

PROPHETS, PROPHECY,
AND PROPHETIC TEXTS
IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

Edited by

Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak



t&t clark

NEW YORK • LONDON

supplications: that the tribes of Jacob may return to their land and that God may take pity on his holy city and his temple (vv. 13a, 18–19). The final strophe (vv. 20–22) makes an urgent request to God to live up to his reputation. The Greek text runs here as:

- 36:20 Acknowledge those you created at the beginning
and fulfill the prophecies spoken in your name.
36:21 Reward those who look to you in trust; prove your prophets worthy of credence.
(REB)⁵⁷

Whereas “prophecy” in 24:33 and 39:1 lays special emphasis upon the authoritative aspect of prophetic words interpreting Torah, the final lines of the prayer in ch. 36 expose another dimension of it. Although the appearance of prophets belongs to the past and the epoch of their preaching has gone, no doubt 36:20 nevertheless refers to prophecies that still wait for realization. Just because those prophecies in former days have been spoken on God’s behalf, they can now serve as a plea to him to fulfill them at last.

Considering both the content and the atmosphere of the prayer, the notion “prophecies” in 36:20 very likely refers to the corpus of Oracles against the Nations, which is found in almost every book of the Latter Prophets. In 36:12, the leaders of the foreign nations are explicitly brought to the fore, uttering blasphemous thoughts. The prayer pleads that the nations be punished because of their blasphemy. The fact that in the subsequent line the trustworthiness of the prophets is so strongly underlined can be adduced as supplementary evidence for this view.

4. Summary

With respect to the notions “prophet” and “prophecy” within the *Laus Patrum*, Ben Sira has in general adopted the biblical concepts and phraseology. It strikes the eye that—apart from in Sir 44:3—the range of the verbal root נבא completely coincides with the second part of the Hebrew Bible (נביאים): from Joshua (Sir 46:1) to the Twelve Prophets (Sir 49:10). Nowhere, however, has Ben Sira simply copied the biblical narratives relating to prophets, for every passage in his book in which “prophet” and/or “prophecy” occurs has been reshaped by him with the help of specific literary features of his own.

Outside the *Laus Patrum* there are only a few occurrences dealing with “prophet” and/or “prophecy.” Within a prayer for deliverance (36:20–21), Ben Sira asks God to make his prophets be proved true. And in two strategic passages (24:33; 39:1) he uses the concept of “prophecy” in order to describe the sage’s—that is to say, his own—function and activities as passing down and interpreting Torah. It is especially here that Ben Sira breaks new ground in respect of the notion “prophecy.”

57. The Greek is not quite identical, however, to its Hebrew parent text, which reads: “(36:15) Give evidence of your deeds of old; / fulfill the vision (חזון) spoken in your name. (36:16) Reward those who have hoped in you, / And let your prophets be proved true” (according to the translation of Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 414).

PROPHECY AND PROPHETS IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: LOOKING BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS

George J. Brooke

1. Introduction

In 1962 no less a biblical scholar than S. H. Hooke wrote: “The emergence of John the Baptist from the wilderness makes the surmise not wholly improbable that the settlements in the Jordan valley, where the Essenes are known to have lived, and from whence the much-discussed Dead Sea documents have come, may have been the last refuge of the remnants of the prophetic order.”¹ The purpose of this essay is to see whether and how flesh can be put on Hooke’s observation: What might some elements of such a prophetic order look like, how can some features of prophecy and prophets in the Dead Sea Scrolls be configured? Is there in the Qumran library evidence for the “last refuge of the remnants of the prophetic order” or are we required by the data to change the labels to such a degree that it is no longer appropriate to speak of prophetic activity as in any way continuous with its forms as these have been preserved in the scriptural sources now found in Jewish and Christian canons?

For any student of prophecy there is an ongoing problem of definition at the outset.² Recent work on prophets and prophecy has resulted in a welcome and more integrated reading of a very wide range of evidence and a determination to set the whole breadth of what might be labelled “prophetic” within a framework which includes both ancient Near Eastern parallels for the prophets of the Hebrew Bible³ and also the classical traditions of the Greco-Roman world for the late Second Temple period and the evidence of the New Testament.⁴ This broad

1. Samuel H. Hooke, “The Religious Institutions of Israel,” in *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible* (ed. M. Black and H. H. Rowley; London: Nelson, 1962), 142–50 (149).

2. This has been helpfully addressed by Lester L. Grabbe, “Poets, Scribes, or Preachers? The Reality of Prophecy in the Second Temple Period,” in *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and Their Relationships* (ed. L. L. Grabbe and R. D. Haak; JSPSup 46; London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 192–215.

3. See, e.g., Martti Nissinen, ed., *Prophecy in its Ancient Near Eastern Context: Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives* (SBLSymS 13; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); idem, “Das kritische Potential in der altorientalischen Prophetie,” in *Propheten in Mari, Assyrien und Israel* (ed. M. Köckert and M. Nissinen; FRLANT 201; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 1–32.

