Full title:

Belial in the Divine Courtroom: Rethinking 11Q11 v 4 - vi 3.

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Abstract:

11Q11 is usually characterised as an anti-demonic magical rite. Much attention has focussed on the better preserved sections of the manuscript, in particular the psalm preserved in 11Q11 v 4 - vi 3. Scholarly consensus holds that this psalm is an exorcistic rite in which the victim addresses the demon Belial directly in a mocking tone. I argue that this interpretation is unlikely on contextual, lexical, and textual grounds. I propose instead that this psalm should be read as a plea for divine assistance: the psalm entreats God to address Belial in the divine court before empowering an angel to eject him and imprison him in Sheol.

Keywords:

Belial, demonology, 11Q11, exorcism, magic, psalms

Plain language summary (limit 1500 characters):

This article looks at a Jewish manuscript from the first century CE that is generally thought to be an anti-demonic magical rite. It contains a psalm that most scholars consider to be an exorcistic rite in which the victim addresses the demon Belial directly. This article proposes a different reading of the psalm. It suggests it is a plea for divine assistance, which asks God to rebuke Belial then to send an angel to expel him and imprison him.

Exorcising Belial? Rethinking 11Q11 v 4 - vi 3.*

Abstract

11Q11 as a whole is usually characterised as a magical rite intended for exorcistic use. 11Q11 v 4 - vi 3 contains one of the better preserved compositions in this collection. Scholarly consensus holds that this unit, which for ease we call 'the Belial psalm', is an exorcistic incantation with which the victim addresses the demon Belial directly in a mocking tone. This paper argues that this interpretation is highly problematic on contextual, lexical, and textual grounds. I propose that this psalm should instead be read as a plea for divine assistance: the psalm entreats God to address Belial before empowering an angel to imprison him in Sheol. This reconstruction and interpretation resolve the main difficulties presented by existing interpretations.

Résumé

11Q11 est typiquement caractérisé dans son ensemble comme un rite magique conçu pour être utilisé dans le cadre d'exorcisme. 11Q11 v 4 - vi 3 contient une des compositions mieux conservées dans ce recueil. Le consensus actuel maintient que cette partie, appelée pour la facilité 'le psaume de Bélial', est une incantation exorcistique avec laquelle la victime harangue directement le démon sur un ton railleur. Cet article soutient que cette interprétation pose des problèmes de point de vue contextuel, lexical, en textuel. On propose plutôt d'interpréter ce psaume comme un appel pour l'assistance divine: le psaume supplie Dieu d'affronter Bélial avant qu'il autorise un ange à lui emprisonner dans schéol. Cette reconstitution et interprétation résolvent les problèmes principaux posés par les interprétations actuelles.

1. The Context of Jewish Demonology

11Qapocryphal Psalms (11Q11) are the remains of manuscript written in a late Herodian script, (1) which contained a collection of earlier works. 11Q11 as a whole is usually characterised as an anti-

* Material in the paper was presented at the Groningen-Leuven-Oxford Network Conference hosted by the Oriel Centre for the Study of the Bible at the University of Oxford (8-9 March 2021). I thank the organisers and participants, especially Arjen Bakker, Drew Longacre, and Hila Dayfani, for their insightful feedback and suggestions. I am also grateful to Shlomi Efrati, George Brooke, and Hugh Williamson for offering detailed comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

(1) Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, "11. 11Qapocryphal Psalms," in Qumran Cave 11, vol II, 11Q2-18, 11Q20-31, ed. F. García Martínez *et al*, DJD 23 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 181-205 (181-184).

demonic magical rite intended for exorcistic use, (2) but as has been widely recognised, (3) this characterisation is rather problematic, since 11Q11 as a whole lacks the typical formulae, practical instructions, and illocutionary utterances that one would expect from a magical rite. As such,

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(2) See, in particular, Philip S. Alexander, "'Wrestling against Wickedness in High Places': Magic in the Worldview of the Qumran Community," in *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After,* ed. S. E. Porter and C. A. Evans, JSPSup 26 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 318-337; Esther Eshel, "Demonology in Palestine during the Second Temple Period" (in Hebrew; PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1999), 157-158, 200-201, 270-284; Esther Eshel, "Apotropaic Prayers in the Second Temple Period," in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 19-23 January, 2000*, ed. E. G. Chazon, STDJ 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 69-88 (85-86); Esther Eshel, "Genres of Magical Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Die Dämonen: die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, ed. A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and K. F. D. Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 395-415; Ida Fröhlich, "'Invoke at Any Time...' Apotropaic Texts and Belief in Demons in the Literature of the Qumran Community," *BN* 137 (2008): 41-74 (41-44); Ida Fröhlich, "Healing with Psalms," in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature: Essays in Honor of Eileen Schuller on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday*, ed. J. Penner, K.M. Penner, and C. Wassen, STDJ 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 197-215; Ida Fröhlich, "Evil in Second Temple Texts," in *Evil and the Devil,* ed. I. Fröhlich and E. Koskenniemi, LNTS 481 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 23-50 (45-49); Ida Fröhlich, "Magical Healing at Qumran (11Q11) and the Question of the Calendar" in *Studies on Magic and Divination in the Biblical World,* ed. H.R. Jacobus, A.K de H. Gudme, and P. Guillaume, Biblical Intersections 11 (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2013), 39-50; Ida Fröhlich, "The 'Horned Demon' and the Watchers," in *Wisdom Poured Out Like Water : Studies on Jewish and Christian Antiquity in Honor of Gabriele Boccaccini,* ed. J.H. Ellens *et al*, DCLS 38 (De Gruyter, 2018), 89-99; Hermann Lichtenberger, "Ps 91 und die Exorzismen in 11QPsApa," in *Die Dämonen: die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt,* ed. A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and K. F. D. Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 416-421; Hermann Lichtenberger, "Demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament," in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity,* ed. R. Clements and D. R. Schwartz, STDJ 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 267-280 (271-273); Mika S. Pajunen, "The Function of 11 QPsApa as a Ritual," in *Text and Ritual. Papers presented at the symposium Text and Ritual in Copenhagen in November 2008*, ed. A. K. D. H. Gudme (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2009), 50-60; Mika S. Pajunen, "The Use of Different Aspects of the Deuteronomistic Ideology in Apocryphal Psalms," in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, ed. H. von Weissenberg, J. Pakkala, and M. Marttila, BZAW 419 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 347-367; Mika S. Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect and Justice for All: Reading Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Light of 4Q381,* JAJSup 14 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); Mika S. Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon. Form- and Tradition-Critical Assessment of the Ritual of Exorcism in 11QApocryphal Psalms," in *Crossing Imaginary Boundaries : The Dead Sea Scrolls in the Context of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. M. S. Pajunen and H. Tervanotko (Helsinki: The Finnish Exegetical Society, 2015), 128-161; Mika S. Pajunen, "Fighting Evil with Psalms and Prayers: Incantations and Apotropaic Prayers as a Response to the Changing Worldview of the Late Second Temple Period," in *Magic in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean: Cognitive, Historical, and Material Perspectives on the Bible and Its Contexts*, ed. N. Nikki & K. Valkama, Mundus Orientis 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 197-213; Émile Puech, "11 QPsAp.a: un rituel d'exorcismes: essai de reconstruction," *RevQ* 14 (1990): 377-408; Émile Puech, "Les deux derniers psaumes davidiques du rituel d'exorcisme, 11QPsAp IV4–V14," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls : Forty Years of Research*, ed. U. Rappaport and D. Dimant, STDJ 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 64-89; Émile Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques du rituel d'exorcisme (11Q11)," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran*, ed. D. K. Falk, STDJ 35 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 160-181; Émile Puech, "Quelques exemples d'apports des manuscrits de Qumrân à l'étude du judaïsme ancien," *RB* 119.4 (2012): 543-563; James A. Sanders, "A Liturgy for Healing the Stricken (11QPsAp a =11Q11)," in *Pseudepigraphic and Non-Masoretic Psalms and Prayers*, vol. 4a of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, J. H. Rietz, and W. L. Henry (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck / Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 216-233.

