

## The Story of Tobit

# Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism

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# The Story of Tobit

*A Comparative Literary Analysis*

*By*

Giancarlo Toloni

*Translated by*

Patrick Hogan



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## Preface

In the almost thirty years that have passed since Joseph A. Fitzmyer published his *editio princeps* (1995) of the Aramaic and Hebraic fragments of the five manuscripts of *Tobit* found at Qumran, the study of this book has experienced a major acceleration and a qualitative evolution prompted by the discovery of these *testimonia*, which have unquestionably opened up new and stimulating paths of research.

I had the fortune of completing my study of Hebrew in those years (1997–2001) with the aim of earning a doctorate in Oriental Studies: Ancient Near Eastern Philology which I pursued at the University of Naples “L’Orientale,” and of focusing my research on *Tobit*, although I had to overcome some initial resistance with respect to the “funny story” told in that book, especially from my teacher, Giovanni Garbini, who with good reason had wanted me to dedicate myself instead to *Job*, a book quite demanding in itself because of the notoriously difficult questions it raises, especially the insidious textual problems that beset it on a linguistic and philological level. Nonetheless, my consideration that we should first of all have critically reconstructed the whole textual tradition of *Tobit*, which is exceptionally complex and intricate, removed all hesitation on our part, as we sensed also the innovative contribution coming by the comparison of the forms of the Greek *receptus* and the ancient versions with the *testimonia* from Qumran, such as to certainly allow us to study the book more deeply and profitably.

In the years following my doctorate, I have returned many times to *Tobit* to study the different critical problems of that book. First of all, with the publication of a part of the thesis (2004), which treated systematically the problem of the original form of the book, then I studied in depth various critical issues suggested by my reading of the text, presenting the fruits of that work in a few specific contributions and extending naturally my interests also in *Job*, thanks to the similarities and connections that I found between the stories of the protagonists in those two books. Now that some time has passed, I have collected here some of these articles, which will also allow the reader to see the progress that studies of *Tobit* have made following the publication of the fragments found at Qumran.<sup>1</sup> After all, even though with the passage of time inevitably the number of philological and linguistic contributions on the book

---

1 The progress made in the research of and the new critical instruments for *Tobit* that have appeared over this span of time are concisely presented in the valuable *status quaestionis* presented by Perrin 2014: 107–42.

have grown a little fewer, nevertheless, the chronological distance from the discovery gives us valuable perspective and makes it possible for us to return to the literary problem of the book with greater objectivity and relevance, by virtue also of new acquisitions by critics.

This collection consists of studies that appeared previously in *Sefarad* and in the *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"* – *Sezione orientale*, as well as of the first part of an essay published by the Paideia Publishing House; therefore, these articles have now been translated from Italian into English. In these pieces, one will see illustrated, from different angles, some of the more representative literary contributions provided by different sources for the elaboration of the *Tobit* story, whose roots extend into Classical mythology, legend, and Near Eastern folktale. Apart from the introduction and the conclusion, I have also added some material to connect the different articles, as well as two brief unpublished studies. This frame thus guides my approach by putting in a new perspective the main exegetical problem of *Tobit*, namely that of the real physiognomy of the controversial literary genre used by the author, which it is possible now to reconsider in light of the critical contributions collected here and brought into relation with each other.

That said, I duly dedicate this volume to the memory of Giovanni Garbini in recognition of the esteem and kindness that he showed me during my research training and of the friendship whose memory remains dear to me still. This small posthumous tribute, although it adds little to the affectionate gratitude I showed many times for the fortune of having met him and the privilege of having spent time with him, renews certainly my admiration for the exemplar quality of his research which was original and free of preconceptions, yet bold in its perspectives and always rich with critical insights. These are, in fact, the essential qualities of all authentic philological research.

## Acknowledgments

The studies collected in the present volume are varied in origin and hence also their structure is different. The introduction, the conclusion, Appendix 2 and the first and second chapters of the first part are unpublished, while the third chapter of the same part appeared with the same title in *Sef* 67/1 (2007), 5–36.

