Three Manuscripts (Abbreviated Texts?) of Canticles from Qumran Cave 4

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Introduction

Four copies of Canticles have been found at Qumran, three of which are presented in this article dedicated to Geza Vermes:

4QCant
- col. i: 3:7-4:6
- col. ii: 4:7, 6:11?-7:7

4QCant
- frg. 1: 2:9-3:2
- frg. 2 i: 3.[2]-5, 9-11, [4:1a]
- frg. 2 ii: 4:1b-3, 8-11a
- frg. 3: 4:[11b]-5:1

4QCant
- 3:7-8

6QCant
- 1:1-7

There is partial overlap between the extant texts 4QCant and 4QCant.

Textual Character

6QCant deviates in several small details from M, but no special direction of these variants is recognizable. On the other hand, the manuscripts from cave 4 contain a large number of variations. Both 4QCant and 4QCant lack substantial segments of text found in the other textual witnesses (one segment in 4QCant ii: the section starting with Cant 4:7 until 6:11; two segments in 4QCant, viz., Cant 3:6-8 in 4QCant ii; and Cant 4:4-7 in 4QCant ii). The shorter text of the two scrolls vis-à-vis the other witnesses is thus a well-supported feature. Where the two texts overlap, they are shorter at different points. Part of the section which is lacking in 4QCant ii between Cant 4:8 and 6:11 is extant in 4QCant ii and 3; likewise, the section lacking in 4QCant ii, viz., Cant 3:6-8, is partially represented in 4QCant i, and the section lacking in 4QCant ii, viz., Cant 4:4-7, is represented in 4QCant ii. In chapter 4 different sections are thus lacking in 4QCant and 4QCant, and in a way the two texts supplement each other. The shorter text of the two scrolls was created consciously by the scribes or their predecessors.

1 The initial identification of the fragments was made by F. M. Cross who kindly allowed me to publish these texts. Thanks are due to Y. Zakovitch for several valuable remarks on an earlier draft of the manuscript. I also want to thank S. Paul and A. LaCocque for sharing with me their insights on the exegesis of Canticles. G. Bearman and S. Spiro (on behalf of the ABMC) kindly made new photographs of 4QCant which revealed segments of additional letters (quoted below as 'photograph ABMC'). Their help is gratefully acknowledged.
who shortened the content of the biblical book, and not by scribal negligence (the omission in 4QCant is very large; this omission would have involved several columns in this scroll of small dimensions). The assumption that no scribal negligence is involved is based on the fact that in the three instances of a shorter text in the two different manuscripts, complete literary units are lacking. The two texts undoubtedly present manuscripts of Canticles, rather than commentaries or paraphrases, but they constituted biblical manuscripts of a special kind. With some hesitation they are described here as abbreviated texts, although there are no exact parallels for this assumption among the Qumran texts. Probably 4QExod formed another such abbreviated text. Further parallels are excerpted biblical texts which juxtapose segments of the biblical text according to considerations of content. The reference to abbreviating may seem somewhat exaggerated for these few instances of shortening the text, but the result of this abbreviating is that the text of 4QCant is much shorter than the other witnesses. 4QCant is only slightly shorter, but if that text terminated at 5:1, as suggested below, it presented only the first half of the biblical book. Attention is also drawn to the unexplained scribal signs in 4QCant (paleo-Hebrew or resembling Cryptic A—see below) and the remnants of a superscription of frg. 1 of the same manuscript, all of which may have been related to the special character of that manuscript. The biblical book of Canticles contains a conglomeration of love songs, and not one coherent composition, so that segments could be removed from it without harming the context. This is the case with the two Qumran scrolls, each of which has been shortened in a different way, and following the sequence of the text as extant in the other textual witnesses. Underlying this description is thus the understanding that the Qumran scrolls shortened an earlier existing text, while the assumption that they represented early literary crystallizations of the book differing from the one represented by the other textual witnesses, though not impossible, is discarded.

That the omissions in these manuscripts as compared with the other textual witnesses do not reflect scribal negligence is clear from 4QCant 2 ii 6–7 where the omission of Cant 4:4–7 is indicated by an open paragraph at the end of line 6, after v. 3, and a large indentation at the beginning of the next line, before the text of v. 8. Likewise, at the point where 4QCant ii 1–2 leaves out a large section, Cant 4:8–6:10, a partially empty line and a com-


4 See my forthcoming article, ‘Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts from Qumran’, RQ.
plete empty line were probably found in the text. The text has not been preserved, and the reconstruction favours such a layout. Furthermore, the last verse of the omitted section 4:4–7, Cant 4:7, forms the end of a content unit, which is indicated in $\Pi$ with a closed paragraph, and the next verse in the scroll, Cant 6:11, starts off another unit, indicated in $\Pi$ with a closed paragraph after 6:10.

The number of omissions is relatively small, but the one omission in 4QCanta pertains to a sizeable stretch of text. There are two omissions in 4QCantb. Exegetical reasons for the shortening of the text are suggested in the notes, but the exact background of the shortening remains unclear. The two texts of Canticles are similar in character with regard to their omissions vis-à-vis the other textual witnesses, but they differ in details.

The scribe of 4QCantb made many mistakes and he was much influenced by the Aramaic language (see the introduction to that manuscript), but these features are not connected with the aforementioned description of the overall character of the contents of these fragments.

