TERMINOLOGICAL PATTERNS AND GENESIS 38

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In recent studies a detailed analysis of the narrative outline of the Judah and Tamar episode has been presented.[1] These analyses interpret Gen 38 as a literary whole possessing a distinct structural unity and design, a narrative in which the "analysis of structure or 'form' has brought to light the 'content'";[2] and concerning the position of Gen 38 in the extant text and its linguistic and thematic interrelation with the Joseph story it has been concluded:

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[1]E. M. Menn proposes that "since the motifs of birth and naming appear earlier in the narrative as well (Gen 38:3-5), Genesis 38 may be viewed as a double tale of procreation, in which initial biological and social discontinuity is twice overcome, first in Gen 38:1-5 and next in Gen 38:6-30" (*Judah and Tamar [Genesis 38] in Ancient Jewish Exegesis: Studies in Literary Form and Hermeneutics*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 51 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997], 15). The second part of the narrative, vv. 6-30, is subdivided by her as follows: vv. 6-11; 12-19; 20-23; 24-26; 27-30 (19-28). A. J. Lambe, considering Gen 38 "one of the best examples of . . . the Bible's 'smaller literary wholes,'" presents a different and somewhat chiastic outline consisting of "five phases of development" ("Genesis 38: Structure and Literary Design," in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives*, JSOTSup 257, ed. P. R. Davies and D. A. J. Clines [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 102-120). The proposed five phases of this overarching structure are: (1) equilibrium (vv. 1-6), (2) descent (vv. 7-11), (3) disequilibrium (v. 12a), (4) ascent (vv. 12b-26), and (5) equilibrium (vv. 27-30) (103). Furthermore, he maintains that each of the five sections has been chiastically structured (109-119). It should be noticed, however, that the postulated chiasms are mainly based on conceptual and only partly on terminological considerations.

[2]Lambe, 102. Cf. J. A. Emerton, "Some Problems in Genesis 38," *VT* 25 (1975): 338-361; idem, "An Examination of a Recent Structuralist Interpretation of Genesis 38," *VT* 26 (1976), 79-98; *idem*, "Judah and Tamar," *VT* 29 (1979), 403-415; C. Westermann, *Genesis*, BK.AT 1/3 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 42; Chr. Levin, *Der Jahwist*, FRLANT 157 (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1993), 271; G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, WBC 2 (Dallas: Word, 1994), 363-365. E. Blum considers Gen 38 to be "eine überlieferungsgeschichtlich einheitliche Erzählung, die zudem als ursprünglich selbständige Einzelerzählung vom Kontext der Josephgeschichte abzuheben ist"(*Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, WMANT 57 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984], 224). Th. Krüger raises anew objections to the literary coherence of this story, claiming that "Gen 38 seine vorliegende Gestalt im Zusammenhang der nachexilischen Diskussion über die Möglichkeit eines Konnubiums mit Nicht-Judäern bzw. Nicht-Juden erhalten hat" ("Genesis 38—Ein 'Lehrstück' alttestamentlicher Ethik," in *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Klaus Baltzer zum 65. Geburtstag*, OBO 126, ed., R. Bartelmus, Th. Krüger, and H. Utzschneider [Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1993], 205-226).

Judah's pivotal role in Gen 37-50 brings into question the appropriateness of the common designation of these chapters as the "Joseph Story." Although Joseph receives primary attention, Genesis 37-50 actually features two of Jacob's sons, Judah and Joseph, by describing the events of their lives after they part company with their brothers and by portraying their rise to positions of leadership, within the family and over Egypt, respectively. . . . Perhaps Genesis 38, with its focus on Judah, appears intrusive at least in part because Gen 37-50 is generally viewed as Joseph's story. If one broadens one's understanding of the subject of these chapters to include events important for Israel's history, then Genesis 38 doesn't appear intrusive, but rather of paramount importance.[3]

While E. M. Menn's results are in clear contrast to many studies scrutinizing the provenience and present position of Gen 38,[4] I not only agree with her conclusions, but I would even hypothesize: in the context of the *Endgestalt*, i.e., the final shape of the text of Genesis, that this narrative has been purposefully placed in its present position by the ancient author, the term "author" being used and understood as referring to the person(s) responsible for the present text, the person(s) who composed the literary unit we call, e.g., "Gen 38" or "Genesis," literary entities which did not exist prior to their being composed in their present compositional context, whatever the prehistory of the respective *Vorlagen* might have been.

