

English Abstracts

Noah's Sacrifices in the Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20 X 13–17): New Readings and Their Interpretation

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Genesis 8:20–22 relates that after emerging from the ark, Noah built an altar to the LORD and offered “of every clean animal and of every clean bird” (v. 20). “The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, and the LORD said to Himself: ‘Never again will I doom the earth because of man’” (v. 21).

The Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20 Col. X, lines 13–17), however, considerably expands this brief biblical narrative and reshapes it into a detailed and highly structured cultic sequence. This expanded account includes a variety of sacrifices and ritual actions that go well beyond the biblical description.

Because the text of the Genesis Apocryphon at this point is only partially preserved, previous scholarship has relied heavily on uncertain readings and tentative reconstructions. As a result, the nature, order, and significance of the sacrificial acts attributed to Noah have remained unclear. Drawing on newly available photographs of the manuscript, the present study offers several improved readings and, on their basis, proposes new reconstructions for portions of the damaged text. These readings allow for a more coherent understanding of the ritual sequence described in the Apocryphon and its underlying conceptual logic.

The revised readings indicate that the text presents a carefully ordered sequence of sacrificial actions, arranged in descending order with respect to the degree of halakhic specificity. The sacrificial rite is divided into three principal stages. First (לקדמין), Noah offers a sin offering (חטאת), described in lines 13–14. Second (ותניאנא), he offers burnt offerings (עולה), mentioned in lines 14–15. Third (ותליתי), he offers bird sacrifices, attested in line 15. Following these three stages, the text refers to the offering of peace offerings (רבחין), a grain offering, wine as a libation, and salt (lines 16–17). The ritual description culminates in a statement

describing the ascent of the 'fragrant aroma of my incense' (ורח מקטורת) to heaven.

The inclusion of a sin offering in Noah's sacrifice is not without precedent. A similar motif appears in the rewritten biblical account found in the Book of Jubilees, as well as in other related traditions. This feature may be explained by the assumption that Noah could not offer a burnt offering upon land that had been rendered impure by human sin before atoning for that impurity.

More surprising, however, is the presence of peace offerings and an independent grain offering—elements that are not ancillary to the burnt offering and that find no parallel in the biblical account of Genesis 8. These additions are unique to the Genesis Apocryphon and, as argued here, are crucial for understanding the broader ritual conception that underlies the passage. Their inclusion suggests that the author did not merely embellish the biblical narrative, but deliberately constructed a comprehensive sacrificial system.

In the Pentateuch, Noah is the first figure explicitly said to have built an altar (Gen 8:20). While Cain and Abel offered sacrifices before him (Gen 4:3–5), those offerings culminated in fratricide and exile. By contrast, Noah's sacrifice achieves cosmic success: God smells the pleasing aroma and swears never again to curse the land because of humankind (Gen 8:21).

Thus, the author of the scroll regarded Noah's first offering, taken from the animal realm, as one that fulfilled its purpose; accordingly, Noah himself is portrayed as a kind of primordial priest who delineated the path of priesthood by offering all types of sacrifices: sin offering, burnt offering, bird offering, peace offering, grain offering, libation, and incense (in the form of frankincense). The author presents him as one who inaugurates the entire sacrificial system. The elaborate cultic sequence in column X should therefore not be understood merely as a routine harmonization of the patriarchal narrative with later priestly legislation. Rather, it represents a deliberate implantation of sacrificial archetypes into the primordial sacrifice offered by Noah upon leaving the ark, thereby framing him as the founder of Israel's cultic system.

