

# Sôfer Mahîr

Essays in Honour of Adrian Schenker  
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## THE TEXT OF ISAIAH AND ITS EARLY WITNESSES IN HEBREW

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### I

A main characteristic of the new edition, the *Biblica Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ), is the use of the textual evidence from manuscripts discovered in Qumran and other places in the Dead Sea region. From the point of textual criticism these texts are of great significance. In the period before Qumran the critical assessment of the Masoretic text (M) was mainly done on the basis of the early versions – translations, which by their nature do not provide direct evidence of the Hebrew text. Instead, the underlying parent text has to be reconstructed first, a procedure which in many instances creates a great deal of uncertainty. Most biblical texts of Qumran, however, are written in the language of the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew or Aramaic, thus representing direct evidence of the text. Moreover, they date from the earliest period in which the biblical text is attested, viz., the third century B.C.E. up to the second century C.E. In comparison to the other witnesses of the early period – the Septuagint (G) and the Samaritan Pentateuch (Smr) – the Qumran texts have an additional value in that they constitute manuscript evidence that goes back to this early period directly, and not indirectly, i.e., via a reconstruction of the text of a witness on the basis of manuscripts of a later date, as is the case with the G and Smr.

Given the great significance of the biblical texts from the Dead Sea region it is, on the other hand, frustrating that in general the evidence is so fragmentary. Fortunately, the book of Isaiah – my part in the Quinta project – is attested by a large number of mostly fragmentary manuscripts from Qumran (22), but also by one complete scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>), and another one that has been preserved for a fifth of the book (1QIsa<sup>b</sup>).<sup>1</sup> As a whole the Qumran evidence now avail-

<sup>1</sup> For a listing of the evidence see, for example, M. G. Abegg, Jr., "1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and

able is very important, the more so since G-Isaiah – a version also going back to the early period – represents an indirect witness which, due to its nature as a ‘free’ translation, causes much uncertainty as far as the underlying Hebrew text is concerned. Consequently, the evidence of the Dead Sea region will play a leading role in the selection of cases for the critical apparatus of Isaiah in *BHQ*.

In this contribution in honour of Adrian Schenker, I like to discuss a number of variant readings in Isaiah which are attested by two or more Qumran mss.

## II

In some cases the available evidence provides us with an interesting variety of readings. Here are some examples.

5:19 M ותקרבה ותבואה; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ותקרבה ותבואה; 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> ותבא ותקרבה

The lengthened form of the third person sing., תבואה (cohortative), is rare in M (cf. יהישה in the same verse).<sup>2</sup> The reading ותקרבה may be due to influence of תבואה.<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to say which text tradition is to be preferred here.

22:17 M ויעטך; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> יעוטך; 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> ויעטך; 4QIsa<sup>a</sup> ויעטך

The Qumran witnesses reflect a tendency related to later Hebrew.<sup>4</sup>

26:1 M השיר הזה; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> השיר הזואח; 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> השירה הזואח; 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> השיר הזח

The reading of M is a *hapax*, whereas that of 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> is the usual one in M (e.g., Exod 15:1; Num 21:17). 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> offers a mixed reading. The reading of M (= 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>, with some uncertainty) is the more difficult one and hence the preferable one.<sup>5</sup>

1QIsa<sup>b</sup>: a Rematch,” in E. D. Herbert and E. Tov (eds.), *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (London, 2002), 222f. In addition, there are a number of citations from Isaiah in Q-documents such as the pesharim.

<sup>2</sup> See H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments* (Halle, 1918; repr. Hildesheim, 1965), §56u<sup>n</sup>, 59p.

<sup>3</sup> E. Y. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)* (STDJ 6; Leiden, 1974), 328.

<sup>4</sup> See Kutscher, *Language*, 357f.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. D. Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 3, *Ézéchiel, Daniel et les 12 Prophètes* (OBO 50/3; Fribourg & Göttingen, 1992), cviii. (= CTAT 3).

