

The Hebrew Bible

Volume 1B

Pentateuch, Former and Latter Prophets

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Armin Lange

2.2.2 Masoretic Texts and Ancient Texts Close to MT

2.2.2.1 General and Typological Features

The term Masoretic Text (MT) conventionally refers to the vocalized, accented, and annotated biblical codices produced by late medieval Hebrew scribes and their modern heirs. There are three sub-branches of MT (Tiberian, Babylonian, and Pales-
tinian), which differ according to their vocaliza-

tion systems.¹ The consonantal text does not differ in major details among these sub-branches.² Nonetheless, the consonantal text of each medieval MT manuscript differs in minor details, due to the fluidity of spelling and common types of scribal error. By scholarly convention, the pre-medieval scrolls belonging to the MT textual family are designated proto-MT. The proto-MT textual family can be further subdivided into an inner circle and an outer circle (see below). The oldest complete or nearly complete codices of MT-Pentateuch are from the tenth or early eleventh century C.E.:³

- St. Petersburg Pentateuch Codex EPB. II B 17 (MT^{L17} = National Library of Russia II Firkovitch B 17)⁴
- St. Petersburg Pentateuch Codex EPB. II B 10 (MT^{L10} = National Library of Russia II Firkovitch B 10)⁵
- Cairo Pentateuch Codex (MT^{C3} = Gottheil 18)⁶
- Damascus Pentateuch Codex (MT^{S5} = National Library of Israel ms Heb. 4° 5702; formerly ms 507 of the Sassoon Collection)⁷

- London Pentateuch Codex (MT^B = British Library Or. 4445)⁸
- St. Petersburg Bible Codex I B 19a (MT^L = National Library of Russia I Firkovitch B 19a)⁹

MT^L is the oldest complete Pentateuch codex. Most of the Pentateuch is lacking in the Aleppo Codex (MT^A), ca. 930, which is the most accurate MT codex from the Tiberian Ben Asher family with respect to vocalization, accentuation, and Masorah.¹⁰ Another important early Pentateuch codex is Vatican ebr. 448 (MT^V), ca. eleventh through twelfth century.¹¹

The codex format was adopted in the eighth or ninth century for scholarly study. Prior to the late ninth century, all known texts of the Hebrew Bible were written in scroll format.¹² Medieval Torah scrolls, written on leather (parchment), contain the consonantal text of MT with the inevitable small variants. The oldest complete Torah scroll is the Bologna Torah Scroll, dated to the twelfth or early thirteenth century C.E.¹³ The oldest fragments of medieval Torah scrolls, dated inexactly to the fifth

¹ Khan, *Introduction*, 43–65.

² See the variants (all minor) in the Cairo Genizah Pentateuch fragments with Palestinian vocalization listed in B. Chiesa, *L'Antico Testamento ebraico secondo la tradizione palestinese* (Turin: Erasmo, 1978), 125–42.

³ See the list of early Bible codices in M. Beit-Arié, “The Damascus Pentateuch: MS Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library Heb. 4° 5702; Orient, Ca. 1000,” in M. Beit-Arié, *The Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book: Studies in Palaeography and Codicology* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 111–27 (111, 125).

⁴ Dated in colophon to 929 C.E.; extant from Gen 2:6 with many lacunae. The scribe, Solomon ben Buya’a, was also the scribe of MT^A; the *naqdan* was his brother Ephraim. See M. Beit-Arié, C. Sirat, and M. Glatzer, *Codices hebraicis litteris exarati quo tempore scripti fuerint exhibentes*, Vol. 1: *usque ad annum 1020* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 53–64.

⁵ Tenth century; Yeivin, *Introduction*, 23.

⁶ Tenth century; J.S. Penkower, “A Tenth-Century Pentateuchal MS from Jerusalem (MS C3): Corrected by Mishaël Ben Uzziel,” *Tarbiz* 58 (1988): 49–74 [Hebr.].

⁷ Ca. 1000 C.E.; extant from Gen 9:26, lacking Exod 18:1–23; Beit-Arié, “Damascus Pentateuch”; facsimile edition, *The Damascus Pentateuch* (eds. D.S. Loewinger and M. Beit-Arié; 2 vols.; Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1978–1982); digitized manuscript at <http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/mss/heb5702/>.

⁸ Mid-tenth century: extant from Gen 39:20 to Deut 1:33, lacking Num 7:46–73; 9:12–10:18; A. Dotan, “Reflections Towards a Critical Edition of Pentateuch Codex Or. 4445,” in *Estudios Masoréticos (X Congreso de la IOMS): En memoria de Harry M. Orlinsky* (eds. E. Fernández Tejero and M.T. Ortega Monterio; Textos y estudios “Cardenal Cisneros” 55; Madrid: Instituto de Filología del CSIC, 1993), 39–50. A digitized version is available at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or_4445, last accessed September, 10th 2015.

⁹ Dated in colophon to 1008 C.E.; *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition* (eds. D.N. Freedman et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Beit-Arié, *Codices*, 114–31.

¹⁰ Extant from Deut 28:17; Beit-Arié, *Codices*, 65–72. The Pentateuch text in Cohen, *Miqra’ot Gedolot “Haketer”* is based on Yemenite codices that are elsewhere very close to MT^A.

¹¹ Extant from Gen 7:11; facsimile edition, *The Pentateuch with the Masorah Parva and the Masorah Magna and with Targum Onkelos, MS. Vat. Heb. 448* (ed. A. Diez Macho; Jerusalem: Makor, 1977); digitized manuscript at <http://bav.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vat-eb-448/>.

¹² The earliest dated biblical codex is the Ben Asher Codex of the Prophets (MT^C), dated in the colophon to 894/5; Beit-Arié, “Damascus Pentateuch,” 111.

¹³ M. Perani, “Il più antico rotolo del Pentateuco ebraico integro: una scoperta alla Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna,” *TECA: Testimonianze Editoria, Cultura, Arte* 4 (2013): 87–97.

to eighth centuries C.E., are the following. They contain the consonantal text of MT, with minor variants.¹⁴

- Cairo Genizah, T-S NS 4.3 and 3.21, portions of Gen 4:14–6:5 and 13:10–17:9¹⁵
- Oxford, Bodleian Library ms Heb. d. 89 (P) (i), portions of Exod 2:23–25¹⁶
- Berlin, Staatliche Museen P. 10598, portions of Exod 3:13–4:9¹⁷
- Ms London + ms Ashkar-Gilson, portions of Exod 9:18–16:1¹⁸

The Oxford scroll, written in small characters and format, was presumably used for study.¹⁹ The others are scrolls with larger formats, which were suitable for synagogue use.