On Samaritan Variants and Halakhah Concerning the Forbidden Fruit of the First Three Years (Leviticus 19:23)

Moshe Florentin

The Samaritan version of the Pentateuch differs from the Masoretic version in the verse *וערלתם ערלתו את פריו* (Lev 19:23) by the addition of *את* after the verb *וערלתם*. Drawing on evidence from a Hebrew manuscript of the Samaritan version (*וערלתם את ערלתו ואת פריו*) and translations into Aramaic and Arabic, this paper argues that *את* was interpreted as the preposition *עם* ‘with,’ and not as the object marker. This, combined with other indications, suggests that the basic meaning of the root *ע"ל* is ‘covering,’ and hence *ערלה* means ‘cover’ or ‘peel.’ The meaning of this verse, at least in certain parts of the Samaritan community, is therefore: “you shall reject the fruit and its peel,” aligning with the Jewish *halakha* that states that at the specified time both the fruit and its peel are forbidden for consumption.

The Law of *Hallah* (Num 15:17–21): A Study in Biblical Texts, Second Temple Literature, and Rabbinic Literature

Itamar Kislev

A brief passage in the Torah (Num 15:17–21) addresses the commandment of separating *ḥallah* (loaf). This practice is also mentioned, albeit briefly, in Ezek 44:30 and Neh 10:38. The present article analyzes various components of the passage in Numbers through both ancient and modern exegetical lenses. The discussion uncovers the original intent of the passage as well as elements that were added to it over time. Among other findings, it becomes evident that the law required the gift to be brought to the Temple, but did not specify what was to be done with it there. Instead, the law employs only the general and ambiguous phrase “to YHWH.” By contrast, the references in Ezekiel and Nehemiah—which likely serve as an exegesis of certain details of the Torah’s law—clarify the purpose of the offering: it is designated directly for the priests. Furthermore, the passage in Num 15 appears to be relatively early compared to the passage listing the priestly and Levitical gifts in Num 18. The analysis suggests that an

early form of the *ḥallah* legislation underwent editorial revision through additions, when inserted into the miscellaneous and chronologically late collection of Num 15.

The question of how frequently *ḥallah* was to be separated receives detailed attention. In the second half of the Second Temple period, two distinct interpretive traditions existed regarding this matter. According to one tradition, represented by Philo, Josephus, and the rabbinic literature, *ḥallah* was to be separated from every batch of dough. The alternative view, explicitly attested in one of the Damascus Document manuscripts (4Q270 = 4QD^e), prescribed the separation of *ḥallah* only once a year. The latter halakhic view reflects the original meaning of the biblical text in Numbers, and is likewise supported by the book of Nehemiah. Moreover, the rabbis were aware of this approach but rejected it: the Mishnah records that some people brought loaves and that the rabbis refused to accept them. It is proposed here that, contrary to all previous interpretations, these loaves were brought to the Temple according to the once-a-year position, and the rabbis contested this halakhic approach by refusing to accept these loaves. A second rabbinic source is a midrashic passage in the Sifre, which, according to certain scholars' interpretation, dismisses the possibility of understanding the Torah's instruction according to the once-a-year approach. It is proposed in the article that another midrashic passage in the Sifre, whose interpretation has challenged commentators and scholars, actually preserves the literalist, sectarian (Qumranic) view.

First Fruits and Moons: Linguistic and Thematic Divisions in Qumran's Calendrical Scrolls

Anna Shirav Hamernik and Eshbal Ratzon

One of the most distinctive features of the Qumran corpus is the presence of manuscripts devoted to calendrical reckoning and to the enumeration of key events. The majority of these texts presuppose the 364-day year, a calendrical scheme unique within Second Temple Judaism and frequently regarded as a central marker of sectarian identity. Yet despite their common framework, the calendrical texts are far from uniform. They display significant diversity in both form and content, especially within the calendrical scrolls that

contain lists of festivals. Such diversity raises important questions not only about the coherence of the calendrical tradition preserved at Qumran, but also about the sectarian or social identity of the circles that transmitted these writings. This article revisits these questions through a detailed examination of the calendrical scrolls and argues that the material may be classified into two clusters, distinguished above all by the presence or absence of the festivals of first fruits.

