The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa\textsuperscript{A})—
Catalogue of Textual Variants

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Abstract: In this erudite survey of textual variants in the “Great Isaiah Scroll” from Qumran, Donald W. Parry lays out the major categories of these differences with illustrative examples. This significant description of the most significant book of Old Testament prophecy provides ample evidence of Parry’s conclusion that the “Great Isaiah Scroll” “sets forth such a wide diversity and assortment of textual variants that [it] is indeed a catalogue, as it were, for textual criticism.”

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The Qumran caves, located near the northwestern area of the Dead Sea, yielded twenty-one copies of the book of Isaiah—two from Cave 1, eighteen from Cave 4, and one from Cave 5. An additional copy (making a total of twenty-two copies) of Isaiah was discovered south of Qumran in a cave at Wadi Murabba’at. All twenty-two copies of Isaiah are written in Hebrew. Most of these scrolls are severely damaged and fragmented, owing to long-term exposure to the elements. Altogether,
the Isaiah scrolls represent about 10 percent of all biblical scrolls discovered at Qumran. This statistic alone indicates that Isaiah held a prominent place in the Qumran community, but other indications also reveal Isaiah’s significance. Isaiah’s book is treated as an authoritative work by the Qumran covenanters; in their sectarian writings, they cite, paraphrase, and allude to Isaiah more than any other prophet. These Isaiah quotations and allusions are located in legal, eschatological, and poetic contexts of the sectarian writings and reveal ideological and theological positions of the Qumran community. In addition to the twenty-two Isaiah scrolls themselves and the sectarian writings that include quotes and allusions to Isaiah, the Qumran discoveries included six Isaiah pesharim (commentaries).

The twenty-two copies of Isaiah represent significant archaeological finds. These Isaiah texts, discovered between the years 1947 and 1952, have impacted our understanding of the textual history of the Bible, and translators have utilized them for modern translations of the Bible.

The most significant of the twenty-two copies of Isaiah is called the Great Isaiah Scroll, or 1QIsa*. This scroll is virtually complete, containing all sixty-six chapters. It is the only complete biblical scroll discovered in the eleven Qumran caves; as such, it presents a view of what biblical manuscripts looked like at the end of the Second Temple era, around the first century CE. Unlike the Masoretic Text (MT) with its consonantal and vocalization framework and system of notes, accents, and versification, 1QIsa* features a handwritten manuscript without vocalization or accents. Additionally, 1QIsa* contains interlinear or marginal corrections, scribal marks and notations, a different paragraphing system, and special morphological and orthographic features.

With regard to the topic of this present paper, 1QIsa* contains such an assortment of textual variants versus the readings of MT, that this Qumran scroll may be considered a catalogue of textual variants. By catalogue, I refer to a “complete list of items.” But unlike most catalogues, which generally present items in a systematic manner (such as alphabetical order), the textual variants of 1QIsa* are not so systematized.

**Scribal Activity in 1QIsa* Produces Textual Variants**

The scribe(s) who copied 1QIsa* from a master copy had somewhat of a free approach to the text, characterized by exegetical or editorial pluses, morphological smoothing and updating, harmonizations, phonetic variants, and modernizations of terms. There is also evidence that a
well-intended scribe simplified the text for an audience that no longer understood certain classical Hebrew forms. His editorial tendencies resulted in a popularization of certain terms, some from Aramaic that reflected the language of Palestine in his time period. This free approach, together with errors that occurred during the transmission of the text (e.g., haplography, dittography, graphic similarity, misdivision of words, interchange of letters, transposition of texts), occasionally produced textual variants.

These textual variants may be divided into four categories:

(1) inadvertent errors that have occurred during transmission of the text
(2) intentional changes of the text on the part of the scribes and copyists of either MT Isaiah or 1QIṣa
(3) synonymous readings
(4) scribes’ stylistic approaches and conventions to the text

Not all variant readings, of course, fit neatly into one of these four categories; some readings are indeterminate.

It should be understood that examples of textual variants do not exist solely because of the scribal activity of one single witness or its ancestors, but because of the scribal activity of one or more of the major witnesses. Most of these scribal errors may easily be categorized according to the rules of textual criticism. A single type of reading does not dominate the deviations between MT Isaiah and 1QIṣa. The following examples, which serve to illustrate the variety of such variant readings listed above, demonstrate that 1QIṣa is indeed a catalogue of sorts of textual variants.

(1) Inadvertent Errors

Various publications that reveal the nature of textual criticism refer to mishaps that occur during the transmission of texts.¹ These include

pluses (e.g., dittography, conflate readings), minuses (e.g., haplography, *homoioteleuton*, *homoioarcton*), changes (e.g., misdivision of letters or words, ligatures, graphic similarity), and differences in sequence (interchange of letters or metathesis and transposition of words). All of these major categories of accidental errors are present in both of the Hebrew witnesses MT Isaiah and 1QIsa.

