

Gendered Genealogies in Response to Fractured Pasts: Inquiring Processes of Othering in 1 Chronicles 1-9 from a German Perspective

Ingeborg Löwisch, SBL 2011, San Francisco

1 Gendered genealogies: Memory performances in response to fractured pasts

Gendered genealogies are memory acts that recall the past in the form of lineages, either linear or segmented. Typical examples of gendered genealogies are the ancestor trees in the Book of Genesis. Genealogies are basically gendered. Being either patrilinear or matrilinear, they award males (or females) only with the exclusive competence to pass on the line. This feature defines females (or males) as the other. Moreover, the clearly gendered structure suggests gender as a critical category to support or interfere with the normative flow of a genealogy.

As memory acts, gendered genealogies have a performative quality. They are not merely antagonistic reflections of an assumedly objective past. Instead, a gendered genealogy is the result of an inventive act, which negotiates, constructs, and to a certain extent creates the past. Gendered genealogies visualize roots and inheritances in view of self-conceptions and socio-political discourses in the present. In this process, subjectivity, agency, and context of those who compose a genealogy are inscribed to the individual memory act.

Gendered genealogies start to be interesting, if they admit to fractures, contradictions, and loss in a lineage, and try to actively respond to it. Most often—and understandably enough—this will not be done without reluctance. Still, involving conflict and pain is a critical criterion for gendered genealogies to become meaningful.

The context from which this paper starts out is the German context, specifically the German bourgeois urban feminist environment at the beginning of the 21st century. Gendered genealogy performance in this context is confronted with German National Socialism and the Holocaust. Genealogies are challenged to involve related fractures, contradictions, and loss. They need to negotiate the location of NS and Holocaust in their account of the past in order to render the genealogy performance meaningful.

2 The German context

The documentary film “My Life Part 2”

An important example of a gendered genealogy performance, which critically addresses Nazi regime and Holocaust, in the German (feminist bourgeois urban) context, is the 2003

documentary film “Mein Leben Teil 2” (“My Life Part 2”) by Berlin filmmaker Angelika Levi.¹ The film tells the filmmaker’s family story in Nazi Germany, Chile, and West Germany. The leading thread of the film is the female lineage ascending from the filmmaker to her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. The lineage is constituted as a Jewish *gynealogy*— that is as a lineage of women, who stand in a biological and ideological succession. This lineage of Levi women is characterized by the women’s traumatic experiences, by their political commitment, and by their stout unconventionality.

«STILLS FROM THE FILM»

The filmmaker uses the form of genealogy—or rather of gynealogy—in response to the legacy of the Shoah. The gynealogy allows her to put the ongoing impact of the Nazi terror on the family life on the record. Coming from a family with Jewish and Protestant roots, it allows her to make sure which tradition she claims as her own. It supports her identity as a Jewish second generation survivor in West German. Finally, it conveys a positive sense of continuity in the face of persecution, murder, and lasting traumatization.

As a second aspect, the form of gynealogy performance also allows for a memory act, which addresses discontinuity at the core of the lineage. And indeed, the reflection on discontinuity is the second crucial element of the film. For example, the filmmaker sets up a lineage of Jewish mothers but then claims that she, as a lesbian woman without wish for children, will not become a mother herself. Her answer to the legacy of the Shoah will be a different one. And surely, one way of responding to her legacy is the filmmaker’s engaging her personal family story with the public discourse on the memory of the Shoah in Germany and beyond—in other words the film as such.

Next to the continuity of the lineage of Levi women, the gynealogy of “My Life Part 2” exposes discontinuity as critical element in performing a memory act in response to a traumatic past.

Viewing “My Life Part 2” from a German non-Jewish perspective

The gynealogy of the filmmaker Angelika Levi, is part of the context from which I will later read the Chronicles text: Germany, the first decade of the 21th century, the tradition of the West German feminist movement and theory. Within this context, the film stems from a setting that is both similar and contrary to my own. I share with the filmmaker the same West German urban lesbian-feminist culture and a bourgeois background. Still, there is a significant

¹ Original title: *Mein Leben Teil 2*, Germany 2003; original version: German; subtitled version: English. Screenplay, director, and editor: Angelika Levi; production: Angelika Levi/*Celestefilm* in cooperation with ZDF (Das Kleine Fernsehspiel).

