

An Examination of the Supposed pre-Samaritan Texts from Qumran  
Chelica L. Hiltunen  
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Abstract

A debate continues among Dead Sea Scrolls scholars as to how best classify the manuscript finds from the eleven caves which border the Dead Sea. Emanuel Tov argues that the biblical scrolls are best organized by their textual character, that is, according to their filiation to the three later versions: the Masoretic Text (MT), the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), the proposed Hebrew *Vorlage* behind the Septuagint (LXX), or, in cases of inconsistent agreement with the versions, identifying the manuscripts as non-aligned. Though this approach to categorizing manuscripts is helpful, the standards for determining a manuscript's affiliation with the later versions are vague. As a result, the textual character of many scrolls is in contention, especially in regard to their relationship to the Samaritan Pentateuch.

This study contends that there are different categories of variants that impact the designation of a manuscript's textual character. Secondary variants, or lack thereof, are the most important element for determining a scroll's relationship, if any, to the three later versions (MT, SP, LXX). Secondary variants (also termed secondary readings) are defined as alterations found in the text due to scribal intervention, both intentional and accidental. Agreement or disagreement between secondary variants present in the scrolls and the later version is the most important criterion for determining manuscript filiation.

This investigation focuses on manuscripts of the Pentateuch that Tov has classified as relating to the both SP and MT, SP and LXX, and SP and the non-aligned category. As part of his method, Tov states that when a manuscript is "equally close" to SP and MT, he defaults to the MT. When a scroll is "equally close" to SP or the non-aligned category, Tov defaults to the non-aligned category. As a result of this methodology, very few manuscripts (6%) of the Pentateuchal scrolls have been classified as relating to SP. This thesis postulates that if the scrolls of the Pentateuch are examined and the primary criteria for deciding a scroll's textual character is agreement or disagreement of significant secondary variants with the three later versions, then there may be more scrolls that share affinity with the Samaritan Pentateuch than previously supposed.