

QUMRAN AND THE CONCEPT OF PAN-ISRAELITE RESTORATION

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In their so-called “sectarian” documents, the members of the Qumran community show a marked preference for identifying themselves either as “Israel” or “Israelites” (Hebrew: *b’ne yisra’el*, lit. “sons of Israel”) rather than as “Judah” or “Judahites” (Hebrew: *yehûdîm*, “Judahites”). This curious phenomenon contrasts sharply with other Second Temple texts (such as the works of Josephus and 1–2 Maccabees).

In this paper, I will first discuss terminology, in order to establish that “Israel” and “Judah,” and their respective gentilic formations, are not necessarily synonymous either in the Hebrew Bible or in the Second Temple literature. I will then examine the so-called “foundational documents” of the Qumran community in order to demonstrate the marked preference for self-identification with “Israel” rather than “Judah.”¹ Finally, I will discuss the significance of the self-identification with “Israel” for understanding the worldview of the Qumran community.

1. Terminology

“Israel” and “Judah” and their respective gentilic formations are not synonyms in the Hebrew Bible. This may seem obvious, but it is necessary to review the data on this issue, since even in academic biblical scholarship the terminological distinctions are frequently blurred.²

In the Hebrew Bible, the term “Israel” usually has one of three referents: (1) the patriarch also called “Jacob”; (2) the nation composed of his descendants, that is, all twelve tribes of “Israel,” including Judah; and (3) the Northern Kingdom, composed of the ten northern tribes, *to the exclusion of Judah*.³ This last meaning, in which “Israel”

1 The term “foundational documents” is taken from S. Talmon, “The Community of the Renewed Covenant: Between Judaism and Christianity,” *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Eugene Ulrich and James C. Vanderkam; Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 10 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 3–24, especially 11. Talmon identifies these documents as: the Community Rule (1QS), the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa), the Damascus Document (CD), the Peshier on Habakkuk (1QpHab), the War Scroll (1QM), the Temple Scroll (11QT), and “to some extent” the Hodayot Scroll (1QH).

2 For discussion of the issues one may see G. Harvey, *The True Israel: Uses of the Names Jew, Hebrew & Israel in Ancient Jewish & Early Christian Literature*, AGAJU 35 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), which surveys a wide body of literature but frequently renders superficial judgments. Much more useful, though narrower in scope, is Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

3 There are exceptions to these three uses. Some argue that in a few instances in Chronicles,

denotes the Northern Kingdom as opposed to the Southern Kingdom “Judah,” predominates in the Former and Latter Prophets. Thus, “Israel” is frequently *contrasted* with “Judah,” as in Ezekiel 4:4–8, where the prophet is told to lay on his left side 390 days for the “House of Israel” (Hebrew: *bêth yisra’el*) and on his right side forty days for the “House of Judah” (Hebrew: *bêth yehûdah*). Even the term “all Israel” (*kol yisra’el*) frequently does not include Judah. For example, in 1 Kings 12:20, Jeroboam is made king “over all Israel” (*‘al kol yisra’el*), but this obviously does not include the tribe of Judah (or Benjamin either, if they are distinguished from each other).

The exact equivalent of the gentilic “Israelite,” (Hebrew: *yisra’eli*), is actually quite rare in the Hebrew Bible, occurring only in Leviticus 24:10–11 and possibly 2 Samuel 17:25.⁴ Otherwise, a different gentilic phrase is used, most commonly *b’nê yisra’el* (sons of Israel). It may denote (1) any descendant of Israel, including those from Judah (Exod. 1:17, etc.), or (2) a descendant of the northern ten tribes, excluding those from Judah (1 Kings 12:24, etc.).

Likewise, the term “Judah” (*yehûdah*) in the Hebrew Bible usually denotes either (1) the patriarch of that name (Gen. 29:35, etc.), (2) the tribe composed of his descendants (Num. 1:7, etc.), or (3) the Southern Kingdom under the House of David (1 Kings 15:1), which also included Levites and Benjaminites (1 Kings 12:21, 23).

The gentilic of “Judah,” namely *yehûdî* (sg.) or *yehûdîm* (pl.), is rare and late in the Hebrew Bible. Most of the biblical occurrences (77 of about 92) are in Esther, Ezra, or Nehemiah—three of the least-attested biblical books at Qumran. There need be little doubt that all of the biblical texts in which *yehûdî* occurs were composed in the exile or afterward, and with one exception (1 Chron. 4:18) all purport to describe events in the very late Judean monarchy, the exile, or the post-exilic period.⁵ Josephus asserted the exilic origin of the term:

From the time they went up to Babylon they were called by this name [*ioudaioi*] after the tribe of Judah. As the tribe was the first to come from those parts, both the people themselves and the country have taken their name from it (Ant. 11:173).

