Joseph, Ahiqar, and Elephantine: The Joseph Story as a Diaspora Novella

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Abstract
The possible Egyptian background of the Joseph story has been discussed for decades. While previous research compared the Joseph story to Egyptian texts from the New Kingdom, the present article focuses on material from the 1st millennium BCE. By drawing from the term "diaspora novella," introduced by Arndt Meinhold in 1975, the present article compares the plot of the Joseph story to two texts connected to Egypt: the story of Ahiqar, which was found at Elephantine, and Papyrus Berlin 23071 vs. In light of these texts, the non-priestly literary layer of the Joseph story appears to be a diaspora novella, presenting a concept of identity that can be connected to the "Judahite/Aramaic" diaspora in Egypt during the Persian period.

The present article is dedicated to my esteemed colleague Prof. Dr. Arndt Meinhold on the occasion of his 75th birthday.

In 1975, the Old Testament scholar Arndt Meinhold published an article on the Joseph story, comparing its narrative to those of Esther and Daniel.[1] Meinhold argued for a similar structure in all three narratives, namely, the rise of an Israelite at a foreign court, combined with the ups and downs of sudden changes in the plot. Drawing on a term introduced by Gerhard von Rad and Hermann Gunkel, Meinhold called the three narratives "diaspora novellas."[2] Following this approach I would like to ask whether it is possible to determine the socio-historical *milieu* of the text and to consider the consequences of this *milieu* for the interpretation of the Joseph story.

The scholarly discussion over the Joseph story in the last 45 years has centered around the literary character of Genesis 37–50.[3] The Joseph story has been seen as a "test case" for the different compositional models for the Pentateuch.[4] Therefore, most scholars who present a theory for the formation of the Pentateuch—whether a redactional model (Erhard Blum and Reinhard G. Kratz)[5] or a "renewal of the Documentary Hypothesis" (Joel Baden and Baruch Schwartz)[6]—seek to incorporate the Joseph story into their compositional theories.

It is not the intention of the present article to suggest a new theory on the literary growth of the Joseph story, although any study of Gen 37–50 has to make clear which "text" it has in mind (see below). The main focus below will be the aspect mentioned by Meinhold and others, namely, the composition of the text and its possible socio-political background. In taking this approach, I would like to include material from the "Judahite-Aramaic" colony on the island of Elephantine in Egypt. This material includes the famous story of Ahiqar, as well as a papyrus from the collection of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.

The present article is divided into three parts. First, I will give a brief overview of the so-called Joseph novella, highlighting the main characteristics of the text. After that, I will compare the Joseph novella with the story of Ahiqar and another Egyptian text, and finally, I will present an interpretation of the Joseph story, taking up the term which was brought into the discussion by Arndt Meinhold: the diaspora novella.

1. The Joseph Novella

The Joseph novella in Gen 37–50 seems to be carefully structured. Gen 37 presents the exposition of the story, mentioning the dreams of Joseph, the reaction of his brothers, and the sale of Joseph to traders. Gen 39–41 reports on Joseph's life in Egypt; 42–45 tells of the journey of Joseph's brothers to Egypt due to a famine; Gen 46–49 narrates the journey of Jacob to Egypt; and in Gen 50 Jacob dies and the whole sequence of events is summarized by a theological *résumé*.

It was Hermann Gunkel who first called the Joseph story a "novella" with regard to its unique literary structure.[7] Other scholars followed Gunkel, among them Gerhard von Rad, who famously described the Joseph story as "a novella through and through."[8] Gerhard von Rad's interpretation of the Joseph story is to some extent paradigmatic, since it illustrates a dilemma: On the one hand von Rad emphasized the literary character of the text as a masterful piece of literature, well composed and with a clear storyline. On the other hand, being trained in the approach of the classical Documentary Hypothesis, von Rad tried to divide the Joseph story into different literary sources.[9] In an important article from 1968, R. Norman Whybray summarized:

> The new approach to the Joseph Story which has been pioneered in the writings of Gerhard von Rad suggests, however, that a re-examination of the question of sources is needed.[10]

This statement by Whybray is literally the tip of an iceberg. Since the late 1960s, a number of highly disparate studies on the composition of the Joseph story have been published. Some scholars continued to postulate different literary sources in the story,[11] while others argued that the Joseph story should be taken as a self-standing unit—a piece of literature which is foreign to the Documentary Hypothesis.[12]

Since it is not the purpose of this article to discuss the various literary theories for the Joseph story, let me briefly summarize my own assumptions in four points:

1) The Joseph story (Gen 37–50) must be taken as a piece of literature on its own, despite its alleged role as a bridge between the ancestral narratives and the exodus story. In fact, on a literary level, this bridge is extremely weak.[13] The thematic links that do exist between the Joseph story and the ancestral narratives in Gen 12–36 also reveal several differences.[14] Moreover, in Exodus 1:6–8 the memory of the Joseph story must be wiped out before the narrative of the exodus can begin. Therefore, one should not take the Joseph story, or even a part of it (Gen 37–45), as an appendix to the ancestral history, as Reinhard Kratz and most recently Franziska Ede have argued.[15] Rather, it is an independent piece of literature which was written against the backdrop of the narratives of the patriarchs and then integrated into its present literary context on a redactional level.

2) The redactional level can be distinguished through three literary hands within Gen 37–50: (1) the priestly redactor, often called the "priestly *Grundschrift*" of the Pentateuch, (2) the non-priestly narrative, which contains most of what one calls the "Joseph story", and (3) a number of literary additions, most of them in Gen 46–50 (Gen 46:*1-5, 48 [+ 41:50–52]; 49; 50:22–26).[16] Since the priestly stratum in Gen 37–50 is very small, the term "Joseph story" refers to the non-priestly layer.[17]

3) In a groundbreaking study from 1976, Herbert Donner convincingly showed that the Joseph story (i.e., the non-priestly literary layer) is structured by using the element of doubling ("*Doppelungen*"): This includes Joseph's two dreams regarding his brothers, the two dreams of the court officials and two dreams of the pharaoh. Joseph is incarcerated twice, first in the pit, then in jail, the brothers travel twice to Egypt, etc.[18] In a nutshell, the literary evidence used by previous (and also current) research for distinguishing different literary sources within the Joseph story turns out to be a compositional strategy of the author.[19] Or, to put this in terms of classical pentateuchal criticism: It is not possible to differentiate between two different literary sources such as a "Yahwist" or an "Elohist" within the non-priestly literary layer

of the Joseph story.[20]

4) This "Joseph story" of Gen 37, 39–47, and 50[21] appears to be a masterful composition that is structured by different motifs. The Joseph story is, in the words of Konrad Schmid, "a self-contained, meaningfully planned novella."[22] It is a piece of literature with affinities to the world of wisdom but also with a theological profile that differs strongly from that of many other biblical books, including the so-called "Deuteronomistic History."[23]

Let me explain the last point by highlighting a few aspects of the composition, whereby I am presenting my own interpretation of the Joseph novella.

