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**Textual History of the Bible, vol. 2: The
Deuterocanonical Scriptures (gen. ed. A. Lange; vol.
eds. F. Feder and M. Henze). Christian Palestinian
Aramaic Texts.**

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1.2.13 Christian Palestinian Aramaic Texts

Witnesses of deuterocanonical texts in Christian-Palestinian Aramaic are as rare and scarce as those of other Old Testament texts (cf. I.1.4.9). It is remarkable that these witnesses have reached us at all. Another point has to be made : all but one of these witnesses are extremely fragmentary. The below list of these manuscripts¹ will show how meager the transmission of deuterocanonical texts is :

Text	Verses	Manuscript
1 Baruch	3:36–38	St. Catherine of Sinai, now St. Petersburg, National Libr., Syr. 16
Letter of Jeremiah	33–63	Cairo Genizah, now Cambridge, Univ. Libr., T.-S. 12.745 + 12.744 and St. Petersburg, National Libr., Antonin, Ebr. B958
Ben Sira	12:7–18 ; 13:3–4, 7	unidentified
Ben Sira	18:18–19:1	from Cairo Genizah, now Cambridge, Univ. Libr., T.-S. 12.191
Ben Sira	45:25–46:8	Damascus, location unknown
Prayer of Manasseh	1–15	provenance unknown, now Berlin, Staatsbibl., Or. Oct. 1019
Wisdom of Solomon	9:8b–10, 2	Cairo Genizah, now Oxford, Bodl. Libr., Syr. D 32 (P)

Among these seven witnesses, the Prayer of Manasseh has been preserved as part of a *horologion*, a « Book of Hours », from the twelfth century² (cf. 11.11). 1 Baruch is a quotation in *Catechesis ad illuminandos* 11 by Cyril of Jerusalem³ (cf. 2.1.11). There is then no proof that these texts have ever been transmitted as part of the Old Testament in the CPA corpus.

The other extant manuscripts probably were parts of the biblical books connected to their deuterocanonical texts (cf. I.1.4.9).⁴ In the case of the Letter of Jeremiah, for example, the presence of a running title indicates with a high probability that this book was part of a larger group of texts,

1. This list is based on the published CPA texts. None of the texts identified among the new finds in St. Catherine Monastery in Sinai (Brock, *New Finds*; Sinai Palimpsests Project, online) contains Deuterocanonical Old Testament witnesses.

2. For the edition of this *horologion*, see Black, *A Christian Palestinian Syriac Horologion*.

3. Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *The Catechism of Cyril of Jerusalem*, 122–23.

4. An edition of these texts can be found in Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic Old Testament*, 200–12.

consisting, at the very least, of the book of Jeremiah, Lamentations and Baruch. Such a statement is harder to prove in the case of the other texts, but there is no reason not to suppose that there were considered to be parts of biblical books.

We do not know who translated the Old Testament from Greek to CPA, when it was translated, or whether at one point in time several translations were in existence (cf. I.1.4.9). To date, no research has been conducted on the text of the Old Testament witnesses to establish whether the CPA Old Testament is a uniform text or whether it is based on several versions. We only have more than one witness of those passages for which we have both a Bible fragment and the equivalent passage in a lectionary. For this particular situation, it has already been proven that the lectionary versions are based on translations from Greek lectionaries and not on the biblical CPA text.⁵ But since we have no witnesses of a deuterocanonical text in a lectionary, and since the same passage is never attested twice, we are not able to say if there existed several versions of the Bible in CPA or not.

It does not surprise that our texts derive mainly from a Greek version. However, we have to underscore the specific case of the Prayer of Manasseh, found in a late manuscript, which is strongly influenced by the Syriac version of the text, and, in the same time, by the Greek *Horologion* (cf. 11.11). This is not surprising, since it is known that CPA was generally influenced by Syriac in later periods.

It is more interesting to point out that the Letter of Jeremiah presents variants coming from an Old Latin version (cf. 2.4.11). This proves that it is necessary to analyze all the CPA texts of the Old Testament in detail to find out if such a phenomenon appears elsewhere as well.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to say more about the history of the deuterocanonical texts of the Old Testament without a high degree of uncertainty. One can only regret once again that so few witnesses have survived.

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Sinai Palimpsests Project = <http://sinaipalimpsests.org/>

5. See, for example, Nestle, *Critical Notes*, xvii, who clearly expresses his opinion that lectionary texts were translated directly from Greek lectionaries because there was no complete translation of the Bible. The coexistence of the same passages in a biblical book and in a lectionary proves that, even if the text existed in biblical books, it was translated again from Greek lectionaries.