

“The Canaanites were then in the Land” and Other Shechemite Ironies

Mark G. Brett

Whitley College, University of Divinity; mbrett@whitley.edu.au

■ Abstract

The Hexateuchal narrative arc begins with Abram’s encounter with Yhwh in Shechem in Gen 12:6–7 and ends with Joshua’s covenant at the same place in Josh 24:25–26. These “bookends” make mention of a particular tree in Shechem, which also features in Gen 35:1–4. The inherited Priestly tradition claimed that none of the ancestors in Genesis knew the name Yhwh, but the Hexateuchal editors of the Persian period insist that both El and Yhwh were known in Shechem and Bethel. In effect, these editors defend northern Yahwism against its southern detractors, and resist any supersessionist proposal that would turn the ancestral memories of the Samaritan province into mere history. Israel was born in the house of El, and the ancestors of Israel, who came from beyond the riverine borders of the Euphrates and the Nile, had no clear understanding of Yhwh until they set foot in Canaanite country.

■ Keywords

Shechem, kinship, migration, conquest, indigenous, El, Hexateuchal redaction

■ Introduction

The narrator in Gen 12:6 speaks about a distant past: “Abram passed through the land to the place (מקום) at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.” The Canaanites were there at the time, but perhaps no longer, the storyteller seems to imply.¹ Abram pauses at the traditional sacred site, hears a divine oracle concerning the promise of land, and builds an altar. The deity’s voice is associated with a Canaanite sacred tree, but the ancestor acknowledges only Yhwh in Shechem. Similarly, Abram again calls on Yhwh when he builds another altar between Bethel and Ai (12:8). The story world is tense with questions and ambiguities. Will the promised descendants of Abram be able to live peaceably in the future beside their indigenous neighbors? And what do the narrator’s audiences know about the unfolding of this story?

The political geography of Gen 12:6–8 is ominous, not just because the Canaanites have ostensibly disappeared from the storyteller’s world, but because the locations of Abram’s first two altars in the promised land—one in Shechem and the other between Bethel and Ai—might well remind some Israelite audiences of the very same places mentioned in the conquest narrative of Josh 8. Is the Abram of Gen 12 perhaps foreshadowing a conquest of this Canaanite area in the future (Joshua’s own territory, according to 1 Chron 7:27–29)? Such a simple foreshadowing of the future cannot be sustained on a closer reading of the biblical narratives; the ironies associated with Shechem are legion.

Notwithstanding a few rhetorical flourishes here and there, the conquest was never complete when it comes down to the details of territory actually held by Israelites. Even according to the book of Joshua, many Canaanites remained. Most importantly for our purposes, there were no conquests of Bethel and Shechem, if the book of Joshua is to be our guide.² Yet, mysteriously, Joshua can still build an altar on one of the mountains that flanks Shechem (Josh 8:30–35), and he secures a covenant there in Josh 24, in a ceremony held alongside the very same tree where Abram received his original land promise—the same tree, if we can consider Gen 12:6 and Josh 24:25–26 the bookends of a single narrative arc. There is certainly a story that stretches from Gen 12 to Josh 24, but how is this narrative frame to be understood in relation to other events associated with Shechem? To whom does this “six-book” story, and its Shechemite tree, belong?

¹ Already in the 12th cent. CE, Ibn Ezra had sensed the chronological distance of the narrator from the events described. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah: As Refracted through the Generations* (trans. Gordon Tucker; New York: Continuum, 2006) 634.

² A conquest of Bethel is found in Judg 1:22–26, a brief narrative that displays a very similar plot to the conquest of Jericho in Josh 6. According to this plot, an indigenous collaborator is saved, along with their entire clan (see Judg 1:25 and Josh 6:23). Perhaps Judg 1 deliberately plugs a gap concerning Bethel that was left by the book of Joshua, as suggested by Nadav Na’aman, “Rediscovering a Lost North Israelite Conquest Story,” in *Rethinking Israel: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel in Honor of Israel Finkelstein* (ed. Oded Lipschitz, Yuval Gat, and Matthew J. Adams; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017) 287–382, at 294.

This article will track Shechem's story via a dialogue with Rainer Albertz's theory that a Hexateuchal redactor (HexR) was at work in the second half of the fifth century BCE, supplementing a mixture of Priestly and non-Priestly materials spread throughout Genesis to Joshua.³ Ancient precedents for this kind of synthesis and supplementation are readily available in Chronicles and the Temple Scroll (11Q19), so we should not imagine that supplementary theories are peculiar to modern European biblical criticism.⁴ It is not simply that the HexR editors would have added some supplementary comments here and there when furthering their own particular agenda; these supplements are evidently interacting with the surrounding literary context—the literary “horizon” of the addition, as it were—so it is always necessary to consider the surrounding material in order to understand the impact of the addition.⁵ One of the main purposes of this article is to show how the proposed HexR editing resonates with surrounding narratives even when they were composed across several different periods of history.⁶ We will be exploring the dynamics of tradition and innovation in relation to Shechem, adopting a place-orientated methodology.

Albertz's proposed list of HexR additions in Genesis includes Gen 15:13–17a, 31:21aβ, 33:19, 35:1–4, 48:21–22, 50:24–26, to which we may add Gen 12:6–7.⁷ The list might appear implausibly atomistic at first glance, but taken together, the

³ Rainer Albertz, “The Formative Impact of the Hexateuchal Redaction: An Interim Result,” in *The Post-Priestly Pentateuch: New Perspectives on Its Redactional Development and Theological Profiles* (ed. Federico Giuntoli and Konrad Schmid; FAT 101; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015) 53–74. Albertz builds on, among many other works, Erhard Blum, “The Literary Connection between the Books of Genesis and Exodus and the End of the Book of Joshua,” in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 89–106; and Eckart Otto, “Deuteronomiumstudien III. Die literarische Entstehung und Geschichte des Buches Deuteronomium als Teil der Tora,” *ZAR* 17 (2011) 79–132.

⁴ Regarding the empirical model provided by the Temple Scroll, see, for example, Bill T. Arnold, “The Holiness Redaction of the Primeval History,” *ZAW* 129 (2017) 1–17. For our present purposes, we will not need to distinguish between P and the Holiness redactions in Genesis, but I will assume with Israel Knohl that P and H share the same chronology of divine names. Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 168–69.

