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THE EMBALMMENT OF JACOB

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In the final chapter of Genesis (vv. 2–3 and 26), we read that Jacob, father of the Israelite nation, and his son Joseph were embalmed.¹ The Bible does not offer any specific instructions on burial and when it should take place relative to the time of death. According to its general approach, however, human beings originated from the dust of the earth, and to it they must return; the body of a dead person must be reunited with the earth. This is the source of the semantic connection between *adam* (man) and *adamah* (earth) highlighted in Gen. 3:19. It is considered an affront, a curse, or a severe punishment for the deceased not to be buried, or to be removed from the grave (Deut. 28:26; Jer. 22:29 and elsewhere).² The shame and dishonor ascribed by the text to persons who are not given a proper burial highlight the importance of this rite. Jacob's request to be buried in his ancestral grave (Gen. 49:29–33) indicates that the familial patriarch is viewed as a source of

support even after his death, and that he is to be joined by his progeny after their own deaths. Burial in an ancestral tomb denotes permanence, connection with the community, continuity, and connection to one's roots, whereas burial in a foreign place seems to have been considered a reflection of the departed person's status as an outsider.³

Jacob's longing for his homeland and his desire to be buried in his ancestral grave are paralleled elsewhere in the Bible. Barzilai the Giladi refrains from going to Jerusalem with King David so that he can be buried in his ancestral grave (II Samuel 19:38), and Nehemiah explains to the king of Persia that he longs to rebuild the Land of Israel because it is the locus of his people's ancestral graves (Neh. 2:3). This desire reflects a particular perception of the link between the world of the living and that of the dead. The detailed report in Genesis 23 of the purchase of the Cave of Machpelah, where Abraham, Sarah, and

their offspring are buried, is an expression of the great importance attributed to the matter of burial in biblical times, notwithstanding the absence from the text of laws stipulating how it is to be done.⁴

The desire for burial in an ancestral grave is also reflected in the ancient Egyptian tale of Sinuhe, which dates from about 1990 B.C.E. Sinuhe, a minister during the reign of Amenmahat I, fled Egypt in the wake of his sovereign's death and the rise of a new king, Sesostris (*sn-wsrt*, 1971–1920 BCE). He found refuge in Canaan, but many years later he sought to return and be buried in his homeland.⁵ Five manuscripts of this tale dating from the period of the Middle Kingdom have been found, as well as a large number of clay artifacts from the New Kingdom with parts of it written on them. The latter, which apparently were used in teaching students at the writers' academy in Deir el-Medineh, indicate that the tale was viewed in the period of the New Kingdom as

belonging to the body of classical Egyptian works. Sinuhe's desire to be buried in an ancestral tomb corresponds to the biblical approach according to which the body of the deceased seeks to reunite with the dust of the earth whence it came. This tale, circulated in Egypt, may reflect a universal sentiment, but it may also have reached the court scribes in Jerusalem and been familiar to the biblical author who described Jacob's death in a foreign land.⁶ It is possible that he recalled the distress of Sinuhe, who, though he had led a comfortable life in Canaan, nevertheless wanted to be buried in the land of his forefathers.

Sinuhe was embalmed in accordance with his own Egyptian custom, but why is Joseph depicted as adopting that custom and embalming his father? If the intention was to portray the fulfillment of Jacob's wishes, the biblical author could have sufficed with stressing the transfer of his remains to his ancestral grave, as the remains of Amatzia and Josiah were transported from afar for interment (II Kgs 14:20 and 23:30). Alternatively, he could have chosen terms highlighting the treatment of the corpse to prevent its decay, as the author of Chronicles does in his description of the funeral of Asa, king of Judea (II Chron. 16:14). But the author of Genesis specifically chose the word *hanat* (חָנַט), embalm, latching onto an Egyptian practice to suit his theological approach.

For illustration see the print version of the Bulletin.

Miniature wooden coffin, 29.5 cm. in length, one of a set inscribed for Sutmehse, Scribe of the Treasury of Amun. Thebes, late twentieth dynasty, about 1100 B.C.E. The British Museum.

