

THE ANCHOR BIBLE

GENESIS

INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION, AND NOTES

BY

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II. THE STORY OF THE PATRIARCHS

C. Joseph and His Brothers

49. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

(xxxvii 2b-36: J, /E/°)

XXXVII 2b At seventeen years of age, Joseph tended flocks with his brothers. He was assisting the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah; and Joseph brought his father bad reports about them.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he made him an ornamented^b tunic. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his "other sons,"^c they came to hate him so much that they could not say a kind word to him.

5 One time, Joseph had a dream, which he told to his brothers; and this made them hate him even more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to the dream I had! 7 In it,^d we were binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly^d my sheaf rose up and stood upright; and your sheaves formed a ring around my sheaf and bowed down to it!" 8 "Do you propose," his brothers asked him, "to rule over us? Are you to be our master?" And they hated him all the more for his talk about his dreams.

9 Then he had another dream, which he told to his brothers, saying, "Look, I had another dream! This time,^d the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me!" 10 When he recounted it to his father,^e his father rebuked him. "What is the meaning," he asked him, "of this dream of yours? Shall I and your mother and your brothers come bowing to you to the

^a For details cf. COMMENT and NOTES.

^b Traditional "of many colors," or "with sleeves."

^{c-c} So with several manuscripts, Sam., LXX; MT "brothers."

^d Literally "here, behold."

^e MT adds "and to his brothers"; LXX, Syr. omit.

ground?" ¹¹ But while his brothers were wrought up at him, his father pondered the matter.

¹² One day, when his brothers had gone off to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem, ¹³ Israel said to Joseph, "Look, your brothers are with the flocks at Shechem. Come, let me send you to them." "I am ready," he answered. ¹⁴ "Go then," he went on, "find out how your brothers and the flocks are faring, and bring back word." With that, he sent him off from the valley of Hebron, and he made his way to Shechem.

¹⁵ A man came upon him as he was wandering in the fields. "What are you looking for?" the man asked him. ¹⁶ "I am looking for my brothers," he replied. "Could you tell me where they are pasturing?" ¹⁷ The man answered, "They have moved on from here; in fact, I heard them say, 'Let us go on to Dothan.'" So Joseph followed his brothers and caught up with them in Dothan.

¹⁸ They noticed him from a distance; and before he got close to them they conspired to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, "Here comes that dreamer! ²⁰ Why don't we kill him now and throw him into one of the pits? We could say that a wild beast devoured him. We shall then see what came of his dreams!"

²¹ When Reuben' heard this, he tried to save him from their hands. He said, "Let us not take his life! ²² Shed no blood!" Reuben told them. "Just throw him into that pit, out there in the desert, but don't do away with him yourselves"—his purpose being to deliver him from their hands and restore him to his father. ²³ So when Joseph reached his brothers, they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the ornamented tunic that he was wearing, ²⁴ and they seized him and threw him into the pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. ✓

²⁵ They sat down to their meal. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their camels bearing gum, balm, and ladanum to be taken to Egypt. ²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, "What would we gain by killing our brother and covering up his blood? ²⁷ I say,^g let us sell him to the Ish-

¹ So MT; for the proposed emendation to "Judah," see NOTE.

^g Literally "come."

maelites, but let us not do away with him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh!" His brothers agreed.

28 Meanwhile, Midianite traders passed by, and they pulled Joseph up from the pit. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. Joseph was thus taken to Egypt. 29 When Reuben went back to the pit and saw that Joseph was missing, he rent his clothes 30 and returned to his brothers, exclaiming, "The boy is gone! What am I to do now?"

31 They took Joseph's tunic, slaughtered a kid, and dipped the tunic in its blood. 32 They had the ornamented tunic taken to their father, and they said, "We found this. Make sure whether it is your son's tunic or not." 33 He recognized it, and exclaimed, "My son's tunic! A wild beast devoured him! Joseph fell prey to beasts!"

34 Jacob rent his clothes, put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters tried to console him, but he refused to be consoled, saying, "No, I will go down to Sheol in mourning!" Thus did his father lament him.

36 The Midianites, meanwhile, sold Joseph^h in Egypt to Potiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh, his chief steward.

^h MT "him."

NOTES

xxxvii 2b. *He was assisting*. For this sense of Heb. *na'ar* "attendant," or the like, cf. Exod xxxiii 11.

bad reports. For the same phrase, cf. Num xiv 37.

3. *Israel*. As applied to Jacob (but not in the phrase "children of Israel"), an invariable indication of *J*'s authorship; cf. xxxv 21, and COMMENT *ad loc.*; see also vs. 13.

and he made. Note the circumstantial aspect in Heb. (signified by the use of the perfect).

an ornamented tunic. The traditional "coat of many colors," and the variant "coat with sleeves" are sheer guesses from the context; nor is there anything remarkable about either colors or sleeves. The phrase, Heb. *k'etonet passim*, occurs aside from this section (also vss. 23, 32) only in II Sam xiii 18 f., where it describes a garment worn by daugh-

ters of kings. Cuneiform inventories may shed light on the garment in question. Among various types of clothing listed in the texts, there is one called *kitû* (or *kutinnû*) *pišannu* (cf. JNES 8 [1949], 177). The important thing there, besides the close external correspondence with the Heb. phrase, is that the article so described was a ceremonial robe which could be draped about statues of goddesses, and had various gold ornaments sewed onto it. Some of these ornaments would occasionally come undone and need to be sent to the proper craftsman for repairs, hence the notation in the inventories. If the comparison is valid—and there are several things in its favor—the second element in the Heb. phrase, i.e., *passim*, would be an adaptation of Akk. *pišannu*, a technical term denoting appliqué ornaments on costly vests and bodices.

The last clause is generally attributed to *E* on account of vss. 23, 32 (*E*).

4. *him*. The pronoun is emphasized in Heb. through inversion.

his other sons. So with Sam., LXX, and several Heb. manuscripts, ("other" is implicit in the juxtaposition), against "his brothers" in the text, which was probably copied inadvertently from the beginning of the clause.

5. *One time*. Implicit in the initial *wa-*.

and this made them hate him even more. Literally "and they proceeded to hate him more"; this clause is missing in LXX.

8. *his talk about his dreams*. Literally "his dreams and his words."

10. *to his father*. Heb. adds "and to his brothers," which LXX leaves out, no doubt justifiably, since Joseph had already described his dream to his brothers (vs. 9); by the same token, the added "and to his father" in the LXX version of vs. 9 is equally gratuitous. Joseph apparently reported first to his brothers (9) and then to his father, without realizing how invidious his words might seem; later copyists tried to fill in imaginary lacunae, to the detriment of the original account.

11. *pondered*. Literally "guarded" (i.e., in his mind). Jacob knew enough to realize, on second thought, that dreams should not be discounted offhand.

13. *Look*. Heb. *h'ôlô'* "is it not?" which is merely another way of saying *hinnē* "here, behold."

14. *I am ready*. Heb. *hinnēnī*, literally "here I am," for which cf. xxii 1, NOTE. A mechanical translation would be particularly pointless in this sequence.

17. *Dothan*. Modern Tell Dothan, about a day's journey north of Shechem.

18. *conspired*. Literally "sought/weighed clever schemes."

20. *Why don't we kill him*. Literally "come, let us kill him."

pits. Primarily, water holes or cisterns.

21. Most moderns would change Reuben in this verse to Judah, on the assumption that the next verse would otherwise be a duplicate; the change to Judah, would certify the present verse as *J*'s, so that the redundancy would actually be due to two separate sources. The reasoning, however, is by no means cogent. It calls for an emendation for which there is no encouragement from any of the ancient versions. What is more, the alleged duplication vanishes once the Heb. imperfect is understood in a conative sense, i.e., "he tried, attempted to save him"; for the related inchoative aspect of the Heb. verb, cf. xxxv 16 f. On this basis, both vss. 21 and 22 go naturally together; accordingly, both may be attributed to the same source, in this case *E*. Judah's independent effort (according to *J*) is dealt with in vss. 26-27.

22. *his purpose being*. Literally "in order that," which introduces the author's comment.

25. *Ishmaelites*. The traders in question according to *J*; also vs. 27 f.; Joseph's protector is now Judah.

For a discussion of the goods which the Ishmaelites were transporting to Egypt, cf. the monograph by J. Vergote, *Joseph en Egypte*, 1959, pp. 10 ff.; this study will be cited henceforward as "Vergote"; see also J. M. A. Janssen, *Ex Oriente Lux* 14 (1955-56), 63-72.

27. *I say*. Literally "come," with the auxiliary connotation that this stem shares with the Heb. verb "to rise."

let us not do away with him. Literally "let us not lay (our) hands on him"; but such a translation would be misleading inasmuch as the brothers had to take Joseph by force in order to throw him down the cistern.

28. The first part of this verse is manifestly from another source (*E*) which knew nothing about the Ishmaelite traders. It speaks of Midianites who pulled the boy up from the pit, without being seen by the brothers, and then sold him in Egypt into slavery. This is why Reuben was so surprised to find that Joseph was gone. The sale to the Ishmaelites, on the other hand (28b: *J*), had been agreed upon by all the brothers (27: *J*), so that Reuben would have no reason to look for the boy in the pit, let alone be upset because he did not find him there. This single verse alone provides a good basis for a constructive documentary analysis of the Pentateuch; it goes a long way, moreover, to demonstrate that *E* was not just a supplement to *J*, but an independent and often conflicting source; cf. pp. xxii ff.

34. *Jacob*. A reliable witness of *E*; contrast vss. 3, 13.

36. *Potiphar*. An Egyptian personal name, "One whom (the god) Re has granted."

courtier. Literally "eunuch."

chief steward. Literally "chief/master of the cooks," a royal post

which was probably as far removed from its original connotation as, say, "Lord Chamberlain." For a possible Eg. prototype, cf. Vergote, pp. 31 ff. The title, Heb. *sar haṭṭabbāḥim*, should not be confused with the analogous *rab haṭṭabbāḥim* (II Kings xxv 8 ff.; Jer xxxix 9 ff., etc.), approximately "captain of the guard," but reflecting a non-Egyptian office.

COMMENT

The last major division of Genesis concentrates with but a few exceptions (notably xxxviii) on the eventful story of Joseph. It is at once the most intricately constructed and the best integrated of all the patriarchal histories. For sustained dramatic effect the narrative is unsurpassed in the whole Pentateuch. The theme is essentially personal and secular. Other aspects, to be sure, are in evidence here and there, yet they are never allowed to distract attention from the central human drama.

In retrospect, of course, the story of Joseph was seen as a link in a divinely ordained course of human history. But while the writing is by no means oblivious of this approach, the theological component has been kept discreetly in the background. And the ultimate historical framework is understated to such a degree that the related data on the Sojourn in Egypt and the eventual Exodus are to this day beset by uncertainties. What has come down is a richly personal document, which accounts no doubt for its great appeal.

An achievement of such literary excellence should be, one would naturally expect, the work of a single author. Yet such is definitely not the case. While *P*'s part in the story of Joseph is secondary and marginal, *J* and *E* are prominently represented throughout, each in his own distinctive way. The casual reader is hardly aware that he has a composite story before him; and even the trained analyst is sometimes baffled when it comes to separating the parallel accounts. All of which points up the skillful and unobtrusive achievement of the compiler or redactor. For the most part he was content to take substantial portions from each source and arrange them consecutively. Only on rare occasions did he find it necessary to intertwine the two narratives. The present section is a case in point; it is also

a parade example of the problems involved in documentary detection of this kind, as well as the benefits which may lie in store.

In this particular instance we lack the immediate external evidence from references to the Deity, since neither Yahweh nor Elohim happens to occur in the chapter before us. Nor can much be made of the motif of dreams, prominent though it is here. For while it is true that dreams play a significant part in the *E* narrative (cf. chs. xx, xxviii, xxxi), they help to identify the source only when used as a medium of contact between God and man. This time, however, no such message is as yet involved. Joseph's two dreams are a factor in the relations between him and his brothers; as such, they would not be ignored by any good writer, certainly not by *J*.

We do get, however, for a start, a valuable hint from another quarter. Joseph's father is called Israel in vss. 3 and 13, but Jacob in 34. Elsewhere in the Joseph story, Israel can be traced confidently to *J* (also in xxxv 21), and Jacob to *E* (and *P*). Thus *J*'s hand is apparent in the first part of the chapter, and *E*'s toward the end; but the middle portion is chaotic at first glance.

It goes without saying that external evidence from personal names or typical motifs is valid only to the extent to which it accords with the internal evidence of the content as a whole. The work of a competent writer surely presupposes an inner consistency of theme and details. Yet vss. 21-30, as they now read, are marked by inconsistency, duplication, and discrepancies. First Reuben, in the hope of saving Joseph later on, persuades his brothers not to kill him but throw him instead into an empty cistern, which they do (21-24). Then Judah, who is also intent on sparing Joseph's life, prevails on his brothers to sell the boy to a passing caravan of Ishmaelite traders, which they do likewise (25-27). Meanwhile, Midianite traders turn up who, unnoticed by the brothers, discover Joseph in the pit, pull him out, and take him with them to Egypt—where he is eventually sold to Potiphar; the discovery takes place at the same time that the same boy is bought by the Ishmaelites at the low slave rate of twenty shekels (28). Small wonder that Reuben, who knows nothing about the sale, is shocked at not finding his brother in the cistern (29-30).

All this confusion is dissipated automatically once the narrative is broken up into two originally independent versions. One of these (*J*) used the name Israel, featured Judah as Joseph's protector,

and identified the Ishmaelites as the traders who bought Joseph from his brothers. The other (*E*) spoke of Jacob as the father and named Reuben as Joseph's friend; the slave traders in that version were Midianites who discovered Joseph by accident and sold him in Egypt to Potiphar. Each source is entirely self-consistent thus far, and goes on to build on its own set of data, which hold up meaningfully as the story unfolds. Indeed, each version gains in significance and impact when viewed as a unit unto itself.

For all the existing differences in detail, sight should not be lost of the prevailing similarities. In both versions Joseph is his father's favorite and is bitterly resented by his brothers; he can count on only one friend among them; eventually he falls into the hands of nomadic traders who sell him into slavery in Egypt. Without this common core there would be no story of Joseph in Egypt. The divergencies must be due to the fact that tradition had seized on the subject matter long before it was committed to writing, so that there was ample time for the details to develop differently, and to fall into slightly varying patterns during the process of oral transmission. Today, the documentary distribution may not be clear in every given instance (cf., for example, the NOTE on vs. 21). But the main contours would seem to be assured.

Lastly, it may be in order to return, in passing, to the question about the ultimate compiler's approach to his task. A verse like 28 could hardly have been regarded as satisfactory by a conscientious redactor. It was impossible to ignore the discrepancy between the Midianites and the Ishmaelites in two adjoining clauses. The omission of either one would have eased the problem considerably; yet the remedy was not applied. Undoubtedly it could not be because no such editorial license was permissible. *R* could still rearrange the material in *J* and *E* into a connected text, but he was not free to suppress any statement in either source. The remarkable thing is that the whole still appears to be deceptively smooth, after so much legitimate scrutiny by modern critics.

50. JUDAH AND TAMAR
(xxxviii 1-30: J)

XXXVIII ¹At about that time, Judah parted from his brothers and put in with a certain Adullamite named Hirah. ²There Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua, and he married her and cohabited with her. ³She conceived and bore a son, ^a“who was named” Er. ⁴She conceived again and bore a son, whom she named Onan. ⁵Then she bore still another son, whom she named Shelah; they were^b at Chezib when she bore him.

⁶Judah got a wife for his first-born Er, and her name was Tamar. ⁷But Er, Judah’s first-born, displeased Yahweh, and Yahweh took his life. ⁸Then Judah said to Onan, “Unite with your brother’s widow,^c fulfilling the duty of a brother-in-law, and thus maintain your brother’s line.” ⁹But Onan, knowing that the seed would not count as his, let it go to waste on the ground every time that he cohabited with his brother’s widow, so as not to contribute offspring for his brother. ¹⁰What he did displeased Yahweh, and he took his life too. ¹¹Whereupon Judah said to his daughter-in-law, “Stay as widow in your father’s house until my son Shelah grows up”—for he feared that this one also might die like his brothers. So Tamar went to live in her father’s house.

¹²A long time afterward, Judah’s wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When the period of sorrow was over, Judah went to Timnah for the shearing^d of his sheep, in the company of his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³When Tamar was told, “Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah for the sheep-shearing,”

^{a-a} MT “he named him,” but see NOTE.

^b MT “he was”; LXX “she was”; cf. NOTE.

^c Literally “wife.”

^d Literally “upon the shearers.”

¹⁴ she took off her widow's garb, wrapped a veil about her to disguise herself, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah; for she saw that, although Shelah was grown up, she had not been given to him in marriage. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he took her for a harlot, since she had covered her face. ¹⁶ So he turned aside to her by the roadside, and said, "See now, let me lie with you"—not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law. She answered, "What will you pay me for lying with me?" ¹⁷ He replied, "I will send you a kid from my flock." But she answered, "You will have to leave a pledge until such time as you send it." ¹⁸ He asked, "What pledge shall I leave you?" She answered, "Your seal-and-cord, and the staff you carry." So he gave them to her, and lay with her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹ She left soon, took off her veil, and resumed her widow's garb.

²⁰ Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite to redeem the pledge from the woman, but he could not find her. ²¹ He inquired of the men of that place, "Where is the votary, the one by the Enaim road?" They answered, "There has never been here a votary!" ²² So he went back to Judah and said to him, "I couldn't find her. What is more, the townspeople told me, 'There has never been here a votary.'" ²³ And Judah replied, "Let her keep the things, or we shall become a laughingstock. I did my part in sending her the kid, but you never found her."

²⁴ About three months later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; moreover, she is with child from harlotry." "Bring her out," Judah shouted, "and she shall be burned!" ²⁵ As they were taking her out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "It is by the man to whom these things belong that I am with child. Please verify," she said, "to whom these things belong—the seal-and-cord and the staff!" ²⁶ Judah recognized them, and said, "She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." Nor was he intimate with her again.

²⁷ When it was time for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb! ²⁸ While she was being delivered, one put out his hand, and the midwife tied a crimson thread on his hand, to

signify: this one came out first. ²⁹ But just then he drew back his hand, and out came his brother; and she said, "What a breach^e you have opened for yourself!" So he was named Perez. ³⁰ Then his brother came out, with the crimson thread on his hand. So they named him Zerah.^f

^e Heb. *peres*.

^f Perhaps "brightness," alluding to the crimson band.

NOTES

xxxviii 1. *At about that time*. Literally "at that time," which in this context would amount to "at the precise time that Joseph was being sold to Potiphar." But the Heb. phrase is formulaic and just as general as the corresponding Akk. *ina ūmišu* "on his/that day, then."

parted from. Heb. "went down from," namely, from the hill country.

put in with. Literally "turned aside next to."

2. *met*. Literally "saw."

3. *who was named*. The corresponding Heb. has masculine singular, which is often used impersonally (as in 29 f.). But Sam., TJ, and some Heb. manuscripts have the feminine, the same as Heb. in vss. 4 and 5, no doubt correctly. The translation is neutral.

5. *Chezib*. Probably the same as Achzib, Josh xv 44; Mic i 14.

7. *displeased*. Literally "was bad in the sight of." The nature of the offense is not specified here, unlike vs. 10.

8. *widow*. Heb. uses "wife," namely, "your (dead) brother's," but such ambiguity is less acceptable in translation; in vss. 14, 19 Heb. employs the abstract noun "widowhood," in speaking of a widow's garb.

fulfilling the duty of a brother-in-law. Heb. literally "levirate her." The institution of levirate, whereby a man married his brother's childless widow in order to provide continuity for the line of the deceased, is an alternative to adoption; cf. JBL 79 (1960), 161 f. The requirement was later relaxed, cf. Deut xxv 5 ff.

line. Literally "seed"; the same noun, Heb. *zera'*, is used in the next verse both in its literal sense and in the secondary sense of "offspring."

11. *Stay*. The cons. text *šby* can be vocalized to yield either "return" (cf. Lev xxii 13) or with tradition, "stay, dwell"; but no repositing appears necessary in this instance.

12. *A long time afterward*. Literally "days/years multiplied, and."

When the period of sorrow was over. Literally "when he had been consoled," when the time for mourning and condolence was past.

for the shearing. The Heb. noun is vocalized as "shearers"; but cf. the infinitive in vs. 13. If the text is retained, the translation should read "to (supervise his) shearers," or the like; the original may have used an abstract plural.

14. *to disguise.* Literally "she covered up"; cf. vs. 15.

the entrance to Enaim. TO, Syr., and Vulg. understand this as the road juncture of/for Enaim. The place is probably the same as Enam in Josh xv 34 (in the Shephelah).

