# TERMINOLOGICAL PATTERNS AND GENESIS 39

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The Joseph story with its beginning in Genesis 37 is "interrupted" by the episode of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38), and in Gen 39:1 the main thread of the story is reintroduced by recapitulating 37:36, "Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar . . . ," but "here Joseph is the subject of the sentence . . . showing he is now to be the focus of interest."[1] In order to elaborate on Joseph's role in Genesis 39 effectively it seems best to take seriously the vocabulary employed by its ancient author, the term "author" being understood and used as referring to the person(s) responsible for the text before us, the person(s) who composed the literary unit we call "Genesis 38," "Genesis 39," or "Genesis," literary entities which did not exist prior to their composition, whatever the prehistory of their individual parts may have been. In order to comprehend the message of each of these three chapters properly and to realize their linguistic and thematic interrelation, the extant *Endgestalt*, the final shape, should be accepted as sole starting point of any exegetical work.

It is my contention that it will prove profitable to implement the proposal made by R. Rendtorff both consequently and rigorously:

> A "reconstruction" of previous stages of the text . . . would be very hypothetical in most cases. . . . Moreover in conscious and categorical deviation from a widely practiced exegetic theory and praxis, the hermeneutic principle applied here is that the understanding of the biblical text in its present form is the preeminent task of exegesis.[2]

Since "the only *fact* available to us is the text of the Pentateuch in all its complexity,"[3] it is the complex and yet carefully composed *Endgestalt* that serves as the foundation for this paper. In some recent studies scrutinizing the vocabulary of selected pericopes of the Hebrew Bible, the hermeneutical principle proposed by Rendtorff has been consequently applied. In the course of these scrutinies significant verbal links have been discovered that come to light both in short self-contained passages[4] and on a larger scale,

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[1] G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word, 1994) 373.

[2] R. Rendtorff, *Leviticus* (BKAT 3/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1985) 4.

[3] R. N. Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 27 (his emphasis).

[4] W. Warning, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 12, 1–3," *Bib* 81 (2000) 386–90; *idem*, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Leviticus 11," *BZ* (forthcoming); *idem*, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 15," *Henoch* (forthcoming)—the seven-part linguistic linkage based on the noun שיבה "old age, gray hairs" reaches from Gen 15:15 to Deut 32:25; *idem*, "Terminological Patterns and Genesis 17," *HUCA* (forthcoming)—two outstanding outlines founded on the noun עולם "eternity; ages; as of old" and the verb נפל "fall" respectively, encompass major parts of the book of Genesis.

encompassing major parts of Genesis, Leviticus, and even the Pentateuch as a whole.[5]

Such linguistic links can be demonstrated by tabulating all the words used in a self-contained literary unit, an entity that may consist of a brief passage or even an entire Biblical book. By way of tabulating the total vocabulary of a given passage, the distinct distribution, the relative frequency, and the structural positioning of significant terms and/or phrases will come to the fore.[6] Concerning the present study, this implies that (almost) every word used in Genesis 39 has been scrutinized by means of *BibleWorks* and the concordance. In tabulating the respective positions and counting the frequencies of the vocabulary, several suggestive terms turn out to be of significance as far as the structural outlines are concerned, and it is these distinct structures based on counting a given sentential entity, word or term that have been designated "terminological patterns."[7]

With regard to such "veiled counting"[8] in the Hebrew Bible we would do well to bear in mind M. Tsevat's admonition:

> The literary units to be scrutinized concerning the frequency of characteristic words must be clearly and distinctly recognizable as such, and if possible they should be delimited in the same way in previous research, so that the exegete will not be tempted or be exposed to the reproach that he or she places the caesura in the continuum of the text in such a way that the characteristic term occurs the desired number of times.[9]

It is, of course, common knowledge that in many eras and diverse cultures people have had a certain predilection for certain numbers carrying symbolic significance. There is no doubt that the symbolic significance of numerals like three, ten, twelve, and their multiples is surpassed by the number "seven" and hence it can rightfully be called the sacred number *par excellence*. In the process of tabulating the vocabulary of many a passage of the Hebrew Bible, it has come to light that in a variable length list often the *seventh* position and, in case of a longer list, less often the *twelfth* are emphasized by means of some special term or phrase.[10] But besides

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[5] W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus* (Biblical Interpretation Series 35; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999) 133–66; *idem*, "Terminological Patterns and the Divine Epithet *Shaddai*," *TynBul* (forthcoming); *idem*, "Terminological Patterns and the Verb מול 'Circumcise' in the Pentateuch," *BN* (forthcoming); *idem*, "Terminological Patterns and the Term עצום 'Strong, Powerful' in the Pentateuch," *AUSS* (forthcoming).

