

case of establishing an eclectic text of the Old Greek Bible, resurrecting a plausible approach to the so-called proto-Septuagint, there has been heated debate, a debate which now is brought to an end, in my judgment, by the Qumran and other scrolls from the Judaean Desert. The task of the textual critic is to ferret out inferior readings. We cannot get back to an inerrant text, nor to an original text. However, the textual critic can vastly improve the traditional biblical text, and pursue the goal of finding superior readings.

So far as I am aware, attempts to prepare an eclectic text of books of the Hebrew Bible using Qumran evidence along with the traditional versions have been made only in the case of the books of Samuel by Patrick W. Skehan and me in the new American Bible, and by Kyle McCarter in his Anchor Bible commentary on Samuel.¹⁶

Choice from among these three approaches ultimately will root in theological dogma. Meanwhile, I see no reason why biblical scholars cannot pursue the ultimate goals of textual criticism and the creation of eclectic texts of biblical books where there is sufficient data.

16 See also R. Hendel's contribution to the present volume.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hebrew Scriptural Texts

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The historical evidence for our understanding of the textual character and the contents of the Bible in antiquity has multiplied greatly. As is often the case with new knowledge, our ability to understand, digest, and describe it adequately languishes somewhat behind.

At Qumran and neighboring sites in the Judaean Desert, over two hundred manuscripts of the books of the Hebrew scriptures were discovered, providing documentary evidence that is abundant, authentic, and contemporary with the formation, in the crucial period of the origins of Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity, of what comes to be our Bible.

This article will attempt to describe the advance provided by the scrolls in understanding the Bible by discussing (I) the evidence available prior to the discovery of the scrolls as well as the prevalent mentality and categories for understanding them, (II) the textual evidence provided by the scrolls, (III) the resulting changes in understanding the text, through a review of theories proposed to explain the history of the biblical text, and (IV) a perspective outlining the development of the scriptural texts and (not the canon but) the process progressing toward the eventual canon(s).

I. Prior to the Discovery of the Scrolls

Prior to the discovery of the scrolls in 1947, the primary sources of our knowledge concerning the text and the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible were the Masoretic Text (MT), the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), and the Septuagint (LXX). The Targum, Peshitta, and Vulgate were also available, but they are for the most part literal translations of a text close to

the MT, and so, despite a great deal of textual analysis, did not pay large dividends in terms of preferable early readings relative to the MT. In contrast, the Old Latin version was translated from an early form of the LXX, and so it not infrequently preserved solid early readings that the Old Greek had accurately translated, even though the received forms of the developed Greek text had lost the readings when the Greek was "corrected" toward the MT on the presumption that the MT was the "original" Hebrew.¹

The prevailing mentality was that of an "*Urtext*," a single original Hebrew text which no longer existed in its purity but witnesses to which eventually emerged in the MT, the SP, and the LXX in discoverably modified ways. That is, the three main collections of texts from antiquity were witnesses to a single text, and the variants displayed through a comparison of them were for the most part easily explainable as one- or two-stage developments—through classifiable errors, changes, expansions, or omissions—from that common original text. Thus, when the MT was compared with the SP, which had been rediscovered in 1616, usually the SP was (correctly) considered secondary; and when the MT was compared with the LXX, more often than not the LXX was considered (sometimes correctly) "a free translation," or (incorrectly) "a paraphrase," or (often incorrectly) "erroneous," and therefore secondary.

For example, in Exod 32:10–11 the MT and SP read as follows:

1 See J. Trebolle Barrera, "From the 'Old Latin' through the 'Old Greek' to the 'Old Hebrew' (2 Kings 10:23–35)," *Textus* 11 (1984) pp. 17–36; and E. Ulrich, "The Old Latin Translation of the LXX and the Hebrew Scrolls from Qumran," in *The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Samuel*, ed. E. Tov (Jerusalem: Academ, 1980) pp. 121–65. Note also the important corroborating evidence of the Old Latin for the text of Joshua below.

MT:

"... my anger may ignite against them and I may consume them;
but I will make you a great nation."
¹¹Then Moses entreated the Lord...

SP:

"... my anger may ignite against them and I may consume them;
but I will make you a great nation."
But against Aaron the Lord was very angry, enough to destroy him;
so Moses prayed on behalf of Aaron.
¹¹Then Moses entreated the Lord...

One easily recognizes that what the SP has done is insert the statement about Aaron from the parallel passage in Deut 9:20, word-for-word except for the grammatically required change from the first person "I" to the third person "Moses," since Deuteronomy is a first-person speech by Moses. This is typical of the many major expansions which characterize the SP, and thus with respect to general text-type, the MT is an earlier, more "original" form of the text than the SP.

Similarly, the LXX was also seen as generally secondary to the Hebrew MT, but though there were indications that the LXX sometimes provided an earlier text, these indications were often stoutly resisted.²

Some ancient form of the biblical texts had also been used by Josephus as a source for his *Jewish Antiquities*. But similarly, when the MT or LXX was compared with Josephus, frequently Josephus was branded as inserting "unscriptural details" and

2 For a sample of a debate on this issue see D. Barthélemy, D. W. Gooding, J. Lust, and E. Tov, *The Story of David and Goliath: Textual and Literary Criticism: Papers of a Joint Research Venture* (OBO 73; Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986).

therefore was judged as less than reliable as a witness to the biblical text.³

Accordingly, the dominant mind-set considered the MT basically the best preserved text of the Hebrew Bible from antiquity, although the SP and the LXX should at times be consulted in order to supply preferable readings when the MT was unclear or presented problems. This was, and is, the prevailing approach also for most translations of the Old Testament in standard Bibles.

II. Illumination and Perspective as a Result of the Scriptural Scrolls

With the discovery of over two hundred biblical manuscripts in the Judaean Desert, the scene and the prevailing mentality changed dramatically though slowly. It is understandable that scholarly minds moved slowly. Epistemologically, we assess new data according to already established concepts and categories that have been formed from previous knowledge. Thus, the evidence offered by the scrolls was at first classified according to the old categories.