The study begins with a presentation of the relevant scrolls and the calendrical lists they contain. We then review previous scholarly attempts at classification, focusing on the theories of Shemaryahu Talmon, who in DJD 21 divided the scrolls into “calendrical documents” and “priestly courses lists,” as well as a third group that combines features of the first two. Another approach, advanced by Stephan Pfann, interprets the textual variety as reflecting the existence of different calendars in the late Second Temple period. While we accept in principle Pfann’s division, we seek to refine the criteria on which it is based, focusing on recurring thematic and linguistic correspondences that point to genuine ancient traditions rather than to modern editorial constructs. We then propose alternative explanations for understanding this clustering.

We argue that the primary basis for classification is the presence or absence of the first fruits festivals. Four manuscripts (4Q324d, 4Q325, 4Q326, and 4Q394 frgs. 1–2; Cluster B) record these festivals alongside the pentateuchal feasts, while four others (4Q319, 4Q320, 4Q321, 4Q321a; Cluster A) omit them. Within the 364-day year, the first fruits festivals pose a unique difficulty: unlike most feasts, which can be observed independently of seasonal accuracy due to their historical meaning, these are strictly agricultural and inseparable from their seasonal context. Consequently, the misalignment of the 364-day calendar with the agricultural cycle creates a serious problem for their observance.

This division is reinforced by a set of correlated features that clarify the logic of the clustering. Most notably, there is an inverse correlation between the presence of the first fruits festivals and references to lunar phenomena: Cluster B records the first fruits festivals but omits the moon, while Cluster A omits the festivals but incorporates lunar cycles. We suggest, drawing also on Jub. 6:36 and the structure of 4Q321, that the issue was not the moon or lunar calendar per se but a deeper theological concern—the danger of human interference in the divinely predetermined order of

time. Cluster A, which omits the first fruits festivals, appears to assign cultic significance to the moon and to integrating it into the calendar. For Cluster B, two explanations are possible: the omission may reflect a principled rejection of the moon and its observation, or a recognition of the limitations of the schematic 364-day year and the realisation that, despite its elegant synchronisation of solar and lunar cycles, it does not reflect astronomical reality. In this view, the calendar should be regarded not as astronomical but as ideal.

An additional criterion for the clustering is their linguistic profile. We analysed variations in spelling and vocabulary and found that festival names—especially the designation of the Omer festival—and references to the first day of the week are the most significant markers for classifying the manuscripts. We suggest that these two features are interconnected and serve to highlight the halakhic dispute concerning the date of the festival, which is in fact one of the first fruits festivals.

Another ground for this division is the connection of each cluster to other, so-called “sectarian” compositions. We consider the link between Cluster A and the Community Rule, in which one copy (4Q259) was copied together with one of the calendrical documents (4Q319), and the link between Cluster B and both *Miqṣat Ma‘aśê ha-Torah* (MMT—which may likewise have preserved a copy containing a calendrical list (4Q394 frgs. 1–2)—and the Temple Scroll. Each of these compositions, and the calendars reflected in them, raises difficult questions concerning the social groups to which they can be attributed, the relationship between the works despite their differences, and their potential audience. Whereas the Community Rule is an internal, sectarian document—possibly even secret—intended only for community members, the Temple Scroll and MMT present a halakhic vision probably intended for all Israel. The correlation of the clusters with these sectarian works indicates that the two calendrical traditions were not confined to isolated list manuscripts but were embedded within major compositions, thereby reflecting broader ideological commitments.

To demonstrate that the clustering is based on fundamental ideological differences that represent different approaches and not merely incidental literary preferences, we propose several explanations, which fall into three main categories, though they may also overlap: (1) Social—the scrolls reflect two or more social groups, either closely or loosely

connected; (2) Chronological—the differences reflect development over time within a single group; (3) Target audience—the scrolls were produced by one group but intended for different audiences, shaping their differing content.

