

Six Viable Readings from Isaiah 1–39 in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a)

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Article abstract

In order to illustrate the contribution of the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran (1QIsa^a) to textual criticism, this paper presents six viable readings for Isaiah 1–39, i.e. variants that most likely represent the original Hebrew text. In assessing the cases of Isaiah 3 : 24 ; 9 : 16 [English 9 : 17] ; 18 : 7 ; 19 : 18 ; 21 : 8 ; 23 : 10, the author takes into account the textual character of the manuscript, the scribal habits of the copyist, the work of scholars and commentaries on the Book of Isaiah, recent translations of Isaiah, as well as the context and the overall sense of the passage. In all six instances — with the possible exception of Isa 19 : 18 — the reading in 1QIsa^a is found to be compelling. These readings and similar ones should therefore be included as part of the main text of Isaiah (not the apparatus) in future editions of the Hebrew Bible, and part of the main text of Isaiah in future translations (not the footnotes).

Six Viable Readings from Isaiah 1–39 in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a)*

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The year 2010 marked the edition of the two Isaiah scrolls from Cave 1 as number 32 in the series “Discoveries in the Judean Desert” (Ulrich and Flint 2010). This effectively brought to a close the publication of the approximately 250 Dead Sea Scrolls that are classified as Biblical. This

* With distinct pleasure I dedicate this essay to my dear colleague Jean Duhaime. In 2007, I had the privilege of hosting a Dead Sea Scrolls conference at Trinity Western University, to which Professor Duhaime brought several scholars and students from the University of Montreal and other institutions of learning in Quebec. The proceedings of this conference — fortified with contributions from several more international colleagues — were published in two large volumes, for both of which Jean Duhaime served as my co-editor. These two books (one in English, the other in French) have identical contents: Flint, Duhaime, and Baek (2011); and Duhaime and Flint (2014). *Editor’s note:* Professor Peter Flint passed away on Nov. 3, 2015. His article was reviewed for publication and a few suggestions were included by the editors of *Théologiques* with the help of Jean Duhaime, without significant modifications to the original text of the author. *Théologiques* wishes to thank Prof. Flint’s family for authorizing the publication of his paper.

** Peter W. Flint (1951-2026) was Professor of Religious Studies and Co-Director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute at Trinity Western University in British Columbia. He held the Canada Research Chair in Dead Sea Scrolls studies and actively promoted Scrolls Studies through sponsored symposia, teaching, writing and delivering public lectures. He regularly participated in seminars and academic meetings on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Biblical topics, and the Christian faith in the USA, Canada, Europe, Asia and Israel. He has been the author of numerous studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls, including the critically acclaimed *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (1997), co-author of the widely-read *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (1999), and editor of the major two-volume collection *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (1998-99). Dr. Flint served as a General Editor of one series on the Old Testament: The Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature (E. J. Brill), as well as three series on the Dead Sea Scrolls. He has also edited over 25 Dead Sea Scrolls for three volumes in the internationally acclaimed series *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* (Oxford University Press).

statement is not entirely accurate, however, since over the past 15 years about 50 additional fragments have come to light, which brings the total of Biblical scrolls to about 300. (Almost all of these fragments contain Biblical texts.) Apparently from the Judaean Desert, most have been purchased by collectors and institutions, including the Norwegian collector Martin Schøyen, Azusa Pacific University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the Green Scholars' Initiative in Oklahoma City and Washington, D.C. In the Summer of 2016, the volumes containing the Schøyen scrolls (Elgvin, Langlois, and Davis 2016) and the Green Scholars' Collection (Tov, Davis, and Duke 2016) appeared. All other pieces are to be published in the near future.

Following the publication of the Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls, several scholars are turning their attention to the full impact of these scrolls on our understanding of the Biblical text, to the relationship of these documents to other early manuscripts, and to the scribal habits of the men who copied them. Whereas scholars dealing with the non-Biblical scrolls tend to deal with the structure of these manuscripts, their message, and the community that produced them, the textual critic concentrates on the relevance of the Biblical scrolls for establishing the text of Scripture in the light of other witnesses and linguistic factors.

The present article arises from my current project for Eerdmans Publishers: *The Great Isaiah Scroll in Hebrew and English, with Variant Readings and an Extensive Introduction*, incorporates data from all twenty-two Isaiah Scrolls¹. In order to illustrate the contribution of these scrolls to textual criticism, I will present here, after a few methodological remarks, six variant readings from Isaiah 1–39. A full study of each case is not possible here. My aim is rather to review briefly the main evidences in order to show how does one establish that these readings are *viable* — that is, most likely represent the original Hebrew text and therefore could or should be adopted in the body of Scripture for future Hebrew editions of the Book of Isaiah.

1. Methodological considerations

When dealing with a Biblical scroll, a scholar needs to consider four aspects:

1) *The textual character of the manuscript*. The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a), for instance, may be regarded as “mixed,” with many affinities

1. Flint, with the collaboration of Baek (in Press).

to the MT, some affinities to the LXX, and many independent readings. This is in marked contrast to the Hebrew University Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^b), which is much closer to the traditional MT. Emanuel Tov describes it as written in the “Qumran practice” (expanded orthography, etc.), and suggests it may have been copied from a text like proto-Masoretic Isaiah (Tov 2008, 16), but this is by no means certain².