In a recent study carefully and consistently following R. Rendtorff's hermeneutic principle that "the understanding of the biblical text in its present

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[3]Menn, 79, and n. 134; cf. U. Cassuto, "The Story of Tamar and Judah," *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), 29-40; Wenham, 365.

[4]E.g., Westermann, 42, maintains that Gen 38 is "eine in sich abgeschlossene Einzelerzählung; . . . Die Erzählung von Judah und Tamar ist nicht, wie bisher gesagt wurde, in die *Joseph*geschichte eingefügt worden, sie hat mit ihr nichts zu tun, sondern in die *Jakob*geschichte bzw. den Schluß der Jakobgeschichte (Gn 37 Vorlage und 46-50)" (his emphasis). R. Rendtorff interprets Gen 38 as a Judahite continuation of the Jacob story which has been inserted together with Gen 49 (*Das Alte Testament. Eine Einführung* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983] 145). Blum, 224, considers Gen 38 as "ursprünglich selbständige Einzelüberlieferung [die] vom Kontext der Josephgeschichte abzuheben ist." Because of its theology, Krüger, 205-226, prefers an exilic-postexilic date for Gen 38; H.-Ch. Schmitt maintains: "Somit spricht alles dafür, daß es sich bei dem Verfasser von Gen 38 um einen schriftgelehrten Kenner der theologischen Tradition seiner Zeit handelt. Da er dabei sowohl auf das Deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk als auch auf das Heiligkeitsgesetz Bezug nimmt, kann durchaus damit gerechnet werden, daß es sich auch bei ihm um den in Gen 48-50 beobachteten nachpriesterlichen spätdeuteronomistischen Redaktor handelt, der Pentateuch und Deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk miteinander verbinden will"("Die Josephsgeschichte und das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk Genesis 38 und 48-50," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature. Festschrift C. H. W. Brekelmans*, Bibliotheca Ephemeredium Theologicarum Lovaniensium 133, ed. J. van Ruiten and M. Vervenne [Leuven: University Press, 1997], 403). Cf. J. A. Soggin, *Das Buch Genesis. Kommentar* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 445-454.

form is the preeminent task of exegesis,"[5] almost the total vocabulary of Leviticus has been scrutinized.[6] This analysis shows that the present text present itself as a carefully composed literary entity. In the course of that study it has been shown that by tabulating the total vocabulary of a given passage, the distinct distribution, the relative frequency, and the structural positioning of significant terms and/or phrases come to light, and it is these structural elements which have been termed "terminological patterns." Furthermore, it has become evident that these terminological patterns create short-range linkages in a self-contained textual unit, but at the same time long-range terminological patterns have been discovered. Because of the symbolic significance ascribed by the ancients to the number "seven" (representing completion and completeness), it has been maintained that "in a variable-length list often the *seventh* slot and, in case of a longer list, at times the *twelfth* position are emphasized by means of some special term/phrase."[7]

At this point, two examples taken from the aforementioned study should suffice. First, in Lev 11, which in Pentateuchal studies is often viewed as consisting of several distinct redactional layers, the hiphil participle of the verb עלה "go up"[8] and the noun ארץ "land"[9] appear both for the *seventh* time in the unique statement: כי יי אני המעלה אתכם מארץ מצרים "for I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (v. 45). Second, in a macrostructure, i.e., structural outline encompassing major parts of the book of Leviticus, an eleven-part terminological pattern based on the phrase ארץ מצרים "the land of Egypt,"[10] comes to light. Within this terminological pattern a carefully construed chiastic structure crops up, an outline with a singular seventh position (25:38), where a cluster of theological tenets can be detected which is unique in the Hebrew Bible. In my view it is noteworthy that in both examples the terminological patterns clearly cross the boundaries of "P" and "H" material, thereby calling into question the validity of these boundaries.

