**Dr. Hila Dayfani: Statement of Research and Teaching Plans**

# 1. Statement of Research

I engage in research in three fields: Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible (HB), with a focus on the Pentateuch; Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS); wisdom literature (both Biblical and post-Biblical).

My doctoral dissertation addresses variants due to graphic similarity between letters and the contribution the study of them makes to the textual criticism of the Pentateuch. The dissertation includes the first systematic review of the variants of this type, comparing the Masoretic text (MT) and the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). Philological and paleographical analysis of these variants leads to some conclusions specifically about SP and the pre-Samaritan tradition, and to other conclusions that relate more broadly to textual criticism of the Pentateuch. The work was funded by the Presidential Fellowship for Excellent Doctoral Students of Bar-Ilan University and was approved in September 2020. I was awarded the Riklis Prize for Outstanding Dissertation in Jewish Studies from Bar Ilan University for my dissertation.

In preparing the dissertation, I devoted considerable time to gaining expertise in the paleography of Hebrew, Jewish, and Samaritan Scripts with the guidance of Dr. Ada Yardeni. I have presented parts(??) of my dissertation at conferences in Jerusalem, Rome, and the SBL Virtual Annual Meeting 2020 (see list of publications, conferences, #1, 3, 11). I have published two papers based upon my doctoral dissertation relating to the script in which SP was transmitted and the nature of the transmission of the pre-Samaritan tradition (see list of publications, #6, 7). I am now in the final stages of writing a third paper dealing with the transmission of the Pentateuch in the late Second Temple period, which will be presented in the SBL Annual Meeting 2021. In addition, I am presently editing my dissertation, converting it into a monograph which will be published in the series *Studia Samaritana*, by de Gruyter (see list of publications, conferences, #2).

I am a member of the German-Israeli *Scripta Qumranica Electronica* (SQE) project. The purpose of this project is to create digital editions of the DSS. My research group, led by Prof. Jonathan Ben-Dov, focuses on *Instruction*, a wisdom composition that has been found only in Qumran, in eight fragmentary copies. Our purpose is to separately reconstruct each copy, both in terms of text and material philology, and then to reconstruct the entire composition, as much as possible. The project involves the development of digital methods for the material reconstruction of fragmentary scrolls. My research focuses on one copy of *Instruction*, 4Q415. I have proposed a material reconstruction of this scroll, utilizing a new method that uses a digital sheet to evaluate the various possibilities of reconstruction according to the extant evidence. The reconstruction sheds light on the portion of the composition that deals with instructions on family matters. I have presented this work at the SBL Virtual Annual Meeting 2020 (see list of publications, conferences, #5) and it also yielded a paper that will be published in *RevQ* (see list of publications, #8)*.* Moreover, I have prepared a comprehensive critical edition of 4Q415. I have been also working on another copy of *Instruction*, 4Q418. This work involves both the materiality and textuality of the scroll, yielding new joins, readings and editions of fragments associated with 4Q418. The new editions, as well as the editions of additional copies of *Instruction*, will be published in a volume in the series *Studies on the Text of the Desert of Judah*, by Brill (see list of publications, #3).

I am currently a postdoctoral fellow in Oriel College at Oxford University, hosted by Prof. Hindy Najman. My research here is funded by the Scholarship Program for Outstanding Postdoctoral Women Students, the Israeli Council of Higher Education. In my postdoctoral research, I use the digital methodologies developed in the SQE project to explore fundamental issues in the textual criticism of the Pentateuch.

So far, I have dealt with two manuscripts of the book of Exodus from Qumran: 4Q11 (4QpaleoGen-Exodl); 4Q22 (4QpaleoExodm). The original editors of 4Q11 did not reach a decisive conclusion regarding the textual classification of the scroll, as statistical analysis of the scroll’s readings does not reveal the agreement of the scroll’s text with one of the textual traditions of the Pentateuch. Nevertheless, it was classified as a MT-like (Tov) or semi-Masoretic (Lange) text, following the editors’ supposition that the major expansions documented in SP were not originally included in the scroll. My research offers a new reconstruction of 4Q11 that validates this supposition regarding the textual classification of the scroll. Locating the fragments on a digital canvas using the corresponding points of damage makes it possible to estimate the distances between the fragments in the original scroll and to evaluate the amount of missing text. In this way, I have shown that the scroll did not include the major SP-expansions. This research was presented in a scholars’ seminar in the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Groningen-Leuven-Oxford Network Conference of Hebrew Bible and Jewish Antiquity at the University of Oxford (see list of publications, conferences, #6,7). It will also be published in *Textus* (see list of publications, #9).

