

DAVID C. HARRIS

Holy War Discourses  
in 1QM and  
John's Apocalypse

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

604

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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David C. Harris

# Holy War Discourses in 1QM and John's Apocalypse

A Comparative Study

Mohr Siebeck

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## Preface

Every doctoral dissertation is an arduous journey and this one was no exception. The genesis of my research began during a time of post-graduate field studies in and around the location of Qumran and at the Shrine of the Book, in Israel. I was initially inspired by the late Dr. Peter Flint, who, during a visit to my graduate school (Regent College in Vancouver), encouraged students to look more deeply into the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), for, he rightly argued, the opportunity to study new materials and make fresh discoveries was still very much alive in those texts. I took this to heart, and decided to research the scrolls in greater depth.

My interest in John's Apocalypse came from a practical desire to know the book itself better. I have many scholars to thank in this regard, and a great number of them are cited in this monograph. One in particular, Adela Yarbro Collins, encouraged me early on to focus on a single scroll, one individual text instead of the entire DSS corpus. This sound advice led me to one of the few pieces of research that directly attempts to connect John's Apocalypse (or any New Testament text for that matter) to the DSS, namely, the work of Richard Bauckham, who argued that John's Apocalypse, for various reasons, stands as a sort of 'Christian War Scroll,' in the vein of the War Scroll of Qumran (1QM).

Having found a scholarly connection between these two great texts, I then needed a means of conducting a thoroughgoing examination of the entire scroll I had chosen, 1QM, as it speaks to the themes and theology found in John's Apocalypse. The phenomenon of theological Holy War came immediately to the fore as a major and significant component of both texts which would serve as the vehicle for my comparison, and I built on Gerhard von Rad's groundbreaking work dealing with the topic because it paved the way for the furtherance of his foundational research. As a literary theme, Holy War often seems scandalous and morally contradictory to the modern understanding, but to the ancients it was a driving force that justified extensive brutality and horrible bloodshed. I believe we have much to learn from its careful analysis.

There are many other related concepts that populate this monograph, and among the more prominent voices are those of Yigael Yadin and Lawrence Schiffman, both preeminent DSS scholars. In the area of John's Apocalypse,



no recent research would be complete without taking into account the monumental efforts of David Aune. The reader will find the thought-life and scholarly work of these great thinkers and many others brought together in the pages that follow. But the most directly influential source, to whom indeed my entire methodology is indebted, would be my thesis supervisor, Prof. Dr. Gerhardus Van den Heever, from the University of South Africa. Without his steady guidance and keen insight this research would never have seen the light of day, and I would have been left with a respectably good idea but no means of executing it. To him I am forever grateful.

There are many other scholars I could thank for directly influencing my course of investigation, and although space is limited and so constrains my expressions of gratitude I would simply say, if you find yourself cited here I am sincerely appreciative of your time, your work, and your generosity in providing the advice, feedback, and encouragement I needed. I hope to be as helpful as you were to me if I am ever asked to provide the same.

I conclude this introduction by making it explicit to the reader that my journey towards completion of this monograph was both personal and experiential in that I attended many conferences, spoke with numerous scholars, and ploughed through piles of books and articles; at no time whatsoever was Artificial Intelligence (AI) used as a tool to produce any portion of this book.

Dr. David C. Harris, Ph.D.

