Jerubaal, Jacob and the Battle for Shechem: A Tradition History

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INTRODUCTION

Jerubaal appears in the book of Judges as an alternative name for Gideon. Many scholars agree that the identification between Gideon and Jerubaal is not original but derives from the redactional combination of two originally distinct accounts, one relating to Gideon and the other to Abimelech. Whether an independent account of Jerubaal ever existed remains a matter of debate.[1]

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[1] For a fuller discussion of the secondary nature of the identification between Gideon and Jerubaal, see H. Haag, "Gideon-Jerubbaal-Abimelek," *ZAW* 79 (1967), 305–14; also B. Lindars, "Gideon and Kingship," *JTS* 16 (1965), 315–26. For a critique of this position, see J. A. Emerton, "Gideon and Jerubbaal," *JTS* 27 (1976), 289–312. For an alternative approach to the problem, see B. Halpern, "The Rise of Abimelek," *HAR* 2 (1978), 79–100. For a recent attempt to reconstruct the development of the Gideon saga, see K. J. Murphy, *Mapping Gideon: An Exploration of Judges 6–8* (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2011).

Graeme Auld suggests the interesting possibility that instead of a conflation of two traditional chieftain characters, what occurred here is that a rather late character (Gideon) was created by the editor of the book of Judges and attached to the older character (Jerubaal). See A. G. Auld, "Gideon: Hacking at the Heart of the Old Testament," *VT* 39/3 (1989), 257–67. Although it is a provocative argument, I do not find it convincing. The story of Gideon focuses on his battle against Midianite invaders and much of the action occurs in the Transjordan. However,

In this article, I will argue that there was an independent account of Jerubaal. Isolating various ripples and fissures in the biblical text, I will attempt to trace the contours of a once-independent Jerubaal tradition, which focused on this character's domination of the city or area of Shechem.[2] I will argue that the older Jerubaal tradition was usurped by Jacob at a time when traditions about this patriarch's conquest of Canaan were gaining currency. Eventually, when the idea of a conquering patriarch had fallen out of favor, this tradition reemerged as part of the highly controversial account of the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34.

PART 1: THE ABIMELECH ACCOUNT

Like many biblical narratives, the Abimelech account (Judg 9) shows evidence of expansion.[3] Some of this growth seems to derive

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once the transition is made to Jerubaal's son, Abimelech, the entire story takes place in Shechem and its surrounding provinces. This implies that each main character, Gideon and Jerubaal, had his own enemy, Midian and Shechem respectively. How old the Gideon tradition is in comparison with the Jerubaal tradition is difficult to say, but it seems that when the editor merged Gideon and Jerubaal, Gideon already had a story of his own, one unlike the (lost) Jerubaal account, which probably had to do with his subjugation of Shechem, as will be seen later on in the article. Additionally, the Gideon account itself seems multilayered, hardly evidence of its being a creation out of whole cloth by the late editor of Judges. In fact, the most likely solution to the Zeev-Orev/Zebah-Tzalmunah doublet is that there were *multiple* Gideon traditions available to the editor of the Gideon account.

[2] For a tradition historical analysis of all the Shechem traditions, see E. Nielsen, *Shechem: A Traditio-Historical Investigation* (2d ed.; Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1959).

[3] This article is not the place for a survey of past reconstructions of this narrative's textual growth or for offering a full, verse by verse, reconstruction of my own. The article will offer some observations about the relative chronology of the narrative and its development and engage the relevant scholars when it does so. For some attempts at reconstructing the layers of the Abimelech story, see G. F. Moore, *Judges* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), 237–38; W. Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch* (BBB, 18; Bonn: Hanstein, 1963), 246–318 (314–16); F. Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat* (WMANT, 49; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 19–42; V. Fritz, "Abimelech und Sichem in Jdc. ix," *VT* 32/2 (1982), 129–44; U. Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum: Redactionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Richterbuch* (BZAW, 192; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 184–208; E. Würthwein, "Abimelech und der Untergang Sichems: Studien zu Jdc 9," in E. Würthwein, *Studien zum Deuteronomischen Geschichtswerk* (BZAW, 227; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), 12–28; I. de Castelbajac, "Histoire de la rédaction de Juges IX: une solution," *VT* 51/2 (2001), 166–85; W. Groß, *Richter: Übersetzt und ausgelegt* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2009), 485–94; E. Jans, *Abimelech und sein Königtum: Diachrone und synchrone Untersuchungen zu Ri 9* (ATSAT, 66; St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2001); R. Müller, *Königtum und Gottesherrschaft: Unter-*

from multiple Abimelech traditions and some from redactional supplements aimed at harmonizing the Gideon and Jerubaal/Abimelech cycles. I will begin with the latter category.

HARMONIZING SUPPLEMENTATION

The story of Gideon's destruction of the Baʿal idol and his subsequent name change to Jerubaal (Judg 6:25–32) appears to be a prime example of a harmonizing supplement. The story functions to explain why Gideon is also known as Jerubaal—an explanation necessary for any editor attempting to combine the traditions about the two characters.[4] One less evident case, but more important for the purposes of this study, appears at the end of the Gideon cycle and is focused on the place of residence and action of the protagonists. Since Gideon is said to have ruled "Israel" (or at least Manasseh and Ephraim) from Ophrah, and Abimelech was king of Shechem (ruling from Arumah), this discontinuity in place of residence required some explanation. The connection is built by the addition of a verse to the end of the Gideon cycle (Judg 8:30–32).

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suchungen zur alttestamentlichen Monarchiekritik (FAT 2, 3; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 93–118; R. G. Kratz, The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament (trans. J. Bowden; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 170–73, 203–4, 208; and N. Naʾaman, "A Hidden Anti-Samaritan Polemic in the Story of Abimelech and Shechem (Judges 9)," BZ 55 (2011), 1–20.

For some attempts at a synchronic reading, see E. Assis, Self Interest or Communal Interest: An Ideology of Leadership in the Gideon, Abimelech and Jephthah Narratives (Judg 6–12) (VTSup, 106; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1–173; J. L. Story, "Jotham's Fable: A People and Leadership Called to Serve," Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 2/2 (2009), 29–50. For a social scientific approach to the text, see N. Steinberg, "Social-Scientific Criticism: Judges 9 and Issues of Kinship," in G. A. Yee (ed.), Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 46–64.

[4] That the Baʿal account should be seen as a late editorial gloss has been argued by a number of scholars. See, for example: Y. Amit, Judges: Introduction and Commentary (Mikra LeYisrael; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1999), 158 (Hebrew); Becker, Richterzeit, 151–160; Gross, Richter, 373–74; and Kratz, Composition, 203–4. A different approach was taken by Albert de Pury, who argues that although the final form of the passage shows evidence of Deuteronomistic editing, an earlier form of the passage, which he reconstructs, was actually a part of one of the oldest strands in Judges, which dealt with the weakness and inevitable defeat of Baʿal. See A. de Pury, "Le raid de Gédéon (Juges 6, 25–32) et l'histoire de l'exclusivisme yahwiste," in T. Römer (ed.), Lectio difficilior probabilior? L'exégèse comme expérience de décloisonnement: Mélanges offerts à Françoise Smyth-Florentin (Heidelberg: Wiss.-theol. Seminar, 1991), 173–205.

^(ל) וּלְגִדְעוֹן הָיוּ שִׁבְעִים בָּנִים יֹצְאֵי יְרֵכוֹ כִּי נָשִׁים רַבּוֹת הָיוּ לוֹ	30. Gideon had seventy sons, children of his loins, for he had many wives.
^(לא) וּפִילַגְשׁוֹ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁכֶם יָלְדָה לּוֹ גַם הִיא בֵּן וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת שְׁמוֹ אֲבִימֶלֶךְ	31. And his concubine, who lived in Shechem, also gave birth to a son, and he named him Abimelech.
^(לב) וַיָּמָת גִּדְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹאָשׁ בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה וַיִּקָּבֵר בְּקֶבֶר יוֹאָשׁ אָבִיו בְּעָפְרָה אֲבִי הָעֶזְרִי	32. Gideon son of Joash died at a ripe old age, and was buried in the sepulcher of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abi-Ezrites.

