Proto-Samaritan Texts
and the
Samaritan Pentateuch[*]

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The biblical text circulated in antiquity in different forms, many of which are now known to us, especially after the scrolls from the Dead Sea area have been found in recent decades. It is now clear that in the last pre-Christian centuries many different text forms were in use in Palestine. In these texts we can clearly discern different approaches to the biblical text and among them we also find different groupings of texts. Although the terms "recensions" and "text-types", so often used in biblical scholarship, are in our view not applicable to these groups,[1] small clusters of texts are certainly discernible. One such group is that of the proto-Masoretic texts, of which many have been unearthed in Qumran (dating from 225 BCE until 68 CE), Masada (until 73 CE), Nahal Hever and Wadi Murabba'at (both until 135 CE). This group of texts does not reflect any characteristics from the point of view of the content of the texts. Much more easily definable is another group, viz., that of the so-called proto-Samaritan texts and the Samaritan Pentateuch. In addition, there are many independent sources that are not exclusively close to others such as several of the Qumran texts and—until further notice—the Hebrew parent text of the LXX.

Within this framework the proto-Samaritan sources hold an important place since contents wise they contain a very distinct group. To be sure, all the texts which are named here "proto-Samaritan" are early non-sectarian texts (to be discussed in **5**), and on one of these the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch was based. Because of this internal relationship, the proto-Samaritan sources should be discussed first, but because of their fragmentary state of preservation as opposed to the full evidence relating to the Samaritan Pentateuch, the discussion starts from the latter. In many ways, the Samaritan Pentateuch continues the textual tradition of the proto-Samaritan texts, so that the extensive discussion of the characteristics of that text also applies to the earlier proto-Samaritan texts.

In its present form, the Samaritan Pentateuch contains a distinctly sectarian text. However, when its thin sectarian layer (pp. 402–3) is removed, together with that of the Samaritan phonetic features (p. 404), the resulting text probably did not differ much from the texts we now name proto-Samaritan.

Origin and Background of the Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritan Pentateuch contains the sacred writings of the Samaritans, presently a community of a few hundred members, living mainly on Mount Gerizim (near Shechem, modern Nablus)

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[*] For a good modern analysis of the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch, see B. B. Waltke, 'The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Text of the Old Testament', in J. B. Payne (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Old Testament* (Waco, TX, 1970) 212–39. See further the bibliographies of L. A. Mayer (ed. D. Broadribb), *Bibliography of the Samaritans*, AbrNSup (Leiden, 1964); R. Weiss, *Leqet bibliografi 'al ha-somronim* (Jerusalem: Academon, 1974[3]).

[1] See E.Tov, 'A Modern Textual Outlook Based on the Qumran Scrolls', *HUCA* 53 (1982) 11–27.

and in Holon (near Tel Aviv). It comprises only the Pentateuch, while a Samaritan version of Joshua (see Gaster)[2] is also known.

Opinions vary about the origin of the community. The Samaritans themselves believe that the origin of their community goes back to the time of Eli (eleventh century BCE), when the "Jews" withdrew from Shechem to establish a new cult in Shiloh, which was later brought to Jerusalem. According to this understanding, the Jews split off from the Samaritans, not the other way around. A different view is reflected in 2 Kings 17:24-34 according to which the Samaritans were not originally Jews, but pagans brought to Samaria by the Assyrians after its fall in the eighth century BCE. In accordance with the tradition, in the later Jewish sources the Samaritans were named Kythians (cf. 2 Kings 17:24).

The great majority of scholars, however, are inclined to think that the Samaritans are a sect that separated from Judaism at the time of the Second Temple. According to some this schism took place in the Persian period (cf. Ezra 4:1-5), and according to others at the time of Alexander the Great (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.340–45). Recently, cogent arguments have been advanced for a later date. According to Purvis,[3] the schism cannot have happened before the destruction of Samaria by John Hyrcanus in 128 BC. That the Samaritan script does not reflect the early palaeo-Hebrew form, but a later development of it from the Hasmonaean period also favors a later date. A further argument for the late date of the Samaritan Pentateuch is the orthography of this text that is usually fuller than MT. On the other hand, that the Samaritans accepted only the Pentateuch might be an argument for an earlier date.

