GEZA VERMES

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS FORTY YEARS ON

THE FOURTEENTH SACKS LECTURE

OXFORD CENTRE FOR
POSTGRADUATE HEBREW STUDIES

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The Dead Sea Scrolls Forty Years On

In the spring of 1947 a Beduin shepherd boy accidentally stumbled on a cache of ancient Hebrew texts hidden in a cave in the Judaean desert. By 1948, a shock of excitement was running through the world. Journalists and scholars announced the discovery as amazing, epoch-making, 'the greatest manuscript find in modern times'. From that moment onwards, the Dead Sea Scrolls have been a household name and the subject of much academic attention. They have, we are told, revolutionized the study of the Bible and of inter-Testamental Jewish literature, history and religious thought.[1]

How, with the hindsight of four decades of intense research, do they appear today?

The principal finds took place in caves situated in the cliffs in the proximity of the north-western shore of the Dead Sea, some eight miles south of Jericho. They consist of a dozen more or less complete scrolls, and thousands of fragments, some large, some minute, of leather or papyrus.[2] Add to these the long Temple Scroll, over 8 meters when unrolled, originating in one of the Caves but concealed until the Six Day War in 1967 in a Bata shoe box in the house of an Arab antique dealer in Bethlehem.[3] The story may not even yet be finished. In December 1986, the *Jerusalem Post* reported that the Israeli police came across in the course of an inquiry into a fraud case, again in Bethlehem, another manuscript, 'possibly one of the Dead Sea Scrolls'.

The placing of the original text find into an archaeological context was due, not to scholars, but to a bored Belgian army officer serving with the U.N. Observer force. With the help of a detachment of the Arab Legion, he managed to identify the cave visited by the young shepherd. Known as Cave 1, this and the ten other caves discovered between 1951 and 1956, mostly by Arab tribesmen who regularly outwitted their professional archaeologist rivals, furnished in addition to texts, jars, potsherds and further dating material which were of considerable value in the ensuing battle for the demonstration of the genuineness and age of the Qumran Scrolls.

This ancient library of Jewish literature is made up, with the possible exception of the Copper Scroll, of religious texts written in Hebrew and

Aramaic, but among them are also a few Greek fragments. A substantial section of the documents represent the Hebrew Scriptures: there are four scrolls[4] (one of them complete, containing all sixty-six chapters of Isaiah), and fragments originally belonging to *circa* 170 manuscripts. The number of copies of individual books varies from 27 (Psalms), and 25 (Deuteronomy), down to a single copy of Ezra–Nehemiah and Chronicles and none of Esther.[5] The Aramaic version of the Bible, the so-called *Targum*, is preserved in small fragments of Leviticus and Job,[6] and in a fragmentary scroll of Job.[7] Only tiny scraps of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are extant in Greek.[8]

The second group of documents corresponds to the Apocrypha, i.e. religious books reckoned as Holy Scripture by the Jews of the Hellenistic Diaspora and included in the Greek (Septuagint) translation of the Bible, but banned from the canon by the Palestinian authorities although most of the compositions were originally in Hebrew or Aramaic. As a result, they soon ceased to be copied in their Semitic original and owed their survival to the Septuagint inherited by the Christian church. Prior to Qumran only the Book of Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira, was known in Hebrew. A large portion of it was found in 1896 in the famous manuscript depository known as the Cairo Genizah.[9] Among the Dead Sea Scrolls figure parts of the original Hebrew Ben Sira,[10] the Book of Tobit in both Hebrew and Aramaic,[11] and Psalm 151, contained also in the Greek Septuagint.[12]

A third division of Jewish religious books failed to attain canonical status either in Palestine or in the Dispersion. I will continue to refer to these as the Pseudepigrapha, despite running the risk of incurring the wrath of a former Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, who advocates the excommunication of this word on account, among other things, of its being 'ugly'.[13] Surviving, again thanks to Christians, in Greek, Ethiopic, Syriac, etc., some of these Pseudepigrapha have now been partly restored through the Qumran finds to their pristine form: Hebrew for the Book of Jubilees[14] and the Testament of Naphtali,[15] Aramaic for the Book of Enoch[16] and the Testament of Levi,[17] etc.

To these three categories of writings previously known in one form or another must be added the many Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts the existence of which, with the single exception of the Damascus Rule yielded by the Cairo Genizah,[18] was not even suspected before Qumran. I refer to the so-called sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls.