The main compositional principle can already be found in Gen 37. With Jacob's love for Joseph and his brothers' hatred of him, the foundations are laid for the following events.[24] Joseph has two dreams and shares them, strangely enough, with his brothers and his father. The reader of the text expects something to happen, and this is exactly what is reported a few verses later in Gen 37.

The brothers have gone to pasture their father's flock (v. 12), Jacob sends Joseph to them in the field (v. 13), and when the brothers see him from a distance, they plot to put him to death. In Gen 37:20 the brothers say:

> "Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say: 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams."

Precisely this question will become the crucial question that drives the storyline: What will become of Joseph's dreams? Will they come true? Dreams mark important turning points in the fall and rise of Joseph.[25] While Joseph's dreams involving his brothers get him in trouble in the first place, his ability to explain the dreams of Egyptians (first the two prisoners, then Pharaoh) draw him out of jail and turn him into Egypt's second-in-command.[26]

This motif is further elaborated by the idea that dreams come true.[27] The dreams of the two prisoners (the baker and the cupbearer) come true, as well as those of Pharaoh. And finally, when looking at the end of the story in chapter 50, it turns out that Joseph's first dream is realized as well.

After Jacob's death in Gen 50, the brothers are afraid of Joseph exacting revenge. They come to

Joseph, fall down before him and say, "Behold, we are your servants" (v. 18). Thus, the brothers' question expressed in the phrase "Then let us see what will become of his dreams!" (Gen 37:20) is finally answered. They will all come true.

This motif is complemented by another aspect. In Gen 50:19–20 Joseph answers his brothers:

> (19) "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? (20) And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

The famous words from the end of the Joseph story—"You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good"—shed light on the sequence of events. Everything happens for a reason; it all has a deeper sense, although this deeper meaning is not apparent in the situation itself.[28]

This message is illustrated in the Joseph story by a literary style in which events turn at key junctures. When everything seems to be lost, somebody shows up and the story moves on. So, for example, when the brothers put Joseph in the pit (in Gen 37), some traders pass by who lift Joseph out of the pit and sell him to other men who bring him to Egypt. In Egypt, while sitting in prison, Joseph meets the two Egyptians who have dreams and so on. There can be no doubt that one of the main characteristics of the Joseph novella is the frequency of these turns in the plot, turns which are explained in the end when it becomes clear that all the characters' changes in fortune were caused by a higher power—God.[29]

This corresponds well with another characteristic of the story. In most parts of Gen 37–50, God is not mentioned explicitly[30] but instead acts behind the scenes. When God is mentioned, such as in Gen 39, he does not directly intervene but rather lays the foundation for the protagonist's own actions. So, for example, in Gen 39:21, God gives Joseph favor in the sight of the prison warden. This divine act is complemented by Joseph, who gets out of prison by using one of his main skills: interpreting the dreams of the two prisoners, which ultimately brings him from prison up to the royal court of Egypt.

It has often been observed that this type of divine action refers to a certain theological concept. When Joseph says in Gen 50:19, "I am in God's place?" he refers to God as the one who judges. The Joseph novella is shaped by a theology which can best be

called "theocratic." This theocratic theology shares some similarities with the Chronicler's history, and it stands in contrast to the Deuteronomistic history.[31] Furthermore, the theocratic framing of the Joseph novella is also the reason why it cannot be called a "didactic wisdom story" ("*eine weisheitliche Lehrerzählung*," Gerhard von Rad).[32] Since the beginning of scholarly investigation into the Joseph novella, scholars have highlighted the sapiential coloring of the text.[33] When Joseph explains to Pharaoh the dreams of the seven fat cows and the seven wretched and lean cows coming out of the Nile, he concludes with the words: "And now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt" (Gen 41:33).

Joseph not only tells Pharaoh what to do, but he also advises him to look for a man "discerning and wise" (Gen 41:33). Exactly this is taken up by the Pharaoh who concludes (v. 39): "There is no one so discerning and wise as you are."

Joseph is the wise man whom Pharaoh needs, and Joseph makes this as explicit as possible. He tells Pharaoh what to do, knowing that all of the other dream-specialists failed and that only he is the person who appears to be נבון וחכם "discerning and wise." This is complemented in Gen 41:38 by Pharaoh's statement that Joseph is a man in whom the spirit of God is found (איש אשר רוח אלהים בו).

Upon first glance, Joseph appears to be a wise man, and Gerhard von Rad goes so far as to declare him a role model. But this is only one side of the coin. "Wisdom literature," as Michael Fox points out, "recognizes that the wise and righteous might find themselves in hard times despite their virtues."[34] In the Joseph novella this sapiential principle is combined with the aforementioned theocratic theology. Joseph acts to some extent according to the principles of wisdom, but this is correlated with the insight that God's help is also necessary.

