SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETh: THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR IN THE GENEALOGY OF NATIONS*

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Considering that the narrative portions of the Chronicler’s work focus on Judah and Jerusalem, the genealogical introduction (1 Chron. 1–9) begins in a very curious way. The genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1 switch back and forth from the particular to the universal, from linear genealogies to segmented genealogies. The first verse of the book begins with the primal human ‘Adam’ and continues in list form to the tenth generation ‘Noah’ (1 Chron. 1.1-4a). The tabulation of ten names is a miracle of condensation, having been extracted from the much longer and more detailed narrative lineage of Adam in Gen. 5.1-32: ‘these are the lineages (תּוֹרָות) of Adam’.1 As a unilineal genealogy, the material in vv. 1-4a features an unbroken line of descent from the first person to Noah. If this lineage stresses depth within one family, the following lineage stresses breadth by tracing in segmented form the descendants of Noah’s three sons—Shem, Ham and Japhet (1 Chron. 1.5-23). This material, drawn from Gen. 10.1-29, the so-called Table of Nations, enumerates approximately 70 or 72 descendants of Noah’s three sons,2 symbolizing the totality of the

* It is a pleasure to dedicate this essay to Ralph W. Klein, a longtime supporter of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah studies in North America and a past chair of the Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah Section of the Society of Biblical Literature. One of his contributions to the study of the Chronicler’s work that I continue to use with great profit is his dissertation, ‘Studies in the Greek Texts of the Chronicler’ (ThD dissertation, Harvard Divinity School, 1966). This research into the additions to LXX Chronicles (clustered near its end) and the textual witnesses to 1 Esdras is an essential study of the textual criticism of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah.

1. Usually attributed to the Priestly source (hereafter, P). The author of Chronicles does not explain the relationships between the persons he lists. One has to follow the context and his source to grasp the sense of this highly condensed lineage.

2. Text-critical variants in Genesis and Chronicles make it impossible to be precise about the exact number.
world’s known peoples. The complex genealogical tree relates all of the
world’s nations to each other through a common ancestor—Noah.

Having branched out to the universal, the genealogies return to the
particular. The ensuing ten-name list extending from ‘Shem’ to ‘Abram’
(1 Chron. 1.24-27) is extracted from the much longer narrative lineage of
Shem in Gen. 11.10-26: these are the lineages (ארוגים) of Shem’ (P).
There is no more discussion of the seed of Ham and Japhet. Hence, the
text returns to a particular focus on a single line. Isaac the son of ‘Abram,
that is Abraham’ (1 Chron. 1.27) is the father of Israel (Jacob), the eponym-
ous ancestor of the Israelite people. If the author was concerned simply
with the roots of the people of Israel, one might expect him to fashion a
descending linear genealogy from Abraham to Jacob. But an exclusive
switch from a universal focus to a provincial focus does not occur. Quite
the contrary, one finds the genealogist drawing from Gen. 25.12-18: ‘these
are the lineages (אֲבָנָק) of Ishmael’ (P) to relate the twelve sons of Ish-
mael, Abraham’s son through Hagar (1 Chron. 1.29-31).3 He then deals
with the various offspring of Qeturah, here declared to be Abraham’s concubine (1 Chron. 1.32-33).4

Isaac, the father of Israel, briefly makes another appearance (1.34), but
the author does not seize the opportunity to address, at least immediately,
Isaac’s grandchildren through Israel. Rather, he chooses to focus his
attention on Isaac’s grandchildren through Esau (1 Chron. 1.35-37). If
Judah was the author’s only interest, he would seem to be avoiding the
issue. He abridges and adapts the material in Genesis 36 to deal with the
progeny of Isaac’s firstborn, the twin brother of Jacob.5 The interest in

3. E.A. Knauf, Ismael: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nord-
arabiens im 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr (ADPV; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2nd edn,
1989).

4. The segmented genealogy is largely abridged and adapted from Gen. 25.1-3.
The description of Qeturah as Abraham’s concubine, not found in the author’s biblical
source, is likely to be the author’s own contribution (cf. 1 Chron. 1.4, 28). Qeturah
appears in Genesis as Abraham’s second wife, taken sometime after the death of Sarah
(Gen. 25.1-2). The reference to her as a concubine may be based on a reading of Gen.
25.1-2 in light of Gen. 25.5-6. The latter mentions that Abraham ‘gave all that he had
to Isaac’, but to his sons by his concubines ‘Abraham gave gifts…and sent them away
from Isaac toward the east’. In other words, 1 Chron. 1.32 is an instance of semukin, an
exegetical technique made famous by the rabbis in which one text is read in the light of
another in close proximity.

