

# *Joseph & Aseneth:*

## *Translated by David Cook*

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**I.** It came to pass in the first year of the seven years of plenty, in the second month, that Pharaoh sent out Joseph to go round the whole land of Egypt. 2. And Joseph came, [\[1\]](#) in the fourth month of the first year, on the eighteenth day of the month, [\[2\]](#) into the district of Heliopolis. 3. And he was collecting all the corn of that land, as the sand of the sea. 4. Now there was in that city a man, a satrap of Pharaoh; and this *man* was the chief of all Pharaoh's satraps and lords. [\[3\]](#) 5. And he [\[4\]](#) was very rich, and wise, and generous, and he was Pharaoh's counsellor, and his name was Pentephres; and he was the priest of Heliopolis. [\[5\]](#) 6. And Pentephres had a virgin daughter of about eighteen years of age, tall and beautiful and graceful, more beautiful than any other virgin in the land. [\[6\]](#) 7. And she was quite unlike the daughters of the [\[7\]](#) Egyptians, but in every respect like the daughters [\[8\]](#) of the Hebrews. 8. And she was as tall as Sarah, and as beautiful as Rebecca, and as fair as Rachel; and this virgin's name was Aseneth. 9. And the fame of her beauty spread through all that land, even to its remotest corners; [\[9\]](#) and all the sons of the lords and of the satraps and of the kings sought her hand in marriage, young men all *of them*. 10. And there was great rivalry between them because of her, and they began to fight among themselves [\[10\]](#) because of Aseneth. 11. And Pharaoh's eldest son heard about her, and he begged his father to give her to him as *his* wife. 12. And he said to him, "Give me Aseneth the daughter of Pentephres the priest [\[11\]](#) of Heliopolis as *my* wife." And his father Pharaoh said to him, "Why should you want a wife of lower station than yourself? 12. Are you not king [\[12\]](#) of all the earth? [\[13\]](#) 14. No! See now, [\[14\]](#) the daughter of King Joakim [\[15\]](#) is betrothed to you, and she is a queen

and very beautiful indeed: take her as your wife."

1. to go round . . . came: B om.
2. in the fourth . . . month: Slav. om.
3. and this *man* . . . lords: B om.
4. Lit. 'this man'.
5. B 'and Pentephres was the first man of Heliopolis'; D om.
6. Or 'upon the earth'.
7. d. of the: D om.
8. but . . . daughters = HA: BD Slav. 'and'.
9. even to . . . corners: Slav. om.
10. among themselves: B om.
11. B 'the first man'
12. So D: BE 'king as you are'; G 'For you are king'.
13. Or 'land'.
14. See now: D om.
15. So BD Slav.: FH 'of the king of Moab'; A 'of king Joachim of Moab'.

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**II.** Now Aseneth despised all men and regarded them with contempt; yet no man had ever seen her, for Pentephres had a tower in his house, and it was large and very high. 2. And the top storey had ten rooms in it. 3. The first room was large and pleasant; and it was paved with purple stones, and its walls were faced with precious stones of different kinds. 4. And the ceiling of that room was of gold; and within it [1] were ranged the innumerable gods of the Egyptians, in gold and silver. 5. And Aseneth worshipped all these; and she feared them and offered sacrifices to them. [2] 6. The second room contained all *the finery for Aseneth's adornment and treasure chests*. [3] 7. And there was much gold in it, and silver, and garments woven with gold, and precious stones of great price, and fine linens. 8. And all her girlish ornaments were there. [4] 9. The third room contained all the good things of the earth; [5] and it was Aseneth's store-house. 10. And seven virgins had the remaining seven rooms, one each. 11. And they used to wait on Aseneth, and were of the same age as she was, for they were all born on the same night as Aseneth; and they were very beautiful, like the stars of heaven, and no man or boy had ever had anything to do with them. 12. And Aseneth's large room, where she spent her time, [6] had three windows. 13. One window looked out over the courtyard to the east: the second looked to the north, onto the street; and the third to the south. 14. And a golden bed stood in the room, facing the east. 15. And the bed had a coverlet of purple woven with gold, embroidered with blue, and fine linen. 16. In this bed Aseneth used to sleep alone, and no man or woman ever [7] sat upon it, except Aseneth only. 17. And there was a great court all round the house, and a wall round the court, very high *and* built of great rectangular stones. 18. And there were four gates to the court, overlaid with iron; and eighteen strong young men-at-arms used to guard

each one of them. 19. And along the wall inside the court every kind of beautiful tree that produces fruit had been planted; and the fruit on every one of them was ripe, for it was harvest time. 20. And on the right of the court there was an ever-bubbling [8] spring of water, and beneath the spring a great cistern [9] that received the water from the spring *and* out of which a river flowed through the middle of the court and watered all the trees in it.

1. Lit. 'that room'.
2. FH add 'daily'
3. In this verse the authorities differ not a little among themselves over the details, though without any change in the general sense.
4. Lit. 'And there was all the adornment of her virginity'.
5. Or 'land'
6. Lit. 'where her virginity was nurtured'.
7. So BH Slav.: D om.
8. Lit. 'rich': D om.
9. Slav. adds 'of marble'.

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**III.** And it came to pass [1] in the fourth month, on the eighteenth [2] day of the month, that Joseph came into the district of Heliopolis. [3] 2. And as he approached the city, Joseph sent twelve men in front of him to Pentephres, the priest of Heliopolis, saying, May I be your guest to-day, [4] for it is near noon and time for a mid-day meal? 3. The sun's heat is overpowering, and I would enjoy some refreshment under your roof. 4. When Pentephres heard this, he was overjoyed and said, 5. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Joseph." And Pentephres called his steward [5] and said to him, 6. "Make haste and get my house into order, and prepare a great feast, because Joseph, the mighty man of God, is coming to us to-day. 7. And Aseneth heard that her father and mother had come back from their family estate in the country. [6] 8. And she rejoiced and said, I will go and see my father and my mother [7] for they have come back from their family estate in the country. 9. And Aseneth hurried [8] and put on a fine linen robe of blue woven with gold and a golden girdle round her waist, and she put [9] bracelets round her hands and feet, and she put on golden trousers and a necklace round her neck. 10. And there were precious stones all about her, with the names of Egyptian gods inscribed on them everywhere, on the bracelets and on the stones; and the names of the idols were stamped on the stones. 11. And she put a tiara on her head and bound a diadem round her temples and covered her head with a veil.

1. BH Slav. add 'in the first year of the seven years of plenty'.
2. So H Slav. Syr. Arm. Lat.: BDFA 'twenty eighth'.
3. B Slav. add 'and he was gathering the corn of that land' (Slav. + 'as the sand of the sea').
4. Lit. 'I will stay with you to-day'.

- 5. Lit. 'him who was over his house'.
- 6. Lit. 'the field of their inheritance'. And so similarly at iii.8, iv. 3, xvi.2, xx.5, xxiv.14, and xxvi.1.
- 7. and my mother: BF om.
- 8. B adds 'into the room where her robes lay'.
- 9. she put = Slav.: BD om.

