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The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Hellenistic Context¹

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Abstract

This introduction aims at situating the contributions of the Thematic Issue into wider debates on Hellenism and Hellenisation and changes taking place in scholarship. Essentialist notions of Hellenism are strongly rejected, but how then to study the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran site during the Hellenistic period? Each contextualisation depends on the (comparative) material selected, and themes here vary from literary genres, textual practices, and forms of producing knowledge, to material culture, networks, and social organizations. All contributors see some embeddedness in ideas and practices attested elsewhere in the Hellenistic empires or taking place because of changes during the Hellenistic period. In this framework, similarities are overemphasized, but some differences are also suggested. Most importantly, the question of Hellenism is a question of relocating Jewish and Judaeon evidence in the study of ancient history.

Keywords

Hellenism – Hellenisation – Qumran – comparative context – globalisation – identity

¹ We wish to thank Hindy Najman for her comments on a preliminary version of this introduction.

“Qumran and Hellenism” would have made a catchy title for this introduction.² Yet it would not have been a very suitable one, seeing that all contributors to this volume resist or object to the dichotomy inherent in that expression. The aim of this volume is to seek new ways to look at the Qumran scrolls and the site of Qumran in light of their broader context within the Hellenistic and Mediterranean world. On a political level, this context was determined for a large part by the rule of Greek and Roman kings and emperors and their allies. Moreover, the authors and collectors of the Dead Sea Scrolls engaged with and were immersed on a cultural level in what could broadly be labelled “Hellenism.”

Central to the debate are definitions. How exactly should we conceive of “Hellenism” and “Qumran/the Dead Sea Scrolls”? J. G. Droysen’s pioneering work remains highly important, even if certain aspects of his understanding of “Hellenism” to refer both to the political institutions of Alexander and his successors and to the cultural merging of Greek and Oriental (not specifically Jewish) elements have been rightly criticised. The main point of criticism was Droysen’s overall Hegelian framework, which led him to consider Christianity as the ultimate *telos* of Hellenism and thus to leave Judaism on a sidetrack.³ At the same time, Droysen’s view on Hellenism as not a uniquely Greek cultural phenomenon, but as a process of cultural fusion has been taken up in in Elias Bickerman’s and Martin Hengel’s monumental studies, in which they demonstrated the far-reaching indebtedness of Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman periods to Greek traditions.⁴

2 Cf. Martin Hengel, “Qumrān und der Hellenismus,” in *Qumrān: Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (ed. Mathias I. Delcor; BETL 46; Gembloux: Duculot, 1978), 333–72; repr. in *Judaica et Hellenistica: Kleine Schriften I* (WUNT 90; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 258–94; idem, “Qumran and Hellenism,” in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler; SDSSRL; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 46–56.

3 Johann G. Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1836). On Droysen’s work and its reception see, e.g., Arnaldo Momigliano, “J. G. Droysen between Greeks and Jews,” *History and Theory* 9 (1970): 139–53; Reinhold Bichler, “Johann Gustav Droysen und der Epochenbegriff des Hellenismus,” *Groniek* 177 (2008): 9–22; Ian S. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 11–36.

4 Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jh. v. Chr.* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969); ET *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols., trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974); idem, “The Interpenetration of Judaism and Hellenism in the Pre-Maccabean Period,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989),

Whereas Bickerman and Hengel portrayed Hellenism in terms of “Greek influences” on “Judaism,” more recent studies have problematised both the concept of “Hellenistic influence” and the idea of conflict-oriented encounters “Judaism” may have had with “Hellenism.” The book of 2 Maccabees plays an important role in these debates, as it draws an explicit distinction between the rare terminology of Ἰουδαϊσμός and Ἑλληνισμός. A long-standing scholarly tradition has understood these terms to refer to “Judaism” and “Hellenism” as bounded and opposed cultural categories. Consequently, themes and *topoi* in ancient Jewish and early Christian writings could be accorded either a “Jewish” or a “Hellenistic” background. Hengel challenged this understanding by emphasising the role of Ἰουδαϊσμός and Ἑλληνισμός within the literary context of 2 Macc,⁵ but continued to frame his analysis in terms of “Greek” influences on “Judaism” (which some Jews resisted). Some scholars after Hengel sought to clarify terminology by distinguishing between “Hellenisation” as Greek influences on Judaism and “Hellenism” as “the distinctively classical Greek cultural ambience.”⁶ 2 Macc, on this view, would be opposed to Hellenisation, but not to Hellenism. This terminological turn remains problematic, though, as it essentially re-establishes “Hellenism” as referring to Greek culture as a bounded entity (*pace* Droysen).⁷ Such a conception of “Hellenism” (and “Judaism”) is alien both to the intentions of the author of 2 Maccabees and to the cultural complexity of the Hellenistic world.⁸

