

EXILE AND SELF-IDENTITY IN THE QUMRAN SECT AND IN HELLENISTIC JUDAISM

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The nature and exact location of the Qumran sect's exile has occupied scholars from the time the Scrolls were discovered, and the subject continues to evoke interest and controversy today. Almost every possible scenario has been suggested: Damascus is actually Damascus; Damascus is only a symbolic designation; the desert is the actual location of the sect's sojourn; the desert is only a metaphor; Damascus and desert both denote geographical locations where the members of the sect resided at different times. To the best of my knowledge, the only possibility not raised in the scholarly literature is that both places are metaphorical and that the members of the sect resided in neither. Even those who deny that the desert was the habitat of any members of the sect, admit that the sect did experience exile.¹ Thus, all agree that the Teacher of Righteousness' "house of exile," (בית גלותו) (pHab 11:6), involved an actual physical exile. The disagreement concerns only its location.

Since the sect did experience physical exile, its self-identity would have been influenced by that experience and should exhibit characteristics associated with diaspora. The majority of the Jews in the Second Temple period lived in the Diaspora and passed on a vast literature that reveals more than a bit about their values and *Weltanschauung*. Obviously, the Babylonian Talmud, hundreds of years later, also reflects diasporan attitudes. However, the question of

* I wish to thank Dr. Esther G. Chazon and Prof. Betsy Halpern-Amaru for their assistance in presenting this paper at the Symposium and the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature for a postdoctoral grant in support of this research.

¹ Y. Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1957), 256 (Hebrew); L. H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 93–94; D. Dimant, "Not Exile in the Desert but Exile in Spirit: The Peshet of Isa. 40:3 in the Rule of Community," *Meghillot* 2 (2004): 21–36 (Hebrew).

the affinity between the values and worldview of Diaspora Jewry and those of the Qumran sect has hardly ever been discussed. Contemporary scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls seldom compare the sect's theology to that of Diaspora Jews, and historians who deal with the Diaspora almost never refer to the Scrolls. Thus, for example, four important monographs on the Jewish Diaspora that have appeared in the past fifteen years barely mention the Dead Sea Scrolls.² In this paper, I would like to begin a preliminary discussion of the subject and point to possible directions for future research.

Two methodological issues need to be clarified from the outset. First, a diasporan identity does not necessarily derive from a location outside of the Land of Israel. Rather, such an identity refers to values and outlook, not to geographical location.³ Second, the attributes under discussion are not the general attributes of abstract group identities, but rather specific religious and cultural phenomena. As Philip Alexander noted in regard to Hellenism, the identity of a group can be described only in the light of the concrete details that define it.

In one paper it is not possible to cover the entire range of details that comprise the mosaic of the Qumran sect's identity. Therefore, I will focus on a selection of components that demonstrate significant similarities between the identity of the sect and certain patterns of identity among communities of the Jewish Diaspora. The highlighting of similarities will also point to some differences between the diasporan identities of these groups.⁴ An overarching question to be addressed is to what extent the different historical circumstances, on

² In the index of I. M. Gafni, *Land, Center and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* (JSPSup 21; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), there is not a single reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls; the few references to the Scrolls in J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); E. S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); and idem, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), do not relate to the question of Jewish diasporan identity but to technical and marginal topics.

³ D. R. Schwartz, "From the Maccabees to Masada: On Diasporan Historiography of the Second Temple Period," in *Jüdische Geschichte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit: Wege der Forschung—Von alten zum neuen Schürer* (ed. A. Oppenheimer; Munich: Oldenburg, 1999), 35 n. 17.

⁴ For another discussion of this issue see D. R. Schwartz's introduction to *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity* (WUNT 60; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1992), 1–26, esp. 15–24.

the one hand, and the common phenomenon of exile, on the other, shape the ideology and the theology of diaspora, both for the Qumran sect and for Diaspora groups.

I

The first component involves the attitudes of the sect and of Hellenistic Jewry to the Temple. As is well known, the Qumran sect viewed the existing Temple in Jerusalem as a place of sin and pollution and forbade participation in the rituals conducted there. It is sufficient to point to comments in the *Damascus Document* about the Jerusalem priests who “continuously polluted the sanctuary” (CD 5:6): “And all who were brought into the covenant [are] not to enter the sanctuary to light his altar in vain, [but rather are] to be ‘closers of the door’ of whom God said, ‘Who of you will close my door and not light my altar in vain?’” (CD 6:11–14).⁵

In Jewish Hellenistic literature, on the other hand, the Jerusalem Temple was perceived, not as a place of sin and pollution, but rather as a holy and distinguished place held in high repute even by Gentile kings. The author of 2 Maccabees relates how Seleucus IV defrayed all the expenses of the sacrificial ritual in the Temple; the *Letter of Aristeas* indicates that Ptolemy Philadelphus donated beautiful utensils to the Temple; and according to 3 Maccabees, Ptolemy Philopator was very positively impressed by its grandeur and organization.⁶

Nonetheless, one finds both in Jewish Hellenistic literature and in the Scrolls a perspective that seeks a substitute for the Jerusalem Temple and attempts to reduce its importance and centrality. This

⁵ J. M. Baumgarten and D. R. Schwartz, “Damascus Document (CD),” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, 2: Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth et al.; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck]; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 21–23. See further 4QFlorilegium (4Q174) and 11QT. Of the extensive scholarly literature on the sect’s attitude toward the Temple, see B. Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (SNTSMS 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 16–46; D. R. Schwartz, “The Three Temples of 4Q Florilegium,” *RevQ* 10 (1979): 83–91; D. Dimant, “4QFlorilegium and the Idea of the Community as Temple,” in *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetzky* (ed. A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel and J. Riaud; Collection de la REJ 3; Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 187–88.

