A. Hebrew

On the eve of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, the study of pre-midieval Hebrew and Aramaic looked considerably different from what it would look like just a few years later after the publication of the first manuscripts. In this talk I will trace in broad strokes the impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the study of Hebrew and Aramaic, as well as their influence on the question of language contact between Hebrew and Aramaic at the close of the Second Temple Period. I shall begin with the pre-Dead Sea Scrolls era, move on to the years immediately following the publication of the first Scrolls and then on to subsequent scholarship, and I shall conclude with an evaluation of the contribution of the Scrolls to current linguistic research.

I. Pre-1947 Research into Hebrew

Research into Hebrew before 1947 tended to concentrate on three topics:

1) Biblical Hebrew as reflected in the Tiberian tradition of vocalization. This was by far the most widely-studied field of Hebrew.

2) Other traditions of Biblical Hebrew, namely, those reflected in the the Babylonian and Palestinian vocalization systems, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Hebrew traditions underlying the Greek and Latin transcriptions of Hebrew found in the Septuagint, the Hexapla, and the writings of St. Jerome. These traditions, however, received far less attention than the Tiberian tradition.
3) Tannaitic or Mishnaic Hebrew. A quiet revolution was taking place in Palestine as scholars began to shift their focus from the printed editions of the Mishna and related literature to manuscripts and the living oral traditions. This was to lead to a gradual but dramatic change in the grammatical description of the language of the Tannaim.

II. Post 1947 – Present Research into Hebrew

The publication of the first partial descriptions of the Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls took place in 1948 by Eliezer Lipa Sukenik in in Jerusalem, in his book מכתיבת גנוזה, “Hidden Scrolls”, and by Millar Burrows and John Trever in their articles in the American periodicals Journal of Biblical Literature and the Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research. These caught the immediate attention of scholars, which intensified with the full publication by Burrows in 1950 of 1QIsa (the Great Isaiah Scroll) and 1QpHab (Pesher Habakkuk), and in 1951 of 1QS (known as the "Manual of Discipline” or “Community Rule”). Articles soon followed both in Israel and abroad, in which the most striking linguistic peculiarities were noted, namely, the extreme plene orthography, weakening of gutturals, lengthened pronominal forms, pausal-looking forms in context, frequency of lengthened imperfects (that is to say, the cohortative), and the presence of Aramaic-like forms.

The most significant initial linguistic contributions were undoubtedly those of Henoch Yalon, whose studies were not well known in Europe and North America, because he published in Hebrew periodicals that appeared in Palestine and then in the new state of Israel. Yalon went beyond pointing out the surprising forms that deviated from the Tiberian Masoretic norm. In an impressive display of erudition, he gathered parallel phenomena from other sources: Classical Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical
Hebrew, various biblical traditions (not only Tiberian, but also Babylonian, Samaritan, and Greek and Latin transcriptions), Tannaitic Hebrew, Paytanic Hebrew (that is to say the Hebrew of piyyutim, religious poems, the medieval Hebrew reading traditions (Sephardic, Babylonian, Yemenite), works of Hebrew medieval grammarians, and Aramaic. His approach stood in sharp contrast with that found in several other early articles, which tended to focus on the differences between the text of 1QIsa and the Masoretic text and similar readings in the Septuagint and the Targum. Yalon's illuminating comparison to other Hebrew sources determined the path for all future linguistic investigations.

During the first decade of the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Yalon, and others who followed his lead such as Moshe Goshen-Gottstein and Ze’ev Ben-Ḥayyim, showed that the language of the Scrolls supplied missing pieces in the history of ancient Hebrew. As argued by paleographers, most notably Frank Moore Cross and later confirmed by carbon-14 dating, the Scrolls fitted in chronologically between Classical Biblical Hebrew and Tannaitic Hebrew, and linguists demonstrated that they were contiguous to Late Biblical Hebrew, the Samaritan oral and written traditions of the Pentateuch, as well as the original language underlying the medieval exemplars of Ben-Sira, the Damascus Document, and the Aramaic Levi Document from the Cairo Geniza. Though a linear development from Classical Biblical Hebrew to the Dead Sea Scrolls to Tannaitic Hebrew cannot be shown, these corpora do, nonetheless, share isoglosses that prove their geographical and chronological proximity.