In the present bipartite study we shall begin by searching for short-range terminological patterns within the narrow confines of Gen 38, and it is only in a second step that long-range terminological linkages will be looked for, structures seemingly interlinking major parts of the present book of Genesis.

[5]R. Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, BK.AT 3, 1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 4.

[6]W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus*, Biblical Interpretation Series 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

[7]Ibid., 32.

[8]Vv. 3, 4², 5, 6, 26, 45; cf. Warning, 52-53.

[9]Vv. 2, 21, 29, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46; cf. Warning, 53-54.

[10]Lev 11:45; 18:3; 19:34, 36; 22:33; 23:43; 25:38, 42, 55; 26:13, 45; cf. Warning, 139-142.

Terminological Patterns Within Genesis 38

The Verb נתן

The eight occurrences of the common verb נתן "give" (2011 / 150)[11] in Gen 38 have probably been employed as a structural device in outlining the content of the narrative. Whereas the first and last occurrences of the verb have not been thematically integrated in the following structure, the other six members have been chiastically arranged, and in my opinion the close verbal and conceptual connection of the corresponding parts can hardly be contradicted. In v. 14 it is stated that "she had not been given to him as a wife," and correspondingly Judah admits in v. 26 that "I have not given her to my son Shela"; v. 16 makes mention of Tamar's question, "What will you give me, if you come into me" and v. 18b reports, "and he gave [them to] her and came into her"; v. 17 refers to her terms, "if you will give me a pledge until you send it" and v. 18a makes mention of Judah's answer, "What pledge shall I give you?"

No.				
9		זרע לאחיו	נתן	לבלתי
14	A	לו לאשה	לא נתנה	כי ראתה כי גדל שלה והוא
16	B	לי כי תבוא אלי	מה תתן	ותאמר
17	C	ערבון עד שלחך	אם תתן	ותמאר
18a	C		לך ויאמר מה הערון אשר אתן	
18b	B	לה ויבוא אליה ותהר לו	ויתן	
26	A	לשלה בני	לא נתתיה	כי על כן
28		יד	ויתן	ויהי בלדתה

The distinct terminological patterns presented in this table support the thematic coherence of the narrative, emphasizing the "not-giving" of Tamar as a wife for Shela and the bargaining about what to give/receive

as a pledge prior to having sexual intercourse.

The Verb בוא

By means of intricately interrelating the six occurrences of the verb בוא (אל) "come (into)" (2,565/150) in each case denoting "to have intercourse with," with two of the five occurrences of the verb הרה "conceive, be pregnant" (54/22),[12] an impressive inclusion has been created. The *inclusio*, being based both on terminological and thematic correspondence, is construed by the verbatim statement ויבא אליה ותהר "and he came into her and she became pregnant" (vv. 3, 18). In a similar vein as in the preceding structure the thematic interrelation of statements made in vv. 8 and 9 and in v. 16a and b cannot be contradicted. "Go into your brother's wife" (v. 8) is matched by v. 9, "so whenever he went into his brother's wife," and Judah's request, "please let me come into you" (v. 16a), is countered by Tamar in v. 16b, "What will you give me to come into me?"

