

SERMON ON JOSEPH THE MOST VIRTUOUS

This long sermon on the Patriarch Joseph is one of a number of metrical texts in the extensive corpus of Greek texts attributed to Saint Ephrem the Syrian. Some of these deal with persons and events from the Old Testament, while others treat of the ascetic life. The sermon on Joseph presents a number of problems, not least the fact that from line 504, or possibly 493, it appears to be in prose not verse. The first five hundred lines are in heptasyllabic and octosyllabic verses in alternating sections of very unequal length. The use of octosyllables seems to be linked to the heightened emotion of the various entreaties and laments. The same phenomenon is found in the long poem on *Abraham and Isaac*.

The *editio princeps* is that published by E. Thwaites in Oxford in 1709, on the basis of MSS in the Bodleian. A fuller edition of the works of St Ephrem in both Syriac and Greek, with parallel Latin translations was published in Rome by J. S. Assemani between 1732 and 1746¹. The sermon on Joseph occupies pages 21-41 of the second volume [1743] of the Greek texts. A text that to all intents and purposes reproduces those of Thwaites and Assemani, with an accompanying version in modern Greek, was published by K. G. Phrantzolas in 1998 in volume seven of his edition of the Greek writings of Saint Ephrem, published between 1988 and 1998 in Thessaloniki. The texts of Thwaites and Assemani are unsatisfactory and appear to have a number of lacunae².

The Latin *editio princeps* is that of Ambrogio Traversari³ published in 1481 in a rare incunabulum containing nineteen texts of the Greek Ephrem, which went through a number of editions in the early sixteenth century and was translated into French, at the request of Cardinal Philippe de Luxembourg, and published in Paris in an even rarer incunabulum, undated, but in fact 1500.⁴ Ambrogio's version was first issued in manuscript and a number of copies in the Vatican library are listed in the first volume of Assemani. Ambrogio also translated another, smaller, collection of some half dozen texts of the Greek Ephrem, which also exist in a number of early incunabula. Another important Latin translation was published by Gerard Vossius in Rome in 1593, as part of the third volume of his translation 'nunc primum latinitate donatus' of the Greek texts of Ephrem, made from manuscripts in Roman and other important Italian libraries. His version was certainly

¹ Greek in 1732, 1743 and 1746; Syriac in 1737, 1740 and 1743.

² See the notes in CPG 2, no. 3938.

³ 1378-1439. A leading Florentine humanist cardinal and strong supporter of the papacy, who drew up, in Greek and Latin, the formula of reunion between the Greek and Latin churches at the council of Florence. His translation of nineteen sermons of Ephrem the Syrian is almost certainly the first of any of St Ephrem's works to be printed in any language. A French translation was published in Paris, at the request of Cardinal Philippe de Luxembourg, in 1500. Robert Watt writes of Ambrosius's version, 'It is very excellent, and done by a person well versed in Greek literature' [*Bibliotheca Britannica*. Vol. 1, 26c. 1824].

⁴ Cf. Brunet, *Manuel du Libraire*, t.2. Paris 1861.

influenced, to put it no more strongly, by the version by that of Traversari. In English the first edition of any of St Ephrem's works seems to be a volume published by W. Bowyer in 1731, though it is not possible to tell from the title what its precise contents were.⁵

The editions of Thwaites, Assemani and Vossius can all be consulted in Cheetham's Library here in Manchester. The British Library holds copies of the various incunabula mentioned above. Other fifteenth century editions of Traversari's translations are held locally by Cheetham's Library, the John Rylands Library (two) and Liverpool University Library.

A number of versions exist in manuscript in other ancient languages, notably Arabic, Coptic, Georgian, Armenian⁶ and Old Slavonic⁷. The Armenian and Old Slavonic have been published in critical editions which I have been able to consult. The editor of the Armenian considers the translation to be from the 'Golden Age' of Armenian translation in the fifth century. If this is so, it would seem to suggest a Syriac rather than a Greek *Vorlage*. A Latin fragment of the first part of the text has also been edited and published by L. Bailly from a ninth or tenth century MS. [*Codex latinus Monacensis 3516*. fol. 109^v – 117^v]. All these are useful for controlling the Greek of Thwaites and Assemani, in the absence for the foreseeable future of a critical Greek text.

The most useful study of the Greek Ephrem is still that of D. Hemminger-Iliadou in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, tome 4 (1960) 800-815. Her treatment of the Latin transmission, coll. 815-818 is less satisfactory.

The first 120 lines outline the story of Joseph and at the same time stress the typological links to the story of Jesus⁸. However at this point the writer announces that he is going to 'make a start' and tell the story of Joseph. This he does for the rest of the sermon, but there is no further reference to Christ, nor are any typological ideas introduced. Indeed, with the exception of a final Trinitarian doxology, the rest of the sermon has nothing specifically Christian about it at all. Moreover there are a number of passages that echo Jewish midrashic traditions.

The sermon is marked by a series of highly rhetorical prayers and lamentations, notably by Joseph himself over the grave of his mother Rachel. Another feature of the text is the way the dreams are played down. They are simply mentioned as having occurred, but the contents of none of them is described.

⁵ Cf. John Nicols *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, London 1812, vol. 1, p.472. The title is, "A Serious Exhortation to Repentance and Sorrow for Sin, and a strict and mortified Life; written about the Middle of the Fourth Century by St. Ephraim, the Cyrian, Deacon of Edessa. Translated into English from the Greek and Latin compared".

⁶ *Sion* 47 (1973), pp 26-37, 137-144.

⁷ G. Bojovsky, *Monumenta Linguae Slavicae* vol. 26 (20.4) 1987, pp. 282-353.

⁸ There are similar passages in the Armenian Commentary on Genesis attributed to Ephrem and in a *contestatio* in the Bobbio Missal.

Although in many places it is clear that the writer is familiar with the Septuagint, there are others where he departs from the Septuagint for no obvious reason.

Paul-Hubert Poirier has made an important preliminary study of the sermon in *Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 2* (Strasbourg 1989) pp. 107-122. He has noticed the break at line 120 and suggests that the rest of the text is Jewish and not Christian. He notes a number of parallels between this text and the Palestinian Targum and other Jewish sources. So far as I am aware his promised edition of the Coptic has yet to appear.

I am fairly confident that the following preliminary translation into English is the first to have been made.

TRANSLATION

Invocation

God of Abraham,* God of Isaac,
God of Jacob, * blessed⁹ God,
who chose the * holy seed of your
5 own servants * who love you,¹⁰
as you are good grant, * that there may flow in me
the streams of grace * in great abundance,
that I may be able * to recount the radiant
and mighty spectacle * of the most virtuous¹¹ Joseph,
10 who had become the ever * revered support
of the profound old age * of the patriarch Jacob.
For this, this youth¹² * from his earliest years
depicted the two * comings of Christ:
the first was¹³ * from the Virgin Mary,
15 the other the one that is going * to terrify the universe.

Exordium

So now, beloved,* beloved by¹⁴ Christ,
let us be firm fixed,* rejoicing¹⁵ in soul,
to hear and to contemplate * without distraction,
20 great¹⁶ deeds * of a most noble youth.
But I, my brothers, * do not only say
that the youngster * is most noble,

⁹ The Greek editor proposes, unmetrically, to add the definite article before 'blessed'.

¹⁰ The odd division of lines in this paragraph, with two articles separated from their nouns at the end of a heptasyllable, suggests that the writer is thinking in lines of fourteen syllables, divided into two heptasyllables, rather than into four line stanzas.

¹¹ Παῖς καλὸς, The stock epithet for Joseph in Byzantine liturgical texts, but not scriptural. It is unlikely to be from Syriac. It refers at once to his beauty, which is a commonplace in both Christian and Jewish texts, and to his virtue in resisting Potiphar's wife. Vossius has understood this and here has 'pulcherrimi atque castissimi'. These double translations are characteristic of his version.

¹² Greek, οὐτοῦ γὰρ, οὐτοῦ οὐ παῖς. Vossius has 'Hic enim, hic inquam sanctus puer'.

¹³ In Greek, τὴν πρῶτην τὴν γενόμενῃν. I propose to delete the second article, *metri causa*.

¹⁴ This does not scan, but the omission of ὑποῖ is easy. On the other hand Vossius has 'a Christo'.

¹⁵ Vossius has 'alacres'.

¹⁶ Unless τὴν ἰκαυτὰ has here its original reference to age. Perhaps 'mature'.

but that he is wondrous, * and a fount of chastity,
a valiant victor, * a wondrous trophy.

25 And so truly a type * he became of that future Coming of the Lord.¹⁷

Let each¹⁸ cast out * from his own soul
every care * for earthly things,
and receive with longing¹⁹ * lyrical songs;
for they are spiritual, * giving joy to the soul.

30 **Joseph as a Type of Christ.**²⁰

For just as the Lord * was sent to us
from the Father's bosom²¹, * to save us all,
So²² the youth Joseph * from Jacob's bosom²³
was sent to enquire * about his own brothers.

35 And just as Joseph's * harsh brothers,
as soon as they saw * him approaching,

began to devise * evil against him,
though he was bringing * them peace

from their father, * so the Jews also,
40 ever hard of heart, * as soon as they saw

¹⁷ This sentence does not scan as the text stands, and as yet I have no plausible emendation to suggest. Vossius has 'typus et figura'. The second half has nineteen syllables, which suggests that a heptasyllable has fallen out.

¹⁸ I omit the word *οὐκ*, *metri causa*.

¹⁹ Or 'love', a frequent meaning of *πορφο* in patristic texts.

²⁰ The Armenian commentary attributed to St Ephrem has a similar passage at the end of chapter 9, which is devoted to Joseph [CSCO 572/3, Armenian 23/24, pp.181-185/143-145]. The passage starts *ex abrupto* 'But Joseph rose from the pit', which does not fit the context at all, and it seems that the passage is a *pièce rajoutée*, from a Syriac (?) poem, not dissimilar in style to the Greek poem in this piece. The Bobbio Missal contains a most unusual *contestatio* which is very similar in form and content to these two passages.

²¹ Cf. John 1:18. Here, and two lines down, I omit a stylistically added article before the adjective *patrikou*.

²² The modern Greek editor unmetrically adds *kai*.

²³ Gen. 37:13-14. The line does not scan and I omit the word *patrikou* as a dittography. Bailly's Latin simply has 'de sinu Iacob'. Ambrosius, on the other hand has simply, 'a patre', but this may simply be a question of style. The Armenian follows the Greek. The Old Slavonic MSS differ. The same typology is to be found in St John Chrysostom's comment on this passage [Hom. in Gen. 61:3; PG 54:528], *Kai; wšper jlwshf pro~ tou~ adel fou~ aphēi episkeyameno~ autour, ka~keinoi ouk aïdesqente~ ou~te thn aïtian th~ parousia~, proteron men ajelein ebouleuonto, epeita de; kai; epi~praskon toi~ barbaroi~: ou~tw kai; ol Despoith~ ol hmetero~ thn oi~keian filanqrwpian mimoumeno~, paragegonen episkeyameno~ to; tw~ ajqrwpw~n geno~, kai; thn omogenh~ hmin sarka ajalabwn, kai; adel fo~ hmw~n genesqai kataxiwsa~ ou~tw paragegone.*

the Saviour, said, * 'This is the heir,²⁴
let us kill him, * and all will be ours'.