46:10 M אהרהי; 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> = M; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> אהרהי; 4QIsa<sup>a</sup> אהרונה

46:13 M קרבתי; 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> = M; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> קרובה; 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> הקרבתי

In both cases M = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> represents the better reading. The reading אהרהי (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) may be an error,<sup>6</sup> or a plural form conveying the same meaning as the reading of 4QIsa<sup>a</sup>, אהרונה.<sup>7</sup> (This latter reading, which is not attested in M, is also found in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 41:22. Compare the plural form ראשונה in 41:22; 42:9.)

As to קרבתי, the reading of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> may be due to influence of 56:1, whereas the reading in 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> is an adaptation to the more common usage in biblical Hebrew (the *hifil* of קרב occurs many times in M; the *piel*, however, is rare).

### III

Of particular interest are those cases where more than one biblical Qumran ms of Isaiah attests the same variant reading against M. The shared evidence may enhance the possibility that the Qumran mss attest a reading which is earlier and better than the Masoretic one. On the other hand, it is one of the principles of textual criticism that mss should not be counted, but weighed, a rule which also applies to the date of mss. Each case therefore should be evaluated individually. First, we will deal with some cases of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> against M, secondly, with cases of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4Q ms, and thirdly, with cases of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = two Qumran mss.

#### A. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> ≠ M

45:2 M הדרים; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> הדרים; 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> הדרים

Hebrew הדרים presents a difficulty since its meaning is uncertain and disputed ('spiral roads', 'uneven places?').<sup>8</sup> Scholars, therefore, have argued that the variant reading attested by 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (1QIsa<sup>b</sup>?) and G, "mountains", is to be preferred, as it makes good sense in the context.<sup>9</sup> However, the difficulty with this solution is that the

<sup>6</sup> Kutscher, *Language*, 366.

<sup>7</sup> A. van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches* (OBO 35; Freiburg & Göttingen, 1981), 95.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion, see J. L. Koole, *Isaiah, Part 3*, vol. 1, *Isaiah 40-48* (HCOT; Kampen, 1997), 434-435.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., D. Barthélemy, *CTAT* 3, cviii.

reduplicated plural (הדרים; see also 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 42:11) does not occur in biblical Hebrew in the absolute state.<sup>10</sup> As has been argued by other scholars, M-Kethib may well represent the original reading if taken in the sense of 'the walls', in line with Akkadian *duru*.<sup>11</sup> Contextually, this would fit even better because of the 'doors of bronze' and 'bars of iron' in the rest of the verse.

49:7 M יהוה; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> יהוה אדני יהוה

According to Barthélemy<sup>12</sup> the short reading of M is the better one. The long expression occurs at some places (thirteen) in M Isaiah where it is also attested by 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (except in a few instances [49:22; 50:5; 52:4; 61:11]). It is difficult to say which reading in 49:7 is the primary one, but it may well be that the long reading of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> is due to influence of 48:16.

51:7 M ומגדפתם; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ומגדפתם; 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> ומגדפתם

The second *mem* in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has been added, in superscript, by a second hand. The feminine plural in M is a *hapax*. Instead of the *qittul*-form in M both Qumran witnesses offer a *miqtal*-form, which seems to be an adaptation to a more usual form.

53:1 M על; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> אל

The *nifal* of נלה with על occurs here and in Exod 20:26. The variant reading in both 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (the 'alep was corrected here from 'ayin) and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> is in line with the usage at other places (e.g., Gen 35:17; 1 Sam 3:7, 21). The same is true for Smr Exod 20:26 (אלי). M seems to be the better reading.

54:3 M יירש; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> יירשו

The plural form may be an assimilation to ירשבו,<sup>13</sup> but it is also possible that this form was introduced because of the subject זרע, 'seed' (M reads זרעך ניים יירש). For a similar case see 57:3.

55:11 M אשר; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> אה אשר

The plus in both Qumran mss is probably due to harmonization with the first half of v. 11b (אה אשר חפצתי).

<sup>10</sup> Koole, *Isaiah*, 435.