2) *The scribal habits of the copyist*. The scribe of the Great Isaiah Scroll was quite careless, making several corrections and supralinear additions. In addition to this, the scroll is written in prose layout, despite the fact that the Book of Isaiah was composed in stichometric (poetic) format, with the exception of chapters 36–39 and a few other verses.

3) *The work of earlier scholars and commentators on the Book of Isaiah*. For the purpose of textual criticism, many commentaries are of limited value because they focus mainly on exegesis and the message of the Book. However, several quite recent commentaries available in English are of great value since they take into account readings from the Isaiah scrolls and other witnesses such as the LXX. For Isaiah 1–39, these include the commentaries by: Blenkinsopp (2000: Anchor Yale Bible), Oswalt (1986: New International Commentary of the Old Testament), Roberts (2015: Hermeneia), Sweeney (1996: Forms of Old Testament Literature), Watts (2005: Word Biblical Commentary), Wildberger (1991; 1997; 2002: Continental Commentary), and Williamson (2006: International Critical Commentary). All these scholars make it clear that Isaiah was composed in stichometric (poetic) format, with the exception of chapters 36–39 plus a few more verses. Although our main primary sources are in prose format, the stichometric layout determined by scholarship is clearly correct since it undoubtedly presents the original poetic text of this prophetic book. This is an important issue, since Isaiah’s stichometric format can help scholars decide if a particular reading should be included in the preferred text of Scripture, or if it is extraneous to the passage being studied.

Biblical translations must be used with caution, since many translators either did not have access to (or even seem unaware of) the Biblical Scrolls. Other deliberately translated the Masoretic Text, even where it contains difficult or troubled readings. Among English Bibles, these “conservative” Bibles include the *King James Version*, the *New King James*, the *New American Standard Bible*, the *English Standard Version*, and the *Jewish Publication Society* version. Some other translations, however, are more

2. See my own view on this topic in Flint (2010).

textually sophisticated, and have adopted several readings — especially from the Scrolls and the Septuagint — for the text of Scripture itself (not the footnotes). These include the *New American Bible*, the *NAB Revised*, the *Revised Standard Version*, the *New RSV*, and the *New International Version*. Such translations — in which translators have weighed variant readings and have chosen to include some variants in the body of Scripture — can be enormously helpful for scholars seeking the earliest recoverable Biblical text³.

Among the English translations of Isaiah, the following eleven should be noted in particular:

1. ESV (*English Standard Version* [2005 update], almost always accepts MT, seldom DSS and LXX)
2. JPS (*Jewish Publication Society Bible* [1985] almost always accepts MT)
3. KJV (*King James Version* [1611], almost always accepts MT)
4. NAB (*New American Bible* [1991], adopts many readings from DSS and LXX)
5. NABRE (*New American Bible: Revised Version*, adopts many readings from DSS and LXX)
6. NASB (*New American Standard Bible* [1995 update], almost always accepts MT)
7. NIV (*New International Version* [1984], adopts many readings from DSS and LXX)
8. NKJV (*New King James Version*, [1982], almost always accepts MT)
9. NRSV (*New Revised Standard Version* [1989], adopts many readings from DSS and LXX)
10. RSV (*New Revised Version* [1952], adopts many readings from DSS and LXX)
11. TNIV (*Today's New International Version* [1985], adopts many readings from DSS and LXX)

A further eight English translations of Isaiah have been consulted, with varying results as to their use of ancient witnesses other than the Masoretic Text:

3. This study has deliberately focused on translations and commentaries available in English. I will also refer occasionally to other studies, including the important report, available in French, on the work done by an international Committee of the United Bible Societies (Barthélemy 1986). For an overview of the use of the Qumran scrolls of Isaiah in three major French study editions of the Bible (*Bible de Jérusalem*, *Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible*, *Nouvelle Bible Segond*), see Duhaime (2005).

MT

וְהָיָה תַּחַת בִּשְׁמֹם מִקַּיָּה וְתַחַת חֲגוּרָה נִקְפָּה
וְתַחַת מַעֲשָׂה מִקְשָׁה קָרְקָה וְתַחַת פְּתִיגִיל מִחֲגֶרֶת שֶׁקַּ
פִּי־תַחַת יָפִי:

Then, instead of perfume there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope;
instead of well set hair, baldness; instead of a fine robe, sackcloth;
branding instead of beauty.

