

# The Joseph Story between Egypt and Israel

Edited by  
THOMAS RÖMER,  
KONRAD SCHMID  
and AXEL BÜHLER

*Archaeology and Bible*

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**Mohr Siebeck**

# Archaeology and Bible

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## Introduction

In the context of the Pentateuch, the Joseph story is an astonishing narration. At first glance one can simply read it as a transition narrative that explains why Jacob and his family came to Egypt. In this regard, the story seems necessary for the book of Exodus, which starts by saying that the Israelites/Hebrews in Egypt had become a huge people. However, if one looks at other texts of the Hebrew Bible, there is no mention of the Joseph story; instead, the arrival of the Israelites is said to be the result of the decision of a “father” or of “fathers” to go down to Egypt (Deut 26:5–9; Num 20:15; cf. also Josh 24:4 and 1 Sam 12:8). Indeed, there are very few references to Joseph at all in the whole Hebrew Bible. Outside Genesis 37–50, only Exod 13:19 and Josh 24:32 relate to the transport and burial of Joseph’s bones in the land of Ephraim (pursuing Joseph’s order given in Gen 50:25). And Psalm 105 is the only other text that alludes to Joseph in Egypt, though it does so quite differently from Genesis 37–50. This psalm is often considered to be one of the Psalter’s latest texts, dating to the Persian or even Hellenistic period.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, the Joseph story is not necessary for explaining why the Israelites found themselves in Egypt.

The question therefore arises: Why was this story written, when, and for what audience?

Here another paradox appears. Attentive readers of the book of Genesis will notice differences between the narrative about Joseph and the ones about the patriarchs in Genesis 12–36.

Whereas the stories about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives are patchworks of a sort that combine previously independent narratives or cycles, the narrative about Joseph and his brothers is a straightforward story and cannot be interpreted as a combination of former independent units. Contrary to the Patriarchal narratives, the Joseph story does not contain any cultic etiology; whereas Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob receive divine speeches telling them what to do or informing them about future events, Joseph never has direct communication with God. The Joseph story clearly has its own style and plot. Gerhard von Rad was among the first to underline the literary character of the Joseph story and its wisdom flair in contrast to the patriarchal and exodus narratives. He praised the literary artistry of the Joseph story, but postulated a

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<sup>1</sup> Some scholars think that the allusion of a young man coming out of prison in Qoh 4:13–16 may allude to the Joseph story. If this is the case, this nevertheless dates not further back than the Hellenistic period.



J-version and an E-version that later redactors would have combined – a conclusion that seems forced into a prior theory.<sup>2</sup> Yet still today, the separation of the Joseph story into a Yahwistic and an Elohist version has some supporters.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, no one has succeeded in reconstructing two coherent, independent narratives.<sup>4</sup> The question of the literary unity of the story is open to discussion.

There are indeed several observations that indicate the need for a diachronic reconstruction of the Joseph story. But how can we reconstruct the original story, its date, and historical setting? If the Joseph narrative was not intended from the outset to conclude the patriarchal history or to provide a transition from the time of the ancestors into the Egyptian oppression and exodus, what was its intention? How much can Egyptology (archaeology, history, epigraphy, iconography) help us decide whether or not the author of the (original) Joseph story lived in Egypt? What would be a fitting date for the Joseph narrative? Many dates have been suggested for the first version of Genesis 37–50, which range from the beginning of the first millennium BCE (or even earlier) until the Hellenistic Period. Is the so-called Priestly document (P) a terminus ad quem? Does P really know and presuppose the Joseph story?

These questions are discussed in this volume, which results from a workshop held in Lausanne on June 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>, 2018 as part of the Synergia project, “The History of the Pentateuch: Combining Literary and Archaeological Approaches,” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. The event brought together Egyptologists, archaeologists, specialists in ancient history, and biblical scholars. Cumulatively, it represents the state of the art in historical research about the Joseph narrative.