And just as Joseph's * brothers said,
'Let us do away with him, * and let us be set free

45 of his dreams',²⁵ * in the same way too
the Jews said, * 'Come, let us kill
him and lay hold * on his inheritance'.²⁶

Joseph's brothers, * while eating,
sold him, * slaying him in intent.

50 In the same way too * the abominable Jews,
while eating the Passover, * slew the Saviour.

The descent of Joseph * into Egypt signifies
the descent to earth * of our Saviour.

55 And as Joseph * within the marriage chamber
trampled down all * the strength of sin,
putting on the bright * prizes of victory,
against the Egyptian woman, * his mistress,
so too the Lord,²⁷ * the Saviour of our souls,
by his own right hand, * descending into Hell,

60 destroyed there * all the power
of the dread * and near invincible tyrant.

When Joseph * had conquered sin
he was put in prison * until the hour of his crowning;

65 so too the Lord²⁸, * that he might take away
every sin of the world, * was placed in a grave.

Joseph in prison * spent two whole years,
passing his time * in great freedom²⁹;

²⁴ Mat. 21:38. The second heptasyllable does not scan, but it is a citation from Scripture. In other heptasyllabic texts by the author the same phenomenon occurs. Vossius adds 'reuera', as a translation of *ajkribw-*, which he notes in his margin is lacking in 'sacro cod.' The addition does not help the scansion. The Armenian commentary has, 'When Joseph's saw him, they said, 'Behold, here is the dreamer coming towards us. Come, let us kill him, and let us see whether his dreams come to anything'. And when the husbandmen saw Our Lord, they said, 'This is the heir to the vineyard. Come, let us kill him, and henceforth the inheritance will be ours'. [op. cit. p.i81/143]

²⁵ Gen.37:20.

²⁶ These three lines do not scan properly. The direct speech is an exact citation from Mat. 21:18.

²⁷ I omit the word 'our', *metri causa*. The word is not in Vossius or Ambrosius.

²⁸ I omit the word 'our', *metri causa*. The word is not in Vossius, but it is in Ambrosius.

while the Lord, * as powerful, remained
in the tomb for three days, * not undergoing corruption.

70 Joseph, on Pharaoh's order, * was brought out
graciously from prison, * as a true type,
when he easily interpreted * the meaning of the dreams,
indicating the abundance of grain * that was going to be;
while our Lord [Jesus Christ]³⁰ * was raised from the dead
75 by his own power, * despoiling Hell,
offering to the Father * our liberation,
proclaiming resurrection * and everlasting life.

Joseph took his seat * in Pharaoh's chariot,
having received authority * over the whole of Egypt;

80 while our Saviour, * king before the ages,
ascending into heaven * on a cloud of light,
took his seat with glory * at the Father's right hand,
above the Cherubim, * as Only-begotten Son.

When ruling * over Egypt, Joseph
85 having received authority * against his enemies³¹,
his brothers * were brought willingly
before the tribunal * of the one who had died through them;
they were brought to prostrate * with fear and trembling
before the one who had been sold * by them to death;

90 and with fear they prostrated * before Joseph,
whom they had not wanted * to be king over them.

But Joseph, recognising * his brothers,
revealed them as murderers * by a single word;
but they, when they realised, * stood dumbfounded³²
95 in great shame, * not daring to utter,
not having anything * at all to say in their defence,
knowing exactly * their own sin

²⁹ Cf. Gen. 39:21-23.

³⁰ I omit these words, metri causa. They are not in Vossius or Ambrosius.

³¹ This clause contains an extraordinary nominative absolute, which suggests that the author was not a native Greek speaker, or at any rate a very uneducated one. Such solecisms are also found in the Apocalypse. Ambrosius has turned this into an elegant ablative absolute.

³² The Greek editor's note and text are curious. He prints ἀθεοί, which does not exist, saying he prefers Assemani's reading to Thwaites's ἐπνεοίη which does, and means 'dumbfounded', which is how he translates the text.

at the moment * when they sold him;
 while he, who seemed * to have been destroyed by them in Hades,
 100 was suddenly found * to be ruling over them.³³
 So too on that * fearful day,
 when the Lord comes * on the clouds of the air,
 he takes his seat on the throne * of his kingdom,
 and all his enemies * are brought bound
 105 by fearsome Angels * before the judgement seat,
 all those who did not want * him to rule over them.³⁴
 For the lawless Jews * thought then,
 that if he were crucified, * he would die as a human;
 the wretches not being persuaded * that God had come,
 110 for salvation, * to save our souls.
 Just as Joseph * said quite openly
 to his brothers, * making them fear and tremble,
 'I am Joseph, * whom you sold [into slavery],
 but now I rule over you, * though you did not want it'.³⁵
 115 So too the Lord * shows the Cross
 in an image formed of light * to those who crucified him,
 and they recognize * the Cross itself
 and the Son of God * who was crucified by them.
 Know how accurately * Joseph became
 120 a true type * of his own Master.

The Story of Joseph. Hated by his Brothers

Since³⁶ his virtue * flowered
 from his youth, * by free choice,³⁷

³³ Vossius version of these lines is, 'Existimarunt infelices illi, qua eum hora vendiderant, ipsum iam fuisse mortuum: at qui ab eis putatus est neci traditus apud inferos, repente super ipsos regnare deprehensus est'. Unless V. is being very free, his text must have been different to that that in Assemani. Ambrosius has a very similar translation.

³⁴ Bailly's MS has here a long passage of some twenty five lines on the last judgement, which is not found in the Greek, or in the Latin and Old Slavonic versions.

³⁵ Cf. Gen 45:4. The last two lines do not scan. The simplest solution is to delete 'into slavery as a gloss'. Genesis has 'into Egypt', with no mention of slavery. The words are not in the Old Slavonic nor in Ambrosius.

³⁶ From this point the author begins to recount the story of Joseph from his being sent to find his brothers by Jacob. Despite the writer's express aim of setting out the detailed typology of Joseph/Jesus, the story from here onwards is told without any reference to typology. Even such obvious points of contact as the price paid, are passed over without comment. In fact, with the exception of the concluding doxology, the text contains nothing Christian at all.

- making a start * we shall come to relate in full,
 125 by our exposition, the virtues * of the holy youth.
 This blessed youth * passed a period
 of seventeen years³⁸ * in his father's house,
 advancing each day * in the fear of God
 by both good behaviour * and honour of his parents.
- 130 Observing unseemliness³⁹ * with regard his brothers,
 he reported to his father * a little of many things,
 for truly virtue * cannot exist
 alongside wickedness;* for that is unseemly. ⁴⁰
- For this they * hated Joseph,
 135 since he was a stranger * to their evil.⁴¹
 Being a virtuous youth, * having dreams, he saw
 what was going * to happen to him
 through the dispensation * of God most high.⁴²

³⁷ Vossius translates these lines as follows, 'Cernitis quam accurate Ioseph veram Domini figuram in se expresserit? Quoniam vero ab ipsa pueritia effloruit in eo virtus, consulto hinc initium ducentes, pergemus [*al. incipiemus*] deinceps gesta atque virtutes sancti illius pueri enarrare'. Poirier also places a full point after 'Master'. The modern Greek editor links this couplet to the preceding one and starts a new paragraph at 'making a start'. Thwaites punctuates like Vossius, but notes in his *scoliae* the other punctuation. The Old Slavonic mss are likewise divided, P having the same punctuation as Vossius and LP the same as the modern Greek editor.

³⁸ Gen. 37, 2. Joseph's virtue is stressed as in Jewish sources. In patristic Greek his epithet is παγκαλ ο-, which could mean 'very beautiful', but also 'very virtuous'. The latter is certainly the primary meaning in the liturgical texts.

³⁹ ἀἰτοπία. A eord which occurs once in the LXX, at Judith 11, 11.

⁴⁰ This expands and explains the ambiguous Greek of the LXX, ὃν ὁ γονὶς ἀποκρίθη. The Hebrew is also ambiguous. The Syriac agrees, more or less with our text, having, 'their evil report'. The fact that it is Joseph who denounces his brother is of importance, since the LXX, as used by the Fathers, has a plural verb and so it is the brothers who accuse Joseph to their father, not the other way round. Rahlfs and Wevers both print the singular, following L, but the Alexandrinus, together with a large no of MSS, the Armenian, Ethiopic and Bohairic and St John Chrysostom [PG 54:525], reads the plural. The Syriac and the Vulgate both follow the Hebrew.

⁴¹ This is not the reason given for their hatred in Genesis 37,4, though it may be inferred from 37,2.

⁴² Something seems to have fallen out of the Greek in this sentence, as both Vossius' and Bailly's Latin versions make clear. Vossius has, 'et uirtuti puer sedulo operam daret; cumque habitantem in se Deum sanctum haberet, praevidebat in somniis ea quae ex dispositione summi Dei in se uentura erant', while Bailly's MS has, 'Habens autem insertum in se Dominum saluatorem, uisiones uideba[n]t, ille [*sic*] quae erant uentura contingere per dispensationem altissimi Domini'. Ambrosius has a version very similar to that of Vossius. There is nothing in this MS corresponding to 'being a virtuous youth'. Both the Old Slavonic MSS have 'Holy Spirit', rather than 'God' or 'Lord'. In the *Testament of Symeon*, 4,4, the following is found, 'But Joseph was a good man, one who had within him the Spirit of God'.

140 While his father Jacob, * ignorant of the hidden
 hatred of Joseph, * with simplicity [of heart]
 loving Joseph, * because of the flower of virtue
 which was always evident * from his early youth.⁴³

Sold by his Brothers.

145 While they were grazing * the sheep in Sychem,
 it happened that Joseph * was with their father.
 Their father Jacob, * as a loving father,
 was anxious about them * [in Sychem],⁴⁴ and he says to Joseph,
 'Come, child, go * to your brothers
 and enquire closely * of their well-being,
 150 and that of the flocks at the same time; * and return with speed'.
 Joseph, accepting * his father's order,
 left with joy * for his brothers,
 bringing peace * from their father's person,
 and at the same time the concern * he had for them.
 155 When he had left,⁴⁵ * he lost the way,
 not finding his brothers * with their shepherds.⁴⁶

Poirier sees in the phrase *katj oikonomian* a possible Christian 'ajout rédactionnel'. The uncertainty of the text at this point makes it difficult to resolve the problem.

⁴³ This sentence contains no main verb, moreover 'with simplicity', *apl othti*, has only four syllables. One solution would be to add the verb *hgapha*, a common 'Hebraism'. To omit *apl othti* would leave the 'stanza' one heptasyllable short. In Genesis [37,3] Jacob's love for Joseph is because 'he was the child of his old age'. Vossius has a finite verb, 'diligebat'. For *apl othti* he has 'simplici animo', like Ambrosius, but gives as a variant 'in simplicitate cordis'. The addition of *kardia~* would correct the scansion.