To begin with, five Rules or Codes present the laws and customs of the Qumran Community. One of them, the Temple Scroll, takes the form of a divine law substituted for the Torah of Moses.[19]

Next, we have a rich collection of documents in which the Bible is systematically expounded. Apart from occasional insertions of biblical

proof-texts with interpretative comments into the Rules, there are paraphrastic rewordings of Scripture; verse-by-verse commentaries on the Prophets and Psalms, usually interpreting biblical 'prophecy' by indicating its fulfilment in the history of the sect, not unlike the use of the Old Testament in the Gospels; and exegetical works organized around a theme (law, Messianism, eschatology, etc.) where scriptural quotations of diverse origin are interwoven to produce a new meaning.[20]

Sectarian religious poetry and liturgical texts are represented by the Thanksgiving Hymns and Blessings from Cave 1, as well as by daily, weekly and festival prayers from Cave 4. The latter are very fragmentary. By contrast, the Scroll of the Songs of the Sabbath Holocaust, known also as the Angelic Liturgy, records hymns purportedly sung by the heavenly choirs on the fifty-two sabbaths of the year.[21]

The fourth category, sapiential writings, is mostly testified to by scrappy remains from Cave 4, the Exhortation section of the Damascus Rule, and non-biblical wisdom poems inserted into the Psalms Scroll.[22]

Finally, we have a few oddments: calendric fragments seeking to combine the lunar and solar months; the Copper Scroll which describes in cryptic style sixty-four hiding places containing gold, silver and scrolls, including another copy of the same inventory in plain language; and horoscopes.[23]

Let me now turn to the history of Qumran research.[24] Prior to 1947, it should be noted, the discovery of ancient documents in Palestine recorded on perishable material was axiomatically held to be impossible. During the preceding century, the land of the Bible had been subjected to intense archaeological search without producing a single piece of leather or papyrus dating to antiquity with a solitary iota—or should I say a yod—written on it. So the first question to haunt scholars when the news of a Scrolls find reached the world was whether they were dealing with a hoax, and auxiliary troops were called in to enquire into the authenticity and antiquity of the Qumran manuscripts: the archaeologists, the numismatists and the palaeographers.

My shorthand summary may be giving an impression of smooth, professional progress. If so, this is misleading. In fact, scholarly investigation started off altogether on the wrong foot. Take for example the chief architect of early Qumran research, the late Father Roland de Vaux, doyen of the archaeologists in Jordanian Jerusalem.[25] He must be credited, in fairness, with much excellent work. There is however no denying that he was also the author of two monumental blunders. The first relates to archaeological dating. When he was called in 1949 to Cave 1 to examine the contents left behind by the Arab shepherd, not only did he inaccurately assign the jars and potsherds to the Hellenistic era, i.e. prior to 63 BC, thus

proclaiming the entire manuscript collection much older than many parts of it have actually turned out to be; he also mistook the nearby Qumran ruins for those of a fourth century AD Roman fortress. Three years later, on 4 April 1952, Father de Vaux dramatically recanted his errors in a triple confession to the French Académie des Inscriptions: 'Je me suis trompé ... Je me suis trompé ... Je me suis trompé ...' Nevertheless in the following year, 1953, he committed his second blunder. Recruiting a new editorial team to take charge of the thousands of scroll fragments, he commissioned a *definitive* edition, planned to fill a score of large volumes, the future series *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* of the Oxford University Press. Roland de Vaux died in 1971, but the world of scholarship still suffers from the consequences of his editorial *faux pas*. For as is well known, the bulk of the material handed over to the team thirty-four years ago is still unpublished. Of the twenty volumes originally contemplated—in today's revised estimate the figure appears to have risen to twenty-five—only *seven* have appeared so far! Had de Vaux had the good sense and scholarly altruism of his American and Israeli opposite numbers, Millar Burrows[26] and E. L. Sukenik,[27] who edited their manuscripts with a minimum of paraphernalia, the first in 1950–51 and the second, posthumously, in 1954, we would not be in a situation which I once described as 'the academic scandal *par excellence* of the twentieth century'.[28]

Be this as it may, after a few years of research converging views began to emerge in regard to the dating of the finds. Despite the paucity of comparative material, palaeographers proposed dates between the second century BC and the beginning of the Christian era. In turn, bearing in mind the data obtained from the excavations, from 1951 to 1956, of the Qumran ruins which by then he recognized as the centre of the group to which the manuscripts belonged, the repentant de Vaux revised his earlier theory and put the occupation of the site between the second half of the second century BC and AD 66–70, the first Jewish War against Rome. The presence of coins dating to the period in question facilitated considerably the establishment of this chronology. An early version of the carbon-14 test on the wrappings of a Cave 1 scroll has assigned the material, with a margin or error of 10 per cent each way, to AD 33. In short, palaeography, archaeology, numismatics and modern technology have all pointed in the same direction. Some of the arguments used may not be wholly conclusive, but it can safely be stated that this overall judgement regarding Qumran chronology is still valid in 1987—as long as it is not treated too rigidly. In fact, apart from the usual odd dissenting voices, the Dead Sea Scrolls are assigned today to a period between 200 BC and AD 70 by most experts.[29] The roughly contemporaneous manuscripts found at Masada (conquered by the Romans in AD 74),[30] and the more recent, often dated

documents, the majority of which belongs to the early second century AD up to the Bar Kokhba uprising (132–135),[31] subsequently discovered in caves situated in other areas of the Judaean desert, now supply external confirmation to the correctness of the proposed Qumran chronology.

