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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

# THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM

(Genesis 37-50)

BY OXONIUS

THE space given to the history of Joseph is very considerable, hardly less than to Abraham; it occupies more than a fifth of the book of Genesis; yet the more is told the more comes to sight which might have been told, only that the necessary limits of a book called for contraction and not completeness. Much of the discrepancy discovered by the critics in this account of Joseph is not really inconsistency but variety of statements which may well be complementary, and the limits of space make extensive omission of original matter more than probable.

There may be no *a priori* objection to the use of more than one document in its original wording more or less modified, but at the same time no actual discrimination should be accepted without serious weighing of substantial evidence.

Mr. D. C. Simpson, in his *Pentateuchal Criticism*, says that "in the story of Joseph, the compiler who united J and E into a single whole, did his work with consummate skill and ably harmonized the two strands without destroying the distinctive characteristics still observable in each." He has no doubt harmonized the documents in a masterly manner, restricting himself conscientiously to their words while producing a result at variance with both. It will be well to write out in full under the head of J and E the verses or parts of verses beginning at v. 17 of the thirty-seventh chapter in which Dr. Driver (*LOT*, 7th Edition, p. 18) finds "two complete *parallel* accounts of the manner in which Joseph was taken into Egypt, each . . . connecting with two corresponding narratives in the chapters following." <sup>1</sup>

J.

37:17. And Joseph went after his brethren and found them in Dothan. (18) And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. (21) And Reuben (*read* Judah) heard

it and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let us not take his life. (25) And they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold a travelling company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. (26) And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? (27) Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. (31) And they took Joseph's coat and killed a he goat and dipped the coat in the blood. (32) And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father and said, This have we found, know now whether it be thy son's coat or not. (33) And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces. (34) And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. (35) And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said For I will go down to the grave to my son mourning. And his father wept for him. Ch.:39 (1) And Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and an Egyptian bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down thither.

E.

37(19) And they said one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh. (20) Come now therefore and let us slay him and cast him into one of these pits, and we will say An evil beast hath devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams. (22) And Reuben said unto them Shed no blood, cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him, that he might deliver him out of their hand to restore him to his father. (23) And it came to pass when Joseph was come to his brethren, that they stript Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colours that was on him, and they took and cast him into the pit. (24) And the pit was empty, there was no water in it. (25) And they sat down to eat bread

(28) And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen, and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and they brought Joseph into Egypt. (29) And Reuben returned unto the pit and behold Joseph was not in the pit, and he rent his clothes (30) And he returned unto his brethren, and said The child is not, and I, whither shall I go. (36) And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard.

If it is claimed that we have here two complete accounts parallel but inconsistent, we may on the other hand claim that the Bible story, granting for the moment a few slight and superficial points of difficulty, is as simple and consistent as it is touching; and that if it is curious that the one account can be split into two complete and inconsistent accounts, it is no less curious that these two accounts so naturally unite into one of such simplicity and consistency.

But Dr. Driver exaggerates the completeness of the separate J and E stories. In J's account the Reuben of v. 21 has to be altered to Judah, or one differentiating characteristic breaks down. Again in v. 18 Joseph is still afar off, at the end of v. 27 they sell him to the Ishmaelites, and nothing is told of him between, no mention of his arriving where the brethren were, and J has been showing no reluctance to insert what might seem even superfluous details. E's account here begins with Joseph coming in sight of his brethren. The last mentioned of him by E was his telling his dreams at home. It is not said how he came to be joining his brothers away from the father. Here is one incompleteness. Again after Reuben has missed him from the pit, and reported it to the rest, the scene passes for good into Egypt, no notice whatever of the way either brethren or father received the news. It would no doubt be said that the originals had each a fuller account. But when so much is made of the silence of documents, it must be remembered that the actual silence is largely due to the compiler's handiwork and not to the originals, and we can't assume that the compiler rejected nothing but what ex-

isted in duplicate. And secondly if the compiler was striking out so freely on this side and that, the presumption is that where he did not strike out, but gives what look like diverse accounts, he had a meaning in it. But it is clear that in omitting, the critics' compiler did not omit only one of two parallel accounts. In the Bible story Reuben visits the pit and is startled to find Joseph away, which he could not have been had he been with the rest at the time of the sale. Much is made of the fact that he is never said to have left them. However seriously we take this omission the critics do nothing to help us, but multiply the difficulty by ten. For their E says nothing of what the brethren did, other than eat when the Midianites got hold of Joseph and took him away. The natural interpretation of the account is, that the pit was at no great distance, no mention is made of their transporting Joseph far, or going back a long way to eat their meal. Reuben has called it *this pit*, implying that it was in sight. If so, Joseph cannot have been carried off unawares to his brethren.

