Scripture as a Spiritual Phenomenon: 
The Evidence of the 11Q Psalms Scroll Colophon

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According to the colophon to the 1st-century Cave 11 Psalms Scroll, the psalmist David was a composing scribe endowed by the divine spirit. In the light of a pattern of legitimation by the divine spirit for social power well attested in the HB, we can discern how the colophon attributes divine efficacy for social power—hitherto exercised only through persons—to David’s psalms as they resound in Israel’s calendric communal cultic observances. The 11Q Psalms Scroll colophon provides early evidence for an enduring understanding of Scripture as a socially potent spiritual phenomenon that shapes the life of a religious community.

Key Words: spirituality, Scripture, inspiration, authority, Dead Sea Scrolls, Psalms Scroll, scribe, David, 11QPs

Although they differ in their specific expressions, all major Judeo-Christian religious traditions appeal to the role of the divine spirit as they affirm the authority of sacred Scripture. The connection of God’s spirit to Scripture has early roots, and many well-known examples show its wide attestation. During antiquity, Jewish notions of inspiration tended to revolve around prophecy. For example, we find among the Dead Sea Scrolls (in CD VIII,16) the paradigmatic phrase קדשו על הנביאים ברוח (“as the prophets revealed by the holy spirit”). Similarly, the Targums often associate הקודשה רוח (“holy spirit”) with prophecy, such as Tg. Neof. at Gen 31:21 (margin); 41:38; 42:1; Exod 2:12 (with one marginal reading of רוח).

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1. For an Orthodox expression, see Canon I of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (NPNF 2 14:555). For the official Roman Catholic view, see Dei Verbum 1.6 and 3.11; Documents of Vatican II (ed. Austin P. Flannery; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 752 and 756–57; The Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1994) §§105–6. Protestant views vary, but ch. 1 of the 1647 Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines is perhaps the most widely reflected.
But the topic we take up here is not simply divine inspiration in general or even necessarily prophetic inspiration but more specifically the association of the divine spirit with the phenomenon of Scripture. Again, this connection appears early on. Philo, for instance, whose understanding of divine inspiration often resembles Greek notions of ekstasis, occasionally refines his conception of prophetic utterance by reference to the influence of the divine spirit as the source of Jewish law in written form. We read in Mos. (2.264), “Moses . . . made announcement of the Sabbath” (Colson, LCL). This example, similar to what we find from Philo in QG 1, reflects a distinction between Greek and Jewish conceptions, inasmuch as, however inspired the venerable poets were considered by the Muses, they were not taken to speak with the voice of the high-


3. Cf., e.g., Her. 264–65, where Philo speaks of inspiration as “ecstasy and divine possession and madness. . . . This is what regularly befalls the fellowship of the prophets. The mind is evicted at the arrival of the divine spirit [τὸ θεῖον πνεῦμα ἄφιξιν], but when that departs the mind returns to its tendency. Mortal and immortal may not share the same home” (Colson and Whitaker, LCL), with Socrates in Plato’s Ion (534b6 and d3), on the source of rhapsodic inspiration: “a poet is . . . never able to compose until he has become inspired and is beside himself and reason is no longer in him . . . it is not they who utter these precious revelations while their mind is not within them, but it is the god himself who speaks [ὁ θεὸς αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ λέγων]” (The Collected Dialogues of Plato [ed. Edith Hamilton and Hamilton Cairn; trans. Lane Cooper; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961]); see also Philo, Spec. 1.65; 4.48–49. For a review of scholarship on Philo’s notions of inspiration see John R. Levison, “Inspiration and the Divine Spirit in the Writings of Philo Judaeus,” JSJ 26 (1995) 271–323, who concludes that, overall, Philo’s view of biblical prophetic inspiration somewhat tempers the ecstatic dimension of the Hellenistic notion; see his Filled with the Spirit (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 178–84.

4. “When the mind is divinely possessed [. . .] becomes filled with God [θεοφόρητος γίνεται], is no longer within itself, for it receives the divine spirit [τὸ θεῖον πνεῦμα] to dwell within it. . . . this is evidence of the clear knowledge of prophecy, by which oracles and laws are legislated by God [χρηστοὶ καὶ νόμιμοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ νομοθετοῦται]” (Gen 3:9; Markus, LCL).
est god. Dio Chrysostom, in his Discourse (36.35) observes, “[t]here comes sometimes to the poets—I mean the very ancient poets—some utterance from the Muses, however brief, some inspiration of divine nature [ἐπίπνοια θείας] and of divine truth, like a flash of fire from the invisible. This is what happened to Homer and Hesiod when they were possessed by the Muses” (Cohoon and Crosby, LCL). By way of a contrasting parallel in the Jewish conception, at 4 Ezra 14:22 the petitioning scribe Ezra directly requests of God an apportioning of the holy spirit (spiritum sanctum) for the sake of writing out Scripture, and in the ensuing episode he notes that “my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory” (14:40, NRSV). The Christian Fathers frequently allude to the church’s reception of the voice of God’s spirit in the Scriptures (albeit, again, without connotations of Hellenistic divine enthusiasm). Ultimately, they regard any inspired OT writer as a prophet, sometimes using the expression “spirit of prophecy” to denote the source of inspiration. Later, Jewish allusions to the origination of Scripture by God’s spirit are found among rabbinic discussions with expressions such as הבורא הקדש נאמרה (“as said by the holy spirit”; b. Meg. 7a–b, regarding Esther; Tos. Yad. 2.14, regarding Song of Songs) and השראה עליה רוח הקדש אמר ג ‘سفرים (“the holy spirit rested on him and he wrote three books,” Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah 1.1.6, regarding books attributed to Solomon). From very early on, and in a variety of ways, the Judeo-Christian religious tradition has understood the phenomenon of Scripture to be spiritual, that is, an effect of God’s spirit. It is in this sense that we may speak of the spirituality of Scripture.

