

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE NUMBER OF MANUSCRIPTS
AND COMPOSITIONS FOUND AT QUMRAN

1. *Total Number of the Qumran Manuscripts*

Following the near-completion of the texts from the Judean Desert, their overall number can now be assessed, on the basis of the most recent list of the Qumran texts,¹ thus advancing our understanding of the nature and scope of the Qumran corpus. In this calculation, no special attention is paid to the exact find-site of these texts in the various caves (see Table 1), because the few conclusions to be drawn regarding the distinctive character of the collections found in the individual caves are irrelevant to the present analysis.²

The analysis below pertains to Qumran texts written in all languages and scripts, but excludes the three ostraca found at Qumran.³ The majority of the texts are penned in the square script in Hebrew on leather. Details regarding other groups (papyri, texts written in Aramaic, Nabatean-Aramaic, Greek, the paleo-Hebrew script, and in one of the cryptic scripts) are provided in *DJD* XXXIX (see n. 1) and p. 339 above.

¹ *DJD* XXXIX, 27–113 (“List of the Texts from the Judaean Desert,” by E. Tov with the collaboration of S. J. Pfann).

² The only characteristics of the individual caves seem to be: (1) Cave 7 contains only Greek papyrus fragments (19 items), probably mainly biblical texts. (2) Most of the texts from cave 6 are Hebrew papyri (21 papyri out of a total of 31 items), including a few biblical papyri. This collection of texts must have derived from a special source, different from that of the main depository of texts in cave 4. (3) The collection of texts from cave 4, by far the largest among the different caves, probably constituted the main collection of the Qumran community, as no compositions (as opposed to manuscripts) were found in caves 1–3 and 5–11 which were not matched by cave 4 copies. (4) A large percentage of the identifiable texts from cave 11 reflect the Qumran scribal system or are sectarian. See chapter 27*.

³ Included, too, are 17 “Qumran” documents which may have derived from other sites. See A. Yardeni, *DJD* XXVII, 283–317.

Table 1: The Number of Manuscripts (Biblical and Nonbiblical) Found in the Qumran Caves

<i>Cave</i>	<i>No. of Manuscripts</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1	80 (72 + 8 supranumeral texts)	This total is based on the inventory mentioned in n. 1. For cave 1, that list mentions 72 items and eight additional (supranumeral) texts. These additional texts consist of two groups: (1) texts such as 1QpHab, which were never given an inventory number and (2) supranumeral texts such as that published as 1Q70bis.
2	33	
3	15	
4	681 This total includes 570 items + 122 supranumeral texts totaling 692, from which eleven items have been deducted (see the "Notes"). ⁴	The final inventory list in <i>DJD</i> XXXIX contains eleven items, such as 4Q335–336, reflecting identifications by J. T. Milik appearing in earlier lists, which could not be identified on the photographs. These items can now safely be deducted from the overall number of texts, as they are probably covered by compositions added in recent years as supranumeral inventory items (e.g., 4Q468a–d). The number of texts listed here for cave 4 (570) actually reflects 582 inventory numbers, from which twelve opisthographs have been deducted. See remark 6 below.
5	25	
6	33	
7	19	
8	5	
9	1	
10	—	
11	31	
Unid. Caves	6	

These calculations pertain only to the number of manuscripts actually found in the caves, with no reference to the number of scrolls once deposited therein; there are no clues available from which to deduce the number of scrolls originally deposited in the caves.⁵ Calculations of the

⁴ On the other hand, in 1993, H. Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus, Ein Sachbuch* (Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder, 1993) 18 counted 566 scrolls for cave 4. This number was repeated in the English translation, *Library*, 8.

⁵ The only possible clue for the number of the texts deposited in any one cave pertains to cave 8. In that cave, archeologists discovered sixty-eight reinforcing tabs, usually of coarse leather, meant to be tied around the scrolls, together with remains of only five manuscripts. Since each reinforcing tab was once attached to a scroll, this cave may have contained an equal number of scrolls and reinforcing tabs while many of the former subsequently disintegrated. In the latter case, sixty-three manuscripts would have perished in that cave. It is more likely, however, that the cave contained a leather workshop or depository. On

number of texts found at Qumran cannot be objective, since several aspects of the counting are open to different interpretations.

1. It is often unclear whether two or more fragments derived from the same or different scrolls (or whether three fragments reflect one, two, or three different scrolls, etc.).⁶ These and similar doubts are disregarded in the calculations.