LXX

(reading not found)⁵

Option 1: “truly, instead of beauty, humiliation,” supported by 1QIsa^a and accepted by the following scholars: Blenkinsopp (“yes, shame where beauty once was”; 2000, 200-201), Oswalt (1986, 140), Watts (“Indeed shame instead of beauty”; 2005, 69-70), Wildberger (“truly, instead of beauty, humiliation”; 1991, 146), and Roberts (“For instead of beauty, [there will be] shame”; 2015, 59-60). כִּי (“truly”) remains a particle (thus Milik 1950, 73-94, 204-225, esp. 216) and Nötscher; 1951, 299-302, esp. 300); for the opposite viewpoint on כִּי (with the sense of “branding”), see Driver (1951, 17-30, esp. 25). This addition of בִּשְׁמֹם (and sense of כִּי as “truly”) is also adopted by the NABRE, NLT-SE, NRSV, and RSV, which also illustrates the textual sophistication of the translators involved.

Option 2: “branding instead of beauty,” supported by the MT, Aquila, and Symmachus (cf. LXXmss). The entire hemistich (24c) is not included in LXX. Kutscher suggests that כִּי in the sense of “branding” is derived from the root כה (*mi’pal* “to be burned,” “to be scorched”) and that בִּשְׁמֹם “shame” in 1QIsa^a may be an addition to the Biblical text (Kutscher 1974, 537). The traditional Masoretic reading is also supported by Sweeney (1996, 107) and Williamson (2006, 285), as well as members of the UBS Committee (Barthélemy 1986, 26-29) and the following translations: AMP, CJB, ESV, GWORD, HCSB, JPS, NAB, NASB, NET, NIV, NJB, NKJV, REB, and TNIV.

Conclusion. This variant reading involves an additional word in 1QIsa^a, but is supported by no other Hebrew witnesses. Nevertheless, the stichometric structure of the entire verse must be considered: 24a(αβ), 24b(αβ), 24c, yielding a discernible pattern that supports inclusion of בִּשְׁמֹם in 24c (thus 1QIsa^a). For Roberts, MT’s is clearly defective (Roberts 2015, 60), while Wildberger (1991, 146) observes that MT’s “branding instead

5. The Septuagint omitted תַּחַת כִּי and moved יָפִי at the beginning of v. 25 (see Barthélemy 1986, 26).

of beauty” is not very likely, “and the pattern of the final sentence [in the MT] leads in a different direction than that of the parallels which precede it...”

2.2 *Isaiah 9: 16 [English 9: 17] (Reading supported by a scroll, parallelism)*

Isa 9: 16[17] יחמיל 1QIsa^a] יִשְׁמַח מִט (cf. v 18)

This variant reading is in a section of Isaiah describing the LORD’s anger against Israel (9: 8-21), and involves different verbal roots in 1QIsa^a and the MT.

1QIsa^a

על כן על בחוריו לוא יחמול אדוני
ואת יתומיו ואת אלמנותיו לוא ירחם
כי כולו חנפ ומרע וכול פה דבר נבלה
בכול זואת לוא שב אפו ועוד ידיו נטויה

For that reason my Lord does not have pity on their young men
or have compassion on their orphans and widows.

For everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks profanity.
For all this, his anger is not turned away, his hands are stretched out still.

MT

על־כן על־בְּחֹרָיו לֹא־יִשְׁמַח אֲדֹנָי
וְאֶת־יְתֹמָיו וְאֶת־אַלְמָנֹתָיו לֹא יִרְחָם
כִּי כָלֹו חָנָף וּמֵרֵעַ וְכָל־פֶּה דֹבֵר נִבְלָה
בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב אָפוֹ וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה:

For that reason my Lord does not rejoice in their young men
or have compassion on their orphans and widows.

For everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks profanity.
For all this, his anger is not turned away, his hands are stretched out still.

LXX

διὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοὺς νεανίσκους αὐτῶν οὐκ εὐφρανθήσεται ὁ κύριος,
καὶ τοὺς ὀρφανοὺς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς χήρας αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐλεήσει·
ὅτι πάντες ἄνομοι καὶ πονηροί, καὶ πᾶν στόμα λαλεῖ ἄδικα.
ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῦτοις οὐκ ἀπεστράφη ὁ θυμός, ἀλλ’ ἔτι ἡ χεὶρ ὑψηλή

Therefore God will not rejoice over their young people,
nor will he have compassion on their orphans and widows;

for they are all lawless and evil, and every mouth speaks injustices.

For all this his anger has not turned away, but his hand is still uplifted.

Option 1: “does not have pity on”, supported by 1QIsa^a and accepted by Blenkinsopp (“had no mercy”; 2000, 216-217). He, together with Wildberger in his translation (“did not spare”; 1991, 219) does not regard the MT’s לֹא יִשְׂמַח “does not rejoice” as a good parallel to לֹא יִרְחַם “or (not) have compassion on” later in the verse. The Isaiah Scroll’s reading לוֹא יִתְמוֹל is a true parallel and one to be preferred. It could also be argued, however, that יִתְמוֹל in 1QIsa^a was influenced by יִתְמולוּ in verse 18 [Eng. 19] (“no man will have pity on his brother”). Modern Bible translations to adopt this variant reading include JPS, NAB, NABRE, NRSV, and the REB.