167–228; Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

- 5 See Jörg Frey, “Judaism’ and ‘Hellenism’: Martin Hengel’s Work in Perspective,” in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, ed. Mladen Popović, Myles Schoonover, and Marijn Vandenberghe, JSJSup 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 96–118.
- 6 Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 16.
- 7 A similar problem exists with regard to “Romanisation.” See Jutta Jokiranta et al., “Changes in Research on Judaism in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods: An Invitation to Interdisciplinarity,” *Studia Theologica* (forthcoming).
- 8 On 2 Maccabees see, e.g., and from different perspectives, Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 1–40; Steve Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457–512 (460–69). On cultural complexity in the Hellenistic world see, e.g., Glen Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity: Thomas Spencer Jerome Lectures* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990); Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism*; Pieter B. Hartog, *Pesher and Hypomnema: A Comparison of Two Commentary Traditions from the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, STDJ 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), chapter 1.

More recent studies on the connections between Jewish and Greek cultures and identities tend to adopt a more deconstructionist perspective. Emphasising the complexity and ambiguity of the Hellenistic world,⁹ scholars have increasingly come to take the adjective “Hellenistic” as a *temporal* designation indicating the period from Alexander’s conquests to those of the Romans rather than a definition of broad and opaque cultural processes. From this perspective, “Qumran” was undoubtedly a part of, or embedded in, “Hellenism,” in the sense that both the site and the scrolls belonged (in part) to the Hellenistic world. More importantly, taking up social-scientific work on the construction and upholding of identities, scholars have been keen to point out that few aspects of the ancient world, perhaps even none, are essentially “Hellenistic” in a sense beyond that of belonging to the time-period of the rule of Alexander and his successors. As Louise Revell wrote with regard to Roman identity and “Romanisation,” things *became* Roman by being perceived and presented as such, and Roman identity was constructed and upheld by inhabitants of the Roman Empire.¹⁰ In analogy with the work of Revell and others on Roman identity, “Hellenisation” and “Hellenism” should not be treated as bounded entities, which are simply out there, but they exist only in their individual manifestations. Things may be perceived and presented as Greek, or they may have developed in the Hellenistic period, but this does not mean that they belonged to a circumscribed “Hellenistic culture.” As a result, the adoption of practices and ideas labelled as Greek in some sources should not necessarily be conceptualised in terms of Hellenistic “influence” on non-Hellenistic cultures and traditions.

The terms “Qumran” and “the Dead Sea Scrolls” are not straightforward, either. The connection between the scrolls and the nearby archaeological site has been amply discussed. The Qumran manuscripts are now generally taken as stemming from a wide variety of backgrounds, representing a broad and diverse collection of Jewish writings.¹¹ What is more, the readers and collectors

9 On which see, e.g., John Ma, “Paradigms and Paradoxes in the Hellenistic World,” in *Studi ellenistici XX*, ed. Biagio Virgilio (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra, 2008), 371–85.

10 Louise Revell, *Roman Imperialism and Local Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

11 See, e.g., Michael O. Wise, *Thunder in Gemini: And Other Essays on the History, Language and Literature of Second Temple Palestine*, JSPSup 15 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 120–22; Philip S. Alexander, “Literacy among Jews in Second Temple Palestine: Reflections on the Evidence from Qumran,” in *Hamlet on a Hill: Semitic and Greek Studies Presented to Professor T. Muraoka on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Martin F. J. Baasten and Wido Th. van Peursen, OLA 118 (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 3–24 (5–7, 14–15); Mladen Popović, “Qumran as Scroll Storehouse in Times of Crisis? A Comparative Perspective on Judaean Desert Manuscript Collections,” *JSJ* 43 (2012): 551–94; idem, “The

of the Qumran scrolls are increasingly considered to belong to a broad Jewish movement spread across Hellenistic-Roman Palestine.¹² The movement behind the scrolls was no isolated community on the fringes of Judaism in the Hellenistic-Roman period. It is evident, therefore, that if the Qumran site, movement, or writings can be demonstrated to be at home in a cultural context we would label “Greek” or “Hellenistic,” this is not simply a sign that “die ‘Hellenisierung’ des Judentums auch die schroffsten Gegner des griechischen Geistes nicht ausschloß”—as Hengel writes.¹³ Rather, it shows that the Qumran movement partook actively in broader intercultural interactions in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The contributions in this issue of *Dead Sea Discoveries* address and conceptualise several of these intercultural interactions and their effects.

