Introduction

**1. The origin story**

Over the past one hundred and fifty years, scholars of comparative biblical research have discussed the plethora of literary findings yielded by ancient Near Eastern cultures (Mesopotamia in particular) and the genres and motifs they contain that parallel those found in the 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, providing us with information regarding the cultural and creative context in which the biblical writers lived and wrote. Rather surprisingly, however, no extensive formal parallel has been adduced 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 contain any of the genealogically-arranged “origin stories” or histories that recount the story of humanity from the dawn of history through to the founding fathers, their settlement in their own territory, and the beginnings of a nation. Nor have any complete parallels been found amongst these findings to the ethnic or national perspective exhibited by the biblical writers.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The absence of this kind of material in the great ancient Near Eastern cultures—Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Hatti—highlights its existence in the Greek genealogical and mythographic literature that began to be to be written at the end of the archaic and beginning of the classical period (seventh to fifth centuries BCE). Our knowledge of this genre in the Greek world has expanded greatly in recent decades thanks to the discovery of papyri from the classical world and their publication in up-to-date editions. We now know that the parallelism between this literature and the pentateuchal sources is not merely typographical, many substantive correspondences also existing—the central role of the Flood protagonist, cultural heroes and first inventors, eponymous siblings struggling for the birthright in the womb, stories of the settlement of the founding father, etc. Despite their importance for understanding the documents in the Pentateuch—their literary genre, formation, and development—only a very few, limited comparative studies have been conducted to date in this field.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This contribution focuses upon the distinctive analogies between the Greek genealogical and mythographic literature and the documents embedded in Genesis. Although these documents also appear to have continued in other books of the Pentateuch, the present discussion is confined to Genesis, which evinces a striking blend of traditions concerning the beginning of history and genealogically-organized histories of the nation—the same synthesis that, as we have already observed, is characteristic of the Greek genealogies. While this genre continued and developed in the Greek world through the Hellenistic period, my interest lies in the early Greek sources in light of the temporal proximity of the archaic Greek and biblical texts and the attempt to identify the early stages of its evolution. I shall also investigate the genre in the context of the ancient Near Eastern literary evidence in order to compare and contrast the material and pinpoint the early legacy upon which the first-millennium literatures rested. Other first-millennium East Mediterranean sources and the ancient traditions embedded in Philo of Byblos’ *Phoenician History* are also important for understanding the genealogical genre. Hereby, I shall seek to provide an explanation for the correspondences between the Greek and biblical genealogical writings, demonstrating what they indicate about the unique genre to which the documents in Genesis belong and the literary and cultural background against which the biblical sources and traditions were compiled into their extant form.

## 2. History of research

Although the core of the origin story lies in its genealogical structure, many of the scholars who have studied the genealogical writing in the biblical texts in light of extra-biblical sources—Abraham Malamat and Robert Wilson, for example—have compared them primarily with the ancient Near Eastern kings 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, sharing several common features with this material, as we shall see below, they nonetheless form a completely separate genre.[[5]](#footnote-5) Rather than genealogical in nature, the lists describe ruling and royal dynasties. While a son frequently succeeds his father, equally 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 kings or demonstrates any interest in the years of their reign. They are also horizontal, including wives, siblings, and offspring—in distinction to the overwhelmingly vertical links in the kings lists, which adduces one king per generation. Similarly, while the genealogical material in Genesis relates human history from its inception to the formation of the nation, the kings lists draw a continuous line of succession or justify a particular royal dynasty.[[6]](#footnote-6) Each genre is thus independent, possessing its own *Sitz im Leben*.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The kings lists only recalling isolated biblical texts—such as Genesis 4–5 and 11:10–27—most studies have been devoted to these chapters. Some scholars have pointed in another direction with respect to the “table of nations” in Genesis 10, however—which also constitutes a proper genealogic list. Early on, 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 (1906) and Gunkel (1910: 87) similarly failed to discuss the issue at length. This neglect may be attributed to the fact that classical studies of the Greek genealogical genre were still in their infancy during this period.

The discovery and publication of new papyri, some of which preserved parts of the *Catalogue of Women* ascribed to Hesiod—the most important Greek genealogical composition—significantly impacted the field.[[9]](#footnote-9) Martin West published a comprehensive study of the *Catalogue of Women* and Greek genealogical literature in 1985, this being followed by a new edition of the former by Glen Most (2007) and an in-depth investigation by Martina Hirschberger (2004). Various other scholars have shed new light on the *Catalogue of Women* and the Greek genealogical and mythographic literature in general.[[10]](#footnote-10) The new edition of Greek mythographs by Fowler (2000) relating to prose genealogical writing s also worthy of note.[[11]](#footnote-11) These new works enable a new, comprehensive examination of the biblical genealogical texts in the light of parallels in the ancient Greek world.

Although the majority of early scholars have focused their attention on Genesis 10, the accumulating mass 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 kings list embedded within a plot sequence, the genealogical lists thus being differentiated from the historical narrative and stories.[[12]](#footnote-12) In fact, 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 sources and thus of the composition as a whole.[[13]](#footnote-13) It thus 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 kings lists. The Greek genealogical documents also blend genealogical sequences with stories of the eponymous founding fathers and heroes, creating a complex historical composition. Only in these two corpora—the biblical and Greek—do we find the schematization of 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 or the father of the nation, the latter being depicted as having military, marital, family relations with each other. Both corpora exhibit a strong nationalist orientation and interest in the nation’s development from its original tribal basis.

In a series of articles published in the 1980s, Moshe Weinfeld examined the distinctive parallels between biblical and Greek literature in relation to the “foundation (κτίσις) stories” and interest in ethnicity evident in both sets of literature.[[14]](#footnote-14) He astutely noted that the literary genre in which the accounts of the nation’s origin and settlement reflected in the patriarchal narrative, Exodus, and conquest of the Land finds its parallel in Greek and Roman literature rather than the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or Hittite corpora. Seeking primarily to identify the characteristics of the foundation-story genre, however, 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 running from the dawn of human history through to the heroes and eponymous forefathers who found cities and ethnic groups. This material requires the investigation of data in both the Greek and biblical corpora neglected by Weinfeld.

In his study of the *Catalogue of Women*, Martin West (1985: 11–30, esp. 13) adduces numerous examples from ancient genealogical literature and oral genealogical traditions collected in recent generations by anthropologists and sociologists. Although he concludes that biblical literature forms the closest parallel to the Greek genealogical epics, this not being his area of study he does not analyze it.

The first person to do so in the wake of West’s work was John Van Seters, in a brief study published in 1988 and a subsequent volume in 1992.[[15]](#footnote-15) Herein, he argues that the Yahwistic document in the Pentateuch constitutes a historical composition along the lines of Greek historiographical texts. Although he adduces various formal and substantives affinities between the *Catalogue of Women* and some of the chapters in the Yahwistic document, he refers to very few other Greek documents, however—the same being true of approach to the Priestly document in the Pentateuch.[[16]](#footnote-16) According to him, the pentateuchal Yahwistic composition (which he dates to the exilic period—towards the end of the third century BCE) was heavily influenced by two outside sources—Mesopotamia in the East and traditions similar to those in the *Catalogue of Women* in the West.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Although he does not explicitly speak of direct Greek imprint on the biblical texts, he has been understood as making this argument. Most scholars thus dispute his claims, rejecting any Greek influence upon the Pentateuch—in the process also denying any need for comprehensive comparative research.[[18]](#footnote-18) His use of the *Catalogue of Women* has also been criticized. The full text of the composition not having survived, he resorted to reconstructions, these not forming sufficiently solid evidence for any accurate comparison with the biblical texts (Hess, 1989: 69–71).

3. The sources

As noted above, the *Catalogue of Women* is but one of a number of examples of epic and prose genealogical writing. The discovery of the papyri of the *Catalogue of Women* in recent decades demonstrates that the *Library* attributed to Apollodorus, for example, was largely comprised of sixth- and fifth-century genealogical works that determined both its order and content, for example. The present study is thus based not only the fragments of early Greek genealogical and mythographical writings but also on relatively later works supported by ancient traditions that to date have not been adduced by biblical scholars.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Philo of Byblos forms another important source. 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 documents. Although others sources from the ancient Near East that have been adduced in relation to the genealogical genre—the Sumerian kings list, the Lagash kings list (BM 23103), the Dynastic Chronicle (ABC 18), and the kings list of the West-Semitic (Amorite) dynasties from the days of Shamshi-Adad and Hammurabi of Assyria and Babylon—do not belong to the genre we are presently discussing I shall refer to them below due to their significant for the genre’s development.[[20]](#footnote-20) The Greek genealogical writings constituting independent works, I shall survey them individually, then proceeding to an outline of the genealogical infrastructure that lies at the basis of Genesis. A broader survey of the Greek genealogical sources and their comparison with traditions and narratival threads in Genesis will allow new conclusions to be drawn regarding the questions of genre and the formation and development of the various traditions contained within the first book of the Pentateuch.

