THE NOTATION OF PARAŠOT IN MS NEOFITI 1

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Three books of the complete Palestinian Targum, MS Neofiti 1, have already been edited and published by A. Diez-Macho.\(^1\) One aspect of the MS mentioned by the editor\(^2\) and discussed in some detail by M. F. Martin\(^3\) is the notation of the weekly parašot. In their preoccupation with the paleographical analysis of these notations, both of these scholars fail to note certain other important aspects.

The impression obtained from Martin’s list is that only seven parašot are indicated in the entire MS,\(^4\) in three different ways:.

a. the name of the parašah in the upper left corner of a page;

b. the name of the parašah in the center of a page, above the first line;

c. a note declaring the end of a parašah (—תורה קריאת [sic!] מfiltro) written in a blank line between two parašot.

In the edition, only the third type is recorded — and that, inconsistently. The first note in Genesis is recorded in the critical apparatus only;\(^5\) the next two are given in the text proper without translation or additional notes;\(^6\) the first note in Leviticus is recorded, translated and footnoted;\(^7\) while the last three in that same book are merely presented and translated.\(^8\)

More disturbing is the fact that although four of these seven parašah notes are misplaced by the scribe, only one of these errors is indicated by either Martin or Diez-Macho.\(^9\) The following scribal errors are unsuspectingly transmitted in the printed edition:

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\(^2\) Ib., 27* f. (Introducción General).

\(^3\) M. F. Martin, “The Paleographical Character of Codex Neofiti 1,” Textus 3 (1963) 22 f.

\(^4\) קריאת [sic!], "תורה קריאת [sic!] מfiltro.

\(^5\) I, 35. Here, Diez-Macho correctly notes, “nomen parašah erasum [ךל לוף תואר] ביבאמשפרחה.”

\(^6\) Martin (op. cit., 22, n. 121) mistakenly writes: “It (ךל לוף תואר) is erroneous, this being מfiltro.”

\(^7\) I, 63, 95.

\(^8\) III, 50f., n. 12 “Anotación del propio manuscrito.”

\(^9\) III, 106f., 126f., 144f.

See n. 5, above.
1. Vol. III, 51 (Lev. 8/9) אֶשֶׁר הָאָשֶׁר מִבְּדַר לַפֶּשֶׁת. This, however, is not the end of אֶשֶׁר, but rather the end of וּרְאֶה.

2. — p. 107 (Lev. 15/16) הָאָשֶׁר מִבְּדַר אַשָּׁה כִּי תַזִּיעֵי. This is not the end of מִבְּדַר, but rather that of מִבְּדַר.

3. — p. 127 (Lev. 18/19) הָאָשֶׁר מִבְּדַר מִבְּדַר. This, again, is not the end of מִבְּדַר, but that of מִבְּדַר. Here, Martin notes that “there are erasures before the first word and under the last word.” He offers no explanation. The edition does not even note the erasures. Furthermore, the repeated notation of the end of the same parašah (פרשה) in two different places in the same text is an obvious error that is detectable without reference to external sources.

Actually, MS Neofiti 1 contains a number of additional types of parašah indicators, that are not mentioned at all by Martin or Diez-Macho:

a. The blank space of a full line (or its equivalent) is left between parašot. If the last line of the previous parašah is fully written on, or almost so, then the entire following line is left blank by the scribe. If, however, the last line of the previous parašah is only partially written on, then its remainder and part of the following line are left blank. In fact, the written notations — שֵׁלֶחַמְלֵי parašah תְּלִין — are inserted in such blank spaces, and were probably added later — after the writing of the text itself. This accounts for the unusually high percentage of misplacement, and for the many blank spaces into which the end-of-parašah notes were never inserted. This also accounts for the missing majuscules at the beginning of the Book of Exodus (see below).

Significantly enough, there are two examples of such blank lines which correspond to sedarim in the triennial cycle. These may prove to be useful in tracing the early Palestinian origins of our targum.

11 Folio 137a (Ex. 13:16/17), beginning of בּוֹשֶׁלֶת; fol. 147b (Ex. 17/18), בּוֹשֶׁלֶת; fol. 154a (Ex. 21/22), בּוֹשֶׁלֶת; fol. 364b (Deut. 3:23/24), בּוֹשֶׁלֶת.
12 Fol. 185b (Ex. 34/35), בּוֹשֶׁלֶת; fol. 252b (Lev. 26:2/3), בּוֹשֶׁלֶת; fol. 316a (Num. 22:1/2), מְגַזְּרִים; fol. 326a (Num. 25:9/10), מְגַזְּרִים. This notation differs from the usual nuskan כִּי תַזִּיעֵי. In the latter there is always overlap of the writing on the two lines, and the total blank space is less than the equivalent of a full line.
13 Fol. 11b (Gen. 6:8/9), end of אֶשֶׁר הָאָשֶׁר; fol. 20a (Gen. 11/12), אֶשֶׁר הָאָשֶׁר; fol. 214a (Lev. 8/9), אֶשֶׁר הָאָשֶׁר; fol. 229b (Lev. 15/16), אֶשֶׁר הָאָשֶׁר; fol. 235a (Lev. 18/19), אֶשֶׁר הָאָשֶׁר; fol. 239b (Lev. 20/21), אֶשֶׁר הָאָשֶׁר. We might note that in the case of fol. 235a, the blank space, in which the scribe later inserted the end-of-parašah note, is of the type that is divided into two lines.
14 Cp. Martin, op. cit., 23, who identifies the hand of these notes with that of the text in which they are found.
15 Fol. 311a (Num. 20/13/14), מִבְּדַר מִבְּדַר; and fol. 367a (Deut. 4:24/25), מִבְּדַר מִבְּדַר. This second example is somewhat dubious, since it is attested to be a triennial seder in only
b. Majuscule letters are sometimes employed in the Hebrew headings at the beginning of parašot. Sometimes, they do not affect the line beneath them; other times, there is a blank space in the next line, just below the majusculea. The latter type is also employed to mark the beginning of the Books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. The beginning of Exodus was intended to be indicated in the same manner, but the scribe apparently forgot to later insert the majuscule in the large blank square left for the word הָלָכוּ. In addition, Exodus is separated from the end of Genesis by a whole blank line.

c. The last type of parašah indicator is an uneven vertical line that appears only once in the entire MS.

Conclusion: The overall picture is quite different from that imparted by the recent edition of Neofiti 1. In all, 28 of the 54 weekly parašot are indicated in various different ways by the scribes of our MS. In addition, two sedarim, exclusive to the triennial cycle, are noted. The explicit “end of-parašah” notes, most of which are erroneous, were added only after the text proper was written. Likewise, the majusculea, which mark the beginning of books, were added later into blank squares, left for that purpose during the writing of the text.


16 Fol. 429b (Deut. 19:9), הביבס; fol. 433b (Deut. 31:1), וייל; fol. 436b (Deut. 32:1), זאמה והמכרב; fol. 442a (Deut. 33:1). The two examples of the word הָלָכוּ in majusculea, fol. 260b (Num. 1:44) and fol. 428b (Deut. 28:69), do not correspond with parašot in the annual cycle nor with sedarim in the triennial cycle, and are thusfar unexplained.

17 Fol. 283a (Num. 8:1), הביבס; fol. 301b (Num. 16:1), קיר; fol. 347a (Num. 33:1), שמש; fol. 399b (Deut. 16:18).

18 Fol. 258a, fol. 356a.

19 Fol. 41a (in front of Gen. 23:1), ויהי ישראל.