JOSEPH AND ASENATH: A NEGLECTED GREEK ROMANCE

THE romance of *Joseph and Asenath*[1] (JA), a work almost entirely neglected by classicists, was extremely popular for many centuries and translated into many languages—Slavonic, Syriac, Armenian, Roumanian, Latin (twice), Middle English, Coptic, and Ethiopian. Yet the first complete edition of the Greek text was not published until 1890, and Batiffol's *editio princeps* ('Le Livre de la Prière d'Aséneth', *Studia Patristica* i–ii (1889–90) does not inspire confidence. Batiffol treated JA as a product of the late fourth or fifth century A.D., though he soon conceded an earlier date, convinced by the arguments of various reviewers that it reflected the missionary outlook characteristic of Judaism of the late Hellenistic and early Imperial period.

Even after this, JA does not seem to have been over-publicized, perhaps partly because it has proved difficult to classify. Some scholars include it among the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,[2] and this is convenient and sensible, though the work is not of course literally pseudepigraphical—it does not purport to have been composed by Joseph or Asenath—but modestly anonymous; it is, however, not included in the familiar collection of R. H. Charles (*The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* [1913]) or in that of Kautzsch (*Die Apokryphen u. Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* [1900]), and is simply not mentioned in many general introductions to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. It should be emphasized that this reflects a fundamental vagueness about the definition of this literary category rather than any controversy about the origins of JA. It is thus not surprising that it has tended to escape notice, and while no treatment of later Greek tragedy would be complete without a glance at the *Exodus* of Ezekiel, the standard modern books on the Greek romance altogether ignore this Jewish work. This can scarcely be because it has been weighed in the balance and found wanting; it is, for instance, peculiarly relevant to the theme of Merkelbach's controversial *Roman u. Mysterium in der Antike*, and the absence of any reference to it there suggests the need for some publicity.

The outlook for JA has been growing brighter since 1965 when Christoph Burchard published a study of its manuscript-tradition and origins (*Untersuchungen zu Joseph u. Aseneth*). Like all works which were genuinely popular before the invention of printing JA presents the editor with problems of unrewarding complexity. The Greek manuscripts fall into four families, none of which can be wholly neglected; one presents a much shorter text than the rest, apparently a deliberate abbreviation. The various translations sometimes

[1] The title is very variously given; there are two basic forms: *Πράξεις τοῦ παγκάλου Ἰωσὴφ καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ Ἀσενὲθ θυγατρὸς Πεντεφρῆ ἱερέως Ἡλιουπόλεως* and *Βίος καὶ ἐξομολόγησις Ἀσενὲθ θυγατρὸς Πεντεφρῆ ἱερέως Ἡλιουπόλεως καὶ πῶς ἔλαβεν αὐτὴν ὁ πάγκαλος Ἰωσὴφ εἰς γυναῖκα.* It is unlikely that the author attached much importance to the title. *Joseph and Asenath* is convenient and has become conventional.

[2] e.g. A.-M. Denis, *Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament* (1970), 40 ff. For a concise introduction to this branch of literature, see M. Hengel, 'Anonymität, Pseudepigraphie und "literarische Fälschung" in der jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur', *Pseudepigrapha* i, *Entretiens Hardt* xviii (1972), 231 ff.

preserve features lost in the extant Greek manuscripts. Burchard's survey is admirably lucid, and no doubt much that is now obscure will be clear when he publishes his critical edition. In 1968 a text, with a very full introduction and commentary, was published by Marc Philonenko (*Joseph et Aséneth* (*Studia Post-Biblica* xiii)); unfortunately, this text is based on the short recension, and the apparatus does not do justice to the longer versions. Philonenko emphasizes the pervading presence in JA of motifs conventional in the Greek romances, though he seems to shrink from the conclusion that it is a Greek romance with Jewish subject-matter. These two books have stimulated further contributions to the understanding of JA from various reviewers,[1] some of whom express surprise that students of the Greek novel have paid it so little attention.

The work draws its theme from the simple statement of *Genesis* (41 : 45) that Joseph married Asenath, the daughter of Pentephres, priest of Heliopolis; it presupposes in the reader a basic knowledge of the Biblical story of Joseph. The narrative, which is about the length of Apuleius' story of Cupid and Psyche (*Met.* 4. 28–5. 24), falls into two parts, of which the first (1–21) is the better balanced and more attractive. It is written in an unambitious *koine*, strongly influenced by the Septuagint.

This is the story. In the first of the seven years of plenty Joseph, travelling round Egypt to collect grain, came to Heliopolis, *ἦν δὲ ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ, σατράπης τοῦ Φαραώ· καὶ οὗτος ἦν ἄρχων πάντων τῶν σατραπῶν καὶ τῶν μεγιστάνων τοῦ Φαραώ. καὶ ἦν ὁ ἀνὴρ οὗτος πλούσιος σφόδρα καὶ φρόνιμος καὶ ἐπιεικής, καὶ ἦν σύμβουλος τοῦ Φαραώ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Πεντεφρῆς, καὶ ἦν ἱερεὺς Ἡλιουπόλεως* (1. 4–5). This rather banal introduction of Pentephres is not unlike the way in which Lycomedes, father of the hero Habrocomes, is presented to the reader in Xenophon's *Ephesiaca* (1. 1. 1), *ἦν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἀνὴρ τῶν τὰ πρῶτα ἐκεῖ δυναμένων, Λυκομήδης ὄνομα.* The star-crossed lovers of Greek romance usually come from the upper levels of society. The reference to satraps and *megistanes*, a phrase repeated elsewhere (7. 3; 20. 6), might at first sight seem to suggest the period of Persian rule, which is commonly the historical background of the Greek romance when any definite period is indicated, but both words are used fairly loosely in the LXX, and generally in post-classical Greek, and it is unlikely that the writer intended a specifically Persian reference;[2] certainly the rest of the narrative implies an independent Egypt. Pentephres had a beautiful daughter, Asenath: (1. 6–8) *καὶ ἦν θυγάτηρ τῷ Πεντεφρῇ ὡς ἐτῶν ὀκτωκαίδεκα παρθένος μεγάλη καὶ ὡραία καὶ εὐπρεπὴς τῷ κάλλει σφόδρα ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν παρθένον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν . . . καὶ ἦν μεγάλη ὡς Σάρρα καὶ ὡραία ὡς Ῥεβέκκα καὶ καλὴ ὡς Ῥαχήλ.* The surpassing loveliness of the heroine is a commonplace of Greek romance; it is interesting to observe this Jewish variation on the usual formula that the only proper comparison is with a goddess: thus Chariton on Callirrhoe (1. 1): *ἦν γὰρ τὸ κάλλος οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον ἀλλὰ θεῖον, οὐδὲ Νηρηίδος ἢ Νύμφης τῶν ὀρειῶν ἀλλ' αὐτῆς Ἀφροδίτης*; cf. Xen. *Eph.* 1. 2. 5–7: *ἦν δὲ τὸ κάλλος τῆς Ἀνθίας οἷον θαυμάσαι καὶ πολὺ τὰς ἄλλας ὑπερεβάλλετο παρθένους . . . πολλάκις*