Size

The copies of the Five Scrolls are much smaller in size than the average biblical scroll from Qumran (the smallest of these are: 5QLam, 2QRutha, and 6QCant). Presumably each copy contained only one of the biblical books, so that these scrolls would be much shorter than the average biblical book, but this aspect cannot be verified due to the fragmentary status of the preserved texts. What can be verified is the height of the sheets of leather which is much smaller than that of other scrolls, and these parameters are probably indicative of the overall size of the scroll (cf. b. Baba Bathra 14a according to which the length of the scroll should be commensurate with the height of the sheets). These data about the size of the columns can be expressed both by the number of lines and by absolute figures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>b. marg.</th>
<th>t. marg.</th>
<th>marg. betw. cols.</th>
<th>writ. block</th>
<th>height of scroll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4QCanta</td>
<td>1.5 cm</td>
<td>1.3 cm</td>
<td>1.1 cm</td>
<td>6.5 cm</td>
<td>9.3 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>4QCantb</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>fragmentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>6QCant</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2QRutha</td>
<td>0.7+</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.4+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THREE MANUSCRIPTS OF CANTICLES

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>0.6+</th>
<th>7.4+</th>
<th>8.0+</th>
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<td>4QCan&lt;sup&gt;t&lt;/sup&gt;a</td>
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<td>4QRuth&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4QQoh&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4QQoh&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>fragmentary</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Since the length of these scrolls is not known, they cannot be compared with other ones. What can be compared is the number of lines and their length. Most Qumran scrolls contain at least 26 lines, e.g. 11QPsa<sup>a</sup> (25–26 lines of 45–50 letter-spaces), 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (29–32 lines of an average 61 letter-spaces), 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> (35 lines of 51 letter-spaces), and 11QpaleoLev<sup>a</sup> (42 lines of 41–50 reconstructed letter-spaces).<sup>5</sup> Scrolls of limited dimensions were probably limited of content as well, as in the case of the Five Scrolls. This pertains also to the other scrolls of limited dimensions. One such scroll of small dimensions also written in small column blocks probably contained only the ‘Song of Moses’ in Deuteronomy 32, viz., 4QDeut<sup>4</sup> with columns of 11 lines of 21 letter-spaces and a final column of 11 lines of 14–15 letter-spaces. Also the following scrolls written in small column blocks probably did not contain the complete biblical books: 4QExod<sup>5</sup> with 8 lines of 30–34 letter-spaces (a liturgical text?), cols. II–VI of 4QDeut<sup>a</sup> with 12 lines of 35–50 letter-spaces (a liturgical text?), 5QDeut with 15 lines of 86 letter-spaces, 4QPsb with 16 lines of 16–18 letter-spaces, and 4QPsa<sup>5</sup> with 9 lines of 30 letter-spaces (containing only Psalm 119).<sup>6</sup> The small size of all these scrolls facilitated easy transport, and it probably implied liturgical use.<sup>7</sup>

106. 4QCan<sup>t</sup>a

**Physical description**

Colour: tan. The script is very tiny. Top margin: 1.3 cm, bottom margin: 1.5 cm, margin between columns: 1.1 cm (average). There is evidence of vertical, but not of horizontal, ruling. At the same time, the writing is extremely regular, so that some ruling device must have been used. Such horizontal ruling is visible on unidentified frg. A probably deriving from this text.

**Contents**

Col. i 3:7–4:6  Col. ii 4:7, 6:11?–7:7

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<sup>5</sup> Some of the nonbiblical scrolls are larger: 4QRPc<sup>c</sup>=4Q365 (43–47 lines), 4QShirShabb<sup>c</sup>=4Q403 (50 lines).

<sup>6</sup> Information kindly provided by P. W. Flint.

<sup>7</sup> Examples of nonbiblical scrolls of small dimensions are mentioned by S. J. Pfann, ‘4Q298: The Maskill's Address to All Sons of Dawn’, in press. 4QAgesCreat<sup>a</sup> (4Q180, 10 lines), 4QApocalypse ar (4Q246; 9 lines), 4QCrA Words of Sage to Sons of Dawn (4Q298; 10 lines), 4QZoelology and Brontology (4Q318; 9 lines), 4QapocrLam B (4Q501; 9 lines), 4QShir<sup>a</sup> (4Q510; 9 lines), 4QTQahat ar (4Q542; 13 lines), 4QprEstha ar (4Q550; 7,8 lines), 5QapMal (5Q14; 5 lines).
Palaeography

A. Yardeni (private communication) dates this manuscript to the early Herodian period.

Orthography

The orthography is very close to מ. Note for example זהיר (3:10), שלשם (3:11), שלשם (4:2), שלשם (4:4). In one detail the scroll is plene as opposed to מ (תמר 3:7), and in two details it is defective as opposed to מ (תמר 4:5; חכמה 7:5). The 'alep of כארנפ in 7:6 was taken as a quiescent 'alep (אֲלפִּיָּאָה).

Textual Character

4QCant\* omits a large section, viz., the text between Cant 4:7 and 6:11. See below and the INTRODUCTION.

Numbers

Mus. Inv. 1118 (earlier number C 64a).

PAM 41.300, 43.097. PAM 43.097 represents the most recent arrangement of the fragments, while PAM 41.300 presents the individual fragments in an earlier stage of preservation, which at times provides more details.

Col. i Cant 3:7–4:6

top margin

| ottah matot shalashmah shemem borim serek bi le m|borean yishrael | 1 |
| inel owh herb |malachim melachmah avit herb bi eric masht heliloth | 2 |
| safrith |shemel metzach heliloth | 3 |
| ropirtah |heliloth and milam | 4 |
| zahav rahat bein yishem bimalch shelema beshurah | vacat | 5 |
| shevrat la am biyum hanaham biyom shemah lebor | vacat | 6 |
| vacat | 7 |

| bet | 8 |
| haqem rizvit haq | bet mitzva | 9 |
| zohut she’ar | halav | 2 |
| melachot she’el | 10 |
| melakhot bet melakh | 11 |
| schem | 12 |
| zimah | 13 |

bottom margin

| hodu nev ezelin alek la a Đối mỡ ol be buit helonah | 14 |
Plate I:  *PAM 43.097. By courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority*
The readings in the beginnings of lines 2, 3 and 4 are based on a small fragment on PAM 43.097 (previously unidentified) which could not be located in the Rockefeller Museum. Mus. Inv. 1118 in the Rockefeller Museum merely contains a clipping from PAM 42.044 and not the fragment itself.

L. 6 (3:11) The relative position on the photograph of the two fragments at the beginning of the preserved part of the line is misleading due to shrinkage.

