Constanza Cordoni / Gerhard Langer (eds.)

Narratology, Hermeneutics, and Midrash

Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Narratives from the
Late Antiquity through to Modern Times

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With one figure

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Celebration and Narration.
Metaleptic features in Ex 12:1 – 13,16[1]

Metalepsis

When I first came across Genette's notion of metalepsis, it made me think of Woody Allen's Purple Rose of Cairo or Peter Handke's Publikumsbeschimpfung. Others may be reminded of Italo Calvino's novel Wenn ein Reisender in einer Winternacht (Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore). Metalepsis, the dramatic transgression of narrative boundaries that reveals the fictionality of a piece of art, might appear to be a modern construct. But the subtitle of Genette's monograph negates this limitation to contemporary literature: "From Homer to Woody Allen" suggests that there are examples of transgressing narrative boundaries in Antiquity as well.[2]

In its narratological sense, metalepsis, first identified by Genette, is a paradoxical contamination between the world of the telling and the world of the told: "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.), or the inverse […]" Narrative metalepsis as a concept results from the convergence of rhetoric (placing it alongside metaphor and metonymy as tropes of transformation, substitution, and succession) and the principle of narrative levels.[3]

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1 See for an extended version of this paper Ilse Müllner, "Pessach als Ereignis und Ritual. Die narrative Einbindung kommender Generationen in Ex 12,1 – 13,16." In: Ute Eisen and Peter von Möllendorf (eds.), *Metalepse in antiken Diskursen*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2013 (Narratologia) (forthcoming).

2 Gérard Genette, *Métalepse, de la figure à la fiction*. Paris: Le Seuil, 2003 (Poétique). Before that Genette adopted the term *metalepsis* from ancient rhetoric in his *Narrative Discourse* (1972) and gave it a narratological use. Irene de Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature." In: Jonas Grethlein and Antonios Rengakos (eds.), *Narratology and Interpretation. The content of narrative form in ancient literature*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2009, pp. 87 – 115.

3 John Pier, "Metalepsis." In: Peter Hühn et al. (eds.), *The living handbook of narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. url: hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Metalepsis&oldid=2056 [view date: 01 May 2013], 2. Pier is here referring to Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, ([1972] 1980), pp. 234 – 235.

In the majority of cases the term *metalepsis* is used in reference to contemporary literature and film.[4] Irene de Jong, a former student of Mieke Bal and now professor of Old Greek in Amsterdam, is currently focusing on narratology and ancient literature.[5] She suggests using the term *metalepsis* as a heuristic tool for analyzing ancient texts. On the one hand, this implies that it can be useful for detecting and describing features of ancient texts unknown thus far. On the other hand, a term like metalepsis changes when it is applied to ancient texts.[6] Concerning ancient Greek literature, de Jong distinguishes four forms of metalepsis (and binds together a few other examples under the term "varia"):[7]

1. apostrophe in narrative texts
2. characters announce the text in the text
3. blending of narrative voices
4. fade-out

In contemporary literature, metalepsis is considered to be something extraordinary, but it may be rather common in biblical and other ancient literatures. It is conceivable that metaleptic storytelling – transgressing the boundaries between the worlds of the narration and the narrated world – may have something to do with the authoritative status of literature.

The Torah must bind together narration and law, as Goethe's famous statement on his experience of reading the Torah reveals:

> Ab der Mitte des Buchs Exodus sehen wir "den Gang der Geschichte überall gehemmt durch eingeschaltete zahllose Gesetze, von deren größtem Teil man die eigentliche Ursache und Absicht nicht einsehen kann, wenigstens nicht, warum sie in dem Augenblick gegeben worden, oder, wenn sie späteren Ursprungs sind, warum sie hier angeführt und eingeschaltet werden. Man sieht nicht ein, warum bei einem so ungeheuren Feldzuge, dem ohnehin so viel im Wege stand, man sich recht absichtlich und kleinlich bemüht, das religiöse Zeremonien-Gepäck zu vervielfältigen, wodurch jedes Vorwärtskommen unendlich erschwert werden muss."[8]

What Goethe describes here is one of the classical observations that have led historical critics to claim that the Pentateuch was not written by a single person.