Several contributions are devoted to the diachronic analysis of Genesis 37–50. Franziska Ede and Reinhard Kratz investigate the development of the Joseph Story between the patriarchal narratives and the Exodus story. Ede argues that the Joseph story initially represented a continuation of the patriarchal narratives (Genesis 37–45\*), to which it is connected through multiple catchword links. It can be understood as a diaspora novella that was transformed by later hands into

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<sup>2</sup> G. VON RAD, “Josephsgeschichte und ältere Chokmah,” in *Congress Volume. Copenhagen 1953* (VTSup 1; Leiden: Brill, 1953), 120–127; see also IDEM, *Das erste Buch Mose. Genesis* (ATD 2–4; 9th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 283–284.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance L. RUPPERT, “Zur neueren Diskussion um die Joseferzählung in der Genesis,” *BZ.NF* 33 (1989), 92–97; J.S. BADEN, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (ABRL; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 34–44. See also H. SEEBASS, *Genesis III. Josephsgeschichte (37,1–50,26)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 2000), who is much more cautious than some of his colleagues. He emphasizes that the Joseph story is “wegen ihrer formalen Geschlossenheit im Pentateuch singular” (6) and admits an important post-priestly redaction (210–211).

<sup>4</sup> Despite the statement of B. J. SCHWARTZ, “How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37?” in *The Book of Genesis. Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (ed. C. A. Evans et al.; VTSup 152; FIO TL 6; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 263–278.

the narrative link between the patriarchal narratives and the exodus-conquest-narrative. Kratz shares the theory that we should read the older version of the Joseph story in Genesis 37–45 as a literary reflection on the Samaritan-Judean diaspora in Egypt. Even if the classification as a “diaspora novella” does not fit the entire Joseph story, it is apt for Genesis 39–41 (and 47), allowing a date of the original Joseph story in the Persian or Hellenistic period. One can even understand the story as a refutation of the editors of the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 43–44), who reject and condemn the Egyptian diaspora. This point is also made by Safwat Marzouk (see below).

The issue of dating the Joseph story is also addressed by Thomas Römer. He agrees with Kratz and other contributors in this volume about characterizing the Joseph story as a diaspora novella, and about a Persian period context for the original Joseph narrative. But Römer finds several indications for a revision of the story in the Ptolemaic period, such as Joseph’s second dream, Joseph’s departure from Hebron, Pharaoh’s birthday and dreams, and Joseph’s invention of capitalism. These texts reflect the ideological and economic context of the Ptolemaic period.

Another approach is taken by Lauren Monroe, who wants to understand the Joseph story together with references to Joseph outside of the Hexateuch. She suggests that the association of the figure of Joseph with the *bet-yosef*, and the importance of the *bet-yosef* in pre- and early monarchic Israel, can explain the incorporation of Joseph into the family of Jacob as part of the process of constructing tribal Israel. Although diaspora interests did shape the canonical Joseph story, she argues that beneath the surface of this literary masterpiece lies “Joseph the Hebrew,” the ancestor of a political entity that appears to have held a position of dominance in the central highlands of Canaan in the pre- and early monarchic period.

The Joseph story’s ideology and its construction of the addressees’ identity is analysed in several contributions. Samuel Arnet locates the ideology of the Joseph story in the context of post-exilic discourses about “Jewish” identity. Through examples of mixed marriages, divination, the presentation of the Egyptian king, and the naming of individuals, he shows that the Joseph story differs from deuteronomistic discourses as well as from those that can be detected in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Arnet’s investigation shows that the construction of identity in the post-exilic period was complex; the position of some communities, such as the one behind the Joseph story, was apparently more “open” than the ideology of other groups.

Safwat Marzouk deals with the link between forced migration and reconciliation. He understands the Joseph story as a narrative that addressed the needs of a diaspora community – and one of those needs had to do with healing the fractured exiled community which had suffered from both external and internal causes of its forced migration. Joseph is a model for the diaspora community,

and he is able to embrace his liminal space, and to maintain his hybrid identity as both a Hebrew and an Egyptian.