The earliest Pentateuchal texts, all fragmentary, are from the Judean Desert, dating from the mid-third century B.C.E. to the early second century C.E.²⁰ The earliest proto-MT fragment, 4QLev-Num^a (→ 2.2.17.10), is from the early Hasmonean

period (ca. 150–100 B.C.E.; see below). It is unclear whether complete Torah scrolls existed in the Second Temple period, but the multi-book scrolls from the Judean Desert – notably MurGen-Exod-Num^a (see below) – indicates that this is a possibility.²¹

The (proto-)MT-Pentateuch has certain typological features that distinguish it from the other identifiable textual families in the Pentateuch (proto-SP and proto-LXX).²² These features include several substantive editorial revisions by scribes in the proto-MT tradition. These revisions contrast with the earlier editions or parallel revisions preserved by proto-SP and/or proto-LXX:

1. A revised edition of the chronologies of Genesis 5 and 11. MT, SP, and LXX have three different editions of these chronologies. All three are responses to exegetical problems in the priestly text.²³
2. An expanded edition of the tabernacle text of Exodus 35–40. LXX has a shorter account of the construction of the tabernacle. The MT edition is expanded, harmonized, and reordered to correspond more closely with God's instructions to Moses in Exodus 25–30.²⁴
3. Sequence differences at Gen 47:5–6 and Num 10:34–36. MT-Gen 47:5–11 is reordered and truncated due to problems in the narrative (see below). LXX preserves the earlier edition. MT and LXX have slightly different locations for the “Song of the Ark” in Num 10:34–36. It is unclear whether one placement is secondary or whether the song was a late editorial insertion in both textual traditions.²⁵

¹⁴ For an earlier inventory, see P.J. Gentry, “The Text of the Old Testament,” *JETS* 52 (2009): 19–45 (21–22), → 1.2.2.2 and → 2.2.1.11. My thanks to Armin Lange and Yosef Ofer for advice and bibliography on these manuscripts.

¹⁵ Dated to ca. eighth century C.E. by A. Yardeni, *The Book of Hebrew Scripts: History, Palaeography, Script Styles, Calligraphy and Design* (London: British Library, 2002), 79 and fig. 97; C. Sirat, M. Dukan, and A. Yardeni, “Rouleaux de la Tora antérieurs à l'an mille,” *CRAI* 138 (1994): 861–64; C. Sirat, *Hebrew Manuscripts of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 27–28 and pl. 11; digitized images in B. Outhwaite, “The Oldest Hebrew Fragment in the Collection? T-S NS 3.21,” *Fragment of the Month: November 2010*: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/fotm/november-2010/>. There is a variant at Gen 17:1, where this manuscript has שנה “year” versus the plural שנים “years” in other MT (and SP) manuscripts.

¹⁶ Dated to ca. third century C.E. by A. Yardeni, *Hebrew Scripts*, 73 and fig. 90; C. Sirat, *Les papyrus en caractères hébraïques trouvés en Égypte* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985), 31–32, 123, and pl. 83; Sirat, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, 29.

¹⁷ Sirat, *Papyrus*, 34–35 and pl. 9; the text is mistakenly identified as Numbers 3–4, but it is Exodus 3–4.

¹⁸ P. Sanders, “The Ashkar-Gilson Manuscript: Remnant of a Proto-Masoretic Model Scroll of the Torah,” *JHS* 14 (2014) article 7: DOI:10.5508/jhs.2014.v14.a7.

¹⁹ Sirat, *Papyrus*, 32.

²⁰ The earliest Pentateuchal text, 4QExod-Lev^f (mid-third

century B.C.E.; → 2.2.1.7.9) has affinities with the proto-SP family.

²¹ Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 75–77.

²² On discerning textual families in the Pentateuch, see Hendel, “Assessing,” 281–302.

²³ Hendel, **Genesis 1–11*, 61–80; Hendel, “A Hasmonean Edition of MT Genesis? The Implications of the Editions of the Chronology in Genesis 5,” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1 (2012): 1–17.

²⁴ A. Aejmelaeus, “Septuagintal Translation Techniques: A Solution to the Problem of the Tabernacle Account?” in Aejmelaeus, **Trail*, 107–21.

²⁵ E. Tov, “Some Sequence Differences between the Ma-

4. Theologically motivated revisions at Deut 27:4, 32:8, and 32:43. An anti-Samaritan revision occurs at Deut 27:4, where MT reads “Ebal,” replacing “Gerizim” in SP and LXX (restored from the Old Latin; → 2.2.4.5). An anti-polytheistic revision occurs at Deut 32:8, where proto-MT reads “sons of Israel,” replacing the original “sons of God,” preserved in 4QDeutⁱ and LXX. Another anti-polytheistic revision occurs in Deut 32:43, where proto-MT deleted a poetic line referring to the “sons of God” and in the parallel line replaced “heaven” with “nations.” The original readings are preserved, with variants and expansions, in 4QDeut^a and LXX.²⁶

These revisions are sufficiently distinctive to count as typological features of the proto-MT textual family in the Pentateuch. They provide a contrast with the respective typological features of the other Pentateuchal textual families. Aside from these typological features, there are many other smaller-scale scribal revisions in the proto-MT textual family, including harmonizations and explicating glosses.²⁷ In general, the proto-MT-Pentateuch is a less revised textual family than proto-SP and proto-LXX.

Besides these typological features and smaller revisions, there are many small scribal errors in the (proto-)MT-Pentateuch. These are the inevitable product of scribal transmission of texts. The following is a small sample of the kinds of scribal errors in MT-Pentateuch. These errors are found in all the early MT codices. Additional scribal errors oc-

cur in the MT codices and printed editions of the early modern period, as demonstrated in the collations of Benjamin Kennicott (1776–1780) and Giovanni de Rossi (1788).²⁸ The correct readings below are supplied by non-MT Pentateuchal texts and versions or by conjectural emendation.

Graphic Error

וְדֹדִים “Dodians” MT-Gen 10:4

וּרְדִיִּים “Rhodians” SP and LXX, cf. 1 Chr 1:7

Metathesis

וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר “Moses *went* to speak” MT-Deut 31:1

וַיֵּכֶל מֹשֶׁה לְדַבֵּר “Moses *finished* speaking” 1QDeut^b and LXX

Dittography

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנָּאֵף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנָּאֵף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ רַעְיוֹ
“And a man who commits adultery with the wife of
a man who commits adultery with the wife of his
neighbor” MT-Lev 20:10

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנָּאֵף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ רַעְיוֹ
“And a man who commits
adultery with the wife of his neighbor” emendation

Haplography

הַגֵּר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל “*the sojourner* in Israel” MT-Lev 22:18

הַגֵּר בִּישְׂרָאֵל “*the sojourner who sojourns* in Israel”
4QLev^b, SP, and LXX

Homoioteleuton

רָד בִּשְׂרוֹ אוֹת זָוָב אוֹ הַחֲתִים בִּשְׂרוֹ מְזֻזָּבו
“if his flesh runs
with his flow *or his flesh is blocked by his flow*” MT-
Lev 15:3

רָד בִּשְׂרוֹ אוֹת זָוָב אוֹ הַחֲתִים בִּשְׂרוֹ מְזֻזָּבו
“if his flesh runs with his flow
or his flesh is blocked by his flow, he is impure all the
days that his flesh flows *or his flesh is blocked by his
flow*” nQpaleoLev (partially), SP, and LXX²⁹

soretic Text and the Septuagint and Their Ramifications for Literary Criticism,” in Tov, *Greek-Hebrew Bible, 414–15.