**Pluses—Minor Readings**

**1:2** MT | עֲרָיִן הָאָרֶץ 1QIsa•

Most pluses that exist in either MT Isaiah or 1QIsa consist of function words or common words, such as *and*, *the*, *all*, *one*, *to*, *for*, *in*, *like*, *et cetera*. In Isaiah 1:2, 1QIsa has the plus of the article on עֲרָיִן, thus reading עֲרָיִן; but the article is lacking on MT Isaiah.

**1:15 > MT 4QIsa'** | עַבְדְּהוֹ זַבְּכֵם 1QIsa•

A well-known example of a plus in 1QIsa is located in Isaiah 1:15, עֶבֶדְךָ זַבֵּכָה (your fingers with iniquity). This plus is lacking in MT 4QIsa'. עַבְדְּךָ זַבֵּכָה serves to fill out the parallelism, thus, עַבְדְּהוֹ זַבְּכֵם 베מט (“your hands are full of blood, your fingers with iniquity”). It is possible that this plus is a primary reading, which dropped out of the proto-Masoretic text during its transmission history. Watts writes, “The addition [of 1QIsa] is parallel to the previous stich and would be a metrical improvement on MT.” So, too, Burrows states regarding 1QIsa’s plus that “a fourth stichos would undoubtedly improve the metrical structure.” Cohen provides a compelling argument in favor of the originality of the plus belonging to 1QIsa, presenting four reasons as to why the scroll is to be preferred. Not only does he produce Ugaritic parallels, but he points out that “the parallelism in the first two clauses makes the possibility of parallelism in the second half of the verse more likely.”

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Or, as some textual critics maintain, 1QIsaª features a harmonization, a word or phrase that has been drawn from a similar context or parallel passage, either from Isaiah itself or from another biblical book. This harmonization may have been created from the scribal school that produced 1QIsaª or from its Vorlage. This particular plus, some critics claim, was adapted from 59:3, which reads כָּפֵרָה נַעֲלָי מִדְּשׁ אַפְּלַו וְתַעֲשֵׂהוּ. For other passages where blood is paired with iniquity, see 26:21; Ezekiel 3:18. For examples of other harmonizations in the scroll, see also 34:4 (cf. Micah 1:4); 51:3 (cf. 35:10; 51:11; 51:6 (cf. 40:26); 52:12 (cf. 54:5); and 60:4 (cf. 66:12).

**Conflations**

Some deviant readings between the witnesses are conflated readings. Although conflated readings are not always clear-cut, one or more textual critics have identified a conflated element in the deviations. In Isaiah 11:9, the reading of 1QIsaa (ךָפֵרָה) is a hybrid verbal form, a conflation, possessing elements of a perfect feminine singular verb (= MT כָּפֵר) and also the imperfect feminine prefix. See also the conflated/hybrid form in Isaiah 63:3 (ךָפֵרָה). In Isaiah 14:2, MT reads מְדֹנֶהוּ, but 1QIsaª has a plus, מְדֹנֶהוּ אָּלֵא אָדְמַה; from whence came מְדֹנֶהוּ? The scroll’s scribe was possibly impacted by the double manifestation of מְדֹנֶהוּ in the immediate context, first attested in verse 1 and then again later in verse 2. Or, 1QIsaª’s reading may be a conflation, based either on its Vorlage or another manuscript that read מְדֹנֶהוּ.

**Dittography**

30:30 שְׁמֹרִי הַשָּׁמָּוִית MT | שְׁמֹרִי הַשָּׁמָּוִית 1QIsaª •

1QIsaª’s duplication of שְׁמֹרִי serves no rhetorical purpose; rather, it is a dittography.


6 For an additional discussion on harmonizations, see J. Koenig, L’herméneutique analogique du judaïsme antique d’après les témoins textuels d’Isaïe, Vetus Testamentum, Supplements 33 (Leiden: Brill, 1982).

Haplography

For an example of a haplography, see Isaiah 2:3 where 1QIsa* omitted the expression [hwhy rh la] by means of haplography, triggered by the prepositions lRa . . . lRa.

—The copyist of 1QIsa wrote down yet concede and then skipped the second yet concede, another example of haplography.

Homoioteleuton

Verses 5b–6a dropped out of 1QIsa* through homoioteleuton, when the scribe's eye went from Mmwy to Mmwy. The reading of MT is supported by both 4QIsa* and other versions.

Confusion of Letters or Graphic Similarity

Graphically similar readings account for a small number of the readings of 1QIsa*, where either the copyists of MT or the Qumran scroll incorrectly copied the text by using graphically similar characters.