Konrad Schmid discusses the anthropology of the Joseph story by focussing on Joseph's second dream. This second dream is disturbing because of its imagery, since the scene where heavenly bodies venerate a human being clearly has blasphemous overtones. The non-fulfilment of this second dream indicates that the Joseph story does not portray a perfect Joseph, on the one hand, and totally negative brothers, on the other. One may therefore understand the Joseph story as combining an ethical and practical concept of wisdom with inspired wisdom, presenting the former as presupposing the latter.

Two contributions deal with the Joseph story from an egyptological perspective. Camille Guérin analyzes commercial, trade, and agricultural allusion in the Joseph story, as well as rites, customs and beliefs (like Joseph's embalming) and lexicographic features. She concludes that the Egyptian elements in the Joseph story help to date the narrative more precisely and can provide some information about its historical context. The egyptological evidence seems to correspond to Egypt during the Persian or even Hellenistic period.

Bernd Schipper confirms that the Egyptian evidence in the Joseph story points to the Neo-Babylonian and Persian period. The Joseph story should be understood above all in parallel to the Ahiqar tradition and the so-called Famine Stela that stands within an inner-Egyptian tradition, as shown by the papyrus pBerlin 23071, which bears a hieratic text datable to the Persian Period (fifth or fourth century BCE) on its verso. This text contains all the motifs of the Famine Stela that can be related to the biblical Joseph story.

This volume offers an overview of the current discussion on the origins, composition, and historical contexts behind the Joseph narrative. There is a tendency to date the story (or its original version) to the Persian period, but divergent voices do appear in this volume. Readers can reflect on possible convergences as well as divergences. The volume also shows that scholarly discussion about the historical location of the Joseph story requires bringing together Egyptologists and biblical scholars.

We thank Nina Jaillet and Phillip Lasater for their help in preparing the manuscript, the Swiss National Science Foundation for its support to make this work available via open access, and Mohr Siebeck for the production of this book.

Geneva, Lausanne, Paris, and Zurich

Thomas Römer  
Konrad Schmid  
Axel Bühler

# The Joseph Story: Diaspora Novella – Patriarchal Story – Exodus Narrative

## Part I

*Franziska Ede*

The Joseph story represents both a part of the ancestral narratives and the narrative bridge between Genesis and Exodus. Joseph, first-born of Rachel and Jacob, continues the genealogical lineage of the patriarchs. Joseph, tribe of Israel, prepares the way for the exodus from Egypt. While this dual function is undeniable within the Masoretic text as it has come down to us, the original scope and function of the Joseph story have been highly disputed in recent Pentateuchal criticism.<sup>1</sup>

In analysis of select passages that have long been subject to controversy, this article will attempt to tackle both aspects. One crucial passage in this respect is Gen 37, as it constitutes the interface towards the ancestral narratives and sets the scene for the subsequent context.<sup>2</sup> In consideration of pivotal aspects from Gen 37, I will first investigate the nature of the relation between the Joseph story and the preceding literary context, and will then inquire into the literary scope foreshadowed by ch. 37. The latter, of course, has implications for the question of when and how the Joseph story became the narrative link between the ancestral narratives and the exodus-conquest narrative.

### 1. The Joseph Story and Its Relation to the Preceding Literary Context

I will commence with a look at the double incentive for fraternal hatred in Gen 37 that has often given rise to the assumption of two independent sources.<sup>3</sup> As any

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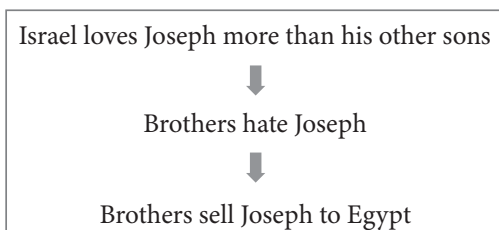
<sup>1</sup> For an overview regarding current issues within Pentateuchal criticism cf. R. G. KRATZ, “The Analysis of the Pentateuch: An Attempt to Overcome Barriers of Thinking,” *ZAW* 128 (2016), 529–561.