Again, within a few years of the first publications, the overwhelming majority of scholars came to identify the community of the Scrolls as the ancient ascetical sect of the Essenes, described by the first century AD Jewish writers Philo and Josephus, who wrote in Greek, and by the Roman Pliny the Elder (who actually located them on the western shore of the Dead Sea). This identification, too, seems still valid provided that we do not expect an absolute correspondence between the classical accounts and the Scrolls. Such an expectation would be all the more unreasonable because the first set of testimonies derives from outsiders and the second from members of an esoteric sect, and because Philo and Josephus occasionally contradict themselves and one another, in the same way that the various Qumran manuscripts display a lack of uniformity in their accounts.[32]

To turn now to evaluating the Qumran discoveries:

What are the most important contributions of the Scrolls to Jewish studies and to the history of the late Second Temple era? Since I cannot undertake a general survey, I will list instead some of the outstanding increments to knowledge and select one for fuller examination.

There are five areas of substantial innovation:

1. The Scrolls have created a new discipline, ancient (i.e. pre-medieval) Hebrew codicology, the technical study of manuscripts, and enriched beyond measure Hebrew palaeography of the inter-Testamental age.[33]

2. They have enabled scholars to transfer Essenism from the a-historical setting provided by the classical authors into the concrete reality of Jewish history of the Graeco-Roman era.[34]

3. Still in connection with the Essenes, the discovery of their original writings and of the remains of one of their settlements affords a hitherto unparalleled grasp of the life, customs and beliefs of a Jewish religious party. Thanks to the information furnished by direct literary and archaeological sources, we know them better than the Pharisees, the Sadducees or the early Christians.[35]

4. This detailed portrait of a Jewish minority group or sect provides an invaluable yardstick for the study of the parallel phenomenon of the nascent Palestinian Christian church. In a true sense—although I have not been able to include a word about it in this lecture—Qumran has revolutionized New Testament studies too.[36]

5. As the manuscript evidence offered by the Scrolls is considerably earlier than anything previously available, they have also opened a totally

new chapter in our search for an understanding of the genesis and transmission of ancient Jewish texts, biblical, apocryphal and Essene sectarian alike, and this is the fundamental issue on which the second half of my talk will be focused.

To start with the Bible, one of the early scoops concerned Hebrew fragments belonging to the Book of Samuel. In 1953, Frank Moore Cross of Harvard University issued preliminary surveys pointing out that the texts in question displayed striking similarities to the Hebrew underlying the Greek translation of Samuel.[37] The official edition of these documents from Cave 4 is still unavailable, but valuable information may be gathered from a doctoral dissertation written by Eugene Ulrich, to whom the unpublished Qumran fragments were, as it were, sub-let by his supervisor, Professor Cross. An excerpt from 2 Samuel 8:7 illustrates the case where, compared to the Masoretic Bible, the Qumran version—in line with the Septuagint—contains a substantial supplement.

2 Sam. 8:7

MT	4Q[39]	LXX
And David took	[And] David [t]ook	And David took
the shields of gold	th[e shields of gold	the *the golden ornaments*
which were carried	which were carried	which were
by the servants of	by the servants of	*on* the servants of
Hadadezer	Hadadezer	Adraazar, *king of Souba,*
and brought them	and brought them	and brought them
to Jerusalem.	to Jerusa]l[e]m.	to Jerusalem.
	[*Afterwards Shoshak, king of Egypt, took*] *them also* [*when*] *he went up to Jer*[*usalem*] *in the days of Jeroboam son of Solo*[*mon*].	*And Sousakim, king of Egypt, took them when he went up to Jerusalem in the days of Roboam son of Solomon.*

Thus the Qumran Samuel produces for the first time concrete manuscript evidence of a LXX-type Hebrew version of the Bible, the existence of which was previously no more than a hypothesis.

The caves have yielded numerous specimens of two further categories of Hebrew text. The first of these is the Samaritan type (restricted to the

Pentateuch or Torah, the only part of the Bible recognized by the Samaritans). The following excerpt contrasts a longer Qumran Exodus fragment, Samaritan in style,[40] with the shorter Masoretic reading which in this case is also that of the Septuagint.

4QpaleoExod^{m}

10:5 (4Q = Sam)	(MT = LXX)
[And they (the locusts) shall eat	And they shall eat
ev]ery *grass of the land*	every
and every [*fruit of the* tree	tree
which grows for you in the field].	which grows for you in the field.

The last Qumran category closely resembles the proto-Masoretic text, i.e. that which was later to become the traditional Hebrew Bible.

Needless to say, the variant readings of the Qumran manuscripts do not always fully coincide with the Greek or Samaritan texts. Sometimes they occupy an in-between position as in a Cave 4 text of Deuteronomy 32:43.[41]

Deut. 32:43

LXX	4Q	MT
Rejoice o heavens with him and *let* all the *angels of God* worship him.	Rejoice o heavens with him and all you *'gods'*, worship him.	
Rejoice o nations with his people *and let all the sons of God declare him mighty.*		Rejoice o nations with his people.
For he shall avenge the blood of his *sons*	For he shall avenge the blood of his *sons*	For he shall avenge the blood of his *servants*
and shall take revenge *and pay justice*	and shall take revenge	and shall take revenge
to his enemies *and shall reward them that hate him*	*on* his enemies *and shall reward them that hate him*	*on* his enemies

Here the Qumran version represents a kind of halfway station between the longer Septuagint and the short Masoretic text.