4. See, e.g., the landmark study by David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); also Ben Witherington, *Jesus the Seer: The Progress of Prophecy* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), esp. Chapters 8–10.

framework has yet to become a serious contextual basis for the consideration of prophecy in the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁵

This is so not least because the non-biblical compositions found in the Qumran caves deconstruct such a broad approach by insisting on certain lines of inherited continuity: the movement which was responsible for collecting the Qumran library claims to have looked to the scriptural past for its appreciation of its own prophetic activity rather than to the phenomena of prophecy in the Greco-Roman world. Nevertheless the broadening of the definition of prophecy discernible in recent scholarly work assists the analyst of the Qumran scrolls by permitting a wider range of data to be included than might previously have been allowed. So the study of prophecy in the Dead Sea Scrolls should consider all the means of divine communication that are hinted at in the scrolls: "the transmission and interpretation of dreams and visions (as in the Enoch literature and Daniel), the use of lots and priestly means of divination, such as the Urim and Thummim,⁶ the writing down of angelic discourse (such as in *Jubilees*), inspired interpretation of authoritative oracles (as in the pesharim), and the symbolic activity of the community as a whole and of its individual members."⁷

With the larger task of a major re-evaluation of prophecy and prophets in the Dead Sea Scrolls awaiting a substantial monograph, the brief discussion of the topic will be narrowed in this essay to four closely related topics. A short consideration of the parabiblical prophetic writings will suggest that such rewritings were a significant mode for some late Second Temple prophetic literature, possibly as part of a wider phenomenon of scriptural rewriting that could in its entirety be deemed as prophetic. This rewriting activity forms the backdrop for a consideration of how other uses of the prophets might be considered as a continuation of prophetic activity itself.⁸ If such was the case, then it also becomes necessary to say a few words about the social character and location of such continuous prophetic activity. In the light of these three topics, some conclusions will be offered about prophetic activity in the movement that collected together the library found in the eleven caves at or near Qumran.

The general observations in this short study are based on the view that in a more or less consistent fashion the finds of manuscripts from the eleven caves at

5. General overviews of prophets and prophecy at Qumran include the following: Millar Burrows, "Prophets and Prophecy at Qumran," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (ed. B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson; New York: Harper, 1962), 223–32; James E. Bowley, "Prophets and Prophecy at Qumran," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years* (ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:354–78; George J. Brooke, "Prophecy," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:694–700.

6. See the references to their use in 4QpIsa^a (4Q164) 1 5; 4QMysteries^a (4Q299) 69 2; 4QApocryphon of Moses B^b (4Q376) 1 1, 3.

7. Brooke, "Prophecy," 695.

8. David N. Freedman, "Prophecy in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth and W. P. Weaver; Harrisburg: Trinity, 1998), 42–57 (49), has expressed it as follows: "When new contemporary prophetic utterances are unavailable or unacceptable, the alternative is to recycle old prophecies."

and near Qumran constitute a coherent collection of works; such a collection deserves the label "library." As with many taxonomies, the suitable classification of the contents of this library is proving to be increasingly complicated. Though there have been several important attempts at distinguishing between the sectarian and non-sectarian compositions in the library,⁹ there has been much less energy devoted to the clarification of where the line should be drawn between what the community responsible for the library deemed authoritative in some form and what it preserved of earlier and contemporary Jewish literature for other reasons.

It has been traditional to divide the non-sectarian compositions into two overarching categories, the biblical and the non-biblical. However, the demarcation between the biblical and the non-biblical has come to be seen as increasingly difficult. There are several reasons for this. To begin with, the labels themselves have now been recognized as anachronistic, implying that there was a fixed list of books of canonical status at an early date. To avoid the term several scholars have moved to a preferred use of "scripture," implying a less fixed, more open-ended view of what might have been authoritative for any particular community. Second, it cannot be denied that for many of these authoritative works there are multiple textual traditions, either in the form of variant text-types or in the form of multiple editions or both. The decision to declare a particular text-type and a particular edition as exclusively authoritative was a matter for the end of the Second Temple period and beyond.

All this is important for this short study because the characterization of the evidence matters. At least two important points need to be borne in mind. First, within the Qumran library are preserved many copies of parabiblical prophetic compositions; these seem to indicate that the way in which the prophetic insights of earlier generations were made relevant to later ones was through the rewriting of the earlier traditions. Second, within the sectarian compositions there is no evidence that any appeal to prophetic texts was ever to any text other than those with close affinity to what was widely held to be scriptural. When these two facts are held together it can be more clearly perceived that there was a necessary tension between the authority of earlier or what may have been understood to have been the earliest forms of certain prophecies and the authority of those prophetic traditions in rewritten form which made contemporary the prophetic voice anew in later generations. The rewritten forms of prophetic works did not replace the compositions upon which they were based, since it is clear that those were avidly copied out as well, but they existed alongside them as a means of access to the significance of those prophetic compositions that had increasing authority.