⁵ The literary “horizon” of the HexR additions includes not just their immediate literary contexts but extends beyond those contexts to include a “constellation” of available traditions, in some of the ways suggested by Hindy Najman, *Losing the Temple and Recovering the Future: An Analysis of 4 Ezra* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 20–24. I am grateful to Hindy Najman for her comments on a previous version of this paper.

⁶ In response to Joel S. Baden's critique of supplementary models, I should emphasize at the outset that there is no presumption here that previously independent texts—“essentially free of theological import”—have been joined together by Hexateuchal theology. On the contrary, I presume that political theology is at work at every level. See Joel Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing of the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012) 64–66.

⁷ Matthias Köckert finds a Hexateuchal addition in Gen 12:7, but this verse clearly lays claim to the geographical context of Shechem mentioned in v. 6; otherwise, the reader would not know the location of Abram's altar. Matthias Köckert, “Wie wurden Abraham- und Jakobüberlieferung zu einer ‘Vätergeschichte’ verbunden?” *HeBAI* 3 (2014) 43–66, at 51–55.

additions all conspire to advance the plot of Genesis in ways that highlight Shechem. This is clearly the case in Gen 33:19 (a purchase of land in Shechem), Gen 35:1–4 (the burial of idols at the foot of the Shechemite oak), Gen 48:21–22 (Jacob’s promise to Joseph of land in Shechem), and Gen 50:24–26, where we find Joseph’s request to his brothers that his bones be taken up from Egypt—corresponding with the burial of Joseph’s bones in Shechem (Josh 24:32). So in addition to these more obvious examples, including now Abram’s altar in Gen 12:7, why include Gen 15:13–17a, which foreshadows the exodus in a way that has no obvious connection with our Shechemite theme? Perhaps against expectations, this question provides one of the most fruitful ways to open up a fresh understanding of HexR’s political geography, along with a renewed appreciation of the northern ancestral narratives.

■ Intertextual Interactions

A time-worn model of source criticism has reconstructed essentially three different literary sources in Genesis (J, E, and P), with minimal interaction between the three strands.⁸ One could dub this the “Gutenberg” model of source criticism—after the printing press—since it envisages so little textual fluidity. The recent “neo-documentarian” revival of this approach seems more indebted to literary theory than to historical studies, since the mutable scriptural traditions known to us from the Persian and Hellenistic times are never inert documents.⁹ Nevertheless, the idea of a Priestly (P) composition has proven itself resilient in many different subcultures of biblical research.¹⁰

In the Priestly story world, the ancestors in Genesis were not Yahwists (Exod 6:2–3), and consequently, Abram could not have called on the name of Yhwh in Shechem, as is claimed in Gen 12:6–8. In the Priestly world, the ancestors knew only El, or El in combination with another divine name, and this is the assumption notably in Gen 17, when Abraham encounters El Shaddai. The Hexateuchal editors beg to differ: the ancestors often do know the name Yhwh, as revealed at Shechem’s altar in Gen 12:6–8. But the divine name is not always at issue. In the case of Jacob’s purchase of land from the traditional owners of Shechem in Gen 33:19, which Albertz identifies as a specifically Hexateuchal addition, there is no mention of Yhwh. The land purchase is immediately followed in 33:20 with a reference to “El, the God of Israel,” as one would expect in the Priestly story world. And, of course, the divine name “El” is historically a Canaanite divine name.¹¹

⁸ The most relevant and recent articulations of this theory for our purposes would be Ronald Hendel, “God and Gods in the Tetrach, in *The Origins of Yahwism* (ed. Jürgen van Oorschot and Markus Witte; BZAW 484; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017) 237–64; Baden, *Composition of the Pentateuch*, 230–45.

⁹ See Konrad Schmid, “The Neo-Documentarian Manifesto: A Critical Reading,” *JBL* 140 (2021) 461–79.

¹⁰ Mark G. Brett, *Locations of God: Political Theology in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019) 54–74.

¹¹ Similarly, Judg 9:46 identifies the deity of Shechem as “El of the covenant.” Theodore

In a recent study, Zev Farber illustrates how comparisons among the Shechem traditions could lead to different kinds of historical insights, beyond the identification of literary sources.¹² Along with many other commentators, he argues that an older tradition can be found within Judg 9, in the story of a rebellion against Abimelech, who was ruling Shechem from a short distance away, from Arumah (9:31, 41). Among the narrative threads that have been woven into Judg 9,¹³ we find a peculiar complaint lodged against the leadership of Abimelech and Zebul: “Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Did not the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul his officer serve the men of Hamor, father of Shechem? Why then should we serve him?” (9:28). Some kind of connection between this Hamor in Judg 9 and the Hamor of Gen 33:19 (HexR) might be possible, but what kind of connection, and how would it be interpreted?

Some have suggested that Hamor’s name was added to Judg 9:28 as a later gloss, in order to resolve some grammatical difficulties in the Hebrew text. But Farber rightly questions the plausibility of a later scribe creating a connection with a story set hundreds of years in the past—a story that envisages the wholesale slaughter of all the men of Shechem, including Hamor. Much more likely is a scenario in which Abimelech was indeed subject to Hamor, an indigenous prince. A certain Gaal¹⁴ appeals to the Shechemites to restore the previous order, but his bid is unsuccessful, and a bloodbath ensues. On Farber’s account, this is the older story of struggle in Shechem, which at a later time seems to have inspired the violent story in Gen 34.¹⁵ Surprisingly, this violence is immediately followed by another HexR episode

Lewis suggests the possibility that this “El of the covenant” in Judg 9 is the name of the divinity associated with a treaty between Israelites and Shechemites. On his account, an earlier covenant with El, the patron deity of a polytheistic Canaanite city, has given way to a monolatrous worship of El who eventually took on the name Yhwh as well. See Theodore J. Lewis, “The Identity and Function of El/Baal Berith,” *JBL* 115 (1996) 401–23, at 404; Aren M. Wilson-Wright, “Bethel and the Persistence of El: Evidence for the Survival of El as an Independent Deity in the Jacob Cycle and 1 Kings 12:25–30,” *JBL* 138 (2019) 705–20.