On the basis of the Qumran biblical fragments, F. M. Cross sought to

account in historical and geographical terms for the triple text-type of the Hebrew Bible. He saw in the glossed version of the Torah, with obvious links to the Samaritan Bible, a recension circulating in the Land of Israel prior to the final break between Jews and Samaritans. He called it the 'old Palestinian' version. The other expansionist text-type, particularly prominent among the Qumran fragments of the Former Prophets and reflecting the peculiarities of the Greek Scripture, was identified by Cross as the Hebrew Bible of the Egyptian Jews, since the Septuagint translation is customarily linked to Alexandria. But what to do with the sober text-form, attested at Qumran for the Pentateuch, the Latter Prophets and the Writings, recalling the proto-Masoretic version? As the Palestinian and Egyptian slots had already been filled, it had to be assigned to Babylonia.[42] Brilliant though this theory may appear, explaining the threefold diversity of text-types by scribal activities in the three great centres of Jewish learning, it nevertheless fails to carry conviction, partly because its protagonist has so far been unwilling to disclose the full evidence on which his thesis is founded and partly, as will be seen presently, because a less summary investigation of the Qumran data seems to point to a different conclusion.

In fact, today there are signs of movement in a fresh direction. A new approach, reflected in the most recent editions by American scholars of biblical material, the Leviticus Scroll from Cave 11[43] and the Exodus fragments from Cave 4,[44] owes much to Emanuel Tov, of the Hebrew University. Having enjoyed privilege of access to all the unpublished Qumran documents, he is in an excellent position to voice soundly based judgements on matters pertaining to textual criticism.[45]

In Tov's view, but in my wording, Cross was so mesmerised by the *agreements* between the peculiar textual features of the Qumran Samuel fragments and the Septuagint (or other Cave 4 texts and the Samaritan Pentateuch) that he became as it were blind to the many disagreements between them. But if one takes into account both agreements and disagreements, a statistical analysis of the two Samuel fragments on which Cross's theory relies produces a substantially different picture.[46]

4Q1Sam 1:22–2:25 (=A)	*4Q2Sam 3:23–5:14 (=B)*	*A+B*
4Q=LXX≠MT: 22	4Q=LXX≠MT: 13	35
4Q=MT≠LXX: 4	4Q=MT≠LXX: 7	11
4Q≠LXX=MT: 9	4Q≠LXX=MT: 6	15
4Q≠LXX≠MT: 5	44Q≠LXX≠MT: 4	9

The only sound conclusion to be drawn from these figures is that notwithstanding a certain amount of overlap between them in one direction or another, and bearing also in mind nine instances of *triple*

disagreement, the three sources must be acknowledged as ultimately autonomous. The same result is obtained at the end of a similar analysis of the Leviticus Scroll from Cave 11, despite some undeniable correspondence with the Masoretic and the Samaritan text-types.

What does all this signify? It indicates, according to Tov, that there existed during the last centuries of the Second Temple era, not just three types, but a large diversity of text-forms for individual scriptural books. Yet in spite of their potentially great variety, they tend already at the Qumran stage to fall into two main categories. One of these is characterized by a 'conservative' tendency; the other by its openness to modernization in both language and literary form.

Professor Tov finds that the sect's copyists generally favoured the latter category. Indeed, the ease and liberty with which the Dead Sea writers handled the text of Scripture appears to confirm his theory. Let me now take over and explore the problem further.

The first of my three examples comes from the Temple Scroll, perhaps better entitled, the Qumran Torah.[47] Its compiler felt free not only to rearrange and combine biblical laws borrowed from diverse books of the Pentateuch, but also to pepper them where necessary with non-scriptural precepts. Incidentally, this is a phenomenon attested elsewhere, among the Cave 4 manuscripts according to John Strugnell, the incoming wearer of de Vaux's mantle of editor-in-chief of *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. He describes this genre as a 'wild' Pentateuch.[48] The Temple Scroll, as is shown below often replaces the third person style of Deuteronomy relating to God, viz. the Lord, him, his, by direct revelation in the first person: I, me, mine, in order to stress the divine, rather than Mosaic, origin of the commandments in an 'ameliorated' edition of the Torah.

Deut. 21:5	*Temple Scroll 63:3*
And the priests, the sons of Levi,	And the priests, the sons of Levi,
shall come forward,	shall come forward,
for *YHWH your God has*	for *I have*
chosen them to minister to *him*	chosen them to minister to *me*
and to bless by	and to bless by
the name of *YHWH*.	*my* name.