Verse 30 presents a standard description of a successful chieftain in the book of Judges. Numerous offspring is an indication of success in this work, and this same measure of success appears in the description of Yair (Judg 10:4), Ibzan (Judg 12:9) and Abdon (Judg 12:14). Marking a chieftain's grave, as is done in v. 32 for Gideon, is also a common way of ending the description of a chieftain.[5] What stands out in this ending is v. 31. Here Abimelech is said to have been Gideon's son through a concubine who lived in Shechem.

The idea of the next leader being born of a mother of inferior status is reminiscent of the account with Jephthah, who is said to have been born of a harlot (Judg 11:1). As such, this claim about Abimelech may reflect a common trope or motif about leaders used by biblical authors. What is odd about this verse is that the concubine apparently lives in Shechem rather than with her husband in Ophrah. This artificial construct was most probably designed to explain why, if Abimelech is indeed the son of Gideon, he lives in the area around Shechem and not in Ophrah with his seventy brothers.

The addition of v. 31 gives the editor an opportunity to combine the stories in another way. How does Abimelech become king of Israel (or, at least, Shechem) if he has seventy *legitimate* brothers? The answer, the editor suggests, is that he killed them. The seventy sons of Gideon, originally referenced merely as a standard closing description of a successful Israelite chieftain, have artificially become Abimelech ben Jerubaal's seventy brothers and his chief rivals. As such they needed to be dispatched. As Gideon's (other) sons do not live in the same city as Abimelech, the editor has

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[5] See Judg 10:2, 10:5, 12:7, 12:10, 12:12, and 12:15.

Abimelech hire an "army of rabble" and send them to Ophrah to assassinate them.[6]

The Abimelech story itself focuses almost exclusively on Shechem and its environs (like Arumah, where Abimelech lives); the connection to Ophrah as a competitor city is best understood as a consequence of the attempt to create a link between Gideon and Jerubaal/Abimelech. Although some have argued that the fratricide should be seen as an early feature of the Abimelech account,[7] I believe that it is best explained as a fortuitous side-product of the combination of the stories which was intelligently used by a later editor to paint Abimelech in the worst possible light.

Finally, the latest piece of the Abimelech story appears to be the speech of Jotham and his parable, which was grafted onto the account of the killing of the seventy brothers at a later date.[8] As all of the harmonizing supplements (the secondary birth-status of Abimelech, the murder of the brothers and the Jotham parable) referenced in this section are late literary developments of the earlier traditions, this article will not discuss them further.

EARLY REDACTION AND MULTIPLE ABIMELECH TRADITIONS

Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century scholarship assumed that the purported Pentateuchal sources, JEDP, continued into the Former Prophets, including the book of Judges. As such, a number of scholars attempted to solve various discontinuities in the narratives by separating out these sources. Although this model

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[6] The army of rabble theme may have been inspired by the Jephthah story (Judg 11:3) or even by the David story (1 Sam 22:2).

[7] Jans (*Abimelech*, 372), although agreeing that Judg 8:31 is supplemental, suggests that there is a verse missing from the final form of the story that was once part of the introduction to an earlier Abimelech tradition (what he calls the *BAALIM-Erzählung*). This missing verse would have also given Jerubaal seventy sons, thereby making Abimelech's fratricide an early feature of the account. The idea that the killing of the seventy legitimate heirs should be seen as an early and integral feature of the Abimelech account goes back to Ernst Sellin, who suggested that in the oldest version, Abimelech killed the seventy sons of Hamor, thereby becoming king. See E. Sellin, *Wie wurde Sichem eine israelitische Stadt?* (Deichert: Leipzig, 1922).

[8] Verse 5b, which records the survival of Jotham, has all the appearance of a late harmonizing supplement; I thank Christophe Nihan and the *JHS* reviewers for pointing this out. For a discussion of the relative lateness of the Jotham parable, see K. Schöpflin, "Jotham's Speech and Fable as Prophetic Comment on Abimelech's Story: The Genesis of Judges 9," *SJOT* 18/1 (2004), 3–22. Schöpflin believes that the Jotham section was written in stages with the parable entering last to reinforce Jotham's prophetic role as critiquing the monarchy. Nadav Na'aman also believes that the Jotham section was put in towards the end of the revision of the Abimelech cycle, in post-exilic times. He argues that the Jotham addition helped reshape the story into an anti-Samaritan polemic (Na'aman, "Hidden," 15–20).

no longer seems viable to most biblical scholars, the question of how best to solve the discontinuities in the Abimelech account (Judg 9), and whether one should assume multiple sources or supplementation, is a live one.

The central segments of concern to this article are the doublet with respect to the reasons for Shechem's rebellion against Abimelech and the doublet with respect to the battle scene between Abimelech's forces and the forces of the Shechemites. Providing a reason for the rebellion, Judg 9:23 states that God placed an evil spirit upon the Shechemites; Judg 9:26–29, on the other hand, state that a passing ruffian named Gaʿal caused the Shechemites to disapprove of Abimelech. Similarly, the Gaʿal rebellion seems to have been put down by Abimelech in Judg 9:40–41, yet Abimelech puts down a general rebellion in Judg 9:43–45.

A possible solution to the doublet problem suggests itself when one compares Judg 9:25 with Judg 9:42.

(כה) וַיָּשִׂימוּ לוֹ בַעֲלֵי שְׁכֶם מְאָרְבִים עַל רָאשֵׁי הֶהָרִים וַיִּגְזְלוּ אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹר עֲלֵיהֶם בַּדָּרֶךְ וַיֻּגַּד לַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ	25. And the masters of Shechem placed ambushes upon the tops of the mountains against him (=Abimelech), and they robbed anyone who passed them upon the way, and this was told to Abimelech.
(מב) וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם הַשָּׂדֶה וַיַּגִּדוּ לַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ	42. And it was on the next day that the people went out to the field and they told this to Abimelech.

Verse 25 explains that after God places the evil spirit of rebellion in the bosoms of the leaders of Shechem, they begin their rebellion with brigandry. They rob passersby who are, ostensibly, under Abimelech's protection. Abimelech hears about this and, as one might expect, he offers a military response. Verse 42, on the other hand, makes little sense. Firstly, who told Abimelech and what did they tell him? Secondly, it is unclear what problem the people are causing by going out to the fields. Finally, if they were going out to the fields to rob passersby or fight with Abimelech, this would be folly on the people's part; did not Abimelech just attack Shechem and eject Gaʿal and his followers from the city?

One possible solution to the problem of v. 42 is that it is, in fact, a resumptive repetition (*Wiederaufnahme*) of v. 25.[9] If this is

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[9] My suggestion dovetails with that of Groß (*Richter*, 492), who believes that v. 42 was written in order to connect two different Abimelech accounts. Crüsemann (*Widerstand*, 34), who also believes the Gaʿal account (vv. 26–41) to have been inserted, nevertheless, does not believe that v. 42 is a resumptive repetition at all, but rather a part of the primary stratum that would have immediately followed v. 25. Würthwein

correct, then the entire story of Gaʿal and his rebellion was added into the story of the Shechemite rebellion against Abimelech. This solution further explains why there appear to be two reasons for the rebellion and two campaigns against Shechem: Two accounts are being combined here.

Yet this suggestion poses problems. One difficulty is that the story of Gaʿal (Judg 9:26–41)—the section being proposed as supplemental—is generally considered to be the oldest section of the story, and for good reason.[10] The Gaʿal story reads more like a trivial local drama between a chieftain and an Apiru leader than part of a significant Israelite drama characteristic of the Deuteronomistic History. Moreover, the explanation that a small-time brigand leader speaks rashly and gets into trouble with the local chieftain is a good point of departure for a tale of political rivalry, as compared with the more theologically-driven explanation according to which God caused an evil spirit to overcome the rebels' senses. The latter fits best into the later picture of the Deuteronomist, where the God of Israel has a hand in all important events among God's people. Yet if this is correct, one must explain how the earlier narrative can interrupt the later narrative.

Another difficulty is that if one believes the two stories are independent accounts, one is hard pressed to explain the many narrative connections between the two.[11] The most obvious of these connections are the use of the term "ambush", the going out to the field, and the term "masters of Shechem" (בעלי שכם).

