

LOOKING BACK: (MORE) DEAD SEA SCROLLS FORGERIES IN THE SCHØYEN COLLECTION

Summary

This article updates, improves and corrects the 2016 publication of Dead Sea Scrolls fragments and artefacts in The Schøyen Collection. A large number of the fragments then published are here classified as modern forgeries. The palaeographical discussion is sharpened and suggests that most of the suspicious fragments in the collection were penned by the same modern forger.

Publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls in The Schøyen Collection

FRAGMENTS and artefacts from The Schøyen Collection allegedly found in the Judean desert were published in 2016. (1) This publication is the outcome of a cross-disciplinary teamwork from 2012 on with Torleif Elgvin, Kipp Davis, Årstein Justnes, Michael Langlois, and Ira Rabin at its core. At a late stage in the preparation of the volume, Elgvin decided to withhold nine fragments (seven texts) from the publication, as the core team had reached a consensus that at least these nine fragments were modern forgeries. They were published in a cross-disciplinary article in *DSD* 2/2017, just before the presentation of the finds at the Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting in Berlin, early August 2017. (2)

Without these nine fragments, 18 texts plus a large number of minute fragments and small scraps remained for publication in *Gleanings from*

(1) Torleif Elgvin, Kipp Davis, and Michael Langlois, eds., *Gleanings from the Caves. Dead Sea Scrolls and Artefacts from The Schøyen Collection*, Library of Second Temple Studies 71 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016).

(2) Kipp Davis et al., "Nine Dubious 'Dead Sea Scrolls' Fragments from the Twenty-First Century," *DSD* 24.2 (2017): 189–228.

the Caves. Yet, several fragments were suspected by one or more of our team members to be forgeries, without any consensus being reached by the core team. In his introduction to the volume, Elgvin noted disturbing facts with a number of fragments:

The appearance of the scripts in a number of Schøyen fragments exhibits a conspicuous nonuniformity in letter sizes, forms, and ductus, in line spacing and word spacing. This is true for MS 4612/5 (Num), MS 5214/1 (Deut 6), MS 5214/2 (Deut 32), MS 5480 (1 Sam 5), MS 5233/1 (2 Sam 20), MS 5233/2 (Ps), MS 5440 (1 Kgs), MS 5441 (Ruth) ... None of the fragments published here were found by archaeologists, and remain unprovenanced ... we cannot at this stage rule out the possibility that some of the fragments contain modern ink. We have noted the exceptional feature that even small fragments in The Schøyen Collection and the American collections preserve textual variants suggested by the editors of *BHK* and *BHS*, and some of them follow line-for-line and word-for-word the layout in previously published texts editions. In his palaeographical analysis Michael Langlois notes many ‘hesitant hands’, and some of them mix earlier and later scribal features. Some of these features may cast doubt on the authenticity of a fragment. (3)

In particular, the publication mentioned problematic features with a Proverbs fragments (MS 4612/11, Prov 4:23–5:1), but concluded, “In spite of these observations, there is insufficient evidence to make any firm judgments about the authenticity of the text” (p. 239).

Langlois drew attention to numerous palaeographical and physical anomalies and concluded that “a number of hands exhibit inconsistencies that may raise concerns as to the authenticity of some manuscripts” and that even in cases where explanations could be offered, “sophisticated forgeries cannot be ruled out” (p. 124).

Elgvin was subsequently criticized for not stating more clearly in the book that nine fragments had been taken out as modern forgeries and that fragments published in it could likewise have been forged. (4) In retrospect it is not difficult to agree that Elgvin’s decision to postpone a more comprehensive discussion until the core team could present a scholarly publication on the disqualified fragments (cf. *DSD* 2/2017) was unfortunate.

(3) Elgvin, Davis, and Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves*, 52 n. 10, 53.

(4) Cf. Molly M. Zahn, “Review of *Gleanings from the Caves: Dead Sea Scrolls and Artefacts from the Schøyen Collection*,” by Torleif Elgvin, Kipp Davis, and Michael Langlois, *DSD* 24.2 (2017): 307–9; Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, “Review of *Gleanings from the Caves: Dead Sea Scrolls and Artefacts from the Schøyen Collection*,” by Torleif Elgvin, Kipp Davis, and Michael Langlois, *RevQ* 29.2 (2017): 314–22.

Growing Awareness of Forged Fragments

From early 2014 the core team working on the Schøyen fragments had entertained the option that a substantial part of the fragments recently bought by private collectors were forged. (5) Since the publication of *Gleanings*, important contributions have shed more light on the remarkable appearance of more than fifty “Judaean Desert fragments” after 2003. (6) The 2016 publication of the thirteen fragments of the Museum of the Bible added more material to the discussion, (7) as Langlois noted palaeographical similarities both with the disqualified Schøyen fragments and fragments published in *Gleanings* and concluded that the thirteen manuscripts in the Museum of the Bible were all forgeries. (8) In the volume itself, Kipp Davis noted disturbing palaeographical and physical features with a number of fragments. Further, Martin Schøyen disclosed new information on communication with William Kando prior to his 2009–2010 acquisitions. (9)

(5) Early publications of new fragments include Hanan Eshel and Esther Eshel, “New Fragments from Qumran: 4QGen^f, 4QIsa^b, 4Q226, 8QGen, and XQpapEnoch,” *DSD* 12.2 (2005): 134–57; Esther Eshel and Hanan Eshel, “A Preliminary Report on Seven New Fragments from Qumran / מגילות מקומראן שטרם פורסמו / Meghillot 5–6 (2007): 271–78; blog posts by James Charlesworth in 2008–2010.

(6) Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, “Post-2002 Dead Sea Scrolls Fishy Fragments—or Forgeries?,” 20 August 2016, https://www.academia.edu/27658971/Post-2002_Dead_Sea_Scrolls_Fishy_Fragments_or_Forgeries (no longer available on academia.edu); Årstein Justnes, “Forfalskninger av dødehavsruller. Om mer enn 70 nye fragmenter – og historien om ett av dem (DSS F.154; 5 Mos 27,4–6),” *Teologisk tidsskrift* 6.1 (2017): 70–83; Årstein Justnes and Torleif Elgvin, “A Private Part of Enoch: A Forged Fragment of 1 Enoch 8:4–9:3,” in *Wisdom Poured Out Like Water: Studies on Jewish and Christian Antiquity in Honor of Gabriele Boccaccini*, ed. J. Harold Ellens et al., DCLS 38 (Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 195–203; Kipp Davis, “Dead Sea Scrolls Papyri: Scribal Features and Questions of Authenticity” (presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Boston, November 2017), https://www.academia.edu/37920665/Dead_Sea_Scrolls_Papyri_Scribal_Features_and_Questions_of_Authenticity. See also Årstein Justnes, “A Lightly Annotated Chronological Bibliography of the Post-2002 Dead Sea Scrolls-like Fragments,” *The Lying Pen of Scribes*, 12 March 2019, <https://lyingpen.com/2019/03/12/a-lightly-annotated-chronological-bibliography-of-the-post-2002-dead-sea-scrolls-like-fragments/>.

(7) Emanuel Tov, Kipp Davis, and Robert R. Duke, eds., *Dead Sea Scrolls Fragments in the Museum Collection*, Publications of Museum of the Bible 1 (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2016).