¹² Zev Farber, “Jerubbaal, Jacob and the Battle for Shechem: A Tradition History,” *JHS* 13 (2013) Article 12, 1–26.

¹³ For a recent overview of the narrative tapestry that has been unpicked in scholarly theories, see especially Sara Milstein, *Tracking the Master Scribe: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) 147–73.

¹⁴ Gaal is identified as “son of a slave,” but he and his family were apparently grafted into Shechem’s kinship systems. See Jack Sasson, *Judges 1–12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 6D; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013) 392–93. Sasson proposes that וייעבר in Judg 9:26 is “likely technical usage for incorporation into a political unit. What may have occurred, therefore, is that Gaal was accepted as a Shechemite, whatever his past. This joining of groups is implied in the story of Dinah and Shechem son of Hamor (Gen 34) but an actual case is documented in the Mari archives.”

¹⁵ Responding to Farber’s argument, Nadav Na’aman resists any connection between Judg 9 and Gen 34 and instead speculates that Judg 1:4–7 preserves references to conflict with a Shechemite king, indirectly named Adoni-bezek. In the interests of Judean self-promotion, this Shechem tradition has been conflated with a conquest of Jerusalem in Judg 1:7–8. Na’aman, “Rediscovering a Lost North Israelite Conquest Story,” 291–93. There is no conquest of Jerusalem in the book of Joshua,

set in the very same place, on Albertz's account, which is remarkably peaceful in tone: the burial of idols under "the oak" in 35:1–4. We will meditate on this tree and its story before returning to Gen 34.

■ Under Shechem's Sacred Tree

The elliptical episode in Gen 35:1–4 has generated much debate, but we can assume that "the oak" is well known to the audience. At least in narrative terms, we can identify it with the sacred tree mentioned in Gen 12:6 and Josh 24:25–26 (which might also be identified with the oak mentioned in Judg 9:6, 37¹⁶). Apart from the shared motif of the oak in Gen 12 and Josh 24, the distinctive phrase "foreign gods" (אלהי הנכר) appears only here in Genesis (in 35:2, 4) and in Josh 24:23, following the covenant ceremony in Shechem at the sacred tree.¹⁷ A parallel between Gen 35:1–4 and Josh 24 is readily apparent: in Josh 24, the people are exhorted to put away foreign gods before entering into the covenant with Yhwh (which in this context is secured with "statute and judgment" written by Joshua, curiously without acknowledging any prior statutes received by Moses). Similarly, in Gen 35, the people are to put away foreign gods before they proceed to Bethel to establish a new altar there. But what precisely is the significance of interring foreign gods under a tree in Shechem? Would this, as some scholars have suggested, have the effect of undermining the validity of Shechem as a sacred site? Actually, the opposite view is more compelling; the Yahwist credentials of the site are enhanced by this ritual.

In Josh 24:2, it is asserted that Abraham's family served "other gods" beyond "the river" (the Euphrates), adopting the characteristic terminology for other gods (אלהים אחרים) that is used dozens of times in Deuteronomistic literature but never in Genesis. The non-Deuteronomistic phrase "foreign gods" (אלהי הנכר) then appears in Josh 24:23. The foreign gods in Gen 35:1–4 and Josh 24:23 are indeed foreign; they come from a foreign land, rather than from Canaan. If we seek to identify particular gods in the previous narratives in Genesis that might be at issue, the best candidates would be the household gods that Rachel stole, in Gen 31, from her father's house in Aramaean territory. The terminology in that context is striking: when Jacob sets out from Haran with his family, unwittingly with stolen gods, "he rose and crossed the river" (Gen 31:19–21), much like Josh 24 suggests of

but if the editors of Judg 1 sought to plug this conspicuous gap left in Joshua, as Na'aman suggests, then their narrative remedy in 1:7–8 seems to yield the effect of undermining the honor of conquest accorded to David in 2 Sam 5.

¹⁶ According to Judg 9, this tree is not only sacred; it seems to be associated in some way with the legitimating of royal power (9:6 and 37; cf. 1 Kgs 12:1). The peculiar wording of the parable in Judg 9:8 is therefore thematically on point: "the trees went out to anoint a king." See Michaela Bauks, "Sacred Trees in the Garden of Eden and Their Ancient Near Eastern Precursors," *JAJ* 3 (2012) 267–301, at 275–81; Sasson, *Judges 1–12*, 381–84.

¹⁷ Otherwise, this phrase is used in Judg 10:16, 1 Sam 7:3, and 2 Chron 33:15, and it is not necessarily to be seen as Deuteronomistic discourse.

Abraham's family.¹⁸ But it seems that a key question then arises in the migration stories both of Abraham and of Jacob's Aramaean family: are these migrant families willing to leave behind the gods who were venerated by their kinfolk in foreign lands? In the case of Gen 35:1–4, a positive answer is demonstrated in a ritual of burying the foreign household gods under the sacred tree in the new homeland. In effect, Jacob's ritual at the Shechemite oak anticipates Joshua's requirement in Josh 24:23.¹⁹ Moreover, the ostensibly atomistic reference to the Euphrates in Gen 31:21 fits the Hexateuchal arc in more than one way, as we shall see. All these materials illustrate the demands that will be placed on migrant ancestors who are traveling to the land from beyond "the river." They need to leave their ancestral gods behind, clearly, but what should their attitude be to the gods of Canaan?

■ Is Violence in Canaan Necessary?

The narrators who created Gen 34 were, according to Farber, most likely inspired by at least one other tradition as well, which is preserved in Gen 48:22 (another HexR addition, according to Albertz). Adopting a play on words, the text suggests that Jacob took Shechem with his own "sword and bow."²⁰ The claim remains something of an enigma, both because of the overwhelmingly peaceful nature of the ancestral narratives and because there is no other record of a conquest of Shechem in Genesis, apart from the violent actions of Simeon and Levi—actions that upset Jacob, according to Gen 34:30, and which he apparently condemns in Gen 49:5–7. As many scholars have suggested, the poetry in Gen 49:5–7 does not exactly match the events in Gen 34, so it is more likely that the poetry has helped to inspire the narrative, rather than the other way around. Accordingly, on Farber's account, Gen 34 is a kind of midrash that was inspired both by an early narrative thread in Judg 9 and by the poetry in Gen 49:5–7. Developing an earlier suggestion from John Skinner, Farber argues that an older warlike account of Jacob's exploits has been deliberately suppressed and replaced with the more irenic ancestral narratives.²¹

¹⁸ Albertz ("Formative Impact," 57) also identified the reference to the Euphrates in Gen 31:21aβ as HexR.