<sup>2</sup> For the relevance of Gen 37 with regard to an analysis of the Joseph story cf. H. DONNER, *Die literarische Gestalt der Josephsgeschichte* (SHAW.PH 2; Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. DILLMANN, *Genesis*, (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1882), 372; H. HOLZINGER, *Genesis*, (KHC; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1898), 224, or H. GÜNKEL, *Genesis*, (4th ed.; HKAT I/1; Göttingen:

decision regarding the original beginning of the Joseph story may influence the nature of its relation to the ancestral narratives, I will first clarify the interrelation between the passages on paternal preference and dreams.

The passage on paternal preference commences in Gen 37:3 and mentions a man called Israel, who is the father of multiple sons, one of whom, Joseph, he loves more than the others. Joseph's brothers perceive this imbalance and start to hate him. The motif of hatred is the necessary means to change scenery: Because of their hatred, the brothers sell Joseph to Egypt. The ultimate cause for this circumstance is the father, Israel, who preferred one son over the others.



While Joseph thus remains a passive agent within v. 3–4, he contributes actively to an increase in hatred in v. 5–9. The relation between both passages may be unfolded as follows: v. 3 describes the familial constellation from the father's perspective, before v. 4 changes into the perspective of the brothers. They realize their father's greater love for Joseph and counteract it with their own hatred. V. 5–8 continue this horizontal perspective and focus on the fraternal conflict. This conflict is increased by Joseph himself, as he reveals the content of his dreams to his brothers.<sup>4</sup> Both the fraternal perspective and the increase in hatred are, perhaps, easiest explained by the assumption that v. 5–9 know v. 3–4. Irrespective of any diachronic considerations v. 3–4 would then represent the oldest introduction to the Joseph story and as such could constitute a possible literary seam between the Joseph story and ancestral narratives. In the following I will verify this possibility by investigating discrete aspects from v. 3–4.

Gen 37:3–5

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱהָב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בָן־זֶקֶנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כַּתְנַת פָּסִים:<sup>4</sup> וַיִּרְאוּ אַחֵיו כִּי־אֱהָב אֱבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אֲחָיו וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוּ לְשָׁלוֹם:  
וַיַּחַלֵּם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם וַיְגַד לְאַחָיו [וַיֹּסֶפֶן] עוֹד שְׁנָא אֹתוֹ:<sup>5</sup>

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), 402; differently J. WELLHAUSEN, *Die Composition des Hexateuch* (4th ed.; Berlin: Reimer, 1963), 54, who attributes V. 2b–11 to E.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. C. LEVIN, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 267–271.

### 1.1 Joseph, Son of Israel

A first possible overlap with the ancestral narratives is the reference to Israel, who fathered a son named Joseph. While no mention of this exact familial constellation is attested within the ancestral narratives, Gen 29–30 provide a list of children born to Jacob, who is later renamed Israel by the deity. The change of name in Gen 32:29 equates the person Jacob with the national-political entity Israel and transfers the family history onto a meta-level that recounts the emergence of a people.<sup>5</sup> Within the ancestral narratives this legend surrounding the emergence of Israel is created indirectly through the change of name and unfolded narratively through the stories of the patriarch and his god Yhwh. Since the authors of Gen 37:3–4 quite naturally refer to Joseph as son of Israel, the narrative introduced by these verses should best be read against the backdrop of the stories surrounding Jacob, who became Israel.<sup>6</sup>

Gen 32:29

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאמֶר עוֹד שָׁמַךְ כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־שְׂרִית עַם־אֱלֹהִים וְעַם־אֲנָשִׁים וְתוֹכֵל:<sup>29</sup>

Gen 37:3f

וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בִן־זִקְנִים הוּא לֹו וַעֲשֵׂה לֹו כְּתַנַּת פְּסִים:<sup>4</sup> וַיִּרְאוּ אֲחָיו כִּי־אָתוּ אֶהָב אֲבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אֲחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכֻלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם:

This assumption is supported by further links between Gen 37:3–4 and the ancestral narratives, namely the antagonism of love and hatred and the reference to Joseph as son of old age.

