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15.11 Christian Palestinian Aramaic

15.11.1 The Manuscript Evidence

A short passage of CPA-Wis survives in a single leaf of a palimpsest manuscript, manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Syr. D. 32 (P), folios 1a + 2b^r and 1b+ 2a^v.¹ The script dates from the late sixth century C.E. The manuscript is nowadays illegible on the lower part of the first page, and only partly legible on the lower part of the second page. The text preserved covers Wis 9:8b-10:2, but due to the poor state of the leaf, Wis 9:10, 9:12-14 and 9:16 are almost lost, except for few words. Wis 9:17 and 10:1-2 are very fragmentary, and it is impossible to check the manuscript, for the reason mentioned above.

The mention of the beginning of Wisdom of Solomon 10 allows us to presume that the manuscript was not originally a lectionary but contained the whole book of Wisdom of Solomon.

The fragment was acquired in 1893 by the Bodleian Library, and is coming from the Cairo Genizah.² Thus it is very probable that the CPA manuscript came originally from the Monastery of Saint Catherine in the Mount Sinai, as many other CPA texts found in the Cairo Genizah.

15.11.2 Modern Editions

The manuscript was first published by Stenning in 1896, with a detailed philological commentary and a translation.³ The text was then reedited, with few emendations but without commentary nor translation, by Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff.⁴

15.11.3 History of Research

Stenning is the only commentator of this fragment. In his *editio princeps*, he has given a detailed and precise commentary of the text, but some readings, as well as the knowledge of the language, have been improved so that some remarks do not make sense anymore. In Wis 9:15 (verso, col. a, l. 5), his readings ܡܠܟܘܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܥܐ “and the earthly tabernacle,” has been rightly corrected by Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff to ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܥܐ “and the tent burdens.” On the opposite, Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff accept the reading ܠܘܠܐ ܠܘܠܐ ܠܘܠܐ “he who was formed” (Wis 10:1, verso, col. b, l. 10-11), while the reading ܠܘܠܐ ܠܘܠܐ ܠܘܠܐ “who was formed the first” would fit better with both the original text (πρωτόπλαστον) and the Christian Palestinian Aramaic grammar.

1. Images available at https://genizah.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/volume_224#MS_Syr_d_32_P-item1-item2 last accessed January 2022.

2. Gwilliam, Crawford, and Stenning, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*, 5.

3. Gwilliam, Crawford, and Stenning, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*, 21-28.

4. Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic Old Testament* 1, 200-01. It has to be noticed that, in this reedition, the remaining words of Wis 9:10 are misplaced, as they appear to be on ll. 21-22 of the column a, and not on ll. 15-16: this is due to a misunderstanding of the edition of Stenning, where three lines of dots have been used to indicate a large *lacuna* in the text, but without any line number. The commentary of Stenning to ll. 11-20 says that these lines “are absolutely illegible.” The words here deciphered fit perfectly with the last words of Wis 9:10, while the edition of Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff suggests that some text is missing after them and while, at the same time, there would not be enough place in ll. 12-14 to contain the text of Wis 9:10.

Furthermore, in several places, Stenning has proposed reconstructions for words lost in *lacunae*. Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff cautiously reedited these *lacunae* making reconstructions only when at least a part of a word was still extant. In one case, however, they may have considered the reconstruction as obvious, i.e. in Wis 9:15 (verso, col. a, l. 8): Stenning proposed ܡܢ ܕܢܘܩܢܐ ܕܠܘܘܢܐ “full of concerns” as a translation of the Greek πολυφρόντιδα.

15.11.4 Relevant Variants with LXX-Wis

It is quite remarkable that the CPA version follows very closely LXX-Wis (cf. 15.2) but in one case our fragment reads with the Peshitta (cf. 15.3). In Wis 9:14, the CPA text reads ܕܘܡܠܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܕܢܘܩܢܐ “their thoughts” which translates αἱ ἐπινοιαὶ αὐτῶν, where the LXX gives αἱ ἐπινοιαὶ ἡμῶν “our thoughts.”

In Wis 9:18 (verso, col. b, l. 7), our fragment goes with a variant reading of LXX^S: ܕܡܢ ܕܢܘܩܢܐ “and by your wisdom” which translates καὶ τῆ σοφίᾳ σου, where the remainder of LXX-Wis only has καὶ τῆ σοφίᾳ “and by wisdom.”

In two places, Greek future tenses are rendered by CPA as present tenses, i.e. in Wis 9:11 (recto, col. b, l. 4 and 7): ܡܢ ܕܢܘܩܢܐ “and she guides”; ܡܢ ܕܢܘܩܢܐ “and she guards.” LXX has καὶ ὀδηγήσει “and she will guide” and καὶ φυλάξει “and she will guard me” instead.

Bibliography

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