

# The Hebrew and Syriac versions of Psalm 154

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## Abstract

The Hebrew version from Qumran and the Syriac apocryphal Psalm 155 are compared to discern the relationship between the different textual traditions. For the comparison, Sanders's edition of the text from Qumran and Baars's critical edition of the Syriac are used. There are more than thirty variants that are important for defining the relationship between the different texts. In the case of more than half of these variants, all the Syriac manuscripts agree against the Hebrew. All the Syriac texts are from the same broad tradition. The important Syriac manuscript 12t4 agrees with the Hebrew in some instances against the Syriac, but agrees in other instances with the other Syriac manuscripts against the Hebrew. The Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Syriac tradition differs from the Hebrew text from Qumran in some important aspects.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The existence of five Syriac apocryphal psalms was mentioned in 1759 (cf. Baars 1972:ii). The study of Martin Noth (1930) remains an important landmark in the history of research on these psalms. It remained the standard work on these psalms until the publication of two major works in 1965 and 1972. In 1965 Sanders's critical edition of 11QPs<sup>a</sup> was published (Sanders 1965). This psalms scroll from Qumran Cave 11 contains a number of canonical psalms, starting with Psalm 101. It also contains a number of apocryphal psalms, including Psalm 151, known from the Septuagint and from the Syriac. Hebrew versions of two of the other Syriac apocryphal psalms are also included in this scroll. These are the psalms known as numbers 2 and 3 of the Syriac psalms, also referred to as Psalms 154 and 155 in the Syriac manuscript 12t4. The second major work is Baars's critical edition of the five Syriac apocryphal psalms (Baars 1972). For this edition he used the five manuscripts used by Noth in his edition, as well as five manuscripts that were not available to Noth.

Sanders and Baars discuss the history of the interpretation of these psalms prior to their publications. A review of research on 11QPs<sup>a</sup> is given by Wilson (1985), referring to canonicity, authority and priority. The latest study dealing with 11QPs<sup>a</sup> as a whole that I had at my disposal is that of Wacholder (1988). Schuller (1986:8)

distinguishes two kinds of theories on the nature of 11QPs<sup>a</sup>. It is regarded by some scholars as a legitimate alternative psalter having canonical status at Qumran (cf. Sanders 1974:95) and by others as a liturgical collection without canonical status (cf. Goshen-Gottstein 1966:31-32).

This article treats Psalm 154 (i.e. Syriac apocryphal Psalm II), focusing on the relationship between the different Syriac manuscripts and their relationship to the Hebrew text from Qumran. It is generally accepted that the psalm dates from the late Persian or early Hellenistic period (cf. Wacholder 1988:68, Van der Woude 1974:35, Schuller, 1986:8-9 and Goshen-Gottstein, 1966:32n,45). Hurvitz (1965:231-232,n.13) finds evidence of late Hebrew in this psalm. The psalm is sometimes called proto-Essene or ḥasidic (cf. Flusser 1984:560).

## 2. THE SYRIAC MANUSCRIPTS

Baars gives a comprehensive description of the ten manuscripts used for his edition (1972:ii-vii, cf. also Van der Woude 1974:31-34). The text used as basis for his edition is 12t4, a twelfth-century manuscript containing the apocryphal psalms at the end of the canonical psalms and numbered from 151 to 155. He had just one other biblical manuscript with these psalms, viz. 19d1. In this nineteenth-century manuscript, the five apocryphal psalms appear at the end of the prophetic books (cf. Baars 1972:iv). All the other manuscripts containing these psalms are manuscripts of a work of Elias of al-Anbar. It is generally accepted that 12t4 has the most faithful Syriac version of the five psalms (cf. Sanders 1965:53). Even before the discovery of the scroll from Qumran, Noth (1930:11) accepted that the five Syriac psalms were related to Hebrew originals, although he proposed a Greek intermediary stage between the Hebrew and the Syriac. He also gave a retroversion of the psalms in Hebrew.