The verb *hanat* comes from Arabic and was used in the Persian language (the English noun 'mummy,' derived from Persian, means 'smeared with camphor' and was used to describe embalmed bodies because of the dark color they acquired); the Egyptian term for embalmment is *wṯ*. In the ancient world, embalmment was the exclusive domain of the Egyptians. At first it was practiced only among the pharaohs, their families, and the nobility, but over time it spread to other strata, until it became a custom of the general public. Foreigners who came into contact with the Egyptians, including Greeks and Romans, also occasionally adopted the custom.

No written documentation of the surgical process of embalmment was preserved, though there are numerous illustrations depicting various stages of the embalmment process.⁷ A collection of embalming tools was found in the tomb of Wahibre in Thebes, including tongs, a device to administer an enema, a sharp knife, and a long hook apparently used to remove the brain. Similar tools were also found in the tomb of the sacred bull in Armanat. Two papyri, one of which is in Cairo and the other in the Louvre, feature descriptions of the ceremonies associated with the process of embalmment. Dating from the Roman period but probably copied from a much earlier source, they contain instructions to the embalmers and stress the spells to be uttered at each stage in the process. The papyri indicate that different groups of embalmers were responsible for each section of the deceased's body. The Rhind I papyrus mentions more than seventeen ceremonies related to embalmment. Each spell and rite was associated with a different organ.

In pyramid texts from the Early Kingdom, we already find spells referring to the preservation of the corpse as a very important element in the passage to the world of the dead. "Hurry the dead to unite your head to your bones, to gather your bones together, your organs" (Spell no. 13).⁸ These texts reflect even older beliefs. The practice of embalmment apparently was already common during the first

and second dynasties (3000–2700 BCE). It became well established during the fifth and sixth dynasties (2700–2190 BCE) and continued until the decline of the Pharaonic culture in the fourth century CE.

The custom was a practical expression of the ancient Egyptian belief in continued existence after death. Death was not the end; it led to another form of existence, as can be seen, for example, in chapter 178 of the Book of the Dead, which likens death to a night, to be followed by another life.⁹ The roots of this belief in an afterlife appear as far back as the fourth millennium BCE. In the earliest periods, Egyptians had already found ways to ensure eternal life and a comfortable existence in the next world. According to the Egyptian belief, preservation of the body by embalming it was essential for preserving other aspects of the deceased's identity that were vital for his existence in another world.

In the Bible, the overlapping concepts of body (*nefesh*), soul (*neshamah*), and spirit (*ruah*), refer to the elements of vitality in a person (II Sam. 1:9; Job 12:10; Jonah 4:3; Psalms 66:9), an organism conceived as simultaneously psychic and physical. The Egyptians, however, separated the human life force into several distinct aspects. *Ka* is the life force that is born with a person and accompanies him throughout his life. It is a person's double, created by the god Hanum and placed in the mother's womb when the infant is conceived.¹⁰ *Ba* is an entity that appears in the shape of a bird, takes on other shapes at will, and performs the bodily functions of the deceased by departing from his body. Magic spells uttered during the embalming process and amulets placed on the body while it was being wrapped were meant to facilitate the transformation of the deceased person into a being able to exist in

the other world. The state in which the deceased exists in the life of the next world, as an eternal, unchangeable being, is called *Akh*.¹¹ Embalmmnt thus served only as a means of preserving the lifeless body, while the person's other vital forces could leave the confines of the body and roam around the world.¹² The treatment of Jacob's remains thus signifies the assimilation of beliefs and ideas prevailing in ancient Egypt whose practical expression was the act of embalmmnt.

It is related that "Egypt wept seventy days" for Jacob (Genesis 50:3) – an exceptionally long period in comparison with other cases mentioned in the Bible. Moses and Aaron were mourned, respectively, for thirty days (Num. 20:29, Deut. 34:8), while it is said of Saul that the people of Jabesh-Gilead mourned him for seven days (I Sam. 31:13; I Chron. 10:12). When the biblical author wishes to highlight an ongoing sense of mourning, he uses a vague phrase like "many days" or "all the days." For example, the description of Abraham's mourning over the death of Sarah does not specify any time period (Gen. 23:2). When Jacob was informed that his son Joseph had been killed, "He mourned for his son many days" (Gen. 37:34); and David, similarly, mourned his son Amnon for "all the days" (II Sam. 13:37). In the story of his infant son's death, David is depicted as declaring that there should be no excessive mourning, because death is a decree that may not be questioned (II Sam. 12:19–23).