¹⁹ Wolfgang Oswald, *Staatstheorie im Alten Israel. Der politische Diskurs im Pentateuch und in den Geschichtsbüchern des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009) 209; Albertz, "Formative Impact," 57. Cf. Christophe Nihan, "The Torah between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua," in *The Pentateuch as Torah* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 199; and Hendel, "God and Gods in the Tetrachateuch," 244–48, 261–62, providing a similar interpretation of Gen 35:1–7 through the lens of his "E" theory.

²⁰ If HexR has retrieved an old tradition rather than composed a new element at this point (see Na'aman, "Rediscovering a Lost North Israelite Conquest Story," 297–98), then it is interesting to note that Josh 24:12 might be pushing back with a counterclaim: "not by your sword and by your bow."

²¹ Farber, "Jerubbaal, Jacob and the Battle for Shechem," 19–21. John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC 1; New York: Scribner, 1910) 422 and 507. See also the influential work of Konrad Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010).

This is indeed a bold hypothesis, with much to commend it, but it provokes an obvious question: Why adapt the Shechemite traditions to create such a violent story in Gen 34 if the overall intention of the late editors is to shape a peaceful origins story, in deliberate contrast with the “Deuteronomistic” preference for conquest? The question might be answered in one way by linking the Shechem and Dinah story to the sensibilities found in the book of Ezra. Among the many scholars who have taken this line, Yairah Amit has argued, for example, that the editors in Gen 34:2 allude to the proscription of Hivite marriage in Deuteronomy in order to tell a story that opposes marriage to Samaritans (=Shechemites) in the Persian period.²² This scenario in effect transfers Deuteronomy’s conquest legislation into an area of law where it does not belong. The humiliation of Dinah is closer to the sexual crimes envisaged in Deut 22:25–29, which entail either capital punishment for the perpetrator or payments to the father of the victim—along with the possibility of marriage.²³ But in an evidently postexilic addition to Deuteronomy, the law in Deut 7:3 prohibits intermarriage with Hivites, while turning the ban into a metaphor for social relations rather than the actual warfare that is presumed in Deut 20.²⁴

Perhaps the main difficulty with the view that Gen 34 foreshadows a conquest law is that Gen 34:25 actually breaches the conquest legislation in Deut 20:15–18 by referring to the slaughter only of the males of the city, instead of “every creature with breath.” In Deut 20:13, the killing of “every male” is prescribed only for cities at a distance. Hivites, on the other hand, are subject to the full ban in Deut 20:17—the comprehensive killing of men, women, and children, along with every creature that breathes. Even if Deut 20:15–18 is to be considered an addition from the Babylonian period, the late editors of Genesis would have been mindful in Gen 34:2 and 30 of the Deuteronomistic laws that refer to Hivites, or to “Canaanites and Perizzites.”²⁵ An audience in the fifth century could hardly have avoided noticing that the women and children of Shechem’s city survive and are assimilated by the sons of Jacob (34:29). If there ever was an earlier version of this story that promoted endogamous marriage, Gen 34:29 has overwritten it, and the “Hivite” women of Shechem have survived—a conspicuous survival when viewed from the point of

²² Yairah Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 189–211; idem., *In Praise of Editing in the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays in Retrospect* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012) 45–69.

²³ Hilary B. Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006) 184–99.

²⁴ Thomas Römer, *The So-called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical, and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2007) 170.

²⁵ For a late dating of the phrase “Canaanites and Perizzites,” see Walter Gross, *Richter, übersetzt und ausgelegt* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2009) 122. Regarding an exilic date for Deut 20:15–18 see, among others, Cynthia Edenburg, “Paradigm, Illustrative Narrative or Midrash: The Case of Josh 7–8 and Deuteronomistic Law,” in *The Reception of Biblical War Legislation in Narrative Contexts* (ed. Christoph Berner and Harald Samuel; BZAW 460; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015) 123–38, at 125, with earlier literature.

view of the Torah's conquest legislation, and also when viewed more specifically in light of Deut 7:3.

The implications for reading Gen 34 in this way are almost satirical in effect: Simeon and Levi emerge as consummately hypocritical characters, and while many readers have assumed that the story concerns the affirmation of endogamy, such a popular reading has difficulty accounting not just for Gen 34:29 but also for the poetry in Gen 49:5–7. Whether these poetic verses were written earlier than the narrative in Gen 34 or not, the result is essentially the same: once both texts were added to the scroll of Genesis, there is a critique of Simeon and Levi, and it cannot be put down to the personal weaknesses of Jacob. The assault on Shechem implicitly breaks every potentially relevant law in the Pentateuch.²⁶ It is much more likely that the Shechem and Dinah story has been shaped as a critique of endogamous marriage policies (a conclusion that would then fit neatly with the narrative in Gen 38, which describes how Judah was mistaken about his opposition to the non-Israelite Tamar). Sarah Shectman's summary of the picture created by the late editing of Genesis is apt:

Of Jacob's twelve sons, we only learn about the marriages of three, but none is a relative, let alone an Aramean: Simeon marries a Canaanite woman (who seems to be one of multiple wives), as does Judah. Joseph marries Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest. All of these unions are reported without a word of censure.²⁷

The elements within the book of Genesis that are most often assumed to be resistant to intermarriage are, on closer inspection, designed with other purposes in view. Accordingly, Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (whose kin groups are given Shechemite land according to Josh 17:7 and 21:21), come from Joseph's marriage to an Egyptian. Judah's marriage to a Canaanite woman is even more to the point: the editors of Genesis have no problem with intermarriage.²⁸

²⁶ Mark G. Brett, "The Priestly Dissemination of Abraham," *HeBAI* 3 (2014) 87–107, at 103–6. The Holiness Code, it should be noted, does not prohibit exogamous marriages among the laity.