The different editions of the Syriac psalms made use of the following Syriac manuscripts (cf. Baars 1972:ii-vi):

- \* Wright's edition of 1887 used the manuscripts referred to by Baars as 17E1 and 18E2.
- \* Noth used these two manuscripts, as well as 14E1, 17E2 and 19E1.
- \* In addition to the five manuscripts used by Noth, Baars used 12t4, 19d1, 17E3, 18E1 and 19E2.

The order of the psalms in 12t4 differs from that in all the other manuscripts. In 12t4 the psalms are numbered from 151-155, with Psalm 151 number I of the other manuscripts, 152 number IV, 153 number V, 154 number II and 155 number III. As

stated above, only 12t4 and 19d1 are biblical manuscripts. It is, however, clear from the order of the psalms and the nature of the variants in 19d1 that they come from the same tradition as the psalms in the manuscripts of Elias (cf. Baars 1972:iv). In many instances 12t4 differs from the other manuscripts. In some of these cases marginal notes were supplied to 12t4, often agreeing with the text of the other manuscripts. These marginal notes are referred to by Baars as 12t4<sup>m</sup>.

Van der Woude (1974:34) proposes that the Syriac translation of these psalms can be traced to a Hebrew manuscript among the manuscripts referred to by the Patriarch Timothy I. According to him these manuscripts were found in the vicinity of Jericho in the year 786. Strugnell (1966:258) translated some portions of this letter, containing references to more than 200 psalms of David.

## 3. STRUGNELL'S DISCUSSION OF PSALM 154

In 1966 Strugnell published a discussion of the three Syriac apocryphal psalms with counterparts in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>. His discussion of Psalm 154 remains important (Strugnell 1966:272-275), even though it antedated the publication of the critical text by Baars.

Strugnell accepts, *contra* Noth, that the Syriac text was translated directly from Hebrew, without a Greek intermediary stage (1966:272). He points out that the Hebrew text of Psalm 154 refers frequently to wisdom and that transmitters of the Syriac text misunderstood these references, as can be deduced from the later pointing of the Syriac text. He thinks that the Syriac translator did understand the references. This can be deduced from the instances where the consonantal text of the Syriac could distinguish between masculine and feminine suffixes. Confusion arose in those instances where the consonantal text does not distinguish between the masculine and feminine suffixes and the later pointing opted for masculine forms. He has seven examples of this (1966:272-273).

Strugnell also points out a number of instances where the Syriac is dubious and where the Hebrew can be used to determine the reading of the *Vorlage* and corruptions in the Syriac. This is especially true of the manuscript later called 12t4 by Baars. This text has readings which, according to Strugnell, should be preferred to certain readings accepted by Noth. This manuscript can be used to deduce what corruptions developed during the transmission in Syriac. Strugnell has three examples of this (1966:273).

Strugnell does not attempt to classify the variants discussed by him (as he did in the case of Psalm 155). His short discussion of some major issues is followed by a list of variants, with a few comments in some instances, which he regards as important for a text-critical apparatus to the Hebrew. In this list he treats twenty-one variants

(1966:274-275).

Strugnell's discussion has a few weaknesses. He does not always state which manuscripts contain certain variants. He knew of some of the variants contained in 12t4, but not of all of them, nor of the variants contained in the marginal readings of 12t4. His discussion of the Syriac variants can thus be supplemented by new information. He considered the Syriac variants, mainly with an eye to an apparatus for the Hebrew, whereas I am interested in the relationship between the different Syriac manuscripts. His article was written before the publication of the critical text of the Syriac psalm by Baars. In the next section the Syriac variants, as well as the variants between the Syriac and the Hebrew, are discussed. As regards the Hebrew, the discussion is restricted to those parts of the text from Qumran that can be read with a fair amount of certainty, ignoring emendations suggested by scholars, such as the proposals of Skehan (1976:156-157) regarding verses 2, 18 and 20.

