



The Authority of Early Hebrew Scripture Texts

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Abstract

Our investigation begins with an analysis of the abstract and tangible aspects of Scriptural authority after the first century ce, thus laying the foundation for a discussion of this topic in earlier times. It is much more difficult to define authority at that early stage than in later periods, because Scripture was still in the making. We avoid an analysis of canonization, focusing on ancient scrolls, but realize that scrolls were only copied after a book had obtained an authoritative status. Among the textual witnesses of Scripture, we assume textual plurality, which is particularly noticeable at Qumran, across the board, while the proto-rabbinic movement adhered only to the proto-MT texts, and the Samaritans only to their own Torah. We describe different kinds of Scripture scrolls, assuming that Scripture-like scrolls such as liturgical, excerpted and partial scrolls had no authoritative status, while all other scrolls did. These scrolls were authoritative throughout ancient Israel in spite of the differences between them, although it is unclear which source other than tradition granted that authority. We provide some tentative criteria for assuming an authoritative status.

Keywords

Scripture scrolls, authoritative status, textual plurality

Background

It is well known that early Scripture scrolls, such as those found in the Judean Desert, differ much from one another, as do the MT, SP, and LXX known from later sources. Textual critics deal with these differences, and in so doing advance our knowledge on the textual condition of Scripture in ancient times. Beyond that activity, it is important to know what the authoritative status of these sources was. Often we need this information in order to evaluate the status of certain variants; an understanding of the status of certain texts in a general, historical sense is also significant.

This paper discusses the authoritative status of these ancient scrolls and sources. Were they all authoritative, if we take into consideration the fact that

the scrolls differed from one another? And if all or some of them were authoritative, did they have the same level of authority, and for which communities? Likewise, did individual scrolls have authority before Scripture as a whole became authoritative? These are just some of the questions surrounding the issue of the authoritative status of ancient texts. There are no easy answers to these questions, as it is not easy to define authority. Our study pertains to the authority of Scriptural witnesses and, as a precondition for such authority, the *content* of the Scripture books first needed to have obtained canonical status. Preparing the way for the discussion of ancient texts, we turn first to the authority of the texts in *later* periods. All medieval and modern Scripture manuscripts and editions carry authority because Scripture itself carries authority. That abstract authority is thus automatically transferred to all Scripture representatives, which in the case of the Hebrew Bible are:

- Hebrew manuscripts
- manuscripts of the primary versions, LXX, Targumim, Peshitta, Vulgate
- manuscripts of the secondary translations, in the case of the LXX, into Latin (the *Vetus Latina*), Armenian, Coptic etc.
- printed editions of the above sources and of modern translations

In all cases, Scripture was granted an authoritative status by a religious community. These two entities are closely connected: without such a community no authority was granted after the turn of the era. This authority was intended to be valid permanently, but history has taught us that the status of texts changed over the course of generations.

In *Judaism*, as in Islam, authority applied only to the text in the source language, although the Targumim may be considered an authoritative Jewish translation.¹ After the first century CE, the authoritative Hebrew Bible was circulated only in the form of the Masoretic Text (MT), preceded by the unvocalized proto-Masoretic Text that also carried authority. This authoritative textual tradition took two forms in the Middle Ages: (1) liturgical consonantal scrolls, and (2) codices that included vowels and accents. All these sources were authoritative, regardless of the minor differences between the manuscripts and editions. In this regard, the position of the vowels and accents is problematic since they were added to the consonantal text at a very late time,

¹ In rabbinic literature and Medieval Jewish exegesis, Targumim were considered to carry the authentic explanation of Scripture and, as such, were included in the rabbinic Bibles, starting with the first rabbinic Bible of 1516-1517.

in the 7th-9th centuries. The traditional Jewish position is that these elements reflect the authoritative oral tradition of the Hebrew Bible, given by God to Moses together with the written text in the case of the Torah. Until a certain period, this was also the official Christian position.²

In Judaism, religious authority is unrelated to scholarly principles. Thus, although scholars determined that details in the Dead Sea Scrolls are more authentic than the medieval text of MT, that position did not diminish the authoritative status of MT in religious circles. Accordingly, for organized Judaism, belief in MT has not been shaken since the first century CE. Accordingly, MT serves as the authoritative text of Hebrew Scripture for all streams of Judaism.³ The Jewish Conservative and Reform movements have not produced any rival editions that include even a few alternative readings where the MT seems to be in error. Such so-called corrections of MT have been inserted only in modern translations. Thus the *NJPS* translation, which is often considered to reflect the views of Conservative Judaism,⁴ reflects MT,⁵ although the translators allowed for the inclusion of some alternative readings, placed only rarely in the text,⁶ and more frequently in the notes.⁷

² The late origin of vocalization is evident from its absence in the Judean Desert scrolls. It was not until the 16th century that a serious attempt was made to refute the supposition of the divine origin of the vocalization. See Elias Levita, *Massoreth Ha-Massoreth* (Venice: D. Bomberg, 1538; ed. C. D. Ginsburg: London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1867; repr. New York: Ktav, 1968). The discussion aroused by Elias Levita's book is described by C. Steuernagel, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament mit einem Anhang über die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1912) 84 ff. and B. J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions: The Hebrew Text in Transmission and the History of the Ancient Versions* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1951) 68-9.

³ This situation explains the lack of interest in the biblical Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Dead Sea Scrolls in general in Orthodox Jewish circles.

⁴ תרגום *JPS Hebrew—English Tanach, The Traditional Hebrew Text and the New JPS Translation* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999).

⁵ Preface, pp. xv, xix, xx. In his description of the first *JPS* translation of the Torah (1962), H.L. Ginsberg, "The Story of the Jewish Publication Society's New Translation of the Torah," *BT* 14 (1963) 106-13 (110-11) described the policy of the Torah committee as: "... where we have been convinced that the text is corrupt, we have made do with the received text if it was at all possible to *squeeze out of it* <my italics, E.T.> a meaning not too far removed from what we thought might have been the sense of the original reading; and in some of the more hopeless cases—and there are quite a few of them—we have added a note to the effect that the Hebrew is obscure." Ginsberg thus admits that the translators manipulated the evidence so as to produce an acceptable meaning for difficult or corrupt passages in MT.

⁶ See the bracketed additions in 1 Sam 2:11 and Judg 16:2 and the use of dots in Gen 4:8 and 1 Sam 13:1.

