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THE PROPHETS AND TRANSTEXTUALITY IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

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The course combined different interrelated perspectives of modern Dead Sea Scrolls research. First, it focused on the relationship between the texts that we now call biblical or canonical and those texts which scholars have called parabiblical and which are related, “in the second degree,” to those biblical texts. Second, it asked questions about the literary and textual nature of those parabiblical texts in relation to the biblical ones. If the dependence of parabiblical texts on biblical ones can be characterized by the concept of transtextuality, then which specific forms of transtextuality does one find? Thirdly, the course inquired as to how those parabiblical texts relate to other texts within the collection of Dead Sea Scrolls. Are they ideologically related to the community or communities behind the Dead Sea Scrolls or to other literatures found both inside and outside the collection? In other words, the course explored the relationship of parabiblical texts to both biblical and so-called “Sectarian” texts.

The course dealt specifically with some of the parabiblical texts related to the prophetic books and figures of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Even though the texts related to these prophets are subsumed under the general category of parabiblical literature, the specific connections are very distinct. Those different forms of transtextuality may be connected to varying degrees of authoritativeness of those four prophets, or to the different genres of those prophetic books, or perhaps to different interests of the communities responsible for the new writings. Apart from textual and cultural aspects, the course also illustrated material issues of the manuscripts and problems of reconstructing manuscripts and compositions.

I. *The Isaiah commentaries as metatexts*

The collection of Dead Sea Scrolls contains a small group of manuscripts of running commentaries on sections from the book of Isaiah, some of the Minor Prophets, and parts of the Psalms. As such, they might be the oldest Jewish metatexts. Their format consists of the sections of the base-texts, followed by a *peshet* (“interpretation”) formula, and some kind of interpretation of the quoted base-text. Earlier scholarship focused for text-critical reasons on the text of the base-text, on historical contents of the interpretation, on connections with the New Testament, and on the character of these commentaries as inspired revelation. Modern scholarship is concerned with interpretative techniques, the literary genre, differences, origin, growth, and function of those commentaries, and the comparison with other commentaries or metatexts in the Ancient Near East and Antiquity.

The *peshet* commentaries themselves give few explicit statements about their origin or function. The *peshet* to Habakkuk has two references (in columns 2 and 7) to God making known to the priest, resp. the Teacher of Righteousness, the meaning of the words of his servants, the prophets. The first reference in col. 2 occurs in an update to the commentary, and the priest is probably not the Teacher of Righteousness, but a later priest who led the community. This shows that the *pesharim* were the product of ongoing interpretative activity.

One of the Isaiah *pesharim*, 4Q161, presents an interpretation of the end of Isa 10 and the beginning of Isa 11, and introduces the figure of the “prince of the congregation.” This commentary must be related to interpretive references to the same Isaiah text in 4Q285 and 1QSB V, showing that this *peshet* is not revelation, or associative interpretation, but part of a shared interpretation of the Isaiah passage. On a more technical level, it is possible that the interpretation of Isa 10:26 is based on an alternative reading of the biblical verse, reading *u-nesi’o*, rather than *u-nesa’o*. The interpretive techniques of the *pesharim* cannot be dubbed specifically “Sectarian.” Yet, the hermeneutics of many of these commentaries, applying the words of the prophets to the commentator’s own period, and the correspondence of its theological contents to that of other texts from Qumran, suggest a specific background of most of these commentaries.

From the perspective of transtextuality, these commentaries are only in part meta-textual, as there is little explicit discussion of textual features of the base text. There also is the entirely different question why there only are running commentaries on a small number of texts. This may be due to chance. Or there are specific reasons. First, commentaries are generally written on authoritative texts. In that case, Isaiah or the Twelve Prophets may have been more authoritative, frozen, or canonical than Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Second, because of the hermeneutical tendencies, such commentaries were specifically written for texts which could more easily be interpreted eschatologically. Third, these commentaries did not produce interpretation, but rather codify existing interpretational traditions in a continuous fashion.

II. *The Jeremiah apocrypha*

Within the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus there are no commentaries on Jeremiah, nor, for that fact, many quotations from or allusions to Jeremiah, apart from the themes of the new covenant and of the seventy years of exile. The largest text that refers to Jeremiah is the composition dubbed *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C*, which is only preserved in a series of fragmentary manuscripts. The figure of Jeremiah is mentioned in two fragments of two different manuscripts which according to the editor, Devorah Dimant, form the narrative framework which frames an historical apocalypse revealed to the prophet Jeremiah. The chronological sequence of the narrative framework sections is already a problem: the assumed beginning of the text, referring to the reading of a text sent by Jeremiah at the river Sur, is chronologically later than the probable ending (4Q385a 18) with Jeremiah being in Egypt.

From the point of transtextuality, this *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C*, is complex. The editorially constructed composition uses the figure of the prophet Jeremiah, who is perceived as an emulation of Moses, in order to comment on Danielic prophecies. As a narrative, the text is only loosely based on the book of Jeremiah, and contains

traditions found in the book of Baruch and later Jewish traditions. Thematically, the text focuses on themes that are also central in the book of Jeremiah, such as the relation between kingship, priests, and temple. In addition, 4Q385a even contains a variant form of Nahum 3:8-10. Altogether, the constructed text displays a bewildering mix of different kinds of transtextuality, such as intertextuality, hypertextuality, and perhaps even architextuality. It is not certain that the different manuscripts preserved the same text. The most extensively preserved manuscript, 4Q385a, may be a loosely organized collection of texts and traditions deemed Jeremianic but not found in the biblical book of Jeremiah, rather than a unified composition.