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4 Karin Kukkonen and Sonja Klimek (eds.), *Metalepsis in Popular Culture.* Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2011 (Narratologia 28).
5 See for instance Irene de Jong and René Nünlist (eds.), *Time in Ancient Greek Literature.* Leiden: Brill, 2007 (Mnemosyne Supplementa 291); Irene de Jong, René Nünlist, and Angus M. Bowie (eds.), *Narrators, narratees, and narratives in ancient Greek literature. Studies in ancient Greek narrative.* Boston: Brill, 2004.
6 See the various contributions in Eisen and von Möllendorf, *Metalepsis.*
7 De Jong, "Metalepsis", pp. 93 – 115.
8 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in den Noten und Abhandlungen zum West-Östlichen Diwan, quoted after Erich Zenger and Christian Frevel (eds.), *Einleitung in das Alte Testament.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, [8]2012 (Kohlhammer-Studienbücher Theologie 1,1), p. 100.

Narrative and legal passages are intertwined and must be clearly separated to obtain readable texts. Traditional Jewish and Christian scholars who were not bound to historical critical approaches have continuously developed ways of precisely understanding this intertwining of narrative and legal texts.

Today, narratology seems to once again provide tools for understanding narratives and their biblical counterparts. Lately, narratology has been moving from a rather narrow structuralist-driven analysis of narratives to a set of different narratologies that combine French, Russian, transmedial, feminist, and postcolonial approaches. This poststructuralist approach to narratology implies the transgressing of the borders of narration as privileged object of research itself – which has been heatedly discussed in the field of literature.[9] In this context, with respect to biblical narratology, I would point out Assnat Bartor's work on a narrative analysis of legal texts in the Torah.[10] There are also narratological works on Schir Haschirim,[11] as well as on letters in the New Testament.[12] In the following I will show:

> 1. The narratological category of the metalepsis helps to describe phenomena of separation, which traditionally have been diachronously resolved in a historical-critical manner, synchronously. "For narrative metalepsis in an ontological perspective, paradox is central, as it involves the logically inconsistent passage between two separate domains through suspension of the excluded middle."[13]

> 2. Forms of the metalepsis selectively extend the circle of intended readers of narratives and open them for receptions for descendants forever, לבניך עד־עולם.

Those who delve into narratology cannot avoid the question of the levels of narrative. The distinction between narrator and author, as well as text-immanent addressee and the actual reader, is fundamental to narratology. One discussion point in narratology is the meaningfulness of an intermediary – author entity[14],

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9 Tom Kindt, "Narratological Expansionism and Its Discontents." In: Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer (eds.), *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research.* Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2009 (Narratologia 20), pp. 35 – 47.

10 Assnat Bartor, *Reading law as narrative. A study in the casuistic laws of the Pentateuch.* Leiden: Brill, 2010 (Ancient Israel and its literature 5).

11 Stefan Fischer, *Das Hohelied Salomos zwischen Poesie und Erzählung. Erzähltextanalyse eines poetischen Textes.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 72); Yvonne Sophie Thöne, *Liebe zwischen Stadt und Feld. Raum und Geschlecht im Hohelied.* Berlin, Münster: LIT, 2012 (Exegese in unserer Zeit 22).

12 Timo Glaser, "Erzählung im Fragment. Ein narratologischer Ansatz zur Auslegung pseudepigrapher Briefbücher." In: Jörg Frey, Jens Herzer, Martina Janßen, and Clare K. Rothschild (eds.), *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen. Pseudepigraphy and author fiction in early Christian letters.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009, pp. 267 – 294.

13 Pier, "Metalepsis", p. 22.

14 Silke Lahn and Jan Christoph Meister, *Einführung in die Erzähltextanalyse.* Stuttgart: Metzler, 2008, p. 14.

author function,[15] and implied author[16]. I cannot go into this discussion here, but in my opinion, it makes sense to use such an entity as a category of analysis for understanding canonical texts. The boundaries between the narrative levels seemingly guarantee support of the fictionality.[17] Metalepses, however, exceed narrative levels; they disturb the as-if agreement between the reader and the fictional text by exposing the fictionality – as is the case in modern literature. In ancient literature, though, the fictionality seems to be strengthened by blurring the boundaries between the individual characters and the implied reader (the function of the narrative Psalm headings comes to mind here).

