

David, the “Ruler of the Sons of His Covenant” (מֹשֶׁל בְּרִיתוֹ): The Expansion of Psalm 151 in 11QPs^a

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Since 1965, there has been great debate concerning the provenance of the Great Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a). Building off recent analyses by Strawn and Debel, this article argues that Psalm 151A contains the sectarian phrase “sons of his covenant,” which was added to the psalm as part of its Qumranic revision. This puts into question Flint’s position that the 11QPs^a-Psalter tradition had a provenance prior to the establishment of the Qumran community. In its final pages, the article examines some of the implications of its findings, particularly concerning the redactional history of Psalm 151, and how one might interpret Psalm 151A in light of its expansions.

KEYWORDS: *Psalm 151, 11QPs^a, Great Psalms Scroll, sectarian terminology, provenance*

In 1965, James Sanders published the first edition of the “Great Psalms Scroll” of Cave 11 (11QPs^a), and in a number of essays following that publication, outlined his theory concerning the scroll’s provenance and scriptural status.¹ The scroll has been dated to ca. 30–50 A.D., and is the largest psalm collection to be found at Qumran.² The contents of the scroll include a large portion of psalms from Books IV–V in the

1. James A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11 (11QPs^a) (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert IV)*; Oxford: Clarendon, 1965); idem., *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967); idem., “*Variorum* in the Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a),” *HTR* 59 (1966): 83–94; idem., “Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon,” *McCormick Quarterly Review* 21 (1968): 1–15; idem., “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) Reviewed,” in *On Language, Culture, and Religion: In Honor of Eugene A. Nida* (ed. M. Black and W. A. Smalley; The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 79–99.

2. Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (STDJ 17; Leiden: Brill 1997), 39.

Received Psalter (Pss. 90–150), but arranged in a different sequence and alongside a number of non-biblical psalms. Sanders’s initial proposals continue to be the objects of much debate in the discussion surrounding 11QPs^a. Since the broad lines of that discussion are well known, a comprehensive summary is hardly needed here. To refresh memory, though, a brief summary of those lines pertinent to the concerns of this article will be given.³

THE GREAT 11QPS^A DEBATE

Peter Flint has helpfully summarized and organized Sanders’s proposals into four theses, entitling them the “Qumran Psalms Hypothesis”:

- (1) Concerning *Gradual Stabilization*: 11QPs^a witnesses to a Psalter that was being gradually stabilized, from beginning to end.
- (2) Concerning *Textual Affiliations*: Two or more Psalters are represented among the scrolls discovered in the Judean Desert.
- (3) Concerning *Provenance*: 11QPs^a was compiled at Qumran, and thus may be termed the “Qumran Psalter.”
- (4) Concerning *Status*: 11QPs^a contains the latter part of a true scriptural Psalter. It is not a secondary collection that is dependent on Pss 1–150 as found in the Received Text (MT-150).⁴

The implications of these theses are inherently significant, since taken together they posit a book of Psalms which did not have a fixed form until the first century A.D. Given their importance, Sanders’s proposals

3. For such a summary, and to see some of the major differences in content between the MT-150 and 11QPs^a, see Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*; cf. Gerald Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); idem., “The Qumran Psalms Scroll Reconsidered: Analysis of the Debate,” *CBQ* 47 (1985): 624–42.

4. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 8.

have been met with mixed reactions.⁵ Leading figures such as Shemaryahu Talmon, M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, and Patrick Skehan have argued that 11QPs^a is a secondary psalms compilation, originating within the Qumran community as the product of a liturgical reordering of the MT-150, and, therefore, does not represent a true, scriptural Psalter. It was “a scroll used and useful in the life of the Community, probably for liturgical purposes, and thus a liturgical manuscript, but not a copy—in the text-critical sense—of the *Book of Psalms*.”⁶

Even though Sanders was arguing against formidable opponents, his views continued to garner support and by the 1980s something of an impasse was reached.⁷ Through the publication of a monograph and several articles by G. H. Wilson, Sanders’s position was further refined and given new fodder.⁸ In the current state of the field, the strongest argument related to Sanders’s above proposals has been given by Flint, beginning with his 1998 monograph.⁹ Refining the earlier proposals of

5. Shemaryahu Talmon, “Pisqah Be’emša’ Pasuq and 11QPs^a,” *Textus* 5 (1966): 11–21; M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, “The Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a): A Problem of Canon and Text,” *Textus* 5 (1966): 22–33; Patrick Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” *CBQ* 34 (1973): 195–205; idem, “Jubilees and the Qumran Psalter,” *CBQ* 37 (1975): 343–47; idem, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” in *Qumrân: Sa piété, sathéologie et son milieu* (BETL 46; ed. M. Delcor; Paris: Leuven University Press, 1978): 163–82; idem, “The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint,” *BIOSCS* 13 (1980): 14–44. Further dissenters include: Menaham Haran, “The Two Text-Forms of Psalm 151,” *JJS* 39 (1988): 171–82; idem, “11QPs^a and the Canonical Book of Psalms,” in *Minhah le-Nahum* (ed. M. Brettler and M. Fishbane; JSOTSup 154; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 193–201; Ben Zion Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter: 11Q Psalms^a,” *HUCA* 59 (1988): 23–72; Emanuel Tov, “Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts from Qumran,” *RevQ* 16 (1995): 581–600; Ulrich Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption im Frühjudentum: Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Struktur und Pragmatik der Psalmenrolle 11QPs^a aus Qumran* (STDJ 49; Leiden: Brill, 2003); Brent Strawn, “David as One of the ‘Perfect of (the) Way’: On the Provenience of *David’s Compositions* (and 11QPs^a as a Whole?),” *RevQ* 24 (2010): 607–27.

6. Strawn, “Perfect of (the) Way,” 610.

7. Peter W. Flint, “Unrolling the Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. William P. Brown; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 233.