²⁶ E. Ulrich, “The Old Latin, Mount Gerizim, and 4QJosh^a,” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scroll Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera: Florilegium Complutense* (eds. A. Piquer Otero and P.A. Torijano Morales; JSJSup 157; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 361–75; S. Schorch, “The Samaritan Version of Deuteronomy and the Origin of Deuteronomy,” in *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans: Studies on Bible, History and Linguistics* (ed. J. Zsengellér; SJ 66; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 23–37; G. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 184–87, 201–12; A. Rofé, “The End of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:43),” in Rofé, *Deuteronomy, 47–54.

²⁷ E.g., Hendel, *Genesis 1–11, 40–60.

²⁸ See Goshen-Gottstein, *Biblical Manuscripts.

²⁹ SP reads חֲתוּם “sealed” instead of the initial הַחֲתִים “blocked.”

Word Misdivision

עָקֵב מֵאַשֶׁר “heel. *From* Asher” MT-Gen 49:19–20

עָקֵבֵם אֲשֶׁר “*their* heels. Asher” SP and LXX³⁰

Reminiscence

פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ שָׂרְצוּ בָאָרֶץ וּרְבוּבָה “Be fruitful and multiply, spread on the earth, and *multiply* on it” MT-Gen 9:7 (reminiscence of וּרְבוּ “multiply” three words previously)

פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ שָׂרְצוּ בָאָרֶץ וּרְדוּ בָהּ “Be fruitful and multiply, spread on the earth, and *rule* it” emendation (cf. Gen 1:28)

Eyeskip

וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל-הָבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה “Cain said to Abel his brother, and when they were in the field” MT-Gen 4:8

וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל הָבֶל אָחִיו נֵלֶכָה הַשָּׂדֶה וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה “Cain said to Abel his brother, ‘*Let us go to the field,*’ and when they were in the field” SP and LXX

The orthography of (proto-)MT-Pentateuch reflects roughly the practices of the earliest Qumran biblical scrolls, which date to the third century B.C.E.³¹ The distribution of *matres lectionis* in MT-Pentateuch is slightly fuller than in 4QSam^b, but not as full as in 4QExod-Lev^f or 4QJer^a (all third-century scrolls). For instance, the use of *waw* to mark word-internal long *ō* is infrequent in 4QSam^b, more frequent in MT-Pentateuch, and regular in 4QExod-Lev^f and later scrolls. Compare the distribution of full and defective spelling of *’ēpōd* (“ephod”): 4QSam^b: אֶפֶד; MT-Pentateuch: אֶפֶד and אֶפֹּד; 4QExod-Lev^f and later texts (4QSam^a): אֶפֹּד.

MT-Pentateuch also preserves an unusual number of pre-exilic spellings, such as occasionally marking final *ō* with *he* (rather than the post-exilic extension of *waw* to this position); e.g. אֶהְיֶה “his

tent” in the *Ketiv* of Gen 9:21, 12:8, 13:3, and 35:21. There are also a smattering of late spellings in MT-Pentateuch, e.g., the occasional final *he* in the second masculine singular pronominal suffix: יְדִכָּה “your hand” (Exod 13:16); כְּמִכָּה “like you” (Exod 15:11); לְךָ “to you” (Gen 27:37).³² Generally, in orthography as well as substantive readings, the inner circle (see below) of proto-MT-Pentateuch is less expansionistic than the outer circle or the non-MT Pentateuchal texts. It is also less expansionistic, both in orthography and substantive readings, than the other sections of MT.

2.2.2.2 History of (Proto-)MT-Pentateuch

There are three general models of the history of (proto-)MT-Pentateuch.³³ The first, formulated by Eichhorn, and refined by de Lagarde, holds that MT derives from a particular textual family (Eichhorn) or a particular text (Lagarde; see below), which in turn descends from the textual original (*Urtext*).³⁴ The original text of the Pentateuch is loosely identified with Ezra’s סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה “scroll of the Torah of Moses” in Neh 8:1, which portrays events of the mid-fifth century B.C.E. The second model, formulated by Kahle, holds that MT derives from editorial efforts in the first century C.E. to create a standard version out of the plethora of “vulgar” texts in circulation at the time. A Pentateuchal *Urtext* of the fifth century B.C.E. is not excluded. Kahle argued that MT is itself a “kritischen Reduktion des Vulgärtextes,”³⁵ that is, a work of ancient textual criticism. A third model, which derives from Kahle’s,

³² On regularities and irregularities in MT spelling practices, see Barr, **Variable Spellings*; and A. Lange, “The Question of the So-Called Qumran Orthography, the Severus Scroll, and the Masoretic Text,” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 3 (2014): 424–75.

³³ Cf. the overviews in Lange, “Textual Standardization,” 31–45; Tov, “History,” 49–66; and B. Chiesa, *Filologia storica della Bibbia ebraica*, Vol. 2: *Dall’età moderna ai giorni nostri* (Brescia: Paideia, 2002), 420–26. Cf. also → 2.1.8; → 1.2.1. For another reconstruction of the textual history of the Pentateuch, see → 2.1.5.

³⁴ J.G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Vol. 2 (2nd improved and enlarged ed.; Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1787), 203 (cf. pp. 111 and 113); De Lagarde, **Anmerkungen*, 1–2.

³⁵ Kahle, **Untersuchungen*, 35–36.

³⁰ This error occurred prior to the consistent use of final letters in the post-Herodian era.

³¹ D.N. Freedman, “The Massoretic Text and the Qumran Scrolls: A Study in Orthography,” in Cross–Talmon, **QHBT*, 196–211.

was formulated by Talmon, who holds that MT is a written crystallization of one of many oral versions of the Pentateuch in circulation during the Persian period. In his view, “the process culminating in the practically total substitution of written transmission for oral tradition [occurred] toward the end of the Persian age.”³⁶ He holds that the variants in the ancient biblical texts stem from independent oral versions, and that there was no *Urtext* behind these textual crystallizations.

While each of these models is theoretically possible, and others are imaginable, the genealogical textual model of Eichhorn and Lagarde has gained currency in light of the data from the Qumran biblical texts. Against Kahle, there is no reason to regard MT-Pentateuch as the product of systematic editing.³⁷ Against Talmon, the variants among MT, the biblical Dead Sea scrolls, SP, and LXX are consistently analyzable as scribal errors or revisions, which are made while copying texts (as in the instances above), and are unlikely to stem from independent oral variants. There is no evidence in favor of Talmon’s theory of “multiple pristine texts.”³⁸

Lagarde, following the historical text-critical method of Karl Lachmann and others, observed that MT-Pentateuch has certain para-textual elements that allow us to trace its textual history into pre-medieval times. These features include the *puncta extraordinaria* (dotted letters and words) that are written in scrolls and codices. There are ten cases of dotted words in the Pentateuch and five in later books. Lagarde argued that such distinctive secondary features must ultimately derive from a single manuscript, since such a complex cluster of scribal features cannot have arisen independently in unrelated texts. He inferred that all exemplars of MT descend from a manuscript that he designated (after Lachmann’s usage) the “archetype of the Masoretic Text” (“archetypus des masoretischen textes”).³⁹ Noting that the scribal

dots are correction marks that mean “delete,” he wrote:

our Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament go back to one single exemplar, and have even reproduced as true corrections the correction [marks] of its scribal errors and taken over its random imperfections.⁴⁰

Lagarde maintained that the archetype of MT, viz., the first manuscript with this cluster of secondary features, existed in the first century C.E., primarily since these features are already known in rabbinic literature.