2. Because of the fragmentary condition of the papyrus and leather fragments, the total number of compositions preserved will never be known. Our own calculations follow the insights of the scholars who published the texts. In the case of the Qumran papyri, some scholars combined many or possibly too many fragments to form a single item, while others designated almost every individual fragment as a separate composition. Thus, such single inventory items as 1Q69 and 1Q70, both named "1QpapUnclassified Fragments," possibly represent many more texts than these two numbers suggest. Conversely, many minute fragments written in the cryptic A script were presented by S. J. Pfann in *DJD XXXVI* as fifty-four individual texts (4Q249–249z, 250–250j, 298, 313–313c, 317, 324–324i, 362–363b), while they probably represent a much smaller number of manuscripts.

3. In the final publication of 4Q451–582 by É. Puech (*DJD XXXVII*) slight deviations from the previous calculations of these texts may occur. In the meantime, the present calculation of these texts is based on the inventory list in *DJD XXXIX* (see n. 1) and on their temporary publication.⁷

4. The hitherto unidentified fragments published in *DJD XXXIII* together with the unidentified fragments presented in earlier *DJD* volumes are not included in the present calculation as independent entities. It stands to reason that most of them derived from manuscripts published elsewhere, so that they need not be counted separately.

5. The calculations do not refer to a few Qumran manuscripts, which reportedly surfaced recently.⁸

the whole, it seems that there is no basis for any estimates of the number of scrolls once deposited in the caves. The literature does, however, contain an estimate, since according to H. Stegemann, the number of such texts was 1000: *Die Essener*, 115 = *Library*, 79.

⁶ See chapter 10*, § 1. By the same token, are 4QJer^{b,d,e} indeed three manuscripts as was claimed by Tov, *DJD XV*, 171–6, 203–7 and are the Deuteronomy and Exodus segments of 4QDeut^f indeed part of the same manuscript as was claimed by J. A. Duncan in *DJD XIV*, 75–91.

⁷ D. W. Parry and E. Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* (Leiden/Boston: E. J. Brill, 2004–2005).

⁸ See chapter 10*, n. 7.

6. In the inventory in *DJD XXXIX*, twelve opisthographs (that is, texts inscribed on both sides) containing two different compositions on the *recto* and *verso* have separate inventory numbers (e.g., 4Q201 and 4Q338; 4Q415 and 4Q414). These items, together with opisthographs containing the same text on both sides (e.g., 4Q250a; 4Q342) are counted only once. As a result, twelve such items are deducted from the total number of Qumran texts found in cave 4 (see Table 1).

As a result of these and several similar problems, the totals for the manuscripts of the biblical books are only approximate. Taking these difficulties into account and accepting the challenge that all calculations are subjective, we count **929** different manuscripts at Qumran, in twelve cases involving manuscripts containing in addition to the text on the *recto* a different text on their *verso*. Some of the Qumran texts are long or even very long, such as 1QIsa^a and 11QT^a. Others comprised one-sheet compositions, such as 4QTest (4Q175) and personal notes such as 4QList of False Prophets ar (4Q339) and 4QList of Netinim (4Q340) that were written on very small irregularly shaped scraps of leather.

Calculations made one or two generations ago totaled 600 Qumran manuscripts, a number that has grown in our imagination to 700, 800,⁹ 900,¹⁰ and now **929**. Early calculations were based on mere estimates, while in recent years they have been based on inventory lists.

It remains impossible to calculate the number of the scrolls originally deposited in the caves (see n. 5). The fact that the remains of the scrolls probably average a mere 5–10% of the surface of all the compositions found at Qumran does not help us in this regard. One could argue on the basis of this percentage that no more than 5–10% of all scrolls have survived, but as the chances of survival depended on the conditions of the various locations in the caves, it would be difficult to make any calculations. But it does stand to reason that a sizeable number of small compositions could have been lost.

2. *Number of Qumran Compositions Excluding Multiple Copies*

In the counting of the Qumran texts, a basic distinction is made between manuscripts/texts on the one hand and compositions on the other. The Qumran collection is composed of a large number of large and small scroll fragments, which scholars have sorted and combined into a much smaller number of reconstructed individual texts (manuscripts). Each

⁹ E.g., Stegemann, *Die Essener*, 115 = idem, *Library*, 79; Dimant, "Qumran Manuscripts," 22–58, especially 30, 35.

