Una *Conclusione* (pp. 106-108) compendia la congerie di interpretazioni del ciclo di Sansone e questo suffraga l'abilità del narratore, anche se non tutte le interpretazioni sono convincenti. Lungi da derive femministe, l'A. propone la sua ritenendo più convincente considerare Sansone come una figura che simboleggia tutto Israele, date le molte facce dell'eroe biblico; comunque non considera esclusiva la sua chiave di lettura. Una nutrita *Bibliografia* (pp. 109-115) chiude questa preziosa monografia. Ci sia permesso di suggerire due studi interessanti: P. Abadie, *Insoliti eroi. Teologia e storia nel libro dei Giudici* (EDB, Bologna 2013); un articolo, tra altri, di C. Lemardelé, «Samson et les biblistes : entre exégèse, théologie et folklore», *ASIDWAL* 7(2012), 71-85 e alcune pagine suggestive di E. De Luca, *L'ora prima* (Qiqajon, Magnano 1997). Pur nella sua concisione dovuta al taglio della collana, questo libretto si raccomanda per l'esposizione limpida, essenziale, non priva di guizzi originali, che si aggiunge alla galleria di altri personaggi che l'A. sta offrendo ai lettori italiani. Ci ricorda l'elogio che Elias Canetti – a sua volta magistrale rabdomante di figure storiche e fantastiche – tesseva di un suo professore: «In storia, invece di date ci dava personaggi».

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Dionisio Candido, *Synopsis of the Book of Esther. Masoretic Text, Old Greek, Alpha Text, Old Latin, Vulgate, Jewish Antiquities* (CBET 102.1), Peeters, Leuven 2023, pp. 213, € 125,00, ISBN 978-9-042-94934-8.

Candido's synopsis is a useful tool for those who study the book of Esther, especially for scholars engaged in textual criticism. However, increasingly exegetes of the book of Esther are interested in versions other than the Masoretic Text and this synopsis would be useful for such readers too. It presents six versions of the book: the Masoretic Text, the two major Greek translations (the «Old Greek» and the «Alpha Text»), the two major Latin translations (the Old Latin and the Vulgate), as well as Josephus' retelling of the story in *Jewish Antiquities*. The Old Greek is also frequently referred to as LXX or o'. The Alpha Text is sometimes (misleadingly) known as the Lucianic text. The label «Old Greek» carries with it the implication that other Greek translations are dependent on this text, an assumption that Candido appears to hold, as he suggests that the «presumed dependence» of the five versions is that the Vulgate depends on MT, and that AT, OL, and Josephus all depend on «OG» (p. 2). Not all who have studied these texts share that view. For the purposes of this review, I have used «Old Greek» and «Alpha Text», because that is what Candido uses.

This synopsis is an update of Candido's older synopsis that contained only chapters A and 1 of the same versions except Josephus (D. Candido, *I te-

*sti del libro di Ester. Il caso dell'introitus TM 1,1-22-LXX A1-17; 1,1-22-Ta A1-18; 1,1-21* [Analecta biblica], Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Rome 2005). Candido is not the first to attempt a synopsis of the versions of Esther. He notes synopses by Anton Scholz (*Commentar über das Buch «Esther» mit seinen «Zusätzen» und über «Susanna»*, Leo Woerl, Würzburg-Wien 1892) and Karen H. Jobes (*The Alpha-Text of Esther. Its Character and Relationship to the Masoretic Text* [SBLDS 153], Scholars Pr, Atlanta [GA] 1996), but his differs in which versions he chooses to include (p. 1). He does not mention (though it seems pertinent) that Jean-Claude Haelewyck's edition of the Old Latin also presents a synopsis of many of the same versions: the Old Greek, the Alpha Text, the Old Latin (in four recensions, not just the oldest), and the Vulgate (J.-C. HAELEWYCK, *Vetus latina. Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel, 7/3: Hester*, Herder, Freiburg 2003-2009). Therefore, the main new contributions of Candido's synopsis are the inclusion of MT, the inclusion of Josephus, and a format that is much easier to read than Haelewyck's.

