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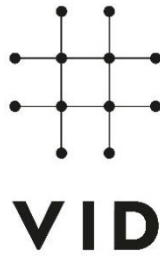
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CARRYING THE BONES OF JOSEPH BACK TO CANAAN:
AN EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 50:24–26; EXODUS 13:19; AND JOSHUA 24:32

Thesis submitted for obtaining the Master's Degree in Theology and Religious Studies

MATRS6000 (30 ECTS)
By
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preliminary Observation

For three years (2012–2015), I was a pastor in a parish located in the countryside of the highland regions of Madagascar. Throughout this pastoral service that I have accomplished there, I observed that the majority of people perform the tradition known as *Famadihana*. It is a funeral custom performed in certain highlands, particularly in the region of Merina and Betsileo. During this ceremony, people take the bones of their ancestors out of the family crypts, repack the corpses in a fresh cloth and rewrite their names on the cloth so that they will always be remembered. Then, they dance to live music while carrying the corpses above their heads and go around the tomb before bringing the corpses back to the family tomb.[1] I observed at that time that people who perform *Famadihana* are not only non-Christians, but even the majority of those who have become Christians are also included, and they still perform it until today.

According to the program organized by the parish committee, a specific study of the scriptures for the congregation is always scheduled every Saturday morning. One day someone in the audience stood up and asked a question about *Famadihana*, especially all the things that are good to know about its background as a Christian. As a result of this question, there were endless discussions during the scripture study that was conducted. I was personally impressed by the discussions. Then I asked them the following question: why are you people who have already become Christians, still performing *Famadihana*? I observed many responses, but there was one that deeply impressed me as well as many of the attendees. They claimed that *Famadihana* should be actively performed by Christians, because it is scriptural and the biblical foundation on which it is based is absolutely certain. They referred to three biblical texts which speak of the carriage of the bones of Joseph from Egypt back to Canaan, as written in Genesis 50:24–26, Exodus 13:19, and Joshua 24:32. Their main point on the affirmation of this is for the accomplishment of what is called the *Famadihana* of Transfer. It is a traditional custom focused on the carriage of the bones of relatives who come from far away in their region of origin. It consists in carrying back the bones to the family tomb which is in the land of the ancestors. Here is the main reason why this *Famadihana* of Transfer is carried out. People living in the highlands

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[1] Maurice Bloch, *Placing the Dead: Tombs Ancestral Villages and Kinship Organization in Madagascar* (London and New York, Seminar Press, 1971), 161.

like to immigrate everywhere in all regions of Madagascar. This means that many of them are classified in the so-called diaspora. In fact, they leave their region of origin where they come from; more precisely, the land of their ancestors, and move to another place. There are generally three main reasons for their migration. First, because of the public works for which they are responsible. There is always an assignment decision within the public service. The government controls the entire organization concerning the public service. So, all of its employees must follow this. Second, due to the fact that the majority of young people in general are pursuing higher education at university. Third, due to the pursuit of a better career. It is on this third point that many participants found. As a result, they actually build a new life where they immigrate, not forgetting the land of their ancestors. In this Malagasy tradition of ancestor worship, the identity of the land of the ancestors is one of the most important things.

This is why there are specific ancestor worship rites that must be followed in the *Famadihana* of Transfer. The bones of migrants must be carried and buried in the family tomb which is in the land of the ancestors. It is a real disaster and shameful for a Malagasy who comes from the highlands not to be buried in the family grave.[2] Thus, I have observed closely that, in order to maintain the reputation of all families, people from the mountains perform this *Famadihana* of Transfer even if they have become Christians. By carrying the bones of their relatives returned to their region of origin, they take these three biblical passages (Genesis 50:24–26, Exodus 13:19, Joshua 24:32) as references, which speak directly of the carrying of the bones of Joseph from Egypt back to Canaan. Genesis 50: 24–26 speaks of Joseph's death and funeral in Egypt, Exodus 13:19 states that Moses took Joseph's bones with him out of Egypt, and Joshua 24:32 tells of Joseph's bones, that the children of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them in Shechem, in a plot of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for one hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of children of Joseph.

The position of the Malagasy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church that I observed is also one of the important reasons that really caught my attention to conduct this research. Theoretically, the Catholic Church is neither opposed to the accomplishment of *Famadihana* nor denies the practices of worship of the dead and the ancestors, but it reserves certain essential points. It is not against the accomplishment of *Famadihana* as a funeral custom, but it rejects the elements considered to come from traditional religion, such as the use of horoscopes by

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[2] Robert Dubois, *L'identité Malgache: La Tradition des Ancêtres* (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 129–130.

astrologers, the belief in the fertility attached to the mats on which the ancestors rested. Exhumed and the possible blessings of the ancestors. According to a Malagasy priest within the Catholic Church, namely A. R. Rajaona, the position of the Church is to authorize these faithful to perform the *Famadihana*. In doing so, the objective is to totally Christianize the rite. Leave aside customs based on traditional religion and introduce Christian traditions into the *Famadihana*. As a result, the majority of Protestant Christians are both frustrated and confused to see this. So, they ask questions, why does the Catholic Church freely allow its members to perform *Famadihana* but not Protestant churches? And when there is a member of the church who performs *Famadihana*, the priest himself comes to conduct a mass with a liturgy and a specific rite adapted to the ceremonies that take place in the tomb. And in this Mass, there are beautiful hymns to sing from hymn books that are used in the church, scripture readings, sermon, and Eucharistic celebration.

In addition to all of this, some years ago Protestant Christians saw some relics that visited Madagascar. In 2015, a national tour of the relics of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and her parents was organized within the Catholic Church. They celebrated a great event by receiving the relics of a blessed family as a triumph. The relics of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and her parents (Louis and Zélie Martin) were the subject of a national tour in Madagascar from July 1 to September 22, 2015.[3] Many dioceses within the Catholic Church welcomed these relics during the national trip. The program also provided for the passage of the relics of these three blessed in Fianarantsoa, during the celebration of the 8th World Youth Day which took place in September 2015. The relics of Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus had already been welcomed to Madagascar in 2003. And personally, I was among the eyewitnesses of this event when its relics visited the city of Fianarantsoa, because I was a student at the Jesuit College at that time. The principle of attributing the veneration of the relics of beatified people, followed by the Malagasy Catholic Church which has shown that it really exists and that its experiences serve as concrete examples for the future generation by the expression of Love and *Fihavanana* in this visit of the Saints. After this period of special visit to Madagascar, the relics of the parents of Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus sent directly to Rome for their canonization.

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[3] Marie Fabien Raharilamboniaina, « Eglise Catholique Romaine: Périple National des Reliques de Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de ses parents à Madagascar, » *Matv Madagascar*, (Juillet -Septembre 2015), 1.

1.2. Research Question

These preliminary observations show that the text of the Old Testament plays as a kind of legitimization vis-à-vis a Christian practice of a traditional funeral ritual in Madagascar, the *Famadihana*. From the perspective of biblical interpretation, it is interesting to see if any traces of a ritual can be seen in the three biblical texts themselves. My research question is therefore: To what extent do the three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26, Exodus 13:19, and Joshua 24:32) indicate a ritual understanding of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan? The research question, in other words, is an exegetical one, and I will attempt at analyzing the texts from historical-critical perspectives. However, as briefly referred to above, and as I will elaborate a bit below, this exegetical question is raised in a Malagasy context where it is part of a broader theological discussion. I will therefore, when I have completed the exegetical investigation, relate my findings briefly to this Malagasy context.

1.3. Procedure

In order to answer the research question, the following procedure will be followed. This first chapter offers a general introduction to the research project, discussing the following three points: (1) the preliminary observation that caught my attention to conduct this research, (2) the research question raised which contains the main problem to be solved due to the preliminary observation, and (3) the procedure to follow to carry out this research work as it should be.

The second chapter will discuss interpretive context from two perspectives: (1) The role of the *Famadihana* in the highlands of the *Sihanaka*, the *Merina*, and the *Betsileo*. According to the common belief of these three ethnic groups, there is a permanent link between the living and the dead. And in this deep relationship that unites them, it is the dead who ensure and take care of the life of the living. (2) Some reflection about my own position as a pastor within the Malagasy Lutheran Church now doing postgraduate studies, that is, what kind of consequences this positioning of mine has for my interpretation.

The third chapter will discuss the theories and perspectives in relation to my textual analysis, from three perspectives: (1) exegetical theory, (2) ritual theory, and (3) a literature survey in relation to the *Famadihana* ritual.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters, an exegetical study of the three biblical texts will be carried out successively: Genesis 50:24–26 will be analyzed in the fourth chapter, Exodus 13:19

in the fifth chapter, and Joshua 24:32 in the sixth chapter. In doing so, these following points will be discussed specifically in each chapter: delimitation, textual criticism and translation, exegetical analysis and the question of ritual.

The three chapters analyzing biblical texts will all have a subchapter on the question of ritual. The seventh chapter will then (1) draw these findings together, and relate them (1) first to a broader material from the Old Testament and (3) then to the challenges raised by the Malagasy context.

The eighth chapter will conclude, mainly in relation to the exegetical research question, but it will then also offer some concluding remarks in relation to the Malagasy *Famadihana* ritual that caused this whole investigation.

CHAPTER TWO

INTERPRETATIVE CONTEXT

This chapter will discuss my research question in three parts. First, I will discuss the *Famadihana* ritual as a Malagasy fertility ritual. Second, I will discuss my own position as a pastor within the Malagasy Lutheran Church and as a postgraduate student. Finally, there will be a general summary of the chapter.

2.1. *Famadihana* as a Malagasy Fertility Ritual

Famadihana is a tradition in ancestor worship. And the Malagasy people of the highlands are concerned about the respect of their ancestors. Thus, whatever they undertake must require their assent and especially their blessings. This is why *Famadihana* is important because it makes the connection between the dead and the living of the same family. Of unknown origin, the word *Famadihana*, whose cultural reason is deep, means, literally, reversal of the dead. In practice, *Famadihana* takes two forms. The first form involves a transfer to the family grave of the remains previously buried elsewhere, as well as the replacement of the shroud, as well as the replacement of the shroud. This first form is practiced for the cases of people who died far from their region of origin and a party is organized during the repatriation of the remains in the family grave so that this person rests in peace with their ancestors. The second form, the most regular, consists of a simple renewal of the shroud. For the Malagasy, who pay a lot of respect to the ancestors, although the body of a deceased rests in the grave, their spirit or even their soul, remains alive and watches over the living. Thus, *Famadihana* constitutes, in fact, a request for blessings to these spirits. Normally, the celebration lasts two to three days. It can also be celebrated for a week, but it depends on the financial possibilities of the organizing family. However, the inhabitants of the highlands do not practice it as they wish. There are rules to respect.[1] According to the habits and customs, it never ends on a Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. It is a great ritual, and many other rules are enforced by a *mpanandro* (one who knows the day), a man with powers of knowledge, among other things, of the auspicious day or not to organize *Famadihana*. In addition, very often he is called if the locals want to build a house, to indicate when the cornerstone can be laid. His role is essential for the Malagasy. Unlike funerals, *Famadihana* is a big festivity, because it is an opportunity to meet the ancestors in another way. It

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[1] Raymond William Rabemananjara, *Le Monde Malgache: Sociabilité et Culte des Ancêtres* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), 78–80.

is separation that weighs heavily but not the difficulties inherent in everyday life. Indeed, *Famadihana* is also known as *vary be menaka* (rice flooded with oil). That is to say a great feast because the beef and pork are mainly slaughtered. Relatives, friends, acquaintances and neighbors are invited to a collective table, to the sounds of a brass and brass fanfare. The *toaka gasy* (artisanal rum) is consumed without moderation.[2] The day before the actual ceremony, in the evening, a common jubilation reigns through a popular ball. Usually this event is held at the *tranon-drazana* (ancestral home). The same day, the *mpanandro*, with some members of the family, performs the *mamoha razana*, (the awakening of the manes), in front of the tomb. Thus, the man, with the magic vision, pronounces words: "The great-grandmothers, the great-grandfathers, and all the ancestors, wake up. Your descendants will come tomorrow. To cover yourself with *lamba* (linen) to keep you warm and to ask for your blessing". This rite is performed especially in the early evening, because during the day, the spirits disperse in nature. It is only at dusk that they enter the grave. The goal is to warn them so that they will no longer wander according to *mpanandro*'s instruction, as spirits are like living beings.

The sun begins to go west, the shadows stretch to the east. Normally the watch points at 2 p.m. All the descendants of the ancestors are rushing because it is D-Day. The big banquet ends, the women are preparing new mats and *lambamena* (red linen), while the men are still looking for *toaka gasy*. The leader of the family with the assistance of *mpanandro* gives the latest recommendations and all instructions. Everyone goes to the family grave in single file. At the head of the procession, a man carries the national flag, the musicians playing the trumpets follow him closely. All the members of the family close the happy procession. But it is the *mpanandro* alone who prescribes this departure time. The grave is not yet open. In the meantime, the family, especially the girls and the ladies, warm up by dancing to the sounds of the brass band, in front of the tomb. Once it is open and after a few minutes of respite to ventilate the interior, the men enter it to extract the mortal remains and place them outside, where they will be draped with new shrouds. The rite says that those who died last came out first. The mortal remains are deposited on the new mats spread out on the south side of the tomb. According to Malagasy tradition, the south is the place of the deceased. They are not immediately covered with new *lambamena*. A sign according to the instructions of *mpanandro* is expected. In fact, they are left to be exposed to the sun a bit to dissipate moisture. However, they should not be placed on the floor. Indeed, the

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[2] Randrianarimanana Norbert, *Ny Finoana an'Andriamanitra no Fototra Anorenana ny Fiandrianam-pirenena* (Antananarivo: n.p, 2009), 15.

rolled-up mats containing the bones are placed on the thighs of the members of the family, seated on the ground in the position of the yogi.

Certain ritual rules must be followed closely when putting on the *lambamena*. The number of cords to hold it is always odd. The last will be tied by the youngest of the deceased, or failing that by that of the family. All knots must end at the end of the rope. But many of the contemporary descendants on the highlands no longer follow this rule. And on the new *lambamena*, some families write marks with indelible ink. It is a distinctive sign. The remains, thus covered with new shrouds, are carried at arm's length by making, in music, three, five or seven times around the vault. They are then put back in their place. Opinions differ on the meaning of these gestures. The ancestral *Famadihana* is only done in three, five or seven years, and the whole family member thinks it is a sign of joy.[3] The penultimate rite to be respected of *Famadihana* concerns the manner of replacing the remains. Contrary to their initial extractions, it is the first deceased who are put back first. At that time, crying is completely prohibited. The reversal of the dead ends with the speaking of the leader of the family. His speech basically is a big thanksgiving word to everyone who showed up for the honor of this family ceremony, saying that the ancestors will bless them.

According to the inhabitants of the highlands, it is the ancestors themselves who are responsible not only for transmitting life, but also for protecting it. By protecting their descendants, the ancestors protect at the same time the life which they transmitted to them. Within the family, the parents represent these ancestors. And the latter bind all living beings to *Zanahary* by ensuring the protection of their descendants because this function is entrusted to them by *Zanahary*. That is, the parents link their own descendants with *Zanahary* through the ancestors (a filial veneration of the parents after their deaths by their descendants). Life binds the inhabitants of the highlands to all their families, all societies, their descendants, their ancestors, and especially with *Zanahary* who is the original founding ancestor, source of all life, plays the role of the principle of life.

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[3] Lars Vig, *Les Conceptions Religieuses des Anciens Malgaches* (Antananarivo: Karthala, 2001), 86.

2.2. My Own Position as a Malagasy Lutheran Pastor and Postgraduate Student

Whereas the Roman Catholic Church has integrated the *Famadihana* into its liturgical life,[4] the Protestant churches—such as my own Lutheran Church, but also the Reformed Church—reject the *Famadihana* as being against the message of the Bible. This raises some questions concerning my double role; I am a researcher, but I am also a pastor in the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Let me therefore discuss some issues of this double role.

First, it is an exegetical project, which means that the historical meaning of the text will be emphasized. Admittedly, I start the investigation based on my experiences as a pastor in the Lutheran Church, and I will never be able to detach myself from that situatedness. Nevertheless, the major research question of the project has an exegetical profile, which means that my own position will play a deliberate role. Second, I will not be doing interviews or other forms of fieldwork; I will only work with written sources. This means that I avoid a situation where my informants are influenced by my position.

Third, however, as I towards the end of this thesis will return to how my exegetical investigation relates to the *Famadihana* practices, I will here briefly clarify how I as a pastor understands the ritual. I will do so from two perspectives, first elements that seem to be contrary to the Christian faith, and then elements that reflect important values.

So, on the one hand there are elements of the *Famadihana* that are contrary to Christian faith, as I understand it. One example is the practice of divination by *sikidy* [5] (astrology) to know if the anomaly in a family is a request of the *Famadihana* or not. This practice assumes a certain power of spirits like the deceased and the ancestors over the living that the Bible fights through its two Testaments. The consultation of soothsayers, the deceased who claim something by causing illness on the living, and these can cause conflicts between faith and tradition. In general, it is the *Famadihana* organizing families who often practice divination or astrology, that is to say the consultation of diviners or astrologers before the ritual to find out if the anomaly in the family is the result of a request from *Famadihana*. The Bible is against the practice of divination, not least to avoid the deification of creatures. One of the elements that could also be contrary to the

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[4] Georges Andrianoelina Razafindrakoto, « The Old Testament and the Malagasy *Famadihana* Ritual, » *Old Testament Essays* 19 (2006) 455–472.

[5] Malagasy divination, called *sikidy*, is a practice in use throughout the territory of Madagascar. The Madagascans have an essential need for traditional diviners for all aspects of their daily life, and for this reason, they are found in every village or district of big city.

Gospel is the practice of sacrifice and the offering of animals, oxen especially for the recipient of the rite during *Famadihana*. Animals can be slaughtered to provide food, but not to provide it to the deceased. The belief in the power of these deceased to influence or even decide the fate of the life of the living must be removed because it is God alone who decides the fate of humans and not his creatures. God is the only one who gives life, and not the other powers or the human beings in the beyond.[6] And the number of beneficiaries of the ceremony could be changed as is already the case in some rare circumstances. It also helps reduce spending on this rite.

