

MICHAEL FISHBANE

Biblical Text and Exegetical Culture

*Forschungen
zum Alten Testament
154*

Mohr Siebeck

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154



Michael Fishbane

Biblical Text and Exegetical Culture

Collected Essays

Mohr Siebeck

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Abbreviations

IQIsa ^a	The Great Isaiah Scroll
AB	Anchor Bible
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
<i>AHw</i>	<i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . W. von Soden. 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965–1981
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</i>
Akk.	Akkadian
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3 rd ed. Princeton, 1969
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
Aq.	Aquila
<i>ASTI</i>	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
<i>b.</i>	Babylonian Talmud
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BBB</i>	<i>Bulletin de bibliographie biblique</i>
<i>BIAI</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel</i> . Michael Fishbane. Oxford, 1985
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BIES</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament. Edited by M. Noth and H. W. Wolff. Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1982
<i>BMRM</i>	<i>Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking</i> . Michael Fishbane. Oxford, 2003
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago, 1956–2010
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBQMS</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> Monograph Series
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
<i>EI</i>	<i>The Exegetical Imagination: On Jewish Thought and Theology</i> . Michael Fishbane. Cambridge, 1998
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem, 1972
<i>GT</i>	<i>The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics</i> . Michael Fishbane. Bloomington, 1989
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HH	<i>Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung"</i> . Erich Ebeling. Berlin, 1953
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament

<i>HR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDBSupp</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume.</i> Edited by K. Crim. Nashville, 1976
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>j.</i>	Jerusalem Talmud
<i>J. Am. Folklore</i>	<i>Journal of American Folklore</i>
<i>J. Hell. Stud.</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal for Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>Jos. Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
<i>JPS</i>	Jewish Publication Society
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal of the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSupp</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal for Theological Studies</i>
<i>KAR</i>	<i>Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts.</i> Edited by E. Ebeling. Leipzig, 1919–1923
<i>KG</i>	<i>The Kiss of God: Spiritual and Mystical Death in Judaism.</i> Michael Fishbane. Seattle, 1993
<i>LH</i>	Laws of Hammurapi
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>m.</i>	Mishnah
<i>MGWJ</i>	<i>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>
<i>MT</i>	Masoretic Text
<i>MVAG</i>	<i>Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-ägyptischen Gesellschaft.</i> 44 vols. 1896–1939
<i>NEB</i>	New English Bible
<i>NJPSV</i>	New Jewish Publication Society Version
<i>NT</i>	New Testament
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i>
<i>OT</i>	Old Testament
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte</i>

<i>RR</i>	<i>Review of Religion</i>
<i>RS</i>	Ras Shamra
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>ScrHier</i>	<i>Scripta Hierosolymitana</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
<i>Sym.</i>	Symmachus
<i>TAPS</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society</i>
<i>Text</i>	<i>Textus</i>
<i>Tg. Onq.</i>	Targum Onqelos
<i>Tg. Yer.</i>	Targum Yerushalmi
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>TT</i>	<i>Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts.</i> Michael Fishbane. New York, 1979
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>UCPNES</i>	University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>UT</i>	<i>Ugaritic Textbook.</i> C. H. Gordon. AnOr 38. Rome, 1965
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSupp</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum Supplements</i>
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Introduction

In this volume of studies (entitled: *Biblical Text and Exegetical Culture: Collected Essays*) I have collected a broad range of my smaller academic writings in the areas of ancient Biblical Studies, Qumran and Dead Sea Scrolls, and the literature of classical rabbinic Judaism. The ensemble is presented in an overall historical sequence, and variously subdivided into thematic clusters. Taken altogether, they represent the interests, concerns and methods that have occupied my scholarly work and attention for nearly five decades. A variety of related writings with some topical or thematic additions have not been included, in order to minimize duplication. In addition, studies that originally appeared in Hebrew language journals or annuals, or in Hebrew language encyclopedias, also do not appear in this collection (e. g., the essay “*Ha-’Ot Ba-Miqra*” [“On Biblical Omina”] in *Shnaton Ha-Miqra*, volume 1 [1976]; and the articles on “*torah*” and “*teshuvah*” [“repentance”] in the *Encyclopedia Biblica / Entziklopedia Miqra’it*, volume 8 [1978]).