This can be seen in the famous scene of Joseph in Potiphar's house. Joseph does not give in to the seduction of Potiphar's wife. He behaves exactly as the wisdom student should, according to the sapiential instructions on the seductress in Proverbs 5, 6, or 7, yet he still finds himself in trouble.[35] What we have in the Joseph story is a highly developed notion of wisdom, a wisdom grounded on piety and on an insight found in Proverbs 16:9: "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (לב אדם יחשב דרכו ויהוה יכין צעדו).[36]

From the argumentation so far, three points can be emphasized:

1) The Joseph story is a masterful composition which is best categorized as a "novella."
2) Joseph's fall and rise are told by a sequence of events that is driven by one main motif: dreams. Joseph's dreams about his brothers in Gen 37 mark the starting point for all the trouble, his ability to interpret dreams brings him from prison to the royal court, and it is precisely this skill that makes him one of the most powerful men in Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh.
3) All of this is reported in a style in which God acts, so to speak, "behind the scenes," though it ultimately turns out that God was the power behind the journey of life. On the one hand, God creates the basis for the sequence of events, while on the other the main turns of fortune are brought about by Joseph himself, who uses his practical skills and his judiciousness.[37]

2. THE EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND OF THE JOSEPH NOVELLA AND THE STORY OF THE WISE AHIQAR

From the beginnings of scholarly investigations on Egypt and the Bible, scholars have paid special attention to the Joseph novella. Among the first was Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg from Berlin University. In his 1845 book, *Egypt and the Books of Moses, or, the Books of Moses Illustrated by the Monuments of Egypt*, Hengstenberg presented an approach that shaped research for the next hundred years.[38] Given that in the sequence of the biblical narrative the Joseph novella comes before the Exodus story, the text was placed in the Egyptian "New Kingdom," in the Ramesside era. Thus, scholars such as Joseph Vergote or Kenneth A. Kitchen searched for Egyptian parallels from the second millennium BCE.[39]

In 1970, the Egyptologist Donald B. Redford presented a different approach. In a groundbreaking study, Redford pointed to the simple fact that when examining the text with the eyes of an Egyptologist, "the writer was not so well acquainted with Egypt as has often been imagined."[40] Furthermore, the specific so-called "Egyptian" motifs point not to the New Kingdom but to the Late Period of Egypt, the historical period from the 26th dynasty onwards—in absolute chronology, from the middle of the 7th century to the late 5th and 4th century BCE. This can

be seen, for example, in the Egyptian names used in the story.

Upon his appointment as royal vizier in Gen 41, Joseph receives the Egyptian name "Zafenat-Paneach" (צפנת פענח); he marries an Egyptian woman named "Asenath" (אסנת), who is the daughter of a certain Potiphera (פוטי פרע), priest of On. Interestingly enough, these are the only Egyptian names in the story.[41] Neither the Pharaoh nor Potiphera's wife or the two other prisoners have specific names. It would go beyond the scope of this article to discuss the etymologies of these three names in detail, but in a nutshell one thing can be said for sure: all of these names are characteristic of the Egyptian Late Period and not of the New Kingdom.[42] As a result of Redford's analysis, the plot of the Joseph novella should be traced to post-New Kingdom literature, although some scholars continue to argue for similarities with earlier compositions such as the "Tale of the Two Brothers" or the "Story of Sinuhe".[43] In the following I will argue that the Joseph story shares similarities in structure and content with the story of Ahiqar and with an overlooked papyrus from the Berlin Museum. Even though the similarities of the Joseph story with the Berlin Papyrus are more striking than with the story of Ahiqar, the latter has to be discussed as an example of the "courtier tale" which connects the Joseph story with other narratives from the Persian period.[44]

The "story of the wise Ahiqar" was already known to scholars from ancient sources in Syriac and Armenian[45] before several sheets of papyri containing a hitherto unknown, older Aramaic version of the Ahiqar composition were retrieved from Elephantine in 1907.[46] This find was groundbreaking for many reasons. First, it enables tracing back the tradition of the wise Ahiqar to its ancient sources in the middle of the first millennium BCE. Second, the find highlights the reception of the Ahiqar composition, be it in Egyptian wisdom texts from the Ptolemaic period or in the Book of Tobit, in which the plot of the Ahiqar narrative was used to portray a Jew living in the diaspora.[47] As a "courtier tale," the story of Ahiqar can shed additional light on the Joseph novella, therefore, its basic contours will be presented below.

The Ahiqar composition tells the story of a wise man at a royal court. The story is set in the Assyrian royal court of the early 7th century BCE,[48] presenting Ahiqar as a scribe and counselor of King Sennacherib of Assyria, "a great man" and "seal-bearer" of the king, who "relies" on Ahiqar's counsel and advice.[49] After the death of Sennacherib, his son Esarhaddon becomes king of Assyria. Ahiqar, realizing that he is growing old and having no children of his own, decides to adopt his nephew, Nadin, as his successor. Nadin is educated and "presented to Esarhaddon, and in time takes his uncle's place at court."

Once he is installed in his new position, Nadin, instead of dealing kindly with his uncle, plots to discredit him. He tells the king (TAD C3 26–27): "This old Ahiqar, who was keeper of the seal for your father, King Sennacherib, is subverting the land against you."[50] When Esarhaddon hears the report of Nadin, the king becomes enraged and orders to have Ahiqar killed. He instructs his officer Nabusumiskun: "Seek Ahiqar out and wherever you find him, kill him! Otherwise that old Ahiqar—wise and counselor of all Assyria that he was—is liable to subvert the land against us."[51]

When Nabusumiskun finds Ahiqar, he greets him with a remarkable phrase: "O wise scribe and master of good counsel, who used to be a righteous man." The following explains why Nabusumiskun calls Ahiqar "a righteous man." Ahiqar reminds Nabusumiskun what he did for him:

> "Indeed, I am the same Ahiqar who once long ago rescued you from an undeserved death, when King Esarhaddon's father Sennacherib was so angry with you that he sought to kill you. I took you directly to my own house and provided for you there, as a man would care for his own brother. I concealed you from him, saying, I have killed him, until an opportune time. Then, after a long time, I presented you to King Sennacherib and cleared you of the charges against you in his presence, so that he did you no harm. Indeed, King Sennacherib was grateful to me for having kept you alive rather than killing you. Now it is your turn to treat me as I treated you."[52]

This is the turning point of the story. Nabusumiskun agrees,[53] and Ahiqar remains hidden in his house until there will be an opportunity for his redemption. At this point in the narrative, the Aramaic version from Elephantine, which is only

fragmentarily preserved, breaks off. However, the later Syriac and other versions tell us how the story ended.[54] When a situation arose in which the Assyrian king needed special advice and neither the royal counselors nor Nadin could help, Nabusumiskun reveals that Ahiqar is not dead but still alive. In the end, Ahiqar is vindicated while his nephew Nadin, who defamed his uncle, is punished and killed.[55]

The story of Ahiqar represents, in some respects, what Michael Fox stated for the Joseph novella: "Wisdom literature recognizes that the wise and righteous might find themselves in hard times despite their virtues."[56] Ahiqar is a wise and "righteous" man, as Nabusumiskun called him, who finds himself in a difficult position.[57]

The difficult position is resolved through Ahiqar's wisdom, calling upon Nabusumiskun's help by reminding him that "Now it is your turn to treat me as I treated you."[58] This sentence is crucial to the text since it illustrates two main aspects: First, it shows that Ahiqar argues in terms of wisdom. He refers to the relationship between act and consequence which is the main motif of sapiential thought (the so-called "deed-consequence-nexus"). And second, Ahiqar takes his fate into his own hands: He does not pray to a deity or expect direct help from God. Overall, the narrative of Ahiqar does not include a single reference to a particular god. Ahiqar acts as a wise man with skills and abilities that help him out of a life-threatening situation. In the story, Ahiqar tells the royal official Nabusumiskun what exactly he has to do: "Do not kill me, but take me to your house until the times change."