The Two-Sided (Opisthograph) Writing Technique in Tefillin from Qumran

Ariel Schwarz

As part of a comprehensive study that includes an analysis of the tefillin and mezuzot finds from Qumran and the Judean Desert, a number of insights emerged regarding the two-sided writing technique on the tefillin slips. The analysis comprised investigating the character of the slips, including: (1) the slips themselves—the manner of writing (one-sided/ two-sided, the layout), the shape of the slip, and the folding methodology; (2) the writing technique—errors and corrections; (3) the text itself—textual profiles, spelling patterns, letters, and script; (4) the tefillin slips' character—their classification (hand/head), content, and order of passages, including reference to open and closed passages.

As a basic step, this article focuses only on the technical aspects of the two-sided writing that distinguishes and defines these tefillin slips as a separate group among the tefillin slips from Qumran and the Judean Desert.

First, because of past inaccuracies, it is important to differentiate the corpus of tefillin and mezuzot finds according to whether the slips are written on one side or both sides. The use of a two-sided writing technique both on leather sheets and on papyri is well known in the ancient world. Accordingly, in the ancient Jewish world of writing in the Land of Israel and beyond, the use of this two-sided technique is attested, though in a more limited fashion. However, no two-sided documents containing a biblical text have been found in Qumran or the Judean Desert with the exception of the tefillin slips. Until the present, the prevailing opinion on the phenomenon of two-sided writing on the tefillin slips regarded it as a random event, resulting from a desire to conserve writing material, or as a scribal mistake in calculating the area for writing on the front side (recto) of the slip. In examining the characteristics of two-sided writing in

comparison with one-sided writing in the tefillin and mezuzah slips, the uniqueness of the two-sided writing technique with specific characteristics and rules became apparent, and these details will be presented in this paper.

The assumption that the use of a two-sided writing technique was intended to save writing material also led to the erroneous conclusion that there was an evolutionary process in which an early stage of two-sided writing in tefillin slips later evolved into one-sided writing, similar to the writing of scrolls. The current study shows that there were separate groups of scribes who contemporaneously used different writing methodologies side by side.

Consistent and deliberate use of these writing methodologies and rules by a scribal group demonstrates that this was not a random phenomenon produced by scribal error or a desire to conserve writing material. Many researchers grappled with the strange, inexplicably disordered layouts of these two-sided slips, which they regarded as a mystery. From the outset of research on the slips, the scholars' perplexity resulted in the proposal of a variety of magical and mystical suggestions for a solution. Recently, a proposal related to the folding of the slips was also suggested.

The elucidation of the technical rules behind the two-sided writing technique enables one to perceive how the writing layout is generated by these rules. This writing methodology always exhibits a perpendicular relationship between the two directions of writing on both sides of the slips, and the location of the writing on the back side (*verso*) is uniquely executed. Secondary rules include the custom of writing on the back side (*verso*) perpendicular to the front side (*recto*), with the writing on the back side arranged so that the text must end at the bottom of the slip. These rules become even clearer in view of later Jewish laws and customs for which the two-sided writing technique is an ancient antecedent.

Such a technical delineation of one- and two-sided slip writing methods in this uniquely defined and regulated manner has the potential to establish a new classification schema for this field of study. This classification and definition of the group of scribes who used this writing technique will be developed through a comparative analysis of the text profiles and spelling patterns in these tefillin slips in a separate publication. This comparative analysis will assist in identifying and characterizing this scribal group that wrote these two-sided tefillin slips. This definition and division will

also assist in the analysis and understanding of the other aforementioned technical parameters, enabling conclusions to be drawn regarding the tefillin and mezuzot from Qumran and the Judean Desert.

Text Profile and Spelling Pattern in the Two-sided (Opisthograph) Tefillin Group from Qumran

Ariel Schwarz

The examination of the two-sided writing technique on the tefillin slips from Qumran demonstrates that it was a unique writing method with specific characteristics and rules. In these slips, care was taken to write on the back side (verso) perpendicular to the direction of writing on the front side (recto), and in addition, the scribes from this group made sure to end the act of writing at the bottom of the sheet. These characteristics, which involve the scribe's planning of the text layout, created layout configurations that were not understood until the two-sided writing technique was fully comprehended. From this technical understanding, the tefillin slips written on both sides among the tefillin and mezuzot finds from Qumran and the Judean Desert can be differentiated from those written on only one side. In this article, we will complete the examination of this group of two-sided tefillin slips by delineating their textual profiles and spelling patterns. Within this framework, a renewed analysis of the text and spelling of the tefillin and mezuzot from Qumran and the Judean Desert will be presented. This analysis accomplishes the textual differentiation of the two-sided tefillin slips from the rest of the tefillin slips and mezuzot finds.