difference in family history: Angelika Levi has Jewish relatives that were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis, a trauma, which left its haunting stamp on the family history and memory. In contrast, I come from a non-Jewish Protestant family, who participated in the ideology and public life of the Nazi regime. A legacy, which is sometimes addressed but most often repressed in the family memory. I am used to think this difference as a criterion of absolute difference. Despite of all the filmmaker and I share, I perceive the different inheritance positions in relation to the Nazi regime and the Holocaust, as a criterion of absolute difference. And indeed, how similar actual contexts may be, a different genealogy can lead to a quite different awareness of life. However, setting the difference between a Jewish and a non-Jewish descent in Germany as absolute also brings about a form of *othering* that might repress complexity and ambiguity and might avoid entering shared engagements and commitments. The latter thoughts arise from working in a second context, the Netherlands. Dutch friends or colleagues often consider my insisting on the impact of the different inheritance positions as “being obsessed with the German past” or just as a form of “extreme othering”. I feel them to bring me on grounds that are slippery but productive.

The priority of difference within German feminist theory and praxis

The strong focus on the difference between the Jewish and non-Jewish inheritance position is a well-established position within feminist theory in Germany. An example for this is Britta Jüngst’s important monograph on a Protestant feminist theology after the Shoah from 1996.² Jüngst claims that for non-Jewish women in Germany, locating and recognizing themselves in the history of female perpetrators and sympathizers is the precondition for assuming political responsibility, and for understanding the priority of the memory of the Shoah in the second and third generation.³

This position results from the paradigm shift from sameness to difference within feminist theory in the early 1990s. This paradigm shift from sameness to difference set a strong impulse for a process of realizing the agency of women in the NS regime. While the presence of women as actors of the NS regime and ideology had long been negated, the aim was now to formulate a nuanced picture of the agency of women. From the 1990s onwards, feminist researches began to unearth NS *herstory*. They described different forms of agency of women in the NS state from their interest in enhancing self-esteem, in material enrichment,

² Britta Jüngst, *Auf der Seite des Todes das Leben: Auf dem Weg zu einer christlich-feministischen Theologie nach der Shoah*, Mit einem Vorwort von Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz, Chr. Kaser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh, 1996.

³ Jüngst, *Auf der Seite des Todes das Leben*, 179.

and in devaluating others,⁴ to the assertion of direct violence in the camps.⁵ This development had strong gender implications. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there was a tendency to identify the males of the Nazi generation as perpetrators and bystanders. In contrast, women were perceived as part of those who suffered from the regime and events, for example from fascist anti-feminist politics or from war rape at the end of World War II. Female agency was often hidden behind male perpetrators and agency.⁶

Together with the process of apprehending the agency of women in the NS regime started a discussion on how to relate to these disturbing ‘foremothers’. For example, Lerke Gravenhorst took up Jean Améry’s notion of negative property and emphasized the need to appropriate the negative property of female NS perpetrators and bystanders.⁷ Jüngst emphasized the need to acquire competence in communicating about the meaning of having grown up in the company of concealed female Nazi perpetrators and sympathizers, about the ambivalence of affinity and defense in relation to the preceding generations, and about how the Shoah and its impact on the survivors and the second generation invades our thinking and experiences.⁸

Apprehending the need to deal with NS herstory has a strong bearing on the performance of gendered genealogies from a non-Jewish German perspective. In particular, accepting and establishing continuity comes to the fore as an especially challenging aspect of gendered genealogy performance.

The process of realizing the need to deal with NS herstory—and especially its belatedness —also has a strong bearing on the perception of Jewish gendered genealogies, German and non-German, from a German non-Jewish perspective. It has strongly supported the position of difference as imperative for responsible politics and possible dialogue.

Difference and othering

I would always sign to both the need to actively deal with the negative property and heritage of the NS herstory and the importance of recognizing different inheritance positions. Still, I

⁴ Frauen gegen Antisemitismus, “Der Nationalsozialismus als Extremform des Patriarchats: Zur Leugnung der Täterschaft von Frauen und zur Tabuisierung des Antisemitismus in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem NS,” in *beiträge zur feministischen theorie und praxis*, 1993/35: Feminis-muß, 77-89, 86.

⁵ Frauen gegen Antisemitismus, “Der Nationalsozialismus als Extremform des Patriarchats,” 84.