Option 2: “does not rejoice”, supported by MT and LXX. Oswalt and Roberts prefer this traditional text: Oswalt (1986, 254) argues that “the 1QIsa^a reading is suspect because it is possible to see the MT reading giving rise to it but hardly vice versa”; Roberts (2015, 159) is reluctant to give up the MT reading since all the Versions support it, although יִתְמוֹל in 1QIsa^a provides a closer parallel to יִרְחַם later in the verse).

Supporting Perles’ suggestion (1899, 689) that the consonants in MT may reflect an original לֹא יִשְׂמַח “is not gracious” or “is not magnanimous” (cf. Arabic *samuha*), Wildberger apparently prefers לֹא יִשְׂמַח “is not gracious”; he argues that לוֹא יִתְמוֹל was possibly used with the intention of clarifying לֹא יִשְׂמַח (which was no longer understood in the sense of “is not gracious” or “is not magnanimous”), and was thus finally inserted into the text at this point. Indirectly, he adds, the 1QIsa^a reading “would attest to the correctness of Perles’ conjecture” (Wildberger 1991, 221). In *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Tov (2001, 264) also considers that an original יִשְׂמַח (= « spare ») « was changed in 1QIsa^a in accordance with the parallel verb » יִרְחַם, thus providing an example of « contextual change ».

The traditional reading in MT has been retained by most modern translations, including: AMP, CJB, ESV, GWORD, HCSB, NASB, NET, NIV, NJB, NKJV, NLT-SE, RSV, and TNIV. Among these, to be noted are NIV, RSV, and TNIV, which elsewhere adopt many readings from the DSS and LXX for the text of Scripture.

Conclusion. As in the previous example, this variant reading is found in 1QIsa^a, but is supported by no other Hebrew witnesses. On balance, however, יִתְמוֹל should be adopted as the preferable text on the basis of context and parallelism with יִרְחַם. It is indeed possible that יִתְמוֹל was used with the intention of clarifying לֹא יִשְׂמַח (no longer understood as “is not

gracious” or “is not magnanimous”) and was inserted into the text at this point, but this is by no means certain.

2.3 *Isaiah 18: 7 (Reading supported by a scroll, Septuagint, Vulgate, context)*

Isa 18: 7 עם ... מעם 1QIsa^a; 6 (ἐκ λαοῦ) 5 (a populo)] עם ... מעם 4QIsa^b; עם ... מעם MT

This variant reading is in a section of Isaiah describing the LORD’s anger against Israel (9: 8-21), and involves an additional preposition in 1QIsa^a.

1QIsa^a

בעתה יהיא יובל שי ליהוה צבאות מעמ ממשך וממרט ומעם נורא מהוא והלאה גוי קוקון ומבוסא אשר בזאי נהרים ארצו אל מקום שמ יהוה הר ציון

At that time a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a tall and smooth⁶ people, and from a people that were frightening from their very beginning, a nation that metes out and tramples, whose land is divided by the rivers, to the place of the name of the LORD, Mount Zion.

4QIsa^b

בע[ת]ה יהיא יובל שי ליהוה צבאות עם ממשך ומורט ומעם נורא מן והלאה גוי [קו]קו ומבוס[ה]אשר בזאו נהרים ארצו אל מקום שם יהוה צבאות הר ציון

[At that ti]me a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts, a tall and smooth people, from a people that were frightening from their very beginning, a nation that [me]tes out and trample[s, who]se land is divided by the rivers, to the place of the name of the LORD, Mount Zion.

MT

בְּעֵת הַהִיא יִיבֹל־שִׁי לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִם מְמִשֶּׁךְ וּמִמְרֵט וּמֵעַם נֹרָא מִן־הַלְאָה גּוֹי קֹקֹן וּמִבּוֹסָה אֲשֶׁר בָּזָאוּ נְהָרִים אֶרְצוֹ אֶל־מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַר־צִיּוֹן:

At that time a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts, a tall and smooth people, and from a people that were frightening from their very beginning, a nation that metes out and tramples, whose land is divided by the rivers, to the place of the name of the LORD, to Mount Zion.

LXX

ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκεῖνῳ ἀνενεχθήσεται δῶρα Κυρίῳ σαβαὶθ ἐκ λαοῦ τεθλιμμένου καὶ τετυλμένου, καὶ ἀπὸ λαοῦ μεγάλου ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον· ἔθνος

6. That is, “hairless” or “without beards,” cf. Roberts (2015, 248).

ἐλπίζον καὶ καταπεπατημένον, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν μέρει ποταμοῦ τῆς χώρας αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸν τόπον οὗ τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου σαβαώθ, ὄρος Σειῶν

At that time gifts will be brought to the Lord Sabaoth from a people afflicted and plucked and from a great people henceforth and forever, a nation having hope and trodden down, which is in a part of a river of its land, to the place where the name of the Lord Sabaoth is, Mount Sion.