In comparison with the Joseph novella, some interesting similarities can be noted. Both stories recount the fall and rise of a wise man. In both narratives, this wise man is presented as a counselor of the king with access to the royal court.[59] And, most interestingly, in both stories a life-threatening situation is changed by the protagonist himself, using his wisdom skills and his judiciousness. He helps himself by referring to a wisdom principle. Joseph and Ahiqar were, to describe it in the words of Donald B. Redford, "wrongly sentenced to death, prevented from entering the King's ken, and later rehabilitated."[60] Both were *personae non gratae* who later, once rehabilitated, became important for the king in solving a problem.

These similarities become more crucial when considered together with the sayings of Ahiqar, which demonstrate a religious background for the sapiential behavior of the protagonist similar to that of the Joseph story. So, for example, a few sayings from the Ahiqar composition mention that the gods are the ultimate source of Wisdom (Saying 13, Col VII 94) or that the righteous man is under the special protection of the deities (Saying 39, Col IV 126).[61]

Further comparison between the two narratives singles out a main motif of the Joseph story that is unparalleled in the Ahiqar narrative: the problem that Joseph has to solve. In the Ahiqar narrative, the problem does not seem to be existential. The later versions tell us that the king of Egypt challenged the Assyrian king in a series of riddles which could not be solved by Nadin or any other royal counselor.[62] In contrast, the Joseph story mentions a serious problem that has to be solved.

Pharaoh has a dream in which he stands on the river Nile seeing seven cows coming out of the water, handsome and fat. Then seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, come up out of the Nile and eat the seven handsome, fat cows. The problem that Egypt faces in the Joseph novella is a seven-year-long famine connected to the Nile (Gen 41).

It is well known that a parallel from ancient Egypt also exists for the motif a period of seven years of hunger. In 1891, the Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch published a hieroglyphic text which was found two years earlier by Charles Wilbour on a granite rock on an island named Sehel (1889).[63] The stela became known as the "famine stela."[64]

Like the Joseph novella, the Egyptian stela tells of a period of seven years of hunger resulting from the failure of the Nile to flood as usual. A wise man, a certain priest, is called to assist by surveying the sacred books. The following night, the king had a dream in which the deity who controlled the flow of the inundation appeared. This god promised the king to end the famine. In gratitude to the god, the king issued a decree making a grant to the temple of this god. The text also states which god it is and where his temple can be found. It is Chnum, the ram-headed creator god who is worshiped in a temple on the island of Elephantine.

The so-called "famine stela" is therefore closely connected to Elephantine.[65] Hence, Egyptological research agrees that the text should be linked with the priesthood of the temple of Chnum. Moreover, nearly all scholars, whether specialists of the Hebrew

Bible or Egyptologists, agree that there must be a connection between the Joseph story and the "famine stela." As the famine stela dates to the Ptolemaic period—that is, to the third century BCE—Egyptologist Jacques Vandier argued that the motif of the seven years of famine found its way from the Bible to Egypt.[66] He assumed that some Jews who lived on the island of Elephantine and who were familiar with the biblical story of Joseph transferred the knowledge of the motif of the seven years of famine to their Egyptian neighbors. However, against the backdrop of the new material described below, it is more likely that the relationship was in fact the other way around.

3. The Judahite/Aramaic colony on Elephantine and the Joseph Story

The Egyptian Museum in Berlin houses a number of papyri from ancient Egypt, including many of the famous Elephantine papyri, as well as other collections. Among them is a papyrus which has been overlooked for decades.[67] This papyrus, numbered 23071, was published in 1990 by the Egyptologist Günter Burkard. The papyrus bears on its verso side a Hieratic text from the Persian period, dating to the 5th or 4th century BCE and containing the earliest known version of the motif of the seven years of famine in Egypt. [68]

Despite its fragmentary state, the papyrus can be deciphered to recount the failure of the Nile's inundation for seven years during the reign of Cheops. As a result, the people of Egypt were dying (ln. 5)—obviously, though not explicitly stated, from lack of food—and the temple collapsed. The situation changed when Pharaoh had a dream:[69]

> x+5 … Then his majesty saw a dream in the night, saying to him:
> x+6 [… Go in each city of] Upper Egypt and go in each city of Lower Egypt. May you strongly establish the temple …
> x+7 [of] their gods. You must rebuild what has collapsed, and you must restore what has been recovered of that which was lost, and you must perform the ritual.
> x+8 […] this […] in the temple of Atum, ruler of Heliopolis, according to … the scriptures.[70]

In the following lines, the pharaoh is instructed to appoint a "supervisor of construction in the whole land" (line x + 12, in Egyptian $ḫpr\ k_3.wt\ m\ t_3\ (r)\ dr(.w)=f$),[71] and their deeds of restoration are introduced by a formulaic phrase that all things are "back in their place" (x + 13). The fragmentary last three lines report that the "supervisor" became involved.

Berlin Papyrus 23071 belongs to an inner-Egyptian tradition known as the "Book of the Temple," which is one of the most important religious texts from Late Period Egypt.[72] This includes not only the famine stela but also a Demotic translation of the Middle Egyptian version on the Hieratic Papyrus Berlin 23071 vs. known as Papyrus Wien D 6319 and dated to the Roman period. In the historical introduction of the Papyrus Wien D 6319, it is reported that during the reign of king "Neferkasokar" (Second Dynasty), the flooding of the Nile did not come for seven years, and Egypt's temples were destroyed.[73] The Pharaoh received a dream revelation to restore all the temples of Upper and Lower Egypt (i.e., all the temples of Egypt).