16. The circumlocution for sexual intercourse which Heb. employs here (literally "to go in to"; see NOTE on vi 4) was chosen no doubt as a matter of tact. The phrase has been shaded in the translation of the various passages, depending on the context.

17. *from my flock.* The definite article of Heb. often has the force of the personal pronoun in English, and vice versa; see vs. 21.

pledge. Heb. *ṣrābōn*. A loanword from Akkadian, which is also found in Greek.

18. *seal-and-cord.* The two nouns of Heb. must represent a hendiadys, something like "the seal on the cord" (cf. also the plural form of the second noun in vs. 25, approximately "cording"), for the following reasons. The items named by Tamar were not chosen for their intrinsic value but for purposes of personal identification, as is made clear by vs. 25; when produced in due time, they must allow of no doubt as to their owner. The cylinder seal was such an object above all else; it served as the religious and legal surrogate for the person who wore it, and its impression on a document signalized the wearer's readiness to accept all consequences in the event of non-compliance, through sympathetic magic among other things (like sticking pins in a doll). The possessor of such a seal was thereby marked as a responsible person; and, as Herodotus reminds us, no Babylonian of any standing would ever be seen without one. The use of the cylinder seal spread from Mesopotamia throughout the Near East, and even to Crete; and many specimens have turned up in Palestine. While the stamp seal fulfilled a similar function, its use was limited in time and space; moreover, the term for the latter would be *ṣabba'at* (xli 42), not *hōtām* as here. Now all cylinder seals were perforated vertically for suspension, so that the seal and the cord or chain on which it was worn became a unit. A cord by itself would be a worthless thing, and meaningless in the present context. Incidentally, the inclusion of the cord is further proof that no signet ring was involved.

the staff. Necessarily, another distinctive means of identification. Cuneiform records of the Old Babylonian period often mention the *bukānum*, an object which looked like a pestle and which changed hands to symbolize the conclusion of certain types of transaction. Whether Judah's

staff was comparable cannot be determined. In any case, Tamar knew exactly what she was doing in telling Judah what she wanted from him as a pledge.

19. *soon*. Literally "she arose," as an auxiliary verb; cf. xxxi 21.

21. *that place*. Literally "her place"; cf. vs. 17.

votary. Ancient Near Eastern society, notably in Mesopotamia, recognized various classes of temple women other than priestesses, who were employed for services connected with the cult. We know now that they had to be virgins in order to qualify (HSS XIV [1950], No. 106, line 31); any subsequent promiscuity was ritually conditioned. One of these classes was the *qadištu*, a cognate of Heb. *q^odēšā* (vs. 21). There is no indication that they were socially ostracized, although their status was inferior to that of married women. It is obvious that the *q^odēšā* was not the same as the *zōnā* (vss. 15, 24; cf. xxxiv 31).

25. *As they were taking her out*. Passive in Heb.

28. *a crimson thread*. Literally "some crimson" (indefinite).

29 f. For the clans of Perez and Zerah, cf. I Chron ii. The aetiologies are, as usual, symbolic retrojections in which the correct etymology is immaterial.

COMMENT

The narrative is a completely independent unit. It has no connection with the drama of Joseph, which it interrupts at the conclusion of Act I. Judah, we are informed, has left his kin and moved to Adullam, in the Canaanite lowlands to the west (cf. Josh xv 35). There he marries a Canaanite woman and has three sons by her, all of whom reach manhood in the course of that stay. Yet no such prolonged interval is indicated when the story of Joseph resumes. Judah is then still a member of Jacob's household (the genealogical notice in xlvi 12 is an insert from *P*).

It is especially interesting that this narrative should stem from *J* (cf. vss. 7, 10), precisely because *J* also has a substantial stake in the Joseph story. Once again it becomes self-evident that the narrators acted in the main as custodians of diverse traditions which they did not attempt to co-ordinate and harmonize when the respective data appeared to be in conflict. The history of Judah was significant in its own right, and it was not to be tampered with, let alone ignored. The place of the present account was chosen with keen literary sensitivity. To his family, Joseph had disappeared

from view—forever, as far as they knew. From the viewpoint of the reader, moreover, the ill-treated boy is in temporary eclipse. What better place, then, to take up the slack with a different story, one that covers many years?

Because of the eventual pre-eminence of the tribe of Judah, the personalized history of that branch was of obvious interest to tradition. Through the period of Judges and down to the time of David, Judah expanded by absorbing various Canaanite elements. This beginning of that composite history is here intimated by Judah's settlement among Canaanites and his acquisition of a Canaanite wife. His line, however, is in danger of extinction; but a daughter-in-law by the name of Tamar, apparently another Canaanite, takes heroic measures and triumphs in the end. In resolutely following the intent of the law, by unorthodox and hazardous means, Tamar thus takes her place alongside Rachel (xxxix 19). She had the stuff, it was felt, to be the mother of a virile clan, which is clearly the main theme of the story.

What brings this theme into bold relief is the institution of the levirate marriage, that is, marriage with the wife of a deceased brother (or another relative in special circumstances). The objective was to maintain the family line in a society that set great store by blood ties, and consequently had little use for adoption (see JBL 79 [1960], 161 f.). Biblical law upholds this obligation and frowns on any attempt to circumvent it (cf. Deut xxv 5 ff.; Ruth iii f.).

Judah sought to live up to this practice, yet shrank from risking the life of his last surviving son. When Tamar became convinced that her father-in-law was temporizing, she tricked him into leaving her with child, by waylaying him in the disguise of a harlot. But she had the presence of mind to secure positive proof of her mate's identity (see NOTE on vs. 18). Here *J* adds a subtle human touch. Judah mistakes Tamar for a common harlot (Heb. *zōnā*, vs. 15), just as he was meant to do. But when his friend Hirah seeks to redeem the pledge, he asks for the local *q'āḏēšā* (votary, hierodule, cult prostitute), in order to place the affair on a higher social level.

At the critical moment, Judah finds out that Tamar was no wanton, and absolves her of any guilt in the matter. She rewards him for his candor and understanding by presenting him with twins. An aetiological notice about the boys' names brings the unique tale to a close.

51. THE TEMPTATION OF JOSEPH

(xxxix 1-23: J)

XXXIX ¹ When Joseph was taken to Egypt, a certain Egyptian—Potiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh and his chief steward—bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there. ² But since Yahweh was with Joseph, he did very well, and was assigned to his Egyptian master's household. ³ And when his master saw that Yahweh was with him, and that Yahweh lent success to everything that he undertook, ⁴ he took a fancy to Joseph and made him his personal attendant; he also put him in charge of his household and entrusted to him all his possessions. ⁵ And from the moment that he had put him in charge of his household and all his possessions, Yahweh blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph's sake; indeed, Yahweh's blessing was on everything he owned, inside and outside. ⁶ And everything he owned was left in Joseph's charge; with him there, the other gave no thought to anything, except the food that he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome of figure and features. ⁷ After some time, his master's wife fixed her eye on Joseph, and said, "Sleep with me." ⁸ He refused. "Look," he told his master's wife, "with me here, my master gives no thought to anything in this house, having entrusted to me all his possessions. ⁹ He wields no more authority in this house than I, and he has withheld from me nothing except yourself, for you are his wife. How then could I commit so great a wrong, to stand condemned before God?" ¹⁰ And much as she cajoled him day after day, he would not agree to lie down beside her "or stay with her."

¹¹ One such day, when he came into the house to do his work,

⊖ LXX omits.

and none of the house servants were there inside, ¹² she caught hold of him by his coat and said, "Sleep with me!" He got away and escaped outside, leaving his coat in her hand. ¹³ When she saw that he had left his coat in her hand as he fled outside, ¹⁴ she called out to her house servants and said to them, "Look, he had to bring us a Hebrew fellow to make love to us! He broke in on me to sleep with me, but I screamed as loud as I could! ¹⁵ When he heard me screaming for help, he left his coat near me and fled outside."

¹⁶ She kept the coat by her until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him the same story: "The Hebrew slave whom you brought to us only to make love to me broke in on me. ¹⁸ But when I screamed for help, he left his coat near me and fled outside."

¹⁹ When his master heard the story that his wife told him, namely, "Thus and so did your slave do to me," he was enraged. ²⁰ So Joseph's master took him and threw him into the jail where the crown's prisoners were confined. But even while he was in that jail, ²¹ Yahweh remained with Joseph; he extended kindness to him and disposed the chief jailer favorably toward him. ²² The chief jailer put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in that jail; and whatever had to be done there, was done through him. ²³ Since Yahweh was with him, the chief jailer did not himself supervise anything in his charge whatsoever. And whatever he undertook, Yahweh made prosper.

NOTES

xxxix 1. The words between dashes are a redactorial gloss carried over from xxxvii 36 (E), the last previous verse in the Joseph narrative. Throughout the rest of the chapter, Joseph's master is never referred to by name, but only as "the Egyptian" or "the master."

2. *he did very well*. Literally "he was a man who succeeded." The Hiphil stem *hšlh* is used in this narrative both as intransitive and as transitive (cf. vss. 3, 23).

was assigned to . . . his household. Literally "he was in the house," as opposed to having to toil in the fields.

4. *he took a fancy to Joseph*. Another variation on the theme of "to find favor in one's eyes."

made him his personal attendant. Literally "he ministered to him" (intransitive); the transitive rendering is required in English for clarity.

6. *except the food that he ate*. Possibly an allusion to Egyptian dietary taboos (von Rad); cf. xliii 32.

handsome of figure and features. Same phrase as in xxix 17, but differently translated there because it was used of a woman.

7. *fixed her eye on*. Literally "raised her eyes at/to." The identical idiom is used in Akkadian to describe Ishtar's designs on Gilgamesh (Gilg., Tablet VI, line 6). Yet a literal rendering would be misleading since the Heb. phrase can also denote trustfulness (Ezek xxxiii 25) or prayerful appeal (Ps cxxiii 1 f.).

9. *God*. Not Yahweh this time, because Joseph is speaking to an Egyptian.

10. *cajoled*. Literally "spoke to."

The last clause is not given in one MS of LXX, and may well be a late gloss.

14. *He had to bring us a Hebrew fellow*. The nuance "he had to" is dictated by the sarcastic purpose of the exclamation. Instead of 'îš "man, fellow," it is preferable to read 'îšî "my husband" (same cons.), because the sequel (vs. 17) speaks of a "Hebrew slave," which is far more suitable (Ehrl.). In that case, the translation would read "My husband had to import a Hebrew [slave] . . . !"

The term "Hebrew" (see NOTE on xiv 13) is applied to Israelites when they speak of themselves to outsiders, or when outsiders refer to them; cf. vs. 17, xl 15, xli 12, xliii 32. It was clearly the more general and widespread designation.

to make love. For this nuance, cf. xxvi 8 (also *J*, but with a different preposition); the possible alternative "to toy with us" is not favored by the context.

to us. That is, Egyptians, who looked down on foreigners such as Hebrews.

15. *screaming for help*. Literally "that I raised my voice and called"; also vs. 18.

20. *jail*. Heb. *bēt hassohar*; cf. Vergote, pp. 25 ff.

COMMENT

The story of Joseph is now resumed with a dramatic episode from *J*'s version; note the mention of Yahweh in vss. 2, 3, 5, 21, 23, and the reference to Ishmaelites in vs. 1. After Judah had prevailed on his brothers to sell the boy to nomad traders rather than take his life (xxxvii 26–27, 28b), the Ishmaelites disposed of him in Egypt to one of Pharaoh's officials. Fortune smiled on the handsome youth until his master's wife became aware of his charms and tried to seduce him. Spurned, she got her revenge by accusing Joseph of attempted rape, offering as proof the coat that Joseph had left in her hand as he fled from the scene. The master had him jailed, but the jailer was soon won over by Joseph, as his owner had been before him.

The name of Joseph's master is given in vs. 1b as Potiphar. But this accords ill with the appended "a certain Egyptian." Besides, there is no mention of the name in the rest of the narrative, where the man is described anonymously as "the master" (vss. 3, 7, 19, 20). Potiphar, on the other hand, is cited in the "Midianite" or *E*'s version (xxvii 36), only one verse above the intrusive episode about Tamar. There can thus be no doubt about the secondary origin of this particular clause.

The motif of a faithless wife who turned on the young man who had spurned her was well known to the Egyptians from "The Tale of the Two Brothers" (now available in J. A. Wilson's candid translation, ANET, pp. 23–25). Whether this circumstance can be invoked to explain the surprisingly mild punishment of Joseph—in that other such accusers were ultimately exposed and the accused vindicated—it is now impossible to decide. Speculations on this subject are natural—but inconclusive. Nor should one overlook the simple point that if Joseph had been subjected to the fate that the ancient Near East normally reserved for such moral offenses—real or presumed—the Joseph story itself would have died an untimely death.

52. JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE DREAMS OF
PHARAOH'S SERVANTS
(xl 1-23: E)

XL ¹ Some time afterwards, the Cup-bearer and the Baker of the king of Egypt gave offense to their lord, the king of Egypt. ² Pharaoh was angry with his two courtiers, the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker, ³ and he put them in custody in the house of the chief steward—the same jail where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The chief steward assigned Joseph to wait on them.

After they had been in custody for some time, ⁵ both the Cup-bearer and the Baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in that jail, had dreams the same night, each dream having its own meaning. ⁶ When Joseph came to them in the morning, he noticed that they were dejected. ⁷ So he inquired of Pharaoh's courtiers, who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are you so downcast today?" ⁸ They answered him, "We had dreams, and there is nobody to interpret them." Joseph said to them, "Surely, interpretations come from God. Tell me about them."

⁹ Then the chief cup-bearer told his dream to Joseph. "In my dream," he said to Joseph, "there was a vine in front of me, ¹⁰ and on that vine were three branches. It had barely budded, when out came its blossoms, and its clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; so I took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

¹² Joseph said to him, "This is what it means: The three branches are three days: ¹³ within three days, Pharaoh will pardon^a you and restore you to your post, and you will be handing

^a Literally "lift your head"; cf. vss. 19, 20, also xxxii 21, and see COMMENT.

the cup to Pharaoh as was your former practice when you were his Cup-bearer. ¹⁴ So if you still remember that I was here with you, when all is well with you again, please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh and try to free me from this place. ¹⁵ For I was in fact kidnaped from the land of the Hebrews; nor have I done anything here that they should have put me in a dungeon."

¹⁶ When the chief baker saw how well he had interpreted, he said to Joseph, "As regards my dream, there were three wicker baskets on my head. ¹⁷ In the uppermost basket were all kinds of pastries that a baker makes; and birds were picking at them out of the basket over my head. ¹⁸ Joseph said to him in reply, "This is what it means: the three baskets are three days: ¹⁹ within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and have you impaled on a pole, and birds will be picking off your flesh."

²⁰ And indeed, on the third day, when Pharaoh gave a banquet for all servants—for it was his birthday—he ^b singled out^b the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker from among his servants. ²¹ He restored the chief cup-bearer to his cup-bearing, so that he again placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; ²² but the chief baker he had impaled—just as Joseph had indicated to them.

²³ Yet the chief cup-bearer gave no thought to Joseph; he had forgotten him.

^{b-b} Literally, "lifted the head of."

NOTES

x1 1. *Cup-bearer . . . Baker.* Since these are titles of Pharaoh's officials which alternate with "chief cup-bearer, chief baker," they have been marked by capital letters.

gave offense. Literally "proved to be at fault." Traditional "sinned" is inappropriate, particularly in a secular context.

3. *house.* There is no indication whether the building was private or public.

The second clause refers back to xxxix 20 (*J*). Actually Joseph was not Potiphar's prisoner but his duly acquired slave (xxxvii 36), and as such was assigned by his master to wait on the incarcerated courtiers.

In vs. 15 the noun translated "dungeon" is the same that was rendered "pit" in xxxvii 28a; the whole clause was apparently inspired by that passage, which also records the kidnaping by the Midianites. It is possible, therefore, that vss. 3b, 15b, and also xxxix 20b, are to be regarded as cross references inserted by the compiler.

5. On the general subject of dreams, see E. L. Ehrlich, *Der Traum im Alten Testament*, 1953, and A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East*, 1956.

14. This is an intricately construed sentence, but it yields good Hebrew and excellent sense. The apodosis begins with "please do me the kindness" (Ehrl.). In the protasis, Heb. has literally "if you remember me with you," that is, if you can still recall this occasion, when I was with you.

16. *wicker*. This interpretation of Heb. *hōri* is favored by Arabic; see also Rashi and Ehrl. Such baskets would permit birds to peck at the pastries from the sides as well as the top.

19. *impaled*. Not "hanged"; aside from other evidence, a beheaded man is not for hanging; also vs. 22.

20. *singled out*. Cf. BASOR 149 (1958), 17 ff. On the triple use of *nš' r's* in this chapter, see COMMENT.

COMMENT

The story of Joseph reached both *J* and *E* in essentially the same outline, but with marked variations in detail. This is why episodes that are really parallel could be construed by the compiler as separate and consecutive, since outward signs of duplications (as in xxxvii 28) are relatively infrequent. On closer probing, however, discrepancies become apparent at every stage, thus helping to distinguish the two separate strands in the narrative.

The whole of ch. xxxix (if one disregards an occasional cross reference) could be safely assigned to *J*. In the present section, on the other hand (as in much of the following), *E*'s authorship is equally assured. One cannot but be struck immediately by the sudden cessation of all references to Yahweh, as against seven such instances within the brief space of the preceding section alone. On the positive side, there is the mention of Elohim in vs. 8; what is more, the passage in question deals with dreams, not merely as a curious experience (such as in xxxvii) but as a prediction of imminent events. The emphasis on the kidnaping (vs. 15), moreover,

points back to *E*'s statement about the Midianites who made off with Joseph and sold him to Potiphar (xxxvii 28a, 36). *J*, it will be recalled, had no record of any such thing; in his version, Joseph was sold by his brothers to itinerant Ishmaelites. Incidentally, the pertinent Heb. verb *gnb* is elsewhere used by *E* in a number of shadings and with telling effect (see NOTE on xxxi 19).

Since chs. xxxix and xl thus had different authors, it is not surprising that their accounts of Joseph as prisoner are at variance. *J*'s version had the Hebrew youth advance to the position of unofficial head of the jail (xxxix 22 f.). On the other hand, when we rejoin Joseph with *E* as our guide, he is a hapless stranger who was "kidnaped from the land of the Hebrews" and is now a servant of Egyptian prisoners. In other words, the present chapter is the direct sequel to xxxvii 36, and shows no awareness of *J*'s account in xxxix.

The central theme at this juncture is Joseph's way with dreams. As a gifted interpreter, he has the knack, shared by many oracular mediums, of couching his pronouncements in evocative terms. The key phrase this time is *ns' rš*, literally "to lift the head." It has several widely deviating connotations, and Joseph—or *E*—plays on these with great skill. One of the meanings is to lift up the head of one who is depressed, mentally or socially, hence "to comfort, pardon"; this nuance is pressed into service in vs. 13. Another sense is grimly literal, namely, "to lift off the head, behead," and this is used in vs. 19. Still another idiomatic usage is "to poll, take the census of, give minute attention to," and the like, exactly as with the corresponding Akk. *rēšam našām* (BASOR 149 [1958], 17 ff.); cf. Num i ff., where the repeated use of this idiom has supplied the very name of the Book of Numbers. Joseph takes full advantage of this aspect in vs. 20.

The author succeeds thus in making a single phrase symbolize an entire episode: Pharaoh will *review* the cases of his two disgraced appointees, *pardon* the Cup-bearer, but *behead* the Baker. Any one of these distinctive uses might apply to Joseph himself. But the writer is not ready as yet to tip his hand. Good storyteller that he is, *E* knows how to maintain suspense. Restored to grace, the cup-bearer promptly forgets the slave for whom he was to intercede with Pharaoh.

53. WHAT DREAMS DID FOR JOSEPH

(xli 1-57: E,^a except 46a: /P/)

XLI 1 After a lapse of two years, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing beside the Nile, 2 when out of the Nile came up seven cows, handsome and sturdy, and grazed in the reed grass. 3 But right behind them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood on the bank of the Nile beside the others. 4 And the ugly gaunt cows ate up the seven handsome sturdy cows. Then Pharaoh awoke.

5 He went back to sleep and dreamed a second time: Seven ears of grain, solid and healthy, grew on a single stalk. 6 But close behind them sprouted seven other ears, thin and scorched by the east wind. 7 And the seven thin ears swallowed up the seven solid and full ears. Then Pharaoh woke up: it had been a dream!

8 Next morning, his spirit agitated, he sent for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh recounted his dreams to them, but none could interpret them for Pharaoh. 9 Then the chief cup-bearer addressed Pharaoh; "I must make confession of my remissness at this time. 10 Once, when Pharaoh was angry with his servants, he placed me in custody in the house of the chief steward—me and the chief baker. 11 We both had dreams the same night, he and I; each of us had a dream with a meaning of its own. 12 A Hebrew youth was there with us, a servant of the chief steward; and when we told him our dreams, he interpreted them for us, telling each the meaning of his own dream. 13 And just as he told us, so it turned out: I was restored to my post, but the other was impaled."