(8) In a personal communication to Kipp Davis in November 2016 and in a paper in August 2017; see Michael Langlois, “Assessing the Authenticity of Dead Sea Scrolls Fragments Through Palaeographical Analysis” (presented at the Society of Biblical Literature 2017 International Meeting, Berlin, 8 August 2017), <http://michaellanglois.org?p=14279>.

(9) Late February and early March 2009 Martin Schøyen approached William Kando about the possibility to acquire fragments of specific books: Nehemiah, Chronicles,

Our suspicions were raised and shared with colleagues in 2014–15, and from 2016 on, other scholars, in particular Eibert Tigchelaar, also voiced their suspicions. (10) The format of this fraud has gradually dawned upon us. The growing evidence suggests that the great majority of the post-2002 fragments are forged. In October 2018, the Museum of the Bible announced that five of their fragments were deemed forgeries: Gen 31:23–25?, 32:3–6 (DSS F.191, Gen2), Lev 23:24–28 (DSS F.203, Lev6), Num 8:3–5 (DSS F.194, Num2), Neh 2:13–16 (DSS F.201, Neh2), Jon 4:2–5 (DSS F.197, Jon1). This conclusion is based on material analysis carried out by one of our core team members, Ira Rabin, at the Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und –prüfung in Berlin. Other fragments in the Museum of the Bible collection are yet to be tested.

Features That May Suggest Modern Forgery

Against this background, it is now high time to review the fragments published in *Gleanings*. Some of this work has been published by Kipp Davis, who elaborated on observations made by our team in the process of preparing the text editions. (11) In his conclusion, he reviews eight different categories of problematic features that recur in many recently appeared fragments: (1) small size, (2) dark color, (3) coarse texture, (4) poor scribal skill, (5) strange formation of letters including bleeding of ink, (6) misaligned lines or letters, (7) palaeographical inconsistency, (8) textual plausibility (including surprising textual variants and line-for-line alignment with published text editions). In MS 5480 (1 Sam 5:10–11) and MS 5214/1 (Deut 6:1–2) he finds six of these categories represented; (12) in MS 4612/9 (Jer 3:15–19), MS 4612/4

Ezra, Kings, 1–2 Samuel, Proverbs, Qohelet, Esther, Jeremiah, *1 Enoch*. He was subsequently able to obtain fragments of 1 Samuel (× 2), Kings, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Proverbs, and *1 Enoch* (× 3). See Davis et al., “Nine Dubious ‘Dead Sea Scrolls’ Fragments from the Twenty-First Century,” 192–94.

(10) In 2015 Eibert Tigchelaar was informed by Årstein Justnes that the core team suspected that a substantial part of the Schøyen fragments were forged (at that stage Justnes was suspicious vis-à-vis a larger number of fragments than his coworkers Elgvín and Davis). For Tigchelaar’s subsequent work on the issue, see the publications mentioned in notes 4 and 6.

(11) Kipp Davis, “Caves of Dispute: Patterns of Correspondence and Suspicion in the Post-2002 ‘Dead Sea Scrolls’ Fragments,” *DSD* 24.2 (2017): 229–70.

(12) Cf. the following note from the edition of MS 5214/1: “The *shin* is much smaller and is shaped differently from the same letter earlier in this line. This letter and the ink trace to the right of it appear surprisingly high on the hypothetical dryline. The *shin* suspiciously follows the contours of the fragment, as if it has been ‘squeezed’

(Gen 36:7–16) and MS 5233/2 (Ps 9:10–13) five; in MS 4612/11 (Prov 4:23–5:1) four or five; in MS 5440 (1 Kgs 16:23–26), MS 5233/1 (2 Sam 20:22–24) and MS 4612/5 (Num 16:2–5) three. (13)

The last five of Davis' categories weigh heavier than the first three. Further, another category should be added: an undocumented or unreliable provenance for fragments not known before 2003. (14) Difficulty in aligning a biblical text with מ or ט within reasonable column margins could be considered a sub-category under 8 (see below).

Palaeographical Anomalies

Suspicion of forgery was expressed by Langlois as early as 2007. (15) His doubts as to the authenticity of XQpapEnoch (16) were based on (1) the unverified provenance of a fragment that had just surfaced and (2) its textual character, especially its clarification of a *crux* in 1 Enoch 9:1. Without being able to examine the fragment or even access high resolution photographs, he could not accumulate more evidence and conclude with certainty that it was forged. It was the global study of the Dead Sea Scrolls in The Schøyen Collection, and more specifically their palaeographical analysis, that led to a breakthrough.

As early as August 2012, when the core team was trying to join the Schøyen fragments to existing scrolls, we realized that, with a few exceptions, their script did not match any potential candidates among known Dead Sea scrolls. As a matter of fact, besides MS 5439/1 (4QRP^b frg. 8a), the script of all the fragments that had recently surfaced did not match any known Dead Sea scroll. Had it been the case for one or two fragments only, this would not have been an issue. But since most of these fragments exhibited a new hand, this could hardly be a coincidence. We hypothesized that they may have been found in a previously

into the available space along the bottom edge"; Elgvin, Davis, and Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves*, 174.

(13) Davis, "Caves of Dispute," 262–64.

(14) Great skepticism is needed vis-à-vis the information on provenance (*i.e.* place of origin and list of previous owners) on the Schøyen collection's website. This information has, for tactical reasons, often been subject to change. All the post-2002 fragments are *de facto* undocumented.

(15) See e.g. Michael Langlois, "Livre d'Hénoch," in *La Bibliothèque de Qumrân, 1. Torah – Genèse*, ed. André Paul, Katell Berthelot, and Thierry Legrand (Paris: Cerf, 2008), 14.

(16) Subsequently purchased by Martin Schøyen (= MS 4612/12). For the first presentation of the fragment, cf. Esther Eshel and Hanan Eshel, "A New Fragment of the 'Book of Watchers' from Qumran (XQpapEnoch) / קטע חדש של ספר העררים מקומראן (XQpapEnoch)," *Tarbiz* 73.2 (2004): 171–79; Eshel and Eshel, "New Fragments from Qumran."

unknown cave or location, and that they perhaps documented a new scribal school. (17)

As Langlois conducted a detailed paleographical analysis of each fragment, the same remarks began to appear over and over again in his notes: many of these fragments were copied by a hesitant hand producing a clumsy script. Dead Sea scrolls are usually penned by experienced scribes who know where to start and stop letter strokes. They write at a regular speed, without hesitation or inconsistencies. Such is not the case with those fragments: the scribe wrote slowly, sometimes stopping at mid-stroke to correct the trajectory. Strokes that should have been smooth and fluid turn out to be shaky and jerky. This phenomenon should not be confused with inconsistencies that may be observed on highly cursive scripts: contemporary Aramaic ostraca from Maresha, for instance, exhibit careless scripts that alternate between various letter forms, but they were penned by a fast and confident hand—perhaps too confident indeed, as the scribe was not trained to copy literary texts. (18) In the case of the Schøyen fragments, the copyist was on the contrary unusually slow, lacking assurance and training. This is quite unusual for such long, literary works as biblical books, but not impossible of course, and does not in itself prove forgery. (19)

Indeed, in 2013, Langlois asked to examine the fragments themselves and discovered that these palaeographical anomalies were often linked with material anomalies: the surface of the fragment could have been already damaged when the text was penned. He first hypothesized that these manuscripts could be scribal exercises, using old fragments for the training of a rookie scribe. But on some of them, the shape of the letters seemed to adapt to the current edge of the fragment, which indicated that the fragment already had this shape when the text was penned on it. Yet, the text was not complete: the copyist had willingly (albeit clumsily) tried to convince the reader that the manuscript was once larger but that only a fragment was preserved. In January 2014, Langlois asked to examine again what he considered, at that time, to

(17) Elgvin, Davis, and Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves*, 124.

