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THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND THE ORIGINS OF BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

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A generation ago, the distinguished patristic scholar R. P. C. Hanson made the following claim in a well-known compendium of learning: "There can be little doubt that the gnostics invented the form of scriptural exegesis which we call the Commentary."[1] There may have been little doubt about that proposition when Hanson wrote these words in the 1960s, although a glance at the work of his fellow contributors to *The Cambridge History of the Bible* might have raised questions even then. Today we can show very clearly that commentaries long predate the rise of Gnosticism.

Seemingly without precedent, the world's oldest biblical commentaries emerge among the Dead Sea Scrolls fully formed around the end of the second century BCE. The study of these works, known as *pesharim*, has long since generated a virtual subdiscipline complete with its own conferences, monographs, student textbooks and the requisite petty feuds and wrangles.[2] But can it really be the case that these

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[1] R. P. C. Hanson, "Biblical Exegesis in the Early Church," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans; 3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963–1970), 1:419. I owe this reference to Marianne Meye Thompson.

[2] For an overview of current *pesher* studies see, e.g., T. H. Lim, *Pesharim* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 3; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); G. J. Brooke, "Pesharim," *DNTB*, 778–82; and M. P. Horgan, "Pesharim," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B: Pesharim, Other Commentaries and Related Documents* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 1–193. J. H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History: Chaos or Consensus?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), is more generally concerned with Qumran history. Pioneering earlier works include: K. Elliger, *Studien zum Habakuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer* (BHT 15; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1953); W. H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979); M. P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* (CBQMS 8; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979); as well as B. Nitzan, *Pesher Habakkuk* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik; Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 1986 [Hebrew]). See also the more recent substantive studies of *Pesher Nahum* by G. L. Doudna, *4Q Pesher Nahum: A Critical Edition* (JSPSup 35; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); and S. L. Berrin, *The Pesher Nahum Scroll from Qumran: An Exegetical Study of 4Q169* (STDJ 53; Leiden: Brill, 2004).

commentaries were, like Melchizedek, *sui generis* and without genealogy? What similarities and connections, if any, exist between the *pesharim* and contemporary Graeco-Roman commentaries?

Strangely, the major reference works and textbooks on the Scrolls show little interest in this question. Literary analogies and points of comparison have been sought almost exclusively in later Jewish literature, including the Targums, rabbinic midrash, and occasionally the New Testament—though no genuine parallels have been agreed upon.[3] The wider context of ancient commentary has not featured in this discussion. Even Philo of Alexandria, whom in these pages we will identify as perhaps the most important bridge between Graeco-Roman and Jewish commentary writing, has received remarkably little attention in relation to the *pesharim*.

The findings of this short study are preliminary and relatively modest, but its subject matter seems sufficiently important to solicit the interest of Qumran scholars more expert than the present writer. We begin by establishing some definitions, and move from there to a brief sketch of ancient Graeco-Roman commentary literature. A survey of the *pesher* commentaries then leads to concluding comments about potential contact between Qumran and Hellenistic commentary techniques and more specifically about formal analogies between them.

I. What Makes a Commentary?

Given the enormous range of ancient interpretative material on Scripture and other canonical texts, we need a definition to keep the subject from becoming unmanageable. By "commentary" I will here denote *works consisting primarily of sequential, expository annotation of identified texts that are themselves distinguished from the comments and reproduced intact*, whether partially or continuously.

This definition is not without its problems, but it has the advantage of distinguishing commentary from a number of related interpretative phenomena. These include paraphrase, scholion,[4] "inner-Biblical

[3] See the circumspect assessment of *pesher* as a distinct genre in Lim, *Pesharim*, 44–53.

[4] G. M. Newlands, *Hilary of Poitiers: A Study in Theological Method* (European University Studies 23.108; Bern: Peter Lang, 1978), 16, 19, suggests that continuity distinguishes the commentary from the scholion.

exegesis,"[5] "rewritten Bible,"[6] and also intertextual allusions or citations in works not of a primarily expository nature. The boundaries in this area are undoubtedly somewhat fuzzy, especially between commentary and "rewritten Bible,"[7] or in rare cases where the actual *lemma* of a cited text departs from known text forms and may already reflect a degree of interpretative modification.[8]

Nevertheless, the difference between "reworking" and expounding a normative text is sufficiently clear in terms of both form and presuppositions to allow us to set commentary apart from other forms of intertextual reflection. As George J. Brooke has also suggested in a study of the diverse genres in use at Qumran, the beginning of explicit commentary is a relatively late stage of such reflection, and one of the clearest markers of the end of the process of canonization.[9]

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[5] A phrase popularized by M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985); idem, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation* (ed. M. Sæbø; 1 vol. in 2 parts; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 1.1:33–48.

[6] This term, although still controversial, has been widely employed for at least three decades to describe so-called "parabiblical" works that often seem to adapt or rewrite earlier Scriptural narratives. See D. J. Harrington, "Abraham Traditions in the Testament of Abraham and in the 'Rewritten Bible' of the Intertestamental Period," in *International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies and the SBL Pseudepigrapha Seminar, 1972 Proceedings* (ed. R. A. Kraft; Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 155–64; reprinted in *Studies in the Testament of Abraham* (ed. G. W. E. Nickelsburg; SBLSCS 6; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976), 165–72. For the current state of discussion see, e.g., S. W. Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); and D. K. Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts: Strategies for Extending the Scriptures in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 8; London: T&T Clark, 2007).

[7] See, e.g., M. J. Bernstein, "4Q252: From Re-Written Bible to Biblical Commentary," *JJS* 45 (1994): 1–27; G. J. Brooke, "4Q252 as Early Jewish Commentary," *RevQ* 17 (1996): 385–401; and Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, 130–43, although they operate with a somewhat looser definition of "commentary." On 4Q252 see also below.

[8] This contested phenomenon is widely discussed; for useful recent introductions see, e.g., Lim, *Pesharim*, 54–63; and idem, "Biblical Quotations in the Pesharim and the Text of the Bible—Methodological Considerations," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (ed. E. D. Herbert and E. Tov; London: British Library; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 71–79.

[9] G. J. Brooke, "Between Authority and Canon: The Significance of Reworking the Bible for Understanding the Canonical Process," in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran. Proceedings of a Joint Symposium by the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature and the Hebrew University Institute for Advanced Studies Research Group on Qumran, 15–17 January, 2002* (ed. E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant, and R. A. Clements; STDJ 58; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 95, 97: "It is noticeable that in the Qumran literary collection there is a mixture of explicit and implicit commentary on authoritative scriptures. I am inclined to think that the explicit commentary such as is found in the *pesharim* is generally to be considered

The gradual move from "rewriting" via implicit exegesis to formally explicit commentary documents the emergence of a conviction that the text is now a given. It is not merely authoritative in content, but has achieved the status of a "classic" which is at least in principle substantially inviolate. This much is true for all relationships between ancient commentaries and texts, including pagan examples in Greek and Latin. Where ancient Jewish (and indeed Christian) biblical commentary differs, as we shall see, is in the additional assumption that the text is no longer merely a literary "classic" of formative philosophical and religious interest, but *definitive*, precisely inasmuch as it is divinely revealed. In this sense the literary move towards textual fixity has its corollary in the *theological* shift from the text as a sympathetic (but malleable) *reflection* of normative views to a point at which its form and content are themselves the uniquely normative disclosure of divine truth. Whether in Judaeo-Christian or Graeco-Roman contexts, however, to close and "canonize" a text or a literary collection is to open it up to a wealth of fresh exegetical exploration—and to invite the possibility of commentary.[10]

II. Greek and Roman Commentaries

In antiquity, the term *commentarius* (Greek ὑπόμνημα) originally denoted a bewildering variety of written records intended as *aide-mémoire* of either a private or official nature. These records ranged widely from notebooks or archival records of accounts; speeches or didactic material; jurisprudential, priestly or governmental decrees or rescripts; all the way to literary works, including scholarly texts and biographical or autobiographical material (i.e., "memoirs" rather than "memoranda"), and even to more private records like notes for a speech or outlines

later than those compositions which contain implicit exegesis in their reworkings of authoritative texts.... The discovery of explicit commentary in the Qumran library, such as is represented in the sectarian *pesharim*, shows that the process with regard to a certain selection of literary traditions is nearly complete."

[10] Cf. similarly M. Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 32–40; as cited in M. Finkelberg, "Homer as a Foundation Text," in *Homer, the Bible, and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World* (ed. M. Finkelberg and G. G. Stroumsa; Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 2; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 92.

for study, teaching or writing.[11] It is only in later usage that one finds treatments of earlier works of history, geography, medicine, philosophy and rhetoric identified as *hypomnēmata*.[12] Of particular interest for early Christianity is the fact that the term also came to be used of autobiographical and biographical writings—as it is in Justin's famous designation of the gospels (e.g., *Dial.* 106.2–3). Under this more literary heading there also emerged a thriving and important genre of "commentary" proper.

