

JAMES A. SANDERS

Scripture in Its Historical Contexts

Volume II:
Exegesis, Hermeneutics, and Theology

Edited by
CRAIG A. EVANS

*Forschungen
zum Alten Testament*

Mohr Siebeck

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Edited by

Konrad Schmid (Zürich) · Mark S. Smith (Princeton)
Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen) · Andrew Teeter (Harvard)

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Prologue for Scripture in Its Historical Contexts II: Exegesis, Hermeneutics, and Theology

This second of two volumes of selected papers, composed and published over the past sixty years in scattered journals and various compendia, focuses on exegetical efforts to understand the original meanings and general importance of passages of Scripture in their ancient Near-Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean contexts. It gathers studies on the exegesis of various crucial passages in both Testaments and at Qumran, especially on the function of First Testament passages cited and alluded to in the Second Testament, and on critical methods developed since the mid-twentieth century in order to do so.¹ The author has for years taught students that the New Testament is also biblical, that is, for a growing Jewish sect of the first two centuries of the common era it was added to a Jewish “canon,” but more importantly it fit well as an addition to the earlier collections that Judahites and increasingly hellenized Jews found helpful in attempts to understand how God worked through adversity to bring blessing both to them and to all God’s world.

It brings together in one volume twenty-one studies that focus on how exegesis and its results can be developed to understand various parts of Scripture, how the hermeneutics of antiquity can be discerned by modern exegetical work, and how crucial understandings of God expressed in the Bible can be ferreted out of critical study of Scripture. All of it is an effort to understand how Scripture that was first expressed in ancient cultural contexts can be re-expressed in modern cultural contexts. Needless to say, “critical” in this context means, not being critical of Scripture, but being aware of and attempting to set aside what the modern reader instinctively brings to Scripture, and instead attempting to understand what the ancient speakers, authors, editors, and schools thereof understood of what they were trying to say that caused these particular writings to make it into a canon of Scripture.

The writer is a product of twentieth-century, Western/European culture and hence of necessity thereby limited, as are we all in modern scholarship, to that extent in perceiving what our ancestors meant when they said and wrote what they did in their ancient cultural and political contexts. We believe, nonetheless, that with the tools developed since the Enlightenment, we increasingly have the means to probe as deeply as is possible into what ancient Scripture meant in its ancient contexts and can yet mean in the various cultures to which we are

¹ Sanders, “Dead Sea Scrolls and Biblical Studies,” 328–29.

ourselves limited today in all our varied cultural contexts. But we also believe that though Western scholarship is of necessity limited by its particular values, Enlightenment study of Scripture is becoming more and more equipped to probe into ancient cultural expressions of what life was/is about in order to express them in today's varied terms. The assumption that we can do so is based on the critical observation that the Bible itself emerged out of ancient Israel's struggles with adversity from the ancient Egyptian, Canaanite, Philistine, Syrian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman threats to her very existence. What was found helpful enough to be repeated, shared, and then passed down to their heirs emerged as something we moderns call canon. The followers of Jesus in their turn searched those Scriptures in an attempt to find answers to why God let happen to their Galilean teacher what God had let happen to ancient Israel through the preceding centuries when life beyond collective death emerged in new forms and realities.

That alone is reason enough to pull together in two volumes what one has been trying to do over the last six decades so that students of more recent and future generations can winnow through such efforts to see what can be built on, and what is more limited in purview, to do what they in their time must do.