(18) Michael Langlois, “New Aramaic Divination Texts from Maresha: Script, Syntax and Genre” (presented at the European Association of Biblical Studies 2017 Annual Meeting, Berlin, 8 August 2017). A palaeographical chart will be published in Esther Eshel and Michael Langlois, “The Aramaic Divination Texts,” in *The Excavations of Maresha Subterranean Complex 169*, ed. Ian Stern, forthcoming.

(19) Ada Yardeni’s suggestion that the Lanier Amos fragment (quoted in Elgvin, Davis, and Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves*, 52) and seven Museum of the Bible fragments were written by a worn nib (cf. Tov, Davis, and Duke, *Dead Sea Scrolls Fragments in the Museum Collection*, 24–26) does not adequately account for features such as “bleeding” of ink and strokes of varying thickness even within one and the same word.

be some of the most suspicious fragments: MS 5214/2 (DSS F.109, Deut 32:5–9), MS 4612/8 (DSS F.124, 1 En. 7:1–5), MS 4612/10 (DSS F.112 1 Sam 2:11–14), MS 5426 (DSS F.122, Neh 3:14–15), MS 5440 (DSS F.115, 1 Kgs 16:23–26), MS 4612/9 (DSS F.116, Jer 3:15–19), MS 4612/12 (DSS F.125, 1 En. 8:4–9:3), MS 4612/4 (DSS F.101, Gen 36:7–16), MS 5214/1 (DSS F.108, Deut 6:1–2). After this second visual examination, he shared his conclusions with the rest of the core team: in his opinion, several of the Schøyen fragments could be modern forgeries. In particular, he pointed to MS 4612/10 and MS 5426, which exhibited physical anomalies. We investigated the issue further and were able to substantiate these conclusions with additional textual and physical evidence. (20)

Once it was established that the hand that penned those fragments is that of a forger, a simple corollary led to the conclusion that other fragments copied by the same hand were modern forgeries as well. That is how Langlois came to doubt the authenticity of numerous Schøyen fragments, and he expressed his suspicions in his chapter on palaeographical analysis. At that stage of research, Elgvin and Davis did not find the evidence clear enough to disqualify more than nine fragments from *Gleanings*, even though they shared some of his suspicions.

Even without additional evidence, and though the hand is sometimes difficult to identify due to its inconsistency and limited sample, its presence throughout recent acquisitions by private collectors (The Schøyen Collection, the Museum of the Bible, Azusa Pacific University, etc.) has led Langlois to conclude that the same modern forger has penned fragments in these collections. In the current state of research, Langlois believes that the following manuscripts published in *Gleanings* are modern forgeries: (21)

- MS 4612/11 (Prov 4:23–5:1, see Figure 1): The script is clumsy, and the few letters that are attested multiple times (see especially ה and כ) exhibit an inconsistent ductus.

(20) Five fragments were sent to Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und -prüfung in Berlin for testing in the spring of 2015, and results from material tests performed in 2012 were revisited. See Davis et al., “Nine Dubious ‘Dead Sea Scrolls’ Fragments from the Twenty-First Century.” A number of fragments published in *Gleanings* were screened anew in June 2015, when the manuscript of *Gleanings* was already submitted.

(21) These manuscripts are listed in the order in which they appear in the chapter on palaeographical analysis, so that the reader may easily compare the following observations with the pictures and more detailed notes available there. In his 2017 review, Tigchelaar concluded that these fragments were possible or probable forgeries. He refers to the naïve and hesitant scribal hands noted by Langlois and gives palaeographical reasons for disqualifying MS 5214/4 (Deut 32).

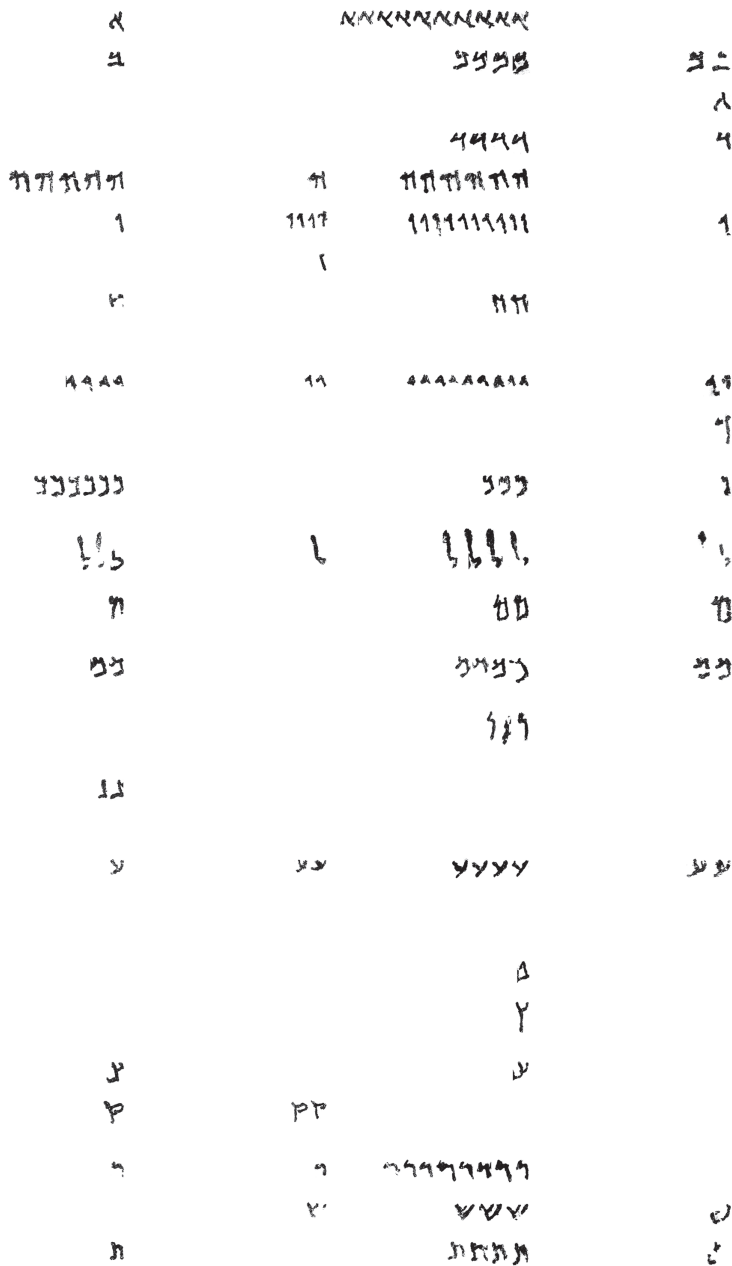


Figure 1. From left to right: palaeographical charts of MS 4612/11, MS 5480, MS 4612/9 and MS 5233/2.