8. Gerald Wilson, *Editing*; cf. idem., “The Qumran Psalms Scroll Reconsidered”; idem., “The Qumran Psalms Manuscripts and the Consecutive Arrangement of Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 377–88; idem., “The Qumran *Psalms Scroll* (11QPs^a) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial Shaping,” *CBQ* 59 (1997): 448–64.

9. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*; cf. idem., “Of Psalms and Psalters: James Sanders’s Investigation of the Psalms Scrolls,” in *A Gift of God in Due Season: Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders* (ed. Richard D. Weis and David M. Carr;

Sanders and Wilson, he argues that one should not speak of a Qumranic provenance for 11QPs^a; rather, it is better to recognize at least three major Psalter traditions existing contemporaneously *before* the Qumran period.¹⁰ He calls these traditions *Edition I*, *Edition IIa*, and *Edition IIb*.

In his proposal, Flint argues that two secondary Psalter traditions were stabilized in a two-stage process from a pre-existing Psalter tradition (*Edition I*), which included only Pss 1/2–89/92.¹¹ Expanding on this first edition, *Edition IIa* (the “11QPs^a-Psalter”) added the texts most fully attested in 11QPs^a, which includes *Edition I* plus Pss 101–151, and at least Ps 93.¹² For Flint, there are at least two other scrolls in the Judaean desert which evidence this edition of the Psalter: 11QPs^b and (possibly) 4QPs^c.¹³ At the same time, he finds no evidence that this edition was compiled by the Qumran community, but that it most likely came into existence among Jewish sects who advocated a solar calendar in a period *prior* to that of Qumran (early 2nd cent. B.C.). Moreover, given this provenance, the 11QPs^a-Psalter must have had widespread use in early Judaism, far beyond the communities at Qumran.

The second secondary edition of the Psalter, *Edition IIb*, originated contemporaneously with *Edition IIa*, prior to the Qumran period.¹⁴ This edition, however, was used in communities advocating a lunar calendar.¹⁵ Differing from *Edition IIa*, it expands *Edition I* by including Pss 90–150, and is most fully represented by the Received Text (MT-150). Further evidence of its existence is found at Masada (*MasPs^b*)

JSOTSup 225; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 65–83; idem, “The Book of Psalms in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *VT* 48 (1998): 453–72.

10. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 150–71.

11. *Ibid.*, 168–69. Here, Flint only thinks *Edition I* included up to Psalm 89, but in “Unrolling” he has opened up the possibility that it could have included up to Psalm 92.

12. Flint, “Unrolling,” 240–41.

13. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 169; cf. idem, “11QPs^b and the 11QPs^a-Psalter,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic: Reading the Psalms in Real Time: proceedings of the Baylor Symposium on the Book of Psalms* (ed. Joel S. Burnett, W. H. Bellinger, Jr., and W. Dennis Tucker, Jr.; LHB/OTS 488; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 157–66. Key compositions (*Catena*, *Plea for Deliverance*, *Apostrophe to Zion*) and the sequence 141–133–144 show support in 11QPs^b, with possible support in 4QPse coming in the sequence 118–104–[147–]105–146.

14. Flint, “Unrolling,” 233.

15. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 169 n. 82, identifies one such group as the Pharisees.

and in the Septuagint translation(s).¹⁶ For Flint, in the caves surrounding Qumran, however, there is no *unambiguous* support for the MT-150.¹⁷ This raises a question about which Psalter edition had “scriptural status” at Qumran,¹⁸ and he gives his full support for the 11QPs^a-Psalter.¹⁹

EVALUATING FLINT’S ARGUMENT

In his 2010 article, “David as One of the ‘Perfect of (the) Way,’” Brent Strawn set out to investigate the possibility of sectarian terminology in one of the non-biblical texts included in 11QPs^a, *David’s Compositions*.²⁰ As part of his argument, he laid out several problem areas with Flint’s proposals. First, he wonders whether the evidence can bear the weight of

16. *Ibid.*, 170 n. 85. The exact date that the Old Greek (OG) of the Septuagint gained its shape is difficult to ascertain, though most scholars, following Swete, would date it ca. 200 B.C. In “Unrolling,” (240–41) Flint continues to attempt to create distance between the OG and the MT-150, not even mentioning it in his conclusion.

17. *Ibid.*, 170 n. 87. He identifies several scrolls with ambiguous support (that is, scrolls which could support either second edition): 1QPsa, 1QPsb, 2QPs, 4QPsl, 4QPsm, 4QPso, 4QPsp, 4QPsu, and 11QPsd. While most of these scrolls are ambiguous, the contents of 4QPsm, 1QPsa, and 2QPs seem quite unambiguous in their support of the MT-150, even if they are fragmentary. Moreover, several scrolls, though in partial disagreement with the MT-150, at least witness to a number of sequences which are present in the MT-150 against the 11QPs^a-Psalter. These include 4QPsb (the sequence of Pss. 91–103) and 4QPsf (the sequence Pss. 107–108–109). “Unambiguous” is not the best term to describe the textual support of the MT-150 at Qumran.

18. It should be noted that recent scholarship has delineated between “scriptural” in the sense of “canonical,” and “scriptural” in the sense of a functional and authoritative text within a community. There is significant debate concerning the canonical status of the Psalter during this period, and even if the term ‘canon’ is an appropriate description of any text prior to ca. 100 A.D. In this article, I am using the term ‘scriptural’ in the latter sense, of a functionally authoritative text within a community. For Flint, the question is which edition of the Psalter was functionally authoritative within the Qumran community?

19. *Ibid.*, 223–24, 227. In “Unrolling” (240–41), Flint also recognizes several other arrangements of psalms which he does not consider proper editions of the Psalter, but smaller collections (4QPsb, 4QPsd, 4QPsk, 4QPsn, and 11QapocPs).