The Number of Scribes in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a): A New Proposal

Hila Dayfani, Yishai Shor, and Barak Sober

The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a), notable for its exceptional length and state of preservation, has long attracted scholarly attention, particularly with regard to the number of scribes involved in its production. This question arises primarily from material features evident at the physical and textual midpoint of the scroll, between columns 27 and 28, which are often interpreted as indicating that the scroll is a composite of two originally independent sub-scrolls and, accordingly, may reflect the involvement of more than one scribe. Previous scholarship has also pointed to orthographic differences between the two halves of the scroll, especially a tendency toward fuller orthography in its second half.

This paper reexamines the number of scribes responsible for 1QIsa^a. It introduces a two-level statistical approach for identifying distinct ‘scribal fingerprints’ through the systematic analysis of orthographic, morphological, and material features. This novel methodology addresses the fundamental challenge of scribal identification where controlled experiments are impossible, allowing us to distinguish meaningful patterns from random variations.

In the first stage of the analysis, we map the distribution of plene and defective orthography of selected frequent words in the scroll (כִּי/כִּיא; כֹּה/כוּה; כֹּל/כוּל; לִי/לִיא; מִי/מִיא; הוּא/הוּאה; ירוּשָׁלַם/ירוּשָׁלַיִם); and variation in the number of lines per column across the scroll. The combined distribution of these features reveals a distinction between three segments in the scroll: columns 1–12; 13–27; and 28–54. To assess whether the observed differences between these segments could have arisen by chance, the second stage of the research applies permutation and bootstrapping tests. Although each test has its own strengths and weaknesses, both yield consistent results, indicating that the distinctions between the segments are statistically significant.

We interpret these differences as evidence for the participation of three distinct scribes in the writing of the scroll. This conclusion rests on the premise that even a conservative scribe who aims to copy his source as

faithfully as possible will unconsciously leave his fingerprint in the text while intuitively using *matres lectionis* or certain morphological forms stemming from his professional training or innate tendencies. Material features, such as column layout and line density, further reflect individual scribal working habits rather than characteristics of the *Vorlage*.

On this basis, we argue that 1QIsa^a was most likely produced by three scribes, challenging earlier proposals. This finding not only corroborates the long-suspected bifurcation of the scroll but also identifies a previously unrecognized transition within its first half. While the transition between the second and third scribes (cols. 27–28) appears to have been planned in advance and is accompanied by material indicators, the transition between the first and second scribes (cols. 12–13) seems to have been unanticipated and therefore lacks comparable material markers. By bridging manuscript studies with statistical analysis, our work provides an objective framework for scribe identification that extends beyond traditional paleographic methods, showing how quantitative methods can enrich traditional humanistic scholarship.

Active–Passive Variation in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a)

Einav Fleck

This study examines active-passive textual variation in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a) in comparison with the Masoretic Text (MT), focusing on cases in which passive clauses in the MT appear as active in the scroll.

Previous scholarship has largely explained such variation through morphological, phonological, or diachronic developments in the Hebrew verbal system—most notably the decline of the internal passive forms *qal* and *pual* and the increased productivity of *niphal* and *hithpael* from Late Biblical Hebrew onward. In this study, I argue that these factors alone cannot account for the patterns observed in 1QIsa^a, as I have previously demonstrated regarding similar variations in the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Drawing on findings from psycholinguistic research, the study proposes that some active-passive variants reflect differences in the comprehension of passive structures or in their retrieval from working memory during

textual transmission. Passive structures are universally regarded as non-canonical, as they involve a marked mapping of semantic roles to syntactic positions, assigning the patient rather than the agent to subject position. In Agent-before-Patient languages such as Hebrew, which also underwent a shift to Subject–Verb word order during the Second Temple period, passive constructions are prone to misinterpretation during copying.

