A Palimpsest Fragment with Unattested Passages of Job 3:11c-4:3b in Christian Palestinian Aramaic under Sinai, Greek NF MG 14

[Un palimpsesto fragmentario con un pasaje no atestiguado de Job 3,11c-4,3b en arameo cristiano-palestinense en Sinai, Greek NF MG 14]

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Abstract: This palimpsest fragment with unattested passages of Job 3:11c-4:3b in the Christian Palestinian Aramaic translation with Lucian readings has been preserved in a Greek codex registered as Sinai, Greek NF MG 14 in the Monastery of St Catherine. The biblical text is one of more than 160 palimpsests, which could be identified among the New Finds that were discovered in 1975 in a blocked-up chamber. With the help of the new technology of multispectral digital imaging it was possible to bring out the reading of the lower script for this Bible section. The unpublished text is edited here in transliteration and translation with commentaries on the variant witnesses.

Keywords: Christian Palestinian Aramaic; Greek; Job; Lucian; Palimpsest; Peshitta; St Catherine’s Monastery; Septuagint; Syrohexapla.

Resumen: Este palimpsesto fragmentario con un pasaje no atestiguado de Job 3,11c-4,3b en traducción aramea cristiano-palestinense con lecturas de Luciano ha sido conservado en un códice griego catalogado como Sinai, Greek NF MG 14 en el monasterio de Santa Catalina. El texto bíblico es uno de los más de 160 palimpsestos, que pueden ser identificados entre los ‘nuevos hallazgos’ que fueron descubiertos en 1975 en una sala tapiada. Con la ayuda de las nuevas tecnologías multiespectrales de
Imagen digital ha sido posible leer la escritura inferior de esta sección bíblica. El texto inédito es editado aquí en transliteración y traducción, con comentarios sobre los testimonios de variantes.

**Palabras Clave:** Arameo cristiano-palestínense; Griego; Job; Luciano; Palimpsesto; Peshitta; Monasterio de Santa Catalina; Septuaginta; Syrohexapla.

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**Background**

The Greek codex with the shelfmark Sinai, Greek NF MG 14 belonging to the New Finds of St Catherine’s Monastery from 1975 assembles a collection of various palimpsest manuscripts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Greek overwritten by a Greek majuscule with the Saint’s Lives from *Encomium on the Theotokos*. Among these palimpsests surfaced four former folios in the translation of Christian Palestinian Aramaic of three early independent Bible manuscripts (5th to 6th centuries AD). The following parts of Bible books, 1 Kingdoms (1 Samuel), Job, and Proverbs, have been preserved in them. The

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1 The palimpsest fragment and the digital photos are published with the kind permission of St Catherine’s Monastery, Mount Sinai, Egypt. The reading and preparation of the edition was made possible by the Early Manuscript Electronic Library (EMEL).


3 This unique text witness for the missing link in the transmission of the Septuagint and their dependent translations was published in the meantime by Christa Müller-Kessler, ”Proverbs 11:1b–15 as Transmitted in an Unpublished Christian Palestinian Aramaic Palimpsest from St Catherine’s Monastery (Sinai, Greek NF MG 14)”, *Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 52 (2019), pp. 157–165.

Greek underlying text also contains biblical passages of Numbers.\(^5\) All three Bible manuscript witnesses in Christian Palestinian Aramaic can be clearly distinguished by their specific scribal hands, but their original place of writing cannot be established through the shape of the letters.\(^6\) This makes it a bit awkward to present them in a single and unified study. One palimpsest sheet forms bifolio Greek NF MG 14, fol. 18/19 with the unattested early Christian Palestinian Aramaic passages of Job 3:11c-4:3b on it.

It is not the first early Bible text witness for Job in Christian Palestinian Aramaic that has come to our attention. Another early Bible fragment of Job has been known for much longer. It was detected in a book cover in 1894 among manuscripts stored in the library of St Catherine’s Monastery (Sinai, Syr. 15) containing Job 22:3-12 and was published in 1896 by Francis C. Burkitt.\(^7\) Both folios definitely belong to early Bible manuscripts and do not derive from lectionaries. Moshe Bar-Asher has signalled another fragment of Job for Christian Palestinian Aramaic, but never published it.\(^8\) All the

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5. For more information, see the electronic catalogue description under “Browse” under www.sinaipalimpsests.org.