⁴⁴ This phrase disturbs the scansion and should probably be omitted as a gloss. Ambrosius does not have it, though the Old Bulgarian does. Josephus also speaks of Jacob's anxiety [*Ant.* II. ii. 4].

⁴⁵ Despite the verb immediately following, this phrase is in the genitive absolute, which is grammatically odd, to say the least. However this usage is common in Koine Greek [*M.* III,322].

⁴⁶ This is a very curious mistake, since there is nothing either in the text or in Genesis to suggest that the brothers were not alone. Genesis 37,14 speaks of 'brothers' and 'flocks', where the LXX refers specifically to probata. The word *poimẽsi* could be a mistake of transcription by Assemani, but the fact that the Old Slavonic and both Ambrosius and Vossius have 'pastoribus' rules this out. The Latin fragment of the 9th or 10th century, edited by Bailly, is no help, since the whole clause is missing, 'Dumque is, se congestatus, init ire, inuenit eum homo et ostendit ei iter'. If the word is not a corruption in the early of the transmission of the Greek, it might be due to a misreading of a Syriac original. One of the plural forms of ܪܥܘܬܐ, 'shepherd', is ܪܥܘܬܐܝܢ, while the word ܪܥܘܬܐܝܢ, 'pasture', is also found, including in the Sinai MS of the Old Syriac Gospels at Matthew 8:30, where the Peshitta has ܪܥܘܬܐܝܢ, with the

- As he was grieving and groaning for them,⁴⁷ * a man found him
and showed him the way. * When Joseph saw
them from afar off, * he went with joy,
160 longing * to embrace them all.
- As he approached, * they saw him
and like wild beasts⁴⁸ * wanted to destroy
Joseph; while he, * like an innocent lamb,
went to fall * into the hands of the most ferocious wolves⁴⁹.
- 165 When he drew near them, * he greeted them kindly,
bringing peace * from the person of their father.
- They, however, immediately * rising up like [wild]
beasts, stripped him * of the coat [of many colours]⁵⁰
he was wearing, * and each one gnashed his teeth
170 to swallow him alive, * savage and merciless

meaning 'flock', 'herd'. That a translator confused a less usual word for a more usual one is not *prima facie* impossible. The Armenian version clearly reads 'flocks'. If the Armenian was made from Greek, the corruption would seem to have arisen later in the Greek transmission, but the fact that the same error occurs later on makes this less likely. If the Armenian was made from Syriac, the corruption may be explained as above.

⁴⁷ This heptasyllable is over long, and one of the participles should possibly be omitted, though Vossius has 'tristis atque suspirans'. Or it may be intended as two 'short' verses, of six syllables each

⁴⁸ Cf. *Romanos Joseph* 8:1 Qhrwn agiwteroi.

⁴⁹ The text does not scan properly. The Old Slavonic, Bailly and Ambrosius all start a new sentence at the word 'Joseph'. If all the other witnesses did not have the name 'Joseph', the simple solution would be to delete it as a gloss. The 'run on' punctuation of the Greek into the next couplet is suspicious. One solution would be to punctuate as follows:

As he approached, * they saw him
and like wild beasts * wanted to destroy [*sc.* him].

While Joseph like an innocent * lamb went
to fall into the hands * of the most ferocious wolves.

⁵⁰ The word is *poikilōn*, which is the word used in the LXX. The Peshitta has 'of long sleeves', like the MT. If the original was in Syriac, the translator has adapted it to the Greek, but the word may be a gloss. Ambrosius has simply 'Verum illi insurgentes continuo: tunica illum qua indutus erat exuerunt', while Vossius has, 'Illi vero, e vestigio ferarum instar insurgentes, tunica illum, qua erat indutus, exuerunt', which suggests that their Greek did not have either *agrioī* or *poikilōn*. The omission of these two words would greatly improve the scansion:

They, however, immediately * rising up like beasts,
stripped him of the coat * he was wearing,

and each one gnashed his teeth * to swallow him alive,
savage and merciless * in their hostility.

And that honourable * and holy youth
they tormented in divers ways * through their own madness.

in their hostility, * and that honourable
and holy youth * they tormented in divers ways
through their own madness.⁵¹

Joseph's Entreaty

175

Octosyllables

Joseph,⁵² seeing * he was among wicked men—
not a single one of them * had pity—turned then
to entreaty and gave vent * to tears and groans,
and lifting up his voice * he besought them, saying,⁵³

180

'Why are you enraged? * I beg all of you
to bear with me a little * that I may entreat you, my brothers.

My mother has gone to her rest, * and Jacob until now
grieves for her each day, * and do you wish to add
another grief to our father, * while the former still endures
185 and has not yet passed. * I beg all of you
to bear with me a little,⁵⁴ * that I may not be parted from Jacob,
that his old age may not descend * with pain into Hades.⁵⁵

I adjure you all therefore, * by the God
of our fathers, Abraham, * Isaac and Jacob,
190 who from the beginning called * Abraham and said,
"Leave your country * and your kindred
and your father's house,* and go to the country
that I will show you and give you.⁵⁶ * And I will multiply your seed
like the stars of heaven, * and like the sand that is by
195 the sea shore⁵⁷ * that cannot be numbered".

⁵¹ This greatly expands on the biblical account. No mention is made of Ruben's attempt to save his life.

⁵² From here the text is in octosyllables. The use of octosyllables for speeches with heightened emotion is also found in the poem on *Abraham and Isaac*, where Sara's plea to Abraham is in octosyllables.

⁵³ In the *Testament of Zevoulon*, 2:1-2, Joseph also pleads with his brothers, though not at such great length.

⁵⁴ This heptasyllable is not in the Old Slavonic or Vossius, which suggests that it may be a dittography, though its omission would disturb the scansion. It is, however, in Ambrosius.

⁵⁵ The scansion is slightly irregular, but can be rectified by a slight rearrangement of phrases, as follows: mh; katel qh/ met j oþunh~ to; ghra~ aujtou eij~ aþhn.

⁵⁶ Gen. 12,1. This is almost word for word the LXX. The addition of the words 'and go', kai; deuro, is the reading of the majority of MSS and Fathers. 'And give you' seems to be an addition *metri causa*.

⁵⁷ Gen. 22,17. Again an exact quotation of the LXX. The next heptasyllable echoes Gen. 16,10.

- The God⁵⁸ most high, * who gave Abraham
endurance willingly to offer * his only son [Isaac] in sacrifice,
[that endurance might be reckoned * to Abraham as a boast].
- 200 The God who delivered * Isaac from death
and gave a ram instead of him * as an acceptable holocaust.⁵⁹
- The holy God * who gave a blessing
to Jacob from the mouth * of his father Isaac.
- The God who went down * with Jacob to Charran
in Mesopotamia, * from where Abraham had departed.
- 205 The God who delivered * Jacob from affliction
and said that he would give him blessing.⁶⁰
- May I not be deprived of Jacob * as I was deprived of Rachel.
May he not grieve for me⁶¹ * as he grieved for Rachel.
- 210 May Jacob's eyes * not be darkened again,
as he waits to see * my return to him.⁶²
- Send me to Jacob [my father],⁶³ * accepting my tears.
Send me back to him.' *
- When he had sworn these things * by the God of the fathers,
the fierce ones immediately * threw <him> into a pit, not fearing God⁶⁴,
215 not respecting an oath. * Though he clasped

⁵⁸ The grammar is odd, since this phrase, repeated five times, is in the accusative, whereas grammatically it is in apposition to *kata; tou' Qeou* eight lines earlier. The third line of the first 'couplet' should possibly be deleted. Both halves are slightly over length.

⁵⁹ This heptasyllable does not scan, being two syllables over length. *Qusiān* would scan correctly and is frequent in Christian texts, being an echo of 1 Peter 2,5. However, the word for 'holocaust', *ol okarpwsi-*, here is the one used in Genesis 22. Either the writer, as elsewhere, disregards scansion when citing Scripture, or the text has been assimilated to the Genesis by a scribe.

⁶⁰ This line does not scan. It may be a somewhat inelegantly expressed allusion to Genesis 32,29.

⁶¹ This 'octosyllable' is three syllables short.

⁶² This line can be made to scan by a slight rearrangement: *kaqorān thn eiḥsodon mou * thn pro; aujton prosdokwnta*. Vossius, however, has, 'qui singulis horis meum ad se reditum, introitum expectat'.

⁶³ I omit 'my father' *metri causa*. It is, however, present in the OS and Ambrosius and so the corruption may be elsewhere. Bailly's ms has a very different text, 'Sed rogo, compatiētes lacrimis meis, absolute me apud patrem, ut ei de uestram suggeram incolumnitatem uel gregium sanitatem', which suggests that something may have fallen out in the main transmission.

⁶⁴ The line does not scan. Vossius has, for *oil deinoi; 'truculentae illae beluae'*, which suggests that something may be missing in the Greek. Also *epebal on* without an object is slightly awkward. Ambrosius also has 'ferae illae beluae'. He supplies the pronoun 'eum'.

the feet of all of them⁶⁵ * and drenched with his tears
 his brothers' feet, * and cried out and said,
 'Brothers, have mercy on me!', * he was cast by them at once into the pit.⁶⁶

Joseph's Lament.

- 220 When Joseph⁶⁷ had been cast * into the pit in the desert,
 with bitter tears * and piteous laments
 he lamented for himself * and his father Jacob,
 and weeping he spoke * with unutterable groans:⁶⁸
 [while he said,]⁶⁹ 'Father Jacob, see * what has befallen your child,
 225 how I have been cast * into the pit like a corpse.
 See, you are expecting me * to come back to you,
 and now I am lying * in the pit like a murderer.
 You said to me, father, * "Go, visit
 your brothers with the shepherds,⁷⁰ * returning with haste",
 230 and see, they have become * like most savage wolves,
 and with rage have parted * me from you, good father.
 For you no longer see me, * nor hear my voice,
 nor again does your old age * rely on me,
 nor do I again see * your holy grey hairs,
 235 because I am no better * than a dead corpse.
 Weep, father, for your child, * and your son for his father,
 for thus have I been parted * from childhood⁷¹ from your face.
 Who will give me a dove, * moaning to bring proof to you⁷²
 that it may come and announce * my weeping to your old age?

⁶⁵ Cf. Ber. R. 91,8 (on 42:21): He threw himself at the feet of each one and begged for pity.

⁶⁶ This octosyllable is over length, and the grammar is curious. The Slavonic is shorter. Bailly's text is very different at this point. Cf. *Bereshit Rabba* for Joseph's plea to his brothers.

⁶⁷ Both Vossius and Thwaites note a variant, 'him', which improves the scansion.

⁶⁸ Rom. 8,26, where NRSV has 'sighs too deep for words'. In Jewish tradition Joseph's lament in the pit takes the form of a further appeal to his brothers. Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 2,15.

⁶⁹ This makes the octosyllable over length, and looks like a gloss. This is confirmed by its absence from Vossius, Ambrosius and OS.

⁷⁰ See the earlier note.

⁷¹ ἐκ παιδοῦ is slightly odd, if it bears its usual meaning.

