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Interpretive Authority in the Studying Community at Qumran

STEVEN D. FRAADE
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
YALE UNIVERSITY
NEW HAVEN

1. Introduction

The complex and continuous process by which the Hebrew Bible took shape as canon is usually connected, but not necessarily in a simple linear way, to the movement from inner-biblical interpretation to post-biblical commentary. Occupying an important place along this continuum is the Jewish sectarian community at Qumran, whose history, ideology, and practices scholars seek to reconstruct from the community's writings preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹ These scrolls contain a wealth of biblical texts, still in a fluid state, sectarian as well as non-sectarian works of biblical interpretation, and texts that describe the place of Scripture and its interpretation in the community's shared practices and self-understandings.² It is this third group of texts that will be the focus of our own interpretive attention.³

¹ Some introductory caveats: 1. By 'community at Qumran' or 'Qumran community' I refer not just to those who lived at or around the ancient encampment at Khirbet Qumran on the western shore of the Dead Sea, the *yahad* of the Community Rule (IQS), but to the larger movement of which scholars believe this settlement was the centre. It has long been acknowledged (as early as the first century historian Flavius Josephus) that the centre and its satellites were not alike in all aspects of their practice. Nor, for that matter, were they static over time. Furthermore, certain texts or parts of texts may be reflective either of different 'branches' of the movement or of its different stages, including perhaps presettlement at Qumran. However, with regard to the topic of this study I find such differences to be unnoticeable, or only faintly traceable. Both the central and branch camps were constructed as studying communities, such study being similarly self-defining for both, even if to differing degrees. This will justify, therefore, my synthetic treatment of the 'Qumran community' in this respect, even as I hope that future studies might draw finer distinctions than are possible here. 2. Since many if not most of the texts found in the caves near the Qumran settlement are not necessarily products of that movement itself, but perhaps originating in some stage of its 'pre-history' or brought to its 'library' from without, my evidence is drawn solely from those texts which by scholarly consensus are of sectarian provenance, having been produced or at least copied for Qumran use some time from about 150 B.C.E. to 68 C.E., with most deriving from the latter half of that period. 3. The Qumran community's portrayal of itself and its practices is to varying degrees idealized. Thus, my description of the 'Qumran community' as a 'studying community' should be understood as one not simply of what that community was, but of what, in part through its very study, it sought to be. I shall return to this point and its implications at the end.

² As will be seen, these descriptions are often found in texts which themselves take the form of or incorporate biblical interpretation.

³ Space does not permit a full bibliography of scholarship on scriptural interpretation at Qumran. For a few recent surveys, containing references to earlier literature, see the following: Devorah Dimant, 'Qumran Sectarian Literature', in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael E. Stone (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), pp. 503-514; Michael Fishbane, 'Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran', in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*

Before turning to those texts some further background is required. As the Hebrew biblical canon gradually took shape, first for the Torah (Pentateuch), then for the Prophets, and finally for the Writings, Jewish groups turned increasingly from interpreting their sacred writings by intratextual glosses to composing new works which extended those writings while preserving their closure to internal alteration. Three interrelated questions needed, if only implicitly, to be addressed: 1. Which individuals or groups were authorized to carry out this interpretive work and to author/edit its results? 2. What forms might such compositions take? 3. How were such compositions, often the products of *competing* varieties of Judaism, to be related to the emerging canon of *commonly* revered biblical writings?

Let me give just a schematic sense of the variety of options (not necessarily exclusive of one another) for all three questions, as suggested by the evidence of Jewish writings from the third century B.C.E. until the end of the first century C.E.: 1. Might such interpretive authority be vested in a community's priestly elite, scribal experts, wisdom class, lay 'elders', charismatic figures, or the community as a whole? 2. Might such compositions take the forms of rewritten and rearranged biblical narratives or laws, the pseudepigraphic visions or testaments of biblical heroes, explicitly authored treatises by post-prophetic yet still divinely inspired teachers, or as texts of communal study or worship? 3. Might such works be viewed as newly revealed supplements to a commonly held Scripture, or as long-hidden disclosures of what was only partly revealed to Israel as a whole? Might they relate to the emerging shared Scripture by allusive paraphrase, explicit citation, or formal commentary?

Although all of these possibilities, and more, are represented in the extant Jewish writings of the late Second Temple period, three characteristics stand out in disproportion, especially if we bracket for a moment the sectarian scrolls from Qumran: A. Most such writings claim their authority not from the status or wisdom of their self-disclosed contemporary authors but from claims that their message was divinely revealed, whether directly or indirectly, to biblical seers of long ago, thereby coming under the rubric of 'pseudepigrapha'. B. Most neither explicitly cite nor formally comment upon the words of Scripture, but retell them by selecting, supplementing, reshaping and rearranging them to create a new amalgam of Scripture and its interpretation in which the two are formally indistinguishable, thereby coming under the rubric of 'rewritten Bible'.⁴ C. As much as scholars seek to intuit the

in *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin Jan Mulder (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), pp. 339-77; Geza Vermes, 'Bible Interpretation at Qumran', *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies*, Volume Twenty: *Yigael Yadin Memorial Volume*, ed. Amnon Ben-Tor, Jonas C. Greenfield and Abraham Malamat (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989), pp. 184-91; Geza Vermes, 'Biblical Proof-Texts in Qumran Literature', *JSS* 34 (1989): 493-508. It should be noted, however, that most earlier studies of scriptural interpretation at Qumran have focused on the interpretive methods or forms of the texts rather than on the social institutions of interpretation at Qumran and the possible social functions of the extant interpretive texts within those institutions.

⁴ On this terminology, see my book, *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy* (Albany: State University of New York, 1991), pp. 171-72, nn. 4-6. Aside from the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls, the allegorical commentaries of Philo of Alexandria, and the New Testament, we have surprisingly little *explicit* citation of Scripture in

social contexts and functions of such writings, those texts continually frustrate that task through their near silence on the structures and practices of their communities of 'readers', remaining, in a relative sense at least, socially disembodied.

The sectarian texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls are significantly different in all three regards: A. While none is explicitly authored by a contemporary member or leader of that community, neither is any explicitly attributed to a biblical figure.⁵ B. While the 'rewritten Bible' is well represented, so is the explicit citation and explication of biblical verses from all three divisions of what was to become the Hebrew biblical canon, as is the genre of running commentary, at least to prophetic texts.⁶ C. While much uncertainty remains regarding the history, ideology, institutions, and practices of the Qumran

the Jewish literature of Second Temple times. For two exceptions (which perhaps 'prove the rule'), see Tobit 2:6 (citing Amos 8:10) and 1 Maccabees 7:16-17 (citing Psalms 79:2-3). On biblical citation at Qumran, see below, n. 6.

⁵ For unconvincing scholarly claims that some of the scrolls were authored by the Teacher of Righteousness, see below, n. 9. While pseudepigraphic texts are well represented among the Dead Sea Scrolls, none of them is clearly of Qumran sectarian provenance. For so-called 'Moses Pseudepigrapha' (it not being clear that this is what they are, nor that they are of Qumran sectarian provenance), see John Strugnell, 'Moses-Pseudepigrapha at Qumran: 4Q375, 4Q376, and Similar Works', in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), pp. 221-56. A stronger case is made by Devorah Dimant ('New Light from Qumran on the Jewish Pseudepigrapha—4Q390', in *Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls—Madrid, 18-21 March 1991*, ed. J. Trebolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner [Madrid/Leiden: Universidad Complutense/Brill, 1993]) for 4Q390 being a Moses pseudepigraphon. But that this apocalyptic historical précis, implicitly framed as a divine address to Moses, is Qumran sectarian seems unlikely to me, notwithstanding some similarities of language with the Damascus Document, particularly for its positive view of the returnees from exile and rebuilders of the Second Temple (4Q390 1 5-7). For possible Ezekiel pseudepigrapha among the Dead Sea Scrolls, whose sectarian provenance is likewise unclear, see John Strugnell and Devorah Dimant, '4Q Second Ezekiel (4Q385)', *RQ* 13.1-4 (nos. 49-52) (October, 1988): 45-58; idem, 'The Merkabah Vision in Second Ezekiel (4Q385 4)', *RQ* 14.3 (55) (1990): 331-348. Finally, it may be asked whether the Temple Scroll (11QTemple), which often transposes third person references to God to first person divine statements, should be classed as 'pseudepigraphic' divine discourse. Although the Temple Scroll is not explicitly framed, as is the Book of Jubilees, as Sinaitic revelation, 44.5 ('your brother Aaron', addressed to Moses) and 51.7 ('I tell you on this mountain') may suggest as much. But once again, scholars are divided whether the Temple Scroll, notwithstanding its important affinities with Qumran sectarian literature, is itself of that class. On the question of whether the Qumran community conceived of its teachings and laws as a second sinaitic Torah (as did the Book of Jubilees), see below, n. 67.

⁶ Even so, explicit citation of biblical verses outside of the biblical commentaries (continuous *pēšārīm*), in the Qumran sectarian literature, is limited mainly to the Damascus Document (CD), with a few each in the Community Rule (1QS), War Scroll (1QM), Florilegium (4QFlor), Melchizedek (11QMelch), and some catenae (4Q177, 182), and now with a few uncertain citations in *Miqṣat Ma'āse Ha-Tora* (4QMMT). On this subject, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 'The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament', in *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974), pp. 3-58, and G. Vermes, *JSS* 34 (1989): 493-508, cited in n. 3. While explicit biblical citation, therefore, cannot be said to characterize the sectarian Qumran literature, certainly if compared to the New Testament, the writings of Philo, and the early rabbinic corpora, it is more evident at Qumran than in other varieties of Second Temple Jewish literature. See above, n. 4. It should also be noted that explicit scriptural citation is largely absent in the sectarian *legal* texts from Qumran, except for a section of the Damascus Document. See below, n. 69.

community, we have more of a sense of its social configuration—of the structural context from which these texts derived and in which they continued to function—than we do of any other Second Temple Jewish group.