Eduard Yechezkel Kutscher's 1959 book on the language and linguistic background of the Dead Sea Scrolls was a tour de force and arguably the most important book written on Hebrew linguistics in the 20th century. Kutscher presented a comprehensive analysis of 1QIsa and other Dead Sea Scrolls in the light of
Classical Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, Tannaitic Hebrew, Greek and Latin transcriptions, Aramaic dialects, and Northwest Semitic in general. He composed a detailed linguistic profile of the language concluding that 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a} was a popular version of the book of Isaiah, whose language reflected "the linguistic situation prevailing in Palestine during the last centuries B.C.E." Or to be more precise, "the linguistic anomalies of I Isa\textsuperscript{a} reflect the Hebrew and Aramaic currently spoken in Palestine towards the end of the Second Commonwealth." He argued that the language of the Scrolls was literary with occasional vernacular features that had penetrated the text. He thought that the scribes of the Scrolls attempted to imitate Late Biblical Hebrew as much as possible and their language "should be considered as the last offshoot of Late Biblical Hebrew."

I think it is accurate to say that Kutscher's view of the language of the Dead Sea Scrolls as essentially literary prevails even today, though it is not shared by all. Already in 1954 both Shelomo Morag and Ze'ev Ben-Ḥayyim emphasized the vernacular elements in the Scrolls. Morag, in discussing the origin of the lengthened independent pronouns יהוּדָה and יהוּדָא, concluded that they were authentic living forms of a previously unknown Hebrew dialect, and Ben-Ḥayyim explained several curious orthographic practices in the Dead Sea Scrolls as reflecting a pronunciation that was similar to that found in the oral tradition of Samaritan Hebrew, and which reflected the pronunciation of Hebrew during the period when Aramaic was the lingua franca in Palestine. Elisha Qimron has continued this approach and for the past twenty years has argued forcefully in his 1976 dissertation and 1986 grammar, and in many articles since then, that the Hebrew in the Scrolls reflects a previously unknown Hebrew dialect.
The linguistic picture that emerged from the first published Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1950's differed significantly from the language of documents from Wadi Murabba‘āt (legal contracts as well as letters, including those written by Shim‘on Bar-Kosiba more commonly known as Br Kochva) and the Copper Scroll (3Q15), which Josef Milik prepared for publication in the early 1960's in DJD II and DJD III. These documents clearly demonstrated that the language of 1QIsa and that of the other scrolls (e.g., 1QS, 1QH) was not the only language-type attested in the Judean Desert. The Bar-Kosiba letters, from a slightly later period than the Qumran material, were written in what was clearly a variety of Tannaitic Hebrew and showed unequivocal signs of being a vernacular text. Milik designated the language of the Copper Scroll 'dialecte mishnique' on the basis of its similarity to Tannaitic Hebrew, in particular, its use of the relative particle -ψ as opposed to the biblical רְשָׁם, and the m.pl. nominal morpheme -in as against the biblical -im.

Another text, which was published officially by Qimron and John Strugnell only in 1994 in DJD X, though it circulated earlier, 4QMMT (Miqṣat Ma‘ašeḥ ha-Torah, originally designated 4QMish), added further to the evidence of linguistic heterogeneity. Qimron and Strugnell summarized the language of 4QMMT as "most closely reflects the Hebrew spoken at Qumran. Its vocabulary resembles that of MH more than that of BH: its grammar resembles BH's more than MH's....Its similarity to MH results from the fact that both MMT and MH reflect spoken forms of Hebrew current in the Second Temple period."

