

Research plan, Tore Jungerstam

Research question

I intend to research the Primaeval History, Genesis 1:1–11:26, focusing on the literary techniques used by the author to compose the text as a literary unit. I will primarily give attention to how he has linked different elements such as the toledot-units and different stories and genealogies within them. I will also investigate if a literary approach can provide new possible solutions to literary tensions and perceived problems within the stories and genealogies in the Primaeval History.

Research overview

The Primaeval History has been studied from two different main perspectives, one of which is grounded in the documentary hypothesis. Adherers to this hypothesis are, for example, scholars like Skinner (1910), Driver (1916), Speiser (1964), McEvenue (1971), Von Rad (1972), Blenkinsopp (1992), Westermann (1994), Friedmann (2003). They find literary tensions both in the composition of single stories like the flood story as between different units like the genealogies in Genesis 4 and 5 and the Creation story and the Eden narrative. They attribute these tensions to three of the sources presented by the documentary hypothesis: J (Jahvist), E (Elohist) and P (Priestly source). According to the documentary hypothesis, there are two parallel primaeval histories in the Bible. One version is written by J, and that story begins in Genesis 2:4b with the Eden narrative, the other version is written by P, and it starts with the Creation story in Genesis 1:1. The documentary hypothesis has its strong defenders today, for instance, Baden (2012). One problem is, though, that there is minimal consensus about anything else than the broad picture. It is striking how often the opinions differ among the scholars concerning which verses belong to a particular source or if it belongs to an editor. The role and function each scholar assign the presumed editor is also quite unique. I consider it noteworthy that the same scholar in the same monograph, for instance, Westermann (1994), is of the opinion that the editor tried to keep every sentence of the two sources in the flood story even though it resulted in unnecessary repetitions and literary tensions while the same editor in the following unit, Genesis 10:1–11:8 is supposed to use just what he needs from one of the sources and do not use doublets of any kind. It does not lend credibility to a hypothesis if one has to adapt the premises, moving one unit to another.

The second main perspective is grounded in a literary approach. In the 1940s, scholars like Cassuto (1944, 1949) and later Sarna (1966) did consider the literary approach, but from the 1970s onward, research grounded in a literary approach began to gain more momentum. Scholars within this approach accept the text as it is in the Hebrew Bible today. They are aware that there are different sources in the text, but these sources are not J, E or P. They consider the sources to be different stories and genealogies. Scholars within the literary approach are Alter (1981), Berlin (1985; 1994), Kikawada & Quinn (1985), Licht (1986), Sternberg (1987), Fokkelman (1990, 1991), Dorsey (1999), Amit (2001), Heller (2004), Bar-

Efrat (2008) and Walsh (2009). These scholars do not immediately consider literary tensions or repetitions as proofs of different sources. Instead, they first consider different literary techniques, two of which are repetition with variation and *concatenatio*. *Concatenatio* is the technique by which the author links two units together by focusing on a similar theme or similar words at the end of one unit and the beginning of the following.

Within the literary approach, the importance of the different so-called toledot-units is crucial. The toledot-formula is considered the means by which the author has arranged the material within the Primaeval History into six overarching units. There are five toledot-units, and before them, the Creation Story in the Primaeval History. The six overarching units are as follow:

1. The Creation Story (Genesis 1:1–2:3)
2. The toledot of Heaven and Earth (Genesis 2:4–4:26)
3. The toledot of Adam (Genesis 5:1–6:8)
4. The toledot of Noah (Genesis 6:9–9:29)
5. The toledot of the Sons of Noah (Genesis 10:1–11:9)
6. The toledot of Shem (Genesis 11:10–26)

Scholars who have researched the Primaeval History from a literary perspective are Cassuto (1961, 1964) and Kikawada & Quinn (1985). Commentaries in which the scholars take the literary approach into some consideration are Wenham (1987), Hamilton (1990) and Mathews (1996).

Scholars like Tigay (1985, 2002) are working with the empirical model. They search for parallels in texts from the Ancient Near East. For instance, how the epic of Gilgamesh developed and how different independent texts were woven together and rewritten to form what is now often considered the most brilliant literary work from the Ancient Near East written in Akkadian. The research made by scholars using the empirical model shows that the scribes were free to make changes in their source material, making it more or less impossible to restore the ancient sources that lie behind the epic entirely. These results show the difficulty of the mission to recreate sources *verbatim* that lie behind the Hebrew text we have today.

Research assignment

In this research, I will study how literary techniques used in other parts of the Old Testament, presented and described by scholars within the literary approach mentioned above, are being used in the Primaeval History. I limit my research to the Primaeval History not because I think there exists a literary division between Genesis 1:1–11:26 and what follows.

Nevertheless, the Primaeval History is often considered a unit in scholarly literature and an analysis of Genesis 11:27 onwards have to await further research.

There is common ground with scholars who adhere to the documentary hypothesis insofar as I agree that there are different sources behind the Masoretic text, such as different stories and genealogies. I will also interact with research done by these scholars if it is relevant to the research assignment. Therefore, I will not do research strictly according to the literary

approach within which scholars usually do not pay attention to the sources behind the text as we have it today.