“Israel” refers to the southern kingdom of Judah (2 Chron. 24:5; but compare 2 Chron. 10:19). I would argue that the Chronicler’s use of “Israel” in relation to the kingdom of Judah reflects his view that Judah had within it an Israelite (that is, Northern) population (see 2 Chron. 10:17), consisting in part of devout Yahwists of all twelve tribes who relocated to the south after the division of the kingdom (2 Chron. 11:13–17). Thus, the population of Judah is representative of “all Israel.” In Ezra-Nehemiah, “Israel” frequently refers to the post-exilic community in Judah: Ezra 6:16; Neh. 7:73, etc. However, Ezra is poorly attested at Qumran and Nehemiah not at all.

4 The term occurs four times in Lev. 24:10–11. Many commentators believe *yisra’eli* in 2 Sam. 17:25 is a corruption of *yishma’eli*.

5 Outside of Esther and Ezra-Nehemiah, the term occurs in 2 Kings 16:5; 25:25; Jer. 32:12; 34:9; 38:19; 40:11, 12; 41:3; 43:9; 44:1; 52:28; Zech. 8:23; Dan. 3:8, 12.

From the Greek *ioudaios* through the Latin *Judaeus* we derive the English word “Jew.” But Shemaryahu Cohen warns that “Jew” in English has become an exclusively religious term—one is a Jew rather than a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc.⁶ It should be used with great care when translating the Hebrew *yehûdi* and Greek *ioudaios*, because in antiquity these terms more commonly mean a “Judean” in an ethno-geographic or political sense, not a “Jew” in the religious sense.⁷ After analysis of the relevant ancient texts, Cohen concludes:

All occurrences of the term *ioudaios* before the middle or end of the second century BCE should be translated not as “Jew”, a religious term, but as “Judaean”, an ethnic-geographic term.⁸

Thus, Cohen argues, the Greek term *ioudaios* begins to be applied to non-Judeans as a description of either religion or politics only with the rise of the Maccabean state, which coincided (roughly) with the foundation of the Qumran community. This raises the question, explored below, of whether the Qumranites would have characterized themselves as *yehûdim* or *ioudaioi*.

In any event, despite the clear non-synonymity of “Israel” and “Judah” and their respective gentilics in the Hebrew Bible, terminological precision is not maintained in this matter even in professional biblical scholarship. The English term “Jew” is often used (inaccurately and anachronistically) to describe Judeans who are merely ethnically or politically associated with Judea, as well as Israelites of any time period.⁹ This confusion begins already with Josephus, who employs *ioudaioi* indiscriminately to describe the people of Israel back to the time of Samuel at least (e.g. Ant. 6:30 *et passim*). Despite the antiquity of this conflation of terminology, it should be avoided, inasmuch as it leads to confusion and blurs the distinction between ancient Israel and the various forms of Judaism in the minds of students and even scholars themselves.

6 Cohen, *Beginnings*, 69.

7 Cohen, *Beginnings*, 69–70. See also E. P. Sanders, “The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews: Commonalities, Overlaps, and Differences,” *The Dead Sea Scrolls in their Historical Context*, ed. Timothy H. Lim (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 7–44. Sanders has a rich theological discussion that would benefit from being informed by Cohen’s work on the etymology and sociology of the term *ioudaios*.

8 Cohen, *Beginnings*, 70.

9 For an example of this (errant) usage, see Niels P. Lemche, “The Understanding of the Community in the Old Testament and in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments*, eds. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 290; Copenhagen International Seminar 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 181–193, especially 188: “Biblical Israel is founded on the Torah ... presented to the Jews [sic] by God on Mount Sinai”; and 189: “According to the Deuteronomistic History ... the Israelites of pre-exilic times were not really Jews [sic], as they almost never fulfilled the requirement of the Covenant and the Law.”

In sum, *ioudaioi* (Hebrew *yehûdîm*) and its equivalents should be (and will be in this article) rendered as “Judahites” to avoid unnecessary connotations and confusion.

2. “Israel” and “Judah” as Self-Identifiers in the “Foundational Documents”

The term *yehûdî* occurs only three times in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and never as a term of self-identification. The occurrences are in 4Q242 3:4 (Aramaic fragment of the Prayer of Nabonidus); 4Q333 2 i 1 (unidentified); and 4Q550c 1 i 3 (Esther-like document). Surprisingly, neither *yehûdî* nor *yehûdîm* occurs in what Shemaryahu Talmon calls the “foundational documents” of the community, which “reveal the Covenanter’s self-understanding”:¹⁰ the Community Rule (1QS), the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa), the Damascus Document (CD), the Temple Scroll (11QT), the War Scroll (1QM) and the Peshar Habakkuk (1QpHab).