[1] In particular, Kilpatrick (*Novum Testamentum* xii [1970], 233 ff.), Brock (*J.T.S.* xviii [1967], 179 ff., xx [1969], 588 ff.), Holtz (*Theologische Literaturzeitung* xciii [1968], 837 ff.), Burchard (ibid. xcv [1970], 253 ff.), Lohse (*Gnomon* xxxviii [1966], 516 ff.); Burchard, 'Zum Text von "Joseph und Aseneth" ', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* i. 1 (1970), 3 ff., discusses Philonenko's work constructively.

[2] I must concede that Asenath's costume consists of a trouser suit (*ἀναξυρίδας χρυσᾶς* combined with a *στολὴν βυσσίνην ἐξ ὑακίνθου χρυσουφῆ* [3. 9]) which sounds Persian rather than Egyptian or Jewish.

αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ τεμένους ἰδόντες Ἐφέσιοι προσεκύνησαν ὡς Ἄρτεμιν; Apul. *Met.* 4. 28; the cliché goes back to Odysseus (*Od.* 6. 149 ff.). Asenath's beauty was well known: (1. 9–11) καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ἡ φήμη τοῦ κάλλους αὐτῆς εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐκείνην καὶ ἕως περάτων αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐμνηστεύοντο αὐτὴν πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν μεγιστάνων καὶ τῶν σατραπῶν καὶ τῶν βασιλέων, νεανίσκοι πάντες. καὶ ἦν ἔρις πολλὴ ἐν αὐτοῖς δι' αὐτὴν καὶ ἐπειρῶντο πολεμεῖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους δι' Ἀσενέθ. καὶ ἤκουσε περὶ αὐτῆς ὁ υἱὸς Φαραὼ ὁ πρωτότοκος καὶ ἐξελιπάρει τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ τοῦ δοῦναι αὐτὴν αὐτῷ εἰς γυναῖκα: cf. Char. 1. 1. 2: φήμη δὲ τοῦ παραδόξου θεάματος [Callirrhoe] πανταχοῦ διέτρεχε καὶ μνηστῆρες κατέρρεον εἰς Συρακούσας, δυνασταί τε καὶ παῖδες τυράννων, οὐκ ἐκ Σικελίας μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ Ἰταλίας καὶ Ἠπείρου καὶ νήσων τῶν ἐν Ἠπείρῳ; 4. 1. 8. But Asenath had no time for men, nor indeed is it easy to see how she had attracted so much attention, since she lived in seclusion, attended by seven maids, in a tower furnished with every convenience and luxury: (2. 1) καὶ ἦν Ἀσενὲθ ἐξουθενοῦσα καὶ καταπτύουσα πάντα ἄνδρα καὶ ἀνὴρ οὐδέποτε ἑώρακεν αὐτήν, καθότι ἦν πύργος τῷ Πεντεφρῇ παρακείμενος ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ μέγας καὶ ὑψηλὸς σφόδρα. Asenath's aversion to men is less commonplace, though Charicleia in Heliodorus (2. 33, cf. 3. 17) prefers virginity and the service of Artemis to marriage,[1] but the idea is obviously very similar to Xenophon's often quoted description of Habrocomes (*Eph.* 1. 1. 5): Ἔρωτά γε μὴν οὐδὲ ἐνόμιζεν εἶναι θεόν, ἀλλὰ πάντη ἐξέβαλεν ὡς οὐδὲν ἡγούμενος, λέγων ὡς οὐκ ἄν ποτέ τις ἐρασθείη οὐδὲ ὑποταγείη τῷ θεῷ μὴ θέλων; cf. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman*[3], 156 f. Beautiful girls secluded in towers are of course a common *Märchen*-motif:[2] one thinks at once of Hero and Danae. But Asenath is not confined to her tower against her will: she can join her parents whenever she wishes. The point is rather that she has led a sheltered life and wanted for nothing that indulgent parents could provide.[3]

Pentephres was delighted to hear that Joseph was coming to visit him, and decided that the time had come for a serious talk with his daughter: Joseph, he tells her, is Pharaoh's grand vizier in Egypt and (4. 9–10) ἀνὴρ θεοσεβὴς καὶ σώφρων καὶ παρθένος ὡς σὺ σήμερον, καὶ ἀνὴρ δυνατὸς ἐν σοφίᾳ καὶ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐστιν ἐπ' αὐτῷ καὶ χάρις κυρίου μετ' αὐτοῦ. δεῦρο δή, τέκνον μου, καὶ παραδώσω σε αὐτῷ εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ ἔσῃ αὐτῷ νύμφη καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται σου νυμφίος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον. παρθένος applied to Joseph is linguistically striking,[4] and the oddity is if anything emphasized by comparison with a passage in Achilles Tatius which at first sight seems analogous, 5. 21. 1: Clitophon writes to Leucippe μαθήσῃ τὴν σήν με παρθενίαν μεμιμημένον, εἴ τις ἐστι καὶ ἐν ἀνδράσι παρθενία. This emphasis on the purity of hero and heroine alike is very reminiscent of Heliodorus; much earlier, the young Ninus protests his own self-control (Pack[2] 2616, Zimmermann, *Griechische Romanpapyri* No. 1): διελθὼν γὰρ τοσαύτην γῆν καὶ τοσούτων δεσπόσας ἐθνῶν ἢ δορικτήτων ἢ πατρῴῳ κράτει

[1] No doubt the heroine of the *Metiochus and Parthenope Romance* (Pack[2] 2622) was another such determined virgin; her name suggests it, as does the saga recorded by Eustathius (on Dionys. Peri. 358): Παρθενόπη πολλοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐπιβουλευθεῖσα καὶ τὴν παρθενίαν φυλάξασα, εἶτα Μητιόχου Φρυγὸς ἐρασθεῖσα τάς τε τρίχας ἔτεμεν ἀκοσμίαν ἑαυτῆς καταψηφιζομένη καὶ εἰς Καμπανοὺς ἐλθοῦσα ᾤκησε.

