PSALMS UNBOUND:

ANCIENT CONCEPTS OF TEXTUAL TRADITION

IN 11QPSALMSA AND RELATED TEXTS

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Psalms Unbound: Ancient Concepts of Textual Tradition in 11QPsalm and Related Texts

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This dissertation investigates ways in which early Jewish communities conceptualized the production and collection of writing. Through a study of 11QPsalm, the Qumran Psalms Scroll, it shows how modern book culture (shaped by the canon, codex, print, authorial copyright, and scholarly editing) has distorted our understanding of ancient texts and fostered anachronistic questions about their creation and reception. Taking seriously what early Jewish texts have to say about their own writtenness and building upon earlier scholarship on scriptural multiformity, the dissertation also uses theoretical insights from the field of Book History to study the identity, assembly, and literary context of the Psalms Scroll as an example of the ancient textual imagination. Physical and discursive evidence suggest that no concept of a “Book of Psalms” existed as a coherent entity in the ancient Jewish imagination, but that psalms collections were conceptualized and created in looser, unbounded ways. New metaphors made possible by electronic text, which likewise cannot be constrained into the categories of print book culture, can encourage new ways of imagining ancient concepts of fluid textuality as well. After a study of the status and compilation of the Psalms Scroll (Ch. 1-2), the dissertation engages the question of Davidic authorship (Ch. 3). David was not imagined as the author of a particular psalms collection, but as the inaugurator of a variety of liturgical traditions. The identity between an individual figure and a specific text should be unbound in favour of a looser relationship, allowing for the continuing growth of traditions inspired by the figure. Chapters 4 and 5 present a reading of the Psalms Scroll and Davidic lore alongside two other traditions: Ben Sira and angelic ascent literature. Both possess literary links with the Psalms Scroll, but also shed light on the ways in which ancient communities imagined writing and understood their own relationship to their texts. Thus, reading across canonical and generic boundaries embeds psalms traditions in a richer context of reception and provides a fuller picture of the ancient textual imagination. The conclusion makes a comparative gesture toward the Nachleben of psalms collecting in Syriac Christianity.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey to this project began when I walked into a graduate seminar with Professor Hindy Najman in 2004. Meeting her changed my academic path, and since then, she has been the most generous, inspiring mentor I could have imagined. She has given me intellectual and practical guidance at every step, all the while encouraging me to trust my ideas and follow where they took me. My debt to her is immeasurable.

I am very grateful to my dissertation committee, Professor Sarianna Metso and Professor Judith Newman, who have both been immensely helpful throughout my PhD program. Sarianna Metso has not only been invaluable in helping me develop the textual skills and command of the field necessary to work with the Dead Sea Scrolls, but has also been a warm and supportive mentor for the last six years. I am deeply appreciative of her guidance and her careful reading and feedback on this dissertation. Conversations with Judith Newman about early Jewish prayer, liturgy, and scriptural interpretation have been formative to my thinking, and she has helped me through this process with not only intellectual acumen, but also sanity and good humour. I am grateful for her incisive comments and suggestions for how to refine and deepen my work.

I thank my other teachers at the University of Toronto: Harry Fox, Alan Galey, Amir Harrak, Reid Locklin, Tirzah Meacham, and David Novak, who supervised my Master’s degree and remained a mentor and supporter throughout my time in graduate school. Several other scholars have given generously of their time and energy to provide feedback on early forms of this work, and to inspire me as I developed this project. I am especially grateful to George Brooke, Steven Fraade, Florentino García Martínez, John Kloppenborg, James Kugel, Dan Machiela, John Marshall, Ishay Rosen-Zvi, Eileen Schuller, Kim Stratton, Loren Stuckenbruck, Eibert Tigchelaar, Eugene Ulrich, and Benjamin Wright III.

Many friends have helped along the way. Clara Kwon and Naomi Jacobs are the reason I am not a cynic; thank you. The members of the Mullins Seminar – Professor Jennifer Harris, Jenn Cianca, Julia Lauwers, Robin Sutherland-Harris, Tim Langille, and Paul Nahme – supported me during some of the most difficult parts of the doctoral program. Paula Schwebel was a source of commiseration as we both
moved into Robarts Library to finish our dissertations in summer 2011. Jennifer Zilm provided moral
support and e-company as I moved toward my first draft, and has served as a sounding board for some of
my bolder ideas. I thank Laliv Clenman, Nicole Hilton, Nathalie Ling, Itamar Manoff, Shayna Sheinfeld,
Chad Stauber, and Ryan Stoner, who provided feedback and encouragement at various stages. I am most
deeply grateful to Aleksander Borucki for years of support of my goals, and for his continuing friendship.
I also thank my parents, grandparents, and sister Julia for their support.

I have been lucky to have Carla Sulzbach as an academic conversation partner, an astute editor of
this entire dissertation, and a mentor and friend. She has guided me through some tough spots
academically and personally with warmth, wisdom, and honesty. Todah rabbah!

I could not have completed the final stages of this process without my new friends and
colleagues at Indiana University. I thank my faculty mentor, Bert Harrill, for his faith in me and for his
wise advice. David Brakke, Constance Furey, David Haberman, Carolyn Lipson-Walker, and Jeff Veidlinger
have also been a source of encouragement and support. I thank my colleagues Jason Mokhtarian, Josh
Paddison, and Steve Selka, and I am especially grateful to Sarah Imhoff for her tireless cheerleading and
cherished friendship.

I gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the University of Toronto, the Canadian Friends
of the École biblique et archéologique française, and generous supporters of the Centre for Jewish
Studies, especially the Koschitzky, Lesk, Shier, Shiff, and Spitzer families.

I end these acknowledgements where I began: with gratitude to my exemplary teacher, Hindy
Najman. The project was born out of an ongoing conversation with her, a conversation that I hope will
continue for years to come. I dedicate this dissertation to her.

Bloomington, Indiana
February 2012
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INTRODUCTION

“Far more books are imagined than ever are written.”

Leslie Howsam, Old Books and New Histories

Since it was first unrolled, 11QPsalms\(^a\) – often called the “Great Psalms Scroll” from Qumran – has offered a window into the textual world of ancient Judaism. This scroll, with its surprising arrangement as well as its several compositions that had not been read for two thousand years, encourages us to ask new questions about how texts were produced, inherited, gathered, and transmitted in ancient communities. Far from being static and bounded entities, such texts have biographies; they originated and grew alongside other writings and were shaped by their material, social, and imaginal\(^2\) contexts.

The Psalms Scroll gives us a particularly rich taste of the broader imaginative world of its creators. Near the end of the scroll, we find a piece that extols King David as a sage, scribe, and psalmist:

וכָּנַבְּנֵי תַּהְמִים בְּכֶלֶד דְּרֵכִי לְפֶנֶּי אֲלֵי הָנִּשָּׁם וֹתְךָ 3


\(^2\) The concept of the “imaginal” was articulated by French philosopher and Islamic scholar H. Corbin, “Mundus imaginalis où l’imaginaire et l’Imaginal,” Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme 6 (1964): 3-26, primarily to refer to contemplative/mystical experience and depictions of otherworlds in Arabic and Persian traditions. Here, I am using it more broadly to refer to the world of the early Jewish religious imagination, with its culturally specific metaphors, symbols, foundational narratives, and modes of organizing knowledge.
And David, son of Jesse, was wise, and a light like the light of the sun, learned, and discerning, and perfect in all his paths before God and men. And YHWH gave him a discerning and enlightened spirit. And he wrote psalms: three thousand six hundred; and songs to be sung before the altar over the perpetual offering of every day, for all the days of the year: three hundred and sixty-four; and for the Sabbath offerings: fifty-two songs; and for the offerings of the first days of the months, and for all the days of the festivals, and for the Day of Atonement: thirty songs.

And all the songs which he spoke were four hundred and forty-six. And songs to perform over the possessed: four. The total was four thousand and fifty.

All these he spoke through prophecy which had been given to him from before the Most High.

The picture of David as psalm-writer, musician, inspired figure, scribe, and sage places this psalm collection in a large network of literary traditions. Moreover, it might provide insight into what the ancient Jewish scribes themselves had to say about writing, how they pictured an ideal scribal sage, and how they imagined Psalms traditions. In this text, the psalms are the result of prophetic revelation – and they exist in staggering numbers, trumping even the 4,005 legendary sayings of Solomon. How does this composition, in the context of a Psalms collection radically different from the

3 I use four asterisks to denote the scribe’s use of Paleo-Hebrew letters for the Tetragrammaton.

4 11QPsalm⁵, col. 27. The editio princeps, on which I am relying for the text and translations, is J.A. Sanders, The Psalms of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs) (DJD 4; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).
biblical Book of Psalms, shed light on scribalism, text production, and scripture in ancient Judaism?

Using 11QPsalms\(^a\) as a starting point, this dissertation examines the “book culture” of early Judaism. I place the phrase “book culture” in quotation marks because it is a misnomer: the *book* as we know it did not exist in the scribal scroll culture of antiquity. Indeed, I argue that our modern book culture, shaped by the history of the biblical canon, the print codex, and scholarly practices of cataloguing and editing, has distorted our understanding of the texts and prompted us to ask anachronistic questions about their nature and status in ancient times.

My title, *Psalms Unbound*, reflects my argument that our thinking about the Psalms and the 11QPsalms\(^a\) manuscript from Qumran has been constrained by the concept of books in two ways: canonical and bibliographic. That is, first, the idea of the biblical book – in this case, the Book of Psalms – is the lens through which we have viewed the collection, despite the realization that canonicity is an anachronistic concept for this period. Second, the book as a unified textual, authorial, and physical entity formed by the history of the codex and print, as well as the bookish habits of “inventorying titles, categorizing works, and attributing texts” to give order to our written world, shape the way we have approached this text as well.\(^5\)

To be sure, scholarship has challenged both of these assumptions in increasingly nuanced ways. The literature on the concept of canon and scriptural authority in early

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Judaism is vast. Many scholars now recognize that there was no canon in the Second Temple period, but rather a developing corpus of authoritative literature that had not been closed. Neither the books included in this corpus nor the textual forms of those books had been fixed. The canon is a later concept, and can no longer be a way to organize Second Temple texts into categories. In the context of Qumran studies, for example, scholars like F. García Martínez and C. Hempel have argued for a looking at the development of “biblical” and “sectarian” texts in tandem, because separating them from one another obscures the analogous ways in which they were created, developed, legitimized, and regarded as authoritative for community practice.

Scholars of Jewish antiquity have also challenged bibliographical propositions, pointing out that the material and social realities that governed writing in the ancient world were different from our own. The differences between the scroll and the codex in terms of text production and interpretive practices has been explored by such scholars as Robert Kraft and David Stern, who nevertheless focus on the transition from scroll to codex, rather than scroll culture itself. The role of scribal culture in the production,

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8 Kraft, “Para–mania” and “Scroll, Codex, and Canons: the Relationship of Ancient Book Formats to Larger Collections and Anthologies (with Special Reference to Jewish and Christian Scriptures),”
collection, and authorization of religious texts has been the subject of many recent studies that seek to place the emergence of biblical texts into a social and cultural context.\(^9\) The reconsideration of textual presuppositions has also made it into textual criticism, with scholars increasingly questioning linear models for the development of texts that have complex histories of expansion and mutual influence,\(^10\) and for the value of establishing a single authoritative text for textual cultures where different “editions” developed over time and seemed equally authoritative.\(^11\) In terms of authorship, Hindy Najman has critiqued modern presuppositions about pseudepigraphy as forgery, arguing that in its ancient context, this practice was a legitimate way in which older traditions were honoured and re-presented for new communities, indeed, even a kind of spiritual practice of authorial self-effacement.\(^12\)

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While my methodology largely consists of literary analysis, I necessarily refer to social practices – the production, reception, and use of texts in the context of interpretive communities in early Judaism, very broadly defined. Though my major source comes from Qumran and I focus largely on literature from the Second Temple period, my working assumption is that imaginative motifs – the conceptual categories of a culture and its most powerful and generative metaphors – can transcend both social and chronological borders. That is, even communities who may be ideologically opposed to one another participate in the same imaginative universe and speak the same metaphorical language; and that the concepts and images through which people understand their traditions are transmitted across generations and have staying power even as they develop over time. Thus, I use a broad selection of sources whose social origins and uses may be different from one another, but whose literary links indicate that they inhabit a shared conceptual landscape.

This is not to say the imagination is universal or monolithic, either across religious communities or within them. While I tell one story about the imaginative context of writing in early Judaism, there are other narratives. For instance, I have not told the story of many of the texts that arose in the shadow of the Alexandrian Library, such as the Letter of Aristeas, where the empire, classical literature, and concepts of translation are key aspects of the textual imagination. Instead, I have focused on the history of the concepts that emerge out of a study of the Psalms Scroll and Davidic

traditions more broadly, using them as a way to complicate our understanding of textual concepts in early Judaism.

**The Contribution of Book History**

My study, then, begins with the question of how to understand the Qumran Psalms Scroll as a textual collection in the context of early Jewish culture. To help approach the problem of textual categories and definitions, I have drawn on ideas from the interdisciplinary field of Book History, otherwise known as *histoire du livre* or historical bibliography. Textual historian D.F. McKenzie defines bibliography as the “sociology of texts,” a “discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the process of their transmission, including their production and reception.” The major theoretical contribution of Book History is to emphasize that books are not simply inert containers for the transmission of disembodied verbal content. They are physical objects, textual artifacts, and cultural transactions, and both their physical forms and social meanings shape the way their content is created, transmitted, and received.

Although it is obvious that ancient texts were not “books” as we know them, and while it is a truism to say that writing, authorship, and textual transmission functioned

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15 See L. Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*. “Book History,” then, combines three disciplines: bibliography (the study of books as material objects), literature (the study of the text), and history (the study of the social and cultural context in which texts were created and used).
differently in a scribal society, book historians show just to what extent our bookish categories are historically contingent. Roger Chartier, for instance, shows how the very concept of a book as we intuitively imagine it – as an entity that links a physical object, a text, and an author – is based on the *libro unitario*, the practice of binding the work of a single author in one codex, a historical innovation of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁶ For Chartier, the figure of the author as “the fundamental principle for the designation of a text” is also an “invention” of the early modern period, when the sharp increase in the availability of texts encouraged the creation of organizational categories.¹⁷

In the last two decades, the advent of digital text has put this historical contingency into sharp relief, showing to what extent our most basic textual categories are informed by assumptions specific to print.¹⁸ With its much-discussed set of characteristics like fluidity, collective creation, proliferation, and changing concepts of authoritativeness, digital culture has challenged scholars to revisit the categories in which we think about text, categories that had long been dominated by the printed book and the individual author. Its penetration into all areas of scholarship and daily life invites us to see texts of various kinds with fresh eyes, and to ask whether the idea of a “book,” when applied to both pre-print and post-print textual worlds, is a metaphor

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¹⁷ Chartier, *The Order of Books*, vii. The scholarly practices and the organization of texts at the Library of Alexandria may serve as a challenge Chartier’s model.
that has outlived its descriptive power. In this study, I suggest that using new
metaphors and models from outside of print is one way to unbind and open ancient
Jewish texts from the constraints of the book.

Now that the book no longer has a monopoly on the structuring, transmitting,
and categorizing of textual materials, we can denaturalize it, and take note of its
contingency and cultural specificity. We can place “the book” within the history of
concepts and trace its genealogy through particular cultural and historical transactions
that unconsciously structure our thinking. When we say “book,” we bring in the entire
history of the book as we know it culturally, and its whole nature as we experience it:
the history of the Alexandrian library, and birth of scholarly editing and cataloguing
practices; the development of the codex; the invention of print; widespread literacy; the
rise of authorial copyright; the 19th century novel; twentieth century publishing,
scholarly bibliographies, modern cataloguing, authorial book signings, and the mass
production of paperbacks.

What I mean to say is that “book” is not a neutral signifier or a universalizable
idea, and thus cannot be uncritically used as a term to translate the early Jewish sefer.
When applied to cultures and time periods other than our own, the term “book”
functions as a metaphor – transferring, whether we like it or not, aspects of one thing
onto another, necessarily distorting or obscuring something even as it describes. Even

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19 Hayles, “Translating Media,” 263. The only published work I have encountered that attempts such a
comparison is S.B. Noegel, “Text, Script, and Media: New Observations on Scribal Activity in the Ancient
20 For an earlier articulation of this idea see my article, “Thinking Digitally About the Dead Sea Scrolls:
if we pay lip service to the idea that the concept of “book” is misleading, our bookish ideas still shape our thinking. To call early Jewish texts “books” – to speak of a “Book of Psalms” or “Book of Ben Sira” in the ancient Jewish world – is to use figurative language. Other metaphors are now possible, taken from the realm of digital text. These metaphors will, of course, break down as well – like “book,” they will obscure some aspects of the textual imagination while highlighting others. However, looking at ancient writing through the lens of another textual culture, where the relationship between material objects, authors, and texts is quite different than in the “book,” can help us imagine just how differently texuality could have been conceptualized.

What, then, is a sefer in its own imaginal context? Translating “scroll” rather than “book” seems more appropriate. While “book” brings in all the conceptual contexts associated with a text of a certain length that is the intellectual property of an author (“I am writing a book,” “I have read that book”), sefer connotes the physical medium of written transmission that is not precisely identified with its textual content (“read in the scroll,” Jer 36:8, 10, 13; “blot out of the scroll,” Exod 32:33-34, Ps 69:29, “inscribe in a scroll,” Isa 30:8). Sefer can also mean a letter or official written request (2 Sam 11:14-15, 2 Chron 32:17) or a legal document (Deut 24:13, Jer 32:11-12). Ezra’s reading from a “Scroll of the Law of Moses” in Neh 8 emphasizes the physical presence of the text, displayed as a symbol for the community of the Return. The broad range of the word sefer seems to suggest physical, written communication, rather than a conceptual category that implies an intellectual product and textual unity and identity.
Why the Psalms Scroll?

A study of the collection in the Psalms Scroll is a promising path into questions about concepts of text and writing. It appears to be both an authoritative text with claims to revealed status (both through its connection to the “authorial” figure of David and through its evocation of other textual traditions), as well as a liturgical and instructional composition with close links to both canonical and non-canonical texts. The presence of many of the compositions in other textual contexts gives us a window into ways that ancient scribes and communities re-contextualized their texts in the process of transmission and use. The Psalms Scroll gives us a rich example of the ways that scripture formation, learning and liturgy, and the transmission of traditions are linked. Through the prose piece in col. 27 that depicts David as scribal figure, it also gives us a glimpse into the way ancient scribes themselves imagined writing.

Since its discovery, scholars have been working to describe and categorize this collection. Its significant differences from the canonical Book of Psalms, in both organization and “additional, non-canonical” compositions, were the catalyst for much early scholarship that attempted to understand the collection in the context of what was then known about the formation of the biblical text and the social/political history of Second Temple Judaism. That is, the first generation of scholars struggled to identify the Scroll as a scriptural or non-scriptural text, and, for the most part, understood it as
the product of a sectarian community set apart from “mainstream” early Judaism.\textsuperscript{21}

They made profound, pioneering contributions to the field, and began to redraw the textual landscape of Second Temple Judaism as it was then understood. For example, the work of James A. Sanders, who argued, against many critics, that the Scroll was a scriptural collection compiled by the sectarianists of Qumran at a time when the last part of the Psalter was not yet fixed and accepted, forced scholarship to imagine a different chronology of canon formation and began to destabilize the centrality of the Masoretic Text as the sole measure of what is biblical.\textsuperscript{22}

Further development of the field would have been impossible without the early work of scholars such as Sanders, who used the newly discovered texts to revise the established story of the biblical canon. Indeed, the work of this first generation of scholars has shaped the field, and has remained influential in many ways. At this point in the history of the field, however, the very questions and categories by which scholars have tried to define the texts need to be reformulated, based on the very findings of those early studies. What does it mean to ask if a text is scriptural when there is no longer a firm standard of comparison, such as the MT, but when authoritative materials existed in a variety of versions, when texts that are not in the canon seemed to enjoy high status, and when texts that we recognize as scripture and those that are ostensibly non-scriptural seem to display the same authorizing strategies and function similarly in a community?

\textsuperscript{21} See the history of scholarship as presented in P.W. Flint, \textit{The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms} (Leiden: Brill, 1997), and Chapter One of this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{22} See Chapter One.
To reformulate what scripture is based on the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls, then, is not simply to revise our chronology of when scriptural texts became fixed and accepted, or to accept that other texts beside the MT canon could be scriptural, as much as these were foundational steps in the history of scholarship. Rather, the next step is to rethink the very category of the “scriptural book,” reflecting on what, if anything, this concept would have meant in the communities that produced and used the texts. In my study, I would like to think about the Psalms Scroll against the background of these developments in the field, exemplified by such scholars as García Martínez, who challenges us to allow the textual evidence to reformulate key scholarly categories and definitions of textual authority, authorship, authenticity, and provenance.\(^{23}\)

**Two Ways of Unbinding the Psalms**

Building upon this work and underpinning it with theoretical insights from Book History, I present a “biography” of 11QPsalms\(^{3}\) – a study of its identity, assembly, and literary context – as an example of the ancient Jewish textual imagination.

I seek to “unbind” the Psalms in two ways. The first is to take seriously what Second Temple texts themselves say about their own “writtenness.” This means investigating the metaphors used and the narratives told by the ancient writers that can shed light on how they imagined the nature and process of writing. While the way scholars named and categorized texts (by title, genre, provenance, author, etc.) remains

\(^{23}\) See most recently García Martínez, “The Voice of the Teacher.”
necessary and helpful, their imaginative life in ancient Judaism shows a complex picture. Writing was polyvocal, undefined, angelic, hidden, powerful, and significant for its physical presence, not only its textual content; and ideas about its authority, legitimacy, categorization, and origins are quite different from our own. As Robert Kraft reminds us, texts emerge and function in a paratextual world that is far broader and richer than what has survived.\textsuperscript{24} From the writing bound up for a future time in Isaiah 8, through the many patriarchal books reported in \textit{Jubilees}, and, of course, the 4,050 compositions of David, understanding the life of writing in the Jewish literary imagination\textsuperscript{25} gives us insight into the ideas that shaped the way the Psalms Scroll and other texts were produced and received.

The second way is to develop new metaphors that will invigorate our understanding of the ancient texts. Although questioning anachronistic categories is my key goal here, I also argue that using models from another cultural domain can be helpful for refocusing our questions and for conceptualizing text production in fresh ways. If, as I have argued, in the ancient context the concept of a “book” is itself a metaphor (albeit an old one, with a religious and scholarly pedigree), then it seems equally appropriate to try out concepts from new, post-book textualities – for example, networks, databases, and projects. While these are only imperfect analogies, digital text does show the possibility – and the implications – of unbinding texts from between the

\textsuperscript{24} R.A. Kraft, “Para-Mania,” 22.

covers of a codex, and of detaching the figure of the author from the individual ownership of a defined written work.

**Overview of Chapters**

The dissertation is divided into five chapters and a substantive conclusion.

In *Chapter One, “The ‘Book of Psalms’ and the Identity of 11QPsalms*,” I focus on the Psalms Scroll as a whole, engaging prior scholarship about the nature and status of the collection. I argue that based on both discursive and physical evidence, the very idea of a “Psalter” or “Book of Psalms” is an anachronistic concept that does not reflect the way ancient communities themselves understood written traditions of psalmody. In other words, there was no such thing as “The Book of Psalms” in the Second Temple period, and so this idea can no longer be the point of departure for defining and categorizing ancient psalm collections. Psalms traditions were conceived not in terms of a coherent “book” with a fixed identity and limits, but as looser, overlapping collections without definite boundaries. I discuss the various explanations that have been proposed for the arrangement of the collection, and argue that rather than a single organizational framework, the collection testifies to a process of organic growth. In this chapter I also introduce the value of digital textuality as a helpful analogy that makes it possible to imagine texts outside and beyond the bounds of a “book,” as textual archives, databases, and projects.

The process of compilation is illustrated in *Chapter Two, “Text, Para-Text, and the Making of a Collection: The 'Non-canonical' Compositions.”* I examine each of
the non-Masoretic compositions in the Psalms Scroll. I will claim that various interpretive and thematic principles govern the way they are interwoven into the collection. Scholarly claims that the non-MT texts were believed by their compilers to be of Davidic provenance are insufficient in light of the polyphonic nature of this collection (or, indeed, of the canonical book of Psalms). In this chapter, I pay particular attention to the final columns of the scroll, which have been invariably labeled as “additional” or “epilogic” paratexts that are not truly part of the psalmic collection itself. I show how these labels are based on assumptions about how to distinguish between liturgical and non-liturgical texts that do not necessarily reflect the way ancient communities received them, as well as assumptions about the psalms collection as a coherent entity with definite boundaries. A major element of Chapter Two is my reading of “David’s Compositions,” the prose piece in column 27, as a literary and possibly liturgical text, and not paratextual colophon asserting Davidic authorship of the Psalms.

This re-consideration of authorship is developed in Chapter Three, “Davidic Traditions and Imagining Psalms in Early Judaism.” Along with a closer reading of “David’s Compositions,” I examine a selection of other texts that illuminate the relationship between the figure of David, liturgical traditions, and writing in the early Jewish imagination. My major argument is that just as there was no “Book of Psalms” in the Second Temple period, so it is also misleading to speak of a tradition of Davidic authorship of the psalms. David is an inaugurator of liturgical traditions, and writings that are linked with him in the ancient imagination cannot be identified with anything like what we would call the Book of Psalms, but are varied and undefined. Thus,
references to David in early Jewish literature, while often used by scholars to support specific historical claims about the formation or authority of the Book of Psalms and the shape of scripture in general, must be understood in the context of this broader interpretive tradition about David and liturgy.

In the remaining chapters, I look at two other textual traditions alongside the Psalms Scroll to further illuminate concepts of writing and authorship: Ben Sira and Enochic literature along with a broader set of traditions about heavenly ascent. The literary links between the Psalms Scroll and these texts show that regardless of their genres or later canonical status, or even ideological or political concerns, texts did not develop in isolation from one another, but were created and received within a broader matrix. Despite their many differences, the texts participate in the same universe of ideas about the nature of written tradition.

Chapters Four and Five shed light on the “book culture” in which the Psalms Scroll developed in two different ways. In Chapter Four, “Ben Sira’s Project and the Textual Context of the Psalms Scroll,” I discuss how the book of Ben Sira can shed light on the way writing was imagined, and how it can illuminate the Psalms Scroll as well. While Ben Sira has long been understood as a unique text in the history of Jewish writing because its author identifies himself by name, I show that Ben Sira does not understand himself as an individual author writing an original book. Rather, his reflections about the nature of the scribal task, and the literary language he uses to describe the transmission of wisdom as a river, show that he inscribes himself in a long process that neither begins nor ends with his own life; and so, that his work is imagined as neither original nor complete, but a continuous project. Writing is collective and
open-ended, to be carried on by the sage’s students in future generations, and the sense of Ben Sira as an individual authorial personality is not clear in the Hebrew text. These ideas about writing are reflected in the compositional history of the text and in the rabbinic reception of Ben Sira as a figure and a written tradition, and they challenge modern editorial practices that seek to establish an “authentic” or authoritative text of Ben Sira. I connect this discussion to the complex relationship between David and psalms traditions in early Judaism period and to the scholarly debates about the compositional history of the Psalms Scroll.

My discussion in Chapter Five, “Enochic Traditions, Angelic Transformation, and the Imaginal Context of the Psalms Scroll” interrogates concepts of authenticity and authority from the perspective of texts that feature heavenly ascent and angelic writing. I discuss the character of Enoch as a scribal sage and heavenly figure as analogous to the way the figure of David also developed over time, beginning with some striking parallels between the ways these characters are described. Based on clues from a broad range of texts, I argue for the existence of an interpretive tradition that ascribed angelic characteristics and angelic ascent to David. Traditions of angelic ascent, then, become an important context in which to consider the development of the Psalms Scroll. Angelic or heavenly writing becomes a key way in which written tradition is authorized and imagined: all “scribal” figures are, at some point, “angelified” and placed in heaven. Connected with the widespread motif in liturgical texts that has human worshippers identifying with angels in prayer and song, the idea of an angelic David can, I think, shed new light on how it is possible to produce new “Davidic” liturgical materials. The pseudepigraphic enterprise becomes not only a way of invoking a past figure and time,
but also, temporarily, accessing a heavenly space where these angelic originators still dwell.

My discussion of both Ben Sira and the ascent traditions show that ancient conceptions of the authenticity or legitimacy of writing are quite different from our own: they are not necessarily tied to the historical, individual identity of an authorial figure. These comparisons give further support to my claims from the first three chapters that Second Temple texts were not developed and categorized according to modern concepts of books and authors.

I conclude with a gesture toward one Nachleben of psalmic and Davidic traditions in a much later context. Since the Psalms Scroll includes three texts also known from the so-called “Syriac Apocryphal Psalms,” the Syriac tradition is a natural context in which to explore the recollection of these materials and their post-canonical reception. Here, I begin to ask how David, the nature of psalm traditions, and the shape of scripture were imagined in a post-canonical world, and to what extent the fixing of the biblical canon transforms the story I have told about writing and the world of texts in antiquity.
Chapter One

THE “BOOK OF PSALMS” AND THE IDENTITY OF 11QPSALMS¹

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss what the manuscript of 11QPsalms¹ can tell us about the way the Psalms as a textual tradition were understood. Since its discovery, scholarly discussion of this scroll has focused on two related issues: its status as a text, and its putative authorial attribution. First is the question of its status and identity. Given its radically different arrangement from the Masoretic Psalter, and the presence of ten compositions not found among the biblical psalms, what is this scroll? Is it a version of the scriptural book of Psalms, or another kind of composition, perhaps a liturgical document?

The second issue is the Scroll’s attribution, which arises from a remarkable prose composition, the so-called “insertion” in col. 27 that celebrates David as a psalmist. He is called a sage (חכם) and scribe (סופר) responsible for writing a total of 4,050 songs and psalms in accordance with the solar year – psalms that he spoke (דבר) through prophecy (בנבואה).¹ Given this passage, the earliest text that presents David as a psalm writer, scholars have interpreted the scroll to be attributed to David.² For those who understand the Scroll as a version of the Book of Psalms, this putative claim to Davidic authorship supports its scriptural status; for others, who consider it a liturgical

¹ I quote the Hebrew text and translation in its entirety on p. 1.
² Authorial attribution to David is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.
document, the very presence of such a composition is incompatible with a scriptural Psalter.

As I will show in this dissertation, these two dominant issues are based on concepts of books and authors that are not applicable to the Second Temple period. In this chapter, I engage the first question: In light of its differences from the Masoretic Book of Psalms, in the context of other psalms manuscripts from Qumran, and considering what we know about the use and status of psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls, what is 11QPsalmss? Is it a version of the Book of Psalms, or should it be classified as another kind of document?

Based on the physical and literary evidence, I argue in Part I that the very idea of a “Psalter” or “Book of Psalms,” while it is used as a starting axiom or definition in much Qumran scholarship, is an anachronistic concept that does not reflect the way that written traditions of psalmody were imagined in the Second Temple period. The concept of a “Book of Psalms” reflects presuppositions that are not only post-canonical, but also post-codex and post-print. To dislodge such notions, I offer analogies and metaphors from digital text culture as an alternative way to imagine written psalm traditions, to unbind our thinking from the confines of the book.

Then, in Part II, I discuss the way that the arrangement of this collection has been interpreted in scholarship. The order of compositions, and its difference from the Masoretic Psalter, has been used to define and categorize the text in terms of its provenance, authoritative status, and function in the community. The question has been whether they signify that the scroll represents a scriptural text or a secondary collection dependent on an already authoritative, accepted MT-type Psalter. I will argue that the
way the question is framed, around concepts of authorized scripture and
derivative/dependent texts, also does not resonate with what the texts themselves tell
us about ancient concepts of textuality, textual development and authority in Jewish
antiquity.

Part I: The Psalms Scroll and the “Book of Psalms” at Qumran

1. 11QPsalms\* and Counting the Psalms at Qumran

11QPsalms\* is one of the best preserved Qumran texts, and the most extensive of
the Psalms manuscripts.\(^3\) The compositions are written in prose format with the
exception of the stichometric layout of the acrostic Ps 119; the orthography is expanded;
and the divine name is written in Palaeo-Hebrew characters. The clear scribal hand has
been dated to around 30 – 50 C.E.\(^4\) The manuscript comprises four fragments containing
Pss 101, 102 and 109, plus a continuous scroll with the remainder of the compositions.

At about 5 m, it is one the longest scrolls from Qumran.\(^5\)

Unusually for Qumran scrolls, we can be sure about the end of the scroll and
make a reasonably justified inference about its beginning. The end of the scroll, a blank
column following Ps 151B, is extant, so we know that the collection ended the same way
the Septuagint Psalms do – with Ps 151,\(^6\) which here exists as two different

\(^3\) Sanders, Psalms Scroll, DJD 4; see also Sanders, The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University
Press, 1967); detailed lists of the contents of the scroll can be found in P. W. Flint, The Dead Sea Psalms
Scrolls and the Book of Psalms.

\(^4\) See Sanders, Psalms Scroll, DJD 4, 6-9; Dead Sea Psalms Scroll, 6.

\(^5\) Sanders, Psalms Scroll, DJD 4, 4; Flint, Psalms Scrolls, 40, 40 n. 85. Two scrolls are substantially longer:
1Qlsa\* (nearly 7.5 m) and 11QT (originally about 9 m). See E. Tov, “The Dimensions of the Qumran

\(^6\) Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 40, and Plate VII.
compositions that, in Greek, have merged into one. As for the beginning, the four fragments containing Pss 101, 102 and 109 are not complete, but it seems likely that Ps 101 on frag. A was indeed the first composition in the original scroll, as first argued in detail by Patrick Skehan. Skehan pointed out that the top margin of the scroll is preserved, and that Ps 101 begins on the right margin; because of this unique placement of the text in relation to the margin, it is very likely that Ps 101 was the first composition on the scroll.

The scroll contains ten compositions absent from the Masoretic Book of Psalms:

1. Catena (col. 16:1-6)
2. Ps 154:3-19 (col. 18:1-16)
5. Apostrophe to Zion (col. 22:1-15)
6. Ps 155 (col. 24:3-17)
7. Hymn to the Creator (col. 26:9-15)
8. David’s Last Words//2 Sam 23:1-7 (col. 27:1)
9. David’s Compositions (col. 27:2-11)
10. Ps 151 a and b (col. 28:3-12, 13-14)

The remaining psalms on the scroll come from Books III-V, or the final fifty psalms (plus Ps 93) of the Masoretic Book of Psalms; however, they are arranged in a completely different order. Flint’s reconstruction of the original scope and contents of the scroll is illustrated in the table on the following page.

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## The Original Contents of 11QPsalms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Fragment</th>
<th>Estimated Original Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>a-c i</td>
<td>101:1-102:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li</td>
<td>c ii</td>
<td>102:18-103:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>missing</td>
<td>103:16-22 → 109:1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>missing</td>
<td>114:6-116:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi</td>
<td>missing</td>
<td>116:12-118:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td>e i</td>
<td>118:25-29 → 104:1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td>e ii</td>
<td>104:21-35 → 147:1-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix</td>
<td>e iii</td>
<td>147:18-20 → 105:1-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>105:24-45 → 146:1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>146:9-10 → 148:1-14 → 120:1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>121:1-124:7</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>124:7-128:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>128:3-132:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>132:8-18 → 119:1-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>119:15-36</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>119:37-58</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>119:59-81</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>119:82-104</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>119:105-127</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>119:128-149</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>119:150-170</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>119:171-176 → 135:1-7</td>
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<td>main</td>
<td>135:17-136:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>136:26 (with Catena) → 145:1-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>145:13-21 (with Postscript) → 154:1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>154:3-20 → Plea for Deliverance (4 lines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>Plea for Deliverance → 139:1-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>main</td>
<td>139:8-24 → 137:1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>137:9-138:8 → Sir 51:1-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Sir 51:23 → Apostrophe to Zion → 93:1-5 → 141:1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>141:5-10 → 133:1-3 → 144:1-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>144:15 → 155:1-21 → 142:1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>144:4-143:1-12 → 149:1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>149:7-150:6 → Hymn to the Creator 1-10 → 2Sam 23:1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>2Sam 23:7 → David’s Compositions → 140:1-14 → 134:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>134:1-3 → 151A → 151B:1-end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Blank column (end of manuscript)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on P.W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 190. Lower case roman letters indicate columns on the smaller fragments; upper case, the main fragment of the scroll. Arrows (→) indicate passages that are continuous with one another. This is an estimation of the original contents of the Scroll; for the exact surviving contents, see Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, Appendix 4, 260-62.
This outline of the scope and contents of the collection is accepted by most scholars. One notable exception is Michael Chyutin, who seems to assume that the scroll originally contained most of the first part of what became the Masoretic Psalter.\(^8\) However, this would mean that the original scroll would have been extremely long;\(^9\) as it is, the extant Psalms Scroll is already one of the longest found at Qumran. The first few columns are fragmentary, so it is not outside the realm of possibility that earlier portions of the manuscript have not been preserved, but it is most likely that Skehan’s initial assessment of the beginning of the scroll is correct and, therefore, that it originally contained compositions from what became the final one-third (plus Ps 93) of the Masoretic Psalter.\(^8\)

This seems especially likely given the distribution of compositions in the other Psalms manuscripts found at Qumran:\(^10\) only five manuscripts (1QPs\(^a\), 4QPS\(^e\), 4QPs\(^f\), 11QPs\(^b\), and 11QPs\(^c\)) preserve compositions from both Pss 1-89 and 90-150. While the evidence is extremely fragmentary, it seems likely, based on the preserved evidence and the usual length of scrolls,\(^11\) that the former and latter parts of what we know as the MT Psalter often existed as physically separate collections. Peter Flint also points out that

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\(^8\) Chyutin’s assumption is not based on any physical evidence, but necessitated by his reconstruction of the collection based on the “catalogue” in col. 27. He imagines the collection to be rigidly fixed in terms of the number of its compositions and their arrangement. B.Z. Wacholder posits that Ps 100 was the first composition, but this is unlikely since Ps 101 begins on the top of the sheet, and Ps 100 would not have filled up the entire column before it, if one had existed. Both Chyutin’s and Wacholder’s reconstructions of the scroll’s contents will be discussed below.

\(^9\) See Tov, “Dimensions.”

\(^10\) See Flint’s comprehensive survey of all scrolls containing psalms, with extensive bibliography up to 1997, in “Chapter 2: A Survey of the Psalms Scrolls,” *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 27-49; on their arrangement and diversity, in comparison with the *Hodayot*, see most recently A. Lange, “Collecting Psalms in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam* (eds E. Mason et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1.297-307. Lange observes that for psalms as well as for *Hodayot*, individual compositions are relatively stable, while inventory and sequence vary greatly from collection to collection.

\(^11\) Tov, “Dimensions.”
Psalms collections of different scopes existed, for example, that 4QPsalsms\textsuperscript{b} could well have ended with Ps 118, and that 1QPs\textsuperscript{b} may only have contained the Psalms of Ascent.\textsuperscript{12} Some scrolls contained Ps 119 alone.\textsuperscript{13}

Given these different extents and contents of the Psalms scrolls, we must think twice about what we mean when we repeat familiar statements from scholarship on the Qumran Psalms, such as that there are 36 manuscripts of the Psalms among the Dead Sea Scrolls (39 including the manuscripts discovered at other locations in the Judean Desert, Wadi Muraba'at, Nahal Hever, and Masada),\textsuperscript{14} or that there are more copies of the Psalms at Qumran than any other biblical book. In the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, for instance, the first sentence of Flint’s entry on the Psalms reads:

> Among the Dead Sea Scrolls the *Book of Psalms* is represented more frequently than any other work, which is indicative of the importance of the Psalter for the Qumran Community.\textsuperscript{15}

Flint also concludes that

> [w]hen the full panoply of thirty-nine Psalms scrolls is taken into consideration, the following items seem clear: the Psalter is very well attested among the scrolls...\textsuperscript{16}

Although ubiquitous, these are misleading claims; these scrolls did not contain all the psalms we think of as constituting “the Psalms” or “the Psalter,” but compositions that

\textsuperscript{12} Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 48 (ch. 2, 3.2, 2.2).
\textsuperscript{13} 4QPs\textsuperscript{b}, 4QPs\textsuperscript{h}, 5QPs; Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 35.
\textsuperscript{14} Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 2, 27.
\textsuperscript{15} Flint, “Psalms, Book of: Biblical Text,” *EDSS* 702.
appear in one part of another of that collection as we know it. While Flint is certainly acutely aware of this situation, his language paints an overly simple picture.\textsuperscript{17}

Besides their varying extents, the contents and arrangements of these manuscripts are also difficult to subsume under the name of a single “book.” 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a}, of course, includes ten compositions not found in the MT; more generally, among Qumran scrolls and fragments that have been listed as Psalms, 16 non-Masoretic compositions are attested among five manuscripts (especially 11QPs\textsuperscript{a}, but also 4QPs\textsuperscript{f}, 4Q522, 11QPs\textsuperscript{b}, and 11QPsalmsAp\textsuperscript{a}).\textsuperscript{18} 11QPs\textsuperscript{b}, like 11QPs\textsuperscript{a}, contains the sequence of Pss 141, 133, and 144 and includes the non-Masoretic Catena, Plea for Deliverance and Apostrophe to Zion, but also preserves Ps 77, which is absent from the Psalms Scroll.

4QPsalms\textsuperscript{f} contains Ps 22, 107, 109, the Apostrophe to Zion, and two other non-MT texts not found in any other source – the Eschatological Hymn and the Apostrophe to Judah.

As is well known, 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a} presents the psalms in a radically different order from the MT. Indeed, only two psalm groupings appear to be shared by both traditions, and only one of these is actually extant in the manuscript. The longest shared chain contains thirteen Psalms of Ascent, Pss 120-132 (120 is conjectured, but 121-132 are extant in columns 2 through 6); the remaining Psalms of Ascent, 133 and 134, appear later in the collection. It is also assumed that the Passover Hallel, 113-118, was also a shared grouping, although only part of 118 is extant on the scroll, and the presence and


\textsuperscript{18} All the non-Masoretic compositions are published in Flint, "Appendix 1 – ‘Apocryphal’ Psalms and Other Compositions," Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 243-51.
order of the rest must be reconstructed for the missing columns 5 and 6. No other sequence of more than three psalms is the same as in the MT.\textsuperscript{19}

Most of the other manuscripts are too fragmentary to comment in a meaningful way on their arrangement compared to the MT and 11QPs.\textsuperscript{a} Those manuscripts that contain Pss 1-89 do not contain structural differences from the Masoretic text, but for the compositions from the latter part of the Psalter the situation is much more fluid, and the order of these compositions contradicts that in the MT more often than it reflects it.\textsuperscript{20} This situation gave rise to Sanders’ theory of the gradual stabilization of the Book of Psalms,\textsuperscript{21} which was reformulated by Flint, who speaks of the stabilization of the Psalter in two distinct stages;\textsuperscript{22} for both scholars, the Qumran evidence represents a point in time when the latter part of the Psalter was still in a state of flux. Indeed, Peter Flint, in his assessment of all the Psalms scrolls from Qumran, comments that no manuscript witnesses unequivocally to the Masoretic arrangement of the last fifty psalms.\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{20}See the statistics presented by Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 238: for Pss 1-89 the order of compositions \textit{vis-à-vis} the MT is 92\% supportive and 8\% contradictory; for Pss 90 onward, the contiguous psalms are 40\% supportive and 60\% contradictory.


\textsuperscript{22}Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 149, 150-171.

\textsuperscript{23}Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 239.
2. The Non-Attestation of “the Book of Psalms” in the Second Temple Period

The arrangement of the scroll, the principles behind it, and its implications for the nature and function of the collection will be discussed more fully in the following section. For now, however, my purpose is to point out that based solely on the extant – admittedly fragmentary – evidence, no sense of a “Book of Psalms” as a coherent and bounded document emerges. This is not only to say that this book was not yet fully fixed and existed in several versions, or that the 150-compositions Masoretic-type Psalter was not yet finalized; rather, I mean to make a stronger claim about the very concept of a “Book of Psalms” in the first place. The different manuscripts containing psalms differ in their scope and extent (where they begin and end), and in many cases, their contents and arrangement. Is it warranted to use the term “Book of Psalms” as a category at all when speaking of psalm collections in the Second Temple period? If not, how do we talk about the way psalms-as-text were conceived by the scribes and communities who compiled and used them, and what implications does this have for the way we formulate our scholarly questions about these texts?

In light of the manuscript evidence, there does not appear to be a sense of a “Psalter” as a “book” – as a coherent collection – in this time. The ubiquitous claim that the Psalms exist in more copies than any other biblical “book” is flawed, because these 36 scrolls are not copies of one text or one collection. Some contain selections from what later became the first part of the canonical Psalter, some from the last, and a few contain compositions from both; their arrangements and inclusion of other, non-Masoretic compositions vary. These manuscripts, then, do not represent the “Book of Psalms,” but,
rather, collections that are reminiscent of different parts and versions of the familiar collection we now know as the Masoretic Psalter.

Literary references attesting to the concept of a “Book of Psalms are also lacking. The term מִסְרָת הַתּוֹלִים is attested in Rabbinic literature, and the term βιβλος ψαλμων is found in twice in the New Testament, in Luke 20:42 and Acts 1:20. But there is no literary evidence of such a concept in any earlier materials. Among the Qumran texts, there is one single reference to התהלים in a recension of the War Scroll (4Q491 frag 17 line 4):

24 B. Baba Bathra 14b, Genesis Rabbah 68 and 74, B. Soferim 16:17, Y. Baba Bathra 13a, Y. Keth. 13 35a (cf. Jastrow, 1649).


26 M. Baillet, Qumrân Grotte 4 III (4Q482-4Q520) (DJD 7; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 40-41.
... and to the whole army [...] Blank and after [...] the Book of Psalms, and after [...] and blessing. Thus shall they do to[wards [...] for a burning [...] and a remnant[ant ...] like th[is...]

García Martínez and Tigchelaar’s translation renders ספר התהלים as “the Book of Psalms,” capitalized to indicate a title, while Baillet's translation reads “le livre des Psaumes.” Baillet writes:

*S’il s’agit vraiment du livre biblique des Psaumes, nous avons ici la plus ancienne attestation de son titre, tel qu’il a été conservé par la tradition juive.*

However, the text is so damaged that it is impossible to determine the context or meaning of the reference, and, since it has no parallel anywhere else in Second Temple texts, we cannot assume it refers to the “Book of Psalms” as such. The word התהלים may be understood in a broader generic sense, not merely as one of the compositions in the Psalter. 1QM makes reference to a תהלת and a תהלת inscribed on a banner, one of the divine paraphernalia to be used in the final war, in 4:14. Indeed, Peter Flint reports a communication with F. García Martínez, who suggests that it may not refer to anything like the “Book of Psalms” but to songs and hymns to be sung at the time of the eschatological battle.

Baillet observes that chronologically, the next extant attestation of a “Book of Psalms” occurs in Greek in Luke and Acts. He also cites attestations of the Hebrew ספר התהלים transliterated in Greek in a variety of ways in Christian texts: in a text attributed to

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28 Baillet, Qumrân Grotte 4 III, DJD 7, 41.
29 See Flint, 23, note 56: “With respect to this passage, Florentino García Martínez suggests (by letter) that ספר התהלים may be referring not to the Book of Psalms at all, but to a collection of prayers or hymns that will be used in the War.”
Hippolytus; in a gloss of a hexaplaric palimpsest; and in Eusebius.\textsuperscript{31} No earlier evidence exists. However, in his introductory assessment of appropriate terminology for the materials that he surveys in his study,\textsuperscript{32} Flint writes as follows:

‘Book of Psalms’ seems very appropriate for the Qumran period, since this term is attested in the scrolls and because the Psalms as a collection were regarded as Scripture by the community.\textsuperscript{33}

Flint’s comment is puzzling given that the one attestation in the War Scroll fragment is out of context, unclear, and without parallel in any other, even roughly contemporary text. But even if the title of the Book of Psalms is not clearly attested, what do we make of Flint’s second point – that “the Psalms as a collection were regarded as Scripture by the community”?

There is no question that Psalms were regarded as authoritative and divinely inspired scripture, and they were read, copied and interpreted as such. The reference to David writing 4,050 psalms and songs “through prophecy” in col. 27 supports this, as does the existence of three manuscripts containing pesharim on psalms that interpret them as prophetic for the fate of the community,\textsuperscript{34} much like the pesharim on the prophetic books themselves. But what do these documents tell us about the concept of a “Book of Psalms” as a category, or the conceptualization of the Psalms as a coherent and/or specific collection?

\textsuperscript{32} Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 13-26.
\textsuperscript{33} Flint, 26. Flint does write that “the ‘Book of Psalms’ is not necessarily to be equated with the MT-150 Psalter.”
The most extensive text is 4Q171 (4Q *Pesher Psalms*), which contains a commentary on Ps 37 (featuring the familiar cast of characters, the Wicked Priest and the Man of the Lie) in columns 1-3; near the end of column 4 the scribe has left a blank space, and then begun a commentary on Ps 45. Column 5 of the manuscript (frag 13) contains part of Ps 60. The other Cave Four Psalms *pesher*, 4Q173 (4Q*Psalms Pesher*), has survived in only a few scraps and contains commentary on Pss 118, 127, and 129. Another fragmentary *pesher* text was found in Cave 1 (1Q16, 1Q*Pesher to Psalms*), and contains comments on Ps 68 only. These *pesharim* indicate that the Psalms the scribes have chosen to comment upon were considered authoritative, prophetic texts. But only seven psalms appear in these documents, scattered over three manuscripts in two different caves, and presented in a way that does not reflect their Masoretic order. Psalms were authoritative scripture, but does that indicate that they had to be a *book*? There is no information in the *pesharim* about the way the psalms were conceived *as a collection* – we have Psalms, but we do not have the Psalms; therefore, support for Flint’s statement that “the Book of Psalms” is an appropriate term is lacking.

Two more Qumran passages may seem to indicate evidence for a “Book of Psalms” as a concept: 4QMMT and “David’s Compositions” in 11QPsalms. The reconstructed composite text of 4QMMTd and 4QMMTe in DJD 10 reads:

\[
\text{אף...}
\]

\[
\text{ובדוי ביאים}
\]

\[
\text{הנ}
\]

\[
\text{בספר בו}
\]

\[
\text{מושה}
\]

\[
\text{בבשנים}
\]

\[
\text{שתבין אליכה}
\]

\[
\text{שישמש}
\]

\[
\text{ודור דór דór במשעי}
\]

The translation offered in DJD is:

\[9\text{...And} \]

\[10\text{we have [written] to you so that you may study (carefully) the book of Moses and the books of the Prophets and (the writings of) David [and the] events of ages past.}\]

\[11\text{[משעי דór זór ווור.]}

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\[35\text{E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4.V: Miqṣat Ma’ase Ha-Torah* (DJD 10; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).}\]
This text has often been used to support the idea of a tripartite canon in Second Temple Judaism. However, the reference to the “books or Moses, the Prophets, and David” is based on a very dubious reconstruction of some badly damaged, non-contiguous fragments. But even if we do accept the reconstructed text as it stands in DJD, it tells us nothing but that there were writings linked with the figure of David, a point that is not in question. In Chapter Three, I show that in the context of contemporary traditions, writings connected to David do not necessarily need to be identified as psalms, and make a case for understanding this text from 4QMMT (if this was indeed the original reading) in a different way.

What about the prose piece in col. 27 of the Psalms Scroll, which tells us that David “wrote Psalms”? This text does indicate that Psalms were considered prophetic, inspired speech; but according to this text, David did not write “the book of Psalms,” or even “the Psalms,” but simply “Psalms.” The claim is both grammatically and conceptually indefinite, and refers to no particular “book.” At 4,050 compositions, David’s scribal/literary activity is legendary – so vast, in fact, that it could not possibly be contained in a book at all. I will discuss the link between David and psalm-writing in

37 The idea of writings linked with David (the identity of the texts and the nature of the link) will be discussed in Chapter Two, where I discuss 4QMMT, among other relevant texts.
38 However, the spectre of a 150-composition Book of Psalms looms large in scholarship on this text, becoming the hermeneutical lens for understanding the number of texts ascribed to David in the Qumran scroll. Skehan and Wacholder offer complex explanations for the enumeration of David's compositions, maintaining that the 3600 psalms are divisible by 150, the “traditional” number of Psalms (“David’s Eschatological Psalter”). But there is no evidence that the Psalter as a coherent and bounded document was an operative concept, and neither is there evidence that 150 was the traditional number, besides traditions from the Septuagint (e.g. the LXX superscription to Ps 151) that cannot be securely dated early (Flint’s study of the relationship between 11 QPss and the LXX Psalter, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 228-36, includes only an analysis textual variants in the individual compositions, but contains no discussion of inventory and arrangement). This interpretation and its significance in the context of Skehan and Wacholder’s more general assessments of the nature and status of the scroll will be discussed below.
Chapter Three; for now, it is sufficient to note that the “Book of Psalms” is not an operative concept in this text either.

The concept of “the Book of Psalms” can be deduced neither from the physical manuscript evidence, nor from any contemporary literary references. It is a concept taken from a later, post-canonical time, when it is possible to speak of the Psalter as one book of 150 (or, in the Greek, 151) compositions. While psalms were certainly being copied and accorded great authority in the Second Temple period, and while there is evidence for the de facto stabilization and copying of the arrangement of the first 89 or so compositions,39 I see no evidence that “The Book of Psalms” or ”The Psalter” was operative as a concept, as a way of defining and categorizing psalms as written texts, at all.

It is possible, in the Second Temple period, to imagine authoritative writings or divinely inspired text without binding it into a book, but in terms of looser, perhaps scattered, overlapping, unbound pieces, clusters, and collections. When we speak of a “Book of Psalms” in the Second Temple period, we are retrojecting an ideal category on the evidence – evidence that never fits the category quite right, always falling short of or spilling beyond its borders. What our evidence may be telling us is that there was no such thing as the Book of Psalms in the Second Temple period.

Indeed, biblical scholars have long recognized the long period of development of the Book of Psalms as a collection of sub-collections. My argument for the lack of the idea of a single specific collection in the conceptual, imaginal world of ancient communities is in continuity with this story, told by scholars who focus not on classifying

39 See Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 148-49 on this partial textual stabilization of Pss 1-89.
and defining texts, but on tracing the history of their composition and use. In fact, noted biblical scholars who specialize in the Psalms, such as William Holladay and Susan Gillingham, seem to be more careful not to retroject later categories on the evidence from the Greco-Roman period than most Dead Sea Scrolls scholars have been. There is a practical reason for this tendency: the discovery of a new cache of manuscripts requires sorting, categorizing, and defining in order to publish the texts in an organized and usable way, and to generate a new vocabulary for previously unknown materials. Now that this work has been done, however, it is time to question that very organization and vocabulary, and to integrate Qumran scholarship into broader conversations about texts to which we have long had access.