Another of "the self contradictions which have been the butt of the shallow gibes of the sceptics," but from which the critics in their zeal for "the real abiding worth of the scriptures" would deliver us is that "throughout the story in J Judah is more to the front, whereas in E Reuben takes the lead." This is what they have entered in their note books, so extracting the pith of the matter, that we need not again turn to the Bible. But refer to it all the same and you will find the account simple and of a piece, so vivid and natural, and at the same time so penetrating into character that it sounds like life. Judah was the heart of the Southern Kingdom, Reuben hung on the fringes of the Northern, but the men here are not described in a way to excite pride in posterity, or to gratify contempt. They come out simply as men in their own personal character. What more natural than that in a family of more than one the elder or eldest should start with a lead and responsibility, but that in the change and pressure of circumstances he should, whether through his weakness or the superior vigour or ability or adapta-

bility of a younger, have to give place. Reuben as eldest feels a responsibility which sets him above any too desperate jealousy of Joseph, while knowing what reason his brothers have for dislike, and able to understand their jealousy of the favourite. He is horrified at the idea of murder, at the idea, too, of having to face his father without Joseph. He is full of genuine good feeling. But he has not the strength of moral courage to bear it out, and so is ineffective. He can carry his brothers so far with him, that they will substitute a slow death by starvation for bloodshed, but he dare not press them further; as soon as Joseph is safe in the pit, he goes off. Perhaps his work required it, but he is glad not to face the fact that the devil in their hearts still wanted watching. Earlier it was said Reuben heard it, as if he was not actually with the party of brothers, and so we are prepared for his independent movement. The caravan would probably be visible a long way, but if he saw it stop by the brothers, he may have thought it was for some dishonest work of the sort Joseph had been reporting and that he was best away.

In the next mention of Reuben the brothers in Joseph's presence are recalling their cruelty and Reuben reminds them of his own better counsel. "Spake I not unto you saying, Do not sin against the child and ye would not hear, therefore behold his blood is required." All these passages of Reuben are given to E, but E has not before told us this, unless feebly in the "Let us not take his life" of v. 21 which the critics give to J altering Reuben into Judah. Reuben whatever he meant in himself, had at the most only tried to move them to alter the form their sin against Joseph should take. Again neither in J nor E had they any reason to think that Joseph was killed; yet Reuben says His blood is required. The critics make nothing of these points, for they have no interest in doing so; but they make much of other indications which are no more substantial. From this speech of Reuben's we see how easily a crude and precarious logic might build insecurely on slight indications.

In the remaining mention of Reuben he is taking the

lead in persuading his father to send Benjamin on their next journey to Egypt. He uses a monstrous inducement. "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not unto thee"; as if the slaughter of grandsons could be any compensation for the loss of a son. Perhaps he hoped by the extravagance and vehemence of his offer to soften something the resentment of his father. Jacob in the Bible order does not address a reply to Reuben, but to all his sons; taking no notice of Reuben's words he reiterates his refusal. The impression given is that among the brothers the leading place had been naturally allowed to Reuben, and Jacob may have passively acquiesced, but when it comes to action he will not recognize it. He neither can nor will trust Reuben. All this quite fits in with Jacob's account of Reuben's character in Ch. 49. His strength is the strength of water which can afford no firm foundation (not to insist on A. V. *unstable*).

In the 37th and 38th chapters Judah appears in a discreditable light; but by the second journey into Egypt he is justly trusted by his father. It is natural to find in 38:26 at his discovery of the truth about Tamar, the turning point of his character and to place this after the sale of Joseph. He, like Reuben, shrinks from murder, but, unlike Reuben, only from that. All that needs further pointing out is that he only comes to the front in Reuben's absence, not as contesting Reuben's lead, but as dealing with a new circumstance which has made a new method, *i. e.*, sale possible. Similarly later on when the brothers are insisting on Benjamin going with them, Judah only comes forward when it is plain their father will allow no weight to anything Reuben may say. All through the narratives the mentions of Judah suggest nothing but truthfulness as opposed to any sort of fiction, all is natural with no second aim either of glorifying an ancestor or manufacturing a good story. Yet the recurrence of the contrast between the two brothers seems to point to one author throughout.

The conclusion is that Reuben and Judah give not the smallest support to the critics; so far from it, were their

analysis into documents proved by other evidence, this would still be a scruple in the opposite scale.