6. There has been a lot of trafficking and trading of vellum material, which was expensive and time-consuming to produce. Not all that is stored today in St Catherine’s Monastery was originally produced there.

7. See George H. Gwilliam, Francis C. Burkitt, and John F. Stenning, Biblical and Patristic Relics of the Palestinian Syriac Literature from MSS in the Bodleian Library and in the Library of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai «Anecdota Oxoniensia. Semitic Series» I.9 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 40–41. Unfortunately, I have not yet had access to the original or a photo of this very fragment.

other attestations for the Book of Job in this Western dialect are part of lectionaries either from the early period\textsuperscript{9} or the later one.\textsuperscript{10}

The translations of the Job witnesses in Christian Palestinian Aramaic often correspond to other Greek Bible witnesses only found as additions in the margins in the Syrohexapla. These early Job translations cannot have been influenced by the latter, since this dialect draws directly from a Greek Vorlage, which differs in the various biblical verses of Job. Nevertheless, the text variants are compared here to the Syrohexapla as found in the only manuscript Milan, Ambrosiana, MS C 313 Inf.\textsuperscript{11}


\textsuperscript{10} Other lections of Job 16:1–9a, 16:20–17:16, 21:1–34 stem from the late period and were edited by Lewis, \textit{A Palestinian Syriac Lectionary}, pp. 55–57, 74–75. The missing fol. 80 with Job 16:9b–19 of this lectionary was published five years later by Friedrich Schulthess, “Christlich-palästinische Fragmenten”, \textit{Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft} 56 (1902), pp. 248–261, esp. 253–254.

\textsuperscript{11} The following Syriac Bible editions have been used: Antonio M. Ceriani (ed.), \textit{Codex Syro-hexaploris Ambrosianus}, «Monumenta sacra et profana» 7 (Milan: Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, 1874); the Peshitta published by the Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East for the United Bible Societies 1979; L. G. Rignell (ed.), \textit{The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version}, Part II, 1a (Leiden: Brill, 1982). For abbreviations and comparison with the Greek and other sources were employed Frederick Field, \textit{Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta}, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875); Robert Holmes and Jacob Parsons, \textit{Vetus Testamentum Graecum cum Variiis Lectionibus}, Vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1823); Alfred Rahlfs (ed.), \textit{Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes edidit
All new palimpsest texts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic of the early period (5th–6th centuries AD), especially Bible witnesses such as 1 Kingdoms, Proverbs, and Job add to our knowledge of the transmission of the Septuagint, their sources, and the dependent translations as well as the lexicography and the grammar. The three Bible witnesses from Sinai, Greek NF MG 14 seem to follow different Greek Vorlagen in their translation. While the fragment with Proverbs 11 agrees in most cases with the Byzantine Prophetologion, the Job verses presented here vary concerning their agreement with other LXX and Syrohexapla witnesses, and follow mostly a Lucian reading that often seems to correspond to witness L1 except for two verses (3:18; 20). The two fragments with 1 Kingdoms 18:29b–30 show an addition as only attested in Lucian and Origen, and they might have had the same translator as the Job fragment, but the manuscript was definitely copied by a different scribe.

**Codicological data**

The former vellum folio now measuring 19.4 x 12.7 cm was folded and converted into a bifolio 18r/19v by the later scribe of the upper text for the Saint’s Lives in the codex Greek NF MG 14 MG. For this re-use the lower script in Christian Palestinian Aramaic text was rotated by 90 degrees and overwritten by a Greek majuscule. The lower Aramaic text is subdivided as usual in early manuscripts into two columns with 21 lines each. Three dots can divide a verse or half verse, two dots a sub half verse and one is put before direct speech. Fortunately, the script of Job was hardly scraped off. The only damage is due to the storage, which resulted in the missing corners at the top and bottom corners.

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12 This can be deduced by the already published folio of an early translation of Proverbs, which follows more or less the text version of the Byzantine Prophetologion; see Müller-Kessler, “Proverbs 11:1b–15”.

on the left-hand side and for the recto on the right-hand side. Therefore, one and a half lines and a few letters are missing in the right column on the recto and in the left column on the verso side.

Chapters three and four are divided by a line filled with dots, which speaks for a Bible manuscript and not a lectionary.

Orthographical and Linguistic Features

Initial or final aleph, when vocalized as /e/ is indicated with a supralinear dot in 'mh 'his mother' (3:16) and in the conjunction ' < ŋ. Mem with a supralinear dot indicates the pronunciation /ā/ in m.n /mān/ (4:2) and tm.n /tamān/ (3:17; 19).

