

Faith and Dedication

1 Samuel 1:1-28

Introduction

Israel's future monarchy commences with Samuel's birth who became prophet, priest, judge, and most significantly, the one who would be remembered above all for his anointing Israel's first two kings, Saul and David.

The underlying theological statement posited in this portion of Scripture is that an individual's faith is not rooted in one's societal position, but in one's posture before God. On the one hand, Eli, who was to possess spiritual competence because of his office, was in fact blind to spiritual realities. On the other hand, Hannah, who was a socially impotent woman, acts with undiminished faith toward the LORD.

Episode 1: 1 Samuel 1:1-2

Elkanah's Family

The foundation of Israel's future monarchy begins with a man's geographical hometown, his proper name, his genealogical descent (traced to his great-great-grandfather) and lastly, his two wives' proper names and their childbearing status.

TRANSLATION

^{1a}Now-there-was one man
 ^bfrom-Ramathaim Zophim
 ^cfrom-the-mount of-Ephraim,
 ^dand-his-name [was] Elkanah
 ^ethe-son of-Jeroham,
 ^fthe-son of-Elihu,
 ^gthe-son-of-Tohu,
 ^hthe-son of-Zuph,
ⁱan-Ephraimite.
^{2a}And-to-him two wives
 ^bname of-one Hannah
 ^cand-name of-the-second Peninnah;
 ^dand-there-was to-Peninnah children,
 ^ebut-to-Hannah no children.

TEXT (Biblia Hebraica)

dx) #y) yhyw^{1a}
Mypwc Mytmrh-Nm^b
Myrp) rhm^c
hnql) wm#w^d
Mxry-Nb^e
) whyl) -Nb^f
wxt-Nb^g
Pwc-Nb^h
.ytrp)ⁱ
My#n yt# wl w^{2a}
hnx tx) M#^b
hnp tyn#h M#w^c
Mydl y hnppl yhyw^d
.Mydl y Ny) hnhl w^e

First Samuel 1 begins with the birth of Samuel. At the conclusion of this book, Samuel is dead, as well as the first king, Saul, whom he anointed. Samuel's birth narrative continues in 2:11, 18-21, 26, which reports Samuel's success at Shiloh, but the placement of the Song of Hannah at the beginning of chapter 2 makes it appropriate to limit the first sub-major division to 1 Samuel 1:1-28 (ACT 1: 1 Sameul 1--4).

1.1a (NASB) **Now there was a certain man** (dx) #y) yhyw) is the principle clause of 1.1-1.2e and introduces a new narrative, which from the historical viewpoint of our writer, occurred in the past. The length of the intervening period of time between the events recorded in Samuel and the historical situation of the narrator is unknown. This same formula begins the books of Joshua (1:1), Judges (1:1), Ezekiel (1:1), Ruth (1:1), Esther (1:1) and Nehemiah (1:1).¹ At times this same introductory phrase sets off a narrative in a series of narratives within the same work, *i.e.*, Judges 13:2; 17:1; 19:1.

The Hebrew dx) #y) , translated as "a certain man" in the NASB, is literally, "one man". dx) is used here and on other occasions as a marker of an indefinite noun (Judg. 9:53; 13:2; 1 Kgs. 13:11; 2 Kgs. 4:1; 8:6). It should be noted that the feminine form tx) occurs again in 1.2b and 1.5a in relation to Hannah.

1.1b (NASB) **from Ramathaim-zophim** (Mypwc Mytmrh Nm). Before introducing the proper name **Elkanah** into the narrative (which would have been natural: "Now there was a certain man and his name was . . ."), his geographical residence is established first with the *hapax legomenon* Hebrew dual form **Ramathaim** for the city, Ramah.²

- The actual location of "Ramathaim/Ramah" is uncertain. Ramah is a common Old Testament name, designating at least eight different places. Earlier commentators have suggested four places in conjunction with **Ramathaim**: Beit Rima (thirteen miles northeast of Lydda), Ram Allah (nine miles north of Jerusalem), Er-Ram (five miles north of Jerusalem), and Nebi-Samwil (Arabic for "Prophet Samuel"; four miles northwest of Jerusalem).³ Later commentators equate "Ramathaim" with the New Testament city "Arimathea" (cf. Matt. 27:57; Mk. 15:43; Jn. 19:38).⁴