In this essay, I explore the earliest spiritual history of Scripture as reflected in a colophon to the Cave 11 Psalms Scroll from the first century A.D., paying close attention to the emphasis that the text places on David’s divine authority as a scribe. I will suggest that part of the background informing this conception of authority lies in a consistent pattern that the HB shows regarding the legitimation of social power by God’s spirit. Turning to the Persian era, I will point out a certain refinement of that pattern in the Chronicler’s notion of prophecy as cultic song composition. In the light of that background, I will conclude by returning to the Psalms Scroll with an

5. Relevant passages within the patristic corpus are abundant. But it is Origen who speaks more, and more systematically, than most Fathers on the subject, and in passages such as his Genesis Homily (3.2), he claims for the biblical authors the sort of sobria ebrietas known widely within the Judeo-Hellenistic and patristic worlds (Origen: Homilies on Exodus and Genesis [trans. Ronald E. Heine; Fathers of the Church 71; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982] 89–90); on this, see Hans Lewy, Sobria ebrietas: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der antiken Mystik (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1929). For a similar Antiochene view on this, see Chrysostom’s comments at Ps 45:1 (St. John Chrysostom: Commentary on the Psalms [trans. Robert C. Hill; Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998] 1:257–59). On the influence of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics on early Christian notions of inspiration, see Thomas F. Torrance, Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995) 17–22.

attempt to describe what we might call the spirituality of Scripture as the scroll’s colophon attests to it.

A WINDOW INTO THE EARLY SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF SCRIPTURE

In 1965, James A. Sanders published the editio princeps of a Psalms scroll from cave 11 at Qumran (11QPs). One of the distinctions of the scroll was a 10-line prose piece at column 27, part of a colophon near the end of the scroll, which refers to David as the inspired writer of an oeuvre of psalms and songs for the periodic liturgical occasions of the Jewish calendar. The piece has come to be known as “David’s Compositions,” and due to the uniqueness of its content among the Dead Sea Scrolls, or any pre-rabbinic ancient Jewish documents, it has enjoyed much attention from scholars from the moment the Cave 11 Psalms Scroll came to light. Much of the discussion has focused on the implications of David’s Compositions for assessing the status canonicus of the Psalms Scroll in the light of Sanders’s suggestion that the scroll constituted a bona fide psalter that the scribe’s community considered canonical (although not exclusively so). After exhaustive examination of the evidence and arguments pertaining to this issue, Peter Flint has concluded largely in favor of Sanders’s thesis, and other scholars concur. There is good basis to regard the Psalms Scroll as a (portion of a) psalter that at least one Jewish community of pre-rabbinic times esteemed as inspired Scripture.

For us, the key word is inspired. As we have seen, Philo occasionally alludes to the divine spirit active in Moses, which renders him the utterer of prophetic oracles, including laws, to direct the Israelites: “All the things which are written in the sacred books are oracles delivered by him . . . as a divinely-prompted lawgiver possessed by divine inspiration” (Mos. 2.188; Colson, LCL). But it is in the Psalms Scroll colophon that we find one of the earliest known and explicit claims to the inspiration of Scripture by the


10. Philo argues in Mos. 2.266 that such inspired possession must be attributed to the spirit of God; see John R. Levison, The Spirit in First-Century Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 171–73.
spirit of God. Although the scroll itself dates on paleographic grounds to the first half of the first century A.D., there is reason to believe that the content of the scroll may have originated from a non-Qumran provenance, perhaps even from late Persian/early Hellenistic times. During that time and into the antique era, David’s authorship of (most of) the Psalms became universally accepted, the dominant (though not universal) view in rabbinic Judaism and Christianity alike. Evidence includes the increase of the number of psalms attributed to David through superscriptions in the LXX (86) relative to the MT (73). Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, 11QMelch II, 10 refers to the psalter as “the songs of David.” Josephus reports in Ant. 7.305 that David composed “songs and hymns to God,” with attention to David’s cultic worship leadership role in Chronicles. The Midrash has David parallel to Moses in authoring five books of Scripture (Midrash Tehillim 1.3), and Augustine cites the authority of Jesus in Matt 22:43 for Davidic authorship of all the psalms, arguing that the propheticus spiritus gave David foresight into things yet to come (Civ. 17.14). The revered status of David as a composer of psalms took some of its biblical impetus from 2 Sam 23:1–7, a composition that itself is scribally superscripted as “the last words of David.” There, the text states, in David’s voice, that “the spirit of YHWH speaks through me; his word is upon my tongue.” In the immediately preceding line David characterizes himself as נְעֵה נְמוּרָת יְשֵׁרָאֵל, an expression that the scribe of 11QPs clearly read to describe David as a psalm composer: not only is the “last words of David” text from 2 Samuel included as part of the colophon to the Psalms Scroll at the end of column 26, but it is immediately followed by the these lines (David’s Compositions) in column 27:

[2] And David, the son of Jesse, was wise, and a light like the light of the sun, and a scribe,
[3] and discerning and perfect in all his ways before God and men. And the Lord gave
[4] him a discerning and enlightened spirit. And he wrote
[5] 3,600 psalms; and songs to sing before the altar over the whole-burnt
[6] perpetual offering every day, for all the days of the year, 364;
[7] and for the offering of the Sabbaths, 52 songs; and for the offering of the New

11. Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 6–9.
12. Eileen M. Schuller, Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection (HSS 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 9–10. Flint concludes, “this Psalter was almost certainly compiled prior to the Qumran period” (Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 201).
14. Albert Pietersma has shown that most of the added superscriptions in the LXX are true expansions on the attributive tradition rather than reflecting a different Hebrew Vorlage; see “David in the Greek Psalms,” VT 30 (1980) 213–26.
And all the songs that he spoke were 446, and songs for the intercalary days, 4. And the total was 4,050.

All these he composed through prophecy which was given him from before the Most High.\(^{15}\)

The substance of these lines, as we have noted, has helped convince many scholars that the psalter represented in 11QPs\(^a\) probably featured the texts of representative songs authorized for use in the corporate worship of the community that produced the *Psalms Scroll*.\(^{16}\) The structure of the colophon in the 27th column, and terminology featured in David’s Compositions (“the Lord gave him a discerning and enlightened spirit. And he wrote . . . he composed through prophecy which was given him from before the Most High”), identify the *Psalms Scroll* and this colophon in particular as relevant to our question: How was the inscription of (sacred) texts as Scripture—that is, as texts drafted explicitly for reading or singing during a religious community’s periodic worship occasions—first spoken of as inspired by God’s spirit? The colophon represents an opportunity to explore a moment in the process within which Jewish Scripture came to be conceived of as a spiritual phenomenon, that is, as an effect of God’s spirit. By tightly associating the divine bestowal of spiritual insight with psalmic composition, what was this scribe saying about David’s psalms or about this psalter as spiritual phenomena?

In what follows, I will point out elements from the *Psalms Scroll* and HB texts that have often been observed, but I will draw inferences from them altogether in a way that can provide perspective on some of the earliest Jewish thinking about the nature of sacred texts as a spiritual basis for the communities that received them as Scripture. Although it is not my purpose to contribute to the debate over the canonical status of the *Psalms Scroll* per se, I will conclude that the colophon claims for David’s songs a certain spirituality that distinguishes them as Scripture.


Shemaryahu Talmon (“The Covenanters’ Calendar of Holy Seasons according to the List of King David’s Compositions in the *Psalms Scroll* from Cave 11 (11QPs XXVII),” in *Fifty Years of Dead Sea Scroll Research: Studies in Memory of Jacob Licht*, [ed. Gershon Brin and Bilhah Nitzan; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2001] 204–219 [Hebrew]) argues that this latter phrase designates a Qumranic innovation in the cultic calendar of four additional days of entreaty, unconnected to occasions for periodized offerings (pp. 216–17).

THE PSALMS SCROLL COLOPHON AS A WHOLE

To be sure, nothing in David’s Compositions explicitly states that David wrote anything by God’s spirit. But the colophon as a whole consists of David’s Last Words (2 Sam 23:1–7) immediately preceding David’s Compositions at the bottom of column 26 and the top of column 27. Thus, we must include 2 Sam 23:1–7 in a consideration of our question. In its specific vocabulary as well as in its general content, the 2 Sam 23 text alludes conspicuously to David’s authority. Starting with the superscription, “David’s Last Words,” the 2 Sam text is abundant in terminology emphasizing the authority that David’s words bear. The HB features the final words of several leading figures, such as Jacob, Moses, and Joshua, whose “last words” are set apart as authoritative proclamations concerning various social and religious dimensions of Israel. David’s case stands out since a number of texts in 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 1 Chronicles can be taken as his “last words.” In 2 Sam 23, those words are called “the utterance of David son of Jesse, indeed, the utterance of the hero raised up high,” and David here is speaking as “the anointed one of the God of Jacob, indeed, the favored one of the Guardian of Israel.” Moreover, David states that “the spirit of YHWH has spoken to me, verily his word is upon my tongue,” using terminology characteristic of the prophetic tradition as well as wisdom.

17. The missing portion at the bottom part of col. 26 is large enough to allow us to assume that the intact scroll included the whole of David’s Last Words. See Ben Z. Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter: 11QPs,” HUCA 59 (1988) 33–34; Ulrich, Origins, 116; and Sanders, Psalms Scroll, 92. Sanders notes that “in the Psalms Scroll 2 Sam 23:1–7 plays a part in the literary (colophonic) conceit which extends over the last columns of the scroll” (“Variorum,” 84); see also Flint, Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls, 192.