As another orthographical feature one can note that /ḥ/ replaces /ḥ/ in the abstract plural noun ḥqyn < *qyn 'distress' (3:19). This orthographical peculiarity, which is actually a phonetic one, is caused by the gradual breakdown of the gutturals in Western Aramaic. For Christian Palestinian Aramaic, however, it tends to be rather rare in the early period. This is, however, also notable in the noun blyw' < bl'.w' 'effort' (4:2) with the phonetic realization of the former glottal /ḥ/ by a vowel /y/ as in many positons, mostly written in initial, medial, and final position in the early manuscripts written with aleph with supralinear dot instead of yod in the later period.

An unusual peculiarity is the usage of waw instead of yod in the construct state of the masculine plural in rwqzwbn 'their wrath' (3:17). Another odd spelling occurs in the derived nominal form mynwqy' √ynq 'still-born child' (3:17) with the m-prefix as in use in

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14 See Christa Müller-Kessler, Grammatik des Christlich-Palästinisch-Aramäischen, Teil 1, Schriftlehre, Lautlehre, Formenlehre, »Texte und Studien zur Orientalistik« 6 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1991), p. 44. Other early attestations of the interchange of gutturals are: ʾšrwt' < ʾšrwt' 'trespass' (Romans 5:15 CCR2); bḥyr:yn < b'yry:n 'animals' (Jonas 4:11; Greek NF MG 32, fol. 1v/2r; unpubl.). The opposite is found in /ḥ/ > /ḥ/: yt'tn < *yḥtn 'he will become the son-in-law' (1 Kingsoms 18:26; Greek NF MG 14, fol. 21v/17r; unpubl.).


16 Müller-Kessler, Grammatik des Christlich-Palästinisch-Aramäischen, p. 44.
several Western Aramaic dialects\textsuperscript{17} instead of the expected nominal form \textit{t}-prefix \textit{tynwq}, which is obviously a Hebrew loan into CPA.\textsuperscript{18}

Lexical and Grammatical additions are: \textit{gby} ‘‘collector’’ (3:18); ‘\textit{tynz}. itpaal \textit{gnz}’ ‘it was hidden’ (3:23); \textit{dyṣ t}’ peal perfect \textit{dwṣ} ‘I rejoiced’ (3:25); \textit{zyn}\textsuperscript{50} ‘weapon’ (3:15); \textit{mtyhr}:yn b- itpeel participle \textit{yhr} ‘(they are) proud’ (Job 3:14); \textit{ṣdkw} afel perfect \textit{ṣdk} ‘they calmed down’ (3:17); \textit{tnwh}’ ‘sighing’ (3:22) is a better variant than \textit{tnwh} (Matthew 2:18 CCR1).\textsuperscript{21}

\textit{ynqt} peal perfect \textit{ynq} ‘I sucked’ (3:12); \textit{mrb’h.} ‘her womb’ (3:16); \textit{ṣq’t} peal perfect ‘I have sunken’\textsuperscript{22} (3:13); ‘\textit{ynyht} (ly) ittafal perfect ‘I was calmed’ (3:13).


\textsuperscript{18} See CPA \textit{tynwq}: Cyril of Jerusalem IV.3 CSR\textsuperscript{i} in Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff, \textit{The Catechism of Cyril of Jerusalem in the Christian Palestinian Aramaic Version}, «A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic» V (Groningen: Styx, 1999), p. 39. It might be considered here a loan from Hebrew, since Western Aramaic prefers the variant with \textit{mem}-prefix instead.

\textsuperscript{19} This verb derives from an Iranian loan, Old Persian *\textit{ganza} ‘treasure’ in the meaning ‘to be hidden’ and became well spread in the Middle Aramaic period, see Claudia Ciancaglini, \textit{Iranian Loanwords in Syriac}, «Beiträge zur Iranistik» 28 (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 2008), p. 142. The early Western Aramaic attestations were neglected in this study.


1. [.....]ʼt :. [.....] .  

mrβ’h. d’.mh23 : the womb of his mother,

[12 lm]ʼ24 qβʼly25 [12 Why] did “. hyk or like (stillborn)

[l]y’ rkwnb : knees receive mynw’y26 dl’ infants27 who never

[wlm]” dy yntq [and why] did hmy26 y28 nhwrʼ . saw the light.