Any solution to these problems has its difficulties. Nevertheless, it is possible that the two stories were combined early on and these similarities reflect editorial expansions, or that the author of the spirit-of-God story knew the Gaʿal account, but did not include it in his alternative version.[12] Either way, the older Gaʿal-Abimelech narrative—whether in its current form or in some more skeletal version—seems to have been added into an alternative Abimelech account, either by the author of that narrative or some later editor. Nonetheless, the Gaʿal story still seems to represent one of the oldest, if not the oldest, account of Abimelech.

(*Studien,* 17), in a middle position, suggests that v. 42b is a *Wiederaufnahme*, with v. 42a being part of the primary stratum.

[10] See, for example, Kratz, *Composition*, 203–4.

[11] Reinhard Kratz in a personal communication.

[12] Another possibility is that the "spirit of God" narrative was written as a framework to introduce and conclude the Gaʿal narrative. The difficulty with this solution is that the use of a *Wiederaufnahme* would be an odd strategy for someone composing the introduction and conclusion, considering how choppy it makes the narrative appear, whereas it would be the method of choice for someone combining sources or adding a supplement.

NOTE ON TRANSMISSION HISTORY (ÜBERLIEFERUNGS-GESCHICHTE)

The above analysis brings up the question of transmission history. The (older) Gaʿal account, as it appears in the Book of Judges, is incomplete. The story has neither a proper introduction nor a conclusion. How would the later author or editor of the core, biblical Abimelech story have access to a sliver of an older Abimelech account? There are a number of possibilities.

First, although any claim about oral traditions are by definition conjectural, it seems likely that stories about old heroes were known to people and passed down through the ages. Such stories would have remained fluid and would have given birth to multiple variants. It is possible that one of these variants formed the core of the biblical text, and a piece of an alternative tradition, finding favor in the eyes of a later scribe or redactor, was inserted in the biblical text. On more than one occasion, the biblical authors assume knowledge of stories not included in any biblical text.[13]

Nevertheless, this does not appear to be the best explanation in the Abimelech and Gaʿal case. It is one thing to suggest that stories about a certain character were known and passed down orally but quite another to suggest this about a saga with multiple parts.[14] If Judg 9:26–41 (or the core of it) represents an incomplete picture of a larger, alternative, Abimelech account, then oral transmission would appear to be an insufficient explanation. More likely, there was once a more extensive written—or, at least, a writing-supported oral—tradition about Abimelech, of which the Gaʿal account was only a part.[15]

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[13] Two examples: a) In Genesis (36:24), a Horite/Hurrian character named Anna son of Zibion is mentioned. The biblical author then informs the reader that this is the same Anna that found the *yeimim*—meaning of word unknown—when he was shepherding his father's donkeys in the desert. No such story is recorded in Genesis or any other biblical book, and yet the author/editor assumes that the reader will appreciate this reference. Apparently stories about famous Hurrians and their adventures were part of the Israelite/Judahite repertoire. b) In Ezekiel (14:14, 20), a righteous "Gentile" named Dan'el (or Daniel) is mentioned. The reader is supposed to know this character even though no such person is described anywhere in biblical literature (including the book of Ezekiel). It is possible that this Dan'el is the protagonist of the Ugaritic story of Aqhat, but this only brings up the question of how a Judean prophet/author in Babylon, during the sixth century (at the earliest), could have been familiar with a story found in Ugarit during the thirteenth century. Apparently, more survives "off the record" than that of which we are aware.

[14] The difference between what reasonably forms an oral legend and what appears like a written saga was one of the basic analytical tools used in John Van Seters' classic analysis of the development of the J Abraham texts. See J. Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

[15] For more on the concept of writing-supported oral traditions, see

There are a number of examples in biblical books of references to works no longer extant. Although some of these titles may be fictional constructs of the biblical author, others seem to refer to real books.[16] Additionally, certain biblical books contain supplementary material that probably came from written sources.[17] Therefore, it seems likely that the Gaʿal account was taken from a (lost) written collection either about Abimelech, or about local heroes or chieftains including Abimelech. The account was then inserted into the heart of what would eventually become the biblical account of Abimelech, by a later editor.[18]

The idea that a core piece of one Abimelech narrative would have been inserted into an alternative Abimelech account corresponds to a phenomenon described by David Carr. Carr notes "the tendency of many (if not most) tradents not to reproduce the entirety of compositions whose parts they appropriate, particularly the beginnings and ends of compositions"[19]. As examples of this phenomenon, Carr points to the Chronicler's use of Samuel-Kings,

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D. M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13–36. See also the review of Carr's book by Angela Roskop Erisman, who highlights the importance of distinguishing between the fluidity of oral traditions and the relative stability of writing-supported oral traditions; compare A. Roskop Erisman, "Review of D. Carr, The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction," *H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews* (2012). Online: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=34258 (accessed 14 October 2013).

[16] The phenomenon of fictionalized references is probably the best explanation for a number of references in Chronicles (like *Midrash Ido the Prophet* in 2 Chr 13:22). Some examples of what appear to be references to actual works now lost are *The Book of the Wars of YHWH* (Num 21:14), *The Book of Yashar* (Josh 10:13 [MT]; 2 Sam 1:18), *The Book of the Kings of Israel* and *The Book of the Kings of Judah* (mentioned numerous times throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles).

[17] One example is the collection of lists of battles and heroes in 2. Sam 21:15–22 and 23:8–39; this example serves as a particularly good parallel as it seems to contain material that is earlier than the biblical David narrative; some of it is even contradictory to this narrative, such as the ascription of the defeat of Goliath to a man named Elhanan as opposed to David. The argument that these traditions, although added later into the book of Samuel, actually predate it, is made in I. Finkelstein and N. A. Silberman, *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of Western Tradition* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 54–57.

[18] Although entirely different than the above suggestion, it is worth noting that Alexander Rofé believes that the core of the book of Judges was once an Ephraimite History that predated the Deuteronomistic History. See A. Rofé, "Ephraimite versus Deuteronomistic History," in D. Garrone and F. Israel (eds.), *Scritti in onore di J.A. Soggin* (Brescia: Paideia, 1991), 221–35; reprinted in G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Studies, 8; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 462–74.

[19] Carr, *Formation*, 88.

the Temple Scroll's use of Deuteronomy, and Matthew and Luke's use of Mark.[20]

My suggestion regarding the Abimelech account is similar, in the sense that the second Abimelech tradition seems to have been preserved only in a fragment. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference. Carr is discussing a phenomenon where a later author builds off of the core of an earlier work, but ignores the opening and closing of that work, replacing it with something new. With the Abimelech account, I am suggesting that a fragment of an earlier Abimelech account was inserted into an alternative, albeit later, Abimelech account by a later scribe who wished to preserve this piece of the alternative tradition but not the entirety of that tradition.

PART 2: RECONSTRUCTING JERUBAAL

USING THE ABIMELECH ACCOUNT TO RECONSTRUCT JERUBAAL

As Jerubaal seems to have been known as the father of Abimelech before he became identified with Gideon,[21] a close look at the Gaʿal story can help in reconstructing the contours of an older Jerubaal account. The key passage is found in Judg 9:28, part of Gaʿal's speech at the party thrown in "dishonor" of Abimelech. The proper reading of this verse has been debated throughout the ages. As pointed by the Masoretes, the text reads:

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[20] Carr, *Formation*, 88–89. This phenomenon should not be confused with a rather different phenomenon, which Carr discusses on p. 66, of scribes adding material to the beginning or ending of a work, without significantly revising the heart of the work itself. This phenomenon, dubbed by Sara Milstein "revision through introduction," is the subject of her dissertation *Reworking Ancient Texts: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2010) and her book *Tracking the Master Scribe: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (forthcoming). I thank Sara Milstein for clarifying some of these issues for me over e-mail.

[21] The name Gideon is never mentioned in the Abimelech cycle and Abimelech is always called "the son of Jerubaal," even when referenced outside of the book of Judges (e.g., 2 Sam 11:21).