Similarities and Differences between Sources

Modern scholarly attempts to contextualise the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran site against their Hellenistic background are partly defined by the selection of the source material included in the comparison. This selection of sources is also itself a comparative enterprise, as it involves a broader assessment of which sources can usefully be put side by side and which questions can be posed to them. The contributors to this volume identify similarities and differences at the level of particular sources, but their discussions of these sources tend to translate into—or arise from—wider comparisons between different corpora and their presumed respective time periods, geographical areas, intellectual discourses, languages, or the like.

Benjamin Wright’s contribution starts off at a meta-level and discusses how previous scholars have conceptualized connections between “Qumran” and “Hellenism” and why these connections have not enjoyed great popularity. Wright moves on to discuss several fundamental aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls that reflect the *embeddedness* of “Qumran” *within* “Hellenism.” He points to similar types of scholarly practices, discourse, and interests in the Qumran

Ancient ‘Library’ of Qumran between Urban and Rural Culture,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and the Concept of a Library*, ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Cecilia Wassen, STDJ 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 155–67.

12 John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Joan E. Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

13 Hengel, “Qumrān und der Hellenismus,” 294.

scrolls and the works of Hellenistic scholarship. Both the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenistic scholarship echo the appeal of bringing together collections of writings, testify to the use and development of the commentary genre, exhibit an interest in astronomy and astrology/physiognomy, and reflect an encyclopaedic perspective. For Wright these broad connections between the Qumran scrolls and Hellenistic scholarship need not indicate direct historical influence; rather, they demonstrate that the writers and collectors of the Qumran scrolls were deeply embedded within their wider Hellenistic context. Finally, Wright presents a set of perhaps the closest comparative material for the Qumran scrolls: Jewish writings in Greek and invites the readers of this volume to imagine how exactly these sources may have been perceived by the Qumran authors.¹⁴

Dennis Mizzi likewise takes a wide starting point for his comparison. In Mizzi's view, Khirbet Qumran with its environs and artefacts (which include the Qumran scrolls) should be considered in relation to other sites in the broader Mediterranean.¹⁵ From a pan-Mediterranean point of view, Mizzi argues, Qumran appears as one nod in the network of connections, and had to be well-connected in order to sustain itself. Such a pan-Mediterranean perspective accounts better for the imported artefacts recovered from the site than previous frameworks which approached Qumran as a site *sui generis*. What is more, pan-Mediterranean comparisons should deal not only with numbers and types of artefacts (fine ware, for example), but also raise questions concerning the uses and meanings of such artefacts in different contexts. Finally, Mizzi treats one particular case, Qumran locus L4 (previously labelled as a "scriptorium") and compares its archaeological features to other sites in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. This leads to a new interpretation of the multiple functions of this locus.

Whereas Wright and Mizzi stress the *embeddedness* of Qumran within its Hellenistic context, Benedikt Eckhardt's comparison of the "Qumran *yaḥad*" and Hellenistic voluntary associations brings out a prominent *difference*

14 See also Hindy Najman, "Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Period: Towards the Study of a Semantic Constellation," in *Is There a Text in This Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke*, ed. Ariel Feldman, Maria Cioată, and Charlotte Hempel, STDJ 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 459–72, who juxtaposes 4QInstruction and Philonic traditions to understand how Wisdom may have been perceived in the Hellenistic period.

15 The concept of "the broader Mediterranean" derives from the work of Fernand Braudel, whom Mizzi quotes with agreement. See Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

between some Qumran scrolls and Hellenistic practices. Rather than continuing the more traditional comparison of terminology that the respective communities used of their membership rules and practices, Eckhardt pays attention to the different social settings in which the *yahad* and Hellenistic associations operated. Eckhardt shows that “multitemplism” was an integral part of Graeco-Roman society and determined how Graeco-Roman associations established and presented themselves. The “Qumran *yahad*,” in contrast, was located in the context of only one central sanctuary in Jerusalem. Eckhardt argues that although the *yahad* of 1QS used temple language and assumed roles and functions of the temple, it could never gain a similar standing and public space in civic society as (some of) the associations in the Hellenistic cities. He concludes that the temple-centredness of Graeco-Roman voluntary associations accounts for the lack of such associations in Hellenistic and Roman Palestine, where the appeal of the Jerusalem sanctuary prevented this.