5. 1 Chron. 1.35-37. The heading for this segmented genealogy is taken from
either Gen. 36.5 or 36.10. The compositional history of the Edomite material in
Judah's southeastern neighbors does not end with the lineage of Esau's heirs. Another segmented genealogy appears in 1 Chron. 1.38-42, abridged and adapted from Gen. 36.20-28, dealing with the 'sons of Seir'. Neither the author nor his biblical sources directly claim that Seir is part of Esau's genealogy. But the writer, following his sources, makes indirect links between the two. The author of the material in Genesis associates Seir with Esau by presenting the genealogy of Seir (Gen. 36.20-28) in the context of the genealogies and lists of Edom (36.1-19, 31-43). The author of Chronicles follows this pattern in his own work. Detailed lists of Edomite monarchs (1.43-51a) and Edomite chieftains (1.51b-54) follow the coverage devoted to the Seirites. The lists of Edomite kings and chieftains are adapted and slightly abridged from Gen. 36.31-39 and 36.40-43, respectively. The attention paid to Edom (1.35-54) is thus extraordinary. Gen. 36 is complex and much-debated; see R.R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (YNER, 7; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 167-83; E.A. Knauf, 'Alter und Herkunft der edomitischen Königssliste Gen 36.31-39', ZAW97 (1985), pp. 245-53.

6. The name of Seir (סִינִי) is associated with hair (בַּזְוִי) and the Genesis narratives repeatedly play on Esau's hairiness (יִבְשָׂם, Gen. 25.25; 27.11, 23). The Seirites and Edomites are presented as co-inhabitants of the land in Gen. 36.20 (cf. Josh. 24.4). Most scholars interpret the biblical references to Seir as designating a mountainous part of Edom or as a synonym for Edom itself; see e.g. E.A. Knauf, *Midian: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens am Ende des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (ADPV; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988), pp. 50-60. It is entirely plausible that the designation of Seir changed over time, as the Chronicler's own narratives seem to attest (2 Chron. 25.11-20; cf. 2 Kgs 14.7-14). See further, P. Bienkowski, 'The Edomites: Archaeological Evidence from Transjordan', in D.V. Edelman (ed.), *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite For He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition* (ABS, 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), pp. 41-92; B. Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist: The Role of Edom in Biblical Prophecy and Story* (JSOTSup, 169; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994).

7. The author's editing of his sources involves changing headings and transitions, and some abbreviation. My concern in this context is with the Chronicler's reuse of his Vorlage. A. Lemaire contends that the original list incorporated into Genesis pertained to Aramaean, rather than to Edomite, kings ('Hadad l'Édémite ou Hadad l'Araméen?', BN 43 [1988], pp. 14-18.). While accepting the plausibility of this line of argumentation, one must acknowledge that the transformation of 'Aram' (לארם) to 'Edom' (לארם) was already part of the Chronicler's Vorlage.

8. The reuse of the Edomite King List and the chieftain list is telling. The structure of the lists in Genesis differs from that of Chronicles. In Genesis the transition between Edomite monarchs is: 'RN died and RN2 reigned', whereas in Chronicles the formula is better translated as 'when RN died, RN2 reigned' (RN = Royal Name);
Only after treating the groups associated with Esau does the text turn to the ‘sons of Israel’ (2.1-2). The list of Jacob’s twelve male progeny both concludes the section begun in 1 Chron. 1.34, which deals with the progeny of Isaac, and introduces the next section, detailing the lineages associated with each of the Israelite tribes (1 Chron. 2.3–9.1).

A Text in Literary and Theological Disarray?

The genealogy of nations in Chronicles raises a variety of questions. Why does the text alternate between pursuing matters of depth (linear genealogies) and matters of breadth (segmented genealogies)? Why does the writer display such a concern with other peoples? What is the nature of the authorial interest in the origins of the nations populating the larger Mediterranean world? Why would the writer magnify the position of Edom at a time when Yehud was struggling to establish itself in the late Persian period? If Israel is the focal point of the Chronicler’s interests, why mention the descendants of Esau at all? Is this truly a unified presentation or an assemblage of literary layers, the product of many Chroniclers? It will be useful to deal with the question of literary disunity and theological incongruity before tackling larger thematic issues. At issue are textual problems, repetitions, inconsistencies, discrepancies in style, the presence of digressions and the claim that the content of much of 1 Chronicles 1 conflicts with the Chronicler’s theological interests.

Rudolph has contended for literary and theological disunity, asserting that most of the text stems from a series of anonymous editors. His work may be considered as a case-study, albeit a radical one, of the argument for disunity. In his view, many additions have been made to an original, largely unilineal descending lineage that extends from Adam to Israel. Noting that the material in MT 1 Chron. 1.11-16 and 1.17b-24 is absent from the LXX B, Rudolph argues that the entire list of Noah’s descendants see S. Japhet, I and II Chronicles: A Commentary (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 52. In 1 Chron. 1.51, the transition to the chieftain list reads, ‘When Hadad died, the chieftains of Edom were…’ In contrast, Gen. 36.40 reads, ‘These are the names of the chieftains of Esau by their families (הָאוֹתֵי נֶפֶל), by their places according to their names’. In Chronicles the list of Edomite chieftains is dated generally to the time of Hadad’s death. The two lists, paratactically ordered in Genesis, are largely consecutive in Chronicles.