¹⁰ Thus most publications in the 1990s.

text (manuscript) is a unicum that is provided with a separate inventory number, such as the long scroll 11QT^a (the main copy of the Temple Scroll) or 4QJer^e, a minute fragment of Jeremiah, which probably represents the only remaining fragment of that scroll. Viewed differently, the various manuscripts (texts) represent copies of a smaller number of compositions, such as the Temple Scroll represented by four copies or the book of Psalms represented by thirty-six different copies. Certain conventions have been developed in the nomenclature of the texts, but the very concept of what constitutes a copy of a certain composition (as opposed to a related or separate composition) is far from clear.¹¹ In the present analysis we do not express a view on the acceptable range of divergence between the various copies of a composition; we merely follow the lead of earlier scholars who in their editions reflect a certain view on the nature of these compositions and their multiple copies. By so doing, we accept that any decision on determining what constitutes a composition, and what is acceptable for a text to be considered a copy of that composition, is subjective.

In the publication system followed in *DJD*, multiple copies of the same composition are denoted with small raised letters such as 4QGen^a, 4QGen^b, etc. At the same time, when two manuscripts are somewhat more divergent, yet not sufficiently so to be considered separate compositions, they are often described as belonging to the same circle, indicated with capital letters, such as 4QMishmarot A, B, etc. The criteria for the differentiation between the two different systems of presentation have never been formulated, and, frankly, it would be very difficult to do so. The procedure employed would probably differ from one literary genre to the next, and could never be spelled out well because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence. We therefore have to content ourselves with describing the decisions of editors. Three different types of relations are reflected by the present nomenclature:

¹¹ Scholars espouse different opinions on the range of differences between the copies of the same composition acceptable within the framework of what was supposedly a single composition. Usually a large range of divergence between the various copies was considered acceptable on the basis of the assumption that in antiquity greatly diverging forms or recensions of the same composition could have been circulating. Thus the thirty-six Qumran copies of the book of Psalms differ in major aspects, as some of them are almost identical to the medieval Masoretic Psalter, while others present the Psalms in a different sequence, with Masoretic Psalms missing, and noncanonical Psalms added. Some scholars would probably say that there is evidence for at least two different books of Psalms, at least one constituting a prayer book of the Qumran community. However, these different views are not reflected in the nomenclature, since all these compositions are named 'Psalms', such as "1QPs," "2QPs," etc. For a discussion of the different Qumran Psalms scrolls, see chapter 4*, § 2j.

- (1) independent compositions;
- (2) compositions belonging to the same (literary) circle indicated with capital letters, such as 4QapocrJeremiah A, B, etc.;
- (3) copies of single compositions, such as 4QpsEzek^{a,b,c}.

The distinction between these three types of presentation is difficult, and has been executed differently and inconsistently over the course of the publication process. But in spite of the subjectivity involved, the editor's intentions regarding the status of the text are clear, so that we usually know which texts were conceived of as independent compositions, and which as copies of a given composition. But problems remain (see remark 5 below), exemplified by *DJD XXX*.¹²

When turning our attention to the Qumran compositions, we note that the number of individual compositions reflected in the Qumran corpus is much smaller than that of the individual manuscripts (texts), as many of them are represented by multiple copies. The number of Qumran manuscripts listed above (929), based on the evaluations by scholars of the nature and extent of individual manuscripts, gives a subjective indication of the number of manuscripts surviving after 2000 years. These manuscripts can now be subdivided into groups of multiple copies of the same composition and the result of such a calculation provides a subjective impression of the number of independent compositions represented in the Qumran corpus. As independent compositions, we describe all the Qumran texts that have not been indicated by raised numbers, as these raised numbers indicate multiple copies. Among the independent copies are also included the semi-independent texts of the type of 4QMishmarot A, B, etc.

Such a calculation, presented in Table 2, temporarily removes from the counting all multiple copies of a given composition.¹³ The result of such a calculation is a list of all the Qumran compositions of which at least one copy was found in the Qumran caves. For the sake of objectivity, unidentified fragments are included in the counting as a separate group.

