

# SOURCE CRITICISM & GENESIS 34

Robin Parry

## Summary

*Most historical critics consider the story in Genesis 34 to be composed of two sources which differ considerably from the redactional unity in which they now stand. In this study a critique is offered of the arguments given for such an analysis of the chapter and it is argued that we ought to consider the story always to have existed as a unity.*

## I. Introduction

The great revolution in Biblical Studies that came to be known as ‘Higher Criticism’ soon made its presence felt in the study of Genesis 34.<sup>1</sup> Genesis 34 is of interest in that it is one of only two extended stories in Genesis thought to be composed of more than one source.<sup>2</sup> Although many of the major writings in recent years on Genesis 34 have ignored source-critical questions and have simply examined the work as a finished product,<sup>3</sup> there have been some important recent studies which continue the concern with the source

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<sup>1</sup> All the standard critical OT introductions give a considerable amount of space to explaining the history of source analysis and defending it in some form (typically a variant on the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis).

<sup>2</sup> The Flood story in Gn. 6-9 is the other.

<sup>3</sup> For example, M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), ch. 12; D. Fewell & D. Gunn, ‘Tipping the Balance: Sternberg’s Reader and the Rape of Dinah’, *JBL* 110 (1991), 193-211; M. Caspi, ‘And His Soul Clave unto Dinah (Gen 34): The Story of the Rape of Dinah: the Narrator and the Reader’, *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 11 (1985), 16-53; L. Kass, ‘Regarding Daughters and Sisters: The Rape of Dinah’, *Commentary* 93 (1992), 29-38; L. Bechtel, ‘What If Dinah Is Not Raped?’, *JSOT* 62 (1994), 19-36; and P. Noble, ‘A “Balanced” Reading of the Rape of Dinah: Some Exegetical and Methodological Observations’, *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996), 173-203. For a brief summary of recent mainstream critics of traditional source theories of Genesis see T.D. Alexander, *Abraham in the Negev: A Source-critical Investigation of Genesis 20:1-22:19* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997).

history of the chapter.<sup>4</sup> In this essay I propose to outline the results of source-critical studies of Genesis 34 along with the rationale behind them. I shall argue that such studies fail to establish their conclusions and that Genesis 34 should be considered as coming from a single source.

## II. Source criticism of Genesis 34

With very few exceptions, the world of biblical scholarship in the late 19th and early 20th centuries eagerly embraced the methods of source criticism and in particular the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis. As far as Genesis 34 goes basically two main positions were held (von Rad<sup>5</sup>):

(1) A documentary solution which held that the chapter was composed of two *separate* stories that were blended together by a redactor, and

(2) A supplementary hypothesis which held that the original story has been substantially modified by major additions from a later hand.

Both such approaches begin by trying to account for the same features of the text which are considered to count against the unity of the narrative. According to the majority of source critics Genesis 34 exhibits two types of such features:

(1) Doublets, that is double accounts of the same event.

(2) What Gunkel<sup>6</sup> calls 'difficulties' and Westermann<sup>7</sup> 'a whole series of inconsistencies'.

These features will be examined in detail later but for now we shall merely note the source-critical attempt to handle them.

### 1. Documentary accounts

Essentially two sources were thought to make up the chapter and although

<sup>4</sup> For example, P. Kevers, 'Etude littéraire de Gen 34', *Revue Biblique* 87 (1980), 38-86; E. Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1984); Y. Zakovitch, 'Assimilation in Biblical Narratives', in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, (ed.) J. Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1985), pp. 185-92; S.A. Geller, 'The Sack of Shechem: The Use of Typology in Biblical Covenant Religion', *Prooftexts* 10 (1990), 1-15.

<sup>5</sup> G. von Rad, *Genesis* (tr. J. Marks & J. Bowden; OTL; London: SCM, 1956), p. 325.

<sup>6</sup> H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (tr. M.E. Biddle; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997, based on 3rd German ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), p. 357.

<sup>7</sup> C. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36* (tr. J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981), p. 535.

critics disagreed over the details of which verses should be in which source there was a broad agreement.

(a) *Source one*: The older of the two sources (in the majority opinion<sup>8</sup>) is often referred to as ‘the Shechem variant’ of the story since its main character is Shechem. Precisely how this variant goes will depend on which verses one thinks ought to be included in the source but basically the story would have read as follows:

Shechem rapes Dinah (v. 2b<sup>9</sup>), falls in love with her (v. 3), and then he abducts her (v. 26). Jacob hears of his daughter’s defilement whilst his sons were in the field (v. 5<sup>10</sup>). When they hear the news they return home in great fury because Shechem had done folly in Israel (v. 7). Shechem speaks to her family and offers generous gifts if only they will agree to let him marry the girl (vv. 11-12), but they refuse his offer as marriage to an uncircumcised man is a disgrace (v. 14<sup>11</sup>). Nevertheless, the enthusiastic Shechem decides to get circumcised anyway, such is his love for Dinah (v. 19). Simeon and Levi (presumably the other brothers have been appeased by Shechem) decide to attack Shechem and kill him<sup>12</sup> and take Dinah out from his house (vv. 25-26). Jacob, however, is not pleased and he rebukes the two brothers (vv. 30-31). Some (e.g. Skinner, *Genesis*, p. 417) think that the original conclusion is now lost.

