ARAMAICA QUMRANICA APOCALYPTICA?

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In her contribution to *Flores Florentino*, Devorah Dimant has published a groundbreaking article entitled “The Qumran Aramaic Texts and the Qumran Community.”¹ In the same *Flores Florentino*, Eibert Tigchelaar has likewise published another groundbreaking article entitled “The Imaginal Context and the Visionary of the *Aramaic New Jerusalem*.”² It seems to me that the best way to express my thanks to these two colleagues and friends for the “flowers” they offered me in San Diego would be to continue their reflections on the topic and develop the thoughts their most stimulating contributions have set in motion.

Dimant’s is the first essay ever to attempt a thematic classification of the corpus of Aramaic writings found at Qumran. She starts from two premises: that the Aramaic texts should be considered a distinct group within the Qumran collection because they have “a particular language, style, and content,” and that “the Aramaic texts contain nothing of the specifically sectarian terminology or ideology, and therefore do not belong with the sectarian literature.”³ I think we all agree with the first of these two premises, but I am not sure that all of us would be willing to put our signature to the second. Even if its first part proves to be true (no sectarian terminology or ideology in the Aramaic texts), the conclusion (“therefore”) does not necessarily follow. Whatever the case, from a thematic perspective Devorah Dimant classifies the corpus in six categories: 1) Works about the Period of the Flood, 2) Works dealing with the History of the Patriarchs, 3) Visionary Compositions, 4) Legendary Narratives and Court-Tales, 5) Astronomy and Magic, and 6) the inevitable *Varia*.⁴

Dimant’s classification is evidently a “thematic” classification, and, as such, it is not without problems. She is forced, for example, to split a

¹ D. Dimant, “The Qumran Aramaic Texts and the Qumran Community,” in *Flores Florentino. Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (ed. A. Hilhorst, E. Puech and E. Tigchelaar; JSJSup 122; Leiden Brill, 2007), 197–205.

² E. Tigchelaar, “The Imaginal Context and the Visionary of the *Aramaic New Jerusalem*,” in *Flores Florentino*, 257–270.

³ Dimant, “The Qumran Aramaic,” 198–199.

⁴ Dimant, *ibid.*, 200–201.

composition (the *Genesis Apocryphon*) in two, because it deals both with the Period of the Flood and with the History of the Patriarchs. Furthermore, although she recognizes that some compositions (*Pseudo-Daniel*, *Four Kingdoms*, and *Apocryphon of Daniel*) are Court-tales like the book of Daniel upon which they are dependent, she places them in the category of “Visionary Compositions.” At the same time, however, she does not place clearly “visionary” compositions like *I Enoch*, Aramaic Levi, or *Visions of Amram* in this category. I am also inclined to think that Émile Puech (DJD editor of both the *Birth of Noah* and the *Apocryphon of Levi*?) would place these compositions in the category of the “Period of the Flood” and the “History of the Patriarchs” respectively because of the identification of the protagonists with Noah and Levi, which Dimant nevertheless rejects as unproved. These problems are less accentuated in the thematic classification proposed in the article by Eibert Tigchelaar.

Tigchelaar’s contribution represents an initial endeavour to specify the “imaginal world” (cf. Henri Corbin) of one Dimant’s “Visionary compositions,” namely the *New Jerusalem*. Tigchelaar does not pretend to give us a taxonomy of the Aramaic texts, as Dimant does, but tries to “assess all the textual and contextual clues that might shed light on the identity of the seer” of *New Jerusalem* (who may be Jacob), and (more importantly) to determine “whether the identity of the seer in a visionary or apocalyptic text is tangential or essential to the imaginal world of the author(s) of the text.”⁵ In an aside, however, Tigchelaar notes that “the Aramaic texts from Qumran only comprise special categories” and that “[t]he vast majority of the Aramaic narrative texts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls belong to two main categories,” namely (1) texts related or ascribed to pre-Mosaic figures, and (2) texts that have an Eastern Diaspora setting, since, with the exception of Daniel, who belongs to a Diaspora setting, “it is remarkable that none of the biblical figures from Moses onwards, through David, and up to the prophets, is connected with Aramaic literature.”⁶ Tigchelaar recognizes that a few Aramaic narrative texts do not fit neatly in either of those two categories, but he thinks that this “dual” division may be useful for dealing with the Aramaic corpus and uses it to identify—with a little more confidence (“as probable”)—the seer of *New Jerusalem*, not with Ezekiel, as proposed by some scholars, but with Jacob, a pre-mosaic Patriarch.

⁵ Tigchelaar, “The Imaginal Context,” 258.

⁶ Tigchelaar, *ibid.*, 261.