Working on 4Q11, I found that approximately half of the scroll’s fragments were not identified in the critical edition. Dr. Drew Longacre (University of Groningen), Anthony Perrot (Faculté de Théologie de Vaux-sur-Seine), and I have identified eleven new 4Q11 fragments, some previously associated with the scroll but not identified, and others previously not associated with the scroll at all. I have presented this research at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (see list of publications, conferences, #8) and it has been written up as a paper that is under review in *RevQ*. Since five of the eleven new fragments were identified by me, and I wrote the first draft of the paper, I am listed as its first author.

My research on 4Q22 has significant implications for our understanding of the textual development of SP and the origin of the pre-Samaritan tradition. 4Q22 is one of the most extensive preserved of the scriptural scrolls from Qumran cave 4. It was classified as a pre-Samaritan scroll because it includes most of the major SP-expansions. The tenth commandment in SP, the commandment to build an altar on Mount Gerizim, was considered to belong to a layer of sectarian changes introduced into the pre-Samaritan tradition at a relatively late stage of its transmission. In 4Q22, the section where the tenth commandment appears was not preserved. I reconstructed the relevant columns in the scroll using digital tools. The new reconstruction shows that the tenth commandment was apparently present in 4Q22, that is, the commandment to build an altar on Mount Gerizim do belongs to the pre-Samaritan layer. A version of the decalogue that includes this commandment presumably originated among the scribes identified with the altar on Mount Gerizim. This altar existed as early as the fifth century BCE and was dedicated to the God identified with Jerusalem. If so, one may conclude that these northern scribes are the source of the pre-Samaritan tradition. The Samaritans, who originated with the Yahwists of Samaria, did not simply adopt a Jewish textual tradition of the Pentateuch as their authoritative text. Instead, they accepted a textual tradition with which they were already familiar, and in whose development, they had a hand. This research was presented at the Hebrew Bible Seminar at Oxford University and the DSS Second Public Online Conference, New York University (see list of publications, conferences, #9,10). It was also written up as an article and submitted to review in *JBL*.

Even before the research on 4Q22 was published, it drew many reactions. I received inquiries from scholars interested in citing it, among them Prof. Emanuel Tov in his fourth edition of the *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* and Prof. Ariel Feldman. In addition, Prof. Sidnie Crawford and Prof. Tommy Wasserman invited me to contribute a paper on the Samaritan Pentateuch and its importance for textual criticism for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook on the Textual Criticism of the Bible* (see list of publications, #5). Moreover, Prof. Eibert Tigchelaar and Dr. Danilo Verde invited me to contribute a paper to a thematic issue of the journal *Advances in Ancient Biblical and Near Eastern Research*. This issue will explore how concrete material features of the scrolls can shed light on the creation, redaction, and transmission of the HB. My paper will discuss the material evidence of the paleo-Hebrew scrolls and the redaction and transmission of Pentateuchal books.

In future research, I intend to utilize material reconstruction of Pentateuchal scrolls to explore the form in which the Pentateuch was transmitted in the late Second Temple period: Was it transmitted as a complete literary unit, or were its five books transmitted as discrete literary compositions? The material reconstruction of the Pentateuchal scrolls, which enables us to estimate the amount of missing text between the extant fragments as well as the distance between them and the end of the scroll, makes it possible to investigate whether any of these texts were part of a complete Torah scroll. This investigation is important, as the evidence from Qumran neither supports nor contradicts the existence of a complete Torah scroll (with the two possible exceptions of 4QReworked Pentateuchb,c that will be treated separately).

This project has implications for the emergence of the Jewish canon. If it would provide evidence for whether or not the Pentateuch was already a complete literary unit in the late Second Temple period, we might answer broader questions, such as when did the status of the Torah as an authoritative literature shift to its being a closed collection of Holy Scripture? Does the evidence point to a unilinear or multilinear model of Torah canonization? The proposed study will offer a unique contribution to these questions, as, to the best of my knowledge, it deals with evidence that has not been taken into consideration in these contexts so far.

