

- ABSTRACT -

Soon after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars such as E.Y. Kutscher began studying Qumran Hebrew (QH). Studies have naturally gravitated toward those aspects of language that can most easily be charted (e.g., grammar, morphology). As a result, syntax has been somewhat neglected. This study attempts to help fill in our understanding of QH syntax. Specifically, I consider word order in the War Scroll (1QM).

Amongst scholars today, the dominant position views Biblical Hebrew (BH) as having Verb-Subject word order, though a minority of scholars holds to a Subject-Verb (SV) model. In 1QM the data can best be explained using the SV model. However, with this model some problems remain, such as the high number (27%) of verb-first clauses and the strange word order patterns of **רוע** and **תקע**. Consideration of these problems leads to a revision of the SV model, which is better able to account for all the word order phenomena in 1QM. The basic word order of 1QM is best described as SV, with subject-verb inversion triggered by the fronting of a non-subject element (for emphasis) or by the use of an intransitive main verb.

Though lengthy discussions of Hebrew word order may seem trivial, there are important ramifications for interpretation. As an example, I briefly consider 1QM 1:1-3, where word order supports the interpretation of Hanan Eshel and the consequent identification of the sons of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin as “violators of the covenant.” I also examine at length an issue critical to translation of 1QM, whether **ל** plus infinitive construct can function as a finite verb. Our understanding of word order suggests that such a phenomenon does occur in 1QM.