



## THE ROLE OF EGYPT IN THE FORMATION OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

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### ABSTRACT

*The article deals with the manifold mentions of Egypt in the Hebrew Bible. Among them are many negative views, especially in the Exodus narrative, which originated in the Northern Kingdom and reached Judah after 722 BCE. Prophetic oracles also condemn Egypt and the attempts of Judean kings in the 8th to 6th century BCE to seek help in Egypt against the Assyrians. Later texts show a positive image of Egypt, especially the Joseph story, which probably originated in the Egyptian Diaspora. Other texts, such as 2 Chronicles 35 and Isaiah 19, also pursue this positive attitude towards Egypt. The article further discusses borrowings of Egyptian texts (Amenemope and the Tale of the Two Brothers) in the Hebrew Bible.*

Egypt is surely the most quoted Empire in the Hebrew Bible. The term מצרים occurs approximately 660 times, whereas בבל appears around 260 times and אשור only 145 times. This already indicates the importance of Egypt for the “mental map” or the historical memory of the biblical authors and redactors.

The different discourses about Egypt in the three parts of the Hebrew Bible show an astonishing love-hate relationship and a strange mixture of historical, mythological and ideological memories that were gathered in such a way that Egypt is present in the Hebrew Bible from beginning to end.

### THE “EGYPTIAN FRAMEWORK” OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

Egypt appears for the first time after the Flood narrative in Genesis 9–10. In the so-called table of nations Noah’s son Ham is presented as the father of Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The fact that Cush is mentioned here before Egypt may reflect a historical context where Egypt was ruled by “Kushite” (black) Pharaohs.<sup>1</sup> In its present form, Gen

10 was constructed during the Persian period and paints a picture of peaceful cohabitation of all the nations of the world:<sup>2</sup> “These are the families of Noah’s sons, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood” (Gen 10:32). Interestingly, in this geographical and genealogical construction Canaan is associated with Egypt, whereas Sem and his descendants (among them Israel) are located mostly in Mesopotamia. The fact that Canaan is associated with Egypt can be explained in at least two ways. On the theological level, “Canaan,” which is often used as a term to designate a theological opposition to “Israel,”<sup>3</sup> is logically linked with another enemy of Israel, Egypt—“the house of bondage.” Alternatively, the geographical “map” in Genesis can be shown to retain the memory of Egyptian domination over Canaan during the second millennium BCE.

In any case, the idea of a peaceful cohabitation of all the people of the world in Gen 10 was blurred by the insertion of Gen 9:20–27. This passage recounts

how Ham “discovered” his father’s nakedness when he was drunk and how this act provoked Noah’s curse of Ham’s son, Canaan. It is not clear why the son is cursed rather than the father. Perhaps the curse was originally uttered against Ham and later replaced by “Canaan,” once the term became a symbol for Israel’s “enemies” in the land. In any case, Ham, the ancestor of Egypt, is presented in a very negative way.<sup>4</sup>

This picture is contradicted in the final chapters of the book of Chronicles, which most manuscripts treat as the last book of the Hebrew Bible. 2 Chronicles 35 presents a new and enhanced interpretation of 2 Kings 23:28–30. This short passage laconically relates how king Josiah, so highly praised for his cultic reforms, is killed by Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo. The author of 2 Chr 35 was perplexed by this short note and added an explanation of Josiah’s wrongful behavior which led to his death.<sup>5</sup> According to 2 Chr 35:20–27, the Egyptian king warns Josiah not to fight against him by referring to the word of God:

But Necho sent envoys to him, saying, “What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but against the house with which I am at war; and God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, so that he will not destroy you” (v. 21).

Necho refers in his speech to a “universal” god, who is also the god of Josiah, and it is Josiah’s disobedience to the divine order that causes his death. The only other place in the Hebrew Bible, where the Egyptian king can have a theological discussion with a Hebrew (Genesis 41:15–32) is the Joseph story, which was probably written at the same time as Chronicles, at the end of the Persian or the beginning of the Hellenistic period (see below).

In this way the Tanak ends on a positive note regarding Egypt that contradicts the negative attitudes expressed in the Exodus traditions and in many of the prophetic oracles (e.g. Isaiah 19; Jeremiah 46:1–18; Ezekiel 29–30).

