

MUSIC IN THE TESTAMENT OF JOB

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“The Testament of Job” (Διαθήκη τοῦ Ἰωβ, henceforth TJ) is one of the Greek-language pseudepigrapha belonging to the same genre as the twelve patriarchal testaments. It has come down to us primarily in three manuscripts (their sigla are given in parentheses): (ME) Messina, San Salvatore 29, fols. 35b-41b; 1307 CE. (Pn) Paris, B.N. gr. 2658, fols. 72a-97a; eleventh century. (Rvat) Rome, Vat. gr. 1238, fols. 340a-349b; thirteenth century.¹

A provisional stemma for the manuscripts is given by Brock.² Translations have been published in German, French, English, and Hebrew.³ It is probable that there was once a Latin version,⁴ but if so it has not survived.

Although the earlier literature ascribes Christian authorship to TJ,⁵ the later tendency is toward a Jewish sectarian origin. The sects that have been proposed are Essenes, Therapeutae and Hassideans. After the appearance of the Qumran documents, the attributions began to be focused in that direction; allusions to

- 1 In addition, Pn, gr. 938 contains an imperfect copy of Pn, gr. 2658. Three Old Church Slavic manuscripts which give a periphrastic version of TJ have been published (Novakovič 1878; Polivka 1891). A Coptic version, unpublished, and Armenian fragments also exist. Pn was published by Brock (1967). The earlier, somewhat faulty, edition is that of M. R. James (1897). The *editio princeps* of TJ is that of A. Mai (1833). It presents the text of Rvat. Kraft (1974) gives a text based on ME and Rvat. No synoptic or fully eclectic edition has yet been published. Peter Nicholas's dissertation on the TJ (Jerusalem, Hebrew University, 1982) was not accessible to me at the time of writing.
- 2 Brock 1967:14. This is included in a full discussion of the manuscripts and their idiosyncrasies, pp. 7-16.
- 3 German – Riessler 1928; this is a translation of James's edition of Pn (see note 1). Mai's edition of Rvat was translated into French by J. P. Migne (1858). A more reliable French translation is that of M. Philonenko (1968) based on Pn. The earliest English translation was made by K. Kohler (1898); this is a flawed translation of Mai's edition of Rvat. Kraft (1974) gives a better one, but it too has some inaccuracies. The Hebrew translation by A. Kahana (1937) is based on James's edition of Pn.
- 4 The *Decretum Gelasianum* 6:4, v. 200, rejects TJ, referring to it as “liber qui appellatur Testamentum Job, apocryphus.” The DG has been dated to the sixth century (and is no longer attributed to Pope Gelasius I); see standard reference literature.
- 5 James 1897: xciv; Thomson 1915; and Meyer 1959.

Merkabah mysticism have also been seen.⁶ There may be traces of Christian editing, however, especially in Pn, which occasionally substitutes *patēr* for *theos*.⁷ The original language may have been Hebrew or Aramaic, but it is more likely that TJ was composed directly in Greek.⁸ The dating of the work is highly controversial, but it may be safely placed between 100 BCE and 100 CE following the consensus of nearly all scholars.⁹

It was on the basis of TJ and its support for popular legend that Job became, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, a patron of music in Holland and Belgium (and, to a lesser extent, in France, Germany, and England), as evidenced in pictorial representations and in mystery plays of the period.¹⁰

The passages of musical interest in TJ are given here for reference in the following discussion.¹¹

Kraft's translation (based on ME and Rvat)

- 14.1 And I used to have six psalms and a ten-stringed lyre.
- 14.2 And I would arise daily after the widows were fed and I would take the lyre and play for them, and they would chant [V: in response].
- 14.3 And by means of the psaltery I would remind them of God so that they might glorify the Lord.
- 14.4 And if my maidservants ever began murmuring, I would take up the psaltery and play for them the payment of recompense.
- 51.1 And after the three had stopped singing hymns, while the Lord was present, as was I Nereos the brother of Job, while the holy angel was present, I was sitting near Job on the couch.
- 51.2 And even I heard the magnificent compositions, as each (sister) noted down things for the other.
- 51.3 And I wrote out the book (of notations for most of the hymns that issued from the three daughters of my brother), so that these things would serve as a safeguard along with those, for these are the magnificent compositions of God.