Part One of this collection comprises, first, a selection of essays on biblical composition in diverse genres – highlighting both stylistic and redactional features which demonstrate the interrelationship between technique, selection, and thematic concerns. Thus, the art and poetics of these works are analyzed as both literary and cultural documents (that is, works of personal and editorial composition). The role of editing is also evident in the scribal techniques that occur in different forms – thus showing how colophon-like summary elements tag certain ritual texts or laws, and even reveal the inner-history of a text or anthology. Links with ancient Near Eastern literature is repeatedly shown. A second broad area deals with topics in biblical religion and religiosity, with special attention to the mentalities involved and how they relate both to ancient mythological notions and to related features in ancient Israel. Thus, the diverse forms are given typological and phenomenological consideration (particularly as they relate to Israel’s awareness of pagan deities and beliefs, and to forms of prophecy, polemic, and expression). Finally, this first part also includes shorter essays related to the issue of inner-biblical exegesis, showing considerations of the emergence of diverse interpretations of older traditions (legal, prophetic, and theological) within the cultural-literary circles of ancient Israel. All this is part of the larger phenomenon of redaction and reception history, and shows the

emergence – already in biblical antiquity – of a textual and exegetical culture built off of received authoritative sources and traditions.

Part Two functions as a kind of transitional unit, and is focused primarily on the types of textual exegesis in Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls – some types of which derive from ancient Near Eastern exegetical models; others displaying modes of interpretation emergent from ancient Israel and anticipating the vast textual and exegetical culture of ancient rabbinic Judaism. Other types of redaction and reception history are evident through various thematic arcs and motifs. All this material fills in the cultural space between ancient Israel and its various rabbinic heirs.

Part Three of the collection puts on display the range of Jewish exegetical culture in rabbinic antiquity. Midrashic creativity is the major hermeneutical mode or technique, and its structures and reach are notable. They include the theological revival and expansion of myth and mythic motifs; and they display how Judaism transformed old sacrificial sources or themes in light of its post-Temple reality – including notions of divine suffering and the reuse of old judgment motifs to articulate new redemptive hope. A series of chapters show how the sages gave new meaning to such topics as death and joy, or to the meaning of action and spiritual values. Exegesis is the font for expanding law and articulating virtues – in short, establishing a viable religious culture and religiosity. The dynamics of tradition and tradition-building are evident throughout, with concomitant issues of authority and dynamic change in full view. The series of chapters concludes with a retrospectus on the forms of biblical textuality and textual cultures during the past century, particularly their exegetical and social shapes. The *terminus ad quem* for these studies is the end of the classical period of Jewish creativity in late antiquity (notably the fifth-sixth century CE).

I am grateful to Dr. Henning Ziebritzki of Mohr Siebeck for his invitation to collect my smaller writings in this distinguished format. During the course of its production, I have benefited from the expert and efficient technical assistance of Mr. Marshall Cunningham and Mr. Samuel Catlin. A second volume will present other researches dealing with Jewish thought, theology, and hermeneutics from the early medieval period through contemporary modernity; and as is the case with this volume, the materials will be arranged historically and thematically. I am hopeful that, through these two publications, the present and future generations can observe a distinct turning point in biblical and rabbinic studies – one focused on the dynamic diversity of scriptural exegesis as a multivalent prism for understanding biblical and rabbinic cultures.

December 2020

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Biblical Israel

1. Composition and Structure in the Jacob Cycle (Genesis 25:19–35:22): Formations of Epic Narrative

I.