*3.1 Origin stories and epic and prose Greek genealogical writings*

As evidenced by Plato in his *Hippias Major*, genealogical traditions were very popular in ancient Greece, the sophist’s answer to Socrates’ question about what the Greeks most like to listen being: “They are very fond of hearing about the genealogies of heroes and men … and the foundations of cities in ancient times” (285b–e).[[21]](#footnote-21) Genealogical lists of heroes appear as early as Homer, although they do not play a central role in the plot herein and are relatively brief (cf. *Il*. 6.150–211; 20.213–241; *Od*. 11.235–265; 15.223–259).[[22]](#footnote-22) The genealogy began to serve as a systematic base for complete compositions from Hesiod onwards, the *Theogony* constituting the paradigm of the genealogical text. This being devoted primarily to the history of the gods, however, I shall only refer to it on occasion, principally in regard to those parts dedicated to early human history—such as the story of Pandora, the first woman.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The most significant genealogical text ascribed to Hesiod, most of which focuses on human beings, heroes, and the Greek eponymous forefathers, is the *Catalogue of Women*. Also known as the *Ehoiai* due to the ἢ οἵη (“or such as”) that opens each section, after which the author passes to the lineage of another woman and her offspring, this five-volume work appears to have been written during the sixth century BCE—almost a century after the date traditionally attributed to Hesiod.[[24]](#footnote-24) Surveying the history of the heroes and Greek eponymous forefathers from the days of Deucalion, the Greek Flood protagonist, to the Trojan War or slightly after, its name derives from the fact that it addresses the most famous women of Greek mythology, born as a result of the commingling between the gods and human heroes and Greek eponymous forefathers.

Although the *Catalogue of Women* remained one of the most popular works ascribed to Hesiod during the first centuries c.e., no complete extant text has survived. A number of fragments have nonetheless been preserved—i.e., quotations or paraphrases cited by later writers. In recent decades, numerous papyrus fragments have been published that contain significant parts of the document. This body of evidence provide us with a relatively broad view of its original contents and structure, the newly-found fragments further indicating that the later genealogical and mythographical writings—such as Apollodorus’ *Library*—preserve ancient traditions, thus 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 plots that stray from the genealogical sequence—the account of Iphimedia’s rescue (F 23a M-W), the story of Heracles’ death and transformation into a god (F 25 M-W), or the narrative of Helen’s suitors (FF 196–204), for example. The fragments demonstrate that the majority of the Greek myths known during the classical period appear in the *Catalogue of Women* in at least condensed form (West, 1985: 29–30, 137–171).

Other works, such as the *Megalai Ehoiai*, are also attributed to Hesiod.[[25]](#footnote-25) This being cited less frequently, it was evidently less popular in the ancient world. Although the paucity of fragments that have survived does not allow us to draw a clear picture of its contents or structure, it appears to have closely resembled other genealogical epics. In addition to Hesiod, other poets wrote genealogical works that seem to have been more limited in scope, focusing primarily on one region or city. Some of the genealogical texts are linked to Eumelus who, according to Greek tradition, lived and worked in the sixth or at the earliest the end of the seventh century BCE[[26]](#footnote-26) One of the most well-known compositions was the *Europia*, which recounts Europa’s abduction by Zeus disguised as an ox and the history of her offspring—Minos, [Rhadamanthus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhadamanthus), and [Sarpedon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarpedon)—and the foundation of Thebes, one of the fragments referring to Amphion and Zethus, the erector of Thebes’ wall. Another work associated with Eumelus is the *Corinthiaca*, whose primary interest appears to lie in the history of Corinth and its kings.

Other genealogical poets include Asius of Samos and Cinaethon of Sparta (Bowra, 1957: 391–401; Huxley, 1969: 85–98). Although their dates are uncertain, the fact that they are cited by fifth centuries BCE authors indicates that at the latest they worked close to the beginning of this century (Bowra, 1957: 394; West, 1985: 4). A citation in Asius preserved in Pausanias (7.4.1) indicates that Asius’ primary interest lay in the genealogy of Samos, his birthplace, Samos being according to him the eponymous founding father of the island, son of the eponymous nymph Samia, daughter of the mainland river Maiandros. Cinaethon of Sparta similarly devoted his attention principally to the Peloponnese and Crete.

The names of other epic genealogies composed during this period have not been preserved. One of the most well known genealogies is the *Phoronis*, which relates the Argivian genealogy, beginning with Phoroneus, the first Argivian (F 1 *PEG*) (Huxley, 1969: 31–38; West, 2003: 33–34). Although only six fragments of this work have survived, the word πρῶτος that occurs in part of these suggests that its interest lay in the traditions relating to the beginnings of history and the first inventors (FF 1, 2, 4 *PEG*). The *Danais* similarly recounts the history of the family of Danaus and their return from Egypt to Argos (Huxley, 1969: 34–38; West, 2003: 33–34). In contrast to Homer and other epics, these collections relate to the genealogy of the first and founding families rather than to a single theme.

Towards the end of the sixth century BCE, genealogical works also began to be written in prose by authors known as logographers or mythographers—i.e., story writers.[[27]](#footnote-27) The earliest of these appears to have been Hecataeus of Miletus (*FGrH* 1).[[28]](#footnote-28) These works seem to form part of the spiritual and philosophical renewal the Ionian world (Asia Minor) witnessed at the end of the seventh and through the sixth century BCE. This renaissance was felt in Miletus in particular, which was a scientific and philosophic centre at the time. The new emphasis on rationality and thought prompted the development of new tools and writing methods for organizing the genealogical and mythological traditions circulating in the Greek world.[[29]](#footnote-29) While many scholars point to Hecataeus’ 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)—in this regard, he nonetheless remained interested in myths and the deeds of the gods.[[30]](#footnote-30) At the most, he thus appears to have sought to impose order and consistency upon conflicting genealogical traditions and introduce a measure of rationality when possible—as, for example, when he disputes the numbers given in the account of Danaus’ daughters’ flight from Aegyptus’ sons.[[31]](#footnote-31) He also preserved the genealogical model he received from the *Catalogue of Women*, apparently opening his work with Deucalion, the Greek Flood protagonist (FF 13–16) and then proceeding to the history of the first heroes and eponymous founding fathers though to the Trojan War and perhaps further.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The logographers who succeeded Hecataeus followed the same genealogical paradigm, each altering some details and diverging from their predecessors in one matter or another in line with 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. Favouring the Argivian traditions, he opens with Phoroneus, the first Argivian (*FGrH* 2 F 23a), amongst whose sons he names Myceneus, the eponymous founding father of Mycenae, and Argos himself, the eponymous founding father of Argos (FF 25–26). While commencing with the traditions about the Argive rather than Deucalion, as in the *Catalogue of Women*, however, he relates that Phoroneus lived at the time of the Flood (*FGrH* 2 F 23a, b), thereby preserving the view that associates the beginning of human history with the Flood (Finkelberg, 2005: 35). A similar outlook is found in Solon, preserved by Plato, who places Phoroneus and Deucalion in close proximity, attributing them to the first generations of humanity. According to Plato, wishing to tell the Egyptian priests “about the most ancient things in our part of the world,” he spoke to them about “Phoroneus, who is called ‘the first man,’ and about Niobe; and after the Deluge, of the survival of Deucalion and Pyrrha” (*Tim*. 22a), then proceeding to give an account of their offspring.[[33]](#footnote-33) This genealogical sequence—Phoroneus, Deucalion, etc.—appears to gradually have became established during the fifth century BCE.

The mid-fifth century Pherecydes of Athens (*FGrH* 3), known as the “writer of genealogies” (γενεαλόγος) (cf. *FGrH* 3 T) or the “writer of history” (ἱστορικός) (cf. *FGrH* 3 T 3), employs the same genre. Broader in scope than its predecessors, his ten-volume genealogical work covered 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.[[34]](#footnote-34) Pherecydes relates to several family trees—the offspring of Inachus, Deucalion, and Atlas—devoting several books to each. In light of his origin, he highlighted the traditions associated with Athens, recounting these in the first volume, the traditions about Deucalion standing at the heart of the composition following the Argivian traditions pertaining to Inachus’ descendants.

