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**Wright, Robert B., ed.**

***The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text***

Jewish and Christian Texts In Contexts and Related Studies 1

New York: T&T Clark, 2007.

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Anyone who has done any study on the pseudepigraphon Psalms of Solomon will know the work of Robert B. Wright. His introduction and translation of the Psalms of Solomon in the Charlesworth *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* volumes have proven indispensable. Now in a long-awaited critical edition of the Greek text, a project he mentions in the Charlesworth volume, Wright has provided an even better tool for future research on this significant pre-Christian Jewish text.

Wright's volume comprises three parts: (1) an introduction (1–53); (2) the Greek critical text with an English translation on facing pages (54–207); and (3) three bibliographies: an annotated list of editions and translations, a bibliography of the Greek text, and a bibliography of the Psalms of Solomon (208–23).

The introduction provides the usual information concerning, historical backgrounds, date, authorship, provenance, and language, but three points are worthy of note. First, Wright agrees with Kenneth Atkinson's assertions concerning the historical references evident within the Psalms. In several early articles in the late 1990s and in the early part of this decade Atkinson argued, against the consensus, that while Pss. Sol. 2 and 8 contained historical allusions to Pompey, Ps. Sol. 17's historical references were to Herod and the Roman general Sosius and their siege of Jerusalem in 37 B.C.E. ("Herod the Great, Sosius, and the Siege of Jerusalem [37 BCE] in Psalm of Solomon 17," *NovT* 38 [1996]: 313–22; "Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the *Sitz im Leben* of an Unknown Jewish Sect," in *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon: Pseudepigrapha* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 49; Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 2000]). Surprisingly, however, Atkinson has apparently reversed his position in his most

recent publication (*I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting* [JSJSup 84; Leiden: Brill, 2004]). Wright seems to be unaware of Atkinson's change of position—at least he does not mention it. Having worked on this area for some years, I found Atkinson's arguments convincing, as has Wright, but I am perplexed as to why Atkinson has subsequently changed his mind and disappointed that Wright neither took notice nor discussed the important issue in detail, which, if correct, would place Psalms of Solomon in very close proximity historically to the literature of the New Testament and perhaps open up new lines of interpretation. For example, would the Herodian critique evident in Ps. Sol. 17 be echoed by Matthew's opening salvo, "An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham," and the early confrontations with the Herodian family?

Second, unique to this volume is Wright's discussion of the manuscript tradition of the Psalms of Solomon. Here he shows his original research by providing a list and description of the twelve extant manuscripts containing whole or parts of the Psalms of Solomon. Wright traveled the world to look at these manuscripts first-hand, and that acquaintance is evinced in his physical descriptions of each and in the process of collation. In addition, Wright builds on the work of Hann (*The Manuscript History of the Psalms of Solomon* [SBLSCS 13; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982]), intending to reconstruct the text that would have stood at the top of the *stemma*. It is this reconstruction that Wright has provided as his critical edition. Thus, he does not attempt to present a "supposed Greek translational autograph" but rather a document that represents an "intermediate state of the text" that best explains the readings contained in manuscripts.

Third, Wright provides an interesting historical narrative of modern scholarship on Psalms of Solomon from the seventeenth to the early twenty-first centuries. Beginning with David Höschel's publication in 1604 to von Gebhardt's edition in 1895 through to Kenneth Atkinson's publications in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Wright chronicles the development of the study of the Psalms of Solomon. He concludes with a brief bibliography of doctoral dissertations treating the Psalms of Solomon. One weakness of this section is that it appears Wright has not kept up with the most recent research of the last decade; at least a few recent dissertations were omitted from his list.

Wright usefully lists five characteristics of his edition that make it distinctive (44–48): (1) he included all twelve extant manuscripts; (2) he included all variant readings from all manuscripts along with the removal of conjectural emendations, while introducing no new ones; (3) he included the significant variants from the Syriac manuscripts; (4) he improved the accuracy of the collation of the manuscripts by employing technological

advances in the editing process; and (5) he personally compared his collation with all twelve extant Greek manuscripts.

The Greek text and the English translation occupy the bulk of the volume. The pages contain anywhere from two to six verses, with the variants in the Greek and Syriac manuscripts placed in footnotes after the verse number. There is a significant amount of white space throughout the section, and it raises a question about the format of the text.

Wright's critical edition of Psalms of Solomon is a significant contribution to the study of this important pseudepigraphon. Nevertheless, the volume itself suffers from the apparent lack of a careful proofreading. There are unnatural gaps between text in the introduction (e.g., 9, 37) and the aforementioned unnecessary blank spaces in the critical text (e.g., 174–75). I also noticed the occasional inconsistently sized font (11).