But then, on the other hand, there are also elements of the *Famadihana* that reflect important values, such as the following examples. The love of life is first and foremost a value that *Famadihana* brings. And this value of human life in the eyes of men and of God is highlighted because this life has its origin in God.[7] The expression of the importance and the value of life is then kept and even amplified in the proposal for the celebration. The next two great values of *Famadihana* are *Fihavanana* and communion. The first is specific to the Malagasy culture, the second is universal. *Famadihana* is one of the rites or cults that constitute the expression of *Fihavanana* and communion in an extended family or in a clan. It brings together all the living members of the same family among themselves and with the inhabitants of the village of the organizing family. It is in this sense that *Famadihana* is the expression of *Fihavanana* and communion between members of the same family. In addition, this ritual also puts in communion the members living on earth with those from beyond. Communion could be taken as the universality of the Malagasy *Fihavanana*. It manifests itself on the basis of social consensus governed by a sense of conviviality, sharing and hospitality between members of the community. The places where *Fihavanana* is lived are within the parental community, society, family, any human group of the same race or not. Without *Fihavanana*, existence loses its meaning and *Fihavanana* therefore implies in itself a primordial motive of existence: life or vital flow.

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[6] Pietro Lupo, *Dieu dans la Tradition Malgache: Approches Comparées avec les Religions Africaines et le Christianisme* (Paris: Karthala, 2006), 23.

[7] Hilaire Raharilalao, *Église et Fihavanana à Madagascar: Une Herméneutique Malgache de la Réconciliation Chrétienne selon Saint Paul* (Fianarantsoa/Antananarivo: Éditions Ambozontany/Analamahitsy, 2007), 412.

2.3. Summary

Famadihana is one of the traditions that the Malagasy ancestors transmitted to their descendants. It is part of an overall concept that includes the belief in a supreme and unique God called above all *Zanahary*, the belief in the intermediate and protective action of the ancestors who already live in the hereafter, and the belief in the existence of the other spirits in the hereafter appear among the elements of this ancestral tradition. Ancestor cults are the key elements of ritual practices in this traditional religion. Life based on *Fihavanana* is the most important value for the Malagasy people of the highlands, and their ancestors transmitted this to them. It is indeed this rite practiced at *Famadihana* which influences me personally to do this research. I mean, the key elements based on the ritual practices found in *Famadihana*. Because of the practice of these rites, *Famadihana* binds the Malagasy people of the high plateaus in their family and ancestral environment.[8] In this perspective of attachment to ancestral traditions, the Malagasy people are afraid of cutting themselves off from the family and ancestral environment if they renounce ancestral traditions or customs, because becoming a Christian is considered to be some sort of another ethnic group. This means that Christians no longer practice family customs, they have their own status that governs them, and at the same time is also to lose one's Malagasy identity by embracing the Christian faith considered as that of foreigners.

Myself then as pastor within the Malagasy Lutheran Church and postgraduate student, my specific objective is to emphasize two things: first, what I am going to do is an historical exegesis, and that is exactly the point principal of this thesis. Second, towards the end of this thesis, I will allow my interpretation of these three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26, Exodus 13:19 and Joshua 24:32) encounter the *Famadiana* practices.

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[8] François Benolo, « Evangélisation des Funérailles : Base de l'Inculturation à Madagascar, » In *Aspects du Christianisme à Madagascar*, Revue de l'Université Catholique de Madagascar à Ambatoroka–Antananarivo (2001), 11, 20.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORY

As already mentioned above, the exegetical research question of this thesis is to know to what extent my three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26; Exodus 13:19; and Joshua 24:32) indicate a ritual understanding of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan. The investigation, in other words, is an exegetical study, where I will employ historical-critical methodology. However, as I have also mentioned above, towards the end of this thesis I will return to how my exegetical investigation relates to the *Famadihana* practices in Madagascar. In the present theory chapter, I will therefore discuss theories and perspectives in relation to my textual analysis, from three perspectives: (1) exegetical theory, (2) ritual theory, and (3) a literature survey in relation to the *Famadihana* ritual.

3.1. Exegetical Theory

It is clear here that the specific objective of this research is to find an answer to the research question to what extent these three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26, Exodus 13:19, and Joshua 24:32) indicate a ritual understanding of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan. In order to search for such a ritual understanding, I will make an exegetical analysis of these three biblical texts.

In exegetical theory, the main point of historical-critical approaches is therefore to come as close as possible to the original text. That is to say the true story that hides in and behind the historical construction of the biblical canon. Literary criticism and history combine in close collaboration. Literary criticism is used initially to verify the authenticity of biblical texts, because it is necessary to verify whether these biblical texts are composed of independent sources or not. Historical criticism follows after that, and its objective is to verify the relationship between statements by authenticated sources and historical reality.[1] The combinations of literary and historical criticism therefore provide what is called the historical-critical method. I will do my best to explore these three biblical texts through Hebrew grammar in order to analyze them more precisely in a technical and scientific way. It is a type of explanation, commentary, exegesis which, before proposing an interpretation, concentrates on the in-depth study of a text of biblical

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[1] Louis Jonker and Douglas Lawrie (eds.), *Fishing for Jonah (anew): Various Approach to Biblical Interpretation, Study Guide in Religion and Theology 7* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2005), 31.

text on five planes: text-critical studies, literary-critical studies, form-critical studies**,** tradition-critical studies, and redaction-critical studies. They will be explained one by one in a few words.

Text-critical studies serve to establish the text by comparing the different variants of the texts that have come down to us in the forms of Hebrew manuscripts and fragments as well manuscripts and fragments from classical translations. Textual criticism is an essential strategy for dealing with interpretation problems resulting from the lack of original biblical manuscripts. Basing our editions and translations of the Bible on divergent copies of the manuscripts seems to be a precarious exercise. An attempt to reconstruct the original texts as much as possible seems essential. Textual criticism provides well-developed tools for this reconstruction process. Certain decisions and conclusions of textual criticism remain highly speculative. In some cases, a final answer cannot be provided.[2]

Literary-critical studies have unfortunately been received rather negatively in certain circles. Some applications of this approach have given the impression that it is a cut-and-paste-method by which a text can be composed according to its own interpretation. In addition, the impression was sometimes created that only old and original textual records were really worth it. Other textual records were often labeled as the latest addition or secondary material. While it is true that a certain application of the literary-critical approach could have created this impression, a negative evaluation of this method is often due to the fact that its literary-critical results are evaluated in insolation, and not in relation to results of other historical-critical approaches. Much controversy surrounds the exact dating of sources. Because the way in which the time of origin of texts is determined is such an important factor in interpretation, uncertainty about the dating of certain biblical texts hinders interpretation. Researchers also disagree on whether the authors of the sources should be viewed simply as collectors and composers, or as full-fledged theologians. The question is therefore whether the religious or theological presuppositions of the authors played a role in the collection, composition, commissioning and addition of textual material. Although there are some reservations regarding this approach. This demonstrates the fact that ancient biblical texts have undergone a long history of development, unlike modern texts, which are written by an author at a given time.[3]

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[2] Louis Jonker and Douglas Lawrie (eds.), *Fishing for Jonah (anew): Various Approach to Biblical Interpretation, Study Guide in Religion and Theology 7*, 33–38.

[3] Ibid.

Form-critical studies are so important to be able to interpret it correctly. The idea that literary forms offer the reader an entry into the world behind the text, which is the original context of textual production, cannot be overstated. Some genres may not function as recordings of historical events, but this should not affect the truth, meaning or authority of the text. In fact, form criticism helps to establish the literary form, the circumstances under which it operated, and what rhetorical goal the literary form wishes to achieve with the reader. A deeper understanding of the original context of the text, resulting from the studies of *Sitz im Leben*, makes it possible to include the modern context of the reader in the process of interpretation.[4]

Tradition-critical studies remove the critical question of the form of the aesthetic-archaic domain from that of the Old Testament declarations of faith and their history of transmission. The interpretation process is then extended so that the interpreters focus not only on the literary forms and their background, but also on the relationship between the religious convictions of Israel and the material transmission processes from which the Old Testament is composed. Because tradition-criticism delves into the past to go beyond the first written form of the text, the speculative element unfortunately increases. Although the identification of oral traditions makes a major contribution to the search for an adequate interpretation, these traditions are nothing more than a theoretical construction.[5]

Redaction-critical studies show the interpretative value of the dismantling of the text. As an aspect of the historical-critical approach, it aims to explain precisely how the final form of the text was born from all the distinct parts which had been previously distinguished. The redaction-critical approach is therefore an important element of the critical historical approach. The final form of the text is the one that should be interpreted, after all. It is therefore necessary to provide satisfactory explanations on how the text reached its final form. The purpose of the redaction-criticism is to provide a description of the literary process of development of the text, without adequately taking into account the theological motivation behind the process.[6] This historical-critical approaches is one of the theories to be used to carry out this research work by carrying out an exegetical analysis of these three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26; Exodus 13:19; and Joshua 24:32).

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[4] Louis Jonker and Douglas Lawrie, 38–40.

[5] Ibid., 40–43.

[6] Ibid., 43–45.

3.2. Ritual Theory

When ritual theory is discussed, it should not be forgotten that its content shows the importance of rites and their effectiveness in human life. It involves different forms of action in everyday life, or at least different purposes. Rites are therefore vital necessities for the survival of a society, a people, a group of people and an ethnic group. Ritual theory therefore gives meaning to what people, society and the community do.[7] Generally, human beings who live in a society are not only understood by the different languages used, they are also communicated by the body and by its different configurations of expression and representation. Rituals are among the most effective forms of human communication. Rituals are actions in which the staging and representation of the human body occupy the central role. Through the rituals, human communities are created, passages within them and from one community to another are organized.

More specifically, ritual theory is therefore based on the importance of rites and their effectiveness by using remarkable communication languages to be able to preserve the specificity of the social life of human beings in a society.[8] That is to say that in ritual theory, these are the rituals which differ from purely linguistic forms of communication, because they constitute social devices in which there is creation of order and hierarchy through action. Social community that produces meaning. Ritual theory is one of the approaches singularly used to properly analyze the context of religions, more precisely, the structures and values of religions in a society. Generally, it can be said that there are similarities between the ritual theory and the hermeneutical approach. But what makes them different is that the rites and their efficiencies are read as texts in ritual theory, and which is studied mainly from the angle of performativity and dynamics. This is illustrated by the fact that various events are seen and experienced within society: ceremonies, festivals, liturgies, different forms of agreement and convention are ritual actions. Religious rituals, rituals of passage, for example those which chant events and ages of life (birth, marriage, death), institutional rituals, which assign places and functions, and all the rituals that regulate daily social interaction. Rites of passage are then rituals that mark the passage from one stage of life and the entry into another.[9]

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[7] Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 738.

[8] Jean Maisonneuve, *Théories du Rite: Les Conduites Rituelles* (France: Presses Universitaires, 1999), 96–120.

[9] Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 737.

According to Pascal Lardellier, ritual theory proposes to probe the anthropological foundations of communication. To do this, it is a question of centering the whole of the analyzes on an object omnipresent in any social life which is called the rite. In this ritual theory, it is therefore the rite which is the status of an object constructed in an operational manner. The rite is like a particular social context, established within a device of a spectacular nature, characterized by its formalism and a set of normative practices, having a strong symbolic value for its actors and its spectators.[10] What distinguishes this ritual theory from other theories is that it leads directly to underlining the omnipresence of the ritual dimension, not to assert a little quickly that everything is ritual in life in society, but to demonstrate that a much of social life is based on ritualized practices, conditioning the forms of exchange and communication. Still according to Pascal Lardellier, the analysis of rites in ritual theory is not limited to updating or shedding light on a somewhat obscure part of social life. It reveals its foundations, that is to say the anthropological foundations. The ritual link theory thus succeeds in modifying the way we look at many social practices, the routinization of which no longer reveals the modes of structuring and the symbolic conditioning of the actors. Ritual theory is traditionally a theory used in anthropological study. It proposes to probe the anthropological foundations of communication.[11] And to do this, it is a question of centering all the analyzes on an object omnipresent in any social life called the rite. In this ritual theory, it is the rite which is the status of an operationally constructed object. The rite is like a particular social context, established in a spectacular arrangement, characterized by its formalism and a set of normative practices, having a strong symbolic value for its actors and its spectators. What distinguishes this ritual theory from other theories is that it leads directly to underlining the omnipresence of the ritual dimension, not to affirm a little quickly that everything is ritual in life in society, but to demonstrate that a large part of social life is based on practical ritualization, conditioning the forms of exchange and communication. This ritual theory is therefore well based on an original approach by the concepts addressed and ambitious by the opening of the ritual spectrum: the theoretical objective is to bring anthropology closer to the sciences of information and communication.[12]

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[10] Stéphane Olivesi, *Théorie du Lien Rituel: Anthropologie et Communication de Pascal Lardellier* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 237.

[11] Ibid., 238.

[12] Ibid.

But according to Durkheim, ritual theory is an approach used to analyze the ritual which constitutes a world breaking away from everyday life, a specific and extraordinary space-time where it is a question of honoring deities (who are nothing else than society, but people do not know it) and which most often presupposes a state of influence, absorption, strong emotion, bordering on hypnosis. Still according to Durkheim, in this theory, the manner of posing the ritual, of describing it and of explaining it had important consequences on most interpretations of rituals more or less entrained by this type of discourse emphasizing in fact two points: the function of rituals and their meanings.[13] Thus, according to this theory, the ritual has a function of channeling of the emotions, a function of communication and mediation with the divine powers but especially a function of communion of the individuals with their group. From the perspective based on this ritual theory, the ritual is often interpreted as associated with a strong symbolic charge. And this is the reason why many anthropologists like Elizabeth Gardère and Stéphane Olivesi have emphasized the symbols and meanings of the ritual. As if the ritual is a sort of unit for storing information (on values, norms, beliefs of society) which should be expressed periodically and reminded to the participants. In this case, the ritual is a kind of information vehicle and periodic reaffirmation of it, with the effect of reviving the union, the community, the integration of individuals. It is also from this perspective that the ritual is interpreted as a transformative mechanism. The specificity of ritual theory is therefore to analyze social phenomena. It is the rituals that are the objects of study. In this ritual theory, the rites are posed as principles of mediation because they are considered as conditions of existence of a community.

According to Patrick Baudry, there are three traits that characterize ritual theory. The first line shows that the rite is always collective. Whether the ritual is organized around an individual as a healing ritual, whether it is an age class as an initiation ritual and an entire society as a festive or funeral ritual or exhumation, it always concerns the community and manipulates the idea of the collective.[14] And that is why it presents expressions of identity, strengthens the feelings of belonging and regenerates solidarity. In the ritual, everyone is summoned as an individual living in a society. The rite therefore evokes the community because it represents a cultural whole and necessary for human life and society.

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[13] Theodore D. Kemper, *Status, Power and Ritual Interaction: A Relational Reading of Durkheim, Goffman and Collins* (London: Routledge, 2011), 40–41.

[14] Patrick Baudry, *La Place des Morts: Enjeux et Rites*, 59.

In this theory, it is the analysis of the rites is the most important. That is to say, an analysis of the different forms of rites that exist in social life. A theory of ritual link which reveals the anthropological foundations and whose specific objective is to modify the perspective which concerns many social practices whose routinization no longer allows to perceive the modes of structuring and the symbolic conditioning of the actors. In this ritual theory, it is on the taking into account of the great community rites from the angle of communication that the emphasis is really put. According to E. Goffman, this theory imports and centers the study which is done on the rites of interactions which are socially and culturally integrated in order to make them pass from the interpersonal scale to the community level.[15] The analysis of community rites that is done in this ritual theory focuses directly on the concept that privileges the notions of symbolic mediation and social communication. And that is why this theory is based on a study carried out on the dimension of the importance of ritual acceptance, by highlighting the forms, the meaning and the function of rites within society.[16]

Maurice Bloch criticizes the theories of ritual. He sees it as a form of ideology, which offers an alternative to everyday life. Because it is very formalized, the ritual restricts debate or contestation, and there is some predictability in the way people construct the ritual in different social and cultural contexts. Maurice Bloch maintains that the archetypal form of ritual is to demonstrate the power of the transcendental in everyday life. The transcendent can take the form of a sacred king or an eternal community, but not necessarily. Thus, the irresistible ritual form of Maurice Bloch is more ambiguous than that of Durkheim or Turner, although no less determined. For Maurice Bloch, ritual is a dramatic process by which the vitality of daily life is conquered by the transcendence of death and the eternal. This is played out in a process he calls "rebounding violence".[17] This ritual theory is then one of the theories to be used to carry out this research work by performing an exegetical analysis of these three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26; Exodus 13:19; and Joshua 24:32) to be able to answer the research question already mentioned.

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[15] Theodore D. Kemper, *Status, Power and Ritual Interaction: A Relational Reading of Durkheim, Goffman and Collins*, 57.

[16] Yves Winkin, « La Notion de Rituel chez Goffman: De la Cérémonie à la Séquence, » In *Hermès*, La Revue, vol. 43, N° 3, (2005): 69–76.

[17] Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, 747.

3.3. Literature Survey with regard to *Famadihana*

Famadihana is a funeral custom which has its uniqueness in the highlands. It is a very popular ceremony, as some have come from afar in the hope of touching the bones of their ancestors wrapped in cotton linen. According to the thought of the inhabitants of the highlands, these bones can be honored because of their loyalty and their humanist value.[18] Therefore, it is impossible to say that it is still considered a blank subject in academia. Many researchers have carried out research on this subject, some of them are Malagasy citizens and others are foreigners.

One of them is a researcher named Maurice Bloch, who carried out his research work between October 1964 and April 1966 within the Merina tribe.[19] The information on which his research is based was largely obtained from fieldwork he had carried out. It contains the first comprehensive study of the two most important aspects of the culture of Madagascar: the existence of massive megalithic tombs and the complex funeral rituals, which involve the *Famadihana* of the dead recently. His research work focused in particular on the explanation of these two aspects according to their place in the belief system and the social organization of the Merina people. And in doing so, he affirmed that the funeral rituals serve to reintegrate the Merina who died far from the traditional homeland in what they believe to be the society of the ancestors by placing them in the tombs that stand on this traditional homeland. This reintegration of the dead in an unchanging order based on kinship and traditional territorial association is the response of the living to the precariousness of contractual ties in everyday political and economic life.[20]

Another example is Pierre-Loïc Pacaud, professor at the Denis Diderot-Paris VII University.[21] His research work focused in particular on the analysis of the concept of ritual meaning found in *Famadihana*, an exhumation ceremony of family death carried out by groups of parents from an anthropological and psychoanalytic angle, which shows that this cult of dead

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[18] Jean-Pierre Domenichini, Jean Poirier et Raherisoanjato Daniel, *Ny Razana tsy mba Maty: Cultures Traditionnelles Malagasy* (Antananarivo: Librairie de Madagascar, 1984), 58.

[19] Maurice Bloch, *Placing the Tombs, Ancestral Villages and Kinship Organization in Madagascar.* London and New York, Seminar Press, 1971.

