GENDER DOCUMENTATION OF NOUNS IN SYRIAC LEXICOGRAPHY: REMARKS ON THE RENOVATED *LEXICON SYRIACUM*

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ACCORDANCE SOFTWARE

ABSTRACT

Since agreement with other sentence or phrasal constituents provides the key to gender recognition in Syriac, future dictionaries of Syriac need to substantiate gender claims made for nouns by translated citations. This essay contains twelve cases as illustration, where the renovated Lexicon Syriacum *by Michael Sokoloff falls short.*

INTRODUCTION

The publication of the translated and renovated *Lexicon Syriacum* by Michael Sokoloff[1] raises a number of issues pertaining to Syriac

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[1] Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon, A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns and Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2009). For reviews, see H. F. Van Rooy in the *Review of Biblical Literature* <http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/7340_7997 .pdf> and Siam Bhayro in *Hugoye* 13/2 (2010) <http://syrcom.cua. edu/hugoye/Vol13No2/HV13N2PRBhayro.pdf>. I would like to

lexicography, among them the documentation of gender descriptions for nouns. As far as possible[2], Sokoloff describes each noun as either masculine or feminine, or in some cases as both.[3] While these gender descriptions are useful and even necessary in lexicography, citations should demonstrate the gender claim in addition to demonstrating definition. Citations should substantiate all claims made in a given entry. Further, citations should readily lead the user to confirmation of gender identification.

Form alone does not define gender in Syriac. Rather, agreement with other sentence or phrasal constituents provides the key to gender identification. In this essay, I will present twelve examples of how agreement leads one to identify the gender of a noun. In all these cases, the renovated *Lexicon Syriacum* was deficient.[4] It is my hope that, whenever a generation of scholars emerges to produce a comprehensive Classical Syriac dictionary, they will incorporate this principle into their lexicography.[5]

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thank my unnamed reviewer for offering suggestions for the improvement of this essay.

[2] The gender of foreign words like ܗܠܡܐ 'discord' and ܟܘܚܠܬܐ 'antimony' (Sokoloff, 579 and 996 respectively) cannot always be determined.

[3] The nouns ܓܡܠܐ 'camel', ܙܒܢܐ 'time', and ܣܝܦܐ 'sword' appear in Syriac texts both as masculine and feminine (Sokoloff, 241, 363, and 486 respectively).

[4] These cases arose randomly as I consulted the various Syriac *lexica* for my collaborative work on the Old Testament Peshitta with Dr. Martin G. Abegg, Trinity Western University, Canada, for use in Accordance, a concordance program produced by Oaktree Software.

[5] Largely through the initiative and persistence of Terry C. Falla, the International Syriac Language Project has been launched with a view to eventually producing a new Classical Syriac-English lexicon. Such a comprehensive undertaking may be a multi-generational task. See especially Terry C. Falla, "A Conceptual Framework for a New Comprehensive Syriac-English Lexicon," in *Foundations for Syriac Lexicography 1, Colloquia of the International Syriac Language Project*, Perspectives on Syriac Linguistics 1, ed. A. Dean Forbes and David G. K. Taylor (Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2005), 1-80.

1. ܐܠܥܐ 'rib'

Sokoloff describes the noun ܐܠܥܐ 'rib' as masculine,[6] when, in fact, agreement demonstrates that it is feminine. In the Peshitta of Gen 2:21, both the feminine numeral ܚܕܐ 'one' and the feminine pronoun attached to the preposition ܚܠܦ demonstrate that the noun ܐܠܥܐ is feminine, not masculine: ܘܢܣܒ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܥܘܗܝ، ܘܐܘܚܕ ܒܣܪܐ ܚܠܦܝܗ 'and he (God) took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its stead'.[7] Sokoloff himself brings a portion of this text as a citation, but fails to note its significance for gender identification. Moreover, his citation in regard to a constellation confirms that the noun is feminine in gender, where the feminine numeral is also used: ܟܠ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܥܘܗܝ، 'every one of its ribs (sides)'.[8]

2. ܐܪܙܦܬܐ 'hammer'

Sokoloff classifies the noun ܐܪܙܦܬܐ 'hammer' as masculine,[9] while agreement demonstrates that it is in fact feminine.[10] None of the citations brought by Sokoloff under the entry is determinative in regard to gender determination. However, under the entry ܚܡܡ,[11] Sokoloff does cite the phrase ܐܪܙܦܬܐ ܕܚܡܡܐ 'a hammer that

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[6] Sokoloff, 50. The fact that C. Brockelmann (*Lexicon Syriacum* [Second Edition; Halis Saxonum: Max Niemeyer, 1928], 22) correctly labels this noun as feminine suggests that Sokoloff just slipped here.

