

# READINGS IN THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

## Considerations in the Light of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>

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### *Status Quaestionis*

F.M. Cross's first publication of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> in 1953<sup>1</sup> has initiated a series of studies which have given a considerable contribution to the comprehension of Samuel fragments and to the relationship of the fragments with the Masoretic Text and with the Septuagint. Cross expresses the idea that the fragments of the books of Samuel testified a text which is more similar to the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint than to the Masoretic Text, especially to the Lucianic Recension; furthermore, Rofé later considered the fragments a *Midrash* of the book of Samuel;<sup>2</sup> besides this it has been suggested that the fragments constituted a witness nearly completely inferior to the Masoretic Text for what text critical purposes are concerned.<sup>3</sup>

The studies of E. Tov, E. Ulrich, F.M. Cross, S. Pisano, N. Fernández Marcos examined all the possible connections with the *Vorlage* of old translations and Greek recensions; J.C. Treballe Barrera<sup>4</sup> paid attention to connections with the *Vetus Latina*.

In 2001 two important works were published that can be considered as a starting point for scholars: on the one hand the text restored by A. Fincke,<sup>5</sup> trying to fill the gaps in the Qumran fragments by means of the Lucianic recension (to be revised in some passages according to DJD); on the other hand, the Italian dissertation by S. Venturini:<sup>6</sup> he considered 4QSam<sup>a</sup> an editorial revision with respect of a "Masoretic tradition" taking into account the scepticism shown by I.H. Eybers and A. Rofé.

Thanks to the 2005 edition of *Discoveries in Judean Desert XVII* (DJD), a new official issue is now available. This edition allows a deeper study of the books of Samuel, from a text-critical perspective, although questionable in some passages.

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#### Legenda:

I.XX<sup>1</sup>: Lucianic Recension.

I.XX<sup>1b</sup>: Codex Vaticanus.

I.XX<sup>a</sup>: Codex Alexandrinus.

I.XX<sup>o</sup>: Hexaplaric Recension (mss. c x).

I thank Maria Haralambakis who kindly improved the language of this article.

<sup>1</sup> Cross 1953.

<sup>2</sup> Rofé 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Eybers 1960; Venturini 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Treballe Barrera 1983; Treballe Barrera 1984.

<sup>5</sup> Fincke 2001; some parts of this work were published advance in Fincke 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Venturini 2001; some parts are published in Venturini 2008.

Scholarly theories about Samuel scrolls can be summarized as follows:<sup>7</sup>

a) before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, authors like O. Thenius,<sup>8</sup> J. Wellhausen<sup>9</sup> and S.R. Driver<sup>10</sup> noticed the differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint, and some theories have been confirmed by the Dead Sea scrolls. About the Septuagint, A. Mez<sup>11</sup> assumed the presence of the Proto-Lucianic Recension in Flavius Josephus: his research was followed and corrected by A. Rahlfs<sup>12</sup> e H.St.J. Thackeray.<sup>13</sup>

b) After the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the so-called theory of local texts was formulated. According to W.F. Albright, Samuel scrolls would reflect elements of the original Deuteronomistic *Vorlage*;<sup>14</sup> F.M. Cross<sup>15</sup> and E. Ulrich<sup>16</sup> identified the Samuel scrolls with the “Palestinian tradition”: the archetype of 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. would be distributed, after the exile, in an Egyptian tradition (from which the Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint could be dependent), in a Babylonian and in a Palestinian traditions; the Samaritan Pentateuch, Chronicles and one Greek version, with proto-lucianic characters used by Flavius Josephus, would depend on the Palestinian tradition.<sup>17</sup>

c) In 1960 I.H. Eybers, criticizing Cross’s formulation, tried to assign the Masoretic Text a higher quality in textual criticism; this scepticism is at the basis of A. Rofê’s and S. Venturini’s studies.

I would like to point out some textual cases that could be useful to examine the above mentioned theories.

The variants of the first book of Samuel attested by 4QSam<sup>a</sup> are about 150; the portion of the text witnessed by the fragments is very small: according to Herbert<sup>18</sup> it is the 8% of the books of Samuel; since the portion of the book of Samuel represented by the Qumran fragments is only small, the issues that I address in this essay are of a preliminary nature.