(b) *Source two*: The more recent (in the majority opinion) Hamor version tells the story as follows:

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<sup>8</sup> Other methods have been employed to date the sources. These include length (the assumption is that longer means more recent), character depiction (the assumption is that ‘livelier’ character portraits are older), and stance towards the Canaanites (the assumption is that more sympathetic stances are likely to be older). Clearly, none of these criteria is very certain. For example, what one considers a lively character portrait is a very subjective affair. Even if such judgements could be made we would need numerous examples of material which we could date with certainty in which earlier works had more sketchy and ‘alive’ characters and later ones were more cardboard. Only then could we employ the criteria with any plausibility. The problem is that we have no such material.

<sup>9</sup> Westermann would have vv. 1-2a as part of the Shechem source also (*Genesis 12-36*, p. 535) as would F. Delitzsch (*A New Commentary on Genesis, Volume 2* [tr. S. Taylor; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888; reprint Klock, 1978], p. 218) although in this they are in a minority.

<sup>10</sup> Skinner includes vv. 5 and 7 in the Hamor source (J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* [ICC; 2nd ed.; T. & T. Clark, 1930], p. 417) or suggests that they may be redactional.

<sup>11</sup> Delitzsch includes v. 14 in the Hamor source.

<sup>12</sup> Gunkel (*Genesis*, p. 362) thinks that the reference to Hamor in v. 25 is a redactional addition and many critics think that the reference to Simeon and Levi slaying all the males in the city in v. 25 has been transposed from the later source in v. 27 by the redactor (p. 357).

Dinah went out to 'see' the women of the land when she was 'seen' by Shechem (vv. 1-2a). Some (e.g. Driver<sup>13</sup> and Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, p. 356) think that there was no sexual relation between Shechem and Dinah (as vv. 2b-3 do not belong to this source)—Shechem merely saw Dinah (v. 2a) then asked his father to request her hand in marriage for him (v. 4). Others (for example, Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 358) think that the words *wayyiskab 'otāh* (וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה) from v. 2 also belong to this source and thus Shechem saw *and* raped Dinah, and then fell in love with her. He did not, however, abduct her. The abduction is found in v. 26 from the Shechem source and thus Dillmann<sup>14</sup> and Gunkel (*Genesis*, p. 358) (as Driver, *Genesis*, p. 303, and Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*) argue that *wayyiskab 'otāh* from v. 2 belongs in the Shechem source and not the Hamor source.<sup>15</sup> Most critics would include v. 4 but not v. 3 in the source (though Westermann is an exception and does the opposite; *Genesis 12-36*, p. 535) and thus Shechem seeks Dinah's hand in marriage through his father. Hamor sets out alone for Jacob's household (v. 6) where he proposes an alliance between the two groups (vv. 8-10). The sons reply deceitfully (v. 13) by agreeing to the alliance on the condition that the Shechemites are circumcised (vv. 15-17<sup>16</sup>). Hamor is pleased with the deal (v. 18) and goes to his city to persuade them to agree to the terms (vv. 20-24). However, three days after they are circumcised (a fragment of v. 25) all the sons of Jacob descend on the town (v. 27), kill all the males (a fragment of v. 25 relocated in v. 27), and plunder the town (vv. 27-29<sup>17</sup>). The conclusion of the story is 35:5 where God protects the family from the retribution of angry locals.

(c) *The redactor's hand*: Clearly to sustain such a division of the text one needs to appeal frequently to the work of a redactor who smoothed over the cracks. Westermann pays more attention to the redactor than most identifying him as C in contrast to sources A (Shechem) and B (Hamor). Westermann's redactor has his own ideological agenda which is not identical with either of his sources

<sup>13</sup> S.R., Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (3rd ed.; Westminster Commentary; London: Methuen, 1904), p. 303.

<sup>14</sup> A. Dillmann, *Die Genesis* (6th ed.; Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1892), p. 365.

<sup>15</sup> Delitzsch thought that all of vv. 1-2 were from this source (*Genesis*, p. 218).

<sup>16</sup> Delitzsch includes v. 14 (*Genesis*, p. 218).

<sup>17</sup> Delitzsch thinks that vv. 27-29 are from a third hand: E (*Genesis*, p. 218).

though closer to the Hamor source.<sup>18</sup> This person made many harmonising additions to the text to blend the two sources. Gunkel too appeals over 15 times to a redactor to explain features of the text which do not fit his source analysis.

Source critics were very much in disagreement about the identity of the two main sources. Most agreed that the Shechem source is J<sup>19</sup> but there was much dispute about the identity of the Hamor source. Was it P (so Delitzsch,<sup>20</sup> Dillmann, Driver,<sup>21</sup> Procksch<sup>22</sup>) or E (Wellhausen,<sup>23</sup> Gunkel, Skinner<sup>24</sup>)?

