

Recenzje / Reviews

Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period. Third Revised and Expanded Edition*, Bar-Ilan University Press, Ramat Gan 2017, XLV + 687 pp.

The *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* by M. Sokoloff was originally published in 1990. The appearance of a third edition in 2017 shows how great was the need for such a work among readers of early Jewish literature, Semitists as well as Orientalists. The preparation of this new edition gave the Author the opportunity of updating his work. The second edition, issued in 1992, only contained *Addenda et Corrigenda*, while the present one is a really updated publication, witnessing the progress made in Aramaic lexicography during the intervening period.

Since Middle Aramaic and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic are appellations used often in a larger sense, it is useful to stress the importance of the chronological determination of *the Byzantine Period*. This means that the dictionary deals neither with Qumran Aramaic nor with the Aramaic of the early Roman Empire and early Christianity. It concerns the Aramaic dialect spoken and written by Jews, mainly in Palestine, from the 3rd century A.D. to the early Islamic period, as late as the 11th century A.D. It is based on sources listed by the Author in the *Introduction* (pp. XIII–XX), followed by *Abbreviations and Signs* (pp. XXI–XXXIII), and in a detailed list of the sources with apposite explanations, on pp. XXXV–XLV.

All the items and all the examples of words in an immediate context are printed in Hebrew “square” characters. The examples in Christian Palestinian Aramaic and in Syriac are given in apposite fonts, designed by the late S. Guttman, Jerusalem.

Author’s introduction presents a short history of the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic lexicography (pp. XIV–XVI). He stresses for instance that the Venetian edition of the Rabbinic literature in the 16th century was generally based on Late European manuscripts, greatly influenced by the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, an East-Aramaic dialect, used in particular in the Babylonian Talmud achieved *ca.* 800 A.D. Sokoloff also explains why he did not use the Pseudo-Jonathan Targum in compiling this dictionary (p. XXXVII, n. 5). This Targum, known from a single manuscript, is in a poor condition, contains

corruptions, and uses many words introduced at a later date from either the Onqelos Targum or Jewish Babylonian Aramaic. The main reason of its omission is the edition of a complete Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, the Neophyti Targum of the Vatican Library, published by A. Díez Macho in 1968–1978. Its dialect goes back to the Byzantine period, not before the 4th century A.D., and it cannot be dated to the first century A.D., as assumed by A. Díez Macho and M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Analecta Biblica 27), Rome 1966. A consequence of this early dating was the assumption of some writers that the Targum was written in the language spoken by Jesus. The manuscript of the Vatican Library was copied in the 16th century and it contains some scribal mistakes, but its language has the general frame of the later Amoraic period.

The dictionary does not contain toponyms and personal names, but one finds appellations of city natives, for instance *byyšnyy*, “of Beit Shean” (p. 79), *yhwdy* or *ywdy*, “Jewish, Jew” (p. 250), *yrwšlmyy*, “Jerusalemite” (p. 260), *pylwšyy*, “of Pelusium” (p. 487). The loanwords are indicated with their original form, also in Greek and in Latin, like *pylgws* < πέλλαγος, “ocean, high sea” (p. 487), or *pṯrwn* < *patronus*, “patron, protector” (p. 485).

The Author rightly specifies in the introduction (pp. XVIII–XIX) that all vocalized entries of the dictionary are based only on the sporadic vocalizations occurring in the sources themselves. One could add here that the gemination can also be problematic in some cases. Greek and Latin mentions of Aramaic names, toponyms or words can sometimes be helpful in this matter, especially when they reproduce the Aramaic dialectal articulation with a dissimilation in *n*- or *m*- of the geminated consonant. The author rightly vocalizes *šaddīq*, “righteous” (p. 521), as shown by the dissimilated form of the Judaeian toponym *Besanduke* < *Bē-Šaddīqa*, mentioned by Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* VI, 32. The “rest day” *šbṯn*, left without vocalization (p. 618), should have a geminated *b*, as indicated by the frequent transcriptions Σαββαθαῖ, with variants, of the personal name *Šabbatay*. The Author rightly ascribes the meaning “to divorce” to a *pa’el* form of the verb *pṯr*, with a unique reference (p. 485). In fact, Celsus, as quoted by Origen *ca.* 249 A.D., was regarding Jesus as “son of πανθηρα”, who would have been Jesus’ father. Now, πανθηρα < *paṯṯira* is a feminine derivative meaning “a dismissed one”, allusion to the Gospel of Matthew 1, 19. This misunderstanding led recently to the publication of a misled and misleading monograph (P. Janiszewski, *Panthera – Ojciec Jezusa*, Warszawa 2013).

Prof. M. Sokoloff should be warmly thanked for his work and the amount of material collected by him in this third edition of the dictionary. The reviewer wishes still to record that M. Sokoloff is also the author of *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Gaonic Periods*, Ramat Gan-Baltimore 2002, of *A Dictionary of Judean Aramaic*, Ramat Gan 2003, of *A Syriac Lexicon*, Winona Lake-Piscataway 2010, and of *A Dictionary of Christian Palestinian Aramaic*, Leuven 2014.

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