[2] Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, T381 (virgin imprisoned to prevent knowledge of men), cf. J147 (child confined to keep him in ignorance of life).

[3] The legend of the Buddha offers a striking parallel. The motif is also found in Christian hagiography, where, however, it is probably due to the influence of JA itself.

[4] παρθένος as a masculine is not otherwise attested before the New Testament, *Apoc.* 14: 4, cf. 1 *Cor.* 7: 25, where παρθένοι perhaps refers to men as well as women.

θεραπευόντων με καὶ προσκυνούντων ἐδυνάμην εἰς κόρον ἐκπλῆσαι πᾶσαν ἀπόλαυσιν . . . νῦν δὲ ἀδιάφθορος ἐληλυθὼς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ νικῶμαι καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλικίας; he is now sixteen, but πόσοι . . . ἄχρι πεντεκαίδεκα ἐφυλάχθησαν ἀδιάφθοροι; One might find it odd that Pentephres should be so well informed about these details of Joseph's private life, but the author may well have intended a delicate reference to Potiphar's wife's attempt at seduction (*Gen.* 39: 7 ff.).

Asenath is aghast at her father's suggestion: (4. 11–15) ὡς ἤκουσεν Ἀσενὲθ τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῆς, περιεχύθη αὐτῇ ἱδρὼς πολὺς καὶ ἐθυμώθη ἐν ὀργῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ ἀνέβλεψε τῷ πατρὶ αὐτῆς πλαγίως τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτῆς καὶ εἶπεν· ἵνα τί οὕτως λαλεῖ ὁ κύριός μου καὶ πατήρ μου καὶ βούλεται τοῖς ῥήμασιν αὐτοῦ παραδοῦναί με ὡς αἰχμάλωτον ἀνδρὶ ἀλλογενεῖ καὶ φυγάδι καὶ πεπραμένῳ; οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ποιμένος ἐκ γῆς Χαναὰν καὶ αὐτὸς καταλέλειπται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ; οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κοιμηθεὶς μετὰ τῆς κυρίας αὐτοῦ [she evidently takes a less charitable view of the incident than her father does] καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ ἐνέβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν τοῦ σκότους . . . οὐχί, ἀλλὰ γαμήσομαι τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ βασιλέως τῷ πρωτοτόκῳ, ὅτι αὐτός ἐστι βασιλεὺς πάσης τῆς γῆς. She retires to her tower and shortly afterwards as she stands at its eastern window, she sees Joseph arrive, and (6. 1) κατενύγη ἰσχυρῶς τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ συνεκλάσθη τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ γόνατα αὐτῆς παρελύθησαν καὶ συνετρόμαξεν ὅλον τὸ σῶμα αὐτῆς καὶ ἐφοβήθη φόβον μέγαν καὶ ἀνεστέναξε. It is surely unnecessary to offer illustrations of the theme 'ut vidi, ut perii' from the Greek romance (abundant documentation in Rohde, op. cit. 158 ff., cf. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*, p. 22 n. 2). There follows an impassioned soliloquy, not unlike those which Xenophon puts in the mouth of his heroine (1. 4. 6–7; 3. 8. 6–7); Asenath reproaches herself for her rash words: (6. 6–8) ἐγὼ δὲ ἄφρων καὶ θρασεῖα ἥτις ἐξουδένωσα αὐτὸν καὶ ἐλάλησα ῥήματα πονηρὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ᾔδειν ὅτι Ἰωσὴφ υἱὸς θεοῦ ἐστι· τίς γὰρ ἀνθρώπων γεννήσει ποτὲ τοιοῦτον κάλλος καὶ ποία κοιλία τέξεται τοιοῦτον φῶς; ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ καὶ ἄφρων, ὅτι λελάληκα τῷ πατρί μου ῥήματα πονηρά. καὶ νῦν δότω με ὁ πατήρ μου τῷ Ἰωσὴφ εἰς παιδίσκην καὶ εἰς δούλην[1] καὶ δουλεύσω αὐτῷ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον. The Biblical description of Joseph (*Gen.* 39. 7) fits in conveniently with the conventional emphasis on the hero's devastating good looks: cf., e.g., Hld. 10. 7. 4, Xen. 1. 1. 1–2.

Joseph is meanwhile entertained by Pentephres and the rest of the household; he eats with them, though at a separate table: (7. 1) οὐ συνήσθιε μετὰ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, ὅτι βδέλυγμα ἦν αὐτῷ τοῦτο. The detail reflects, in terms rather more soothing to Jewish pride, *Gen.* 43: 32, οὐ γὰρ ἐδύναντο οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι συνεσθίειν μετὰ τῶν Ἑβραίων ἄρτους. βδέλυγμα γάρ ἐστιν τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις.[2] He has seen Asenath at her window, and, not realizing who she is, asks that she should leave. This seems rather overbearing, but Asenath's behaviour has been, to say the least, equivocal: numerous references, both Biblical and classical, to girls standing at their windows to attract the attention of young men[3] indicate that this is more than mere harmless curiosity, and Joseph is understandably nervous that she has her eye on him. He has already suffered much embarrassment from the unsolicited advances of Egyptian women—(7. 3–4)

[1] Philonenko comments on εἰς δούλην 'locution empruntée à la langue amoureuse, voir K. Kerényi, *Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur*², pp. 69–70.' But the idea expressed in this last sentence is certainly not a commonplace of prose romance, though it is not difficult to find parallels in poetry: see Kroll on Cat. 64. 158 ff.