## 2. *Supplementary accounts*

Noth<sup>25</sup> argues that a J account had been expanded by later supplements (vv. 4, 6, 8-10, 15-17, 20-23, 27 as well as the mention of Hamor in vv. 13a, 18, 24, 26). Others who have followed in his trail include de Pury,<sup>26</sup> Kevers,<sup>27</sup> Blum, Vawter<sup>28</sup> and Zakovitch. Vawter thinks that an original text (vv. 3, 5, 7, 11-13 [minus the reference to Hamor], 18 [minus the reference to Hamor], parts of vv. 24-26 and 30-31) has been supplemented by vv. 1-2, 4, 6, 8-11, 14-17, 20-23, fragments of 24-26 and 27-29. This does not follow the documentary analysis exactly but in essence Vawter sees the Shechem source as

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<sup>18</sup> The redactor 'wants to narrate an example of the execution of the law of Deuteronomy. He wants to take a stand in express opposition to the possibility of any peaceful or contractual agreement with the inhabitants of the land such as was at hand to him in the tribal account' (Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, p. 544).

<sup>19</sup> Westermann does not identify it with any Pentateuchal source (*Genesis 12-36*, p. 545) and Skinner resists identifying the Shechem source as J. Following Meyer he thinks that it reflects a much older tradition which took literary shape in the Yahwistic school and thus he refers to it as Jx.

<sup>20</sup> Delitzsch refers to P as Q.

<sup>21</sup> Driver admits that P may have made use of E. See S.R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1894; first published 1891), p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> O. Procksch, *Die Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: Deichertsche Verlags-buchhandlung, 1924), pp. 542-49.

<sup>23</sup> Wellhausen, J., *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (reprint Cleveland: Worlds, 1965; ET of German original, 1878).

<sup>24</sup> To be more precise, Skinner tentatively refers to the Source as Ex. He thinks that it did not find itself in the main document of the Elohist circle but was current in E circles and was inserted as an afterthought (Skinner, *Genesis*, p. 418).

<sup>25</sup> Noth, M., *History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (tr. B.W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> A. de Pury, 'Gen 34 et l'histoire', *Revue Biblique* 76 (1969), 5-49.

<sup>27</sup> P. Kevers, 'Etude littéraire de Gen 34', *Revue Biblique* 87 (1980), 38-86.

<sup>28</sup> B. Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977).

the basic story which has been changed by the 'Hamor sections'. The latter, however, never existed as an independent source and were added to fit J.

Yair Zakovitch has recently argued for a more moderate supplementary analysis in which an original story (which he thinks is most of the chapter) has been expanded by a few additions (vv. 2b, 5, 7b, 13b, 17, fragments of 25-26, 27 and 30-31). His interesting analysis differs quite considerably from the traditional one.

***Excursus: The two sources and the priority of P***

If one reads Genesis 34 accepting the standard critical delineation of the two sources it seems obvious that the structure of the story is provided by the Hamor source into which parts of the Shechem variant have been added (so Gunkel, *Genesis*, p.362). The basic structure of the finished chapter is as follows:<sup>29</sup>

A—Dinah 'goes out'; Shechem 'takes' Dinah; father and son talk (vv. 1-4)

B—Hamor 'goes out' and negotiates with Jacob (vv. 5-12)

C—The sons deceive Hamor (and son) (vv. 13-19)

B1—Hamor (and son) 'came to' their city and negotiate with Hivites (vv. 20-24)

A1—The sons 'come upon' the city—kill men—'take' loot; father and sons talk (vv. 25-31)

This basic structure is almost all found in the Hamor sections. All that is missing is vv. 30-31 (and vv. 27-29 need some doctoring to allow them to include killing). The Shechem variant includes no such symmetry. Now this need not mean that the Hamor version is the earliest (it is possible that the later story was taken as the outline and the earlier story fitted around it) but it does look as if it is. To support the seniority of the Hamor source we may observe that the Shechem version in vv. 2b-3 (or simply v. 3 if one gives all of v. 2 to Hamor) must presuppose the Hamor version (vv. 1-2a or 1-2) to make any sense. These two clues point to the Hamor source as the elder of the two. However, as most source critics attribute this source to P and date P later than J and E, the majority opinion has been that the Hamor source is the later of the two. The idea that P is later than J or

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<sup>29</sup> As an aside, I would point out that the structure of Genesis 34 is perfectly balanced with v. 4 paralleling vv. 30-31. The source division would have the effect of unbalancing the text by removing vv. 30-31 from the P source. This observation should be added to those adduced in the main text in defence of the unity of the chapter.

E has been questioned by some in recent years (e.g. G.J. Wenham<sup>30</sup>) but such questionings remain a minority view. Nevertheless, Genesis 34 could play a role in defending the idea that P is the earliest source (Wenham tentatively uses it in this way) *if* one accepted the standard source division of the chapter which, it will become clear, I do not.

### III. Critique of source-critical studies of Genesis 34

Before examining the arguments behind the source analysis I ought to make clear an assumption operating in this study. I shall presume that the burden of proof lies with the scholar who wants to divide up an episode in the biblical text into sources. It seems to me that an episode which is inherited as a unity should be presumed to be a unity *unless* we have some good reasons to think otherwise. Few will dispute such an assumption and the arguments which follow demonstrate the shouldering of this burden by the source critics. I shall counter that their arguments fall far short of the good reasons necessary to establish their conclusions.

As already mentioned there are essentially two types of criteria used to locate sources in Genesis 34:

- (1) doublets
- (2) other problems

We shall examine these in turn.