⁷² Both the printed editions have ἐλ ἐγχαί σοι . The Greek editor, however, proposes the emendation ἐλ ἐγχαί σοι . This is flat and unnecessary. The meaning 'to bring convincing proof' is found in classical Greek as a meaning of the verb when used absolutely. The idea is odd. Is the writer thinking of the story of the Flood? Or perhaps even of Psalm 54,7? The expression $\text{περίστερα ἢ ἐγγόμεναι}$, used here is found in the plural at Naoum 2,8 as a simile for lamenting women. 'Moaning' is used by Tennyson for the sound 'of doves in immemorial

- 240 My tears are exhausted, * father, and my groans;⁷³
 my voice has given out; * and there is none to help.
 O earth! O earth! that cried * to the holy God
 over Abel the just, * unjustly destroyed,
 as according to a tradition * from our forefathers,
 245 the earth cried out * to God because of the blood
 of the just one, now too * cry out yourself to my father [Jacob],
 letting him know clearly what has happened to me at the hands of my
 brothers'.⁷⁴

Joseph sold to the Ishmaelites

- 250 *Heptasyllables*
 When⁷⁵ the savages * had thrown Joseph into the pit,
 they sat down to eat * and drink with joy.

As someone who had won * a war would take wing,
 so they too with * joy of heart sat down to eat.⁷⁶

- 255 *Octosyllables*
 And⁷⁷ as they were eating and * drinking with gladness,
 suddenly they raised their eyes, * and saw approaching
 Ishmaelite merchants, * journeying to Egypt,
 with camels too * loaded with spices,
 260 and they said to one another, ⁷⁸ * 'It is much better for us
 to sell Joseph * to these foreign merchants,
 that, when he has gone away, he may * die in a foreign land,
 and let not our hand * be on our brother'⁷⁹.

elms'. Vossius, Ambrosius, Bailly and OS would appear to have nothing to correspond to
 e] egxai soi.

⁷³ This line does not scan, but a slight rearrangement improves it.]Exel ipon ta; dakrua, *
 pater, kai; oij stenagmoi

⁷⁴ This passage does not scan.

⁷⁵ This paragraph returns to heptasyllables.

⁷⁶ The scansion of this line is odd, having no caesura. Vossius has a much longer text, which
 suggests that the Greek is corrupt. 'Et sicut exultare solent uictores superatis atque fugatis
 hostibus, ac capta praeda : ita quoque illi magno cordis sui gaudio discubuerunt'. A. has a
 similar, but shorter text, 'Ac ueluti exaltant uictores fugatis hostibus et capta praeda'. OS has
 'a city' rather than 'a war'. B. has an expanded text, 'Ac si quis preliator, dum uicerit bellia,
 agonem, et ad uictorie peruenerit palmas'.

⁷⁷ The next stanzas are in octosyllables.

⁷⁸ There is no mention of Juda's role in making this suggestion, nor of Ruben's role earlier..

⁷⁹ This is very close the LXX, ail de; ceire~ hmwn mh; e]stwsan ep j aujton.

And they drew him from the pit * <Joseph> their own brother
 265 like wild beasts,⁸⁰
 and having accepted his price, * they sold him to the merchants,
 not remembering their father's * concern and grief.
 As⁸¹ the merchants were journeying,* they came on the road
 to the place of the hippodrome,⁸² * where Rachel's tomb is,
 270 for she died there * on the hippodrome road,⁸³
 when Jacob was returning * from Mesopotamia.

Joseph's Lament over Rachel.⁸⁴

When Joseph saw * the tomb of his mother Rachel,
 he ran forward and fell * upon the grave,
 275 and lifting up his voice, * with tears he raised a loud lament
 and cried out in the bitterness * of his soul, saying,
 'Rachel, Rachel, my mother, * rise from the dust
 and look on Joseph, * whom you loved, what he has become.'⁸⁵
 See, how he is being led * as a prisoner into Egypt,
 280 handed over as a malefactor * into the hands of foreigners.
 My brothers have sold me, * stripped naked, into slavery,
 and Jacob has not learned * that I have been handed over.

⁸⁰ These lines do not scan. Vossius has 'fratrem suum Ioseph' which improves the scansion of the first line. A. has 'eduxerunt Ioseph de lacu fratrem suum: tamquam ferae beluae'.

⁸¹ This tradition, together with Joseph's appeal to his dead mother to arise and help him, is found in Jewish tradition. Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 2, p. 20s. In the Jewish texts Joseph's appeal is for his mother to rise to avenge him and comfort Jacob.

⁸² The word 'hippodrome' comes from Gen. 48,7. Cf. also Jerome, *Questions on Genesis* and C.T.R Hayward's comments; also *La Bible d'Alexandrie* ad loc. The *Testament of Joseph*, 20,3 has a reference to the hippodrome, 'Take Aseneth, your mother, and bury her by the hippodrome, near Rachel, your grandmother'. That the merchants travelling south from Samaria should pass by Bethlehem is not improbable. Bailly's Latin MS has 'locum querci'. Has the translator confused the burial place of Rebecca [Gen. 32:8, where the Vulgate has 'quercus'] with that of Rachel? Or is he thinking of Judges 6:11, where the LXX has, $\epsilon\pi\ \theta\eta\ \tau\epsilon\tau\epsilon\mu\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\ \tau\eta\ \epsilon\pi\ \epsilon\phi\tau\alpha\kappa\alpha$? It is worth noting that the Vulgate at 48:7 has 'uiam Ephratae', without any mention of a hippodrome.

⁸³ The LXX, at Gen. 35,19, says that Rachel was buried $\epsilon\pi\ \theta\eta\ \tau\eta\ \delta\iota\omega\ \epsilon\phi\tau\alpha\kappa\alpha$. Vossius does not have the phrase 'on the hippodrome road' here, only in the preceding couplet.

⁸⁴ It is not without interest to note that in Philo's *De Iosepho* [IV (15-19)] Reuben is given a long lamentation on discovering that Joseph is no longer in the cistern. Genesis 37,29 simply says, 'He rent his clothes'. In the Jewish tradition Joseph appeals to his to arise and avenge him and she answers him [Ginzberg, *Legends*, 2,20s. 'Joseph hastened to his mother's grave, and throwing himself across it, he groaned and cried, saying: "O mother, mother, who bore me, arise, come forth and see how your son has been sold into slavery"'].

⁸⁵ Greek, $\tau\iota\upsilon\ \gamma\epsilon\gamma\omicron\tau\epsilon\iota$. This could also mean 'what has happened', but the syntax would be odd. The writer uses $\gamma\iota\omicron\tau\epsilon\iota$ similarly a few lines later, $\rho\omega\ \alpha\iota\phi\alpha\eta\gamma\ \gamma\iota\eta\tau\epsilon\iota$.

Open to me, mother, * and receive me in your tomb.
Let your tomb become * one bed for me and you.

- 285 Rachel, receive your son, * <whom you love more than yourself⁸⁶
Rachel, receive a captive>, * that he may⁸⁷ not die a violent death⁸⁸.

Mother, receive the one who has suddenly * been deprived of Jacob,
in the same way that I * was deprived of you from childhood.

- 290 Listen, my mother, * to the groans of my heart,
<and my bitter cry of lamentation> * and accept me in your tomb.⁸⁹

For my eyes can no longer * support my weeping,
nor my soul endure * to wail aloud with groans.

Rachel, Rachel, do you not hear * the voice of your son Joseph?
See, I am forcibly going far away, * and do you not want to receive me?

- 295 I called to Jacob, * and he did not hear my voice.
See, once again I call to you, * and you do not hear me either.

Here I will die, * upon your tomb,
that to a foreign land * I may not depart as a malefactor’.

Heptasyllables

- 300 But⁹⁰ the whole company * of the Ishmaelite men
who had taken Joseph, * when they saw him
as he ran like this * and threw himself face downward
on the tomb * of his mother Rachel⁹¹,
said to one another, * ‘This young man
305 wishes to work some * sorcery against us,
so that he can * escape from us
without us knowing * how he has become invisible.

⁸⁶ This couplet is emended from Bailly’s Latin ms., which reads, ‘Suscipe, Rachel, filium tuum, quem amabas plus quam te. Suscipe, Rachel, captyuum, ut non uiolenter moriar’.

⁸⁷ The verb is in fact future; but this use is found in Hellenistic Greek. Bailly’s ms. has for this heptasyllable the curious reading, ‘et suscipe me in fratrem’.

⁸⁸ The Greek word is the rare *bioqanh̄*, which normally means a ‘suicide’, but this is hardly suitable in the context. Lampe has not noticed this example. Vossius has ‘uiolenta nece’.

⁸⁹ There seems to be some corruption here. The whole lament, apart from these five lines, falls into ‘couplets’. Each heptasyllable scans correctly and so it is possible that a heptasyllable has fallen out. Vossius has, ‘cordis mei gemitum, amarumque eiulatum’. The last two words probably represent the ‘missing’ heptasyllable.

⁹⁰ The next stanzas are in heptasyllabics.

⁹¹ Cf. Ginzberg loc. cit. These lines are abbreviated in Bailly’s MS, ‘Cum uero vidissent eum uiri Ismaelitae hoc agente [*sic*], dicebant ad inuicem’. The following lines are also very different and much shortened and the references to sorcery are absent.

- So let us seize him * and bind him securely,
lest he make all * of us invisible'.⁹²
- 310 So they approached him, * and said threateningly,
'Get up now, * and stop practising sorcery,
lest, having struck you down * on this tomb,
we lose the gold⁹³ * that we gave for you'.
- But⁹⁴ when he arose, * they all saw
315 that his face was reddened * from his bitter
weeping, and they began * each to ask
him kindly, * 'Why do you shed tears?
For you were dreadfully troubled * as soon as you saw this tomb⁹⁵
when you were on * the road of this hippodrome.
- 320 Tell us boldly * casting away cowardice,
what is your trade,* and why have you been sold?
Those shepherds, * when they sold you,
said this to us, * "Make him secure,
so that he does not run away * from you on the road.
- 325 We are not liable ourselves. * See, we have told you in advance".
So, tell [us]⁹⁶ exactly * whose slave you are;
those shepherds', * or some free man's?⁹⁷
And let us know * for what reason⁹⁸
you threw yourself ardently * upon the grave?
- 330 We have bought you, * and we are your masters.⁹⁹
Tell us everything that concerns you. ¹⁰⁰

⁹² Cf. a similar idea in Ginzberg loc. cit. pp.21s. This section of Ginzberg is all taken from the *Sepher ha-Yashar*, which is late, to put it mildly. The earliest witness to our text is the Latin fragment of the 9th or 10th century. The Greek is presumably earlier and so our text may be among the earliest evidence for some of these traditions.

⁹³ Cf. Gen 37,28. The Greek is *crusion*, which means 'a gold coin', 'gold' or 'money'. This may imply that the writer is using the LXX, which has 'twenty gold coins', rather than the Hebrew, which has 'silver'.

⁹⁴ The next six lines are much abbreviated in Bailly, and the opening words, 'Et surgentes dicent' look like a mistranslation.

⁹⁵ This heptasyllable does not scan properly. Perhaps 'this' should be deleted.

⁹⁶ Omit *metri causa*.