Editions and Translations

Presently, no satisfactory critical edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch is available. The most elaborate one is by A. von Gall, *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* I–IV (Giessen, 1914–1918; repr. Berlin, 1966). The eclectic principles on which this edition is based are not always convincing, however. For example, von Gall prefers defective readings (p. LXVIII) and grammatically "more correct" elements. Thus in Genesis 2:11 he opted for *hsbb* (= MT) against the majority of the Samaritan manuscripts (*hswbb*). Another problem in the use of this edition is that von Gall knew only a limited number of manuscripts. The important Abisha scroll, for example, became known only later; cf. the edition of F. Perez Castro (Madrid, 1959). The colophon of this scroll states that it was written in the thirteenth year after the entrance into Canaan. Though this dating cannot be correct (the scroll was probably written in the thirteenth century), the manuscript contains many original readings. On the basis of the Abisha scroll and other old manuscripts, A. and R. Sadaqah issued a useful edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch, *Jewish and Samaritan Version of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem, 1965). In this edition the Samaritan Pentateuch and MT are printed in parallel columns that indicate typographically the differences between the two texts. A more recent edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch is L. F. Giron Blanc, *Pentateuco hebreo-samaritano, Genesis* (Madrid, 1976), which contains the text of codex Add. 1846 University Library Cambridge (1100 CE) and offers variants from fifteen unpublished manuscripts.

The Samaritan Pentateuch was translated into Aramaic, Arabic, and perhaps also Greek. While not of direct significance for the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, these translations

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[2] M.Gaster, 'Das Buch Josua in hebräisch-samaritanischer Rezension', *MDMG* 62 (1908) 209–79, 494–549.

[3] J. D. Purvis, *The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Origin of the Samaritan Sect*, HSM 2 (1968) 98–118.

reflect the Samaritan tradition of reading, supplementing the unvocalized text of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The manuscripts of the Samaritan Targum contain different but related translations. The most used editions are the ones of H. Brüll, *Das samaritanische Targum zum Pentateuch* (Frankfurt am Main, 1873–1876; repr. Hildesheim, 1971), and A. Tal, *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch* I–III (Tel Aviv, 1980–1983).

An Arabic translation from the eleventh century was published by P. Kahle, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen* (Leipzig, 1904). For a partial, critical edition and an extensive discussion, see H. Shehadeh, *The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch, Prolegomena to a Critical Edition*, unpubl. diss., Hebrew University (Jerusalem, 1977) (Hebrew).

The status of the Greek translation is fairly complicated. A fragment of a Greek translation of Deuteronomy was published by Glaue and Rahlfs[4] and attributed to *the* Greek translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Yet it is not certain whether there has ever been a complete Greek translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The assumption that such a translation existed is based on some marginal notes in hexaplaric manuscripts that quote from a *samareitikon*.

The oral tradition of reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch, running parallel to the written vocalization of MT, has been recorded by several modern scholars, see especially Ben-Hayyim.[5]

The History of Investigation

When the Samaritan Pentateuch became known in Europe in the seventeenth century, many greeted it as a more original version of the Pentateuch than the MT. This idea was influenced by the use of the palaeo-Hebrew script, which impressed scholars, as well as by the similarities that were soon discovered between the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Polyglot of London (1654–1657) contains a list of non-Masoretic similarities between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX in one thousand nine hundred instances, that is, one-third of the total number of readings in which the Samaritan Pentateuch deviates from MT. These data have given rise to many theories, which are discussed by Gesenius.[6] For example, it has been propounded that the LXX was translated from a Samaritan text; also that the LXX was revised on the basis of the Samaritan Pentateuch (or *vice versa*, the Samaritan Pentateuch was revised on the basis of the LXX). Gesenius's own view was that both the Samaritan Pentateuch and LXX derived from a "recension" that differed from the Palestinian recension of the OT (i.e., MT). Such opinions, which find defenders even today, are based neither on accurate data nor on critical editions. The relationship between both texts needs to be reexamined and the likely result will be that the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX will be found to be not as closely related as was thought in the past.