⁶ Lerke Gravenhorst, “Nehmen wir Nationalsozialismus und Auschwitz ausreichend als unser negatives Eigentum in Anspruch?: Zu Problemen im feministisch-sozialwissenschaftlichen Diskurs in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” in *TöchterFragen: NS-FrauenGeschichte*, edited by Lerke Gravenhorst and Carmen Tatschmurat, Kore: Freiburg i. Br., 1990, 17-37, 24-27.

⁷ Gravenhorst, “Nehmen wir Nationalsozialismus und Auschwitz ausreichend als unser negatives Eigentum in Anspruch?,” 21-22; see also Ulrike Janz, “(K)eine von uns? Vom schwierigen Umgang mit ‚zwiespältigen Ahninnen’,” in *IHRSINN: eine radikal-feministische Lesbenzeitschrift*, 3/1991: Das verlorene Wir?, 24-39.

⁸ Jüngst, *Auf der Seite des Todes das Leben*, 188.

feel that foregrounding difference, for example in my reception of the film “My Life Part 2”, brings about a form of othering, which I think to be problematic.

Let me just hint to possible problem areas in relation to my—somewhat typical—reception of “My Life Part 2”. First of all, the focus on the Jewish/non-Jewish divide makes small what the filmmaker and I share. Taking away attention from the fields we share, might lead to missing out the impact differences have on these very fields. For example, which impact has the negative property of the NS herstory in general and its frequent repression in particular on German feminist self-conceptions, politics, and coalitions? Next, the focus on difference runs the risk of reducing complexity. Am I able to perceive complexity and ambivalence in Angelika Levi’s memory act? How do I deal with people beyond the scheme in a more general sense, e.g. Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union, young Israelis moving to Berlin, second generation refugees from the Pinochet regime, etc.? Finally, othering takes place in the context of defining in- and out-positions, e.g. what and who is German, what and who is feminist etc. As to “My Life Part 2”, stressing difference might run the risk of defining Angelika Levi and her lineage as outsiders from a dominant position rather than listening to the ways in which the family positions itself.

Continuity, discontinuity and othering: leading key notions for the text analysis

Reflecting on gendered genealogy composition in the German context brings about three key notions for the following close reading of the gendered genealogies of Judah in 1 Chronicles 2:3-4:23. First of all, the categories of continuity and discontinuity have become apparent as critical poles between which gendered genealogies in response to trauma are located.

Together with these concepts comes the notion of othering as ambivalent part of the process of identifying continuity and discontinuity in relation to others. This leads to two main interests for the text analysis. First, I am interested in how the gendered genealogies in 1 Chronicles 2:3-3:23 interplay notions of continuity and of discontinuity in view of meeting the fractures in the history of Israel they depict, as well as in view of taking up the complex socio-cultural situation in which Judaism is just beginning to emerge. Second, I am interested in processes of othering as part and product of this gendered genealogy performance between the poles of continuity and discontinuity.

3 Text analysis: Continuity, discontinuity, and othering in the gendered genealogies of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:3-4:23)

The literary context: politics of continuity in 1 Chronicles 1-9

The gendered genealogies of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:3-4:23) make part of the larger genealogy composition in 1 Chronicles 1-9. 1 Chronicles 1-9 provides a comprehensive archive of gendered genealogies, both linear and segmented. The genealogies start out from Adam and reach until the early postexilic time. They focus on the genealogies of the tribes of Israel with special attention to Judah and Levi. 1 Chronicles 1-9 recalls roots and lineages of Israel in a memory act, which proposes a self conception of Israel in the period of beginning Judaism.⁹

Approaching the gendered genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1-9 from the German context, I would expect the text to foreground the destruction of state and temple, the deportations, and the exile as central turning points in the genealogy composition. Yet, the genealogies do not meet this expectation in the first place. 1 Chronicles 1-9 does highlight exile and return through its selection of time frame: the genealogies end with the early postexilic period and by doing so focus on exile and return. However, the text does not comment on the traumatic events or exposes their unsettling force in any other way.¹⁰ Instead, 1 Chronicles 1-9 carefully draws its lineages through the fractures in Israelite history. Rather than putting focus on the moment of fracture, the gendered genealogies highlight the continuity that remains throughout the changeful and partly traumatic past. It seems that the fractured past leaves its trace in this interest for continuity – and in acknowledging its fragility, as I will argue later.

