

Reconsidering 4Q24 (4QLeviticus^b):

Two Manuscripts and a New Fragment

1. The Edition of 4Q24 (4QLev^b)

In 1994, all the then identified Qumran Cave 4 manuscripts of Genesis to Numbers written in square Hebrew script were published in the official series Discoveries in the Judaean Desert.¹ The publication of those manuscripts had originally been assigned to Frank Moore Cross. He, however, entrusted the majority of the manuscripts he had been working on to Eugene Ulrich.² In his work on the fragments in the 1950s Cross had organized the Leviticus fragments into four groups or manuscripts, which he called “4QLev^a [=4QNum^a],” “4QLev^b,” “4QLev^c,” and “4QLev^d,” but in the case of “4QLev^d” one museum plate (Mus. Inv. 197) was tagged as “4QLev^d” and the other (Mus. Inv. 198) as “4QLev^d (?)”.³ In his 1989 progress report, Ulrich simply refers to four Leviticus manuscripts, 4QLev-Num^a and 4QLev^b assigned to himself, and 4QLev^c and 4QLev^d to Emanuel Tov.⁴ Five years

¹Eugene Ulrich, Frank Moore Cross, James R. Davila, Nathan Jastram, Judith E. Sanderson, and Emanuel Tov, *Qumran Cave 4, VII: Genesis to Numbers (DJD 12; Oxford, 1994)*. Henceforth: *DJD 12*. The transcriptions by Ulrich in his *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants (VTS 134; Leiden, 2010)* and in Robert A. Kugler and Kyung S. Baek, *Leviticus at Qumran: Text and Interpretation (VTS 173; Leiden, 2017)* are dependent on the *DJD* edition.

²Eugene Ulrich, “The Biblical Scrolls from Qumran Cave 4: A Progress Report of their Publication,” *RevQ* 14/54 (1989), pp. 207-228, at p. 213.

³In J. T. Milik et al., “Le travail d’édition des fragments manuscrits de Qumrân,” *RB* 63 (1956), pp. 49-67, Cross refers to “trois [mss] du Lévitique, deux des Nombres” (56), perhaps including 4QLev-Num^a as one of the two Numbers ones.

⁴Ulrich, “Progress Report,” p. 215.

later, in the *DJD* 12 edition, Tov published the fragments that Cross had grouped together as 4QLev^d as deriving from three distinct manuscripts which Tov designated as 4Q26 (4QLev^d), 4Q26a (4QLev^e), and 4Q26b (4QLev^g).⁵ Indeed, these three “manuscripts” are clearly different both materially and palaeographically. It is therefore hard to imagine that Cross would have considered the fragments on Mus. Inv. 197 and 198 to have derived from one single manuscript, even though they all have a transitional, late-Hasmonean to early Herodian hand.⁶

In the case of 4Q24, Ulrich adopted the grouping of Cross, who had labelled the fragments on Mus. Inv. 1077-1079 all as 4QLev^b.⁷ In the introduction to the edition, Ulrich calls attention to the fact that frags. 1-8 derive from the first two columns of the scroll, and cover the very beginning of Leviticus (1:11-3:14), whereas frags. 9-25 constitute “three contiguous columns from much later in the manuscript,” covering Lev 21:17-24:23.⁸ In fact, frags. 26-28 (as well as the newly identified fragment to be presented below) preserve text from Lev 25:28-52 which would derive from the column after these three contiguous columns, so that all identified fragments⁹ can be placed in two large

⁵*DJD* 12, pp. 193-204.

⁶In the *DJD* editions, Tov does not supply palaeographical descriptions. Armin Lange, *Handbuch der Textfunde vom Toten Meer*, Band 1: *Die Handschriften biblischer Bücher von Qumran und der anderen Fundorten* (Tübingen, 2009), pp. 71-72 characterizes the script of 4Q26 as Herodian, of 4Q26a as early Herodian, and of 4Q26b as late Hasmonaeon-early Herodian. I would be inclined to qualify, according to the typology of Cross, the hands of all three manuscripts as transitional from what Cross describes as late Hasmonaeon to early Herodian.

