XVI

THE TESTAMENT OF LEVI AND
"ARAMAIC LEVI"

1. "Aramaic Levi"

At the time the first scrolls from Qumran were being published and studied intensively a number of scholars believed to be able to establish a close link between the author(s) of the Jewish Grundschrift of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (= TXIIPatr) and the community of Qumran. They came to this conclusion on the basis of parallels in content between the already published documents and the Greek Testaments and cherished the hope that soon Aramaic or Hebrew fragments of the original TXIIPatr would be discovered among the still unidentified or not yet discovered material.(1)

In the end these scholars were disappointed. The fragments 1Q21, 1-60 published by J. T. Milik in the first volume of Discoveries in the Judean Desert(2) and the fragments belonging to 4Q213 TestLevi\(a\) and 4Q214 TestLevi\(b\) published or announced by the same scholar(3) clearly had to be assigned to the Levi-document (related to but by no means identical with T. Levi) which was already known from the Cambridge and Bodleian Cairo Genizah fragments published by H. L. Pass and J. Arendzen(4) and A. Cowley and R. H. Charles respectively,(5) and from the two

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(2) D. Barthélemy, O.P. and J. T. Milik, Qumrán Cave 1 (DJD I), Oxford 1955, pp. 87-91.
(5) An Early Source of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Jewish Quarterly Review 19 (1907), pp. 566-580. Appendix III of R. H. Charles, The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Oxford 1908 gives the text of all Genizah fragments together with those of the Greek fragments to be mentioned presently. On p. 254 there is also a very small Syriac fragment.
additions found in the eleventh-century Greek manuscript Athos, Koutloumous 39 (= MS e) of T.XII Patr at T. Levi 2,3 and 18,2. (6) Although of a very different date, the Qumran fragments and the Genizah fragments partly overlapped and clearly represented the same document. Very interestingly, the two columns of a prayer of Levi partly preserved on the fragment published by Milik in 1955 found a parallel in the first addition to the Greek MS e, of which hitherto no Aramaic counterpart was known. Milik rightly used the Greek material in his reconstruction of the fragmentary text.

It is to be regretted that the 4Q-fragments of "Aramaic Levi" (= Ar. Levi) have still to be published in full. At the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense 1976 J. T. Milik told his audience that he was finishing a volume devoted to the Testament of Levi, at the same time announcing the existence of more manuscript material. (7) What is available, either from Qumran or from the Cairo Genizah, has been brought together by J. A. Fitzmyer-D. J. Harrington, (8) K. Beyer (9) and J. C. Greenfield-M. E. Stone. (10) Until everything that is known is also published all editions, translations and comments have to remain provisional, at least to some degree.

It is clear that the Greek fragments in MS e are an important witness for Ar. Levi. While not directly translated from the Aramaic fragments known to us, as is evident from the differences between the two groups of fragments where they overlap, they clearly go back to another Aramaic manuscript of Ar. Levi. (11) The Greek is of help in the reconstruction and

(6) See now the apparatus on T. Levi 2,3 and 18,2 in M. De Jonge el alii, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. A Critical Edition of the Greek Text, Leiden 1978. Very likely, a small addition in MS e to T. Levi 5,2, worked into the text, also came from the same source.


(9) Die aramäischen Texte vom Tolen Meer, Göttingen 1984, pp. 188-209 (includes the Genizah fragments, and translations of the Greek).