However, the redactors of the Hebrew Bible have inserted a more positive description of Egypt even before the book of Exodus in the narrative of the Joseph novella. The Joseph story, which serves as a bridge between the narratives of the Patriarchs and the Exodus, offers a striking contrast to the national myth of the Exodus.

#### THE JOSEPH NARRATIVE: A PLEA FOR THE EGYPTIAN DIASPORA

In the context of the Patriarchal narratives the theme of a descent to Egypt appears already in the beginning of the Abraham narrative in Gen 12:10–20. Abram<sup>6</sup> travels to Egypt due to a famine and presents his wife Saray as his sister so that she is taken into the harem of the Pharaoh. YHWH intervenes with “plagues” and unlike the Pharaoh of the Exodus, this Pharaoh respects the manifestation of the god of Israel and sends Abram back to his land (שׁלח). Contrary to the Book of Exodus, the king of Egypt is presented here positively, but Egypt however, is depicted as a place where one should not live. The idea is repeated with regard to Isaac who, from the beginning, is warned against the descent to Egypt. In a divine speech YHWH tells the Patriarch: “Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you” (Gen 26:2). These texts probably allude to the existence of a Judean diaspora in the Egyptian Delta and in Elephantine, which originated at the end of the 6th century BCE during the period of Babylonian occupation. Jer 44:1 indicates locations of this diaspora in mentioning Migdol (a fort, marking the northern border?), Tahpanhes (= Daphnae, Tell Defenneh; cf. Jer 43:8–13), Noph (= Memphis, missing in LXX), and the land of Pathros (“Upper Egypt”). The author of Jer 44 is very hostile against the Judeans that went to Egypt, perhaps of their syncretistic religion that is attested in the texts from Elephantine. Gen 12:10–20 and 26:2 do not depict a hostile attitude towards Egypt, but insist on the idea that Egypt is not a place where the Patriarchs and their offspring should live.

A very different approach is taken in the Joseph narrative in Gen 37–50.<sup>7</sup> The text praises Joseph’s career in Egypt and excludes any theological difficulties during the encounter between Joseph and the Egyptian king. Both Joseph and the Pharaoh use the term *’elohim* to describe the god of the Hebrews as well as the god of the Egyptians.<sup>8</sup>

The theology of the Joseph story can therefore be labeled as “anti-deuteronomistic”: mixed marriages are accepted, as are contacts with “pagan” religions and integration into the Egyptian culture. The ideology of the Joseph narrative reflects the situation of the Egyptian Diaspora as we know it from the Elephantine texts (double names, intermarriages, etc.).<sup>9</sup>

In light of these observations, there is a growing consensus to understand the Joseph narrative as a “Diaspora novella” which originated in Egypt

during the Persian or even in the early Hellenistic period.<sup>10</sup> The author's knowledge of Egypt and Egyptian civilization seems more important than what is sometimes stated.<sup>11</sup>

If the Joseph narrative is to be understood as a "Diaspora novella" then one must ask why the hero "Joseph" is of northern origins. First of all, the author of the Joseph story knows the Jacob story, which includes the birth of his sons. According to this story, Joseph and Benjamin are the (only) sons of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife. It is therefore quite logical for the author of the Joseph story to choose these two sons in order to construct his plot about the problem of preferred sons in a family. Second, the Northern character of Joseph could also be explained by the hypothesis that the Joseph story was perhaps composed in Elephantine,<sup>12</sup> a colony that may have Northern origins.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the Northern Joseph who reconciles with his "southern" brothers, especially Judah, also fits nicely with one of the major themes of the narrative, the reconciliation between brothers.<sup>14</sup> Behind this theme, we can detect a "pan-Israelite" ideology corresponding to post-exilic prophetic texts, which announce a restoration of "Joseph" and "Judah" (Ezek 37:19; Zechariah 10:6). The figure of Joseph makes perfect sense in the context of a Diaspora novella.