A. *The Greek Tradition*

According to Philo of Byblos (c. 70–160 CE), Sanchuniathon of Berytus (c. 700 BCE?) attributed the invention of *hypomnēmata* to none other than the Egyptian man-god Thoth (i.e., Hermes).[13] Allegorical exegesis of Homer, which enjoyed an early efflorescence under Crates (fl. 159 BCE) and his pupils at Pergamum,[14] can be shown to have its oral origins in the performative tradition well before the fifth century BCE,[15] and to have continued despite the studied resistance of Plato

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[11] Surveys of the terminology are widely available; see, e.g., H. Thédenat, "Commentarium, Commentarius," *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines* (ed. C. Daremburg and E. Saglio; 5 vols.; Paris: Hochette, 1873–1919), 1.2:1404–6; A. Lippold, "Commentarii," *KlPauly* 1:1257–59; F. Bömer, "Der Commentarius," *Hermes* 81 (1953): 210–50; C. B. R. Pelling, "*Commentarii*," *OCD*, 373; R. A. Kaster, "Kommentar," *DNP* 6:680–82.

[12] See F. Montanari, "Hypomnema," *DNP* 5:813–14, with references *inter alia* to works of Polybius, Ptolemy, Galen, Diogenes Laertius, and Ps.-Longinus. In this respect, Pfeiffer's critique of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's definition is perhaps a little overstated; see his comment (R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1968], 29) on U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1907), 121–219.

[13] Philo of Byblos, quoted in Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 1.9.24. On Sanchuniathon see, e.g., O. Eissfeldt, *Taautos und Sanchunjaton* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952); W. Röllig, "Sanchuniathon," *KlPauly* 4:1539; J. F. Healey, "Sanchuniathon," *OCD*, 1352 and the literature cited there.

[14] Cf. P. B. R. Forbes, R. Browning, and N. G. Wilson, "Crates of Mallus," *OCD*, 406; cf. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 140, 235, 237–46.

[15] See, e.g., D. Obbink, "Allegory and Exegesis in the Derveni Papyrus: The Origin of Greek Scholarship," in *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions* (ed. G. R. Boys-Stones; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 178; A. Ford, "Performing Interpretation: Early Allegorical Exegesis of Homer," in *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World: The Poetics of Community* (ed. M. H. Beissinger, J. Tylus, and S. L. Wofford; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)—also cited by A. Laird, "Figures of Allegory from Homer to Latin Epic," in Boys-Stones, *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition*, 175. Finkelberg, "Homer as a Foundation Text,"

and the earlier Platonists.[16] The earliest identifiable "commentaries," however, do not in fact appear until very much later. Some recent scholarship would wish to identify the so-called *Derveni Papyrus* (fifth century BCE) as a commentary on an Orphic religious text.[17] However, formal commentaries in the narrower sense defined above do not really emerge until the third century in Greek and the late second or early first century in Latin.[18]

The influence of the Greek commentary tradition remained for a long time largely confined to the East. It is, however, no less interesting for all that, and intrinsically more likely to have influenced Jewish expositors in the Holy Land and the Diaspora—not least in Alexandria, as we shall see.

Commentaries in the narrower sense of sequential annotations of literary texts began to emerge in the Hellenistic period. Together with the definitive edition of texts (*ekdosis*), we shall see that the commentary (*hypomnēma*) became one of the characteristic forms above all of Alexandrian scholarship from about the second century BCE, although it arose out of a thriving earlier tradition of erudite poetry and its textual

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92, cites the sixth-century Theagenes of Rhegium. Cf. previously Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 212.

[16] Cf. the discussion of F. Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style," in Sæbø, *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament* 1.1:130–98, pp. 131–33 and *passim.*

[17] So, e.g., A. Lamedica, "II papiro di Derveni come commentario: Problemi formali," in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Papyrology, Cairo, 2–9 September 1989* (ed. A. H. S. El-Mosalamy; 2 vols.; Cairo: Ain Shams University, Center of Papyrological Studies, 1992), 1:325–34; but cf. already Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 139 n. 7, cited approvingly by Obbink, "Allegory and Exegesis in the Derveni Papyrus," 180, who consistently refers to the author as "the Derveni commentator" (*passim*). The papyrus (also known as *P. Thessaloniki*) was discovered in that Greek city in 1962 and features a late fifth-century interpretation of an Orphic poem of theogony. For text and recent discussion see, e.g., R. Janko, "The Derveni Papyrus: An Interim Text," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 141 (2002): 1–62; A. Laks and G. W. Most, *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); G. Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology, and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[18] These dates, although obviously debatable, refer respectively to the New Comedy poet Euphron's *hypomnēmata* on Aristophanes' *Plutus* (so Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 160–61, quoting *Lexicon Messanense*), and to the interpretation of *Carmen Saliare* (a barely intelligible ancient hymn) by Lucius Aelius, the first great Roman scholar. J. Geffcken, "Zur Entstehung und zum Wesen des griechischen wissenschaftlichen Kommentars," *Hermes* 67 (1932): 397–412, offers an earlier study of the origin of Greek scholarly commentaries, written before many of the twentieth century's papyrus discoveries.

explication.[19] Alexandria's philological eminence was due in large part to its two famous publicly funded institutions of learning: the great Library and the adjacent scholarly community known as the Museum, founded ca. 280 BCE by Ptolemy I Soter.[20]

Not unlike their modern successors, ancient philologists carefully distinguished between treatises or monographs (*syngrammata*) and commentaries (*hypomnēmata*) on a given text.[21] Most of this material did not survive intact, although it exercised an extensive influence on the subsequent Byzantine scholia and philological tradition.

It is of significance to my argument here that a particularly fertile commentary tradition on the classics had thrived in Alexandria for a good century or two before the first scribes at Qumran put pen to parchment. To take just one genre, early expositors of ancient comedy, for example, included Lycophron (born ca. 320 BCE) and Callimachus (ca. 305–ca. 240) as well as Eratosthenes (ca. 275–195), who wrote at least twelve books on early comedy; a commentator in the more technical vein was Aristophanes of Byzantium (ca. 257–180), director of the Royal Library (though he did not compose *hypomnēmata* as such).[22]

Alexandrian *hypomnēmata* in the proper sense originated around this same time with writers like Callistratos (2nd cent BCE), who produced them on Homer and at least six comedies of Aristophanes. Aristarchus of Samothrace (ca. 216–144), another head of the Library and a champion philologist (ὁ γραμματικώτατος),[23] produced both critical editions of and commentaries on Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Herodotus and others.[24]

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[19] Prof. Horbury suggests to me that the learned nature of Alexandrian poetry may itself have encouraged a commentary tradition, and that recondite biblical texts that explicitly required interpretation (e.g., Zechariah, Daniel) would have fostered an analogous Jewish interest.

[20] See, e.g., L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (3d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 6–17.

[21] For this distinction see, e.g., Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 212–14; Montanari, "Hypomnema," 814.

[22] See S. Trojahn, *Die auf Papyri erhaltenen Kommentare zur alten Komödie: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der antiken Philologie* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 175; Munich: Saur, 2002), 123–27.

[23] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 15.12 (*Athenaei Navcratitae Dipnosophistarvm libri XV* [ed. G. Kaibel; Leipzig: Teubner, 1887]).

[24] Cf. J. F. Lazenby, R. Browning, and N. G. Wilson, "Aristarchus of Samothrace," *OCD*, 159.

Thanks to the twentieth century's extensive papyrus discoveries, especially at Oxyrhynchus, we are today in the fortunate position of having at our disposal, for the first time since late antiquity, a substantial library of Alexandrian commentaries ranging in date from the third century BCE to the sixth century CE.