Approaches to the patriarchal narratives in the Book of Genesis have been as diverse as the biases and concerns of biblical text study. Indeed, the first preserved “interpretations” of the narratives dealing with the patriarch Jacob (Gen. 25:19–35:22) are already textured into various biblical reflections on the moral and historical relations found in the Cycle. Nor is it surprising that the Jacob traditions should have been reused and reappraised. Just as Abraham became both a model of trust and hope in divine beneficence to later generations (e. g., Isa. 29:22; 41:8, 51:2; cf. Ezek. 33:24), the patriarch Jacob was also significant – particularly insofar as he was renamed “Israel.” Because Jacob was Israel, every reading of the particular life history of Jacob could be deepened by a national reading of the same contents. Thus for later biblical traditions the original relations between Jacob-Israel and his brother Esau-Edom were but the surface level of numerous layers of allegorical possibilities.

But it would seem that this later apprehension of a national dimension to the Jacob Cycle is, actually, a primary motivational feature of the narrative. Since the epical Genesis narratives took shape largely during the United Monarchy, it is not surprising to find there historical retrojections.¹ Thus the oracle of Esau-Edom’s subjugation to Jacob-Israel (Gen. 25:23) may reflect Judah’s suzerainty over Edom after David conquered it and set up military garrisons (2 Sam. 8:13f.; 1 Kings 11:15f.). Similarly, the oracle of Edom’s eventual independence (Gen. 27:40) most probably reflects the temporary break in Judah to hegemony near the close of Solomon’s reign (1 Kgs. 11:14–22, 25; cf. LXX).²

With such a political motivation at its core, it is even less surprising to witness the use of the Jacob-Esau scenario to depict later historical episodes in the national life of Israel-Judah and Edom, both singly and in combination. Thus in the oracles against the nations preserved in Amos 1:2–2:6 there is an

¹ For a study of this matter, see Benjamin Mazar, “The Historical Background of the Book of Genesis,” *JNES* 28 (1969), 73–83.

² On this oracle as a retrojection, see Menahem Haran, “Observations on the Historical Background of Amos 1:2–2:6,” *IEJ* 18 (1968), 207, and n. 18; Michael Fishbane, “The Treaty Background of Amos 1:11 and Related Matters,” *JBL* 89 (1970), 315.

oracle against Edom (1:11–12) of which the following condemnation is pertinent (v. 11): “He chased his ally (*’āh*) with sword/and broke fealty with his partner (*raḥamāv*).”³ This stich deals with an historical occurrence of covenantal malfeasance by Edom, as both *’āh* and *raḥam(āv)* are ancient parallel terms, known from Akkadian and Aramaic sources, whose technical sense is “treaty-partner.”⁴ But the pun is obvious: the first word, *’āh* literally means “brother”; the second *raḥam(āv)* plays on the homonym *reḥem* “womb.” Thus the oracle condemns Edom in language reminiscent of his struggle with Jacob at birth (Gen. 25:22–26). There are similar references to the fraternity of Edom and Israel in Obadiah 10 and Malachi 1:2 ff.

In addition to the above situations of international treaty relations, there are further explicit references to this tradition in texts dealing with the national covenantal relations between Israel and YHWH. In these cases the tradition is not used to condemn Edom but to criticize the duplicity and perfidy of Israel (Judah) itself. Accordingly, the theme of deception comes to the fore in these texts, thereby affording some insight into a traditional reading of Jacob’s wily character – the negative evaluation of which is, as shall be seen, largely muted in the extant pentateuchal sources. Thus in Hos. 12 in addition to indicating various episodes of the Jacob Cycle scenario, Judah’s covenantal malfeasance is characterized as *mirmāh* “deceit” (v. 7).⁵ This term also appears in Jer. 9:5, in the context of various references to Judah’s covenantal perfidy (vv. 3–5):

Watch out, each one from his fellow; don’t trust;
For every brother (*’āh*) is a conniving trickster (*’aqōv ya’aqov*) ...
Secrecy within secrecy, deceit within deceit (*mirmāh*), they refuse to know Me ...⁶

There can be little doubt of the background of this castigation. Indeed the prophet has not only played on the name Jacob (*ya’aqov*) but has used other terms which appear in the Genesis source.⁷

It is thus clear that the pentateuchal tradition anent Jacob enjoyed a lively place in ancient Israelite imagination, which did not repress reflections that

³ For the possible historical background of this verse cf. Haran, op. cit., 207–12 and Fishbane, op. cit., 313–318. On 201–07, Haran has argued plausibly that Amos 1:6–9 do not deal with Edom.