Over the last 15 years Joachim Quack has collected different papyri which all belong to the Book of the Temple. Among them is not only the aforementioned Papyrus Berlin 23071 vs. and Papyrus Wien D 6319 but also a fragmentary papyrus from Deir el-Bahri (Papyrus BM 10565). Dating to the Roman Period, Papyrus BM 10565 displays some changes within the so-called "historical introduction" of the Book of the Temple.[74] The text mentions not only the failed flooding of the Nile but also seven years of the Nile's abundant flooding.[75] Taking the evidence from the different papyri together, it can be concluded that (1) the Book of the Temple was widely distributed in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt and that (2) some interesting changes occurred within the literary tradition over time.

Furthermore, Joachim Quack has shown that the Book of the Temple also influenced other texts, including the famine stela,[76] as can be seen by comparing Papyrus Berlin 23071 vs. and the famine stela:

(1) Both texts mention a time of chaos related to a period of seven years.
(2) Both texts mention a dream of the pharaoh.
(3) Both texts connect the concrete activities with a special official who is appointed by the pharaoh.
(4) Both texts have a special interest in a certain temple and its priesthood, presenting this temple as the most important cult place of

Egypt. In the Berlin papyrus it is the temple of Heliopolis, and in the famine stela it is the temple of Elephantine.

An analysis of the biblical story of Joseph in light of these Egyptian texts suggests that all the motifs in the Joseph story that can be related to the famine stela, can already be found in the Berlin papyrus:

(1) the seven years
(2) the lack of inundation which caused a kind of famine (people were dying, l. 5 / because of a lack of food)
(3) the dream of the pharaoh[77]
(4) the overseer (or supervisor) appointed to solve the problem
(5) the appointment of the supervisor by the king himself

Another similarity between the Berlin papyrus and the Joseph story is the reference to the temple of Heliopolis. According to Gen 41:45, Joseph married Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, who was a priest of Heliopolis (On). This is the only religious place-name mentioned in the entire Joseph story.[78]

In sum, the Joseph story shares more similarities with papyrus Berlin 23071 vs. than with the famine stela. This means that, when searching for Egyptian parallels of the motif of the seven years in the Joseph story, one should take first and foremost the Berlin papyrus into account and not the famine stela. Given that the Berlin papyrus is one of the earliest versions of the historical introduction of the Book of the Temple, dating to pre-Hellenistic times, the similarities to the Joseph story shed new light on the old question of the Egyptian background to Gen 37–50*. The question becomes more crucial if one takes into account that the famine stela shows that the tradition of the seven years of hunger was connected to Elephantine. Is it possible, so I would like to ask, to combine the two pieces of evidence discussed above: (a) the tradition of the seven years of hunger, the dream of the Pharaoh, and the appointed overseer who is a wisdom specialist, and (b) the plot of the narrative of Ahiqar which was found in its earliest version on Elephantine?

This brings me to the third name in the title of this paper—Elephantine. The papyri from Elephantine, discovered in 1906–1907 by Berlin archaeologists, help us to reconstruct what has been called "a Jewish colony" in Egypt. As a result of Bezalel Porten's groundbreaking work,[79] Elephantine is now recognized as a Persian military garrison of the 5th and early 4th century BCE housing not only "Jews" but also people of other ethnicities.[80] It was, in some respects, a multicultural society with Greeks, Phoenicians, Egyptians, and "Judahites/ Aramaeans", as the people who came from Israel/Palestine to Elephantine called themselves.[81] These people lived in different neighborhoods of the city and had their own cult-places. Furthermore, according to the famous letter to Jerusalem from the year 407 BCE, a rivalry between the Judahites/Arameans and the priesthood of the temple of Chnum resulted in the destruction of the temple of Yaho by the Egyptian priests. A certain Jedaniah wrote to the governor of the Persian province Yehud requesting permission to rebuild the temple.[82] Thus, the Judahite/Aramaic colony on Elephantine was not disconnected from Israel/Palestine.

Other letters from Elephantine provide insight into the life of this multicultural society. They report, for example, of a Judahite woman who was later married to an Egyptian[83] or of a certain Anani, son of Haggai, who was working for an Egyptian and was paid by a grain ration from the royal storehouse.[84] The evidence from Elephantine shows that the Judahite/Aramaic community from the 5th/early 4th century BCE was neither isolated from Israel/Palestine nor from the Egyptians on Elephantine.

A comparable reality can be inferred from the Joseph story. The protagonist is an Israelite man who makes a career in Egypt, marries an Egyptian woman, and lives under diaspora circumstances. It has often been stated that the marriage of Joseph and Asenath, the daughter of the priest of Heliopolis, stands in sharp contrast to the prohibition on "mixed marriages" in Ezra and Nehemiah (see Ezra 9:1–4; 10:1–17; Nehemiah 10:30–31; 13:23–27). The concept of identity in the Joseph story therefore fits nicely with the practices of the "Judahite/Aramaic" community on Elephantine.

This association with Persian period Egypt is strengthened by the auxiliary texts from Elephantine, namely the Ahiqar story and the Berlin Papyrus. The Ahiqar story, like the Joseph novella, recounts the ups and downs of a wise man, advancing the plot by using one of the main principles of the world of wisdom: the ethic of reciprocity. In the Joseph novella, this plot is

combined with the main motifs of the Egyptian tradition of seven years of hunger, comparable with the Berlin papyrus.

Against this backdrop, it seems to me that the social *milieu* for which the Joseph novella was written should not be sought in Palestine/Israel. It has been often stated that the Joseph novella presents a totally different concept of identity than the ancestral narratives. The aforementioned Donald B. Redford summarized this evidence as follows. The Joseph story

> brings all the sons of Jacob to Egypt, where they live out their lives, even the 'baby' Benjamin already blessed with ten sons! This contradicts emphatically the traditions of individual tribes in later times in which the eponymous ancestors live, marry, raise families, and die in Canaan.[85]

The Joseph novella contains a unique concept of identity: whereas the ancestral narratives present the main idea of Israel's existence in the land, the Joseph story argues for a life in the diaspora. It is a life in a foreign country where the career of an Israelite is possible and where this Israelite is allowed to marry a woman from that land. Precisely this is denied in the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah, both of which represent (for the Persian period) a concept of the people's identity in the holy land and Jerusalem—no mixed marriages and a life within a certain "Jewish" community. Therefore, it seems to me that scholars such as Christoph Uehlinger, Thomas Römer, and Reinhard Kratz are right in connecting the Joseph story with the Egyptian diaspora of the Persian period.[86] Or, to put it in the words of Reinhard Kratz: "In the Joseph Story the Egyptian Diaspora makes itself heard and clearly indicates that there are also Israelites outside Judah and the other territories in the land inhabited by Israelites."[87] In light of the evidence discussed in this article, this Egyptian diaspora can be connected with Elephantine. Even though one could hardly argue that the Joseph story was written on Elephantine, the text was composed in a style in which literary traditions from Egypt were intentionally used—the tradition of the seven years of hunger, which is genuinely Egyptian, and the plot of the Ahiqar story, which stems from Mesopotamia but was popular on Elephantine.