The second part of the book re-proposes part of an essay previously printed by Paideia Publishing House under the title *La sofferenza del giusto. Giobbe e Tobia a confronto* (StBib 159), Brescia 2009, 13–71.

The three chapters of the third part appeared in the following order: the first, “Aḥiqar nel libro di Tobia,” and the second, “Aḥiqar archetipo di Tobia? Sull’intertestualità biblica di una tradizione assiro-aramaica,” in *AION* 71 (2011), 87–114 and 73 (2013), 107–133 respectively; the third in *Sef* 73/1 (2013), 7–30, with the title “Aḥiqar tra leggenda e rielaborazione letteraria. Una tradizione e i suoi riflessi.”

The texts are republished with an essential updating of the bibliography and with some additions, removals, and various editorial modifications necessitated by their new placement. I apologize in advance for some repetitions and overlaps: in several instances this is due to the kind of unavoidable inconsistencies that are wont to arise when it is decided to only formally review previously published material.

I want to thank Dr Ramón B. Rodríguez, the editorial director of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas of Madrid; Dr Marco Scarpato, manager of the Paideia editorial brand of the Claudiana Publishing House; and Prof. Elda Morlicchio, President of the University of Naples “L’Orientale,” for permission to reissue and translate into English my aforementioned contributions, which previously appeared in Italian in the publishing houses of these institutions.

I am particularly indebted to Prof. René Bloch and Prof. Karina Martin Hogan for having accepted my work for inclusion in their prestigious collection of the Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series.

Apart from the publisher, the publication of this volume was also made possible by funding provided by the European Secretariate for Scientific Publications and by a grant from the Department of Historical and Philological Studies at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, which I am very grateful for.

# Abbreviations

## Primary Sources

|                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| LXX <sup>A</sup>                    | <i>Codex Alexandrinus</i> of the LXX |
| LXX <sup>B</sup>                    | <i>Codex Vaticanus</i> of the LXX    |
| LXX <sup>S</sup>                    | <i>Codex Sinaiticus</i> of the LXX   |
| LXX <sup>V</sup>                    | <i>Codex Venetus</i> of the LXX      |
| G <sup>I-III</sup>                  | Greek recensions of <i>Tobit</i>     |
| 4QTob ar <sup>a-d</sup> (4Q196–199) | Aramaic manuscripts of <i>Tobit</i>  |
| 4QTob hebr <sup>e</sup> (4Q200)     | Hebrew manuscript of <i>Tobit</i>    |
| VL                                  | <i>Vetus Latina</i>                  |

## Secondary Sources<sup>1</sup>

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AAWG    | Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.<br>Philologisch-Historische Klasse                                                                                                                                         |
| ABG     | Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| AC      | <i>Acta Classica</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| AcT     | <i>Acta Theologica</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| AIONSup | AION Supplement Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| AION    | <i>Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" – Sezione<br/>Filologico-Letteraria</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| Akr     | <i>Akroterion</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| APOT    | <i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English,<br/>with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several<br/>Books</i> , 2 vols. (ed. R.H. Charles, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1913; repr.<br>1964) |
| ATC     | L'Antico Testamento commentato                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| ATI     | Antico Testamento                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| ATSAT   | Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| BibTS   | Biblica Testi e Studi                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| BibTut  | La Bibbia per tutti                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| BInt    | <i>Biblical Intersections</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| BtE     | Biblioteca Einaudi                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| BtSag   | Bibliotechina del Saggiatore                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

<sup>1</sup> In addition to standard abbreviations listed in *SBLHS*: 117–260, esp. 171–260.

