**Material Reconstruction and Discussion of 4QpaleoGenExl (4Q11)**

I would like to thank Prof. Hindy Najman for her helpful comments on this paper and for inviting me to present my research today. I would also like to express my thanks to the entire Oxford community which I am most fortunate and grateful to be a part of.

In today’s presentation, I will propose a new material reconstruction of nineteen consecutive columns of 4Q11 **–** the contents of which encompass the biblical text of Gen 50:26 to Ex 28:42. I will describe the assumptions and principles underlying the reconstruction, and discuss its contribution to two issues pertaining to the study of 4Q11: 1) the scroll’s textual classification and 2) whether it originally contained a complete copy of the Pentateuch.

Of the scroll’s 64 fragments, only 38 have been identified. Though fragments 39–50 were edited their text was not identified. As for fragments 51–64 they were not edited at all, as “they have no decipherable letters or were identified only after the edition was completed” (*DJD* 9, 50). In truth, however, the number of fragments belonging to 4Q11 is more than just 64. Of IAA plate 395, only five fragments were associated with the scroll, while another fifteen – which also belong to the scroll – were omitted from the critical edition. These latter fragments evince material features characteristic of other 4Q11 fragments – i.e., their leather surface and disintegrating ink. Furthermore, those fragments with preserved script-traces, have equivalent handwriting to that used for 4Q11. It seems then that 4Q11 comprises at least 79 fragments.

4Q11 was characterized by Emanuel Tov as a “deluxe edition” (Tov 2004, ##). Although no single column of 4Q11 has been preserved in its entirety, it can be confidently assumed that the scroll had a large writing block. The editors suggested that 4Q11 originally had 55–60 lines per column, a suggestion accepted by most scholars, but which will be reexamined in light of the reconstruction presented today. I should add that the large lower margins, the skilled script, and the limited amount of scribal interventions further attest to 4Q11’s status as a “deluxe edition.”

**Textual Classification of 4Q11**

In considering the scroll’s textual classification both preserved and the unpreserved text must be taken into account. First, the extant text: 53 variants are attested in which one of the four Hebrew texts of Exodus 4Q11, 4Q22 (also known as 4QpaleoGenm), MT and SP disagrees with another (slide). Of these 53 variants, one is a major feature of the pre-Samaritan tradition, as will be discussed shortly. Five of the variants pertain to the level of phrase, and the remainder to a single word.

From a statistical perspective, there is no significant agreement between 4Q11 on the one hand, and each of the Hebrew text-traditions and the LXX on the other (slide). The relatively numerous cases of agreement with the MT are overshadowed by a larger number of disagreements. Moreover, the quantity of non-aligned readings is insufficient to simply classify 4Q11 as a non-aligned manuscript. Put simply, statistical tools prove inadequate for determining the scroll’s textual classification.

Some of 4Q11’s unique readings attest to emendations of an exegetical nature. This is despite the fact that 4Q11 is, in most cases, transmitted with much care and reverence. For example, Noam Mizrahi (2020) has explored a textual variant in Ex 12:9 (slide). At first glance, it seems that the addition of a conjunctive *vav* in the phrase בשל ומבושל is rather minor. But, as Mizrahi explains, the *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. It is to this distinction, influenced by Second Temple Hebrew, that the conjunctive *vav* points.

An additional variant with exegetical significance can be found in Ex 18:21 (slide). In context, the word עליהם, meaning “over them,” should refer to the Israelites – i.e., “over the Israelites” and not “over the judges.” However, the reading in the MT and the SP is ambiguous, as the subject of the verse is the judges themselves. In 4Q11, as well as in the LXX, the word אותם (“them”)’ is added, clarifying that it is the judges who should be appointed over the Israelites.

**4Q11 – A Complete Copy of the Pentateuch?**

The material reconstruction of the scroll may shed light on another important issue: the question of whether 4Q11 originally constituted a complete scroll of the Pentateuch. Although several manuscripts from the Judean Desert attest to some partial combinations of Pentateuchal books, no evidence for a complete copy have been found (Tov 2004, 70–71). Evidence for such a copy in the Judean Desert would significantly enrich our understanding of the textual history of the Pentateuch as it would indicate that the Pentateuch was, already in the Second Temple period, treated as a unified literary framework.

The editors have considered the possibility that 4Q11 was a complete copy of the Pentateuch (*DJD* 9, 17). Lange (2009, 15) even considers this probable. The suggestion is based on the significant amount of text estimated to have comprised each column – which is in turn based on a calculation of the small size of the script and the great height of the columns. The reconstruction I present today will offer material considerations for challenging this suggestion.

**Material Reconstruction of 4Q11**

The reconstruction encompasses forty-eight fragments – approximately two-thirds of the total.

To reconstruct the missing text between the two columns of fragments 2 and 30, I used a font based on typical letters in the scribe’s hand, while taking into consideration practices of orthography and paragraph division which I will not discuss now due to time limitations. Reconstruction indicates that the scroll originally consisted of 60 lines per column (slide). I therefore suggest that 4Q11 is a 60-line scroll.

The position of the large fragments and the determination of the number of lines per column allow a complete reconstruction of a lacuna between fragments in instances of a relatively stable biblical text (slide). Reconstruction further allows one to locate additional fragments and to propose new joins.

