

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute,
OR,
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

VOL. LXV.



LONDON:

Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1933

763RD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 1933,
AT 4.30 P.M.

DR. JAMES W. THIRTLE, M.R.A.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of Edwin J. Tharp, Esq., D.C., as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Dr. A. S. Yahuda to read his paper on "Joseph in Egypt in the Light of the Monuments," which was illustrated by many lantern slides.

*JOSEPH IN EGYPT IN THE LIGHT OF THE
MONUMENTS.*

By Dr. A. S. YAHUDA.

IT was gratifying to me that my lectures at University College and my articles in the periodical press during the summer of 1932 aroused such a widespread interest. It has been my aim to show that the treatment applied to the Bible, regarded as a complex of suspicious documents which can only be trusted when outside evidence is forthcoming, and even then only to such an extent as is in harmony with the tendencies of Higher Criticism, must be abandoned since every discovery of ancient monuments, and every new find of old records has gone to confirm the Biblical statements. If proper and fair treatment is given to the Bible; if Critics place the Biblical records at least on the same level as they place other records of ancient times and peoples, then the Bible will be treated as a truthful source, capable of holding its ground, and only coming under suspicion in the event of outside evidence of an absolutely reliable nature furnishing definite proof to the contrary.

There were times, and not very far distant, when Biblical scholars doubted the correctness of statements found even in the Books of the Kings, challenging them because there was lack of evidence from the neighbouring peoples of Israel ; but Assyria and Babylonia have brought to light abundant evidence in support of such historical statements. The names of the kings, Jehu and Hezekiah, have been found in cuneiform inscriptions on the monuments of Shalmaneser and Sennacherib, and the Biblical version of Sennacherib's campaign has been proved as correct as the Assyrian version, even supplying details which go to complete the records of Assyrian and Babylonian history. Again, Egypt has yielded historical and archaeological evidence, and now Palestine is beginning to give up its secrets, hidden for thousands of years in its soil ; and all along we have new evidence of the truth of the Bible. The time may, therefore, not be far distant when the whole range of Biblical history from the time of the Exodus down to the Babylonian Exile, will be found to be confirmed by the archaeological and documentary discoveries of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia.

For the earliest formation of the Hebrews as a people, as well as for the beginning of their language and culture we must, however, find in Egypt the most important source—a source which will remain the most fruitful ground of investigation. Beyond question, Egypt was the cradle of Hebrew thought, and it was in Egypt that the Hebrew language had its development from the stage of a primitive Canaanite dialect to a perfect literary language as we have it before us to-day in the books known as the Pentateuch.

* * * * *

In my lectures and articles I gave a short outline of the main points regarding the formation of the Hebrew language, and in the first volume of my large work, "The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian," recently published, I have adduced a large amount of evidence, going to show the influence, deep and intense, exerted by Egyptian on the Hebrew language. In my book there is supplied abundant material, showing that Egyptian influence has penetrated the language and thought of the Pentateuch, not only in that portion which deals with the story of Joseph and the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, but likewise in other portions, including the Genesis

stories of Creation, Paradise and the Flood. It is obvious that such portions as the Joseph and Exodus narratives must reflect most vividly the conditions of life, the customs and manners of the environment in which Hebrews and Egyptians lived together, in intimate contact during many centuries.

It is about that earliest period of the Hebrew-Egyptian contact that I propose now to speak. I shall show features of the Joseph story that have a clear bearing on the time and environment—when and where events in such circumstances as are depicted in the Joseph narrative could appropriately occur, and where such a narrative as we have could have been written in such a style and such a language as we have received it. It is, of course, impossible to go beyond a few examples; no one could expect me in a short lecture to give all the evidence derived from Egyptian even for a part of Joseph's story alone. I shall, however, make an attempt to throw a few rays on this portion of the Bible records from the beacon light radiating from Egyptian sources.

Biblical critics have maintained, and they still maintain, that the Joseph and Exodus stories, in spite of being enacted in Egypt and referring to Egyptian life, show very little genuine knowledge of Egyptian conditions—that Egyptian loan words are so scanty as not to justify the belief that the author had any idea of the Egyptian tongue. Yet we shall show that the narratives now before us may be illustrated with a wealth of detail such as could only be derived from first-hand knowledge and exact observation at close quarters.