^a For a few suspected glosses see NOTES.

¹⁴ Pharaoh sent immediately for Joseph, who was rushed from the dungeon. He cut his hair, put on fresh clothes, and appeared before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had dreams that nobody can explain. But I have heard it said of you that you can interpret a dream the instant you hear it." ¹⁶ "Not I," Joseph replied to Pharaoh. "God will give Pharaoh the right answer."

¹⁷ Pharaoh then said to Joseph, "In my dream, I was standing on the bank of the Nile, ¹⁸ when out of the Nile came up seven sturdy and well-formed cows and grazed in the reed grass. ¹⁹ But right behind them followed seven other cows, scrawny, exceedingly ill-formed, and emaciated—never have I seen their likes for ugliness in all the land of Egypt! ²⁰ And the seven lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven sturdy cows. ²¹ Yet when they consumed them, no one could tell that they had consumed them, for they looked just as bad as before. Then I awoke. ²² In my other dream, I saw seven ears of grain, solid and healthy, growing from a single stalk. ²³ But close behind them sprouted seven other ears, shriveled and thin and scorched by the east wind. ²⁴ And the thin ears swallowed up the seven healthy ears! I have spoken to the magicians, but none has given me the answer."

²⁵ Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same: God has thus foretold to Pharaoh what he is about to do ²⁶ The seven healthy cows are seven years, and the seven healthy ears are seven years; it is the same dream. ²⁷ The seven lean and ugly cows that followed are seven years also, as are the seven empty ears scorched by the east wind; they are seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is just as I have told Pharaoh: God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ Immediately ahead lie seven years of great abundance in all the land of Egypt ³⁰ But these will be followed by seven years of famine, when all the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten. As the land is ravaged by famine, ³¹ no trace will be left in it of the abundance because of the famine thereafter, for it will be most severe. ³² And as for Pharaoh having had the same dream twice, it means that the matter has been reaffirmed by God, and that God will soon bring it about.

³³ "Let Pharaoh, therefore, seek out a man of discernment and wisdom, and place him in charge of the land of Egypt. ³⁴ And let Pharaoh take steps to appoint overseers for the land so as to organize^b the country of Egypt for the seven years of plenty. ³⁵ They shall husband all the food of the good years that lie immediately ahead, and collect the grain by Pharaoh's authority, to be stored in the towns for food. ³⁶ And let that food be a reserve for the country against the seven years of famine that are coming upon the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish in the famine."

³⁷ The whole thing pleased Pharaoh and all his officials. ³⁸ Said Pharaoh to his officials, "Could we find another like him, one so endowed with the divine spirit?" ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there could be none so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people shall submit^c to your orders; I shall outrank you only with respect to the throne. ⁴¹ See," said Pharaoh to Joseph, "I place you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." ⁴² With that, Pharaoh removed the signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand. He then had him dressed in robes of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck. ⁴³ He also had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they shouted "Abrek"^d before him. Thus was he installed over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁴ Pharaoh told Joseph, "Although I am Pharaoh, no one in all the land of Egypt shall move hand or foot without your approval." ⁴⁵ Pharaoh then gave Joseph the name of Zaphenath-paneah,^e and he gave him as wife Asenath daughter of Potiphora, priest of On. And Joseph became known^f throughout the land of Egypt.

✓⁴⁶ Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt.✓

^b See NOTE.

^c Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

^d Perhaps Eg. "Attention!"

^e Probably Eg. "God speaks: he lives."

^f Precise meaning uncertain.

After Joseph left Pharaoh's presence, he traveled throughout the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven years of plenty, when the land produced in overabundance, ⁴⁸ he husbanded the various crops^o of the seven years that the land of Egypt was enjoying, and stored the food in the cities, placing in each city the crops of the fields around it. ⁴⁹ Joseph gathered in grain in very large quantities, like the sands of the sea, until he stopped taking stock, for it was past computing.

⁵⁰ Before the years^a of famine set in, Joseph became the father of two sons, whom Asenath daughter of Poti-phera, priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹ Joseph named the first-born Manasseh, meaning, "God 'has caused me to forget' entirely my hardships and my parental home." ⁵² And the second he named Ephraim, meaning, "God 'has made me fruitful' in the land of my sorrow."

⁵³ The seven years of plenty that the land of Egypt enjoyed came to an end, ⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine set in, just as Joseph had predicted. There was famine in all the countries, but in the land of Egypt there was food. ⁵⁵ And when all of Egypt, too, came to feel the hunger and the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, Pharaoh would tell all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; do whatever he tells you."

⁵⁶ As the famine spread throughout the land, Joseph opened ^kall the stores^k and rationed grain^l to the Egyptians, since the famine in the land of Egypt was becoming severe. ⁵⁷ And all the world came to Joseph in Egypt to obtain rations, for famine had gripped the entire world.

^o Literally "food."

^a Literally "year."

⁴⁻⁴ Heb. *naššani*, connected with Manasseh.

⁵⁻⁵ Heb. *hiprani*, associated with Ephraim.

^{k-k} Literally "what was in them."

^l Supplying *br*; see NOTE.

NOTES

xli 1. *the Nile*. For the underlying Eg. term see T. O. Lambdin, JAOS 73 (1953), 151.

2. *sturdy*. Literally "healthy, robust of flesh."

3. *the others*. Heb. "the cows," i.e., the other cows by juxtaposition.

5. *healthy*. Literally "good(ly)."

8. *magicians*. See Vergote, pp. 80-94; cf. Exod vii 11, 22.

9. *remissness*. Heb. literally "omissions, 'sins,' failings," the plural being used in an abstract sense.

10. *Once*. Implicit in the word order and tense of Heb.

15. *dreams*. This time, singular with collective sense; cf. vs. 8 where the singular noun is construed with plural pronoun. In each instance (also vs. 25) more than one dream is manifestly involved.

27. *empty*. Heb. *rēqōt*, cons. *rqwt*; but Sam., LXX, TO, Syr. show "thin" (cons. *dqwt*), which involves the frequent graphic confusion of R/D. MT may have been influenced by *raqqōt* "lean" in first clause (same cons.). At all events, the sense remains the same.

31. *no trace will be left*. Literally "will not be known."

34. The overseers are regarded by some critics as contrary to the proposal of a single manager in vs. 33; hence they assign 34a to *J* (cf. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte* . . . , p. 31). Yet the task clearly involved a large staff, so that all that the clause implies is that Joseph could pick his own assistants. Had *J* recorded the episode, or had his account been available to *R*, more of it would surely have come through than the few phrases and lines which are alleged to disrupt the flow of *E*'s narrative.

to organize. Traditional "to take a fifth part of" (the land) or alternatively "to divide (the land) into five parts." But a denominative based on "five" is by no means the only possible solution of Heb. *w^eḥimmēš*; and xlvi 24 is not strictly parallel. The very next verse calls for state control over the whole crop. There is, however, a verbal stem *ḥmš*, the passive participle of which means "armed, equipped" in Josh i 14, iv 12; Judg vii 11; cf. also Exod xiii 18; and Arabic employs the identical cognate (Ehrl.). Accordingly, the present occurrence may be safely translated "to organize, regiment," or the like, in complete agreement with attested usage and etymology, not to mention the text.

40. *shall submit to*. Heb. cons. *yšq*, as now pointed (*yiššaq*, preceded by 'al *pīkā*), can only mean "shall kiss you on the mouth." By re-pointing the verb to *yāšoq* (with Ehrl.), we obtain the sense here

indicated. For the same sense with 'al pī, cf. especially Num xxvii 21. If, on the other hand, the meaning of the verb should be something like "be managed," there might be a connection with the noun *mešeq* in xv 2.

42. *signet ring*. Cf. JAOS 73 (1953), 151 and Vergote, pp. 116 ff.; this is not to be confused with the cylinder seal, for which a different noun is employed in xxxviii 18 (see NOTE *ad loc.*).

gold chain. On the royal chain in Egypt see Vergote, pp. 116 ff.

43. *his second-in-command*. For this sense cf. II Chron xxviii 7; not "the second best" (chariot). The Heb. term, like its Akk. analogue *terdennu* (cf. *tartān*, Isa xx 1), is used both as a title and an adjective. Here, however, the title is plainly indicated, for the reference is specifically to the Vizier, who was also the Royal Seal-bearer (42).

Abrek. For a probable Egyptian etymology, see JAOS 73 (1953), 146; contrast, however, Vergote, pp. 135 ff. The alleged "kneel down!" of Heb. origin is morphologically untenable and contrary to the Egyptian background of the episode.

45. *Zaphenath-paneah*. For the underlying Eg. form and meaning, cf. BASOR 140 (1955), 31 and Vergote, pp. 141 ff.

Asenath. Eg. "belonging to (the goddess) Neith"; see Vergote, pp. 148 ff.

Poti-phaera. Eg. "he whom Re gave"; cf. Vergote, pp. 146 ff.; a fuller form of the same name as Potiphar (xxxvii 36), but referring to a different person. The name is of a type common to many languages and applicable to many individuals.

On. Cf. vs. 50 and xlvi 20; also Ezek xxx 17. Gr. Heliopolis, seven miles northeast of modern Cairo.

became known in. Heb. literally "rose over"; in this construction, the verb is attested in the sense of "to spread, become familiar" in Esther i 17, and perhaps Ps lxxxi 6. Accordingly, this clause is not a duplicate of 43c, and need not therefore indicate a different source.

46. The first part of the verse is an unmistakable insert from *P*. According to that source, therefore, Joseph's servitude lasted thirteen years (cf. xxxvii 2).

48. *of the seven years*. Sam. and LXX add "of plenty," which MT gives in vs. 53; the omission was caused by haplography ("seven" and "plenty" share the same letters).

51 f. The aetiological explanations of the names are, as usual, independent of correct etymology.

51. *meaning*. Both in vss. 51 and 52 Heb. *kī* takes the place of "saying"; this is clear proof, if such proof were needed, that the particle is not to be confused with the conjunction *kī* "that," in which case the direct address would be stylistically awkward; cf. iv 25, NOTE.

entirely. The repeated *kol* in vs. 51 is not "all" but comparable to our colloquial "all about"; note the use of the term with "parental home."

56. *all the stores*. Heb. literally "all that was in them" is unmanageable as it stands. Sam. reads an added *br* ("everything in which there was grain"; similarly LXX), and these cons. could have been lost through haplography, in view of the form *wyšbr* which follows. It is virtually certain that the same two cons. dropped out after *wyšbr*. The restored passage (with additions given in square brackets) would thus read: 't kl 'šr bhm [br] wyšbr [br]. The translation here offered presupposes some such text, since a slavish rendering would have been meaningless, and a neutral translation misleading.

rationed. The Heb. stem *šbr* (noun and verb) is used in the Joseph story specifically of countermeasures against hunger (note especially xlii 19). It is not to be confused, therefore, with "grain" (*br*), "bread" (*lhm*), or "food" (*'kl*), but should be interpreted (with Ehrl.) as referring to "(emergency) supplies" and the sale or purchase of such; apparently based on the common verb *šbr* "to break (the fast)."

COMMENT

The section forms an organic unit with the preceding chapter. With all of Pharaoh's experts baffled by his two disquieting dreams, the cup-bearer recalls belatedly the lowly Hebrew youth who did so well by him in similar circumstances. Joseph is rushed to the palace, where he soon attains a position second only to that of Pharaoh himself. His subsequent rise to power exceeds even the extravagant promise of his boyhood visions.

The story that is thus artfully built up is in all essentials a secular account. Yet the very fact that the history of Joseph occupies such a prominent place in the patriarchal narratives is sufficient proof, as was indicated earlier, that the subject matter was viewed as part of a broader spiritual pattern. The factual background is now all but obliterated by the rich literary detail. Yet some intimation of a deeper purpose can be found fairly close to the surface. It is God, the author assures us through Joseph, who causes dreams to serve as guideposts to the future (vs. 16). Thus even the distractions of an unusually exciting story cannot crowd out entirely the recurrent refrain that human destiny is divinely

ordained. By the same token, Joseph's career as a whole is ultimately but a link in a grander design.

Since the two consecutive sections are so closely interrelated, one expects them to derive from the same source; and they do. *E*'s hand could be discerned throughout ch. xl, and the same holds true of the present chapter: it is Elohim, not Yahweh, whom Joseph invokes when he names his two sons, not to mention his address to Pharaoh; the dream motif is more prominent than ever before; and the cast of characters is basically the same as in ch. xl. To be sure, some apparent discrepancies and duplications have been pointed out toward the end of the chapter. But these are by no means as definite as is sometimes alleged. Indeed, in at least two instances (34a, 45c), the problem is one of interpretation rather than parallel documents (cf. NOTES *ad loc.*). Nor can the minor textual irregularities in vs. 56 be ascribed to an intrusive source. All in all, the case for fractional additions from *J* must be said to rest on very flimsy foundations. The statistical comment by *P* in 46a, on the other hand, is beyond serious dispute.

No appreciable progress has been made in the effort to establish the historical setting of the episode, and with it the identity of the Pharaoh "who knew Joseph." A faint hint, but no more than that, may be contained in vs. 39, which has Pharaoh refer to God with obvious reverence. An Egyptian ruler of good native stock would not be likely to do so, since he was himself regarded as a god. When the Pharaoh of the Oppression speaks of Yahweh in Exodus, he does so in defiance, or in extreme straits, but never in sincere submission. The attitude of the present Pharaoh, therefore (barring an oversight on the part of the author), might conceivably suggest that he was not a traditional Egyptian ruler; and such a description would fit best some member of the foreign Hyksos Dynasty (ca. 1730–1570). It has long been assumed on other grounds that the Hyksos age offered the best opportunity for the emergence of someone like Joseph. Nevertheless, the narrative before us furnishes too slender a basis for historical deductions.

On the other hand, the incidental detail is authentically Egyptian. Pharaoh elevates Joseph to the typically Egyptian post of Vizier (43). This is corroborated by the transfer to Joseph of the royal seal (42), inasmuch as the Vizier was known as the "Sealbearer of the King of Lower Egypt" as far back as the third millennium. (Cf. J. A. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, 1951, pp. 81 f.; and for

this and other details, see Vergote, pp. 96 ff.) The gift of the gold chain is another authentic touch. The three names in vs. 45 are Egyptian in type and components; so, too, in all probability, is the escorts' cry "Abrek" (43, see NOTE).

While the story is the main thing, the setting is thus demonstrably factual. And although the theme and the setting together cannot as yet be fitted into an established historical niche, the details are not out of keeping with that phase of Egyptian history which can be independently synchronized with the patriarchal period.

54. THE BROTHERS' FIRST TRIP TO EGYPT

(xlii 1-26, 29-38: *E*^a; 27-28: /J/)

XLII ¹When Jacob saw that there were rations to be had in Egypt, he^b said to his sons, "Why do you keep staring at one another? ²I hear," he went on, "that there are rations in Egypt. Go down there and procure some for us, that we may survive and not die." ³So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to procure grain from Egypt; ⁴it was only Benjamin, Joseph's full-brother, that Jacob did not send with his brothers, for he feared that he might meet with disaster. ⁵Thus the sons of Israel were among the others who came to get rations, for there was famine in the land of Canaan.

⁶Joseph was the regent of the land; it was he who dispensed rations to the entire population. When Joseph's brothers came to him, they bowed low, face to the ground. ⁷Joseph recognized his brothers as soon as he saw them; but he kept his identity from them, and spoke to them sternly. Said he to them, "Where have you come from?" They answered, "From the land of Canaan, to procure food."

⁸Now when Joseph recognized his brothers, while they failed to recognize him, ⁹Joseph was reminded of the dreams that he had dreamed about them. So he said to them, "You are spies. You have only come to look at the land in its nakedness!" ¹⁰"But no, my lord," they said to him, "truly,^c your servants have come to procure food! ¹¹All of us are sons of the same man; we are forthright men; your servants have never spied!"

^a See NOTES for details.

^b Heb. "Jacob."

^c Heb. *wa-*.

12 But he answered them, "Yes, you have come to look at the land in its nakedness."

13 They persisted, "We your servants were twelve brothers, sons of the same man in the land of Canaan; but the youngest is just now with our father, and another one is gone." 14 But Joseph answered them, "It is just as I told you: you are spies. 15 This is how you shall be put to the test: unless your youngest brother comes here, I swear by Pharaoh that you shall not go free from here! 16 So send one of you to fetch your brother, while the rest of you remain under arrest; thus shall your words be put to the test whether there is truth in you. Otherwise, by Pharaoh, you are nothing but spies!" 17 With that, he herded them into the guardhouse for three days.

18 On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this, and you shall live, since I am a God-fearing man. 19 If you have been forthright, let but one of you brothers be detained in your place of custody, while the rest of you go and take home rations for your starving households. 20 But you must come back to me with your youngest brother; thus shall your words be verified, and you shall not die." They agreed. 21 To one another, however, they said, "Alas, we are being punished for our brother, since we looked on at his personal anguish, when he pleaded with us, but paid no heed. That is why this distress has come upon us." 22 Reuben retorted and said to them, "Did I not warn you to do no wrong to the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now comes the accounting for his blood." 23 They did not know, of course, that Joseph understood, since there was an interpreter between them and him. 24 He turned away from them to cry. When he was able to speak to them again, he picked out Simeon from among them and had him bound before their eyes. 25 Then Joseph gave orders to fill their containers with grain, replace each one's money in his sack, and give them provisions for their journey; and it was so done for them. 26 Then they loaded their asses with their rations and departed.

/²⁷ As one of them was opening his bag^d at the night en-

^dSee NOTE.

campment to give his ass some fodder, he saw that his money was there at the mouth of his bag. ²⁸ "Someone has returned my money," he called out to his brothers, "it is here in my bag!" Their hearts sank. They asked one another anxiously, "What is this that God has done to us?" /

²⁹ When they got back to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him about all their adventures, saying, ³⁰ "The man who is lord of the country spoke to us sternly and charged us with spying on the land. ³¹ We said to him, 'We are forthright; we have never spied! ³² There were twelve of us brothers, sons of the same father; but one is gone, and the youngest is just now with our father in the land of Canaan.' ³³ But the man who is lord of the country replied to us, 'This is how I shall know that you are forthright: Leave one of your brothers with me while the rest of you go home with something^d for your starving households. ³⁴ When you come back to me with your youngest brother, and I know that you are forthright, and not spies, I will restore your brother to you, and you shall be free to go about in the land.' "

³⁵ As they were emptying their sacks, there in each one's sack was his money bag! On seeing their money bags, they and their father were dismayed. ³⁶ Their father Jacob said to them, "I am the one you would leave bereft! Joseph is gone, and Simeon is gone, and now you would take away Benjamin! This always happens to me!" ³⁷ But Reuben told his father, "You may kill my own two sons if I fail to bring him back to you! Leave him in my care, and I will get him back to you." ³⁸ But he answered, "My son shall not go down with you, for his own brother is dead and he alone is left. If he should meet with disaster on the trip you take, you will send my white head down to Sheol in grief."

NOTES

xlii 3. *procure*. Here the verb *šbr* is combined with the noun *bār* "grain," yielding approximately "get us an emergency supply of grain"; also vs. 5, etc.

4. *it was only Benjamin*. Some such emphasis is indicated by the inversion in Heb.

full-brother. This nuance is self-evident from the specific construction with Joseph.

he feared that. Literally "he said: 'lest . . .'"; this is one of the methods that Heb. uses to express indirect discourse.

disaster. Comparison with Exod xxi 22 f. makes it clear that Heb. *'āsōn* is not just the traditional "harm" but a fatal misadventure; also vs. 38, below, and xliv 29.

5. *sons of Israel*. Whereas Joseph's father is called Israel by *J*, but Jacob by *E* (cf. xxxv 21), the same does not apply to the possessive compound "sons of Israel," as is definitely shown by xlv 5 ("Jacob : sons of Israel"). Because of its prevailing ethnic connotation, the phrase "children of Israel" would occur automatically to any writer. The use of this compound as a documentary criterion is therefore fallacious.

were among the others who came. Lit. "came . . . among the comers."

7. *kept his identity from them*. Literally "made himself a stranger to them."

spoke to them sternly. Literally "spoke harsh things to them"; cf. the Akk. idiom *dannātīm* (which is likewise a feminine plural) *šakānum* (same sense), which is common in the Mari texts.

8. Not necessarily, or even plausibly, a duplicate of 7a, and hence not to be credited mechanically to another source (*J*). This is the author's comment to explain Joseph's treatment of his brothers: Joseph was still very much aware of the past. Accordingly, this is a subordinate clause.