ויקחה	ויבא		<u>אליה ותהר</u> ותלד בן	2-3
ויאמר יהודה לאונן	בא	אל אשת אחיך		8
והיה אם	בא	אל אשת אחיו		9
ויאמר הבה נא	אבוא	אליך		16a
מה תתן לי כי ותאמר	תבוא	אלי		16b
ויתן לה	ויבא		<u>אליה ותהר</u> לו	18

By way of deliberately distributing the two "procreative verbs"[13] בוא אל and הרה, the ancient author construes two portentous sexual encounters in Judah's life into a fine inclusion, thus encompassing a major part of Gen 38. Whereas the first one turns out to be a failure, at least in the long run because of Er's untimely death, Judah's intercourse with Tamar resolves a problem which his forefathers, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, had to face before, childlessness. Furthermore, Judah's and Tamar's intimate encounter not only results in the birth of twins, but Tamar thus secures for Judah the honor of becoming the progenitor of King David. The significance of the twins' birth is further underscored by the following terminological pattern, which is based on the noun "name."

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[12]This verb also occurs in 38:4, 24, 25.

[13]Menn, 17.

The Noun שם

It is a well-known fact that in ancient genealogies the seventh slot has at times been reserved for a highly honored person (cf. Gen 5:21-24/ Jude 14; Ruth 4:18-22).[14] In view of this fact it may be more than accidental that the seventh time the noun שם "name" (864/103) appears, the name of Perez, the ancestor of the Davidic dynasty, is given. In my opinion, Menn correctly maintains that the significance of the detailed description of the "double event of birth and naming in comparison with the formulaic description of the three single births in the first birth narrative attests to the relative significance of the twins."[15]

1	חירה	ושמו	ויט עד איש עדלמי
2	שוע	ושמו	וירא שם יהודה בת איש כנעני
3	ער	שמו	ויקרא את
4	אונן	שמו	ותקרא את
5	שלה	שמו	ותקרא את
6	תמר	שמה	
29	<u>פרץ</u>	<u>שמו</u>	<u>ויקרא</u>
30	זרח	שמו	ויקרא

If it is true that this story is aiming at the climactic birth of twins, with Perez as the more important of the two sons,[16] the author has obviously attained his objective by placing Perez's name in the seventh position.

Each of the three preceding terminological patterns, being based on the two verbs נתן and בוא and the noun שם, supports the notion of literary unity. The first terminological pattern extends from vv. 2 to 18, the second from v. 9 as far as v. 28; and the last one, reaching from vv. 1 to 30, encloses the whole narrative from its very beginning to the end. While Gen 38 thus turns out to be a fine example of Hebrew narrative art, it is certainly even more amazing to detect the author's adroit artfulness in interlinking Gen 38 with what precedes and follows.

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[14]J. M. Sasson, "Generation, Seventh," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement* (1976), 355.

[15]Menn, 28.

[16]Cf. Menn, 82.

Terminological Patterns Beyond Genesis 38

In the aforementioned study on terminological patterns in Leviticus, no less than twenty-one macrostructures have been pointed out, each structural outline encompassing a major part of the present book of Leviticus. In a very similar way the ancient author of Genesis has seemingly created long-range terminological patterns interlinking Gen 38 with the preceding patriarchal stories and even the *Urgeschichte*.

There can be no doubt that in the Judah-Tamar narrative the development of the plot depends very much on Tamar's artfulness in beguiling her father-in-law. In order not to be recognized and thus to have her scheme wrecked, she has to put aside, i.e., to take off (סור) her widow's clothes (v. 14); and in order to hide behind anonymity, she had better cover (כסה) her face with a veil (v. 14). After having recovered from mourning his wife's death, Judah goes up to his men who are shearing sheep. On his way he notices a veiled woman, and considering her to be a prostitute, Judah turns (נטה) to her and in plain terms inquires about her price for venal love (v. 16). Following this portentous intercourse—in the word's double meaning—with her father-in-law, Tamar returns home and again puts on her widow's clothes (בגד) (v. 19).