The writer was brought up in an American form of Christianity that he early on saw was a form of *apologia* for the suppression of cultures that weren't northern European in origin. That form so focused on individualistic understandings of Christianity and its Bible that its adherents could find support in it for stealing others' lands on the excuse of bringing European understandings of the faith to indigenous peoples, sometimes committing genocide to do so, then finding support in it for slavery, segregation, prohibition, suppression of women's and gays' rights, and those of anyone different from them who claimed rights for themselves. They made the untenable claim that their understanding of the Bible was inerrant and harmonious, but it was actually based on passages that formed a sort of scrap-book Bible that supported their biases. They in essence wanted the whole nation to practice what they preached but rarely fully practiced themselves.²

By contrast I found in critical readings of Scripture applied to current issues the challenge humans need to live lives of Torah, or lives in Christ, indeed to respond in any adequate way to the biblical command to love the enemy (Jer 29:7; Matt 5:44; et al.) and to come to realize that all humans inhabiting this very small planet in an ever-expanding universe need each other, no matter how varied and different, to make sense of it all. The realization that we live on an ever-shrinking ball of fiery rock in a universe impossible to envisage in its immensity, coupled with the realization that all of us on it are born to die, and that all of life on it must return to the dust whence it came, should bring us all to learn to appreciate all the cultures on it into which and through which God has reached out to touch humanity in various ways around the globe. It should also bring us all to learn to

² See Sanders, *Re-birth*, and the review of it by Prof. Walter Brueggemann, "A Scholar's Faith."

love and appreciate all the “others” on the same shrinking planet. The message of the “death of death and hell’s destruction” is the biblical re-assurance that God is the God of death (1 Sam 2:6; Deut 32:39) as well as of life, and that birth and death both remain the divine gifts they have always been.

Such thinking brought me to the conviction that the central message of the Bible critically studied is the monotheizing process, that we all are part of the same Reality, and should think, live, and act like it.³ There is indeed but One Reality or God of (us) All. With all our diversity of skin colors, sexual givens, cultures, stories, and religions we are all integral parts of a God-given whole.

Hence the efforts assembled in this volume are offered, probing as deeply as the writer has been able to probe, the amazing, continuing relevance of the messages of Scripture we inherit from ancient Near-Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean antiquity.

As in Volume I, the essays are reproduced here basically as previously published, though style conventions have been harmonized; however, where it has been felt necessary to add updating, current information has been added inside square brackets.

James A. Sanders

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- Sanders, James A. *The Re-birth of a Born-Again Christian: A Memoir*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017.

³ Sanders, *Monotheizing Process*.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACF	<i>Annuaire du Collège de France</i>
Aeg. WB	A. Erman and H. Grapon. <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen sprache</i> .
AGSU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums
ANQ	<i>Andover Newton Quarterly</i>
AOS	American Oriental Series
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AT	Alte Testament/Ancien Testament
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> .
BH	<i>Biblia Hebraica</i>
BHQ	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
BHT	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibB	Biblische Beiträge
BibS(N)	Biblische Studien (Neukirchen)
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CEV	The Contemporary English Version. New York: The American Bible Society, 1991–92.
ChrCent	<i>Christian Century</i>
DBSup	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément</i> . Edited by Louis Pirot and André Robert. Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1928–.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ET	English Translation
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>

FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
Folio	<i>The Folio: The Newsletter of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center for Preservation and Research</i>
HB	Hebrew Bible
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IB	<i>The Interpreter's Bible: The Holy Scriptures in the King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible</i> , edited by George A. Buttrick et al. 12 vols. New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–67.
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> , edited by George A. Buttrick. 4 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1962.
IDBSup	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume</i> . Edited by Keith Crim. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
IOSCS	International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
ITQ	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JANESCU	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTC	<i>Journal for Theology and the Church</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KJV	King James Version (Authorized Version)
LXX	Septuagint
McCQ	<i>McCormick Quarterly</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
MS	manuscript (pl. MSS)
NCB	New Century Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NRTb	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NT	New Testament
NTP	<i>The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Translation</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumrân</i>
RGG ³	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> , edited by Hans Dieter Betz. 3rd ed. 6 vols. + index. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957–65.
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SDSRL	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SRKAE	Schriftenreihe der katholischen Akademie der Erzdiözese
SSEJC	Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity
<i>SwJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76.
<i>Textus</i>	<i>Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project</i>
<i>ThTo</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>ThViat</i>	<i>Theologia Viatorum</i>
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> , edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932–79.
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
USQR	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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Part 3: Exegesis