[7] Sokoloff cites part of this verse. All Old Testament Peshitta citations in this essay are taken from the Leiden edition where available: *Peshitta. The Old Testament in Syriac*, edited on behalf of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament by the Peshitta Institute. Leiden: Brill, 1972-.

[8] Sokoloff, 50, citing Sergius of Raʾsʿain, "Über den Einfluss des Mondes," found in Ed. Sachau, *Inedita Syriaca: Eine Sammlung Syrischer Übersetzungen von Schriften Griechischer Profanliteratur* (Wien: Verlagder Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses in Halle, 1870), 103, l. 18.

[9] Sokoloff, 97. Brockelmann, 723, does not give its gender.

[10] R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), col. 3877, correctly classifies this noun as feminine.

[11] Sokoloff, 1191.

shatters’ from the Syrohexapla of Jer 23:29, a citation of Aquila.[12] The full citation reads as follows: ܐܪܙܦܬܐ ܡܫܒܪܬ ܫܘܥܐ ‘a hammer that shatters rock’, removing any ambiguity about the function and form of the participle ܡܫܒܪܬ. The form ܡܫܒܪܬ is a feminine singular *pael* participle that agrees with its nominal head ܐܪܙܦܬܐ in gender. Further, R. Payne Smith cites the noun phrase ܐܪܙܦܬܐ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ‘the first hammer blow’, where the adjective ܩܕܡܝܬܐ agreeing with ܐܪܙܦܬܐ is feminine. Future lexicons should cite this noun as feminine, citing at least one gender-determining example.

3. ܥܪܣܐ ‘couch’

For the lexeme ܥܪܣܐ ‘couch’, Sokoloff is non-committal with regard to its gender, describing it only as a noun.[13] While its plural form ܥܪܣܬܐ might lead one to consider it a feminine noun, agreement with an anaphoric pronoun attached to the preposition *beth* (that is, ܒܗܘܢ) in the Peshitta of Ezek 13:20 indicates that this noun is masculine in gender:

ܗܐ ܐܢܐ ܥܠ ܥܪܣܬܟܘܢ ܕܐܢܬܝܢ ܨܝܕܢ ܒܗܘܢ ܢܦܫܬܐ
'Lo I am against your couches upon which you hunt souls'

The snippet ܕܬܦܝܢ ܥܪܣܬܐ cited by Sokoloff from Ezek 13:18 can be misleading, being left without a translation, since the feminine plural participle ܬܦܝܢ refers to the subject and the plural noun ܥܪܣܬܐ serves as its object, not its subject. The snippet should be rendered: ‘the women who sew cushions’. Mere citation of a Syriac snippet in a dictionary entry without sufficient context or without translation for guidance can mislead the user.

4. ܟܘܬܪܐ ‘cake’

Sokoloff is non-committal on the gender of the noun ܟܘܬܪܐ ‘cake’,[14] even though his example ܟܘܬܪܐ ‘polluted cakes’ points to the masculine gender by agreement with a masculine adjectival form. His predecessor J. Payne Smith, at least, labeled this noun as

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[12] Sokoloff, 1191, erroneously lists the citation as Jer 23:30.

[13] Sokoloff, 163. Neither does Brockelmann, 547, list its gender.