[6] W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984) 288, points out that the seventeen occurrences of the particle כל "all, every" in Psalm 145 are "obviously related to the universalist theme of the poem."

[7] Warning, *Artistry* 25.

[8] M. Tsevat, "Abzählungen in 1 Samuel 1–4", in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Blum, Ch. Macholz, and E. W. Stegemann; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990) 213, speaks of "verhüllte Abzählungen."

[9] Ibid. 208.

[10] W. Warning, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen in der Urgeschichte," *ZAW* (forthcoming), points to the clear-cut terminological and thematic interrelation of the seventh occurrences of the two terms טוב "good" and עשה "make" in Gen 1:31, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (NIV), and their twelfth occurrences in 2:18, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (NIV), which may shed new light on the correlation of the so-called

having made use of the symbolic significance of the numbers "seven" (representing completeness and completion) and "twelve,"[11] Biblical authors have created well-crafted inclusions or envelope structures, outlines in which the first and last positions are similar.[12] Analogous to the envelope structure the designation "open-envelope structure" has been coined for terminological patterns if the second and second-from-last positions resemble each other,[13] and in case the third and third-from-last, fourth and fourth-from-last, etc. positions are similar or even verbatim, one can speak of an "equidistant structure."[14]

It is important to understand that terminological patterns can be found in diverse genres of Biblical literature,[15] and I dare say that even high-frequency words, technical terms or common words have been used by Biblical writers in creating significant structural outlines.[16] Faced with the fact that in present-day Pentateuchal studies this approach is rarely being used, certain reservations on the part of scholars are understandable. Considering the results that substantiate the methodological appropriateness of this approach, it has been rightly remarked:

> After having become accustomed to this aspect of art, you will no longer have any basic problems with the veiled countings of the Old Testament. You will rather realize that the significance of the components of a piece of art and their simple identifiability are not necessarily in a positive ratio to one another.[17]

In the following different types of terminological patterns are presented, each of which is rooted in the extant text, some of them embracing Genesis 39 proper and others encompassing even (major parts of) the book of Genesis. In my view these linguistic links should be taken into serious consideration for two reasons: First, they often transcend the boundaries set by redaction-critical and source-critical studies, and, second, they come to light only after the extant *Endgestalt* has been made the sole starting point.

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"Priestly" and "Yahwistic" creation stories. Because of these terminological links we may proceed on the assumption that in the extant text the creation story in Genesis 1–2 has been composed as a carefully conceived homogeneous literary unit.

[11] Cf. Warning, *Artistry* 66–82, 105–7, 110–15, 133–36, 139–42, 149–59.

[12] Ibid. 120–24, 159–60.

[13] Ibid. 32–33, 115–20, 156–59.

[14] Ibid. 105–6, 109–10.

[15] Whereas the terminological patterns brought to light in Amos and Esther will be presented elsewhere, at this point attention should be drawn to the fact that in either book the verb קרא "call, name" is the basis for significant linguistic linkages encompassing major parts of each of the two books. Cf. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part I. From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961) 14–15; J. Limburg, "Sevenfold Structures in the Book of Amos", *JBL* 106 (1987) 217–22; Tsevat, "Abzählungen" 207–14; W. Berg, "Siebenerreihen von Verben und Substantiven," *BN* 84 (1996) 11–15; Warning, *Artistry* 27–30, 51–54, 66–81, 133–36.

[16] Warning, *Artistry*, points to the structuring function of common words such as ארץ "land" (53–54, 77–78), בן "son" (97–98) and היה "be" (80–81) in Leviticus; cf. M. Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah* (JSOTSup 130; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 56; M. J. Boda, "Chiasmus in Ubiquity. Symmetrical Mirages in Nehemiah 9," *JSOT* 71 (1996) 55–70.

[17] Tsevat, "Abzählungen" 213.

### I. TERMINOLOGICAL PATTERNS IN GENESIS 39

Gen 39:1–23, generally accepted as a literary unit in which the narrative thread of Genesis 37 is taken up,[18] has seemingly been outlined by means of the distinct distribution of the PN "Joseph," the tetragrammaton, the verbs עזב "leave (behind)" and שכב "lie (sleep) with," and the interplay of the words חוץ "outside," יצא "go out," and נוס "flee."