With the next point it is different: the mention of Midianites by the side of Ishmaelites, and the omission of the article with them. The LXX indeed have it *οι ἀνθρώποι οι Μαδιηναῖοι οι ἔμποροι*, but the critics would I suppose fairly regard this as a testimony rather to the need of the article than to the original reading. The suggestion of a difference of source is *prima facie* reasonable, and is allowed to be possible, though not even were it granted need it at all carry with it the double story of the way Joseph was got rid of. But it presents a difficulty which other explanations would escape. "Come let us sell him to the Ishmaelites"; and then the very next verse, "And there passed by Midianites merchantmen." The change of expression is very noticeable. Change of expression *prima facie* would point to change of meaning. To the critics it can have no interest and no significance except as pointing to a variety of source. But the more obvious the change the more difficult to suppose that it escaped the notice of the compiler. It needed no consummate skill of an able harmonizer either to discern it or to avoid it. At every step he is leaving out something of J or E or of both. The whole story of Joseph as preserved in his tribes, perhaps in Joshua's family, is likely to have been much too long for the general history to accommodate; in Ps. 105 we have particulars unrecorded in Genesis and there may have been many more. What simpler for the compiler than to stick to J, which he has followed in the preceding three verses and will do nearly to the end of the verse and to leave unrecorded just these words, "And there passed by Midianites merchantmen." It is far more natural to suppose that the editor let this stand because it added some new point. This is clearly the case in the word merchantmen. Hitherto the travellers have only been described as carriers, it might be for governments or business houses, to whom traffic on the way would not be in the usual line of business. But when they arrived they were just the men the brethren wanted. As to Midianites nothing is known

bearing on the point except that from Judges 8:24 it appears that later on the same men might be both Midianites and Ishmaelites. The impression given by the Bible account as it stands is that Ishmaelites is here used generally, as we might say Arabs, and that Midianites are a class of them. If these are descended from the son of Keturah, and if there is no sufficient time for a tribe to have evolved (though no great number of men is wanted here) we might suppose the names to have been attached later in the currency of the story. But Ishmael may have gathered a sort of nomad empire over many tribes and his name cover these and many more than his own descendants. It is quite reasonable then to suppose that the mention of Midianites had at that time some pertinent associations. It is nothing against the Bible story that we do not know what these were; but as a sample of the sort of thing meant, they may have been known specially in the slave trade.

According to the critics, J makes the brethren sell Joseph and knows nothing of the pit; E makes Midianites steal him and knows nothing of their selling. In Ch. 45 which is given entirely to E except three short phrases, two of which are now to be mentioned, we read *whom ye sold into Egypt* and *that ye sold me hither*, which are therefore withdrawn from E and assigned to J or J's influence. This may be possible, but it is no evidence of fact. The witness of chapter 45 is dead against the critics' theory. Direct evidence may be false and may be parried; but if no weight is to be allowed to any evidence which can in any way be parried or explained away, the law courts might dispense with all evidence and all witnesses.

Possibly the Greek translators are right in not attaching much importance to the absence of the article in 37:28. The abridgment of a longer account might explain, *e. g.*, the omission of a passage containing Joseph's entreaties and remonstrances, or his brethren's debate or other matters, and on resuming, the travellers are introduced afresh and described more exactly. Or the brethren may be seated a little distance from the main track which

most of the caravan pursue; while one detachment whose business was to pick up bargains on the way diverged to pass them, so that these Midianites, though belonging to the party mentioned, are not identical with them.

The critics quote 40:15, "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews" and maintain that this is not the account of our Ch. 37, but cut the text in two and we have it in E where the Midianites take him out of the pit behind the brethren's backs. The answer is first a direct denial. According to the undivided account he was stolen. Possibly the reader is arrested for a moment by the phrase, but he instantly recognizes its accuracy. He has paused in thought because the stealing was attended by circumstances so much worse, and so unusual that we do not generally think of it as such. But it was so; this common sense says, and the strictness of technical language confirms. Under the head of *Stealing children*, an English Law Dictionary says, "This offence consists in taking away a child under the age of fourteen years [probably a statutory limitation] with intent to deprive any parent, guardian, etc., of its possession." The brothers were the first thieves, and they employed as accomplices the traders, knowing that they would convey Joseph away and in all probability to Egypt. For this "I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews,"<sup>a</sup> is a condensed but quite accurate expression. What should Joseph have said? Simply "I was sold" to imply it was just an ordinary honest process of transference. Or should he have mentioned his brethren's part. To say nothing of filial piety and strong family feeling, which would make such a crime shame to himself, what prudence could there be in it? Would not the great men have said, "A kind and partial master has put you here for a vile attempt: your own family at home found you intolerable: you may be a sharp, active fellow, but we quite understand the rest." Again take the supposed account of E. The Midianites come across a boy left alone in a cistern from which unassisted escape is impossible and assistance improbable. They rescue him from starving to death even if they enslave him. Would

Joseph, unexpectedly rescued from destruction, have remembered them simply as thieves? So far as they went they had stolen him from death and from no other owner. Here is a point which no technical training is needed to estimate; and the way it is treated by the critics is a weight in the wrong scale as regards their authority.