[20] Molet Louis and Maurice Bloch, « Placing the Dead: Tombs, Ancestral Villages and Kinship Organization in Madagascar, » in L'Homme, N°3, Tome 12 (1972): 146–149, Accessed February 28, 2020, www.persee.fr/doc/hom_0439-4216_1972_num_12_3_367290

[21] Pierre-Loïc Pacaud, *Un Culte d'Exhumation des Morts à Madagascar: Le Famadihana - Anthropologie Psychanalytique* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 2003) 100–200.

established during the nineteenth century is widely practiced today in the highlands of Madagascar. And in doing so, he affirmed that the exhumations of the dead practiced by the inhabitants in the highlands of Madagascar have given rise to the development of various heuristic hypotheses (historical, anthropological, psychoanalytic), all produced with reference to the second funeral or to the social end of mourning. *Famadihana* is supported by an ethnography of the rite referred to the cultural context, and which brings to light the limits and the inconsistencies of the previous theories, then reintegrates their contributions in a psychoanalytic anthropology of the rite built in rupture with structuralism and applied psychoanalysis.[22] The rite is elucidated there as a substitute accomplishment for forgetting the myth, the dramatized representation of the separation of the living and the dead, and its transformation into a system of symbols and prohibitions, shared by the group. The unconscious conflict dynamic, updated at each ritual test, is restored in relation to the narcissism of the groups and their collective identity.

A particularly important literature for this study is the research conducted by the Malagasy biblical scholar named Razafindrakoto Georges Andrianoelina, who has done research on interpretations of Old Testament texts in Malagasy contexts.[23] In doing so, his research work focused in particular on *Famadihana* from a contextual perspective. Thus, his contextual study of the use of these three following biblical texts from the Old Testament encouraged my reflection to look further: Genesis 49:29–50:13 (story of Jacob's death and burial), Exodus 13:19 (transfer of the bones of Joseph from Egypt to Canaan) and Exodus 20:12 (The fourth commandment). He clearly accentuated in a contextual way, the use of these three Old Testament biblical texts which are mentioned above in the version of *Famadihana*. And in doing so, he carried out his research from the perspective of the Malagasy Catholic Church by focusing particularly on a set of traditional rituals of death and burial of the Merina and Betsileo ethnic groups in the central highlands. Razafindrakoto Georges Andrianoelina claims that the perspective of inculturation shows the importance of the Malagasy Catholic Church's use of Old Testament biblical texts in rituals. Because its main task is to make the message of God applicable to a culture so that it can

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[22] Pierre-Loïc Pacaud, *Un Culte d'Exhumation des Morts à Madagascar: Le Famadihana - Anthropologie Psychanalytique,* 203.

[23] Razafindrakoto Georges Andrianoelina, « Old Testament Texts in Malagasy Contexts: An Analysis of the Use of the Old Testament in Three Religious Contexts in Madagascar, » University of South Africa, Pretoria, (2009): Accessed January 15, 2020, http://hdl.handle.net/10500/2009. The thesis is not published, but there is a summarizing article entitled « The Old Testament and the Malagasy *Famadihana* Ritual, » in *Old Testament Essays* 19 (2006) 455–472.

operate within that culture. Accordingly, the Malagasy Catholic Church uses the biblical text of the Old Testament in the *Famadihana* to inculturate the Gospel message so that the Malagasy to whom it is addressed can feel at home in its own culture.[24] In other words, what he said about the results of his research is as follows: these three biblical texts seem to have two functions. On the one hand, they serve to legitimize typically pre-Christian rituals in the church and, on the other hand they serve to integrate the Christian faith in Malagasy culture and society.

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[24] Razafindrakoto Georges Andrianoelina « The Old Testament and the Malagasy *Famadihana* Ritual, » In *Old Testament Essays: Journal of the Old Testament Society of South Africa*, Volume 19, Nº 2 (2006), 455–472.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENESIS 50:24–26

In this fourth chapter, I will make an exegetical analysis of Genesis 50:24–26. These three verses describe an interdependent content of Joseph's final speech concerning his death, his funeral, the transport of his bones, and the donation of the Promised Land by oath to the patriarchs. Rainer Albertz points out that this final speech of Joseph has its own distinctive value at the Pentateuch, because it is directly linked to the Promised Land sworn to the patriarchs repeated in Deuteronomy 34, and to the Hexateuch which is linked to the burial of Joseph's bones written in Joshua 24.[1] The main objective of the exegetical analysis of this last speech by Joseph in this chapter will therefore be to discover what these three verses convey. Biblical scholars Henry A. Virkler and Karelynne Gerber Ayayo emphasize that the exegetical analysis of a biblical text is an interpretation which seeks to locate different voices in the text and to see these voices as a progressive trajectory through history.[2] To grasp the meaning of what is written in the Scriptures requires historically and contemporary reasonable interpretation of the text, because what its author means can never be known, it is no longer possible to meet its author. Only the texts are now at hand. What I will do in this fourth chapter is therefore to analyze Genesis 50:24–26, in four stages: delimitation, textual criticism and translation from biblical Hebrew to English, exegetical analysis, and question of ritual.

4.1. Delimitation

Before embarking on an exegetical analysis of the text, it must first be delimited. It must be explained how the textual unit to be examined is delimited, as Timothée Minard says. He declares that the first step to make an exegetical analysis of the text is to read and delimit the specific passage to study, because it is not possible to make an exegetical analysis of all the biblical texts at the same time.[3] That is to say, a biblical text which designates an extract forming a coherent unity. The text unit must have a specific meaning and be read independently in its context. Therefore, in this section, not to be too far from the main topics, I will point out what is the

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[1] Rainer Albertz, "The Recent Discussion on The Formation of The Pentateuch/Hexateuch," In *Hebrew Studies* 59 (2018): 65–92. Accessed April 9, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/26557787.

[2] Henry A. Virkler and Karelynne Gerber Ayayo, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 202–204.

[3] Timothée Minard, « Première Etape : Lire et Délimiter le Passage Biblique Etudié, » In *Étudier un Texte Biblique en 8 Etapes*, (Décembre 2016): 4.

reason why these biblical verses 24, 25 and 26 are considered as an independent textual unit. In doing so, I will emphasize this by a precise discussion with the text which will focus on the grammatical argumentation due to the presence of the waw וֹ consecutive as a conjunction of sequential particles based on the waw וֹ consecutive theory.

To better understand the contextual delimitation of Genesis 50:24–26, I observe that the following is the simplest possible explanation in order to facilitate the vision of what is called a contextual delimitation of a biblical text to be examined in this subsection. As seen here, Genesis 50:24–26, which is the text to be examined, appears towards the end of Genesis 37-50, the last part of the book, a part which is occupied almost entirely with the history of Joseph. According to John Skinner, the connection of Genesis 37–50 is twice interrupted: by the story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38); and by the so-called blessing of Jacob (Genesis 49:1–28).[4] That is to say that apart from this story twice interrupted, everywhere else, the story follows the thread of Joseph's fortune. And the plan with its contents are as follows in order to understand the contextual delimitation of Genesis 50:24–26: Genesis 37, 39–41 Joseph's solitary career in Egypt: Joseph betrayed by his brethren and carried down to Egypt (Genesis 37). How he maintained his virtue against the solicitation of his master's wife, and was thrown into prison (Genesis 39). His skill in interpreting dreams discovered (Genesis 40). His interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, and his consequent elevation to the highest dignity in Egypt (Genesis 41). Genesis 42–45. The reunion of Joseph and his brethren: The first meeting of the brethren with Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 42). The second meeting (Genesis 43, 44). Joseph reveals himself to his brethren (Genesis 45). Genesis 46–50, the settlement of the united family in Egypt. Jacob's journey to Egypt and settlement in Goshen (Genesis 46, 47:1–12). Joseph's agrarian policy (Genesis 47:13–28). 10. Joseph at his father's death-bed (Genesis 47:29–31, 48). Death and burial of Jacob, and death of Joseph (Genesis 49:29–33, 50).[5] And in this Genesis 49: 29–33, 50, Genesis 49:29–50:14 deals with death and Jacob's funeral, Genesis 50:15–21 deals with Joseph forgives his brothers, and Genesis 50:22–26 deals with the death of Joseph. Therefore, a simple deduction can be made as follows: Genesis 50:24–26 which is a passage to be examined here included in the conclusion (Genesis 50:22–26). It then deserves more attention because it has great significance. Verses 22–23 which precede verses 24–26 have a narrative character cf. its

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[4] Skinner John, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Scribner, 1910), 438.

[5] Ibid.

use of consecutive imperfect waw וֹ. Thus, verses 24–26 are here a story with a specific discourse (speech) which is also justified by the presence of consecutive imperfect waw וֹ.[6] It is found as internal evidence in the word וַיֹּאמֶר which begins verse 24. All this means that Genesis 50:24–26 can be considered an independent textual unit. Therefore, what makes Genesis 50:24–26 so is that there are specific connections between these three verses and the rest of Joseph's account. These two verses 22 and 23, which immediately precede it as its immediate context, give more precise explanations of its independence. Genesis 50:22–26 is a preparation for Joseph's death. Joseph is entirely Israelite, but partly Egyptian. This final report is given in the form of a chiasmus:

A: Then Joseph said to his brothers, I am about to die [מֵת] (24a)

    B: But God will surely visit you [וֵאלֹהִים פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם] and take you up [וְהֶעֱלָה] from this land [מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת] (24b).

        C: To the land he swore on oath [נִשְׁבַּע] to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (24c).

        C': And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath [וַיַּשְׁבַּע] (25a).

    B': And said, 'God will surely visit you [פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם], and then you will take up [וְהַעֲלִתֶם] my bones from here [עַצְמֹתַי מִזֶּה] (25b).

A': So, Joseph died [וַיָּמָת] at the age of a hundred and ten (26a).

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[6] Oswald Leonard Barnes, *A New Approach to the Problem of the Hebrew Tenses and Its Solution without Recourse to waw Consecutive, Illustrated by Bible Old Testament: Genesis* (Oxford, 1965), 4–5.

4.2. Textual Criticism and Translation

According to the critical apparatus in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, there are two critical textual problems observed in Genesis 50:24–26:

25ª nonn Mss Sam Vrs + אִתְּכֶם

The apparatus says: "nonn Mss Sam Vrs + אִתְּכֶם". That is, some Hebrew manuscripts and the Samaritan Pentateuch add the term אִתְּכֶם which means "with you" at the end of this verse. And this addition is supported by classic translations. Still, I have decided to keep what is written in the Masoretic text due to *lectio difficilior*. So, I tend to think that what is written in the Masoretic text, without additional word אִתְּכֶם is the best reading.

26 ª l c Sam וַיּוּשַׂם

As seen here, the apparatus says: "ª l c Sam וַיּוּשַׂם". Here is what the apparatus means: a suggestion from the editor of the apparatus of Genesis that we should follow the Samaritan Pentateuch, which reads וַיּוּשַׂם. The point here is as follows: the Masoretic text is an imperfect consecutive qal, normally an active form. But an active form is difficult here, and it seems that Samaritan Pentateuch is correcting it with a passive form. I tend to think that I will still keep the Masoretic text, but still give it a passive meaning.

As a textual unit independent of Genesis 50:24–26, it can therefore be translated as follows:

Verse 24: *Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."*

Verse 25: *Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry my bones up from here."*

Verse 26: *So, Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.*

4.3. Exegetical Analysis

When Genesis 50:24–26 is examined closely, it is known that it has what is called a symmetrical arrangement or a chiasmus which is generally the figure of speech in which two or more clauses are linked to each other by a reversal of structures in order to make a greater point. That is, the clauses display an inverted parallelism. Chiasmus was particularly popular in the literature of the ancient world, including Hebrew, Greek and Latin, where it was used to articulate the balance of order in the text. The Chiasmus has several composition figures. And at each of these levels, the texts are organized according to what are called figures. The system is very simple. It is distinguished by symmetries called total symmetries. And this Genesis 50: 24–26 which will be examined here has a specular construction in total symmetry. That is to say, this biblical passage has a figure of composition where the units in pairs are arranged antiparallel or mirrored: A B C D E | E'D'C'B'A'. Like parallel construction, specular construction has no center; like the concentric construction, the related elements correspond in a mirror.[7] But David A. Dorsey says that the symmetrical arrangement is one of the centers that attract the most attention in the exegetical analysis of a biblical text. By placing this symmetrical arrangement in a particular way, the author is able to highlight the information that he considers most important for his purpose.[8]

Genesis 50:24–26 tells that when Joseph saw his death approaching, he expressed to his brothers his firm belief in the fulfillment of the promise of God. And made them take an oath, that if God brought them into the Promised Land, they would carry with them his bones from Egypt. And his last wish was fulfilled.[9] The farewell speech in verse 24 parallels the farewell speech in Genesis 48:21 with an announcement of Joseph's coming death and a promise to the survivors for possession of the land. In this case, as in Genesis 48:21, the land is identified in relationship to the fathers. But contrary to Jacob's speech, this speech ties the land to an explicit promise to the patriarchs. And the patriarchs are identified by the formula "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," presupposing unification of the patriarchal traditions. The speech in verse 25 is identified

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[7] David Mark Heath, « Chiastic Structures in Hebrews: A Study of Form and Function in Biblical Discourse, » (PhD Diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2011), 60–70.

[8] David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis – Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Academic, 2004), 40.

[9] Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 265–266.

as an oath. It gives burial instructions (Genesis 47:31) specifically with an allusion to the exodus. No detailed description of a burial place, parallel to Genesis 49:29–32, appears here. To the contrary, Joseph secures an oath only to have his bones taken out of Egypt at the exodus (Exodus 13:19, a citation of this speech, and Joshua 24:32). But the parallel with Jacob's burial instruction speech cannot be mistaken. The unit ends in verse 26 with an explicit note of the death, a repetition summary by reference to total age, and a designation of execution for the burial instructions.[10] In this subsection then, an exegetical analysis of this Genesis 50:24–26 which will be based specifically on grammatical reflection will be carried out. These three verses will be taken separately, and the discussion will be done by integrating the analysis of the keywords which concern them in particular.

Verse 24

In this verse 24, Joseph said to his brothers, I am about to die [אָנֹכִי מֵת] (24a). אָנֹכִי is here a pronoun independent 1st person common singular which is clause immediate constituent (Subject). And מֵת is a verb Qal participle masculine singular absolute from מות. It (אָנֹכִי מֵת) is the same words spoken by Jacob in Genesis 48:21. In the Old Testament, the verb מות means "to die, to kill, to put to death, to execute", and it is the root from which the term מָוֶת originates.[11] This verb מות occurs in the simple stem (Qal) of the verb in 600 of its 809 occurrences, which means to be dead or to die. It indicates in particular a natural death in peace at an advanced age, for example as in the case of Abraham (Genesis 25:8; Judge 8:32). David Noel Freedman points out that this verb has a common root with all other Semitic languages. The root of the noun מָוֶת derived from this Semitic term.[12] Death is personified in reference to the Canaanite goddess מות in several texts of the Old Testament. As it is written in Jeremiah 9:20–21 can be taken as an example:

> Hear, O women, the word of the LORD, and let your ears receive the word of his mouth; teach to your daughters a dirge, and each to her neighbor a lament. Death has come up into our windows; it has entered our palaces, to cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the squares.

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[10] George W. Coats, *Genesis: With an Introduction to Narrative Literature: The Forms of the Old Testament Literature Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 314.

[11] *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament,* 2003 ed., s.v. "מות".

[12] K.H. Richards, "Death: Old Testament", Anchor Bible Dictionary 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 108–110.

In a few words, here is what is written in this text of Jeremiah: the siege has brought death to families, children, and young men within the city (verse 21), while outside in the field's corpses lie like dung. Death has climbed in through our windows may refer to plagues, or as in Akkadian literature, to a demon like personification of death called Lamastu. The prophet appeals to the visual corpses, but also to the auditory, the sound of women wailing to make vivid the coming destruction.[13] But this central similarity does not mean that the Hebrew conception of death is parallel to that of the texts of the Ancient Near East. According to James B. Pritchard, in ancient Egyptian texts which speak of the context of death, the Egyptians understand death as a continuation of life and the completion of all the fortunes that belong to the one who died when he or she is still alive.[14]

If the Hebrew texts concerning death are studied closely, many descriptions and definitions of death can be stated. Death according to Johnston's definition is described as the end of natural life. Moses predicted that some rebels would not have died a natural death (Numbers 16:29) and likewise Joshua knew that he would follow the way of all the earth (Joshua 23:14). As the end of life, death is therefore for the Hebrews an event which arrives at the end of life, whether long or short, happy or unhappy. The latter is very clear in the story of the deaths of Abraham. Rest, inactivity and sleep are the centers of Hebrew thought on death.[15] But God will visit you (וֵאלֹהִים פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם).

This word visit (פקד) is here a verb Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular with God (אֱלֹהִים) as subject. It used in this way for the first time in Genesis, means to intervene in the affairs of people or to come to do something powerful or significant for them. It means, to intervene for blessing or cursing; here Joseph announces that God would come to fulfill the promises by delivering them from Egypt. The statement is emphasized by the use of the infinitive absolute with the verb: "God will surely visit you." פקד is a verb that has several meanings such as "to attend, to visit, and to search out".[16] This verb refers to someone who is generally God paying attention to people, either to do them good (Genesis 50:24, 25; Exodus 3:16; 1 Samuel

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[13] Elmer A. Martens, *Jeremiah: Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986), 83.

[14] James B. Pritchard ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 50.

[15] Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 25.

[16] *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 1906 ed., s.v. "פקד".

2:21; Jeremiah 23: 2); or to bring punishment or evil (Exodus 20: 5; Isaiah 10:12; Jeremiah 23: 2). Warren Patrick Baker asserts that פקד is also a verb which generally means in a causal form "to appoint over" or "commit to". In other words, to get people to take care of something placed in their care (Genesis 39:4, 5; Joshua 10:18; Isaiah 62:6).[17]

According to Willem A. VanGemeren, this verb פקד has its specific meaning in military contexts. It takes on an even more specialized meaning. That is, the process of gathering, counting and ordering men for battle. It can therefore be better classified as "muster, assemble, array." This action is most often performed by military leaders before a battle:Joshua, Saul, David, Ahab, Jehoram, and Amaziah all muster their fighting men before engaging in combat (Joshua 8:10; 1 Samuel 11:8; 13:15; 15:4; 2 Samuel 18:1; 1 Kings 20:15; 2 Kings 3:6; 1 Chronicles 25:5).[18]

In this verse 24 then, the context determines whether this is for good or bad. Here Joseph's meaning is that God will come to Jacob's family, to protect, to help, to care for them. The form of the expression both here and in verse 25 is emphatic, with the sense of "he will certainly visit you." It occurs also in Exodus 3:16, where it is used in an emphatic expression, translated "I have observed you" and Exodus 4:31, and serves here as a link to the Exodus story. In many languages this clause is translated "but God will come to help you" or "I am sure that God will appear to you. "The remainder of this verse is essentially the same as the words spoken by Jacob to Joseph in 48:21.[19] So, in the sentence וֵאלֹהִים פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם, Joseph expressed continuing faith in the promises of God. He reassured his relatives that God would continue to work in the family. In His time (Genesis 15:12–16), God would keep His promise to give Canaan to Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12:7; 26:3; 35:12; 46:4). To Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob (לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב): This phrase is the standard way of referring to God's covenant to Abraham's family (Genesis 48:15; 49:25; Exodus 2:24; 3:16). The recital of the three names reaffirms the certainty of the promise and God's commitment to fulfill it.[20]

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[17] Warren Patrick Baker, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 913.