Following their lead, Morag sought to analyze all the Hebrew material from Qumran typologically and concluded that the evidence points to three different language varieties. According to Morag, most Scrolls were written in "General
Qumran Hebrew," 4QMMT in "Qumran Mishnaic," and as for the difficult language of 3Q15 (the Copper Scroll), he choose the neutral term "Copper Scroll Hebrew."

Today, now that all the manuscripts have been published, and with the perspective of sixty years of research, it is clear that the Dead Sea Scrolls have left an indelible mark on Hebrew linguistic research:

Firstly, they have demonstrated beyond doubt that the written Hebrew of the Second Temple period was not monolithic. The literary remains attested in the late books of the Hebrew Bible, Ben-Sira, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, betray varying features and constellations of Classical Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, Tannaitic Hebrew, and Aramaic. The existence of different dialects in ancient Palestine cannot be denied, though it is not certain to what extent all the differences in language between the corpora are dialectal and not due to genre and literary conventions.

Secondly, the Scrolls have focused scholarly discussion on the question of spoken versus written language during the Second Temple Period. After six decades of research, however, the linguistic nature of the Dead Sea Scrolls is still contested: some argue that the Scrolls reveal a literary Hebrew with occasional vernacular forms; others believe that the language in toto reflects a vernacular. All agree that vernacular forms have penetrated the literary texts found at Qumran; the disagreement lies in the extent of the phenomenon. It should be stressed that it is only the Bar-Kosiba letters from Wadi Murabba‘āt and Nahal Ḥever, though from a later period, that provide certain colloquial evidence, and no less important is the fact that the vernacular of Bar-Kosiba differs considerably from the vernacular elements in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Thirdly, the verbal system attested in the language of the Scrolls has, I think, been one of the unnoticed catalyzing factors in the renewed investigation into the
debate over the temporal vs. aspectual nature of the Classical Biblical Hebrew verbal system. Though Hans Reichenbach's 1947 book on relative tense, *Elements of Symbolic Language*, has also played an important role, the evidence for the breakdown of the classical verbal system attested in Late Biblical Hebrew and paralleled in the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., the less frequent and non-classical use of waw-consecutive forms) together with the fact that the Tannaitic verbal system is temporal, has led to a reassessment of the Classical Biblical Hebrew system on the part of some scholars, who argue that the Classical system was in fact temporal from the start.

**B. Aramaic**

Research into pre-medieval Aramaic before the discovery of the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls dealt with

1. The small corpus of Old Aramaic inscriptions.
2. Tiberian Biblical Aramaic.
3. The Elephantine papyri.
4. Targumic Aramaic, both that of Targum Onqelos, on the one hand, and that of the so-called Jerusalem Targumim, on the other hand, i.e., Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (JT1), and the Fragment Targum (JT2).
5. Nabatean and Palmyrene.

The publication of Aramaic Qumran fragments in 1955 by Dominique Barthélemy, Josef Milik, Maurice Baillot, and Michel Testuz, and of the first lengthy
Aramaic manuscript in 1956, 1QapGen (the Genesis Apocryphon) by Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin, ushered in a new era in Aramaic studies since it provided scholars for the first time with documents of early Palestinian provenance. Two years later in 1958, Kutscher described the language of the Genesis Apocryphon in an article that has had a significant impact on Aramaic dialectology. I am referring to “The Language of the Genesis Apocryphon” in Script Hierosolymitana 4. Kutscher stressed the importance of the Palestinian background of the document and examined its linguistic profile in the light of later Palestinian Aramaic corpora and other Aramaic corpora in general. Among other things, he showed the influence of Biblical Aramaic on the language of the Gensis Apocryphon, and also pointed out affinities with later Palestinian Aramaic dialects (Galilean Aramaic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and Samaritan Aramaic) as well as with Targum Onqelos, whose origin had been disputed (Palestinian or Babylonian?). Kutscher demonstrated by means of salient features in the Genesis Apocryphon that Targum Onqelos was roughly contemporaneous, and also originally composed in Palestine, though this view has come under attack in the past two decades by Edward Cook and Christa Müller-Kessler.