(3) Already by Jan P. M. Van der Ploeg, "Un petit rouleau de psaumes apocryphes (11 QPsApa)," in *Tradition und Glaube : das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt : Festgabe für Karl Georg Kuhn zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. G. Jeremias, H-W. Kuhn, and H. Stegemann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 128-139 (129). Also Alexander, "Wrestling," 326; Matthias Henze, "Psalm 91 in Premodern Interpretation and at Qumran," in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran,* ed. M. Henze (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 168-193 (190); Jennifer M. Shepherd, "11Qapocryphal Psalms (11Q11). Structure, Genre, and Function" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2005), 106-112. I thank prof. G. Brooke for drawing my attention to this unpublished dissertation. Bohak identifies an echo of part of the Belial psalm in a medieval amulet. The similarities between the two texts are striking, but so are the differences; Bohak's characterisation of the Genizah text as a 'garbled descendant' (צאצא משובש) of the psalm attested in 11Q11 or a text like it (Gideon Bohak, "From Qumran to Cairo: The Lives and Times of a Jewish Exorcistic Formula" [Hebrew], *Megillot* 10 (2013), 163-179 [172]) more accurately reflects the state of affairs than his earlier characterisation of it as "an almost verbatim copy" (Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 303). Even if one accepts the link between the two texts, the Genizah material sheds light on the reception history of the text attested in 11Q11, rather than its original meaning.

Shepherd's reservations about the placement of this material in the category exorcistic magic seem justified. (4)

The problematic nature of this characterisation seems particularly acute when one considers the better preserved material at the end of the scroll, and in particular 11Q11 v 4 - vi 3, a unit which for ease I call the 'Belial psalm'. The Belial psalm is said to be an exorcistic incantation in which an individual addresses her or his demonic afflicter; Alexander sums up the *communis opinio* when he writes, "The afflicted one is invited to abuse the devil to his face." (5) But when compared to roughly contemporary Jewish sources, the following elements of this interpretation appear incongruous:

1) It seems highly unlikely that an exorcistic incantation would be *directed at the chief of the demons*, in this case, Belial. (6) Where Belial appears, he is the leader or ruler of evil spirits / demons, most obviously in the *Rule of the Community* and the *War Scroll* (e.g., 1QS iii 18; 1QM i 1; xiii 1-2, 10-11). (7) A comparable hierarchical arrangement of the demonic realm under a single leader appears in other sources, (8) where different epithets (e.g., Prince of Hostility) are attributed to the figure of the chief demon. (9) Where we find this hierarchical model, it is the evil spirits/demons, not their leader, that afflict individuals. The Book of Jubilees offers the closest parallels in this respect (e.g. Jub 10.8; 11.4-5; 19.28). One would therefore expect that an exorcistic incantation would be addressed not at the archdemon, but directly at the afflicting spirit/demon, as is probably the case in the fragmentary *Magical Booklet* (4Q560).

2) It is extremely unlikely that the victim of a demonic affliction would be expected to address her/his *own* demonic assailant. (10) Such actions would rather by undertaken by a third party, normally one with a certain expertise or personal power. In the Songs of the Sage, for example, it is left to the *Maskil* (4Q510 1 4) to frighten away the various spirits and demons who might lead the upright astray (4Q510 1 6-9). (11)

This second point is further strengthened by comparison with other texts in which similar elements appear. First, we know of other texts that contain formulae with which to address an archdemon-figure. 4QBerakhot (4Q286-290) and 4QCurses (4Q280), for example, contain curse formulae directed towards 'Belial', 'Melkiresha', and 'the angel of the pit', among others. These, however, are prescriptions that the community are to recite as part of collective liturgical/ceremonial acts (e.g., 4Q280 2 1-7; 4Q286 7 ii 1-10 | 4Q287 6 1 – 7 2); they do not relate to the possession and exorcism *of an individual*. (12) Secondly, in the Book of Tobit we encounter an individual, Tobiah, who succeeds in repelling a demon, Asmodeus, by following instructions received from an angel (Tob

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(4) Shepherd, "11Qapocryphal Psalms."

(5) Alexander, "Wrestling," 326. Cf. Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, trans. J. Chipman, STDJ 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 233-234.

(6) As noted already by Shepherd, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 104.

(7) See further Devorah Dimant, "Between Qumran Sectarian and Non-Sectarian Texts : The Case of Belial and Mastema," in, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture: Proceedings of the International Conference held at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (July 6-8, 2008)*, ed. A. D. Roitman, L. H. Schiffman and Sh. Tzoref, STDJ 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 235-256 (237-246). It is debatable whether Jub 1.20; 15.33 originally employed בליעל as a personal name; more likely it served as an attributive noun (e.g. "worthless spirit / people"), as Todd R. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees,* EJL 34 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 73.

(8) E.g., 1QS iii 17–22 (Treatise of the Two Spirits); T. Dan. 1.7; 3.6; 5.6; 6.1-7; T. Ash. 1; T. Ben 6.1; Mk 3.19-22|Mt 12.22-24 cf. Lk 11.14-16 (Beelzebul controversy).

(9) Whether or not these represent one or multiple figures is not germane to the current argument.

(10) As noted already by Shepherd, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 84; Eric Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles,* JSNTSup 231 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 208.

(11) For comparable phenomena in later sources, cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46-49; Mk 1.25; 5.8; 9.25; Mt 12.27|Lk 11.19.

(12) García Martínez notes the similarities, without considering the implications of the differences in the suppose function that these texts had; Florentino García Martínez, "Magic in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. J. N. Bremmer and J. R. Veenstra, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 14-33 (25).

6.16-18). But again, the differences are telling: Asmodeus is not the chief demon, Tobiah is a potential victim rather than an actual victim, and Tobiah does not address the demon directly in speech.

In short, the interpretation of the Belial psalm as an exorcistic incantation in which the afflicted individual addresses the chief of demons directly would be exceptional in the context of contemporary Jewish demonology; this interpretation of the Belial psalm is therefore doubtful.

2. Content of the Manuscript

At a rough estimate, the manuscript preserves 40% of the text of the Belial psalm; if we include those letters and words that can be plausibly reconstructed, we have roughly half its original text. The Belial psalm forms part of a collection of psalms with a common theme. The limits of only the last two psalms in the manuscript are preserved. Neither the beginning nor the end of any of the psalms preceding the Belial psalm can be determined with certainty, though proposals have been made. (13) We might express this schematically as follows:

Psalms ?-? :	? — ?
Psalm *x* :	? — v 3 (*vacat*)
Psalm *y* (Belial psalm) :	v 4 (לדויד) — vi 3 (סלה)
Psalm *z* (≈ Ps 91) :	vi 3 — vi 14

The exact number of psalms that the collection originally contained therefore remains unknown. It has been common, however, to accept that 11Q11 contained a copy of the four songs to be played על הפגועים (interpreted in terms of demonic possession, see further §3.3.1), which are listed among David's literary output in 11QPs[a] [11Q5] xxvii 9-10. Van der Ploeg evoked this identification as a mere possibility; (14) Puech subsequently attempted to demonstrate that the identification was correct. (15) But Puech's reconstruction of psalms preceding the Belial psalm is highly speculative — inevitably given how much of the manuscript has been lost. Indeed, as many others have already pointed out, (16) there are a number of problems with the identification of 11Q11 with the four songs mentioned 11QPs[a], especially regarding the length of the first two psalms and the attribution to David, such that the theory must now be regarded as untenable.

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(13) E.g., García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 183; Puech, "Les deux derniers psaumes davidiques," 65-66; Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques"; Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon."

(14) Van der Ploeg, "Un petit rouleau," 129.