[18] Willem A. VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 659.

[19] William D. Reyburn and Euan McG Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis: UBS Handbook Series* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 1118.

[20] Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen and H. W. House, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1999), Genesis 50:24.

So, here is the conclusion that can be said about this verse 24: Joseph reaffirms the land promise, appealing to the oath of the fathers. It is the only time the promise is on his lips. It can be said that the narrator finally made his main character a truly Israelite figure. Or if one stays in the story itself, one can conclude that it was only at death that Joseph came to fully understand who he is. Joseph's last words are neither reminiscences nor resentments. These are hopes. His last words are the last words of every Israelite. The use of the word "visit" in the verses of this verse 24 when used with an absolute infinitive for emphasis is the same word of Jeremiah for the exiles (Jeremiah 29:10). God's visit is an intrusion ending the exile. This is the hope of sixth-century exiles in Babylon. It is Joseph's last and best hope. Joseph knew that the path of his people would be like his own path with God visited, interrupted, invaded according to God's plan. In God's way and in God's time, this visit is the source of hope for Israel. An unvisited story is not at all a story. But Joseph knows that the history of Israel is visited in a powerful and irresistible way.[21]

Verse 25

In this verse 25, God swore an oath to the patriarchs. Joseph now asks his brothers to take the oath. His request closely resembles that of his father (Genesis 49:29–32). He too wants to be buried in his native country. Jacob made his request with שבע, perhaps because of the persistent suspicions which he has on the integrity of his brothers.[22] In the Old Testament, שבע is a verb which means particularly "to swear, to take an oath, to make to swear an oath." In the passive reflexive stem, the verb means "to swear, to take an oath".[23] Abimelech and Phichol asked Abraham to swear his kindness and integrity to them and their descendants (Genesis 21:23; Judges 21:1). In the causative stem, the verb means "to make, to cause someone to take an oath". Abraham made his servant swear an oath to get Isaac a wife from Abraham's own people (Genesis 24:37). In this stem, the word can mean "to charge someone" or "to adjure that person". David's men adjured him not to go into battle with them again (2 Samuel 21:17; 1 Kings 22:16). The land of Canaan became the Promised Land the Lord gave to His people based on His oath. He brought them into the land as He had promised by oath to their fathers (Exodus 13:5; Deuteronomy 1:8, 35; 6:10; Joshua 1:6; Judges 2:1; Jeremiah 11:5). This is how the significance

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[21] Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 379.

[22] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1995), 711.

[23] *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament,* 2003 ed., s.v. "שבע".

of this verb שׁבע is explained. The swearing in as a religious institution was widespread and of considerable importance in Israel, since everyone, from the humblest peasant to the strongest king, could invoke the name of God to validate His word. Oaths could be taken to affirm a statement of fact (1 Samuel 20: 3), to testify of his innocence (Exodus 22:11), to assure certain behavior (Genesis 24:37; 50:24), to confirm a peace treaty (Joshua 9:15), to express loyalty or love to another person (1 Samuel 20:17; Nehemiah 6:18), or even to demonstrate commitment to God (2 Chronicles 15:14). Israel believed that God Himself had sworn an oath to His chosen people to emphasize the certainty of His word (Genesis 24:7; 26:3; Exodus 13:11).[24]

This is what is written in this verse 25: "And Joseph took an oath of the sons of Israel" (וַיַּשְׁבַּע יוֹסֵף אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). Here, the word שׁבע is a Hiphil waw consecutive imperfect 3rd person masculine singular. Its translation is therefore a causative form of the verb "to swear an oath" and so has the sense of "made them take an oath", "made them swear to him" or "made them promise him." According to Genesis 47:31, Jacob had made Joseph swear to him that he would not bury Jacob in Egypt; and likewise, Joseph here makes the family of Jacob swear the same thing about his body.[25] The question that arises is this: why did Joseph not follow his father's example in the order he gave regarding his remains? He exercised and manifested the same faith that Jacob did when he gave the command concerning his bones, but he did not give the same command; he did not ask to be buried in Canaan. He was glad that his bones were in Egypt for ages to come. He made no arrangements for such a funeral for himself that he had given to his father. Here are some answers from a biblical scholar named Robert Smith Candlish.[26] The past is not mentioned in Joseph's command concerning his bones. It is the future alone that he contemplates. Jacob belongs to the generations who lived and died in Canaan. This means that he is directly associated with Abraham and Isaac. But Joseph is the fountain of the generations that will be born in Egypt; it identifies with the house of Israel as it must continue in Egypt until the beginning of the exodus in the time of Moses. Joseph, on the other hand, prefers rather to cast his lot, insofar as the disposition of his corporal body concerns the present and future races of Israel in Egypt. Joseph did not order that his bones were to be buried; his embalmed body be kept among the Israelites. Joseph's desire is not to be separated from the

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[24] Willem A. VanGemeren, 33.

[25] William D. Reyburn and Euan McG Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis: UBS Handbook Series,* 1118.

[26] Candlish Robert Smith, *Studies in Genesis* First Published Under Title: Contributions Towards The Exposition of the Book of Genesis.; Reprint of the New ed., Carefully Rev., Published in 1868 by A. and C. Black, Edinburgh, Under Title: The Book of Genesis Expounded In A Series Of Discourses (Oak Harbor, WA, 1997), Genesis 50:22.

Israelites who are his closed family. Even if after death, he would as far as possible still be one of the Israelites as a member of the family. Joseph has no doubt about the return of the Israelites to Canaan. And his last wish is to go with the Israelites. He also wants to leave as far as possible from Egypt with the Israelites. And his bones will represent him on this journey of exodus from Egypt. Joseph did not choose to have any part of him reach Canaan before the Israelites. He chose that his decease would never be separated from the Israelites. For Joseph, his father Jacob belongs to their ancestors, and seen with them in his grave. Joseph therefore also belongs to them as a direct descendant. Joseph himself waited for his time, waiting for the fulfillment of his specific wish concerning his death which was identical to his father. He was confident in what he believed saying: "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from hence". And it was achieved. Joseph's purpose for the preservation of his bones was accomplished, in a constant state of preparation to be transported from Egypt to Canaan, his bones helped to maintain among the Israelites, during the years of their affliction, the memory of the Abrahamic covenant and the expectation of the promised deliverance.[27]

So, here is the conclusion that can be said about this verse 25, "an oath" made means Joseph had buried his father Jacob in Canaan as it is written in Genesis 50:7–14. Now he had the Israelites swear that they would take his bones to the Promised Land when the entire nation of Israel returned to Canaan. In this oath, Joseph expressed his complete belief that God would keep His promise to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites. Hundreds of years later, Moses would keep the Israelites' oath by taking Joseph's bones with the people into the wilderness (Exodus 13:19). Finally, Joshua would bury the bones of Joseph at Shechem after the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 24:32). His bones can finally rest with his ancestors in the land that God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And from this it is evident that Joseph considered his bones to be typical.

Verse 26

The question to answer in this verse 26 is what was the meaning of Joseph's body embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt when he died there? This verse 26 is the last verse which is the narrative closure of the entire section from chapter 37 to chapter 50. It is well mentioned at the

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[27] Candlish Robert Smith, *Studies in Genesis* First Published Under Title: Contributions Towards The Exposition of the Book of Genesis.; Reprint of the New ed., Carefully Rev., Published in 1868 by A. and C. Black, Edinburgh, Under Title: The Book of Genesis Expounded In A Series Of Discourses (Oak Harbor, WA, 1997), Genesis 50:22.

beginning of this verse that Joseph was dead. The sentence וַיָּ֣מָת יוֹסֵ֑ף which can be translated as "so, Joseph died" appears here first. וְ is a particle conjunction which has been translated "so". It is a word that marks an appropriate conclusion. This means that all of this verse 26 is kind of a conclusion which is as follows simply stated: Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten (וַיָּ֣מָת יוֹסֵ֗ף בֶּן־מֵאָ֥ה וָעֶ֖שֶׂר שָׁנִ֑ים), he was embalmed (וַיַּחַנְט֣וּ אֹת֔וֹ), and he was put in a coffin in Egypt (וַיִּ֥ישֶׂם בָּאָר֖וֹן בְּמִצְרָֽיִם). These will be discussed separately.

Joseph passed away at the age of one hundred and ten. Why is the indication of his age at the time of his death important here? According to William MacDonald and Arthur L. Farstad, Joseph's death was fifty-four years after the death of his father Jacob.[28] But according to Warren W. Wiersbe, fifty-one years after Jacob's death, at the age of one hundred and ten, Joseph died.[29] He then probably outlived his older brothers, and it is conceivable that he could have been the first to die of these twelve brothers who were the sons of Jacob; but his own grandsons knew their grandfather's wishes regarding his mortal remains. Joseph died in the land of Egypt. Like his father before him, he made his brothers promise that his bones would be taken out of the land of Egypt at the great deliverance. This deliverance, he reassured them, would take place when God would visit them to fulfill His promises to their fathers. Joseph lived to see his great-great-grandchildren by Ephraim and his great-grandchildren by Manasseh. Placing them on his knees at their birth was a gesture signifying they belonged to him (Job 3:12). Then Joseph died at 110.[30] He died confident that God would bring the people of Israel back to the land that He had promised to give Abraham's offspring.[31] It can be said that Joseph lived at least fifty years after the death of his father (Genesis 50:22; 41:46; 45:6; 47:28). Like his father, he saw his family grow and died with the same assurance that his descendants would live in the Promised Land. To express this assurance, he left instructions that when the alliance people moved to Canaan, they would take his remains with them.

Some scholars like William D. Reyburn, Euan McG Fry and R. G. Hoeber claim that this 110 year was considered an ideal lifespan, which means an ideal age for a man to live in the

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[28] William MacDonald and Arthur L. Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), Genesis 50:22.

[29] Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Authentic: An Old Testament Study* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Chariot Victor Pub., 1997), 168.

[30] John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983–1985), 100.

[31] Lawrence O. Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1996), 49.

Egyptian context according to ancient Egyptian writings. For the Egyptians, this would have meant a specific blessing for Joseph.[32] This is why the age of Joseph is apparently important here in this verse 26.

Joseph was embalmed (וַיַּחַנְטוּ אֹתוֹ) like Jacob. In this verse 26, embalming refers to the process used by the Egyptians to preserve the bodies of humans and certain animals. The internal organs were removed and the body was dried. Spices and oils were applied, and then the body was tightly wrapped in strips of linen. Finally, the body was placed in a decorated mummy case. Some of these procedures can be seen in paintings on the walls of Egyptian tombs. The reason for preserving Jacob's body is that, being Joseph's father, he is treated as a high-ranking person. In addition, the long journey back to Canaan with the body made it essential.[33] Embalming is a precaution that was taken to preserve his body as for that of his father Jacob; and this was particularly necessary in his case, because his body was to be transported to Canaan one hundred and forty-four years later; which was the duration of the bondage of the Israelites after Joseph's death.[34] In the Old Testament, חנט is a verb which means "to form, to ripen and get red", which refers to the ripening process of the fig tree (Song of Songs 2:13) or to its production of figs. It is a verb that means "to embalm" and refers particularly to the Egyptian process of treating the bodies of deceased persons with various chemicals (Genesis 50:2, 26) and of wrapping them ceremoniously and meticulously with material.[35] But Warren Patrick Baker claims that if it is a plural masculine noun referring to embalming (Genesis 50:3), it indicates a process of forty days of the Egyptians when they treated the corpses of certain deceased people.[36] This verb חנט is limited to Genesis 50:2, 26 whose frame is Egypt of the Middle Kingdom and the well-known practice of the chemical preservation of mortal human remains. And it is clear because of its single occurrence in Genesis 50:3. Willem A. VanGemeren claims that this embalming of Jacob and Joseph is unique to the archives of the Old Testament and was clearly made only because of the link of these eminent patriarchs with Egyptian life and culture (Egypt). Normal practice in the Israelite world was that the deceased be buried fully clothed, that incense be burned and that the

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[32] Hoeber R. G, *Concordia Self-Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1997), Genesis 50:26; William D. Reyburn and Euan McG Fry, 1117.

[33] William D. Reyburn and Euan McG Fry, 1104

[34] Clarke, Adam, *Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible-Volume 1 – Genesis through Deuteronomy* (Dallas: GraceWorks Multimedia, 2008), Genesis 50:26.

[35] *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2000 ed., s.v. "חנט".

[36] Warren Patrick Baker, 356.

body be quickly buried without preservatives (2 Chronicles 16:14). For the Hebrew notion of the state or condition of the dead.[37] And he was put in a coffin in Egypt (וַיִּישֶׂם בָּאָרוֹן): שִׂים is a verb Qal passive waw consecutive imperfect 3rd person masculine singular which is an impersonal verb. A coffin is a box used for burial. For illustrations of Egyptian coffins used for mummies or bodies that were preserved. These coffins were often made out of stone.[38] Here, the word for coffin is אָרוֹן, which is a word used for the ark or chest of the covenant as well. Perhaps it is best to understand אָרוֹן as a sarcophagus here (the only time אָרוֹן has this nuance in the Old Testament). The use of the definite article with the preposition on coffin (בְּ particle preposition הַ particle article אָרוֹן noun common both singular absolute) which can be translated "in the coffin" is perhaps a way of specifying that the coffin in which Joseph was placed was similar to a sarcophagus used in Egypt for a high-ranking Egyptian. He was not buried. His body remained in a coffin in Egypt until his children received their inheritance at Canaan. Thus, Joseph was not only embalmed but was also placed in a coffin, both of which were almost peculiar to the Egyptians.[39] Coffins were not universally used in Egypt and were used only for distinguished and distinguished people. In other words, the use of the coffins or sarcophagus in mummification was an Egyptian practice but not an Israelite. It is therefore reasonable to believe that in times as distant as Joseph's, they could have been much less common than after, and that, therefore, the fact that Joseph was laid in a coffin in Egypt could be mentioned with a plan to express the great honors that the Egyptians did him in death as in life; be treated in the most sumptuous way, embalmed and placed in a coffin to wait for the starting point of the forty-year journey to Canaan during the time of Exodus. Joseph demanded a commitment from his brothers that they keep his bones safe until they return to Canaan, then they would take them to the homeland for burial.

4.4. The Question of Ritual

The question to answer in this subsection is how did the embalming rite unfold in the context of ancient Egypt? In this subsection, a specific discussion that focuses directly on the ritual question will be presented. In doing so, the following questions will be answered: Why was Joseph embalmed? And why was the embalming applied to him suitable for an Egyptian ritual? Why was he not buried but simply put in a temporary coffin? Joseph was no doubt embalmed like the

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[37] Willem A. VanGemeren, 197.

[38] The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 1996 ed., s.v. "coffin".

[39] Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible-Volume 1 – Genesis through Deuteronomy*, Genesis 50:26.

Egyptians. He was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt when he died in that country. The embalming that was applied to him suited an Egyptian ritual, because according to the Egyptians, for a man's soul to reach eternal life after his death, he had to keep his remains. That is why their corpses were mummified. Joseph died in Egypt. He wanted to be buried in Canaan, in the cave where his ancestors were buried. He was an Egyptian official and his body was embalmed. This embalming would have prevented the corpse from decomposing during the long journey, using an Egyptian practice called mummification.[40] The specific objective is to preserve the body by eliminating fluids after death, which was not exclusive to ancient Egypt. The Egyptian mummies indicate the body wrapped with the arms crossed on the chest. There is a ritual practice concerning mummification called embalming ritual which was followed at this time. It is a ritual practice of treating the corpse, a physical process of drying the body so that it does not risk decomposing. Here is how the Egyptians mummified the dead in the times of ancient Egypt: Mummification was to prevent a body from collapsing by embalming it so that it would dry out slowly.

According to Françoise Biotti-Mache, the mummification procedure followed these following rites so that the body could not be broken down: (1) removal of the brain, (2) evisceration by incision of the left flank, (3) first wash of the body, (4) treatment of viscera with natron. Wrapping of these viscera and placement in canopic jars, (5) dehydration of the body in a natron bath, (6) second purifying body wash, (7) stuffing of the skull and cavities, (8) treatment of nails, eyes, external genitals, (9) anointing and body massage, (10) installation of the side plate, (11) body treatment with resin, (12) bandage.[41] God's assurance to Jacob that "Joseph's hand will close his eyes" (Genesis 46:4) probably alludes to the custom of a close relative closing the eyes of one who died with a fixed gaze. Close relatives can also kiss the body literally as soon as they expire. The body was washed and dressed in the deceased's clothing. This is not a simple cleansing wash, but a total wash, often with palm wine, from the outside and inside of the body which, if necessary, had to be scraped off to remove everything which could still deteriorate. The body was constantly rubbed and dried using cotton swabs. Tampons were still used to fill the voids in the body. The pins and other ornaments found in the excavated graves prove that the

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[40] Rachel P. Kreiter, "Our Mummified Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph," TheTorah.com (2017). https://thetorah.com/article/our-mummified-patriarchs-jacob-and-joseph

[41] Françoise Biotti-Mache, « La Thanatopraxie Historique : L'Esprit du Temps, Études sur la Mort, » In *Revues et Ouvrages en Sciences Humaines et Sociales*, 1, N° 143 (2013): 13–59. https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01538628/document

dead were buried fully clothed. The soldiers were buried in royal dress, with shields covering or cradling the armored corps, their swords under their heads (Ezekiel 32:27). Embalming was not a common practice in Israel, Egyptian treatment for Jacob and Joseph being the exception rather than the rule.