[14] Sokoloff, 376. Likewise Brockelmann, 208, does not record its gender.

masculine, though in keeping with her purpose did not bring citations as proof.[15]

5. ܚܓܠܐ 'partridge'

Claiming to follow Nöldeke, Sokoloff lists the noun ܚܓܠܐ 'partridge' as feminine in gender.[16] However, Nöldeke actually wrote as follows: "*Names of animals*, which *for the most part* are *feminine*, appearing *sometimes* as *masculine*, especially when they denote male individuals,–are: ….."[17] Morever, the title Nöldeke gave to this section of his grammar is "Fluctuation of Gender in Names of Animals"![18] In other words, certain nouns denoting animals can be both masculine and feminine. R. Payne Smith recorded the dual gender for this lexeme, citing Jer 17:11, a reference brought by Sokoloff, as demonstration of masculine gender (ܩܪܐ ܚܓܠܐ ܕܦܪ 'as a [male] partridge which calls'), and the citation ܗܘ ܚܓܠܐ 'that partridge' as demonstration of feminine gender.[19] Actual attested agreement of this noun indicates that it should be listed in a dictionary as both masculine and feminine.

6. ܠܩܠܩܐ 'stork'

On the basis of the citation ܠܩܠܩܐ ܕܣܡ ܒܓ ܐܘܟܪ,[20] the noun ܠܩܠܩܐ 'stork' appears to be masculine in gender. Sokoloff labels it

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[15] J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903; reprinted Winona Lake, Indiana, 1998), 114. R. Payne Smith does not give a gender for his first entry ܩܘܬܐ (col. 1163), but labels the second and third entries as masculine (col. 1164). The material in these three entries should be consolidated into one entry.

[16] Sokoloff, 412-13. This was Brockelmann's assessment as well (214).

[17] Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, transl. James A. Crichton (London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), § 85.

[18] Nöldeke, *Grammar*, "Contents", XX, and in the margin of § 85.

[19] R. Payne Smith, col. 1191.

[20] G. Bickell, S. *Isaaci Antiocheni, Doctoris Syrorum, Opera Omnia, ex omnibus, quotquot exstant, codicibus manuscriptis cum varia lectione*

accordingly.[21] The complete sentence reads as follows: ܡܣܟܘܢ ܕܣܘܡ ܟܘܝܘܪܐ ܘܬܟܢ ܠܟܠ ܪܪܐ ܠܡ. 'The stork which departs from your place prepares a path for you to your homeland'. However, in Jer 8:7, this noun is feminine in gender: ܐܦ ܣܘܟܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܝܕܥܬ ܙܒܢܗ 'even the stork in the sky knows her time'. Both the *peal* active participle ܝܕܥ '(she) knows' and the personal pronoun attached to the noun ܙܒܢ 'time' are feminine in agreement with their governing noun ܣܘܟܐ 'stork'. Furthermore, in Ps 104:17, the pronoun attached to the noun ܩܢܗ 'nest', referring to ܣܘܟܐ 'stork', is feminine, at least as vocalized in the Mosul edition: ܘܣܘܟܐ ܩܢܗ ܒܫܪܘܝܢܐ 'and as for the stock, her nest is in the cypresses'. It seems that this noun can be either masculine or feminine, depending on the context.[22]

7. ܝܡܝܢܐ 'right (hand)'

With regard to the lexeme ܝܡܝܢ used as a noun, Sokoloff seems to allege a gender differentiation between the meaning 'right (side, hand)', which he lists as masculine in gender, and the meaning 'oath', which he lists as feminine in gender.[23]   In this Sokoloff differs from Brockelmann who describes the gender of ܝܡܝܢ as feminine only.[24] Over against this claim, the Peshitta of Ps 118:15b-16 witnesses to feminine agreement, where ܝܡܝܢ means 'right (hand)':

ܝܡܝܢܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܥܒܕܬ ܚܝܠܐ ܠܝ
ܝܡܝܢܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܥܒܕܬ ܚܝܠܐ ܠܝ
ܝܡܝܢܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܐܪܝܡܬܢܝ

The right hand of the Lord has wrought power,

The right hand of the Lord has wrought power,

The right hand of the Lord raised me up.

Syriace Arabiceque Primus Edidit, Latine Vertit, Prolegomenis et Glossario Auxit, vol. 2 (Giessen: J. Ricker, 1877), 324, verse 1474.

   [21] Sokoloff, 433. So did Brockelmann, 254.

   [22] Nöldeke, *Grammar*, § 85, makes this same observation.

   [23] Sokoloff, 576. To be fair, the siglum 'n.m' (noun masculine) comes before the gloss 'right (side, hand)' but appears to govern that meaning.