(vv. 4b-23) is secondary, a later addition that interrupts the flow of the presentation (from vv. 1-4 to vv. 24-27). He also thinks that this material is incongruent with the Chronicler’s theology. For similar reasons, Rudolph excises the genealogy of Qeturah’s descendants (vv. 32-34a) and views the material about the Edomite kings and chieftains (vv. 43b-54) as later supplements. Considering that Rudolph expunges most of the text dealing with other peoples as later additions, this leaves him with a short, relatively uncomplicated lineage as original to the Chronicler’s work (1 Chron. 1.1-4a, 24-27, 28-31, 35-42; 2.1-2). The focus in this reconstruction is on the particular, the line of continuity extending from Adam to Israel. The only attention paid to any other group is that accorded to the children of Esau (1 Chron. 1.35-42).

Serious doubts may be raised, however, whether Rudolph’s truncated version of the universal genealogies passes critical muster. To be sure, there are some genuine text-critical issues in the formation of 1 Chronicles 1. Verses 11-16 (from ‘and Mizraim’ through to ‘the Hamathites’) are lacking in the LXX\(^B\) and cursives gh\(_c\)\(_2\) and are sub asteriscus in the Syro-Hexaplar. In cursive i only vv. 13-16 are missing. All of vv. 11-23 are sub asteriscus in cursives cn, although the text-critical significance of these variations is disputed. Verses 11-16 do appear in the MT, the LXX\(^AN\) and the Armenian. The LXX\(^B\) has the lectio brevior but, by the same token, the want of this material in LXX\(^B\) is puzzling, given (1) the heading in v. 4 (‘The sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth’); (2) the heading in v. 8 (‘the


11. In viewing the material pertaining to Qeturah as a later addition, Rudolph (Chronikbücher, p. 7) was not stating a new opinion. See E. Podechard, ‘Le premier chapitre des Paralipomènes’, RB 13 (1916), p. 372, and more recently, H.G.M. Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 43. Also viewing the material pertaining to the Edomites and the Seirites as later additions (Rudolph, Chronikbücher, p. 9) is R.L. Braun, 1 Chronicles (WBC, 14; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), p. 21.

12. In this context, the arguments for unity raised by scholars, such as M. Kartveit (Motive und Schichten der Landtheologie in I Chronik 1–9 [ConBOT, 28; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1989], pp. 19-23), M. Oeming (Das wahre Israel: Die ‘genealogische Vorhalle’ 1 Chronik 1–9 [BWANT, 128; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1990], pp. 73-97), T. Willi (Chronik [BK, 24/1; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991], pp. 15-47), and Japhet (I and II Chronicles, pp. 55-56) are substantial.

sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan’); and (3) the inclusion of Ham’s other descendants (vv. 9-10). I am inclined to think that the material in question has been lost from the tradition underlying the LXX, although there is no obvious mechanism for haplography. There is another text-critical issue: MT 1 Chron. 1.17b-24a (from ‘Arpachshad, Lud…’ through to ‘Shem, Arpachshad’ in v. 24) appears neither in LXX nor in cursives ghc2 (they, as in vv. 11-16, are sub asteriscus in the Syro-Hexaplar). Again, the LXX has the lectio brevior. Nevertheless a clear mechanism for haplography is evident (homoioteleuton from יִתְזָאשַׁר to יִתְמַשָּׁר). Given that this material was probably lost from the LXX, the MT represents the more original text.

Turning to larger literary issues, Rudolph’s highly abridged version of the material in 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2 presents a coherent linear progression from the first human to Israel with only one interruption, the lineage of the sons of Esau (1.35-42). But to sustain his case, Rudolph has to posit a hypothetical earlier form of the Chronicler’s work that has been obscured, if not over-written, by later editors. One should note that the type of horizontal lineages appearing in vv. 4b-27 are not at all unusual within 1 Chronicles 1–9. Segmentation—the formulation of different branches within a larger genealogical tree—can serve many purposes: to posit links among a variety of individuals, families and groups; to draw social, political and geographic connections between ethnic groups and places; and to introduce a hierarchy of kinship relationships within a larger group. Moreover, the segmented lineages of 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2 are not chaotic. Although these materials have been drawn from different contexts in Genesis, they have been organized in a coherent way. Precisely because earlier lines are picked up in later contexts, the phenomenon of segmentation is not a problem from a literary point of view.

The Case for Unity

To these arguments, based largely on comparative and contextual considerations, others may be added. From a literary vantage point, one can

argue that the genealogy of nations in 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2 is more than a jumble of materials extracted from various contexts in Genesis. The placement of names reflects a larger sense of organization and stylization. The chapter begins with a linear genealogy composed of ten members, extending from primordial time to Noah (vv. 1-4a). Having provided a heading for the next section, 'the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth' (v. 4b), the author sets out their respective descendants: approximately 70 (or 72) nations in segmented genealogies (vv. 5-23). There are seven sons of Japheth, seven descendants of Cush and seven descendants of Mizraim. Canaan together with his offspring number 12. The element of stylization extends into the later material. Both Seir and Eliphaz have seven sons. There are twelve sons of Ishmael and twelve sons of Israel.