⁶ 2 Macc 3:2–3; *Let. Aris.* 51–82; 3 Macc 1:9–10.

aspect of the sectarian literature is well known. The *Community Rule* says: “the Council of the Community (עצת היחוד) shall be truly established as an eternal planting, a house of holiness for Israel and a foundation of the holy of holies for Aaron... chosen by God’s will to atone for the land... for a covenant of justice and to offer a sweet savor.... And they will be accepted willingly to atone for the land.”⁷ According to this statement, the Council of the Community is “a house of holiness,” a temple, and the Aaronites who are members of this council are “the holy of holies,” the holiest part of that temple, which only the high priest may enter on the Day of Atonement. Through the uniqueness of their religious beliefs and actions the members of the group atone for the land and sacrifice a sweet savor just as was done in the physical Temple. It is clear that the community is the Temple itself, complete with its sacrifices and atonement, which has undergone a process of spiritualization.⁸

Although more subtly expressed, a similar perspective is evident in Hellenistic Judaism. In several works by Jews living in the Diaspora, we find expressions of concern with their physical distance from the Temple and the development of creative solutions to the problem. It is well known that the *Letter of Aristeas* praises Jerusalem and the Temple extensively. However, alongside the praise and glorification, one also finds a hint that Aristeas’ affinity to the Temple is more complex than it might first appear. As noted earlier, Aristeas recounts the Ptolemaic king’s generous donation to the Temple, which, among other things, includes a table and other Temple utensils. The *Letter of Aristeas* emphasizes that the king consulted with priests regarding the suitability of the table, and that the table was constructed according to

⁷ My translation of 1QS 8:5–10: נכונה עצת היחוד באמת למטעת עולם בית קודש לישראל וסוד קודש קודשים לאהרון... ובחירי רצון לכפר בעד הארץ... לברית משפט ולקריב ריה ניחוח... והיו לרצון לכפר בעד הארץ.

⁸ See, inter alia, Gärtner, *Temple and Community*, 22–30; D. R. Schwartz, *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity*, 37; L. H. Schiffman, “Community Without Temple: The Qumran Community’s Withdrawal from the Jerusalem Temple,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel (Community without Temple): Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kultus im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (ed. B. Ego, A. Lange and P. Pilhofer; WUNT 118; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 272–74; and, using discourse studies terminology, C. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran* (STDJ 52; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 152–65; for a different interpretation, see Dimant, “4QFlorilegium,” 186–89.

the size specified in the Torah in order to make it appropriate for the Temple service. It may be the case that one of the writer's aims in recounting these details was to detract from the Temple's association with the Jews of Jerusalem and to suggest its partnership with the Jews of the Egyptian Diaspora. Those Jews are represented in the story by their Ptolemaic king, who released them from bondage and initiated the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek, their language.⁹

Other Diaspora works express a different attitude toward the Temple. In his commentary on 2 Maccabees, Daniel Schwartz argues, in contrast to Robert Doran, that the work attributes only a secondary importance to the Temple. In his opinion, such a position reflects the thinking of a diasporan writer whose beliefs place God in heaven, not in a specific, delimited place on earth. Clearly, the Temple is of religious significance, but it is not the focus of the writer's religious world. This is how Schwartz accounts for the paucity of sources regarding Onias' temple. The absence of information should not be understood as criticism of a temple located outside of the only chosen site. Rather, it reflects a natural inclination to ignore temples when one's religion, like that of Diaspora Jews, does not focus on earthly temples but on a God who is in heaven.¹⁰

This last point requires some elaboration. The Temple is the house of God wherein he causes his Presence to dwell. Nevertheless, the members of the sect, who disdain the Temple, and the Diaspora Jews, who are distanced from it, could not accept the idea of God being present in a place other than among themselves. A religious person seeks his God, and if God is not with him, he is rendered religiously

⁹ *Let. Aris.* 52–57 (on the dimensions of the table); 83–111 (on Jerusalem and the Temple). On the diasporan character and identity of the *Letter of Aristeas*, see also S. Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 37–63; N. Hacham, “The Letter of Aristeas: A New Exodus Story?” *JSJ* 36 (2005): 1–20.