According to many commentators, Gen 38 should be seen as an originally independent narrative standing clearly outside of the Joseph story.[17] Whatever the oral and/or written prehistory of this episode might have been, each of the terms pointed out, which are indispensable to the plot of the story, appears in this very narrative for the *seventh* time in Genesis. Did the author of the extant text possibly attempt to convey the "completeness" and "perfection" of this encounter, a sexual encounter during which the ancestor of David was conceived, by means of using each of the above-mentioned terms in the extant text of Genesis for the *seventh* time? In order to bring home the distinct differences between a diachronic interpretation as, for example, presented by Chr. Levin in his redaction-critical study on the "Jahwist," and the exclusively synchronic approach taken in the present study, the following has been done: in the right margin of each of the following tables Levin's results have been inserted, and in each case *his* sigla have been used,[18] whereas

[17]E.g., Rendtorff, *Einführung*, 145; Blum, 224; Soggin, 452-453; cf. C. Paap, *Die Josephsgeschichte Genesis 37-50: Bestimmungen ihrer literarischen Gattung in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, European University Studies. Series XXIII: Theology, vol. 534 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995).

[18]Levin, 51: J^Q = pre-Jahwistic sources ("vorjahwistische Quellen"); J^R = Jahwist redaction ("jahwistische Redaktion"); J^S = post-Jahwistic additions ("nachjahwistische Ergänzungen"); P = Priestly Source ("Priesterschrift"); R = final redaction ("Endredaktion"); R^S = "post-final-redaction" additions ("nachendredaktionelle Ergänzungen"). If we cast a glance at the respective commentaries, Levin's assigning texts to different redactional layers turns out to be one of many

the sigla have not been added to the terminological patterns presented above, since Levin considers Gen 38 *in toto* to be the result of what he calls "post-Jahwistic additions."

The Verb סור

The distribution of the verb סור "turn aside; take off" (300/11) in Genesis is seemingly of significance because of the seventh position. Tamar's taking off her widow's clothes and covering herself with a veil in order not to be recognized in the encounter with her father-in-law constitutes the first indispensable move in order to achieve her objective, i.e., to be impregnated by Judah:

Ref	Text	Verb	Extra	Siglum
8:13	נח את מכסה התבה	ויסר		J^R
19:2	נא אל בית עבדכם	סורו	הנה נא אדני	J^Q
3	אליו ויבאו אל ביתו	ויסרו		J^Q
30:32	משם כל שה נקד וטלוא	הסר		J^R
35	התישים העקדים ביום ההוא את	ויסר		J^R
35:2	את אלהי הנכר אשר בתככם	הסרו		J^S
38:14	<u>בגדי אלמנותה מעליה ותכס בצעיף ותתעלף</u>	<u>ותסר</u>		J^S
19	בגדי אלמנותה צעיפה מעלה ותלבש	ותסר	ותקם ותלך	J^S
41:42	פרעה את טבעתו מעל ידו	ויסר		J^S
48:17	אתה מעל ראש אפרים	להסיר		J^S
49:10	שבט מיהודה	לא יסור		R^S

possibilities proposed by commentators. Therefore, we should be cognizant of two sobering statements, the first one made by R. N. Whybray concerning the present state of Pentateuchal studies: "There is at the present moment no consensus whatever about when, why, how, and through whom the Pentateuch reached its present form, and opinions about the date of composition of its various parts differ by more than five hundred years" (*Introduction to the Pentateuch* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 12-13). Second, conerning a final redactor, Blenkinsopp remarks: "The contribution, even the existence, of a final redactor is one of the fuzziest issues in the study of the formation of the Pentateuch. One thing does seem clear, however, though not always acknowledged: the final redaction was not the work of P" (J. Blenkinsopp, "P and J in Genesis 1:1-11:26: An Alternative Hypothesis," in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. A. B. Beck, A. H. Bartelt, P. R. Raabe and C. A. Franke [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 6).

Having taken off her widow's clothes, she has to take the second step in disguising herself by covering her face with a veil and it is the distribution of the verb כסה "cover" in Genesis which will be discussed next.