   [24] Brockelmann, 303.

Three times in this Psalm, the noun ܝܡܝܢܐ meaning 'right (hand)' agrees with a feminine verb. Therefore, its gender is feminine.

Further, of all the citations offered by Sokoloff, only one can be construed, or rather misconstrued, as masculine. Sokoloff cites a seemingly determinative case from Ephrem's hymn against Julian.[25] The text snippet cited reads as follows: ܝܡܝܢܐ ܟܡܝܪܐ ܒܚܛܝ̈ܐ, partially glossed incorrectly by Sokoloff as "made dark w. sins." The fuller context reads as follows:

ܕܟܕ ܠܗ̇ ܝܡܝܢܐ ܟܡܝܪܐ ܒܚܛܝ̈ܐ
ܗܘܘ ܝܠܕ̈ܝ ܣܡܠܐ ܪܘܙܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܣܓܝ

 "For, when the right was saddened by sinners,
 the offspring of the left were rejoicing exceedingly."

Contra Sokoloff, it would be better to render the phrase ܝܡܝܢܐ ܟܡܝܪܐ ܒܚܛܝ̈ܐ 'the right was saddened by sinners'. The adjective ܟܡܝܪܐ appears in this phrase as a feminine singular absolute form used predicatively; it is not a masculine singular determined form. This is the only citation offered by Sokoloff that could appear to substantiate interpreting the lexeme ܝܡܝܢܐ as masculine. However, upon closer examination, the agreement with a feminine predicate adjective does the exact opposite. It confirms that the gender of the lexeme ܝܡܝܢܐ used as a noun meaning 'right (side, hand)' is feminine.

8. ܠܘܚܐ 'tablet'

Sokoloff correctly describes the noun ܠܘܚܐ 'tablet' as feminine.[26] However, none of his citations demonstrates this fact. He should replace his first citation, namely ܠܘܚܐ ܕܟܐܦܐ 'tablets of stone' (Exod 24:12), with ܬܪܬܝܢ ܠܘܚܐ ܕܟܐܦܐ 'two tablets of stone' (Exod 34:4). In doing so, he would substantiate his statement that this noun is feminine, by agreement with the feminine numeral.

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[25] Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers, Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*, CSCO 174, Scriptores Syri 78 (Louvain, 1957), 72, l. 23.

[26] Sokoloff, 677, following Brockelmann, 361.

9. ܡܩܛܪܓܢܐ 'accuser'

On the basis of the lone citation (ܡܩܛܪܓܢܝܟ ܩܝܡܝܢ 'your accusers are standing'), the description of the noun ܡܩܛܪܓܢܐ 'accuser' as feminine[27] appears to be a blunder, missed in proofreading. Agreement in gender with the participle ܩܝܡܝܢ indicates that the noun ܡܩܛܪܓܢܐ is masculine. This case raises another issue, namely the question of whether participles, functioning as substantives,[28] deserve separate status as lexemes.[29] This question, however interesting, extends beyond the scope of this essay and so will not be treated here.

10. ܣܦܝܠܐ 'sapphire'

Sokoloff describes the gender of the noun ܣܦܝܠܐ 'sapphire' as masculine, without demonstrating his claim.[30] Both R. Payne Smith and J. Payne Smith label the same noun as feminine.[31] Ishodad of Merv in his commentary on Ezekiel uses the word in a sentence that demonstrates that its gender is feminine: ܐܝܟ ܕܢܐܡܪ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܟܐܦܐ ܬܚܝܬ ܪܓܠܘܗܝ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܗܘܬ ܣܦܝܠܐ "that is to say, in the likeness of a

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[27] Sokoloff, 760. Brockelmann, 846, lists no gender.

[28] The form ܡܩܝܡ could be placed under the verb ܩܘܡ, as a second participle of the *afel* conjugation. It is cases such as this that led Theodor Nöldeke, Carl Brockelmann's mentor, to prefer organization on the basis of root rather than form (see Sokoloff, 1681, for a translation of Nöldeke's preface to the first edition of *Lexicon Syriacum*). Pedagogically, his view makes sense.