The next points relate to Joseph's stay in Egypt up to the time when he stood before Pharaoh. The contrast is in the main between J in chapter 39, and E in chapter 40.

In J Joseph is sold to an unnamed Egyptian, a married man, who for an offence puts him in prison, where the governor appreciates him highly and gives him oversight of other prisoners. After that J has no more to tell us of Joseph till after the brethren's first visit to Egypt Judah tells his father that the man had warned them he would not have them there again without Benjamin. How he got out of prison, and how he came to the position of laying down the law to foreigners, J tells us absolutely nothing; dreams cannot have had to do with it for they are E's copyright.

According to E he is sold to Potiphar, a high officer of Pharaoh's, a *saris*, which is regularly rendered eunuch. The offenders of rank are confined not in prison but in Potiphar's house, and he appoints to wait on them his servant Joseph who is neither a criminal nor a prisoner.

As to what looks the only point-blank difficulty, the married state of a eunuch, it is enough to refer to Driver's notes on Genesis 37:36, and chapter 39 (foot note), from which we seem not seriously to differ if we regard it less as a difficulty than as a question the answer to which is doubtful. For the rest, in order to hold that in J Joseph's master is unnamed we have to erase the last half of verse 1 of chapter 39. He is called (Ch. 39) an Egyptian: if this requires explanation we may easily find it in the fact that a foreign dynasty was on the throne with foreign ministers and officers just as under the Chinese Empire one was told that such and such an official was Chinese. That the name Potiphar does not recur but he is described in some such way as Joseph's master is not unnatural, as

he only interests us through Joseph. But such matters of style can be made too much of. In Exodus 18 Jethro has his name given seven times in the first 11½ verses. In the remaining 15½ of which he is almost equally the subject, not once. And throughout the chapter the description "His father in law" stands almost everywhere it could stand even where a pronoun might suffice or the subject be simply omitted; but the critics are not engaged on their sources here.

It is natural to ask, how could prisoners be confined at the same time in the Captain of the Guard's house and in a prison; so natural that it is not surprising the writer thinks it worth while pointing out how that is. In Ch. 40:3, Pharaoh put his officers "in ward into the house of the Captain of the Guard, the Round House (so Dr. Driver renders it), the place where Joseph was bound, and he has prepared for this, as the critics point out, by describing in the last chapter 39:20 the Round House as the place where the King's prisoners were bound. These are explanatory, or if you like, harmonizing notes; but they are remarks which it is perfectly natural for the original writer to make. Such explanatory notes come quite simply into narratives, as in a letter or other account, "Now I must explain that, etc.," where for some reason the reader or hearer might find a little difficulty in exactly piecing the story.

The Round House, according to the writer of Genesis 40, was one of the buildings which together constituted the house of the Captain of the Guard, the expression house covering more than residence, as Samuel is said to be buried in his house. We know nothing of the Egyptian Captain of the Guard nor of his duties, only from these chapters; but there is nothing to surprise us in one of the duties being the charge of the king's prisoners; and in Chapter 30 are expressions allowed to J which point to the Egyptian there having authority over a prison. It is said "Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison," as if he had authority over the prison and its officers and need not first hand over to judicial or executive authorities to punish. And then the place is

not called by a common word for prison, but by this singular name, *Beth has Sohar*, the exact meaning of which is very uncertain, though what it denotes is sufficiently described. It is quite natural that only the Captain of the Guard and not the Governor of the Jail should appear in chapter 40. Pharaoh's dealings would be with his own high officer and not directly with a subordinate, and so, in dealing with prisoners as high in rank as himself, the Captain of the Guard himself saw to the arrangements for them, did not simply commit them to the Governor; and he it was who gave Joseph, not to be over them as over ordinary prisoners, but to wait on them, a prisoner on prisoners. The most stubborn traditionists would allow that, if you go through chapters, striking out all that points to the place being a prison and Joseph a prisoner, the residue will know nothing of place or man in these characters, but they object to the logic of the method.

To come now to the famine and the brethren's first visit to Egypt. In 42:13 (E) the brethren seem to volunteer in informing Joseph of Benjamin's existence; that accords with their report to Jacob, verses 25-32 (E), when they are said to have told him all that had befallen them; whereas J (43:7; 44:19) makes them tell it only in answer to Joseph's explicit enquiry.

Leaving 42:13 (E) for the moment, it is plain that J exactly agrees with 42:32 (E). For 43:6 (J) when they are urging Jacob to send Benjamin saying "for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you," Jacob replies, "Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother," showing that what they had so far reported on the matter was exactly what E says they did and no more. Then in answer to their father they supply the detail "The man asked us straitly" and on the next occasion (44:19) speaking to Joseph do not omit it. The writer will then in 42:13 merely be taking the liberty with the reader which the brethren took in first reporting to their father, the liberty we all take in reporting conversation (unless possibly some persons of inhuman

wearisome exactitude) and understand in conversation reported to us, the liberty regularly taken in newspaper reports of cases in the law courts, of giving consecutively the matter of a witness's answers without the questions which elicited them.