#### 4. THE VARIANTS

The variants in the psalm can be classified as follows:

- \* Variants where the Hebrew is lacking and 12t4 differs from the other Syriac manuscripts, without a marginal note in 12t4.
- \* Variants where the Hebrew is lacking and 12t4 differs from the other Syriac manuscripts and 12t4<sup>mg</sup> or <sup>c</sup>.
- \* Variants where all the Syriac manuscripts agree against the Hebrew.
- \* Variants where the Hebrew and Syriac differ, but where 12t4 differs from the other Syriac variants, without a marginal note.
- \* Variants where the Hebrew and Syriac differ, but with a note in 12t4 agreeing with the Hebrew.
- \* Variants where 12t4 differs from the other Syriac manuscripts, 12t4<sup>mg</sup> and the Hebrew.
- \* Variants where the Hebrew and 12t4 agree against the other Syriac manuscripts, without a marginal note.
- \* Apparent variants, due to pointing, interpretation of the consonantal text or translation.
- \* Variants where the Hebrew and 12t4 agree against the other Syriac manuscripts, with another variant in 12t4<sup>mg</sup>.
- \* Variants in one or a few manuscripts that are not of importance for the

relationship of the texts.

The variants will be discussed in these groups. In Baars' edition 12t4 is the basic text. The Syriac variants will be defined in comparison to 12t4. In the Hebrew 1-3a and 17b-20 have been damaged beyond recognition.

##### 4.1 Variants where the Hebrew is lacking and 12t4 differs from the other Syriac manuscripts, without a marginal note in 12t4

The number given by 12t4 to this psalm (154) does not appear in another manuscript.

The heading differs in the different Syriac manuscripts. 12t4 has the following heading: *šlwth dhzqy' kd hdyryn hww lh 'twry' wš'l hw' mn 'lh' ghyt' dmnhwn. 'krnn dnsb e'm' mpsnwt' mn kwryš dnpnwn l'rhwn wš'lyn mn 'lh' dnštml' swkyhwn* - "Prayer of Hezekiah when the Assyrians surrounded him and he asked God for deliverance from them. When the people received permission from Cyrus to return to their land". All the other Syriac manuscripts have: *šlwth dhzqy' kd hdyryn lh b'ldbb'* - "Prayer of Hezekiah when enemies surrounded him". Skehan (1976:156) points out that there is confusion regarding the headings of this psalm and Psalm 155 in the manuscripts. The double heading of Psalm 154 combines the headings of Psalms 85 and 86 in the East-Syriac tradition. He believes that the Hezekiah heading belongs to Psalm 155 and the one concerning the exile to Psalm 154. The fact that the Syriac manuscripts (except 12t4) switched them, with the Hezekiah heading at 154 and the exilic one at 155, he regards as utter nonsense.

In verse 20 12t4 has *l'myn*, with the variant *l'mn* in 19d1, 14E1<sup>1</sup>(?), 17E1-3, 18E1 and 2 and 19E1. 19E2 agrees with 12t4 in this instance.

##### 4.2 Variants where the Hebrew is lacking and 12t4 differs from the other Syriac manuscripts and 12t4<sup>mg</sup> or <sup>c</sup>

At the beginning of verse 2, 12t4<sup>c</sup> and all the other manuscripts omit *w* before *wbswg'*.

Regarding verse 18, Strugnell (1966:275) was unaware of the variants in 12t4 and 12t4<sup>c</sup>. 12t4 has *bryk*, against the *brykw* of the other Syriac manuscripts. 12t4<sup>c</sup> has *bryk hw*. The Hebrew is damaged. Sanders (1965:64) proposes [*brkw t*] *yhw*, while Strugnell proposes *brwk*, agreeing unwittingly with 12t4.

In verse 20, 12t4<sup>c</sup> and all the other Syriac manuscripts omit *l'm*.

#### 4.3 Variants where all the Syriac manuscripts agree against the Hebrew

All the Syriac manuscripts have *npškw* in verse 3 against the Hebrew plural. Strugnell (1966:274) says that it appears as if the Hebrew has a singular orthographically, but morphologically a plural and that either a singular or plural would be acceptable Hebrew.