The analysis is based on a verse-by-verse comparison of MT Isaiah and 1QIsa^a. Forty-seven clauses were identified in which a passive clause in the MT corresponds to an active clause in the scroll, representing approximately 14–15% of the relevant passive constructions. These were classified according to verbal pattern and passive type (personal/impersonal). The data show that approximately two-thirds of the changes involve internal passives (*qal*, *pual*, *hophal*, and passive participles), while the remaining cases involve *niphal* forms, despite the growing association of *niphal* with passive voice during this period. Notably, approximately half of the internal passive changes do not occur in homographic forms, indicating that the active interpretation cannot be explained solely by homography or phonological opacity.

By integrating philological analysis with psycholinguistic theory and findings, the article suggests that some active-passive variants in 1QIsa^a are not the result of systematic diachronic change or deliberate editorial intervention, but rather of spontaneous, non-systematic effects of language comprehension and production. The findings align with cross-linguistic evidence showing that passive representations are harder to maintain in working memory and may sometimes be retrieved as active. Consequently, active-passive variation should be expected in any Hebrew text transmitted through copying, regardless of corpus or dialect.

The study thus contributes a cognitive dimension to the analysis of textual variation in Biblical Hebrew and the Dead Sea Scrolls that complements traditional morphological and historical explanations.

A New Interpretation of the Hebrew Genizah Text of Ben Sira 11:34b

Daphne Baratz

This paper proposes a novel interpretation of a difficult verse in the Hebrew Genizah text of Ben Sira 11:34b: משוכן זריו זְהִיר דְּרִכֶּיךָ, וַיִּנְכַּרְךָ בְּמַחְמַדֶּיךָ (MS A). The Hebrew and Greek texts differ considerably in the first half of the verse while the second half corresponds to the Greek translation, conveying how the person introduced in the first half will estrange himself from his family. The Hebrew Genizah version of this section has long presented significant interpretive difficulties for scholars, as the word זריו is without parallel, and the combination משוכן זריו seems unintelligible.

In this paper I follow Rey and Reymond in their new critical edition of the Hebrew manuscripts of Ben Sira, who proposed emending זריו to זריז 'quick, diligent.' Building on their emendation, I suggest reading משוכן with a *sin* (ש). This yields: 'משוכן (= מסוכן) זריז > זְהִיר דְּרִכֶּיךָ, וַיִּנְכַּרְךָ בְּמַחְמַדֶּיךָ' of a diligent steward, be careful in your ways, lest he estrange you from your beloved ones.' This interpretation is supported by several other instances of the interchange of *sin* and *samekh* in the Ben Sira manuscripts, including two other examples in chapter 11.

The biblical term סֵכֵן, which likely derives from Akkadian, refers to a high-ranking servant or official (Isa 22:15) and to a maidservant or caretaker in the feminine form סֵכְנָה (1 Kgs 1:2, 4). Drawing on these biblical connections, this word in Ben Sira likely refers to a servant or an official appointed to manage household affairs. The description of this servant as זריו aligns with values expressed in wisdom literature, where quickness is considered one of the important virtues for a servant or scribe (Proverbs, Ahiqar).

The emended proverb warns against the paradoxical danger of competence: a steward who is exceptionally diligent in performing his duties might avoid proper supervision, and taking advantage of this freedom, he may turn the family of his master against him through his influence within the household. This interpretation connects thematically with the preceding passage in Ben Sira (11:29–31), which warns against the danger of introducing a peddler (רוכל) into one's house. This context strengthens the proposed reading, as both passages share a common concern with professional figures who enter the domestic sphere and may cause damage inside one's house and family.