#### EGYPT, THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE: THE EXODUS NARRATIVE AND THE EXODUS TRADITION

There is no doubt that the Exodus tradition is at the very heart of the "historical memory" of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>15</sup> The Decalogue, for example, begins with YHWH's self-presentation as the god who has brought Israel out of Egypt (Exod 20:5 = Deuteronomy 5:6). Moreover, the Exodus tradition, contrary to the Patriarchal one, is alluded to in many books of the Hebrew Bible and seems therefore to be much more central to its formation. The Exodus tradition may find its origin in an orally transmitted memory. Such a memory of antagonism between Egypt and "Israel" and of an "escape" from Egypt could reflect the waning days of Egypt's control over the Levant at the end of the second millennium BCE.<sup>16</sup> The Exodus tradition may also reflect the experiences of "habiru-groups" which could escape the control of the Egyptian king and/or also the Shasu nomads mentioned in lists of Ramses II (Amara-West) and lists of toponyms of Amenophis III (Soleb).<sup>17</sup>

Recently, Oswald and Utzschneider have argued

for a 7th century BCE origin of the Exodus tradition<sup>18</sup>. According to them the description of the Israelite corvée labor in Egypt has its origin in the time of Pharaoh Necho (who briefly regained control over the southern Levant<sup>19</sup>). According to Herodotus, Necho planned to cut a canal from the Pelusiac branch of the Nile to the Red Sea. So it is quite plausible that he would have used Judean prisoners as working force. After the project was stopped, Judean "slaves" could have escaped and returned to Judah.

Such an origin of the Exodus is, however, not plausible, since this tradition must be quite older and was probably transmitted initially by the Northern kingdom, in Israel. In 1 Kgs 12, Jeroboam I, the founder of the Northern kingdom, established the cult of YHWH by building two sanctuaries in Bethel and Dan where he placed bull statues: "So the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold. He said to the people 'You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan." (1 Kgs 12:28–29). The plural, which appears also in the story of the golden calf in Exod 32:4, is intriguing. Even if the text speaks of two sanctuaries, it is clear that the bulls or the calves are not representing different deities, but the national god. So one might imagine that the plural alludes to the YHWH of Dan and the YHWH of Bethel, but in the golden calf story in Exod 32 such an explanation does not work. The easiest solution might be to understand the plural as polemical, as a transformation of an original cultic exclamation. A comparison of 1 Kgs 12:8 with the opening of the Decalogue shows that both exclamations are very similar. If there was an original singular behind 1 Kgs 12:28 the similarity would be even more important.

1 Kgs 12 clearly attests a Northern origin of the Exodus tradition that could not be denied by the Judean redactors who edited the books of Kings during the 7th and 6th centuries BCE. These Judean redactors sought to convince their audience that the northern cult in Bethel and Dan (and elsewhere) was in fact a "polytheistic" one, by transforming the bovine cult of Yhwh into a "polytheistic" cult.

The mention of the sanctuary of Dan in 1 Kgs 12 is intriguing. According to archaeological evidence put forth by Eran Arie, Dan became part of Israel only during the 8th century BCE,<sup>20</sup> thus making 1 Kgs 12 a retrograde projection from the time of

Jeroboam II.<sup>21</sup> Therefore it appears that YHWH was venerated in Israel as the deity that brought his people out of Egypt at least since the 8th century BCE. This fits well with the statement in Hos 12, a text from the 8th century BCE, declaring YHWH as the God from the land of Egypt (12:10).

After the destruction of the Northern kingdom in 722 BCE, the Exodus tradition probably reached Judah, either via refugees or through the sanctuary of Bethel, which came under southern influence. This was perhaps the first time that the Exodus narrative was brought into a written form or at least combined with the figure of Moses, who was apparently remembered in the temple of Jerusalem. According to 2 Kgs 18:4 king Hezekiah “broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it; it was called Nehushtan.” The existence of such a serpent linked to Moses is again hardly an invention of the redactors of the books of Kings. The redactors would not have been keen to invent such an association between Moses, whom they presented as an iconoclast (see the story in Exod 32), and an Egyptian cult symbol (the serpent) in the temple of Jerusalem. The first written version of the Exodus tradition may have reflected the time of renewed Egyptian domination over the southern Levant, which lasted from the decline of the Assyrians to the arrival of the Babylonians.<sup>22</sup> In this context, the story of the Exodus was perhaps also alluding to this new situation of Egyptian dominion as suggested by Oswald and Utzschneider.<sup>23</sup> After the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Exile, the Exodus narration was revised by the so-called Deuteronomists; a priestly group wrote its own version of YHWH’s manifestation in Egypt and his sovereignty over Pharaoh and his gods. Later, both accounts were combined to form the “official” Exodus account as we have it now in the book of Exodus. The delivery from Egypt had become a symbol for any foreign power under which the Israelites had to suffer.