Hanna Tervantko adopts a more text-focused perspective as she compares the *literary* depictions of prophetic interpreters in Jewish and Greek texts. What is more, Tervantko points out that a study of the wider cultural background of ancient Judaism is important for understanding how things that we might consider new in Jewish sources—mediators of the divine will are engaging with texts and interpretation of written oracles rather than proclaiming oracles themselves—have counterparts in older Greek material. She argues that the shift from oral to written prophecy in post-exilic Judaism, manifest in Qumran writings such as the Pesharim, can be understood in light of the depiction of interpreters of oracles in Greek sources from the fifth century BCE onwards. Both Greek and Jewish sources portray prophetic interpreters as preserving the prophetic words through writing, by returning to earlier written collections for further knowledge, and by selecting the sections for divinatory purposes. At the same time, Tervantko points out that Greek *chresmologoi*, in contrast to Jewish prophets, were not portrayed as directly divinely inspired, but instead garnished their authority by attributing the sources of their interpretations to famous figures of the past.

Lastly, Mladen Popović offers a broad comparison of scribal and intellectual practices in the Qumran scrolls and the Hellenistic-Roman world. Applying insights from William Johnson’s work on the reading culture of Roman elites,¹⁶ Popović argues that the act of reading cannot be understood in isolation of the production, study, and consultation of texts. In Popović’s view, such activities are based on and confirm shared norms and values held within “textual

16 William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Reading Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

communities,” a concept adopted from the medievalist Brian Stock.¹⁷ Moreover, Popović suggests how some anomalous features of the Qumran collection—such as the presence of excerpted texts, manuscripts with an odd combination of material, or the use of scribal markings—can be fruitfully understood against the wider background of reading and textual practices in the Roman world and its textual communities.

These contributions demonstrate that similarities and differences between two corpora of evidence (whether concrete and specific, or more general, at the level of scholarly constructions from a wide range of sources) can indeed be recognised. At the same time, the source material treated by these authors differs vastly in scope and temporal distribution. The question remains therefore what each of these different sources have to offer in terms of a comparative context for “Qumran.”

Contextualising Qumran

Tervanotko’s analysis of the Greek term *chresmologos* leads her to contextualise “Qumran” against the background of fifth-century BCE Greek literature where this Greek term is best attested. Although she does not offer concrete clues on how the “cultural continuum [of the Qumran writers] with Greek authors” (445) should be understood, her analysis draws on almost universally valid cross-cultural analogies of how humans are attracted by things ancient and how writing has a lure of authenticity. Such comparison could proceed to other (even present-day) materials where similar functions and appeals are at play.

Whereas Tervanotko develops a wide temporal perspective on the Qumran scrolls, Mizzi and Wright seek to broaden our geographical conceptions of the Hellenistic world. Wright emphasizes that the Hellenistic world comprised not just Greece and Egypt, but a range of Eastern territories too. As we have seen above, wondering how “Qumran” relates to “Hellenism” is inherently problematic if we assume that “Qumran,” like other Eastern parts of the Hellenistic world, was “Hellenistic.” As Wright shows, a much more fruitful avenue to pursue is to wonder which cultural and religious elements can be recognised at Qumran, and how these relate to cultural and religious traditions elsewhere.

Mizzi adopts a similar perspective, but differs in the scope of the comparison. He argues that Qumran should be studied as a Mediterranean site—that

17 Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

is, as one of many instantiations of a broader Mediterranean culture that thrived in the Hellenistic and (especially) Roman periods. Whereas the notion of “Mediterranean” may be understood as referring mainly to the west (Italy, Spain, and other regions surrounding the “Great Sea”), Mizzi includes in his comparative material also sites to the east (such as Dura Europos, by the river Euphrates).

Eckhardt addresses the importance of the societal contexts in which social groups operate. He contextualises social formations within their immediate societal contexts in order to demonstrate that even if the social organizations (of the Qumran *yahad* and Graeco-Roman voluntary associations) had been completely identical, they could never have been the same since their societal contexts (Hellenistic cities and Hasmonaean Palestine) differed. Eckhardt redefines “voluntary associations” as “private associations”: these created a “fourth space” in which religious, political, and private spaces of life met and were appropriated. Similar possibilities for creating such “fourth spaces” were unavailable to social groups in Hasmonaean Judea.