Beyond the differences, it is important for the present author that both Tigchelaar and Dimant agree fundamentally on their basic approach, since the latter also recognizes the “pre-mosaic” character of the Aramaic literature as well as the Diaspora context: “[N]o Aramaic work deals systematically and in detail with Moses and Joshua, the period of the Judges, or the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. For that matter, nothing in Aramaic is related to the biblical Prophets. Obviously, in the understanding of the authors of these texts, Hebrew belonged to the sphere of Israelite history proper, whereas Aramaic is relegated to earlier generations.”⁷ Likewise for Dimant “some of the works are set in a Diaspora context,” and “Aramaic was apparently selected as the language of composition precisely because of such a setting, as it was for Dan 2.”⁸

This agreement allows us to give a tentative answer, even at this early stage, to the first of the questions posed to all of us by Katell Berthelot and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra in their convocation of this meeting: the question of the specificity of the Aramaic texts compared with other Aramaic compositions and with the Hebrew literature found at Qumran.⁹ Although some Hebrew compositions at Qumran deal with “pre-mosaic” protagonists (4QCommentary on Genesis, for example), and we also have some Aramaic works with a Diaspora setting (Ahiqar) outside Qumran, we can assert that the Aramaic literature found at Qumran is characterized by a predominant interest in “pre-mosaic” protagonists or by a setting in the Diaspora. Dimant’s conclusion: “[b]ut the data already at hand demonstrates the need to consider these texts as a specific group, which requires further detailed investigation along these lines”¹⁰ can be subscribed to without reservation.

In the present author’s opinion, a careful look at the compositions classified by Dimant allows for the discovery of another element of the specificity of the Aramaic texts: namely the apocalyptic character of a disproportionately large number of these compositions when compared both with the rest of the known compositions in Aramaic and with the Hebrew compositions found at Qumran (sectarian or not). Dimant describes her “Visionary Compositions” as “a complex of Aramaic visionary apocalyptic tales” (my emphasis) and notes that “[t]hese texts de-

⁷ Dimant, “The Qumran Aramaic,” 203.

⁸ Dimant, *ibid.*, 204.

⁹ The other two basic questions, which I will try to answer later, are the origin of the Aramaic texts and their function within the collection.

¹⁰ Dimant, “The Qumran Aramaic,” 205.

scribe visionary scenes, often dealing with figures and events of the eschaton.”¹¹ If we take the adjective that Dimant uses in her description (“apocalyptic”) seriously, and draw up a list of the Aramaic compositions from the perspective of their apocalypticism, we can judiciously increase the number of compositions that could be ranked in this category in addition to those placed by Dimant in her third category (the *New Jerusalem*, the *Four Kingdoms*, the so-called *Apocryphon of Daniel*, the *Words of Michael*, the so-called *Birth of Noah*, the so-called *Apocryphon of Levi* (?), and *Pseudo-Daniel*). *I Enoch*, of course, will have pride of place, but also the *Visions of Amram* and other testamentary compositions, such as *Testament of Jacob* (?) for example, and many other fragmentarily preserved compositions.

I am not claiming for any of those Aramaic compositions from Qumran that they are Apocalypses according to the definition of *Semeia* 14, although several of them definitely are.¹² But the apocalyptic outlook of all these compositions seems to me to be clear. At the same time, I am not pretending that apocalypticism is absent from the Hebrew compositions (sectarian or not) found at Qumran (it is enough to think of the *War Scroll* for the first category or of the *Pseudo-Ezekiel* for the second). The only thing I am claiming is that a disproportionately large number of Aramaic compositions of the collection demonstrate an apocalyptic outlook, and that this (if we are not afraid of apocalypticism) allows us to conclude that a predominant interest in apocalypticism is also a specific characteristic of the Aramaic texts found at Qumran (although we cannot find it, of course, in all Aramaic compositions). In my opinion, this characteristic may help us to provide an answer to the third question.¹³

¹¹ Dimant, *ibid.*, 203.

¹² J. J. Collins, “Apocalypticism and Literary Genre in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (2 vols.; ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:403–430.