This project will study Pentateuchal scrolls selected according to two criteria: (1) scrolls with a large or very large writing block (more than 25 lines per column), which may have included more than one book of the Pentateuch or even the entire Pentateuch; (2) scrolls for which there is sufficient evidence for material reconstruction. According to my count, there are eleven such scrolls. As this is an ambitious and large-scale project, I intend to apply for research grants for funding.

I have a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and I make use of my digital expertise in my research. As part of my doctoral dissertation, I built a computerized database (SQL) of all the textual variants discussed in the study, as well as the additional occurrences of letter interchanges in textual witnesses that were not included in the study. The database organized the data according to predetermined criteria and makes it possible to extract data according to these criteria efficiently and accurately. In this way, even the collection of research material was a contribution to the textual criticism of the Pentateuch, since the data are now accessible in new ways for scholars seeking to study the textual witnesses. Moreover, an integral part of my work in the SQE project is the development of innovative methods for the material reconstruction of scrolls, using digital tools. These tools include the use of graphic manipulation programs for the processing of fragment images, the designing of a digital canvas that simulates the condition of the scroll before its disintegration and the creation of a digital font based on the typical letters in the scroll’s script. The assimilation of these tools into the study of the DSS sets a new standard, bridges a gap in the work of the first editors, and allows us to answer old questions by new methods.

I also am interested in the study of wisdom literature. In 2014, I wrote an M.A. thesis at Bar-Ilan University entitled: “Switching Job's Responses to Eliphaz and Bildad in the First Cycle of Dialogues.” In this study, I pointed to the thematic, stylistic and linguistic connections between the speeches of Job and the friends. I proposed that two of Job’s speeches in the first cycle were interchanged during the redaction of the book. I lectured on the narrative prologue of the book in the scholars’ seminar of the JTS-Schocken Institute (see list of publications, conferences, #2). As a graduate student, I served as a research assistant to Dr. Nili Samet in the project entitled: “Linguistic Dating of the Book of Proverbs.” The project focused on the comparative study of proverbs in ancient Near Eastern texts and the Book of Proverbs. In addition, as detailed above, I am intensely occupied with the study of *Instruction*, a wisdom composition from the Second Temple period.

**2. Teaching Plan**

Next term (Michaelmas 2021), I expect to teach a one-term course on the Samaritan Pentateuch for postgraduate students (MPhil; DPhil). I also have experience with non-academic teaching: In the years between my undergraduate and graduate studies, I taught Bible and Computer Science at Amit Modiin High School.

I suggest teaching courses in my research interests. If necessary, I can also offer general courses such as Bibliographical Guidance and Introduction to the Bible. The following is a list of courses I would be interested in teaching:

1. Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the HB; Introduction to the DSS

Introductory courses that would focus on the general aspects of the theory and methods of textual criticism of the HB and the study of the DSS.

1. Scripture at the Judean Desert Scrolls

The scriptural scrolls from the Judean Desert are the earliest evidence of the HB. The discovery of the scrolls was a turning point in HB research, and their contribution is immeasurable. This course will be devoted to gaining acquaintance with the study of these scrolls, their content and their contribution to the study of the HB. The course will address the essential questions related to the development of the scriptural text in the late Second Temple period and will help the students acquire skills for the study of the scriptural scrolls.

1. SP and Affiliated Texts: Literary Growth and Textual Criticism

This course will deal with the only comprehensive Hebrew manuscript of the Pentateuch that does not belong to the Masoretic tradition, SP. The course will discuss the latest innovations in research regarding the importance of the SP for the understanding of the textual development of the Pentateuch, while extensively engaging with the origin and characteristics of the pre-Samaritan tradition. Part of the course will be devoted to the reading of the ancient and medieval texts and analyzing the relationship between them.

1. Material Reconstruction of the DSS with Digital Tools

This course aims to impart knowledge and practical tools related to the material reconstruction of fragmentary scrolls from the Judean Desert. The course will combine theory and practice and will aim to give the students the ability to become independent researchers in this field. The first sessions of the course will deal with theoretical issues, while the rest of the sessions will be devoted to familiarity with advanced digital tools for reading and reconstructing the scrolls, which rely on material philology, and which are now the research front in the study of the Judean Desert scrolls.

1. The Book of Job

The course will include a discussion of the theological issues and stylistic features of the Book of Job. The study will be accompanied by reading texts from the Book of Job and emphasis will be placed on philological interpretation and textual issues.