20. The term “sectarian” is used in reference to texts, phrases, and terminology which have widespread reception and significance by the manuscripts found surrounding Qumran. Cf. Carol A. Newsom “‘Sectually Explicit’ Literature from Qumran,” in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (ed. B. Halpern, W. H. Propp, and D. N. Freedman; BJS 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 167–87.

Flint's argument.²¹ He summarizes Flint's argument as follows:

Because (a) a solar calendar was widely used in Early Judaism (witness *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*) and because (b) *11QPs^a* reflects that calendar (via *DavComp* especially), then it follows that (c) *11QPs^a* represents a psalter-type that was widely used in Early Judaism. If so, it further follows that (d) *11QPs^a* is far from a sectarian, "non-biblical" composition, secondary and inferior to the MT-150 Psalter. Instead it is a "true, Scriptural" Psalter reflective of one shape of the Psalms in Early Judaism.²²

For Strawn, the evidence from Qumran, Masada, and Nahal Hever cannot definitively establish the direct correlation between steps (a)–(b) and steps (c)–(d). In fact, at present there is no non-Qumranic evidence for the *11QPs^a*.²³ Even though Qumran shares a solar calendar with other Jewish sects, this does not make the use of that calendar or the use of *11QPs^a* any less sectarian; it only shows that the solar calendar was not the sole property of the Qumran community. Further evidence is needed to demonstrate that *11QPs^a* was used outside of the Qumran community, and as Strawn points out, such evidence is completely lacking.²⁴ Along these same lines, Strawn questions Flint's proposal that while the specific manuscript of *11QPs^a* was copied at the Qumran site, the tradition it represented was brought to the Qumran community from somewhere else.²⁵ Since such evidence is again completely lacking, he concludes that Flint's proposal is "entirely speculative" and is "almost entirely a matter of conjecture."²⁶

21. Strawn, "Perfect of (the) Way," 614.

22. *Ibid.*, 612.

23. *Ibid.*, 614.

24. He writes, "By all accounts, the find-spot and the date of *11QPs^a* place this manuscript squarely at Qumran, which—again, by virtually all accounts—was very much a sect, even a highly exclusivist and radically isolated one" (*Ibid.*, 614).

25. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 199–200.

26. Strawn, "The Perfect of (the) Way," 615.

A second problem area is the use of sectarian terminology in 11QPs^a.²⁷ Flint adamantly asserts 11QPs^a contains none of the terms so frequently used in the unambiguous sectarian texts.²⁸ Strawn, however, argues that he has found a sectarian phrase in 11QPs^a 27.3 (*David’s Compositions*), “perfect of (the) way” (תמיים + דרך). For him, “when the use of דרך + תמיים in *DavComp* is considered along with the numerous and stereotypical instances of that collocation elsewhere in Qumran literature . . . David begins to look like a Qumran Covenanter himself—like one of the תמימי דרך, one of the ‘Perfect of (the) Way,’ perhaps even paradigmatically so.”²⁹

Strawn avers such sectarian terminology raises serious questions about 11QPs^a as a whole, especially since *David’s Compositions* has received so much attention in the previous debates. Evocatively, he asks how and why a larger *non-sectarian* manuscript (tradition) should or would contain *sectarian* compositions or terminology?³⁰ Sharing his concerns and questions, I will attempt to add to Strawn’s observations by showing that another sectarian phrase can be found in 11QPs^a 28.12 (Ps 151A:7b), “the sons of his covenant” (בני בבריתו).

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON PSALM 151A-B

Prior to the discovery of 11QPs^a, Ps 151 was known in Greek, Old Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Coptic, and Armenian translations, all showing clear dependence upon the Greek.³¹ Unlike its Greek counterpart, the version in 11QPs^a is written in Hebrew, and appears as two separate psalms

27. *Ibid.*, 615–22. Again, this includes terminology or phrases which either have distinctive usage within the Qumran community though originating elsewhere, or have little to no attestation outside those communities, but could provide evidence of particular interest for these communities.

28. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 199.

29. Strawn, “Perfect of (the) Way,” 622. Two important independent confirmations of Strawn’s findings can be found in Dahmen, *Psalm- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 254, and in Devorah Dimant, “Pertinence and Usage of Taxonomy,” *RevQ* 24 (2009): 11 n. 12.

30. *Ibid.*, 623. Here he seems to be speaking of Newsom’s category of *composition*, not *reception and use*.

31. Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 94; cf. M. S. Smith, “How to Write a Poem: The Case of Psalm 151 (11QPs^a 28.3–12),” in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira: proceedings of a symposium held at Leiden University, 11-14 December 1995* (ed. T. Muraoka and J. E. Elwolde; STDJ 26; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 182 nn. 1–3. Such widespread ancient support will lend credibility to Debel’s theory of redaction in Psalm 151, as well as the uniqueness of the Qumranic version of Psalm 151 found in 11QPs^a.

(151A-B). Below they are laid out in parallel to help see their differences:³²

LXX	11QPs ^a
<p>¹ This Psalm is autobiographical. Regarding Daudid and outside the number. [When he fought Goliad in single combat.]</p>	<p>A Hallelujah of David the son of Jesse.</p>
<p>I was small among my brothers and the youngest in the house of my father; I would shepherd the sheep of my father.</p>	<p>¹ Smaller I was than my brothers, and younger than the sons of my father, but he made me the shepherd of his flock, <u>and ruler over his kids.</u></p>
<p>² My hands made an instrument; my fingers tuned a harp.</p>	<p>² My hands made a harp, my fingers a lyre, <u>and I rendered glory to the Lord: I spoke in my interior:</u> ³ <u>“The mountains cannot bear witness for me, nor can hills declare (anything) on my behalf. (nor can) the trees my words (of praise). (nor) the flock my works (of praise).</u></p>
<p>³ And who will report to my lord? The Lord himself, it is he who</p>	<p>⁴ For who will declare, who can speak, <u>who can recount my works?”</u> The Lord <u>of all saw,</u></p>

32. LXX translation from *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright; New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 619–20. 11QPs^a translation is mostly from Eric Reymond, *New Idioms within Old: Poetry and Parallelism in the Non-Masoretic Poems of 11Q5 (= 11QPsa)* (*Early Judaism and its Literature* 31; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 55; and Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 97–99. Texts have been underlined to help identify variants and expansions more easily.

listens.