#### 1. Doublets

Three so-called doublets have been identified in chapter 34 and it is these which constitute the primary reason for dividing the narrative. They lead Westermann to exclaim, 'The *obvious* conclusion is that here, as in virtually no other single text of Genesis, there are two different basic narratives which have been subsequently worked into one' (*Genesis 12-36*, p. 535; italics mine).

(a) *The request for Dinah and the responses* (vv. 8-10, 13, 15-17 and vv. 11-12, 14)

First of all it is claimed that we have two accounts of the request that Shechem marry Dinah. In the one Hamor goes alone to see Jacob (v. 6). He sets forth an inter-tribal alliance (vv. 8-10) which the sons pretend to accept on the condition that Hamor is circumcised (vv. 13, 15-17). In the other Shechem speaks to the brothers of Dinah. He

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<sup>30</sup> G.J. Wenham, 'The Priority of P', *VT* 49 (1999), 240-58.

promises to give gifts as large as they choose to name if only he can marry the girl (vv. 11-12). The request is simply refused by the sons of Jacob (v. 14). It is often noted that the Hamor version focuses more on national life whilst the Shechem version is more personal. This is the basis for claims that J is a personal family narrative whilst P/E is a tribal narrative.

In evaluating this claim let us first look at the sequence of events in the undivided text. In vv. 8-10 Hamor proposes an inter-tribal alliance in return for allowing Shechem to marry Dinah. Then in vv. 11-12 Shechem speaks. He is not concerned with the politics of alliances—all that concerns him is that Dinah marry him and he will pay whatever it costs. In v. 13 the sons reply to them both ('Shechem *and* Hamor his father'). In reply they say 'we cannot give our daughter to an uncircumcised man (v. 14). Vv. 15-17 follow on very naturally from this—'Only in this will we agree to you...' and the condition of circumcision is set out as a requirement for intermarriage of any Hivite to any Israelite and as a condition for agreeing to the alliance proposed by Hamor. The expression *'ak b<sup>e</sup>zōt* (אֶכְּבֹֿזֶֿת׃ אִם) 'only in this') implies that a *previous* proposition is being restricted (van der Merwe<sup>31</sup>). That being the case, v. 15 *presupposes and modifies* v. 14. In v. 14 the sons say that they will not allow an uncircumcised man to marry their sister. It looks like a flat denial of the Hivite request. However, v. 14 immediately modifies this refusal by saying that if a Hivite were to get circumcised then they could intermarry. Thus not only are v. 14 and vv. 15-17 compatible but they *require* each other. Source critics have traditionally maintained that this text gives two very different answers to the request for marriage: 'No' (v. 14) and 'Yes, if...' (vv. 15-17). In fact, as we have seen, the text actually gives one answer, 'No, unless...' (vv. 14-17). This cuts right across the source analysis of these verses. On the face of it I can see no obvious problems with the text as it stands. Source critics may choose to reinforce their position in several ways:

First, they could point out that the Hamor appeal seems to be more of a tribal one, whilst the Shechem appeal is more a personal one reflecting the different concerns of the different sources. This observation of the difference between the two speeches is correct, but the conclusion is too hasty as the difference can be explained very simply. Hamor is the tribal leader and sees in the situation an

<sup>31</sup> C.H.J. van der Merwe, 'Old Hebrew Particles and the Interpretation of Old Testament Texts', *JSOT* 60 (1993), 27-44, esp. p. 30.



opportunity to arrange a mutually beneficial alliance whilst Shechem is the love-sick boy whose only concern is his marriage to Dinah. The two speeches brilliantly indicate the different characters of these two actors.

Second, they could argue that in v. 14 only Shechem's circumcision is in view whilst in vv. 15-17 the circumcision of all of the townsmen is under discussion. This, we are told, indicates two sources—one in which Shechem alone seeks to marry Dinah and the other in which a more general alliance is proposed. This response is wholly inadequate also. In Hamor's speech (vv. 8-10) *two* things are in view: Shechem's marriage to Dinah *and* a more general alliance where intermarriage is common. Shechem's speech (vv. 11-12) only mentions the former. In their reply to father and son (v. 13) the sons respond to both issues. First they say that Dinah's marriage to Shechem is problematised by his uncircumcised status (v. 14). This obviously has more general implications for the alliance which Hamor has proposed, so in vv. 15-17 the sons modify their denial by setting out a principle which will allow general intermarriage and, by implication, Shechem's marriage to Dinah. Indeed, the sons may well have responded in this way even if Shechem had never opened his mouth and they only had Hamor's proposal to reply to. On the standard source-critical view the sons in the Hamor source (vv. 15-17) only respond to the second part of Hamor's proposal (vv. 9-11) and make no mention of Shechem's marriage to Dinah (v. 8). Now that would be peculiar. However, the problem is resolved if the source critical analysis is abandoned.