²⁷ Sarah Shectman, "Rachel, Leah, and the Composition of Genesis," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz; FAT 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 207–22, at 210.

²⁸ The attempts to extrapolate a Priestly marriage policy from Gen 27:46–28:1 rest on insubstantial claims about characters' discourse regarding Canaanites rather than on divine commands. Genesis 24, the wooing of Rebekah, is similarly more complex than often supposed. Abraham's instructions to the servant in 24:4 breach the divine command in Gen 12:1. See Mark G. Brett, "The Politics of Marriage in Genesis," in *Making a Difference: Essays on the Bible and Judaism in Honor of Tamara Cohn Eskenazi* (ed. David J. A. Clines, Kent Richards, and Jacob N. Wright; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012) 49–59; idem., "Yhwh among the Nations: The Politics of Divine Names in Genesis 15 and 24," in *The Politics of the Ancestors: Exegetical and Historical Perspectives on Genesis 12–36* (ed. Mark G. Brett and Jakob Wöhrle; FAT 124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018) 113–30. Cf. David Frankel, *The Land of Canaan and the Destiny of Israel: Theologies of Territory in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrans, 2011) 240–47; Megan Warner, "'Therefore a Man leaves his Father and his Mother and clings to his Wife': Marriage and Intermarriage in Gen 2:24," *JBL* 136 (2017) 269–88.

Specifically in relation to Gen 34, two startling ironies can be stated quite sharply: first, a presumed right to conquer Shechem had the effect for Simeon and Levi of undoing their customary land rights (49:7, “I will scatter them in Israel”); and second, a narrative that ostensibly supports endogamy in fact points to the survival of indigenous women (34:29). Thus, even allowing for Gen 34, the ambiguous observation in Gen 12:6 that “the Canaanites were then in the land” remains strangely true as the ancestral narratives unfold.²⁹

The ceremony in Gen 35:1–4 then has an important function for the migrant ancestors in Jacob’s family, as we have seen: the interring of foreign gods under the tree in Shechem points to a transformation of social identity as the gods from “beyond the river” are forsaken and the older kinship ties are diminished.³⁰ But what are the implications for the Elohim “this side” of the river, inside the promised land? Do the gods on this side of the river also need to be forsaken? This is where the theology of the Hexateuchal editors takes a remarkable turn as they ponder the narrative inheritance of the older Priestly and Deuteronomic traditions. P had been evidently unconcerned about the gods of the land, and instead opposed only the gods of Egypt.³¹ Intertwining younger and older narrative threads, the Hexateuchal perspective seems to conclude that whether the migrant ancestors come from Babylon or from Egypt, they will learn the significance of Yhwh’s name only within the household of El in Canaan. This surprising outcome comes to light with closer investigation of Gen 15—not just in Albertz’s HexR in Gen 15:13–17a but through reflection on how this addition engages the whole chapter.

■ A Hexateuchal Theology of Promised Land

Against any previous conception of a promised land that set its eastern border on or close to the Jordan River, the political geography of Gen 15 has a much broader scope: the land of promise is seen to stretch from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen 15:18, so also SamP Deut 34:1).³² If the Persians had named one of their satrapies “Beyond the River” because they were viewing the satrapy from

²⁹ Even if Gen 12:6 were to have originated in an early “J” document, as Hendel presumes, its relevance would fit very well with the late Hexateuchal theology that I am proposing. See Hendel, “God and Gods in the Tetrateuch,” 245–46, where he links both Gen 12:6–7 (J) and Gen 35:2 (E) to Josh 24:23. The Hexateuchal editors could have either absorbed any earlier Yahwistic material or, conversely, added new references to Yhwh to serve their overall narrative purposes.

³⁰ See, especially, Shectman, “Rachel, Leah,” 211–22.

³¹ Konrad Schmid, “Judean Identity and Ecumenicity: The Political Theology of the Priestly Document,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 3–26, at 7–8; cf. Jan C. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung* (FRLANT 189; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 79–97.

³² Nili Wazana, *All the Boundaries of the Land: The Promised Land in Biblical Thought in Light of the Ancient Near East* (trans. L. Qeren; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 22–104, 301. For an argument that the Euphrates map belongs specifically to a Hexateuchal imagination, see Brett, “Yhwh among the Nations.”

their homeland in the east, the Hexateuchal point of view is oriented, ironically, the other way around. The homeland is Canaan, and the land beyond the river is now foreign. By implication, the migrant ancestors who came from beyond the Euphrates had to leave their kinfolk and gods behind, as Josh 24:2 makes clear. In this respect, the experience of Ruth the Moabite is no different from Rachel and Leah, who came from Aram. All three women are migrants, and all three have to leave kin, country, and gods in order to build up the house of Israel. This point is made quite explicitly in Ruth 4:11–12, where the people of Bethlehem compare Ruth with Rachel and Leah, and also with Tamar, the mother of Perez, who all build up “the house of Israel.”³³ In effect, crossing the river Euphrates becomes part of the making of Israel.

The political geography of the Hexateuchal imagination makes a similar point about the western border of the land as well: the exodus also constitutes a liminal event through which the name of Yhwh is discovered, and in this respect the Nile forms a border that needs to be crossed. The divine name is discovered in all its social depth as the ancestors move from the house of slavery in Egypt to the house of freedom in the land. This unusual vision of the land that stretches from the Nile to the Euphrates is decidedly theological in its significance. On analogy with the ancestors beyond the Euphrates who worshiped idols—including Abraham, according to Josh 24:2—Moses in Exod 3 is still in a state of theological confusion when visited by the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At issue is the question of the divinity’s name: “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The Elohim of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” (Exod 3:13). Then follows the explanation of Yhwh’s name in Exod 3:14–16, delivered in the context of the imperative for Yhwh’s people to leave the land of Egypt.³⁴

At first glance, it seems that the authors of Gen 15 have simply contradicted the revelation of the divine name in the Exodus story when they claim that Yhwh’s name was revealed already to Abram as he left his homeland: “I am Yhwh, who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess” (Gen 15:7). But we could also infer, as already suggested, that the editors of Gen 15 have synthesized a theological point that can be applied to the ancestors who came from both east and west: Yhwh can only be known when the ancestors cross the riverine borders of the Euphrates and the Nile on their journeys into promised land.