⁴ I advanced this interpretation in the above-cited article and added “Additional Remarks on *Rhmmyw* (Amos 1:11),” *JBL* 90 (1971), 391–93.

⁵ On Hos. 12 see, e. g., Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-’Eminah ha-Yisra’elit III/1*, 134–36; M. Gertner, “The Masorah and the Levites,” *VT* 10 (1960), Appendix, 272–84; and Peter Ackroyd, “Hosea and Jacob,” *VT* 13 (1963), 248–59.

⁶ This follows the LXX reading where the consonants *šb* of MT *šbtk* were assumably linked to the preceding v. 4. The resulting *tk* was read as *tok*, a word after parallel to *mirmāh* (cf. Ps. 10:7; 55:12). A structural interpretation of Jer. 9 occurs in my book *Biblical Text and Texture* (Oxford, 1998).

⁷ In addition to *’āh* and *’aqov*, stem *tll* (*hetel*) appears in Gen. 31:7, *mirmāh* appears in Gen. 27:35; 34:13, and the verbal stem *rmy* in Gen. 29:25.

suggest a reading of Jacob's behavior in less than elegant moral terms. Indeed, as we shall see, a moral critique of Jacob's actions is textured into the Cycle itself. But later Jewish tradition was far more gracious to "Israel." On occasion the very linguistic basis of this treachery was undercut, and the palpably disquieting way that he acquired the blessing of first-born was controverted.⁸ In addition to these exegetical apologetics, the relationship between Jacob and Esau bit at the root of Jewish imagination with the result that Israel's historical encounters with Rome and Christendom were often depicted as an extenuation of an ancient enmity with Edom.⁹

II.

In more recent times, when the documentary hypothesis has often formed the conceptual framework for a critique and interpretation of Genesis 25:19–35:22, the putative repetitions in the narrative, the variations in style, and the diversity of content and motivation were felt to attest to an original diversity of courses. Otto Eissfeldt presented an elaborate reconstruction of the Jacob Cycle and, through his isolation of various parallel strands, constrained to account for the confusions and contradictions of the present text.¹⁰ Other commentators, like John Skinner¹¹ and Ephraim A. Speiser,¹² have also assigned various labels to the separate strands, but without reconstructing the separate documents as exhaustively.

This analysis of the Jacob Cycle by Eissfeldt, first presented as part of his influential work in text-criticism, was re-presented in elaborate form in the *Festschrift* for Hermann Gunkel.¹³ Eissfeldt criticized Gunkel's earlier literary-folk analysis on the ground that any literary analysis must be based on the bedrock of firm textual criticism. But in actual fact, Gunkel had himself assumed

⁸ Onqelos translated *bemirmāh* in Gen. 27:35 as *beḥokma* "with wisdom"; see also TJI, R. Yoḥanan in *Bereshith Rabbah* 67:4 and *Midrash Hagadol* (ed. Margulies), 482. Onqelos also translated *ye'aqveni* (v. 36) by the same verb. Of a piece with this tendentiousness we might point to those midrashim which understand "Israel is my first-born" in Exod. 4:22 as referring to Jacob, thereby giving a *post hoc* legitimation to Jacob's appropriation of Esau's birthright; cf. *Bereshith Rabbah* 86:2 and *Exodus Rabbah* 15:7. The problem of selling the birthright is noted in *Midrash HaGadol*, 445.

⁹ Cf. Gerson Cohen, "Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval thought," *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. A. Altmann (Brandeis Texts and Studies IV; Cambridge, 1967), 19–48.

¹⁰ *Hexateuch-Synopse. Die Erzählung der fünf Bücher Mose und des Buches Josua mit dem Anfange des Richterbuches in ihre vier Quellen zerlegt und in deutscher Übersetzung dargeboten* (Leipzig, 1922).

