Introduction

THE ORIGIN STORY

Over the last 150 years, comparative biblical research has examined countless literary findings from ancient Near Eastern cultures – Mesopotamia in particular – and compared their stories, genres, and motifs to those found in biblical texts. The cuneiform inscriptions discovered during these years have revealed the cultural and literary world on whose fringes the biblical literature emerged and developed, providing us with information regarding the cultural and creative context in which the biblical writers lived and wrote. Rather surprisingly, however, no comprehensive structural parallel has been presented for the historical and genealogical sequence in the pentateuchal sources or the Pentateuch as a whole.[1] None of the literary remains from the ancient Near East contain any of the genealogically arranged "origin stories" or histories that begin with the dawn of humanity and continue to the founding fathers, their settlement in certain territories, their proliferation and becoming of a nation. Nor have these findings yielded any true parallels to the ethnic or national perspective exhibited by the biblical writers.[2]

[1] For a survey of the pentateuchal sources, see the section "Origin Stories and the Genealogical Material in Genesis."

[2] For general discussions of the various forms of the origin story in world literature, see Eliade (1963:21–38); Dowden (1992:74–92); Csapo (2005:143–154). Anthony Smith has analyzed the use of foundation myths among ethnic groups and races in the fields of anthropology and political science. See Smith (1986: esp. 190–191); Smith (2000:62–72); Smith (2003: esp. 172–174). In his latest work, Smith correctly observes that many of the ethnic and national origin stories found across the globe in the modern world are in fact dependent on biblical ideas disseminated by Christian missionaries in the last few centuries. See also Wright (2004: esp. 3–23).

The absence of this kind of material in the great cultures of the ancient Near East – Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Hatti – accentuates its presence within the Greek genealogical and mythographic literature that began to be written at the end of the Archaic and beginning of the classical periods (seventh to fifth centuries BCE). Our knowledge of this genre within the Greek literature has expanded greatly in recent decades thanks to the discovery of papyri from the classical world and their publication in updated editions. We now know that the parallel between this literature and the pentateuchal sources is not merely typological, but includes many other substantive similarities in both form and content, such as the central role of the Flood protagonist as the forefather of the genealogical lineage, cultural heroes and first inventors, eponymous siblings struggling for the birthright in the womb, and the founding father's settlement of the land. Despite their importance for understanding the pentateuchal sources – their literary genre, formation, and development – literature from the ancient Greek world has been discussed in only very few, limited comparative studies to date.[3]

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

[3] See the survey in the following section.

A HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

The core of the origin story lies in its genealogical structure. Nonetheless, many scholars, including Abraham Malamat and Robert Wilson, who examined the biblical genealogical writing in light of extra-biblical sources, compared it primarily with the ancient Near Eastern king lists from Sumer, Egypt, Ebla, Assyria, Babylon, Ugarit, and Hatti.[4] While these lists may well have influenced the development of the genealogical writing in Genesis and share with it several common features, as we shall see below, they nonetheless form a completely separate genre.[5] Rather than genealogical in nature, the king lists delineate rulers and royal dynasties. While a son sometimes succeeds his father, often the heir to the throne lacks any blood relation to his predecessor. In contrast, the genealogical material in the Pentateuch makes no mention of either kings or the years of their reigns. In addition, these sources are lateral, in that they include wives, siblings, and their offspring, in contrast to the overwhelmingly linear king lists that record one king per generation. Furthermore, while the genealogical material in Genesis (both P and non-P sources) is part of a historiographical work which relates human history from its inception to the formation of the nation, the king lists draw a continuous line of succession or legitimize a particular royal dynasty.[6] Each genre is thus independent, possessing its own *Sitz im Leben*.[7]

The king lists recall only a few specific biblical texts, such as Genesis 4–5 and 11:10–27, and most studies have been devoted to these chapters.

[4] See Speiser (1964:41–42); Malamat (1967:9–28); Malamat (1968:163–173); Wilson (1975:169–189); Wilson (1977:137–195); Wilson (1992:929–932); Hartman (1972:25–32); Hasel (1978:361–374); Bryan (1987:180–188); Hess (1994:58–69).

[5] See Hasel (1978:368–374); Averbeck (2003:131–132); cf. Röllig (1969:266–273). In light of these disparities, Hess (1994:59) correctly argues that none of the ancient Near Eastern examples adduced by scholars form a close parallel to the genealogical material in Genesis 1–11.

[6] See, for example, Michalowski (1983); Aufrecht (1988:209, 215–216).