¹⁰ D. R. Schwartz, *The Second Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Hebrew Translation, and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2004), 15–16, 36 (Hebrew); English edition: *The Second Book of Maccabees* (CEJL; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 46–48; idem, “From the Maccabees to Masada,” 29; idem, “The Jews of Egypt between the Temple of Onias, the Temple of Jerusalem, and Heaven,” in *Center and Diaspora: The Land of Israel and the Diaspora in the Second Temple, Mishnah, and Talmud Periods* (ed. I. M. Gafni; Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2004), 37–55, esp. 48–55 (Hebrew); R. Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* (CBQMS 12; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981).

inferior and dependent upon other people and other places for his relationship with the divine. Precisely such a dependency is expressed in an epistle the Jews in Jerusalem and Judaea sent to their brethren in Egypt. The epistle assures them that “we,” the Jews of Jerusalem, pray for “you,” the Diaspora Jews (2 Macc 1:6). Under such circumstances, Diaspora Jews would naturally try to position God closer to themselves in order not to feel rejected or inferior. Correspondingly, to the degree that the daily religious experience of Jews is independent of the Temple, the importance and centrality of that sanctuary will decline, and God’s “place” will be relocated.¹¹ Indeed, Philo, a Diaspora Jew, relates to different temples in different places: the world as a temple (*Spec.* 1.66); the temple within each man’s heart (*Somn.* 1.149); the temple within each congregation of believers (*Sobr.* 66); and the Jerusalem Temple as a concrete expression of the all-encompassing presence of God (*Spec.* 1.66–67).¹²

3 Maccabees seems to exhibit a position that is similar to that in the Scrolls. This work relates two conflicts between the Jewish people and Ptolemy IV Philopator. In the first, Philopator, after winning the Battle of Raphia (217 BCE), visited Jerusalem and wanted to enter the Holy of Holies, but was prevented from doing so when he fell unconscious as he approached the site. Despite this failure, the king did not repent; he returned to Egypt and initiated a policy of killing all its Jews by means of drunken elephants. Following two unsuccessful attempts to slaughter the Jews, who had been forcibly assembled in the Hippodrome, God revealed himself and saved his people. Instead of trampling the Jews, the drunken elephants stampeded the soldiers

¹¹ For other examples of such dependence and the reaction to it, see D. S. Williams, “3 Maccabees: A Defense of Diaspora Judaism?” *JSP* 13 (1995): 23–24; G. H. Howard, “The *Letter of Aristaeus* and Diaspora Judaism,” *JTS* 22 (1971): 342; P. S. Alexander, “3 Maccabees, Hanukkah and Purim,” in *Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Texts: Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman* (ed. A. Rapoport-Albert and G. Greenberg; JSOTSup 333; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 338–39; S. R. Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity: Third Maccabees in its Cultural Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 165–66.

¹² On Philo’s view of the Temple see, inter alia, V. Nikiprowetzky, “La Spiritualisation des sacrifices et le culte sacrificiel au temple de Jérusalem chez Philon d’Alexandrie,” *Semitica* 14 (1967): 97–116. On the similarities and differences between Philo’s conception and other diasporan concepts, including that of *Florilegium*, see C. Werman, “God’s House: Temple or Universe?” in *Philo und das Neue Testament* (ed. R. Deines and K. W. Niebuhr; WUNT 172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 309–20.

who led them. After the divine epiphany, the king repented and released all the Jews to their homes in safety.

In both instances the king failed in his attempts to hurt the Jews, but the descriptions of these failures are very different. Whereas in Jerusalem, the Temple was saved *without* a divine epiphany, in Egypt, where the *people* were saved, God revealed himself and the king repented. God's revelation and his ultimate resolution of the conflict between the king and the Jews seem to be related to the object of the salvation: in Jerusalem it was the Temple alone that was in danger, whereas in Egypt it was the people. In light of this, I have concluded elsewhere that the writer of 3 Maccabees was of the opinion that God is with his people more than he is within the Temple.¹³ In order to illustrate this further, it suffices to mention that the verb ἀγιάζω and the nouns related to it in 3 Maccabees refer to place, people, and God. An examination of the occurrences of these words leads to the conclusion that the holiness of the people is the reason for the revelation of God's holy countenance and for the deliverance of the holy people, whereas the holiness of the place did not cause a comparable theophany.¹⁴ This is an extension of a principle clearly asserted in 2 Macc 5:19: "It was not for the sake of the Place that the Lord chose the nation; rather, He chose the Place for the sake of the nation."¹⁵

There is a clear parallel in rabbinic literature. We read in *Sifre Numbers* (161) "Wherever they went into exile, the Divine Presence went with them" (כל מקום שגלו שכינה עמהם).¹⁶ Egypt, Babylon, Eilam and Edom are enumerated as places to which Israel went into exile with the divine presence accompanying them. Thus, the divine presence is not dependent on place; indeed, in times of exile it attaches itself to the people: wherever the people are, the divine presence is.

To sum up this point, the Qumran sect and Diaspora Jewry differ in their basic attitudes to the Temple. The former views it as a place

¹³ N. Hacham, "The Third Book of Maccabees: Literature, History and Ideology" (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002), 65–103 (Hebrew). See also Williams, "3 Maccabees," 17–29.

¹⁴ 3 Macc 2:2, 6, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21; 5:13; 6:1, 3, 5, 9, 18, 29; 7:10. In several manuscripts the word occurs also in 1:16; 7:16. See further Hacham, "The Third Book of Maccabees," 81–82.

¹⁵ J. A. Goldstein's translation (idem, *2 Maccabees* [AB 41A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983]), 245.