L. 7 (3:11) Note the completely empty line after v. 11 corresponding with an open section in מ. Since the empty space at the end of line 6 is not extensive enough to indicate an open section, the scribe added an empty line. For similar procedures, see 4QpaleoGen-Exod ו and several of the manuscripts of Psalms from Qumran.

L. 10–11 (4:2–3) The minute fragment joined in PAM 43.097 to the right edges of the lines of the main fragment (not yet extant in the earlier photograph 41.300) seems to be appropriate from the point of view of the colour of the fragment and its shape. However, from the point of view of the content of the fragment the join is not convincing. The first preserved letter on line 10 does not seem to be final mem as warranted by the reconstruction and the first preserved letters in line 11 cannot be placed in the context. Little space is left between the two words, so that a single word לְחָדְרוֹן or לְחָדְרָו seems to be possible as well, although it is not clear which word is meant.

L. 11 (4:3) The first letter of לְחָדְרַן probably is a he, shaped like in several other documents and slightly different from the hes in this text. Another possibility is an 'alep, but the letter is somewhat different from the 'aleps in this document.

L. 12 (4:4) A remnant of an undetermined letter some 8–10 letter-spaces before ה is visible on the small fragment which has been joined to the right of the main fragment. See above on lines 10–11.

L. 13 Remnants of the first preserved letter on this line seem to point to a final pe which cannot be placed in the context.

Variants

This fragment overlaps with 4QCantג ii (Cant 4:1b–3, 8–11a).

3:11 (5) בָּנָה צִיוּר בִּנְתָּהוּ כִּי הָיָה יַעֲמָל מ; א>ג*; note that the phrase of מ occurs only here in the Bible, while that of 4QCantג occurs elsewhere, including in Canticles (see the previous verse). Cf. 4QLam 1:17 for a reverse interchange.

3:11 (6) בָּרָם בֵּית מ. Similar asyndetic structures in 4QCantג are found in 4:6 and 7:7.

4:1 (8) מַטְרָר וַעֲלַמְתָּה וַעֲלַמְתָּה מ. The omission of the word in the scroll could reflect haplography, but in view of the context in 4QCantג it is more likely that the word would have been found in the lacuna in the beginning of the next line, thus creating a different (and unusual) sequence. See next note.

8 In this publication, S and T are only listed when differing from מ.
4:1 (9)  
[מַשכֹּר] | The lacuna would have included מַשכֹּר, although such a reconstructed text creates an unusual sequence, in  
which the singular word מַשכֹּר was followed by a plural form מָשְּכֹר pertaining to the preceding word. This  
reconstructed form is nevertheless likely because also in the next phrase the scroll inverted the order of the words, likewise creating an  
unusual sequence (see 4:2). In the lacuna there seems to be slightly more space available than required by מַשכֹּר. A reconstructed plural  
form מָשְּכֹר would be possible, as it would suit the next word מִשְׁכֹּר. The meaning of the reconstructed context is questionable,  
but this issue did not disturb the scribe of this text who, against other witnesses, also in the next verse juxtaposed מַשכֹּר and מָשְּכֹּר, even  
though the latter word refers to מִשְׁכֹּר מָשָּכֹר.

4:1 (9)  
dιὰ ἀπεκαλόθησαν Ἡ (ἀπὸ τοῦ Γαλαάδ), cf. 6:5.

4:1 (9)  
Second letter מָשְּכֹּר in הֵמָשְּכֹּר הַמֶּלֶךְ Mss Ὠ (ἀπὸ τοῦ Γαλαάδ), cf. 6:5.

4:2 (9)  
For the construction of 4QCant⁴ cf. the beginning of the next verse, חָבֵית, as well as the reconstructed text in 4:1.

4:2 (10)  
Ὁ στὰτον [See Notes.]

4:2 (10)  
ὁ ἀνατίναὶ ἃ Ἔ 

4;3 (11)  
[The preserved letters cannot be correlated with the text of מָשְּכֹּר. See further Notes.]

4:3 (11)  
4QCant⁵ מָשְּכֹּר. The word in 4QCant⁴, si vera lectio,⁴ is not evidenced elsewhere. מָשְּכֹּר is probably somehow connected with מָשְּכֹּר, which, though indicating an area different from מָשְּכֹּר ('temple') in מִשְׁכֹּר, nevertheless indicates a section of the face, viz., chin (see the dictionaries).

4:3 (11)  
4QCant⁵ מָשְּכֹּר. The word preceding מָשְּכֹּר in מִשְׁכֹּר or מִשְׁכֹּר in 4QCant⁴ is מִשְׁכֹּר, but the remnants of the one letter preceding מִשְׁכֹּר in 4QCant⁴ cannot be fitted to a he. The remnants of the letter seem to point to a final pe. Therefore the scroll must have contained a text which differed from מִשְׁכֹּר (מִשְׁכֹּר). The latter word seems to be مُکَشَّر, the crossbar of مُکَشَّר, but the second letter cannot be a resh, since it lacks the crossbar at the top.

4:6 (14)  
for 4QCant⁴ are found in 3:11 and 7:7.

Col. ii  Cant 4:7, 6:11?–7:7

top margin

[ vacat ? קַלּ[כָּלִים] יַחַת רַע הָעֵתִים וְהָמוֹן אַנַּחֲוָא בּ] 1
[ vacat ? קַלּ קַלּ] 2

⁹Nebe (see note 2) reads מִרְקְעָת, (translated by him as 'grün-gelbes Aussehen'), but the second letter cannot be a resh, since it lacks the crossbar at the top.
The logic behind the reconstruction of this column is as follows. The first word of this column (בלבל) indicates that the text immediately continues the verse with which the previous column ended. Of lines 2-3 nothing has been preserved, while line 4 contains a single word of 6:11. The reconstruction of line 5 is questionable, but from line 6 onwards, the reconstruction of 7:1 ff. is stable. While it is not clear at which point the scribe moved from the text of chapter 4 to the end of chapter 6, in line 1, 2 or 3, from the point of view of the content the most probable solution seems to be the one suggested in the reconstruction, namely the juxtaposition of 4:7 and 6:11-7:7 with an empty line intervening between them, similar to the closed paragraphs in M *ad loc.* and the open paragraph after 3:11 in 4QCant* a.10 Cf. also 4QCant* b 2 ii 7-8 where the omission of Cant 4:4-7 is indicated by an open paragraph at the end of line 6 and a large indentation at the beginning of the next line. On the other hand, in 4QCant* b 2 i 7 no such space has been left after 3:5 indicating the omission of 3:6-8.