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## Chapter 1

# Setting up a Comparative Reading

It has been noted that apocalyptic literature, along with the symbolic worlds which it generates, and the theologies it gives birth to, is, by nature, literature of conflict, struggle, violence, and resistance.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, whether it be of Jewish or Christian origin, historically-based or otherworldly, restorative or utopian,<sup>2</sup> in its final form the impulse to conquer an evil world, or more specifically, the apocalyptic hope that evil would one day be overcome by means of divine intervention, was widespread as a diversified worldview throughout ancient Israel during the Second Temple period.<sup>3</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that John's Apocalypse (the Book of Revelation) would be seen as comparable to Jewish sectarian literature, to the extent that Revelation has been described as a "Christian War Scroll"<sup>4</sup> in the vein of the Qumran War Scroll, or War Rule, known by its designated siglum as 1QM. Accordingly, the following research will focus on the exploration of the relationship between these two ancient documents with an eye towards illuminating the larger matter of Jewish thought development leading as it does into Christian origins by way of shared discourses. This side-by-side comparison will be viewed through the lens of

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<sup>1</sup> Anthea Portier-Young, "Jewish Apocalyptic Literature as Resistance Literature," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 145–162.

<sup>2</sup> The eschatology of the Dead Sea sect was both restorative and utopian. See Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming The Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, The Background of Christianity, The Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 339.

<sup>3</sup> The apocalyptic worldview was a forward-thinking perspective based on the Jewish prophetic tradition. It was not monolithic, and each sect was inclined towards idiosyncrasies that distinguished the group. Some of these theological differences will be taken into account in this study. For a discussion of the genre of apocalypse as distinguished from the apocalyptic worldview, see John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 1–8.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase "Christian War Scroll" was coined by Richard Bauckham in *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 210–237. Bauckham's inspiration was derived from Matthew Black, "Not Peace but a Sword: Matt. 10:34ff; Luke 12: 51ff," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. C.F.D. Moule and E. Bammel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 287–294.

Holy War<sup>5</sup> as a recurring phenomenon found in the common body of sacred literature shared by both texts.

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) occurred less than a century ago, it is reasonable to consider DSS research to be as yet in its infancy when compared with the centuries of scrutiny directed towards the Apocalypse of John. In light of this imbalance and numerous other unknowns, it must be asked, is John's Apocalypse, and by extension certain facets of Christian theology, indebted in some way to IQM? Conversely, is Qumranic apocalypticism a direct antecedent to that of nascent Christianity, and if so, what would be the nature of such development? Most specifically – and for the purposes of this study – within the literary motif of *Holy War*, is there a type of metatextual relationship<sup>6</sup> to be found within the discourse between Revelation and IQM, giving some credence to the coining of terms such as 'Christian War Scroll?' And beyond all of these, if indeed such a relationship exists, does the Holy War motif then provide any insight with regard to the so-called 'parting of the ways' between Judaism and Christianity? Such questions will serve as doorways into a critical analysis which will drive our study forward. Consequently, a re-examination of the Book of Revelation in light of Holy War as depicted by IQM is appropriate.<sup>7</sup>

Section One of this study will begin with a rationale for our research, accompanied by a survey of various Qumran-Christian theories. These theories

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<sup>5</sup> Holy War has been alternately categorized as a literary theme, an institution, and an ideology by scholars. See Tremper Longman III, "The Divine Warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif." *WTJ* 44 (1982): 290–307. While not neglecting these categories, for our purposes we will engage with the topic in a broader sense, referring to it as a phenomenon or shared experience embedded in Jewish collective memory during the centuries immediately preceding and following the Second Temple period when our two texts were written. Von Rad used the same terminology. See Gerhard Von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, trans. Marva J. Dawn (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000), 44.

<sup>6</sup> This study seeks to hone Bauckham's thesis describing Revelation as a "Christian War Scroll," to the more sharply defined literary category of a *metatext*, per Genette. See Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). We will stop short of theorizing that Revelation may have used IQM as a *vorlage*, because of the association that term has with works of translation. Genette's categories define the metatext as a commentary on a prior text, not necessarily quoting or even referencing the earlier document.