Another set of secondary features that can arguably be used to elucidate the history of MT-Pentateuch is the *qere perpetuum* in the Pentateuch in which הוּא (third person masculine singular pronoun) is the *Ketiv* and הִיא (third person feminine singular pronoun) is the *Qere*. This textual feature occurs around 120 times in the Pentateuch, versus eleven instances where הִיא is written correctly. This textual phenomenon is either: 1) a retention of a dialectal feature in which the old feminine singular independent pronoun was replaced by an epicene pronoun, הוּא; or 2) a systematic graphic confusion of *yod* and *waw* in a proto-MT Torah scroll or scrolls.⁴² Since the oldest proto-MT scroll, 4QLev-Num^a (early Hasmonean period; see below), twice correctly reads הִיא “she” where MT *Ketiv* is הוּא “he” (at Lev 14:44 and Num 5:6), it appears that a systematic graphic error subsequent to the Early Hasmonean period is the more likely solution. Cross has argued that this systematic graphic error stems from the script of the early Herodian period:

⁴⁰ De Lagarde, *Anmerkungen*, 2: “unsere hebräischen handschriften des alten testaments auf ein einziges exemplar zurückgehn, dem sie sogar die korrektur seiner schreibfehler als korrektur treu nachgeahmt und dessen zufällige unvollkommenheiten sie herübergenommen haben.”

⁴¹ Recently advocated by S.E. Fassberg, “The Kethiv/Qere הוּא: Diachrony, and Dialectology,” in *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (eds. C.L. Miller-Naudé and Z. Zevit; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 171–80.

⁴² So J.A. Emerton, “Was There an Epicene Pronoun *Hū* in Early Hebrew?” *JSS* 45 (2000): 267–76.

³⁶ Talmon, “Ancient Versions,” 393.

³⁷ Albrektson, “Reflections,” 47–62; Tov, *TCHB*, 174–80.

³⁸ See the critiques by Tov, *TCHB*, 163–67; Hendel, “Prologue,” 340–42; and Hendel, “Assessing,” 289–91.

³⁹ De Lagarde, *Anmerkungen*, 2.

TABLE 1 *Inner-Circle Proto-MT texts*

MasLev ^a	Early Herodian formal script (30–1 B.C.E.)	63 complete or partial words
MasDeut	Early Herodian formal script (30–1 B.C.E.)	68 complete or partial words
MasLev ^b	Middle Herodian formal script (1–30 C.E.)	457 complete or partial words
4QDeut ^g	Middle Herodian formal script (1–30 C.E.)	151 complete or partial words
XLev ^c	Late Herodian formal script (30–75 C.E.)	107 complete or partial words
XHev/SeNum ^b	Late Herodian formal script (30–75 C.E.)	95 complete or partial words
4QGen ^b	Late or post-Herodian formal script (50–100 C.E.)	358 complete or partial words
SdeirGen	Late or post-Herodian formal script (50–100 C.E.)	117 complete or partial words
MurGen-Exod-Num ^a	Post-Herodian formal script (75–125 C.E.)	260 complete or partial words

The most plausible explanation of this is that the manuscript or manuscripts copied for the Pentateuchal Recension was a manuscript in which *waw* and *yod* were not distinguished in the Jewish script. This occurs at only one time in the development of the Jewish scripts: in the Early Herodian Period (30–1 B.C.E.).⁴³

These two genealogical arguments, based on widespread innovations or *Leitfehler* (indicative errors, *errores significativi*) in the proto-MT-Pentateuch converge on the period that is illuminated by the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2.2.2.3 Proto-MT-Pentateuch: The Inner Circle

Tov has usefully distinguished between two categories of proto-MT texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls, an inner and an outer circle:

We should posit two types of Masoretic scrolls, an inner circle of proto-rabbinic scrolls that agree precisely with codex L and a second circle of scrolls that are very similar to it ... Most scrolls found at Qumran belong to this second circle, with only a few texts belonging to the first group. On the other hand, all the scrolls found at sites in the Judean Desert other than Qumran belong to the inner circle of proto-rabbinic scrolls.⁴⁴

⁴³ F.M. Cross, "The Stabilization of the Canon of the Hebrew Bible," in F.M. Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 219–29 (223).

⁴⁴ E. Tov, "The Text of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek Bibles Used in the Ancient Synagogues," in Tov, **HB, *GB, and Qumran*, 171–88 (176). On the distinctive character of the

Tov's distinction between the inner circle and outer circle of proto-MT texts corresponds to Lange's distinction between proto-Masoretic and semi-Masoretic texts.⁴⁵ Since proto-MT conventionally refers to all of the pre-medieval scrolls in this textual family, I will adopt Tov's terminology. I will, however, criticize Tov's use of the term "proto-rabbinic" (following Cross's usage) to designate the proto-MT family.⁴⁶

The criterion for determining the "inner circle" scrolls is relatively simple: they are scrolls that "differ from the medieval manuscripts no more than the latter differ among themselves."⁴⁷ The list in Table 1 includes only scrolls with more than fifty words.⁴⁸ These proto-MT Pentateuchal texts from the "inner circle" were written in Herodian or post-Herodian script, dating from ca. 30 B.C.E. to 125 C.E. The earliest are from Qumran and Masada. The later scrolls are from the Bar Kokhba caves at Murabba'at, Naḥal Hever, and Wadi Sdeir (probably including 4QGen^b and XLev^c).⁴⁹

Pentateuchal scrolls from Masada and the Bar Kokhba caves, see Young, **"Stabilization,"* 370–76.

⁴⁵ Lange, "Textual Standardization," 47; Lange, **Handbuch*, 16 and → 1.2.2.

⁴⁶ E.g., E. Tov, "The Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert: An Overview and Analysis," in Tov, **HB, *GB, and Qumran*, 128–54 (146–47); Cross, **"Fixation."*

⁴⁷ Tov, "Text of the Bible in Ancient Synagogues," 173.

⁴⁸ Word-counts are from Lange, **Handbuch*; other details are from the *editiones principes* in *DJD*. Lange agrees on the assignment of these scrolls to the inner circle/proto-MT (**Handbuch*, 16).

