CHAPTER TWO

THE TEXTUAL MATERIAL OF THE
‘PLAGUES NARRATIVE’

Reflecting the methodological framework and working model described in the previous pages, the present chapter offers—prior to any text-critical evaluation—a detailed registration and description of the textual variants found in the extant material of the ‘Plagues Narrative’ in Exod. 7:14–11:10. Thereby, it bases itself on an exhaustive synoptic survey of the textual material. However, even though the synoptic collection (and comparison) of the textual material constitutes de facto the very first phase of the text-critical study, it is, due to practical, typographical and editorial reasons, presented in appendix at the end of this volume. When intending to fully understand the registration and description of the text-critical variants in Exod. 7:14–11:10, presented below, it should nevertheless be consulted simultaneously.

Synopsis of the textual witnesses to the ‘Plagues Narrative’

The synoptic survey presented in appendix is subdivided as follows: the first column contains the Hebrew Masoretic Text; the second column the eclectic Greek LXX text of J.W. Wevers (Göttingen Edition); the third one the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch based on the diplomatic text edition of A. Tal; the fourth column offers 4QpaleoExod\textsuperscript{a} based on DJD 9; the fifth column presents 4QpaleoGen-Exod\textsuperscript{b}, likewise based on DJD 9; the sixth column 2QExod\textsuperscript{c} following the text edition of DJD 3; the seventh column the text of 4QExod\textsuperscript{d} based on DJD 12; the eighth column

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. J.W. Wevers (ed.), \textit{Exodus}.
\textsuperscript{2} Cf. A. Tal, \textit{The Samaritan Pentateuch}.
\textsuperscript{3} Cf. P.W. Skehan, E. Ulrich, J.E. Sanderson, DJD 9, 53–71, 72–85 and plates VII–XI.
\textsuperscript{4} Cf. P.W. Skehan, E. Ulrich, J.E. Sanderson, DJD 9, 17–26, 28–33 and plate II.
\textsuperscript{5} Cf. M. Baillet, J.T. Milik, R. De Vaux, DJD 3/1, 50–51; DJD 3/2, plate X.
contains 4QGen-Exod⁴ and finally, the ninth column presents 4QExod¹, both likewise based on DJD 12.⁶

A number of remarks should be made on the rendition of problematic textual fragments from Qumran in this synoptic survey.

1. Exod. 7:29b–8:1b 4QExod¹: cf. E. Ulrich, F.M. Cross et al., DJD 12, 149–150.

The two identified fragments from 4QExod¹ can be interpreted in two different ways. They represent either Exod. 7:28–8:2 if the manuscript agrees with MT, or Exod. 7:29b–8:1b if the manuscript agrees with SamP. According to DJD 12, the latter of the two possibilities is most probable, see p. 149: ‘Frgs. 1–2 have been presented in two ways, reconstructed according to SamP and to MT, respectively, though differences involve only line 5, since the text of MT in 7:29 is virtually identical to that of SamP in 7:29b, and 8:1 is also identical with 8:1a in SamP. There is no direct evidence to show whether this manuscript contained the major expansions of the 4QpaleoExod⁴-SamP tradition or lacked them with MT-LXX. While both reconstructions are possible, the placement of the text favours the expansion. The interval at the end of line 4 is not surprising in SamP, since SamP often has an interval before and/or after interpolations. The presence of any interval between vv. 1 and 2 in the unexpanded text of MT would be less expected, however, and the fact that an additional interval at the beginning of line 5 is required (unless a longer reading is to be posited) is even more unusual.’ I have followed this option in the synoptic presentation of the text and located the text fragment adjacent to the expansion in SamP and 4QpaleoExod⁴.

Within these verses we are confronted with an additional problem, namely the location of the existing letters יִהְוָה in the manuscript. See in this regard DJD 12, p. 150: ‘The final ink traces could either be taw, or be yod/waw followed by a space and a possible bet (בכלי בותי?). If taw, the only possible word in M or SamP is נוֹרָך תבכלי[1], in which case the spacing would suggest that the order of the items in the list differed from that in SamPM.’ The synopsis presents both possibilities.

It is to be noted that the divine name יִהְוָה (Exod. 8:1a) is underlined in the synopsis on account of the fact that it is rendered in Palaeo-Hebrew

⁶ For the last three manuscripts referred to in the text, see E. Ulrich, F.M. Cross et al., DJD 12, 7–10, 28, 97–113, 149–150 and plates IV, XVI, XVII.