PART FOUR

STUDIES ON PARTICULAR TEXTS AND ISSUES
I. Spatial Perspectives

a. Introduction

Within the theme of “Texts and Context” this paper investigates whether there is any information in the Qumran pesharim that might indicate where they were created and used. The principal concern, then, is to reconsider most of the obvious spatial language in the pesharim to discern what sense of space and place they might disclose.

The sense of space and place which was variously stressed by Michel Foucault,¹ and then popularised for the English-speaking world by Edward Soja, especially through his writings on thirdspace,² have provided a welcome balance to two or more centuries of scholarship that have prioritised time over space, chronology over place, history over territory, and eschatology over immanence. Though the terms “space” and “place” are commonly used interchangeably as virtual synonyms, several thinkers have tried to differentiate them or defined them in terms of a spectrum of meaning, in particular suggesting that “space” refers to the undifferentiated infinite, whereas “place” refers to a particular locality or spot.³