<sup>11</sup> See C. H. Southwood, "The problematic *hadurim* of Isaiah xlv 2," *VT* 25 (1975), 801f.

<sup>12</sup> Barthélemy, *CTAT* 3, cix.

<sup>13</sup> Barthélemy, *Ibid.*

58:3 M נפשנו; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> נפשוחנו = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> נפשוחנו

The plural form in both Qumran mss is an adaptation to the idiom as found in texts such as Lev 16:29, 31 and Num 29:7.<sup>14</sup>

62:6 M תמיד; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> >

The Hebrew תמיד, which in M follows the expression 'all the day and all the night', may well have been regarded as superfluous.

B. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4Q ≠ M

10:32 M ביה; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> בה

The reading of the Qumran mss agrees with M Qere. The latter, "(the mountain) of the daughter (of Zion)", is the original one (cf. Isa 16:1). For this reading, see also 4QpIsa<sup>a</sup> 5-6, l. 4.

11:8 M צפעתי; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> צפעתיים

The plural reading of the Qumran mss is the secondary one.<sup>15</sup> For a similar case see 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> Isa 59:5.

12:4 M ואמרהם; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ואמרהה; 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> ואמרה

The singular in the Qumran mss seems to be an assimilation to v. 1.

19:9 M חורי; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> חורו

M is difficult here.<sup>16</sup> The reading of the Qumran mss seems to be the preferable one - "(and weavers) shall wax pale" (of the root חור)<sup>17</sup> - because this verb makes good sense parallel with בוש in the same verse (cf. 29:22).

19:18 M החרם; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> חחרם

As has been argued by scholars, the Qumran mss offer the better reading here: "(the city) of the sun" (instead "the city of destruction" in M).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Kutscher, *Language*, 398; Barthélemy, *CTAT* 3, cx.

<sup>15</sup> See Kutscher, *Language*, 399.

<sup>16</sup> *DCH* suggests: 'חורי', 'white stuff'. The reference to 4QpIsa<sup>c</sup> (4Q163), however, is misleading since the reading involved is not attested by the ms, but has been reconstructed to fill in a lacuna.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Kutscher, *Language*, 235; D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 2, *Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations* (Fribourg & Göttingen, 1986), 139. (= *CTAT* 2)

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., D. Barthélemy, *CTAT* 2, 143-150; van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 216.



24:4 M אמללו; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> אמלל

The M reading may represent the primary one,<sup>19</sup> but in this instance the evaluation of the evidence depends on the interpretation of the word that follows, מרום. (M reads אמללו מרום עם הארץ.) If one takes this word, together with עם, in the sense of people that are in a high position (cf. Job 5:11), then the plural reading is fitting, but if מרום is understood in the sense of a high place, the singular reading is more plausible.

24:6 M חזרו; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> חזרו

The Qumran mss offer a reading here which is the same as in 19:9 (see above). The M reading is best explained as a form of חזרה<sup>19</sup>, 'to diminish in number' (cf. the parallel, נשאר). It fits the context better than the verb חזר.<sup>20</sup>

26:12 M חשפה; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> חשפוט; 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> חשפט

As is often the case, particularly in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, a common word – in this case חשפט – has been substituted for a rarer one, חשפה.<sup>21</sup> The verb חשפה occurs at a few other places (2 Kgs 4:38; Ezek 24:3; Ps 22:16) and carries the meaning 'to set'.

42:11 M ישאו; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> ישא

The verbal form is followed by מדבר, 'the desert', and it therefore seems appropriate to have a singular form here. However, it may well be that the M reading is the better one since contextually speaking (see v. 11b) the inhabitants of the desert are meant.

49:7 M לבזה; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> לבזי

The M reading לבזה is a difficult one since its vocalization (infinitive construct) does not seem to make sense. Rather, one expects an adjective, or participle (cf. מזהב) as continuation of "Thus says the Lord to . . .". One therefore could read the Kethib בזה as an active participle, as some scholars prefer (cf. G), but most scholars agree that a passive sense is the more plausible understanding of the verse.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the variant reading לבזי is likely to be the primary

<sup>19</sup> So Barthélemy, *CTAT* 2, 174.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., for example, H. Wildberger, *Jesaja* (BKAT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1972–1982), 915.

