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ARTICLE IV.

THE ANSWER OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM TO THE HIGHER CRITICISM OF THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

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II.

THERE has hitherto been one great fundamental historical difficulty in the story of Joseph. Most of the details are in themselves highly probable. The local coloring appears to be minutely accurate in the light of what is known of ancient Egypt. Joseph's sudden rise to power is exactly what might be expected at an Oriental court. The incident of the purchase of the Egyptians and their lands finds world-wide parallels.[1] Famines and successions of good years and bad are in themselves too frequent to arouse comment; but one great historical improbability remains. Is it likely that a minister of Joseph's position would personally serve all who came to buy corn?

The other details of his activity are probable enough. We find him at the head of a large office controlling a number of store-houses,[2] imprisoning people at pleasure, residing with a suite away from the office, and directing the policy of a great state department. Would such a man act as salesman to all comers? Undoubtedly the Massoretic text represents him as

[1] In xlvii. 21, for M. T., העביר אתו לערים, "he removed them to the cities," the Samaritan and Vulgate have העביד אתו לעבדים "he made them bondmen." The LXX apparently had לו for אתו: but otherwise agrees with the Samaritan.

[2] So read in xli. 56 with some ancient Versions.

so doing. Its other expressions are all susceptible of reasonable explanation, but in xlii. 6 it says bluntly: "And Joseph was the governor over the land; he it was that sold to all the people of the land." The difficulty was felt by Jerome, for he paraphrases and makes the sales take place by Joseph's direction (*ad ejus nutum*). On the other hand, Mr. Carpenter is inclined to assign the words "was the governor over the land" to R, on the ground that the word rendered "the governor" is late. The larger Cambridge Septuagint gives reasons for holding that the difficulties that troubled Jerome and Mr. Carpenter are alike due to the activity of a commentator. One MS. (f) omits the first half of the verse (down to "people of the land"); and this is clearly right.

But does the historical difficulty really vanish with this change? Do we not still see Joseph selling to the Egyptians and to his brethren? If the narrative be carefully examined we shall find the answer. It is no doubt true that we read of Joseph's selling to the Egyptians and other similar phrases; but such expressions do not necessarily imply any more than that he directed the operations of the department that did these things. In the case of his brethren the matter is different; but the sequel makes it reasonably plain that the difficulty merely arises from the fact that the narrator's interest is centered on the moral and dramatic elements of the story, so that he omits details that are irrelevant to his purpose. It is not to be supposed that the accusation of being spies would have sounded arbitrary and unreasonable to Egyptians who were unacquainted with the identity of the strangers who had come to buy corn. On the contrary, we must assume that in taking this line Joseph was acting as his department would have expected him to act. In other words, the charge was made because in the eyes of the Egyptians these foreigners were for

some reason or other suspect. It was probably on this account that they were interviewed by Joseph himself. It was not that he personally weighed out corn to all comers and received the purchase money in exchange, but rather that, if circumstances arose that caused suspicion, the matter was brought before the head of the department. Whether the mere fact that the would-be purchasers were foreigners was the sole ground of suspicion in this case it is impossible to tell: that there was something about them that stood in need of explanation appears to result from the narrative and to provide the solution of the difficulty that has been felt. It must be remembered that the narrator's motive naturally led to the suppression of all details that did not bear directly on the absorbing human interest: in reading a story of this kind one must always bear in mind the point of view from which it is told.

The analysis of chapter xlii. has already been answered in part. We have seen that the Jacob–Israel clue and the argument from Joseph's twofold recognition of his brethren melt away under the rays of textual criticism. The same holds good of another critical argument. It is claimed that, in J, Joseph is described by his brothers as "the man"; in E, as "the man the lord of the land" (xlii. 30, 33). But, in point of fact, in verse 30 one MS. of the LXX (n) and the Vulgate omit "the man," and in verse 33 the Vulgate reads "and he." In both cases the variants appear to be more original than the Massoretic text; so that the argument comes down to the fact that in verse 30 Joseph is spoken of as "the lord of the land." If the critics choose to base an argument on that, nobody need begrudge it to them.

