

## VARIANT READINGS IN THE LEVITICUS SCROLL FROM QUMRAN CAVE 11

The Leviticus Scroll from Qumran Cave 11 (11Q Lev) consists of twelve columns of writing in the paleo-Hebrew script, none of them complete, and a number of small fragments. Approximately the lower third of each column, containing about nine lines of writing, has been preserved. The extant text begins at the end of ch. 14, and continues to ch. 27, the last in the book. The smaller fragments come from earlier chapters in the book. Among the reasons for special interest in this scroll, we may list the following:

(1) It is one of the oldest surviving texts of the book of Leviticus, perhaps the oldest, dating in all likelihood from the late second or early first century B.C.

(2) It is the longest single document written in the paleo-Hebrew script, and should therefore be an important factor in determining the development of paleo-Hebrew in the Greco-Roman period.

(3) It comes from a time before the stabilization of the Hebrew text of the Torah, and should therefore provide significant clues to the history and transmission of the text in that period.

The present paper is devoted to certain aspects of the third point only, specifically a preliminary study of textual variants in 11Q Lev in comparison with the major early textual recensions: MT, Sam, and LXX. While the book of Leviticus has never been regarded as especially interesting from a text-critical point of view, i.e., the principal recensions do not exhibit startling divergences, nevertheless there is a sufficient number of variant readings to permit a basic classification of text types. In this respect, Leviticus conforms to a pattern more easily detectable in other books of the Pentateuch, and we can speak of three recensions or editions, represented by MT, Sam, and LXX respectively. Moreover, in accordance with the persuasive thesis of F. M. Cross, Jr., we may assign these text types to different geographic locations: MT from Babylonia, Sam from Palestine, and LXX from Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Given the provenience and script of 11Q Lev, we might reasonably expect the text to conform to that of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and in fact it does to a substantial degree. Nevertheless, details of the study reveal a more intricate

<sup>1</sup>See F. M. Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 120-145.



A Fragment of the Leviticus Scroll from Qumran Cave 11: Lev 14:53—15:5

## TABLE OF VARIANT READINGS:

## 11Q Lev in comparison with MT, Sam, and LXX

11Q Lev	MT	SAM	LXX
1. 15:3a	#	#	X
2. 15:3b	X	#*	#
3. 17:2	X	X	X
4. 17:3a	#	#	X
5. 17:3b	#	#	X
6. 17:4a	#	X	X
7. 17:4b	#	#	X
8. 18:27a	X	#	—
9. 18:27b	X	X	X
10. 18:30a	#	X	—
11. 18:30b	X	X	#
12. 19:2	#	#	X
13. 19:3	#	#	X
14. 20:2a	#	X	X
15. 20:2b	X	#	X
16. 20:3	X	#	#
17. 21:6	X	#	#
18. 21:8a	X	X	—
19. 21:8b	X	#	#
20. 21:9	#	#	X
21. 22:22	X	X	X
22. 22:24	#	X	X
23. 22:25	X	#*	#*
24. 24:9a	#	X	—
25. 24:9b	#	X	—
26. 24:10	X	X	#
27. 25:29	#	#	X
28. 25:30	X	#*	#*
29. 25:31a	X	#	#
30. 25:31b	X	X	X
31. 25:33	#*	#	—
32. 25:34	X	#	—
33. 25:35a	#	X	—
34. 25:35b	#	X	X
35. 26:20	#	X	X
36. 26:22	X	#	—
37. 26:24	X	X	#*
38. 27:13	X	#	—
39. 27:17	#	X	X

# = 11Q Lev agrees with text.

#\* = 11Q Lev agrees in part.

X = 11Q Lev disagrees with text.