Option 1: “from a tall and handsome people,... and from a people that were frightening”, supported by 1QIsa^a, LXX and the Vulgate. Unlike the first two examples above, this variant reading in 1QIsa^a has strong versional support. מַעַל is accepted by Wildberger (1991, 209), following Ehrlich (1908-1914; repr. 1968, vol. 4.21), Kaiser (1974, 90) *et al.* Thus also Oswalt (1986, 358), Watts (2005, 301)⁷, and Blenkinsopp (2000, 308-309), who points out that מַעַל as in MT involves a clear difference in meaning: that the tribute comes not “from a tall and handsome people” (1QIsa^a ט ט), but consists in the people themselves⁸. To avoid this problem, Duhm (1892, 140) suggested emending MT יִבֵּל *hop‘al* to יִבֵּל *hip‘il* (“he will bring”). Three members of the UBS Committee out of five have chosen this option, arguing that, in addition to the textual witnesses, the reading מַעַל restores, with the following מַעַל, a parallelism similar to the one found in 18: 2 (Barthélemy 1986, 135-137). Most modern Bibles have adopted this variant (perhaps some only in sense): AMP, CJB, ESV, GWORD, HCSB, JPS, NAB, NABRE, NASB, NET, NIV, NJB, NKJV, NLT-SE, NRSV, REB, RSV, and TNIV.

Option 2: “a tall and handsome people,... and from a people that were frightening” attested by 4QIsa^b and MT. Asyndeton aside, the support of 4QIsa^b (מַעַל) for MT’s מַעַל is to be noted, but there is no significant versional support. A few modern translations reference this variant in a footnote: HCSB, NKJV, NRSV, and REB.

Conclusion. This variant reading is found in 1QIsa^a, LXX and the Vulgate, and thus has strong support from the Versions, as well as from scholars and most modern Bible translations. It should be accepted as part of the text of Isaiah.

7. He comments: “Following 1QIsa^a is supported by the parallel phrase three words later”.

8. Blenkinsopp (2000, 309) concedes that this is “a not impossible supposition”, cf. Isa 14: 2; 45: 14; 66: 20.

2.4. Isa 19: 18 (Reading supported by two Qumran scrolls, Masoretic mss, Symmachus, Vulgate, context)

Isa 19: 18 החרס 1QIsa^a 4QIsa^b M^{ms} σ' (πόλις ἡλίου) ∅ (civitas Solis)] ההרס
 M ∅; ασεδεκ Θ; ασεδ ηλιου Θ^s; αρεζ α' θ' ; בית שמש דעתידיא למחרב; ∅ (= החרס
 החרס?) (BHS note errs)

This variant reading is part of a prophecy about Egypt (19: 1-25). The options are complex, and involve two similar but different roots and the resemblance of / confusion between ה and ח.

1QIsa^a

ביום ההוא יהיו חמש ערים בארץ מצרים מדברות שפת כנען ונשבעות ליהוה צבאות
 עיר החרס יאמר לאחרת

On that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD of hosts. One of these will be called the City of the Sun.

4QIsa^b

[ביום ההוא יהי] חמש ערים בארץ מצרים [מדברות שפת כנען ונשבעות ליהוה]
 צבאות עיר החרס יאמר לאחרת

[On that day there will] be five cities in the land of Egypt [that speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD] of hosts. [One of the]se will be called the City of the Sun.

MT

ביום ההוא יהיו חמש ערים בארץ מצרים מדברות שפת כנען ונשבעות ליהוה
 צבאות עיר החרס יאמר לאחרת:

On that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD] of hosts. One of these will be called the City of Destruction.

LXX

Τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἔσονται πέντε πόλεις ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ λαλοῦσαι τῇ γλώσσῃ τῇ
 Χανανεϊτικῇ καὶ ὁμνῦντες τῷ ὀνόματι Κυρίου· πόλις ἀσεδὲκ κληθήσεται ἡ μία
 πόλις

On that day there will be five cities in Egypt speaking the Chananite language and swearing in the name of the Lord. The one city will be called Asedek city.

Option 1: עיר החרס “City of the Sun,” has very strong textual support: several Hebrew witnesses (1QIsa^a, 4QIsa^b, medieval Hebrew manuscripts),

as well as Symmachus and the Vulgate. It is adopted by Blenkinsopp (2000, 317), who describes the reading in MT as impossible in the context, and prefers “City of the Sun” (cf. Job 9: 7; Judges 1: 35; cf. Josh 19: 41; Judges 8: 13 [“the ascent of Heres”]). Oswalt (1986, 373) notes that even if שֶׁמֶשׁ is the normal term for sun, הָהָרִים is used as a poetic synonym; he also draws attention to “the Akkadian and Ugaritic *h̄rs* ‘gold’ (like the sun?)”.

Wildberger (1997, 262) points to the great variety of evidence in the transmitted Versions as “showing that the name of this city was not understood for certain, even by the ancient copyists”. Jerome comments: *quidam interpretantur in solem, et alii in testam transferunt ulontes uel Heliopolim significare uel Ostracinem* (“which some people understand to refer to the sun, while others translate it as referring to pottery, desiring thereby to signify either Heliopolis or Ostrakine”; *Onomastikon*, 39).⁹ Thus Jerome is translating a text that read עִיר הָהָרִים (“City of the Sun”), and presumes this to be the Hebrew translation of Heliopolis, but also considers that הָהָרִים may be understood in the sense of תֶּרֶשׁ (“pottery sherd”).