A Multivalent Text: Psalm 151:3–4 Revisited

(1985)

It is now twenty-three years since I unrolled 11QPs^a [in 1961] and saw in its last written column the Hebrew psalm(s) lying back of LXX-Syriac Ps 151.¹ I recognized it immediately, thanks to my teachers, especially Sheldon Blank, who instilled in me a deep respect for the biblical text and its early versions. It is a pleasure to be able to thank Professor Blank, in this manner, for all that he gave me during my three years at the Hebrew Union College and since then in his writings.

It was clear on first perusal that the Qumran Hebrew and the LXX-Syriac Ps 151 differed considerably. The most obvious difference lay in the lacunae in the LXX-Syriac, and especially in the total lack of anything corresponding to 11Q vv. 3 and 4. I fixed my attention immediately on these, and though it was apparent that one could read it in different ways (see, e. g., the circelli I affixed above each *waw/yod* in the Clarendon publication),² it seemed only logical that one should prefer the plainest, simplest reading that would explain the glaring omissions in the LXX and Syriac versions – the heterodox idea that mountains and hills did not witness to God’s works. This was so clearly non-biblical (and against everything I had been taught) that it commended itself as the explanation for the salient and lengthy lacuna in the clearly orthodox LXX Ps 151 and, of course, the Syriac 151, its faithful daughter.

Once thinking along this track, I wondered just how heterodox the “original” psalm was. I was asked by Paul Lapp, director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, and by Roland de Vaux, director of the École Biblique there, to share my findings in the scroll with the scholarly community of (then) Jordanian Jerusalem. At a meeting in the library of the ASOR (now the Albright Institute) in the late winter of 1962 I presented what was published soon thereafter.³ The reaction was positive. Fr. Jean-Paul Audet was among those present, and it was he who suggested the figure of Orpheus as the explanation for the 11Q verses lacking correspondence in the versions.⁴ I delved straightaway into the question of whether 11QPs 151 did not perhaps provide the missing literary link to the frequent artistic presentations of an Orphic understanding or “resignification” of David. I published Ps 151 making that suggestion.⁵ Jean Magne has

¹ Sanders “Ps 151 in 11QPss.”

² Sanders, *Psalms Scroll*.

³ Sanders, “Scroll of Psalms” and then Sanders, “Ps 151 in 11QPss.”

⁴ See Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 99.

⁵ Sanders, “Ps 151 in 11QPss”; Sanders, *Psalms Scroll*; Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*.

since then provided a sane, clear statement of why one would logically expect such a literary link to appear sometime.⁶

The first reactions to the suggestion were mixed. The first to come to my attention was that of Isaac Rabinowitz.⁷ Upon reading his rebuttal in manuscript form, I decided to let the debate take its course, for in the meantime other responses were quite favorable.⁸ Since then more scholars have tried their hand at reading the text in what each has been confident was the author's intention. Most of them tried to deal with the question of whether there had been a Hebrew recension *Vorlage* to the present LXX and Syriac version. But only two, to my knowledge, have suggested that the 11Q text is corrupt and offered reconstructions of the original.⁹ Magne thinks that the negative particles in 151:3 are later insertions, while Smith thinks all of 151:4 is a later insertion; the latter thinks a full line dropped out of 151:3. Neither of these had appeared when I did a first review of the situation.¹⁰ The two scholars who have studied the script of 11QPs^a the closest in attempting to determine readings in these two verses of Ps 151¹¹ disagree at every crucial point (see the synopsis below), so that it would appear that paleography provides no obviously clear answers.