More important than the relationship between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX is that between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the other Hebrew texts. Before Gesenius, the Samaritan Pentateuch was usually described as a more original text than the MT. Gesenius proposed a new

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[4] P. Glaue and A. Rahlfs, 'Fragmente einer griechischen Übersetzung des samaritanischen Pentateuchs', *Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens* I/2 (Berlin, 1909–1915) 31–64.

[5] Z. Ben-Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Traditions of Hebrew and Aramaic among the Samaritans* I–V (Jerusalem, 1956–1979) (Hebrew).

[6] W. Gesenius, *De Pentateuchi samaritani origine, indole et auctoritate commentatio philologico-critica* (Halle, 1815). For an English translation of Gesenius's classification, see S. Davidson, *A Treatise on Biblical Criticism, Exhibiting a Systematic View of That Source* (Edinburgh, 1854) 79 ff.

view on the relationship of both. In a now classical study he carefully described ten categories of differences between the MT and the Samaritan Pentateuch that illustrate the secondary character of the Samaritan Pentateuch evident especially in harmonizing changes. Even though Gesenius's analysis is now in several respects antiquated and shown to be inaccurate, his classification still remains valuable.

The Character of the Samaritan Pentateuch

The textual character of the Samaritan Pentateuch is usually studied through a comparison of its readings with the MT. On the basis of a list prepared in the seventeenth century,[7] the number of these differences is usually quoted as six thousand, but the amount of the discrepancy must be studied again on the basis of new editions.

Study of the proto-Samaritan texts has facilitated the separation of ancient elements in the Samaritan Pentateuch (such as were found already in its base text) and elements added to it by the Samaritans. The details of this distinction are subject to further research, but the very distinction seems to be correct. It had been surmised by the last generations of scholars that the Samaritan Pentateuch was composed of two different layers, but the nature of the second layer could be clarified only after detailed study of the new texts. It is now clear that the Samaritan layer is very thin, and that if this layer is "peeled off", the proto-Samaritan basis of the Samaritan Pentateuch becomes visible.

a) *Ancient* (*proto-Samaritan*) *Elements in the Samaritan Pentateuch*

Harmonizing Alterations
The Samaritan Pentateuch contains various kinds of harmonizing alterations, especially additions (that is, additions in one place on the basis of another) that by definition are secondary.[8] The presence of these alterations does not display a consistent pattern, that is, features that have been changed harmonistically in one place have been left in other texts. The Samaritan Pentateuch was not sensitive to differences between parallel laws within the Pentateuch that, as a rule, have remained intact, while differences between parallel narrative accounts were closely scrutinized, especially the speeches in the first chapters of Deuteronomy.

The most frequent type of harmonizing alterations happens when one of two differing parallel verses in the Samaritan Pentateuch is adapted to the other (for the editorial principles, see especially Tigay).[9] Thus in the MT the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8 begins with *zakor* (remember) and in Deuteronomy 5:12 with *samor* (observe), but the Samaritan Pentateuch reads *samor* in both verses. As a rule, however, the Samaritan Pentateuch puts both parallel verses (or parallel details) after each other in the earlier of the two texts. Thus the parallel verses from Deuteronomy 1:9-18 are added in Exodus (after 18:24 and within v. 25), which thus has a double account of the story of the appointing of the judges by Moses. For similar additions, see Numbers 10:10 (= Deuteronomy 1:6-7), 12:16 (= Deuteronomy 1:20-23). In this way the nature of the book of Deuteronomy as a "repetition of the law" (*misneh torah* in Jewish sources) has been safeguarded, since on a strictly formal level Deuteronomy can only "repeat" something if it is also found verbatim in an earlier book.

