

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE TEXTS FOUND IN QUMRAN CAVE 11

In cave 11 at Qumran, the remains of thirty-one different compositions have been found, among them the longest of the surviving Qumran scrolls, 11QTemple^a, as well as several very fragmentary texts. The biblical texts comprise two scrolls of Leviticus (11QpaleoLev^a and 11QLev^b), one of Deuteronomy (11QDeut), one of Ezekiel (11QEzek), five of Psalms (11QPs^{a-e}), and a copy of the Targum of Job (11QtgJob), while the remaining twenty-one texts are nonbiblical. All the texts from this cave are included in *DJD* XXIII¹ except for two long compositions, 11QTemple^a and 11QpaleoLev^a, published elsewhere.²

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the texts from this cave are more homogeneous with regard to their content than those found in the other caves. More specifically, the corpus of texts found in most caves cannot be characterized in any way, with the exception of cave 7.³ We suggest that the collection of items in cave 11 reflect a common origin, being more sectarian, so to speak, than the contents of the other caves. It seems that the great majority of the texts from this cave were either copied according to the Qumran scribal practice, or were of interest to the Qumran community; in most cases, both conditions are met.

1. *Qumran scribal practice*. Most of the texts from cave 11 that are large enough for analysis were copied according to the Qumran scribal practice.⁴ The characteristics of *all* the texts from cave 11, positive and negative, are tabulated as follows:

¹ F. García Martínez, E. J. C. Tigchelaar, and A. S. van der Woude, *DJD* XXIII.

² Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, vols. 1–3 (Heb.; Jerusalem: IES, 1977); idem, *Temple Scroll*; D. N. Freedman and K. A. Mathews, *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll (11QpaleoLev)* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1985).

³ For details, see chapter 28*, n. 2.

⁴ See *Scribal Practices*, 261–73.

No.	Name	Qumran Scribal Practice	Sectarian Content	Notes
1	11QpaleoLev ^a	no	—	See group 4.
2	11QLev ^b	yes?	—	paleo-Hebrew Tetragrammaton
3	11QDeut	no data	—	
4	11QEzek	no	—	
5	11QPs ^a ⁵	yes	yes? ⁶	
6	11QPs ^b	yes	—	
7	11QPs ^c	yes	—	
8	11QPs ^d	yes	—	
9	11QPs ^e ?	no data	—	
10	11QtgJob	irrelevant	—	
11	11QApocryphal Psalms	yes	no?	
12	11QJubilees + XQText A ⁷	yes	yes? ⁸	
13	11QMelchizedek	yes	yes	
14	11QSefer ha-Milhamah	yes	yes	
15	11QHymns ^a	no data	yes	
16	11QHymns ^b + XQText B ⁹	yes	yes	
17	11QShirot 'Olat ha-Shabbat	no?	yes	
18	11QNew Jerusalem ar	irrelevant	no	
19	11QTemple ^a	yes	yes? ¹⁰	
20	11QTemple ^b	yes	yes?	
21	11QTemple ^c ?	no data	yes?	
22	11QpaleoUnidentified Text	no data	no data	See group 4.
23	11QcryptA Unid. Text	no data	no data	See group 3.

⁵ This text was published by J. A. Sanders, *DJD* IV. Additional fragments were published in *DJD* XXIII, 29–36.

⁶ The sectarian nature of this scroll, probably serving as an early prayer book, is shown by the prose composition in col. XXVII. The listing of David's Psalms in this composition presupposes the Qumran calendrical system. For a discussion of the sectarian nature of this scroll, see the scholars mentioned in chapter 4*, n. 43.

⁷ This fragment was published by S. Talmon as "XQText A (= 11QJub frag. 7a)" in *DJD* XXXVI. It was to be published differently, but at the last moment it was identified correctly by H. Eshel, "Three New Fragments from Cave 11," *Tarbiz* 68 (1999) 273–8.

⁸ See n. 16 below. This composition, though not sectarian in the narrow sense of the word, had great influence on the Qumran community.

⁹ This fragment was published by S. Talmon as "XQText B (= 11QHymns^b frag. 2)" in *DJD* XXXVI. This fragment was likewise identified correctly by H. Eshel (see n. 7).