6 Essenes – Riessler 1928:1133–1134; Therapeutae – Kohler 1898 and Philonenko 1968, and also Spittler 1971; Hassideans – Pfeiffer 1949:70–72; Qumran sect – Wacholder 1972:129–30; Merkabah mystics – see especially Urbach 1967:1–28.

7 See Bousset & Gressman 1926:45; Volz 1934:51. Spittler 1971, concurs.

8 James 1897, Meyer 1959, and Wacholder 1972 support a Hebrew original; for the arguments for Aramaic, see Torrey 1945:140–45, and Fritsch 1962:961. The majority of today's scholars see the original as being Greek, as Philonenko states: "le TJ n'a pu être écrit qu'en grec" (1968:12).

9 For a concise summary of the opinions, see Denis 1970:103; James 1897, and, more recently, Spadafora 1954:413, claim a later date.

10 The complete history of this development is told by Meyer (1954).

11 Chapter and verse divisions follow those of Kraft; the Greek texts have been reconstructed from the apparatuses of Kraft and Brock. I wish to thank Prof. D. Weissert for his invaluable assistance in reconstructing the Greek texts.

- 52.2 And rising immediately, he took a lyre and gave it to his daughter Hemera, and gave a censer to Kassia, and gave a kettle-drum to Amaltheias-Keras – so that they might praise those who had come for his soul.

Philonenko's translation (based on Pn)

- 14.1 J'avais six harpes et une lyre à dix cordes.
 14.2 Je me réveillais chaque jour après le repas des veuves, je prenais la lyre et je jouais pour elles, et elles chantaient.
 14.3 Avec mon instrument, je les faisais se souvenir de Dieu pour leur faire rendre gloire au Seigneur.
 14.4 Et si, parfois, mes servantes murmuraient, je reprenais l'instrument, je chantais le salaire de la rétribution.
 51.1 Après que les trois soeurs eurent cessé de chanter des hymnes, pressé par le Seigneur, moi, Néreus, le frère de Job, pressé aussi par l'Esprit Saint, je m'assis près de Job, sur mon lit.
 51.2 J'entendis les Magnificences que l'une des soeurs expliquait à l'autre.
 51.3 Je couvris un livre entier de la plus grande partie des annotations des hymnes, alors que j'étais à côté des trois filles de mon frère, pour que cela soit à salut, car ce sont les magnificences de Dieu.
 52.2 Il se leva aussitôt, prit une lyre et la donna à sa fille Héméra. A Casia il donna un encensoir et à Corne d'Amalthée il donna un tambourin, en sorte qu'elles bénissent ceux qui venaient pour son âme.
- 14.1 εἶχον δὲ ἕξ ψαλμοὺς καὶ δεκάχορδον κιθάραν
 14.2 Pn/ME καὶ διεγειρόμην τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν μετὰ τὸ τρέφεσθαι τὰς χήρας, καὶ ἐλάμβανον τὴν κιθάραν καὶ ἔψαλλον αὐτοῖς, καὶ αὐταὶ ὕμνον
 14.2 Rvat καὶ διεκρουόμην τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν, καὶ ἀνθύμουν αἱ χῆραι μετὰ τὸ ἐσθίειν αὐτάς
 14.3 καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ψαλτηρίου (Rvat = ψαλτήρος) ἀνεμίμησκον αὐτάς τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα δοξάσωσιν τὸν κύριον
 14.4 Pn καὶ εἴ ποτε διεγόγγυζον αἱ θεράπαιναι μου, ἀνελάμβανον τὸ ψαλτήριον καὶ τὸν μισθὸν τῆς ἀνταποδόσεως ἔψαλλον
 14.4 ME/Rvat καὶ εἴ ποτε ἐγόγγυζον αἱ θεράπαιναι (Rvat = θεράπενές) μου, ἐλάμβανον τὸ ψαλτήριον καὶ τὸν μισθὸν τῆς ἀνταποδόσεως ἔψαλλον αὐταῖς
 51.1 Pn/ME μετὰ δὲ τὸ παύσασθαι τὰς τρεῖς ὕμνολογούσας, ἐπικειμένου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἐμοῦ Νηρείου (ME = Νίρεως) ἀδελφοῦ ὄντος τοῦ Ἰωβ, ἐπικειμένου δὲ καὶ (ME – om.) τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (ME = ἀγγέλου), ἐκαθεζόμεν πλησίον τοῦ Ἰωβ ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης μου
 51.1 Rvat μετὰ δὲ τὸ παύσασθαι τὰς τρεῖς ὕμνολογούσας, ἐγὼ Νηρεὸς ὁ ἀδελφὸς Ἰωβ ἐκαθεζόμεν πλησίον τοῦ Ἰωβ κειμένου αὐτοῦ
 51.2 Pn/ME καὶ (Pn – om.) ἤκουσα ἐγὼ (ME = κάγῳ) τὰ μεγαλεῖα μιᾶς ὑποσημειουμένης τῇ μιᾷ
 51.2 Rvat καὶ ἤκουσα τὰ μεγαλεῖα τῶν τριῶν θυγατέρων τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου μιᾶς ὑποσημειμένης (sic!) τῇ μιᾷ
 51.3 Pn καὶ ἀνεγραψάμην τὸ βιβλίον ὄλον πλείστον σημειώσεων τῶν ὕμνων παρὰ τῶν τριῶν θυγατέρων τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου, σωτήριον ταῦτα εἶν(αι), ὅτι ταῦτά ἐστιν τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ

51.3 ME	καὶ ἀνεγραψάμην τὸ βιβλίον σωτήριον εἶναι ταῦτα μετὰ τοῦτον ὅτι ταῦτά ἐστιν τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ
51.3 Rvat	καὶ ἀνεγραψάμην τὸ βιβλίον τοῦτο πλὴν τῶν ὕμνων καὶ τῶν σημείων τοῦ ῥήματος, ὅτι ταῦτά ἐστιν τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ
52.2	καὶ εὐθέως ἀναστὰς ἔλαβεν κιθάραν καὶ ἔδωκεν τῇ θυγατρὶ αὐτοῦ Ἡμέρα. τῇ δὲ Κασσία (Pn = Κασία) ἔδωκεν θυμιατήριον, τῇ δὲ Ἀμαλθείας Κέρας ἔδωκεν τύμπανον, ὅπως εὐλογήσωσιν τοὺς ἐλθόντας ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ (Rvat – add. ἀγίους ἀγγέλους)

A collation of the names of musical instruments, along with the Hebrew words in the Book of Job for which the Septuagint uses the same Greek terms, is given in the following table, together with the three modern translators' choices.¹²

To these may be added two problematic terms.

1) Kassia's *thymiatērion* (52.2) is indubitably a censer, as all translators agree. But the present context places it between two musical instruments, the *kithara* given to Hemera and the *tympanon* assigned to Amaltheias-Keras. If indeed the *thymiatērion* had some musical use, as might be construed, then one is led to an association with paraphernalia of the Temple service which also seem to play a dual role, their acoustic properties being mentioned in the sources or otherwise hinted at along with their primary use in connection with ashes, incense, and the like. The *magrefah* (rake) of the altar comes to mind here (*Tamid* 2:1, 3:8, 5:6); but its later exegetical conflation with the Byzantine organ cannot be brought into the present argument.¹³ The frequent appearance of a sort of short-handled incense shovel, together with the shofar (but also the menorah, *lûlav* and *etrôg*) in synagogue art of a slightly later period – from the fourth century CE on – provides another provocative datum. But all these are not in themselves proof of anything, and one must await further contemporaneous evidence.

2) A curious misunderstanding on the part of the author of the Slavic adaptation of TJ led him to take *keras* (52.2 and elsewhere) as an independent word (meaning “horn”) rather than as a part of the name of Job's third daughter Amaltheias-Keras (Hebrew: *qeren hap-pûk*); thus he places in the hands of “Amaltheias” a horn along with a tambourine (Brock 1967:11).

The other names of instruments present few problems.

The *kithara*'s appearance, rather than that of the smaller *lyra*, may be connected with the urban atmosphere of TJ and Job's (self-)portrait therein as a

12 Most of them are taken from the respective standard translations of the Bible (Riessler's – from Luther). Still, it is necessary to emphasize that they can be used neither for illumination nor for support.