<sup>7</sup> Catastini 1980; Catastini 1987; Polak 2000, pp. 820-821; Tsumura 2007, pp. 3-6.

<sup>8</sup> Thenius 1864.

<sup>9</sup> Wellhausen 1871; see e.g. Wellhausen’s considerations at 1Sam 2,29 and 2,31b-32a (col. III).

<sup>10</sup> Driver 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Mez 1895; reaffirmed by Ulrich 1978 and Spottorno 1987, pp. 277-285.

<sup>12</sup> Rahlfs 1911, pp. 80-111.

<sup>13</sup> Thackeray 1929, p. 85; see also the Preface at the Books of Samuel in Brooke - McLean - Thackeray 1927, p. IX.

<sup>14</sup> Albright 1955.

<sup>15</sup> Cross 1975.

<sup>16</sup> Ulrich 1978.

<sup>17</sup> Tov 2001, p. 185; see also Polak 2000, p. 820: “The scroll (4QSam<sup>a</sup>) presumably preserves the text on which the author of Chronicle based his narrative”.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert 2002, p. 197.

1. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> variants in agreement with the Masoretic Text against the LXX

1Sam 10:12 – DJD col. IX, l. 14, p. 63

4QSam <sup>a</sup>	[ויען איש מהם ויאמר ומי אביהם]
MT	ויען איש משם ויאמר ומי אביהם
LXX	καὶ ἀπεκρίθη τις αὐτῶν καὶ εἶπεν καὶ τίς πατὴρ αὐτοῦ

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** [And one of them answered and said: and who is] their father?

**MT:** And one of the place answered and said: and who is their father?

**LXX:** And one of them answered and said: and who is his father?

By examining only the variant attested, I can suppose that the reconstruction of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> proposed in the DJD edition (אִישׁ מֵהֶם) is questionable, because אִישׁ מֵהֶם in the Masoretic Text is always preceded by לֹא, and used only in a negative sense, with the meaning of “nobody of them” (see Eze 22:30; Num 26:65; 2Ki 10:14). In fact Fincke reconstructs it by following the Masoretic Text.<sup>19</sup>

Consequently the variant results the difference between singular and plural in the possessive pronoun.

The whole Greek tradition has “his father”, by reading then אביו; the Peshitta and the Vetus Latina follow the Septuagint, while the Vulgate follows the Masoretic Text.

In the previous verse the father of Saul is named: the Septuagint reading could be the *lectio faciliior*, but it makes more sense, and it is to be preferred.

1Sam 17:5 – DJD 12-14, l. 4, p. 78<sup>20</sup>

4QSam <sup>a</sup>	[ומשקל השריון]
MT	ומשקל השריון

<sup>19</sup> Fincke 2001, p. 16

<sup>20</sup> Columns after the XI are not countable for certain; we follow DJD numbering: it's different from Fincke's numbering who follows Herbert.

<b>LXX</b>	καὶ ὁ σταθμὸς τοῦ θώρακος αὐτοῦ
<b>LXX<sup>1</sup></b>	ἦν ὁ σταθμὸς τοῦ θώρακος αὐτοῦ

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** [And] the weight of the armour

**MT:** And the weight of the armour

**LXX:** And the weight of his armour

**LXX<sup>1</sup>:** Was the weight of his armour

The topic is the description of Goliath's armour.

The Septuagint possessive adjective is not essential: the verse previously said that "he was armed with a coat of mail"; it is possible that the final *nun* was confused with *waw*, and that the article was removed. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> has *scriptio defectiva*.

These textual cases are relative to the presence of suffixed pronouns; they are different in the Septuagint and the Recensions in comparison with 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Masoretic Text.

It is difficult to assume a reading as original, but it is important to remark that sometimes 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is in disagreement with the Septuagint and in particular with the Lucianic Recension.

Especially in the Song of Hannah (1Sam 2:1-10) we can find the greatest number of different variants in the Septuagint: it is a text that could seem secondary in the Greek tradition.