Third, the source critic could say that the redactor did not do his job quite well enough and that a clear trace of the original source is left in v. 6. There we read that 'Hamor, the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.' There is no mention of Shechem going with him. That, says the critic, is because in the original source he did not go with him. This is, I admit, peculiar. It is not what I would have expected. The source critic provides one possible explanation but even if no other explanation commends itself this anomaly is a very weak foundation for a source analysis. I do not pretend to have a solution here but let me say this: in v. 4 Shechem asks Hamor to approach Jacob and in v. 6 we are told that he did. At this point there is nothing to indicate that Shechem is with him. However, in v. 11 he is there and from then on it is clear (see v. 13 and v. 18, both of which come from the *same source* as v. 6 on any theory) that *both* father *and* son are present. Clearly, the final

redactor wanted us to think that both were there all along. I am not sure why Shechem is not mentioned in v. 6. Possibly the name was there originally and it was lost in copying. Possibly Shechem's presence is assumed; it is certainly clear from the context that he did go. Whatever the reason, this peculiar feature alone comes nowhere close to overthrowing the presumption of episodic unity.

(b) *The agreement to the conditions set by the sons (vv. 18-19)*

Here we have, it is claimed, two accounts of the acceptance of the sons' responses. In v. 18 Hamor is pleased with the deal whilst in v. 19 Shechem rushes off to get circumcised.

In evaluating this claim we need again to look at the unified text which we have. The sons of Jacob have proposed a deal in which Israelite-Hivite intermarriage is permitted if the Hivites are circumcised. Hamor is pleased with the deal (v. 19) as is Shechem (v. 19). Indeed Shechem is so pleased he cannot wait to rush off and get circumcised. It is not at all obvious what is supposed to be problematic here for the text makes perfect sense as it stands. Not only that, but positing such sources *creates* two problems which are not otherwise present. First of all, if we have a Shechem source in which the sons' response to Shechem's request (vv. 11-12) is a flat refusal (v. 14) it becomes more difficult to see why Shechem rushes off to get circumcised. It is possible that he is willing to try anything, but a more satisfactory answer lies to hand. The sons had said that circumcised Hivites could marry Israelites (vv. 15-17) and thus he rushes off to get circumcised (v. 19). This simple and satisfying answer is achieved by merely abandoning the source analysis. A second problem generated by the source analysis is that v. 18, which is supposed to be about Hamor and not Shechem (according to the source critics), actually says, 'And their words were good in the eyes of Hamor *and in the eyes of Shechem, son of Hamor.*' This completely cuts across the source analysis, but it makes perfect sense if we take the text as a unity. At this point the redactor is wheeled in to help the source critic out of the pit he has dug for himself. The words 'and in the eyes of Shechem son of Hamor' must, we are told, have been added by the redactor to smooth over the cracks. This is a strategy of defeat. What the source critic is saying is that the text actually is rather smooth as it stands (thanks to the redactor). But of course, if it is smooth as it stands why posit different sources? Indeed, the text seems to run *counter* to source critical expectations and has to be adapted to fit the theory. When

that starts to happen we can begin to suspect that a theory is getting into trouble.<sup>32</sup>

(c) *The massacre (vv. 25-26 and 27-29)*

The key doublet is claimed to be found in the two accounts of the attack on the city. In the one (vv. 25-26 edited) only Simeon and Levi come and kill Shechem and perhaps Hamor (depending on the commentator), take Dinah and leave. In the other (vv. 27-29) all the sons descend on the city, kill all the males and plunder. This is usually claimed to be clear evidence of the conflation of two sources.

Again, let us read the text as we find it. Simeon and Levi enter the city, kill all the males, including Hamor and Shechem, and leave with Dinah (vv. 25-26). Then the sons of Jacob come upon the slain and plunder them (vv. 27-29). I am at a loss to see what is supposed to be problematic with this. Zakovitch claims that vv. 27-29 know nothing of vv. 25-26 ('Assimilation', p. 186), and thus constitute an alternative account. But this is simply false. As the text stands, vv. 27-29 *presuppose* vv. 25-26. V. 27 tells us that the sons of Jacob 'came upon *the slain* and plundered the city'. But who are 'the slain'? To find the answer one must have read v. 26 when Simeon and Levi kill all the males in the town. In the so-called 'Hamor account of the massacre' (vv. 27-29), there is no mention of the sons of Jacob killing the people in the town; thus there is no obvious sense in which these verses can be said to describe an *alternative account* of the massacre. As they stand they provide no account of any massacre at all. So vv. 25-29 make perfect sense as they stand and do not require a source analysis.

Source critics have an answer to the argument above. The words *wayyaharġû kol-zākār* (וַיַּהַרְגוּ כָּל־זָכָר) in v. 25 are said to have been moved by the redactor from v. 27 where they originally belonged before *wayyābōzzû* (וַיָּבֹזְזוּ) (Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, pp. 542-43, and most other source critics). Thus, in vv. 25-26 Simeon

<sup>32</sup> In fact, throughout the entire set of negotiations between Hivites and Israelites we read that Hamor spoke to 'them' (v. 8), not just to Jacob, as traditional source theory requires (Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 362, thus argues that the redactor changed וְיָבֹזְזוּ to וַיַּהַרְגוּ); that Shechem spoke to 'her father and her brothers' (v. 11) and not just her brothers as traditional source theory requires (Gunkel thus thinks that the words 'to her father and' have been added by a redactor); that the sons 'answered *Shechem and Hamor his father*' (v. 13) and not simply Hamor as source-critical theory requires (so the redactor has been smoothing over the cracks again by adding 'Shechem' and 'his father'). The unified text makes perfect sense like this but each example is awkward for a source-critical analysis and thus the redactor is brought in to save the day. So well does he do his job however that one wonders if he even existed.