¹⁶ My translation.

of sin and pollution, and the latter views it as a place of holiness. Nevertheless, for both groups there is a decline in the importance assigned to the Temple, a search for a substitute, and an attempt to place God outside of a specific location in Jerusalem. Likewise for both, where a substitute is proposed, its base is usually the people, defined as the chosen group. On the other hand, whereas Diaspora Jews exhibit a tendency to abandon the Temple-related language of place, sacrifice, and atonement, the Scrolls use these very words to describe the community of the *Yahad* as a spiritual substitute for the Temple.¹⁷

II

A second component involves the location of religious authority. The central institutions of justice and instruction in the Second Temple period were located in proximity to the Temple and were directly connected to it. Furthermore, the Jews in Jerusalem viewed themselves as the central authorities in matters of Torah and law. This is the meaning of 2 Macc 2:13–15, where the Jews of Egypt are invited to use the books and histories of the library of Jerusalem; it is with this in view that the grandson of Ben Sira, in his introduction to the Greek translation of his grandfather's book, writes that there are significant differences between the original Hebrew of the Torah, Prophets, and other writings, and their translations. Such a claim, notably uttered by a Jew who emigrated from Judaea to Egypt, finds the translation of the Torah dear to the Jews of Egypt inherently flawed. By definition, it denigrates Torah knowledge based upon the Greek translation and concomitantly scorns the Jews of Egypt.¹⁸

The members of the sect clearly did not acknowledge the authority of the Jerusalem Torah instructors. They called their disputants *דורשי חלקות* ("seekers of smooth things") and considered their Torah to be

¹⁷ On the ritual language of the sect, see for example the many occurrences of words like *מקדש*, *ניחוח*, *מנחה*, *ניחוח*, *מקדש* etc. in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In contrast, this type of language is rare in the diasporan books mentioned above.

¹⁸ See further: M. H. Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira Ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1972), 2 (Hebrew); G. H. Howard, "The *Letter of Aristeeas* and Diaspora Judaism," 342. For a similar attitude reflected in the colophon of the Greek version of Esther, see V. A. Tcherikover, *CPJ*, "Prolegomena," 1:46 n. 119; Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*, 166; Alexander, "3 *Maccabees*, Hanukkah and Purim," 335–37.

teaching based on untruth. Another designation of the Jerusalemites who misunderstand the Law is “the men of mockery who are in Jerusalem... the ones who rejected the Torah of God and reviled the word of the Holy One of Israel.”¹⁹ In contrast, it is the Righteous Teacher who knows the true Torah, and “guides them in the way of his heart” (CD 1:11); and it is he to whom God had granted the ability to interpret “all the words of his servants, the prophets” (*Pesher Habakkuk* 2:8–9). According to the sect, the authority for establishing the Law lies in the revelation to and the divine inspiration of the Righteous Teacher and of the sect’s priests and instructors, as well as in the sect’s writings and interpretations, rather than in the traditional sources (or *loci*) of authority.²⁰ Such a perspective may have derived from or have been accentuated by the sect’s exile: a group that went into exile because of a halakhic dispute must claim that its law is authoritative and deny any halakhic authority to the place and people of its origin.

A similar, albeit weaker, argument may be found in the *Letter of Aristeas*. According to Aristeas, the Greek translation of the Torah by the seventy-two elders sent from Jerusalem was entirely accurate (310, 314), so much so that the elders, priests, and members of the community agreed that it should neither be added to nor detracted from (311). That this translation attempt, in contrast to others, was successful, suggests that God viewed the project favorably and that the translation had divine approval. The Egyptian Jews, therefore, no longer required the Hebrew version of the Torah in order to know God’s word, for they had an accurate and divinely recognized Greek version. Consequently, the Jews of Egypt were no longer dependent on the Jerusalem center for learning Torah. Moreover, God’s involvement in the translation project indicates that even for the author of

¹⁹ *Pesher Isaiah* 2:6–8; see “162. Commentary on Isaiah (B),” in *Qumrân Cave 4.I (4Q158–4Q186)* (ed. J. M. Allegro with A. A. Anderson; DJD 5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 15–16; M. P. Horgan, “Isaiah Pesher 2 [4Q162=4QpIsa^b],” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, 6B: Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 43. At certain points my translation differs from that of Horgan.

²⁰ On this central tenet of the sect, see among others L. H. Schiffman, *The Halakhah at Qumran* (SJLA 16; Leiden: Brill, 1975), esp. 75–76; idem, *Law, Custom and Messianism in the Dead Sea Sect* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1993), 88–89; 312 (Hebrew); idem, “The Pharisees and their Legal Traditions According to the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *DSD* 8 (2001): 265–70.

the *Letter of Aristeas* (who views the Jerusalem Temple as a holy place), in matters concerning his Torah God reveals himself outside the Temple, even in Egypt.²¹ I would suggest that living in the Diaspora functions as a stimulus to the formulation of such a position. While not denying the centrality of the Temple in matters of *halakhah*, the Diaspora Jew who composed *Aristeas* obviated his own need for that center by claiming an independent channel of access to the Torah and its correct interpretation.²²

Of course, disputes over the source of halakhic authority were not unique to these Diaspora groups. Within Jerusalem itself such a dispute existed between the Sadducees and the Pharisees.²³ But these two factions struggled for their positions within the establishment accepted by both, namely, the Temple in Jerusalem. The writings of the sect and certain sources in Jewish Hellenistic literature, on the other hand, undermine the authority of the Jerusalem "establishment" and seek independence from it.