The biblical text Ex 12 – 13, which I will address in the following section, blurs the boundary between the characters of the narrative, the addressees, and the implied reader, between the narration's world and the world of the narrative. The metalepsis is not dramatic here the way it often is in modern literature, but rather fluid – a characteristic not only of biblical literature, but also that of ancient Greek literature.[18]

Historical narrative and feast instructions in Ex 12:1 – 13:16[19]

Ex 12:1 – 13:16 leads into a smooth process between the narrated world and the world of narration. It deals with the introduction of a ritual – Passover. Or perhaps not; it deals with the narrative of the departure of the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery. Is this the introduction of a ritual or a narrative? Ex 12 – 13 is both at the same time.

The unification of the Passover and the feast of the Unleavened Bread creates ambiguity at a number of points in the story, indicating that the desire to es-

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15 Barbara Schmitz, *Prophetie und Königtum. Eine narratologisch-historische Methodologie entwickelt an den Königsbüchern.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 60), pp. 58 – 108.

16 Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, "Der 'implizite Autor'. Zur Explikation und Verwendung eines umstrittenen Begriffs." In: Fotis Jannidis, Gerhard Lauer, Matias Martínez, and Simone Winko (eds.), *Rückkehr des Autors. Zur Erneuerung eines umstrittenen Begriffs.* Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999 (Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur 71), pp. 273 – 287.

17 Ilse Müllner, Art. "Fiktion." In: WiBiLex 2008 (http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/Stichwort/Fiktion/) [view date: 01 May 2013].

18 See the articles in Eisen and von Möllendorf, *Metalepsis.*

19 Concerning the delineation cf. Benno Jacob, *Das Buch Exodus.* Stuttgart: Calwer Verl., 1997; Georg Fischer and Dominik Markl, *Das Buch Exodus.* Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2009 (NSKAT), pp. 129 – 130; Christoph Berner, *Die Exoduserzählung. Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungslegende Israels.* Göttingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, pp. 267 – 342.

tablish the etiological setting of the festival takes precedence over the narrative logic of the story.[20]

The literary context: Ex 12:1 – 13:16 belongs to the larger section Ex 1:1 – 18:28, in which the Israelites' becoming a people results in the oppression by the Egyptians and the departure from Egypt. The description of the departure is embedded in the narrative of the plagues (nine plagues in Ex 7 – 11) and the narrative of the passage through the Red Sea (Ex 13:17 – 15:21), which is followed by the journey to Mount Sinai (Ex 15:22 – 18). Following the narrative of the nine Egyptian plagues is the narrative of the departure of Israel from Egypt. One would assume this to be the case. A closer look at the text in the Book of Exodus starting in Chapter 12, however, reveals that the departure scenario is not simply being *narrated*, but rather instructions are being given for a ritual that is to be celebrated in commemoration of an event that has not yet taken place. The text also includes songs that also integrate different communicative situations into the broader narrative.[21] Narrative and feast instructions are thus inseparably connected to each other from the outset. The imperative that the Passover evening should be celebrated as if the people themselves had been present in Egypt is in accordance with the departure narrative's offer of literary identification, which exceeds the normal textual pragmatism. Ex 12 – 13 does not offer a narration followed by a ritual implementation, but rather narrates with an eye on the ritual celebration of the event in all the following generations into eternity (12:24 לך ולבניך עד־עולם).

> In der Gottes- und Moserede tritt der Autor teilweise aus der Erzählsituation heraus. Er bespricht zwar weiterhin, was die Israeliten damals in Ägypten taten und erlitten, wendet sich aber gleichzeitig an seine Hörer und Hörerinnen und verknüpft die Vergangenheit mit der Gegenwart, indem er Assoziationen an ihre eigene liturgische Erfahrung hervorruft. Wie jede Ätiologie beschreibt Ex 12 den Sinn der Gegenwart als Erzählung der Vergangenheit.[22]

This entanglement or even identification between the acting community of Israel in Exodus and the respective reading and acting community of Israel in the ritual belongs, in my opinion, in the field of metalepsis. The narrative describes a highly complex relationship between the historical event and the commemorative feast, of an isolated act and iteration, of narrative and instruction. In this entanglement,

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20 Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus.* Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdman 2009 (The Eerdmans critical commentary), p. 270.