Candido has chosen to include versions only from the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin traditions on the grounds that they are «the three most ancient and long-lasting textual traditions of the Old Testament» (p. 1). Although no one would disagree with the importance of translations in these three languages, one wonders about the exclusion of others. Some translations, like the Coptic and Ethiopic, are presumably left out because they are «daughter» translations of the Old Greek and also relatively late. The Slavonic, Georgian, Armenian, and Arabic translations are presumably excluded because they are late. However, it is unclear why Candido's criteria for inclusion would not extend to the Peshitta: the Peshitta of Esther has considerable antiquity, and the Syriac tradition of the Bible is certainly as long-lasting the Greek and the Latin. While Peshitta Esther often matches MT, the same is true of the Vulgate.

The synopsis reproduces the text of major critical editions: the BHQ edition for MT (ed. M. SÆBØ, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 2004); the Göttingen edition for OG and AT (ed. R. HANHART, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen ²1983); the «Vatican» or «Benedictine» Vulgate (Tipografia poliglotta vaticana, Rome 1950); text «R» of the Beuron Vetus Latina (HAELEWYCK, *Vetus latina*); and NIESE's edition of Josephus (Weidmann, Berlin 1892). Most of these choices will be uncontroversial. However, the choice of the Benedictine Vulgate over the Stuttgart Vulgate (edd. R. WEBER – R. GRYSON, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart ⁵2007) may stand out as unusual to some readers, since the latter is commonly cited. Although the Benedictine Vulgate (with its fuller apparatus) is frequently referenced by the Stuttgart edition, there are, nonetheless, differences.

For example, in 4:16, the Benedictine edition reads *et non bibatis tribus diebus ac tribus noctibus*. The Stuttgart Vulgate, on the other hand, reads *et non bibatis tribus diebus ac noctibus*. Although Candido claims to use the Benedictine edition, his text (surprisingly) agrees with the Stuttgart edition instead.

In reproducing the text of these editions rather than his own text, my impression is that Candido intends to avoid imposing his own text-critical decisions on the synopsis. This impression is reinforced by the fact that the synopsis is presented without any commentary. This is a useful goal insofar as it makes

the synopsis beneficial to scholars whose assumptions about these texts may differ from Candido's own. However, in my examination of the synopsis, I have found that even the act of aligning the five texts is not always objective. Yet, the lack of commentary means that it is sometimes difficult to understand Candido's choices.

The synopsis is organised according to MT, with Candido aligning the Greek and Latin to MT as much as possible at the level of the Hebrew lemma (often corresponding to more than one word in the Greek or Latin) (pp. 2–3). This is another difference from Haelewyck, who does not present MT at all. Those familiar with the texts of Esther will understand that this is not an easy task, due to the extent of variation. However, Candido does admirably. His choice to align by lemma allows him to handle a lot of the periphrastic nature of some of the translations. For example, in 4:4, MT וּלְהָסִיר (infinitive construct) is parallel to OG καὶ ἀφελέσθαι (infinitive) and AT περιέλεσθε (imperative) and Vulgate *ut ablato* (purpose clause and ablative absolute). Each refers to the removal of Mordecai's clothes, even though the sentence structure is quite different. However, the equivalent verb in VL (*auferes*) is not aligned. Perhaps this is due to the greater extent of paraphrasing in VL, but it gives the incorrect impression that VL contains no equivalent material to the other versions at this point.