* * * * *

Coming to the records, we find that no sooner does the writer begin the story of Joseph than he plunges deeply into Egyptian life. He approaches his audience, or readers, not as one conveying something foreign, something strange, almost unknown, coming from a remote country; rather he assumes, straightway and as a matter of course, a complete acquaintance with the land and people of Egypt. Manners and customs are mentioned that indicate, nay, presuppose, a thorough familiarity with the structure of Egyptian life. Many individual features of social, family, and court life are touched upon by the narrator, merely to be passed over by the reader as devoid of special significance, yet features which, on closer study of actual Egyptian conditions, are found to be intentional allusions to common and popular

occurrences, in connection with social or state institutions, more or less important. By the brevity and casual nature of these allusions, we rightly infer that they could be understood in their full significance only by those who knew them from first-hand observation, or had at some time participated in them.

The whole incident of Potiphar's wife and Joseph reveals the Egyptian background with its local colouring. There is an Egyptian story of two brethren, Ynepu and Bata, which provides so many similarities that it may serve as an illustration of the whole episode. Although such love affairs could occur in any other country, the charm of the story lies in the fact that it reveals the Egyptian background with local colouring. The great Berlin historian, Eduard Meyer, found the resemblance to be so striking that he could not conceive the Joseph narrative as anything but fiction, and suggested that it was a mere adaptation of the Egyptian story. Unfortunately he forgot that he belonged to the chorus of those scholars who have decried the author of the Joseph narrative as completely ignorant in Egyptian matters! Yet he could suddenly credit the same author with a good knowledge of Egyptian literature! Thus these scholars have it both ways when the Bible is in question.

Further, the reference to the dungeon into which Joseph was thrown, makes it clear that the place was not an ordinary gaol, but rather a special prison designed for dangerous criminals or political offenders. In my book I have shown that the dungeon was in the well-known fortress *Zaru* (mentioned for the first time under Thutmoses III, about 1478 B.C.) on the borders of the Palestine frontier. As a matter of fact, it is mentioned several times in the Edicts of Harembeh (1350-1315 B.C.) as a prison for grievous offenders, just as it appears from Gen. xxxix, 22, that it was an establishment for forced labour, under the supervision of the chief executioner. This fortress must be identical with that mentioned by Sinuhe, under Amenemhet, about 2000 B.C., on the paths of Horus. At any rate, *Zaru* was well known long before the Joseph narrative was written down.

As for the butler and the baker mentioned in the story, we can refer to reliefs which depict such high officials "in action." From the one we see the butler pouring drink in the cup of a great lady, who is undergoing the strain of a hair-dressing toilet. In another tomb we see the "chief of butlers" sitting in his vineyard receiving accounts of the product of his domains.

Other reliefs show a bakery and men carrying baskets heaped with loaves and cakes, carrying them on their heads, as did the chief butler in the presence of Pharaoh.

There are other details which do not attract the special attention of the reader because of their general character. Thus, *e.g.* no English reader will find anything unusual in the statement that Joseph was shaved as soon as he was freed from the dungeon (Gen. xl, 15). This, however, points to a very characteristic feature in Egyptian conceptions of hirsute propriety, a feature which radically differed from that which prevailed in Joseph's home-land of Canaan. For only Semitic "barbarians" allowed their beard and hair to grow; and hence in Egyptian pictures they were represented with beard and long hair as characteristic of foreigners. In the eyes of all Semitic people the beard was a mark of dignity, and long hair was the ornament of warriors and heroes, only prisoners and slaves being shaved, in token of humiliation and dishonour, as appears to be clear from such a passage as 2 Sam. x, 4. The Egyptian practice was the exact opposite, and the first thing that every Egyptian of better standing was anxious to do as he came of age was to submit his head and face to the attentions of the barber. He only grew beard and hair when mourning for near relatives. Thus we see Joseph was made to appear before Pharaoh, not as a barbarian and in foreign garb, but as a well-dressed Egyptian gentleman, duly shaven.