God of all, he heard,
and gave ear to (my thoughts).

⁵ He sent his prophet to anoint me,
Samuel to exalt me;
my brothers went forth toward
him,
beautiful of form, beautiful of
appearance,

⁴ It was he who sent his
messenger
and took me from the sheep of
my father
and anointed me with the oil of
his anointing.

⁶ exalted in their height,
beautiful with their hair,
The Lord God did not choose
them.

⁵ My brothers were handsome
and tall,
and the Lord did not take
delight in them.

⁷ But he sent and took me from
behind the flock,
and he anointed me with holy oil;
and he made me leader for his
people,
and ruler over the sons of the
covenant.

⁶ I went out to meet the
allophyle,
and he cursed me by his idols.

[PSALM 151B]
At the beginning of David's power
after the prophet of God had
anointed him.

⁷ But I, having drawn the
dagger from him,
I beheaded him
and removed reproach from
Israel's sons.

Then I (saw) a Philistine uttering
defiances from the r[anks of the
enemy].

... I ... the ...

From this layout, one observes that both 11QPs^a and the LXX contain material that the other does not, and often have variant readings of those parts of the psalm which are parallel. Throughout the past 50 years, scholarly attention has been fixed on the bulk of this variant material. In particular, scholars have provided analysis along two main lines: the textual relationship and/or development between these two versions, and whether or not there are traces of Orphism in 151A:2–4.³³

33. Concerning the textual relationship between the two versions, see the following: James Sanders, "Ps. 151 in 11QPss," *ZAW* 75 (1963): 59–61; Patrick Skehan, "The Apocryphal Psalm 151," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 407–9; James Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 94–103; Menaham Haran, "The Two Text-Forms of Psalm 151," *JJS* 39 (1988):

Beginning with Sanders, the Hebrew text form of Psalm 151 in 11QPs^a was understood as the original form of the psalm, with both its form and content “reworked and abbreviated” in the LXX.³⁴ This view was widely held until 1988, when Menaham Haran challenged it through linguistic analysis.³⁵ According to Haran, the opposite is true, “[The] Hebrew text behind Ps 151 LXX reflects the original extent of the Psalm, Ps 151A-B being expanded and derivative.”³⁶

In a more recent article, Hans Debel articulated a third position, arguing that Ps 151 LXX and Ps 151A-B are not necessarily directly related to one another.³⁷ Instead, he argued that both versions of Ps 151 stem from a now lost Hebrew text.³⁸ This earlier text, which he designated “edition *n*,” was faithfully translated into Greek and added as a supernumerary psalm to the Greek Psalter and subsequent versions.³⁹ Independently from this tradition, “edition *n*” was also revised by a scribe who expanded portions of it through a reworking of 1 Sam 16:7.⁴⁰ This revision was then divided between the calling of David (151A) and the Goliath episode (151B), and may have also been enriched with other expansive elements.

171–82; Smith, “How to Write a Poem,” 182–208; D. Amarna, “Psalm 151 from Qumran and Its Relation to Psalm 151 LXX. English Abstract,” *Textus* 19 (1998): 183–85; M. Segal, “The Literary Development of Psalm 151: A New Look at the Septuagint Version,” *Textus* 21 (2002): 139–58; Hans Debel, “‘The Lord Looks at the Heart’ (1 Sam 16,7): 11QPsa 151A-B as a ‘Variant Literary Edition’ of Ps 151 LXX,” *RevQ* 23 (2008): 459–73. Concerning the influence of Orphism, see the review of the discussion in Debel, “The Lord Looks at the Heart,” 464–66.

34. Haran, “Two Text-Forms of Psalm 151,” 172; cf. Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 95.

35. Haran, “Two Text-Forms of Psalm 151.”

36. Debel, “The Lord Looks at the Heart,” 466, summarizing Haran’s position.

37. *Ibid.*, 467.

38. *Ibid.*, 472. This is also suggested in Devorah Dimant, “David’s Youth in the Qumran Context,” in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (ed. J. Penner, K. M. Penner, and C. Wassen; STDJ 98; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 114. She does not seem to be aware of Debel’s argument.

39. *Ibid.*, 472.

40. *Ibid.*, 472, but cf. pp. 468–71. Cf. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll*, 56, who describes it as a “midrash” on 1 Samuel 16:1–13.

While Debel argues that it is wrong at this point to designate either version as “later” or “earlier” historically,⁴¹ his observations concerning 11QPs^a have at least one important implication for the concerns here: literary expansions have taken place between “edition *n*” and Ps 151A-B. Though it is difficult for one to conjecture at what point such literary expansions took place, I argue below that one of those literary expansions, the phrase “sons of his covenant,” is both late and germane to the concerns found in other unambiguous sectarian texts.

THE “SONS OF HIS COVENANT” (בני בריתו) OUTSIDE OF PSALM 151A

The collocation ברית + בן (“descendant/son” + “covenant”) has no precedent in the biblical texts, and is only found in one Greek text in early Judaism outside the scrolls of the Judaeen wilderness (*Pss. Sol.* 17:15). Before looking at that text, I will first look at its six attestations within the scrolls and fragments from Qumran.⁴² In the Qumran texts, ברית + בן occurs three times in “undisputed” sectarian texts (1QM17.8; 4Q284 4.2; 4Q503 7–9.3),⁴³ twice in a “disputed” text (4Q501 2; 7),⁴⁴ and once in the text at hand (11QPs^a 28.12).

41. *Ibid.*, 473.