Cant 4:7 forms the end of a content unit, indicated in M with a closed paragraph. Likewise, Cant 6:11 starts the beginning of another unit, indi-
cated in M with a closed paragraph after 6:10. The reason for the juxtaposition of the unit ending with 4:7 with 6:11–7:7 is not clear. As in the other instances of a shorter text in the Canticles manuscripts from cave 4, it is unlikely that the omission of the large stretch of text extending from 4:8 until 6:11 was due to a scribal phenomenon such as homoioteleuton; rather the similar content of the text before and after the break may have been related to the shortening of the text. One notes the closeness in content between 4:1–3 (included) and 6:5–7 (excluded). At the same time, the sections juxtaposed in 4QCanta contain similar elements and in those sections several identical parts of the body are described and identical motifs are used: pomegranates (4:3; 6:11), breasts, twins (4:5=7:4), neck (4:4, 7:5), eyes (4:1, 7:5), and tower (4:4, 7:5). This similarity may have brought about the present juxtaposition of the sections. If this assumption is correct, 4QCanta, like 4QCantb, is in the nature of an abbreviated version of Canticles. It should be noted that part of the text lacking in 4QCanta is found in 4QCantb 2 ii (vv. 8–11a). It is further noteworthy that the two texts, when compared with the other textual witnesses of Canticles, omit a section at exactly the same point. However, in 4QCantb 2 ii 6–7 the omission pertains to three verses preceding v. 8 (vv. 4–7), while in 4QCanta the omission pertains to a long stretch of text starting with that verse (4:8–6:10). The section missing in this scroll is very large when compared with the size of the book (some 30 per cent).

Variants

This fragment overlaps slightly with 4QCantb 2 ii (4:1b–3, 8–11). The lacunae in the above text are reconstructed according to M, even though a certain amount of variation should be expected in these verses in accordance with the nature of this text.

4:8–6:10 (2) > I habent 4QCantb (partially preserved) M. 4QCanta reflects an intentionally shortened text.

6:11 (4) | | | | for 4QCanta [א] is reconstructed.

7:1 (5) > | | | | 2° M. The reconstructed line would be too long with the two pairs of שָׂרָיב שָׁבָר, so that one of them was probably omitted in 4QCanta.

7:6 (13) | | | | There is more room in the lacuna than is needed for the mem, so that [ת] would be possible as well.

7:7 (14) | | | | Similar asyndetic structures in 4QCanta are found in 3:11 and 4:6.

107. 4QCantb

Physical description

The colour of frgs. 1 and 2 is medium to dark brown, while frg. 3 is beige. The three fragments preserve the bottom part of the columns together with the bottom margins. In the case of frg. 1, the top, right (before lines 1–2), left and bottom margins of the column have been preserved partially as well
as a segment of the top margin of the preceding column. Frg. 2 ii probably preserved the top margin as well. Both frgs. 1 and 2 preserve the end of a sheet, including the holes in which the thread was once sewn. There is no evidence of ruling, and as a result the lines are not straight, and the distance between them is uneven.

The horizontal fold in the parchment in frg. 1 7–9 was probably there before the text was inscribed; the uneven surface in line 8 probably necessitated that the scribe leave more space before and after ꞌ than he would have done otherwise. In the middle of the bottom margin of frg. 1, the parchment was damaged and subsequently repaired by stitches (see especially PAM 41.277).

The three preserved fragments of this scroll display very similar patterns of decay at their lower edges. The specific shape of the bottom margins and the decay and notch on the lower right side in all three fragments allows us to place the three fragments on top of each other and in this way to calculate the lacking parts of frgs. 2 and 3, as explained below.

Several peculiar scribal characteristics are visible in this manuscript (best visible in PAM 40.604). There are five different scribal marks in frg. 1, at the ends of lines 4 (⦸), 7 (⦹), 9 (⦷), 11 (⦸), and 13 (⦹), and probably also the bottom part of a sign in frg. 2 i 4 (⦶), and the sign at the left edge of the last line of frg. 3 (⦱). The signs differ from each other, and their shape is that of letters in the Palaeo-Hebrew script, or the Cryptic A script (as in 4Q249, 298, 317), or a combination of several scripts, including Greek (see the notes below). Since the Cryptic A script is used for Qumran sectarian writings, the appearance of these letters in 4QCant would point to either a sectarian scribal background or to use of the manuscript by the Qumran community. The function of the letters is, however, not clear. Since these marks appear in lines that were slightly or much shorter than the surrounding ones, it is not impossible that they served as line-fillers written in the spaces at the end of the lines lest the lines be mistaken as ‘open sections’ (similar to the use of the ‘X’ signs in 1QpHab). It is less likely that the signs somehow referred to the content of the manuscript, since they occur in the middle of sentences. There are also remnants of a superscription or scribal note in the top margin of frg. 1. On the other hand, what looks like a subscription or scribal note at the bottom of frg. 3 is probably part of the running text (see below).

Frg. 2 has been damaged seriously: its right side is completely darkened, and there is much shrinkage. For the measures, see the introduction.

Frgs. 1–3 represent the text, albeit fragmentary, of four continuous columns. Frg. 1 represents the last column of a sheet, frg. 2 contains remnants of the two columns of the next sheet, while frg. 3 contains the first column of a third sheet. The sheets containing merely two columns are thus of small dimensions, as is the scroll as a whole.