¹¹ ICC, Genesis, 1910.

¹² AB, Genesis, 1964.

¹³ "Stammesgeschichte und Novelle in den Geschichten von Jacob und von seinen Söhnen," *Eucharisterion für H. Gunkel*, ed. H. Schmidt (Göttingen, 1923), I, 56–77.

the results of earlier textual work on the Cycle and felt that there was substantial agreement between the results of source criticism and his analysis. In his study, he isolated two Jacob-Esau folk-tales, a Jacob-Laban tale, genealogies and various shrine sagas.¹⁴ From each of these text units Gunkel then tried to isolate a core tale (*Einzelsgage*) around which the other narratives, genealogies, and historical details were integrated.

But even though Eissfeldt's analysis was highly critical of the literary conclusions drawn by Gunkel, and controverted him at various points, the irony was that both proceeded from similar methodological assumptions of text-criticism and sought to recover the original literary sources (strands) of a received text. Such an approach is genetic, insofar as it considers the isolation of the "origins" of a narrative to be a *sine qua non* of textual inquiry. Gunkel, on the other hand, showed a firmer sense of style and appreciation of the form of literary units. Nevertheless, in his search for the *Einzelsgage*, he too was firmly rooted in the diachronic thrust of the folk-tale analysis of his day which searched for the genetic origin of a saga-unit, and attempted to follow its peregrinations and unification with other saga-units.¹⁵

Whatever the conceptual and analytic merits of these methods with regard to the Jacob Cycle, the discussion is now frozen into various degrees of hyper-refinement of the one approach or the other. Accordingly, it is my assumption that any critical advance can only proceed by shifting the entire ground of discussion. Thus without denying the assured results of a critical scholarship, which has painstakingly isolated diverse materials in Genesis 25:19–35:22, I shall attempt to investigate the entire Cycle as a structural unity, i. e., as a synchronic whole.

Whatever the "original" shape of the various traditions "underlying" the Jacob Cycle, any serious analysis must *also* consider their morphological unity. We must ask: are there grounds for investigating the structural coherence of the received Cycle? Is the Cycle merely a patchwork of narrative strands, or have these been integrated by a sustained literary imagination? In other words, is there ground for assuming a skillful intentionality behind the editing and, if so, may we extrapolate any positive implications regarding the "composition" and "editing" of biblical traditions? Let me note at this point that this methodological shift – from a diachronic to a synchronic analysis – is a shift which has also assumed increased importance in the continuing critical study of folk and epic narratives.¹⁶ A few background remarks may serve to place my analysis in perspective.

¹⁴ *What Remains of the Old Testament* (London, 1928 = *Preussische Jahrbücher*, Bd. 176, 1919), ch. 5, "Jacob," 150–86.

¹⁵ Alan Dundes, "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales," *J. Am. Folklore* 75 (1962), 95–97.

¹⁶ *Op cit.*, 95–105 and below, Part IV.

In Homeric scholarship, the analytic insights of Friedrich A. Wolf¹⁷ and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff¹⁸ led both to skepticism regarding the unity of the Homeric epics, and to a treatment of its contents as diverse literary units. But the celebrated innovations of Milman Parry¹⁹ and Albert B. Lord²⁰ have gone a long way in restoring respect for the oral techniques which underlie these epics; and John L. Myres²¹ and Cedric H. Whitman²² have given considerable attention to the editorial techniques and coherence of the Iliad. In a bold hypothesis, Myres demonstrated the remarkable symmetry of the 24 books of the Iliad, and suggested that this editorial technique is a literary cognate of the bilateral symmetry in late-Minoan pottery decoration. Whitman deepened this insight, and further elaborated upon an even more complex symmetry between the sub-units comprising the “dramatic action.” It is, moreover, noteworthy that a chiasm has been detected for a sub-unit in the Akkadian Atrahasis epic as well.²³

Withal, interest in the structural unity of a narrative has neither been as strong nor as developed in literary investigations of the Hebrew Bible. Certain initial steps in this direction were taken by Nils Wilhelm Lund, who attempted to reveal the presence of chiasm in various literary texts.²⁴ Yehuda Radai has continued this approach and offered various possible examples of chiastic structure in the biblical narrative.²⁵ Many of their suggestions, and those of others, will have to be further analyzed before over-all conclusions can be reached.²⁶ The following study of Genesis 25:19–35:22 will hopefully give a firm attestation of this technique in the Hebrew Bible and suggest a method of analysis. What follows, then, is a structural outline and analysis of the Jacob Cycle.

