GOD'S ANGEL OF TRUTH AND MELCHIZEDEK

A Note on 11QMelch 13b

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In the editio princeps of 11QMelch A. S. van der Woude 1) re-constructed line 13 as follows: μελκίζεδικος Βελία νοτομάταν στίλασμα Φαλά ταμίν μελκίζεδικος Βελία νοτομάταν στίλασμα . . . . . . . . . . This reconstruction was also taken up, without any alteration, in a joint publication by M. de Jonge and A. S. van der Woude 2), and has been accepted by J. A. Fitzmyer 3), P. von der Osten-Sacken 4), M. P. Miller 5) (at least the first part), J. Carmignac 6) (except for the phrase τικός Ιερόν) and A. Dupont-Sommer 7).

The purpose of this study is to propose a conjecture for the lacuna after μελκίζεδικος Βελία νοτομάταν and to point out the possible consequences for the interpretation of the passage. But, since the missing words in the lacuna must have a syntactical connection with the latter part of line 13, we shall first have to evaluate the correctness of the reading μελκίζεδικος Βελία νοτομάταν.

On fragment 6 the characters ι'11 are legible. The reading of a beth before ought to be no problem; and because the words of Ps. 82, 2 are applied to “Belial and the spirit[s] of his lot” (הפליט וראיה) in line 12a, it is plausible to fill the lacuna after ι'11 in line 13 with רוח ותרזה. Consequently, the use of waw before followed by מכ and preceded by בשמים νοτομάταν also requires the use of

3) "Further light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11", JBL LXXXVI (1967), pp. 25-41; in particular p. 27.
4) Gott und Belial, Göttingen 1969, p. 207.
before מְּדִים. Compare, for example, the same construction with the
preposition בּי in line 12 (משרר על בּלシェל וּלְרָחַז בּוֹרָג) and with מְדִים in IQS 1, 2 f. (הָאָשֶׁר צָה בּי רָחַז בּוֹרָג מִלְּךְ נָדוִים מְדִים). For the
construction מְדִים מְדִים ... מְדִים in the Old Testament, see e.g. Ex. 18,
10; Jdg. 6, 9; 1 Sam. 10, 18; 17, 37 and 2 Sam. 3, 18. We believe that
the same verb must govern both prepositions. Therefore, it is safe to
follow De Jonge, Fitzmyer, Von der Osten-Sacken and Carmignac in restoring the latter part of line 13 in accordance with the editio princeps.

When we compare the instances where מְדִים is used in the Qumran
literature it appears that the idea of being “helped”, “redeemed”,
“saved” or “delivered” from the hand or power of someone is very
prominent. In fact, there is only one exception. That is in IQS 11, 10
where we have a totally different situation. The text reads: “For to
God belongs judgment and from his hand (נָדוִים) comes perfection of
way”. In contrast with this, however, we find the following cases
where מְדִים is combined with נָדוִים respectively:

1QH 2, 34 f.: “But Thou, my God, hast helped (נָדוִים) the soul of the
wretched and the poor from the hand of (נָדוִים) him that is too
strong for him, and Thou hast redeemed (נָדוִים) my soul from the
hand of (נָדוִים) the mighty”.

4QpPs A fl-2 col. 2, 18 f.: “But God will redeem them 1) (רָשָּׁת
יָדָּם) from their 2) hand (רָשָּׁת יָדָּם).

4QpPs A f3-10 col. 4, 21: “God will save them 3) (רָשָׁת יָדָּם) and
[deliver them (רָשָׁת יָדָּם)] from the hand of (רָשָׁת יָדָּם) the wi[cked ones...].”

4QCat A f12-13 col. 1, 7: “[....] his angel of truth (פָלַךְ אָפָחַת
רָשָׁת יָדָּם) will help (רָשָׁת יָדָּם) all the Children of Light from the power of
Belial[....]”.

In the light of these examples, compared with our passage from
11QMelch, it is quite reasonable to expect more or less the same idea,
namely, that Melchizedek 4) will save or help someone “from the
power of Belial and all the spirits of his lot”. We think A. S. Van der
Woude is right when he comments on 11QMelch 13 as follows:
“Das Ergebnis der Gerichte Gottes ist aber gewiss die Befreiung der

1) The verbal suffix refers to the “Priest and the men of his counsel.”
2) The pronominal suffix of נָדוִים refers to the “wicked ones of Ephraim and
Manasseh,” i.e. the opponents of the party mentioned in note 1.
3) I.e. the righteous.
4) Because he is the subject in the first half of line 13, there is every reason to
regard him as the subject in the latter part of the same line.