Abstract:

The Judaean Desert discoveries have revolutionized our understanding of the textual development and transmission of the Hebrew Bible. Accordingly, after almost seventy years of research, four theories of textual transmission have become predominant. Nevertheless, in recent years the need to incorporate Second Temple scribal practices and historical linguistics into current philological methods and text-critical approaches has come to the forefront.

This thesis proposes a linguistically sensitive schema for categorizing variation of Hebrew Bible texts, which serves to incorporate historical linguistic insights alongside existing philological models. Using such a schema this thesis presents three case studies from the Psalms to test whether or not the identification of variant scribal practices, as discernible from computational linguistics, can sufficiently explain the variation found among Judaean Desert psalms witnesses. The conclusion affirms the validity and utility of such a schema and perspective for Hebrew Bible textual studies.