In verse 4 all the Syriac manuscripts have *'tknšw 'khd'*, against the *hḥbyrw y<d* of the Hebrew. Strugnell (1966:274) says that the Syriac presupposes an adverbial *yḥd* in the Hebrew. The Hebrew must be a *Hiḥēl* imperative. Sanders (1965:66) refers to Job 16:4, where the *Hiḥēl* of a verb *hbr* occurs. That verb is regarded as being from a different root from the one used here (cf. Koehler & Baumgartner 1958:273). It is possible that the *Vorlage* of the Syriac had a form *hḥbrw*, which can be taken as a *Niḥēl* (cf. Jastrow 1950:421). That would fit the context of the Hebrew and would explain the origin of the Syriac.

In verse 5 the Hebrew has *lhwdy<sup>c</sup>* and the Syriac *dntyd<sup>c</sup>*. Strugnell (1966:274) asks whether the Syriac does not point to a Hebrew *Niḥēl*, but prefers 11QPs<sup>a</sup>'s *Hiḥēl*. The probability of a *Niḥēl* in the *Vorlage* of the Syriac should be seriously considered, taking into account the remark regarding the previous variant.

There is no counterpart to the Hebrew *rwb* in verse 6. Strugnell (1966:274) thinks that the omission may be due to haplography in the Hebrew *lspr rb m<sup>c</sup>syw*.

In verse 7 Strugnell (1966:274) refers to the Hebrew *gdwtw* and the Syriac *išbḥth*, adding just a question mark. The Syriac could be a free translation of the Hebrew (cf. Sanders, 1965:66), or it could point to a different *Vorlage*, perhaps with *tp'rt*.

In verse 7 all the Syriac manuscripts, including 12t4 have *w* at the beginning of the second half of the verse.

In verse 9 the Hebrew has *wtp'rtw* and the Syriac *wšwbhrh*. Strugnell (1966:274) regards the latter as a corruption of the Syriac *wšwbḥh*. This is possible, but *šwbhr'* fits the context.

The three comparisons in verse 11 begin with *w* in the Syriac.

In verse 11 and 12 the Hebrew has *šdyqym ... šdyqym ... ḥsydym* and the Syriac *zdyq' ... k'n' ... k'n'* (cf. Strugnell, 1966:275).

In verse 12 the Hebrew has *wmqhl*. The Syriac has *wmn ql'*, corresponding to a Hebrew *wmq(w)l*. Strugnell (1966:275) mentions the possibility that it could be an error due to a phonetic Hebrew writing.

Strugnell regards both the Hebrew and Syriac at the beginning of verse 13 as unsatisfactory (1966:273-274). He proposes to emend the Hebrew to *el 'wklmh bšbh*

*n'mrh*. The relationship of the Syriac to the Hebrew of Qumran is unclear. There are no variants in the Syriac at the beginning of the verse, pointing to a common *Vorlage*. Skehan (1976:156-157) rejects an emendation of the Hebrew. He regards (1976:156 n.46) the Syriac *bšrr'* in verse 13 as a translation of a defective *n'mrh*. If this is accepted, the Syriac reading can be traced to a mistake in its Hebrew *Vorlage*.

Strugnell (1966:275) points out the difference between the Hebrew plural *'mryhmh* and the Syriac singular *m'mrhwn* and judges that a *yôd* must have been lost during the Syriac transmission. For a Hebrew *Vorlage* with a singular, at least two letters had to change to get a Hebrew *'mrm*. This must have happened very early during the Syriac transmission for all the manuscripts to reflect this change. A difference in *Vorlage* must be kept in mind.

In verse 16 the Hebrew again has a plural against the Syriac singular: *'ynh dmry'* versus *'yny yhwḥ* (cf. Strugnell, 1966:275). Sanders (1965:67) thinks that the Hebrew must be emended to the singular, following the Syriac, or that the *ḥūreq* at the end of *'yny* must be regarded as a *ḥūreq compaginis*. This proposal is related to the fact that the verb is in the singular in both the Hebrew and the Syriac. To the possibility of a *ḥūreq compaginis* Strugnell adds the possibility of dittography in the source of 11QPs<sup>a</sup>.

In verse 17 the Hebrew has *ḥsdw mn* and the Syriac reflects a tradition with the *w* shifted to the beginning of *mn* (Strugnell, 1966:275).

The Syriac has a *w* at the beginning of verse 13 and at the beginning of the second half of verses 14 and 15.