—The variant of 1QIsa* (ros jwrbw, “and by the whirlwind”) has no contextual significance in this passage; it is likely that a copyist slipped by writing samek rather than bet, an error that pertains to the graphic similarity of the two characters. Or he was impacted by the expression (hwhl) in Ezekial 1:4; 13:11, 13; Psalms 107:25; 148:8. For support of MT’s reading of rob, see also Jeremiah 21:12 which also collocates the words fpvm and √ rob in the context of the execution of judgment.

9:8[English v. 9] מִ֣דֶּרֶץ MT | רָוָּדֵר 1QIsa* •

—The variants between MT (רָוָּדֵר) and 1QIsa* (רָוָּדוּ) most likely arose because of the confusion of the letters dalet/resh in the Assyrian square script. For other instances of the dalet/resh interchange in MT

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8 See Weingreen, *Introduction to the Critical Study*, 38–45, for examples of graphically similar letters together with examples of variants in the HB.
and 1QIsa\(^a\), see also Isaiah 16:14; 17:6, 12; 22:5; 23:10; 27:2; 33:8; 40:20; 41:19, and others. But it is also possible that the 1QIsa\(^a\) scribe (or his Vorlage) intentionally rendered the verb יָדַע (via √ґґґ), thus reading, “And all the people will do evil (יָדַע), even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and arrogance of heart…” There is one additional possibility, set forth by Kutscher.\(^9\) He reminds us that the √ґґґ (“to tremble”; see Isa. 15:4) may have been the scroll’s intended meaning.

22:5 \(\text{כֶּרֶשׁ} \text{כְּרֵת} \text{חַוֹּר} \text{תֹּשֶׁת}\) 1QIsa\(^a\) •

1QIsa\(^a\) reads כֶּרֶשׁ. According to Weingreen, this is an example of graphic similarity: כֶּרֶשׁ = כְּרֵת חַוֹּר. The ayin may have lost its guttural sound late in antiquity and a scribe read the dalet for the resh.\(^10\) Consequently, the same scribe or a subsequent copyist changed the preposition מַלָּא to מַלָּא in order to make sense of the passage. Contrast Weingreen with Blenkinsopp,\(^11\) who prefers the reading of 1QIsa\(^a\). He writes that verse “5b [of MT] defies translation and has probably been seriously damaged in the transmission; the present translation depends on 1QIsa\(^a\) (מַגְּרַר qדס ʼl hhr), which makes better though by no means perfect sense and which MT (מַגְּרַר qר וֹסֶר ʼl hhr) may represent a damaged version.” Blenkinsopp, therefore, translates verse 5b, “with crying out for help to his holy place on the mountain.”

Misdivision of Words

9:2[English v. 3] \(אָל\) MT\(^{\text{ket}}\) 1QIsa\(^a\) (כָּל) | MT\(^{\text{qere}}\) •

אָל — For other occasions where אָל reads “to him” (versus “no, not”), see Isaiah 3:11. Ginsburg proposes that the original reading was אֲנִי = הָנָה (“the rejoicing”); this word experienced an improper misdivision of words and subsequently the waw was incorrectly added.\(^12\) אֲנִי fits the context and also corresponds with הָנָה in the parallelism: “You have increased the rejoicing, you have magnified the joy.”

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\(^10\) Weingreen, Introduction to the Critical Study, 53.
Interchange of Letters or Metathesis

3:7 MT | 1QIsa

— MT (材料) and 1QIsa (材料) exhibit two different words for garment or clothing. In the Hebrew Bible, 材料 (31 times) is attested approximately twice as often as 材料 (16 times). Both carry the same meaning. Kutscher produces a body of evidence “that 材料 is the original form and 材料 of later vintage”; at some point through the transmission of the word, 材料 came about by means of metathesis. Based on the fact that the previous verse (3:6) is part of the same pericope and that verse attests 材料 for both MT and 1QIsa, then 材料 in 1QIsa 3:7 signifies an error, an example of metathesis of the mem and lamed. Or, alternatively, the scribe’s Vorlage already contained the reading of 材料. Compare also the variant of 材料 and 材料 in 4:1.