The enumeration of some 70 (or 72) offspring from Noah’s sons is followed by another linear genealogy composed of ten members, beginning with Shem and culminating in Abram (vv. 24-27). Hence, what some scholars describe as an intrusive interpolation does not appear so to others. Whereas Rudolph views vv. 4b-23 as one of a series of disruptive interpolations, Japhet views the same verses as an integral part of the Chronicler’s original composition. In her presentation (well-defended in my judgment) vv. 1-4 together with vv. 24-27 comprise an inclusio around vv. 5-23. The first ten generations (vv. 1-4) are antediluvian, while the latter ten (vv. 24-27) are postdiluvian. In between lie the 70 (or 72) nations that emerge in the postdiluvian world.

It is true that duplications (e.g. vv. 9, 22-23, 32), inconsistencies (e.g. vv. 17-23, 24-27), discrepancies in style (vv. 11-12, 14-16) and digressions (e.g. vv. 10, 32-33, 51-54) may be found in 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2. Nevertheless, these also occur in the author’s Vorlage of Genesis. The author abridges much of the material he cites—omitting various formulas, territorial remarks, anecdotal references and chronological notes—but the material he does include is often followed punctiliously. This means that tensions in the text of Genesis are largely reproduced in the text of Chronicles. Indeed, the Table of Nations itself has been called a ‘heterogeneous collection of material’. Names such as Meshech, Sheba, Dedan, Uz and Havilah appear two or even three times. Such duplication (or triplication) cannot be explained by the Documentary Hypothesis, because there are variations in style and content within the sources (J and P).

themselves. Gentilics in plural form appear, for instance, in vv. 11-12 in accordance with Gen. 10.13-14 (J), while gentilics in singular form appear in vv. 14-16 in accordance with Gen. 10.16-18 (J). Meshech appears both among the descendants of Japheth in v. 5 (P) and among the descendants of Shem in v. 17 (P). Sheba appears among the descendants of Ham in v. 9 (P), among the descendants of Shem in v. 22 (J) and among the descendants of Qeturah in v. 32 (J).  

18. The author’s light editing—his adherence to his sources—has its costs, inevitably resulting in repetition and inconsistency. But this situation does not differ substantially from the situation in the Chronicler’s treatment of the united and divided monarchies. A conservative reproduction of texts selected from his Vorlagen of Samuel and Kings is part, albeit not the whole(!), of the Chronicler’s compositional technique. 19 In both cases, the replication of disparate sources unavoidably generates some unevenness in the Chronicler’s own presentation.

One can discern another regular pattern in 1 Chron. 1.1-2.2. The text consistently provides information on subsidiary lines first. 20 In this, the Chronicler’s compositional technique is indebted to the work of the Priestly writers. For example, 1 Chron. 1.4 lists the sons of Noah as Shem, Ham and Japheth. In the following verses, the descendants of Noah’s sons appear beginning with Japheth (1.5-7), continuing with Ham (1.8-16) and concluding with Shem (1.17-23). Similarly, after introducing Abraham’s children as Isaac and Ishmael (1.28), the text first lists the offspring of Ishmael (1.29-31). In some cases, the order of the genealogies contained in Genesis—Jacob (Gen. 35.23-26) and Esau (Gen. 36)—is reversed to comply with this preferred arrangement—Esau (1.35-37) and Jacob/Israel (2.1-2). Hence, the text consistently lists peoples whose independent


histories will not be recounted prior to the listing of peoples whose
development will be recounted (1 Chron. 1.4, 17, 34; 2.1).

In speaking of regular patterns within the genealogies, I do not mean to
suggest that the author simply imposed paradigms upon his sources. Quite
the contrary, he found some patterns already present within the sources. I
am suggesting, however, that the Chronicler continued and elaborated ten-
dencies toward schematization already present within the sources. This
he did by reworking and repositioning materials from his Vorlage of
Genesis and by supplying new rubrics when they were needed. In the
case of 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2, headings, summaries and numerical patterns
serve a larger purpose—unifying collections of disparate names.

As for the arguments for disunity based on content, the exclusion of
the Table of Nations and the lists of Edomite kings and chieftains from the
Chronicler’s original work presumes that he pursues the narrowest of ideo-
logical interests. Two comments from slightly different vantage points
may be made about this supposition. First, one can concede, for the sake
of argument, much of Rudolph’s point about the Chronicler’s theological
orientation and still view this material as original. By far and away the
bulk of the genealogical prologue relates to Israel (1 Chron. 2.1–9.1) and
not to other peoples. In its scale, the genealogical prologue presents an
unprecedented kinship-based introduction to the people of Israel: their
identity, filiations and land. This extensive section is concluded with the
summary ‘and all Israel was enrolled by genealogies’ (1 Chron. 9.1). Even in dealing with Israel, the author allocates
the bulk of his coverage to the three major groups of his own time: Judah
(1 Chron. 2.3–4.23), Levi (1 Chron. 5.27–6.66 [EVV 6.1-81]) and Ben-
jamin (1 Chron. 7.6-12; 8.1-40; 9.35-44). When compared with the
coverage allocated to the Israelite tribes, the coverage afforded the rest of
the world is relatively brief.

