



Ulrich, Eugene, ed.

The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants

Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 134

Leiden: Brill, 2010. Pp. xvi + 796. Cloth. \$199.00. ISBN 9789004180383.

Aaron D. Rubin
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pennsylvania

The vast majority of the Dead Sea Scrolls are printed in the forty volumes of the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series (DJD) that were published between 1955 and 2010. These volumes remain eminently important for the study of the scrolls, but they can be inconvenient to use. They are large and very expensive, and it can sometimes be difficult to locate the text one is looking for. Moreover, multiple versions of the same biblical book can be scattered between different volumes.

The nonbiblical texts from among the Dead Sea Scrolls have been long available in a more portable and affordable format, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (ed. F. García-Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, Brill, 1997–1998; *DSSSE*). There is also the six-volume series entitled *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* (ed. D. W. Parry and E. Tov, Brill, 2004–2005; *DSSR*), which is less affordable than *DSSSE* but still reasonable.¹ These handy books do not replace the DJD volumes, but they serve most needs of the scholarly researcher. (Of course, there are other collections containing the major nonbiblical texts, as well as books that contain only translations of the scrolls.)

For biblical texts, on the other hand, no such convenient set has to date been available in print (though an electronic version has been available for users of Accordance software).

¹ In electronic form, there is also the *Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library* CD-ROM (ed. E. Tov, Brill, 2006), as well as various add-ons for programs such as BibleWorks and Accordance.

Instead, scholars have been forced to consult one of a dozen different volumes in the DJD series, along with various other publications, for editions of particular scrolls. Happily, this situation has now been remedied with the publication of Eugene Ulrich's *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants*. This volume, which is about the size and price of a single DJD volume, contains nearly all that one needs in order to do text-critical analysis of the Hebrew Bible on the basis of the Qumran material.

This book is not an introduction to the subject of the Qumran biblical scrolls or their role in the study of the Bible. There is almost no introductory material and no discussion of any kind throughout the book. This is a reference tool, providing just the basic facts, extensive as they are. The preliminary material includes a one-page preface, simply stating the purpose of the volume; a list of acknowledgements; and a list of abbreviations and sigla, which are very similar to those used in the DJD series. There is nothing about the history of the scrolls or their importance, nothing about the availability or state of the scrolls for an individual book, nothing about the amount of variation between the Qumran version(s) and the Masoretic version of a given book, or any other information of this sort. There are also no translations of any of the Hebrew material presented in this volume. These observations are not criticisms, since such information is available in numerous other publications. I point these out just to explain my comment that this is a reference volume, not an introduction to the topic.

The bulk of the book (1–778) contains the available texts of the Hebrew Bible found at Qumran, from Genesis through Chronicles. Many passages are, of course, attested in multiple scrolls or fragments, and, conversely, since most scrolls are fragmentary, many scrolls contain disjointed chunks of text. Ulrich presents all of the material according to the order of the biblical texts, rather than keeping all fragments of a particular scroll together. So, for example, there are a half dozen different scrolls representing parts of Gen 1, in multiple fragments, several of which overlap in content. These fragments are presented in the following order:

- 4QGen^h: title (ברשית)
- 4QGen^b: vv. 1–25
- 4QGen^g: vv. 1–11
- 4QGen^h: vv. 8–10
- 4QGen^k: v. 9
- 4QGen^g: vv. 13–22
- 4QGen^k: vv. 14–16
- 1QGen: vv. 18–21
- 4QGen^d: vv. 18–27
- 4QGen^b: vv. 25–28

4QGen^k: vv. 27–28

This means that, should one want to read all of scroll 4QGen^b (also called 4Q2), for example, it would be rather inconvenient, as the scroll is presented in several different pieces. However, Ulrich's choice of ordering all of the relevant fragments in the way that he has was clearly a good one. It will certainly almost always be the case that a reader will be looking for all attestations of a particular verse or passage, rather than a complete version of a single scroll.

The major exceptions to the style of presentation of the texts are the books of Isaiah and Psalms. For Isaiah, Ulrich presents the entire text of 1QIsaiah^a (the complete book), followed by the remaining twenty scrolls of Isaiah, which are broken up by content (as described above for Gen 1). For Psalms, Ulrich presents thirty-five or so different scroll fragments by content (like Gen 1), after which he gives separately the complete text of 11QPsalms^a, which preserves a significant portion of the book. I did find the Psalms material a bit difficult to use, since the Qumran scrolls preserve a different order than that of the Masoretic book of Psalms. For example, the first seven psalms in scroll 11QPsalms^a are 101, 102, 103 (or 104?), 109, 118, 104, and 147. Assuming that most readers will be using this as a reference when reading the Masoretic Hebrew Bible, it will not always be easy to find a particular psalm that the reader wants to compare. More on this below.

The critical apparatus, which is printed after each scroll fragment or, in the case of longer texts, at the bottom of each page, indicates variants among the scrolls themselves, as well as variants between the Qumran text and the Masoretic Text (MT), the Septuagint, the Peshitta, and other ancient versions. In those places where there are differences, Ulrich also helpfully indicates when other versions agree with the Qumran text. For example, in Ruth 1:1, 4QRuth^a has **וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו** “and his two sons.” Ulrich's critical note (735) tells us that this agrees with the MT and with 4QRuth^b (although **וּשְׁנֵי** is cut off in that fragment), while the Septuagint and Syriac have just the equivalent of **וּבָנָיו** “and his sons.” In Ruth 1:2, 4QRuth^a has **שְׂדֵה מוֹאָב** “the field of Moab,” and Ulrich's critical note tells us that this is in opposition to both the Masoretic Text and to 4QRuth^b, both of which use the plural construct form **שְׂדֵי** “fields of” in this phrase.