No one who has written on Ps 151 since the *Nida Festschrift*¹² appeared had apparently read it, for no one has referred to it. Nor have I seen any clear references to the fresh observations I made in 1967.¹³ But then it is very interesting to note that none of those who prefer to read *haqqol* as a genitive has offered a satisfactory explanation of the accusative translations of it in LXX^S, OL, et al. If Sinaiticus can be ignored . . . ! John Strugnell, noting and respecting Sinaiticus, reads *haqqol*, with me, as accusative.¹⁴

Yigael Yadin understood that, like the Temple Scroll,¹⁵ the Psalms Scroll was functionally canonical for the Essenes at Qumran.¹⁶ D. Barthélemy,¹⁷ E. Puech,¹⁸ and G. Wilson,¹⁹ among others also agree.²⁰

I will here simply reaffirm my assessment of Ps 151 as stated in 1967 and 1974, and offer in the manner of 1967 a synopsis of the sixteen scholarly attempts

⁶ Magne, "Orphisme, pythagorisme, essénisme," 533 ff.

⁷ Rabinowitz, "Alleged Orphism."

⁸ See Brownlee, "11Q Counterpart"; Carmignac, "La forme poétique"; Dupont-Sommer, "Le Psaume cli."

⁹ See Magne, "Orphisme, pythagorisme, essénisme"; Smith, "Psalm 151."

¹⁰ In Sanders, "Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) Reviewed."

¹¹ See Magne, "Orphisme, pythagorisme, essénisme," and Cross, "David, Orpheus."

¹² Sanders, "Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) Reviewed."

¹³ Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, over Sanders, "Ps 151 in 11QPs^s" and Sanders, *Psalms Scroll*, especially those in the extensive footnotes in *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 96–97.

¹⁴ Strugnell, "Notes on the Text."

¹⁵ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1:298–300.

¹⁶ See Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, and Sanders, "Cave 11 Surprises."

¹⁷ Barthélemy, "Histoire du texte," 347–51.

¹⁸ Puech, "Fragments du Psaume 122," 547n2.

¹⁹ Wilson, "Editing of the Hebrew Psalter."

²⁰ *Pace* Skehan, "Liturgical Complex"; Skehan, "Jubilees and the Qumran Psalter"; and Homan, "Comparative Study."

at reading Ps 151:3–4 since the *editio princeps*. A translation of the full psalm is offered for the convenience of the reader, followed by the translations that others have made of the two verses (where full translations of them have been provided); and thereafter the specific readings by each scholar of the crucial multivalent words in the two verses. A bibliography on 11QPs^a from its recovery [to 1985] is appended. I wish to express gratitude to three graduate students: Mr. William Yarchin for helping to update the bibliography, Mr. Peter Pettit for collaboration in composing the following, and Mr. Stephen Delamarter for typing the final draft.

Translation of 11QPs 151²¹

A Hallelujah of David the Son of Jesse

1. Smaller was I than my brothers
and the youngest of the sons of my father,
So he made me shepherd of his flock
and ruler over his kids.
2. My hands have made an instrument
and my fingers a lyre;
And (so) have I rendered glory to the Lord,
thought I, within my soul.
3. The mountains do not witness to him,
nor do the hills proclaim;
The trees have cherished my words
and the flock my works.
4. For who can proclaim and who can bespeak
and who can recount the deeds of the Lord?
Everything has God seen,
everything has he heard and he has heeded.
5. He sent his prophet to anoint me,
Samuel to make me great;
My brothers went out to meet him,
handsome of figure and appearance.
6. Though they were tall of stature
and handsome by their hair,
The Lord God chose
them not.
7. But he sent and took me from behind the flock
and anointed me with holy oil,
And he made me leader to his people
and ruler over the sons of his covenant.

²¹ Sanders, "Ps 151 in 11QPs," 75–76.

Other Translations of 11QPs 151:3–4

*Skehan*²²

the mountains cannot witness to Him
 nor the hills relate:
 Neither the boughs of trees, my words,
 nor the flock, my compositions;
 Who indeed can relate, and who can tell,
 and who can recount the works of the Lord?
 Everything, God saw,
 everything He heard – and He gave heed.