⁷ E.g. Gen 4:8; Judg 16:2; 1 Sam 13:1. For a discussion, see my *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (3rd rev. ed.; Minneapolis/Assen: Fortress Press, 2012) 374. Henceforth: *TCHB-3*.

It remains a matter of debate as to when MT was accepted as authoritative by the proto-rabbinic movement. Early evidence antedating the Qumran scrolls is lacking. The existence of MT-like texts from Qumran can be traced back to the middle of the 3rd century BCE, although at that time MT had not yet become the sole text throughout Israel.⁸ After the first century CE, this acceptance was complete. In the biblical quotations in rabbinic literature, MT was so fixed as an authoritative text within Judaism, that even its spelling was considered sacred, since various *halakhot*, “religious instructions,” were determined on the basis of the precise spelling of words.⁹

The practices applied to Hebrew Scripture by *Christianity* differed from those current in Judaism. The choice of the authoritative text of the Christian Old Testament underwent changes, and furthermore it was and is not tied to a single tradition as in Judaism. Initially, the Gospels and Paul quoted from both the LXX (Old Greek) and one of its early revisions, *kaige*-Theodotion.¹⁰ For Paul, both were authoritative. The LXX started off as a Jewish enterprise, and was accepted by early Christians when they were still a Jewish community. Christianity continued to regard the LXX as Scripture, although it lost its leading position for several centuries to the Vulgate. At a later stage, the Reformation introduced a return to the Hebrew source, at the cost of the LXX and the Vulgate. The Protestants thus turned to MT in Hebrew or translation, in the latter case also accepting somewhat eclectically some details from other versions.¹¹ Roman Catholics remained loyal to the Vulgate and the LXX, in that sequence, although in recent centuries they have also accepted MT.¹² The new Vatican edition of the Vulgate shows the extent to which Rome remained loyal to that translation.¹³ Today, there are even voices calling upon Christianity

⁸ See *TCHB*-3, 30-31.

⁹ For example, the number of the walls of the *sukkah* (four) is determined according to the majority spelling סוכות (*b. Sukk.* 6b), disregarding a spelling סוכות with five letters or סכת (Neh 8:15) with three letters.

¹⁰ See my study “The Septuagint between Judaism and Christianity,” in *The Septuagint and Christian Origins—Die Septuaginta und das frühe Christentum* (ed. T. S. Cauley & H. Lichtenberger; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 3-25.

¹¹ For details, see my study “The Textual Basis of Modern Translations of the Hebrew Bible: The Argument against Eclecticism,” in *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, and Qumran: Collected Essays* (TSAJ 121; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 92-106.

¹² The papal encyclical “*Divino Afflante Spiritu*: Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on Promoting Biblical Studies, Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of *Providentissimus Deus*, September 30, 1943” allows for the correction of “errors” in MT, although it is vague on the sources used for the “improvement” of that version. For a discussion and the text of this encyclical, see my “Textual Basis,” 101.

¹³ *Nova Vulgata, Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio* (2nd ed.; Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998).

to return to the LXX based on the argument that this was the Scripture of early Christianity.¹⁴

For the NT, Protestants accepted the eclectic text composed by Erasmus in 1515-1516¹⁵ and remained loyal to the principle of eclecticism to this day. The Erasmus edition was used as the central edition until the end of the 18th century, when the first “modern” eclectic editions were published. These editions were constantly updated to conform to the changing views of leading textual critics.¹⁶ This practice has the blessing of NT scholars and the general public alike. It is thus acceptable within Christianity to have a different authoritative text in every decennium, since all the Nestle-Aland editions differ from one another in major and minor details. Christianity thus adopted an eclectic approach to both Testaments and is not linked to a single authoritative text, as is Judaism.

Authority of Hebrew Scripture in Antiquity

Moving now to the period preceding the first century CE, it is much more difficult to analyze authority because Scripture was still in the making. In our analysis, we distinguish between the abstract concept of the authority of Scripture in antiquity and that of its tangible representatives, viz., ancient scrolls and manuscripts. Initially, the individual biblical books obtained canonical

¹⁴ M. Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint* (JSOTSup 206; Copenhagen International Seminar 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) argued that the final form of MT was fixed after the beginning of Christianity and should therefore not be used in a Church environment. According to this view, the Greek Old Testament text used in the New Testament, which is close to that of the uncials of the LXX, should remain the determining form of Scripture; however, the Old Testament quotations in the NT are in fact often closer to MT than those uncials.

¹⁵ Erasmus' text, composed eclectically from several late minuscules, was idiosyncratic and sometimes erroneous, but nevertheless came to be accepted as the “textus receptus.” See B. M. Metzger & B. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (4th ed.; New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 137-64; D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate, A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980) 33-7; J. L. H. Kraus, *Beyond What Is Written: Erasmus and Beza as Conjectural Critics of the New Testament*, Ph.D. diss., Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2004.

¹⁶ The leading editions in 2011 are Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum graece* (ed. E. Nestle, E. Nestle, K. Aland, B. Aland, et al.; 27th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993); *The Greek New Testament* (ed. B. Aland, K. Aland, et al.; 4th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 2001).

status, and subsequently that authority was transferred to scrolls and manuscripts.

The oldest part of Hebrew Scripture, the Torah, perceived as God's word, carried authority for all later generations, as is visible in the later Scripture books. The Torah influenced the prophets, exemplified by the influence of Leviticus on Ezekiel and that of Deuteronomy on Jeremiah. Likewise, the earlier historical books carried authority in the eyes of the Chronicler, who reworked them. We will not discuss the canonization process, but will focus instead on textual aspects.

Before the time of the earliest textual witnesses from Qumran, that is, before the middle of the third century BCE, authoritative scrolls were circulating that contained different textual forms. It is necessary to make this assumption if the LXX of the Torah was indeed prepared in 285 BCE, since its *Vorlage* differed from MT, which probably already existed at that time. However, we have no tangible evidence for textual plurality in earlier periods.

Different Types of Scripture Scrolls in Ancient Israel

In our discussion of the status of Scripture scrolls before the first century CE, we limit ourselves to the known evidence, thus necessarily focusing on the Judean Desert scrolls. The main question is, were *all* the copies of Scripture scrolls found in the Judean Desert considered authoritative? There is no unequivocal answer to this question, since there is no consensus among scholars regarding the nature of many "biblical" scrolls.

