4Q11 comprises sixty-four fragments, only 38 of them were identified in the official edition. In today’s presentation, I hope to illustrate how 4Q11 carries importance far outweighing its relatively restrained evidence. I will discuss material and textual matters of 4Q11 and their implications for the conception of the various ways in which scriptural texts were transmitted in the late Second Temple period.

My discussion of 4Q11 takes into account both the extant and missing (or “lost” or “extinct”) text of the scroll. I will begin with the lost text, proposing a new material reconstruction of 4Q11. This reconstruction will provide crucial data concerning the amount of ~~the~~ missing text between the preserved fragments, which will shed light on the literary form reflected in the scroll. I will then analyze exemplars of variant readings attested in 4Q11 in light of the interpretative processes of scriptural transmission in the late Second Temple period.

**Literary Forms of the Book of Exodus**

Of the seventeen major expansions, nine are in plagues narrative. These expansions are motivated by a formalistic need of perfecting the divine speech act, detailing both the divine command to Moses to speak to Pharaoh and its fulfillment (see, e.g., Ben-Dov 2019, 221). In the major expansions of chapters 18, 20, and 32, a certain amount of text in Exodus was copied from parallel accounts in Deuteronomy. These expansions are not simply harmonizations, but rather aims to “increase the consistency of speech events” or to increase “the self-referentiality of the Torah”, as suggested by Molly Zahn (2015).

An additional literary form of the book of Exodus is evident in chapters 35–40. When contrasted with the LXX, the MT and SP-Ex are significantly different regarding the internal order of chapters 35–40. We may conclude, therefore, that the book of Exodus existed in (at least) three literary forms in the last centuries BCE: MT-Ex, SP-Ex and 4Q22, and the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX-Ex.

**The Lost Text: Material Reconstruction of 4Q11 and Its Implications**

There is insufficient evidence from 4Q11 to confidently determine whether it originally contained the major expansions found in the pre-Samaritan tradition. Likewise, we are unable to determine whether 4Q11 follows MT/SP or LXX in the order of chapters 35–40, because of the small amount of the preserved text from these chapters (slide, only fragment 38 preserves text of these chapters, attesting to Ex 36: 34–36).

In a paper presented in Orion’s seminar last January, I proposed a material reconstruction that encompasses twenty-three fragments, which their content extends from Gen 50:26 to Ex 17:11. This material reconstruction supports the suggestion that 4Q11 did not include the SP-expansions in the plagues narrative. Today, I will extend the reconstruction to forty-eight fragments – approximately two-thirds of the total – which encompasses Gen 50:26 to Ex 28:42. In doing so, I will argue that 4Q11 did not include the two SP-Ex expansions in chapter 18, both dealing with the organization of the judiciary. In the following, I will briefly describe the assumptions and principles underlying the reconstruction:

1. (slide) Identification of recurrent damage patterns in four of the largest fragments of the scroll – fragments 7,10,19, and 35, most of these preserve the bottom margins.

2. (slide) Location of the fragments in a digital canvas simulating the original scroll in a horizontal axis according to the corresponding points of damage. The sequence of the fragments within the canvas is determined by the preserved text. At this point, we are still unable to estimate the distances between the fragments.

4. (slide) The position of the large fragments and the determination of the number of lines per column allow a reconstruction of the missing text between fragments in instances where there is a relatively stable biblical text. Further reconstruction allows one to locate additional fragments and to propose new joins.

As a preliminary conclusion, the essence of this part of this paper was to use the materiality of 4Q11 as a fruitful source to investigate its textual context. The material reconstruction of the scroll indicates that 4Q11 represents the short text-type of Exodus, where MT and the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX are also its exemplars.

**The Extant Text: Scribal and Exegetical Techniques in Second Temple Period**

Not only does the shared literary form attest to textual proximity between MT and 4Q11, but so does a statistical analysis of 4Q11’s readings. (slide) According to Armin Lange (THB), there is a relatively large number of agreements between 4Q11 and the MT. However, this number is overshadowed by an identical number of disagreements. Due to the inconclusive textual evidence, 4Q11 was not simply classified as a Masoretic manuscript. Tov (2002, 154) placed it in the outer circle of proto-Masoretic texts.

The textual data illustrates that we have to explore 4Q11’s text in terms of the scribe and his process, rather than its comparison to other ancient versions. In other words, we should ask what the scribe did when he copied his *Vorlage*? Did he copy it faithfully or did he modify or redact the text before him? I approached 4Q11 with these very questions in mind. In doing so, I follow Sidnie Crawford (2017), who emphasizes the importance of seeking patterns for scribal activity rather than a textual characteristic of a specific manuscript vis-à-vis other manuscripts.

At this point of the discussion, I should caution that it is often impossible to distinguish whether individual passages were inserted by the scribe or already existed in his *Vorlage*. That being said, we can only make conclusions about scribal processes in a general way. It is often impossible to identify a certain point in the transmission of the text when a change was made .

Fifty-three variants are attested in which one of the four Hebrew texts of Exodus – 4Q11, 4Q22, MT, and SP – disagrees with another (slide). Most of these variants pertain to a single word or phrase. Upon first glance, it may appear as these variants are insignificant and negligible, but a closer inspection reveals that 4Q11 includes readings that demonstrate scribal work beyond mere copying. The scribe of 4Q11 or its predecessors intervened in the wording of the scriptural text in order to reflect a particular interpretation of the text, as well as to simplify and clarify phrases.