[7] Several indicators suggest that many of the king lists, such as those from Syrian Ebla and Ugarit and the West Semitic (Amorite) Hammurabi dynasty, served some form of ancestor worship. See, for example, Michalowski (1983:245). On the "king list" from Ebla, see Archi (2001:1–13). On *KTU3* 1.113 from Ugarit, see Kitchen (1977:131–142); Lewis (1989: 47–52); Pardee (1996:276); Wyatt (2000:399–403); Lawson Younger (2011). On *KTU3* 1.161 from Ugarit, see Wyatt (2000:430–441); Levine, de Tarragon, and Robertson (2011) and the bibliography cited therein. On *CTH* 661, regarded as a type of king list from the Hittite world, see Otten (1951); Otten (1968:122–126); Kitchen (1977:52–55); Haas and Wäfler (1977:107–113); and the bibliography cited in Forlanini (2010:117–121).

However, regarding the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, which also constitutes a proper genealogic list, several scholars have pointed in a different direction. Samuel Driver briefly noted the affinities between this biblical text and the Greek traditions regarding Hellen and his sons, whence sprang the Greek ethnic groups, the Dorians, Aeolians, Achaeans, and Ionians.[8] He made no mention, however, of the Greek compositions relevant for comparison nor drew any further parallels. Edward Mayer and Hermann Gunkel similarly neglected to discuss the issue at length, possibly because classical studies of the Greek genealogical genre were still in their infancy during this period.[9]

The discovery of new papyri that preserve parts of the *Catalogue of Women* ascribed to Hesiod, the most important Greek genealogical composition, and their publication in the updated edition of Martin West and Reinhold Markelbach, significantly impacted this field of research.[10] Martin West published also a comprehensive study of the *Catalogue of Women* and Greek genealogical literature in general in 1985, which was followed by a detailed analysis by Martina Hirschberger in 2004 and a new edition of the Hesiodic *Catalogue* by Glen Most in 2018.[11] Various other scholars have shed new light on this work and the Greek genealogical and mythographic literature in general.[12] The new edition of Greek mythography by Robert Fowler (2000; 2013) is also noteworthy in its treatment of prose genealogical writing.[13] These recent studies enable a comprehensive new examination of the biblical genealogical texts in light of parallels in the ancient Greek world.

[8] See Driver (1905:112), cited by Skinner (1930:190 n. *).

[9] Meyer (1906); Gunkel (1997:87).

[10] Although the third edition, produced by Merkelbach and West in 1990, is based on the first edition of 1967, it contains new fragments discovered after that date. On the newly found fragments, see, for example, Renner (1978:277–293); West (1983a:27–30); West (1985a:1–7); Renehan (1986:221–222); Mastronarde (2010:192–194). See also Bastianini and Casanova (2008).

[11] Most's first edition was published in 2007.

[12] On the *Catalogue of Women*, see Solmsen (1981:353–358); Janko (1982:27–28, 85–87, 221–225); Cohen (1986:127–142); March (1987); Finkelberg (1988:31–41); Rutherford (2000:81–96); Hunter (2005); Doherty (2006:297–325); Thomas (2007:15–23). For further bibliography, see Hirschberger (2004:9–20); Bastianini and Casanova (2008). On the Greek genealogical literature, see, for example, Broadbent (1968); Graf (1993:125–131); Calame (1987:153–186); Thomas (1989:173–195); Davies (1992); Fowler (1998:1–19); Malkin (1994:19–22); Hall (1997:67–97); Hall (2002:1–89); Alden (2000:153–178).

[13] See also the new, expanding electronic edition of *Brill's New Jacoby*. On prose genealogical writing, see also the section "Origin Stories and Greek Epic and Prose Genealogical Works."

Although most early scholars focused their attention on Genesis 10, the accumulating body of data we possess today clearly indicates that the parallels with Greek genealogical writing are not confined to this chapter. In the wake of interest in ancient Near Eastern sources, the genealogical texts in the Pentateuch were initially regarded as a type of king list embedded within a plot sequence; this approach differentiated the genealogical lists from the historical narrative and stories.[14] However, it is not always possible to distinguish between the genealogical data and the narrative in Genesis. The genealogical material in Genesis runs throughout the book, forming the primary basis of two of its principal narrative threads and thus of the composition as a whole.[15] It therefore constitutes the bedrock of the historiographical account of the ancient period of the nation's history, forming an integral part of the narrative, in stark contrast to the ancient Near Eastern king lists. The Greek genealogical works also blend genealogical sequences with stories of the eponymous founding fathers and heroes, creating a complex historical composition. Of all extant literature of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations, only these two corpora, the biblical and the Greek, schematize historical, geographical, mythological, and ethnographical traditions into lineage lists and narratives based upon genealogical details. In both cases, ethnic groups or geographical units personified as human beings serve as the eponymous national fathers who engage in military, marital, and family relations with each other. Both corpora exhibit a strong ethnographical orientation and interest in the people's development from its early ancestors and tribes.