¹⁰ Many, if not most, scholars believe that this composition is sectarian. For a summary of the arguments, see F. García Martínez, "Temple Scroll," in *Encyclopedia DSS*, 2.930–31. If the present form of the work is not sectarian, it is at least close to the interests of the Qumran community, see L. Schiffman, "Utopia and Reality: Political Leadership and Organization in the Dead Sea Scrolls Community," in Paul, *Emanuel*, 413–27.

24	11QUnidentified Text ar	irrelevant	no data	
25	11QUnidentified Text A	no data	no data	
26	11QUnidentified Text B	no data	no data	
27	11QUnidentified Text C	yes	no data	
28	11QpapUnidentified Text D	no data	no data	
29	11QFragment Related to Serekh ha-Yahad	no data	yes	
30	11QUnclassified Fragments	yes?	no data	
31	11QUnidentified Wads	no data	no data	

It is suggested with differing degrees of certainty that fourteen of the cave 11 texts had been copied according to the Qumran scribal practice. This group forms a majority among the thirty-one texts, since nine other texts provide too little information on their system of Hebrew orthography and morphology (11Q3, 9, 15, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29), while three Aramaic texts are irrelevant for such an analysis (11Q10, 18, 24). On the other hand, three other texts (11Q1, 4, 17) do not reflect the characteristics of the Qumran scribal practice. The main argument for ascribing a text to the Qumran scribal practice pertains to orthography and morphology, while several texts *additionally* exhibit scribal phenomena that within the Qumran corpus are characteristic of the Qumran scribal practice.¹¹ In the case of 11QLev^b the main criterion for the assumption of the Qumran scribal practice is a scribal habit (writing of the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew letters) rather than morphology and orthography. If indeed F. García Martínez, E. Tigchelaar, and A. van der Woude are correct in assuming that 11QTemple^{c?} (11Q21) and 11QJub (11Q12)¹² were written by the same hand, this would support our view to some extent.

The following fourteen texts were probably copied according to the Qumran scribal practice:

11QLev^b: In this text, the Tetragrammaton is written in paleo-Hebrew, a phenomenon otherwise attested solely in 28 (29?) texts almost exclusively displaying the Qumran orthography and morphology.¹³ The

¹¹ Cancellation dots in 11QPs^a and 11QT^a, parenthesis signs in 11QpaleoLev^a, marks written at the ends of lines as a line-filler in 11QT^b (11Q20) IV 9, writing of the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew letters in 11QPs^a.

¹² *DJD* XXIII, 411.

¹³ See *Scribal Practices*, 261–73. With two or three exceptions, all these texts are written in the Qumran orthography and morphology. Since the texts written in the Qumran scribal practice form a minority within the Qumran corpus, the connection between the specific writing of the Tetragrammaton and the Qumran scribal practice is evident. A reverse examination of the texts written according to the Qumran scribal practice reveals that 36 texts did *not* use a special system for the writing of the divine names with paleo-Hebrew

text is too short for orthographic analysis, but it contains one doubtful instance of כִּי (frgs. 5 + 6 2), otherwise connected with the Qumran scribal practice.

11QP_s^{a-d}

11QApoeryphal Psalms (11Q11)

11QJubilees (11Q12)

11QMelchizedek (11Q13)

11QSefer ha-Milhamah (11Q14)

11QHymns^b (11Q16) + XQText B¹⁴

11QTemple^a (11Q19)

11QTemple^b (11Q20)

11QUnidentified Text C (11Q27)

11QUnclassified Fragments (11Q30) (too small for analysis, but frg. 10 reads כִּי).

A remark on the statistical picture is in order. The analysis is based on the Qumran corpus containing fragments of 930 texts, from which 150 Aramaic and twenty-seven Greek texts were excluded, since they display no features comparable to the orthographic and morphological peculiarities recognized for the Hebrew. By the same token, at least another 150 items should be excluded due to their extremely fragmentary state. This leaves us with some 600 texts, of which 300–500 are large enough for analysis. Among these texts, 167 items are presumed on the basis of the mentioned criteria to have been copied according to the Qumran scribal practice (of these 167 texts, some 130 are good candidates, while the remainder are probable candidates). It cannot be coincidental that the great majority of the sectarian texts were copied, admittedly somewhat inconsistently, in a common orthographical and morphological style and with common scribal features; rather, the only plausible conclusion seems to be that the sectarian scribes used set scribal conventions. This group of sectarian texts represents probably one third or half of the Qumran texts.

