

RBL 10/2009



Puech, Émile, ed.

Qumran Grotte 4.XXVII Textes Araméens, deuxième partie

Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXXVII

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. xxvi + 561 + 26 plates. Cloth. \$220.00. ISBN 0199550042.

Aaron Rubin
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pennsylvania

The set of Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts numbered 4Q520 to 4Q587 was assigned in 1956 to Jean Starcky of the École Biblique in Jerusalem, but, like so many other texts from this corpus, their official publication stalled for decades. Upon Starcky's death in 1988, responsibility passed to his colleague Émile Puech, who has now published the *editio princeps* of this set of texts in three volumes of the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series (DJD). The Hebrew texts (4Q520–528, 4Q576–579) were published in 1998 as DJD XXV; the first part of the Aramaic texts (4Q528–549) was published in 2001 as DJD XXXI; and now he has published the third volume, containing the remaining Aramaic texts from this set (4Q550–575a, 4Q580–587), as well as a few other unpublished fragments of previously published texts from Cave 4.

Though this volume is the *editio princeps*, many of the texts were already published in general works such as *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (ed. F. García-Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar; Brill, 1997–98; henceforth *DSSSE*) and/or *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* (ed. D. W. Parry and E. Tov; Brill, 2004–5; henceforth *DSSR*), or in other scholarly publications. Nevertheless, readings of the earlier editions can differ from those of Puech, sometimes significantly.

The volume under review contains a few interesting, lesser known texts, though all are quite fragmentary. 4Q550 has also been called 4Qproto-Esther, though Puech calls it

4QJews at the Persian Court (*4QJuifs à la cour perse*). Esther is not mentioned in the attested fragments, and the text is clearly a different tale, but there are some interesting parallels to the biblical book, such as a Persian king who listens to the royal annals when he cannot sleep (frag. 1) and the rewarding of a noble Jew (frag. 5). 4Q554 and 4Q555 contain the so-called New Jerusalem text, which is also attested (sometimes better so) in fragments from Qumran Caves 1, 2, 5, and 11. 4Q551 contains a very short fragment of some kind of tale, and it has been suggested that this may be part of the Susanna story, but this is highly speculative. 4Q552 and 4Q553 contain the apocalyptic text known as Four Kingdoms. Others texts include 4Q556–55, prophetic visions; 4Q559, a short fragment of a genealogy or chronology; 4Q560, a magical text describing an exorcism; and 4Q561, containing something like a horoscope. The remainder of the texts, 4Q562–587, are of a diverse nature, including wisdom, historical, and prophetic texts, though all are extremely short and fragmented. A number of them are so short that they escape any identification or classification at all.

The volume begins with a short preface (xiii) by Emanuel Tov, the series editor; this is in English, though the remainder of the volume is in French. Following this is a preface by Puech (xv–xxiii). Both Tov and Puech describe the history of the editing of this set of Aramaic texts, the latter obviously going into more detail. The great bulk of the volume (1–504) is dedicated to the presentation of the texts. Each scroll is presented with a great wealth of background information, including the history of research on the scroll, description of the various fragments (including precise measurements), identification of the text, dating of the text, paleography, and remarks on linguistic and orthographic features. Each fragment is published in Hebrew characters, followed by notes on the reading, a French translation, and commentary on the text contents. Puech is meticulous in his detail. The first text, 4Q550 is attested in ten fragments, ranging in content from only about four to about fifty words, yet they cover about forty-five pages of this large-format book. Compare *DSSR*, where the text and translation of 4Q550 take up only about five pages of much smaller size (about seven pages in *DSSSE*).

The edition of Puech differs in presentation from other editions of these texts, though not always in a consistent way. For example, for text 4Q559 (also called 4QpapBibChron ar), Puech presents this very fragmentary text with reconstruction for most lines, while *DSSR* (2:136–39; text edited by E. Cook) and *DSSSE* (1114–15) include little or no reconstruction. Compare the following passages from 4Q559, fragment 4:

DJD (line 2): ומן די נפקו [מן אר]עא די מצרים עד

DSSR (line 1):]מן אר[

DSSSE (missing)

DJD (line 6): בשילו ושכמ[אִ שנין 3 ומן די מית]ו אלעזר:

DSSR (line 5): [] שנין 20 ומן די מית:]

DSSSE (line 3): [...] שנין 20 ומן די מית[...]

Whether or not the inclusion of such reconstruction is beneficial is up to the reader. Note also the differing line numbers between the editions.

We also find places where *DSSR* and/or *DSSSE* has reconstruction where Puech has little or none. For example, compare Puech's version 4Q560, line 3 with that of *DSSR* (6:226; text edited by D. Penney and M. Wise) and *DSSSE* (1116):

DJD (line 3): [] עלל בבשרא לחלחיא דכרא וחלחלית נקבתא

DSSR (line 3): [] אנה מומה לך כל] עלל בבשרא לחלח<ל>יא דכרא

וחלחלית<א> נקבתא

DSSSE (line 3): [... די] עלל בבשרא לחלחיא דכרא וחלחלית נקבתא

One consistent, albeit minor difference between the editions is that Puech uses the native Hebrew numerical symbols, while both *DSSR* and *DSSSE* use Arabic (that is, English) numerals in place of these. So in 4Q559, fragment 4, line 6 (cited above), the Aramaic transcription of Puech has the symbol that looks something like 3 (though tilted about 70 degrees counterclockwise), while *DSSR* and *DSSSE* have simply "20". The *DJD* volume also contains more complete editions of each scroll. So, for example, for 4Q559, Puech publishes thirteen different fragments; *DSSR* publishes six, *DSSSE* only two. The edition of Puech is thus by far the most complete.

Following the presentation of the texts in Puech's volume is an appendix (506–23), which includes the *editio princeps* of six additional fragments of other texts from Cave 4 that were published in earlier volumes of *DJD*. These fragments had been incorrectly catalogued with the lot of texts for which Puech was responsible. Each contains just a few words.

Following the appendix is a concordance of all of the Aramaic words (525–61) occurring in this volume, including the texts in the appendix. The concordance is very clearly laid out and easy to use. Each head-word is followed by a list of citations (with scroll, fragment, and line numbers), along with the full context of the word. Only for ubiquitous

lexemes such as -ܘܢ “to, for” do we find only a list of citations without the full Aramaic passage. A translation for each head-word would have been useful.

Finally, at the end of the volume are twenty-six plates, with black-and-white photographs of all of the text fragments covered in this volume. These are of very good quality, and although they are not all legible, they can all be used profitably in conjunction with the transcribed texts.

This volume of DJD does not contain any of the major Dead Sea Scroll texts, nor does it contain texts of any great length that might be read in an Aramaic course. However, there is plenty of interesting material to work with, and the volume itself is extremely well done.