Before turning to specific texts in order to probe the meaning of these differences, we may note an explanation often suggested for the first of them. It has been remarked by others that the absence of pseudepigraphic attribution among the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls is especially significant in light of the fact that several non-sectarian pseudepigrapha are included in the Qumran 'library' (most significantly 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and fragments of an Aramaic Testament of Levi), and the claim that the apocalyptic eschatology that often suffuses such pseudepigraphic texts finds close if not exact parallels within the sectarian Qumran writings.⁷ It has been argued that the Qumran community had no need to attribute its teachings to hoary biblical heroes since it had its own divinely chosen prophetic teacher and founding figure, the Teacher of Righteousness, who either authored their writings or from whose authority those writings derived. For example, John J. Collins states:

With the arrival of the Teacher of Righteousness, the sect had no need to rely on the authority of legendary heroes such as Enoch. The authority accorded to the contemporary figure of the Teacher is probably a major reason why the sectarians dispensed with the literary form of the apocalypse . . . The sect . . . found a new medium of revelation in the inspired exegesis of the Teacher and did not rely on visions or ascents in the name of an ancient seer.⁸

The problem with this solution is that not a single Qumran sectarian scroll is explicitly attributed to the authorship of the Teacher,⁹ nor is the Teacher mentioned all that often in those scrolls, notwithstanding the enormous industry of modern scholars to intuit his identity and role from them.¹⁰

⁷ See, most recently, John J. Collins, 'Was the Dead Sea Sect an Apocalyptic Movement?', in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, pp. 25-51.

⁸ Collins, 'Was the Dead Sea Sect an Apocalyptic Movement?', pp. 41, 44.

⁹ Attempts have been made by scholars to attribute several scrolls to the Teacher of Righteousness, especially the Temple Scroll (11QTemple), *Miqṣat Ma'āse Ha-Tora* (4QMMT), and parts of the Thanksgiving Scroll (1QH). But the evidence for such claims is highly circumstantial. See below, n. 15.

¹⁰ A full bibliography would be impractical here. For starters see the following: H. Bardtke, 'Literaturbericht über Qumran. X. Teil: Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit und die Geschichte der Qumrangemeinde', *Theologische Rundschau* 41 (1976): 97-140; H. Burgmann, 'Wer war der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit?', *RQ* 10 (1981): 553-78; J. Carmignac, 'Qui était le Docteur de Justice?', *RQ* 10 (1980): 235-46; Gert Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 'Judah the Essene and the Teacher of Righteousness', *RQ* 10 (1981): 579-86; P. Schulz, *Der Autoritätsanspruch des Lehrers der Gerechtigkeit* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1974); H. Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1971); B. E. Thiering, *Redating the Teacher of Righteousness* (Sydney: Glenburn, 1979); Ben Zion Wacholder, *The Dawn of Qumran: The Sectarian Torah and the Teacher of Righteousness* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1983).

2. The Teacher of Righteousness as Prophetic Interpreter

Let us begin, then, with the text that goes the farthest in attributing exegetical authority to the Teacher of Righteousness, from the Peshar on Habakkuk (1QpHab. 6.15–7.5):

[And He said: Write the vision and make it plain upon the tablets so that the one [who reads it] may run [with it] (Hab. 2:2): Its interpretation: . . .] And God told Habakkuk to write down the things that are to come upon the last generation, but the fulfillment of the end-time he did not make known to him. And when it says, 'That the one who reads it may run [with it]', the interpretation of it concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants the prophets.

God's prophetic revelation comes in two parts: first to the biblical prophets, here represented by Habakkuk, who recorded God's words relating the events that would befall the last historical generation, now understood as that of the commentary's audience. But the true significance of that prophetic message, that is, its fuller and more specific redemptive meaning, was hidden from the prophets and their audience and only revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness.¹¹ But that fuller meaning was revealed to the Teacher not by the previous prophetic medium of direct divine communication, but by his inspired *interpretation* of the earlier words of the prophets as continuous texts.¹² The following passage, also from the Peshar on Habakkuk (1QpHab 2.7–10) and presumably referring to the Teacher,¹³ states the interpretive nature of his prophetic communication even more explicitly:

The interpretation (*pēšer*) of the passage [concerns] . . . those . . . who do not believe when they hear all the things that [are to come] upon the last generation from the mouth of the priest in whose [heart] God put [understand]ing that he might interpret (*lipšôr*) all the words of His servants, the prophets, through [whom] God foretold all the things that are to come upon his people and [his congregation].

Although these passages say a lot, it is important not to impute to them more than they say. At most they imply that such socially self-justifying commentaries derive their authority from the Teacher by claiming to incorporate

¹¹ The Hebrew translated as 'mysteries' is *rāzīm*. Compare the use of the Aramaic of the same word in Dan. 2:18–19, 27–30, 47; 4:6, where Daniel discloses the meaning (also *pēšer*) of the secrets divinely revealed to the king through his dreams, again concerning the end of days. Note also *b. Meg.* 3a, where Jonathan ben Uzziel is said to have revealed to Israel, through the *targum* (Aramaic translation) attributed to him, the secret meanings (*šētārim*) of the words of the prophets.

¹² This transformation is called by Joseph Blenkinsopp (*Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* [Notre Dame: Notre Dame University, 1977], pp. 71, 129, 131) 'the scribalization of prophecy'. But compare 1QpHab 2.1–2, which speaks of those apostates 'who [did] not [follow the words] of the Teacher of Righteousness (which he received) from the mouth of God'.

¹³ Here referred to as 'the priest'. Cf. 4QpPs^a 1–10 3.15 (*DJD* 5 [1968]: 44), for 'the priest, the Teacher [of Righteousness]'. Cf. nn. 17, 20, 57.

his divinely inspired unveiling of the prophetic writings. But from this to making the scholarly claim that these writings were actually authored by the Teacher is a big leap.¹⁴ More importantly, nowhere do the extant texts ever claim, as is sometimes presumed, that the sect's interpretations of other parts of Scripture, especially the Torah, derive directly from the Teacher.¹⁵

3. Exegesis and Exile

The community's own self-understanding as an elite exilic remnant is deeply tied to its collective activity of scriptural interpretation, as is unmistakable in the following passage, itself containing explicit scriptural exegesis, from the Community Rule (1QS 8.12–16):

When these exist as a Community in Israel in accordance with these rules, they shall separate themselves from the settlement of the men of injustice and shall go into the wilderness to prepare there the way of Him, as it is written: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of . . . , make level in the desert a highway for our God' (Isa. 40:3). This [way] is the study (*midrāš*) of the Torah w[hic]h He commanded through Moses, that they should act in accordance with all that has been revealed from time to time and in accordance with what the prophets revealed by His holy spirit.

¹⁴ It should be stressed that all of the continuous *pēšārim*, unlike other major sectarian scrolls of the Dead Sea Scrolls, exist in only single copies, dated to the second half of the first century B.C.E., more than a century after the Teacher of Righteousness is most commonly thought to have been active at Qumran. It is not at all clear how and to what extent the *pēšārim* functioned within the religious life of the community, since, as we shall soon see, the interpretation of the prophetic writings is not mentioned as a component of the sect's study or liturgical practices.

¹⁵ We do find attributions of the sect's laws to the Teacher (CD 20:32–33; perhaps CD 1.11; and perhaps CD 6.9–10, to be discussed below), but none of these suggest that he derived these laws by means of scriptural interpretation. Clearly the Teacher, by being so called, is seen as the founding and probably archetypal teacher of the community, at least in its present configuration. But this does not tell us the nature of his teaching activity, or that all of the sect's teachings are thought to derive from him, or whether he is conceived as the first of a series of communal teachers who carry on but also add to his tradition. As important as the Teacher of Righteousness, or his memory, may have been for the sect, it is indeed curious that he is only mentioned in a few scrolls: seven times in the Peshar on Habakkuk (1pQHab), five times in two Pesharim to Psalms (4Q171, 4Q173), once in a Peshar to Micah (1Q14), and three times in the Damascus Document (CD). How important the *pēšārim* were to the Qumran community remains an open question (see previous note), as does the place of the Damascus Document, thought by some to be more reflective of a pre-Qumran stage or extra-Qumran wing of a larger movement. While it has been claimed that some of the Hodayot (e.g. 1QH 2.7–19) were authored by the Teacher, this is never stated by the texts themselves and remains highly conjectural. Similarly, it has been suggested (see E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, 'An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran', *Israel Museum Journal* 4 [1985]: 9) that the unpublished *Miqṣat Ma'āse Ha-Tora* (4QMMT, kindly supplied to me by John Strugnell) represents a letter written by the Teacher of Righteousness to the Wicked Priest (cf. 4QpPsa 1–10 4.8–9, as reconstructed by J. Allegro in *DJD* 5 [1968]: 45; and J. Strugnell in *RQ* 7 [1970]: 216). The text's authorial voice is in the first person plural and there is no basis within the text for identifying its author as the Teacher. These futile attempts to enlarge the Teacher's oeuvre, and hence our picture of him, stem from and remind us of the fact that no text at Qumran is explicitly attributed to him, and frustratingly little is said about him. This is especially surprising given the looming presence attributed to him by modern interpreters of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The community's separatist desert dwelling is understood as the positive fulfillment of Isa. 40:3.¹⁶ The redemptive roadwork of that verse is interpreted to signify the community's study/interpretation of the Torah originally revealed by God to Moses. Through that collective activity God's will is continually revealed to the community. This study activity is placed on a par with God's other means of revelation, through His inspired prophets. Thus, the community's practice and self-understanding are grounded in a twofold scriptural 'canon': Torah and Prophets.¹⁷ Here, however, the emphasis is on the community's interpretive study of the Torah, rather than, as we saw in the Peshet to Habakkuk, on the Teacher's interpretation of the Prophets, even though a prophetic text (Isa. 40:3) is here the interpretive basis of that emphasis. But unlike the Teacher's decoding of the Prophets, the community's revelatory study of God's Torah is ongoing ('from time to time' [*'ēt bā'ēt*]), at least from the time of the community's separation into its desert exile.¹⁸

The study activity herein stressed is not the purview of particular leadership figures or elite classes, as we shall witness elsewhere in the scrolls, but of the community as a whole, however much idealized, as a collective elect. Thus, the lines preceding the above citation (1QS 8.11–12) stress that the teaching functionary in the community (*hā'īš haddōrēš*) not withhold any of the knowledge that has been hidden from Israel but revealed to him from the newly entered members of the sect, for fear that they cannot be trusted with such knowledge. As stated in 1QS 5:2, the community is to be a union (*yahad*) with respect both to their commonly held property (*hôn*) and their commonly studied and practiced Torah.