3. Texts Beyond Books: Digital Text and the Psalms Unbound

If there was no concept of the Psalms as a book, as a coherent and bounded entity, how did ancient communities understand the psalms as text, as written tradition? For modern people, writing has been contained in and experienced through books – printed codices bound between two covers. But the connotations of such a medium are not appropriate to a scribal scroll culture, in which texts were experienced aurally by most people, authorial copyright did not exist, and copies of texts were not affordable or easily available. The idea of a “book” becomes a loaded metaphor, not a neutral

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40 G. Wilson is one notable exception. He studies the editorial shaping and compilation of both the biblical Book of Psalms and the Qumran Psalms collections as part of the same cultural practice; see discussion later in this chapter and in Chapter Two. For work that traces the development of the collections over the longue durée, see W. Holladay, The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), esp. ch. 5, 6, and 7, on the development and use of Psalms from the beginning of the Second Temple period through Qumran; and S. Gillingham, Psalms through the Centuries (Volume 1) (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

41 I presented an early form of these ideas in my article, “Thinking Digitally About the Dead Sea Scrolls: ‘Book History’ Before and Beyond the Book.”
designation, since it is so closely bound with the culture of print – and with the canonical idea of the Bible as the holy book.


\[\text{[t]he books of the Bible were not designed to be read as unities. They rather compare to archives. A biblical book is often like a box containing heterogeneous materials brought together on the assumption of common authorship, or chronology.}\] \footnote{van der Toorn, 16.}

In the introduction to his study, he writes that rather than thinking of books, we should imagine a “stream of tradition.” But yet, van der Toorn himself reverts to anachronistic “bookish” concepts in the body of his work. In particular, he speaks of the “publication” of the Book of Psalms in the second century B.C.E., as a response to Hellenism, and as a
result of the powerful scribes’ declaration that the era of prophecy and revelation had ended. This is not a new story, and does not deliver on the promises of a non-anachronistic picture of the development of biblical texts. Beyond the problems with the traditional idea of the “cessation of prophecy” that is repeated here, van der Toorn’s statement that the Book of Psalms was “published” is incomprehensible in the context of the Second Temple period; it is unclear what this concept might mean for that culture, or where evidence of such a moment or process may be found. If we consider ancient analogues to modern publishing – that is, making texts public – two possibilities come to mind: first, oral recitation by an authority figure to a community, such as public covenant renewal and ratification of the Law by a witnessing stone in Joshua 24:25-27, the reading of a scroll of the Torah by Ezra in Nehemiah 8, or the reading of the Greek translation of the scriptures in the Letter of Aristeas; and second, public display of the text, such as the command to display the Decalogue on doorposts and gates (Deut. 6:9).

Neither of these modes of publicizing texts resonate with the kind of “publication” van der Toorn seems to suggest for the Psalms.

Thus, even if we say that the concept of a modern book is misleading, our bookish ideas, informed by the culture of print and often unacknowledged, remain the basic categories through which we analyze the ancient material. If “book,” then, is not the right way to define, categorize, and understand the texts, what is? No compelling alternative metaphors and categories for thinking about ancient texts have been proposed. But new, post-print digital textualities have opened up new ways of thinking.

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46 van der Toorn, 259.
47 On this topic, the relevant sources, and the history of scholarship, see most recently by S.L. Cook, On the Question of the “Cessation of Prophecy” in Ancient Judaism (TSAJ 145; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).
and speaking about writing that can help us break out of our book- and print-centred categories and look at ancient texts in fresh ways. Since the 1990s, textual scholars have been attempting to rethink concepts of textuality in light of the new material and social conditions that govern the way electronic texts are produced, manipulated and consumed, and how they change our very understanding of the nature of written communication. Roger Chartier comments that “palimpsestic and polyphonic” digital texts “challenge the very possibility of recognizing a fundamental identity for a text.”

Chartier points out that the threefold link between a material object, a fixed text, and an author, contained in the concept of a book, is deconstructed in electronic textuality. He writes:

The electronic representation of texts completely changes the text’s status; for the materiality of the book, it substitutes the immateriality of texts without a unique location; against the relations of contiguity established in the print objects, it opposes the free composition of infinitely manipulable fragments; in place of the immediate apprehension of the whole work, made visible by the object that embodies it, it introduces a lengthy navigation in textual archipelagos that have neither shores nor borders.

Chartier’s characterization of the nature of electronic texts can be challenged, but what interests me here are the metaphors, the ways of speaking about texts that do not fit neatly into our idea of “books.” Instead of the “immediate apprehension of the whole work” in a single physical object, electronic texts are “textual archipelagos that have neither shores no borders.” The same might be said of the overlapping, multiform collections of psalms found among the Scrolls, collections that cannot be subsumed

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48 R. Chartier, “Languages, Books, and Reading from the Printed Word to the Digital Text.”
50 See Mroczek, “Thinking Digitally,” 238.
under the title of a single book, but exist in varying, overlapping scopes, are rearranged, and continue to be expanded.

Digital textuality, then, offers models for thinking about written materials that are not bound (literally and metaphorically) in “books” - that do not have a fixed or bounded identity. In her programmatic theoretical work on electronic text, N. Katherine Hayles suggests a reinvention of the idea of a written “work,” which would be understood in terms of texts “spread out along a spectrum of similarity and difference along which clusters would emerge.”51 From this follows her notion of “Work as Assemblage, a cluster of related texts that quote, comment upon, amplify and remediate one another.”52

Both Hayles’ notion of clusters and assemblages, and Chartier’s borderless, shoreless archipelagos, are helpful images for thinking about evidence for the Psalms at Qumran. I am not arguing that there is a fixed ontological similarity between digital literature and collections found in scrolls, besides that neither format conforms to the rigid conception of a “book” that has dominated the way we think about texts. Alternative conceptual language borrowed from another “non-book” textuality gives us a way to speak about ancient texts without imposing concepts that do not clearly emerge from the physical or literary evidence from the Second Temple period. If we reject the idea of a “Book of Psalms” as an inappropriate concept in which to think about the psalms-as-text during this time, many scholarly questions and definitions that presuppose “book” as an axiomatic category need to be rethought.

52 Hayles, 278.
One example is the nomenclature used to categorize the different psalms manuscripts among the Scrolls. Once again, I return to the habit of counting a high number (36 or 39) of Psalms manuscripts among the scrolls. How are these collections related to one another? Calling them versions or editions of the Psalms appears to me to be a retrojection of an ideal concept on the evidence, a concept that cannot be deduced from the evidence itself. This impulse is everywhere found, even in the work of those scholars who are intimately familiar with the overlapping and complex manuscript evidence for the psalms at Qumran. For instance, Peter Flint writes that the manuscripts show “at least three literary editions of the Psalter,”\textsuperscript{53} Edition I = 1-89, Edition IIa = Edition I + 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a}, and Edition IIb = MT-150 Psalter. I am sympathetic to the concept of variant literary editions as articulated by E. Ulrich,\textsuperscript{54} when in fact we are speaking of, in general terms, versions of the same composition, but in the case of Flint’s categories, we cannot speak of three different “editions” of a work. Rather, these are various collections, representing different versions, precursors, developments and portions of the collection that became the Book of Psalms. If the “Book of Psalms” was not an operative concept, then to call the different scrolls “editions” of such a book is to think backwards. While scholars need categories for heuristic purposes, this nomenclature risks imposing a concept foreign to the way ancient communities conceptualized the Psalms.

Jettisoning the idea of a “Book of Psalms” in favour of a looser concept of psalms collections with “neither shores nor borders” destabilizes the central scholarly questions that have been asked about 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a} since its discovery, and encourages us to

\textsuperscript{53} Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 239.
\textsuperscript{54} E. Ulrich, “Multiple Literary Editions: Reflections toward a Theory of the History of the Biblical Text.”
formulate new ones. This basic reformulation of the way we understand the psalms in the Second Temple period will both undergird and be further developed in the rest of this chapter as well as in Chapter Two, where I discuss the questions scholars have asked about how to name and categorize the Psalms Scroll and its contents. The fundamental question has been what this manuscript is – a copy, version or edition of the Book of Psalms, or another kind of “secondary” composition – based on its arrangement and its contents. But it is anachronistic to ask whether this particular scroll is a “Psalter” or something else if there is no conception of such a contained material and textual entity, a “book,” but expanding and overlapping collections. Different kinds of questions about the making of the Psalms Scroll – the motivations and processes behind its assembly and expansion – can reveal new insights about the way ancient communities themselves understood their textual traditions; it is to these issues that I now turn.

Part II: Making the Psalms Scroll: Arrangement of the Collection

In his work on Psalms scrolls from Qumran, Peter Flint recognizes two kinds of what he calls “macro-variants” between 11QPs⁵ and the Masoretic Psalter:⁵⁵ the arrangement of the compositions in the collection, and the presence of ten texts that do not appear in the MT at all. In this section, I discuss the first “macro-variant,” the order of psalms in 11QPs⁵, reviewing the major theses put forth about the motivations and significance of this arrangement, from the early reactions of the 1960s through more

⁵⁵ Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 153.
recent treatments. The discussion will centre on four major themes: the issue of the *dependence* of 11QPsalms⁴ on a prior Masoretic-type collection, and the related question of whether its arrangement is informed by *liturgical* usage, both of which have normally been identified with the question of whether or not the scroll is “scriptural”; the role of *calendrical* concerns in its organization; and whether *Davidic* traditions have a role in structuring the collection. Through a review and assessment of the various theories proposed, I will show that many of the fundamental questions asked about this collection – most notably its authoritative status and the significance of its divergence from the MT – rest on anachronistic notions of how texts were produced, categorized and conceptualized in the Second Temple period.

Scholarship has focused on four key issues in attempting to explain the structure of this collection: its chronological relationship with the MT version; whether it is arranged according to liturgical principles; what role the calendar plays in its organization; and the significance of Davidic superscriptions and compositions in the way the collection was assembled. These issues, of course, overlap, and all have implications for how we imagine the status and function of the text in community.

**1. Relationship of 11QPs⁴ to MT order: is it dependent?**

The question of whether the scroll represents a secondary rearrangement of a previously fixed MT-like text, or whether it is a parallel development, occupied the first generation of Qumran scholars. For them, to answer this question amounts to determining the collection’s scriptural status. Sanders, the major early proponent of the
view that the collection is a “genuine scriptural psalter,” argued that it is an alternative arrangement that developed independently of the MT at a time before the final third of the book of Psalms was stabilized. Indeed, as Sanders and Flint both show, Pss 1-89 from Qumran show a high degree of uniformity across manuscripts, while the remaining compositions seem to exist in a far more fluid state. Sanders’ key argument is that the Qumran sectarians left Jerusalem at a time after the first two thirds of the Psalter were more or less stable, but the last third had not yet been fixed; their “Qumran Psalter” developed independently of what would become the MT arrangement. Sanders’ hypothesis, then, connects a particular way of assembling psalms with a concrete moment of social history, the departure of the Qumran covenanters from Jerusalem; and he maintains a model of parallel, isolated development of an alternative scriptural text in a sectarian community, rather than chronological dependence of one collection on another.

Sanders’ most vocal and prolific critic when it comes to the status of the Psalms Scroll was Patrick Skehan, who maintained that the collection is dependent on and recognizes the authority of an already-accepted MT version of the Psalter. As a secondary rearrangement, it is not a scriptural book, but an altogether different kind of text; precisely what kind of text is a question Skehan endeavoured to answer in a variety

56 Sanders articulates his position in several works. See e.g. “Variorum,” 83-94; “Cave 11 Surprises,” 101-116; Qumran Psalms Scroll Reviewed,” 79-99; see G. Wilson, “Qumran Psalms Scroll Reconsidered: Analysis of the Debate,” CBQ 47 (1985): 624-42, 626-29; Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 204-6. Sanders had previously argued that this was an alternative “sectarian” version of the Book of Psalms; it had been compiled at a time when the last third of the Psalter was not yet finalized; when the sectarians left Jerusalem, their Psalm collection developed in a different direction from the Jerusalem version that later became the MT Psalter.

57 See the tables and statistics in Flint, 135-49, 238, 254.

58 Later, however, Sanders revised his position, and now believes that 11QPs was brought into the community from outside. See Sanders, “Psalm 154 Revisited,” Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: für Norbert Lohfink, S.J. (ed. G. Braulik et al.; Freiburg, 1993), 296-306, 301-2.
of ways throughout his career. For one, the text was a secondary collection compiled, excerpted and embellished from the scriptural book for liturgical purposes; or, it was a "library" edition of representative Psalms thought to be Davidic.\textsuperscript{59} Whatever it was and however it was meant to be used, Skehan maintained that the Psalms Scroll recognized the already established authority of the MT-type psalter and was a secondary composition that was different in kind from the scriptural book.\textsuperscript{60}

While many more voices have taken part in the debate about the relationship between the 11QPsalsa arrangement and the MT,\textsuperscript{61} most recently and comprehensively Peter Flint has defended James Sanders' early view. Flint's own assessment of the principles behind the collection's structure will be discussed below, but his major argument in favour of Sanders and against his critics is that there is no evidence that there was an already set, authoritative Masoretic-like arrangement of the last third of the Book of Psalms at the time the Qumran collection was assembled. For Flint (as for Sanders, although with less certainty on the particular historical events and groups involved\textsuperscript{62}), the scroll may witness to an alternative arrangement, not a secondary rearrangement. Since there is no evidence that it is a rearranged collection based on a finalized MT-type version, it is an edition of the scriptural Book of Psalms.

\textsuperscript{59} P.W. Skehan, a "library copy" (P. Skehan, "Qumran and Old Testament Criticism," 168–69), and an "instruction book for budding levitical choristers" (P. Skehan, "The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint," \textit{B IOSCS} 13 [1980]: 14–44, 42).


\textsuperscript{61} See the excellent summary of the debate between Sanders, the scroll's editor, who thought the scroll was scriptural, and his critics in Peter Flint, \textit{The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 204–17.

\textsuperscript{62} Flint also now argues for a non-Qumranic origin for the collection (but not the physical manuscript, which he still believes could have been copied at Qumran for community use), \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 200-1.
With Flint, I agree that there is no evidence for considering the MT-version of the Psalms to have been fixed and already authoritative before the 11QPs\textsuperscript{a} collection was compiled, and therefore to view the 11QPs\textsuperscript{a} collection as secondary or dependent on the MT. However, while there is much more to say about the details of the debate about whether the collection is alternative or secondary, it seems to me that both sides conflate two separate issues: chronological priority and authoritative status. To argue that the collection extant in 11QPs\textsuperscript{a} is secondarily dependent or derived from a chronologically earlier MT-like version is one thing; to argue that the proto-MT was then already recognized as the authoritative scriptural edition of the Psalms is quite another. The first can be true without the other, and without implying much about the authoritative status of the text.

Indeed, the question of what was “official” in Second Temple Judaism is anachronistic, as many scholars of the canonical process have already argued. There were certainly texts recognized as scripture with authority and power for communities, but, as Ulrich has argued for works such as Exodus, Jeremiah, and indeed the Psalms, it was the book, and not its textual form that was authoritative.\textsuperscript{63} However we might answer it, asking if the MT-version of the Psalms was “already fixed” presupposes modern conceptions of publishing by which a specific text form is officially authorized, a practice that did not exist in ancient Jewish textuality.

Such presuppositions are clear in the work of such scholars as K. van der Toorn, who actually writes about the “publication” of the Book of Psalms in his discussion of the

\textsuperscript{63} Ulrich, “Multiple Literary Editions: Reflections toward a Theory of the History of the Biblical Text.”
canonical process,\textsuperscript{64} and E. Tov, who argues for a picture of “official” editions of texts that were supposed to supersede other, earlier versions.\textsuperscript{65} In order to speak about whether or not the arrangement of the book of Psalms was “already accepted” before the creation of 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a}, we need to think about what this would have actually meant in the context of early Jewish culture; and in fact, no evidence exists that the “stabilization” of texts happened through any institutional or binding decisions, but rather through ongoing, processes of scribal transmission. If the ancient analogue to modern publishing is public recitation, then “publication” of Psalms would not mean establishing an overarching shape for the collection.

If the idea that the MT mode of arranging the Psalms was already fixed and accepted when the 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a} type was compiled is rejected, all that remains is the argument about chronological dependence. Even if we find that the 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a} order is a rearrangement of an earlier collection rather than an independently developed tradition, this need not imply that it had less than scriptural status. This assumes that an earlier or “original” text was by definition more authoritative. But dependence on or expansion of earlier material is a process that occurs within biblical texts themselves. Practices or rearrangement or expansion need not mean that the resulting compositions were not intended or received as divinely authoritative (cf. Samaritan Pentateuch).

However, the tendency to assume that a secondary collection is less “scriptural” seems to be at play both among scholars who treat the Psalms Scroll as a non-scriptural collection and those who consider it to be an edition of the scriptural Book of Psalms. Arguing that the arrangement and contents of the Psalms Scroll is chronologically later

\textsuperscript{64} van der Toorn, \textit{Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible}, 259.
\textsuperscript{65} Tov, “The Writing of Early Scrolls and the Literary Analysis of Hebrew Scripture.”
and literally dependent on an arrangement like the one in the Masoretic Text seems to amount to an admission that the collection is not scriptural; thus, scholars like Sanders and Flint, who argue for a scriptural status for the scroll, find it necessary to show how the arrangement of the collection was not dependent on a prior MT-type text, but could have constituted its own parallel, independent tradition.

But if we agree that there was no mechanism for “fixing” a text, and that there is no evidence that the MT mode of ordering the Psalms was the accepted scriptural tradition; and if we accept that a “secondary” or re-worked version of a text need not be inferior to its predecessor, then the arrangement of the Psalms Scroll, even if it is a rearrangement of an earlier MT-like order, need not be taken as proof of less-than-scriptural status. Rather, its structure can be mined for different kinds of information about its use in interpretive communities, a point I will develop in Chapter Two.

2. Liturgical Concerns in the Arrangement of the Collection

The key issue related to the structure of the collection is, of course, its liturgical function. Were the compositions rearranged with liturgical performance in mind? In Skehan’s early assessment, the collection contains “liturgical regroupings” of the already authoritative MT-like scriptural Psalter. Deliberate liturgical regrouping is evident, for instance, in Pss 135-136-Catena-145, and Pss 104-147-105-146-148. For Skehan, however, the liturgical collection ends with Ps 150, the composition that also concludes the Masoretic psalter, and the Hymn to the Creator, which immediately follows. The four remaining columns of the scroll contain compositions that “have nothing to do with
liturgy,” but form an appended epilogue to the liturgical collection, comprising of the Hymn to the Creator, the Last Words of David (=2Sam 23), David’s Compositions, Ps 140, Ps 134, and Ps 151A and 151B. Skehan’s assessment of what is and is not liturgical, and the question of how to understand the final few compositions of the collection, will be discussed further later in this chapter. What concerns me at this point is the argument that the collection is liturgical, not scriptural, as if the two were mutually exclusive features.

While his work on the purpose and nature of the collection is very different from Skehan’s, Ben Zion Wacholder also upholds the “liturgical, not scriptural” model. For Wacholder, the collection was composed as an eschatological, angelic liturgy led by a Davidic figure; but Wacholder follows Skehan in considering it a secondary rearrangement of the MT-type of Psalter, which he understands as the traditional order. Wacholder understands the selection and ordering of the compositions to be based on literary echoes in the individual psalms, particularly expressions of praise and thanksgiving (hallel and hodu), which illustrate the main theme he sees in the scroll – the expression of human and angelic praise in the eschatological future. With Skehan, too, Wacholder does not consider all the texts in the collection to be liturgical: notably, the Hymn to the Creator is not really part of the liturgical collection but a pastiche that

67 B.Z. Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter: 11QPsalm³,” HUCA 59 (1988): 23–72, 56. A similar approach to Wacholder’s, was recently espoused by U. Dahmen, Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption im Frühjudentum: Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Struktur und Pragmatik der Psalmenrolle 11QPs³ aus Qumran (STDJ 49; Leiden: Brill, 2003), who considers the Psalms Scroll to be a non-canonical, sectarian, eschatological-liturgical rearrangement of the final redaction of the scriptural Book of Psalms.
68 Such considerations also explain the absence of certain Masoretic psalms from the collection.
makes up a kind of “scribal colophon”\textsuperscript{69} that is part of the “epilogue” of the collection. Wacholder is not able to explain the placement of Ps 134 and 140 in this non-liturgical “epilogue.” He suggests that they may have been “overlooked” and included later, or that their placement reflects some deliberate theological or literary move, but does not offer a satisfying explanation.\textsuperscript{70}

Flint rejects arguments that suggest a “liturgical” arrangement precludes a text from being “scriptural.” To point out the obvious, the MT itself is a liturgical collection, with evidence that liturgical use was an organizing principle for some groupings there as well (e.g. 145-150). Scholarship on the editorial shaping of the canonical Book of Psalms observes the same type of liturgical considerations for its organization as Qumran scholars suggest for the Psalms Scroll.\textsuperscript{71}

However, there is more to say about the tendency of some scholarship to see signs of liturgical shaping as distancing a text from “scriptural” status and moving it into the realm of texts that are developed for purposes of a different kind. What does this tell us about the way we tend to imagine the nature and purpose of \textit{scripture} during our period? “Scripture,” when opposed to “liturgy,” seems to be considered a special genre of literature with its own unique function. But what \textit{was} this function? And to what extent is a conception of this uniqueness a feature of ancient attitudes about textuality, and to what extent does it betray traces of modern theological assumptions about the unique

\textsuperscript{69} Wacholder, “David's Eschatological Psalter,” 56. On the concept of a “colophon” in the context of this composition and others in the Scroll, see Chapter Two, Part III.
\textsuperscript{70} Wacholder, “David's Eschatological Psalter,” 57.
\textsuperscript{71} See especially Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial Shaping,” 448-64.
status and use of Holy Writ. As with the issue of chronological dependence, asking questions about liturgical arrangement with the view of determining the scriptural status of the text is fraught with anachronism. And, in fact, it tells us little of interest about the people and communities who compiled and used the collection.

### 3. The Calendar as a Structuring Principle

Related to liturgical considerations is the argument that the solar calendar is the key to understanding the structure of the Psalms Scroll. The major proponent of this view is Michael Chyutin, whose elaborate reconstruction of the Scroll is based on a strict understanding of its structure in line with the text of “David’s compositions” (col. 27), which enumerates, in addition to 3600 psalms, 364 songs for each day of the year, 52 Sabbath songs, 30 songs for the New Moons, Assemblies, and the Day of Atonement.

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72 The sense of “scripture” as a pure and unique revealed text that has no other function is a theological ideal, and does not seem to be reflected in any concrete, material form. Even after the canonization of the Tanakh and the Christian Bible and the widespread use of the codex in Christian and, much later, Jewish communities, biblical texts were bound together with other writings. Closer to the current discussion of liturgical features and arrangements, we may even cite the practice of printing a prior verse at the end of such books as Lamentations and Qohelet, so that the text does not end on a dire note. Such examples might be used to further challenge the arguments of certain scholars who single out details in the Psalms Scroll as “incompatible” with scripture.


and 4 songs for the intercalary days (more commonly translated at “for the stricken,” i.e. songs of exorcism). Of course, the collection does not contain, and never contained, all of these, so Chyutin imagines the scroll as a representative selection or sample of these compositions. His reconstruction is as follows:

- 91 Psalms for every day (the collection gives a “sampling” of 25% of 364 Psalms; here Chyutin assumes that the scroll originally included the first 91 Psalms of the MT arrangement as well)
- 26 Sabbath Psalms (the collection gives 50% of 52 Sabbath Psalms; in the manuscript, only ten of Chyutin’s proposed Sabbath psalms are extant, so he must conjecture another 16 as not preserved)
- 30 Psalms for New Moons and Festivals (13 Psalms of Ascent + 4 Psalms for Memorial Days + 13 for Holy Days)
- 4 Psalms for the intercalary days
  - + Prose conclusion (David’s Last Words, David’s Compositions)
  - + “Additional Psalms” (140, 134, 151a,b)

Chyutin’s calendrical interpretation, then, rests on a rigid, technical interpretation of “David’s Compositions” in col. 27. It also resorts to some mathematical acrobatics, and his percentages seem rather arbitrarily selected. Chyutin also conjectures too much about the original scope of the manuscript: his model requires him to imagine that the scroll originally contained not only the final third of the MT compositions, but also Pss 1-

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75 Against the common translation “for the stricken”/possessed, Chyutin and R. Elior translate הפגועים as “intercalary days,” i.e. where the four sets of 13 weeks each year “meet”; see Elior, The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism (trans. D. Louvish; Oxford: Littman, 2004) 50-51.
91, while it is generally agreed that this manuscript began with Ps 101.\textsuperscript{76} One intriguing aspect of Chyutin’s hypothesis is that it is not only the 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a} collection, but also the MT arrangement is based on calendrical concerns. For him, then, the two versions represent the competing collections of two opposing groups, collections that were already rigidly set before the Qumran period (the proto-MT collection with exactly 89 psalms in its first part, the 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a}-like collection with exactly 91).\textsuperscript{77}

Peter Flint critiques Chyutin’s “rigid” picture, not least on the grounds of manuscript evidence that makes his reconstructions of lacunae unlikely.\textsuperscript{78} In Flint’s view, the solar calendar does structure the collection, but in a far less rigid way. Flint’s reconstruction maintains that there were originally 52 compositions in the scroll, plus 4 “Davidic” pieces. The number of compositions (plus the text of “David’s Compositions”) is enough to unmistakably tie the arrangement of the collection to the solar calendar. This means, however, that just like all other scholars, Flint considers the final part of the scroll an addition or epilogue, not part of the collection “proper.” I will assess this view and examine the end of the collection in detail Chapter 2, Part III.

\textbf{4. Davidic Emphasis as a Structuring Principle}

In addition to the evocation of the 52-week calendar, Flint cites a second major organizational principle for the collection: Davidic attribution. Flint notes that psalms

\textsuperscript{76} See above on the scope of the manuscript. If it also contained Pss 1-91, the original scroll would have been extraordinarily long; see Tov, “Dimensions,” for the usual length limits of scrolls.

\textsuperscript{77} See Flint’s critique of this highly rigid picture, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 186. The differences in arrangement of other Psalms manuscripts from Qumran, although they are much more fragmentary than 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a}, complicate Chyutin’s model of two distinct and rigidly structured psalters.

\textsuperscript{78} Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 186; see Flint’s comparison with 4QPs\textsuperscript{b} for Pss 103-112, which is at variance with the arrangement of the 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a} collection.
with Davidic superscriptions are distributed among other psalms to infuse the whole collection with Davidic authority. The Davidic psalms are strategically placed at the beginning and end of certain groupings in order to cast their aura on compositions that are not explicitly associated with David. As an example, Flint writes that two Psalms of Ascent, Ps 133 and 134, have been intentionally separated from the remaining thirteen (120-132) and placed later in the collection, so that the Ascent grouping ends with Ps 132, which is the “most Davidic”; 133 is incorporated into the sequence 141-133-144-155-142-143. Of these, the first and last two contain Davidic superscriptions, “forming an inclusio which ‘Davidicizes’” the middle two, superscription-less Psalms. Psalms without Davidic superscriptions are given a “Davidic home” through this type of redistribution.

For Flint, then, the editorial shaping of the collection connects it more strongly to David, in a process of “Davidicization” of the entire psalter that seems analogous to the additional Davidic superscriptions in the Septuagint version. But as Flint himself recognizes, this organizational principle is not absolute. Indeed, Flint has trouble explaining how compositions with no Davidic title such as Ps 119 and Ps 127, which is ascribed to Solomon, fit into this collection, if its organization (and selection?) was so heavily influenced by Davidic authority. He writes that “their presence in this Davidic collection indicates that the compilers regarded them as Davidic Psalms, however

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79 Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 193-94.
illogical it may seem.”81

The “illogical” presence of non-Davidic pieces in this “Davidic collection” forces us to reflect on what it means to term a collection “Davidic” in the context of ancient beliefs about David and authorial attribution. I explore this theme at length in Chapter Two, where I show how different kinds of logic governed the inclusion of individual compositions. In the context of the discussion of the scroll’s arrangement, however, it is appropriate to engage the way two other scholars, Ben Zion Wacholder and Gerald Wilson, understand the designation of “Davidic” for this text. Flint’s discussion of the “Davidic” arrangement remains at a structural level, emphasizing the distribution of the psalms with Davidic superscriptions, but both Wacholder and Wilson take a more broadly thematic approach.

Wacholder’s provocative thesis is that the collection represents the songs of David for the end times.82 Here, we are not dealing with the historical David as much as an eschatological Davidic deliverer who will lead Israel in praise in the last days. Wacholder understands the collection as a rearrangement of an earlier, finalized MT-type psalter. But although “the compiler of 11Q Psalms was aware of the existence and perhaps even the ‘canonicity’ of the traditional composition and sequence of the Book of Psalms,” he also “regarded this scroll as a "Book of Tehillim" or as a tehillim-like work.”83 Wacholder bases this argument on the presence of Davidic texts, particularly “David’s Last Words” and “David’s Compositions,” which bolster the Davidic authority of the collection. For Wacholder, they are part of a sectarian apologetic strategy – to authorize

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81 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 194, on Ps 119 and 127.
this “alternative” psalter against the “traditional” one by linking it with a prophetically inspired, prolific David. The texts justify the “unorthodox” or “non-traditional” arrangement of the collection through its invocation of David’s psalm-writing activities, which, Wacholder argues, “redefine” the role of David as a writer of psalms.\textsuperscript{84} Justifying himself by including texts that about the existence of inspired Davidic psalms outside the “traditional Book of Psalms,” the compiler felt free to rearrange the traditional composition and order of the Psalter:\textsuperscript{85}

The compiler selected and juxtaposed compositions based on liturgical elements, particularly \textit{hodus} and \textit{halleluiahs} that are supposed to reflect the major theme of the collection – the joint praise of humans and angels at the end times. Wacholder offers explanations for why some canonical psalms, like Pss 106-108 and 11-117,\textsuperscript{86} were excluded from the collection, including irrelevant themes and the lack of Davidic superscriptions. But here again, the diversity of the collection, both thematically and in terms of its superscriptions, prevents us from accepting that the shape of this collection can be explained through a single principle. Just as the MT Psalter is not a book that has a single coherent shape and function, but a collection that preserves a variety of compositions and sets of compositions, so the Psalms Scroll also includes diverse texts that do not easily fit Wacholder’s model of a Davidic, eschatological, human-angelic liturgy. His explanations for why the “missing” MT psalms have not been included are not convincing, since, by his logic, psalms like 119 or 127 should not appear there either;

\textsuperscript{84} Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter,” 56.
\textsuperscript{85} Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter,” 43, 56.
\textsuperscript{86} While these texts are not extant in the scroll, they may have originally formed part of the collection, since material is most likely missing between cols d and e of the initial fragments, so it is unlikely that 118 directly followed 109 as Wacholder assumes; see Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 180-82.
these explanations are only necessary because Wacholder considers the MT to be standard or default, and must account for divergences, but not similarities.

Indeed, this aspect of Wacholder’s thesis is most problematic. As Flint also observes, the prioritization of the MT does not allow him to consider the collection on its own terms. Most of his discussion focuses on accounting for its differences from the canonical book – and he imagines that the compiler, too, needed to account for the “unorthodox” or “non-traditional” features of his collection, by “redefining” the role of David as author of the 150-composition Book of Psalms through the inclusion of 2 Sam 23 and David’s Compositions which serve to make him more prolific. But such reasoning is backwards, for it assumes that a normative tradition of Davidic authorship of a set 150-composition Psalter already existed to be redefined. The manuscript evidence reveals diverse arrangements for these compositions, and no discursive evidence exists that a traditional, set order was an operative concept for ancient communities, so the notion of a “traditional composition and sequence of the Book of Psalms” is an anachronism.87

Gerald Wilson’s work on the editorial shape of psalms traditions is more nuanced in this regard. In his 1985 study, Wilson considers both the MT and the Qumran psalms scroll as two collections that have been intentionally shaped, without positing the MT as a standard or default. Both the Masoretic Psalter and the Qumran scroll reveal an interesting compatibility of methods employed to arrange and shape these collections. The use of halelu-yah and hodu groupings, postscripts, repeated phrases, and thematic connections to provide structure and development draws these two collections of psalms together.88

87 Also, as I will show in Chapter Three, the notion of Davidic authorship is an emergent notion at this point, not an established tradition that already existed to be polemically or apologetically redefined.
88 Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11 QPs) and the Canonical Psalter,” 464.
While the textual methods are analogous, a different “motivating vision” distinguishes the two collections. The overarching principle behind the editorial shaping of the MT is a focus on the kingship of YHWH, and the principle behind the scroll’s selection and organization of compositions is a focus on David as king and deliverer of Zion. This, Wilson observes, is particularly evident in the final columns of the scroll, with their cluster of “Davidic” pieces, whereas the concluding focus of the MT is the kingship of God. The scroll’s editorial strategy is also evident from the Masoretic psalms that are absent from the scroll. Wilson writes that

for our understanding of the editorial purposes behind both these collections the list of masoretic psalms not included in the Psalm Scroll may assume as much significance as the list of apocryphal compositions not found in the masoretic Psalter.89

Wilson points out that among the “missing” compositions – not readily apparent because of the different order of the collections – are “seam” psalms, editorially significant compositions that seem to indicate divisions between the “books” of the Masoretic psalter; this, for Wilson, underscores the different editorial shapes of the texts. Pss 94-100, the YHWH MLK collection, which Wilson calls the “editorial heart” of the Masoretic psalter, is also not present, showing that 11QPsalm IV de-emphasizes the kingship of God in favour of hope in David.

Although Wilson does argue for a general editorial emphasis, he does not require a fixed or singular purpose for this collection, but recognizes its internal diversity and fluidity. For instance, he points out that despite the great importance of David, the Davidic psalms 108 and 110 are not included, and 144 appears without the Davidic

89 Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPsalm IV) and the Canonical Psalter,” 451.
superscription that is found in the MT. This allows us to think of the compilation of the collection as an organic, gradual, perhaps messy process, rather than the result of a single, rigidly imposed plan, a model that simply does not fit the manuscript evidence.

Second, Wilson treats the MT and the 11QPsalms collection on the same terms, without treating one as a “standard” and the other as a “deviation” whose every difference from the MT must be explained.

My own sense is that there is no overall organizational principle to the Qumran Psalms Scroll; it was not presented as a document with a coherent shape. Instead, the process of anthological arrangement happened on a far smaller scale – on the level of small clusters or pairs of compositions, rather than the collection as a whole. I explore some of these microform relationships in Chapter Two as a way to understand the gradual and diverse ways that compositions were juxtaposed and supplemented, likely without the overarching, holistic goal of shaping the collection in its entirety.

Conclusion to Part II

Questions about the arrangement of the Psalms Scroll have tended to focus on its authoritative status. To say that the scroll is secondary to the Masoretic text or liturgically oriented has usually been equated with saying that it is not “scriptural.” However, neither dependence on a chronologically prior text nor liturgical arrangement can be seen as an indication of non-scriptural status. Scriptural texts all go through a process or development and rearrangement, and “liturgy” and “scripture” are not two distinct genres in the case of the psalms. There is no evidence that the arrangement of a
collection has any bearing on its authority, and no evidence that there was any process by which a particular textual form was authorized or fixed, akin to modern publishing practices. While there is evidence for the de facto “stabilization” of the order of those psalms that became the first half of the MT, this does not mean that there was an awareness of this idea or a recognized editorial process by which it was deliberately achieved.

Scholarly suggestions for the editorial principles behind the arrangement of the Psalms Scroll have tended to be overly rigid. It appears that the collection did not undergo a systematic arrangement based on a general set of principles, as a modern edited book might. Instead, we can see various ways in which the texts in this manuscript are connected to one another, whether are formal, thematic or liturgical, and evidence of organic, expansive growth that likely happened gradually over time, as more psalms and psalm-like compositions found their home in this collection. The fact that the Masoretic 150-composition book of psalms did not exist as a concept in the Second Temple period makes it fruitless to ask such questions as whether or not this text is a “copy,” a “version,” or an “edition” of such a book. Rather, we must see 11QPsalms³, other psalms scrolls from Qumran, and the precursors of the Masoretic psalter as collections that reflect in their own ways a larger, expanding tradition of psalm-collecting, arranging, and composing in the Second Temple period.
Conclusion to Chapter One

In this chapter, I discussed a cluster of issues surrounding the nature and production of the collection found in 11QPsalms. First, I argued for the lack of a concept of a “book of Psalms” in the Second Temple period based on the physical and literary evidence, which shows us that psalms were available in collections of various contents, extents and arrangements. Even though we find evidence of consistency when it comes to what we know as the first part of the Book of Psalms, there is no evidence that the psalms were conceptualized by their ancient audiences in any other way than as loose, unbounded assemblages. I brought an analogy from digital textuality, which has “neither shores nor borders,” as a way to imagine the “texts beyond books” of the Second Temple period. In both scroll and digital culture, the relationship between materiality, textual content, and authorship is configured differently from the modern book, where these three aspects of object, text, and author tend to be tightly bound. This analogy is helpful not because of some ontological similarity between digital and scroll cultures, but because it helps shift our conceptual categories away from the print codex that has long shaped our thinking about texts, and encourages new ways of imagining texts of a different, non-codex, materiality.

Next, I discussed the arrangement of the compositions within the scroll, examining scholarly arguments for the priority of the MT arrangement and its implications for the authoritative status of the collection. I argued that arguments for neither the liturgical nor the secondary status of the arrangement have any bearing on its status. “Canonical” arrangements of psalms are also liturgical, and the notion that a
rearranged, derivative collection is less authoritative than its predecessor falsely assumes an authorized or finalized status for an earlier text and privileges an idealized “original” text, while in fact all texts go through a long process of development; and no system for “authorization,” analogous to modern publishing, can be posited for the Second Temple period. Moreover, I argued that rigid models for the arrangement of the scroll cannot be upheld considering the internal evidence for ongoing, organic expansion of the collection.

The concept of a “book” is not a neutral signifier, but brings with it a set of assumptions coloured by a very specific history of the transmission of text in the modern West, and the very specific way in which we are accustomed to accessing, reading, and organizing writing. I would go so far as to say that “book,” when used to speak of ancient Jewish writings, is a metaphor, because it seeks to describe and understand one thing in terms of another. For centuries, the book has been the only metaphor that has seemed available for the study of these materials: not only because this is the form in which we have accessed our sources, but also because of their strong cultural significance as, or as related to, biblical books. But the “book” metaphor, like any metaphor, can help understand some aspects of ancient Jewish writings, while missing or muddling others. Thinking of “books,” for example, has occasioned a 50-year debate about the identity of 11QPsalms for over fifty years. The major question – is it really a Book of Psalms? – is still the obvious starting point for most scholarly work on the manuscript. But, as I have shown in this chapter, this question is unanswerable, because its premise did not yet exist. By analogy, John Barton made a similar comment about
questions scholars used to ask about what was and was not “canonical” in Second Temple times. Barton writes that

asking about the state of the canon in our period we are asking a question which the available literature cannot be made to answer, for the very good reason that no one had yet begun to think in such terms. ... Perhaps we can make some good progress towards this goal by concentrating on the questions that are asked in the literature, rather than those that are not.90

I am suggesting a similar refocusing of our questions in the context of Psalms traditions. While Barton jettisons “canon” to turn our attention to new questions about the literature, I would like to bracket the idea of the “Book of Psalms” for a similar reason. More broadly, I would like to seek out a metaphor other than “book” in order to help denaturalize some persistent post-canonical and post-print patterns of thinking. Such new metaphors suggest themselves easily: many of us now access the majority of our sources on screens, not in codices. Changing the metaphor shifts what is revealed about the subject and, by introducing images from another conceptual domain, encourages new ways to visualize it. In my view, to think of (and experience) texts as “archives” or “databases” rather than books opens new ways of imagining overlapping and unbounded collections like the Psalms in the context of the ancient communities who compiled and preserved them.

Perhaps we may also consider the concept of text as project, which brings human agency and a sense of ongoing development and use back into the production of texts. Such an understanding of texts as projects, not products, is at the heart of the way we access some of our primary sources. As an example, I draw attention to the Project on

90 J. Barton, Oracles of God, 58.
Ancient Cultural Engagement, which currently houses texts and scholarship on Josephus and Polybius. The website emphasises that PACE is “A Project – Not a Product”:

[I]t was never intended to be a finished ‘product’ to be simply handed over to the internet community. We intend to be only the basis of a collaborative, ongoing, international research project91—with no predefined limits of content. The material we have for Josephus, and especially for Polybius, may be developed in all sort of ways through the contributions of member colleagues.... Thus we hope to have created the basis of a ‘living commentary,’ constantly informed by new scholarship.92

The articulation of the nature of the PACE resource as a “project” and not a “product” evokes notions of continuing development and nebulous borders. This sense of texts beyond books, a textual project that breaks apart the threefold identity between text, object, and author in favour of more freely expanding writing that has “no predefined limits of content,” offers a fresh model of looking at the way text production happened in an ancient, scribal context as well.

These metaphors and analogies offer paths into new questions. How did the “project” of the Psalms develop? On what principles and by what authority did the database expand? What was the context, literary and imaginal, that influenced how the project took shape and how it was received? Finally, through these cross-historical analogies combines with a broad view of early Jewish literature, can we get any closer to understanding the metaphors and imaginative categories through which ancient communities did conceptualize their writings? I approach these questions from several angles in the remaining chapters.

91 A “collaborative, ongoing, international research project” is, incidentally, an apt summary for the way in which J.L. Kugel describes “Wisdom” in Israel and its neighbours; see “Wisdom and the Anthological Temper,” Prooftexts 17 (1997): 9–32.
92 The Lead Investigator of PACE is Steve Mason. The quotation is from the section “About PACE: A Project – Not a Product,” pace.mcmaster.ca/york/york/project-ext.htm.
Chapter Two

TEXT, PARATEXT, AND THE MAKING OF A COLLECTION: THE “NON-CANONICAL” COMPOSITIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore in detail the ten non-Masoretic compositions in the Psalms Scroll. In Part I, I focus on the first six compositions in order of their appearance. I discuss the principles behind their inclusion in the Scroll, and the implications of their presence for the status of the collection as a whole. The conclusion that will emerge from the analysis of each composition is that their presence in the collection is not due to one factor (such as the purported belief that they are of ancient Davidic provenance), but reflects multiple ways in which authoritative textual traditions grew – by invoking earlier traditions, linking themselves to literary themes, or invoking traditions about an authoritative figure. The “non-canonical” compositions do not form a distinct category, but participate in a broader, largely undifferentiated, and expanding treasury of psalmic literature.

In Part II, I discuss the remaining four compositions, which are placed near the end of the Scroll, as exemplifying a collection in flux. I assess the way that scholars have interpreted these final compositions, noting that they have most commonly been called “additional” or “epilogic,” standing apart from the collection proper. These evaluations have at their basis several assumptions about the way the collection was conceptualized, the nature of scripture and liturgy, and the production of texts –
assumptions that are not borne out by the texts themselves. The final compositions on
the scroll testify to a process of dynamic expansion and development, and may have had
diverse functions at various stages in its growth. I devote some space to discussing the
way texts conclude – the concept of epilogues, colophons, and endings, and their
implications for concepts of textual boundedness and closure.

Part I: The Status and Origins of the “Apocryphal” Compositions

The Psalms Scroll contains the following non-Masoretic compositions:

1. Catena (col. 16:1-6)
2. Ps 154:3-19 (col. 18:1-16)
5. Apostrophe to Zion (col. 22:1-15)
6. Ps 155 (col. 24:3-17)
7. Hymn to the Creator (col. 26:9-15)
8. David's Last Words//2 Sam 23:1-7 (col. 27:1)
9. David's Compositions (col. 27:2-11)
10. Ps 151 a and b (col. 28:3-12, 13-14)

Along with the “unorthodox” arrangement of its compositions, the presence of these
non-Masoretic texts has been at the heart of debates about the status and nature of the
Psalms Scroll. What are these compositions, what does their appearance here tell us
about the intentions of the Scroll’s compilers, and how does it affect the way we name
and categorize the collection?

Once again, the early debate between Sanders and his critics about these
compositions has continued to shape most scholarly approaches to these materials.
Here, too, the major question driving the way in which these texts have been studied

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has been the issue of the canonical status of the collection, which divided early scholarship into two distinct camps. In Sanders’ “Qumran Psalter hypothesis,” the presence of these compositions indicates that the latter portion of the Book of Psalms was not yet stabilized and that it could still “accept” new material. These texts were considered by their audience to be of Davidic authorship and date, as indicated by “David’s Compositions” in col. 27, on par with the rest of the psalms in the collection. This is possible, argues Sanders, since they are similar in form and content to the “biblical” psalms, have no indications of strictly sectarian provenance, and do not have unequivocal indicators of a very late date,\(^1\) and thus could be considered part of a “true Davidic Psalter.” Sanders contrasts these compositions with the Hodayot, which, for him, are categorically different – never attributed to David, never combined with biblical psalms, and different in vocabulary and style.\(^2\)

Sanders’ critics challenge the scriptural status of these compositions. For Talmon and Skehan, they are “additions” or “interpolations” into an already authoritative or accepted scriptural text. Such assessments presuppose that there was an already authoritative Book of Psalms, and that concepts of official acceptance and fixity existed in this period, and so are vulnerable to the same critique as their evaluations of the arrangement of the collection as a reorganization of an already established text, already discussed above. But the way in which they account for the presence of these compositions specifically deserves some more attention.

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\(^1\) Sanders, “Variorum in the Psalms Scroll (11QPs\(^9\)), 83-94, and other work.

Skehan’s characterization of the collection as dependent on the MT, but “reworked” in two ways, through liturgical regrouping and “library edition” expansions, explains his approach to the non-Masoretic compositions. One of Skehan’s arguments for the dependence of the collection is that the “additional” compositions do not begin until the final ten columns of the scroll, although it is unclear to me how this is supposed to support dependence. In terms of the nature of the compositions, Skehan writes that the scroll contains “not simply a liturgical composition, but what I have called a “library edition” of the putative works of David, whether liturgical or not.”³ It seems, then, that for Skehan, this scroll is a sort of inclusive anthology of “Davidic” pieces, not all of which are liturgical – and not all of which, according to him, are considered scriptural. Here, it is apparent that for Skehan, the criteria of what is “canonical” is strictly whether it appears in what he considers a pre-existing, established MT-like text: not even the belief in Davidic provenance for a composition can place it into the category of “scripture,” and no clues indicate that these non-Masoretic compositions were regarded any differently from the rest of the collection. Another issue is to what extent these “additional” pieces can be considered straightforwardly “Davidic” – only David’s Last Words, David’s Compositions, and Ps 151 mention David, and there is little in them that would immediately suggest these pieces were considered “putative works of David.”

Shemaryahu Talmon’s approach to these compositions is similar in that he a) considers them to be liturgical “interpolations” “dispersed” among canonical psalms,

and b) argues that they were presented as originating with David. Along similar lines, Moshe Goshen-Gottstein argues that “David’s Compositions” in col. 27 claims only that the “apocryphal hymns” are also of Davidic provenance, not in order to put them on par with the rest of the psalms, but in order to ensure their “future use” in liturgy. Here again however, nothing indicates that the non-Masoretic compositions were understood differently from the rest of the texts. Also, the standard for “canonicity” is, as for Talmon, a previously fixed MT-like Psalter; a belief in the Davidic origin of a text is not enough, for these scholars, to indicate scriptural status.

While they reach the opposite conclusions about the status of the collection, the arguments of Skehan, Talmon, and Goshen-Gottstein and that of James Sanders seem to have a similar explanation for the inclusion of the non-Masoretic compositions in the collection: namely, that they are understood or presented as authored by David. This is also the assumption of Peter Flint and others who interpret the text in col. 27 as a claim for the Davidic authorship of the compositions in this collection. However, the claim that putative authorship accounts for the inclusion of these compositions in the collection seems too rigid, and does not follow from a reading of these compositions themselves, not all of which are explicitly connected to David, but which have other kinds of links to the rest of the collection. We must, instead, look to the compositions themselves to uncover the complex ways in which they are linked with the older or

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6 This claim to authorship of the whole collection is taken very seriously and interpreted quite rigidly in the scholarship. Flint, for example, comments that Ps 119 and Ps 127, with its Solomonic superscription, are problematic, but that their “presence in this Davidic collection indicates that the compilers regarded them as Davidic Psalms, however illogical this may seem” (Flint, The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 194). I problematize the notion of Davidic authorship for all the texts in the scroll in the rest of this chapter, and more specifically in Chapter Three.
more familiar psalms, and how they may have been included, authorized and received as part of this psalm collection.

A first step in explaining the presence of these compositions in the collection is to examine their origins. Early in Qumran scholarship, they were deemed to be of a “late,” that is, of late Persian or Hellenistic provenance. Sanders dated them to the third century B.C.E., as did D. Luhrmann, who called them the product of “late wisdom.” Frank Moore Cross and Robert Polzin also posited a Hellenistic origin for these texts. While this may all be true, the way the information is presented is misleading, because although the purpose is to examine these texts themselves, the canonical psalter still predetermines the way they are approached. In scholarship, these compositions have traditionally been “sifted” out from the rest of the collection and considered as a separate group, implying that they share features that distinguish them from the rest.

This is reinforced through the way most scholars experience these compositions in modern editions – separately from the “canonical” material. To be sure, it is expedient to publish the “non-canonical” texts as a group, and the physical form and size limits of the codex book imposes such decisions about how to edit and organize material for the modern reader. Thus, in popular editions of the Scrolls, as in, for example, Geza Vermes’ translation and the Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition, only the non-Masoretic pieces are published. The DJD editio princeps has a separate section with translations and commentaries for the “apocryphal” compositions. This seems practical, but it is all too easy to project the way we experience published texts onto our

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7 D. Luhrmann, “Ein Weisheits Psalm aus Qumran (11QPs a XVIII), ZAW 80 (1968): 87-98.
understanding of their ancient status. Interpretive patterns suggest themselves through such practical organizational principles, principles that have nothing to do with the way the texts developed and were organized in ancient times. Here again, the risk of anachronism comes not only from canonical assumptions, but from the form through which we access the texts.

Seeing the “non-canonical” compositions in terms of a distinct group, then, distorts the way they were experienced and understood by the communities who compiled and used the collection, since the texts share no common features except their absence from the MT. Dating, at any rate, does not distinguish them. “Late,” Hellenistic-period dates are likely for many of the Masoretic Psalms as well. If we have abandoned the notion that the “book of Psalms” existed as a fixed and bounded entity, then we must rethink the way we have grouped these texts; based on dating, these compositions should be grouped together not simply with each other, but with other psalms that have been assigned a “late” date.

The same is true of what has been said about the thematic content or genre of these compositions. Luhrmann’s observation that they are the product of “late wisdom” is followed by scholars like Gerald Wilson, who sees a shared sapiential character in the non-Masoretic compositions that gives the whole collection a particular flavour that differs from the MT. While Wilson’s work does make significant strides toward viewing the Psalms Scroll as a collection on its own terms rather than through the lens of the MT, to say that most of these compositions are “wisdom” pieces also constructs a false category. In fact, out of the non-Masoretic texts, only Ben Sira 51, Ps 154, and David’s

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9 See especially Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial Shaping.”
Compositions are saturated with sapiential language – as are several so-called “Wisdom Psalms” that are included in the Masoretic Psalter.

To summarize: in much past scholarship, the non-Masoretic compositions have been treated as a distinct group, whether they are considered non-scriptural pieces interpolated into canonical psalms (Skehan and Talmon), or described in terms of a shared set of features (e.g. late date and sapiential themes, or social provenance). However, there is no indication that they were viewed as distinct by the communities who received them. They illustrate a variety of themes, and they were probably joined to other texts in the collection at different stages of transmission (some appear in other Psalms manuscripts as well) and for a variety of reasons; they do not constitute a separate group that was later dispersed through an existing collection.

The question to ask now is not what the inclusion of these texts indicates about the “canonical” status of the collection or assess their provenance and nature as a group, but how their presence, position in the collection, and contents illustrate the growth and interpretive development of a psalm collection. Thus, while I do not accept a single structuring principle for the Psalms Scroll, I also resist the conclusion that the collection was put together at random. This is the suggestion of A. Lange in his recent comparison between the diverse collections of psalms and Hodayot, where he writes:

Each psalm or hodayah was regarded as an independent text which could be combined more or less randomly in the various psalms or hodayot collections. [...] Individual psalms and hodayot were copied according to need and affordability. [...] When such random psalms or hodayot compilations were copied they became Psalms and Hodayot collections.10

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While need and affordability must certainly have governed the compilation of texts, I suggest in this chapter that the inclusion and placement of particular compositions was not random, but based on thematic, aesthetic, and/or interpretive logic.

**Part II: Compilation and Interpretation in the 11QPsalms Project**

In the following sections, then, I will assess the non-Masoretic compositions in the scroll individually. For each composition, I ask what criteria govern its inclusion in the collection. While most scholars have insisted that all these compositions were considered to be of Davidic provenance, I argue that more complex concerns related to developing traditions of prayer, pedagogy and liturgy account for and authorize their inclusion in the collection. The texts are transcribed, translated and discussed in the order of their appearance in the scroll. I begin with the two non-Masoretic texts that are part of what appears to be a thematic cluster of praise and thanksgiving compositions, Ps 135 – Ps 136 + Catena – Ps 145 – Ps 154. These compositions focus on the relationship between the deeds of God in history and communal praise, and illustrate the way that traditions grew through juxtaposition, rearrangement, and interpretive development.

1. **Catena (cf. 11QPs b; col. 16)**

The first non-Masoretic composition that appears in the scroll is the so-called Catena, which follows immediately after Ps 136 and precedes Ps 145:
for his mercy endures forever (Ps 136). [136:1/118:1] Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. [118:15] The sound of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. [118:16] The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord has done a mighty thing. [118:8] It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in a human being. [118:9] It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. [line otherwise unknown] It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in a thousand people. [136:1, 118:1, 118:29] Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Praise the Lord.

This text has been interpreted as both an independent composition \(^{11}\) and an expansion of Ps 136. These lines do seem to be attached to Ps 136, because there is no blank space between them, while a line has been left blank before every other composition in the extant portions of the manuscript. The first line, והוד ל׳עלא לשורי, repeats the first verse of Ps 136; however, it is also the first verse of Ps 118. Ps 118 serves as the source for the rest of the composition, which is made up of 118:15-16 and 8-9 and a previously unknown line, והוד ל׳עלא לשורי. The composition ends with a repetition of והוד ל׳עלא לשורי, which forms an inclusio by hearkening back to the first line of Ps 136 (but also vv. 1 and 29 of Ps 118) and its refrain.\(^ {12}\) Thus, we witness how a composition has been expanded using lines from another psalm that suggested itself to its composer through a shared liturgical refrain.


\(^{12}\) Ps 136 features the liturgical refrain והוד ל׳עלא לשורי both here and in the MT.
Thematically, these additional lines taken from Ps 118 fit well as a continuation of Ps 136 and, more generally, the thematic cluster that begins with Ps 135. Ps 136, like Ps 135 before it, praises the deeds of God from creation through the Exodus and the possession of the land. In addition, the final four verses of MT Ps 136 end the composition with praise and thanksgiving for God’s continuing, enduring care, and bring in the first person plural voice:

שבשפלנו זכר לנו כי לועלם חסד
ורפרקון מצורנו כי לועלם חסד
נתן להם לכל בשר כי לועלם חסד
وحدו לא נשימו כי לועלם חסד

Who remembered us in our lowliness, for his mercy endures forever;  
And delivered us from our enemies, for his mercy endures forever;  
Who gives food to all flesh, for his mercy endures forever.  
Give thanks to the God of Heaven, for his mercy endures forever (Ps 136:23-26).

The Catena builds thematically upon this ending. The “lowliness” of the speakers in Ps 136 has become “songs of victory in the tents of the righteous,” in the Catena; deliverance from “our” enemies in Ps 136 is celebrated through the Catena’s praise of God’s valiant right arm. God’s provision of nourishment to all flesh, and God’s deliverance of the people from their lowly state to victory, has an obvious consequence expressed in the Catena: an exhortation to the praising community that it is better to trust (ḇaḇaš) in God than in human beings (118:8), princes (118:9), or a thousand people (source unknown).

The Catena, then, uses rearranged verses from another composition to extend Ps 136. The blending of the two composition perhaps began with a simple mnemonic connection between their shared first and last verses, נחרז ויהיו זכר חסד והודו לן כי לועלם חסד. Yet
the juxtaposition is not mechanical, but thematically meaningful and deliberate. This new, developed form of Ps 136 is now a composition that praises God’s works from creation, through the present, and concludes with songs of victory, and a description of the proper attitude of trust in light of these deeds.

2. (Syriac) Ps 154 (col. 18)

I now move on to the first full non-Masoretic composition, which appears on col. 18 of the Psalms Scroll. This composition preserves the Hebrew original behind Syriac Psalm II/154, and the beginning and the end are found in another Qumran manuscript, 4Q448, known as the “Prayer for King Jonathan,” copied in the first century B.C.E.

Thematically, it is a fascinating text because of its personification of Wisdom and its description of community practices that evokes those of the Qumran community as they are known from the Rule texts. While it is unique in these respects, this composition is very much at home in the collection, and in particular, at the end of the cluster of Ps 135 – 136 + Catena – 145 – 154. The psalm illustrates interpretive developments of the


themes that run through this cluster – the deeds of God, the place of ritual, and the nature of praise.