1. *The PN Joseph*. By tabulating the eleven occurrences of the PN "Joseph" a fine and meaningful open-envelope structure comes to light. Significantly, in Genesis 39 the open-envelope structure encompasses the entire story except for the last verse with the verbatim statement ויהי יי את יוסף "and the Lord was with Joseph" in the second and second-from-last positions. The notion that the Lord was with Joseph is not only the basis of this open-envelope structure but, viewed from the end, this programmatic statement constitutes the center of the story.[19] If we accept the idea of the Lord being the golden thread of the narrative, it is likewise of significance that in the very center of the following table a statement is made that is crucial to the denouement of the plot: "Joseph had a fine figure and a handsome face" (v. 6b). Had it not been for his attractiveness, Potiphar's wife might never have noticed this handsome young slave. Therefore it is of great consequence for the plot of the story that, following the remark regarding his fine figure and handsome face, it is stated that "his master's wife set her eyes on Joseph" (v. 7a):

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | **יוסף** | הורד מצרימה | |
| 2 | | <u>ויהי יי את יוסף</u> | | |
| 4 | | **יוסף** | חן בעיניו | וימצא |
| 5 | | **יוסף** | | ויברך יי את בית המצרי בגלל |
| 6a | | **יוסף** | | ויעזב כל אשר לו ביד |
| 6b | *ויהי* | *יוסף* | *יפה תאר ויפה מראה* | |
| 7 | | **יוסף** | | ותשא אשת אדניו את עיניה אל |
| 10 | | **יוסף** | יום יום | ויהי כדברה אל |
| 20 | | **יוסף** | אתו ויתנהו אל בית הסהר | ויקח אדני |
| 21 | | <u>ויהי יי את יוסף</u> | | |
| 22 | | **יוסף** | | ויתן שר בית הסהר ביד |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | **Joseph** | was taken down to Egypt |
| 2 | *and the Lord was with* | *Joseph* | |
| 4 | | **Joseph** | pleased his master |
| 5 | the Lord blessed . . . because of | **Joseph** | |
| 6a | so he left in | **Joseph's** | care everything he had |
| 6b | | *Joseph* | *had a fine figure and a handsome face* |
| 7 | his master's wife set her eyes on | **Joseph** | |
| 10 | she talked to | **Joseph** | day after day |
| 20 | so | **Joseph's** | master took him and put him in prison |
| 21 | *and the Lord was with* | *Joseph* | |
| 22 | so the warden put . . . in | **Joseph's** | care |

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[18] G. W. Coats, "Redactional Unity in Genesis 37–50," *JBL 93* (1974) 15–21; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* 372, proceed on the assumption that a new section begins with 39:21.

[19] Cf. H. Seebass, *Genesis III. Josephsgeschichte (37,1–50,26)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000) 45.

Indubitably, this open-envelope structure brings to the fore the story's main theme. Although the open-envelope structure is based on the statement "and the Lord was with Joseph" (v. 2aα, 21), the same idea is expressed differently one more time in v. 23b, yet without using the PN "Joseph:" באשר יי אתו ואשר הוא עשה יי מצליח "because the Lord was with him and the Lord made everything he did successful."[20] Through the term מצליח "be/make successful" (vv. 2aβ, 3b) Joseph's successful services to the prison warden are linked with his services in Potiphar's house:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2a | מצליח | ויהי יי את יוסף ויהי איש |
| 3b | וכל אשר הוא עשה יי מצליח בידו | |
| 23 | ואשר הוא עשה יי מצליח | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2a | the Lord was with Joseph and he became a | successful man |
| 3b | everything he did the Lord made | successful in his hand |
| 23 | and what he did the Lord made | successful |

Additional support for the notion of Gen 39:1–23 being a self-contained literary unit is provided by the distinct distribution of the ineffable name.