It is further said that in J "the money is found in the mouth of the sacks, when one of them is opened for provender on the way xlii 27, 28a, xliii 12, 18, 21, xliv 8," while in E

"the money is found in the sacks on being emptied when they reach Jacob, provision for the way being furnished separately xlii 25, 35." (Oxford Hexateuch, vol. ii. p. 66.)

First, as to the location of the money. In the LXX the money is found in the mouth of the sack opened on the way in xlii. 27, but the word "mouth" is missing in xliii. 12, 18, 21: xliv. 8; so that its presence in the Hebrew text must be attributed to a glossator. Thus the story is that when the brothers reached the inn one of them opened his sack to obtain not provision for the way but provender for his ass. There is here no inconsistency. Subsequently, on their arrival home, the others found that their money also had been returned. So far as I can see, the only discrepancy that can be charged is that in xliii. 21 the brothers say, "When we came to the lodging-place and we opened our sacks and, behold, every man's money was in his sack," etc.; while in fact only one of the sacks had been opened there, the others having been opened at home. I can only say that, having regard to the ordinary colloquial habits of mankind, there is nothing in a discrepancy of that kind to justify any suspicion as to the unity of the narrative.

There is one other point that requires notice. The Hebrew generally uses for "sack" a word (אמתחת, *amtachath*) not found outside this group of chapters; but in verses 25, 27a, and 35 (twice) we meet with שׂק (*saq*) the ordinary word. The alternation is very striking, and Mr. Carpenter accordingly attributes the first word to J and the second to E, saying, that in 27a *saq* "seems due to the compiler." In point of fact in 27 the LXX and Aquila both had *amtachath*, which is, therefore, probably the correct reading. But in verse 35 a Septuagintal MS. reads this word for sack 2°, and in verse 25, so far as can be judged from the text of the Vulgate in its present

condition, Jerome seems to have found the same word. Thus here too the Versions do not confirm the critics. The present text of the Vulgate is too inconsistent in its translations of the two words for any certain inference to be drawn from its usage, but we may hope for more light when the revision that has now been undertaken is completed. Meanwhile it should be noted that the Massoretic text is clearly not a reliable guide in this matter. *Saq* may be due to glossators or the two words may have been discriminated to convey different shades of meaning; but, for the present, no certain conclusion is possible.

The other arguments employed to buttress this part of the analysis are unworthy of attention, being merely based on the forced analysis itself, and not on anything in the biblical text.[1]

There is nothing further in Mr. Carpenter's commentary on the concluding chapters of the story of Joseph that calls for detailed notice, but it is desirable to say a few words about some of the passages attributed to P. The first of these is xlvi. 6 f. In these two verses the following words are doubt-

[1] There is Septuagintal authority for suspecting the following other phrases in these chapters: xlii. 2: "And he said" (omitted by Vulgate), "and not die"; ver. 3, "ten"; ver. 5, the whole verse; ver. 6, "with their faces"; ver. 13, "the sons of one man," "the land of"; ver. 14, "unto them" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 18, "Joseph" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 22, "and ye would not hear"; ver. 32, "brethren," "this day" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 33, "unto us"; ver. 34, "unto me," "but that ye are true men" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 35, "they and their father"; xliii. 3, "saying" (omitted by Vulgate and two of Kennicott's MSS.); ver. 8, "that we may live," "and also our little ones"; ver. 9, "unto thee"; ver. 13, "and arise go again" (Vulgate has *et ite* for the whole phrase); ver. 14, "other" (omitted by Vulgate), "and Benjamin"; ver. 15, "that" (omitted by Vulgate), "they took" 2° (omitted by Vulgate), "in their hand" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 17, "the man" 2° (omitted by Vulgate), "Joseph's" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 22, "in our hand" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 24, "And the man brought the men into Joseph's house" (compare ver. 16, 17); ver. 26, "into the house" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 30,