Continuity in 1 Chronicles 1-9 is first of all conceptualized in terms of kinship. However, the concept of continuity clearly exceeds kinship terms. It bases on shared narratives and traditions (e.g. the narratives of the Torah); it involves joint ideologies and discourses (e.g. the David ideology); and it aims at common institutions (e.g. the temple cult). All these factors are involved in establishing continuity between the foundational periods, namely creation, ancestral period, and the time of David, to the postexilic restoration. On a formal level, continuity is produced, supported, and maintained through repetitive and strongly formalized language.

The notion of continuity is most central for the political implications of the memory act as performed in 1 Chronicles 1-9. The text claims to document a coherent continuous and traceable identity of Israel from the creation to the return from exile. This continuous identity substantiates the claim to a monopoly in defining Israel in the present. A claim, that is most

⁹ The book of Chronicles probably stems from the late Persian period.

¹⁰ Only 3:17 hints at the events. It says “And the sons of Jeconiah, the captive:...”.

important in the face of socio-economical, territorial, and ideological contests between the *Golah* and those who had remained in the land, between North and South (Samaria and Jerusalem), and between homeland and Diaspora.

The occurrence of a gendered subtext in the genealogies of Judah as marker for complexity and discontinuity

The genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9 are especially occupied with establishing continuity when it comes to the cult, as for example the genealogies of Levi, and to the Davidic tradition, e.g. in the royal line of succession in 3:10-24. Other sections of the genealogy composition are much more permeable for acknowledging and negotiating discontinuity and breaks in the patrilinear succession. Especially the genealogies of Judah feature a subtext that interferes with the idea of an ongoing stream of generations. The subtext consists of references to foreigners, slaves, and outsiders, many of whom are female. The subtext significantly adds complexity to the genealogies. It broadens the genealogical self-conception of Judah. Next to this, the subtext marks instances of fractures in the respective tradition lines and facilitates a dynamic of discontinuity.

Both functions, broadening the self-conception of Judah and marking fractures in this self-conception, have a basic gender dimension. The women of Judah add complexity to the picture as eponymous ancestors (Ephrathah¹¹) and heads of lineages (Helah and Naarah¹²), as sisters who link lineages to the central Davidic lineage (Zeruiah and Abigail¹³), and as secondary wives who facilitate segmentation in overt processes of othering (Maacah and Ephah¹⁴). Moreover, many of the references to women mark fractures and contradictions. They indicate moments in which the patrilinear succession is endangered (e.g. Tamar and Sheshan's nameless daughter¹⁵), in which the formal and logical coherence of the genealogies breaks down (e.g. Azubah and Jerioth¹⁶), and in which constant references to unknown sisters add a sense of dysfunction to the genealogical system (e.g. Shelomith and Hazzelelponi¹⁷).

My argument for the following close reading is as follows: The agents of the gendered subtext, often women, but also male foreigners and slaves, are not undisputedly integrated to the dominant lineages. On the contrary, at the intersection of dominant text and subtext emerge strong processes of saming and of othering. Spotlighting these processes of saming

¹¹ 1 Chronicles 2:19; 2:50; 4:4.

¹² 1 Chronicles 4:5-7.

¹³ 1 Chronicles 2:16-17.

¹⁴ 1 Chronicles 2:46-49.

¹⁵ 1 Chronicles 2:3-4; 2:34-35.

¹⁶ 1 Chronicles 2:18-20.

¹⁷ 1 Chronicles 3:19; 4:3.

and othering is critical for understanding how the genealogies of Judah interplay notions of continuity and discontinuity in view of responding to the fractures in the history of Israel they depict and to critically assessing this interplay.

Close reading: Three instances of othering in the process of negotiating continuity and discontinuity

Close reading I: Othering in the course of defining centre and fringe

In the gendered genealogies of Judah, the most obvious example of othering in the process of negotiating continuity and discontinuity takes place in relation to defining the central lineage in Judah. This central lineage runs from Judah to Perez and to Hezron, and branches out to Hezron's sons Ram, Jerahmeel and Caleb and their descendants. It is clearly marked off from additional more marginal segments of the Judah genealogies. The main lineage includes the Davidic succession and functions as warrantor of continuity. The more distant segments include lineages, which are only loosely connected to Judah. Including them suggests ethnic and territorial extension to be an important factor in the self conception of Judah.