In Egypt, forty days were dedicated to the procedure of drying the body, and therefore some references mention forty days of

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Ba, a creature with the body of a bird and a human head bearing the features of the deceased. In this vignette from the Book of the Dead of the scribe Ani (ca. 1290 B.C.E.), the *ba* leaves Ani's body. The British Museum.

For illustration see the print version of the Bulletin

Female mourners in the funeral procession of the eighteenth-dynasty vizier Ramose express their grief, as depicted on the walls of his tomb at Luxor.

embalmmnt. However, these took place within a longer seventy-day mourning and embalming period. Thus, when the biblical author specifies forty days of embalming and seventy days of mourning over Jacob's death, he is describing an Egyptian practice. From Egyptian sources and from Herodotus,¹³ we learn that the embalmmnt process usually took seventy days from the time of the person's death until his burial. Examples of such texts occur in the tombs of Djehuty and Antef, from the eighteenth dynasty, and in other tombs from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first dynasties.¹⁴ A seventy-day count recurs in the demotic tale of Setna I (Cairo papyrus 30646), which relates that the wrapping took thirty-five days, and seventy days elapsed before the body was placed in a coffin.¹⁵

Shore and Smith believe that the seventy days between death and burial represent the period during which the star of Sotis disappears. This period also symbolizes the seventy days between the death of Osiris and his revival by Isis, according to ancient Egyptian mythology.¹⁶ The Rhind I papyrus refers to a seventy-day embalmmnt period and stresses that each day was connected with a different embalmmnt ceremony and a different organ. It seems, therefore, that the biblical author's portrayal of the embalmmnt and mourning period for Jacob rests on the Egyptian experience of how long it took to prepare the body of the deceased for burial.

Thus, both Jacob's embalmmnt and the length of the mourning period indicate the assimilation of Egyptian customs and practices

among the children of Israel.¹⁷ There is no hint in the biblical text of any negative association with the way in which Joseph fulfilled the wishes of his father, who was the father of the nation.¹⁸ Yet embalmmnt, which reflects the dualistic notion of a separation between body and spirit, is contrary to the Bible's monistic approach, which maintains that the material and the spiritual are one. In the Bible, when the body dies, so does the spirit; there is no life after death, and every person can expect to die. To be sure, the desire for immortality was universal and is clearly expressed in the story of the Garden of Eden, which ends with Adam's expulsion from Eden and the realization of the inevitability of death. Some researchers note the presence of death rituals and ceremonies in the Bible, and others point to hints at the concept of an afterlife.²⁰ The question of what happens to a person after his death and speculations about the afterlife engaged people of all the ancient Near Eastern cultures and also found expression in the Bible.²¹ Nevertheless, the religious norm maintained that humanity was created from dust, from the earth, and that a person's end was to return to the earth (Gen. 2:7 and 3:19; Job 10:9). There is no distinction between the reward and punishment of body and spirit, no separate trial for the spirit after death; reward and punishment are in this world.

The Bible uses the terms *nefesh*, *ruah*, and *neshamah* almost synonymously. When the Bible stresses that the soul (*nefesh*) departs at death ("as her soul departed," Gen. 35:18) and returns when the person is revived ("the soul of the child returned," I Kgs 17:21–22),

the term generally refers to the physical aspect of a person, as reflected in the assertion that “the blood is the life [*nefesh*]” (Deut. 12:23). *Nefesh* is very close in meaning to *ruah*, spirit or breath, and the latter is often used in parallel with *neshamah* (e.g., Is. 57:16; Job 32:8, 33:4). A human being is a single unit comprising body and soul. The Bible does not have a systematic theology of death and the afterlife. Death is conceived as the departure of *nefesh*, *ruah*, or *neshamah*, and that can only be accomplished by God.

