Amidst the thousands of fragments found in the caves of Qumran, hundreds could not be associated with a specific manuscript by the scrolls’ original editors. Others were tentatively associated with a specific manuscript, but the editors were nearly certain that they belonged elsewhere. In some cases, fragments were associated with scriptural manuscripts whose text is known, though the fragments could not be identified with specific texts within those manuscripts.

For the most part, the unidentified fragments are relatively small, preserving numerous complete or partial words, or mere traces, if any, of various letters. In 2001, Dana Pike and Andrew Skinner published fragments from Cave 4 in Qumran in Volume 33 of the *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* series. These cannot (yet) be assigned to any of the manuscripts that have been identified in this cave. The editors expressed the hope that now that the fragments were in the public domain, various scholars would be able to say more about many of them. George Brook describes working with these fragments as “visiting an orphanage with the ambition of finding parents for each piece.” But as he rightly emphasizes, we must accept that most of these small pieces will remain unidentified due to their poor state of preservation.

In the last few years, Eibert Tigchelaar had set himself the task of identifying some of these fragments. Additional scholars, such as Émile Puech, Oren Ableman, and Idan Dershowitz, have also been dealing with new identifications of hitherto unidentified fragments. Nonetheless, there is certainly more work to be done. The exhausting nature of this labor is often underestimated. Scholars generally avoid dealing with new identifications as this is time-consuming, sometimes frustrating work, and its contribution to our knowledge and perception of a specific manuscript may be of limited value. After all, a fragment is just a fragment! To what extent can the location of a tiny fragment in one place or another contribute to the material or textual reconstruction of an entire manuscript? Indeed, the contribution may be minimal. However, the identification of new fragments often provides new information about manuscripts that would not have been known otherwise. Therefore, in my view, a comprehensive exploration of a manuscript—that is, the study of it as an artifact that contains text—must begin with research of the fragmentary evidence related to it, which includes the discovery of new fragments and identifications.

In today’s presentation, I will discuss the identifications and implications of new fragments of one copy of the books of Genesis and Exodus from Qumran—4QpaleoGenExodl. The work presented here is the fruit of a collaboration with two dear colleagues, Drew Longacre and Antony Perrot. Our study of 4QpaleoGenExodl, known also as 4Q11, has revealed that the scroll contains eighty-seven fragments, rather than the sixty-four suggested in the official edition. I will bring up representative examples of the new identifications and show that they provide constructive information on 4Q11 and have implications on the understanding of the scroll. Hopefully, in this way I can illustrate the significant value of hitherto unidentified fragments to the scholarship of the patchy Qumran evidence.

The identification of fragments is painstaking work that requires several stages. The assignment of a fragment to a particular manuscript is based on the suitability of its material properties—skin preparation, color, thickness, and state of preservation—to those of a particular manuscript. Paleographic issues regarding the script must too be taken into consideration. Once we assign a fragment to a particular manuscript, and in cases when the manuscript is that of a known composition, mostly scriptural scroll, we try to associate the fragment with a specific text within the composition. To do so, we read certain preserved letters and offer possible readings for the uncertain traces of others. Based on these readings, we look for possible combinations of the letters in the composition and distinguish between certain and possible readings. The accordance BHS text module has proven to be an indispensable tool for this kind of research. At this point, it all depends on the options available. When the combination does not produce any possible text, the fragment cannot be identified, of course. In such cases, the suggested reading of the fragment may be incorrect, and we must reconsider it. On the other hand, when there are many possible readings, we are also unable to offer a certain one. In these cases, we must narrow down the possibilities by considering features that are independent of the reading of the fragment, such as material joins with other preserved fragments or preserved text in proximity to the possible identification.

One additional methodological note before we get to the evidence and identifications: as new identifications must deal with the paucity of evidence, we need to distinguish between levels of certainty (slide). Put differently, the discussion of new identifications may reflect their probability, detailing whether they are secure, probable or possible. On the one hand, the fact that we cannot know for certain whether an identification is correct or not should not stop us from suggesting it. On the other hand, we must be transparent about the reasonable nature of our suggestions.

Antony Perrot recently found a small fragment that probably belongs to 4Q11 among the fragments placed on plats of the unidentified fragments published in DJD 33. The association of the fragment with 4Q11 is based on the similarity of the forms of the legible letters, *he, aleph* and *resh*, and on the typical peeling of the upper leather layer.

As the new identification successfully combines all the traces in the fragment, I consider it certain.

According to the proposed identification, fragment 48 is the only one of the “Song of the Sea” in 4Q11. This raises the possibility that there may have been small blank intervals at points in the song, perhaps like those in the medieval Samaritan tradition (slide), but it is impossible to prove this definitively.

A comparison with further copies of the book of Exodus from Qumran reveals that only 4Q14 and 4Q15 also preserve portions of the “Song of the Sea.” (slide) While 4Q15 contains a poorly preserved fragmentary text of the first two verses, 4Q14 fragment 33 preserves a larger portion of the end of the song. In 4Q14, the song written in a conventional format, with no blank intervals.

However, as the new identification definitely does not conform with the traces of the beginning of the second line, I consider it probable, but not certain.

This fragment has not been previously identified. It was placed in the unpublished plates and published in DJD 33. It is catalogued as Manuscript 4Q9999 in the Leon Levy Digital Library, a catalogue number that does not represent an original manuscript, but rather includes all the unidentified fragments in Cave 4 that belong to different manuscripts.

By explaining the identification of 4Q11’s fragments, I have emphasized the importance and value of this effort to study the Qumran scrolls. This task was not completed by the original editors, and even today, over seventy years since the discovery of Qumran scrolls, it has not yet reached its utilization.