According to Herodotus, the Egyptians began embalming procedures by removing the brain from the skull through the nasal openings piecemeal, using a long-curved hook. Once this was done, the cranial cavity was rinsed with a mixture of resins and spices. The body was eviscerated and the bowels were placed in four canopic jars (Imsety, a human who protected the liver; Duamutef, a jackal, who protected the stomach; Hapy, a baboon, who guarded the lungs; and Qebsenuef, a falcon, who protected the intestines). The body was soaked in a natron solution for a period of 40 to 80 days, depending on the cost of the burial. At the time of burial, the corpse was wrapped in strips of fine linen from head to toe and placed in an anthropoid coffin. The canopic jars were placed in the tomb with the body, symbolizing the reunification of the personality and its survival after death. The cremation of the bodies of Saul and his sons (1 Samuel 31:12–13) was also an exception to normal practice. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote that unlike customary Roman Jewish piety, it was necessary to bury rather than burn corpses. According to the Mosaic law, such a burn was reserved as a judgment sentence (Leviticus 21:9; Joshua 7:25). After preparing the body, it was transported on a bier (a simple frame with transport sticks) without being placed in a coffin.[42] The body was placed either in a prepared niche in the wall of a rock-cut room, or directly in a shallow grave dug in a burial. Neither bier nor any form of coffin entered the grave with the corpse.[43]

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[42] Typhaine Haziza**,** « De l'Égypte d'Hérodote à celle de Diodore : Etude Comparée des Règnes des Trois Bâtisseurs des Pyramides du Plateau de Gîza », *Kentron*, 28 | 2012, 17–52.

[43] Elwell W. A. and Beitzel B. J., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 388.

In this fifth chapter, an exegetical analysis of Exodus 13:19 will be presented. This is a biblical passage telling of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan. Moses took Joseph's bones with him. Before the Great Exodus, Joseph had made the children of Israel swear to take him with them when they finally left Egypt. As viceroy of Egypt, Joseph could not hope to be buried in Israel when he died, as his father Jacob had been. The Egyptians would not have tolerated their political leader being buried in foreign land. But he asked his brothers to solemnly promise that, when the time comes and all the Israelites will leave, they will take his remains with them.[1] Exodus 13:19 will therefore be examined in four subsections. The following is a plan for achieving this: delimitation, textual criticism, translation from biblical Hebrew to English, exegetical analysis, and question of ritual.

5.1. Delimitation

To be able to clearly understand the contents of this Exodus 13:19, knowing certain information about the context surrounding it is essential, because it helps to understand the main themes it contains. It is important to read, understand and interpret the text in its context. In this section then, a few words about its contextual delimitation will be highlighted. I do not think Exodus 13:19 is considered an independent textual unit here. What is more important is to say a few words about how this verse functions within its literary context. It is important to read, understand and interpret the text in its literary context. In doing so then, a main point will be addressed: I will point out a specific discussion which will focus on the text itself by mentioning where it is situated in the outline of the book of Exodus and by showing in particular how this Exodus 13:19 functions in its close literary context.

This Exodus 13:19 belongs to the second main section of the book of Exodus which claims the deliverance from Egypt. It is written in Exodus 5:1–15:21.[2] This second section can be described in detail as follows in a few words: 5:1–6:27 deals with Moses' first meeting with Pharaoh, 6:28–7:13: forecast of coming judgment, 7:14–10:29: nine plagues, 11:1–10: final

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[1] Schwartz Regina M. "Joseph's Bones and the Resurrection of the Text: Remembering in the Bible," *PMLA* 103, Nº 2 (1988): 114–24. Accessed April 3, 2020. doi:10.2307/462428.

[2] Carol Meyers, *Exodus: The New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 107.

plague announced, 12:1–36: the Passover, 12:37–51: the Israelites leave Egypt, 13:1–16: dedication of the firstborn, 13:17–14:31: final triumph over Egypt, and 15:1–21: Moses' victory song. It is then evident from this detailed description that Exodus 13:19 is included in Exodus 13:17–14:31 which tells of the final triumph over Egypt, which can also be divided as follows: 13:17–22: Israel leaves its place of bondage, 14:1–22: the crossing of the Reed Sea, and 14:23–31: destruction of the Egyptians. It is then evident from this detailed structure that Exodus 13:19 which tells of the transportation of Joseph's bones with the Israelites to the Promised Land is included in Exodus 13:17–22.

Therefore, a simple deduction can be made as follows: this Exodus 13:19 which is a passage to be examined here is included in Exodus 13:17-22 which narrates the beginnings of the journeys. It deserves more attention because it has its great importance, especially for the specificity of verse 19.

5.2. Textual Criticism and Translation

As seen in the critical apparatus of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, there are two critical textual problems observed in Exodus 13:19. These two critical textual problems are as follows: 19ᵃ Sam 𝕲⁻ᴮ*⁷⁵ + יוֹסֵף ‖ 19ᵇ 𝕲 κύριος.

19ᵃ Sam 𝕲⁻ᴮ*⁷⁵ + יוֹסֵף

The apparatus says: "Sam 𝕲⁻ᴮ*⁷⁵ + יוֹסֵף". It means that the Samaritan Pentateuch and one Septuagint manuscript add the term יוֹסֵף which means "Joseph," just after the verb הִשְׁבִּיעַ. This addition is not only claimed by the Samaritan Pentateuch and one Septuagint manuscript, but it is also supported by some manuscripts such as Textus Graecus excepto codice, Codex Vaticanus, and Textus Graecus originalis. Perhaps their main point here on this explanatory textual insertion (addition) is to remove the fleeting misimpression that Moses had adjured Israel.[3] I then decided to keep what is written in the Masoretic text, because on this addition of the term יוֹסֵף, which looks like a typical clarification. So, due to *lectio brevior*, I take the Masoretic version without the additional word יוֹסֵף as the best text.

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[3] William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18 Volume 2: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2008), 465.

19^b 𝕲 κύριος

The apparatus says: "𝕲 κύριος". It means that the LXX Septuagint/Greek Pentateuch uses the term κύριος which means "Lord" to read instead of the term אֱלֹהִים of the Masoretic Text which means "God". Perhaps, this reflects a Hebrew text underlying the translation of the name of God "YHWH" (reconstructed, unattested or erroneous form). I then decided to keep what is written in the Masoretic Text, because it is difficult here to say which name of God is original. Genesis 50:24, which Exodus 13:19 quotes, uses אֱלֹהִים. But that makes LXX attractively difficult.[4] Because of all this, I tend to think that reading the term אֱלֹהִים which is written in the Masoretic Text is the best, because other translations such as the New American Standard Bible, the King James Bible and the French Ecumenical Translation of the Bible also follow it.

Exodus 13:19 can therefore be translated as follows:

Verse 19a: *"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him."*

Verse 19b: *"for he had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, God will visit you*, *then you must carry my bones with you from here."*

5.3. Exegetical Analysis

When Exodus 13:19 is examined closely, it indicates that the promise made to Joseph has been fulfilled. This verse says two main points: first, it says that *"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him"* (verse 19a). Joseph asked that his bones be taken from Egypt. He did so because he knew that Egypt was not the last resting place for the Israelites. God had a promised land for them. Second, it quotes what is written in Genesis 50:25: *"And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath, God will surely visit you, then you will take up my bones from here"* (verse 19b). This verse 19b says that Joseph had predicted. He claimed that one day the Israelites would carry his bones out of Egypt. And that word of prophecy that Joseph spoke was entirely rooted in the promise of God. What he said is based on the covenants that were made by God. God made covenants with Abraham, and the content of the covenants is to bless him and all of his descendants, to give them land, a house, and a name. When Joseph died in Egypt, he knew that God was true to his word. And God was. In this subsection then, an exegetical analysis of this Exodus 13:19 which will be based specifically on grammatical reflection will be carried out. In doing so, it will be divided into two parts as already mentioned above. In fact, it should not be

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[4] William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18 Volume 2: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 465.

separated because it is completely interdependent. But, to be able to understand what this verse wants to convey, it is better to divide it into two parts, and the discussion will be done by integrating the analysis of the keywords which concern it in particular.

Verse 19a

The question to be answered in this verse 19a is: what was the significance of the bones of Joseph being carried away from Egypt? It is stated here that Moses took Joseph's bones with him. The Hebrew phrase used in this verse to describe this phrase is וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־עַצְמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ. This means that Moses kept the oath of Israel to Joseph. Joseph's bones were not immediately taken to Canaan like his father, those of Jacob. His bones remained in Egypt until the time of the exodus. It can be said that Joseph became the one by whom God kept the rest of Israel alive. Moses took Joseph's coffin with him when the exodus journey from Egypt to Canaan began. He did it because Joseph had made an agreement with his family to bring his bones back to the Promised Land. Carrying the bones of Joseph from Egypt means ending the Egyptian scene of the presence of Israel. The Hebrew term for "bone" is עצם, which also means "substance, essence, self".[5] The Israelites were about to embark on a journey through a desert. In order to allow them to survive this journey, Moses arranged for the Jewish people to be accompanied by the bones of Joseph. In the Old Testament, the term עצם is a singular feminine noun, and its first use is found in Genesis when Adam proclaimed that Eve was the bone of her bones (Genesis 2:23). This phrase was repeated later as an idiom of close relationship (Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 19:13). The word can also be used for animal bones (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Job 40:18). Speaking figuratively, Jeremiah said that the Word of God was like a closed fire in his bones (Jeremiah 20:9).[6] The movement and the placing of the bones of the patriarch Joseph have their particular significances in the accounts of the first history of Israel. Sure that the oath of God to the fathers would be fulfilled, Joseph made a vow to the sons of Israel that they would take his bones to the Promised Land when they left Egypt (Genesis 50:24–25), an obligation that Moses took care to fill (Exodus 13:19). When Joshua then buried Joseph's bones in Shechem, this act was a testament to the sovereignty and faithfulness of God (Joshua 24:32).[7] According to Regina M. Schwartz, Joseph's

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[5] *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon,* 1907 ed., s.v. "עצם".

[6] Warren Patrick Baker, 861.

[7] Willem A. VanGemeren, 500.

bones reminded the Israelites that Egypt was not their homeland.[8] Here, taking Joseph's bones was a kind of demonstration that the ties to Egypt were completely broken. They kept their word to Joseph because he had solemnly promised the children of Israel that they would take his bones with them when they left Egypt. Joseph's prophecy was now being fulfilled, and the blessing of God's favor was indicated by taking the bones from Egypt with them. That is why Gispen signals by saying: "Joseph's confidence was not put to shame".[9] Here, Moses carrying Joseph's bones means that Joseph's bones were absolutely removed from Egypt. The Hebrew verb referring to the action of Moses is לקח, which means "to take", "to grasp", "to seize", "to take and go away with".[10] This verb is so important because of its appearance at the beginning of the sentence. In the Old Testament, its exact meaning must be discerned from its context. It is used of grasping or seizing a person or an animal (Genesis 12:5; Exodus 17:5; Ezekiel 8:3). The ark was captured (1 Samuel 4:11; 17, 19). It has the sense of keeping what one has (Genesis 14:21). It may mean in context to receive or acquire, to buy (2 Kings 5:20; Proverb 31:16). It is used of a bird carrying or loading its young onto its wings (Deuteronomy 32:11). It is used figuratively of obeying, "taking on" commands, and instructions (Proverb 10:8). It is used of taking a wife (Genesis 25:1). It is used of one's heart sweeping away, carrying away oneself (Job 15:12). In its passive usage, it means to be brought in (Genesis 12:15; Esther 2:8, 16).[11] This verb לקח does not indicate how these bones of Joseph were carried or transported. It indicates that they were carried from Egypt.

A simple conclusion can be drawn as follows: Joseph's bones were taken from Egypt for accomplishing what is written in Genesis 50:25–26 (The oath that the children of Israel have sworn). This act of taking Joseph's bones with the Israelites to the Promised Land has symbolic significance behind. It showed respect for the ancestors (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). Solidarity, family continuity, and heritage of the Promised Land. Bringing his bones out of Egypt ends the Egyptian scene in the life of Israel and symbolizes that what started with Joseph has now been achieved in a wonderful way: Israel was kept alive by God's providential activity. This was

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[8] Regina M. Schwartz, "Joseph's Bones and the Resurrection of the Text: Remembering in the Bible." *PMLA* 103, Nᵒ 2 (1988): 114-24. Accessed April 20, 2020. doi:10.2307/462428.

[9] Willem Hendrik Gispen, *Bible Student's Commentary: Exodus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1982), 139.

[10] *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 2003 ed., s.v. "לקח".

[11] Warren Baker*, The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003), 554.

evident in transporting his bones out of Egypt, especially the various ways of treatment that were practiced on his body before the funeral rite in Shechem.

Verse 19b

The question to be answered in this verse 19b is: what was the significance of Joseph's bones in ancient Israel? Apart from the oath which the children of Israel swore, why was it important that Joseph's bones were taken away from Egypt? This verse carries two verbs used two times each. The first is שׁבע. It is a verb closely related to the number seven, which is a sign of completion or a sign of perfection. Here, it means "to take a solemn oath".[12] It is first found in the Hiphil infinitive absolute and then in the Hiphil perfect. An infinitive absolute is a verbal noun which can stand on its own; but most often it is used to mean "surely, certainly, definitely", when accompanied by the same verb in a different morphology. So here: "he" refers to Joseph who was specified in the translation for clarity, "solemnly swear" stress that Joseph had made them take a solemn oath to carry his bones out of Egypt, and "Saying" introduces the content of what Joseph said. This verb appears also in Exodus 3:16; 4:31. The repetition here is a reminder that God was doing what he had said he would do and what Joseph had expected.[13] The form is a Hiphil perfect with the waw (ו) consecutive; it follows in the sequence of the imperfect tense before it, and so is equal to an imperfect of injunction (because of the solemn oath). Israel took Joseph's bones with them as a sign of piety toward the past and as a symbol of their previous bond with Canaan.[14] The second is the verb פקד which means "to visit, attend to, appoint".[15] It is first found in the Qal infinitive absolute, and is used in the same way the infinitive absolute of שׁבע was used. Immediately afterward, it is found in the Qal imperfect, indicating continuing action. God has attended and visited Israel throughout its history as a client nation of God.

According to this grammatical analysis of this verse 19b which was made by integrating the analysis of the keywords which concern it in particular, a simple conclusion can be drawn as follows: the oath plays a very important role. Not only in the Old Testament as seen in this Exodus 13:19, but also in the history of ancient Israel in general. Taking an oath actually involves

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[12] *Harper's Bible dictionary*, 1985 ed., s.v. "שׁבע"

[13] Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus,* (New York: Ktav Pub & Distributors Inc, 1992), 380.

[14] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press; Full Notes edition, 2006), Exodus 13:19.

[15] *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon,* 1907 ed., s.v. "פקד".

creating a sanctified relationship. In this verse 19b which is a direct quote from what is written in Genesis 50:25. Joseph swore an oath to the sons of Israel, that is to say, a sanctified relationship between Joseph himself and the sons of Israel whom they would surely carry with them the bones of Joseph to be buried in the Promised Land. This verse 19b then considers an oath as a relationship not only between two people (Joseph and the Israelites), but also in a sense with God. Apart from the oath which the sons of Israel swore, it was important to point out that Joseph's bones were removed from Egypt, because the sons of Israel viewed this oath concerning Joseph's bones as a sacred covenant between them and God. And that is the main point of this verse 19b. The sons of Israel fulfilled their oath because Joseph was buried in the Promised Land.

In the context of ancient Israel, these Joseph's bones have their specific significance. They were considered in ancient Israel as sacred things because the covenants that God made with Abraham and his physical descendants, that is, Isaac, Jacob and the sons of Israel were sealed with these bones of Joseph at that time. All of the Israelites' hopes were sealed in Joseph's bones. All of the Israelites' futures depend on Joseph's bones for four centuries. His bones were at least their training aid. Just like the feast of unleavened bread, the sacrifices of the lambs, the consecration of the firstborn, Joseph's bones had to provoke conversation to give meaning to their existence.[16] The Hebrews stayed in Egypt for several centuries and got used to slavery. Only Joseph's bones and the increased wickedness of slavery forced them to leave Egypt. Joseph knew that God had given him and his offspring the land of Israel and that Egypt was only a temporary residence for the Jews. Therefore, as a testimony to all future generations, Joseph did not want his bones to be buried in Egypt, but wanted them to remain above the ground and buried in the land when the Hebrews settled in the land that God gave them (Genesis 50:24–26).

5.4. The Question of Ritual

The question to be answered in this subsection is what was the ritual process of the pre-funeral ceremony which was followed in the days of ancient Israel if examined closely from these bones of Joseph taken from Egypt to the Promised Land? What was the ritual practice regarding the treatment of the body that was followed specifically in the time of ancient Israel before the funeral ceremony? There was a specific ritual process that was followed in the days of ancient Israel during the funeral preparatory ceremonies. It was a ritual practice regarding the treatment

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[16] Regina M. Schwartz, "Joseph's Bones and the Resurrection of the Text: Remembering in the Bible." *PMLA* 103, no. 2 (1988): 114-24. Accessed April 20, 2020. doi:10.2307/462428.

of the body in particular. It is therefore as follows when presented in a few words in this subsection.