⁷Edition of 4Q24 in *DJD* 12, pp. 177-187. The three museum plates have tags mentioning the plate numbers (C13a, C13b, and C13c) as well as the contents, in all three cases: 4QLev^b.

⁸*DJD* 12, p. 177. I am not aware of any subsequent independent work on 4Q24 as a manuscript.

⁹*DJD* 12, p. 187 gives two unidentified fragments (frags. 29-30), while four more unpublished and unidentified fragments have been associated with 4Q24 on PAM 43.157, and are now placed at the bottom of Plate 1077 (cf. www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-371166 frags. 6, 8, 9, and 10). These one might provisionally number frags. 31-34 from right to left. For the

blocks, one from the very beginning of the book of Leviticus (block A), and the other from four columns close to its end (block B).

Ulrich reports some minor differences between the blocks. The leather was “apparently not well-prepared,”¹⁰ and especially many of the fragments from block B have deteriorated. However, “it is not clear whether the deterioration, especially of these latter fragments, is due to inadequate preparation or to unusually severe subsequent damage.”¹¹ In block A the distance between the tops of the lines is about 0.6 cm, and in block B it differs from 0.6-0.9 cm. In block A, the normal range of letters per line is 60-69, and in block B 65-75. Such small variations can be expected in large scrolls. The same holds true for other differences not recorded in the edition. In block A the size of normal-sized letters wavers between 2.2 and 3.0 mm, and in block B they are very slightly smaller, between 2.0 and 2.8 mm. The variation is somewhat larger in the case of the margins. In frag. 8 (block A) the upper margin of the scroll measures 1.8 cm, and at the left of 9 ii (block B) 2.5-2.6 cm.¹² Ulrich also reports that in block B the column with frag. 9 i had forty-one lines, while the first column (block A) possible also had forty-one lines. However, this latter calculation is based on the assumption that the manuscript lacked about seven lines of text which are present in the other textual witnesses: “the *Vorlage* had an abbreviated text or [...] the scribe may have

identification of frag. 29 see below.

¹⁰*DJD* 12, p. 177.

¹¹*DJD* 12, p. 177.

¹²The same measurements are given by Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts from the Judean Desert* (*STDJ* 54; Leiden, 2004), p. 103. Small differences may appear from sheet to sheet in a scroll. For example, on the whole the sheets of 1QIsa^a are ruled very similarly, but the sheets ending with col. 11 and beginning with col. 12 are ruled differently (compare also cols. 30 and 31). See the variations adduced by Tov, pp. 102-103.

skipped some text.”¹³ Altogether, one gets the impression of a largely homogeneous scroll, with only small variations between the two different blocks. According to Ulrich, such small variations also occur in the script: “The manuscript was written in a late Hasmonaean hand ... Final letters are sometimes larger than their corresponding medial forms. *Reš* is sometimes very narrow (...), but usually broad in final position.”¹⁴

2. The Palaeography of 4Q24

The palaeographical descriptions in this *DJD* volume are often very brief, or even nonexistent, even though the introduction to the volume proposes that paleographical descriptions of the manuscripts are based primarily on the programmatic study of Frank Moore Cross, and will refer to specific information, as, for example: (Cross, p. 137, Fig. 1, Line 3).¹⁵ Such a reference is lacking in the introduction to 4Q24, and, except for the reference to the *reš*, no details or examples are given. No information is given about the clear and manifold differences between the scripts of block A and block B, differences which can be seen in the plates in the edition,¹⁶ but which are even more observable in the images available on the Israel Antiquities Authority’s Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library.¹⁷ The visual dissimilarity between the scripts of block A and block B is in part due

¹³*DJD* 12, p. 177; cf. also p. 181.

¹⁴*DJD* 12, p. 177.

¹⁵*DJD* 12, p. 3.

¹⁶But since the fragments of block A (Pl. XXXI) and those of block B (Pls. XXXII-XXXIV) are not printed on facing pages, the reader has to flip the pages in order to compare them.