¹³ In his contribution to the Groningen meeting of last April, Eibert Tigchelaar insisted that the Aramaic texts from Qumran were not only apocalyptic in outlook, but they also could be characterized as different from the Hebrew texts because the Aramaic compositions were mainly narrative in character, and because they explicitly state the way in which revelation is imparted (be it by dreams, visions, otherworldly traveling or angelic intermediaries). This clearly opens a whole series of questions on the literary conventions used by the texts in question and their concrete origins, see E. Tigchelaar, “Aramaic Texts from Qumran and the Authoritativeness of Hebrew Scripture,” in *The Authoritativeness of Scripture in Ancient Judaism* (ed. M. Popović; STDJ; Leiden: Brill, 2010) (forthcoming). These questions should also be dealt with in a comprehensive study of the

The answer to the second question put forth by Katell Berthelot and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, the question of origins (Qumranic or not Qumranic), is more complex and requires a more thorough treatment than is possible here. Albert Baumgarten, when reflecting on the Groningen Hypothesis,¹⁴ has expressed a firm caveat—in the footsteps of Marc Bloch—against the worship of the “idol of origins,” and I think it would be wise to apply his caveat also to the question of the origins of the Aramaic compositions. Nonetheless, I will try in summary form, to express my thoughts on the matter; although, in the last analysis, I think the question is irrelevant and not particularly useful, since for the biggest part of the Aramaic compositions the only context we know is the Qumranic context, the collection in which they were preserved, read and transmitted to us. For this reason, I am tempted to paraphrase the Arab proverb, quoted by Baumgarten: “Men resemble their times more than they do their fathers,” as “Writings resemble their contexts more than they do their origins.” And since the work of Michael Stone, Robert Kraft and Marinus de Jonge (among others) we are well aware of the importance of the context in which a composition has been preserved and transmitted for our understanding of this composition.¹⁵

I think we cannot deal with the question of the origins of the Aramaic compositions in isolation from the more general question of the origins of all the compositions found at Qumran, since (in spite of the illustrious defenders of this position, S. Segert, B. Z. Wacholder, D. Dimant, and many others) I refuse to accept that the simple fact that a composition is written in Aramaic excludes the possibility of it having been written by the people who collected the works that now form the collection of Qumran. There are too many indications of linguistic plurality in the collection that would have to be disregarded in order to sustain such a position. Among them, one should carefully consider the presence of Aramaic in the documentary texts and the influence of Aramaic on the

characteristic of the Aramaic texts from Qumran. But for my purpose here, the apocalypticism of most of these compositions is the key characteristic which will allow us to answer the question of their function within the whole collection of manuscripts.

¹⁴ A. I. Baumgarten, “Reflections on the Groningen Hypothesis,” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins. New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (ed. G. Boccaccini; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 256–262.

¹⁵ See the articles by R. Kraft, M. A. Knibb, D. C. Harlow and C. Böttrich, collected and edited by J. W. van Henten and B. Schaller in the monographic issue of the *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, *JSJ* 32 (2001): 369–470.

Hebrew of documentary texts (which points to the bilingualism of the writers¹⁶), the influence of Aramaic on the original literary compositions written in Hebrew¹⁷ and the influence of Hebrew on many of the Aramaic compositions,¹⁸ the fact that we have found a Hebrew copy of an Aramaic composition like Tobit together with the Aramaic manuscripts, and that Aramaic translations have been found of books like Job or Leviticus, and even Milik's reference to 4Q232 as an assumed Hebrew copy of the *New Jerusalem* (although I was not able to identify the remains of 4Q232 in the fragments reproduced on PAN 43.368,¹⁹ I cannot exclude that this tiny fragment will show up, as it has done in the Catalogue of Spirits²⁰ discovered by Tigchelaar).²¹ For all these reasons, and though recognizing that all the most characteristic "sectarian" compositions have been written in Hebrew (which implies that Hebrew was the preferred language of the group when penning their own compositions),²² I think that the answer to the question of the sectarian or not sectarian origin of the Aramaic compositions should be put with the same rigor as it is put for each Hebrew composition found at Qumran.

In an article recently published in the *RevQ*, originated as a response to two recent articles (by Dimant and Kugler) that propose to change

¹⁶ See G. Wilhelm Nebe, "Die hebräische Sprache der Naḥal Ḥever Dokumente 5/6 Hev 44–46," in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira* (ed. T. Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde; STDJ 26; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 150–157.

¹⁷ A fact recognized from the beginning and definitively proved by E. Y. Kutscher in *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1959), 19–22 (Hebrew).

¹⁸ See, most recently, C. Stadel, *Hebraismen in den aramäischen Texten vom Toten Meer* (Schriften der Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg 11; Heidelberg: Winter, 2008).

¹⁹ See note 27 of F. García Martínez, "The Temple Scroll and the New Jerusalem," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:431–460, on pages 445–446.

²⁰ E. J. C. Tigchelaar, "'These are the names of the spirits of...' A preliminary Edition of 4QCatalogue of Spirits (4Q230) and New Manuscript Evidence for the Two Spirits Treatise (4Q257 and 1Q29a)," *RevQ* 21/84 (2004): 529–547.