The members of the “community” (Hebrew *yaḥad*) preferred to identify themselves as Israelites, using various phrases such as “the repentant of Israel” (*shavê yisra’el*), the “men of Israel” (*’anshê yisra’el*), or “the majority of Israel” (*rôv yisra’el*).

Qumran’s Four “Foundational” Documents

The members’ self-identification is incontestably evident in Qumran’s four “foundational” documents, 1QS, 1QSa, 1QM, and 11QT. In 1QS and 1QSa, the tribe of Judah is never mentioned. The community is identified as “Israel” and its members as “Israelites” in various phrases. We may note the following examples:

- (1) The “rank and file” members of the *Yaḥad* (community) are denoted as “Israelites,” as in this passage describing the order of procession of the community:

1QS 2:19 They shall do as follows annually, all the days of Belial’s dominion: the priests shall pass in review 20 first, ranked according to their spiritual excellence, one after another. Then the Levites shall follow, 21 and third all the people by rank, one after another, in their thousands and hundreds 22 and fifties and tens. Thus shall *each Israelite* (*kôl ’ish yisra’el*) know his proper standing in the *Yaḥad* of God.¹¹

- (2) Elsewhere, the *Yaḥad* is equated with “Israel”:

¹⁰ Talmon, “Community,” 11.

¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of the scrolls throughout this paper are from Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg, and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), available electronically through Accordance® Bible software. Any and all emphasis is my own. I have provided the Hebrew in parentheses for the key phrases on which my arguments are based.

1QS 5:5 ... Together they shall circumcise the foreskin of this nature, this stiff neck, and so establish a foundation of truth *for Israel—that is to say, for the Yahad of the Eternal 6 Covenant* (*l'yisra'el l'yahad b'rith 'ôlam*).

- (3) The assembly of the community is described as “the majority of Israel,” as in this text prescribing the testing of prospective members:

1QS 5:21 ... They shall investigate his understanding and works vis à vis the Law, guided both by the Sons of Aaron ... 22 ... and by *the majority of Israel* (*rôv yisra'el*) who have volunteered to return, as a community, to His covenant.

- (4) The *Rule of the Congregation* addresses itself from the beginning to the “congregation of Israel”:

1QSa 1:1 This is the rule *for all the congregation of Israel* (*l'kôl 'edath yisra'el*) in the last days.

- (5) Members of the congregation are expected to be “native-born Israelites”:

1QSa 1:6 The following is the policy for all the troops of the congregation, and it applies *to every native-born Israelite* (*l'kôl ha'ezrach b'yisra'el*).

- (6) The governing structure is based on the ideal of tribal Israel:

1QSa 1:13 ... When he is thirty years old, he may begin to take part in legal disputes. 14 Further, he is now eligible for command, whether of the *thousands of Israel* (*'alphê yisra'el*), or as a captain of hundreds, fifties or 15 tens, or as a judge or official *for their tribes and clans*.

Suffice it to say that the identification of the *Yahad* with “Israel” in 1QS and 1QSa is very strong—but one must also recognize that the community acknowledges an “Israel” that is larger than their community, *in which* and *for which* they exist.¹² Thus, they are an “Israel” within “Israel.”

12 For example, 1QS 5:6 describes the community as a “house of truth *in Israel*” (*b'yisra'el*); 1QS 6:13 states that “anyone *from Israel*” (*miyyisra'el*) may freely join the community; 1QS 8:5 describes the community as a “holy house *for Israel*” (*l'yisra'el*). Similar statements may be found in the Damascus Document.

In the Temple Scroll (11QT) and the War Scroll (1QM), we see portrayed a utopian vision of the restored twelve-tribe nation of Israel:

11QT 24:10 After this burnt offering he shall offer that of the tribe of *Judah* separately. Just as 11 he has performed the burnt offering of the *Levites*, so shall he perform that of the sons of *Judah*, after the *Levites*. 12 Then on the second day he shall offer the burnt offering of *Benjamin* first, and afterwards 13 that of the sons of *Joseph* as one, *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*. On the third day he is to offer 14 *Reuben's* burnt offering separately, and that of *Simeon* separately. On the fourth day 15 he shall offer the burnt offering of *Issachar*, then that of *Zebulon*, separately. On the fifth day 16 he shall offer *Gad's* burnt offering, then *Asher's*, separately. Finally, on the sixth day 25:1 he shall offer [*Dan's* burnt offering, then *Naphtali's*, separately.]

1QM 3:13 Rule of the banners of the whole congregation according to their formations. On the grand banner which is at the head of all the people they shall write, "People of God," the names "Israel" and 14 "Aaron," and the names of the *twelve tribes of Israel* according to their order of birth.