Eckhardt’s way of framing of the question (“what would the introduction of a Greek type of association mean in Hasmonaean Judea?”) may appear to place Hasmonaean Judea outside of the “Greek world.” Whereas this may seem to bring us back to a conception of “Hellenism” as being fundamentally opposed to “Judaism,” for a classicist such as Eckhardt it seems natural to conceive of the small Hasmonaean “state” and the (expanding) areas it ruled as distinct from the empire and Greek-governed *poleis* or cities with markedly Hellenistic institutions, in spite of the inclinations and power-plays continuously taking place among the Hasmonaean rulers. The significance of the environment cannot be overemphasised. Eckhardt’s article demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary approaches, as it offers the view of an expert in Greek inscriptions and ancient history on the Qumran rule texts and their portrayals of the *yahad*.

Popović, like Mizzi, emphasises the larger Mediterranean background of the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls. In his analysis of reading culture, the specific point of comparison is Roman elite reading communities. It is not surprising, therefore, that Aelius Gellius’ *Attic Nights* and Philo of Alexandria’s works play a central role in Popović’s contextualisation of Qumran. Building on his earlier work, Popović shows that the Qumran scrolls do not represent the literary heritage of a Jewish marginal movement, but testify to the type of discourses and reading practices one would expect to find amongst the Roman intellectual elite.

This shows that the most suitable context to understand “Qumran” depends on the questions scholars pose to the material. Cultural continuums can be

recognised from India to Gibraltar.¹⁸ A wide range of cultural and religious traditions from this broad geographical area has the potential to illuminate aspects of “Qumran.” Some of these traditions (particularly Mesopotamian, Iranian, and Egyptian ones) have been given due attention either in contemporary or in previous scholarship, but others have been largely neglected. The Greek tradition is still perhaps the most important one: it was an important cultural factor both in the Hellenistic and in the Roman period, but its connection with the Qumran site and the Dead Sea scrolls has only recently become a central topic.

At the same time, some issues tend to remain implicit or underdeveloped. In future work on “Qumran” and “Hellenism,” it would be welcome to see more explicit attention to and reflection on the *extent* of similarities and differences/closeness and distance between comparanda (that is, to what extent one point is closer to another *in relation to* a third point); the *distribution* and *endurance* of things being compared (e.g., whether things belong to well-established societal structures or represent merely passing personal choices); the *level* of comparison (highly abstract macro-level phenomena vs. specific micro-level actions); and lastly the *meanings* attached to things being compared (e.g., how identity-defining or culturally persistent they were). Progress in this kind of intercultural or transcultural scholarship on Qumran depends on the models scholars use to frame their analysis. After all, the articles in this issue demonstrate that the types of comparison scholars develop emerge not just from their selection of specific source materials, but also from the models they, and other scholars before them, employ to approach “Qumran” and “Hellenism.”

Models and Conceptualizations

The contributors to this volume develop different models to account for connections and interactions of “Qumran” with its contexts. What unites these contributors is their justified avoidance of seeing straightforward influences from “Hellenism” to “Qumran,” as if these were two distinct entities that then clashed or merged. Wright, for instance, questions the usefulness of influence-thinking and portrays Qumran as being “enmeshed” in the Mediterranean world. Mizzi develops the important concept of connectivity: to understand

18 It is not coincidental that this is the trajectory of Apollonius according to Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii* (second century CE). Cf. also the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea and Lionel Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

Qumran, he argues, it is necessary to gain insight into the trade and production routes that spanned the Mediterranean and enabled the travel of information as well as other forms of exchange. In the terms of this connectivity model, links between Qumran and other sites in the Mediterranean can be stronger or weaker. Eckhardt's contribution concentrates on the impact that political realities had on the development of the Qumran *yahad* and the *yahad*'s relationship with Graeco-Roman voluntary associations. When "Qumran" becomes an integral part of the Hellenistic world, economic and other networks play a vital role in defining the Mediterranean world in each setting and in enabling the transmission of knowledge. In this way, the contributors to this issue accentuate the need to understand "Qumran" as an integral part of a wide range of economic, social, and intellectual networks that spanned the whole Hellenistic and Roman worlds, but also the need to be specific about the nature of links in such networks.