Possible Ligature

20:6 MT | 1QIsa

— MT and 1QIsa produce two different verbal roots, √ (“to flee”) and √ (“to lean, support”) respectively. MT has the primary reading, because √ is often collocated with √ (e.g., Gen. 19:20; Exod. 21:13; Num. 35:6), an adverbial particle that follows the verb in both MT and 1QIsa in the verse under discussion. √ followed by √ (= 1QIsa) is unprecedented in the Bible and achieves an awkward reading. It is possible that the scroll’s scribe changed the verbal root to reflect his particular historical understanding regarding the pericope under discussion, the Conquest of Ethiopia and Egypt: Isaiah’s Dramatization (Isa. 20:1–6). Thus Pulikottil has written, “The scribe wanted to make it clear that the people of the coastland did not flee to Egypt for help, which never happened; they only relied on the military assistance of Egypt.” It is more probable, owing to the graphic similarities of √ and √ (both forms begin with nun and samek, plus a ligatured nun and waw share the appearance of a mem), that the scribe simply misread or miscopied the verb that was in his Vorlage.

14 Kutscher, The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll, 288.
Word Order\textsuperscript{16}  

1:30 MT 4QIsa\textsuperscript{f} | 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a} •  

These terms are syntactically variegated (or transposed) in MT versus 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a}. Both Ny¶Ea Mˆy™Am (= MT and 4QIsa\textsuperscript{f}; see also Num. 20:5) and Mym Nya (= 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a}; see also Exod. 17:1; Num. 21:5; Deut. 8:15; Isa. 50:2; Jer. 38:6; Zech. 9:11) exist in the Bible, although Mym Nya is more common. Because of the multiple examples of such variations, Talmon has written that the “widely encountered textual phenomenon of inter-Version variations in the form of syntactical inversion cannot be judged to be merely an indication of ordinary scribal laxity.”\textsuperscript{17} Instead, Talmon sees many examples of such variations as “evidence for the existence of equally valid text-traditions which cannot be reduced to one common archetype, and/or scribal manifestations of stylistic conventions.”\textsuperscript{18} For other examples of syntactical variations between MT and 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a}, see Isaiah 23:9; 36:12; 37:1, 7, 32–33; 38:19; 43:3; 49:6, 25; 52:7; 55:13; 60:7; 61:7; 62:8; 63:9, 17. For syntactical variations between MT and for 1QIsa\textsuperscript{b}, see 52:13 and 62:8. And for an example of a syntactical variation between MT and 4QIsa\textsuperscript{f}, see 8:7.  

36:12 MT 2 Kings 18:27 | 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a}  

hmkynwda low hmkylah  

1QIsa\textsuperscript{a} presents a different word order than MT’s. For a discussion of syntactical inversions or variations between MT and 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a}, see 1:30 above.  

37:7 MT 2 Kings 19:7 | 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a}  

awb jwr  

MT and 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a} have a different word order for these two words. Note that the scribe often spelled \( \text{wb} \) with the \( \text{alep} \) (cf. also \( \text{ayk} = \text{yk} \); \( \text{awl} = \text{wl} \)).  

(2) Intentional Changes  

Scribes and copyists of either MT or 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a} intentionally made changes to the Isaiah text. These changes include exegetical pluses or late editorial

\textsuperscript{16} It is not always easy to determine if the category “Word Order” belongs to “Inadvertent Errors” or to “Intentional Changes.” Unless there is evidence to the contrary, I am placing “Word Order” in the grouping of “Inadvertent Errors.”  


\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
additions, harmonizations (when a scribe blends one reading with a second reading that is located in the immediate or greater context, or with a parallel text), morphological smoothing, morphological updating, updating the vocabulary, euphemistic changes, orthographic variants, and phonetic differences.

**Exegetical Plus**

44:3 MT | יִשְׂכָּרְּב qxa 3 — The adverbial particle יִשְׂכָּרְּב (thus, so) is an exegetical plus in 1QIsa that was inserted interlinearly, probably to assist in the flow of reading between two clauses in the verse.

**Harmonizations**

34:4 > MT | יִשְׂכָּרְּב 1QIsa — This plus of 1QIsa, listed by scholars in verse 4, actually belongs to verse 3. Brownlee declares the plus of 1QIsa to be a harmonization, derived from Micah 1:4 (וֹקְבֶּה יָמִם). He further argues that the reading of MT (v. 3), minus the plus of 1QIsa, comprises a tristich as follows: “Their slain shall be flung out, and from their corpses their own stench shall rise—the mountains melting down with blood!” (translation by Brownlee). The third line of this tristich, writes Brownlee, serves as a “climax or conclusion” to the parallelistic structure, and that such a configuration is quite acceptable by modern scholars. 19 While the reading of MT is acceptable, the following two bicolons that are attested in the Qumran scroll also comprise a satisfactory structure, with “the valleys will be split” filling out the second bicolon: “Their slain will be cast down, and the stench of their corpses will rise, mountains will melt with their blood, the valleys will be split.” The plus of the scroll may have been derived from Micah 1:4 (or vice versa) or from a source that is common to both the book of Micah and the Isaiah Scroll or its Vorlage.