Greek commentaries on papyrus achieved their heyday between the first and third centuries CE.[25] The best examples were produced on good, though not luxurious, mid-sized scrolls, with the text written in wide columns using a clear and functional semicursive script and a system of abbreviations and diacritical symbols. The title, with the names of the author and commentator, was placed at the end.[26]

From the recent discoveries we know that commentaries usually expounded literary works, above all those of Homer, the Greek "Bible" widely regarded as the fount of all knowledge.[27] Aside from him, favourite subjects consisted of the great Attic tragedians and comedians including Aristophanes and Eupolis,[28] and increasingly Aristotle and Plato (famously explicated by Proclus in the fifth century CE and

[25] This is, at any rate, the period for which the fullest documentation exists. A pioneering treatment of this material was the survey of 112 such papyri by M. del Fabbro, "Il commentario nella tradizione papiracea," *Studia Papyrologica* 18 (1979): 69–132; see her catalogue, pp. 128–30; and cf. pp. 92 n. 74, 131–32 for the dominant time frame. More recent literature is discussed in T. Dorandi, "Le commentaire dans la tradition papyrologique: quelques cas controversés," in *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation: Actes du Colloque International de l'Institut des Traditions Textuelles, Paris et Villejuif, 22–25 septembre 1999* (ed. M.-O. Goulet-Cazé and T. Dorandi; Paris: Vrin, 1999), 15–27; W. Luppe, "Scholia, Hypomnemata und Hypotheseis zu griechischen Dramen auf Papyri," in *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter: Beiträge zu seiner Erforschung* (ed. W. Geerlings and C. Schulze; Clavis Commentariorum Antiquitatis et Medii Aevi 2; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 55–77; and Trojahn, *Die auf Papyri erhaltenen Kommentare*. See also n. 17 above for discussion of the Derveni papyrus.

[26] Cf. del Fabbro, "Il commentario nella tradizione papiracea," 92.

[27] On this subject see usefully Finkelberg, "Homer as a Foundation Text," 91–96 (esp. pp. 94–95 on *De Homero*); also A. Ford, "Performing Interpretation"; S. Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); and previously P. Lévêque, *Aurea Catena Homeri: Une Étude sur l'Allegorie Grecque* (Annales Littéraires de l'université de Besançon; Paris: Belles Lettres, 1959).

[28] For the commentary and scholia (marginal notes) tradition on Attic comedy see esp. Trojahn, *Die auf Papyri erhaltenen Kommentare*; and previously G. Zuntz, *Die Aristophanes-Scholien der Papyri* (Berlin: Seitz, 1975; first published in 1939). Trojahn, 211 and *passim*, notes that while scholia are necessarily subject to limitations of space, the nature of the comments could in principle be the same as that in *hypomnēmata*.

by Damascius in the sixth),[29] as well as historians like Herodotus or Thucydides and orators like Demosthenes.[30]

A developing scientific subgenre eventually included extensive commentaries on Euclid and Ptolemy (e.g., by Pappus of Alexandria, fl. 320 CE), but also on Hippocrates and other "applied" medical texts, of which Galen (ca. 129–199) is a towering, if somewhat rambling, representative.[31] In late antiquity, another important subgenre was that of commentaries on legal texts, developed especially in fifth-century Beirut and Gaza.[32]

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[29] See the extensive editions of Leendert Westerink on Proclus, Damascius, and Olympiodorus (e.g., *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo* [ed. L. G. Westerink; 2 vols.; Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1976]; *Damascius: Lectures on the Philebus* [ed. L. G. Westerink; Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1959]; *Olympiodori in Platonis Gorgiam Commentaria* [ed. L. G. Westerink; Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana; Leipzig: Teubner, 1970)]); for Proclus see also *Proclus: Commentaire sur le Timée* (ed. A. J. Festugière; 5 vols.; Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques; Paris: Vrin, 1966–68); *Proclus: Commentaire sur la République* (ed. A. J. Festugière; 3 vols.; Paris: Vrin, 1970). D. N. Sedley, "Plato's *Auctoritas* and the Rebirth of the Commentary Tradition," in *Philosophia Togata II: Plato and Aristotle at Rome* (ed. J. Barnes and M. T. Griffin; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 110–29, discusses Roman commentary on Plato; C. D'Ancona Costa, "Commenting on Aristotle: From Late Antiquity to the Arab Aristotelianism," in Geerlings and Schulze, *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter*, 201–53, deals with commentary on Aristotle in the late antique and medieval period.

[30] E.g., del Fabbro, "Il commentario nella tradizione papiracea," 123.

[31] See H. von Staden, "'A Woman Does Not Become Ambidextrous': Galen and the Culture of Scientific Commentary," in *The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory* (ed. R. K. Gibson and C. Shuttleworth Kraus; Mnemosyne Supplements 232; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 109–40, who comments (e.g., pp. 134–36) on Galen's frequent failure to observe his own criterion of utility for the practitioner of medicine. On Galen as a commentator see further D. Manetti and A. Roselli, "Galeno commentatore di Ippocrate," *ANRW* 37.2:1529–1635; see also on Stephanus (6th century), *Stephanus: Commentary on Hippocrates' Aphorisms* (ed. L. G. Westerink; 3 vols.; Corpus Medicorum Graecorum 11.1.3; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985–1995); and on the medieval reception history of Galen's commentary, see G. Strohmaier, "Galen als Hippokrateskommentator: Der griechische und der arabische Befund," in Geerlings and Schulze, *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter*, 253–74. I. Andorlini, "Codici papiracei di medicina con scoli e commento," in Goulet-Cazé and Dorandi, *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation*, 37–52, notes more generally the phenomenon of medical papyri and their annotation by owners who were medical practitioners. See more generally H. von Staden, *Herophilus: The Art of Medicine in Early Alexandria. Edition, Translation, and Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), concerning the pioneering influence of Herophilus (ca. 330–260) on much of ancient medical primary and secondary literature.

[32] See N. G. Wilson, "A Chapter in the History of Scholia," *CQ* n.s. 17 (1967): 244–56; idem, "A Chapter in the History of Scholia: A Postscript," *CQ* n.s. 18 (1968): 413 on Gaza; and K. McNamee, "Another Chapter in the History of Scholia," *CQ* 48 (1998): 269–88; cf. K. McNamee, "Missing Links in the History of Scholia," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 36 (1995): 399–414, on Beirut.

The Greek commentaries consistently distinguish between *lemma* and exposition, and like their Latin counterparts they may include a wide variety of comments covering matters of philological, exegetical, rhetorical, antiquarian, historical and biographical, scientific, mythological and philosophical interest. Nevertheless, the majority of commentaries on papyrus served relatively popular pedagogical rather than strictly scientific purposes.[33] They offer sapiential, moral and aesthetic advice, often by way of allegory.

B. *The Latin Tradition*

Most of the early Latin commentaries were on classic plays or poems like Aristophanes, the *Carmen Saliare* and above all Virgil, although some commentators cover unknown or seemingly more obscure works, like those of the mid-first-century BCE poet C. Helvius Cinna, a friend of Catullus.[34] On the whole, what is striking about the earliest Roman commentaries is that they tended to appear soon after the works they treated.

Much of this extensive literary output remains at best in fragments. The earliest extant complete commentary in Latin is the influential treatment of Virgil by the fourth-century grammarian Servius, apparently a fellow student of Jerome under Donatus. This commentary, whose author held the prestigious lectureship associated with the title of *grammaticus urbis Romae*, survives in several hundred medieval MSS.[35] Other near contemporaries include Pomponius Porphyrio on Horace (early third century) and Aelius Donatus on Terence (fourth century); but we know of many other commentaries in circulation at this time.[36] By the fourth century, there was a widespread and highly developed commentary tradition on Virgil, whose importance had long

[33] So, e.g., I. Hadot, "Der fortlaufende philosophische Kommentar," in Geerlings and Schulze, *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter*, 184–85, 199 and *passim*, on the primary function of philosophical commentaries. See previously H. Usener, "Ein altes Lehrgebäude der Philologie," in idem, *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 2:265–314, to which my former colleague Winrich Löhr has kindly drawn my attention.

[34] Kaster, "Kommentar," 681; Cinna's sophisticated miniature epic *Zmyrna* was regarded as a masterpiece of the emerging Roman poetry (cf. E. Courtney, "Helvius Cinna, Gaius," *OCD*, 681).

[35] Cf., e.g., J. E. G. Zetzel, *Latin Textual Criticism in Antiquity* (Monographs in Classical Studies; New York: Arno Press, 1981), 81–83; Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, 32–33.

[36] Jerome, *Apologia Contra Rufinum* 1.16 (CCL 79.15.26; quoted in P. K. Marshall, "Kommentar: II. Lateinische Literatur," *DNP* 14:1057–62, p. 1058), knows numerous

been assured by his ubiquitous presence in schools. The compendious *variorum* commentary of Donatus permitted commentators to draw on a wide range of learning and opinion from four centuries of Virgil scholarship. No other ancient author was so extensively commented on.

To modern readers, at least the critical philology of Servius's commentary on Virgil may seem in some respects familiar.[37] His method is to highlight critical questions of particular importance, discussing them with reference to a range of opinion. Sometimes readers are encouraged to make their own judgment among a variety of options. Servius's introduction deals with standard issues of *Einleitung*: the life of the poet, the title, character (*qualitas*) of the poem, its "intention" and the number and order of the books. This is followed by line-by-line or word-by-word explications of the text, aiming to communicate Virgil's intention. The majority of comments are linguistic, concerned with semantic meaning and assessing Virgil's use of language by the criteria of the grammatical rules of his time—departures are explained as "archaisms" or "figures." Finally, Servius turns to a range of matters of textual[38] and rhetorical criticism, intertextual links with Homer and other Greek and Latin poets, philosophical and religious issues in the text, and notes of antiquarian or historical interest.