However, it is difficult to accommodate more complex variants at the level of lemma. Thus at 6:1, MT reads בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא נָדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ. OG reads ὁ δὲ κύριος ἀπέστησεν τὸν ὕπνον ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως. AT reads ὁ δὲ δυνατὸς ἀπέστησε τὸν ὕπνον ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως. VL reads *Iudaeorum autem Deus et universae creaturae Dominus percussit regem vigilantia*. The Vulgate reads *noctem illam rex duxit insomnem*. The main obstacle is that MT and Vulgate say something very different to OG, AT, and VL. Candido nevertheless attempts to align these texts (p. 126). Some choices are straightforward: הַמֶּלֶךְ is aligned with βασιλεῦς and *rex*. Some are debatable, such as whether κύριος in OG should be parallel to *Deus* or *Dominus* in VL. Candido opts for the former, whereas the latter seems a more natural fit to me. However, others are quite surprising: נָדְדָה «[sleep] fled» is aligned with ἀπέστησε(ν) «[God] removed». While both texts can be construed as referring, in the broadest of terms, to the same event (the king's sleeplessness), it does not seem to me that what we find in the Greek and Latin are *necessarily* the same «lemma» as the Hebrew. This is a case where some commentary from Candido might have been useful.

Another difficult case is AT 7:14-21. This section corresponds, in very broad terms, to chapter 8 in the other versions. Candido presents AT 7:14 prior to chapter 8 in the other versions; he aligns AT 7:15 (καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ πάντα τὰ τοῦ Αμαν) with OG 8:1 (ἐδωρήσατο Εσθηρ ὅσα ὑπῆρχεν Αμαν τῷ διαβόλῳ) so that ἐχαρίσατο‖ἐδωρήσατο, αὐτῷ‖Εσθηρ, πάντα τὰ‖ὅσα ὑπῆρχεν, and τοῦ Αμαν‖Αμαν. Notably, Mordecai in AT (αὐτῷ) is aligned with Esther in OG (Εσθηρ). The rest of the section (AT 7:16-21) he presents unaligned after the end of what is chapter 8 for the rest of the versions. The result is that Candido presents an entirely blank column for AT where the other versions have chapter 8 (pp. 154–161).

This case is difficult because AT presents a series of events that is different to what we find in other versions, insofar as the role of Esther is usurped by Mordecai. Nonetheless, as we have seen in the above examples, Candido does not mind aligning texts that contain different versions of events (e.g., in 6:1, «the Lord removed sleep» [OG] is presented as parallel to «sleep fled» [MT]; in 8:1 [= AT 7:15], the king giving Haman's property to Mordecai [AT] is presented as parallel to the king giving it to Esther [OG]). Although AT's series of events is different to the other versions in this section, they do bear comparison: Mordecai's request to revoke the letters sent by Haman (AT 7:16: Ὅπως ἀνέλῃς τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τοῦ Αμαν) is parallel to Esther's request to revoke them in the other versions (e.g., OG 8:5: ἀποστραφῆναι τὰ γράμματα τὰ ἀπεσταλμένα ὑπὸ Αμαν). Yes, Mordecai has been substituted for Esther, but the same is true in 8:1. If the texts can be aligned at 8:1 (AT 7:15), it is unclear why they cannot be aligned at 8:5 (AT 7:16): ἀποστραφῆναι‖ἀνέλῃς; τὰ γράμματα τὰ ἀπεσταλμένα‖τὴν ἐπιστολὴν; ὑπὸ Αμαν‖τοῦ Αμαν. Similarly, some of the material in AT 7:21 could be seen as parallel to OG 8:7.

Another area of difficulty is the rearrangement of verses. Candido discusses 3 well-known cases of this (p. 4): AT 3:7, 10; VL 4:3/3:15; and the positioning of the long additional chapters (which Jerome moved to the end, but stand in their logical position in the other versions). In these three cases, Candido rearranges material (marking it with dotted sigma, italics, or obelus), in order to make the parallel text clearer. However, he does not address some of the other notable cases, like the rearrangement of verses in VL C:22-30 where he treats everything following *tu scis* as a VL plus, «C:30», that is not paralleled with anything in the other versions. This is a departure from Haelewyck's edition which numbers these verses as C:27, 24, 30, 22, 23, making their relation to the parallel Greek material clearer. For example, VL C:24 (C:30 in Candido) reads *et converte cor eius in odium oppugnantis nos*, which is clearly parallel to AT C:24 καὶ μετάστρεψον τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ εἰς μῖσος τοῦ πολεμοῦντος ἡμᾶς and OG C:24 καὶ μετάθες τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ εἰς μῖσος τοῦ πολεμοῦντος ἡμᾶς. However, this parallel is not at all apparent in the synopsis. This is another case where some commentary from Candido might have been helpful.