Authoritative scrolls are scrolls that were considered to contain "Scripture," which one could study, from which one could quote as a religious authority, which one could read in religious gatherings or in one's personal meditation, and which formed the basis for religious practice, especially *halakhah*. I distinguish between such authoritative Scripture scrolls and scrolls with scriptural content, that is, Scripture-like scrolls, that were not authoritative, viz., excerpted or partial Scripture scrolls and liturgical scrolls. However, for many scholars, these liturgical and partial scrolls are also considered Scripture, thus complicating the analysis. We distinguish between three types of scrolls.

1. *Authoritative Scripture scrolls*. In the Qumran corpus, scholars count 210-212 fragmentary Scripture scrolls found in eleven Qumran caves.¹⁷ Most of the fragments are small, containing no more than one-tenth of a biblical book,

¹⁷ For details, see my *TCHB-3*, 96.

while 1QIsa^a contains the complete text of Isaiah. Several scrolls contain more than one book of the Torah, usually two, and in a few cases 3, 4, or 5 books.¹⁸ As a result, the Qumran scrolls represent 224-226 copies of biblical books. The total number of 210-212 Scripture scrolls also includes the following two groups, which in my thinking need to be removed from the main group, reducing the overall number of Scripture scrolls by some 40.

2. *Excerpted and partial Scripture scrolls.* A small group of scrolls covering only parts of books were probably meant for personal use:¹⁹ 4QExod^d, covering Exod 13:15-16 and 15:1, thus omitting the narrative sections 13:17-22 and ch. 14; 4QCant^a, lacking Cant 4:7-6:11 and 4QCant^b, lacking Cant 3:6-8, 4:4-7.²⁰

According to G. J. Brooke, also 4QEzek^a (Ezek 10:5-15, 10:17-11:11; 23:14-18, 44-47; 41:3-6) may reflect an excerpted text.²¹ Among the liturgical scrolls are several ones that probably contained only parts of books. See below, group 3. The freedom of the Canticles scrolls in small details²² leads us to believe that also its large minuses derived from their shortening by a scribe who was led mainly by his literary taste. The shortening of the text in 4QExod^d was based on the choice of the subject matter.

3. *Liturgical Scrolls (or Personal Copies).* The liturgical character of scrolls is presumed for several scrolls of the Torah and Psalms. The assumption of such a use for these scrolls is more commonly accepted for the Torah scrolls than for the Psalms scrolls. In the Torah we can also easily posit an opposition between the liturgical and other scrolls, while in the Qumran Psalms there is no visible opposition between the presumed liturgical scrolls and an MT

¹⁸ The following scrolls contain more than one biblical book: 4QGen-Exod^a and 4Qpaleo Gen-Exodⁱ; 4QRP^a (Genesis, Exodus); 4QRP^b (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); 4QRP^c (Genesis-Deuteronomy) 4QExod^b contains Genesis; 4QExod-Lev^f; 4QRP^d (Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); 4QLev-Num^a; 4QDeut^g includes Exodus. See Tov, *TCHB-3*, 96.

¹⁹ See E. Tov, "Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts from Qumran," in id., *Hebrew Bible*, 27-41; L. Doering, "Excerpted Texts in Second Temple Judaism: A Survey of the Evidence," in *Selecta colligere II: Beiträge zur Technik des Sammelns und Kompilierens griechischer Texte von der Antike bis zum Humanismus* (ed. R. M. Piccione and M. Perkams; Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2005) 1-38 offered a very broad and helpful analysis of all excerpted texts.

²⁰ If this view is correct, the note in the apparatus about the lack of these segments in *BHQ* may be misleading.

²¹ "Ezekiel in Some Qumran and New Testament Texts," in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Madrid, 18-21 March, 1991* (ed. J. Treballe Barrera & L. Vegas Montaner; STDJ 11; Leiden/Madrid: Brill, 1992) I.317-37 (319).

²² See E. Tov in E. Ulrich et al., *Qumran Cave 4.XI: Psalms to Chronicles* (DJD XVI; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000) 201, 208, 211-12.

psalter. Presumably the Qumran community accepted such a psalter, identical or similar to MT, as authoritative.²³ Since the argument of liturgical scrolls is not without doubts, it is also possible that these scrolls were prepared for personal use.

In the case of the Torah, a number of "Scripture" texts from the Judean Desert only contain segments of chapters that are included in the *tefillin* and *mezuzot*,²⁴ as well as Deuteronomy 8,²⁵ and are therefore often described as liturgical.²⁶ The argument for their liturgical use is supported by the small size of several scrolls,²⁷ precluding the possibility that they would have contained the complete biblical book. The liturgical use of these scrolls would have included devotional reading from these chapters, alone or in religious gatherings:

4QDeutⁱ, containing only sections from Deuteronomy 5, 8, 10, 11, 32 and Exodus 12, 13;

4QDeut^{kl}, containing only sections from Deuteronomy 5, 11, 32;

4QDeutⁿ, covering Deuteronomy 8, 5 (in that sequence);

4QDeut^a, probably covering only Deuteronomy 32;²⁸

Among the liturgical Psalms scrolls three scrolls include only the long acrostic Psalm 119: 4QPs^g, 4QPs^h, 5QPs. It can be no coincidence that this Psalm, which has played an important role in Jewish liturgy and that of the Orthodox

²³ The authors of the *peshtarim* considered the biblical scrolls of the Prophets and the Psalms authoritative (see below). Further, the Psalms are quoted in various sectarian writings (see a list in Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 220), introduced by the formula אֲשֶׁר אָמַר דְּוִיד in 4QCatena A (4Q177) 12-13 I 2.

²⁴ The *tefillin* and *mezuzot* are no regular biblical texts, although they consist of Torah passages, separated by a *vacat* in the middle of the line or a blank line. The range of textual variation in these texts reflects the known variants between biblical manuscripts, and is not specific to these excerpted texts. At the same time, the juxtaposition of these texts is not used in text-critical analyses, and is not noted in textual apparatuses. The Scripture chapters from which excerpts are included in the Qumran copies of these *tefillin* and *mezuzot* are: Exodus 12, 13; Deuteronomy 5, 6, 10, 11, 32. See Tov, "Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts," 30-32.

²⁵ The assumption of liturgical use is based on an argument from silence, as other fragments of these scrolls may have been lost. Furthermore, in no case has a join between chapters been preserved in the scrolls mentioned below.

²⁶ For references to the liturgical use of some texts, see J. A. Duncan, *DJD* XIV (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) 79 and M. Weinfeld, "Grace after Meals," *JBL* 111 (1992) 427-40.