For our purposes, a number of features of ancient commentary on literary classics are of particular interest. We shall return to these after considering the phenomenon of commentary at Qumran.

III. Qumran Commentaries

The Dead Sea Scrolls have brought to light the earliest explicit Jewish commentaries on Scripture, dating by common consent from the period of ca. 100 BCE–70 CE.

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commentaries not only on Virgil, but on Sallustius, Cicero, Terence, Plautus, Lucretius, Flaccus, Persius, and Lucan.

[37] For this discussion I am indebted to B. Guthmüller, "Kommentar," *DNP* 14:1055–57; Marshall, "Kommentar: II. Lateinische Literatur," 1059–60; Kaster, "Kommentar," 681–82.

[38] For the Latin commentators' textual criticism see esp. Zetzel, *Latin Textual Criticism in Antiquity* (81–147 on Servius, and 148–70 on Donatus).

A. *Identification*

Before turning to commentaries proper, it will be useful to mention in passing several other texts that are here excluded, although they are sometimes identified as "commentaries" in the scholarly literature on the Scrolls. In particular, there are several fragments formally identified by the editors as a *Commentary on Genesis* (4Q252, 4Q253, 4Q254, 4Q254a).[39] Of these, 4Q252 in particular has attracted a lot of scholarly attention, partly because its genre is so intriguingly difficult to classify.[40] It is true that in its treatment of Jacob's blessings in Genesis this text not only employs the distinctive technical term *pishro* ("its interpretation," 4Q252 4:5) to expound Gen 49:4, but also proceeds to offer an explicitly messianic interpretation of Gen 49:10 as referring to the "Messiah of righteousness, the branch of David" (4Q252 5:3–4). Correspondingly, other influential texts confirm that the Dead Sea sect clearly viewed the Pentateuch as of no less "prophetic" importance than other parts of Scripture (see, e.g., 4QMMT C 20–24 = 4Q398 11–13 3–7). Despite this, however, 4Q252 does not obviously belong to the "commentary" genre as defined above: it consists for the most part of a noncontinuous and extensively *rewritten* text of Gen 7:10–8:13; 9:24–27; 22:10–12; 49:3–20. Apart from the annotations in columns 4 and (especially) 5, there is no attempt to distinguish textual *lemmata* from their interpretations; and it remains difficult to distinguish what is simply an integral part of the *aggiornamento* of "rewritten" discourse from what is intended as comment upon an inviolate given text. Although a number of recent scholars have spoken here of "excerpted" or "selective commentary,"

[39] See the official publications: G. J. Brooke, "252. 4QCommentary on Genesis A," in *Qumran Cave 4.XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (ed. G. J. Brooke et al.; DJD 22; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 185–207; idem, "253. 4QCommentary on Genesis B," in Brooke et al., DJD 22.209–12; idem, "254. 4QCommentary on Genesis C," in Brooke et al., DJD 22.217–32; idem, "254a. 4QCommentary on Genesis D," in Brooke et al., DJD 22.233–36. For a time this writing was even mislabelled as a Genesis "*pesher*"; contrast, e.g., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (ed. F. García Martínez; trans. W. G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 213, with *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (ed. F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997–98), 1:505.

[40] Cf. Brooke, "Pesharim"; Bernstein, "4Q252: From Re-Written Bible to Biblical Commentary"; J. L. Trafton, "Commentary on Genesis A," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B: Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 203–19 and the literature cited there; also Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, 130–43.

it is also generally admitted that the document is a composite compilation of preexisting interpretations.[41] In this and other respects its genre is also clearly unstable, appearing to fluctuate between "rewritten Bible" and perhaps commentary—and thus not a clear instance of the latter.[42] In that sense, for all its undoubted intertextual reflection, the hermeneutical posture of 4Q252 in significant respects resembles that of documents like the *Temple Scroll, Jubilees, Pseudo-Ezekiel*, and a number of Qumran "apocrypha" more than that of the explicit commentary in the consecutive *pesharim*, which will claim our attention here.[43]

Another group of texts to be omitted here are the so-called "thematic" *pesher* texts like *11QMelchizedek* or *4QFlorilegium*, which collate scriptural material around a particular topical focus.[44] Although here too the technical term *pishro* is used to identify eschatological interpretations,[45] once again we are clearly not dealing with the *consecutive* exposition of an intact, objective text. A number of other fragmentary texts seem in some respects to resemble the prophetic *pesharim*, but probably also do not properly belong to this genre.[46] The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the occasional identification of the *Damascus Document* as a kind of thematic commentary.

[41] So, e.g., Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, 141–42. Brooke, "4Q252 as Early Jewish Commentary," 400 speaks of "a compilation of pericopae containing various kinds of commentary," although even this designation begs the question of whether we are dealing with continuous "commentary" in the sense here in view.

[42] See, e.g., Brooke, "4Q252 as Early Jewish Commentary," 395–400; Bernstein, "4Q252: From Re-Written Bible to Biblical Commentary," 24 and *passim*; Trafton, "Commentary on Genesis A," 204 and n. 4.

[43] Among the same group of fragments appears a text known as *Commentary on Malachi B* (4Q253a), which uses *pishro ʿal* once and might in theory be part of a more extensive work. Another noteworthy exception is 4Q159 5 1, which applies the term *pesher* to the explication of Lev 16:1. The highly damaged fragments of 4QpUnid (4Q172) permit few conclusions. In all these cases, we have few indications of continuous commentary. On these and other exceptions see Lim, *Pesharim*, 53; Brooke, "Pesharim," 779; also see, e.g., the analyses of specific texts in Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B*, 203–365, the section on "other commentaries" and "related documents."

[44] Cf. Brooke, "Pesharim," 779; Lim, *Pesharim*, 14, citing terminology first employed by J. Carmignac, "Le Document de Qumrân sur Melkisédeq," *RevQ* 7 (1969–71): 342–78. See also Lim's fuller list of ten "thematic *pesharim* and other related texts," pp. 16–18. D. Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (TSAJ 30; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1992), 194, regards 4QFlor as a commentary on 2 Sam 7; but that identification, although not implausible at first, breaks down at the end of line 13.

[45] E.g. 11QMelch (11Q13) 2:12, 17; cf. 4QFlor (4Q174) 1 i 14, 19.

[46] See the discussion in Lim, *Pesharim*, 15.

To be sure, these exceptions serve to demonstrate that the boundary lines between *pesher* and related literature remain admittedly somewhat fluid in both genre and interpretative techniques. A fuller discussion of the origin of Qumran commentary would certainly need to take into account a wider range of literature, including the texts cited above, along with exegetical discussions in texts like the *Damascus Document*. For present purposes, however, the narrower focus on the *pesharim* nevertheless helps to delimit the material for purposes of comparison.

B. *Characteristics*

For present purposes, therefore, I will adopt a fairly standard inventory of fifteen continuous *pesharim*, all of them in Hebrew: five on Isaiah, seven on the minor prophets (Hosea [2], Micah [1], Nahum [1], Habakkuk [1], Zephaniah [2]) and three on the Psalms (Pss 37, 68, 129).[47] Although all of these texts are fragmentary and none provides anything approaching a complete running commentary, they do share several distinctive characteristics that bear on our inquiry. We will do well to bear in mind George Brooke's admonition that at Qumran the term *pesher* serves to denote more than just commentary, and that

[47] 4QpIsa[a] (4Q161), 4QpIsa[b] (4Q162), 4QpIsa[c] (4Q163), 4QpIsa[d] (4Q164), 4QpIsa[e] (4Q165); 4QpHos[a] (4Q166), 4QpHos[b] (4Q167); 1QpMic (1Q14); 4QpNah (4Q169); 1QpHab; 1QpZeph (1Q15), 4QpZeph (4Q170); 1QpPs (1Q16), 4QpPs[a] (4Q171), 4QpPs[b] (4Q173, but N.B. excluding frg. 5, now reclassified as 4Q173a: see M. P. Horgan, "House of Stumbling Fragment [4Q173a = 4Q173 *olim*]," in Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B*, 363–65 [cf. 31 n. 5]. Reference may also be made to two other fragmentary texts including an apparent Isaiah *pesher*, 3QpIsa (3Q4), on Isa 1:1, and a possible Micah *pesher*, 4QpMic(?) (4Q168), on Mic 4:9–10; both are included as *pesharim* in Horgan, "Pesharim." The document sometimes thought to be a possible Malachi *pesher*, 5QpMal(?) (5Q10), on Mal 1:14, is now generally called *Commentary on Malachi A* (e.g., J. H. Charlesworth, "Commentary on Malachi A," in Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B*, 240–43), and paired with *Commentary on Malachi B* (4Q253a; see G. J. Brooke, "Commentary on Malachi B," in Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B*, 244–47; cf. previously Brooke, "253a. 4QCommentary on Malachi," DJD 22.213–15). Both of these remain sufficiently fragmentary to preclude confident conclusions about any sort of consecutive commentary; the same is true *a fortiori* of doubtful fragments like 4QpUnid (4Q172; J. H. Charlesworth and C. D. Elledge, "Unidentified Pesharim Fragments [4Q172 = 4QpUnid]," in Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B*, 195–201); and 4Q183 (J. H. Charlesworth and C. D. Elledge, "Pesher-Like Fragment [4Q183]," in Charlesworth, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Vol. 6B*, 358–61).