[2] Confirmed by Herodotus (2. 41).

[3] Whether as professional prostitutes or more innocently: cf. Gow on Theocr. 3. 7, W. Fauth, 'Aphrodite Parakyptusa', *Abh. Ak. Mainz* vi (1966), 359 ff. (31 ff.).

ἠνόχλουν γὰρ αὐτῷ πᾶσαι αἱ γυναῖκες καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες τῶν μεγιστάνων καὶ τῶν σατραπῶν πάσης γῆς Αἰγύπτου τοῦ κοιμηθῆναι μετ' αὐτοῦ. καὶ πολλαὶ γυναῖκες καὶ θυγατέρες τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, ὅσαι ἐθεώρουν τὸν Ἰωσήφ, κακῶς ἔπασχον ἐπὶ τῷ κάλλει αὐτοῦ. καὶ τοὺς πρέσβεις αὐτῶν ἀπέστειλον πρὸς αὐτὸν μετὰ χρυσίου καὶ ἀργυρίου καὶ δώρων πολυτίμων—the counterpart of Asenath's many suitors. Theagenes in the *Aethiopica* is similarly troubled by the unwelcome attentions of Arsace, the sister of the Great King (7. 20 ff.).[1] Pentephres, however, reassures Joseph, who agrees to be introduced to Asenath, though he forbids her to obey Pentephres' hospitable suggestion that she should kiss him, because she is an idolator. But when he sees that she is distressed by this refusal, he takes pity on her and prays for her conversion. Asenath retires to her tower, overwhelmed by conflicting emotions: (9. 1) πέπτωκεν ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης αὐτῆς ἀσθενοῦσα, διότι ἦν αὐτῇ χαρὰ καὶ λύπη καὶ φόβος πολὺς καὶ ἱδρὼς συνεχὴς περιεχύθη αὐτήν. The Greek romances offer many parallels for such psychological turmoil: e.g. Charit. 1. 9. 3: τὴν Καλλιρρόην κατελάμβανεν ὁμοῦ πάντα, φόβος, χαρά, λύπη, θαυμασμός, ἐλπίς, ἀπιστία; 4. 5. 10; A.T. 1. 4. 5; 2. 29. 1; 5. 19. 1; *Ninus romance* frg. A. ii. 149 ff.

Joseph leaves, promising to return in a week's time. During his absence Asenath's conversion takes place. After a week of fasting and penitence, for which she secures the necessary privacy by alleging a headache,[2] she confesses her sins and prays for salvation, ending with a special petition for Joseph and herself: (13. 11–12) ἀλλά, κύριέ μου, σοὶ παρατίθημι αὐτόν, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τὴν ψυχήν μου. διατήρησον αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τῆς χάριτός σου καὶ παράθου με αὐτῷ εἰς παιδίσκην, ἵνα ἐγὼ νίψω τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ διακονήσω αὐτῷ καὶ δουλεύσω αὐτῷ εἰς τοὺς χρόνους ἅπαντας τῆς ζωῆς μου.

Asenath is now visited by the archangel Michael, who tells her that her prayers have been heard, that her salvation is assured, and that God has given her Joseph as her husband. He feeds her on a miraculous, and evidently sacramental, honeycomb, and performs a curious miracle with some bees.[3] This part of the work has received more attention than any other, because it is almost certainly relevant to the problem of the origins of the Eucharist, though it is not altogether easy to interpret it in relation to our other information about Jewish, or even early Christian, ritual meals;[4] no doubt the author intended a certain degree of mystification. The archangel also, at Asenath's request, blesses her maids, though there is no suggestion that they have shared her experience of conversion. This section obviously invites comparison with Apuleius' description (*Met.* 11. 3 ff.) of Lucius' vision of Isis.[5]

[1] Theagenes is unusual among the heroes of Greek romance in not yielding to his seductress; Clitophon gives way to Melite (A.T. 5. 27), Daphnis to Lycaenion (Longus 3. 18); Habrocomes resists Manto (Xen. 2. 3 ff.), but practically gives in to Cyno (3. 12).

[2] The stratagem is reminiscent of romance (e.g. A.T. 2. 16. 1), but can be paralleled from the Old Testament.

[3] In view of the manifold symbolic connotations of bees in ancient thought the incident offers plenty of scope for speculation: cf. Koep, *R.A.C.* ii. 274 ff. The bees are described as μεγάλαι ὡς βασιλίσσαι: it seems worth publicizing this apparent exception to the usual ancient belief that the leaders are male (slight minority support from Xen. *Oec.* 7. 32. 33, Arist. *H.A.* 5. 21).

[4] Cf. Kilpatrick, 'The Last Supper', *The Expository Times* lxiv (1952), 4 ff., Jeremias, ibid. 91 ff., Kuhn, 'The Lord's Supper', *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (ed. Stendahl, 1957), 65 ff., R. D. Richardson, appendix to Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper* (1964), 335 ff., Burchard, *Untersuchungen*, 121 ff.

[5] Cf. Burchard, *Der dreizehnte Zeuge* (1970), 59 ff.; much interesting comparative material in Nock, 'A vision of Mandulis Aion', *H.Th.R.* xxvii (1934), 53 ff. (= *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* i. 357 ff.).

Joseph now returns, and is welcomed by Asenath; he has received a similar visit from the archangel, who told him of Asenath's conversion.[1] Journeys end in lovers' meeting *καὶ ἐξέτεινε τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ Ἰωσὴφ καὶ ἐνηγκαλίσατο τὴν Ἀσενὲθ καὶ ἡ Ἀσενὲθ τὸν Ἰωσὴφ καὶ ἠσπάσαντο ἀλλήλους ἐπὶ πολὺ καὶ ἀνεζωοπύρησαν τῷ πνεύματι αὐτῶν*. Obviously, a romantic cliché; *ἀνεζωοπύρησαν* is reminiscent of Chariton's description of the effect on Callirrhoe of the news that she is to marry Chaereas (1. 1. 15): *ὁ μὲν οὖν Χαιρέας προσδραμὼν αὐτὴν κατεφίλει, Καλλιρρόη δὲ γνωρίσασα τὸν ἐρώμενον ὥσπερ τι λύχνου φῶς ἥδη σβεννύμενον ἐπιχυθέντος ἐλαίου πάλιν ἀνέλαμψε καὶ μείζων ἐγένετο καὶ κρείττων*. The marriage is arranged for the following day, and Pharaoh himself officiates; in due course Manasseh and Ephraim are born. No further events are recorded until the years of famine bring Jacob, with his other sons, down to Egypt; the details of Joseph's *anagnorisis* had nothing to do with Asenath, and our author passes over them in silence, concentrating instead on Asenath's first meeting with her in-laws.