Morphological Smoothing

IQIsa\(^a\) doubles the dative pronoun (ואל נתנות לאל) via conflation. With regard to the MT reading (ואל נתנות לאל), 1QIsa\(^b\) and 1QIsa\(^a\) has which is the Mishnaic Hebrew form. This is direct evidence that the scroll’s scribe has modernized this word.

The deviation between MT ("to him") and 1QIsa\(^a\) ("to him") is not a variant reading, but an orthographic difference. Often the scroll writes "to him" with an aleph (compare also אַל, אֶל = אל; ד = קט = אל). For other examples of אַל ("to him"), see Isaiah 5:26; 9:2 (MT\(^\text{here} = \text{al}; MT^\text{ket} = \text{אל})); 31:8; 36:22; 44:7; 57:18 (bis in the scroll); 59:16; 63:9.

62:1

Following the negative particle אַל are variant verbal roots, וַתַּחְשָׂה in MT and וְתַחְשָׂה in 1QIsa\(^a\). These verbs are employed as synonymous readings in at least two parallelistic structures (see Isa. 42:14; Ps. 28:1), but here they are deviations in the first bicolon of verse 1. The reading of 1QIsa\(^a\) may have been assimilated from one of these two parallelisms (Isa. 42:14 or Ps. 28:1); or, according to Talmon, the Qumran scroll “presumably perpetuated an established reading.” The theory held by Kutscher\(^23\) that a scribe of 1QIsa\(^a\) modernized the reading from the relatively rare וַתַּחְשָׂה (16 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible) to the more popular וְתַחְשָׂה (47 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible) may be questioned because וְתַחְשָׂה was not modernized in other verses of 1QIsa\(^a\), i.e., 42:14; 57:11; 62:6; 64:11, and 65:6.

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20 Smoothing, together with archaising and modernizing, are “three related skewing processes which are involved in text production and preservation.” Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 11. For examples of smoothing from the Samaritan Pentateuch, see 13. Morphological smoothing is a scribal activity that seeks to remove textual unevenness or inconsistencies through leveling out the text. Such inconsistencies may pertain to morphological, phonological, or syntactical structures.


23 Kutscher, The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll, 34, 239.
Morphological Updating

13:10 אֶתְהוּ תַּכְּרִיתוּ MT | אֶתְהוּ תַּכְּרִיתוּ 1QIsa

—MT אֶתְהוּ תַּכְּרִיתוּ (via √ דָּוֶה, “to shine”) sets forth the difficult reading, because √ דָּוֶה occurs only four times in the Bible (Isa. 13:10; Job 29:3; 31:26; 41:10) and this verb does not exist in Rabbinic Hebrew. The scribe of 1QIsa replaced the rare אֶתְהוּ תַּכְּרִיתוּ with the common אָירֵו אָירֵו (via √ רָוֶה), thus updating the text to a common biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew root.

37:13 תַּכְּרִיתוּ MT 2 Kings 19:9 | תַּכְּרִיתוּ 1QIsa

—37:11–13 refers to nations, kingdoms, and city-states that Assyria had destroyed, including Gozen, Haran, Rezeph, Telassar, Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah. At the end of the list of names of nations and city-states, 1QIsa adds “and Samaria” (יִשְׂרָאֵל). Scholars generally agree that the invasion of Sennacherib into the kingdom of Judah (36:1–21) and Hezekiah’s reaction (36:22–37:20) occurred after Samaria’s destruction in 722 BCE. The 1QIsa scribe therefore added “and Samaria” to the text with the intent of updating the list of kingdoms and city-states. But this addition is unnecessary because the list of names in verses 11–13 was not meant to be comprehensive, but representative. Samaria was not listed simply because Hezekiah would have already been painfully aware of its destruction, for Samaria was his northern neighbor.

Updating the Vocabulary

33:7 תֵּאָר MT | תֵּאָר 1QIsa

—in the Bible, √ תֵּאָר and √ תֵּאָר have the same meaning (“to cry out”). In Isaiah 14:31; 15:4–5; 26:17; 30:19; 57:13, both MT and 1QIsa attest √ תֵּאָר; in Isaiah 19:20, both MT and 1QIsa have √ תֵּאָר. But in Isaiah 33:7; 42:2; 46:7; 65:14, these two witnesses have deviations—MT reads √ תֵּאָר and the scroll has √ תֵּאָר. In other words, of the eleven occurrences of √ תֵּאָר in Isaiah, the Qumran scroll has √ תֵּאָר ten times, but uses √ תֵּאָר only once. Inasmuch as the √ תֵּאָר is used more often in later biblical books, it appears that the scroll’s copyist updated the vocabulary from √ תֵּאָר to √ תֵּאָר in 33:7; 42:2; 46:7; 65:14. The versions cannot shed light on these readings.