## 2. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> variants in agreement with the LXX against the Masoretic Text

1Sam 11:8 – DJD col. X, l. 3-4, p. 67

<b>4QSam<sup>a</sup></b>	וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּבִזְקַת כּוֹל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה] שְׁבַעִים אֶלֶף
<b>MT</b>	וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּבִזְקַת וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה שְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף

<b>LXX</b>	καὶ ἐπισκέπτεται αὐτοὺς Αβιεζεκ ἐν Βαμα πᾶν ἄνδρα Ἰσραηλ ἑξακοσίας χιλιάδας καὶ ἄνδρας Ἰουδα ἑβδομήκοντα χιλιάδας
<b>LXX<sup>1</sup></b>	καὶ ἐπισκεπτεται σαουλ αὐτοὺς ἀβιεζεκ ἐν ραμα πᾶν ἀνδρα Ἰσραηλ ἑξακοσίας χιλιαδας καὶ ἀνδρας Ἰουδα ἑβδομήκοντα χιλιαδας

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** [And he numbered them in Bezek in Bamaa; all the men of Israel six hundred thousand, and the men of Judah] seventy thousand

**MT:** And he numbered them in Bezek; and were the sons of Israel three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand

**LXX:** And he numbered them in Bezek in Bamaa; all the men of Israel six hundred thousand, and the men of Judah seventy thousand

**LXX<sup>1</sup>:** And Saul numbered them in Bezek in Rama; all the men of Israel six hundred thousand, and the men of Judah seventy thousand

4QSam<sup>a</sup> is reconstructed by following the Septuagint: we do not know the first part of the verse, but the number “seventy thousand” is closer to the Septuagint than to the Masoretic Text. The numbers of the Masoretic Text are the same of the Targum, the Peshitta and the Vulgate.

The name of Saul (LXX<sup>1</sup>) is certainly a gloss; according to DJD editors, the absence in the Masoretic Text and the versions of בַּמָּדָה (in Bamaa) is *homoiarkton*, but I argue that it is a Septuagint gloss: at the moment its presence in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is not certain.

The number of Israel soldiers of the Septuagint (six hundred thousand) is to be found also in Flavius Josephus *Ant.* 6,78; in fact unlike the Masoretic Text (three hundred thousand) there is only a *lamed*: it could probably be an error, but it is very difficult to assume the original reading.

It is difficult to consider the number of Judah men as a scribal error: perhaps the Masoretic Text follows the dead soldiers against Philistines (1Sam 4:10).

1Sam 14:31 – DJD 3, l. 5-6, p. 73

<b>4QSam<sup>a</sup></b>	יך ביום
<b>MT</b>	יכו ביום ההוא

<b>LXX</b>	καὶ ἐπάταξεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ
<b>LXX<sup>L</sup></b>	επαταξεν αν ο λαος (εν) τη ημερα ταυτη

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** And he smote [the Philistines that] day

**MT:** And they smote (the Philistines) that day

**LXX:** And he smote (the Philistines) that day

**LXX<sup>L</sup>:** The people smote (the Philistines) that day

The verb is in the plural in the Targum and the Vulgate, which is in accordance with the Masoretic Text. This raises the question what the subject of the verb is. Is the subject of the verb the people, Jonathan or the Lord (see verse 23)? “The people” could be the subject either with a singular or a plural verb: the expression “all the people” usually governs the plural verb, but “the people” takes normally the singular one.

In this context the Lucianic text is very exemplifying how a gloss can clarify the text.

It is difficult to determine whether the variant is stylistic or whether it is an error.

### 3. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> variants in agreement with Lucianic Recension against the Masoretic Text and LXX<sup>ABO</sup>

*1Sam 6:20 – DJD col. VII, l. 1, p. 56*

<b>4QSam<sup>a</sup></b>	לפני יהוה יהוה הקדוש הזה
<b>MT</b>	לפני יהוה האלהים הקדוש הזה
<b>LXX<sup>B</sup></b>	ενωπιον του αγιου τουτου
<b>LXX<sup>O</sup></b>	ενωπιον κυριου θεου του αγιου τουτου
<b>LXX<sup>A</sup></b>	ενωπιον κυριου του θεου του αγιου τουτου
<b>LXX<sup>L</sup></b>	ενωπιον κυριου του αγιου τουτου

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** (Who is able to stand) [in front of] the Lord, this Holy?