¹ Thomas O. Lambdin analyzed this frequent construction with temporal clauses and phrases. He stated, "Within a narrative sequence temporal modifiers are very frequently placed before the clause they modify and are introduced by *waw-conversive* + a form of the verb *hyh*. In the past tense narrative this is uniformly *yhyw* . . . The temporal [form] is then followed by the expected sequential form of the main narrative" (T. O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Scribner, 1971), 123.

² The city-name, Ramah (htmr/"the height"), occurs sixteen times in 1 Samuel (1Sam. 1:19; 2:11; 7:17; 8:4; 15:34; 16:34; 19:18, 19, 22², 23²; 20:1; 22:6; 25:1; 28:3), and always in connection with Samuel. It is evidently certain the city-name "Ramah" mentioned in Joshua (18:25; 19:29, 36) and Judges (4:5; 19:13) are distinct from the one in 1.1b and elsewhere in 1 Samuel (*The Oxford Bible Atlas*, 3rd edition, pp. 61 and 63). For further comment on "Ramah", see notes on 1 Samuel 1:19.

³ H. P. Smith, *Samuel* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), 5. Without giving any evidence, Smith's opinion is that Ram Allah is the most likely candidate. On the basis of Eusebius and Jerome, others identify Ramathaim with

- Ramah apparently was associated with Naioth, at which the "school" of the sons of the prophets was maintained (1 Sam. 19:18; 20:1). It had also in its area a great well (probably between it and Gibeah of Saul), known as the well of Has-Sechu (1 Sam. 29:22).
- Both the NEB and NIV follow the LXX in understanding **Zophim** as indicating the clan to which Elkanah belonged: "a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim". Other translation traditions (KJV) understand it as part of a compound place name.
- It is best to understand **Zophim** (Μυρῶν) as the region settled by Elkanah's great-great-grandfather Zuph (Πωκ; 1.1h), who subsequently lend his name to the territory. The region of Zuph occurs only again in 1 Samuel 9:5 as the name of the region in which Saul finds the home of Samuel. Significantly, the genealogy of Elkanah ends with a reference to "Zuph" (1.1h), linking the genealogy with the geographical location. This linking suggests the reason our author traces Elkanah's genealogy back to the fourth generation. Zuph settled in the mountains of Ephraim and the particular location was named after him.

Because Samuel's hometown elsewhere is clearly called "Ramah" (1Sam. 1:19; 2:11; 7:17; 25:1; 28:3),⁵ the deliberate word choice of Elkanah's city-name invites attention to its "double" length (dual form), and therefore its meaning, "Two/Twin Heights". Its significance may lie in Samuel's two most important and inseparable roles, prophet and judge, or his anointing of two kings, Saul and David.⁶ Since the location (always referred to as Ramah later) is constantly associated with Samuel's prophetic ministry, the "two heights" may be figuratively the most appropriate advantage point for a prophet to view what is coming. This may be demonstrated by taking note that the only other time the territory **Zuph** is mentioned in Samuel (1 Sam. 9:5) is in connection with Saul as he scours "the land of Zuph", trying to find the she-asses of his father, Kish, while in the meantime the prophet Samuel is on the lookout for the future king Saul (1 Sam. 9).⁷

modern Rentis, about 16 miles east of Jappa on the west slope of the hill country of Ephraim (R. F. Youngblood, *Expositor's Bible Commentary, Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), Vol. 3:570.

⁴ R. P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 72.

⁵ Ramah is associated with Samuel from the cradle to the grave. Not only is Ramah Samuel's birth place, it is also his official residence (1 Sam. 7:17; 8:4) and occurs twice to denote the place of his burial, in 1 Sam. 25:1 ("in his own house") and 1 Sam. 28:3 ("that is, in his own city").

⁶ J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), Vol. 4:8 [footnote #18].