21. The traditional rendering (“songs of Israel”) of the MT takes מִזְמֶרִים as from the root מָזַר I (“sing, make music, praise”). But the parallelism with אֲדֹלָם יִנֵּהַג and makes it more probable that we have in מִזְמֶרִים a divine epithet than an allusion to musical celebrations in ancient Israel. Scholars have suggested that מָזַר is here better understood as מָזַר III (“protect”), related to Ugaritic dmr (‘protect’) and Amorite mnr (‘safeguard’), and attested in an ancient Hebrew epithet מִזְמַר (Exod 15:2; Isa 12:2; Ps 118:14); see P. Kyle McCarter, II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary (AB 9; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984) 480. The reading in this case would be מִזְמֹר instead of the MT’s מִזְמֶר, the former was likely used as a construct plural intensive, as sometimes appears in divine epithets while the latter arose when the technical sense of מָזַר as “an affirmative response to an act of augury” (Jon D. Levenson, “A Technical Meaning for mnr in the Hebrew Bible,” VT 35 [1985] 62–63) went unrecognized, taken instead to describe David either as one pleasantly reflected in Israel’s songs, or as the one who produced Israel’s pleasant songs, which is the sense in David’s compositions.

22. The phrase בְּדֵרֶךְ הָה is attested exclusively in prophetical contexts with the meaning “speak to” in the sense of the human agent coming to know from God the truth of a subject (Num 12:2, 6, 8; 1 Kgs 22:28; Hos 1:2; Hab 2:1; Zech 1:9, 13, 14; 2:2; 7:4:1).
vocabulary. It is not only the authority of David’s utterances that these lines emphasize, but his governing authority as well, with expressions such as “One who rules over people justly” (v. 3b) and David’s appeal to the secure “eternal covenant” that God has established for his house (v. 5). As in this text David reflects on political leadership, he does so as someone preeminently endowed by the spirit of God to understand the truth about righteous governing authority, to articulate it, and to rule by it. David’s Last Words not-so-subtly affirm David as fully authorized and inspired by God’s spirit to come to speech with divine wisdom. In the 11Q Psalms Scroll, the connection between David the divinely inspired composer of psalms (David’s Compositions) and David the divinely inspired speaker of political wisdom (David’s Last Words) is made obvious: there David first declares his special authority for coming to speech by virtue of the action of God’s spirit in him, and then the scroll’s scribe claims the same authority of God’s spirit for David’s musical compositions.

The structure and syntax of David’s Compositions establishes attribution of David’s inspired royal authority to David’s cultic songs for the 364-day cultic calendar. In line 2, repetition of the epithet “David ben Jesse”—already found in David’s Last Words—immediately connotes the royal authority that the phrase does in 2 Sam 23:1. A similar association occurs with the parallel allusion to the sun’s light in both 2 Sam 23:4 and line 2. According to lines 3–4, David’s distinctions before God and humans—his wisdom, his understanding as a scribe—have derived from an endowment directly from Yhwh. And, as the syntax in line 4 suggests, the result of that endowment was David’s musical compositions for use in Israel’s cultic life as psalms and holy day songs. Songs for use on various regular cultic occasions according to the 364-day calendar constitute the focus of over half of this colophon. With the concluding lines that numerically amalgamate David’s cultic calendar compositions with David’s psalms and accentuate his prophetic status, the scribe brings additional emphasis to the divine authority that David’s liturgical compositions bear towards the shaping of Israel’s cultic life for specific cultic occasions.

23. מלה is found only in wisdom compositions (with the possible exception of Ps 19:5; the term also appears within the wisdom Ps 139:4). It frequently appears in Job where it usually denotes the construction or presentation of an argument or interpretation (e.g., 6:26; 23:5; 32:11, 15).


25. In the HB references to David’s patrilineage typically appear in contexts that point to ruling authority, such as in the Succession Narrative (see also 1 Chr 12:18), Isa 11:1, and the colophon to Ps 72.
The whole colophon to the *Psalms Scroll* thus claims for David an endowment by God’s spirit for governing authority and for articulated speech whether in gnomic wisdom for the royal court or in musical compositions for temple worship. Emphatically, David’s words bear the authority of God’s spirit, and these lines of the *Psalms Scroll* implicitly claim the authority of God’s Spirit for the scroll—and for the 364-day cultic calendar that David’s compositions serve. How are we to understand this concept of divine spiritual authority that applies not only to a human being but also to written texts? We may find some illumination to this question by briefly reviewing what is claimed or assumed in texts from the HB where God’s spirit is invoked.

**GOD’S SPIRIT AS SOCIAL POWER IN THE HEBREW BIBLE**

To review: David’s Last Words and David’s Compositions refer to the spirit of God solely in terms of divine authority for speaking as Israel’s political and cultic leader. It would be greatly understating the case to note that the motif of authority, both divine and human, constitutes a major preoccupation of the HB. It appears on almost any page one opens, clearly a defining characteristic of tanakhic Yahwism. It does not come as a surprise, then, to note that a survey of the HB shows that throughout the literature of ancient Israel—but particularly in narrative and prophetic texts—in the preponderance of texts that speak of the spirit of God affecting individuals, it is precisely authority for wielding social power that is the question at issue (or, in the case of certain prophets, authority for speaking to those who wield social power). There are so many examples of this in the HB that a complete overview is not possible on the present occasion.

The first and perhaps most conspicuous of these references appears in the Joseph story at Gen 41. After discerning and explaining the meaning of Pharaoh’s dreams, Joseph recommends to Pharaoh a course of action. Pharaoh responds not only to Joseph’s mantic achievement (in his dream...
interpretation) but also to his policy proposal. He does this because he recognizes the presence and operation of God’s spirit in Joseph:

Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find anyone else like this—one in whom is the spirit of God?” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” (Gen 49:38–41, NRSV)

This development in the Joseph novella is consistent with the preceding plot which from the very beginning has been driven in part by the motif of authority.

