ARAMAIC TEXTS FROM QUMRAN AND THE
AUTHORITATIVENESS OF HEBREW SCRIPTURES:
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Eibert Tigchelaar

1. Introduction

During the last fifty years it has been held broadly that the Aramaic
texts found at Qumran form a distinct group within the Dead Sea
Scrolls corpus.1 From Józef Milik on, it has been commonly asserted
that, perhaps with some exceptions, the Aramaic texts are non-Essene
or presectarian.2 Another prevalent view is that the Aramaic Testament

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1 See, chronologically: J.T. Milik, Dix ans de découvertes dans le Désert de Juda
(Paris: Cerf, 1957), 95–96; idem, Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea
(trans. J. Strugnell; London: SCM, 1959), 139–40; S. Segert, “Die Sprachenfragen in
der Qumrāngemeinschaft,” in Qumran-Probleme: Vorträge des Leipziger Symposions
Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1963), 315–39 (though in this contribution
he pays more attention to the distinct use of Hebrew); idem, “Sprachliche Bemerkun-
gen zu einigen aramäischen Texten von Qumrân,” ArOr 33 (1965): 190–206 (192,
205–6); J.T. Milik, “Écrits préessénienst de Qumrân: d’Hénoch à Amram,” in Qumrân:
Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu (ed. M. Delcor; Paris-Gembloux: Duculot, 1978),
91–106; K. Beyer, Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck
& Ruprecht, 1984), 157; B.Z. Wacholder, “The Ancient Judaeo-Aramaic Literature
(500–164 BCE): A Classification of Pre-Qumranic Texts,” in Archaeology and History
in the Dead Sea Scrolls (ed. L.H. Schiffman; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 257–81; D.
Dimant, “The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance,” in Time to Prepare
the Way in the Wilderness (ed. eadem and L.H. Schiffman; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 22–58
esp. 32, 35; eadem, “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha at Qumran,” in The Bible and the
Dead Sea Scrolls, Volume Two: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community
Qumran Aramaic Texts and the Qumran Community,” in Flores Florentino: Dead
Sea Scrolls and Other Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martinez
(ed. A. Hilhorst, É. Puech, and E. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 197–205; E. Tigchelaar,
“The Imaginal Context and the Visionary of the Aramaic New Jerusalem,” in Flores
Florentino (ed. Hilhorst, Puech, and Tigchelaar), 257–70 (261); J. Ben-Dov, “Hebrew
and Aramaic Writing in the Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Ancient
Near Eastern Background and the Quest for a Written Authority,” Tarbiz 78 (2008–
2009): 27–60 [Hebrew], vi [English summary]. I saw Ben-Dov’s article only at the final
stage of writing this paper.

2 Thus already Milik, Dix ans, 95–96 and Ten Years, 139–40, even though the
hypothesis of the nonsectarian provenance is often ascribed to Stanislav Segert or
of Levi or Aramaic Levi Document, as well as most other Aramaic Testaments of the Patriarchs are older than Jubilees. These two assumptions are generally correlated to larger hypotheses, such as the revival of Hebrew under the Hasmonaeans, the sectarian use of Hebrew as an antilanguage, or a non-Judaean provenance, like Samaria.}


