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

I would like to thank Prof. Hindy Najman for inviting me to present my research today and for her helpful comments on this paper, and to all Oxford community that it is a real delight to be belong to.

In today’s presentation, I will propose a new material reconstruction of nineteen consecutive columns of 4Q11, which their contents extend from Gen 50:26 to Ex 28:42. I will describe the assumptions and principles underlying the reconstruction, and discuss its contribution to two issues on 4Q11 scholarship – its textual classification and whether 4Q11 was a complete Torah scroll.

Of the scroll’s 64 fragments, only 38 have been identified. Fragments 39–50 were edited but their text was not identified. Fragments 51–64 were not edited at all, as “they have no decipherable letters or were identified only after the edition was completed” (*DJD* 9, 50). However, the number of 4Q11 fragments that are not included in the edition is larger. Of IAA plate 395, only five fragments were associated with the scroll. All others fifteen have vanished from the critical edition, even though they belong to the scroll. These fragments display material features common with the other 4Q11 fragments – leather surface and ink disintegration. In addition, in fragments in which script traces have been preserved, the script corresponds to that of 4Q11. Thus, it seems that 4Q11 comprises at least 79 fragments.

4Q11 was characterized by Emanuel Tov as a “deluxe edition” (Tov 2004, ##). Although no column of 4Q11 has been preserved in its entirely, it can be confidently assumed that the scroll had a large writing block. The editors have suggested that 4Q11 originally contained 55–60 lines per column, a suggestion accepted by most of the scholars, but which will be reexamined in the reconstruction presented today. In addition, the large bottom margins, the skilled script, and the limited amount of scribal interventions also indicate that 4Q11 is a “deluxe edition”.

**Textual Classification of 4Q11**

The textual classification of the scroll is discussed through two aspects: the preserved and the unpreserved extant text. Positively speaking, the extant text of 4Q11 preserves 53 variants in which one of the four Hebrew texts of Exodus 4Q11, 4Q22 (also known as 4QpaleoGenm), MT and SP disagrees with another (slide). Of the 53 variants, only one involves a major feature of the pre-Samaritan tradition, as will be discussed soon. Five variants involve as much as a phrase, and the remaining variants involves only a single word.

From a statistical point of view, one may not point to a tendency of agreements between 4Q11 and each of the Hebrew texts, nor with LXX (slide). The relatively large number of agreements with MT is overshadowed by a larger number of disagreements. Likewise, the quantity of non-aligned readings is insufficient to simply classify 4Q11 as a non-aligned manuscript. Statistical tools thus prove insufficient for determining the scroll’s textual classification.

When exploring individual readings of 4Q11, one may discern several attempts of the scribe of 4Q11, or of his sources, to integrate secondary interpretations into the wording of the scriptural text. This is despite the fact that 4Q11 is generally transmitted with much care and reverence. Noam Mizrahi (2020) explored a textual variant in Ex 12:9 (slide). Upon first glance, it seems that the added conjunctive *vav* in the phrase בשל ומבושל is insignificant and negligible. But, according to Mizrahi, the *vav* indicate that the scribe of 4Q11, as the Palestinian Targums, distinct between two forbidden cooking methods for the Passover meat: בשל and מבושל. These practices are marked by a conjunctive *vav*, influenced by the linguistic background of Second Temple Hebrew.

An additional occurrence of exegetical reading in 4Q11 may be found in Ex 18:21 (slide). According to the context, the sense of the word עליהם, “over them”, must be “over the Israelites” and not “over the judges”. However, this reading is ambiguous in MT and SP, as the subject of the verse is the judges. At 4Q11, as well as reflected in LXX, the word אותם, “them”’ is added, explicating that the judges should be placed over the Israelites.

**4Q11 – A Complete Torah Scroll?**

The material reconstruction of the scroll may shed light on an additional prominent issue, the question of whether 4Q11 was originally a complete Torah scroll. Although several manuscripts from the Judean Desert attest to some partial combinations of the Torah, no evidence for a complete Torah scroll was found (Tov 2004, 70–71). Evidence for a Torah scroll in the Judean Desert may enormously enrich our understanding of the textual history of the Pentateuch, as it would indicate that the Torah was a complete literary product in the Second Temple period.