It reads as follows:

לעבים בשמטותך ולחםيمنך לפאר עליון ההבריה היה
להרديد ישuai ואלה תחתון לרדעי עוזי ומאות
לכתוב פחתים כו לרדין בכבד נגדוה והכהון והפער
רוח מתשבא נרדהלאה להרדייע לאוזני עוזי
לחבשיל לסור עלڑהו הרוחקים משתחוות
הנדיהו מנבואות כי עליון הנאה אוגן

יתكب הטרנור על כהל משישו ואותו מפאן עליון
ירצהmploy מנה נכמה פרקינו וני בכר
כממשמע בורוב שלחן כמותר נחתה מז
אידהם מפתה ודיאנשניל לחם המקהל המדריס
המארה על כלכתל בסמבן על שלחתמה הבוחר
على להרדיין אמורמה עליון כלחרת השם ידוע
כמה רוחה נשענת אמירת מקהל ודימ לדרשתה הנה
 yeni על עזיבת התחל עליל מפארים גודל הפור
מעיני רעת צלי פש[**** נאום על מז

1 [unite] your souls with the good ones and with the perfect ones to glorify the Most High. Join together
2 to make his salvation known and do not hesitate to proclaim his power and his glory
3 to all ordinary people. For, wisdom has been granted in order to make YHWH's glory known, and in order to recount
4 his many deeds she has been taught to man: to make his power known to ordinary people,
5 to instruct his greatness to those lacking judgment, those who are far from her gates,
6 those who are withdrawn Blank from her entrances. For the Most High is the Lord of Blank [a blemish on the scroll left uninscribed]
7 Jacob and his glory is upon all his deeds. The person who gives glory to the Most High
8 is accepted like one who brings an offering, like one who offers rams and calves [sic],
9 like one who makes the altar greasy with many burnt offerings, like the sweet fragrance blank from the hand of
10 just ones. Her voice is heard from the gates of just ones, and from the assembly of devout ones
her song; when they eat to bursting they speak about it, and when they drink in unison
with one another; their meditation is on the Law of the Most High, their words to make his power known.
How far from the wicked is her word, from all haughty men to know her. Behold, the eyes of the Lord upon the good ones are compassionate, and upon those who glorify him he increases his mercy;
from an evil time will he deliver [their] soul. [Bless] the Lord who redeems the humble from the hand of strangers….

What is such a composition doing in this psalms collection? Sanders, in keeping with his overall view of the Scroll as a “true Davidic Psalter,” justifies the presence of this composition among the other psalms in the collection by arguing that it, too, must have been considered of Davidic provenance:

For it to have been accepted in the Qumran psalter, it was probably considered ancient enough to merit a place alongside the thirty-six psalms in the scroll which later at Jamnia were deemed canonical. If its actual date were known, or if its author were remembered, it probably would not have been included in 11QPsalms\(^\text{a}\), which at Qumran was clearly considered a portion of the Davidic psalter.\(^\text{15}\)

I would like to devote some space to this statement, because it illustrates the general approach of Sanders and other scholars to the presence of non-MT compositions in the scroll, an approach I find limited, and not cognizant of the richness of these texts and their relationships with other parts of the collection. First, of course, the theory that the canon was closed at Jamnia in 90 C.E. is no longer current in scholarship, neither for what it claimed about the event itself nor for its assumption that there was a clear, deliberate, authoritative selection or decision through which the canon came to be.\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{15}\) Sanders, The Psalms Scroll, DJD 4, 70.

\(^{16}\) The classic articulation of the idea that the canon was “fixed” at the Council of Yavneh is H. Graetz, Kohelet oder der salomonische Prediger, Anhang I: Der alttestamentliche Kanon und sein Abschluss (Leipzig: C.F. Winter, 1871), 147-73. A.C. Sundberg, ‘The “Old Testament”: A Christian Canon’, Catholic Biblical Quarterly 30 (1968): 143-55, was a proponent of this thesis, but since the 1960’s it has been
However, this issue is not central to Sanders’ argument, which is simply that the book of Psalms was not yet “closed” during the Qumran period and could still “admit” new compositions. I support the assertion that no fixed canon existed at this time. But for Sanders, the question of Davidic authorship and ancient date (made believable by the “archaic” or “archaizing” language of the psalm) are the criteria for why it appears in an authoritative psalms collection. However, it seems to me that such criteria reflect the concerns of biblical scholars, who have traditionally been concerned with determining the date and provenance of texts, and the presuppositions of a “book culture” that thinks of “books” in terms of a fixed text, physical object, and attribution to an originary author;17 I do not think that this is the kind of logic that governed the inclusion of this composition for the collection’s compilers and users. The appeal to ancient figures functioned as a way to claim inspiration or continuity with an authoritative legacy, rather than in terms of attributing texts to authors in a positivistic, historical way.18 We must build upon Sanders’ assertion of an open canon at this point in history, but go beyond his explanation of the ways in which these authoritative texts were open to development and growth. Psalm 154 is illustrative in this regard because of the way it both links itself to and transforms the themes in other psalms. In order to shed some light on the ways in which such collections grew, we might look at the interpretive tropes and motifs that connect Ps 154 to the preceding few compositions.

17 See my discussion of this threefold link in Chapter One.
18 See my full discussion of this issue in Chapter Three.
First, Ps 154 fits thematically as the last composition in the cluster of praise and thanksgiving hymns comprised of Pss 135 + 136 + Catena + Ps 145. In Skehan’s delineation of liturgical complexes in the scroll, Pss 135 through 145 are listed as a cluster, but Ps 154 is not included. Peter Flint points out this omission as part of his critique of Skehan, who “sometimes fails to include ‘apocryphal’ compositions in liturgical groupings even when these manifestly belong with ‘biblical’ psalms.”\textsuperscript{19} Flint is correct to note the shared themes of praise and thanksgiving in this group, as well as the fact that the next three compositions (Plea for Deliverance + Ps 139 + Ps 137) are prayers of supplication. But there is much more to say about the presence and position of the psalm at the end of this thematic grouping, as it builds upon and transforms themes from the previous texts, particularly traditions about praising the deeds of God, which are connected to traditions about the place of praise and sacrifice, heavenly wisdom and community practices.

The compositions in this cluster are psalms of praise for the deeds of God. These deeds are creation, the Exodus with its signs and wonders, and the possession of the land, which are described in order in Pss 135 and 136. Ps 145, however, contains no specific references to these events, but is a more abstract composition about the attributes of God, the greatness of God’s deeds, and the way in which they are to be praised, recited, and proclaimed; it is a psalm of praise but also, to a great extent, a psalm about praise. Something similar might be said Ps 154, which follows after it, and reflects self-consciously about what it means to praise God’s deeds. In lines 1-7, we read:

\textsuperscript{19} Flint, \textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 188.
The language describing God’s deeds and power has parallels in the previous three compositions. God’s salvation (ישע), glory (כבוד), greatness (גדול), and deeds (מעשים) all link Ps 154 with the previous psalms, as do the terms for proclaiming (להודיע) and recounting (לספר) these things and meditating or conversing about them (אשיחה/שיחות; see line 12 and 145:5).

But the psalm does not only link itself to these traditions; it also develops or interprets them in a definite direction. The recounting and proclaiming of God’s glory and deeds is connected to revealed wisdom and pedagogy: wisdom has been “given” and “made known” to human beings so that they may “proclaim” the greatness of God and “enlighten” the simple, those who lack understanding. Indeed, there are hints of sapiential themes already in Ps 145, immediately preceding Ps 154, for example, in vv. 3-4:

The Lord is great and highly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise your deeds to another, and will proclaim your mighty acts.

Both the mention of חקר (something that is searched out, familiar from, for example, Proverbs 2:4 and Job 28:3) and the theme of intergenerational teaching already point to sapiential traditions, setting the stage for Ps 154.
Here, both psalmody and pedagogy are transformed through their juxtaposition with one another. The vocabulary of “enlightening” (לָהַשֵּׂךְ) and those who “lack understanding” (לָֽחוֹרְוָא לָבָב) link the text unambiguously to the pedagogical traditions in Proverbs, but here, what is taught are the deeds of God. In an interesting “mirror image” of Ben Sira’s claims that Wisdom is to be learned from the deeds of God in the world and in history (ch. 24), here in Ps 154 it is Wisdom herself who teaches God’s deeds to the simple.\(^{20}\) Ps 154 also links Wisdom to *song* in a way that is only hinted in earlier sapiential traditions. In Prov. 1:20, we read, "תָּרָהָה בַּחַדּוֹת הָרָהָה, בְּתוֹךְ הָאָרְזוֹת הָקֵלָה, 'Wisdom sings [or shouts] in the street; in the squares she raises her voice." The theme of Wisdom’s voice and speech runs throughout Proverbs 1-9. While the meaning of תָּרָהָה is ambiguous here, and can mean simply “shouts,” in Ps 154 Wisdom is unambiguously associated with *song* (זֶּמרֶתָה), which is heard from the community of the just (lines 10-11):  

In the context of the rest of the Psalm, this “song” can be considered a song of praise for the greatness and deeds of God. The community who is being described and addressed here knows to praise God through divinely revealed, personified Wisdom.

This theme of Wisdom being present in the community brings me to another way in which both psalmic and sapiential traditions are developed in this text: the theme of the *place* of praise and ritual. Of course, many psalms are closely linked to traditions about temple and sacrifice. In the cluster that concludes with Ps 154, the first composition, Ps 135, is framed by strong temple traditions in vv. 2 and 21. Those who

\(^{20}\) See my discussion of the relationship between this psalm, Ben Sira, and Proverbs in Chapter Four.
are called to praise the Lord are (135:2) “those who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God,” "Those who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God," while the connection is more ambiguous, the Catena that concludes Ps 136 contains a reference to "the sound of salvation in the tents of the righteous," once again a reference to place and a praising group.

In Ps 154, these themes of place and sacrifice are developed in connection with wisdom and community life. Wisdom, just as in earlier sapiential traditions, is imagined to be dwelling on high, and described using building metaphors of doors and entrances (מפתחיה, פתחיה) from which one can be near or far. However, while it seems that Wisdom is imagined as dwelling on high, it also dwells within the community – her “song” is heard, "Her voice is heard from the gates of just ones, and from the assembly of devout ones her song" (lines 10-11). Who are these “just ones” and “devout ones”? In the context of the beginning of the Psalm, which exhorts its audience to join their souls with the “just ones” and the “perfect ones” (line 1) these may be angelic, heavenly beings. But the psalm continues with a description of a community eating, drinking, meditating on the Torah and proclaiming God’s power. The place of Wisdom is both a heavenly place and the practices of a community. It may be helpful here to consider the motif of Wisdom’s banquet in

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21 I discuss the relationship of this composition with angelic traditions in Chapter Five. According to the Qumran Rule of the Congregation, 1QSa, the holy angels are said to be within the council; 1QSa 2:8-9: כיא תם [בנז] תמalah כהנים מצראות [ממקהל קהל] [נמקהלית קהלית] [מקהלית קהלית].
Proverbs 9.\textsuperscript{22} This tradition was perhaps reinterpreted in a more concrete, literal way in Ps 154’s articulation of a community’s practices of dining, teaching and praise, reminiscent of some sectarian accounts of the community’s daily habits.\textsuperscript{23}

Finally, I come to what may be the most striking verse in this psalm (lines 7-9):

זאמה מפואר עליון
ירצה ממגוון מנשה ממקריב ותורה בלב בור
במדרש ממלעה ביה ביה עולות בור
נוהי midi

The person who gives glory to the Most High is accepted like one who brings an offering, like one who offers rams and calves [\textit{sic}], like one who makes the altar greasy with many burnt offerings, like the sweet fragrance from the hand of the just ones.

This is, of course, a striking claim in any context, but particularly so within 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a}: as discussed above, Ps 154 concludes a cluster of Psalms that extol the glory and deeds of God. This cluster begins with Ps 135, which includes very strong temple/Zion traditions. Here, we have evidence for the development of traditions about prayer, psalmody, and sacrifice within the psalms collection itself. Sapiential themes both influence and are influenced by this connection with psalmody and sacrifice. Once again, it is the book of Ben Sira that provides an evocative parallel in ch. 24, where Wisdom is a heavenly figure ensconced in Zion and ministering in the tabernacle, exuding the fragrance of incense (24:10, 24:15). In its weaving together of the themes of divine revelation, pedagogy, community practice, and sacrifice, Ps 154 builds upon and serves as a climax to the four psalms of praise that precede it.

\textsuperscript{22} See my discussion in Chapter Four.

Ps 154, then, fits seamlessly into this collection of Psalms. It is anchored to the older psalms that precede it, through shared vocabulary and themes relating to praising the deeds of God. However, it not only depends upon, but also transforms and carries forward the traditions found in these psalms of praise. It is divinely revealed Wisdom, that dwells in the heavens but is present in the worshipping community, that makes it possible for God’s praises to be sung, both as a virtual sacrifice and as instruction for the ignorant. Traditions about praise and God’s deeds that run through Pss 135, 136+Catena, and 145 are developed in Ps 154’s spinning and weaving of traditions about pedagogy and Wisdom as a female figure, ritual/sacrifice, heavenly and virtual space, and community practice: here, worship and pedagogy are joined together through the voice of divine hokhmah which infuses the diverse practices of the assembly.

Does this continuity indicate that Ps 154 was composed directly in response to this particular cluster of psalms? Not at all. The vocabulary and themes in the composition reflect and develop traditions about praise and ritual that are much broader, and found in many other texts. Indeed, the beginning and end of this psalm are found in another manuscript in Cave 4, 4Q448, together with the so-called “Prayer for King Jonathan,” showing that the text had a “life” independently of the Psalms Scroll (and continued to be alive to later communities, as is evidenced by its appearance in the Syriac tradition).24 But the composition – in the literal sense – of the scroll, that is, the way the pieces were collected, is itself a creative process. Noting how this text builds

24 See further on this in the conclusion to this dissertation.
upon the preceding psalms of praise shows the tight weave of the collection and the continuity between the compositions collected in it, and reveals evidence for unfolding interpretive trajectories within the Psalms Scroll itself. “Filtering” the non-Masoretic texts out of the rest of the collection blinds us to the way these traditions grew and developed; a text like Ps 154 must be read together not only with the other “non-Masoretic” compositions, but also with the “biblical” psalms of praise where it has been placed.

Therefore, while scholars have insisted that the presence of this composition in the collection is predicated upon a belief in or claim to its Davidic origins, it does not appear to me that purported authorship and provenance was a primary consideration for its inclusion here. Like many of the biblical psalms, this composition itself has nothing that would explicitly connect it to the figure of David\(^ {25} \); indeed, it is divine hokhmah, rather than David, that is the source of psalmody here. Rather, the themes and interpretive connections this composition shares with other psalms makes it fit seamlessly into a compilation of hymns that are presented as divine revelation and that a community is called upon to perform. Here again, thinking of 11QPsalms\(^ {9} \) as an unfolding, developing collection, rather than a “book,” helps us think beyond rigid categories of authorship and provenance as criteria for the inclusion of these non-

\(^ {25} \) Indeed, in the Syriac tradition, Ps 154 has a superscription that links it to King Hezekiah and is connected to the Syriac heading of Ps 86 (although it is nevertheless included in a group of psalms identified as Davidic). The superscription of the Qumran version of Ps 154 has not survived, and the Syriac heading is part of a distinct East-Syrian tradition and cannot be used to reconstruct a possible Hebrew superscription in the Scroll. However, E. and H. Eshel argued for a Hezekian association for the composition in the Second Temple period based on its role in 4Q448, the “Prayer for King Jonathan,” arguing that it is included there because of an interpretive motif that links Alexander Jannaeus and Hezekiah; see “4Q448, Psalm 154 (Syriac), Sirach 48:20, and 4QPlsa\(^ {2} \).
Masoretic compositions, and consider other principles of traditionary development that were more meaningful to ancient communities themselves.

3. Plea for Deliverance (cf. 11QPs\(^\text{b}\)) (col. 19)

Surely a maggot cannot praise you nor a grave-worm recount your mercy.

But the living can praise you, all those who stumble can laud you. In revealing your kindness to them and by your righteousness you enlighten them. For in your hand is the soul of every living thing; the breath of all flesh you have given. Deal with us, O Lord, according to your goodness, according to your great mercy, and according to your many righteous deeds.

The Lord has heeded the voice of those who love his name and has not deprived them of his mercy.

Blessed be the Lord, who executes righteous deeds, crowning his holy ones with lovingkindness and mercy. My soul cries out to praise your name, to sing high praises for your loving deeds, to proclaim your faithfulness – of praise there is no end. Near death was I for my sins, and my iniquities had sold me to the grave; But you saved me, O Lord, according to your great mercy, and according to your many righteous deeds. Indeed have I
loved your name, and in your protection I have found refuge. When I remember your might
my heart is brave, and upon your mercies I lean. Forgive my sin, O Lord, and purify me from my iniquity. Vouchsafe me a spirit of faith and knowledge, and let me not be dishonoured
in ruin. Let not Satan rule over me, nor an unclean spirit; neither let pain nor the evil inclination take possession of my bones. For you, O Lord, are my praise, and in you do I hope
all day. Let my brothers rejoice with me and the house of my father, who are astonished by your graciousness...
For]ever I will rejoice in you.

The “Plea for Deliverance” was unknown prior to the discovery of the Scrolls. It appears also in 11QPsalms⁶, a fragmentary manuscript that has important affinities with 11QPsalms⁷, since it also contains parts of the Catena and the Apostrophe to Zion (discussed below). The composition follows immediately after Ps 154, and is in turn followed by Ps 139.

Flint considers the text as part of the cluster 154-Plea-139-137,

whose general theme is the kindness of God who delivers or vindicates his people. The first two pieces focus on God’s goodness and compassion..., while the second two express the cry of the individual (139) and the community (for deliverance and vengeance.... By emphasizing the qualities and sufficiency of God, Ps 154 and the Plea show him able to deliver the pure ones or those who stumble (154:18, Plea, line 2) from an “evil time” (154:17) or from Satan (Plea, line 15). This sets the stage for the dramatic pleas for deliverance and vengeance to be found in the next two Psalms.²⁶

Elsewhere, Flint states that Ps 154 “obviously belongs” in the previous cluster of 135 – 136+Catena – 145 because they are hymns of praise and thanksgiving, “while the group that follows [Plea – 139 – 137] contains only prayers of supplication.”²⁷ Flint, then, has configured the clusters in two different ways at two junctures in his book, and has made a strong case for each based on shared themes among the compositions. This array of

²⁶ Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 198.
²⁷ Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 188.
possibilities for seeing clusters within the collection shows that it may not be productive to delineate rigid groupings and separate “sections” in the text, and suggests that the ancient compilers and users of the scroll would also have configured these clusters in varying ways over time. The Plea for Deliverance “fits” both with Ps 154 before it and the Masoretic compositions that follow, both thematically and formally, testifying to the organic and fluid nature of the collection.

The Plea uses familiar biblical imagery, themes, and vocabulary, although some of its language may be described as “late.” The plea to be delivered from death because the dead cannot praise God echoes such texts as Isa 38:18-19, Job 7:21, Ps 6:4-5.28 As Sanders points out, the psalm mentions Satan, not Belial like the sectarian documents. It does not stand out from the other “canonical psalms” in any other way and there is no reason to suspect ancient communities would have understood it as a different kind of text from, say, Ps 139, which immediately follows it and contains a first person plea for deliverance as well.

4. Sir 51:13-30 (col. 21)

28 Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 76.
I was a young man before I had strayed when I looked for her. She came to me in her beauty when I finally sought her out. Even as a blossom drops in the ripening of grapes, making the heart glad, my foot trod in uprightness; for from my youth I have known her. I slightly inclined my ear and great was the teaching I found. And she became a nurse for me; to my teacher I give my praise.

I purposed to make sport; I was zealous for pleasure, without pause. I kindled my soul for her and I did not turn my face away. I bestirred my soul for her, and on her heights I did not waver. I opened my hand(s) [...] and perceive her unseen parts.

This first person acrostic hymn to wisdom is otherwise known from Ben Sira 51.30 Little scholarship exists on the rationale for this composition’s inclusion in the collection. Indeed, for the most part, scholars treat it as an exemplar of a portion of Ben Sira31 without reflection on its “home” within the Psalms Scroll. Peter Flint sees it as part of a “Davidic cluster” of Ps 138, Sir 51, Apostrophe to Zion, and Ps 93, which “contains three hymns of praise of thanksgiving and one wisdom piece”32 and whose Davidic character

29 Numbers in square brackets in the translation correspond to the verse numbers in the Ben Sira version of this composition.
32 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 194.
is indicated by the superscription on Ps 138 and the Davidic superscription in the subsequent psalm, 141.

In the editio princeps Sanders, however, posits an originally separate origin for the text, and reflects on its function as part of a Davidic collection:

[I]t is now quite clear that the canticle is totally independent of Sirach. If Jesus, son of Sira, of Jerusalem, had penned the canticle it would hardly be found in 11QPsᵃ, which claims Davidic authorship. That neither David nor Ben Sira wrote it needs no comment. What is interesting, of course, is that in Palestine it could be considered Davidic while contemporarily in Alexandria it became related to the later ‘Jerusalem’ sage.³³

Let me rephrase Sanders’ argument here, because it is telling in terms of his (and other scholars’) approach to the question of authorship and textual transmission. Sanders argues that the composition was originally independent of Ben Sira because if it was written by Ben Sira, it could not make its way into a text that claims Davidic authorship. This argument has been challenged directly by M.R. Lehmann, who writes that

Sanders’ contention that the Canticle could not have been authored by Ben Sira merely because the compiler of 11 Q Psᵃ branded the entire Scroll as Davidic, does not stand the test of either logic nor exegetical examination. The Scroll is manifestly apocryphical without making any claim to faithful adherence to the canonical text, since it freely admits non-canonical material to be intermingled with Biblical Psalms.³⁴

Lehmann claims that the Psalms Scroll, which he considers a liturgical and not scriptural collection, incorporates “texts taken direct out of Ben Sira”³⁵ – not only Sir 51,

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³³ Sanders, Psalm Scroll, 83.
³⁴ M.R. Lehmann, “11 QPsᵃ and Ben Sira,” RevQ 11 (1983): 239-51, 240. Lehmann’s article misrepresents the diversity of the psalmonic material found at Qumran and uses post-canonical categories to call the Psalms Scroll “liturgical” and not scriptural. He posits a process of “authorization” for “Biblical” texts in “scribal reference texts” that set them apart from non-canonical material, which is based on his reading of much later rabbinic material and does not fit the Second Temple context (241). However, his observations about literary and conceptual points of contact between 11QPsalmsᵃ and Ben Sira are important and full of implications for the way these texts were used and imagined; these will be explored in Chapter Four.
³⁵ Lehmann, 239.
but other, shorter quotations as well, testifying both to Ben Sira’s popularity at the time of the Scroll’s compilation, and to the non-canonical status of 11QPsalms.\(^{36}\)

It is not my intention here to take a position regarding the text’s origin with Ben Sira or as an independent composition. Given the complex history of translation and transmission of the text of Ben Sira, and that text’s own anthological nature, this seems to me an impossible question to answer with any confidence. It is also, as I will show in Chapter Four, not particularly indicative of the way that Ben Sira and his contemporaries themselves would have thought of textual origins and authenticity. Rather, I would like to point out the presuppositions that underlie the positions of both scholars, presuppositions that are related to an anachronistic understanding of textual coherence and integrity. For Lehmann, an anthological text that allows for expansions, additions and rearrangements in the process of its transmission cannot be “canonical,” but must be “unauthorized (=apocryphical),”\(^{37}\) at best a liturgical document. This argument will convince few scholars today: the fact that “biblical” texts themselves underwent such processes is well recognized, and we are hard pressed to find any evidence that there was a concept or process of “authorizing” particular textual forms – the ancient equivalent of publishing an official editio princeps – in early Judaism. Sanders’ view of a textual fluidity, then, seems more convincing; and yet, his treatment of the Ben Sira text shows us that we must go further still in re-thinking our understanding of ancient concepts of textual tradition. Sanders’ argument that the text

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\(^{36}\) Lehmann’s view of the collection as liturgical and not canonical is a result not only of anachronistic categories, but also an incomplete understanding of the manuscript evidence. He writes that “while almost all the other Psalm Scrolls follow the canonical, Masoretic sequence, 11 Q Psalms takes great liberties in the sequence of the listed chapters” (240); this is incorrect; see Chapter One.

\(^{37}\) Lehmann, 241.
could not have been taken from Ben Sira because it was part of a Davidic scroll presupposes an understanding of the collection as a coherent entity ascribed monolithically to a single authorial figure – imagined in terms of the identity of material object, text and author, like a modern book, the libro unitario.

But, as I have argued, this is an anachronism for the Second Temple period. That David was considered the “author” of all the psalms in this scroll is a problematic statement in light of the texts used to support this claim, and the non-Davidic superscriptions of the compositions in the scroll. These issues of Davidic authorship will be explored in detail in Chapter Three; for now, I would like to suggest only that the presence of Ben Sira 51 in 11QPsalms\(^3\) does not indicate that it could not have been taken from Ben Sira – *not* because the collection is a non-scriptural mishmash that includes material taken from this popular book, as Lehmann argues, but because the expansion of this collection was not governed by rigid concepts of authorial provenance. Both the Psalms Scroll and, I believe, Ben Sira as well, are compilations of materials from a variety of sources and were not imagined in terms of an originary, authorial text. This is especially convincing since the ultimate source of prayers and psalms was understood to be revealed wisdom, a belief that is present in both the Psalms Scroll and in Ben Sira. Thus, whether the hymn was in fact composed by Ben Sira himself or was an independent composition, it could become a movable, manipulable fragment, a piece of the tradition of “learned psalmography”\(^3\) that could find its way into another collection.

Let us look further at the way Sanders understands the presence of this text in the Psalms Scroll:

If the witnesses offer us an accurate reflection of the latter half of the poem it was indeed probably a song composed by a Wisdom teacher as a plea to his students to gain Wisdom from him and to espouse her as he had done in his youth. If so, it fits the context of Sirach better than the context of a Davidic psalter. But at Qumran it was clearly thought to be one of the 4050 songs (xxvii 10) which David composed.\textsuperscript{39}

Here again, the issue of what the communities who used this scroll would have thought about the historical authorship or provenance of this composition is front and centre; although he assumes it was clearly considered a composition of David,\textsuperscript{40} Sanders finds the composition an awkward fit in a “Davidic psalter.” But the themes of wisdom and learning are, of course, not foreign to psalms collections; the sapiential concerns of psalms compilers are evident in the Masoretic psalter (which begins with a sapiential composition) and, even more clearly, in 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{a}. Wisdom is personified in Ps 154 (discussed above) and credited with giving human beings the ability to praise God in the first place, and dwelling in the praying and studying community as well as “on high” (Sir. 51:21). In the same vein, David is described as a חכם and סופר as well as a psalmist in col. 27, appropriating the characteristics of Solomon the sage to further flesh out his persona as an inspired singer and writer of psalms.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39} Sanders, \textit{Psalms Scroll}, 85.

\textsuperscript{40} In fact, it is not at all clear that this text was considered one of the 4050 songs that David composed (col. 27) – that text makes no claim to be referring to any specific compositions. The indefinite meaning of this claim will be discussed in Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{41} More broadly, the blurring of boundaries between wisdom and psalmody can be seen in, for example, entire textual collections like the \textit{Psalms of Solomon}. Just as wisdom compositions are not out of place in psalm collections, neither are liturgical, psalm-like compositions foreign to sapiential texts, as MS B of Ben Sira shows, with its placement of a psalm with a refrain immediately before the wisdom hymn in ch. 51 (see Chapter Four).
In Sanders’ view, although it fits better into the context of Ben Sira, we might understand this hymn in its present context as giving “further insight into Jewish views in Hellenistic-Roman times of David’s youth” (85), together with Ps 151. Indeed, given the Davidic, biographical character of some of the final compositions in the scroll and the sapiential language used about David there, a connection to David’s youth may have been evoked for some users of the scroll. But such a conclusion is only obvious or necessary if, again, we think of the entire collection as a unit, as if it was a coherent entity defined by its purported authorial origin. As part of 11QPsalms\(^a\) seen as a developing collection – a Psalms Project – this hymn to Wisdom can be understood as woven into the text in other ways: in terms of a concern with revelation and instruction for an exemplary life, much like Ps 154 and other sapiential pieces that become part of the psalmic tradition, but are not necessarily directly linked with David’s biography. The function of this piece as a pedagogical composition does not make it out of place in this collection, neither in terms of its themes of the fervent search for revealed, personified wisdom, nor its acrostic form.

5. Apostrophe to Zion (cf. 11QPs\(^b\), 4QPs\(^c\)) (col. 22)

5.

א GIF I II III IV

אポストロープスへのゾイオン

1. השמחת ברוך ב淄בלי ציוון ושלום

2. הנחת ישעטך לפני וℍודרי יום ב淄בלי הסדר

3. תפסות בהזאותי יום ישעטך ברוב כבוד

4. בן אור ליגש החומצון יכ私たち תפארתי

5. חכם מכות החומצון יכ私たち תפארתי יכ actionTypes

6. תפארתי מבצע חסדים חסידיך תחון חסדים

7. עמל חכמה מתך ונכוך בכרך רבי דידי

8. זו ישראל יטביב עד חייו אליך נגלה

9. חכם כו ישאול אתך עד חייו אליך נגלה

10. ציוון לא נשכח החומצון מי הוא אנך עד פי נא ציוון

11. בחולך בנחת אוכדך נאם מצ과장ו ישנה חומצון

12. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

13. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

14. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

15. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

16. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

17. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

18. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

19. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

20. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

21. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

22. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

23. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

24. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

25. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

26. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

27. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

28. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

29. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון

30. ציוון יתפאר נאם פסניאק ערבת באך תשחת ציוון
I remember you for a blessing, O Zion; with all my might
I have loved you. May your memory be blessed forever! Great is your hope, O Zion; that peace
and your longed-for salvation will come. Generation after generation will dwell in you and generations of holy ones
will be your splendor; those who yearn for the day of your salvation that they may rejoice in the greatness of your glory. On the abundance
of your glory they are nourished and in your splendid squares they will walk. The merits of your prophets
will you remember, and in the deeds of your pious ones will you glory. Purge violence from your midst; falsehood
and iniquity will be cut off from you. Your sons will rejoice in your midst and your precious ones will be united with you.
How they have hoped for your salvation, your pure ones have mourned for you. Hope for you does not perish,
O Zion, nor is hope in your forgotten. Who has ever perished in righteousness, or who has ever survived
in his iniquity? Man is tested according to his way; every man is acquitted according to his deeds. All about you your enemies are cut off,
O Zion, and all your foes have been scattered. Praise of you is pleasing, O Zion, cherished through all the world. Many times do I remember you for blessing; with all my heart I bless you.
May you attain to everlasting righteousness, and may you receive the blessings of the honourable. Accept a vision
bespoken of you, and dreams of prophets sought for you. Be exalted, and spread wide, O Zion;
praise the Most High, your saviour; let my soul be glad in your glory.

This poem follows immediately after the hymn to wisdom familiar from Sir. 51.

It does not have a sapiential flavour, but it may be linked to Sir 51 through the acrostic form, a style prevalent in wisdom compositions. This may, perhaps, indicate another

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way in which compositions were joined in collections – according to shared formal, rather than thematic, elements. Fragments of this text are also found in 11QPs² and 4QPs¹, fragmentary manuscripts that seem to have other affinities with 11QPsalsms³. The fragment of 4QPs¹ (4Q88) contains parts of Pss 107 to 109, part of the “Apostrophe to Zion” with some textual variants, and then two other compositions: “Apostrophe to Judah” and “Eschatological Hymn.”⁴³

The composition contains many echoes of the latter part of Isaiah. For example:

עָלָיו כָּל־הָמַּעֲבָדִים קָרִים
אֶלָּה שִׁישוֹ כָּל־הַעֲבָדָיו
לָמוּן חָיָה וְשֵׁבֵעָה מֵעָלָיו בְּנַחֲמוֹתְיוֹ וְהַעֲנָקָם לְפָנָיו
פְּנֵי תְּנַחֲמוֹתְיוֹ בַּכְּלָלָה.

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her – that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast; that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious bosom. (Isa 66:10-11).

The sentiments about mourning Zion’s desolation and rejoicing in her promised restoration are also familiar from such passages as Isaiah 62:1-8. The composition is followed by Ps 93, which concerns the certain, eternal reign of God robed in glory and majesty, perhaps with the effect of reinforcing the strength of the promises about Zion’s restoration:

uproot נַעֲמְרֵךְ נַעֲמָה לְבֵיתךְ נַעֲמָה גָּדוֹל והַעֲנָקָם לְפָנָיו לְאָרֶץ יִמָּה

Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore (Ps 93:5).

This love song to Zion is the subject of a recent article by Bodil Ejrnæs, who reads it along with the sapiential hymn from Ben Sira, which I discussed above, and

⁴³ See the discussion of the compositions in 11QPs¹ in Starcky and Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 35, 249, 250.
places both in the context of Davidic autobiography. She argues that the speaker in both psalms is David, and that they exemplify his love for two women – personified Wisdom and personified Zion, connecting the themes of wisdom, cult, and liturgy.

Ejrnæs writes:

The main theme of the two poems is the speaker’s, i.e. David’s, relationship with two women, Miss Wisdom and Lady Zion, and his experiences with them during his life. With this imagery, the poems have a personal or even ‘autobiographical’ character. In this respect, they anticipate the ‘autobiographical’ poems in the concluding parts of the scroll, where David talks about his life. ... Therefore, the function of the Sirach poem and the Apostrophe to Zion in the context of the Psalms Scroll is to contribute to the glorification of David and to emphasize his authority – and consequently, the authority of the Psalms Scroll, the book written by him.

Ejrnæs’ approach, once again, is to read the scroll as a univocal text, rather than a diverse collection, a Psalms Project. The direct connection between its compositions and its purported “author” betrays a modern view of literary work as the product of individual creativity. While the figure of David is important as a kind of figurehead of psalmic activity, used in a kind of “branding” of textual tradition, he may not necessarily be considered their personal author. I discuss this Davidic version of pseudepigraphy in detail in Chapter Three. For now, it is sufficient to mention that some psalms in the collection are attributed to other figures, making a strict designation of the Psalms Scroll as a “book written by” David, and its compositions directly autobiographical, problematic. Psalm 127, for instance, begins with a Solomonic superscription. Flint comments:


45 Ejrnæs, “David and His Two Women,” 588-89.
This reading is particularly interesting, since it shows that the compilers did not feel at liberty to replace such superscriptions with an attribution to David.  

Flint, however, does not speculate on how this retention of a Solomonic superscription might challenge the accepted picture of monolithic Davidic authorship. But the presence of this Solomonic psalm should make us cautious to connect the non-Masoretic compositions to David in direct, authorial, or autobiographical ways, as scholars from Sanders to Ejrnæs have done. It seems to me that here again, canonical presuppositions determine these readings. The biblical Psalm 127 is, as it were, grandfathered into the collection since we are familiar with it; but the “apocryphal” compositions need to be justified and shoehorned into our conception of authorial attribution. But since no such division between canonical and non-canonical existed, polyphony among the “additional compositions” should be expected as well. Both the Masoretic Book of Psalms and the Qumran collection speak with many voices.

6. Ps 155/Syriac Ps III (col. 24)

46 Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 194 n.120.
O Lord, I called to you, give heed to me. I spread forth my palms toward your holy dwelling. Incline your ear and grant me my plea, and my request do not withhold from me. Edify my soul and do not cast it down, and abandon it not in the presence of the wicked. May the Judge of Truth remove from me the rewards of evil. O Lord, judge me not according to my sins; for no man living is righteous before you. Grant me understanding, O Lord, in your law and teach me your ordinances, That many may hear of your deeds and peoples may honour your glory. Remember me and forget me not, and lead me not into situations too hard for me. The sins of my youth cast far from me, and may my transgressions not be remembered against me. Purify me, O Lord, from the evil scourge, and let it not turn again upon me. Dry up its roots from me, and let its leaves not flourish within me. You are my glory, O Lord. Therefore my request is fulfilled before you. To whom may I cry and he would grant it to me? And the sons of man – what more can their power do? My trust, O Lord, is before you. I cried “O Lord,” and he answered me, [and he healed] my broken heart. I slumbered [and slept], I dreamt; indeed...

[from the Syriac: I awoke.
You did support me, O Lord, when my heart was smitten
and I invoked the Lord, my deliverer.
Now I shall behold their shame;
I have trusted in the and shall not be abashed.
(Render glory for ever and ever.)
Deliver Israel, O Lord, thy faithful ones,
and the house of Jacob, thy chosen ones.]

This partial acrostic composition is the Hebrew behind Ps 155, or Syriac Apocryphal Psalm III, found in the Syriac manuscripts together with Ps 151 (I; here, col. 28) and Ps 154 (II; here, col. 17). Noth, in his work on the Syriac version, considers it within generic designations of biblical psalms, as a Dankelied with a Klagelied within it (v. 3-14,
Syriac 3-27). Sanders writes that “No. III, it now appears, is as 'biblical' as Ps 22 itself, being a combination of two biblical Gattungen... and like its canonical counterparts defies all facile attempts to assign it a date.” While the first person singular, penitential, self-deprecating tone of the psalm might be compared to some of the Hodayot, it does not distinguish itself from other psalms included in the Masoretic collection formally, chronologically, thematically or philologically.

Some scholars, however, have argued that this text and the other “Syriac Apocryphal Psalms” are distinct from the other psalms in the collection because they are of sectarian/Essene provenance. The champions of this view are primarily Philonenko and Delcor, who argued that the references to a studying and worshipping community in Ps 154 indicate sectarian origins, and that Ps 155 originates with the Teacher of Righteousness, who at one point in the composition is pleading for understanding so he may teach others, in parallel to 1QH 6:10-13:

חיינו *** בחרותמה ואחר משפכתיו למלוע
ישמעו רבם ועשיכם זעופים ידוהי ואכדוה.

Grant me understanding, O Lord, in your law and teach me your ordinances,
That many may hear of your deeds and peoples may honour your glory. (col. 24:8-9)

However, as Sanders says, “we must surely admit that many psalmists and men of faith from biblical times on have uttered the same prayer,” and the language of law and wisdom strongly echoes Ps 119. Moreover, while Sanders admits of a possibility that Ps

47 Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 72; M. Noth, “Die fünf syrisch überlieferten apokryphen Psalmen,” ZAW 48 (1930) 1-23, 15.
48 Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 75-6.
49 Delcor, "Cinq nouveaux psaumes esséniens?" and Les Hymnes de Qumrân (1962), 299-319; Philonenko, “L’Origine essénienne des cinq psaumes syriaques de David.” Delcor and Philonenko discuss all five non-canonical Syriac psalms, only three of which are found in 11QPsalms.
50 Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 75.
154’s emphasis on community worship may point to a “proto-Essene” origin, nothing in Ps 155 indicates sectarian ideas. Wherever Delcor and Philonenko saw evidence for sectarian terminology in the Syriac translation, the Hebrew original in 11QPsalms contradicts this.51

Sanders’ most important observation for our purposes, however, is that those “apocryphal” psalms from 11QPsalms that are also known from the Syriac manuscripts – namely Pss I/151, II/154, and III/155 – have no particular relationship to one another and should not be categorized together in discussions of the Qumran collection. He points out that in the Syriac manuscripts, Ps I/151 is a translation from the LXX 151, not the Hebrew; Ps II/154 could be “proto-Essenian”; and Ps III/154 is very “biblical.” They are diverse compositions that do not share a common origin, thematic focus or date with one another anymore than they do with other, “canonical” texts. Sanders astutely argues:

The fact that these three psalms appear in 11QPs says nothing about their ultimate origin. Certainly no one will suggest that the thirty-six canonical psalms were penned at Qumran! Furthermore, the three are interspersed among the thirty-six canonicals (in Cols. xviii, xxiv, and xxviii) in such a way as to cast on doubt on their ‘canonicity’ at Qumran, or to suggest any relationship among them. They have no more special relationship of origin one to another than do Pss 141, 133, and 144, which in 11QPs appear (in that order) on the same column.52

At the time the 11QPsalms collection was compiled, these “Syriac apocryphal psalms” were not thought of as a distinct group, but were part of a large treasury of psalmic compositions, undifferentiated from those psalms that later became canonical. They are dispersed throughout the Qumran psalms scroll, and no contemporary evidence exists

51 E.g. in Syr. Line 10/Qumran 8, Philonenko posited a Hebrew original ofbows, but the Hebrew actually reads, like Ps 143; Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 74-75.
52 Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 75.
to connect them in any way. They function as a separate “collection” of sorts only in the medieval Syriac manuscripts; but “the answer as to why the psalms appear together in the various Syriac manuscripts must be sought elsewhere than at Qumran.”53 I will consider the question of the “recollection” of these psalms in Syriac in my conclusion. For now, I wish only to emphasize that for the people who compiled and used the Psalms Scroll, no distinction existed between the Masoretic psalms and the “Syriac Apocryphal Psalms”; grouping them together is a result only of looking backwards from later textual traditions – the Masoretic Text and the Syriac manuscripts – and does not reflect the nature of the Qumran Psalms Scroll on its own terms.

**Conclusion to Part I**

What Sanders says about the lack of any special relationship between what we call the three Syriac apocryphal psalms can also be said of the non-Masoretic pieces in general. There is no call for seeing them as a distinct group, different from the “canonical” psalms. They are of various dates, origins, literary forms and themes. They have no special characteristics that they share with one another but not with some of those compositions that later became biblical, but are organically part of the psalms collection and were considered in the same terms by the communities who used it. While they appear in the latter part of the collection, they are interwoven with compositions we recognize from the Masoretic text. While it is fair to say that many of these texts are “late” compositions and show a sapiential character, this does not set them apart from many of the psalms we call biblical. These compositions are woven

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53 Sanders, *Psalms Scroll*, 75.
into the collection through shared themes of prayer, revelation and song, and through shared poetic forms.

Part III: The End(s) of 11QPsalms and the Boundaries of Liturgy

My discussion of the non-Masoretic pieces in 11QPsalms continues with a consideration of a group of texts that have been viewed in a special way: the final few compositions in the scroll. Without fail, scholars understand these compositions to be “extra,” “additional,” or “epilogic” – not part of the “psalm collection proper.” Such an assessment rests on two assumptions: first, about the nature and function of these compositions as “other” than the rest of the collection of psalms; and second, about the rest of the collection understood as a coherent, structured and bounded entity. My reading, however, challenges both of these sets of assumptions. I present these compositions not as “additional” material, but as evidence of a layered history of arrangement, embellishment and ongoing development of a collection, which can be compared in some ways to the seams and fissures in the canonical Book of Psalms. A major feature of the discussion will be a consideration of the nature or function of psalmic and liturgical texts over against other kinds of writing, ideas that lie behind the scholarly approach to most of these compositions.⁵⁴

The compositions at the end of the scroll are the following:

Col. 25-26:
Ps 149
Ps 150
Hymn to the Creator

Col. 26-27:
David’s Last Words (/2 Sam 23)
David’s Compositions - ‘colophon’
Ps 140

Col. 27-28:
Ps 134
Ps 151a, 151b

Col. 29:
Blank (end of scroll – uninscribed sheet)

These final four columns have played a key role in the scholarship about the nature of the psalms scroll for several reasons. First, as discussed above, the end of the collection is extant, as signified by the blank column. Second, the Hebrew version behind the Greek Psalm 151 is the final composition on the scroll, just as it concludes the Septuagint version of the Book of Psalms. In addition to Ps 151, this concluding section includes three more of the compositions not found in the Masoretic Psalter – the Hymn to the Creator, David’s Last Words (/2 Sam 23), and particularly David’s Compositions, a piece that is at the heart of most scholarly discussions of the nature of the Psalms Scroll. In the following section I will highlight major approaches to the arrangement and nature of these last compositions.

Among early scholars of the text, Patrick Skehan (who considered the scroll a non-scriptural liturgical collection) saw two principles behind its general arrangement – liturgical grouping and “library edition” expansions\(^5\) – and these two principles also, it seems, inform the way he understood the end of the collection. For Skehan, the collection “proper” ends with the liturgical grouping of Ps 149 and 150 plus the “Hymn

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\(^5\) Skehan, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” 169; “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs”.
to the Creator.” Skehan’s initial assessment seems to have been that the Hymn was not “liturgical” but one of the “library edition” expansions, or a “pendant” for Pss 149-150, but he later did come to understand it as a liturgical composition. In any case, for Skehan the scroll “effectively terminates with Pss 149, 150 and the Hymn to the Creator,” which constitute a “liturgical grouping.” The rest of the compositions form an epilogue that has “nothing to do with liturgy,” and thus falls under Skehan’s category of “library edition” expansions.

Flint’s assessment of the arrangement of these final few columns rests on his interpretation of 11QPsalms as “David’s Solar Psalter,” that is, his argument that the collection is structured around two principles: the 52-week calendar and attribution to David (see section 2). Flint argues that the manuscript originally contained 52 psalms reflecting the solar calendar, plus four “additional” compositions to strengthen the claim for a connection with David (David’s Last Words, David’s Compositions, and Ps 151). Flint argues that David’s Last Words capped off a liturgical grouping consisting of Ps 149, 150, and the Hymn, and calls the final group of David’s Compositions, Ps 140, 134, and 151a and b “Mainly Davidic Pieces.” Like Skehan, Flint also considers the end of the collection as a kind of epilogue that stands apart from the rest of the collection, based on a judgment about its function:

Whether 11QPs was used in worship or for providing instruction, it is easy to envisage a group of worshippers or a teacher reciting Ps 101 or 145 or Sirach 51 or the Plea for Deliverance, which all relate to individual or community life in one way or another. But this is not the case for David’s Last Words, David’s Compositions, Ps 151A and Ps 151B, which emphasize Davidic authorship of this Psalter by highlighting the achievements or career of David.56

56 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 193.
Thus, Peter Flint’s assessment of the end of the scroll also distinguishes strictly between “liturgical” and “other” kinds of pieces – in this case, what might be called “paratextual” compositions that are not part of the text “proper.”

In literary theory, “paratext” means elements additional to a work, such as the author’s name, title, preface, or illustrations, usually provided by an editor, publisher, or printer. Such features serve as a “frame” or “threshold” for the work that mark off its boundaries and govern the way it is received. This, it seems, is just the way the “epilogic” pieces are interpreted by Flint and others: these pieces relate back to the text itself for the purposes of asserting its authorship and authoritative status and framing it as a work. They are not themselves part of the work, which is a collection of liturgical pieces that are meant to be recited and that “relate to individual or community life in one way or another.”

But the concept of “paratext” is tightly bound with the culture of print: book covers, title pages, dedications, information about the printers and publishers, tables of contents. Colophons and other distinctly paratextual material tend to be set apart from the corpus text in some visual, physical way. No such distinction exists in the Psalms Scroll; the “colophon” in col. 27 is laid out in the same way as other compositions, visually blending into the rest of the corpus. Furthermore, the understanding that some pieces are paratextual assumes a bounded identity for the text. Are we justified in reading the final compositions of the Psalms Scroll in this way? In Chapter One, I argued

58 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 193.
that in the Second Temple period, the concept of the Book of Psalms as an identifiable and coherent textual entity did not exist. But assumptions about textual identity and coherence extend to notions about not only books, but also the functions and boundaries of collections. For Skehan and Flint, the real or core psalms collection is identified with a particular use – liturgical pieces – and those parts that do not comfortably fit there are not text but paratext, as front matter, introductions and afterwords are to a printed novel. This move is made in every approach where the “text” is conceptualized as a contained entity with a coherent shape. Michael Chyutin’s imagined text, for example, follows a rigidly structured calendrical scheme that reflects the numbers in “David’s Compositions” (col. 27; on Chyutin’s model, see the section on the arrangement of the scroll earlier in this chapter). Texts that do not fit the scheme fall outside the collection proper: “David’s Compositions,” then, is a “catalogue” that, along with “David’s Last Words,” forms the scroll’s “Prose Conclusion” - which is followed by “Additional Psalms” (140, 134, and 151 a and b).

For Wacholder, who understands the scroll as “David’s Eschatological Psalter” – songs to be sung by the Davidic deliverer at the end of days – the end of the scroll is also an epilogue of sorts, standing apart from the psalms themselves. Pss 143, 149 and 150 are a “Peroration to David,” followed by “Davidic pieces” (David’s Last Words, David’s Compositions), and more information about the typological figure of David (151a-b) Wacholder is unable to explain the presence of Pss 134 and 140 in this cluster. He views “David’s Compositions” – and, by extension, seems to view the entire cluster at the end of the scroll – as an apologetic or polemical “Davidic epilogue,” justifying the
“unorthodox” structure of this collection over against the “traditional” Book of Psalms.59
Here again, the compositions on the final columns of the collection are viewed as separate or different from the rest, and are understood to provide paratextual information on the collection itself, and govern its reception.

There is something compelling about the observation that the final columns of the scroll form a Davidic conclusion, given the presence of the four biographical pieces, David’s Last Words, David’s Compositions, and Ps 151a and b. But there are three problems with separating “epilogic” pieces from the “true” collection, “paratext” from “text.”

First, it rests on dubious generic divisions – what exactly is it that makes some pieces liturgical, and others not; why are some texts “psalms,” and others colophons, scribal expansions or “library edition expansions”? For example, why is it, as Flint claims,60 easy to envisage a community of worshippers reciting certain compositions, but not the biographical pieces about David?

Second, making such divisions does not take into account the development and expansion of collections over time, presupposing a rigidity or coherence of a bounded “base text” to which “additional” paratextual compositions were then appended; however, the texts themselves do not give us such a boundary, and the functions of individual compositions within the collection may have evolved over time.

Third, to ascribe specific paratextual roles to certain compositions – for example, to claim that their function is to strengthen claims to authorship and authority, to justify the text over against another version, or to serve as a catalogue – can obscure other,

59 See Chapter One.
60 Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 193.
richer aspects of these texts, blinding us to shared themes and interpretive connections that go far beyond any paratextual function the texts may have had.

Below, I examine the final compositions of the scroll, keeping in mind these three themes – generic ambiguity, changing uses over time, and thematic/literary content beyond form and function. Ultimately, I show how the final few compositions of the scroll testify to a long history of expansion and interpretation and challenge our ideas of the closure or end of a collection.

7. **Hymn to the Creator – Jer 10:10-13//Ps 135 (col. 26)**

Great and holy is the Lord, the holiest of holy ones for every generation. Majesty precedes him and following him is the rush of many waters. Grace and truth surround his presence; truth and justice and righteousness are the foundation of his throne. Separating light from deep darkness, he established, by the knowledge of his mind, the dawn. When all his angels had witnessed it they sang aloud; for he showed them what they had not known [cf. 1QH 13:11]. Crowning the hills with fruit, good food for every living being. Blessed be he who makes the earth by his power, establishing the world in his wisdom. In his understanding he stretched out the heavens, and brought forth [wind] from his storehouses. [cf. Jer 10:12-13, Ps 135:7] He made [lightning for the rain], and caused mist[s] to rise [from] the end [of the earth].
This composition follows immediately after Ps 150. Its final lines contain material also found in Jer 10:12-13 and Ps 135:7. Skehan’s early assessment of this text was that it merely forms a “pendant” to Ps 150, which is where the “liturgical” part of this collection really ends (and therefore, it should be counted as one of the collection’s “library edition” expansions).61 Wacholder is even more explicit about the “paratextual” function of this composition, claiming that it is not part of the liturgical collection but rather a “scribal colophon.”

Why has this text, which based on its form and content seems to be a psalm like many others – a poem of praise for God and creation – been called something qualitatively or generically different? The first reason, I think, is its position immediately after Ps 150. Given that the Masoretic book of Psalms is the lens through which this collection has long been understood, it is not surprising that Ps 150 would be considered a natural ending, with anything beyond it an “extra” or “additional” composition, i.e. not a psalm. The second reason has to do with the production and quality of this text. It is composed partially using phrases familiar from other places, i.e. Jeremiah and Ps 135, and its literary quality has been deemed poor – in Sanders’ words, “forced and pedestrian.” Such an assessment seems to lie behind Wacholder’s evaluation of the text as a “scribal” composition or “pastiche.”

But the difficulty of naming and categorizing this composition emerge already within the work of Skehan, who eventually came to see it as liturgical after all.62 Indeed, neither its position after Ps 150, its bricolage-like process of composition, or the purported quality of the poetry are good reasons to categorize this text differently from

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the other psalms in the collection. First, as I have emphasized, the boundaries of the Masoretic psalter should no longer constrain the way we conceptualize psalm collections in early Judaism. There is no indication in our 11QPsalms manuscript (or, for that matter, in the LXX) that Ps 150 was understood to be a boundary at all. Further, the statements that the text is a “pastiche” and a “scribal” composition seem to be aesthetic value judgments that create another untenable distinction between psalms – understood presumably as biblical psalms – and other compositions: compositions that are late, cobbled together from existing pieces, and created by mere scribes, presumably in opposition to quality, “authorial” literary creations. But no such boundary exists. Indeed, compilation from pre-existing fragments is one way in which texts were produced. Of the Hymn specifically, Sanders writes:

> These verses may have originally belonged to some very familiar liturgy of praise of the Creator, easily quotable and frequently used; for they are found equally well at home in Jeremiah, the Psalter, and this poem. Such ‘floating’ bits of liturgical poetry may have been even more common than we had heretofore thought.”

These “floating” phrases are the building blocks of new literature. Calling such writing “pastiche,” which implies inferior quality, privileges imagined early, “original” texts; conversely, it denigrates writing that draws upon, echoes and reworks older traditions, considering such literary production derivative and inferior (even though even the earliest texts to which we have access are probably doing the very same thing, using still earlier inherited traditions). Connected to this is Wacholder’s designation of the text as a “scribal colophon,” presumably as opposed to an “authorial,” or perhaps even “inspired,” composition. Here, “scribal” implies lesser, inauthentic; and in this case, it

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63 Sanders, Dead Sea Psalms Scroll, 129.
places the text in a wholly different generic category, that of a "colophon" rather than a psalm. But once again, the designation “scribal” is a value judgment rather than a historically meaningful claim. Not only is all literature that has survived “scribal,” but there is also no reason to consider a “scribal” kind of creativity – which draws on a knowledge of existing traditions and reworks them in new texts – to be of lesser value than “authorial” or “originary” creation, even assuming such a thing exists at all.

Certainly, the fact that the Hymn to the Creator is partly a collation of verses from other loci, and is likely to be dated “late,” should not compel us to see it as anything but a psalm among other psalms for the users of this scroll. Sanders, who had no high opinion of its literary quality, still called it a “sapiential hymn” and pointed out its affinities with other sapiential compositions within the scroll. If ever it was a “colophon” – as Wacholder says, the creation of a scribe composed as a conclusion to the liturgical collection “proper” – it certainly does not function in this way in the collection as we have it. Most obviously, it is no “colophon” because it is not the last text of the manuscript, but is followed by six other compositions. As it stands, the Hymn does not have a “paratextual” function (the way a colophon would, by asserting some information about the nature or origin of the text), but is seamlessly part of the “text” itself, another psalm of praise in an expanding collection.

8. David’s Last Words (2 Sam 23) (col. 26-27)

1 ישראל זמרות ונועים יעקב אלהי משיח על הקם הגבר ונאם בן-ישי דוד נאם האחרונים דוד דברי ואלה
2 על לשוני ומלתו דבר ביהוה רוח
3 אֲלֹהִים יראת מושל צדיק באדם מושל ישראל צור דבר לי ישראל אֲלֹהִים אמר
4 מארץ דשא ממטר מנגה עבות לא בקר יזרח-שמש בקר וכאור
These are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favorite of the Strong One of Israel:

1 These are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favorite of the Strong One of Israel:

2 The spirit of the Lord speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue.

3 The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God,

4 is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

5 Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?

6 But the godless are all like thorns that are thrown away; for they cannot be picked up with the hand;

7 to touch them one uses an iron bar or the shaft of a spear. And they are entirely consumed in fire on the spot.