The second section of the narrative begins, with quite unbiblical adventures which reveal the differing characters of Joseph's brothers.[2] Pharaoh's son, Joseph's disappointed rival, sees Joseph and Asenath passing by, *καὶ ἰδὼν τὴν Ἀσενὲθ ἐμμανὴς ἐγένετο ἐπ' αὐτὴν διὰ τὸ ὑπερβάλλον κάλλος αὐτῆς*; he resolves to kill Joseph and get her for himself. We may compare the attempted revenge by the unsuccessful suitors in Chariton 1.[3] He tries to persuade Simeon and Levi to help him, but they indignantly refuse; he has more success with Gad and Dan. Fortunately the plan miscarries completely, owing to the energetic action of Joseph's other brothers, among whom Benjamin and Levi particularly distinguish themselves, assisted by a small, harmless miracle (the enemies' swords disintegrate) in answer to Asenath's prayer. Gad and Dan, realizing the significance of this prodigy, throw themselves on Asenath's mercy, and she succeeds in saving them from the just wrath of their brothers. Pharaoh's son, however, dies from injuries received in the fighting, and so Pharaoh at his death appoints Joseph as regent. This second part reads like an afterthought, and its twofold moral is plain: God protects the believer, and the righteous man does not seek revenge.

It seems perfectly natural to describe JA as a romance: throughout the narrative it is love (even when turned sour—the love of a jealous rival) which determines the action. It is an independent work, not merely a romantic interlude like the story of Cupid and Psyche in Apuleius or that of Pantheia and Abradates in Xenophon's *Cyropaedeia*, and it is long enough to engage the reader's sympathies in a way impossible for such brief and summary narratives as those of Parthenius' *Erotica Pathemata*.

Yet the modern reader's feeling that JA belongs to the same section of the library as Chariton, Achilles Tatius, and Heliodorus does not settle the question

[1] These complementary visions are obviously comparable to the double dreams narrated in the Greek romances: cf. Charit. 1. 12. 5–10: 2. 1. 2; Long. 1. 7; A.T. 4. 1. 4–8; Hld. 3. 11 f.: 3. 18 and 4. 14; 9. 25: 10. 3. But it is a commonplace of contemporary religious belief, not something markedly characteristic of romantic fiction: cf., e.g., Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros* (*Philol. Suppl.* xxii, 1931), 16, No. 21; D.H. 1. 57. 4; Livy 8. 6. 9; P. Oxy. 1381; Aristid. *Or.* 48. 30–6; Lib. *Or.* 11. 114; further examples in Wikenhauser, 'Doppelträume', *Biblica* xxix (1948), 100 ff. The only instance of this motif in Jewish literature appears to be Jos. *A.J.* 11. 325–35, where, however, the corresponding dreams are years apart.

[2] A theme elaborated in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and very popular in Jewish legend: cf. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, ii *passim*.

[3] Cf. Apul. *Met.* 8. 1 ff.

of its antecedents without further discussion. It has been argued[1] that its affinities with the Greek romantic novel are superficial or misleading, that it stands in the same tradition as *Ruth*, *Esther*, *Judith*, and *Tobit*, all of which may fairly be described as religious romances. This, however, is a different sense of the word 'romance' (and indeed such semantic confusion has constantly bedevilled discussions of the origin of the ancient romance). *Esther* and *Judith* may be called 'romances' in the same sense as Callisthenes' *Life of Alexander* is generally known as the Alexander romance: all three are irresponsible narratives which purport to be history: they may include some love-interest, but it is of minor importance. *Ruth* and *Tobit* fall in a different category: both stories are primarily edifying, and the question of their historicity does not strike the reader with any great urgency. But though both include a marriage, their authors concentrate on the solid virtues of Jewish family life: Ruth's affection for her mother-in-law is far more memorable than her feelings towards Boaz or his to her; Tobias, it is true, falls in love with Sarah, but he does so on the instructions of his mysterious but efficient escort, the disguised archangel, and the emotions of Tobias and his bride are not treated as a matter of any importance.

It might be said that JA shares with *Judith*, *Ruth*, and *Esther* the intention of supplementing our information about the history of Israel: *Genesis* does not tell us that Asenath was converted, and this is surely a point of equal substance to the sequence of events which brought Ruth from Moab to be the great-grandmother of King David:[2] the balance of ingredients is different, but the end-product was meant to be similar. Yet Asenath's conversion can scarcely have seemed a novelty: every reader of *Genesis* must have taken it for granted:[3] the idea that Joseph might have risked his sons learning from their mother the beastly devices of the heathen would not bear contemplating.[4] Asenath's conversion might have been effected in other ways: the work would have been even more edifying if Joseph had engaged in theological debate with Pentephres, or with Asenath herself, and gained her affections by a display of superior wisdom; or he might have won her, as Aeneas did Dido, with a tale of dangers passed. But Asenath, like many girls, finds the combination of aloofness, unusual competence, and remarkable good looks irresistible. Love triggers off the action and makes her susceptible to conversion: God moves in a mysterious way, or, as Chariton puts it (1. 1. 4 ff.), *φιλόνικος δ' ἐστιν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ χαίρει τοῖς παραδόξοις κατορθώμασιν.*

Even if the argument of the last three paragraphs has failed to convince the

[1] See in particular Kilpatrick, *Novum Testamentum* xii (1970), 233 f.

[2] It scarcely matters for the purpose of this discussion whether the concluding verses of *Ruth* were added by a later hand.