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[7] The list is by Castellus in the sixth volume of the London Polyglot (1657), part IV, pp. 19–34.
[8] See E. Tov, 'The Nature and Background of Harmonizations in Biblical Manuscripts', *JSOT* 31 (1985) 3–29.
[9] J. H. Tigay, *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Philadelphia, 1985) 53–96.

Another kind of harmonizing change concerns the addition of details in the Samaritan Pentateuch with which the reader should actually be familiar but which are not explicitly mentioned in the Bible. In Exodus 14:12 the Israelites murmur against Moses after he has led them through the Red Sea: "Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians?'" This complaint is not mentioned earlier in MT, however, and therefore the Samaritan Pentateuch mentions the "source" of this quotation in an addition to an earlier verse (Exodus 6:9). Another illustration is in Genesis 31:11-13, where Jacob tells a dream to his wives that is not known to the readers of the earlier verses. In the Samaritan Pentateuch the content of this dream is added after Genesis 30:36.

It is characteristic of the style of the biblical narrative to relate commands in great detail but their execution only briefly, with the words ". . . and he (etc.) did as . . ." In the Samaritan Pentateuch, the execution of such commands is often elaborately narrated by repeating the details of the command. For example, in the first chapters of Exodus God gives Moses and Aaron commands whose execution is briefly mentioned in the MT; the Samaritan Pentateuch, however, mentions their execution in detail after Exodus 7:18, 29; 8:19; 9:5, 19.

Linguistic Corrections
Probably most of the linguistic corrections of the Samaritan Pentateuch were already found in the proto-Samaritan sources, as they are similar in nature to the preceding category and some of them are found in 4QpaleoEx^m. These corrections pertain to the removal of "unusual" forms (such as *nahnu* corrected to *'anahnu* in Genesis 42:11; *wehayyat ha'ares* in Genesis 1:24 instead of *wehayeto 'eres*), correction of syntactical incongruities such as sing./plur., masc./fem. (Genesis 9:29; 13:6).

Content
It cannot be determined how many of the content variants of the Samaritan Pentateuch were already found in the early sources. Probably most of these variants (which cannot be characterized in any way) were ancient. The number of these content variants is large, and they reflect all the types of variations that are known to occur between Hebrew sources: differences/changes, pluses, minuses, different sequence. Some of the major differences pertain to the chronological differences between the MT and the Samaritan Pentateuch relating to the first generations in Genesis. Numerous differences are in the area of vocabulary, where the Samaritan Pentateuch (as well as 4QpaleoEx^m) replaces words with synonymous ones.[10]

b) *New Elements*

Sectarian Changes
The views of the Samaritans differed from those of the Jews in a number of important details, only one of which is known to have been inserted in their biblical text.

This concerns the most important doctrinal difference between the Jews and the Samaritans relating to the central place of worship: Jerusalem for the Jews and Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans. To reinforce this belief the Samaritans added a commandment to the Decalogue (after Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18) that secured the centrality of Mount Gerizim in the cult. This commandment is composed of a series of biblical pericopes that mention such a central cult in Shechem (Deuteronomy 11:29a; 27:2b, 3a, 4-7; 11:30 [in this sequence]). The addition of

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[10] See especially R. Weiss, *Studies in the Text and Language of the Bible* (Jerusalem, 1981) 63–189 (Hebrew).

this material as the tenth commandment was made possible by making the first commandment into an introductory clause.

Closely connected with this addition are various alterations in Deuteronomy where the characteristic expression "the place which the Lord your God *will* choose" is changed to "the place which the Lord your God *has* chosen" (e.g., Deuteronomy 12:10, 11). From the Samaritan perspective, Shechem had already been chosen in the time of Abraham, whereas from the historical perspective of Deuteronomy, Jerusalem, the (anonymous) central location envisioned in that book, still had to be conquered and elected.