### 1.2 Jacob-Israel's Unequal Distribution of Affection

Within Gen 37:3–4 the unequal distribution of affection is expressed terminologically through the terms *מן אהב* + *אהב* and *שנא*. While the positive emotion refers to Israel and his affection towards Joseph, the latter verb designates the brothers' reaction to paternal preference.<sup>7</sup> They hate Joseph, because Israel distributes his love unequally amongst his sons. The same imbalanced distribution of affection is recounted for Jacob in Gen 29. Upon serving Laban for his younger daughter, Rachel, Jacob is first deceived and married to Rachel's older sister Leah. He then

<sup>5</sup> Cf. R. G. KRATZ, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 281–286.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. B. WILLMES, "Objektive Ereignisse bei textinterner Literarkritik: Einige Anmerkungen zur Subjektivität literarkritischer Beobachtung. Harald Schweizers Studie. Die Josefsgeschichte," *BN* 67 (1993), 54–86, here 58.

<sup>7</sup> For considerations on the motif of paternal preference cf. B. J. VAN DER MERWE, "Joseph as successor of Jacob," in *Studia Biblica et Semitica* (ed. W. C. van Unnik and A. S. van der Woude; Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers, 1966), 221–232, here 228 f, or B. JOHNSON, "Die Josephserzählung und die Theodizeefrage," in *Nachdenken über Israel* (ed. H. M. Niemann, M. Augustin and W. H. Schmidt; BEAT 37; Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1994), 27–36, here 27.

serves Laban another seven years in order to gain Rachel's hand in marriage. The account of courtship concludes in Gen 29:30 with the observation that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. The motif of greater love segues into the following birth accounts, in which Jacob's greater love for Rachel is juxtaposed with Leah's identification as שְׂנוֹאָה.

Comparing the above passages, it is most striking that they not only concord regarding the opposition of love and hatred, but do so in the context of a conflict between siblings that is described in terms of their respective relation with Jacob-Israel. While some may say that the motif is part of a common traditional theme and the terminology to be expected in this regard, within the Hebrew Bible the exact constellation only occurs in the above instances. Both motif and terminology may then, perhaps, be easiest explained as a deliberate bridge between the Jacob stories and the Joseph story, through which Jacob-Israel projects his greater love for Rachel onto her first-born son.<sup>8</sup>

Gen 29:30–31

וַיָּבֵא גַם אֶל־רַחֵל וַיֹּאחֲבֵב גַּם־אֶת־רַחֵל מִלֵּאָה וַיַּעֲבֹד עִמּוֹ עוֹד שִׁבְע־שָׁנִים אַחֲרוֹת׃<sup>30</sup>  
וַיִּרְא יְהוָה כִּי־שְׂנוֹאָה לֵאָה וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת־רַחֲמָהּ וַרְחַל עִקְרָה׃<sup>31</sup>

Gen 37:3–4

וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בְּנָיו׃<sup>3</sup>  
וַיִּרְאוּ אָחָיו כִּי־אֶתּוֹ אֶהָב אֲבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אָחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכֹּל דַּבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם׃<sup>4</sup>

### 1.3 Joseph, Son of Old Age

The aspect of election contrary to genealogy is strengthened by another link to the ancestral narratives, i. e. the reference to Joseph as son of old age. Again, the exact reference only occurs in three instances (Gen 21:2, 7; 37:3).<sup>9</sup>