**MT:** (Who is able to stand) in front of the Lord, the God, this Holy?

**LXX<sup>B</sup>:** (Who is able to stand) in front of this Holy?

**LXX<sup>O</sup>:** (Who is able to stand) in front of the Lord God, this Holy?

**LXX<sup>Λ</sup>:** (Who is able to stand) in front of the Lord, the God, this Holy?

**LXX<sup>L</sup>:** (Who is able to stand) in front of this Lord, the Holy?

The Masoretic Text is followed by the Codex Alexandrinus; 4QSam<sup>a</sup> has the same expression as the Lucianic Recension and other manuscripts: it is the most strengthened expression in the Greek tradition, even if the most important uncials manuscripts are divergent; like the Masoretic Text, the Vulgate presents *in conspectu Domini Dei sancti huius*. It is worth noticing that this verse suffered in the Greek tradition, because every Greek witness has a different words order and some different translations; e.g. the previous verb לַעֲמֹד is translated differently: διελθειν by LXX<sup>BAO</sup>, παραστηναι by LXX<sup>L</sup>, απελθειν by the minuscule manuscript v.<sup>21</sup>

In fact 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is reconstructed by [לעבור]. This corresponds, in the opinion of the editors of DJD, with the verb of the Lucianic Recension; 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is then reconstructed with the addition of [ארוֹן יהוה], that is absent in the Masoretic Text (יַעֲלֶה מֵעַלֵּינוּ וְאֶל־מִי), while it is to be found in the Septuagint and Peshitta (*w' mirw' ns' dbyt šmš mnw mškh lmqm qdm mry' 'lh' qdyš' hn' wmw nsqywhy mnn l' rwn'*): καὶ πρὸς τίνα ἀναβήσεται (LXX<sup>L,O</sup>: η) κιβωτὸς (LXX<sup>L</sup>: του) κυρίου ἁφ' ἡμῶν.

#### 4. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> variants which are in agreement with Lucianic Recension

1Sam 6:4 – DJD col. VI, l. 13, p. 51

4QSam <sup>a</sup>	[חמשה] עפלי זהב כי מגפה אחת ל[כם] [ולסרניכם]
MT (Qeré)	חמשה שחרי זהב וחמשה עבברי זהב כי מגפה אחת לכלם ולסרניכם

<sup>21</sup> According to Brooke - McLean - Thackeray edition.

<b>LXX<sup>B</sup></b>	πέντε ἔδρας χρυσᾶς ὅτι πται̃σμα ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ὑμῶν καὶ τῷ λαῷ
<b>LXX<sup>I</sup></b>	ποιησατε πεντε εδρας χρυσας ομοιωμα των εδρων υμων οτι πταισμα εν υμιν και τοις αρχουσιν υμων και εν τω λαω
<b>LXX<sup>AO</sup></b>	πεντε εδρας χρυσας και πεντε μυας χρυσους οτι πταισμα υμιν εν τοις αρχουσιν υμων και εν τω λαω

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** (They answered: according to the number of the lords of the Philistines) [five] golden boils, because one plague (was) on [you, and on your lords]

**MT:** (They answered: according to the number of the lords of the Philistines) five golden boils and five golden mice, because one plague (was) on (you) all, and on your lords

**LXX<sup>B</sup>:** (They answered: according to the number of the lords of the Philistines) five golden boils, because one plague (was) on you and on your lords and on the people

**LXX<sup>I</sup>:** (They answered: according to the number of the lords of the Philistines) make you five golden boils, image of your boils, because one plague (was) on you and on your lords and on the people

**LXX<sup>AO</sup>:** (They answered: according to the number of the lords of the Philistines) five golden boils and five golden mice, because one plague (was) on (you) all, and on your lords and on the people

The editors of DJD wonder if this is a dittography in the Masoretic Text and the Codex Alexandrinus, or an haplography in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Codex Vaticanus with the omission of the five golden mice. They write: “The omission is most significant in view of verses 17-19 which presume five images of plague boils, but images of mice in great number”.<sup>22</sup>

The editors of DJD quoted Thenius<sup>23</sup> and they argued that this seems to have been the original form of the story, five boils and many mice; “Moreover, 4QSam<sup>a</sup> does not share the secondary Septuagint pluses in 6:1 and 5:10 LXX<sup>I</sup> which refer to mice. (...) On the other hand, LXX<sup>BI</sup> do not mention עפלים in 6:5 opposite to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Masoretic Text”.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> DJD XVII, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> Thenius 1864, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> DJD XVII, p. 52.



