

**Waldemar Linke CP, *Literacka ojczyzna Tobiasza. Tło kulturowe Tb jako klucz teologicznej lektury księgi*, Wydawnictwo Verbinum, Warszawa 2013, 676 pp. (Lingua Sacra. Monografie, 2)**

Tomasz Maria Dąbek, OSB

Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

tomasz.dabek@upjp2.edu.pl  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1427-0135>

This dissertation by Rev. Waldemar Linke, CP, is a detailed study based on the original texts of the Book of Tobit in various Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew versions, taking into consider Latin translations and, if necessary, others as well.

In the lengthy preface (beginning on p. 11), the author presents the state of research on the Book of Tobit, topics related to its cultural context and the time it was written in addition to outlining the aim and methodology used in the work.

The first part of the dissertation describes social life in the Book of Tobit. The first chapter (starting on p. 53) presents marriage and the family as the basic educational, economic, social, national, and religious institutions in the Book of Tobit. The author describes the ways of entering into marriage, the marital relationship with the right to inheritance, the aim of the marital union, endogamy as the principle of marriage of the Israelites in the diaspora, and the life of married couples. He analyzes the traits and aims of the family: its anthropocentrism (dominance of the male line), the son's dependence on the father, the value and situation of children and grandchildren, the dynamic of dependence in the family, bonds with more distant relatives and their scope, and the family community. The chapter ends with a presentation of the theological value of the topic of the family in the Book of Tobit as well as an intertextual reading of Psalm 128 (127) and Tobit. The research is summed up by pertinent conclusions taking into account the richness of the complex problem.

Meanwhile, the second chapter (beginning on p. 139) deals with money, financial institutions, and work in the Book of Tobit. In relation to money, trade, and financial services, he presents means of payment, trade, and the exchange of goods, financial services, caravans, and travels, and the relative value of

money. He also describes the types of work described in the book (spinning and weaving, agriculture) as well as wages and economic factors in the state apparatus. He summarizes everything with a formulation of his conclusions.

The second part of the work is devoted to religious life in the Book of Tobit. The longest (third) chapter begins on page 223 and is titled: *Religion and Theology in Tobit*. It contains a discussion of the theological ideas in the book: the image, names, and attributes of God; the law and the covenant; providence; God's omniscience and destiny; eschatology in Tobit (both communal and individual eschatology); and public devotion and the liturgy (the temple and the community of devotion). The chapter ends with concluding remarks.

The fourth chapter (beginning on p. 391) presents private practices of devotion and religiosity in the Book of Tobit: prayer (as a plea, profession, and blessing), alms, and the norms of purity (concerning the purity of meals and cleansing). Additionally, Linke describes the roles of the dog in the Book of Tobit with regards to the topic of purity and the role of the fish in the book.

The fifth, final chapter (beginning on p. 469) is devoted to angelology and demonology in the Book of Tobit. The author begins it by noting the new "angelic wave" in today's culture as well as the place of angels in contemporary theology. He discusses demonology in the cultures and religions of the Middle East (research on demonology and the concept of the demon as well as Mesopotamian and Persian demonology) and angelology and demonology in Judaism (in the apocalyptic writings and in the Bible). Linke presents the role of the angel and the demon in Tobit (he discusses the studies and discussions on angelology and demonology in Tobit, angelological and demonological terminology in various language versions of Tobit, the role of the angel in the narrative and theology of Tobit, and the demon in the narrative and theology of Tobit). He presents Raphael as the healer and the nature of salvation in Tobit as well as Raphael's other functions. In his conclusions, Linke synthetically presents the origins and unique nature of angelology and demonology in Tobit.

In the conclusion (starting on p. 573), he sums up the conclusions of his scrupulous research. His exhaustive bibliography attests to perfect familiarity with the literature on the topics he studies in many languages. The English-language conclusion allows readers who do not know the Polish language to become familiar with the contents of the dissertation and the directions of study he has undertaken.

The author knows the Biblical languages and numerous modern ones very well, which allows him to make free use of the rich existing literature. He

exceptionally dutifully analyzes problems, comparing various versions of texts in detail, presenting the attitudes of the authors, translators, and editors of the work in which Tobit's family stands in opposition to the Zadokite priests and certain rules of Nehemiah's reforms, thus presenting their attitude as zealous Israelites who want to faithfully persist in the religion of the first covenant. The impressive bibliography (beginning on p. 590) is approximately eighty pages long and contains numerous publications in various languages. This long list of titles is not only testimony to the author's erudition; it is also a valuable aid to those interested in academic research on the topics described in the dissertation.

In response to the question contained in the work's title and subtitle, the author writes in the conclusion: "What, then, is 'Tobit's literary fatherland?'" The response should be that it is longing for the temple and for the religious community. It did not leave another trace apart from Tobit, but the one that has remained today affects readers through the liveliness of its narrative, the colorfulness of the portraits of people, the wisdom of the proverbs, and the poetic fervor of the prayer poetry. Praising God, which is foremost among the forms of religiosity that this book speaks of, does not require a temple and is not dependent on political compromises or concessions. Tobit's family lives in their fatherland aware that God will not forget their righteousness."

This dissertation attests to the author's impressive status as a scholar and allows us to better understand many problems related to the life of the Israelites in Palestine and in the diaspora during their exile and after the return to the Maccabee times. It is an interesting read for Biblical scholars, historians, and historians of religion alike, as well as for all who are interested in a deeper understanding of Sacred Scripture.