In a series of articles published in the 1980s, Moshe Weinfeld examined the distinctive parallels between biblical and Greek "foundation (κτίσις) stories" and the interest in ethnicity evident in both literatures.[16] He astutely noted that the literary genre of the national origin and settlement narrative, as reflected in the patriarch stories, the Exodus, and the

[14] See Malamat (1967:9–28); Malamat (1968:163–173); Wilson (1975:169–189); Wilson (1977:137–195). For studies of the biblical genealogical writing in general and the Pentateuch in particular, from the last three decades, see Crüsemann (2002:57–76); Thomas (2011a:83–104) and the bibliography cited there.

[15] While many scholars have observed this fact, they have not examined its implications for understanding the genre of the pentateuchal sources. See, for example, Westermann (1984:6–18); Prewitt (1981:87–98); Robinson (1986:595–608); Steinberg (1989:41–50); Renaud (1990:5–30); Alexander (1993:255–270); Thomas (2011a).

[16] See Weinfeld (1988a:324–332); Weinfeld (1988b:270–283); Weinfeld (1988c:353–369, esp. 353–354). These are collected together in Weinfeld (1993). Cf. Licht (1980:98–128, esp. 109–116).

conquest of the Land, has no parallel in the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or Hittite literature, but can be found in Greek and Roman literature. However, in seeking primarily to identify the characteristics of the foundation story genre, he too ignored the broader and more significant analogies with the Greek genealogical genre, which exhibits affinities not only with the foundation stories but also with the genealogical narrative running from the dawn of humanity to the heroes and eponymous forefathers who founded the cities and ethnic groups of the Greek world. A proper analysis of this material requires the examination of Greek and biblical sources not examined by Weinfeld.

In his study of the *Catalogue of Women*, Martin West discussed numerous examples from ancient genealogical literature and oral genealogical traditions collected in recent generations by anthropologists and sociologists. 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.[17] The first biblical scholars to examine the biblical sources, in the wake of West's work, were Ronald Hendel, in his article on the story of the sons of God and daughters of men (Gen 6), and John Van Seters, in a brief study published in 1988, as well as a book published in 1992, in which he argued that the Yahwistic document in the Pentateuch constitutes a historical composition along the lines of Greek historiographical texts.[18] Although he adduced various substantive affinities between the *Catalogue of Women* and some of the chapters in the Yahwistic narrative, Van Seters made insufficient reference to either additional Greek works or the Priestly narrative in the Pentateuch.[19] According to Van Seters, the pentateuchal Yahwistic composition (which he dated to the exilic period, toward the end of the sixth century BCE) was heavily influenced by

[17] West (1985b:11–30, esp. 13).

[18] See Hendel (1987a), and Chapter 4 below; Van Seters (1988: esp. 1); Van Seters (1992: esp. 78–103). Despite his familiarity with West's (1985a) contribution, Van Seters seems not to have made use of Merkelbach and West's 1967 or 1990 editions, his isolated references to the *Catalogue of Women* being to the out-of-date Evelyn-White edition (1914). Elsewhere (Van Seters, 1988:8, 19), he relies on unsupported reconstructions that have been rejected in the new editions.

[19] Fuller (1995:617) similarly criticizes him: "Unfortunately, other than a brief comment (p. 89) where he classifies the *Catalogue* as epic poetry (is this the same as didactic poetry?) in the same style as *Theogony*, the genre of the *Catalogue of Women* is not adequately discussed nor is its probable oral origin … A careful study of the *Catalogue* from the perspective of biblical studies would be quite helpful in establishing its usefulness." Crüsemann (2002:63–64 n. 23) also draws attention to the need for modern comparative study of the biblical and Greek genealogical material.

two external sources, Mesopotamia in the East and traditions similar to those in the *Catalogue of Women* in the West.[20] Although he did not explicitly propound a direct Greek imprint on the biblical texts, he has been understood to make this argument. Most scholars dispute his claims, rejecting any Greek influence upon the Pentateuch and in the process also denying any need for comprehensive comparative research.[21]