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23 LXX ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ μήτρας μητράς; Syhex ܕܢܦܩ ܣܢ ܣܪܒܥܐ ܕܐܣܐ.
24 * LXX ἔδ. No space in the CPA text to restore dy.
25 LXX συνήντηςάν μοι; Syhex ܐܥܝܢ ܒܝ̈ ܦܓ̈ ܪ̈ܒܝܢܝ — lay me down‖.
26 LXX νηπιοι; θ΄ εμβρυον; Syhex ܠܐ ܥܘ ―fetuses‖; MT עֹלְּלִים — children‖.
27 This lexeme has been till now only attested in various Western Jewish Aramaic dialects, including inscriptional texts. While the Peshitta understands it as unborn children and translates it with ܠܐ ܥܘ, which makes more sense, since only an unborn infant cannot have seen the light. According to Galen 17 1.653 νηπιος can be also ‘a fetus’ in Greek, see O ὁπερ νηπιοι οι ουκ ειδον φως, but clearer in θ΄ εμβρυον μη ιδον φως. The other Western Aramaic dialects (GA, JPA, SA) take it as ‘child, infant’; see Sokoloff, Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, p. 304a sub מיינוק; Abraham Tal, A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic, «Handbuch der Orientalistik» 50 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 350 sub 2. ינוק.
28 mynw’y ʼ is taken here despite the masculine plural ending as a feminine plural, although a regular plural formation מינוקייחא is attested in western Aramaic in Midrash Pesiqta Rabba; see Marcus Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature (London: Luzac, 1876–1903), p. 776. Therefore, the verb hmy is written here with the feminine verbal affix -y. Also in a western Midrash of Esther from the Cairo Genizah one finds this exceptional form זומ אמרה מינוקיא עברנן בהדין שוקא חד—‘one time saying (impersonal), ‘the (female) children are passing us by in this market’, where עברנן is obviously a perfect with feminine plural suffix ending -n- plus an object suffix first plural ι-, of which only appears ι- in the spelling; see for the text Zevi Meir Rabbinowitz, Ginze Midrash: The Oldest Forms of Rabbinic Midrashim According to Geniza Manuscripts (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Chaim Rosenberg School of Tel Aviv, 1976), p. 157:3–4 (T-S C 2.184r) or https://fgp.genizah.org.
I suck

[tdy:]n' כקד (breast)s?

Now I

[ndk] dmk (had)

would, [when]

I had

'š1'yt : 7sq't כקד (fallen asleep, have quietness, and had I sunken away, [and}

'wtnyht ly : I would be resting.

tm.n 'tnyhw there they were

'1 'm mlk'y' כקד (With the kings)

hlyn dl'yn resting, those who

хот the counsellors

bpgryhw כקד (were weary in their bodies)

dl' : hlyn of the earth, those

'hyk 1d' dy כקד (As the captives)

dhww who were kpy:ty כקד (succeeded together

29 L επαυσαν; ≠ LXX δεξίοναν.
30 LXX άπνοας; Sy' δεξίοναν, but 6' άφησαν; מז' שומם; MT וּ; Sy' שומם.
31 CPA has a combination 7mt' drwzwhwn, which cannot be found in the other witnesses, except for Sy' 9דַשְׁנְה, but 6' שלום; מז' שלום; MT וּ; Sy' שומם; 6', שומם.
32 + L καί; LXX omits.
33 Sy' 'כיקס; LXX + κατάκοποι; Sy' שומם; ≠ MT וּ; Sy' marginal gloss שומם.
34 Sy' שומם [superscript שומם above שומם] 'misbehaved'; minor witnesses + ευθηνής. The CPA version and also the Peshitta are taking it as שומם 'captives' as the MT שומם, and also מז' הגרמו; מז' הגרמו, while LXX has מז' הגרמו 'eternal ones', L δי מזומם, but the Complut shows מז' מזומם 'captives' (Holmes and Parsons) too. Syrohexplia and CPA follow a different LXX witness, which is nearer to the Hebrew and Peshitta version.
35 + O ευθηνής = מז' 6'.
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\[ mtyhryn \quad \text{proud of the} \quad wl' \; \text{sm'}w \quad \text{and did not hear} \]

\[ bzy'n^{16} \quad w^{17} \text{m} \quad \text{weapon.}^{15} \quad \text{And} \quad qlh \; dgby^{18} \quad \text{the voice of the collector.} \]