The Greek tradition is complex, and it is often compared with the *Vetus Latina*. The Lucianic manuscripts substitute *και ειπαν* with *ειπον αυτοις εκεινοι* at the beginning of the verse; before *πεντε* they put *ποιησατε*, and after *χρυσας* they add *ομοιωμα των εδρων υμων* (as in the *Vetus Latina*); on the other hand the *Codex Alexandrinus* add *και πεντε μισας χρυσους*. If we read the verse together with the following one (6:5) we realize that the clearest text is the Lucianic Recension. It inserts the boils and mice number, and puts the verb in the end, thus creating a chiasmus. I can argue that the Lucianic text is *lectio facilior*, and that it has a gloss, because it is perfectly symmetric: five boils in the beginning, five mice in the end, as the Masoretic Text that repeats boils and mice in verses 4 and 5.

It is obvious that the verse suffered of corruption in every textual tradition, and that the text suffered of glosses and corrections rather than haplography: in my opinion the original text was very close to the *Codex Vaticanus*, that is the same of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> text in the first part (v 4), i.e. *lectio brevior*.

1Sam 12:15 – DJD col. XI, l. 5, p. 71

4QSam <sup>a</sup>	[את פי יהוה]
MT	אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה
LXX	τῷ στόματι κυρίου
LXX <sup>1</sup>	τω στοματι αυτου

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** (If you will rebel) [against the mouth of the L.]ord

**MT:** (If you will rebel) against the mouth of the Lord

**LXX:** (If you will rebel) against the mouth of the Lord

**LXX<sup>1</sup>:** (If you will rebel) against his mouth

The Lucianic Recension probably reads *פִּיהוּ*: a mistake in the reading.

### 5. Unique readings of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>

1Sam 6,2 – DJD col. VI, l. 8, p. 51

4QSam <sup>a</sup>	[ ולבעוֹנָנִים ]
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MT	וַיִּקְרְאוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים לַכַּהֲנִים וְלַקְסָמִים
LXX	τοὺς ἱερεῖς καὶ τοὺς μάντεις καὶ τοὺς ἐπαοιδοὺς αὐτῶν

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** [And the Philistines called for] the magicians

**MT:** And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners

**LXX:** And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and their magicians

The term “magicians” is present only in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>; the editors of DJD wrote that ἐπαοιδος renders כַּסְמִים more frequently than יָדַעַנִי, and that “The short text of the Masoretic Text is probably superior to both the expansive text of the Septuagint and the doubly expansive text of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>”.<sup>25</sup>

It seems an acceptable affirmation; in the Masoretic Text the term קְסָמִים, which occurs only three times (Dt 18:10.14; 2Ki 17:17), is never linked to the other terms.

*ISam 9,7 – DJD col. VIII, l. 3, p. 59*

4QSam <sup>a</sup>	[וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל וְהַנְּה]
MT	וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל לְנַעֲרוֹ וְהַנְּה
LXX <sup>BAL</sup>	καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ τῷ παιδαγωγῷ αὐτοῦ τῷ μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδοῦ

*Translation:*

**4QSam<sup>a</sup>:** [And Said S]aul: behold (we'll go, what shall we bring the man?)

**MT:** And Said Saul to his servant: behold (we'll go, what shall we bring the man?)

**LXX<sup>BAL</sup>:** And Said Saul to his servant who were with him: behold (we'll go, what shall we bring the man?)

<sup>25</sup> DJD XVII, p. 53.

The Masoretic Text is followed by all the versions, except for the Greek ones; I agree with the editors of DJD<sup>26</sup> who assumed the 4QSam<sup>a</sup> *lectio brevior* as original, and the others as explicating pluses: the Masoretic – Septuagint text suffered perhaps the influence by v 5, and the specification is useless.

### Conclusions

#### *4QSam<sup>a</sup> is a text of Samuel*

The study of the variants shows us that 4QSam<sup>a</sup> has many original readings, even if unique original readings are very rare: the most original 4QSam<sup>a</sup> readings agree with one witness at least.