It is clear that the author of Biblical Isaiah meant the Egyptian city of Heliopolis, which was most likely the original reading (Roberts 2015, 261). This city is known elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible as On (אֵן or אֹן). In Jer 43: 13 this city is called בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ (Beth-shemesh or “House of the Sun”; cf. Heliopolis in the LXX). Modern Bibles that have adopted this variant include GWORD, HCSB, NAB, NABRE, NET, NJB, NLT-SE, NRSV, REB, RSV, and TNIV.

Option 2: עִיר הַהָרִים “City of Destruction,” supported by the MT, Aquila, Theodotion, and Syriac. The Targum apparently combines the readings found in 1QIsa^a *et al.* and the sense of MT *et al.*: קְרַתָּא בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ דַּעֲתִידָא לַמַּחֲרָב (“the city of Beth-Shemesh, which is about to be destroyed”; cf. Mishna, *menah* 13: 10). The Babylonian Talmud (*Menahot* 110a) reads עִיר הָהָרִים (“City of the Sun”), but interprets this as עִיר הַהָרִים (“City of Destruction”), explaining the original name (with reference to Job 9: 7¹⁰) as being בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ (Beth-Shemesh or “House of the Sun”; Wildberger 1997, 262).

Duhm (following Ikenius) proposes for הָרִים the meaning “lion” (cf. Arabic *haris*, “the one that tears apart”), with reference to Leontopolis (“Lion City”; Duhm 1892, 145), the place where the temple of Heliopolis

9. Ostrakine (Ὀστρακίνη) is a city in the eastern part of the Egyptian delta; see Wildberger (1997, 262).

10. Job 9: 7 reads הָאֱמִיר לְהָרִים (“who commands the sun”).

was built according to Josephus (*Ant.* 13.65-71). This interpretation is less likely, however, because *הֶרֶם* is never used in this way in the Hebrew Bible, and the Arabic word is only a nickname for a lion (cf. Wildberger 1997, 262).

The LXX's *πόλις-ασεδεκ* presupposes *עִיר הַצֶּדֶק* “City of Righteousness”, a reading which could refer to Isa 1: 26, where the title is promised to Zion: the translator would have transcribed a Hebrew *Vorlage* apparently intended to assimilate Heliopolis to a “new Jerusalem” with a legitimate temple and cult (cf. Ps 51: 21: *וְבָחִי-צֶדֶק*, “legitimate sacrifices”; Barthélemy 1986, 149-150). In Wildberger’s view, however, the Greek reading is probably pure speculation, an attempt to render a Hebrew text that made little sense to the translator. Wildberger (1997, 262-263) attributes the confusion to the meaning of *הֶרֶם* denoting the sun as being forgotten, and notes that various attempts were made to find viable textual solutions. Even though he translates “one (of which) will be named ‘city of the sun’”, Wildberger regards the entire phrase as an addition. Yet he seems to conclude with Watts (2005, 313) that *עִיר הֶרֶם* (“City of Destruction”) as in the MT should be retained – but that the consensus of interpreters is that it refers to Heliopolis in Egypt, the “City of the Sun.” Modern Bible translations that retain the traditional reading in the MT include the CJB, ESV, NASB, NIV, and the NKJV.

Conclusion. The variant *עִיר הֶרֶם* “City of the Sun,” has strong textual support, is preferred by some scholars, and has been adopted in many modern Bible translations. It is also the choice made by the UBS Committee (Barthélemy 1986, 143-150). It is likely that, at some point, in the transmission process *הֶרֶם* was changed for the pejorative term *הֶרְרָם* (a (with its similar letters and identical vowels), altering the text for religious reasons (thus Roberts 2015, 261) to criticize Heliopolis, the City of the Sun (*עִיר הֶרֶם*). The Greek transcription of its *Vorlage* (*πόλις-ασεδεκ*) shows a movement in an opposite direction¹¹. There is therefore a strong case to present *עִיר הֶרֶם* as the preferred Isaianic text, with *עִיר הֶרְרָם* cited and explained in a footnote.

2.5 Isaiah 21: 8 (Reading supported by a scroll, Syriac, context)

Isa 21: 8 *הַרְאָה* 1QIsa^a] *אָרִיָּה* ; *Οὐρίαν* ᠙

11. In a recent article, Hibbard (2015) has concluded that there was a three-stage development (1QIsa^a, LXX, MT) of the textual tradition of this passage.

This variant reading occurs in a prophecy against Babylon (21: 1-10), and involves different verbal roots in 1QIsa^a and the MT.

1QIsa^a

ויקרא הראה
על מצפה אדוני אנוכי עומד תמיד יומם
ועל משמרת אנוכי נצב כול הלילות

The seer shouted,

O LORD, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime,
and am stationed at my post throughout the night.

