

In this account as contained in the Bible, we find a great deal of local color, many of the incidental details in it are things which are commonly found in the literature and also in the ruins of ancient Egypt and which would be out of place in most other countries. For instance, it is easy to show that dreams were regarded with superstitious attention in Egypt. The position that Potiphar entrusted to Joseph in making him overseer over his house was an office which actually existed in the houses of great Egyptian nobles. The office of *imj r pr.*, The titles "chief of the butlers" and "chief of the bakers" actually occur in Egyptian inscriptions. Pharaoh's birthday was an occasion of feasting and possibly also for release of prisoners. Magicians existed in Egypt. The signet ring, the vestures of fine linen and the gold chain about his neck, which Pharaoh gave to Joseph, were fitting gifts from an Egyptian king to one whom he was making his prime minister. The mumification of both Jacob and Joseph was in accordance with Egyptian customs.

The biblical statement that every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians is borne out by the Egyptian evidence.

Such famines as the one which is described in connection with the life of Joseph did actually occur in Egypt. We have several inscriptions in the tombs of Egyptian governors telling of the preparations that they made during times of plenty for famine and telling of the coming of greivous famines through the failure of the Nile to overflow its banks as usual and how they kept their people alive during that period by distributing the corn that they had gathered. One of these inscriptions comes from a period rather near the time of Joseph and has been thought by some to refer to the very incident described in the Bible, but the date of it is too uncertain to be sure that this refers to this particular famine.