1QM 5:1 and on the sh[ie]ld of the Prince of the Whole Congregation they shall write his name, the names "Israel," "Levi," and "Aaron," and the names of the *twelve tribes of Israel* according to their order of birth, 2 and the names of the twelve chiefs of their tribes.

Some might object that the Temple and War Scrolls do not directly address the self-identity of the *Yahad*. Instead, they present us with eschatological ideals. However, these eschatological ideals are precisely what the *Yahad* wishes to become, and to the extent possible, they are actualizing their ideals in the present. Therefore it should be uncontroversial to say that the War and Temple Scrolls do contribute to our understanding of Qumran self-identity. The *Yahad* endeavors to become the functioning, restored twelve-tribe entity of Israel portrayed in these documents.

The evidence from 1QS, 1QSa, 1QM, and 11QT is, taken by itself, strong enough to establish that the community prefers an "Israelite" self-appellation over a "Judahite" one. However, the evidence from all the scrolls permits an even stronger claim, namely, that *there is no unambiguous self-identification of the Yahad with Judah in the scrolls.*

This claim runs counter to the common assertions that the *Yahad* sees itself as “the remnant of Judah” or “the true Judah.”¹³ Such assertions do not capture the ambition and sweep of the Qumran vision of a restored Israel. More importantly, they are not supported by the texts.

The two key documents from which scholars argue for an identification of the community with “Judah” are the Damascus Document and the *peshtarim*.

The Damascus Document

In the Damascus Document (CD), the word “Israel” is used about forty times, of which about fourteen occurrences are either direct or indirect identifications of the community very similar to those found in 1QS and 1QSa. For example, the rank-and-file members of the community are identified as “Israel,” as can be seen from the stipulation in CD 10:5 that the judges of the congregation must be composed of ten men, four “from the tribe of Levi and Aaron, and six *from Israel*.”¹⁴ Like the Community Rule, the order of procession in the CD is “priests first, Levites second, the *children of Israel* third ...” (CD 14:5–6). The community is also called “the company of Israel”: no member is to “take any of their [the gentiles’] riches, lest they blaspheme, except on the advice of *the company of Israel*” (CD 12:8). Another term of self-identification is the “seed of Israel”: “In accordance with this regulation shall the *seed of Israel* walk” (CD 12:21–22).

The word “Judah,” by contrast, occurs only nine times in CD, of which four are simply quotations of Scripture. Of the remaining five independent uses of “Judah,” three are sometimes taken as indicating the identity of the community.

In CD 3:21–4:4 one finds the well-known allegorical interpretation of Ezekiel 44:15:

CD 3:21 God promised them by Ezekiel the prophet, saying,
The priests and the Levites and the sons of 4:1 Zadok who have
kept the courses of My sanctuary when the children of Israel
strayed 2 from Me, they shall bring Me fat and blood (Ezekiel
44:15). “The priests”: they are the *returnees* (or *repentant*) of *Israel*,
3 who go out of the land of Judah and the Levites are those ac-
companying them; “and the sons of Zadok”: they are the *chosen*

13 See Ben Z. Wacholder, “Historiography of Qumran: The Sons of Zadok and their Enemies,” *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments*, eds. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 290; Copenhagen International Seminar 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 375; Stephen Goranson, “Others and Intra-Jewish Polemic as Reflected in Qumran Texts,” *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, 2 vols.; eds. Peter W. Flint and James C. Vanderkam (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), 2.534–551, here at 537, 543.

14 The English translations of the CD in this paragraph are from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997–98).

of 4 Israel, the ones called by name, who are to appear in the last days.

The phrase *shavê yisra'el*, rendered variously as the “repentant,” “converts,” “returnees” or “captives” of Israel,¹⁵ is an important self-identification for the community of the Damascus Document.¹⁶ It is repeated elsewhere: for example, in CD 6:2, while commenting on Numbers 21:18, the writer asserts:

CD 6:2 ... But God remembered the covenant of the forefathers; and He raised up from Aaron insightful men and *from Israel* 3 wise men and He taught them and they dug the well: the well the princes dug, the nobility of the people 4 dug it with a rod (Numbers 21:18). The Well is the Law, and its “diggers” are 5 the *returnees of Israel who went out of the land of Judah* and dwelt in the land of Damascus ...

In these passages the Israelite self-appellation is quite apparent: the members of the community are “wise men from Israel,” the “returnees of Israel,” and the “chosen of Israel.”

However, when the Damascus Document describes the community members as those “who went out of the land of Judah” (CD 4:3; 6:5), does this indicate that the authors considered their origins to be from Judah and therefore wished to be considered “Judahites” (*yehûdîm*)?