⁴⁹ According to Cross, the coarse and poorly prepared

The extant differences between the inner circle scrolls and our early MT codices are purely orthographic, with no substantive variants. The variants from the early MT codices MT^A, MT^L, MT^{C3}, MT^{S5}, and MT^V are as follows:

- Gen 1:15 למארת 4QGen^b [למאורת] (both meaning “as lights”) MT^L
- Lev 4:7 ישפוך MasLev^a [ישפך] (both meaning “he shall pour out”) MT^L, MT^{S5}, MT^V
- Lev 11:28 הםה MasLev^b [המה] (both meaning “they”) MT^L, MT^{S5}, MT^V
- Deut 33:19 ושפני MasDeut, MT^A, MT^{S5}, MT^V [ושפוני] (both meaning “covered”) MT^L

The differences in Gen 1:15, Lev 4:7, and Deut 33:19 are cases of plene versus *defectiva* spelling. The difference in Lev 11:28 is a different kind of orthographic variant: a final *mem* in medial position. This phenomenon occurs once in MT (למרבֿה “abundant,” Isa 9:6), but it is relatively frequent (ca. forty times) in the biblical Dead Sea scrolls.⁵⁰

Of these inner-circle proto-MT scrolls, only the longest, MasLev^b, has text that corresponds to the indicative errors that Lagarde or Cross adduce to approximate the date of the archetype of MT-Pentateuch. MasLev^b has two readings that overlap MT perpetual *Qere* of הוּא/הִיא “he/she.” At Lev 10:17 and possibly 11:6, MasLev^b reads הוּא “he,” agreeing with MT *Ketiv*.⁵¹ And at Lev 11:39, it agrees with MT *Ketiv* in reading הִיא “she,” one of the eleven correct readings of the third person feminine singular pronoun in the Pentateuch. The implications are notable. As Cross notes, the early Herodian script is the likely source for the *yod/waw* confusion in the third person feminine singular pronoun. MasLev^b, written in the middle Herodian script, is from the

leather of 4QGen^b suggests that it did not come from Qumran Cave 4 but from one of the other Judean Desert caves “and was inadvertently mixed with the Cave 4 manuscripts by the Bedouin,” apud J.R. Davila, “4QGen^b,” **QGD* XI: 31–38, 31. XLev^c, from the Schøyen Collection, may come from one of the Bar Kokhba caves; Lange, **Handbuch*, 77.

⁵⁰ Tov, **Scribal Practices*, 232–34.

⁵¹ At Lev 10:17, הוּא is a supralinear insertion.

era when a scribe would have had to disambiguate the script of an Early Herodian *Vorlage*. This scroll may be closely related to the MT archetype, but it is not identical to it; note the final *mem* in medial position at Lev 11:28 (above). MasLev^b may provide a partial view of the scribal origins of the MT archetype.

There are two other scrolls that Tov or Lange assign to the inner circle of proto-MT. Tov assigns MasGen (→ 2.2.1.8) to this group.⁵² MasGen is written in a Hasmonean semicursive script (ca. 150–50 B.C.E.) and preserves eleven complete or partial words. It is the oldest biblical scroll from Masada. If Tov’s assignment is correct, then MasGen would be to the earliest Pentateuchal scroll of this type. However, as Ulrich has observed, the variants argue against Tov’s (and previously Talmon’s) categorization.⁵³ In Gen 46:7–8, MasGen twice reads מצרים “Egypt” against MT’s מִצְרַיִם (with *he*-locale). The second of these agrees with a variant in the (lost) Severus Scroll, whose unusual readings are listed in some medieval texts (→ 2.2.5).⁵⁴ In Gen 46:8, MasGen reads את “with” preceding יעקוב “Jacob” against MT. Talmon reconstructs this phrase as את יעקוב [אביהם] “with Jacob [their father],” a reading reflected in Jub 44:11–12.⁵⁵ I note that this phrase, את יעקוב, occurs in 4QExod^b and LXX-Exod 1:1, where it is a scribal expansion of MT’s יַעֲקֹב. The reading in MasGen is arguably a harmonizing plus. In view of these substantive variants and their affinities, MasGen should probably be cat-

⁵² Tov, “Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert,” 135.

⁵³ E. Ulrich, “Two Perspectives on Two Pentateuchal Manuscripts from Masada,” in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (eds. S.M. Paul et al.; VTSup 94; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 453–64 (454–58).

⁵⁴ Talmon, **Masada VI*, 32, misstates the data; J.P. Siegel, *The Severus Scroll and 1QIsa^a* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 31; A. Lange, “The Severus Scroll Variant List in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity*, 22–24 February, 2011 (eds. M. Kister et al.; STDJ 113; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 179–207.

⁵⁵ Talmon, **Masada VI*, 33–34.

egorized as either an “outer circle” or a non-MT-type text.⁵⁶ In sum, this is the only Masada biblical scroll that probably does *not* belong to the inner circle of proto-MT. It is an outlier, which highlights the predominance of the inner circle of proto-MT-Pentateuch scrolls at Masada.

Lange assigns 4QDeut^c (→ 2.2.1.2.1) to this inner circle.⁵⁷ 4QDeut^c is another relatively early text, written in late Hasmonean formal script (ca. 50–25 B.C.E.), and it preserves 126 complete or partial words. However, it has a notable agreement with LXX in a secondary reading: בידך “into your hand” vs. לפניך “before you” (MT) in Deut 7:23, probably a harmonization with בידך in the following verse. This is not a large percentage of variation from MT, and hence it falls within Lange’s threshold of 2 percent variation from MT for inner-circle/proto-MT texts. However, it is a larger variation than exists among the early MT codices. This shared secondary reading with proto-LXX may be sufficiently weighty to exclude this text from the inner circle of proto-MT scrolls.

Another notable feature is the format of the inner-circle proto-MT scrolls. Tov observes that many scrolls belonging to the inner circle are what he calls “deluxe” scrolls, characterized by ample top and bottom margins (more than 3 cm) and long columns of text.⁵⁸ The inner-circle scrolls do not all feature fine workmanship and materials.⁵⁹ They do, however, conform to the later requirements in rabbinic literature for the vertical margins of single books of the Pentateuch: “in the Five Books, (the margin) below is three fingerbreadths, above is two fingerbreadths” (*b. Menah. 30a*).⁶⁰ It is possible

that all of the inner-circle MT-Pentateuch scrolls listed above conform to this standard. The only uncertain cases are MasLev^a and MasLev^b, whose extant margins are slightly less than 3 cm, but they are broken; and SdeirGen, which has no preserved top or bottom margins.

While there is a tendency for inner-circle scrolls to be deluxe scrolls, there is not a fixed correlation between format and text type. 4QpaleoExod^m and 4QSam^a also share this format, and they belong, respectively, to the proto-SP and the proto-LXX family. The oldest deluxe Pentateuchal scroll is an outer-circle proto-MT scroll, 4QpaleoGen-Exod^l (see below). Although ample vertical margins are only one indicator of textual status, the distribution of this format arguably indicates a high status for the inner-circle proto-MT scrolls from at least the early Herodian period.

2.2.2.4 Proto-MT-Pentateuch: The Outer Circle

The criteria for determining the outer circle of the proto-MT-Pentateuch (what Lange calls “semi-Masoretic”) are not well defined. Tov regards roughly half of the Qumran Pentateuchal scrolls as belonging to this category.⁶¹ However, as several scholars have noted, Tov’s method for determining textual affiliation is biased in favor of proto-MT.⁶² Moreover, his statistics rely predominantly on minor variants, which are not indicative of textual affinity. The only sure criteria to determine textual affinities are shared indicative errors or innovations. As Timpanero emphasizes, “only coincidence in error can indicate the kinship between two manuscripts.”⁶³ In textual transmission, there are many categories of error that are non-indicative, viz., those that scribes continually

⁵⁶ MurGen also has two orthographic variants: plene spelling of יעקוב (MT יַעֲקֹב) and a medial *kap* in final position (חנֹכ).