24 Occasionally scribes from the Hebrew witnesses of Isaiah have updated the vocabulary, replacing archaic and outdated words with contemporary usage.

25 See the discussion in Kutscher, The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll, 233.
Euphemistic Changes

Biblical scholars provide examples of indelicate words or anthropomorphisms that have been removed from the Hebrew Bible and replaced with euphemisms\(^\text{26}\) or dysphemisms. Yeivin, for example, cites TB Megilla 25b, “Wherever the text is written indelicately, we read it delicately” and posits, “In 16 cases in the Bible, the qere form presents a euphemism.”\(^\text{27}\) Ginsburg maintains that “authoritative redactors of the Sacred Scriptures\(^\text{28}\) removed indelicate words and anthropomorphisms.

36:12 MT\(^\text{ket}\) 1QIsa\(^a\) 2 Kings 18:27 | MT\(^\text{qere}\) •

36:12 MT\(^\text{qere}\) 1QIsa\(^a\) 2 Kings 18:27 MT\(^\text{ket}\) |

—This word (cf. 2 Kings 18:27) belongs to the list of words in Megilla 25b that are considered to be indelicate expressions; צואמת (“filth”) is to be its euphemistic substitution. Hence the MT\(^\text{ket}\)/ MT\(^\text{qere}\) reading here.

19:18 MT | 1QIsa\(^a\) 4QIsa\(^b\) •

—MT reads “the city of destruction” and two Qumran scrolls attest “the city of the sun.” On the one hand, the variants between the Qumran scrolls and MT may be represented by a simple copyist error, writing he instead of het, or vice versa.\(^\text{29}\) On the other hand, critics have argued that a redactor/editor of MT made a tendentious change to the text, or what McCarthy calls “a secondary dysphemism.”\(^\text{30}\) This textual change came about, according to one theory, to protect the legitimacy of the Jerusalem temple against a Jewish temple that was believed to have existed in Heliopolis.\(^\text{31}\) HOTTP, Kutscher, and Wildberger support “City of the Sun” as the original reading.\(^\text{32}\)

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\(^\text{29}\) For other examples of he/het confusion, see Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll*, 506.


\(^\text{32}\) See Hebrew Old Testament Text Project (HOTTP ) Vol. 4, 45; Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll*, 116, and Hans Wildberger,
Phonetic Differences

40:11 MT | 1QIsa

1QIsa’s deviation of is an orthographic deviation, based on phonetics.

16:1 MT | 1QIsa

— Sela in this verse may refer to a proper name of a site in Moab, which some lexica suggest is Petra; or Sela may signify a cliff. Elsewhere in the Bible, means “rock” or “cliff.” 1QIsa’s may be an alternate spelling found in the scribe’s Vorlage or known to the scribe; or more likely, indicates a phonetic error.

(3) Synonymous Readings

A few of the textual variants in MT Isaiah and 1QIsa consist of synonymous readings. According to Talmon, synonymous readings are characterized as follows:

a) They result from the substitution of words and phrases by others which are used interchangeably and synonymously with them in the literature of the OT. b) They do not affect adversely the structure of the verse, nor do they disturb either its meaning or its rhythm. Hence they cannot be explained as scribal errors. c) No sign of systematic or tendentious emendation can be discovered in them. They are to be taken at face value…If, as far as we can tell, they are not the product of different chronologically or geographically distinct linguistic strata.”


34 The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB), 701.


37 Talmon, “Synonymous Readings,” 336. Sanderson defines synonymous readings as “those variants for which no preferable reading can be determined even with probability. They are different legitimate ways of expressing the same idea.”
Representative examples of synonymous readings include the following.

24:1 MT 4QIsa\(^c\) | 1QIsa\(^a\) •

MT and 4QIsa\(^c\) set forth קַרְמוֹנָה, versus 1QIsa\(^a\)’s synonymous reading of קַרְמָוּת. Two items support the reading of קַרְמָוּת: the pericope, consisting of 24:1–12, features קַרְמָוּת eight times (but never קַרְמוֹנָה); and verse 3a (הָקִסְסְתִּים קַרְמָוּת) rhetorically develops the reading of verse 1a (לְהוֹד הָבַטְקָק קַרְמָוּת, “the LORD makes the earth empty”); that is, both expressions collocate קַרְמָוּת with קְצַצַת פִּקְחָּם.\(^{38}\)