2. *Sectarian content and terminology.* While the nature of the Qumran community will remain controversial, it espoused specific ideas and a terminology of its own. The group has often been described as a sect, and hence its ideas and terminology have been dubbed “sectarian.” On the basis of these two criteria, D. Dimant has composed a list of the

characters or *Tetrapuncta*. It therefore appears that within the Qumran scribal school different practices were employed for writing the divine names, possibly by different scribes or in different periods.

¹⁴ In the analysis of the orthography, XQText B (*DJD XXXVI*) especially is taken into consideration. See n. 9 above.

presumably sectarian writings found at Qumran¹⁵ that is followed in our listing of the sectarian writings in cave 11. The case of Jubilees is a special one as the community had a close affiliation to this work.¹⁶ In most cases, these sectarian texts were also copied according to the Qumran scribal practice (denoted below as “Qu”), but in some cases insufficient evidence is available:

- 11QPs^a? (11Q5) (Qu)
- 11QJubilees (11Q12) (probably) (Qu)
- 11QMelchizedek (11Q13) (Qu)
- 11QSefer ha-Milhamah (11Q14) (Qu)
- 11QHymns^a (11Q15)
- 11QHymns^b (11Q16) (Qu)
- 11QShirot ‘Olat ha-Shabbat (11Q17)
- 11QTemple^a (11Q19) (Qu)
- 11QTemple^b (11Q20) (Qu)
- 11QTemple^c? (11Q21)
- 11QFragment Related to Serekh ha-Yahad (11Q29)

Since eleven of the twenty-two nonbiblical texts are sectarian, they comprise a large group, taking into consideration that for seven additional texts insufficient data are available and three texts are in Aramaic (there is no proof that the Qumran community wrote in any language other than Hebrew).¹⁷ The data registered in this section run parallel to the previous one, providing a different outlook on more or less the same texts. To be precise, seven of the eleven sectarian texts listed here are also recorded in the previous paragraph. The four *sectarian* texts for which there was insufficient proof for a link with the Qumran scribal practice (indicated by *italics*: 11Q15, 17, 21, 29), may now be added to the fourteen texts mentioned in section 1.

3. *A Cryptic text.* A single fragment written in the cryptic A script was probably written by the Qumran community:

- 11QcryptA Unidentified Text (11Q23)

¹⁵ D. Dimant, “The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance,” in *A Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness. Papers on the Qumran Scrolls by Fellows of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1989–1990* (ed. D. Dimant and L. H. Schiffman; STDJ 16; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995) 23–58. When that study was written, not all the Qumran compositions were known.

¹⁶ Dimant, “The Qumran Manuscripts,” 28 distinguishes between works composed by the community and works written outside the community such as Jubilees and 1 Enoch sharing religious ideas and concepts with the Qumran sectarian literature. Works of the latter type may have influenced the community and were definitely cherished by the Qumran community as shown also by their relatively large representation in the corpus.

¹⁷ See Dimant, “The Qumran Manuscripts,” 34.

This script, described by S. Pfann, “4Q298” as a development from the Late Phoenician scripts, was used for several texts of a Qumran sectarian nature (4Q249, 249a–i, 298, 317) as well as for other texts which may have had a special meaning for the Qumran community.¹⁸ According to Milik, quoted by Pfann, *ibid.*, and Pfann this script was used especially by the Maskil.

4. *Texts written in the paleo-Hebrew script.* Two texts completely written in the paleo-Hebrew script, one very fragmentary, *may* have been linked to the Qumran community:

11QpaleoLev^a

11QpaleoUnidentified Text (11Q22). In this text, לאלהים was written with a different ink color (red?), implying either the use of a different pen or the involvement of a different scribe, or both.¹⁹ If indeed this word was written with a different pen, this would be the only instance of the special treatment of a divine name in a text completely written in paleo-Hebrew characters

The background of the writing of complete scrolls in the paleo-Hebrew script remains unknown. It has been suggested cautiously that these texts were written by the Sadducees,²⁰ a community from which the Essenes may have branched off.