³³ Similarly, Ruth’s pledge to Naomi that “your people shall be my people, and your Elohim my Elohim” (Ruth 1:16) is analogous with the speech of Rachel and Leah in Gen 31:14–16 and the division of the gods in the boundary marker of Gen 31:51–54. There is even an implied parallel between Abram and Ruth in the wording of Gen 12:1 and Ruth 2:11. Irmtraud Fischer, *Rut* (2nd ed.; HThKAT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005) 86–91. Cf. Mark S. Smith, “‘Your People shall be my People’: Family and Covenant in Ruth 1:16–17,” *CBQ* 69 (2007) 242–58, esp. 243.

³⁴ Albertz (“Formative Impact,” 59–60) understands Exod 3:4b, 6a, 12aβ–15, 16aβ to be HexR additions. Cf. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion*, 292–98; Rainer Albertz, *Exodus: Band I: Ex 1–18* (ZBK AT 2.1; Zürich: TVZ, 2012) 67–90.

This is arguably a late theological reflection in Gen 15, which has grappled with some of the contradictions between the inherited Yahwistic and Priestly theologies.

Beyond what Albertz notes about the exodus motif in Gen 15:13–17a, some of the keys to the Hexateuchal perspective are arguably found in the larger context of Gen 15. The exodus memory was under reconstruction, and any view that tied the exodus to a Deuteronomistic concept of conquest was implicitly rejected. The list of ten nations in verses 20–21 contains at least three nations too many if it is simply meant to prefigure the Deuteronomistic lists. The older tradition of six or seven nations is apparently invoked precisely in order to assert something very different: the three additional nations—Kenites, Kenizzites, and Kadmonites—are potential allies, rather than marked for the ban. Notably, Caleb was among the Kenizzites, who, according to Josh 14:6 and 14, were integrated into Israel. The mysterious Kadmonites, on the other hand, are never mentioned outside of Gen 15. If we are to think of the children born to Keturah who migrated to the “land of Kedar” (Gen 25:6), then these are kin groups outside the covenant who nevertheless belong to Abraham’s seed.³⁵ Alternatively, Kadmonite might refer to the Aramaean kin of Abram, as implied by Gen 29:1, where Jacob’s journey takes him to בני־קדם (“people of the east”).³⁶ In short, the dramatic expansion of a promised land from the Nile to the Euphrates also has the effect of drawing attention to peoples who will be neighbors—often, indeed, kin—on an enduring basis.

■ El, the God of the Ancestors

The P tradition had a crystal clear periodization when it comes to the divine names: none of the ancestors in Genesis were Yahwists, because they had only heard the name of El Shaddai (Exod 6:2–3). But this conviction begs another significant question: who else had heard the name El Shaddai? Were some of the indigenous ancestors, on “this side” of the river, worshipers of El before they became Yahwists? Historians are of course unanimous in affirming that they worshiped El, because that name is widely attested as the Canaanite name of the Creator.³⁷ The cultural memories of Genesis answer this question via a series of complex narratives:

³⁵ Thomas Römer, “Abraham and ‘The Law’ and ‘The Prophets,’” in *The Reception and Remembrance of Abraham* (ed. Pernille Carstens and Niels P. Lemche; PHSC 13; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011) 87–101, esp. 100–101. The non-Israelite origins of Caleb are, of course, overwritten with Judean credentials in many texts other than Josh 14:6 and 14.

³⁶ Burnett compares Gen 29:1 with Num 22:5 and argues that Balaam is depicted as a prophet of both El and Yhwh, a liminal character associated especially with the “border” of the Euphrates. Significantly, Balaam is also recalled in the narrative of Josh 24:9–10. Joel S. Burnett, “Prophecy in Transjordan: Balaam Son of Beor,” in *Enemies and Friends of the State: Ancient Prophecy in Context* (ed. Christopher A. Rollston; University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018) 135–204, at 168–76.

³⁷ See, among many other studies, the overviews provided by Mark S. Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), and Thomas Römer, *The Invention of God* (trans. Raymond Geuss; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

the ancestors worshiped El in places like Bethel and Shechem—ironically, the unconquered cities according to the book of Joshua.

The stories associated with Bethel (“House of El”) are particularly significant when it comes to the narrative history of divine names. Against the combined convictions of Exod 3 and 6, Jacob the migrant has his own encounter with Yhwh. A dream in Bethel is an event of revelation: “Surely Yhwh was in this place, but I did not know it!” he says, but then he proceeds to call the place the “House of El” (28:16–17). It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the name of Yhwh has been discovered in a preexisting sacred site that belonged to El.³⁸ In Priestly theology, this event at Bethel could not have happened in the way that Gen 28 suggests, and accordingly, in Gen 35:5–15 we have P’s alternative version of what transpired there—with no mention of Yhwh and only a naming of El in that place, as is also the case with the encounter of the Shechemite oak in Gen 35:1–4 (which refers back to the theophany in Bethel but mentions only El). Would the Priestly editors have left the remarkable confession of Yhwh in Gen 28:16 untouched? That seems very unlikely, and accordingly, we may doubt whether the reference to Yhwh belongs to any pre-Priestly tradition in Gen 28.³⁹

The Priestly inclusive theism in Exod 6:2–3 could clarify that Yhwh was another name for El, and this conceptual innovation meant it was, in many ways, unnecessary to answer the historical question of when the prior inhabitants of the land might first have encountered the name Yhwh. The Hexateuchal editors have a new and different emphasis: while respecting the chronology of Abram’s name change to Abraham in Gen 17, they deliberately breached P’s chronology in order to introduce, in direct speech, a self-revelation of the divine name to Abram in Gen 15:7 (אני יהוה, “I am Yhwh”). The wording in Gen 15 evokes texts like Exod 20:2 and Lev 25:38, which clearly tie the revelation of the national name of God to the exodus from Egypt, but then 15:7 lodges an alternative theology: “I am Yhwh, who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” The exodus is from Babylon rather than Egypt. Consequently, there is no difficulty in imagining that Jacob could discover the possibility of Yahwism in Bethel.