Phonological Changes
Some of the phonological features of the Samaritan Pentateuch have been inserted by the Samaritans as they run parallel with those of the known Samaritan literature. This is true especially of the gutturals, which differ distinctly from MT, and among which the interchange of *ayin-heth* is known to reflect Samaritan linguistic habits (see esp. Ben-Hayyim and Macuch).[11] Thus in Genesis 49:7 the Samaritan Pentateuch reads *wehebratam* instead of MT *we'ebratam*.

c) *Orthography*

The use of *matres lectionis* in the Samaritan Pentateuch differs in several respects from their use in the MT. Macuch and Cohen[12] have shown that it is an over-simplification to say that the orthography of the Samaritan Pentateuch is fuller than that of the MT: in some word categories the MT is fuller than the Samaritan Pentateuch, while in other ones the Samaritan Pentateuch is fuller. It cannot be determined with certainty how many of these orthographic peculiarities were introduced by the Samaritans, as the proto-Samaritan texts themselves are cont consistent in this matter either. 4QpaleoEx^m is fuller than the Samaritan Pentateuch (and the MT), while the other texts are more defective.

Proto-Samaritan Texts

An important group of early texts unearthed at Qumran are the ones which scholars name "proto-Samaritan". That name may be somewhat misleading since these particular Qumran manuscripts are not Samaritan (pace Baillet)[13] nor sectarian in any way. This term is used like in other cases (cf. proto-Theodotion, proto-Lucian) to denote a group of texts, on one of which the Samaritan Pentateuch has been based.

The prominent characteristic that these texts have in common is the occurrence of major harmonizing elements such as described in 4a for the Samaritan Pentateuch. These are large harmonizing pluses within Exodus and additions from Deuteronomy in Exodus and Numbers (and in one case: *vice versa*), well attested in the following sources: 4QpaleoEx^m[14] (see additions after 7:18 based on 7:16-18; 7:29 based on 7:26-29; 8:19 based on 8:16-19, etc., all agreeing

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[11] See n. 5 for Ben-Hayyim, Macuch, *Grammatik des samaritanischen Hebräisch* (Berlin, 1969).

[12] See n. 11. M. Cohen, 'The Orthography of the Samaritan Pentateuch', *Beth Miqra* 64 (1976) 54–70; 66: 361–91 (Hebrew).

[13] M. Baillet, 'Le texts samaritain de l'Exode dans les manuscrits de Qumran' in *Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer*, eds. A. Caquot and M. Philonenko (Paris, 1971) 363–81.

[14] For a preliminary publication of three columns see P. W. Skehan, 'Exodus in the Samaritan Recension from Qumran', *JBL* 74 (1955) 182–7 (col. XXXIX) and id., 'Qumran, IV, Litterature de Qumran, A. texts bibliques', *DBSup*, vol. IX (Paris, 1978) col. 805–28 (cols. I and II, plates only). For a full analysis of this text, see J. E. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran: 4Qpaleo-Ex^m and the Samaritan Tradition*, HSS 30 (Atlanta, 1986).

with the Samaritan Pentateuch and all referring to the explicit execution of the divine commands to Moses and Aaron telling them to warn Pharaoh before each plague); 4Q158[15] (like the Samaritan Pentateuch, this text, a "biblical paraphrase",[16] has added in the Sinai pericope in Exodus parts of the parallel account in Deuteronomy 5:24-31 as well as the divine command to install a prophet [Deuteronomy 18:18-22]; this source also contains the performance of the command of Deuteronomy 5:30, a detail not shared with the other witnesses of the biblical text); 4Q364, also containing major harmonizing additions;[17] 4QNum[b] which reportedly[18] holds major harmonizing pluses from Deuteronomy in Numbers (after Numbers 20:13 according to Deuteronomy 3:23-24 and after Numbers 27:23 according to Deuteronomy 3:21); 4QDeut[n][19] (this text adds, like the Samaritan Pentateuch, Exodus 20:11 after Deuteronomy 5:15), and finally the sequence of the scriptural passages in 4Q175 (Test) corresponding with the Samaritan Pentateuch.[20]

All these texts form a typologically similar group, related in character, yet sometimes different in content. Most of the known texts are written in Assyrian characters, but 4QpaleoEx[m] is not. They share with the Samaritan Pentateuch its linguistic simplifications, harmonizations in small matters, as well as non-characteristic readings, yet differ in many details in these areas. The spelling of 4QpaleoEx[m] is fuller than that of the Samaritan Pentateuch, that of the other texts is not.[21] They are not sectarian in any way.[22] Moreover, they contain various readings not known from other sources. At the same time, these proto-Samaritan texts share a sufficient amount of significant detail with the Samaritan Pentateuch in order to recognize the close relationship with that text. In the same way as the proto-Samaritan texts relate to each other, the Samaritan Pentateuch is akin to all of them, although that text is a little remote from them because of its subsequent ideological and phonetic developments.