The response is likely negative. If the authors of the CD wished to be considered *yehûdîm*, they would have called themselves the “returnees of Judah.” Indeed, the phrase “who went out of the land of Judah” may well express a desire to *dissociate* with Judah. For example, in Exodus alone there are around thirty variants of the expression “to go/bring out from the land of Egypt,” using the same verb-preposition-noun combination found here (see, for example, Exodus 12:41). The Exodus was surely a desire to dissociate with Egypt.

Moreover, the “returnees of Israel” are mentioned in the Damascus Document only four times. Twice the “returnees of Israel” are said to “have gone out from the land of Judah” (4:3; 6:5) and twice they have “turned aside from the path of the people”:

CD 8:16 Such is the verdict on the *returnees of Israel, those who turn away from the way of the people* [repeated at CD 19:28–29].

15 Compare the Hebrew of Isa. 20:4; 59:20; Ezra 6:21, Neh. 8:17.

16 See Wacholder, “Historiography,” 357. Wacholder opts for “captives.” See also Samuel Iwry, “The Exegetical Method of the Damascus Document Reconsidered,” *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects*, eds. Michael O. Wise et al.; Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722 (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 329–338, especially 333–334, where he argues for “returnees.”

The two phrases (the “returnees of Israel” and “who went out of the land of Judah”) may describe the same action—the leaving of the land of Judah indicates dissatisfaction with the “path” the people in Judah were following.

Only a few lines after the first mention of the “returnees of Israel who go out from the land of Judah” in the Damascus Document (i.e. CD 4:2–3), we encounter the text that scholars commonly cite as “proof” that the community self-identifies with “Judah”:

CD 4:10 ... When the total years of this present age are complete, 11 *there will be no more joining with the House of Judah*, but instead each will stand on 12 his own tower (or “siegeworks”).

The most common interpretation of these lines identifies the House of Judah as the community. Thus the passage supposedly asserts that in the last days—after the present period of tribulation—it will no longer be necessary to join the *Yahad*. The text, however, does not explicitly identify the House of Judah with the community. The identification arises in interpretation. Furthermore, the *Yahad*’s view of itself, so clearly presented in other documents, is as the vanguard of the eschatological restoration of Israel. In fact, in the eschaton the *Yahad* and Israel will be one. How then could CD 4:10–12 be asserting that in the last days, there will no longer be any joining with the *Yahad*-Israel?

The passage is admittedly obscure, but there are several alternative interpretations. For example, we have already observed that the designation “returnees of Israel” emphasizes that the community saw themselves as having “left the land of Judah,” which probably indicates dissociation from Judah, in parallelism with “turning away from the path of the people.” Perhaps in CD 4:10–12, the “House of Judah” stands for the corrupt society that the “returnees” have left.¹⁷ The passage thus asserts that when the present age is over, not only the “returnees” (i.e. the community) but everyone else will no longer join in the sins of the House of Judah. There are other possible interpretations, but, in any event, there is no clear equation of the community with the House of Judah in CD 4:10–12.

There remains one more passage in the CD which gives rise to the scholarly opinion that the community identifies itself with the returned Judean exiles of Babylon. Martin Abegg and others read the following passage as an allegory of the Babylonian exile:¹⁸

17 Talmon seems to take “House of Judah” as a reference to the majority of the people who followed the Pharisees and their form of Judaism. See Talmon, “Community,” 22.

18 See Martin Abegg, “Exile and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. J. M. Scott; Supplement to the Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods 56 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 111–125, especially 113–115, 118, 125.

CD 7:11 ... “Days are coming upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house that 12 have never come before, since the departure of Ephraim from Judah” (Isaiah 7:17), that is, when the two houses of Israel separated, 13 Ephraim departing from Judah. All who backslid were handed over to the sword, but all who held fast 14 escaped to the land of the north, as it says, I will exile the tents of your king 15 and the foundation of your images beyond the tents of Damascus (Amos 5:27). The books of Law are the tents of 16 the king, as it says, I will re-erect the fallen tent of David (Amos 9:11). The king is 17 the congregation and the “foundation of your images” is the books of the prophets 18 whose words Israel despised. The star is the interpreter of the Law 19 who comes to Damascus, as it is written, a star has left Jacob, a staff has risen 20 from Israel (Numbers 24:17). The sceptre is the prince of the whole nation; when he appears, he will shatter 21 all the sons of Seth (Numbers 24:17). They escaped in the first period of God’s judgment, 8:1 but those who held back were handed over to the sword.

Abegg and others take “Damascus” to mean Babylon, and understand this whole narration as a cryptic description of the Judean exile to Babylon. Thus, the *Yahad* is said to view itself as the true remnant of Judah.