²¹ For these and other reasons, Puech prefers to speak of the group's "multilinguisme" rather than "bilinguisme." See E. Puech, "Du bilinguisme à Qumrân?" in *Mosaïque de langues, mosaïque culturelle: le bilinguisme dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (ed. F. Biquel-Chatonnet; Antiquités Sémitiques 1; Paris: J. Maisonneuve, 1996), 171–189.

²² I think this can be accepted without difficulty, and without entering into the problems posed by the hypothesis of Schniedewind, who argues that Qumran Hebrew is an "antilanguage." See W. M. Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an antilanguage," *JBL* 118 (1997): 235–252, and "Linguistic Ideology in Qumran Hebrew," in *Diggers at the Well* (ed. T. Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde; STDJ 36; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 245–255.

generally accepted labels of “non-sectarian” to “sectarian” or “in between,”²³ I have dealt with the taxonomic problem we have encountered when classifying a composition (be it Aramaic or Hebrew) as sectarian or non-sectarian.²⁴ Since this article is written in Spanish (and Spanica, like Semitica, non legitur), I summarize its main points here in English.

Devorah Dimant, who greatly contributed to the establishment of the criteria generally used to classify a composition as “sectarian” or “non-sectarian” in a celebrated article of 1995,²⁵ (in the footsteps of another even more famous article by Carol Newsom²⁶), now recognizes the necessity of refining this classification and proposes a new category of writings between the “sectarian and non-sectarian,” particularly regarding the compositions that rework the Bible:

Until now the sectarian character of a given text was recognized by the presence of typical sectarian terminology and ideas. Yet these criteria have proved inapt for accommodating certain works, which lack sectarian characteristic nomenclature and style but embrace notions shared with the sectarian ideology. Since compositions of this type may not be simply defined as either sectarian or non-sectarian, I propose to assign them to a third, intermediate category, between the sectarian literature proper and writings devoid of any connection to the community.²⁷

A careful reading of the case on which Dimant bases her introduction of the new category (the *Apocryphon of Joshua*) and of the other texts she would place on this category (primarily *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll*, but also other texts like the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*, the *Words of the*

²³ D. Dimant, “Between Sectarian and Non-Sectarian: The Case of the *Apocryphon of Joshua*,” in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran* (ed. E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant and R. A. Clements; STDJ 58; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 105–134 and R. A. Kugler, “Whose Scripture? Whose Community? Reflections on the Dead Sea Scrolls Then and Now, By Way of Aramaic Levi,” *DSD* 15 (2008): 5–23.

²⁴ F. García Martínez, “¿Sectario, no-sectario, o qué? Problemas de una taxonomía correcta de los textos qumránicos,” *RevQ* 91/23 (2008): 383–394.

²⁵ D. Dimant, “The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance,” in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness* (ed. D. Dimant and L. H. Schiffman; STDJ 16; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 25–58. Dimant refers to a more detailed article in Hebrew: בין כתבים קומראן לשאינם כיתתיים במגילות קומראן, in *על מגילות קומראן* (ed. M. Kister). But as far as I know it has not yet been published.

²⁶ C. A. Newsom, “‘Sectually Explicit’ Literature from Qumran,” in *The Hebrew Bible and its Interpreters* (ed. W. H. Propp, B. Halpern and D. N. Freedman; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 167–187.

²⁷ Dimant, “Between Sectarian and Non-Sectarian,” 106.

Luminaries and the like) shows that she is focused on compositions that, in one way or another, rework the biblical text.²⁸

Her example of the *Apocryphon of Joshua* is well chosen. The composition, which does not contain any sectarian expressions, shares a series of ideas with sectarian texts or with texts associated with the Qumran community: a jubilee chronology, the precedence of a priestly officer over a political one, and the pesher technique, and her conclusion can be accepted: “This fact favors the view that the *Apocryphon* [of *Joshua*] belongs to a group of works that share a number of notions with the community, but also evidence perhaps an even wider frame of thought. The *Apocryphon* should therefore be assigned to a different category.”²⁹

That this category should be considered as “in between” is more problematic, since it maintains the basic dichotomy that she considers as insufficient and it uses two reference terms that are not properly defined. But this is not important here. What counts is that all the examples she quotes belong to the “re-written bible” or “parabiblical” type of composition. Equally important, it seems to me, is a detail that Dimant does not mention, namely that the *Apocryphon of Joshua* is recognized as authoritative scripture in a writing that is clearly “sectarian” according to the usual definitions (4Q175 or 4QTestimonia). The same could also be argued with respect to *Jubilees*, a “parabiblical” composition whose authority at Qumran is undisputed and, perhaps, of the *Temple Scroll*. In my opinion, this indicates that the taxonomic problem is not at the level of “sectarian/non-sectarian” but at the more basic level of the categories we use to classify the books that form the collection (“biblical/non-biblical”) and comprises all of them.