#### EGYPTIAN LITERATURE AND THE HEBREW BIBLE

As masterfully demonstrated by Bernd Schipper, the close contacts (friendly and unfriendly) between Egypt, Israel, and Judah continued throughout the kingdoms’ existence.<sup>24</sup> These ties also persisted under Persian and Hellenistic rule, especially through the Judahite diaspora in Egypt. The interactions necessitated the presence of Egyptian-

speaking officials in the Jerusalemite court, thus triggering the reception of Egyptian documents into parts of the Hebrew Bible. This is quite certainly the case for the Judean adaptation of the Instructions of Amenemope in Proverbs 22:17–23:11. The Egyptian manuscripts date from the 11th to the 6th centuries BCE so that one can imagine that this text reached Jerusalem either through Judean emissaries sent to Egypt or via Egyptian officials in Judah. Although the text of Proverbs is not a literal translation of the Egyptian *Vorlage* there is a strong case for the literary dependency of the Proverbs passage on the Egyptian text<sup>25</sup> as can be shown by the reference to 30 “chapters” in both texts:

“Look to these thirty chapters; they inform, they educate” (Amenemope, XXX, 539).

“Have I not written for you thirty sayings of admonition and knowledge” (Prov 22:20).

Another case of literary borrowing can be traced in Gen 39, in which Joseph’s seduction by the spouse of his Egyptian master and her false accusation strongly parallel the Egyptian “Tale of the Two Brothers.”

Although the motif of the spurned wife is quite common in ancient tales and occurs in the legends of Bellerophon, Hippolytus, and others,<sup>26</sup> the parallels between Gen 39 and the Egyptian tale are much closer.<sup>27</sup> In the Egyptian tale, the woman speaks to Bata, the younger brother, in a manner quite similar to that of the wife in Gen 39 and also tries to take hold of him: “She got up, took hold of him, and said to him: Come let us ... sleep together.” Bata delivers a speech similar to that of Joseph, characterizing the woman’s proposal as “this great wrong that you said to me,” and, as in Gen 39, the woman misrepresents the events in the presence of her husband by taking up Bata’s speech as if not he, but she, would have protested. Both narratives also share the motif of the clothes, although used differently in each case.

In contrast to Gen 39, the Tale of the Two Brothers is a complicated and long mythological text which functions to legitimize Bata as Pharaoh. The author of Gen 39 has only taken over the first part of the tale, although it can be argued that the Joseph story is also about Joseph’s ascent. Contrary to Gen 39, Anpu, the elder brother, learns that his wife has cheated on him and kills her.

The author of Gen 39 has used this mythological tale for several reasons. First of all, he transforms Joseph through this story into a model of loyalty and chastity. Second, whereas the original Joseph story is about his integration into Egypt and his reconciliation with his brothers, the redactor who inserted Gen 39\* introduced a new topic into the narrative, making his Diaspora audience aware that life in the Diaspora can pose some dangers and that one must behave in an absolutely loyal way.

The Egyptian narrative, of which only one copy survives in the Papyrus D'Orbiney, dates to the New Kingdom, but this does not imply that Gen 39 must be as ancient. A later reference to Bata and his castration exists also in the Papyrus Jumilhac, dated to the Ptolemaic period.<sup>28</sup>

Other likely examples of borrowing from Egyptian narrative traditions or wisdom literatures include the transformation of Aaron's rod into a serpent in Exod 7, reminiscent of the wax crocodile that was brought to life in Papyrus Westcar.<sup>29</sup>

#### EGYPT IN THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

In most prophetic books Egypt is depicted in a negative manner. Under the Assyrian domination of the ancient Near East, Hosea criticizes the leaders of Israel for their constant transition between Assyrian and Egyptian alliances: "Ephraim has become like a dove, silly and without sense; they call upon Egypt, they go to Assyria" (Hosea 7:11). In Isa 36, an emissary of the Assyrian king criticizes the Judean king Hezekiah for seeking Egypt's help: "See, you are relying on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him" (Isa 36:6).