וַיֹּאמֶר גַּעַל בֶּן־עֶבֶד	And Gaʿal ben Ebed said:
מִי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּמִי שְׁכֶם כִּי נַעַבְדֶנּוּ	"Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem[22] that we should serve him? Is [he] not the son of Jerubaal,
הֲלֹא בֶן־יְרֻבַּעַל וּזְבֻל פְּקִידוֹ	and Zebul his deputy?
עִבְדוּ אֶת־אַנְשֵׁי חֲמוֹר אֲבִי שְׁכֶם	Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem!
וּמַדּוּעַ נַעַבְדֶנּוּ אֲנָחְנוּ	Why should we serve him?!"

In her article on the Abimelech story, Katie Heffelfinger makes an argument in support of this reading.[23] She writes: "the speech is a call to the current Shechemites to serve themselves, Shechemites on behalf of Shechemites, rather than the partial Shechemite of whom they had once said, 'he is our brother.' " This is certainly an elegant interpretation of the Masoretic text; nevertheless, for many reasons, the Masoretic pointing itself is very difficult to accept and Gaʿal's argument as a whole remains inexplicable.

Firstly, הלא בן ירבעל is not a sentence; there is no subject. In general, phrases like this beginning in הלא require a pronominal subject.[24] If the verse were trying to say, "Is he not [just] the son of Jerubaal?" it should have said הלא בן ירבעל הוא.[25] Second, what is

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[22] It would take us too far afield to discuss the possible meanings of this phrase. The LXX reads: "καὶ τίς ἐστιν [ὁ] υἱὸς Συχεμ" (and who is the son of Shechem?). This reading seems to make the two phrases parallel since Abimelech is a "son of Shechem," i.e., a Shechemite. For a fuller discussion of this, see R. G. Boling, " 'And Who Is Š-K-M?' (Judges IX 28)," *VT* 13/4 (1963), 479–82. Tur-Sinai, in his characteristically creative fashion, argues that since this half of the verse should parallel the second half, the phrase should really refer to Zebul. Based on this, he suggests the emendation: ומי שרו ("and who is his minister?"). See N. H. Tur-Sinai, *Peshuto shel Mikra* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1964), 2:80 (Hebrew). There exists, however, no textual evidence to back up this suggestion.

[23] K. M. Heffelfinger " 'My Father is King': Chiefly Politics and the Rise of Abimelech," *JSOT* 33/3 (2009), 277–92 (291–92). Her point is made in the context of her argument against Robert Miller, who prefers a different reading of the text; see R. D. Miller, *Chieftains of the Highland Clans: A History of Israel in the 12th and 11th Centuries B.C.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 120.

[24] Cf. Gen 19:20 הלא מצער היא or the many examples of the construct הלא הם כתובים in Kings (e.g., 1 Kgs 11:41; 15:7; 16:5; 2 Kgs 1:18; 8:23; 10:34).

[25] Boling (1963) notices this problem and attempts to solve it by pointing to LXXᴬ (LXXᴮ reads like the MT), which has οὐχ οὗτος υἱὸς Ιεροβααλ, adding the pronominal subject and making it a complete sentence. Nevertheless, Boling's methodology here is questionable. The LXXᴬ text can best be understood as evidence that the LXXᴬ (or its Vorlage) noticed the problem with the half sentence and tried to solve it. The

the purpose of the words וזבול פקידו? Is there something particularly insulting about claiming that Zebul was his deputy? Third, how can the people of Shechem serve the men of Hamor? Are the men of Hamor still around to serve? Where have they been until now?[26] Finally, how does the final phrase follow the one before it? The "him" being referred to must be Abimelech, but he has not been referenced in this sentence at all.

I would argue for an alternate pointing of the text, understanding the ע.ב.ד.ו not as the imperative (*ᶜibdu*), but as the perfect (*ᶜabdu*). The verse would then read:

הֲלֹא בֶן יְרֻבַּעַל וּזְבֻל פְּקִידוֹ עָבְדוּ אֶת אַנְשֵׁי חֲמוֹר אֲבִי שְׁכֶם וּמַדּוּעַ נַעַבְדֶנּוּ אֲנָחְנוּ	Did not the son of Jerubaal and Zebul his deputy once serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem! So why should we serve him?

This reading is supported by the Targum and is the translation offered by the JPS and the NRSV, among others.

The problems with this reading are not grammatical but historiographical. I say historiographical and not historical, because the past few decades of scholarship have shown that attempting to find historical clues—let alone historical records—in the book of Genesis is fraught with methodological problems. To be clear, this article is in no way attempting to discuss the question of whether there ever was a king of Shechem named Hamor, and if so, when he may have lived. My discussion of the historiographical problems with certain interpretations should be seen in the context of a tradition-historical or mnemohistorical analysis of various textual artifacts.[27]

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same strategy may be behind the Peshitta's text, which also adds the pronominal subject, "ܐܢܘܢ ܗܘ ܦܠܚܘ ܠܐܢܫ."

[26] Heffelfinger's interpretation attempts to address this problem by understanding "men of Hamor" to be referencing Shechemite natives in general. Although this is a creative interpretation, I am unsure that it is a convincing one.

[27] In the past, many scholars did attempt to situate the Hamor and Shechem narrative in some historical reality, like the Amarna period, even going so far as to claim that the tradition is grounded in a real historical event which occurred during the "patriarchal period." Some of these scholars latched onto the mention of Simeon and Levi, two tribes who were said to have been landless (or virtually landless) during the monarchic period, and use this to argue for the antiquity of the tradition (thus, e.g., Moore, Weinfeld, Speiser, and to some extent Westermann, in their commentaries on Genesis ad loc., to name a few). Others argued the antiquity of this tradition based on the curious absence of a conquest story for Shechem in the book of Joshua (Kaufmann, *Joshua*, 133; Sarna, *Genesis*, ad loc.). Some even pointed to archaeological evidence for the possibility of an early tradition; Shechem Stratum XIII has a destruction layer (F. M. T. Böhl, referenced by G. E. Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965], 139–40, 257 nn. 3 and 4).

If one takes the Primary History as a whole, Gaʿal's claim flatly contradicts the account in Genesis 33–34. According to the logic of the Primary History, Hamor and Shechem lived hundreds of years earlier and were slaughtered by Jacob's children. One would have expected greater consistency in the redactional layer and Gaʿal's claim that Abimelech once served the sons of Hamor seems highly problematic.[28]

One could try to solve the problem by suggesting that the references to Shechem and Hamor are secondary glosses. For example, one reviewer suggested the following reconstruction:

מִי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּמִי שְׁכֶם כִּי נַעַבְדֶנּוּ הֲלֹא בֶן יְרֻבַּעַל, וּזְבֻל פְּקִידוֹ/עִבְדוֹ אֶת אַנְשֵׁי חֲמוֹר אֲבִי שְׁכֶם וּמַדּוּעַ נַעַבְדֶנּוּ אֲנָחְנוּ	Who is Abimelech [and who is Shechem] that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubaal, and Zebul his deputy/his servant? [the men of Hamor the father of Shechem!] Why should we serve him?!"

However, this historical approach has been abandoned by much of modern scholarship. Currently, most scholars do not see the "patriarchal period" as reflective on any historical period but as a mythological construct, put together in a relatively late period. See, T. L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1974); E. Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT, 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984); J. Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992).

Furthermore, the field of cultural memory studies has begun to demonstrate that a people's memory of their history often differs greatly from their actual historical experience. For more on cultural memory studies, see M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (original French, 1941; trans. and ed. L. A. Coser; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); J. Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); A. Erll, "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction," in A. Erll and A. Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Media and Cultural Memory, 8; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2008), 1–18. For an attempt to apply cultural memory studies to biblical studies, see P. R. Davies, *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History Ancient and Modern* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).

[28] The problem is made even worse if one accepts the LXX's interpretation of the verse, where the phrase את חמור אבי שכם is understood to mean "together with the men of Hamor father of Shechem" (σὺν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν Εμμωρ πατρὸς Συχεμ), implying that the men of Hamor were still around and serving Abimelech. This is the reading preferred by Jans (*Abimelech,* 56 n. 42). Nevertheless, the interpretation is an odd one, as it is hard to understand how claiming that the men of Hamor are his slaves would be insulting to Abimelech. However one understands it, the lack of consistency in the redactional layer remains, since the men of Hamor should have been long gone by the time Jerubaal came on the scene.