⁷ It is not by chance that this narrative portion is also begun after the introduction of another father (Kish) followed by his genealogical descent. The similarities between Elkanah and Kish were designed by our author to show the connection between Samuel, the first in the prophetic line, with that of Saul, the first in the line of kings of Israel.

1.1c (NASB) **from the hill country of Ephraim** (Myrp) rhm). The city-name is further defined by its region designation, "the hill country/mount of Ephraim". The geographical references move from a narrow circle to a larger one, from the city of **Ramathaim**, an area within the region of **Zophim**, and finally to **Ephraim**, the largest territorial unit. This is similar to modern addresses, such as "Kansas City, Missouri".

Different explanations have been posited in an attempt to harmonize biblical statements relating to Elkanah's/Samuel's family background, *i.e.*, are they Ephraimites or Levites?

- According to 1 Chronicles, Samuel was born into the family line of Kohath in the tribe of Levi, thereby making Samuel a Levite and an ancestor of tabernacle and temple musicians. The family line is recorded twice in 1 Chronicles 6:26-27, 34-35 [the latter in reverse order!]. However, Samuel's father is said to be from Ephraim, and thus assumed by many commentators from the tribe of Ephraim.
- Several commentators suggest that Samuel was an Ephraimite who was "adopted" into the Levites because of his subsequent service in the tabernacle and his priestly duties (1 Sam. 2:11, 26; 3:15; 7:9-10).⁸
- Psalm 99:6 evidently states that Samuel, as well as Moses and Aaron, were priests who called on the LORD's name. Two separate groups of priests seem to be indicated with Moses and Aaron grouped together with Samuel standing alone. This may be explained thematically. Whereas Moses and Aaron were the first priests who exalted the LORD above "all the people" (v. 2), Samuel was the first priest who anointed the first king (v. 4) over Israel (1 Sam. 9:15--10:27) and demanded obedience from him (1 Sam. 15:20-31).
- The best explanation may be that Samuel was geographically an Ephraimite, but genealogically a Levite.⁹ Thus, the reference to Elkanah as an Ephraimite relates to the territory where he lived rather than to his tribal origin. Joshua 24:33 supports this suggestion, in that some Levites are said to have dwelled in a hilly region of Ephraim: "And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim" (NASB).
- Allotted no land inheritance of their own, the Levites lived among the other tribes. Joshua 21:20-22 mentions several cities within Ephraim wherein the Levites lived. However, Ramah is not specifically mentioned as a Levitical town.

⁸ J. A. Thompson, *The New American Commentary, 1, 2 Chronicles* (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), Vol. 9:86.

⁹ Robert D. Bergen, *The New American Commentary, 1, 2 Samuel* (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), Vol. 7:64.

1.1d (NASB) **and his name was Elkanah** (hmq |) wm#w). Elkanah's name means "God has acquired [a son]". From the outset, Elkanah's name provokes prophetic overtones what was soon to occur in Hannah's womb. This phrase continues the principal clause begun in 1 Samuel 1:1a.¹⁰

- "Elkanah" was a popular name which was shared by at least five different Old Testament men, two of whom were Samuel's father's ancestors (1 Chron. 6:22-27).¹¹
- All the men that shared the name "Elkanah" in the Old Testament, with the exception of the one mentioned in 2 Chronicles 28:7, whose genealogy is unknown, can be demonstrated to have been Levites; and most of them belong to the family of Korah, from which Samuel was also descended. The connection between the meaning of "Elkanah" ("God has acquired [a son]") and their tribal affiliation is no accident, since such a name was particularly suitable to the Levites, whom the LORD had set apart for sanctuary service in the place of the firstborn of Israel, whom He had sanctified to Himself when He slayed the firstborn of Egypt (Num. 3:13, 45).

1.1e-h (NASB) **the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph** (Pwc Nb wxt Nb) whyl) Nb Mxry Nb). This genealogical list not only serves to tie Elkanah to his family ancestral roots, but also to historically authenticate what is to follow.

- The family is defined through the male as the point of reference for defining relations, even though it is Hannah who becomes shortly the heroine of the episode.
- Long genealogical lists are rare in the historical narrative in Joshua through Kings.