1QIsa^a and 1QIsa^b. Among the very first discoveries were 1QIsa^a and 1QIsa^b.⁴ 1QIsa^b was quickly and lastingly classified

3 See the notes in H. St. J. Thackeray and R. Marcus, eds., *Josephus with an English Translation* (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966) vol. 5, p. 201, note c; pp. 330–31 note a; p. 425 note c; p. 433 note a; etc. Those passages, however, are all documented in the biblical MS 4QSam^a, and thus were in fact in the biblical text at the time of Josephus; the fact is simply that the specific form of the scriptural text that was current in his day and that he used for the composition of the *Jewish Antiquities* was subsequently lost; see the text of the NRSV and the note at the end of 1 Samuel 10. See E. Ulrich, "Josephus' Biblical Text for the Books of Samuel," in *Josephus, the Bible, and History*, L. H. Feldman and G. Hata, eds. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989) pp. 81–96; and idem, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978).

4 Both MSS were published admirably quickly, though they still lack a thorough critical edition: for 1QIsa^a, M. Burrows, ed., *The Dead*

as virtually identical to the MT, thus validating the MT (which had been based on medieval manuscripts) both as resting on a text-form that was now documented a millennium earlier and as copied with amazing accuracy through the centuries. This was a valid and legitimate conclusion—not for the MT in general, but for the MT of Isaiah, since the MT collection is not a unified text and the evidence was only from the book of Isaiah. 1QIsa^a was also able to be fit into the established categories insofar as it basically "agreed with the MT" while exhibiting a "baroque" orthography and a large number of variants which could be explained for the most part as deriving from the same text-type as the MT; it was just a somewhat deviant text and was considered by some as a "vulgar" text.

As many more biblical MSS came to light, both phenomena continued to appear. Many texts showed intriguing variants, documenting a certain pluriformity in the text in antiquity, while many other texts showed close affinity with the corresponding books of the MT. In fact, texts in general agreement with the MT are claimed to "comprise some 60 percent of the Qumran biblical texts."⁵ I will argue below, however, that this is not the best way to categorize and describe the texts. That view presumes that "the MT, the SP, and the LXX" are identifiable "text-types" according to which other texts may be compared and classified. But this is not the case: generally, the MT and the LXX are not "text-types" and ought not to be used as categories for classifying other texts. Prior to the turn of the era we have no evidence that the MT (or the "proto-MT") was compared with other textual forms and judged preferable. Rather, the Rabbis—

Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery 1 (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950); for 1QIsa^b, E. L. Sukenik, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*, eds. N. Avigad and Y. Yadin (Jerusalem: Hebrew University and Magnes Press, 1955 [Hebrew edition 1954]), plus additional fragments in D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, eds., *Qumran Cave 1* (DJD 1; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955) pp. 66–68 + pl. XII.

5 E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Assen and Maastricht: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) p. 115; emphasis his.

to the best of our knowledge—simply happened (with apparently no specifically text-critical judgment) to preserve for many, but not all, of the individual books that edition of a book which was prevalent within general Judaism. For those books they simply inherited the majority text. But for other books, again without any clear pattern discernible, they preserved textual forms which were less widely influential or were clearly textually inferior (e.g., Samuel, Ezekiel, Hosea). At any rate, it remains true that the *textus receptus* of the various books in the MT was quite accurately copied over the centuries from one form of the text tradition for each book as it existed in the Second Temple Period.

4QpaleoExod^m and 4QNum^b. If the MT was vindicated as a collection of texts carefully preserved from one form of each book from antiquity, so too was the SP. 4QpaleoExod^m dramatically showed in reading after reading the expanded text-type so well known from the SP.⁶ As a specific example, the expanded text in Exod 32:10 illustrated earlier with the insertion from Deut 9:20 is among those preserved by 4QpaleoExod^m:

MT:

“... my anger may ignite against them and I may consume them;
but I will make you a great nation.”

¹¹Then Moses entreated the Lord ...

4QpaleoExod^m:

[“... my anger may ignite against them and I may consume them;
but I will make] you a great nation.”

6 Patrick W. Skehan published as early as 1955 fragments alerting the scholarly community of the significance of this scroll: “Exodus in the Samaritan Recension from Qumran,” *JBL* 74 (1955) pp. 435–40. The full publication is in P. W. Skehan, E. Ulrich, and J. E. Sanderson, *Qumran Cave 4, IV: Palaeo-Hebrew and Greek Biblical Manuscripts* (DJD 9; Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) pp. 53–130. J. Sanderson published in 1986 a highly detailed and useful analysis of it: J. E. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran: 4QpaleoExod^m and the Samaritan Tradition* (HSS 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

[But against Aaron the Lo]rd [was] very [angry], enough
to destroy him;

so Moses prayed on behalf of A[aron.]

¹¹Then Moses [entreat]ed the [Lord ...]

SP:

“... my anger may ignite against them and I may consume them;

but I will make you a great nation.”

But against Aaron the Lord was very angry, enough to
destroy him;

so Moses prayed on behalf of Aaron.

¹¹Then Moses entreated the Lord ...

This ancient scroll from ca. 50 BCE repeatedly shows, where preserved, all the major expansions exhibited by the SP. Even where fragments are not extant to decide regarding the major text differences, the scroll is in general so extensively preserved that judgments about the inclusion or lack of large portions of text can be made confidently. With one significant exception it agrees with the SP against the MT in the major interpolations. That exception is the extra commandment, lacking in the MT and LXX but added after the traditional commandments in the SP at Exod 20:17^b, to build an altar at Mount Gerizim. Moreover, insofar as the evidence is available, it appears that the scroll also agrees with the MT and the LXX against the SP in the small but important formulaically repeated variant which envisions Israel's central shrine in Jerusalem in the future (“which the Lord will choose,” relative to Moses' time) as opposed to Shechem by a past decision (“which the Lord has chosen”). This means that there were (at least) two variant editions of the text of Exodus circulating in Second Temple Judaism.⁷ The earlier and more widely used edition continued in use by the Rabbinic and the Hellenistic Jews and thus was eventually incorporated into the MT and LXX collections. The secondary, expanded edition was taken

7 At least for Exodus 35–39 there was a third edition, yet earlier than that in the MT. The LXX is systematically different from the MT

up by the Samaritans, probably without knowledge of the specific text-type, and intentionally altered in two ways: they added a commandment in which God commands that Israel's central altar be built on Mount Gerizim, and they emphasized that this central shrine had been chosen by God.⁸ But the secondary edition (evidently without the two specifically Samaritan alterations) continued to be used by Jews and was still being copied around the middle of the first century BCE.