However, for CD 7:10–8:1 to refer to the Babylonian exile, “Damascus” has to mean Babylon, “North” has to mean East, and “escaped” has to mean “taken captive.” It is difficult to accept all this. As Samuel Iwry,¹⁹ Norman Golb,²⁰ Ben Zion Wacholder,²¹ and others²² have argued, there are cogent reasons for interpreting “Damascus” as meaning the actual city of *Damascus*.²³

19 See Iwry, “Exegetical Method,” 330–332.

20 Golb, quoted in Iwry, “Exegetical Method,” 338

21 Wacholder, “Historiography,” 357.

22 For example, Phillip R. Callaway, “Methodology, the Scrolls, and Origins,” *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects*, eds. Michael O. Wise et al.; Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722 (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 409–427, at 422; also J. T. Milik, quoted in Iwry, “Exegetical Method,” 332; Hartmut Stegemann, quoted in Iwry, “Exegetical Method,” 338.

23 I argue here against the “Babylonian exile” interpretation of this passage, but the other common alternative, the “Qumran migration” interpretation (see, for example, Michael A. Knibb, “The Place of the Damascus Document,” *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects*, eds. Michael O. Wise et al.; Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722 [New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994], 149–162, especially 159; compare with 161–162), which sees “Damascus” as a cipher for Qumran as a place of study of the Law (based on Zech. 9:1), is even less likely. Then the claim of the CD that the community “went out from the land of Judah and escaped to the north, to Damascus” *really* means that the community “moved to a different part of Judah, migrating

First, the “sectarian” scrolls speak freely and literally about Babylon and the exile in at least a dozen other passages, including the first column of the Damascus Document itself.²⁴ There is no reason why the authors of the CD should feel compelled to use a cipher here, especially one as arbitrary as “Damascus.” Second, there is no biblical passage that would serve to link Damascus with Babylon.²⁵ Third, the one element of Amos 5:27 which is *not* allegorized in the CD’s interpretation is “Damascus.” Therefore, the literal meaning of Damascus is the reason the verse was deployed. The author was seeking some Scriptural justification for a rather bizarre emigration—one to Damascus. Amos 5:27 was the best he could do—but in order to press it into service as a prophecy of a positive sojourn to Damascus, he had to allegorize all the elements of the text *except* the name of the city itself, *whose literal sense he wishes to retain*.

To sum up our review of the Damascus Document: it can be confidently asserted that it contains no unambiguous identification of the community with the “remnant of Judah” or some similar concept.

The Pesharim

There is a consensus that in the *pesharim*, the three groups designated “Judah,” “Ephraim,” and “Manasseh” correspond to the Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees respectively.²⁶ Stephen Goranson calls this identification one of the most “assured results” of scrolls scholarship.²⁷ On the basis of the *pesharim*, he asserts “the Essenes saw themselves as the true Judah.” It follows that since the Qumranites were Essenes they too saw themselves as the “true Judah.”

to the southeast of Jerusalem, to Qumran.” See the critique of this view by Iwry, “Exegetical Method,” 330–332.

24 CD 1:6; 1Q20 21:23; 4Q163 4–6 ii 2; 4Q163 8–10 i 1; 4Q163 25 i 1; 4Q242 1–3 i 1; 4Q244 12 i 3; 4Q266 2 i 11 (=CD 1:6); 4Q385b 16 i 4–6; 4Q386 1 iii 1–3; 4Q552 1 ii 5; 4Q553 6 ii 4; 4Q554 2 iii 19.

25 Callaway, “Methodology,” 422.

26 See Ida Frölich, “Qumran Names,” *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues*, eds. D.W. Parry and E. Ulrich; *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 30 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), 294–305, especially 300–303; also George J. Brooke, “The Pesharim and the Origins of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects*, eds. Michael O. Wise et al.; *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 722 (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 339–353, especially 346–347; Graham Harvey, *The True Israel*, 41–42; H.J. Zobel, “y^hhūdā,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 5.485–486.

27 Goranson, “Others,” 543–544. For some healthy skepticism to balance the “assurance,” see Callaway, “Methodology,” and Lester Grabbe, “The Current State of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Are There More Answers than Questions?” *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After*, eds. Samuel E. Porter and Craig A. Evans; *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, Supplement Series 26 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 54–67, especially 58–60.

However, when one examines the key *loci* in the *pesharim* that pertain to the relationship of the *Yahad* with this group known as “Judah,” the situation becomes more complex than a simple equation between the two. For example, a key passage from 1QpHab 7:17–8:1 reads:

1QpHab 7:17 [... “As for the righteous man, by loyalty to him one may find life” (Habakkuk 2:4b).] 8:1 This refers to *all those who do the law in the house of Judah* whom 2 God will rescue from among those doomed to judgment, because of their suffering and their loyalty 3 to the Teacher of Righteousness.