Elkanah's genealogical heritage is traced back four generations, *i.e.*, to his great-great-grandfather. The genealogical list found here varies from the one in 1 Chronicles 6:25-26. There are three possibilities that account for the differences.

1. There may be gaps within the genealogical list given in 1 Chronicles. This is the least likely of the these three options.
2. Possibility of alternate names for the same individual:
 - a. Elihu in 1 Sam. 1:1f is equal to Eliab in 1 Chron. 6:26, which is the same name as Eliel in 1 Chron. 6:34.
 - b. Tohu in 1 Sam. 1:1g is the same as Nahath in 1 Chron. 6:26 and Toah in 1 Chron. 6:34.
3. The same name may have alternate spellings: Zuph in 1 Sam. 1:1h is the same as Zophai in 1 Chron. 6:26.

¹⁰ The development of a major narrative chain often relies heavily on the minor one.

¹¹ Elkanah's name occurs in 1 Sam. 1:1, 4, 8, 19, 21, 23; 2:11, 20. Outside of 1 Samuel, the name occurs in Ex. 6:24; 1 Chron. 6:23, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36; 9:16; 12:6; 15:23; 2 Chron. 28:7.

The following chart illustrates the divergences in the genealogical lists.¹²

1 Samuel 1:1; 8:2	1 Chronicles 6:16-28	1 Chronicles 6:33-38
Zuph	Zophai	Zuph
Toah	Nahath	Toah
Elihu	Eliab	Eliel
Jeroham	Jeroham	Jeroham
Elkanah	Elkanah	Elkanah
Samuel	Samuel	Samuel
Joel, Abijah	Joel, Abijah	Joel

1.1i (NASB) **an Ephraimite** (ytrp)). **Ephraimite** does not grammatically relate to "Zuph" or "Elkanah", but describes "a certain man" (1 Sam. 1:1a), the subject of the principal clause.¹³

An Ephraimite cannot be evidence against the Levitical descent of Samuel. As stated above, the Levitical lineage of Elkanah and Samuel is beyond dispute by a comparison of the genealogy in 1 Samuel 1:1e-h with that in Chronicles. In the first of these, 1 Chronicles 6:22ff the genealogical list descends from the second son of Levi, Kohath, to Samuel and his sons; in the second, verse 33, it ascends from the singer Heman, Samuel's grandson, to Kohath, Levi and Israel. These Levites of the family of Kohath had their dwellings appointed to them in the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and Manasseh.

Although the Levites had no land apportioned to them for their inheritance, they lived and blended among the other tribes.

- "What, therefore, belongs to the Levites may be redeemed and a house sale in the city of this possession reverts in the jubilee, for the houses of the Levites are their possession among the sons of Israel. But pasture fields of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their perpetual possession" (Lev. 25:33-34).
- "Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession, cities to live in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities As for the cities which you shall give from the possession of the sons of Israel, you shall take more from the larger and you shall take less from the smaller; each shall give some of his cities to the Levites in proportion to his possession which he inherits" (Num. 35:2-8).

¹² See Additional Note A regarding how to read and study genealogies.

¹³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Books of Samuel* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), Vol. 2:17-18.

- "Therefore, Levi does not have a portion or inheritance with his brothers; the LORD is his inheritance, just as the LORD your God spoke to him" (Deut. 10:9).
- "The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the LORD's offerings by fire and His portion. And they shall have no inheritance among their countrymen; the LORD is their inheritance, as He promised them" (Deut. 18:2-3). See also Joshua 13:14, 33; 14:4; and 21:3-8, 21

Samuel's Levitical descent is not emphasized in 1 Samuel 1:1 in Elkanah's lineage, for Samuel's future prophetic office described later rests not upon his Levitical genealogy, but solely upon the call which he received from God (1 Sam. 3). The prophetic office was not confined to any particular tribe, like that of priest, but founded exclusively upon the divine call and endowment of the Spirit of God. For example, the prophet Amos was by occupation a sheep breeder before receiving his call (Amos 1:1; 7:15ff.).