¹⁷www.deadseascrolls.org.il.

to the pen that was used for the two parts, the one in block A with a thicker nib than the one in block B. However, also in the execution of the forms of the letters, there are clear distinctions.¹⁸

A general feature is that in the block A the writing is more square and angular.¹⁹ Most letters—with the exception of the *lamed*, final letters, the *kap* and the *qof*—fit nicely in between the ruling-line and the virtual baseline, and tend to have sharp angles where vertical and horizontal strokes connect. One should preferably zoom in on 4Q24 frag. 1²⁰ to recognize this angular feature, where even, the two strokes forming the head of *pe* (in frag. 1 בכנפיו) are angular (see figure 1). In contrast, in the script in block B (see sample in figure 2) there is some more variation in the size of the letters. The *alef* often will not reach to the virtual base-line, while the medial *mem* is larger than most letters and will as a rule extend below the base-line. Even more general, the letters in block B tend to have rounded forms where those in block A are more angular. This very visible distinction between more angular versus more rounded affects the appearance of many letters. For example, in the *bet* in block B the downstroke curves into the basestroke, whereas in block A the downstroke of *bet* goes down vertically, after which a separate basestroke is written.

In this case, but also in many other letters, the distinction between the forms of the letters corresponds to the typological development which Cross has proposed for the Hasmonaean

¹⁸Since this paper mainly aims to reconsider the relation between block A and block B, I will not discuss, but only point out that within block A the execution of the writing in frag. 8 is not entirely similar to that in frags. 1-7. However, typologically, the hand in all these fragments belongs to the same type, and one might allow for the same scribe to have written both frags. 1-7 and 8.

¹⁹This is true even more for frags. 1-7 than for frag. 8.

²⁰See <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-368070>. Cf. also the binarized-processed image in figure 1. Thanks are due to Maruf A. Dhali at the University of Groningen for binarizing these images.

script.²¹ The script of block B still has many letters that display what Cross referred to as the early Hasmonaean hand, though the same letters sometimes also have samples that are closer to the later hand. The script of block A, in contrast, has indeed, as reported by Ulrich, the appearance of Cross's late Hasmonaean hand. With many letters in 4Q24 one can find individual samples that are identical in both blocks. However, where there is variation in the letters, block B will consistently have more earlier, and block A more later forms.

With respect to individual letters, some characteristic examples should suffice. The *alef* in block A usually has a left leg which extends to the baseline, generally to the same height as the bottom of the diagonal stroke. Such forms do also occur in block B (and one can therefore find examples of *alef* which are identical in both blocks), but in block B one also finds many examples where the left leg is considerably shorter (e.g., 9 i 1 מִקְרָאִי). In final position, the left stroke of *alef* in block B often tends to be horizontal, a feature known from the archaic script (e.g., 9 ii 2 הִיא [see figure 2] occasionally also in non-final position as in אֵל in 9 i 25). As noted, the downstroke of the medial *mem* in block B often extends below the virtual base-line, while the diagonal is drawn downward to the left, often to the base-line. In block A the medial *mem* has a smaller size and the left diagonal is drawn sloping slightly downwards to almost horizontal. Typical of block B are the sometimes very narrow *dalet* and *reš* (extremely narrow *reš* is found in, e.g., 9 i 29 יִקְרִיב and 31

²¹As presented in Frank Moore Cross, "The Development of the Jewish Scripts," in G. E. Wright (ed.) *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (Garden City, NY, 1961), pp. 133-202; repr. with some revisions in *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy* (HSS 51; Winona Lake, IN, 2003), pp. 3-43; see also Cross, "Palaeography and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1998), pp. 379-402.

תקריבו; also mentioned by Ulrich), even though some broader forms are found; in block A there are some cases of narrow *reš*, but never so narrow as in block B, and more often they are broad.

In sum, the fragments of these two blocks are written differently, both with regard to general style and individual letter forms. Also, these differences represent, if one follows Cross's typology, different developmental stages of the Hasmonaean script.²² Roughly speaking, block A (4Q24 frags. 1-8) is written in a late Hasmonaean, or even transitional to early Herodian hand, while block B (4Q24 frags. 9-30) is early Hasmonaean.