11 See the paleographical analysis by S. J. Pfann in the article quoted in n. 7.
12 If they were used as line-fillers, their use is not consistent. In three of the five occurrences in frg. 1 they could be line-fillers in spaces left uninscribed (lines 4, 9, 11), but in lines 7 and 13 they occur in ‘open sections.’ The possible signs in frgs. 2 and 3 are of an unclear nature.
13 The words are not legible, but the very presence of such a superscription would be very unusual for the Qumran scrolls.
According to a calculation of the distance between the identical patterns at the bottom of the leather of frgs. 1, 2 and 3, the reconstructed distance between frgs. 1 and 2 (14.6 cm) was much larger than between frgs. 2 and 3 (9.5 cm), so that the loose rollings became smaller as the text continued. This implies that the text was rolled inwards with the beginning of the text at the outside of the scroll.

The columns probably had a different number of lines, but due to irregular spacing they had the same length. The fragmentary status of their preservation and the shrinkage does not allow for any precision. The column in frg. 1 is reconstructed as 15 lines, while the columns in frgs. 2 and 3 are reconstructed as containing 14 lines.

Contents

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</tr>
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Palaeography

A. Yardeni (private communication) dates this manuscript to the end of the first century BCE.

Orthography

The orthography is very close to M; note for example שֶׁכֶלֶם 4:2. In some details the scroll is defective as opposed to M: מצה 2:12, קל 2:14, hara 2:14; מיר 5:1. In other details the scroll is plene as opposed to M: הרעה 2:16, שָׁפָתּ 4:3, וֹדֵה 4:10, וֹדֵה 4:15. In 3:1 the scribe omitted the quiescent 'alep.

Textual Character

The relatively large number of scribal errors and of Aramaic influence on the scribe of 4QCantb make it into an imprecise copy. It further omits two large segments of text, Cant 3:6–8 and 4:4–7.

Scribal errors:
2:13 (1 5) מְתַהַנְא בְּהַנְא | מְתַהַנְא
2:15 (1 9) שָׁפָתּ | שָׁפָתּ (based on letter count)
3:1 (1 13) בְּלִילָה | בְּלִילָה (אֶדְוַ וּוַבּ)
3:1 (1 13) בְּכָשֶת | בְּכָשֶת
4:8 (2 ii 8) מַעָּא | מַעָּא

Aramaic influence:
2:17 (1 11) מֵהַלָּלָה | מֵהַלָּלָה
2:17 (1 2) מַרְרִי | מַרְרִי
4:8 (2 ii 7) וְזַח אֵלֵּך 1° אָמָת
4:8 (2 ii 7) וְזַח מְלֵבָנָן 1° מִן לָבָן
4:8 (2 ii 7) וְזַח אֵלֵּך 2° אָמָת
4:8 (2 ii 7) וְזַח מְלֵבָנָן 2° מִן לָבָן
4:8 (2 ii 8) וְזַח מְכָּשָה 2° רֶאֶש
4:8 (2 ii 8) וְזַח אָמָת 2° אָמָת
4:8 (2 ii 9) וְזַח מְרָדִיר 2° הָרָדִיר
4:10 (2 ii 13) וְזַח מְכָל 2° כָּל
4:10 (2 ii 13) וְזַח בֶּשָּׁמִים 2° בֶּשָּׁמִים
4:16 (3 12) וְזַח פֶּרֶת מְנַיִּּי 2° נַגֵּדַו מֶסַר אָבָּבָבוֹתָו 2° מֵן מִדַּי

Numbers

PAM 43.093*, 41.277* (40.604, 40.613, 42.635). Photograph 43.093 represents the most recent arrangement of the fragments, while the earlier 41.277 at times provides more details. A photograph made in 1994 by G. Bearman and S. Spiro on behalf of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center (quoted below as ‘photograph ABMC’) revealed a few additional details.

Mus. Inv. 1119 (earlier number C 64)

Frg. 1  Cant 2:9–3:2

top margin

[עֶנֶּה דָּוִיד גֵּאָר] [לְ קְשַׁיַּ[ל] רוֹקִיִּי חֶרֶף וְלָ[לַח] 2
[כִּי הָצֵחָת צַבְלִים] [מַצְפּוּת] חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 3
[עֶנֶּה נָרָק בּ[אֱר]יִּי] [עֶנֶּה הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 4
[עֶנֶּה נָרָק בּ[אֱר]יִּי] [עֶנֶּה הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 5
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַיִּי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 6
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 7
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 8
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 9
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 10
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 11
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 12
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 13
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 14
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 15
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 16
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 17
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 18
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 19
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 20
[עָנַי] [אֲמָר] [ם] [טַמ] נָרַי הָצֵחָת חֶרֶף וְלָ[ל] 21

bottom margin

PAM 40.604 reveals remnants of several letters in the top margin above the
Plate II: PAM 43.093. By courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority
beginning of the text on line 1 as well as above the preceding column, which appear to be part of two different words, possibly part of a superscription or scribal note. Visible are the base line of a letter such as a bet, kap, or final mem, and after some six spaces the remnants of a resh and an additional letter. On the fragment itself these letters are not visible any more.

L. 1 (2:9) יִרְפָּא. See PAM 40.604.
L. 3 (2:11) אַלּוּ. See PAM 41.277.
L. 4 (2:11). At the end of the line, which is slightly shorter than the surrounding ones, at some distance from the last word, a scribal mark resembling a zayin in the Palaeo-Hebrew script is recognizable. It resembles an intercolumnar mark in 1QIsa\(^a\), between cols XXI and XXII next to Isa 27:10, to the left of a new paragraph, although that sign adds vertical lines below and above and its slant is somewhat different. See J. C. Trever in: M. Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark’s Monastery (New Haven, 1950) XVI. An additional sign, of a more complex shape, occurs to the right of an indentation (and hence, new paragraph) in 1QS IX 3. Again another item occurs at the bottom of col. VII. These signs were inserted into the text of 1QIsa\(^a\) and 1QS after it had been written, either by the main scribe or by a later scribe or reader. These scribal marks are discussed by M. Martin, S.J., The Scribal Character of the Dead Sea Scrolls, I (Bibliothèque du Muséon 44; Louvain 1958), 152–153, and by the present author in ‘The Nature and Background of the Scribal Markings in the Qumran Scrolls’ (in press), but their purpose remains unclear. See further the introduction to this manuscript.