42. M. G. Abegg, Jr., James Bowley, and Edward Cook, “ברית,” in *The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran* (vol. 1 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 158–60.

43. 1QM (*War Scroll*) is one of the core texts thought to have arisen from the Qumran community itself. Cf. Devorah Dimant, “The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance,” in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness* (ed. Devorah Dimant and Lawrence Schiffman; STDJ 16; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1995), 38. 4Q284 (4QPurification Liturgy) is unclassified by Dimant, “Qumran Manuscripts,” 56, but is identified as having a sectarian provenance by both Russel C. D. Arnold, *The Social Role of Liturgy in the Religion of the Qumran Community* (STDJ 60; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 184, and Hannah K. Harrington, *Purity Texts (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 5*; New York: T& T Clark, 2007), 63. 4Q503 (4QDaily Prayers) is classified by Dimant, “Qumran Manuscripts,” 41, as a liturgical sectarian text, an identification shared by Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1998), 22–27; Arnold, *The Social Role of Liturgy*, 120–27; and D. Olson, “Daily Prayers,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Volume 4a: Pseudepigraphic and Non-Masoretic Psalms and Prayers* (ed. J. A. Charlesworth; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 236. Note, “sectarian” here designates texts with a provenance in the Qumran community, much like the Gospels or letters of Paul would be sectarian for early Christian communities.

44. 4Q501 (4QApocryphal Lamentations B) is considered a sectarian liturgical text by Dimant, “Qumran Manuscripts,” 41, but is considered non-sectarian by James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (ECDSS; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 178. Adele Berlin,

In 1QM17.8, the phrase occurs in the middle of the final section (14:end–19:13+), which describes an epic battle against the Kittim.⁴⁵ Following Nickelsburg’s literary analysis, its occurrence can be more narrowly understood as within an account describing Belial’s counterattack to the first attack made by the armies of Israel (16:11–17:9).⁴⁶ Here, a priest encourages the armies and in a final word says, “And you, sons of his covenant (בני בריתו), be strong in God’s crucible until he shakes his hand and finishes his testings, his mysteries concerning your existence” (17.8–9). The phrase, then, is used appositionally to encourage the armies of Israel to remain strong while God tests them. Within the larger context, the “sons of his covenant” are also given these other synonymous epithets: “the lot of his covenant” (גורל בריתו; 17.6), “God’s lot” (גורל אל; 17.7), and “the sons of his truth” (בני אמתו; 17.8). The importance of these final priestly encouragements, combined with the significance the *War Scroll* had for the self-understanding of the Qumran community, give these epithets a certain weight as self-designations. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that there is a strong link between the Qumran community’s self-understanding and the title “the sons of his covenant.”

4Q284 (4QPurification Liturgy) is a fragmentary scroll dated to the first century A.D.⁴⁷ According to Arnold, it contains “a priestly liturgy, recited by an individual presiding over the rites of purification.”⁴⁸ He also notes,

The people are designated, through the use of language that emphasized their chosen-ness, their access to the covenant, and their status as God’s lot. The sectarian nature of these titles

“Qumran Laments and the Study of Lament Literature,” in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 19-23, January, 2000* (ed. E. G. Chazon; STDJ 48; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 13, 15-16, initially identifies the work as non-sectarian, but in concluding is not as confident. Hence its designation here as “disputed.”

45. George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005), 145.

46. *Ibid.*, 145.

47. Arnold, *Social Role of Liturgy*, 181.

48. *Ibid.*, 184.

ensured that these designations referred to the Qumran community alone.⁴⁹

Though little context remains to provide analysis of how the phrase is specifically used in Fragment 4, from what does remain it appears that “sons of your covenant” (בני בריתכה; 4.2) is used in parallel with, or at least designates the same group as, the phrase “the lot of your truth” (גורל אמת[כה]; 4.3). The change in pronoun from third-person to second-person is due to the nature of the text, with the priest addressing God. This variation does not change the thrust of the epithets, but their affinities with those noted above in the *War Scroll* provide strong grounds for taking them as self-designations of the communities at Qumran.

A third occurrence of the epithet occurs in 4Q503 (4QDaily Prayers). This text is a large collection of fragmentary prayers dated ca. 100–75 B.C.⁵⁰ Through textual reconstruction, scholars have been able to understand a great deal about them. Short, and formulaic in style, they are organized chronologically, according to day of the month, and within each day, by a designation for morning or evening prayer.⁵¹ Each prayer averages between four and six lines in length, and the collection as a whole seems to emphasize several basic themes and uses important key phrases, such as light and darkness, knowledge, holiness, chosen-ness, and the joint-witness and praise with angels.⁵² The designation “sons of your covenant” appears in Fragment 7–9.3, within the prayers designated for the morning of the sixth day, “[And we,] the sons of your covenant (בני בריתכה), bless [your name,] with all the companies of [the light . . . with all] the tongues of knowledge” (3–4). Here, the phrase is again a self-designation of the ones praying, who are blessing the name of God alongside the “companies of the light” (דגלי אור). One familiar with the key terms and themes of the sectarian texts will again see the close affinities with the above two texts, further corroborating the epithet “sons of his/your covenant” as a self-designation germane to the interests of the Qumran community.