[3] Cf. Strack–Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud u. Midrasch* i. 928 (on *Matt.* 23: 15): 'Rabbi Bun hat gesagt: Die Gerechten (Israeliten) gehen dorthin (wo Proselyten erstehn sollten) und (dann) kamen sie (Pr.); so ging Joseph zur Asnath, Josua zur Rahab, Mose zu Chobab (vgl. *Nu.* 10, 29).' Burchard (*Untersuchungen*, 99) comments 'Dass Joseph und Aseneth als Beispiel genannt werden, ist kein Reflex von *JA*, sondern R. Bun erschliesst Asenethes Übertritt wie bei den anderen Beispielen aus der Tatsache, dass die Bibel eine nicht jüdische Person in eine enge Lebensbeziehung zu einem gläubigen Juden setzt: da muss sie sich bekehrt haben.'

[4] There is, it may be noted in passing, another objection to the marriage: despite her conversion, Asenath remains a descendant of Ham, and so subject to the curse pronounced by Noah on him and his descendants (*Gen.* 9: 25). Ingenious rabbinic casuistry invented a legend which made Asenath the illegitimate daughter of Joseph's half-sister Dinah: see Aptowitzer, 'Asenath, the wife of Joseph: a haggadic literary-historical study', *Hebrew Union College Annual* i (1924), 239 ff.

reader, JA still has a strong claim on the attention of students of the Greek romance. If it is in fact entirely explicable within the perspective of *Judith*, *Tobit*, etc., adorned with a few commonplaces from New Comedy, this indicates that one ought to take rather seriously the theory that Jewish or Aramaic influence had a decisive effect on the early development of the Greek romance.[1] *Tobit* and the immensely popular *Story of Ahikar* have often been cited in this connection, but one would not naturally call either a romance, and something recognizably closer is needed. But I would not myself interpret the evidence in this way.

It has seemed to many readers that there was more to JA than met the eye. Moses of Aggel, who died some time in the latter part of the sixth century A.D., was moved to undertake the translation of JA into Syriac after it had been brought to his attention by a correspondent who said that he had enjoyed the ἱστορία but had not understood the θεωρία; Moses replied that the truth underlying the narrative was the union of God with the soul. In modern times many interpreters have seen in Joseph the figure of the Messiah, or, if they believed in drastic Christian revision, of Christ, in Asenath the soul, or the people of Israel, or the Church. Philonenko goes yet further, and invites us to distinguish an astrological allegory, a gnostic drama, and a liturgy of initiation. Determined allegorists are not easily dissuaded, but the fact that Asenath's conversion takes place during Joseph's absence surely precludes identifying him with Asenath's redeemer (whatever Asenath herself may be supposed to symbolize). Moreover, the author gives no hint that he is speaking in parables, that there is a deeper level of meaning; there is no apparent incongruity in the narrative which falls into place on an allegorical interpretation. The question is not, after all, whether one can apply to JA the principles of exegesis which Philo applied to the Pentateuch, but the actual practice of those who wrote allegories and parables at this period.[2]

The significance of the religious element in the Greek romance, ἡ ἐκ τῶν θεῶν οἰκονομία, is not easy to assess. We tend to view the assumption that the gods have a special interest in the vicissitudes of the hero and heroine either as mere literary convention or as blatant propaganda. Translated into an Old Testament context, the combination of religion and mild eroticism is more disconcerting. This may perhaps partly explain the long-standing assumption that allegorical interpretation is required here, though there are other reasons.

If we can disregard the writer's rather inelegant style, the work is attractive in itself, quite apart from its significance for anything else. The writer had an excellent topic: Joseph is a far more impressive figure than Habrocomes or Theagenes. Here we have a hero who is important in his own right: he does not acquire significance merely from his devotion as a lover, and very little is in fact said about Joseph's reactions to Asenath: the clichés appropriate for inexperienced teenagers would obviously have been unsuitable. The obstacle to marriage is real enough: no contrivance is required.

The writer's attitude to the pagan world is tolerant and unimpassioned. The villain meets his downfall not because of antisemitic activities but as a result of his attempt to hijack the heroine; he dies from straightforward head injuries, not by any of the bizarre forms of death which so commonly await the θεομάχος

[1] Cf. Altheim–Stiehl, *Die aramäische Sprache unter den Achaemeniden*, (1959–), 182 ff. The influence of *Ahikar* on the *Life of Aesop* is of course undeniable.

[2] For a fuller discussion of this topic, see Burchard, op. cit. 112 ff.

in ancient literature. Asenath's confession is long, but the only specific offences mentioned are idol-worship and malicious talk about Joseph; there is no suggestion that idolatry must in itself lead to further sins. She smashes her idols in a spontaneous gesture, and the archangel does not suggest any further duties. Asenath is, so to speak, justified by faith alone; there is no hint of submission to the detailed precepts of the law, or of the customs which struck the pagan world as characteristic of Judaism. This is reasonable enough in a story set in the time before the law was given to Moses, but it makes it clear that the author was not writing a missionary tract: JA is as irrelevant to the problems of contemporary proselytes as *Quo Vadis* to the oecumenical movement. Evidently the writer held that converts should be welcomed but not sought.

The earliest external testimony to JA comes from the correspondence of the sixth-century translator, Moses of Aggel;[1] to establish the date of composition we have to make what we can of the internal evidence. Batiffol's original view of the work as essentially Christian has proved remarkably long-lived, even though he himself quickly abandoned it; this misconception no doubt largely explains the neglect from which JA has suffered. Yet its ethics and its doctrine of justification are not Christian but distinctively Jewish, as is the author's rather *laissez-faire* attitude towards the conversion of the pagan world. The story of Asenath's conversion is in any case much less interesting in a Christian context: compared with the vicissitudes of heroic virgins like Thecla it is very tame (this also may account for the persistent tendency to allegorical interpretation). The acceptability of proselytes and their subsequent status within the Jewish community were live issues: without the angel's explicit assurance there might well be some doubt whether μετάνοια could compensate for Asenath's alien origins. In Christian terms her conversion is, if not calculated, at any rate a rather commonplace form of religious experience. It is not surprising that the story appealed to Christian readers, but if it had been composed or substantially reworked by a Christian it would surely look very different. The equally popular story of *Barlaam and Ioasaph* offers an instructive contrast: there is no doubt about its Buddhist origins, yet in its Byzantine form it is unambiguously Christian. In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the *Ascension of Isaiah* Christian rewritings and interpolations are unmistakable.[2] Such explicitly Christian features are lacking in JA. Christian conceptions may have produced some superficial changes in the text, though the extent of this is debatable,[3] and in any case it is rather an effect of the trivial modernization to which popular texts of this sort were constantly exposed than of deliberate editorial purpose; but the basic narrative is indisputably Jewish. The author's exact religious position is not clear, but there is no reason to connect him with any identifiable sect such as the Essenes or Therapeutae.