Something similar happens with the article of Robert Kugler, which proposes to change the label of an Aramaic composition, the *Aramaic Levi Document*. Kugler is working at a different level from that of Dimant, at the level of the transmission of a composition that is also known in two other contexts, the Cairo Geniza and the Greek transla-

²⁸ “Candidates for such a category are, for instance, the *Temple Scroll* and the *Book of Jubilees*. Both share various elements with the sectarian literature. Indeed, some scholars include both works in the sectarian literature. However, neither *Jubilees* nor the *Temple Scroll* contains any of the features distinctive of the output of the Qumran community; consequently, they cannot be considered equivalent to explicitly sectarian products. Both writings rework the Bible, a fact that may have to do with their specific position between sectarian and non-sectarian texts” (ibid., 106–107).

²⁹ Dimant, “Between Sectarian and Non-Sectarian,” 134.

tion. In this case, we are dealing with a composition written before the floruit of Qumran,³⁰ and generally recognized as “non-sectarian.” Kugler argues, nevertheless, that the Qumranic version has introduced tangible modifications in order to adapt the work to the characteristic thought of the group, that these modifications are typical of the Qumranic version and that, as a consequence, this particular version of *Aramaic Levi* should be considered as substantially distinct from the Aramaic version of the Geniza and from the Greek translation. Above all, Kugler argues that these modifications represent the interest and the redactional practice of the community and allow us to classify the composition in its Qumranic form as a “sectarian” composition:

And as it turns out, these differences not only mark Q Aramaic Levi as different, they also encourage us to consider Q Aramaic Levi among the category of Qumran Scrolls our homogenizing tendencies have led us to overlook. This fresh category, as we will see, might be characterized as works imported into the community and adapted (emphasis in the original) for use among the covenanters, or ones composed de novo within the community from existing texts, traditions and motifs. In either case, such texts, though made from material of non-Qumranic origin, were perhaps nonetheless unique to Qumran. As such they are hitherto unrecognized “sectarian” compositions.³¹

Also in this case, the example chosen seems to me convincing, although the differences that Kugler studies in detail are very minor, not to say minimal. Nonetheless, they indicate the peculiar character of the text attested at Qumran, reinforce the major differences already noted by the editors,³² and make impossible a synoptic reading of the three known versions.

Similarly interesting are the other two examples that Kugler introduces to prove that the change of classification is not an isolated phenomenon, but applies also to other “non-sectarian” compositions (4Q225 and 2Q22, 4Q371–373 the so-called 4QNarrative and Poetic composition). In like fashion to the examples used by Dimant, those adduced by Kugler are also clear examples of “re-written Bible” or “parabiblical” texts, and, as is the case with the *Apocryphon of Joshua*, we can also argue that *Aramaic Levi* was recognized as authoritative scripture in the Qu-

³⁰ See the article of M. E. Stone, “Enoch, Aramaic Levi and Sectarian Origins,” *JSJ* 19 (1988): 159–170.

³¹ Kugler, “Whose Scripture? Whose Community?,” 10–11.

³² Summarized by Kugler, *ibid.*, 8–10.

mran context. This brings us back to the question: “biblical/non-biblical”?

Faced with the proposed changes of labels of these two compositions, one in Hebrew and the other Aramaic, previously considered as “non-sectarian” and now brought into the sphere of the “sectarian” compositions or “in between,” in the article of the *RevQ* I present, as a possible way out of the taxonomic problem, the example of the scholars of the “biblical” texts who recognize that the “Bible” at Qumran is in a process of evolution and formation, a very advanced but not yet completed process, and where the writings recognized as authoritative do not necessarily coincide with posterior confessional canons. As a way out of the problem of defining what is “biblical” and what is “not biblical” or “not yet biblical” posed by the publication of “re-written bible” and “parabiblical” texts,³³ and in order to avoid anachronisms, these scholars refer to the study of the different authority-conferring strategies used in the various writings (“biblical” and “non-biblical”).³⁴

A very recent book by Sidnie White Crawford³⁵ gives us a good summary of the problem and of the most important conclusions achieved so far. In her book, White Crawford focuses on the “rewritten scripture” texts and leaves “parabiblical texts” out of consideration because:

³³ The bibliography on the topic is very large, starting with my “Las fronteras de lo bíblico” originally published in *Scripta Theologica* 23 (1991): 759–784. For a lucid analysis of the problem see A. Klostergaard Pedersen, “Rewritten Bible as a Borderline Phenomenon—Genre, Textual Strategy, or Canonical Anachronism?,” in *Flores Florentino* (ed. A. Hilhorst, É. Puech and E. Tigchelaar; JSJSup 122; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285–306. For the latest thoughts of Moshe J. Bernstein on the topic, see his article “What Has Happened to the Laws? The Treatment of Legal Material in 4QReworked Pentateuch,” *DSD* 15 (2008): 24–49 where he underlines the different way of dealing with the legal materials 4Q365+4Q365a as compared with the other manuscripts of 4QRP. For Bernstein, only 4Q364 might eventually be considered as “biblical.”