The final two occurrences of the phrase are in 4Q501 (4QApocryphal Lamentations B), lines 2 and 7. The scroll has been dated ca. 50–25 B.C., and is a poetic text addressing God, asking for his

49. Ibid.

50. Olson, “Daily Prayers,” 235.

51. Arnold, *Social Role of Liturgy*, 120.

52. Ibid., 121. In footnote 54, Arnold identifies our phrase, “sons of your covenant,” a key phrase emphasizing the theme of chosen-ness.

protection from persecutors within the Jewish community.⁵³ The first occurrence of the phrase is in line 2, “Remember the sons of your covenant (בני בריתכה).” Within the larger context, the supplicant is petitioning God to remember his or her community, which is also called “the removed ones of your people” (עצורי עמכה; line 2), “the forsaken ones of your inheritance” (עזובי נהלתכה; line 2), the “desolate” (השוממים; line 2), “the wanderers, whom no one brings back, the sorely wounded, whom no one bandages, [those bent double, whom no one rai]ses up” (המנדובים תועים ואין משיב שבורים ואין חובש [כפופים ואין זן] קרף) (lines 3–4). It is used, then, in reference to a faction of people within Israel whom God is called on to remember (זכר). In contrast to this group, a second faction of people, the oppressors, are identified as “the wretched ones of your people” (הילליא עמכה; line 4) who have disgraced the speaker’s group through a lying tongue.

In 4Q501 line 7, the phrase, though partially deleted, appears again and seems to function similarly to its use in line 2.⁵⁴ The group praying sees its enemies as the disgraceful “sons of your people” (lines 5–6) and asks that their posterity not be included “among the [sons of the] covenant” (מבני ב[ר]ית). As Davila notes, in line 7 the phrase “their posterity” seems to “refer to hostile members of the Jewish community, since there would be no question of the seed of the oppressing Gentiles being associated with the covenant.”⁵⁵ In this prayer, then, we have a faction of Israel identifying themselves as the “sons of your covenant,” distinguishing themselves from another party in Israel (“sons of your people”), likely seeing themselves as the true heirs of the covenant. Though occurring in a text which may or may not be sectarian in provenance, these two uses in 4Q501 at the very least show ideological similarities with those expressed in sectarian compositions, as well as the self-designation “sons of your/the covenant” in 1QM, 4Q284, and 4Q503.

My final investigation of the phrase is from *Psalms of Solomon*. This work has a consensus dating to the middle of the first century A.D., and likely originated from a party in Jerusalem sharing similar concerns

53. M. Baillet, *Qumran Grotte 4: III (4Q482–4Q520)* (DJD 7; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 79–80; Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 177.

54. Speculatively, the partial-deletion of the phrase may prove an even stronger marker of self-designation, since the mistake of the scribe would have been to write the epithet of his community rather than to simply refer to the covenant of Israel.

55. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 180.

over Jerusalem and messianism as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁵⁶ Given the absence of many key features of the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g. dualism, a sharp differentiation between who is in and out of the community, etc.), it is unlikely *Psalms of Solomon* originated in the same circles.⁵⁷

Psalms of Solomon 17, where the phrase occurs, is noted for its developed messianism.⁵⁸ It is written by an author whose community has had to flee from Jerusalem (17:11–18) because of the treatment of its citizens by an incoming foreign leader (17:7, 11). This invasion was understood as punishment against the Jewish community in Jerusalem for adopting the practices of the Gentiles (17:15–20, 36). Out of this situation, the psalmist turns to God (17:1, 46), and petitions for the Davidic messiah to come to Jerusalem, purge it of both Gentile and Jewish sinners, and reign righteously from Jerusalem (17:21–45).

The phrase is used in 17:15, where the psalmist is describing the impact of the foreign invasion on the Jewish citizens of Jerusalem. It reads, “And the children of the covenant (οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς διαθήκης) in the midst of the people of mixed origin surpassed them, there was no one among them in Jerusalem who practiced mercy and truth.”⁵⁹ The “children of the covenant” being referenced here are Jewish citizens, surpassing even the Gentiles in avoiding the practice of mercy and truth. It lacks the exclusivity observed in the scrolls above, and simply seems to be a designation for those Jewish people who, though in rebellion, are

56. Jerry O’Dell, “The Religious Background of the Psalms of Solomon,” *RevQ* 3 (1961): 241–59; Robert B. Wright, “The Psalms of Solomon, the Pharisees, and the Essenes,” in *1972 Proceedings for the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies and the Society of Biblical Literature Pseudepigrapha Seminar* (ed. Robert A. Kraft; Septuagint and Cognate Studies 2; Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 136–54; D. Rosen and A. Salvensen, “A Note on the Qumran Temple Scroll 56.15–18 and Psalms of Solomon 17.33,” *JJS* 38 (1987): 98–101; P. N. Franklyn, “The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the Psalms of Solomon” *JSJ* 18 (1987): 1–17; Robert R. Hann, “The Community of the Pious: The Social Setting of the Psalms of Solomon,” *SR* 17 (1988): 184–89; Ernest-Marie Laperrousaz, “Le milieu d’origine du 17^e Psaumes (apocryphes) de Salomon,” *REJ* 150 (1991): 557–64.

57. It is far beyond the scope of this article to enter into these questions here. For helpful reviews see the following: Joseph Trafton, “The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research” *JSP* 12 (1994): 7–8; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 238–47; Robert B. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 1; New York: T&T Clark, 2007).

58. Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon’s Historical Background and Social Setting* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 84; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004).

59. *Ibid.*, 130.

still part of the covenant community of Israel. Its use, then, is much different than that of 1QM, 4Q284, 4Q503, and 4Q501. While 4Q501 line 7 used the phrase in reference to those in Israel who are considered true members of God's covenant, in distinction from the rest of "the sons of your people," in *Psalms of Solomon* 17:15, no such distinction is maintained.

Considering the above uses of the phrase in our texts above, the following conclusions are reasonable. First, we can conclude that in the undisputed sectarian texts (1QM, 4Q284, and 4Q503) the epithet "sons of the/his/your covenant" is self-designating and particular to an exclusive group of Jewish people, synonymous with the members of the Qumran community.⁶⁰ Second, in the disputed text 4Q501, the epithet is also self-designating and is used to differentiate the praying faction from other Israelite factions. And third, in the non-sectarian *Psalms of Solomon* the epithet is used to refer more generally to Israelites (those in covenant with God) as opposed to foreigners. From this discussion, then, we can conclude that even though the collocation "sons + covenant" (בן + ברית) can be used in less sectarian ways within early Judaism, when used by those at Qumran it is a self-designating referent to a particular, exclusive group (faction) of Jewish people, synonymous with those identifying with the Qumran community. This would add further evidence to Strawn's previous discovery of sectarian terminology, and, if true, would further weaken Flint's proposal. In what remains of the article, I will investigate how the phrase is used in Ps 151A-B, and how its inclusion in the psalm fits within the larger concerns of other sectarian texts.