Except for Nahash plus at 1Sam 10 (in agreement with Flavius Josephus<sup>27</sup>) and for Hannah's Song, where the Septuagint is supposed to have a secondary text, there are few variants in which 4QSam<sup>a</sup> has a demonstrable unique reading: about the 13% of the studied ones.<sup>28</sup>

4QSam<sup>a</sup> presents a gloss in 1Sam 1:11, scribal errors in 1Sam 2:16; 2:18; 15:32; but also original readings in 1Sam 1:22; 5:10; 9:7; 10:5; and perhaps original in 1Sam 11:9; 18:5; 28:1.

I suggest that other variants are secondary for the scribe's conscious intervention; but they are, besides the gloss in 1Sam 1:11, the half of the variants; these numbers are not enough to consider 4Q51 a *Midrash of Samuel*,<sup>29</sup> but they are enough to state that 4Q51 is not "the text" (i.e. the original text *tout court*) of Samuel.

The high number of unique secondary readings tempts us on the contrary to study the textual history of the Books of Samuel: it is an important indication to consider Samuel scrolls a step in the history of the manuscript tradition.

E. Ulrich wrote in the conclusions of one of his works: "The major Samuel scroll from Qumran (...), does not disappoint us in our hopes that it illumine the textual situation in the late Second Temple period".<sup>30</sup>

#### *The text of 4QSam<sup>d</sup> is closer to the text of the Septuagint than to the Masoretic Text*

About fifty variants, i.e. about one third of the total ones, present a text that agrees with the Septuagint versus the Masoretic Text. On the contrary

<sup>26</sup> DJD XVII, p. 60.

<sup>27</sup> *Ant.* 6,68-71.

<sup>28</sup> 1Sam 1:28; 2:9; 2:16; 2:21; 2:25; 5:8; 5:10; 5:11; 6:2; 6:5; 9:7; 10:4; 10:18; 11:9; 14:30; 15:30; 15:32; 24:4; 28:1; 2 Sam 3:2.

<sup>29</sup> Rofé 1989; Rofé 1998; Rofé 2007; Venturini 2001; Venturini 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Ulrich 1978, p. 257.

about twenty are the variants that agree with the Masoretic Text versus the Septuagint, about the 13-15% of the total ones.

The unique readings of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> are not few: less than thirty variants, that is about the 20% of the total ones; among these, 1Sam 1:22 and the “Na-hash plus” are very important, (i.e. where 4QSam<sup>a</sup> agrees only with Flavius Josephus).

This witnesses that 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is not the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint: if it were so, differences between 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and Septuagint would be less and they all would be mechanical mistakes (as in 1Sam 2:18 or 2:21); on the contrary, 4QSam<sup>a</sup> variants at 1Sam 1:11 e 1:22 seem stylistic and witness the Qumran scribe’s editorial attempts.

We wonder if the archetype of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> was the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint: for the moment we can argue that the archetype was the same as 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.

At the same time, 4QSam<sup>a</sup> does not represent the proto-Masoretic text:<sup>31</sup> the Masoretic Text is the result of a long course of vocalisation and study by Soferim and Masorettes; it was not a “close” text, as it is often thought; Kennicott and De Rossi collations demonstrate that, when the Masoretic Text became the central text,<sup>32</sup> the Jewish manuscript tradition did not modify the text substantially; what happened “before” the *textus receptus*?<sup>33</sup> The Vulgate and Peshitta show that around the 4<sup>th</sup> century the text of Samuel was very similar to the *textus receptus*: only one time, in 1Sam 8:11, the Vulgate witnesses a 4QSam<sup>a</sup> reading *versus* the Masoretic Text.

For chronological reasons, Qumran represents an anterior stage to the Vulgate and to the Masoretic vocalization of the Masoretic Text; but it does not represent the proto-Masoretic text, because we can find many stylistic variants that draw away from the consonantal text of the Masoretic Text; and we found original readings in the Masoretic Text when 4QSam<sup>a</sup> agrees with the Septuagint as in 1Sam 9:18; 9:24.

It is very interesting noticing that, when a stylistic variant is differently mentioned in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and Masoretic Text, and it is not present in the Septuagint,<sup>34</sup> it is very difficult to decide what the original reading should be.