[1] Indirect evidence of a slightly earlier date is provided by *P.S.I.* 27, a fifth-century papyrus of the *Passion of St. Christina*, a work which has much in common with JA and must have been influenced by it.

[2] The graphic comment of Charles on Christian interpolations in the *Test. xii Patr.* (op. cit. ii. 282 n. 1) is worth citing: 'The *dogmatic Christian interpolations* are patches differing alike in colour and texture from the original material, stitched on at times where originally there was no rent at all, and at others rudely thrust in where a rent has been deliberately made for their insertion.'

[3] e.g. the description of Joseph as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ πρωτότοκος (21. 3) is most easily explained in terms of the familiar view of Joseph as a type of Christ (though Burchard [p. 115] argues otherwise). The most problematic passages are those reminiscent of the Eucharist, of which there are several. See further Holtz, 'Christliche Interpolationen in "Joseph u. Aseneth" ', *New Testament Studies* xiv (1967/8), 482 ff.

It is now generally held that JA was written in Egypt, though the grounds for this view would not be of much weight if there were anything to indicate an alternative provenance. All the characters are either Egyptians or Jews resident in Egypt, and the plot hinges on relations between these two groups. Two passages which refer to Pharaoh or his son as *βασιλεὺς πάσης οἰκουμένης* / *πάσης τῆς γῆς* (1. 13; 4. 15) may seem to indicate an Egyptocentric outlook, but an author living elsewhere might well have thought it a neat touch of local colouring. Philonenko detects in several places the influence of specifically Egyptian elements, but none of his examples seems to me cogent.[1] It is true that the author's outlook has much in common with the liberal views characteristic of the Egyptian diaspora, but the number of Jewish works of this period which clearly indicate their provenance is relatively small, and there is obviously some danger in the assumption that this attitude necessarily reflects Alexandrian origins.

There is virtually universal agreement that the work belongs to the period of Jewish missionary activity which was decisively halted by Hadrian's decrees against circumcision; if it was in fact composed in Egypt, it can scarcely be later than the Jewish revolt under Trajan, after which Egyptian Jewry became increasingly isolationist. The upper limit has not been the subject of much discussion, but is roughly indicated by the pervasive influence of the LXX. Various reflections of contemporary events have been detected, though none of them is conclusive. Thus Aptowitzer suggested that the author was stimulated by the outstanding triumph of Jewish proselytism, the conversion of Queen Helena of Adiabene, along with many members of the royal household, in A.D. 50: an ingenious speculation, but no more. Burchard attaches some importance to a reference to the daughter of Joachim, king of Moab, as a suitable bride for Pharaoh's son (1. 14), a detail which, he argues, suggests an independent Nabataean kingdom, and thus dates the work between *c.* 110 B.C. and A.D. 106; but in view of the prominence of Moab in the Old Testament the idea might occur to the author anyway. Some have attempted to relate details in

[1] He argues (40 ff.) that the structure of JA and certain details in the narrative indicate that the author was familiar with the Egyptian story of the *Doomed Prince* (see G. Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens de l'époque pharaonique* [1949], 114 ff., E. Brunner-Traut, *Altägyptische Märchen* [1963], 24 ff., or Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians* [Harper Torchbooks, 1966], 161 ff.), which relates how the king of Naharina (Syria) built a tower for his daughter, with a window a hundred feet up, and announced that he would marry her to the first man to reach the window; the 'doomed' prince (who, so far as our fragments extend, does not seem unduly oppressed by knowing in advance that he is destined to be killed by a dog, a snake, or a crocodile) succeeds, and marries her. But apart from the common *Märchen*-motif of the girl in the tower (see p. 72 n. 2) the similarities between the two stories are slight.

Several reviewers have commented with approval on Philonenko's suggestion that Asenath's prayer implies at one point a distinctively Egyptian cosmogony: (12. 2–3) *Κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν αἰώνων, ὁ δοὺς πᾶσι πνοὴν ζωῆς, ὁ ἐξενέγκας τὰ ἀόρατα εἰς τὸ φῶς, ὁ ποιήσας τὰ πάντα καὶ φανερώσας τὰ ἀφανῆ, ὁ ὑψώσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ θεμελιώσας τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων*: 'Dieu est appelé *ὁ ὑψώσας τὸν οὐρανόν* . . . La formule est surprenante . . . elle est étrangère à l'Ancien comme au Nouveau Testament et les Pseudépigraphes n'en attestent nul exemple. En revanche, et le fait est capital, "soulever" ou "élever le ciel" est un des traits les plus caractéristiques de la cosmogonie égyptienne, tout particulièrement héliopolitaine.' This presses *ὑψώσας* rather hard; it obviously produces a more forceful antithesis to *θεμελιώσας* than a neutral word like *κτίσας* or the verb commonly used in such contexts, *ἐκτείνων*. But the idea is something of a cosmogonical commonplace.

the rite which marks Asenath's reception to contemporary changes and developments in Jewish ritual; in particular, it has been argued that the absence of any reference to baptism implies a date before the end of the first century B.C. However, some controversy surrounds the question of when it became normal practice to baptize proselytes, and the assumption that the author would faithfully reproduce contemporary ritual is unsafe: Joseph and Asenath move in a pre-Mosaic dreamworld where Pharaoh can perform their marriage and solemnly bless them in the name of the Most High God.