1.2a (NASB) **And he had two wives** (My#n yt# wl w). The background for Samuel's birth continues with the introduction that Elkanah had two wives. Elkanah is the only commoner in the books of Samuel and Kings specifically mentioned as having more than one wife. This may indicate that Elkanah was the exception rather than the rule, and a man of means to be able to support such a family.

- Polygamy is never expressly forbidden under the Old Covenant; but then, it never expressly approves of it either. The Torah governs it by various regulations (Ex. 21:7-10; Lev. 18:18 [legislates not marrying sisters]; Deut. 17:17; 21:15-17 [legislates inheritance when both wives have children]). Under the New Covenant, elders and deacons are required not to have more than one wife (1 Tim. 3:2, 12).
- There are other examples in Scripture of a husband whose first wife was (initially) infertile and who took a second wife in order to produce an heir.¹⁴ The circumstance of having a beloved wife who was incapable of bearing children links Elkanah with the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob (Gen. 16:2-3; 30:3-9). This connection may peak the reader's imagination and suggest that a child of great significance may ultimately result.
- As with Abraham's (Sarah and Hagar) and Jacob's (Leah and Rachel) polygamy, complications and feuding among Elkanah's wives will soon be evident (1 Sam. 1:4-6). It seems apparent that it is was by divine pattern that one man was to be joined to one woman to share together the dominion over the Garden, and eventually through their

¹⁴ The ancient Code of Hammurabi (#145-148) includes four laws regarding a man taking a second wife in the event of a first wife's inability to produce an heir (*ANET*, 154). This fact, in combination with the biblical record (Gen. 11:30; 15:2-4; 16:1-2; 17:15-16; 21:1-2; 25:5), suggests that a major concern of all ancient Near East societies was the provision of social mechanism, including polygamy, to assure the man's genealogical continuity to perpetuate his name and a son to inherit his estate. The Torah's provision for the preservation of a family line was the levirate marriage (cf. Deut. 25:5-10).

children, over the entire works of God (cf. the singular "man" and "woman", and "one flesh", Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18, 21-25; Psa. 8).

- Lamech, the seventh descendant from Cain, is the first mentioned polygamist in Scripture (Gen. 4:19).

1.2b (NASB) **the name of one was Hannah** (hnx tx) M#. Because Hannah is introduced first and explicitly that "name of the second" (tyn#h; 1.2c) was Peninnah, Hannah was Elkanah's first wife. Hannah's name literally means "grace" or "gracefulness" and is a common Hebrew name for a woman, although the name does not occur outside of 1 Samuel in biblical Hebrew.¹⁵

- The proper name "Hannah" occurs again in Luke 2:36 ("Anna -- with the rough breathing mark, transliterated as "h" in English), and is improperly transliterated in all but a few English translations as "Anna".¹⁶ The only recent English versions that has translated the name properly (and therefore maintain continuity between the OT and NT) are those of Lamsa, Moffatt, and Smith-Goodspeed (cf. NASB mg.). It is interesting to compare how both of these women were marked by fasting and prayer and by a longing for a male child. Hannah desired a son to devote to the LORD; the prophetess Anna longed to see the Son that God was to send to His people. The prayers of both of these women were answered in the House of the LORD.

Notably, Hannah is not called "the first wife" (an ordinal number), but "one" (tx), a cardinal number). The order of rank is reserved only for Peninnah in that she is called "the second" (tyn#h; 1.2c). Hannah's position corresponds to that of her husband's, wherein Elkanah is called "one man" (dx) #y), and not "a (certain) man". As explained above, "one" (dx) in relation to Elkanah functions as the indefinite article. However, it still remains a numeral and it must not be overlooked that our author's word choice forges together Elkanah and Hannah as "one". The inspired choice of word ensures Hannah's position is not quantifiable, but unique and that she occupies the "number one" spot.¹⁷ This term again occurs in 1 Samuel 1:5b in Elkanah's relation to Hannah.

1.2c (NASB) **and the name of the other Peninnah** (hnp tyn#h M#w). The proper name "Peninnah" literally means "ruby" or "coral". It is plausible to suppose that Elkanah married Peninnah only in an attempt to produce an heir. This is reasonable since Elkanah's love for Hannah is specifically stated by our narrator (1.5b), whereas the contrasting lack of such a statement about his feelings for Peninnah is conspicuously absent.