<sup>31</sup> The proto-Masoretic text is the consonantal base of the Masoretic Text: “Therefore, although the medieval form of Masoretic Text is relatively late, its consonantal framework reflects an ancient tradition that was in existence more than a thousand years earlier in many sources, among them, many texts from the Judean Desert. Accordingly, scholars often designate the consonantal base of Masoretic Text (deriving from the Second Temple period), as *proto-Masoretic* although sometimes, anachronistically, also as the Masoretic Text”, Tov 2001, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> Tov 2001, p. 24: “When Masoretic Text became the central text, at first of a central stream in Judaism and later of the whole Jewish people, no further changes were inserted into it and no additions or omissions were allowed, not even in small details such as the use of *matres lectionis*”.

<sup>33</sup> *Textus receptus* is an edition who continues as it already is, without any improvements, except by conjecture; this is the past publishing method: Del Popolo 1994, p. 252; see also Borbone 1984.

<sup>34</sup> At 1Sam 10:5 the text of the Septuagint is conflated; at 8:9 is not possible to understand which text follows the Septuagint, because it’s about the *nota accusativi* presence or absence; we have the same problem at 8:16 where the Hebrew word can be translated differently.

*The text of QSam<sup>a</sup> is not the Hebrew Vorlage of the Lucianic Recension*

We started that at first the text of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> was considered very close to the Lucianic Recension, and that both the works of reconstruction of the text (Fincke and DJD) aim to fill the gaps with an Hebrew back version of the Lucianic Recension; in particular Fincke is connected to this idea, but curiously he sometimes reconstructs the text differently from DJD and from the Lucianic Recension: e.g. 1Sam 4:3; 8:16; 10:9.

Anyway we can reshape the remark about the similarity between 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Lucianic text, even if we cannot deny their closeness.

As above mentioned, many times 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Lucianic Recension have a different text, in particular when 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is closer to other witnesses of the Septuagint: the study of the variants shows us a great fluctuation of the Greek text of Samuel; ten times 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is closer to the other Greek witnesses versus the Lucianic text and only five times it shows unique readings with the Lucianic text.

It is difficult to solve the problem of the Proto-Lucianic text, but it is to be considered that the Books of Samuel had a troubled textual history: Lucianic manuscripts copied or translated a *Vorlage* very close to the textual family of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, that had variants (sometimes primary, sometimes secondary as above argued). At that moment of the manuscript tradition, as far as we know, they were typical of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, and obviously they were received by the surroundings of the Lucianic manuscript tradition; sometimes Lucianic manuscripts glossed the text (e.g. 1Sam 6:5; 10:10; 11:8; 15:29; 2Sam 3:24).

4QSam<sup>a</sup> is not the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Lucianic text, and the fragments reconstruction attempts to a Hebrew witness back version is only a conjecture, as far as we know.

By quoting S. Brock's<sup>35</sup> Septuagintal stemma, the Lucianic Recension derives directly from the "fifth column" of Origen's Hexapla as other Greek text-types; he argued that "This text contains many early variants lost to the rest of the Septuagint tradition, and – most important – a number of original readings, again otherwise lost" although two recensional elements: a desire to improve on the Septuagint text stylistically and the adaptation of the text to the requirements of public reading.<sup>36</sup>

*The original text of Samuel is not directly represented by any surviving witness*

Through a reconsideration of these data, we could state that at present the original text of Samuel is represented by no witnesses.

<sup>35</sup> Brock 1996, p. 307.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibi*, p. 306.

The study of the variants showed us that the readings must be weighed depending on the case, considering the whole context of the Bible or scribes' aims: the scribes could modify the text under the language or theology influences; 1Sam 1:11 or 1:24-25 could be used as examples, although Qumran fragments do not show "sectarian" influence and there are not obvious readings influenced by socio-religious background.<sup>37</sup>

Every witness can present primary or secondary variants, and no one represents the text of Samuel: every reading can be original, even if it is often very difficult choosing the original one, because it is thought that there was a textual unity soon dismembered.<sup>38</sup>

This theory is opposite to Kahle's and "local text" theories, according to which the texts that we know developed from a textual plurality.<sup>39</sup>

*"Local Texts" do not exist: the text of Samuel is one, which suffered corruptions, and it witnessed different readings and some textual families in the history of textual transmission*

Following these studies, we could argue that the witnesses do not have such relationships to describe clear textual families.

4QSam<sup>a</sup> is undeniably very close to the Septuagint and in particular to the Lucianic Recension; but the study of the variants does not show the same textual family for these witnesses, that derived independently from the archetype.