During the Babylonian period, a harsh condemnation of Egypt can be found in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, both revised in the Babylonian Golah.<sup>30</sup> Here the condemnation is not only of Egypt but also of the Judeans living in Egypt. In Jer 44, the prophet, who according to the narrative was kidnapped by the Judeans fleeing to Egypt warns that the Egyptian king will be of no help for them: YHWH will give Pharaoh Hophra (Apries) "into the hands of his enemies, those who seek his life," just as he "gave King Zedekiah of Judah into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life" (Jer 44:30).

A more general condemnation of Egypt occurs in

Ezek 30, which may reflect the Babylonian invasion of Egypt. The author of this chapter uses the *Chaoskampf* rhetoric, which is well known in ancient Egypt as well as in the ancient Near East.<sup>31</sup> Like the Exodus story, this long oracle discusses YHWH's judgment over Egypt with a similar vocabulary: "Thus I will execute acts of judgment on Egypt. Then they shall know that I am YHWH" (v. 19).<sup>32</sup>

This strong condemnation of Egypt is, however, counterbalanced by a later text, probably from the Hellenistic period, which has been added to the Book of Isaiah. In Isa 19 an oracle that also announces YHWH's judgment over Egypt is followed by an astonishing passage:<sup>33</sup>

[19] On that day there will be an altar to YHWH in the center of the land of Egypt, and a stele (maššebah) to YHWH at its border. [20] It will be a sign and a witness to YHWH Šebaot in the land of Egypt; when they cry to YHWH because of oppressors, he will send them a savior, and will defend and deliver them. [21] YHWH will make himself known to the Egyptians; and the Egyptians will know YHWH on that day, and will worship with sacrifice and burnt offering, and they will make vows to YHWH and perform them. [22] YHWH will strike Egypt, striking and healing; they will return to YHWH, and he will listen to their supplications and heal them. [23] On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. [24] On that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, [25] whom YHWH Šebaot has blessed, saying "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage."

In this text, Egypt is called "YHWH's people," a title which is normally reserved for Israel.

Verse 19 envisages cultic objects for YHWH in the land of Egypt. Is this an allusion to the presence of a Judean Diaspora or to the idea that the Egyptians will convert to the god of Israel? According to the following verses, the latter hypothesis seems more plausible.<sup>34</sup>