The next point is that E mentions the detention of Simeon as a hostage, J does not. As chapter 43 is ascribed to J we should be ready to point to vv. 14 and 23 as disproving this; but the critics give the words in these verses to E, or a redactor borrowing from E. Why? Apart from this arbitrary assignment the name Simeon occurs twice in E and once in J; but as to the general mention of a hostage it is likely that it should occur oftener while the arrangement is taking shape than afterwards, and in the doing than in the undoing. But it is said Simeon is not mentioned at the beginning of ch. 43 (including 42:38) where the question of a second visit to Egypt is in debate. One must ask with surprise what difference this could possibly have made. The critics would only have got out their paints and painted it the E colour and continued to say with a good conscience, J knows nothing of Simeon as a hostage. And how do they know J said no more of Simeon when so much of J is omitted by the compiler, and the important difficulty was only over Benjamin. Or again who was to bring up Simeon in the argument. Jacob (E is silent here but what we have of his favours this) of his own mind did not think it worth risking Benjamin to get Simeon; he was standing out against a second journey under the circumstances, so it was not for him to bring out an argument against himself. The brethren anyhow had tact enough not to raise an argument, pitting Simeon against Benjamin, which would have stirred all Jacob's jealousy for Rachel's sons against the rest. Jacob had good reason to be anxious about Benjamin. He had lost Joseph and the others had given such explanation as they could. But as time went on and he could observe them, their manners and behaviour, what they said and what they did not say, one much less keen and deeply ruminant than Jacob would see that they knew more about Joseph's dis-

appearance than they had told and suspect foul play on their part. It would be a cloud between father and sons, enhance the value of Benjamin and make more reasonable the doubt whether he could be safely entrusted to the rest. If there were anything in the omission of Simeon at one point of J, E's treatment is still more striking. Do the nine burst in with the sad news that Simeon is not with them. Far from it. They never mention Simeon, do not even say they are not all there; but after telling words that passed between Joseph and them, mention his proposal to keep one of them as a hostage. They do not say whether Joseph carried it out, nor if so which was the one detained. Jacob makes no remark at all, does not even ask which it is, and they set to work emptying their sacks, and each proved to have in his, his money returned. Then Jacob is stirred to speak and bewail, and the loss of Simeon comes out as one of his misfortunes. What has J colder towards Simeon than this. After all, from what they heard and saw of Joseph in Egypt, they would feel he was a man who meant to be just, and would keep Simeon safe; and when food was scarce, it was something to have one mouth less to feed. The Bible story gives the impression that the matter of Simeon had no great weight in determining the second visit to Egypt, and we have no reason at all to doubt that was the case, and also that up to that point there was no real anxiety about him, though had that state of things been much prolonged it might have been otherwise. Anyhow any slight difficulties would be better explained by omissions from one more fully detailed story than by the conjunction of two inconsistent ones. For on this point in the matter of tone and the matter of fact, J and E are at one.

The next points are genuine ones; there is no simple manufacturing of enclaves, and the two verses (42:27, 28) ascribed to J are not extracted from the middle of an E chapter altogether arbitrarily. For a needed explanation variety of source is properly suggested.

The three passages in which a discrepancy is found are 42:27, 28; 42:35; 43:21. In the first and third pas-

sages the discovery of the money in the sack is made at the lodging place, in the second on arriving home in their father's presence. The 43rd and 44th chapters are, as a whole, given to J including 43:21. The 42nd is, as a whole, assigned to E, but verses 27, 28 are taken out and given to J, partly as giving a different account of the discovery, but also as containing the word for sack (*amtáhath*) which is otherwise found only in the J chapters. This assignment then has not the arbitrary character of many. In the other, the second passage, the discovery is made at home, in a chapter which is as a whole E, including this verse 35. In both cases the discovery excites alarm.

Then as was said, an explanation is called for, and the critics explain by saying that J made the sacks opened at the inn, E at home. The counter explanation is that the discovery at the inn was only of one man's bundle, at home it was of all; the first discovery in one sack was unpleasant, but the thing might have been accidental, the second, the money in all, shows plainly a purpose, and presumably a malign one. Dr. Driver tells us that as in v. 27 it is literally "*the one, i. e., the first one opened his sack,*" J went on to tell about the rest. But in that case the question is what did he tell about them. If the compiler suppressed it for harmonistic purposes, why did he not suppress both verses 27, 28 with 43:21, unless he thought this also reconcilable. As a fact, in literal strictness, there is no opposition in 43:21, for they do not tell the steward they found the money when they opened the sacks, but it was there then. But without insisting on this what they wanted to bring home to him was that all the money had been restored and that this had been done in Egypt; to prove that they say it was in their sacks at the lodging place. This they have deduced from the facts that it was in one of the sacks at the lodging place, and in all on reaching home, but it was not worth troubling him with the exact process by which they reached this conclusion. Still a slight difficulty remains. It is possible that there was no new discovery at home, but the sight of all the bundles with suggestions

from their father renewed their fears and opened the view of more painful possibilities.