Hellanicus of Lesbos, who worked in the last third of the fifth century, was Hecataeus’ direct literary successor.[[35]](#footnote-35) His writings cover a broad spectrum, including a series of genealogical or mythographic monographs devoted to the offspring of the major Greek families—the *Phoronis*, which deals with Phoroneus’ descendants, the *Deucalioneia*, dedicated to Deucalion’s offspring, and three further genealogies, *Atlantis*, *Asopis*, and *Troica*, that relate to the descendants of Atlas and Asopus, apparently focusing upon the generation of the Trojan heroes. Although containing a number of books, some scholars maintain that the separate tomes formed sections of a single large composition originally intended to serve as an overarching chronological genealogy, with Phoroneus and Deucalion standing at its head (Pearson, 1939: 170–171). The *Atthis* recounts the national history of Athens from the reign of the kings to Hellanicus’ own day. This appears to constitute the first such history based on a collection of early traditions about the city presented in an orderly chronological sequence. Hellanicus was followed by a long list of “Attidographers” in subsequent generations who employed his model in writing their own histories of the city.[[36]](#footnote-36)

In general, the Greek genealogical literature consists of stories about the mythological heroes and forefathers from the first generations of human history and the chronicles of cities and the various Greek ethnic groups. The origin stories and genealogical writing are thus informed by an ethnic perspective, their principal purpose appearing to be to recount the history of the aristocratic clans and the heroes of the Greek cities and groups while preserving traditions regarding the past. They also frequently recall the eponymous forefathers of ethnic groups outside the Greek world in order to demonstrate their links with the Greek races. Although a critical tone began to appear in Hecataeus and was developed by Herodotus, this is not typical of all the prose genealogical mythographers—and certainly not of the authors of the genealogical collections of the ilk of the *Catalogue of Women*, the *Phoronis*, or the *Danais*.[[37]](#footnote-37) Both this and the first-person language of the historian employed by Hecataeus, for example, are both absent from the biblical literature.[[38]](#footnote-38)

*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-narratival section of the Pentateuch—or at least Genesis and Exodus—form an Israelite origin story based on a genealogical structure. Just as we must trace earlier genealogical or mythographical sources in later collections such as Apollodorus’ *Library* so we must use philological-historical tools to identify the early sources embedded in the Pentateuch. In the following, I shall review the current prevalent approaches to this undertaking.[[39]](#footnote-39)

In its classic formulation, the Documentary Hypothesis, which dominated Biblical Studies from the end of the nineteenth and part of the twentieth century, posited that the Pentateuch contains four literary documents—J, E, P, and D—each of which constitutes an independent, stylistically- and linguistically- disparate narrative. In recent decades, this theory has fallen into disfavour, many scholars adopting alternative methodologies—such as the “history of traditions” and “block theory.” Although 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 and the primary stratum of Deuteronomy as a separate, independent composition (D)—ideas relating to the nature, formation, and dating of the other documents and other premises of the classical theory have been significant revised.

As early as the 193os, Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph (1933; Rudolph, 1938) argued that the sections attributed to E in fact form part of J or late deuteronomistic stratum. Already prior to Volz and Rudolph, in fact, numerous other scholars—such as Wellhausen (1899: 35)—contended that the folk sources constituted a single entity (JE), regarding the attempt to identify two separate, autonomous documents as unnecessary and pointless.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Similar questions arose in relation to P, especially in the mid-twentieth century. The succinct nature 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 its existence as a complete, independent composition at any point. According to this approach, the texts assigned to it by scholars constitute a series of editorial strata and supplementary material. Hereby, P represents the editorial hand that gathered together the non-P material and compiled it into a single text.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Once E had been discounted and P reduced to an editorial layer, focus then shifted to J—now in the guise of an unorganized and diverse literary entity containing all the non-Priestly material in the Pentateuch. At this juncture, the basis for understanding the Pentateuch and the consolidation of new research methods came to rest on understanding how this literary artifact had evolved. Right from the beginnings of the classic study of the Pentateuch, in fact, many scholars had questioned the argument that J was a coherent document *a priori* intended to constitute a broad-scoped account of Israelite history. Signs of discontent were already evident amongst the leading early-twentieth-century Documentary Hypothesis scholars, such as Gunkel and Noth. Treating J and E as “collectors,” Gunkel described their works as collections of legends and stories resembling those of the brothers Grimm. Although not rejecting the classic documentary theory, the view of the “documents” as congeries made the need to define them as discrete compositions redundant, the idea of “selection” similarly not requiring an “author” (Gunkel, 1910: lxiv and passim).

This direction was developed by von Rad and Noth. While not rejecting the documentary theory, they nonetheless posited the existence of blocks of oral traditions at the heart of the biblical texts, these forming the basis of the Yahwist source. Von Rad identified three major blocks—the Genesis story, the patriarchal narratives, and the giving of the law on Sinai—that formed a core like that reflected in Deut 26:5–9. Noth (1948: esp. 131–164) 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.

This approach paved the way for the “history of traditions” theory developed by their successors. In the 1970s, Rendtorff (1977, 1983: 131–164) argued that the classic Documentary Hypothesis must be jettisoned in favour of a system based on clusters or blocks of stories. Despite accepting the distinction between Priestly and non-Priestly material, he did not regard the ensuing strata as representing two narratival documents. 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 primeval history (Genesis 1–11), the patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12–50), the Exodus account (Exodus 1–15), the wanderings in the wilderness (Exodus 16–18; Numbers 11–20), the events at Sinai (Exodus 19–34), and the conquest of the land (the earliest layer of Joshua). In his view, the Priestly editorial layer filled in, corrected, and reconstructed the non-Priestly material.

Erhard Blum, Konrad Schmid, and others—particularly European scholars 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 Genesis 1–11), the patriarchal cycle (including the non-Priestly material in Genesis [12–50]), and the Exodus cycle (including the non-Priestly material in Exodus and Numbers). According to this school, each of the blocks possessed an independent existence, the patriarchal cycles (Genesis 12–50) and Exodus cycles (Exodus and Numbers) in contrast constituting two rival histories of Israelite origins. The amalgamation of this material, they maintain, was a product of the final editing of the Pentateuch in the middle of the fifth century BCE after the combination with the Priestly material. [[42]](#footnote-42) Blum, however, posits that the blocks had already been formed prior to the final editing of the Pentateuch by a Deuteronomistic redactor or someone influenced by the Deuteronomistic outlook during or after the exile (which he refers to as KD).[[43]](#footnote-43)

This view is not without its own problems. The division into blocks on occasion imposes new limitations on the text, all of the references to the patriarchs in Exodus and Numbers—and all those to the Exodus in Genesis—necessarily constituting editorial additions. Editorial units are frequently determined by a predetermined division of blocks without sufficient evidence. Ultimately, this theory does not differ substantially from its predecessor. The idea of amalgamation at an early stage—before the encounter with the Priestly material and the final editing of the Pentateuch—resembles Wellhausen’s “Jehovist”—i.e., a blending of the J and E documents—or Noth’s J source. According to both theories, the extant non-Priestly material was compiled from various traditions in its early stages.[[44]](#footnote-44)

At the same time, much of the criticism the history of traditions 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 with those in the Exodus-cycle block in Exodus and Numbers.[[45]](#footnote-45) 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 it grew up independently, a later hand being at work in many other cases that betrays a deliberate attempt at literary narrative. The traces of narratival unity suggest that much of the non-Priestly material in Genesis—still most conveniently called “Yahwist”—is the product of a prolonged period, being compiled from a number of units. In its entirety, however, it is an independent document that gives a genealogically-framed account of the history of Israelite origins from the first man.[[46]](#footnote-46)

The Priestly stratum appears to have been formed in similar fashion. While various discrete blocks are evident here, too, it 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 who follow Rendtorff and Blum in distinguishing between the Genesis and Exodus-Numbers cycles—Carr, Otto, and de Pury, for example—acknowledge that the Priestly material in the Pentateuch essentially comprises an independent document covering the period from the creation to Moses.[[47]](#footnote-47) At the same time, additional editorial layers penned by scribes who were influenced by or came out of priestly schools can be clearly discerned.