Here, the operation of God’s spirit in an individual manifests abilities that are closely associated with and directed to the exercise of social power in the form of political authority. Joseph is authorized to rule over all the people because he has penetrating mantic insight and he has insight for beneficial rule—even salvific—and this in turn is because the divine spirit is in him. Somewhat the same obtains regarding Daniel in the book of Daniel, as is often observed. Very clearly, in the Joseph (and Daniel) story, the operation of God’s spirit manifests in extraordinary insight and discernment, denoting these qualities as prerequisite for authority to wield social power. The endowment brings about an obvious, even compelling legitimate ruling authority. Here the divine spirit authorizes individuals for ruling authority by empowering them with superior mantic wisdom and, in Joseph’s case, skill at governing.


30. See Gen 41:45b—על-ארץ מצרים יוסף ויצא, which the NRSV renders “Thus Joseph gained authority over the land of Egypt,” and similarly NJPSV: “Thus Joseph emerged in charge of the land of Egypt.” These are likely translations because v. 46 uses יצא in the sense of “went out” with a different formulation: מצרים את־ארץ ויזא פרעה מפני יוסף ויצא (See also 50:19, where everyone recognizes that Joseph has authority but he notes that it is limited and not equivalent to God’s authority.)

31. The king twice attributes Daniel’s mantic powers to the operation of God’s spirit in him (Dan 4:5–6, 15 MT); the Aramaic phrase is בקדושין אלהין רוח, which can be understood to refer to “God” rather than “gods” in the light of the praise that Nebuchadnezzar utters in 4:34, though scholars differ on this. See James A. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927) 225–27. Interestingly, the book of Daniel, like the Joseph story, includes the theme of elevating the hero’s ruling authority; in 2:46–49, his ability to decipher royal dreams results in the elevation of Daniel’s governing authority, something that happens again in 5:16–29, already anticipated in 5:11–12 and there explicitly attributed to the divine spirit in Daniel. (Essentially, the same is found in Dan 6:3 [די בהיתירא רוח]—“an extraordinary spirit was in him”). We should note, however, that relative to MT and Theodotion, the role of divine spirit in the OG book of Daniel is rather attenuated, mentioned only at 5:12, referring to Daniel’s authority of revelatory insight, and at 6:4, referring to Daniel’s superlative authority (πνεῦμα ἅγιον).
Joseph serves as a useful paradigm for identifying several aspects of the divine spirit that appear consistently in many other HB narratives and poetic presentations that speak of God’s spirit affecting people. First, the HB often refers to God’s spirit not simply as a divine agent that transmits divine power but as a divine presence manifesting in the exercise of abilities that effect social power. Second, when this divine presence-as-power is observed in a person (or, in other texts, claimed to be operative in a person), it brings about (or should) a recognition of divine authority such that what that person utters or decides is to be accepted and obeyed. Third, those persons who possess God’s spirit are by virtue of that authority speaking (as regents) from or (as prophets or advisors) to the exercise of social power in specific institutions such as the royal court or the army. According to this well-attested pattern, the spirit of God has to do with the legitimate exercise of social power. Indeed, in this biblical model it is the presence of the divine spirit that makes the exercise of social power legitimate. In short, what the spirit of God does is effect social power. The expression of social power by God’s spirit according to the HB connotes generally the sorts of social dynamics of power as worked out by sociologist Michael Mann, and I use the expression in that sense. As the following pages document, Mann’s multiform notion of social power—political, military, economic, and ideological—is well suited to the intersecting domains of authority claimed in the HB for the operation of the spirit of God.

The HB alludes to this pattern of spiritually effected social power in a variety of ways. For example, in the qualifications that distinguish an expected future ruler according to Isa 10:33–11:10, we read that from the ruins of the destroyed Assyrian oppression YHWH will raise up a Davidic ruler conspicuously endowed with YHWH’s spirit. Similar to the Joseph story, the Isaiah text refers to divine spiritual endowment as the expression of the qualities by virtue of which the righteous ruler will govern a realm that includes and extends beyond YHWH’s people. Here, the spirit of YHWH—qualified specifically as “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (nrsv)—will give this ruler authority beyond simply the Davidic...

33. With regard to the relational texture of royal political authority in the ancient world, see Dale Launderville, Piety and Politics: The Dynamics of Royal Authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical Israel, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
34. In his detailed treatment of the relationship between charisma (spiritual and otherwise) and institutional forms of leadership in the HB, Rodney R. Hutton understands ancient Israel’s primary leadership institutions as “bearers of charismatic attribution and empowerment” (Charisma and Authority in Israelite Society [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994]) 209.
35. Numerous HB texts speak of the Spirit of God in other respects, such as the source of life, but we are following the conceptual direction indicated by the Psalms Scroll colophon, and so our focus remains on the spiritual dimension of social power according to the HB.
pedigree (“from the trunk of Jesse”).\textsuperscript{37} It is emphatically divine spiritual endowment that qualifies this individual for a rule of such righteous judgment that the nations will defer to his authority (v. 10), indicating that what the Spirit of \textit{Yhwh} manifests through him is \textit{authority}, and not merely capacity, to rule. We find a close analogy in Second Isaiah’s description of God’s servant (Isa 42:2–4), whose ability for establishing justice derives from the expression of social power by \textit{Yhwh’s} spirit in him—which again the nations will recognize (v. 4).\textsuperscript{38}