* * * * *

As to the famous dream of the seven fat and lean kine (Gen. xli, 1 ff.), it was pointed out some years ago, by Edouard Naville and others, that such a story was only conceivable in Egypt, where the goddess Hathor was worshipped in the form of a cow. As there were seven districts, each of which had its Hathor-cow, the kine were seven in number. In the tomb of Nefertaru, the beautiful wife of Rameses II, seven cows are to be seen, accompanied by the bull-god, as if marching in a solemn procession. In another picture the Hathor-cow is seen looking out of a grove of papyrus reeds, and on the wonderful mural reliefs of the temple of Hat-shep-sut, in Deir al-Bahari, are to be seen seven cows feeding in a meadow under trees. This is the picture that appeared to Pharaoh in his dream. What, however, so much disturbed him, and what so much confused his magicians, was not the appearance of the seven

cows merely, but the accompanying details—that there were fat and lean kine, and that they were followed by seven full and seven empty ears of wheat. The magicians, of course, could not but think of all kinds of eschatological connections in the nether world. That was where Joseph's wisdom came in; he eliminated any connection of the kine with the beyond, and regarded the whole dream as a prognostication of happenings in the land itself, seeing in connection with the ears of wheat a relation to food conditions of the country. Accordingly he interpreted the seven kine and the seven ears as "years of plenty" and "years of famine."

Here the language also testifies to the relations subsisting between Hebrew and Egyptian. The "years of famine" (Gen. xli, 54) is a genuine Egyptian expression, and the Hebrew of the passage presents a literal translation of the Egyptian phrase. Not only this, however; the entire conversation between Joseph and Pharaoh bears a thoroughly Egyptian stamp. Thus, quite at the beginning, Pharaoh says: "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it, but I have heard of thee that thou understandest a dream to interpret it." (Gen. xli, 15.) For "understand" the Hebrew has, "thou *hearest* a dream"; this corresponds entirely with the Egyptian use of *sedem*, "to hear" "to understand," a meaning which is clearly shown by its use in the phrase: "He *hears* the speech of Egypt," *i.e.*, "he *understands* the language"; exactly as "hearing" is used in the Hebrew text of Gen. xlii, 23, for *understanding* the language.

Even ordinary phrases of deference such as are or might be in vogue at any court, are here highly typical of Egyptian etiquette, and only become clear in their right meaning in the light of Egyptian Court ceremonial, and Egyptian conceptions of good breeding.

A characteristic formula is the phrase recurring in several passages "to the face of Pharaoh," or "from the face of Pharaoh," (Gen. xlvii, 2, 7; xli, 46), meaning *in the presence of Pharaoh*. This corresponds completely with hierarchical court custom, whereby one might not speak to His Majesty (*er hemef*), but only *to the face* of His Majesty (*em her hemef*, or *kheft her hemej*).

* * * * *

The particulars given of Joseph's honours (Gen. xli, 42), which accompanied his installation as vizier, with solemn

ceremonies, are in perfect harmony with ancient Egyptian usage. In fact, they could not be better illustrated than by the Egyptian inscriptions and pictorial representations found in tomb-reliefs. The ceremonies at the Court of Pharaoh were very complicated, and full of pomp and splendour, specially during audiences. The king sat on his throne, invested with all his regalia, as bestowed on him by the gods themselves on the day of his coronation. Over him was extended a richly ornamented canopy, and beneath his feet, and in front of him, were carpets in gay colours. Visitors were introduced to his presence by ushers, who held in their hands plumes which served as a sign of their high official position.

This was the manner in which we may conceive Joseph to have been received in official audience, on the day of his elevation to the highest office in the State. Dressed in garments of fine linen, which was the distinctive garb of kings and high personages, the royal signet was conferred on Joseph, and he was invested with the gold neck-chain. The latter was not, as it may appear, a mere present, but a ceremonial act, showing in a spectacular manner the investiture of a high State dignitary among the plaudits of the people. The ceremony was known as the conferment of "gold of praise," or simply "the gold." It would appear that from the earliest times of the Middle Kingdom (2300 B.C.) great army commanders and royal functionaries of high rank coveted this decoration with much the same punctiliousness as a Prussian dignitary boasted of the Order of the Black Eagle, or an English nobleman is jealous of the Order of the Garter. The decoration consisted of gold jewels presented by the king, among the chief gifts being necklaces comprising many strings of gold. In ordinary cases, at the king's behest, these jewels were placed round the neck and on the arms and ankles of the recipient by the keeper of the treasury.