<sup>7</sup> Despite disagreement over the true identification of the Qumran sectarians, it is widely understood that they existed as an apocalyptic community, with expectations of divine intervention in an anticipated Holy War that would overthrow the enemies of God and of the sect itself. While IQM itself is not an 'apocalypse' in terms of its literary genre, it does reflect the apocalyptic worldview that was common among many, if not all, Second Temple Jewish sects. According to Collins: "A worldview is not necessarily tied to any one literary form, and the apocalyptic worldview could find expressions in other genres besides apocalypses," John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 8.

will establish the outer boundaries of analysis by referencing the possibilities of points of contact, and serve as background for our study. While tentative in nature, such theories are relevant for historical, geographical, cultural, and literary considerations, and will support the discursive aspect of our methodology. Following this will be a general review of the theories of authorship and origination ascribed to both Revelation and to 1QM, with provisional positions taken for the purpose of furthering historical and comparative theological analysis.

Our opening section will conclude with a review of scholarly thought concerning the Holy War phenomenon and literary motif as it is found in ancient Israelite Scripture preceding both Revelation and 1QM. This will clear the way for a detailed examination by way of the juxtaposition of a series of comparisons in the form of contrasting literary symbols, referents, phrases, terms, and concepts from both Revelation and 1QM, all pertaining to the larger theme of Holy War as portrayed in each document.

In Section Two, we will outline a comparative/rhetorical methodology appropriate to our investigation, which will enable us to triangulate questions of genre and intertextuality, language and perception, cultural and theological trajectories, in conjunction with the apocalyptic expectations expressed by both documents. These comparisons will be located within the domain of discourse, as both 1QM and Revelation are recognized as being in dialog with a wider pool of shared influences.

Section Three will be comprised of a detailed comparative analysis of these aspects of Holy War as they are employed by 1QM and Revelation. We will work progressively through 1QM, it being the earlier of the two documents, noting aspects which correspond to and/or conflict with that of Revelation, while noting features which may be analogous to, or dependent upon the Qumran War Scroll. These elements and aspects will be garnered from the immense world of discursive interaction which may be readily detected in both texts.

Finally, theological comparisons will be drawn between that of 1QM and early apocalyptic Christianity, vis-à-vis Revelation, as they shaped the trajectory and evolution of the institution of Holy War itself. These will be accompanied by assessments regarding the larger issue(s) of Jewish thought development feeding into Christian origins.

## 1. Rationale

This study is given warrant, in part, by the textbook writings of James VanderKam and Peter Flint, who assert the need for renewed attention to be directed



toward this area of research.<sup>8</sup> David Aune has verified this assertion, noting that the raw number of DSS citations to be found in commentaries on John's Apocalypse had steadily decreased over a 20+ year period of time, rather than increasing, as one might expect.<sup>9</sup> Yet as a number of scholars indicate, IQM is of particular interest to the study of Revelation.<sup>10</sup> Many reasons can be given for this association, among them being the prominent literary motif of Holy War, along with its associated imagery and theology, which provides a basis for mutual comparison. Under this rubric we would include the following points.

- The thematic indicators which accompany a biblical Holy War are detectable in both Revelation and in IQM, even as the two documents differ in their approach to, and understanding of the battle(s).
- Both Revelation and IQM share the expectation of a final battle between Israel's God and the powers of evil in the world, with the portrayal of an ultimate victory on the part of God. In both cases the result is a victory which culminates in eternal peace for God's faithful people, who are expected to endure an extended period of tribulation prior.
- Both primary texts share a use of otherworldly beings, i.e., angelic figures in the context of the Holy War, with specific angels being named. In both cases it is anticipated that these angelic beings will engage in a decisive battle (or series of battles), with the people/armies of God taking either a passive or active stance as the Holy War unfolds.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Most discussions of the relationship between the Qumran scrolls and the New Testament have placed little emphasis on the book of Revelation...This is somewhat surprising, in view of the relevance of the documents such as the War Rule [IQM] and the New Jerusalem Text for our understanding of the New Testament book. Although there are many references to the Dead Sea Scrolls in scholarly literature that throw light on the interpretation of specific passages in Revelation, most studies and commentaries on the book of Revelation have not felt the full impact of the scrolls." Jude

C. VanderKam and Peter W. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 362.

<sup>9</sup> David Aune, "Qumran and the Book of Revelation," in *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity: Collected Essays* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 79.