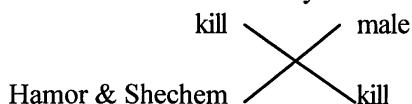
and Levi kill only Shechem (and perhaps Hamor) whilst in vv. 27-29 the sons kill all the males and then plunder the city.<sup>33</sup>

So are there any syntactic grounds for relocating the words ‘and they killed every male’ in v. 25? Do they fit awkwardly in v. 25? No. Is v. 27 awkward without them? No. In fact, these words *cannot* be removed from v. 25 without doing violence to the text. As I read Genesis 34:25b-26a I see an example of what Longacre<sup>34</sup> calls a ‘Narrative Amplification Paragraph’.

*Text:* ‘And they killed every male.’

*Amplification:* ‘And Hamor and Shechem his son they killed with the edge of the sword.’

The text makes a general claim which is amplified by a focus on two men in particular who were slain—Hamor and Shechem. The text and the amplification are linked chiasmally:



The chiasm ties in Hamor’s and Shechem’s killing as part of the general massacre. Now if this is right then one cannot remove the words ‘and they killed every male’ from v. 25, and if that cannot be done, then the source-critical analysis collapses.

Other supposed problems with the attack accounts now disappear. Gunkel observes that in vv. 25-26 only Simeon and Levi attack whilst in vv. 27-29 all the sons do. He also notes that in v. 26 the sons go out and yet in v. 27 they plunder. The reason is obvious. In vv. 25-26 only Simeon and Levi attack and go out whilst in vv. 27-29 the *other* sons did. But this is not a problem. It is no use responding, as Zakovitch (‘Assimilation’, pp. 186-87) does, that if v. 27 had meant ‘the *other* sons’ it would have said so. The *context* clearly indicates that it was the other sons.

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<sup>33</sup> To justify this dubious move it is also argued that one cannot possibly imagine two people killing the entire male population of a town as the present text envisages (so Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 357 and Skinner, *Genesis*, p. 421). But now we run into that old demon that haunts source critics—if the final redactor had no trouble envisaging two men killing the entire male population of a town, what grounds do we have for thinking that an original source did have trouble with the idea? The answer is that we have no such grounds. One must remember that the men of the city were incapacitated (v. 25) and that there is no telling what two angry young men are capable of.

<sup>34</sup> R. Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989), pp. 97-98.

## 2. *Other difficulties*

It has been my contention above that the major plank in the source critical analysis—the doublets—cannot support the load that it has been used to bear. I shall now try to deal with some of the other problems.

(a) Vv. 4-12 display a ‘remarkable lack of cohesion’ with ‘no perceptible relationship between them’ (Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 357). Westermann thinks that they have a ‘clumsy, uneven style’ (*Genesis 12-36*, p. 535). We move from Shechem and Hamor (v. 4 source A) to Jacob (v. 5 source B) to Hamor (v. 6 source A) to Jacob’s sons (v. 7 source B) to Hamor (vv. 8-10 source A) to Shechem (vv. 11-12 source B). Skinner is unusual in taking the whole of vv. 5-10 as coming from the Hamor source (*Genesis*, p. 417).

I shall attempt to show how the text makes perfect sense as it stands. There is a change of scene between v. 4 and v. 5. Vv. 5-7 form the setting for the dialogue in vv. 8-19. We leave Shechem and Hamor in the city (v. 4) and find ourselves with Jacob having just discovered what has happened to Dinah (v. 5a). The narrator then tells us that when Jacob learned the news his sons were still in the field (v. 5b) so he waited in silence for them to return (v. 5c). The narrator then informs us that Hamor had set out (reading *wayyēšē* נָסַף] as a pluperfect) to see Jacob as his son had requested (v. 6). When we last saw them we were not aware of Hamor’s response to his sons’ request but were kept in suspense. We see Jacob learning of the news and we wonder what Hamor will do. In v. 6 we learn that he is on his way to Jacob but we are still unsure if he is to apologise to Jacob or ask for Dinah’s hand in marriage for his son, or both. V. 7 advances the setting somewhat. The sons now hear the news and return home (or vice versa) furious to Jacob who has been waiting for them. Now I propose that we are to imagine that this flurry of events was all happening at the same time. Jacob learns the news whilst his sons are out in the field and so he awaits their return. As he waits Hamor (and Shechem) sets out. Before he arrives the sons return and learn (or ‘having learned’) the news. They are furious. The scene is now set for the negotiations. Hamor (having arrived) speaks to ‘them’ (v. 8). On the source-critical analysis we should read that Hamor spoke to ‘him’ (Jacob) because if the original document ran straight from v. 6 into v. 8 we have no idea who the ‘them’ are. As the text stands it makes sense: Hamor had gone to see Jacob (v. 6), but in the meantime the sons had returned home (v. 7) and thus he addressed ‘them’ (v. 8). The source critics can, of

course, appeal to the hand of the redactor here and they may be right in doing so if there are solid, independent grounds for their source analysis. However, when one thinks of Ockham's razor one happily declines their proposal. After Hamor has finished (vv. 8-10) his son joins in the appeal (vv. 11-12) and Jacob's sons answer them both (v. 13). And therein lies another problem for the source critic. The Hamor source apparently ran as follows: Hamor goes to see Jacob (v. 6) and speaks to him (emendation of v. 8) about an alliance (vv. 8-10). Then Jacob's sons answer him (v. 13 emended, vv. 15-17). But where did they come from? As far as we can tell they appear from nowhere. The problem is solved if we read the text as it stands.