The calculation of the number of *independent Qumran compositions* (not

¹² In this volume one group of texts is presented as multiple copies of a single composition, 4QpseudoEzekiel (4QpsEzek^{a-e} [4Q385, 386, 385b, 388, 391]; 4QpsEzek: Unid Frags. [4Q385c]), while a similar group of texts is presented as a literary circle also involving multiple copies of the same composition, 4QApocryphon of Jeremiah: 4QapocrJer A (4Q383), 4Qpap apocrJer B? (4Q384), 4QapocrJer C^{a-f} (4Q385a, 387, 388a 389–390, 387a).

¹³ In the example of the six items mentioned above, 4QpseudoEzekiel (4QpsEzek^{a-e} [4Q385, 386, 385b, 388, 391]; 4QpsEzek: Unid Frags. [4Q385c]) is counted as a single composition.).

including multiple copies) is based on all fragments whose character has been expressed in their name. *Grosso modo* this list contains all the Qumran fragments bearing an identifying name (including such items as 4QFragment Mentioning a Court [4Q440b]), while the unidentified fragments are included as a separate group. This counting could have been based on a list of the raw data included in *DJD XXXIX*, but is more convincing on the basis of the classified list of the Qumran documents presented in the same volume.¹⁴ In this list, the 929 items found in the Qumran caves are subdivided into thirteen different content categories represented in Table 2 below. The advantage of listing the Qumran compositions in this way is that we can easily see the scope of the different categories of compositions. Its drawback is that some individual compositions are listed two or three times in the analysis of Lange-Mittmann, since the categorization of individual texts cannot always be narrowed down to a single literary genre. As a result, the overall number of Qumran compositions cannot be determined simply by adding up the figures in the second column, but certain adaptations have to be made on the basis of the remarks in col. 3.

The classification of Lange-Mittmann refers only to texts or fragments that they consider large enough for a characterization of their content. It therefore disregards 83 very fragmentary pieces listed in category 14.1, which in spite of the fact that they contain such names as 1QApocryphal Prophecy (1Q25), 1QHymnic Composition? (1Q37), cannot be characterized satisfactorily.¹⁵ These 83 fragments are taken into consideration below, together with other unidentified fragments.

Table 2: The Number of Nonbiblical and Biblical Compositions Found in the Qumran Caves Subdivided by Content Category

¹⁴ A. Lange with U. Mittmann-Richert, "Annotated List of the Texts from the Judaean Desert Classified by Content and Genre," *DJD XXXIX*, 115–64.

¹⁵ In the words of Lange-Mittmann (p. 145, n. 87): "While the manuscripts listed below often preserve enough text to provide a general description, their fragmentary state does not allow for any further conclusions. Thus, 5Q10 is named 5QapocrMal but the fact that Mal 1:13-14 is quoted or alluded to in this manuscript does not mean that the unpreserved text of the manuscript contained any references to the book of Malachi. Another example is 1QHymnic Composition? (1Q37). While a hymnic style can certainly be found in the few preserved fragments, it is impossible to conclude that this manuscript attests a collection of hymns. It could also be part of a sapiential composition which includes a creation hymn or a halakhic liturgical prescription like 1QS I 18–II 25."

	Overall Section Total	No. of Compositions Also Appearing Under Other Headings ¹⁶							
		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9
1.1 Parabiblical Texts	49			3	1*			10*	
1.2 Exegetical Texts	28			1				1	
1.3 Religious Law	22	3	1					2	
1.4 Calendrical Texts	33	1*				1		1*	1
1.5 Poetic & Liturgical Texts	56/57				1		1	2	6
1.6 Sapiential Texts	18					1			
1.7 Historical Texts & Tales	7								
1.8 Apocalyptic & Eschatological Texts	27	10*	1	2	1*	2			
1.9 Magic & Divination	10				1	6			
1.10 Documentary Texts	17								
1.11 Treasure List	1								
1.12 Letters	2								
1.13 Scribal Exercises	4								
Total	274/5								
To be deducted: 26 compositions appearing twice and one composition appearing three times in the list.	28								
Sum Total: Nonbiblical Compositions	246/7								
Total: Biblical Books ¹⁷	23								
Total: Biblical Translations and Semi-Biblical Compositions ¹⁸	30								
Sum Total: Biblical Compositions	53								
Overall Total:	299/300								

¹⁶ These numbers refer to the classification by Lange-Mittmann in *DJD* XXXIX.

¹⁷ For the sake of convention, the books of Hebrew Scripture (not including the book of Esther) are recorded anachronistically according to their subsequent canonical status.