The editors consider the possibility that 4Q11 was a complete Torah scroll (*DJD* 9, 17), and Lange (2009, 15) even considers it probable. This suggestion is based on the large amount of text estimated to have comprised each column. This in turn is based on a calculation of the small size of the script and the great height of the columns. However, the reconstruction presented today will provide material considerations that challenge this suggestion.

**Material Reconstruction of 4Q11**

The reconstruction encompasses forty-eight fragments, which are approximately two-thirds of the total preserved.

I, therefore, reconstructed the text between the two columns of fragments 2 and 30, using a font based on typical letters in the scribe’s hand and based on considerations regarding orthography and paragraph division which I will not detail now due to the shortness of time. The text 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 number of lines per column allow to completely reconstruct the missing text between fragments in places when the biblical text is relatively stable (slide). By reconstructing the text, one can locate additional fragments and present new joins between fragments.

There are three litmus tests for examining whether the scroll originally contained major SP-Ex expansions: fragments 5, 7 and 20.

As noted, SP-Ex contains 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. (slide). According to the proposed reconstruction, however, there is no room for major expansions between the columns in either of these fragments. By contrast, the text of MT-Ex fits well into the space between the columns in both cases. (slide) The fact that the difference between MT-Ex and SP-Ex involves a large amount of text yields a high level of certainty on this point.

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; Ex 18:25a–25c, both adapt text from Deuteronomy 1, dealing with the organization of the judiciary (slide). Reconstruction of the hypothetical text between fragment 20 and the successive fragments leads also to the conclusion that 4Q11 did not include the two SP-Ex major expansions in chapter 18. The text of MT-Ex fits well the bottom margins in fragments 52 and 35, placed in the successive columns. Conversely, the reconstruction of the longer SP-Ex text will not allow placing 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. However, 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 the 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 method is reinforced by 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). These fragments reflect a similarly shaped bulge as their top-right edge, as seen by the digital representation of their borders. Significantly, they are placed in the same vertical axis, according to the textual reconstruction (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 by the application of Stegemann 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 fit together 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. The material reconstruction thus successfully combines independent data.

Furthermore, fragments 10 and 20, as the widest preserved fragments, provide supportive evidence for the reconstruction proposal. According to my analysis, both 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. Therefore, fragments 10 and 20 are expected to have been 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, approximation of the length of the scroll may be calculated by the sum of the circumferences with an incremental decrease until the width of the inner roll, which may be approximately 1–2 cm (slide). The calculation indicates that the length between fragment 35 and the assumed end of the scroll is approximately 175 cm.

An average width of a reconstructed sheet in 4Q11 is approximately 52.7 cm. This number is based on an average column width in the scroll, the average width of intercolumnar margins and the fact that all the four fully reconstructed sheets include 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 Torah scroll would require much longer scroll. To my estimation, a complete Torah scroll in the layout of 4Q11 would require at least 18 sheets. Thus, we may conclude that 4Q11, apparently, was not a Torah scroll, but contained only the books of Genesis and Exodus.

Eshbal Ratzon and Nachum Dershowitz (2020) recently pointed to the limitations of Stegemann method. They maintain that no valid conclusion about the original scroll length can be drawn from the application of this method. As shown by Ratzon-Dershowitz, the margin of error of such calculations may be very high, and therefore no decisive conclusions can be drawn. I agree that we have to be careful when applying the method, as measurements are a tricky thing, especially when dealing with extremely small numbers. However, sometimes imprecise measurements are good enough to answer big questions. In this case, the relatively narrow circumferences refute the possibility that 4Q11 was a Torah scroll. Even if the calculation yields a very wide margin of error, it would hardly leave room for all the text of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy at 4Q11.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I have proposed a material reconstruction of nineteen consecutive columns of 4Q11 that provided crucial data for the textual classification of the scroll and for the question of whether it was originally a Torah scroll. The material reconstruction offers evidence that the scroll did not originally contain the major expansions that characterize the pre-Samaritan tradition. This is despite the fact that 4Q11 shows textual divergence from MT. In addition, it present material considerations that indicate that 4Q11 was not a complete Torah scroll.