

## Review

Carmen Palmer, Andrew R. Krause, Eileen Schuller, and John Srenock (eds.). *Dead Sea Scrolls, Revise and Repeat: New Methods and Perspectives*. Early Judaism and Its Literature 52. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020. ISBN 9780884144359 (hardback); 9781628372731 (paperback).

By Don (Dongshin) Chang, PhD

*Dead Sea Scrolls, Revise and Repeat* is a collection of scholarly essays that were peer-reviewed and discussed at the Dead Sea Scrolls section of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies for two consecutive years (2016–17). The title, *Dead Sea Scrolls, Revise and Repeat: New Methods and Perspectives*, represents the character and the purpose of this volume. It employs new methodologies to the well-known texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls (hereafter DSS) and offers new insights to previous conclusions. The volume expands to 403 pages with another 20 pages of introductory matter, a thorough abbreviations list, and indices of the source texts and authors.

The editors of the book represent the generations of the DSS scholarship. Professor Emeritus Eileen Schuller of McMaster University is a renowned senior DSS scholar. Her contribution to this field is immense. Dr. John Srenock of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University, is in mid-career, teaching linguistics of DSS Hebrew. Dr. Andrew R. Krause (Trinity Western Seminary) and Dr. Carmen Palmer (Martin Luther University College) are relatively new to the field. The editors are active members of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (CSBS) and leading figures of the Dead Sea Scrolls session at annual meetings. This volume collects the research discussed at annual meetings. The thirteen articles are consolidated into three parts. Part One concerns the law, language, and literary formation of the Dead Sea Scrolls; Part Two focuses on the issue of space and time; and Part Three deals with aspects of gender and circumcision under the title of “The Body.”

In the introduction, the editors explain the background and the purpose of the book. The papers as a whole are searching for the identity of the Yaḥad movement, which is associated with Khirbet Qumran, the Qumran archaeological site, and the DSS. The Qumran-Essene hypothesis, which was dominant in the earlier period of DSS studies, has been challenged by leading DSS scholars, for

example, John J. Collins, Joan Taylor, and Alison Schofield. This volume addresses this issue. Each essay provides a fresh insight into aspects of the identification of the Qumran community and its movement. The most significant contribution of these studies is they approach the well-known texts utilizing new interdisciplinary methodologies.

Part One contains five essays. The first two deal with the Qumran movement's perception of the law. Sarianna Metso reassesses Qumran's rule texts through the broader context of Jewish legal documents which originated within various Jewish communities of the contemporaries, and which are beyond the categorization of halakhic (or rule) text. She affirms the earlier hypothesis that the Teacher and the scribes who came after him, viewing themselves as recipients of revelation, permitted revelatory modifications to legal material. In the second article, Jonathan Vroom theorizes the authority of the legal texts from the DSS into the two categories of practical authority, measured by compliance to the law, and epistemic authority, measured by engagement of reasoning to the law. Vrooms' analysis of the Qumran penal codes leads him to identify them as didactic texts (epistemic authority) rather than binding law (practical authority).

The following two essays deal with linguistic matters. John Screnock challenges Elisha Qimron's view that emphasizes the distinctiveness of Qumran Hebrew from Biblical Hebrew. Applying the methodology of historical linguistics, Screnock reassesses the numbering system in the DSS. He concludes that the numbering system reveals the DSS's preference for the order number-noun, which aligns with Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew. This result implies more continuity than distinctiveness between the DSS and the earlier use of Hebrew. The following essay, by Andrew B. Perrin and Brandon Diggins, provides a significant reference for the study of Aramaic DSS texts. Perrin and Diggins present the complete list of textual variants of DSS Aramaic texts: *Enochic Book of Watchers and Book of Dreams*, *Aramaic Levi Document*, *Astronomical Enoch*, *Tobit*, *Four Kingdoms*, *New Jerusalem*, and *Vision of Amram*. In the final essay in Part One, Kyung Baek addresses the formation of biblical texts and tradition history. Employing the extensive use of Isaiah in DSS as a comparative tool, Baek analyzes the use of Isaiah in the Gospel of Matthew. He suggests that fluidity was a common scribal practice that was applied in the use of Isaiah in the DSS and Matthew.

In Part Two, four essays address space and time in DSS. First, Heather Macumber applies monster theory in her reading of Songs of the Sage (4Q510-511).

Monster theory is a cultural methodology that analyzes a community's concerns reflected through the monsters it creates. She addresses the vulnerability to demonic attack that the Qumran community faced due to their retreat to the wilderness. Her analysis of Songs of the Sage illuminates community members' self-understanding of liminal status. Then, Matthew L. Walsh performs comparative studies between Dan 7-12 and key DSS sectarian texts such as Community Rule (1QS), 1QMelchizedek, and War Scroll. He argues that the fusion of heavenly Israel and earthly Israel in Daniel 7 is developed in those sectarian texts that claim angelic fellowship as an integral part of the true Israel. His conclusion illuminates the identity formation of the movement.