21. See the Excursus on the genealogies in my commentary, I Chronicles (AB, 12;

22. Schematization in genealogies and lists, including the use of favorite numbers,
is paralleled in ancient Mesopotamia and Greece; see A. Malamat, ‘King Lists of the
Old Babylonian Period and Biblical Genealogies’, JAOS 88 (1968), pp. 168-73;
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); M.D. Johnson, The Purpose of the Biblical Genealo-
gies (SNTSMS, 8; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1988). Similarly,
in early Christian tradition, Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1.1-17) is a highly
structured work, consisting of three groups of 14 generations; see G. Mussies, ‘Paral-
Second, the decision to excise 1 Chron. 1.4b-23, 32-33 and 43-54 because they do not comport with the Chronicler's theology, ironically is based on the premise that the Chronicler cares exclusively about Judah. Perhaps, however, the material about other cultures is not extraneous. Rather than removing entire sections of the text, because they do not accord with one's understanding of an author's purpose, it might be better to re-evaluate one's conception of the author. The Chronicler's ideological interests may not be as narrow and parochial as they are purported to be.23 Given the literary evidence presented above, one is drawn to the conclusion that almost all of the genealogy of nations stems from the Chronicler's own hand.24

The Genealogy of Nations and Map Making

With the exception of some headings and summaries, virtually all of the material in 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2 has been taken from Genesis. The extent to which the Chronicler is indebted to the lists, narratives and genealogies of Genesis can be seen by comparing his text with that of his source:

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24. There may be some scattered additions to the text, but most of 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2 seems to be original to the Chronicler's work. See further my forthcoming commentary, I Chronicles.
In some cases (e.g. vv. 1-4, 24-27), the author extracts names from long narratives; in others, he rearranges blocks of material from Genesis to suit his own purposes (e.g. 1 Chron. 1.29-31, 32-33, 35-54; 2.1-2). As the list indicates, the author is selective in his citations. The paring down of Genesis involves changing headings, omitting some geographical, anecdotal and chronological details, and creating new transitions. The choice of certain genealogies (and not others), the editing and repositioning of those genealogies and the Chronicler’s own minor additions produce a distinctively new presentation. Drawing from a variety of passages in Genesis, the Chronicler is able to make these older texts speak with a new voice.

The reuse, culling, selection, rearrangement and supplementation of materials from Genesis raises an additional issue. The writer’s approach is fairly comprehensive; he draws from the main genealogical blocks in Genesis—chs. 5, 10–11, 25 and 35–36. The inclusion of these disparate lines manifests broad literary and antiquarian interests, leading one scholar to assert that the unit 1 Chron. 1.1–2.1 ‘represents the book of Genesis, from which all of its material is taken’. However valid this observation may be, it should be pointed out that in condensing Genesis the Chronicler’s interests are not all-encompassing. He bypasses or ignores

25. The citation is only approximate. There are a number of tribal lists in the Hebrew Bible, but the precise order of Israel’s sons in 1 Chron. 2.1-2 is unique; see M. Noth, *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels* (BWANT, 4/1; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1930), pp. 3-86; Wilson, *Genealogy and History*, pp. 183-95, 224-30; Z. Kallai, ‘The Twelve-Tribe Systems of Israel’, *VT* 47 (1997), pp. 80-81; idem, ‘A Note on the Twelve-Tribe Systems of Israel’, *VT* 49 (1999), pp. 125-27. Most of the catalogue is implicitly organized by mother, but unlike some earlier authors (Gen. 29.31-30.24; 35.16-20 [J], 23-26 [P]) the writer omits any direct mention of the mothers and the one daughter (Dinah).


some substantial genealogical materials in Genesis: the Cainite and Sethite lines (Gen. 4.17-26), the lineage of Terah (11.27-32), the lineage of Lot (19.30-38), the line of Nahor (22.20-24) and the descendants of Dedan and Midian (25.3-4).

In my judgment, the genealogy of nations may be compared to one of the genres developed in the Classical and post-Classical worlds—the epitome (ἐπιτομή), a short abridgment or compendium of an older work.\(^{28}\) The first-known Classical writer to compose such an epitome was Theopompus of Chios, who lived at about the same time or slightly before the Chronicler (c. 378–320 BCE) and wrote an epitome of Herodotus in two books.\(^{29}\) In Classical antiquity such epitomes generally tended to be schematic summaries, rather than stylish short histories.\(^{30}\) In the Roman era, when epitome writing became quite popular, authors sometimes used the epitome to introduce much longer accounts of contemporary events. Why does the author include many, but not all, of the genealogies from Genesis? Epitomes by their very nature were selective. Rather than seeing the writer’s approach as completely encyclopedic, it might be more helpful to say that the Chronicler’s epitome includes more and more genealogical material from Genesis as he nears his chief interest: the genealogies of Israel (1 Chron. 2.3–9.1). The detailed attention given to the descendants of Ishmael, Qeturah, Seir and Esau (1 Chron. 1.28-54) anticipates the very detailed treatment given to the descendants of Israel.