In the splendid pictures in the tomb-hall of the vizier Eye, we see a detailed representation of the ceremony of conferment. When this same vizier Eye, received "the gold" for the second time, on the occasion of his marriage with Teye, it was his special privilege to receive "the gold" from the hands of the king himself. With great pomp, Eye and his wife were conducted in royal chariots to the Palace, with a royal escort, accompanied by fan-bearers, servants, and troops of runners in front of the chariot, while whole regiments of Syrian and Nubian soldiers followed as body-guard. No fewer than ten scribes accompanied

the procession, in order that the gracious words which the king would utter might be carefully recorded. The king, leaning on the gay cushions of the balcony parapet, threw "the gold" upon his faithful servant, the queen holding her youngest child in her arms also threw gold chains, and the two elder princesses joined in the throwing of bracelets, there being a real shower of treasures falling upon Eye and Teye.

Here we have a documentary description of the ceremony of conferring the gold necklace on Joseph, as given in Gen. xli, 42. Joseph was the recipient of the greatest distinction, for, as we read, it was the king himself who placed his signet ring upon Joseph's finger, and put the gold chain round his neck; and further, Joseph was driven in a royal chariot through the streets, with runners in front of him.

* * * * *

There are many other features in the Joseph story, of which the Egyptian monuments furnish illustrations. I could give a running commentary from Egyptian life and customs on all the chapters that deal with Joseph. Let me mention a few: In Gen. xliii, 11, we read—"And their father Israel said unto them, do this, take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down to the man a present. A little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds." Further, verse 25: "And they made ready the present, against the coming of Joseph at noon; and when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth." From these passages it appears that they prepared to offer him the present in a solemn manner, and as a matter of fact we know from the Egyptian monuments that etiquette would not allow any foreigner to make a present to the vizier or the king without the observance of the prescribed ceremony. There are many pictures that show the scene of Canaanite notables offering presents or tribute to the king; they are in characteristic garb, and illustrate very clearly the manner in which Joseph's brethren brought before him the present sent by their father.

In connection with the ceremonies of Joseph's investiture with the gold chain, whereby he was installed in the highest State office by Pharaoh, mention was made of the runners in front of his chariot. I desire to supplement that description by a few details. One picture shows the State chariot of the

king, attired in sumptuous apparel, the horses caparisoned as on occasions of State ceremony, or as when driven out at the head of the army in battle array. This shows us how we must imagine Joseph's chariot to have been driven through the land, by way of proclaiming his appointment to high office. The chariot was of elaborate craftsmanship, inset with gold, and engraved with beautiful scenes and figures. In another picture we see an Egyptian grand-seigneur and land-owner proceeding to his estate, accompanied by servants, one of whom, running in front, makes way for his master in the crowded streets. It is interesting to note how well some old Egyptian customs have been preserved to this very day in the Valley of the Nile. In the same manner as runners were employed in front of Joseph's chariot, so throughout the ages, right down to the Khedives and Viceroys of modern times, runners have been employed to clear the way for kings, princes, viziers, and high State personages. Probably Lord Kitchener was the last counterpart of Joseph, to have the *says* (Arabic word for runner) with swords in their hands, proceeding in front of his carriage.

But the most amazing thing is that even the expression that was shouted by the runners in Joseph's time is still alive in modern Egypt. The expression was, as we learn from Gen. xli, 43, *Abrek!* which means, literally, in Egyptian, "Mind thee!" in the sense of "Look out!" How many people who have visited Egypt will have heard in the streets of Cairo the drivers of animals and vehicles shouting along the road to pedestrians, the word *Balak!* which, in Arabic, is exactly the same as "Mind thee!" thus coinciding literally with the old Egyptian *Abrek!* As a matter of fact, I have been able to identify many expressions and phrases which have come down from ancient Egyptian into the Arabic language since the Moslem conquest of Egypt.