A conventional view in DSS is that use of a solar calendar distinguished the Qumran community from the rest of Jewish society. Helen R. Jacobus extensively challenges this view. She starts with the pre-sectarian date of Calendrical Document Mishmarot A (4Q320), which holds the 364-Day Calendar tradition. Then she analyzes Astronomical Enoch<sup>a-b</sup> (4Q208-209) for a test case of possible development of the intercalation in Qumran calendar. Based on 4Q208-209, she reconstructs the year by using the corresponding zodiac signs from Zodiac Calendar (4Q318). Her study demonstrates that the sectarians used the calendar more creatively than has been previously suggested. The ninth essay, by Andrew R. Kraus, applies critical spatial theory to wide range of apotropaic prayers in Aramaic Levi Document, 4QIncantation (4Q444), 4QShirot (4Q400-407), the Treatise of the Two Spirits (esp. 1QS IV, 15-26), the Hymn of the Maskil (1QS IX, 25-XI, 15), and the Hodayot (Thanksgiving hymns; 1QH<sup>a</sup>). Krause concludes that the community regarded the physical body as a protective space where the spirits and the sectarian body are connected. The heart is the central arena where God gives positive spirits of knowledge, whereas the evil spirits attempt to force them out. These beliefs led the community to the understanding that it could experience spiritual failure while at the same time claiming the spirits of knowledge and truth as the safeguards of their special revelation from God.

Part Three considers issues concerning "the body." Nicholas Meyer and Jessica M. Keady deal with sexuality in the DSS. First, Meyer conducts a comparative study of Hodayot with the Rules of the Community (S), Damascus Document (D), and the Temple Scroll (11Q19) with respect to sexuality and celibacy. Analyzing the negative description of sexuality in the Thanksgiving hymns (Hodayot), he observes a close connection of sexuality, both male and female, with

ritual impurity. Furthermore, he finds that the practice of celibacy, once regarded as the norm in the community, was later considered an exception, especially for an elite member of the community pursuing the priestly perfect holiness among angels. With these conclusions, he redirects the issue of celibacy from a symptom of misogyny (by Philo and Josephus) to a symptom of priestly concerns for ritual purity and heavenly worship. In the next essay, Jessica Keady, reassesses the ideal male described in the War Scroll, employing Hegemonic Masculinities developed by Raewyn Connell. She observes that in the text the concept of the ideal man is closely related to ritual purity and violence, which leads to the conclusion that masculinity was fluid, based on the purity of a person.

Carmen Palmer's essay returns to the motif of circumcision of the heart. Using ethnicity theory, she reassesses the reference of the circumcision of the heart and physical circumcision in the Rule of the Community (1QS) and Damascus Document (CD) and the Book of *Jubilees*. She observes that heart circumcision does not replace physical circumcision in matters of kinship and descent in the DSS. This observation challenges the conventional understanding of the kinship of the community, indicating that the kinship of the community has been underestimated due to the spiritualization of the movement. The heart circumcision, according to Palmer, is exclusive to the group members and considered a secondary conversion after the physical circumcision. She further investigates the relationship between the two circumcisions in Philo, where the heart circumcision is a spiritual one being elucidated by physical circumcision. Furthermore, in Romans, the heart circumcision enables a dual ethnicity such as Jew and Christ-follower or Gentile and Christ-follower. In the final essay, Angela Kim Harkins applies the cognitive literary theory of immersive reading to Hodayot. She uses two literary techniques, counterintuitive landscape features and enactive reading, to make a fresh analysis on 1QHa XVI.5-XVII.36. According to Harkins, these literary techniques enhance the proprioceptive reading of the text, which leads her to conclude that the ancient readers' experience extends to their bodies as well as their minds.

It is necessary to constantly employ new approaches to an existing area of studies, especially when a discipline enters into the third generation. Reassessing old conclusions and suggesting new explanations are essential to the progress of scholarship. Metso employs a broader Jewish legal context to the study of DSS legal material. Discernment of practical authority and epistemic authority brings new insight to Vroom. Utilizing historical linguistics, Srenock is able to challenge the old

view of the distinctiveness of Qumran Hebrew. Monster theory and spatial theory open fresh perspectives on the understanding of the movement's self-identification. Gender approaches highlight the relatively neglected theme of masculinity in the movement. The application of ethnicity theory and cognitive literary theory generate new insights into the concept of the circumcision of the heart and the community's experience of text reading. These current research methodologies meaningfully contribute to better understandings of the DSS and subsequent discussions.

The flow of the book is relatively loose. Because the studies were conducted independently and collected into a book, readers cannot expect an essay-by-essay flow of argumentation. Although several studies are bound into a section, they tend to share a motif rather than a line of argument. Concerning this limitation, the title, *Dead Sea Scrolls, Revised and Repeat: New Methods and Perspectives*, well represents the character of the volume, with its wide range of research approaches. It also emphasizes that new methodological theories are contributing to ongoing scholarship in the field.