Josephus Flavius, in *The History of the Jews*, notes the deaths of Jacob and Joseph and their request to have their remains brought to the Land of Israel, but he omits all mention of the length of the mourning period, their embalment, or the coffins in which they were laid. Remaining loyal to the monistic ideology, he writes: “after a time (their children) and grandchildren took their remains and buried them

in Hebron, whereas Joseph’s remains were brought to the land of Canaan at a later time.”²²

The biblical author, too, is aware that the practice of embalment entailed the assimilation of foreign, gentile ideas, and so, by the stroke of a quill, he casually clarifies that it was “the physicians” who embalmed Jacob: “Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father” (Gen. 50:2). The lofty status of physicians in Egypt is reflected in numerous Egyptian texts and illustrations and is also documented in later sources. As Homer put it, “In Egypt, more than in other lands, bounteous earth yields a wealth of drugs, healthful and baneful side by side, and every man there is a physician; the rest of the world has no such skill.”²³ However, despite the physicians’ great expertise, the Egyptians did not call upon their services for embalment.²⁴ Herodotus relates that embalment was the job of people “who

were trained to do it, and it was a kind of art to them.”²⁵ The name of the embalmers, *wt*, is derived from a verb meaning “to bandage” or “to swathe.” The embalmers used spells, amulets, and other rites related to Egyptian mythology, and their patron was Anubis, the Egyptian god of burials.

The use of the term “physician” (*rofe*) in biblical literature is interesting. The prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 8:26)²⁶ mocks the physicians, who are unable to cure the people: “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?” Asa, king of Judea, is accused of not appealing to God and consulting instead with physicians (II Chron. 16:12), while Job, criticizing his friends for offering him bad advice, calls them physicians of no value (Job 13:4). The king of Israel who is asked to heal Na’aman’s leprosy likens healing an illness to giving life: “Am I God to kill and give life, that this man sends to me to cure a man of his infection?” (II Kgs 5:7) The Bible emphasizes that illness and cure are in the hands of God; the notion “I am the Lord that heals you” (Ex. 15:26) is expressed in numerous passages (e.g., Deut. 32:39; Ps. 103:3, 147:3; Jer. 51:8). Healing is a reward or an act of kindness, while illness is perceived as a punishment. Miriam is punished, and God heals her (Num. 12:13–16). As a punishment for their complaining in the desert, God sends down snakes upon the children of Israel; as a kindness, he sends them a cure (Num. 21:4–9). Hezekiah prays to God and is healed: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you” (II Kgs 20:5). The mention in our text of a flesh-and-blood physician without any negative connotations is thus unusual.

For illustration see the print version of the Bulletin.

This detail from the tomb of Sennedjem at Deir el-Medineh shows a priest wearing the mask of the god Anubis tending to Sennedjem’s mummy.

For illustration see the print version of the Bulletin.

Decorated cartonnage coffin lid of the priest Nekhtefmut. Luxor region, middle of the Third Intermediate period. The British Museum.

In his depiction of the embalment of Jacob, the biblical author remains loyal to his didactic, theological objective. On the one hand, he depicts the assimilation of the Children of Israel into Egyptian society, while on the other he tries to soften the implications of Joseph's actions in fulfilling Jacob's last wish. By intentionally using the term "physicians," he disassociates embalment from the embalmers and, as far as possible, from the

foreign beliefs associated with it, transforming it into a purely surgical procedure. Jacob, the father of the nation, was not embalmed the way Egyptians are; rather, he was embalmed by a physician for the sole purpose of preserving the body, as a form of healing, until it could be brought to the ancestral grave for burial. Therefore, in this case, the term "physician" is used without any negative connotations. The specification of the length of the mourning period also documents an Egyptian custom, but taking the embalment away from the embalmers simultaneously deprives it of the mythological meanings associated with that period, during which magic, ritual activities were carried out. When the funeral procession arrived at the Jordan River crossing, the mourning period shrank to seven

days: "And he made a mourning for his father of seven days" (Gen. 50:10).²⁷

In addition to this "revision" of the length of the mourning period, the story of Jacob's embalment would also be "revised."²⁸ He would be buried in his ancestral grave in the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 50:13), thus fulfilling the monistic view asserted concisely in Gen. 3:19: "For you are dust and to dust shall you return." Jacob, who