How should one explain a manuscript with two clearly different hands? Some scrolls are written by two or more different hands, or in different styles of writing, sometimes even typologically from different periods.²³ In all of these cases, there is no doubt that the different hands were written on one and the same artefact, since the change of hand generally is attested on one and the same fragment or column.

In the case of 4Q24, however, the manuscript is a scholarly and editorial construct, apparently prompted by the general material and scribal correspondences between the fragments, but not supported by a palaeographical analysis. Hypothetically, block A might be the remains of a repair sheet to the scroll to which block B belonged. One must then also hypothesize, with the editor, that a substantial section of Lev 3 got lost at the end of the first column. We need to empha-

²²As described specifically in Cross, "Development," pp. 166-173 (in 2003 reprint: 27-31).

²³To my knowledge, the most extensive list with some discussion is to be found in Tov, *Scribal Practices*, pp. 21-22. One should, contra Tov, not include 1QIsa^a. Also, there are other examples, not listed by Tov, such as 4Q177 (see frag. 12).

size, though, that there is no evidence that 4Q24 1-8 and 4Q24 9-30 ever belonged to one and the same scroll, and the assumption that we have here the remnants of two manuscripts, written in two different hands, one preserving the beginning of Leviticus, the other a section of the last part of the book, is much more plausible.

3. Two Manuscripts, 4Q24a and 4Q24b

It remains unclear why Cross labelled all these fragments together as 4QLev^b, in spite of their palaeographic differences. We may refer to the editorial tasks of the 1950s, where the overall arrangement of many thousands of fragments belonging to hundreds of manuscripts was more important than the task to decide whether a group of fragments that represented one and the same composition should ultimately be ascribed to one or more manuscripts. One may also note that though Cross expertly identified and arranged these 4Q24 fragments, there is no evidence that he was particularly concerned with these fragments, or, for that matter, with the Leviticus manuscripts at large. Given that the fragments in the two blocks perfectly correspond to his own (later) description of the typological development of the Hasmonaean script, he must have, or would have, recognized the differences, but simply was not concerned at the moment.

It is more plausible to construct two different manuscripts, than to uphold the hypothesis of one manuscript written in two different hands. If the decision to differentiate between two manuscripts had taken place at the beginning of the editorial process, one would have numbered these as 4Q24 and 4Q24a. However, since the number 4Q24 and the name 4QLev^b are now associ-

ated with the unlikely construct of the *DJD* edition, I propose, temporarily, to refer to these two manuscripts as 4Q24a (4QLev^{b1}) for block A, and 4Q24b (4QLev^{b2}) for block B, and not to change now the fragment numbers. Hence, I will refer to 4Q24 frag. 8 as 4Q24a frag. 8, and to 4Q24 frag. 27 as 4Q24b frag. 27.

For many scholars, this reconstruction of two 4QLev^b manuscripts rather than one, would mainly have a statistical impact, slightly affecting the numbers in the rankings of books found in the Judean Desert. However, there are more important implications. First, the typological dating of 4Q24b puts this manuscript in the second part of the second century BCE, typologically contemporary or only slightly later than our hitherto oldest Leviticus manuscript written in square characters, 4Q23 (4QLev-Num^a). Second, the differentiation of two manuscripts, rather than one, necessitates a new assessment of the textual alignment or the scribal practices of the manuscripts.²⁴ Third, an analysis of 4Q24a on its own right puts an end to the assumption of a loss of several lines of Lev 3:1-11.

More in general, the example of 4Q24 illustrates that all fragmentary manuscripts are scholarly constructs, and that scholarship should not approach these without further ado as data. Scholarly engagement with the scrolls should critically consider these constructs, rather than take them as ground truth.

²⁴For example, Tov, *Scribal Practices*, p. 92, includes, because of the 41-line column, 4Q24 in his list of scrolls with a large writing block and dates it with *DJD* 12 to the middle of the first century BCE. However, since this large writing block is attested in 4Q24b, this would be the third example of a large-block scroll from before the first century BCE, all three of which contain Leviticus. It remains likely that also 4Q24a was a large format scroll.