## SUMMARY

The alternation of positive and negative presentations of Egypt in the Hebrew Bible reflects different historical contexts and different social groups. The negative view of Egypt in the Exodus narrative and in many prophetic oracles reflects the opposition of court officials and priestly groups against Egyptian dominion. The idea that YHWH is the god who delivers from Egypt later became an idea that could apply to all situations of oppression. Other texts, as the Joseph narrative or Isa 19, depict a positive image of Egypt reflecting the conditions of an Egyptian diaspora which was very open to cultural and religious contacts and finally triggered the translation of the Torah into Greek.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See on this topic Donald B. Redford, *From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience of Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore—London: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).
- <sup>2</sup> Albert de Pury, “Sem, Cham et Japhet. De la fraternité à l’esclavage,” in A. Kolde, A. Lukinovich and A. L. Rey (eds.), *Mélanges offerts à André Hurst, Recherches et rencontres* (Genève: Droz, 2005), 495–508.
- <sup>3</sup> Othmar Keel, *Kanaan-Israel-Christentum. Plädoyer für eine “vertikale” Ökumene* (Münster: Franz-Delitsch-Vorlesung 2001, Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, 2002).
- <sup>4</sup> The curse of Canaan, who is said to be a slave for his brothers, was used later in order to legitimize the enslavement of the African people; see David Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003).
- <sup>5</sup> Thomas Römer. “Der Pharao als Gotteswortvermittler: Josia und Josef,” in H. Jenni and M. Saur (eds.), *Nächstenliebe und Gottesfurcht. Beiträge aus alttestamentlicher, semitistischer und altorientalischer Wissenschaft für Hans-Peter Mathys zum 65. Geburtstag*, *Alter Orient Altes Testament* 439 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016), 339–349.
- <sup>6</sup> According to the Patriarchal narrative, Abram and Saray change their names to Abraham and Sarah only in Gen 17.
- <sup>7</sup> The original Joseph story does not encompass all the passages between chapters 37 and 50. For a reconstruction of the original story see Thomas Römer, “The Joseph Story in the Book of Genesis: Pre-P or Post-P?,” in F. Giuntoli and K. Schmid (eds.), *The Post-Priestly Pentateuch. New Perspectives on its Redactional Development and Theological Profiles*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* 101 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 185–201, 187–189.
- <sup>8</sup> Interestingly, *’elohîm* can be understood as both singular and plural.
- <sup>9</sup> See on this Anke Joisten-Pruschke, *Das religiöse Leben der Juden von Elephantine in der Achämenidenzeit*, *Göttinger Orienforschungen III. Iranica NF 2* (Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz, 2006).
- <sup>10</sup> See also the contribution of Bernd U. Schipper in this volume. The position of Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, *Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament* 57 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 239–244, followed by Kristin Weingart, *Stämmevolk—Staatsvolk—Gottesvolk?: Studien zur Verwendung des Israel-Namens im Alten Testament*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament II/68* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 247–251, who understands the Joseph novella as a “propaganda” for the Northern kingdom is, in my view, not convincing.
- <sup>11</sup> See, for instance, Herbert Donner, *Die literarische Gestalt der alttestamentlichen Josephsgeschichte*, *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-historische Klasse, Abh.2* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1976), 13, n. 16; Norbert Kebekus, *Die Joseferzählung. Literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Genesis 37–50*, *Internationale Hochschulschriften* (Münster—New York: Waxmann, 1990), 150–151.
- <sup>12</sup> Michael Fieger and Sigrid Hodel-Hoernes, *Der Einzug in Ägypten. Ein Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Josefsgeschichte*, *Das Alte Testament in Dialog* 1, (Bern et al.: Lang, 2007), 373–375.
- <sup>13</sup> Karel Van der Toorn, “Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine,” *Numen* 39 (1992): 80–101.