The organization of centre and fringe is regularly realized by segmentation through wives. This is specifically so, if the organization institutes a hierarchy between the individual segments of the lineage. In this case, the secondary status of a segment is indicated by means of deriving it from a secondary wife, namely from "another wife" (אשה אחרת) (2:25-26) or a "concubine" (פלגש) (2:42-46).

Othering in this context concerns gender, but likewise ethnicity. Both, the secondary wife and her descendants are regularly identified as ethnic other by means of ethnic names, toponyms and/or geographical references (e.g. 2:46-49). Establishing continuity on the basis of a central lineage involves gendered, social, and ethnic othering.

Close reading II: Othering through acknowledging and repressing the fragility of the central lineage

Second, othering in the genealogies of Judah takes place in an ambivalent process of acknowledging and repressing fractures in the performance of continuity as such. For example, the text establishes the central lineage as warrantor for continuity. This comes side by side with privileging the patrilinear succession as backbone of the genealogical self conception. At the same time, the genealogies address the fragility of both the central lineage and the notion of patrilinear succession by means of twice discussing its exposure to break off.

1 Chronicles 2:3-4

The first case of acknowledging the thread of discontinuity is a brief reference to the story of Tamar and Judah in Genesis 38. 1 Chronicles 2:3-4 reads as follows:

2:3 The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, and Shelah; these three were born to him by Bath-shua the Canaanite. And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was displeasing to YHWH, and he put him to death. 4 And Tamar his daughter-in-law bore to him Perez and Zerah. All sons of Judah: five.

The narrative in Genesis 38 and its reflection in 1 Chronicles 2:3-4 testify to a complex fracture in the concept of patriarchal succession. The primogeniture of the firstborn is renounced, and the levirate does not function. Instead, a widow achieves offspring through her father-in-law. The central lineage is blocked and only restored through female agency and tricksterism. Finally, Judah, a central tribe in Israel is essentially linked to the Canaanites.

The reflection on the Genesis narrative in 2:3-4 highlights the fracture. The text lists Bath-shua as a Canaanite and Tamar as the daughter-in-law of Judah. This exposes fissures that already appeared in Genesis 38 and sharpens them in view of the genealogical succession. By doing so, the passage seems to argue in favor of the presence of unconventional agents at the basis of the Judah genealogy. The subtext is taken up in what seems to be a process of saming. Bath-shua and Tamar are integrated to the process of establishing continuity and broaden its conception. The message seems to be that continuity functions if it involves ethnic, social and gendered complexity.

However, the text also provides a contrasting message. 2:3-4 closes with a statement that counters the previously made assessment. The concluding formula, “All sons of Judah: five” (2:4b), attributes all five sons to Judah.¹⁸ The offspring of the complex and ambiguous situation is clearly attributed to the paterfamilias. This concluding formula weights all the more as, in the genealogies, formulaic language is a major tool to establish continuity. The concluding formula gives shape to the succession from father to son, which runs as leading thread through the segmented genealogies. In 2:3-4, the formal attribution of all sons to Judah puts all irregularities into perspective. Fissures in the patrilinear succession that had been exposed in favor of acknowledging complexity are now devitalized or even closed down again.

1 Chronicles 2:34-35

A similar dynamic is active in the second embedded narrative, which is peculiar to Chronicles and addresses the threat to the continuation of the lineage of sonless Sheshan (2:34-35). The

¹⁸ 2:4b is the only part of 2:3-4 that is not worked out in close relation to Genesis 46:12 or Genesis 38 (Japhet, *I&II Chronicles*, 70). The clause thus sets an original accent and ending to the story.

story of sonless Sheshan is prepared by several instances of males who die sonless. For example 2:30: “The sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim. And Seled died: no sons.” The theme of branches that die off finds its climax in the following narrative:

2:34 Sheshan had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had an Egyptian slave and his name was Jarha. 35 And Sheshan gave his daughter as wife to his slave Jarha. And she bore him Attai.