13 In spite of past efforts of musicologists to identify the (mishnaic) *magrefah* with some musical instrument (usually an organ), it is now clear that its only “musical” use was a signal. See Bayer 1972.

		LXX – Job	Philonenko (1968)
14.1	φαλμός	עוגב	harpe
14.1	δεκάχορδος κιθάρα		lyre à dix cordes
14.2/52.2	κιθάρα	כנור , נגינה	lyre
14.3	ψαλτήριον (Ω: ψαλτήρ)	(!) תה	instrument
14.4	ψαλτήριον		instrument
52.2	τύμπανον		tambourin

	Kraft (1974)	Riessler (1928)
14.1	psalm	Harfe
14.1	ten-stringed lyre	Zither mit zehn Saiten
14.2/52.2	lyre	Zither
14.3	psaltery	Saitenspiel
14.4	psaltery	Harfe
52.2	kettle-drum	Pauke

“gentleman farmer”; the *dekachordos kithara* is not a rendition of the *nevel ‘asōr* of the Psalms, which the Septuagint translates as *dekachordon psaltērion*.

But the text of 14.1 speaks of six *psalmoi*. The number six here is intriguing: one might rather expect a symbolic number such as three or seven. Yet the number six has its allegorical and symbolical connotations as well. One of the Septuagint’s emendations to the Bible is in Genesis 2:2, where the Massoretic “*vāyekaḷ elohim bay-yōm haš-ševvîi*” is changed to have the labors of creation cease on the *sixth* day, instead of the seventh, thus emphasizing six as the number of days of the Creation. The Pythagorean view of six as the first, or smallest, perfect number (equal to the sum of its divisors) may also be cited. While Philo tells us that the Therapeutae revered the numbers seven, 49 (or 7×7), and 50 – not six,¹⁴ Macrobius hands on the identification of six with the number of musical intervals, and he makes a point of dividing seven into six-plus-one.¹⁵

A more pertinent reference to six is, it seems to me, that of the specification of the Temple instrumentarium in *Mishna ‘Araḳîn* 2:3: “... never less than two *nevalim* nor more than six.” All of Chapter 4 of TJ is contained within a section which describes the piety and former wealth of Job; it may be that he is telling us

14 Philo *VitCont*: 65.

15 Macrobius *SC*, I:6:12-17 and II:1:14-20.

there that he owned a large number of instruments of the *nevel* type. The number six would, by this reading, be metaphorical, meaning something like “as many as a man could possible use or want.”

This interpretation is not without its difficulties. The translation of *nevel* by *psalmos* is not attested in the Septuagint, and the supposition that the author of TJ was familiar with the tradition expressed in the Mishna requires proof. The only use of the word *nevel* in the biblical Book of Job is somewhat obscure, but seems to refer to *nevel* as vessel, container.¹⁶ A more conservative view would take *psalmos* to be a generic term for plucked instruments and read 14.1 as “six [small] plucked instruments [of various kinds?], in addition to one [large] ten-stringed *kithara*.”

The Rvat text of 14.2 uses the word *anthymnoun* where Pn and ME have *hymnoun* – “they [fem.] would chant in response” instead of the simple “they would chant.”¹⁷ That is, Rvat envisions a kind of responsorial singing (not ruled out by the other two mss.), with the widows of the city singing hymns after their repast in answer to Job’s playing on the *kithara*: a charming picture of charity and piety.¹⁸

The most intriguing passage is that of 51.2-3. Almost certainly, what we have here is a description of the acts of musical notation, the second of which, in 51.3, implies notating by ear.¹⁹ The stated purpose – that of preservation or healing – is to be understood in a context of esoteric mysticism, but the act itself can be interpreted in purely musical terms.²⁰ Similar, only slightly less explicit, descriptions of writing from dictation are found in the apocalyptic Slavonic (Secrets of)

16 Job 38:37 “*nevalim* of the heavens.” On the *nevel* see Bayer 1968 (Septuagint discussed p. 110 ff., Mishna p. 125 ff.)