¹⁶ The verse is also alluded to, but not cited, in 1QS 9.19–20. Compare the use of this verse in the New Testament, where it is applied to the teaching ministry of John the Baptist, to whom, it is said, the people of Judea and Jerusalem came to the Jordan valley desert: Mark 1:3–5; Matt. 3:3–6; Luke 3:2–6; John 1:23.

¹⁷ For this twofold scriptural curriculum, see also 1QS 1.2–3: '[They shall] do what is good and right before Him as was commanded through Moses and through all His servants the prophets'. The same may be the sense of CD 5.21–6.1: 'the commandments of God [given] through Moses and through the holy anointed ones'. In the New Testament see Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; John 1:45. But compare 4QMMT c10: 'We have written to you so that you might examine the Book of Moses [and the words of the prophets] and (of) David . . . every generation'. Do we witness here the beginnings of the emergence of a third division of the biblical canon? For David as a prophetically inspired author of psalms and songs, see 11QPs^a DavComp (*DJD* 4 [1965]: 92). We may similarly find an emerging third canonical category including Psalms in Luke 24:44; Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa* 25; and Josephus, *Contra Apion* 1:8 (39–40).

¹⁸ For a similar sense of the ongoing revelation of God's will, see 1QS 9.12–13: 'These are the statutes by which the *maskil* (wise leader) shall walk with every living being according to the rule appropriate to each time and according to the weight of each man. He shall perform the will of God according to all that has been revealed from time to time (*lē'ēt bā'ēt*), and he shall learn all the knowledge that has been found throughout the times and the statute [appropriate to the present] time'. The wise leader-teacher must know not only God's will as revealed over time, but also which statutes are intended for the present time. For similar expressions of the continuously revealed yet time-specific nature of the sect's statutes, and hence way of life, see CD 12.21; 1QS 1.9; 8.4; 9:18–20. On progressive revelation at Qumran, see Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Halakah at Qumran* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), pp. 22–32; Michael Fishbane, 'Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran', pp. 347, 364, 376.

4. Study Rites of Passage

If the Qumran community defined its elect identity, at least in part, in terms of its ongoing activity of study and thereby its possession of an esoteric knowledge of God's will, what can we learn of this self-understanding from the procedures by which its boundaries were crossed, by the admission, advancement, or expulsion of its members? Persons wishing to be considered for candidacy to the community would first be examined by an official of the community, as a precondition to being instructed in the 'correct' knowledge and practice of Torah as revealed within the community (1QS 6.13–15):

Anyone of Israel who willingly offers himself to join the Council of the Community shall be examined by the Officer (*pāqid*)¹⁹ at the head of the Many with respect to his insight (*siklō*) and his deeds (*ma'āsāyw*). If he is fitted to the discipline, he shall admit him into the covenant that he may return to the truth and turn away from all falsehood, and he shall instruct him in all the rules of the Community.

After a first and second year of such training, the prospective member would stand before the priests and the members to be tested again for the knowledge acquired and behavior displayed during that time: for his 'insight and deeds in Torah' (1QS 6.18; cf. 5.21). As each test is passed, the candidate becomes entitled to further instruction and to move gradually into the sanctum of the community with its privileges and obligations (1QS 6.15–23). Entering the community is tantamount to entering the study and practice of its esoteric Torah. This is well expressed by the oath of the new member in the presence of the membership to enter into 'the covenant of God' (1QS 5.8–10):

He shall undertake a binding oath to return with all his heart and soul to all that has been commanded of the Torah of Moses, to all that has been revealed from it to the Sons of Zadok, the priests, who are the keepers of the covenant and the seekers/interpreters of His will, and to the multitude of the members of their covenant who have willingly offered themselves as a Community to His truth and to walking according to His will.

The neophyte commits himself fully to the divine commandments as those have been revealed from the Torah of Moses to the sect, both to their priestly elite and to their membership as a whole. If the former are worthy receivers of such knowledge by virtue of their privileged genealogy and assigned roles in guarding the covenant and determining its terms, the latter are no less worthy as receivers of esoteric knowledge by virtue of their collective dedication to the practice of God's will through their disciplined life. It is both to the community and to its priestly leadership that the new member submits himself in fully 'returning' to the Torah. Of course, the placement of the priests before the 'multitude' is a common expression of the former's paramount status.

¹⁹ A similar function is assigned to the *maskil* (wise leader) in 1QS 9.15, and to the *mēbaqqēr* (overseer) of the camp in CD 13.11–13. We need not here go into the difficult question of the identity of or relation between these figures.

Nevertheless, the explicit statement that it was to *the community as a whole* that the Torah in its esoteric truth was disclosed should not be taken lightly, for it expresses the sect's self-understanding as a 'congregation of holiness' (1QS 5.20; 1QSa 1.9) even as it is governed as a hierocracy. As one scholar of the Dead Sea Scrolls has expressed it, 'Theologically the order may have been a priesthood of all believers, but the texts clearly show that in ritual and purity the legitimate priesthood had prerogatives'.²⁰

Once fully entered into the ranks of the community, the member's study, examination, and advancement do not end. Even as each is assigned his place in accord with his genealogical status as a descendant of Aaron (priest), Levi (Levite), or Israel (laity),²¹ within his class each man is assigned a rank, from which he may be upgraded or downgraded on the basis of his examined knowledge and deeds (1QS 5.23–24):

They shall register them in order, one man before his fellow, according to his insight and his deeds, so that every man may obey his fellow, the man of lower rank [obeying] the man of higher rank. And they shall examine their spirits and their deeds every year, that they may promote each man according to his insight and the perfection of his way, or demote him according to his perversity.²²

Just as during the period of candidacy a person's advancement was a function of his 'insight' as instilled through instruction in the community's Torah, so too we may presume that study (not to mention practice) of the sect's rules were required for advancement within the community's ranks.

Finally, the above mentioned demotion of a member could lead to his expulsion (or the expulsion of a group of members) from the community. Note the terms in which such expulsion is described in the Damascus Document (CD 19.33–20.13):²³

None of the men who entered the new covenant in the Land of Damascus and turned back and acted treacherously and turned aside from the well of living waters shall be reckoned among the assembly of the people or recorded in their roll from the day of the gathering in of the Teacher of the Community until the appearance of the Messiah from Aaron and from Israel²⁴ When his deeds

²⁰ John Strugnell, in *JBL* 77 (1958): 111. In other areas as well, especially in judicial practice, the priests are assigned paramount authority even as such authority is shared with the laity. Compare the following: 1QS 5.2–3, 21–22; 6.3–5, 8–9, 18–19; 8.1; 9.7; 1QSa 2.17–21; CD 10.4–6; 14.3–4; 4Q159 frgs. 2–4 lns. 3–4 (*DJD* 5 [1968]: 8). However, in 4QS^b (4Q256) and 4QS^d (4Q258), paralleling 1QS 5.1–4, the community is under the authority of the 'many' alone, without mention first of 'the Sons of Zadok, the priests, who are the keepers of the covenant', as in 1QS 5.2 and 5.9. Geza Vermes ('Preliminary Remarks on Unpublished Fragments of the Community Rule from Qumran Cave 4', *JJS* 42 [1991]: 255) suggests that the formulation in 1QS is a later expansion of that in 4Q^b and 4Q^d.

²¹ See especially 1QS 2.19–25; CD 14.3–6.

²² For the assignment of new members to their appropriate rank, see 1QS 6.22.

²³ Compare 1QS 6.24–7.25; 8.16–9.2, where the distinction between temporary and permanent expulsion is more clearly drawn.

²⁴ From here through 'the holy ones of the Most High have cursed him', the text speaks of one who is to be temporarily expelled from the community, whereas what precedes and follows seems to refer to permanent expulsion. For this distinction, see the previous note.

are revealed, he shall be sent away from the congregation as though his lot had never fallen among the disciples of God. According to his unfaithfulness, the men of knowledge shall rebuke him until such time as he shall once again [be worthy to] stand in the assembly of men of perfect holiness. But [so long as] his deeds are revealed [not to comply with] the interpretation (*midrās*) of the Torah in which the men of perfect holiness walk, let no man deal with him with respect to property or work, for all the holy ones of the Most High [=angels] have cursed him [Such apostates] shall have no portion in the house of the Torah For they spoke falsely against the statutes of righteousness and rejected the covenant and the agreement that was established in the Land of Damascus, which is the new covenant, and they and their families shall have no portion in the house of the Torah.

The community is here denoted as a 'house of Torah', in which constantly flow the living waters (of Torah), an image to which we shall return shortly. Its members are characterized as 'disciples of God' and 'men of knowledge', whose esoteric knowledge and concomitant deeds mark them as 'men of perfect holiness'. Anyone who rejects the disciplined path of the community, as revealed to them through their inspired study/interpretation of the Torah, must be removed, such a decision by the community's human holies being mirrored in the curse of the heavenly holies. The holiness of the community is reciprocally related to its continually revealed and safeguarded knowledge and practice.²⁵

Another form of advancement within the community dependent upon study of the Torah and the sect's laws, was that through the stages of childhood toward full entry into the privileges and obligations of adult membership in the community. The messianic Rule of the Congregation (1QSa 1.6–8) describes or prescribes this process:

From [his] you[th] they shall [t]each him the Book of Hago, and according to his age they shall instruct him in the laws of the covenant. He shall [receive] [in]struction in their rules for ten years. If he proceeds well, then at [the age of] twenty he shall [be] registered so as to enter (his) allotted place within his family (and) to join the congregation of holiness.