III

Another religious issue closely related to the previous ones is that of prayer. A number of scholars have noted the prominence of prayer in the Scrolls.²⁴ Not only are members of the sect obligated to pray at fixed times, but prayer is viewed as "an offering of the lips." Groups like the Qumran community, who reject the Temple and the sacrifices therein, require a different, more spiritual, form of worship, one that

²¹ See H. M. Orlinsky, "The Septuagint as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators," *HUCA* 46 (1975): 94–103.

²² See, e.g., Howard, "The *Letter of Aristeas* and Diaspora Judaism," 337–48.

²³ On the dispute between the Sadducees and Pharisees over the authority of *halakhah*, see inter alia M. Kister, "Marginalia Qumranica," *Tarbiz* 57 (1988): 315–16 (Hebrew); idem, "Some Aspects of Qumranic Halakha," in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18–21 March, 1991* (ed. J. Treballe Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner; 2 vols.; STDJ 11; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2:571–76; C. Werman, "The *Torah* and the *Te'udah* on the Tablets," *Tarbiz* 68 (1999): 485–90 (Hebrew); V. Noam, *Megillat Ta'anit: Versions, Interpretation, History* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2003), 206–16 (Hebrew).

²⁴ On the character and meaning of prayer in the sect, see, for example, E. G. Chazon, "Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:710–15; D. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden: Brill, 1998); B. Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (trans. J. Chipman; STDJ 12; Leiden: Brill, 1994).

will compensate for the lack of sacrifices. However, not only those who have reservations about the legitimacy of the Temple, but also those who are physically distanced from it, make prayer their cardinal mode of worship. Thus prayers are more preeminent in Diaspora books than they are in Palestinian works. For example, whereas in 1 Maccabees sacrifices often appear alongside prayers, in the Diaspora-based 2 Maccabees the main way of addressing God is through prayer.²⁵ Similarly, in 3 Maccabees prayer figures as the central means of worship;²⁶ likewise Philo, describing the role of the high priest, emphasizes prayer over sacrifice.²⁷ The synagogue in the Diaspora is called *προσεύχη*, a house of prayer, while in Palestine it is called *συναγωγή*, a house of assembly. Each term reflects the essence of the institution in its particular locale.²⁸ The question of whether or not public prayer existed in the time of the Temple is not at issue here.²⁹ If public prayer did exist in Judaea, it was of marginal significance compared to the centrality of prayer in the Diaspora and in the Qumran community.

IV

The varied attempts to seek substitutes for the Temple and the center in Jerusalem bring the discussion around to the question of how Diaspora Jews accounted for their “off-center” situation. Isaiah Gafni has addressed this question and has shown that three patterns exist in different Jewish sources. Whereas Jewish writers in the homeland adopted the biblical position and stressed the facet of punishment inherent in exile, Jewish writers from the Diaspora did not view their situation as inherently negative. Rather, they perceived their exile as an expression of a blessing of natural proliferation not unlike the

²⁵ Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Hebrew), 36, 115; *2 Maccabees* (English), 48, 203.

²⁶ See Hacham, “The Third Book of Maccabees,” 107 n. 1.

²⁷ Philo *Mos.* 2.5; *Spec.* 1.97.

²⁸ L. I. Levine notes the parallels between the Qumran and Diaspora approaches to prayer, which he attributes to, among other things, the distance of each from the Temple (*The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000], 153–55).

²⁹ On this important question, see J. Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (SJ 9; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977), esp. 218–29; E. Fleischer, “On the Beginnings of Obligatory Jewish Prayer,” *Tarbiz* 59 (1990): 397–441 (Hebrew); E. G. Chazon, “Prayers from Qumran and their Historical Implications,” *DSD* 1 (1994): 277–84; Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 151–58.

expansion of the Greek colonial world, or as a reality whose purpose was to be a mission to the nations of the world.³⁰

The members of the Qumran sect saw themselves as exiles. However, if, as the Bible indicates (e.g., Deut 4:27), exile were a punishment, then they themselves would be the ones being punished. Such a conclusion would not be commensurate with their self-image as the chosen group that alone observes the Torah as it should be observed. How could it be that the enemies of the sect are not punished and the members of the sect are in exile? The sect's deterministic point of view and their conception of the current dominion of the forces of darkness may be understood as attempts to account for their present tribulation. Furthermore, in sectarian writings that relate the circumstances that gave rise to their exile, diaspora is presented neither as a punishment nor as an escape from persecution. The opposite is the case. The members of the sect *choose* to withdraw from the rest of the people and go into exile *voluntarily*, because of the latter's sinful way of life.