In confirmation, a second MS found at Qumran exhibits the same character as 4QpaleoExod^m. The most extensive MS of the book of Numbers, 4QNum^b, also provides evidence of some of the ways that the biblical text grew at the hands of learned scribes.⁹ 4QNum^b was copied in the early Herodian Period, not far from 25 BCE.¹⁰ It frequently displays, in agreement with the SP, additions to the traditional text as known through the MT and LXX. One partly preserved example from Num 27:23 can illustrate the general phenomenon:

MT:

... as the Lord had spoken through Moses.
 28:1¹ The Lord spoke to Moses ...

in those chapters, and Anneli Aejmelaeus, the Director of the Septuaginta-Unternehmen in Göttingen, has demonstrated that the LXX edition is earlier than the MT edition; see her "Septuagintal Translation Techniques—A Solution to the Problem of the Tabernacle Account," in *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings* (Manchester 1990), G. J. Brooke and B. Lindars, eds., (SBLSCS 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) pp. 381–402.

8 A third intentional, but not necessarily specifically Samaritan, change illumined by 4QJosh^a will be suggested below.

9 For the critical edition of 4QNum^b, see N. Jastram, "27. 4QNum^b," in E. Ulrich, et al., *Qumran Cave 4, VII: Genesis to Numbers* (DJD 12; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) pp. 205–67.

10 Ibid., 205 and 211. The date given, of course, is the date of the copying of this scroll, not the date of the creative compositional activity recorded in the text.

4QNum^b:

... as the Lord had spoken through Moses.
 [And Mose]s [said] to him,
 "Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done to [these]
 two k[ings ...]

SP:

... as the Lord had spoken through Moses.
 And he said to him,
 "Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done to these
 two kings.
 The Lord will do the same to all the kingdoms which you
 will cross through.
 Do not fear them, for it is the Lord your God who will
 fight for you.
 28:1¹ The Lord spoke to Moses ...

Again, the secondary Jewish tradition, exemplified in 4QNum^b and taken up by the Samaritan tradition, expanded by incorporating a parallel text from Deut 3:21–22. The fragmentary MS breaks off in the middle of the passage, but the full expansion must be reconstructed to fit the dimensions of the scroll.¹¹

Thus, the realization dawned concerning the specifically Samaritan reworking of the Pentateuchal text. It appeared that the Samaritans' reworking extended only to those two specifically Samaritan features mentioned above, that most of the literary creativity displayed in the expanded version was the product of general Judaism, and that both editions were probably in use by Jews in the late Second Temple period. It is gratifying to observe that dawn has moved toward full daylight in much of the biblical community.

4QJer^b. If the MT and SP were vindicated as different collections of carefully preserved forms of the texts from antiquity, so too was the LXX. A fragment of Jer 9:22–10:22, for example, was discovered in Cave 4.¹² That fragment of 4QJer^b holds the ends of about thirteen lines of text at the left edge of a skin.

11 For fuller discussion, see Jastram, DJD 12:242–5.

12 A preliminary transcription of 4QJer^b as well as 4QJer^a was published by J. G. Janzen in *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (HSM 6; Cam-

Since the column from which it came must be presumed to have been symmetrical, with each of the lines normally holding approximately the same number of words and letters per line, the conclusion can be safely made that 4QJer^b provides a Hebrew witness to the type of parent text from which the LXX of Jeremiah was translated. The ends of lines 4–8 of the fragment are translated below, with the translations of the spatially corresponding material in the LXX and the MT:

4QJer^b (Jer 10:2–13)

- 4 . . . the way of the nations . . .
- 5 . . . with . . . gold they beautify it; with hammers /
[and nails . . .]
- 6 . . . blue and purple [are their clothes] . . .
- 7 . . . will perish from the earth . . .
- 8 . . . from the end of the earth. Lightnings . . .

LXX (Jer 10:2–13)

- 4 . . . the ways of the nations . . .
- 5 . . . with . . . gold they are beautified; with hammers
and nails . . .
- 6 . . . blue and purple will clothe them . . .
- 7 . . . will perish from the earth . . .
- 8 . . . from the end of the earth. Lightnings . . .

MT (Jer 10:2–13)

- 10:2 . . . the way of the nations . . .
- 10:4 . . . with . . . gold they beautify it; with nails and
hammers . . .
- 10:9 . . . + vv. 6–8 . . . blue and purple are their
clothes . . .
- 10:11 . . . + v. 10 . . . will perish from the earth . . .
- 10:13 . . . from the end of the earth. Lightnings . . .

The MT and the LXX differ in *quantity* of text and differ in *order* of the text. The MT has a much longer text including verses 6–8 and 10 which are lacking in the LXX; the MT adds about forty extra words in line 6 which are not in the LXX and must be

bridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973). For the critical edition, see E. Tov, “71. 4QJer^b,” in E. Ulrich, et al., *Qumran Cave 4, X: The Prophets* (DJD 15; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997) pp. 171–76.

presumed absent from 4QJer^b. Moreover, the second half of MT verse 5 is found in the LXX after verse 9, so that the LXX order of verses is: 4, 5a, 9, 5b, 11. As the column in 4QJer^b is reconstructed, verse 5b must spatially have followed the extant text from verse 9, and thus the same quantity and order of text that is encountered in the LXX must be assumed to have been in 4QJer^b. As a minor confirmation, note that 4QJer^b agrees with the LXX in displaying the order “hammers [and nails . . .]” against the MT order “nails and hammers.” As the LXX and MT forms of Jeremiah are analyzed in comparison, it becomes clear that the LXX is an earlier edition of the text and that the MT is a secondary, expanded version based on the earlier edition witnessed by 4QJer^b and the LXX. Note that the status of the MT is reversed in this example compared to that seen in the examples from 4QpaleoExod^m, 4QNum^b, and the SP. Finally, many other biblical scrolls, including especially 4QSam^a, have demonstrated various examples of ancient Hebrew texts documenting individual readings attested by the LXX, and thus grounding the LXX as often a solid witness to an ancient form of the Hebrew Bible that is simply different from the *textus receptus* handed down in the MT.

Additional Examples: 4QJosh^a, 4QJudg^a, 11QPs^a, 4QRP.