there is much biblical interpretation that is not *pesher*.[48] Nevertheless, it is the case that all the commentaries here in view are interested in *pesher*. Eight brief observations may suffice for the moment:

1. All the relevant commentaries assume that the biblical text is, at least formally, a fixed point of reference. Although the textual *lemmata* reflect a degree of continuing textual fluidity and may occasionally be adjusted to suit the commentator's hermeneutical stance, there is now no doubt that the text stands in some sense over against the interpreter, as the object of interpretation and understanding rather than simply as available means to a writer's literary ends. More typically, the Qumran commentaries' often radical sectarian *relecture* of Scripture is achieved *not* by altering the text of the *Vorlage*, but by techniques other than textual adaptation.[49]
2. None of the *pesharim* in question reproduces the biblical text in its entirety; this is a point whose significance in the context of ancient commentary writing will be further explored below. What matters here is that the Qumran commentators all nevertheless quote the relevant portion of text (the *lemma*) before expounding it.
3. Some commentaries quote only brief phrases, while others (like several of the Isaiah commentaries) may cite whole verses or paragraphs of text. Similarly, some expository comments are extensive while others are little more than parenthetical glosses. In the case of 4Q163, at least, it has been suggested that the complete *pesher* quoted extensively from chapters 8–30 of Isaiah,[50] while the *pesharim* on Nahum and Habakkuk repeatedly confine themselves to citing (or reiterating) individual terms. In each case, however, the pattern of citation followed by an exposition remains consistent; as does the deliberate separation of the former from the latter by a stereotypical tag (e.g., *pishro [ʿal* or *ʾasher], pesher ha-dabar [ʿal], huʾ[ah]* etc.),[51] or in some cases even by a clear space or blank line (so some of the

[48] Cf. Brooke, "Pesharim," 783.

[49] So rightly J. R. Wagner, "Review: T. H. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters*," *JBL* 120 (2001): 175–78, pp. 176–77.

[50] See, e.g., Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*, 86–93; cf. Lim, *Pesharim*, 29.

[51] Note, e.g., the index of citation formulae in Trafton, "Commentary on Genesis A"; also M. J. Bernstein, "Introductory Formulas for Citation and Re-citation of Biblical Verses in the Qumran Pesharim," *DSD* 1 (1994): 30–70, esp. pp. 67–68 on the significance of the different formulae within the continuous *pesharim*.

pesharim on Isaiah as well as those on Hosea, Nahum and Habakkuk: 4Q161, 4Q166, 4Q167, 4Q169; 1QpHab).

4. Although not straightforwardly continuous, the order of the texts expounded nevertheless remains in keeping with the canonical sequence.[52]
5. The Dead Sea commentators only occasionally make reference to the biblical author or circumstances pertaining at the time of the biblical text's composition. Generally speaking, linguistic, philological or diachronic historical issues remain outside the Qumran commentary's purview.
6. The commentators take for granted that the text contains definitive divine pronouncements or prophecies that concern the commentator's present, near future, or relatively recent past, often with surprising specificity. These contemporary points of reference are in turn understood as part of the eschatological (and sometimes messianic) end-time conflicts.
7. In keeping with this confident interpretative stance, insights about the text's specific bearing on the contemporary context are themselves implicitly (and sometimes explicitly)[53] derived from divine revelation, although that revelation was granted exclusively to the sect's founding master interpreter, the Teacher of Righteousness, and through him to his followers.[54] As the Habakkuk commentary famously shows, even the prophet himself may not have understood the deeper meaning of his words,[55] and by taking the prophetic text as *unfulfilled* prophecy the commentator deliberately interprets *more* than the literal sense of the words. In this respect there is also an interesting correlation between the "*lemma* commentary" of Qumran and the interpretation of signs and dreams in mantic wisdom

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[52] 4QpIsa[c] (4Q163), without diverging from the canonical order of Isaiah, quotes several other biblical prophets (Jeremiah, Zechariah, Hosea) in the course of its commentary. The only apparent exception is 4QpIsa[e] (4Q165), whose *editio princeps* arranges the fragments so as to produce a nonsequential commentary; see J. M. Allegro, "165. Commentary on Isaiah (E)," in *Qumrân Cave 4.I (4Q158–4Q186)* (ed. J. M. Allegro; DJD 5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 28–30 and pl. ix. In view of the consistency of the other *pesharim* on Isaiah, it would seem plausible to rearrange the material in canonical order, as has been variously suggested (cf. Lim, *Pesharim*, 29, citing J. Strugnell and M. P. Horgan).

[53] Most famously in 1QpHab 6:15–7:6; cf. 1QpHab 2:8–10; 4QpIsa[d] (4Q164).

[54] Cf. my fuller remarks in M. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (WUNT 2.36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 79–81.

[55] 1QpHab 7:1–14; cf. similarly *4 Ezra* 12:12; note already Isa 16:13–14.

traditions, which have often been assumed to be connected with the origin of Jewish apocalyptic literature.[56]

8. An interesting feature of Qumran, as of other ancient commentaries, is that the commentator's typological reading is not always univocal. An instructive example of such hermeneutical multivalency is 4QpNah 3–4 i 1–11. Within the space of a few lines the *Pesher* on Nahum first identifies the "lion" (*aryeh*) of Nah 2:12 (ET 2:11) with "Demetrius, king of Yavan" (probably Demetrius III Eucareus, 95–88 BCE), and then proceeds to find a *different* "lion" (*aryeh*) in Nah 2:13 (ET 2:12)—the contemporary Jewish ruler who "hanged living men from a tree"; that is, Alexander Jannaeus (who notoriously crucified eight hundred Pharisaic dissidents).[57]

IV. The Scrolls and Ancient Commentary: Alexandrian Literary Criticism in the Judean Desert?

What, then, are we to make of the similarities between the ancient Graeco-Roman commentary tradition and the genre of Scriptural commentary that appears to have emerged more or less fully formed on the shores of the Dead Sea around 100 BCE?

The easiest and safest answer is to treat them as wholly unrelated: no love is lost in the Scrolls for the Kittim and all their works, and aside from passing merchants only an encyclopaedic geographer like Pliny could show even superficial interest in an eccentric religious conventicle in one of the ancient world's least hospitable environments.

Great ideas, however, have a habit of crossing even the most impermeable cultural boundaries, and of taking root in contexts that appear in other ways radically opposed. A wholly unrelated Jewish example of this might be the postexilic development of beliefs in a dualistic cosmology or in resurrection, both of which have been thought to derive from Persian roots. More closely *à propos* the topic of literary

[56] Cf., e.g., J. C. VanderKam, "The Prophetic–Sapiential Origins of Apocalyptic Thought," in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (ed. J. D. Martin and P. R. Davies; JSOTSup 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 163–76, following the influential essay of K. Müller, "Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik," in *Congress Volume, Uppsala 1971* (VTSup 22; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 268–93; and note, e.g., the expansion of LXX Esther 10:3 *c–f*.

[57] Cf. Josephus, *Ant*. 13.372–383; *War* 1.90–98. For the polysemy of the terms *aryeh* and *kefirim* in this passage see also Lim, *Pesharim*, 32–33.

production, it is clear that even the monastic scribes of Qumran had benefited from a degree of "globalization": for all their idiosyncrasies, they came to adopt not only the new "square" Aramaic script and trends in Hebrew *plene* orthography, but their physical production of scrolls shows extensive dependence on contemporary scribal technology—from the manufacture of ink to the craftsmanship and preparation of leather and papyrus.