Thus, the *Damascus Document*, which describes the sect's loyal house, says: "and [he] built them a sure house...as God swore to them through the hand of Ezekiel, the prophet, saying: 'The priests and the Levites and the Sons of Zadok who kept the watch of my sanctuary when the children of Israel strayed from me, they shall present to me fat and blood (Ezek 44:15).'⁷ The priests are the penitents of Israel who depart(ed) from the land of Judah...."³¹ Similarly, we find in 4QMMT (4Q397 14–21 7–8): "and you know that we have separated ourselves from the multitude of the people...and from being involved with these matters and from participating with them in these things."³² Volunteers who join the sect are obliged to "separate themselves from the congregation of the men of deceit" (1QS 5:1–2).³³ And, in the words of the famous call in the *Rule of the Community* (1QS 8:13):

³⁰ Gafni, *Land, Center and Diaspora*, 19–40.

³¹ CD 3:19–4:3 (Baumgarten and Schwartz, "Damascus Document (CD)," 17–19).

³² וזאתם יודעים ש[פרשנו מרוב העם...[ו]מהתערב בדברים האלה ומלבווא ע[מהם] לגב ואלה, E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4.V (Miqsat Maase Ha-Torah)* (DJD 10; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 59.

³³ להבדל מעדת אנשי העול, E. Qimron and J. H. Charlesworth, "Rule of the Community (1QS)", *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, 1: Rule of the Community and Related Documents* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth et al.; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck]; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 18–19.

“they shall separate themselves from the dwelling of the men of deceit in order to depart into the wilderness to prepare there the Way of the Lord.”³⁴ As Carol Newsom notes, the expression, “they shall be set apart (as) holy in the midst of the Council of the men of the Community” (1QS 8:11),³⁵ speaks of the separation of the holy from the unholy. The sect’s voluntary departure thus points to its holiness and election by God.³⁶

A similar motivation for the phenomenon of “exile” appears in Hellenistic sources. The famous description of the Jews in Strabo’s *Geography* recounts that Moses, one of the Egyptian priests, went to Judaea because he could not bear the religious situation in Egypt. He arrived in Jerusalem, which was an unattractive rocky place, and settled there. In his voluntary exile, Moses established a worthy society, religion, and regime.³⁷

The similarity between this story of the origins of the Jewish people and the Qumran sect’s narrative is apparent. In both cases, a religious group, led by a priest, left its home, settled in a wasteland, and conducted a special religious life there. What is important for us is the similar attitude towards the abandonment of the original residence and the settlement in a new wasteland place. Strabo, or more precisely his source, who seems to be Posidonius, one of the important Stoic thinkers in the Hellenistic period,³⁸ viewed this exile as an act of separation or isolation, one that enabled the members of the special group to acquire conditions appropriate for observing and developing their philosophical religion without interference. Needless to say, we are noting here two similar opinions about exile, and not, of course, a direct influence of one source upon the other.

³⁴ יבדלו מתוך מושב הנשי העול ללכת למדבר לפנות שם את דרכי הוואהא; Qimron and Charlesworth, “Rule of the Community,” 37. My translation differs at points from that of Qimron and Charlesworth. On this sentence, see Dimant, “Not Exile in the Desert.”

³⁵ יבדלו קודש בתוך עצת אנשי היחוד; Qimron and Charlesworth, “Rule of the Community,” 34–35.

³⁶ C. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space*, 157.

³⁷ Strabo, *Geographica* 16.2.35–37 (M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* [3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–1984], 1:294–311, no. 115).

³⁸ On Posidonius as Strabo’s source, see B. Bar-Kochva, “Mosaic Judaism and Judaism of the Second Temple Period—The Jewish Ethnography of Strabo,” *Tarbiz* 66 (1997): 328–31 (Hebrew).

The same idea appears with somewhat different hues in other sources as well. In a rejoinder to the people of Jerusalem, who claim that the Babylonian exiles “keep far from the Lord” and that “the land has been given as a heritage to us (= the people of Jerusalem),” Ezekiel says: “I...have scattered them among the countries, and I have become to them a diminished sanctity in the countries whither they have gone” (Ezek 11:15–16). In another prophecy Ezekiel proclaims against those survivors who have been left in the Land of Israel: “Yet you expect to possess the land?...They shall fall by the sword....I will make the land a desolate waste” (Ezek 33:26–28). In other words, those in exile are the chosen ones with whom God will be, albeit in a diminished sanctity (מקדש מעט), whereas those who stay in the land and believe they will inherit it will in fact perish.³⁹ In this instance, as in the others, exile is presented as the situation of the chosen, the good people with whom God chooses to be, whereas the sinners remain in their homeland. This case, however, is slightly different from the above, because here the exile is not voluntary but rather a punishment. Nevertheless, it is clear that those who are in exile are the chosen people, who were separated from the evildoers—as were the members of the Qumran sect and Moses, according to Strabo.

Another example of this perspective may be found in the Onias story. Onias moved from Jerusalem to Egypt and built a temple to God in the province of Heliopolis, constructing its furnishings and utensils like those of the Jerusalem Temple. Josephus reports this event in a number of places, some of which provide a similar justification for Onias’ actions.⁴⁰ In *J.W.* 7.424–425 we are told that Onias claimed to have built his temple in order to worship God in Egypt according to the laws of the fathers, because Antiochus IV had sacked the Temple in Jerusalem. The beginning of the *Jewish War* reports that Onias had fled to Egypt because of the looting of the

³⁹ See: M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB 22; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 190; D. Rom-Shiloni, “Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles and Constructor of Exilic Ideology,” *HUCA* 76 (2005): 17–18.