Although Rule of the Congregation describes a future ideal community, certain of that community's projected practices may be assumed to mirror the practices of the community at the time of the text's composition.²⁶ Note in particular that the youth's studies during his second ten years, the period prior to his full entry into communal 'citizenship', are characterized by an advancement from scriptural to sectarian legal studies and training.²⁷ As brief

²⁵ I shall return to this interrelation below, n. 58. Note that in the fragment 4QS^d 1.1, the community members are referred to as '*ansē hattōrā*' ('the men of the Torah'), rather than '*ansē hayyahad*' as in the parallel 1QS 5.1. See Geza Vermes, 'Preliminary Remarks on Unpublished Fragments of the Community Rule from Qumran Cave 4', 251.

²⁶ See Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), p. 9.

²⁷ Compare *m. 'Abot* 5:21: 'At five years [a child begins the study of] Scripture (*miqrā*'); at ten years, Oral Teaching (*mišnā*). For the twofold nature of sectarian study, compared to that of rabbinic studies, see below, n. 34.

as this passage is, it is our earliest and only evidence from the Second Temple period for a mandatory, communal curriculum of studies for children.²⁸ The sectarian emphasis on study as a means of passage into and through the community, whether for new members, existing members, or youth, reflects the centrality of esoteric knowledge and its constant cultivation to the community's self-understanding, in both theological and social terms.

5. Ritualized Common Study in the Daily Life of the Community

Ongoing study was a ritualized part of the community's collective life is best attested by the following passage from the Community Rule (1QS 6.6–8), immediately succeeding the stipulation that the Priest be the first to bless the bread and wine at the common meal:

In the place where there are ten men let there not be lacking ('*al yāmēš*) a man who studies (*dōrēš*) the Torah day and night continually, concerning the right conduct of a man with his companion. And the Many shall watch together for a third of every night of the year, to read the book (*liqrō' bassēper*), to study (communal) law (*liḏrōš mišpāt*), and to pray as a Community (*lēbārēk bēyāhad*).

The opening allusion is to Josh. 1:8 (with an echo of Ps. 1:2), in which God charges Joshua: 'Let this Book of Torah not cease (*lō' yāmūš*) from your (sing.) lips, but recite it day and night, so that you may observe faithfully all that is written in it.' Several slippages from the biblical verse to the sectarian rule are significant. While the biblical verse speaks of the Torah text itself never ceasing from Joshua's lips, the rule speaks of there never ceasing to be a 'man who studies the Torah' within each communal cell. If in the first instance Joshua is constantly ('day and night') to be uttering words of Torah, in the second instance there is always to be a man studying the Torah so as to teach the members of the community how to conduct themselves.²⁹ But the community as a whole is not thereby absolved of its obligation to be regularly engaged in the study of the Torah and laws. Rather they, unable to fulfill the ideal of constant study, devote themselves for a part of every night to such activity. Their nightly watch consists of three activities: reading the book, studying the law, and praying (or blessing) collectively. 'The book' most likely refers to the 'Book of Torah', elsewhere referred to as *sēper hehāgō* ('book

²⁸ This is contrary to Schiffman's comment on this passage (*The Eschatological Community*, p. 14): 'That the sect would have assumed that there was an obligation to instruct children in the teachings of the Torah is in line with what we know of the history of Jewish education. Jewish schools were already widespread in the Hellenistic period.' For a careful review of the evidence (or lack thereof), see David Goodblatt, 'Hammēqorot 'al re'šito šel haḥinuk hayyehudi hamme'urgan be'erēš-yšra'el', in *Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel*, vol. 5, ed. B. Oded (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1980), pp. 83–103. For the eschatological role of children's study of Torah and commandments, see Jubilees 23:26.

²⁹ This seems to be the simplest way to read the awkward phrase '*al yēpōt 'is lērē'ēhū*' ('concerning the correct conduct of a man with his companion'). It should be noted, however, that others have suggested emending the text to read: *hālīpōt 'is lērē'ēhū* ('one man being replaced by his companion'), meaning a rotation of members in the nightly watch.

of utterance' or 'meditation'), as in the parallel to our passage in CD 13.2–3: 'And in a place of ten, let there never cease to be ('*al yāmēš*) a priest ('*is kōhēn*) who is learned in *sēper hehāgō*.'³⁰ While it cannot simply be assumed on the basis of this parallel that the 'man who studies' of our passage is a priest, that would certainly be consistent with the privileged functions assigned to the sect's priests elsewhere in this scroll.³¹ It is most likely that he is one of the priestly or levitical officers of the community.³²

An even more significant difference between the verse from Joshua and its re-use at Qumran regards the relation of scriptural reading to covenantal practice. Joshua is admonished to recite, or meditate upon, constantly the words of the Torah so that he may live by its precepts. The Qumran sectaries are to accompany their reading of 'the book' with their study of *mišpāt*, the latter most likely denoting the esoteric laws of the community.³³ Even as the latter derive by inspired exegesis from the former, they constitute a distinct component of the nightly curriculum. This twofold activity of 'reading Torah' and 'studying *mišpāt*' finds parallel elsewhere in the sectarian scrolls. For example, children, as already noted, are to be 'taught (*lmd*) the Book of Hago and ... instructed (*škl*) in the laws (*huqqim*) of the covenant' (1QSa 1.7). Similarly, the ruling priest is to be 'learned in the Book [of Hago] and in all the statutes (*mišpātīm*) of the Torah' (CD 14.7–8), while the members of the camps are to 'conduct themselves according to the Torah and according to the rule (*mišpāt*) of the discipline' (CD 7.7–8). Furthermore, the ten judges of the community are to be 'learned in the Book of Hago and in the [legal] foundations of the covenant (*yēsōdē habbērit*)'.³⁴ Thus, a proper Qumran education, whether for the laity, its youth, or its leadership, would combine yet differentiate between two types of learning: Torah and sectarian rules.³⁴ Finally, the members' nightly study activity includes a third component: the recitation of blessings (or perhaps psalms) together. This concluding of the nightly study

³⁰ The rest of this passage, dealing with the situation in which the priest is not learned enough to assume authority, which passes to a Levite who is learned, is treated by me in depth in 'Of Priests, Scribes, and Sages in Second Temple Times', *JBL* (forthcoming).

³¹ See above, n. 20. Compare as well the preceding paragraph (1QS 6.3–4): 'In every place of ten men from the council of the community, let there never cease among them a man who is a priest.'

³² Compare 1QS 8.12, discussed above, where 'the man who studies' appears to be a communal official (perhaps the *mēbaqqēr* or the *maškil*, the two perhaps being identical) with responsibility both for the induction of new members and for teaching the 'hidden' Torah to the sect's members. For the interpretive-teaching role of the *mēbaqqēr* in matters of skin impurities, see CD 13.4–7, where he is said to instruct a priest in the correct interpretation/application (*pērūš*) of the Torah. For my treatment of this passage, see 'Of Priests, Scribes, and Sages in Second Temple Times'. Less clear is the relation of the '*is haddōrēš* to the *dōrēš hattōrā*' ('interpreter of the Torah'), mentioned in CD 6.7 (to be discussed below); 7.18; and 4QFlor 1.11; in the last two of which he is described in messianic terms.

³³ Compare 1QSa 1.5 with Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community*, p. 13; idem, *The Halakot at Qumran*, pp. 42–47.

³⁴ The distinction between 'reading the book' and 'studying (sectarian) law' might be compared to the rabbinic distinction between 'reading Scripture (*miqrā'*)' and 'repeating oral teaching (*šimḥā*)', even though the Qumran expressions are not as formulaic as are the rabbinic, and the former do not draw the latter's distinction between written and oral performance. For the rabbinic twofold curriculum, see also above, n. 27.

sessions with a liturgical practice suggests that communal study was itself a religious performance, a point to which we will return later.³⁵ Thus, while an officer of the community is assigned the responsibility of *continual* Torah recitation or meditation, the community as a whole performs a *nightly watch* of three parts: scriptural reading, sectarian legal study, and blessings.³⁶

6. Study as a Bridge between Communal Origins and the End of Time

The Qumran community's radical self-understanding as a studying body, from its beginnings to its hoped for redemption, is given clearest expression in the following 'well midrash' from the Damascus Document (CD 6.2–11):

But God remembered the covenant with the men of former times (*ri'sōnim*), and He raised up from Aaron men of understanding, and from Israel men of wisdom, and made them hear [His voice] and they dug the well. 'The well which the princes dug, which the nobles of the people delved with the sceptre' (Num. 21:18): 'The well' is the Torah, and those who dug it are the Converts of Israel who went out from the Land of Judah and sojourned in the Land of Damascus. God called all of them 'princes' because they sought Him (*dērāsūhū*), and their renown was not disputed by anyone. And 'the sceptre' (*mēhōqēq*) is the Interpreter of the Torah (*dōrēš hattōrā*), of whom Isaiah said: 'He produces a tool for His work' (54:16). And 'the nobles of the people' are those who come (*habbā'im*) to dig the well with the ordinances (*mēhōqēqōt*) that 'the sceptre' ordained (*hāqaq*) for them to walk by for the duration of the time of wickedness, and without which they will attain nothing, until the appearance of the one who will teach righteousness at the end of days.