feared abandoning the land, is brought back to it, in fulfillment of the specific promise made to him in God's last revelation to the patriarchs: "I will go down to Egypt with you and I will also surely bring you up again" (Gen. 46:4). The description of Jacob's death, Joseph's role in the rites that followed, and Joseph's own embalment were thus made to serve the biblical author's theological outlook, which emphasized God's navigational role in history. The personal promise made to Jacob was intertwined, in Joseph's last request to his brothers, with the fulfillment of the nation's destiny: "And God will surely bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (Gen. 50:24).²⁹

1. Some argue that the description of Jacob's death was originally written about Joseph; see: W.L. Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family*, Columbia, S.C., 1988, p. 164. We will relate to the biblical text in the traditional version. On the different literary sources see J. Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC), Edinburgh 1912, pp. 490ff; G. von Rad, *Genesis* (OTL), Philadelphia 1961, pp. 430ff.; E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB), New York 1964, pp. 342ff; C. Westermann, *Genesis* (BKAT 2), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981, pp. 197–199; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis*, Word Biblical Commentary, II, Waco, Texas, 1994, pp. 437ff.; R. Bartelmus, "Topographie und Theologie: Exegetische und didaktische Anmerkungen zum letzten Kapitel der Genesis (Gen. 50:1–14)," *BN*, 29 (1985), pp. 35–57.
2. G. Barkay, "Tombs and Burial in Judea in the Biblical Period," in A. Singer (ed.), *Tombs and Burial Customs in the Land of Israel in Antiquity*, Tel Aviv 1994, pp. 96–164; N.M. Sarna, "Genesis 23: The Cave of Machpelah," *Hebrew Studies*, 23 (1982), pp. 17–21; G. Barkay and A. Klöner, "Jerusalem Tombs from the Days of the First Temple," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 12 (1986), pp. 29ff.; E. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1990.
3. See Gen. 49: 29–32; 50:13, 25–26; Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32.
4. See in general Singer, *Tombs and Burial Customs* (above, note 2).
5. Of the five manuscripts of the tale of Sinuhe from the Middle Kingdom and over 20 from the New Kingdom, the oldest is in the Berlin papyrus, dating to the second half of the twelfth dynasty. See M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, I, Berkeley 1973, pp. 222–236; J. Baines, "Interpreting Sinuhe," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 68 (1982), pp. 34ff; J.L. Foster, *Thought Couplets in the Tale of Sinuhe*, Frankfurt a/M 1993 (Ägyptologische Untersuchungen, 3). The Finnish author Mika Valtari rewrote the tale of Sinuhe as a modern novel, *Sinuhe, egyptiläinen* (The Egyptian, 1945).
6. There are different opinions as to how Egyptian ideas entered biblical literature. For more on this see Y. Aharoni, "The Use of Hieratic Numerals in Hebrew Ostraca and the Shekel Weights," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 184 (1966), pp. 13–19; O. Goldwasser, "An Egyptian Scribe from Lachish and the Hieratic Tradition of the Hebrew Kingdoms," *Tel Aviv*, 18 (1991), pp. 248–253; R.S. Hess, "Hebrew Psalms and Amarna Correspondence from Jerusalem: Some Comparisons and Implications," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 42 (1989), pp. 249–265; T.N.D. Mettinger, *Solomonic State Officials, Where Can Wisdom Be Found?* (OBO 130), Freiburg 1993, p. 349–351.
7. J.C. Goyon, *Rituels funéraires de l'ancienne Égypte*, Paris 1972.
8. R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford 1969, (Spells no. 13, 31, 73, etc.).
9. See idem, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, New York 1985, p. 176; A.H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*³, Oxford 1957, p. 500; A.J. Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt*, Harmondsworth 1982; S.J. Fleming, B. Fishman, D. O'Connor, and D. Silverman, *The Egyptian Mummy: Secrets and Science*, Philadelphia 1980; H.S. Bakry, *A Brief Study of Mummies and Mummification*, Cairo 1965; and J. Assmann, "Death and Initiation in the Funerary Religion of Ancient Egypt", in W.K. Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt* (Yale Egyptological Studies), Yale 1989, pp. 139–142.
10. A.B. Lloyd, "Psychology and Society in the Ancient Egyptian Cult of the Dead," in William Kelly Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, New Haven, Conn., 1989, pp. 117–133; E.F. Wente, "Funerary Beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians: An Interpretation of the Burials and the Texts," *Expedition*, Winter (1982), pp. 17–26; P. Galpaz-Feller, *Exodus: Reality or Illusion*, Tel-Aviv 2002, p. 18 (Hebrew).
11. See P. Derchain, "Death in Egyptian Religion," in Yves Bonnefoy (ed.), *Mythologies*, I, Chicago 1991, pp. 112–113.
12. See Wente, "Funerary Beliefs" (above, note 10), pp. 19–20; A.M. Roth, "The Social Aspects of Death," in Sue D'Auria et al. (eds.), *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt*, Boston 1988, pp. 52–59; and J.H. Taylor, *Death and The Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, London 2001, pp. 31–32.
13. Herodotus, *The History* (English transl. by D. Grene), II, Chicago 1988, §§ 86f.
14. J. Vergote, *Joseph en Egypte*, Louvain 1959, pp. 199–200; J.M.A. Janssen, "Egyptological Remarks on the Story of Joseph in Genesis," *Jaarbericht ex Oriente Lux*, 14 (1955–1956), p. 71, no. 24. B.D. Redford notes that the seventy days of embalmment are first attested in the eighteenth dynasty and are mentioned sporadically thereafter until the end of the nineteenth dynasty, but most of the attestations date from the later Saitic and Persian periods. See idem, "A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis, 37–50)," *VT Supp.* 20, Berlin 1970, p. 240, nos. 4–5.
15. Galpaz-Feller, *Exodus* (above, note 10), p. 16; A.J. Spencer, *Death in*