[29] Janet W. Dyk ("Desiderata for the Lexicon from a Syntactic Point of View," in *Foundations for Syriac Lexicography 1, Colloquia of the International Syriac Language Project*, Perspectives on Syriac Linguistics 1, ed. A. Dean Forbes and David G. K. Taylor [Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2005], 152) advocates that the participle, whether active or passive, transitive, intransitive, or stative, should appear under the verb in the lexicon. Yet, she continues that concession should be made for the benefit of the student by making separate entries for other functions like substantive and adjective with cross references to the verbal root.

[30] Sokoloff, 1030. Brockelmann, 490, gives no gender for this noun.

[31] R. Payne Smith, col. 2698, and J. Payne Smith, 385.

footstool, under the throne, sapphire was put."[32] The verbal construction ܡܬܬ ܗܘܐ is feminine in agreement with the subject of its sentence, the noun ܣܘܦܬ. Citation of such a determinative example is a *desideratum* of dictionary writing. While one might not expect this to appear in a *Handwörterbuch* (Sokoloff's aim), one does expect it to appear in a scientific dictionary.

11. ܩܠܘܒܝܢ 'cage'

While Sokoloff is non-committal on the gender of ܩܠܘܒܝܢ 'cage, den',[33] two of the examples he brings demonstrate that it is masculine in gender. In the case of Jer 5:27, ܩܠܘܒܝܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܦܪܚܬܐ 'a cage which is full of birds', the peal passive participle ܡܠܐ, which agrees with the noun ܩܠܘܒܝܐ, is masculine. In the case ܩܠܘܒܝܐ ܚܕ ܕܕܗܒܐ 'a cage of gold', the use of the masculine numeral ܚܕ indicates that the noun in question is masculine. Agreement with other phrasal constituents in both examples demonstrates masculine gender.

12. ܪܘܚܐ 'spirit'

Sokoloff describes the gender of ܪܘܚܐ as feminine, without any qualification.[34] By contrast, J. Payne Smith makes the following observation: "usually fem. except when used of the Holy Spirit."[35] Now, the unreferenced citation ("*passim*") brought by Sokoloff under his definition 6 substantiates the observation made by Payne Smith, where the adjective is masculine in agreement with its headword 'Spirit': ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ 'the Holy Spirit'. For actual

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[32] Celas van den Eynde, ed., *Commentaire d'Išhoʿdad de Merv sur l'Ancien Testament: V. Jérémie, Ézéchiel, Daniel*, CSCO 328; Scriptores Syri 146 (Peeters, Louvain): 1972, 50, ll. 11-12.

[33] Sokoloff, 1368. From the evidence presented in citations, I do not find the definition 'den' warranted as alleged by Sokoloff. Brockelmann, 667, brings only the definition *cavea*, noting its Greek origin from κλωβίον, without defining its gender. Further, the headword ܩܠܘܒܝܢ is not substantiated by any of the citations offered by Sokoloff. There is only evidence for the spellings ܩܠܘܒܝܐ and ܐܩܠܘܒܐ. The headword of the entry should fit the evidence.

[34] Sokoloff, 1445. In this, Sokoloff follows Brockelmann, 718.

[35] J. Payne Smith, 533.

references, see 1 Peter 1:21 ܐܠܐ ܟܕ ܡܢ ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܬܕܒܪܝܢ ܡܠܠܘ ܓܒܪ̈ܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ 'but being led by the Holy Spirit, holy men of God spoke' and Jude 20 ܐܢܬܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܚܒܝܒܝ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܡܬܒܢܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܡܢ ܕܪܝܫ ܟܕ ܡܨܠܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܗܕ ܚܝܠܡ 'But you my beloved, in your holy faith, be built up anew, praying in the Holy Spirit'. When used in the phrase ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ 'the Holy Spirit', the word ܪܘܚܐ is masculine.[36]

Sebastian Brock has astutely observed a chronological development within Syriac of the gender of this lexeme in reference to God the Holy Spirit.[37] Probably due to a misconception of the Trinity as Father, Mother (= the Holy Spirit), and Son,[38] certain authors began using the masculine collocation ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ to refer to the Holy Spirit as a replacement for the feminine ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ found in earlier texts. This phenomenon appears particularly in literature dated after the year AD 400.[39] The fifth century poet Narsai prefers the masculine collocation, while the poet Jacob of Serugh (died 521) uses both collocations, his choice being governed by metrical considerations.[40]