In the Chronicler’s genealogy of nations, the lineage principle is employed to organize and classify diverse ethnic data. The spatial dimensions and depth of the coverage are remarkable. The various ethnic groups of the world are traced to a common progenitor. The Chronicler’s universal lineages may be compared with works such as the Table of Nations in Genesis, which preceded it, and the reworking of the same in Jubilees, which succeeded it. Such biblical and early Jewish genealogies, lists and narrative texts are exercises in ‘cognitive mapping’, attempts ‘to impose order on the chaos of spatial perception’.\(^{31}\) The resulting statement of relationships may at best only partially comport with external reality.

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The beginning and end of the section in Chronicles are of considerable import. The line the Chronicler traces begins with the first human and culminates in the eponymous ancestor of the twelve tribes (1 Chron. 2.1-2). In tracing the origins of a panorama of nations to a common ancestor, the author devotes special attention to the descendants of one of Noah’s sons: Shem. Even among these descendants, there is a narrowing of focus. Among Shem’s offspring, the writer privileges the descendants of Abraham and Isaac. In calling attention to Abraham’s seed, the Chronicler’s extensive supplementation of the Table of Nations provides it with a new significance.32 Whereas the Table of Nations actually gives very little attention to the ancestors of Israel, the Chronicler’s genealogy of nations does. Inserting much of the Table of the Nations (Gen. 10.1-32//1 Chron. 1.4-23) into the midst of other genealogies extending from the first person—Adam (1.1)—to the progenitor of the twelve tribes—Israel (2.1)—the Chronicler takes the earlier classification a series of steps further. The narrowing of focus from the 70 descendants of Noah to the descendants of Isaac demonstrates that the writer’s purpose was not to compile an exhaustive enumeration of all human cultures, but rather to create a certain picture of humanity—an imago mundi (image of the world), reflecting the circumstances of his own time. Selectively employing the information available to him from Genesis, the Chronicler concentrates on those nations to whom he believed his people were most closely related.

The Genealogy of Nations as Theology

In his genealogy of humanity, the author posits a direct connection between the first person and the progenitor of the Israelite tribes. But by the same token, this continuity occurs in the context of segmented genealogies that underscore the blood relations among various peoples of the world. Indeed, if a major purpose of genealogies is to configure or rewrite kinship ties, the unit 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2 establishes such ties between Israel and a host of other nations, most notably Seir and Edom. The opening to the Chronicler’s work may be best understood in the context of other relevant works from the ancient Mediterranean world. When one compares the opening chapter in Chronicles with other historical writings from ancient Mesopotamia and Greece, one is struck by a number of features. First, the author begins his genealogies with the primal human, thus providing a universal context for his work. Such a global perspective is, of

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course, not unique to the Chronicler’s writing. It is also characteristic of the Yahwistic (Gen. 2.4b-25) and Priestly (Gen. 1.1–2.4a) creation stories. A universal concern may also be found in other late compositions such as the prayer of Nehemiah 9, which begins with creation (v. 6), the historical litany of Psalm 136 (vv. 1-9) and the beginning of Josephus’s *Jewish Antiquities*. In Chronicles, the line of continuity extending from the primal human to Israel confers a certain dignity upon all of Israel’s descendants. Living in the Persian period, the residents of Yehud can claim a direct line all the way back to the time of creation. Their ancient ancestor Israel himself stood in a direct line, genealogically speaking, to the first person.

Second, the author does not confer any special title upon the first human. Adam is not described as ‘the image of God’ (אֵלָה אֶלֶם, Gen. 1.27). The origins of Adam go unexplained. Nor is Adam a liminal figure, as was Adapa in second-millennium BCE Mesopotamian lore, the figure who reappears transformed as Oannes in the *Babyloniaca* of Berosus. There is no indication that the primal human was of any special descent, bridged the divine and human spheres, functioned as either a royal priest or a prophet, enjoyed any special divine favors, or experienced any intimate relations with the gods. In fact, neither Yhwh nor any momentous theological term, such as election, appears in the universal lineages. The first reference to Yhwh occurs appropriately in the context of the genealogies devoted to Israel, specifically the lineage of Judah (1 Chron. 2.3). In Chronicles, Adam is no more and no less than the first human in a series. The omission of titles seems to be part of a larger compositional strategy on the author’s part. With the exceptions of Nimrod, the Edomite kings and chieftains, the text does not ascribe any special offices to the figures listed. The Chronicler traces certain lines of descent