The beginning of the passage is set at the time of 'the desolation of the land' and 'rebellion against the commandments of God', the time of the Exile broadly speaking.³⁷ With the covenant seemingly in ruins, God 'raises up'³⁸ and enlightens a righteous remnant, the founders of the movement to

³⁵ For the combination of the first and third activities, see IQS 7.1, which speaks of the exclusion of a member who blasphemes while 'reading the book or blessing'. It should be noted that these passages presume that the community members were literate, something not to be taken for granted, even for Jews, in the ancient world. Such literacy would have contributed to the community's elect self-understanding. For the recitation of (presumably sectarian) laws, morning and evening in the context of prayer, see IQS 10.10: 'With the coming of day and night I will enter the covenant of God, and with the departure of evening and morning I will recite His decrees (*huqqāyw*)'.

³⁶ The nightly watch for a third of the night is suggestive of the priestly watches in the Temple in Jerusalem for a third of the night (see *b. Ber.* 3a). That the Qumran community considered both study and prayer as substitutes for sacrificial worship, is evident in other passages, to be cited below. For the later rabbinic notion that Torah study, especially at night, was considered a substitute for Temple sacrifice, see, for example, *b. Menah.* 110a, as well as below, n. 64.

³⁷ Cf. CD 1.3–12; 3.9–12. The Qumran community considered itself still to be living in the period of physical and spiritual exile from Jerusalem. See Michael A. Knibb, 'Exile in the Damascus Document', *JSTOT* 25 (1983): 99–117.

³⁸ The same word (*wayyāqem*) is used in CD 1.11 for God's appointment of the Teacher of Righteousness to lead the founding community. Interestingly, in our passage and its parallel in CD 3.12–21, the Teacher of Righteousness is not mentioned at all, the emphasis being on God's election and enlightenment of the community as a whole, and their subsequent interpretive activity.

which the Qumran community is the revelatory and soteriological heir.³⁹ The founding community is said to comprise two classes: priests and laity. Both receive divine insight and both are characterized as having 'dug the well', meaning: opened a previously sealed source of revelatory teaching for the community.⁴⁰ Once again (compare IQS 8.12–16, treated above), the elite self-understanding of the community is closely tied to its *activity* of esoteric Torah study.

The citation of Num. 21:18, with its double digging of the well, provides the interpretive opportunity to pose this interpretive self-understanding in two stages. The first diggers of the 'well' (=Torah) were the 'princes' of the biblical verse, who signify the sectarian 'Converts (literally, returnees) of Israel', exiled to 'Damascus'.⁴¹ The second diggers of the 'well' are the 'nobles of the

³⁹ There is substantial disagreement among scholars regarding the dating and provenance of the Damascus Document and its relation to the other sectarian scrolls found at Qumran. Until all of the fragments of the Damascus Document found in Qumran Cave 4 (4QD) are published and analyzed this relation cannot be fully determined. However, even if the document, or some of its parts, originated outside of Qumran or in earlier periods of the larger movement's history, its understanding of sectarian origins, purpose, and destiny are consistent with those of those scrolls generally thought to have been produced at and for the Qumran community, where it continued to be copied, and presumably studied or consulted. Joseph Baumgarten ('The Cave 4 Versions of the Qumran Penal Code', *JJS* 43 [1992]: 273) on the basis of the 4QD fragments, has recently argued for regarding the Damascus Document as a compilation of sectarian Torah interpretations and legal rulings with 'affinities with the whole range of Qumran serakhim and halakic sources' and not to be associated 'exclusively with one uniform type of social organization'. For other sections of 4QD, see Baumgarten, 'The 4Q Zadokite Fragments on Skin Diseases', *JJS* 41 (1990): 153–165; idem, 'A "Scriptural" Citation in 4Q Fragments of the Damascus Document', *JJS* 43 (1992): 95–98.

⁴⁰ The paired expressions 'men of wisdom' and 'men of discernment' is biblical, as in Deut. 1:13. Although rabbinic texts treat the distinction between these two types (see my discussion of *Sifre Deut.* 13 in *From Tradition to Commentary*, pp. 101–103), only the Damascus Document differentiates between them as signifying priesthood and laity. For water as a metaphor for Torah in the Damascus Document, and for its flow as a sign of continuing Torah teaching or revelation within the community, see CD 3.16, where the founding community is said, after having received divine revelation, to have 'dug a well of plentiful waters (*mayim rabbim*)'. Similarly, CD 19.34 speaks of apostates from the community's laws and teachings as having 'turned away from the well of living waters (*mayim hayyim*)'. Compare IQH 8.4: 'I sha[ll] thank You my Lord, for you have placed me at the font of streams in an arid land'. For Torah teachings having been formerly sealed, see CD 5.2–5, which speaks of a 'sealed Book of the Torah', that was 'unopened' from the days of the deaths of Eleazar, Joshua, and the elders until it was revealed at the time of the coming of Zadok, who some (Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983], p. 395 with n. 18, referring back to the view of J. Liver) take to refer to the Teacher of Righteousness. But even if Zadok refers to the High Priest Zadok of Solomon's time, the sect would have understood that the Torah's correct interpretation was resealed from the onset of the Exile until the time of its own origins. For the 'sealed book' as a sign of human–divine alienation, see Isa. 29:11 and compare Dan. 12:4, 9. Note that early rabbinic texts also interpret water as a metaphor for Torah teaching, similarly interpreting well, fountain, and cistern metaphors in relation to Torah study and sages. For examples see my *From Tradition to Commentary*, pp. 18–19, 110–112, 244. For well-symbolism in biblical tradition and post-biblical interpretation more generally, see Michael Fishbane, 'The Well of Living Water: A Biblical Motif and Its Ancient Transformations', in *'Sha'arei Talmon': Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. Michael Fishbane and Emanuel Tov (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 3–16.

⁴¹ There might be here a pun on *sārīm* ('princes') and *sarīm* ('those who turn'). In CD 8.16, the 'converts (*sābīm*) of Israel' are those who 'turned (*sūrū*) from the way of the people'. Damascus is

people', who continue the activity begun by the original converts/founders. This denotes either a second group that subsequently joined the founders, or all those who *continued* to join the community in its study activity subsequent to its founding until the present time of the text.⁴² Favouring the latter interpretation is a passage in CD 4.7–8, which speaks of 'all those who have come (*habbā'im*=entered the community) after them (= 'the first holy ones') to act according to the exact interpretation (*pērūs*) of the Torah in which the first ones were instructed until the completion of the present [period] of years'.⁴³ Those who have come into the community since its origins are temporally suspended between sectarian beginning and end, between what was revealed to the founders and transmitted to the joiners to observe, and the redemptive conclusion to their exilic travail.⁴⁴ As we shall see, the 'well midrash' conveys a similar temporal scheme, with the difference that the joiners are as much engaged in the opening of the well of esoteric teaching as were the founders.

The belated 'nobles of the people', unlike the founding 'princes', open the 'well' by means of a *mēhōqēq*, usually translated in its biblical context of Num. 21:18 as 'sceptre'.⁴⁵ But our sectarian text has other meanings in mind. The *mēhōqēq* is, to begin with, a person. He is that figure otherwise known as *dōrēs hattōrā*, the Interpreter of the Torah.⁴⁶ Rather than wielding

most likely code for Qumran, as in CD 6.19; 7.15, 19; 19.34; and 20.12 (the last two cited above). The identification of Damascus with exile derives from Amos 5:27 (cf. CD 7.15). See M. Knibb, 'Exile in the Damascus Document', cited above, n. 37.

⁴² It is uncertain whether the participial *habbā'im* (6.9) describes a past completed activity or a continuing one. The context favours the latter.

⁴³ For the expression *pērūs hattōrā* for the authoritative legal teachings of the community, see CD 6.14; 13.6. For the use of *pērūs* with a specific area of law, see also CD 6.18, 20.

⁴⁴ A few lines earlier (CD 4.1–4), the text interprets Ezek. 44:15 to refer to three stages in the sacred history of the movement: the original 'converts of Israel who went out from the Land of Judah', those who later 'joined them', and the 'chosen ones of Israel . . . who will arise at the end of days [=the author's time]'. The 'chosen ones of Israel' (*bēhīrē yisrā'el*) would appear to be the same as 'the nobles of the people' (*nēdībē hā'am*) of CD 6.8. For a similar three-fold temporal division, see 1QpHab 1.16–2.10, and my discussion in *From Tradition to Commentary*, p. 6.

⁴⁵ In Gen. 49:10 *mēhōqēq* is in parallel construction with *šēbet* ('sceptre').

⁴⁶ On the title *dōrēs hattōrā*, see below. The word *mēhōqēq*, biblically denoting one who rules or commands, or his sceptre, is often taken post-biblically to denote scribal authority and its concomitant interpretive skills. Thus, the *mēhōqēq* ('ruler') in Ben Sira 10:5, to whom God imparts his majesty, is rendered by the Greek translation with *grammateus* ('scribe'). This probably derives from an understanding of the Hebrew as 'one who inscribes' by writing rather than 'one who rules' by virtue of political authority, although both senses may be combined. A similar understanding likely lies behind the targumic rendering of this word as *sāprā* ('scribe') in the following verses: Gen. 49:10; Num. 21:18; Deut. 33:21; Judg. 5:9; Ps 60:9; 108:9. In particular, the *targumim* (Onqelos, Fragmentary, Neofiti, and Pseudo-Jonathan) render 'the nobles of the people' of Num. 21:18 as scribes, taking *mēhōqēq* to signify not their instrument (their sceptre), but they themselves. Thus the Fragmentary Targum (MS P) renders the verse as follows: 'The well, which the chieftains of the people, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had dug in the beginning, which was [later] completed by the seventy sages of the Sanhedrin of Israel, the scribes, with their staffs (*hōtrēhōn* for MT *miš'ānōtām*); they are the very scribes of Israel, Moses and Aaron.' Here too, the verse is taken to denote two chronologically distinct sets of 'diggers', with the latter (Moses, Aaron, and the sages) completing the antecedent activity of the former (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Note as well Tg. Neb. Isa 33:22, where God as *mēhōqēq* is translated: 'the teacher who gave us the instruction of Torah from Sinai'. For further treatment of the term *mēhōqēq* in its various biblical and post-biblical meanings, see Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in*

a sceptre he is *himself* God's chosen instrument, as alluded to in Isa. 54:16.⁴⁷ But by a double word play, the biblical *mēhōqēq* becomes the one who has prescribed (*hāqaq*) the rules (*mēhōqēqōt*) by which the community members open the 'well' and according to which they conduct themselves through the present 'age of wickedness'. Only by such rules, which they alone possess, can a divinely prescribed course be charted through the present interim until the final time when a future teacher of righteousness will arise to lead them directly once again.⁴⁸ While the community's continuing activity of opening the 'well' connects them back to their sectarian founders, their adherence to the true rules established by the Interpreter of the Torah guides them forward to a final teacher in the redemptive end of time.