Further support for this interpretation comes from a Genizah fragment containing an alphabetically arranged collection of Aramaic proverbs. The proverb for letter מ reads: מעבד טב תהוי זהיר תהוי צעיר 'of a good slave, be careful, [lest] you will be sorry.' This parallels the above interpretation of Ben Sira 11:34b, both thematically and partially in form, sharing the term זהיר and a similar sentence structure. This collection of proverbs shows additional connections to Ben Sira and to the later Alpha Beta of Ben Sira. In particular, a noteworthy connection is found between the proverb for letter ט in this collection and the passage that directly surrounds verse 11:34b in MS A of Ben Sira.

In conclusion, this brief study proposes a new interpretation for a difficult verse in the Hebrew Genizah text of Ben Sira 11:34b. The solution involves a minor textual emendation (changing זריז to זריו) and reading שוכן with a *sin* (ש). This interpretation is supported by several other instances of the interchange of *sin* and *samekh* in the Ben Sira manuscripts, by its alignment with wisdom literature's values, by its thematic connection to the immediate context of the passage warning against peddlers, and by its partial correspondence to a proverb found in a Genizah collection related to the Alpha Beta of Ben Sira that also has a connection to the Book of Ben Sira itself.

A New Reconstruction of *Miqṣat Ma'āšê ha-Torah*: Textual Stability Reconsidered

Eshbal Ratzon

This article offers a comprehensive reassessment of the textual history of *Miqṣat Ma'āšê ha-Torah* (4QMMT), based on a new material reconstruction of its six extant manuscripts (4Q394–399). Prepared as part of a forthcoming critical edition co-authored with Vered Noam and published by Oxford University Press, this reconstruction allows for a detailed examination of the textual integrity and consistency of the work across its various copies.

4QMMT has long served as a key document for understanding sectarian law and ideology at Qumran. The composition is conventionally divided into three sections: (A) a calendrical section preserved only in 4Q394; (B) a list of disputed legal rulings preserved in 4Q394–397; and (C) an

epilogue appealing for repentance and promising reward for observance, found in 4Q397–399. Scholars have debated the textual coherence of these sections, with some arguing that the work demonstrates considerable textual fluidity. This view has been supported by apparent discrepancies between copies.

The article challenges the prevailing view of textual fluidity by subjecting each claim to close scrutiny in light of the new reconstruction. First, the presence of the calendar at the beginning of 4Q394 and its alleged absence from other copies have been interpreted as evidence that the calendar was a later addition. However, the physical analysis of 4Q395, including stitching marks, suggests that at least one additional sheet once preceded the surviving text—possibly containing the calendrical section. Thus, the absence of the calendar in other copies cannot be taken as conclusive evidence for its non-inclusion.

Second, the legal section (B), long thought to be a locus of significant textual variation, is shown to be largely stable. Differences between the manuscripts primarily involve spelling, syntax, or scribal habits, with no meaningful changes to content. Numerous instances of conflicting text between 4Q397 and 4Q394 are the result of a column in 4Q397 that was mistakenly reconstructed too narrowly. An improved reconstruction allows for a stable text with only minor differences. One set of fragments (4Q398 1–10), previously attributed to the legal section, contains no clear parallels in other copies. A careful material analysis reveals that these fragments are physically distinct from the rest of 4Q398 and should likely be reassigned to a different legal text altogether. This reattribution eliminates another apparent example of divergent legal content.

The third issue addressed is the relationship between the legal section and the epilogue. While only 4Q397 preserves both units together, the absence of either section in the remaining manuscripts is more plausibly attributed to accidental loss than to original structural differences. This is especially likely given the highly fragmentary nature of all six manuscripts.

The final part of the article revisits the claim that the epilogue exhibits substantial textual variants, especially between 4Q397 and 4Q398. This perceived variation has been cited as evidence of textual fluidity. However, the new reconstruction demonstrates that earlier editions mistakenly aligned two non-parallel passages, which are in fact separate paragraphs with shared vocabulary but distinct content. Once these sections are

decoupled, the supposed variation vanishes. In addition, the differences between 4Q398 and 4Q399—though real—are limited to abbreviation and do not affect meaning. These are best understood as minor editorial or scribal choices rather than signs of textual instability.