Preparatory ceremonies before funerals are important in ancient Israel. Unlike the Greeks and Romans, whose costume is to cremate the dead, but the Israelites bury rather than burn the corpses. As written in Genesis 23:4, 9; 25:9; Deuteronomy 10:6; 34:6), burial has been its biblical procedure since the earliest patriarchs. For a corpse to remain unburied or to be exhumed after burial, and thus to become the food of beasts of prey, was the culmination of indignity or judgment (1 King 14:11; 16:4; 2 King 9:37; Psalm 79:3; Jeremiah 7:33; 8:1; 16:4, 6; 22:19; Ezekiel 29:5). In the East, burial takes place, if possible, within twenty-four hours after death. Muslims bury their dead on the day of their death, if death occurs in the morning; but if in the afternoon or at night, not until the next day. Haste is required because of the speed of decomposition, the excessive violence of sorrow, a reluctance to allow the dead to stay long in the homes of the living, perhaps for fear of harboring the body of a dying under divine judgment (Leviticus 10:4) and the defilement to which contact with a corpse gave rise (Number 19:11–16; Ezekiel 43:7; Haggai 2:13; Genesis 23:4, burial "outside of my sight"). Even hanged corpses were not allowed to remain exposed after dark (Deuteronomy 21:23). Thus, it is as follows the ritual procedure followed for the preparations before the time of the funeral. Families have different roles. Although the pre-burial ceremonies may have varied somewhat from period to period, the following characteristics appear normal. The death was announced by a high-pitched cry, followed by a tumult of lamentations (2 Samuel 1:12; 18:33). As an expression of affection, loved ones can kiss or kiss the body (Genesis 50:1). The eldest son or, failing that, the closest relative present would then close the eyes of the dead (Genesis 46: 4), perhaps symbolic of the "sleep of death" (Psalm 17:15). Those responsible would wash the body, anoint it with aromatic ointments, clothe it as in life (1 Samuel 28:14), patting hands and feet in graves, usually linen (Siracide 38:16), and covering the face or tie it with a towel or handkerchief. These ministries are generally the responsibility of loving relatives and friends, mainly women.[17] There is also the embalming action applied to the corpse. In fact, the real embalming action was not practiced in Israel, as evidenced by the body remains found; the "sweet smells and spices" (2 Chronicles 16:14) seem to have been used more for purification than for preservation. As well as the main

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[17] A. P. Bender, " Beliefs, Rites, and Customs of the Jews, Connected with Death, Burial, and Mourning: As Illustrated by the Bible and Later Jewish Literature, " In *the Jewish Quarterly*, Review, Vol. 7, Nº 2 (January 1895), 259–269.

reason for its use before the time of the funeral is to specifically indicate the honor that belonged to the deceased when he was still alive in society. The Hebrew verb חנט which means "to embalm, to give the color of ripeness" is mentioned in the Scriptures only in the cases of Jacob and Joseph (Genesis 50:2, 26).[18] It was definitely an Egyptian invention and a method to preserve the bodies of men and animals. Jacob's embalming took forty days (Genesis 50:2; seventy days was also common) and was performed by Joseph's "servants the physicians" (Genesis 50:3). These opinions serve mainly to demonstrate the importance of the individuals concerned, as well as to prove their faith in the ultimate return of the Hebrew people to Palestine (Genesis 50:25; Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32).[19]

In addition to the embalming action applied to the corpse, there is also the ritual procedure and practice followed by the mourners. For the Gentiles surrounding Israel, death was a calamity, hopeless; and their corresponding bitter mourning acts are illustrated both in the Scriptures (Isiah 15:2; Jeremiah 47:5; 48:37) and by ancient monuments. But even if this excess was questionable in the Old Testament (2 Samuel 12: 21–23), it nevertheless came to be widely assimilated into Israelite culture. The tears, so natural in themselves (Jeremiah 9:18), were supplemented by cries of "Alas, alas" (Amos 5:16), "Alas, my brother" (1 Kings 13:30; Jeremiah 22:18; 34:5), and similar phrases, until self-control disappears. A first action consisting in tearing the clothes (2 Samuel 1:11; 13:31; Job 1:20) was followed by the threading of a bag (Genesis 37:34; 2 Samuel 3:31), ruffling or ripping his hair and beard. (Jeremiah 7:29; Micah 1:16), holding hands over his head (2 Samuel 13:19; Jeremiah 2:37, as archaeological evidence confirms), spreading dust and ash on his head, or wallowing in it (2 Samuel 13:31; Ezekiel 27:30), and by fasting (2 Samuel 1:12), especially in times of extraordinary grief, such as the death of an only son (Jeremiah 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zechariah 12:10). Family members, such as wives, may cry in separate groups (Zechariah 12:12–14), while those in professional mourning come to occupy a special place (Ecclesiastes 12:5). The latter were mainly women (Jeremiah 9:17), "gifted in lamentation" (Amos 5:16), with singers and flutes. The most pagan characteristics of mourning, such as cutting the flesh (Jeremiah 47:5) or plucking the hair (Isaiah 15:2) for the dead, were prohibited by Mosaic law (Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 14:1), although Israel's obedience seems to have been far from laudable (Jeremiah 16:6). Because of the

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[18] *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon,* 1907 ed., s.v. "חנט".

[19] Simcha Paull Raphael, *Living and Dying in Ancient Times: Death, Burial, and Mourning in Biblical Tradition* (Colorado: Albion-Andalus, 2015), 40–50.

defilements involved, the priests were specifically restricted in their observance of mourning (Leviticus 21:1–4); and for the high priests and the Nazirites, this was completely prohibited (Leviticus 21:10; Number 6:7).[20] In addition to the action of the mourners, there is also the ritual procedure and the practice of processions which can be simply stated as follows. When the other preparations were completed and when the time came, the body was lifted over a beer or a litter box. The basic ideas contained in the Hebrew noun common feminine singular absolute מִטָּה which means "a couch, bed" written in 2 Samuel 3:31 confirm this. The word מִטָּה here refers specifically to the body lying on the shoulder by which it was carried by the shoulder to the tomb.[21] The chief mourners followed the beer (2 Samuel 3:31), accompanied by specially dressed professional wailing men (2 Samuel 14:2). As a particularly notable example, Genesis 50:7–11 describes in detail the funeral procession involved in transporting the remains of Jacob from Egypt to his grave in Palestine.[22]

When a few words concerning the ritual of internment are provided in connection with this Exodus 13:19, the following points can be explained. The burial must have taken the form of road burials, perhaps marked by a tree (Genesis 35: 8) or a pillar (Genesis 35:20). Coffins were not used in ancient Israel. The only one mentioned in the Bible is the sarcophagus. The word אֲרוֹן which means "box, chest" written in Genesis 50:26 in which Joseph's embalmed body was kept in Egypt. For the majority of the Israelites, unable to afford even a simple gravestone, the burial must have continued to consist simply in placing the body in a shallow depression. After the body was lowered into the ground, the beer was of course put aside; and the earth was replaced, followed by a pile of stones to save the dead from the depredations of beasts or thieves. For example, as it is written in Joshua 7:26 and 2 Samuel 18:17, the tomb of Achan at Anchor and that of Absalom in the wood of Ephraim were topped with piles of stones. In these cases, however, not for honor but for dishonor. Excavations at Canaanite sites have demonstrated the frequency of burials in homes, especially of infants. These include both normal burials, in broken pots under floors, and children's sacrifices, under foundations (1 Kings 16:34). But among the Hebrews, the burials of houses seem to have been exceptional, reserved for the main chiefs such

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[20] *Jewish Encyclopedia* 1901–1906 ed., s.v. "Burial" "Duty of Burial", "Object of Burial", "Time of Burial", "Early Burials", "Spices and Plants at the Burial", "Preparation for Burial", "Simplicity of Funerals", "Coffins or Biers", "Funeral Procession", "The Family Sepulcher".

[21] *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, 1974 ed., s.v. "מִטָּה".

[22] Geoffrey W. Bromiley *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Eerdmans Pub Co; Revised, 4 Volume Editions,1988/2002), 556–558.

as Samuel (1 Samuel 25:1), Joab (1 Kings 2:34) and the kings; and even in these references, the enclosure or the garden of the house can be what is planned (2 Chronicles 33:20 with 2 Kings 21:19). Thus, the Jewish took the burial of the dead very seriously; it was the way a community paid a final tribute to the one who died. The scriptures firmly stated that nobody should be left unburied, even that of its worst enemy (Psalm 78). In ancient Israel the custom was that the body was carefully wrapped in a shroud and that the face was covered with a special cloth. The hands and feet were tied with strips of fabric. Once this was done, relatives and friends could come to the home to say goodbye to the deceased for the last time. After this brief period during which the living was able to say their goodbyes to the deceased, the body was transported in a sort of litter to the grave.[23]

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[23] Kraemer David Charles, *The Meanings of Death in Rabbinic Judaism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 1–14.

CHAPTER SIX

JOSHUA 24:32

This sixth chapter will analyze the third of my three texts, Joshua 24:32, telling of the burial of Joseph's bones in Shechem. According to the narrative in Genesis and Exodus—and discussed thoroughly in the previous two chapters of this thesis—Joseph had given his brothers an order about his bones (Genesis 50:25–26), and Moses was eventually the one responsible for transporting Joseph's bones with him out of Egypt (Exodus 13:19). And now, in Joshua 24:32, Israel faithfully performs in Shechem the last will of the patriarch. Formerly leaving Hebron, Joseph had descended to Shechem, in search of his brothers. It is there, near the well of Jacob, his father, that his bones now rest.[1] This Joshua 24:32 will then be closely examined in this sixth chapter in order to discover the traces of the ritual significance found there in order to be able to answer the research question of this research work. In the same way as already done in the fourth and fifth chapters, this sixth chapter will also be divided into four subsections as it is successively expressed as follows: delimitation, textual criticism, translation from biblical Hebrew to English, exegetical analysis, and question of ritual.

6.1. Delimitation

In order to understand the content that this Joshua 24:32 wants to convey, it is preferable to obtain certain information about the context that surrounds it. Its context makes it possible to understand the main content it contains. In this section then, a few words on its contextual delimitation will be presented. The same thing that was done in the fifth chapter (Exodus 13:19). I also do not think that this Joshua 24:32 is considered an independent textual unit. But there is no need to comment or explain about it in this section. The most important thing is to say a few words about the functioning of this verse in its literary context. What Joshua 24:32 wants to convey can be understood through its literary context. In doing so then, I will highlight a specific discussion that will focus on the text itself by mentioning where it is placed in the outline of the book of Joshua and by showing in particular how this Joshua 24:32 functions in its close literary context.

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[1] Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), 361.

Joshua 24:32 belongs to the fourth main section of the book of Joshua which claims the last acts and the death of Joshua. It is written in chapter 22 until chapter 24.[2] This fourth main section of the book of Joshua can be described in detail as follows in a few words: chapter 22 deals with the return of the two and one-half tribes to their inheritances, chapter 23: Joshua's farewell address to the Israelites, Joshua 24:1–28: Israel's second renewal of the covenant, and Joshua 24:29–33: the death and burial of Joshua and Eleazar. It is then found in this fourth main section that Joshua 24:32 says the bones of Joseph that the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt buried them in Shechem in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph, is included in Joshua 24:29–33. The Israelites deposited Joseph's bones in that piece of ground which his father gave him near Shechem.

Therefore, a simple conclusion can be made as follows: Joshua 24:32 which is the passage to be examined here is included in Joshua 24:29–33, which narrates that Joshua and Eleazar died at the same time. This completely concludes the book of Joshua.[3] It deserves more attention because Joshua 24:29–33 is significant, especially for the specificity of verse 32. That is to say that neither these three verses 29, 30 and 31 which precede it nor the verse 33 which follows it have a narrative character due to the presence of consecutive waw ו.[4] Verses 29 to 31 deal with the death and burial of Joshua, verse 32 deals with the burial of Joseph's bones, and verse 33 deals with the death and burial of the priest Eleazar. Thus, verse 32 is here a specific story which refers to the instructions of the patriarch concerning the bones of Joseph (Genesis 50:24–25), and to the removal from Egypt by Moses (Exodus 13:19). This is justified by the presence of consecutive waw ו in the term וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת, which is placed at the beginning of verse 32. It is found as strong internal evidence here (narrative).

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[2] Trent C. Butler *Word Biblical Commentary: Joshua* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated. 2002), 209.

[3] Robert G. Bratcher, Barclay M. Newman, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Joshua* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), 314.

[4] Kasper Siegismund, *Studies in The Hebrew Verbal System Hebrew as a System of Relative Tense and the Origins and Development of the Classical Consecutive Forms* (Copenhagen: Karen Blixens, 2018), 149.

6.2. Textual Criticism and Translation

According to the critical apparatus of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, there is a critical textual problem observed in this Joshua 24:32:

32a prb l וַתְּהִי cf 𝔊𝒱

As seen here, the apparatus says: "prb l וַתְּהִי cf 𝔊𝒱" which can be translated as follows: the verb וַתְּהִי is proposed to read instead of reading the verb וַיִּהְיוּ which is written in the Masoretic text. I will clarify the difference between them as follows: Both are forms of the same verb היה. The suggestion of the critical apparatus is to read 3rd person singular feminine, which is referring back to the noun common feminine singular absolute קְשִׂיטָה, which is the logical reading. The Masoretic Text has 3rd person plural, and it is not clear here what the plural refers to. I would guess the bones. This proposition is supported by certain manuscripts such as the Syriac Peshitta and the Latina vulgate. The Masoretic Text considers here that the verb וַיִּהְיוּ has for subjects Shechem and the portion of ground. That is to say that Joseph's bones are buried in this place which became the heritage of his sons. The subject of this verb is then Shechem or the portion of land. But according to the Syriac Peshitta and the Latina vulgate versions, it is just a proposal to replace or substitute verbal translation.[5] So, I have decided to keep what is written in the Masoretic text, because what presupposes the versions Syriac Peshitta and the Latina vulgate is just a substitution which directly concerns the funerary domain, but not Joseph's bones to be buried. I note that what they presuppose is not entirely safe for carrying out an exegetical study. Because of all this, I tend to think that what is written in the Masoretic Text is the best because of the satisfying senses it offers. It is therefore the closest to the original text.

This Joshua 24:32 can therefore be translated as follows:

"Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons."

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[5] Barthélemy Dominique, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament : 1. Josué, Juges, Ruth, Samuel, Rois, Chroniques, Esdras, Néhémie, Esther* (Fribourg, Switzerland / Göttingen, Germany : Éditions Universitaires / Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 1982), 71–72.

6.3. Exegetical Analysis

The question to be answered in this subsection is what was the significance of Joseph's bones buried in Shechem? When Joshua 24:32 is examined closely, it speaks of the burial of Joseph's bones in Shechem, which marks the culmination of a long-standing action. His dying request was that he be buried in the Promised Land (Genesis 50:24–25). Moses, knowing of this request, took Joseph's bones with him in the Exodus (Exodus 13:19). Now after the long years of the wanderings and the Conquest, Joseph's bones, which had been embalmed in Egypt (Genesis 50:26) more than 400 years earlier, were now laid to rest in the piece of ground where is located in Shechem.[6] The burial of Joseph's bones was then accomplished. As clearly stated in Joshua 24:32, his burial took place in the piece of land in Shechem that Jacob had bought for one hundred pieces of silver, from the sons of Hamor, father of Shechem. This piece of land later became an inheritance for the descendants of Joseph. It is worth noting here that this burial of Joseph's bones in Shechem completes the time of the exodus and the conquest, and the children of Israel did so faithfully to carry out the last will of the patriarch. In this subsection then, an exegetical analysis of this Joshua 24:32—with particular attention to grammatical reflection— will be carried out. In order to be able to understand what this verse wants to convey; the discussion will be done by integrating the analysis of the keywords which concern it in particular.

As it is written in this Joshua 24:32, the exact place in Shechem where these bones of Joseph were buried is בְּחֶלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה which means "in the plot of ground". This plot of land had its specific history, and the way Jacob got it is written in Genesis 33:18–20: *"Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel."* Thus, according to this Genesis 33:18–20, it is the ancestor of the Israelites Jacob who bought this plot of ground where these bones of Joseph were buried. And this Joshua 24:32 also confirms it. Jacob bought it directly from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. He had paid them a hundred pieces of silver for it. When the children of Israel left Egypt, they had taken these bones of their ancestor Joseph with them on all their migrations through the wilderness, and had postponed the burial, according to the dying

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[6] John F Walvoord, Roy B Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of The Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 370.

accusation of Joseph himself, until they arrived in the Promised Land. Joseph knew that God had given him and his family a promised land, and that one day, in the not too distant future, the children of Israel would leave Egypt, take this Promised Land and live there. This means that Joseph had never lived in Canaan as a landowner. His bones which were buried there prove that he was also a native and member of a landowner. The sarcophagus in which his mummified body had been placed was brought there by the Israelites. And this specifically marked his arrival in his native country. According to Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Joseph's bones were probably buried when the tribe of Ephraim had obtained their settlement, or during the solemn convocation described in this Joshua 24.[7] Joseph's wish was thus fulfilled according to this Joshua 24:32. The promise he believed as written in Genesis 50:24–25 now comes to fulfillment. His coffin brought from Egypt is buried in this piece of land that Jacob had bought.[8]

In the Old Testament, the verb which has its own meaning "to bury, to bury, to be buried" is קבר. This verb often refers to placing a body in a cave or stone tomb rather than directly in the ground (Genesis 23:4; 50:13; 2 Samuel 21:14; 1 Kings 13:31; Isaiah 22:16). Abraham stated that one of the purposes of the burial was to make the dead disappear (Genesis 23:4). Corpses were considered to pollute the earth until they were buried (Ezekiel 39:11–14). It was also a reproach to the dead for being buried in a foreign place or for not being buried at all (Genesis 47:29, 30; 50:5; 50:24–26; Jeremiah 20:6). The bones were sometimes specifically mentioned as an object of burial (Joshua 24:32; 1 Samuel 31:13; 1 Kings 13:31). Those buried had to sleep or be buried with their fathers, and they were often placed in the same tomb (Genesis 47:30; 50:13; Judges 16:31; 2 Samuel 2:32; 17:23).[9] The verb קבר appears in the main branches of the Semitic languages with the meaning "to bury".

In the Old Testament, it is always linked to the burial of people, never animals or lifeless objects. Among the ancient Israelites, it was customary to bury their dead in a natural cave or a room carved out of soft rock, each family having its own funeral grave for the burial of deceased relatives. The existence of a family tomb seems to indicate permanent ownership of the surrounding land. This explains the importance of the detailed account in Genesis 23 of Abraham's purchase of the field of Machpelah as a burial place for his wife Sarah. By allowing

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[7] Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown, *A commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), Joshua 24:32.

[8] Robert G. Bratcher, Barclay M. Newman, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Joshua*, 316.

[9] Warren Patrick Baker, 975.

Abraham to use the cave for Sarah's burial, the people of Hebron granted him and his descendants permanent possession of the property. The desire of his descendants to be buried in Machpelah reveals the importance they attach to maintaining their families' inheritance rights over the land (49:29, 31; 50:13). Likewise, the locations of Jacob's burials (49:29–32; 50:5–14), Joshua (Joshua 24:30; Judges 2:9) and Joseph (Joshua 24:32) are directly associated. With the land their descendants will inherit. It was important that the dead be buried because the display of human corpses desecrated the earth (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23; Joshua 8:29; Ezekiel 39:11–16). Whoever touches a corpse has become unclean for seven days (Numbers 19:11–16). Not being buried properly was a sign of shame (2 Kings 9:10, 34, 35; Jeremiah 8:2; 14:16; 16:4, 6; 25:33; 1 Kings 14:13; Psalm 79:3; Ecclesiastes 6:3; Isaiah 14:19–20); burying someone was an act of kindness (2 Samuel 2:4–5).[10]

The question that arises here is then. Why were Joseph's bones buried in this plot of land in Shechem? Why did he have to be buried there? Why did he have to be buried in this piece of land in Sichem but not elsewhere? The answer is simple, because this land located in Shechem belonged to Ephraim and Manasseh, who were the sons of Joseph. Shechem has become an important city for Ephraim and Manasseh. And it was therefore normal that their great ancestor was buried there. This term שְׁכֶם denotes two different things in the Old Testament. Sometimes it denotes specifically to a masculine noun referring to a shoulder, the upper back. It mentions to the upper back and neck (Genesis 9:23; 21:14). Often, things were carried on the shoulder (Genesis 24:15, 45; Exodus 12:34; Joshua 4:5; Judges 9:48).[11] But sometimes this term is used to refer to a proper noun designating Shechem as a geographical region. And that is exactly what it means in this Joshua 24:32. It refers to an important biblical and Middle Eastern city located on the border of Ephraim and Manasseh (Joshua 17:2, 7). It was located between Mount Ebal in the northwest and Mount Gerizim in the southeast where the people of Israel had reaffirmed their commitment to the Lord (Joshua 8:30–35). It also served in Israel as a Levitical city as well as a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7; 21:21). It was briefly the first capital of the Northern Kingdom (Tirzah then Samaria took its place). Abraham had a vision and received promises from God in Shechem at the tree of Moreh (Genesis 12:6). When Jacob bought the plot of land there from Hamor, father of Shechem (Genesis 33:18), he and his family made a commitment to the Lord

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[10] Willem A. VanGemeren, 866.