³⁴ See G. J. Brooke, “Between Authority and Canon: The Significance of Reworking the Bible for Understanding the Canonical Process,” in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran* (ed. E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant and R. A. Clements; STDJ 58; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85–104. In a recent synthesis, I have attempted to delineate some of the different authority-conferring strategies used in “rewritten scripture” texts, in “non-sectarian” and in “sectarian” compositions. See F. García Martínez, “Rethinking the Bible: Sixty Years of Dead Sea Scrolls Research and Beyond,” in *The Authoritativeness of Scripture in Ancient Judaism* (ed. M. Popović; STDJ; Leiden: Brill, 2010) (forthcoming).

³⁵ S. White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (SDSSRL; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008).

These parabiblical texts seem to have had a variety of purposes, some with a definite theological agenda. While in some cases they may have made a claim to authority, their collective status in late Second Temple Judaism is extremely murky.³⁶

But the distinction between these two categories (“rewritten” and “parabiblical”) seems to me more a question of degree than of fundamental difference (and the variations on the classification in one or another category of certain works by the different authors prove my point). I consider the distinction artificial and the result of our incapacity to make abstraction of our own categories when looking at the historical reality that the collection of manuscripts offers us, and consequently consider the distinction also irrelevant. The fact is that the whole collection of manuscripts found at Qumran (with the exception of a few documentary texts) is formed by religious texts (in Hebrew or in Aramaic) whose formation has been influenced by other precedent religious texts considered as more or less authoritative. And this applies to the whole “spectrum of texts” of Sidnie White Crawford³⁷ or the larger sliding scale of George Brooke.³⁸

The two examples from Dimant and from Kugler form part of the “murky” category of “parabiblical” writings (whatever this may mean in the Qumran context), but of both we can reasonably argue that they were considered authoritative by the group of Qumran (were part of their “Bible” in the usual sense). And in both we find the particular line of interpretation that White Crawford discovers in the “rewritten scripture” examples she analyzes (an interpretative written tradition with particular priestly interests, different from that of the proto-pharisaic group), which she qualifies as “priestly-levitical/Essene exegetical tradition.”³⁹ This interpretative line is evident in the *Apocryphon of Joshua* and in the *Aramaic Levi*, and is characteristic of the writings generally accepted as “sectarian”:

³⁶ White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, 15.

³⁷ White Crawford, *ibid.*, 13.

³⁸ G. J. Brooke, “The Rewritten Law, Prophets and Psalms: Issues for Understanding the Text of the Bible,” in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (ed. E. D. Herbert and E. Tov; London–New Castle: British Library–Oak Knoll, 2002), 31–40, at 36: “This sliding scale approach prevents us from applying the anachronistic labels of scriptural or non scriptural too quickly to manuscript evidence which is so obviously replete with variety, pluralism, multiple editions of books and a range of secondary compositions.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 and 146.

The group at Qumran developed from this priestly-levitical/Essene interpretative line a more stringent set of theological emphases, including a more pronounced dualism, end-time eschatology, and a distinct set of sectarian terms.⁴⁰

Curiously enough, the elements White Crawford underlines here are precisely the elements generally used to determine the “sectarian” or “non-sectarian” character of a composition, be it Aramaic or Hebrew. And if the group at Qumran has developed these characteristics under the influence of already extant Hebrew and Aramaic writings (both “Biblical” and “non-biblical”), this means that these writings had been appropriated by the group, and the question of their origin is no longer relevant. Consequently, in the *RevQ* article, I suggest that we abandon the effort to classify the manuscripts as “biblical/non-biblical” and “sectarian/non-sectarian” and look at the whole as a collection of religious writings more or less authoritative for the group that collected them, preserved them, and in certain cases, wrote them. Since the evidence preserved is essentially circumstantial and fragmentary, we may not be able to determine the level of authority of a certain composition in each instance, but we will certainly avoid unnecessary problems that arise from looking at the evidence from a perspective that is certainly different from that in which the writings in question were created, copied and read.

In the last analysis, my answer to the second question is that it is irrelevant and not particularly useful, since the only context we have for most of the Aramaic compositions is the context provided by the collection in which they have been found.⁴¹

I think I can be short (and more assertive) in my answer to the third question, that of the function of the Aramaic compositions (particularly those of the third category described by Dimant, or the enlarged category I suggest of “apocalyptic writings”) within the manuscript collection

⁴⁰ Ibid., 147.