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**IV.** And she hurried and came down by the staircase from her storey at the top; and she came to her father and mother and greeted them. 2. And it gave Pentephres and his wife great joy to see their daughter Aseneth adorned as the bride of God. And they took out all the good things they had brought from their estate in the country, and they gave them to their daughter. [1] 4. And Aseneth rejoiced at the good things, and at the fruit, the grapes and the dates, and at the doves and at the pomegranates and the figs, for they were all delightful. 5. And Pentephres said to his daughter Aseneth, "My child": she said, "Lo, *here I am, my lord.*" 6. And he said to her, "Sit down, please, [2] between us: I want to talk to you." [3] And Aseneth sat down between her father and her mother. 7. And her father Pentephres [4] took her right hand [5] in his right hand and said to her, "My child"; and Aseneth said, "What is it, father?" [6] 8. And Pentephres said to her, "See, Joseph, the mighty man of God, is coming to us to-day, and he is ruler of all the land of Egypt, for Pharaoh has appointed him ruler of all our land; [7] and he is the distributor of corn throughout the country and is to save it from the famine that is come upon it. 9. And Joseph is a man that worships God: *he* is discriminating, and a virgin (as you are to-day), and a man of great wisdom and knowledge, and the spirit of God is [8] upon him, and the grace of the Lord *is* [9] with him. 10. So come, my child, and I will give you to him as *his* wife: you shall be his bride, and he shall be your bridegroom for ever." 11. And when Aseneth heard what her father said, a great red sweat came over her, and she was furious [10] and looked sideways at her father. [11] 12. And she said, "Why should my lord and my father speak like this and talk as if he would hand me over like a prisoner to a man of another race, a *man who was a* fugitive and was sold *as a slave*? 13. Is this not the shepherd's son from the land of Canaan, and he was abandoned by him? 14. Is not this the man who had intercourse with his mistress, [12] and his master threw him into prison where he lay in darkness, [13] and Pharaoh brought him out of prison, because he interpreted his dream? 15. No! I will marry the eldest son of the king, for he is king of all the earth." [14] 16. On hearing this, Pentephres thought it wiser to say no more to his daughter about Joseph, for she had answered him arrogantly and in anger.

- 1. and they gave . . . daughter: B om.
- 2. So BH: D om.
- 3. Lit. 'and I will speak my words to you'.

4. So D: B om.
5. in his right hand = B Slav.: D om.
6. Lit. 'Let my lord and (B om. 'my lord and') my father speak'.
7. of all our land: DF om.
8. So FA: BD 'was'; EH om.
9. BD 'was'.
10. Lit. 'she was angry with a great wrath'.
11. at her father: B om.
12. Is not . . . mistress = D Slav.: B om.
13. Lit. 'into the prison of darkness'.
14. Or 'land': D adds 'of Egypt'.

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**V.** And behold, one of the young men from Pentephres's retinue burst in and said, 2. "Lo. Joseph is at the gates of our court." And Aseneth quickly left her father and her mother and ran upstairs and went into her room and stood at the big window that looked towards the east, so as to see *Joseph* as he came into her father's house. 3. And Pentephres and his wife and all his relations went out to meet Joseph. 4. And the gates of the court that looked east were opened, and Joseph came in, sitting in Pharaoh's viceroy's chariot. 5. And there were four horses yoked *together*, white as snow, with golden reins; and the chariot was covered over [1] with gold. 6. And Joseph was wearing a marvellous white tunic, and the robe wrapped around him was purple, made of linen woven with gold: *there was* a golden crown on his head, and all round the crown were [2] twelve precious stones, and above the stones twelve golden rays; and a royal sceptre *was* in his right hand. 7. And he held an olive branch stretched out, and there was much fruit on it. 8. And Joseph came into the court, and the gates were shut. 9. And strangers, whether men or women, remained outside, because the gatekeepers had shut the doors. [3] 10. And Pentephres came, and his wife, and all his relatives, except their daughter Aseneth; and they made obeisance to Joseph with *their* faces to the ground. 11. And Joseph got down from his chariot and extended his right hand to them.

1. Lit. 'shaded over'. Is the reference to a golden awning over the chariot, or was the chariot itself overlaid with gold?
2. the crowns were: B om.
3. D adds 'and all strangers were shut out'.

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**VI.** And Aseneth saw Joseph and she was cut to the quick, her stomach turned over, [1] her knees became limp, and her whole body trembled. 2. And she was much afraid and cried out and said, "Where shall I go, and where can I hide myself from him? And how will Joseph, the son of God, regard me, for I have spoken evil [2] of him? 3. Where can I flee and hide myself, for he sees everything, and no secret is safe with him, because of the great light that is in him? 4. And now may Joseph's God be propitious to me [3] because I spoke evil in ignorance. 5. What can I hope for, [4] wretch that I am? Have I not spoken, saying, Joseph is coming, the shepherd's son from the land of Canaan? And now, behold the sun is come [5] to us from heaven in his chariot and has come into our house to-day. 6. But I was foolish and reckless to despise him, and I spoke evil of him and did not know that Joseph is the son of God. 7. For who among men will ever father such beauty, and what mother [6] will *ever* bear such a light? Wretch that I am and foolish, for I spoke evil *of him* to my father. 8. Now let my father give me to Joseph [7] as a maidservant and a slave, and I will serve him for ever."

1. Lit. 'and she was strongly pricked in the soul, and her inwards were broken'.
2. D om.
3. D 'have mercy on me'
4. Lit. 'What then shall I see (= DF: BA 'follow')'.
5. B 'like the sun is he come'.
6. Lit. 'what kind of womb'.
7. to Joseph: B om.

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**VII.** And Joseph came into Pentephres's house and sat down on a seat; and he washed his feet, and he placed [1] a table in front of him separately, because he would not eat with the Egyptians, for this was an abomination to him. 2. And Joseph spoke to Pentephres and all his relations, saying, "Who is that woman standing in the solar [2] by the window? Tell her to go away." [3] 3. (*This was* because Joseph was afraid she too might solicit him; [4] for all the wives and daughters of the lords and satraps of all the land of [5] Egypt use to solicit him to lie with him. [6] 4. And many of the wives and daughters [7] of the Egyptians suffered much, after seeing Joseph, because he was so handsome; and they would send emissaries to him with gold and silver and valuable gifts. [8] 5. And Joseph would reject them out of hand, [9] saying, I will not sin before the God of Israel. 6. And Joseph kept his father Jacob's face before his eyes continually, [10] and he remembered his father's commandments; for Jacob used to say to Joseph and his brothers, "Be on your guard, my children, against the strange woman,

and have nothing to do with her, for she is ruin and destruction. 7. That is why Joseph said, "Tell that woman to go away." [11] ) 8. And Pentephres said to him, "My lord, the woman you have seen in the storey at the top is no stranger: she is our daughter, a virgin, who detests men; and no other [12] man has ever seen her, apart from you today. 9. And if you wish it, she shall come and speak with you; for our daughter is your sister. 10. And Joseph was overjoyed because Pentephres said, "She is a virgin who detests men." 11. And Joseph answered Pentephres and his wife and said, "If she is your daughter, then let her come, for she is my sister, and I will regard [13] her as my sister from to-day."

1. So BEA: D 'they placed'.
2. So BD: EFHA 'top storey'
3. Lit. 'Let her leave this house'.
4. she . . . him: D om.
5. the land of: BF om.
6. DE 'them'.
7. D adds 'of the potentates'.
8. gold . . . gifts: B 'many gifts'.
9. Lit. 'would send them back with threats and insults'.
10. DH Slav. om.
11. Lit. 'Let that (DFH 'the') woman leave this house'.
12. B 'strange'
13. Lit. 'love'.

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**VIII.** And Aseneth's mother went up to the top storey and brought Aseneth *down* to Joseph; and Pentephres said to his daughter Aseneth, "Greet your brother, for he too is a virgin as you are to-day, and he detests all strange women just as you *detest* strange men." 2. And Aseneth said to Joseph, "May you have joy, *my lord*, blessed *as you are* of God Most High"; and Joseph said to her, "May God, who has given all things life, bless you." 3. And Pentephres said to Aseneth, "Come near and kiss your brother." 4. And when she came near to kiss Joseph, Joseph stretched his right hand out, and laid it against her breast, and said, 5. "It is not right for a man who worships God, who with his mouth blesses the living God, and eats the blessed bread of life, and drinks the blessed cup of immortality, and is anointed with the blessed unction [1] of incorruption, to kiss a strange woman, who with her mouth blesses dead and dumb idols, and eats of their table the bread of anguish, [2] and drinks of their libations the cup of treachery, [3] and is anointed with the unction of destruction. 6. A man who worships God will kiss his mother and his sister that is of his *own* tribe and kin, [4] and the wife that shares his couch, who with their mouths bless the living God. 7. So too it is not right for a woman who worships God to kiss a strange man, because this is an abomination in God's eyes." 8. And when Aseneth heard what Joseph said, she was most distressed and cried out aloud; and she fixed her

gaze on Joseph, and her eyes were filled with tears. 9. And Joseph saw her and his heart went out to her -- for Joseph was tender-hearted and compassionate and feared the Lord. [5] 10. And he lifted up his right hand above her head and said,

"O Lord, the God of my father Israel, the Most High, the Mighty One,  
Who didst quicken all things, and didst call *them* from darkness into light.  
And from error into truth, [6] and from death into life;  
Do thou, O Lord, thyself quicken and bless this virgin,  
11. And renew her by thy spirit, [7] and remould her by thy secret hand,  
And quicken her with thy life.  
And may she eat the bread of thy life, [8]  
And may she drink the cup of thy blessing,  
She whom thou didst choose before she was begotten, [9]  
And may she enter into thy rest, which thou has prepared for thine elect."