*Brownlee*²³

“Mountains do not witness to Him,
 nor do hills proclaim (Him).
 The trees have extolled my words,
 and the flocks my deeds.
 Yet who can proclaim?
 and who can tell?
 And who can recount
 the deeds of the Lord?”
 All this did God observe;
 all this did He hear;
 and He gave ear.

*Carmignac*²⁴

Les montagnes ne sont pas un témoignage pour lui
 et les collines ne sont pas une annonce.
 Les instruments (de musique) ont mis en valeur mes paroles
 et le troupeau mon activité.
 Mais qui annoncera? qui exprimera?
 qui racontera les oeuvres du Maître?

Second Strophe

Elôah a vu le tout,
 Lui, Il a entendu le tout,
 et, Lui, Il a écouté.

*Dupont-Sommer*²⁵

“Les montagnes ne lui rendent-elles pas témoignage?
 Et les collines ne [Le] proclament-elles pas?”

²² Skehan, “Apocryphal Psalm 151,” 409.

²³ Brownlee, “11Q Counterpart,” 380–81.

²⁴ Carmignac, “La forme poétique,” 375.

²⁵ Dupont-Sommer, “Le Psaume cli,” 32.

Les arbres prisèrent mes paroles
et le troupeau, mes poèmes.
Car qui proclamera et qui célébrera
et qui racontera les oeuvres du Seigneur?
L'univers, Eloah le voit:
l'univers, Lui l'entend, et Lui prêté l'oreille.

*Rabinowitz*²⁶

“The mountains will not bear witness for me,
nor the hills;
the trees will not report my words on my behalf,
nor the flocks my deeds;
but O that someone would report,
O that someone would speak about,
O that someone would recount my deeds!”

The Master of the universe saw;
The God of the universe –
He himself heard,
and He himself gave ear.

*Weiss*²⁷

But who can proclaim and who can tell,
and who can recount the works of the Lord of the Universe?
The God of the Universe has seen –
He has heard and he has heeded.

*Carmignac*²⁸

“Les montagnes ne témoigneront pas pour moi
et les collines ne proclameront pas en faveur de moi,
les arbres (ne proclameront pas) mes paroles
et le troupeau mes oeuvres.
Qui est-ce donc qui proclamera,
qui est-ce qui exprimera,
qui est-ce qui racontera mes oeuvres?”

Second Strophe

Le maître de l'univers a vu,
le dieu de l'univers, lui, il a entendu
et, lui, il a prêté l'oreille.

²⁶ Rabinowitz, “Alleged Orphism,” 196.

²⁷ Weiss, *Herut*, and *Massa*, v. 3 with Sanders, “Ps 151 in 11QPss.”

²⁸ Carmignac, “Précisions,” 250–51. See also Carmignac, “Nouvelles précisions.”

*Delcor*²⁹

Nicht können die Berge für mich Zeugnis ablegen noch die Hügel,
 noch die Blätter der Bäume meine Worte verkünden,
 noch die Herde meine Werke.
 Denn wer kann ankündigen,
 wer kann sagen,
 wer kann meine Werke erzählen.
 Der Herr des Universums hat gesehen,
 der Gott des Universums;
 er selbst hat aufgehört,
 er selbst hat hingehört.

*Strugnell*³⁰

The mountains cannot witness to Him,
 nor the hills proclaim about Him;
 (Nor) the trees (proclaim) His words,
 nor the flocks his deeds.
 For who can relate, who can tell
 and who can recount the works of the Lord?
 But God saw all, all He heard,
 and He gave ear.

*Meyer*³¹

Die Berge zeugen für ihn nicht,
 und die Hügel verkündigen [ihn] nicht;
 [Aber] die Bäume preisen meine Worte
 und das Kleinvieh meine Werke.
 Fürwahr, wer verkündet und wer bespricht
 und wer erzählt die Taten des Herrn?
 Alles sieht Gott,
 alles hört er und nimmt er wahr.