Lacking sons who could continue his line, Sheshan marries one of his daughters to his Egyptian slave. As in the case of Tamar and Bath-shuah, the risk of losing continuity marks a moment in which unusual agents and strategies, a daughter and a foreign slave are given into marriage, step in and secure the lineage. However, as in the case of Tamar and Bath-shuah, unconventionality and complexity at the basis of the lineage are taken back again. The concluding formula attributes the offspring of Sheshan’s daughter and the Egyptian slave Jarhah to the paterfamilias Sheshan.¹⁹

Reading the two narratives together reveals a pattern to deal with fissures that holds a twofold and contradictory dynamic (see 2:21-23 for a third passage that functions in a similar way). On the one hand, the passages acknowledge the fragility of continuity based on the patrilinear succession. Cracks in the succession are met by means of performing the identity of Judah as complex and inclusive. On the other hand, sons that spring from this opening are eventually attributed to the male Israelite patriarch of their grandfather generation. The generation, which represented a multifaceted self conception is dispossessed of offspring and collapses. In consequence, admitting to fissures, proposing unconventional solutions, and drawing on complex agents eventually opens into a growth of the potency of the paterfamilias. This double edged strategy brings about a strong dynamic of othering the new genealogical agents. The new genealogical agents and the complexity they represent are crucial for securing continuity. But eventually, they are lined out again. The fragility of the concept of continuity is addressed, solutions are proposed, but then, in an ambiguous twist, the text puts off the figures that stand for the solutions in an act of othering them as figures, who color the lineage, but are not rewarded with representing it.

¹⁹ 2:35b leaves a slight ambiguity as to whether the son Attai is born to his father Jarha or to his grandfather Sheshan. For example Labahn and Ben-Zvi argue that the narrative provides Sheshan’s daughter with the structural role of the son who passes on the line – an argument that seems to suggest that she bears Jarha to her own generation and thus to Jarha (Antje Labahn, and Ehud Ben Zvi, “Observations on Women in the Genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9,” *Biblica* 84 (2003) 457-478, 465). Against Labahn and Ben-Zvi, I follow Sara Japhet, who argues that Sheshan’s daughter bears Attai to her father, who remains the owner of the son of his slave Jarha. (Japhet, *I&II Chronicles*, 84). For identifying Sheshan as *major participant* of the narrative see L. J. De Regt, *Participants in Old Testament Texts and the Translator: Reference Devices and their Rhetorical Impact* (Van Gorcum: Assen, 1999), 23-4. See also the parallel to Hagar and Ismail, who remains the son of Hagar’s owners.

Close reading III: Sisters and the standstill of the genealogical flow in the structure of shaped gaps

Third, the genealogies of Judah address the fragility of continuity as critical location for processes of othering is the reoccurring reference to sisters.²⁰ Some sisters are known from innerbiblical intertexts (e.g. Tamar) and/or fulfill clear genealogical functions (e.g. Zeruah and Abigail). Other sisters are listed without indication of their status and function in the text. However, their name and the formalized character of the references constitutes a space in the text, which persists even though it is not filled by further information but remains gapped. The concurrence of formalized language and lack of indication of the function of the sisters provokes a phenomenon that I propose to term a structure of *shaped gap*. The notion of shaped gaps does not primarily refer to gaps in the logical progress of the text, which are often tacit and implicit.²¹ Instead, shaped gaps indicate explicit formal vacancies in the text. They plainly mark the absence of information pertaining to the figures in their centre. In the genealogical context, the occurrence of shaped gaps has a particular impact. The notions of linearity and segmentation convey the ideas of a genealogical stream that branches out in a process of continuous movement. In contrast, the notion of shaped gaps contains the idea of still-water areas. These still-water areas do not bring the entire genealogical stream to a halt. Rather, they convey a sense of standstill or downtime as part of the movement, a paradoxical dynamic of halt within the genealogical stream. The sisters represent something that belongs to the genealogies but that is also alien to it. The paradoxical character of the structure of shaped gaps testifies to the interest to keep the moment of standstill or downtime on board, to acknowledging its meaning. At the same time, the sisters at the centre of the shaped gaps are identified with a dynamic that is alien to the genealogical movement and runs across the interest in continuity. They represent a critical moment of bringing depth to the notion of continuity but are simultaneously othered in the process of doing so.

Conclusion: Othering at the cross road of continuity and discontinuity in the gendered genealogies of Judah

The genealogies of Judah have a strong interest in establishing and maintaining continuity with the ancestral period and the Davidic area. This serves them as a strategy to perform roots and identities of the contemporaneous community in the face of breaks and discontinuities

²⁰ 1 Chronicles 1-9 lists the following sisters: Esau: Timna (1:39); Judah: Zeruah and Abigail (2:16-17), Tamar (3:9), Shelomith (3:19), Hazzeleponi (4:3), the nameless wife of Hodiah sister of Naham (4:19); Manasseh: Maacah (7:15), Hammolecheth (7:18); Asher: Serah (7:30), Shuah (7:32).