¹⁷ *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, 1795, ed. I. Bekker (Berlin, 1872).

¹⁸ *Homerische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1884).

¹⁹ *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (Paris, 1928) and *Les Formules et la métrique d'Homère* (Paris, 1928).

²⁰ *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, 1960); cf. Lord, “Composition by Theme in Homer and South Slavic Epos,” *Transactions of the American Philological Assn.* 82 (1951), 71–80, and in the same collection James Notopoulos, “Continuity and interconnection in Homeric Oral Composition,” 81–101.

²¹ “The Last Book of the ‘Iliad,’” *J. of Hell. Stud.* 52 (1932), 264–96; he acknowledges his debt to John Tresidder Shepard, *Pattern of the Iliad*.

²² *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, 1958), esp. Ch. XI

²³ See William L. Moran, “The Creation of Man in Atrahasis I 192–248,” *BASOR* 200 (1970), 75–86.

²⁴ “The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament,” *AJSL* 46 (1930), 104 ff; 49 (1932), 281 ff. Cf. his *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill, 1942).

²⁵ “Chiasm in the Biblical Narrative,” *Beth Mikra* 20–21 (1964), 48–72 [Hebrew].

²⁶ For other uses of this technique, cf. Albert Condamin, “Symmetrical Repetitions in Lamentations 1–2,” *JTS* 7 (1905), 137–40; Norbert Lohfink, “Darstellungskunst und Theologie in Dtn. 1, 6–3, 29,” *Bib* 41 (1960), 120–123; Ad. Lenglet, “La Structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7,” *Bib* 53 (1972), 169–90; and Jack Lundbom, “Elijah’s Chariot Ride,” *JJS* 24 (1973), 39–50.

III.

I. The Jacob Cycle, Genesis 25:19–35:22

A	oracle sought; Rebekka struggles in childbirth; <i>bekhorah</i> -birthright; birth; themes of strife, deception, and fertility	25:19–34	
B	interlude; strife; deception; <i>berakhah</i> -blessing; covenant with foreigner	26	
C	deception; <i>berakhah</i> stolen; fear of Esau; flight from land	27:1–28:9	
D	evening encounter with divine beings at sacred site, near border; <i>berkahah</i>	28:10–22	
E	internal cycle opens; arrival; kisses; Laban at border; wages; deception	29	
•	Rachel barren; Leah fertile		
F		30	
•	Rachel fertile; Jacob breeds the herds		
E'	internal cycle closes; departure; kisses; Laban at border; wages; deception	31	
D'	evening encounter with divine beings at sacred sites, near border; <i>berakhah</i>	32	
C'	deception planned; fear of Esau; <i>berkahah</i> -gift returned; return to the land	33	
B'	interlude; strife; deception; covenant with foreigner	34	
A'	oracle fulfilled; Rachel struggles in childbirth; <i>berkahah</i> ; death; resolutions	35:1–22	

In the foregoing I have schematized the contents of Genesis 25:19–35:22. The material has been sub-divided by content and theme. Thus each sub-division has an independence of actions, theme and mood, even as the various pericopae have an overall interdependence. What is striking, in retrospect, is that our thematic sub-divisions agree, almost completely, both with the chapter divisions introduced by Christian scholars in the Middle Ages and with the Masoretic unit divisions found in Rabbinic Bibles. As can be readily seen, the Jacob Cycle has a symmetrical coherence which is, as we shall see, effected by a repetition of both thematic content and key verbal stems. Before proceeding, a brief word on the last point is in order.

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