In two recent papers, Noam Mizrahi (2017, 2020) explored two of 4Q11’s unique readings in Ex 12:9 (slide). 4Q11 differs from the MT in two details in this verse: (1) while MT reads נא, commonly interpreted as “raw”, 4Q11 employs the *hapax legomenon* נו. (2) while MT reads the clause בשל מבשל, a conjunctive *vav* between the two words was inserted in 4Q11: בשל ומבשל. Mizrahi sees the interchange between MT’s נא and 4Q11’s נו as intentional on the part of the scribe. The scribe used the secondary biform נו, from his contemporary vernacular, in order to solve the ambiguity of the earlier form נא, which can also be interpreted as a common particle.

As for the phrase בשל ומבשל, the conjunctive *vav* indicates that the scribe of 4Q11, much like the Palestinian Targums, distinguished between two prohibited methods for cooking the meat of the Passover offering: בשל on the one hand, מבושל on the other. Therefore, he inserts a conjunctive *vav*, which syndetic marks the two methods, as prevails in Second Temple Hebrew. These examples illustrate that the scribe of 4Q11 intervenes in the receives text in order to express a specific interpretation and to avoid what he sees as a misinterpretation of the text.

I would like to follow Mizrahi by presenting another example in which a textual variant in 4Q11 is likely the result of an interpretative approach of the scribe of 4Q11 or its predecessors. In Ex 25:11 the author of 4Q11 adopts a particular interpretation of the word זר and at the same time rejects its other possible meaning.

(slide- Ex 25:11).

זר is an enigmatic feature of the ark, as well as of the table, the table’s מסגרת, and the incense altar. In all its eight occurrences in MT-Ex and SP-Ex, the text specifies that the זר is made of gold and is situated “around” the object it adorns, סביב. In 4Q11, of all the occurrences of זר זהב סביב, only the case of Ex 25:11, dealing with the ark, was preserved. The scroll uniquely read זר זהב, while the word סביב was left out.

Raanan Eichler, in a paper from 2014 (197–200), shows that the accepted interpretation of זר in LXX and related texts is a guilloche moulding, a decorative element of Greek architecture attested in all periods (slide). In contrast, in *Targum Neofiti* and *Peshitta* זר is rendered as (א)כליל, “crown”. The Vulgate similarly translates “corona”. This interpretation, evidently stemming from the assumption that זר is etymologically related to the biblical נזר , is also dominant in Rabbinic Exegesis. It is found in the homily of *R. Shimon b. Yohai* in Exodus Raba 34:2, and such an understanding seems to underline two homilies of *R. Yohanan* in *b. Yoma* 72b as well.

Simply, a crown is anything that surrounds an object, whether it is head as in spoken language or the ark as in Ex 25:11. Indeed, Kahler-Baumgartner interpreted זר as “frame, border” (HALOT 1: 279). This interpretation would make the word סביב in the phrase זר זהב סביב redundant. Therefore, 4Q11’s reading may be a deliberate omission of סביב in order to avoid this duplication. Perhaps the scribe of 4Q11, or its predecessors, preferred the interpretation of זר as a crown, and improved the text of the verse in a manner that does not leave room for the interpretation reflected in the Greek text. If this is the case, then Ex 25:11 is further evidence of the exegetical readings attested in 4Q11.

Moreover, there are numerous examples in which 4Q11 readings reflect a simplification of phrases in content and language. I will now discuss two of these; The first relates to content and the second to language.

(slide, Ex 18:21)

The addressee (or the subject?) of the word עליהם, meaning “over them,” is somewhat ambiguous in the MT and SP. Nonetheless, the context certainly indicates that its sense is “over the Israelites” and not “over the judges.” In 4Q11, as is reflected in LXX, the word אותם (“them”)’ is added in order to clarify that it is the judges who should be appointed over the Israelites.

Ex 18:20

The relative particle אשר appears in 4Q11, 4Q22, and SP, but is absent in the MT. It belongs to the group of grammatical elements whose presence in the text has increased throughout the textual transmission. The presence of אשר eliminates asyndetic constructions in order to syntactically simplify the phrase.

The last two examples are not unique to 4Q11, but they demonstrate the tendency of the ancient scribes to modify the text in order to produce clear and coherent phrases.

**Conclusions**

this paper began with the question of whether 4Q11 reflects the long or the short literary form of the book of Exodus. With my material reconstruction, I demonstrated that it did not include any of the major SP expansions. However, despite the general association with the Masoretic tradition, 4Q11 contains readings that reflect a free attitude of the scribes to change their received texts.

There are varying degrees of scribal intervention in their received texts, shaping the transmission of the Pentateuch in the Second Temple period. 4Q11 introduces minor changes that may wrongly be evaluated as insignificant. I have listed some of what I believe are deliberate changes. The scribe of 4Q11 felt free to introduce his own changes, whether or not they were passed on by another scribe. He seems to have been motivated by the wish to produce an improved text with respect to content and language.

This sort of scribal activity also underlies other scriptural texts. An integrative approach to the study of these manuscripts, which involves scrutinizing their material and textual characteristics, comparing with other ancient versions, and determining the scribal approach, is important to our understanding of the biblical texts of the late Second Temple period.