9. See especially the works of Carol 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, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 167–87; and Deborah Dimant, "The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance," in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness: Papers on the Qumran Scrolls by Fellows of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1989–1990* (ed. D. Dimant and L. H. Schiffman; STDJ 16; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 23–58.

11 of this discussion, it is clear that the belief of earlier generations of scholars, based on particular readings of some ancient sources, that prophecy had ceased at some time shortly after the end of the exile, is to be dismissed.¹⁰ In late Second Temple period Judaism for most Jews prophecy was a lively affair, even if it was somewhat transformed from its earlier states.

2. The Parabiblical Rewritten Prophets¹¹

One of the most straightforward ways of seeing that prophecy and prophetic texts were an ongoing affair in the second half of the Second Temple period is to consider briefly the developing transmission of those books considered to contain the writings of the literary prophets or to be prophecy for some reason, perhaps because they were viewed as oracular. Apart from the scribal copying of the texts of the literary prophets in a variety of forms and their explicit quotation, for the literary prophets the most notable developments of their traditions are to be found in the remains of the so-called *Jeremiah Apocrypha* (A–C^{a-b}) and of *Pseudo-Ezekiel*^{a-d}.¹² Furthermore, in addition to the literary prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve) several scriptural figures were understood as prophets, some obviously so, such as Samuel and Elijah, and others less obviously so, such as Moses, David and Daniel. In the Qumran library there are non-sectarian parabiblical compositions that can be associated with all these “non-literary” prophets that indicate that the authority of earlier revelation was recognized in subsequent generations through the need for it to be re-presented afresh in rewritten and reworked forms.

It is not necessary in this study to consider the whole range of non-sectarian and quasi-sectarian rewritten compositions that are associated in one way or another with the towering prophetic figures of earlier generations. If the broadest definition of prophetic literature is presented as a starting point, then nearly all of the writings now contained in the Law and the Prophets, as well as the Psalms and Daniel, together with all their various rewritten forms would need to be included, either because they were deemed to have been revealed or because they were associated with a prophet, which may amount to much the same thing. In the light of the non-biblical, non-sectarian compositions found in the Qumran library it is clear that a broad definition like this would be clear grounds for saying that one of the most significant characteristics of the literary activity of Second Temple Judaism was its attention to prophecy, and not just prophecy as an activity of the past but as a past activity continuous with the present.

For the parabiblical prophetic texts in particular, like the *Jeremiah Apocrypha* or *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, several features need to be discussed in a general fashion to

indicate at least some of the ways in which prophecy continued in the Second Temple period. To begin with, the very existence of the parabiblical rewritten prophetic texts shows that the prophets themselves were understood as forward-looking. The parabiblical prophetic rewritings reflect the view that if ever classical prophecy had been about forth-telling, in the Second Temple period it was more clearly perceived as foretelling.¹³ If the classical literary prophets had been perceived as simply speaking to their own generations alone, then they might have been studied for some antiquarian reasons as in some way foundational for later generations, but not as having direct relevance. So it is the case that the narrative framework of parts of the *Jeremiah Apocryphon* is Jeremiah adapted to fit the chronological framework of Jubilee periods which is a feature of the kind of eschatological historiographical prophecy evident in later sectarian texts. Likewise some of the oracles of Ezekiel, such as that concerning the dry bones of Ezek 37, originally about the post-exilic restoration of Israel, are adapted in *Pseudo-Ezekiel* to speak of future eschatological events, such as the end-time resurrection of all individuals.

Second, the full diversity of genres in which the prophetic literature had been presented was adopted and recast in the parabiblical prophetic compositions. Narratives were expanded and reworked; oracles were adjusted and adapted; dialogues between the prophet and God were retold; speeches addressed to Israel or others were recast. The generic continuity of the rewritten compositions with what they rewrite is indicative of the way in which those who saw themselves as the heirs of the prophets also identified with them. The force of the rewriting of “prophetic” genres in their own look-alike forms probably also influenced the way other rewritings took place, so that, for example, the rewriting of Genesis–Exodus in the book of *Jubilees* took the form of an angelic revelatory speech with explicit oracular characteristics, and the Temple Scroll is written in the form of a revelatory divine speech.

So, third, the continuity strongly suggests not that the rewriting and reworking of earlier prophetic traditions is something new, but that it is something that goes to the heart of what has already been revealed in some way. Earlier authoritative traditions were already indicating this, most notably in the way in which within some prophetic compositions doublets were visible, showing how traditions could be reused and adapted. This third point indicates that there is no need for the rewritten forms explicitly to claim revelatory status for themselves. Such status was inherent in the original authoritative prophetic texts and was transmitted in some way in the relationship between the reworked composition and its base text. In this way the rewritten compositions should be viewed neither as replacing the compositions they rework nor as entirely secondary and interpretative.¹⁴

10. Much of the ancient source material is neatly laid out and commented upon by Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 103–6.

11. For a general survey of the manuscripts containing parabiblical prophetic compositions, see George J. Brooke, “Parabiblical Prophetic Narratives,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1:271–301.

12. These are described fully in Devorah Dimant, *Qumran Cave 4.XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (DJD 30; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001).