Among several historic examples, we note that although Gideon received a commission to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Midianites and had become active against Baal worship, it was only when the Midianites launched their next raid and “the spirit of \textit{Yhwh} clothed Gideon” that Gideon exhibited social power bringing unity to Manasseh and leading them to victory (Judg 6:11–34). Much the same takes place in the 1 Sam 11 narration of Saul’s first exploit. Like Gideon, Saul had already been identified in chs. 9–10 and commissioned as the leader—indeed the king—by which deliverance will come. But there is no unity and movement of the Israelites together against the threat of Nahash the Ammonite until Saul learns of it, whereupon “the Spirit of God came upon Saul in power and his anger was greatly kindled” (11:6, \textit{NRSV}). Immediately, Saul takes action that unites Israelite and Judean warriors, and he leads them to decisive victory. In this episode, the effect of the spirit of God on Saul was manifest in an expression of social power. Essentially the same spiritual dynamic applies to other leaders of early Israel. Though he writes concerning the Judges, Rodney Hutton’s observations apply to most representations of spiritual leadership in the HB; they are “persons who represent the struggle for the establishment and preservation of Israelite national identity and the commitment to solidarity and cohesion. In spite of their forays into lamentable behavior and near disastrous mishaps, they were received by the reader as representative of the centering of cosmos and order in the life of Israel.”\textsuperscript{39} David is not the least among these, as the story of his rise in 1–2 Sam, beginning with 1 Sam 16:13 makes clear: “the spirit of the \textit{LORD} came mightily upon David from that day forward,” especially when we later read, after David’s first public exploit, “And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him; as a result, Saul set him over the army. And all the people, even the servants of Saul, approved” (1 Sam 18:5, \textit{NRSV}). These few examples could be multiplied, making it evident that in the HB the divine spirit characteristically operates effecting social power through political leadership.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{37} On the various spiritual capacities listed in this text, see Wonsuk Ma, \textit{Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah} (JSOTSup 271; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 40–42.

\textsuperscript{38} See ibid., 94–96.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Charisma and Authority}, 209

\textsuperscript{40} Additional examples adverting to various modes of leadership could be adduced, including Bezalel and Oholiab as they were commissioned for design and construction of the
What about God’s spirit and prophecy? Although the HB does not typically associate prophetic utterance with divine spirit, on those occasions where it does the point comes across strikingly. In the famous story of Micaiah ben Imlah’s confrontation before royal leadership of the Israelite-Judaean alliance against Aram, the word of YHWH that Micaiah announces depicts a scene of divine governance centered on the issue of authorizing prophetic utterances. The outcome of the deliberations within the divine council is the authorization of the spirit of revelation to mislead Ahab through the utterances of his prophets (1 Kgs 22:1–22). In the exchange that follows between Micaiah and his challenger, Zedekiah ben Chenannah, the issue revolves around whether Micaiah’s words are those of the spirit of YHWH. The outcome of the episode makes it clear that YHWH not only granted Micaiah insight into the truth behind the events but also that YHWH’s spirit spoke through him announcing that truth (ברר יהוה). Similarly, in Mic 3:8 when the prophet declares the basis for his discernment of the truth about Jacob’s transgression and announcement of it, he uses a catena of expressions that altogether form a single expression of the social power that the spirit of YHWH effects: “as for me, I am filled with power (כח), with the spirit of the LORD and with justice and might (ומשפט והרביה), to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin” (NRSV). At several instances in the book of Ezekiel, it is clear that the spirit of YHWH comes on Ezekiel in order to utter the words of YHWH (e.g., 11:4–5a). In 37:1–4, when both the spirit of the LORD and the hand of the LORD reveal to Ezekiel the vision of the valley of dry bones, he is then commanded to announce (הנבא) the reconstitution of Israel by רוח. Here, the social power exercised by God’s spirit in the prophet’s words is illocutionary, effecting the reconstitution of Israel by announcing it. Finally, with the phrase רוח עלי יהוה אדני in Isa 61:1, we find reference to the operation of God’s spirit in another illocutionary utterance that will manifest divine social power “to transform in decisive ways the community of emerging Judaism.”

wilderness tabernacle (Exod 31:2–6; 35:29–35) and the delegation of Moses’ divine authority to the 70 elders for governance of the people (Num 11:16–17; 24–29).

41. Long ago, Sigmund Mowinckel pointed this out; see “‘The Spirit’ and the ‘Word’ in the Preexilic Reforming Prophets,” JBL 53 (1934) 199–227.
43. This observation stands irrespective of whether Mic 3:8 is an addition from a later time when the association of God’s spirit and prophecy was more usual. On this question, see Paul Volz, Der Geist Gottes und die verwandten Erscheinungen im Alten Testament und im anschliessenden Judentum (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1910) 65; and Dilbert Hillers, A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 44–45.
44. The parallel of functions between YHWH’s spirit and hand in the book of Ezekiel, and elsewhere in the HB, fairly equates the two. See the discussion in Dreytza, Gebrauch, 146–58, and Walther Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 117–18.
These representative examples reflect a consistent pattern in the HB to speak of the manifestation of social power as an operation of divine spirit upon persons. The pattern appears in the cultural domains of political, cultic, and prophetic leadership as a part of the distinctions and interpenetrations of social authority between these domains. This observation from the HB is consistent with the thesis argued at length by sociologist Michael Mann that societies “are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power . . . ideological movements argue that human problems can be overcome with the aid of transcendent, sacred authority, authority that cuts through and across the ‘secular’ reaches of economic, military, and political power institutions.”