PSALM 151A AND ITS QUMRANIC EXPANSION

Psalm 151A can be divided into two general parts: verses 1–4b and verses 4c–7.⁶¹ In the first part of the psalm, David is introduced (v. 1) as

60. Another similar phrase is the use of ברית + אנוש (1QS 5.9; 6.19; 1QSa 1.2; 1Q36 7.2; 4Q258 VI.8; 4Q511 63–64.II.5; 63–64.III.5).

61. I follow the division by Jean Carmignac, "La Formepoétique du Psaume 151" *RevQ* 4 (1963): 374–76, and Isaac Rabinowitz, "Alleged Orphism of 11QPss 28 3–12" *ZAW* 76 (1964): 196–97. Raymond, *New Idioms within Old*, 67, argues for four paragraphs: v. 1, vv. 2–4b, vv. 4c–e, and vv. 5–7. Pierre Auffret, "Structure littéraire et interprétation du Psaume 151," *RevQ* 9 (1977): 163–88, divides the psalm similarly according to a symmetrical relationship where David is the passive object of the actions (v. 1), where David is subject (vv. 2–4b), where God reacts to David (v. 4c–e), and where God is subject and David the object of the actions (vv. 5–7).

the shepherd of his father’s flock (רועה לצונו) and ruler of his kids (מושל בגדיותו). The psalm then turns to describe the inward monologue of David (vv. 2a–4b). It recalls how David, since neither the mountains or hills or trees or flock can bear witness to David’s works of praise, creates musical instruments and worships YHWH (vv. 2a–c). In the second part of the psalm (vv. 4c–7), God responds to David’s inward disposition by sending the prophet Samuel to anoint him as a “leader” (נגיד) for his people and as a “ruler over the sons of his covenant” (מושל בבני בריתו). For Ps 151A, David’s need to personally render glory to God sets him apart from his brothers. The message of the psalm, then, seems to focus on the transformation of David from his role as shepherd to his role as king, a transformation tied to his inward disposition to praise God.

Reinforcing this message is the enveloping structure that occurs between verses 1 and 7, which is tied to specific vocabulary (e.g. שים, בן, צואן, and מושל) and parallel grammatical structures (e.g. 1c–d and 7c–d are both VOM//OM).⁶² What is interesting to note about the shape of the psalm is that it is only partially paralleled by Ps 151 LXX. In that version of the psalm, there is no reference to David being ruler or leader; instead, David’s transformation from shepherding to anointing is focused on David’s ability to overpower and vanquish Goliath, his enemy. The effect of the expansions in Ps 151A-B is a refocusing of 151A toward David’s changing flock, namely, from “ruler” (מושל) of his father’s kids to the ruler (מושל) of the sons of God’s covenant. It is only after this transformation takes place that the reader is ready to reflect on David’s military success over Goliath and the Philistines (Ps 151B).

What is striking is how instrumental our phrase is in the transformation in Ps 151A; it is one of the principal expansive phrases in the psalm emphasizing David’s changing leadership role. Without verses 1d and 7c–d, the focus of Ps 151A would be exactly the same as in LXX Ps 151. The only difference would be a clearer identification of the reasons why David is anointed (151A:2c–3).⁶³

AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL FOR 11QPs^A AND THE MEANING OF PSALM151A-B

62. Reymond, *New Idioms within Old*, 69–70.

63. Dimant, “David’s Youth,” 112–13, has also made similar independent observations about the specific contribution these variant and expanded elements add to Ps 151A-B in 11QPs^A.

Given the discovery of sectarian terminology by Strawn, and the preceding argument for further sectarian terminology in Ps 151A, the evidence demands that scholars seriously consider whether or not 11QPs^a could be, in C. Hempel's words, a "community-specific" (*gemeindespezifisch*) collection with "authorship or revision by the Yahad" (*VerfässherschaftoderÜberarbeitung durch den Jachad*).⁶⁴

Like the rule texts, 11QPs^a is a "manuscript collection" (*Sammelhandschrift*) that at some point in its composition was editorially revised.⁶⁵ That being the case, the possibility that a redactor (*Überarbeiter*) inscribed a phrase with ideological import into one of the texts from 11QPs^a, a text which did not have such language within its own "compositional level" (*Kompositionsebene*), must remain open.⁶⁶ Ulrich Dahmen, has, in fact, made such a case.⁶⁷

As for the interpretation of Ps 151A, the acknowledgment of sectarian terminology changes its interpretation. As Dahmen notes,

[David] is the paradigm of the small outsider—a radical reality for the Qumran community—who, though unnoticed by the wider public, is exalted by God and in the future will not only succeed, but will become the unrivaled standard and the ideal of a life well-pleasing to God. In this hope the Qumran community has kept itself until the end.⁶⁸

For Dahmen, the characterization of David in Ps 151A becomes paradigmatic for the whole Qumran community. David's story is one that

64. Charlotte Hempel, "Kriterien zur Bestimmung 'essenischer Verfässherschaft' von Qumrantexten," in *Qumran kontrovers: Beiträge zu den Textfunden vom Toten Meer* (ed. Jörg Frey and Hartmut Stegemann; Katholische Akademie Schwerte 6; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2003), 75. In the essay, Hempel takes issue with some of the proposals made by Dimant regarding the identification of sectarian texts (cf. Dimant, "The Qumran Manuscripts"). In particular, Hempel emphasizes the difficulty in classifying redacted texts. Her concern is with texts that have certainly been redacted by the communities at Qumran, but which mostly likely did not originate with them (p. 75). For her, room must be made for a more nuanced picture that considers a more complex literary tradition-historical and redaction-historical (*redaktionsgeschichtlichen*) development (p. 80).