Yet it is precisely the relation of their own Torah-opening activity and their living by the laws prescribed by the Interpreter of Torah that is awkward and ambiguous in the context of our passage. How can it be that these rules, elsewhere represented as having been revealed *from* the Torah, are here represented as the instruments *by which* the Torah is so opened? This seeming circularity may be understood in terms of the *ongoing* revelatory quality of the community's life and self-understanding. The community conceives of its origins in terms of its acceptance of a divinely ordained set of 'first rules', revealed to their founders (and them) alone.⁴⁹ Once so established as a 'community of holiness', study both of Torah and communal laws constitutes a central *practice* of their religious life. Through such ongoing study, the Torah is more fully disclosed to them and new laws are revealed to them to suit their changing circumstances. But even as such ongoing revelation, here represented by the image of digging a well by means of a divinely authorized tool (or set of tools), characterizes the life of the community as a whole, it is instituted among them by certain elite functionaries, here represented as the Interpreter of the Torah. Just as their disciplined life according to the divine rules laid down by this figure links them to the originary teacher and

Judaism: Haggadic Studies, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), pp. 49–55.

⁴⁷ Louis Ginzberg (*An Unknown Jewish Sect* [rev. trans. of *Eine unbekannte jüdische Sekte*, 1922; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, 1976], p. 28), commenting on this passage, notes that Moses is referred to as a vessel (*kēlī*) of God in *Mekilta Pisha* 1 (ed. Lauterbach, 1:1). But this requires emending the text of the *Mekilta* according to the suggestion of I. Levy, *Ein Wort über die Mechilta des R. Simon* (Breslau, 1889), p. 38 (note). For Moses as *mēhōqēq*, see Tgs. Onq. and Ps.-Jon. Deut. 33:21; *Sifre Deut.* 355 (ed. Finkelstein, p. 417); *The Assur* 12:22 (trans. Moses Gaster, p. 318 with note).

⁴⁸ That *mēhōqēqōt*, a play on *mēhōqēq* and *hūqōt* ('laws'), means sectarian laws here (and not encephalic principles, as some have suggested), is also clear from the use of the verb *lēhithalēk* ('to conduct one's self') for the community's behavior with respect to the *mēhōqēqōt*. For the same verbal form used in relation to sectarian legal conduct, see IQS 9.12; IQSa 1.1; CD 12.21; IQM 13.12. The future teacher of righteousness is presumably modeled after, if not a return of, the originary Teacher of Righteousness. For the sect's temporal self-understanding as living in the time-between, see CD 19.35–20.1: 'from the day of the gathering in of the Teacher of the Community until the appearance of the Messiah from Aaron and Israel.' A similar temporal span is denoted by CD 20.13–15, 'from the day of the gathering in of the Teacher of the Community until the end of all the fighting men who turned back with the liar'; and IQS 9.10–11, 'the first rules in which the Men of the Community began to be instructed until the coming of the Prophet and the Messiahs from Aaron and Israel'.

⁴⁹ For references see n. 51.

observers of the 'first rules' and vouchsafes their expected redemption, so too their collective study in the context of that life is both a continuation of the study which marked the community's original going into exile and the medium for continuous revelation in anticipation of the final teacher. In short, not only does their collective study provide a justification for their laws, but their common life in accord with those laws justifies their study as a medium of revelation.⁵⁰

What remains intentionally ambiguous in this reading of our text is the identity of the Interpreter of the Torah. Is he the founding Teacher of Righteousness, as many have assumed, who set the sect's rules for the duration of the present age, or is he a successor functionary within the community, who, as God's inspired instrument, continuously interprets the Torah and legislates communal practice? Although the Teacher of Righteousness is said in one other passage (CD 20.31–33) to be the source of the 'first rules' of the community, he is never claimed to be the source of its later laws.⁵¹ Nor is the verb *dôrēš* ever used in conjunction with the Teacher, whose interpretive activity *per se* is only mentioned with respect to the prophetic books.⁵² The term *dôrēš hattôrâ* appears in two other passages where the reference appears to be to a priestly messianic figure: CD 7.18 and 4QFlor 1.11.⁵³ However, in 1QS 6.6, treated above, it is said that each community of the movement should have one '*iš dôrēš battôrâ*' ('man who studies/interprets the Torah'), who was to be engaged in constant Torah study, while in the parallel in CD 13.6.2–3 this figure is said to be a priest learned in the Book of Hago (the Torah), whom the community is charged to obey. Finally, 1QS 8.11–12 speaks of a communal functionary, *hā'iš haddôrēš* ('the man who studies'), presumably the same as '*iš dôrēš battôrâ*', who is to instruct new members in the esoteric teachings of the sect. It is quite possible, therefore, that it is to such a communal official, and not to the Teacher of Righteousness or any other particular historical personage, that CD 6.7 refers in its identification of the biblical word *mēhōqēq* as God's instrument for interpreting the Torah and establishing the covenantal rules.⁵⁴ Thus, while study as a medium for the collective disclosure of esoteric Torah teaching and law characterizes the ongoing life of the community as a whole from its origins until its redemption, the specific authority to derive

⁵⁰ For the former emphasis, see Michael Fishbane, 'Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran', pp. 345–46, 377. For the redemptive role of communal discourse in the time-between, see CD 20.13–22.

⁵¹ However, other references to these 'first rules' make no mention of the Teacher of Righteousness: CD 4.8, cited above; 1QS 9.10, for which see above, n. 48.

⁵² See 1QpHab 2.7–10; 6.15–7.5; both of which are discussed above.

⁵³ The term also appears in 4QCatena^a (4Q177) 10–11 5, where the immediate context is unclear because of the broken text.

⁵⁴ This communal officer could be modeled after, and thought to transmit the teachings of, the original Teacher of Righteousness, even as he prefigures a future messianic teacher. For the identification of the Interpreter of the Torah with the Teacher of Righteousness, see, for example, Gert Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit*, p. 272. For the argument (which I obviously find unconvincing) that the Interpreter of the Torah *predates* the Teacher of Righteousness and the sectarian settlement at Qumran, see Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the 'Damascus Document'* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 123–124; Phillip R. Callaway, 'Qumran Origins: From the *Doresh* to the *Moreh*', *RQ* 14 (1990): 637–50.

such law from the Torah and to apply it to the life of the community is the purview of particular communal functionaries, distinguished by their priestly or levitical class, intensity of study, and proficiency of learning.⁵⁵

7. The Performative Power of Torah Deeds and Discourse

By now it should be clear that scriptural and legal studies at Qumran were not simply means toward the end of covenantal compliance, but religious performances—media of religious expression and experience—themselves. We have already noted the close connection between such collective study and worship above. The following passage from the Florilegium (4QFlor 1.6–7) suggests even more:

And He has commanded that a sanctuary of man be built for him, that there they might offer before him (like the smoke of incense) precepts of Torah (*ma'āsē tôrâ*).⁵⁶

The 'sanctuary of man', in contrast to the previously mentioned defiled 'sanctuary of Israel', is usually understood to refer to the Qumran community, which viewed itself as a temple, or levitical camp, in exile, in anticipation of (or the very foundation of) the 'house' which God Himself would build 'at the end of days'. In such an exilic sanctuary, the sect's 'precepts of Torah' stand in lieu of animal sacrificial offerings, just as elsewhere (1QS 9.3–6) the members' 'proper offerings of the lips' (prayer, study, or both) are 'like a pleasing fragrance of righteousness' and their 'perfection of way' is 'like an acceptable free-will offering', both having atoning potency in place of the offerings of flesh and fat.⁵⁷ The community considered itself to be a 'congregation of holiness' (*ādāt qōdeš*) or 'council of holiness' (*āṣat qōdeš*),

⁵⁵ On the priestly or levitical status of these figures, see my forthcoming article, 'Of Priests, Scribes, and Sages'. For the Teacher of Righteousness as a priest (as presumably would be the future messianic figure who 'will teach righteousness'), see above, n. 9. On the tension between priestly pedigree and scholarly proficiency, see below, n. 53.

⁵⁶ The reading *ma'āsē tôrâ* is a bit unclear, especially the *resh* of *tôrâ*. For this reason, John Strugnell (*RQ* 7.2 [1970]: 221; followed by George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* [Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1985], pp. 87, 108) had proposed an alternative reading of *ma'āsē tôdâ* ('works of thanksgiving'), in part because the expression *ma'āsē tôrâ* had not appeared elsewhere in the scrolls at the time of the publication of this text. Now, however, with the discovery of 4QMMT, with its employment of this phrase for the sect's distinctive legal teachings, the likelihood of the reading *ma'āsē tôrâ* in our passage has been greatly strengthened, as Strugnell himself has expressed to me in conversation. For *ma'āsīm* as 'precepts', and not simply 'works' or 'deeds', see Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell, 'An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran', in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984*, ed. J. Amitai (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), pp. 401, 406 n. 5; Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 101; as well as my discussion below.