<sup>10</sup> See Aune, "Qumran and the Book of Revelation," in *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity: Collected Essays*, 79–98; Adela Yarbro Collins, "Revelation, Book of," in *EDSS 2:772–774*; VanderKam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 362–378.

<sup>11</sup> See Richard Bauckham, "The Book of Revelation as a Christian War Scroll." *Neot 22* (1988): 17–40.

- Both Revelation and IQM share a common foreign enemy in the Roman Empire, which appears as a cypher in Revelation as *Babylon*,<sup>12</sup> and as a cypher in IQM as the *Kittim*.<sup>13</sup> Along these lines, both texts include various names referencing a number of Israel's other historic enemies. Similarly, both share a common spiritual enemy in *Satan*, or *Belial*, who, it is predicted, will suffer a final defeat.
- Each book references military arrangements and aspects of conquest found in the Hebrew Scriptures; hence the same authoritative written sources are drawn from in both documents.
- Revelation and IQM share assorted symbolism in depictions of trumpets, insignia, and priestly designations. Moreover, they share characteristics that stem from Levitical holiness requirements prior to battle.

These, and several other features of our subject texts, perhaps provide more “points of contact” between the two literatures than previously assumed.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.1 Various Theories of a Qumran-Christian Connection

DSS research is particularly susceptible (as is Revelation) to unwarranted and undisciplined theorizing. As a result, the hope of clearly defining any relational links between Qumran and the early Christian movement has not been promising. Most efforts have been marked by sensationalism and disappointment. Florentino García Martínez, expressing his own dismay, reflected that, having once been enthusiastic about the possibility of uncovering new areas of overlap between the DSS and Christianity, in retrospect he had hoped for far richer findings than what has been produced.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in an effort to stave off

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<sup>12</sup> David E. Aune, *Revelation*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 829–830; Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2013), 18–19.

<sup>13</sup> Acknowledging the possibility that the Kittim may also include the Seleucids, we stay with Rome, since this is the majority view among scholars, and the comparison is most useful for our purposes. It is quite possible that the Kittim references are aimed not only at certain people but also to specific *events*, such as the taking of Jerusalem. See Timothy H. Lim, “Kittim,” *EDSS* 1:469–471.

<sup>14</sup> Loren L. Johns, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Apocalypse of John,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Princeton Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 3: *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 255–279. Citing Aune, Yarbo Collins, and Flint, Johns asserts that a consensus among scholars is that two individual themes: 1) the final eschatological battle and 2) the New Jerusalem, appear to be the most promising motifs for furthering intertextual studies of Revelation. In the present research we pursue the former.

<sup>15</sup> “But the results have been disappointing and, in spite of the thousands of books written on the matter during the fifties and sixties, no real consensus among scholars was reached. The quest has been practically abandoned, and the relationship between the two corpora is only sporadically treated.” Florentino García Martínez, “Qumran Between The Old And The

overblown expectations and the grief that inevitably follows, some caveats are necessary. To that end, this section will survey a list of hypotheses which will serve as theoretical background material for our study. It is the intention of this researcher to set aside excessive guess work, in favor of a more circumspect approach, in an attempt to salvage whatever data and information may be useful to the matter of Jewish thought development leading into Christian origins. While this catalog is by no means intended to be exhaustive, our overview will begin with an historical extrapolation from John the Baptist, followed by supporting considerations per Josephus. We will then look at the geographical location of Qumran according to Pliny the Elder, followed by a review of Qumran as a holiness school. This will be followed by considerations of Greek manuscript evidence found in Cave 7. Finally, we will consider the possibility that John of Patmos had some familiarity with the Qumran sect and its literature. Taken together these items would conceivably link the early Christian movement to the Qumran sectarians *from a conceptual standpoint*, if not an historical one.