Analogous examples have been presented elsewhere for numerous books spanning the entire Hebrew Bible, and so a few examples will suffice here.¹³ Some of the significance of

13 See, e.g., Ulrich, “The Canonical Process, Textual Criticism, and Latter Stages in the Composition of the Bible,” in M. Fishbane and E. Tov with W. W. Fields, eds., *Shar‘arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) pp. 267–91; and idem, “The Bible in the Making: The Scriptures at Qumran,” in E. Ulrich and J. VanderKam, eds., *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 10; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) pp. 77–93.

this phenomenon for tracing the history of the biblical text will be explored below.¹⁴

The earliest MS of Joshua, 4QJosh^a, seems to present an important event in an order contrasting with that of the traditional biblical narrative.¹⁵ It places the first altar that was constructed in the land of Canaan after Joshua led the tribes across the Jordan immediately at Gilgal, just after the crossing (at the end of traditional chapter 4). The MT and the LXX relate that incident at the end of chapter 8 (at the beginning of chapter 9 in the LXX) and explicitly place it at Mount Ebal. It has long been known that the traditional narrative is strange, both because no altar or worship is ever again mentioned on Mount Ebal, which is otherwise insignificant in the Hebrew Bible except as the mountain of the curse, and because militarily Joshua marches twenty miles north into enemy territory, builds an altar, and immediately goes back south, abandoning the altar in enemy territory.

The Qumran evidence now appears to make the development clear: 4QJosh^a presents the early literary tradition, and the next earliest independent witness, Josephus, corroborates that tradition (*Ant* 5.16–19). In Deut 27:1–8 Moses directs the people “on the day you cross over the Jordan into the land . . .” to “set up large stones and plaster them” (27:2). Note both that, even though “on the day” need not be taken literally, a literal interpretation is quite plausible, and that no place is specified and so the place of entrance would be a quite natural interpretation. Verse 4 then repeats that “when you have crossed the Jordan, you should set up these stones . . .,” again suggesting immediate construction. Within the entire passage

14 See also the discussion in Tov, *Textual Criticism*, pp. 313–49.

15 For the critical edition and a discussion see E. Ulrich, “47. 4QJosh^a,” in E. Ulrich, F. M. Cross et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4, IX: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings* (DJD 14; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) pp. 143–52; and idem, “4QJoshua^a and Joshua’s First Altar in the Promised Land,” in G. J. Brooke, ed., *New Qumran Texts and Studies: Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Paris 1992* (STDJ 15; Leiden: Brill, 1994) pp. 89–104 + pls. IV–VI.

Deut 27:1–8 in MT no locality is specified except in the single parenthetical phrase in verse 4 “on Mount Ebal,” and the sentence reads perfectly smoothly without that phrase. If the phrase were absent, one would expect the altar to be built as 4QJosh^a and Josephus narrate the incident. Although it is possible that the phrase was simply lost by accident, two other texts suggest that it represents a later addition. At Deut 27:4 the SP reads “on Mount Gerizim” instead of “on Mount Ebal.” Interestingly, the Old Latin version, which undoubtedly is based not on the SP but on an early form of the LXX, also attests “on Mount Gerizim.” This double witness clarifies the missing piece. To the original unspecified text, someone—either simply knowing the ancient tradition of the sanctuary at Shechem connected with Joshua (Josh 24:1, 26), or intentionally from northern perspectives crediting Shechem with that first altar constructed in the newly won land—inserted “on Mount Gerizim” into the text at Deut 27:4. Then at a third stage, from a southern, or a Judaeian, or a rabbinic anti-Samaritan perspective, someone else changed the secondary “on Mount Gerizim” to “on Mount Ebal,” and it is this third and final stage which survived in the *textus receptus*.

4QJudg^a is a small fragment of the book of Judges, but it also provides an educative text.¹⁶ It contains Judg 6:2–6, 11–13, but moves directly from verse 6 to verse 11, without verses 7–10. The narrative is an old story about Midianite raids on Israel: the Israelites would plant seed, but the Midianites would repeatedly come and destroy the land.

16 For the critical edition and a discussion see Julio Trebolle Barrera, “49. 4QJudg^a,” DJD 14.161–64; and idem, “Textual Variants in 4QJudg^a and the Textual and Editorial History of the Book of Judges,” in F. García Martínez, ed., *The Texts of Qumran and the History of the Community: Proceedings of the Groningen Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls (20–23 August 1989)* 1. *Biblical Texts*, (Paris: Gabalda [= RevQ 14/2 Nos. 54–55] 1989) pp. 229–45.

4QJudg^a:

... [⁶And Israel was greatly impoverished by the Midianites],
and the Israe[lites] cried out [to] the Lord.
[¹¹Then the messenger of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth . . .] owned by Joash the Abiezrite . . .

MT:

... ⁶And Israel was greatly impoverished by the Midianites,
and the Israelites cried out to the Lord.
⁷The Israelites cried out to the Lord because of the Midianites.
⁸So the Lord sent a prophet to the Israelites, and he said to them:
Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: It was I who brought you up out of Egypt and brought you forth from the house of slavery . . .
¹⁰... But you have not obeyed my voice.
¹¹Then the messenger of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth . . . owned by Joash the Abiezrite . . .

The passage 6:7–10 is set off as a self-contained section in the MT by paragraph markers, and it has for over a century been seen by Wellhausen, Stade, Burney, and others as a secondary insertion by another hand, characterized by a distinctive theology (more recently identified as Deuteronomistic theology).¹⁷ Again, the MT exhibits the secondary, more developed form of the text.

11QPs^a was, from its first unrolling, the subject of debate concerning whether it was a biblical scroll or a secondary (merely) "liturgical" scroll. James Sanders, who produced the critical edition of this fragmentary but large and plentifully

17 See, e.g., C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (New York: KTAV, 1970 [first published in 1918]) pp. 176–77: "In no other section of Judges is the existence of two documents . . . more clearly evident, and the criteria for determining the main lines of analysis are fairly decisive . . ."

preserved scroll, considered it a biblical MS.¹⁸ Others, including Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, Shemaryahu Talmon, and Patrick Skehan, saw reasons to prevent its being classified as biblical and to consider it secondary; but Peter Flint has recently reexamined the issue and convincingly argued that it should be classified as a biblical MS.¹⁹ All of the arguments marshaled in the early days for denying its biblical status have disappeared in light of what we have increasingly learned about the biblical text in the Second Temple period. "Secondary" is an attribute of virtually all biblical texts. Additions to the text, even large additions, or lack thereof are found in a variety of texts recognized as biblical. Moreover, differences in the order of texts have long been recognized through comparisons of the MT, the LXX, and the SP, and such differences in order do not mean that the text is not biblical.