21 Georg Steins, "'Ein Gedenken für seine Wundertaten hat er gewirkt'. Exodus 12,1 – 15,21 als kulturelles Skript." In: Ilse Müllner, Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger and Ruth Scoralick (eds.), *Gottes Name(n). Zum Gedenken an Erich Zenger.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2012, pp. 85 – 103.

22 Clemens Leonhard, "Die Erzählung Ex 12 als Festlegende für das Pesachfest am Jerusalemer Tempel." *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* 18 (2003), pp. 233 – 260, at 253. In narratological perspective, Leonhard talks about the narrator, not the author.

1. a repeatability is intended, namely from generation to generation, from year to year and into eternity (עד־עולם 13:10), and

2. there is an identification of the characters represented in the text with the readers and listeners.

The following literary traits contribute to the cross-fading of the first Exodus and subsequent feasts, of the acting community and listening community, of the Exodus generation and all following generations:

1. The breaching of the course of the narrative in the macro context (see above), and the complex communication structure,

2. an appropriate temporal structure that finds its expression in the verbal syntax and temporal markers (from year to year 13:10; an eternal law for future generations 12:14),

3. a spatial structure that transcends the location of the narrated action – Egypt – and looks toward the location of the future action (the land that YHWH gives to you as he promised 12:25),

4. semantic fields that create a connection between the active characters in the text and the listening entities (generation, children, people of Israel עדה , elders of Israel, people …),

5. discussion of the very narration of the event (that represents a special form of the metalepsis, *mise en abyme*) in 13:8,

6. on the level of the story, an interference of unique action and repeatable ritual.

The communication structure

> The basic rhythm of the text is thus not that of memory and hope but of memory and liturgical responsibility.
>
> Terence Fretheim[23]

The speech of Moses to Israel – or the speech that God commanded to Moses for Israel – has relevance for the Exodus generation being addressed as well as the respective future generations that renew the text in reading and reciting processes, thus for active entities in the narrated world and in the world of narrating.

In the communicative structure of the text, the voice of Moses plays an important role. This central role corresponds naturally to the unsurpassability of Moses as a prophet (cf. Deut 34:10), i. e. as mediator between God and the people. The prophetic role is primarily communicative and not to be determined from its

23 Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus.* Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991 (Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching), p. 147.

content (future) or from religious forms (vision, etc.). Therefore, I will begin with the communication structure in the text of Exodus 12:1 – 13:16[24]:

12:1 – 20		*Instructions for Passover and Matzot (YHWH ▸ Moses and Aaron ▸ Community of Israel)*
12:1	L1	Introduction to speech
12:2 – 20b	L2	YHWH ▸ Moses and Aaron
12:3a	L2	Introduction to speech
12:3b – 20	L3	YHWH ▸ Moses and Aaron ▸ whole community (עדה) Israel
12:21 – 27d		*Instructions for Passover (Moses ▸ Elders)*
12:21a.b	L1	Introduction to speech
12:21c – 27	L2	Moses ▸ all elders of Israel
12:26b	L2	Introduction to speech
12:26c	L3	"your sons" ▸ "to you"
12:27a	L2	Introduction to speech
12:27b – 27d	L3	"you" ▸ (your sons)
12:27e – 42		*Departure from Egypt (unleavened bread, but no lamb)*
12:27e – 31b	L1	Execution of that which had been commanded by Moses and Aaron, Striking of the firstborn
12:31a.b	L1	Introduction to speech
12:31c – 32d	L2	Pharaoh ▸ Moses and Aaron
12:33a	L1	Actions of the Egyptians
12:33b	L1	Introduction to speech
12:33c	L2	Egyptians
12:34 – 42	L1	Departure from Egypt, Matzot (no Passover), taking the utensils
12:43 – 51		*Instructions for partaking of Passover meal (YHWH ▸ Moses and Aaron); Note of execution*
12:43a	L1	Introduction to speech
12:43b – 49	L2	YHWH ▸ Moses and Aaron
12:50 – 51	L1	Execution of that which has been commanded by Moses and Aaron
13:1 – 16		*Instructions for the redeeming of the firstborn and for Matzot (YHWH ▸ Moses; Moses ▸ עם)*
13:1	L1	Introduction to speech
13:2	L2	YHWH ▸ Moses
13:3a	L1	Introduction to speech
13:3b – 16	L2	Moses ▸ people
13:8a	L2	Introduction to speech
13:8b	L3	"you" ▸ "your child"