The book itself is not easy reading for pastors or church educators, due to its scholarly focus and technical terminology. However, the essays shed light on various Christian discussions and yield many insights to ponder. As is widely known, the span of the Yahad movement, from the second century BCE to the first century CE, overlapped spatially and temporally with the Jesus movement and the subsequent establishment of the early church. Characterized by some scholars as a messianic movement, the Yahad movement emphasizes the new (or renewed) covenant. The movement and its DSS texts illuminate the Judaism of the time as well as the background of the early Christian movement and the New Testament compositions. The title contributes in this manner as well.

This book makes contemporary scholarly activity accessible to students of the DSS and Judaism in the period from the third century BCE to the first century CE, providing context for the Jesus movement and early Christianity. The essays of Walsh, Meyer, and Palmer can be used as examples of the contextual insights that may be gleaned.

Walsh's study on Qumran angelology shows that the Qumranic emphasis on the angelic assistance or angelic communities was part of the sectarian identity. Walsh traces the development of the angelology of the Second Temple Judaism, which possibly bridges from Daniel 7-12 to Luke 1, Jude 1, and Revelation 12 where named angels such as Gabriel and Michael commonly appear. Walsh's study

also provides second temple textual data that can be compared to the Pauline understanding of angel (Gal 1) and Hebrews (Heb 1).

Meyer's work on celibacy in the DSS relates to the practice of celibacy in the later Christian monasterial movement as a means of pursuing greater spirituality. Meyer's research elaborates the theological foundation of the celibacy of the Yaḥad movement. The relation between sexuality and ritual purity observed in the Hodayot texts leads Meyer to a negative view on sexuality toward the heavenly communion; that is, that celibacy is an effective means for heavenly communion. Meyer's conclusion, that the celibacy of the Yaḥad movement is an elite component for perfect holiness with priesthood among angels, also sheds light on the requirement of the Roman Catholic Church that its priests practice celibacy.

Palmer's research on circumcision and ethnicity finds a point of contact between Qumran studies and new perspectives on Paul. Palmer employs the concept of "the secondary conversion" as the Yaḥad's understanding of the "circumcision of the heart," which, according to her, was exclusively sectarian. Her conclusion reminds the reader of Craig Evan's proposal on the sectarian's self-identification as the "select of the selects." Both Evan's and Palmer's conclusion brings the reader back to the unresolved discussion on the "new covenant" vs. "renewed covenant" as part of the self-identification of the Yaḥad movement; that is, the sectarian view of the status of Jews who only have physical circumcision. Sociologically, this issue shows commonality with the Christian discussion of baptism of water and spirit as the identity of a "true" Christian. Palmer's discussion, however, sheds more light on the circumstantial background of the new perspective on Pauline epistle.

Earlier DSS scholars found that the sectarian documents do not emphasize the significance of circumcision. Lawrence Schiffman explains that this is because all the sectarians were circumcised. The presupposition of physical circumcision for spiritual circumcision was the norm and would not need to be explicitly regulated in the sectarian texts. Palmer's study on *Jubilees* finds significance here. Although the Book of *Jubilees* does not necessarily represent the exclusive view of Yaḥad due to the non-sectarian origin, the number of copies of *Jubilees* scrolls found in Qumran deposit reflects its significance to the movement. Therefore, Palmer's observation that *Jubilees* considered physical circumcision a condition for heart circumcision suggests the weight of the ethnical matter or, more significantly, the theological implication of the notion concerning circumcision as a conversion process in the

foundational process of the sectarians' identity construction. The Yaḥad movement's position may account for an aspect of the ethnic and theological milieu of the Jesus movement that was rooted in the Jewish context in the first half of the first century AD. This conclusion furnishes a plausible cultural context in favour of the new perspective on Paul, where the expression, "works of the law" is not considered a matter of legalism but a matter of Jewishness or Jewish status; in other words, whether conversion to Judaism and entry into the Mosaic covenant by circumcision and observation of the purity laws is presuppositional to belief in Jesus and entry into the new covenant.

Christian educators and pastors with an interest in DDS studies will find the reading of *Dead Sea Scrolls: Revise and Repeat* demanding and rewarding. They will gain many insights and data relevant to the construction of early Christian thinking that will add depth to their knowledge and inform their teaching.

Don (Dongshin) Chang, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, at Northwest Baptist Seminary. His research interests include Biblical Studies, High Priest and Priesthood in the Second Temple Period, and Dead Sea Scrolls.

Author Copyright.

Don (Dongshin) Chang, review of *Dead Sea Scrolls, Revise and Repeat: New Methods and Perspectives*, Carmen Palmer, Andrew R. Krause, Eileen Schuller, and John Screnock (eds.), Northwest Institute for Ministry Education Research, [www.nimer.ca](http://www.nimer.ca), (December 10, 2021).