2. *The Tetragrammaton.* In view of the fact that the divine name occurs very rarely in the Joseph story, attention should be paid to the structuring function of its eight occurrences in Genesis 39:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | | ויהי יי את יוסף | | |
| 3a | | אתו | יי | | וירא אדניו כי |
| 3b | מצליח בידו | | יי | | וכל אשר הוא עשה |
| 5a | | את בית המצרי בגלל יוסף | יי | ויברך | |
| 5b | | בכל אשר יש לו | יי | ברכת | ויהי |
| 21 | | | ויהי יי את יוסף | | באשר |
| 23a | | אתו | יי | | |
| 23b | מצליח | | יי | | ואשר הוא עשה |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | **and the** | **Lord was with Joseph** |
| 3a | . . . that the | **Lord** was with him |
| 3b | everything *that he did the* | **Lord** *made successful* in his hands |
| 5a | the | **Lord** *blessed*: the house of the Egyptian because of Joseph |
| 5b | *the blessing* of the | **Lord** was on everything Potiphar had |
| 21 | **and the** | **Lord was with Joseph** |
| 23a | because the | **Lord** was with him |
| 23b | and *what he did the* | **Lord** *made successful* |

This outline, somewhat resembling a chiastic structure [ABC DD ABC], seemingly focuses on the Lord's blessing on Potiphar and his house, and this idea is expressed twice, once by means of the verb "bless" (v. 5a) and a second time by the noun "blessing" (v. 5b). Each of the two words appears only once in this chapter. Furthermore, it is of significance that three different phrases describing the Lord's being with Joseph are repeated when he finds himself in prison although being innocent (vv. 2 // 21; 3a // 23a; 3b // 23b). In view of the terminological and thematic affinities there can be hardly any doubt that this structure and the two preceding ones strongly support those

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[20] The translation is taken from Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* 378.

commentators who maintain that the chapter division correctly delimits this section of Genesis.

3. *The verb* עזב.   No reader of Genesis 39 would deny that the idea of "leaving (behind)" is essential to the plot of the story. Having recognized the fact that for Joseph's sake his household is being blessed by the Lord, Potiphar "left in Joseph's care everything he had" (v. 6a). When Potiphar's wife set her eyes on Joseph, he left his garment with her (v. 12) in order to escape her seductive advances, the fact of leaving his garment with her being repeated three times (v. 13, 15, 18). Finally, the woman uses the garment left behind as her "piece of evidence" to "prove" to her husband that the Hebrew slave had approached her. The distinct conjugational forms—עזב being bracketed on both sides by two occurrences of ויעזב—constitute a terminological pattern that has been designated "identical verbal structure":[21]

| 6 | | כל אשר לו ביד יוסף | **ויעזב** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | | בגדו בידה | **ויעזב** | |
| 13 | | בגדו בידה | **עזב** | ויהי כראותה כי |
| 15 | | בגדו אצלי | **ויעזב** | ויהי כשמעו כי הרימתי קולי ואקרא |
| 18 | | בגדו אצלי | **ויעזב** | ויהי כהרימי קולי ואקרא |

| 6 | | so he | **left** | in Joseph's care everything he had |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | | but he | **left** | his garment in her hand |
| 13 | when she saw that he had | | **left** | his garment in her hand |
| 15 | | he | **left** | his garment beside me |
| 18 | when I lifted my voice and screamed he | | **left** | his garment beside me |

The fine balance of this identical verbal structure within the narrow confines of Genesis 39 cannot be contested, an outline that, as will be shown below, constitutes the very center of a somewhat equidistant structure extending from Genesis 2 to 50.

Joseph left his garment behind because of the seductress's indecent proposition to sleep with her, and it is the verb שכב "lie, sleep (with)" that will be considered next.

4. *The verb* שכב.   Because of the clear-cut alternation of its conjugational forms, the four occurrences of the verb שכב "lie (sleep) with" are worth looking at more closely:

| 7 | עמי | **שכבה** | woman speaks to Joseph |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | אצלה | לשכב | narrator reports |
| 12 | עמי | **שכבה** | woman speaks to Joseph |
| 14 | עמי | לשכב | woman reports to her servants |

| 7 | . . . | **lie** with me |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | . . . *to* | **lie** beside her |
| 12 | . . . | **lie** with me |
| 14 | . . . *to* | **lie** with me |

It is worth mentioning that in v. 14 Potiphar's wife tells her servants ראו הביא לנו איש עברי לצחק בנו בא אלי לשכב עמי "Look, this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us, he came to lie with me," whereas the verb

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[21] Cf. Warning, *Artistry* 33–34, 124–28, 160–62.

"to lie with" is omitted in the report she gives to her husband on his return home (v. 17b): בא אלי העבד העברי אשר הבאת לנו לצחק בי "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me" (NIV). The following terminological pattern reveals yet another aspect of why Joseph successfully withstood her seductive advances.