24 Level One (L1) is the level of the narrated events; L2 signifies the level of narrated speech; L3 stands for embedded speech, i. e. speech that is reported itself in reported speech.

(Continued)

13:14b	L2	Introduction to speech
13:14c	L3	"your child" ▸ "you"
13:14d	L2	Introduction to speech
13:14e – 16	L3	"you" ▸ "your child"

As you can see, from a quantitative standpoint, the level of narrated action (L1) takes up only a small portion of the whole. Apart from the introductions to speech and a short note of completion in 12:50 f, it is predominantly *the passage 12:27 – 42*, in which the actual departure of the Israelites from Egypt is described: the striking of the firstborn, the quick departure with unleavened bread, the taking of utensils, a local and temporal setting of the departure situation, and finally a summarizing qualification of this night.

Everything that is said about Passover and Matzot is communicated through speech acts by the narrative characters and partially in multiple steps. The entire first section, vv. 1 – 20, is subject to such a double gradation: YHWH speaks to Moses and Aaron (a short instruction regarding the monthly payment directed only to them), then v. 3 instructs "tell the entire community of Israel." What is said afterwards about Passover (vv. 4 – 13) and Matzot (vv. 14 – 20) underlies the doubled introduction to the speech where YHWH speaks to Moses and Aaron and tells them what they should say to the Israelites.

The second section, vv. 21 – 27d, is represented as Moses' speech to the elders, which with respect to communication, therefore, is an implementation of the command in v. 3 (tell the entire community of Israel). However, only Moses speaks, and he does this before the elders. Furthermore, the rendition of the speech does not match the instructions from YHWH. The emphasis is on the blood ritual; Matzot are completely missing. As such, this section has a much stronger content-based connection to the following narrated action of striking the firstborn (blood ritual as protection) than to the speech, commanded by YHWH, to the community with its evolvement of Passover and Matzot, where the blood ritual takes up only a small portion (12:7, 13).

Vv. 43 – 49 follow the narrative of the departure with a divine speech to Moses and Aaron in which rules for the participation of foreigners in the Passover meal are created. Circumcision is a prerequisite; the Passover is therefore a question of belonging.

A note of completion (vv. 50.51) and a temporal setting end the section.

Finally, before the narrative of the Red Sea, more ritual instructions are given (13:1 – 16). The main emphasis is now on redeeming the firstborn. The communicative level is virtually a headline for a divine speech to Moses (13:1 [in-

troduction to speech].2), and detailed regulations follow in a speech by Moses to the people.

Binding of subsequent generations

> Traditon läßt sich als ein Sonderfall von Kommunikation auffassen, bei dem Nach-richten nicht wechselseitig und horizontal ausgetauscht, sondern vertikal entlang einer Generationslinie weitergegeben werden.
>
> Aleida Assmann[25]

The last observation on the communication structure (I am already at point 4) deals with the integration of subsequent *generations.* The discussion of the generations – which occurs multiple times in this text – plays a special role in the connection between the narrated world and the world of narration.

In the context of the communication structure, the *proleptic didactic dialogues* become noticeable. These children's questions are still formative of the structure of the Passover Seder even today. They open a further communicative level inside Moses' speech to the elders (12:21 – 27) and inside Moses' speech to the people (13:3 – 16). Vv. 25b – 27 suggest a future picture of the Passover ritual in the Promised Land. ושמרתם את־העבודה הזאת This tradition is to be held firmly and comes before the question of "your children" (בניכם:לכם). מה העבודה הזאת The question refers back terminologically to the discussion of celebrating immediately preceding it.