Although the concise nature of the Priestly material and the genealogical data it contains frequently served the pentateuchal author as the frame for his plot or as bridging units that create the impression of an editorial layer, its author was not responsible for editing the Pentateuch. When this material is removed and gathered together, it comprises a relatively complete and coherent narratival sequence. If the same steps are taken with regard to the editorial layers in the Deuteronomistc or the Chronistic works, on the other hand, no such entity emerges. We must therefore assume that the Priestly material in the Pentateuch originally consisted of a lengthy independent narratival source. These strata nonetheless do not preclude the possibility that P was familiar with non-Priestly textual traditions that circulated in Israel, reworking or polemicizing with them.

While the issue of the nature of the pentateuchal sources and their compilation must be decided on the basis of philological or literary-historical grounds, the comparative material adduced in the present study can shed light on it from outside. Just as ancient Near Eastern sources have provided an analogy primarily for the short texts and genres that may have lain at the pentateuchal authors’ disposal for incorporation into larger works, so now the ancient Greek genealogical and mythographical compositions can be recognized as doing the same for the complex historical surveys that deal with broad-scoped and lineages and dynasties. The genealogies commence with the first men—Phoroneus and Deucalion, the protagonist of the Flood, for example—and continue with the Greek heroes, eponymous forefathers, and city founders. Similar sequences to these occur in various strata of Genesis.[[48]](#footnote-48)

*3.2.1 The genealogical sequence in P*

The genealogical nature of the sources of Genesis is most prominent in the Priestly narrative thread within the Pentateuch. The phrase “This is the book of the generations of …” (אלה תולדות) that runs throughout constitutes the Hebrew parallel of the Greek term γενεαλογία.[[49]](#footnote-49) This appears at the opening of every human and family unit, 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)

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

“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). Such a heading would have been appropriate to the Priestly work as a whole. This is followed by a list of the first ten generations of humankind from Adam, Seth, and Enosh to the hero of the Flood—Noah (Genesis 5). Thenceforth, it is replaced by the heading “These are the generations of …” before each generation.[[50]](#footnote-50) The term תולדות at the end of the creation account is secondary in form, appearing at the end of the section instead of its more customary place at the beginning. Secondly, the meaning of the term here is unusual. Normally signifying the “branching out of the offspring of x,” here it denotes “the matter of the development” or “the history of the heaven and earth.” The Priestly author—or one of the final compilers—appears to have created this formula in order to bring the story of the creation into line with the overall genealogical framework.[[51]](#footnote-51)

The final occasion on which the formula appears is Num 3:1 (cf. Exod 6:16, 19): “And these are the generations of Aaron and Moses”—immediately followed by a list of the priestly and Levitical clams. The concluding point of the genealogy clearly identifies the circles from which the composition issued, the priestly writer seeking, *inter alia*, to provide an overarching outline of the lengthy and well-established line from Adam to the first priestly and Levitical descendants of Aaron and Moses. Although the genealogy was not penned by a single hand, numerous literary traditions being incorporated here that were consolidated over time, the unit as a whole constitutes a relatively homogeneous, chronologically-organized genealogy spanning the creation of the world to the rise of the priestly and Levitical clans in Israel.

The stories integrated into the genealogies are concise, primarily containing genealogical data relating to the number of sons born to the wives, the lifespan of the main protagonists, and a report of their death. In some instances, the Priestly author adds narratival details, such as the account of the Flood, Abraham’s covenant with God in Canaan (Genesis 17), and his purchase of the Cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23).[[52]](#footnote-52) Following the survey of Aaron, Moses, and the emergence of the priestly and Levitical clans, no further need exists for the “these are the generations of …” framework, the priestly author turning his attention to other, larger events. *Inter alia*, he incorporates larger, ready-made 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 turns once again to the patriarchal stories, ending with an account of Moses’ death to conclude the history of that generation (Deut 34:1a1, 8–10).

*3.2.2. The genealogical sequences in the non-Priestly material*

At least one independent narratival thread relating to the beginnings of humanity and the patriarchs can also be identified in the non-Priestly materials, composed by a member of a school that sought to homogenize the various traditions that stood at its disposal—i.e., the Yahwistic stratum. Although this bears a more complex character than the Priestly thread, consisting of diverse traditions and early internal clusters, it is not a “collection of traditions” as Gunkel posits. Amongst the non-Priestly materials in Genesis remnants of another literary thread can be discerned—E. Due to the limited scope and fragmentary nature of this thread in Genesis and the absence of E passages in the account of human origins (Genesis 1–11), I shall only refer to this material in brief—primarily in relation to the patriarchal narratives.[[53]](#footnote-53)

In contrast to P, the Yahwistic thread contains no organized framework, the genealogy forming an integral part of the narrative. The genealogical data thus cannot be distinguished from the narrative. In Genesis, the genealogy forms the basis for the whole Yahwistic account, primeval history (Genesis 1–11) consequently being inseparably linked to the patriarchal cycle (Genesis 12–50).[[54]](#footnote-54) A similar genealogical style also occurs both in the primeval history section (Genesis 1–11—the Yahwistic “table of nations” [Gen 10:8–19, 21, 24, 30]) and the patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12–50—the births of Amon 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, both sections 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 prefers the formula “x begat יָלַד]] y and z” in the *qal*, the priestly writer favouring the *hiphil* [[הוליד (cf. ויולד את-אנוש [Gen 5:6[[55]](#footnote-55)]) and a more formal style:

“And these are the generations of Noah’s sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth … The descendants of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, 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 focuses primarily on the patriarchs and their descendants in his lists, the Yahwist frequently adduces the mothers and their pregnancies. This style is found in both the primeval history (Genesis 1–11) and patriarchal (Genesis 12–50) cycles:

*Genesis 1–11*:

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

“and she [Cain’s wife] conceived and bore (ותהר ותלד) 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 (ותהר ותלד) a son to Abraham in his old age.” (Gen 21:2a)

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

The uniformity between the two sections is also evident in the reference 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 forged all implements of copper and iron.” (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)[[56]](#footnote-56)

As these examples—and those I to be adduce below—demonstrate, it is difficult to differentiate stylistically between the genealogical data in the non-Priestly materials in the primeval-history section and their counterparts in the non-Priestly writings in the patriarchal narratives. It is also not easy content-wise to regard the two divisions as separate entities that developed independently. The assumption that a genealogical composition existed that surveyed the first generations from Adam to Terah (or the descendants of Eber) without leading to the central element—namely, the nation’s forefathers—is dubious. Even if these two sections contain material that consolidated separately, they are integrally linked by deliberate intention via the genealogical sequence.

The Yahwistic material in Genesis can thus be identified as a thread based upon a chronological genealogical frame 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 (although the latter episode also appears secondary in P). The first story in the Yahwistic thread—the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2–3) is primarily devoted to the creation of the first man and woman and an explanation of their suffering and toil. Further down the genealogy and survey of the first generations in the world prior to the Flood, the author recounts the first murder in the world and the beginnings of human culture and the first inventors (Genesis 4). This original sequence undoubtedly included the story of Noah planting the first vineyard and discovering wine (Gen 9:20–27), this frame also encompassing the Flood and its addendum—the commingling 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).[[57]](#footnote-57)

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—the descendants of Cush—i.e., Mesopotamia (Gen 10:8–12), Mizraim (vv. 13–14), Canaan (vv. 15–19), Eber—i.e., the Aramaean and Arab worlds (vv. 25–30) and self-evidently the forefathers of the Israelites (see Chapter 2). The story of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9) reflects a variant tradition of the scattering of the nations. It, too, however, finds its way into those Yahwistic primeval accounts that relate how men sought divine status, causing God time and again to intervene to prevent them from doing so.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Following the reference to Peleg, Joktan, and their descendants (Gen 10:25–30), the Yahwistic genealogy resumes with the names Abram’s and Nahor’s wives—Sarai and Milcah (Gen 11:29–30).[[59]](#footnote-59) These family relations and their history are reviewed again in Yahwistic account of Nahor’s sons by Milcah—the eponymous fathers of the Arameans—and his concubine Reumah (Gen 22:20–24). Similar data are also given concerning Abraham’s descendants from Ketura—the eponymous fathers of the southern Arabian region (Gen 25:1–6).