What is more, the type of comparisons scholars develop have a temporal dimension. Tervanotko conceives of centuries-earlier Greek traditions as having originated from a cultural context that differs from that of the later Qumran texts. She urges her readers to "be cautious not to force texts from one cultural context to answer questions about another" (443), implying that the cultural context of Qumran has its own original make-up. Eckhardt points out the difficulty of comparing Graeco-Roman voluntary associations to the Qumran movement since the inscriptions attesting associations are often much later than the scrolls. He makes a specific attempt to find roughly contemporary sources for his particular task (comparing the place of the temple[s]). These efforts exemplify the need to choose one's comparative materials critically, especially when similarities are suggested to have had some larger cultural value: the closer the comparative materials, the more interesting are the differences (but also the greater the risk of exaggerating their significance!); the further away the points of comparison, the more valuable are well-defined similarities (and the greater the risk of not contextualizing these similarities properly).

Revealing hidden ideological inclinations have more recently entered the agenda when using abstract labels such as "Hellenistic," or "Roman." Scholars have grown more sensitive to tendencies of setting Judaism apart from Graeco-Roman civilization that then informed emerging Christianity (and modernity). Wright rightly criticises the concept of "antiquity" as being opposed to Judaism and Christianity, arguing that the adjective "Hellenistic" should be taken broadly to refer to cultural traditions in the Hellenistic world as a whole (including its Eastern territories). The question recently posed by Albert Baumgarten in the meeting on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenism (Groningen, April 2016), "Who are one's heroes" when a scholar studies his/her ancient sources, touches

on a very pertinent issue and invites scholars not only to critical self-reflection but wider meta-analyses of past and present scholarship in Biblical and Jewish Studies. If we reject the models previous scholars present us with—including models that conceive of “Judaism” as a failed response to “Hellenism” and of Christianity as preserving what is best in “antiquity”—how do we proceed to conceptualise “Qumran” as part of both “Judaism” and “Hellenism”? If the Qumran movement is no longer assumed to have been in conflict with the Hellenistic Hasmonaean rulers in all or most matters, what sort of impact or social influence may it have had? Who are our heroes: members of the Qumran movement, the Hasmonaean rulers, the Greek rulers, or others? Those who react to threats for change by pushing their own vision and identity forward (however strange to us) and react to changing circumstances often by insulating themselves; or those who take great risks in the face of changes, aiming to change the world but may also suffer great losses? Those who use violent language for getting their message across; or those who use violence rather than words? What sort of intellectuals do we “hear;” what kind of persons would we like to encounter in the sources at our disposal? How do we face gendered language? To what extent is it justified to use the monotheism-polytheism dichotomy in an ancient context? Such questions may come across as sounding uncomfortable, non-academic, or otherwise wrongly-posed, but it is our conviction that scholarship of the past is always contextual, and to change incorrect ways of posing questions or problematic frameworks requires a much greater amount of reflection on our perceptions of the present and the past than is currently taking place.

Conspicuously absent from these contributions is the notion of influence. As noted above, this concept implies the existence of two bounded cultural and/or religious traditions of which one influences the other. However, as the studies in this issue show, “Qumran” was very much a part of the larger “Hellenistic” world. Nor was Qumran a passive recipient of “Hellenistic” knowledge: even if the scribes or collectors of the Qumran scrolls or the inhabitants of the site of Qumran had knowledge of certain practices or discourses available more widely in the Graeco-Roman world, they adapted these practices and discourses to serve the needs of their own communities. Instead of a model in which one tradition influences another, the contributors to this issue are all in search for a model that understands “Qumran” in view of its broader context in the Hellenistic and Roman world.

Whilst this is generally an important step forward, we should be cautious not to rule out the possibility of specific forms of influence altogether—which could broadly be defined as some Qumran scribes, collectors, or inhabitants having received a Greek education. The “Greek” Qumran cave 7, for instance,

may indicate that the collectors of these manuscripts were familiar with Greek textual scholarship and normally consulted their Scriptures in Greek.¹⁹ The same may be true for the persons who collected the Greek scriptural manuscripts recovered from Qumran cave 4. These fragments and the role they may have fulfilled for their collectors should make us hesitant to discard direct influence of Greek traditions at Qumran all too quickly. This is particularly pertinent if we consider the broader implications of language differences. Language is not only a matter of expressing things; it also characterises a way of thinking and a way of being in the world. So we may wonder if and how the Greek ways of conceptualizing, for example, cosmology, anthropology, and the divine realm differ from the ways in which these matters were formulated in the Hebrew/Aramaic languages? Lastly, whenever *changes* are investigated, the analysis calls for identifying reasons behind the changes, the mechanisms in which the changes take place, or the impact the changes have, and therefore the concept of influence is not far removed from our need to understand what exactly changed when the Greek or Hellenistic encounters became more pressing or widespread.