⁴⁰ Josephus, *J.W.* 1.32–33; 7.424–425; *Ant.* 12.387–388; 13.62–73; 20.236. On Onias’ temple in general and on Josephus’ description of the event, see, among others, F. Parente, “Onias III’s Death and the Founding of the Temple of Leontopolis,” in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (ed. F. Parente and J. Sievers; StPB 41; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 69–98; E. S. Gruen, “The Origins and Objectives of Onias’ Temple,” *SCI* 16 (1997): 47–70.

Temple and the cessation of sacrifices (*J.W.* 1.32–33). Thus, according to these sources, Onias acted out of concern for the continuation of divine worship. Similarly, in *Ant.* 13.62–63, Onias’ decision to build a temple is attributed to the dire situation of Judaea, which was in the hands of the Macedonians and their kings. It seems that in this passage as well, Onias’ escape from Jerusalem is justified by the fact that the temple in Egypt is to be the new place of worship, replacing the old one that had been looted and sacked. Onias left Jerusalem and the desecrated Temple, since he, a scion of the high priesthood, was obliged—in his view—to continue the priestly line and temple worship elsewhere. Indeed it is possible that Josephus’s purpose in these passages is to ridicule Onias’ temple, and, historically speaking, it is doubtful that these claims were argued by Onias himself. However it seems plausible that this kind of justification would have been offered, and we may assume that the basic motif of voluntary separation is the same: the chosen one left out of a sense of spiritual superiority and of a mission of religious continuity, and configured the place or group left behind as sinful and rejected.

Clarification is needed: one should not, in light of the above, confuse the approach that finds substitutes for the Temple while in exile with the approach that views diaspora as preferable. A proposal for a substitute may assume that the source is preferable, and that the substitute is only a replacement. A claim to the Diaspora’s superiority argues for the inferiority of the original homeland, whether due to its sin or to its destruction.

V

The similarities between the Jews of the Hellenistic Diaspora and the Qumran sect may also extend beyond the boundaries of theology into the realm of politics, and perhaps into the realm of discourse. First let me address the aspect of politics. Jewish Diaspora literature excels in its expressions of loyalty to the host government. This is the case in the biblical books of Esther and Daniel and in almost any postbiblical diasporan work. It is inconceivable to rebel against the host regime. Thus, for example, 3 Maccabees describes those Jerusalemites who want to take up arms to rebel against Philopator’s plot as “arrogant” (3 Macc 1:22–23: οἱ περὶ τῶν πολιτῶν θρασυθύντες). The leaders of the city, for their part, make every effort to prevent such an action

(3 Macc 1:23). It should be emphasized that the “arrogant” are from Judaea, not the Diaspora; nevertheless they are obligated to respect and acknowledge the Gentile rulers. A similar position is found in 2 Maccabees, which justifies the Maccabean wars by claiming that the Jews were not allowed to observe their ancestral laws. Indeed, some passages in the book appear to suggest that, had the Jews been allowed to observe their laws, peace would have prevailed.⁴¹ Talmudic literature reveals comparable approaches. Certainly, the hostile attitude of the Babylonian Talmud toward attempts at rebellion as well as toward immigration to Palestine is well known.⁴²

A similar viewpoint can be found in the writings of the Qumran sect. The account of the war at the end of the days is not a realistic, operative battle plan, but rather an ideological and utopian one. There is no actual cry to take arms and to fight. The battle array entails a religious mustering of priests, a taking of weapons constructed according to divine decree, and a religious ritual. Thus, according to its writings, the sect actually abandons the option of making war and chooses instead to wait for the eschatological war that God will fight against the Sons of Darkness. The description of the Essenes in Josephus matches this pacifist orientation, for according to him, the Essenes are loyal to the regime and do not fight.⁴³ Clearly, those descriptions are not free of tendentiousness. Obviously the Essenes would not have felt obligated to the Jewish regime towards which they were hostile; at the same time they would not have felt obligated toward the Romans. Nevertheless, it seems that they did not view the option of rebellion as a practical one.

I would like to propose that the lack of reference to a war option in the Scrolls is also related to the diasporan nature of the sect. Just as the Jews in the Hellenistic Diaspora could not assert themselves from a position of independent military power, so the members of the sect were unable to engage in actual warfare. Just as it was clear to the Diaspora Jews that there was no point in fighting against the

⁴¹ On this feature of diasporan literature and historiography in general, see Schwartz, “From the Maccabees to Masada,” 34–35; idem, *2 Maccabees* (Hebrew), 230; (English), 420 (on 2 Macc 12:1); and more generally, Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Hebrew), 36, 38–39; (English) 45–56. See also AddEsther E15; Hacham, “The Third Book of Maccabees,” 163–69; Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*, 154–57.

⁴² E.g. *b. Ned.* 28a; *b. Ket.* 110b.