⁹⁷ Cf. Ginzberg 2,21

⁹⁸ This heptasyllable is two syllables short.

⁹⁹ Bailly's MSS here reads, 'Domini tui sumus, nocte emimus'. He adds 'te' after 'nocte' to provide 'emimus' with an object, but the emendation is simpler: read 'nos te emimus'. Bailly's text at this point continues, 'Numquid aliquid domino tuo peccasti, aut superbe egisti et prae

If you hide from us what concerns you,
to whom can you tell it? * Your are our servant.

335 As those shepherds * said to us,
you want to escape, * while we are idling.

But be encouraged, * and tell us clearly
what is your trade. * For [to us]¹⁰¹ you seem like a free man.

We will not use you as a slave, but as a brother or a beloved son.¹⁰²

340 For we see the greatest freedom * and much knowledge
with much composure¹⁰³;

for you are worthy too * to stand in the presence of a king
and to be honoured * with nobles, young man.

For this beauty¹⁰⁴ of yours * will swiftly place you,
with much splendour * and honour, in authority,

345 and you will be our friend * and acquaintance there,
where we are taking you * for you to be in joy.

For who would not long * for such a servant,
most handsome in appearance¹⁰⁵, * both noble and wise.'

Octosyllables

350 Joseph¹⁰⁶ answered, * and said to them with groans,
'I was neither slave * nor sorcerer,¹⁰⁷ again not
having done any wrong,¹⁰⁸ * I was sold into your power.

odio uenditus es? Aut forsitan debito fuisti cuiusdam, et non ualens adimplere debitum, huc deuenisti?

¹⁰⁰ This line and the following one do not scan. The repetition of *ta; kata; se* looks suspicious, but is explained by the probable omission of the passage in Bailly's text.

¹⁰¹ Omit *metri causa*. Bailly has simply, 'Par es enim liber'.

¹⁰² This sentence does not scan. Bailly has, 'et non possumus sicut servo uti te, sed sicut fratre amantissimo delectare'.

¹⁰³ Cf. Eph. 2.132E for this use of *katastasi-*. The scansion of this whole section is disturbed, from 'We will not use you' to 'young man'. Bailly's text does not help.

¹⁰⁴ Bailly's text takes *kal l o-* here as moral, 'honestitas', a word that is not in Lewis and Short.

¹⁰⁵ Greek *pl hrh kal l ou- oifqal mwn*. The expression *meta; kal l ou- oifqal mwn* is used in the description of the young David in 1 Kingd. 16,12., where it translates the Hebrew *~y[e]hpy~[i]*. The latter expression is considered odd by Hebraists, but is commonly thought to mean something like 'with beautiful eyes' NRSV, 'bright-eyed' JPS. TOB has 'la jolie figure'. The same phrase occurs again in 1 Kingd. 17,42. Here, however, the Hebrew has *harn hpy~[i]* where the translations agree on the meaning 'handsome'. It is likely that the LXX understood both phrases in the same way, and that this is meaning of the phrase in our text. The fact that LXX adds *kuriw/to* the next phrase, *agaqo~ orasei*, supports this view.

¹⁰⁶ The next stanzas are in octosyllabics.

But a beloved son * I had been to my father,
likewise also to my mother * a most dear son.¹⁰⁹

355 Those shepherds * are my brothers,
and my father sent me * to see how they were faring.

As a loving father * he was concerned about them,
for they had delayed * long on the mountains.

For this reason I was sent * by my father to see them.
360 But they seized me * and at once sold me

to you into slavery, * carried away by dreadful envy.
They parted me from my father, * unable to endure the love
that my father had for me.¹¹⁰ * This tomb here is my mother's.

For¹¹¹ once when my father * was returning from Charran
365 he passed from there to journey * to the place where he now lives.

And as my father journeyed, * my mother died here,
and was buried in this tomb, * at which you are now looking'.

When they heard this,¹¹² * they wept concerning him,
and said to him,¹¹³ * 'Do not be afraid, young man;

370 for to the greatest honour * you are going to Egypt.
For your appearance * reveals your nobility.

But rather be eager,¹¹⁴ * now that you are free from the envy
and hatred of your brothers, * who sold you to us.'

Jacob's Lament.

375 But¹¹⁵ Joseph's brothers, * when they had sold him,
brought a he-goat¹¹⁶ * and eagerly¹¹⁷ slew it,

¹⁰⁷ Bailly's text has 'fur'. Note that Joseph, as he does in the *Sepher ha-Yashar*, reveals the truth, which he does not do in the Targum and Midrash.

¹⁰⁸ This stichos has only five syllables.

¹⁰⁹ Lacks two syllables. Bailly's text, curiously, adds 'unicus': 'amantissimus et unicus'.

¹¹⁰ Bailly's text is again shorter.

¹¹¹ The next four lines are not in Bailly.

¹¹² Bailly adds, 'misericordia moti' This will not help the scansion, since it would need more than two syllables.

¹¹³ Lacks two syllables.

¹¹⁴ Euproquo~, a word not attested before the 5th century.

¹¹⁵ The next lines follow the biblical text fairly closely., but there is no mention of sackcloth and ashes. Also, unlike Genesis, the brothers twice declare that they know the tunic to be Joseph's. Like the LXX, the writer uses the verb mol unw, 'to stain', 'defile'. The Hebrew word **WBj** **W** does not seem to have the pejorative overtones of the Greek, nor does the Syriac. The text of the next few lines is not sound.

- and having stained * holy Joseph's tunic,
they sent it at once * to their father, saying,
'We found this * abandoned on the mountains,
380 and immediately we knew * it was our¹¹⁸ brother's garment,
and we are all * in grief for him.¹¹⁹
For this reason, father, * we have sent you
Joseph's tunic * of many colours,
not having found our brother.¹²⁰
385 Make sure yourself, * if it is your son's;
for we all know that it is Joseph's.¹²¹
When Jacob saw * the tunic he cried out
with lamentation and bitter * weeping, saying,¹²²
'This is the garment * of my son Joseph.
390 An evil beast * has devoured my son'.
Wailing he said * with unbearable groans,
'Why was I not devoured * rather than you, my son?¹²³
Why did the wild beast * not encounter me,
and, having made its fill of me, * left you alone, my son?
395 Why did the wild beast * not rather savage me,
and I become its * fodder to satiety? Alas! Alas!¹²⁴

¹¹⁶ *tragon*, which is quite common in the LXX, notably in Numbers and Deuteronomy, but which does not scan here. The LXX has *ἐφ' ἡν αἰγῶν*, the Syriac is similar. Josephus [*Ant.* II,35] also uses the word *trago-*. He adds the detail that they first tore up the coat, *diasparaxasin*.

¹¹⁷ The corresponding adverb, *euproquw-*, which, according to Lampe is only attested for Greek Ephrem. Ass. 3.114e, 1.144c, 1.146c.

¹¹⁸ Bailly's text, curiously, has 'fratris mei'. Genesis has 'your son's'

¹¹⁹ These three lines do not scan properly. Bailly's text is quite different, 'Et in memores sumus omnes, non inuenientes fratrem nostrum, nisi solam tunicam fratris nostri Ioseph'.

¹²⁰ This line does not scan.

¹²¹ This line does not scan. Bailly has a negative, 'non enim cognouimus ipsius esse hanc tunicam', but I suspect 'non' is mistake for 'nos'.

¹²² This octosyllable has only six syllables. Philo also gives Jacob a long rhetorical lament.

¹²³ Omit the final *ēgῶ* which does not scan.

¹²⁴ From this point Bailly's text is quite different, 'uiscera mea mobuntur [*sic*], corpus meum mouitur, oculi obscuratur. O mi fili Ioseph, lumen oculorum meorum, baculum senectutis meae, consolatio anime meae, firmamentum etatis meae...!' Here the MS breaks off. Jacob cites Tobit 10:4, from the Vulgate, not the LXX, 'lumen oculorum nostrorum baculum senectutis nostrae'.

I am rent with anguish * for Joseph! Alas! Alas!
 where was my son slain, * that I may go
 and tear my grey hairs * over your beauty!
 400 For I no longer wish to live, * if I cannot see Joseph.
 I am the cause * of your death, my child.
 I am the one who has blinded * your shining eyes.
 I destroyed you, my child, * when I sent you to journey
 in the wilderness to look for your brothers with the shepherds.¹²⁵
 405 So I will lament, my child, * and grieve at every hour,
 until I go down to Hades, * with you, my son.
 And instead of your body * I shall place your tunic,
 Joseph, before my eyes, * as I weep without ceasing.
 See once more,¹²⁶ your tunic * has brought me, my son,
 410 to another great grief; * for it is still intact¹²⁷,
 so that I think that it was not a wild beast * that devoured you, my beloved,
 but that you were stripped and slaughtered * by human hands.
 For if, as your brothers * say, you were devoured,
 your tunic would have been torn apart; * for the wild beast would not first
 415 have stripped you and then * made a meal of your flesh.
 If though it had stripped you * and then eaten,
 your tunic would not * have been stained with blood.
 There are no rents of claws, * no marks of the teeth
 of a wild beast * on your tunic. Whence then the blood?
 420 Again, if the beast * who ate Joseph
 was alone, * how did it manage to do all this?¹²⁸
 This is for me alone * grief and lamentation,
 that I may grieve for Joseph * and lament the tunic!
 Two griefs, two weepings * and most bitter lamentations
 425 for Joseph and his tunic. * Ah, how was he stripped!

¹²⁵ Together with the preceding octosyllable, this line, does not scan. For the curious 'shepherds', see above note 35.

¹²⁶ There is no suggestion in the Bible that Jacob suspects foul play.

¹²⁷ The same doubt on Jacob's part is also found in the *Palestinian Targum* and in Romanos, *Joseph* 43:8,8, *Ο citwn swot ejsti: su; pw~ mono~ eprwqh-É* In Fragment E from the Cairo Genizah we read, "This is the garment of my son. A wild beast has not devoured him. nor has my son been surely killed" Fragment D has a similar text. There is a similar interpretation in Ber. R. 84,19.

¹²⁸ This translation disguises a problem. The Greek has, *pw~ panta eiten ejrgasasqaiÉ* But the final word falls outside the metre, and is probably to be deleted as a gloss.

I shall die, Joseph, * my light and my support.
 Let your tunic now descend * with me to Hades.
 For without you, my son [Joseph]¹²⁹, * I no longer wish to see the light
 Let my soul depart * with yours, my child [Joseph].¹³⁰

430 **Joseph in Egypt.**

Heptasyllables

But¹³¹ the Ishmaelites * taking Joseph,
 brought him down * with speed to Egypt,
 as they discussed * the money they would get
 435 from some nobleman * because of his beauty.
 As they arrived * in the middle of the city,
 Petephres * met them at once,
 and seeing Joseph, * he enquired [of them]¹³², saying,
 'Tell me, merchants, * where is this young man from?
 440 For he is not like you, * because you are
 all Ishmaelites, * while he is outstandingly beautiful'¹³³.
 They answered[, saying]¹³⁴, * 'This youth is
 extremely well-born * and full of knowledge'.
 Having given them * whatever price they wanted,
 445 with longing¹³⁵ he bought * Joseph from them.¹³⁶
 Having brought him * into his own household,
 he asked to learn * about his upbringing.