4QRP, the so-called "Reworked Pentateuch," I would suggest, also should be analyzed to assess its biblical status.²⁰ Just as 11QPs^a was earlier judged by some as nonbiblical but now is arguably correctly seen as a biblical text, so too for 4QRP: though it is included in a "parabiblical" volume of *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, it should be analyzed to see whether it may have been a third edition of the Pentateuch alongside the edition recognized in the MT–LXX and the edition recognized in 4QpaleoExod^m–4QNum^b–SP.²¹

18 For the critical edition see J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11 (11QPs^a)* (DJD 4; Oxford: Clarendon, 1965).

19 P. W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (STDJ 17; Leiden: Brill, 1997) esp. pp. 202–27, including bibliographic details.

20 For the critical editions see J. M. Allegro, "158. Biblical Paraphrase: Genesis, Exodus," in *Qumrân Cave 4, I (4Q158–4Q186)* (DJD 5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) pp. 1–6 + pl. I; and E. Tov and S. White, "364–367. 4QReworked Pentateuch^{b,e}," in H. Attridge, et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam, eds., *Qumrân Cave 4, VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* (DJD 13; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) pp. 187–351.

21 See, provisionally, Ulrich, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Biblical Text," forthcoming in the volume from the international congress "The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years after Their Discovery" held in Jerusalem, July 20–25, 1997.

III. Theories Proposed to Explain the Textual Evidence

Theories attempting to explain the diversity in textual witnesses of the Hebrew Bible naturally developed as the exciting new evidence unfolded.

1. William Foxwell Albright initiated the paradigm of different local texts as the primary explanation for the most meaningful variants in the biblical text, and Frank Moore Cross fleshed out that theory both with creative intuition and with intriguing new manuscript readings.²² This was significant for two reasons. First, Albright raised an important new question, and Cross launched a trajectory of research that might otherwise not have been explored. Secondly, Cross illustrated the theory with an impressive amount of specific examples, providing examples of how readings should be analyzed. The main lines of his theory suggested that the MT, the SP, and the LXX exemplified three textual families or text-types and that those three textual families developed "in Palestine, in Egypt, and in a third locality, presumably Babylon."²³ On the assumption that different texts would not likely be tolerated within a single locality, it was envisioned that the text which had started in a uniform state, an "*Urtext*," could well have spread to different localities and then have developed in different ways in the different localities.

With the advantages of hindsight and several more decades of published MS editions we can recognize some of the presuppositions and categories that had not yet sufficiently developed among textual scholars: (a) "Higher criticism" and "lower criticism" were often kept separate as distinct realms

22 W. F. Albright, "New Light on Early Recensions of the Hebrew Bible," *BASOR* 140 (1955) pp. 27–33; F. M. Cross, "The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert," *HTR* 57 (1964) pp. 281–99.

23 F. M. Cross, "The Contribution of the Qumrân Discoveries to the Study of the Biblical Text," *IEJ* 16 (1966) pp. 81–95, esp. p. 86 [repr. in Cross and Talmon, eds., *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1975) pp. 278–92, esp. p. 283.

treating the composition process and textual transmission, respectively; (b) The "*Urtext*" was still seen as relatively close to the extant texts; and (c) The MT, the SP, and the LXX were seen as "text-types" or even called "recensions," i.e., intentionally and deliberately reworked text-types.²⁴

But consideration of other dynamics that have become clearer through time allows us to adopt the contributions made by Cross and move the discussion forward. For example:

(a) It was eventually recognized that the same process by which the biblical books were produced from their shadowy origins to recognizable biblical form was an organic process still in progress in the textual forms discovered at Qumran.²⁵ This helped eradicate the line of demarcation between the literary and the textual development of the text, and thus between literary criticism and textual criticism.

(b) That same realization—that the composition stage was still in process in the late Second Temple period—further helps us realize that the concept of "*Urtext*" is not equal to the task of explaining the complexity involved. Each biblical book has its own complex history of literary development, and in some instances this history of development traverses many centuries and entails major revisions. Thus, the goal of seeking "the original text" may sound like a clear idea with a clear object, but, as I have argued elsewhere, it can have at least eight different levels of meaning.²⁶ Moreover, it can be argued that the entire presumption that a "more original" form of the text is to be preferred to a "more developed" form of the text

24 Whereas Albright had spoken in terms of "recensions," Cross ("The Contribution," 85 [= *Qumran and the History*, 282] n. 21) correctly softened the language, noting that the "textual families" were the product "not of conscious or controlled textual recension" but "of natural growth or development in the process of scribal transmission."

25 See E. Ulrich, "The Canonical Process" and "The Community of Israel and the Composition of the Scriptures," in C. A. Evans and S. Talmon, eds., *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders* (BibInt 28; Leiden: Brill, 1997) pp. 327–42.

26 Ulrich, "The Community of Israel," pp. 337–38.

should be reconsidered.²⁷ The various types of literary creativity seen in the variegated examples found at Qumran are representative of the types of literary creativity that characterized the biblical text from its very beginnings and throughout its development. That is, one can now chart and describe the literary creativity that produced the expanded "proto-Samaritan" texts of Exodus and Numbers, the expanded versions of the MT both for the David-Goliath narrative of Samuel and for the book of Jeremiah, the "Additions" to the LXX of Daniel, and the expanded form of the Psalter seen in 11QPs^a. Those types of literary creativity are analogous to the literary creativity that kept contributing to the biblical books as they developed through the monarchic and post-exilic periods. There are numerous examples: (i) the book of Genesis grew from mythic themes and Aramean/Canaanite tribal stories to the national epic of the Yahwist, and to the narrative Torah of the Priestly edition, with its stories, themes, and theologies periodically updated to meet the changing needs of the historically developing communities through the centuries. (ii) The book of Isaiah, beginning with small collections of sayings and stories of the eighth-century prophet, grew by the intermittent incorporation of both large and small additions over centuries: the accumulation of anonymous oracles against the nations, a historical appendix taken from the book of Kings, a substantial section of high literary and theological poetry by the anonymous "Deutero-Isaiah" nearly two centuries later, plus numerous small accretions of a prophetic, liturgical, historical, or scribal nature. (iii) The books of Psalms and Proverbs developed organically through the occasional addition of small collections of similar materials until they reached the forms we encounter in the traditional *textus receptus* or, for Psalms, in a scroll such as 11QPs^a.