According to this suggestion (as I understand it), the explanation for the enigmatic term עבדו, which has been the source of debate for two millennia, is that the word was originally a copyist's gloss offered as an interpretation for the less familiar term פקידו that was then copied into the main text by a later scribe. This conflated reading would have caused confusion, leading to the interpretation of עבדו as a verb. Another, later, scribe, being bothered by the fact that no object existed for this verb, and being familiar with the Dinah story, may have offered the suggestion in the margins that it was Hamor, king of Shechem, that Abimelech once served. Finally, the words "and who is Shechem" would have been added to the opening question to create parity with the next line.

As ingenious as this suggestion is, I find it unconvincing for a number of reasons. Firstly, if one assumes that the original verse simply read "is [he] not the son of Jerubaal and Zebul his deputy," the problems with the MT reading return. What is insulting to Abimelech about this claim? Even if one could suggest some sort of criticism of Abimelech in Jerubaal being his father or Zebul being his deputy, one still faces the problem that Gaʿal's quip is not a complete sentence, as it is missing the pronominal subject required in Hebrew. Finally, even if one is willing to overlook the grammatical infelicity, still by adding Hamor and Shechem into the account the purported scribe creates more problems than he solves with his gloss.

According to Genesis 34 Hamor and Shechem were long dead. By suggesting that Jerubaal or Abimelech once served the men of Hamor,[29] the scribe creates a historiographical contradiction between Judges and Genesis. It is difficult to understand why a scribe, who ostensibly accepts the biblical presentation of history as a baseline, would create an unnecessary narrative contradiction just because he noticed that the two stories occurred in the same city. Were he really motivated by the perceived need of an object for the verb "served" he could simply have filled in something like "[served] the people of Shechem" (בעלי שכם) and left it at that. Therefore, it appears that the reference to Hamor is best understood as original, and that Judges 9 and Genesis 34 reflect two different historiographical traditions regarding the conquest of Shechem and its king, Hamor.[30]

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[29] Although either Jerubaal or Abimelech can be understood as the referent, I suggest Jerubaal as the vanquisher of Hamor and not Abimelech. One could argue, alternatively, that this is a reference to Gideon and that Gaʿal's speech should be taken literally as a claim that Abimelech himself once served Hamor, and that Jerubaal, his father, was a man of no account. Nevertheless, this appears to me to be the less likely interpretation for a number of reasons, not least of which is the independently referenced tradition (1 Sam 12:11) that records Jerubaal as some sort of a savior.

[30] To be clear, I am not suggesting that the story in Gen 34 as we have it is a tradition in the technical sense—i.e., a written or writing-supported

OTHER POSSIBLE CLUES

A number of elements in the older segments of Abimelech's story imply an earlier and longer cycle. For example, at the end of the account, Abimelech inexplicably lays siege to the city of Thebetz where he meets his death.[31] Not only is there a complete lack of context for this siege, but when Abimelech dies, Judg 9:55 states:

וַיִּרְאוּ אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מֵת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיֵּלְכוּ אִישׁ לִמְקֹמוֹ	And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, each man went back to his place.

Who are these men of Israel and when did they arrive? To what places did they return?

Another example of possible missing information concerns Abimelech's home base. Through the course of the narrative, at least in the Gaʿal section, the reader learns that Abimelech rules from Arumah (Judg 9:31[32] and Judg 9:41).[33] One can reasonably

story that existed in a form more or less similar to what we have now before its inclusion in the biblical text. Rather, what I am suggesting, which will be clarified in a later section, is that Gen 34 is based on a tradition which had Jacob—not Jerubaal or Abimelech—as the conqueror of Shechem.

[31] One could suggest that Judg 9:50 was added into the account later, in order to make the assault on the tower into a separate battle, with the original tower being a tower in Shechem itself. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that at least by the time of the final form of the Bathsheba and Uriah story, Abimelech was said to have laid siege to a tower in Thebetz and died there (2 Sam 11:21).

[32] Judg 9:31 actually reads "בתרמה," and there are those who translate it as "secretly" from the root ר.מ.ה/י. This is the translation offered in the LXX[B] (ἐν κρυφῇ) and the Peshitta (ܒܘ) as well as in the KJV. LXX[A] reads "with gifts (μετὰ δώρων)," but whether this is an attempt to translate בתרמה or represents a different Vorlage is hard to say. The most reasonable hypothesis, I would argue, is that the word is a scribal error and should read בארמה, meaning that Zebul sent Abimelech a message while he (Abimelech) was in Arumah, his home town.

[33] Arumah plays an important role in Robert Miller's historical reconstruction, since it would have been the largest of the sub-chieftaincies in the region controlled by Shechem, according to Miller's Gravity Model (Miller, *Chieftains*, 120). However, it should be admitted that Miller's Gravity Model has come under some heavy criticism; see, for example, the reviews of R. D. Miller, *Chieftains*, by W. G. Dever in *NEA* 69.2 (2006), 99 and J. L. Wright in *ZAW* 118 (2006), 469.

Whether one accepts Miller's Gravity Model or not, Khirbet el-Urmah (Arumah) is a large site in the vicinity of Shechem, whose pottery repertoire includes Iron I and Iron II pottery; see R. J. Bull and E. F. Campbell Jr., "The Sixth Campaign Balaṭah (Shechem)," *BASOR* 190 (1968), 2–41, esp. 38–41. See also Erasmus Gaß's discussion of the site in: E. Gaß, *Die Ortsnamen des Richterbuchs in historischer und redaktioneller Perspektive* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, 35; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 330–31. The fact that the site existed in the Iron I is an

hypothesize that this was Jerubaal's town as well, Ophrah having been Gideon's town, tradition-historically speaking.

Most importantly, as was pointed out in the previous section, it is clear from Gaʿal's speech that Abimelech and/or his father once served Hamor. (Again, this is meant as a literary claim, following the logic of the speech. I am making no claims about the historical reality of a king of Shechem named Hamor.) If this is really the meaning of Gaʿal's statement, then it is possible that at least part of the Jerubaal-Abimelech cycle would be about how he, Jerubaal, overthrew Hamor and became king himself.[34]

RECONSTRUCTION

On the basis of the above, I would suggest the following overall structure to the Jerubaal tradition. Jerubaal, Abimelech's father, ruled Shechem from his native city of Arumah, having vanquished Hamor, the previous ruler. After Jerubaal's death, his son, Abimelech takes his place as ruler.[35] At some point Abimelech displeases the Shechemites. In one version this is attributed to the spirit of God causing discontent; in another, possibly earlier, version it is attributed to the newly arrived brigand, Gaʿal ben Eved.

In this latter version, Gaʿal stirs up discontent with his speech, reminding everyone of what they already knew: not long ago Jerubaal and the Arumites served the king of Shechem, but now, everything is backwards and the Shechemites serve Abimelech, the ruler

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important point as it allows for the *possibility* that the Abimelech story may be based on an early tradition or even a historical memory of some kind; Arumah *could* have played an important role in the Shechem traditions during this period.

Katie Heffelfinger, responding to Miller's suggestion that the Abimelech account may be based on the memory of Arumah rebelling against its Shechemite overlord, writes: "Miller assigns Abimelech's residence to Arumah, a site the text notes only in passing. Arumah should probably be seen as an encampment during Abimelech's campaign against Shechem rather than as his permanent residence" (Heffelfinger, "My Father is King," 291). I must disagree with Heffelfinger here. It seems clear from the story that Abimelech does not live in Shechem at all, and, following his coronation, is always found outside the city. In fact, Yairah Amit, in her commentary on Judges, goes so far as to suggest that Abimelech's remaining in Arumah may have been the main reason for the bad feelings the inhabitants of Shechem had for him (Amit, *Judges*, 177).

[34] I accept the basic outline of Haag's theory that Jerubaal was the conqueror/redeemer of Shechem ("Gideon-Jerubbaal-Abimelek," 305–14). Lindars ("Gideon and Kingship," 315–26) suggests that Jerubaal was a vanquisher of Canaanites in general, but the idea that there were pan-Israelite chiefs in this period seems to be a later development in "Israelite/Judahite" historiography.

