The Text of Eccl 12.11: An Attempt to Master the Collection of these Words

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1. Comparison of Edited Texts

Eccl	MT	Holmstedt-Cook-Marshall (BHHB)	LXX (RH/PG)	P. Gentry (NETS, based on RH)
12:11a	דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים כַּדָּרְבֹנוֹת	The words of the wise are like goads	Λόγοι σοφῶν ὡς τὰ βούκεντρα	The words of the wise are like ox-goads
12:11b	וּכְמַשְׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים בַּעֲלֵי אֲסֻפּוֹת	and like nails sunk in are well-grouped sayings	καὶ ὡς ἧλοι πεφυτευμένοι, οἱ παρὰ τῶν <u>συναγμάτων</u> (RH)/ <u>συνθεμάτων</u> (PG)	and like nails firmly planted; those from the collections
12:11c	נִתְּנוּ מֵרֹעֶה אֶחָד:	(which) are given by one shepherd.	ἐδόθησαν ἐκ ποιμένος ἑνὸς	were given from one shepherd
12:12a (MT)/ 12:11d (OG)	וְיֹתֵר מֵהֵמָּה	And more than they....	καὶ περισσὸν ἐξ αὐτῶν.	and a surplus of them.

1.1. Difference in versification:

1.2. Analysis of Hebrew syntax:

1.2.1. Clause structure adopted in HCM: three clauses (without 11d/12a)—2 null copula clauses (verbless/nominal) followed by a verbal clause.

Clause 1: Null copula clause. S = דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים; SC = PP כַּדָּרְבֹנוֹת.

Clause 2: Null copula clause. S = בַּעֲלֵי אֲסֻפּוֹת; SC = fronted PP וּכְמַשְׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים (chiastic)

Clause 3: Verbal clause: Null S, V = נִתְּנוּ (passive Ni pft) with מִן-PP מֵרֹעֶה אֶחָד marking the agent of giving.

1.2.2. An alternate clause structure: 2 clauses—1 longer null copula clause followed by verbal clause.

Clause 1: Null copula clause. S = דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים; lengthy SC = coordinated כ-PPs כַּדָּרְבֹנוֹת וְכִמַשְׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים בַּעֲלֵי אֲסֻפּוֹת.

Clause 2: Verbal clause: same as above

1.3. Analysis of Greek syntax:

1.3.1. Clause structure adopted in NETS (Gentry): two clauses—1 null copula clause (verbless/nominal) followed by 1 verbal clause.

Clause 1: Null copula clause. S = *Λόγοι σοφῶν*; lengthy SC = coordinated כ-PPs *ὡς τὰ βούκεντρα καὶ ὡς ἧλοι πεφυτευμένοι*.

Clause 2: Verbal clause: S = *οἱ παρὰ τῶν συναγμάτων/συνθεμάτων… καὶ περισσὸν ἐξ αὐτῶν*, V = *ἐδόθησαν* (Aor Pass Ind 3p) with *ἐκ*-PP *ἐκ ποιμένος ἑνὸς* marking the agent of giving.

1.3.2. An alternate clause structure (Marshall): 3 clauses—1 null copula clause, 1 verbal clause, 1 null copula clause (in 11d)

This is almost the same as NETS; however, I suggest taking 11d as an independent, null copula clause:

S = *περισσὸν* (understood as 'advantage or profit') and the SC = the *ἐκ*-PP *ἐξ αὐτῶν* with the meaning 'And advantage/profit is [i.e., comes] from them [the collections? the goads and nails as the teaching of the wise?]'.