ful textually on Septuagintal or Hebrew evidence or both: ver. 6, "in the land of Canaan," "Jacob"; ver. 7, "with him," "and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt." Jerome too had a different text, for he renders these verses "(tuleruntque eum filii . . . .) et omnia quae possederat in terra Chanaan: venitque in Aegyptum cum omni semine suo, filii ejus, et nepotes, filiae, et cuncta simul progenies." Then comes a passage (ver. 8–27) given to a late priestly writer. This is omitted from consideration as not being an integral part of the story of Joseph, and we pass to xlvii. 5–11. Here there is great uncertainty as to the text, for the LXX omitted 5 and 6a (down to "dwelt"). The last half of the verse is given to J, and therefore does not touch our inquiry; but in verse 9 there is ground for omitting everything after "few and evil have (they) been." In verse 11 "land of" should probably be omitted before "Egypt"; while "in the land of Rameses" is of doubtful authenticity. But once all these phrases are removed, as they perfectly well can be without injury to the sense, what evidence is there that these verses

"there" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 34, "And they drank and were merry with him." On the other hand, in verse 28 the LXX and the Samaritan add "And he said, Blessed be that man of God," after "alive." In chapter xliv. the following omissions may be noted: ver. 11, "and opened every man his sack"; ver. 14, "house" (omitted by Vulgate), "and he was yet there"; ver. 23, "youngest"; ver. 26, "We cannot go down"; ver. 27, "unto us." In chapter xlv. the following may be noted: ver. 3, "at his presence" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 5, "hither"; ver. 7, "in the earth" (there is some evidence for omitting "to preserve you a remnant" and some other evidence for omitting "to save you alive by a great deliverance." The Vulgate omits "by a great deliverance." Apparently the present Hebrew text is conflate); ver. 12, "my brother"; ver. 16, "saying" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 19, "this do ye" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 22, "each man"; ver. 23, "corn and," "and victuals" (omitted by Vulgate); ver. 27, "which he had said unto them"; ver. 28, "Joseph."

should be attributed to P? The same argument applies to xlvii. 27b, 28, where "and were fruitful," "land of," "the years of his life," are all doubtful. In chapter xlix. there is evidence for omitting "And he charged them," "unto them" (both ver. 29); "that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which" (ver. 29–30); "with the field from Ephron the Hittite" (ver. 30); "his wife" 1° (ver. 31); while verse 32 is entirely omitted by the Vulgate. Similarly, in l. 13, "with the field. . . . Mamre" is a glossator's addition.

I now return to chapter xxxvii. I have left it till the last because it contains a difficulty requiring somewhat delicate textual operations.

It is supposed by the critics that in J's story Judah was prominent, while in E's version his part was played by Reuben. Accordingly verses 21 f. are divided. The earlier verse is assigned to J — "Reuben" being declared to be an alteration of the original text — and the later to E. The textual evidence disposes of this, for the Vulgate, supported by one of Kennicott's Hebrew MSS., omits "And Reuben said unto them" (ver. 22). It also reads the second person plural for the first in verse 21 ("Do not take his life"). It is clear that in point of fact the attitudes of Reuben and Judah were quite different. Reuben wished to save Joseph, Judah to make money out of him instead of killing him. There is no hint that the latter was actuated by any nobler sentiment. Moreover the sequel points in this direction. The language of Reuben in xlii. 22 ("his *blood* is required"), interpreted naturally, means that he thought his brothers had been responsible not for selling but for killing Joseph.[1]

[1] It is certainly true that in chapter xlii. Reuben pleads unsuccessfully with his father, while in chapter xliii. Judah manages to

The real difficulty lies elsewhere. While it is clear from xxxvii. 25–27, 28b, and xxxix. 1 that Joseph was sold to Ishmaelites, we read of Midianites in xxxvii. 28a and 36. The critics of course postulate two stories; and they go further, and say that in E Joseph was kidnapped, while in J he was sold. No doubt in xl. 15 Joseph speaks of having been stolen from the land of the Hebrews, while in xlv. 4 he uses the expression "sold"; but in point of fact both passages are entirely accurate, as he had in fact been both kidnapped and sold by his brothers.

The difficulty is therefore really narrowed down to the question of the Midianites in xxxvii. 28 and 36.