The second example is borrowed from the Psalms Scroll from Cave 11. Although it has preserved thirty-four biblical poems in well-nigh traditional text-form, they are arranged in a largely haphazard order and with seven non-canonical psalms and hymns interspersed among them, as well as a catalogue of the total poetic output of David, amounting to 4,050 prophetically inspired psalms and songs.[49] This odd admixture may suggest either that the compiler of the Scroll, like the author of the

Temple Scroll, calmly mingled the canonical with the non-canonical, or that he still considered the Psalter to be open-ended, just as, if not more than, the Greek Septuagint, which appends to the canonical collection a 'supernumerary' Psalm 151.[50]

Thirdly, one of the Qumran Bible interpreters, the author of the Habakkuk Commentary, skilfully demonstrates that he knew both the Septuagintal and the Masoretic readings of Habakkuk 2:16.

The Septuagint alludes to stumbling caused by alcohol (a variant adopted also by the Qumran citation of Habakkuk): 'Drink and *stagger*' (*hera'el*). The Masoretic text, by contrast, envisages a drunkard discarding his clothes: 'Drink and show your foreskin' (*he'arel*). However, when applying the prophecy to the priestly opponent of the community, the commentator implicitly refers to both readings:

> For he did not *circumcise the foreskin* of his heart, and he *walked in the ways of drunkenness*.[51]

This is not the moment to discuss at length such an elastic attitude to the Bible within the authoritarian community of the Dead Sea sect. No doubt its priestly teachers claimed the right—as did the Jewish priests in general before the Pharisaic revolution—to select the genuine text and propound the correct interpretation. Let it be enough therefore to emphasize that the Qumran library firmly establishes that, as far as the Bible is concerned, textual plurality precedes textual unity, and the nature of the evidence seems to suggest that it was not a situation confined to the Dead Sea sect but was typical in inter-Testamental Judaism.

In the following pages, I intend to consider briefly the relationship and interaction between textual plurality and unity in the genesis of literary compositions in ancient Judaism. Theoretically it would seem natural to imagine that unity came first. This would be the original text or *Urtext* of old-fashioned textual criticism. This unity subsequently deteriorated into multiplicity through the inadvertence or deliberate interference of a chain of copyists. Again, in principle, the longer this chain, the larger is the potential diversity. Since, generally speaking, apart from Daniel where the evidence is equivocal,[52] the Qumran manuscripts of Scripture are considerably distant from the original biblical compositions, in the absence of fresh discoveries of documents antedating the third century BC they are of little help for tracing early developments leading from the one to the multiple. Progress in this field requires textual evidence within a narrower chronological framework, one where the initial stages of a literary work can be followed. Here the sectarian compositions and the Apocrypha from Qumran may facilitate a break-through.

The ideal document in the sectarian domain would be the Damascus

Rule for which we possess already from the Cairo Genizah two partly overlapping recensions (manuscripts A and B) with notable differences. Caves 4, 5 and 6 have furnished numerous fragments dating to the first century BC–first century AD. Those already published partly correspond to Cairo recension A, but one of them is unparalleled. However, remains of seven further manuscripts from Cave 4 apparently indicating a composition structured quite differently from the medieval copies are—as you will have guessed—still unpublished, and until the editors can be persuaded to release the material, comparative study will have to mark time.[53] By the way, John Strugnell, the prospective general editor, apparently envisages 1996 as the overall completion date, but if work continues at its present pace—seven tomes produced between 1953 and 1987—according to my reckoning volume 25 may not appear before 2074.

On the other hand, we are more fortunate with the War Scroll. The best preserved witness from Cave 1 has been available for more than thirty years[54] and in 1982 substantial parts of six further manuscripts were published.[55] Analysis shows that the texts are never strictly identical. Many of the differences are of the same nature as those signalled in the Qumran biblical fragments.

War Rule

1QM 14: 4–6, 16–18	*4Q 491, 8–10*
Answering they said: Blessed be the God of Israel, who keeps mercy towards his Covenant and the appointed times of salvation with the people *he has delivered.*	[An]swering they said: Blessed be the G[od of] I[srael who] keeps mercy [towards his Covenant and the appointed times of salvation with *his* people]
He has called them that staggered to marvellous [mighty deeds] and has gathered in the assembly of the nations to destruction without a remnant	[He has called them that staggered to marvellous mighty deeds and has gathered in the assembly of the na[tions] to destruction *and* without a remnant
And he has lifted up in judgement the fearful of heart and has opened the mouth to the dumb *that they might praise* the mighty w[orks of God]	And [he has lifted] up [in judgement] the fear[ful of heart and has opened the mouth] *of* the dumb *by* the mighty works of God

Rise up, rise up, O God of gods,	[Rise up, rise] up, O God of gods,
lift Thyself in migh[t ...	lift Thyself in might,
	King of Ki[ngs ...
	that from before Thee may scatter
[al]l the [s]ons of darkness	all the sons of darkness
and the light of Thy greatness	and the light of [Thy] greatness
	... ['go]ds' and men
	... [fire bur]ning in the dark
	places of perdition that it may
burn ...	burn in the perdition of hell
in an [eternal] blaze [	in an eternal blaze the [s]inners
	... in all the eternal seasons.
	They shall recite there [all] the
	war [hy]mns and afterwards they
	shall return to [their] cam[ps
	... there for the order]