2. A Brief Comment on Hebrew Textual Criticism for 11b (וְכִמַשְׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים בַּעֲלֵי אֲסֻפּוֹת)

2.1. Variation between critical apparatuses of BHS and BHQ

2.1.1. BHS (ed. F. Horst): Index at בַּעֲלֵי with critical note: l prb מִבּעלי cf 𝔊 ('to be read probably מִבּעלי cf 𝔊')

2.1.2. BHQ (ed. Y.A.P. Goldman): _____ (that's right, friends—nothing here!)

2.2. Possible evidence for a Hebrew *Vorlage* with the prep מִן on בַּעֲלֵי (מִבַּעֲלֵי)

2.2.1. Hebrew evidence: none

2.2.2. Greek evidence: 3 readings have *παρά* + genitive where MT has no preposition מִן.

OG (Gentry): (*οἱ*) *παρὰ τῶν συνθεμάτων*

Aquila: *α′ παρὰ τῶν συναγμάτων*

Symmachus: *σ′ παρὰ τῶν συναχθέντων*

2.2.3. Comments on the data.

3. Establishing OG for 11bβ (בַּעֲלֵי אֲסֻפּוֹת) and Ejecting Aquila for Past Interference

3.1. Hexaplaric Readings:

3.1.1. Aquila (from Marshall's critical edition):

α′ παρὰ τῶν συναγμάτων

Wit: lemma ↓Syh | συναγμάτων ↓161 ↓248 ↓252

Var: συναγμάτων] συνταγματων 161 248 252 Syh

NonGr: Syh: ܕ ܡܟܢܫ̈ܐ ܕ .ܐ.

The evidence should be read as follows: I take Aq. to read συναγματων. Aq. has attributed readings in 4 witnesses (161, 248, 252, Syh), but in each of them they say that Aquila's reading is συνταγματων (and not συναγματων as I suggest). Why would I go against this evidence? Aside from Eccl 12:11, neither σύνταγμα nor συντάσσω nor συνταγή nor σύνταξις is used by LXX or hexaplaric translators to render words with the root אסף. The most likely reason, then, that σύνταγμα exists as a reading (for both Aquila and for OG 12:11) is that it is an inner-Greek variant of σύναγμα. (This is not how PG's AppII goes!)

3.1.2. Symmachus (from Marshall's critical edition):

σ′ παρὰ τῶν συναχθέντων

Wit: lemma Syh

NonGr: Syh: ܕ ܣܢܝ̈ܩ̈ܐ ܘܟܢܫ̈ܐ .ܒ.

Notes: Retroversion from Field. There are no extant Greek readings preserved.

3.2. Establishing OG:

PGentry's MS evidence for OG text of אספות:

συνθεμάτων] θεματων 68 (*sed hab* Ol^{com} Or *Matth* 14,4 (X 281) PhilC 129 EpiphSchol *Cant* 197); συνθηματων C′$^{-298}$(συμθη. 797) 338 = Ald; συναγματων A S* 542 Syh = Gra. Ra. ↓; συνταγματων 253-475 S^{c} 298 *k* 339 547 788* Ol$^{lem\ et\ com}$ Met X.12,3,10,13 = Ra. ↓; συναντηματων 161^{mg}-248^{mg}; *concilio* Hi^{com} 358,318.331.323(-*ium*) 359,339; *conciliis* Hi *Is* 9,13,40; *componentibus* Hi *Or in Ez hom* 328 ↓

From the listing we see that there are four main candidates for the OG rendering of אספות: *συνθεμάτων*, *συνταγματων*, *συναγματων*, *συναντηματων*.

3.2.1. The form *συναντηματων* 'events, incidents, occurrences':
The lexeme *συνάντημα* should be excluded from consideration. This word is employed in OG Ecclesiastes to render only the noun מִקְרֶה 'chance, fate' in all 7 of its uses: 2:14, 15; 3:19 (3x); 9:2, 3.[1] The verb *συναντάω* is used to render only the verb קרה 'to meet, encounter, happen to, befall' in all 3 of its uses: 2:14, 15; 9:11. The consistency with which the OG translator tends to match lexical roots indicates that there is no reason to believe that he would have rendered אספות (root אסף) with *συνάντημα* (always rendering the root קרה). The word *συνάντημα* either comes directly from one of the Three (least likely) or is corruption from *συναγμάτων* or *συνταγμάτων* (which comes from one of the Three) or is corruption due to influence from the seven occurrences of *συνάντημα* in the book by scribes with no recourse to the Hebrew parent text.