Cumulatively, the evidence presented in this study supports the return to the original presentation in the official edition. 4QMMT, contrary to the long-held assumption of textual fluidity, exhibits a high degree of textual stability. The three-part structure likely characterized the composition in all its copies. Apparent discrepancies result from either damaged preservation, mistaken identifications, or differences in scribal presentation. In comparison to genuinely fluid compositions from Qumran (such as the Community Rule), the consistent transmission of 4QMMT across six fragmentary but overlapping copies is striking.

A New Examination of 6Q18: Textual and Material Aspects

Asaf Gayer

This study reexamines fragment 2 of scroll 6Q18, one of 31 manuscripts discovered in Qumran Cave 6. Traditionally considered part of a liturgical or apotropaic composition, this fragment is the largest and most substantial among the surviving fragments attributed to 6Q18. Through a detailed analysis of PAM (Palestine Archaeological Museum) photographs and physical features, the article argues that fragment 2 did not originate in Cave 6 but rather in Cave 4, and should therefore be excluded from the 6Q18 corpus.

The article is divided into two main parts. The first reconstructs the identification and classification process of fragment 2, which is composed of six separate papyrus pieces joined together during the sorting of fragments at the Rockefeller Museum. While DJD 3 includes this fragment as part of 6Q18 from Cave 6, three of its constituent pieces appear in PAM photographs from the 1953 “G series,” which document only Cave 4 material. Furthermore, a 1955 photo (PAM 41.825) shows the nearly complete fragment placed alongside known Cave 4 scrolls. It is only from 1958 onward that the fragment appears with Cave 6 material. This shift suggests a misattribution caused by the chaotic influx of thousands of fragments from multiple caves during September 1952. This reassessment casts doubt on the long-held

confidence in the accuracy of the initial sorting process and the reliability of Bedouin testimony regarding cave provenance.

The second part of the article presents a new reading of the fragment's content. The text preserves nine partial lines written in early Herodian script on high-quality and uniform papyrus, indicating both high scribal skill and considerable investment in the scroll's production. The preserved vocabulary and poetic rhythm reflect a Qumranic dualistic worldview, alternating between blessings and condemnations, light and darkness, reward and judgment. Phrases such as "eternal life and glory" (חיי נצח וכבוד) and "darkness and gloom" (חושך ואפלה) echo core Qumranic motifs from the Community Rule, the War Scroll, and the Thanksgiving Hymns.

Particularly noteworthy is the expression "guardian of the son of Yishḥaq" (שומר בן ישחק) which likely refers to Jacob and may allude to his divine protection as portrayed in *Jubilees*. This phrase integrates the figure of the patriarch into the dualistic theological landscape, presenting him as an archetype of divine favor, possibly contrasted with Esau as a symbol of rejection.

Based on this reexamination, fragment 2 should not be read as part of the same composition as the other 6Q18 fragments, which are shorter, more fragmentary, and distinct in both content and provenance. Rather, fragment 2 appears to be an independent Qumranic composition, likely poetic and theological in nature, and originally from Cave 4. Its polished script and elevated language suggest it was part of a structured literary work addressing themes central to the Qumran worldview.

Two appendices further support the study's material approach. The first proposes a new physical join between fragments 6Q18 8, 11, and 13, based on fiber alignment and partial letter reconstructions, contributing to our understanding of the original structure of the scroll. The second documents the presence of a *kollēsis* (joining seam between two papyrus sheets) in fragment 5—a feature rarely identified in Qumran manuscripts but significant for understanding scroll production techniques.

This article underscores the importance of combining textual, paleographic, and photographic evidence to reassess longstanding assumptions about manuscript provenance in the Qumran corpus. The case of fragment 2 exemplifies how a return to archival photographs and physical evidence can reveal overlooked histories of classification and open up new interpretations of Qumranic texts.