[35] The idea that Abimelech is a native Shechemite and that that was what gave him preference over his brothers is probably a construct derived from the attempt to attach Abimelech to Gideon, as argued above.

of Arumah. This "absurdity" makes doubly good sense when one takes into account that Arumah (Khirbet el-Urmah), although a relatively large town, was in close proximity to Shechem. The Shechemites, being native to the larger and more important city, would presumably have been offended by the upstart family of the upstart town ruling over them. For this reason, Gaʿal can appeal to their "Shechemite" pride.

One key theme behind this older Jerubaal-Abimelech tradition seems to be the domination of Shechem by an outsider. One cannot help but notice that any account of the conquest of Shechem is conspicuously absent from the various conquest traditions in Joshua and Judges.[36] An older Jerubaal story may have filled this very niche, at least at some point in its development.

PART 3: TWO CONQUESTS OF SHECHEM

Both Genesis 34 and Judges 9 contain a story or reference to a king Hamor of Shechem who was once the reigning monarch but gets displaced by (Israelite) protagonists. In Genesis 34 the vanquishers of Hamor are Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob; in Judges it seems to have been Jerubaal. It is tempting to suggest that the account of the slaughter of the Shechemites and their king Hamor by Jacob's sons may represent an alternative version of the tradition that spawned the Jerubaal account, deriving from the identical niche in Israelite mnemohistory, namely, the Israelite domination of Shechem.[37] The merging of Jerubaal with Gideon and the push-

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[36] In fact, as noted above, this forms one of the bases for the maximalists' defense of the historicity of Gen 34.

[37] In much of twentieth century scholarship, the consensus was that the Shechemites in this period were Canaanites. See, for example, A. Zertal, *A Nation is Born: The Altar on Mount Ebal and the Beginning of Israel* (Israel: Yedioth Aharonot, 2000), 292 (Hebrew). Dissenters, like Yehezkel Kaufmann, who called it "the creation of scholarly fancy" (*Judges* [Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1964], 195–196 [Hebrew]), remained the minority. Over the past couple of decades, however, the entire paradigm has begun to shift, with some scholars questioning the reality of neat ethnic distinctions between Israelites and Canaanites and pointing to the fluidity of ethnic identity and the complexity of making such determinations based on material culture. The entire issue of ethnicity in the Iron Age I period will require serious reevaluation over the coming years.

For a discussion of the archaeological issues, see W. G. Dever, "Ceramics, Ethnicity and the Question of Israel's Origins," *BA* 58 (1995), 200–13; I. Finkelstein, "Ethnicity and Origin of the Iron I Settlers in the Highlands of Canaan: Will the Real Israel Please Stand Up?," *BA* 59 (1996), 198–212; A. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines and Early Israel, 1300–1100 B.C.E.* (Atlanta: SBL, 2005); and A. Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion, and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006).

For a discussion of the biblical conception of Israel as an outside group, see P. Machinist, "Outsiders or Insiders: The Biblical View of Emergent Israel and its Contexts," in L. G. Silberstein and R. L. Cohn

ing of the Shechem account far back into Israel's past would then be the precipitant causes of the above-mentioned lacuna in the conquest tradition.

THE CONQUEST OF SHECHEM TRADITIONS

Working with this suggestion, one can begin to trace a skeletal framework for the "conquest of Shechem" tradition and its various iterations: There was a ruler of Shechem named Hamor. For one reason or another, a nearby warrior rose up against him and slew him, conquering the city and reigning in his stead.

Each version has a life of its own. In the Jerubaal version, the hero is a local citizen of Arumah, perhaps its chieftain. Until Jerubaal's "uprising," his city was most probably ruled by Shechem. Unfortunately, the *casus belli* has been lost. Jerubaal does not slaughter the people of Shechem; rather he takes control of the city, ruling as chieftain from his native Arumah. Ostensibly, the story would have Jerubaal hailed as a savior in his lifetime, at least by the Arumites and other disaffected citizens, but eventually his son Abimelech destroys the city, when the Shechemites attempt to throw off the yoke of the less popular new leader. In the Genesis 34 version, Jacob's impetuous sons Simeon and Levi attack the town of Shechem, killing all the male inhabitants. The *casus belli* in this story is the taking of Jacob's daughter, Dinah, by King Hamor's son.

The main problem with suggesting that the two accounts are versions of the same tradition is that the Simeon and Levi story does not seem to share very much with the posited Jerubaal story, other than the conquest of Shechem by a group of Israelites and the name of the king, Hamor. If one is to assume that the story in Genesis developed out of the Jerubaal story (as I am suggesting here), then a stage, if not many stages, must be missing that would explain how the former developed into the latter. Luckily, yet another biblical account provides a helpful hint with an allusion to the story.[38]

JACOB'S SWORD AND BOW

In Genesis 48:22, in his final words to Joseph, Jacob states:

וַאֲנִי נָתַתִּי לְךָ שְׁכֶם אַחַד עַל אַחֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר לָקַחְתִּי מִיַּד הָאֱמֹרִי בְּחַרְבִּי וּבְקַשְׁתִּי	I have given you one *shechem* more than your brothers, which I took with my sword and my bow.

(eds.), *The Other in Jewish Thought and History* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 35–60; and N. Wazana, "Natives, Immigrants, and the Biblical Perception of Origins in Historical Times," *Tel Aviv* 32/2 (2005), 220–44.

[38] Another allusion, which will not be explored here, is in Jeremiah 40:5.

Although the word "*shechem*" here means portion, it appears to be a play on words.[39] Jacob is claiming that, insofar as the inheritance of the land goes, he is giving Joseph the city of Shechem. Jacob believes that this is his right, since he took it with his own sword and bow. No such story is recorded in any transmitted biblical text.[40]

Modern scholarship has struggled with this problem in various ways.[41] Erhard Blum and Nahum Sarna both suggested that the verse reflects a tradition about Jacob making war on Shechem which was not preserved in the biblical corpus.[42] A more radical hypothesis was offered years earlier by John Skinner:

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[39] But see Claus Westermann, who does not believe that there is any connection between this passage and the conquest of Shechem tradition in ch. 34: "This cannot be Shechem but must mean a smaller piece of land which can be described as 'a shoulder' . . . The present passage has nothing to do with Gen 34 . . ." C. Westermann, *Genesis 37–50: A Commentary* (trans. J. J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 192–93. As an absolute claim, this is hard to accept.

[40] This problem was noticed already by early rabbinic exegetes, who attempted to solve the difficulty midrashically. Cf. *Gen. Rab.*, *Va-Yislaḥ*, 80 (J. Theodor and C. Albeck [eds.], *Midrash Bereshit Rabba: Critical Edition with Notes and Commentary* [Berlin: Bi-defus Ts. H. Itsḳovsḳi, 1903; reprinted: Jerusalem:Wahrman, 1965, 3 vols.], 965–66).

ויבאו על העיר בטח שמואל שאל
ללוי בן סיסי אמר ליה מהו ויבאו
על העיר בטח אמר לו בטוחים על
כוח הזקן. ולא היה אבינו יעקב
רוצה שיעשו בניו כך וכיון שעשוהו
אמר מה אניח בניי ליפול ביד
אומות העולם מה עשה נטל חרבו
וקשתו ועמד על פתח שכם אמר
אם יבואו אומות העולם להזדווג
להם אני נלחם כנגדן הוא דהוא
אמר ליוסף אשר לקחתי מיד
האמרי בחרב ובקשתי ואיכן מצינו
שנטל אבינו יעקב חרבו וקשתו
בשכם.

"And they came to the city securely" (Gen 34:25)—Samuel asked Levi ben Sisi (about this verse). He said to him: "What does it mean 'they came to the city securely'?" He said to him: "Secure in the power of the old man. Our father Jacob did not want them to do this (i.e., massacre Shechem), but once they did it, he said: 'Can I let my sons fall to the nations of the world?' What did he do? He took his sword and his bow and stood by the entrance of Shechem. He said: 'If the nations come to join the [Shechemites] I will fight against them.' This is what he meant when he said to Joseph: 'Which I took from the Amorite with my sword and my bow.' For where have we seen that our father Jacob took a sword and a bow against Shechem?"