(15) Puech, "Les deux derniers psaumes davidiques" (the bulk of which is near-verbatim repetition of his "11 QPsAp.a: un rituel d'exorcismes"); Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques." On the basis of this identification, Fröhlich has attempted to link the four songs to four specific dates in the calendar; in her view the psalm in 11Q11 v 4 - vi 3 would be recited at Passover; see Fröhlich, "Healing with Psalms," Fröhlich, "Magical Healing", much of which is repeated in her "The 'Horned Demon'"; Ida Fröhlich, "The Use of Psalm 91 in Qumran," in *You Who Live in the Shelter of the Most High (Ps. 91:1): The Use of Psalms in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. I. Fröhlich, N. Dávid, and G. Langer, Poetik, Exegese und Narrative : Studien zur jüdischen Literatur und Kunst 16 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 19-29. Cf. Johann Maier, *Die Qumran-Essener : Texte der Schriftrollen und Lebensbild der Gemeinde,* 3 vols (München: Reinhardt, 1973), 1.341 n. 720; Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 238; James C. Vanderkam, "Studies on 'David's Compositions' (11QPsa 27:2-11)," in *Frank Moore Cross Volume*, ed. Baruch A. Levin *et al*, ErIsr 26 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1999), 212– 20, esp. 218.

(16) For a summary of the arguments see Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 55-61, esp. 58-60.

3. The Lexicon of the Collection

Despite these difficulties with currently accepted interpretations, we can nonetheless conclude on the basis of the vocabulary that the collection of texts contained in 11Q11 were thematically linked and can be correctly situated in the context of demonology.

3.1 Demonology

The collection's concern with demons is confirmed by the indisputable reading השדים 'the demons' (ii 3), and the plausible reconstruction of the lexeme הרוחות 'the spirits' immediately preceding it (ii 3). השדים can be plausibly reconstructed at two other points in the manuscript (i 10; ii 4).

The reconstruction בלי֯[על (v 4), a proper name of a demonic figure, 'Belial', is preferable to בלי֯[לה (see below). בליעל can also be reconstructed with confidence at the end of the same psalm in the locution בני בל[יעל (vi 3), but there it probably serves as an attributive noun indicating quality ('sons of worthlessness' → 'worthless people'), (17) rather than the personal name of a demon (i.e., 'sons of Belial'). (18)

The reconstruction of other specifically demonic terminology remains speculative. The *editio princeps* reconstructs מה[ר המשט]ש 'prince of enmity', a demonic title (ii 4), and תנין[translated 'dragon' (i 5). The latter came to have demonic connotation, (19) but as so little of the text remains it is impossible to determine its original literary context.

In addition, the phrase מ[אדם ומזרע הקד֯[ושי]ם (v 6, for discussion, see below) alludes to the Watchers tradition, specifically the bastard offspring of the Watchers and the daughters of men (see 1 En 15.8-12). (20) The mention of דל[תי נחושת 'bronze [ga]tes' (v 9) and the lexeme תחתית 'lowest', is almost certainly correctly understood as a reference to the gates of Sheol, hence the reconstruction לשאו[ל תחתית of the *editio princeps*. (21) The context implies that this is to be a place of punishment (see below). If this reconstruction of the context is correct, this would be reminiscent of the casting down and binding of Azaz'el by Raphael in the Enochic tradition (1 En 10.4) or the wider corps of demons in Jubilees (Jub 10.10-14).

Other terms in what must once have been the psalm immediately preceding the Belial psalm (ending at v 3) might also be associated with this theme. The term תהום רבה 'great abyss' (iv 7) is closely associated with Sheol (cf. 1QH[a] xviii 33), as is the term אבדון 'Abbadon, place of destruction' (iv 10 cf. Prov 15.11; 27.20; Job 26.6; also Rev 9.11; 1QH[a] xi 31-32), if correctly reconstructed. The mention of מלאך תקיף, 'a mighty angel' (iv 5), before these references to Sheol again suggests the motif of demonic imprisonment (e.g., 1 En 10.4 cf. Jub 5.6; 48.15, 18; Rev 20.1-3). (22) The

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(17) See Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, SubBi 27 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006), §129[j].

(18) As, e.g., García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 203.

(19) See Hector M. Patmore, "Demonic Exegesis," in *Demons in Early Judaism and Christianity: Characters and Characteristics*, ed. H. M. Patmore and J. Lössl, AJEC XX (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming), XX-XX.

(20) See Eshel, "Demonology" 57-59, 281; Archie T. Wright, "Prayer and Incantation in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Studies in Jewish Prayer*, ed. C. T. R. Hayward and B. Embry, JSSSup 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 75-88 (76-82). Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1-4 in Early Jewish Literature*, 2nd ed., WUNT 2/198 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 174, 184-187. *Pace* Henze, "Psalm 91 in Premodern Interpretation," 192.

(21) For the idiom שאול תחתית see Deut 32.22; 1QH[a] iv 13; 4Q200 6 6; 4Q381 10-11 5; 4Q428 18 4.

(22) As already van der Ploeg, "Un petit rouleau," 134-35. See further Eve, *The Jewish Context*, 205; Chad T. Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ: 1 Peter 3:18-22 in Light of Sin and Punishment Traditions in Early Jewish and Christian Literature*,

adversative עליך, 'against you', strengthens the sense of hostility (whence the reconstruction "[(YHWH) will send] a mighty angel *against* you...," 11Q11 iv).

3.2 Other Themes

The fragmentary nature of the material precludes decisive statements, but there seems to be a clustering of language related to the theme of creation, and the ordering of the cosmos more generally, which begins (roughly) at ii 5 and ends (roughly) at iii 6. One might speculate that this section formed the heart of a psalm that proclaimed God's sovereignty over the cosmos by rehearsing his creation and ordering of the cosmos. This is a common motif in psalms (Ps 19.2; 33.6-9; etc) and other poetic texts (Isa 40.22; 42.5, etc.) that are now preserved in the Hebrew Bible; it is also found in texts with an anti-demonic purpose such as the Songs of the Sage (*passim*; cf. 1QM x 11-16; 4Q286 3 6; 5^{a-c} 9–11; 4Q287 3 2–3).

These themes are already implied by the use of the terms תהום 'deep', אבדון '(place of) destruction, Abaddon', and שאול 'Sheol', which are well attested in the cosmology of the Hebrew Bible and other writings from among the Dead Sea Scrolls as noted above (cf. also Prov 15.11). The appearance of את השמים 'the heavens' (ii 10), marked as the direct object, and, on the following line, הבדיל 'he separated' (ii 11) could well be an allusion to the Genesis creation account (cf. Gen 1.14). (23) If that is correct then the lexemes ה̇גד[ול 'the great (light?)' (cf. Gen 1.16 המאור הגדל) and תהו̇]ם 'deep' (cf. Gen 1.2), which appear a few lines above (ii 5-6), could be plausibly connected to this theme too. The cases of the appearance of the terms הארץ 'the earth' and השמים 'the heavens' in close proximity (iii 6; iv 3), as well as the appearance of these lexemes in various states of reconstruction elsewhere (i 6; ii 10; iii 2bis, 6; iv 9) might also reflect this theme.

Two further terms that appear a few lines later, ה̇תהומ[ות 'the depth[s]' (iii 1) and המופ[תים 'the wonde[rs]' (iii 3), seem *prima facie* to relate to the paradigmatic example of God's sovereign power and favour, the Exodus. The "signs and wonders (מופתים)" by which God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians is a widespread motif (e.g. Deut 6.22; Jer 32.21; 4Q185 1-2 i 15; 4Q392 2 2; 4Q422 iii 5; and freq.) and the waters of the Sea of Reeds are poetically called תהומות (e.g., Ex 15.5, 8; Ps 106.9). Alternatively, these terms may also be connected to the theme of creation (on התהומות cf. Ps 33.6-7; 1QH^{a} ix 14; etc; on המופתים cf. 4Q416 1 7-8). (24)

The tone in the second half of column iii and beginning of column iv takes a darker turn. The shift is signalled by the mention of חטא 'sin' (iii 7). This is followed by references to להרוג נפש 'to slay someone' (iii 9), ויירא[ו 'and [they] will fear...' (iii 10), יככה יהוה 'the Lord will strike you' (iv 4), לאבדך 'to destroy you' (iv 4), בחרון אפו 'in his blazing anger' (iv 5), and so on. These precede the cluster of references to Sheol that we noted above.

The clustering of themes observed above reflects other roughly contemporary Jewish works concerned with demonology: the Watchers tradition and the motifs of creation and God's power over the forces of chaos are found the Songs of the Sage, for example (e.g., 4Q510 1 5; 4Q511 35 7; 4Q511 30).