5. *The term* חוץ *and the verbs* יצא *and* נוס.   In the central part of Genesis 39 its ancient author has employed three significant terms whose syntactic correlation cannot be overlooked. Whereas the word חוץ "outside" and the verb נוס "flee" occur four times each in Genesis 39, the verb יצא "go out" is used only twice. The following table underlines the fact that Joseph fled from the seductress and ran outside:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | **ויצא החוצה** | וינס | | narrator reports |
| 13 | **החוצה** | וינס | | narrator reports |
| 15 | **ויצא החוצה** | וינס | | woman reports to her servants |
| 18 | **החוצה** | וינס | | woman reports to her husband |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | and he | *fled* and <u>went</u> | **outside** |
| 13 | and he | *fled* | **outside** |
| 15 | and he | *fled* and <u>went</u> | **outside** |
| 18 | and he | *fled* | **outside** |

Once more the compositional competence of the author comes to light. The "theme" of Joseph fleeing from her advances ("content") has evidently been cast in this unmistakable structure ("form").

The diverse terminological patterns presented heretofore, structural outlines based on the terms "Joseph," "YHWH," "leave (behind)," "lie (sleep) with," and "outside" / "go out" / "flee," illustrate the fine congruence of "form" and "content." Because each of these words is the basis of some linguistic linkage, they are essential to the plot of the story. Apart from these terms that are foundational to the terminological patterns within the narrow confines of Genesis 39, there are four words by means of which the author of the extant *Endgestalt* has interrelated this story with other pericopes in Genesis.

## II. TERMINOLOGICAL PATTERNS IN GENESIS

Being aware of the fact that many commentators will object to juxtaposing different texts by means of terminological patterns, I dare hypothesize that the following features are due to someone's design. As stated in the beginning, this study solely aims at bringing to light linguistic links within Genesis 39 (microstructure) and to disclose structural outlines by means of which this story has terminologically been integrated into the extant text of Genesis (macrostructure).[22] The latter has been achieved through four terms, the verbs עזב "leave (behind)," נוס "flee," צלח "prosper, be successful," and the noun בגד "garment." In view of the fact that each of these terms is essential to the plot of the story in Genesis 39, we begin to comprehend the literary craftsmanship of the Biblical writer.

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[22] Cf. ibid. 22–23.

1. *The Verb* עזב.   The following table discloses the structuring outlines based on the verb עזב "leave (behind)" in Genesis.[23] As already pointed out above, the idea of "leave (behind)" is essential to the denouement of the story about Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and therefore it is amazing that the following table focuses on Genesis 39. In my view the outlining of the following texts can only be ascribed to someone's literary inventiveness, because by having three occurrences of the verb "leave" precede and follow the five in Genesis 39, the table directs our attention to a significant aspect of the story under consideration:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2:24 | איש את אביו ואת אמו | **יעזב** | על כן |
| 24:27 | חסדו ואמתו מעם אדני | **עזב** | אשר לא |
| 28:15 | | **אעזבך** | כי לא |
| 39:6 | כל אשר לו ביד יוסף | **ויעזב** | |
| 12 | בגדו בידה | **ויעזב** | |
| 13 | בגדו בידה | **עזב** | ויהי כראותה כי |
| 15 | בגדו אצלי | **ויעזב** | ויהי כשמעו כי הרימתי קולי ואקרא |
| 18 | בגדו אצלי | **ויעזב** | ויהי כהרימי קולי ואקרא |
| 44:22a | את אביו | **לעזב** | לא יוכל הנער |
| 22b | את אביו ומת | **ועזב** | |
| 50:8 | בארץ גשו | **עזבו** | רק טפם ועאנם ובקרם |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2:24 | therefore a man will | **leave** | his father and his mother |
| 24:27 | who has not | **left** | [abandoned] his kindness . . . to my master |
| 28:15 | because I shall not | **leave** | you |
| 39:6 | so he | **left** | in Joseph's care everything he had |
| 12 | but he | **left** | his garment in her hand |
| 13 | when she saw that he had | **left** | his garment in her hand |
| 15 | he | **left** | his garment beside me |
| 18 | when I raised my voice and screamed he | **left** | his garment beside me |
| 44:22a | the lad cannot | **leave** | his father |
| 22b | if he does | **leave** | him, his father will die |
| 50:8 | they | **left** | only the young children and . . . in . . . Goshen |

The evident juxtaposition of diverse pericopes brings to light the author's deliberate terminological design, an outline that cannot be disregarded. Probably no modern reader would want to ascribe these verbal linkages to chance. It may therefore be inferred that the vocabulary of the present text of Genesis must have been very familiar to its author. In view of this artistic arrangement of distinct pericopes by way of linguistic links, present ideas concerning the homogeneity of the extant text of Genesis ought to be reconsidered.