The midrash harmonizes the claim of Jacob in his speech to Joseph with the Dinah story recorded in Gen 34.

[41] Speiser believed the problem to be insurmountable; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB, 1; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 358.

[42] See Blum, *Komposition*, 219 n. 39; N. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: JPS,

> "The verse . . . seems to carry us back to a phase of the national tradition which ignored the sojourn in Egypt, and represented Jacob as a warlike hero who had effected permanent conquests in Palestine, and died there after dividing the land amongst his children."[43]

Skinner's hypothesis was bold for his day, but it finds resonance in current, mostly European, models of Pentateuchal studies that reckon with a fundamental distinction between the Patriarchal and the Exodus traditions.

To clarify, following Rolf Rendtorff,[44] a number of European scholars see the incorporation of the Genesis block into the Pentateuch/Hexateuch/Enneateuch block as having occurred very late, even after the Priestly redaction. This would make the incorporation of the Genesis stories one of the last steps towards creating the overall structure of the Primary History as it is known today.[45] These scholars believe that the Patriarchal accounts circulated separately, not just as oral traditions, but as a written work. Steps towards disentangling Genesis from the rest of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch were taken by Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer, and complete models of a literarily independent Genesis have been put forward by Jan Christian Gertz, Reinhard Kratz and

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1989), 330. Understanding the two accounts as two separate traditions, Blum notes a number of differences between the accounts other than the role of Jacob in the battle, like the name of the enemy (Gen 34 has Hivites whereas Gen 48:22 has Amorites). Most importantly, Blum points out that the etiological *purpose* of the two accounts differs; Gen 48:22 explains Joseph's place in Shechem whereas Gen 34 explains the scattering of the tribes of Simon and Levi.

[43] J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC, 1; New York: Scribner, 1910), 507. See also his comment (422): "The one point, indeed, which stands out with some degree of evidence from these discussions is that there was a form of the patriarchal tradition which knew nothing of the sojourn in Egypt, and connected the story of the conquest with the name of Jacob."

[44] See R. Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (original German, 1977; trans. J. Scullion; JSOTSup, 89; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990).

[45] There are still a number of scholars who defend the classical Documentary Hypothesis model, according to which the combination of the Patriarch and Exodus traditions would have occurred during the earliest stages of writing, and perhaps even before this in the pre-Monarchic period. For a defense of this position, see R. E. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003); B. J. Schwartz, "Does Recent Scholarship's Critique of the Documentary Hypothesis Constitute Grounds for its Rejection?," in T. B. Dozeman, K. Schmid and B. J. Schwartz (eds.), *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 3–16; J. S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

Konrad Schmid.[46] The latter scholar, in his monograph, traces the overall structure of each text before they were combined and seeks to uncover the fissures and glosses that demonstrate the imperfectly woven seams of the combined work.

Comparing Skinner's insights about a Jacob conquest tradition with the current model of an independent Genesis account, one can see a major difference in emphasis between the pre-Genesis patriarchal traditions and the form those traditions take in Genesis itself. Current models emphasize the non-warlike character of patriarchs in Genesis (with some exceptions, like Abraham in Gen 14) in contrast to the conquest-based Exodus-through-Joshua traditions. Yet the hints to a warlike Jacob saga noted by Skinner point to the probability that the early patriarchal accounts may very well have been military in character. Skinner's insight demonstrates just how hard the editors of Genesis worked to erase most traces of military spirit from its account, creating the relatively passive and peaceful character of that book.

In the spirit of Skinner, I would like to suggest that the evidence marshalled above regarding a (lost) Jacob and Shechem account suggests that at least one version of a patriarchal story was, in fact, warlike in character. Specifically, I suggest that there was once a tradition where Jacob as the leader of a band of Israelites conquers the city of Shechem, wresting it from the reigning monarch Hamor. This tradition would represent a development midpoint between the older—now lost—Jerubaal account, and the canonically recorded Simeon and Levi account. A schematic of the development proposed here would look like the following:

A. Jerubaal conquers Shechem (implied by Gaʿal's speech)

B. Jacob conquers Shechem (referenced in Gen 48:22)

C. Simeon and Levi conquer Shechem (Gen 34)

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[46] See A. de Pury, "The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch," in T. B. Dozeman and K. Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist: The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Scholarship* (SBLSymS, 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 51–72; T. Römer, *Israels Väter: Untersuchungen zur Väterthematik im Deuteronomium und in der Deuteronomistischen Tradition* (OBO, 99; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1990); T. Römer, "The Exodus in the Book of Genesis," *SEA* 75 (2010), 1–20; J. C. Gertz, "The Literary Connection between the Books of Genesis and Exodus," in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist*, 73–87; Kratz, *Composition*, 248–99; K. Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (trans. J. Nogalski; Sifrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Bible, 3; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010). It is worth noting the somewhat different model of the American scholar, David Carr. Carr sees a pre-exilic proto-Genesis composition being combined with a pre-D Moses story and a proto-Dtr[L.] during the early exilic period to form what he calls the non-P post-D Hexateuch; see Carr, *Formation*, 277–78, 286–89.

There are little data for a reconstruction of B, the conquest of She-chem by Jacob. Nevertheless, one can hypothesize that B shared the basic features of the overall conquest of Shechem tradition outlined above. If so, it may have been a version of the tradition midpoint between the Jerubaal account and the Dinah account.

One can even see elements of the older Jacob tradition in the Dinah story-elements which were not fully reworked. For example, the claim of the brothers in Gen 34:7:

וַיִּתְעַצְּבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּחַר לָהֶם מְאֹד כִּי נְבָלָה עָשָׂה בְיִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁכַּב אֶת בַּת יַעֲקֹב וְכֵן לֹא יֵעָשֶׂה	And the men were per-turbed, and became full of wrath, for a horror had been committed in Israel to sleep with the daughter of Jacob—and such is not done!

The reference to "in Israel" would fit a context of an Israelite people led by Jacob, as opposed to a family unit.[47] Similarly, in their speech to Hamor in Gen 34:16, the sons of Jacob claim that through marriage they and the Shechemites will become "one nation." Hamor, in his speech, reiterates this to his own people. This claim would make much more sense if the party negotiating with Hamor were a larger group than just one family unit. These examples bear witness to the existence of an older version of the conquest of Shechem story that portrayed Jacob as the conqueror. In this tradition, Jacob would have been the leader of a people as opposed to the father of a single family unit.

It seems clear that the refashioning of the Jacob-as-conqueror story into the Dinah story and its insertion into the Jacob cycle occurred at a relatively late stage of the editing process.[48] What seems less clear is why this was done. Skinner's insight referenced above may be decisive: As the patriarch cycle began to merge with

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[47] Blum (*Komposition*, 212) points out the connection between the lan-guage in this verse and the language used in the account of the rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13:12). The intertextual resonance is so striking that it seems clear that either one story copied from the other, or that both were penned by the same author or school of authors. Assuming that Genesis 34 is copying from Samuel, one could argue against my claim that this verse is a sign of an earlier layer by assuming that the (late) author of this account simply copied a dramatic statement from the older Tamar rape story without modifying it to fit the new context. Nevertheless, when taking Genesis 48 and Hamor's language of "one nation" into account, I believe the case for an earlier Shechem conquest narrative that was reworked into the Dinah story remains plausible.

[48] See Blum, *Komposition*, 210–23; D. M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 252; J. Van Seters, "The Silence of Dinah (Genesis 34)," in J.-D. Macchi and T. Römer (eds.), *A Plural Commentary on Genesis 25–36. Mélanges offerts à Albert de Pury* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2000), 239–47.

the exodus tradition scribes felt the need to explain why one of the patriarchs was conquering Canaanite territory before the return from Egypt. Wasn't Abraham told during the covenant of the parts (Gen 15:13–16) that his descendants would take control of the land only in another 400 years? If Jacob were a conqueror then he would be acting too early and ignoring the explicit word of YHWH to Abraham.