13. Perceived on other grounds, e.g., by John C. Trever, “The Qumran Teacher—Another Candidate?,” in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee* (ed. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring; SBL Homage Series 10; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 101–21 (103).

14. The same should be said for the Septuagint, in which the translators sometimes conformed the wording of the original prophetic oracles to their own outlook. See, e.g., the descriptions of this

Fourth, a feature of the parabiblical prophetic rewritings, as in other rewritings, is the tendency towards specificity. Part of this seems to have resulted from the lack of a full appreciation for the original context or setting of the prophetic work being reworked, but part of it was indeed a belief that the prophetic texts were originally written to speak to contemporary circumstances and so could be glossed with clarificatory explanations to fit the views and circumstances of the rewriter. However, although there is this tendency towards a new specificity in the rewritten texts, so it also needs to be recalled that there is little or nothing in the parabiblical prophetic texts which might be labelled as clearly sectarian. Sectarian readings of prophetic texts are reserved for the extension of the rewriting process which is visible in the more explicit interpretative works, such as the pesharim.

In sum, the re-presentation of the prophetic books in rewritten form is an extension of those very books. Those responsible for the rewritings were being no more interpretative (in the sense of being derivative and secondary) than were the members of the prophetic schools who compiled the prophetic oracles together into literary collections in the first place. In such cases such work of compilation sometimes took several generations (as with Isaiah) and sometimes took several forms (as with Jeremiah) and sometimes both. The rewriting process shows that the prophets were understood as foretelling matters that needed to be apprehended and appropriated by a new generation. From all these perspectives it is most appropriate to view these rewritings of the literary prophetic texts as themselves examples of ongoing prophetic activity.

3. Explicit Interpretation as Prophecy

The presence of rewritten prophetic works has indicated that in the late Second Temple period the prophetic voice was held to be enduring and made present through a variety of means which were continuous with the production of the classic literary prophetic works. Generically these rewritten compositions imitate the compositions they rewrite; like them they contain interpretative material that is not presented as secondary and derivative but as coherent with the divine communication received by the prophet.

It can be argued, furthermore, that such coherence is also a feature of the explicit interpretations of prophecy. Part of the discernment of divine purposes in the prophetic literature and the lives of the prophets depended upon suitable scriptural interpretation.¹⁵ The varieties of such interpretation covered not just halakhic matters, such as in the revelatory rewritten presentations of the book of *Jubilees* or the Temple Scroll, but insight into how God might be working

process in several instances by Frederick F. Bruce, "Prophetic Interpretation in the Septuagint," *BIOCS* 12 (1979): 17–26.

15. Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 105–7, considers the similarities and differences between Josephus's Essene prophets and peshar interpretation at Qumran, noting in particular the similarities.

his purposes out through the current circumstances of the community and the wider movement of which it was a part. The pesharim provided a mode of interpretation of unfulfilled prophetic texts of all kinds that demonstrated that the experiences of the community were anticipated in the prophecies of previous generations.¹⁶ Prophetic text and inspired exegetical interpretation are coherent with one another, so much so that the interpretation sometimes infected the presentation of the prophetic text and the prophetic text bears frequent repetition in the interpretation.¹⁷

In the Habakkuk Peshar, there is a well-known passage which clearly indicates that God was considered to be still revealing his mysteries for the first-century reader. Habbakuk 2:2, "That he who reads may read it speedily," is understood as concerning "the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of His servants the prophets" (1QpHab VII, 4–5). The Habakkuk Peshar is commonly understood to be just such a set of divinely inspired mysteries and equally inspired revealed interpretations. Few scholars would say that the Habakkuk Commentary was intended to be read in its final form as a product of the Teacher of Righteousness, since it speaks about him in the third person, but it was almost certainly intended to contain inspired interpretations as had been revealed to him.

Such inspired interpretations undoubtedly have a special status. With the parabiblical rewritten prophetic texts it was argued above that the rewritten texts were not intended to replace the works of the literary prophets which they reworked and whose authority they continued to convey through the subsequent act of rewriting. So too it is most likely that the relationship of inspired interpretation to the prophecy being interpreted was not one in which the interpretation negated the original force of the prophet's words but rather endorsed them for the present. For example, S. Berrin has noted that

the words of the biblical prophet Nahum would have been perceived as applicable to Assyria, but as ultimately important because of their applicability to the end-time. They would make sense in regard to Assyria, but would matter in regard to the Community and its contemporaries. In this view, peshar does in fact presuppose an originally meaningful base-text.¹⁸

Thus, as with the parabiblical rewritten prophetic compositions, so the pesharim can be viewed as continuous with the prophetic texts they interpret, and, as such, as a further form of prophecy in their own right. Intriguingly, the view of the prophetic text as "fore-telling" results in an exegetical application that is "forth-telling."

16. The most recent elaborate attempt to articulate not just the historical significance of the pesharim but what they might reveal of Qumran history is by James H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History: Chaos or Consensus?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

17. As pointed out with regard to the use of variants for exegetical purposes by Frederick F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 12–16.