¹⁵ The proper name, "Hannah", occurs only in the Old Testament in the first two chapters of 1 Samuel (1:2², 5², 8, 9, 13, 15, 19, 20, 22; 2:1, 21).

¹⁶ Unfortunately the KJV spelling "Anna" in Luke 2:36 has become traditional.

¹⁷ The Shema' in Deut. 6:4 points to the fact that the God of Israel is "one" (dx), meaning "unique".

1.2d (NASB) **and Peninnah had children** (Mydl y hnnpl yhyw).¹⁸ Just as Elkanah's feelings for Peninnah are conspicuously absent, so are the number and names of Peninnah's children. From whose standpoint this omission is made, is an interesting one; it may be Elkanah's or that of our narrator. No where in Scripture are Peninnah's children names listed. Because there is no genealogical information concerning Peninnah's children, this is the first indication that the heir will not come through Peninnah, but through Hannah. Furthermore, our narrator does not give Peninnah a single line of dialogue, only her taunting behavior toward Hannah is described, and after 1 Samuel 1:7c, Peninnah herself is never heard of again.

1.2e (NASB) **but Hannah had no children** (Mydl y Ny) hnhl w). Hannah's childlessness is underscored and contrasted to Peninnah having children with the particle of nonexistence, Ny) (translated as "had no" by the NASB). This becomes the catalysis for the events in the next sequence, 1 Samuel 1:3-8.

The contrast between Elkanah's two wives is underscored by a repetitive reverse parallel structure: Hannah -- Peninnah, Peninnah -- Hannah.¹⁹ The entire structure may be graphically expressed as:

- A "the name of one was Hannah" (1.2b)
- B "and the name of the second Peninnah (1.2c)
- B' "and Peninnah had children" (1.2d)
- A' "but Hannah had no children" (1.2e)

Hannah is not only mentioned first, but also is at the center of the climactic contrast at the end of the verse. Our author's chosen literary structure emphasizes that while Hannah is Elkanah's "number one" wife, the chiastic pattern of children places her last with her barrenness. Peninnah comes first with her children.

This particular chiastic structure indicates the potential rival between the wives of Elkanah. The difference between panels A/B and B'/A' places the "haves" and the "have-nots" in juxtaposition the moment we switch over from one half of the structure to the other. The structure places the presence and absence of children conspicuously together, which becomes the catalysis for the next sequence.

¹⁸ After a nominal clause with past time reference, yhyw tends to represent a definite perfective situation in past time (Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 560.

¹⁹ This type of reverse parallelism is called chiasmus (spelled also as "chiasm"). This is a common literary pattern in biblical Hebrew, as well as in other ancient Near Eastern literature.

Additional Note A: How to Study Genealogies

We do not normally read the genealogies in the biblical texts. They are not part of our history and the names are difficult to pronounce. We struggle to know how to read the genealogies, and how we should understand them. Sometimes we find tension between different genealogical lists. For example, the names found in 1 Samuel 1:1 appear also in 1 Chronicles 6:1-13 and 1 Chronicles 6:18-23, with slight variations on some of the names. Usually we do not read the genealogies closely enough to notice such variations.

Perhaps we can begin to learn to ask ourselves questions as we read biblical genealogies. Suppose we begin by asking why each genealogy appears in its particular place. Often we find such a list at the end or sometimes the beginning of a new narrative section. The list may group some persons together, distinguishing them from other persons that have been or will be important in the narrative; or the genealogy may function to link a person or group to its historical roots: family, tribal, or political roots.

We may also look inside the genealogy to see what stand out as important in the flow of the list. Even in the most repetitious genealogy, we can search for variations and pay close attention to those. Not always, but often those variations signal important elements in the genealogy.

We need also to study closely at a genealogy to find out why this list was passed on. For example, Genesis 4:17-22 served to group together various occupations, while Genesis 10 organized different national groups.

Genealogies may never become favorite texts. However, as we learn how to read them, we can find different kinds of information than simply who gave birth to whom.