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Searching for Dead Sea Scribes

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Propositions to Defend

Searching for Dead Sea Scribes

Gemma Hayes

- 1) Evidence from applying both digital and traditional palaeographic approaches to the Qumran manuscripts demonstrates that the curved *lamed* that Yardeni, 2007, regarded as an idiograph of one particular scribe is an allograph of a particular curvilinear style prevalent in the early Herodian period.
- 2) Eight of the manuscripts penned in the curvilinear style prevalent in the Herodian period were penned by the one scribe. These manuscripts are 4Q161 (*peshet* Isaiah^a) 4Q166 (*peshet* Hosea^b), 4Q171 (*peshet* Psalms^a), 4Q215 (Testament of Naphtali), 4Q397 (*Miqṣat Ma'āse Ha-Torah*^d), 4Q439 (Lament by a Leader), 4Q474 (Text Concerning Rachel and Joseph) and 11Q18 (NewJerusalem ar).
- 3) When using traditional palaeography to answer the question of how to know and show the identity of scribes, palaeographers should explicate the subtle differences characteristic of the scribe from the broader type and style to which handwriting belongs. Otherwise, descriptions of a scribal hand are difficult to distinguish from descriptions of a type and style.
- 4) [RQ1]The variation in the spelling of words—within and between the manuscripts copied by the three most prolific scribes of Qumran manuscripts—casts doubt on the proposal that the Qumran movement employed a Qumran scribal practice or an antilanguage. Rather, the *plene* and lengthened spelling reflect the syllabic contours of words, and helped readers of manuscripts with pronunciation when dealing with a consonantly written language.
- 5) His consistent reproduction of letter forms according to the ornate, curvilinear style prevalent in the Herodian period suggests that GQS001 was a professional scribe. His manuscripts were produced with skill, care and beauty.
- 6) People who study palaeography love letters.
- 7) The Hebrew or Aramaic word for mushroom does not appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- 8) The elephant in the room is not actually an elephant.