The text presented here, “David’s Last Words,” also appears in 2 Samuel 23:1-7. The Psalms Scroll, col. 27, preserves only part of the final line: ישורף ושאר ישורף ובאש חנית ועץ. This text is crucial to understanding the origins and development of traditions about David as an inspired figure, with the unique articulation of an “oracle” placed in his mouth. This prophetic language about David, along with the sunlight metaphor in v. 4, connects this text closely with “David’s Compositions,” which follows immediately on the scroll and will be discussed in detail below.

“David’s Last Words” is one of the compositions in the scroll that has consistently been called “additional” or “epilogic,” or, in my terminology, understood as “paratextual,” standing apart from the collection and serving a different function from the rest of the compositions in it. To return to Peter Flint’s assessment, while the psalm-like texts in the scroll are related to individual and community life and we might easily imagine them being recited in a liturgical or educational setting, this is not the case for a
group of biographical texts, including “David’s Last Words,” that serve to bolster the
collection’s Davidic authority. While Flint seems to suggest only that this text casts a
general Davidic “aura” or emphasis, Ben Zion Wacholder offers a more specific
argument about the composition’s “para-textual” function in the collection. For
Wacholder, the piece

provides an apology for the peculiar structure of the scroll vis-à-vis the
traditional Book of Psalms. The apparent need for such an apology tends to
support the argument that the compiler of 11Q Psalms³ was aware of the
existence and perhaps even the “canonicity” of the traditional composition and
sequence of the Book of Psalms.⁶⁴

Wacholder’s explanation for how exactly this text functions as an “apology” is
interesting: for the compiler of 11QPsalms³,

the term ha-aharonim apparently signified the existence of Davidic compositions
outside the traditional number in the Book of Psalms, and essentially redefines
the role of David in the composition of tehillim.⁶⁵

Since the piece indicates that there are other Davidic compositions outside “the Book of
Psalms,” the compiler felt free to create an expanded and rearranged collection; this
text is included in order to justify his activity.

Wacholder’s suggestion that a sense that there were more Davidic pieces enabled
new psalm collections is intriguing, and will be further explored in Chapter Three. But
the rest of his argument about the function of “David’s Last Words” is unconvincing. The
problems with his thesis, particularly its assumption that there was a “traditional Book
of Psalms” at this time, have already been discussed in Chapter One. His specific reading
of ha-aharonim depends upon reading the text as an apology for a different
arrangement. Wacholder presents a circular argument here, since the reading is

supposed to indicate that there is need for a justification of a “non-traditional”
collection, but in fact depends on this presupposition. Nothing in the text itself suggests
that the piece is meant to comment on the structure and contents of this collection, that
the term ha-aharonim indicated “non-traditional” or additional psalms (no other
analogous use of this term exists), or that the piece polemically or apologetically
“redefined” David in the context of psalm-writing, as opposed to participating in and
developing existing traditions about David’s inspired, divinely elected status.66

But what I would like to emphasize here is that Wacholder’s argument also
depends on seeing this composition in functional terms, as a paratext. For Wacholder as
for Flint, it is not part of the other compositions of the scroll, but rather, communicates
information about them. This means that it is not a liturgical piece to be performed, but
more of a scribal notation. But why is it difficult to imagine the text of “David’s Last
Words” as a liturgical, performed composition? In fact, the first verse of this text (if it
appeared in this form in the psalms scroll – again, only the final verse has survived)
may be compared to a Davidic psalm superscription, and the subject matter – just
kingship, trust in God to help and reward, and the certainty of punishment for the
wicked – is hardly different from many biblical psalms. Its literary structure is
parallelistic, and it is set as poetry in the MT.67 Perhaps we can blur the generic
difference between a biographical or autobiographical Davidic piece and a Davidic
liturgical psalm, in some canonical psalms as well as here.68 The same might be said of

66 These traditions will be explored further in Chapter Three.
67 In this scroll, once again, all the texts are set in prose format, except the acrostic Ps 145 which is
written stichometrically.
68 Flint writes that the genre of the text is “difficult to classify, but is reminiscent of the wisdom Ps 1.
While comprising and extended epilogue with David’s Compositions, in terms of form it may be grouped
the “Teacher Hymns” in the 

_Hodayot_, which are also written as the first person speech of an exemplary inspired leader.

The fact that “David’s Last Words” is a first person composition placed in David’s mouth does not set it apart from many other “Davidic” psalms whose liturgical function has never been questioned. The difference is simply that for the “canonical” psalms, the biographical content is limited to superscriptions, while here it infuses the whole composition – but we have no evidence that ancient communities would have seen them much differently. If so, there is little reason to ascribe a “non-psalmic” function to the text, and claim that it is somehow “additional,” and that its role in the collection is to endow it with revelatory Davidic authority. _De facto_, its very presence (along with that of the many other pieces that mention David) does accomplish this goal. But in my view, this is not the reason for its inclusion here. Rather, this text from the book of Samuel is included because it is considered another inspired song, a liturgical composition associated with David that could be recited in community worship or used in pedagogical contexts like the other psalms, and was deemed to belong in an expanding, authoritative Davidic collection.

with 149 and 150” (195 n. 123). If the text may be seen as a psalm, what motivation remains to classify its function as epilogic?
9. David’s Compositions (col. 27)

And David, son of Jesse, was wise, and a light like the light of the sun, and learned,
and discerning, and perfect in all his paths before God and men. And YHWH gave him a discerning and enlightened spirit. And he wrote psalms: three thousand six hundred; and songs to be sung before the altar over the perpetual offering of every day, for all the days of the year: three hundred and sixty-four; and for the Sabbath offerings: fifty-two songs; and for the offerings of the first days of the months, and for all the days of the festivals, and for the Day of Atonement: thirty songs.

And all the songs which he spoke were four hundred and forty-six. And songs to perform over the possessed: four. The total was four thousand and fifty.

All these he spoke through prophecy which had been given to him from before the Most High.

If the last two texts discussed can be understood not as scribal additions or paratextual compositions, but as liturgical texts that belong to the psalm collection in their own right, surely the case is clearer when it comes to a “colophonic” or “paratextual” status for “David’s Compositions” in col. 27. Indeed, this text has consistently been called either a “colophon,” a “catalogue,” or a “prose insert” that

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69 11QPsalms, col. 27. The editio princeps, on which I am relying for the text and translations, is J.A. Sanders, The Psalms of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs) (DJD 4; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).
asserts Davidic authorship, and has been deployed to shed light on the nature and structure of 11QPsalms. Wilson writes that

[the prose ‘epilogue’ ‘David’s Compositions’ must also be considered as functionally oriented. Its purpose is clearly to exalt David as the author of a myriad of psss for a variety of occasions. It may well intend to extend Davidic authorship and authority to all the works of the scroll.]

To be sure, this text is crucial for an understanding of how ancient communities understood the nature of psalm-writing and the figure of David, and this aspect will be discussed in depth in Chapter Three. However, the way this text functions paratextually, i.e. what it tells us about the 11QPsalms collection, has perhaps blinded scholars to its features as a literary composition in its own right.

I argue that giving this text a rigid generic definition and function (e.g. “colophon,” “catalogue” or “prose insert” that asserts authorship of the collection) can obscure the different ways that this evocative text could have been read, used and understood by ancient communities. A fresh reading of the composition on its own terms, apart from what it can tell us about the structure and status of 11QPsalms, reveals a rich tapestry of imagery that evokes many other literary traditions.

Most immediately, it is connected with the immediately preceding piece in the scroll, “David’s Last Words” (2 Sam 23:1-7). The image of David as the light of the sun, his favoured status in the eyes of God, and his prophetic inspiration (expressed in “David’s Last Words” in terms of an “oracle” on his tongue) connect the two texts closely. In fact, W. Brownlee argued that “David’s Compositions” is a kind of “midrash”

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71 Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 137.
on “David's Last Words.”72 Similarly, B.Z. Wacholder comments that “the prose note regarding the literary activity of David must be viewed as a commentary upon the immediately precedent 2 Samuel 23:1-7.”73 But the designations of “midrash” or “commentary” are not adequate, since just about every Second Temple Jewish text draws upon, echoes, and develops older traditions; such was the way text production happened. In this case, “David’s Compositions” is a chronologically later text that takes up and transforms some of the imagery and themes in the Samuel text, but it is not a secondary commentary on an established authoritative text; it is a literary composition in its own right that has been placed in a collection alongside the older piece, without any indication that it differed in function or authority for the communities who used the scroll.

Further, the text is not only connected to “David's Last Words,” but is full of allusions to other Second Temple literature. To mention a few, the description of David’s calendrical activities and his connection to the cult evokes the traditions about David included in Ben Sira 47, where David is a singer of songs, a forgiven sinner, and a liturgical figure who “sets the feasts in order” and brings beauty to the cult.74 But the text also brings to mind the figure of Enoch, who is also a sage, a scribe, and a recipient of revelation related to the correct ordering of the calendar, as described in the Enochic corpus and in the book of Jubilees:

[Enoch] was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, that men might know the seasons of the years according to the order of 18 their separate months. And he was the first to

74 See my study of the links with Ben Sira in Chapter Four.
write a testimony and he testified to the sons of men among the generations of
the earth, and recounted the weeks of the jubilees, and made known to them the
days of the years, and set in order the months and recounted the Sabbaths of the
years 19 as we [the angels] made (them), known to him. (*Jubilees* 4:17-19)\(^75\)

The description of David’s prolific psalm-writing in 11QPsalms\(^3\), then, participates in a
broad tradition of lore about wisdom, writing, revelation, and worship, and must be
read in this rich literary context – not merely as a functional scribal colophon.

Even the enumeration of David’s compositions is not dry accounting, but
hearkens back to a tradition in 1 Kings 5 about the prolific activity of the paradigmatic
wise king, Solomon, whose songs and sayings numbered 4,005, to David’s 4050. Nobody
interprets 1 Kings 5 as a functionally oriented editorial note, but as a literary account of
Solomon’s exemplary wisdom. In the same way, the rich, evocative imagery and
traditions that are woven into “David’s Compositions” belie attempts to treat it as if it
were a purely functional table of contents or scribal notation. This is even clearer
because it patently does not enumerate the contents of the scroll. Michael Chyutin’s
suggestion, that the scroll does contain a proportional “sample” of the compositions
enumerated here, rests on a questionable reconstruction of the manuscript and an
overly rigid interpretation of the structure of the collection.\(^76\)

Scholars who have called it a catalogue or colophon have perhaps had in mind an
analogy with Sumerian and Babylonian tablets or summary lines, which enumerate
specific hymnic compositions by citing their incipits and grouping them according to
their genre/cultic function or the deity to which they are addressed. These materials

\(^{75}\) Trans. R.H. Charles. I discuss this connection to Enochic literature in Chapter Five.
\(^{76}\) See the discussion of Chyutin’s hypothesis in Chapter One.
are clearly records of functional scribal cataloguing. But while lines 5-10 of “David’s Compositions” also enumerate compositions for various liturgical occasions (daily offerings, Sabbath offerings, festivals, and exorcism), and even if the author had been aware of the form of Ancient Near Eastern scribal notations and meant to allude to or creatively evoke this practice, the purpose of the text is altogether different. This is not a library catalogue referring to actual texts in order to organize, account for, and facilitate access to them; it is an idealized, imagined list of psalms and songs that a) make a point about the solar calendar, and b) add up to a symbolically significant number, 4,050, that links back to older sapiential traditions and exalts David over Solomon. Further, as I have mentioned, the enumeration of compositions are embedded in a highly evocative literary composition praising the life and personality of David. It is not a “functional” composition.

Although Flint sets the final group of compositions, including this one, apart from the liturgical psalms that are “related to individual and community life,” I maintain that this text about David is absolutely relevant to individual and community concerns. The praise of David it contains must have resonated in far richer, more complex ways with the community than simply as a “paratextual” insert that asserts something about the authority or authorship of the collection, but on its own terms. The resonance of the text for community life is related to the figure of David as an edifying figure, and

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functions in at least two ways: by setting up David as an exemplar of a forgiven sinner, and as an inspired figure connected to prayer and sacrifice in the absence of a temple.

The text calls David not only wise and enlightened, but also “perfect in all his ways before God and men,” Of course, other traditions about David tell us that he is far from perfect. But what makes him an ethical exemplar is his earnest repentance which earned him forgiveness, and this is expressed both in Ben Sira 47 and in two Qumran texts, 4QMMT and the Damascus Document:

1 [forgiv][en (their) sins. Remember David, who was a man of the pious ones, [and] he, too, 2 [was] freed from the many afflictions and was forgiven (4QMMTe frag 14 II 1-2).

And David’s deeds were praised, except for Uriah’s blood, 6 and God forgave him those (CD-A V 5-6).

“David’s Compositions,” in its praise of the sinful king, emphasizes that a penitent sinner can achieve perfection, perhaps even becoming one of the angelic “perfect ones” who dwell at the gates of wisdom, described in Ps 154 (see above). The invocation of David as an example of perfection must have resonated for a community whose prayer and penitential life appears to have been so rich.

This is also true of the connection made here between David and the temple. Like Ben Sira 47 and the book of Chronicles, this composition links David closely to the sacrificial calendar and the liturgy of the temple, even though he was forbidden from building the temple itself. Even though he did not have a permanent temple, he received divine revelation, had his prayers answered, and prepared the way for the temple that
was to come by inaugurating the liturgical service. For a community who worshipped away from the temple with the “sacrifice of the lips,” understanding themselves as a miqdaš adam and a cornerstone of the holy of holies, and awaiting the heavenly or eschatological sanctuary, David must have been an inspiring figure indeed. The text of “David’s Compositions” both draws on and develops these traditions that link David, temple sacrifice, inspiration, and prayer.

Since this composition not only bolsters the Davidic authority of the psalms collection, but also celebrates David as an exemplary, edifying figure for the community in richly evocative language, we must reconsider how its function has been understood. I suggest that there is no reason that this text could not have been performed or recited in a liturgical and pedagogical context – as a hymn of praise for David, or as an exemplum for the edification of a worshipping or studying community. While the literary form of the text is not readily classified as “poetry,” its imagery is hardly prosaic, but, as I discussed above, highly evocative and allusive – a text quite amenable to recitation for praise and pedagogy, and far from a functional scribal notation.

“Poetry” and “prose” are in any case not native concepts of ancient Hebrew literature, as James Kugel has argued in *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*. Indeed, there is no single formal criterion – not even parallelism – that distinguishes one kind of writing

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79 The text is laid out on the page in prose format, but so are all the poetic pieces in the manuscript, except the acrostic Ps 145, so no scribal distinction between poetry and prose/scribal notation can be observed here. Publications of 11QPsalmss are misleading in this regard, printing "David’s Compositions" as prose and other pieces stichometrically, which artificially emphasizes the functional distinction between them.
from the other. Rather, Kugel argues, texts exist on a continuum: both texts commonly classified as “poetry” and those identified as “prose” employ various stylistic elements to “heighten” their effects. In my estimation, an example of a non-parallelistic, and yet poetic collection of texts is the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. Highly visionary and evocative, the Songs use imagery, repetition, allusions to scriptural traditions, and progressively loosening syntax as means of “heightening” their effect on the reader, performer, or listener. They were likely recited for liturgical, even theurgic purposes. In addition, they exhibit a strong interest in both calendrical issues and the symbolic significance of numbers – just like “David’s Compositions.” The presence of numbers in this composition does not make it a pragmatic “catalogue” and exclude it from oral performance for liturgy and education; the numbers are not practical accounting, but symbolic in their evocation of both the cosmic calendar and the unfathomable wisdom revealed to Solomon.

“David’s Compositions,” therefore, is not a functional scribal colophon, but a literary text in its own right. Not only does it do much more than offer support for the Davidic authority or provenance of this psalms collection, but, to state the obvious, it does not function as a colophon, because it is not the final composition in the scroll: it is followed by Ps 140, 134 and 151a-b. It is conceivable that at one point in the transmission and growth of the collection, “David’s Compositions” did serve as an

epilogue. If this was the case, however, the collection had grown beyond its conclusion, and the text has been subsumed into the body of the collection. We must consider that the way it was understood and used could have changed over time, and that it could have functioned as a text of praise for an exemplary figure, taking up the themes of prayer, song, sacrifice and ethical perfection that are so prominent in the other texts that constitute 11QPsalms\(^3\), and that resonated with the worldview and concerns of a community like the ones we know from the Scrolls.

At the same time, of course, this composition does have a “paratextual” significance – it is crucial for understanding the way that ancient scribes and communities understood the nature, structure, and authorship of 11QPsalms\(^3\). But, as I will explain in Chapter Three, seeing the text as a poetic, possibly liturgical composition in its own right can also nuance our understanding of what this text really tells us about these issues.

**10. Ps 151a-b (cf. LXX ) (col. 28)**

\(^3\) A Halleluia of David, son of Jesse. I was smaller than my brothers and the youngest of my father’s sons; he made me

\(^4\) shepherd of his flock and ruler over his kid goats. My hands made a flute, my
fingers a lyre,
and I gave glory to YHWH. I said to myself: the mountains do not witness
to me, nor do the hills proclaim on my behalf, the trees my words and the
flock my deeds.
Who, then, is going to announce and who will speak and who will recount my
deeds? The Lord of all saw, the God
of all, he heard, and he listened. He sent his prophet to anoint me, Samuel
to make me great. My brothers went out to meet him, handsome of figure and
handsome of appearance. Though they were tall of stature,
handsome Blank by their hair, YHWH God did not choose them, but sent to
fetch me
from behind the flock and anointed me with holy oil, and made me leader of
his people /and ruler/ over the sons of
his covenant. Blank
Beginning of David's power, after God's prophet had anointed him. Then I saw
a Philistine
threatening from the ra[nks of the Philistines.] I [.....]

These two compositions conclude the collection, just as the Greek Ps 151 –
which is not a mere translation, but an independent yet closely related composition in
which the two texts we find in the Psalms scroll appear as one – concludes the LXX
Psalter. However, unlike in the Septuagint, they do not follow Ps 150, but David's
Compositions, Ps 140, and Ps 134. How do we understand the function and meaning of
this text in the context of our collection? For both Sanders and Flint, the role this text
plays, like "David's Compositions," is to assert authorship of the rest of the scroll:

The remaining two appended pieces are Psalms 151A and 151B in col. XXVIII.
Since both contain poetry and not prose, they seem similar to many other
compositions in 11QPs, yet both are intrinsically different from all other Psalms
with respect to content. These two poems (corresponding to Ps 151 in the
Septuagint) are the only truly autobiographical Psalms at Qumran, since both
their titles and contents refer unambiguously to events in the life of David. As
such their function (like that of 151 in the Septuagint) is to assert Davidic
authorship of the collection.

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83 Sanders, Psalm Scroll, 58.
84 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 194.
151a and b, then, are included in the list of compositions that, according to Flint, do not relate to individual and community life and were not recited, but whose role is to “emphasize Davidic authorship of the Psalter by highlighting the achievements and career of David.”85 Like the other compositions discussed above, Ps 151 is deemed to have a paratextual function that is not part of the collection itself, but “intrinsically different,” standing apart from it and providing bibliographical information or a claim to authority.

Indeed, Greek traditions support the idea that this psalm is somehow separate, appended, or not part of the psalter “proper” through the superscription that is found in the Greek manuscripts: οὗτος ὁ ψαλμὸς ιδιόγραφος εἰς δαυιδ καὶ ἐξωθὲν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ ὅτε ἐμονομάχησεν τῷ γολιάδ. The Greek tradition calls the psalm ιδιόγραφος εἰς δαυιδ, written by David himself, but also ἐξωθὲν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ, outside the number, or supernumerary.86

Wacholder writes that the LXX superscription asserts the Davidic authority of Ps 151 despite its being beyond the established number of 150 psalms, and could have been related to a lost Hebrew original that would have been the oldest version of the heading. The Qumran scribe, he suggests, may have omitted the “polemical” superscription to remove any doubt about the authority of the psalm.87 Here again, Wacholder posits an established 150-composition Psalter far too early; while the

85 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 193.
86 This supports the Laodicene canon’s judgment that the number of the psalms is 150. Codex Sinaiticus sees it as belonging to the Book of Psalms, but Alexandrinus (although it includes the psalm and the letter of Athanasius which speaks of Ps 151 as Davidic) excludes it from the collection proper. For the status of Ps 151 in Greek manuscripts, see references in H. Swete, An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 252-53. The fact that the Greek superscription calls the psalm both written by David and “supernumerary” is also reflected in the Syriac tradition; I discuss this phenomenon further in the conclusion.
superscription in the LXX recognizes a set number of compositions, there is no such
evidence for the earlier, Hebrew texts. Sanders, with most scholars, considers the Greek
superscription late.88 He observes that

Ps 151 in 11QPs is in no wise supernumerary. Far from being ‘rider’ or
something extra it is places, with the psalm that follows it, in a climactic position
to the whole scroll.89

Flint’s assessment is somewhat different. As discussed above, his notion of these
texts as “appended” pieces is dependent on his structural analysis of the scroll: a
calendrical collection of 52 “proper” liturgical psalms, plus four “Davidic” pieces.
Therefore, for him, the remaining four texts, including Ps 151, are indeed
“supernumerary,” and must have functioned as something other than psalms.

Let us examine his criteria for such a judgment. Even though he acknowledges
the formal similarity to other psalms, the reason why these compositions are
“intrinsically different” is that they are unambiguously autobiographical,90 with respect
to their superscriptions and their contents. While this is true, it is unclear what the
autobiographical nature of these texts really signifies with regard to their textual
function, and why it should place them in a different category from other psalms. Flint
points out that in contrast to 151, with its clear references to the life of David, “all other
Psalms are more general and are not clearly tied to specific events; many later came to
be associated with David on the basis of contents or tradition.”91

88 Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 63; J. Strugnell, “Notes on the Text and Transmission of the Apocryphal Psalms”;
89 Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 58.
90 See my discussion of ostensibly autobiographical compositions and their possible communal functions
in the context of Ben Sira, including a comparison with the “Teacher Hymns” from the Hodayot, in
Chapter Four.
91 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 192 n. 110.
But was this the perception of ancient communities? It is unclear how, without a scholarly kind of literary analysis of superscription and contents, ancient communities would have made such distinctions. The first line identifies it as a הַלְלוּיָה לֹדוּיָא בֶּן יִשֵׁי, and while the יִשֵּׁי is an unusual designation that evokes the subscription to Ps 72 and the first line of “David’s Compositions,” the scroll’s designation of the composition as a הַלְלוּיָה indicates that it was placed in the same functional category as other psalms of praise.92 Thematically, too, the text is a psalm of praise – while the first two and final five lines directly relate events in the life of David, the middle verses of the composition describe the praise of God with musical instruments, and the calling to proclaim and recount God’s deeds, themes that weave through many psalms.

Although Flint does not allow that this text could be recited by a community, the psalm’s superscription, literary form, and contents suggest otherwise. Further, while the implication is that most psalms relate to individual and community concerns but this Davidic composition only authorizes the collection, it appears that, like in “David’s Compositions,” individual and community concerns are indeed key here. Once again, David functions as an exemplar – the lowly shepherd whose prayer was heard, whose praise of God with lyres and harps was richly rewarded with David’s election and anointment as “the ruler of the sons of his covenant.” While the text must have also worked to give the collection a Davidic “flavour” or authority, in no way can we say that this was its textual function and purpose. This is not a paratextual composition that is

92 This designation has been challenged, as both Haran and Strugnell think the word הַלְלוּיָה does not belong here, having been misplaced or carried over from another composition; M. Haran, “The Two Text-Forms of Psalm 151,” JJS 39 (1988): 171-182, 171; Strugnell, “Notes on the Text and Transmission,” 258-9. Based on the contents of Ps 151, however, the heading does not appear out of place, and there is no reason not to take it seriously as a designation for this composition.
“appended” to psalms “proper” in order to serve a bibliographical role. The only reason to argue this is to support a notion of this psalms collection as a fixed and bounded entity, in which case any compositions that fall beyond it must be considered “paratextual.” But if we allow ourselves to imagine the collection as expanding and loosely bounded, we must see this composition as just what it tells us it is – a *halleluiah*, a psalm, and we have no reason to doubt its liturgical and communal use.

**Conclusion to Part III**

All scholarly assessments of the structure of 11QPsalms have described the final columns of the collection as “additional,” epilogic, different in nature and function from the rest of the collection. To recap, for Skehan, these pieces are an epilogue that has “nothing to do with liturgy”; Flint follows this line of thinking, deeming them non-liturgical pieces that serve to strengthen the link to David; Wacholder sees in the last few columns an apologetic “Davidic” epilogue that authorizes this “alternative” Psalter; Chyutin simply calls them “additional compositions,” outside the calendrical structure he imagines for the collection. But calling these compositions “additional” or “epilogic,” and ascribing to them a “paratextual” function, comes from a tendency to look for a pre-existing text with clear borders and a fixed shape. However, the final few columns of the scroll do not suggest a contained text, but an organically growing collection. I have also suggested that the *function* of these final compositions does not necessarily set them apart from the rest of the collection: while the Davidic character of the texts does bolster the collection’s authority, this effect does not preclude other meanings and uses for these compositions, which could have been recited and performed as part of
community worship and education, and which can be considered liturgical pieces that belong to the collection, linking themselves to it through shared themes and imagery, rather than standing apart in a category of their own.

The compositions at the end of 11QPsalms encourage us to reflect on endings – on the way in which texts conclude – and what this tells us about how the nature of text and writing was imagined in Jewish antiquity. It is possible to read several endings in this collection. We might place the “real end” at Ps 150, presupposing that anything beyond the MT collection is “additional”; we might consider the Hymn a “scribal colophon,” a pastiche compiled by a scribe as a way of closing the collection; we may also see the other so-called “colophon,” “David’s Compositions,” as the concluding composition meant to tell us about the provenance of the text; or we might place the end with Ps 151a-b, in line with the physical end of the scroll and the Septuagint tradition. I suspect that, indeed, each of these texts may have served as the conclusion to a psalms collection at some point in time. But if all these were endings, they were not closures; rather, they attest to a history of growth – of many incomplete endings over time, endings that became swallowed up into the text itself as the tradition continued to grow beyond them.

We may argue that the Masoretic collection itself also testifies to a history of layered endings. Pss 146-150 are the concluding Hallel of the MT Psalter, considered to be liturgically dependent on 145:21. With this in mind, Wilson observes that it is suggestive that the notation לאד ולאזרי appears in the Psalms Scroll at the end of Ps 145.
what amounts to the conclusion of the MT 150 Psalter.”93 While Wilson writes that the presence of this notation (the only passage that appears to be a functional superscription in the scroll) is inclusive and “in the context of the 11QPs arrangement [where ten more columns of text follow it and Pss 146-150 are in different positions] its significance is unclear”; but Wilson seems to be suggesting that the notation may indicate a seam in the compilation, an awareness that Ps 145 concludes, or once concluded, a collection that then grew beyond it. It, too, has been swallowed up by the living text – not the Hallel of MT 146-150, but Ps 154 and the final columns of the Psalms Scroll.94

A tradition of endings that are not endings is also found in the Masoretic Psalter itself. The famous notation after Ps 72 reads:

כל תפלות דוד בן ישй
The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended.

But the prayers of David pick up once again at Ps 86, the next composition with a Davidic superscription in the MT. David’s legacy continues far beyond this “ending.” While the notation asserts an end, it does not close the collection. It alerts us to a layered history of compilation, and, right here within the Masoretic text, forces us to rethink the concept of a psalms collection as a book or text with coherence and clear boundaries. The several “endings” of the Qumran psalms scroll do the same thing for the late Second Temple period: point to the continuing expansion of a collection, the multivalent ways in which texts can function within it, and the fluidity of its borders.

93 Wilson, The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, 87.
94 See my comments above on the way Ps 154 is linked to and builds upon the themes in Ps 145.
Conclusion to Chapter Two

In this chapter, I explored the way the collection was compiled by focusing on the inclusion, function and nature of the non-Masoretic pieces. In scholarship, it is expedient to separate these pieces from the more familiar compositions present in the biblical Psalter, as I have done here; but in their own historical context, they do not form a separate group. The only characteristic they share is that they are absent from the MT; otherwise, neither their date, genre, literary form, scribal aspects, provenance, or thematic content single them out as different from other, “canonical” texts. These compositions are interspersed and interwoven into the collection according to various interpretive and aesthetic criteria, and, like the “canonical” pieces, are polyphonic; we should not assume that they were all included because of a straightforward belief in their Davidic authorship.

Next, I focused on those compositions found near the end of the collection and interpreted as “epilogic” or “concluding” material. While scholars have ascribed a separate para-textual, non-liturgical function to these texts and claimed that they stand apart from the collection “proper,” I argued that deeming these texts “additional” rests on the presupposition that there is a coherent and bounded shape to the rest of the collection. I showed how we can understand these pieces as liturgical compositions on par with the rest of the collection. Viewed in the context of other psalm traditions, they testify to a history of expansion and development and belie attempts to view psalms collections as entities with fixed boundaries or endings.
It seems appropriate now to return to metaphors from digital text, which offer us a way of unbinding writing from the covers of a codex, the relative stability of a printer’s block, the constraints of authorial property – and the very concept of a coherent shape or identity for texts. Chartier’s early articulation of electronic text as “polyphonic and palimpsestic,” with “neither shores nor borders,” evokes the properties of ancient Jewish collections as well. It is a particularly helpful image to support my contention that, in the Second Temple period, the concept of a “Book of Psalms” did not yet exist, but psalm traditions were conceptualized in far looser ways.

The modern conception of a book, as I have mentioned above, connects a physical object, a text and an author – a threefold link that does not reflect textual traditions in Jewish antiquity. In Chapter Three, I turn to the third point on this triangle – the idea of Davidic authorship of the psalms. Just as we cannot talk about a “Book of Psalms” in this period, we also cannot speak of straightforward notions of its authorship. Rather, traditions about David, liturgy, and writing point to far more nebulous ways of conceptualizing scriptures in early Judaism.
Chapter Three

DAVIDIC TRADITIONS AND IMAGINING PSALMS IN EARLY JUDAISM

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the way that traditions about the figure of David shed light on the Qumran psalms scroll, psalm-writing practices, and ancient conceptions of scriptures more broadly. In the first two chapters, I already discussed some scholarly approaches to explaining how the figure of David functions in 11QPsalms. Based on the prose piece in col. 27, the presence of Ps 151, and the Davidic superscriptions to many of the compositions, scholars have agreed that the scroll claims to be of Davidic authorship, and some have seen a “Davidic emphasis” in its organizational principles, and read specific compositions as Davidic biography. However, through a reading of the “Davidic” pieces in the collection against the background of traditions found in other texts, I will argue that the connection between David and the production of Psalms traditions is more complex than an ancient belief in Davidic authorship. Rather, it is a layered cluster of traditions about inspired prayer, wisdom, liturgy, and authoritative writing. These traditions and their relationship with the figure of David help us understand the Psalms Scroll as a polyphonic collection in the context of the network of traditions in which it was developed and received.

I also argue that an anachronistic view of David as author has misled us into finding false data about the Book of Psalms and even its place in the canonical process,
in texts that do not clearly contain any such information. This, in the words of Robert Kraft, is a kind of “textual myopia” that does not take into account that the thought and imagination of early Jews was far broader than the texts that have survived, and that the sources may not be concerned with our most burning questions. An awareness of a broader view of the relationship between David and writing helps us refine our understanding of the way ancient Jewish communities conceptualized their scriptural traditions, shedding light on an array of other texts from Jewish antiquity.

**Davidic Authorship and the Qumran Psalms Scroll**

The strong connection between David and this Psalms Scroll has been observed in scholarship since the scroll’s discovery, and is evident from the non-Masoretic pieces like the text from 2 Samuel 23, “David’s Compositions,” and Ps 151. But what is the nature of this connection between the text and the figure? In the scholarship, the connection is articulated in terms of a belief in the *Davidic authorship* of the Psalms. Sanders writes that

> the last three columns of 11QPs* clearly stake a claim for the Davidic authorship of the Psalter as represented by the scroll, the earliest literary evidence of belief in the Davidic authorship of the Psalter.¹

Peter Flint does not deviate from this, even though it is not always easy to square with the evidence, such as the presence of apparently non-Davidic pieces such as Ps 119 and Ps 127, whose superscription links it not with David but with Solomon. Flint writes, however, that

¹ Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11*, DJD 4, 92.

² Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 194.
their presence in this Davidic collection indicates that the compilers regarded them as Davidic Psalms, however illogical this may seem. We are told in David’s Compositions (col. XXVII, lines 10-11) that he wrote 4,050 pieces through נבואה (“prophecy”), which implies that all the compositions found in 11QPs, and many others besides, were regarded as originating with David.2

In the same way, as I have shown in Chapter Two, the presence of the individual non-Masoretic pieces in the collection is explained with recourse to an ancient belief that they, too, were authored by David, or in some way constitute Davidic autobiography, even if the works themselves tell us no such thing.

I have already argued for seeing these pieces’ appearance in the collection in ways that do not assume such a direct authorial relationship or autobiographical voice. But how, then, do we understand a text such as “David’s Compositions,” which is always marshalled as evidence of the ancient belief in the Davidic authorship of the Psalter? Although this view is so prevalent that it seems obvious and unequivocal, I will show that we have been too quick to read a claim to authorship in this text. Indeed, scholars have allowed themselves to read against the claims of the works themselves – even, as Flint’s above comment shows, against logic – in order to hold on to a model of an authored book, an exact overlap between a text and its creator, that does not reflect the shape of the ancient texts.

The expanding, fluid, and internally diverse nature of psalms collections force us to rethink the concept of David as the author of a book, rather than to force these collections into an anachronistic category. In the ancient context, the relationship between the Psalms Scroll and David is far more complicated than a straightforward belief in authorial attribution. In a culture in which both “author” and “book” are ill-

2 Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 194.
fitting concepts, we must instead look at a wide range of developing traditions to learn about the way the figure of David and the process of psalm-writing was imagined. What will emerge is a way of thinking about how psalm collections grew around the inspiring figure of David, without anachronistic assumptions about authorship, textual fixity or boundedness. This will shed light not only on the way the Psalms Scroll itself and its particular contents were perceived, but also on the complex ideas about the relationship between David, psalmody, and liturgy that persisted well into later Jewish and Christian traditions.

I will first revisit the key text that has been read as evidence for the belief in Davidic authorship of the Psalter, “David’s Compositions,” and point out some of the problems with such a reading (Part I).

In Part II, I look at Samuel, Chronicles, and Ben Sira, discussing how they articulate the connection between David, text-production and liturgical prayer, arguing that nothing like a belief in the Davidic authorship of any book exists in earlier and contemporary traditions.

Part III discusses another selection of texts, 2 Maccabees, 4QMMT, Josephus, Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and the New Testament, showing that simplistic assumptions about authorship of the Book of Psalms misses the complexity of Davidic traditions and distorts our conclusions about the shape of scripture in the Second Temple period. I present David as a rich, multifaceted exemplary figure that implicates a variety of traditions about scribalism, wisdom, and prayer, and is imaginatively connected with various writings.
With this picture in mind, I finally return to the manuscript evidence from Qumran in Part IV. I discuss how redefining the concept of authorship and thinking in more complex ways about David’s connection to psalmody can free us to step outside of our post-canonical, post-codex, post-print point of view, and to rethink the production and expansion of 11QPsalms in the context of ancient conceptions of writing.

**Part I: “David’s Compositions” Beyond Authorship**

While the composition in col. 27 that extols David as a scribe, sage, and prophetic psalm writer was discussed above in terms of its textual function and its role in 11QPsalms compilation, here I revisit its claims about David as a psalmist. The ubiquitous assumption in scholarship is that this text stakes a claim to the Davidic authorship of the book of Psalms and/or of this Psalms collection. This assumption, however, is fraught with difficulties. Let us examine what the text actually tells us about David and psalm-writing. We are told that David wrote psalms, and that the total number of the songs he “spoke through prophecy” was 4,050. But what is the referent of the 4,050 prophetically revealed compositions cited here? Clearly, this refers neither to this scroll, 11QPs, nor any other collection that could ever have existed; rather, it is an imagined, symbolic number, that functions rhetorically in several ways: it testifies to

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the importance of a *proliferation* of writing and revelation, a concept that is also found in other Second Temple literature;⁴ it emphasizes, through the calendrically significant numbers that add up to this total, the precisely correct ordering of liturgy according to the solar year;⁵ it underscores the prophetic inspiration of David and the prophetic source of prayer and song; and it links itself to (while also trumping) an older wisdom tradition in 1 Kings 5 that credits Solomon with uttering 4,005 sayings and songs. Just as the Kings text functions to establish Solomon as an inspired and prolific wise man, so “David’s Compositions” establishes David as a prolific psalmist and liturgical originator.

What it does *not* do is establish David as the author of this collection, or any text or collection in particular. We do not read that David wrote “these Psalms” or “the Psalms,” but only Psalms, התהילים - the claim is grammatically indefinite, and suggests a *conceptually* indefinite way of imagining what David wrote. In his study of the editing of the Hebrew psalter, Gerald Wilson already noted the indefiniteness of this claim in the context of a critique of Skehan’s argument that nothing in “David’s Compositions” can be regarded as referring to “apocryphal” psalms. Wilson writes that

> there is no *certainty* that the epilogue refers to *any* of the pss – canonical or

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⁴ See, e.g., the many unidentified books mentioned in *Jubilees*, where Moses is only “one of many bookish heroes charged with the transcription of the heavenly tablets” (Najman, “Primordial Writing,” 388); I connected this to the proliferation of wisdom lore as reflected in 1 Kings 5 (see J.L. Kugel, “Wisdom and the Anthological Temper”). There is also an anxiety about the proliferation of texts, as reflected in the statement about “many books” in *Qohelet* 12:12 and also in Josephus’ polemical statement that the Jews “do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other” (*Against Apion* I.38–40). See my brief discussion of this anxiety about proliferation that is a recurring motif at many junctures in history of books, “Thinking Digitally,” 254-56.

⁵ The details of this calendar, its origins, and its relationship to other calendrical works is a separate issue that is beyond the scope of this project. On this issue see my discussion of Wacholder’s assessment of the structure of the Scroll in Chapter One, as well as D.K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 193–194; J.C. VanderKam, “Studies on ‘David’s Compositions’; most recently, V. Noam, “The Origin of the List of David’s Songs in the ‘David’s Compositions’; and earlier discussions including Brownlee, “The Significance of ‘David’s Compositions’,” and Beckwith, “The Courses of the Levites and the Eccentric Psalms Scrolls from Qumran.”
otherwise. The single possible exception is the four ‘Songs for the Stricken’ which may refer to the compositions in 11Q11.6

Wilson, then, suggestively observes that the “colophon” does not necessarily refer back to the scroll in which it is found, and that the only possible reference to specific compositions points to apocryphal psalms that were not part of the 11QPsalmsa collection at all.7 But neither Wilson himself nor any scholar after him explores the implications of this indefiniteness for the way in which ancient communities conceptualized the development of Psalms traditions – that there was no notion of a one-to-one identity between Davidic authorship and this scroll, or any collections of psalms in particular.

Elseswhere, Wilson himself concurs with other scholars, positing that “David’s Compositions” does indeed refer to the scroll, as a kind of colophon, and asserts its authorship:

The prose “epilogue” “David’s Compositions” must ... be considered as functionally oriented. Its purpose is clearly to exalt David as the author of a myriad of pss for a variety of occasions. It may well intend to extend Davidic authorship and authority to all the works of the scroll.”8

A reading of “David’s Compositions” as something other than a claim to authorship depends on what I have argued in Chapter Two about the textual function of this piece – that is, that it is not a paratextual item (a “colophon”) with a bibliographical function,

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6 Wilson, The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, 83.
8 Wilson, The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, 137.
but a literary, and possibly liturgical, text on its own terms. To argue that this is not a paratextual colophon, but a literary text, is also to say that it is not about this scroll, but about David as a figure.

As a literary text, then, this composition must be read against the background of a much broader context of traditions concerning David, prayer and liturgy in order to gain some insight about how the text was understood by its ancient audience. The wider traditions evoked in the text must have resonated with the compilers and users of the collection, and informed what “David’s Compositions” meant for them. If these broader traditions did, in fact, contain the motif of “David, author of the Psalms,” we would be justified in viewing “David’s Compositions” in such a sense. But in a wider network of literature from the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple texts, no such claim is made.

Part II: The Non-Attestation of “Davidic Authorship” in Early Jewish Literature

My arguments takes issue with the claims of many scholars who maintain that the notion of Davidic authorship was already in place or developing in works like Samuel, Chronicles, and Ben Sira. Alan Cooper, for example, writes that “we arrive at the positivistic claim that all of the psalms are Davidic (perhaps as early as Ben Sira).”9 B.Z. Wacholder claims that it is “abundantly clear that the authors of the books of Ezra and Chronicles had before them collections of psalms attributed to David.”10 But this is reading a later tradition back into the sources, not taking them on their own terms. In

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9 Cooper, “The Life and Times of King David According to the Book of Psalms,” 130.
these sources, David sings, plays music, prays, receives divine favour and revelation, sets up musical liturgy for the future Temple, and serves as the paradigm of an ideal man and forgiven sinner. These activities do not denote a belief in the authorship of any particular texts.

I now offer a brief survey of some relevant texts as a way of sketching a picture of David that was available in the Second Temple period, against which the claims of “David’s Compositions” should be interpreted.

1. Samuel

The tradition of David as a psalmist, musician and inspired figure begins in the book of Samuel. When king Saul is plagued with an evil spirit, the young David is summoned:

One of the attendants spoke up, “I have observed a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is skilled in music; he is a stalwart fellow and a warrior, sensible in speech, and handsome in appearance, and the LORD is with him.” ... Whenever the [evil] spirit came upon Saul, David would take the lyre and play it; Saul would find relief and feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him. (1 Sam 16)

In 2 Samuel 1:17-18, David laments over Saul and Jonathan:

David intoned this lamentation over Saul and his son Jonathan.
He ordered that The Song of the Bow be taught to the people of Judah; it is written in the Book of Jashar.

Here, we find early articulations of David’s reputation as an inspired musician, whose music has an effect on the supernatural world, and as a singer of songs. In the second passage, David also has a song (apparently not of his own composition, but written in the unknown הישר ספר) taught to the people of Judah; this teaching function will become crucial in the Book of Chronicles.

2. *Chronicles*

The Chronicler’s David has his sins whitewashed and his deeds idealized. Rather than the statesman of the Deuteronomic history, we encounter what James Kugel calls a “Temple impresario”\(^\text{11}\) whose main role seems to be planning and inaugurating the liturgy for the future Temple, a legacy that goes beyond his own exemplary life and is invoked by future generations from Solomon to Ezra. In this way, the Chronicler strives to legitimize the Second Temple service by giving it a Davidic pedigree. David is shown as a cult founder in two related ways: he delineates the cultic roles of the priests and Levites, and commissions the praise of God with musical instruments and song.\(^\text{12}\) We see an elaboration here of David the musician, whom we encountered in Samuel – but here, his connection to psalmody and praise is not only tied to his own life and personality, but also becomes a legacy or song and proper liturgy for future generations.

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\(^\text{11}\) Kugel, “David the Prophet,” 47.

\(^\text{12}\) See the discussion of these two areas of Davidic authority in S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (trans. A. Barber; Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang, 1989), 236.
A key example is David’s liturgical leadership before the newly relocated Ark of the Covenant (1Chr 16):

David performs the sacrifices and blesses the people, acting as a liturgical leader. He assigns liturgical roles to the Levites: they are to play musical instruments and praise God “regularly” – showing that music and song were to be an integral part of worship, as regulated as the sacrificial rite would become.

In the following verses, we read about David’s commissioning the Levites (Asaph and his kinsmen) to praise the Lord:

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1. They brought in the Ark of God and set it up inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they sacrificed burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before God. 2. When David finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

4. He appointed the Levites to minister before the Ark of the LORD, to invoke, to praise, and to extol the LORD God of Israel:

5. … with harps and lyres, and Asaph sounding the cymbals, and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests, with trumpets, regularly before the Ark of the Covenant of God.

13. The focus at the Ark in Jerusalem is on a service is primarily one of song, commemoration, thanksgiving and praise, whereas the sanctuary at Gibeon is associated more with the sacrifice itself; on the primacy of the musical liturgy in this account see S. Japhet, The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles, 227-29; and G. Knoppers, I Chronicles 10-29 (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 659.

Praise the LORD, call on his name, proclaim His deeds among the peoples. Sing praises unto Him; speak of all his wondrous acts.

Blessed is the LORD, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity.” And all the people said, “Amen” and “Praise the LORD.”

He [David] left Asaph and his kinsmen there before the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD to minister before the Ark regularly as each day required.

Since the prayer in vv. 8-36 is a medley of verses from Pss 96, 105 and 106, this passage is significant to a discussion of how ancient audiences understood David’s relationship to the psalms. One issue scholars have raised is the ambiguity about who is singing this psalm. Both Sara Japhet and Gary Knoppers understand the psalm to be sung by the Levites, not by David.\textsuperscript{15} Knoppers, for instance, writes that “David is many things: organizer, patron, leader, composer, and liturgist. But Chronicles does not stress the role of David as a singer himself.”\textsuperscript{16} Wacholder, however, understands it to be placed in David’s mouth, arguing that it is “abundantly clear” that the author of Chronicles had access to a collection of psalms attributed to David.\textsuperscript{17}

Neither Wacholder’s nor Japhet’s and Knoppers’ position are quite satisfactory on their own. First, I do not think Wacholder’s conclusion about the existence of a tradition of authorial attribution follows from the texts he cites. To be sure, the Ezra and Chronicles passages he cites do point to the Davidic origin of the Temple liturgy. Ezra 3:10 recognizes that the priests and Levites praised the Lord with music and song as “David had ordained” [ישראל何もך מלך דויד על־ידי]. But this, and the fact that we see excerpts


\textsuperscript{16} Knoppers, \textit{I Chronicles 10-29}, 644.

\textsuperscript{17} Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter,” 25: “Ezra 3:10 and Chronicles 16:7-36 make it abundantly clear that the authors of the books of Ezra and Chronicles had before them collections of psalms attributed to David.”
from several canonical psalms in 1Chr 16, does not equal a claim for authorship of any particular texts, and cannot serve as evidence for an existing collection of psalms straightforwardly attributed to David. Neither the cited passages nor the rest of Chronicles warrant a jump to authorship, which appears to be the result of reading later traditions back into the sources. It is, of course, possible that the Chronicler, as Wacholder claims, had “Davidic” psalms at hand; but this does not clearly follow from the texts cited, which in any case not attach great importance to the composition of particular liturgical texts.\textsuperscript{18} James Kugel writes that in these earlier traditions that

there is no reference to David as the composer of the words to be spoken or sung in the Temple... It is important to assert that what goes on in the Temple is utterly in keeping with God’s will, even if it had not been spelled out in the great corpus of priestly law – hence the insistence on David’s ideal qualities, his status as divinely chosen man, and his role in establishing the Temple music. At the same time, since the actual words spoken or sung in the Temple were not supposed to be utterly standardized... there was no stress on David’s authorship of the words spoken or sung there.\textsuperscript{19}

To further support this argument, the prayer on the altar was not even a single psalm, but a medley of three different compositions that suited the occasion.\textsuperscript{20} Explicit claims are made for other Davidic activities – but not for authorship; therefore, I think it is reasonable to say that something else besides authorship of psalms was important to the Chronicler. Nowhere is David’s connection to psalms or prayer presented in terms

\textsuperscript{18}The tendency to read later traditions about authorship into a text is evident in the JPS translation of 2 Chr 7:6, which misleadingly states that the Levites stood “with the instruments for the LORD’s music that King David had made to praise the LORD, ‘For His steadfast love is eternal,’ by means of the psalms of David that they knew.” The Hebrew of the final phrase reads simply בידם דוד בהלל. There is no mention of Psalms of David, only the fact that David used instruments to give praise. The reference to Psalms of David is not present in the NAB (“when David used them to accompany the hymns” or the KJV or NRSV (“David offered praises by their ministry”).

\textsuperscript{19}Kugel, “David the Prophet,” 106.

\textsuperscript{20}Japhet (\textit{I & II Chronicles}, 313) understands the Chronicler to be responsible for the composition of this psalm from existing works.
of composing texts, but in terms of David’s exemplary or organizational activity.

What is abundantly clear in these texts is that David was credited with inaugurating liturgical song: Chronicles has David commissioning גַּם [the Levites] to praise God through a hymn of praise. I would place these words in the mouth of David without putting undue stress on the idea that David is the “author” of a set text. To be sure, it is said that David appoints רָאָשׁ Asaph to praise God, not that he himself utters the praise. But we have already seen that he is vocal in the liturgy, as he himself has blessed the people (v. 2), standing before them as priest-like leader, and know he will pray before the people again later in 1Chronicles. 21 There is no reason, then, to rule out that the Chronicler understood these words to be spoken by David, especially in light of what we read at the end of the prayer:

בָּרוּךְ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרָם וַיְהִי עַל יָדוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע כָּל הָעָם אָמְרָם אֵלֵּה וַיֹּאמְר אָם מְנַחֵל הָעָם

Blessed is the LORD, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity.” And all the people said, “Amen” and “Praise the LORD.” He left Asaph and his kinsmen there before the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD to minister before the Ark regularly as each day required (1 Chr 16:36-37).

The passage does not mention David’s name, but assumes the continuity of the narrative about him, suggesting that what has gone before was his own utterance, not that of a different character. David, not the Levites, is the subject of the verbs in the passage both before and after the psalm. In light of this framing, I understand David to be instructing his Levites exactly how to give glory to God: David commissions them to praise, gives them an example by breaking into a psalm, and that being done, leaves his

21 David also prays before the people in 1 Chr 29, before Solomon’s enthronement, offering a prayer of thanksgiving, praise, and humility.
new liturgical personnel to take over on their own. This prayer, then, is “Davidic” not because it is written by him, but because it is associated with David’s activity of inaugurating the liturgy, and because it is a model provided by an exemplary figure of how God should be praised.

As such, David is invoked in the narrative about king Hezekiah’s reforms in 2 Chronicles, where we find a reference to the words of David:

יאמר יושב ישיאו מלך ושפיים לЈייוו ליהוא יзыва ודיבר ורוי אסף מעון

King Hezekiah and the princes told the Levites to praise the Lord in the words of David and Asaph the seer (2 Chr 29:30).

Here, David is not mentioned alone, but together with Asaph, as an exemplar and teacher of the Levites on the correct performance of the liturgy.

So far, there has been nothing to indicate the relationship between David and a written text. But David is connected with writing in the Book of Chronicles, in two ways. The first way is through the written blueprint for the Temple, the tabnit, that David receives and hands down for Solomon to follow:

11 והנה ויד שלמה בונ אתחצינה חאלם וחרים בניו ועלייוו והריי הפנים בוית המקדש
12 ות新农村 כל אيسر היה בהר צמ
13 יתחצינה מקדש כלכללולשתנים סוכי יראותיהם ביה חלום והראות הקדשים
14 וחלקה התכנית וחלום וכלכללולשתנים ביה בחריחים וכלכלכל עבידת ביתיהם [...] 19 וכל בתמ ויד הוה עליה שביל כל כלכלת התנינים

11 David gave his son Solomon the plan of the porch and its houses, its storrerooms and its upper chambers and inner chambers; and of the place of the Ark-cover; 12 and the plan of all that he had by the spirit: of the courts of the

22 Ibn Ezra also put these words in the mouth of David, writing of Ps 105, which forms part of this pericope, that “it is explained in Chronicles that David composed it on the altar and gave it to Asaph the poet” (cited in Cooper, “The Life and Times of King David According to the Book of Psalms, 119). Ibn Ezra makes this statement in the context of his discussion of authorship, but I believe that this interpretation of what is happening in Chronicles also supports my claim for Davidic exemplarity in the realm of prayer and praise.
House of the Lord and all its surrounding chambers, and of the treasuries of the
House of God and of the treasuries of the holy things; 13 the divisions of the
priests and Levites for all the work of the service of the House of the LORD... 19
“All this that the LORD made me understand by His hand on me, I give you in
writing—the plan of all the works” (1Chr 28).

What is the nature of this הובנית (construction, pattern, figure)? First, it is of divine
origin, מידי יהוה עדי, (lit. “from the hand of the Lord upon me”); again we see that David is
described as one who has received divine revelation. Second, the divine הובנית contains
both construction plans and instructions for the organization of the liturgical personnel.
Third, David gives Solomon the הובנית in writing. Here we have the first instance that the
Chronicler associates a written document with David. This writing is not associated
with psalms or the words of liturgy at all, but with divinely received instructions (not
identifiable with any surviving text) for how the Temple should be built, equipped, and
staffed.

This connection between David and the functioning of the Temple service
continues throughout Chronicles. The Temple cult becomes a Mosaic and Davidic
legacy – while Mosaic law governs sacrifice, Davidic prescriptions govern the
accompanying liturgy.23 These legacies are already invoked in the Chronicler’s account
of the early days of Solomon’s temple:

13...
14...
15

13 What was due for each day [Solomon] sacrificed according to the
commandment of Moses... 14 Following the prescription of his father David, he set

23 For a discussion of Mosaic and Davidic authority, see S.J. DeVries, “Moses and David as Cult Founders in
up the divisions of the priests for their duties, and the Levites for their watches, to praise and to serve alongside the priests, according to each day’s requirement, and the gatekeepers in their watches, gate by gate, for such was the commandment of David, the man of God. (15) They did not depart from the commandment of the king relating to the priests and the Levites in all these matters and also relating to the treasuries (2 Chr 28).

Both Moses and David are understood to be transmitting divine commandments, מתחית.

The appeal to Moses (associated with sacrificial law) and David (associated with liturgical song and the organization of Temple personnel) is repeated numerous times in 2 Chronicles. The account of Jehoiada’s reign contains the following report:

Jehoiada put the officers of the House of the LORD in the charge of the Levite priests whom David had assigned over the House of the LORD to offer up burnt offerings, as is prescribed in the Teaching of Moses, accompanied by joyful song as ordained by David (2 Chr 23:18).

As the word of God through Moses was written down, so David’s liturgical legacy, too, is associated with writtenness later in Chronicles. In the account of Josiah’s Passover, the Levites are instructed:

4 Dispose of yourselves by clans according to your divisions, as prescribed in the writing of King David of Israel and in the document of his son Solomon, and attend in the Sanctuary, by clan divisions, on your kinsmen, the people – by clan divisions of the Levites. Having sanctified yourselves, slaughter the Passover sacrifice and prepare it for your kinsmen, according to the word of God given by Moses’ (2 Chr 35).

Here, a written document is attributed to David and to Solomon. Japhet writes that this

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24 Japhet points out that the two functions of Moses and David are kept separate and do not infringe on one another: The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles, 236-38.
“is another point of comparison between the authority of David and that of Moses, both established by 'books.'”

Again, as with the הבניה pericope, writing is not associated with the composition of a collection of liturgical texts, but with authoritative instructions for the Temple liturgy inaugurated by David and followed by future generations.

All the “good kings” (Solomon, Jehoiada, Hezekiah, and Josiah), and later Ezra’s community of returnees, are credited with following the ordinances of David for the correct way to praise the Lord – from the use of the cymbals, harps and lyres that David created, through regular song, to the correct divisions of the Levitical clans. David’s legacy is a divinely inspired model, for proper liturgical worship. No “authorship” of psalms is present, and Davidic “writing” is not connected to psalm texts but to liturgical materials of other kinds.

3. Ben Sira

David’s liturgical legacy also makes an appearance in Ben Sira’s “Praise of the Ancestors.” David is a man of praise, music and prayer:

25 Japhet, I & II Chronicles, 1049.

26 The Hebrew text comes from the Cairo Geniza Manuscript B, published in the critical edition of all the Hebrew texts of Ben Sira by P.C. Beentjes, The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew. However, for the reconstruction of the Hebrew text for the parts of this passage that have not been preserved in the Hebrew but exist in the Greek, I have followed M.H. Segal, Sefer ben Sira ha-Shalem (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1933, 1958),
8 In all his deeds he praised God Most High [with words of glory],
With all his heart he loved his maker, and [praised him constantly all day].
9 He established music before the altar, and the [melody of instruments],
[He added beauty to the feasts, and set the festivals in order for each year.]
So that when his holy name was praised, justice rang out before daybreak.
10 And [the Lord forgave him his sins, and exalted his might forever.]
He gave him the rights of kingship and established his throne in Israel.