4. A Hitherto Unidentified 4Q24b Fragment

The photograph PAM 43.677, taken in July 1960 from Mus. Inv. 40, shows a collection of forty-three unidentified fragments that were published in 2001.²⁵ One of these fragments (frg. 37 in the *DJD* edition) was transcribed, but not identified by the editors.²⁶ They failed to recognize the early Hasmonaean forms of *bet* (with the downstroke still curving into the horizontal base) and *qof*, with very short tail, and confused these with *kaf* and *qof* respectively. Once the reading is corrected, the text can easily be identified as corresponding in three successive lines to Lev 25:44-46, while a survey of the images of Qumran Cave 4 Leviticus manuscripts immediately shows the palaeographic correspondences with the latter part of 4Q24b (4QLev^{b2}). One may transcribe the text of the fragment, which I provisionally number 4Q24b frag. 35, as follows:

תקנ]	1
ם אשר]	2
לעולם בה]	3

The fragment covers the same verses as 4Q24b frag. 27. If one would fit the text of PAM 43.677 frag. 37 (4Q24b 35) in the transcription of 4Q24b frag. 27,²⁷ then lines 2 and 3 of the former would corre-

²⁵Dana M. Pike and Andrew C. Skinner, *Qumran Cave 4, XXIII: Unidentified Fragments* (*DJD* 33; (Oxford, 2001), pp. 103-15, at p. 103; henceforth: *DJD* 33.

²⁶*DJD* 33, p. 113.

²⁷*DJD* 12, p. 186.

spond with lines 1 and 2 of the latter. However, if one rearranges the fragments, by placing 4Q24b frag. 27 more towards the left of the column, then the lines of the fragments align.

In addition, the small fragment 29, unidentified in the *DJD* edition, joins physically to the left of frag. 27 lines 2-3. See the transcription of 4Q24b frag. 35 (double underlined), 27 (no underline), and 29 (single underlined) lines 1-3:

[אשר סביבותיכם מהם] <u>תקנ</u> [ו עבד ואמה ⁴⁵ וגם מבני התושבים הגרי] ם עמכם מה [ם תקנו]	1
[וממשפחתם אשר עמכ] ם <u>אשר</u> [הולידו בארצכם והיו לכם לאחוז] ה ⁴⁶ ו {ת} נחלתם אתם לְבָנֵיכֶם	2
[אחריכם לרשת אחזה] <u>לעולם</u> בה [ם תעבדו ובאחיכם בני י] שראל איש באחיו לא תר [דה בו]	3

In frag. 35, 4Q24b reads לעולם against לעלם (Masoretic text) and with לעולם of the Samaritan Pentateuch (Shekhem MS 6). This would seem to agree with the observations of Ulrich who argued that when MT and SP differ, 4Q24 usually has the fuller spelling.²⁸ However, Ulrich's statement applies especially to 4Q24a and less to 4Q24b. Unfortunately, line 1 only contains the letters תקנ, where MT reads תקנו and SP Shekhem MS 6 תקנהו.

In the *DJD* edition, Ulrich reads in 4Q24b frag. 27 line 2 וְהִנְחַלְתֶּם, whereas both MT and SP have וְהִתְנַחַלְתֶּם, and records that this reading וְהִנְחַלְתֶּם corresponds with LXX καὶ καταμεριεῖτε.²⁹ However, the remaining downstroke after ן and before נחלתם does not at all have the stance and form of the right part of *he*, but of *waw* or the right part of *taw*. The available space suggests *taw*, rather than *waw*. What seems to be the abrasion of part of the letter, is more likely an intentional

²⁸*DJD* 12, p. 177.

²⁹*DJD* 12, p. 187.

erasure, resulting in the intended reading וּנְחַלְתֶּם (either *qal* or, more likely, *pi'el*). It is not clear what prompted the scribe to write originally a *taw* here. The LXX's use of *καταμερίζω* cannot be taken as supporting וְהִנְחַלְתֶּם, since this rarely used verb renders in Num 32:18; 34:29; Deut 19:3 *hit-pa'el*, *pi'el*, and *hif'il* respectively.