The patriarch narratives that follow are also associated with the family matters that lie at the basis of the genealogy. Numerous stories are dedicated to the promise of multiple descendants given to the patriarchs (Gen 13:16, 16:10, 26:3–4, 25:14). Some deal with the lives of the lonely, barren matriarchs— their difficulties in conceiving (e.g., the births of Jacob [Gen 25:21–26a] and Isaac [Gen 18:9–15, 21:1–2] and in rearing their families (the birth of Ishmael [Gen 16:1–2, 4–13]). As in the Greek world, the central element in the biblical genealogical writing is the national or ethnic focus rather than antiquarian matters.[[60]](#footnote-60) Genealogical writing does not derive solely from the need to collect antiquities or preserve early family traditions for purely investigative or collectable reasons but also from a wish to know the history of peoples or cities, adduce the lineages of households, and establish the ethnic identity of the group to which one belongs. More than being a simple interest in the past, the Greek and biblical genealogical writings thus reflect issues relating to the authors’ identity in the present day. They consequently include not only the lineage of the eponymous fathers of the city or broad/narrow ethnic group but also the stories about the founding 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 control group for 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—in particular those from the Phoenician world—are specifically relevant for comparison and identifying a common genre. Despite the paucity of texts that have survived from this region and period, these include a number of early-first-millennium BCE multilingual inscriptions discovered and published in recent decades from the kingdoms in the region of Cilicia, whose royal languages were Phoenician and the local Luwian. I shall discuss these sources in Chapter 7, which looks at the settlement traditions of these kingdoms. The most important source for the traditions of origins and genealogical writing in the Levant in this respect, however, is Philo of Byblos’ *Phoenician History*.

Relatively late in date, this has only reached us via indirect witness. Exhibiting close affinities to some of the genealogical models and ideas in the biblical and Greek texts, it is cited frequently in the following discussion. Up until the beginning of the twentieth century, some scholars still believed it to constitute a “Hellenistic pot-pourri” of notions Philo collected from diverse late sources. The Ugarit discoveries and the findings from the Hurro-Hittite space have thoroughly refuted this view, however. The correspondence between the traditions he cites and second-millennium BCE literary artifacts has led some scholars—such as Eissfeldt—to the conclusion that Philo accurately preserves a second-millennium composition.[[61]](#footnote-61) This notion is commensurate with Philo’s own claim that he has preserved a Phoenician document composed by Sanchuniathon of Beirut who lived (according to Philo’s testimony) “even before the Trojan War.” While it is clear today that Philo’s work was created in the main within the context of the Graeco-Roman world, it nonetheless contains ancient traditions that reflect an ancient Phoenician narrative infrastructure. Comparison with the epigraphical findings from the Levant, the Hurro-Hittite expanse, and biblical literature on the one hand and a filtering out of the later strata that characterize other national histories from the Hellenistic-Roman world—such as those of Berosus and Manetho—on the other helps to reveal this.[[62]](#footnote-62)

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 relating to the creation of the world, immediately followed by an enumeration of the first human generations—who were also the first inventors. The first generation is said to have been responsible for discovering the eating of fruit from trees, their offspring being the first to worship the lord of heaven. Their progeny discovered the production of fire, Hypsouranios subsequently discovering the art of the building of huts from reeds and bulrushes and his brother, the hunter Ousoos, using the skins of the animals he hunted for clothing and being the first to dare to enter water. As in the Greek and biblical genealogies discussed above, here, too, we find a national focus that indicates the origins of the people or city. Philo recounts that the first generations—Genos and Genea—founded Phoenicia, Hypsouranios Tyre. Philo’s genealogical sequence, thus includes cosmogony, technogony, and stories of the settlement of Phoenicia—in a close parallel to Genesis.

Although the early traditions in Philo may only constitute a small example of a much broader Phoenician literary output that has been lost, those he does preserve prove fascination testimony of a genealogical and historical writing very similar to the pentateuchal sources in temporal, geographical, and linguistic terms. Together with the parallels between the Greek and biblical genealogical literature to be discussed below, we gain a clear impression that this genre—absent from the literary oeuvre of Mesopotamian and the other great ancient Near Eastern civilizations—was prevalent in the Eastern Mediterranean basin during the first half of the first millennium BCE

**4. Research methodology**

Biblical scholars have made use of the comparative method since the days of 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 it is that the biblical literature was not created in a vacuum but developed and grew out of earlier literary artifacts penned in the same geographical space and influenced by the literary activity in its environs, particularly in regard to the Mesopotamian literature. This assumption—or at least that of a world of shared ideas and common texts—has become so prevalent that only isolated scholars now feel the need to anchor their conclusions within a solid methodology.[[63]](#footnote-63) 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 has turned into “parallelomania.”[[64]](#footnote-64)

In order to formulate proper methodological principles to guide comparative studies we may to turn to those propounded by the historical-geographical school within the field of literature and comparative folklore. This approach seeks to collect diverse versions of a single literary work that found their way into different cultures and languages in order to identify its original form and provenance. Various rules have been proposed for identifying different versions of the same composition and reconstructing its geographical dissemination and assimilation.[[65]](#footnote-65) These may also be employed in order to trace a common genre or creative encounter.

The fundamental principle is that a single motif found in several literatures is likely to be 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 way to explain such a circumstance is by the assumption that such a one-off composition found its way to other storytellers. In this context, Dov Noy’s comments are particularly instructive, relating as it happens to the very motifs that lie at the heart of the present contribution:

Field studies and research based on them have demonstrated that the complex act—i.e., the lengthy tales 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 one-motif short tales (jokes, etc.) in divergent places. This is not the case with complex acts. 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—whoever he may be—tends to imagine that it might never stop and that the sinister waters are out to get him. However, in tales that combine this motif with the miraculous escape of a tiny family of three via a wooden vessel that floats on the surface of the water (a boat, an “ark”), constituting the beginning—the reason for a new division of humanity into clans and races—the affinities in the details cannot be coincidental. When a tale is composed of many identical elements, we must accept the monogenetic theory. (1970: 20–21)[[66]](#footnote-66)

Here, Noy recalls the biblical narrative of the Flood, appearing to hint at the Mesopotamian origin of the tale in its well-known version. Strikingly, however, precisely those points that he adduces are those that are paralleled in the Greek rather than the Mesopotamian version. Let me review these briefly in order to demonstrate the working principles I shall adopt below.

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, the Flood hero goes to live amongst the gods after the waters recede rather than becoming the forefather of the human race.[[67]](#footnote-67) This motif does appear, however, in the 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, who had three sons—Dorus, Aeolus, and Xuthus (the latter begetting Achaeus and Ion) who are the eponymous ancestors of the Greek ethnic groups.[[68]](#footnote-68)

The other vessels that float on the water Noy adduces also exhibit a much closer correspondence with the Israelite and Greek than the Mesopotamian traditions. In the Mesopotamian story, we hear of a “(large) boat” (ĝišmá gur4-gur4 in Sumerian, ĝiš*eleppu* in Akkadian). Although the *Gilgamesh Epic* depicts it as a sealed box, the Akkadian and Sumerian employ the standard term for a vessel. In contrast, the Hebrew term is תיבה, the Greek employing the precise equivalent (λάρναξ). Neither of the latter form the customary term for vessel, both signifying a storage container or crate.[[69]](#footnote-69) The choice of this word signifies the vessel’s special purpose and sealed nature.[[70]](#footnote-70) Cultures in the Mediterranean basin thus appear to have defined the vessels associated with the Flood heroes is slightly different fashion (or focused on another aspect of them) to the Mesopotamian traditions.

The specific parallels between the two traditions make it difficult to believe that the stories are unconnected. This is especially true in light of the fact that the story of the Flood itself entered Greek literature at a relatively late stage, never gaining as a central place as it held in Eastern literature.[[71]](#footnote-71) The Greeks generally being recognized as receiving the Flood story from the ancient Near East, the additional details the Greek and biblical Flood myths exhibits appear to derive from a common Eastern source that reworked the older Mesopotamian version—most probably a Phoenician or northern Syrian intermediate.[[72]](#footnote-72)

According to the principle outlined above, in order 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 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 customs in various places. However, such a step cannot demonstrate the history of a story that is peculiar to a certain place or its dissemination across a defined geographical and cultural space.[[73]](#footnote-73)

This principle relates to the fixed features of a work—i.e., to the literary motifs, story types, plot templates, substantive elements, and matters of style and form that lie at its base. In addition to these, comparative study must also address the variable features that emerge when a tale is assimilated into a new context.[[74]](#footnote-74) In such cases, all sorts of changes begin to take place due to the new spiritual and cultural climate. Frequently, these stories absorb the features of the ethnic identity, historical context, and geographical location of their new home. Von Sydow (1948: 44–59) coined the term ecotype—borrowed from the botanical world—to denote the processes of development that folktales undergo in this respect. In his wake, other scholars compared how literary artifacts are absorbed into new cultures with the way in which plants adapt to a new climates and geophysical milieu. This includes the replacement of original, “foreign” ideas and motifs with local ones, the acculturation of norms in order to make the story more appealing to local audiences, accommodation to local canonical texts, and alteration of the rules deriving from the original author’s style. This principle recognizes that no two works being compared will ever exhibit precisely the same features.