It is obviously tempting, therefore, to speculate about links between Qumran and the emerging commentary tradition of the Hellenistic world—perhaps above all as evidenced in Alexandria. After all, despite their relative isolation the two worlds were never wholly sealed off from each other. Greek philosophical and literary texts featured at the Dead Sea site of Wadi Murabbaʿat, as did a fragment of Virgil at Masada.[58] And of course Qumran and especially Naḥal Ḥever turned up a wide variety of biblical texts in Greek. These are the same texts that were the object of Jewish study and indeed commentary in Alexandria—a point to which we shall return before long. Egyptian Jews in turn were accustomed to extensive contacts with the Holy Land, including the Jerusalem Jews who are said to have played a part in the composition of the Septuagint.[59] Even Josephus's exposition of the Pentateuch in the *Antiquities* famously acknowledges that a proper understanding requires one to recognize that some things Moses "shrewdly veils in enigmas, others he sets forth in solemn allegory."[60]

[58] *Aeneid* 4.9 (Mas pap 721). The influence of Virgil in Palestinian Judaism is documented to good effect in W. Horbury, "Der Tempel bei Vergil und im herodianischen Judentum," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel / Community without Temple: Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (ed. B. Ego, A. Lange, and P. Pilhofer; WUNT 118; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 149–68, pp. 157–62 and *passim*; cf. also P. S. Alexander, "'Homer the Prophet of All' and 'Moses our Teacher': Late Antique Exegesis of the Homeric Epics and of the Torah of Moses," in *The Use of Books in the Ancient World* (ed. L. V. Rutgers et al.; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 127–42 on the perceived relationship between Homer and Moses. For the Wadi Murabbaʿat literary fragments see *Les grottes de Murabbaʿat* (ed. P. Benoit, J. T. Milik and R. de Vaux; 2 vols.; DJD 2; Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 1:234–38 (nos. 108–112); and note more generally E. Tov, "The Nature of the Greek Texts from the Judean Desert," *NovT* 43 (2001): 1–11.

[59] LXX Esther 10:3*l*; *Aristeas* 46 and *passim*; Ben Sira (Prologue 27); and for that matter the Gospel of Matthew (2:13–14), appear to take such contact for granted.

[60] Josephus *Ant.* 1.24, τὰ μὲν αἰνιττομένου τοῦ νομοθέτου δεξιῶς, τὰ δ᾽ ἀλληγοροῦντος μετὰ σεμνότητος (while also stressing that whatever needed to be clear is in fact clear!). Note too the argument of G. Veltri, *Eine Tora für den König Talmai: Untersuchungen zum Übersetzungsverständnis in der jüdisch-hellenistischen und*

If one were to give vent to such "genetic" speculation for a moment, it could be well worth pondering the connection that many scholars still suspect between the Essenes and the *Therapeutae* near Lake Mareotis in Lower Egypt, both of which were known to Philo of Alexandria as keen "allegorical" interpreters of Scripture in the context of a monastic common life. The Essenes, he writes, take a keen moral interest in their interpretation of the divinely inspired ancestral laws (τὸ ἠθικὸν εὖ μάλα διαπονοῦσιν ἀλείπταις χρώμενοι τοῖς πατρίοις νόμοις, *Prob.* 80). They study them at all times and especially on the Sabbath, when in their synagogues they will listen as one person reads aloud from the books and another, more experienced interpreter "explains what is not self-evident" (ὅσα μὴ γνώριμα παρελθὼν ἀναδιδάσκει, *Prob.* 82).

Philo's other ascetics, the *Therapeutae*, were thought by some church fathers to have been Christians,[61] but are now usually regarded as representing the Egyptian branch of the Essene movement. They base their initiation into the sect (NB αἵρεσις, *Vit. Cont.* 29) on a similar commitment to the "laws, prophetic oracles, psalms" and other books; and their spiritual exercises between morning and evening prayers consist substantially of allegorical reflection on their Holy Scriptures (τοῖς ἱεροῖς γράμμασι). Imitating the exegetical method exemplified in the writings of their founders, they take words of the surface text to imply a deeper symbolic meaning (σύμβολα τὰ τῆς ῥητῆς ἑρμηνείας νομίζουσιν ἀποκεκρυμμένης φύσεως ἐν ὑπονοίαις δηλουμένης, *Vit. Cont.* 28–29). The formal exposition of Scripture in these inherited "allegorical" terms[62] is also of particular importance at their festive banquets, when the senior president (πρόεδρος: *Vit. Cont.* 75) takes up a particular topic in the Scripture and begins to instruct the community in extended and reiterative fashion. It is characteristic of their interpretation that the whole written revelation (νομοθεσία) resembles a living being that has the literal commandments (τὰς ῥητὰς διατάξεις) as its body and the invisible sense (ἀόρατον νοῦν) as its soul; and the task is to view the invisible through the visible (τὰ ἀφανῆ διὰ τῶν φανερῶν θεωρεῖν, *Vit. Cont.* 75–78). Once again we find the intriguing combination of respect for the literal text while seeking a hidden meaning, even if Philo

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rabbinischen Literatur (TSAJ 41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 213–15 and *passim*, about the Septuagint's continuing significance for Jews.

[61] E.g., Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.16–17.

[62] αἱ δὲ ἐξηγήσεις τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων γίνονται δι᾽ ὑπονοιῶν ἐν ἀλληγορίαις, *Vit. Cont.* 78.

understandably conceives of that meaning in mystical and transcendent rather than specifically eschatological terms.

While there is here no reference to written commentaries, Philo's Essenes and Therapeutae arguably took up *lemmata* requiring explication in much the same fashion as Qumran's pesherists did.[63] This is quite clearly a different enterprise from that of translation or even of a meturgeman's paraphrase. Nevertheless, it is significant that Philo identifies an explicitly homiletical *Sitz im Leben* for these activities, as indeed for his similar description of the Sabbath service in synagogues (*proseuchai*) more generally, where a priest or elder reads the holy laws and "expounds them point by point," καθ᾽ ἕκαστον ἐξηγεῖται.[64] Philo's fascination with the homiletical hermeneutics of Essenes and Therapeutae is arguably of a piece with his own approach to Scriptural exposition, which has been thought to have similarly homiletical origins.[65]

Philo was undeniably familiar with Alexandrian literary criticism and commentators on Homer and the classics, whose exegesis resembles this Jewish philosopher's allegoresis in several respects. Despite initial resistance to Pergamum's perceived excesses,[66] Alexandrian pagan and Jewish scholars alike had by the first pre-Christian century come to accept allegorical interpretation of Homer and other classics. Philo's contemporary Heracleitus and later neo-Platonic commentators favoured a mystical, hermeneutically sophisticated exegesis that found in Homer knowledge about the quest of the soul, and disclosures about

[63] Taking up an early suggestion of David Flusser, M. Kister, "A Common Heritage: Biblical Interpretation at Qumran and its Implications," in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 May, 1996* (ed. M. E. Stone and E. G. Chazon; STDJ 28; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 111 n. 37, suggests that Philo's reference to Essene allegories may indeed refer to *pesher* exegesis. Kister's additional argument that the *pesharim* constitute plausible antecedents for Philo's development of Jewish allegoresis needs, however, to be balanced against the extensive influence on Philo of contemporary Alexandrian hermeneutics.

[64] *Hypothetica, apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 8.7.13. For the significance of this passage cf. also J. Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (TSAJ 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 89–90; also pp. 93–95 on Philo's link between liturgy and homiletical exposition.

[65] So, e.g., Newlands, *Hilary of Poitiers*, 20–23.

[66] Cf., e.g., Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 140, 167, 237; J. Carleton Paget, "Jews and Christians in Ancient Alexandria from the Ptolemies to Caracalla," in *Alexandria, Real and Imagined* (ed. A. Hirst and M. S. Silk; London: Ashgate, 2004), 152–53; and D. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 74–75; Carleton Paget and Dawson comment more on the Ptolemaic than the later periods.

the secrets either of the natural world (e.g., its spherical shape) or of the mystical realms above.[67]

Alexandrian Jewish allegoresis of the Pentateuch had long been encouraged by secular developments in the same city, already noted above. Anticipated to some extent in the Septuagint, it arguably came into its own with second-century BCE texts like the *Letter of Aristeas* (144–69), Aristobulus, and Artapanus.[68] The *Letter of Aristeas* in particular repeatedly refers to the Septuagintal editors' task in terms analogous to those one might associate with work on textual editions of Homer and other ancient authors.[69] In accounting for the absence from the King's library of the Hebrew laws of the Jews, Demetrius the royal librarian is said to suggest that (30–31):

> They have, in the opinion of the experts, been transcribed [σεσήμανται] rather carelessly and inadequately. This is because they have never benefited from royal patronage. Suitably corrected [διηκριβωμένα], they too should be in your library [παρά σοι].[70]

It is important for present purposes to note that both Jewish biblical translation and interpretation in Greek were at that stage already under the extensive influence of Alexandrian philology and Homeric

[67] For philosophical allegoresis of Homer cf., e.g., R. Lamberton, "The Neoplatonists and the Spiritualization of Homer," in *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes* (ed. R. Lamberton and J. J. Keaney; Magie Classical Publications; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 115–33 (esp. on Proclus and Porphyry); and previously Lévêque, *Aurea Catena Homeri*, 10; F. Buffière, *Les Mythes d'Homère et la Pensée Grecque* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1956), 2–3; *Héraclite: Allégories d'Homère* (ed. F. Buffière; Collection des Universités de France; Paris: Belles Lettres, 1962) (on Heracleitus' *Homeric Allegories*); R. M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1957); and more broadly F. Wehrli, *Zur Geschichte der allegorischen Deutung Homers im Altertum* (Leipzig: R. Noske, 1928).