The Verb כסה

The seventh occurrence of the verb כסה "cover" (156/8) in Genesis is likewise found in Gen 38:14a. Because it seems rather unlikely that the seventh occurences of the two verbs, סור and כסה, would appear accidentally in a single sentence, "She took off [ותסר] her widow's clothes, and covered [ותכס] herself with a veil to disguise herself" (v. 14aα), we should reckon with some author's deliberate structural design:

P	והמים גברו מאד מאד על הארץ	ויכסו	כל ההרים הגבהים	7:19
P	חמש עשרה אמה מלמעלה גברו המים	ויכסו	ההרים	20
J^R		ויכסו	את ערות אביהם	9:23
R^S	ויי אמר המכסה אני מאברהם			18:17
J^S	ותקח הצעיף	ותתכס		24:65
J^R		וכסינו	את דמו	37:26
J^S	<u>ותסר בגדי אלמנותה מעליה</u>	<u>ותכס</u>	<u>בצעיף ותתעלף</u>	38:14
J^S	ויראה יהודה ויחשבה לזונה כי	כסתה	פניה	15

Having completed her part by carefully disguising herself, she has now to wait for Judah to become actively involved and perform his part. As soon as the widower looks upon the putative prostitute, his sexual desire seems to be aroused, because he (instantaneously) turns to her, and it is the verb נטה "turn" which will be considered next.

The Verb נטה

The overall distribution of the verb נטה "turn aside; bend down low; spread out, pitch [a tent]" (185/9) in Genesis gains in momentum because of its seventh position in Gen 38:16. Having turned toward the "prostitute," Judah immediately comes down to business: "He turned [ויט] to her by the roadside and said, 'Please let me come into you'", for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law" (38:16):

12:8	אהלה	ויט		J^Q
24:14	נא כדך ואשתה	הטי		J^R
26:25	שם אהלו	ויט		J^S
33:19	שם אהלו	נטה	... אשר	R^S
35:21	אהלה	ויט	ויסע ישראל	J^R
38:1	איש עדלמי ושמו חירה עד	ויט		J^S
16	_הבה נא אבוא אליך אליה אל הדרך ויאמר_	_ויט_		J^S
39:21	אליו חסד	ויט	ויהי יי את יוסף	J^R
49:15	שכמו לסבל	ויט		R^S

The five preceding structures based on the verbs כסה, סור, בוא, נתן, and נטה have possibly been used by the ancient author to depict both the piquantness and pointedness of this portentous encounter. Following the sexual intercourse with her father-in-law, Tamar returns to her father's house and puts on her widow's clothes again, and it is the noun בגד "clothes; garment" we shall look at next.

The Noun בגד

The seventh occurrence of the noun בגד "garment" (215/14) in Genesis is closely related to the two preceding structures. Whereas the seventh occurrences of the verbs סור and כסה describe Tamar's *taking off* her widow's clothes and *covering* herself with a veil, the noun בגד is used for the seventh time in depicting the reversal: "And she rose, went away and she took off her veil and put on her widow's clothes [בגדי אלמנותה] again" (38:19):

24:53	ויתן לרבקה	ובגדים	ויוצא העבד ...	J^R
27:15	עשו	בגדי	ותקח רקבה את	J^Q
27	ויברכהו	בגדיו	וירח את ריח	J^Q
28:20	ללבש	ובגד	ונתן לי לחם לאכל	J^S
37:29		בגדיו	ויקרע את	R^S

38:14	אלמנותה מעליה ותכס בצעיף ותתעלף	בגדי	ותסר J^S
19	אלמנותה	בגדי	ותסר צעיפה מעליה ותלבש J^S
39:12a		בבגדו	ותתפשהו J^Q
12b	בידה	בגדו	ויעזב J^Q
13	בידה	בגדו	כראותה כי עזב ויהי R^S
15	אצלי	בגדו	ויעזב R^S
16	אצלה	בגדו	ותנח J^Q
18	אצלי	בגדו	ויעזב R^S
41:42	שש וישם רבד הזהב על צוארו	בגדי	וילבש אתו J^S

There can be no doubt that the ancient author aptly includes the taking off (v. 14) of her widow's clothes and the re-dressing (v. 19) in significant terminological patterns.