We now turn to the book of Chronicles because there we find a certain refinement in the overlapping of these domains of spiritually effected social power relevant to what the Psalms Scroll colophon reflects.

**PROPHETCY AND CULT IN CHRONICLES**

As the book of Chronicles presents it, prophecy often denotes authority for shaping Israel’s cultic life. The nuanced sense of prophecy (נביא) as it appears in David’s Compositions seems rather similar to the Chronicler’s portrayals of David and others as singing cultic prophets.

Specific functions in the Chronicler’s Second Temple cultic world characterized as “prophetic” included performance of music and singing for great communal Temple celebrations. In 1 Chr 25:1–3 we are told that David—who, for the Chronicler, was the founder of Israel’s temple cult in almost every detail—“set apart for the service (לעבודה) the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy (נביא) with lyres, harps, and cymbals.” These ordained temple officials were the ones who “prophesied (נביא) under the direction of the king” and “prophesied (נביא) with the lyre in thanksgiving and praise to the Lord” (nrsv).

In addition to musical performance, the Chronicler alludes also to liturgical composition as a prophetic function, as indicated in 2 Chr 29:30: “King Hezekiah and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of the seer Asaph” (nrsv).

According to the Chronicler’s presentation, the cultic rites owe their origination to God through (implied) revelation of the sort reflected in

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46. Sources, 1, 22 (emphasis original).
David’s words to Solomon in 1 Chr 28:19 regarding the various implements for Temple worship; “All this, in writing at the LORD’s direction, he made clear to me—the plan of all the works” (NRSV). Even more direct are the narrator’s words qualifying Hezekiah’s appointment of the Levite musicians “according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king’s seer and of the prophet Nathan, for the commandment was from the LORD through his prophets” (2 Chr 29:25b, NRSV). As the leaders of Temple choral music are consistently referred to with nuanced prophetic terminology in Chronicles, we might agree with S. J. de Vries when he characterizes them as “revelational instruments.”

I suggest that the same sort of Davidic association with inspired liturgical song composition and performance we see in Chronicles approximates the nuanced understanding of “prophecy” found in the Psalms Scroll colophon. When we recall that, in Chronicles, the actual words of certain liturgical performances are selections from biblical psalms, this suggestion appears all the more likely. For example, 1 Chr 16:8–22 is a liturgical composition compiled from Pss 96, 105, and 106—none of which the MT psalter attributes to Asaph (or to David), yet the Chronicler links both David and Asaph to the composition and performance of this song of praise. Two verses from Ps 132 (arguably the most intensely royal Davidic psalm in the Psalter) are integrated into the Temple dedication ceremony in 2 Chr 6:41–42 (see also 1 Chr 16:41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21). These passages document that in Chronicles the Psalms were understood to have constitutive meaning for Israel’s corporate religious life.

Through the lens of the Psalms Scroll from Qumran, the psalter and its psalms can be seen to have been spiritually produced—that is, expressions of God’s spirit—for communal performance in the regular periodic cultic observances that call into being and define the people of God in their temporal and social existence. In this perspective, the psalms of Israel are a means by which God’s spirit manifests social power, constituting Israel through corporate worship.


51. This is not the same as claiming a direct reliance in the Psalms Scroll on the biblical books of Chronicles, which are at best minimally represented among the biblical manuscripts and sectarian documents from the Judaean desert.

52. See Adele Berlin, “Psalms in the Book of Chronicles” (Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis and Its Language [ed. M. Bar-Asher et al.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2007] who argues that, for the Chronicler, “the psalms, the divinely-inspired hymns of David, are the only appropriate hymns with which to praise God. David instituted the practice of cultic praise and David provided the hymns to use in this practice” (32*).
As scholars have amply documented, the ancient world understood kings to wield social power by virtue of divine prerogative. Ancient Israel stands out in that context because, according to the HB, it is by the presence of God’s spirit with or in persons that the exercise of legitimate social power transpires within the political and cultic life of Israel. To speak of the spirit of God and of spirituality in this sense is to speak of the divinely manifest exercise of social power.

Following a direction parallel to the Chronicler, the *Psalms Scroll* colophon suggests that this spiritual power to direct the shape of Israel’s social cultic existence is exercised in the scribal composition of psalms and songs (יִכְתְּבוּ, line 4) through which the communally definitive calendric worship takes place. God’s spirit does not simply inspire these compositions as in “bring them to the mind” of the composer—although that is not excluded—but also authorizes them such that they bear David’s divinely granted social power as founder of Israel’s temple cult to shape the cultic life of Israel. The scroll’s colophon, consisting of David’s Last Words followed by David’s Compositions, invokes various institutional modes of divine spiritual empowerment available in the scriptural tradition such as king and prophet, generally known as being authorized for their functions by the spirit of God. In this scroll, divine spiritual power manifests in David’s shaping of the community according to the 364-day calendar through his liturgical compositions. That is, operation of the sort of social power that traditionally had been manifest in persons is now exercised.