18. Shani L. Berrin, *The Peshar Nahum Scroll from Qumran: An Exegetical Study of 4Q169* (STDJ 53; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 15–16.

Moreover, there is an additional parallel between the prophetic character of the interpretation of the rewritten parabiblical prophetic compositions and the explicit inspired exegesis of the pesharim. It was noted above that prophetic figures beyond the literary prophets attracted rewritings, whether as adjusted sacred narratives or as revelations of what was written on heavenly tablets or as records of direct divine speeches. So too the pesharim cannot be confined solely to the literary prophets, notably Isaiah and the Twelve, but also include a wide range of authoritative texts. The sectarian compositions found in the Qumran caves indicate that pesharim can be applied to any unfulfilled blessing, curse, promise or prophecy, whether in the literary prophets or in some other authoritative writing.

The continuity of the pesharim with the prophetic texts of various kinds which they complete raises the question of what kind of prophetic revelation they may consist. After a careful analysis of various technical terms, E. M. Cook asks the question of the sectarians reflected in the scrolls from the eleven Qumran caves:

What exactly were they doing when they received revelation? Did they hear an audible voice, or did they see or hear figures in a vision, or in a dream? Did they experience trances, or see miracles, or what? The question is important, because they claimed to have a revelation that the rest of Israel did not have, and we must try to understand what made them think it was a revelation and why only they had it.¹⁹

Cook continues by underlining that most of the terms connected with the special knowledge that is the repository of this special revelation are intellectual terms. The sectarian community members seem to be very reticent about their experience of the divine: they do not claim to have literally heard the voice of God or to have had a supernatural vision as the prophets of old had done. Cook goes on to insist, rightly, that no sectarian, not even the Teacher of Righteousness, is credited with a new vision or audition. Cook's analysis permits us to envisage that both the continuity of the inspired exegetical sections of the pesharim with the scriptural texts they interpret and the discontinuity of prophetic experience can be characterized as an intellectual transformation of prophecy. In the next section a few comments will be made on the social location of such prophetic intellectualization.

4. Ongoing Prophetic Practice and its Social Location

Though no sectarian is explicitly credited with a new vision or audition,²⁰ there is a small group of compositions in the Qumran library that suggests that there was ongoing activity that was labelled as prophecy. From the perspective of those at

19. Edward M. Cook, "What Did the Jews of Qumran Know about God and How Did They Know It? Revelation and God in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Vol. 2, *World View, Comparing Judaisms* (ed. A. J. Avery-Peck, J. Neusner and B. D. Chilton; Judaism in Late Antiquity 5; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 3–22 (7).

20. A possible exception is the sapiential composition 4Q410 1 7–10 which contains a first person report of a vision apparently received "in the spirit."

Qumran the presence of a list of false prophets and the existence of legislation about false prophecy strongly suggests that some contemporary Jews were operating as prophets. Such would have been a futile activity if there was a general consensus within Palestinian Judaism in the few centuries before the fall of the temple in 70 C.E. that prophecy had ceased a long time before. Thus the compositions from Qumran that speak of false prophets strongly suggest the view that it was still possible to operate as a true prophet. Let us consider these texts in more detail.

The first composition to be considered is 4Q375. 4Q375 contains a reworked form of the laws of Deut 13 and 18. 4Q375 1 I opens with a section on the true prophet through whom God commands his people. A subsequent section discusses the false prophet (4Q375 1 I, 4, 6) who rises up and teaches apostasy (as is the case in CD VI, 1–2; 1QH^a XII, 16; 4Q267 2, 6; 4Q269 4 I, 2). Such a false prophet is to be put to death, except that 4Q375 contains a non-scriptural exception clause such that if the tribe of the prophet so accused stands up in his defence, then all those concerned will assemble with the anointed priest for judgment. In his interpretation of this text J. Strugnell has oscillated between seeing it as a reference on the one hand to future or eschatological prophetic figures, and on the other to understanding that "this text is giving general prescriptions for any case of prophecy that will occur."²¹ A thorough investigation of the composition by G. Brin has concluded that 4Q375 is "an example of the usage of legal material, the law of the prophet in Deuteronomy, in a new, non-biblical context. . . . In practice, this reflects an attempt to explain actual events in the life of the sect and its world-view while presenting them as biblical legal material."²² It is possible that the reworked legislation of 4Q375 was pre-sectarian but reused and copied at Qumran for the community's own purposes as members tried to judge between true and false prophets. The implication of the composition is that prophecy in some form or other had not ceased.

In the Temple Scroll the same passage of legislation about prophets is repeated with minor redactional variations, notably the change to the scroll's first person fictional stance. Deuteronomy 13.2–6 is rehearsed in 11Q19 LIV, 8–18 and so three uses of *nby'* occur in LIV, 8, 11 and 15.²³ Deuteronomy 18.20–22 is represented in 11Q19 LXI, 1–5 with three uses of *nby'* in LXI, 2, 3 and 4. The legislation of the Temple Scroll is difficult to locate in a life setting; it seems to be presenting itself as legislation that should have been put in place when the First Temple was built, but never was. It apparently is legislation that should have lasted until the day of new creation referred to in 11QT19, column XXIX.