SUMMARY

The biblical story of Joseph is a unit on its own. It is a masterful piece of literature which is mainly structured in two ways: on the one hand, Joseph is a righteous and wise man who finds himself in hard times despite his virtue.[88] Like Ahiqar, Joseph solves the problems by using his own skills and judiciousness and by referring to the main principle of wisdom—the deed-consequence nexus. On the other hand, this sapiential coloring of the text is combined with a theological concept that can be found in later wisdom:[89] "The heart of man plans his way, but YHWH directs his steps." As it is stated in Proverbs 16:9 both the qualities of wisdom and guidance by God are necessary. This is the reason for the many turns of the Joseph story and for a literary character which can be best called a "novella." Hence, the Joseph story presents a concept of wisdom which is connected to theological insights as well as to mantic-magical practices such as dream interpretation.[90] In this respect, the Joseph novella comes close to the biblical books of Daniel and Esther.[91] Like these books, it can be described as a "diaspora novella" following Arndt Meinhold's proposal from 1975.

The Joseph story presents a concept of identity that is connected to the "Judahite/Aramaic" diaspora in Egypt of the Persian period and that differs sharply from other identity concepts found in the narrative cycle of the ancestors, the Deuteronomistic History, or the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Furthermore, the Joseph novella reflects a "Judahite/Aramaic" identity similar to that which is attested by the material from Elephantine. It tells the story of a man who marries an Egyptian woman and who makes a career in Egypt. All of this is told in a way which was understandable for people who lived in Egypt and who were familiar with Egyptian traditions—the tradition of the seven years of hunger as it is described in papyrus Berlin 23071 vs., the historical introduction of the Book of the Temple, and the story of Ahiqar, which is not a genuinely Egyptian text but was popular in Persian period Egypt. In sum, the Joseph story should be seen as a diaspora novella which was written in a multicultural environment in the Persian period, probably in the 5th (or early 4th) century BCE. It is a composition which connected on the one hand to the classical biblical tradition, as can be seen in the thematic links to the narrative of the ancestors (i.e.,

Jacob), but which was written in a style that makes the text accessible for the "Jewish" diaspora in Egypt.[92]

NOTES

[1] See Arndt Meinhold, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle I," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 87 (1975): 306–324; ibid, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle II," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88 (1976): 72–79.

[2] Here and in the following, the term "diaspora" refers to a historical situation of the Persian period where parts of former "Israel" and "Judah" live in a diaspora situation, whether in Egypt, Babylonia, or Persia.

[3] See the excellent overview by Konrad Schmid, "Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch," in Jan C. Gertz et al. (eds.), *Abschied vom Jahwisten.* Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 315 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 83–118 (87–115).

[4] See J. Alberto Soggin, "Notes on the Joseph Story," in A. Graeme Auld (ed.), *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 152 (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1993), 336–349.

[5] See, for example, Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte.* Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 57 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984) and Reinhard G. Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

[6] Joel Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012) and Baruch Schwartz, "How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37," in Craig A. Evans et al. (eds.), *The Book of Genesis. Composition, Reception, and Interpretation.* Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 263–278 (263–270).

[7] Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis.* 3rd ed. Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament I/1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 397.

[8] Gerhard von Rad, "The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 292–300 (292).

[9] Gerhard von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis.* 9th ed. Das Alte Testament Deutsch 2/4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 284. See for the classical approach of the Documentary Hypothesis on the Joseph story Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments.* 3rd ed. (Berlin: Remers, 1899), 52.

[10] Roger N. Whybray, "The Joseph Story and Pentateuchal Criticism," *Vetus Testamentum* 18 (1968): 522–528 (523).

[11] See the overview in Hans-Christoph Schmitt, "Die Hintergründe der 'neuesten Pentateuchkritik' und der literarische Befund der Josefsgeschichte Gen 37–50," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 97 (1985): 161–179.

[12] So, for example, Kratz 2005, 275: "The documentary theory is not applicable to the Joseph story."

[13] See Konrad Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible*. Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 3 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 52.

[14] See Schmid 2010, 4–6.

[15] Kratz 2005, 275–276. See also Franziska Ede, *Die Josefsgeschichte. Literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen von Gen 37–50*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 485 (Berlin / Boston: de Gruyter, 2016).

[16] See Blum 1984, 255–256.

[17] It is an interesting question whether or not the priestly redactor knew the non-priestly Joseph story. Can the non-priestly text be assigned to a post-priestly stage of composition? See Thomas Römer, "The Joseph Story in the Book of Genesis: Pre-P or Post-P?," in Federico Giuntoli and Konrad Schmid (eds.), *The Post-Priestly Pentateuch*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament

101 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 185–202.

18   Herbert Donner, *Die literarische Gestalt der alttestamentlichen Josephsgeschichte*. Sitzungs-berichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 36–37.

19   In contrast, Baden 2012, 34 takes "Midianites and Ishmaelites" in Gen 37 as a point of departure for literary criticism.

20   See n. 11, above. This can also be seen in Axel Graupner, *Der Elohist: Gegenwart und Wirksamkeit des transzendenten Gottes in der Geschichte*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 97 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2002), who cannot provide new arguments against the old critique of Wilhelm Rudolf from 1933: "Die Josephsgeschichte," in Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolf (eds.), *Der Elohist als Erzähler, ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik?: An der Genesis erläutert*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 63 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1933), 143–183.

21   The present article is not the place to discuss possible redactional additions to the non-priestly Joseph Story.

22   Schmid 2010, 51. See also George W. Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt: Structural and Theological Context for the Joseph Story*. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 4 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976).