The textual reality as viewed from the proto-Samaritan texts

The proto-Samaritan texts display a free approach towards the biblical text allowing for extensive editorial rewriting of the biblical texts. This feature has to be viewed now together with

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[15] 4Q158, published by J. Allegro in *DJD* V (Oxford, 1968) to be read together with the detailed notes of J. Strugnell, 'Notes en marge du Volume V des "Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan"', *RQ* 7 (1970) 168–75. See also the analysis in my own article (n. 7 above).

[16] So named by the editor. This text contains a combination of biblical texts interspersed with midrashic exegesis.

[17] E.g., Jacob's dream after Genesis 30:36 (= 31:11-13). This text, similar in nature to 4Q158 is to be published by J. Strugnell in collaboration with the present author. 4Q364 agrees in several details with 4Q158 against the MT.

[18] See F. M. Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (New York, 1961[2]; repr. Grand Rapids, 1980) 186.

[19] Also named "All Souls", this text has been published preliminarily in F. M. Cross, Jr., *Scrolls from the Wilderness of the Dead Sea* (Claremont, 1969) 29–30 (translation and plate).

[20] Exodus 20:18 (= Deuteronomy 5:25-26; 18:18-19); Numbers 24:15-17; Deuteronomy 33:8-11; Joshua 6:26. Also in the Samaritan Pentateuch the first two mentioned passages are added after Exodus 20:18.

[21] In the three published columns of 4QpaleoEx[m] (see n. 12), see especially the full spelling of *'hrwn* and *wy'wmr*, reminiscent of the full Qumran orthography. Note also an occasional agreement with the characteristic Qumran language (*m'dh* quoted by J. Sanderson, *op. cit.* [n. 14] 40). These spellings, however, are exceptional for the Exodus scroll. For small harmonizations of the Samaritan Pentateuch not found in the Exodus scroll, see in the published section 6:27, 30; 7:2 and for a linguistic simplification not shared with the scroll, see 7:4.

[22] For the reasons by 4QpaleoEx[m] could not have included the Samaritan tenth commandment, see P. W. Skehan, 'Qumran and the Present State of Old Testament Text Studies: The Masoretic Text', *JBL* 78 (1959) 22–3. Also 4Q158 does not contain the Samaritan tenth commandment.

the approaches to the text visible in the other sources, that is, the ones known from Qumran, that is the proto-Masoretic and independent sources.

Within the textual variety reflected in the finds from the Judaean Desert one recognizes two different *approaches* to the biblical text. A *free* approach to the text of the Bible is visible in the texts introducing the "Qumran system"[23] of orthography and language, as well as contextual changes. These texts were written in careless handwriting with many mistakes. It is similarly reflected in the proto-Samaritan texts allowing for extensive editorial rewriting. At the same time, as far as we can see, these texts did not allow for sectarian readings. At the other extreme is a *conservative* stand visible in the proto-Masoretic texts, in the one scroll close to the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX, 4QJer[b] (and others?), and the Qumran texts characterized as "independent". None of these texts displays major interventions in orthography, and hence is relatively defective, as the MT. The conservatism of these texts is also seen in the relative absence of secondary readings such as described here. At the same time, the very differences between these sources do not undermine their description as conservative since the concept of a universally accepted text had not yet been created.

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[23] See the present author, 'The Orthography and Language of the Hebrew Scrolls Found at Qumran and the Origin of These Scrolls', *Textus* 13 (1986) 31–57.