[68] See esp. Aristobulus, *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 8.9.38–10.17; 13.12.9–16. Translation in *OTP* 2:837–42; text in A.-M. Denis and M. De Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece* (3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1964–70), 3:217–28.

[69] A point recently developed by Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 48–49, 130–36 and passim; cf. further D. Weissert, "Alexandrian Analogical Word-Analysis and Septuagint Translation Techniques," *Textus* 8 (1973): 31–44, on philology; and S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century BCE–IV Century CE* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1950), 47–82, on hermeneutics.

[70] For the interpretative difficulties surrounding the Greek words quoted, see, e.g., R. J. H. Shutt, "Letter of Aristeas," *OTP* 2:7–34, pp. 14–15 and nn. (e)–(g); M. Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates* (Jewish Apocryphal Literature; New York: Ktav, 1973), 110 n.; Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 48 and the literature she cites on 164 n. 39.

scholarship.[71] Demetrius the Chronographer, too, although not obviously allegorical or directly concerned with scriptural interpretation, has been regarded as applying to the Torah such Alexandrian interpretative genres as "problems and solutions" (ἀπορίαι/ζητήματα καὶ λύσεις), by which a poet would be examined and, if appropriate, acquitted of the charge of "irrationality" (ἀλογία).[72] A more attenuated awareness of some Hellenistic interpretative techniques has even been identified in the *Book of Jubilees*; if this is true, despite the book's almost "anti-philosophical" and emphatically halakhic outlook, it would immediately attach our discussion to Palestinian circles close to the seemingly xenophobic sectarians of the Dead Sea.[73] (Even among Alexandrian Jews, to be sure, there were always some interpreters who shared the older reservations about Homer and thus "refused to accept that Moses had spoken in allegories.")[74]

Philo, writing a century and a half later, was already very much in tune with the literary-critical and mystagogical concerns of contemporary Alexandrian interpretation of Homer, whom he cites over 50 times.[75] Philo applied many of these Alexandrian exegetical conventions

[71] So, e.g., Weissert, "Alexandrian Analogical Word-Analysis," 36 and *passim*, concerning the Alexandrian grammarians' influence on Septuagintal translation techniques; cf. Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 119–43. *Pace* Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 74–78, who insists that Ptolemaic Jews had no interest in textual authenticity (75; contrast 269–70 n. 2) and were "not…significantly influenced by the interests and practices of the Alexandrian grammarians and editors" (74). While Philo's more supernatural views of the Septuagint's origins arguably do leave him uninterested in matters of textual criticism (Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 86–89; cf. Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 173–74), *Aristeas* suggests a more nuanced and differentiated assessment.

[72] On Philo's use of the technique, see, e.g., Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 65–68; 47–82 *passim*; S.-k. Wan, "Philo's *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim*: A Synoptic Approach," *SBL Seminar Papers, 1993* (*SBLSP* 32; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 22–53; and P. Borgen and L. Skarsten, "Quaestiones et Solutiones: Some Observations on the Form of Philonic Exegesis," *Studia Philonica* 4 (1976–1977): 1–15; also H. Dörrie and H. Dörries, "Erotapokriseis," *RAC* 6:342–70, on the cognate genre of *Erotapokriseis*. For Demetrius, see further J. Hanson, "Demetrius the Chronographer," *OTP* 2:843–54, p. 845.

[73] So C. Werman, "The *Book of Jubilees* in Hellenistic Context," *Zion* 66 (2001): 275–96, p. 294 (Hebrew).

[74] Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 190; cf. pp. 190–97 on the fragmentary Jewish "historians" preserved in Eusebius, and on Pseudo-Philonic sermons.

[75] Buffière, *Les Mythes d'Homère et la Pensée Grecque*, 38–39 n. 27, somewhat overstates the case in suggesting an exclusively allegorical interest: for him, Philo's approach "correspond à la tendance des Néoplatoniciens qui, pour l'exégèse d'Homère, ne s'intéressent plus au sens physique, mais cherchent dans les aventures d'Ulysse l'histoire mystique de l'âme en marche vers la vraie patrie." Philo in fact remained somewhat nervous about solely allegorical readings, as he famously shows in *Migr.* 89–93. Cf. further my discussion in Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 78–81.

to his own consecutive expositions of the Pentateuch (e.g., in *Leg., Spec., QG, QE*), whose author is the hierophant *par excellence* and prophet of divine oracles.[76] He shows little interest in philology or textual criticism, perhaps precisely because of this intensely mystical approach. This in turn is based on a view of the Septuagint's origins which is rather more exalted and error-proof than that represented in *Aristeas*.[77]

In view of this literary critical setting, it seems significant that Philo thought he recognized a kindred and commendable hermeneutical practice in the biblical interpretation of both the Essenes and the *Therapeutae*. Even the talk of exegetical "mysteries" (μυστήρια; *razim*) and of "plain" (ῥήτη, φανερός; *niglot*) and "hidden" (ὑπόνοια, ἄδηλος; *nistarot*) meanings of the text shows intriguing parallels.[78] And it remains inevitably suggestive that apart from Philo and the *pesharim* we know of no other consecutive biblical commentaries during the Second Temple period.[79]

Philo appears, indeed, to be familiar with a number of other Jewish exegetical techniques. The influence of Alexandrian grammarians on Palestinian Jewish interpretation has repeatedly been suggested,[80] as has Philo's reception of Palestinian aggadic traditions and modes of interpretation.[81] Philo himself appears to have visited Jerusalem (and Ashkelon) in person at least once.[82] What is more, the possibility that Alexandrian Jews exported ideas about biblical interpretation to the Dead Sea seems immediately less far-fetched when we recall the

[76] Cf. on this Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 171–72, and references cited there.

[77] Note the references to dictation, literal correspondence with the Hebrew, and the authors as prophets rather than translators in *Mos*. 2.37–40. See further Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 182–87, on the assumptions underlying Philo's literal and allegorical exegesis; he sees in Philo one of the "first witnesses of what has been called 'Hellenistic mysticism'" (185).

[78] For references see, e.g., Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 77.

[79] A point rightly stressed by Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, 194.

[80] Notably by David Daube (e.g., D. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," *HUCA* 22 [1949]: 239–64; idem, "Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis, 1953," in *Essays in Greco Roman and Related Talmudic Literature* [ed. H. A. Fischel; New York: Ktav, 1977], 165–82); cf. also J. Cazeaux, *Philon d'Alexandrie: De la grammaire à la mystique* (CaESup 44; Paris: Cerf, 1983), 88; and J. Cazeaux, "Philon d'Alexandrie, exégète," *ANRW* 21.1:156–226.

[81] See, e.g., Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, 199–200, 203–4; cf. the classic treatment of H. A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947). Also perhaps, S. Belkin, *Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940; repr. New York: Johnson, 1968).

[82] *Prov*. 2.64; καθ᾽ ὃν χρόνον may well refer to one of several or even regular visits to Jerusalem, as F. H. Colson's note *ad loc.* in LCL rightly suggests.

appreciable number of discoveries in Caves 4 and 7, as well as at Naḥal Ḥever, of biblical and other texts in Greek—amounting to about 3% of the total.[83] As for the owners of these texts, Timothy Lim has argued not only that at least *some* members of the Dead Sea community must have known Greek, but that in fact certain *pesher* interpretations reflect knowledge of Septuagintal text types or variants.[84] In this light, it no longer seems unreasonable to consider that a confluence of Alexandrian textual and interpretative concerns with the canonizing tendencies of the early Greek translations known at or near Qumran[85] could in turn have encouraged moves from "rewritten Bible" towards canon and commentary.