23   This can be seen, for example, in the presentation and evaluation of kingship, which is positive in the Joseph story but highly critical in the Deuteronomistic History; see Frank Crüsemannn, *Widerstand gegen das Königtum: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 49 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978), 174–180.

24   See Horst Seebass, *Genesis 3: Josephsgeschichte (37,1–50,26)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000), 20–24 and 28–29.

25   For this see the overview in Schmid 2002, 95–98.

26   Jörg Lanckau, *Der Herr der Träume: Eine Studie zur Funktion des Traumes in der Josefsgeschichte*. Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 85 (Zürich: TVZ, 2006).

27   See Schmid 2002, 96 and Jürgen Ebach, *Genesis 37–50*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 40–41.

28   See von Rad 1972, 355–356.

29   See Ebach 2007, 40 who speaks of a *providentia dei*.

30   This is the case already in the introduction of the Joseph story in Genesis 37, where "the divine name makes no appearance," Baden 2012, 34.

31   Schmid 2002, 113.

32   Von Rad 1966, 300. For a fundamental critique of Gerhard von Rad's position see Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50)*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 103–105 who argues that Joseph does not fit the wisdom ideal of the "long suffering, silent, modest man who controls his spirit" (p. 104).

33   For a detailed "sapiental" reading of the Joseph story see von Rad 1966, 293-298 and the overview in Rüdiger Lux, "Josef/Josefsgeschichte," in Michaela Bauks and Klaus Koenen (eds.), *Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet*, January 2013, https://www.bibel wissenschaft.de/de/stichwort/22800/.

34   Michael V. Fox, "Wisdom in the Joseph Story," *Vetus Testamentum* 51 (2001): 26–41 (31). See also Prov 24:16: "For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity."

35   See for Gen 39:7–12 the passages in Proverbs 2:16–19; 5:1–23; 6:23–25 and 7:5–21. Cp. Lux 2013.

36   See also Proverbs 19:21: "Many designs are in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's plan that comes to pass."

37   Fox 2001, 31–33.

38   The English edition from 1845 (New York) based on the German book: Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Die Bücher Moses' und Ägypten: nebst einer Beilage: Manetho und die Hyksos* (Berlin: Oehmigke, 1841). This groundbreaking study was the point of departure for a scholarly debate which runs over Georg Ebers' "Aegypten und die Buecher Mose's" and W. Max Mueller's "Asien und Europa nach aegyptischen Denkmaelern" to the

present; see Bernd U. Schipper, "The History of Egyptology and the Gesenius Dictionary," in Stefan Schorch and Ernst-Joachim Waschke (eds.), *Biblische Exegese und Hebräische Lexikographie*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 427 (Berlin / Boston: de Gryuter, 2013), 482–505 (498–500).

39 Joseph Vergote, *Joseph en Égypte: Genèse chap. 37– 50 à la lumière des études égyptologiques récentes*. Orientalia et Biblica Lovaniensia 3 (Leuven: Peeters, 1959); Joseph Vergote, "Joseph en Égypte: 25 ans après," in Sarah Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Pharaonic Egypt: The Bible and Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985), 289–306; and Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 261– 270.

40 Redford 1970, 241–242.

41 See Michael Fieger and Sigrid Hodel-Hoenes, *Der Einzug in Ägypten. Ein Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Josefsgeschichte*. Das Alte Testament im Dialog 1 (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 2007), 188–189.

42 For a detailed examination see Schipper 2013, 487–488.

43 See for example Wolfgang Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern: Der Papyrus d'Orbiney und die Königsideologie der Ramessiden*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 195 (Fribourg / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2003), 228– 233 and Fieger and Hodel-Hoenes 2007, 353–357.

44 See, for example, Sidnie White Crawford, "4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550 a–e) and its Relation to Biblical Royal Courtier Tales, especially Esther, Daniel and Joseph," in Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov (eds.), *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (London: Oak Knoll, 2002), 121–137.

45 See J. Bentel Harris et al. (eds.), *The Story of Aḥikar*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), which is up to now the standard edition of the versions, including the original texts of the Syriac, Armenian, and other versions of the Ahiqar story.

46 See the overview by James M. Lindenberger, "Ahiqar (Seventh to Sixth Century B.C.): A New Translation and Introduction," in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, *Vol II* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 479–507 (479–480).

47 For the parallels between the Ahiqar sayings and the Demotic instruction of Ankhecheschonqi, see Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 52 (Fribourg / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 13–21.

48 For a summary of the content see Lindenberger 1985, 479. Sennacherib ruled from 705 to 681 BCE and Esarhaddon from 681 to 669 BCE.

49 References to Ahiqar passages are from text C1.1, "Words of Ahiqar," in Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, Vol. 3*: *Literature, Accounts, Lists* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1993), 24– 53.

50 Translation: Lindenberger 1985, 495.

51 Lindenberger 1985, 496.

52 Lindenberger 1985, 496.

53 According to the story, a slave was killed instead of Ahiqar, see Lindenberger 1985, 497.

54 See Harris et al. 1913.

55 Reinhard G. Kratz, "Mille Ahiqar: 'The Words of Aḥiqar' and the Literature of the Jewish Diaspora in Ancient Egypt," *Al-Abhath* 60/61 (2012/2013): 39–58 (44).

56 Fox 2001, 258–260.

57 See Michael Weigl, "Die rettende Macht der Barmherzigkeit: Achikar im Buch Tobit," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 50 (2006): 212–242.

58 Quote from Porten and Yardeni 1993, C1.1: 51– 52.

59 It would go beyond this paper but should briefly be mentioned that the Ahiqar story also contains some features which can be compared to the Egyptian tradition. See Seth A. Bledsoe, *Wisdom in Distress: A Literary and Socio-Historical Approach to the Aramaic Book of Ahiqar*, PhD dissertation, (Florida State University, 2015).

60 Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Israel, and Canaan in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 428–429 who also stated: "The character and function of Joseph in the story in

Genesis fits this role of savior and erstwhile persona non grata."

61 See Lindenberger 1985, 499 and 502–503. The religious dimension of Ahiqar comes through the combination between the Ahiqar sayings and the framing narrative; see Kratz 2012/2013, 47.