Kutscher's comparative Palestinian approach to the language of the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls has continued to guide research in Qumran Aramaic to this day. It views the Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls as the harbinger of later Palestinian Aramaic. Abraham Tal has demonstrated the value of this approach in a series of articles that lay out a linear development of certain grammatical features from the Dead Sea Scrolls up until the Western Neo-Aramaic dialect of Ma'lula. The features he examined include the suffixed nun on verbal and non-verbal forms, demonstrative pronouns, and infinitival forms.
The Aramaic documents from the Dead Sea published before 1960 were literary works. In the beginning of the 1960’s, however, Aramaic legal documents (marriage and divorce contracts, deeds of sale, IOU’s) and letters from two other sites in the Judean Desert (Wadi Murabba‘āt and Naḥal Ḥever) were made accessible, the most famous being the Aramaic letters of Bar-Kosiba. As was the case with the Hebrew letters of Bar-Kosiba, here, too, the language revealed itself to be markedly different from the literary Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as from the legal documents, which by nature are conservative. Kutscher was the first to publish a comprehensive analysis of the Aramaic Bar Kosiba letters from Naḥal Ḥever. As he did with the language of the Genesis Apocryphon, Kutscher stressed the importance of the letters as genuine documents of Palestinian Aramaic (as opposed to the Jerusalem Targumim 1 and 2) and showed their affinities with Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Targum Onqelos. A more recent treatment of the letters can be found in the 2002 volume *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters*, as well as the grammar of Ursula Schattner-Rieser from 2004.

A decade went by and the Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls took a new turn. The publication of 11QtgJob (Job Targum) in 1971 by Johannes van der Ploeg and Adam van der Woude presented scholars with a slightly different type of Aramaic from that of the Genesis Apocryphon. Differences were reflected in orthography, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Various explanations were advanced, some attributing the differences to genre, others to chronology, degree of archaizing, or even provenance. On the basis of word order and dissimilation of gemination by insertion of nun, Takamitsu Muraoka went so far as to argue that it represented an Eastern type of Aramaic and thus was not native to Palestine. This idea dovetailed
with the argument that there was a library at Qumran containing works from elsewhere.

Subsequently published manuscripts and fragments from Qumran have not changed the general picture of the Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The contribution of the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls to the study of Aramaic is no less striking than is the contribution of the Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls to the study of Hebrew. I consider the following to be noteworthy and of lasting importance:

1. The Aramaic reflected in the literary documents does not reflect spoken speech. This was not the initial view of some scholars who claimed early on to have found the spoken language of Jesus. As is true for Hebrew, the Aramaic of the Scrolls is a written language that occasionally reveals colloquialisms. Jonas Greenfield argued that "Qumran Aramaic is also Standard Literary Aramaic but written on Palestinian soil."

2. The concept of "Standard Literary Aramaic," a term coined by Greenfield, helps to explain the strong influence of the Biblical Aramaic of Daniel on the language of the Aramaic Qumran documents.

3. Based on a comparison with the Genesis Apocryphon, the dating and Palestinian provenance of Targum Onqelos is widely, though not universally, accepted.

4. The evidence from Qumran, along with an increase in material from all periods of Aramaic, has led to a replacement of the old periodization of Aramaic (Old, Middle, and Late Aramaic) proposed by Franz Rosenthal into a more detailed chronological division (Old, Official, Middle, Late, and Modern) suggested by Joseph Fitzmyer, in which the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls together with other documents from the Judean Desert, Nabatean, Palmyrene, Hatran, Edessan, Targums Onqelos and
Jonathan, and the Aramaic words found in Josephus and the New Testament, all belong to Middle Aramaic (200 B.C.E – 200 C.E.), a period in which clear local differences distinguish the Aramaic corpora.