9. *to look at the land in its nakedness*. Heb. *'erwā* is not "nudity" (cf. ii 25) but "nakedness," in the sense of something that is unseemly (Deut xxiii 15), and improper to look at or expose (cf. ix 22 f.; Lev xviii 6 ff.); here metaphorically, things that are meant to be hidden from potential enemies.

10. *truly*. Or "on the contrary," Heb. *wa-* in the sense of Ar. *fa-*.

11. *sons of the same man*. A family unit as opposed to a reconnaissance task force.

forthright. Heb. *kēn*, cf. Akk. *kēnu* "right, legitimate"; here men who

are what they appear to be, aboveboard, not undercover agents, in contrast with "spies."

12. *Yes*. See xviii 15, NOTE.

15. *by Pharaoh*. Literally "life of Pharaoh," with "life" having the technical sense of "oath," precisely as Akk. *nēšum*. In the translation, "I swear" is based on Heb. 'im as used in oaths; in vs. 16, on the other hand, "by Pharaoh" is a circumstantial expression.

20. *They agreed*. That is, "they made (the) Yes (sign)," cf. xxix 28; not "they did so" for no deed follows. Contrast vs. 25, where the same words are used with "to them" in a more general sense.

22. *Reuben*. Joseph's advocate throughout the *E* version; cf. vs. 37, and also xxxvii 22. In *J*, the same part is taken by Judah, cf. xxxvii 26, xliii 3, xliv 18.

the accounting for his blood. Cf. ix 6. In *E*'s version the brothers did not know what the Midianites had done (see xxxvii 29). For all they knew, Joseph was dead and they were responsible for his blood.

23. *of course*. Emphatic in Heb., cf. xxi 32.

between them and him. Heb. *bēnōtām* (not *bēnēhem*); cf. NOTE on xxvi 28.

24. *When he was able to speak to them again*. Literally "he returned to them and spoke to them." Some manuscripts of LXX omit the second half of the clause, probably because no speech is indicated. But with the first verb used adverbially, as it often is in hendiadys constructions, the whole has the force of "when he was able to face them again."

Simeon. Next in seniority to Reuben, who was spared because Joseph remembered him as his protector.

27 f. For this excerpt from *J*, cf. COMMENT.

27. *one of them*. The first one who happened to do so. We know from xliii 21 that the others followed suit.

his bag. MT has "his sack"; but LXX gives here the same term that is used to translate 'amtahat "bag" at the end of this verse and in xliii 12, 18, 21 ff. The text apparently carried over the other term from vs. 25.

28. *God*. Heb. Elohim is not a stranger to *J* in the general sense of "Fate, Heaven, Providence"; cf. for example, xxvii 28. In this non-specific usage the term is not of itself a dependable documentary criterion. There is no call as yet for such an exclamation in *E*, where the discovery of the money does not take place until the brothers are back home.

33. *something*. MT appears to say "take home the starvation of your households," unless one ascribes to the noun the added meaning of remedy against starvation. In all likelihood, however, the phrase read originally "take home [rations for] . . ." etc., just as in vs. 19; the supplemented text is found in LXX, TO, Syr.

34. *you shall be free to go about.* Cf. the discussion on xxxiv 10 (NOTE).

36. *make desolate.* Literally "bereave."

This always happens to me. Literally "all these things are against me."

37. *Reuben.* See above on vs. 22.

38. *you will send my white head down to Sheol in grief.* Trad. "you will bring down my gray hairs" etc. Actually, however, the Heb. noun in question is an abstract, either "grayness," or "whiteness," which applies, of course, to hair. But in very advanced age the hair is white rather than gray, and in an instance such as this it is not only the disembodied hair but the whole person that is involved; moreover, "white head" is a familiar figure of speech in English. For the converse image "happy old age," cf. xxv 8.

The verse as a whole is often attributed to *J* as the beginning of the long account that follows. The reason is Jacob's failure to say anything about the detention of Simeon, a detail of which *J* is apparently not aware (xlili 14, 23b are taken as cross references to *J*). Nevertheless, the present verse is concerned solely with Benjamin as Rachel's only surviving son, so that a reference to Simeon would not be expected at this point. Moreover, the next verse (xlili 1) is the logical starting point of a separate section, which cannot be said of the verse before us.

COMMENT

The leading theme of the Joseph story, as proclaimed at the outset, is the relationship between the protagonist and his brothers. Hence Joseph's rise from servitude to unprecedented authority, dramatic though this event may be in itself, is but one strand in a complex fabric. Before the dull design can be unfolded, therefore, the other main thread must be picked up and woven in with the first. In other words, Joseph's brothers need to be placed on the scene in Egypt.

The required impetus is provided by the catastrophic famine that grips all the countries, Canaan included. Egypt is still, for the time being, the traditional breadbasket of the region, but only so because of Joseph's foresight and his far-reaching countermeasures. When Joseph's brothers arrive thus in Egypt for emergency supplies (technical term *šeber*), they are brought face to face with their brother. They have, of course, no intimation of his true identity; to the best of their knowledge, Joseph perished long ago in the wilderness near

Dothan. The man who must approve their request for food rations is the Vizier of Egypt, to whom Pharaoh has ceded virtually unlimited powers. As for Joseph, the intervening years have left no outward sign of his origin. He is thoroughly Egyptian in rank, name (xli 45), and speech; he communicates with the petitioners through an interpreter (vs. 23). But there are no corresponding barriers to Joseph's recognition of his brothers. Joseph's private knowledge leaves him with mixed emotions, whereas his brothers go on unsuspecting, until events finally force to the surface their ever-present but hitherto unarticulated sense of guilt. All this is handled by the author with great subtlety and insight. The immediate personal drama overshadows, but is never allowed to drive out, the underlying moral issue.

The intimate structural connection between the present episode and Joseph's whole Egyptian career to date automatically presupposes a corresponding unity of authorship. It is natural, therefore, that all the incidental evidence should point once again to *E*. Indeed, the whole is so closely knit that any discordant note, any intrusive passage, is bound to stand out prominently. Such is the case with vss. 27-28. In that passage, the discovery of the money that Joseph caused to be replaced in his brothers' bags is made at a lodging place on their way home to Canaan (cf. also xliii 21). But a few verses farther down, in what is clearly an integral part of the present narrative, we find that the same disturbing discovery takes place while the brothers are unpacking upon their return home (vs. 35). Nor was there any need in the first place to open the bags on the way in order to feed the animals, since provisions for the purpose had been separately supplied (vs. 25). The brief conflicting statement is thus clearly marked as an excerpt from *J*, whose parallel account is given in xliii 1 ff. Significantly enough, the intrusive fragment uses '*amtahat* "bag" (as opposed to *E*'s *šaq*), the same term that *J* employs thirteen times in his own version.

On the other hand, there is no such manifold evidence to back up the claim of some critics that several other passages should be similarly ascribed to *J*, or at least denied to *E*; for details, cf. the NOTES on vss. 5, 8, 28c, and 38. It will be found that in each instance the point at issue can be logically accounted for and independently confirmed.

55. SECOND TRIP TO EGYPT

(xliii 1-34: *J^a*)

XLIII ¹ The famine in the land grew more severe. ² So when they used up the rations that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and procure us some food." ³ But Judah told him, "The man warned us repeatedly, 'You may not come before me unless your brother is with you!' ⁴ If you are ready to let our brother go with us, we will go down and get you food. ⁵ But if you withhold permission, we cannot go down, for the man told us, "You may not come before me unless your brother is with you!'"

⁶ "Why did you make it so hard for me," Israel demanded, "by telling the man that you had another brother?" ⁷ They answered, "The man kept asking us about ourselves and our family: 'Is your father still living? Have you another brother?' We had to answer his questions! How were we to know that he would insist, 'Bring your brother here?'"

⁸ Judah then urged Israel his father, "Send the boy in my care, and let us be off and be on our way if any of us is to survive and not die—we and you and our children! ⁹ I will stand surety for him; you shall hold me accountable for him: if I fail to bring him back and produce him before you, I shall stand condemned before you forever. ¹⁰ As it is, had we not dillydallied, we could have been there and back twice!"

¹¹ Their father Israel replied to them, "If it must be so, do this: Put in your baggage the land's best products and take them to the man as a gift—some balm, and a little of the honey, gum, ladanum, pistachios, and almonds. ¹² Take also a double

^a See NOTES on vss. 14, 23.

amount of money, for you must return the sum that was put back in the mouths of your bags; it may have been an oversight. 13 Take your brother, too, and be off; go back to the man. 14 And may El Shaddai^b dispose the man to mercy toward you, that he may let your other brother go, as well as Benjamin. As for me, if I am to suffer bereavement, I shall suffer it."

15 So the men took this gift, and double money they took in their hands, and Benjamin, and soon^c made their way to Egypt, where they presented themselves to Joseph. 16 When Joseph saw them with Benjamin, he told his house steward, "Take these men into the house, and have an animal slaughtered and prepared, for the men are to dine with me at noon." 17 The steward^d did as Joseph told him and took the men into the house. 18 But they became apprehensive on being taken into Joseph's house. They said, "It must be on account of the money which was put back in our bags the first time that we are being taken there—a pretext against us to attack us and seize us as slaves, with our animals." 19 So they went up to Joseph's house steward and talked to him at the entrance of the house.

20 "If you please, sir," they said, "we were here once before to procure food. 21 But when we got to a night encampment and opened our bags, there was each man's money at the mouth of his bag—our money in the exact amount! We have brought it back with us; 22 and we have brought other money to procure food with. We don't know who put the "first money"^e in our bags." 23 He replied, "All is well with you; have no fear. Your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your bags for you. I got your payment." /With that, he brought Simeon out to them./

24 The steward^d then brought the men inside Joseph's house. He gave them water to bathe their feet, and got feed for their asses. 25 They laid out their gifts to await Joseph's arrival at noon, for they had learned that they were to dine there.

^b See NOTE.

^c See xxxi 21 for a similar auxiliary use of the verb *q-m*.

^d Literally "man."

^{e-e} Literally "our money."

26 When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts that they had brought inside, and they bowed before him to the ground. 27 After inquiring how they were, he asked, "And how is your aged father of whom you spoke? Is he still 'in good health?'" 28 They answered, "Your servant our father is well and still in good health." And they bowed respectfully.

29 As his eye fell on his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, he asked, "Is this the youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he added, "God be gracious to you, my boy."

30 With that, Joseph hurried out, for he was overcome with feeling for his brother, and wanted to cry. He went into a room and wept there. 31 Then he washed his face, reappeared and—now in control of himself again—gave the order, "Serve the meal!"

32 They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who partook of his board by themselves; for Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, since that is loathsome to Egyptians. 33 And as the men took their seats ^gat his direction,^g the oldest in the order of his seniority and the youngest in the order of his youth, they gazed at one another in astonishment.

34 Portions were served them from his table, but Benjamin's portion was several^h times as large as that of anyone else. And they feasted with him and drank freely.

^{f-f} Literally "alive."

^{g-g} Literally "before him"; see NOTE.

^h Literally "five."

NOTES

xliii 3. *warned us repeatedly*. Expressed in Heb. by the infinitive absolute. Verses 3 and 5 would thus seem to allude to a prior journey of the brothers to Egypt as told by *J* in a passage that is no longer extant. For according to *E*, Benjamin was to be produced as proof that the brothers were telling the truth (xlii 20, 34)—a motive that was apparently absent in *J*.

5. *if you withhold permission*. Literally "if you will not let go," without object. Cf. also vs. 14 in which the object is expressed.

9. *I will stand surety for him*. Technical sense of the verb 'rb, partic-

ularly common in Akk. legal usage; cf. the cognate noun *ṣrābōn* "pledge," xxxviii 17 f.

stand condemned. Stem *ḥṭ'*, with the primary sense of "to fail, be guilty, at fault," hence also "to offend" (xl 1). The translation is complicated by the added "to you forever." The general force is that of "I shall be in chancery to you for the rest of my life" : "you can hold it over my head, I shall never be able to live it down," or the like.

12. *double the amount of money.* So certainly in vs. 15. Here, however, "extra money" is also possible; cf. "other money" in vs. 22. Heb. *mišnê* has these and many other nuances; cf. "second-in-command," xli 43.

14. *that he may let your other brother go.* Actually, Heb. has "that he may release your other brother to you," which can apply to Simeon, but cannot be referred at the same time to Benjamin, as the text does, since Benjamin has not been detained. This difficulty, however, is symptomatic of the marginal character of the verse as a whole. It is doubtful altogether whether *J* made any mention of Simeon's arrest; certainly nothing of this kind is apparent from the material before us; note the omission of any such allusion in the preceding verses (3 ff.). On these and other counts (note especially El Shaddai), the verse has long been regarded as conflate, and influenced mostly by the previous account from *E*.

18. The brothers became uneasy when they realized that they were going to Joseph's house. Heb. appears inconsistent at first glance, in that the men first go there, then they talk to the steward, and finally they go there again (24). Actually, however, the stem in question (causative of *b'*) is both ingressive (to conduct) and terminative (to bring); the first connotation is used in vs. 17 f.; the second in vs. 24. The talk with the steward takes place before the brothers got inside the house.

21. *in the exact amount.* Literally "in its weight." Until coins were introduced, toward the middle of the first millennium, all payments in metal were made by weight (stem *šql*, hence the monetary unit "shekel"). This mode of payment is still often practiced in the Near East.

22. *the first money.* Literally "our money," but it was no longer theirs; hence, in effect, the money we had paid, our payment.

23b. From *E*; cf. NOTE on vs. 14.

27. *in good health.* Literally "alive"; cf. I Kings xx 32 Akk. *balātu* "to live" carries the same two meanings.

28. *they bowed respectfully.* Literally, "they prostrated themselves and bowed" (hendiadys).

30. *he was overcome with feeling.* Literally "his emotions boiled over."

32. Joseph's eating by himself was evidently a matter of rank, since the cultic and social taboo ("abomination, anathema") against taking food

with Hebrews would scarcely include the Vizier who bore a pious Egyptian name (xli 45).

33. *at his direction*. For this nuance of Heb. *lipnē*, see NOTE on vi 11. It is possible, of course, that this term may have here its primary meaning "before": Joseph's brothers were seated facing their host. In that case, however, the seating of the men in the exact order of their ages—a detail on which the text lays much stress—would have to be ascribed to coincidence, or at most to prior instructions on the part of Joseph which the author chose to pass over in silence. We have seen that the same expression can signify "at the instance, behest, with the approval, by the will of," and the like (cf. x 9, xvii 18, xxvii 7). Since the context favors some such meaning, this interpretation (with Ehrl.) has been given preference.

34. *several*. For this non-specific sense of Heb. "five," see NOTE on xxiv 10; cf. also xlv 22, and II Kings vii 13.

And they feasted with him and drank freely. Literally "and they drank and became drunk with him"; cf. ix 21. Here, however, the emphasis is not on the consequences of the carousal, but rather on the contrast between the carefree banquet and the rude awakening that awaits the brothers. The clause depicts thus a convivial, but not necessarily indecorous, occasion. The first verb, moreover, yields a noun *mištē*, which means simply "feast"; cf. xxi 8.

COMMENT

As the story of Joseph progresses, the two parallel strands of which it is composed stand out more and more sharply by reason of their sustained and increasing differences in detail. According to the *E* version so far, Joseph won a reprieve thanks to Reuben, only to be kidnaped by Midianites, who sold him as slave to an Egyptian official named Potiphar. Eventually, fate turns the tables on the brothers by placing them at Joseph's mercy. They fail to recognize him, having no reason to think that he is still alive, let alone that he has become the all-powerful regent of mighty Egypt. But there are no such obstacles to Joseph's immediate recognition of his brothers. He charges them with spying against Egypt, demands that they prove their innocence by producing Benjamin, and retains Simeon as hostage. Upon their return home, the brothers are further upset by the discovery of the money that Joseph had ordered to be put in their grain bags. Reuben personally vouches to their father

for Benjamin's safe return from the unavoidable second trip to Egypt. The father is consistently referred to as Jacob.

In *J*'s account, on the other hand, it is Judah who prevails on his brothers to stop short of fratricide and instead dispose of Joseph to Ishmaelites, who sell him in turn to a high-ranking but unnamed Egyptian official. The official's faithless wife delays, but cannot cut off, Joseph's ultimate rise to great power. Eventually, there is a similar encounter in Egypt between the brothers and Joseph, but nothing is said apparently about Simeon's detention as hostage. The brothers discover the planted money a night encampment, long before their return home. Their anxious father is identified as Israel.

On the strength of these criteria, among others, the present narrative proves to be the work of *J*. The brothers' spokesman is not Reuben but Judah, and it is he who gives Israel his personal guarantee of Benjamin's return—with significant differences in language and specific detail. The replaced money has been discovered at a night encampment (21); and the term for "bag" is invariably *'amtahat*, not *saq* as in *E*. Only two brief fragments, which refer to Simeon (14, 23b), appear to belie this uniformity; but these are precisely the kind of exceptions that point up the rule, and thus stand out as intrusive glosses, as does the use of El Shaddai in vs. 14.

Closer scrutiny, moreover, will reveal other characteristics that we have learned to associate with *J*. In dealing with his father, Judah does not hesitate to speak up forcefully, and even accuse Israel of dangerous indecision (10); in similar circumstances, *E*'s Reuben pleads, but does not reproach (xlii 37). A phrase or two at the proper time and place adds dimension to the portrayals of the steward (23) (whose use of *Elohim*, moreover, is natural in an Egyptian) and of Joseph himself (30 f.). Incidentally, the domestic is called simply "the man" in vs. 17, the same term that *J* applied to another trusted servant in the story of Rebekah (xxiv 21 ff.). And just as the long journey to Mesopotamia was summed up there in a few words (vs. 10), so too the trip to Egypt is here covered by a single phrase (vs. 15).

The ability to maintain suspense is common to both *J* and *E*. The episode ends on a merry note. But the reader knows, or will soon find out, that the very next morning will confront the brothers with their gravest crisis, just when their worst fears appear to have been allayed.

56. THE ULTIMATE TEST (xliv 1–34: J^a)

XLIV ¹Then Joseph^a instructed his house steward, as follows, “Fill the men’s bags with all the food they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his bag.^o ²Put also my goblet, the silver one, in the mouth of the youngest one’s bag, with the money for his rations.” He did as Joseph told him.

³With the first light of morning, the men were sent off, pack animals^d and all. ⁴They had gone but a short distance from the city, when Joseph said to his house steward, “Up, go after the men! When you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why did you repay good with evil?’^e ⁵It is the very one from which my master drinks and which he uses in divination. You have done a base thing!’”

⁶He overtook them and repeated those words to them. ⁷They remonstrated with him, “How can my lord say such things? Far be it from your servants to act in such a way! ⁸In fact,^f we even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money we had found in the mouths of our bags. Why then would we steal silver or gold from your master’s house! ⁹If any of your servants is found to have it, he shall die, and the rest of us, moreover, shall be slaves to my lord!” ¹⁰He replied, “Even though what you propose is just, only he who is found to have it shall become my slave, and the rest of you will be exonerated.”

¹¹Each of them eagerly lowered his bag to the ground, and each opened his bag. ¹²He searched, starting with the oldest and

^a Except for glosses in vss. 1, 2; see NOTES.

^b Literally “he.”

^c On this clause, see NOTE.

^d Literally “they and their asses.”

^e LXX adds “and why have you stolen my silver goblet?”

^f Literally “here, behold.”

ending with the youngest. And the goblet turned up in Benjamin's bag.

¹³ At this, they rent their clothes. Each reloaded his animal, and they turned back toward the city.

¹⁴ As Judah and his brothers re-entered Joseph's house, he was still there. They flung themselves before him on the ground.

¹⁵ Joseph said to them, "What a thing for you to have done! Surely, you must know that a man like me resorts to divination!" ¹⁶ Judah answered, "What can we say to my lord? How can we plead, how try to prove our innocence? It is God who has uncovered your servants' misdeeds. Here we are, then, my lord's slaves, the rest of us no less than the one in whose possession the goblet turned up." ¹⁷ But he replied, "Far be it from me to act thus! Only he who was found to have the goblet shall be my slave; but the rest of you can go back to your father without hindrance."

¹⁸ Thereupon Judah stepped up to him and said, "I beg of you, my lord, may your servant speak earnestly^o to my lord, and do not be impatient with your servant, you who are the equal of Pharaoh. ¹⁹ My lord asked your servants, 'Have you a father, or another brother?' ²⁰ We said to my lord, 'We have a father, who is old, and there is a child of his old age, the youngest; his own brother died, and he is the only one by that mother who is left, so his father dotes on him.' ²¹ Then you told your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may set my eye on him.' ²² We explained to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father; his father would die if he were to leave him.' ²³ But you declared to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes back with you, you shall not be admitted to my presence again!' ²⁴ When we returned to your servant my father, we reported my lord's statement to him.