The reproductions of the text are not free from error. Some errors are immediately obvious and thereby inconsequential. For example, in AT A:3, κραυγὴ is misprinted as καυγὴ. In AT 1:6, the accent on λιθόστρωτον is incorrectly printed as λιθοστρώτον (which is impossible). This kind of error does little to vitiate the usefulness of the synopsis. However, some errors are more significant. Thus, for example, in A:3, Candido omits ἦν from AT, making it appear more similar to OG, the sort of error that makes us more sympathetic to the scribes of the past. In A:14, Candido prints ἐξήτασεν in AT, in place of ἤτασεν, once more making it appear more similar to OG. In AT 1:7, Candido prints the phrase καὶ ἀργυρᾶ and aligns it to the same phrase in OG 1:7. However, there is no such phrase in AT, with the result that Candido suggests an alignment between these two texts that does not truly exist. Similarly, in 1:6, Candido prints ἐπὶ στυλοῖς for both AT and OG, but AT in fact reads καὶ στυλοῖς. The second half of AT 5:12 is missing (καὶ ἐταράσσετο ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ πᾶσα ἡ θεραπεία αὐτοῦ, καὶ παρεκάλουν

αὐτήν), though the corresponding text in OG D:16 is present. Occasionally in the text of OL, Candido conflates the R and I text types. For example, while the text presented is mostly of the R type (generally thought to be the oldest form of OL), in 1:17 Candido prints *quod contemnerent viros suos* which is the I type (cf. R: *quod contemnat virum suum regina*). Similarly, in C:16 Candido prints *accepisti Israhel ex omnibus gentibus et patres nostros ex omni progenie in Hieru-salem*. However, this is only found in the I text and not in R. In C:5-6, Candido prints *tu scis domine quoniam mihi placet*, whereas Haelewyck's edition has *tu scis Domine non quoniam mihi placet* (Haelewyck, *Vetus Latina*, 260). In fact, Haelewyck's text also appears to be in error, when the relevant text-witnesses are consulted: manuscript 151 in fact reads *tu scis Domine quoniam non mihi placet*; and 130 reads *tu scis domine, quoniam non mihi placet*. While the errors do not ruin the usefulness of the synopsis for textual criticism, any scholar using the synopsis must be mindful of their presence.

Nevertheless, the synopsis is genuinely useful and arranges the material in a way that generally makes similarities and differences between these six texts quickly apparent. The inclusion of Josephus is particularly useful and helps to differentiate sections where Josephus' text is similar to the major translations from sections where Josephus is distinct – whether he is paraphrasing, composing new material, or reliant on unknown sources. Although the synopsis is primarily useful for scholars engaged in textual criticism, it is also potentially useful for those who are engaged in the exegesis of the book of Esther or who study the history of its interpretation.

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Takamitsu Muraoka, *Wisdom of Ben Sira* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 302), Peeters, Leuven-Paris-Bristol (CT) 2023, pp. IX+807, € 135,00, ISBN 978-90-429-4914-0.

L'ultima opera di Takamitsu Muraoka, professore emerito presso l'Università di Leiden ed esperto riconosciuto nell'area della sintassi ebraica e nella Bibbia greca dei LXX, potrebbe essere classificata come un commentario filologico alla versione greca del libro deuterocanonico di Ben Sira. Fa parte della prestigiosa collana Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (OBO) edita da Peeters, casa editrice che ha già pubblicato numerosi contribuiti dell'autore. T. Muraoka dedica questo cospicuo volume, più di 800 pagine, al prof. dott. Masao Sekine (1912-2000), noto veterotestamentarista giapponese che lo introdusse allo studio delle lingue bibliche nella Università Kyoiku a Tokio (adesso Università Tsukuba) all'ini-