The Cave 1 and Cave 4 versions display only three variants of minor significance:

1Q: the people he (God) has delivered
4Q: *his* people

1Q: destruction without a remnant
4Q: destruction *and* without a remnant

1Q: he (God) has opened the mouth to the dumb that they might praise the mighty works of God
4Q: he has opened the mouth *of* the dumb *by* the mighty works of God

According to Emanuel Tov's criteria, these and other similar discrepancies would already qualify the two manuscripts as autonomous texts. But if we look at the final lines of the excerpt, representing on the left the damaged end of column 14 of the Cave 1 specimen, we find in the corresponding part of the Cave 4 text lines which do not fit into the Cave 1 account. Moreover the continuation of the Cave 4 version manifests only vague similarities to column 15 of the Cave 1 text.

Let us consider another passage from the War Scroll, and its Cave 4 parallels.

War Rule

1QM 17	*4Q491, 11 ii*	*4Q491, 13*
And after these	And after these	[And after] these
words the priests shall	words the priests shall	words [the priest shall
sound *for them*	sound	sound
to order the	to order the	to order the
divisions of the	*second battle with the*	*third battle with the*
formation	*Kitt[im*	*Kittim*
and at the sound of		and at the sound of
the trumpets the		the trum]pets [the
columns shall deploy		columns shall deploy]
until [every ma]n	*And when* every man	*And when* every man
stands	*is stationed*]	*is stationed*
		in their divisions
in his place.	*at his post,*	*at his* [*post,*
[And] the priests shall	the priests shall	the priests shall
sound a second signal	sound a second signal	a second signal
on the trumpets		on the trumpets
for them to advance	for them to advance	for them to advance
and when the [foot-]	and when *they*	and when] *they*
soldiers approach	approach	approach
throwing distance	[throwing dis]ta[nce	throwing distance
of the formation	*of* the fo[rmation	*of* he formation
of the Kittim	of the Kittim]	of the Kittim
they *each* shall	they shall *each*	they shall [*each*
seize his battle weapon	seize his battle weapon	seize his battle weapon]

Here we are faced not only with more noticeable terminological differences, but with two distinct compositional arrangements: Cave 1 offers an abridged description of the seven stages of the final battle with the Kittim (Romans), whereas the fragments from Cave 4 seem to detail the events of every encounter: 'the second battle', 'the third battle', etc.

The state of affairs disclosed by this summary survey of the War Rule manuscripts is as follows: the text of this quite extensive composition existed in remarkably different versions, and these came about within a fairly short lapse of time since the various manuscripts date to between fifty and a hundred years from one another starting from 50 BC. The resulting confusion may be illustrated by the title of a paper offered by Philip Davies of Sheffield to the forthcoming Congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies: 'Will the real War Scroll please stand up!'

As a matter of fact, I do not think that we can speak of *the real* War Scroll, for there are as many *real* War Scrolls as there are manuscripts. In fact, the variations in style, terminology and structure cannot be explained as arising from deviations from a single original version, but rather as representing various semi-independent 'editions' of this writing.

It may be apposite to note here that a similar freedom in transmission can also be detected in the textual history of rabbinic literature. In connection with the Genizah fragments of the Palestinian Aramaic paraphrase or Targum of the Pentateuch, the late Professor Paul Kahle remarked more than half a century ago that they constitute a literary work the text of which has remained in a permanently fluid state.[56] A similar absence of finality was noted last year by Professor Peter Schäfer, a former Sacks lecturer, not only in connection with Genesis Rabbah, a rabbinic midrash, or the esoterical-mystical Hekhalot books, but even in regard to such basic texts as the Mishnah, the Tosefta and the Jerusalem Talmud.[57] All the indications from Qumran and rabbinic writings appear to postulate, therefore, elasticity as the overall rule in textual transmission, an elasticity verified also apropos of the Qumran text of the Bible down to the first century AD.

The causes of this elasticity are manifold and as far as the development of the scriptural text is concerned may be due to variations in local traditions (in the same way as there existed city editions of Homer),[58] to efforts in modernization of spelling and grammar, to literary processes already apparent in the Bible itself, such as stylistic variations and attempts at harmonization, but above all to a phenomenon, defined by Shemaryahu Talmon of the Hebrew University as 'insufficiently controled copying',[59] which I would prefer to call more positively, 'scribal creative freedom', by virtue of which redactor-copyists saw it as their right and duty to correct and improve the work they were propagating. Such relative liberty could go hand in hand with the conviction of fidelity to tradition. Josephus, for instance, maintains that he reproduces the details of the biblical record in *Jewish Antiquities* (i, 17) without adding or omitting anything, when he in fact does precisely the opposite.