In short, the special sectarian nature of the thirty-one texts found in cave 4 is based on the following evidence:

14 texts copied according to the Qumran scribal practice (most of which reflect the ideas and terminology of the Qumran community).

4 texts, for which insufficient proof is available regarding their orthography and morphology, reflect sectarian ideas and terminology.

1 text written in the cryptic A script, possibly linked to the Qumran community.

2 texts completely written in the paleo-Hebrew script, possibly connected with the Sadducees, from which the Essenes may have branched off.

The link with the Qumran community seems convincing, since the remaining texts from cave 11 are either written in Aramaic (3), a language in which the Qumran community is not known to have written, or are too small for analysis (7, viz., 11Q3, 4, 9, 25, 26, 28, 31). Within the latter group, 4Q4 (4QEzekiel) is not written in the Qumran scribal practice.

¹⁸ See Pfann, “The Writings in Esoteric Script from Qumran,” in Schiffman, *Jerusalem Congress*, 177–90.

¹⁹ The fragment itself could not be located, and the photograph remains our only source.

²⁰ *Scribal Practices*, 247–8.

The collection of texts found in cave 11 must have come as a whole from the Qumran community itself, possibly from a specific location. In this collection some special material features are recognizable as well:

1. It is probably no coincidence that for a large percentage of the texts from cave 11 (six of the twenty-one texts from that cave,²¹ disregarding the small unidentified fragments), one of the two extremities has been preserved, in this case always the ending. This implies relatively favorable storage conditions in that cave, as described in detail in chapter 9, § 4c.

2. Among the texts preserving a separate (ruled or unruled) uninscribed handle sheet (protective sheet, ἐσχατοκόλλιον) stitched after the last inscribed sheet, the high frequency of scrolls from cave 11 is striking. In several instances, the handle sheet is still attached. Among the Qumran scrolls for which the ending is known this system is the exception rather than the rule. In most cases, an uninscribed area was left at the end of the scroll without a protective handle sheet.²² Among the seven scrolls for which such a final sheet is either extant or reconstructed, four were found in cave 11,²³ while the other three were found in cave 4,²⁴ a cave preserving twenty times more texts than cave 11. It is also noteworthy that all the Qumran texts in this group (from both caves) were copied according to the Qumran scribal practice. The preservation of such a large number of ends of scrolls shows favorable storage conditions in cave 11, while the preponderance of handle sheets among the cave 11 scrolls reflects a specific type of preparation or treatment of the scrolls.

3. "Some of the manuscripts from Cave 11 were of especially fine, thin leather, others of coarse leather."²⁵ While 11QT^a (11Q19) is one of the finest scrolls from Qumran, study of the Qumran leather samples is not advanced enough to make any statement beyond mere impressions.

A strong sectarian connection of the fragments from cave 11, stronger than that of the other caves, together with the preponderance of handle sheets among the cave 11 texts characterize the contents of this cave.

²¹ 11QpaleoLev^a, 11QPs^a, 11QtgJob, 11QapocrPs (11Q11), 11QShirShabb (11Q17), 11QT^a (11Q19).

²² 1QpHab; 4QDeut^a; 4QJudg^b; 4QpsDan^c ar (4Q245); 4QD^a (4Q266); 4QD^e (4Q270) 7; 4QMish H (4Q329a); 4QOrdo (4Q334) 7; 4QMMT^f (4Q399); 4QHod.-like Text C (4Q440) 3; 4QShir^b (4Q511) 63; 11QPs^a; 11QtgJob. Often the straight vertical edge of the scroll has been preserved, but in a few cases such evidence is lacking. The system of 1QH^b (1Q35) 2 is unclear.

²³ 11QpaleoLev^a, 11QapocrPs (11Q11), 11QShirShabb (11Q17), 11QT^a (11Q19).

²⁴ 1QS, 1QSa, 4QD^d (4Q269) frg. 16.

²⁵ Stegemann, *Library*, 78.

These characteristics suggest that the collection of texts found in cave 11 must have come as a whole from the Qumran community itself, possibly brought from a specific location.