* * * * *

But not only are the ceremonies to which I refer of astounding accuracy as describing the function and position of Joseph as vizier, but they are in full accord with all that we know concerning the duties and privileges of State officials, standing next after the king. In this connection we are particularly enlightened by detailed regulations for the office of vizier, preserved in the tomb-inscriptions of *Rekh-My-Re*, the vizier of Thutmose III (1500-1447, B.C.). The whole description of his installation into

high office is so vividly reminiscent of the Joseph narrative that it may be regarded as an authentic confirmation of the Biblical narrative, and even more, as an illustrative commentary of the details furnished by the narrator in Genesis. After the king, the vizier is the highest dignitary in the State, invested with all the rights and powers belonging to the king. In a word, he replaces the king; in the king's absence, the vizier is the actual ruler, even as, in the king's presence, no person and no matter can reach the king except through the mediation of the vizier, just as Pharaoh said to Joseph—"I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in the whole country of Egypt" (verse 44.) It is the vizier who issues all orders, and he it is who carries out the royal commands. Every officer, from the highest to the lowest, must report to him: even in legal proceedings, in complaints by officers one against the other, as well as in criminal cases, the decision rests with the vizier as the supreme judge. The signet ring signified the confidence of the crown, but it was also a token of high privilege the bestowal of which rested with the king alone. The vizier is, furthermore, the supreme administrator of the Crown lands, the country as a whole being under his supervision, corresponding with the statement of Gen. xli, 40 f.—"thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be fed;" and again, "See I have set thee over the whole country" (cf. also xlv, 8; xliii, 15 f.). In the hands of the vizier lay the real direction of all affairs in Court and State, he being real ruler next to the king, as it is further said "Only on the throne shall I be greater than thou" (Gen. xli, 40).

One picture shows the High Court in which the vizier sat to dispense justice. Before him are the forty law rolls on two mats; on both sides stand the scribes of the Court, and outside are the litigants waiting to be called, or dragged, into the Court. A second picture shows a vizier wearing the signet-ring on his finger.

As already mentioned, it was the narrator's tendency, or purpose, to show that the installation of Joseph was in every respect in conformity with the hierarchical customs and laws of Egypt. Joseph was given an honorific Egyptian name by Pharaoh, viz., *Zaphnath-paaneah*; which, as I have shown in my book, means "The Good of the Land is this Living One." And the daughter of Potiphera, the high priest of On (Heliopolis) was married to him. This was a great distinction, by which

Joseph was elevated to priestly rank. This is meant when it is said, as in Gen. xlv, 8, that he was made as "Father to Pharaoh." This is the exact equivalent of Egyptian *itef-neter*, i.e. Father of the God. The Hebrew expression *Ab*, father, is a reproduction of the Egyptian title *itef*, "father," a common priestly title, which was borne by humble officers as well as those of high rank, including viziers. In a hierarchic state where Pharaoh was a god (*neter*) his vizier had naturally to occupy priestly rank, and it was precisely this which was conferred on Joseph by the title "father." This qualification, as we have seen, was enhanced by Pharaoh giving to Joseph for wife the daughter of the priest of On (Gen. xli, 45). The narrator was quite clear as to the hierarchic significance of such a union, and of the high position occupied by the priests of On, for, to the Egyptians On was the Holy City *par excellence*, regarded as the seat of the most powerful of the cosmic deities, namely, *Atum*, which was occupied by a numerous and important body of priestly functionaries.

The central sanctuary of On was established as early as the middle of the fourth millennium B.C., when the first god *Re* was already ruling there. It is significant to note that the marriage of Joseph to the daughter of the priest of On implied the reception of a foreigner into the highest priestly caste, and by such elevation to the rank of "Father of the God" Joseph was assigned an eminent sacerdotal dignity. Of course, the monotheistic narrator evades such an expression as lies behind the Egyptian title "Father of the God," and simply renders it "Father to Pharaoh," as we at the present time speak of a priest as "father."

As to the title "lord of his whole house" (Gen. xlv, 8), this answers to *mer-per*, "lord, chief of the house" i.e. of the palace, meaning the court chamberlain.

The narrator gives us the Egyptian name, or official title, *Zaphnath-paaneah*, conferred by Pharaoh on Joseph, in the Egyptian language, deeming himself under no necessity to add any explanation, because the meaning would be at once intelligible to listeners and readers of the narrative. Had the narrator lived many years later than the Exodus, and in a country far removed from Egypt, as Egyptologists and Biblical critics have maintained, then most certainly he would have said something about the name, as used in a language which could not be understood in his actual surroundings.