(b) Vv. 8 and 17 (the Hamor variant) describe Dinah as 'daughter' whilst v. 14 (the Shechem variant) describes her as 'sister'.

We can reply to this objection quickly. The first thing to say is that v. 13 which belongs to the Hamor variant describes Dinah as 'their sister'. This seems to be *prima facie* evidence that the Hamor variant could use both expressions and that the different terms cannot be used to indicate sources. Of course, things are never that simple. The expression 'who defiled Dinah their sister' in v. 13 is often regarded as 'a syntactically intolerable gloss' (Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 362; similarly Zakovitch, 'Assimilation', p. 186). I shall deal with that objection later. Let us simply note that if we can show that the words in v. 13 are not a gloss our original point stands. Now in v. 8 Hamor is talking to all the males in the family. To describe Dinah as 'your (plural) daughter' may seem unusual as she is obviously not literally the daughter of them all<sup>35</sup> but she is the first 'daughter of Israel' in what Hamor hopes will be a fruitful alliance of exchanging 'daughters'. *In that context* she is appropriately described as 'your daughter'. I suggest that the same applies in v. 17. The context is again the exchange of daughters. The sons deliberately ape Hamor's language in vv. 15-17. Thus they describe Dinah as 'our daughter', i.e. the first 'daughter of Israel' to be given to a Hivite. The sons speak here as the representatives of Israel and Dinah is spoken of as an Israelite woman in the context of an inter-tribal alliance. However, in v. 13 we are let in on their real motives—the woman who has been defiled is not just any Israelite daughter—she is 'Dinah their sister'.

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<sup>35</sup> If the source critic appeals to this as evidence that a 'your (singular—Jacob's) daughter' has been changed to a 'your (plural—Jacob and sons) daughter' to blend the sources we may reply that if 'your (plural) daughters' was not a problem for a redactor then we may suppose that it was not a problem for the original author of the document. As it happens I am unaware of any critics who do suggest this redactional change.

The sons are angry and say that no uncircumcised man (Shechem) can marry their sister (Dinah) (v. 14). This principle is then expanded to apply to all Hivite-Israelite intermarriages (vv. 15-17) and consequently the terminology changes. Thus at the end of v. 17 when the sons return to talk of Dinah again they continue to talk in the language of daughters.

(c) ‘The vestige of a second source is usually seen in the double statement of the rape in v. 2b’ (von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 326).

V. 2 tells us that Shechem ‘saw her..., took her, lay with her and shamed her’. This is felt by *some* source critics such as Gunkel (*Genesis*, p. 357) to be too repetitive and thus to reflect the conflation of two sources. Precisely which words belong to which source is not agreed. However, this cannot be thought of as a serious problem for the unity of the text. What we have is a powerful sequence of verbs of ascending seriousness climaxing in ‘he shamed her’.

(d) The references to Dinah’s defiling are syntactically awkward in v. 13 and v. 27 indicating that they are later additions (Delitzsch, *Genesis*, pp. 224-25; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, p. 543; Zakovitch, ‘Assimilation’, p. 186). Similarly, v. 13 accuses Shechem of defiling Dinah whilst v. 27 accuses the whole city of that crime.

With regard to the second point both of the accusations of defiling come from the *same* source (E/P) or, in Zakovitch’s case, the *same* supplement. Consequently it cannot be used to support a division of the text.

With regard to the awkward syntax of vv. 13 and 27 we recall that we are dealing here with a reason to see the hand of a less than competent glossator and not an independent source. These phrases are, in fact, rather difficult to interpret. Strictly speaking the problem with v. 27 is not the syntax but the content. We read that ‘The sons of Jacob descended on the slain (m.pl.) and they plundered the city (f.sg.) where/because (’āšer אֲשֶׁר) they (m.pl.) defiled their sister.’ The problem is knowing who the ‘they’ are that defiled Dinah. The context would clearly indicate that it is ‘the slain’—the men of the city (it could not be the sons). The problem is knowing in what sense all the men of the town could be considered to have defiled Dinah, especially since earlier in the chapter Shechem is said to have defiled her (vv. 5, 13).<sup>36</sup> That problem is of no relevance, so far as I can see, to any of the proposed source analyses. The *syntax itself* though is

<sup>36</sup> Possibly they were seen to share in the crime of Shechem, their leader-in-waiting, via some kind of corporate responsibility.

not especially awkward. V. 5 is similarly ‘awkward’ if we wish to be pedantic for there we read that ‘Jacob heard that *he* had defiled his daughter.’ Who is the ‘he’? The most obvious immediate person is Jacob himself but the context excludes that and thus we are led back to vv. 1-4 which clearly indicate that the ‘he’ is Shechem. V. 27 is exactly parallel. The most immediate ‘they’ in the context is Jacob’s sons but that makes no sense and one does not have to look far to find the real candidate (the slain).<sup>37</sup>

The problem in v. 13 is that we have three lines in parallel:

(1) ‘And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully,

(2) And they spoke (’*āšer timmē*’ אֲשֶׁר תִּמְמֵ = ‘to him who had defiled’ or ‘because he defiled’?) Dinah their daughter,

(3) And they spoke to them...’