— = The relationship with 11Q Lev is uncertain or ambiguous.

series of relationships between 11Q Lev and the major recensions. A list of the main textual variations follows:

### 1. Lev 15:3

In this verse there are significant divergences among the three major recensions; 11Q Lev does not seem to agree exactly with any of them, though it is much closer to Sam and LXX than to MT; as between Sam and LXX, it leans toward the latter.

a. At the beginning of the verse, MT reads *w<sup>e</sup>zō't tihyeh tum'ātô* "And this shall be his uncleanness." This reading is supported by both Sam and 11Q Lev, although the scroll has been damaged, and only the latter part of the passage has been preserved: *—yh tm'tw*. LXX, however, reads: *kai oûtos ô nômos tēs âkatharsias aûtoû = w<sup>e</sup>zō't tōrat tum'ātô*, "And this is the law of his uncleanness." This reading in LXX is the normal formula in Leviticus, occurring repeatedly throughout the book: Lev 6:2,7,18; 7:1,11; 11:46; 12:7; 13:59; 14:32,57; 15:32. The wording in MT at 15:3 is unusual and may be challenged on grammatical and syntactic grounds. A clue to the proper analysis of the different readings may be found in Lev 14:2, where MT (supported by Sam) has: *zō't tihyeh tōrat . . .* "This shall be the law of . . ." LXX has simply: *Oûtos ô nômos . . .*, which may imply that *thyh* did not appear in its Hebrew *Vorlage*, but the case is ambiguous. It is likely that the original Hebrew text at Lev 15:3 was the same as that at 14:2, namely *z't thyh twrt . . .* "This shall be the law of . . ." The word *twrt* has apparently fallen out of MT, Sam, and 11Q Lev, while LXX has preserved it. It is difficult to say whether the word *thyh* occurred in the *Vorlage* of LXX. In this instance, 11Q Lev clearly agrees with MT and Sam against LXX, although LXX has the better reading.

b. Further on in the verse, there is an important plus in Sam and LXX in contrast with MT. The latter reads as follows: *rār b<sup>e</sup>šārô 'et zôbbô 'ô hehtîm b<sup>e</sup>šārô mizzôbbô tum'ātô hî*<sup>2</sup> "Whether his body flows with his discharge, or his body is stopped up from his discharge, that is his uncleanness." Sam agrees with MT as far as *mzwbw*, and then adds: *tm' hw' kl ymy zb bsrw 'w htytym bsrw mzwbw tm'tw hy'* "he is unclean; all the days that his body has a discharge or his body is stopped up from his discharge, that is his uncleanness." LXX has substantially the same addition as Sam, but the precise wording is clearly, if slightly different (contrary to the footnote in *Biblia Hebraica*<sup>3</sup>): *aûtē ē âkatharsia aûtoû en aûtq̄ . pāsai ai êméraî rýseōs sōmatos aûtoû , q̄ synéstēken tò sōma aûtoû diâ tēs rýseōs , âkatharsia aûtoû êstin = hî' tum'ātô bô kol-yemê zôb b<sup>e</sup>šārô 'ô hehtîm b<sup>e</sup>šārô mizzôbbô tum'ātô hî* "that is his uncleanness in him; all the days of the discharge of his body, or his body is stopped up from (his) discharge, is his uncleanness."

<sup>2</sup>The Kethib, as regularly in the Pentateuch of MT, is *hw'*; the Qere *perpetuum* is *hî*.

The critical difference is that Sam reads *ṭm' hw'* at the beginning of the plus, whereas LXX is a translation of *hî' tum'ātô bô*. 11Q Lev, while fragmentary, agrees with Sam and LXX against MT in having the addition. The reading is as follows: *bw . kl . ymy . z* "in him; all the days of the dis(charge)." The occurrence of *bw* shows that as between Sam and LXX, 11Q Lev agrees with LXX (*hy' ṭm'tw bw*), and not with Sam (*hw' ṭm'*).

In an attempt to determine the relationship between MT and the other texts, and to reconstruct a more original reading, preference normally would be given to the shorter text (i.e., MT). In this case, however, the longer text is to be preferred, since the shorter one can best be explained as the result of a routine but extensive haplography. The source of the difficulty is in the repetition of the clause: *'w hḥtym bśrw mzwbw* in the longer version (Sam and LXX, supported by 11Q Lev). In MT, the scribe's eye skipped from one to the other inadvertently, and the intervening material was omitted.

