The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Discourse in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls

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Although it has been sixty-five years since the initial discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the full critical publication of these materials from the mid to late Second Temple period was only completed within the last few years. The Aramaic Scrolls were among the latest materials to appear in the *editio princeps*, constituting approximately 10-13% of the Qumran library. Among this Aramaic corpus were found a number of familiar texts (e.g. Daniel, Tobit, and *1 Enoch*), a small collection of works known only from later versions or adaptations (*Aramaic Levi* and the Enochic *Book of Giants*), and in most cases, compositions that were entirely unknown until their modern discovery (e.g. *Genesis Apocryphon*, *Visions of Amram*, and *Testament of Qahat*).

With all of these texts before us in multiple scholarly editions, a critical element of the task ahead involves mapping out contrasts and consistencies among these materials in terms of their linguistic character, literary forms, and rhetorical-ideological emphases. In my McMaster University doctoral dissertation, "The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Discourse in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls," I explore the form and function of revelatory dream-vision accounts that are interspersed throughout approximately twenty of these texts.

In my ongoing survey of the revelatory episodes in the Aramaic Scrolls, I have found a number of places where the transcriptions presented in current scholarly editions are open to debate. To try and resolve these textual issues it was invaluable to consult the manuscript evidence in Jerusalem. Early in September, I spent a day at the Israel Antiquities Authority lab where the Scrolls are housed and consulted select fragments from the Qumran cave 4 manuscripts of the book of Tobit, *Book of Giants*, *Visions of Amram*, *Aramaic Levi Document*, and *Apocryphon of Daniel*. In October, I also visited the Shrine of the Book to work directly with the *Genesis Apocryphon*. What was invaluable for my research on these materials was a database of digital palaeographic samples that I have been developing for Dr. Daniel Machiela (former Albright Fellow) as part of a wider research project on the Aramaic Scrolls. By having nearly 100 abecedaries of early Jewish scripts built entirely from the Aramaic Scrolls at my fingertips, I was able to efficiently assess and evaluate contending readings. I have begun to compile my notes on this cross-section of problematic readings, which I hope to develop into a journal article in the coming months. All of these readings will contribute appreciably to my

present research as well as to a volume of translations and transcriptions I am co-editing with Daniel Machiela to be published in the 'Early Judaism and its Literature' series by the Society of Biblical Literature and Brill.

In addition to this detailed textual work, I split my time researching and writing a core chapter of the dissertation in the Albright library and the nearby École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem. Having concentrated research time and access to exceptional research facilities at this stage in the project has well-positioned me to advance my research in the academic year. I aim to complete the dissertation by the summer of 2013 and hopefully publish the study as a monograph that will find its way onto the shelves of the Albright library in the not too distant future. In sum, there remain many questions to ask regarding the origins and nature of the Aramaic Scrolls corpus. My hope is that the present study answers one of these questions but engenders many more.

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