29:3 MT | 1QIsa\(^a\) • 4QIsa\(^f\) •

MT and 1QIsa\(^a\) attest readings that are graphically similar and that have synonymous meanings: MT has קְרֶשֶׁת (“fortresses”) and 1QIsa\(^a\) sets forth קְרֶשָׁה (“strongholds”). Inasmuch as both words work well in the context, it is not easy to settle on a primary reading. These two readings may point to a vario lectio, but it is more probable that a scribe of either Hebrew witness (or tradition, i.e., the proto-MT or 1QIsa\(^a\)) misread his Vorlage and wrote a resh in place of a dalet, or vice versa. See also the variants חָרְשִׁית and חָרְשַׁה in Isaiah 29:7. Another possibility, set forth by Kutscher, is that the words חָרְשִׁית and חָרְשַׁה “changed places” between verses 3 and 7.\(^{39}\)

35:9 MT 4QIsa\(^b\) | + אֶל 1QIsa\(^a\) • אֶל 4QIsa\(^b\) | 1QIsa\(^a\) •

—the double negative in 1QIsa\(^a\) (אֶל בַּל), unknown in the Hebrew Bible, is probably the result of an error. The scribe first wrote בַּל, which is the primary reading, and then duplicated the אֶל from verse 8, vertically located on the line above on the scroll (see col. xxviii, line 25). The vertical borrowing explains why MT and 4QIsa\(^b\) lack the double negative. Other possibilities, however, exist. בַּל may be a conflated reading; or אֶל may be the primary reading and בַּל a synonymous reading acquired from another text-type.\(^{40}\)

39:2 MT 2 Kings 20:13 | 1QIsa\(^a\) •

—the nouns קְמַלְמָה and מַלְמָת are synonymous or near synonymous readings. Tov refers to synonymous readings as


38 For other examples of synonymous substitutions in 1QIsa\(^a\), see Burrows, “Variant Readings in the Isaiah Manuscript,” *BASOR* 113 (1948): 27.


“interchangeable words [that] entered the manuscript tradition at all stages of the transmission, both consciously and unconsciously.”

(4) Scribes’ Stylistic Approaches and Conventions to the Text

The scribes’ stylistic choices, conventions, or idiosyncrasies account for a number of variant readings that exist in the Hebrew witnesses of Isaiah. Examples of scribal stylistic preferences include the following:

Changes to Proper Names

1:1 MT |워ו | 1QIsa• MT |חוכי | 1QIsa•

During the Second Temple era, theophoric names customarily featured shorter forms, that is, חוכי and חוכי. 1QIsa generally employs the shorter forms throughout Isaiah, but with a few exceptions the longer form is used. In verse 1, for example, the scroll attests חוכי instead of חוכי. See also the theophoric names listed in Isaiah 36:1, 14–16, 22; 37:1–3, 6, etc.

Division of Letters

66:1 MT |ואר | 1QIsa• 1QIsa• 1QIsa•

The deviations here are not textual variants, but stylistic differences.

Filling Out a Parallelism

35:6 > MT |ולך | 1QIsa•

The plus of 1QIsa, having no support from other witnesses, may be an attempt to fill out the parallelism, with יבלם corresponding to ובלם. Tov attributes the plus of 1QIsa to a scribal contextual change, derived “from the copyist’s stylistic feelings” and points out that all nouns in this verse, except for יבליים (“streams”), are “assigned specific verbs. The scroll sensed the lack of a verb in this last clause and supplied

41 Tov, Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, 260; see also Talmon, “Synonymous Readings,” 335–83.
42 For a discussion of the forms of the name Hezekiah in 1QIsa, see Beegle, D. M. “Proper Names in the New Isaiah Scroll,” BASOR 123 (1951): 28–9.
43 Tov, Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, 263. See also Pulikottil, Transmission of Biblical Texts in Qumran, 79.
it, thus filling a conceptual void.” But Blenkinsopp prefers this plus of 1QIsa\(^a\), and thus translates the bicolon as “Yes, water will burst forth in the desert, wadis flow (ים אֶרֶץ) in the wilderness.”\(^b\) MT, followed by the versions, has the primary reading.

**Particles יָאָכָל and הַיָּאָכָל**

1:21 יָאָכָל 1QIsa\(^a\) •

The particles יָאָכָל (61x in MT), הַיָּאָכָל (17x in MT), הַיָּאָכָל (4x in MT), and הַיָּאָכָל (2x in MT) are exclamatory interrogatives meaning “how.” In the verse under discussion, 1QIsa\(^a\)’s unique reading is a derivation of יָאָכָל, which appears only in late BH texts (Dan. 10:17, 1 Chron. 13:12). 1QIsa\(^a\)’s יָאָכָל may have been influenced by Aramaic\(^6\) or it is a hybrid of יָאָכָל and יָאָכָל.\(^7\) See also Isaiah 14:12, where the scroll reads יָאָכָל, versus MT’s יָאָכָל. Elsewhere in Isaiah, MT has יָאָכָל where 1QIsa\(^a\) reads יָאָכָל (Isa. 14:4; 36:9 [MT = 2 Kings 18:24]; 48:11 [MT = 4QIsa\(^d\)])). Only twice does MT and the scroll have the equivalent reading of the particle יָאָכָל (Isa. 19:11; 20:6).