Within the Old Testament Peshitta, there are a few cases where ܪܘܚܐ is masculine by agreement. Usually where in the Hebrew the noun רוח appears as masculine by agreement, the Old Testament Peshitta renders it as a feminine (Exod 10:13, 19; Num 11:31; Isa 57:16; Jer 4:12; Ezek 27:26; Ps 51:12; 78:39; Job 8:2; 41:8; Qoh 3:19). But in three cases, at least, the Old Testament Peshitta retains the masculine agreement (1 Kgs 22:12; Job 20:3; Qoh 1:6). In 1 Kings 22:12, the true prophet Micaiah, in renouncing the false

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[36] With regard to theological usage of words, one should also observe that when the lexeme ܡܠܬܐ 'the Word' refers to the incarnate Christ in the prologue to the Gospel according to John, the agreement is masculine (John 1:1, 14). Sokoloff, 775, meaning 4, notes this.

[37] Sebastian Brock, "'Come, Compassionate Mother …, Come Holy Spirit': A Forgotten Aspect of Early Eastern Christian Imagery," *Aram* 3:1&2 (1991), 249-257. My thanks are due to the staff of Kviteseid folkebibliotek for finding this and other resources for me.

[38] Brock, 249 and 252.

[39] Brock, 252.

[40] Brock, 254.

prophets who had urged the king of Israel to go up against Aram and take back Ramoth Gilead, reports that he had seen a spirit volunteering in the heavenly court to be a lying spirit in the false prophets. The text reads as follows: ܟܐܬ ܩܕܡ ܘܩܡ ܪܘܚܐ ܘܢܦܩ 'and a spirit went forth and stood before the Lord'. The noun ܪܘܚܐ stands in agreement with the masculine verbal forms ܢܦܩ and ܩܡ. Job 20:3 reads ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܣܘܟܠܝ ܬܥܢܝܢܝ 'and the spirit of my understanding will answer me', where the noun ܪܘܚܐ agrees with the masculine verbal form ܬܥܢܝܢܝ. In Qoh 1:6 ܐܙܠ ܠܬܝܡܢܐ ܘܡܬܟܪܟ ܠܓܪܒܝܐ. ܡܬܟܪܟ ܡܬܟܪܟ ܘܐܙܠ ܪܘܚܐ. ܘܥܠ ܟܪܘܟܝܗ ܗܦܟ ܪܘܚܐ 'The wind goes to the south and whirls around to the north, indeed whirls around and goes. The wind returns to its circuits', the noun ܪܘܚܐ agrees with the masculine participles ܐܙܠ ܡܬܟܪܟ, and ܗܦܟ. This evidence pushes the masculine use of ܪܘܚܐ back to the late second century, when the Old Testament Peshitta was translated.

Conclusion

To sum up, gender agreement of nouns with other sentence or phrasal constituents unlocks the gender of that noun in Syriac. Agreement demonstrates that the nouns ܐܠܥܐ 'rib', ܐܪܙܦܬܐ 'hammer', ܝܡܝܢܐ 'right (hand)', ܠܘܚܐ 'tablet', and ܣܦܝܠܐ 'sapphire' are feminine and that the nouns ܥܪܣܐ 'couch, cushion', ܓܪܨܬܐ 'cake', ܡܩܛܪܓܐ 'accuser', and ܡܚܒܘܫܐ 'cage' are masculine. Further, agreement indicates that the nouns ܚܓܠܐ 'partridge' and ܚܘܪܒܐ 'stork' can be masculine or feminine, depending on the context. Though the noun ܪܘܚܐ is feminine in the overwhelming majority of cases, it is masculine in its use in the theological phrase 'the Holy Spirit' especially in texts dating after AD 400 and even appears so a few times in the Old Testament Peshitta. A Syriac dictionary should state this fact. Further research could bring one to modify these soundings, but the method is clear: Syriac lexicographers must incorporate gender agreement documentation into their lexical entries of nouns. Citations in dictionary entries of nouns should demonstrate gender as well as meaning.

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