21. John Strugnell, "375. 4QApocryphon of Mosesa," in *Qumran Cave 4.XIV: Parabiblical Texts Part 2* (ed. M. Broshi et al.; DJD 19; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 111–19 (119).

22. Gershon Brin, *Studies in Biblical Law: From the Hebrew Bible to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (JSOTSup 176; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 164. Brin probably over-interprets the text by identifying the false prophet, who can in fact be proved innocent, with a spiritual leader of the Qumran sect who was accused of false prophecy by the Jerusalem hierarchy.

23. No parallel to this passage survives in 11Q20, but the following pericope concerning being misled to worship false gods by family members is present in 11Q20 16.

As such it could well be that it reflects something of the practices of those who put it all together. If so, the legislation against false prophets can be understood as being in force in the second and first centuries B.C.E. As with 4Q375 there may be hints in the Temple Scroll of the outlook and practices of those who produced and transmitted the text. Prophecy was a live contemporary issue.

A further text which may belong in the same category as 4Q375 and the Temple Scroll is the Aramaic 4Q339, the list of false prophets (*nby'y* [š]qr'). This list begins with Balaam (Num 22–24) and runs through the man of Bethel (1 Kgs 13:11–31), Zedekiah (1 Kgs 22:1–28), Ahab and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah (Jer 29:21–24), Shemaiah the Nehelamite (Jer 29:24–32) and Hananiah son of Azur (Jer 28); but it may conclude with a reference to John Hyrcanus ([*ywhnn bn šm*] 'wn) which would bring the list down to the end of the second century B.C.E.,²⁴ though the principal editors prefer to reconstruct the last line as a reference to Gibeon from where Hananiah came.²⁵

Although these few compositions which refer to true and false prophets suggest that prophecy was an ongoing phenomenon in the late Second Temple period, it is nevertheless clear that the technical terms for prophecy and prophetic activity are used in a somewhat restricted way in the sectarian compositions that have survived at Qumran. The predominant use of "prophet" (*nby'*) is to describe the scriptural prophets, including Daniel. The limited use of the term for prophecy as an activity is restricted to what can be found in the poetic compositions of David according to 11QPs^a XXVII, 11. However, there are other ways of identifying prophetic activity than in the use of technical labels. One such way is to observe that the wilderness location of one part of the movement can be understood as a symbolic prophetic activity.

Though some few voices are raised against the identification of the Qumran site as of some significance within the Essene movement, most scholars are willing to acknowledge that the site was occupied by some kind of Essenes from the first half of the first century B.C.E. until the arrival of the Romans in the region in 68 C.E. The precise function of the Qumran site is not yet known, but it is commonly identified with the wilderness region in which preparation for the coming of God in judgment is to be undertaken according to prophetic tradition. Residence in the wilderness is thus a symbolic activity, activity which is continuous with the word of the Lord as declared especially in Isaiah and which is not just dramatic illustration but the actualization in an anticipatory way of what is to happen.

Something of this prophetic symbolism is significantly explained in the *Rule of the Community*. The wilderness residence which is continuous with the prophetic word of Isa 40:3 "is the study of the Law which He commanded by the

24. As proposed by Elisha Qimron, "On the Interpretation of the List of False Prophets," *Tarbiz* 63 (1994): 273–75, and Alexander Rofé, "ršymt nby'y hšqr mqwmr 'n—šty hydwtpwtrwnn," *Ha'arets* (April 13, 1994), B11.

25. Magen Broshi and Ada Yardeni, "339. 4QList of False Prophets ar," in Broshi et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.XIV*, 78–79 (78–79); Bowley ("Prophets and Prophecy at Qumran," 365) also views the list as referring only to prophets of the past.

hand of Moses, that they may do according to all that has been revealed from age to age, and as the Prophets have revealed by His Holy Spirit" (1QS VIII, 15–16).²⁶ The symbolic significance of the community's move to the wilderness has often been noted, but the understanding of such a move as to do with the interpretation of the Law and as continuous with prophetic activity has not been highlighted. In other words it is important to let the *Rule of the Community* provide the sect's own interpretation of its symbolic prophetic activity.

Once it is granted that prophetic activity is indeed taking place among the Essenes and more specifically within the sect behind the sectarian compositions found in the Qumran caves, then the search can begin in earnest for the most suitable social location of that prophetic activity. However, this is not an easy task, not least because Josephus's modelling of the sectarian elites in late Second Temple Palestinian Judaism has forced historians to allocate materials to one or another group without acknowledging the large amount of common ground that all the groups shared. For discerning the social location of ongoing prophetic activity, the options have been laid out too precisely as either apocalyptic or priestly or scribal or mantic. Once the methodological issues are seen as problematic and faced squarely, then the historian is freed to suggest that the intriguing matter to be discerned in the ongoing prophetic activity in the Qumran sectarian compositions concerns the way in which it shares much with all four options.