Ben Sira’s David is a man of prayer and song. He himself, in his personal devotion, gives praise to God, but he also sets an example for future worship: he inaugurates liturgical music, including the use of musical instruments for praise, and not only beautifies the worship services, but also put them in the correct order. Verse 10 implies something about the establishment of a correct liturgical calendar: ירושם שנה ויתקן. Finally, Ben Sira asserts that “the Lord forgave him his sins.” This forgiveness of sins and David’s kingship, like the fact that God gave him strength (v.5), is a consequence of David’s prayer and praise.

Ben Sira presents David as a perfect model: a man completely at the service of the Lord to the point that he himself is a sacrifice, and, while a sinner, an exemplar of beautiful, perfect and efficacious prayer. David is not a prophet or an author of psalms, although he does praise “God Most High with words of glory."

Alan Cooper writes that “we arrive at the positivistic claim that all of the psalms are Davidic (perhaps as early as Ben Sira),”27 but I see nothing in Ben Sira’s text to support this claim. Kugel writes that

though this [v. 8] does seem to be an allusion to the Davidic authorship of some psalms, it is still far from an assertion that he wrote all of them, or even many; nor yet is there evidence of the association of psalm writing with prophecy or divine inspiration.28

27 A. Cooper, “The Life and Times of King David According to the Book of Psalms,” 130.
28 Kugel, “David the Prophet,” 53.
I would be even more cautious than Kugel about finding allusions to authorship here. David’s deeds (מעשהו כל), not David’s words or writings, are invoked. There is no mention of writing or a collection of texts, only the two-fold assertion that David himself praised God and organized the musical liturgy for the future. In this sense Ben Sira does not stray from the Chronicler’s version of David’s role; I think it is only possible to read an allusion to authorship here if one is already aware of the later tradition. Further, as Kugel writes, there is indeed no association of psalm writing with prophecy or divine inspiration, since there is no mention of psalm writing at all, nor is anything explicitly said about divine inspiration. The closest we get to Davidic divine inspiration in Ben Sira is David’s fervent prayer and God’s approving – and forgiving – response.

Let us review the traditions about Davidic prophecy and psalmody that we have encountered. The Book of Samuel presents a musical exorcist whose lyre-playing is efficacious, a king endowed with angelic wisdom, and a man of prayer whose sins are forgiven, as well as the singer of a lament that can be found in the “Book of Jasher”; David’s “last words” also depict him as a bearer of a divine oracle and associate him with song (ڑרהו). The Chronicler’s David is an exemplar of praise and the founder of liturgical music; he receives, in writing, a divine blueprint of the construction and organization of the Temple, and his authority in liturgical matters – found in writings consulted by future kings – is invoked on par with that of Moses. Ben Sira summarizes these traditions, emphasizing David’s prayerful life, his establishment of Temple music and festivals, and his forgiven sins.
This is the picture of David available when 11QPs was composed, at least as far as it has been preserved in the extant texts. I have tried to read these texts on their own terms, avoiding the lens of later traditions about Davidic attribution; and while prophetic characteristics abound and musical liturgy is central, there is little if any hint at authorship of any particular collection of psalms. While David is connected with writing, nothing like a book of psalms makes an appearance; we hear only of written liturgical instructions, which cannot be identified with any surviving texts. As Kugel argues, the concern with authorship of psalms “bespeaks a somewhat later period” than these sources.

Part III: Reading David in Early Jewish Texts

Before I return to the Qumran Psalms scroll, I would like to take a look at other traditions about David from the Second Temple period and beyond, to see how they depend on and elaborate the traditions I have just discussed. I begin by showing how the assumption in a belief about Davidic “authorship” of the Psalms has distorted our readings of two texts, 2 Maccabees and 4QMMT, which have been widely used to support arguments about the development of the canon. I argue that taking into account the fuller picture of David at the time shows that these texts do not warrant such readings. I then discuss several other texts from the Second Temple period (and slightly later) to further flesh out the way ancient communities imagined the indefinite

29 See my earlier discussion in Chapter One of the lack of attestation of such a concept in the texts, pp. 28-36.
30 Kugel, “David the Prophet,” 51.
31 See Chapter One, pp. 33-34.
connection between David and psalmic traditions.

### 1. 2 Maccabees

One text that has often been cited in discussions about written authority and the shape of the canon is 2 Macc 2:13. The text mentions “books” “of David” – in a letter to the Jews of Egypt in order for them to observe properly the festival of the Jews (1:10b-2:18) – collected by Nehemiah, along with “the books about the kings and prophets” and “letters of kings about votive offerings”; in the next verse, we are told that “in the same way Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war.” Much speculation exists on what these designations refer to, and what this passage tells us about the shape of the Jewish scriptures in the Maccabean period.32 Leiman writes that “[w]hat may very well be described [in 2:13] is a collection and canonization of biblical books,” and that in 2:14, the “literary activity ascribed here to Judah Maccabee may, in fact, be a description of the closing of the Hagiographa, and with it, the entire biblical canon.”33 Others have written that while the status of the Writings is vague here, at least the Psalms were deemed canonical.34 Another scholar has interpreted 2:13 “to be referring to the Psalms, the books of Samuel and Kings, and the books of Chronicles and Ezra.”35

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Against these forced interpretations, Barton rightly argues that the passage “is actually about a salvage operation on archival material of all kinds, including Scripture. It has nothing at all to do with a decision about the limits of the canon.”36 E. Ulrich, too, considers it a “painful stretch... to see here a plausible reference to the canon of Scripture.”37 Despite these rejections of the canonical interpretation of 2 Macc 13, there is one assumption that has gone unchallenged in the scholarship: that the writings of David denote the Psalms. This identification seems to be beyond debate, no matter how one understands what, if anything, this passage says about the canonical process.

But are we really justified in making this assumption? While most discussions of this text cite only the two verses referring to writings, I would like to present the text in the wider context of the letter to the Jews of Egypt to show that another interpretation is possible.

9 διεσαφεῖτο δὲ καὶ ώς σοφίαν ἔχων ἀνήνεγκεν θυσίαν ἐγκαινισμοῦ καὶ τῆς τελειώσεως τοῦ ιεροῦ καθὼς καὶ μωυσῆς προσηύξατο πρὸς κύριον καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὰ τῆς θυσίας ἐδαπάνησεν οὕτως καὶ σαλωμῶν προσηύξατο καὶ καταβαν τὸ πῦρ ἀνήλωσεν τὰ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ ἐπίνει μωυσῆς διὰ τὸ μὴ βεβρῶσθαι τὸ περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἀνηλώθη 12 ὡσαύτως καὶ ὁ σαλωμῶν τὰς ὀκτὼ ἡμέρας ἠγαγεν

13 ἐξηγοῦντο δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνηματισμοῖς τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νεεμιαν τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ώς καταβαλλόμενος βιβλιοθήκην ἐπισυνήγαγεν τὰ περὶ τῶν βασιλείων βιβλία καὶ προφητῶν καὶ τὰ τοῦ δαυιδ καὶ ἐπιστολάς βασιλέων περὶ ἀναθεμάτων 14 ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ιουδας τὰ διαπεπτωκότα διὰ τὸν γεγονότα πόλειον ἡμῖν ἐπισυνήγαγεν πάντα καὶ ἐστίν παρ’ ἡμῖν 15 ὧν οὖν ἐὰν χρείαν ἐχθετο τοὺς ἀποκομιούντας ὡμὴν ἀποστέλλετε

16 μέλλοντες οὖν ἄγειν τὸν καθαρισμὸν ἐγράψαμεν ὡμὴν καλῶς οὖν ποιήσετε ἄγοντες τὰς ἡμέρας 17 ὃ δὲ θεὸς ὁ σώσας τὸν πάντα λαὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀποδοὺς τὴν κληρονομίαν πᾶσι καὶ τὸ βασίλειον καὶ τὸ iεράτευμα καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμὸν

36 Barton, Oracles of God, 57.
It was also made clear that being possessed of wisdom Solomon offered sacrifice for the dedication and completion of the temple. Just as Moses prayed to the Lord, and fire came down from heaven and devoured the sacrifices, so also Solomon prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the whole burnt offerings. And Moses said, “They were consumed because the sin offering had not been eaten.” Likewise Solomon also kept the eight days.

The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and those of David, and letters of kings about votive offerings. In the same way Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war which had come upon us, and they are in our possession. So if you have need of them, send people to get them for you.

Since, therefore, we are about to celebrate the purification, we write to you. Will you therefore please keep the days? It is God Who has saved all His people, and has returned the inheritance to all, and the kingship and priesthood and consecration, as He promised through the law.

To read the relevant passages in context: first, nothing in the Maccabees text itself indicates that the books mentioned here correspond neatly with particular biblical titles. Here, we have evidence of what Kraft has called “textual myopia,” an attachment to texts, particularly canonical texts, that have survived, as if these were the only possible writings that the author could have had in mind, even though the textual landscape of early Judaism is much more varied than the Hebrew Bible and those parabiblical texts that have come down to us. The text, however, is extremely vague about what writings are meant; in fact, perhaps the author was not thinking of particular titles at all, but only mentioned general types of texts that came to mind as he composed his account.

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39 This view is shared by M. Haran, “Archives, Libraries, and the Order of the Biblical Books,” 52-61, who in fact argues that there could not have been any real Jewish libraries because there were too few books – only 22!
The connotations of "David" in the context of the whole passage is particularly interesting, because scholars have automatically assumed that what the writer had in mind was the Psalms. Indeed, the text has been used to make arguments about the use and status of the Psalter in this period. For instance, Y. Miura writes that based on this text, we can deduce the following information about the Psalms:

(1) All the Psalms are read in the Davidic context. Unlike Sirach, 2 Maccabees indicates Davidic attribution of the Psalter. (2) The Psalms in the Davidic context are easily applied to the Jew's individual life. David's life gives the dispersed Jews great encouragement. (3) The authority of the Psalms is necessary so they might be able to give the Jews instruction the ways of the Jewish festival. ... In 2 Macc 2:13 we see how the Psalms are employed in the final 150 years BCE. 2 Maccabees reflects the characteristics of the Greek Psalter, such as the phenomenon of "Davideicization," the application of the Davidic Psalms to the Jew's individual life, and the necessity of the authority of the Psalms in those days.40

But before we can make arguments such as this, it is necessary to prove that when he mentions τὰ (plural!) τοῦ δαυιδ, “the [books] of David,” the author of 2 Maccabees has the Psalms in mind here at all. This is far from clear. As I have explained, David is associated with a variety of (non-extant) writings that are related to the proper functioning of the liturgy and consulted by future rulers. The Maccabees passage enjoins the Jews of Egypt to properly observe the festival; it invokes the sacrifice of Solomon and the ordinances for the proper functioning of the temple; and it mentions “the kingship and priesthood and consecration, as [God] promised through the law.” These themes are highly reminiscent of those passages in Chronicles that I discussed above, where the written document associated with David and consulted in future generations is related to the setup and staffing of the liturgy, and in Ben Sira, where

40 Miura, 68.
David, although he is not explicitly said to have written anything, “set[s] the feasts in order.”

As I argued, no text before 2 Maccabees mentions David as a psalm-writer, much less as the author of a psalms collection. It is more likely in context, then, that the writings of David here refer to these non-extant (likely, never extant) liturgical instructions – which could easily be imagined to give Jews guidelines about the observance of the festival – rather than to psalms at all. The text of 2 Maccabees 13 indicates that writings, including Davidic writings, were conceived much more broadly and ambiguously than as a collection of particular authoritative titles – and this is all that this text can tell us about the shape of the canon in this period. About the use and status of the Psalms, it can tell us nothing at all.

2. 4QMMT

Another text that has been ubiquitous in discussions of the shape of scripture and the canonical process in early Judaism is the Halakhic Letter, 4QMMT. This text, which appears to be a letter from the sect to the Jerusalem priesthood that concerns differences in their interpretations of sacrificial and calendrical matters, contains a line that has been used to prove that the notion of a tripartite canon of scripture had already developed at the time.41 The reconstructed composite text of 4QMMT\textsuperscript{d} and 4QMMT\textsuperscript{e} in DJD 10 reads:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
The translation offered for this reconstruction is:

9 [...And] 10 we have [written] to you so that you may study (carefully) the book of Moses and the books of the Prophets and (the writings of) David [and the] 11 [events of] ages past.42

Qimron and Strugnell write that here, דוד [ד] “probably refers not only to the Psalms of David, but rather to the Hagiographa. This is a significant piece of evidence for the history of the tripartite division of the Canon.”43

The problems with such an argument are many, beginning with the reconstruction and arrangement of the small fragments of this heavily damaged manuscripts. In his 2003 study, Eugene Ulrich showed that the entire argument falls apart when we attempt a more cautious reconstruction of the text. Ulrich writes that a sober review of the evidence yields the following uncertainties:

- We do not know whether the word “Moses” occurs in this context.
- We do not know whether “the books of the” prophets are mentioned in this context.
- We do not know whether the word “David” occurs in this context – for example, ובדוי, among other possibilities, is equally likely...
- If the word were “David,” the syntax and expression would be strange.
- If the word were “David,” there would be no basis for suggesting that it is intended to signify anything more than the Psalms.44

The force of Ulrich’s argument about the reconstruction problems is compelling. But even if the reconstruction is accepted and the odd syntax is ignored, there is more to be said. The question remains: what does ובדוי mean in this context? More precisely, what

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43 DJD 10, 59 n. 10.
would it bring to mind for an ancient reader or hearer? Qimron and Strugnell suggest that the passage may be referring to the *ketuvim* as a group by the name of David, but there is no basis for connecting David to other texts among the Writings, or for considering the Writings as a distinct group in this period in the first place. Ulrich’s last point is that even if the reconstruction is correct, there is no basis for suggesting that “David” “is intended to signify anything more than the Psalms.” But perhaps we may be even more cautious about what the reference to David means. As I have argued, David is not only associated with the Psalms, which were in any case a fluid and undefined corpus that was not limited to any single collection. He is also connected with non-extant liturgical instructions that are consulted by future leaders who are concerned with the proper celebration of the cult. These materials, according to the Chronicler, were consulted by those “good kings” who made sure God was worshipped correctly. In the context of the Halakhic Letter, which is about sacrificial and calendrical matters – the proper functioning of worship – it would be appropriate to cite materials of just this kind.45

The four (*not* three) kinds of texts cited in 4QMMT (Moses, the Prophets, David, and the events of ages past) might be compared to “the books about the kings and prophets, and those of David, and letters of kings about votive offerings” in 2 Macc 13, a text that is also part of a letter about liturgical propriety. Given the very uncertain reconstruction of the fragmentary manuscript and the ambiguity of the passage, it is impossible to make a conclusive case for any specific interpretation of what “David”

45 G.J. Brooke, in “The Psalms in Early Jewish Literature in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” also suggests that this mention of David in 4QMMT may indicate something other than the Psalms, such as “an account of his deeds, and possibly some other writings that might have been associated with him as a royal figure (such as Chronicles)” (11).
means here, if the word “David” was indeed part of the original text. But within the broader context of Second Temple traditions, we cannot immediately assume that “David” unambiguously equals “the book of Psalms.”

3. Josephus

I would now like to consider Josephus’ account of David’s psalmic activities. The accomplishments of David according to Josephus are precisely in line with these texts from Qumran and Ben Sira, which link him with various liturgical and compositional activities that are embedded in a broader discourse about David’s life, and – although here, unlike in Chronicles, Ben Sira, 2 Maccabees, and 4QMMT, David is explicitly a composer of psalms – his description cannot be understood as referring to the authorship of an identifiable, particular collection of texts. In Ant. VII.305, we read that David,

 showing in trinomials, some in pentameters. He also made musical instruments and instructed the Levites how to use them in praising God on the so-called Sabbath Day (Josephus, Ant. VII.305).46

Josephus then goes on to describe the instruments David made, but gives no further information about the psalms David is supposed to have composed. Like “David’s

46 The text is from the Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement, pace.mcmaster.ca.
Compositions,” he is offering a narrative about David and his accomplishments, including liturgical instruction and prolific psalmody, not making a bibliographical claim.

His vague, indefinite account of the songs and hymns David composed in varied metres contrasts with the passage about the twenty-two books in Against Apion I.38-40 that is so often used to support the notion of a delineated canon of scriptures in the Second Temple period.47 Unlike in the earlier materials, in Josephus we do have a description of David as a psalm composer. But it seems evident from this account is that Josephus does not imagine he has access to all the writings of David, and does not find their exact identification to be of primary importance; but, like “David’s Compositions” and Ps 151, is interested in David as a figure, his connection to music, and his prolific psalmody.

4. Philo

Philo mentions the name of David in connection with the psalms only in Conf. 149, where he calls him “God’s psalmist David.”48 Other references to the authority behind the psalms are rather vague. Without explicitly citing David’s name, he mentions “the psalmist” in Gig 17, Immut 74, and Agr 50, and “the sacred poet” in Plant 29. In Agr 50, Philo writes:

οὕτως μέντοι τὸ ποιμαίνειν ἔστιν ἀγαθόν, ὥστε οὐ βασιλεύσι μόνων καὶ σοφοὶς ἀνδράσι καὶ ψυχαῖς τέλεια κεκαθαρμέναις ἀλλά καὶ θεῷ τῷ πανηγεμόνι δικαίως ἀνατίθεται. τούτου δὲ ἐγγυητής οὐχ ὁ τυχῶν ἀλλὰ προφήτης ἔστιν, ὃ καλὸν

48 Miura, 90.
Thus, indeed, being a shepherd is a good thing, so that it is justly attributed, not only to kings, and to wise men, and to souls who are perfectly purified, but also to God, the ruler of all things; and he who confirms this is not any ordinary person, but a prophet, whom it is good to believe, he namely who wrote the psalms [hymns]; for he speaks thus, “The Lord is my shepherd, and he shall cause me to lack nothing” (Ps 22:1).

While this clearly refers to Ps 22 which has a Davidic superscription, Philo's ambiguity is notable. He refers to “a prophet, whom it is good to believe,” and “he... who wrote the hymns,” in rather generic, indefinite terms. This comes through even more strikingly in Heres 290 when he refers to the author of Ps 83/84 – attributed to the Korahites – as τις προφητικὸς ἄνηρ, “a certain prophetic man,” a rather non-committal identification. However, because David and the Psalter are so strongly identified in the modern imagination, scholars have still interpreted this as a reference to David. Miura writes:

Heres 290 refers to Ps 83 which is attributed to the Korahites (prophets in 1 Chr 25:1) in both the MT and the LXX. But scholars understand Heres 290 in terms of David's prophetic status (Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, 9:94; cf. Leonhardt, Jewish Worship, 150). This case is possible because of the concept that David is the representative author of the Psalter.

But, given his ambiguous formulations, this does not seem at all clear to Philo. David is a psalmist, but not all the psalms are David's. Here, we see further complication of the seemingly axiomatic tradition of the Davidic authorship of the Book of Psalms. In Chronicles and, I argued, 2 Maccabees, David is responsible for non-psalmic writing; in

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50 C.D. Yonge translation.
51 Miura, 91 n. 12.
Josephus, he composes many different psalms in a variety of forms that cannot be identified with those we know from scripture; and in Philo, David is a psalmist, but the “authors” of psalms are identified in vague and generic language.

5. **Pseudo-Philo**

In the Biblical Antiquities, Pseudo-Philo does not present a picture of David as the author of a psalm collection, but as an exorcist. In LAB 60:2-3, he presents the kind of song David would have sung to exorcise the demon from Saul in 1 Sam 16:13-23:

> And in that time the spirit of the Lord was taken away from Saul, and an evil spirit was choking him. And Saul sent and brought David, and he played a song on his lyre by night. And this was the song he played for Saul in order that the evil spirit might depart from him.
> “Darkness and silence were before the world was made,
And silence spoke a word and the darkness became light.
Then your name was pronounced in the drawing together of what had been spread out,
The upper of which was called heaven and the lower was called earth.
And the upper part was commanded to bring down rain according to its season,
And the lower part was commanded to produce food for all things that had been made.
And after these was the tribe of your spirits made.
And now do not be troublesome as one created on the second day.
But if not, remember Tartarus where you walk.
Or is it not enough for you to hear that, through what resounds before you, I sing to many?
Or do you not remember that you were created from a resounding echo in the chaos?
But let the new womb from which I was born rebuke you,
From which after a time one born from my loins will rule over you.”
As long as David sang, the spirit spared Saul. ⁵²

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⁵² The translation is by D.J. Harrington, *OTP*, vol. 2.
Here, David is prototype of Solomon the exorcist. According to Harrington, the prediction of “one from my loins” who will rule over the evil spirit does not refer to a messianic figure, since Pseudo-Philo shows no interest in such a figure, but to Solomon.\textsuperscript{53} The words placed in David’s mouth are not at all reminiscent of biblical psalms. We might compare them to the songs for exorcism in 11Q11 and the four songs “for the stricken” mentioned in “David’s Compositions.”\textsuperscript{54}

6. Other Traditions

The multilingual literature of the Second Temple period and beyond does not identify David as the author of the book of psalms, but seems interested in other aspects of his legacy. Eupolemus, in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C.E., follows the Chronicler’s tradition of David’s preparation of temple materials and funds, adding some embellishments about David’s shipping and mining operations for this purpose.\textsuperscript{55} In 4Ezra David is mentioned as the founder of the holy city and a righteous man of prayer together with Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Solomon, Elijah, and Hezekiah.\textsuperscript{56} Perhaps most interestingly, the 1\textsuperscript{st} century C.E. Lives of the Prophets credits David with the design of priestly and prophetic tombs:

\textit{[Isaiah’s] tomb is near the tomb of the kings, west of the tomb of the priests in the southern part of the city. For Solomon made the tombs, in accordance with David’s design (1:7).}\textsuperscript{57}

This is evidently an outgrowth of the tradition of David’s temple blueprint, tabnit,\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{53} Harrington, \textit{OTP} 2.373.
\textsuperscript{54} I discuss the figure of David in \textit{LAB} in another context in Chapter Five.
\textsuperscript{55} Eupolemus 30:5-8; see trans. by F. Fallon, \textit{OTP}, 861-872.
\textsuperscript{56} 4 \textit{Ezra} 7:108.
\textsuperscript{57} Trans. D.R.A. Hare, \textit{OTP}.  
received in writing by David and followed by Solomon; it appears that the tradition of a Davidic blueprint was so strong that he became the natural choice to be the architect of other sacred structures as well.

In this context, I must mention an intriguing suggestion offered by Y. Yadin: that the Qumran Temple Scroll was supposed to be the very tabnit revealed to David in Chronicles, the blueprint for the first temple as it should have been built.58 There is no way to prove this, especially since the beginning of the Temple Scroll is lost; and the text explicitly connects the ideal temple with the covenant with Jacob, not David, in col. 29.59 But there is undoubtedly a strong tradition linking David to temple design and various liturgical writings that have not survived; and the very fact that such a suggestion could be made already complicates any straightforward, limited identification of David and the Book of Psalms in the Second Temple period.

In the New Testament, of the fifty-four references to David, most occur in the context of Jesus’ lineage or the messianic epithet “Son of David.” Other references to David are in the context of citing psalm passages as prophetic speech that is fulfilled through Jesus.60 David speaks “in the Spirit” εν πνευματι (Matt 22:43) or “by the Holy Spirit” εν πνευματι αγιω (Mk 12:36). God is said to speak “through the mouth of David,” ο δια στοματος δαυιδ (Acts 4:25), Acts 1:16 states:

ανδρες αδελφοι εδει πληρωθηναι την γραφην ταυτην ην προειπεν το πνευμα το αγιον δια στοματος δαυιδ περι ιουδα του γενομενου οδηγου τοις συλλαβουσιν τον ιησουν

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58 Y. Yadin, Megillat ha-Miqdas (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1977) 1.70.
59 On these traditions about the temple and Jacob in the Temple Scroll and in Jubilees, see Najman, Seconding Sinai, 57-63.
60 Most references mention “David,” not “Psalms”; see Chapter One.
Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus.

David, then, is presented as infused with the spirit, and his words are oracular, divinely inspired speech, not unlike his image in “David’s Compositions.”

In the Ascension of Isaiah, a Christian compilation likely completed in the late second century C.E. but containing older materials, David is also credited with oracular writing. In this section, the speaker, Isaiah, prophesies about the coming of the Beloved and his descent into Sheol:

20 And the rest of the vision regarding the Lord, behold, it is written in three parables according to my words which are written in the book which I publicly prophesied. 21 And the descent of the Beloved into Sheol, behold, it is written in the section, where the Lord says: “Behold my Son will understand.” And all these things, behold they are written in the parables of David, the son of Jesse, and in the Proverbs of Solomon his son, and in the words of Korah, and Ethan the Israelite, and in the words of Asaph, and in the rest of the Psalms also which the angel of the Spirit inspired. 22 (Namely) in those which have not the name written, and in the words of my father Amos, and of Hosea the prophet, and of Micah and Joel and Nahum and Jonah and Obadiah and Habakkuk and Haggai and Malachi, and in the words of Joseph the Just and in the words of Daniel.

According to Michael A. Knibb, this portion of the Ascension of Isaiah likely dates from the late first century. Interestingly, David here does not act as a paradigmatic writer of psalms, but as a source of prophetic “parables,” a word that the Isaiah character also uses to refer to his own written prophecies. References to psalms come later in the list of inspired writings, after the mention of the Proverbs of Solomon, and are attached to

61 On David as a prophet in the New Testament see e.g. Miura, David in Luke-Acts; Kugel, “David the Prophet”; see also additional bibliography in Ch. 5.
63 Trans. R.H. Charles, APOT.
64 Knibb, OTP 2.149.
other figures, some named and some anonymous (“which have not the name written”).

Does the writer of this text understand “parables” to be another designation for Davidic psalms, or does he have in mind another genre of Davidic lore? Regardless of what exactly is meant by “parables” here, David and the psalms are not directly identified with one another – “David” is not understood as an umbrella term for psalms materials. Neither are psalms imagined as a coherent collection or “book” that can be simply cited by title; rather, the text paints a picture of a large and multivocal collection of compositions that “the angel of the Spirit inspired.”

One last text deserves mention here: the Cairo Geniza text that has been titled “Apocryphal Psalms of David” by D. Flusser and S. Safrai.\(^65\) The manuscript consists of two double-sided pages that, according to Flusser and Safrai, had originally been part of a long apocryphal work composed in the Second Temple period, and had appeared in the Cairo Geniza through the same channels as the Damascus Document and the Aramaic Levi Document.\(^66\) Flusser and Safrai observe that the speaker is a prophetic and messianic figure who receives his psalms through visionary prophecy and describes himself in royal terms, and therefore, that these compositions were part of a Davidic pseudepigraphon from Qumran.\(^67\)

The reference to 4,050 psalms in “David’s Compositions” is used to support this identification. Flusser and Safrai write that even far-flung statements [like 4,050 psalms] should not be rejected out of hand. For while it is difficult to imagine that there existed a workgroup able to

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\(^66\) Flusser and Safrai, 258.
\(^67\) Flusser and Safrai, 264.
compose such a great corpus and attribute it to King David, it would appear that at least some portion of this work was in fact completed.... if the Psalms scroll does indicate that there were psalms attributed to David during its composition, then the Genizah Psalms were written before the Qumran text. Moreover, if these are the psalms referred to in the Dead Sea Scrolls then they were produced in the same milieu as the Qumran community, in other words, they are also Essene.

This interpretation of “David’s Compositions” is far too literal; this literary, symbolic piece cannot be taken to refer to specific texts, and certainly not to establish their date. Moreover, there is nothing in the texts themselves to connect them with David as closely as Flusser and Safrai suggest. The Cairo Geniza psalms are not explicitly attributed to David; David’s name is used only in the third person, e.g. “You vowed of old to your servant David,” I.15. Not enough data exists either to date the texts or to connect them in any way to Qumran or to the text of “David's Compositions.”

**Summary**

I now summarize what I have presented about the figure of David, the psalms, and traditions about writing. The main thrust of my argument is that the traditions from the Hebrew Bible through the Second Temple period and beyond do not allow us to make simple claims about a belief in the Davidic authorship of the book of psalms. The following three points illustrate the messiness of these traditions:

1. **Not all psalms are Davidic** (those texts with no connection to David, or with superscriptions linking them with other figures, in the Book of Psalms; but also 4Q448, with its possible connection to Hezekiah and Isaiah; psalms
attributed to other figures included in 4Q380 and 4Q381; separate traditions such as the psalms of Solomon; references in Philo to a prophetic psalmist that do not mention David’s name; the claim of B. Baba Bathra 14b/15a that David wrote down and compiled the compositions of others).

2. **Not all of David’s “psalms” are found in anything we might call the “Book of Psalms,”** but David’s compositional activity is far more broad and less definable (e.g. the song for exorcism attributed to David in 11Q11 5:4; but also in texts that are not extant, such as the lament over Saul and Jonathan, if we understand it as a “psalm,” supposedly found in the “Book of Jasher”; the psalms imagined by Josephus to be in tetrameter and pentameter; Pseudo-Philo’s “psalm” of exorcism; and of course, the 4,050 psalms cited in the Qumran Psalms Scroll).

3. **Not every piece of writing transmitted by David can be identified with psalms** (e.g. the Temple tabnit and the “writing of David and Solomon” consulted by Judean kings; the writings of David in 2 Macc 13, whatever they might be; perhaps the “parables” of David in Ascls; the design of prophetic tombs

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– once again, writings that are not extant and may never have historically existed; songs for exorcism; the possible reference to David in 4QMMT).

We see from these three points that the tradition of David as psalmist and writer is far more complex than one of authorship of the Psalter. Not only did no Psalter (i.e. specific collection) exist as an idea in the early Jewish imagination, but David’s authority and activity extended far beyond psalms. At the same time, the production of psalms extended far beyond the individual figure and life of David. Any texts that link David with writing or with psalmody must be placed in the context of the rich and complex tradition I have described. The identification of David as the author of the Psalter was not operative in the Second Temple period.

Given the above, how do we understand the Davieic superscriptions of the psalms themselves? The superscription לדוד was not an authorial note, but an indication of a less strict relationship of association. Support for this can be found in Albert Pietersma’s research on the Greek Psalter, which indicates that this is just how the Old Greek translator understood לדוד as well.69 This translator rendered לדוד as τῷ δαυιδ, using the dative, which Pietersma translates as “pertaining to David.” This phrase “did not spell Davidic authorship either to the translator himself or to subsequent [Greek] tradition;”70 it was only in the later transmission history of the Greek psalms that τῷ was replaced with the genitive τοῦ “in an apparent effort to clarify Davidic authorship”

70 Pietersma, “Septuagintal Exegesis,” 112.
where such a claim had not existed before. Pietersma writes that

[i]t is quite clear that for the OG translator Hebrew לדוד did not mean Davidic authorship—the articular genitive for a Hebrew ַ-phrase is well within his usage. It is equally clear that subsequent Greek tradition was fully aware of the fact that the τό δαυιδ of the Greek Psalter did not denote Davidic authorship. Of further interest is that, in the process of transmission, τό δαυιδ was often made to compete with other phrases of association (see e.g. 40, 45, 46, 48, 64, 70, 71, 84, 136, 137, 138). Thus in light of the fact that neither the Greek translator nor later tradition [incl. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion] understood τό δαυιδ to be a not auctor it comes as no surprise that in transmission history we see τοῦ δαυιδ appear on the textual scene.

Part IV: Back to “David’s Compositions”

It is in this context that we must understand “David’s Compositions” and its function in 11QPsalms. While the tradition of Davidic authorship may be emergent here, and it has been the sole way the text has been read by scholars from Sanders and his critics to Flint, the idea of attribution should not be the framework through which we look at this text on its own terms, within the context of early Jewish ideas. Rather, it is an extension and elaboration of the tradition of Davidic liturgical activity and exemplarity that I discussed above. Its indefinite reference to the 4,050 songs mentioned there should be read together with such texts as Josephus’ vague claim that David composed many psalms of various metres; indeed, it is another example of the

72 Pietersma, “Exegesis and Liturgy,” 103. Such an understanding persists well into the first centuries of Christianity. Didymus the Blind (4th c. Alexandria) notes this difference in another way in the Tura Psalms Commentary for Ps 24:1: “The psalm says “to David,” for others are “of David” and others “to David.” It says “of David,” when he made/wrote it or sang [it]. But it says “to him” when it was brought to him”; Pietersma, “David in the Greek Psalms,” 217.
way ancient writers thought of texts in much more ambiguous ways than we usually assume, since we tend to look for specific references to particular writings that we can name. The ambiguity of these references reflects the fact that not everyone had access to, or specific awareness of, all scriptural or authoritative texts, and the imaginative power of texts in the minds of ancient Jewish communities.

In the larger literary context of early Judaism, it becomes evident that this text extends and develops other traditions about David's writing and liturgical activity, but does not stand against them. This is contrary to the argument of B.Z. Wacholder, for whom the “Last Words of David” and “David’s Compositions” provide an apology for the “unorthodox” structure of the collection. Wacholder argues that the inclusion of 2 Sam 23 “redefines the role of the David in the composition of tehillim” through its suggestion of the existence of Davidic compositions outside the “traditional number in the Book of Psalms” and the continued production of psalmody, which gave the compiler license to rearrange the “traditional composition and order of the Psalter.” Indeed, traditions about David’s prophetic inspiration and prolific psalmody do, I think, inspire and authorize the practices of the tradents of psalms traditions as they embellish and expand them, in a kind of continuation of “Davidic” activity and an interpretation of the figure himself. However, I take issue with Wacholder’s comment that this “redefines the role of David in the composition of tehillim.”

To say that the compiler of the Psalms Scroll “redefined” the figure of David through the inclusion of 2 Sam 23 and David’s Compositions assumes that a normative tradition of Davidic authorship of a 150-composition Psalter already existed to be

73 Except in the sense of its championing of the solar calendar.
redefined. For Wacholder, this redefinition was a sectarian apologetic strategy – to authorize this “alternative” psalter against the “traditional” one by linking it with a prophetically inspired, prolific David. But as I have shown, neither the “traditional” Psalter or a “traditional” idea of Davidic authorship was yet traditional or normative at this time, and therefore, that there is no reason why the picture of David that emerges from the assembly of the Psalms Scroll must be an alternative or apologetic (“sectarian”) one. Rather, the way the Psalms Scroll constructs this figure draws on and develops a larger web of traditions about David that are represented in the texts discussed above – threads of which would also emerge in, for instance, the New Testament, where David is a prophet, non-canonical Christian texts like the Apocalypse of Paul, where David is a heavenly figure playing a lyre, traditions thinkable in 8th century Syriac Christianity, where David was responsible for more psalms than the traditional number, and, of course, the attribution of the 150-composition Psalter to David.

“David’s Compositions” and the Psalms Scroll

I now explain how I envision the link between the figure of David and the psalms, and articulate how this can nuance the way that we see “David’s Compositions,” the 11QPsalmsa collection, and the other psalms collections that have survived, in ways that are perhaps closer to the way ancient communities would have viewed them. “David’s Compositions” should be read as both less and more than a claim for the Davidic authorship of the book of Psalms/the 11QPsalmsa collection.

It says less in that it does not claim that David authored this scroll or the “book of
Psalms,” which is not an operative concept in any case; it is not a bibliographical
colophon but a literary text about David’s activity as a prolific, inspired scribe of liturgy,
who received and correctly arranged a staggering number of unidentified psalms and
liturgical songs for various occasions, compositions that cannot be identified directly
with any particular collection. This helps us see the Psalms Scroll as a collection that,
while it has a strong connection with David, does not necessarily depend on the belief in
the Davidic authorship of every individual composition within it. New compositions
from other sources and figures that resonate with the Davidic heritage, as it is
broadened and redefined, may be added, and the collection may grow.

The text says more than authorship in that it presents David not only as a writer
of psalms, but, both through its explicit contents and the wider context to which it
points, an exemplary figure who inaugurates and inspires liturgical activity in
multivalent ways, some of which are connected to writings. As a man of prayer, a
forgiven sinner, a founder of the temple liturgy and of musical worship, and the
proleptic builder of the temple itself, David functions as a powerful founding figure for
liturgy and prayer, far beyond the issue of “authorship” of a text. This entire context
must be considered when we think about the way the connection between psalm-
writing and David was imagined in antiquity. David was not an “author” of any
particular collection but a founder, exemplar and inspiration for future liturgical
activity.

David is not only a liturgical inaugurator, but an inspired scribe. Indeed, he is
described in terms highly reminiscent of the ideal scribe in Ben Sira 39 and the epilogue
to Qohelet, an inspired man of prayer and penitence and a channel for revelation who
has the task of receiving, collecting, arranging, and handing down tradition. David is praised for who he was and what he did; this text is not a “byline” for the scroll, but a rich expression of praise for David’s textualizing activity, and a witness to the great importance placed upon the idea of the correct, prolific transmission of texts. As such, he serves as a model for the continued performance, writing, compilation and arrangement of psalms. Seeing David in this way helps us understand the strong Davidic emphasis in the Psalms Scroll without making the jump to anachronistic concepts of authorship and textual coherence and boundedness, concepts that are filtered through modern book culture and do not resonate with the diversity and fluidity of the collection itself. To return again to the claim in "David’s Compositions,” David’s 4,050 psalms overlap with but are not identical to any particular collections. This helps us view psalm and liturgical traditions *in general* as linked to David, but in a looser way than a strict connection between an authorial figure and a bounded book.

This picture of David as a figure who inspires the ongoing production and expansion of texts is linked to the concept of “discourse tied to a founder,” articulated by Hindy Najman as a way of understanding traditions pseudonymously attributed to figures like Moses and Ezra. On Najman’s model, these powerful figures serve to authorize ongoing discourses that are written in their names, discourses that also serve to transform the figure itself for reception by a new audience and in a new historical

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context. A key example of such a process is the Fourth Book of Ezra, which is placed in
the mouth of Ezra the scribe at the time of the return from exile and gains authority
from this attribution, but that reconfigures Ezra as a character, describing his inner
transformation from despair to hope, and endowing him with the qualities of a prophet
and apocalyptic seer in order to give hope and comfort to a post-70 community. In
many ways, the way in which psalm collections develop around David, and the way in
which the figure of David is also developed and transformed for late Second Temple
audiences, is comparable. David, too, is elevated to the rank of a prophet and an
example of ethical perfection through prayer, and his connection with the temple
sacrifice deepens. This makes his connection with psalms traditions somewhat different
from authorial attribution; rather than the author of the Book of Psalms, David is the
inaugurator of, and the inspiration for, the Second Temple Psalms “Project.”

We must, then, interpret the manuscript evidence in light of the literary evidence
for a sprawling, undefined tradition of “Davidic” liturgical activity and writing. In this
sense, Gerald Wilson’s approach to the editorial shape and fluidity of the Qumran
psalms collection seems most nuanced. Wilson looks beyond questions of authorial
attribution to a fuller consideration of who David was in the imagination of an ancient
audience. For him, the whole identity of David, not simply his identity as a psalmist,
figures into the textual strategies of the scroll, whose editorial shaping indicates a hope
in David as king and deliverer of Jerusalem, in contrast to the MT arrangement, where
the climax of the collection focuses on the kingship of God.77

In terms of the fluidity of the collection, Wilson writes that the last half of what

77 Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPsα) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial
Shaping,” 464.
came to be the Psalter permitted expansion “in obedience to the compiler’s desire to be faithful to the Davidic corpus or heritage,”78 an articulation that seems to be an apt corrective to monolithic conceptions of authorial attribution. Somewhat incongruously with this position, however, Wilson himself does understand “David’s Compositions” as a “functionally oriented” notation claiming Davidic authorship for “all the works of the scroll.”79 We must, however, understand the ideas of a Davidic “corpus” or “heritage” broadly: the Davidic “corpus” as we encounter it in early Jewish traditions includes various writings of a liturgical nature, available or not, and the Davidic “heritage” is the figure of David as a temple founder, ethical exemplar, and deliverer. All of these traditions have a bearing on the continuing production and collection of psalms collections inspired by this figure.

This has broad implications for the way we understand the state of the “canon” in the Second Temple period, and how we reconstruct the way ancient communities would have conceptualized their scriptural traditions. Not only does thinking of David as an inaugurator and inspirer, and a Davidic “heritage” rather than Davidic authorship, make is conceivable that the incipient “Book of Psalms” could allow for rearrangement and expansion, including the inclusion of “non-Davidic” compositions; but also, the connection of David to writings of different kinds, and the presence of “Davidic” psalms in collections like 11Q11, complicates the classic picture of the shape of scriptures at this time. References to the writings of David may not necessarily mean anything we might recognize as the psalms as they came to appear in the Bible – or to psalms at all.

78 Wilson, The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, 73.
79 Wilson, The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, 137.
Conclusion

The figure of David is connected with liturgical activity and a variety of writings, and thus serves as an inspiration for the compilers of the collection and as an authorizing figure; but the idea of David as the “author” of the “Psalter” is not an operative concept. There is no one-to-one identity between David’s authorial activity and any one recognizable collection. All collections are polyvocal entities – social texts. I now come full circle to my earlier argument in Chapter One, that there was no such thing as the Book of Psalms in the Second Temple period. The threefold link that makes up a modern “book,” the so-called libro unitario – the identity between physical object, text, and author – is broken in the textual culture of early Judaism.

Why, then, have we insisted on seeing this piece as evidence for a belief in the Davidic “authorship” of the “book of Psalms,” when it says both less and more than this, and when neither “book” nor “author” are appropriate concepts for understanding Second Temple textual culture? This move betrays our modern post-canonical, text-centred point of view: we are concerned with a text to which we have access, what we call the “Davidic Book of Psalms,” and cannot but read our own categories back into these ancient witnesses. But the ancient sources may be concerned with altogether different things than the texts we would like to know more about. Robert Kraft writes that often we forget, or fail to pay attention to, the various contexts in which those texts were produced... The surviving texts may be our main gateway to the pasts they are thought to report, but the actual pasts are much fuller than the texts on which we initially depend. ... Published written products have survived, as it were. But the paratextual world is much broader than those items in their
various forms (...).\textsuperscript{80}

In the case of David, our modern text- and canon-centredness has caused us to overlook the “para-textual” David, the David that is before, beside, and beyond the identifiable, fixed text that we now possess – the full picture and function of this figure both in this passage, and in ancient traditions in general.

Indeed, a looser way of understanding the idea of “Davidic” psalms was suggested over two centuries ago by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who saw that the connection between David and the psalms was not necessarily one of strict attribution but one of aesthetics, “the sublime”:

Not all [of the Psalms] are his or of his age. Only an individual song of Moses, however, is from more ancient times, and later writers obviously followed him as their model.... The superscription ascribing them to David, where it stands without further limitation, seems to be as indefinite in its import, as the ascription to Solomon of whatever proverbs and delicious songs belong in any sense to his age, or correspond with his character... [A]mong the Hebrews a beautiful song is synonymous with a song of David.\textsuperscript{81}

While this reflects the context in which Herder lived (as a late 18th century German political thinker, a friend of Goethe, and a member of the proto-Romantic \textit{Sturm und Drang} movement), his description of the indefinite connection of psalms to David seems to me to be more indicative of Davidic traditions in Second Temple Judaism than the rigid categories of historical scholarship, textual criticism and editing practices. Herder’s articulation of the “indefinite import” of Davidic attribution – that is, the sense that a “song of David” is one that corresponds somehow to David’s character, is

\textsuperscript{80} R.A. Kraft, “Para-Mania: Beside, Before and Beyond Bible Studies,” 22.

The work first appeared in German in 1782 as \textit{Vom Geiste der Ebräischen Poesie. Eine Anleitung für die Liebhaber derselben, und der ältesten Geschichte des menschlichen Geiste}.
modeled upon his example, or is aesthetically pleasing, not necessarily, in literal terms, believed to be authored by David – is congenial to the way I have presented Davidic traditions in this chapter.

From the eighteenth century, I jump forward to the twenty-first, when the figure of the author becomes blurred not because of romantic aesthetics and exemplarity, but because of a new textuality. I have already used the analogy of digital text as an alternative to the concept of the “book” in the study of ancient textual traditions. Digital text deconstructs the concept of a “book” as a literary unity, presenting instead the written “work” as an unbounded assemblage of related texts and fragments. Along the same lines, it also changes models of authorship in ways that may open up new ways of thinking about ancient attribution, authorial identity, and subjectivity as well. N.K. Hayles writes:

Going along with the idea of Work as Assemblage are changed constructions of subjectivity. The notion of the literary word as an ideal immaterial construction has been deeply influenced by a unitary view of the subject, particularly in the decades when editors sought to arrive at the work by determining an author’s “final intentions.” The work as it was formulated using this principle in turn reinforced a certain view of the author as a literary figure. The unitary work and the unified subject mutually reinforced and determined each other. As the rest of critical theory and cultural studies was deconstructing the unified subject and exposing the problematic ideological bases on which it rested, editorial criticism underwent similar revisionist movement, particularly in ... arguments for the “social text.” Perhaps now it is time to think about what kinds of textuality a dispersed, fragmented and heterogeneous view of the subject might imply.\(^{82}\)

\(^{82}\) N.K. Hayles, “Translating Media: Why We Should Rethink Textuality,” 279.
Chapter Four

Ben Sira's Project and the Textual Context of the Psalms Scroll

Introduction

In the first three chapters of this dissertation, I discussed the Dead Sea Psalms Scroll as a fluid, expanding collection among other collections with varying scopes and contents, arguing that a “Book of Psalms” did not yet exist, either physically or conceptually; and I challenged the prevailing assumption that David was understood to be the “author” of such a book, showing how traditions related to David, writing, and liturgy were far richer and less straightforward. Rather than an author, the developing character of David serves as an inspiring model for a psalmic collection or project. Both chapters served to show that the concepts of textual tradition in Second Temple period Judaism defy our most basic concepts through which we define and categorize the texts of this era. This must also nuance our understanding of what ancient writers had in mind when they mentioned written documents, and what ancient audiences understood by such references. The sources suggest that writings were often understood in indefinite, non-specific ways and do not always refer to any particular works that became canonical, have survived, or even existed at all, which serves as a warning to scholars not to draw conclusions about the history of the biblical books and canon based on vague literary references to written works.
In these next two chapters, I broaden the scope of the discussion, placing the Psalms Scroll in conversation with two other texts that provide useful foils for understanding how such collections were compiled and conceptualized as part of the textual matrix of early Judaism, putting the issues of scripture production, authorship, and prayer into sharp relief. I will focus on two sets of texts – Ben Sira and 1 Enoch – in comparison with the Psalms Scroll, as examples of the production and collection of texts in the context of Second Temple liturgical and pedagogical traditions.

These texts, in my view, can help illuminate a different aspect of the development and conceptualization of the Psalms Scroll in particular and early Jewish writings more generally. I have selected Ben Sira and 1 Enoch because they share important conceptual links with the Psalms Scroll and because they illustrate the complex interaction of texts and traditions across canonical, generic, and sectarian divides, as part of a larger landscape of text production in the Second Temple period.

Ben Sira, the subject of the present chapter, is linked to the Psalms Scroll through a shared composition, the Hymn to Wisdom in Ben Sira 51, and other conceptual and literary parallels. It also contains important material about the idea of scribalism, and, uniquely in ancient Jewish literature, the author is not anonymous or pseudepigraphic, but identifies himself by name; it is, therefore, a crucial source for a study of concepts of text, writing and authorship. I bring out the links between Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll and argue that Ben Sira’s uniqueness as a watershed in the history of Jewish textuality has been overstated. I draw out some of the ways Ben Sira’s own poetic reflections about scribalism and the transmission of traditions shed light on his conception of his own work, and how this in turn helps us understand its compositional
history and transmission beyond the constraints of the modern concept of a book. The
manuscript tradition of the text and its reception can also give us insight into the way
writing and its tridents were imagined in Jewish antiquity, providing an interesting foil
for the concepts of text and authorship I have discussed in the context of the Psalms
Scroll.

In the next chapter I consider the writings collected as 1 Enoch, considered
together with a larger set of texts that touch upon heavenly ascent and angelic liturgy.
The literature about Enoch is self-conscious about its own writtenness, and, like Ben
Sira, provides clues into how its authors conceptualized scribalism and the
transmission of traditions.1 I argue that the literature of angelic ascent and heavenly
journey – whether apocalyptic narratives or liturgical materials – are important
contexts for the Psalms Scroll, as these collections came together at the same time and
in conversation with one another. I argue that traditions about David participated in a
broad context of lore about angelic prayer and angelified human identities, and that the
connection between writing and heavenly beings has implications for the production
and expansion of psalmic materials and other scriptures in the Second Temple period.

My major argument is that these texts must be read together with the Psalms
Scroll in terms of their thematic and formal aspects; that is, the literary links they share,
and their textual history as collections that expanded over time. The question that
arises is how reading these texts together illuminates them and what it tells us about
how to rethink scholarly categories for defining and categorizing this literature.

Grouping texts according to their canonical, generic, or sectarian nature risks missing

1 While there are significant differences between the worldviews and interests of these texts, it is not
the important threads of tradition and the similar modes of production that connect texts across such boundaries, and does not reflect the way ancient communities themselves imagined their written traditions.²

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The main issues in scholarship on Ben Sira, particularly its Hebrew manuscript tradition, have several parallels to those of the Psalms Scroll. Both texts testify to a complex transmission history, including expansions and rearrangements, whose authority, originality, or canonicity has been variously assessed, although this has been far less intense for Ben Sira because of its non-canonical status in most communities. Also, the compositional history of both texts has, to varying extents, been connected to sectarian activity. Although the Dead Sea Scrolls yield only a very fragmentary portion of Ben Sira chapter 6, the affinities between the texts found among the Scrolls and Ben Sira have long been recognized by scholars, with some going so far as to suggest that the expanded text (HII/GII) was largely an “Essene” creation, and ended up in the Cairo Geniza through the same channels as the Damascus Document and the Aramaic Levi materials. The scholarly publication of these texts, as well, presents parallel problems, as determining how to produce a scholarly edition depends on concepts of authoritative or original texts that do not apply in the texts’ own contexts. In this chapter, then, I discuss what these issues in the study of both Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll can reveal about the textual world of Jewish antiquity.

My starting point, after a brief outline of the textual links between Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll, is to consider the way Ben Sira understands his own activity as an

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8 This is mainly said of the messianic/eschatological passages. See most notably Kearns, The Expanded Text of Ecclesiasticus. Its Teaching on the Future Life as a Clue to its Origin. See also M. Philonenko, “Sur une proposition essénisante dans le Siracide (16:15-16), Orientalia Suecana 33-35 (1984-86): 317-21. The psalm in 52:12 that is extant only in ms B has also been called “Essene” based on its expression of messianic hopes; Puech, “Ben Sira and Qumran,”108 n.89, and Di Lella, The Hebrew Text of Sirach, 101-5. It is my sense that such assessments may betray an impulse to marginalize practices of rewriting and expanding scripture by associating them with a supposedly marginal group or movement.
author/scribe and how he conceives of his own textual product. I argue that while Ben Sira has long been considered unique in the history of Jewish text production because he is the only author who identifies himself by his real name, too much has been made of this feature of his text, which in other senses stands firmly in the tradition of Jewish writings of the period. Based on an analysis of some of the poetic images Ben Sira employs, I explore how he understood himself as the transmitter of a work that was neither original nor complete, and how we can apply these insights to our understanding of the development of his text later periods. To this end, I discuss the compositional history of Ben Sira and the reception of the text and the figure in rabbinic traditions. A comparison between the production and reception of the Psalms Scroll and Ben Sira sheds light on the way we understand the nature and function of these works and how they were imagined as texts in Jewish antiquity.

**Literary Links Between Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll**

Substantively, while Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll may appear quite distant from one another in terms of provenance, genre, and content, a closer look indicates that they participate in the same textual and text-producing world.9 The clearest literary link between these two texts is, of course, the sapiential poem found in Ben Sira 51 and col. 21 of the Scroll, which I already began discussing in Chapter Two.10 There, I

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9 This is not a statement about ideological agreements. The author of Ben Sira and those responsible for the "sectarian" documents found among the Scrolls did not see eye to eye on such issues as legitimate priesthood, sacrificial rites, and calendar. However, they inhabited the same cultural and imaginal world, knew the same traditions, and thought in terms of the same metaphors. In my view, therefore, the way Ben Sira poetically describes his role as a transmitter of revealed wisdom can legitimately be read as a reflection of a broader imaginative landscape and can shed light on texts that do not share his particular ideological stance.

10 See Chapter Two. Much has been written on this composition; see M. Delcor, "Le texte hébreu du Cantique de Siracide Ll,13 et ss. et les anciennes versions"; T. Muraoka, "Sir. 51, 13–30: An Erotic Hymn to
discussed the way scholars have interpreted its presence in the Psalms Scroll. Sanders argues that since the text was included in a “Davidic” psalter, it could not have been authored by Ben Sira, but must have had an independent origin; while Lehmann argues that 11QPsalms makes no claim to “biblical” status, and so could freely incorporate direct quotations and misquotations from Ben Sira. I argued that Lehmann presupposes a fixed canonical Psalter and Sanders assumes an anachronistic, “bookish” sense of identity between a text and its authorial provenance. Ben Sira scholarship has likewise focused on the text’s authenticity, that is, whether or not it is an autobiographical composition by Ben Sira himself. I discuss this issue further below.

The presence of this text in both the Psalms Scroll and Ben Sira is the clearest evidence that the compilers of 11QPsalms either used the text of Ben Sira or drew on a common source. But a less direct connection, one of concepts and terminology, exists between Ben Sira 24 and Psalm 154 on column 18 of the Scroll. These compositions reflect a cluster of traditions about personified wisdom, pedagogy, song, and ritual. The special relationship between Ps 154 and Ben Sira 24 has been discussed in a 1964 article by B. Uffenheimer, who points to a number of ideological and lexical links between these texts. The use of עליון as an epithet of God is common to both texts, and appears in the Psalms Scroll also in “David’s Compositions” l. 11 and col. 22:15.

However, it is the close connection between wisdom, praise, and Torah that

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12 B. Uffenheimer, “Psalms 152-153 from Qumran.” Uffenheimer’s Ps 152 corresponds to what is commonly numbered Ps 154//Syriac Ps II//11QPs col. 18.
13 On this term see Lehmann, “11QPs and Ben Sira,” 248-49, who also points out that the Masada Scroll of Ben Sira has עליון in two places where there are other divine appellations in the Syriac (42:18, which has the tetragrammaton) and MS B.
conceptually binds these compositions. According to Ps 154, Wisdom, whose song rings out from the “entrances of the righteous” and the “assembly of the pious,” (l. 12) is given in order to teach human beings to praise the glory and deeds of the Most High, who is the God of Jacob (יעקב אדון הוא עליון). Praise is equated to sacrifice, and the assembly who eats and drinks together meditates upon the Torah and makes God’s strength known (l. 14). In Ben Sira 24, personified Wisdom is established in Zion and ministers before God (10), and is identified with the “Book of the Torah of the Most High” given as an inheritance for the “congregations of Jacob” (23; retranslated as קהלה יעקב). He who eats and drinks of wisdom will desire more (21).

While Uffenheimer writes that the creator of Ps 154 was influenced by Ben Sira, it is not necessary to posit a direct textual correlation as much as participation in shared traditions that connect Torah, instruction in Wisdom, and praise. Both texts draw on sapiential themes already found in Proverbs 8-9 and develop them in similar directions. The sound of Wisdom’s voice (Prov. 8:1) calling to the ignorant (8:4-5) from the heights, entrances, and portals (Prov. 8:2-3, 34) is a key theme in Ps 154, although there, the “portals” of wisdom seem to reflect her heavenly dwelling place, not the gates

14 Uffenheimer, 336. Lehmann, however, points to an even tighter link between Ps 154 and Ben Sira than one of influence in “11Q Ps and Ben Sira,” 248. As part of his general claim that 11QPs is full of sloppy, but direct quotes from Ben Sira, Lehmann claims that col. 18:7-10 is a “modified” quotation of Ben Sira 35:8-9:

Col. 18:7-10:

Ben Sira 35:8-9:

While there are certainly some lexical overlaps, the sacrificial terminology is rather conventional and not unique to these texts, and the passages differ to such an extent that to call these verses a quotation, “modified” or not, seems tenuous at best. It is far more likely that the language of sacrifice and justice shows that both Ben Sira and the psalmist inhabit the same imaginal world, in which the language of sacrifice is highly generative and charged with symbolic meaning.
of the city, as in Proverbs 8. Ben Sira 24 also has wisdom dwell “in the highest heavens” (24:4) and “open her mouth” in praise (24:2; cf. the focus on Wisdom's mouth and lips in Prov. 8:6-7).