MT

ויקרא ארזה
על-מצפה אדני אנוכי עומד תמיד יומם
ועל-משמרת אנוכי נצב כל-הלילות:

A lion shouted,

O LORD, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime,
and am stationed at my post throughout the night.

LXX

καὶ κάλεσον Οὐρείανεις τὴν σκοπιάν Κυρίου.
καὶ εἶπεν Ἔστην διὰ παντὸς ἡμέρας,
καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς παρεμβολῆς ἔστην ὅλην τὴν νύκτα

and call Ourias (= Uriah) to the watchtower of the Lord.

And he said: “I stood continually by day
and over the camp I stood the whole night.”

Option 1: “the seer,” (הַרְאָה) is supported by 1QIsa^a and by the Syriac, as well as most recent commentators, including Blenkinsopp (2000, 325), Oswalt (1986, 388), Wildberger (1997, 305-306), Watts (2005, 326-327), and Roberts (2015, 276-278). There is a distinction between a מַצְפָּה (“look-out”) and a רְאָה (“seer”), since in v. 6b the מַצְפָּה is commended to declare what he sees (רְאָה). In the sense of “lookout post” or “watchtower,” מַצְפָּה is used as a technical term only in 2 Chron 20: 24, but Sir 37: 14 also mentions seven watchmen (צוֹפִים) on the watchtower (מַצְפָּה). After several attempts at emendation by other scholars¹², הַרְאָה was proposed by Lohmann (1910, 61), and has found almost universal acceptance. It

12. Ehrlich (1968, vol. 4.74) proposed הָאָה “alas” (cf. 2 Kings 3: 10); Buhl (1888, 157-164, esp. 162) suggested הָיָה “woe” (cf. Ps 120: 5); and Marti (1990) posited הָאָה “I will see”.

has been adopted by several modern Bible translations, including the ESV, GWORD, HCSB, NAB, NABRE, NASB, NET, NIV, NJB, NLT-SE, NRSV, REB, RSV, and TNIV.

Option 2: The MT reading “a lion” (אַרְיֵה) makes no sense in this context. Ibn Ezra proposed כְּאַרְיֵה (“like a lion,” cf. Rev 10: 3). Other versions struggle to give some sense to the hemistich: the LXX associates the phrase with Uriah (καὶ κάλεσσον Οὐρίαν; cf. Isa 8: 2), which could be derived from the consonantal base of the MT, while the Targum specifies “the standard of a lion” (an emblem of the Sassanid Empire). Modern translations that adopt this reading include the CJB, JPS (“And [like] a lion, he called out”), and the NKJV.

Conclusion. Older scholars had already suggested the correction “the seer,” (הַרְאֵה), which fits the context better than the “a lion” (אַרְיֵה). This reading being now attested in 1QIsa^a (and standing most likely behind the Syriac) should be preferred¹³. The variant of the MT is perhaps to be explained by phonological confusion early in the transmission process (see Oswalt 1986, 30-31).

2.6 Isa 23: 10 (Reading supported by a scroll, LXX, Targum, context)

Isa 23: 10 עבדי 1QIsa^a 𐤀 (ἐργάζου)]] 4QIsa^a; עבד 4QIsa^c 𐤌 (עברי) 𐤓 𐤕 (גלא) 𐤀

This variant reading is from Isaiah’s prophecy against Tyre (23: 1-18). It involves two similar but different roots and the resemblance / confusion between 𐤕 and 𐤌 in 1QIsa^a and the MT.

1QIsa^a

עבדי ארצך כיאור בת תרשיש אין מזה עוד

Cultivate your land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish,
for there is no longer a harbor.

4QIsa^c

[עבורי] [ארצך כיאר] בת תרשיש אין מזה עוד

Cross [] through your land like the Nile, [O daughter of Tarshish,
for there is no longer a harbor.]

13. Since this reading could be a facilitating one, four members of the UBS Committee preferred to keep the MT without strong conviction, admitting that it is hardly intelligible (Barthélemy 1986, 154-155).

MT

עֲבְרֵי אֶרֶצְךָ כִּי־אֵר בַּת־תַּרְשִׁישׁ אֵין מִזַּח עוֹד:

Cross through your land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish,
for there is no longer a harbor.

LXX

ἐργάζου τὴν γῆν σου, καὶ γὰρ πλοῖα οὐκέτι ἔρχεται ἐκ Καρχηδόνης

Work your land, for indeed ships no longer come from Carthage.

Option 1: “Cultivate your land” has the strong textual support of 1QIsa^a and the LXX. This reading also enjoys wide acceptance among scholars. For example, Blenkinsopp (2000, 342) finds MT’s “Pass through your land” as unacceptable, preferring “Till your land” (following 1QIsa^a and the LXX). A similar position is adopted by Watts (“Till your land”; 2005, 357, 359) and Wildberger (“Build up your land”; 1997, 408-409), who also discusses various alternatives (see below). Only a few modern translations have adopted this reading, including the NIV, NJB, REB, and TNIV.