The problem is that line 1 refers to ‘Shechem and Hamor’ and line 3 refers to ‘them’ whilst line 2 talks about the *one* who defiled Dinah—‘he’ not ‘they’. One can see the syntactic problem pointed out by the source- and supplementary-critics.

In response we can observe that out of twenty-one occasions when *dbr* (דבר) takes a direct object without a preposition (as here) there are no examples where ’*āšer* is the object of *dbr*<sup>38</sup> and this makes it unlikely that we ought to translate line 2 as ‘and they spoke to *him who* had defiled Dinah their sister’. ’*āšer*, in the sense of ‘whom’, can be used as the direct object of a verb if the object marker ’*et* (אֶת) is present (Gn. 32:24; Ex. 20:7; 33:12) but it is not present here. It is better to read ’*āšer* as ‘because’. This is how Evan Shoshan (RVA #4019<sup>39</sup>) and BDB (834.8.c) take the text and Sternberg too sees this as an intended meaning (*Poetics*, p. 460). The consequence of this is that line 2 gives the reason why the sons

<sup>37</sup> This kind of mildly awkward grammar is not uncommon in the OT and discourse analysts such as Comrie have written on the topic proposing possible explanations for it. He talks of ‘global reference tracking’ (see L. de Regt, ‘Devices of Participant Reference in Some Biblical Hebrew Texts: Their Importance in Translation’, *Jaarbericht ‘Ex Oriente Lux’* 32 [1991-1992], 161-62). ‘In such a strategy the pronoun or affix is assigned to one of the participants—presumably a major one—early in the story and is retained throughout the discourse as referring to this entity, even if there are local references or other potential referents.’ This may have possible relevance to v. 5 though not to v. 27. I am inclined to think that this is not the best explanation for what is going on here and am prepared to wait for future developments in the field of Hebrew discourse linguistics.

<sup>38</sup> My thanks to Professor Gordon Wenham for pointing this out to me.

<sup>39</sup> Shoshan considers Gn. 34:13 one of fifteen occasions when אֲשֶׁר is interchangeable with אֶת.



speak with deceit to Hamor and Shechem in line 1—*because* he defiled Dinah their sister. Thus line 2 does not mention a referent but only the speakers, Jacob's sons. So we do not have a plural-singular-plural list of addressees but a plural-blank-plural list. One could be excused for saying that the non-use of the noun in line 2 hardly constitutes a major problem. It is *obvious* who the 'he' is. Shechem has already been identified clearly as the defiler (vv. 2, 5) and mentioned in line 1 (v. 13a). The author may have felt it to be quite unnecessary to name the defiler again. Thus any syntactic irregularity in vv. 13 and 27 is, at best, a weak foundation for seeing the hand of a glossator.

(e) In v. 20 Shechem and Hamor are described as the same speaker—this reflects the unsuccessful attempt to blend two narratives.

That Hamor and Shechem (i.e. more than one speaker) 'spoke to the men of their city' (v. 20) is a perfectly natural way of introducing a speech in Hebrew narrative. Perhaps we are to imagine that both of them had things to say or, more likely, that Hamor spoke *on behalf of* himself and his son. The less than precise phrasing of v. 20 is surely no ground for a source division.

(f) Skinner (*Genesis*, p. 417) argues that the Hamor source (v. 17) indicates that Dinah was still with her family (or else how could they 'take her and go') whilst the Shechem source (v. 1—'he took her' and v. 26—'they took Dinah from the house of Shechem and went out') implies that Dinah was abducted. Skinner has unintentionally invited a critique of his own source analysis here. We shall ignore the fact that 'he took her' in v. 2 need not imply an abduction because it is evident that Dinah was at Shechem's house (v. 26). The problem for Skinner is that v. 17 ('we will take our sister and go out') is a hidden threat which the sons carry out in v. 26 ('and they took Dinah out of Shechem's house and they went out'). The parallel Hebrew wording makes it clear that these two verses belong to the same source. But if that is so then traditional source analyses are in major trouble because v. 26 is integral to the Shechem source and is closely linked in with vv. 30-31 whilst v. 17 is integrally linked to the Hamor source. If, as seems the case, vv. 17 and 26 are linked in a two way relationship then the two sources look suspiciously like one source. We must now also note that if v. 26 (J) assumes an abduction then so does v. 17 (P) and Skinner's point disappears.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion I think that it is fair to say that source critics have drawn our attention to some awkward features of the text and that some of those features remain awkward even though not nearly as much as has often been claimed. However, none of the problems, in my view, comes close to challenging seriously the presumption of episodic unity and thus we have little basis for a source analysis of Genesis 34.