55. See Berlin, “Psalms in the Book of Chronicles,” 33*.

56. Flint (*Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 192–93) argues that the structure of the *Psalms Scroll* reflects the 364-day calendar, and Talmon (“Covenants’ Calendar”) maintains that the scroll’s community sought to distinguish itself from other forms of Judaism in part by following a 364-day calendar. In this view, the basic cultic calendar bears the authority of Moses, but the chronological calendar for scheduling the cultic events bears the authority of David’s liturgical compositions by the spirit of God—a potent textual exercise of social authority. On the so-called calendar wars of Second-Temple Judaism, see Michael Chyutin, *The Role of the Solar and...*
through texts, or at least extended to them.\textsuperscript{57} Indeed, given the emphasis in column 27 on the divine source of David’s inspiration, effectively these cultic compositions—these texts—bear God’s own social power for shaping Israel’s corporate cultic life according to the scheduling of the 364-day calendar. Texts are here said to bear the divine expression by which a compliant Jewish community is defined as faithful. In short: these texts, David's Compositions, are spoken of as Scripture.\textsuperscript{58}

I am using the word Scripture in the sense circumscribed by the colophon itself. We may assume that, for this scribe, the spirit of Y\textit{H\textsuperscript{w}H} has spoken through David as the royal founder of Israel’s temple cult. The divine spirit, through David, engages the worshiping community as the songs David composed resound during the regularly periodic constitutive Jewish cultic observances. Scripture here is the community’s efficacious textual tradition for communal engagement with the divine, and it is a spiritual phenomenon—that is, a phenomenon of God’s spirit. True to what we find in so many HB texts, the effect of God’s spirit present in David is the exercise of social power in shaping Israel’s manner of corporate participation in the Y\textit{H\textsuperscript{w}H}-cult. The Psalms Scroll’s colophon strongly suggests that it is because Y\textit{H\textsuperscript{w}H}’s spirit wields social power in Israel through David’s compositions that they are Scripture—and not simply because they are attributed to David.

The seminal phenomenon of Scripture here reflected in the Psalms Scroll colophon may be understood as the voice of God’s spirit shaping the (cultic) life of the covenant community through a medium of compositions that God’s Spirit has imbued with prophetic liturgical power. They are to be performed in the observances of divinely ordained cultic occasions according to a chronological calendar that, at least implicitly, likewise bears the authority of God’s spirit. The spirituality of Scripture as the Psalms Scroll adverts to it is an intriguing blend of \textit{graphe} and \textit{ethnos}.\textsuperscript{59} The texts,


\textsuperscript{58} Flint (\textit{Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls}, 223) comes to a similar conclusion regarding 11QPs\textsuperscript{a} but on the basis of the manuscript evidence from Qumran. Kugel, “David the Prophet,” 53, refers to the Second Temple era shift in David’s reputation that came to recognize him as “a fit author for the ‘Scripturecent’ Psalms.”

because they are the expression of God’s Spirit, convey the social power of God’s spirit whereby the community is called into being before God through these constantly repeating communal cultic observances—daily, weekly, monthly, annually. And so the worshiping community is also itself the expression of God’s spirit, manifest in the faithful arrangement of communal cultic life (yaḥad) in accordance with divine temporal order. According to the Psalms Scroll colophon, the spirituality of Scripture is communal. With this suggestion we move beyond simply understanding the colophon as legitimizing the Qumran Psalter and the 360-day calendar. Because it is the yaḥad’s communal worship songs that God’s spirit has spoken through David, what is effected here is also the community’s participation in what the spirit has created through David. The ordering of the worshiping community is one of the text’s emergent functions as Scripture, and to the degree that this function was conceptualized as an operation of God’s spirit we may speak here of a corporate or communal spirituality of Scripture.

A BRIEF CONCLUSION IN THE LONGER VIEW

Here, I have put the matter in religious terms not unlike the notions to which the Psalms Scroll itself adverts. But in its essence the concept is ancient, even archaic, and has been studied in the humanistic sciences. The practical exigencies involved in the rise of agrarian (particularly irrigation-based) civilizations made paramount a coordinated social ordering to support the maintenance of life, thereby bestowing a sacred imperative to proper social ordering. The leadership institutions that developed for the administration of productive social order typically integrated various sources of social power (military, political) including the ideological, which served in part for transcendent legitimation of royal authority. Particularly in agrarian empires, transcendent legitimation resided in the divine dimension that ritual enactments or oracular events brought to royal authority: the king’s exercise of social power to maintain social order commensurate with the divine order would ensure the continued conditions for sustaining life. At least in the ancient Near East, the king’s authority thereby corresponded viceroy-like to that of the gods who empowered him for the various pursuits that repel chaos and sustain the cosmic order underlying civilization. Among their functions, the kings of Mesopotamian and of the Levant undertook the building and care of temples and temple ritual as a prominent channel for expression of divine authority, as well as seeing to justice in the administration of law. In this mediatory role, the king was the symbolic center of the community he ruled.60

Through both their own designs and the expectations of their subjects, regimes of the Hellenistic and Roman imperia maintained much the same integrative religious role on behalf of the realms they commanded.61 Within the emerging religious Jewish tradition, however, there developed a distinctive view of the revelatory means by which the divine world had ordered the mundane: through the written word that God had uttered by the divine spirit.62 I submit that in the colophon to the Cave 11 Psalms Scroll we have one of the earliest evidences of a socially potent textual spirituality that would go on to shape Jewish and Christian communities in the West to the present day.