- <sup>14</sup> See Peter Weimar, “Josef—Eine Geschichte vom schwierigen Prozeß der Versöhnung (1995),” in P. Weimar, *Studien zur Josefs-geschichte*, Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsätze 44 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2008), 9–26.
- <sup>15</sup> For the question of “cultural memory” see also Jan Assmann, *Exodus: die Revolution der Alten Welt*, (München: C.H. Beck, 2015) and some of the articles gathered in the collective volume T. E. Levy, et al. (eds), *Israel’s Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective. Text, Archaeology, Culture and Geoscience*, Quantitative Methods in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Heidelberg: Springer, 2015).
- <sup>16</sup> Nadav Na’aman, “The Exodus Story: Between Historical Memory and Historiographical Composition,” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 11 (2011): 39–69.
- <sup>17</sup> For details see the discussion in Thomas Römer, *The Invention of God* (Cambridge, MA — London : Harvard University Press), 44–46.
- <sup>18</sup> Helmut Utschneider and Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, Internationaler exegetischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013), 38–40.
- <sup>19</sup> See below.
- <sup>20</sup> Eran Arie, “Reconsidering the Iron Age II Strata at Tel Dan: Archaeological and Historical Implications,” *Tel Aviv* 35 (2008): 6–64
- <sup>21</sup> Angelika Berlejung, “Twisting Traditions: Programmatic Absence-Theology for the Northern Kingdom in 1 Kgs 12:26–33\* (the ‘Sin of Jeroboam’),” *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 35 (2009): 1–42.
- <sup>22</sup> The famous campaign of Shesonq in the 10th century BCE does not indicate an ongoing Egyptian domination over the Levant. He might have wanted to revive Ramesside aspirations over the Levant, without obtaining a lasting success; see Meindert Dijkstra, “Canaan in the Transition from Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age,” in L. L. Grabbe (ed), *The Land of Canaan in the Late Bronze Age*, Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 636/European Seminar in Historical Methodology 10 (London et al.: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016) : 59–89, 82–84.
- <sup>23</sup> See above, note 18.
- <sup>24</sup> Bernd U. Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit. Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 170 (Freiburg (CH) — Göttingen: Universitätsverlags — Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).
- <sup>25</sup> Bernd U. Schipper, “Die Lehre des Amenemope und Prov 22,17–24,22. Eine Neubestimmung des literarischen Verhältnisses (Teil 1 und II),” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116–117 (2005) 53–72; 232–248, Vincent Pierre-Michel Laisney, *L’enseignement d’Aménémopé*, Studia Pohl. Series maior 19 (Roma: Ed. Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2007); Michael Fox, “From Amenemope to Proverbs. Editorial Art in Proverbs 22,17–23,11,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 126 (2014): 76–91.
- <sup>26</sup> Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis 37–50)*, Vestus Testamentum, Supplements 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 92.
- <sup>27</sup> See also Hans Jochen Boecker, “Überlegungen zur Erzählung von der Versuchung Josephs (Genesis 39),” in P. Mommer and W. Thiel (eds.), *Altes Testament. Forschung und Wirkung. Festschrift für Henning Graf Reventlow* (Frankfurt et al.: Lang, 1994), 3–13, 8.
- <sup>28</sup> See Jacques Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1962), 46–47, 105, 114–15. This shows that this tale was certainly known in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. I would like to thank my colleagues Bernd U. Schipper (Berlin) and Nicolas Grimal (Paris) for their help with this question.
- <sup>29</sup> Gary A. Rendsburg, “Moses, the Magician,” in T. E. Levy, T. Schneider and W. C. Propp (eds.), *Israel’s Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective. Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience* (Heidelberg — New York — Dordrecht — London: Springer, 2015), 243–258. 244–246. Further prominent examples are Psalm 104 (cf. Anette Krüger, *Das Lob des Schöpfers: Studien zu Sprache, Motivik und Theologie von Psalm 104*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 124 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2010) and Sirje

- Reichmann, *Bei Übernahme Korrektur?: Aufnahme und Wandlung ägyptischer Tradition im Alten Testament anhand der Beispiele Proverbia 22-24 und Psalm 104*, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 428 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016), Job 31 (Andreas Kunz-Lübcke, "Hiob prozessiert mit Gott—und obsiegt—vorerst (Hiob 31)," in T. Krüger et al. (eds), *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen. Beiträge zum Hiob-Symposium auf dem Monte Verità vom 14.–19. August 2005* (Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 88), Zürich: TVZ, 2007, p. 263-291) and Job 38–41 (Othmar Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob: eine Deutung von Ijob 38-41 vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen Bildkunst*, *Forschungen zur Religion des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 121 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1978).
- <sup>30</sup> Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Jeremiabuches*, *Forschungen zur Religion des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 118 (Göttingen, 1978) and Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Ezechielstudien. Zur redaktionsgeschichte des Buches und zur Frage nach den ältesten Texten*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 202 (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1992).
- <sup>31</sup> See Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) and Safwat Marzouk, *Egypt as a Monster in the Book of Ezekiel*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* II/76 (Tübingen 2015).
- <sup>32</sup> For the similarities between the discourse about Egypt in Ezekiel and the priestly exodus narrative, see Jaeyoung Jeon, "A Source of P? The Priestly Exodus Account and the Book of Ezekiel," *Semitica* 58 (2016): 77–92.
- <sup>33</sup> On Isa 19, see also Bernd U. Schipper. "'The City by the Sea will be a Drying Place': Isaiah 19.1–25 in Light of Prophetic Texts from Ptolemaic Egypt," in N. MacDonald and K. Brown (eds.), *Monotheism in Late Prophetic and Early Apocalyptic Literature. Studies of the Sofja Kovalevskaja Research Group on Early Jewish Monotheism. Vol. III*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* II/72 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 25–56.
- <sup>34</sup> See also the discussion in Willem A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja 13-27*, *Herders Theologischer Kommentar. Altes Testament* (Freiburg — Basel — Wien: Herder, 2007), 182–203.