This organic process which characterized the growth of the biblical texts over centuries relegated the concept of an "Urtext" to a more distant and foggy position or at least into a

more blurred series of "Urtexte," since it becomes difficult to decide on principle which one from a series of editions should be chosen as *the* text.

(c) Although in some instances clarity was maintained regarding the diverse nature of the MT collection, often it was seen or treated by scholars as a single text; i.e., if one's mental image of the Hebrew Bible is a codex in form—such as *BHS*—it is easy to fail to recognize that the MT consists of a collection of text forms which are of different types for different books, just as the LXX has been acknowledged to exhibit different text forms for different books. The image of a collection of individual scrolls, rather than the image of a single codex, is more helpful for thinking clearly about the Hebrew Bible in antiquity.

Specifically with respect to the "local-text" theory, Talmon, Tov, and I have noted limitations.²⁸ Perhaps the most problematic aspect is the existence in the Qumran collection of numerous widely divergent texts used by a community that studied the scriptures in an explicitly concentrated fashion (1QS VI.6–7) within the same isolated locality over a period of two centuries. Texts such as 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d call into question the specific Egyptian character of the Hebrew texts that served as *Vorlagen* for the LXX. And, though it is quite probably true that there were different examples of textual growth that took place in different localities, to my knowledge there is no specific evidence that causally links any particular form of growth with any particular locality. This last remains a challenge for future research.

28 S. Talmon, "The Old Testament Text," in P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Bible. 1. From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1970) pp. 159–99, esp. pp. 197–99 [repr. in Cross and Talmon, eds., *Qumran and the History*, pp. 1–41, esp. 39–41]; E. Tov, *Textual Criticism*, pp. 186–87; idem, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997) pp. 183–87; E. Ulrich, "Pluriformity in the Biblical Text, Text Groups, and Questions on Canon," in J. Trebolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner, eds., *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid, 18–21 March 1991* (STDJ 11; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1992) pp. 23–41, esp. pp. 26–27.

27 Ibid., pp. 338–41.

2. Shemaryahu Talmon, in contrast to Cross' local-text theory which attempted to explain how a single text developed into three, proposed a quite different perspective. Noting the diversity of textual forms in the Second Temple Period, he introduced the socio-religious aspect of *Gruppentexte*, which served to explain why the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Christians emerged with only three textual forms of the scriptures out of the plethora of forms that were generally circulating in the first century CE.²⁹ He pointed out "the necessary socio-religious conditions for the preservation of a text-tradition, namely its acceptance by a sociologically integrated and definable body."³⁰ This insight helped reorient the search from a "one-to-many" (= three) trajectory to a "many-to-few" (= three) trajectory, and it helped reorient the view that the MT, the SP, and the LXX were "recensions." It did not, however, provide the rationale for the selection of texts. That is, it did not explain why any particular community should choose a particular text; e.g., if the Qumran Community had eventually chosen its own single text form for each book, is there any way to know which of the several available texts for a given book it would have chosen? Why specifically did the Rabbis end up with the collection found in the MT, the Samaritans with the expanded form of the text, and the Christians with the collection found in the LXX? Are there any features that are *group-specific* in any of those texts (other than the two SP features described above)? The challenge for this theory is to discover any evidence that a group changed its form of the text in a manner attributable to the ideology of that group. Beyond the two programmatic SP features, I have found only one example of an ideological change, i.e., the double instance of "Mount Gerizim"—"Mount Ebal" discussed above as illumined by 4QJosh^a.

3. Emanuel Tov also focused more on the multiplicity of texts than on the basic agreement between texts that would

29 Talmon, "The Old Testament Text," pp. 197–9 [= *Qumran and the History*, pp. 39–41].

30 Talmon, "The Old Testament Text," p. 198 [= *Qumran and the History*, p. 40].

ground the notion of text-types. He first denied that there were many text-types at all, but that proved to be too reductionist.³¹ He subsequently refined his ideas, helpfully and correctly articulating the point that the Qumran texts have "taught us no longer to posit MT at the center of our textual thinking."³² This was a significant advance, but I think he needs to move yet farther, since in his generally masterful *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* he continues to use the categories of "proto-MT," "pre-Samaritan," "proto-LXX," and "non-aligned texts," and classifies MSS according to these categories.³³ There clearly are distinguishable text-types at Qumran, though I would suggest that the categories just mentioned are not the best ones for classification. In my view, we should rethink the use of such terms, since the MT and the LXX are not "texts" or "text-types,"—as Tov himself had said in 1981³⁴—and thus they are not consistent standards by which other manuscripts of individual books are to be measured for proper "alignment." The categories of "the MT, the SP, and the LXX" had earlier been employed for classifying texts, and this was understandable when those were the principal texts available for comparison, because they appeared to be "text-types." But for the most part, they are not text-types but, rather, accidentally gathered *collections* of texts of variegated character, mixed collections with different types of texts for different books, shorter and longer, earlier and later. We have no reason to think that "the MT, the SP, and the LXX"

31 E. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint* (1st ed.; Jerusalem: Simor, 1981) p. 274; but see E. Ulrich, "Horizons of Old Testament Textual Research at the Thirtieth Anniversary of Qumran Cave 4," *CBQ* 46 (1984) pp. 613–36, esp. p. 624.

32 E. Tov, "Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts from the Judaean Desert: Their Contribution to Textual Criticism," *JJS* 39 (1988) pp. 5–37, esp. p. 7.

33 Tov, *Textual Criticism*, pp. 114–17.

34 Tov, I think correctly, said that the MT, the LXX, and the SP "do not reflect different textual types, because, with some exceptions, they do not reflect *typologically* different texts . . ." (*The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint* [1st ed.; Jerusalem: Simor, 1981]) p. 274.

were seen in the Second Temple period as text-types or categories or standards for measurement.³⁵ For clear thinking, categories should be formed inductively, dependent on the evidence observed.³⁶

35 A. van der Woude has argued that the "proto-Masoretic" text was growing in dominance in the late Second Temple period, giving as an example the systematic correction of the Greek Minor Prophets text back toward the proto-MT seen in the *Nahal Hever* text (DJD 8); see his "Pluriformity and Uniformity: Reflections on the Transmission of the Text of the Old Testament," in J. N. Bremmer and F. García Martínez, eds., *Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism: A Symposium in Honour of A. S. van der Woude* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992) pp. 151–69. The correction of the Greek back toward a Hebrew text is clear; but is the correction toward the "proto-MT" specifically, or simply, toward a Hebrew language text? There are also counter-examples in which texts which had originally read in agreement with the MT were corrected away from the MT reading.