The above explains why the story required reworking, but not why Simeon and Levi had to take the fall, and why Jacob needed to express consternation over the conquest. Noting that the Dinah story seems to be a late addition to the Jacob cycle, James Kugel suggests that one motivation for the rewrite may have been to offer a "backstory" to the curse of Simeon and Levi in Genesis 49:5–7.[49]

As Kugel points out, although Genesis 34 works as a midrashic expansion and interpretation of Jacob's curse, the reverse seems impossible. The curse makes no mention of Shechem or Hamor, and never references rape, trickery, circumcision or any of the salient points of the Dinah story. It seems that a later editor, confronted with a virtually incomprehensible passage recording Jacob condemning two of his sons, reworked an already problematic text that recorded some sort of battle between Jacob's clan and the city of Shechem that ended in the "Israelite" takeover of the city as a backstory to this curse.

COMPARING THE ACCOUNTS

In comparing the reconstructed Jerubaal story (A) to the reconstructed Jacob account (B)—the Dinah account is clearly secondary—the question of priority arises. Although it is possible to argue that both the Jerubaal and Jacob traditions surrounding the conquest of Shechem were independent sites of memory, nevertheless to me the most reasonable hypothesis seems to be that the Jerubaal account represents the older version.[50]

It is common that traditions important to various Israelite groups are attributed to the ancestor figure Jacob. This is clear from the amount of cities that claim an association with Jacob (e.g., Succot, Penuel, Mahanaim, Beth-El, Shechem, Gilead). It seems most reasonable to argue that the traditions of the less important and more local hero are taken over and incorporated into the story of the more famous national figure, a phenomenon I call "tradition-cannibalism."[51] It would be more difficult to believe that the

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[49] See J. L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 169–75. Skinner notes many of the same points but admits to being unable to synthesize them to create an overall explanation (Skinner, *Genesis*, 421–22).

[50] I avoid using the term "original" here for it is difficult to determine upon what the Jerubaal story may have been based.

[51] Z. Farber, *Images of Joshua: The Construction of Memory in Cultural Identities* (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, forthcoming), ch. 2. Other examples are David's appropriation of the Goliath story from Elhanan (1 Sam 17

figure of Jerubaal could have taken over a story previously attributed to Jacob, and the pattern of Jacob's tradition-cannibalism militates against the possibility that there was simply an independent Jacob-as-conqueror story.

Moreover, the Jerubaal-Abimelech tradition refers to a specific building, the Temple of El-Brit or Baʿal-Brit, and the story explains its total destruction. Lawrence Stager argues that the Temple of El-Brit or Baʿal-Brit is to be identified with Wright's "Temple 1," a large building with a tower.[52] If Stager is correct, this part of the account, at least, must stem from an early memory, even if only an etiological tale about a destroyed building, since the building was destroyed in ca. 1100 B.C.E. according to the standard higher chronology (1000 B.C.E. according to Finkelstein and his lower chronology),[53] and all remains of the building would have been entirely covered for most of the monarchic period. Traditions B and C have no such particulars in their versions of the story, and nothing tying their versions archeologically to such an early period.[54]

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vs. 2 Sam 21:19), Joshua's appropriation of the conquest of Hebron and its native giants from Caleb (Josh 11:21 vs. Josh 14:12–15; 15:13–14), as well as his appropriation of the conquest of Hazor and defeat of King Jabin from Barak (Josh 11:10 vs. Judg 4:2, 23–24).

[52] As opposed to "Temple 2," which Stager claims is illusory, having really been a granary; L. E. Stager, "The Fortress Temple at Shechem and the 'House of El, Lord of the Covenant,' " in P. H. Williams, Jr. and T. Herbert (eds.), *Realia Dei: Essays in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Edward F. Campbell, Jr. at his Retirement* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 228–49. See also Gaß's discussion of Bet Baʿal-Berit–Bet El-Berit (Gaß, *Ortsnamen*, 312–14).

[53] See I. Finkelstein, "Shechem in the Late Bronze Age and the Iron I," in E. Czerny et al. (eds.), *Timelines: Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak* (3 vols; OLA, 149; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 2:349–56 (I thank Israel Finkelstein for discussing some of the details of his dating of Shechem with me and for directing me to this article).

[54] Admittedly, this particular argument is not conclusive, since it is based on Stager's (reasonable but not certain) identification of the building. Na'aman, for instance, claims that the Temple of El-Brit is not the temple of Shechem at all, since he identifies Migdal Shechem as a town outside of Shechem and not a part of Shechem itself. He argues ("Hidden," 10–11) that the Temple of El-Brit may very well be the unusual structure uncovered by Adam Zertal and identified by him (Zertal) as an altar (A. Zertal, "Has Joshua's Altar been Found on Mount Ebal?," *BAR* 11/5 [1985], 26–44). Zertal's description of the site, and his claim that the structure was Joshua's altar, brought about a flurry of counter-claims, with the dominant alternative interpretation of the structure being a watchtower. For more on the polemic of tower vs. altar, see A. Kempinski, "Joshua's Altar—An Iron Age I Watchtower," *BAR* 12/1 (1986), 42, 44–49; A. Zertal, "How Can Kempinski be so Wrong?," *BAR* 12/1 (1986), 43, 49–53; and A. F. Rainey, "Zertal's Altar—A Blatant Phony," *BAR* 12/4 (1986), 66. It was in the context of this debate that Na'aman first offered his own suggestion that the structure was Migdal Shechem; see N. Na'aman, "The Tower of Shechem and the House of El-Berith," *Zion*

CONCLUSION

I have argued that there are three different constructions of the same tradition regarding the conquest/destruction of Shechem recorded or referenced in the biblical texts. The earliest tradition would have been the Jerubaal-Abimelech cycle, before its incorporation into the Gideon narrative. Jerubaal rebels against/vanquishes King Hamor and becomes the ruler of Shechem. Eventually, his son Abimelech destroys the town.

As time went on, two parallel processes occurred. First, the conquest of Shechem became associated with the patriarch, Jacob. Second, Jerubaal began to be associated with Gideon, another Menassite hero. With these two processes working together, Jerubaal became thought of as the vanquisher of the Midianites (Gideon's story) and the conquest of Shechem was erased from the cycle and firmly planted into the Jacob cycle. An edited version of the Abimelech piece was added to the Gideon cycle, producing the incongruities mentioned earlier (Ophrah vs. Arumah, the serving of Hamor, etc.). Finally, the Jacob story itself began to morph into the

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51/3 (1986), 259–80 (Hebrew).

If Na'aman is correct, one could argue that this part of the story was inspired by the ruins of this ancient structure (thirteenth–twelfth centuries according to Zertal, eleventh century according to Finkelstein). Nevertheless, to me it appears very difficult to support the understanding of this structure as a tower (or even a temple with a tower). Rather, ignoring Zertal's more radical claim about the structure being Joshua's altar, it seems most probable that the structure was some sort of cult center, and its remains were the inspiration for the story of Joshua and the altar on Mount Ebal (in a personal communication, this was the opinion of Avraham Faust as well).

In a similar vein, Amichai Mazar tentatively accepts Zertal's claim about "the cultic nature of the site." He writes: "The site's ritual purpose is suggested by the animal bones… found in the fill of the superseding structure. The bones include those of ritually clean young animals which may have been sacrificed here." Mazar suggests that the biblical references to the altar could be based on "old traditions." See A. Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1990), 348–50. Mazar further discounts Na'aman's suggestion that the building was the tower of Shechem, writing that most probably "the tower of Shechem was located in Shechem itself," (Mazar, *Archaeology*, 366 n. 50; for a survey of possible geographic locations for Migdal Shechem, see Gaß, *Ortsnamen*, 305–11).

Zioni Zevit, in his balanced discussion of the site, reaches similar conclusions as well; see Z. Zevit, *The Religion of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 196–201. For a book-length and very thorough analysis of the structure and the many possible interpretations, see R. Hawkins, *The Iron Age I Structure on Mount Ebal: Excavation and Interpretation* (Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements, 6; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012). Hawkins, admitting that the site is an anomaly, comes to the conclusion that the site was Israelite and that the structure was cultic (I thank Ralph Hawkins for clarifying his position with me over e-mail).

Dinah saga as we have it. Ironically, Jerubaal himself was lost in the shuffle, and his story as it was once told is nowhere to be found. Yet through the accidents of tradition history, he lives on as the hero Gideon, and the patriarch Jacob.