In Gen. xlv, 19 we read that Pharaoh commanded Joseph to send wagons to Canaan for his old father and the women and children of the patriarchal family. This is not to be regarded merely as an act of courtesy on the part of the king; rather it reveals to us a fine trait of the ruler, who was desirous of sparing his minister the embarrassment of allowing the families of his brethren to enter Egypt as nomads, in Semitic fashion, as depicted in Egyptian reliefs, which represent the men as driving asses, and the women and children following on foot. Joseph's people were to enter the country in wagons, as was the custom in better circles in Egypt. It is expressly stated that Pharaoh took the initiative in this matter, commanding Joseph to send the wagons for his folk in Canaan. It is only subsequent to this command that the narrator tells us of Joseph presenting his brothers with new raiment, which of course was cut in the Egyptian style, and not after the Semitic fashion, checked in colours that were too vivid (Gen. xlvii, 2; xlv, 22). The picture of a nomadic caravan, such as archæologists and commentators of the Bible have so often employed in order to illustrate the entry of Israel into Egypt, is a sad misrepresentation of the journey as described in the record: at the behest of Pharaoh it was arranged that Joseph's family should not enter the land as wandering Asiatic barbarians, but rather as distinguished members of the vizier's family, in order to settle in the land and be looked upon as civilized people.

* * * * *

As to the time in which Joseph's installation as vizier took place, scholars who do not reject the whole story as a fiction, think that it took place under the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, who entered Egypt from Arabia about the eighteenth century B.C., and ruled over the country till about 1580 B.C., when they were driven out of Egypt. I do not propose to discuss this question now, but I must mention that, according to Exod. xii, 40, it would appear that Joseph's advent to power was somewhat earlier than the usurpation of Egypt by the Shepherd Kings. There are many details which point in that direction. For instance, in Gen. xliii, 32 it is said that, when the meal was set for Joseph and his brethren, before he revealed himself to them, they "set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians who did eat with them by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews,

for that was an abomination to the Egyptians," and this because they were shepherds, and it is expressly said, in Gen. xlvii, 34 that shepherds were "an abomination unto the Egyptians." This is a clear indication that Joseph's activities fell under an Egyptian king, and not under Shepherd Kings: it would not be conceivable that, under the rule of the Shepherd Kings, it could be tolerated that a shepherd should be "abominated by the Egyptians." In connection with this I also draw attention to the expression "bread" for "meal" in this context (Gen. xliii, 32), where it is said "because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews." The usage of "bread" for "meal" or food, exactly corresponds with the usage of the Egyptian "*ka*" which means bread in the sense of meal, whereas the Semitic expression in such a case would not be simply "bread," but "bread and water," or "bread and salt."

* * * * *

In a scene quite wonderfully described in Gen. xlvii, 7-10, we see the aged patriarch greeting the king and offering him his blessing. When asked by Pharaoh about his age, he replies: "The days of the years of my sojournings are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojournings." In the first place, it must appear strange that Jacob describes his hundred and thirty years as *few*. When, however, we consider that Pharaoh was regarded as an eternally living god, endowed by the gods with millions and myriads of years (*hh n rnp wt*), being as such praised and worshipped, it becomes clear why the venerable man Jacob had to assure Pharaoh, who was certainly much younger, that his hundred and thirty years were but *few* in comparison with the endless years of the eternally living "son of *Ra*." Furthermore, the remark that his age was not so high as that of his fathers must be understood in the light of Egyptian Court etiquette as both tactful and thoughtful, especially on the lips of a foreigner; for it belonged to the good manners of obsequious Court visitors to assure the king that they had been given a long life, and that many happy years had been theirs because they had the good fortune to enjoy the protection and favour of the king. The wise Ptah-hotep, the vizier of King Issi (about 2675 B.C., or earlier) at the end of his book of wisdom, said "It is not little that I have

done upon earth ; I have lived a hundred and ten years, which the king granted me with rewards *exceeding those of my fathers* because I did what was right for him." Also the statement that he lived a hundred and ten years, granted him by the king, has its significance. As a matter of fact, a hundred and ten years were considered in Egypt as the limit of full age. Now it will be understood why it is said of Joseph that he lived a hundred and ten years (Gen. 1, 26).