36 An additional area where Tov has done pioneering work, but where the terminology in my opinion needs correction, is that of scribal practice. Tov speaks of "Qumran scribal practice" and "Qumran orthography" ("The Orthography and Language of the Hebrew Scrolls Found at Qumran and the Origin of These Scrolls," *Textus* 13 [1986] pp. 31–57; and idem, *Textual Criticism*, pp. 107–9). But those terms are misleading, applying the label "Qumran" to general Palestinian practice, because the scrolls were found at Qumran; see E. Ulrich, "Multiple Literary Editions: Reflections toward a Theory of the History of the Biblical Text," in D. W. Parry and S. D. Ricks, eds., *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995* (STDJ 20; Leiden: Brill, 1996) pp. 78–105, esp. pp. 93–96; and idem, "Orthography and Text in 4QDan^a and 4QDan^b and in the Received Masoretic Text," in H. W. Attridge, J. J. Collins, and T. H. Tobin, eds., *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (CTSRR 5; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990) pp. 29–42.

It is true that some of the MSS displaying the orthographic and scribal features are works specific to the Community's "foundation documents"; but on the one hand some of those documents derive from a movement that was probably wider than the Qumran settlement (i.e., from wider Palestine), and on the other hand some MSS of the *Community Rule* (e.g., 4QS^b and 4QS^d) which were copied after 1QS are not inscribed in the "Qumran orthography"; see S. Metso, *The Textual Development of the Qumran Community Rule* (STDJ 21; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

4. I have proposed in a series of studies exploring various aspects of the theory,³⁷ (a) that the succession of revised literary editions of the individual books of scripture is a more useful pattern for charting the main lines of the history of the biblical text. The smaller lines are to be charted secondarily by studying individual textual variants between MSS. (b) Further, the succession of revised literary editions visible in the MS tradition in the late Second Temple Period is simply the continuation of the similar process of composition which characterized the biblical texts from their very beginnings, throughout the history of Israel and Judah, up to the First (66–74 CE) or even Second (132–135 CE) Jewish Revolt. (c) A third and related point is that, though there were of course certain books that were considered sacred and authoritative for Jewish belief and practice, there was no canon as yet in the first century CE. Judaism was far into the process of forming a canon, but there was no fixed and agreed-upon list of books that were, as opposed to books that were not, acknowledged widely as sacred scripture.³⁸ That is, the external shape or contents of the scriptures was not yet fixed, just as the internal shape or text was not.

(a) Successive literary editions. From our present vantage point, I think that the template used to sketch the primary lines of the history of the biblical text should be that of the developing literary editions of the books of the scriptures. The method for detecting successive literary editions is relatively simple but requires several stages. Not only is there a range of orthographic variety visible in virtually all MSS, and not only is there an incessant stream of textual variants for individual words visible in virtually all MSS; but more importantly, there is, beyond

37 Ulrich, "The Canonical Process," "Orthography and Text," "Pluriformity," "Multiple Literary Editions," and "The Community of Israel."

38 Each of the features mentioned is required according to the definition of the theological *terminus technicus* "canon"; if some of the features are not present or not yet fully present, there may be sacred and authoritative books of scripture, but there is not yet a canon.

those, an array of variant literary editions of virtually all the books of the scriptures. The method for studying them can be envisioned as a series of sieves. First, the differences in orthography and the meaningless differences in morphology should be sifted out; these differences (for which I hesitate to use the term "variants") usually happen at a level that has little interrelationship with text-type and distract from the primary lines. Secondly all the variants which can be categorized as textual variants should be sifted out and studied, each as an individual variant on its own terms. Thirdly the individual textual variants should be studied as a group, to see whether a significant number of them might display an intentional, systematic pattern. For many books now, a significant concatenation of what had usually appeared as merely individual variants has emerged showing the same intentional work, presumably by a single individual or "school," and pointing to a variant literary edition of that book.

Numerous examples have been described of successive literary editions of a variety of biblical books, a few already in these pages.³⁹ After the ancient traditions surrounding the Exodus and the Wilderness Wandering had already undergone repeated reformulations during the monarchic period and the early post-exilic period, a Hebrew form of Exodus emerged that was eventually translated into Greek. That form can be labeled edition $n + 1$, where n stands for the number of revised literary editions the text had undergone prior to becoming the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the OG of Exodus. A subsequent edition, $n + 2$, was produced when some editor systematically rearranged the section with chapters 35–39 into the form present now in the MT.⁴⁰ Yet another revised edition of Exodus, $n + 3$, was formed when the many large expansions visible now in 4QpaleoExod^m were added to the text of edition $n + 2$. The SP of Exodus may or may not be considered a new

39 See, e.g., Ulrich, "The Canonical Process" and idem, "The Bible in the Making"; and Tov, *Textual Criticism*, pp. 313–49.

40 See Aejmelaeus, "Septuagintal Translation Techniques—A Solution to the Problem of the Tabernacle Account" (note 7 above).

edition $n + 4$, dependent upon whether quantity or significance is the criterion, since there are only two or three small changes beyond 4QpaleoExod^m, but those changes determine the Community's identity. We saw above that the book of Numbers somewhat parallels that of Exodus. And it is quite plausible that the so-called "4QRevised Pentateuch" witnesses to yet another variant edition of the Pentateuch.

Similarly, the editions of Joshua can be traced through the witness of 4QJosh^a (corroborated by Josephus), the somewhat fuller LXX-Joshua, and the yet fuller MT-Joshua.⁴¹ Some further examples are the LXX-Jeremiah enlarged into the MT-Jeremiah, the MT-Daniel enlarged into the LXX-Daniel, and the MT-Psalter enlarged into the 11QPs^a-11QPs^b-Psalter. Note throughout that (just as the LXX) sometimes the MT form of a given book witnesses to the earlier edition which is subsequently revised, while for other books its character is reversed and it witnesses to the later edition revised from previous forms of the text.