- Ancient Egypt* (above, note 9); Faulkner, *Book of the Dead* (above, note 9), New York 1985, pp. 129–130; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, III, Berkeley 1980, p. 132.
16. A.F. Shore and H.S. Smith, "A Demotic Embalmer's Agreement (Pap. Dem. B.M. 10561)", *Acta Orientalia*, 25 (1960), pp. 276 ff.; A.F. Shore, "Human and Divine Mummification," in A.B. Lloyd (ed.), *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths*, London 1992, pp. 226–235.
 17. This is also evident in the description of Joseph's embalmment, which mentions his age and the coffin in which he was laid. On this see C.W. Goodwin, "Dela longévitè chez les Égyptiens," in M.F. Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, second series, 1864, pp. 231–237; and Janssen, "Egytological Remarks" (above, note 14), pp. 63–72. J.K. Hoffmeier writes that in the Egyptian view, the 120 years ascribed to Moses represent three spans of 40 years, that is, three generations; see idem, *Israel in Egypt*, New York 1997, pp. 105–106 (nos. 197 and 198), and Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family* (above, note 1), p. 165. The term *aron* is used in the Bible to refer to the Holy Ark, but in the description of Joseph's death it refers to a burial coffin. The use of a coffin was an established Egyptian custom. Wooden burial coffins appear in Egypt for the first time during the second dynasty; see W.B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, Harmondsworth 1961, pls 24–25, fig. 77; W.C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, I, Cambridge, Mass., 1953, fig. 30; and C. Aldred, *Egypt to the End of the Old Kingdom*, London 1965, p. 96. On the word *aron* see the list of symbols appearing from the ancient period to the Middle Kingdom in Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (above, note 9), p. 500.
 18. According to U. Cassuto, the biblical author chose to use the name Israel in this context (Gen. 50:2) because Jacob, in assimilating gentile customs, represents the entire family unit; see idem, *The "Quaestio" of the Book of Genesis*, Jerusalem 1990, p. 119. For a different approach see Westermann, *Genesis* (above, note 1), p. 200; Humphreys *Joseph and His Family* (above, note 1) p. 164; and M. Görg, "Die Lade als Sarg," *BN*, 105 (2000), pp. 5–11.
 19. K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1986, pp. 244–248; B.B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, Tübingen 1994, pp. 262–263; H.C. Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife – A Biblical Complex," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 44 (1973), pp. 1–54; G.E. Mendenhall, "From Witchcraft to Justice: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament," in Hiroshi Obayashi (ed.), *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religion*, New York 1992, pp. 67–81.
 20. E. Bloch-Smith, "Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, suppl. 123 (1992); idem, "The Cult of the Dead in Judah: Interpreting the Material Remains," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 111 (1992), p. 222; L.R. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death*, Philadelphia 1979, pp. 47–51.
 21. L.R. Bailey, "Death as a Theological Problem in the Old Testament," *Pastoral Psychology*, 22 (1971), pp. 20–32; T.J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, Atlanta 1989; Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife* (above, note 19), p. 281; Bloch-Smith, "Judahite Burial Practices" (above, note 20), pp. 262–263. In the wisdom literature in general and in Ecclesiastes in particular, there begins to appear a new approach to death, influenced by the regional cultures. These changes were primarily a result of political and economic trends that emerged after the destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE. See B. Shannon, "Death in Qoheleth and Egyptian Biographies of the Late Period," *SBL*, 170 (1999), pp. 35ff.
 22. Josephus Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews* (English transl. by W. Whiston), Peabody, Mass., 1980, I, Book II, §§ 196–200.
 23. Homer, *The Odyssey* (English transl. by Walter Shewring), Oxford 1980, p. 40.
 24. The Egyptian physician Swnw cured illnesses but did not engage in embalmment. See N. Shupak, "And Joseph Commanded his Servants the Physicians to Embalm his Father (Genesis 50:2): The Physicians רופאים in the Joseph Story," in *Illness and Healing in Ancient Times*, Haifa 1997, pp. 7–10; and Vergote, *Joseph en Egypte* (above, note 14), p. 199. For a different approach see Redford, "A Study" (above, note 14), p. 238; and J.W. Estes, *The Medical Skills of Ancient Egypt*, Canton, Mass., 1989, pp. 18 ff.
 25. Herodotus (above, note 13), II, §86.
 26. Shupak, "And Joseph Commanded" (above, note 24), pp. 7ff; Recently, Y. Hoffman has proposed rendering *rofe* in Jer. 8:22 as "healer" rather than "physician"; see idem, *Mikra leYisrael: Jeremiah*, I, Jerusalem 2001, p. 280.
 27. The location of the seven days of mourning raises many difficulties: Where are Goren Ha'atad and Avel Mitzrayim located (Gen. 50:10–11)? Are they two different places or two names for the same place? On this see Skinner, *Genesis*, pp. 538–