²⁷ 4QDeutⁱ: 14 lines; 4QDeut^{kl}: 12-14 lines; 4QDeutⁿ: 11 lines; 4QPs^g: 8 lines.

²⁸ For the textual critic, this scroll contains very important readings, because it was copied from a very good copy of that book. See *TCHB*-3, 249.

Church until this day, was transmitted in separate scrolls already in the Qumran times, probably for liturgical purposes.

A relatively large group of additional psalm scrolls from Qumran, including both canonical and “apocryphal” psalms, may be considered liturgical. At least five groups of scrolls and individual scrolls²⁹ differ from the known Psalters in both the addition of non-canonical psalms and the omission and altered sequence of the canonical psalms³⁰ (for details on all these, see Flint and Lange).³¹ Several scholars present these Psalms scrolls as biblical texts,³² and in their opinion they present a very different picture of the biblical Psalter,³³ especially Flint in an extensive study.³⁴ However, the view held by other scholars

²⁹ Due to their fragmentary condition not all of the 36 Qumran scrolls can be ascribed to the five groups.

³⁰ These deviations occur especially in the last two books of the Psalter (Psalms 90-150): (1) 11QPs^a, also reflected in the more fragmentary 4QPs^c and 11QPs^b; (2) 4QPs^a and 4QPs^d; (3) 4QPs^b; (4) 4QPs^d; (5) 4QPs^f. For example, both 4QPs^a and 4QPs^d omit Psalm 32, and the former reflects the following sequence: 38, 71; 4QPs^d has the following sequence: 147, 104, while 4QPs^e has the sequence 118, 104 and 105, 146. See A. Lange, *Handbuch der Textfunde vom Toten Meer, I: Die Handschriften biblischer Bücher von Qumran und den anderen Fundorten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 583.

³¹ P. W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (STDJ 17; Leiden: Brill, 1997); Lange, *Handbuch*, 415-50.

³² The position of J. A. Sanders was formulated with regard to 11QPs^a which he published in *DJD* IV (1965), but he also referred to the Psalms scrolls from cave 4 in “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) Reviewed,” in *On Language, Culture and Religion: In Honor of Eugene A. Nida* (ed. M. Black and W. A. Smalley; The Hague: Mouton, 1974) 79-99 (98). G. H. Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Manuscripts and the Consecutive Arrangement of Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter,” *CBQ* 45 (1983) 377-88; id., *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985) and Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls* dealt extensively with the Psalms scrolls from all the caves. See further Ulrich (n. 34). It is unclear whether any of the Qumran Psalms scrolls unequivocally supports the sequence of the MT-psalter against these Qumran collections (see Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 158), but this fact does not affect the nature of the scrolls that deviate from MT.

³³ Like Sanders and Wilson at an earlier stage of scholarship, Flint (see note 31) suggested that books 1-3 (Psalms 1-89) of the collection of Psalms were finalized before books 4-5 (Psalms 90-150) and that the major differences among the various Qumran psalm collections reflect different crystallizations of the biblical book. According to Sanders and Wilson, a comparison of MT and 11QPs^a shows that alternative collections of Psalms circulated before the 1st century CE.

³⁴ This view is reflected not only in Flint’s monograph mentioned in n. 31, but also in the publications by P. W. Skehan, E. Ulrich, and P. W. Flint of the cave 4 texts as biblical Psalms in E. Ulrich et al., *Qumran Cave 4.XI: Psalms to Chronicles* (DJD XVI; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000) and in E. Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (VTSup 134; Leiden/Boston, 2010) with an extensive notation of the deviations of the sequence of all the Psalms scrolls from MT. This view is also reflected in E. Ulrich, “Multiple Literary Editions: Reflections toward a Theory of the History of the Biblical Text,” in id., *The Dead Sea Scrolls and*

that these scrolls are liturgical, and therefore irrelevant to the analysis of authoritative Scripture scrolls, is preferable.³⁵ The arguments used in favor of that position pertain especially to the longest scroll, 11QPs^a.³⁶ The inclusion in col. XXVII of “David’s Last Words” (2 Sam 23:[1-]7) and of the sectarian prose composition listing David’s compositions preclude the characterization of that scroll as a Scripture scroll of Psalms. Other scholars, especially Wacholder and Dahmen, likewise deny the scriptural character of 11QPs^a by emphasizing its eschatological and Davidic character.³⁷

Liturgical scrolls were used for a specific purpose, devotional reading, alone or in religious service. Although they contained Scripture texts, the Qumran covenanters would not have considered them adequate for their Bible study or

the Origins of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI/Leiden: Eerdmans/Brill, 1999) 99-120 (115-20). As for Skehan, I wonder whether this scholar, whose contribution to *DJD* was published posthumously, would have agreed to the emphasis on the biblical character of the cave 4 scrolls. In his own research, Skehan stressed that the scrolls from cave 4, like those from cave 11, do not provide information on the growth of the biblical book of Psalms: “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” in *Qumrân, Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (ed. M. Delcor; BETL 46; Paris-Gembloux/Leuven: Duculot/University Press, 1978) 163-82 (164), critically reviewed by Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 17.

³⁵ S. Talmon, “Pisqah Be’emša’ Pasuq and 11QPs^a,” *Textus* 5 (1966) 11-21; M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, “The Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a): A Problem of Canon and Text,” *Textus* 5 (1966) 22-33; P.W. Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” *CBQ* 35 (1973) 195-205; M. Haran, “11QPs^a and the Canonical Book of Psalms,” in *Minhah le-Nahum—Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honour of His 70th Birthday* (ed. M. Brettler and M. Fishbane; JSOTSup154; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 193-201; B. Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (trans. J. Chipman; STDJ 12; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 16-7; H.-J. Fabry, in *Der Psalter im Judentum und Christentum* (ed. E. Zenger; HBS 18; Freiburg: Herder, 1998) 137-63 (153-61); E. Chazon, “Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam; Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 2.710-15 (712); D. K. Falk, “The Contribution of the Qumran Scrolls to the Study of Ancient Jewish Liturgy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. T. H. Lim and J. J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 617-51 (632). Similar views by other scholars are mentioned in Lange, *Handbuch*, 427-30.