Strugnell (1966:274 n.25) points out the translation of *ygd* in verse 17 with an imperfect and of *ygy* with a participle, adding that this impedes the reconstruction of the Hebrew at the end of the psalm.

#### 4.4 Variants where the Hebrew and Syriac differ, but where 12t4 differs from the other Syriac variants, without a marginal note

Strugnell (1966:274) points out the variant between the Syriac and the Hebrew in verse 4. The Hebrew has *lhwdy<sup>c</sup> yš<sup>c</sup>w ... lhwdy<sup>c</sup> c<sup>c</sup>wzw* and the Syriac *lmwd<sup>c</sup>w c<sup>c</sup>wšnw ... lmḥwyw pwrqnh*. The Syriac switched the two objects, according to Strugnell. He adds that the second *c<sup>c</sup>wšnw* developed from a later marginal note that reflected the same sequence of objects as the Hebrew. He asks whether *lmḥwyw* in the Syriac perhaps indicated *lhgyd* instead of a second *lhwdy<sup>c</sup>* in the Hebrew. What Strugnell did not realize is that 12t4 does not have the second *c<sup>c</sup>wšnh*. It does, however, agree with the other Syriac manuscripts with regard to the order of the objects.

Skehan (1976:156) refers to a difference between the Hebrew and Syriac that Strugnell does not refer to. He says that 12t4's *mbdryn* in verse 8 corresponds to the Hebrew *hndhym* and that the other Syriac manuscripts have *mb<sup>c</sup>dyn*, which he regards as a corruption. It is, however, possible to regard the reading of the other Syriac manuscripts as a different but valid translation of the same Hebrew *Vorlage*, influenced perhaps by the word used in parallelism to it in the first half of the verse.

#### 4.5 Variants where the Hebrew and Syriac differ, but with a note in 12t4 agreeing with the Hebrew

In verse 8 the Hebrew has *mpthyh ... mmbw'yh* and the Syriac *mn m<sup>c</sup>lnyh ... mn tr<sup>c</sup>yh*, switching the two nouns (cf. Strugnell, 1966:274). In his apparatus, Baars mentions signs that were placed in the text of 12t4 seemingly indicating that the two words should be transposed. This points to a tradition knowing of another order for the two words.

#### 4.6 Variants where 12t4 differs from the other Syriac manuscripts, 12t4<sup>mg</sup> and the Hebrew

There are important variants regarding the words *mpthyh* and *mbw'yh* in the Hebrew in verse 8. 12t4 differs from all the other Syriac manuscripts. 12t4<sup>mg</sup> agrees with the other Syriac manuscripts. Strugnell (1966:272-273) used the reading of the other Syriac manuscripts (and 12t4<sup>mg</sup>) as proof for his argument that the Syriac translator knew that the original psalm had several references to wisdom, references that were lost when the pointing was added at some later stage. In the case of these two words he used the form of the pronominal suffixes as part of his argument. The Syriac *m<sup>c</sup>lnyh* and *tr<sup>c</sup>yh* agree with the Hebrew in being in the plural with third person feminine suffixes. In 12t4, however, the two words are in the singular (*m<sup>c</sup>lnh* and *tr<sup>c</sup>h*), with the suffixes pointed as masculine. These are variants where the other Syriac manuscripts and 12t4<sup>mg</sup> agree with the Hebrew against 12t4. It is usually the case that 12t4 agrees with the Hebrew against the other manuscripts. It is true that 12t4's consonants can be pointed to be read as feminine suffixes. Strugnell's view that the translator could have known about the references to wisdom is still tenable. The singular of the nouns in 12t4 remains an important variant.

In verse 10, 12t4 has *hw* in the phrase *'yk hw d ...*, against *'yk d ...* in the other Syriac manuscripts and 12t4<sup>mg</sup>. The Hebrew has *k*, followed by a participle. This variant could reflect an adaptation to the normal Syriac construction, without implying a different *Vorlage*.

In verse 13, 12t4 has *mštyhwn*, against the *bšwtpwt'* of the other Syriac manuscripts and 12t4<sup>mg</sup>. The reading of 12t4 is very problematic in the context, while the variant in the other manuscripts is closer to the Hebrew.