It must be noted that the point of these caveats, again, is to set the outer limits of our research, beyond which we shall not speculate. In the flush of excitement which naturally surrounds such momentous discoveries as the DSS, the rush to apply new information to old questions is understandable and to be expected, and since the novelty of the DSS made its initial impact beginning in 1947, the scholarly world has indeed seen a host of new theories. Yet this impulse must be tempered in order to yield accurate and useful findings. The intention of this study is to make a precise assessment of a certain aspect of two documents in our possession, and to avoid contributing to the unrestrained conjecture of popular conspiracies. Thus, the following overview of some plausible connections between the visionary worlds of the *yahad* and that of John of Patmos is simply a survey intended to provide the context for other points of contact which will arise during the course of our study. These must each be considered on their own individual merits, but the cumulative weight of the plausible connections also, we would argue, begins to build a fairly persuasive case for some degree of intertextuality between our pair of texts.

### *1.2 Extrapolation from John the Baptist*

First, while it has been suggested that John the Baptist might be a possible candidate for some level of direct involvement in the Qumran community, this now largely marginalized hypothesis was originally fueled by the following five factors:<sup>16</sup>

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New Testament,” in *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament*, STDJ 85 (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 1–6.

<sup>16</sup> These have been excerpted from VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 330–332.

1. John's family background as having elderly parents.
2. John's lineage as one having come from a priestly family.
3. John's ministry being located in the vicinity of the Judean wilderness.
4. Similarities between John's ministry and that of Qumran, including ritual baptism.
5. John's interpretation of certain Scriptures being similar to that of Qumran.

Taken together, these do present a rather compelling, yet ultimately inconclusive case for the famous Baptist to have been at one time directly associated with the Qumran sect. For example, Josephus points out that, located at Qumran, was a community which found room for child adoption,<sup>17</sup> which some speculate may have been the case with John the Baptist himself, having been born to elderly parents.<sup>18</sup> Second, John's own lineage being derived from a priestly family would have coincided with the sectarian concern for a halachically pure priesthood and Qumran's own possible Zadokite origins.<sup>19</sup> Third, John's ministry as an adult is said to have taken place in the Judean wilderness, the same region if not the precise locale as Qumran.<sup>20</sup> Fourth, John's form of baptism into repentance was similar to the sectarian ceremonial washings, although the meaning of those rituals, while theologically connected, would have been performed differently.<sup>21</sup> Of the five points listed above, perhaps the most compelling is the similar interpretation of Scripture. The Baptist's own interpretation of Isaiah 40:3 shares with the Qumran sect a common reasoning for dwelling out in the wilderness, namely, to prepare for the coming of the Lord.<sup>22</sup>

As a result, although this theory has largely been set aside due to its lack of concreteness, the factors which made it attractive to begin with should not be entirely discarded, particularly when we widen the scope to include the possibility of social interaction between the Qumran community and the larger cross section of Jews in the region, including those of the earliest Christian movement. By extension, if John the Baptist were indeed tied to the Qumran sect as a youth, it seems plausible that the harsh strictness of Qumran discipline would have been sufficient to drive him and many would-be followers away later in

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<sup>17</sup> Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008): *War* 2.120.

<sup>18</sup> See Luke 1:7, 18, and VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 330.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> As referenced in Luke 1:80 (NASB), "And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel."