This process is of great significance in seeking to trace sources of influence or literary borrowing. Literary works—like any foreign ideas—requiring time before they become assimilated into their new surroundings, elements that still have not been “eccotyped” can frequently be identified, standing out as foreign to the local milieu and thus pointing to their original setting (von Sydlow, 1948: 52–59; Honko, 1981: 151). Although this principle is evident in literary or artistic borrowing, it also holds true for cultural ideas. Let us take the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, for example.[[75]](#footnote-75) The correspondence between the majority of the letters in the two alphabets, their order, and names evinces that the two cultures did not develop independently of one another. It is well known that the alphabet with which we are familiar developed amongst the Phoenicians, then spreading to other cultures. Although absorbed by the Greeks, it continued to develop in its new environs, several further signs being added in line with the Greek language and other coming to signify vowels as well as consonants. This process represents the Greek acculturation 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 carry no meaning in Greek but are completely intelligible to speakers of West-Semitic languages demonstrates both the fact of the borrowing and its source—the West-Semitic world. Hebrew-speakers assimilated the Phoenician alphabet without any difficulty, their culture being close in character and geographical space. Here, too, however, a foreign element can still be discerned, at least one alphabetic sign denoting two consonants—*š*(*in*) and *ś*(*in*).[[76]](#footnote-76) The inhabitants of the Levant who invented the language but had no *ś* had no need for a letter to signify it. Foreign signs of this type deriving from incompletely acculturated elements point to the source from which they were borrowed.

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

**5. The order of the discussion and the thesis propounded**

I shall present first of all some of the unique parallels between the Genesis narratives and Greek genealogical and other eastern Mediterranean stories. Due to the centrality of the hero of the Flood in the Greek and biblical genealogies, the first part will be devoted to a comparative study of the parallels in regard to this episode and the races that emerged in its wake. In light of the clear affinities the literatures of these two cultures exhibit in regard to this motif, its link to ancient Near Eastern literature, and the importance of the genealogical lineage ensuing from the hero of the Flood, I shall focus 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 biblical peoples 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 proceeding to examine the motifs relating to the generation prior to the Flood. Chapter 3 looks at the genealogical traditions embedded in Genesis 2–3 and the Greek world that incorporate the story of the creation of the first man and woman and the origin of evil in the world. Chapter 4 traces the parallels between the commingling of the “sons of God” and the daughters of men (Gen 6:1–4) and the account in the *Catalogue of Women* of Zeus seeking to wipe out the entire generation of the heroes.

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 types that serves as a frame 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 groups or cities in “real time.” This type of story constitutes a recurrent motif in the Pentateuchal sources and Greek genealogical traditions, in particular in the Argivian sources. 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 other eastern Mediterranean states, 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 lived as a foreigner, became assimilated, and finally became the founder of a people.

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

The analogies are not coincidental or merely typological. While no direct contact can be adduced between the Greek and Israelite worlds during the first millennium BCE, both cultures formed part of an ancient eastern Mediterranean continuum that shared traditions and ideas. This cultural space is marked off to a certain extent from the Mesopotamian expanse, even though it imbibed much from it, as the examples from the Flood story adduced above evince.

As is well known, the Aegean world and the Levant in particular and the ancient Near East in general witnessed two central eras of contact prior to the Persian period. 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 written in Cypro-Minoan in Ugarit, attest to the existence of strong commercial and diplomatic ties—as well as conflicts and struggles—between the Mycenaean and Aegean worlds and Hatti and the kingdoms along the northern Syrian coast. These led scholars such as Cyrus Gordon and others to depict the world of the mid-second millennium BCE as a *koine* Middle East.[[77]](#footnote-77) Another period of contact between the Aegean and Levant occurred approximately between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. At this juncture, a sharp and abrupt change is evident in Greek art, shifting from a geometric style to one resembling the ancient Near Eastern art of the period. This fact has led to its characterization as the “Orientalizing period.”[[78]](#footnote-78) At the beginning of this era, the Greek world was influenced not only via art but also received the alphabet, thus being greatly impacted in literary terms as well.[[79]](#footnote-79) *Contra* past studies that attributed the links between the literature of the classical world and that of the ancient Near East during the *koine* period of the mid-second millennium BCE, Burkert and others argue that in many cases it is better to ascribe this influence to the second era of contact—namely, at the beginning of the archaic period or end of the Greek Dark Age, i.e., the Orientalizing period. This time span also better fits the date of the classic and biblical sources, not requiring any speculative reconstruction of the literary artifact of the Mycenaean world.[[80]](#footnote-80)

These claims receive support from those cases in which parallels exist in the literature of the classical world and Israel that do not appear in earlier literatures in this space. The bulk of these literatures was created 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 we find between them thus frequently reflect the contemporary literature of the Levant—i.e., the Orientalizing period in the Greek world (the end of the eighth, the seventh, and the beginning of the sixth century). This was the golden era of the Assyrian Empire, its fall, and the rise of the Babylonian Empire—and 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 this space. 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 real signs are evident of any Aegean culture.[[81]](#footnote-81) This circumstance may also explain the affinities to which I alluded above and will discuss below relating to the genealogical patterns associated with the Flood hero and the line issuing from him. This borrowing—together with other indicators I shall present in this study—suggests that the Greek genealogical tradition (particular as reflected in the *Catalogue of Women* and the works that followed in its wake) exhibits an awareness of Syro-Phoenician models.

The story of origins emerged as a new genre in the Eastern Mediterranean during the second quarter of the first millennium b.c.e as a genealogically-structured narrative that gives an historical account extending from the first human beings up until the nation’s forefathers. Although each clan, tribe, and people had its own lineage and family history, up until the first millennium BCE these traditions and the literary frames associated with them appear not to have been written down in the ancient Near Eastern kingdoms, not occurring in Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Hatti. The evidence suggests that the genre only began to flourish at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, apparently first developing in the Levant and Syria. Together with the related Greek genealogical tradition, it nourished the work of the biblical authors while the Pentateuch was being formed.

With the fall of the great kingdoms in the region—Hatti, Mycenae, and Egypt—towards the end of the second millennium BCE, the *koine* space disappeared, the ethnic identity of other cultures beginning to change. During the first third of the first millennium BCE, however, closer ties began to develop once again, in certain senses even beginning to grow and expand. At this juncture, the cultural space 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, some of the kingdoms of Asia Minor that had adopted Phoenician as an official script alongside the local Luwian, and the Greek cultures, which brought the Phoenician alphabet into lines with their needs in a distinctive fashion.[[82]](#footnote-82)

The literary evidence presented below attests that the small kingdoms that sprang up in this space—such as Israel, Judah, and the Greek city states—began to ask questions relating to 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 promoted the establishment of this genre. Other factors may have been the adoption of the Phoenician alphabet with its great accessibility—thus facilitating a shift in literacy focus from the skilled scribes who served at court and in the temple (employing Akkadian and Mycenaean cuneiform) to broader layers amongst the elite.[[83]](#footnote-83) Whatever the case may be in this respect, the traditions regarding the beginnings of the human race in the Hebrew Bible and Greek world clearly gave a central place to the genealogies of the most important clans and elites, the question of tribal and city relations replacing the royal succession of the kings lists. In the course of time, these became broad-scoped origin stories from which this history of the people or city-states could be adduced.