To facilitate the comprehension of a somewhat technical discussion I begin by setting out in Hebrew and English the present Massoretic text, with what appears to be the true text underneath. For the benefit of those who are unacquainted with Hebrew, the translation follows the order of the Hebrew words, hyphens connect the English words corresponding to a single Hebrew equivalent, and bars are used to show the divisions into words.[1]

VERSE 28.

Merchants	Midianites	Men	English rendering of M. T.
סחרים	| מ ' נ (י) ד מ | מ (י) ש נ א |		Massoretic Text
	מ '	ש מ ע א ' ה	Emended Text
	the-Ishmaelites		English rendering of E. T.

VERSE 36.

And-the-Midianites		English rendering of M. T.
ו ה מ ד נ ' מ		Massoretic Text
ו ה ס ח ר ' מ		Emended Text
And-the-merchants		English rendering of E. T.

persuade him at a later date; but there is not the slightest discrepancy in all this. Reuben's previous conduct had been such as to rob him of all influence with Jacob (xxxv. 22).

[1] It must be remembered that in Hebrew MSS. words were not always divided, so that in an inquiry of this kind we must look beyond the divisions.

What are the facts and the reasons by which these changes can be supported?

In verse 28, two of Kennicott's Hebrew MSS. read "Mdnm" for "Mdynm" (Midianites). This is indicated above by placing the ' in parentheses. When the vowels are added, this word becomes Medanites, an expression that occurs again in verse 36, but is otherwise quite unknown. In the latter passage it is generally regarded as a corruption from "Mdynm" (Midianites). This exhausts the *Hebrew* evidence, but it must be remembered that considerable latitude was exercised in old MSS. with regard to certain letters called the *matres lectionis;* and accordingly in verse 28 we are free to neglect the ' of the word for "men," and this also is shown by parentheses.

After what we have seen of the habits of glossators, "men, Md(y)nm, merchants," appears to be a description that in its present condition is more likely to be due to a commentator's activity than to the original writer. At this point the Versional evidence comes to the rescue. The readings of most of the Septuagintal authorities afford no assistance, but E and the Ethiopic read "the Ishmaelites" for the whole phrase. At first sight this looks like a correction or a gloss to avoid the difficulty of the original: closer scrutiny shows that that is not the case. A glossator does not *diminish* the number of the words of the original. On the contrary he adds to them. This text presents nothing corresponding to the "merchants" of the Massoretic text and we had already seen reason to suppose that the Massoretic text was too full. Again, it has the single word "the Ishmaelites" for the two "men, Md(y)nites." If it be compared letter for letter with the Massoretic text, it appears that the numbers of the letters exactly correspond (allowing for the features noted above), and that in the middle

of both phrases we get ובו. For these reasons it is fair to suppose that "the Ishmaelites" is the original reading. Five letters having become illegible, the text "men Mdnm" arose; and in explanation of this unintelligible phrase a glossator interpolated a note "merchants," taken from the then text of verse 36, conjecturing that "Mdnm" must be some out-of-the-way word for "merchants."

With regard to verse 36 the case stands thus: There is a Hexaplar note in Field that the LXX had "Midianites," while other copies had "Ishmaelite merchants"; and this reading is supported by d and p. "Midianites" does not represent a variant to our Massoretic text; but the alternative reading clearly does. In view of the great activity of glossators it is more probable that this reading is itself conflate than that a long word like "Ishmaelites" should have entirely fallen out of the Hebrew text and the other authorities. By a very easy corruption of three letters of "merchants" (assuming the word to be original), we could get the "Mdnm" of the Massoretic text. The process would be aided by the prior corruption of verse 28. This reading, too, would explain the gloss "merchants" in the earlier verse. Lastly, a memory of it seems to have survived in the reading of another Septuagintal MS. (t), which has "the Midianite merchants." For all these reasons the readings suggested above appear to fulfil most exactly the conditions of the problem, and to explain all the available data; and it is submitted that they should be adopted. With their adoption the last and most formidable difficulties of this narrative entirely disappear.