³⁶ (1) The added antiphonal refrains to psalm 145 in col. XVI; (2) more in general, cols. XV-XVII represent a separate liturgical collection; (3) col. II 1-5 probably represents a hymn based on Psalm 146:9-10 and other Psalms; (4) the addition of the extra-canonical hymns “Plea for Deliverance” (col. XIX), “Apostrophe to Zion” (col. XXII), and the “Hymn to the Creator” (col. XXVI); (5) the inclusion of the complete text of Psalm 119 points to the scroll’s liturgical character because of the prominent place of that psalm in the liturgy (see above).

³⁷ B. Z. Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter 11Q Psalms^a,” *HUCA* 59 (1988) 23-72; Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 313-18 (Dahmen considers this scroll a manual, based on MT, containing psalms to be used by the future Davidic Messiah); M. Kleer, “Der liebliche Sänger der Psalmen Israels,” *BBB* 108 (1996) 204-317; G. H. Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) and the Canonical Psalter,” *CBQ* 59 (1997) 448-64; Lange, *Handbuch*, 443.

as a source for biblical quotation. The free approach towards the content of these scrolls comes to light in the addition of the prose composition in 11QPs^a XXVII and of many non-canonical psalms. These scrolls should not be used in canonical and literary criticism of Hebrew Scripture,³⁸ while their small deviations from MT are constantly used in text-critical analysis. These scrolls do not provide reliable information about the growth of the biblical book of Psalms, just like the liturgical Torah scrolls are irrelevant for the literary analysis of the Torah.

Authority of the Different Types of Scrolls³⁹

While the mentioned liturgical, excerpted and partial scrolls probably were not considered authoritative Scripture texts, all others were. Phrased differently, Scripture-like scrolls were not authoritative, while Scripture scrolls were. However, how can we prove this point? One person's Scripture-like scroll is another's Scripture.⁴⁰ I suggest that the default assumption should be that most Qumran scrolls were authoritative.

This assumption implies that the individual scrolls carried authority before the Scripture collection as a whole became canonical. By itself, that is not a difficult position. For example, when Jeremiah and Ezekiel based their writings on Torah scrolls, the collection as a whole did not yet exist. Likewise, the

³⁸ Thus also Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 314, referring to 11QPs^a. If the large deviations from MT in the Qumran Psalms scrolls are taken as authoritative Scripture, they would have to be recorded in the critical apparatuses of Scripture editions, as was indeed done by Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls*. Ulrich records all the different Psalm sequences, and even the non-canonical hymnic compositions such as the Apostrophe of Zion and the prose composition in col. XXVII named "David's Compositions" (pp. 694-726).

³⁹ See the various studies included in the volume edited by M. Popović, *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. M. Popović; JSJSup 141; Leiden/Boston, 2010), especially F. García Martínez, "Rethinking the Bible-Sixty Years of Dead Sea Scrolls Research and Beyond," on pp. 19-36 and my own study "From 4QReworked Pentateuch to 4QPentateuch (?)," on pp. 73-91. See also the studies included in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period* (ed. H von Weissenberg et al.; BZAW 419; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011) and G. J. Brooke, "The Rewritten Law, Prophets and Psalms: Issues for Understanding the Text of the Bible," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (ed. E. D. Herbert and E. Tov; London: British Library & Oak Knoll Press in association with The Scriptorium: Center for Christian Antiquities, 2002) 31-40.

⁴⁰ Based on a remark by M. Bernstein quoted in n. 59. M. Segal, "Between Bible and Rewritten Bible," in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. M. Henze; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005) 10-29 (20-6) suggested a helpful list of criteria for the distinction between Scripture and "Rewritten Bible."

Chronicles based himself on Samuel-Kings before the complete collection of Hebrew Scripture existed.

We suggest that all Qumran scrolls that we regard as Scripture were authoritative for the Qumran community, and that they were likewise considered authoritative by all persons and communities in ancient Israel, although it is unclear which source other than tradition granted that authority. (An important exception should be made for the proto-rabbinic movement that accepted only the proto-Masoretic text, and the Samaritan movement that accepted their own version of the Torah, see p. 294.) This view is based on the following arguments:

- (1) The fact that the scrolls were copied, and in such quantities, probably implied their authoritative status (“Antiquity implies authority.”);⁴¹
- (2) All assumed literary development presupposes that the second stage considered the first stage authoritative: the Deuteronomist considered the earlier scrolls of Joshua-Kings authoritative, and so did the MT edition of Jeremiah regarding the earlier edition included in the *Vorlage* of the LXX and 4QJer^{b,d}, etc.
- (3) *Subsequent authoritative tradition.* If a Judean Desert scroll forms part of a textual tradition or family that *subsequently* was considered authoritative, the scroll itself was probably already authoritative in Qumran times. This argument pertains to proto-Masoretic scrolls found in the Judean Desert sites other than Qumran (below, p. 293). The same argument may be used with regard to the MT-like Qumran scrolls that are somewhat more distant from the medieval tradition. The proto-Samaritan scrolls from Qumran must have enjoyed the same authority as the later SP, albeit granted by different communities. Likewise, the LXX scrolls from Qumran were authoritative, and so were the early Greek revisions of the OG towards MT. The few *Hebrew* Qumran scrolls that were close to the LXX (like 4QJer^{b,d}) must have been authoritative since otherwise the Greek translator would not have used them for his translation. At the same time, this argument cannot be made for many of the Qumran scrolls.
- (4) *Quotation.* A scroll was considered authoritative within a community if its members quoted it systematically in one of their writings. Thus, if we can prove that 1QIsa^a, probably copied by a sectarian scribe, was quoted exclusively in a Qumran composition and not the MT-like 1QIsa^b, it can

⁴¹ K. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2007) 34.

be assumed that the former source was considered authoritative by the scribe of that Isaiah scroll. However, only some data are available in this area.⁴² Lange,⁴³ analyzing quotations from the Torah, finds that the Qumran compositions reflect a variety of sources.

- (5) In individual cases, quotation from Scripture shows that the Qumran authors ascribed authority to specific Scripture texts:
- (a) The pluralistic approach of the author of the sectarian composition 4QTestimonia (4Q175) shows which scrolls he considered authoritative, while the fact that he chose scrolls of a *differing* textual nature may indicate that he considered all Scripture scrolls authoritative, but only had access to some of them. This author combined three extensive scriptural quotations with a quotation from a non-biblical composition, 4QPsalmsJoshua. Each of the three scriptural quotations reflects a different sort of text. The first biblical quotation is close to SP in a major way, namely the combination of two Scripture verses,⁴⁴ while the third one, from Deut 33:8-11, is very close to 4QDeut^b, a textually independent (non-aligned) text, and may have been based on that scroll or a similar one.⁴⁵ The second quotation, Num 24:15-17, is of undetermined character.
 - (b) The authors of the *pesharim* considered the biblical scrolls of the Prophets and the Psalms authoritative. Otherwise they would not have appended their sectarian explanations to the biblical text.