**Orthographic Variants**

15:3 יָאָכָל 1QIsa\(^a\) •

The deviation between MT (= יָאָכָל) and 1QIsa\(^a\) (= יָאָכָל) is orthographic. The root letters are יָאָכָל for both words and both have the same translational values. Note that in Isaiah 52:5, MT sets forth יָאָכָל with the infixed he, as it is found in 1QIsa\(^a\) in the verse under discussion. For two textual variants of יָאָכָל that exist between these two Hebrew witnesses, see 23:1 and 52:5.

**Presentative Exclamations**

20:6 יָאָכָל 1QIsa\(^a\) • יָאָכָל 4QIsa\(^a\) •

יָאָכָל and יָאָכָל are presentative exclamations that serve to give emphasis to “the immediacy, the here-and-now-ness, of the situation.”\(^8\)

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In the Bible, הָנָה is ten times more common than חָנוֹן (approximately 1,060 occurrences of הָנָה versus 100 attestations of חָנוֹן), with חָנוֹן found most often in the books of Job (32 times) and Isaiah (27 times). There is no difference in meaning or use between the two presentatives. 49 MT and 1QIsaª deviate with חָנוֹן and הָנָה in the following verses: 23:13; 32:1; 38:17; 41:24, 29; 42:1; 44:11; 49:16, 21; 50:1–2, 9 bis, 11; 54:15–16 (MTbere יָנָה); 55:4–5; 56:3; 58:4; 59:1; 64:4, 8. With the exception of 38:17, MT reads חָנוֹן versus 1QIsaª, which has הָנָה. In 38:17, MT attests הָנָה and 1QIsaª reads חָנוֹן. These deviations (a) indicate a different scribal school; (b) that the Vorlage of the scroll read חָנוֹן; or (c) the 1QIsaª scribe had a tendency to popularize חָנוֹן to read הָנָה.

Abbreviated Form הָנָה

22:4 מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא 1QIsaª

is a common form in the Bible, occurring approximately one hundred eighty times. Contrast מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא (vocalized as מִשְׁמָטָא), which is found only in Isaiah 22:4; 30:1; 38:12; Psalms 18:23; 65:4; 139:19; Job 16:6; 21:16; 22:18; and 30:10. For MT’s three occurrences of מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא in Isaiah, 1QIsaª reads מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא in 22:4 and 30:1, but equals MT with its reading of מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא in Isaiah 38:12. The translational value of מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא and מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא are the same, as indicated by Ibn Ezra in his commentary to Isaiah 30:1.

Prepositions חָנוֹן and מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא

26:5 מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא MT 4QIsaª 1QIsaª

— For this preposition that is attested in MT and 4QIsaª, 1QIsaª has the older form מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא. 50 The translational value is the same for both חָנוֹן and מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא, although suffixed forms (מְעֹטֵר, מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא, מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא, etc.) of the preposition were built upon מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא. For the reading מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא in 1QIsaª 26:5, compare Psalms 147:6 (מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא).

Morphological Forms חָנוֹן and מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא

28:4 מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא MT 1QIsaª

— Both MT (= מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא) and 1QIsaª (= מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא with an unetymological letter nun) are legitimate morphological forms, with both having the same translational value. Watts remarks that מַעְטָא מִשְׁמָטָא is “a seemingly


50 See Waltke and O’Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, 215.
meaningless nun epenthetic before the suffix.”\textsuperscript{51} For the form חַשְׁבָּהַה, see also 1 Kings 1:22.

\textbf{Conclusion}

1QIsa\textsuperscript{a} contains a great number of textual variants, which may be categorized as follows: (1) accidental errors; (2) intentional changes; (3) synonymous readings; and (4) scribes’ stylistic approaches. These four categories include multiple examples of haplography, homoioteleuton, dittography, confusion of letters (graphic similarity), conflation, pluses, minuses, misdivision of words, interchange of letters (metathesis), transposition of word order, possible ligature, exegetical or editorial pluses, synonymous readings, changes to proper names, improper division of letters, filling out a poetic parallelism, morphological smoothing and updating, euphemistic changes, harmonizations, phonetic variants, peculiar orthographic variants, and modernizations of terms. The textual variants of 1QIsa\textsuperscript{a} sets forth such a wide diversity and assortment of textual variants that this scroll is indeed a catalogue, as it were, for textual criticism.

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\textsuperscript{51} Watts, Isaiah 1–33, 360.