3.3 Exorcistic terminology?

On the basis of the above survey there can be little doubt that this collection was concerned with demonic forces. But the common view that 11Q11 served as an exorcistic rite, or a compendium of

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WUNT 2/305 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 143-144.

(23) *Pace* van der Ploeg, "Un petit rouleau," 132.

(24) See Pajunen, "The Use of Different Aspects," 351-355, esp. 353.

such rites, is less well founded in terms of the collection's lexicon.

3.3.1 Possession?

The lexeme ה֯פגוע[ים (v 2) is usually understood in terms of demonic possession; the *editio princeps*, for example, translates "the possessed". It must, however, be borne in mind that the verbal root פגע is not a *terminus technicus* for demonic possession. Rather, it relates to an action, state, or occurrence that produces negative effects. Its functional equivalent in English would be 'to afflict' or 'to attack'. The agent may be a demonic force (e.g., 4Q510 1 6; cf. 4Q511 11 8), but it need not be, (25) and it is questionable whether the notion of demonic affliction of a type from which one might expect to be relieved by means of an exorcistic incantation is appropriate to the literary context. The lexeme ה֯פגוע[ים appears in the penultimate line of a psalm; the preceding lines appear to be concerned with divine wrath and demonic imprisonment, possibly connected with the Watchers tradition (see above). According to the early sources of that tradition, the evil spirits that result from the union of the Watchers with human women as well as the rebellious angels themselves lead humans astray (e.g., 1 En 19.1-2). As a result, both the humans and the rebellious angels incur God's wrath; this is probably what ובחרון אפו and]יְ֯הוה חרון אף in the preceding lines refer to (iv 5, 11). Therefore, contextually it would seem more likely that ה֯פגוע[ים, understood as a subordinate clause (i.e. "who had been afflicted..."), refers to the punishments meted out by God.

3.3.2 Adjuration?

A similar observation can be made in connection with the lexemes משביע 'adjures' and שבועה 'adjuration'. In two of the three occurrences of משביע, the text either side of the lexeme has been lost, so the context is impossible to reconstruct (i 7; iv 1). This is true also of the one occurrence of שבועה (i 3). In the case of the remaining instance of משביע (iii 4) the surrounding text is better preserved, but it is the Lord who is probably the grammatical subject; the *editio princeps* reconstructs: (26)

יהוה הוא֯[ה אשר] עשה את ה֯[אלה בגבור]תו משביע לכול מ֯[לאכיו]

11Q11 iii 4

In this case √שבע clearly does not relate to exorcising demons. (27)

One might conclude on the basis of comparable Greek and Aramaic evidence that the Hebrew √שבע may have been used in exorcistic contexts, (28) but it does not follow that the presence of the root √שבע is *indicative* of an exorcism, as the example in 11Q11 iii 4 demonstrates. The verbal root belongs primarily to the realm of halakah (as m. Šebu. serves to remind us); halakic formulae appear in anti-demonic texts, but the presence of halakic formulae does not demonstrate a text is exorcistic.

3.3.3 Solomon the exorcist?

All commentators read the personal name, Solomon (11Q11 ii 2) and interpret this as an additional

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(25) As its use in Ex 5.3 already implies, it may refer to disease. In the earliest Rabbinic sources the verb also refers to attacks by wild beasts (e.g., wolves, scorpions), fits of jealousy, and so on, e.g. m. Sanh. 9.1; Mek. R. Ish., Pisḥa 17 (p. 59); Sifra 8.3 (p. 99 l.4); t. Ber. 1.11. This point is also of relevance to how one interprets 11QPs^{a}.

(26) As already van der Ploeg, "Un petit rouleau," 133. unless the root here is שׁבע (cf. Ps 145.16), García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 194.

(27) Cf. Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon," 140-141.

(28) See Reimund Leicht, "Mashbia' Ani 'Alekha: Types and Patterns of Ancient Jewish and Christian Exorcism Formulae," *JSQ* 13.4 (2006), 319-343; Aram. √ימי appears to be used to adjure a demonic spirit in 4Q560 1 ii 5-6.

indication of the work's exorcistic nature. (29) Van Cangh, for example, claims that "it is certain that [11Q11] deals with exorcisms carried out by Solomon." (30) This goes way beyond the evidence.

First, the interpretation of שלומה as a personal name, 'Solomon', is not incontestable. The orthography שלומה is not found among the other complete examples of Solomon's name among the Dead Sea Scrolls, (31) and the unvocalised text could be read in a number of other ways. (32) The fragmentary nature of the text at this point makes decisive conclusions impossible. Yet even if we accept as plausible the reading 'Solomon', it is nonetheless misleading to speak of Solomon as the "exorcist *par excellence*", (33) because examples of Solomon *performing* an exorcism are lacking in Jewish sources of the early Roman period and earlier. What the sources reflect is the belief that Solomon's prodigious literary output (e.g., 1 Kgs 3.12; 4.29-34; 5.9-14), included incantations that were effective against demons (see, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 8.45-49). This is an important nuance, since the body of Solomonic lore was also thought to incorporate a wide range of materials — songs, psalms, parables, proverbs, and so on — including material that in modern terms would be called 'medical', reflecting Solomon's legendary in-depth knowledge of the natural world. This raises the question, Which elements in the fragmentary text should the name 'Solomon' be associated with? There are references in what immediately follows to demons (השדים and הרוחות, ii 3), but the text also refers to medicine (רפואה 'healing, cure, medicine', ii 7). Solomon could plausibly be connected to one or both themes, which may or not be distinct (the notion that illnesses were *always* thought to be caused by demons is not reflected in late Second Temple sources).

We will treat the term לחש, usually rendered 'incantation', below.

4. Setting in the Collection

In the preceding analysis we have identified three aspects of the current interpretation of the texts contained in 11Q11 that are problematic:

1. Other examples of a possessed individual addressing the chief of demons are unknown is contemporary Jewish sources, making such an interpretation of the Belial psalm unlikely.

2. The notion that 11Q11 contains exorcistic incantations has been substantiated by identifying it with the four songs referred to in 11QPs[a] [11Q5] xxvii 9-10; this identification is probably incorrect.

3. Three key terms in 11Q11 are usually treated as *indicative* of an exorcistic rite. These terms may be appropriate for use in an exorcistic incantation, but they do not appear exclusively in exorcistic incantations; thus the appearance of such terms does not demonstrate *ipso facto* the presence of an exorcistic incantation.

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(29) Baumgarten sees a further reference to Solomon in 11Q11 v 3, i.e.,]שלמ, and argues that the exact function of David and Solomon in relation to the following material (i.e. the Belial psalm) is unclear; Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Qumran Songs Against Demons" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 55.3 (1986), 442-445 (443-444). Most scholarly, however, accept לדויד in 11Q11 v 4 as the start of a new psalm (see below).

(30) My translation ("qu'il s'agisse bien d'exorcismes pratiqués par Salomon est certain"), Jean-Marie Van Cangh, "«Fils de David» dans les évangiles synoptiques," in *Figures de David à travers la Bible*, ed. L. Desrousseaux and J. Vermeylen, LD 177 (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 345-396 (354).

(31) i.e., שלומוה in 4Q245 1 i 11; 4Q398 11-13 1; שלומו in 3Q15 v 6, 8; שלמה in 4Q385[a] 1[a-b] ii 5 (citation of a biblical formula, e.g. 1 Kgs 2.12; 1 Chr 29.23, may account for the defective spelling in 4Q385[a]).

(32) e.g., שְׁלוֹמָהּ or שְׁלוֹמֹה 'its/her/his welfare'; שִׁלֵּמָה 'recompense', cf. Ps 91:8, though 11Q11 vi 9 reads שלום.

(33) García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 183.