1. of life . . . unction = HA: BD Slav. om.; cp. xv.4.
2. Lit. 'strangling': D 'shame'.
3. Lit. 'ambush'.
4. and kin: BE om.
5. for Joseph . . . Lord: D om.
6. And from . . . truth = HA: BD Slav. om.
7. DA 'holy spirit'.
8. and remould . . . thy life = F Lat.: BD Slav. om. (A om. 'and remould . . . hand').
9. She . . . begotten = BD Slav.: FA 'And number her with thy people which thou didst choose before all things came into being'.

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**IX.** And Aseneth was filled with joy at Joseph's blessing, and she went up [1] in haste to her storey at the top and fell on her couch exhausted, because she felt *not only* happy, *but also* disturbed and very frightened; [2] and she had been bathed in perspiration from the moment she heard Joseph speaking [3] to her in the name of God Most High. 2. And she wept bitterly, and she repented of her gods she used to worship; and she waited for evening to come. 3. And Joseph ate and drank; and he said to his servants, "Yoke the horses to the chariot" (for he said, "I must depart and go round the whole city and the district" [4] ). 4. And Pentephres said to Joseph, "Stay the night here, my lord and to-morrow go your way." 5. And Joseph said, "No! I must be going *now*, for this is the day when God began his works: in eight days time I will come back again [5] and stay the

night here with you."

1. So BEA: Slav.: DFH 'away'.

2-3. Lit. 'and a continual (D om.) sweat was poured about her (= D: BFA om. 'was poured about her') when she heard these words from Joseph who had spoken'.

4. Lit. 'land'.

5. So D Slav.: BEFA om.

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**X.** Then Pentephres and his relations went away to their estate. 2. And Aseneth was left alone with the [1] virgins, and she was listless and wept until sunset: she ate no bread and drank no water; and while all slept she alone was awake. 3. And she opened *the door* and went down to the [1] gate; and she found the portress asleep with her children. 4. And Aseneth quickly took down the leather curtain from the door, and she filled it with ashes and carried it up to the top storey and laid it on the floor. 5. And she secured the door and fastened it with the iron bar from the side; and she groaned aloud and wept. 6. And the virgin that Aseneth loved most of all the virgins [2] heard her mistress groaning, and she roused the other virgins [3] and came [4] and found the door shut. 7. And she listened to Aseneth groaning and weeping and said, "Why are you so sorrowful my lady? What is it that its troubling you? 8. Open *the door* for us, so that we can see you." And Aseneth said to them from inside (shut in *as she was*, "I have a violent headache and am resting on my bed; and I have no strength left to open to you now, [5] for I am utterly exhausted; [6] but go each of you to her room." 9. And Aseneth got up and opened her door quietly, and went into her second room, where *her treasure-chests and the finery* for her adornment were, and she opened her wardrobe and took out a black and sombre tunic. 10. (And this was her mourning tunic, which she had worn for mourning when her eldest [7] brother died). And Aseneth took off her royal robe and put on the black *one*, and she untied her golden girdle and tied a rope around her waist *instead*, and she took her tiara off her head and the diadem, and the bracelets from her hands. 12. And she took her best robe, just as it was, [8] and threw it out of the window, for the poor. 13. And she took all her innumerable gold and silver gods and broke them up into little pieces, and threw them [9] *out of the window* for the poor and needy. [10] 14. And Aseneth took her royal dinner, even the fatted beasts and the fish and the meat, and all the sacrifices of her gods, and the wine-vessels for their libations; and she threw them all out of the window as food for the dogs. 15. And after this she took the ashes and poured them out on the floor. 16. And she took sackcloth and wrapped it round her waist, and she removed the fillet from her hair and sprinkled herself with ashes; and she fell down upon the ashes. 17. And she beat her breast repeatedly with her two [11] hands and wept bitterly and groaned all night until the morning. 18. And in the morning Aseneth got up

and looked and lo, the ashes underneath her were like mud because of her tears. 19. And again, Aseneth fell down on her face upon the ashes until sunset. 20. And so Aseneth did for seven days; and she tasted neither food nor drink. [12]

1. D 'her'.
2. 'most of . . . virgins: D om.
3. and . . . virgins = EFA: BDGH Slav. om.
4. B 'made haste'.
5. BF om.
6. Lit. 'for I am grown weak in all my limbs'.
7. So BDA Slav.: EFG 'younger'.
8. Lit. 'all her chosen robe'. Is the reference to the 'royal robe' of verse 11 -- as we have assumed? Or ought we to take *στολη* ('robe') here in the more general sense of 'equipment' and translate 'all her choice apparel'? If so, the girdle, the tiara, the diadem, and the bracelets, which Aseneth had just taken off, will also be included (as the editors of the *a* recension distinctly state), and perhaps some other items as well -- though xiv.15 and xviii.3 make it clear that Aseneth did not empty her wardrobe completely!
9. D 'gave'.
10. and needy: D om.
11. B om.
12. Lit. 'and she tasted nothing at all'.

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**XI.** And it came to pass on the eighth day that Aseneth [1] looked up from the floor where she was lying (for she was losing the use of her limbs as a result of her great affliction).

1. D 'her'.

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**XII.** And she [1] stretched her hands out towards the east, and her eyes looked up to heaven, [2] and she said,

2. "O Lord, God of the ages, that didst give to all the breath of life,  
That didst bring into the light the things unseen,  
That hast made all things and made visible what was invisible,
3. That hast raised up the heaven and founded the earth upon the

waters,  
That hast fixed the great stones upon the abyss of water,  
Which shall not be submerged,  
But to the end they do thy will. [3]  
4. O Lord, my God, to thee will I cry: hear my supplication; [4]  
And [5] unto thee will I make confession of my sins,  
And unto thee will I reveal my transgressions of thy law.  
5. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned:  
I have transgressed thy law and acted impiously,  
And I have spoken things evil before thee.  
My mouth, O Lord, has been defiled by things offered to idols,  
And by the table of the gods [6] of the Egyptians.  
6. I have sinned, O Lord, before thee; I have sinned and acted  
impiously,  
Worshipping idols deaf and dumb,  
And I am not worthy to open my mouth unto thee, wretch that I am.  
7. I have sinned, O Lord, before thee,  
I, the daughter of Pentephres the priest,  
*I*, the haughty and arrogant *Aseneth*.  
To thee, O Lord, [7] I present my supplication, and unto thee will I  
cry:  
Deliver me from my persecutors, for unto thee [8] have I fled,  
Like a child to his father and *his* mother.  
8. And do thou, O [9] Lord, stretch forth thy hands over me,  
As a father that loves his children [10] and is tenderly affectionate,  
[11]  
And snatch me from the hand of my enemy.  
9. For lo, the wild primaeval Lion pursues [12] me;  
And his children are the gods of the Egyptians that I have abandoned  
and destroyed;  
And their father the Devil is trying to devour me.  
10. But do thou, O Lord deliver me from his hands,  
And rescue me from his mouth,  
Lest he snatch me like a wolf and tear me,  
And cast me into the abyss of fire, and into the tempest of the sea;  
And let not the great Sea-monster swallow me.  
11. Save me, O Lord, deserted *as I am*,  
For my father and mother denied me,  
Because I destroyed and shattered their gods;  
And I have no other hope save in thee, O Lord;  
For thou art the father of the orphans, and the champion of the  
persecuted,  
And the help of them that are oppressed.