Furthermore, as can be gathered from the preceding table both in Gen 38 and the Joseph story, the "garment motif"[19] seemingly plays a

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[19] V. H. Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative," *JSOT* 65 (1995), 28. Cf. Warning, 86-88, who calls attention to the striking בגד-structure in Lev 16. Whereas the majority of scholars view this chapter as composite, a close reading of the extant text reveals an impressive seven-part chiastic structure, by means of which Lev 16 shows itself as a creatively composed literary whole:

4	A	קדש הם	בגדי	
23	B	הבד	בגדי	ופשט את
24	C		בגדיו	ולבש את
26	C		בגדיו	והמשלח את השעיר לעזאזל יכבס
28	C		בגדיו	והשרף אתם יכבס
32bα	B	הבד	בגדי	ולבש את
32bβ	A	הקדש	בגדי	

significant role. Six occurrences of the nominal form (ב)בגדו ("his garment") in Gen 39 are capped by the *seventh* בגדי שש "linen garment" in 41:42: "Then Pharaoh . . . dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck." In view of Joseph's reply to Potiphar's wife, "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (39:9b), this subtle and surprising structure seemingly corroborates the significant statement, "the Lord was with Joseph" (39:2, 21). Are we to understand this structure as a subtle authorial hint pregnant with theological meaning? Because of his being faithful to the Lord and leaving בגדיו "his clothes" in the hands of the mendacious seductress, Joseph is finally "rewarded" by being dressed in "fine robes of linen" and is made "second-in-command" in Egypt. If we take the fourteen texts of the above structure at face value, we cannot help but admit that by means of the noun בגד the author of the extant text of Genesis has created a perfect terminological pattern by means of which a major section of the present-day book of Genesis has been structured.[20]

Conclusion

The search for terminological patterns has seemingly proven profitable. Both within the narrow confines of Gen 38 and the framework of the book of Genesis, the structuring function of terminological patterns has been brought to light. Hence there can be hardly any doubt that by having scrutinized the structure, i.e., the "form," the "content" has been elucidated. If it is true to fact that in "literature the form is meaningful . . . ; in literature the form creates meaning . . . ; in literature the meaning exists in and through form,"[21] then the terminological patterns presented above should be evaluated as exquisite examples. In view of the fact that in scrutinizing the structure of a given biblical text "our option consists of the alternative between more or less substantiated hypotheses, not between a hypothesis and no hypothesis,"[22] we ought to be mindful that "the reliability of theories is conditioned by their degree

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[20]Further terminological and thematic links between Gen 38 and its immediate context have been pointed out, for example, by Cassuto, 30-31; Blum, 245; Wenham, 363-365; Menn, 75-78.

[21]A. Alonso-Schökel, "Hermeneutical Problems of Literary Study of the Bible," *VTSup Congress Volume 28. Edinburgh 1974* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 7.

[22]R. Knierim, *Text and Concept in Leviticus 1:1-9: A Case in Exegetical Method*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 2.

of explanatory power."[23] Since it is of course self-evident that in matters like these "all one can aspire to is to elevate a possibility into a serious probability or, in other words, to propose a better hypothesis,"[24] the reader is called upon to weigh the evidence and then to decide for herself or himself, whether in Pentateuchal studies a systematic synchronic approach should at last be taken more seriously.

In my opinion the message conveyed through the distinct terminological patterns enables us to better understand the eminent role that Judah holds among his brothers in the last chapters of Genesis and that his (royal) descendants have held throughout the history of Israel. And in case the foregoing observations are true to the authorial intentions, we may conclude that by means of dexterous structural designs the biblical writer subtly promulgates profound theological tenets.

[23]A. G. van Aarde, "Historical Criticism and Holism: Heading Toward a New Paradigm?," in *Paradigms and Progress in Theology*, ed. J. Mouton et al. (NP: HSRC Studies in Research Methodology, 1988), 54.

[24]Blenkinsopp, 1.