#### 4.7 Variants where the Hebrew and 12t4 agree against the other Syriac manuscripts, without a marginal note

Strugnell (1966:274) asked, with reference to the Hebrew *elywn* and the Syriac *ely* in verse 9, whether the Syriac should not be regarded as a corruption, seeing that *ely* appears in verses 3, 10 and 14. He was unaware that *ely* was the reading of 12t4 (cf. Skehan, 1976:156). There is no marginal note in 12t4 in this instance.

In verse 11 Strugnell (1966:275) drew attention to another variant in the Syriac. The Hebrew has *myd* and the Syriac *mn ydy*. He was again unaware of the variant in 12t4 agreeing with the Hebrew (*yd' dzdyq'*). There is again no marginal note in 12t4.

In verse 11, 12t4 has *dyqd'*, against all the other Syriac manuscripts' *dyqdn'*. The Hebrew has *ewlwt. yqd'* is used, for example, in Genesis 8:31 as a translation of *elh* (cf. Brockelmann, 1928:306). It is an acceptable translation for the Hebrew *ewlwt. yqdn'* is used more to denote a fire. Payne-Smith (1976:195) uses as translation equivalents **burning, fire, conflagration; firing, fuel; and heat, inflammation**. Brockelmann (1928:306) has *incendium* in addition to *holocaustum*. The latter is also used for *yqd'*. Both can therefore be traced to the same Hebrew, but 12t4's reading is preferable.

In verse 12 12t4 has *tr<sup>c</sup>y*, agreeing with the Hebrew. The other Syriac manuscripts have the defective *tr<sup>c</sup>yky*. Strugnell does not include this variant in his apparatus, but regards it as an error during the Syriac transmission, probably due to dittography (1966:273). 12t4<sup>mg</sup> does not have this defective reading either.

At the end of verse 12, 12t4 has *mrtynwth*, against the *mrtynwt'* of all the other Syriac manuscripts. There is no marginal note in 12t4. The Hebrew has the noun with the third person singular feminine suffix (*zmrth*). Strugnell (1966:273) again thinks that the suffix of 12t4 was originally feminine, as in the Hebrew, and that the pointing as a masculine suffix in 12t4 must be regarded as defective.

#### 4.8 A variant where the Hebrew and 12t4 agree against the other Syriac manuscripts, with another variant in 12t4<sup>mg</sup>

In verse 14 Strugnell (1966:275) refers to a variant in the Syriac, where 12t4 has, according to him, a more faithful rendering of the original. The Hebrew has *syhtm*,

12t4 *šw<sup>c</sup>ythwn*, and the other Syriac manuscripts *škynthwn*. Baars regards the latter as an error. Strugnell was unaware of the reading of 12t4<sup>mg</sup>. It has *šk<sup>h</sup>thwn*, with *seyame*. This reading has *h*, against the *yn* of the other Syriac manuscripts. It is quite possible to read *h* mistakenly as a *yn* in a handwritten manuscript. This makes it possible that 12t4<sup>mg</sup> preserved the reading that can be regarded as the original of the nonsensical reading of the other manuscripts. It differs from the reading of 12t4, but preserves another rendering of the Hebrew. The readings of 12t4 and 12t4<sup>mg</sup> are in the plural, against the singular of the Hebrew. The parallel word in the second half of the verse is plural in the Hebrew, but singular in the Syriac.

#### 4.9 Apparent variants, due to pointing, interpretation of the consonantal text or translation

In verse 10 the Syriac has *nštb'bh* and the Hebrew *yršh*. The latter could be *Qal* or *Niḫ<sup>c</sup>al*. Strugnell (1966:274) wants to take the Hebrew as a *Niḫ<sup>c</sup>al* and regards that as equalling the Syriac *nštb'bh* through standard transposition into the active.

In verse 10 the Hebrew has *mgyš* and the Syriac *mqr̄b* (cf. Strugnell 1966:275). This could simply be a matter of translation technique, with the Syriac translator using the normal technical term. In both the Hebrew and Syriac in the next verse the same stem is used as in the Syriac in verse 10, which can be a reason for the Syriac translator using the same term in this verse. Strugnell (1966:275) regards it as possible that *mqr̄b* was transposed from verse 11 and refers to the *homoeoarchton* in one Syriac manuscript.