12. For [5] lo, all the gods [13] of my father Pentephres are but for a season and  
uncertain; but the inhabitants of thine inheritance, O Lord, are incorruptible and  
eternal.

1. D 'Aseneth'. B prefixes to this chapter the title 'Prayer and Confession of Aseneth', which is found also in A between verses 1 and 2.
2. looked up to heaven: BD Slav. om.
3. D 'ordinance'.
4. hear my supplication: B om.
5. D om.
6. to idols . . . the gods: D 'to the idols'.
7. O Lord = D Slav.: B 'also'.
8. will I cry . . . unto thee = B Slav.: D om.
9. B 'my'.
10. over . . . children = B Slav.: D om.
11. and is . . . affectionate = B: D Slav. om.
12. the wild . . . pursues = B: D 'as a lion he pursues'.
13. So B Slav.: DFH 'habitations'.

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**XIII.** Look upon my ophanhood, O Lord, [1] for unto thee did I flee, O Lord. 2. Lo, I took off my royal robe interwoven with gold and put on a black tunic *instead*. 3. Lo, I loosed my golden girdle and girt myself with a rope and sackcloth. 4. Lo, I threw off my diadem from my head and sprinkled myself with ashes. Lo, the floor of my room *once* scattered with stones of different colours and of purple, and besprinkled with myrrh, [2] is now sprinkled with my tears [3] and [4] scattered with ashes. [5] 6. Lo, Lord, from the ashes and from my tears there is as much mud inside my room as there is on a public [6] highway. 7. Lo, Lord, [7] my royal dinner and my fatted beasts have I given to the dogs. [8] 8. And lo, for seven days and seven nights [9] I have neither eaten bread nor drunk water; and my mouth is dry like a drum and my tongue like horn, and my lips like a potsherd, and my face is shrunken, and my eyes are failing as a result of my incessant tears. [10] 9. But do thou, O Lord, pardon me, for in ignorance did I sin against thee and uttered calumnies against my lord Joseph. 10. And I did not know, wretch that I am, that he is thy son, O Lord; for they told me that Joseph was a shepherd's son from the land of Canaan, and I believed them; but I was wrong, and I despised Joseph, thine elect one, and I spoke evil fo him, not knowing that he is thy son. 11. For what man ever was so handsome and who else is as wise and strong as Joseph? But to thee, my Lord, do I entrust him; for I love him more than mine own soul. 12. Preserve him in the wisdom of thy grace, and give me to him as a servant, so that I may wash his feet and serve him and be his slave for all [11] the seasons of my life.

1. O Lord . . . O Lord = D: B 'O Lord'; Slav. om altogether.
2. and bespr. with m.: B om.
3. with my tears: D om.
4. BD om.; Slav. adds 'to-day'.
5. scattered with ashes: D om.
6. Lit. 'broad'.

7. B 'my Lord'.
8. So BA: DFH Slav. 'the strange dogs'.
9. and seven nights: Slav. om.
10. Lit. 'as a result of the inflammation of my tears'.
11. B om.

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**XIV.** And as Aseneth finished her confession to the Lord, lo, the morning star rose in the eastern sky. 2. And Aseneth saw it and rejoiced and said, "The Lord God has indeed heard me, for this star is a messenger and herald of the light of the great day. 3. And lo, the heaven was torn open near the morning star and an indescribable light appeared. 4. And Aseneth fell on her face upon the ashes; and there came to her a man from heaven [1] and stood at her head; [2] and he called to her, "Aseneth". [3] 5. And she said, "Who called me? For the door of my room is shut and the tower is high: how then did anyone get into [4] my room?" 6. And the man [5] called her a second time and said, "Aseneth, Aseneth;" and she said, "Here am I, my lord, tell me who you are." 7. And the man said, "I am the commander [6] of the Lord's house [7] and chief captain [8] of all the host of the Most High: [9] stand up, [10] and I will speak to you." 8. And she looked up and saw a man like Joseph in every respect, with a robe and a crown and a royal staff. 9. But his face was like lightning, and his eyes were like the light of the sun, [11] and the hairs of his head like flames [12] of fire, and his hands and feet like iron from the fire. 10. And Aseneth looked *at him*, and she fell on her face at his feet in great fear and trembling. 11. And the man said to her, "Take heart, Aseneth, and do not be afraid; but stand up, [13] and I will speak to you." 12. And Aseneth got up, and the man said to her, "Take off the black tunic you are wearing and the sackcloth round your waist, [14] and shake the ashes off your head, and wash your face with water. 13. And put on a new robe that you have never worn before, [15] and tie your bright girdle round your waist -- the double girdle of your virginity. 14. And *then* come back to me, and I will tell you what I have been sent to you to say." 15. And Aseneth went into the room where *her treasure-chests and the finery* for her adornment were; [16] and she opened her wardrobe and took *out* a new, fine robe, and she took off her black robe and put on the new and brilliant *one*. 16. And she untied the rope and the sackcloth round her waist; [17] and she put on the brilliant double girdle of her virginity -- one girdle round her waist and the other round her breast. 17. And she shook the ashes off her head, and washed her face with pure water, and covered her head with a fine and lovely veil.

1. So FG: B 'a man of light from heaven; D 'the man of God'.
2. Lit. 'over her head'.
3. So B: D Slav. om.
4. Lit. 'and how did he come into' (=B Slav.: D 'and how did you come here into').

5. B 'And he'.
6. So BD: A 'chief captain'; EFG 'ruler'.
7. So BEF Slav.: G 'of the Lord'; D 'of glory of the Lord'; A 'of the Lord God'.
8. So D: EFGA 'and commander'.
9. So GA Slav.: D 'of all the host of the Lord Most High'; F 'of all the heavenly host'; B om. 'and chief . . . High' altogether.
10. Lit. 'stand upon your feet' (D 'stand up from the floor').
11. B 'his eyes like the sun'.
12. Lit. 'a flame'
13. Lit. 'stand upon your feet' (D om. 'upon your feet').
14. round your waist (lit. 'from your loins') = FGA: B 'from you'; D Slav. om.
15. Lit. 'a new robe, undefiled'.
16. where . . . were: B om.
17. And . . . waist: D om.

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**XV.** And she came *back* to the man; and when the man saw her he said to her, "Take now the veil off your head, for to-day you are a pure virgin and your head is like a young man's." 2. So she took it off her head; and the man said to her, "Take heart, Aseneth, [1] for lo, the Lord has heard the words of your confession. 3. Take heart, Aseneth, [2] your name is written in the book of life, and it will never be blotted out. 4. From to-day you will be made new, and refashioned, and given new life; and you shall eat the bread of life and drink the cup of immortality, and be anointed with the unction of incorruption. [3] 5. Take heart, Aseneth: [4] lo, the Lord has given you to Joseph to be his bride, and he shall be your bridegroom. 6. And you shall no more be called Aseneth, but 'City of Refuge' shall be your name; for many nations shall take refuge in you, and under your wings shall [5] many peoples [6] find shelter, [7] and within your walls those who give their allegiance to God in penitence will find security. 7. For Penitence is the Most High's daughter and she entreats the Most High on your behalf every hour, [8] and on behalf of all who repent; [9] for he is the father of Penitence [10] and she the mother of virgins, and every hour she petitions him for those who repent; for [11] she has prepared a heavenly bridal chamber for those who love her, [12] and she will look after them for ever. 8. And Penitence is *herself* a virgin, very beautiful and pure and chaste and gentle; and God Most High loves her, and all his angels do her reverence. 9. And lo, I am on my way to Joseph, and I will talk to him about you, and he will come to you to-day and see you and rejoice over you; and he shall be your bridegroom. 10. So listen to me, Aseneth, and put on your wedding robe, the ancient [13] robe, [14] the first [15] that was stored away in your room, and deck yourself in all your finest jewellery, and adorn yourself as a bride, and be ready to meet him. 11. For lo, he is coming to you to-day; and he will see you and rejoice." 12. And when the man had finished speaking Aseneth was overjoyed. 13. And she fell at his feet and said to him, "Blessed be the Lord God [16] that sent you out to deliver me from darkness and

bring me into light; and blessed be his name for ever. 14. Let me speak now, *my lord*, if I have found favour with you: sit down a little on the bed, and I will get a table ready and food for you to eat; [17] and I will bring you good wine, of the finest flavour, for your to drink; [18] and *then* you shall go your way."