The “doers of the law” are generally understood as the Essenes, based on the derivation of the term “Essene” from Hebrew *‘asah*, “to do.”²⁸ What is the relationship of the “doers of the law” to the “House of Judah”? At least some of them are *in it*. They are not simply the “House of Judah,” they are “*in the House of Judah*.” The text does not specify whether *all* “doers of the law” are “in the House of Judah,” nor whether all “in the House of Judah” are also “doers of the law.” All that can be known is that the “House of Judah” includes some who “do the law” and are sympathetic to the Teacher of Righteousness. If these are Essenes, then the “House of Judah” includes at least some Essenes.

Another important text from the *pesharim* is found in 1QpHab 11:17–12:1:

11:17 [“For the crimes perpetrated against Lebanon he will bury you, for the robbery of beasts,] 12:1 he will smite you; because of murder and injustice in the land, he will destroy the city and all who live in it” (Habakkuk 2:17). The passage refers to the Wicked Priest, that he will be paid back 3 for what he did to the poor, for “Lebanon” refers to 4 *the council of the Yahad*, and “beasts” refers to *the simple of Judah who do 5 the Law*.

Here the “council of the *Yahad*”—which is probably a circumlocution for the *Yahad* viewed as a “committee of the whole”—is distinguished from “the simple of Judah.” The relationship between the two is not made clear: apparently they are two different groups. There is no equation of the *Yahad* with Judah. The simple of Judah “do the law,” so they are presumably Essenes. Whatever “Judah” is, here again we find that it includes “doers of the law.”

Also germane to this discussion is another text from the *pesharim*, 4QpPs^a:

4QpPs^a (4Q171) 1 ii 13 “The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes [his teeth against him. But the Lo]rd laughs at him,

28 See, for example, J. C. Vanderkam, “Identity and History of the Community,” *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, eds. P. W. Flint and J. C. Vanderkam (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 2.487–533, especially 2.490–499; Goranson, “Others,” 537–540.

for he knows 14 his day is coming" (Psalm 37:12–13). This refers to the *ruthless of the covenant in the House of Judah* who 15 plot to destroy those who do the Law in the council of the *yahad*.

This passage indicates that in addition to "simple folk" and "doers of the law," the "House of Judah" includes "ruthless ones" who wish to destroy the *Yahad* (or at least, the "doers of the law" within it).

Based on the above three passages from the *pesharim*, one can safely assert that from the perspective of the *Yahad*, the category "Judah" is a mixed bag.²⁹ "Judah" includes some who are sympathetic to the Teacher of Righteousness, and some who want to destroy the *Yahad*. Nowhere is there a one-for-one identification of the *Yahad* with "Judah" or even an identification of the "doers of the law" with "Judah." All that can be known with certainty is that there are "doers of the law" in "Judah" and there are "doers of the law" in the *Yahad*. There are also enemies of both the *Yahad* and the "doers of the law" in "Judah." In sum, the assertion that in the *pesharim* "the Essenes saw themselves as 'the true Judah'" is tenuous at best. Even more tenuous is the assertion that the Qumran *Yahad* saw itself as such.³⁰

3. Significance

My thesis has been that in the foundational documents of the community, the Qumranites show a marked preference for identifying themselves as "Israel" or "Israelites," even though they implicitly acknowledge that, in the present, "Israel" is a bigger category from which they have come, in which they exist, and for which they exist. In no place is there any clear identification of the community with Judah alone or as composed mainly or solely of "Judahites." That does not mean the community is anti-Judahite. On the contrary, the tribe of Judah has an honored place with the *Yahad*. The *Yahad*, however, aspires to be all of "Israel," not just "Judah."

How can we explain this evidence? Why does the community avoid simple identification as "Judahites" or "Judeans" when they are in fact living in the land of Judah?

First, the leadership of the community is composed, not of *yehûdim* (Judahites) but of *levî'im* (Levites). This is a society governed by priests who are proud of their

29 Harvey's assessment on this point is accurate: "Judah' is applied to both 'good' and 'bad' in Qumran Literature. ... It is applied to both the producers of Qumran Literature and their opponents in other groups" (Harvey, *True Israel*, 41). Despite this insight, Harvey curiously refers to "a distinctive use of the phrase 'House of Judah' as a name for the Community" on the same page (Harvey, *True Israel*, 41).

