Ortega Monasterio, Maria Teresa

Las masoras del libro de Éxodo: Códice M1 de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Textos y Estudios “Cardenal Cisneros” de la Biblia Políglota Matritense 74

Madrid: Instituto de Filología, 2002.

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The collection of Hebrew manuscripts at the Universidad Complutense’s library goes back to the library of the Colegio Mayor de San Idelfonso at the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, where they were purchased in 1837. Most of those manuscripts were collected at the beginning of the sixteenth century.1 They originated in Spain, whose prestigious tradition goes back to the tenth century. The Spanish tradition was highly praised by Menachem de Lonzano and Y. S. de Norzi. The Codex M1, described as “magnificent” by Ginsburg,2 was one of the manuscripts used as a model for the Hebrew text of Cisneros’s Biblia Políglota Complutense (1514–1517). Produced in Toledo around the year 1280, the manuscript M1 (118-Z-42) is the oldest of the collection and reproduces the whole text of the Hebrew Bible (with the exception of some missing folios of Exodus; see infra). It is bound in leather with the escudo (shield) of Cisneros, consists of 340 unpaged folios, and is written in three columns of 32 lines in Sephardic square letters, which include the vowel points and the accents. There are illuminations at the beginning of each book. The Masorah Magna is in written three lines at the upper and in four lines of the lower margin of each page in almost every case. The Masorah Parva is written in the outer margins and the margins between the columns.

The Masorah edition of the Codex M1 is currently being published by the research project “Edición de textos bíblicos y parabíblicos” of the Institute of Philology, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), in Madrid, under the direction of Natalio Fernández-Marcos. In addition to the original manuscript, a digital copy of the manuscript is being used to facilitate the operations needed to identify and read the Masorah. The careful edition of María Teresa Ortega Monasterio presents the Parva and Magna Masorahs of the book of Exodus with the exception, naturally, of the missing folios of Exod 9:33–24:7. The edition presents the lemma, which refers to each word or group of words carrying a masoretic notation (as each is marked by a circellus in nearly every case), with the transcription of the Masorahs following. When the circellus is missing, this is noted (e.g., Exod 36:6; 38:30; 40:4). Also noted are instances when the Masorah is written on the following page (e.g., MM Exod 7:25, 27), when it is written by a different scribe (MP Exod 30:20; 31:3; 37:18; 39:14), and when it is written in circles within ornamental masorahs or written from left to right (e.g., MM Exod 4:28; 6:6). The liturgical sections are also noted. The M1 manuscript notes twenty-six differences between Ben Asher and Ben Naftali.

The simanim, both Hebrew and Aramaic, are properly identified. Missing simanim are listed (e.g., MM Exod 32:1, 34; 33:4, 22; 34:33; 36:9), and when the citation is incorrect, it is properly noted (e.g., MM Exod 31:12; 32:1). The plene and defective readings are not taken into account unless they have an impact in the Masorah.

The volume includes both Spanish (9–14) and English (15–18) introductions, an index of Hebrew words for the lemmas (179–203), a list of the biblical texts quoted (205–27), and two pictures of the Codex (Gen 50:2–Exod 1:12; Exod 5:11–6:28), reproduced below with the permission of the publisher. The author is to be congratulated for presenting this material with such care and precision.

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3. Already published in this series are Las masoras del libro de Números, by M. J. Azcárraga-Servet (Madrid: CSIC Instituto de Filología, 2001); Las Masoras del Libro de Deuteronomio, by M. G. Seijas de los Ríos-Zarzosa (Madrid: CSIC Instituto de Filología, 2002); and Las masoras del libro de Levítico: Códice M1 de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Madrid: CSIC Instituto de Filología, 2004).

4. I would like to thank Dr. María Teresa Ortega Monasterio for providing a photocopy of the Codex and a detailed description of the process of publication.