Within the six overarching units mentioned above, I have tentatively identified ten units comprising a different story or a genealogy within the Primaeval History. These are:

1. The Creation story (Genesis 1:1–2:3)
2. The Eden narrative (Genesis 2:4–3:24)
3. The Story about Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1–16, 25–26)
4. The Genealogy of Cain (Genesis 4:17–24)
5. The Genealogy of Adam through Seth (Genesis 5:1–32; 9:28–29)
6. The Flood story (Genesis 6:9–9:17)
7. The Story about Noah's intoxication and his sons (Genesis 9:18–27)
8. The Genealogy of the sons of Noah (Genesis 10:1–32)
9. The story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9)
10. The Genealogy of Shem (Genesis 11:10–26)

In the schedule given above, eight verses are missing, namely Genesis 6:1–8. At this point, I leave their relation to other stories open and will examine them more closely. I am content to identify these ten story-units and genealogies within the Primaeval History.

My primary focus will be on how the author has linked the overarching six toledot-units as well as the ten units mentioned above using literary techniques.

I will also pay attention to whether and to what extent literary techniques can explain some of the literary tensions found within the stories and genealogies in the Primaeval History. By adherers of the Documentary Hypothesis, many tensions are being attributed to combining different sources from J, E and P. I have identified the flood story as a story containing many literary tensions highlighted in the scholarly literature. The flood story is also of key interest for the question of how the Primaeval History is composed. That is why I will focus on the tensions detected within the flood story more closely.

I hope this research will provide new possible solutions to tensions or problems hitherto, at least to some degree, unresolved in the Primaeval History. It may also provide new insights, and possible interpretations of problematic passages acknowledged in the scholarly literature. One such passage is Genesis 6:1–8, wherefore I will pay special attention to those verses to see if I, through the literary approach, might provide some new insights and new possible interpretations to the challenge these verses provide.

Concerning Genesis 6:1–8, there are early Jewish texts that include interpretations of the Primaeval History and are therefore of importance for my research. Of particular interest is how these texts interpret who the "sons of God" are in Genesis 6:1–4. That is why I will consider interpretations found in The Book of Jubilees, The Book of Enoch, also named 1 Enoch, and the Genesis Apocryphon from the Qumran texts. Likewise, I will consider the translation in the Septuagint and the version found in the Samaritan Pentateuch if it has a bearing on the results of my research.

This research also has the potential to provide new insights vis-a-vis the role of the final author or editor and which parts might be ascribed to him. In scholarly literature, word frequency is of some interest concerning the literary composition of the units within the Primaeval History. Attention to word frequency can provide clues to the final author's role and to what extent he might have altered the wording in his sources. For that purpose, I will also pay attention to the word frequency.

Methodology

The consonantal script of the Masoretic text is the primary text in this research. In addition, I also pay attention to the Septuagint, the Greek translation from the 3rd Century B.CE, and the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Septuagint, as well as the Samaritan Pentateuch, show harmonising tendencies. The Masoretic consonantal text is often considered more original.

My methodology is based on a literary analysis where I focus on which literary techniques have been used in the composition of the Primaeval History as a literary unit, being composed of six overarching units and ten story-units.

Based on the research within the literary approach, there is reason to look for techniques like *concatenatio*, which means that the author uses the same theme or words at the end of one unit as at the beginning of the next. The way the author uses repetition, with or without variation is also of interest. Sternberg (1987) has highlighted the importance of repetition with variation as an important technique in the narratives in the Hebrew Bible. These two techniques are of particular importance as a method of linking together the six overarching units in the Primaeval History. They are also of crucial interest since repetitions also can be interpreted as a sign that two different sources are placed after each other creating unnecessary duplicates.

Using this methodology, I will be able to make a well-founded analysis of Genesis 6:1–8 and give my answer to how these verses should be understood in its literary context of Genesis 1–11.

The next step will be to consider the literary techniques used in the different story-units within the toledot-units. One question is if the story-units are linked together with the same technique as the toledot-units.

Even if the main focus is on how the different units in the Primaeval History are linked together, I will also analyse the units themselves to see whether a literary approach can provide new solutions to perceived problems in the text. The Flood Story is of particular interest for the reasons mentioned above. Within the story-units I will analyse how the author uses repetition. Has the text a chiasmic or linear structure? Is the technique *inclusio* used? *Inclusio* means that the author returns to the same theme or words at the end of a unit as he used in the beginning. *Inclusio* helps to clarify where a unit starts and ends. I will also analyse the units concerning word frequency, which can be of importance for the analysis if the technique is present. For instance, it could explain unexpected choices of words otherwise attributed to different sources.

Using the method described above, I will be able to provide conclusions about the literary techniques used in the composition of the Primaeval History. I hope to offer new insights and possible solutions to perceived problems in the text and find exciting new paths for further research. I will also interact with other interpretations, for instance, those in the early Jewish texts. My research will be published in a monograph.

The Primaeval History and its composition is well researched, as the research overview indicates. However, I am not familiar with any research trying to address the composition of the Primaeval History using precisely the methods I describe above.

I will start my research in August 2022. I will do my research as a part-time study. In the first semester, I will start by analysing the text and progress step by step according to the plan above. I hope to be able to present my results in 2028 at the latest.

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Concerning ethical considerations, I will do my research following the Guidelines for Responsible Conduct of Research, published by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK.

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