(b) The Composition Process. Literary critics had been demonstrating for over two centuries that virtually all the biblical books are the products of a long series of creative efforts by authors and tradents, editors and redactors, scribes and copyists. We can now see that the process just described as visible in our MS tradition is the continuation of that age-old process. In our overly simplified imaginations, the history of the biblical text was categorized in two neatly distinct periods: one period comprised the composition of the text; it eventually closed and another, comprising the transmission of the text, then began. That view was understandable in light of the earlier data: much evidence was seen for the second period but none for the first. From the transmission period there was evidence of the text's development in the multiplicity of extant MSS. We saw no MS evidence for the development of the text in the compositional period; that development was knowable only through inductive literary analysis. Thus, it was easy

41 See L. Mazon, "The Septuagint Translation of the Book of Joshua," *BIOSCS* 27 (1994) pp. 29–38.

to imagine two periods: the composition period, studied through various forms of literary criticism (termed "higher criticism") but lacking MS evidence; and the transmission period, studied through textual criticism (termed "lower criticism"), operating on MS evidence dating from the time after the composition period had closed.

The biblical scrolls from Qumran illuminate many aspects of the situation. They shed light on both periods, showing that they are genetically linked as one development, not discretely separate. They provide evidence of the period when the text was still growing in its compositional stage, and they provide evidence that is helpful for assessing the factors at work in the transmission stage. Furthermore, they show that the two periods overlapped. That is, there was the type of minor development normally associated with the transmission stage operative in one given form of a book; then a revised edition of the same book was produced and it then experienced its own transmissional development.

(c) The Canonical Process. Finally, just as the texts of the Hebrew scriptures were not fixed prior to the First Jewish Revolt, nor arguably prior to the second revolt, so too the set of books that form the contents of the Hebrew scriptures was not yet fixed. Since discussion of the term "canon" tends quickly to become limitless and amorphous, I can here present only a few principal statements. The term "canon" is a theological *terminus technicus*. James Barr is correct in insisting that "when we talk about a canon of scripture, we refer in the first place to the fact that the Bible contains certain books, while others are outside the canon and do not count as holy scripture." He adds that "This is, and has always been, the normal meaning of the word in English when applied to scripture." In recent discussions "new usages of the word canon have proliferated," but this is "a regrettable innovation, without secure basis in traditional theological language; moreover, it is confusing to the point of being nonsensical."⁴² The same point is made by Bruce Metzger, who

states that the process of canon-formation "was a task, not only of collecting, but also of sifting and rejecting," and he chides "the seemingly indiscriminate way in which the word canonical is attached to a vast range of words, creating a kind of mystique."⁴³ Thus, a strict definition of canon includes the concepts of comprehensive list, conscious decision, unique authoritative status, and permanent binding.

Some form of the "Law of Moses" held a unique authority from the early part of the post-exilic period. Some books of "the Prophets" were also of high religious importance, but which books were and which were not considered among "the Prophets" is unclear to us and was quite likely unclear in the Second Temple period. The book of Psalms was considered and interpreted as a prophetic book, as was the book of Daniel explicitly.⁴⁴ The closest that we can come to clarity at the end of the Second Temple Period, and perhaps as late as the Second Revolt, is that "the scriptures" (not the "Bible," and not the "canon") included "the Law and the Prophets." The contents of the former were clear, those of the latter unclear. Occasionally, a third item is mentioned with "the Law and the Prophets," but it is either explicitly the Psalms (which may be the explicit singling-out of one prophetic book, or may be seen as emerging to begin a new category beyond "the Prophets") or quite vague and unlikely to be considered as constituting a third category of scripture. "The Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors" mentioned in the Prologue to the Wisdom of Ben Sira quite plausibly denotes the scriptures ("the Law and the Prophets") and a multitude of Israel's other holy books (e.g., possibly *Jubilees*, *Enoch*, Job, Proverbs, Tobit, Ezra, Chronicles, the *Temple Scroll*, Sirach, etc.). Some of these may have been implicitly regarded as "scripture" by some groups, others by other groups; there is little indication that people were explicitly asking these questions or making these distinctions yet, and no indication that all the books considered by one group as "scripture" were agreed upon by wider groups.

42 J. Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) p. 49.

43 B. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) p. 36 and n. 84.

44 See Ulrich, "The Bible in the Making," pp. 81-82.

IV. A Current View of the Scriptures and the Process toward Canon in the First Century CE

1. The Qumran biblical scrolls present the scriptures of general Judaism as they existed in the closing centuries of the Second Temple Period. Some were copied at Qumran, but most were probably copied in Jerusalem or wider Palestine and brought to Qumran. Thus, they are representatives of the books of the Hebrew scriptures at the time of Hillel the Elder and Jesus the Christ. They are not the aberrant MSS of a curious sect on the fringes of Judaism and thus able to be dismissed. They are the oldest, the best, the most authentic witnesses to the text of our Bible in this crucial period. There is generally no detectable difference in scrolls thought to be copied outside Qumran from those possibly copied at Qumran. Moreover, the variety in the text of the scriptures quoted during the late first century by the New Testament authors and by the Jewish historian Josephus reflects the same character as that found in the scriptures from Qumran.

2. The text of the scriptures was pluriform throughout the period up to at least the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (66–74 CE) and possibly as late as the Second Jewish Revolt (132–135). There was a range of orthographic variety exercised in virtually all MSS, and there was an unpredictable quantity of textual variants for individual words in all MSS; importantly, Qumran has illuminated an array of variant literary editions of virtually all the books of scripture.

3. Literary criticism had demonstrated for the past two centuries that virtually all the biblical books are the products of a long series of creative efforts by many hands over many generations. Qumran has enabled us to see that this process of dynamic composition of the biblical books continued up to the late first or even the second century, until the irresistible power of Rome and the growing threat of Christianity abruptly halted that dynamic process, and eventually a single form of the text for each book alone survived within the rabbinic community. It was not so much a “stabilization” of the

biblical texts as a loss of the pluriformity of the texts and the transition from a dynamically growing tradition to a uniform collection of “scripture.”

4. Finally, just as the texts of the scriptures were not fixed prior to the first revolt, or possibly until the Second Revolt, so too the list of books that eventually formed the contents of the Hebrew scriptures was not yet fixed. Though the process toward the eventual canon had ancient roots, the canon of scripture is a later, post-biblical set of decisions.