The editors of DJD suggested that 1Sam 20:39 witnesses a different variant in the same Qumran tradition:<sup>40</sup> it is very difficult to make remarks because of the fragment conditions, but it is very interesting to notice that the Qumran tradition is to be considered as other textual traditions, with copying mistakes, scribes' corrections, and perhaps with manuscripts that derived independently from the archetype.

As above: if a variant of any witness can be original, and if the contaminations that we studied in the variants show a great complexity in their relationships, we have then a text (the text of Samuel) that was hardly established during the years and gave origin to manuscript traditions that influenced themselves each other.

According to Ulrich the biblical books are the result of a long compositional process that grew and developed dynamically over centuries, and the scrolls from Qumran provide manuscript evidence for the latter stages of the lengthy compositional process.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Parry 2002, p. 215.

<sup>38</sup> Tov 2001, p. 189.

<sup>39</sup> Tov 2001, pp. 183-184: Kahle talked about intermediary sources named *Vulgärtex-te*, that is, texts created to facilitate the reading; among P. Kahle's works I quote only *Die hebräischen Handschriften aus der Höle*, Stuttgart 1951.

<sup>40</sup> See the different scrolls reconstructions in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (p. 81) and 4QSam<sup>b</sup> (p. 230).

<sup>41</sup> Ulrich 2002, p. 99.

*The same textual family gave origin to 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, to Flavius Josephus' and Lucianic Vorlage thus deriving from the archetype common to every witness*

It is impossible to reconstruct the stemma of the books of Samuel; Qumran manuscripts, which are chronologically closer than others to the time of the archetype, are very fragmentary; and the study of the variants cannot help us to describe clear textual relationships.

The mistakes that I studied do not allow us to understand the witnesses dependence on the archetype; but they do not allow either to establish a stemma in which the witnesses developed without reciprocal influences.

In other words: every witness has variants that agree or disagree with other witnesses; establishing textual families, as Cross did, is very difficult; it is difficult to create a stemma too, even if Herbert formulated a hypothesis: according to him the data confirm a genealogical link between 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Septuagint and a variety of contacts between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint, but "insufficient evidence was found to affirm any link between Lucianic Recension and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (...). This does not, of course, demonstrate that no such link existed, but does place the burden of proof upon those who propose a proto-Lucianic recension towards a text related to 4QSam<sup>a</sup>". He suggested that a contact between the Lucianic Recension and the Masoretic Text "was demonstrated, although this was in all probability an indirect contact via Origen's Hexapla".<sup>42</sup>

The weak point of view of this theory is the divergence between 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Masoretic Text: we said above that they have common variants for 13% of the total ones: as far as we know today and because of the smallness of Qumran scrolls, we are far from the identification of a stemma of the books of Samuel.

*The Masoretic Text collects the highest number of variants*

The Masoretic Text of the first book of Samuel is the witness who contains the highest number of variants in respect of the Septuagint and 4QSam<sup>a</sup>; it has some readings that we suppose to be original, as in 1Sam 2:9; 2:16; 2:29; but the majority are secondary variants, in agreement or not with other witnesses.

This does not mean that the Masoretic Text is the most corrupted text: it just means that in the Masoretic Text flow the variants of every textual tradition, because it is at the end of a long course; and it means that the superiority of the Masoretic Text cannot be taken as granted, as asserted by Barthélemy<sup>43</sup> and criticized by several scholars.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Herbert 1997, p. 49; cfr. with Brock's theory.

<sup>43</sup> Barthélemy 1980; Barthélemy 1982; see also Caquot - de Robert 1994: they take the Masoretic Text as the best-preserved text; Warren 1994, p. 284; Würthwein 1988, p. 131.

<sup>44</sup> Tov 2001, pp. 299-300.

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## ABSTRACT

*After Cross's first publication of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, many theories and many remarks arose about Samuel scrolls and the transmission of the biblical text; in this article we would like to point out some textual cases for a better understanding of the textual transmission of the first book of Samuel and the relationships between Samuel scrolls and other witnesses.*

*We argue that 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is a text of Samuel, not a Midrash, although it does not represent the original text of Samuel; it is closer to the text of the Septuagint than to the Masoretic Text, but it is not the Hebrew Vorlage of the Lucianic Recension, as argued by several scholars.*