- MS 5480 (1 Sam 5:10–11, see Figure 1): Despite the limited number of letters attested on this small fragment, the hand is hesitant (see especially ו, ז, פ). In his online discussion of *Gleanings* (see note 6) Tigchelaar correctly notes several palaeographical anomalies. The *he* in line 1 ends in a clumsy protuberance. The first letter of line 1, supposed to be a *waw*, is quite problematic. The *lamed* in line 2 has an additional diagonal stroke that turns the hook into a triangle. The hook of *qop* is jerky.
- MS 4612/9 (Jer 3:15–19, see Figure 1): The hand is hesitant and the strokes uneven; the script is irregular and alternates between Hasmonean and Herodian shapes.
- MS 5233/2 (Ps 9:10, 12–13, see Figure 1): The few letters on this fragment exhibit inconsistencies and sometimes contradictory morphological features.
- MS 4612/5 (Num 16:2–5, see Figure 2): The ductus of letters that appear multiple times is inconsistent (see especially ב, ו, final מ) and the hand is overall very hesitant.
- MS 4612/4 (Gen 36:7–16, see Figure 2): The small size of the script complicates palaeographical analysis and could have accounted for its anomalies had they not been spotted on other forged manuscripts (see especially א, ה, ח, ט).
- MS 5233/1 (2 Sam 20:22–24, see Figure 2): This one is a tough call; there is no obvious anomaly, but the script is crude and reminiscent of forged manuscripts. Early on, Hanan Eshel suggested that the fragment belonged to 1QSamuel, though this scroll was found not by the Bedouin but by archaeologists. This ascription must be abandoned. MS 5233/1 exhibits smaller line spacing and script. Its ductus is also quite different. א, for instance, features a left leg that joins the diagonal far below its top, as opposed to 1QSamuel. Langlois believes that this tiny fragment was probably copied by the same forger, but not as an attempt to imitate 1QSamuel. Elgvin is hesitant about this fragment, and notes that some letters appear weaker than others in a way that might suggest post-writing wearing of the skin. (22)
- MS 5440 (1 Kgs 16:23–26, see Figure 2): The script is quite clumsy and inconsistent, with hesitations that are characteristic of this series of forgeries (see especially ב, ה, ז, ש, ש).

(22) The fragment belongs to Martin Schøyen's second round of acquisitions from William Kando (2003–04), consisting of MS 4612/2a–c (Exod 3, 5, 16), MS 5234 (Tob 14), MS 5214/1 (Deut 6), MS 5233/1 (2 Sam 20), MS 5233/2 (Ps 9), MS 4612/3 (DSS F.Eschat ar). Of the seven other fragments only MS 4612/3 (DSS F.Eschat ar) seems to be authentic.



Figure 2. From left to right: palaeographical charts of MS 4612/5, MS 4612/4, MS 5233/1 and MS 5440.

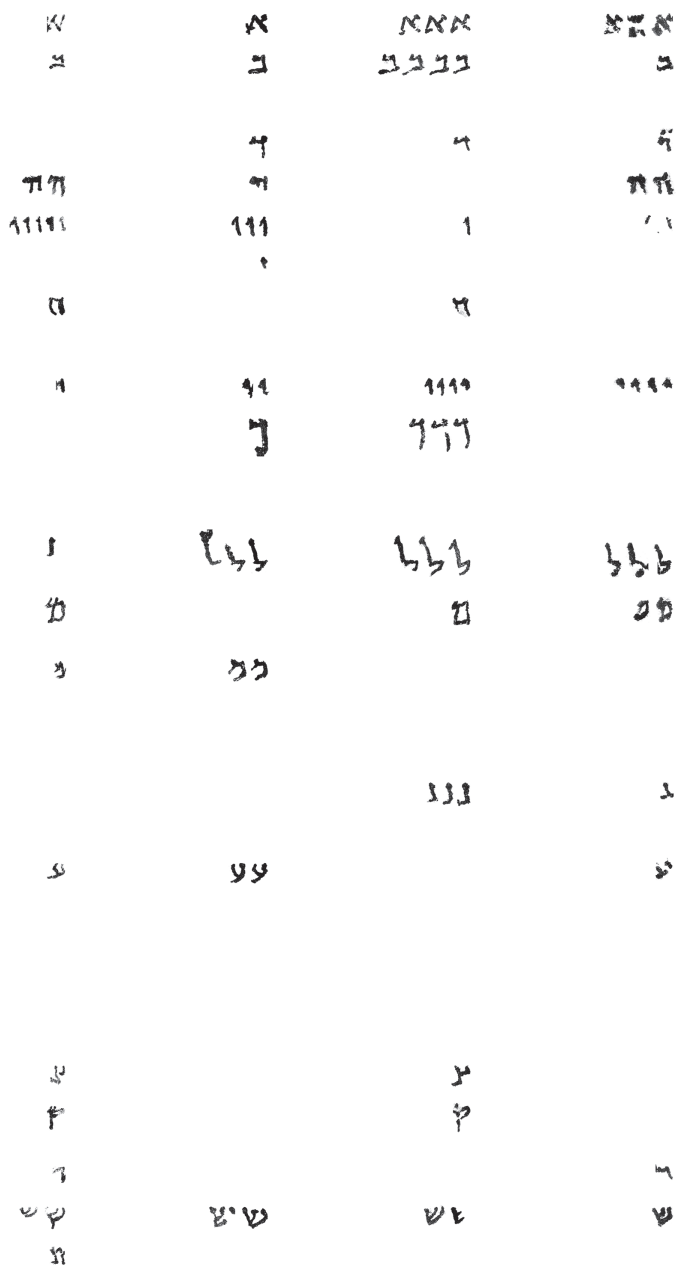


Figure 3. From left to right: palaeographical charts of MS 5214/1, MS 5441, MS 5214/2 and MS 4612/2a.

- MS 5214/1 (Deut 6:1–2, see Figure 3): In spite of this fragment's small size, the forger's crude and clumsy script is easy to recognize, notwithstanding several inconsistencies and anomalies (see especially π , ρ).
- MS 5441 (Ruth 2:1–2, see Figure 3): The hand is less hesitant, but the forger is betrayed by his crude ductus. Either the same forger tried to imitate a later script, or this is the work of another forger (see also MS 5214/2). In any case, MS 5441 should be considered a forgery.
- MS 5214/2 (Deut 32:5–9, see Figure 3): Studied individually, this fragment could easily be considered authentic, with its rather consistent script. But the ductus is quite crude, as is the case with MS 5441. It should thus be considered a probable forgery. (23)

By contrast, other manuscripts analyzed in Langlois' chapter do not exhibit the same problems: MS 5439/1 (4QRP^b), MS 1909 (1QSB), MS 5095/7 (CommGen A), MS 4612/3 (Eschat. Frg), MS 5439/2 (Unid.), MS 4611 (Lev 26:3–9, 33–37), MS 2861 (Judg 4:5–6), and MS 2713 (Josh 1:9–12; 2:3–5) are not suspect in terms of palaeography, while MS 4612/1 (Joel 4:1–5) is fine except for a couple of letters that exhibit an unusual ductus (see especially \aleph and \beth). From a purely palaeographical standpoint, there is no strong evidence of forgery; but this does not mean that these manuscripts are genuine, of course, as a skilled forger could imitate such scripts. Hence, if some of these fragments are forgeries, they were probably not copied by the same forger. Other factors must be taken into consideration, such as history of ownership, physical testing or literary analysis.