## 2. Lev 17:2-4

a. In vs. 2, the standard text reads in part as follows: *dabbēr 'el 'ahārōn w'e'el bānāw w'e'el kol be nê yiśrā'el* "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel" (MT, Sam, and LXX). 11Q Lev omits *w'l bnyw*, but this is not significant, as it is a transparent case of homeoarcton: the scribe's eye skipped from *w'l* before *bnyw* to *w'l* before *kl bny*. Happily, this errant variation did not catch on anywhere in the later transmission of the text.

b. In vs. 3, 11Q Lev agrees with MT and Sam in reading *mbyt yśr'l* "from the house of Israel," and against LXX which has *tōn uīōn Israēl* "of the sons of Israel."

c. After "Israel," LXX adds a phrase *ē tōn prosēlytōn ē tōn proskeimēnōn en ūmīn* "or of the proselytes who sojourn among you," which is not found in MT, Sam, or 11Q Lev. Since the same phrase is found in all recensions of vss. 8, 10, and 13, we conclude that it was original here too, and that LXX has the superior and more original reading.

d. In vs. 4, after the opening clause, which reads *w'e'el petaḥ 'ōhel mō'ēd lō' hēbī'ō* "and to the entrance of the tent of meeting he shall not bring it" (MT), there is a long plus in Sam and LXX, which ends with the same clause. The situation is very much like the one in Lev 15:3, discussed earlier. We may conclude that we have another example of haplography in MT; in this instance, however, 11Q Lev agrees with MT throughout against Sam and LXX.

e. Toward the end of the same verse, 11Q Lev reads *h'yš·hhw'* "that man," in agreement with MT and Sam, but against LXX, which has: *ē psychē ēkeīnē = hannepēš hahī'* "that soul."

## 3. Lev 18:27—19:3

a. In 18:27, 11Q Lev reads *h'lh* "these," in agreement with Sam, but against MT, which has the anomalous *hā'ēl*, with the same meaning (after *hattô'ēbōt* "the abominations").

b. The next word in 18:27 in MT and Sam is *'āsû* "they did"; presumably 11Q Lev had the same reading, though only parts of the letters are preserved. 11Q Lev breaks off at this point, but when it resumes, the text is identical with Lev 20:24, *'tm tyršw . 't . 'd'm' tm* . "you shall possess their land." The missing section of the manuscript could easily have accommodated the preceding words in Lev 20:23-24, *wā'āqūš bām; wā'ōmar lākem* "and I loathed them; then I said to you . . ." It is to be noted that the words immediately before these in 20:23 are *'ēlleh 'āsû* "these they did" (MT), which are the same as in 18:27. Apparently the scribe (or editor) inserted a passage from Lev 20:23-24 into the present context, on the basis of the occurrence of the same expression in both places. Once he had completed the sentence, which is duly noted by a bracket or parenthesis, he returned to the text of 18:27 and continued with the words *'nšy h'rš* "the men of the land," which follow *'āsû* directly in all standard texts.

c. In 18:30, 11Q Lev reads *bhm* "by them," in agreement with MT, and against Sam *bhn* (the fem. form), which seems to be grammatically more accurate: the antecedent is *tw'bw't* or *h'qwt* (both of which are fem. pl. nouns).

d. In the same verse, 11Q Lev inserts *ky* "for," after *bhm*, to introduce the final clause *'ny yhw'h 'lhykm* "I am Yahweh your God." Neither MT nor Sam has the word, but LXX reads *ōti* = *ky*.

e. In 19:2, 11Q Lev reads *kl* before *'dt*, in agreement with MT and Sam, but against LXX which omits the word.

f. In 19:3, 11Q Lev reads *'mw w'byw* "his mother and his father," in agreement with MT and Sam; LXX has the words in reverse order, "his father and his mother," which would seem to be more regular.

## 4. Lev 20:2-3

a. In vs. 2, 11Q Lev reads *'t'mr* "you shall say," in agreement with MT, but against Sam, which has *tdbr* "you shall speak," and LXX: *lalēseis* = *tdbr*.

b. Also in vs. 2, 11Q Lev reads *mbyt* "from the house of" before *yšr'l* "Israel" with Sam, but against MT which has *mibbēnē* "from the sons of" and LXX: *āpō tōn uīōn* = *mibbēnē*.

c. In vs. 3, 11Q Lev reads *wḥll* "and he profanes," in agreement with Sam and probably LXX, *kaī bebēlōsē*, but against MT, which has *ūl'ē hallēl*

“and to profane.” MT seems to have the smoother text, but not necessarily the more original one.