* * * * *

In Gen. 1, 2 ff., the narrator describes the preparations made for the burial of Jacob. From all the details, in spite of their brevity, we see how perfect was the acquaintance with the embalming procedure of Egypt, also with its mourning customs and funeral arrangements. Note the statement (verse 3) that forty days were needed for the embalming of the body, and that the Egyptians mourned seventy days for Jacob. This statement is in exact accord with the periods that were customary for embalming and mourning in the case of highly-placed deceased persons. A shorter period of mourning was observed only in cases where the position or means of the family did not permit of great expense. On this account we find that the narrator emphasizes the fact that, for the father of the viceroy, the longer period of seventy days was decreed. It is of great significance that the expressions used are modelled with precision on Egyptian phraseology. Thus, it is said (Gen. 1, 2) that Joseph commanded his *physicians (roph'im)* to embalm his father. This expression agrees exactly with the term *syn* (physician), employed by the Egyptians to denote an embalmer. Similarly the "days of *weeping*," as the Hebrew expression should be rendered, for the period of "*mourning*" (Gen. 1, 4), reproduces the Egyptian expression for the time observed for mourning. Its Egyptian origin is indicated by the fact that, as a phrase, it only occurs here in the entire Bible. During the "days of weeping," there was an extraordinarily elaborate programme of processions, with wailing women, rending their garments and tearing their hair. The programme comprised complicated ceremonies in which various priests took part.

Further, it is said (Gen. 1, 4 and 5) that Joseph asked "the house of Pharaoh" to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf, in order to obtain leave for burying his father in Canaan. This agrees exactly with the Egyptian custom, according to which, however

high their position might be, mourners could not themselves come near the king before the burial of their dead.

That Joseph did not hesitate, after having devoted seventy days to mourning, to remain absent from his office for a further long period, and to undertake a journey to Canaan, was by no means likely to annoy Pharaoh. In Egypt it was quite customary to convey the dead to distant burial places, and to devote long periods to funerals. The statement that the cortège was joined by a whole galaxy of high dignitaries, by horsemen and chariots, corresponds to the Egyptian custom of processions to the burial place being accompanied by large bands. As a matter of fact, in no other country beside Egypt were funerals converted into such elaborate processions, and the ceremonies of interment carried out with so much pomp in the case of highly situated personages.

The fidelity with which the narrator transmits every detail, is apparent also from the enumeration of the classes of the officials which escorted the procession to Canaan. The "servants of Pharaoh," (Gen. 1, 7) were the Court officials, who formed a sort of bodyguard of the king, and stood nearest to him; "the elders of his house" are identical with the *shemesu-hayit*, which means the "elders of the hall," who also held high Court rank. In the "elders of the land of Egypt" we have to understand the high counsellors, representing all districts of the land, and holding seats in the supreme council of the king. The chariots and horsemen were known in the Egyptian army in the earliest period, and were very prominent in the time of Joseph. Such details as these could only be known by a writer who lived among the Egyptians, and knew the rules of Court etiquette, and was acquainted with the rank and file of State officialdom.

* * * * *

What I have said will, I hope, suffice to show how vivid are the colours of Egyptian conditions as they are brought before us in the Joseph narrative, which must be regarded as containing, not dim reminiscences or remote memories, as some Egyptologists have led the scientific world to believe, nor can it be a case of the narrator having gathered details from soldiers or tourists who might have visited Egypt in the ninth or eighth century before Christ, that is to say, five hundred years after the Exodus. Since my researches became known some investigators of a past day have come down from their Olympic heights and shown a

disposition to admit that the Joseph story embodies details more or less in accordance with what has come to be known as old-time Egyptian life. Professor Erman, one of the most prominent German Egyptologists, after reading my book wrote to me that he thought that the author of the Joseph story was a writer who himself lived in Egypt towards the ninth century B.C. Thus we have a suggestion of an author who was deprived of the comfort of receiving tourists and soldiers in his study, but found himself compelled to take up the wanderer's staff and go to the land of Pharaoh and collect the material himself! Poor man! Could he have foreseen all the vicissitudes which the Egyptologists would in turn have enforced upon him, he would assuredly have added their unhappy theories to the ten plagues of Egypt. But we have seen, and those who read my book will see, how much better the narrator knew Egypt and its people than do his Egyptological detractors of our times.