The idea of Wisdom's nourishment of her followers is also a shared theme. In Proverbs 9:4-5, Wisdom issues an invitation to eat and drink at her house:

Let all who are simple turn in here!
To those who have no sense she says,
Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.

This invitation finds an echo, although not an exact parallel, in Ben Sira 24:19-21, which also mentions eating and drinking of Wisdom:

Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits.
For the memory of me is sweeter than honey, and the possession of me sweeter than the honeycomb.
Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more.

A reference to eating and drinking as a community,יחדיו, is famously present in Ps 154 as well, which has occasioned much speculation about the connection of this text to the practices of the Qumran yahad. But whether or not there is any relationship between this psalms and communal dining practices, I believe that this text also reflects an older tradition of Wisdom's metaphorical banquet. The passage in question is the following, vv. 12-15:
The references to eating and drinking are in v. 13. The surrounding verses are about the song and voice of Wisdom, heard from the entrances of the pious (12), the Torah and praise of God by those righteous ones (14), and Wisdom’s distance from the wicked (15). Given the context of this passage, it seems to me that a metaphorical or perhaps mystical reading of this “eating and drinking” is natural; those who have heeded Wisdom’s voice really do feast together at her banquet. Such a contextualization in the tradition of Proverbs is all the more likely since the simple, פתי, and the lacking in judgment, חסר־לב, of Prov 9:4-5 appear in verses 4 (פותאים) and 7 (חסרי לבב) of the Psalm. Thus, both Ben Sira and Ps 154 draw on a shared treasury of metaphors and images associated with Wisdom, whether or not there is any direct literary link between them.

Finally, I come to the final point of contact that motivates my reading of Ben Sira together with the Psalms Scroll: the way in which Ben Sira imagines a) the figure of David and b) the role of the scribe and wise man as a transmitter of traditions, themes that are separate in Ben Sira, but linked in “David’s Compositions,” where David is a חכם and סופר. I have discussed the portrayal of David earlier, so a brief overview will suffice here. “David’s Compositions” in col. 27 shares many literary links with the material about David in Ben Sira, but it also contains elements reminiscent of Ben Sira’s description of the ideal scribe. Ben Sira’s famous claim that he will “pour out wisdom like prophecy” has often been linked to the statement in “David’s Compositions” that David spoke his psalms “through prophecy which had been given to him from before the Most High” (note, as mentioned above, the use of the word עליון here, a feature that several passages in 11QPsᵃ and Ben Sira share); both statements claim prophetic
inspiration, but use a circumlocution, *like or through* (ב) prophecy. Like David in col. 27, to whom God gave an understanding and enlightened spirit (l. 3-4), the scribe will be “filled with the spirit of understanding” if the Most High, so desires (39:6). Further, the scribe, like David, is a man of prayer and a forgiven sinner. This parallel is evident within Ben Sira itself, where both the praise of David and the praise of the scribe include references to forgiveness (47:11 and 39:5). David’s calendrical arrangement of his liturgical songs reflects his inauguration of liturgical music and “setting the festivals in order” in Ben Sira (47:10).

In both texts, the scribe is a sage, a writer of texts, and an ethical exemplar – “perfect in all his ways before God and men” (“David’s Compositions,” l. 4), a man of prayer and praise who enjoys prophet-like inspiration and God-given enlightenment. Moreover, the scribe is himself someone to be praised, someone whose legacy will remain beyond his own life. Ben Sira 39:9-10 reads:

9 Many will praise his understanding; it will never be blotted out.
   His memory will not disappear, and his name will live through all generations.
10 Nations will speak of his wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim his praise.

Verse 9 certainly came true for Ben Sira himself; as for our other scribal-sagely figure, David, “David’s Compositions,” itself is proof that both these verses came to apply to him.
Part II: The First Jewish “Author”? Ben Sira’s Self-Understanding

As this brief overview of literary connections suggests, Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll are part of a network of texts that drew on a common treasury of literary tropes, and shared an interest in the connected themes of pedagogy, worship, and writing. But these literary links also make it possible to step back from what the texts communicate about these interests, and ask what they tell us about themselves. That is, Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll do not only share images and ideas, but they participate in a larger matrix of ideas and practices related to text production. How do their producers imagine their textual work? What does their self-consciousness about their own writtenness tell us about how writing was practiced and imagined in Jewish antiquity? In the remainder of this chapter, I use Ben Sira as a way into these questions.

Ben Sira’s claim to uniqueness among early Jewish literature is his self-identification in 50:27.\(^{15}\) The work’s self-attribution is indeed unparalleled among the corpus of writings from this period, which are otherwise anonymous or pseudepigraphic. However, the way the work developed as a text, and understood its own textual nature, is not utterly different from other works of this era. By this, I mean to say that the book of Ben Sira appears to me to be a collection just as fluid and open to

expansion as the 11QPsalms collection itself, despite the attribution of the whole text to an identifiable author. This comes through in three ways that challenge any fixed interpretation of Ben Sira as the “author” of a “book”: Ben Sira’s own understanding of his role in the production of his “book”; the compositional history of Ben Sira; and the ways in which Ben Sira was understood as a figure and a text in Jewish interpretation.

I have already discussed the way Ben Sira understood the role of the scribe and wise man, and compared it to the way writing and wisdom are understood in the Psalms Scroll in the context of David’s scribal activity. Ben Sira’s comments on scribalism also shed light, of course, on his own self-understanding. How does Ben Sira conceive of his own role in the production of his text? This is a crucial question for the study of ancient concepts of text production, for the book of Ben Sira is considered to represent the first instance of individual, self-identified authorship in Judaism. Indeed, Ben Sira identifies himself by name in 50:27 and urges his readers or listeners to take his words to heart:

27 παιδείαν συνέσεως καὶ ἐπιστήμης ἐχάραξεν ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ ἴσος ὦ ἱεραχ ἔλεαζαρ ὁ ἱεροσολυμίτης δός ἀνώμβρησεν σοφίαν ἀπὸ καρδίας αὐτοῦ
28 μακάριος δός ἐν τούτοις ἀναστραφήσεται καὶ θεὶς αὐτὰ ἐπὶ καρδίαν αὐτοῦ σοφισθήσεται
29 ἐὰν γὰρ αὐτὰ ποιήσῃ πρὸς πάντα ἰσχύει ὃτι φῶς κυρίου τὸ ἱχνος αὐτοῦ

27 Instruction in understanding and knowledge Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sirach of Jerusalem has written in this book, whose heart poured forth wisdom.
28 Happy is the one who concerns himself with these things, and he who lays them to heart will become wise.
29 For if he does them, he will be equal to anything, for the light of the Lord is his path.
This familiar passage, however, is from the Greek translation; it is extant in only one Hebrew manuscript (MS B), where it reads rather differently:

27 Instruction in enlightenment and appropriate sayings of Simon\textsuperscript{16} ben Yeshua ben Elazar ben Sira,
Whose heart overflowed with understanding, and who poured forth wisdom.

28 Happy is the man who meditates on them, and he who lays them to heart will become wise. For the fear of the Lord is life.\textsuperscript{17}

The Greek version of 50:28 has evidently been reworked, and Greek 50:29, which O. Mulder calls “an expanded version of the epilogue,”\textsuperscript{18} appears to be a Greek interpolation not extant in Hebrew. The differences between the one Hebrew witness of chapter 50 and the Greek translation are notable with regard to Ben Sira’s authorial persona. In the Greek, we read ἐγράψατεν ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, “he ‘engraved’ [wrote] in this book.” Conversely, no reference to writing or books appears in the Hebrew. Rather,

\textsuperscript{16} MS B is the only source that names the author “Simon”; this may be a mistake influenced by the praise of the High Priest Simon in ch. 50. See Collins, Jewish Wisdom, 23 n.1; Skehan and DiLella, The Wisdom of Ben Sira, 3-4.

\textsuperscript{17} C. Mopsik (La Sagesse de ben Sira [Lagrasse: Verdier, 2004]) translates from Hebrew into French thus: “Discipline d'intelligence et directive d'équilibre, de Simon fils le Josue, fils d'Eleazar, fils de Sira, Que son Coeur a fait jaillir comme une pluie, et qu’il a repandues avec intelligence”; Mopsik takes אופנים as a dual, an image that illustrates the dual, i.e. bicolon, structure of Ben Sira’s proverbs. See his clarification, 321 n.4.

the Hebrew states simply that this is the wisdom and sayings associated with Ben Sira, the *lamed* prefix recalling the *le-david* psalm headings. At the end of the manuscript, MS B adds a colophon once again linking the text with Ben Sira, but without making a reference to writing or a book, only his "words" and "wisdom":

These have been ["up to here"] the words of Simon ben Yeshua who is called Ben Sira.
The wisdom of Simon ben Yeshua ben Elazar ben Sira.
Blessed be the name of the Lord from now until eternity.

MS B most likely dates from the 12th century, and it is a matter of debate to what extent it reflects an older or more 'original' version of the text than the Greek translation.

However, the copyist of MS B seemed to have at his disposal an older text, as many of the marginal notes there reflect readings close to the Masada scroll.19 If the older, 2nd century B.C.E. Hebrew text is closer to our one Hebrew witness in MS B than to the Greek translation, we must ask whether the construction of Ben Sira’s self-presentation as an author of a book is a function of reading the Greek version of this work, in particular, the first person identification in Greek 50:27 and the grandson’s biographical prologue, which repeatedly calls the work a "book."

We do have a Hebrew reference to writing in MS B in 39:32:

Therefore from the beginning I have been convinced[?] and thought it out and left [it] in writing.

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19 See Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 7; Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada*, 7 (Hebrew section), and 9 (English section).
There is no mention of “sefer” here, but only the looser and more general sense that Ben Sira has handed on the wisdom he has learned in written form.

If he is not the author of a book, how does Ben Sira conceptualize his own activity, and what does this mean to our understanding of the textual landscape he inhabits? It is my contention that Ben Sira does not understand his work as a “book” in the sense of an original and final written composition, but as the malleable and necessarily incomplete continuation of a long tradition of revealed wisdom. Two major metaphors shed light on this question: the comparison with flowing water in chapter 24, and the image of the gleaner in chapter 33.

As discussed above, chapter 24 has not survived in any of the Hebrew manuscripts, but it is a valuable witness to the way Ben Sira imagined his own role in the transmission of wisdom:

25 It overflows, like the Pishon, with wisdom, and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits.
26 It runs over, like the Euphrates, with understanding, and like the Jordan at harvest time.
27 It pours forth instruction like the Nile, like the Gihon at the time of vintage.
28 The first man did not know wisdom fully, nor will the last one fathom her.
29 For her thoughts are more abundant than the sea, and her counsel deeper than the great abyss.
30 As for me, I was like a canal from a river, like a water channel into a garden.
31 I said, "I will water my garden and drench my flower-beds." And lo, my canal became a river, and my river a sea.
32 I will again make instruction shine forth like the dawn, and I will make it clear from far away.
33 I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations.
34 Observe that I have not labored for myself alone, but for all who seek wisdom.20

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20 24:34 is lacking in the Syriac, and there are other differences between the Greek and Syriac versions of this passage, although the basic metaphor remains the same.
With the beginning of the first-person speech in v. 30, Ben Sira describes himself as tapping into this vast, overflowing body of holy wisdom, which he carries forward like a current. B. Wright writes that

using water as the basic metaphor, Ben Sira argues for continuity between his teaching and Wisdom. As his small canal becomes a river, then becomes a sea, the metaphor finally links “the sea” of heavenly Wisdom described in verse 29 directly with wisdom/teaching of the sage, who serves as a channel for Wisdom.  

Ben Sira’s work carries forward part of a larger, overflowing tradition – and it becomes a growing tradition itself. In verse 28, he writes that “The first man did not know wisdom fully, nor will the last one fathom her,” implying that the collection and transmission of wisdom is a multigenerational process that is never complete.

These sentiments are also expressed in the metaphor of the gleaner in chapter 33:16-19, which we do have partially preserved in the Hebrew MS E.

I also have been vigilant as the last person,  
And like a gleaner after the grape harvesters.  
By God’s blessing I also have advanced,  
And like a grape harvester I have filled my wine vat.  
See that not only for myself have I toiled,  
But for all those seeking instruction.

The last verse of this passage echoes 24:34. Not only this, but the passage also takes up the idea of the intergenerational chain of transmission of traditions that was expressed in the previous text’s comment about the “first” and the “last” being unable to fathom the whole of wisdom. Here, Ben Sira sets himself up as the “last person,” the most

recent link in the chain of transmission – “a gleaner after grape harvesters,” that is, his
sagely or prophetic predecessors. As Corley and Wright both observe, the reference to
being “vigilant” recalls the call of Jeremiah (1:11-12), and the imagery of the vintage
harvester echoes Isa 5:1-7, the vineyard planted on Zion. Ben Sira’s ingathering of
wisdom after it has already been “picked over” by his predecessors still produces a full
wine press, which becomes the teaching he transmits to his students and successors. 22

This image of the scribe and sage as a channel or a gatherer is confirmed in
chapter 39 as well:

1 [The scribe] seeks out (ידיוש) the wisdom of all the ancients, and is concerned
with prophecies;
2 he preserves (ישמרו) the sayings of the famous, and enters into the subtleties of
parables;
...  
5 He sets his heart on rising early to petition the Most High.
He opens his mouth in prayer and asks forgiveness for his sins.
6 If God Most High is willing, he will be filled with the spirit of understanding;
he will pour forth words of wisdom and give thanks to the Lord in prayer.
7 He [God] will direct his counsel and knowledge, as he meditates on his
mysteries.
8 He will pour forth wise teaching, and will glory in the Law of the Lord.

Ben Sira’s text shows the scribe as a channel for preserving and transmitting sacred
traditions who seeks (ידיוש), preserves (ישמרו), and pours forth (יביע) the wisdom of the
anceints, all with the help of divine inspiration, recalling 24:33 where Ben Sira says he
will “pour out teaching like prophecy.” But what exactly does it mean to “preserve the
sayings of the famous” and “pour forth words of wisdom”? As James Kugel shows in his

Ben Sira,” The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology (eds A. Passaro and G.
Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 21-47, 31.
article, “Wisdom and the Anthological Temper,” the activity of the sage was collecting units of wisdom—which were already “out there,” not created by the sage himself—and handing them down to posterity.23 Wisdom is not the abstract capacity for understanding, but a body of knowledge that needs to be gathered bit by bit, arranged in a usable way, and passed down as collections of meshalim. The anthological enterprise of wisdom is concerned with the quantity of things known; hence, for example, the import of the staggering number of sayings that Solomon knew in 1 Kgs 5:12. We might connect this to the repeated references to the Law or Wisdom as overflowing, and to Ben Sira’s full wine vat after his grape harvest – and, by extension, to the overwhelming thousands of songs sung and written by David, the scribe and sage in 11QPsalms4. The scribe/sage is an anthologist, indeed, like Ben Sira himself, who has gleaned and transmitted the revelations of his age.

How do the images of the river and sea, the light, the gleaner, and the scribe as the gatherer and transmitter of traditions shed light on the production of texts? There is an element common to all these descriptions, and that is the sense of a continuity or movement that traces itself back to the past and flows out toward the future. Perhaps we might connect such metaphors to the way that textual traditions were conceptualized in this period, not as books, but as currents of tradition (borderless and shoreless) without delineated origins or end points. I want to connect this to the inadequacy of using “book” language to describe the texts of this period, a language that requires us to posit, in Chartier’s words, a fundamental identity for a work – either its

23 J.L. Kugel, “Wisdom and the Anthological Temper,” esp. 9, 18, 30, repr. in The Anthology in Jewish Literature (ed. D. Stern; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 32–52. See also the introduction to this volume by D. Stern, who emphasizes the creative and influential role of the scribe, editor, and anthologist in preserving, transmitting and creating tradition.
“original” or its “completed” form. From the way in which Ben Sira describes his sagely task and the work of the scribe in general, we can see that he did not consider his work to be either original or complete.

Indeed, I argue that he did not consider it to be a “book” (with a definite identity and shape) at all, and that his own understanding of his activity does not allow us to set him up as a unique, first individual “authorial” figure in the history of Jewish texts, contrary to the claims of most Ben Sira scholarship. M. Hengel, for example, writes that

Ben Sira was the first to venture to emerge clearly as a personality (50:27). Here is the beginning of a new development, for the stressing of the personality of the individual teacher derived from Greek custom.24

However, we must consider to what extent Ben Sira’s own Hebrew text allows us to make such strong claims about his individual personality. As I began to suggest above, perhaps our familiarity with the Greek text of Ben Sira, which includes not only the mention that Ben Sira of Jerusalem wrote a book (50:27), but also the translator’s account of his grandfather as an individual personality, colours our understanding of Ben Sira’s own activity, causing us to read all the first person passages in terms of an individual authorial figure. But in his study of the “autobiographical” texts in Ben Sira, Benjamin Wright points out:

While it is tempting to see the “real” or autobiographical Ben Sira as the primary subject of these passages, and most scholars read the book this way, we cannot assume that this is the case. Besides whatever personal experience might be reflected here, these sections offer a deliberate self-presentation. That is, through his authorial “voice” we hear how Ben Sira wants his reader to perceive the “I” who speaks here, and, as we shall see, the “I” passages serve a specific function in the book. Consequently, we should exercise caution when claiming that we can gain any significant insight into Ben Sira’s personality, since upon reflection we

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24 Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism, 1:79. See also T. Middendorp, Die Stellung Jesu Ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus.
find the “I” of Ben Sira to be just as constructed as the “I” of Moses in Jubilees or the “I” of Ezra in 4 Ezra.  

To this, we might add that the parallels between David and Ben Sira as constructed textual figures are many. Neither figure is connected with a “book” but with a continuous tradition that is handed on in writing. Neither is directly called a prophet, but each is credited with prophet-like inspiration to either “speak psalms” (11QPsalms) or “pour forth teaching” (Sir 24).

Both figures also serve as ethical exemplars. For Wright, Ben Sira’s “I” passages construct an authoritative voice to be obeyed, and an ideal sage to be emulated. His mode of self-presentation is not primarily as the author of a book, but as a link in the chain of the inspired transmission of revealed wisdom. And, while we do have Ben Sira’s own name in one verse of the book, we should, as Wright warns, not be so quick to assume that all the first person passages reflect his own individual “personality.” After all, the book of Proverbs uses the first person abundantly as a feature of its pedagogical rhetoric, along with a variety of sapiential texts from the Second Temple period, and Ben Sira certainly stands in continuity with this tradition; this is clear, for instance, from his references to his listeners or students as his children.  

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Another example of such a rhetorical strategy are the so-called “Teacher Hymns” in columns 10-17 of the Hodayot. These first-person compositions have been read by some Qumran scholars as the *ipsissima verba* of the Teacher of Righteousness, and mined for information about this mysterious figure’s life. In particular, Michael Wise has extracted from these hymns not only data about the Teacher’s life, persecution, and exile, but also insights into his spiritual life and even his name. But the suggestion that the Hymns can be used to reconstruct the life of a historical individual, is highly problematic given the poetic genre of the texts and their use of rhetorical conventions and literary tropes, which, in prayer and confession texts such as psalms, include first person discourse and references to suffering and persecution. These hymns are perhaps linked to the “office” of an inspired community leader and the ideal, exemplary teacher, rather than to a specific historical personality.

In Ben Sira, I suggest, the situation is not so different. Elias Bickerman writes that “there are no self-revelations in Ben Sira,” and indeed, were it not for the single mention of Ben Sira’s name in the Hebrew 50:27, little would remain to suggest a distinct, historical individual in the text. Some scholars, however, have attempted to mine the first person passages for concrete autobiographical information about Ben Sira as an individual, just as Wise has done for the Teacher of Righteousness. One such attempt is a 2000 article by F. McKechnie, who argues that the first person passages

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27 Wise believes the Teacher’s name was Judah; M.O. Wise, *The First Messiah: Investigating the Savior Before Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1999). 
29 The Jews in the Greek Age (Cambridge, MA, Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), 204. 
that mention persecution faced by the narrator (12:10-12, 25:7, 27:21-24 and 51:1-7) refer to real, specific events in Ben Sira’s life. The mention of a false accusation before the king (51:6) is key to his argument. According to McKechnie’s reconstruction, Ben Sira left Jerusalem at around 200 B.C.E., was a courtier in Alexandria until accusations against him were brought before Ptolemy IV, V, or VI, faced trial, was exonerated, retired from royal service, opened a school, and wrote his book – all in Alexandria.

This elaborate life story and revisionist argument about Ben Sira’s geographical provenance reflects a scholarly ambition to reconstruct specific, concrete, historical facts from sources that do not readily yield this kind of information. In particular, McKechnie’s reconstruction has two flaws. First, it is more likely that these passages about the persecution of a righteous man by his foes are literary creations that echo themes in psalms of lament, not autobiographical reports. Second, much is made of the mention of lying accusations before the king, which are interpreted to mean that Ben Sira was in the court of a Ptolemaic ruler and experienced persecution there. Since other political/historical clues to Ben Sira’s context are missing, the mention of a king is taken seriously as the one feature that may help us place Ben Sira precisely in space and time. This does not make for a strong case, since accusations and persecutions against a sage before the king are a conventional part of sapiential narratives, such as the stories of Daniel and Ahiqar (we might also cite those parts of Proverbs that warn about the wrath and judgment of kings, e.g. 16:10, 13, 19:12, 20:2, 24:21-22, or instruct how to conduct oneself in their presence, e.g. 23:6-8). But even more than this, the picture of Ben Sira as a historical, individual personality may be coloured by reading the Greek
translation rather than the Hebrew. In 51:5-6, the speaker thanks God for protecting him

ἐκ βάθους κοιλίας ᾆδου καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης ἀκαθάρτου καὶ λόγου ψευδοῦς βασιλεῖ διαβολῆ γλώσσης ἀδίκου ἤγγισεν ἐως θανάτου ἡ ψυχή μου καὶ ἡ ζωή μου ἦν σύνεγγυς ᾆδου κάτω

from the deep belly of Hades, from an unclean tongue and lying words—
the slander of an unrighteous tongue to the king. My soul drew near to death,
and my life was on the brink of Hades below.

The extant Hebrew (found in MS B only) for 51:5-6, however, reads:

... and the arrows of a deceitful tongue. My soul drew near to death, and my life to the depths of Sheol.

Although there is no way to be certain which version best reflects Ben Sira’s own text, if
we assume the reliability of the Hebrew MS B here, we find no mention of a king – no
reference to a ruler whom we can then try to identify in order to situate Ben Sira’s first
person passages in a specific geographical location and historical moment.31 Like
references to persecution by one’s enemies in the Psalms32 and warnings about lies and
deception in Proverbs, these are generic and conventional literary accounts, not
references to concrete historical events and cannot be used to historicize Ben Sira as an
individual.

While McKechnie’s reconstruction and re-location of Ben Sira in Alexandria is
rather extreme among the would-be biographers of the sage, many scholars have had
taken the wisdom poem in 51:13-30 as an autobiographical account of the author’s
search for wisdom. They have had a particular stake in 51:23:

31 The Syriac goes so far as to avoid any mention of slander, making the passage into a rather generic prayer.
32 For similar sentiments to 51:6/7, see e.g. Job 13:4, 7, Ps 119:69, Ps 52, Ps 64, Ps 86, Ps 88, Jer 9.
MS B: מדרשי ב בית ו لدينا אל פנו
Turn to me, simple ones, and lodge in my house of study (beit midrash).

Greek: ἐγγίσατε πρός με ἀπαίδευτοι καὶ αὐλίσθητε ἐν οἴκῳ παιδείας
Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction.

This verse has not survived in the Psalms Scroll, and the Hebrew MS B is not particularly reliable here.\(^{33}\) It has achieved a great deal of attention because it is considered to be the earliest clear reference to a school in a Jewish text.\(^{34}\) It is also taken as evidence that Ben Sira opened his own wisdom school in Jerusalem. Thus, this verse is pressed into service as concrete textual evidence for both the social history of Jewish education and author’s biography, and so, much seems to be at stake in the “authenticity” of the poem as a composition of Ben Sira himself. The poem is considered to be authentic by many scholars, despite the arguments of Sanders and García Martínez that its presence in 11QPsalms\(^{a}\) indicates its independence, and despite the existence of a previous “colophon” at 50:27-29 that might suggest that the poem is a later addition.\(^{35}\) M. Gilbert considers this acrostic to be a conclusion to the book, similarly to the acrostic in Proverbs 31.\(^{36}\) J. Corley also considers this poem a conclusion


\(^{34}\) Beit midrash is the text found in MS B, which is not considered a reliable witness to the early Hebrew text for this passage; the “original” reading may also be beit musar as argued by Skehan and Di Lella, The Wisdom of Ben Sira, 575. See J. Crenshaw, Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 271; Collins, Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age, 36-37; see also C. Rollston, “Ben Sira 38:24-39:11 and the Egyptian Satire of the Trades: A Reconsideration,” JBL 120: 131–39, who writes that 51:23-24 contains “exhortations to pursue the scribal vocation,” similarly to ch. 39, 139.

\(^{35}\) Gilbert, “Methodological and Hermeneutical,” 8. Skehan and DiLella, Wisdom of Ben Sira, 576-80, defend its autobiographical character; see also H. Stadelman, Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980), 30-33, as cited in Gilbert’s article.

to the book that already formed part of the first of five “editions” of the text as it was
developed by Ben Sira himself.37

But the arguments for authenticity, I think, seem to be motivated solely by
scholars’ desire to derive some concrete historical and biographical facts from the scant
sources we possess. Even if Ben Sira did compose this text, which is impossible to
determine, it is an acrostic poem, full of metaphors and images about the elusive Lady
Wisdom that recall her personification in Proverbs. Indeed, the invitation to enter the
“house of instruction” may echo a text like Prov. 9:1:

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars.

In this chapter, personified Wisdom calls throughout the town and invites the “simple”
(תבא) and the “lacking understanding” (חסר־לב) to enter her house; specifically, she says
that the simple should turn there, so that they may receive instruction. This is
semantically, though not lexically, parallel to Ben Sira’s command to the unschooled to
turn to him, אלי, in the Hebrew MS B (or is it Wisdom herself who is calling in this
verse of Ben Sira just as she is in Proverbs 9, which, given the frequency of shifting
subjects in Hebrew poetry, would not be wholly surprising?). The Greek, on the other
hand, uses ἐγγίσατε, “draw near.” The references to thirst and lack in Sir 51:24 may
also allude to the metaphorical banquet of wine and meat that Wisdom has waiting
(Prov 9:2, 5). In the context of this composition, the invitation to the simple to enter a
“house of instruction” may well be a metaphor, infused through and through with the

38 See, for example, the shift between the voice of the narrator and another personified female figure,
Zion, in another acrostic poem, Lamentations 1.
flavour of Proverbs; it is a poetic account of a search for wisdom that is generic and idealized, rather than personal, despite its first person form.

The sense of Ben Sira’s individuality as a person with a discoverable biography seems to be a function of modern scholars’ desire to reconstruct the concrete and historical. It is encouraged by some features of the Greek text, particularly the translator’s portrait of his grandfather as an individual person. But all we know about Ben Sira, besides his name and his grandson’s later report, is a conventional, idealized self-presentation as a sage. To further challenge the idea of Ben Sira’s uniqueness as a figure, it seems to me that another individual teacher had to some extent already “emerged as a personality” in Hebrew literature – Qohelet. Of course, this teacher is not named and not identifiable, and shrouded in a pseudigraphic or legendary narrative framework. But his personality and activity are described in fairly concrete detail by the book’s epilogist:

Besides being wise, Qohelet also taught the people knowledge, and weighed and studied and arranged many proverbs. Qohelet sought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly. (12:12)

Qohelet, although he takes on Solomonic garb in the introduction to the book (while never being explicitly called Solomon), is presented as an individual teacher in concrete, realistic terms here; indeed not so differently from the translator’s description of his grandfather Joshua Ben Sira as a learned writer and teacher, and certainly more concretely and realistically than the supposed reference to Ben Sira’s Jerusalem school in 51:23. In addition, the personality and activities of Qohelet, expressed in the first
person accounts of his search for wisdom earlier in the book, seems quite sharply
drawn – no less sharply than the idealized personality of Ben Sira in his own first
person passages.

The key difference, of course, is that Ben Sira has included his own name, and his
historical individuality is confirmed by a personal report from a descendant, whereas
Qohelet remains anonymous and, in the book’s narrative frame, allusively
pseudonymous.39 I do not wish to deny that this is significant, but I do believe too much
has been made of this single notation. If we bracket Ben Sira’s name in 50:27, we can
read his book not much differently than Qohelet, the Book of Proverbs, or the “Teacher
Hymns,” which, too, feature the first person voice of wisdom teachers.

The implications of Ben Sira’s name for the conceptual development of
individual authorship in Jewish texts have been overstated. Ben Sira’s self-
identification, first, is not personal and specific, but, with the exception of his individual
name, draws on conventional and stylized language to place him in a chain of inspired,
ideal teachers and pious men. Second, putting his name on the work does not imply a
sense of authorial property; it is not the equivalent of Ben Sira’s “copyright.” That is, the
fact that he mentions his own name does not necessarily mean that he considers his
text to be his own coherent, fixed intellectual creation, extends his authority over it, and
identifies it as both originating and coterminous with his own textual activity. Rather,
Ben Sira presents himself by name as the recipient and heir of some revealed wisdom
and received instruction. He considers himself to stand in continuity with earlier

39 By this, I mean that the traditional attribution to Solomon is never made explicit with his name,
although the description of Qohelet as wealthy king and son of David implicitly makes this identification.
inspired figures and sages and he understands his work as collection and transmission. He presents his persona as an ideal scribe, a gleaner following his predecessors, a channel for the great sea of revealed wisdom; but channels and streams, by definition, do not suddenly solidify but continue to flow.

Ben Sira’s uniqueness as the first individually authored book in Jewish antiquity now seems much less clear, and perhaps coloured by the Greek translation of 50:27 and the grandson’s prologue, where the personality of the writer as an individual author, and the nature of the text as an identifiable, particular, and coherent “book,” are much more clearly defined.

How does this help us understand concepts of authorship in the Psalms Scroll? As I argued in Chapter Three, in early Jewish thinking, the psalms neither begin nor end with David as a historical figure. While his example embodies and inspires the practice of psalm-writing, the Psalms do not bear his “copyright,” but are also products of earlier generations (e.g. Moses)\textsuperscript{40} and remain open to further expansion and supplementation by those consider themselves to be in continuity with it his legacy, like gleaners after the grape harvest.

Part III: What is “The Book of Ben Sira”?

Compositional History and Authentic Text

This discursive evidence, including Ben Sira’s images and metaphors, can help illuminate the formal, compositional development of his text – that is, that the text itself

\textsuperscript{40} See also a later articulation of David “writing down” the Psalms of earlier figures in B. Baba Bathra 14b-15a.
sheds light on, and perhaps opens the way, for its own complex transmission history. The diversity among the Hebrew manuscripts indicates that the transmission process of the text is in line with the understanding that Ben Sira’s work is, like the 11QPsalms collection, *neither original nor complete* – but is a moment in a long process of inheriting, preserving, arranging, and teaching the tradition. Indeed, the text flows like channels from a river, from generation to generation and language to language. As mentioned already, there are two major recensions, a shorter and an expanded version; each Hebrew manuscript differs from the others in minor or major ways in terms of contents and arrangement, from differently ordered verses, through an “additional” hymn (ms B, at 51:12), to an excerpted and completely rearranged text (ms C).

In Chapter One, I argued that the “Book of Psalms” is the wrong concept through which to consider Psalms traditions. This is also the case for the Ben Sira materials. The incongruence of using “book” models to conceptualize Ben Sira traditions is most clearly evident in the practical task of publication of these manuscripts. P. C. Beentjes was faced with this problem when preparing his 1997 edition of all the Hebrew manuscripts of Ben Sira. How to present the texts in a way that would be usable for the modern reader, possible to render in a printed book, and true to the diversity of the manuscripts themselves?

Both Mss A and B contain verses that appear out of order compared to the Greek text: for example, in A, 27:5-6 appears between 6:22 and 6:23. “How should one process such ‘erratic verses’?” Beentjes asks; “By lifting them out of their original context, the
editor is *creating a new text* that has never existed."\(^{41}\) Particularly problematic is Manuscript C, the oldest medieval manuscript, which contains a selection of material in a radically different arrangement and has been called an “anthology,” “abstract” or “compendium”\(^ {42}\) from Ben Sira. S. Schechter wrote that

> the codex from which these leaves come never represented a complete Ms. of Ben Sira, but merely formed an abridged collection of extracts from the Book, prepared by the scribe for some special purpose of his own.\(^ {43}\)

Beentjes has argued that the compiler of MS C creatively rearranged passages from Ben Sira according to his own hermeneutical principles to form a “gnomic anthology.”\(^ {44}\) He arranged material from Ben Sira thematically, according to at least three subjects – shame, the wise man, and the wife.\(^ {45}\) For Beentjes, if the first leaf, which begins with Sir 3:14, was the first page of the anthology, this would suggest that the text was to be used in a school context. Beentjes comments on his methodological difficulties he faced when deciding how to present this text:

> To the editor who wants to ‘synopticize’ this manuscript with the parallel texts of MSS A, B and D, the ‘chaotic’ sequence of the verses of MS C (e.g. Sir 3,14-18.21-22; 41,16; 4,21; 20,22-23; 4,22-23) poses a serious problem. To present MS C synoptically, one has to rearrange the anthological verses into an assumed ‘original’ order, but then all characteristics of the anthological MS C disappear at once.

The problem is a practical one, but it reveals deeper conceptual questions about the definition of a book that Beentjes does not engage, although his use of quotation marks around the word “original” suggests some discomfort with this term.

\(^{44}\) Beentjes, “Hermeneutics,” 54.
\(^{45}\) Beentjes, “Hermeneutics,” 57.
This discomfort is not thematized, but it seems to me that the problem of using such language lies in the impossibility, to return once again to the words of Chartier, of “positing a fundamental identity” for the text. What is the “original” Ben Sira, the authoritative version of this book, which is to serve as the standard to which all other versions are compared? Such questions do not make sense in the context of the different “editions” of Ben Sira that existed already during his or his students’ time, and Ben Sira’s own understanding of his text as an overflow or ingathering of older traditions and a compendium of wisdom that is necessarily unfinished – “The first man did not know wisdom fully, nor will the last one fathom her” (24:28). With such attitudes toward the gathering, production, and transmission of wisdom, it becomes clear that the criteria of either Urtext (i.e. determining the “original” form of a text before its later additions and corruptions) or the related criteria of “final authorial intent” (determining the ideal form the author intended his work to have) that has long informed editorial decisions about the authoritative form of books does not apply

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in this context, when there is no understanding of individual books and authors as clearly delineated, separate entities, but as moments in a multi-generational process.

Here, I would like to draw on Peter Schäfer’s work on the diversity of the Heikhalot manuscript tradition, which evolved continuously long after the composition of its constituent parts. The rearrangements, omissions, and additions to this literature over time prevent us from talking about, or publishing, a stable literary text that can be called the Heikhalot. Schäfer develops the language of “microforms and macroforms,” instead of the terms writing or work, to accommodate the fluctuating character of the texts of the Hekhalot Literature. The term macroform concretely denotes both the fictional or imaginary single text... as well as the often different manifestations of this text in the various manuscripts. The border between micro- and macroforms is thereby fluent: certain definable textual units can be both part of a superimposed entirety (thus a macroform) as well as an independently transmitted redactional unit (thus a microform).47

The manuscript history and compositional diversity of Heikhalot literature is far more complex than that of Ben Sira, but I believe that Schäfer’s departure from the language of “book” or “work” is a helpful approach for rethinking the goals of the editorial process for ancient texts in general. Ra’anan Boustan, explaining and drawing upon Schäfer’s work, writes that “an editor must be prepared to forgo the creation of a misleading ‘finished product.’”48 For Ben Sira, the idea of a “finished product” is misleading not only because of the evidence of compositional fluidity and expansive recensional work,49 but also because of how Ben Sira understands the “incomplete” nature of wisdom (as a tradition in constant movement and striving toward greater

49 C. Kearns, “Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach,” 547-550; M.H. Segal, “The Evolution of the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira.”
insight and disclosure) and the continuity between the work of successive generations of sages. In other words, it is not merely a question of the practical, text-critical impossibility of determining an authentic or original Ben Sira, due to its messy compositional, translational, and scribal history; rather, it is a question of a deeper conceptual incongruence, in that the modern scholarly impulse to produce an authoritative editio princeps, a definitive edition, does not reflect the way texts were produced and imagined in antiquity – as projects, not as products.

There are no criteria to determine what stage of Ben Sira to treat as the “fictional or imaginary single text,” since anthologizing is the mode of both composition and transmission of these materials. In his article “Searching for Structure and Redaction in Ben Sira: An Investigations of Beginnings and Endings,” J. Corley traces the various stages of Ben Sira’s composition, arguing that the text existed in several “editions” already during the author’s lifetime:


Corley argues that the work has a thoughtful arrangement, and that the acrostic in ch. 51 was the original ending of the composition (see my discussion above). Nevertheless, it appears that the text has “ended” more than once: the “colophon” in 50:27-29 that includes Ben Sira’s name still allows for more material to run over like the Euphrates,
bringing to mind the “ending” of David’s psalms at Ps 72 and the layered endings of the 11QPsalms\(^a\) collection, which I discussed in Chapter Two.

While Corley’s thesis is attractive in its delineation of the different genres within Ben Sira and comparisons to the structure of Proverbs, not everyone shares his view that the structure of Ben Sira is so carefully thought out. One scholar has argued that the structure of Ben Sira is too haphazard, with too many repetitions and disconnected segments, to be the work of the sage, and must have been compiled from his notes by one of his students after his death.\(^52\) But once again, such a view betrays a modern sense of individual creativity and textual coherence, not taking into account the collective anthological nature of sapiential traditions. Whether we assume that the arrangement of the book comes from Ben Sira or from his students, the text likely underwent several redactional stages and was motivated by the impulses to both preserve and renew.\(^53\)

Furthermore, if we allow that some of the redactional and compilational work was done by Ben Sira’s students, using the teacher’s demise as a cut-off point for the “authentic” form of his text seems arbitrary, informed by modern assumptions of individual intellectual property. After all, in the pedagogical rhetoric of wisdom literature, the teacher-student relationship is not only personal, but textual as well. As Carol Newsom explains in her work on Proverbs, the strategy of direct address, “I and “you,” “recruits” readers as students and sons, who


\(^{53}\) See discussion and notes on Ben Sira’s textual history earlier in this chapter.
are called upon to take up the subject position of son in relation to an authoritative father. Through its imitation of a familiar scene of interpellation the text continually reinterpellates its readers.\textsuperscript{54}

Benjamin Wright considers such “interpellation” in the context of Ben Sira as well, whose teaching function continues through his text as his addresses to his “children” are read.\textsuperscript{55} If the creator of a textual tradition like the Wisdom of Ben Sira did not consider his work to be bounded and self-contained, as I have shown above, then the expansion and morphing of his text by later generations of his students (including, I would suggest, his translator) is continuous with his own process of expanding and compiling his writings.

All this complicates the very question of authenticity, of determining what the “Book of Ben Sira” is; this has traditionally been assumed to be what the individual Joshua ben Eleazar ben Sira actually wrote. This is, I think, comparable to the myriad scholarly discussions of what was or was not believed to be “Davidic” in ancient communities, which is understood to have bearing on the status of such collections as 11QPsalms\textsuperscript{4}. I am comparing a “historical” author as studied by modern scholars to a pseudepigraphic hero as viewed by ancient people; however, both scholarship on what is authentically Psalmonic, and what is authentically Ben Sira, rest on the same assumption that ancient texts functioned along the same concepts of authenticity and authorship as modern ones. It seems to me that the question of whether ancient audiences believed that David “really wrote” a certain composition was simply not that

\textsuperscript{55} Wright, “The Sage as Father.” For the continuity between the personal and the textual in pedagogy in the later rabbinic context, see M. Jaffee, Torah in the Mouth (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
crucial to their conception of the authority or status of a psalms collection, just as whether a text or arrangement is “authentically” Ben Sira seems foreign to the textual context in which he himself wrote. The focus on the ipsissima verba of Ben Sira (or of David according to putative ancient beliefs) is an anachronistic concern, and blocks other, more interesting questions about the formation of traditions in antiquity.

A case in point is the “additional” psalm after 51:12 in the Hebrew MS B of Ben Sira:

The “additional” psalms between ch. 51:12 and 51:13 (referred to as Sir 51:12a-o) is another example of Ben Sira’s compositional diversity. This hymn has been largely ignored in scholarship because, missing from the Syriac and the Greek and preserved only in MS B from the Geniza, it is generally not considered “authentic,” that is, not

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56 I am thinking here of such comments as Peter Flint’s statement that a psalm with a Solomonic superscription must have been considered to have been authored by David, “no matter how illogical this may seem” (Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 194), or Sanders’ sense that the sapiential hymn that is also in Ben Sira 51 must have been imagined to be Davidic autobiography if it was present in the Psalms Scroll. For the same tendency, see B. Ejrnæs, “David and His Two Women: An Analysis of Two Poems in the Psalms Scroll from Qumran (11Q5)”; See my comments in Ch. 2.
representing the creativity of Ben Sira himself. In a recent pair of articles on the composition, Francoise Mies explains how the question of authenticity has dominated the existing scholarly work on this hymn:

L’hymne final de Ben Sira n’a guère inspiré les exégètes: depuis la découverte du ms. B du Caire, voici un peu plus d’un siècle, deux brefs articles ont paru à son propos, en 1909 et 1935! Les commentateurs, certes, ne l’ignorent pas, lui consacrant quelques lignes, voire quelques pages, mais c’est la question de l’authenticité du passage qui a retenu leur attention, en négligeant l’analyse. ⁵⁷

Mies does analyse the hymn in detail, but in essence, her work also focuses on the question of probable authenticity. She argues that the text is right at home in Ben Sira’s own work, pointing out the biblical language, connections with Second Temple literature and Jewish liturgy, and congruence with the rest of Ben Sira. She also makes a case for reading it as a natural part of the “concluding” pieces in chapter 51, a hymn of praise between the first-person thanksgiving prayer, 51:1-2, and the first person acrostic to Wisdom, 13-30. Mies also observes that the unique attestation of the composition in MS B should not marginalize it, since chapter 51 is not extant in any other Hebrew manuscript. As for its absence from the Greek, Mies points to the mention of the priesthood of the צדוק בני זאדוק in line i; at the time Ben Sira’s grandson made his translation, the Zadokites were not in charge of the priesthood, and the composition was left out on this account.⁵⁸

While this work is valuable and, in fact, makes an excellent case for the antiquity of this composition and its relationship with other Second Temple literature, a text’s value should not depend on proving its authenticity. Whether or not Ben Sira or a later

⁵⁸ The Syriac, coming from the 3rd/4th century, was far removed from these political concerns, and likely indifferent to them; Mies, 501.
sagely heir composed this psalm and placed it in its penultimate position in the text, it is still an important witness to the way liturgical compositions were compiled and combined with other texts, and the way traditions about the divine names and the deeds of God were formed.

Part IV: The Reception of Ben Sira as Text and Character

If we cannot pinpoint a fundamental identity for the text, what, then, did ancient people mean when they said “Ben Sira”? In the first chapters of this dissertation, I argued for a looser understanding of the idea of “psalms” and maintained that no concept of the Book of Psalms as a coherent collection existed; I also showed how the figure of David is not straightforwardly identified with the psalms, but associated in a looser way with a more amorphous, undefined idea of liturgical tradition. While no exact comparison is possible, rabbinic references to Ben Sira, as a figure and as a text, serve as another interesting example of this less definite way of imagining a textual tradition, and show that ancient references to writings or their “authors” should not be automatically identified with books as we know them.

As many scholars have noted, the overlap between extant versions of Ben Sira and its rabbinic “citations” is not exact. Some sayings attributed to Ben Sira are close

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to the extant manuscripts, and some are similar but rearranged or otherwise altered; still others do not exist in any known version, but are in fact biblical texts; or even, in one case, close to a passage in the Aramaic sayings of Ahiqar. Conversely, some rabbinic sources quote a verse that is found in Ben Sira, but do not attribute it as such, pointing instead to a different source, such as a rabbi. What accounts for such variability, or, we might say, lack of precision? Segal suggests that the only explanation is that the passages were cited from memory. Other scholars point to the non-canonical status of Ben Sira, arguing that this meant the rabbis could be less accurate and literal in the transmission of this text. However, it appears that the variability of these citations and pseudo-citations reflects a far more complex relationship between rabbinic communities and Ben Sira as a character and as a textual tradition. This relationship depends on the kind of access to and knowledge of the text at different times and places, the continuing development and rearrangement of the text in anthological compilations, and the “notoriety” of the figure of Ben Sira as a sage and teacher in rabbinic circles.

In her study of rabbinic knowledge of Ben Sira, J.R. Labendz shows that “at different times and in different places, the Rabbis possessed different materials.” Her key argument is that the early Palestinian Rabbis cited Ben Sira accurately because they

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60 Mic 7:5 and Prov 27:1b appear to be cited as part of Ben Sira in B. Sanh. 100b; Wright, “Rabbinic Knowledge,” 186, 187.
62 E.g., the earliest citation, m. Avot 4:4: “R. Levitas of Yavneh says: Be very humble of spirit, as the hope of humanity is a worm” (cf. Ben Sira 7:17). A conflated version of Sir 13:7b and 26:9a is cited as part of the Ketuvim in B. Baba Kama 92b. See Labendz’ discussion of the unattributed citations, “The Book of Ben Sira,” 348-51.
64 Lehmann, “11QPs² and Ben Sira,” 241.
65 Wright, “Rabbinic Knowledge,” 192.
had the text available for study, but, based on their citation formulae, treated Ben Sira an oral source – that is, cited him as a proto-rabbi (“Ben Sira said,” or “So-and-so said in the name of Ben Sira...”), rather than the author of a book (“It is written in the Book of Ben Sira”), in order to distinguish it from canonical texts. On the other hand, the text did not seem to have been available in Babylonia until after the fourth century; while Ben Sira is cited numerous times in the Babylonian Talmud, the citations are not accurate, and “there is no indication that those who cite Ben Sira in the [Babylonian] Talmud actually had a physical book from which they were quoting.” The one exception to this seems to be R. Joseph, whose unique textual relationship with Ben Sira is evident in the accuracy of the citations attributed to him in Sanhedrin 100b, which reports a dispute with R. Abaye about the merits of Ben Sira.

Despite its non-canonical status, Ben Sira’s wisdom was a popular source for Jewish homiletics and liturgy. Since it was not a canonical text and thus there was no set “official edition,” the text was altered, expanded, and excerpted for different circumstances. We know from the existence of MS C that anthologies of this material were created, where the sayings were selected and rearranged. This phenomenon was not unique to Judaism. The 3rd/4th century Syriac translation is comparable to the

71 E.g for the work of the paytan Yose ben Yose.
73 According to Gilbert and Wright, this type of rearranged collection or “florilegium” may also lie behind the citations of Sanhedrin 100b; M. Gilbert, “The Book of Ben Sira: Implications for Jewish and Christian Traditions,” 85; Wright, “Rabbinic Knowledge,” 191.
uneven, “inaccurate” citations of Ben Sira in the Babylonian Talmud.74 The Wisdom of Ben Sira was used in Christian homiletics just as it was among Jews, and, since its text had not been “sanctified by tradition”75 verses were altered in the course of usage, according to the pedagogical needs of the ancient teachers. These altered passages found their way into later written editions of Ben Sira, exemplifying the way in which texts evolve in the interplay between writing and community use.

This dynamic process is also connected to the reputation of Ben Sira as a wisdom teacher and an expert in the Law, which made him one of the Rabbis’ own. The figure gained a certain “notoriety” in rabbinic circles,76 and so – just as David was considered not so much as the author of a book of Psalms, but as an exemplary liturgist, linked to a more amorphous tradition of liturgical material – Ben Sira was considered not only as the author of a concrete and particular book, but more generally as a representative of a tradition of wise sayings. Because of this character’s reputation, new sayings “accumulated around and circulated in his name,” some of which made it into “popular anthologies.”77 Other sayings found in Ben Sira circulated without attribution to this figure, as part of a large “amorphous body of sayings” that circulated “atomistically and anonymously.”78 Labendz summarizes this complexity:

The contents of Ben Sira were spread within the rabbinic community. They were preserved and remembered with varying degrees of accuracy, and sometimes they were conflated with other wisdom sources. The title of the work was attached to a variety of wisdom traditions, only some of which were actually in Ben Sira.79

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77 Wright, “Rabbinic Knowledge,” 192.
Thus, in these communities, there is no precise identification between the figure of Ben Sira and the work we possess that bears his name; rather, we discern a more complex overlap and sense of generative potential, showing the inadequacy of “book” language to characterize the production and reception of ancient Jewish texts.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have considered how the Wisdom of Ben Sira might help us place the Psalms Scroll in a broader context of the textual imagination in Jewish antiquity. Reading these two texts side by side despite their generic differences is warranted by some of the close literary links they share, including the presence of the Wisdom acrostic from Sir 51, similar concepts and terminology related to wisdom and song, and shared ideas about the figure of David and scribalism. Besides these literary links, the scholarly questions that have been asked about both of these texts – particularly, about concepts of authorship, the collection and expansion of traditions, and the significance of diverse textual witnesses – are analogous, and suggest that both should be read together to give a richer picture of textual concepts in early Judaism.

To this end, I discussed the way in which the author-compiler of Ben Sira understands his own role in the transmission of traditions, the compositional history of the text, and the later reception of his work and his status. I argued that although Ben Sira is commonly accorded unique textual status in Jewish antiquity as an individually authored book, this designation is misleading, for its authorial figure understands himself to stand fully in continuity with a far broader, more ancient tradition of seeking
out, preserving, and transmitting wisdom, which neither begins nor ends with his own activity, but hearkens back to the past and remains open to the future. Thus, the process of textual creation and its later transmission are not separate, but continuous. The individual personality and life of Ben Sira are not the boundaries of the textual tradition he transmits. Here again, the idea of a “fundamental identity” for a text, which I have discussed in the context of the Psalms Scroll and metaphors from digital textuality, does not apply. Hence my articulation of Ben Sira’s work not as a “book” (which brings to mind a conceptual identity of object, figure, and text), but as a “project” (which does not combine these three components into a single entity, but configures their relationship as more loosely overlapping), in the title of this chapter.

Reading these texts alongside each is also useful when it comes to the reception of Ben Sira in later traditions. The transmission and reception of a non-canonical, but highly regarded and popular textual tradition can, I think, shed light on the way texts were imagined in a pre-canonical age. Texts are not listed in a catalogue or cross-checked systematically; they exist in different forms, without anything like an editio princeps that sets the standard for all others; and they have different levels of availability and awareness in various communities. My sense is that this multiform, “unauthorized,” and variable nature of Ben Sira’s wisdom is comparable to the way that psalms collections existed in the Second Temple period, when we have no evidence to suggest that any official or conscious decisions were being made about their shape and form, when they celebrated the character of the exemplary psalmist, and when they grew and changed over the course of community use.
I sought to show how a comparison with a Ben Sira might help us understand the Psalms Scroll across generic borders, and give us a fuller sense of its place in the imagination of Second Temple Jews. These traditions developed, and were read, in the context of one textual world, and affected one another’s production and reception regardless of the categories in which modern readers have placed them. My other broad methodological point was that the literary study of themes and tropes cannot be separated from the history of the production and re-production of the texts in which they are found. Textual historian D.F. McKenzie wrote that no border exists between bibliography and textual criticism on the one hand and literary criticism and literary history on the other. In the pursuit of historical meanings, we move from the most minute feature of the material form of the book to questions of authorial, literary, and social context. These all bear in turn on the ways in which texts are then re-read, re-edited, re-designed, re-printed, and re-published. If a history of readings is made possibly only by a comparative history of books, it is equally true that a history of books will have no point if it fails to account for the meanings they later come to make.

While McKenzie’s example is the publication history of an 18th century poem, his insights are relevant just as much to the comparisons I have set up between the Psalms and Ben Sira and Enochic literature on both “bibliographic” and “interpretive” grounds. Indeed, what these texts say about themselves – the literary reflections on their own origins and purposes, and the nature of the figures responsible for their creation – enable and explain their bibliographic and textual history, that is, their expansiveness and their fluidity in terms of arrangement, scope, and textual form.

In other words, what Ben Sira says about the role of the scribe and wise man as a transmitter of traditions, and what the writer of the Psalms scroll tells us about the

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80 D.F. McKenzie, Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts, 23.
figure of David, wisdom, and sacrifice, already point the way to the possibility of complex bibliographical histories for both collections. It is as if the texts themselves were enabling, and drawing attention to, their own openness – as moments in a long process or writing, reading, and collection.
Chapter Five

ENOMIC TRADITIONS, ANGELIC TRANSFORMATION, AND THE IMAGINAL CONTEXT OF THE PSALMS SCROLL

Introduction

In Chapter Four, I examined the way in which Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll participate in the same textual world. Ben Sira’s comments on his own role as a scribe and teacher, and the way he imagines the tradition to which he contributes, give us a glimpse into the imaginative landscape of Second Temple texts. In this section, I tackle another intertext for the Psalms Scroll: the Enochic literature and related texts that feature heavenly ascent.

No study of scribalism and “bookishness” in early Judaism in general would be complete without a discussion of Enoch, the heavenly scribe, writer of angelic revelation, and expert in all that is written in the heavenly tablets. But why specifically consider Psalms traditions and Enochic literature side by side? These texts have not, to

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my knowledge, been treated in tandem, for a variety of reasons, both canonical and
generic: for what might connect the biblical Book of Psalms with texts purporting to
report the secret revelations and heavenly journeys of a visionary, texts that we place
among esoteric and apocalyptic literature? It might appear as if these texts and their
authors have little in common with one another. But I suggest that the visionary
literature that features angelic discourse and song is a useful context in which to
consider psalmic collections as well; these texts developed in a broader context of
thought about liturgy and writing. A closer look at their affinities can help break
through generic and canonical boundaries that have kept related traditions in isolation
from one another.

My engagement of the Enochic literature together with the Psalms Scroll is more
specifically motivated. In the Book of Jubilees, the antediluvian patriarch is described as
follows:

[Enoch] was the first who learned writing and knowledge and wisdom, from
(among) the sons of men, from (among) those who were born upon earth. And
who wrote in a book the signs of the heaven according to the order of their
months, so that the sons of man might know the (appointed) times of the years
according to their order, with respect to each of their months. This one was the
first (who) wrote a testimony and testified to the children of men throughout the
generations of the earth. And their weeks according to jubilees he recounted;
and the days of the years he made known. And the months he set in order, and
the Sabbaths of the years he recounted, just as we [the angels] made it known to
him. (Jub. 4:17–19)

This account, narrated by the Angel of the Presence, sheds light on the
conceptualization of writing in the early Jewish imagination.3 The resonances with
“David’s Compositions” are striking: writing, knowledge, and wisdom are mentioned

3 See Najman, “Interpretation as Primordial Writing.”
together, and the scribe’s work is intimately connected to the calendrical order, and thus, to liturgical observance. Similarly, David is a wise scribe who writes down liturgical songs in accordance with the solar calendar, for all the days of the year, each Sabbath, and each month; and in Ben Sira, it is David who “set in order the seasons throughout the year” (47:10), just as Enoch “set in order” the months.

These parallels between the descriptions of Enoch and David – two figures who have not, to my knowledge, been considered together as literary heroes – indicate that they do not inhabit separate textual worlds, but are both implicated in a shared tradition of thought about writing, wisdom, liturgy, and, as I will argue, angelic revelation. This observation underpins my attempts to discover ways in which Enochic (and related) traditions might serve as intertexts for traditions about David and for the Psalms Scroll. In what follows, then, I unpack these themes, considering the way they appear across Enochic literature and related texts, asking if they might help us see traditions about David and psalms in a new context.