¹⁸ The list of biblical compositions is augmented by the following related material (without considering multiple copies): Phylacteries (1), Mezuzot (1), Targum (3), LXX (6 + 19 [cave 7]?).

Qumran Compositions									
1.14 Unclassified Fragments	?								

The data in this table present the number of compositions found in the Qumran caves, pertaining to both the nonbiblical and biblical compositions.

Remarks

1. The calculation of the number of independent compositions is based on the list of Lange-Mittmann in *DJD* XXXIX, the logic of which is clarified here. In sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the list, the names of the compositions are given first, followed (after an *indentation*) by the specific Qumran texts that represent each composition. For example, the composition named Apocryphon of Joshua (see chapter 7* above) is represented by the following Qumran texts: 4QapocrJosh^{a-b}, 4QProphecy of Joshua, 5QWork with Place Names, as well as by Mas apocrJosh (p. 126). According to the logic of that list, all these texts are counted as a single composition, Apocryphon of Joshua. In sections 1.3 onwards, the names of compositions and texts are presented differently, but the listing follows the same principle. For example, according to Lange-Mittmann (p. 142), the eleven texts listed for the War Rule, among which are 4QWar Scroll-like Text B (4Q471), 1QM, 4QpapM^f, and 4QSefer ha-Milhamah (4Q285, 11Q14), all reflect a single composition.

2. According to Lange-Mittmann, 4QNon-Canonical Psalms A and B, listed in section 1.5.2.3, may represent either one or two compositions. This uncertainty is reflected in the overall number of 56–57 compositions for section 1.5.

3. The four items in 1.15 “Manuscripts Not included in This List” (4Q123, 158, 168, 365a) are not included in the calculation, as we follow the logic of that list. According to Lange-Mittmann, 4Q123 (4Qpaleo paraJosh), 4Q158 (4QRP^a), 4Q168 (4QpMic?) are biblical, and 4Q365a is part of the same manuscript as 4Q365.

4. One composition (1 Enoch 72–82) appears under three different headings (1.1, 1.4, 1.8) and is marked with an asterisk in the table. All other compositions listed under the heading “No. of Compositions Also Appearing Under Other Headings” appear in two sections.

¹⁹ See the analysis below.

5. Ninety-six texts in sections 1.1–1.13 are given names denoting a special literary circle, such as 4QApocrPent A, B in which the capital letters A, B (as opposed to small raised characters such as 4QEnoch^{a,b}) indicate their semi-independent status. Terminology of this type is subjective (see above), and on the basis of the assumption that some of these texts may nevertheless be divergent copies of the same composition, the number of *independent* compositions is probably smaller than indicated by the sum total of 246/7 non-biblical compositions.

6. On the other hand, some of the 83 very fragmentary pieces listed in category 1.14 and disregarded in the classification may reflect some Qumran compositions for which these are the only surviving fragments. This may also be the case for the even more fragmentary pieces mentioned in category 14.2 as well as for the unidentified fragments published in *DJD XXXIII*. Also the semi-biblical compositions are likely to comprise less than the figure provided (30), for which see n. 18.

The total number of independent compositions found at Qumran is listed as 299–300. From this number one has to deduct:

1. An unknown number of the 96 texts that have been presented as semi-independent, while actually they may be copies of other compositions.

2. An unknown number of fragments that have been wrongly presented as independent, while they are actually copies of other, known, Qumran compositions.

3. An unknown number of the semi-biblical Greek compositions (see n. 18).

4. A great percentage of the texts in the cryptic scripts, now presented as 54 different items.

To this number one has to add:

Small fragments such as the material presented in the list of Lange-Mittmann (14.1 and 14.2), altogether 175 items, together with the fragments published in *DJD XXXIII*, some of which may present the only evidence for otherwise unknown Qumran texts.

Owing to the lack of clarity described above, it may be safe to work with the assumption of 300 independent compositions found at Qumran,²⁰ each of which has an average of 2.0 copies. Many of these texts are represented by single copies, while for others as many as ten, twenty, or even 36 copies (Psalms) are known. On the whole, the average

²⁰ Because of the numbers to be deducted from the overall figure, probably the real figure is likely to be smaller than 300, possibly no more than 250.

number of copies for the biblical texts (7.7 copies per composition) is much higher than for the nonbiblical texts.²¹

²¹ The calculation, based on the data provided in *DJD* XXXIX, 165–84, pertains to all the biblical books except for Esther (the Minor Prophets are counted as one book).