Option 2: “Cross through your land” also has strong textual support: 4QIsa^c, MT, Syriac and the Vulgate. This reading is also preferred by Oswalt (“Pass over your land”; 1986, 424) and Roberts (“Cross over your land”; 2015, p. 299-300). The first word, however, has proved challenging. The Targum reads גּלָא מֵאַרְעָךָ (“Go into exile from your land”), which suggests an attempt to make sense of a difficult base text (see Wildberger 1997, 408). Ehrlich (1968, vol. 4.81) proposed reading עֲבָרוּ (“they invade”): “the enemies that are invading overflow the land, just as the Nile overflows Egypt.”¹⁴ And Blenkinsopp (2000, 342), who prefers עֲבָדִי, regards עֲבָרִי in 4QIsa^c as “another case of *daleth/resh* confusion”. Most modern Bible translations have retained this reading, including AMP, CJB, ESV, GWORD, HCSB, JPS, NAB, NABRE, NASB, NET, NKJV, NLT-SE, NRSV, and RSV.

Conclusion. As part of a famously difficult passage, this variant reading is found in 1QIsa^a, has the support of the LXX, and has been adopted by several scholars. Even though only a few modern Bibles have adopted this reading, and MT’s עֲבָרִי אֶרֶצְךָ also enjoys strong textual support, “cultivate your land” makes better sense than “cross through your land” in the context. Thus עֲבָדִי should be accepted as part of the text of Isaiah.

14. The members of the UBS Committee also retained the reading of the MT, suggesting an interpretation based on the use of the verb in Isa 8: 8; 33: 21; etc. (Barthélemy 1986, 169).

Conclusion

This paper has presented six *viable* readings for Isaiah 1–39 in the Great Isaiah Scroll, that is textual variants that could or should be adopted in the body of Scripture for future Hebrew editions of the Book of Isaiah. In assessing each one, I have taken into account the textual character of the manuscript, the scribal habits of the copyist, the work of scholars and commentaries on the Book of Isaiah, recent translations of Isaiah, as well as the context and the overall sense of the passage. Among recent commentaries, those of Blenkinsopp, Watts, and Wildberger have proven particularly helpful, as have a few Bible translations (the *New American Bible*, the *NAB Revised*, the *Revised Standard Version*, the *New RSV*, and the *New International Version*).

In all six cases – with the possible exception of Isa 19: 18 (הָהָרִים *versus* הַהָרִים) – I find the reading in 1QIsa^a to be compelling. These readings should be included as part of the main text of Isaiah (not the apparatus) in future editions of the Hebrew Bible, and part of the main text of Isaiah in future translations (not the footnotes). I put forward these examples to the Editors of the Book of Isaiah in projects such as the *Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition* (HBCE)¹⁵.

With further research, I consider that one could expect to find, overall, fifty or more cases where a variant reading in the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran should be adopted — or at least seriously considered — as part of the Biblical text. This would certainly be a significant contribution of this important scroll to Biblical textual criticism, to a better understanding of the Book of Isaiah, and to the production of improved translations and commentaries of it.

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15. Previously known as the *Oxford Hebrew Bible*, this multi-volume series will be published by the Society of Biblical Literature. One volume has appeared so far: Proverbs by Michael V. Fox (2015). For the Isaiah edition, see under Troxel and Ulrich in the References.

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Résumé

Pour illustrer la contribution du grand Rouleau d'Isaïe de Qumrân (1QIs^a) à la critique textuelle, cet essai présente six lectures *viabiles* d'Isaïe 1–39, c'est-à-dire des variantes qui représentent probablement le texte hébreu original. En évaluant les leçons d'Isaïe 3,24; 9,16; 18,7; 19,18; 21,8; 23,10, l'auteur considère le caractère textuel du manuscrit, les habitudes du scribe, les travaux des chercheurs et les commentaires du livre d'Isaïe, les traductions récentes, ainsi que le contexte et le sens général du passage. Dans chacun des six cas, à l'exception peut-être d'Is 19,18, il estime que la variante de 1QIs^a s'impose. Ces variantes et d'autres semblables devraient donc être intégrées à au texte d'Isaïe (et non à l'apparat critique) dans les prochaines éditions de la Bible hébraïque et faire partie du texte d'Isaïe (et non des notes) dans les prochaines traductions.

Abstract

In order to illustrate the contribution of the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran (1QIsa^a) to textual criticism, this paper presents six viable readings for Isaiah 1–39, i.e. variants that most likely represent the original Hebrew text. In assessing the cases of Isaiah 3: 24; 9: 16 [English 9: 17]; 18: 7; 19: 18; 21: 8; 23: 10, the author takes into account the textual character of the manuscript, the scribal habits of the copyist, the work of scholars and commentaries on the Book of Isaiah, recent translations of Isaiah, as well as the context and the overall sense of the passage. In all six instances — with the possible exception of Isa 19: 18 — the reading in 1QIsa^a is found to be compelling. These readings and similar ones should therefore be included as part of the main text of Isaiah (not the apparatus) in future editions of the Hebrew Bible, and part of the main text of Isaiah in future translations (not the footnotes).