Some of the manuscripts published in *Gleanings* were not included in Langlois' chapter on palaeographical analysis, especially wads with small fragments: MS 1926/4a (Dan 2:4–5), MS 1926/4b (Dan 3:26–27), MS 1926/2 (1QApocryphon of Genesis ar), MS 5095/1 (11QT^a), MS 5095/4 (11QT^a), MS 1926/1 (1QIsa^a), MS 1926/3 (1QS), MS 4612/7. Their script, when attested, is not suspect, and their ownership history is usually well documented; these manuscripts are probably authentic.

Let us now turn to the nine fragments published in *DSD* 24. As with other Dead Sea Scrolls in The Schøyen Collection, Langlois had carried out a full palaeographical analysis and prepared charts to be included in *Gleanings*, but these manuscripts were subsequently removed from the publication, so that his study was not published. Here are a few notes on their palaeography: (24)

(23) While Langlois in *Gleanings* considered this script as skilled and confident, Tigheelaar's review (p. 318) points to interrupted strokes, a problematic base of *bet* in בני in line 4 and the diagonal of ל in תבל in line 5.

(24) The fragments are listed according to their inventory number.

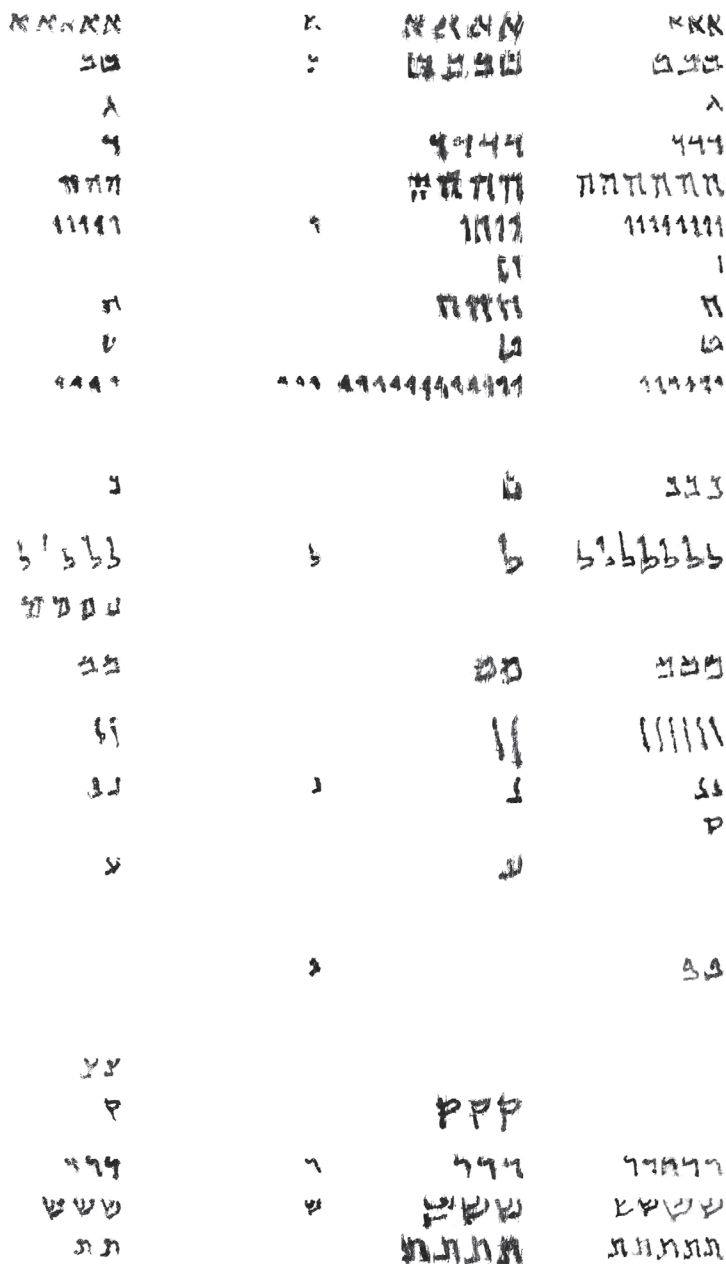


Figure 4. From left to right: palaeographical charts of MS 4612/2b, MS 4612/2c, MS 4612/6 and MS 4612/8.

- MS 4612/2a (Exod 3:13–15, see Figure 3): The hand is hesitant, with several inconsistencies. The strokes are uneven and the script clumsy; see further MS 4612/2b and c.
- MS 4612/2b (Exod 5:9–14, see Figure 4): The hand is hesitant, inconsistent; the forger apparently tried to imitate the same script as MS 4612/2a; see further MS 4612/2c.
- MS 4612/2c (Exod 16:10, see Figure 4): The few letters on this small fragment exhibit a hesitant hand, probably imitating the same script as MS 4612/2a and b, so that the three fragments would appear to come from the same scroll.
- MS 4612/6 (1 En 106:19–107:1 [papyrus], see Figure 4): The script is rather consistent but quite crude. It is possible that this fragment was copied by another forger, though other factors may explain the better script (size, surface, experience; see also MS 4612/12).
- MS 4612/8 (1 En 7:1–5, see Figure 4): The hand is hesitant and inconsistent (see especially א, ב, ה, מ, ת). The forger's crude and clumsy script is easy to recognize.
- MS 4612/10 (1 Sam 2:11–14): The forger tried to imitate a more sophisticated book hand but is betrayed by the clumsiness of the script and the inconsistency of ל, which appears to adapt to the edges of the fragment (see also ק).
- MS 4612/12 (1 En 8:4–9:3 [papyrus]): The hand is quite regular but naïve and crude, with a few hesitations (see e.g. ש). As with MS 4612/6, the surface and larger size might account for the somewhat less clumsy script; although it is possible that these two fragments were penned by another forger, this is not necessarily the case.
- MS 5234 (Tob 14:3–4 [papyrus]): The script is quite regular, but the thickness of the strokes is sometimes inconsistent (see e.g. ל, מ), and the hand is rather crude. The forger apparently attempted to imitate a semi-cursive script (see esp. ת).
- MS 5426 (Neh 3:14–15): The hand is hesitant and exhibits several inconsistencies (see e.g. ד, ו, ח, י, ל, מ, ש, ת). It mixes formal and semiformal techniques of various periods. The ink is unusually shiny, and visible—albeit with bleeding—even as the text continues in places where the upper layer of the parchment is gone. This is a clear indication that the text was added on an old, already damaged fragment. The forger may have attempted to imitate the small-sized script and line spacing of 4Q117, the only known manuscript of the Book of Ezra, so that the new fragment could appear as though it belonged to the same scroll. Esther Eshel indeed proposed early on to identify this fragment as belonging to 4Q117. Elgvin, noting that the script is slightly different from the other suspicious fragments,