A further comment regarding this last point is in order before we proceed. Even if one were to accept the reference to 'Solomon'(?) and 'the afflicted' (הפגועים) as indicating the presence of exorcistic incantations, their relevance for interpreting *the Belial psalm* would still be open to question. The psalms in 11Q11 exhibit thematic coherence, but it does not follow that they were all intended to serve the same function. At least some of the psalms were composed separately and assembled into a collection at a later stage (Psalm 91 indisputably has a provenance distinct from the others) and the obvious differences in focus between the two best preserved psalms (i.e., the Belial psalm; the version of Psalm 91) suggest either an anthology, (34) or a single ritual (35) that contains a number of distinct elements, as liturgies typically do. In terms of literary form, even if the material preceding the Belial psalm contained exorcistic incantations, the material that follows the Belial psalm, namely Psalm 91, is clearly *not* an exorcistic incantation. At best, then, one could conclude that 11Q11 contained a mix of apotropaic (supplicatory; preventative) and exorcistic (instrumentally effective; curative) literary forms. (36) Such variation is also evident in terms of content. References to 'demons' and 'spirits', for example, appear only in the preceding material and not in the Belial psalm itself; the Belial psalm is concerned in contrast with a single figure, which we take to be Belial. The focus is clearly different. We should, therefore, be cautious about allowing one composition in the collection to exercise a decisive influence on how we determine the literary form and intended function of another, especially when the much-more fragmentary parts are used to determine the function of the much-less fragmentary parts.

5. Analysis of the Text

Since neither the external evidence nor the wider literary context, provide sufficient justification for approaching the Belial psalm as an exorcistic incantation, we need to consider whether it might be interpreted in a way that provides a better fit within the context of Jewish demonology while adequately accounting for the literary context of 11Q11 as a whole. It is to this task that we now turn.

Line 4

The two lines after the vacat (v 4-5) are reconstructed in the *editio princeps* as follows:

4 לדויד ע̇[ל... ל]ח̊ש בשם יהו[ה קרא בכו]ל̊ עת

5 אל ה̊שמ̊[ים כי]י̊בוא אליך בלי̊[על וא]מרתה אליו

To David o[n... incan]tation in the name of the Lo[rd. Call eve]ry time

to the heav[ens because Be[lial] will come to you [and] you should [s]ay to him...

The heading לדויד reflects other extant psalms, apparently attributing authorship to David (i.e. *lamed auctoris;* (37) e.g., 11Q5 xxviii 3; Ps 25.1; 26.1; 27.1). This reinforces the point made above, namely

(34) Corinna Körting, "Text and Context: Ps 91 and 11QPsAp," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. E. Zenger, BETL 238 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 567-578. Such a collection may have served as a handbook, similar in function to 4QMagical Booklet [4Q560]; Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 109, 140.

(35) E.g. Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon"; Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 61. Similarly Alexander ("Wrestling," 327) understands the whole scroll to be addressed to a single figure, Belial, whom he claims is referred to with various sobriquets throughout the scroll. But these appellations are either substantially ('prince of enmity', 'ruler of the abyss of darkness', 'ruler of the earth' 11Q11 ii 5-6; iv 9) or totally reconstructed ('Satan' 11Q11 v 12).

(36) See the helpful summary in Pajunen, "Fighting Evil," 205-209.

(37) Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar,* §132[a-b]. On the notion of Davidic authorship see Eva Mroczek, "The Hegemony of

that the (possible) reference to Solomon earlier in the collection should not exercise a decisive influence on our interpretation of this psalm: this a psalm of David, not Solomon.

The reading לחש בשם יהוה, interpreted as 'incantation in the name of the Lord', was first proposed by Puech (38) and is now widely accepted. *Prima facie* it situates the text firmly within the context of exorcistic magic. However, on stylistic, syntactical, and lexical grounds this reconstruction is probably not correct.

First, it is questionable whether the root לחש would be employed to introduce an exorcistic incantation. This noun does not appear elsewhere in the Dead Sea Scrolls; (39) in the biblical corpus it is connected to the notion of whispering, and by extension activities such as snake-charming (Jer 8.17; Eccl 10.11), which is not a form of magic *per se* (the English 'horse-whispering' is perhaps a useful analogy). The instances in Isaiah 3.3, 20; 26.16 are ambiguous, but there seems no reason to connect them to demons (see, LXX *ad loc*). (40) Likewise, the verb is not connected with demons in Classical Hebrew (2 Sam 12.19; Ps 41.8; 58.6; 4QDibHam^{a} [4Q504] 1-2^{R} v 17). In rabbinic literature, the verb most frequently refers to whispering, and by extension such things as snake-charming and whispering healing formulae over wounds (e.g., m.Sanh 10.1). The Tosefta records the view that one may whisper (charms?) over eyes, snakes, and scorpions on Shabbat, but not demons, though Rabbi Yose held that this was not even done on weekdays (אף בחול אין לוחשין בדבר שדים; t. Shabb 7.23, cf. y. Shabb 14.3, 14c; b. Sanh. 101a), but as the rabbinic parallels indicate quite what this action involved is not clear; (41) an exorcistic incantation does not seem to be in view.

The cognate Aramaic noun לחש is used of magical practices in Targum Onqelos and Pseudo-Jonathan but not of an anti-demonic kind: it is applied to the means by which the Egyptian magicians replicate the signs performed by Moses (Tg. Onq. & Tg. Ps.-J. Ex 7:11, 22; 8.3, 14). As far as I can ascertain, the noun occurs only once in the corpus of Aramaic magic bowls hitherto published, where it appears to be something from which the bowl offers protection rather than something that counteracts demonic forces (though the perplexing language makes it difficult to determine the context). (42) The verb, on the other hand, occurs once in this corpus in a sequence of verbs (√אסר 'to bind'; √חתם to seal'; √קטר 'to tie up') that apparently designate various means of restraining demonic entities. (43)

In short, the evidence connecting √לחש with exorcistic incantations in late Second Temple Palestine, is essentially absent. But there is a further problem with this reconstruction.

The conclusions that the formula בשם יהו]ה should be connected to the preceding noun, reconstructed as לחשׁ 'incantation', is doubtful. First, there is no other case in Classical Hebrew of לחשׁ followed by בשם. Secondly, as far as the fragmentary nature of the materials allows us to determine, the relatively common בשם only ever has an adverbial value in the Dead Sea Scrolls; (44)

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the Biblical in the Study of Second Temple Literature," *JAJ* 6.1 (2015), 2-35 (on 11Q11, see 8, 21-22). There is little reason to assume that all the psalms in the original collection were attributed to David, *pace* Henze, "Psalm 91 in Premodern Interpretation," 191.

(38) Puech, "11 QPsAp.a: un rituel d'exorcismes," 381-383.

(39) The Aram. cognate occurs in 4Q586 m 2; the fragment is too damaged to determine its context.

(40) See discussion in Hugh G.M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 247.

(41) Sara A. Ronis, "'Do Not Go Out Alone at Night.' Law and Demonic Discourse in the Babylonian Talmud" (PhD diss., Yale, 2015), 181-185.

(42) Tapani Harviainen, *An Aramaic Incantation Bowl from Borsippa: Another Specimen of Eastern Aramaic Koiné,* StOr 51 (Helsinki : Finnish Oriental society; 1981), l. 6-7.

(43) James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1913), §5 (pp. 138-140). On the linguistic aspects see Jacob N. Epstein, *Studies in Talmudic Literature and Semitic Languages*, trans. Z. Epstein, ed. E. Z. Melamed (in Hebrew; Jerusalem : Magnes Press, 1983), I.334.

(44) CD xx 34; 1Q20 xix 7; xxi 2; 1QS vi 27; 1Q28^{b} v 28; 1Q33 xi 2, 3; 4Q175 7; 4Q365 10 3; 4Q391 62 ii 3; 4Q403 1 i 17, 19, 21, 24, 29; 4Q404 2 2, 5; 4Q405 3 ii 6; 13 3, 5; 4Q438 6 2; 4Q521 2 ii+4 5; 8Q5 1 1; 11Q14 1 ii 2, 4; 11Q19

it is therefore unlikely on simple syntactical grounds to mark the nominal attribute of לחשׁ (i.e. 'an incantation in the name of'). (45) In this respect, the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect typical Biblical Hebrew usage, where בשם is coupled with a number of verbal roots, (46) by far the most common of which is קרא. (47) The reconstruction of the verbal root קרא in the lacuna is therefore plausible, but a reading בשם יהוה אקרא 'I invoke the name of the Lord...' seems preferable in light of what follows. We find this construction in Ps 116.4, 13, for example, in which the psalmist first expresses his confidence in God before addressing God directly in praise. The switch from referring to God in the third person to a direct address in the second person in the following lines (see discussion of below) is unproblematic in a poetic context (i.e., Ps 116.17; cf. e.g., 4Q511 10 9).