The relation of this *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* to other Dead Sea Scrolls is unclear. There are several connections with 4Q390, which Dimant thought to belong to the same work, but which is more likely a different work depending on the *Apocryphon*. The text gives a veiled historical overview of the events of the second century B.C.E., and probably expected the conclusion of an era of ten jubilees (490 years) to happen in the early first century B.C.E. While such periodizations are also attested in other Dead Sea Scrolls, the text has virtually none of the hallmarks of what is generally called “Sectarian” literature.

III. *The Pseudo-Ezekiel text*

The *Pseudo-Ezekiel* text would be – in Anglo-Saxon parlance – the best example of a rewritten prophetic book. Only a few fragments survive, and even a reconstruction of their sequence is problematic. The fragments rewrite parts of Ezekiel 37–43 (including the vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones, the Merkavah vision, prophecies against the nations, and a prophecy on the return of Israel) and may be analyzed either metatextually, as an implicit commentary on these chapters, or hypertextually as a transformation of these chapters. The most important transformation is that the metaphor of resurrection of Ezekiel 37, referring to the future national restoration of Israel, is in *Pseudo-Ezekiel* a vision about the resurrection of individuals as eschatological recompense for the righteous of Israel alone. Scholars have asked about the connection between *Pseudo-Ezekiel* and the different forms of the biblical book of Ezekiel, as attested in the Masoretic text, and the alternative forms in the LXX, and especially in P967.

Some of the preserved fragments closely follow sections from Ezekiel, and other fragments are new, and seem to be *vaticinia ex eventu*. Overall, the transtextual character of the work is not yet entirely clear.

For an assessment of *Pseudo-Ezekiel* one should also intertextually connect it to other scrolls, notably 4Q521 and 11Q5, which share a cluster of themes that are largely absent from other scrolls. This goes for the idea of resurrection as a recompense for the pious, who love the name of God. Also, so-called “Sectarian” terminology is virtually absent from this composition, whereas other terms, such as God being a redeemer, are found here, but not elsewhere.

IV. *Proto- or Para-Danielic texts*

Many texts in the collection of Dead Sea scrolls have been associated with the book or figure of Daniel for various reasons. The complexity starts at the material

manuscript level. One Daniel manuscript, 4Q116, may in fact be a manuscript that only preserved parts of the prayer of Dan 9, before it was included in the book of Daniel. Noteworthy are also papyrus fragments of Daniel which might suggest that Daniel did not yet have the same status as other biblical books. Famous is 4Q242, the *Prayer of Nabonidus*, which is reminiscent of, and possibly precedes Daniel 4. Other texts connected to Daniel are the *Pseudo-Daniel* texts (4Q243-4Q245) which are reminiscent of, but not necessarily dependent on the court-tales of Daniel 1-6. Other texts with certain or possible connections to the book of Daniel are 4Q246 (Aramaic Apocryphon of Daniel), 4Q248 (Historical Text A), 4Q550 (Jews at the Persian court, tentatively connected by its editor to the figure of Daniel), 4Q552, 4Q553, 4Q553a (Four Kingdoms), 4Q556-556a (Prophecy, tentatively associated by the editor with Daniel), as well as parts of other works, such as the arboreal dream in Genesis Apocryphon 13-15, and the throne vision in 4Q530 (Book of Giants).

The different connections need not be intertextual, implying direct dependency of some texts on others, but architextual, connected by broader categories of discourse and genre. These texts share forms such as the courtier at the foreign court, dreams and their explanation, or writings concerning knowledge of the future. With respect to discourse, the Danielic texts share specific forms of revelation (dreams, visions, angels, books) and concern periodizations, judgment, and the end.

With respect to the Danielic literature, Foucault's concept of author function may be helpful. The anonymous diviner of the *Prayer of Nabonidus* corresponds to the figure of Daniel in Daniel 4. Similarly, other Danielic chapters (Aramaic as well as Greek) may reflect the secondary connection of stories and figures with Daniel, in a process which might be called "Danielization." Is there a specific Danielic author function? On the basis of the canonical Hebrew-Aramaic book of Daniel, we can call Danielic those texts which present an understanding, achieved through various revelatory ways, of the course of history, with the change of kingdoms and kings, until the end, the kingdom of God. The concrete historical and political interest is accentuated by a setting in the court. The interest in the detailed unfolding of history is also reflected through the study of books. The inclusion of the name of Enoch in 4Q245, and Daniel's reading of Jeremiah in Daniel 9, raises the question of the relation of Daniel to the Enochic and Jeremianic books and traditions. Ultimately, the Danielic and Jeremianic traditions are more closely related to one another than to the Enochic ones.

Conclusions

The paraprophetic texts relate in very different manners to the biblical prophetic books. Interestingly, and perhaps unexpectedly, the so-called "Sectarian" *peshet* commentaries on the book of Isaiah retain the biblical text, and metatextually comment on it. The other paraprophetic texts, with no clear "Sectarian" signs, instead transform or extend, hypertextually and architextually, the biblical prophets.

Tigheelaar, E. (2012). "Classifications of the Collection of Dead Sea Scrolls and the Case of Apocryphon of Jeremiah C", *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 43 (4-5), 519-550.