L. 7 (2:13). On PAM 40.604 and 41.277 one recognizes at the end of the line, at the place of the left margin of the column, a circle, representing either a kap in the Cryptic A script, or an ayin in the Palaeo-Hebrew script, or the Greek letter omicron. It recurs in 1QIsa\(^a\) col. XVII, line 1=Isa 21:16 and between cols. XXVIII,18 and XXIX,18 (=Trever, fig. 5) as well as in the margin before the text of 4Q417, col. II, line 23 (Sapiential Work A\(^a\)). See further the introduction to this manuscript.

L. 9 (2:14) מְשַׁמֵּר. This word is written in smaller characters and close to the next line because of surface problems (fold in the leather).
L. 9 (2:14) נ. See photograph ABMC.
L. 9 (2:14). At the end of the line, which is slightly shorter than the surrounding ones, one recognizes a scribal mark consisting of two almost parallel lines and a third one above them placed at an angle of 45 degrees. The lines do not touch each other, but if they had been closer to each other, they would have formed the Greek letter epsilon. Cf. Massir col. V. See further the introduction to this manuscript.

L. 11 (2:16). The scribal sign at the end of the line resembles a dalet in the Cryptic A script, or a vertically written shinsin in the Palaeo-Hebrew script, or a capital sigma. See further the introduction to this section.

L. 13 (2:17). The scribal sign at the end of the line (best visible in PAM 40.604) is shaped as a beth in the Palaeo-Hebrew script or a tet in the Cryptic A script. See further the introduction to this manuscript.

L. 14 (3:1) לֶאֶל. It is not likely that the vertical line under the tav represents part of a letter.
THREE MANUSCRIPTS OF CANTICLES

Plate III

4QCan\textsuperscript{b} Irg.

PAM 43.093

Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority

Courtesy of G. Bearman and S. Spiro
L. 14 (3:1) הִקָּשֵׁת. There is an intentionally large space before this word which is not due to any visible surface problems such as roughness of the leather or folds. It is not impossible that the scribe wished to create a straight left margin.

L. 15 (3:2) רְפָּאָה. Cf. PAM 41.277. The remnant of the first preserved letter points to a הֶ, not a yod.

L. 15 (3:2) עֵזְרָא. These words are written in somewhat larger characters slightly below the line, probably because of surface problems. The ink of these two words is more faint than that of the surrounding words.

Variants

2:10 (2) יִלָּךְ לְכָּל יֵמָו according to a Geniza fragment (cf. context); ἐλθὲ ὦ (likewise v. 13).

2:10 (2) יִלָּךְ לְכָּל יֵמָו; the same interchange recurs in v. 13, probably influenced by v. 14.

2:11 (3) בְּשַׁכְלָהוּמָסְס וּכְו.

2:12 (3) וּכְו > מָו; cf. app. on v. 13. The syntax of 4QCant is unusual. Possibly these two words were meant as a marginal note providing a parallel to the beginning of the next verse and wrongly inserted in the present place (Zakovitch).

2:12 (4) וּכְו מָו; cf. app. on v. 13.

2:13 (5) בַּאָמָה מָו.

2:13 (5) בַּאָמָה מָו.

2:13 (6) יִלָּךְ לְכָּל יֵמָו; ἐλθὲ ὦ (likewise v. 10).

2:14 (8) וְמַהֲרַתָּהוּ מְדִילָהוּ; elsewhere this word occurs only in Ezek 38:20 where מְדִילָהוּ occurs also in v. 8.

2:14 (8) וְמַהֲרַתָּהוּ מְדִילָהוּ; the form in 4QCant is influenced by the Aramaic equivalent.

2:14 (9) וְמַהֲרַתָּהוּ מְדִילָהוּ (τῇ φωνῇ σου). Cf. Jer 50:42 כָּל מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִילָהוּ מְדִil}
THREE MANUSCRIPTS OF CANTICLES

3:2 (15) אָכַלְהוּ וְאֶכֶם; for similar interchanges, see Kutscher, Isaiah Scroll, 326–7.

Frg. 2 col. i 3:[2]–5, 9–11, [4:1a]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>וְאָכַלְהוּ וְאֶכֶם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>[ supplemental material]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>[ similar interchanges, see Kutscher, Isaiah Scroll, 326–7. ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>[ similar interchanges, see Kutscher, Isaiah Scroll, 326–7. ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>וְאָכַלְהוּ וְאֶכֶם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>בֵּית יְרוּשָׁלָם בִּבְנֵי בּוּז אֶלֶף אֲחָצֵל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>[ supplemental material]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>[ supersonic material]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>[ supplemental material]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>[ supplemental material]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>[ supplemental material]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>[ supplemental material]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>[ vacate ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>[ vacate ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L. 4 (3:4). At the end of the line one recognizes in PAM 42.635 the tail end of either a letter or a sign. Since the remnants of this letter/sign do not point to a final letter (mum, pe or kap), they may preserve the bottom part of a scribal sign, like the signs at the ends of the lines in col. i. See further the introduction to this manuscript.

L. 4 (3:4) המ. See photograph ABMC.

L. 10 (3:10). The reconstruction allows for a longer text than the text of המ.

L. 13–14 (4:1). For the layout of these lines, cf. lines 5–6 in col. ii.

When frgs. 1, 2, and 3 are placed on top of each other, joined at their bottom margins and at the identical shapes at the right of the fragment, the contents of frg. 2 can be calculated. Frg. 1, preserving a bottom margin, contains the text between Cant 2:9 and 3:2, including the first two words of v. 2, in a column of 15 lines. Since frg. 2 ii contains Cant 4:1b–3, 8–11a, the present column, col. i of that fragment, would have contained the text between those two units, viz., 3:2–11 and the beginning of 4:1. The reconstruction includes 4:1a because the top margin of the next column has been preserved and because the comparative position (juxtaposition) of בָּשֹׁמַל in line 9 and the seventh line from the bottom of the next column require the reconstruction of five or six lines after this word. The text of this col. i is reconstructed with an average 35 letter-spaces per line (on the basis of lines 9–10). Of this col-

---

14 Five lines is more likely than six, since the words on lines 9–10 are written with larger characters.
umn remnants have been preserved of lines 5–11. These remnants are of limited scope and the words in lines 9, 10 are in a larger and more irregular script than in the surrounding lines. The ends of lines 4–6 are clearly visible on PAM 42.635.