The other point connected with the last is that from the middle of verse 27 the word for *sack* changes and instead of *saq* we have *amtáhath*, a word found only in this passage, *saq* not occurring again except twice in v. 35. The word *saq*, though very common as the name of a mourning material, is rare in the meaning of *bag* which outside this chapter is found distinctly only in the story of the Gibeonites, Josh. 9, though in Lev. 11:32 all meanings would be included; and the frequent mention of the material might show that its use for bags was fairly common. Here chapt. 42 contains all the four occasions of its use in the history of Joseph, 3 in E and 1 in J, a small number of cases and a divided number, so that no strong argument can be drawn from them. And v. 27 (J) would show that sources alone are not enough to explain the change of word. "The first opened his sack to give his ass provender, and he saw his silver and lo it was in the mouth of his *amtáhath*." This is not poetry and therefore in spite of the LXX we may confidently say the *saq* and the *amtáhath* would be different things, or at least, that the words are not simply synonymous. Indeed the LXX rendering exhibits the feeling that if the meanings are identical the words should be identical. In this verse difference of source is not in question, for it is all assigned to J. One obvious explanation would be that here at least the *amhátath* was carried inside the bulkier sack with the provender; another perhaps that the *amtáhath* was a sack with compartments one of which was called the mouth.<sup>4</sup>

That *saq* should be a word of more general meaning would suit two of the cases where it is used by E; Joseph, v. 25, in unimportant points would word his orders generally and, v. 35a they would be emptying all their receptacles. But in verse 35b the bundles are distinctly said to be in the sacks, it might be as containing the *amtáhath* in which the bundles were, or else as a term including the *amtáhath*. But it is best to offer no suggestion of the relation of sack and *amtáhath* as certain

only that v. 27 shows the words are not simply of identical meaning and that *saq* is found so rarely and on the whole explicably in E, occurring as it does also in J it cannot be set up for a characteristic of E as against J's *amtáhath*. Still the only contents of the *amtáhath* mentioned are what may be called personal articles, money, journey food and the silver cup; and it is because the interest turns so much on two of these that the word *amtáhath* comes to be preferred.

Three words are used for the containing bags, vessel, sack and *amtáhath* (v. Payne Smith, Ellicott's Bible, Genesis 42:27). Vessel is a very vague word, but here it seems to be used only of the sacks<sup>s</sup> holding produce, the main supply of corn brought from Egypt and Jacob's present of fruits sent to Joseph which would be taken by servants on their own asses; for this purpose no other word is used and *vessel* occurs only in this use, except in the vaguest sense 45:20. Sack, as was suggested, with a more extended use might also be applied specially to something larger and rougher than the *amtáhath*, which is rendered by Payne Smith "travelling bag" and he thinks each rider carried his behind him on his beast. The word *mouth* is associated only with *amtáhath* and not with sack.

The LXX render  $\rho\psi$  by *σάκκος* and  $\eta\eta\eta\eta$  by *μάεσιππος*, the only exception being that identifying the sack and the *amtáhath* mentioned 42:27, they feel bound to render both by *μάεσιππος*. Of this, whether or not correctly identifying it with *amtáhath* they had a distinct idea. In v. 27 for the word opening they say *λύσας*, loosing or undoing, and they are unable to make sense of the expression "in the mouth of the *amtáhath*," in most cases saying simply "in the bag" or "bags," but 42:27, *ἐπάνω τοῦ στόματος* over the mouth and 44:1 *ἐπί τοῦ στόματος* upon the mouth. What the arrangement can have been which made this phrase *in the mouth* a difficulty, and *upon the mouth* plain is hard to imagine and helps to show how natural it is there should be difficulty in exactly grasping the arrangements of the original in all details. Details are multitudinous and in them is a natural home of irregu-

larity, yet only a few can be recorded, and so it is to be expected that slight difficulties should occur in them, still more that it should be possible to propound unanswerable questions which can be represented as difficulties.

*Jhvh* and *Elohim* in ch. 37-50.

We will take these names under two heads. Use (1) by the narrator, (2) by the characters of his story. That this classification is reasonable and relevant is practically owned by Dr. Driver where he says (LOT, 7th Edition, pp. 18, 19): "The use of God elsewhere in these sections in converse with Egyptians or between Joseph whilst in disguise and his brethren is naturally inconclusive either for E or against J." But we need not grant that here is the only difference of force between the two names.