In verse 18, 14E1, 18E1 and 19E2 have a perfect instead of the participle *mšwzb* of the other manuscripts.

#### 4.10 Variants in one or a few manuscripts that are not of importance for the relationship of the texts

In verse 1, 19E2 has *šm<sup>c</sup>w* instead of *'šm<sup>c</sup>w*. Baars (1972:vi and 7) regards it as a writing error. If this is the case, it cannot be regarded as a real variant.

A unique variant appears in verse 10 in 12t4<sup>mg</sup> - probably because Baars (1972:7) gives the variant as a variant in verse 9, but the word he mentions appears not in verse 9, but in verse 10. According to this text-critical note 12t4<sup>mg</sup> has for *nštb'* (and probably for the words till the end of the verse) *b'ḥrn' nštb' 'yk dmqrb smyd'*. This variant agrees with the other Syriac manuscripts regarding the omission of *hw*, but the *b'ḥrn'*, which must probably be connected to the previous phrase, is unique.

It appears as if 12t4<sup>c</sup> wants to omit the *h'* at the beginning of verse 16.

19E2 points the Aphel *nasge'* in verse 17 as a Peal *nesge'*. Baars (1972:8) thinks that it is possible that the pointing is a mistake. The Hebrew can also be intransitive. This variant is only related to the pointing.

In verse 18, 14E1 and 19E2 omit the *seyame* at *byš'*. Strugnell (1966:275) wants to accept this, as the Hebrew has the singular.

In verse 19, 17E1 and 19E2<sup>1</sup> omit the first *mn*, while 19E2\*(/) + <sup>c</sup> retain it.

In verse 19, 19E2 has the strange reading *wšbt'*, instead of the normal *wdyn'*. Baars (1972:8) suggests that it may be a writing error, caused by a damaged portion of 14E1. 19E2 is a copy of 14E1.

In verse 20, 19d1 omits *bšhywn*.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The apparent variants and the variants restricted to one or two manuscripts in the Elias manuscripts are not very important for the relationship between the different major texts.

As regards the remaining eight groups of variants, there is a total of more than thirty variants. About half of these are variants where all the Syriac manuscripts agree against the Hebrew. In six of the other instances the Hebrew is missing and 12t4 disagrees with the other Syriac manuscripts. In three of these instances 12t4 has a marginal reading agreeing with the other Syriac manuscripts.

As regards the other variants, there are five where 12t4 agree with the Hebrew against the other Syriac manuscripts, without a marginal note in 12t4 agreeing with the other Syriac manuscripts. It is important to note that there are three variants where 12t4 differs from the Hebrew, 12t4<sup>mg</sup> and all the other Syriac manuscripts. These are instances where 12t4 is not closer to the Hebrew than the other Syriac witnesses, contrary to the general view of the relationship of 12t4 to the Hebrew.

The variant referred to in 4.8 - where 12t4<sup>mg</sup> has a variant that could be used to explain the error in the other Syriac manuscripts - proves that the marginal notes in 12t4 are related to a tradition close to the tradition contained in the other Syriac manuscripts, but older than that tradition.

The large number of variants, where all the Syriac witnesses agree against the Hebrew, makes it clear that all the Syriac texts are from the same broad tradition. 12t4 agrees with the Hebrew in some cases, against the other Syriac witnesses, but there are also instances where the other Syriac witnesses agree with the Hebrew against 12t4. The *Vorlage* of the Syriac Psalm 154 differed from the text of Qumran

in a number of cases. There are a number of variants that can be ascribed to errors in the Syriac transmission, as for example the variant discussed in 4.8. There are, however, variants that cannot be ascribed to errors in the Syriac transmission and that testify to a difference in the *Vorlage*. The variants in verse 13 and 17 referred to in 4.3 are cases in point. In the broad Syriac tradition 12t4 has a unique place, but it cannot be equated with the Hebrew from Qumran.

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