¹²⁹ The word 'Joseph' is deleted as a gloss in both lines, metri causa.

¹³⁰ In Genesis Jacob's grief is briefly described in 37,34-35. Philo, however, provides a long and rhetorical lament (*De Iosepho* V, 23-27). This dwells mainly on the fact that Joseph has not received proper burial. The final sentences, though, as in Ephrem, dwell on Joseph's tunic, though with no suggestion that Jacob suspects foul play..

¹³¹ From this point the text is in heptasyllables.

¹³² Omit, metri causa.

¹³³ This somewhat 'racist' remark may help to identify the nationality of the writer. Cf. Ber. R. 86,3, 'He [Potiphar] reasoned, "Everywhere a white man sells an Ethiopian, while here an Ethiopian is selling a white man! He is no slave"'.
¹³⁴ Omit, metri causa.

¹³⁵ In Greek πορω/ The Greek translator omits this word, but it may be a discreet allusion to the idea found in some Jewish sources that Petephres's intentions were not entirely honourable. See Ginzberg, op.cit. p.43 and note 101.

¹³⁶ Cf. Ginzberg, op. cit. p.23, where his source is again the *Sepher ha-Yashar*. In the *Testament of Joseph*, 16 Pentephres' wife tells one of her eunuchs, who says the Ishmaelites are asking a great deal of money, 'Even if they are asking two minas; offer it. Do not be sparing of the gold; just buy the boy and bring him to me'. Eventually the price is eighty pieces of gold.

But¹³⁷ the true shoot * of the holy seed
 of Abraham the just, * of Isaac and of Jacob,
 450 advanced in virtue * and great sobriety
 in the household of Petephres,
 day by day * strictly practising
 in sight and in word * the grade of sobriety,
 having continually * before his eyes
 455 the holy God * who sees all things,
 the God of the fathers, * who had delivered him
 from the pit of death * and the hatred of his brothers.
 But his heart * was constantly grieving
 over his father, * the saintly Jacob.
 460 When¹³⁸ Peterphes saw * the good character of the young man,¹³⁹
 his great knowledge * and honesty,
 he gave into the care * of Joseph the most virtuous,
 as to his own son, * all that he had acquired.
 And he had no idea at all * what Joseph did
 465 in all his dealings, * not even so much as a word,
 except only the food, * that he ate at the appointed time;
 for he saw that Joseph * was completely honest.
 In particular he knew from experience * that his affairs
 were prospering * in Joseph's hands,
 470 and that there was great happiness * among the male and female servants
 at all the good things * that came about through him.

Peterphres' Wife.

But his mistress, * seeing that Joseph
 was adorned¹⁴⁰ * with beauty and knowledge,
 475 was smitten with passion * and satanic folly,
 and greatly desired * to sleep with him,
 and she desired to cast * that honourable youth
 and fount of sobriety * into the miry pit of unchastity.

¹³⁷ Is there something missing here? In the *Testament of Joseph*, 11-16, Joseph insists that he is a slave until he has been bought by Pentephres.

¹³⁸ The following verses are based fairly closely on Gen. 39,4-6, though they are developed, but not so extensively as in the *Testament of Joseph*, 3-9.

¹³⁹ This half line does not scan, being three syllables over length.

¹⁴⁰ This heptasyllable is two syllables short.

Working ten thousand wiles * and enticements,
 480 she plotted mercilessly * the deception of the youth.
 Hour by hour * by changing her clothes,
 making up her face * and decking herself in gold,
 the wretched woman tried to entrap * with satanic nods
 and shameless smiles * the holy eyes of the just young man.
 485 For she reckoned * that by such tricks
 she would easily trap * the soul of the holy youth.
 Joseph however, * protecting himself with the fear of God,
 did not look at her * by so much as a nod.
 But when she saw * that the wiles
 490 of her many adornments * had no effect on the just one,
 she burned with greater passion * and schemed even more,
 not finding what * she might yet do to win him.
 And¹⁴¹ finally she longed shamelessly to invite him to a dishonourable deed,
 watching like a snake raging to pour upon him the poison of unchastity; and
 495 with a shameless face she said to the holy youth, 'Joseph, sleep with me, don't
 be an utter coward; approach me boldly. I would enjoy your beauty; and you
 be sated also with my loveliness. Over all the servants in the household you
 have complete authority. No one else dares to come in to us, or to listen to our
 business. But if you do not want to, because you fear my husband, I will do
 500 away with him, by giving him poison.¹⁴² So then, come to me and fulfil my
 desire, because I am aflame with my desire for you.
 But¹⁴³ that adamant stone, in both soul and body, was not worsted in
 mind, and especially by such a squall, but repelling everything that happened
 through his fear of God, with fitting and fair stability, he made it clear to her
 505 by godly words, saying, 'Woman, it is not good to commit sin with you, my
 mistress; for it is God that I fear. For see, my lord has handed over to me all
 his property both in the house and in his lands, and there is nothing that is
 not under my authority, except you, my mistress. It would be unseemly for
 me to reject such a love of such a master, especially one who so loves me.
 510 How can I commit such a sin in the sight of God, who examines hearts and
 inner parts?'

¹⁴¹ From this point the text appears to be in octosyllables, but the scansion soon becomes increasingly irregular and finally breaks down altogether. That is to say, just under half the text is in verse, the rest in prose.

¹⁴² Cf. Ber. R. 87,5,: 'I am afraid of my master.' 'Then I will kill him', she urged. 'Is it not enough that I should be counted in the company of adulterers, but I am to be counted among murderers too!', he replied.

¹⁴³ From this point to the end the text is clearly in prose. The occasional sentence or clause appears to scan, but this is probably fortuitous.

Joseph spoke these holy words to her hourly, warning, asking, rebuking, accusing; but she accepted nothing godly, but like a snake that stops¹⁴⁴ its ears, she burned more fiercely, evil desire welling up in her. Hourly she
515 watched for a suitable opportunity to force herself on the chaste young man. Joseph, seeing that the female, like a wild beast, was so shamelessly trying to destroy him, raised his sight to the God of his fathers, and constantly besought the Most High, saying, ‘God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, great and fearful, rescue from this wild beast. For you see yourself, Master, the madness
520 of the woman, how she wishes in secret to kill me by impious actions, so that I shall die in sins along with her and be wholly parted from my father Jacob. You delivered me, Master, from death at the hands of my lawless brothers; deliver me again here also from a raving wild beast, that by my deeds I am¹⁴⁵ not a stranger to my fathers, who loved you deeply and devoutly, Lord’. And groaning from the depths of his heart, he again called on his father Jacob, saying, ‘Pray, father, for your child Joseph, for a fierce war has been launched against me, which could separate me from God; this is much more powerful than the death my brothers planned to inflict on me. They were trying to kill my body, she is separating my soul from God¹⁴⁶. I know, my father, that you
530 prayers for me ascended to the holy God, and thanks to this I was delivered from the pit of death. Now once again implore the Most High, that I may be delivered from this wild beast, that wishes to destroy your child; she has no sense of shame in her eyes, nor fear of God in her heart. Pray, father, that I may not in this way be parted from your bosom in body, and become a
535 stranger to you in soul. I went to my brothers, and they became like wild beasts; like savage wolves they tore me from you, dear father, and I was brought down to Egypt by the hands of foreigners, and there once again a wild beast met me. My brothers wanted to do away with me in the wilderness, while she has appeared to tear me apart in her inner chamber.
540 Pray, father, that I may die in the sight of God and my fathers’.

But as he did not wish to obey the words of his mistress, she pursued him hourly like a shameless serpent; she looked for an opportunity to find him in an inner chamber and so to commit the sin. When she found him in his bed, as she wished, she shamelessly approached the chaste young man, and
545 dragging him to herself, began to force him to commit sin. When he saw the woman’s outrageous lack of shame, he dashed out into the street¹⁴⁷ at a run,

¹⁴⁴ I accept the emendation proposed by the Greek editor, who reads *buouush-*, rather than the *biazoush-* of the eighteenth century editors. The words are a citation of Psalm 57,5. Scansion is no help here.

¹⁴⁵ The verb here, after *iħa mħi* is present indicative, *eijmi*, which is odd, even by Hellenistic standards. Turner, in Moulton III,102, gives a few examples from the New Testament, but these are all variant readings.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Matthew 10:28.

¹⁴⁷ The Greek word is *αἰνῳδο-*. The word is uncommon and normally neuter, and usually means ‘a block of houses surrounded by streets’, which will scarcely do here. It can also mean ‘a street’. The text seems to be a translation from either Hebrew **hcWh**, or Syriac, which

and like an eagle, when he sees the hunters, raises it wings towards the sky, so too Joseph ran out of the door, lest by tricks he be harmed in words or deeds; and leaving behind his own garment in her hands, he fled the Devil's
550 snares. When the woman saw him flee thus, she fell into a towering rage, and planned to strike at the just youth by most shameful words, intending to accuse him before her husband, so that, when her husband heard, he would be enflamed with jealous rage and do away with Joseph. She reasoned thus with herself, 'It is far better for me that Joseph dies, and I find relief; for I
555 cannot endure to see in my house hour by hour his outstanding beauty, while I cannot find a way, either openly or in secret, to enjoy his beauty and his great knowledge'. So summoning the male and female servants, she said to them, 'Do you see what the Hebrew servant, whom my husband set over his household, has done to me? Authority over my household was not enough
560 for him, but he wanted to separate me from my husband', And taking Joseph's tunic, he showed it to her husband, accusing him and saying, 'Look, you introduced a Hebrew servant to mock and insult me, your wife. Do you not know, my lord, that I am chaste, and this is why I have told you this?'

Joseph in Prison.

565 On hearing this her husband immediately believed the woman's¹⁴⁸ words that this was so; and he at once gave orders for Joseph to be given over to the prison house¹⁴⁹ with great security and threats. Without examination or enquiry he passed the unjust sentence against him, saying, 'I order Joseph to be thrown into the prison house and to have absolutely no relief'. But the God
570 of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who examines the hearts of all, was with him, and granted him compassion in the eyes of the gaoler¹⁵⁰. And the gaoler left

has ܠܡܕܢܐ. The natural translation of both the Hebrew and the Syriac would be 'outside'. Moreover in Hebrew the meaning 'street' does not seem to occur in the Pentateuch, but is mostly found in the Prophets and Wisdom literature. The LXX simply has *ekw*, and Wevers notes no variants. Neofiti 1 has 'he fled into the market-place' three times; the second time the margin has the gloss 'outside'. Add. 27031 has a different verb, 'he fled', but the same phrase, 'into the market-place'.

¹⁴⁸ Or 'his wife's'.