²¹ See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985, chapter 6, especially 186-190.

brought about by the end of the state, exile and return. However, the passages discussed above point out that the genealogies advance a notion of continuity, which includes fragility, paradoxes, and discontinuity. In my view, these features add depth to the genealogies and significantly increase the relevance of 1 Chronicles 1-9. They make sure that the strategy of continuity does not aim at repressing fractures in the first place. Instead, the combination of continuity and counter-movements opens space for a multilayered conception of the past. However, the text analysis also pointed to a dynamic in the text to restrict such a multilayered conception and to other its agents. The text is not unambiguous but provides a back and forth between admitting to and repressing complexity and discontinuity.

From a gender viewpoint, this back and forth is a doubled edged dynamic. Female gendered references in the text serve as prism for taking in discontinuity as need and starting point for a complex memory performance. This invites women and additional ethnically and socially different groups to identify as constituent members in the genealogical succession. At the same time, the text entails a dynamic of othering those who have been invited and cuts back their enduring impact. The text allows a glimpse on the potency of a multilayered and inclusive community, but flinches away from a definite position. At the intersection of continuity and discontinuity takes place othering; this is ambivalent and highly problematic.

Still and in spite of this critical assessment, it seems extremely important to me that the Chronicles genealogies indeed dare to touch on fractures and discontinuity as essential parts of the genealogical memory act.²²

4 To sum up

The Judah genealogies set out with constructing continuity and then work along its fragility. This process involves othering and is therefore problematic, but it likewise brings about a significant gain in relevance of the texts. Starting out with a strategy of continuity and then working along its fragility is quite different from a typical take on gendered genealogy composition from the non-Jewish German feminist perspective I have sketched above. In the latter context, discontinuity rather than continuity is regularly taken as starting point for reflecting on descent and legacy. Realizing and admitting continuity is done in a second step (if it is done at all). The insight that the Chronicles genealogies gain by means of taking in fractures, contradictions, and discontinuity suggest reconsidering the status of continuity in my own conception of the past. While the challenge for the text is to negotiate amount and

²² In my view, this also adds to the relevance of the Book of Chronicles as such. In their ambivalence, the gendered genealogies bring to the book a healthy amount of chaos, contradiction, and wrestling with complexity, discontinuity, and difference. This puts the rest of Chronicles positively into perspective.

form of acknowledging discontinuity, for me, the challenge is to negotiate amount and form of acknowledging continuity in performing gy/genealogies. And this reversal will be true for other people and contexts for different reasons as well.

Taking this thought one step further, the contextual reading suggests, that sounding the balance between continuity and discontinuity is critical for genealogies to become relevant. Somehow or other, daring to take in the pole that is more easily repressed will add to a meaningful genealogy performance in response to fractured pasts. Without having said much about the contemporaneous context of *Chronicles*, I would go another step further and claim, that sounding the complicated relationship between continuity and discontinuity, between links to the past and fissures in this links, is not only important in a situation of fractured pasts, but likewise in a situation of a fragmented present.

I began to work on this paper with the feeling that investigating the pitfalls of clinging to the difference between a Jewish and a non-Jewish descent in Germany as absolute difference would bring me on slippery grounds. Now I find, that what I had thought to be delicate in view of my perception of the filmmaker Angelika Levi has turned out to be delicate in view of the perception of my own tradition lines, both the personal and the political ones. On this backdrop, establishing the difference between the Jewish and the non-Jewish inheritance position as absolute difference seems to be perfectly in order on the one hand. On the other hand, it might be a strategy to keep the focus away from personal and political issues on the non-Jewish side. The study has also brought me on some slippery grounds in view of how to assess the potential of gender genealogies for memory acts. Othering has turned out to be an inherent aspect of interplaying the critical aspects of continuity and discontinuity in gendered genealogy performance. First of all, this means that one does good to carefully and critically look at processes of othering in the course of genealogy composition. However, it also hints to the limits of a genre that necessitates decisions of whom to take in and whom to leave out on such a basic level.