<sup>21</sup> Among the difference being that John apparently performed the baptisms himself as a single instance practice, while the members of the *yahad* used the ritual baths on a personal and regular basis. See VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 331.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

life, out into other related communities such as that of Jewish Christianity.<sup>23</sup> We know, for example, that Josephus himself claims to have had direct contact with the Qumran sectarians as a teenager, albeit briefly.<sup>24</sup> For this reason John the Baptist (and Josephus) are representative of what may have been typical experiences at the time. It is to the claims of Josephus to which we now turn our attention.<sup>25</sup>

### 1.3 Josephus at Qumran

The claim on the part of Josephus to have spent time among the Qumran sectarians is entirely defensible, and, on the balance, while his writings are

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<sup>23</sup> In the disorderly historical progression often described as the ‘parting of the ways,’ which saw the development out of an ancient Jewish milieu, into the transitory ‘Jewish Christian,’ and finally leading to the distinctly recognizable Christian cultural markings of later centuries, rituals such as *baptism* become very useful for tracing the evolution of religious practice and theology in the era from which our two documents are derived. Hence, while the present research is not centered or focused on the practice of baptism per se, the transitional (and much overlooked) ‘Jewish Christian’ blending and overlap of ritual and its accompanying holy writ is germane to our study. On the issue of baptism, G. van den Heever frames the matter thusly: “There was a widespread culture of practicing a specific kind of washing, labelled baptism. It constitutes an essential characteristic of ‘heterodox’ Jewish groups because of its underlying critique and replacement of temple cult and ritual (which are deemed—for the period—an essential marker of Jewishness and identity). The rite carries apocalyptic overtones due to its association with repentance as entry into the end-time people of God. It is within this trajectory that Jewish Christian groups should be understood, and that Jewish Christianity should be localized.” Van den Heever continues: “Second, by drawing the line like this, that is, running almost straight over Qumran via John the Baptist (even though the differences between John and Qumran are noted) into the Jesus movement and subsequently into the New Testament literature as the charter documents of later first century Christian social formations, implies that the New Testament to a large extent itself is an exponent of Jewish Christianity, which then causes Jewish Christianity practically to disappear from view when it is, so to say, indistinguishable from emerging ‘mainstream’ Christianities.”

This note is helpful as it is this same amorphous and transitional ‘Jewish Christianity’ which the present research deals with, as it represents an inheritor of Jewish thought and culture, and subsequently feeding as it does (by way of discourse) into the apocalyptic literature of the Christian Scriptures, i.e., via John’s Apocalypse. Prior to the ‘parting of the ways’ between Jewish and Christian theology (and the clash of civilizations which ensued), the intermediary *Jewish Christian* understanding of divinely sanctified warfare (or Holy War) was based on a shared tradition with which both Jews and Christians would interact. It is this tradition which we will focus on as it is used and reconfigured in both IQM and Revelation. See Gerhardus A. Van den Heever, “The Spectre of a Jewish Baptist Movement. A Space for Jewish Christianity?” *ASE* 34 (2017): 43–69.

<sup>24</sup> Josephus, *Life* 10–12; *Ant.* 13:171; 15:371.

<sup>25</sup> For a broader sociological perspective on the hypothesis of a Qumran-Christian connection existing between John the Baptist and the *yahad*, see f.n. 110 below.

understood by scholars to indicate a high degree of concern for his Roman audience, the supporting evidence for a direct connection between Josephus and the Qumran sectarians seems to substantiate his assertion. The list of accurate descriptions provided by Josephus of the Qumran community is lengthy. These include the following:<sup>26</sup>

1. Josephus accurately describes a three-year period of initiation into the sect.
2. Josephus accurately depicts the strict organizational authority among the sectarians.
3. Josephus discusses the aspects of shared communal property within the sect.
4. Josephus accurately describes the daily routines and rituals which take place at Qumran, including regular ceremonial washings and communal meals.
5. Josephus specifically indicates that oil was forbidden by members of the sect due to ritual defilement, a prohibition which is verified by the writings of the sect.