⁵⁷ Lange, *Handbuch*, 154.

⁵⁸ Tov, “Text of the Bible in Synagogues,” 176; Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 125–29.

⁵⁹ Compare the well-prepared leather of 4QDeut^s with the coarse and poorly prepared leather of 4QGen^b. On the characteristics of deluxe Greek papyrus scrolls, see W.A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 155–56.

⁶⁰ בחומשין מלמטה שלש אצבעות מלמעלה שתי אצבעות; cited in Talmon, *Masada VI*, 21–22.

⁶¹ Tov, “Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert,” 145.

⁶² J.C. VanderKam and P. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (San Francisco: Harper, 2002), 146; Lange, *Handbuch*, 15; Debel, “Variant Literary Editions,” 170; S. White Crawford, “Understanding the Textual History of the Hebrew Bible: A New Proposal,” in *The Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. N. Dávid et al.; FRLANT 239; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 60–69, 68.

⁶³ S. Timpanero, *The Genesis of Lachmann’s Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 89; see also Hendel, “Assessing,” 283–84.

TABLE 2 *Outer-Circle Proto-MT texts*

4QLev-Num ^a	Early Hasmonean formal script (150–100 B.C.E.)	1173 words/parts
4QGen-Exod ^a	Early Hasmonean formal script (125–100 B.C.E.)	929 words/parts
4QpaleoGen-Exod ^l	Hasmonean paleo-Hebrew script (100–30 B.C.E.)	804 words/parts

commit in all periods (graphic error, dittography, haplography, addition of conjunctive *waw*, etc.). Hence, only distinctive changes are reliable indicators of textual affinity.

The distinctive changes that characterize the proto-MT family in the Pentateuch against the other discernible textual families are (as listed above) the edition of the chronologies in Genesis 5 and 11; the expanded tabernacle text in Exodus 35–40; sequence changes in Gen 47:5–6 and Num 10:34–36; and theological revisions in Deut 27:4, 32:8, and 32:43. Unfortunately, there are no plausibly proto-MT texts (including the inner circle) that overlap with these innovations. We are left with the less exact criterion of non-agreement with distinctive features and indicative errors of the other textual families, proto-SP and proto-LXX.

Using this criterion, we can identify the scrolls listed in Table 2 with substantial text as belonging to the outer circle of the proto-MT-Pentateuch.⁶⁴

The evidence for affiliation is circumstantial: non-agreement with indicative errors in proto-SP and proto-LXX makes it likely – but not demonstrable – that they belong to the outer circle of the proto-MT-Pentateuch.

4QLev-Num^a (→ 2.2.1.7.10), as Jastram observes, has forty distinguishable variants, of which three are helpful for determining affiliation.⁶⁵ In Num 3:12 and Num 32:29–33 it lacks distinctive harmonizations shared by LXX and SP, and in Num 4:3 it lacks a distinctive harmonization with LXX. There are sufficient disagreements with MT to indicate that it does not belong to the inner circle of the proto-MT-Pentateuch. Among the disagreements,

it twice correctly reads שׁה “she” where MT has הוה “he” (at Lev 14:44 and Num 5:6). This is an interesting feature, since the distinctive *qere perpetuum* of MT may derive from the period after this scroll (see above).

4QGen-Exod^a (→ 2.2.1.1.1) lacks the distinctive proto-SP harmonizing pluses at Exod 6:9 and 7:18 (based on the reconstructed space) and it lacks several distinctive harmonizing pluses in LXX.⁶⁶ There are, again, numerous small disagreements with MT, placing it in the outer circle of proto-MT.

4QpaleoGen-Exod^l (→ 2.2.1.1.2) lacks the distinctive pluses of proto-SP at Exod 8:19; 10:2; and 26:35, and lacks three distinctive LXX readings in the tabernacle text at Exod 27:11.⁶⁷ It also has numerous small disagreements with MT, hence it does not belong to the inner circle of proto-MT-Pentateuch. There are two notable features of this early proto-MT scroll. As Tov observes, it is a deluxe scroll, indicated by ample vertical margins (see above). It is the earliest extant proto-MT Pentateuchal scroll in this format. Second, it is also the only identifiable proto-MT Pentateuchal scroll written in paleo-Hebrew. At some point, scribes transmitting proto-MT scrolls eschewed this script, perhaps as a counterpoint to the exclusive use of this script in SP.⁶⁸

The more fragmentary Qumran scrolls (viz., the vast majority) lack sufficient distinctive readings to identify them as outer circle proto-MT scrolls. For example, aside from 4QGen^b (addressed above), the fragmentary Genesis texts from Qumran Cave 4 that contain portions of Genesis 1 (viz., 4QGen^{d,g,h,k}) sometimes lack the distinctive

⁶⁴ Lange, **Handbuch*, 16, lists only 4QGen-Exod^a and 4QpaleoGen-Exod^l as semi-Masoretic Pentateuchal scrolls. As above, word-counts are from Lange, **Handbuch*.

⁶⁵ N. Jastram, “Numbers, Book of,” in **EDSS* 2:615–19 (616).

⁶⁶ J.R. Davila, “Text-Type and Terminology: Genesis and Exodus as Test Cases,” *RevQ* 16 (1993): 2–37 (10–12, 30–33).

⁶⁷ P. Skehan, E. Ulrich, and J.E. Sanderson, “11. 4QpaleoGen-Exod^l,” **DJD* 1X: 17–50 (23–25).

⁶⁸ See Cross, **“Fixation,”* 215.

features of the highly harmonized text of Genesis 1 in proto-LXX, but there is insufficient evidence to determine whether they belong to the proto-MT or proto-SP textual family. As a default position, Tov characterizes such texts as proto-MT.⁶⁹ But this decision masks our inability to make such determinations. Where we cannot ascertain the textual affinities of a scroll due to its fragmentary state, we should acknowledge the limits of our knowledge and describe it as “affiliation unknown.”

2.2.2.5 Who Promulgated the Inner Circle of the Proto-MT-Pentateuch?

Most textual critics have attributed the rise of the inner circle of proto-MT texts to the influence of the early rabbinic or Pharisaic sages. For instance, Tov writes, “the text that was carefully transmitted through the centuries was previously embraced by rabbinic circles.”⁷⁰ He therefore refers to the proto-MT family as “proto-rabbinic.” However, as Lange has recently argued, “whether the Pharisees played an important role in the development of the proto-Masoretic standard text during the early first century C.E. – maybe due to the influence of Hillel – remains doubtful.”⁷¹ As Lange correctly emphasizes, both Josephus and rabbinic texts indicate that “the Jerusalem temple played a key role in the process of textual standardization.”⁷² He concludes “that the standard text was created by priests in the Jerusalem temple.”⁷³ I would emphasize the agency of a particular scribal guild in promulgating the proto-MT-Pentateuch; but it is inferable that this guild was institutionally allied at some point with the Jerusalem temple and its priests.⁷⁴

Lange argues that “the Jerusalem priests employed the principle of majority readings to create

a standard text.”⁷⁵ This is a variant of Kahle’s model of the recensional origins of MT. However, Albrektson and Tov have cogently argued against the idea that the “standard text” was created by deliberate editorial activity.⁷⁶ The rabbinic narratives of Second Temple sages selecting among variant readings are probably etiologies for particular variants or unusual readings (including the eleven exceptions to the perpetual *Qere* of קרי/קריא) rather than reminiscences of ancient textual activity. Talmon aptly describes these tales as reflecting rabbinic discussions that are, in a sense, “a very early case of Masoretic-type notation ... [and] do not relate to the creation of a *textus receptus*.”⁷⁷ These tales serve to anchor rabbinic authority in the prestigious past of temple and Torah (see below).