Stylistic considerations do not offer much help towards a more precise date. There is, fortunately, no doubt that *JA* was composed in Greek: apparent Semitisms are explained by the influence of the LXX, while many features of the style positively exclude a Hebrew or Aramaic original. Burchard, who examines the linguistic evidence in some detail, notes that JA includes some words first attested in the first century B.C., e.g. *ἡμιθανής* and *πρόσκαιρος*, and several which do not appear elsewhere before the New Testament period, e.g. *ἀναζωοποιέω*, *σιτιστός*, *σιτοδοτής*; the masculine use of *παρθένος* (see p. 72 n. 4) is obviously significant in this connection. But the uncertainties of the text, reflecting the perpetual tendency to modernization characteristic of popular literature, make such stylistic niceties inconclusive; in particular, one suspects that scribes were often tempted to import familiar and apparently appropriate phrases from the New Testament. Moreover, the fact that there is much more literature definitely datable to the period between *c.* 50 B.C. and A.D. 100 than there is for the equivalent period before 50 B.C. may falsify the picture to some extent.

Philonenko, struck by the work's obvious affinities with the Greek romance, dates it to the beginning of the second century, just before the revolt under Trajan: 'Toutefois, on a le sentiment que *Joseph et Aséneth* est postérieur à *Chéréas et Callirhoé*, par exemple, ou à *Leucippé et Clitophon*. Certes, les plus anciens fragments sur papyrus des ouvrages de Chariton d'Aphrodise et d'Achille Tatius sont du second siècle de notre ère, mais rien n'interdit de penser que les romans eux-mêmes pourraient avoir été rédigés beaucoup plus tôt.' This may be putting the cart before the horse: despite the obvious parallels with Achilles Tatius and Chariton, the influence of these particular works on JA cannot be established: all that it presupposes is the existence of sentimental narratives of this type.[1]

Inconclusive as are these attempts to reach a more precise date, most recent discussions favour the first century B.C., and it is certainly difficult to avoid the impression that the work belongs to the Hellenistic period. JA is not so much sentimental jam round a homiletic pill, but a Greek romance with Jewish subject-matter, a further instance, though at a less highbrow level, of the fashion exemplified in the tragedies of Ezekiel and the historical work of Demetrius. In spirit it is nearest to the *Letter of Aristeas*.[2] Both, like *Esther* and *Daniel*, are *Hofgeschichten*,[3] a type of story which lost its former popularity with Jewish readers under Roman rule; they exemplify the theme developed by

[1] This is not the place to discuss the dates of Chariton and Achilles Tatius, though the latter can scarcely be earlier than the second century.

[2] On these works, and on general trends in Jewish literature under the Ptolemies, see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* i. 687 ff., ii. 955 ff., where further bibliography may be found. Ezekiel's Alexandrian connections are not guaranteed: the argument rests on general probability, and is no stronger than it is for JA.

[3] Cf. Hengel, op. cit. 257 ff., *Judentum u. Hellenismus* (1969), 55 ff.

Ben Sirach (39. 3 ff.) in his praise of the ideal scribe, the man who combines piety and learning.[1] Both envisage a society in which Jews are respected for their piety, integrated but not assimilated, honoured guests at gentile dinner parties, where their hosts provide for the peculiarities of Jewish diet spontaneously and without fuss.[2] This eirenic attitude is the more remarkable in JA in view of the writer's rather sub-literary style, which suggests a lower social and educational level than that of 'Aristeas'. If JA is indeed of Egyptian provenance, this does not suit the increasingly anti-semitic atmosphere under Roman rule attested by Philo and the *Acta Alexandrinorum*: the general outlook surely reflects the relative security of the Ptolemaic period, and the linguistic evidence does not seem to exclude a date in the second century. This argument, is not altogether invalidated by the uncertainty about the place of composition: Hadrian's decrees against circumcision did not come as a bolt from the blue.

There is thus a reasonable chance that JA is older than Chariton; at all events, it is earlier than most of the extant romances. Much has been written about the revolutionary effect of papyrus discoveries in this connection, but they have been more important for establishing the chronology of extant authors than for any light they throw on the early development of the genre.[3] One should not, in any case, overestimate what papyrology can contribute here: even the most extensive fragments so far published preserve only isolated episodes, and we know virtually nothing of the structure and scale of the works from which they come. In these circumstances it is illogical to ignore JA: the Jews were not a people so peculiar that Jewish literature in Greek bore no relation to contemporary trends. That this Jewish novella is in many ways very different from any of the extant Greek romances is undeniable, but they are themselves a rather heterogeneous group. It is clearly debatable whether JA is a crude imitation of a genre already established as respectable, or typical of a class of popular narrative which stimulated Chariton and other literary men to more polished productions, but in this area where so much is doubtful we cannot afford to restrict ourselves to texts whose origins and interpretation are free from uncertainty.[4]

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[1] *ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν ἐκζητήσει, καὶ ἐν αἰνίγμασι παραβολῶν ἀναστραφήσεται. ἀνὰ μέσον μεγιστάνων ὑπηρετήσει, καὶ ἔναντι ἡγουμένων ὀφθήσεται. ἐν γῇ ἀλλοτρίων ἐθνῶν διελεύσεται, . . . αἰνέσουσι τὴν σύνεσιν αὐτοῦ πολλοί, ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἐξαλειφθήσεται.*

[2] 'Aristeas' 182 f.: the writer seems somewhat defensive: he goes out of his way to emphasize that Jews are no more peculiar than many other minorities.

JA also shares with 'Aristeas' a taste for opulence: thus, the detailed description of the interior decoration and furnishings of Asenath's tower (2) and of her clothes (3, 9–11) seems disproportionately lengthy, while 'Aristeas' ' account of the reversible gold table presented by Philadelphus (57 ff.) is absurdly comprehensive in its detail (unless the author intended to stimulate the manufacture of reproductions).

[3] There is no reason for regarding the *Ninus romance* as earlier than JA. Our papyri (Pack[2] 2616, 2617) are dated to the first century A.D. At the time when the first fragment was published this seemed, in view of Rohde's work, a sensationally early date, but there is no justification for prolonging the excitement artificially by maintaining that the date of composition must be at least as early as 100 B.C. There is no rule in these matters, but nothing like this interval can have elapsed between the composition of the fourth gospel and our earliest evidence for it, the fragment now in the Rylands Library, dated to the first half of the second century.

[4] I read an earlier version of this paper to the Oxford Philological Society in February 1973, and profited greatly from the ensuing discussion; I would particularly like to thank Professor G. D. Kilpatrick, Professor A. Momigliano, Oswyn Murray, Peter Parsons, and my husband.