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November 2016

### Circumcising a Second Time: The Composition of Joshua 5:2-9 Reconsidered

On its surface, Josh 5:2-9 narrates a straightforward ceremony where Joshua ensures that all Israelites are circumcised before they celebrate the Passover for the first time in the Promised Land. Passing details include the nature of the tools that Joshua should use and an etiology for Gilgal. These few verses have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, often focusing on confusing descriptions of Israelite cultic observance and major differences between Hebrew and Greek versions of the text. This paper introduces a new understanding of the pericope's compositional history, refocusing understanding of the text on its etiology. It also proposes a timeline of the various additions and harmonizations to both MT and LXX.

The research proposes that Josh. 5:2-9 underwent four primary stages of composition. The earliest recoverable strand contains a short etiology for Gilgal and one of its hills, explaining the names by relating them to an act of communal circumcision. This etiology presented ideological problems for later authors, as it seems to indicate that circumcision is a new procedure. An author employing Deuteronomic vocabulary then supplemented the etiology with further information about the people involved in the circumcision, explaining that the ritual involved the children of the rebellious generation who had wandered in the wilderness. After this point, the verses were expanded in two different extant recensions. One of these Hebrew traditions became MT, and the other Hebrew text became the basis for LXX. Finally, both MT and LXX contain scribal harmonizations and errors. Reconstructing the compositional history of this small sample text provides clues to understanding the writing and editing process for the whole of the book of Joshua.