- 539; and Wenham, *Genesis* (all above, note 1), p. 489; R. Bartelmus, "Topographie und Theologie: Exegetische und didaktische Anmerkungen zum letzten Kapitel der Genesis (Gen. 50:1–14)." *BN*, 29 (1985), pp. 35–57; H. Schweizer, "Fragen zur Literarkritik von Gen. 50: Diskussionsbeitrag zu R. Bartelmus *BN* 29 (1985) 35–53," *BN*, 36 (1987), pp. 64–68.
28. The author treats the death of Joseph similarly. Joseph would be buried in the plot of land that Jacob purchased from Shechem (Gen. 33:19, Josh. 24:32).
29. Genesis 50:7–14 stresses terms recreating the description of Israel's exodus from Egypt. For more on this see Wenham, *Genesis* (above, note 1), pp. 488–489; Casuto, *The "Quaestio"* (above, note 18), p. 100; Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family* (above, note 1) pp. 196–200; G. Shibavama, "Notes on *Yārad* and *'ālāh*: Hints on Translating," *Journal of Bible and Religion*, 34 (1966), pp. 358–362; H. Gese, *Essays on Biblical Theology*, Minneapolis 1981, pp. 37–38; C.H. Kampen, "Wer kann Sünden vergeben außer Gott Allein?" *BN*, 95 (1998), pp. 33–44.