34. Willi, *Chronik*, p. 47.


among the figures he lists, but he neither establishes nor defends a hierarchy among individuals. Significant achievements or shortcomings are not listed. In exhibiting or not exhibiting certain features, the universal genealogy differs markedly from works such as the Sumerian King List and the Assyrian King List, which mention titles, select military or political achievements, and chronological details.\(^37\)

Third, the genealogies evince a spatial dimension. Names found in the Table of Nations (e.g. Cush [Sudan or Ethiopia], Mizraim [Egypt] and Canaan) in Gen. 10.6 (//1.8) are inherently territorial. The overlap between eponyms, tribal names and place-names is also known from other ancient lands (e.g. Babylon).\(^38\) Although the geographical relevance of the list in Genesis has been stressed by many, some commentators on Chronicles are skeptical that these names have any geographical importance.\(^39\) It is true that the Chronicler omits most of the geographic digressions and explanations in the Table of Nations from his own presentation (e.g. Gen. 10.5, 10-12, 19-20, 30). But this pattern of exclusion is consistent with his compositional technique throughout much of the first part of 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2. Concentrating on the lists themselves, the writer excises many of the headings, anecdotes and conclusions found in his sources (e.g. Gen. 5.2-5, 7-8, 10-11, 13-14, 16-17, 19-20; 10.1, 31-32). Exceptions are to be found, of course, in the lists of the Edomite kings and chieftains (1 Chron. 1.43-54). In any case, the distinction between ethnicity and land suggests, if not promotes, a false dichotomy. Peoples are not free-floating entities unsullied by connections to the material world, but are inevitably tied to certain places and territories. For readers familiar with the various regions of the ancient world, names such as ‘Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Rodanim’ (v. 7) have territorial referents. This is true not only of names gleaned from the Table of Nations, but for other names as well (e.g. Teman, Qenaz, Timna and Amaleq in v. 36).

To put the matter somewhat differently, no one contends that the genealogies of Israel in 1 Chron. 2.1–9.1 lack any spatial dimensions. For the

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sake of consistency, it would be strange to contend that the genealogies of 1.1–2.2 do. Again, no one contends that the Chronicler’s genealogy of nations lacks a chronological dimension, even though he systematically excises the chronological information from his sources (esp. in vv. 1-4, 24-27). For the sake of consistency, it would be odd to affirm a temporal dimension but deny a spatial dimension. One does not need to insist that all of the eponyms and ethnic names are somehow also place names. This seems highly unlikely. Nevertheless, many of the names included from the Chronicler’s sources do have geographical associations. The spatial range of names found in the Chronicler’s genealogy of nations far exceeds, in fact, that found in the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women, a work which has been compared with the Table of Nations. The Catalogue of Women contains a series of segmented genealogies that are largely limited to detailing the names of Greek-speaking peoples, groups and places.

Fourth, the Chronicler admits, much like earlier biblical writers before him, that Israel was a relative latecomer to the stage of world history. Eber, the eponymous ancestor of the Hebrews, does not appear until well into the genealogy of nations (1 Chron. 1.18). Israel (Jacob) appears many generations later (2.1). Unlike the authors of the Babylonian creation story Enûma eliš, who correlate the establishment of Babylon with the culmination of the divine creative process, the author does not view the rise of Israel as coterminal with cosmogony. Israel emerges as part of a longer historical process. If Israel is to have a privileged place among the nations, the author tacitly acknowledges that the other nations have some legitimacy as well. After all, in both preliterate and literate societies, having a history is itself a mark of status and authority.

Fifth, the author follows the Yahwist and Priestly writers in locating the eponymous ancestor of the Hebrews, Eber, among the descendants of

41. West, Hesiodic Catalogue, pp. 36-124.
42. In this respect the Chronicler seems to be faithful to the force of the materials in Genesis from which he quotes. On the latter, see F. Crüsemann, ‘Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity: Israel’s Self Definition in the Genealogical System of Genesis’, in M.G. Brett (ed.), Ethnicity and The Bible (BibInt, 19; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 57-76; M.G. Brett, Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity (Old Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 2000).
Shem. This means that he does not see Israel as indigenous to its land.\textsuperscript{44} Canaan, the figure associated with the land that bears his name, is presented as one of the sons of Ham. If one of Shem’s descendants were to occupy the land of Canaan at some later point, he would have to do so as an outsider. To this it may be objected that the Chronicler is merely reproducing older materials bequeathed to him. This he does. But if the Chronicler wished to depart from the script written by earlier authors (e.g. the Yahwist and the Priestly writers), he could have modified their presentations. Comparison with the presentation of \textit{Jubilees} is apt. In his rewriting of the Genesis narrative, the author of \textit{Jubilees} has Noah explicitly promise the land of Palestine to Shem (8.12-21). While Shem is awarded most of Asia, Ham is awarded Africa (8.22-24).\textsuperscript{45} In this highly developed \textit{imago mundi}, Zion becomes the \textit{omphalos} of the earth and the three Ionian continents—Europe, Asia and Libya (Africa)—are correlated with Noah’s three sons—Japheth, Shem and Ham (8.12–9.15). The author of \textit{Jubilees} situates Israel in the middle of all peoples and in the middle of all lands. If Ham to the south is hot and Japheth to the north is cold, Shem is just right (8.30).\textsuperscript{46} As for Canaan, his lot falls very far to the west (9.1). It is only Canaan’s envy of the allotment given to Shem and his rebellion against his father’s wishes that leads him to occupy a territory, ‘the land of Lebanon’, that was not his to inherit (10.27-34). When \textit{Jubilees} finally describes this land as ‘Canaan’ (e.g. 10.34), the term takes on a whole new meaning—the land that was stolen by Canaan.