13:8 introduces the speech with the children as a narration: לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר והגדת. Similar to 12:26 f, in 13:14ff the narrating of the rescue event precedes a question of the child: מה זאת. It can't get any shorter. The answer starting at 13:14ff is difficult to delimit. Once again, it deals with the redeeming of the firstborn, this time already in strongly ritualized form. I consider the section through v. 16 as a part of the speech to the child. This is supported by:

> a) The framing by the Exodus formula בחזק יד הוציאנו יהוה ממצרים (vv. 14b.16b), and

> b) The understanding of the entire section as a short narrative, introduced by ויהי. This is unusual, because the typical verbal syntax for narrating (*wa-yiqtol*) only occurs here with the exception of the level of the narrated action:

> ויהי v. 15a, and

> ויהרג v. 15c: And YHWH killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt.

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25 Aleida Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition. Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer.* Köln, Wien: Böhlau, 1999 (Beiträge zur Geschichtskultur 15), p. 64.

c) Following the short narrative is a causal-connected description of the ritual of redemption.

d) V. 16a goes to the meta level and again determines the semantization of this action: The (the redemption) shall be a sign on your hand and jewelry on your forehead ▸ (cf. Deut 6).

In three passages (12:26 f; 13:8, 14 – 16), therefore, an instruction is simulated that is intended to secure the handing down of the main content to coming generations. This instruction discusses the narrating of that which is currently taking place, whereby the narrating itself in turn belongs to the narrated ritual: *mise en abyme.*

The generations are also considered in the further instructions. In principle, the succession of generations is thought of as endless: *You shall celebrate this day as a day of remembrance. Celebrate it as a feast in honor of the Lord! For all generations this celebration shall be made into an ordinance!* (Ex 12,14).

The notion of the generations (12:14, 17, 42) implies two things:

A. It represents a line of relations that always has an identificational function in the sense of a constellative anthropology, as it can be established for Hebrew thinking (subsequent to Bernd Janowski[26]),

B. The generation term has a temporal dimension and refers to an uncertain and unfinished future.

Feast and memory terminology

Alle Riten haben diesen Doppelaspekt der Wiederholung und der Vergegenwärtigung. Je strenger sie einer festgelegten Ordnung folgen, desto mehr überwiegt der Aspekt der Wiederholung. Je größere Freiheit sie der einzelnen Begehung einräumen, desto mehr steht der Aspekt der Vergegenwärtigung im Vordergrund.

Jan Assmann[27]

This reference to the generations occurs not only in the instruction, but in a narrow sense also in the narrative section, which flows into the memory of the generations (12:27b – 42). 12:42 identifies the night as one of departure and of its own remembrance. In the process, many translations create a temporal disambiguation (in the past "was a night of vigil …"), where the Hebrew has an

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26 Bernd Janowski, "Konstellative Anthropologie. Zum Begriff der Person im Alten Testament." In: Christian Frevel (ed.): *Biblische Anthropologie. Neue Einsichten aus dem Alten Testament.* Freiburg et al.: Herder, 2010 (Quaestiones disputatae 237), pp. 64 – 87.

27 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen.* München: Beck, 1992, p. 17.

openness, namely through the temporally ambiguous nominal sentence. Even the verb used here is ambiguous: ליל שמרים is mostly translated as a night of vigil, but even in the Luther Bible of 1912, the meaning of the verb *schamar* was present as a remembrance term:

> Therefore this night shall be kept for the LORD, that he led them out of Egypt; and the children of Israel shall keep it unto the LORD, they and their descendants. (Darum wird diese Nacht dem HERRN gehalten, daß er sie aus Ägyptenland geführt hat; und die Kinder Israel sollen sie dem HERRN halten, sie und ihre Nachkommen)

שׁמר means watch (over), preserve, hold, and in the sense of preservation and holding of a ritual, the verb also occurs in 12:17 (2x), 24, 25; 13:10. What should be held is the Matzot feast (12:17), the word (דבר 12:24), the service (העבודה 12:25), the ordinance (החוקה 13:10).

The term שׁמר is semantically near remembering זכר. In 13:3, the imperative of remembrance connects the people spoken to by Moses with the events to be remembered. Stronger than the ambiguous שׁמר, the זָכוֹר in 13:3 proleptically breaks through the narrative logic.