The end of line 4 is almost certainly correctly reconstructed בכל עת 'at all times, always'. Again, this is echoed in other extant psalms, for example, אברכה את יהוה בכל עת 'I bless the Lord at all times' (Ps 34.2). The Masoretic Text usually marks בכל עת with a disjunctive accent (e.g., Ps 10.5; 62.9; 106.3; 119.20; outside the psalms: Ex 18.22, 26; Job 27.10). If we take this as indicative of established patterns of accentuation, then idiomatically בכל עת is likely to end a clause, so that what follows, אל, begins a new clause rather then marking the object of the verb קרא.

In short, we might reconstruct and interpret the sequence at the end of line 4 as follows:

בשם יהו[ה אקרא בכו]ל עת

[*I invoke*] *the name of the Lor*[*d al*]*ways!*

The words preceding בשם יהוה in line 4 thus belong to separate clause.

If the reconstruction ל[חשׁ, though possible on palaeographic grounds, is nonetheless unlikely, what might be a preferable reconstruction? Concerning the reconstruction ל[חשׁ, the *editio princeps* notes that the reconstruction of *ḥet* is uncertain, adding "many other letters are also possible". (48) In fact, no traces of the letter preceding the *shin* are (now) discernible on the recent infrared image. (49) With only an *ayin* and a *shin* to guide us, we can only speculate on what might once have stood where the lacunae now is. What is possible is, however, limited by two physical factors: first, a character with a long horizontal base stroke (e.g. פ, כ, ב) cannot have preceded the *shin* because traces of its base stroke would still be visible; second, the length of the lacuna.

Although both accept the reconstruction לחשׁ, a reading we have rejected, the suggestion of Pajunen (על שׁטן) and Puech (על פגוע) to reconstruct the]עֹ following לדויד with על, which serves to indicate the psalm's topic has considerable merit. (50) A number of psalms use על to introduce what we presume to be musical direction (e.g., Ps 8.1; 12.1) or the psalm's topic (e.g., Ps 7.1). (51) One might

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lx 11; lxi 3; lxiii 3. See Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, §132a-b; §125a-b.

(45) In theory could be resolved by treating the form as a piel imperative, a possibility noted in García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 200. According to Puech ("Les Psaumes davidiques," 165), A. Caquot suggested the *piel* ptc as alternative.

(46) e.g. ברך, קלל, בטח, דבר, שרת, נבא, הלך, זכר Deut 18.5, 22; 21.5; 2 Kgs 2.24; Isa 50.10; Jer 11.21; Mic 4.5; Ps 20.8 etc.

(47) See the translation of Geza Vermès, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 2004), 310-311.

(48) García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 199.

(49) Taken February 2014; https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-499700

(50) Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon", 145-147; Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques", 163-165.

(51) See further the note in García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 200; Shepherd, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 82. It should be noted that, when the attribution to David (לדוד) appears with על in the heading of a psalm preserved in the Hebrew Bible (they do not appear together elsewhere in the non-biblical scrolls from the Judean desert), על usually precedes לדוד (Pss 6.1; 8.1; 12.1; 22.1; 53.1; 56.1; 60.1; 61.1; 62.1; 69.1). However, in all these cases על marks some sort of musical direction ("on the *gittith*", "on the *sheminith*", etc.) rather than introducing the psalm's topic. On the sole occassion when לדוד precedes על in the psalms in the Hebrew Bible (i.e., Ps 7.1), על

reconstruct the topic of the psalm in a number of ways, (52) but the reconstruction איש/אנוש preceded by a construct noun indicating affliction, e.g. נגיעי/רעות/צרת or a noun or participle indicating an afflictor, e.g., נוגשׂ/סטן (cf., e.g., 2 Sam 7.14; Ps 34.20; 86.7; 88.4; 1QHa vii 29; 11Q5 xix 15) seems preferable. By way of example, a reconstruction such as ע[ל נגיעי אי]ש provides a textually and contextually more plausible alternative to לחש.

Line 5

The above interpretation implies that the sense division coincides (coincidentally) with the end of line 4. As we noted above בכל עת ends a clause, so that what follows, אל, begins a new clause. (53)

The commonly accepted interpretation of אל is as the preposition 'to, towards'. This is probably correct. If we accept the reconstruction השמים 'the heavens' for the following word, then we might postulate that the lacuna after השמים contained a qualification of the heavens such as מעל (cf. Gen 27.39; 49.25; Ps 50.4) or ממעל (cf. Ex 20.4; Deut 4.39; 5.8; Josh 2.11; 1 Kgs 8.23; Isa 45.8; Jer 4.28; 1Q22 1 ii 10; 4Q254 7 4; 4Q299 8 10). The clause would then read: "To the heavens above Belial will come to you..." The word order here, however, would be eccentric. Although alternative interpretations of אל as the divine epithet, אֵל, (54) or the adversative אַל, '(do) not', (55) are possible, a more convincing reconstruction would be אל השמים אשוע or אל השמים אצעק/אזעק, 'to the heavens I will cry (for help)', creating a parallelism between the two hemistichs (cf. Ps 50.4; also Neh 2.4; 9.27; 1 Chr 21.26; 2 Chr 6.21).

As is typical of the psalms now preserved in the Hebrew Bible — and as our analysis of line 4 suggests — the addressee is God. What follows is therefore best understood as a petition to God. One possible reconstruction would be:

אל ה̇שמ̇[ים אזעק]י̇בוא אליך בלי̇[על וא]מרתה אליו

To the heaven[s I cry (for help)!] May Beli[al] come (56) *to you (i.e. God) [that] you might [s]ay to him:*

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introduces the topic (i.e., על דברי כוש בן ימיני). The exception thus proving the rule.

(52) By way of example: על רוחי קודש, 'Concerning the holy spirits' (cf. 4Q405 6 5; 19 2; 4Q418 76 3; Isa 63.10-11; Ps 51.13); על מלאכי קודש or על מלאכי הקודש, 'Concerning the holy angels' (cf. 11Q17 vi 7; vii 12; ix 9; 37 1 and freq.); על רוח אנוש or על רוח איש, 'Concerning the human spirit' (see 1QHa ix 34 cf. Aram. 4Q539 5 2 cf. Prov. 17.27; 18.14).

(53) Pajunen's proposal ("How to Expel a Demon," 145-146) to read אל השטן כאשר יבוא אליך בלילה is almost certainly incorrect: he leaves the lacuna at the end of l.4 blank; I cannot imagine what one could reconstruct in that lacuna to make his reconstruction syntactically feasible.

(54) There are several possibilities: a) אֵל followed by a verb in imperative, e.g. Ps 10.12: אל נשא ידך 'O God, raise your hand!' (cf. Ps 17.6; 54.4; 64.2; 80.4). שמע in *hifil* (cf. Ps 143.8) would fit the remaining letters and could be followed by a number of possible objects (הודך cf. Isa 30.30, דינך cf. Ps 76.9, חסדך cf. Ps 143.8 etc.), e.g., אֵל הַשְׁמִיעַ (אֶת־)קולך (cf. Deut 4.36). b) If the subject has already been defined in the heading of the psalm (e.g., על שטן אנוש 'concerning humankind's adversary'), then a reconstruction אל השמידהו 'O God, destroy him!' would be possible. c) A laudatory vocative such as אל השמים, 'O God of the heavens! (Ps 136:26).

(55) The ה at the beginning of ה̇שמ̇[ים (l.5) is almost totally lost; Van der Ploeg ("Un petit rouleau," 136-137) noted the possibility of reading ר. Given the formation of the ר and the right-hand of a ת are very similar, one could conceivably read the adversative אַל followed by the second person jussive form, as is very common in other extant psalms, e.g., Ps 28.1 לדוד אליך יהוה אקרא צורי אל תחרש ממני cf. Ps 10.12; 22.12, 20; 25.7; 26.9; 27.9 etc. The partially preserved character reconstructed as מ in the *editio princeps* could also be פ (e.g., אל תשפלני, 'don't bring me low!') or ט (e.g., אל תשטנני 'don't be an adversary to me!').