(1) The author's own wording:

*Jhvh* Ch. 38:7, 7, 10; 39:2, 3, 3, 5, 5, 21, 23, 23, eleven times; *Elohim* 46:2.

Here all the *Jhvh* cases are given to J; the *Elohim* to E. The instances of *Jhvh*, though comparatively numerous, are found in a limited context. The three cases of ch. 38 are of the Lord's displeasure with Judah's sons. Of the eight of ch. 39, half are of the Lord being with Joseph in his trouble, half of the Lord blessing him or his employers for his sake. One single example of *Elohim* proves nothing. There is nothing to show that the same writer in other contexts would not employ the other Name whether *Jhvh* or *Elohim*.

(2) In the mouth of the characters

*Jhvh*. No instance; for Jacob's blessing of his sons (49:18) is by the critics excluded from account.

*Elohim*. Accepting Driver's dictum that what may for shortness be called Foreigner use is inconclusive, the following are the inconclusive cases: E. By Joseph 40:8, 41:16, 25, 28, 32, 32; 42:18. By Pharaoh 41:38, 39. J. By Joseph 39:9; 43:29. By Judah to Joseph (yet unrecognized) 44:16.

The only remark on these is that J's speakers, never using *Jhvh*, use *Elohim* three times, showing that J is quite capable of using *Elohim* in its proper place.

The remainder which are to be considered are:

E. By Joseph. To himself 41:51, 52; to father or brethren 45:5, 7, 8, 9; 48:9; 50:19, 20, 24, 25. By Jacob 48:11, 15, 15, 20, 21; by the brethren 42:28.

In the class then of speakers' use J and E are absolutely agreed. Neither use *Jhvh*; and except for a few instances of *El* and *Shaddai* both confine themselves to *Elohim*.

In this class then there is absolutely nothing to differentiate sources.

#### JACOB. ISRAEL.

Jacob as the name of the Patriarch is said to be characteristic of E; Israel of J.

The allotment of names according to the letters in the margin of Driver's Genesis is as follows:

Israel—J. 37:3, 13; 43:6, 8, 11; 46:29, 30; 47:27, 29, 31; 50:2 (11). E 42:5; 45:21, 28; 46:1, 2, 5; 48:2, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 21 (13).

Jacob—J 37:34 (1). E 42:1, 4, 29, 36; 45:25, 27; 46:2, 5; 48:2; 50:24 (10).

If this stood it would mean that E had more cases of Israel than J; and more cases of Israel than of Jacob: but there is now and then a footnote that J's or E's influence is probable in parts marked with the other letter; but there can be nothing clear or certain about this or the margin would have noted it.

In the *table*, p. 17, *LOT*. ch. 37:3-11 is given to E and the ordinary reader cannot see why anyone should divide these nine verses unless to get the Israel of v. 3 away from E and to J: but in the *Genesis* from 2 b (*was feeding*) to the end of 4 is given to J. and in (b) p. 19. *LOT* it is assumed that 37:3 is J and not E. In this note (b) Driver says that it is "probable that in the few passages where in the context of J Jacob occurs (37:34) or in the context of E Israel (45:28; 46:1, 2; 48:2b, 11, 21) the variation is either a change made by the compiler or is due to the use by him of another source." Conjecture is a two-edged weapon, and if the compiler changed the name in these places, so he may anywhere. Consequently

this suggestion would upset the whole value of the two names as indicative of sources, just the conclusion aimed at here.

But it will be seen that only six instances are allowed in *LOT*, p. 19 in which E has Israel whereas the Genesis margin gives 13; this leaves seven to account for.

Of these three, viz.: 42:5, 45:21, 46:5 have *Bne Israel*, which is regularly rendered as referring to a nation "children of Israel," but rendered by A. V. here "sons of Israel," evidently rightly understood to refer explicitly to Jacob in person. The other five are all in ch. 48, vv. 8, 10, 13, 13, 14. Why vv. 8, 10 are suppressed is not said. The only explanation of the omission of 13, 14 is in a note of *LOT*, "Perhaps 13,-14, 17-19 are from J." What can be built firmly on a shifty uncertain bottom like this?

There cannot be properly claimed for "Israel" in these chapters any distinctive value. With "Jacob" it is not quite the same. In the passages marked as J it occurs only once, one of Jacob against 11 of Israel. It is found indeed in ch. 49, which is not allowed to count, and some of the cases of J using Israel might be ascribed to him solely on the ground of this word, and thus the proportion of the number be altered. But more cases of Jacob would not be found. Card players do not expect always to hold an average hand nor is it an incredible wonder if now and then an exceptional one is dealt.