Future Perspectives

The contributions to follow yield an excellent survey of the state of affairs and future avenues for studies on “Qumran” in relation to “Hellenism.” In our view, such future work will face three main challenges. To begin with, studies on this topic will benefit from a more refined understanding of “Graeco-Roman culture” and its diverse manifestations in different time periods. If, for instance, post-exilic Jewish writers can be seen to have operated within a cultural continuum they shared with (some) Greek authors (so Tervanotko), should we extend this shared cultural continuum beyond the post-exilic period to earlier and later periods. In this regard the work by scholars such as Martin West and Walter Burkert on interactions between Greek and ancient Near Eastern cultures remains highly relevant.²⁰ Even more pressing is the temporal situation

19 Cf. Eric Turner’s somewhat overstated suggestion that these manuscripts “were no doubt for the use of those Jewish adherents at Qumrān who could read only Greek, not Hebrew” (*Greek Papyri: An Introduction* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980], 38).

20 Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Martin L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997).

of the Qumran scrolls. If we follow the datings now available, the majority of these scrolls stem from the Roman period, and a mere comparison with “Hellenistic” traditions will not do. If we compare “Qumran” with Greek cultural traditions, we shall have to treat them both as being situated in the context of the Roman Empire. Greek cultural traditions played an important role in this Roman context, but their expression and function did not necessarily take the same form as they did in the Hellenistic or other periods.²¹ The Roman context of both the scrolls and the Graeco-Roman tradition with which they are being compared should be taken into account more explicitly in any future work on “Qumran” and “Hellenism.”

A second challenge is the integration into Qumran studies of social-scientific concepts and tools that are suitable to direct our attention to how humans perceive social entities, construct and maintain social and religious identities as group members (of multiple groups), and manage bi- or multicultural identities. Refined methods of investigating these matters are available in the social sciences.²² Their application can help us to avoid any static views of the claims we may find in the sources related to human beings and their identities. The concept of cultural transmission also becomes important: to what extent were ideas and practices transmitted from one generation to another—and how do we imagine (in light of limited explicit evidence) the ways in which this transmission took place? From these perspectives, the label “Hellenistic Jew” is another *etic* label, which is absent from our sources and, presumably, from the ancient world in general.²³ This is not to deny the value of *etic* terminology. It is of little use to restrict ourselves to repeating the *emic* terminology—which, in the case of Qumran Scrolls, would lead to multiple and hard-to-sort-out mixtures of various ways of identifying oneself (comparison of the language of self-identifications in the Damascus Document and the Community Rule suffices to make the point). The *emic* conceptualisation can serve as a starting point, but one does not need to go far to realise that a term, such as “Israel,”

21 An illustrative case in point is the movement of the Second Sophistic, which reached its zenith in the third century CE, but is connected with earlier and later traditions. This movement is usually taken as a sort of Greek revival movement. See, e.g., Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

22 See, for example, John M. Levine & Michael A. Hogg, eds., *Encyclopedia of Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications), 2010.

23 A related issue is the question of which terminology is the most appropriate to convey to modern readers the nuances and circumstances of the ancient peoples. For example, for “Judaean” or “Jewish/Jew,” cf. Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism.”

for example, can mean many different things and soon calls for an outsider perspective and social-scientific translation.

Another concept that appears to constitute a promising tool for analysing the ancient world is “globalisation.” Beginning in the 2000s, archaeologists have applied modern globalisation theories to the ancient world.²⁴ By so doing, they seek to understand the impact of the increased interconnectedness of the Roman Empire (brought about by the construction of roads and use of waterways by the Romans) on the identity of its inhabitants. The application of globalisation theories to the ancient world has not gone unchallenged, however, and ample room for further work remains. First, there is room for methodological clarification. General appeals to globalisation are not particularly helpful, considering the complexity of modern globalisation studies, and may result in “globalisation” becoming nothing more than a fanciful buzz-word.²⁵ Scholars of the ancient world who engage with modern theories of globalisation should be clear on which concepts and aspects they consider helpful in their analysis of ancient sources. Second, previous work on globalisation has focused on material and epigraphic evidence. Literary material has only rarely made an appearance, and Jewish and Christian material have been entirely neglected. Scholars of Judaism and Christianity are in a position to take up the baton and try to contextualise sources not only within their broader ancient contexts, but also in dialogue with current debates in other academic disciplines (classical studies, Roman archaeology, globalisation studies). Third, Silvie Honigman has recently pointed out that scholars who employ network theories (which are closely bound up with theories of globalisation) should pay more attention to nodes in these networks which carry particular importance as meeting places or localities of exchange—especially courts, gymnasia, and temples.²⁶ This goes to show that processes of globalisation did not occur in a vacuum, but were closely connected with sites of power and prestige.