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BtStor          | Biblioteca di storia e storiografia dei tempi biblici                                                                                                                  |
| BtStClas        | Bibloteztlesung                                                                                                                                                        |
| BtStClas        | Biblioteca di studi classici                                                                                                                                           |
| BtSU            | Biblioteca di scienze dell'uomo                                                                                                                                        |
| BURcgl          | Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli. Classici greci e latini                                                                                                                 |
| CCr             | Connaître et croire                                                                                                                                                    |
| CHCL            | Cambridge History of Classical Literature                                                                                                                              |
| <i>CivCC</i>    | <i>Civiltà classica e cristiana</i>                                                                                                                                    |
| ColBC           | Collegeville Bible Commentary                                                                                                                                          |
| ComBib          | Commenti biblici                                                                                                                                                       |
| ContRev         | Contemporary Review                                                                                                                                                    |
| CR              | Classici delle Religioni                                                                                                                                               |
| CSS             | Cursus Scripturae Sacrae                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>CThM</i>     | <i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>                                                                                                                                |
| CTSSst          | Collezione di testi e studi. Storiografia                                                                                                                              |
| Dalman          | <i>Aramäisch-Neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch</i> (ed. G.H. Dalman, Göttingen: Pfeiffer 1938; 3rd ed., 2nd repr. Hildesheim: G. Olms 1997) |
| DCEJAL          | Dropsie College Edition. Jewish Apocryphal Literature                                                                                                                  |
| DCLSB           | DCLS Book                                                                                                                                                              |
| DCLY            | Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook                                                                                                                       |
| DEBAAT          | Documents pour l'étude de la Bible. Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament                                                                                                   |
| <i>DialArch</i> | <i>Dialoghi di Archeologia</i>                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>DSD</i>      | <i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>DTAT</i>     | <i>Dizionario Teologico dell'Antico Testamento</i> , 2 vols. (eds. E. Jenni and C. Westermann, Torino: Marietti 1978.1982; ed. it. G.L. Prato)                         |
| EANEC           | Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations                                                                                                                     |
| EB              | Earth Bible                                                                                                                                                            |
| ESHM            | European Seminar in Historical Methodology                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Fab</i>      | <i>Fabula</i>                                                                                                                                                          |
| FAT             | Forschungen zum Alten Testament                                                                                                                                        |
| FeC             | Filologia e critica                                                                                                                                                    |
| FrN             | Fratelli nostri                                                                                                                                                        |
| FTS             | Frankfurter Theologische Studien                                                                                                                                       |
| GAP             | Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha                                                                                                                                 |
| GC              | Il grande codice                                                                                                                                                       |
| GCTMar          | Grandi classici tascabili Marsilio                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>GELS</i>     | <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint. Revised Edition</i> (eds. J. Lust, E. Eynikel and K. Hauspie, 2nd ed., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 2003)       |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>GLNT</i> | <i>Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento</i> , 16 vols. (eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, Brescia: Paideia 1965; eds. it. F. Montagnini, G. Scarpat and O. Soffritti)                                                                                              |
| GSc         | Geistliche Schriftlesung                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| HBM         | Hebrew Bible Monographs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| HE          | Hermes. Einzelschriften                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Hen</i>  | <i>Henoch</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| IGP         | I grandi piccoli                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| ILBS        | The Indiana literary biblical series                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| ISB         | Introduzione allo Studio della Bibbia                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| ISBSup      | ISB Supplementi                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| ISBLSup     | ISBL Supplement Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Jastrow     | <i>A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature</i> , 2 vols. (ed. M. Jastrow, London – New York: Luzac and Co. – Putnam's Sons 1886–1903; 2nd repr. New York 1950)                                               |
| JJSSup      | JJS Supplement Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>JQR</i>  | <i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| JSJSup      | JSJ Supplement Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| JSNTSup     | JSNT Supplement Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| JSOTSup     | JSOT Supplement Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| JSSSup      | JSS Supplement Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>JTI</i>  | <i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Lab         | Labirinti                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| LAS         | Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| LegN        | Leggere narrativa                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| LHBOTS      | Library of Hebrew Bible. Old Testament Studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| LibSagr     | Los Libros Sagrados                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| LIKKPh      | Lexika, Indizes, Konkordanzen zur klassischen Philologie                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| LoB         | Leggere oggi la Bibbia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| LSJ         | <i>A Greek-English Lexicon. Revised and Augmented throughout by Henry Stuart Jones with the Assistance of Roderick McKenzie... Supplement. Edited by P.G.W. Glare</i> (eds. H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, 9th ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press 1940, repr. anast. 1996) |
| LUMar       | Letteratura universale Marsilio                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| ModLet      | La modernità letteraria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| MP          | Myth and Poetics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| NarCNT      | Narratologia. Contributions to narrative theory                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| NSBT        | New Studies in Biblical Theology                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| NVBTO       | Nuovissima versione della Bibbia dai testi originali                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