My argument in this chapter is that the concept of angelic ascent is a key part of the context in which liturgical texts, including the Psalms Scroll, were received in the Second Temple period, particularly at Qumran. This theme that is front and centre in scholarly work about Enochic literature, apocalyptic traditions, and liturgical works, but for a variety of reasons, both generic and canonical, has not been engaged together with David and psalmic collections. I argue that traditions about David did not develop in isolation from this important feature of the apocalyptic and liturgical texts of the time. Several Jewish and Christian text suggest the existence of a tradition about a
heavenly, angelic David, and that this might be compared to the “angelification” of other writers – Enoch, Moses, and Ezra.

By this, I do not mean to argue that the notion of angelic ascent is explicitly present in the major source I have been discussing thus far, the Psalms Scroll. David is not directly called an angel in the text, nor are there unambiguous references to angelic communion in the collection. However, when the collection is considered as part of a broader culture in which song, praise, and writing were considered angelic activities, new possibilities emerge for placing the Psalms Scroll within the conceptual world of the ancient text production. The link between writing and angelic ascent illuminates the concept of text in the imagination of early Jews, and encourages us to think about the process of continuing text production together with liturgical practices of angelic prayer. This chapter, then, goes beyond 11QPsalms to reflect upon related traditions, to extend the discussion of pseudepigraphy as a cultural practice, and to flesh out more ways in which texts and writing were conceptualized in the early Jewish world.

In Part I, I outline several ways in which the themes of writing, wisdom and worship are intertwined in these traditions, and how using the Enochic literature as a lens can help us view the development of Psalms and Davidic lore in new ways. In Part II, I situate Davidic traditions in the context of angelic ascent literature, beginning with the one text where David and Enoch are featured together, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, and argue for a tradition in early Judaism about David as a heavenly, angelic figure. Then, in Part III, I discuss how this affects our reading of the Psalms Scroll from Qumran. Finally, in Part IV, I discuss the relationship between angelic ascent and writing in general, exploring how the liturgical possibility of accessing the heavenly
world, learning new wisdom and a new language, and transcending human identity can shed light on how it is possible to write and authorize new scripture.

Part I: Enoch and David

1. Scribalism and the Transmission of Wisdom

In Jubilees, Enoch is “the first who learned writing and knowledge and wisdom” and “the first (who) wrote a testimony and testified to the children of men throughout the generations of the earth” (4:17-19). In the texts that make up 1 Enoch, Enoch’s role of scribe and sage is illustrated in a variety of ways. In the Astronomical Book, Enoch is not explicitly called a scribe, but writes down the positions of the luminaries that the angel Uriel shows him (74:2). Uriel also has Enoch read the heavenly tablets (81:1) and commissions him to “teach [his] children, write for them, and testify” (81:6). The explicit title “scribe” appears in the Book of Watchers, the Epistle of Enoch, and the Book of Giants. Enoch is the “celebrated scribe and the wisest of men” (Ethiopic, 92:1; יפרוש פירשא קוסה [ו] יקז אוחא, 4Q212 ii.23). The title פירשא יפרושא, “distinguished scribe,” appears in the Aramaic fragments of the Book of Giants from Qumran, along with other vocabulary related to the scribal profession:


On writing as testimony in earlier materials, especially Isaiah 8 and 30, see Najman, “The Symbolic Significance of Writing.”
See Orlov’s discussion of Enoch’s scribal roles in Enoch and the Metatron Tradition, 50-59.
On Enoch’s scribal activities in the Astronomical Book, see J.C. VanderKam, Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition, 133.
In the Book of Giants, Enoch’s office as distinguished scribe is also connected with divination and the interpretation of mantic dreams (4Q530, 2:14-19). In the Book of Watchers, where Enoch is given the scribal task of writing a petition and interceding on the Watchers’ behalf, he is called the “scribe of righteousness” or “scribe of truth” by both the Watchers (12:4) and God himself (15:1). He also refers to himself in the first person as “me, Enoch the scribe” (12:1).

Like Ben Sira, what this scribe learns is divine wisdom, and the purpose of his writing is to transmit it to future generations. George Nickelsburg writes that “the fictional Enoch presents his books as the embodiment of life-giving heavenly wisdom.”

The importance of transmitting written revelation to future generations is stressed in many places in the Enochic corpus, with Enoch’s son Methuselah playing an important role in the way the tradition is communicated. In the Astronomical Book, the angel Uriel tells Enoch:

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9 L.T. Stuckenbruck, “The Epistle of Enoch: Genre and Authorial Presentation,” DSD 17 (2010): 358-388, writes that transmission to Methuselah is “how the communication has become accessible” (361). Enoch gives instructions to Methuselah in several places across the 1 Enoch collection in both the Ethiopic and
We will leave you with your son for one year until you again give your (last?) command, to teach your children, write for them, and testify to all your children; in the second year they will take you from them (81:6).

Later in the narrative, Enoch says to his son:

Now my son Methuselah, I am telling you all these things and am writing (them) down. I have revealed all of them to you and have given you the books about all these things. My son, keep the book written by your father so that you may give (it) to the generations of the world (82:1-2).

This emphasis on the intergenerational transmission of tradition, passed down through Methuselah to his descendants forever, is repeated later in the chapter:

I have given wisdom to you [Methuselah] and to your children, and to those who will be your children, that they may give (it) to their children for all the generations for ever – this wisdom (which is) beyond their thoughts (82:23).

This theme is emphasized further still in an Aramaic fragment that represents a longer version of 1 Enoch 91 than is found in the Ethiopic text:

22 [What he wro[te and gave to Meth[uselah, his son, and to all his brothers, Enoch, the celebrated scribe] 23 [and the wis]est of men, the cho[sen one of] the sons of [the earth to judge their deeds. He wrote to the sons of] 24 [his] sons [and] to future generations, to all who dw[ell on dry land so that they will do good] (4Q212 4QEnoch-g ar col. 2).

As in Ben Sira, “wisdom” is written down and transmitted in order to instruct future generations. While Ben Sira stylizes himself as the “father” giving instructions to his “children” (“sons”), it is Enoch’s actual son who is the recipient of his writings. The same motif of a visionary passing down revealed secrets in written form to his son – so that they may be further transmitted down the generations – appears in the Book of

the Aramaic texts: Epistle 92:1, 4QEn-g 1 ii 22); Animal Apocalypse (85:1-3), Exhortation (91:1-2), 2nd appendix of Astronomical Book (Eth. 81:5-82:4a).

10 B.G. Wright III, “From Generation to Generation: The Sage as Father in Early Jewish Literature.”
Jubilees: “And [Jacob] gave all of his books and his father’s books to Levi, his son, so that he might preserve them and renew them for his sons until this day. (Jub. 45:16).” Jacob’s “books” may allude to the written record of his visionary dream at Bethel, in which an angel shows him seven tablets containing a record of what would happen to him and his sons “throughout all the ages” (32:21-26), which he writes down with divine aid upon waking.

In these texts, to write books means to leave a legacy to hand down to successive generations. The moment of transmission of revealed wisdom in writing from the visionary to his son is at the centre of the testament genre as well. For Enoch, Jubilees, and the testament literature, these books seem to contain exhortations to righteous living and knowledge about what will take place in the last days. But the motif of transmitting revealed wisdom to a “son” and writing for the sake of the generations to come is not limited to materials we tend to classify as apocalyptic. As I have shown above, it is also a key aspect of the way Ben Sira understands himself as a transmitter of traditions. Much has already been written about the affinities between Ben Sira and 1 Enoch. But how does this motif shed light on the formation of the Psalms Scroll?

I began this section with another glance at the column 27, where David is a “sage and scribe” who is the recipient of prophecy. Considering traditions about Enoch, another sage, scribe, and recipient of revelation, can help situate the text of “David’s

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11 In 4 Ezra, while there is no mention of “sons,” writing also happens for the sake of the next generation. Books are needed as testimony for the future. Ezra’s speech in ch. 14 is clear on this point:

[20] For behold, I will go, as thou hast commanded me, and I will reprove the people who are now living; but who will warn those who will be born hereafter? For the world lies in darkness, and its inhabitants are without light. [21] For thy law has been burned, and so no one knows the things which have been done or will be done by thee. [22] If then I have found favor before thee, send the Holy Spirit into me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in thy law, that men may be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live.
Compositions” in a broader context of ideas about the transmission of written instruction as a legacy passed down from father to son and through the generations. Indeed, even though no pseudepigraphic “Testament of David” is known, developing traditions about David indicate the importance of the motif of intergenerational pedagogy.

In the Book of Chronicles, the future orientation of David’s activities is central. I have already discussed the importance of the tabnit, blueprint for the Temple, in 1 Chronicles 28, in the previous chapter in the context of David’s connection with writing. But reading it with the genre of Testament literature, and the kind of transmission from father to son and down the generations that is described there and in the Enochic writings, sheds light on some other aspects of this tradition. David’s to Solomon speech is as follows:

9 “And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve him with single mind and willing heart; for the LORD searches every mind, and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will abandon you forever. 10 Take heed now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house as the sanctuary; be strong, and act.” 11 Then David gave his son Solomon the plan of the vestibule of the temple, and of its houses, its treasuries, its upper rooms, and its inner chambers, and of the room for the mercy seat; 12 and the plan of all that he had in mind: for the courts of the house of the LORD, all the surrounding chambers, the treasuries of the house of God, and the treasuries for dedicated gifts.... 18 for the altar of incense made of refined gold, and its weight; also his plan for the golden chariot of the cherubim that spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 19 “All this, in writing at the LORD’s direction, he made clear to me – the plan of all the works.” 20 David said further to his son Solomon, “Be strong and of good courage, and act. Do not be afraid or dismayed; for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished.”
Here, like the patriarchs of the testament literature, David transmits divinely revealed instruction to his son before his death. I say “instruction” because the content of the transmitted knowledge is not only a temple plan, but also guidelines for how it is to be equipped and run, together with ethical exhortations and encouragements. These instructions are to shape Solomon’s temple building and inform liturgical practice for generations to come. As in the testamentary literature, they are given in the form of a written document received in a visionary prophetic experience. Indeed, David has seen his own version of the celestial chariot and cherubim (28:18) that form Ezekiel’s vision (Ezek 1), features that, in the earthly temple, are meant to serve as a reflection of the heavenly sanctuary with its angelic guardians. This was perhaps suggestive for later interpreters who made David a heavenly figure like Enoch, a motif that I will discuss in detail in Part II of this chapter.12

As Ben Sira pours out “teaching like prophecy, and leave[s] it to all future generations,” (24:33), not toiling for himself alone, but for all those who seek wisdom, there is a clear future orientation to the activities of David in the Chronicler. David lays aside materials for the building of the temple:

יָתוֹם בּוֹנִיִּת לָבְשֵׂיתָהוּ, זָהָב מֶכְרֶמֶם פַּאָרִיאלָךְ כִּכְרֵי אֲלֵפֶּים אֲלֵפֶּים צָהָלָלָךְ וּלְנַחַשת לְבֵית יְהוָה וְהָנַה (Chr 22:14).

See, by denying myself, I have laid aside for the House of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and so much copper and iron it cannot be weighed; I have also laid aside wood and stone, and you shall add to them (יָתוֹם הָזֵכָר) (Chr 22:14).

12 Y. Yadin suggests that the Temple Scroll was meant to be the “missing” written blueprint from Chr. 28. See my discussion in Chapter Three.
David’s life is dedicated to the (liturgical and material) preparation for something that is not to come to fruition until after his death. Indeed, the “document of David” does remain as a legacy consulted by future generations of kings. David’s pedagogical function also extends to his teaching of the Levites: he instructs them how to sing psalms before the altar:

36 “Blessed is the LORD, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity.” And all the people said, “Amen” and “Praise the LORD.” 37 [David] left Asaph and his kinsmen there before the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD to minister before the Ark regularly as each day required (1 Chr 16).

The preparation of the temple materials and the giving of liturgical instructions is future-oriented, and David’s life seems, in this context, to epitomize the kind of deferred fulfillment that is at the heart of many narratives. Perhaps Moses on Mt. Nebo, looking over the land he will never be allowed to cross, is a less apt analogy than Ezekiel’s vision, tour, and plan of a perfected temple and liturgy, at a time when he is in exile with a devastated community. Like Ben Sira’s scribal project, David’s work is incomplete – to be carried on by his heir. In the later traditions, more and more temple-related activity is ascribed to David, with Solomon becoming merely the executor of his project, to the extent that the temple, in later traditions, bears David’s name, although it was built by Solomon.13

13 The relationship between David and Solomon, their relative merits, and the “division of labour” between them become a point of discussion in later rabbinic traditions that discuss their roles in the building of the temple and in the production of biblical texts. On these traditions, see my article “A Peg To Hang on: Metaphor, Ancestral Merit, and the Midrashic Relationship of David and Solomon,” in Vixens Disturbing Vineyards: Embarrassment and Embracement of Scriptures: Festschrift in Honor of Harry Fox (eds A. Glazer, M. Segal, and T. Yoreh; Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 219-40. A midrashic tradition (Song of Songs Rabbah) interprets Ps 30, the “song for the dedication of the house of David,” in a twofold way – as Solomon’s ascription of his temple to David, or, in a striking acknowledgement of the
2. *Scribalism, Sacrifice, and the Sacred Calendar*

David’s legacy is tied to the inauguration of the liturgy, including the correct order of the festal calendar; in “David’s Compositions,” this becomes the core of his scribal task, the inspired writing he leaves as an instruction to future generations. The emphasis on liturgy and calendar also encourages us to read the Psalms Scroll together with Enochic literature. Enoch’s identity as a scribe “cannot be separated from his initiation into the celestial lore,”14 and is also bound up with priestly activity, the temple, and the ordering of liturgical time. In her work on Jewish and Christian ascent literature, Martha Himmelfarb observes that the roles of priest and scribe, while often considered to be in political tension with one another in Second Temple Judaism, coexist in depictions of ideal heroes. Priestly themes, however, are brought out in various ways in the different parts of the developing Enochic corpus. In the *Book of Watchers*, Enoch is

is actually designated “scribe” … [but] his priestly role is implicit in the narrative. Enoch’s intercession on behalf of the Watchers is a traditional priestly task, and in order to intercede, Enoch enters the heavenly temple and gains access to the sanctuary, a place reserved for priests.15

In the Ethiopic text, Enoch passes through three celestial constructions that echo the structure of the temple on earth. He is granted the priestly privilege of ascending to the practice of honorific pseudonymous attribution, as his ascription of the psalm itself to David. This suggests an imaginal relationship between liturgical text and physical temple. In the Chronicler’s passage where David charges Solomon with the project of temple-building and describes his preparations and collection of the materials, he says: “you shall add to them” (ועליהם תוספו). Here, the preparations are material: wood and stone, copper and iron, silver and gold. But the wording of the command contrasts with a negative command in Deuteronomy concerning words – the laws: 4:2, and 12:32: לאלך אל תבש תגרע ממנה, “you shall not add to it or take anything away from it.” Can we imagine a sense in which David’s legacy – both physical and, by extension, literary – was meant to be continued and supplemented by future generations?

Throne of Glory which, if heaven is a temple, as Himmelfarb shows, parallels the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple (see 1 Enoch 14). Angels serve as heavenly priests, and Enoch takes on the role of high priest who has access to the sanctuary. 16

While Enoch’s priestly identity is only implicit in the Book of Watchers through his connection to the celestial sanctuary, Jubilees portrays him explicitly performing both scribal and priestly duties. In 4:23-25, Enoch is placed in the Garden of Eden:

And he was taken from amongst the children of men, and we conducted him into the Garden of Eden in majesty and honour, and behold there he writes down the condemnation and judgment of the world, and all the wickedness of the children of men. And on account of it (God) brought the waters of the flood upon all the land of Eden; for there he was set as a sign and that he should testify against all the children of men, that he should recount all the deeds of the generations until the day of condemnation. And he burnt the incense of the sanctuary, (even) sweet spices acceptable before the Lord on the Mount.

Here Enoch “performs the rites of a priest in the temple,” a new element in his expanding identity.17

Enoch does not perform priestly duties in the Astronomical Book, but he writes down the positions of the heavenly bodies in order to transmit the correct liturgical calendar:

All this Uriel the holy angel who is the leader of them all showed me. I wrote down their positions as he showed me and wrote down their months as they are and the appearance of their light until fifteen days were completed. (1 Enoch 74:2)

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17 VanderKam, A Man for All Generations, 133; M. Himmelfarb, Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses, 25. The priestly functions of Enoch are expanded in 2 Enoch, where he is depicted as a heavenly, angelic high priest; see Orlov, The Enoch-Metatron Tradition, 200-3.
Thus, the purpose of Enoch’s scribal activity is essentially to establish instructions for priests in the (future) temple. Fletcher-Louis writes that

the patriarch’s observation of the heavens and their order so that the sons of man might know the (appointed) times of the year according to their order, with respect to each of their months... is knowledge of a thoroughly priestly and cultic nature.18

These multiple ways in which Enoch is connected to priestly roles and images – the heavenly temple, sacrifice, and the liturgical calendar – all find parallels in Davidic traditions, and should help us better understand the imaginal context in which these traditions developed and psalmic collections were compiled. With their priestly functions and their calendrical legacies from the time before the Temple was built, both Enoch and David are linked to an ideal or proleptic cultic service: both are recipients and transmitters of the revealed liturgical order.

Already in the Book of Chronicles, David is indispensable to the proper functioning of the sacrificial system, placed beside Moses as a cultic founder. Although David is responsible for setting up liturgical music, he himself is presented as performing priestly duties as well. In 1 Chronicles 16:1-2, David pitches a tent for the Ark of the Covenant, sacrifices the burnt offering and offering of well-being, and blesses the people. Ben Sira emphasizes his role in inaugurating music to be played before the altar to accompany the sacrificial rite: “Music of stringed instruments he ordained before the altar, and set the singing of psalms to harps, he gave comeliness to the feasts and set in order the seasons throughout the year” (Ben Sira 47:9–10).

“David’s Compositions” in col. 27 recognizes this sacrificial role and connects David to the ordering of sacrifices and Sabbaths according to the solar calendar, aligning itself with *Jubilees*, the *Astronomical Book* (*1 Enoch* 72-82), and other Qumran texts. The connection between David and sacrifice becomes still stronger since he is the singer, musician, and man of prayer *par excellence*, and in several Qumran texts, prayer and music are understood as standing in for sacrifice. 1QS, column 10, reads:

5 At the commencement of the months in their seasons, and of the holy days in their sequence, as a reminder in their seasons. 6 With the offering of lips I shall bless him, in accordance with the decree recorded for ever. ... 9 I will sing with knowledge and for the glory of God shall all my music be, the playing of my harp according to his holy order, and the whistle of my lips I shall tune to its correct measure.

Here, as in “David’s Compositions,” sacrifice, song, and calendar come together, as the community offers an “offering of the lips” in lieu of sacrifice;¹⁹ and the reference to playing music the harp for the glory of God recalls the picture of David known from Ps 151.

The sacerdotal role of David, and his duties as choirmaster and liturgical timekeeper, is already evident in these early texts, from the Chronicler through the Psalms Scroll, but it is most highly developed in a Christian text dated to the 3rd century, the *Apocalypse of Paul.*²⁰ According to this text, “offering sacrifice” – here, performing the Eucharist – is “unlawful” without the participation of a heavenly David:

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¹⁹ See also 1QS 9:3-5 and Ps 154/11 QPsalms, col. 18 (discussed in Chapter Two).
When (or, because) Christ the Son of God sitteth on the right hand of his Father, this David shall sing praises before him in the seventh heaven: and as it is done in the heavens, so likewise is it below: for without David it is not lawful to offer a sacrifice unto God: but it must needs be that David sing praises at the hour of the offering of the body and blood of Christ: as it is performed in heaven, so also is it upon earth. (Ap. Paul 29)

I discuss the significance of this text further below.

Part II: Is David, Too, Among the Angels?

I have drawn attention to some of the thematic links that join Enochic and Davidic traditions. But only one ancient text, to my knowledge, actually features these characters together – the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, a text from between the 1st century B.C.E. and 70 C.E. that was probably written in Greek but survives only in Coptic manuscripts. In this text, David and Enoch are among a select group of heavenly dwellers, capable of speaking with the angels like friends, whom the visionary encounters on his celestial journey. I use this image as my starting point to broaden the focus of my discussion and explore the way of heavenly ascent and angelic discourse shed light on the development of Davidic and psalmic traditions in the Second Temple period.

The Apocalypse of Zephaniah describes the journey of a visionary, led by an angelic guide, who observes the fate of souls after death. In chapter 9, we encounter a great angel who blows a golden trumpet and assures the visionary that his name is

written in the Book of the Living. Then the angel “ran to all the righteous ones, namely, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Enoch and Elijah and David. He spoke with them as friend to friend speaking one with another” (9:4-5). Why are these six characters singled out as dwelling in heaven, and able to speak with the angels as friends? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the three patriarchs whose names ubiquitously appear together. Enoch and Elijah, since they did not die, are naturally residents of heaven, and the tradition of Enoch conversing with angels is well established. But why include David in their company?

Although David is not commonly associated with angelic discourse, such clues suggest that a tradition of a heavenly or angelic David was developing. The tradition of ideal figures being raised to angelic status is not unusual in apocalyptic texts. In addition, in recent years, many studies have discussed the theme of heavenly liturgy in the Dead Sea Scrolls and related literature, the idea that the Qumran sectarians understood themselves to be participating in angelic praise. Earthly worship was to

be modeled on the celestial order, which was revealed to the scribe Enoch during his heavenly journeys and conversations with the angels. It was inevitable, I argue, that some parts of this tradition permeated into the collection and reception of psalmic materials, the quintessential liturgical texts, and traditions about David, the liturgical inaugurator and exemplar par excellence. In what follows, I outline some evidence for the development of a tradition connecting David to angelic discourse.

Perhaps some justification for this could be found already in Second Samuel, where David is compared to an angel, מלאך, four times. First, the widow of Tekoa, trying to convince David to reconcile with Absalom in 2 Samuel 14, twice compares the king’s wisdom to that of an angel:

Let the word of my lord the king provide comfort; for my lord the king is like an angel of God, understanding everything, good and bad; may the Lord your God be with you (2 Sam 14:17).

My lord is as wise as an angel of God, and he knows all that goes on in the land (2 Sam 14:20).

It is notable that here, it is David’s wisdom that is deemed angelic. The comparison of David to a מלאך occurs twice more, spoken by Mephibosheth in 2 Sam 19:27 and...
by Achish in 1 Sam 29:9. To be sure, the epithet might be understood as calculated flattery in its original context; but perhaps the exaltation of David and his wisdom to angelic status was memorable and suggestive for later interpreters.

Other texts also suggest that the figure of David was thought of in terms of angelic wisdom, ascent, and transformation. In Zechariah 12:8, another link is made:

On that day the LORD will shield the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, before them (לפניהם כמלאך יהוה).

This text contains a specific parallel to Exodus 23:20:

I am going to send an angel in front of you (לפניך מלאך), to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.

Fletcher-Louis has suggested that these texts may have influenced a tradition in Pseudo-Philo’s rewriting of the slaying of Goliath in Biblical Antiquities. In 1 Samuel 17:55-58, Saul and Abner do not recognize David after he kills Goliath. Pseudo-Philo’s version of the story explains the reason why:

And David said to [Goliath], “Before you die, open your eyes and see your slayer, the one who has killed you.” And the Philistine looked and saw an angel and said, “Not you alone have killed me, but also the one who is present with you, he whose appearance is not like the appearance of man…. Now the angel of the Lord had changed David’s appearance, and no one recognized him. And Saul saw David and asked him who he was, and there was no one who recognized him. (LAB 61:8-9)

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23 C. Fletcher-Louis, Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 114-15. Fletcher-Louis does not consider other traditions about David, but places these texts in the context of his discussion of “angelomorphic kingship” (110-18) observing also that in Greek Esther (the addition at 5:1f, LXX 15:13-14, judged to be a translation of a Semitic original), the king is likewise compared to an angel of God (113).

24 The manuscripts read “raised,” but are commonly amended to “changed” based on the supposition that Hebrew was the original language of LAB, and there was a confusion between שנה and נשה (D.J. Harrington, OTP 2:374).

Slightly earlier in the narrative, David sang: “[God] delivered me unto his angels and his watchers to keep me” (59:4); his fellowship with angelic beings has already been established. In the Goliath story, David’s appearance is transformed by contact with an angel, and it is the angel – or David and the angel together – who appears to have slain Goliath. Fletcher-Louis writes that the text implies that David has been “possessed by the angel, and his physical prowess and accompanying appearance have thereby been transformed.” The language of possession is perhaps overstated, and it is not my purpose to explain the nature of David’s changed state; but this passage serves as another example of a tradition that connects David to angelic transformation.

I return, then, to the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, where David is a friend of the angels portrayed together with two other heavenly figures, Enoch and Elijah. The Apocalypse places great emphasis on language and speech: the visionary reads the records of his deeds in a scroll in his “own language” (7:2). In the next chapter, however, the seer puts on angelic clothing and is transformed, now able to pray and speak in the language of the angels:

2 Thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of angels gave praise before me. 3 I, myself, put on an angelic garment. I saw all of those angels praying. 4 I, myself, prayed together with them. 5 I knew their language, which they spoke with me (8:2-5).

The seer’s new ability to praise and converse with the angelic hosts, however, has its limits; Zephaniah “wanted to exchange greetings with” one great angel, but “could not, so great was his glory” (3:9). This is the same angel who later spoke with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elijah, Enoch, and David “as friend to friend speaking one with another”

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(9:4-5). These heavenly dwellers are proficient in the language of angels and had entered into fuller fellowship with them. Here, David is placed in the company of the transfigured.

While the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* is the only early text thatportrays David as a heavenly dweller alongside the deathless Enoch, a clue from the *Acts of the Apostles* suggests that this tradition existed more widely. Peter's speech in Acts 2 includes a reference to David as a prophet foretelling the resurrection of the Messiah in Pss 16:8-11 and 110:1, and includes peculiar statements about David himself:

25 For David says of Him, “I saw the Lord always in my presence; for he is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will live in hope; 27 because you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow your holy one to undergo decay. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.” [Ps 16:8-11] 29 Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day (ἐξὸν εἰπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου Δαυίδ, ὅτι καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν καὶ τὸ μνῆμα αὐτοῦ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκείνῳ τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης). 30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne.

31 Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, “He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.” [Ps 16:10] 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens (οὐ γὰρ Δαυὶδ ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς), but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool. (Εἶπεν [ὁ] κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου, Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου.)” [Ps 110:1] 36 Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified (Acts 2:29-36).

Why would the author of Acts have Peter emphasize that David “both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day,” and that he “did not ascend into the heavens”? Commentators on *Acts* understand these statements to be grounded in
exegesis of the two quotes from the Psalms. For Ps 16, the “meaning of the quotation must be determined more exactly because David appears to be speaking of himself” as someone who would be saved from death and decay; but this cannot be correct since David actually did die, and his tomb is proof of his death. Therefore, the quotation must refer to the Davidic Messiah. The same is true for the quote from 110:1 – David himself did not ascend to heaven, but he speaks of the Messiah as sitting on the right hand of God.

Y. Miura adds that behind Peter’s argument was the awareness of a tradition of a David redivivus, a messianic eschatological David who would appear again in the last days. Peter convinces his listeners to interpret the words of the psalms in light of Jesus, a Davidic messiah, not David himself. This is true as far as it goes, and it is indeed the message the author of Acts wants to communicate; but perhaps he has Peter protest too much. I think it is possible that behind these statements lies the awareness of not only a tradition of David redivivus, but also a tradition that does claim the kind of Enoch- or Elijah-like heavenly ascent for David that is depicted in the Apocalypse of

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Akiba is said to have expounded the plural “thrones” of Daniel as “one for God, one for David.” [Hag. 14a, Sanh. 38b] The antiquity of the idea that the Davidic king had a throne in heaven is a matter of debate. Psalm 110, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand,’ could be interpreted in that way, but it could be metaphorical or could refer to a ritual enthronement in the temple.

The fact that Enoch is also said to have a throne in heaven in the later materials (see Orlov, The Enoch-Metatron Tradition) provides another example of how these traditions are linked.
This is an idea that the author of Acts must deny, pointing to David’s tomb as proof of his death and decay, in order to present scriptural backing for his kerygmatic message.

While Samuel and Chronicles explicitly state that David did die, direct scriptural statements did not always preclude opposing interpretive traditions. The case of Moses is a key example: although Deuteronomy 34:5-6 clearly records his death and burial, it was possible for Second Temple interpreters to state that Moses did not die but, like Enoch or Elijah, was transferred to heaven. Josephus, for example, writes:

While he was bidding farewell to Eleazaros and Iesous, and was still conversing with them, a cloud suddenly stood over him and he disappeared in a certain ravine. But he has written of himself in the sacred books that he died because he was afraid that they might dare to say that because of the abundance of the virtue surrounding him he had gone up to the Divinity (Ant. 4:8:48).33

In Josephus’ account, Moses did not die but “disappeared,” and wrote of his own death as an act of humility.34 Deuteronomy states that God himself buried Moses in an


33 The text is taken from the Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement at pace.mcmaster.ca.

34 Reports of a tradition that Moses did not die exist in early Christian texts that refer to “The Assumption of Moses.” The work identified as “The Assumption of Moses,” also called “The Testament of Moses,” does not mention such an event. It is possible that the relevant portion of the text has been lost, or that the citations refer to another lost text. See J. Priest, OTP 925; a detailed discussion of the citations is found in E.M. Laperrousaz, Le Testament de Moïse (généralement appelé ‘Assomption de Moïse’): Traduction avec introduction et notes (Semitica 19; Paris, 1970), 29-62. For rabbinic traditions that Moses did not die, see Sifre Deut. 305 (ed. Friedmann, p. 129b); Megilah 13b, Sotah 12b, Kidushin 38a, Beshallah, Wayassa’, 5. Sotah 13b relates that
unknown grave, so that “no one knows his burial place to this day” (LXX: οὐκ ὤδεν οὐδεὶς τὴν ταφὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκς τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης, Deut 34:6); perhaps the absence of a known tomb contributed to the development of the tradition that Josephus relates.35 Conversely, in our passage from Acts concerning David, Peter states in 2:29 that David “both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day” (καὶ τὸ μνῆμα αὐτοῦ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης). Could Peter’s statement be alluding to Moses’ unknown burial place, contrasting it with the publicly known location of David’s tomb? If so, it would serve to bolster Peter’s argument against any tradition that would claim David ascended to heaven – after all, this is at least possible for Moses, who appears together with Elijah at the transfiguration of Jesus in the synoptic gospels36 and whose tomb has never been located; but David’s tomb, which is “with to this day,” should prove beyond doubt that he died a natural death37 – and thus that the words of the Psalms apply to the resurrected Jesus who sits on the right hand of God.

It is my sense that reading the passage as reflecting only a messianic polemic is too limiting, and perhaps betrays a tendency to see the significance of a figure like David through a Christian lens, that is, solely or mostly in light of or in contrast to, the Christian message about Jesus. Thus, David is primarily considered in terms of

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35 The mysterious circumstances of Moses’ burial are alluded to in Jude 1:9, which refers to an argument between the archangel Michael and Satan over Moses’ body; Origen links this reference to the unknown “Assumption of Moses” text. See my discussion of Moses in a double form, known from Origen and Clement, below.
37 This is also in opposition to a rabbinic idea that David’s body did not decompose and he does not “smell the scent of hell” (R. Yitzhak’s interpretation of Ps 16 in Midrash Tehillim, Buber 123, as cited in Flusser, “The Apocryphal Psalms of David,” 280).
messianic/eschatological expectations, and to think of David in heaven is automatically to think of the throne of the Davidic messiah. But, as I have shown, David’s significance is far broader than this for early Judaism: he is also a heavenly figure who inaugurates proper worship and exemplifies prayer. Of course, the purpose of the passage in Acts is indeed to contrast David with Jesus; but it may also reflect awareness of a contemporary tradition about David’s angelic ascent that is distinct from his eschatological or messianic role.\(^{38}\)

The passage from Acts alone would not be convincing as evidence that early Christians were aware of such a tradition. But besides the mention of David as dweller of heaven and friend of the angels in *Ap. Zeph.*, David’s heavenly ascent and angel-like status is a fully developed motif in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, a text I have cited above.\(^{39}\) In the text, Paul travels through heaven and hell witnessing the fates of the righteous and the wicked, escorted, as is typical in ascent literature, by an angelic guide. In the heavenly city, the visionary sees David, a radiant figure singing praises on a high altar:

> And I saw in the midst of the city an altar exceeding high. And there was one standing by the altar whose visage shone like the sun, and he held in his hands a psaltery and a harp and sang praises, saying: Alleluia. And his voice filled all the city. And when all that were upon the towers and the gates heard him, they answered: Alleluia, so that the foundations of the city were shaken. And I asked the angel and said: Who is this, Lord, that is of so great might? And the angel said unto me: This is David. This is the city of Jerusalem; and when Christ the king of eternity shall come in the fullness (confidence, freedom) of his kingdom, he shall again go before him to sing praises, and all the righteous together shall sing praises, answering: Alleluia. And I said: Lord, how is it that David only above the rest of the saints maketh (made) the beginning of singing praises? And the angel answered and said unto me: When (or, because) Christ the Son of God sitteth on

\(^{38}\)This distinction cannot be overdrawn because of the Jewish motif of the messiah being “greater than all the angels,” see *Midrash Tanhuma*, Buber ed. 134-38, and *Yalkut ha-Makhiri* to Pss, 2:233 and *Yalkut ha-Makhiri* to Zech, 42. (on this see Flusser and Safrai, “The Apocryphal Psalms of David,” 273-4 Hebrews 1:4 calls Jesus “greater than the angels.”

the right hand of his Father, this David shall sing praises before him in the seventh heaven: and as it is done in the heavens, so likewise is it below: for without David it is not lawful to offer a sacrifice unto God: but it must needs be that David sing praises at the hour of the offering of the body and blood of Christ: as it is performed in heaven, so also is it upon earth. And I said unto the angel: Lord, what is Alleluia? And the angel answered and said unto me: Thou dost examine and inquire of all things. And he said unto me: Alleluia is spoken in the Hebrew, that is the speech of God and of the angels. (Ap. Paul 29-30)

This striking vision of a heavenly David, who is not only the eternal musician but also the liturgical timekeeper and the sine qua non of the Christian Eucharist, is the fullest expression of a tradition to which earlier texts only gesture. While it is clearly a Christian text from a later time, it inscribes itself firmly in the literary tradition of Jewish ascent literature, resonating with 1 Enoch and especially with the heavenly journeys in the Apocalypse of Zephaniah. For its depiction of David, this text also draws on earlier traditions of David’s musicianship and song, and the connection between liturgical praise and sacrifice: “without David it is not lawful to offer a sacrifice unto God.” It also draws on earlier traditions of earthly worship reflecting heavenly liturgy, a theme much discussed in scholarship on Qumran liturgical texts: “as it is performed in heaven, so also is it upon the earth.” The image of David leading praises before the throne of Christ in the Apocalypse evokes a later tradition in which Enoch-Metatron becomes the celestial choirmaster. This office is a prominent feature of the Merkabah tradition, but Andrei Orlov traces its origins to the 1st century 2 Enoch, where, in chapter 18, Enoch instructs the Watchers to begin a liturgy "before the Face of the

Angel speech is a key theme in many texts that feature heavenly journeys, as well as in liturgical materials. I discuss this theme below.
Lord.” This is the same location where Metatron leads angelic hosts in heavenly liturgy in the Shi’ur Qomah and Hekhalot texts.41

The seer in the Apocalypse of Paul had also encountered Enoch earlier in the text:

And when I had entered within the gate of paradise there came to meet me an old man whose face shone like the sun, and he embraced me and said: Hail, Paul, dearly beloved of God. And he kissed me with a joyful countenance.... And I asked the angel and said: Who is this, Lord? And he said unto me: This is Enoch the scribe of righteousness. (Ap. Paul 20)

It is compelling that the Apocalypse says that both Enoch’s and David’s faces “shone like the sun.”42 This image, of course, is not new; the motif of a visionary shining face brings to mind the account of the Sinai theophany in Exodus 34, where the face of Moses shines as he descends from the mountain with the tablets of the law. Seth Sanders argues that here, Moses is

a sage who ascends like Enoch to behold God (Ex. xxiv), writes down a revelation (Ex. xxxiv 27-8) as does Enoch, and becomes angel-like, imbued with a terrifying supernatural light. In the Torah’s original mythology, Moses is already analogous to the transfigured visionaries of the apocalypses.43

Besides the transformed Enoch and Moses, and, in the Apocalypse of Paul, David as well, this image is used to describe the angels. The Apocalypse of Paul describes angels

whose faces shone like the sun, and their loins were girt with golden girdles, holding palms in their hands, and the sign of God, clad in raiment whereon was

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42 In Ap. Paul 47, the visionary also meets Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose “forms were shining,” together with “their angels.”
written the name of the Son of God,\textsuperscript{44} full of all gentleness and mercy. (\textit{Ap. Paul} 12)

Angels with shining faces appears in the earlier Apocalypse of Zephaniah, where this feature is a sign of perfection and glory:

Then I arose and stood, and I saw a great angel standing before me with his face shining like the rays of the sun in its glory since his face is like that which is perfected in its glory (\textit{Ap. Zeph.} 6:11).

But this angelic radiance is also accessible to righteous humans, who can hope to join the angels and to be transformed into luminous beings as well. In the \textit{Epistle of Enoch}, we read:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[I] I swear to you that the angels in heaven make mention of you for good before the glory of the Great One, and your names are written before the glory of the Great One,
  \item[II] Take courage, then; for formerly you were worn out by evils and tribulations, but now you will shine like the luminaries of heaven; you will shine and appear, and the portals of heaven will be opened for you.
  \item[III] Your cry will be heard, and the judgment for which you cry will also appear to you.
\end{itemize}

\ldots

\begin{itemize}
  \item[VI] Fear not, O righteous, when you see the sinners growing strong and prospering, and do not be their companions; but stay far from all iniquities, for you will be companions of the host of heaven (\textit{1 Enoch} 104:1-6).
\end{itemize}

In the synoptic gospels, it is Jesus who appears with a luminous face, like the angels and transfigured visionaries of the apocalypses:\textsuperscript{45}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[44] The \textit{Testament of Job} also mentions an inscribed garment: Job's daughter Hemera "spoke ecstatically in the angelic dialect, sending up a hymn to God in accord with the hymnic style of the angels. And as she spoke ecstatically, she allowed 'The Spirit' to be inscribed on her garment" (\textit{T. Job} 48:3, trans. R.P. Spittler, \textit{OTP} 829-868; Spittler, 866 n. g, cites Kraft’s suggestion that “The Spirit” may be the title of a poem or hymn, in view of parallel titles in 49:3 and 50:3). On Job’s daughters’ hymns and their writtenness, see E.D. Reymond in “Imaginary Texts in Pseudepigraphal Literature: The Angelic Hymns of Job's Daughters in The Testament of Job,” \textit{Henoch} 31 (2009): 366-86.
\end{footnotes}
καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἐμπρόσθεν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, τὰ δὲ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο λευκὰ ὡς τὸ φῶς.

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white (Mt 17:2).

Together with Jesus appears Elijah, the prophet who never died but was taken up to heaven, and Moses, whose death is also ambiguous and who takes on an angelic identity in Second Temple texts. Across these traditions, luminosity is a sign of divine transformation and a perfected, heavenly state, and image applied to both angels and transfigured human beings in early Jewish and Christian texts.

The widespread use of this motif should encourage us to challenge the views of such scholars as Gabriele Boccaccini and Andrei Orlov, who interpret shared motifs as polemical appropriation of the features of one figure by followers of another, rival figure. 46 In his work on the Slavonic Enoch literature, Andrei Orlov discusses a passage in 2 Enoch 37, where Enoch’s luminous face must be chilled by an icy angel because it is too dangerous for human beings to look upon. Orlov links this passage with the account in Exod 34:29-35, where Moses descends from Sinai with a luminous face and must wear a veil; this text, he writes, “unambiguously constitutes the Mosaic background” of the tradition in 2 Enoch 37. Orlov continues:

It is also obvious that this transferal [sic] has a polemical character. Passing on to the patriarch [Enoch] such a salient detail of the biblical story would immediately invoke in the Enochic readers the memory of Moses’ example. Such transference also intends to demonstrate that Moses’ encounter at Sinai and his luminous face represent later, inferior imitations of the primeval account of the patriarch’s vision, a vision which occurred not on earth but in heaven in the antediluvian time.47

In light of the traditions I have surveyed, which are earlier or roughly contemporary with 2 Enoch, the polemical character of this image is not so clear. While the motif of Enoch’s face being dangerous finds its closest parallel in the account of Moses’ veil in Exodus, the shining face motif was a widespread image when it comes to angels, humans who dwell in heaven, and other figures who have been transfigured through contact with the divine.

**Part III: The Psalms Scroll and Angelic Lore**

What, then, do these new intertexts add to our reading of the Psalms Scroll from Qumran? In this context, I wish to return once again to “David’s Compositions.” Here, David is characterized as a kind of prophet, a recipient and transmitter of divine words, as he is in the New Testament. But reading the passage together with the literature I have surveyed reveals a more complex identity, one that suggests more than prophetic inspiration. In the first three lines of the piece in 11QPs\(^a\) col. 27, we read about David’s luminescence, scribal activity, and perfection:

Here, David is הָאָדָם, “luminous like the light of the sun.” To be sure, the imagery recalls the previous passage, “The Last Words of David”:

אמר אלוהי ישראל לבר צור ישראל מושל בציוו צור מושל יראת אלהים ובר בר כפר ורותشم בקבלא עבון מעון דש אファー

The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land (2 Sam 23:3-4).

The texts are certainly connected, but the new context of heavenly ascent literature should encourage us to see more dimensions to this passage. The sun-like radiance of David in “David’s Compositions” is reminiscent of the luminescence of Moses’ face after his descent from Sinai (discussed above); this motif is developed in, for instance, Philo’s Life of Moses, where upon his death, Moses is transformed into a “sun-like mind” (ἐις νοῦν ἡλιοειδέστατον, Mos. II.288). This feature that also characterizes many other figures who had encountered divinity or who dwell in its presence: thus, David’s luminescence finds parallels in the descriptions of Enoch and the angels in the apocalyptic literature I have surveyed here, as well as the luminous Jesus in the gospels. David’s perfection, too, recalls angelic perfection and glory (cf. Ap. Zeph. 6:11), and his wisdom and enlightenment are angelic traits as well (cf. Enoch’s revealed angelic wisdom and David’s angelic wisdom in 2 Sam 14:20). Perhaps relatedly, in Rev 22:16 Jesus says, ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυίδ, ὁ ἀστήρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός, “I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star,” connecting Davidic lineage with the luminosity of a heavenly body.48

48 I thank John Marshall for bringing this verse to my attention. Cf. 2 Sam 23:4, which compares the king to the light of morning.
What are we to make of these connections? While David is not explicitly said to ascend to heaven here, this depiction certainly portrays a figure who has been transformed from his incarnations in earlier texts to a far more exalted figure. When placed into a broader imaginal context of thinking about heavenly liturgy, writing, and angelic discourse, this text appears to foreshadow the later, more explicit tradition of David as an angelic or heavenly being. Indeed, B.Z. Wacholder already argued that 11QPsalms⁴ as a whole is meant to be a collection of songs that both humans and angels together, led by the eschatological Davidic deliverer, will sing at the end of time.⁴⁹ Although I generally disagree with Wacholder’s assessment of the nature of the collection,⁵⁰ this connection between the Psalms Scroll and angelic song is suggestive, and can be understood in less rigid ways.

Thinking about the 11QPsalms⁴ collection as a text that was received within a cultural tradition of angelic communion opens up new possibilities for thinking about how its compositions might have been read. For example, Psalm 154 (col. 17), reads:

1 לטובים משכובם הלטימים לפאר עלון ההבריה יה
2 הלוריה ישן ואל תשתעלל לחודד עד ותאצורה
3 לכל פתואים פי הלוריה רבים חתת קונמה לפאר
4 ברו מעשיל רדעה נשלה הליתין לפתואים ותח
5 להמשליל חזרה בין גוותה הורוקים מחית
6 עדותם ממקובה כי עלון מזה אדוע
7-8

⁵⁰ See Chapter One.
[unite] your souls with the good ones and with the perfect ones to glorify the Most High. Join together to make his salvation known and do not hesitate to proclaim his power and his glory to all ordinary people. For, wisdom has been granted in order to make YHWH’s glory known, and in order to recount his many deeds she has been taught to man: to make his power known to ordinary people, to instruct his greatness to those lacking judgment, those who are far from her gates, those who are withdrawn blank from her entrances. For the Most High is the Lord of Blank [a blemish on the scroll left uninscribed] Jacob and his glory is upon all his deeds. The person who gives glory to the Most High is accepted like one who brings an offering, like one who offers rams and calves, like one who makes the altar greasy with many burnt offerings, like the sweet fragrance blank from the hand of just ones. Her voice is heard from the gates of just ones, and from the assembly of devout ones her song; when they eat to bursting they speak about it, and when they drink in unison with one another; their meditation is on the Law of the Most High, their words to make his power known.

The language of perfection here is likely connected to the blemish-free animals required for sacrifice in Priestly texts (cf. Lev 22:17-23 and Lev. 21:16-23). However, how might this text (which raises praise to the level of sacrifice) be received in the context of a culture that looks to the angelic host as the ultimate singers of praises? How might it signify in the context of communities who also composed and recited such texts as the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Hodayot?

In such a context, the Psalm’s terminology of joining together, יחד החבירו, suggests the idea of joining the angelic hosts in worship. The language of perfection, תמימים, recalls the perfection of angels (cf. for example Ap. Zeph. 6:11, the shining face of the angel “perfected in its glory”), as well as the designation of David as דרכיו בכול תמים,
“perfect in all his ways,” in “David's Compositions.” Perhaps we might connect this to the phrase רדך "perfect of way," used in many sectarian documents to refer to the community, as well as in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, where the term can refer to the human community, the angelic hosts or, in a telling double entendre, to both.51 The references to the להיווה וסידים, "assembly of the pious ones," might perhaps also be understood in such a way, here and in Psalm 149 in column 26 of the scroll. Suggestively, the term איש תרדים is used to describe David in 4QMMT and Moses in 4Q377, in the context of his angelic transformation at the Sinai theophany.

The emphasis on heavenly wisdom and the link between praise and sacrifice connects Ps 154 not only to “David's Compositions,” where David is the scribe and sage who composes songs to accompany the sacrificial rite, but also to such texts as the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, where the human community enters into a unity (רביע) with the angels. As the audience of the psalm joins together (הברוי יהודה) with the perfect ones, they become perfect themselves and attain divine knowledge, and are then called to instruct those who are still far from the gates of wisdom (הרחקים מעתירה). This emphasis on teaching others (למשיכים in Ps 154) the many recalls Daniel 12:3:

המשיכים והרחקים מעתירה בני הרקיע כה הללווה והמשיכים והרחקים מעתירה

The enlightened ones shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

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51 4Q403 frg 1 1.22, 4Q404 frg 2 line 3, 4Q405 frg 13 line. See B. Strawn and H. Morisada Rietz, “(More) Sectarian Terminology in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: The Case of," in Qumran Studies: New Approaches, New Questions (eds M.T. Davis and B.A. Strawn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 53–64. Strawn and Morisada Rietz argue that the use of the phrase in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice indicates that the composition is of sectarian origin because the term is found elsewhere “almost exclusively in other, clearly sectarian compositions – most notably, the Rule of the Community” (53). For more about the double entendre (63) at play in such texts, see below.
Here, the attainment and teaching of wisdom makes humans shine like heavenly beings. The same promise is given to the righteous in the *Epistle of Enoch*: “you will shine like the luminaries of heaven; you will shine and appear, and the portals of heaven will be opened for you... you will have great joy like the angels of heaven” (104:1, 6).

In her work on angelic liturgy in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Esther Chazon discusses different modes of joint human-angelic prayer depicted in the 4Q503 Daily Prayers (which does not seem to have been either composed or widely used at Qumran), *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (widely attested but likely not composed at Qumran), and 4Q*Berakhot* (which seems to be a distinctively sectarian text). Chazon does not include Ps 154 in her study, but this text features the kind of language of communion and praise she discusses for her other sources, particularly the idea of uniting the soul with the “good ones” and “perfect ones” and “joining together” (יחד החבירו) to glorify the Most High. She does, however, observe that another text in the Psalms Scroll, the Hymn to the Creator, may reflect the idea of praise with angels as well:

The opening line (קדש קדוש קדושי קדש), appears to allude to the *trishagion* (קדוש קדוש קדושי) of Isa 6:3 while the next line (רבים מים רבים) may reflect *merkabah*-throne exegesis involving Ezek 1:24 (כحلول מים רבים). The Hymn’s recitation by human worshippers would then imply that they praise with the angels. The pattern would be like the one in the *Shirot* and the *Berakhot* – that is, human words echoing but not identically repeating those of the angels.

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52 The provenance of this text is still up for debate. Initially, C. Newsom argued for a sectarian origin in *The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (HSS 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985). However, she now finds it more likely that this text had developed prior to the formation of the sect and had a broader popularity in Second Temple Judaism; see “Sectually Explicit’ Literature from Qumran,” *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (eds W.H. Propp et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 167–87. For an opposing view, see Strawn and Morisada Rietz, “(More) Sectarian Terminology in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice.”

53 E. Chazon, “Liturgical Communion with the Angels at Qumran” and “Human and Angelic Prayer in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls.”

The Hymn to the Creator forms part of what has been called the “epilogue” of the Psalms collection. It is found on column 26, immediately before “David’s Last Words” (1 Samuel 23) and “David’s Compositions.” I want to carry Chazon’s observation further: the Hymn to the Creator is not simply an isolated example of a text that reflects the tradition of angelic discourse; rather, this tradition is one of the imaginal contexts in which the 11QPsalms collection was compiled. Together with my reading of “angelic” traditions implicating David and their resonances with Enochic materials, the presence of Ps 154 with its call to join the “perfect ones” and the Hymn to the Creator give further indications that this psalm collection participates in, and developed in the context of, the discourse of angelic praise.

Connecting this concept to a collection of psalms is not a common move, but a link between the psalms and angelic liturgy should not be surprising. Chazon writes:

[the] concept and its concomitant liturgical practice of joint praise seem to have been current not only at Qumran but also outside of that sectarian community, both in the matrix of Second Temple Judaism and to some extent in subsequent periods.55

Given the widespread importance of the motif of angelic song and joint human-angelic praise in early Jewish conceptions of liturgy, it is only natural that this tradition would permeate some of the most widespread liturgical texts – the psalms – and that it would also colour traditions about the inaugurator and exemplar of liturgical practice – David. In making the claim that the concept of angelic liturgy – whether it is understood as emulating the angels or joining their heavenly song in some kind of mystical ascent – is a context for the compilation and reception of the Psalms Scroll, I am drawing attention

to the permeable boundaries of texts that were not, for their ancient producers and audiences, kept separate along canonical and generic lines, but mutually influenced one another over time.

**Part IV: Folding Time and Space:**

**Identity, and Angelic Transformation, and Writing**

I have explained how reconstructing a cluster of motifs that connect David with heavenly ascent and angelic features can give us a new sense of the imaginal and literary context in which the Qumran Psalms Scroll was collected and expanded, suggesting, as well, some ways in which its audience(s) may have imagined David as a heavenly figure dwelling among the angels they, too, hoped to join. But besides giving us new intertexts for the Psalms Scroll that cross canonical and generic boundaries, reading David as an angel-like figure brings out a strand of tradition about the imagined nature of writing itself, and sheds light on pseudonymous attribution as a cultural practice.

When we take seriously the “angelification” of David as an early Jewish motif, and consider the scribal activities with which he is credited in 11QPsalms⁴, we can situate it as part of a *topos* of Second Temple literature that appears in various texts: the act of writing is linked either to angels themselves, or to the transfiguration or angelification of a scribal character. Writing occurs when the writer is *transfigured*, and when he dons a new angel-like identity. When Moses, in Exodus 34, comes down from
Sinai with a luminous face, he has just inscribed the tablets of the law. The fragmentary text 4Q377 (4QApocryphon Pentateuch B) takes this transformation further:

10 ומרחוק ויעמודו ... ויכס בענן אלוהים עם האלוהים איש ומושה...

11 וידברוכוכך בראשון ואיש [...]

12 כיא הענן עליו כמוהו [רמב"ם]

10 and they stayed at a distance. Blank But Moses, the man of God, was with God in the cloud, and 11 the cloud covered him because [... when he sanctified him, and he spoke as an angel through his mouth, for who was a messenger like him,12 a man of the pious ones?56 (4Q377 2 ii)

While in Jubilees, the Angel of the Presence dictates the contents of the heavenly tablets to Moses, here it is Moses himself who takes on angelic status and authority, receiving revelation directly from God, without the mediation of an actual angel.57

Enoch learns writing in heaven and writes after he is taken up to heaven to converse with the angels, but he also becomes angel-like himself. In the Testament of Abraham, Enoch, the scribe of judgment, is an angelic figure of giant stature who carries a golden pen and is accompanied by cherubim (recension B, 10-11).58 His full angelification is made explicit in 2 Enoch, when Enoch is transformed through a celestial priestly investiture at the heavenly throne:

56 The term(DB) "man of the pious ones," is also used to describe David in 4QMMT:

אף והחסדים איש השם [וריד שלמה איש תרומא] אמן [ב] משRenderWindow וכסהו וספה [fay] en (their) sins. Remember David, who was a man of the pious ones, [and] he, too, 2 [was] freed from the many afflictions and was forgiven (4QMMTe frag. 14 II 1-2).

Given the context of the use of this term for Moses in 4Q377 and the other evidence I have discussed in this chapter, this may be another indication that David was also considered to be angelic. No other figure is described as an ה掸 ה ReadOnly "congregation of the pious ones," is mentioned in Ps 149:1: "Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of the pious ones." Whether the ה掸 הReadOnly came to signify an angelic congregation at the time the Psalms Scroll was compiled, and if Ps 149 was understood in this way in the context of its placement among the "Davideic pieces at the end of the collection, cannot be shown conclusively; but the fact that two angelified figures are described in these terms is suggestive. For a similar question, see my discussion of the termודר埃尔 ה苓, "perfect of path," above.


And the Lord said to Michael, ‘Take Enoch and take off his earthly garments and anoint him with good oil, and clothe him in glorious garments.’ And Michael took off from me my garments and anointed me with good oil. And the appearance of the oil was more resplendent than a great light, and its richness like sweet dew, and its fragrance like myrrh, shining like a ray of the sun. And I looked at myself, and I was like one of the glorious ones, and there was no apparent difference (9:17–19).

Enoch’s transformation into an angel is complete. In 2 Enoch 22, the angel Vereveil (Uriel) gives Enoch the heavenly books and a pen (2 Enoch 22). Enoch has become a celestial scribe and curator of the books, just like Vereveil himself. Just as there is “no apparent difference” between Enoch and the heavenly priests, so Enoch and Vereveil seem to take on the same identity, becoming scarcely distinguishable from one another and performing similar tasks. In Pseudo-Eupomelus, for example, Enoch takes on the same narrative role as Uriel does in the earlier Astronomical Book.