²⁵ "In time, our father said to us, 'Go back and get us some food.' ²⁶ We reminded him, 'We cannot go down; only if our youngest brother is with us, can we go, for we shall not be allowed to see the man if our youngest brother is not with us.'

²⁷ Your servant my father said to us, 'As you well know, that

^o Literally "in the ears/hearing of," cf. xxiii 10, 13, 16.

wife bore me two sons. ²⁸ One, however, disappeared, and I had to conclude that he must have been torn by beasts; nor have I seen him again to this day. ²⁹ If now you take from me this one, too, and he meets with disaster, you will send my white head down to Sheol in grief.'

³⁰ "If I appear before your servant my father, and the boy—whose very life is so bound up with his—is not with us, ³¹ when he sees that the boy is missing, he will die; and your servants will thus send the white head of your servant, our father, down to Sheol in grief. ³² Besides, this servant got the boy from my father under the following pledge: 'If I do not restore him to you, I shall stand condemned before my father forever.' ³³ Therefore, may your servant remain here as your slave instead of the boy, and let the boy go with his brothers. ³⁴ For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? Let me not be witness to the ill fate that would overtake my father!"

NOTES

xliv 1. *and put each man's money in the mouth of his bag.* This clause, and the phrase "with the money for his rations" in vs. 2, must both be out of place in view of vs. 12 where nothing is said about any money being replaced and the goblet alone is the object of the search. The insert appears to have been influenced by xlii 27 f., which in turn represents an excerpt from *J's* account of the brothers' first journey.

2. See the previous NOTE concerning the intrusive phrase.

4. LXX adds a direct question concerning the theft of the silver goblet, but the addition is not necessarily original. The text as it stands is effective by indirection: the steward pretends that the brothers know what he is talking about.

5. Divination by means of liquids is well attested, especially in Mesopotamia; cf. J. Hunger, *Becherwahrsagung bei den Babyloniern*, 1903 (see also Vergote, pp. 172 ff.). Oil or water was poured into a bowl or cup, and omens were then based on the appearance of the liquids inside the container; hence the importance of the receptacle was likely to exceed its intrinsic value.

uses in divination. Or "consults the omens"; also vs. 15, and cf. Num xxiv 1.

9. *the rest of us.* Heb. uses the pronoun alone, but the added nuance is apparent through juxtaposition; analogously in vss. 10, 16.

10. On the syntax and meaning of this verse, cf. Ehrl. The steward concedes that the suggested punishment would fit the crime, but pretends to be magnanimous: only the actual culprit is to be arrested, and his punishment shall be slavery, not death.

13. The brothers are too stunned to speak; but their actions are enough to show their abject resignation.

16. *God*. The choice of Elohim may have been for the Egyptian's benefit. But *J* is also known to use this appellation in the more general sense of "Heaven, Fate," or the like, e.g., xxvii 28; see xlii 28; the present translation does not, of course, preclude a broader meaning. Though innocent of the present charge, the brothers are now being punished for a past crime which cannot be covered up indefinitely. It would be Judah's way of saying that justice has finally caught up with them.

19. *My lord asked your servants*. It is worth stressing that in *E*'s account the brothers volunteer this information; see xlii 13.

27. *that wife*. Literally "my wife," either in the sense of "my chosen/favorite wife," or "that particular wife"; cf. "that mother" vs. 20.

28. *disappeared*. Literally "is gone from me."

I had to conclude. Heb. "I said," followed by direct statement.

29. *white head*. See NOTE on xlii 38.

COMMENT

The episode links up intimately with the preceding section both in time and content. Only a few hours separate the two accounts—the short time between the end of the banquet and the onset of dawn; even this slight break is not entirely blank, since Joseph uses the interval to brief his steward about the part he wants him to play. The drama that will soon unfold depends, moreover, in some measure on the false sense of security into which the brothers have been lulled. In short, since the previous section was the work of *J*, the sequel must also stem from the same author. Other criteria, and especially the major part that Judah assumes, are fully in accord with this conclusion. Indeed, there is, for once, not the slightest trace of any other source throughout the chapter. The two discordant clauses in vs. 1–2, though intrusive, would still seem to derive from *J* in the final analysis (see NOTE on vs. 1).

Actually, the present narrative is not only an integral part of *J*'s account, but the real climax of that author's conception of the Joseph story. The events that now come to a head, reach back, beyond the carefree interlude of the preceding afternoon, to that

fateful day far away and long ago when Joseph was surrendered by his brothers to Ishmaelite slave traders (xxxvii 28c). Nothing in the crowded period since then could drown out the memory of that deed. The brothers are haunted by a burden of guilt that is never far from the surface (vs. 16); and Joseph still harbors a feeling of resentment, which time and success may have helped to blunt, but could not altogether obliterate.

It is these deep-rooted and sharply contrasted personal issues that *J* makes into his principal theme. For the moment at least, everything else is underplayed and blended with the background detail. To be sure, the great famine and Joseph's spectacular rise to power are to *J* echoes of historical events, just as they are to *E*. Both *J* and *E*, moreover, see in these factors a higher design for vindicating Joseph and punishing his brothers. But Joseph is not interested in retribution. Still, he expects from his brothers something more than mere admission of their past guilt. As *J* has portrayed him, Joseph needs to find out whether the men have been morally regenerated (von Rad): if an emergency arose, would they now resist the temptation of saving themselves by sacrificing another of their number? To find the answer, Joseph offers them Benjamin as bait.

There is more to the choice of Benjamin than immediately meets the eye. Many years ago, his brothers had treated Joseph with incredible callousness and cruelty. Why? Was it because they had never forgiven their father for favoring Rachel over their own mothers, and then transferring his affections to Rachel's older son? If so, and if they were still much the same, they would be most likely to betray themselves now at the expense of Rachel's other boy.

Joseph's attachment to his full-brother is never left in doubt (xlili 29, 34). Benjamin was obviously in no danger of suffering personal harm. Joseph's choice of him was only meant to duplicate as closely as possible the other conditions. Would the brothers revert to type, and welcome the opportunity to leave without Benjamin, this time with a genuine excuse? This was the test.

Once again it is Judah who takes the initiative. This time, however, he rejects the course of least resistance. Instead, he offers his own person to the Vizier—who is still the forbidding stranger—as substitute for the boy for whose safe return he had vouched to his father.

The brothers had indeed changed. They passed the ultimate test. And Joseph had his answer.

57. THE DISCLOSURE

(xlv 1–28: *J, E^a*)

XLV ¹ Joseph was no longer able to control himself in the presence of all his attendants. He cried out, “Have everyone withdraw from me!” Thus no one else was about when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² But his sobs were so loud that the Egyptians could hear, and so the news reached Pharaoh’s palace.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is Father still in good health?” But his brothers were unable to reply, so dumfounded were they at him.

⁴ Joseph told his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And when they had done so, he went on, “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you once sold down to Egypt. ⁵ But do not worry now or reproach yourselves for having sold me here. It was really God who sent me here in advance of you as an instrument of survival. ⁶ For it is now two years that there has been a famine in the land; and there are five more years to come in which there shall be no yield from tilling. ⁷ Therefore God sent me ahead of you to insure for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance. ⁸ So it was really not you but God who sent me here; he has set me up as a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his household, and ruler over the whole land of Egypt.

⁹ “Hurry back, then, to my father and tell him, “Thus says your son Joseph: God has made me lord of all Egypt; come to me without delay. ¹⁰ You will live in the region of Goshen, where you will be near me—you and your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and everything you own.

^a See COMMENT.

11 There I will provide for you—for there are still five years of famine ahead—so that you and your family and all that is yours may suffer no want.’ 12 Surely, you can see for yourselves, and my brother Benjamin can see for himself, that it is I who am speaking to you. 13 Tell my father everything about my high station in Egypt and what you have seen here; but hurry and bring Father down here.”

14 With that, he flung himself on the neck of his brother Benjamin and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Then he kissed all his brothers, crying upon them; only then were his brothers able to talk to him.

16 The news reached Pharaoh’s palace, “Joseph’s brothers have come.” Pharaoh and his courtiers were pleased. 17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, “This is what you shall do: Load up your beasts and go to the land of Canaan without delay. 18 Take your father and your households, and come back here. I will assign to you the best territory in Egypt, where you will live off the fat of the land. 19 You ^bare further requested (to say),^b ‘Do the following: Take from the land of Egypt wagons for your children and your wives, and to transport your father, and come back. 20 And never mind your belongings, since the best in all the land of Egypt is to be yours.”

21 The sons of Israel did accordingly. Joseph gave them wagons, as Pharaoh had ordered, and he supplied them with provisions for the journey. 22 To each of them, moreover, he gave fresh clothes; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and several^c changes of clothing. 23 And to his father he sent the following: ten asses loaded with Egypt’s finest products, and ten she-asses loaded with grain, bread, and sustenance for his father on his journey. 24 And as he sent his brothers off on their way, he told them, “Don’t be fretful on the way.”

25 They left Egypt and made their way to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26 When they told him, “Joseph is still alive, and it is he who is ruler over the whole land of Egypt,” his

^{b-b} So MT, but see NOTE.

^c See xliii 34.

heart went numb, for he could not believe them. ²⁷ But when they repeated to him all that Joseph had told them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent for his transport, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸ "Enough," said Israel, "my son Joseph is still alive! I must go and see him before I die."

NOTES

xlv 2. *his sobs were so loud that*. Literally "he gave/put his voice/sound in weeping."

3. *Is Father still in good health*. Literally "is my father still alive?" Cf. xliii 27. (*J*). If the present passage goes back to *E*, no actual redundancy is involved. But even if *J* was the author, the question may have been asked for reassurance: tell me the truth, is he really all right? As for the noun, Heb. actually says "my father," whenever Joseph refers to Jacob; but the noun without possessive pronoun would be unidiomatic. This time, at any rate, the pronoun may be advantageously left out in translation.

5. *God*. Here, and in vss. 8, 9, Elohim has distinctly the more general sense of "Heaven, Providence," so that the term cannot be an automatic indicator of *E*'s authorship; cf. xlv 16.

6. *there shall be no yield from tilling*. Nowhere is the special force of hendiadys—the use of two co-ordinated terms to express a single modified concept—better demonstrated than in the instance before us. The literal and traditional "there shall be neither plowing nor harvest" is out of the question. No farmer could be expected to stop tilling the soil because somebody had predicted five more years of famine, least of all in Egypt, where good crops depend on irrigation and not on rainfall. Quite the contrary, after two years of famine, the farmers would work that much harder instead of remaining idle. As a hendiadys, however, the phrase "tilling-and-reaping" describes cultivation which leads to harvesting, as opposed to whatever the earth might produce without man's efforts. This self-evident interpretation is independently supported by the syntax of Heb. The alleged "neither . . . nor" would call in the original for repetition of the negative particle *'ēn* (Ehrl.). Note that when the same two nouns are separately employed, the pertinent particle is repeated: "both at plowing time and at harvest time" (Exod xxxiv 21).

7. *extraordinary*. Heb. *gādōl* "great" with reference to something supernatural.

8. *father to Pharaoh*. This phrase is applied to Viziers as far back as the third millennium.

9. The message from Joseph to his father is couched in epistolary style with the standard introductory formula; cf. xxxii 5. For letters reflect only the spoken word, which is why they begin with the imperative "speak," a term that is all the more appropriate in an oral message. The invitation to Jacob is sent in Joseph's own name, as opposed to Pharaoh's invitation in vss. 16-20. Yet, according to xlvi 31 ff. Jacob's arrival comes as news to Pharaoh. The inconsistency disappears once the present passage is assigned to *J* (on the independent evidence of sale into slavery, vss. 4 f.), and the other to *E*.

10. *the region of Goshen*. Identified with the Wādi Tumulāt, the eastern part of the Nile Delta. Since this is a part of Egypt, the traditional "land of Goshen" is misleading.

12. The original says "your eyes and Benjamin's see that it is my mouth which is speaking to you," to underscore the directness of the evidence.

14. *flung himself*. Literally "fell"; for this idiom see xiv 10, NOTE. If "neck" sounds somewhat strange in this context, it is mainly because the respective Heb. noun (and its Sem. analogues) designates not only neck but also the shoulder blades (note the plural, or rather dual, construct and possessive in this verse).

17. *go . . . without delay*. Literally "go . . . arrive," lose no time in getting there.

19. *You are further requested (to say)*. Literally "you have been commanded," followed by the content of the command. In all probability, however, the present cons. text *šwyth* represents an original *šw 'tm*, or the like, that is "instruct them," cf. LXX, Vulg.

20. *never mind*. Literally "let not your eye grudge"; cf. Deut vii 16, xiii 9, xix 13, etc.

24. The Heb. stem *rgz* may describe excitement, anger, impatience, and the like. The proposed translation seeks to leave the choice open. Very likely, the general sense is, "let there be no recriminations."

25. *Jacob*. In the Joseph story, a direct sign of *E*'s authorship; also vs. 27.

28. *Israel*. See COMMENT below.

COMMENT

After the strain and tension of the last episode, the present narrative is bound to appear as an anticlimax. Joseph's brothers had passed the critical test, which was all the more revealing since they did not know that they were being tested. Joseph's disclosure

of his real identity brings relief at long last to himself, his brothers, and—a fact that should not be overlooked—the reader as well. Indeed, so welcome is this happy ending that one is not likely to realize right away that the account is no longer of a piece, but a blend of more than one source.

This is the point in the story at which the often separate paths of *J* and *E* must draw together. Both sources had to highlight Joseph's self-revelation and the receipt of the good news by Jacob. Such episodes could not be lifted bodily from the two parallel accounts and then arranged consecutively, as was done with the others (xxxix–xliv), without irreparable damage to the story as a whole. Hence the present chapter is no less composite and fused than was the start of the story in ch. xxxvii; but this time the component parts are much more difficult to separate and identify.

The beginning of the section is the obvious sequel to Judah's moving recapitulation immediately before it; therefore *J* must still be the author. Thereafter, however, the reflective reader runs into trouble. Do vss. 3 and 4 indicate that Joseph revealed himself to his brothers twice? If so, does such duplication betray the presence of *E*, alongside *J*? The critics who subscribe to the latter assumption find a measure of support in the use of the term Elohim in vss. 5, 7, 8, and 9. Yet the solution is not that simple. While *E* does not speak of Yahweh in Genesis, so that the use of this personal name becomes a direct witness of *J*, the converse does not apply; *J* employs the term Elohim on various occasions as a general term of reference to a superior power, and the present passage is especially well suited to just this kind of usage. To be conclusive, the external criterion of terms for the Deity should be corroborated by the internal evidence of the given context.

Now on such internal grounds, there can be no doubt that vss. 4 and 5a go back to *J*; for both say that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, yet that detail was unknown to *E*, the Midianites having picked up the boy without his brothers' knowledge. The passage, moreover, which consists of vss. 9–13, must also stem from *J*. In it Joseph invites his father in his own name to come to Egypt; this accords well with xlvii 31 ff. (*J*), where the news of Jacob's arrival comes as a surprise to Pharaoh. Yet, significantly enough, this message too cites Elohim in vs. 9. Thus far, therefore, there is no sure sign of *E*'s contributions to the narrative; the re-

peated statement "I am Joseph" is entirely natural in the given circumstances.

For cogent proof of *E*'s participation we have to wait until vss. 16-20. There a separate invitation to Jacob is issued by Pharaoh himself; since he is unaware of this step in the episode in xlvi 31 ff., which is traceable to *J*, the author in the present instance must be *E*. Farther down, the name Jacob occurs twice (25, 27), and that is an independent witness of *E*. The last sentence, however, substitutes Israel (28), which points in turn to *J* (cf. xxxv 21 f., COMMENT on Sec. 47, and NOTE on xlii 5). There is thus at least a fair presumption that vss. 16-27 are to be attributed to *E*, and the rest to *J*; but since we cannot put it more definitely, it has seemed best to omit the usual source markers in the translation.

Because of the involved nature of the composition, which may have caused omissions from the originally separate and independent documents, a few loose ends remain that can no longer be tied together. As *J* tells the story, it was Judah's forthright confession that finally made Joseph reveal himself to his brothers. But no such motive is explicit in the extant material from *E*. Furthermore, it goes without saying that when the brothers brought the startling news to their father, they could not but make a clean breast of their previous crime and lies. This detail is passed over in silence, very likely by design rather than through accidental loss in the text. Good writers are not given to spelling things out; the reader, too, has his part to play. In this case, the joy of recovering a son who had long been given up for dead, coupled with the fact that the brothers' schemes had not only been frustrated but turned to good purpose, may have been reason enough for Jacob to forgive and forget. Such at least is the inference that the narrative would seem to favor.

58. JACOB'S MIGRATION TO EGYPT

(xlii 1-34: J, /E/, |P|)^a

XLVI ¹ So Israel set out with all that was his, and arrived in Beer-sheba, where he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

/² God spoke to Israel in a vision by night, and called, "Jacob! Jacob!" "At once," he answered. ³ He said, "I am El, the God of your father. Be not afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you there into a great nation. ⁴ I will go down with you to Egypt, and I myself will bring you back; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

⁵ So Jacob left Beer-sheba, and the sons of Israel put their father Jacob, and their little ones and their wives, aboard the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. / ⁶ They took their livestock and the possessions that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and arrived in Egypt—Jacob and all his offspring. ⁷ He brought with him his sons and grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.

⁸ These are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his descendants, who migrated to Egypt.^b

Jacob's first-born Reuben; ⁹ Reuben's sons: Hanoch,^c Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰ Simeon's sons: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul^d son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹ Levi's sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹² Judah's sons: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah—but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan; and the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

^a For details, see COMMENT and NOTES.

^b For parallels and variants, cf. Num xxvi and I Chron ii 1 ff.

^c Same as Enoch.

^d Same as Saul.

13 Issachar's sons: Tola, Puvah, Jashub,^o and Shimron. 14 Zebulun's sons: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. 15 These were the sons that Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, aside from his daughter Dinah. Persons in all, male and female—33.

16 Gad's sons: Ziphion,^f Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. 17 Asher's sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah, with Serah their sister; and Beriah's sons: Heber and Malchiel. 18 These were the descendants of Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah, that she bore to Jacob—16 persons.

19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. 20 Joseph became the father of two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath daughter of Poti-phaera, priest of On, bore to him in the land of Egypt. 21 Benjamin's sons: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, ^oEhi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim,^o and Ard. 22 These were the descendants of Rachel, who were born to Jacob—14 persons in all.

23 Dan's son:^h Hushim. 24 Naphtali's sons: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillel. 25 These were the descendants of Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel, that she bore to Jacob—7 persons in all.

26 Altogether, Jacob's people who migrated to Egypt—his own issue, not counting the wives of Jacob's sons—numbered 66 in all. 27 Together with Joseph's sons who were born to him in Egypt—two persons—all the people comprising Jacob's family who came to Egypt came to 70 persons. |

28 Israel^t had sent Judah ahead to Joseph, ^tto precede him^t to Goshen. When they reached the region of Goshen, 29 Joseph ordered^k his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as he appeared before him, he flung himself on his neck and wept upon it a long time. 30 And Israel said

^o So Sam., LXX, Num xxvi 24; MT cons. *ywb* (Iob), textual error for *yšwb*.

^f Sam., LXX, Num xxvi 15 *Zephon*.

^{o-o} To be corrected to *Ahiram*, *Shephupham*, *Hupham*, for which see Num xxvi 39 f.; cf. I Chron viii 4 f.

^h Heb. "sons" in formulaic use.

^t Cf. vs. 30; MT "he."

^{t-t} See NOTE.

^k Literally "tied, hitched up."

to Joseph, "Now I can die, having seen 'in person' that you are still alive."

³¹ Then Joseph said to his brothers and his father's household, "I will go and inform Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were formerly in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³² The men are shepherds, having long been keepers of livestock; and they have brought with them their flocks and herds and everything they own.' ³³ So when Pharaoh summons you and asks about your occupation, ³⁴ you shall answer, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from the beginning^m down to the present—we and our fathers too'—in order that you may stay in the region of Goshen. For every shepherd is abhorrent to Egyptians."

^{l-l} Literally "face to face."

^m Literally "from our youth."

NOTES

xlvi 1. *Beer-sheba*. A logical stop on the way from Canaan (presumably Hebron) to Egypt.

2. *a vision by night*. For this indirect mode of communication, which is characteristic of the *E* source, cf. xx 3, 6, xxxi 11, 24.

3. *a great nation*. Note that *E* uses here *gōy*, not '*am*', precisely as *J* did in xii 2, see NOTE *ad loc.*

5. *the sons of Israel*. In this combination, the use of the name Israel is not limited to *J*; cf. NOTE on xlii 5.