|                  |                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OA               | <i>Orientis Aura</i>                                                                                                                                          |
| OBib             | Orizzonti biblici                                                                                                                                             |
| OH               | Oxford Handbooks                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>OrAntMisc</i> | <i>Orientis Antiqui Miscellanea</i>                                                                                                                           |
| PBE              | Piccola biblioteca Einaudi                                                                                                                                    |
| PBSBAT           | Petite Bibliothèque des Sciences Bibliques. Ancien Testament                                                                                                  |
| PCMas            | Petite collection Maspero                                                                                                                                     |
| PEBib            | Piccola Enciclopedia biblica                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>PhilAnt</i>   | <i>Philologia Antiqua</i>                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Prom</i>      | <i>Prometheus</i>                                                                                                                                             |
| PSt              | Poetologische Studien                                                                                                                                         |
| PT               | Playing the Texts                                                                                                                                             |
| PTA              | Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen                                                                                                                         |
| QuadSar          | Quaderni del ‘Sarpi’                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>QuadStor</i>  | <i>Quaderni di Storia</i>                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>QuadUCC</i>   | <i>Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica</i>                                                                                                                  |
| RCar             | Recherches carmélitaines                                                                                                                                      |
| RencEd           | Rencontre édition                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>RivCCM</i>    | <i>Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medievale</i>                                                                                                                |
| SatCL            | Sather classical lectures                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>SBLHS</i>     | <i>The SBL Handbook of Style</i> (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press 2014, 2nd ed.)                                                                                       |
| SepCS            | Septuagint Commentary Series                                                                                                                                  |
| SDSSRL           | Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature                                                                                                        |
| <i>Sef</i>       | <i>Sefarad</i>                                                                                                                                                |
| SeptVTG          | <i>Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum</i> Auctoritate Academiae<br>Scientiarum Göttingensis editum, 20 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &<br>Ruprecht 1931–) |
| SGL              | Scrittori greci e latini                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Sol</i>       | <i>Soleriana</i>                                                                                                                                              |
| SS               | Storia e Società                                                                                                                                              |
| StBib            | Studi biblici                                                                                                                                                 |
| StSup            | Studi superiori                                                                                                                                               |
| StSupNISLet      | Studi superiori NIS. Lettere                                                                                                                                  |
| SUEF             | Saggi Universale Economica Feltrinelli                                                                                                                        |
| TBS              | Tools for Biblical Study                                                                                                                                      |
| TECC             | Textos y Estudios “Cardenal Cisneros” de la Biblia Políglota Matritense                                                                                       |
| <i>THB</i>       | <i>The Textual History of the Bible</i> , 3 vols. (ed. A. Lange, Leiden: Brill 2016–)                                                                         |
| UBBSS            | Universale Bollati Boringhieri. Serie scientifica                                                                                                             |
| UEClas           | Universale economica. I Classici                                                                                                                              |

|               |                                                                                                                    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UL            | Universale Laterza                                                                                                 |
| UTB           | Uni-taschenbücher für Wissenschaft                                                                                 |
| VCSup         | Supplément à Vie chrétienne                                                                                        |
| VTSup         | Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series                                                                                |
| WANEM         | Worlds of the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean                                                                  |
| WestBC        | Westminster Bible Companion                                                                                        |
| <i>WiStud</i> | <i>Wiener Studien</i>                                                                                              |
| Zorell        | <i>Lexicon Hebraicum Veteris Testamenti</i> (ed. F. Zorell, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1951–85, repr. 1989) |