17 Lampe *Lex*, lists *antipsallō* as “sing in response,” citing the fourth-century Basilios (St. Basil the Great). Basilios is also one of his sources for *antiphthengomai* “respond antiphonally.” *ant(h)ymneō* is, according to Lampe, found only in TJ.

18 Job’s treatment of widows in TJ harks back to Job 29:13. Compare Clement *Paid*, II:4 on the responsorial psalmody of Alexandrian Jewry. Cf. also Philo *VitCont*: 83-84, on the singing of the Therapeutae.

19 Much hinges on the meanings given to the words *hyposēmeioumenēs* (51.2 Pn, ME, with an impossible reading in Rvat) and *sēmeiōseōn* (51.3 Pn). The general indication is one of tachygraphy, but the context here will modify the meaning, delimiting it to notation.

20 The preceding section of TJ (48-50) has Job’s three daughters chanting celestial hymns while under divine influence, occasioned by their girding magic belts. “Musical glossolalia” might be thought of. The literature on glossolalia is extensive and ongoing. For early Christianity (centering on 1 Corinthians), see the *Elenchus Bibliographicus Biblicus*. Studies of glossolalia in contemporary societies, Christian and others, can be found in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, virtually in every volume of the last five years. A link between glossolalia and the Alleluia-Jubilus has been proposed by Avenary (1978); a possible connection with our subject certainly deserves to be explored.

Enoch 22-23: "Vreveil (Uriel?) explained this to me during thirty days and thirty nights, and his mouth did not cease from speaking. And I, I did not rest during thirty days and thirty nights, writing down all the signs."²¹ We also have IV Esdras 14:42: "Altissimus autem dedit intellectum quinque uiris, et scripserunt quae dicebantur ex successione notis quas non sciebant"; but these passages seem to have nothing to do with musical notation. The text of TJ is quite realistic here (as it is throughout!), and we can only wish that the notation had survived.²²

TJ has, of course, close affinities with the biblical Book of Job; to be more precise, with the primitive text of the Septuagint version of the Book of Job.²³ It probably owes something to the Targum as well, and may be linked with Aristeas.²⁴ Philonenko's convincing arguments for reading TJ as a sacred drama (Philonenko 1968:13-16), however, take us beyond the realm of textual criticism and into a visual representation of the characters (Job, the widows, Job's three daughters, his brother Nereos), the "stage props" (musical instruments, house furnishings), and the events (responsorial chanting, glossolalia, instrumental playing, notating). The picture that emerges is one of a domestic milieu in which musical activity was the norm, and musical competence was expected – a milieu which is, to be sure, not foreign to Hellenistic times, but which finds little support in Jewish sources outside of TJ.

A new translation of TJ has just reached me, too late to be included in the discussion above: Berndt Schaller: *Das Testament Hiobs* (= Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit III/3), Mohn, 1979. Briefly, these are the relevant points mentioned in Schaller's translation and the notes thereto: 1) His translations of the names of instruments mentioned in TJ are, in the order listed in Table 1, *Harfe, zehnsaitige Laute, Laute, Harfe, Harfe, Pauke*. He equates φαλμός with the biblical *ugav* (p. 336, fn.). 2) As to the censer etc. of 52.3-4, he states (p. 371, fn.): "Alle drei Geräte sind kultischer Natur," citing biblical and apocryphal references (Ps. 149, 3; Ps. 150, 3f.; Ez. 8, 11; Apc. 5, 8 and 8, 3ff.; ApcMos. 33, 38). But he adds that "Pauke und Harfe auch Zeichen enthusiastischen Geistes," citing I Sam. 10, 5 and II Sam. 6, 5. 3) 51.4 is given as "Und ich schrieb das Buch voll mit sehr vielen Deutungen der Lieder, die ich vernahm von den Töchtern meines Bruders" (p. 371).

I have not yet been able to examine an even newer translation, James H. Charlesworth, ed.: *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol. I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, New York, 1983.

21 Vaillant, *SecHen*: 13.

22 On the general tone of this section, compare Scholem 1960:20-30.

23 The Septuagint Job presents a complex text, which underwent at least one major redaction; but its primitive form can – within limits – be discerned.

24 Delcor 1968:63-66. Cf. also Philonenko 1968:11-12.

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