[11] Warren Patrick Baker, 1139.

(Genesis 35:4), as much of Israel and Joshua did years later (Joshua 24:1–32). Here Dinah was raped and savagely avenged by Simon and Levi (Genesis 37). Shechem has remained a city intertwined with Israel at various times in its history (Judges 8:31; 9:1–57). Jeroboam I was made king in Shechem (1 Kings 12:1, 25).[12]

According to Joshua 24:32, it is explicitly stated that the purchase price that Jacob bought this plot of land in which Joseph's bones were buried was בְּמֵאָה קְשִׂיטָה which means "one hundred pieces of silver". Here, the combination of these two terms refers to some unknown measures of money, probably some measures by weight as found only in Genesis 33:19, Joshua 24:32, Job 42:11. This means that a piece of silver was an old measure of weight, amount unknown.[13] According to Warren W. Wiersbe this was meant to mean "a lamb," the weights being in the form of lambs or kids, which were, in all probability, the earliest standard of value among pastoral people.[14] But the purpose of the story in this Joshua 24:32 was not to know the exact significance of the value of these hundred pieces of silver. What is important is here is to know that thanks to this monetary transaction, Jacob became the owner of the land where Joseph's bones were buried.[15] These purchases of land served as a burial place for the Patriarchs. These purchases were prophetic purchases. They showed, by the possession of these properties, that the descendants of the patriarchs, the future nation of Israel, would one day truly possess the Promised Land in which Abraham and the others had been buried. And since Jacob was the owner of the land, his descendants were therefore obviously his heirs. This means that this plot of land was a homeland for Joseph and his descendants. And that is why Joseph's bones had to be buried there. Being buried in the country of origin is extremely important. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Julius Delitzsch point out that Joseph's burial in this land that Jacob had bought in Shechem undoubtedly took place immediately after the division of the lands, when Joseph's descendants received Shechem and the field for inheritance.[16]

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[12] Warren Patrick Baker, 1139.

[13] Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth* (ATD 9; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), 139.

[14] Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments*, Joshua 24:32.

[15] Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, 361.

[16] Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Julius Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, trans. James Martin (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1869), 234–235.

In the Old Testament, נַחֲלָה is the term to indicate inheritance. It is a specific term that has its own meaning "inheritance, property, heritage, possession or land given by one person to a successive generation" (Genesis 31:34). It refers to a part which is a part of a whole, as a part which has been assigned, involving association (2 Samuel 20:1).[17] In some passages it refers to an idea of possession which has been conceived as permanent and does not imply the idea of succession (1 Samuel 26:19; Psalm 78:55; Ezekiel 45:1).[18] According to this Joshua 24:32 then, this plot of land they chose for a burial-place for Joseph's bones, not only because Jacob had purchased it, but in all probability chiefly because Jacob had sanctified it for his descendants by building an altar there (Genesis 33:20). Thus, the specific significance of the burial of Joseph's bones in Shechem can be answered as follows: Shechem was the ideal place for the moving farewell address by the great leader of Israel. It was at Shechem that God promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the earth (Genesis 12:6–7), and there Jacob built an altar (Genesis 33:20). It was at Shechem that the people of Israel had reaffirmed their commitment to the Lord (Joshua 8:30–35). Shechem was indeed a holy land for the Israelites.[19]

In addition to that, perhaps another prophetic link on this subject calls the bones of Joseph repatriated to Canaan. Perhaps so that this burial would be based on a deep spiritual foundation in the land of Israel, an incredible prophecy of dry bones, received by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37:4–11). This may be the continuation of a second prophecy on the two sticks of Judah and Ephraim united in one (Ezekiel 37:19). Perhaps also that these bones with the essence and the breath which symbolically and prophetically accompanies them must revive to allow the reunification of all Israel. However, Joseph has given way to Ephraim. It is therefore up to those of Ephraim, a large army, to be one of the two actors in this prophecy. Moses brought back Joseph's bones at the request of Joseph, so that this prophecy could be fulfilled and this great army formed by the return of those of Ephraim alongside those of Judah. Indeed, if Joseph's bones had been left in Egypt, this single symbol would have been enough for many segregationist commentators to decree the absolute separation between Judah and Ephraim. So, the burial of Joseph's bones in

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[17] James A. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew, Old Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 5709.

[18] R Laird Harris, Gleason L Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 569.

[19] Warren Wendel Wiersbe, *Be Strong* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), Joshua 24:1.

Shechem was important not only because of the old parcel of land that Jacob had purchased from Hamor, but also because Shechem was to be the center of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

6.4. The Question of Ritual

The Old Testament does not provide any particular funeral rites that were followed concerning the burial of Joseph's bones. According to this Joshua 24:32, the only thing that is clearly stated is that Joseph's bones were buried in Shechem. However, a funeral rite was followed during a burial ceremony in ancient Israel. And the funeral rite in which Joseph's bones were buried was certainly not far from that. In this subsection then, I will briefly discuss two points regarding the question of ritual in relation to this Joshua 24:32. They concern the disposing of the corpse and the custom of the funeral rite.

The Old Testament does not give a detailed picture of the burial procedures; it alludes to the common burial practices of the Israelites and contains some scattered prohibitions relating to death. Placing the corpse in the ground or in a cave was the main method of eliminating the dead. One of the worst indignities was to be left unburied or become the food of predators (Deuteronomy 28:26; 1 Kings 11:15). If possible, the deceased was to be buried on the day of his death (Deuteronomy 21:23). Although embalming was not practiced, the corpse was dressed in special funeral clothing and sprinkled with various scents. Intense weeping surrounded the funeral rites during biblical times. This bereavement was not simply the result of spontaneous grief but was part of the funeral ritual. In ancient Israel, groups of paid mourners emerged who could lament a ritual signal. Much of the funeral service focused on these professional mourners who sang psalms and delivered elaborate praise for the dead (2 Chronicles 35:25; Jeremiah 9:17–22). The focus on mourning resulted from the Israelites appreciation of human life and health, which was considered one of the greatest gifts of God (Psalm 91:16), as well as from a vision of human nature which affirmed embodied existence (Psalm 16:9–11).[20] The burial was followed by the funeral meal (2 Samuel 3:35; Jeremiah 16:5, 7; Ezekiel 24:17, 22; Hosea 9:4).

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[20] Walter A. Elwell and Philip W. Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 501.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE QUESTION OF RITUAL

In the previous chapter, I have analyzed Joshua 24:32. The third of my three texts relating to the burial of Joseph's bones in Shechem. Now, in this chapter I will discuss the question of ritual. The following is a plan for achieving this: first, in relation to my three biblical texts, second, in relation to the broader lines in the Old Testament, third, in relation to early Jewish ritual, and fourth, in relation to the Malagasy challenges.

7.1. In Relation to My Three Biblical Texts

In chapter one, I asked the research question to what extent do these three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26, Exodus 13:19, and Joshua 24:32) indicate a ritual understanding of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan? So, I am now able to give and answer that these three biblical texts indicate a ritual understanding in the following extents: the embalming ritual applied to Joseph's body which followed his placement in a coffin in Egypt, the rite of the funeral procession from Egypt to Canaan where he will be buried, and the funeral rite in a specific plot of land located in Shechem where he will rest. Here then is what sums up the three preceding chapters with regard to the ritual question.

Genesis 50:24–26 speaks of the embalming of Joseph which was in accordance with Egyptian custom. It was a ritual process of preserving a body by means of aromatics. This art was practiced by the Egyptians from the earliest times and there brought to great perfection. This custom probably originated in the belief in the future reunion of the soul with the body. The most elaborate method of ritual embalming required the removal of the brain and all internal organs except the heart. The inner cavity of the body was then washed and filled with spices. The corpse was soaked in natron, then washed and wrapped in linen bandages soaked in gum. Finally, the embalmed body was placed in a wooden coffin. The ancient Israelites generally did not embalm their dead because of the laws concerning the touching of corpses (Numbers 5:1–4; 19:11–22). But Joseph died in Egypt. He was apparently embalmed so that his bones could be brought back to Canaan for burial.

Exodus 13:19 tells that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. The route of Joseph's funeral procession went from the funeral home (Egypt) to the burial site (Canaan), and the pallbearers of his bones are the Israelites as family members. In ancient Israel, the funeral

procession was an opportunity to accompany the body to its last place of rest as a last tribute to the one who died. It was a great way to honor and celebrate the life of a loved one. Joseph was with the Israelites and in their midst on the whole route of the exodus. It would show the bond and family love between him and his brothers. In ancient Israel, it was traditional to stop seven times along the procession route at significant places to recite psalms. Psalm 91:1 was a very common psalm to recite. The practice of stopping seven times during the procession was derived from the funeral procession of Patriarch Jacob. During their funeral procession from Egypt to Canaan, the group stopped for seven days to cross the Jordan to the "Promised Land". These breaks along the way also allowed mourners to stop at different places to reflect on the life of the deceased.[1] This route of Joseph's funeral procession which went from Egypt to Canaan lasted forty years.

Joshua 24:32 says that Joseph's bones that had been taken from Egypt according to his request were now buried in Shechem. Joseph's coffin was placed in a family grave in Shechem, in the heart of the Promised Land. In the Old Testament, there is no explicit biblical evidence on the length of the burial after death. The only thing most clearly expressed by the Israelite burial practices was the common human desire to maintain some contact with the community even after death, by burying in one's native land with one's ancestors. The location of burial plots was generally determined on a family basis. The Old Testament contains many references to an Israelite's desire to be buried in the family burying place, describing his death as going to his fathers (Genesis 15:15; 1 Kings 13:22), to sleep with one's fathers (1 Kings 11:23) and to be gathered to one's kin (Genesis 25:8). Burial customs among the Israelites consisted of two important elements: the mortuary ritual, which accompanied the burial, and the physical preparation of the body and its final resting place. Bodies were buried in tombs, that is, natural caves or rock-hewn sepulchers.

These three biblical texts therefore indicate a ritual understanding of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan in the following measure: Joseph was with the Israelites and in their midst on the whole route of the exodus like a living person. It would show the bond and family love between him and his brothers. This love and family bond which bound a family is one of the reasons for the transfer and transport of the bones of the ancestors to their ancestral land. There are identity ties between people and their ancestral countries. Joseph was then buried

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[1] William G Hoy, *Do Funerals Matter? The Purposes and Practices of Death Rituals in Global Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2013), ISBN 9780203072745. OCLC 800035957

by his people (the sons of Israel) in Shechem. The return of Joseph's bones is presented as a new fact; but also, an episode already recounted in Exodus 13:19 which mentions the transport of the bones of Joseph by Moses and the sons of Israel, from Egypt to the Promised Land in Canaan. J. Cazeaux considers these Joseph bones as a talisman.[2] This burial of Joseph's bones in the Promised Land meant that Joseph's body (or bones) was transported from Egypt where he died. His body therefore traveled with the people for forty years in the desert, then during the years of conquest of Canaan. Philippe Lefebvre says: "For part of his life, it was said that Joseph died; at his death, he was passing through the living".[3] And this is what is special for Joseph, the fact of transiting with his family for forty years. He was with his family who were on their way home for all these years of the exodus. A dead man who stays with his family for forty years without being buried is very special. It was the fulfillment of a promise made 400 years before. The Israelites carried Joseph's bones during the journey with a reverential sense of the sacred. For the Israelites on their forty-year journey into the wilderness, Joseph's bones are not an afterthought. It is a residue of the old days transported with a feeling of usual duty. Like the Ark of the Covenant and the Ten Commandments it contains, the ritual carrying of Joseph's bones is in a sense essential to the spiritual foundation of the nation. For the Israelites, their forty-year journey into the wilderness became both a pilgrimage to freedom and a national funeral procession in honor of the dead, which at the same time perpetuated the heritage of the ancestors.[4] It is unique in the Old Testament.

7.2. In Relation to the Broader Lines in the Old Testament

When the burial customs that were followed in ancient Israel are presented, it should first be noted that the Old Testament does not provide a detailed picture of the proper burial procedures. It simply refers to the common funeral practices and the prohibitions on death dispersed at that time. The first burial mentioned in the Old Testament was that of Sarah as written in Genesis 23, which says a lot about the picturesque market of Abraham with the sons of Heth concerning the purchase of the cave of Machpelah. Later, Abraham himself was buried in the same cave, as well as Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob. The sarcophagi of these patriarchs and their wives, probably located above the cave of Machpelah. And Joseph's mummy was buried in Shechem, in the piece

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[2] Jacques Cazeaux, *Le Refus de la Guerre Sainte : Josué, Juges et Ruth* (Paris : Cerf, 1998), 112.

[3] Philippe Lefebvre, *La Vierge au Livre : Marie et l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 75.

[4] Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Andrea L. Weiss, eds., *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (New York: URJ Press, 2008), 383.

of land purchased by Jacob from the sons of Hamor. The main point to be addressed in this subsection then concerns the ritual process that was followed during the burial in ancient Israel. In doing so, the question to be answered is: how was the funeral rite at that time? The following themes will be highlighted successively in order to answer this question: preparation for burial, funeral procession, and burial sites.

In ancient Israel, preparation for burial focused on the treatment of the corpse. God's assurance to Jacob that Joseph's hand will close his eyes (Genesis 46:4) probably alludes to the custom of a close relative closing the eyes of one who died with a fixed gaze. Close relatives can also literally embrace and kiss the body immediately upon expiration. The body was washed and dressed in the deceased's clothing. The pins and other ornaments found in the excavated graves prove that the dead were buried fully clothed.[5] In other words, as soon as the person has expired, the oldest son or the closest relative present would close the eyes of the deceased, which is simply explained by the resemblance of death to sleep. The mouth was closed, the body washed, then anointed with aromatic ointments. The body was then wrapped in fabric (usually linen), although high-ranking individuals were frequently dressed in fine clothing. Archaeological and biblical evidence indicates that wealthy or politically motivated people took advantage of burials with elaborate funeral assemblages that included robes, jewelry, furniture, weapons and pottery (1 Samuel 28:14; Isaiah 14:11).[6]

The soldiers were buried in royal dress, with shields covering or cradling the armored corps, their swords under their heads (Ezekiel 32:27). Embalming was not a standard practice in Israel. Egyptian treatment for Jacob and Joseph was the exception rather than the rule.[7] According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the Egyptians began the embalming procedures by removing the brain from the skull through the nasal openings, piecemeal, using a long-curved hook. Once this was done, the cranial cavity was rinsed with a mixture of resins and spices. The corpse was gutted and the bowels were placed in four canopic jars. The body was soaked in a natron solution for a period of 40 to 80 days, depending on the cost of the burial. At the time of burial, the corpse was wrapped in strips of fine linen from head to toe and placed in an anthropoid

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[5] Walter A. Elwell and Philip W. Comfort. *Tyndale Bible Dictionary: Tyndale Reference Library* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 241.

[6] Helene Nutkowicz, *L'homme Face à la Mort au Royaume de Juda : Rites, Pratiques, et Représentations* (Paris: Cerf, Coll. « Patrimoines Judaïsmes », 2006), 204–208.

[7] Rolland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (London: Darton, Longman & Todd LTD, 1973), 56.

coffin. The canopic jars were placed in the tomb with the body, symbolizing the reunification of the personality and its survival after death. The cremation of the bodies of Saul and his sons (1 Samuel 31:12–13) was also an exception to normal practice. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote that contrary to Roman custom, Jewish piety required burial rather than the burning of corpses. Under the Mosaic law, this burn was reserved for condemnation (Leviticus 21:9; Joshua 7:25). Cremation was then widely practiced among the last Greeks and Romans with the Canaanites; it was the custom of the Israelites to intervene in the body. The only exceptions to this practice have occurred when bodies are in an advanced state of decay after mutilation or when threatened with plague (Amos 6:10). Embalming was not part of the Israelites' burial, but because Jacob and Joseph died in Egypt, they were mummified after local custom by physicians (Genesis 50:2–3, 26). A coffin was used for the burial of Joseph (Genesis 50:26), but this was generally not the case among the Israelites.[8]

In ancient Israel, the funeral procession to the grave began, when preparations for the body were completed. It all started with the corpse carried on a wooden bier, usually by friends, servants or relatives (2 Samuel 3:31). The procession was led by professional mourners, followed by family members who filled the air with cries of sadness and agony (2 Samuel 3:31–32; Job 21:33; Ecclesiastes 12:5; Jeremiah 9:17; Amos 5:16).[9] The porters carried the bier on their shoulders. They are called shoulders, who walk barefoot, a group of carriers changing from time to time to give as many people as possible the opportunity to honor the dead. In the case of a child under the age of twelve months, the bier was carried by the handles. The women went, as a rule, in front of the bier, the reason invoked being that "woman brought death upon the world"; in reality because the mourning women singing the song and beating the drum led the funeral procession, as they always do in the East (Jeremiah 9:16);[10] though at times they follow the bier. Besides relatives and friends (Genesis 1:7), it was also expected that any stranger would follow when he saw the dead carried to the grave, lest he be said to be "the one who made fun of the poor reproached his Creator" (Proverb 17:5). A law teacher was honored by having a roll of the bier law placed, or carried next to it, and placed in the grave. Among the Canaanites, the mourning ritual included cutting or mutilating one's flesh, but this was expressly forbidden by

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[8] Paul John Achtemeier, et al, *Harper's Bible dictionary*. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 145.

[9] Rolland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh, 59–60.

[10] Joseph Schwarz, *Das Heilige Land* (Frankfurt am Main: Kaufmann, 1852), 342.