The implications of \textit{Jubilees} are clear. Should one of the descendants of Arpachshad (the son of Shem) come to occupy the land of Canaan, he would inherit what was originally and properly his (9.4). By presenting Canaan as a usurper, the author of \textit{Jubilees} completely revises the force of Genesis 9–10, even as he faithfully reproduces many individual details. The Chronicler, by contrast, lets the force of the Table of Nations go


uncontested. His summary (1 Chron. 1.24-27) presents Abram as the tenth generation after Shem, both chronologically and ethnically differentiated from the descendants of Japheth (vv. 5-7) and Ham (vv. 8-16). As in Genesis, Canaan’s offspring are Heth, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Gergashites, the Hivites and so forth (vv. 13-16). This is not to say that the Chronicler’s reuse of Genesis lacks its own individual perspective. Rather, as we have seen, this distinctive perspective must be sought in how the Chronicler recontextualizes and extends the Table of Nations within his own presentation.

To do justice to the force of 1 Chron. 1.1–2.2, one has to reckon with the continuity from Adam to Esau and Israel, the common humanity of all peoples and the diversity of the various nations inhabiting the world. Two overlapping dimensions—the linear and the spatial—are present in the universal lineage. On one level, the presentation moves diachronically from Adam and the primeval age to the descendants of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Esau and Israel in the postdiluvian age. Israel (Jacob) is the focus of the remaining genealogical material in 1 Chronicles 2–9. On this diachronic level, the lineages achieve greater elaboration and greater focus as they progress toward the descendants of Israel. Seen in this context, the Chronicler’s presentation promotes an *imago mundi* in which the tribes of Israel emerge at the end of a long development. Israel may be the focus of the larger presentation, but the *imago mundi* also presents Israel as very much related to the other nations, which preceded Israel or developed alongside it. All are members of a larger human family. The posterity of Israel will be singled out for exclusive attention, but these descendants live within a community of nations of which they are but one part. If on one level the presentation moves diachronically, situating the appearance of Israel against the background of other peoples, on a second level, the presentation moves laterally, situating Israel spatially within the world it inhabits. The segmented genealogies of Japheth, Ham, Shem, Ishmael, Qeturah, Esau and Seir illustrate the author’s acknowledgment that a great diversity of peoples in a great diversity of places inhabit his world. The nations may be linguistically, geographically and ethnically dispersed, but they share a common humanity and a common progenitor.

The ethnographic horizons of the Chronicler’s genealogical outline generate a map of the world (*mappa mundi*) in verbal form. The descendants of Abraham and Isaac are situated within a larger international context. The Chronicler’s ethnographic perspective displays a variety of contours,
but it is basically centered on southern Canaan. Given the setting of the author in Yehud, it is important that the ethnographic ties to those nations traditionally situated to the south and southeast of Judah are particularly strong. The spatial interest, sustained beyond the material extracted from the Table of Nations, extends into the material about Ishmael, Qeturah, Esau, Seir and the Edomite kings and chieftains. In this respect, the Chronicler’s vision is less grandiose than that of the author of Jubilees. The genealogies of Judah (1 Chron. 2.3–4.23) and Simeon (4.24–43) develop many of the ties hinted at in vv. 29-33 and 35-54 of ch. 1 between the southern tribes and their southern neighbors (2.25-26, 32, 50-53; 4.25, 39-43). The stories about the United Monarchy (1 Chron. 18.11-13; 27.30; 2 Chron. 8.17; 9.1-12) and Judah (2 Chron. 17.11; 20.1-23; 21.8-10, 16-17; 22.1; 25.11-12, 14, 20; 26.7-8; 28.17) continue and elaborate this interest.

By situating the emergence of Israel in the context of the emergence of other peoples in other lands, the Chronicler’s work anticipates an important feature of early Jewish historiography. The *imago mundi* becomes a consistent feature of medieval Jewish and Christian literature. Like earlier biblical authors, the Chronicler is most interested in stories about Israel, but he also recognizes that Israel did not emerge out of a vacuum. The universal is very much tied to the particular. Indeed, one can only appreciate the experience of Israel within its land if one has some understanding of other relevant lands and peoples to which Israel is related.


The Chronicler as Theologian

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