It is worth considering each prophetic social location in turn so that the distinctive characteristics of Qumran sectarian prophetic activity can be outlined and appreciated for the way in which it indicates continuity with and developments beyond the forms of activity associated with the prophets of the classical period. The discussion as to whether and how late Second Temple apocalyptic is the legitimate heir of prophecy is still ongoing. What becomes clear from the Qumran library is that there are virtually no texts that can be labelled apocalypses in the strict sense (narrative reports of visions or auditions). This means, as Cook has pointed out,²⁷ that there are virtually no texts that claim to be the straightforward narration of an audition or a vision as supposedly experienced by the author of the composition to hand. However, there are several compositions conceived on the grand scale that the sectarian community clearly held to be important and which show some features of apocalypses proper. Chief among these is the book of *Jubilees* which is conceived as the revelation of what was on the heavenly tablets, revelation conveyed to Moses by an angel. The content of such angelic revelation turns out to be rewritten Torah, both in terms of narrative content and also in all kinds of halakhic detail. The Temple Scroll is another instance of such narrated revelation. Sadly its opening is not preserved, but in the rewriting of various sections of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and especially Deuteronomy, God himself is the implied author and revealer of matters to Moses. With both the book of *Jubilees* and the Temple Scroll addressed to

26. Geza Vermes, trans., *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (5th ed.; London: Penguin, 1998), 109.

27. See above n. 19.

Moses, his prophetic status is clarified and enhanced. He is not a prophet quite in the same mould as an Isaiah or a Jeremiah, who apparently had visions so that they could comment on the observance of the law or the lack of it in their contemporary societies. Rather, Moses is given primordial revelation. The kind of apocalyptic writing which thus comes to the fore in the quasi-sectarian or sectarian writings are what seem to the modern reader to be interpretations of the Torah but which present themselves as revelations from of old.

The priestly associations of this apocalyptic prophetic activity are plain to see. Not least, the interest in the cult in the book of *Jubilees* is apparent at several turns, both in the way in which the patriarchs are portrayed as observing the cultic rules before they have in fact been revealed to Moses and also in the particular concerns of the book, such as its calendrical interests or its concern to give some pre-eminence to Levi. Similar cultic matters underpin the character of the contents of the Temple Scroll. However, it is not just such "apocalypses" as *Jubilees* and the Temple Scroll that have a cultic character. One may easily suppose that the whole practice of the interpretation of the Torah was understood to be a priestly activity. Inasmuch as we have noted already at several turns that the key hallmark of the prophetic activity of the Qumran sect and its forebears is the interpretation of authoritative prophetic texts, including the Torah, such activity is explicitly aligned with the priests in various sectarian compositions.

But what kinds of priest function principally as interpreters of the Law? These are priests who probably had extensive and long-standing affinities with various scribal schools. Such scribal schools may be associated particularly with the education of the elites in the Second Temple period and are commonly linked with the wisdom schools. Just as the book of *Jubilees* and the Temple Scroll are "apocalypses" of a pre-Qumran stage of the sectarian movement, so some of the wisdom compositions found in Cave 4 seem to have been composed before the movement became clearly differentiated from others. Apparently popular among the wisdom compositions reflecting the views of the wider movement of which the Qumran community was a particular part was Instruction or Musar le-Mevin. Much of this wisdom composition falls within the standard parameters of scriptural wisdom books that may be a little earlier or roughly contemporary with large sections of it. Such content concerns the practical matters of daily living, social and family relations, work and financial matters, as well as matters of public deportment. But strikingly distinct in this composition is a motif, also found in a few other compositions from the Qumran caves, which links practical insights to the *raz nihyeh*, "the mystery of existence" or "the mystery that is to come." This mystery is something heavenly that has yet to be fully disclosed, but it appears to under gird the view of reality which is espoused by the wisdom teacher. As a result these scribal wisdom traditions are not based in pragmatics alone nor in philosophical speculation, but in the discernment of the purposes of God in creation from which can be derived the most appropriate way for living one's life. As with the revelations contained in the interpretative works such as the book of *Jubilees* and the Temple Scroll, here is another heavenly item which needs to be mediated to earth.

The scribal basis of some Qumran prophetic activity may also be discerned in the poetic activities of some members. It would seem that the identification of David's compositions as given through prophecy (11QPs^a XXVII, 11) might suggest that the creation of poetry could be understood as ongoing prophetic activity. The presence in the Qumran library of several scrolls containing such works might reflect such an opinion. Most especially the various copies of the Hodayot and the real possibility that some or all of its contents can be associated directly or indirectly with the leading Teacher is suggestive of the likelihood that such activity was deemed consistent with David's inspired psalter. Although the Teacher is nowhere identified as a *nby'*, the way in which the author of the Hodayot sets himself over against the false prophets (1QH^a XII, 16) may suggest that he understood himself to be a true prophet. The teacher is "a mediator of knowledge of wonderful mysteries . . . a spring of knowledge for all *mebinim*" (1QH^a X, 13, 18).²⁸