⁴² For example, Isa 6:10 השמן MT LXX] 1QIsa^a השם (sic) = 1QH^a XV 6, XXI 6; 57:15 להחיות MT] 1QIsa^a לחיות = 1QH^a XVI 37; 66:2 ונבה MT] 1QIsa^a ונבאי = 1QH^a XXIII 160 and 1QM XI 10. See Lange, *Handbuch*, 288. By the same token, in several cases, 4QTanh (4Q176) is close to 1QIsa^a against MT, although more often this composition disagrees with the Isaiah scroll. For examples of agreements of 4QTanh (4Q176) = 1QIsa^a, see H. Lichtenberger in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B, Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents* (Tübingen/Louisville: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 332 (Isa 49:13, 16); 338-40 (Isa 54:6, 8, 9).

⁴³ *Handbuch*, 158-68.

⁴⁴ The nature of the first excerpt creates a somewhat unusual impression as it seemingly quotes from two pericopes in Deuteronomy (MT Deut 5:28-29, 18:18-19). However, in fact, it contains merely one text that, as in SP (Exod 20:21), is composed of two pericopes that occur in different places in MT. 4QRP^a (4Q158) frg. 6 likewise juxtaposes the same texts.

⁴⁵ See E. Tov, "The Contribution of the Qumran Scrolls to the Understanding of the LXX," in *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings: Papers Presented to the International Symposium on the Septuagint and Its Relations to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Writings, Manchester, 1990* (ed. G. J. Brooke and B. Lindars; SBLSCS 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 11-47 (31-5); J. A. Duncan, "New Readings for the 'Blessing of Moses' from Qumran," JBL 114 (1995) 273-90; Lange, *Handbuch*, 163-4.

Although the biblical texts were authoritative, they were incomplete in the eyes of the Qumranites, because the fulfillment of the prophecies was made known only to the Teacher of Righteousness, while the prophets themselves were not aware of these secrets (thus 1QpHab XI:17-XII:20 commenting on Hab 2:17). This understanding of Scripture and the *peshet* technique renders both the scriptural lemma and the *peshet* authoritative since Scripture is incomplete without the *peshet*.⁴⁶

We suggest that the *liturgical texts* were not considered authoritative Scripture scrolls, and that this approach allowed the editors/scribes/ compilers to make major changes in the text. As for partial scrolls, it is hard to imagine that the Qumran covenanters, who were instructed to read from Scripture on a regular basis,⁴⁷ would have used 4QExod^d (Exodus 14-15), 4QDeut^j (Deuteronomy 5, 6, 8, 11, 32; Exodus 12, 13), 4QDeut^{k1} (Deut. 5, 11, 32), 4QDeutⁿ (ch. 8, 5), and 4QDeut^q (ch. 32) for this purpose. Most of these were probably liturgical.

Not all persons and communities approached the issue of authority in the same way. See below pp. 293-4.

Textual Plurality

The authority of Scripture scrolls described in the previous paragraph did not refer to textual plurality, to be described in this paragraph.⁴⁸ Our working hypothesis is that Scripture scrolls had authority although they differed from one another.

In early centuries, scribes acted as authors (authors/editors-scribes), and not as copyists, as in later centuries. Scribes approached their writings with much freedom, inserting many changes in the scrolls. In many ways, each scroll was a unicum and textual plurality was created in this way. This plurality is visible

⁴⁶ These points are made by T. Lim, "Authoritative Scriptures and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. T. H. Lim & J. J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 303-23 (306).

⁴⁷ 1QS 6:6 "In any place where is gathered the ten-man quorum, someone must always be engaged in study of the Law, day and night, continually, each one taking his turn."

⁴⁸ See H. Debel, "Rewritten Bible, Variant Literary Editions and Original Text(s): Exploring the Implications of a Pluriform Outlook on the Scriptural Tradition," in *Changes in Scripture*, 65-91.

when comparing ancient texts, such as MT, LXX, and Samaritan Pentateuch, deriving from different locations. Sources found at a single locality, Qumran, likewise point to plurality. The more than 210 texts found at Qumran differ from one another in overlapping sections, while some textual groups and clusters are also recognized.⁴⁹ Textual plurality also characterized the manuscripts of all the non-biblical compositions found at Qumran.⁵⁰

The textual plurality of the Qumran corpus comes to light in these data:

- a. *Pluralistic collection.* The Qumran corpus is pluralistic,⁵¹ among other things due to the different origin and nature of the scrolls that were imported into the community and copied locally. These texts relate to one another and to the texts known before 1947 in a complicated manner.
- b. *Lack of preference for a specific biblical text in the biblical quotations in the Qumran compositions.* The Qumran covenanters copied sectarian and non-sectarian texts and authored sectarian compositions containing biblical quotations. No specific text or text group is preferred in these quotations, as analyzed in detail by Lange, *Handbuch*, 158-68.

We know little about the approach of the Qumranites to the textual variety within the Scripture manuscripts found on the spot, but it is safe to say that they paid no attention to such differences. The fact that these different texts were found in the same caves reflects textual plurality not only at Qumran but also throughout Israel, for the period between the third century BCE and the first century CE.⁵²

⁴⁹ For a description of this textual plurality, see Tov, *TCHB-3*, 107-10.

⁵⁰ See C. Hempel, "Pluralism and Authoritativeness: The Case of the S Tradition," in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. M. Popović; JSJSup 141; Leiden/Boston, 2010) 193-208; *ead.*, "Sources and Redaction in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Growth of Ancient Texts," in *Rediscovering the Dead Sea Scrolls: An Assessment of Old and New Approaches and Methods* (ed. M. L. Grossman; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010) 162-81.

⁵¹ See Tov, *TCHB-3*, 107-10; E. Ulrich, "Pluriformity in the Biblical Text, Text Groups, and Questions of Canon," in *Madrid Qumran Congress*, 1.23-41; A. Lange, "The Textual Plurality of Jewish Scriptures in the Second Temple Period in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Qumran and the Bible: Studying the Jewish and Christian Scriptures in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. N. David and A. Lange; CBET 57; Leuven: Peeters, 2010) 43-96.