<sup>21</sup> See Kutscher, *Language*, 293.

<sup>22</sup> See Koole, *Isaiah*, 31f.

reading, as many scholars believe.<sup>23</sup> Alternatively, since this reading may have been due to a harmonization to *מִהֲעַב*, and since the collocation *לְבוֹי נִפְשׁ* suggests the meaning, 'despised by someone'<sup>24</sup> rather than 'despised as far as (his) נִפְשׁ is concerned', it is more likely to regard the Kethib *בִּזָּה* as the primary reading and to vocalize it as *בִּזָּה*.<sup>25</sup>

C. *IQIsa<sup>a</sup>* = *Two Qumran mss* ≠ *M*

46:11 M Kethib *עֲצָרוּ* / Qere *עֲצָרוּ*; *IQIsa<sup>a</sup>* = *IQIsa<sup>b</sup>* = *4QIsa<sup>d</sup>* *עֲצָרוּ*

The Qumran mss support M Kethib which is the primary reading.

48:11 M *יָהֵל*; *IQIsa<sup>a</sup>* = *4QIsa<sup>c</sup>* = *4QIsa<sup>d</sup>* *יָהֵל*

(*4QIsa<sup>d</sup>* with a second *alep* in superscript)

McCarthy has argued that the variant of the Qumran mss testifies to the primary reading since M represents here an example of a *tigqûn*, a theological correction. The phrase "How should I be profaned" (*יָהֵל / יָיָךְ אֱהֵל*) was changed into "How should it be profaned", in order to avoid blasphemy.<sup>26</sup> Other scholars, however, consider M to be the better reading. The verbal form (*יָהֵל*) should be understood as referring to "my name" in v. 9 ("How should my name be profaned"). Furthermore, according to this view, the first person singular in the Qumran mss is easily understood as a change due to the context.<sup>27</sup> The plene spelling of the reading in the Qumran mss seems to be in favour of this opinion because, if the first person singular were the original reading, one would expect the form *יָהֵל* as it is found in Ezek 22:26 (where it is used with God as subject!). So there is reason to believe that the M reading is the primary one.

The form *יָהֵל* in the Qumran mss may be regarded as plene of *יָהֵל* (so McCarthy), or as a *piel* form of the verb *יָהַל*, 'to wait'.<sup>28</sup> The

<sup>23</sup> Koole, *Isaiah*, 32.

<sup>24</sup> Compare *עַבְדֵי* in Ps 22:7.

<sup>25</sup> Cf., for example, Barthélemy, *CTAT* 2, 358–360; M. C. A. Korpel and J. C. de Moor, *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry: Isaiah 40–55* (OTS 41; Leiden, 1998), 401.

<sup>26</sup> C. McCarthy, *The Tigqune Sopherim and Other Theological Corrections in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament* (OBO 36; Freiburg & Göttingen, 1981), 207–209. See also Barthélemy, *CTAT* 2, 354f.; Korpel and De Moor, *Isaiah 40–55*, 364.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., Kutscher, *Language*, 242; J. Koenig, *L'hérméneutique analogique du Judaïsme antique d'après les témoins textuels d'Isaïe* (VTSup 33; Leiden, 1982), 373 ("une retouche par petite mutation"); Koole, *Isaiah*, 575.

<sup>28</sup> See Kutscher, *Language*, 242; P. Pulikottil, *Transmission of Biblical Texts in Qumran: The Case of the Large Isaiah Scroll IQIsa<sup>a</sup>* (JSPSup 34; Sheffield, 2001), 102.

latter interpretation makes sense if understood as "How shall I wait" (i.e., I will not wait to act for my name's sake), and not as "How shall I hope for".<sup>29</sup>

53:11-12

(1) M ראה אור; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> ראה אור

(2) M ראה אור; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> ראה אור (1QIsa<sup>b</sup> { })

(3) M ראה אור; 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> = 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> = 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> ראה אור (1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ראה אור)

This is a most interesting situation since in three instances three Qumran mss offer in each case the same variant reading against M. In view of the fact that not only the three available Qumran mss agree in each case, but also because 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> as 'pre-Masoretic' witness is part of the picture, Barthélemy is of the opinion that the Qumran readings are to be regarded as the primary ones.<sup>30</sup> The evidence is impressive indeed, but one has also to consider and evaluate each case on its own.