⁵⁷ Compare 11QPs^a 18.7–10, where it is said that one who 'glorifies the Most High' is accepted as though he had offered meal and animal sacrifices, and 'a pleasing (incense) fragrance from the hand of the righteous'. For the 'offering of lips', see also 1QS 9.26 (restored); 10.6; and 10.14; all of which in relation to 'blessing'. For the atoning force of the community's discipline, see also 1QS 3.4–12; 8.3–10; 1QSa 1.3. See also 4Q511 35 1–5 (*DJD* 7 [1982]: 237), which speaks of

whose members worshipped in the presence of holy angels, as they constructed lives of levitical purity and moral perfection, while engaging collectively in the cultivation of esoterically revealed knowledge. In short, their 'house of holiness' (*bêt qôdeš*) was simultaneously a 'house of Torah' (*bêt tôrâ*), in which they studied and performed 'precepts of Torah'.⁵⁸

What then are we to make of these 'precepts of Torah', by which the Qumran community defined itself in holy communion with heaven and in sharp separation from the rest of Israel? Luckily, we now have a 'new' Qumran text, whose title, as bestowed by its modern editors, centres on this very expression: *Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Tora* (4QMMT).⁵⁹ The text contains mainly a list of rules relating to sacrificial offerings and rituals of purification, rules by which the community differentiates and separates itself from the practices of the rest of Israel in general and of its opponents, some competing movement or power elite in or around the Jerusalem Temple, in particular. The text concludes its list of rules by invoking Deuteronomic blessings and curses and the examples of biblical leaders who were divinely blessed or cursed in accord with their deeds, finishing with the hope that the text's addressees would 'examine (*tâbîn bē-*) the Book of Moses [and the words of the Pro]phets and (of) David' (C10) and 'examine (*hâbēn bē-*) all these [precepts] and ... find that some of our words are true' (C30-32), so as to 'do what is upright and

God's sanctifying a 'sanctuary of eternity' among the cleansed and 'righteous people'. Compare Philo's description (*Prob.* 75) of the Essenes as being 'especially devout in the service of God, not by offering sacrifices of animals, but by resolving to sanctify their minds'. But compare Josephus, *Ant.* 18.15 (19). Early rabbinic Judaism also emphasizes study, righteous deeds, prayer, and suffering substituting for the temple service (once it had ceased) as forms of worship and expiation. See for starters, my discussion of *Sifre Deut.* 41 (ed. Finkelstein, pp. 87-88) in *From Tradition to Commentary*, pp. 89-92; as well as above, n. 36, and below, n. 64. For a survey of scholarship on the Florilegium, especially on its temples, see George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran*, pp. 178-93.

⁵⁸ For 'congregation of holiness', see 1QSa 1.9, 13; CD 20.2. For 'council of holiness', see 1QS 2.25; 5.20; 8.21; 1QSa 2.9; 1QM 3.4; 1QH 7.10; CD 20.25. For 'house of holiness', see 1QS 8.5; 9.6. For 'dwelling-place (*mā'ôn*) of holiness', see 1QS 8.8; 1QSa 4.25; 1QM 12.2; 1QH 12.2. For 'house of Torah', see CD 20:10, 13, cited above. For the presence of angels amid the community, see 1QS 11.7-9; 1QSa 2.8-9; 1QSa 4.26; 1QH 3.21-23; 6.12-14; 1QM 7.6; 12.7-8; 4Q511 2 6-10; 35 2-4; an unpublished 4Q version of CD 15.15-17 (4QD^a [olim 4QD^b]=4Q266), cited in J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 114. For the interrelation of holiness, worship, and esoteric knowledge at Qumran, especially as expressed in the community's liturgical texts, see Carol A. Newsom, 'He has Established for Himself Priests': Human and Angelic Priesthood in the Qumran Sabbath Shiroi', in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, pp. 101-120.

⁵⁹ This is a phrase drawn from the end of the text (C28-29): 'We have written to you some of the precepts of the Torah which we reckon for good, for you and for your people'. For other preliminary discussions of the text, see Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell, 'An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran', pp. 400-407; Lawrence H. Schiffman, 'The Temple Scroll and the Systems of Jewish Law of the Second Temple Period', in *Temple Scroll Studies: Papers Presented at the International Symposium on the Temple Scroll, Manchester, December 1987*, ed. George J. Brooke (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), pp. 245-53; idem, 'The New Halakhic Letter (4QMMT) and the Origins of the Dead Sea Sect', *Biblical Archaeologist* 53 (1990): 64-73; Yaakov Sussmann, 'The History of *Halakha* and the Dead Sea Scrolls—Preliminary Observations on *Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Tora* (4QMMT)', *Tarbiz* 59 (1989-90): 11-76.

what is good before [God], for your wellbeing and that of Israel' (C33-34).⁶⁰ However, many of the listed *ma'asê tôrâ* are practices that could not have been observed by the community at Qumran, especially those requiring participation in a centralized Temple and its sacrificial rites. Thus, the text asserts not simply what the community members, in contrast to the rest of Israel, *do*, but what they *would do* were biblical conditions ideally (or eschatologically) present.⁶¹ The disputed *ma'asê tôrâ* are as much disputes of interpretation as of practice. But such a distinction should not be overdrawn at Qumran, where, as we have seen, the very recitation and study of the Torah and the community's esoterically revealed precepts were regarded as religiously redemptive and socially self-defining practices in their own rights. It is not surprising, therefore, to find 4QMMT employing the phrases *miqsat ma'asê hattôrâ* and *miqsat dibrenû battôrâ*, Torah deeds and Torah discourse, interchangeably.⁶² Thus, the *ma'asê tôrâ* that the sectaries, who are elsewhere referred to as '*asê tôrâ* ('performers of Torah'),⁶³ 'offer' to God in their human sanctuary may denote *both* their actual Torah practices *and* their shared performative discourse of Torah and sectarian legal study, the two shading off into each other.⁶⁴

8. Conclusions

The Qumran community stands in a critical transitional period between the gradual formation of biblical canons and the no less gradual emergence of competing institutions of scriptural interpretation in early varieties of Judaism and Christianity. Thanks to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars have been able to form a picture of this one community's biblical texts and their texts of biblical interpretation. But as importantly, we are now able to assemble a community's rules for the institutionalization of communal

⁶⁰ There are significant questions in the historical interpretation of this text, especially the identification of the 'you', which shuttles between plural and singular forms, and the 'we', who in several cases advocate *ma'asê tôrâ* which in mishnaic disputes between the Pharisees and the Sadducees are attributed to the latter. Since the text has been discovered in six manuscripts (4Q394-399), dating no earlier than 75 B.C.E., it may be, as we have it, as much a document of internal communal rhetoric of self-justification and construction as an actual missive sent at a particular point in the community's history to a particular adversarial group or authority.

⁶¹ Lawrence Schiffman's statement ('The New Halakhic Letter', p. 66) that 'the list of laws is indeed being strictly observed, as stated by the authors', finds no support in the text as he claims (presumably referring to the broken line C9).

⁶² See lines B1-2; C29, 32. Compare the early rabbinic expression *dibrê tôrâ*, as Torah discourse, including the written Torah and the rabbinic 'oral' Torah. For examples, see my book, *From Tradition to Commentary*, p. 258 n. 219.

⁶³ See 1QpHab 7.11; 8.1; 12.5.

⁶⁴ In 'mishnaic' Hebrew, the verb '*sh*' with Torah as its object can similarly mean either study or performance, or both. See Shraga Abramson, in *Leshonenu* 19 (1954): 61-65. For the later rabbinic view that the study of laws of sacrificial worship took the place of such worship after the Temple had been destroyed, see besides *b. Menah.* 110a, cited above, n. 31: *Lev. Rab.* 7:3 (ed. Margulies, p. 155); *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 6:3 (ed. Mandelbaum, p. 118); *Midr. Haggadol* to *Lev.* 7:37 (ed. Scaevola, n. 105).

study and instruction in several contexts, and to gain a view of the social and ideological shape of that community in which those texts and rules must have functioned, even if not as ideally projected.

In order to highlight the distinctive contours of this picture, I shall compare and contrast its most striking details with what we know, in general terms, of another Jewish studying community which has left us much the same sorts of evidence, albeit in texts some three centuries later: early rabbinic Judaism.⁶⁵

To begin with, the diet of study at Qumran is said to comprise—for the community as a whole, for its youth, and for its officers—two main parts: Torah and *mišpāt*.⁶⁶ The former is probably something close to the Pentateuch, while the latter are the laws revealed to and, to the extent possible, lived by the Qumran community.⁶⁷ Even as *mišpāt* is understood to derive from the Torah, it is clearly differentiated as a separate class in the study curriculum. Although this two-part division may be compared to that between *miqrā*' (read Scripture) and *mišnā* (repeated teaching) in early rabbinic literature, there is no parallel at Qumran to the accompanying rabbinic distinction between two Torahs, 'written' and 'oral'.⁶⁸ In addition, whereas the latter

⁶⁵ For extensive textual examples and more nuanced discussion of these characteristics of early rabbinic Judaism, see my book, *From Tradition to Commentary*, especially chap. 3, 'The Early Rabbinic Sage and His Torah in the Text of the Sifre'. Unfortunately, we lack sufficient evidence to paint a similarly detailed picture of any other Second Temple variety of Judaism. Whether this reflects the paucity of preserved data or the distinctiveness of the Qumran community, is impossible to say. In general terms, however, see my article, 'Of Priests, Scribes, and Sages in Second Temple Times', *JBL* (forthcoming). I leave to others more qualified than I the task of drawing similar comparisons and contrasts with related aspects of the varieties of early Christianity.

⁶⁶ For examples, see my discussion of IQS 6.6–8 above.