3.2.2. The form *συναγματων* 'collections; (med.) concretions, stones':

If the lexeme *σύναγμα* is original, 12:11 is its only occurrence in Ecclesiastes. However, translation technique makes it unlikely. Since aside from 12:11 we have no other occurrences of *σύναγμα* with which to compare the translator's technique, the next best place to look is at renderings of a related verbal form: *συνάγω*. This verb is employed to render only כנס in all three of its occurrences: 2:8, 26; 3:5. Again, since אספות comes from a different root than כנס, the translator probably did not employ *σύναγμα* to render it.

3.2.3. The form *συνταγματων* 'things put in order, arrangements, constitutions, books/treatises, arrangements of music':

The lexeme *σύνταγμα* does not occur in OG Ecclesiastes outside of the MS witnesses for 12:11. Its meaning, however, does not quite match that of אספה. The word *σύνταγμα* has to do with placement into an order or arrangement (doctrine, troops, music), while אספה has

[1]Note that a different word, מָקֹרֶה ('beams'), is rendered *δόκωσις* ('truss, framework for a roof') in OG Eccl 10:18.

to do with gathering or collecting, coming from the verbal root אסף (‘to gather, collect, bring in, receive’ in the Qal stem).

As mentioned above, aside from Eccl 12:11, we find no evidence that the *σύνταγ root is used by LXX or hexaplaric translators to render words with the root אסף. The most likely reason, then, that σύνταγμα exists as a reading for 12:11 is that it is an inner-Greek variant of σύναγμα. As well, both σύνταγμα and σύναγμα can be rejected as possibilities for OG because they owe their origin to corruption from Aq (see above).

3.2.4. The form συνθεμάτων ‘things put/placed together’:

By the process of elimination, we are left with σύνθεμα (“what is put together, mixed, compounded”), which should be considered the OG reading. Just as with σύναγμα and σύνταγμα, aside from 12:11 we have no other occurrences of σύνθεμα (or related verbs) with which to compare the translator’s technique, so the next place to look is how the translator renders the verb אסף. This Hebrew verb occurs only once, in 2:26, and is rendered with the lexeme προστίθημι.[2] Perhaps the translator sees a relationship between –τιθημι (the root θε/θα being the source of σύνθεμα) and the root אסף. Whatever the case, given the weaknesses of all the other options, it appears that συνθεμάτων is the best candidate for the original rendering of אספות.

3.3. Concluding comments about hexaplaric readings and OG:

3.3.1. First, Aquila’s original text (συναγμάτων) and a variant of it (συνταγμάτων) have corrupted a significant portion of the LXX text history early, affecting even two early uncial mss, A (Alexandrinus) and S (Sinaiticus).

[2]Otherwise, προστίθημι is used for 5 occurrences of יסף in 1:16, 18 bis; 2:9; 3:14. One should not assume, however, that the translator confused אסף in 2:26 with יסף. The 5 occurrences of יסף are all Hiphil forms, while in 2:26 the word is unmistakably a Qal Infinitive Construct: לאסוף. The fact that the translator employed προστίθημι for a different verb only shows that at times he is contextually sensitive and not always mechanical. The simplex form τίθημι is used 1x for נתן in 7:21. This is the only occurrence of τίθημι for נתן; the translator’s normal rendering is δίδωμι, 23x. The use of τίθημι here is probably due to idiomatic rendering.

3.3.2. Secondly, since Syh indicates that Symmachus' rendering of אספות involved a passive participle, *συναχθέντων*, and the Aq reading can be reconstructed as *συναγμάτων*, I was tempted to think that Theodotion's rendering (which is not preserved as an attributed reading) might be the variant *συναντημάτων* in the OG manuscript tradition. HRCS, however, shows no Theodotionic usage of the noun *συνάντημα*.

3.3.3. Finally, there is an interesting note in Olympiodorus: "*Οὗτοι δὲ οἱ λόγοι, φησίν, παρὰ τῶν συνταγμάτων ἐδόθησαν· ἕτερα δὲ βιβλία παρὰ τῶν συνθεμάτων ἔχουσιν.*"

The primary OG reading is attributed by Olympiodorus to *ἕτερα βιβλία*; it is considered by him to be a variant reading. On the other hand, what Olympiodorus considers to be the LXX, *παρὰ τῶν συνταγμάτων*, is really a doubly corrupted reading: it is a "LXX text" that has been corrupted by a corrupted Aquila reading, *συναγμάτων*.