(1) M "he will see"; Qumran "he will see light"

This is the most intriguing case of the three. It is disputed, however, whether the plus אור, 'light', was part of the original text, or not. The expression, 'to see light', is well known in the Hebrew Bible in the sense of 'to enjoy life' (e.g., Ps 36:10). However, in our text there seems to be a relationship between 'light' and 'knowledge, insight' (דעת) since the text continues as יושב בדעתו (M).<sup>31</sup> Hence the expression "to see light" would then convey the meaning of 'gaining insight'. Seeligmann has argued rightly that since the expression 'to see light' in this sense has no parallel in the Hebrew Bible, the plus 'light' should be regarded a secondary reading.<sup>32</sup> In addition, one could say that the verb ראה itself carries here the connotation of gaining insight comparable to Isa 5:19; 6:9; 41:20; 44:9 (ראה // דע).<sup>33</sup> However, the difficulty with this latter argument is that in 53:11 the verb 'to see' is followed by the verb 'to be satisfied' (שבט), and not by 'to know'. Of course, the verb שבט is followed by בדעתו, "with his knowledge", but here the question arises whether this word

<sup>29</sup> For this latter meaning, see the *hifil* in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 51:11 (M *piel*).

<sup>30</sup> Barthélemy, *CTAT* 2, 403-407; *idem*, *CTAT* 3, *cix*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. G.

<sup>32</sup> I. L. Seeligmann, "Δείξαι αὐτῷ φῶς," *Tarbiz* 27 (1956), 127-141. Most recently, this article has been published in a German translation in: I. L. Seeligmann, *Gesammelte Studien zur Hebräischen Bibel* (ed. by E. Blum; FAT 41; Tübingen, 2004), 401-419.

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., W. A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja: deel II* (Nijkerk, 1979); Koole, *Isaiah*; and De Moor and Korpel, *Isaiah* 40-55.

belongs to שָׁבַע, or rather should be taken as the first word of the next clause ("with his knowledge he will justify . . ." [בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק]).<sup>34</sup> The latter option seems the more plausible one because of the suffix, for it is strange to say that the servant will be satisfied with *his* (own) knowledge.<sup>35</sup>

On balance then it seems that the original text read (in translation) "he will see and be satisfied".<sup>36</sup> As has been suggested by Bonnard, both verbs are to be understood in the light of the preceding verse (v. 10) where it reads, "he will see offspring, prolong his days" (וְרָאָה זָרַע אֲרֵרֶךְ יָמִים).<sup>37</sup> As to the verb 'to be satisfied' as denoting a long life he points to texts such as Gen 25:8 (שָׂבַע), and Gen 35:29 and Job 42:17 (both שָׂבַע יָמִים).<sup>38</sup> Compare also the expression אֲרֵךְ יָמִים אֲשֶׁר יִעֲשֶׂהוּ in Ps 91:16.

(2) M "sin" (sg.); Qumran "sins" (pl.)

The singular הַטָּמָה in M (וְהוּא הַטָּמָה רַבִּים נִשְׂאָה) occurs only here in Deutero-Isaiah. According to Barthélemy, the singular represents an adaptation to the singular in v. 6 (עֵץ) and in v. 8 (פֶּשַׁע).<sup>39</sup> Koole, on the other hand, argues that the plural "is better explained as a harmonization with the plural forms in the context" (see vv. 4-5, 11b).<sup>40</sup> So the context does not help us any further. As has been observed by Kutscher, the reading of Qumran (הַטָּמָה רַבִּים) is a double plural which is typical of later Hebrew (e.g., Chronicles).<sup>41</sup> It therefore seems to be a secondary reading.<sup>42</sup>

(3) M "sinners"; Qumran "their sins"

Some consider the reading of the Qumran witnesses as the original one (e.g., Barthélemy), but it is also possible that, as Kutscher argues, this reading is due to harmonization with the first half of the line

<sup>34</sup> So IQIsa<sup>a</sup>, T, and V.