⁶⁷ This does not account for the many other kinds of texts—'biblical' and 'non-biblical', 'sectarian' and 'non-sectarian'—found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Perhaps 'Torah' and '*mišpāt*' include more than is generally allowed, or other types of texts (for example, the continuous *pēšārīm* to the Prophets) were studied but not considered part of the 'core curriculum', or other texts were used in liturgical settings, the line between study and worship, as we have seen, being somewhat porous at Qumran. Of course, not all texts found in the Dead Sea caves near Qumran were necessarily in active use in that community. Josephus reports that the Essenes 'display an extraordinary interest in the writings of the ancients' (*J.W.* 2.136), and in the same context that their new members took an oath 'to safeguard carefully the books of the sect' (*J.W.* 2.142). Would that we had a certain rule for differentiating between the 'writings of the ancients' and the 'books of the sect' among the Dead Sea Scrolls!

⁶⁸ For the idea that the laws of the community were revealed from the 'Torah of Moses', see especially IQS 5.8–10 and 8.12–16, both discussed above. For a twofold conception of sinaitic revelation, see 4 Ezra 14.5–6, 26, 45–48. There God instructs Moses to reveal one set of books to all of Israel, the 'worthy and the unworthy', while the other to the 'wise' alone. Unlike at Qumran, both sets of writings originate at Sinai, as claimed by the rabbis for their two-part Torah. But unlike the rabbis and like at Qumran, both parts are written and only the first was for Israel as a whole. A twofold written sinaitic revelation, exoteric and esoteric, may also be implied by the Book of Jubilees, which claims to be part of an esoteric sacred history dictated by the angels to Moses. Note in particular Jub. 6:22, which speaks of a 'first book of law', presumably the exoteric Torah to which Jubilees is a supplement. While 4QCatenā^a (4Q177) 1.14 (*DJD* 5 [1968]: 68) has been said by some (see John M. Allegro's translation ad loc.; and Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 1:396–97) to speak of a sectarian 'Second Law' (*sēper hattōrā sēnit*), it is not at all clear from the fragmentary context that this is the meaning. See J. Strugnell, *RQ* 7.2 (1970): 241, who translates 'That is the book of the Law again'. Since in the preceding line Hosea 5:8 had been interpreted to refer to 'the book of [vacat.]', the word *sēnit* following the second occurrence of

division among the rabbis includes *midrās hālākā*, legal exegesis of Scripture, there is no evidence of such a genre of texts at Qumran. While the *mišpātīm* are said to have been revealed to and studied by the community as a whole, that study does not appear to include, in any systematic way, the exegetical connecting of sectarian laws to texts of Torah.⁶⁹ Thus, even if we were to presume that sectarian laws were once generated by scriptural exegesis, the Qumran community as a whole studied the results and not the processes of such exegesis.

If the Qumran community believed themselves to be in possession of a twofold revelation, that which had been revealed to all of Israel and that which had been kept hidden from Israel but later revealed to them alone, then the latter revelation is said to have occurred with the formation of the sect and the commission of the Teacher of Righteousness to guide them some time after the rest of Israel had forsaken God and He had 'hidden His face' from them (CD 1.1–12; 3.12–20; 5.20–6.11). Thus, unlike rabbinic literature and some apocalyptic writings in which a twofold Torah is said to have been revealed simultaneously at Sinai,⁷⁰ the esoteric component of the Qumran revelation, both of laws and of prophecies, is said to have awaited the establishment of a second covenant with the sect subsequent to the destruction of the First Temple.⁷¹

However, this second-fold revelation was not considered a one-time occurrence, limited to the time of the sect's formation or to the ministry of its founding Teacher, but continuous in the ongoing study life of the community—its laity as well as its leaders. Thus, just as God's dispensation of knowledge at the time of the movement's origins is both to the founding community and to the founding Teacher, so too, His will and plan are revealed, 'from time to time', both to the community as a whole and to its especially inspired priestly and levitical elite. If revealed knowledge and interpretive authority is concentrated in the priestly class and officers of the community, whether because of pedigree or specialized knowledge and activity,⁷² it is shared by the community as a whole by virtue of their common life of mutually justifying

the same interpretation would mean 'a second time' (as in Gen. 22:15; Ezek. 4:6).

⁶⁹ The citation of scriptural prooftexts for sectarian law is limited to the Damascus Document (CD 9–12, 16). It should be stressed that we lack continuous works of legal exegesis (*midrās hālākā*, as distinct from legal 'rewritten Bible') from other varieties of Second Temple Judaism as well. The closest we get is Philo's *Questions and Answers to Exodus*. On explicit scriptural citation at Qumran in general, see above, n. 6.

⁷⁰ See above, n. 68. In early rabbinic literature it is claimed that this twofold revelation was intended, ultimately at least, for all of Israel, whereas the apocalyptic texts stress that the second-fold revelation was to the righteous or wise elect alone.

⁷¹ Since some of the apocalyptic texts of revelation (especially 1 Enoch and Jubilees) have been found in multiple copies among the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is not clear how the Qumran community would have regarded them in relation to what they claimed to have been revealed only after the formation of their movement. The notion of a belated second-fold revelation may be compared and contrasted with the notion of a second covenant, and retrospectively the formation of a 'New Testament', in Christianity with the advent of Jesus. The difference, as we have seen, is that the Qumran literature is not particularly attentive to, nor is it structured after, the life and teachings of its founding figure.

⁷² For the tension between pedigree and specialized knowledge, see especially CD 13.2–7, on which see above, nn. 30, 32.

discipline and ritualized study.⁷³

This strain, between the heuristic poles of 'elitist' and 'egalitarian' Torah ethics, is also to be found in early rabbinic literature, but with telling differences. The rabbinic sages claimed that just as at Sinai all of Israel shared in the reception and interpretation of revelation, even as Moses and the elders were singled out for special revelatory (and then judicial) prerogatives, so too throughout history all of Israel are, ideally at least, the receivers of the Torah text and its unfolding tradition, even as the non-priestly rabbinic class, by virtue of their concentrated and collective Torah study and discipline, have inherited the interpretive and judicial authority (formerly held by priests) to interpret and apply Torah for Israel.⁷⁴

The two interpretive societies, Qumran and rabbinic, notwithstanding their common emphasis on the revelatory and redemptive consequences of study, are critically different in two regards. The Qumran community understood itself *alone* as the true Israel, its privileged priesthood alone holding the ultimate authority to establish and apply the truly revealed law. The rabbinic class understood itself as a part of Israel, that part which claimed the authority to legislate for the people as a whole, but only by virtue of the performative example they set for the rest of Israel to follow. This is the difference between a movement that defined itself in moral and legal *separation* from the rest of Israel as a 'house of Torah' and 'congregation of holiness', and one that through its leadership and model sought to *transform* Israel as a whole into the same.⁷⁵

This difference may also be expressed in temporal terms. Both movements claimed that revelation and divinely authorized interpretation were continuous in their midst. For the rabbinic sages that continuity extended far back to the revelatory moment when all of Israel stood at Mt. Sinai, and forward through their own leadership of Israel, justified by their intensive social and performative engagement with the words of Torah, to the *eventual* redemption of Israel as a people. For the Qumran community that continuity extended back to the more recent past event of their rupture from the rest of Israel and the divine commission of their founding community and teacher, and forward through their privileged exilic state, justified by their watchful study, discipline, and prayer, to their *imminent* and exclusive messianic vindication. Both communities viewed their collective study as a medium for the *ongoing* disclosure of Scripture's meaning and God's will. Both also conceived of that study as their link to, and *re-enactment* of, an originary revelatory moment.

⁷³ Similarly, there is a sharing of judicial authority between the community's priests and laity, as expressed in the composition of courts, even as the priests are paramount. See citations in n. 20 above.

⁷⁴ For the tension between 'egalitarian' and 'elitist' Torah ethics among the early rabbinic sages, with many examples, see chap. 3 of my book, *From Tradition to Commentary*.

⁷⁵ It should be stressed that this comparison is between two literatures that in their present forms derive from significantly different times and circumstances, and therefore it is not intended as a historical judgment. Whether the antecedents to the rabbinic sages, generally thought to have been the Pharisees, whose name has the root meaning of separation, had a similar stance vis-à-vis history and larger Israel is difficult to determine with precision because of the absence of any Pharisaic literary remains.

For the Qumran community that moment was one that set them apart from the rest of Israel under the prophetic guidance of the Teacher of Righteousness in the aftermath of the Exile, while for the rabbinic sages it was that which set Israel as a people apart from the other nations under the guidance of Moses and the elders (the prototypes of the rabbinic sages) at Sinai.

Returning to the question of why the Qumran community's sectarian literature does not derive its revelatory authority from pseudepigraphic attribution to biblical seers, I would argue that the movement experienced its collective life of study and practice (and study as practice) as the revelatory link to the biblical past that justified its rules and teachings, just as its life of purity and prayer linked it to heaven. While its priestly or levitical officers continued the interpretive work of the founding Teacher while anticipating the restoration of messianic rule, so too the community as a whole continued the interpretive work of the founding 'converts' while anticipating the establishment of a messianic community. If the ritualized discipline of study played an important socializing and solidifying function in shaping neophytes, youth, and the membership as a whole into a unitary society (*yahad*), it also served to construct a self-conception of that society in continuity with the biblical 'camp', with the heavenly 'sanctuary', and with the eschatological order.

These conclusions have implications not just for our reconstruction of the ideology and institutions of the Qumran community as *represented* in these texts, but for our analysis of the *rhetorical* work of these texts themselves in their making and remaking of the society and its leaders engaged in their study. If we presume that the main sectarian scrolls of commentary, of rules, and of liturgy were copied at Qumran not just for the sake of preservation (not to be discounted), but in order to be *used* communally in the several contexts of study and instruction described above, then we must ask *how* these texts through their very study constructed and confirmed their readers' self-understanding as a socially unitary and separate community, divinely chosen to prepare an exegetical and ruled way through the wilderness to the very end of days.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ For a preliminary example of this sort of analysis, see Carol A. Newsom, 'Apocalyptic and the Discourse of the Qumran Community', *JNES* 49.2 (April, 1990): 135-44.