The critical notes are overall very brief, usually with no additional comments other than the variants. Only very rarely does Ulrich add some small remark on a particular variant. For example, in verse 40:25 of 4QIsa^a, we find the form **וְאִשׁוּא**, where the MT and 4QIsa^b have **וְאִשׁוּה**. In the critical note to 4QIsa^a (409), Ulrich adds “missp,” indicating that this form is a misspelling (this abbreviation is missing in the prefatory list). Interestingly, in the critical note to 4QIsa^b (510), when this form **וְאִשׁוּא** from 4QIsa^a is noted, Ulrich has instead the parenthetical note “orth or var?,” which alludes to the question as to whether

אִשְׁוֹ is simply an orthographical variant (which is unexpected, since the final vowel of the MT form is *seghol*) or a different word. On the whole, the critical apparatus is quite easy to use, although occasionally there is an unexplained abbreviation that may not be obvious to readers, such as “OG?” (e.g., 510, Isa 40:25) and the various manuscript letters for some of the ancient versions.

At the back of the volume, following all of the biblical texts, are two indices. The first of these (779–81) is an index of the scholars who have edited each of the scrolls containing biblical text. This will probably not be useful to most readers, since there is no companion bibliography. For example, the index tells us that scroll 1Q1 was edited by Barthélmy, but nowhere in the book does it tell us that Barthélmy’s text appears in DJD 1. (Lack of a bibliography is also problematic for the occasional references given at the heading of each text, when column or fragment numbers differ, e.g., 506, Isa 37.) The second index is more useful. It is a list of all biblical passages attested at Qumran and the scrolls in which they appear. This index essentially follows the order of the presentation of scrolls in the book, with the exception of places in which the scrolls do not follow the traditional order. So, for example, the psalms in the index are presented in their biblical order, even though they do not appear this way in the scrolls. The index also includes biblical texts found at other locations in the Judean desert (e.g., Naḥal Ḥever), even though those texts are not published in this book. Absent from this index are some of the noncanonical passages (e.g., from Ben Sira) that are found within the Qumran Psalms scrolls and that are published in the book. Those that are part of other traditions (e.g., Syriac Pss 154 and 155) are included in the index.

A nice companion to this volume is *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (ed. Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich). Though all in English and presumably not intended for a scholarly audience, it makes a convenient (and very affordable) translation of the volume under review and also contains some nice introductory material to the Qumran biblical material.

Another very useful companion to Ulrich’s volume is Joseph A. Fitzmyer’s *A Guide to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature*. This book complements Ulrich’s indices perfectly, as Fitzmyer lists all of the scrolls and tell us where they were published and what exactly they contain.² Fitzmyer’s *Guide* also comes in very handy when trying to locate a passage in the Psalms scrolls, as I discovered. For example, Ulrich’s index tells us that Pss 154 and 155 appear in 11QPsalms^a, but after much searching I did not find them. Fitzmyer’s breakdown of the scroll’s contents (112) helped me discover that Ps 154 (=

² Similar information can also be found in the volume of García-Martínez and Tigchelaar, mentioned above, as well as in DJD 39 (E. Tov, Oxford University Press, 2002).

Syriac Psalm II) can be found in column 18 of the scroll, while Ps 155 (= Syriac Psalm III) is in column 24. Since Ulrich indicates column numbers in his headings, it was then easy to find the psalms I was looking for. Ulrich titles these Syriac Psalm II and III, respectively, and only in the critical apparatus uses the numbers 154 and 155. But since these psalms do not exist in the Masoretic Hebrew tradition, there is only one critical note per psalm, both indicating exactly this fact.

I have made a couple of very minor criticisms regarding the indices, the possible difficulty of some abbreviations, the lack of a bibliography, and the difficulty of finding certain texts, and I have noted the lack of any meaningful introduction or discussion. So let me return to a more positive direction, for the reality is that this volume is an enormously useful and highly valuable resource for all biblical scholars. I have no need to convince the reader of the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for biblical scholarship, as they represent the earliest witnesses to the biblical texts. Prior to the publication of this volume, it was not so simple to use the scrolls for text-critical purposes. I am sure that very few biblical scholars have the entire DJD set on their own bookshelves (not to mention the various other publications containing Qumran biblical texts). The standard edition of the Hebrew Bible, *BHS*, has very little data from Qumran in its critical apparatus; *BHQ* and *HUBP* are better, but each has just a few volumes published so far. Ulrich has now made it very easy to find text-critical information relevant to the study of the Bible. One needs only this single volume in order to find out if the Dead Sea Scrolls contain any variants to a particular passage. One has only to look in the index to see if a particular passage is even attested in the scrolls. Despite my comments above regarding the Psalms, it is on the whole very easy to find what one is looking for and very easy to spot variants thanks to Ulrich's critical apparatus. It will still be necessary on occasion to check the more detailed presentations of the texts in the DJD volumes and elsewhere, but Ulrich's convenient single volume will suffice much of the time. I can also add that the volume is very handsomely produced, with a large, clear Hebrew font.

In short, this is an excellent resource, a major contribution to the scholarly arena, and surely every scholar of the Hebrew Bible interested in text criticism will want to own it. Of course, we all wish that it were \$35, but given its importance, its size, and the enormous amount of careful work that must have gone into its publication, its list price of \$199 (less for the savvy shopper) is actually not unreasonable.