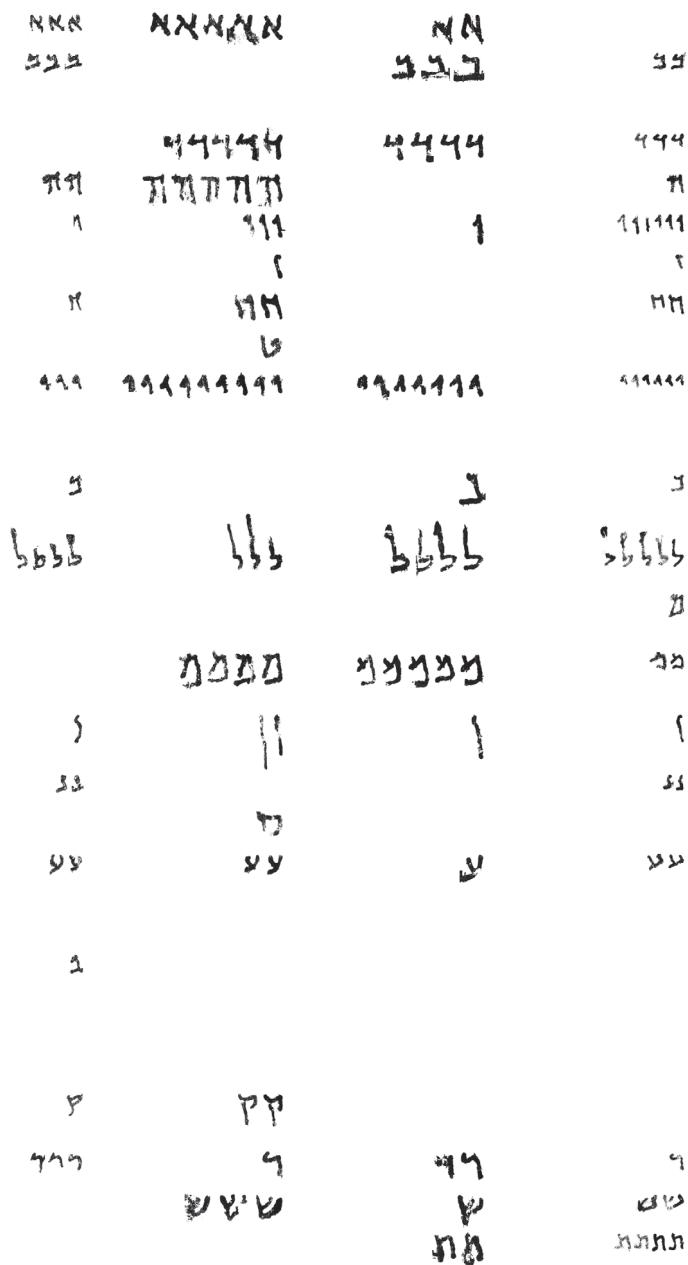


Figure 5. From left to right: palaeographical charts of MS 4612/10, MS 4612/12, MS 5234 and MS 5426.

holds that it is likely written by another scribe. (25) Langlois, on the other hand, argues that it may have been penned by the same forger, who attempted to imitate different scripts on various fragments while exhibiting the same characteristic tendencies: lack of fluidity; slow and jerky drawing; inconsistencies; exaggerations; mistakes. (26)

Overall, palaeographical analysis alone already constitutes strong evidence of forgery, and even allows for the identification of the same forger's hand on most, and perhaps all, of the fake Dead Sea Scrolls fragments in The Schøyen Collection. This evidence is further supported by additional suspicious features.

Letters Related to Damaged Skin

In some fragments, specific letters “circumvent” holes or damaged areas of the skin. Some observations in *Gleanings*, now revisited, lead us to more definite conclusions:

- MS 4612/4 (Gen 36:7–16) line 5: חור[ה] מן[ה]. “There is a hole in the leather before the last clearly preserved letter. It is difficult to fit a letter into this lacuna without breaking the line” (p. 142). The unusually long word space and the fact that a *waw* cannot be reconstructed before ח[ה] מן[ה] without breaking the imagined dryline suggest that the hole in the skin was present at the time of inscribing.
- MS 4612/9 (Jer 3:15–19) line 2: יאמר. There are two wormholes that obscure this word where the *'alep* and *mem* occur. Both of these letters appear as though they were written around the edges of the holes” (p. 216). Further observations with regard to this fragment (see below on the presence of ink in a crack) have convinced the editors (Elgvin and Davis) that it is a forgery.

(25) This fragment was not bought from the Kandos but from an American vendor (possibly Lee Biondi or Craig Lampe) who claimed to have acquired it from Kando. MS 5426 was first published in July 2008 by James H. Charlesworth on his webpage (<https://web.archive.org/web/20081026024708/http://www.ijco.org/?categoryId=28681>). A picture of it appeared in Lee Biondi, *From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Bible in America: A Brief History of the Bible from Antiquity to Modern America Told through Ancient Manuscripts and Early European and American Printed Bibles* (Biblical Arts of Arizona, 2004). The fragment exhibits four textual “variants,” one of which may be interpreted as a correction from a *Ṣ*-like reading towards *Ṣ*; cf. Davis' eighth category (above, p. 8): here also the forger seems scholarly informed.

(26) In his online discussion (see note 6) Tigchelaar comments: “Like several other fragments procured by Biondi, this one has a remarkable variety of letter forms, with all kinds of unusual ways in which the letters and even the strokes are written.” As examples he notes that the two *taws* in דלתותיו in line 3 appear different from those in the same word in line 1, and that the right arm of *sin* in שר (line 2) appears as a *nun* with an extended base stroke.

Textual “Variants” and Line Reconstruction

In *Gleanings* we used computer software to virtually reconstruct the full text between column margins on both sides of the fragment. At times the reconstruction only allowed for a plumb-line right margin and a reasonable left margin by postulating a variant text—shorter or longer than \mathfrak{M} —and much scholarly effort was invested in reflection on possible textual variants. In retrospect, the difficulties in reconstructing an \mathfrak{M} -like text between column margins for these fragments should be explained, not by possible ancient textual variants, but by their being written by a modern scribe who had not invested much effort in a full reconstruction of his lines (apart from some of the cases where a line-for-line agreement with a modern text edition could be recognized). This sometimes happens with authentic fragments, but the frequency is clearly different with the post-2002 fragments. (27) Here are some notes on specific fragments:

- MS 4612/4 (Gen 36:7–16, cf. *Gleanings*, 141–51). In lines 4 and 8 the editors (Elgvin and Davis) suggested to insert the name of an additional descendent of Esau to accommodate for the needed line length (p. 146). They further tended to classify לֹא־לְכֹז for מִלֹּא־לְכֹז (Gen 36:12) as a scribal error. In contrast, Elgvin now concludes that the modern scribe did not succeed in inscribing a nice *pe* on the coarse surface.
- MS 4612/9 (Jer 3:15–19, cf. *Gleanings*, 215–21). In line 3 Elgvin and Davis reconstructed a shorter text of 3:17 (= \mathfrak{G}) without the “plus” in \mathfrak{M} . In line 4 they suggested the presence of a longer variant text of 3:18 to fill out the line. In line 5 (3:18) they added two words restored from \mathfrak{G} to the Hebrew text to fill out the line: $\text{מֵאֶרֶץ צֶפֶן וּמִכָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת עַל הָאָרֶץ}$. Rather than preserving a text with these highly interesting variants, the fragment evinces careless line reconstruction by the modern scribe. However, in lines 1 and 6 the scribe successfully presented a Hebrew version of the \mathfrak{G} text of 3:15 and 3:19 and thus seems scholarly informed. Further, analysis of high-resolution photographs from June 2015 showed the presence of ink in a crack in the skin (crossing the head of *lamed* of יִשְׂרָאֵל , line 5), suggesting modern copying of the text.

