INTRODUCTION

1. THE WAR SCROLL AND THE NEED FOR CONTINUED RESEARCH

After an initial flurry of work on the War Scroll (1QM; M) just after its discovery in 1947, interest in this unique scroll seemed to wane, and much of scholarship merely reiterated the results of prior studies. It has mainly been based on the work of such scholars as Yigael Yadin\(^1\) and Jean Carmignac\(^2\) who preferred to read the text as a unified composition, and who wrote commentaries which sought to highlight the text’s overall thrust. For others, the focus was slightly different, as they sought to understand the text’s compositional history, with Philip Davies’ monograph being the most thorough and careful treatise on the matter.\(^3\) While the work done then was most commendable, it did not have the advantage of access to the materials from Caves 4 and 11,\(^4\) both of which contained texts akin to M, thought to be either copies of the Cave 1 manuscript, or different recensions of the same composition. At first, and rightly so, much of the focus was on the differences these manuscripts preserved from the Cave 1 text. Even so, it took about a decade after the Cave 4 material was published before a critical edition of M was

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published, the basis from which one could attempt to better evaluate both the text’s overall message and its assumed compositional history. Yet even with this new tool in hand, surprisingly little effort has been put into re-examining M in light of the material from Caves 4 and 11. This is not to deny the many articles dealing with this or that particular aspect, but hardly has M been reexamined in its entirety to see if the additional material affects our understanding of its overall message, or if it provides clues about the text’s metamorphosis over time.

Recently, a most useful summary of scholarship on M has been published by Jean Duhaime. Its purpose was not so much to break new ground in the matter, but rather to provide a comprehensive survey of the issues that have been examined about the composition since its discovery. While it is a most welcomed and useful addition to the corpus of literature on M, it also highlights how many questions still remain, and points out the absence of any new attempt to synthesize all the material. Thus, for example, Duhaime’s conclusion about matters pertaining to the composition and genre of M:

The internal evidence from 1QM suggests that this work has probably achieved its actual form through some kind of literary growth. Tensions and duplications between the main parts of the document (cols. 1; 2–9; 10–14; 15–19) indicate that these could have developed separately before being brought together by a redactor who eventually adjusted them, but only to a certain point. There are also clues that some parts of the document (especially 2–9 and 10–14) are not homogeneous and integrate diverse elements which could have been circulated independently, perhaps in various forms. Osten-Sacken, Davies and others generally acknowledge these problems, but propose very different and sometimes opposite solutions to them. The precise history of composition, then, still remains to be clarified. A systematic comparison between 1QM and the various recensions of the War Text from Cave 4 is not available yet.

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7 Duhaime, War Texts, 60.