⁵² Within that textual plurality, the large number of proto-Masoretic texts (in the Torah scrolls found at Qumran) probably indicates their importance, while the large number of independent texts (in the scrolls of other books) underlines the special status of the transmission of the biblical text. See *TCHB-3*, 107-10.

The textual variety had no impact on the recognition of Scripture books as authoritative.⁵³ For the Qumran sectarians, the authority applied to the content of the book, while differences in details were disregarded.⁵⁴ Seemingly, there is a contradiction between their strict approach to the observation of the Law and their free approach to the exact letter of the Scripture text, but these are different areas in religious experience.

Additional Authoritative Scrolls and Compositions?

While all “regular” biblical scrolls found at Qumran probably were authoritative for the Qumran community, we should be open to the possibility that additional compositions of scriptural content were also considered authoritative. The authority of the Scripture scrolls described above is not at stake, but we need to delve into the definition of the scope of the collection of accepted Qumran writings.

Some so-called rewritten Scripture⁵⁵ texts obtained authoritative status⁵⁶ as Scripture-like compositions.⁵⁷ This group of texts adds an exegetical dimension

⁵³ In individual cases, it is hard to prove the status of the scrolls, but sometimes there is circumstantial evidence. It stands to reason that the large Isaiah scroll was considered authoritative at Qumran. This is made likely by the sectarian notations in the margins in the cryptic script and the fact that this scroll was carefully stored in a jar. See my study “Letters of the Cryptic A Script and Paleo-Hebrew Letters Used as Scribal Marks in Some Qumran Scrolls,” *DSD* 2 (1995) 330-39.

⁵⁴ Thus also E. Ulrich, “The Canonical Process, Textual Criticism and Later Stages in the Composition of the Bible,” in id., *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI/Leiden: Eerdmans/Brill, 1999) 57: “It is the literary opus, and not the particular wording of that opus, with which canon is concerned. Both in Judaism and in Christianity it is books, not the textual form of the books, that are canonical.” See also J. J. Collins, “Changing Scripture,” in *Changes in Scripture*, 23-45 (29).

⁵⁵ See S. W. Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008); G. J. Brooke, “Rewritten Bible,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam; Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 2.777-81; M. Segal, “Between Bible and Rewritten Bible,” in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. M. Henze; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005) 10-29; M. M. Zahn, “Rewritten Scripture,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. T. H. Lim & J. J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 323-36; ead., “Talking about Rewritten Texts: Some Reflections on the Scriptural Tradition,” in *Changes in Scripture*, 93-119; D. Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts: Strategies for Extending the Scriptures in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 8; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2007).

⁵⁶ See Zahn, “Rewritten Scripture,” 329-31.

⁵⁷ It is difficult to draw a line between these compositions and those that were considered Scripture after the first century CE. The definition of what constitutes a rewritten Bible text is less

to the Scripture text. The two groups differ in their authoritative status, but both changed their underlying text. Editors-scribes of Scripture texts such as the SP-group, the *Vorlage* of the LXX in 1 Kings, Esther, and Daniel, and MT-Jeremiah inserted major and minor changes in the text, all of which were integrated into the Scripture texts that circulated in ancient Israel. Similar changes, often much more encompassing (e.g. in the Temple Scroll, Jubilees, the so-called *apocrypha* of Joshua, Moses, Jeremiah), were embedded in rewritten Scripture texts.

In the Second Temple period, most of the rewritten Scripture texts were *not* authoritative.⁵⁸ The modern nomenclature “rewritten Scripture text” seems to exclude the possibility that these texts were considered authoritative,⁵⁹ but such a claim was made for the Temple Scroll, Jubilees, and 1 Enoch.⁶⁰

clear now than it was a few years ago. Before the Qumran texts were found, scholars were aware of a series of rewritten biblical texts of very diverse nature, such as Jubilees, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*. We now know from Qumran an additional group of rewritten Bible texts, all fragmentary, ranging from compositions that change the biblical text only minimally to those in which the substratum of the biblical text is only seldom visible. Each composition is a unicum with regard to its approach to the Bible and the act of rewriting. The second half of 11QT^a (cols. LI-LXVI) only changed the biblical text to a small extent, while a much greater degree of change is visible in the Jubilees texts from cave 4, 4QExposition on the Patriarchs (4Q464), 4QCommGen A-D (4Q252-254a), and in the various compositions that have the component “apocryphon” or “pseudo-” as part of their title (see *DJD* XIII, XIX, XXII).

⁵⁸ The definition of Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, 12-13 is very relevant “... a category or group of texts which are characterized by a close adherence to a recognizable and already authoritative base text (narrative or legal) and a recognizable degree of scribal intervention into that base text for the purpose of exegesis. Further, the rewritten scriptural text will often (though not always) make a claim to the authority of revealed Scripture, the same authority as its base text. The receiving community will not necessarily accept such a claim.” However, the appeal to the authority of revealed Scripture pertains only to three texts (see below).

⁵⁹ For a discussion, see M. J. Bernstein, “‘Rewritten Bible’: A Generic Category Which Has Outlived its Usefulness?,” *Textus* 22 (2005) 169-96 (p. 181: “One person’s reworked Bible is another’s Bible”); F. García Martínez, “Las fronteras de ‘lo Bíblico,’” *Scripta Theologica* 23 (1991-1993) 759-84; J. G. Campbell, “‘Rewritten Bible’ and ‘Parabiblical Texts’: A Terminological and Ideological Critique,” in *New Directions in Qumran Studies: Proceedings of the Bristol Colloquium on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 8-10th September 2003* (ed. J.G. Campbell et al.; Library of Second Temple Studies 52; London: T & T Clark International, 2005) 43-68.

⁶⁰ See the analysis of J. C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2010) 188-9. For a longer list of such texts and an innovative analysis, see A. Lange, “From Literature to Scripture: The Unity and Plurality of the Hebrew Scriptures in Light of the Qumran Library,” in *Canon from Biblical, Theological, and Philosophical Perspectives* (ed. C. Helmer and C. Landmesser; Oxford: University Press, 2004) 51-107.

Note, e.g., the following quotation from CD 16:2-3 referring to Jubilees as authoritative Scripture: “As for the exact determination of their times to which Israel turns a blind eye, behold it is strictly defined in the *Book of the Divisions of the Times into their Jubilees and Weeks*.” Besides,

Choice of Different Authoritative Texts by Religious Groups

The acceptance of all circulating Scripture scrolls as authoritative was not operative across the board. We assume this to be the case for the Qumran community, and probably for most persons and communities in the Second Temple period, but not for the proto-Pharisaic and Samaritan movements.