(56) Concerning י̇בוא the *editio princeps* notes: "The trace at the edge [of the lacuna] is most likely to be part of yod, even though the stance of the stroke does not correspond exactly to yod. However, the fragment is broken at this point, and it is not possible to ascertain if the spot is indeed ink" (García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 199). The recent infrared images confirm a trace of ink, so the reconstruction remains plausible.

This reconstruction also resolves a difficulty presented by the conditional particle כי reconstructed in the lacuna in the *editio princeps*. Although the use of כי-*yiqtol-weqatal* to form a conditional clause ("if/ when... then...") is common (i.e., Gen 12.12; Ex 7.9, and frequently), (57) the reconstruction כי is too short to fill the available space. (58) The reconstruction proposed above does not leave space for a conditional particle. The proposed word order, namely 'imperfect verb → indirect object → subject', is well attested, (59) and may be construed in several ways, for example, as consecutive actions ("he will come to you, then you will say...") or, as seems preferable, expressing volitive mood ("May he come to you that you might say..."). The setting imagined is probably that of the heavenly courtroom (see further below) and God is called upon to reject Belial's accusations, to rebuke him, and cast him away.

The reconstruction בליֽ[על remains the most plausible of the available possibilities. (60) Van der Ploeg, followed by the *editio princeps,* reconstructs בליֽ[לה. This is possible, but as Puech rightly pointed out, leaves יבוא without a clear subject. (61)

The analysis so far suggests that the psalmists is petitioning God to address Belial; it is not the psalmist himself who addresses Belial. We note *en passant* that one can also find a direct address to God in the preceding materials in the scroll (11Q11 ii 6). (62)

Lines 6-7

The following lines are reconstructed and translated in the *editio princeps* as follows:

6 מי אתה [הילוד מ]אדם ומזרע הקדֽ[ושי]ם פניך פני

7 [שו]ן וקרנֽיִך קרני חל[ו]ם חושך אתה ולוא אור

'Who are you, [oh offspring of] man and of the seed of the ho[ly one]s? Your face is a face of [delu]sion and your horns are horns of ill[us]ion, you are darkness and not light,

The reconstruction בליֽ[על creates a problem vis-à-vis the reconstruction הילוד of the *editio princeps*, (63) since Belial does not appear to have been thought of as one of the spirits who emerge from the union of human and fallen angels, but as an angel that rules over such spirits (see below). This difficulty can be resolved if the preposition מִן is interpreted as marking the comparative, in which case it would be preceded by a lexeme expressing the adjectival idea. ארר, which appears in a construction with מִן in the cursing of the serpent and Cain in Genesis (3:14; 4:11), would be an obvious choice (cf. 1QM xiii 4). (64) The preceding מי אתה is thus to be taken as a rhetorical

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(57) On difficulties presented by verb forms in Qumran Hebrew see Mats Eskhult, "Tense Forms and Time Frames in Qumran Hebrew Prose and Poetry," in *The Reconfiguration of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period : Proceedings of the Seventh International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira at Strasbourg University, June 2014*, ed. J. Joosten, D. Machiela, and J.-S. Rey, STDJ 124 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 16-29.

(58) Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques," 165; Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon," 146 n.53

(59) Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, §155^{k}, 155nd, 155^{t}.

(60) The reading בלי חת, 'without fear', which is used of Leviathan in Job 41.25 (cf. Gen 9.2), would also fit but also leaves the subject undefined. The lacuna is too small to accommodate other possible readings with בלי, such as בלי משפט 'without just cause' or בלי דעת 'without knowledge'.

(61) Puech, "11 QPsAp.a: un rituel d'exorcismes," 383; Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques," 165-166. Unless the subject were specified in the psalm's heading; on this possibility, see García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 200.

(62) See Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon," 137-140.

(63) As its editors noted, García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 201. Cf. Puech, "Les Psaumes davidiques," 166; Alexander, "Wrestling", 327-328.

(64) That the word lost in the lacuna referred to those under Belial's control (e.g., חילך cf. 1QM i 1; i 13; xv 3; גדודיך cf.

question with an air of mockery about it. (65) The sequence would therefore read:

מי אתה [תואר מ]אדם ומזרע הקדֹ[ושי]ם

Who are you?! [You will be cursed (66) *] more than humankind and the offspring of the ho[ly on]es!*

Lines 8-9

We have proposed that the psalmist is petitioning God to address Belial. The reconstruction and translation of lines 8-9 in the *editio princeps* presents an apparent difficulty for this conclusion, which needs to be addressed:

8 [עו]ל ולוא צדקה[ ]שֹׂר הצָּבָא יהוה [יוריד]ך

9 [לשאו]ל תחתית [ויסגור דל]תי נחושת בָּ[אלה לו]אָ

8. [(you are) injus]tice and not justice. [ ] the chief of the army, YHWH [will bring] you [down]

9. [to the] deepest [Sheo]l, [and he will shut the] two bronze [ga]tes th[rough which n]o

According to this reconstruction and interpretation, Belial continues to be addressed in the second person by the afflicted individual while the Lord is spoken of in the third person. But the locution שר הצבא renders the interpretation of the *editio princeps* improbable. The reconstruction is plausible, despite damage to the manuscript that has eviscerated all but the last traces of the *tsade* and *beth,* but the interpretation of the sequence יהוה שר הצבא that understands יהוה and שֹׂר הצָּבָא to be in apposition is unlikely since שר הצבא is not used as a divine title in Classical Hebrew or in rabbinic literature. (67)

How, then, should the sequence יהוה שר הצבא be interpreted? The presence of the definite article excludes the possibility of reading it as a single chain of genitives, i.e., 'commander of the Lord's army', as we find in Josh. 5.14-15 in reference to an angel (cf. Tg. Jon. *ad loc*, שר הצבא = מלאך). (68) יהוה can better be treated as vocative, a common enough feature in psalms (cf. Ps 144.3), preceded by שר הצבא in construct relationship, i.e. 'the commander of the army, O Lord...' The locution שר הצבא probably refers to an archangel (cf. Dan 8.11), perhaps Raphael, whose name may be reconstructed at the end of the preceding psalm (v 3), or Michael (cf. Dn 10.13, 21 12.1). (69) The notion of God providing angelic protection is, of course, also evident in Psalm 91, which follows (vi 10-11).

How would this reading fit in the text? The proposal of the *editio princeps* to place a full stop after 'justice' (צדקה) is appropriate: there is a clear shift in focus. I suggest that this marks the end of the words with which the psalmist hopes God will address Belial; the psalmist then implores God to send an angel to execute Belial's punishment, which consists of imprisonment in Sheol. (70) The lacuna preceding שֹׂר הצָּבָא therefore probably contained a verb. Continuation of the *weqatal* sequence indicating sequential action (e.g., ופקדתה 'then you shall appoint...'; ושלחתה 'then you shall send'; וצויתה 'then you shall command') is possible, but since the tone of the psalm is one of entreaty, then

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1QM xi 8; עדתך cf. 1QHa x 22; 4Q511 2 ii 3; רוחותיך cf. CD xii 2; 4Q271 5 i 18) is possible but less compelling.

(65) As van der Ploeg, "Un petit rouleau," 137. Cf. Zech 4:7; BDB §4310^{f}.

(66) Or perhaps אר(ו)רך, 'I will curse you'.

(67) The one exception might be Dan 8.11, which may refer to God or an (arch)angel.

(68) *Pace* Eshel, "Apotropaic Prayers," 86.

(69) Puech, "11 QPsAp.a: un rituel d'exorcismes," 384-385; Alexander, "Wrestling," 327. See also Cecilia Wassén, "Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings: Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. F. V. Reiterer, T. Nicklas, and K. Schöpflin, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 499-523 (503, 514).

(70) Cf. the appearance of this theme in 11Q11 iv 3-8, especially the reference to מלאך תקיף (iv 5).

an imperative (e.g., שלח 'Send!') or *yiqtol* (e.g., תשלח 'May you send!') seems most fitting.