In conclusion, let me say this—Every discovery made in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, has confirmed the Bible, and now at length the linguistic evidence is coming forth to support and complement archæological evidence. And I hope, nay, I am sure, that future archæological discoveries, excavations, and researches will assist us still further in establishing the accuracy of the Book of books.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman (Dr. THIRTLE) said: I am sure I carry you all with me when I move that the cordial thanks of this meeting be given to Dr. Yahuda for the lecture to which we have listened, for the demonstration with lantern illustrations that has been conducted in our presence.

Dr. Yahuda comes before us with a fame that needs nothing of advertisement. Some of us have followed him for many years, since the time when, shortly before the Great War, he was called to fill the Chair of Mediæval Hebrew Literature in the University of Madrid, thus opening with signal honour an historic chapter in the records of a revived Oriental culture in Spain. Little did we think, however, at that time, that Dr. Yahuda had already put his hand to researches that promised to yield great and lasting results in the interpretation of the Old Testament. When, at length,

he retired from the professorial chair, he betook himself to studies which have now yielded a great surprise, and which, most certainly will tell upon Old Testament work for years to come. In a volume in German, issued three years ago, the position was outlined, and as a result notable scholars have declared in plain terms that the problem of Old Testament study as a whole comes under re-examination to-day: nothing can hinder such re-examination.

Some of us are assuredly aware that, in a noble volume just published, Dr. Yahuda has embodied the researches of years, not only with reference to Joseph and his story, but also with reference to the question of the Pentateuchal records as a whole, in their relation to the language of ancient Egypt. It has been my pleasure to read the volume, given forth a few days ago by the Oxford University Press, with the title, *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian*, which is modestly described as the opening section of a comprehensive work—a work which, in my judgment, will stand to the credit of its learned author for long years to come. To manifest purpose did Dr. Yahuda surrender responsibilities at Madrid in order to bring to fruition so important an enterprise.

The thesis of the great work of which I speak has been, so to say, sampled before us this afternoon, and for one thing, it must have convinced us all that the early books of the Bible demand reconsideration in the light of new and undeniable facts. During recent decades, as we know, scholars have been labouring under an impression that could not but mislead; and inquiring students have been led, at the same time, to associate words and phrases found in the Pentateuch with conceptions brought from the literature of Assyria and ancient Babylon—with illustrations from Akkadian, Aramaic, and Arabic, and now and then á thought of the language and customs of Egypt. Now at length, however, whether we are ready for it or not, we face an entirely new balance in things: even as in the *history* of Israel, Egyptian bondage came before Babylonian exile, so also in *the language* of Israel we must find among things that are fundamental, in the earliest section of the Old Testament, a reflection of the thoughts and customs of Egypt—the influence of the Egyptian language.

Neither Old Babylon nor New, nor both of them together, can rule out the influence of Egypt, the land in which the people of

Israel passed weary centuries; and while others have, with hesitation, suggested such an influence as vital in the history of the chosen people, Dr. Yahuda has come forward with full and convincing proof along lines not hitherto expected. We are thus compelled to recognize in his labours the opening of a new chapter in Old Testament criticism, with an enlarging interpretation of outstanding episodes in regard to the Pentateuch in particular.

To our knowledge, many who would have been present this afternoon are on the sick list; otherwise the attendance would have been larger than is actually the case. We congratulate Dr. Yahuda on the fact that, though for weeks past he has been unwell, he has now made recovery, and has been able to give so good an account of himself this afternoon. One thing is certain, we shall hear more of him and his great achievements in coming days.

Calling for the thanks of the meeting to be given to Dr. Yahuda I invite those who hear me to count upon the *Journal of Transactions*, in which the lecture will appear, in due course, and to be assured that along the lines of our present study, there is "more to follow." Moreover, to those who are prepared to read a work which is at once rich in new facts, and strong in the presentation of an argument which cannot but tell for the confirmation of Holy Scripture, I say—Do not pass by the great work just given to the world by the Oxford University Press.

The resolution of thanks was carried with acclamation; and thereupon remarks were offered and questions asked by Messrs. P. O. Ruoff, W. Hoste, S. Collett, Rev. C. W. Cooper, and Dr. Norman Denham.