¹⁴⁹ *ej tw/ oikw/ th- ful akh-*. This looks suspiciously like a Syriacism, or at least a Semitism. The LXX, at Genesis 39,20, has *oicurwma*, not a usual word for 'prison', but in almost every case it means 'fortress', 'stronghold', which is what it means at Gen. 39,20. The Hebrew has the unique expression **rhSh; tyB** which seems to mean 'round house', but the exact meaning is disputed. It is curious that the writer, who likes slightly unusual words, has not used the word in the LXX. The Peshitta, on the other hand, has the quite normal expression for prison, ܠܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

¹⁵⁰ The Greek of this clause is odd, *kai; didwsin autw/ ej- oiktirmou- ej- oifqal mou- tou desmoful ako-*. It looks like a literal translation of the Syriac. The corresponding text of Genesis is far more natural, *kai; ejdwken autw/ carin enantion tou ajrcidesmoful ako-*. This looks like a literal translation of Syriac. The corresponding text of Genesis in the LXX is far more natural, *kai; ejdwken autw/ carin enantion tou ajrcidesmoful ako-*. This is an exact rendering of the equally natural Hebrew **rhSh; tyBerf; yB B. Axi!TW**. The Peshitta on the

him with some relaxation¹⁵¹; for God never abandons those who fear him with their whole heart.

575 After this two eunuchs sinned against Pharaoh the king, the chief butler and the chief baker, and he ordered them to be thrown into the prison. Joseph was serving them. When both of them had spent two years in the prison, after some days they both had dreams, about what was soon to happen to them. Holy Joseph, being their servant, as they were men of honour, as usual came in to serve them and found them in great distress; for
580 they were both cast down and listless¹⁵² because of their dreams. When he sought to learn the cause of their distress, they both said, 'We have seen dreams, and are in distress, because there is no one who can explain the dreams that we have seen'. But he said to them, 'This belongs to God to make [them] known to those who fear him. Tell me your dreams, that my God may
585 make them known through me'. When they heard this, the chief butler and chief baker told him their dreams, each one as he had seen it. Joseph explained to them in a few words exactly what was going to happen to them at the king's hands, in the way in which it came to pass; for he gave back his rank to the chief butler, but handed over the chief baker to death.

590 Since Joseph knew the honour that was about to come to the chief butler, he asked him and said, 'Remember me in Pharaoh's presence, and quickly make clear what has happened to me, so that I may come out of here; for I have committed no sin, nor have I done anything wrong, that I have been thrown into the prison house'.

595 Chosen and blessed seed, why do you seek help from a mortal man? Abandoning God, you appeal to a human!¹⁵³ And yet you experienced God's help in the greatest need, when you preserved the tunic of your chastity untouched! Why are you faint-hearted, blessed one? God foresees kingship and glory for you whenever he wills. When you nobly endure the test, you
600 make the garlands of victory brighter.

Joseph Governor of Egypt.

So that the explanation of both the dreams might be fulfilled, as Joseph had said, Pharaoh held a drinking party for all his nobles, while he remembered both the chief butler and the chief baker. And he recalled the chief butler to

other hand has 'And he gave him ܠܚܝܬܝܢ in the eyes of the prisoner governor'. Eij-
oiktirmou- is an exact translation of ܠܚܝܬܝܢ, but not of either the Hebrew or the LXX.

¹⁵¹ The word is used in this sense at Acts 24,23.

¹⁵² A somewhat curious use of ܠܚܝܬܝܢ.

¹⁵³ Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends* 2, 63. Philo [*On Joseph* XIX,99] and Josephus [*Ant.* II,74], on the butler's forgetfulness, make the point that Joseph was to be freed by God and not through any human intervention. Ber. R. 88,7 and 89,3. The latter has, commenting on Psalm 40:5, 'Another interpretation: *Happy is the man who has made the Lord his trust*, alludes to Joseph. *And has not turned to the arrogant nor to such as fall away treacherously*, because he said to the chief butler, "But have me in remembrance....and make mention of me", two years were added to his sufferings'. Cf. also Neofiti 1 at 40:23, Add. 27031 at 40:14 and Midr. Tanhuma on 40:23

605 his place, while he handed the other over to death. But when the chief butler had forgotten Joseph, two years later, in accordance with God's providence, Pharaoh dreamt great dreams, that surpassed all the understanding of the wise men of Egypt and its sorcerers. Pharaoh having summoned all the wise men and told them his dreams,¹⁵⁴ no one was able to expound their meaning. The
 610 king being in great distress, the chief butler remembered and told the king everything about Joseph and his understanding. When the king heard about him, he rejoiced with great joy, and sent for him speedily. When Joseph came from the prison, Pharaoh said to him in the presence of his nobles, 'I have heard of you, that you are a man of understanding, able to explain profound
 615 dreams'. Joseph answered Pharaoh, 'To interpret dreams belongs to the Giver of wisdom'. Then Pharaoh told his dreams in the presence of Joseph and all his nobles. And he at once heard the explanations of the dreams from Joseph's mouth as though from the mouth of God¹⁵⁵. Pharaoh was amazed¹⁵⁶ at his learning and his remarkable advice; for he was giving him the following
 620 advice, 'Let the king look out a man of understanding and wisdom; and you shall set him to collect the corn of Egypt, because there is going to be a great famine; so that the majority of crops will be available in time of distress'. And the king said, 'I shall set you today over the whole of Egypt, because you have given such advice; and let Egypt and all my household accept judgement at
 625 your mouth'. Then he made Joseph mount on his own chariot¹⁵⁷, and all the nobles went before and around Joseph¹⁵⁸.

But¹⁵⁹ when Petephres, who had earlier thrown Joseph into prison, saw the remarkable wonder that had taken place, that Joseph had taken his seat on Pharaoh's chariot, he was greatly afraid, and discreetly separating himself from
 630 the midst of the nobles, he made off with speed to his house, and with great fear said to his wife, 'You have seen, my wife, the remarkable wonder and great fear for us that has taken place: that Joseph, our servant, has become our lord and that of all Egypt, and now he is seated with glory on Pharaoh's chariot, honoured by all like a king. But I, unable to appear before him, have

¹⁵⁴ Another curious example of nominative absolute phrases. See M. III, 314, 316 for examples from the Apocalypse and some other NT books. It occurs in the papyri and is 'popular' rather than 'literary' Greek.

¹⁵⁵ It is worth noticing that the writer avoids giving the actual details of any of the dreams. Earlier he makes no mention of Joseph's dreams, except in the brief summary of the story in the first hundred lines.

¹⁵⁶ This is in fact a participle and the sentence contains no main verb.

¹⁵⁷ The LXX has 'the second chariot of those he had – τὴν αὐτοῦ -', or possibly 'of his [officers]' understood. The Hebrew can mean 'the second chariot', or 'the chariot of the second', i.e. the [grand] vizier, as the NAB has it.

¹⁵⁸ This detail is not in the Bible, but cf. Ginzberg II, 74. See also St Ephrem's *Commentary on Genesis*, 35:7, 'With all who were subject to him, all the king's military chiefs and nobles were subject to him'.

¹⁵⁹ This passage, to which nothing corresponds in the biblical narrative, closely resembles St Ephrem's commentary [35:7-9] at this point.

635 quietly separated myself". When Petephres's wife heard all this, she encouraged him, saying, 'I will tell you my sin. I did this. I was in love with Joseph the all-virtuous, that chaste youth, and hour by hour with many enticements I lay in ambush for him, so that I might sleep with him and enjoy his beauty. Nevertheless But I seized hold of him, forcing him to tolerate me a
640 little, and he had fled outside, when I showed you his garment. I am the cause of his kingship and his surpassing glory. For if I had not been passionate for Joseph, he would not have been thrown into prison, but he owes me thanks, who have become the cause of his glory. Joseph is just and holy, because when falsely accused, he did not reveal it to anyone. Get up then, and go with joy, and bow down before him with the nobles'. So Petephres arose and went
645 to bow down with reverence to Joseph.

Famine in Canaan

Meanwhile, all the years of great plenty were completed and famine prevailed in all the land of Canaan, and Jacob was in despair with his children. But
650 Jacob heard that there were supplies in Egypt in great abundance, and he said to his sons, 'Come, go and buy supplies for us from Egypt, as I have heard, so that we may not all die of hunger'. Accepting his commands, the ten sons of Jacob all went down to buy food. However they did not know that he was their brother.¹⁶⁰ When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognised them all, and
655 said fiercely, 'These ten men are wicked spies, and that is why they have come to Egypt. Arrest them and bind them securely, for they have come here to spy out our land'. They were terrified and answered with fear, saying, 'God forbid, lord! But we are all brothers, children of one just father, and once we were twelve, but one was carried off by an evil wild beast, he was most
660 virtuous and beloved of his father, and his father grieves for him until today. Our other brother is with our father in the land of Canaan, comforting him'. Again Joseph answered them with anger,¹⁶¹ saying, 'Since I fear and reverence the holy God, I grant you grace this time. Take the corn, and return quickly to your father, if you are honest. And bring your brother, whom your father
665 loves, here to me, and so I shall believe you'.¹⁶²

And taking the wheat they returned grieving to their father in the land of Canaan, and reported to him¹⁶³ the man's the evil questionings¹⁶⁴ and

¹⁶⁰ This sentence is curious, and it looks as though something has fallen out just before it. The Old Slavonic has the following addition after 'buy food.': 'When they reached the city [they came up with their vessels] to buy corn'. It continues, 'When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognised them, however they did not recognize him'. The Armenian has the second sentence only. Two sentences seem to have become inverted in the Greek.

¹⁶¹ The Old Slavonic, the Armenian and Georgian add 'seized Symeon, had him bound and locked up, and said'.

¹⁶² The retention of Symeon as hostage and other details are not mentioned.

¹⁶³ From 'they returned' to 'reported to him' is, except for the added 'grieving', almost exactly the wording of the LXX.

¹⁶⁴ Greek *peusei-*. A late, and uncommon word, first cited from Philo in L&S.

anger. And their father was greatly grieved at these words, and said with groans, 'Why did you do this? Why did you tell the master of Egypt that you
670 had another brother here?' They answered him, 'He asked about us and about our family in great detail'¹⁶⁵. Jacob said to them, 'I would rather die than that you should take Benjamin from my bosom'. But when the famine grew more intense, Jacob said to them, 'If only I had been childless by Rachel and been deprived of my most beloved sons, as you say,¹⁶⁶ arise, take gifts in your
675 hands, and your brother, and go together'.