#### GOSHEN.

This is claimed for J alone.

Goshen is found once in E, 45:10; in which, therefore, three words are extracted and assigned to J.

In J we have it seven times in the passage 46:28-47:6, where the entrance and settlement are described, once in 47:27 summing up the settlement, and 50:8, where at Jacob's funeral the women and children stay behind. As for E, after chapter 45 where E is not permitted by the critics to utter the word, what opportunity has E? Only 46:1-5; 48, and 50:15-26.

46:1-5 only brings us to the start from Beersheba.

Chapter 48 is all about Jacob blessing Joseph, no need whatever and hardly any room here for mention of Goshen.

50:5-26. All through these verses Joseph is the centre and he did not live in Goshen. One resolute on mentioning Goshen might have brought it in once or twice by main force, but with what result. No one can doubt the poor stragglers would have been dragged out for execution like the one in ch. 45.

There is a unity in the story which wants more than the critic's arguments to break it up, J and E (so to name the sections assigned by the critics) both have the same main outlines. Joseph unknown to his father, through the brothers' hatred taken to Egypt enslaved, in contact with penal confinement, and rising to the highest power; the plenty and the famine; the brothers' two visits to Egypt; Jacob's reluctance to send Benjamin, and the use made by Joseph of Benjamin for testing his brothers, and yet in both this is buried in the narrative, in neither explicitly stated. Details, too, the coat of many colours, the suggestion of an evil beast, the part played by the bags, and the bundles of money; the use of the word "vessel" only for containers of produce for transport by E 42:25 and by J 43:11. Suppose that two such stories could have varied in some details in the name of the people who took Joseph to Egypt, or the precise point at which the money was discovered, they could not have varied on the cardinal point of the brothers selling, and hardly on such an impressive feature as the pit. Dislocation at these points would imply a far more extensive want of harmony than is found. And the critics show such resolution to build up sources, such incapacity of testing the rawest impressions, if seeming to favour their views, that their judgment ought not to be accepted as final. Their formation of enclaves is delusive, anyhow, to the ordinary reader. He sees a few words coloured differently from the context and thinks they are a witness to the side assigned them; whereas they are like buttresses that do not rest on firm ground but hang on to the building. If the wall is itself strong enough it may support

them, but it gains from them no support, on the contrary their tendency is to pull it down.

The following is the allotment of Genesis 37-50 (R. V.) among J. E. & P. given by letters in the margin of Driver's Genesis. It will appear from the foregoing paper that the margin is in a few cases qualified in the notes as partially uncertain. Questions bearing on P are not dealt with here.

[End=end of verse.]

XXXVII. P.1-2 (*seventeen years old*).

J. 2 (*was feeding*)—4:12-18; 21 (*correcting Reuben*; 25 (*and they lifted*)-27; 28 (*and sold—pieces of silver*); 31-35.

E. 5-11, 19, 20; 22-25 (*eat bread*); 28 (except as above)-30; 36.

XXXVIII. J.

XXXIX. J; except 1 (*Potiphar-guard*); and 20 (*the place-bound*) R (Redactor).

XL, XLI, XLII, E. Except—

XL:3 (*into the prison—end*); 5 (*the butler—end*); 15 (*and here—end*). R.

XLI:14 (*and they—dungeon*) R 46; P.

XLII, 27, 28, 38. J.

XLIII J. Except 14E; 23 (*And he brought—end*) R.

XLIV. J.

XLV. E. Except 4 (*whom—end*); 5 (*that—hither*) R; 10 (*beginning—Goshen*) J.

XLVI. E 1-5; P. 6-27; J. 28—end.

XLVII J. Except 5-11 (but in this 6, *in the land of Goshen* to end, J), 27 (*and they eat*)-28 P.

XLVIII. E, except 3-7 P.

XLIX. From 1 (*and said*)-28 (*spake unto them*) earlier than J but incorporated in J's narrative; the rest P.

L. J 1-11, 14; P 12, 13; E 15-26.

<sup>1</sup>Ch. 37:23-28, 36, 39 are taken from Simpson; the rest from R. V.

<sup>2</sup>Pentateuchal criticism, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>The land of the Hebrews need not mean the land generally known as such, but "the land of my people and of my origin for you are aware I am a Hebrew."

<sup>4</sup> Prof. Margoliouth (Hastings BD. III. 28, Language of O. T.) says מְטָאָה "baggage" Arab, *amti'at*, plural of *mata'*; (it is curious that Mohammed uses this word in the Koran, XII-25, where this verse is represented, 'when they opened their baggage,' *mata'ahum*)." This, it must be allowed, does not help us to a specific meaning of *amtahath*.

<sup>5</sup> *Genesis* 43:11, "In your vessels," i. e., the corn sacks which were going empty into Egypt.