<sup>35</sup> This may have been the reason why G, followed by S, does not offer an equivalent of the suffix.

<sup>36</sup> For suggestions of what may have been the reason of the plus "light", see Seeligmann (due to the notion of 'light' in the sense of knowledge in texts of the Qumran community [IQSb IV 25-27; IQH IV 27-28]); Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique*, 275f. (influence of 9:1 and 50:11); Koole, *Isaiah*, 329 (influence of 50:10 and 9:1); and Korpel and De Moor, *Isaiah 40-55*, 549 (influence of 42:16).

<sup>37</sup> P. E. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe son disciple et leurs éditeurs, Isaïe 40-66* (Paris, 1972), 278.

<sup>38</sup> Bonnard, *Second Isaïe*, 278 note.

<sup>39</sup> Barthélemy, *CTAT* 2, 406.

<sup>40</sup> Koole, *Isaiah*, 341.

<sup>41</sup> Kutscher, *Language*, 399.

<sup>42</sup> For the expression הַטָּמָה נִשְׂאָה see, e.g., Lev 19:17; 20:20; 22:9; 24:15.

(cf. the Qumran reading under [2]).<sup>43</sup> It may well be that the original reading was spelled defectively (פִּשְׁעִים) because this would explain both interpretations – “sinners” as well as “their sin” (sg.),<sup>44</sup> the latter of which was changed into the plural, “their sins” (cf. [2]). For a similar case of a shift from singular to plural see 58:1: מִפִּשְׁעֵם (= 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>) vs. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> פִּשְׁעֵיהֶם.

## IV

From the above analysis the picture emerges that while in a few cases shared readings in Qumran mss testify to a better text, in many cases the combined evidence turns out to be of a secondary nature in comparison to M. This may not be surprising as far as concerns 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, but it is interesting to note that 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>, a ms that is considered to be archaic, or ‘pre-Masoretic’ (Barthélemy), also contains readings – albeit to a much lesser extent, which testify to tendencies such as linguistic adaptation to later Hebrew or to a more common usage in the Hebrew Bible. The same is true of Isaiah mss from Cave 4.

Thus, as far the above evidence goes, M attests a textual tradition which was transmitted in the early days – third century B.C.E. up to second century C.E. – in a more strict and accurate way. This is in line with the view that there has been a situation of textual fluidity *alongside* textual stability, or uniformity, in the early period.<sup>45</sup>

The Qumran mss of Isaiah referred to above reflect a practice of copying texts which was marked by linguistic adaptation and changes due to context. This mode of copying texts testifies to a scholarly interest in the language and the content of the text,<sup>46</sup> and may have been characteristic of the production of mss for study purposes.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Kutscher, *Language*, 383.

<sup>44</sup> For this view see K. Elliger, “Nochmals Textkritisches zu Jes 53,” in J. Schreiner (ed.), *Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch: Festschrift für J. Ziegler* (FB 2; Würzburg, 1972), 2:143f.

<sup>45</sup> See in particular A. S. van der Woude, “Pluriformity and Uniformity: Reflections on the Transmission of the Text of the Old Testament,” in J. N. Bremmer and F. García Martínez (eds.), *Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism* (CBET 5; Kampen, 1992), 151–169.

<sup>46</sup> A very interesting case is the plus “light” in Isa 53:11. The question whether this plus reflects a specific or sectarian interpretation, as has been suggested by Seeligmann, needs further investigation.

<sup>47</sup> For this phenomenon, see M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, “Biblical Manuscripts in the United States,” *Textus* 2 (1962), 36–39.