This creative copying did not enjoy, needless to say, absolute licence. Some subjects tolerated no laxity. Every scribe would have known that the deletion of the negative particle from 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' would hardly be accepted as an improvement, as the King's printers of the so-called 'Wicked Bible', the 1631 edition of the Authorized Version, found to their cost. For allowing 'Thou shalt commit adultery' to appear in Exodus 20:14 they were fined £300 by Archbishop Laud. (To convey properly the size of the penalty, I ought to say that in those days £40 was the yearly stipend of a Regius professor, and that a Fellow of All Souls was charged 2s 6d a week for his food.)

Furthermore, certain literary forms, especially in poetry, placed definite obstacles before a scribe intent on amelioration. Thus there is no doubt that the eight verses of the hymn of Ben Sira 51:13–20 included in the Psalms Scroll from Cave 11[60] are nearer to the original that the medieval copy from the Cairo Genizah because the Qumran version faithfully preserves the alphabetical acrostic character of the poem, whereas the Genizah version loses eight of the twenty-two opening letters. On the other hand, in two instances (for the letters *bet* and *het*) the Cairo text displays the correct initial characters but in connection with different words, suggesting the possibility of two partly divergent alphabetical poems. Incidentally, the Greek translation of the chapter by the author's grandson is fairly close to, but not altogether the same as, the Qumran version, and some of the variants probably result from a partially divergent Hebrew text owned by Ben Sira's family!

If plurality appears to have been the rule, how did the unity of the Masoretic Bible manuscripts come about with practically no discrepant readings? The answer is quite simple: a religious authority intervened, that of the rabbis assembled in the academy of Yavneh, who at the end of the first Christian century set out to rebuild Judaism after the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of the state Sanhedrin. They selected one of the many text-types, the proto-Masoretic text, well represented at Qumran, and unified its readings; for even the three legendary master-scrolls kept in the Temple included variants, so rabbinic tradition tells us.[61] This purified text was then raised to canonical status. Thereafter, all the other traditions were declared aberrant, null and void. Variety entails uncertainty, the very opposite of a sovereign, divinely inspired Holy Scripture filled with the infallible words of God.

Indeed the proto-Masoretic text was believed to be the Bible received by Moses from God on Sinai, exactly in that form, with divisions, diacritical signs and all.[62] It was endowed with sacredness and reliability. In the same way, Christians could feel entirely secure with the Greek Septuagint in the East and the Latin Vulgate in the West. Since the Renaissance in Protestant circles, and more recently in all the Christian churches, the Masoretic Bible rendered in the vernacular has served as the official Old Testament, the 'Hebrew truth'.

Forty years ago, the Dead Sea Scrolls opened up undreamt-of vistas, revealing marvellous variety and riches in late Second Temple Judaism, and slightly obliterating the far too neatly drawn dividing lines between Scripture, the Apocrypha, and to some extent even the Pseudepigrapha. In regard to the Bible, the Hebrew text can no longer be designated with Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate, as *the* Hebrew truth just alluded to, *hebraica veritas* in the singular. In the Qumran caves, Hebrew

truths have mushroomed, and the historically minded are unwilling to grade the varieties. But above all, as the last section of my talk has endeavoured to demonstrate, the Dead Sea Scrolls have afforded for the first time direct insight into the creative literary-religious process at work within that variegated Judaism which flourished during the last two centuries of quasi-national independence, before the catastrophe of AD 70 forced the rabbinic successors of the Pharisees to attempt to create an 'orthodoxy' by reducing dangerous multiplicity to a simple, tidy and easily controllable unity.

NOTES

1. See G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (= *QIP*), SCM Press, ²1982, pp. 9–28.

2. For a repertory, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study*, Scholars Press, ²1977.

3. Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* I–III, Israel Exploration Society, 1983.

4. M. Burrows *et al.*, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery* I, ASOR, 1950 (Isaiah A); E. L. Sukenik, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*, Bialik Foundation, 1954/5 (Isaiah B); J. A. Sanders, *Discovery in the Judaean Desert* (= *DJD*) IV, Clarendon Press, 1965; D. N. Freedman and K. A. Matthews, *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll*, ASOR, 1985.

5. Cf. Vermes, *QIP*, p. 201.

6. J. T. Milik, *DJD* VI, 1977, pp. 86–90.

7. J. P. M. van der Ploeg *et al.*, *Le Targum de Job de la grotte XI de Qumrân*, Brill, 1971.

8. M. Baillet, *DJD* III (1962), pp. 142–3; P. W. Skehan, 'The Qumran Manuscripts and Textual Criticism', *Volume du Congrès, Strasbourg 1956* (VT Suppl. IV), Brill, 1957, pp. 148–60.

9. Cf. E. Schürer–G. Vermes–F. Millar–M. Goodman, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (= *HJP*) III.1, T. & T. Clark, 1986, p. 203 and n. 14.

10. M. Baillet, *DJD* III, 1962, pp. 75–7; J. A. Sanders, *DJD* IV, 1965, pp. 74–6, 112–17. For the Masada Ecclesiasticus see Y. Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada*, Israel Exploration Society, 1965.

11. J. T. Milik, 'La patrie de Tobie', *RB* 73 (1966), pp. 522–30. Cf. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 222–32.