62 See Harris et al. 1913.

63 Heinrich Brugsch, *Die biblischen sieben Jahre der Hungersnoth nach dem Wortlaut einer altägyptischen Felsen-Inschrift* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1891). For the history of research see the overview by Carsten Peust, "Hungersnotstele," in Bernd Janowski and Gernot Wilhelm (eds.), *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Neue Folge, Vol 1* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2004), 208–217 (208–210).

64 An easily accessible English translation with brief introduction can be found in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. 3: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 94–103.

65 See Lichtheim 1980, 94–95.

66 Jacques Vandier, *La famine dans l'Égypte ancienne.* Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie et d'histoire 7 (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1936), 42–43.

67 The only references I have found in biblical scholarship are in the unpublished dissertation of John Huddlestun, *Who Is This That Rises like the Nile? A Comparative Study of the River Nile in Ancient Egypt and the Hebrew Bible*, PhD dissertation (University of Michigan, 1996); a brief note in Seebass 2000, 79; and a note in Peust 2004, 208–217. The text is also mentioned in Fieger and Hodel-Hoenes 2007, 157–159.

68 Günter Burkard, "Frühgeschichte und Römerzeit: P. Berlin 23071 VSO," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 17 (1990): 107–134 (122), where he dated the text to the late 26th dynasty. The papyrus itself dates to the 1st or 2nd century CE; see Joachim F. Quack, "Der historische Abschnitt des Buches vom Tempel," in Jan Assmann and Elke Blumenthal (eds.), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten.* Bibliothèque d'Étude 127 (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1999), 267–278 (277).

69 The text follows the German edition and translation from Burkard 1990, 113. For a slightly different German translation, see also Quack 1999, 274, who filled the gaps in the papyri with parallel texts.

70 According to the parallel versions of the "historical introduction" of the Book of the Temple, the scriptures were found in Heliopolis; see Quack 1999, 274.

71 See Burkard 1990, 114. Quack translates with "architect," 1999, 274. For the title $ḥpr\ k^3.wt$, see F. Steinmann, "Untersuchungen zu den in der handwerklich-künstlerischen Produktion beschäftigten Personen und Berufungsgruppen des Neuen Reiches," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 107 (1980): 137–157 (146).

72 Cp. Joachim F. Quack, "pWien D 6319. Eine demotische Übersetzung aus dem Mittelägyptischen," *Enchoria* 19/20 (1992/1993): 125–129.

73 See Joachim F. Quack, "Das Buch vom Tempel und verwandte Texte: Ein Vorbericht," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000): 1–20 (3).

74 For this historical introduction, see Quack 1999, 267–272.

75 Joachim F. Quack, "Danaergeschenk des Nil? Zu viel oder zu wenig Wasser im Alten Ägypten," in Angelika Berlejung (ed.), *Disaster and Relief Management: Katastrophen und ihre Bewältigung.* Forschungen zum Alten Testament 81 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 333–381 (348–350).

76 Quack 2012, 349–350. The motif of a famine can be traced back in the Egyptian tradition to the Middle Kingdom; see Nili Shupak, "A Fresh Look at the Dreams of the Officials and of the Pharaoh in the Story of Joseph (Genesis 40–41) in Light of Egyptian Dreams," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 30 (2006): 124–125.

77 See also Nili Shupak, who tried to connect the dream motif in the Joseph story with Egyptian traditions and who already pointed to the Demotic material: Shupak 2006, 103–138 (108).

78 The other Egyptian toponyms refer to cities or to areas: Ramses (Gen 47:11) and the Land of Goshen (Gen 45:10; 46:28,34; 47:1,27; 50:8). Interestingly, neither the place where Joseph served as slave nor where the Pharaoh lives is

mentioned; Gerhard Pfeifer, *Ägypten im Alten Testament*. Biblische Notizen Beihefte 8 (München: Institut für Biblische Exegese, 1995), 27.

[79] See the classical summary of the evidence from Elephantine in Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 235–263.

[80] For the following, see the summary of the evidence from Elephantine in Bezalel Porten, "The Jews in Egypt," in William D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol. I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 372–400 and, for a more nuanced perspective, Reinhard G. Kratz, *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Traditions, and Archives of Israel and Judah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 137–147.

[81] Bob Becking, "Yehudite Identity in Elephantine," in Oded Lipschitz et al. (eds.), *Judah and the Judaeans in the Achaemenid Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 403–419.

[82] Porten and Yardeni 1993, A 4.7 (Version A) and A 4.8 (Version B).

[83] Several marriage contracts were found where rights and prices (for example, for a linen garment) are mentioned. See Annalisa Azzoni, *The Private Lives of Women in Persian Egypt* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 81–99.

[84] Porten 1984, 383.

[85] Redford 1993, 423–424.

[86] Thomas Römer, "La narration, une subversion: L'histoire de Joseph (Gn 37–50*) et les romans de la diaspora," in George J. Brooke and Jean-Daniel Kaesti (eds.), *Narrativity in Biblical and Related Texts* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 17–29 (28–29) and Christoph Uehlinger, "Fratrie, filiations et paternités dans l'histoire de Joseph (Genèse 37-50)," in Jean-Daniel Macchi and Thomas Römer (eds.), *Jacob: Commentaire á plusieurs voix de Gen 25-36*: *Mélanges offerts à Albert de Pury*. Le Monde de la Bible 44 (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2001), 303–328 (328).

[87] Kratz 2005, 279.

[88] In this respect the Joseph story can also be related to the Egyptian Aramaic "Prophecy of Hor bar Punesh"; see Bezalel Porten, "The Prophecy of Hor Bar Punesh and the Demise of Righteousness: An Aramaic Papyrus in the British Library," in Friedhelm Hoffmann and Heinz-Josef Thissen (eds.), *Res severa verum gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004*. Studia Demotica 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 427–466 (435) and plates xxxv–xxxvi.

[89] See n. 34, above, with reference to the work of Michael V. Fox.

[90] See the classical study of Hans-Peter Müller, "Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik," in Hans-Peter Müller (ed.), *Mensch, Umwelt, Eigenwelt: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Weisheit Israels* (Stuttgart et al.: Kohlhammer, 1992), 194–219.

[91] This connection was already seen in the late 19th century: Ludwig A. Rosenthal, "Die Josephsgeschichte, mit den Büchern Ester und Daniel verglichen," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 15 (1895): 278–284.

[92] Such an interpretation fits nicely with recent theories on the "post-priestly" dating of the non-priestly Joseph novella; see n. 17, above.