The motif of the angelified scribe is also developed in 4 Ezra, where, in the final chapter, the destroyed holy books are revealed once again. There, it is not the angel of the presence but a transformed Ezra who dictates the destroyed holy books to a group of scribes. Ezra has undergone a series of transformations throughout the text through which his identity, culminating in a promise that he will be taken up to heaven: “You shall be taken up from among men, and henceforth you shall be with my servant and those who are like you, until the times are ended” (14:3). We may understand “those who are like you” to be angels or other righteous human beings who have become

59 See Orlov, Enoch and the Metatron Tradition, 53.
60 Orlov, Enoch and the Metatron Tradition, 53; see H.S. Kvanvig, Roots of Apocalyptic: the Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), 239.
angel-like (cf. Moses’ angelification in 4Q377 2 ii, above). Ezra’s final earthly act
before his translation to heaven is to dictate the lost books to a group of scribes:

And on the next day a voice called me, saying, “Ezra, open your mouth and drink
what I give you to drink.” So I opened my mouth, and a full cup was offered to
me; it was full of something like water, but its color was like fire. I took it and
drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and
wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory, and my
mouth was opened and no longer closed. Moreover, the Most High gave
understanding to the five men, and by turns they wrote what was dictated, using
characters they did not know. They sat forty days; they wrote during the
daytime, and ate their bread at night. But as for me, I spoke in the daytime and
was not silent at night. So during the forty days, ninety-four books were written
(14:38-44).

Here, a transformed, angel-like scribe, Ezra, takes on the task of dictating revelation to
scribes, a task performed by the Angel of the Presence in Jubilees. Indeed, throughout
the narrative, Ezra has gradually begun taking on the roles previously performed by his
own angelic interlocutor, Uriel.

What all this tells us is that writing is imagined as an angelic activity, such that
the major scribal/authorial characters linked with the texts of that period are, in one
way or another, turned into angelic figures: Moses, Ezra, Enoch, and, as I have argued,
David. Much has been said about the mirroring of earthly priesthood and the priesthood
of the angels, and the way in which a visionary is transformed through a kind of heavenly
priestly investiture. But the same phenomenon is present for scribalism as well: angelic

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Authority, Renewed Revelation and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 161-74.
62 Jacob, who is associated with the heavenly tablets in Jubilees and the Prayer of Joseph, is also
transformed into an angel. On this motif see A.D. Crown, “Messengers and Scribes: The soper and malak
63 Himmelfarb, Ascent to Heaven. This is most explicit in the Levi materials; the Testament of Levi reports
a full ritual of priestly investiture in heaven (8:2-10). See Kugel, “How Levi Came to be a Priest,” in The
writing in heaven, and the transformation of the scribe’s identity. As it appears that every major pseudepigraphic hero becomes angel-like, I want to bring this motif to bear on the way we understand the practice of pseudepigraphy itself as a cultural phenomenon. Hindy Najman has called pseudepigraphy a “spiritual discipline, an asceticism of self-effacement,”64 in which “the actual author emulates and self-identifies as an exemplar”65 from the ancient past. The theme of angelification that I have identified across these pseudepigraphic traditions supports and adds another dimension to Najman’s claim. Not only is the practice of pseudepigraphy the attempt to recover a “perfect, holy and idealized past” through the emulation of a past exemplar, but it also becomes a way to identify with an angelic figure, striving to achieve angelic or heavenly perfection.

Andrei Orlov has made this suggestion in his study of what he calls “heavenly counterparts,” particularly the Angel of the Presence as the heavenly counterpart of Moses, and the blurring boundaries between Enoch and his guiding angel. Orlov links the practice of pseudepigraphic emulation of a biblical exemplar with the process by which scribal characters take on the identity of an angelic figure. I quote Orlov’s conclusion at length:

The identity of the celestial scribe in the form of the angel of the presence might further our understanding of the enigmatic process of mystical and literary emulation of the exemplary figure, the cryptic mechanics of which often remain beyond the grasp of our postmodern sensibilities. ....
Could the tradition of unification of the biblical hero with his angelic counterpart be part of this process of emulation of the exemplar by an adept? ... Is it possible

65 Najman, “How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?,” 534.
that in the tradition of heavenly counterparts where the two characters of the story, one of whom is represented by a biblical exemplar, become eventually unified and acquire a single identity, we are able to draw nearer to the very heart of the pseudepigraphical enterprise? In this respect it does not appear to be coincidental that these transformational accounts dealing with the heavenly doubles of their adepts are permeated with the aesthetics of penmanship and the imagery of the literary enterprise. In the course of these mystical and literary metamorphoses, the heavenly figure surrenders his scribal seat, the library of the celestial books, and even personal writing tools to the other, earthly identity who now becomes the new guardian of the literary tradition. 66

Orlov limits his comments to “transformational accounts” of exemplary figures in pseudepigraphical texts, where the boundaries between the biblical hero and his celestial counterpart become blurred over the course of the narrative. But his suggestion is all the more compelling because “mystical and literary metamorphoses” of personal identity are evident across genres and in various ways: the understanding of personal identity emerges as fluid, ambiguous, and transformable. Personal transformation takes place in various ways: across the history of the literary tradition, characters gradually take on new, often angelic identities, far removed from their earliest articulations; in apocalyptic literature, the visionary is transformed over the course of the narrative, his prior human identity and human ways of knowing dissolved; and praying individuals and worshipping communities are raised to angelic status, joining the heavenly host in praise.67

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I used insights from digital text studies to argue for the lack of a fundamental, coherent, and bounded identity for texts in the

Second Temple period. In the next chapter, I brought these ideas to bear on the figure of the author, who, in the digital age, ceases to be a self-contained and stable subject. But, as these literary phenomena suggest, personal identity more generally seems to be just as much of a shape-shifter: human beings are not stable entities. A kind of ambiguity or haziness of identity can be found already in what James Kugel has called the “moment of confusion,” where characters in Pentateuchal narratives have what seem to be ordinary human encounters, only to experience a shift in perception and recognize that they are in the presence of a divine being. As Kugel writes, “everyday perception was in constant danger of sliding into something else.” This slippery perception, this possibility of a kind of human/angelic “double vision,” is mirrored lexically: that the common word for “man,” איש, can also mean “angel.” Thus, the term אלוהים, “man of God,” is used as an epithet for great prophetic figures – Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and David – as well as for angelic beings, such as the angel who visits Samson’s mother (Judges 13:6, 8). Might reading איש as “man” at one time and “angel” the next, or seeing a man at first glance but a divine being when he comes into focus, be connected to a deep sense of ambiguity about human identity in this era, a sense of potential for “sliding into something else”? Borders become hazy and indistinct; the transformed Enoch says, “I looked at myself, and I had become like one of the glorious ones, and there was no apparent difference” (2 Enoch).

A “moment of confusion” about identity occurs in LAB 61:8-9, where after an angelic encounter, David’s appearance is transformed and he becomes unrecognizable.

69 E.g. Dan 9:21, where “the man Gabriel” appears to Daniel, and the man in white linen robes in Ezek 9.
A sense of “sliding into something else” – flickering between two states of existence – also seems present in the transformational narrative in 4 Ezra, where the lead character occupies an undefined state between humanity and divinity, passing through death or death-like states that undo his human knowledge, and finally remaining on earth for a final act of writing before being taken up to be with “those who are like [him].”

In some traditions, the idea of a dual state of existence is given more explicit literary expression. Clement of Alexandria and Origen report an earlier tradition of Moses in twofold form, heavenly and earthly. According to several targumic texts to Genesis 28:12, Jacob’s face is engraved on the heavenly throne even as he has an earthly life; but his double identity is even more explicit in the Prayer of Joseph, which relates that Jacob is the earthly incarnation of the archangel Israel:

I, Jacob, who is speaking to you, am also Israel, an angel of God and a ruling spirit. Abraham and Isaac were created before any work. But I, Jacob, who men call Jacob but whose name is Israel am he who God called Israel which means, a man seeing God, because I am firstborn of every living thing to whom God gives life. And when I was coming up from Syrian Mesopotamia, Uriel, the angel of God, came forth and said that I [Jacob-Israel] had descended to earth and I had tabernacle among men and that I had been called by the name of Jacob. He envied me and he fought with me… (Prayer of Joseph frag. A 1-5)

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70 On these transformations and the death-like experiences Ezra undergoes, see Najman, “Between Heaven and Earth.”

71 Clement of Alexandria (Strom. vi. 15 (p. 806, Potter), cf. i. 23, 153) relates that Joshua saw Moses in dual form: one taken up to with the angels and the other buried in the valley. Origen (Libr. Jesu Nave, Hom, ii. 1), also states that according to a non-canonical text (the Assumption of Moses?) Moses was seen in twofold form, one alive in the spirit, and one dead in the body. The tradition is also reported by Evodius (Augustin. Ep. 158 [ii. p. 426, Ben.] “When he ascended the mountain to die, the power of his body brought it to pass, that there should be one body to commit to earth, and another to be the companion of his attendant angel.”


73 From the translation by J.Z. Smith, OTP, 2.713-14. The Prayer of Joseph is extant only in three quotations in the writings of Origen.
Another fragment of the *Prayer* (frag. B) relates that Jacob “read in the tablets of heaven all that shall befall you and your sons,” echoing Jacob’s reading of the tablets during an angelic vision at Bethel in *Jubilees* 32:31.

A rabbinic tradition extends the privilege of such a double life beyond the great biblical heroes, with the idea that all Jews have a second soul that is given to them each Sabbath, when the Holy Spirit adorns them with an angelic crown. While it is not possible to argue convincingly this tradition has roots in the Second Temple period, the idea of a temporary angelic life, a transformation of identity tied to liturgical time, is suggestive when considered together with the idea of human/angelic prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism more generally. Much scholarship has been done on the extent and nature of the “communion with angels” implied in such texts as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, which seems to reflect a process by which human beings join the angels in worship, even temporarily identifying with them. The ontology of angelic communion has been much debated; for many scholars, angelic prayer is understood analogically, such that a “fundamental boundary between human beings and the angelic host” is maintained. Conversely, Crispin Fletcher-Louis argues for a much fuller angelomorphic transformation – indeed, the angelomorphic nature – of human beings, not merely in the *Songs* but much more generally across early Jewish texts. While Fletcher-Louis has been critiqued for the overly sweeping scope of his argument, it is my sense that a text like the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* or some of the

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74 This rabbinic tradition is evident in b. Betzah 15b-16a, b. Ta’an. 27b.
76 C. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, esp. ch. 8-13.
Hodayot do permit us to speak of a transformation of identity and a dissolution of the human/angelic distinction, as if the human and the divine had blurred and merged into one another, at least for a time. J. Zilm writes that

communion with angels is realized by human beings temporarily acting as and embodying angels during the performance of the liturgy. This is what is indicated when the sectarian texts say that the human worshippers were ייחד “united” with Sons of Heaven; the term indicates not just shared space but an essential oneness between the human worshippers and the angelic ones.\(^77\)

However one understands the nature and extent of angelic communion,\(^78\) the liturgical materials point toward an anthropology in which human identity is transformable or translatable, sometimes occupying heaven and sometimes earth, like the character of Ezra flickering in and out of focus between heavenly and earthly life.

Indeed, a text like the Song of the Sabbath Sacrifice suggests that liturgical participation is a gradual process of identity transformation – or ambiguation. Judith Newman writes that

[t]he distinctions between priests, humans, angels, deities, and spirits, clear at the more prosaic beginning of the cycle, gradually becomes blurred if not indistinguishable by the thirteenth song.\(^79\)

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\(^{78}\) While there is a large body of literature on how exactly angelic communion or transformation was understood by the worshippers, it seems to me that such questions are unanswerable and based on a different notion of truth than can be ascribed to religious statements. This question of what people actually believe to be true in the context of making religious claims is an important issue for historians of religion. For an important critique that may be particularly relevant to the motif of biblical characters or liturgical worshippers becoming (like) angels in Second Temple texts, see J.Z. Smith’s “I am a Parrot (Red), History of Religions 11 (1972): 391-413, where he critiques scholarly efforts to determine whether the Bororo people of Brazil “actually believed” themselves to become parrots, their totem animal, in ritual practice. A similar critique can also be applied to the famous Sahlins/Obeyesekere debate on whether Hawaiians “really thought” Captain Cook was the god Lono. In light of these critiques, it seems futile to ask about the precise nature of belief about liturgical angelic transformation. This is especially true because, as I show below, it is imprecision, ambiguity, and unstable identities that seem key to ideas about angelic communion.

\(^{79}\) Newman, “Priestly Prophets at Qumran,” 71.
Newman maintains that “deliberate ambiguity is built into much of the Songs’ vocabulary, including identity of the angels/priests/humans in order to obscure the distinction between them as they are brought into contact through the liturgy.” Here, rather than “identity formation,” the building of a distinct and coherent personality, we see a kind of dissolution or haziness, or perhaps a superimposition of human identity onto an angelic one, like double vision “coming into oneness” as the eyes gradually focus. Such ambiguity may be at play, for example, in the use of the term הַמָּקוֹם הָרֵךְ “perfect of way,” in the Songs. Does this phrase refer to the human community, as it does in the sectarian documents, or the angelic hosts? Strawn and Morisada-Reitz write that given the context of this usage, it may be referring to either, or to both at once, in a telling double entendre:

There was a concern at Qumran, evident in calendrical machinations and in specific Qumranic texts (e.g. 1QM), to align the worship of the Community with that of heaven and the angels. A possible double entendre inทางָּמָּקוֹם הָרֵךְ is thus not impossible, nor is it completely unexpected, especially in the poetic context. Such a double referent may, in fact, further underscore the point: that it is the Qumran Community itself that is referenced in the phrase – a Community that understood itself, even by means of this very phrase, as comprised of both earthly and heavenly worshippers.

What does this translation of humans to angelic status entail? In both the apocalyptic narratives and the liturgical materials, it is a translation in both senses of that word: both a change to a different form, and from one kind of language to another. The transformation of language, speech, and song is key in many texts, as the movement from human knowing to angelic wisdom seems to require a new language. Ezra in 4

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80 Newman, “Priestly Prophets at Qumran,” 40 n.25.
81 Strawn and Morisada Rietz, “(More) Sectarian Terminology in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” 63.
Ezra speaks ecstatically, dictating the holy books to five men, who write them down in “characters they did not know” (4 Ezra 14). In the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, the visionary first reads the heavenly scrolls in his own language, but eventually comes to learn the tongue of the angels so he can join them in their praise (although he does not fully attain angelic speech, since he is still unable to communicate with the great angel, who speaks with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Enoch, Elijah, and David, figures who seem to have achieved a still higher insight into angelic speech). The abandonment of human identity together with the learning of the angelic language is perhaps most explicit in the Testament of Job, where Job’s daughters sing angelic hymns:

And she took on another heart—no longer minded toward earthly things—but ecstatically in the angelic dialect, sending up a hymn to God in accord with the style of the angels. (T. Job 48:2-3)

The other daughters sing in “the dialect of archons” and “the dialect of the cherubim” (T. Job 49:1-50:3). These angelic hymns sung are then written down in books.83

In the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, the dissolution of human personality and the initiation into divine knowledge over the course of the series also go hand in hand with the idea of a new kind of speech. The emphasis on tongues in the Songs is striking: Newman writes that “the principal body part mentioned... is the tongue, or more precisely in this communal liturgical composition, a plurality, or rather community, of tongues.”84 In the second song, the human community laments the inadequacy of their praise: “[What] is the offering of our tongue of dust (compared) with the knowledge of the divinit[ies?]” (4Q400 ii 7). But the Songs

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83 In 51:3, Job’s brother writes out a “complete book” of the daughters’ hymns.
indicate a gradual initiation into another kind of knowledge, and the learning of a
different kind of language:

Proclaim his glory with the tongue of all who proclaim knowledge, his wonderful
songs with the mouth of all who proclaim [him. For he is] God of all who sing
{knowledge} for ever, and Judge in his power over all the spirits of
understanding (4Q403:36-37).

Judith Newman writes that the elites of the community “performed the Shirot in order
to acquire the ‘tongues of angels’,” and that the “liturgical ritual itself would have played
a crucial role of transformation in this regard.”85 The askesis or effacement of identity,86
the blurring of the boundaries of an individual human personality, goes along with
entering into a new knowledge beyond human ken (“a wisdom beyond their thoughts,”
1 Enoch 82:23), and speaking the language of the heavenly host.

How does this unstable, translatable anthropology – the process by which
personality is dissolved and a new, heavenly language is learned – shed light on the way
new scriptures are produced and legitimized? Leslie Baynes notes that in the
apocalyptic literature featuring heavenly books, the only “legitimate handlers” of books
are either angels87 or transformed human beings who take on angelic characteristics.

She writes of 1 Enoch:

86 I connect the “asceticism of identity” in the production of pseudepigraphic texts (Najman) with what S.
Fraade has called an “elitist askesis” among the members of the Qumran community. J. Newman links this
with the performance of the angelic liturgy, “Priestly Prophets,” 57. See S. Fraade, “Ascetical Aspects of
Ancient Judaism,” in Jewish Spirituality: from the Bible to the Middle Ages (ed. A. Green; New York:
87 Not all angels, however; “writing is a privilege only of those angels who are in good standing. The fallen
Watchers must throw themselves upon the mercy of Enoch the righteous scribe to plead their case”; L.
site.org/assets/pdfs/baynes.pdf, 4. See also Baynes’ comments on the sinister view of writing connected
In the earliest sections of 1 Enoch, the Astronomical Book (AB) and the Book of the Watchers (BW), the only ones who deal with books and writing are Enoch (72:1, 81:1-2, 82:1-3; 12:6, 13:4-6, 14:4-7) and the angels Uriel (72:1, 81:1-2; 33:4) and Raphael (10:8). References to books and writing in chapters 71 and 82 of the Astronomical Book act as a frame, the purpose of which is to present the Astronomical Book itself as Enoch’s own heavenly writing backed by the authority Uriel. … the only legitimate writers are angels and Enoch himself, who by virtue of his translation has become a supra-human figure. … other writers are mentioned in 1 Enoch only to be most emphatically dismissed.

Indeed, as I have observed above, the figures who are most often identified with text production – Enoch, Moses, Ezra, and, as I have argued, David – take on angelic features as the literary tradition develops over time, their identities dissolving and blurring with those of the angels in heaven. This kind of angelic identification is also possible, perhaps temporarily and partially, for liturgical participants, who strive to “come into oneness with the sons of heaven,”88 “unite together with the perfect ones” (Ps 154), through liturgical performance and purity, whether angels, righteous humans, or both, and who achieve “angelic tongues.”

Perhaps it is this transformation of identity and language that serves as the prerequisite for legitimate or authoritative writing. In that case, the pseudonymous attribution of texts in the Second Temple period is not necessarily a historical claim (that is, a summoning up of the ancient past), but a spiritual and ethical one. Writing is illegitimate when its tradent has not undergone the proper angelic transformation that would lift, however temporarily, the curtain between ordinary reality and the heavenly world, between ordinary human words and divine, angelic speech, between human

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with the fallen angel Penemue in 1 Enoch 69:8-11, 2. At the time of writing, Baynes’ monograph, The Heavenly Book Motif in Judeo-Christian Apocalypses 200 BCE-200 CE (Leiden: Brill), was not yet available for consultation.
knowledge and “wisdom beyond their thoughts” (1 Enoch 82:23). In the Epistle of Enoch, we read:

Do not err in your hearts or lie, or alter the words of truth, or falsify the words of the Holy One, or give praise to your errors. For it is not to righteousness that all your lies and all your error lead, but to great sin. And now I know this mystery, that sinners will alter and copy the words of truth, and pervert many and lie and invent great fabrications, and write books in their own names. Would that they would write all my words in truth, and neither remove nor alter these words, but write in truth all that I testify to them. And again I know a second mystery, that to the righteous and pious and wise my books will be given for the joy of righteousness and much wisdom. Indeed, to them the books will be given, and they will believe in them, and in them all the righteous will rejoice and be glad, to learn from them all the paths of truth. In those days, they will summon and testify against the sons of earth in their wisdom. (104:9-105:1)

The writer seems to be reacting against another, non-pseudepigraphic mode of text production. But perhaps the “sinners” he berates are not called sinners because they produce false writings – but vice versa, they produce false writings because they have remained sinners, rather than taking on perfected angelic identities and learning angelic tongues. We might understand the invective against those who “write books in their own names” in 1 Enoch 104:10 as referring to people who have not undergone the correct process of spiritual transformation – an ambiguity or abandonment of personality, of “their own name,” that would dissolve their human, earthly identity at least temporarily – that would make them worthy of receiving and passing on revealed wisdom.

The “authenticity” of sacred writing, then, is not strictly historical: that is, the question is not whether the text comes from the mouth or stylus of Moses or David in times gone by – but spiritual: whether the writer of the text has identified, come into “oneness” with an angelic figure through a process of spiritual transformation that
initiates him into the angelic life and divine secrets. The choice of a figure who is summoned as an ideal or authority for the creation of new writing, does, of course, have a historical dimension, in terms of returning to a “perfect, holy, and idealized past.” As Loren Stuckenbruck explains, pseudonymous attribution conjures up past events and situations, and allows the audience to “participate imaginatively in that world in order to re-imagine and gain perspective on the present.” As I have already suggested, the figure of David, for instance, brings a worshipper back to a golden age and an ideal temple. For the Enochic literature, Stuckenbruck emphasizes the prominent theme of judgment that makes the past relevant to current concerns. Through summoning such an ideal hero, “ancient authors could open up the ancient tradition for new insights into the present.”

But this is not the whole story. This practice opens up not only the past world, but the heavenly one as well. Pseudepigraphic heroes are not only historical exemplars from days gone by; they also dwell in heaven, with the angels, to this very day. The Cairo Geniza Apocryphal Psalm 1:22-23 has the following to say about David:

You have sanctified him through the holy name,  
And the recounts daily the songs of your might.  
You made him greater than all the angels,  
Establishing him as king of all nations forever.

With many other traditions I have discussed, Jewish and Christian, this text shares the sense that David is still singing songs of praise, in the present tense, just as Enoch has remained in heaven, writing books of judgment, all this time. This is a folding of both

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89 Najman, “How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?,” 529.  
90 Stuckenbruck, 367.  
91 Stuckenbruck, 366.  
92 See my brief comments on this manuscript in Chapter Three. The text is from Flusser and Safrai, “The Apocryphal Psalms of David,” 258.
time and space: the continuous writing of scripture is not only returning to the past, but also “participating imaginatively” in a heavenly world. The imagined, continued heavenly existence of such figures sheds new light on pseudepigraphy as a practice that is concerned not only with returning to another time, but also ascending to another place, where these transformed ancient heroes still dwell.  

In the context of the Enochic literature, Stuckenbruck writes that additional writings are authorized by an appeal to the heavenly tablets that contain pre-existent revelation:

> Within the context of rapid growth of additional revelations in the patriarch’s name, the appeal to heavenly tablets reflected writers’ claims that their words were not in fact, ‘additional’ but rather constitute a provision of divine revelation that had existed all along.  

For psalmic and liturgical traditions, we might say something similar of the 4,050 compositions ascribed to David – a heavenly archive that is partly, but not fully, accessible in various collections, but that may still be expected to yield more of its treasures to worthy human beings. But it is not only the content of the revelation that exists in heaven to be accessed; its mediators also dwell there, and are accessible through practices that bring human worshippers into oneness with the divine beings and into an understanding of their celestial language.

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93 While angels increasingly become essential to the way new texts are authorized in the Second Temple period, the account in 2 Kings 22 the discovery of the new “scroll of the Torah” in the temple reports several different kinds of authorizing strategies: discovery by a priest, handling by a scribe, confirmation through an ecstatic revelation to the prophetess Huldah, and acceptance by the king. The scroll is presented not as new writing, but as an old text that has just been found. The development of the motif of angelic writing and angelic transformation, which gives access to heavenly wisdom, is a different way of authorizing texts from the strategy found in 2 Kings 22; but see my comments on the motif of the unavailable or hidden text as more than just an authorizing ruse in the Conclusion.

94 Stuckenbruck, 369.
Conclusion

Time is not a line but a dimension, like the dimensions of space. If you can bend space you can bend time also, and if you knew enough and could move faster than light you could travel backward in time and exist in two places at once.

Margaret Atwood, *Cat’s Eye* 95

In this chapter, I made a case for reading the Psalms Scroll side by side with texts that feature heavenly ascent and angelic discourse. I began by drawing parallels between Enoch and David as figures linked to the development of literary collections, arguing that the picture of David in the Psalms Scroll has clear resonances with the portrayal of Enoch as a scribe, sage, and calendrical authority. I then argued for the likelihood of an interpretive tradition of an angelic David, based on clues from a selection of early Jewish and Christian texts. Next, I discussed the tradition of angelic liturgy/angelic discourse as a context for the compilation of the Psalms Scroll, and what such a context can tell us about the pseudepigraphic, continuing production of writings, in light of some anthropological ideas in the Second Temple period – namely, the possibility of joining angelic beings or taking on angelic identities.

This is particularly imaginable when the writings in question are related to liturgical practice and song, which in any case are modeled on, and attempt to approximate, angelic worship in the heavenly temple. Redrawing the character of David, liturgical founder and temple visionary, has the effect of both returning to an idealized time (when the Temple only existed in an ideal heavenly blueprint, before it

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95 Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988, 3.
could be destroyed or defiled) and ascending to a heavenly place (where the perfect model for the temple and its functionaries is found, and where David still dwells as an angelic figure). It is the temple that stands at the centre of this folding of time, space, and identity.
CONCLUSION

A Story of Ancient Jewish Textual Tradition

This dissertation reconstructs an imaginative context for the production of scriptures in early Judaism, that is, an ancient Jewish “book culture,” through the lens of a contentious collection of Psalms. My major point, one that has been suggested by many others before me, is that this “book culture” differs in profound ways from our own. Our imaginative world of books is filtered through a two thousand year history of codices, canonical lists, libraries and catalogues, publishing houses, and print. These historical innovations have created a set of definitions and assumptions about texts that have only recently come under scrutiny, thanks to the spread of electronic textuality and its completely different conceptual categories for the production and reception of writing.

The history of books is a self-referential field of study. The book historian is constantly faced with the necessity of reflecting upon what it is she is doing, and distinguishing between its parts: the sources where her information is found, the topic of her research, and the written form the research is to take all overlap and flow into each other. It is crucial to be aware how these components interact, how they tend to become identified with one another, and how they inform the scholar’s questions and priorities. Chartier writes:
Inventorying titles, categorizing works, and attributing texts were all operations that made it possible to set the world of the written word in order. Our own age is the direct heir of this immense effort motivated by anxiety.¹

Chartier identifies these three impulses as fruits of the Early Modern period, when the enormous increase in the number of manuscripts, and then printed texts, led people to find ways of mastering and controlling this new vast textual territory. We may challenge Chartier’s work by pointing out the robustness of these activities in the cataloguing and acquisitional practices of the Alexandrian library.² Regardless, the desire to inventory titles, categorize works, and attribute texts is at the heart of the scholarly enterprise in the field of biblical and Qumran studies, and in particular, the way the texts I have discussed in my dissertation have been studied.

It should be no surprise that the discovery of a vast new textual corpus should occasion the kind of anxiety, the impulse toward order, that Chartier describes. The organizational principles that have developed throughout the history of books and libraries in the West – authorship,³ titles that reflect textual identities as names define personal ones, genre, and, in the case of religious texts, canonicity as well – would naturally and necessarily shape the way in which this astounding collection was studied and published. But as we consult the published versions of the texts in the DJD volumes, numbered and catalogued in our academic libraries, it is crucial to remember that our modes of access and organization are the results of a long historical process, not

³ Chartier cites the “invention of the author as the fundamental principle for the designation of a text” as one of the innovations that transformed the way people related to texts in the early modern period; The Order of Books, 7.
inherent in the texts themselves. Is the concept of authorial attribution the key principle in ancient Jewish collections, just as it is in our libraries? Did they name and categorize their texts based on similar ideas about textual identity, legitimacy, and authenticity to our own?

Using the 11QPsalmss manuscript as my starting point, I have shown that the answer to these questions is no. The texts employed a different logic. Our own textual imagination, bound by the double bonds of “book” and “canon,” has superimposed a foreign set of categories onto the ancient imaginal world and obscured its richness and complexity. I attempted to reconstruct the imaginative world in which a collection like 11QPsalmss developed and was received, based on what the ancient texts tell us about themselves. I argued that no concept of a “Book of Psalms” existed in the Second Temple period, but that psalms were known through collections of various extents and imagined as a loose corpus, not fully defined, coherent, or accessible. I showed how the deconstruction of longstanding print-centred assumptions by digital textuality can make such borderless and fragmented texts more imaginable. Further, I argued that the concept of Davidic authorship has blinded us to the multiform ways in which this figure is linked with liturgical writing, that the identification between David and psalms was not one of straightforward attribution, and that ancient references to “authorial” figures or writings may not refer to the specific texts that have come down to us.

Next, I showed that the Qumran psalms collection lived its life in relationship with other traditions, in the context of a broader world of ideas about writing and inspiration. Articulations of these ideas, or at least clues about them, are found across genres, and can be gleaned from texts such as Ben Sira, 1 Enoch, and other apocalyptic
and liturgical texts from the formative period of Judaism and Christianity. These articulations come through in the metaphors that are chosen, the narratives that are told, and the other textual traditions that are sampled; all these communicate something about the way writing and its creators functioned in the ancient Jewish imagination, and shed light on the way the surviving texts were created and received.

Ben Sira’s understanding of his own role as a gleaner and channel of Wisdom, which overflows like a river, and of his work as neither beginning nor ending with his individual life, can shed light on the dynamic compositional history of the text. This conception of wisdom writing is also useful for understanding in later rabbinic communities, where, depending on the level of access to the text and the diversity of its forms, we have evidence that Ben Sira was not necessarily understood as a coherent book (or the author of one) but in a looser context of pedagogical lore. Although Ben Sira is often singled out as a unique example of ancient Jewish “authorship,” I showed that the history and reception of this text can productively be read alongside Davidic and psalmic traditions, and shed light on the pre-book, pre-authorial context of collections like 11QPsalms and challenge the value of scholarly questions about “authenticity” for a textual culture where this concept seems to be understood in entirely different ways.

One of the ways of conceiving of “authenticity” in a pre-copyright, pre-publishing culture is in the context of angelic writing, which I discussed in my final chapter on Enochic and related literature. While the links between the Psalms Scroll and Enochic lore are striking, the implications of these connections in terms of liturgy and text production have not been explored. I argued that there was a developing tradition of an
angelic David who dwelled in heaven, and that this was related to the sense that
writing, when legitimate, was an angelic activity. I connected this to the strong tradition
of angelic transformation in apocalyptic and liturgical texts, suggesting that this sense
that human identity and language is unstable and transformable can shed light on the
possibility of (pseudonymously) writing new scripture.

Rather than an attempt at "[i]nventorying titles, categorizing works, and
attributing texts... to set the world of the written word in order," I have presented a
disorderly world. References to texts are indefinite, haphazard, sometimes concocted
from vague impressions; compositions from texts of one genre meander into another;
texts spill beyond their authors, and vice versa. Such a picture does not provide much
relief for the "anxiety" that Chartier sees at the heart of the scholarly attempt to list,
classify, and attribute, or for the scholar's goal of clarity and precision. The textual
landscape of ancient Judaism, as I have described it through a cluster of texts in
corneration with the Psalms Scroll, is indefinite, heavenly or angelic, borderless, and
unstable; it is also not fully accessible, too large to be graspable, and partly obscured –
although, with enough spiritual effort and divine aid, there is always the hope for new
discovery.

This story, of course, is not the only story that can be told about writing in
ancient Judaism. Other ways of conceiving of texts did exist; the Letter of Aristeas, for
example, gives us a glimpse into an imaginal world where the Alexandrian Library,
classical literature, and the royal patronage of writings loomed large. That world is
beyond the scope of this project, which has focused on how the Qumran Psalms Scroll
and Davidic traditions should complicate our understanding of textual concepts in
Second Temple Judaism. However, in these last pages, I would like to gesture toward one more context in which this story about writing, psalmody, and scripture continues: the Syriac tradition.

**Postscript: Writings Hidden and Revealed – A Nachleben of Psalms Traditions**

In succeeding centuries in Jewish and Christian communities, canons were defined and text forms were frozen; boundaries were drawn, and the formation of new scriptures ceased. And yet, even in the Nachleben of the Psalms and tales about the royal psalmist, an ambiguity exists about the boundaries of sacred writings and the extent of human knowledge of or access to them, and shows that the relationship between texts, authors, and authority was not straightforward even after the “fixing” of the biblical canon. While the purpose of this project was to suggest a way of imagining the early Jewish textual world, in these final pages I wish to gesture toward the re-collection of the Psalms in the post-canonical world of the Syriac tradition, as a possible direction for further study of the scriptural imagination.

The five so-called Syriac Apocryphal Psalms were first published in a critical edition by M. Noth in 1930, but the discovery of 11QPsalm gave these compositions a new significance for scholars. As I briefly discussed in Chapter One, three of the five appear in the Qumran collection: Syriac Psalm I/ Ps. 151, which appears in another version in the LXX and is also present on col. 28 of our Psalms Scroll; Psalm II/154, or

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the sapiential hymn on col. 18 of the Psalms Scroll; and III/155, col. 24. The Psalms numbered 152 and 153 are unknown outside the Syriac tradition. These five compositions appear in a number of medieval manuscripts, most of which are versions of a work called *Kethabha dhe-Dhurrasha*, or “Book of Discipline,” by the Syriac father Elias of al-Anbar. There, according to scholars, they were included as “filler material.”

The most important text is the 12th century Baghdad manuscript 12t4, the only biblical psalms manuscript that includes these five Apocryphal Psalms. This text was not available to Noth, but was the base for the critical edition by W. Baars, part of the Leiden Peshitta. In this manuscript, the Psalms are preceded by five commentaries: Hippolytus, Basil, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Origen. Following the canonical psalms are the five apocryphal compositions, and then the Biblical Odes of Moses (Exod 16, Deut 32:1-20, 32:21-43) and Isaiah (42:10) and other hymns.

While the commentaries and unique psalm headings ascribed to Eusebius, Athanasius, and Theodore of Mopsuestia in ms 12t4 are important material for the study of the interpretation of the Psalms in the Syriac tradition, here I will focus only on the way the Apocryphal Psalms are treated in this important text and, where relevant to

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6 This is not to say that the manuscript was a complete Bible. The majority of Syriac Psalters are not part of complete Bibles; see D.M. Walter, *The Book of Psalms* (The Old Testament in Syriac, Part II, Fascicle 3, Leiden 1980); only four of the forty-two Psalms manuscripts Walter used for this edition are part of complete Bibles, vii. In another manuscript, 19d1, the Apocryphal Psalms are found after the prophetic books; their textual form and headings indicate that they are based on a manuscript of Elias’ work; Baars, iv.

7 See the description of the manuscript in van Rooy, 14-25, following his own study of the manuscript in the Leiden Peshitta Institute and the earlier description of A. Scher, “Notice sur les manuscrits syriques et arabes conservés à l’archévéché chaldéen de Diarbékér,” *Journal Asiatique* 2 (1907): 331-60.
the discussion, other manuscripts. While in Chapter Two I argued that the Hebrew versions of three of these psalms that appear in 11QPsalms do not constitute a distinct group in that context and should be considered separately and in relation to the other compositions in the scroll, the Syriac manuscripts invariably consider the five compositions as a separate collection, set apart from the biblical psalms. Each manuscript has an introductory note preceding Psalm 151. In 12t4, the introduction reads:

The one hundred and fifty first. It does not occur in the Hebrew. Neither is there an introduction to the Psalm in the work of Eusebius. And in Athanasius, who makes known the words of the glory in the Lord: But when you were the smallest, you were chosen to be of some use to your brothers. You were not raised above them. But sing, while giving the glory to God who chose you. The blessed lord Theodore the commentator did not write an introduction either. In the Syriac manuscripts this is its number [ܝܘܥܐ ܟܐܦܢܐ ܡܫܬܒܐ]. Of David, when he fought alone against Goliath.

In other manuscripts, the introduction is far shorter, and does not mention the presence of absence of this psalm in the writings of the church fathers. It states only:

Again, five Psalms of David that are not written in the series [or, “order”] of the Psalms.
Here, all five psalms are called Psalms of David, even though the headings of Pss 154 and 155 link these compositions to Hezekiah and to the community of the Return.\textsuperscript{12}

Returning to ms 12t4, Psalm 151 begins the series of “apocryphal” compositions, but is itself set apart from the next four, which constitute another subgroup. 12t4 provides the following introduction to 152:\textsuperscript{13}

The one hundred and fifty second. There are no introductions by Eusebius, by Athanasius and my lord Theodore, the commentator. These four Psalms are, however, written here.

Spoken by David when he fought with a lion and a bear that carried away sheep from his flock.

The remaining headings in 12t4 read as follows:

The one hundred and fifty third. Spoken by David when he received mercy from God, when he delivered him from the lion and the bear and he killed the two of them with his hands.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} The origins and transmission of these superscriptions in the East Syriac traditions is discussed in van Rooy, esp. 53-56.

\textsuperscript{13} Ps 152, as mentioned, exists only in the Syriac tradition. While it is the series of superscriptions that is most important for my purposes, the full text of the psalm reads (van Rooy, 5-6, based on the version in 12t4):

\begin{enumerate}
\item God, God, come to my aid. Help me and save me. Deliver my soul from the murderers.
\item I will descend into Sheol through the mouth of a lion, or a lion will harm me.
\item Was it not enough for them to lie in wait for the flock of my father and to tear sheep from his flock that they also wanted my soul to slay me.
\item Have pity, o Lord, on your chosen one, and save your holy one from harm, he who persevered in your praises in all his times and who praised your great name.
\item How did you deliver me from the hands of the destroying death and how did you snatch my devastation from the mouths of the beasts.
\item Send quickly, o Lord, a saviour from before you and rescue me from the gaping death that wishes to confine me in its depths. [sic]
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{14} Skehan observes that although 151 is separated from the other four Apocryphal Psalms, the superscriptions link 151, 152, and 153 together in terms of content; "Again the Syriac Apocryphal Psalms," 147-9. The full text of Ps 153 (known only from the Syriac) reads:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Praise the Lord, all you nations, glorify him and blass his name.
\item For he redeemed the soul of his chosen one from the hands of death and he saved his holy one from harm.
\item Yes, from the snares of Sheol he delivered me and he brought my soul out from the inscrutable abyss.
\item Because almost, before my salvation came to pass before him, I became two parts through the two animals.
\item But he sent his messenger and shut the gaping mouths from me.
\item My soul will praise him and exalt him on account of all his blessings, which he gave and gives me.
\end{enumerate}
The one hundred and fifty fourth. Prayer of Hezekiah when the Assyrians surrounded him and he asked God for deliverance from them. When the people received permission from Cyrus to return to their own land and they asked God to fulfill their expectation.\textsuperscript{15}

The one hundred and fifty fifth. Prayer of Hezekiah when the Assyrians surrounded him and he asked God for deliverance from them.\textsuperscript{16}

Finally, after Psalm 155, the scribe of 12t4 has added a concluding note:

With the help of our Lord the book of psalms of the blessed David, prophet and king \([\textit{🐟🐟🐟} \textit{🐟🐟🐟} \textit{🐟🐟🐟}]\), is completed, together with five Psalms, not of the number \([\textit{🐟🐟🐟} \textit{🐟🐟🐟} \textit{🐟🐟🐟}]\), Greek or Hebrew, but, as they say, they are found in Syriac and we wrote them for the one who asked.

There is an echo here of the superscription of the Greek Ps. 151:

\[\textit{οὗτος ὁ ψαλμὸς ἰδιόγραφος εἰς δαυιδ καὶ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ἄριθμοῦ ὅτε ἐμονομάχησεν τῷ γολιαδ}.\]

This psalm is written by David himself and is outside the number.

Other Syriac manuscripts that include only Ps. 151, but not the other four “apocryphal” compositions, include a fairly straightforward version of this Greek heading:

\[\textit{ܒܝܬ_sin}_ܝܐܬܐ_ܝܬܐ_ܩܪܝܢܐ_ܘܐܬܐ_ܩܕܡܐ_ܟܬܒܐ_ܡܕܢܐ_ܕܡܕܢܐ_ܡܕܢܐ_ܕܡܕܢܐ_ܡܕܢܐ\]

The 151st. This psalm (was) written by David himself, and is outside the number.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} Cf. the Hebrew version of this text and comments on its place in the Qumran Psalms Scroll in Chapter Two. The Hebrew Vorlage of the Syriac text was not identical to the Qumran version. The transmission history of this composition in Hebrew and Syriac is discussed in Strugnell, “Notes,” 272-5; Skehan, “Again the Syriac Apocryphal Psalms”; and van Rooy, 133-47. The heading is linked to the superscriptions of Ps 85 and 86 in the East Syrian tradition (see van Rooy, 53). The Hebrew headings of the Psalms were not part of the translation of the Peshitta; the Psalms in the Peshitta are either without headings, or completely different from the MT or the LXX. Headings also vary across the different Syriac traditions. See Bloemendaal, \textit{The Heads of the Psalms in the East Syrian Church} (Leiden: Brill, 1960); and van Rooy, 44-45 and 53-56.

\textsuperscript{16} Cf. the Hebrew version and discussion of this text in the Psalms Scroll in Chapter One. On transmission history and bibliography on the composition, see van Rooy, 148-61.

\textsuperscript{17} See n. 9 above.
What does this subscription in 12t4 tell us about the role of these psalms in the Syriac churches, or, at least, for the scribe who prepared the manuscript? First, we know that the scribe saw these psalms as a separate group. Such self-conscious recognition of the “otherness” of these (or any other) compositions as distinct from an established Psalms collection is absent from the Qumran Psalms Scroll; rather, these texts are scattered and woven into the collection. In the Syriac (and in the Greek), on the other hand, there is a sense of an established number\(^{18}\) of psalms beyond which additional compositions are somehow different. Van Rooy writes:

the subscript at end of the five Apocryphal Psalms in 12t is important because it indicates that the scribe distinguished between the canonical and Apocryphal Psalms. This distinction applies even to Psalm 151, that does appear in the Septuagint. He knows the five Apocryphal Psalms as a distinct unit in Syriac and included them upon request in his manuscript. Although he knows the five as a unit, he distinguishes Psalm 151 from the other four, as indicated by the separate introduction to Psalm 151 and the new introduction before Psalm 152.\(^ {19}\)

But how is the “otherness” of these psalms understood? While there is a sense that certain compositions are not properly part of the established psalm collection, but still worthy of being copied and transmitted. In 12t4, the scribe has apparently included them upon request.

There are several distinguishing features that the Syriac scribes assign to these texts to differentiate them from the Psalter “proper”:

\(^{18}\) Arguments have been made for the tradition of an established number of Psalms in Hebrew as well; the divisibility of the numbers in “David’s Compositions” by 150 is one key argument used to support this, but see my discussion of the arrangement of the collection in Chapter One.

\(^{19}\) van Rooy, 50.
1) The first seems to be scribal convention. In the Elias manuscripts, the brief introduction says that these five psalms of David are simply “not written in the series (‘order’) of the Psalms.”

In the more elaborate notes in the 12t4 manuscript, more distinguishing features are given:

2) **Language**: Ps. 151 does not exist in Hebrew (the introduction emphasizes its language through the comment, “in the Syriac this is its number”); the other four are found in neither Hebrew nor Greek.

3) **Availability of authoritative commentaries**: No major commentators introduce Ps. 151 except Athanasius, who recommends it for recitation; the other four have no introductions by either Athanasius, Eusebius, or Theodore.

4) **Number in excess of the accepted 150**: Finally, just as 151 is “outside the number” in the LXX and in most Syriac psalters, so the subscription in 12t4 ascribes this outsider status to all five apocryphal compositions.

What distinguishes these psalms from the biblical ones, then, is scribal convention (they are not written in the “series of the Psalms”), the language(s) in which they are available, and the availability of commentary by distinguished church authorities, and their excess beyond the established number of 150. While the numbers in “David’s Compositions” in 11QPsalms serve to throw open the imagined corpus of psalms beyond any realistic, identifiable collection, here numbers limit and define. But none of these factors of convention, language, commentators’ attention, or number
seems to have any bearing on the scribes’ assessment of their authenticity – and thus, most likely, of their divine inspiration.

All these psalms are psalms “of David,” and this is made clear in all the Syriac witnesses in general introductions or conclusions, in the individual headings to the psalms that relate to events in David’s life, or both. Interestingly, even the psalms with non-Davidic superscriptions (154 and 155) are at home under this Davidic umbrella. Skehan observes that only 12t4 has the psalms in the order from 151-155; through their superscriptions, 151-153 are grouped together because they are made to refer to David’s struggle against wild animals. In the other manuscripts, however, the order is rearranged: the Davidic “autobiographical” Psalm 151 is followed by 154 and 155 (connected to Hezekiah and the Community of the Return), and then 152 and 153. Skehan argues that 151, 152 and 153 form a kind of frame for the “non-Davidic” Ps 154-155.20 This framework, according to Skehan, ascribes all five psalms to David.

While the order is changed and the psalms are not numbered in these manuscripts, the scribe of 12t4 does enumerate them continuously. It is important to note, once again, that this manuscript includes the psalms at the end of the biblical Psalter. Although the subscription indicates that the extra psalms are “outside the number,” they are not beyond numbering; in the Syriac Book of Psalms in the manuscript ends at Psalm 150, as it does in the Hebrew Bible. But after this final psalm comes another, and four more; the numbering picks up where it left off, each psalm enumerated consecutively and clearly: 151, 152, 153, 154, 155. Here, we have a post-

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20 Skehan, “Again the Syriac Apocryphal Psalms,” 147-49. For the order of the compositions in the manuscripts and a description of the mss themselves, see Baars, iii-vii, and iii n.5.
canonical example of a collection spilling beyond its ending, continuing after it has closed.

How do we understand this openness in spite of closure? It appears to me that there is an admission of a gap between the actual books that communities possess, consult, and habitually copy, and the whole of revelation. I receive this as a kind of humility, but also imaginative vitality; perhaps, in fact, it is an expression of the same impulse that made heavenly books such common motifs in Second Temple literature, even when they were not quoted, identified, or described in any detail. The great heavenly archive of divine writing is not fully knowable and far more vast than what scribes have managed to copy so far, and even that which has been inscribed is part of a larger archive than the established number.

There is a clear awareness in the Syriac manuscripts of authoritative, legitimate writings ascribed to a biblical figure, but nevertheless beyond the boundaries of the biblical canon. This notion should encourage us to ask what exactly it was that constituted the idea of a biblical canon for these communities. Perhaps our notions of authenticity and legitimacy – that is, a community’s belief in a whole text’s attribution to an authoritative figure – as a marker of scriptural authority is not as crucial even here, in a post-canonical Christian community, just as I argued that it was not a straightforward criterion for Second Temple Jewish textual traditions.

This question deserves a careful treatment that would take into account the rich tradition of biblical commentary in the Syriac churches, scribal conventions in Syriac

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21 For an example, see the comments in Stuckenbruck, “The Epistle of Enoch: Genre and Authorial Presentation,” 388, on how the contents of the heavenly tablets or the Enochic books are referred to but never quoted by the author of the Epistle.
biblical and liturgical manuscripts, and the history of canon formation in Christian communities. Only then would it be possible to understand the reception of these “Apocryphal Psalms of David” in the correct cultural context. For the purposes of this dissertation, I only wish to point out the generative possibilities that are opened in the study of religious texts when we look at them from a book historical perspective, interrogating texts based on what they tell us about their own writtenness, with an awareness of this historical and cultural contingency of our modern (and perhaps distinctly scholarly) attempts at order and clarity through titles, genres, and attributions.

The Syriac tradition gives us another glimpse into the textual imagination, particularly the motif of revelation that is bigger than a bible. The famous letter of Mar Timotheus, a Nestorian Patriarch of the eight century, is often mentioned in accounts of the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, as evidence that similar finds had also taken place centuries before. I cite this fascinating letter at length:

We have learned from some trustworthy Jews who recently converted to Christianity that some manuscripts were discovered about ten years ago in a chamber within a mountain in the vicinity of Jericho. They say that a dog belonging to a certain Arab who was hunting went into a cave while pursuing an animal and did not come out. His owner went in after him and found a chamber within the mountain containing numerous manuscripts.

The hunter then went to Jerusalem and informed the Jews of this (discovery). A large group came out (from Jerusalem) and went and found both biblical manuscripts as well as non-biblical Hebrew (works). Since my informant was knowledgeable about literature and a learned man, I asked him about various passages which are quoted in our New Testament as occurring in the Old Testament, but whose record is completely missing from the Old Testament, both in our Christian one and their Jewish one. He informed me that they are extant and can be found in the manuscripts which were discovered there.

When I heard this from this student (of Scripture), as well as from others I asked
in addition to him, and discovered that their story did not vary, I wrote about these matters to the illustrious Gabriel and also to Shubhalmaran, Metropolitan of Damascus, (to see) whether they could investigate regarding these manuscripts and see if there is contained in the Prophets the text “he shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt 2:23), or “(What) no eye has seen, nor ear heard” 1 Cor 2:9; Isa 64:3?), or “Cursed are all those hung on the tree” (Gal 3:13; Deut 21:23?), or “He has restored the boundary of Israel” (1 Kgs 14:25), as in the message of the Lord which He spoke through Jonah the prophet from Gath Hepher, or others like these which are quoted in the New Testament, but completely lacking in the Old Testament now in our possession. And I asked them that if they found these words in those manuscripts, they must by all means translate them – it is written in the Psalm beginning “Have pity on me, O God, in accordance with Your goodness” (Ps 51:1): “Sprinkle me with the hyssop of the blood of Your Cross and purify me” (Ps 51:9). This passage is not in the Septuagint, nor in the other versions, nor in the Hebrew (text). But a Hebrew (informant) told me: “We found ascribed to David in those manuscripts more than two hundred Psalms.” (Therefore) I have written to them on account of these things.

I think that these manuscripts were deposited either by the prophet Jeremiah or by Baruch or by some other person who obeyed the word of God and feared him. For when the prophets learned via divine revelations (of the) captivity, pillage, and destruction destined to come upon the people due to their sins, it became as if they were firmly convinced that none of the words of God could fall to the ground. They (therefore) hid the manuscripts among the mountains and in caves and concealed them so that they would not be consumed by fire nor pillaged by despoilers. Those who concealed them died during the period of the seventy years (of Exile) or less, and when the people returned from Babylon, no one remained of those who had deposited the manuscripts. This is why Ezra and others were forced to seek out and find what (works) the Hebrews retained. That (which remained) among the Hebrews consisted of three parts. One was that (section) which after a time the seventy translators translated for the king esteemed worthy of the crown of glory; namely, Ptolemy; another was that (section) which after a time was translated by others; and the last was that which was preserved among them. If those words are found in those manuscripts which were mentioned, it is certain that they are more reliable than those (manuscripts) preserved among the Hebrews or among us.

However, what I have written about this (matter) has generated no response from them, and I have no competent envoy whom I can send. This (matter) is in my heart like a fire which burns and consumes my bones...

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The discovery of an ancient cache of manuscripts in the ancient world is also known from Eusebius, who mentions that Origen had used a Psalms manuscript “found at Jericho in a jar during the reign of Antoninus son of Severus”\textsuperscript{23} for his Hexapla. As for the manuscript find reported in Timothy’s eighth century letter, Reeves writes that the eventual fate of this group of texts remains unknown, although one must recognize that a sizeable recovery of manuscripts from this particular location possesses important implications for explaining why non-biblical works of Second Temple provenance like the Damascus Document are present in the Cairo Genizah scant centuries later. Moreover, the explicit mention of an expanded Davidic psalter (“more than two hundred”) suggests one likely source for the presence in Syriac ecclesiastical tradition of five apocryphal Psalms of David – the so-called Psalms 151-155.\textsuperscript{24}

Timothy’s letter gives us several kinds of information. As Reeves observes, it suggests a possible solution to two problems of textual provenance: the presence in the Geniza of texts otherwise known only from Qumran; and the origins of the liminal – authentic, and yet non-biblical – Syriac Apocryphal Psalms. Thus, the letter is often cited as part of the historical-archeological puzzle about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Cairo Geniza.

Putting together Timothy’s report with our existing scholarly archive, we can attempt to draw conclusions about the identity and fate of the texts he mentions, and use it to fill in some gaps in our understanding of those writings that have eluded categorization, dating, and attribution.

But we can also use Timothy’s letter to do a different kind of history. Beyond the straightforward report of an event, and however close he tried to stay to the “facts” as he knew them, the patriarch’s words are also a literary creation: they offer a glimpse

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\textsuperscript{23} Hist. eccl. 6.16.3 (LCL; eds J.E.L. Oulton and H.J. Lawlor; repr. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964) 2.52-53.
\textsuperscript{24} Reeves, 160-61.
into an imaginal world. It is part of the same linguistic and cultural milieu that produced the psalmic re-collections I have discussed above, but has roots in far older interpretive traditions. Timothy’s understanding of the history of sacred writing, and the narrative he suggests for the origins of the cache of manuscripts in the desert, is a key example. The texts, Timothy speculates, were deposited by a figure like Jeremiah or Baruch, who wished to save them from the burning and pillaging that they knew would befall Jerusalem. After the Exile, Timothy writes, “no one remained of those who had deposited the manuscripts. This is why Ezra and others were forced to seek out and find what (works) the Hebrews retained.”

The association of Jeremiah and Baruch with concealing texts is not only, I think, due to their chronology (as witnesses to the Destruction), but also reflects a long tradition that connects these two figures to sacred and efficacious writing. Baruch, acting as Jeremiah’s scribe, draws up a deed of purchase for a field, placing a sealed and unsealed version in a clay jar so it will last a long time (32:10-14), even as the Babylonian siege ramps surround Jerusalem. Baruch writes and rewrites the revelations of Jeremiah that are destroyed by the king in Jeremiah 36. As for Timothy’s reference to Ezra’s later search for the remaining scriptures after the Return, one cannot help but think of the final chapter of 4Ezra, where the scriptures that had been burned are given once again.

More broadly, Timothy’s letter can be read as part of a centuries-long interpretive motif about writing that is hidden and revealed, lost and found. Like the Syriac superscriptions I discussed above, the patriarch reflects a sense that more sacred words exist than can be accessed, collected, and read – that revelation extends beyond
what is contained in his books. More psalms of David exist, and possibly, some of them can still be found. I see this not only as part of a similar impulse that exists in “David’s Compositions” in 11QPsalms, which cites an inaccessible number of compositions; but also the discovery of a “Scroll of the Torah” in the Temple (1 Kings 22) that no-one living had ever read before; the writing that is bound up in Isaiah 8; the sealed heavenly books of Daniel. Another key example of hidden writings appears in the Testament of Moses:

15 ... I am going to sleep with my fathers. 16 But (you) take this writing so that later you will remember how to preserve the books which I shall entrust to you. 17 You shall arrange them, anoint them with cedar, and deposit them in earthenware jars in the place which (God) has chosen from the beginning of the creation of the world, 18 (a place) where his name may be called upon until the day of recompense when the Lord will surely have regard for his people (1:15-18).

In this textually self-conscious passage, Moses gives Joshua a piece of writing that instructs him how to preserve and conceal other writings, although again, as in the writings that feature in 1 Enoch and Jubilees, none of the texts mentioned are quoted or precisely defined.

The Syriac materials and the texts I have discussed in earlier chapters suggest that the archive of Davidic compositions (like the archive of sacred texts in general) is only partially accessible; more psalms remain to be revealed. But among the literature that features the motif of hidden, sealed, unread texts, we encounter David not only as a writer, but as a reader as well. In the Damascus Document, col. 5, where David is set up as an ethical model, it is said that David did not know the law against polygamy because he had not read the book of the law:

25 I discussed T. Mos. in a different context in Chapter Five.
However, David had not read the sealed book of the law which was in the ark, for it had not been opened in Israel since the day of the death of Eleazar and of Jehoshua, and Joshua and the elders who worshipped Ashtaroth. One had hidden the public (copy) until Zadok’s entry into office.

In this text, the idea of hidden writing is used to exculpate David, raising him to the kind of perfected status we find in 11QPsalms. In 1 Kings 22, the lost and found “Scroll of the Law” serves as an authorizing strategy for the Josianic reforms. But the motif of sealed, unread, unavailable texts seems to be more than simply a ruse used in such instrumental ways, to legitimize political and moral actions.

Rather, this motif of hiddenness and unavailability, of writing that is yet to be read, is part of the textual imagination. It follows texts around, turning up almost everywhere they appear as subjects of literature. Timothy’s letter also reflects such a world, where divine revelation is far more abundant than the limited heritage to which we still have access. The world is full of secrets, and books – more books, better books! – could be waiting to be discovered under every stone.
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