12. J. A. Sanders, *DJD* IV, 1965, pp. 54–64; *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 188–9.

13. H. F. D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. xvii.

14. *HJP* III.1, 1986, p. 309 and n. 1.

15. *HJP* III.2, 1987, p. 776.

16. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*, Oxford University Press, 1976.

17. *HJP* III.2, 1987, p. 776.

18. S. Schechter, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries* I: *Fragments of a Zadokite Work*, Cambridge University Press, 1910; reprinted with a Prolegomen by J. A. Fitzmyer, KTAV, 1970.

19. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 381–420.

20. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 420–51.

21. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 451–64; C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition*, Scholars Press, 1985.

22. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 189–90, 213–14.

23. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 464–9, 364–6.

24. For a summary, cf. Vermes, *QIP*, ²1982, pp. 9–14, 25–6.

25. Cf. his *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Oxford University Press, 1973. See also E. M. Laperrousaz, *Qumrân: Histoire et archéologie du site*, Picard, 1976.

26. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery*, I, II.2, ASOR, 1950, 1951.
27. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*, Bialik Foundation, 1954/5.
28. *QIP*, ²1982, p. 24.
29. For a summary, see *QIP*, pp. 29–44.
30. *QIP*, pp. 19–20, 26.
31. *QIP*, pp. 14–19, 26.
32. *QIP*, pp. 125–30, 134–6; cf. *HJP* II, 1979, pp. 555–90.
33. *QIP*, pp. 42–3.
34. Vermes, *Jesus and the World of Judaism*, SCM Press, 1983, pp. 126–39, 182–4.
35. *Ibid.* pp. 108–9.
36. *QIP*, pp. 211–21, 224–5.
37. 'A New Qumran Biblical Fragment related to the Original Hebrew underlying the Septuagint', *BASOR* 132 (1953), pp. 15–26.
38. E. C. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, Scholars Press, 1978.
39. For the Hebrew translated here, see Ulrich, *op. cit.*, p. 45. The supplement is inspired by 1 Kings 14:25–6.
40. Cf. Judith E. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran 4QpaleoExod^{m} and the Samaritan Tradition*, Scholars Press, 1986.
41. P. W. Skehan, 'A Fragment of the "Song of Moses" (Deut. 32) from Qumran', *BASOR* 136 (1954), pp. 12–15.
42. Cf. F. M. Cross, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, Harvard University Press, 1975, pp. 306–20.
43. D. N. Freedman and K. A. Matthews, *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll*, ASOR, 1985; K. A. Matthews, 'The Leviticus Scroll (11QpaleoLev) and the Text of the Hebrew Bible', *CBQ* 48 (1986), pp. 171–207.
44. Cf. n. 40 above.
45. See especially *The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Samuel: 1980 Proceedings IOSCS—Vienna*, 1980; 'A Modern Textual Outlook based on the Qumran Scrolls', *HUCA* 53 (1982), pp. 11–27; 'The Orthography and Language of the Hebrew Scrolls found at Qumran and the Origin of these Scrolls', *Textus* 13 (1986), pp. 31–57.
46. Cf. Tov, *HUCA* 53 (1982), p. 21, n. 45.
47. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 406–20.
48. See his letter to B. Z. Wacholder dated 28 April 1981, quoted by the latter in *The Dawn of Qumran*, Hebrew Union College Press, 1983, p. 206.
49. Cf. J. A. Sanders, *DJD* IV, 1965. The order of the canonical Psalms is as follows: 109, 105, 146, 148, 121–132, 119, 135–136, 118, 145, 139, 137–138, 93, 141, 133, 144, 142–143, 149–150, 140, 134.
50. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 188–9.
51. 1QpHab xi, 13–14.
52. Whereas the text preserved in the fragments is very close to the Masoretic version, it circulated together with a 'Danielic cycle' containing episodes absent from the canonical book or even from the enlarged Septuagint.
53. *HJP* III.1, 1986, pp. 389–98.
54. Sukenik, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*, 1954/5.
55. M. Baillet, *DJD* VII, pp. 12–72.
56. *Masoreten des Westens* II, Kohlhammer, 1930, p. 10*.
57. 'Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to define the Status Quaestionis', *JJS* 37 (1986), pp. 139–52. These rabbinic texts resemble to some extent the phenomenon designated by classical textual critics as an 'open recension', viz. when the older manuscripts containing significant variants are unrelated and do not enable the scholar to construct an archetype. Cf. Martin L. West, *Textual Criticism and Technique applicable to Greek and Latin Texts*, Teubner, 1973, pp. 37–8.

58. Cf. B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, Oxford University Press, ²1968, p. 149.

59. F. M. Cross and Sh. Talmon, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 380.

60. Cf. *The Book of Ben Sira: Text, Concordance and an Analysis of the Vocabulary*, Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1973, p. 66.

61. Cf. yTa'an. 4:2 (68a); Sh. Talmon, 'The Three Scrolls of the Law that were found in the Temple Court', *Textus* 2 (1962), pp. 14–27.

62. Cf. bMeg. 19b.