Spatial and temporal prolepses

> So it is with memory: it is a complex and deceptive experience. It appears to be pre-eminently a matter of the past, yet it is as much an affair of the present. It appears to be preeminently a matter of time, yet it is as much an affair of space.
>
> Jonathan Z. Smith[28]

The זָכוֹר from 13:3 refers back to 12:14 – the day shall be לְזִכָּרוֹן to you, in remembrance. But of what? Of an event that at the level of the story has not yet occurred. In turn, the temporal gradation of the events proves to be strange, the narratological differentiation of the story and discourse decidedly practical.

Not every memorial culture is metaleptic. But it must be kept in mind here that in 12:14, where all subsequent generations are commanded to commemorate, on the level of the story, we are still prior to the event of the departure, and that, therefore, a commemoration command is being given for an event that has yet to be completed. In doing so, both are proleptically anticipated: the situation of remembering and the situation that is to be remembered. The metaleptic aspect is that those who are to remember are not those who are just preparing to leave Egypt; they are not the ones to whom Moses is speaking. The departure gen-

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28 Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place. Toward Theory in Ritual.* Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 25.

eration receives instructions for a life it will never lead. The departure generation receives feast instructions that are actually intended for the implied readers.

Also with regard to content, this jump from the departure generation to the Israelites who will live in the land is clear. The life in the land is assumed in 12:25 in the situation of the first instructions, and it is imagined in 12:43 ff when it deals with the behavior towards foreigners who will live "near you." As such, the identification is doubled:

> a. The departure generation is identified with the subsequent generations by being presented as the addressee for ritual instructions, which the subsequent generations will have to complete, and

> b. The subsequent generations are already present in the text as future addressees for the instructions as well as present in the instructions.

Functions of the metalepsis in biblical narratives

How can this interaction, the permeability of the narrated world for the world of narration, in Ex 12 – 13 be interpreted? In a narrow sense, there is an intertwining between narration and liturgy. "One is invited, indeed compelled, to read the story through a liturgical lens."[29]

I would like to suggest here that we speak of a canonical metalepsis. The blurring of the boundary between narrated characters and implied readers does not serve to produce an effect of estrangement or to expose fictionality. On the contrary: This blurring of the boundaries has the effect that the respective readers – as long as they accept the text's offer – are more strongly pulled into the world of the narrated than they would be with simple identificational reading. As members of the דורות and the בנים, they are present in the text, already being accounted for in the original foundational situation as narrated characters. It is important to the canonical – or to put it more carefully, *binding* – text that the readers identify with it in a number of ways. The interweaving of unique, remembered actions repeated in the feast contribute to this, just as the generational connection of the actors at the point of origin עד־עולם. The text makes use of its own reader-response situation by discussing the act of narrating (the children's questions).

> Die für einen bestimmten Anlass formulierten Texte werden transformiert, indem sie dekontextualisiert und literarisch (vielschichtig) rekontextualisiert und erst dadurch zur Heiligen Schrift für nachfolgende Generationen werden. Bildlich gesprochen wird die Bindung an den Ursprung gelockert, damit der Text weiterhin sprechen kann. [...] Heilige Schrift gewinnt den Charakter des Rituals, gewissermaßen der 'gepflegten' Er-

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29 Fretheim, *Exodus*, p. 133.

innerung, das die Teilnehmenden, statt sie in die Vergangenheit zurückzuführen ('so war das damals') in die Gegenwärtigkeit des Ursprungs stellt ("Ein Gedächtnis seiner Wunder …") […] Der Kanon selbst überspringt diesen "Graben", indem er die Geschichte der Gotteserfahrungen des Gottesvolkes "auf das Gedenken" hin transformiert.[30]

The Torah as a binding text, as a text that spans across generations, as well as a link between narrative and instruction is structurally established here through the narrating.

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30 Georg Steins, "Kanonisch lesen." In: Helmut Utzschneider and Erhard Blum (eds.), *Lesarten der Bibel. Untersuchungen zu einer Theorie der Exegese des Alten Testaments.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006, pp. 45 – 64, at 50 – 52.