In the Second Temple period, the high priest was generally the ruling authority, and the Jerusalem temple was the locus of priestly authority. This authority extended to sacred texts. Josephus, who proudly asserted his priestly lineage, held that, as Gray observes, “the physical care and transmission of sacred texts was a specifically priestly responsibility.”⁷⁸ According to Josephus, Moses handed over the books of the Torah to the priests, who ensured their accurate transmission (*Ant.* 4.304; *Ag. Ap.* 1.28–29). Moreover, according to Philo, the priestly authority over sacred texts extended to the synagogue. He writes: “Some priest who is present or one of the elders reads the Holy Law to them and expounds them point by point” (*Hypoth.* 7.13). It is plausible, as Goodblatt comments, that “Philo may indicate here a preference for a priestly reader while allowing a lay elder to teach if no priest is available.”⁷⁹ The Mishnah recalls a similar proce-

⁶⁹ Tov, “Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert,” 144.

⁷⁰ Tov, “Text of the Bible in Synagogues,” 175, 177.

⁷¹ Lange, “Textual Standardization,” 80.

⁷² Lange, “Textual Standardization,” 76. See also → 1.2.2.4.2.

⁷³ Lange, “Textual Standardization,” 79.

⁷⁴ The situation is more complicated for biblical books outside the Pentateuch, whose transmission history is more complex; see White Crawford, “Textual History,” 67; J. Trebolle-Barrera, “Qumran Evidence for a Biblical Standard Text and for Non-Standard and Parabiblical Texts,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in their Historical Context* (ed. T.H. Lim: London: Clark, 2000),

89–106 (89–100); E. Ulrich, “The Canonical Process, Textual Criticism, and Latter Stages in the Composition of the Bible,” in Ulrich, *DSS*, 51–78 (56–61).

⁷⁵ Lange, “Textual Standardization,” 79.

⁷⁶ See above, n. 21.

⁷⁷ S. Talmon, “The Three Scrolls of the Law that were Found in the Temple Court,” in Talmon, *Text*, 329–46 (336, 346).

⁷⁸ R. Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 54.

⁷⁹ D. Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 81.

dure: “A priest reads [the Torah] first, and after him a Levite, and after him an Israelite” (*m. Giṭ.* 5.8). The priests had textual authority in the Jerusalem temple and, so it seems, also in the synagogue, in theory if not always in practice. It may be relevant to note that in an early synagogue inscription, from the Theodotos synagogue of pre-70 C.E. Jerusalem, the benefactor identifies himself as a priest and the head of the synagogue, as were his father and grandfather before him.⁸⁰

It is plausible that the priests also exercised authority over the copyists of sacred books, whom Josephus calls ἱερογραμματεῖς, “sacred scribes.” If there were Torah scrolls at the Jerusalem temple, as Josephus and rabbinic texts indicate, then the copying of these scrolls was certainly under priestly authority.⁸¹ According to the Talmud, the “correctors” (מגהרים) of Torah scrolls in Jerusalem were paid by “Temple funds” (תרומת הלשכה) (*b. Ketub.* 106a; *y. Šeqal.* 4.48a). Tov observes that “most of the *soferim* whose genealogy is known were priests,”⁸² and Daniel Schwartz plausibly argues that many or most of the scribes were Levites or Sadducees.⁸³ These details and inferences indicate a link between the priests’ textual authority and the scribes’ textual activity.

However, the Jerusalem priests did not have textual power at Qumran, which defined itself as a breakaway sacred enclave, in contrast to the defiled Jerusalem priesthood. This split arguably accounts for the different profile of the biblical texts at Qumran versus the texts at Masada and the Bar Kokhba

caves. Since Qumran and Masada were both destroyed in the First Jewish Revolt, their comparison is salient. The occupants of Masada were originally the *Sicarii* (“dagger-men”) from Jerusalem, who were later joined by other refugees. The *Sicarii* were not priests, although one of their founders, Zadok, may have been a scion of a priestly family. These refugees carried their biblical scrolls to Masada, predominantly scrolls from the inner circle of proto-MT. The Qumran library, in contrast, has few inner-circle proto-MT texts, and probably only one from the Pentateuch. The Qumran community had a wide range of texts outside of this circle, including proto-SP and proto-LXX Pentateuchal scrolls. This textual contrast corresponds to a sociological contrast in the locus of textual authority. The Qumran enclave was outside of the textual authority of the Jerusalem priests, whereas the Masada group was, at least originally, within it.

Note that the Pharisees or proto-rabbis have no role in this historical model. Their religious authority was located elsewhere, perhaps as popular interpreters of law in the public domain, including matters of purity, marriage laws, calendar, and tithes.⁸⁴ But there is no warrant for assuming their authority in the production, dissemination, or public reading of Torah scrolls in the period from the Macabees to the Mishnah. According to rabbinic texts, some rabbinic sages were scribes (e.g., R. Meir), but this does not argue for proto-rabbinic authority over scribes. The earliest rabbinic text about the Torah scrolls in the temple court says that the “sages” (חכמים) made the textual decisions (*Sifre* 2.356), but this is what Albrektson calls “rabbinic embroidery” and cannot be relied on as historical evidence.⁸⁵ Torah scrolls in the temple court would have been textual icons of priestly authority. It is to be expected that the classical rabbinic texts would assert a memory of the sages’ ancient tex-

⁸⁰ L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 57–59.

⁸¹ See A. van der Kooij, “Preservation and Promulgation: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Textual History of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. N. David et al.; FRLANT 239; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 29–40.

⁸² Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 12.

⁸³ D.R. Schwartz, “Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites: Who are the ‘Scribes’ in the New Testament?” in D.R. Schwartz, *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity* (WUNT 60; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 89–101; cf. M. Goodman, “Texts, Scribes and Power in Roman Judaea,” in M. Goodman, *Judaism in the Roman World: Collected Essays* (AGJU 66; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 79–90.

⁸⁴ S.J.D. Cohen, “The Place of the Rabbi in the Jewish Society of the Second Century,” in S.J.D. Cohen, *The Significance of Yavneh and Other Essays in Jewish Hellenism* (TSAJ 136; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 282–96. Note that these include the areas of Jesus’ arguments with the Pharisees in the New Testament.