Jewish law (Leviticus 19:27–28; 21:5; Deuteronomy 14:1). The period of mourning varied among the ancient Israelites. Mourning for Jacob lasted for seventy days (but this also included the embalming period, Genesis 50:3) while Aaron (Numbers 20:29) and Moses (Deuteronomy 34:5–8) were mourned for a period of thirty days after burial.[11]

In ancient Israel, varieties of burial sites were used. Their use depended on the occasion of death, the time allotted for burial and the geological characteristics of the region. The most common type of burial was the simple pit or trench, often covered with carpets, slabs of wood or stone. These simple graves were sometimes marked with a tree (Genesis 35:8), although in the case of infamous individuals, the burial plot was identified by a pile of stones placed on them (Joshua 7:26; 2 Samuel 18:17). The burial places received their main holiness because they were the resting place of family members. For the ancient Israelites, to die was "to be reunited with their people" and "asleep with their fathers" (Genesis 49:29; Numbers 27:13; Judges 2:10); to be buried in the grave of their fathers and mothers was their dearest wish (2 Samuel 19:38; 21:14). Thus, the cave of Machpelah has become the family tomb of the Patriarchs (Genesis 23, 49:29–31). The kings were buried in a family grave (2 Kings 21:18, 26; 23:30). Tombs were either dug in the ground near the family home (1 Kings 2:3–4; 1 Samuel 25:1; 28:3) or carved out of the rock, often during life (Isaiah 22:16; 2 Chronicles 16:14).[12]

Typical tombs in the days of ancient Israel involving some sort of cave or excavation carved out of a rocky cliff. In one case, they were stone buildings in the shape of houses or erected domes; in the other case, they are caves or rocks selected in order to provide the compartments or galleries with as many vaults on three sides as the family wishes. Sometimes larger families or groups of families used these burial areas together. An opening on the side of a cliff could lead to a crypt of several rooms used by different families. There would be an exterior chamber and an interior chamber, or at least a front and rear part of the cave. In the outer chamber, the body was placed on a sort of bench or shelf cut out of rock (vaults). In these vaults, the corpse was placed horizontally, the stone rolled on the entry forming the cover or the door, while the porch on the fourth side was large enough to leave room for bier and visitors.[13] And when the body was placed, the bier is of course put aside, and at first only a pile of stones is piled

[11] Paul John Achtemeier, et al, *Harper's Bible dictionary*, 146.

[12] David Noel Freedman*, The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 785.

[13] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "From Womb to Tomb: The Israelite Family in Death as in Life," in *the Family in Life and in Death*: *The Family in Ancient Israel*, ed. P. Dutcher-Walls: New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 122–131.

on the shallow grave to save the dead from the dreaded depredations of hyenas, jackals or thieves. Once the final thanks were paid, a large round stone was generally rolled into place via a groove to cover the tomb. These large stones were often whitewashed as a kind of warning to passers-by that the area was actually a grave.[14] Indeed, the Jews incurred a ritual impurity by coming into close contact with a corpse. Certainly, this could be supported as an act of charity for a deceased relative, but one would not want to incur this for a stranger.

Thus, the entrances to the whitewashed graves served as a kind of warning to depart. Very poor people, who could not afford a rock-hewn grave, or foreigners who had no land were buried in vertical wells in designated fields. There was the purchase of the potter's field as a burial place for the poor and foreigners who died in Israel. A brief meal was followed, served and included after the time of burial. The ritual consumption of wine and the consumption of mourning bread. For close relatives such as a wife, son or daughter, the grief lasted 30 days. This has been observed by wearing special clothing, refraining from wearing bubbles during prayer and not responding to greetings on the street.[15]

In the ancient graves of the Palestinian family, the burial did not take place immediately, but the body was left in the burial chamber for some time until it was reduced to a simple skeleton, and then the bones were recovered again, wrapped in linen clothes, tied tightly. Together like mummies, then solemnly buried. Mourners throw grass behind them as they leave the cemetery. Disturbing the rest of the dead by removing the body or bone from one place to another was considered a great evil; but it was authorized for the benefit of the dead in the event of transfer of the body to the family plot, or when the burial site had become sheltered from insults or elementary ruins.[16]

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[14] Jacob Edmond, *Kajoba-Kilimbo Kipai:Mort et Pratiques Funéraires dans l'Ancien Testament*, Thèse du Doctorat de 3e Cycle. In *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, 57eme Année, N° 3 (1977): 417–418.

[15] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Death in Life of Israel," In *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, ed. B. M. Gittlen. Winona Lake IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 139–143.

[16] Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel*, Baker Encyclopedia of The Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988), 388.

7.3. In Relation to Early Jewish Ritual

It should be noted that during Antiquity, in Israel, there was a Jewish funeral rite of *ossilegium*, a secondary burial which consisted in grouping the bones of the dead. During the primary burial of the corpse in a loculus, Kokh or arcosolium of the funeral chamber, the body is left in decomposition for about a year in order to recover a naked skeleton.[17] During the secondary burial, the family of the deceased gathers their bones which are thrown loose in collective graves but, from the years 20 to 15 before the Christian era, the practice spread in Israel to collect these remains in an ossuary, a rectangular box (the size of the largest bone in the body, the femur) often made of limestone, sometimes mounted on small feet and closed by covers of various shapes (flat, domed, slide, double slope).[18] The name of the deceased and his relatives can be engraved or cut on the side of these boxes, the most common of which measure 50 by 30 centimeters, that is to say long enough to contain the femurs and wide enough for the skulls. These ossuaries placed along the walls of the funerary room or in kokhim are sometimes decorated with geometric (triangles, diamonds, twists, rosaries, zigzags, stars, etc.), floral (palm trees, olive trees, rosettes) and architectural (columns), pediments, capitals) and inscribed with the names of the deceased.[19]

The reason for all this is as follows: the burial was not completed until the bones were removed from the ground or the sarcophagus. The bones have been cleaned and placed in their final deposit, that is to say in an ossuary, usually a small stone coffin. The tendency to postpone the final burial, where it is a question of exhumation or collection of bones, is accentuated by the realization of a common ossuary for a certain number of deceased. The exhumation and the collection of bones are linked to the idea of the final meeting with his fathers.[20] Family members marked the box with identifying information and placed it in the back room of the tomb where the bones of other parents were also stored. This is the basis of the Israelites expression that the deceased "rested with his ancestors".

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[17] Eric M. Meyers, "The Theological Implications of an Ancient Jewish Burial Custom," in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 62, N° 2 (1971): 95–119. Accessed May 7, 2020. doi:10.2307/1453302.

[18] Estelle Villeneuve, Jean Radermakers, et Jean Vervier, *La Découverte du Tombeau de Jésus*, (n.p: Éditions Fidélité, 2007), 24.

[19] Jean Perrot, Daniel Ladiray, et David Ussishkin, *Tombes à Ossuaires de la Région Côtière Palestinienne au IVème Millénaire avant L'ère Chrétienne* (Paris : Association Paléorient, C.R.P.F.J. Jérusalem, 1980), 35.

[20] Walter A. Elwell and Philip W. Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 981.

It effectively explains the concerns of the patriarch Joseph: Then Joseph took an oath from the sons of Israel, saying, "God will visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here" (Genesis 50:24–26). And Scripture says that as Moses left Egypt, he took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, "God will visit you; then you must carry my bones with you from here" (Exodus 13:19). And Scripture says that after entering the land, The bones of Joseph which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money; it became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph (Joshua 24:32). Thus, Joseph rested with his ancestors.[21] According to these three biblical texts which speak of Joseph's death, funeral and burial then, family burial in a grave meant a good death in ancient Israel, while individual or non-family exhumation and burial without a grave or in a foreign country were denigrated or considered a form punishment (Joshua 7:25–6; 1 Kings 13: 21–2; 14:13; Jeremiah 8:1–2). Joseph's bones therefore returned to his fatherland with his family, his brothers and all his compatriots.

7.4. In Relation to the Malagasy Challenges

As already mentioned in the second chapter (Interpretative Context). There are two different kinds of *Famadihana* in the highlands region of Madagascar. There is what is called the *Famadihana* of inauguration and the *Famadihana* of transfer. But both are ancestral worship ceremonies for the request of the blessing. The ceremony is fixed in principle several years after death: (one, three, five, or seven years or even ten years). And it is very common in the highlands. These three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26; Exodus 13:19; and Joshua 24:32) which indicate a ritual understanding of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan then show some parallels on what happens in the practice of the *Famadihana* of transfer in Madagascar. These three biblical texts show three different processes of ritual questions: the rites that followed regarding the treatment of Joseph's body when he died in Egypt. The rites of the funeral procession began so far from his native land (Egypt) to his ancestral land (Canaan) where he will be buried, and the funeral rite in a specific plot of land located in Shechem where he will rest. In addition to this, the close relationship and family love between Joseph and his brothers; and above all, the importance of being buried in an ancestral land. This love and family relationship which bound a family is one of the reasons for the transfer and transport of the bones of the

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[21] Rivka Ulmer, *Egyptian Cultural Icons in Midrash*, (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2009) doi: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110223934

ancestors to their ancestral land. There are identity ties between people and their ancestral countries. The same is true for the transfer of bones from ancestors or ordinary people in Madagascar by the practice of the *Famadihana* of transfer. It is a ceremony consisting of exhuming the remains of the deceased and transferring them to the family vault, wrapped in a new shroud. This is the case when the person has died far from their homeland. In the proper sense of the term, *tanindrazana* (ancestral land). According to Pierre Loïc Pacaud,[22] the displacement of a body from an individual provisional tomb to a collective family tomb located in the cradle of the lineage, and re-wrapping of the remains in new shrouds.

All the ancestors find their unity in the family tomb where they are buried collectively. The tomb close to the places of habitation and the grounds is the guarantor of a territorial registration of the families in a clearly delimited space. There is a very strong correspondence in the highlands between the ancestors and the land heritage that they have transmitted over the generations. The role of the living is moreover to transmit this heritage to their descendants in the best possible conditions, thus playing a role of ferryman, insofar as the *tanindrazana* constitutes the most precious good. Thus, the *tanindrazana* is both the physical place where the rice fields are located and the symbolic place where the tomb is located, one and the other rubbing shoulders to finally put the rice fields under the protection of the ancestors. According to Maurice Bloch,[23] there is a symbiosis between kinship, the land of the ancestors, and the tomb, the characteristic of this system being the importance given to the tomb as a material object, while in many related civilizations; the concept of descendants is enough for him - even to create these intergenerational links.

In Madagascar also during the worship of the Ancestors especially, the bones of the Ancestors are found among the living but this does not last as long as for those of Joseph. During the *Famadihana* in the highland region of Madagascar, the living even dances with the bones of the Ancestors exhumed until their reburial. What comes close to the case of Joseph in Madagascar is this concern to bring back the bones of the Ancestors in the country of their Ancestors. Most of the Malagasy must imperatively be buried in the tomb and the country of their ancestors of the paternal line with some exceptions because in the Malagasy society, the true bearer of the children is generally their father, it is a patriarchal tradition. And in the patrilineal

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[22] Pierre-Loïc Pacaud, 203.

[23] Maurice Bloch, 146–149

tradition or the case of patrilineage like that of most Malagasy, the woman who marries still belongs to her original lineage but her children will belong to that of her husband.[24] Most Malagasy people practically belong to their father until their death. Hence the burial in everyone's paternal family tomb. *Famadihana* then characterizes the traditional Malagasy funeral rites. It is about dressing the bones of the deceased, putting them in a box. The most important bones for the Malagasy are the bones of the limbs (forearms, arms, thighs, legs) which are in total eight. It is called in Malagasy *Taolam-balo* (*Taolana* = bones, *valo* = eight). In addition to that, the Malagasy also have a very important proverb: *"Velona iray trano; maty iray fasana"* (Living in the same house, dead in the same tomb), which indicates the relationship between the living, the house, the dead and the tomb. The living and the dead are, according to the Malagasy, members of the same family, there is continuity of life. And this proverb expresses the transcendental family union.[25] This proverb explains traditional funeral practices. It is shameful for a Malagasy to leave the bones of the deceased separated from his or her ancestors already buried in the *Fasan-drazana* (tomb of the ancestors) [*Fasana* = tomb, *Razana* = ancestors].

Before performing the *Famadihana* ceremony, the Malagasy must always consult the *mpanandro* (the one who knows the day). Only the mpanandro determines the day, the hour and everything for the opening of the tomb. And this is a great challenge for the Malagasy in the highland regions of Madagascar, because the word of the *mpanandro* should not be overlooked. Everything he says should be followed in detail. It is he who determines everything. Before going to look for the bones of the deceased, the *mpanandro* indicates the time to warn the deceased by saying: "Prepare yourself because tomorrow we will come to pick you up or to dress you". Search for the body who is not yet in the family grave, and clothe for the body who is already buried there. The *mpanandro* puts water in a container, soaks the leaves in it and makes a gesture to sprinkle around him (A little the same gesture as the priest who blesses). The ancestors' tomb is a kind of house with shelves inside where they put the bones of the deceased according to their age (date of birth). The oldest are the highest. Before dressing the bones, the Malagasy put coconut oil on all the bones in the family tomb. And the whole family takes advantage of the opening day of the family tomb to be able to dress the other ancestors. During this time, they ask for their wishes, which focus on health, wealth and descendants. These are the three most important wishes for the Malagasy. Each brings the *Tsihy* (mats) and the *Lamba* (linen). They

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[24] Jacques Lombard, *Introduction à L'Ethnologie* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2008), 70.

[25] Lars Vig, *Les Conceptions Religieuses des Anciens Malgaches* (Antananarivo: Karthala, 2001), 86.

dance around the family tomb, turning 7 times. They dance with the well-dressed bones of the deceased wrapped in *Tsihy*. The bones of the deceased are called *Razana* (ancestors). For Malagasy participants, they can speak directly with the *Razana*. The Malagasy consider that the ancestors can help them to have prosperity in life. They believe that ancestors can fulfill their wishes by giving: health, wealth and descendants. The Malagasy give the ancestors a very important place; they call the ancestors before making a decision or doing something important in life. They practice a specific ritual to call the ancestors, for example, before *Famadihana*, marriage, to build a house, etc. This ritual called *Joro*.[26]

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[26] *Joro* is a kind of worship offered for ancestors. This cult is practiced everywhere in Madagascar but is presented in different forms. In the highlands, *joro* is practiced near the *vatolahy*, a stone-built near a tomb or on a place considered as holy. Remembering that all activities or a project within a Malagasy society did not start without the permission of the ancestors doing this worship.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

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I have now come to the end of this investigation. In this concluding chapter I will highlight three main points: summarize, answer the primary research, and reflect briefly on the question about Christians and *Famadihana*

For summarizing, this research work is divided into eight main chapters. The first chapter specifically presents a general introduction to the research project. These following three points have been discussed: the preliminary observation that caught my attention to conduct this research, the research question arose that contains the main problem to be solved due to the preliminary observation, and the procedure to follow to carry out this research work. The second chapter deals with the interpretive context. These two perspectives have been highlighted, followed by a simple summary: the role of the *Famadihana* in the highlands region of Madagascar, and some reflections on my own position as a pastor within the Malagasy Lutheran Church which is currently a postgraduate student. The third chapter presents the theories and perspectives related to my textual analysis. Three perspectives have been accentuated: exegetical theory, ritual theory, and a literature survey in relation to the *Famadihana* ritual. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters present an exegetical analysis of the three biblical texts which was carried out successively: Genesis 50:24–26 was analyzed in the fourth chapter, Exodus 13:19 in the fifth chapter, and Joshua 24:32 in the sixth chapter. In doing so, these following points were discussed specifically in each chapter: delimitation, textual criticism and translation, exegetical analysis, and the question of ritual. The seventh chapter presents the question of ritual. The three chapters analyzing biblical texts all had a specific sub-chapter related to this. The question of the ritual centered on these four following points was discussed: in relation to my three biblical texts, in relation to the broader lines in the Old Testament, in relation to the earlier Jewish ritual, and in relation to the Malagasy challenges.The eighth chapter concludes, mainly in relation to the exegetical research question. Three main points were highlighted: summarize, answer the primary research, and reflect briefly on the question about Christian and *Famadihana*.

The specific objective that was set in this investigation is to answer the research question to what extent do the three biblical texts (Genesis 50:24–26, Exodus 13:19, and Joshua 24:32) indicate a ritual understanding of the carrying of Joseph's bones back to Canaan? It is seen then during the development of this research work that there are ritual significances found in these

three biblical texts. The embalming ritual applied to Joseph's body which followed his placement in a coffin in Egypt is found in Genesis 50:24–26, the rite of the funeral procession from Egypt to Canaan where he will be buried is found in Exodus 13:19, and the funeral rite in a specific plot of land located in Shechem where he will rest is found in Joshua 24:32. These three biblical texts therefore indicate a ritual understanding in the following extents: the embalming ritual, the rite of the funeral procession, and the funeral rite.

In Malagasy belief the funeral rite is one of the rites of passage which take place in three stages: the rite of separation, the rite of margin and the rite of aggregation. All the steps to be followed during the funeral rite are therefore in accordance with the description of the rite of passage, in particular with the preparation of the deceased corresponds to the separation rite, the day before and the burial corresponds to the rite of margin and after the burial to the rite of aggregation. *Famadihana* is a rite of passage for the dead. The new deceased is never called *"razana"* (ancestors), but after the *Famadihana* they would become *razana*, they have the power to bless and to be the intermediary between *Andriamanitra* (God) and human beings. *Famadihana* is then in this case as a kind of enthronement of the deceased so that he can become one of the gods, and his soul is immortal, still has influences in the life of the living either by their blessing or by their curse.

It is in this idea of the immortality of the soul that rests the religion of the Malagasy and that leads them to adore and venerate the ancestors. These adorations and venerations are more visible in the funeral rites and in the *Famadihana*. The steps to follow in these customs have ritual significances related to the souls of the ancestors. The immortality of the soul in the Malagasy conception leads to ancestral worship, which is described as the oldest religion in the world. It is on this antiquity of ancestral worship that the problem of the difficulty of differentiating culture and religion rests. Today the funeral practices and the practices of *Famadihana* in the highlands region of Madagascar are said to be cultures but no longer religions. This statement may be true if I only look at the appearance, but if I observe in more detail the steps to follow in these rites, I can conclude that it is a question of religions. So, for the pagans, they practice the *Famadihana* in ignorance, but for the Christians who still practice it, it is idolatry and fornication in the eyes of YHWH. It is for this reason that YHWH prohibited all forms of necromancy and all relations with the dead. Hans Walter Wolff has made this prohibition clear:

> Everything that embellishes death and the dead, everything that
> could surround them with a sacred halo, everything that could
> deify them and deify the power of death is resolutely rejected,
> so that any adoption of a cult of the dead in the life and faith of
> Israel is excluded.[1]

To face *Famadihana*, therefore, Christians must know that the dead are radically separated from the living and that the tombs that will be built to bury the bodies of the deceased must conform to this idea. The only solution for Christians is then to build family tombs. This is not prohibited in the Old Testament, but its specific conception must keep the Malagasy away from the temptation to touch the bones of the deceased again and to re-bury them.

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[1] Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 1974), 95.

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