10. *Jemuel*. Num xxvi 12 and I Chron iv 24 give *Nemuel*. The present reading is inferior because (1) Num xxvi has proved dependable on many counts, and (2) Heb. *n* will be mistaken for *y* more readily than the other way about.

12. According to the data in xxxviii, Perez was born to Judah after the latter's three older sons had reached adulthood. Here Perez is recorded as having two sons of his own, who in terms of the total elapsed time could have been Judah's great-grandchildren. Yet at the time of Jacob's migration to Egypt, Judah's brother Joseph had been there only 22 years (combining xxxvii 2, xli 46 f., and xlv 6: 13 years in Egypt plus 7 years of plenty and 2 years of famine). The chronological discrepancy disappears, however, once it is established that the present

list had originally nothing to do with the record of the migration to Egypt.

13. *Jashub*. See textual note ^e. The dropping of a cons. (š) is easy enough to explain, whereas its addition in the parallel passages could not be accounted for.

15. *aside from his daughter Dinah*. This is believed to be a harmonizing insert, caused by the need to bring the total number of migrants up to 70.

19. *Jacob's wife Rachel*. The appositional "wife" is not found with Leah, let alone the two concubines. The same apparent partiality to Rachel is reflected in xlv 27 (*J*). Evidently, Heb. 'iškā could carry the specialized meaning of "principle, favorite wife."

21. The list of Benjamin's sons has been badly mangled in the present version. Aside from mechanical textual corruptions, which can be corrected on the basis of parallel passages (cf. textual note ^{e-v}), Num xxvi 38-40 credits Benjamin with only five sons, as opposed to ten in the present instance; the others become grandchildren (cf. also LXX, which credits Benjamin with three sons and seven grandchildren). All of which serves to point up the secondary character of the list before us; see next NOTE.

26 f. The figure 66 would seem to be a later correction by someone who deducted from the total of 70 the two sons of Judah (Er and Onan) who died in Canaan, and Joseph and his two sons who were already in Egypt, but counted Dinah; cf. Dr.

28. *to precede him*. Little can be done with Heb. *lhwrt*, which would require an object if interpreted as "to show, point." LXX suggests that the original may have read *lhr'wt* "to present (himself)"; but even then the syntax would not be smooth. In any event, Joseph does not start for Goshen until he has been informed of his family's arrival (29). The translation here adopted is in the nature of a compromise, close enough to the admittedly defective Heb. and also to the not altogether convincing LXX.

34. *from the beginning*. The literal "from our youth" is ruled out by the following "and our fathers," since the ancestors' childhood could not be so described.

all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians. The taboo cannot apply to shepherds as such; cf. xlvii 6. In all likelihood, the term shepherds is here a play on the popular interpretation of the Hyksos as "shepherd kings" (SB), whose temporary domination of Egypt dealt a severe blow to national pride.

COMMENT

The section is made up of excerpts from all three major sources. But the component parts have been left more or less intact, so that each has retained its individuality and can be identified without much difficulty. The narrative portions comprise vss. 1-5 and 28-34. The break between them is filled by a long insert from *P*, which betrays itself as intrusive in more ways than one.

The first verse finds Israel on his way to Egypt, with his entire family and their possessions. The name Israel points directly to *J*, the same source from which the last verse of the preceding section was also derived. This version is resumed in vss. 28 ff.; note the two occurrences of the name Israel in 29 f., and the prominent role of Judah (as is customary with *J*) in 28. One needs only to read xlv 28 - xlvi 1 + 28-34 consecutively to see how well these passages fit together as a unit. It will be recalled, moreover, that in 31 ff. Pharaoh is shown to know nothing about Israel's arrival until Joseph's family had crossed into Egypt. This is why Joseph has to maneuver Pharaoh into assigning to the visitors a part of the Goshen district—an area good for grazing and close to the Asiatic border. The detail accords well with xlv 9-13 (*J*), where it is Joseph himself who issues the invitation to his family, but is in marked contrast with xlv 16 ff. (*E*), where the invitation originates with Pharaoh.

Verses 2-5, on the other hand, are manifestly from *E*. Not only does the divine name appear as El, but God communicates with Jacob (vs. 2) by means of a night vision, as is customary in this source. The patriarch is reassured that his departure from Canaan is not contrary to the divine plan but, in fact, in keeping with it; the isolated "Israel" in vs. 2 is an accidental carry-over from the preceding verse. The transportation, finally, is furnished by Pharaoh (vs. 5).

The extensive insert from *P* can be identified at a glance by its content and phraseology. The genealogical interest is dominant throughout. A record of Jacob's family was deemed necessary on the eve of the sojourn in Egypt, and this seemed to be the best place to give it. A similar record of the Israelites as they are about to return to Canaan is furnished by the same source in Num xxvi.

Indeed, the names of the principals are essentially the same in both instances, except for textual changes: the future clan-heads of Joseph's time become populous clans in the Mosaic period. On closer examination, however, the present list turns out to be a summary of the data in Num xxvi, compiled without reference to the Egyptian interlude and only later readjusted to the requirements of the present context (Dr.). Since Er and Onan died in Canaan (12), they could not be part of a record devoted expressly to "Jacob and his descendants who migrated to Egypt" (8). The two sons of Perez (12), who are in effect two generations removed from Judah (xxxviii), can scarcely be synchronized with a Joseph who is still a relatively young man. The traditional, and originally round, number of 70 male descendants (27) can be eked out only by adding Jacob himself and Dinah. And lastly, where the present list departs from that in Num xxvi (as, for example, in the case of ten sons of Benjamin, vs. 21, as against five in Num), it proves to be a distortion of the other. On all these counts, the list before us is not only intrusive in the present narrative but also secondary within the *P* source itself.

59. JACOB BEFORE PHARAOH.
JOSEPH'S LAND POLICY
(xlvii 1-26: *J*, /*P*/^a)

XLVII ¹ Joseph then went and reported to Pharaoh, saying, "My father and brothers have come from the land of Canaan, with their flocks and herds and everything they own; they are at present in the region of Goshen." ² He had picked several^b of his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. ³ Pharaoh asked his brothers, "What is your occupation?" "We your servants," they replied to Pharaoh, "are shepherds, the same as our fathers were. ⁴ We have come," they said to Pharaoh, "to seek sojourn in this country, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks in the land of Canaan, so severe has been the famine. Pray, then, let your servants stay in the region of Goshen." ^{5a} Pharaoh turned to Joseph, saying,^c ^{6b} "They may stay in the region of Goshen. And if you know any of them to be suitable, you may put them in charge of my own livestock."

/^d[Thus, when Jacob and his sons came to Joseph in Egypt, and Pharaoh king of Egypt heard about it, Pharaoh said to Joseph,]^e ^{5b} "Your father and brothers have come to you; ^{6a} the country of Egypt is at your disposal: settle your father and brothers on the pick of the land." ⁷ Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh. Jacob paid respects to Pharaoh. ⁸ Pharaoh then asked Jacob, "How many are the years you have lived?" ⁹ Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years I have been granted^e add up to 130. Few and hard have been these years of my life; nor do they compare with the life-spans that my

^a See COMMENT.

^b Literally "five," cf. xliii 34.

^c From here through vs. 6, see LXX and NOTE.

^{d-d} Supplied from LXX.

^e Literally "of my sojournings"; see NOTE.

fathers were granted.”¹⁰ Then Jacob took his leave from Pharaoh and left his presence.¹¹ And so Joseph settled his father and brothers and gave them land holdings in Egypt, on the pick of the land—the region of Rameses—as Pharaoh had commanded.¹² And Joseph sustained his father and brothers, and his father’s entire household, with food, down to the youngest. /

¹³ There was, however, no food in any country, for the famine was very severe; and the lands of Egypt and Canaan languished from hunger.¹⁴ Joseph gathered in all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, as payment for the rations that were being dispensed, and he put the money in Pharaoh’s palace.¹⁵ And when the money in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan was spent, all Egypt came to Joseph, pleading, “Give us bread, or we shall perish under your eyes, for the money is gone.”¹⁶ Joseph replied, “Give me your livestock, and I will make distribution in return for your livestock, since your money is gone.”¹⁷ So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he sold food to them in return for horses, for their stocks of sheep and cattle, and for asses. Thus he saw them through that year with bread in exchange for all their livestock.¹⁸ And when that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, “We cannot hide from my lord that, with the money and the animal stocks made over to my lord, there is nothing left at my lord’s disposal except our persons and our farm-land.¹⁹ Why should we perish before your very eyes, both we and our land? Take us and our land in exchange for bread, and we shall become serfs to Pharaoh, with our land; only give us seed, that we may survive and not perish, and that the land not turn into a waste.”

²⁰ So Joseph acquired for Pharaoh all the farm-land in Egypt; for every Egyptian sold his field, since the famine was too much for them; thus did the land pass over to Pharaoh.²¹ As for the people, Joseph’^o reduced them to serfs’^o from one end of Egypt’s territory to the other.²² Only the priests’ land he did not take

¹ MT “he.”

^{o-o} So Sam., LXX; MT “transferred to the cities” (change of *D/R*), see NOTE.

over; for it was the priests' allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment that Pharaoh had made them, which is why their land was not sold.

23 Joseph told the people, "Now that I have acquired you and your land for Pharaoh, here is seed for you to sow the land. 24 But when the harvest is in, you must give a fifth to Pharaoh, keeping four-fifths as seed of/for the field, as food for yourselves and members of your households, and to feed the children." 25 They answered, "You have saved our lives! We are thankful to my lord that we can be serfs to Pharaoh." 26 And Joseph made it a land law in Egypt, which is still valid, that a fifth should go to Pharaoh. Only the land of the priests did not pass over to Pharaoh.

^{h-h} LXX omits.

NOTES

xlvii 2. *He had picked*. Literally "he took from the edge/fringe" (Heb. *miqṣē*) in a context made emphatic through inversion. This strongly suggests something like "he took the outstanding ones" (cf. Ehrl.); Joseph evidently selected those brothers who were most likely to make a good impression. On "several" for "five," cf. NOTE on xliii 34.

3. *the same as our fathers were*. Literally "both we and our fathers," which is standard Heb. but unacceptable in translation since only one ancestor was still alive.

4. *to seek sojourn*. That is, permission for temporary residence; not "to sojourn" without modification, since the necessary permission should not be taken for granted.

in this country. Literally "in the land." Heb. *'ereṣ* appears in this narrative in three related connotations: (1) "country" as a political entity; (2) "land" in general (cf. vs. 1); and (3) "region," as with Goshen (*passim*) or Rameses (11), which are merely districts within a country.

5 f. The translation follows LXX both in the order of clauses and in supplying a sentence which is now missing in MT. The fact that LXX is self-explanatory indicates that the disturbance in MT is relatively late. The authenticity of the Greek version should be clear from the context; note especially the logical transition from 4b (Please, may we stay in Goshen) to 6b (Yes, they may stay in Goshen). Above all, the sentence

which LXX supplies will readily account for the difficulties in the received text: the added part ends with "Pharaoh turned (spoke) to Joseph, saying," the identical clause that both MT and LXX read in 5a. Such endings (a feature known as homoioteleuton) often cause copyists to confuse the first occurrence with the second, and hence skip the intervening part; for a parade example, cf. I Sam xiv 41, where LXX comes again to the rescue in a context of unusual importance. The upshot in the present instance has been the loss of a sentence and the consequent dislocation of 5b-6a.

6a. *at your disposal*. Literally "(open) to/before you"; cf. vs. 18.

7. *paid respects*. Cf. vs. 10.

8. *How many are the years you have lived*. The natural translation would be simply "how old are you?" But the question has to contain "the years," since the answer goes on from this very word.

9. *The years I have been granted*. The literal "the years of my sojournings" would be misleading. Jacob cannot be alluding to his ancestors' actual wanderings, inasmuch as Abraham's total time outside Mesopotamia was exactly 100 years, whereas the present verse goes on to say that Jacob cannot match his forefathers in this respect; this point gains in significance when *P* is found to be the author of all the relevant passages. The alternative, therefore, is to interpret the noun *m^egūrīm* in some other sense. But "pilgrimage," which has often been proposed, is unsatisfactory; such an allusion to wandering through life has rightly been suspect as unduly sophisticated. But the attested range of the stem *g-r* includes "to live on sufferance" (see especially xix 9), and this suits the present context admirably: any time that man is allowed to stay on earth is but borrowed time.

10. *took his leave*. For Heb. *bērēk* in the sense of either "to greet on arrival" (vs. 7) or "to bid farewell," cf. NOTE on xxviii 1.

11. *region of Rameses*. Used as a synonym for Goshen (which is *J*'s term). It is, however, an anachronism, since the royal name became popular only under the Nineteenth Dynasty (not before the end of the thirteenth century).

2. *down to the youngest*. Literally "according to the little ones," which is obscure; perhaps, including the least significant members of the household, or the like; cf. vs. 24.

13. *in any country*. Literally "on all the earth," but hardly "in all the land (of Egypt)."

16. *I will make distribution*. Literally "I will give/sell," without direct object.

17. *he saw them through*. Literally "he guided them."

The question may be raised at this point why it was necessary for the Egyptians to exchange their livestock for bread when it would have been

simpler, and more provident, to kill off their animals gradually as a means of feeding themselves. No plausible answer is immediately apparent. A possible reason may be sought in the existing animal taboo; another would be the exigencies of storytelling.

18. *our persons*. Literally "our bodies, carcasses," perhaps in the sense of "our bodily shells."

our farm-land. Heb. 'ādāmā, as distinct from 'ereš; the emphasis is on arable land.

21. *reduced them to serfs*. Aside from the evidence of Sam. and LXX, and the mechanical nature of the slight chance that is involved (*h'byd* . . . *l'bdym* for MT *h'byr* . . . *l'rym*, primarily *D/R*), the reading here adopted is strongly favored by the context. The people had offered themselves for servitude, according to vs. 19. Nor would the transfer of the entire rural population—the overwhelming majority of the people—be practicable or serve any conceivable purpose.

24. *and to feed the children*. This is obviously related to the last phrase in 12, which is obscure (see above). The omission of the present passage in LXX hints at trouble of some sort, without betraying, however, its nature and significance.

COMMENT

Joseph presents his father to Pharaoh, along with several of his hand-picked brothers who have been specially briefed for the occasion (xlvi 31–34). The audience comes off according to plan. The brothers answer Pharaoh's friendly question with all due deference, stressing their pastoral pursuits as instructed. Pharaoh invites them to settle in Goshen. The end of the preceding chapter and the beginning of the present section are thus clearly from the same hand, in this case *J*. It will be remembered that *E* had Pharaoh issue an invitation to Jacob while the latter was still in Canaan (xlv 17 ff.).

The meeting of Jacob and Pharaoh is also recorded by another source. Some critics (cf. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte* . . . , p. 38) would attribute this parallel to *E*. The majority, however, ascribe it to *P* with ample show of reason. The phraseology is distinctly *P*'s; note especially the literal "the days of the years" (f.) and the use of the term *m'gūrīm* (9). More important perhaps is the nature of the context. The subject matter is not primarily statistical as is so often the case with *P*. Neither is it, however, narrative in the

sense that the story is materially advanced; what happens is that the two men meet, at which time polite comments are exchanged in the spirit of "Wisdom" literature. Such an unworldly approach, which totally ignores the essence of the story, is precisely what one is accustomed to in *P*. When Pharaoh shows a courteous interest in his visitor's venerable age, Jacob counters with a modest disclaimer: his stay on earth, on borrowed time, may appear to have been impressive in length, but it has really been brief and insubstantial. These are sentiments that are well known from many wisdom compositions of the ancient Near East.

The rest of the section (13-26) reverts to *J*. It dwells on the increasingly acute effects of the prolonged famine, and thereby highlights the importance of Joseph's precautionary measures. More than one modern writer has found in this report of the enslavement of the Egyptian peasant shocking proof of Joseph's inhumanity. But, as has been stressed repeatedly by more objective students, such censorious comments show little understanding of either history or literature. The Egyptian concept of state, whereby the king was viewed as a god, made the pharaoh an absolute ruler from the start, and hence the owner of all he surveyed, at least in theory (cf. Vergote, pp. 190 ff.). In practice, private ownership of land appears to have been sanctioned in the Middle Kingdom. But the pharaohs would seem to have reasserted their titular rights with the beginning of the New Kingdom, following the expulsion of the Hyksos. The need for a stronger government, which the Hyksos experience was bound to accentuate, may have brought with it corresponding curtailment of individual privileges.

To that extent, therefore, the agrarian changes that are here described may reflect actual socio-economic developments. There is no evidence that Egyptian society would have found such changes to be anything other than constructive. That they should be credited in this narrative to Joseph is part and parcel of his idealized historical image. Pharaonic Egypt followed its own due course, regardless of ancient visitors or modern moralizers.

60. THE BLESSING OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

(xlvi 27–xlviii 22: *J, E,^a /P/*)

XLVII 27 Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen. / They acquired holdings in it, were fertile, and increased greatly. 28 Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years; thus the span of Jacob's life came to 147 years. /

29 When the time approached for Israel to die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If you really wish to please me, put your hand under my thigh as a pledge of your steadfast loyalty to me: do not let me be buried in Egypt! 30 When I lie down with my fathers, have me moved from Egypt and bury me in their burial place." He answered, "I will do as you have said." 31 "Swear it to me," he demanded; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed at the head of the bed.

XLVIII 1 Some time later, Joseph was informed, "Your father is failing."

He took along with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," he^b summoned his strength and sat up in bed.

/³ Jacob said to Joseph, "El Shaddai appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me 4 and said to me, 'I will make you fertile and numerous, and raise you into an assembly of tribes; and I will give this land to your offspring to come as an everlasting holding.' 5 Now your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I joined you in Egypt shall be mine: Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, no less so than Reuben or Simeon. 6 But progeny born to you after them shall

^a On the parts from *J* and *E*, see COMMENT.

^b MT "Israel"; see NOTE.

remain yours; they shall succeed^c their brothers in their inheritance. 7 ^dI want this because,^d when I was returning from Paddan, ^eyour mother^e Rachel died, to my sorrow, as we were traveling in Canaan, only a short distance from Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath—now Bethlehem.” /

8 Noticing Joseph's sons, Israel asked, “Who are these?” 9 “They are my sons,” said Joseph to his father, “whom God has granted me here.” He said, “Bring them to me that I may bless them.” 10 —Now Israel's eyes had faded from age; he could not see. —So Joseph^f brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. 11 Said Israel to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face again, and here God has let me see your progeny as well!”

12 Joseph removed them from Israel's^g knees, and bowed, face to the ground. 13 Then Joseph took both of them, Ephraim with his right hand, to Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand, to Israel's right, and led them to him. 14 But Israel put out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, although Manasseh was the first-born—thus crossing his hands: 15 and he blessed them,^h saying,

“The God in whose ways walked my fathers, Abraham and Isaac,
The God who has been my shepherd from my birth to this day,
16 The Angel who has delivered me from all harm—bless the boys,
That in them be recalled my name, and the names of Abraham and Isaac, my fathers,
And that they may become teeming multitudes upon the earth!”

^c Literally “shall be called by the names of.”

^{d-d} Heb. “T” in emphatic construction.

^{e-e} Reading with Sam. and LXX. MT omits.

^f Heb. “he.”

^g Heb. “his.”

^h So with LXX; MT “Joseph” (cons. *'t-ywsp* for *'wtm*).

17 When Joseph saw that his father had laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, he deemed it wrong; so he grasped his father's hand in order to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's. 18 Said Joseph to his father, "Not so, Father, for the other one is the first-born; lay your right hand on his head!" 19 But his father resisted, saying, "I know it, my son, I know. That one too shall become a tribe, and he too shall be great. But his younger brother shall surpass him, and his offspring shall suffice for nations." 20 And he blessed them then / on that day, saying,

"Through you⁴ shall Israel bless itself,⁵ thus:
May God cause you to be like Ephraim and Manasseh,"

putting Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

21 Thereupon Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and restore you to the land of your fathers. 22 As for me, I give you,⁶ as the one above your brothers, Shechem, which I captured from the Amorites with my sword and bow."

⁴ Singular in Heb.

⁵ Active form in Heb.

⁶ Rest of the clause obscure; see NOTE.

NOTES

xlvi 29. *If you really wish to please me.* Literally "Please, if I have found favor in your eyes"; yet another variation on a versatile idiom.

put your hand under my thigh. For the same phrase, followed by an oath, cf. xxiv 2 (J).

as a pledge of your steadfast loyalty. Here the substance of the oath is expressed indirectly, literally "that you will act toward me with steadfast loyalty," followed by the heart of the matter (burial in Canaan). On the hendiadys describing "steadfast loyalty/kindness," see xxiv 27.