### 5. Lev 21:6 - 9

a. In vs. 6, 11Q Lev apparently read *qdšym* “holy ones” (as reconstructed on the basis of available space), in agreement with Sam and LXX, but against MT: *qōdeš*, which seems to be an inferior reading.

b. In vs. 8, 11Q Lev omits *t*, the sign of the definite direct object before *lhm* “food,” against both MT and Sam.

c. Also in vs. 8, 11Q Lev reads *mqdšm* “the one who sanctifies them,” in agreement with Sam and LXX, which has *ó úgiázōn aútoús*, but against MT which reads *m<sup>e</sup>qaddiškem* “the one who sanctifies you.”

d. In vs. 9, 11Q Lev reads *t byh* “her father,” in agreement with MT and Sam; LXX, however, has *tò ónoma toū patròs aútēs* “the name of her father.”

### 6. Lev 22:22-25

a. In vs. 22, MT has the sequence *'δ yabbelet 'ô gārāb 'ô yallepet* “or having a discharge or an itch or scabs” (RSV); Sam has the same reading. 11Q Lev, however, reverses the terms *yblt* and *ylpt*.

b. In vs. 24, 11Q Lev reads *wm'wk* “and one which is crushed,” in agreement with MT, but against Sam, which omits the conjunction (though many manuscripts retain or restore it), and LXX: *thladian = mā'uk*.

c. In vs. 25, 11Q Lev reads *'mšh' tym hm* “they are mutilated,” which differs from Sam: *mšhtym bhm = LXX: phthármata éstin èn aútoīs*, and MT *mošhātām bāhem* “their mutilation is in them.” It is difficult to determine the original reading, or to explain the variation in 11Q Lev; the omission of the preposition *b* before *hm* is defensible.

### 7. Lev 24:9-10

a. In vs. 9, 11Q Lev reads *hw'* “that one,” in agreement with MT, and against Sam: *hy'*.

b. Also in vs. 9, 11Q Lev seems to support MT: *wa'ākāfūhū* “and they shall eat it,” against Sam which reads *w'klwh* (with fem. suffix), though there is a break in the Scroll, which makes a definitive reading difficult.

c. In vs. 10, 11Q Lev reads *h'yš<sup>3</sup> hyśr'ly* “the Israelite man,” in agreement with LXX: *ó ánthrōpos ó Israēlītēs*; MT, however, has *'iš hayyiśr'e'ēlī*,

which is grammatically anomalous, while Sam has *ʾyš yšrʾly* “an Israelite man.”

### 8. Lev 25:29-35

a. In vs. 29, 11Q Lev reads *mmkrw* “after its sale,” in agreement with MT and Sam; LXX, however, omits the word.

b. In vs. 30, 11Q Lev reads *ʾšr bʾyr lw* “which belongs to him in the city”; Sam conforms generally, though it has a second *ʾšr*: *ʾšr bʾyr ʾšr lw*. LXX agrees with Sam: *ἔ οὔσα ἐν πόλει τῆ ἐχοῦσῆ*. MT, however, has *ʾāšer bāʾīr ʾāšer lōʾ* (ending with the negative particle rather than the preposition and pronominal suffix), which hardly makes sense in this context.

c. In vs. 31, 11Q Lev reads the plural form *yḥšbw* “they shall be reckoned,” in agreement with Sam and LXX: *logisthētōsan*. MT has the singular form: *yēḥāšēb* “it shall be reckoned.”

d. Also in vs. 31, 11Q Lev reads *bywbl* “in the Jubilee,” while MT, Sam, and LXX all have the conjunction before the preposition. The omission in 11Q Lev may be explained as a simple haplography, since the preceding word ends in *waw* (*lw*). There are other possibilities, of course.

e. In vs. 33, 11Q Lev reads *hyʾ* in agreement with Sam, but against MT: *hwʾ* (which, however, has the Qere *perpetuum hīʾ*).

f. In vs. 34, 11Q Lev reads *hyʾ* in agreement with Sam, and against MT which has *hūʾ*. The correct reading is *hīʾ*, since the corresponding noun, *ʾāḥuzzat*, is feminine.