65. *Ibid.*, 75.

66. *Ibid.*, 79.

67. Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption im Frühjudentum*, 262–63.

68. *Ibid.*, 263. Translation my own.

can give them hope, providing them a picture of their own future. But one can also observe broader significance than this.

Following Debel’s reconstruction, the literary expansion of Ps 151 “edition *n*” into Ps 151A-B has created a division between David’s anointing as ruler over the Qumran community and David’s subsequent military success over Goliath. As noted above, the effect of this division in Ps 151A was to emphasize the transformation of David from shepherd over Jesse’s flock to ruler over the sons of the covenant. The reason for this transformation was David’s inward desire to give glory to God. His inclination to praise, then, is what makes him fit to rule over the sons of the covenant. As a paradigm, David’s praise was meant to instill the value of worship with those who used this scroll at Qumran. Following this through, the ideological impact is that just as David was given dominion over the sons of the covenant through his worshipful deeds, so Qumran covenanters would be given a special place over the sons of Israel.

Moreover, just as this David, now the anointed ruler, is able to slay enemy nations (Ps 151B), so the covenant community is anointed to lead the battle against Belial and the Kittim (1QM). This interpretation is more speculative, but it does offer an explanation for why the psalm might have been divided into two. In this scheme, Ps 151A allows the community to see itself in the coloring of David’s divinely sanctioned worship, while Ps 151B allows them to reflect on their special calling to fight as the true Israel, the true sons of the covenant, against the Kittim.

The placement of Ps 151A-B in 11QPs^a enhances such a proposal further. In 11QPs^a, Ps 151A-B is the concluding psalm of the scroll, and is preceded by a non-biblical text enumerating *David’s Compositions* (11QPs^a 27:2–11; *DavComp*), and several verses from Ps 140:1–5 (11QPs^a 27:12–15) and Ps 134:1–3 (11QPs^a 28:1–2).⁶⁹ For Sanders, “these last columns of the scroll clearly demonstrate the belief that David composed, or ‘spoke,’ not only all the psalms in this scroll but many, many more.”⁷⁰ The final texts included in 11QPs^a, then, put all of the psalms into the mouth of David. By doing so, the poetic and musical abilities of David recounted in Ps 151A are given further clarification and can be identified with what precedes Ps 151A in the scroll. Thus, if the David of Ps 151A-B is a kind of figure or type to be imitated by the Qumran community, the arrangement of the scroll can be seen as a kind of liturgical joining with David in his praise, in preparation for the final eschatological battle.

69. Dimant, “David’s Youth,” 100.

70. Sanders, *Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 10–11.

Such a view of David is described well by Dimant in her recent essay on the youthful David of Ps 151A.⁷¹ For her, “The portrayal of David, who recognizes that his first duty is to glorify God, is strikingly close to the ideals conveyed by the particular world-view of the Qumran sectarian writings.”⁷² She surveys 1QH 9:29–33 to better appreciate the theme of praise, concluding, “Seen from the perspective of the primacy attached by the sectarian ideology to praising God, [the] David of the poem under consideration emerges as a prototype of perfect piety from a young age, a characteristic which earned him royal leadership.”⁷³ Identifying with the piety of David through the use of 11QPs^a, those at Qumran were able to join with him in his praise, preparing themselves for what may come in the future.

In conclusion, the debate over the provenance of 11QPs^a will undoubtedly continue, and whether the above analyses are correct will require further discussion. But, as Dimant notes, some explanation needs to be given for the differences between Ps 151A-B and its LXX counterpart. Out of the above considerations, the tentative conclusion of this article, given further sectarian terminology and the relationship between this terminology and the expansive nature of Ps 151A-B (in view of wider sectarian ideology), is that the present form of Ps 151A-B originated within the Qumran community.⁷⁴ Building off of Strawn’s argument, this would continue to weaken Flint’s proposal concerning the provenance of the 11QPs^a, but by no means settles the debate on how to

71. Dimant, “David’s Youth.”

72. *Ibid.*, 109–110.

73. *Ibid.*, 112. Dimant also suggests that the different title in Psalm 151A (‘Hallelujah’), as compared against the LXX, could reflect this emphasis on praise in the psalm (p. 102).

74. Dimant, “David’s Youth,” 114, similarly concludes, “What matters is that the Qumran version of this psalm is close to the particular Qumran ideology. In its present form it seems to have been composed by a member of the Qumran community or a related circle.”

understand the growth of the Psalter or its potential alternative arrangements.⁷⁵

75. One might still posit that the tradition represented by 11QPs^a has a provenance prior to Qumran and that the specific manifestation of that tradition preserved by 11QPs^a is something peculiar to Qumran. For the present author, however, it is more likely that the MT-150 was completed by the end of the third century B.C., that its use was widespread in early Judaism, especially with its translation into the OG (without Ps 151), and that Ps 151 was included at a later date as a supernumerary psalm, as the manuscript tradition unanimously indicates (*contra* William P. Brown, “The Psalms: An Overview,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, 3–4, who erroneously notes that Codex Sinaiticus presents Ps 151 as within the “151 Psalms of David.” The manuscript clearly reads κατ’ ἐξῶθεν του ἀριθμου.). The Psalms scrolls found in Caves 4 and 11 at Qumran are likely liturgical collections of psalms, some with more popularity than others (hence, some scrolls supporting others). If 11QPs^a does represent a true alternative Psalter tradition (in my view it is impossible to determine), then it is one which is peculiar to Qumran, functioning authoritatively as a liturgical and meditative collection with clear ideological connections to other undisputed sectarian texts (e.g. 1QM, 1QH).