24 See, e.g., Robert Witcher, “Globalisation and Roman Imperialism: Perspectives on Identities in Roman Italy,” in *The Emergence of State Identities in Italy in the First Millennium BC*, ed. Edward Herring and Kathryn Lomas (London: Accordia Research Institute, 2000), 213–25; Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys, eds., *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

25 Cf. Frits G. Naerebout, “Global Romans? Is Globalisation a Concept That Is Going to Help Us Understand the Roman Empire?” *Talanta* 38–39 (2006–2007): 149–70.

26 Sylvie Honigman, “Intercultural Exchanges in the Hellenistic East: The Respective Roles of Temples, Royal Offices, Courts, and Gymnasia,” in *Centres and Peripheries in the Early Second Temple Period*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin, FAT 108 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 49–78.

From this perspective, Eckhardt's argument that temples were not an external or somehow voluntary aspect of associational life in the Greek world makes a valuable case for further reflection. The issue he raises could be supplemented by the question which roles temples had in the first place in conceptualizing divine-human relations and what other functions they served? To what extent did concrete temples function as sources for speaking about religious issues, and to what extent were temples used as metaphors for divine-human encounters? If the idea of a temple or sacred space is separate from its concrete societal manifestations and functions, then people could also, to some extent, identify themselves religiously in terms of their ideal temple, even though their practices could have been restricted by concrete societal contexts including a temple. And furthermore, if a society claims to have a monopoly on the temple (a temple), could this encourage claims of monopoly for interpretative practices (cf. Tervanotko)?

The third challenge is to distance ourselves from powerful earlier categories which, for example, suggest that the primary or most important comparative context must come from earlier Hebrew writings. No-one denies the importance of Hebrew scriptures for understanding the scrolls, but there is much work to be done to look across the language and other barriers, and let the new sources re-define our previous categories, rather than fit the sources into old ones.²⁷

In the end, what is needed is developing a model in which all different kinds of evidence discussed in these contributions—archaeological, socio-historical, literary—come together. This model should be broad enough to contextualise “Qumran” within its wide cultural and religious surroundings, but specific enough to be meaningful in our understanding of the Qumran material. Hellenistic impact, conscious and unconscious, has been considered to be found in all aspects of society, including economy, politics, and material culture, not just literature, philosophy, religion, and language. Some potentially fruitful proposals for new models to account for this multi-faceted and multi-layered Hellenistic impact are suggested in the following contributions—for example, those of pan-Mediterranean networks or those of the Roman world as a global space—though model for future research in this area is still a desideratum.

27 See Najman, “Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Period,” who urges that, even though filled with scriptural language, 4QInstruction can only be understood when read in view of philosophical ideas and discourse of the Hellenistic time.

These contributions are exemplary of an increasing awareness in Qumran studies that “Qumran” can no longer be studied “in splendid isolation” (379), as Mizzi puts it. The isolationist approach that characterised much of the earlier Qumran scholarship made an impact on the boundaries between academic disciplines: Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls only rarely make an appearance in thematic studies the ancient world. The writing of commentaries is a case in point: although the Qumran scrolls have yielded the earliest commentaries on (parts of) the Jewish Scriptures known today, they—unlike the Rabbinic Midrashim—are never discussed in thematic volumes on ancient commentary writing.²⁸ Rather than lamenting this situation Qumran scholars face the challenge to demonstrate the importance of “Qumran” in the study of Hellenistic and Roman antiquity. Whereas the first generation of Qumran scholars consisted of philologists and biblical scholars, the present generation calls for Qumran scholars who are also archaeologists, ancient historians, and classicists. What is called for is a redrawing—or even better: a dissolution—of the boundaries between academic disciplines in order to make “Qumran” a vital part of the ancient world and its modern study.

28 See Pieter B. Hartog, “Peshar as Commentary,” in *Proceedings of the Eighth Meeting of the International Organization of Qumran Studies: Munich, 4–7 August, 2013*, ed. George J. Brooke et al., STDJ (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).