g. In vs. 35, 11Q Lev reads *whḥzqt*, “then you shall support,” in agreement with MT, and against Sam which has *ḥzqt* with the same meaning.

h. Also in vs. 35, 11Q Lev reads *why mk* “and he shall live with you,” in agreement with MT; Sam, however, adds the word *ʾhyk* “your brother” after *wḥy*, and LXX supports this reading: *καὶ ζῆsetai ó ádelphós sou metá sou*. In view of the reading of the fuller text at the end of vs. 36, *why ʾhyk mk* in all recensions, the longer reading in vs. 35 is to be preferred.

### 9. Lev 26:20-24

a. In vs. 20, 11Q Lev reads *hʾrš* “the land,” in agreement with MT, and against Sam which has *hšdh* “the field.” LXX reads *toū ágroū úmōn = ἡδῆkem* “your field.”

b. In vs. 22, 11Q Lev reads *wšlḥty* “and I will send,” in agreement with Sam, and against MT which has *w<sup>e</sup>hišlaḥtī*, a variant form of the same root with essentially the same meaning.

c. In vs. 24, 11Q Lev reads *whlkty 'mkm bhmt qry* "then I will walk among you with raging hostility," against MT, *w<sup>e</sup>hālaktî 'ap 'ānî 'immākem b<sup>e</sup>qerî* "and I will walk, even I, in opposition to you." Sam has *gm 'ny* for 'p 'ny, but otherwise agrees with MT. LXX has *thymō plaglō = (ba) hāmat qerî*, but otherwise conforms to MT in vs. 24. It will be seen that 11Q Lev here follows the opening clause of vs. 28 exactly, and hence its reading must be regarded as secondary in vs. 24.

#### 10. Lev 27:13-17

a. In vs. 13, 11Q Lev reads *yg'lnw* "he will redeem it," in agreement with Sam, and against MT which has *yig'ālennā* (with the feminine pronominal suffix instead of the masculine).

b. In vs. 17, 11Q Lev reads 'm "if" in agreement with MT, and against Sam which has w'm "and if," and LXX which reads *eàn dē*.

In all, we have cited thirty-nine cases of textual divergence involving 11Q Lev and the three major recensions of Leviticus: MT, Sam, and LXX. Of the thirty-nine cases, there are seven in which 11Q Lev has unique readings. In five of these, the differences between 11Q Lev and the other texts are trivial; in the remaining two, 11Q Lev is either in error (cf. 18:27 and 20:24), or secondary and inferior (26:24).

11Q Lev agrees with MT eighteen times, once partially (25:33), and disagrees thirteen times.

11Q Lev agrees with Sam eighteen times, partially in three cases (15:3b; 22:25; 25:30), and disagrees eleven times.

11Q Lev agrees with LXX seven times, partially in three cases (22:25; 25:30; 26:24), and disagrees twelve times. In ten other cases, there is insufficient evidence to decide the question.

11Q Lev agrees with MT and Sam against LXX eight times.

11Q Lev agrees with Sam and LXX against MT four times (but two of these are uncertain).

There does not seem to be a single instance in which 11Q Lev agrees with MT and LXX against Sam.

It is too early to attempt a systematic classification of 11Q Lev on the basis of the present analysis. Our initial impression is that it is a mixed text, but that its affinities are predominantly with MT and even slightly more with Sam. There are some striking correlations with LXX, but the divergences from the Egyptian text are more pronounced than is the case with either MT or Sam. In view of the textual characteristics and the script of the present manuscript, it is reasonable to conclude that it belongs to the Palestinian, or proto-Samaritan, text-type. Since the surviving Samaritan manuscripts are

not only much later in date, but also reflect the influence of the dominant proto-Massoretic text in the course of transmission, the divergences between 11Q Lev and the standard Samaritan text can be explained in large part in terms of the early date of the former. 11Q Lev thus reflects an older stage in the history of the Palestinian text, itself a descendant of the Babylonian text presumably brought to Jerusalem by Ezra the Scribe in the 5th century B.C.<sup>3</sup>

DAVID NOEL FREEDMAN  
*University of Michigan*  
*Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104*

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 141-142.