These and other descriptions indicate a personal familiarity with the Essene sect on the part of Josephus which appears to go beyond the mere desire to entertain a Roman audience. When we consider that Flavius Josephus, born Joseph ben Matthias, himself a Galilean Jew, had some direct contact with the Qumran community – and he being the only known Jewish historian from the Second Temple era – what strong objection could arise from the notion that so many other Jews from the same time period and locale, Christian Jews in particular, would also have had some direct contact with Qumran? The point seems evident: The Qumran sectarians did not exist in a vacuum, isolated from the rest of the Jewish population.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Jews of the time widely shared a common language and spiritual heritage, with shared Scriptures and holy observances. Furthermore, while many undoubtedly held opposing political positions – a common sociological characteristic which we would expect among any diverse population – they all lived under the same theocratic sacrificial system, ruled over during that time by the Roman Empire. For this reason, we must not make the assumption that Christian Jews in the region were unconscious or ignorant of the existence of the Qumran sectarians with their particular views and practices, despite the argument which comes from silence. Quite the opposite, we must posit some familiarity between Jewish neighbors.

#### *1.4 Pliny the Elder and the Qumran Location*

To the previous points, we must further emphasize that, given the pivotal geographic location of Qumran as described by Pliny the Elder<sup>28</sup> – stationed as it

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<sup>26</sup> These items have been excerpted from Todd S. Beall, “Essenes,” *EDSS* 1:262–269.

<sup>27</sup> 4QMMT by itself indicates contact with the outside world. See 4Q394 1:2–5, 8.

<sup>28</sup> See Pliny et al., *Natural History* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press; W. Heinemann, 1971), 5.73. “Beneath them stood the town of Engadda, for Fertility (of soil)

was at an intersection that constituted the main thoroughfare leading up to Jerusalem, departing eastward from the King's Highway, heading away from the Jordan River – that it is entirely possible, again even likely, that many, if not most or all, of the disciples of Jesus came within close vicinity of the Qumran communal location repeatedly during their lifetimes.

A trek to Jerusalem was a tri-annual event required by Torah law of every Israelite family.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, it is almost inconceivable that the first Jewish Christians would have, *en masse*, been completely unaware of the Qumran sectarians, or so unobservant as to be oblivious to the existence of Qumran as the central hub of a thriving Jewish sub-community contemporary with their own. The existence of the Qumran sect predating Christianity by roughly 250 years would have also meant that the sect had long been established at its outpost, even considering the history of destruction and rebuilding now thought to have occurred at the location.<sup>30</sup>

### 1.5 Qumran as a Holiness School

A final ingredient in determining the plausibility of nascent Christianity's general acquaintance with Qumran has to do with the nature of the Essene community itself. As described by the *Community Rule* (1QS)<sup>31</sup> and Josephus,<sup>32</sup> a candidate seeking admittance to the sect would have gone through a rigorous two-to-three-year period of initiation. This lengthy process would have required any new initiate to dedicate his full energies and resources to the working ethos of the community, subject to a yearly review appraising the success or failure of his dedication. The pitfalls and punishments were considerable, and demerits were apparently doled out liberally for a wide variety of reasons.<sup>33</sup> This being the case, full acceptance as a member would have been no small accomplishment.

To this end, it has been theorized, based on the mention of a plurality of outposts in the Damascus Document (CD),<sup>34</sup> plus a disproportionately high number of men to women buried in the nearby cemetery,<sup>35</sup> that Qumran

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and Groves of Date-trees the next City Hierosolyma, now a place for the dead. Beyond it is Masada, a castle upon a Rock, and not far from Asphaltites.”

<sup>29</sup> Exodus 23:17; 34:23; Deuteronomy 16:16–17.

<sup>30</sup> See revised chronology in Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> 1QS 6:13–23.

<sup>32</sup> *The Jewish War* 2.137–142.

<sup>33</sup> For example, 1QS 7:1–27 prescribes ten days punishment for talking over another person's words.

<sup>34</sup> CD 7:6; 12:23; 13:20; 14:3; 14:9; 14:17; 19:2.

<sup>35</sup> “...the archaeological evidence attests to only a minimal female presence at Qumran.” Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 182.

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