Three fragments in particular serve as litmus tests for examining whether the scroll originally contained major SP-Ex expansions: fragments 5, 7, and 20.

As noted, were 4Q11 textually similar to SP-Ex, three major expansions in the hypothetical text between the two columns of fragment 5, as well as in that between the two columns of fragment 7 would be expected (slide). According to the proposed reconstruction, however, there is simply no room for such expansions in either fragment. By contrast, the text of MT-Ex fits well into the space between columns in both cases. (slide) As the text of SP-Ex include a significant amount of material absent from MT-Ex, this can be asserted with high level of certainty.

Fragment 20 preserves the text of Ex 18:17–24 (slide). SP-Ex 18 includes two major expansions after verse 24: Ex 18:24a–24f and Ex 18:25a–25c both appropriate and adapt text excerpted from Deuteronomy 1, dealing with the organization of the judiciary (slide). Reconstruction of the hypothetical text between fragment 20 and subsequent fragments further indicates that 4Q11 did not include the two major expansions in chapter 18 characteristic of SP-Ex. By contrast, the text of MT-Ex would fit well into the lower margins in fragments 52 and 35, placed in the successive columns. Conversely, the reconstruction of the longer SP-Ex text would not allow one to place fragments 52 and 35 at the bottom of the columns. This case is less certain than fragments 5 and 7, as the amount of hypothetical text between the fragments is larger. Nevertheless, this conclusion seems probable as it is based on material signs of both fragments 52 and 35.

The material and textual reconstruction enables us to define column-width and to measure the distances between corresponding points of damage in fragments 7, 10, 19 and 35. I have represented these points with the letters A–D (slide).

The application of Stegemann’s method is reinforced by the identification of additional fragments that reflect repeated pattern of damage. I suggest that fragments 16 and 23 were also wadded in the rolled scroll (slide). Both fragments have a similarly shaped bulge at their top-right edges, as can be seen in a digital representation of their borders. Importantly, in my reconstruction, the fragments are aligned along the same vertical axis (slide). In addition, the distance between the corresponding points of damage in these fragments, represented by the letters E and F, equals the expected distance calculated earlier through the application of Stegemann’s method.

Although I have shown the correspondence of all relevant material data, like any reconstruction, this one has a margin of error. Nevertheless, the fact that independent pieces of material evidence converge in the proposed reconstruction, significantly narrows down that margin. The column-widths have been determined by reconstructing the missing text between fragmentary lines. They accord with the distances between two groups of corresponding points of damage that show incremental growth between the rolls of the scroll. Put simply, my material reconstruction successfully combines independent data.

Another point: My proposal for reconstruction is further supported by fragments 10 and 20 – the widest of all the preserved fragments. According to my analysis, the two fragments do not preserve two iterations of patterns of damage. In other words, they do not preserve more than one roll of the original scroll. Thus, fragments 10 and 20 are equal or narrower than the circumference of the scroll at that point. Indeed, the maximum width of fragment 10 is 13.7 cm, which equals the calculated circumference of the scroll at that point. The maximum width of fragment 20 is 12.7 cm, which is narrower than the calculated circumference of the scroll at that point.

According to the proposed material reconstruction, the first reconstructed circumference of the scroll, measured from fragment 35 to the right, equals 11.3 cm (slide). Based on this data, the scroll’s approximate length can be calculated by the sum of circumferences with an incremental decrease until the width of the inner roll, which can be estimated at 1–2 cm (slide). This calculation indicates that the length between fragment 35 and the assumed end of the scroll is approximately 175 cm.

The average width of a reconstructed sheet in 4Q11 is approximately 52.7 cm. This number is based on the average width of a column as well as that of an intercolumnar margin – and the fact that all four of the fully reconstructed sheets contain four columns each. In this case, 4Q11 contained only 3 sheets from fragment 35 (Ex 27:6–14) to the end of the scroll. A complete copy of the Pentateuch would require a much longer scroll – at least 18 sheets by my estimate. We can thus conclude with some confidence that 4Q11 was not a full Pentateuchal scroll; it only contained the books of Genesis and Exodus.

Eshbal Ratzon and Nachum Dershowitz (2020) have recently pointed to the limitations of Stegemann’s method. They maintain that no valid conclusions about the original length of a scroll can be drawn from its application – the margin of error for such calculations being very high. I do agree that we have to be careful in our application of the method – measurements are, after all, a tricky thing, especially when we are dealing with big numbers. However, sometimes imprecise measurements are sufficient to answer big questions. In our case, the relatively small circumferences preclude the possibility that 4Q11 was a Pentateuchal scroll. Even if we take into account a wide margin of error, finding room for Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy in 4Q11 would be most difficult.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I have proposed a material reconstruction of nineteen consecutive columns of 4Q11 in an effort to provide crucial data for the scroll’s textual classification as well as to help determine whether it originally included a full copy of the Pentateuch. The material reconstruction offers evidence that the original scroll did not contain the major expansions characteristic of the pre-Samaritan tradition. This is despite the fact that 4Q11 diverges textually from the MT. In addition, reconstruction provides material considerations that indicate that 4Q11 did not originally include the entire Pentateuch.