We do not need to reconstruct the entire history of compositions in order to see a pan-Israelite pattern in the constellation of ancestral traditions, which move from the knowledge of El to acknowledgment of Yhwh in Bethel and Shechem, but also in Beersheba—where Isaac “calls on the name of Yhwh” in 26:25 (cf. Abraham’s

³⁸ See Wilson-Wright, “Bethel and the Persistence of El.” Cf. Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Römer, “Comments on the Historical Background of the Jacob Narrative in Genesis,” *ZAW* (2014) 317–38; Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 300.

³⁹ Reinhard Achenbach provides a case for thinking that the later Yahwistic editing in Gen 28:13–15, 16b, 21b, 22b* can be distinguished from an earlier Elohîm story, in Achenbach, “The Post-Priestly Elohîm-Theology in the Book of Genesis,” in *Ein Freund des Wortes. Festschrift Udo Rütterswörden* (ed. Sebastian Grätz, Axel Graupner, and Jörg Lanckau; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019) 1–21; cf. Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984) 9–34.

tree-planting for Yhwh in Beersheba in Gen 21:33). And remarkably, the first person after Abram to receive the revelation of Yhwh's name is Hagar, in Gen 16:11 (כִּי-יָשָׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל-עֲנִיךָ, "for Yhwh has heard your affliction"), although she then chooses her own name for the divinity: El Roi. Beyond an antiquarian interest in preexilic religion, what historical circumstances might account for such contrarian stances within the Hexateuchal horizon?

■ Historical Ironies in the Fifth Century BCE

The so-called Hexateuchal redactors were evidently engaged in debate with earlier forms of both the Deuteronomic and the Priestly traditions. Among the new points to be made, it seems, was that Yhwh could appear anywhere between the Nile and the Euphrates—not just to Israelites, and not just in Jerusalem. Accordingly, Shechem was also "the place" (מָקוֹם) where Yhwh's name was revealed already in Gen 12:6–7, and by implication this lodges an ancestral objection to the centralization theology of Deut 12—at least to the extent that this was taken to imply a reference to Jerusalem as the sacred place. The Yahwistic communities were scattered from Elephantine in the Nile to Al Yahudu in Babylon, and the northerners in Samaria found the center of the earth in their temple on Mount Gerizim.

The Hexateuchal narrative additions seem to have expanded on aspects of the Priestly political theology, drawing out some of the consequences of P's view that Abraham was not just the father of one nation but of many nations (Gen 17:4–6).⁴⁰ The "many nations" clearly included the surrounding kinship groups who claimed descent from Abraham. They would hear the stories about Abraham and El Shaddai and count themselves blessed. But what about the kinship groups *within* the promised land—such as those who gathered around the sacred sites of Shechem and Bethel? What about the inhabitants of the "un-empty" land who already knew about El?⁴¹

The question might seem odd, given the Persian-period context for the Hexateuchal editing of the earlier traditions. But this question arises from the inherited material, and so we must first understand why the Priestly writers found it necessary to develop a Canaanite or "indigenous" theology of El Shaddai in the Genesis stories, instead of reiterating the national theology of Yhwh. One might doubt whether the Priestly theologians were actually interested in advancing a postcolonial cause *avant la lettre*. It seems that the Persian-period theology of an "un-empty land" was opposed to the exilic presumptions of Israelite identity

⁴⁰ Jakob Wöhrle, "Abraham amidst the Nations: The Priestly Concept of Covenant and the Persian Imperial Ideology," in *Covenant in the Persian Period* (ed. Richard J. Bault and Gary N. Knoppers; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015) 23–39.

⁴¹ See Jakob Wöhrle, "The Un-Empty Land: The Concept of Exile and Land in P," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 189–206.

developed in the book of Ezra; the *golah* theology excluded those who had remained behind in the land during the Babylonian period.⁴² The “remainees” were even being configured as Canaanites, apparently including those who lived in Samaria. In response to a Judean-centric theology, the Priestly imagination asserted a pan-Israelite vision, ironically insisting that all the ancestors in Genesis were El worshipers, just like the Canaanites.

For the Hexateuchal editors, this pan-Israelite vision evidently did not go far enough; the legitimacy of Yahwism in the north had to be asserted more overtly. Accordingly, it was Abram who first called on the name of Yhwh in Shechem, and also, in Bethel, Jacob received the self-revelation of the divine name: אֲנִי יְהוָה, “I am Yhwh” (Gen 28:13). Jacob aptly concludes that “Yhwh is in this place (מקום), and I did not know it” (Gen 28:13, 16). Regardless of who first composed these verses, a northern claim like this fits very well with the need of the Hexateuchal editors to respond to any southern detractors.⁴³ Given the strictures of the Priestly theology of divine names in Exod 6:2–3, it seems very unlikely that a Priestly editor would have allowed such anachronistic revelations of the divine name to appear in Gen 12:6–8, 15:7, and 28:13–16. Much more likely is a scenario in which the Hexateuchal editors were not satisfied with the Priestly scheme of divine names, and they proposed a different view, perhaps drawing on older northern traditions.

The revelation of Yhwh’s name to Jacob in Bethel would have been significant also in earlier times when the northern altars were criticized, for example, by the southern voices within the books of Kings. When Jeroboam took up his kingship in Shechem (1 Kgs 12:1, cf. 12:25), this would have tied the legitimacy of the northern king specifically to the memory of Jacob. Instead of acknowledging an exclusive covenant with David, 1 Kgs 11:36–38 asserts that Ahijah the prophet endorsed an alternative Yahwist denomination in the north. In this respect, Jeroboam was not just doing something good in his own eyes; he was following the orders of Yhwh’s prophet. The narrative in 1 Kgs 12 then seems to construct its own mimicry of the exodus, with Jeroboam as the new Moses—although this new Moses obviously

⁴² See, especially, Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, “The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 509–29; Katherine E. Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9–10: An Anthropological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Lisbeth S. Fried, “No King in Judah? Mass Divorce in Judah and in Athens,” in *Political Memory in and after the Persian Empire* (ed. Jason M. Silverman and Caroline Waerzeggers; ANEM 13; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015) 381–401.