31. Joseph's promise (30) was not enough. Israel demanded an explicit oath.

Israel bowed at the head of the bed. So MT; but the text has given trouble to interpreters all the way back to LXX. The difficulty appears to be due to the verb; the literal "prostrated himself, bowed low" is hard to visualize in the circumstances, hence LXX read the pertinent cons.

mṯh as *maṯṯê* "staff," and not *miṯṯā* "bed," an interpretation which is echoed in Heb xi 21. But the picture of Jacob leaning here on his staff is equally implausible. The trouble derives in all probability from taking the Heb. stem too literally. The term "to bow low" need not signify here anything more than a gesture of mute appreciation on the part of a bedridden man on the point of death. The bow or nod would come naturally from the head of the bed.

xlvi 1-2. The passage would be abrupt and redundant if the author were still *J*. But the transition to "Jacob" suggests immediately that we have here a duplicate account by *E*, who had similar material before him (note "bed" in vs. 2). The ultimate joining of the two statements left its mark in the use of "Israel" and "Jacob" in the same verse.

4. *and raise you into an assembly of tribes*. For virtually the same statement, cf. xxviii 3 (also from *P*).

5b. In consequence of their adoption by Jacob, Joseph's two sons acquire the status of Jacob's sons, on a par with that of Reuben and Simeon (Jacob's oldest).

6. Concurrently, Joseph's younger sons will move up, in terms of inheritance, to the senior spots left vacant by their older brothers; see above, textual note ^c.

7. *to my sorrow*. For this "adversative" sense of Heb. 'alay, cf. xxxiii 13.

8 ff. Direct sequel to vs. 2 (*E*); but the combination of Elohim and the repeated Israel indicates that this passage now represents a fusion of both narrative sources.

10. *had faded*. Literally "had grown heavy"; for the use of the same stem (*kbd*) with one of the other parts of the face (=mouth), cf. Exod iv 10 (impaired speech).

11. *I never expected*. Heb. *pll* has the basic sense of "to estimate"; cf. *p^elilim*, which in Exod xxi 23 means "assessment" (by the husband of the age of the embryo), and in Deut xxxii 31 "(even in) the estimation (of our enemies)."

12. The act of placing a child on the father's knees signifies acceptance of the child as legitimate; the same act also serves to formalize adoption.

14. *crossing his hands*. The verbal form appears to denote "plaiting," if the generally cited Ar. cognate is pertinent. In any case, the context speaks for itself.

15. *he blessed them*. Heb. "he blessed Joseph" is obviously in disorder. Either the *ywsp* of the text is a mechanical slip for 'wtm "them" (with LXX), or the word "sons of" dropped out in Heb.

in whose ways walked. Cf. xvii 1.

19. *a tribe*. Clearly not "a people" in this instance; see NOTE on xxviii 3.

shall suffice for nations. Literally "shall become a quantity of (=sufficient for) nations," i.e., sufficient in numbers to constitute nations (Ehrl.).

20. *Through you.* In place of the singular pronoun LXX and TP read plural, referring to both boys; but MT is acceptable in the sense of "each of you."

shall Israel bless itself. Pointing the conss. *ybrk* of MT as passive (Pual), with LXX, Syr. The trad. vocalization is due to the interpretation of Israel as a person (hence active singular) rather than a people.

22. A laconic and obscure allusion. Part of the difficulty arises from the fact that Heb. *š'kem* may stand either for the city of Shechem or the common noun "shoulder." In the latter case, we would have here a reference to a mountain side or slope, specifically Mount Gerizim, which dominates Shechem. The common noun, however, should be feminine, whereas the numeral that follows in the present text is masculine; the Sam. version makes it feminine (*'ht*), understandably enough, as a welcome allusion to Mount Gerizim. The translation here adopted construes the numeral (actually adjective) *'hd* with Joseph, who is thus described as "the one who is above/unique among" his brothers. To be sure, we have no independent notice of a conquest of Shechem by Joseph; nor does xxxiv state that the brothers who massacred the inhabitants actually retained the city itself. But the alternative interpretation runs up against the same difficulty, inasmuch as "mountain slope" would likewise presuppose possession of Shechem. For the present, at any rate, no plausible solution is in sight.

COMMENT

Joseph's eventful career is now drawing to a close. At such major junctures, the main concern is for the proper link with the next generation, to maintain the continuity of patriarchal traditions. Significantly enough, there appears to be a need to emphasize this continuity in both directions, the past as well as the future—in retrospect as much as in prospect. We have seen that the shift in emphasis from Jacob's generation to the next was marked both by the birth of Benjamin (xxxv 16 ff.: *J*) and the death of Isaac (xxxv 28 f.: *P*). This time, Jacob is on his deathbed, and so he makes far-reaching provisions for two of Joseph's sons. The theme is of sufficient consequence to have found its way into all three sources.

The portions from *P* (xlvii 27b–28, xlvi 3–7) are, as usual, easy

enough to identify: note the characteristic remarks about fertility and increase (xlvi 27b, xlviii 4), El Shaddai (xlviii 3), "assembly of tribes" (xlviii 4) and the geographic term Paddan (xlviii 7)—short for the familiar Paddan-aram. Indeed, the whole of xlviii 4 is but a restatement of xxxv 11 f. (likewise *P*). What is new now is the adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh as Jacob's own sons. The genealogical reason for this extraordinary fact might be traced to the circumstance that the boys' mother was an Egyptian. Another reason, of course, is aetiological, in that Ephraim and Manasseh became eponyms of tribes and thus the equals of Jacob's natural sons. Verse 7 would seem to be irrelevant at first glance. On closer probing, however, its pertinence is easily vindicated. Death had robbed Jacob of his beloved Rachel (cf. the Akk. personal name *Išlul-ilum* "god has taken away," to designate a replacement). Hence Jacob feels justified in substituting two of Rachel's grandsons for such other sons as fate may have prevented her from bearing.

As for the remainder of the section, however, the source analysis is a task of a different order. *J* is plainly the author of xlvii 29–31. This is shown not only by the use of the name Israel (29, 31), but also by the "hand under thigh" form of oath, which is known elsewhere from only one passage (xxiv 2) in a celebrated account by *J*. The burden of this statement, made especially solemn by its deathbed setting (cf. xxvii), is that Jacob is to be buried in Canaan and not in Egypt's alien soil.

In xlviii 1–2, on the other hand, *E*'s hand is unmistakable. The name of the patriarch is now given as Jacob (see NOTE loc. cit.). The fragment, moreover, parallels the antecedent notice about Israel's impending death.

Verses 8 ff. constitute an obvious sequel to vs. 3, as is immediately apparent when the two passages are read consecutively. Joseph takes his two sons to be blessed by their grandfather, who raises himself to a sitting position (2), whereupon he notices the boys (8). The author, therefore, is once more *E*, so that the repeated mention of Elohim (9, 11, 15 *bis*) comes as no surprise. Yet the patriarch is now called Israel (10 ff.) instead of Jacob; and the blessing in vs. 20 would seem to be repetitive. It appears probable, therefore, that *E* and *J* are now so fused that they can no longer be pried apart.

A deathbed blessing is irrevocable, as we know from xxvii 33. Joseph tries to make sure that the hands of his unseeing father would

not be misdirected. But Jacob crosses his hands, thus reversing the order of seniority, as though guided by an inner light. Thus the story anticipates history: Manasseh, originally the more prominent of the two tribes in question (cf. the order in Num xxvi 28, 34–35), was eventually outstripped by Ephraim, the ultimate leader of the Israelite group. For the enigmatic last verse, see the NOTE *ad loc.*

61. THE TESTAMENT OF JACOB
(xlix 1–27: X)

XLIX ¹ Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather round that I may tell you what is in store for you in days to come:

² Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob,
Listen to Israel your father.

³ You Reuben, my first-born,
My strength and first fruit of my vigor,
Exceeding in rank and exceeding in honor!

⁴ Unruly like water, you shall excel no more;
For you climbed into your father's bed,
Thus defiling my couch ^ato my sorrow.⁶

⁵ Simeon and Levi are a pair;
Their wares^b are the tools of lawlessness.

⁶ My person must not enter their council,
Or my being be joined with their company!
For they killed men in their fury,
And maimed oxen at their whim.

⁷ Cursed be their fury so fierce,
And their wrath so relentless!
I will disperse them in Jacob,
Scatter them throughout Israel.

⁸ Your brothers shall praise you, O Judah,
Your hand ever on the nape of the enemy—
The sons of your father shall bow to you.

^{a-a} Assuming cons. 'ty, in the sense of xlvi 7; MT 'th "he climbed"; LXX, TO "you climbed."

^b MT obscure; see NOTE.

- 9 A lion's whelp is Judah;
 You have batted on prey, my son.
 He crouches like a lion recumbent,
 A lion's breed—who would dare rouse him?
- 10 The scepter shall not move from Judah,
 Or the mace from between his feet,
 °To the end that tribute be brought him,^o
 And to him go the peoples' homage.
- 11 He tethers his ass to a vine,
 His purebred to the choicest stem;
 In wine he washes his garments,
 His robes in the blood of grapes.
- 12 His eyes are darker than wine,
 And his teeth are whiter than milk.
- 13 Zebulun shall dwell by the seashore,
 Which shall be a haven for ships;
 And his flank shall be based on Sidon.
- 14 Issachar is a rawboned ass,
 Crouched amidst saddlebags.
- 15 When he saw how good was the homestead,
 And how very pleasant the country,
 He bent his shoulder to burdens
 And became a willing serf.
- 16 Dan shall govern^d his kindred
 Like other tribes in Israel.
- 17 May Dan be a serpent by the roadside,
 A horned snake by the path,
 That bites the horse's heel,
 So that backward is tossed the rider.
- 18 I long for your deliverance, O Yahweh!

o-o Obscure; see NOTE.

^d Heb. *ydyn*, play on Dan.

- 19 Gad shall be raided^o by raiders,
And he shall raid at their 'heels.
- 20 Rich shall be the yield^o of Asher,
And he shall furnish dainties for kings.
- 21 Naphtali is a hind let loose
That brings forth lovely fawns.
- 22 Joseph is a wild colt,^h
A wild colt by a spring,
Wild asses on a hillside.
- 23 Archers in their hostility
Harried and attacked^h him.
- 24 Yet each one's bow stayed rigid,^h
And their arms were unsteady,
By dint of the Champion of Jacob,
^kThe Shepherd, Rock of Israel,
- 25 The God of your father who aids you,
Shaddai who grants you his blessings—
Blessings of heaven above,
Of the deep that couches below,
Blessings of breast and womb,
- 26 ^lBlessings of grain stalk and blossom,
Blessings of mountains eternal,^l
The delights of hills everlasting.
May they rest upon the head of Joseph,
The crown of one set apart from his brothers!

^o Heb. *ygdnw*, along with *gdwd* and *ygd*, all plays on Gad.

^h So LXX, Syr., Vulg., reading '*qbm* for MT '*qb*, where the final *m* has been erroneously moved to the next line.

^h Literally "bread, food."

^h Relating the whole verse to fauna and not, with tradition, to flora.

^h MT obscure.

^h Trad. "strong," with reference to Joseph; LXX has "strong/with strength," *metà krátous*.

^k Preceded in Heb. by *miššām* "from there," misread for *miššēm* "on account of," for which see TO, Syr. Omitted in the translation as redundant.

^{l-1} See Deut xxxiii 13 ff., and cf. NOTE *ad loc.* for details.

27 Benjamin is a wolf on the prowl:
Mornings he devours the prey,
And evenings he distributes the spoils."

NOTES

xlix 1. Superscription, whereby the poem is attributed to Jacob. The name of the patriarch betrays a hand other than *J's*; but the heading does not necessarily stem from the compiler of the poetic sayings.

in days to come. Not "in the end of days," with tradition, but in the days to follow; cf. the analogous Akk. *ina arkāt ūmī* "in the future."

3. *You Reuben, my first-born*. The pronoun is appositional (you Reuben), not predicative (Reuben, you are); cf. vs. 8. The first three lines constitute the address. Such a statement as "you are my first-born" would be banal in this context.

exceeding in. Heb. *yeter* (twice), used as a construct adjective; cf. the cognate Akk. (*w*)*atar*, notably in the familiar *Atar-ḥasīs* "exceeding wise."

4. *you shall excel no more*. The verb (*tōtar*) is correctly pointed as Hiphil. The suggested repointing to a Niphal (intransitive/passive) following LXX, to yield "you shall remain, survive," would destroy the subtle literary effect (you were, but shall no longer be *yeter*), aside from contradicting the historical data (Reuben did survive, after all). This is yet another example of the "elative" Hiphil; cf. JCS 6 (1952), 81 ff., and see NOTE on iii 6.

Thus defiling my couch to my sorrow. MT literally "then you defiled; my couch he climbed." But the first verb requires an object; what is more, in the corresponding passage I Chron v 1, we actually find "he [Reuben] defiled his father's couch." The source of the difficulty lies in the last word, Heb. cons. *'lh*, which in this form had to be interpreted as "he went up." Yet TO and LXX give here the second person, which helps very little, except to indicate that the problem is of long standing. The very slight change of *'lh* to *'ly* (*h* and *y* are not unlike in the old script) yields an adverbial phrase, which we know from xxxiii 13 and xlviii 7, instead of a discordant and disruptive verb. To be sure, this is an emendation (accepted by SB); but the received text is unmanageable, contrary to usage, and acknowledged as a stumbling block by the oldest versions. That at least some portions of this old poem are demonstrably corrupt is shown most clearly by vs. 26.

For the offense that is alluded to here, see xxxv 22.

5. *a pair*. Literally "brothers," two of a kind.

wares. Heb. *mkrtyhm*, an old and stubborn puzzle. The form lends itself to a variety of derivations, none of which has proved convincing. Traditional "weapons" involves the anachronism of a Greek etymology. The ancient versions reflect little more than guesswork. Syr. and many moderns adduce the consonantly identical noun in Ezek xvi 3 and xxi 35, meaning "origins"; others operate with "schemes, plots, ruses," on flimsy linguistic grounds. The translation offered above hazards the possible, but unsubstantiated, derivation from *mkr* "to sell, trade"; it is intended as a neutral rendering and nothing else.

lawlessness. See xvi 5.

6. For the verb *b-'* used of participation in a council, cf. xxiii 10.

being. Tradition "glory," which is a frequent mistranslation of Heb. *kābōd*. Even when applied to the Deity, this noun usually has the meaning of "essence, being, presence"; and with mortals, "glory" is altogether out of place. LXX reads *kābēd* "liver, mood," which has been adopted by many moderns; but this is not a logical parallel to "self, soul."

For the pertinent incident and its setting, cf. COMMENT ON xxxiv.

be joined with. Cf. Isa xiv 20; a suitable parallel to "enter" in the preceding phrase. Although the form appears to have caused trouble in more than one ancient version, the only problem is a grammatical one; the pronominal prefix is feminine, whereas *kābōd* is always (and *kābēd* usually) masculine; in fact, Sam. has here the masculine prefix. But the preceding parallel verb is feminine, which may have caused the error by attraction.

at their whim. Literally "at their pleasure, will," with the nuance of "willfulness."

8. *shall praise . . . Judah*. The verbal form (*yōdū-kā*) is in assonance with Judah; cf. xxix 35.

9. *You have battened*. Literally "you have risen, gone up" in the metaphorical rather than physical sense.

a lion's breed. Generally translated "a lioness"; for the latter, however, we would expect the feminine form of the noun, for which cf. Ezek xix 2. The several biblical synonyms for "lion" designate various breeds (e.g., the Asiatic as opposed to the African) or stages of growth. It so happens that no direct synonym is available in English.

10. *mace*. Etymologically, something pertaining to a legislator or one in authority; and from the context, an analogue of the scepter. When the dignity was seated, the staff would rest between his feet.

To the end that tribute be brought him. Although this is one of the most widely discussed passages in the Bible, the clause continues to defy solution. Traditionally, the cons. are broken up into 'd ky yb' šylh. The main stumbling block is the last group (variant šylw), which elsewhere stands for the sanctuary of Shiloh. On this basis, the phrase might be

rendered either "until he [Judah] comes to Shiloh," or "until Shiloh comes." But the first runs into various difficulties, chronological as well as substantive, among them the decisive fact that Shiloh was an Ephraimite and not a Judaeian shrine. The latter rendering involves faulty grammar, in that the verb should be feminine and not masculine; nor would the Heb. be idiomatic in such a case, and even if it were, the statement would remain incomprehensible. In these circumstances, it is methodologically precarious to construe the phrase, with rabbinical and later interpreters, as a Messianic allusion to David, who never had much to do with Shiloh. There is even less of an excuse to import for the same purpose the rare Akk. noun *šēlu* "counselor," when Hebrew (and Akkadian) had various direct terms for "ruler." Now is the situation improved if *šylh/w* is emended to *mšlh/w* "his ruler"; what would be the antecedent of "his"? Where the procedure is so forced, it tends to condemn itself. In a poem that is manifestly pre-Davidic on every apparent count, one does not strain for veiled references to David.

The older versions, notably LXX, TO, and manuscripts of Sam., appear to have read *šellō* "what is his, due him," with the general sense of "until he comes into his own." Perhaps more to the point is an old Midrashic interpretation, followed by some of the medieval Jewish authorities, which operates with *šay lō* "tribute to him," in agreement with the cons. text (cf. Ps xxvi 12, following Rashi); for the phrase and context cf. Isa xviii 7, where even the accompanying verb is analogous in meaning ("shall be brought"), and close enough in its written form (*ywbl* : *yb'*). The sequel would then be in perfect poetic parallelism (tribute is brought him: homage is his). The whole, then, would affirm that Judah is assured of a position of leadership. The above translation reflects this particular reading, without undue confidence, as the one that is least objectionable.

There is another possibility, however, which called for bolder remedies but is more plausible on the whole. The parallel Song of Moses, Deut xxxiii, contains in its concluding verse the phrase "your enemies shall come fawning to you" (29), the verb in that case being *ykḥšw*. If the same form was present here originally, the clause may have read **dyw ykḥšw lh/w* "his foes shall come fawning to him," with a perfect sequel in "and the peoples' homage shall be his." The required change would be no more drastic than the well-supported alterations in vs. 26. At a minimum, the conjecture is worth noting in passing.

11. *purebred*. Literally "the young of (his) she-ass," for which see Zech ix 9, and cf. W. F. Albright, ANET, p. 482, n. 6. The identical phrase is now known from Mari, in the form of *mār atānim*; for the meaning "choice, purebred ass," as against the literal "ass foal," see Noth, *Gesammelte Studien*, 1957, pp. 144 f., n. 8.

12. *dark(er)*. Heb. *ḥaklīlī*, cognate of Akk. *ekēlu* "to be dark."

13. *a haven for ships*. Heb. uses the term *ḥōp* twice, the first time with seas and the second time with ships; there is, however, the possibility of textual corruption in the latter instance.

14. *saddlebags*. Against trad. "sheepfolds," cf. A. Saaristo, *The Boundary between Issachar and Naphtali*, 1927, p. 92.

It is apparent that this pronouncement is caustic rather than complimentary.

15. *homestead*. Literally "place of repose, stability."

16. *Like other tribes*. Literally and trad. "one of," in the sense of "any other" (Ehrl.).

17. *is tossed*. Literally "falls"; cf. NOTE on xiv 10.

18. In all likelihood a marginal gloss or a misplaced general invocation; alternatively, the cry of a tumbling rider (Ehrl.).

19 f. On the erroneous verse division, see textual note *f*. All the other names, with the exception of Joseph, head their respective passages, and even the latter is without preposition.

21. The meaning of this distich depends entirely on the pointing of two words, cons. *'ylh* and *'mry*. The trad. reading of the first yields "hind"; but different pointing (*'ēlā*) would yield "terebinth," and this is what both LXX and TO appear to paraphrase; the accompanying article happens to be applicable to either form (a hind let loose; a branching tree). But the ambiguity is increased rather than resolved by the second word; for, depending on the vocalization, *'mry* may be "crowns, crests, tops" (*'amīrē*), "words" (*'imrē*), or "fawns" (*'im-mārē*)="lambs" in Aramaic and Akkadian). Many of those who accept the received text and render "hind," still translate "words" in the next phrase; but the picture of an articulate animal, or an eloquent Naphtali (note the masculine form of the pertinent participle), gives rise to serious misgivings. It so happens, however, that the received *'imrē* is a permissible reduced form of *'immārē* > *imm^rrē*, so that even the pointed text does not oblige us to separate the hinds from their young.