⁸⁵ Albrektson, “Reflections,” 54; and see above, n. 73.

tual authority, a historiographic *Tendenz* that Jacob Neusner and Shaye Cohen aptly call the “rabbinization of Jewish history.”⁸⁶

Who were the scribes who transmitted and promulgated the inner circle of the proto-MT-Pentateuch? We do not know. All we can say is that this was a relatively conservative group, whose scribal philosophy at some point narrowed to minimal intervention in the text. As noted above, the orthography of MT-Pentateuch preserves spelling practices of the third century B.C.E.; this may be the era when other kinds of textual change were curtailed in this scribal lineage. Another possibility is that a later scribal group used third-century Pentateuchal scrolls as model scrolls. Under either scenario, the third century B.C.E. may have been the *terminus ad quem* for substantive changes in the inner circle of the proto-MT-Pentateuch. (The only likely exception is the change of Gerizim to Ebal in MT-Deut 27:4, which, as noted above, is likely a sectarian revision from the Hasmonean era.⁸⁷) The correct readings in MT-Pentateuch, of course, stem from an earlier period, when the Pentateuch was compiled and made public, which returns us to the portrait of Ezra reading the Torah in Jerusalem in the fifth century B.C.E.

2.2.2.6 Value for Literary (Source) Criticism

Some text-critical features of MT-Pentateuch are valuable for discerning the earlier compositional history of the Pentateuch, particularly where proto-MT scribes found contradictions in the narrative. For example, two of the typological features noted above – the revision of chronologies in Genesis 5 and 11, and the sequence revision at Gen 47:5–11 – are exegetical responses to source-critical problems. The chronological revision in Genesis 5 was motivated by a contradiction between the date of the flood in P and the lifespans of three of Noah’s ancestors (Lamech, Methuselah, and Jared) in the סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת אָדָם “Book of the Generations of Adam”

(Gen 5:1), which was a source document of P.⁸⁸ The chronological revisions in proto-MT, proto-SP, and proto-LXX are independent attempts to solve what is, in origin, a source-critical problem within P: the overlap between the lifespans of three patriarchs and the onset of the flood.

The revision at Gen 47:5–6 in proto-MT is an attempt to overcome a problem of narrative continuity caused by the combination of J and P. The proto-LXX reading is arguably the superior text.⁸⁹ The following quote begins in verse 4, with Joseph’s brothers speaking. Pharaoh’s two speeches are marked by regular and bold italics.

LXX

ⲱ And the brothers said to Pharaoh ... “Now let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “*Let them dwell in the land of Goshen, and if you know that there are capable men among them, appoint them as overseers of my livestock.*” ⲱ And Jacob and his sons came into Egypt to Joseph, and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, heard. And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, “*Your father and your brothers have come to you. See, the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best land.*”⁹⁰

MT

And the brothers said to Pharaoh ... “Now let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” And Pharaoh said to Joseph, saying, “*Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you; in the best land settle your father and your brothers. Let them dwell in the land of Goshen, and if you know that there are capable men among them, appoint them as rulers of my livestock.*”

The revision in MT eliminates the problem of discontinuity by two revisions: a) erasing the second coming of Jacob and his sons, which comes from the P source (יבאו יעקב ובניו מצרימה אל יעקב וישמע) פרעה “And Jacob and his sons came into Egypt to Jacob, and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, heard”); and b)

⁸⁶ S.J.D. Cohen, “Parallel Historical Tradition in Josephus and Rabbinic Literature,” in Cohen, *Significance of Yavneh*, 154–61 (158–59).

⁸⁷ See above, n. 23.

⁸⁸ See above, n. 21.

⁸⁹ See, e.g., J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2nd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1930), 497–98.

⁹⁰ Translation adapted from R.J.V. Hiebert, “Genesis,” in **NETS*, 1–42 (39).

combining into one Pharaonic speech what were originally two speeches, one from J and the other from P. A corroborating clue for the secondary recombination of sources in MT is the Pentateuchal doublet, אֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן “the land of Goshen” (J) and אֶרֶץ רַעַמְסֵס “the land of Rameses” (P; see Gen 47:11), which is consistent in the LXX reading but not in MT. The restructured text in MT is an exegetical response to a problematic source-critical “seam” in the Pentateuch.

As these examples show, the textual history of MT-Pentateuch is in some measure a consequence and continuation of the Pentateuch’s literary history. These late literary interventions – after the separation of the proto-LXX and proto-MT textual families – show that the proto-MT scribes were, in Talmon’s sense, “minor partner[s] in the variegated aspects of the literary process.”⁹¹

Albrektson, B., “Reflections on the Emergence of a Standard Text of the Hebrew Bible,” in Albrektson, *Text, 47–62.

Barthélemy, D., “The Different Forms of the Hebrew Text,” in Barthélemy, *Studies, 237–409.

Hendel, R., “Assessing the Text-Critical Theories of the Hebrew Bible after Qumran,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. T.H. Lim and J.J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 281–302.

Khan, G., *A Short Introduction to the Masoretic Hebrew Bible and its Reading Tradition* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2012).

Lange, A., “‘They Confirmed the Reading’ (י. Ta’an. 4.68a): The Textual Standardization of Jewish Scriptures in the Second Temple Period,” in Lange et al., *From Qumran to Aleppo, 29–80.

Tov, E., “The History and Significance of a Standard Text of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, Vol. 1: *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300)*: Part 1: *Antiquity* (ed. M. Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 49–66.

Tov, E., “The Text of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek Bibles Used in the Ancient Synagogues,” in Tov, *HB, GB, and Qumran, 171–88.

Ulrich, E., “The Old Testament Text and Its Transmission,” in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From*

the Beginnings to 600 (eds. J.C. Paget and J. Schaper; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 83–104.

White Crawford, S., “Scribal Traditions in the Pentateuch and the History of the Early Second Temple Period,” in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (ed. M. Nissinen; VTSup 148; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 167–84.

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2.2.3 Other Texts

This article approaches those ancient Pentateuchal manuscripts that do not align with MT from a genealogical perspective. For a description of the individual Pentateuch scrolls, see Lange, *Handbuch, and entry → 2.2.1.

2.2.3.1 Problems of Classification

There are many possible ways to classify ancient Hebrew manuscripts of the Pentateuch. For instance, one could use the following criteria, which would generate a series of intersecting classifications:

paleo-Hebrew script vs. square script; iron-based vs. carbon-based ink; papyrus vs. parchment scroll; Qumran orthography vs. conventional orthography; excerpted or abbreviated book; contains more than one book; has unique readings; has affinities with the Samaritan Pentateuch or Septuagint; has top and bottom margin of more than three centimeters; includes interlinear corrections; copied by the same scribe as 4QTestimonia; is unpublished

Each of these criteria has been used to good purpose in scholarly studies.¹

For any particular classificatory task, one must identify the relevant criteria for classification and eliminate the irrelevant ones; otherwise the results

¹ For many of these criteria, see Tov, *Scribal Practices; A. Yardeni, *The Book of Hebrew Script: History, Palaeography, Script Styles, Calligraphy & Design* (London: British Library, 2002); E. Tigchelaar, “In Search of the Scribe of 1QS,” in *Emanuel: Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (eds. S.M. Paul et al.; VTSup 94; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 439–52.

⁹¹ Talmon, *New Outlook, 84.