Gen 21:2, 7

וַתֵּהָרֵם וַתֵּלֵד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־לִזְקֵנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר אֱלֹהִים׃<sup>2</sup>  
וַתֹּאמֶר מִי מִלֵּל לְאַבְרָהָם הִינֵקָה בָּנִים שָׂרָה כִּי־יֵלְדֵתִי בֶן־לִזְקֵנָיו׃<sup>7</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For the interrelation with Gen 29 cf. esp. R. LUX, *Josef. Der Auserwählte unter seinen Brüdern* (Biblische Gestalten 1; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 50. Cf. further S. TENGSTROM, *Die Hexateuchergeschichte: Eine literaturgeschichtliche Studie* (CB.OTS 7; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1976), 42; T. NAUMANN, "Der Vater in der biblischen Josefserzählung," *ThZ* 61 (2005), 44–64, here 48, or R. DE HOOP, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context* (OTS 39; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 323. A different view is held by W. DIETRICH, *Die Josephserzählung als Novelle und Geschichtsschreibung: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Pentateuchfrage* (BThSt 14; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989), 46; J. LANCKAU, *Der Herr der Träume: Eine Studie zur Funktion des Traumes in der Josefs Geschichte der Hebräischen Bibel* (ATANT 85; Zürich: TVZ, 2006), 166, or J. WÖHRLE, *Fremdlinge im eigenen Land: Zur Entstehung und Intention der priesterlichen Passagen der Vätergeschichte* (FRLANT 246; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 105.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. יֵלֵד זִקְנִים in Gen 44:20 with regard to Benjamin.

Gen 37:3

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו [כִּי־בֶן־זָקֵנִים הוּא לוֹ] וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כַּתְנַת פָּסִים:<sup>3</sup>

Within Gen 37 the reference provides a reason for Israel's greater love, while the statement itself is not indicated by the birth accounts in Gen 29 f. Whereas Joseph may be the second last son born to Jacob, the father's age is of no importance for the story line. The opposite, however, applies to the second passage, in which the reference occurs. Gen 21 recounts the birth of Isaac, who was promised to Abraham by the deity in Gen 18:10. In spite of their old age, Yhwh promises that Abraham will beget a son, whom Sarah, the legitimate wife, will deliver. This son – Isaac, son of Abraham's old age – will continue his father's lineage and supersede his older brother Ismael, born by the handmaid Hagar.

The above circumstances regarding the birth of Isaac may help us shed light on the seemingly incorrect reference to Joseph as son of old age in Gen 37.<sup>10</sup> Just like Isaac before him, Joseph is not the oldest son of his father. Yet, he is the son of the beloved, the legitimate wife and as such will continue his father's lineage. Should these considerations apply, the literary evidence would, again, suggest that Gen 37:3–4 were written in awareness of certain passages from the ancestral narratives.<sup>11</sup> Within Gen 37:3–4 the theme continues the concern of genealogical descent from the right mother as already implied in the motif of greater love.

In sum v. 3–4 include three major elements, each of which creates a link with the ancestral narratives.<sup>12</sup>

Gen 37:3 f

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זָקֵנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כַּתְנַת פָּסִים:<sup>4</sup> וִירָאוּ אֹחָיו כִּי־אָתוּ אָהַב אֲבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אֹחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם:

Gen 21:2, 7

וְתוֹהַר וְתִלְדַּ שְׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־זָקֵנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר אֱלֹהִים:<sup>2</sup>  
וְתֹאמַר מִי מִלֵּל לְאַבְרָהָם הִינִיקָה בָנִים שְׂרָה כִּי־יִלְדַתִּי בֶן־זָקֵנָיו:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>10</sup> A connection between both passages could be implied in Josephus, *Ant.*: “Josephus specifically characterises the youth of one other patriarch in terms of practising virtue. Isaac, also passionately beloved because he was the son of old age, is said to have ‘endeared himself to his parents by the practice of every virtue, showing a devoted filial obedience and a zeal for the worship of God’ [Ant. 1:222]” in M. NIEHOFF, *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 87.