The reconstruction makes it necessary to postulate the omission of vv. 6–8, which contain a separate literary unit.

Variants

This column overlaps with 4QCant\(^a\) i (3:7–4:6).

\[ \text{3:6–8 (7) } \text{ > Jhabent } 4QCant\(^a\) (\text{partially preserved}) \text{ M S. The omission of vv. 6–8 in 4QCant}\(^a\) \text{ reflects an intentionally shorter text.} \]

Frag. 2 col. ii Cant 4:1b–3, 8–11a

\textit{top margin}

\begin{align*}
\text{1} & \text{ רכתק ומבצעי עצמות} \\
\text{2} & \text{ אמה מחמות חסולה אץ [בمعنى] במחמות} \\
\text{3} & \text{ שעון חסורה חסורה שלע} \\
\text{4} & \text{ שליכס מחמות חסולה אץ [בمعنى] במחמות} \\
\text{5} & \text{ והשין שמחותי ומסגרת} \\
\text{6} & \text{ רכתק ומבצעי עצמות} \\
\text{7} & \text{ אמה מחמות חסולה אץ [בمعنى] במחמות} \\
\text{8} & \text{ אבראשה עשת עשתו} \\
\text{9} & \text{ אבראשה עשת עשתו} \\
\text{10} & \text{ כלנה והבולות במדים} \\
\text{11} & \text{ ברקע [בمعنى] במדים} \\
\text{12} & \text{ והא עדין [בمعنى] במדים} \\
\text{13} & \text{ bütün ממך בדמך} \\
\text{14} & \text{ ובמחמות} \\
\end{align*}

\textit{bottom margin}

When frgs. 1, 2 and 3 are placed on top of each other, joined at their bottom margins and at the identical shapes at the right of the fragment, it becomes clear that the extent of the column contained in this fragment is larger than indicated by the photograph. Calculations are made difficult by the shrinkage of this fragment, especially its top. At the same time, enough has been preserved of the leather above line 1 in order to ascertain that it was not inscribed and hence constituted the top margin.

L. 1 (4:1). See photograph ABMC.

L. 2 (4:1) שעון חסורה. For the reading see PAM 42.635.

L. 5 (4:3) והרמז. Shrinkage and surface damage gave this word a vertical twist.
L. 8 (4:8) מ. Shrinkage of the fragment makes it appear as if the word is written in the margin.  
L. 9 (4:8) מ. See also photograph ABMC. The mem is not a final letter (contrast final mems in this text), but a medial letter joined with a partially completed (or preserved?) final nun, for which cf. מ in line 12.  
L. 10 (4:9) מ. See PAM 41.277.  
L. 11–14 (4:9–11). The beginnings of these lines are readable on PAM 42.635.  
L. 11 (4:10) מ. Due to damage in the fragment the last letter is separated from the previous ones.  
L. 12 (4:10) מ. The remnants of the first word in this line, best visible on PAM 42.635 and the ABMC photograph, do not reflect מ (no remnant of a lamad is visible). Rather, they probably reflect an incorrectly written word, followed by a parenthesis sign to the left of the letters, indicating that the scribe wished to remove the word from the context. Likewise, in 11QpaleoLev the notation of a sigma and antisigma serves to indicate verses written in the wrong place (Lev 20:23–24 written in the middle of 18:27). Similar notations are found in 1QM, col. III, line 1 and 1QS, col. VII, line 8. For a discussion, see Tov, Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, 54–55.

Variants

This column overlaps with 4QCan$t^a$ ii (4:7, 6:11–7:7).

4:2 (3–4) מ (י). שער כנעלת מקולהות 4QCan$t^a$.  
4:3 (5) מ. מים ב.  
4:3 (6) מ. ב.  
4:4–7 (6) מ. The omission of vv. 4–7 in 4QCan$t^b$ reflects an intentionally shorter text than the one included in the other textual witnesses (see TEXTUAL CHARACTER). The intentions behind the scribe’s presentation of the text are reflected in the layout of lines 6–7 as described below. One can only speculate on the reason for the omission of these verses. Since the scroll is only partially known, one does not know whether the mentioning of the ‘breasts’ (v 5) in this section would have been the reason for the omission of the pericope as a whole. This seems to be a remote possibility. Another possible explanation (Y. Zakovitch) of the shortening of the text is related to the parallel between the description of the female body in chapter 6 and that in the present chapter. In chapter 6 the description of the body (6:1–7) ends at exactly the same point at which the present description stops, after מ (6:7=4:3). In any event, in view of the overall character of the two scrolls of Canticles, it is not likely that the omission of these verses resulted from erroneous omission (parablepsis) triggered by the situation that both v. 4 and v. 8 would have started new sections, possibly indicated by indentations in the Vorlage of 4QCan$t^b$. 

Three Manuscripts of Canticles

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the same consonants are reflected in a different vocalisation in 0 (Sejpa) and 1. Possibly this is a hypercorrection by the scribe who, more than others, was influenced by Aramaic, and may have explained 2 as the Aramaic of 1.

Possibly this is a hypercorrection by the scribe who, more than others, was influenced by Aramaic, and may have explained 2 as the Aramaic of 1.

In 0 (SEopo) El7, the apocopated mi- is consistently replaced by min in 4QCantb. This is also the trend in late biblical Hebrew and in Aramaic. See Kutscher, Isaiah Scroll, 214. For a reverse example see Lam. 1:6 and 4QLam.