And they did as Jacob had ordered them. And when they had entered Egypt in great fear, they bowed down before Joseph. But when Joseph saw his own brother Benjamin standing with fear and alarm, he was greatly moved, and longed to take hold of him and kiss him, and he asked him, 'Is your father
680 alive?' He said with fear, 'Your servant, our father, is alive'. He said to him again, 'Does he have Joseph in his heart?' he said, 'Yes, he has him greatly in his heart, and is tormented because of him'. Unable to take hold of him or ask him, he went into his chamber, and wept bitterly. For at that moment, when he saw his brother, he immediately remembered the good old age of Jacob,
685 and said with tears, 'Happy are those who see the holy character of your old age, good father! Indeed, as I think, my whole royal power and glory are not worth as much as your old age, good father. And I wanted to be sure from Benjamin's mouth if you have me in your heart and long for me, as I do you. This is why I compelled my brothers by a trick to bring my brother Benjamin
690 down with them. For I did not believe them when they spoke about you, "We have a father and a younger brother". For I thought that, carried away by jealousy, they had killed your beloved youngest son Benjamin, and even more had cast down your soul in grief to Hades, in the same way that they had also killed me in their design. For they hated the two of us because we had the
695 same mother, I and Benjamin. I know, father, that you grieve greatly over us, and now indeed your old age has been quite overwhelmed¹⁶⁷ because of my brother Benjamin. And see, I too, knowing your affliction, am greatly pained, because there is none of us by you in your old age. My former grief was not sufficient, but yet another grief has been added to the other for you, father. I
700 am the cause of your weepings and pains. For I acted cruelly¹⁶⁸ in bringing down Benjamin; but what I heard of you compelled me to do this, for I

¹⁶⁵ The LXX has *εἰρῶτων ἐφρῶτῃσεν*. The text has a good idiomatic rendering, *εἰφρῶτῃσεν...ἐν πασὶ ἀκριβεῖα*

¹⁶⁶ This must go with what follows, rather than what precedes. The following participle, *ἀπαστάντε*-, looks like a Semitism, or is imitation Semitic style. It appears to be a reference back to Gen. 43,8, where Judas 'Send the boy with me, *kai; ἀπαστάντε* - *πορεύσονται*'.

¹⁶⁷ The text has *καταπεποῖται*, a word which is unattested in the lexica and which would make little sense in the context. The modern Greek editor proposes, not unreasonably, to read *καταπεποῖται*, 'has been overwhelmed', a sense found in the fathers. Ambrosius has 'cruciat'ur'. The Old Slavonic has 'grieved', 'afflicted'.

¹⁶⁸ Greek *ἀποτόμῳ*-. Here meaning 'cruelly', 'severely'. The word is only found, and with this meaning, in the LXX in Wisdom, both as adjective and adverb. The latter only once at 5,22.

wished to learn if you were truly still alive, my father. Who will grant me to see once again your holy form, and to be filled with your angelic face?

705 Then having wept bitterly in his chamber and washed his face, he came
out cheerfully. He ordered all to be brought into the house to feast with him.
Hear, my brethren, how Joseph brings them from all directions into alarm.¹⁶⁹
For he ordered each one to take his place, calling him by name and order, as
they had been born. And for each he made use of a form, divining into the
710 goblet¹⁷⁰; it is a silver cup that he held in his hand. He set the cup down and
struck it with the ring on his right hand, and the goblet when struck sent a
loud noise to the ears of those who were in attendance in the house. Then
having struck once, he said, 'Roubem is first, let him have the honour of the
first place'. Then he struck again and revealed the name of the second, saying,
715 'This Symeon is the second. Let him take his place in accordance with his
birth'. Striking again a third time, he said, 'Let Levi take his place and be
honoured'. And so he sat them all down, calling them by name and in order.
He brought all of them to a state of astonishment over this and to greater
terror, so that they reckoned that, since he knew them all, he might perchance
720 know something more than this. And they had much greater terror because of
the goblet, and they considered with one another, each saying, 'We told a lie
before, when we said Joseph had been carried off by an evil wild beast'. And
they were in a great turmoil about him. But that he might do away with their
suspicion, he gave them portions from his own table, but gave more to his
own brother. To Benjamin he gave ten times¹⁷¹ more than to the others. Why
725 then did he do this to his brothers and show the name of each from the
goblet? That he might make their crime greater.

¹⁶⁹ A sudden reminder that this is a sermon.

¹⁷⁰ The word is *kondu*, an unusual word, only used in the LXX in Genesis 44 and Isaiah 51, where it is used of the 'goblet of God's wrath'. See *La Bible d'Alexandrie* ad loc., where it is pointed out that the other Greek versions and Philo use more ordinary words. The Hebrew word is confined to this chapter, Exodus 25 and 37, the 'cups' on the golden candlestick, and Jer. 35,5, where NRSV has 'pitchers'. In Exodus the LXX word used is *krathr*. The erroneous entry in L&S has been corrected in the new edition. That the word is unusual is underlined by the fact that the writer feels the need to explain it. This also suggests that his text, at this point at any rate, is the LXX. The Peshitta uses the Syriac equivalent of *skufō-*. This is also the word used by St Ephrem in his commentary at this point, 'As from a goblet', i.e. by divination. Tonneau, in his translation, glosses the word 'augurii magici'. The idea that divination is involved is also found in Jewish tradition, cf. Ginzberg II,76 and the Palestinian Targum [Add. 27031], 'He took the silver cup in his hand and struck it like a diviner'. The source for this being, of course, Gen. 44,5. In the Bible the goblet is not mentioned until the beginning of chapter 44, when Joseph orders it to be put into Benjamin's sack. In some Jewish sources the cup is brought into play earlier, at the moment of the brothers' first appearance before Joseph [Gen. 42,30]. Cf. Ginzberg II,83 and V,347 [note 207]. As in our text, the method of divination is by striking the cup, not by pouring oil onto water, as most of the commentators on Genesis 44 say. Cf. Ber. R. 91:6, 92:5 and 93:7, also Ishodad of Merv on 43:33 [CSCO 156 p.225] and, citing Ephrem, on 45:5.

¹⁷¹ Hebrew and LXX 'five times'. One MS of the LXX has 'seven times'. Cf. also Ginzberg II, 97 and note 249 [V, 351].

Then he ordered his own steward to give them corn in abundance without payment, and in Benjamin's sack to hide the goblet, and he dismissed them speedily with joy. When they had gone a short distance from the city
730 rejoicing, Joseph's steward caught them up on the road, and spoke heavy words to them, upbraiding them with threats and calling them thieves and unworthy of honour. But they answered the steward, 'The previous gold we found in our sacks and brought it to our lord. Have we now stolen your lord's goblet? God forbid!' But he said to them, 'Open your sacks, so that I may
735 search'. And they hastened to take down their sacks from animals; and the goblet was found in Benjamin's sack. When they saw this, they rent their garments¹⁷² and began with much threatening to accuse and insult both Rachel and Joseph with his mother and brother, saying, 'You have become a stumbling block to our father; you and Joseph, Rachel's children. Joseph
740 wanted to be king over us, while now you, his brother, have brought us to shame and disgrace. Are you not the children of Rachel who stole her father's idols and said that she had not stolen them?'¹⁷³

And lifting up his voice Benjamin began with weeping and lamentation to address each one of them and to say, 'See, the God of our fathers knows,
745 who took Rachel, as he willed, knows the death of the all-virtuous Joseph, who watches over Jacob, as consolation for his being parted from Joseph, while he invisibly comforts him now once again, as he knows how, who sees everything of all of us and examines hearts and inner parts, he knows that I did not, as you say, steal this goblet, nor again have any designs on it. So may
750 I see the holy grey hairs of Jacob, that I may kiss his knees with joy. I did not steal this goblet. Alas! Alas! Rachel, what has happened to your children! Joseph the all-virtuous, as they say, has been destroyed by wild beasts. And see how I, mother, have suddenly become a thief, and I do not know how. I am held for slavery in a foreign land. Joseph, as he was being devoured by the
755 wild beast in the wilderness, cried out that he might find a deliverer, and did not find one. See again, O good mother, how I address my brothers and there is no one who listens to or believes me your child'.

And they took and returned to the city to Joseph, having no defence for him. Joseph answered and said to them with rage, 'Is the reward for all my
760 benefactions? Was it for this that I honoured you, that you might remove my goblet, with which I practise divination? Did I not say to you that you were not men of peace, but spies? But because of the fear of God, this is what I am doing, I am holding the one who stole my goblet for slavery. The rest of you go with safety'.

765 And one of them, named Judas, fell on his knees, and implored him, saying, 'Do not be angry, lord, that I may speak. You asked your servants, saying, "Do you have a father or a brother?" and we said, 'Our father is your

¹⁷² This detail is in Gen. 44,13.

¹⁷³ Cf. Ber. R. 92:8, 'When [the cup] was found they exclaimed to him, "What! You are a thief and the son of a thief. To which he answered, "Have we a he-goat here? Have we brothers who sold their brother?"'

770 servant and had two very well-loved children, more than the rest of us. One
of them a wild beast tore in pieces on the mountains, and his father grieves for
him every hour, and until now he is pain and groaning, and one could almost
say that even the earth grieves at his voice; the other he keeps with him as
consolation for the first child. Now, as you commanded, we have brought the
brother, and your servants themselves involved in a terrible injustice. I
775 implore that I may your household servant instead of this boy. Only let the
boy return to his father with the brothers, because I accepted him from my
father, and I cannot leave for my father without him, lest I should witness the
bitter death of my father’.

Joseph reveals himself to his Brothers.

780 When Joseph heard these pitiable words and saw the all standing with shame,
seeing Benjamin too with his tunic rent and falling with weeping at the knees
of the bystanders, that they would entreat Joseph for him, that he would
pardon him to go down with his brothers, he was exceedingly troubled and
moved to the depths of his being, and he at once ordered the bystanders to
785 leave. When they had gone out, Joseph lifted up his voice with weeping and
said to them, with complete openness, in Hebrew, ‘I am Joseph your brother. I
was not eaten by a wild beast, as you say. I am the one who was thrown
naked into the pit by you. I am the one who was sold to the Ishmaelites; the
one who clasped the knees and feet of all of you. Then none of you had mercy
790 on me in such affliction, but like savage wild beasts you laid hands on me.
However, my brothers, let no of you be frightened, let none of you be afraid,
but rather rejoice, both I and you, that I have attained royal power. And in the
same that you said to our father before, that I had been carried off by a wild
beast on the mountains, return again and tell Jacob, ‘Joseph your son is alive,
and see, he is seated in a royal chariot in Egypt’.

795 While Joseph was speaking to his brothers, the remained like dead men
through fear and terror. And Joseph, the offshoot of Jacob, kissed each one of
them with love, not remembering evil as fitted him, and made them very
joyful with gifts and great joy. And he sent them all to Jacob, saying this, ‘Do
not quarrel at all on the road, but rather go with haste to the father, and say to
800 him, “Thus says Joseph your son, ‘God has made me king of all Egypt. Come,
father, in joy of heart, that I may the angelic face of your old age’”’.

And they left with haste and told Jacob Joseph’s words, as he had
commanded them. When Jacob heard Joseph’s name he groaned bitterly and
wept, saying, ‘Why do you trouble my spirit, so that I may be reminded of the
805 appearance of Joseph the all-virtuous, and why do you wish to relight in my
heart the grief that had been somewhat quenched?’ And Benjamin came
forward, kissed his knees and beard and said, ‘These words are true, good
father’; and he showed him everything that had been sent to him by Joseph.
And then he believed Benjamin’s words. And he arose with the whole
810 household with haste and with great joy went down to Egypt, to his son
Joseph.

And Joseph heard that Jacob his father had arrived, and he arose with
great joy, and went out of the city with Pharaoh’s nobles, and there he met him

815 with a large entourage. But when Jacob saw Joseph his son, he fell upon his
neck with great love, saying, 'Now I can die, since I have seen your face, my
sweetest child. For truly you are still alive'. And they both glorified God.

Final Doxology.

820 For all these things let us give glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
to whom be glory, the might, honour and worship, now and ever, and to the
ages of ages. Amen.