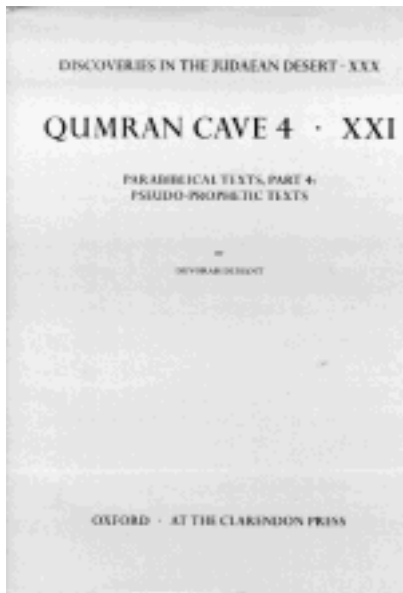


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**Dimant, Devorah**

*Qumran Cave 4, XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts*

Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 30

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The fourth and final volume of parabiblical texts from Cave 4 is devoted to the fragments once grouped together under the sigla 4Q383 and 4Q385–390 and known as *Pseudo-Ezekiel*. In this principal edition, Devorah Dimant has separated these pieces into eleven copies of two different texts. 4QPseudo-Ezekiel is now represented by four or maybe five copies (4Q385, 4Q386, 4Q385b, 4Q388, and 4Q385c [unidentified]), while the remaining fragments have been reorganized into seven copies of another text named *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* (4Q383, 4Q385a, 4Q387, 4Q388a, 4Q389, 4Q390, and 4Q387a). Another copy of the former, 4Q391, was published earlier in DJD XIX, and some fragments of the latter were once known as “Pseudo-Moses.”

Much remains uncertain and conjectural about the presumed original text of 4QPseudo-Ezekiel, but Dimant has reconstructed six consecutive columns of the scroll based primarily upon the overlaps of 4Q385, 4Q386, and 4Q388. From this she discerns several motifs, including the resurrection of the righteous, the future of land and people of Israel, the great war of nations, the curtailing of the end time, and the merkavah vision. Dimant believes that the themes and eschatological episodes found here interpret biblical prophecy, specifically Ezek 36–40, although not in the MT order but possibly a variant sequence as reflected

in the Old Greek Papyrus 967 and Codex Wirceburgensis of the Old Latin, namely chapters 36, 38, 39, 37, and 40.

The readings and commentary on the texts of 4QPseudo-Ezekiel in this *editio princeps* are much better than those found in the preliminary studies. Throughout Dimant interacts with scholars who have suggested alternative readings and explanations in the wake of the earlier studies that she published for the most part with John Strugnell. Only two brief comments are added here. First, it would have been very useful to have produced a composite text of 4QPseudo-Ezekiel in addition to the transcription of individual fragments and copies (this also applies to the following *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*). Such a critical text would give the reader a clearer sense of the thematic sweep that she is particularly good at explaining and a simpler way of referencing citations from it. Second, the intriguing image of a tree bending and standing erect (4Q385 frg. 2, line 10), which M. Kister suggested was also attested in *Barnabas* 12:1, does not seem to be related to the biblical references of Deut 20:19; Isa 65:22; or Ezek 17:24 that Dimant adduces. The source of this image remains obscure. She is correct to say, however, that it is unlikely to be the tree of life, as suggested by M. Philonenko and A. Jack (28–29), since if it were so one would expect a definite substantive, “the tree.” Moreover, “the tree of life” is the designation found in 4Q385a, frg. 17 a–e, col. ii, line 3.

The text called *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* is, according to Dimant, a quasi-historical review of the fate of the Israelites and Jewish people from the Babylonian exile down to the second century B.C.E. and the eschatological future. What can be observed from the vestiges of this original composition is its dependence upon biblical sources, especially the prophecy of Jeremiah and the book of Deuteronomy. However, it did not simply adopt the biblical narrative wholesale but wove a new compositional garment from the diverse strands of scriptural sources. Distinct to this hitherto unknown literary work is what Dimant considers the prominence of Jeremiah. Jeremiah not only plays an important role for the exiles, as he does in the biblical account, but he also accompanies the deportees until “the river,” perhaps the River Euphrates. He exhorts them to keep the commandments and to avoid idolatry in exile, thus inducting a new era in which piety and Torah obedience substitutes for the temple cult.

Dimant also helpfully sets the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* in its literary context. She is certainly justified in calling it an apocalypse, and, not surprisingly, literary affinities can be found not only with the book of Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah but also 2 Maccabees. There are also some similarities to the Qumran

pescharim, but she rightly eschews to identify the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* as sectarian.

If what has been put forward passes the test of time, then Dimant would have discovered a hitherto unknown text that, like many pseudepigraphical compositions, creates pious retellings and embellishments based on biblical characters. There is, however, a great deal that remains uncertain that further study may clarify. Two points particularly interested this reviewer.

First, is it really the case that Baruch was passed over in this text in contradistinction to the central role that the scribe played in, say, *2 Baruch* (106–7)? Dimant could have been cautious here as she has laudably been elsewhere in the volume. Apart from the obvious problem of the fragmentary nature of the Qumran scrolls, in 4Q383, frg. 4, line 2, there may well be a reference to Jeremiah's faithful scribe. Dimant translates the line as "and he said 'Blessed [*baruch*] be the people,'" but it could, as she recognizes, equally be "and Baruch said: 'people/with.'"

Second, on pages 186–88, 237–38, 242, and 245–46 Dimant argues that the phrase "the angels of *mastemot*" (4Q387 frg. 2.ii.4; 4Q390 frg. 1.11; 2.i.7) should be understood as those angels who belong to the demonic chief "Mastemah." The plural variant of this proper name is unique and may also be reconstructed in the lacuna of 4Q225 2.ii.6. But surely if the feminine noun meaning "animosity" were now considered a proper noun, one would have expected the absolute *Mastemot* rather than the definite as in every case. The alleged parallel to *beliy'al* in 4Q390 frg. 2.i.4 is not decisive either, since the word can, as Dimant correctly points out, mean "wickedness" or "worthlessness" in the scrolls. The alternative is to understand the phrase to mean "the angels of animosity."

Devorah Dimant has labored conscientiously over two badly mutilated but nonetheless fascinating texts. She has brought to this edition of DJD careful editing and erudition that benefit us all.