Although none of this rules out the possibility that early sectarian biblical interpretation might have been influenced by Hellenistic philologists at Damascus,[86] everything we have seen makes it tantalizing to ponder the intellectual analogies specifically between the *commentary* traditions of Alexandria and Qumran. At Qumran itself, that correlation led historically to a dead end, since *pesher* found no direct continuation in subsequent Jewish or Christian interpretation. Looking forward, however, one also notes the influence of that same Alexandrian

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[83] Other texts often cited in this connection are 4Q186 (e.g., by M. Hengel, "Qumran und der Hellenismus," in *Judaica et Hellenistica: Kleine Schriften* [WUNT 90; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996], 258–94; cf. M. Hengel, "Qumran and Hellenism," in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls* [ed. J. J. Collins and R. A. Kugler; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 46–56); 4Q341 and 4Q468g (on which cf. W. Horbury, "The Proper Name in 4Q468g: Peitholaus?" *JJS* 50 [1999]: 310–11); and the Wadi Murabbaʿat material cited in n. 58 above.

[84] T. H. Lim, "The Qumran Scrolls, Multilingualism, and Biblical Interpretation," in Collins and Kugler, *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 67–72. Tov, "Nature of the Greek Texts," 9–11, notes the prevalence of the Old Greek text at Qumran but of the first-century BCE *kaige*-Theodotion recension (towards a more "proto-Masoretic" text) at Naḥal Ḥever.

[85] For the Minor Prophets scroll see the classic treatment of D. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila: Première publication intégrale du texte des fragments du Dodécaprophéton trouvés dans le désert de Juda* (Leiden: Brill, 1963); and cf. *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr) (The Seiyâl Collection I)* (ed. E. Tov, R. A. Kraft, and P. J. Parsons; rev. ed.; DJD 8; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995); also, e.g., A. van der Kooij, "Perspectives on the Study of the Septuagint: Who are the Translators?" *VT* 73 (1998): 214–29; and A. van der Kooij, "Textual Witnesses to the Hebrew Bible and the History of Reception: The Case of Habakkuk 1:11–12," in *Die Textfunde vom Toten Meer und der Text der Hebräischen Bibel* (ed. U. Dahmen, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), 91–108.

[86] So in a passing (but in his view "not merely speculative") suggestion, M. D. Herr, "Continuum in the Chain of Torah Transmission," *Zion* 44 (1979): 43–56, p. 54 and n. 74 (Hebrew), citing the interpretation of the "well" of Num 21:18 at CD 6:3–6 and of the "star" of Num 24:13 at CD 7:18–19.

concern for text and commentary on the great "gnostic" and orthodox Christian commentators (including Heracleon, as well as Origen, Aristarchus, Didymus, and Theon).[87] In this respect it may be relevant that even before the end of the Second Temple period a certain Apollos, an educated Alexandrian Jew with an Essene-like background in the movement of John the Baptist came to exercise considerable influence in primitive Christian circles at Ephesus and Corinth.[88]

V. Conclusion: Qumran and Ancient Commentary

In the end, the superficial analysis just provided permits of no grand deductions about literary connections or even confident conclusions about intellectual points of contact. Nevertheless, further research in this area remains a definite *desideratum* simply because Qumran scriptural commentaries emerged in a context where Jewish scholars were aware of a thriving Hellenistic commentary tradition that bore certain analogies to their own hermeneutical concerns and techniques. Certain texts came to be regarded as inviolate literary classics replete with hidden meaning: every seemingly stony phrase might to the attentive exegete yield an unexpected flood of divinely charged significance that was often directly applicable to the life of the reader.

By way of a preliminary conclusion, I wish here to single out four salient formal characteristics that would seem to invite further comparative research:

1. Leaving aside the separate genre of *florilegia*, commentaries in the developed sense here in view tended to be concerned with *sequential texts*, even if the vagaries and accidents of time have ensured that in

[87] Cf. e.g. W. Horbury, "Old Testament Interpretation in the Writings of the Church Fathers," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading, and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. M. J. Mulder and H. Sysling; CRINT 2:1; Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 727–87, pp. 733–36 and n. 16. The abiding influence of the Alexandrian tradition for commentary on papyri as well as for medieval scholia is demonstrated in the case of comedy by Zuntz, *Die Aristophanes-Scholien der Papyri*, followed by Trojahn, *Die auf Papyri erhaltenen Kommentare*, 215.

[88] See Acts 18:24–19:7; cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:4–6, 22; 4:6; 16:12. I am indebted for this suggestion to D. R. Schwartz, "On Quirinius, John the Baptist, the Benedictus, Melchizedek, Qumran, and Ephesus," *RevQ* 13 (1988): 635–46, p. 646.

many cases we are dealing with fragments rather than entire books. Qumran and the Alexandrian commentaries vary considerably in the style and length of comment provided; but the impression given is that the text to be covered was at least in principle treated in its entirety, from beginning to end, and that all of its particularities were of interest. Having said that, an obvious difference in the developed classical commentary is its more explicitly philological and scientific concerns, which might range from breathings and accents to vocabulary, orthography, and the precise meaning of terms. Grammatical and mythological features were equally of interest, and commentators might take a view of aesthetic strengths or weaknesses. Similarly, especially the later Graeco-Roman commentaries often showed more interest in the personality of the authors and the historical circumstances in which they worked.

2. Whether fully sequential or not, commentaries cited the text by means of consecutive *lemmata*. The most complete classical commentaries in fact provided a continuous sequence of *lemmata*, since this obviated the need for a separate edition of the text. In her study of commentaries on papyrus, Marina del Fabbro noted that the use of noncontinuous *lemmata* presupposed the availability to the readers of a separate edition of the complete text[89]—a point of evident relevance for the Qumran commentators, who could take for granted the presence of a written or at least a memorized scriptural text. Partly because abbreviated or incomplete *lemmata* tended to preclude the independent circulation of the commentary in the absence of a separate text, later Graeco-Roman commentators increasingly opted to include the entire text.[90]
3. The commentator's interpretation was deliberately separated from the text and yet presented as a valid and implicitly authoritative exposition of its significance. This separation is usually achieved by means of formulaic phrases: where at Qumran one finds terms like *pishro, pesher ha-dabar* or the like, in classical commentaries one might encounter ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ᾠδῇ λέγει ὅτι to mark a paraphrase, and ὅτι or τὸ σημεῖον ὅτι in case of explanatory comments.[91] As at Qumran, *lemma* citations may sometimes be less than exact. While

[89] So del Fabbro, "Il commentario nella tradizione papiracea," 81.
[90] Ibid., 91. Note the similar but imperfect analogy in the Talmudic relationship between Mishnah and Gemara, and between the Talmud itself and the marginal Tosafot.
[91] Cf. ibid., 97.

one cannot rule out the possibility that a variant may represent an adjustment to suit a commentator's preferred reading, especially for classical texts the original may not always have been continuously at the commentator's disposal.[92] Both Qumran and Graeco-Roman commentators periodically resorted to quotations from elsewhere in the same or another author's work (especially in the case of Homer); this often served either to confirm the interpretative position taken by the commentator or else to underline the authority of the work under investigation.

4. Finally, Alexandrian exposition on Homer in particular affirmed the need to read texts allegorically, to discover under the rough literal surface of the text the polished gems of an interpretation for the life of the readers, both for their knowledge of God and for their present life in the world. In Alexandrian commentary these gems were of course philosophical rather than eschatological, but Philo for one found among the biblical interpretation of Essenes and Therapeutae a kindred love for the deeper sense of the sacred text. At any rate the sudden appearance at Qumran of a surprisingly mature technique of prophetic commentary is suggestive of wider Graeco-Roman cultural influences that may have facilitated its rapid development. It also confirms the existence of a well-established Jewish commentary tradition, in both Alexandria and the Holy Land, a full two and a half centuries before the "gnostic" philologist Heracleon of Alexandria began his celebrated work on the Fourth Gospel.[93]

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[92] Cf. ibid., 102–4.

[93] At the same time, as B. Aland implies, in a study to which Winrich Löhr has kindly drawn my attention ("Die Rezeption des neutestamentlichen Textes in den ersten Jahrhunderten," in *The New Testament in Early Christianity = La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le Christianisme primitif* [ed. J.-M. Sevrin; BETL 86; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1989], 1–39), it may indeed be that "gnostic" teachers (including Ptolemy, Heracleon, and the Valentinians) were among the first to perceive the textual integrity of the New Testament writings and their need for *ekdosis* and commentary. N.B.: W. A. Löhr, "Valentinian Variations on Lk 12,8–9/ Mt 10,32," *VC* 57 (2003): 437–55, has recently also discussed a surviving fragment of Heracleon's exposition of Luke. I offer a fuller discussion of the origin of Christian commentary in M. Bockmuehl, "The Making of Gospel Commentaries," in *The Written Gospel* (ed. M. Bockmuehl and D. A. Hagner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 274–95.

I am grateful for comments received from my former colleagues William Horbury and James Carleton Paget; from participants in the 2004 Orion Center Symposium at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, "Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity"; and from senior seminars at Fuller Seminary and Cambridge University in 2005.