<sup>11</sup> Against the backdrop of this assumed purpose the discrepancy between Gen 37:3 f and Gen 29 f dissolves, and may not support the formerly independent existence of the Joseph story as purported by K. SCHMID, “Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch,” in *Abschied vom Jahwisten. Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (ed. J. C. Gertz et al.; BZAW 315; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 83–118, here 94, or L. SCHMIDT, “Literarische Studien zur Josephsgeschichte,” in *The Traditional Prayer in the Psalms* (ed. A. Aejmelaeus; BZAW 167; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 125–194, here 149 f.

<sup>12</sup> Different views are held by SCHMID, “Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch” (see n. 11), 94, or SCHMIDT, “Studien” (see n. 11), 149 f.



Gen 29:30 f

30 וַיְבֹא גַם אֶל־רַחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם־אֶת־רַחֵל מֵלֵאָה וַיַּעֲבֹד עִמּוֹ עוֹד שִׁבְע־שָׁנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶן: 31 וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה בְּכִי שְׁנוּאָה לֵאמֹר וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת־רַחֲמָהּ וּרְחַל עֲקָרָה:

Gen 32:29

29 וַיֹּאמֶר [לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֹאמֵר עוֹד שִׁמְךָ כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל] כִּי־יִשְׂרָיִת עַם־אֱלֹהִים וְעַם־אֲנָשִׁים וְתוֹכַל:

The cumulative evidence suggests that those verses intend to introduce a story, in which Yhwh's journey with the patriarchs continues in Joseph and in Egypt. It is to this journey to Egypt, more precisely its cause, its extent and its content, to which we will now turn our attention. Our endeavor, again, begins in Gen 37 with the two causes for fraternal hatred.

## 2. Original Scope and Function(s) of the Joseph Story

### 2.1 *The Double Incentive for Fraternal Hatred in Gen 37*

As mentioned before, the double incentive for fraternal hatred has often been considered an indication for diachronic distinction. An independent existence of both aspects has already been refuted, the exact nature of their relation, however, remains to be verified. As seen above, the passage on paternal preference moves from the father's perspective to the brother's perspective. The father loves Joseph more than his other sons. The brothers perceive this imbalance and start to hate Joseph. The reason for the father's preference roots in his greater love for Joseph's mother. Joseph's election thus rests on genealogical implications.

The section on Joseph's dreams picks up on the fraternal perspective depicted in v. 4. The verse now ignores the father and instead renders the fraternal conflict the sole center of attention.<sup>13</sup> In this regard, Joseph, who had remained a passive recipient of paternal preference in v. 3–4, is newly introduced as active agent, who increases hatred – albeit unintentionally. For unknowing of their true meaning, Joseph reveals to his brothers the image of his dreams and thus incites their anger.

A first dream account extends from v. 5 to v. 8 and is framed by reference to Joseph's dreams and their ramification, i. e. fraternal hatred.<sup>14</sup> The conclusion to the dream account in v. 8b presupposes multiple dreams and suggests that the

<sup>13</sup> Cf. LEVIN, *Jahwist* (see n. 4), 267–271.

<sup>14</sup> For the framing function of the above references cf. B. BECKING, "They hated him even more: Literary Technique in Genesis 37.1–11," *BN* 60 (1991), 40–47, here 41.45 f; P. WEIMAR, "Die Josefsgeschichte als theologische Komposition: Zu Aufbau und Struktur von Gen 37," in *Studien zur Josefsgeschichte* (ed. P. Weimar; SBAB 44; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2008), 27–60, here 30 f, or N. KEBEKUS, *Die Joseferzählung: Literaturkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Gen 37–50* (Münster: Waxmann, 1990), 15 f.

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