As I shall demonstrate below, the collection and examination of the affinities between the Greek genealogical literature and the biblical texts and remnants of additional eastern Mediterranean sources reveals the patterns and models that marked this new genre of writing, enabling us to clearly identify it and 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 sources and collections embedded in the Pentateuch, see 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 this genre amongst ethnic groups and races in the fields of anthropology and political science (Smith, 1986: esp. 190–191; 200: 88–94; 2003: 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 either by Christian missionaries or Western civilization. See also Wright (2004: esp. 3–23). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See the survey in the following section. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Speiser (1974: 41–42); Malamat (1967: 9–28; 1968: 163–173); Wilson (1975: 169–189; 1977: 137–195; 1992: 929–932); Hartman (1972: 25–32); Hasel (1978: 361–374); Bryan (1987: 180–188); Hess (1989: 58–69). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Hasel (1978: 368–374); Averbeck (2003: 131–132); Röllig (1969: 266–273). In light of the disparities, Hess (1989: 59) correctly argues that none of the ancient Near Eastern examples adduced by scholars to date form a close parallel to the genealogical material in Genesis 1–11. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Michalowski (1983); Aufrecht (1988: 215–216). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Several indicators suggest that many of the kings lists—such as those from Syrian Ebla and Ugarit and the West-Semitic (Amorite) Hammurabi dynasty—served some form of ancestor cult: see Michalowski (1983: 245); below (2.6). For the “kings list” from Ebla, see Archi (2001: 1–13). For *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); Lewis and Wigen (2011). For *KTU3* 1.161 from Ugarit, see Wyatt (1998: 430–441); Levine, de Tarragon, and Robertson (2011 and the bibliography cited therein). For *CTH* 661, regarded as a type of kings list from the Hittite world, see Otten (1968: 122–126); Kitchen (1977: 52–55; Haas and Wäfler (1977: 107–113); and the bibliography cited in Forlanini (2010: 117–120). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Driver (1905: 112)—adduced by Skinner (1930: 190). Rather surprisingly, Driver failed to connect this tradition with the Greek Flood protagonist: see below, Chapter 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 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. For the newly-found fragments, see Renner (1978: 277–293); West (1983: 27–30; 1985b: 1–7); Renehan (1986: 221–222); Mastronarde (2010: 192–194). See also Bastianini and Casanova (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For 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); Doherty (2006: 297–325); Thomas (2007: 15–23). For further bibliography, see Hirschberger (2004: 9–20); Bastianini and Casanova (2008). For the Greek genealogical literature, see 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 (2002: 1–89); Alden (2000: 153–178). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See also the electronic edition—*Brill’s New Jacoby*. For prose genealogical writing, see also section 3.1 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Liver (1965: 666); Malamat (1967: 9–28; 1968: 163–173); Wilson (1975: 169–189; 1977: 137–195). For studies of the biblical genealogical writing in general and the Pentateuch in particular written in the past three decades, see Crüsemann (1996: 57–76); Thomas (2011: 83–104 and the bibliography cited therein). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. While many scholars have observed this fact, they have not examined its implications for understanding the genre of the pentateuchal sources: see Westermann (1976: 6–18); Prewitt (1981: 87–98); Robinson (1986: 595–608); Steinberg (1989: 41–50); Renaud (1990: 5–30); Alexander (1993: 255–270); Thomas (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See Weinfeld (1988a: 353–369, esp. 353–354; 1988b: 270–283; 1988c: 324–332). These are collected together in Weinfeld (1992). Cf. Licht (1980: 98–128, esp. 109–116). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See Van Seters (1988: esp. 1; 1992: esp. 78–103). Despite his familiarity with West’s 1985 contribution, he seems not to have made use of Merkelbach and West’s 1967/1990 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-15)
16. “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” (Fowler, 1995: 617). 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-16)
17. “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-17)
18. See Hess (1989: 69–71). This aspect of his work has garnered the most criticism: see Nicholson (1991:16–18; 1994: 135–150; 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). 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-18)
19. For Ps. Apollodorus see for example Finkelberg, 2005: 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This list does not include writings composed after the biblical period, such as the early Arabian *nasab* literature. Despite the similarities they exhibit to the genealogical genre due to the typological parallelism between the Middle Eastern tribal societies and familiarity with the Jewish and Christian traditions, these do not contribute to our understanding of the sources of the biblical genealogical texts: see Caskel (1966: 19–46); Goldhizer (1967: 1:164–190); Kister and Plessner (1976: 48–68); Duri (1983: 146–147); Khalidi (1994: 49–61); Szombathy (2003: 71–82). Also excluded are the oral genealogical traditions from tribal societies collected by anthropologists in recent decades, these not containing sufficient evidence to shed light on 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-20)
21. Περὶ τῶν γενῶν … τῶν τε ἡρώων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τῶν κατοικίσεων, ὡς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐκτίσθησαν αἱ πόλεις [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See West (1985: 5); Davies (1992: 11–81); Alden (2000: 153–178). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 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). For 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-23)
24. Although most scholars date the *Catalogue of Women* to the sixth century BCE (following West, 1985: 168–171), some—such as Janko (1982: 85–87, 198)—argue on linguistic and stylistic grounds that it was composed much later than Hesiod himself, in the seventh century c.e. For a summary of the various views, see Hirschberger (2004: 42–51); Hunter (2005: 2–3). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Some scholars argue that this is merely another name for the *Catalogue of Women*, however: see West (1985: 3); Cohen (1986: 127–142). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. For Eumelus, see West (2002: 109–133; 2003: 26–31); Dunbabin (1948: 66–69); Huxley (1969: 60–84). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. For a general survey of these 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). For the term “logographer” as serving a different sense than its original meaning, see Pearson (1939: 5–9); Grethlein (2010: 207–209). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See Jacoby (1912); Pearson (1939: 25–108); Fowler (1996: 62–87). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See von Fritz (1967: 23–47); Gorman (2001: 72–85); Asheri (2004: 27–28). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. 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 (2.45; cf. 2.2, 16, 134). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. According to the *Catalogue of Women*, Danuas had fifty daughters. In Hecataeus’ view, however, “there were not even twenty” (*FGrH* 1 F 19 = *Schol. Eurip. Or*. 872). Cf. also his retelling of the story of Heracles and Eurystheus, wherein he claims that the 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) that Heracles overcame him and brought to Eurystheus (F 27). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This is revealed in particular by the fragments explicitly attributed to the first book of the *Genealogies*, which refer to places along the Thessalian strip customarily associated with Deucalion (FF 2, 5): see Pearson (1939: 96–97 and the earlier bibliography cited therein). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Φορωνέως τε τοῦ πρώτου λεχθέντος καὶ Νιόβης, καὶ μετὰ τὸν κατακλυσμὸν αὖ περὶ Δευκαλίωνος καὶ Πύρρας ὡς διεγένοντο μυθολογεῖν [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See Jacoby (1947: 13–64); Fowler (2001: 114); Morison (2012 and the bibliography cited therein). For the role genealogies played in establishing aristocratic lineage in the Greek world, see Thomas (1989: 155–195; 2011b: 72–99); Fowler (1998: 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See Jacoby (1912: 104–151); Pearson (1939: 152–235); Asheri (2004: 56–58). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See Pearson (1942); Jacoby (1949); Asheri (2004: 213–232); Harding (2008 and the bibliography cited therein). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See Jacoby (1947: 39) in particular on Acusilaus’ and Pherecydes’ mythographical style vs. Hecataeus’ critical stance. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See Fowler (2001: 104–105) on Acusilaus and Pherecydes. For 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 pentatechal sources: cf. Van Seters (2002: 3–9); Halpern (2005: 101–127). The biblical scholars adduced here paid no attention to the genealogical material that forms a specific branch of Greek historical writing. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. 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). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Wellhausen (1899: 35). Some scholars continue to argue for the independent existence of these sources: see Jenks (1977); Coote (1991); Baden (2009); Yoreh (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. 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 hold this view include Volz (1933: 135–142); Cross (1973: 293–325); Van Seters (1975: 279–295); Rendtorff (1977: 136–170); Blum (1990: 219–332). For a survey of the research relating to this question, see Nicholson (1998: 46–48, 206–221). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See Gertz (1999: esp. 380–388; 2006: 73–87); Otto (2000; 2007: 171–184); Blum (2005: 13–32, esp. 31–32); Schmid (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Blum (1984: esp. 362–419; 1990: 7–207). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See 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 and later generations of written sources. Although the dating of the texts is also disputed, this issue irrelevant to the way in which the documents were incorporated and thus lies beyond my present brief. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Rendtorff (1977: 55–100 and passim), for example, suggests that while the blessings and promise of the land and numerous descendants are interspersed throughout the patriarchal unit (Genesis), they are do not occur in the Exodus cycle (Exodus and Numbers). See also Dozeman and Schmid (2006: 3). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. 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; 2007: 209–230). Others maintain that the Yahwist as author: see Van Seters (1992, 1994) following von Rad (1938: 50–67). The view that the Yahwistic stratum is a consciously-written composition can be also found amongst those who, remaining loyal to the classic theory, portray E as a separate composition: see recently Campbell and O’Brien (1993); Seebass (1992); 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 (2009: 1–22). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Carr (1996: 43–140); Otto (2000: 234–275; 2007: 172); de Pury (2006). For a discussion, see Emerton (1988); Nicholson (1988: 196–221); Kratz (2005: 229–247) and the bibliography cited in all these. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Discussion of the link between the non-Priestly material in Genesis and that in Exodus lies beyond the scope of my brief here. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For the title “genealogies” given to Greek compositions, see Jacoby (1947: 45–47). The formula “these are the generations of …” in P has been extensively discussed. Although its importance is unanimously acknowledge, its source and function remain hotly debated. Some scholars contend that the genealogical material that immediately follows originally existed 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 a 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 shaping his text: see Eissfeldt (1958: 31–40). Those who posit that P is not a document but an editorial hand responsible for the Pentateuchal composition suggest that these formalae functioned as the framework for the compilation of the entire Pentateuch: see Cross (1973: 301–307); Tengström (1981: esp. 19–28). For a survey of opinions on this issue, see most recently Thomas (2011: esp. 25–31). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The Priestly stratum in the story of Joseph (Gen 37:2a, 45–46, 46:6–27, 47:5 [LXX], 6a, 7–11, 27–28, 48:3–7, 20, 49:1, 28–33, 50:12–13) has been the object of much recent research in light of the fact that the absence of any sequentiality attests according to the block approach to the editorial nature of this layer and an attempt to connect the patriarchal and Exodus cycles: see Schmid (2006: 32–35 and the bibliography cited therein). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Although this half-verse (Gen 2:4a) has garnered much attention, it does not appear capable of serving as an editorial heading for the following material, these verses not dealing in any way with the “generations of the heaven and earth”: see Blenkinsopp (1995: 7); Seebass (1996: 90). For other views and literature, see Witte (1998: 55); Thomas (2011: 42–43). Westermann (1976: 8, 16) suggests that the Priestly author preserves traces of mythological traditions that describe the heaven and earth as giving birth to the whole world here. If so, however, the obfuscation derives from the word בְּהִבָּרְאָם—the heavens and were created (just like the rest of the creation) rather than created, or gave birth themselves as stated in early cosmogonic or theogonic traditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. For identification of the Priestly thread in Gen 6:9–9:17, see Addis (1892: 1:10–14; 1898: 201–205); Carpenter (1902: 9–14); Skinner (1930: 14–181); Driver (1905: 85–108); Speiser (1964: 47–56). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. The nature and date of the E material within the non-Priestly material in the Pentateuch are still debated. For recent attempts to demonstrate the independent character of E, see n. above. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Contra* recent suggestions: see Crüsemann (1981: 11–29); Rendtorff (1989: 83–894); Blum (1990: 278–285); Carr (2011: 458 and the bibliography cited therein). Carr argues 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-54)
55. 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-55)
56. See below, Chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. It is no surprise that the Flood account appears to be secondary within the sequence, this being the case in virtually all of the ancient historiographical / genealogical compositions from the Sumerian kings lists onwards, the story occurring within an already-existing genealogical unit into which it has been awkwardly inserted: see Chapters 1–4 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. In the Garden of Eden, Adam wishes to acquire the knowledge of good and evil that God possesses, the threat also arising that he might gain eternal life (Genesis 2–3). The “sons of God” commingle with the daughters of men, producing “men of renown” whom it was feared might live forever (Gen 6:1–4). The tower of Babel was built in the attempt to “make a name” for men, understood as the possibility that “nothing they may propose to do will be out of their reach” (Gen 11:1–9). See Chapter 4 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The correspondence between the Priestly and Yahwistic threads with respect to the first generations prior to the Flood might have led us to expect a similar parallelism with respect to the enumeration of the post-Flood generation. The Yahwistic genealogical thread breaks off with Eber’s descendants, however. Although the author states that Joktan’s descendants dwelt in southern Arabia, Peleg’s are not noted, the genealogy of the forefathers from Peleg to Abram in the Yahwistic thread apparently being deleted from the final version by the pentateuchal compiler. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Van Seters’ definition of the genre in Genesis as “antiquarian historiography” is erroneous (1988: 22; 1992 passim). See also Noth (1943: 11. 84); von Rad (1944: 166–167); Kofoed (2005: 227–235) for the writing genre of the Former Prophets. Momigliano’s (1950: 286–288) treatment of the Greek genealogical writing has similarly been subject to criticism in recent decades. It is more appropriate to regard these compositions from the Greek world and ancient Israel as the Greeks themselves did—i.e., as genealogies or histories (investigations). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. See Eissfeldt (1952: 70; 1960: 510). For a summary of the recent diverse views regarding Philo of Byblos, see 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-61)
62. For a comparison of these works, see Oden (1978: 115–126). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. One of the most prominent scholars to address methodological questions in this regard is Malul (1990: esp. 112–113). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See Zakovitch (1995: 11); Singer (2004: 13). For the term “parallelomania” (in another context), see Sandmel (1962: 1–13). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See Krohn (1926); Taylor (1927–1928: 481–491); Thompson (1946); Dorson (1963: 93–112); Ben-Amos (1975: 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. For this methodological principle, see also Dundes (1999: 42). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. According to Hallo (1970: 62 and esp. 74), the Flood in the Mesopotamian myth was meant to diminish rather than wipe out humankind, no reason thus existing to assume that its protagonist was the forefather of a new human race. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. [Hes.] *Cat.* FF 2, 3, 4, 9, 10a M-W and the genealogical traditions dependent on it. See Gantz (1993: 167–197) and Chapter 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. DBD, s.v. תבה; LSJ, s.v. λάρναξ 1, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. The Greek sources are not dependent upon the LXX, the latter employing the term κιβωτός. 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 just as Perseus and other Greek heroes were placed in a λάρναξ: see [Hes.] F 135.3 M-W; Pherecydes, *FGrH* 3 F 10; LSJ, s.v. λάρναξ 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. See Kirk (1974: 261–264, 269–272); Caduff (1986); West (1997: 489–493); Bremmer (1998: 39–55); and Chapters 1–4 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. While some scholars have noted this fact, they have not adduced the considerations brought here: see Kirk (1974: 263–264); Bremmer (1998: 46); Graf (1987: 95–96). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. For a survey of other approaches to the study of myths and folktales, see Csapo (2005: 80–315 and the bibliography cited therein [320–322]). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. For an illuminating discussion of this issue in folklore, see Hasan-Rokem (1982); Honko (1981 and the bibliography cited therein). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. For a summary of the views regarding the relationship between the Greek and Canaanite alphabets, cf. Sass (2005); Demski (2012: 40–51). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The Greek transliterations in the LXX also indicate that Hebrew and Aramaic speakers preserved their pronunciation of other consonants not found in Phoenician through the first centuries c.e. Thus for example ġ—marked in Hebrew and Aramaic as ע but signified as γ in Greek transliterations, and the original velar ḫ—signified 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 Qimron (2003: 10–11); Steiner (2005: 229–267). For the history and transmission of the Canaanite script, see for instance Sass (2005); Sanders (2009). Cf. Naveh (1979). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Gordon (1955: 43–108; 1966); Webster (1958: 27–63); Astour (1973: 17–27); Laroche (1973 : xix–xvii); Bouzek (1985); Crowley (1989); Lambrou-Philipson (1990); Morris (1992: esp. 101–124; 2003: 3–15). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. 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-78)
79. This fact is being increasingly recognized by scholars: see Burkert (1992); West (1997); López-Ruiz (2010 and the bibliography cited therein); Louden (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. See Burkert (1987: 13–14; 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, being 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 contacts also existed between the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean basin during the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, even if these declined. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. 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; 2010: 43). [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. For 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-82)
83. Some of the most prominent studies in regard to the the classical world are those of Goody and Watt (1968: 27–68; Goody, 1977, 1986), who argue that many of the new ideas that were characteristic of it, such as rationality, individuality, democracy, and historiography—all arose in the wake of the entrance of writing into the Greek world. For a more cautious approach, see Harris (1998). Cf. Thomas (1989: 22–34; 2011b: 72–99); Fowler (2001: 95–115); Powell (2002); Yunis (2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)