1. BFHA Slav. add 'you pure virgin'.
2. Take heart Aseneth: D om., BA add 'you (A + 'pure') virgin'.
3. The authorities differ not a little in detail here. All, however, refer to Aseneth's eating of the bread and all except F to her drinking of the cup. Her anointing with the unction appears in HGA Arm., but not in BDEF Slav. Cp. viii.5.
4. BA add 'you (A + 'pure') virgin'.
5. under . . . shall: D om.
6. B 'nations'; G om.
7. find shelter (lit. 'shelter themselves') = EGH: B 'lodge and sh. th.'; D om.
8. on your b. every hour: B om.
9. and (B om.) on b. of all (BG om.) who r.: D om.
10. for . . . Penitence: D om.
11. she the mother . . . for: B om.
12. B 'him'.
13. So BEFHA: D om.
14. So BFA: DEH om.
15. So BD: HA 'even the first'; EF om.
16. B om.
17. Lit. ' . . . and bread, and eat' (imperative).
18. Lit. 'wine, whose savour reaches to the heavens, and drink' (imperative).

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**XVI.** And the man said to her, "Bring me, please, a honeycomb too." 2. And Aseneth said, "Let me send someone *my lord*, [1] to my family estate in the country and I will get you a honeycomb." 3. And the man said to her, "Go into your *inner* room and you will find a honeycomb *there*." 4. And Aseneth went into her *inner* room and found a honeycomb lying on the table; and the comb was as white as snow and full of honey, and its smell was like the breath [2] of life. 5. And Aseneth took the comb and brought *it* to him; and the man said to her, "Why did you say, 'There is no honeycomb in my house?' And lo, you have brought me this." 6. And Aseneth said, *My lord*, I had no honeycomb in my house, but it happened just as you said: did it perchance come out of your mouth, for it smells like myrrh?" [3] 7. And the man stretched his hand out and placed it on her head and said, "You are blessed, Aseneth, for the indescribable things [4] of God [5] have been revealed to you; and blessed *too* are those who give their allegiance to the Lord [6] God in penitence, for they shall eat of this comb. 8. The bees of the Paradise of Delight [7] have made this honey, and the angels of God eat of it, and no one who eats of it shall ever die. 9. And the man stretched his right hand out and broke off a *piece* of the comb and ate it; and he put a *piece* of it [8] unto Aseneth's mouth. 10. And the man stretched his hand

out and put his finger [9] on the edge of the comb that faced eastwards; and the path [10] of his finger became like blood. 11. And he stretched out his hand a second time and put his finger on the edge of the comb that faced northwards, and the path of his finger became like blood. 12. And Aseneth was standing on the left and watching everything the man was doing. 13. And bees came up from the cells of the comb, and they were white as snow, and their wings were *iridescent* -- purple and blue and gold; [11] and they had golden diadems on their heads and sharp-pointed strings. 14. And all the bees flew in circles round Aseneth, from her feet right up to her head; and yet more bees, [12] as big as queens, settled on Aseneth's lips. 15. And the man said to the bees, "Go, please, to your places." 16. And they all left Aseneth and fell to the ground, every one *of them*, [13] and died. 17. And the man said, "Get up now, and go to your place;" and they got up [14] and went, every one *of them*, to the court round Aseneth's tower.

1. So D: B Slav. om.
2. Lit. 'smell'.
3. D adds 'from your mouth'.
4. So BDH: G 'the hidden things'; F 'the mysteries'; A 'the indescribable mysteries'.
5. So BDA: FGH 'the Most High'.
6. BF add 'your'.
7. i.e. the Garden of Eden (cp. the LXX at e.g. Gen iii.23 and Ezek. xxxi.9).
8. Lit. 'and he gave of the comb with his hand'.
9. B Lat. 'his forefinger'.
10. So D Lat.: B Slav. 'appearance'.
11. Lit. 'and their wings were as purple, and hyacinth, and as threads of gold' (= B:A '... hyacinth, and as scarlet': D Slav. om. 'and as threads of gold').
12. Aseneth . . . bees: D om.
13. every one *of them* = B: D Slav. om.
14. And they got up = BFG A Slav.: D om.

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**XVII.** And the man said to Aseneth, "Have you observed this?" and she said, "Yes, [1] *my lord*, I have observed it all." 2. And the man said, "So shall be [2] the words I have spoken to you." 3. And the man touched the comb, and fire went up from the table and burnt up the comb; and, as it burned, the comb gave out a refreshing fragrance that filled the room. 4. And Aseneth said to the man, "There are, *my lord*, seven virgins with me, who have been brought up with me, and who wait upon me: they were born in the same night as I was and I love them: let me call them, [3] so that you can bless them as you have blessed me. 5. And the man said, "Call *them*;" [4] and Aseneth called them, and the man blessed them and said, "God, [5] the Most High, will bless you [6] for ever." 6. And the man said to Aseneth, "Take this table away;" and Aseneth turned to move the table, and [7] the man vanished out of her sight, and Aseneth saw what looked

like a chariot of fire being taken up into heaven towards the east. 7. And Aseneth said, "Be merciful, O Lord, to thy maidservant, because it was in [8] ignorance that I spoke evil [9] before thee."

1. Lit. 'Lo'.
2. B 'my'
3. Lit. 'Pray, I will call them = DGA: B om.
4. And the man . . . *them* = BG: Slav. 'And he said, Call *them*; D om.
5. So DEFT Slav.: A 'the Lord God'; B om.
6. E adds 'and you shall be seven pillars of the City of Refuge'.
7. B adds 'immediately'.
8. D adds 'my'.
9. B 'this word'.

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**XVIII.** And while this was happening, [1] behold, [2] a young man, one of Joseph's [3] servants, came and said, "Lo, Joseph, the mighty man of God is coming to you [4] to-day." 2. And Aseneth called her steward [5] and said, "Get ready a special dinner for me, because Joseph the mighty man of God, is coming to us." 3. And Aseneth went into her room and opened her wardrobe, and she took out her finest [6] robe that shone like lightning, and she put it on. 4. And she tied a resplendent royal girdle round her waist -- and this girdle was [7] of precious stones. 5. And she put golden bracelets round her hands, and golden boots on her feet, and a costly necklace about her neck; and she put a golden crown upon her head, and in the crown, in front, were the costliest of stones. 6. And she covered her head with a veil. 7. And she said to her maidservant, "Bring me pure water from the spring. And Aseneth bent down to the water in the basin [on the cockle-shell]; [8] and her face was like the sun, and her eyes like the rising morning star.

1. So B: D Slav. 'and when Aseneth said this'; F 'and Aseneth was saying these things to herself'; A 'and while Aseneth was yet saying these things to herself'.
2. So B Slav.: D 'immediately'.
3. So BDA Slav.: EFG 'Pentephres's'.
4. So D Slav. (plural): B 'you' (sing.).
5. Lit. 'him who was over her house'.
6. Lit. 'first'.
7. and this g. was: B om.
8. Philonenko would exclude these words on the ground that they make no sense. He interprets the verse as a description of a rite of divination (lecanomancy). Aseneth, therefore, could not bend over both a basin and a shell at the same time. It is worth noting, however, that Battifol's much fuller text, not only makes no mention of a shell, but also leaves no room for doubt that Aseneth's purpose in sending for the water was to 'wash her face', and that it was only when she saw her reflection in the water that she desisted ('Lest I wash off this great and welcome

beauty').

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**XIX.** And a little slave came and said to Aseneth, "Lo, Joseph is at the gates of our court;" and Aseneth went down with the seven virgins to meet him. [1] 2. And when Joseph saw her, he said to her, "Come to me, pure virgin, for I have had good news about you from heaven, explaining everything about you." [2] 3. And Joseph stretched his hands out and embraced Aseneth, and Aseneth *embraced* Joseph, [3] and they greeted each other for a long time and received new life in their spirit. [4]

1. So D: BFA 'Joseph'.
2. from heaven . . . you: D om.
3. and embraced As . . . Joseph = DA: B om.
4. Or 'by their breath': D om. 'and rec. . . . spirit'.