(27) “[T]his is something I have learned to expect from modern Dead Sea Scrolls forgeries through our work with the post-2002 fragments: When reconstructed in Photoshop they seldom — perhaps I should even say never — correspond with the text in MT or in the Septuagint”: Årstein Justnes and Anders Langslet, “Yet Another Fake? Joel 4:1–5 (DSS F.117; Hev[?]Joel)” (presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Boston, 19 November 2017).

- MS 5440 (1 Kgs 16:23–26, cf. *Gleanings*, 211–13). Our graphical reconstruction led us to propose a longer text in lines 3–4 (16:25) similar to the Peshitta (additions to מל underlined): מכל המלכים אשר היו לפניו]. The fragment exhibits the same hesitant hand as other suspicious fragments and is written by a modern scribe who did not take line reconstruction into consideration.
- MS 5214/2 (Deut 32:5–9, cf. *Gleanings*, 177–81). The fragment preserves a right column margin in lines 2–5, but it is not possible to restore an aligned beginning of line 1. At the end of the line Elgvin reconstructed a shorter text without the word הוא present in מ (32:6). In line 5 the *het* of (32:9) intended by the modern scribe appears more like a *taw*. In his attempt to copy the reading of Sam and 9 (with the plus “Israel” in 32:9 and a different division of the cola), the scribe forgot to inscribe the possessive suffix *-o* to נחלת, thus producing a text that hardly makes sense. The forger seems scholarly informed yet negligent; it is also possible that the copyist is not the same person who prepared the text.
- MS 5233/2 (Ps 9:10.12–13, cf. *Gleanings*, 235–38). Line 2 preserves words from Ps 9:10, line 3 from 9:12–13, but it is hardly possible to make a reconstruction that includes 9:11. It is difficult to identify the traces of line 1 with words in 9:9. Elgvin tentatively suggested a text where v. 12 followed v. 10, and that line 1 represents v. 11, written as superscript to line 2 (the line spacing between lines 1 and 2 is smaller than between lines 2 and 3). In retrospect, we attribute this textual inconsistency to the forger’s negligence.
- MS 4612/8 (a parchment fragment with 1 En 7:1–5) was disqualified as forged in 2015 (“Nine Dubious ‘Dead Sea Scrolls’ Fragments,” 209–13). Early on, we never succeeded in making a virtual reconstruction of the text with a plumb-line right margin, even though the scribe had followed Milik’s text edition line-for-line.

MS 4612/1 (Joel 4:1–5), Authentic or not?

It is difficult to reach a firm conclusion on the authenticity of fragment MS 4612/1 (Joel 4:1–5; cf. *Gleanings*, 223–32). In a 2017 SBL paper, Justnes suggested it to be a fake. (28) Yet, it was bought from William Kando in 2001 together with the large Leviticus fragment (MS 4611) that seems to be authentic. If MS 4612/1 is a fake, it would, according to our present knowledge, be the only forged fragment offered to buyers before 2003.

(28) Justnes and Langslet, “Yet Another Fake?” In his review (pp. 318–19), Tigheelaar regards the fragment as likely authentic.

On the basis of a graphical reconstruction of the column, Elgvin suggested a slightly shorter text in lines 3–4 (omitting the *nota accusativi* תא) and an additional word in line 5. (29) For Justnes, this “graphical textual problem” is one of the features casting doubt on the authenticity of this text—an argument now acknowledged by Elgvin.

In contrast to other suspicious scrolls, this fragment exhibits a relatively consistent late Herodian hand. (30) Langlois notes (above) that a couple of letters exhibit an unusual ductus (see especially א and ב). If the text is forged, we deal with a more skilled scribe whose hand is different from the one recognized in other recent fragments.

The skin is unusually thick (1.2 ± 0.5 mm), and its shrinking has created a wavy surface. According to Rabin, the material is leather, not processed parchment. Where the edge is folded unto the *verso*, several nicely written letters can be discerned on the vertical part of the fold and on the *verso*. As Elgvin sees it, this would have been difficult to achieve for a modern scribe: see, for instance, the following photograph (Figure 6), where a nicely written *lamed* on line 9 can be seen on the fold.

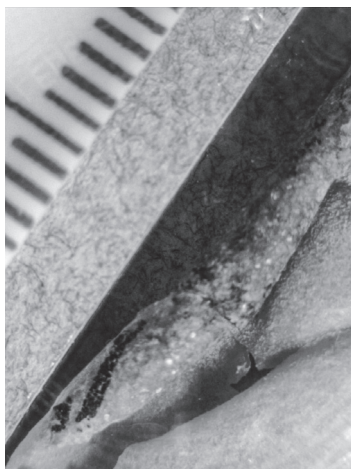


Figure 6. MS 4612/1 (Joel 4:1–5): microscopic infrared photograph of the fold on the bottom-right corner

(29) In his review, Tigchelaar notes (p. 319): “[T]hose ‘considerations of space’ pertain to lines that are almost in their entirety reconstructed with only very few remaining traces. Such highly hypothetical reconstructions should not lead to the construction of variants, let alone proposals about textual development.”

(30) “A skilled book hand exhibiting developments that appear in the latest Herodian scripts ... copied ... perhaps in the third quarter” (of the first century AD): Elgvin, Davis, and Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves*, 113. For Davis, together with the Schøyen scrolls of Leviticus, Joshua and Judges, it “exhibits a high quality, ornamental late or post-Herodian script”: Elgvin, Davis, and Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves*, 129.

Justnes notes that the letters on line 3 look blurry and that word spaces are lacking here, suggesting that the surface seems to have been wavy and worn at the time of writing. He concludes, “it is abundantly clear that this is not a fragment from a prepared scroll. It looks more like a random piece of unprepared leather, with an extremely busy surface.” He further asserts that the graphical reconstruction does not allow for enough space for a *yod* at the end of יקבצתי (line 1), while Elgvin suggests that the head of *yod* and a short space are hidden in the large fold on the leather. Further, the lower part of this *yod* is less visible than neighboring letters, which is easier explained by post-writing wearing of the skin.

The fragment is relatively large. The top margin is 3.5 cm and here the skin is less wavy. Elsewhere, the modern scribe(s) struggled to inscribe as much text as possible onto the available piece of skin. So, if recent, it is strange that the forger did not inscribe four more lines on the upper part of the fragment. For Elgvin, the weight of evidence leans towards authenticity, while Justnes concludes differently. (31)

Conclusions

Our present assessment of all Dead Sea scrolls in The Schøyen Collection is summarized in the following table (Table 1):

Table 1. List of Dead Sea scrolls in The Schøyen Collection with an Assessment of their Authenticity

MS ref.	DSS ref.	Text	Assessment (32)	Publication
MS 1909	DSS F.127, DSS F.1QSb, 1Q28b 25a = 1QSb V 22–25	1QRule of Blessings	A	Brooke and Robinson 1995; <i>DJD</i> 26:227–33; <i>Gleanings</i> , 273–81
MS 1926/1	DSS F.134. DSS F.1QIsa ^a	1QIsa ^a Uninscribed Fragments	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 309–12
MS 1926/2	DSS F.129, DSS F.1QapGen, 1Q20 I, III, IV, V	1QApocryphon of Genesis ar	A	Lundberg and Zuckerman 1996; <i>Gleanings</i> , 283–90
MS 1926/3	DSS F.135. DSS F.1QS	1QS Uninscribed Fragment	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 309–12

(31) The fragment remains unprovenanced and has uncertain origin. It cannot be excluded that MS 4611 (Lev), MS 2713 (Josh), MS 2811 (Judg) and MS 4612/1 (Joel) come from a Bar-Kokhba cave looted in the 1980s (cf. Elgvin, Davis and Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves*, 48, 160, 185–86, 193, 225).