15. \text{‘rkwnyn m’} \quad \text{rulers, what was} \quad wz'\text{wr’ wrb’} \quad \text{And the small and} \quad tm.n \; hwnn : \quad \text{great are there,} \quad w'bd' l^{40} \quad \text{and the servant does}

\[ ddhbhw \quad \text{their gold} \quad tm.n \; hwnn : \quad \text{great are there,} \quad w'bd' l^{40} \quad \text{and the servant does} \]

\[ dml' w' \; btchwn \quad \text{who filled} \quad dhl \; mn \; mrh^{41} \quad \text{not fear his master.} \]

\[ [\text{bks}] p' \quad \text{[with sil]ver.} \quad \text{[with sil]ver.} \]

16. \text{Or} \quad ln' gr \; yhb^{42} \quad \text{For why does he}

20. \text{[hy]k yhb}^{43} \quad \text{[lik]e the} \quad nhwr \; lhlyn \quad \text{give light to}

\[ [\text{ds}] \text{byq} \quad \text{[which l]eft from the} \quad dbmryr^{45} \quad \text{who are in bitterness,} \]

56 All other witnesses have plurals: LXX ἐπὶ ξίφος; Syhex = MT חרב, but Aramaic, however, treats zyn’ as a collective term.

57 ο καὶ; LXX ἤ.

58 LXX φορολόγου; Syhex עבדה = MT עבדה, but Aramaic, however, treats ħṭ like the captives.

59 LXX ὡν ... ἰχθύς; Syhex עבד הוא מנהוג ... ויחום; possessive in Syhex עבדה עם עבדה for MT עבדה עבד.

60 L ou; omitted in Vaticanus, Sinaiticus.

61 Sy’ex = מנהוג; Syhex עבדה עבדה מנהוגו ‘a servant who fears’; α’ = ב לוכדים ב לעבננה תבש עבדה ב לוכדים ב.

62 Active in CPA as in MT פ”, but passive LXX בדד; Sy’ex = MT פ”; Syhex = MT פ”.

63 LXX אֶתְּמְרָה; Sy’ex עבדה; + MT פ”; + Sy’ex עבדה, hidden”; + α’ = ב"א לוכדים ב"א + ב"א לוכדים ב"א.

64 LXX אֶתְּמְרָה ידוע; + ס’ ידועה; + ס’ ידועה + ס’ ידועה.

65 Sy’ex עבדה ‘for the toilers’; MT בדד.
1. ωὐχῦντες λήπστε and life to the souls [ṣ ...] [ṣ ...]

dῆπον (sic) ... who are in pains, ἡλιῶν those ὀμαθμὸν who desire λῦ : ωμμν ωμ[dm] me, and from some[thing]

λμωτ' ἔλι death and do not ἔδήλτ πγ [by :] that I feared met [me].

5. ἀσβύν : take (it)55, and ἅλπσυν dig ὑβρὶς ὑκ after him as ἱσδκ ὑ'[w']['] no[r] quiet n(or)

dβτρ σμτ ἔτι after a treasure, 'τνυή did I rest,

22 ὑμντ:ἔδυν and they would ἕτ 'τ' but wrath came

50 ὑθ omitted in CPA.

64 ἔδηλτ πγ' [by :] that I feared met [me].
it?

$^{23}$ mwt' gr$^{57}$ nyḥ $^{23}$ For death is rest

$^{4}$ 1 w'n' ḫypz $^{4}$ And Eliphaz, the Temanite

ḥw lbrn$^{3}$: for the human-being,
tynny' w'mr. answered and said,

$^{4}[m]$ d'wrhh whatever of his path

$^{2}$ dm' sgy zb:nyn $^{2}$'Have you often

ignty' w'mr

'tgnzt.$^{48}$: was hidden, mlt blyw$^{59}$: spoken with effort,

‡ [m] ' d'wr ḫ

wbnnt l $^{[g}y']$ instructed m[any]

and Eliphaz, the Temanite

‡

‡...‡ L γαρ; Syhex nil.

O ου η οδος απεκρυβη; missing in Syhex; Sy$^{9}$

$^{60}$ LXX ηκει μοι.

$^{61}$ L Lat Copt ασθενουστως; LXX ασθενούς.
Plate II: Greek NF MG 14, fol. 18r/19v – Job 3:20c-4:3b
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