⁴³ Josephus, *J.W.* 2.140.

regime, so the members of the sect also seemed to believe that undertaking an actual war against the Sons of Darkness in the present age was a hopeless endeavor. The difference between the two groups lies in the fact that the Gentile regimes granted the Diaspora Jews the right to live according to their religion, whereas the members of the sect lived according to their rules against the desires of a regime that was unable to stop their practice. That difference notwithstanding, in both situations the prevailing feeling is that it is God who actually protects the continuity of the group.⁴⁴

One may argue that in my analysis I have fallen into a trap set by the members of the sect; namely, that they did not want to expose their real, operative plan to act against the regime, so they concealed it. Indeed, in the same manner, and probably for the same reason, they obfuscate the identity of historical figures through the use of sobriquets. If this is the case, it brings us to the form of discourse used by exilic communities; that is, one which hides or encodes problematic items and can be characterized as a hidden discourse. This mode of expression seems, once again, to derive from the circumstances of exile, since exiles and persecuted people cannot express criticism of the “host” regime openly and freely. It seems that this kind of discourse can also be found in Josephus and Philo’s descriptions of the conflicts between Jews and Gentiles.⁴⁵ A more sophisticated mode of discourse is evident in 3 Maccabees. In this book one finds a description of the king’s hostile attitude toward the Jews together with his recognition of their contribution and loyalty to the throne. I have shown elsewhere that the best way to solve the contradiction between the two is by assuming that there are two levels of discourse: the public transcript, which claims that relations are normal, and the hidden transcript, which depicts a substantial problem in the relationship between the Gentile regime and the Jews.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ This is the case in 3 Macc 7:23; Dan 3:28–33; 6:23–28; 4Q171 (pPs^a) 4:7–9; and many other texts.

⁴⁵ Philo, *Flacc* 29; *Legat.* 166–170; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.68–70. See also Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 196–97; J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 127.

⁴⁶ Hacham, “The Third Book of Maccabees,” 147–73. On a similar phenomenon in talmudic literature see D. Boyarin, “Tricksters, Martyrs, and Appeasers: ‘Hidden Transcripts’ and the Diaspora Art of Resistance,” *Theory and Criticism* 10 (1997): 145–62 (Hebrew).

Conclusions

I offer these conclusions, which pertain mainly to the similarities between the exile communities, with a word of caution and a warning. “Diasporan identity” is a widely used construct and its significations can differ greatly. In addition, not every diasporan attribute is adopted by everyone who has a diasporan identity. This is apparent, for example, in relation to the Temple and the expectation for return from exile. We have seen a variety of positions regarding the Temple in Jewish Hellenistic literature. None of these works condemns the Temple,⁴⁷ but neither do we find in them a strong desire to return to the Temple or even to the Land of Israel. Thus, for example, the author of 3 Maccabees presents an account of how the Jews of Egypt were almost annihilated, describes a holiday that was decreed in commemoration of the salvation, but nowhere does he refer to an actual expectation to leave Egypt and return to Judaea. The few references to the temporary nature of the Diaspora seem to be no more than lip service.⁴⁸ The *Letter of Aristeas* actually recounts a tale of a new exodus from Egypt, at the end of which the Jews, expressing no serious aspirations to migrate to the Land of Israel, settle, of all places, in Egypt.⁴⁹ In contrast, the actual Temple occupies a central place in the Scrolls.⁵⁰ In the *War Scroll*, for example, a desire to return to Jerusalem and to the Temple is apparent. This difference may derive from the fact that the Diaspora Jews might in theory choose to return to Jerusalem but do not wish to, whereas the members of the sect could not return. Thus, those who could return or visit the Jerusalem Temple would seek substitutes for it, but would not need to see themselves as voluntary dissidents; while those who desired to but were unable to return would redefine themselves as voluntary exiles.

⁴⁷ But note the exception of Stephen (Acts 7:46–48), and *Sib. Or.* 4.8, 24–27. See also M. Simon, “Saint Stephen and the Jerusalem Temple,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 2 (1951): 127–42; Hacham, “The Third Book of Maccabees,” 95–96.

⁴⁸ 3 Macc 6:36; 7:19. See further Hacham, “The Third Book of Maccabees,” 97–102.

⁴⁹ Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 53–55; Hacham, “New Exodus Story.”

⁵⁰ As we can see from the *Temple Scroll*, *War Scroll* 2:3–6, *4QFlorilegium* (4Q174), and other writings.

It must be emphasized that other groups in the Second Temple period, especially in Palestine, did not necessarily display these diasporan characteristics. One such group is the Sadducean priests, who did not accept Roman rule, but spoke clearly against it; secure in their Temple power base, they did not face the issue of alienation from it. Another group is the Pharisees who, although opposed to Sadducee leadership, did not adopt the strategy of leaving Jerusalem and the Temple, but chose to promote their aims using existing channels of power. Unlike the diasporan-type groups, their opposition might actually include war against the rulers, as in the time of Jannaeus.⁵¹

With regard to the Qumran sect, we can arrive at two general conclusions. First, although the sect lived in Judaea, in many significant ways it had a Diaspora-like character. Second, there is a similarity between characteristics of the Diaspora phenomenon among Hellenistic Jewish communities (and probably also among talmudic Jewry) and the diasporan character of the sect. In light of these conclusions, exploring the Dead Sea Scrolls from the perspective of diasporan identity has produced new insights that can deepen our understanding of the Second Temple period.

⁵¹ Josephus, *Ant.* 13.376–378; 4QpNah (4Q169) 3–4 i 1–3.