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**XX.** And Aseneth said to him, "Come, *my* lord, come into my house;" and she took his right hand and brought him [1] inside her house. 2. And Joseph sat down on her father Pentephres's seat, and she brought water to wash his feet; and Joseph said to her, "Let one of *your* virgins come, and let her wash my feet." 3. And Aseneth said to him, "No, *my* lord, for my hands are your hands, and your feet my feet, [2] and no one else shall wash your feet;" and so she had her way and washed his feet. 4. And Joseph took her by the right hand and kissed it, [3] and Aseneth kissed his head. 5. And Aseneth's parents [4] came back from their country estate, and they saw Aseneth sitting with Joseph and wearing a wedding [5] robe; and they rejoiced and glorified God, and they ate and drank. 6. And Pentephres said to Joseph, "To-morrow I will invite the lords and satraps of Egypt, and I will celebrate your wedding, and you shall take Aseneth as *your* wife." 7. And Joseph said, "First I must tell Pharaoh about Aseneth, because he is my father; and he will give me Aseneth as *my* wife himself." 8. And Joseph stayed that day with Pentephres; and he did not sleep with Aseneth, for he said, "It is not right for a man who worships God to have intercourse with his wife before their marriage."

1. So B: D 'and hand in hand (lit. 'holding each other's right hands') they entered'.

2. So DFA Slav.: B 'my feet your feet'.
3. Or 'her'.
4. B adds 'both her father and her mother'.
5. So BA Slav.: D 'bright'.

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**XXI.** [1] And Joseph got up early in the morning, and he sent away to Pharaoh and told him about Aseneth. [2] 2. And Pharaoh sent and called [3] Pentephres and Aseneth. [4] 3. And Pharaoh was astonished at her beauty and said, "The Lord will bless you, *even* the God of [5] Joseph, [6] who has chosen you to be his bride, for [7] he is the first-born son of God, and [8] you will be called daughter of the Most High, and Joseph shall be your bridegroom for ever. 4. And Pharaoh took golden crowns and put them on their heads and said, 5. "God Most High will bless you and prosper your family [9] for ever." 6. And Pharaoh turned them towards each other, and they kissed each other. And Pharaoh celebrated their wedding with a banquet and much merry-making [10] for seven days; and he invited all the chief men in the land of Egypt. [11] 7. And he issued a proclamation, saying, [12] "Any [13] man who does any work during the seven days of Joseph and Aseneth's wedding [14] shall die." 8. And when the wedding was over and the banquet ended, Joseph had intercourse with Aseneth; and Aseneth conceived by Joseph and bore Manasseh and his brother Ephraim in Joseph's [15] house.

1. Philonenko's text of this chapter is for the most part a reconstruction from the Slavonic, B and D having a number of omissions. A, on the other hand, agrees in the main with the Slavonic apart from a few small variations, expansions and additions.
2. and told . . . Aseneth: BD om.
3. And Phar. . . . called = Slav.: D 'And Phar. called'; B. om.
4. Pent. and As. = D: Slav. 'Pent. and his daughter'; B om.
5. And Phar. . . . God of = (A) Slav.: BD om.
6. So A: Slav. 'Israel'; BD om.
7. who . . . for = (A) Slav.: BD om.
8. he is . . . and = F (A) Syr.: BD Slav. om.
9. Lit. 'and multiply you'.
10. Lit. 'drinking'.
11. you will be called . . . Egypt = (A) Slav.: BD om.
12. And . . . saying = (D) (A) Slav.: B om.
13. So BFGA Slav. (lit. 'every'): D 'if any' ('man does . . . he shall die').
14. B Slav. add 'that man'.
15. So DFA Slav.: BG 'Pharaoh's'.

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**XXII.** And after this the seven years of plenty came to an end, and the seven years of famine began. 2. And when Jacob heard about his son [1] Joseph, he came into Egypt with his family, in the second month, on the twenty-first *day* of the month; and he settled in the land of Goshen. [2] 3. And Aseneth said to Joseph, "I [3] will go and see your father, because your father Israel is my father; and Joseph said to her, "Let us go together." 4. And Joseph and Aseneth came into the land of Goshen, and Joseph's brothers met them [4] and made obeisance to them upon the ground. 5. And they came to Jacob and he blessed them and kissed them; [5] and Aseneth hung upon his father [6] Jacob's neck and kissed him. 6. And after this they ate and drank. 7. And Joseph and Aseneth went to their house, and Simeon and Levi escorted them, to protect them: [7] Levi was on Aseneth's right hand and Simeon [8] on the left. 8. And Aseneth took Levi's hand because she loved him as a man *who was* a prophet and a worshipper of God and *a man who* feared the Lord. And he used to see letters written in the heavens, and he would read them and interpret them [9] to Aseneth privately; and Levi saw the place of her rest in the highest heaven.

1. his son: Slav. om.
2. So BA Slav.: D 'Egypt'.
3. So BEFGA Slav.: D 'we'.
4. into . . . them = BA Slav.: D 'and Joseph's brothers'; B adds 'in the land of Goshen'.
5. and kissed them = B Slav.: D om.
6. his father: D om.
7. Lit. 'escorted them because their enemies were envious of them'.
8. So B: DFA Slav. 'Joseph'.
9. So B (lit. 'he would reveal them'): D 'he would reveal all things'.

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**XXIII.** And as Joseph and Aseneth were passing by, Pharaoh's eldest son saw them [1] from the wall. [2] 2. And when he saw Aseneth [1] he was driven to distraction by her because she was so beautiful; and Pharaoh's son sent messengers [3] and summoned Simeon and Levi to him, and they came to him and stood before him. [4] 3. And Pharaoh's son said to them, "I have heard [5] that you are better soldiers than any others there are on earth, and *that* with your *own* right hands you destroyed the city of Schechem and with your *own* two swords you cut to pieces thirty thousand fighting men. [6] 4. I need your help: let us get together without delay; [7] and I will give you gold and silver in

abundance, and menservants and maidservants, and houses and great estates. [8] Make a compact with me, [9] and shew kindness to me; for I was greatly wronged by your brother Joseph, because he married Aseneth although [10] she was originally pledged to me. 5. And now come with me, and I will take up arms against Joseph and kill him with my sword, and I will marry Aseneth; and you shall be my brothers and [11] my friends for ever, 6. But if you will not listen to me, I will kill you with my sword" (and as he said this he bared his sword and showed it them). 7. Now Simeon was a brave but impetuous man, and he drew his sword from its scabbard and made a rush at Pharaoh's son, as if to strike him. 8. And Levi was aware of what Simeon was about to do, for Levi was a prophet and foresaw everything that was to happen; and Levi trod hard on Simon's right foot as a sign to him to curb his wrath. 9. And Levi said to him, "Why so angry with him? For we are the children of a man who worships God, and it is not right for a man who worships God to repay his neighbour evil for evil." 10. And Levi said to his neighbour, [12] Pharaoh's son, respectfully and in good humour, "My lord, why do you speak to us like this? For [13] we are men who worship God, and our father is the servant of God Most High, and our brother Joseph is loved by God: how could we do [14] anything so wicked in God's eyes? 11. And now, listen to us, and be careful you never repeat what you have just said about our brother Joseph. 12. If, however, you persist in this wicked plan, see, our swords are drawn against you." 13. And they [15] drew their swords from their scabbards and said, "Do you see these swords? It was with them that the Lord [16] God avenged the outrage on the sons of Israel, which the men of Schechem committed in the affair of our sister Dinah, whom [17] Schechem, Hamor's son, defiled." 14. And Pharaoh's son saw their drawn swords, and he was afraid and trembled and fell on his face to the ground at their feet. 15. And Levi stretched his hand out and lifted him up, saying, "Do not be afraid: only be careful you say nothing against our brother." 16. And they went out from him, leaving him trembling and afraid.