Proto-Pharisees and Pharisees. The MT was used as the only text in the literature of the rabbis and we assume that this was also the case for their fore-runners. All 25 Scripture texts found in the Judean Desert at sites other than Qumran display complete identity with codex L.⁶¹ These texts were found at both the earlier site of Masada (texts written between 50 BCE and 30 CE) and the later sites of Wadi Murabba'at, Wadi Sdeir, Naḥal Ḥever, Naḥal Arugot, and Naḥal Še'elim, dating to the period of the Bar Kochba revolt in 132-135 CE (texts written between 20 and 115 CE). Recognizing that few differences exist between L and the other medieval sources of MT, we note that these discrepancies are of the same nature as those between L and the Judean Desert texts. The relation between L and the ancient Judean Desert texts is one of virtual identity, showing that the consonantal framework of MT changed very little over the course of more than one thousand years. The great majority of the biblical quotations in rabbinic literature and the *piyyuṭim* (liturgical hymns) also agree with MT.

Likewise, some *translations* that derive from the first centuries CE reflect MT: some of the Targumim and S (to a lesser extent), both originating during either the second or third stage of MT, as well as two revisions of the OG, *kaige*-Th, probably dating to the middle of the 1st century BCE, and Aquila, probably dating to 125 CE. In fact, all translations that originated from the 1st century CE onwards are bound to reflect the Hebrew text that was to become

fourteen or fifteen copies of Jubilees were found at Qumran, showing its popularity among the Qumranites. The book presents itself as divine revelation, with God announcing Israel's future to Moses on Sinai. A similar claim of authority is implicit in the Temple Scroll, in which Israel's laws are rewritten according to biblical pericopes, and Deuteronomy is rewritten in cols. LI-LXVI. Written in the first person, the book lends greater authority to its contents, in comparison with the third person used in Scripture. The book is known from five Qumran manuscripts (three from cave 11, and two from cave 4), showing its popularity at Qumran. Likewise, the various parts of 1 Enoch are represented in 20 copies, a very large number when compared with the number of copies of biblical Scripture books. The author of 1 Enoch claims divine inspiration as he presents his visions as having been shown to him by God or his angels. No book quotes Enoch as Scripture, but its traditions, especially the story of the Watchers are widely quoted in the Qumran literature. See VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 192-3.

⁶¹ See the discussion in *TCHB*-3, 29-31.

the medieval MT. There simply were no other Jewish Hebrew texts to be translated. Besides, the Targumim were the in-house texts of the rabbis and therefore, by definition, they were based on MT.

Samaritans. The SP-group (SP and pre-Samaritan Qumran scrolls) reflects a textual tradition of the Torah that circulated in ancient Israel in the last pre-Christian centuries in addition to the MT-group and many other texts.⁶² It is difficult to know why the Samaritan chose a so-called pre-Samaritan text as the basis for all five books of its Torah. In all probability, this was a popular text-group circulating throughout Israel. Neither the proto-Masoretic text nor the text underlying the LXX was chosen for this purpose.

Summarizing the authority of the textual sources, in the period following the first century CE, MT was authoritative for the Jewish people as a whole, and the SP for the Samaritans, while the Greek LXX was authoritative for the Christians. Going back one century to the time of the Masada scrolls (texts written between 50 BCE and 30 CE), MT was already authoritative for the proto-rabbinic movement, and the SP was probably authoritative for the Samaritan community, but all scrolls must also have had authority for the remainder of Israel as copies of all textual streams were found in the Qumran compound.

Authority and Revision

It is sometimes claimed that authority granted to one text, particularly MT, was the basis for the revision of other texts.⁶³ Some scholars suggested that several supralinear corrections and linear erasures in the Qumran scrolls evidence correction towards MT or the LXX, but the evidence is not very strong.⁶⁴ Milik and Lange presented the evidence in 5QDeut as corrections towards the

⁶² See *TCHB-3*, 90-93.

⁶³ The full material in favor of an assumption of revision is provided by A. Lange, "Nobody Dared to Add to Them, to Take from Them, or to Make Changes" (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.42): The Textual Standardization of Jewish Scriptures in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (ed. A. Hilhorst et al.; *JJS*Sup 122; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 105-26. Lange focuses on these texts: biblical quotations in early sources, the *kaige*-Th revision, 4QLXXNum, P. Fouad Inv. 266b-c, and 5QDeut and compares them with a process of textual standardization in the Graeco-Roman world.

⁶⁴ Tov, *TCHB-3*, 202-3.

Hebrew base of the LXX.⁶⁵ Likewise, according to Barthélemy, the base text of 1QIsa^b, as well as that of MurIsa, was corrected several times towards the proto-Masoretic text.⁶⁶ In these texts, correction towards an external source is not impossible, in which case one would have to assume that these texts, which were already very close to the proto-Masoretic text, were corrected in the same direction. Such correction would involve a change towards a central (standard) text, such as a “corrected copy” (ספר מוגה), mentioned in *b. Pesah.* 112a. However, most corrections in agreement with MT seem to be corrections of simple scribal errors,⁶⁷ suggesting that the original or a later scribe or reader corrected the manuscripts towards their base text in the case of an error. This base text was almost identical to the medieval MT.

⁶⁵ J. T. Milik, *DJD* III, 169-71; Lange, “They Confirmed” (2009) 62. Thus also N. Fernández Marcos, “5QDt y los tipos textuales bíblicos,” in *Biblia Exégesis y Cultura: Estudios en honor del Prof. D. José María Casciaro* (ed. G. Aranda et al.; Pamplona: EUNSA, 1994) 119-25. For an analysis, see E. Tov, “The Textual Base of the Corrections in the Biblical Texts Found at Qumran,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (ed. D. Dimant & U. Rappaport; Leiden/New York/Cologne/Jerusalem: Brill/Magnes Press/Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1992) 299-314 (307-8).

⁶⁶ Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle* 1992, cxiii. This assumption is unlikely because the level of disagreement between 1QIsa^b and MurIsa on the one hand and the medieval *Â* on the other is much higher than the details in which the two former texts had presumably been corrected.

⁶⁷ See Tov, *Scr. Prac.*, 223-5.