Such concern with mysteries as is apparent in the phrase *raz nihyeh* provides a link to the kind of mantological interpretative practices which are also a part of the Qumran sectarian prophetic landscape. J. C. VanderKam has argued that there is continuity with prophetic activity at Qumran in the mantic wisdom found reflected in some Qumran texts.²⁹ Mantological practices discernible in the compositions preserved at Qumran include the casting of lots and the reading of astrological information associated with the physiognomical features of each member (4Q186). More significantly, such practices might be deemed to include dream interpretation and the interpretation of visions and auditions such as can be found in the prophetic literature. We have come full circle and ended up with the prophetic exegesis of the community which consists of a set of mysteries which God made known to the prophets but whose full significance is to be made known to the sectarian interpreter, notably the Teacher of Righteousness.

This study has argued that in the light of the attention given to both the implicit interpretation of the literary prophets in the parabiblical rewritten prophetic compositions and also the explicit inspired interpretation of unfulfilled prophetic texts in the pesharim of all kinds, it is appropriate to view the exegetical activity of many of the compositions found in the Qumran library both as continuous with earlier prophetic activity, but also as an intellectual transformation of it. The exposition of heavenly mysteries in the compositions in the Qumran library takes many forms, and those forms can be identified with various interests. The intellectual transformation of prophecy reflected in the Qumran library is at home not in any one social location, but in a distinctive combination of apocalyptic, priestly, scribal and mantological concerns, the interrelationships of which scholars are only just beginning to appreciate fully.

28. Cited by Cook ("What Did the Jews of Qumran Know?," 13) to illustrate the intellectual transmission of information about the mysteries of God.

29. James C. VanderKam, "Mantic Wisdom in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 4 (1997): 336–53 (338–40). R. Gray (*Prophetic Figures*, 107–10) notes the use by Josephus of *mantis* terminology for Essene prophetic practices.

5. Conclusions

The apparent proclamation of the cessation of prophecy in a small number of Second Temple Jewish and later rabbinic texts convinced an earlier generation of scholars that indeed prophetic activity was in some way entirely redirected and refocused in the Second Temple period. Some believed that this was the origin of apocalyptic and the explanation for its strength; others took different views. More recent scholarly reconsiderations of prophecy have argued for prophetic continuities in Second Temple Judaism contextualized within the broader framework of practices in the eastern Mediterranean world. The data of the Qumran library need to be part of this overall reconsideration.

The use of the terms *nb'* and *nby'* are not common in the Qumran sectarian scrolls for describing the activity of the community members. Nevertheless the community seems to have envisaged its life as continuous with that of scriptural Israel, with the exile only recently completed after 390 years (CD I, 5–6), perhaps as the last part of a Jubilee period of 490 years that began with the fall of the First Temple. As having continuity with scriptural Israel and in claiming to be Israel's only true heirs, the community at Qumran and the movement of which it was a part preserved prophetic traditions in their scriptural manuscripts but also in rewritten and interpreted forms in which the rewritings and atomized interpretations were capable of being perceived as continuous with the prophetic activity of much earlier generations.

The presence of compositions in the sectarian library which deal with the matter of false prophecy should not be taken to mean that all prophecy was false because the community subscribed to the idea that prophecy had ceased. Rather, legislation for dealing with false prophets was in place because it was necessary to be able to discern the difference between true and false prophecy. As indicated in the earlier sections of this study, it seems as if the dominant mode for true prophecy, both in late Second Temple Judaism more broadly and also in the community itself was interpretation, but interpretation not as secondary and derivative but as inspired revelation both continuous with and pointing to the heart of earlier revelation.

A distinctive combination of apocalyptic, cultic, scribal and mantological practices provides the social location for the kind of intellectualization of the prophetic tradition which the Qumran sectarian compositions imply. But prophecy has not become solely an intellectual exercise. Josephus, for one, is happy to describe some of the non-intellectual activities of the Essene movement as prophetic, though avoiding the scriptural label in a way similar to the evidence of the sectarian scrolls themselves.³⁰

I began this short essay with S. H. Hooke's ruminations on whether the Qumran community provided evidence for the "last refuge of the remnants of the prophetic order." For prophecy there is much more in the Qumran library than a

last refuge. In the wide range of parabiblical compositions there are prophetic continuities both with the literary prophets and with other prophetic figures. Such continuities can also be seen in the inspired explicit interpretations of unfulfilled curses, blessings, oracles, visions and dreams, that are mostly but not exclusively to be found in the writings of the literary prophets. The intellectual transformation of prophetic activity has its setting in a complex matrix of apocalyptic, priestly, scribal and mantological ideas and practices. All this deserves the label "prophecy" as the Qumran community and the movement from which it came and of which it was a part looked backwards to the prophets of old and their literary legacy and brought that legacy forwards to their present.

30. See the summary description of Josephus on the Essenes and prophecy by Gray, *Prophetic Figures*, 80–111.