1. D 'her'.
2. from the wall = BEA: DFG Slav. om.
3. So BFA Slav.: DG om.
4. and stood before him = BFG: D Slav. om.
5. Lit. 'I know'.
6. Lit. 'thirty thousand men of war' (D om. 'of war').
7. So Slav. (lit. 'I call you to my aid: make haste. Lo, I will take you as companions'): D 'I call you to my aid: make haste'; B 'And lo, I will take you to my aid this day'; A 'And I this day will take you to myself as companions'.
8. Lit. 'inheritance'.
9. So G: B 'swear to me'; D 'listen to me'; A 'strive together with me'.
10. Lit. 'and'.
11. my brothers and: D om.
12. his neighbour: D om.
13. Lit. 'And'.
14. Lit. 'and how (D om.) shall we do'.
15. D 'Simeon and Levi'.
16. the Lord: D om.
17. BD Slav. add 'in'.

**XXIV.** And Pharaoh's son was in much affliction and torment because of Aseneth, and he was greatly distressed. 2. And his servants whispered in his ear, "Lo, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, the maidservants of Leah and Rachel, Jacob's wives, hate Joseph and Aseneth and are jealous of them, and they will do what you want." 3. And Pharaoh's son sent messengers [1] and summoned them, and they came to him by night; and Pharaoh's son said to them, "I have heard [2] that you are good soldiers." 4. And Gad and Dan, the elder brothers, said to Pharaoh's son, "Let our lord tell his servants what it is he wants, and he will do it." [3] 5. And Pharaoh's son was overjoyed, and he said to his servants, "Go away and leave us alone, for I have something to say to these men privately." 6. And all the servants went out; and Pharaoh's son told them lies, saying, "I offer you a choice between prosperity and death: [4] so choose prosperity [5] and not death. 7. I know that you are good soldiers, and *that* you will not die as women *die*; but act like men and take vengeance on [6] your enemies. 8. I heard" (he continued [7] ) "your brother Joseph say to my father Pharaoh, 'Dan and Gad are the children of maidservants [8] and are not my brothers. 9. And I am only waiting for my father to die to take action against them and all their progeny, so that they will not share the inheritance with us, for they are the children of maidservants, and it was they who sold me to the Ishmaelites. 10. When my father is dead I will repay them for the wrong they did me.' 11. And my father Pharaoh commended Joseph and said to him, [9] 'What you have said is quite right, *my* son; and now [10] take some of my soldiers [11] and proceed against them as they did against you, and I will help you.'" 12. And when the men heard what Pharaoh's son told them they were much [12] troubled and distressed, and they said to him, "We appeal to you, *our* lord, to help us; and whatever you tell your servants to do, we will do it." 13. And Pharaoh's son said to them, "To-night I will kill my father, for my father Pharaoh is like [13] a father to Joseph; and [10] do you also kill Joseph, [14] and I will marry Aseneth." 14. And Dan and Gad said to him, "We will do everything you have told us to. We overheard Joseph say to Aseneth, 'Go to-morrow to our country estate, for it is vintage-time; and he has arranged for six hundred armed soldiers to go with her and fifty outrunners.'" [15] 15. And when Pharaoh's son heard this, he [16] gave the four men five hundred men each and appointed them their officers and commanders. 16. And Dan and Gad said to him, [17] "We will go by night and lie in wait at the brook and hide in the woods on the banks. [18] 17. And as for you, take fifty men with you, archers on horseback, and go on ahead, [19] some distance in front; and Aseneth will come and fall into our [20] hands, [21] and we will cut down the men who are with her. [22] 18. And Aseneth will flee in her chariot and fall into your hands and you will *be able to* deal with her as you wish. 19. And afterwards we will kill Joseph while he is fretting about Aseneth; and we will kill his children before his eyes." 20. And Pharaoh's son was delighted when he

heard this, and he sent two thousand soldiers after them. 21. And they came to the brook and hid in the woods on the banks, and five hundred men took up their position in front; and in between them was a highway. [23]

1. So BGA Slav.: DF om.
2. Lit. 'I know'.
3. Lit. 'his (= B: DEGA Slav. 'your') will'.
4. Lit. 'Blessing and death are before your face (= BFG (A): D Slav. 'before the face of God')'.
5. Lit. 'the blessing'.
6. and . . . on = DA Slav.: B 'and greet'.
7. Lit. 'he says'.
8. B 'a maidservant'.
9. to him: B om.
10. Lit. 'for the rest'.
11. D Slav. add 'with you'.
12. DF Slav. om.
13. D om.
14. and . . . Joseph = D Slav.: BF om.
15. and fifty outrunners = (F) A Slav: BD om.
16. when . . . he: D 'the son of Pharaoh'.
17. D 'the son of Pharaoh'.
18. Lit. 'in the wood of reed(s)' (and so subsequently at xxiv.21; xxvii.7; xxviii.5,7).
19. BA add 'of her'.
20. So EFA Slav.: B 'your' (plur.): DG 'your' (sing.).
21. EF 'ambush'.
22. who are with her: B om.
23. Lit. 'a wide (B om.) road'.

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**XXV.** And Pharaoh's son went to his father's room to kill him; but his father's guards would not allow him [1] to go in to him. 2. And Pharaoh's son said to them, "I want to see [2] my father because I am going off to gather the grapes from my newly planted vine. [3] 3. And the guards said to him, "Your father is in pain, and he has been awake all night; but he is resting *now*; and he said to us, "Do not let anyone in to me, not even my eldest son." 4. And he went away in anger; and he took fifty mounted archers, and he went in front of them as Dan and Gad had told him to. 5. And Naphtali and Asher [4] said to Dan and Gad, "Why must you plot [5] again against our father Israel and against our brother Joseph? For God looks after him as if he were the apple of his eye. 6. Did you not once sell Joseph as a slave, and to-day he is king of the whole earth, [6] and *its* saviour, [7] and gives us corn? 7. And now, if you make plots against him again, he will call upon the God of Israel, [8] and he will send fire from heaven, [9] and it will burn you up, and the angels of God will fight against you." [10] 8.

And their elder brothers Dan and Gad were angry with them, saying, "Are we then to die like women? God forbid!" And they went out to encounter Joseph and Aseneth.

1. B adds 'to kill him or'.
2. Lit. 'I will see'.
3. D 'vineyard'.
4. and Asher: B om.
5. Lit. 'work evil'.
6. BGA 'land of Egypt'.
7. and *its* saviour: B om.
8. the God of Israel = BD: A 'the Most High'; Slav. 'heaven' (cp. EG Syr. 'he will go up into heaven').
9. from heaven: Slav. om.
10. and the angels . . . you: Slav. om.

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**XXVI.** And Aseneth got up early *in the morning* and said to Joseph, "I am going to our estate in the country; but I am frightened because you are not coming with me." 2. And Joseph said to her, "Take heart and do not be afraid, but go; for the Lord is with you and he will keep you from all evil [1] as the apple of an eye. 3. And I will go and distribute my corn, and give corn to all the men in the city, [2] so that no one dies of famine in the land of Egypt." [3] 4. And Aseneth departed on her journey and Joseph to the distribution of the corn. 5. And Aseneth came to where the brook was with *her* six hundred men; and suddenly [4] the men that were with Pharaoh's son leaped out from their ambush [5] and joined battle with Aseneth's soldiers, and they cut them down with their swords and killed all [6] Aseneth's outrunners. 6. And Aseneth fled [7] in her chariot. 7. And Levi, the son of Leah, was informed about all this (for he was a prophet), and he told his brothers [8] about Aseneth's danger; and they took, each one of them, [9] his sword on his thigh, and their shields on their arms, [10] and their spears in their right hands, [11] and they went after Aseneth with what speed they could. [12] 8. And Aseneth fled, and lo, Pharaoh's son met her, and fifty men with him; and Aseneth saw him, and she was afraid and trembled. [13]

1. B 'danger'.
2. all . . . city = FA: BD 'those in the city'; Slav.: 'all men'.
3. So DA: Slav. 'in all the land'; B 'in Egypt', in all the land which is under it'.
4. Slav. om.
5. from their ambush: Slav. om.
6. killed all: B om.
7. And As. fled = EFGA Slav.: D 'And As. was distressed and fled'; B om.
8. And Levi . . . brothers = B: D 'And Levi was informed about . . . told the men of *his* counsel'; Slav. 'And Levi told his brothers'.
9. of them = BA Slav.: DEFG om.