*Magne*³²

“Les montagnes [ne] témoignent [pas] sur moi,
 et les collines [ne] rapportent [pas] à mon sujet;
 les arbres <racontent> mes chants,
 et les brebis, mes oeuvres;
 mais qui rapporte,
 et qui chante,

²⁹ Delcor, “Zum Psalter von Qumran,” 18, 20.

³⁰ Strugnell, “Notes on the Text,” 280.

³¹ Meyer, “Die Septuaginta-Fassung,” 165.

³² Magne, “Orphisme, pythagorisme, essénisme,” 544.

et qui raconte les oeuvres du Seigneur?”
Dieu voit tout,
il entend tout:
il écouta.

*van der Woude*³³

“Die Berge legen für mich kein Zeugnis ab,
und die Hügel verkünden mir zugunsten nicht,
(weder) die Bäume meine Worte
noch die Schafe meine Taten.
Wahrlich, wer wird verkünden
und wer wird erwähnen
und wer wird erzählen meine Taten?”
Der Herr des all sah (es),
Der Gott des All, –
Er selbst hörte hin
und Er selbst horchte auf.

*Auffret*³⁴

“Les montagnes n’iront pas témoigner à mon sujet,
et les collines n’iront pas rapporter sur mon compte,
<ni> les arbres mes dits
ou les brebis mes oeuvres.
Qui irait rapporter,
et qui irait dire,
et qui irait raconter mes oeuvres?”
Le Seigneur de l’univers a vu,
le Dieu de l’univers, lui a entendu
lui a prêté l’oreille.

*Cross*³⁵

O that the mountains would bear Him witness,
O that the hills would tell of him,
The trees (recount) his deeds,
And the flocks, His works!
Would that someone tell and speak,
And would that someone recite His works!
The Lord of all saw;
The God of all heard,
And He gave heed.

³³ van der Woude, “Die fünf syrischen Psalmen.” 39–40.

³⁴ Auffret, “Structure littéraire et interprétation du Psaume 151,” 164–65.

³⁵ Cross, “David, Orpheus,” 69.

*Baumgarten*³⁶

The mountains cannot witness to Him
 neither the hills tell about Him
 (nor) the trees His words
 nor the sheep His deeds.
 For who can tell, and who can bespeak,
 and who can relate the deeds of the Lord of All Things?
 God has seen everything, He has heard and He has heeded.

*Starcky*³⁷

les montagnes ne lui portent pas témoignage,
 les collines n'annoncent rien de lui,
 (ni) les arbres ses faits et gestes,
 (ni) les troupeaux ses oeuvres!
 Qui donc annoncera ses oeuvres,
 qui en parlera, qui les racontera?
 Le Seigneur de l'univers a vu,
 le Dieu de l'univers, lui, a écouté,
 et lui, il a prêté l'oreille.

*Smith*³⁸

The mountains do not witness to him,
 Nor do the hills proclaim about him.
 <But I will tell of his deeds;
 (As) my burnt offerings I shall offer thanksgiving;>
 (for) the logs, my words,
 and (for) the sheep, my deeds.
 []
 God saw everything;
 He heard and He heeded.

Synopsis of Crucial Readings

Ps 151:3a (stich 9):

lô: Sanders; Skehan; Brownlee; Carmignac, “La forme poétique”; Dupont-Sommer, “Le Psaume cli”; Weiss; Strugnell; Meyer; Cross; Baumgarten; Starcky; Smith.

lî: Rabinowitz; Carmignac, “Précisions”; Delcor; Magne, “Orphisme, pythagorisme, essénisme”; van der Woude; Auffret.

³⁶ Baumgarten, “*Perek Shirah*,” 575–76.

³⁷ Starcky, “Le Psaume 151,” 9.

³⁸ Smith, “Psalm 151.”

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