In the following section the two verbs "flee" and "be successful," each occurring seven times in Genesis, will be examined more closely.

2. *The verbs* נוס *and* צלח.   Based on the verb נוס "flee," a seven-part terminological pattern has been construed through which Genesis 39 has been linked with earlier patriarchal narratives in Genesis 14 and 19. On account of the fact that Joseph's flight from the seductress is most essential to the

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[23] In the Pentateuch the verb appears next in Reuel's question asking his daughters: "Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat" (Exod 2:2).

plot of the story, we may assume authorial deliberateness in employing the verb seven times in the extant text of Genesis:

| 14:10a | מלך סדם ועמרה | **וינסו** |
| 10b | | **נסו** | והנשארים הרה |
| 19:20 | שמה | **לנוס** | הנה נא העיר הזאת קרבה |
| 39:12 | ויצא   החוצה | **וינס** |
| 13 | החוצה | **וינס** |
| 15 | ויצא   החוצה | **וינס** |
| 18 | החוצה | **וינס** |

| 14:10a | when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah | **fled** |
| 10b | and the rest | **fled** | to the hills |
| 19:20 | let me | **flee** | there |
| 39:12 | and he | **fled** | and went outside |
| 13 | and he | **fled** | outside |
| 15 | and he | **fled** | and went outside |
| 18 | and he | **fled** | outside |

By means of the seven occurrences of the verb צלח "prosper, be successful" in the first book of the Bible, two narratives, Genesis 24 and 39, have been closely connected terminologically. Since throughout Genesis the verb appears only in these two stories, it should be kept in mind that in both Genesis 24 and 39 the Lord is the sole subject of the verb:

| 24:21 | יי דרכו אם לא | **הצליח** |
| 40 | דרכך | **והצליח** | יי . . . ישלח מלאכו אתך |
| 42 | דרכי | **מצליח** | יי אלהי אוני אבוהם אם ישך נא |
| 56 | דרכי | **הצליח** | ויאמר אלהם אל תאחרו אתי ויי |
| 39:2 | | **מצליח** | ויהי יי את יוסף ויהי איש |
| 3 | בידו | **מצליח** | וכל אשר הוא עשה יי |
| 23 | | **מצליח** | ואשר הוא עשה יי |

| 24:21 | if the Lord had made his journey | **successful** | or not |
| 40 | . . . and will make your journey | **successful** |
| 42 | . . . make my journey | **successful** |
| 56 | . . . the Lord has made my journey | **successful** |
| 39:2 | . . . and he became a | **successful** | man |
| 3 | everything he did the Lord made | **successful** |
| 23 | and what he did the Lord made | **successful** |

Possibly there is a "thematic" interrelation between the two preceding terminological patterns as far as Genesis 39 is concerned: Because Joseph did not succumb to temptation (" . . . How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" v. 9b) and fled instead, the Lord makes him successful—even in prison. The aged Abraham evidently believes that the Lord will send his angel before his servant, so that he will get a wife for his son (cf. 24:7). In view of the fact that in both stories the Lord is the sole subject of the verb ("form"), we are told that it is God who "rewards" people who trust in him and are faithful to him by granting them success in their endeavors ("content").

The final terminological pattern to be presented is based on the fourteen occurrences of the noun בגד "garment" in Genesis. After having discerned the author's literary ingenuity in the preceding linguistic linkages, one

need not be surprised that the noun "garment" has likewise been used in composing another terminological pattern.