C. Hebrew and Aramaic Language Contact

Finally, I turn to the prevailing views on the linguistic situation in Palestine at the end of the Second Temple Period that were current before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The topic aroused considerable interest among scholars of Christianity and Judaism. In the case of the former, there was a strong desire to identify the language or languages that Jesus spoke. At the time, the only way to attempt to recover his language was through the investigation of the Semitisms in the Greek New Testament. For many, Aramaic rather than Hebrew, seemed to be their source. See, e.g., Gustaf Dalman’s influential *Die Worte Jesu* from 1898, as well as the revised English version from 1901 and revised German version from 1930 in which he argued that Jesus spoke Aramaic. Of the dialects known in Dalman's time and available for comparison, he considered the closest to the language of Jesus to be those of Targum Onqelos and the Jerusalem Talmud. Dalman’s view should be contrasted with that of Harris Birkeland in his 1954 book, *The Language of Jesus*, in which the latter argued for the primacy of Hebrew.

For scholars of Judaism, on the other hand, the language question was important for determining whether or not Hebrew was still spoken at the end of the Second Temple period and in the Tannaitic period. The evidence was thought to lie in the late books of the Hebrew Bible and especially in the Mishna. During the 19th century, Abraham Geiger had argued that the Rabbis during the Tannaitic period spoke Aramaic but wrote a Hebrew that had no basis in the spoken reality, a
Other scholars followed him, arguing for the primacy of Aramaic and the artificiality of Hebrew. In 1908 Moshe Hirsch Segal took Geiger and those who adopted his view to task in a seminal article in which he downplayed the effect of Aramaic on Tannaitic Hebrew and demonstrated that features of Tannaitic Hebrew could only be explained if they came from a living language.

Today, the existence of Hebrew documents and of Aramaic documents at Qumran and elsewhere in the Judean Desert, as well as the Hebraisms in the Aramaic documents and the Aramaisms in the Hebrew documents, prove conclusively that speakers in Palestinian before and after the turn of the Common Era were bilingual. Moreover, the similarity between the Bar Kosiba letters and the language of the Tannaim reinforces the view that Tannaitic Hebrew was a living and developing language. This was recognized immediately by Milik in 1961 when he published the Hebrew letters of Bar Kosiba: "La thèse de savants comme Segal, Ben Iehuda et Klausner, d'après lesquels l'hébreu mishnique a été une langue parlée par la population de la Judéa aux époques perse et greco-romaine, n'est pas plus un hypothèse, elle est un fait établi. Plusieurs actes de Murabba'at son rédigés en mishnique." See also Chaim Rabin: “If Mishnaic Hebrew was a spoken language in the first century C.E., we are entitled to assume that it must have been spoken, in some form or other, for some centuries previously...

Nonetheless, one gets the impression that some scholars today still seem to find it difficult to accept the notion that Tannaitic Hebrew, in addition to Aramaic, was a natural vernacular for large numbers of Jews. See, e.g., Fitzmyer: "but pockets of Palestinian Jews also used Hebrew, even though its use was not widespread"; contrast this with Greenfield’s description: “In all likelihood Hebrew was used in the villages of Judea during this period, Aramaic was used in the Jewish urban areas and
in the Galilee, while Greek was used in the Hellenistic cities throughout the land and along the coast. Klaus Beyer wrote surprisingly in 1984: “If one bears in mind the fact that Greek too was used in the larger cities, it is difficult to see where Hebrew could have been still spoken in Jesus’ time... Hebrew had not been spoken in Palestine since 400 B. C.” The desire of others to attribute the use of Hebrew at Qumran mainly to reasons of holiness, or the use of Hebrew by Bar Kosiba primarily to reasons of nationalism, ignore the demonstrated vitality of Tannaitic Hebrew during this period. Those familiar with research into the field of Tannaitic Hebrew and into the dialectal varieties it evidences will surely take strong exception to what appears to be a lingering prejudice from a bygone era.