30 One other passage of the *pesharim* merits discussion: 4QpNah (4Q169) 3:2–5: The "glory of Judah" I take to be the royal messiah, and the "majority of Israel"—which the simple of Ephraim join—is clearly a technical term for the *yahad* (cf. 1QS 5:22). That "Ephraim" contains "simple folk"—a class of people elsewhere described as "doers of the law" [Essenes] and included in "Judah" (compare 1QpHab 12:4–5)—militates against a simple equation of "Ephraim" with the Pharisees. Whatever "Ephraim" is in the *pesharim*, it is a complex category, including (like Judah) both good and bad, both (evil) deceivers and (innocent) deceived.

Levitical, Aaronic, and Zadokite lineages. The tribe that consistently is given primacy in the documents is Levi, *followed by* Judah. Since the Levitical/Zadokite leadership of the *Yahad* probably wrote many of the documents themselves, they strongly resist suppressing their own tribal heritage under that of Judah.

Second, the *Yahad* exhibits what Talmon calls “self-implantation in the world of biblical Israel.”³¹ They are living in the biblical world, and they use their terms as the Bible uses them. Thus, they realize that “Judah” does not mean “Israel” and vice-versa, even if some of their contemporaries were beginning to mix the terms.

Third, the *Yahad* is actively anticipating the *eschatological, pan-Israelite restoration of the twelve tribes*. In terms of their self-identity, they are the vanguard, the spearhead of the incoming of the lost tribes in the eschatological era. After all, the restoration and reunification of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, of all twelve tribes, was consistently proclaimed by the three great prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel):

In that day the LORD will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel [Northern Kingdom], and gather the dispersed of Judah [Southern Kingdom] from the four corners of the earth. (Isa. 11:11–12 RSV)

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when men shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel [Northern Kingdom] out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ (Jer. 23:7–8 RSV)

Say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (which is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him; and I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. ... and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. (Ezek. 37:19–22 RSV)

³¹ Talmon, “Community,” 12.

Fourth, the *Yahad* did not see the Hasmonean or Herodian Judean state as the true successor of biblical Israel. Nor was the return of the *yehûdim* from Babylon the fulfillment of the prophecies of restoration as foretold in the prophets. It could not have been: only one tribe returned—or, at best, three, if Levi, Judah, and Benjamin are counted separately. But the prophets foresaw a pan-Israelite restoration which included the ten northern tribes.

In conclusion, although in our academic schemas we place the Qumran community into the category “Second Temple Judaism,”³² their own worldview is more accurately described as Second Temple *Israelitism*.³³ This is not an issue of small importance, for as Talmon remarks:

We should avoid applying a vocabulary to the description of the Community of the Renewed Covenant which tends to obfuscate its specific identity and which is prone to predetermine the conclusions of the proposed analysis.³⁴

The *Yahad* anticipated the eschatological regathering of all twelve tribes. This finding sheds light on pan-Israelite restoration motifs in the New Testament, including at least the following: (1) Jesus’ choice of twelve apostles to represent a reconstituted Israel; (2) Paul’s use of the term “all Israel” in Romans 11:26 and his concept of “Israel of God” in Galatians 6:16; (3) the significance of the *ioudaioi* in the Gospel of John as “Judahites” or “Judeans” (an ethno-geographic designation) rather than “Jews” (a religious designation);³⁵ (4) James’ deployment of the phrase “the twelve tribes in dispersion” in James 1:1. In their self-identity, the Qumran community anticipated the theology of the early Church, which would also understand herself to be the restored Israel.

32 See, for example, P. R. Davies, “The Judaism(s) of the Damascus Document,” *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery*, eds. J. M. Baumgarten et al.; Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 34 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000). Davies, in an otherwise thoughtful article on Qumran self-identity, never asks whether it is appropriate to describe the Qumran religion as a form of “Judaism” at all.

33 Or, as John Collins has pointed out, *Third Temple Israelitism*, inasmuch as the community was dissatisfied with the Second Temple and eagerly anticipating a third, eschatological one (personal communication with author). Also, if one may digress, another community which sits with great discomfort in the category “Second Temple Judaism,” or Judaism generally, is the Samaritans, who consider themselves neither Jews nor Judeans, and do not trace their history from the Southern Kingdom and the return from Babylon. Along with the Qumran community, they would much more accurately be described as practicing a form of “Israelitism.” On Qumran’s dissent from Pharisaic/Rabbinic/Normative Judaism, see Talmon, “Community,” 22–24.

34 Talmon, “Community,” 10. In my opinion this has to some extent already taken place: the (understandable) categorization of the community as a form of “Judaism” has encouraged, consciously or subconsciously, the identification of the *yahad* with “Judah” in various texts.

35 “Judean” (*ioudaios*) in John should be contrasted with “Israelite” (John 1:27), “Samaritan” (John 4:9), or “Galilean” (John 4:45), but not with “Christian,” which would be anachronistic.