Van Seters' use of the Greek material has also been criticized because the fragmented state of the *Catalogue of Women*, despite textual reconstruction, cannot provide a satisfactory basis for an analytical comparison with biblical sources.[22] However, the *Catalogue of Women* is but one of several examples of epic and prose genealogical writing. The discovery of the papyri of the *Catalogue of Women* in recent decades demonstrates that the *Bibliotheca* attributed to Apollodorus, for example, was comprised largely of sixth- to fifth-century genealogical works that determined both its order and content. The present study is thus based not only on the fragments of early Greek genealogical and mythographic writings but also on relatively later works based on ancient traditions that to date have not been used by biblical scholars.[23] A broader survey of the Greek genealogical sources and their comparison with the traditions and narrative threads in Genesis will allow new conclusions to be drawn regarding the genre, formation, and development of the various traditions contained within the first book of the Pentateuch.

[20] "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).

[21] See, for example, Hess (1994:69–71). This aspect of his work has garnered the most criticism. See Nicholson (1991:16–18); Nicholson (1994:135–150); Nicholson (1998:146–153); Emerton (2006:28–29); Holloway (1997:150 n. 8) who asks how the Hebrew-speaking biblical author could have come into contact with Greek sources while in exile in Babylon in the sixth century BCE. Some, however, have accepted Van Seters' conclusions, thus preferring to date the pentateuchal sources 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).

[22] Hess (1994:69–71).

[23] The state of the research field is well demonstrated by the comprehensive and thorough studies of Gertz (2018) and Carr (2020), who discuss extensively parallels from Mesopotamia and Egypt while paying almost no attention to ancient Greek sources. See also the studies in Arnold (2022). On Ps. Apollodorus, see, for example, Finkelberg (2005:28).

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN GENEALOGICAL WORKS

In Greek literature, the genealogical genre appears in independent sources. I will therefore begin my survey with these independent works, before proceeding to an outline of the genealogical infrastructure that lies at the basis of Genesis. The work of Philo of Byblos is another important source for our subject matter. While his *Phoenician History* dates to a later period, it preserves echoes of earlier compositions from the Phoenician world that exhibit close affinities with the Greek and biblical genealogical narratives. Although others sources from the ancient Near East that have been discussed in relation to the genealogical genre, such as the Sumerian King List, the Lagash King List (BM 23103), the Dynastic Chronicle (ABC 18), and the king list of the West Semitic (Amorite) dynasties from the days of Shamshi-Adad and Hammurabi of Assyria and Babylon, do not belong to the genre under discussion, I shall refer to them below because of their significance to the genre's development.[24]

Origin Stories and Greek Epic and Prose Genealogical Works

The popularity of genealogical traditions in ancient Greece is attested by Plato in his *Hippias Major*; when Socrates asks what the Greeks most enjoy listening to, the sophist replies, "They are very fond of hearing about the genealogies of heroes and men … and the foundations of cities in ancient times" (285d).[25] Genealogical lists of heroes appear as early as Homer, although not as autonomous works, and in a relatively limited scope (cf. *Il.* 6.150–211; 20.213–241; *Od.* 11.235–265; 15.223–259).[26] Genealogy first began to serve as an organizational structure for cohesive

[24] This list does not include writings composed after the biblical period, such as the early Arabian *nasab* literature. Despite their similarities to the genealogical genre, due to the typological parallelism between the Middle Eastern tribal societies and their familiarity with the Jewish and Christian traditions, they do not contribute to our understanding of the sources of the biblical genealogical texts. See Caskel (1966:19–47); Goldziher (1967: I:164–190); Kister and Plessner (1976:48–68); Duri (1983:146–147); Khalidi (1994:49–61); Szombathy (2003:71–82). The oral genealogical traditions from tribal societies collected by anthropologists in recent decades may also be excluded as they do not contain sufficient evidence of genealogy as a form of historiography. For a discussion of the anthropological materials and their relation to genealogical writing, see Henige (1974); Malamat (1973:126–136); Wilson (1977:11–55); Averbeck (2003:133–134); Deysel (2009:564–579).

[25] Περὶ τῶν γενῶν … τῶν τε ἡρώων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τῶν κατοικίσεων, ὡς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐκτίσθησαν αἱ πόλεις.