22. This verse, which introduces the long pronouncement about Joseph, leads to more problems than any other passage in the poem; but it also affords better prospects of a solution than, for example the "Shiloh" phrase in vs. 10.

a wild colt. The trad. "a fruitful bough" is vulnerable on various counts. Heb. *prt* could conceivably be connected with the stem for "to be fruitful" and "fruit," but that would still be a long way from an unspecified fruitful tree. Besides, the other such metaphors in this poem are taken from the animal world, not the flora: lion's whelp (9) raw-boned ass (14), serpent (17), and wolf (27), not to dwell on the ambiguous allusion in vs. 21 which was discussed in the preceding NOTE. More important still, the present saying about Joseph is closely paralleled in Deut xxxiii, where the counterparts are an ox and a wild ox

(vs. 17). Lastly, in the present passage, the next new term features animals once again, as we shall presently see, in apposition to *pri*. On this combined evidence, the phrase *bn pri*, in which *ben* designates a member of the given class, cannot but point to the animal world. Nor is the etymological basis far to seek; it is provided by the established term *pere'* "wild ass, equid," which is found in the poetical books and has already been met with in xvi 12; our *pri* (whatever the correct vocalization) would thus be the feminine form of *pr'*. The following phrase, then, depicts the same animal by a spring—recalling a common theme in Tablet I of the Gilgamesh Epic—and not a fruit tree, which would have to be transformed into a vine according to the prevailing interpretation.

wild asses. MT cons. *bnwt š'dh*, whose first element, literally "daughters," is forced to serve as "shoots, branches," and the accompanying verbal stem is made to mean "to climb, run over." Yet Arabic dictionaries carry the term *banāt ša'dat* (the exact phonologic counterpart of the Heb. phrase before us) with the undisputed meaning of "wild ass(es)," as noted by Ehrl. The complete correspondence with our Heb. term cannot possibly be ascribed to mere coincidence. On this basis, Ehrl. viewed the preceding *pri* as a corruption of the common Heb. noun *pārā* "cow." There is no reason, however, to change species in the middle of a metaphor. Wild asses are logical literary companions of wild colts (of ass, horse, or onager); and the otherwise troublesome *š'dh* turns out to be an integral component of the term.

hillside. Heb. *šūr* is a poetic term for "wall, terrace," cf. II Sam xxii 30; Ps xviii 30. The picture, then, is that of spirited young animals poised on some nearby elevation.

23. *in their hostility*. This represents the last of the three Heb. verbs in this clause; literally "and they opposed him."

and attacked him. MT cons. *wrbw*, which is generally derived from a questionable stem *rbb* "to shoot." Sam. and LXX read *wyrbhw* (from *rīb*) "and they contended with him," which the translation above reflects.

24. Here begins a long sentence which carries through 26a. In this regard, the present passage is paralleled by the pronouncement about Joseph in the Song of Moses, Deut xxxiii 13–16a. Both sayings, moreover, end with the identical distich (26b : 16b). The parallels are very helpful, precisely because they diverge in certain details.

Yet each one's bow stayed rigid. Traditional "But his bow abode in strength." The principal question is whose bow was involved. Heb. has the pronoun suffix "his," which is why tradition has made Joseph the subject. But we have just learned that the shooting came from the opposition; and singular forms can often be used collectively or dis-

tributively. LXX, moreover, read *wišbr* (for Heb. *wišb*) "it was broken," thus assigning the weapon to the hostile archers (and following up with "their bows"). The second Heb. word (*b'ytn*) normally describes something permanent. But if the text is right, and the bows belong to the enemy, the emphasis in this instance has to be on "rigid, inflexible." (For an illuminating parallel of a bow that failed, cf. the Akkadian myth of "Zu," ANET, p. 515, lines 16 ff.; and the military inventories from Nuzi often list bows that lost their resilience.)

their arms were unsteady. The pronominal suffix is again singular in Heb., and is to be interpreted the same way as with the bow. The predicate (Heb. *wyprw*) has an Ar. cognate (*fzz*) meaning "to tremble, shake."

By dint of. Literally "by the hands of"; the favorable result of the contest is traced to the intervention of Joseph's protector, the Champion (literally the "mighty one") of Jacob.

In the translation, "by dint of" carries over to the next phrase. MT gives *mšm*, vocalized *miššām* "from there," which is neither a coordinate of *mīdē* "by the hands of" nor appropriate to the context. TO, however, reads *miššēm*, "by the name," which can be a divine epithet ("Name," cf. SB), or can have the force of "because" (cf. Aram. *miššūm*, Akk. *aššum*).

Rock. Literally "stone"; if correctly transmitted, the epithet is an unusual one; cf. M. Dahood, *Biblica* 40 (1959), 1002 ff.

25. *who grants you his blessings.* The corresponding Heb. form governs the detailed list of blessings as given in 25b-26a.

26a. MT reads "the blessings of your father have been mightier than the blessings of my progenitors, unto the desire of the everlasting hills." This reading is hopeless on more counts than one: (1) the poetic meter is suddenly abandoned; (2) the prosaic content is even more disturbing; (3) emphasis shifts abruptly from boons to beneficiaries; (4) the term for "progenitors" (literally "conceivers") is without parallel in biblical Heb., the only form otherwise known being in the feminine singular (Hos ii 7; Song of Sol iii 4), and having the natural sense of "mother"; (5) the attested term for "parents" is *'ābōt*; (6) the connection with the next clause is disrupted; (7) above all, the parallel text in Deut xxxiii 15 gives *hrry qdm* "the ancient hills," which is paralleled in turn by *hrry 'd* (same meaning) Hab iii 6, the obvious prototype of the present *h(w)ry 'd*. The only difference is the graphically slight change of *r/w* (in the "square" script); but the misreading was sufficient to throw the rest of the verse completely out of balance.

It remains only to restore the beginning of the verse (26). With the "parents" (*hwry*) of the second hemistich gone in favor of "hills," the

text's "your father" is now all the more out of place. The received cons. text is as follows:

brkt 'abyk gbrw 'l—for which read (with SB)

brkt 'abyb wgb'l

"blessings of grain-stalk and blossom." The whole sequence becomes at once natural and cohesive—and an analogue to Deut xxxiii 13 ff. There can be little doubt that this, or something very close to it, was the original wording of the passage.

one set apart from. In Heb., the same term that is used to designate the "nazirite," one who is distinguished from his fellows and consecrated to a specific task.

27. *on the prowl.* Literally "who tears (the prey)."

prey. Heb. 'ad, a rare noun, the meaning of which is not definitely established; another possibility is "foe."

COMMENT

The traditional designation of this poem as the "Blessing of Jacob" is a misnomer, since the pronouncements are not always favorable. Indeed, the first three sons are sternly reprov'd, and the very word "cursed" is employed in vs. 7. The misleading label is based no doubt on vs. 28, where the stem *brk*, normally "to bless," is used; but that passage is manifestly from a different source. To be sure, the analogous composition which constitutes Deut xxxiii is described as the Blessing of Moses in its superscription; but the tone of that poem is uniformly benign. There are thus good reasons for renaming the poem before us as the Testament of Jacob.

Aside from its poetic form, the Testament is notable also for its approach to the subject matter. Elsewhere in Genesis, the descendants of Jacob are treated as individuals; here they are considered as tribes, as is explicitly stated in the colophon (28a, see next section). This puts us immediately on guard as to the authorship of the piece. We miss here the typical indications of the three familiar sources. The occurrence of the name Yahweh in vs. 18 cannot be viewed as a valid criterion, inasmuch as this term is part of a brief ejaculation (three words in the original) that has little, if anything, to do with the body of the poem, and could well be a displaced or marginal gloss. In vs. 2, the names Jacob and Israel occur side by side, yet it is obvious that the distich is not the joint effort of *E* and *J*. The superscription cites Jacob, but this is not part of the

poem, and there is no way of deciding when it was added, or by whom. Most important of all, the body of the poem proves to be much earlier, on internal evidence, than even *J*, the oldest of the tangible sources. At best, *J* may have collected the tribal sketches before us and incorporated them at this point as a pertinent poetic retrospect and prospect.

The Testament of Jacob invites comparison with two other poems in which the Israelite tribes pass in review, i.e., Deut xxxiii and Judg v. The latter, the celebrated Song of Deborah, deals with one specific occasion—the critical war against a Canaanite coalition—in the early period of Judges, and cannot therefore be properly aligned with the present composition. The Blessing of Moses (Deut xxxiii), on the other hand, is a much closer analogue, as was indicated above. The pronouncements that are attributed to both Jacob and Moses cover an indeterminate period of time. Both are general in their characterization, and each abounds in poetic imagery and obscure allusions. And since each tribe is a subject unto itself, the reader is obliged to make his way without the guiding thread of a connected context.

The Blessing of Moses is the later of the two collections not only because of the titular author but also on internal grounds. Simeon had apparently ceased to exist as an independent tribe, while Levi is praised for his piety; the only significant feature that is common to both poems is their great respect for Joseph, which is expressed in similar terms. The Testament, for its part, still knows Simeon and Levi as impetuous and worldly; and the memory of Reuben's moral offense is fresh in the poet's mind. All of which points to an early stage in the Israelite settlement in Canaan, with some of the allusions resting perhaps on still earlier traditions. In no instance is there the slightest indication of a setting later than the end of the second millennium. Small wonder that the text is now uncertain at a number of points. Where the Blessing parallels the Testament, notably in the case of Joseph, the younger composition helps to correct obvious errors in the older poem, which was exposed to greater attrition in the long process of transmission.

For the most part, however, the interpretation of this poem is beset with extraordinary difficulties, as is to be expected from a work of such scope, complexity, and antiquity, and replete with unfamiliar expressions and allusions. It is indeed doubtful whether some of the problems here encountered can ever be resolved with any de-

gree of confidence. On several points there is considerable disagreement among the oldest versions, and this lack of a firm tradition complicates still further the task of modern scholarship. At times, the attempted solutions are diametrically opposed to one another. Verses 21 and 22, for example, contain metaphors from the plant world according to some translators, and from the animal world according to others, even though each school operates with the same consonantal text.

In these circumstances, a comprehensive commentary on this poem would require a book in itself. Indeed, a summary of views about the four words in the "Shiloh" passage (10) would fill a good-sized monograph. Since such exhaustive detail would be neither suitable nor feasible within the present framework, the comment and notes have been held down to bare essentials. Having been warned about the problems and pitfalls of this particular section, and the tentative nature of some of the conclusions that are here embodied, the reader may be referred to more detailed works and special discussions. Among the recent articles on the subject are B. Vawter's "The Canaanite Background of Gen. 49," *CBQ* 17 (1955), 1-18, and J. Coppens' "La bénédiction de Jacob," *VT* 6 (1956), 97-115.

62. DEATH OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

(xlix 28-1 26: P, /J/, |E|)

XLIX 28 All these were tribes of Israel, twelve in number, and this is what their father said about them as he bade them farewell, addressing to each an appropriate parting message.

29 Then he gave them instructions as he said to them, "I am about to be gathered to my kin. Bury me with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave that lies in the field of Machpelah, facing on Mamre, in the land of Canaan—the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site. 31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, and so were Isaac and his wife Rebekah; there, too, I buried Leah— 32 the cave and the field in it having been bought from the children of Heth."

33 When Jacob finished his instructions to his sons, he drew his feet into the bed, breathed his last, and was gathered to his kin.

L /1 Joseph flung himself on his father's face and wept upon him as he kissed him. 2 Then Joseph ordered the physicians in his service to embalm his father, and the physicians embalmed Israel. 3 It required forty days, for such is the full period of embalming; and the Egyptians bewailed him seventy days. 4 When that wailing period was over, Joseph addressed Pharaoh's court as follows, "Do me this kindness and convey to Pharaoh this appeal: 5 My father put me under oath, saying, 'When I die, be sure to bury me in the grave that I made ready for myself in the land of Canaan!' May I, therefore, go up now, bury my father, and come back?" 6 Pharaoh replied, "Go and bury your father, as he made you promise on oath."

7 So Joseph left to bury his father; and with him went up all

of Pharaoh's officials who were senior members of his court, and all of Egypt's dignitaries, ⁸ together with Joseph's household, his brothers, and his father's family; only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the region of Goshen. ⁹ Chariots, too, and horsemen went up with him; it was a very large train.

¹⁰ When they arrived at Goren-ha-Atad,^a which is beyond the Jordan, they held there a very great and solemn memorial observance; and Joseph^b observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father. ¹¹ When the Canaanites who inhabited the land saw the mourning at Goren-ha-Atad, they remarked, "This is a solemn mourning by the Egyptians." This is why "the place^c was named Abel-mizraim^d—which is beyond the Jordan."/

¹² Thus Jacob's^e sons did for him as he had instructed them. ¹³ His sons bore him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, facing on Mamre, the field that Abraham had bought from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site.

/¹⁴ After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father./

|¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Suppose Joseph is resentful toward us and tries to pay us back for all the wrong we did him!" ¹⁶ So they sent Joseph a message, as follows, "Before his death, your father left these instructions: ¹⁷ You shall say to Joseph, 'Forgive, I urge you, the crime and faults of your brothers who treated you so harshly.' So please, forgive the crime of the servants of your father's God!" Joseph broke into tears at this word from them.

¹⁸ Then the brothers went to him themselves, flung themselves before him, and said, "Let us be your slaves!" ¹⁹ But Joseph replied to them, "Have no fear. How could I act for God?"

^a A place name, literally "threshing place of brambles."

^b Heb. "he."

^{c-c} Literally "it."

^d Wordplay on "mourning"; see NOTE.

^e Literally "his."

²⁰ Besides, although you meant me harm, God meant it to good purpose, so as to attain the present end—the survival of many people. ²¹ So have no fear now. I will provide for you and your children.” Thus he reassured them by speaking to them with affection.

²² Joseph stayed on in Egypt together with his father’s family. Joseph lived 110 years; ²³ he lived to see the third generation of Ephraim’s line, and the children of Machir son of Manasseh were also born on Joseph’s knees.

²⁴ At length, Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die. God will surely take notice of you and take you up from this land to the land that he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” ²⁵ Then Joseph put the sons of Israel under oath, saying, “When God has taken notice of you, be sure to take up my bones from here.”

²⁶ Joseph died at the age of 110 years. He was embalmed ‘and laid to rest’ in a coffin in Egypt. |

t-t Heb. impersonal; Sam. passive.

NOTES

xlix 28. This verse could be placed just as readily at the end of the preceding section. The first half is a colophon, to go with the superscription in vs. 1, and it may be due to the compiler of the poem. The rest of the verse, at any rate, appears to stem from *P*, who is clearly the author of vss. 29-33.

about them. So rather than “to them,” since the various sayings were primarily about the respective tribes, a term that is used here explicitly.

as he bade them farewell. For this connotation of *brk* see especially xlvii 10, and cf. NOTE on xxvi 31; accordingly, the corresponding noun is here “a parting message” rather than “blessing.”

29. *my kin.* Heb. *am* in the singular stands for “people, tribe,” but in the plural the sense is normally that of “kin.” In this verse, the term is pointed as singular, but in vs. 33 as plural, although the phrase is the same in both instances. It follows that either the form has been mispointed or the singular could also have the sense of “kin.”

1 1. *flung himself upon.* Cf. xiv 10. Verses 1-11, 14 stem from *J*.

3. *forty days.* According to Diodorus Siculus I 91, the embalming proc-

ess lasted more than thirty days, while Herodotus speaks of as many as seventy (Dr.); Diodorus also states (I 72) that the Egyptians mourned their kings seventy-two days. Cf. also Vergote, pp. 197 ff.

4. *that wailing period*. Literally "his days of wailing."

5. *put me under oath*. Not "made me swear," for what follows is not the wording of the oath taken by Joseph but the content of the promise that Jacob exacted from his son. The Heb. stem in question can carry either of these meanings.

I made ready. For the pertinent verb, see NOTE on xxvi 18.

7. *senior members . . . dignitaries*. Heb. "elders" in both instances.

9. *train*. Literally "camp"; cf. xxxiii 8.

10. *Goren-ha-Atad*. A place name based evidently on some locally prominent threshing center. The customary translation "threshing floor of Atad" is not a suitable topographic designation. Analogously, Akk. *magrattu* (from **ma-gran-tu*), perhaps a cognate of Heb. *goren*, denotes in the Nuzi texts both private and communal threshing areas.

seven-day. The normal wailing period among the Hebrews; cf. I Sam xxxi 13.

11. *the place was named*. Literally "its name was called," the pronominal suffix (feminine) presupposing "the city's."

Abel-mizraim. This aetiology rests on the popular equation of *ʿēbel* "mourning" with *ʾābəl*, probably "watercourse, conduit"; cf. BASOR 89 (1943), 15, n. 44.

15-26. This account comes from *E*.

16. *they sent Joseph a message*. Literally "they ordered for Joseph," apparently elliptical for "they ordered someone to inform Joseph"; but LXX reads "they drew near to Joseph," suggesting an error in MT in anticipation of the same verb ("left instructions") in 16b.

17. *at this word from them*. Literally "as they spoke to him"; the brothers, however, have not as yet appeared in person.

19. *How could I act for God*. Same phrase as in xxx 2 (also *E*).

20. *you meant . . . God meant*. Cf. the proverbial "man proposes, God disposes."

21. *speaking to them with affection*. For the same Heb. idiom cf. xxxiv 3.

22. *110 years*. The Egyptians viewed this span as the ideal lifetime for a man; cf. Vergote, pp. 200 f.

23. *on Joseph's knees*. That is, in time for Joseph to accept them formally into his family; cf. xxx 3.

25. *put . . . under oath*. Cf. vs 5.

the sons of Israel. As previously noted (xxxvii 3), this phrase is not exclusive with *J*.

COMMENT

The Book of Genesis carries its account down to the end of the story of the patriarchs. This major milestone is now before us, and all three of our principal sources are on hand to witness it. As was to be expected, however, each author writes *finis* in his own characteristic fashion. Yet, while the differences of *J*, *E*, and *P* from one another are thus plainly in evidence, the three concluding passages have this feature in common: the stay in Egypt is but a passing phase, a sojourn; the focal point continues to be the Promised Land. Hence the physical remains of the main characters in the cast must not be left in alien soil; they are to be taken back to Canaan.

The verse that now constitutes xlix 28 is at once a colophon to the preceding section, the Testament of Jacob, and a transition to the epilogue of the book as a whole. It is probable that this verse has been pieced together from two different sources; in any event, vs. 28b comes from *P*, as do also 29-33 and 1 12-13. *P* foreshadows the eventual shift back to Canaan no less than *J* or *E*. But *P*'s main concern remains formal and impersonal. Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah (xxiii) gave Abraham a legally valid foothold in that land. And so it is there that Abraham's grandson must be buried, in conformance with patriarchal precedent.

J (vss. 1-11, 14) also ends the story of the forefathers with the death and interment of Jacob—who is again referred to as Israel (vs. 2). But it is the personal aspect of the story that this source emphasizes, here as elsewhere. Joseph is deeply moved by his father's death. Israel is embalmed, in accordance with the practices of the host country. The period of mourning that follows corresponds in round figures to the seventy-two days that were reserved for the pharaohs themselves (von Rad). Pharaoh is then petitioned to let Joseph accompany the funeral party to Canaan. The request is made through intermediaries, perhaps because of local taboos calculated to shield the Egyptian god-king from direct contact with persons who had been exposed to a corpse. After another period of solemn commemoration prior to the burial, Joseph and his people return to Egypt. This detail serves as a reminder that, although Jacob is gone, the Egyptian phase has barely begun for his descend-

ants. But in the background there is always the main course of history, with all its twists and turns—and with occasional glimpses of an ultimate purpose.

E (vss. 15–26), for his part, brings his story down to the death of Joseph. Even in this brief passage, the author manages to assert himself again as a moralist. Joseph's brothers have never been able to rid themselves of the sense of guilt incurred when Joseph was still a boy. Now that the moderating influence of their father has been removed, the specter of reprisals comes up to plague them afresh. They fling themselves at Joseph's feet, as if to validate the dream recorded in xxxvii 7. In the end, Joseph succeeds in allaying their fears. It may be noted in passing that the problem of the brothers' guilt was no longer an issue with *J*. For him the matter had been resolved a long time ago, when his brothers met their severest test (xliv), which established them as morally regenerated.

Joseph's thoughts, too, turn in his dying moments to the Promised Land, as did Jacob's. Those at his bedside swear to see to it that his remains shall be removed to Canaan; and it is actually recorded that this promise was carried out in due time (Exod xiii 19). For the time being, however, the Sojourn is still unaccomplished, and it is to be followed by the extreme crisis of the Oppression. Significantly enough, the last Hebrew word in the book reads "in Egypt."

The interval between the death of Joseph and the emergence of Moses represents a dark age in two ways: (1) the Israelites in Egypt fell upon evil days; and (2) the available record is limited to a few meager references at the beginning of the Book of Exodus. Nevertheless, circumstantial evidence indicates that the quest which began with the patriarchs was never completely abandoned. It required, however, the challenge of the Oppression and the inspired leadership of Moses to reactivate that drive and give it new impetus and direction. The Genesis phase had served its purpose. In time, biblical history will enter upon its next stage, the Hebrew term for which (stem *yš'*) denotes not only physical departure but also spiritual liberation. It is in this dual sense that "Exodus" has to be evaluated.