Only the upper part of the last character on line 8 is preserved. It is reconstructed in the *editio princeps* as final *kaph* (ך-), but the termination of the down stroke is now visible on the more recent infrared photograph; it does not cross the baseline and is therefore more likely a *dalet*. The verb ירד (cf., e.g., Ps 55.24) is the best fit for the context, forming a final clause indicating purpose, e.g., שלח שר הצבא יהוה ויורד, 'Send, O Lord, the commander of the army, that he (Belial) might be brought down...' (71)

From line 9 onwards the reconstruction can follow that of the *editio princeps*; I suggest only minor modifications. The *editio princeps* reconstructs בֿ[אלה לו]א. The final א is clearly visible in the infrared photos from 2014. Regarding the first letter, the *editio princeps* notes that it is "hard to determine whether it is an oblique trace or only a spot". (72) It remains uncertain in the latest images. It seems preferable, however, to assume that whatever lexeme once stood here belonged with the preceding hemistich, so that the following distich consists of two hemistichs each beginning with לוא. The particle בעד with pronominal suffix would complete the idiom (cf. Judg 3.23; 2 Kgs 4.4-5, 33; Isa 26.20).

By way of example then, we might reconstruct *exempli gratia* as follows:



4 לדויד ע[ל נגיעי אי]ש בשם יהו[ה אקרא בכו]לֿ עת

5 אל הֿשמֿ[ים אזעק]יֿבוא אליך בליֿ[על וא]מרתה אליו

6 מי אתה [תואר מ]אדם ומזרע הקדֿ[ושי]סֿ פניך פני

(71) The alternative עד as we find in Deut 32.22 עד שאול תחתית (cf. also 1QH[a] xiv 17; 4Q200 6 6; 4Q491 10 ii 17) is too short.

(72) García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11Qapocryphal Psalms," 199.

7 [שו]ו וקרניֿך קרני חל[ו]ם חושך אתה ולוא אור

8 [עו]ל ולוא צדקה[שלח]שֿר הצֿבֿא יהוה [ויור]ד

9 [לשאו]ל תחתית [וסגור דל]תי נחושת ב[עדו לו]אֿ

10 [יהיה] אור ולוא[יאיר שם ה]שמש אש[ר יזרח]

4 (A psalm) of David concer[ning hum]an[afflictions. I invoke] the name of the Lord [al]ways!

5 To the heaven[s I cry (for help)!] May Beli[al] come to you [that] you might [s]ay to him:

6 'Who are you?! [You shall be cursed] more than humankind and the offspring of the ho[ly on]es! Your appearance is an appearance of

7 [delu]sion; your horns are horns of ill[us]ion! You are darkness and not light,

8 [injus]tice and not justice!'[Send,] O Lord, the commander of the army, [that he (Belial) might be brought do]wn

9 [to] the depths of [Sheo]l [then close] the bronze [gat]es af[ter him!]

10 [There will be n]o light and [the] sun, which shines (on the righteous), will [give] no [light there...]

We note that the reconstruction offered above would create a distich pattern, at least in the opening stanzas up to the end of the indirect speech.

לדויד על נגיעי איש

בשם יהוה אקרא בכול עת // אל השמים אזעק

יבוא אליך בליעל // ואמרתה אליו

מי אתה // תואר מאדם ומזרע הקדושים

פניך פני שוו // וקרניך קרני חלום

חושך אתה ולוא אור // עול ולוא צדקה

6. Conclusions

The widely accepted interpretation of the Belial psalm holds that it is a magical incantation consisting of a "direct taunt of the offensive demon" (73) to be employed in cases of demonic attack. I have sought to show that this interpretation is problematic on lexical, syntactic, and literary-critical grounds and in light of contemporary Jewish demonology. I have proposed a more plausible reconstruction and interpretation of the Belial psalm that characterises the psalm as a petition for divine assistance, reflecting a form similar to that found in other extant psalms. (74) The petitioner seeks God's intervention on his behalf against the negative forces against which he struggles; these are depicted in terms of the cosmic 'dualistic' system with which 11Q11 is coloured. (75)

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(73) Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 109.

(74) Cf. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Pleas for Deliverance from the Demonic in Early Jewish Texts," in *Studies in Jewish Prayer*, ed. C. T. R. Hayward and B. Embry, JSSSup 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55-73.

(75) J. Frey, "Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library," in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues. Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995, Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten,* ed. M. Bernstein *et al*, STDJ 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 275-335 (322-323); García Martínez, "Magic in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 25. See also Eve, *The Jewish Context*, 210-211.

Taking into account the textual and material features, particularly the relatively small size of the scroll, (76) it seems likely that 11Q11 was intended for use in a public rite, (77) thus probably comparable to 4QBerakhot and 4QCurses in terms of its function. In terms of its literary form the Belial psalm does not belong to the realm of instrumentally effective magic (i.e., an exorcistic incantation); instead it should be categorised with a genre of texts that Stuckenbruck has dubbed, "anti-demonic petitionary prayers." (78) Instead of addressing the demon directly with adjurations and threats, the text petitions God to intervene on the speaker's behalf. As such, there are a number of roughly contemporary works to which the Belial psalm might be compared, most obviously the Plea for Deliverance and the Prayer of Levi, in which God's intervention against demonic forces are sought in prayer (11Q5 xix 15-16; ALD 3.5-11). (79) Likewise, in narrative contexts we find Noah petitioning God directly for deliverance from evil spirits (Jub 10.3-6), leading to the well-known exchange in which God permits Mastema to retain a tenth of his demonic forces (Jub 10.8-9). Tobiah too is instructed to 'cry out to the merciful God' (Tob 6.17; 8.7 cf. 1QapGen xx 28-29).

If we are correct in conceiving of the Belial psalm as a petition for divine assistance then the scene envisaged by the petitioner is that of a direct exchange between God and Belial. This, as we noted, is more likely in light of contemporary Jewish sources than the proposal that it contains words with which a possessed individual can address the chief of the demons. What is imagined, is exactly the kind of exchange that we find between God and Mastema in the Book of Jubilees (10.7-8). Such exchanges are perhaps to be thought of as taking place in the heavenly courtroom, inspired by the exchanges between God and *śāṭān* in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Job 1-2; Zech 3.1-2) and (loosely) echoed in the *Vision of Amram*. (80) In the Belial psalm the psalmist petitions God to pronounce a judgement of condemnation on Belial then instruct a powerful angel to carry out the sentence. The imagery of the divine court can be found earlier in the scroll too (i.e., 11Q11 iii 4-6) if the reconstruction of the *editio princeps* is correct.

When understood in this way it seem particularly fitting that the Belial psalm — a supplication — should be followed by Psalm 91 — a psalm of reassurance (e.g., "He will save you..." 11Q11 vi 5 [Ps 91.3]). The implication of this sequence is that the plea for divine assistance will be heard and acted upon. The material preceding the Belial psalm is too fragmentary to be certain, but it is tempting to see in it an articulation of the causes of affliction, so that the collection as a whole moves from a description of the problem (*incipit* to v 3), to a petition for assistance (v 4-vi 3), before concluding with reassurance of deliverance (vi 3-vi 14).

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(76) Length 71cm, no full height columns are preserved; with a handle; see further Pajunen, "How to Expel a Demon," 61.

(77) Pajunen, "The Function of 11 QPsApa," 54-56.

(78) Stuckenbruck, "Pleas for Deliverance," 57.

(79) Although its principle technique for scaring off demonic forces is to proclaim God's might and sovereignty, elements of supplication addressed directly to God can also be found in the Songs of the Sage (e.g., 4Q511 10 9), another work presumably intended for practical application.

(80) The reconstructed form ו]צָּבו לפני[י הָתָּ]ת כול זר[ע הקודש]אשר מ[לאכיו וא]ת in 11Q11 iii 4-5 might plausible be connected to divine courtroom scenes (cf. Job 1.6; 2.1; Zech 6.5); Fröhlich, "Invoke at Any Time," 43. See also Puech, "11 QPsAp.a: un rituel d'exorcismes," 402-403.