In 4QCantb the plural form cf. v. 14.

For the Aramaic ending, see the list of Aramaizing forms in 4QCantb.

Because of the omission of a complete section in 4QCantb (vv. 4–7) the division into sections of 4QCantb cannot be compared well with 1. This difference in content involves not only an open space at the end of v. 3 in line 6, but also an indentation at the beginning of the next line, 7. 1 has a 2 after v. 7.
THREE MANUSCRIPTS OF CANTICLES

When frgs. 1, 2, and 3 are placed on top of each other, joined at their bottom margins and at the identical shapes at the right of the fragment, the number of the missing first lines of the column in frg. 3 is calculated as six. Since the column preceding frg. 3, viz., frg. 2 ii, ended with the text of 4:11a, the first lines of the next column represented by frg. 3 would have contained the text of 4:11b–14. According to the length of the preserved lines in this column (37–40 letter-spaces), the text of 4:11b–14 would have been written in 6 lines, including an open paragraph or empty line.

The comparative position of the bottoms of the columns also allows us to understand that the single word written on the last line of frg. 3 is written on what in the other fragments constitutes the last line as well, in this case partly extending to the bottom margin because the word is written in large characters. On PAM 43.093 there seem to be remnants of letters or signs to the right of this word, but such remnants are not visible on the earlier photograph 41.277 nor are they found on the leather itself. Nevertheless these vestiges of letters are used as the basis for our assumption that the line would have been inscribed. Possibly the scroll ended at this point, thus presenting only the first half of the book (see below).

The pericopes included in this section—4:9–11 (partially) and 4:12–5:1—constitute separate literary units, so that it is not inconceivable that the scroll indeed ended at this point.15

L. 8 (4:14) וַיְלַחֲשֵׁם. For the reconstruction of the ending cf. 4:10.
L. 12 (5:1). The line starts with an indentation of one letter-space. Possibly this slight indentation is connected with the possibility that this is the penultimate line of the scroll (see the note on line 14).
L. 13 (5:1) יִרְשָׁלִּים. The remnants of the penultimate letter resemble aresh, but it probably represents a tav, of which the left leg was chipped off from the leather. The line starts with a very slight indentation.
L. 14 בָּרֵא. The final letter in this word is much larger than the letters on the preceding lines. The vertical line of the first letter has been truncated since the top layer of the leather has been peeled off. If the three letters which are clearly visible on all photographs are taken by themselves, the word could be read as דֹּמֶּה, whose contextual meaning would be unclear. The word could be taken as a note of some kind. If the word is taken as 'silence', it may have been an exegetical note relating to the content of the last line. It could also have indicated the end of a literary unit or even of the scroll. It is, however, difficult to conceive of the word as indicating the end of the scroll, since in that case the text would have ended abruptly in the middle of 5:1. It is more feasible to conceive of the three preserved letters, together with the aforementioned remnants of letters on PAM 43.093 as reflecting דֹּמֶּה occurring in the biblical context (suggestion by Y. Zakovitch). This assumption would explain the large size of the letters, especially the final mem, since this word would constitute the end of the scroll. See further below on the different se-

15 Although the traditional chapter division starts at 5:1, the first verse of this chapter actually belongs to the literary unit that started with 4:12. Note that מ has a closed paragraph division at this point.
quence of the elements in 5:1. At the same time, it remains difficult to understand why the last three letters of דודים are preserved so clearly, and the preceding letters are not.

To the left of ד'311, at the left edge of the preserved fragment one notices the traces of what looks like a nun in the Cryptic A script or a Greek gamma. This could be another one of the scribal signs such as are written in the left margin of the column in frg. 1. If this is indeed a scribal sign, the very location of the letter at this place, well before the end of the line, would strengthen the assumption that this is the last line of the scroll. See further the introduction to this manuscript.

According to this assumption the last two lines of the text are reconstructed as follows.

[א]ריאת מרי ועבשומת ש;<יתר יידי וחלב ו]
[אכלהי יעיב ועבשומ אכלה רעי שות ושבר ו]

bottom margin

Variants

4:16 (11) מַעַר פֶּרֶס מִזְרַיִם | עֲאָכַל וּמְלַאֹר מְלַאֹר וְדָאֲבָנָהוּ | מַעַר יִזְיִד | cf. the text reflected in the scroll omits מַעַר פֶּרֶס מִזְרַיִם and it takes מַעַר פֶּרֶס מִזְרַיִם as a combination of מַעַר פֶּרֶס מִזְרַיִם and מַעַר פֶּרֶס מִזְרַיִם. For similar exegesis, see 6:12 מַעַר בֵּית מֶלֶךְ מַעַר בֵּית מֶלֶךְ in ב (propter quadrigas).

5:1 (13–14) The reconstructed text of the last three lines differs from the sequence of מַעַר G which read מַעַר מֶרֶשֶׁי עֲאָכַל עִיֵּר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר עֲמַר דְּבָשְׁר. The advantage of this reconstruction is that it removes the otherwise unexplained vacat at the end of line 14. While the sequence of the stichs in מַעַר G creates a parallel pattern abab, 4QCant^a contains a chiastic pattern (abba).

108. 4QCant^c (?)

Numbers

Mus. Inv. 1118 (earlier number C 64b)
PAM 43.097 (40.604, 41.977)

3:7–8 [הנה מְכַה שָׁלִיחֲהָלֵלָה | שֵׁפְיוֹמִים נִבְּרִים סְבֵּר לֶה] [מנָבְּרִי יְשָׁרָא | לֶה] 1
[ ] [ ] 2

Variant

3:8 (2) מַעַר אָאוֹת ה

This tiny fragment probably derived from a third manuscript of Canticles. The script is somewhat different from 4QCant^b (note especially the 'aleph),
and the letters are written in a different ductus from that text. On the other hand, if the fragment were to be ascribed to 4QCant⁶, it would have belonged to frg. 2 i of that manuscript.