⁴¹ In a sharp and lucid (as usual) comment to this draft, Eibert Tigchelaar has noted that what I intend to do, more “than finding a way out of the taxonomic problem,” is to find “a way around the taxonomic problem,” and has suggested that I might be more fruitful to try to order clusters of related texts. I think this suggestion is worth pursuing (and the six categories of Devorah Dimant form a starting point), provided that we also include a composition such Daniel (partially written in Aramaic) under the category of “apocalyptic” compositions.

from Qumran, since the question of origins is independent of the question of the function and use. The Aramaic “apocalyptic” compositions, both those known outside the collection and those only known because they have been found there, have so profoundly shaped the group of Qumran that we can define it as an “apocalyptic community.”

In his beautiful contribution to the Groningen symposium of last April,⁴² George Brooke analyzed the influence of Rewriting Scripture on the formation of the community, concluding that what is needed is a “matrix of mantic wisdom and interpretative role of the priest, with the prophetic, needs to be juxtaposed with ‘parabiblical’ and scribal activity.” This neatly ties in with the two examples by Dimant and Kugler I have been discussing without regard to their labelling, because, if anything, the Qumran community is a scriptural community.

Nobody really bothers about the origins (for example) of Deuteronomy, or of Isaiah, or of the Psalms (assuming that such origins could be determined), when dealing with the influence of the said books on the clearly sectarian writings from Qumran. What counts is the way these books inspired and modelled the thinking of the people who collected the many manuscripts of Deuteronomy, Isaiah or Psalms found at Qumran, how these books were rewritten and interpreted by them, how the ideas of these books informed and inspired their own writings, and how they helped them to live their lives. And I think the same can be said of the Aramaic compositions, some of them present in many copies in the collection, because the group to which we owe the collection appropriated the contents of these Aramaic compositions in a fashion similar to the way they appropriated the contents of all the other religious literature they preserved. And since apocalypticism is one of the characteristic elements of many of the Aramaic compositions (not to say of the Aramaic compositions as a whole), I think we can assert that the apocalyptic outlook and the apocalyptic world view of the Qumran group was informed by these writings.

These Aramaic compositions were part and parcel of the religious literature of the time. Their presence in the collection from Qumran shows us that this religious literature deeply influenced the thinking of the group (as they deeply influenced the thinking of another group, Christianity, to which we owe the preservation in translation of several

⁴² G. J. Brooke, “The Apocalyptic Community, the Matrix of the Teacher and Rewriting Scripture,” in *The Authoritativeness of Scripture in Ancient Judaism* (ed. M. Popović; STDJ; Leiden: Brill, 2010) (forthcoming).

of them). The fact that this Aramaic literature was left out of later rabbinic Judaism—and not because it was written in Aramaic—needs to be explained. But that is another story.

RESPONSE: KATELL BERTHELOT

First, I wish to thank Florentino García Martínez for making a special effort to address the three main questions that were asked in the call for papers, namely: 1) the question of the specificity of the Aramaic texts compared both with other Aramaic compositions outside Qumran and with the Hebrew literature found at Qumran; 2) the question of the origin of these texts; 3) the question of their role or function within the Qumran library.

As far as the first question is concerned, García Martínez adds a new characteristic to those already underlined by Devorah Dimant and Eibert Tigchelaar. He correctly notices “the apocalyptic character of a disproportionately large number of these compositions when compared both with the rest of the known compositions in Aramaic and with the Hebrew compositions found at Qumran (sectarian or not).” He is also correct, in my view, to include into the group of “apocalyptic compositions” texts which may not belong to this group in terms of literary genres, but which “show an apocalyptic outlook.”

Concerning the second question, García Martínez understands it as being equivalent to that of “sectarian” versus “non-sectarian” origin. He basically considers the question irrelevant, since the context in which these books were transmitted—in this case, the Qumran library—is ultimately more important than the context in which they were elaborated and produced. However, the question of origins may have more to do with the cultural and literary connections with Mesopotamia or Babylon than with the issue of sectarian literature. And the paper of André Lemaire shows that this is a relevant question to ask.

Moreover, in the following pages of his paper, García Martínez himself tends to consider the Aramaic texts as having come from outside. This is particularly clear when he compares the influence of the Aramaic texts upon the “sectarian” writings from Qumran with that of biblical books such as Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Psalms (p. 12), whose non-sectarian origin nobody doubts.

Now, concerning this issue of sectarian versus non-sectarian and biblical versus non-biblical literature, I am not sure that I can follow García Martínez in his attempt to shift the focus and to replace this question

with that of the degree of authority hold by the texts, no matter whether they are considered Bible, “rewritten Bible” or “parabiblical literature.”