3. *The noun* בגד.    Close reading makes us perceive the importance of the "garment motif"[24] in several sections of the Joseph story. Since the structural significance of the seventh occurrence of the noun בגד "garment" (38:19) has already been discussed elsewhere,[25] we do well to focus on the six mentions of the nominal form (ב)בגדו) "his garment" in Genesis 39 and the seventh in 41:42 reading: "Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand. He clothed him in linen garments [שש בגדי] and put a gold chain around his neck":

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24:53 | ויתן לרבקה | **ובגדים** . . . ויוצא העבד |
| 27:15 | עשו | **בגדי** את רקבה ותקח |
| 27 | ויברכהו | **בגדיו** ריח את וירח |
| 28:20 | ללבש | **ובגד** לאכל לחם לי ונתן |
| 37:29 | | **בגדיו** את ויקרע |
| 38:14 | אלמנותה מעליה ותכס בצעיף ותתעלף | **בגדי** ותסר |
| 19 | אלמנותה | **בגדי** ותלבש |
| | | |
| 39:12a | | **בבגדו** ותתפשהו |
| 12b | בידה | **בגדו** ויעזב |
| 13 | בידה | **בגדו** עזב כי כראותה ויהי |
| 15 | אצלי | **בגדו** ויעזב |
| 16 | אצלה | **בגדו** ותנח |
| 18 | אצלי | **בגדו** ויעזב |
| 41:42 | שש וישם רבד הזהב על צוארו | **בגדי** אתו וילבש |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 24:53 | then the servant brought out . . . and | **garments** |
| 27:15 | then Rebekah took Esau's | **clothes** |
| 27 | and he smelt the fragrance of his | **clothes** |
| 28:20 | if God . . . will give me food to eat and | **clothes** to wear |
| 37:29 | so he tore his | **clothes** |
| 38:14 | she took off her widow's | **clothes** . . . |
| 19 | . . . and wore her widow's | **clothes** again |
| | | |
| 39:12a | so she grabbed his | **garment** |
| 12b | but he left his | **garment** in her hand |
| 13 | when she saw that he had left his | **garment** in her hand |
| 15 | he left his | **garment** beside me |
| 16 | so she put his | **garment** aside |
| 18 | he left his | **garment** beside me |
| 41:12 | *he clothed him in linen* | **garments and put a gold chain around his neck** . . . |

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[24] V. H. Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative," *JSOT* 65 (1995) 28. Cf. Warning, *Artistry* 86–88, calling attention to the striking בגד-structure in Leviticus 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 presents itself as a homogeneous unit:

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

[25] W. Warning, "Terminological Patterns and Genesis 38," *AUSS* 38 (2000) 293–305.

In view of Joseph's answer given to Potiphar's wife, "how could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (39:9b), the preceding terminological pattern evidently corroborates the narrator's statement, "the Lord was with Joseph" (39:2, 21). Are we to understand this structure as a subtle authorial hint replete with theological meaning? It is my contention that this question should be answered in the affirmative: Because of Joseph's being faithful to the Lord and leaving בגדו "his garment" in the hands of the mendacious seductress, he is finally "rewarded" by Pharaoh's dressing him in "robes of fine linen" and making him second-in-command in Egypt. In taking the fourteen texts of the above structure at face value, we cannot help but admit that by means of the noun "garment" the author of the *Endgestalt* of Genesis has created a terminological pattern whereby a major part of the book has been meaningfully outlined.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

The preceding terminological patterns based on the words "Joseph," "YHWH," "leave," "lie (sleep) with," "outside"/"go out"/"flee" evidently provide linguistic links within Genesis 39, and through the terms "leave," "flee"/"be successful," and "garment" linguistic linkages have been composed by means of which Genesis 39 has been intricately integrated into the text before us. These terminological patterns entitle us to conclude that the methodology employed, that is, probing the distribution of each and every word of the extant text, has proved profitable. At the same time we should call to mind that in Genesis 38, the immediately preceding story of Judah and Tamar, the terminological patterns brought to light there accentuate the plot of the story both on the microstructural (Genesis 38 *per se*) and macrostructural levels (Genesis 38 in the context of Genesis). In view of the fact that two distinct pericopes, stories that are very different in content, have been juxtaposed, each one of them being structured by way of terminological patterns, the reliability of the approach applied in this study seems to be corroborated.

Therefore, if R. N. Whybray is correct with his appraisal of the present situation in Pentateuchal studies that, "as far as assured results are concerned we are no nearer to certainty than when critical study of the Pentateuch began. There is at the present time no consensus whatever about when, why, how, and through whom the Pentateuch reached its present form, and opinions about the dates of composition of its various parts differ by more than five hundred years,"[26] it should be mandatory to accept only the extant *Endgestalt* as the basis for any analysis. While pondering Whybray's portrayal of the present situation in Pentateuchal studies, the reader is called upon to weigh the evidence and to decide for himself whether the approach presented above is valid or not.

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[26] R. N. Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 12.