[26] See, for example, West (1985b:5); Davies (1992:11–81); Alden (2000:153–178).

independent compositions only from the Hesiodic works onwards. While *Theogony* constitutes the paradigm of the genealogical text, it is devoted primarily to the history of the gods. I will therefore refer to this work only occasionally, principally to those parts dedicated to early human history, such as the story of Pandora, the first woman.[27]

The most significant genealogical text ascribed to Hesiod, the *Catalogue of Women*, focuses primarily on humans, heroes, and the Greek eponymous forefathers. It is also known as the *Ehoiai* because of the words ἢ οἵη ("or such as") that opens each section, after which the author describes the lineage of another woman and her offspring. This five-volume work, apparently written during the sixth century BCE, almost a century after the date traditionally attributed to Hesiod, surveys the history of the heroes and Greek eponymous forefathers from the days of Deucalion, the Greek Flood hero, to the Trojan War or slightly thereafter.[28] Its name derives from its subject matter, the famous women of Greek mythology, who, after mating with gods, gave birth to heroes and the Greek eponymous forefathers.

Although the *Catalogue of Women* remained one of the most popular works ascribed to Hesiod during the first centuries of the common era, no complete extant text has survived. Several fragments – that is, quotations or paraphrases cited by later writers – have nonetheless been preserved. In addition, in recent decades, numerous papyrus fragments that contain significant parts of the document have been published. This body of evidence provides us with a relatively comprehensive knowledge of its original contents and structure. The newly found fragments provide further indications that the later genealogical and mythographic writings, such as Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca,* preserve ancient traditions, allowing us to reconstruct the structure of the *Catalogue of Women* and the contents of most of the genealogical traditions. From time to time, the *Catalogue of Women* also interweaves various plotlines that stray from the genealogical sequence, for example, the account of Iphimede's (Iphigeneia) rescue

[27] The final section in the *Theogony* also deals with human beings, addressing the Greek heroes born via the intercourse between men and immortal women (lines 900–1022). On this passage, which appears to represent a late stage based on the genealogical model exemplified by the *Catalogue of Women*, see West (1966:48–49, 397–399); Alden (2000:153–178).

[28] Although most scholars date the *Catalogue of Women* to the sixth century BCE (following West, 1985b:168–171), some – such as Janko (1982:85–87, 198), argue on linguistic and stylistic grounds that it was not composed much later than Hesiod himself, in the seventh century BCE. For a summary of the various views, see Hirschberger (2004:42–51); Hunter (2005:2–3).

(F 23a M-W), the story of Heracles' death and transformation into a god (F 25 M-W), or the story of Helen's suitors (FF 196–204 M-W). The fragments demonstrate that most of the Greek myths known during the classical period appear in the *Catalogue of Women* in at least concise form.[29]

Besides the *Catalogue of Women*, there existed other genealogical works, such as the *Megalai Ehoiai*, also attributed to Hesiod.[30] This work was cited less frequently than the *Catalogue of Women*, which indicates that it was less popular in the ancient world. Although the paucity of surviving fragments precludes a clear understanding of its contents or structure, it appears to belong to the genre of genealogical epics. In addition to Hesiod, other poets wrote genealogical works of more limited scope, focusing primarily on one region or city. Some of the genealogical texts are associated with Eumelus, who, according to Greek tradition, lived and worked in the second half of the eighth century BCE, even though the works themselves are today dated to the sixth or, at the earliest, the end of the seventh century BCE.[31] One of the most famous of these, the *Europia*, recounts Europa's abduction by Zeus, disguised as an ox, and the history of her offspring, Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon. The composition apparently included the story of the foundation of Thebes, as one of the fragments mentions Amphion and Zethus, who constructed Thebes' wall. Another work associated with Eumelus, the *Corinthiaca*, deals primarily with the history of Corinth and its kings.

Other genealogical poets include Asius of Samos and Cinaethon of Sparta.[32] Although their dates are uncertain, the fact that they are cited by fifth-century BCE authors indicates that, at the latest, they were active near the beginning of this century. A citation of Asius preserved by Pausanias (7.4.1 = F 7 *PEG*) indicates that Asius' primary interest lay in the genealogy of the inhabitants of Samos, his birthplace. According to Asius, Samos – the eponymous founding father of the island – was the son of the eponymous nymph Samia, daughter of the mainland river Maiandros. Cinaethon of Sparta, on the other hand, devoted his attention principally to the Peloponnese and Crete.

[29] West (1985b:29–30, 137–171).
[30] Some scholars, however, argue that this is merely another name for the *Catalogue of Women*. See West (1985b:3); Cohen (1986:127–142).
[31] On Eumelus, see Dunbabin (1948:66–69); Huxley (1969:60–84); West (2002:109–133); West (2003:26–31); Fowler (2013:656–657).
[32] Bowra (1957:391–401); Huxley (1969:85–98); West (1985b:4).