According to García Martínez, the way Deuteronomy, Isaiah or Psalms were rewritten and interpreted in the sectarian writings from Qumran and the way the Aramaic compositions were appropriated by the people behind the Qumran collection, are similar. But apart from a few exceptions, no Aramaic text is quoted in a sectarian text from Qumran, even less commented upon in a *peshet*-like commentary. Since the texts are everything we have, these discrepancies must be acknowledged. It seems to me that we are back to the differences between 2 groups: most of the biblical texts (plus a few others), on the one hand; non-biblical texts, to which a few biblical texts may indeed be added, on the other hand.

It is also difficult to focus exclusively on the question of the use of a text in a given context, and to disregard the question of the original redactional milieu; especially when one does not know how the Aramaic texts were used within the communities linked to the Qumran collection: Were these texts studied alongside biblical texts, for instance? Or studied as a kind of esoteric knowledge reserved to some initiates? Or, on the contrary, were some of them read as simply entertaining? Were they used in the context of specific feasts? etc.

In the end, my impression is that we lack fundamental elements to draw any firm conclusions about the use that was made of these texts within the community/ies linked to the scrolls, apart from a very general statement that they were read and valued. I also suppose that the importance and the authority granted to them varied to some significant extent, depending on the very nature of the text. *I Enoch* may have been very authoritative, whereas the Aramaic Proverbs were perhaps considered a good reading, but with much less authority.

This being said, the questions raised by García Martínez in this highly stimulating paper need further research. He is also fundamentally right in concluding that the presence of the Aramaic texts highlights the deep interest in apocalyptic revelations and eschatological speculations within the Qumran group(s), and that these texts probably influenced the apocalyptic worldview of the people belonging to these circles.

DISCUSSION FLORENTINO GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ

Florentino García Martínez: But if we agree that the apocalyptic outlook of the group that collected the manuscripts has been formed by Aramaic compositions preserved in the collection, in a similar way as to its Torah centrism has been formed say by Deute-

ronomy, I see no reason to privilege one characteristic over the other. And if we agree that the composition quoted as authoritative in 4QTestimonia is not the “biblical” book of Joshua but the *Apocryphon of Joshua*, its rewriting, I see no reason to privilege the one over the other.

It is totally true that we lack fundamental elements to draw any firm conclusions about the use and authority of many of the compositions found in the collection; but the same happens when we try to draw firm conclusion about the origin both of the so-called “biblical” and of the so-called “non biblical” compositions. And many of the compositions of both categories, in Hebrew and in Aramaic, were probably no more than “a good reading.” And that is precisely my main point: the only thing we are certain is the context on which all these manuscripts have been found, this tells us that they were read and valued and were influential in forming new compositions by the group who read and valued all of them. This is perhaps not much, but it is something, and it may help us to stop putting the right historical questions to the collection as a whole.

Jörg Frey: If you want to reconstruct only the function of the texts within the entire library, this might be an interesting perspective. I do not really know whether you also read all the books of the Leuven library together at the same time. What I want to say is: Such a synchronic reading is also a mere construction, which, admittedly, avoids some of the impasses of the historical or diachronic approaches. On the other hand, we can simply not abandon such an approach and limit ourselves to a merely synchronic perspective, if we are interested in the history of the myth of the fall of the watchers or in the history of belief in resurrection and other issues of historical development. So we must locate the texts in space and time, even before the collection of the writings within the whole of the library.

Florentino García Martínez: It is precisely because I am interested in understanding the collection historically, trying to see it with the eyes of the people who collected all the manuscripts we have recovered and who composed some of them, that I propose a synchronic perspective. Because I am convinced that the formulation of the so-called “sectarian” texts has been deeply influenced not only by the so-called “biblical” texts but by all later developments attested in the so-called “non biblical non sectarian” texts. Of course, in the same way that some of the so-called “biblical” texts have been much more influential than others of the same category in the forming of the developments attested by the so-called “sectarian” texts, some of the so-called “non biblical non sectarian” texts have been much more influential than others of the same category in shaping the thoughts of the group that collected the manuscripts and wrote some of them.

Michael Stone: Note the recent article by Rob Kugler in *DSD* you cited. Kugler is right that manuscripts may be influenced by the context in which they are copied, however, his examples that attempt to show Essene influence on certain copies of *Aramaic Levi Document* from Qumran do not hold water.

Florentino García Martínez: Yes, I agree that the examples Kugler deal with are not particularly convincing (I qualified them as “minimal,”), but these examples reinforce the major differences that you noticed in the edition of the Qumran fragments and the peculiarity of the Qumran version of the *Aramaic Levi Document*.