10. and . . . arms = DA Slav.: BF 'and their shields'.
11. and . . . hands = EA Slav. (cp. F 'and their spears in their hands'): B 'and their spears on their arms'; D om.
12. with what speed they could (lit. 'at a swift run') = EF (A) Slav.: BD om.
13. A Slav. add 'and she called upon the name of (A + 'the Lord') her God.'

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**XXVII.** And Benjamin was sitting with her in the chariot. 2. And Benjamin was a sturdy [1] lad, about eighteen years old, indescribably handsome, [2] and as strong as a young lion; and he feared God. 3. And Benjamin jumped down from the chariot, and he took a round stone from the brook and hurled it with all his might [3] at Pharaoh's son and hit him on his left [4] temple and wounded him severely, [5] and he fell from his horse half-dead. 4. And Benjamin clambered up on a rock and said to the driver of Aseneth's chariot, "Give me fifty stones from the brook;" and he gave him fifty stones. 5. And Benjamin hurled the stones and killed the fifty men that were with Pharaoh's son; and the stones sank into the temples of each one of them. 6. Then the sons of Leah, Reuben and Simeon, Levi and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, went after the men who had lain in ambush; and they fell upon them suddenly, and cut down [7] the two thousand men, and the six of them [8] killed them. 7. And their brothers, the sons of [9] Bilhah and Zilpah, fled; and they said, "We have been ruined through our brothers; [10] and [11] Pharaoh's son is dead, killed by Benjamin, and all those with him have perished at his hand: [12] come now, let us kill [13] Aseneth [and Benjamin], [14] and let us make for the woods." 8. And they came, with their swords drawn, covered in blood; and Aseneth saw them, and she said, "O Lord my God, that didst quicken me from death, that didst say to me, 'Thy soul shall live for ever, deliver me from these men.'" And the Lord God heard her voice, and immediately [15] their swords fell from their hands to the ground and were reduced to dust.

1. So BA: the others vary not a little here.
2. D adds 'beyond the nature of man'.
3. Lit. 'filled his hand and hurled it': cp. 2 Kings ix.24.
4. BD om.
5. Lit. 'and wounded him with a great and grievous wound' (= G Slav.: EFA 'and wounded him with a grievous wound'): BD om.
6. Slav. om.
7. D adds 'all'.
8. Lit. 'the six (D add 'hundred') men'.
9. the sons of: D om.
10. Lit. 'We are perished from out of our brethren'.
11. D 'for'.
12. and . . . hand: BD om.
13. So EFGA Slav.: BD 'make war against'.
14. So all MSS: Slav. om.

15. she said . . . immediately = (A) Slav.: BD om.

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**XXVIII.** And the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah saw the miracle that had happened and they were afraid [1] and said, "The Lord is fighting for Aseneth against us." 2. And they fell on *their* faces to the ground and made obeisance to Aseneth, saying, "Have mercy on us, your servants, for you are our mistress and queen, and [2] we have done you [3] a great wrong and our brother Joseph. [4] 3. And now God has brought retribution on us: we pray you, therefore, have mercy on us, and deliver us from our brothers' hands, [5] for they will avenge the outrage *done to* you and their swords will be against us." 4. And Aseneth said to them, "Take heart and do not be afraid, for [6] your brothers are men who worship God, and do not repay evil for evil [7] to any man. [8] 5. But retire to the woods until I can secure your pardon and mollify their wrath; for what you have been trying to do to them is indeed no trifling matter. [9] 6. Take heart, *though*, and do not be afraid, for the Lord will see justice done between us." [10] 7. And Dan and Gad fled to the woods. 8. And behold, the sons of Leah came, running like deers in pursuit of them; and Aseneth got down from her chariot, and she greeted them with tears. 9. And they made obeisance to her on the ground and wept aloud; and they asked about their brothers, the maidservants' sons, intending to kill them. 10. And Aseneth said to them, "Spare you brothers and do them no harm, for the Lord has shielded me and reduced the swords in their hands to dust, and they melted away like wax before the fire. 11. Surely this is enough for us that the Lord is fighting for us: so [11] spare your brothers." 12. And Simeon said to Aseneth, "Why should our mistress [12] plead for her enemies? No! We will cut them down [13] with our swords, because they have plotted evil against our father Israel and against our brother Joseph [14] now on two occasions, [15] and *they have plotted* against you to-day." 14. And Aseneth said to him , "No brother, you must not repay evil for evil to your neighbour, [16] for the Lord will avenge this outrage." 15. And after this [17] Simeon bowed to Aseneth; [18] and Levi came to her, and he kissed her right hand and blessed her. [19] 16. Thus Aseneth saved the men from their brothers' wrath, so that they did not kill them.

1. DG 'much afraid'.

2. your servants . . . queen and = F (A): BD 'your servants, because'; Slav. 'our mistress'.

3. D adds 'our lady'.

4. and . . . Joseph: Slav. om.

5. BD 'from our brothers'.

6. And . . . for = EG (A) Slav.: D 'And . . . them, Do not fear for'; B 'And we know that'.

7. for evil: B om.

8. to any man: D om.

9. Lit. 'for you have dared great things against them'.
10. Lit. 'between me and you' (= EA Slav.: BD 'between you').
11. Lit. 'for the rest'.
12. Lit. 'Why does our mistress speak'.
13. D adds 'limb from limb'.
14. against our father . . . Joseph = Arm.: B 'concerning our brother Joseph and his father Israel'; D 'against our father Joseph'.
15. So DF (lit. 'now this twice'): B om.
16. evil for . . . neighbour = BA: FG 'evil for evil'; D 'your neighbour evil'.
17. after this = B: D om.
18. So B (lit. 'Simeon greeted Aseneth'): D 'Aseneth greeted Simeon'.
19. and blessed her = B: D om.

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**XXIX.** And Pharaoh's son lifted himself up from the ground and sat up; and he spat blood from his mouth, because his blood was running from his temple into [1] his mouth. 2. And Benjamin advanced upon him [2] and took hold of his sword [3] and drew it from its scabbard (for Benjamin had no sword of his own with him). 3. And as he was about to strike Pharaoh's son, Levi rushed up and seized him by the hand and said, "No brother, you must not do this, for we are men who worship God, and it is not right for a man who worships God to repay evil for evil, or to trample upon a man who has *already* fallen, or to harry his enemy to death. 4. But come: let us bind up [4] his wound; and if he lives, he will be our friend, and his father Pharaoh will be our father." 5. And Levi raised Pharaoh's son up and washed the blood off his face and bound a bandage round his wound; and he set him on his horse and took him to his father. 6. And Levi told him everything that had happened. 7. And Pharaoh got up [5] from his throne and made obeisance to Levi upon the ground. [6] 8. And on the third day Pharaoh's son died from the wound of Benjamin's stone. [7] 9. And Pharaoh mourned for his eldest son, [8] and he was worn out with grief. 10. And Pharaoh [9] died at [10] the age of one hundred and nine; and he left his crown [11] to Joseph. 11. And Joseph was king of Egypt for [10] forty-eight years. 12. And after this Joseph gave the crown to Pharaoh's grandson; and Joseph was like a father to him in Egypt.

1. Lit. 'in'.
2. upon him = BFA: D om.
3. D adds 'to strike him'.
4. Lit. 'let us heal him from'.
5. BFGA: D 'And when Pharaoh heard he got up'.
6. B adds 'and he blessed him'.
7. So BFG: D 'his wound which Benjamin gave him'.
8. for . . . son = BA: D 'and all the council of the palace'.
9. So B Slav.: D 'he'.
10. D adds 'about'.

11. So BEGA: F 'the crown of his kingdom'; D *'his* dominion and his crown'.

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