(32) “A” means “probably authentic”; “F” means “probable modern forgery.” A question mark indicates further uncertainty or disagreement between the present authors.

MS ref.	DSS ref.	Text	Assessment	Publication
MS 1926/4a	DSS F.121, DSS F.Dan4, 1Q71, 1QDan ^a	Dan 2:4–5	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 247–56
MS 1926/4b	DSS F.121, DSS F.Dan5, 1Q72, 1QDan ^b	Dan 3:26–27	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 257–70
MS 2713	DSS F.110, DSS F.Josh1, XJosh	Josh 1:9–12; 2:3–5	A	<i>DJD</i> 38:231–39; <i>Gleanings</i> , 185–92
MS 2861	DSS F.108, DSS F.Judg3, XJudg	Judg 4:5–6	A	<i>DJD</i> 28:231–33; <i>Gleanings</i> , 193–201
MS 4611	DSS F.106, DSS F.Lev4	Lev 26:3–9, 33–37	A	<i>RevQ</i> 21:311–13; <i>Gleanings</i> , 159–67
MS 4612/1	DSS F.117, DSS F.Joel1	Joel 4:1–5	?	<i>Gleanings</i> , 223–32
MS 4612/2a	DSS F.103, DSS F.Exod3	Exod 3:13–15	F	<i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 4612/2b	DSS F.104, DSS F.Exod4	Exod 5:9–14	F	<i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 4612/2c	DSS F.105, DSS F.Exod5	Exod 16:10	F	<i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 4612/3	DSS F.131, DSS F.Eschat	Eschatological Fragment ar	A	<i>DJD</i> 37:501–4; <i>Gleanings</i> , 295–98
MS 4612/4	DSS F.101, DSS F.Gen1	Gen 36:7–16	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 141–51
MS 4612/5	DSS F.107, DSS F.Num1	Num 16:2–5	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 169–72
MS 4612/6	DSS F.126, DSS F.En3	1 En. 106:19–107:1	F	<i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 4612/7	DSS F.136, DSS F.Scraps	Wadi ed-Daliyeh Documentary Texts	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 313–19
MS 4612/8	DSS F.124, DSS F.En1	1 En. 7:1–5	F	<i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 4612/9	DSS F.116, DSS F.Jer1	Jer 3:15–19	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 215–21
MS 4612/10	DSS F.112, DSS F.Sam1	1 Sam 2:11–14	F	<i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 4612/11	DSS F.119, DSS F.Prov1	Prov 4:23–5:1	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 239–41
MS 4612/12	DSS F.125, DSS F.En2	1 En. 8:4–9:3	F	<i>Tarbiz</i> 73: 171–79; <i>DSD</i> 12:134–57; <i>DSD</i> 24:189–228; <i>FS Boccaccini</i> , 195–203

MS ref.	DSS ref.	Text	Assessment	Publication
MS 5095/1	DSS F.133	11QT ^a Unidentified Fragments	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 301–8
MS 5095/4	DSS F.133	11QT ^a Unidentified Fragments	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 301–8
MS 5095/7	DSS F.130, DSS F.CommGen	Commentary on Genesis A	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 291–94
MS 5214/1	DSS F.108, DSS F.Deut5	Deut 6:1–2	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 173–75
MS 5214/2	DSS F.109, DSS F.Deut6	Deut 32:5–9	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 177–81
MS 5233/1	DSS F.114, DSS F.Sam3	2 Sam 20:22–24	?	<i>Gleanings</i> , 207–9
MS 5233/2	DSS F.118, DSS F.Ps2	Ps 9:10, 12–13	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 235–38
MS 5234	DSS F.123, DSS F.Tob1	Tob 14:3–4	F	<i>RevQ</i> 22/3:451–61; <i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 5426	DSS F.122, DSS F.Neh1	Neh 3:14–15	F	<i>DSD</i> 24:189–228
MS 5439/1	DSS F.102, DSS F.RP1, 4Q364 8a	Gen 37:8, 4QRP ^b	A	<i>DJD</i> 12:7–30; <i>RevQ</i> 25:103–11; <i>Gleanings</i> , 153–58
MS 5439/2	DSS F.132, DSS F.Unident	Unidentified Fragment	A	<i>Gleanings</i> , 299–300
MS 5440	DSS F.115, DSS F.Kings1	1 Kgs 16:23–26	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 211–13
MS 5441	DSS F.120, DSS F.Ruth1	Ruth 2:1–2	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 243–46
MS 5480	DSS F.113, DSS F.Sam2	1 Sam 5:10–11	F	<i>Gleanings</i> , 203–5

Out of 37 manuscripts or groups of fragments, 16 are probably authentic, 19 are most likely forgeries, and 2 are debated.

The 16 or so probably authentic Dead Sea scrolls in The Schøyen Collection have allowed for contributions of lasting importance, including material analyses performed by Ira Rabin which break new ground in scrolls research. Analyses of small pieces of 1QIsa^a, 1QS, and 1QSB demonstrate that these scrolls were written on parchment of extremely high quality (*Gleanings*, 64–67). The analysis of minute pieces of 11QT^a and other texts from Cave 11 should be reviewed together with the forthcoming edition of recently discovered pieces from this cave. Davis' work on quality post-Herodian scrolls characterized by columns that are both

high and narrow provided new insights. The introduction of a two-stage presentation of fragmentarily preserved texts—with a first transcription showing only what can be seen on the fragment without any attempt to reconstruct partially preserved letters—allows for a more transparent presentation of the scholarly process in deciphering and reconstructing such texts. Material analysis of a well-preserved scroll wrapper suggests that we indeed deal with the Temple Scroll wrapper, and radio-carbon dating of a piece of the wrapper suggests a late date of deposit in Cave 11 (pp. 351–56). Taylor argued that the Schøyen “scroll jar” indeed was found in Cave 1 or Cave 2 (pp. 393–426).

The presence of around 19 likely Dead Sea scroll forgeries in The Schøyen Collection is, however, worrisome. Since 2003 the Kando family seems to have channeled few authentic manuscripts to private collections: from the first wave of small fragments in 2003–2004 to the larger wave in 2009–2010, most of the Dead Sea scrolls that have appeared on the market are at best suspect—and the Kandos are not the only vendors involved.

Fragments from these recent waves have too easily entered our textual databases. Dealers, middlemen, collectors, and scholars who have brought new fragments into the market or opened them to scholarship need to disclose all information they have about the origin and odysseys of these fragments. Among scholars, questions are raised about ethical aspects involved in the study and publication of unprovenanced texts. But it should be noted that it was the cross-disciplinary teamwork carried out on the Schøyen texts and artefacts that documented the presence of a large number of fake scrolls, some of them revealing the hands of scholarly informed forgers who are yet to be identified.

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