⁴³ Blum claims that the Priestly version of Jacob’s Bethel encounter has reinterpreted an older non-P story by transforming the cultic pillar into a mere memorial of divine speech, in effect undermining any enduring authority of Bethel. Erhard Blum, “The Jacob Tradition,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception and Interpretation* (ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen; Leiden: Brill, 2012) 181–211. If this were P’s intention, to devalue Bethel, then the Hexateuchal editors have apparently rejected any such implication. For a critique of Blum’s account of the Bethel traditions, see Brett, *Locations of God*, 57–58, 105–7.

had no interest in centralizing Yahwism in Jerusalem.⁴⁴ Later Deuteronomists could judge this northern development to be almost self-evidently wicked,⁴⁵ and the older Yahwist affirmation of the secession of a northern monarchy would have largely lost its relevance when Israel was overrun by the Assyrians.

The dignity of Samaria was, however, certainly at stake once again in the Persian period. A story in which Jacob heard the voice of Yhwh in Bethel would be freshly significant in the fifth century, although the main northern temple was built on Mount Gerizim, beside Shechem. Accordingly, the Abram of Gen 12:6–8 implicitly affirms both Shechem and Bethel for the readers in the fifth century, even when the “place” (מקום) at Bethel was something of a distant cultural memory.

The conquest traditions in Joshua could still be embraced within the Hexateuchal horizon, but this implied a shift in ethos from the generally irenic P ancestral traditions in order to engage critically with Deuteronomistic notions of conquest. Most importantly, all the conquests and land allocations (north and south) were led by northerners: both Joshua and Eleazar the priest were buried in Ephraim, and the bones of Joseph were interred in Shechem (Josh 24:29–33). If an earlier text had claimed that “all” of the land of promise was taken in Joshua’s time, then could that perhaps imply that the unconquered cities, the coastlands, and even Jerusalem may not actually have belonged to the scope of the land promises? If that seems too preposterous to contemplate, then essentially the same point could be put more gently: the Canaanites would always be neighbors in the land—notably including the Rahabite and Gibeonite clans who had made their covenants with Joshua.⁴⁶

The final twist in the Hexateuchal tale arguably comes in Gen 14, which was not itself a HexR contribution but an even later composition that took up the conspicuously outstanding problem of the unconquered Jerusalem. The wording in Gen 14:13 strikingly suggests that Abram lived in a treaty relationship with the local indigenous people: Abram lived “by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, the brother of Eschol and of Aner; these were the בעלי בריה of Abram.” English translations tend to water this distinctive Hebrew phrase down to “allies,” but Theodore Lewis has convincingly shown that a more accurate translation would

⁴⁴ Even the oldest version of centralization law would have been unknown in the time of both Jeroboam I and Jeroboam II. The oldest layer is found most likely in Deut 12:13–19. Eckart Otto, *Deuteronomium 12,1–23,15* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2016) 1146–67 and 1182–88; Thomas Römer, “Cult Centralization and the Publication of the Torah between Jerusalem and Samaria,” in *The Bible, Qumran and the Samaritans* (ed. Magnar Kartveit, Gary N. Knoppers, and Stefan Schorch; SJ 104; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018) 79–92; cf. Gary N. Knoppers, “The Northern Context of the Law-Code in Deuteronomy,” *HeBAI* 4 (2015) 162–83.

⁴⁵ On the Golden Calf traditions in Exod 32:25–29, Deut 9:8–21, and 1 Kgs 12:28–32, see the comments in Brett, *Locations of God*, 42–43, 56, 60; Gili Kugler, *When God Wanted to Destroy the Chosen People: Biblical Traditions and Theology on the Move* (BZAW 515; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019) 13–26.

⁴⁶ See, especially, Joachim J. Krause, “Hexateuchal Redaction in Joshua,” *HeBAI* 6 (2017) 181–202; Edenburg, “Paradigm, Illustrative Narrative or Midrash.”

be “treaty partners.”⁴⁷ The language is analogous in various ways with “El of the Covenant” in Shechem, and hence we can speculate that the notion of a covenant initially secured by El between the Shechemites and Israelites has its echo also in Gen 14, where Abram’s sojourning has been secured by a treaty. The implied respect for indigenous tradition comes to light when Abram acknowledges “El Elyon, Creator of heaven and earth” in Gen 14:22. If a later Hebrew scribe has prefixed this Canaanite name for the Creator with the Israelite name “Yhwh,” as seems to be the case, then we need not think of theological censorship.⁴⁸ Rather, we can see here the reiteration of P’s inclusive theism now asserted quite overtly with the name of Yhwh, precisely in the way that the Hexateuchal editors would have applauded—although they may have been less appreciative of the way in which the Melchizedek episode has tilted social interests toward Jerusalem.

■ Conclusion

An audience conditioned by the national proposals for Israelite identity in Deuteronomistic tradition might encounter Gen 12:6 with a sense of foreboding: “Abram passed through the land to the place (מְקוֹם) at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.” The Canaanites were there at the time, a nationalist reader might conclude, but no longer. The Hexateuchal editors of Genesis have a more complex story to tell, embracing the earlier traditions in a number of different ways, and defending northern Yahwism against its southern detractors. Accordingly, it became necessary to contest even the Priestly theology of divine names: Yhwh’s name is revealed not just to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob but also to Hagar the Egyptian. The possibilities for sharing God and land with foreigners are thereby radically expanded. By reconfiguring the inherited traditions of Genesis in a fresh constellation with other texts, the ancestors Judah, Joseph, and Moses all engage in the kind of intermarriage prohibited in Ezra 9. The children of Judah and Tamar—Perez and Zerah—arise apparently also from Canaanite intercourse. One might even conclude that the ancestors of Israel who came from beyond the riverine borders of the Euphrates and the Nile had no clear understanding of Yhwh until they set foot in Canaanite country.

⁴⁷ Lewis, “The Identity and Function of El/Baal Berith,” 413–14.

⁴⁸ Smith, *God in Translation*, 193–215. On the complexities of Gen 14, see Gard Granerød, *Abraham and Melchizedek: Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110* (BZAW 406; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010); Robert Cargill, *Melchizedek, King of Sodom: How Scribes Invented the Biblical Priest King* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).