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Mladen Popović

2 Multilingualism, Multiscripturalism, and Knowledge Transfer in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Graeco-Roman Judaea

2.1 Introduction

The Dead Sea Scrolls – about one thousand reconstructed manuscripts found in eleven caves between 1947–1956 that date to the third century BCE until the first century CE – provide a unique vantage point to study multilingualism, “multiscripturalism,” and knowledge transfer. These three aspects offer a valuable entry into some of the cultural encounters in which people in ancient Judaea took part.

The scrolls have been a treasure trove for all sorts of literary investigations into early Jewish and Christian traditions and thought-worlds, serving as a hub from which connections with diverse bodies of literary evidence from various geographic origins and different time-periods have been made. Much research also has been devoted to the social matrix of the presumed community or sect behind the scrolls, privileging certain textual evidence over others, for example, the so-called sectarian texts. This has become more difficult with the publication of all the scrolls material, questioning whether all manuscripts should be understood as one collection and attributed to one movement or community at a specific place. Since the early days of scrolls research, most scholars approached the manuscript finds as belonging to a distinct ancient Jewish group – the Essenes or the Qumran Community – inhabiting the site of Qumran. But more recently, this “single community at a single place”-framework has been questioned, and rightly so. Historical, literary, and religious studies analyses of the scrolls’ contents indicate heterogeneity and religious diversity within the collection of texts on different levels. Literary heterogeneity and religious diversity have been related to

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different models of communities behind the manuscripts, in terms of diverse but related communities at various localities that were behind these texts. Thus, for example, scholars argue that the different, conflicting versions of the sectarian Rule of the Community (Serekh ha-Yaḥad) were developed in Yaḥad communities that were geographically, not chronologically, distinct. Jerusalem, for example, may have been one such location outside Qumran. This analysis of the Serekh manuscripts is then extrapolated to the Qumran collection as a whole.

The texts in the different caves attest to various scribal practices, among which a so-called Qumran scribal practice,¹ to multilingualism through the use of languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and to “multiscripturalism” through the use of various scripts, sometimes in the same manuscript, such as square script for Hebrew and Aramaic, palaeo-Hebrew, Greek, and Cryptic scripts. These sociolinguistic and scribal features are also significant in light of proposals that consider the choice of Hebrew as an anti-language or holy language to reflect the social context of the movement behind these texts having been one of isolation.² Sociolinguistic method and theory of multilingualism and language ideology³ may present us with alternative models that better explain the hetero-

1 Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2004); idem, “Scribal Practices and Approaches Revisited,” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 3 (2014): 355–67; Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, “Assessing Emanuel Tov’s ‘Qumran Scribal Practice,’” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, ed. Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 173–205.

2 William H. Schniedewind, “Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 235–52; idem, “Linguistic Ideology in Qumran Hebrew,” in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, ed. Takamitsu Muraoka and John F. Elwolde, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 245–55; idem, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Steven Weitzman, “Why Did the Qumran Community Write in Hebrew?” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119 (1999): 35–45; Gary A. Rendsburg, “Qumran Hebrew (With a Trial Cut [IQS]),” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Shani Tzoref, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 217–46.

3 See, e.g., Kormi Anipa, “The Use of Literary Sources in Historical Sociolinguistic Research,” in *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics*, ed. Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 170–90; Hanna Rutkowska and Paul Rössler, “Orthographic Variables,” in *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics*, ed. Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 213–36; Herbert Schendl, “Multilingualism, Code-switching, and Language Contact in Historical Sociolinguistics,” in *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics*, ed. Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 520–33; Florian Coulmas, *Writing and Society: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012);

geneous collections of writings from the Judaean Desert, which strongly suggest multiple standards.

Bearing in mind the rich diachronic and multifaceted insights all this data and research have given us, I wish to redirect the focus on the people behind the scrolls again, not in the sense of a single community at a single place, but to understand the collections of manuscripts as a reflection of a textual community, understood as a micro-society in antiquity organized around a common understanding of texts.⁴ However one conceives of the configuration of the people behind the scrolls, texts were central in their social activities. The wealth of texts attests that people were occupied with the interpretation of and commentary on scripture, legal issues and community building, but also with science, magic and the writing of history. These people were not isolated but participated in various ways in ancient Mediterranean intellectual networks.⁵ Through the writing, copying, and studying of texts, the scrolls' anonymous scribes and teachers constructed a textual community of a highly intellectual and scholarly character.⁶ The textual community behind the Dead Sea Scrolls was not only an ancient Judean phenomenon but also an ancient Mediterranean phenomenon. Taking multilingualism, multiscripturalism, and knowledge transfer as key issues will provide us with an entry into this ancient Mediterranean textual community and also show its entangled history with other intellectual and scholarly communities, both near and far.

Robert Bayley, Richard Cameron, and Ceil Lucas, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Sari Pietikäinen and Helen Kelly-Holmes, eds., *Multilingualism and the Periphery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁴ See, e.g., Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); idem, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

⁵ See, e.g., Mladen Popović, *Reading the Human Body: Physiognomics and Astrology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenistic-Early Roman Period Judaism*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 67 (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Jonathan Ben-Dov, *Head of All Years: Astronomy and Calendars at Qumran in their Ancient Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Jonathan Ben-Dov and Seth L. Sanders, eds., *Ancient Jewish Sciences and the History of Knowledge in Second Temple Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Pieter B. Hartog, *Peshet and Hypomnema: A Comparison of Two Commentary Collections from the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2017). See also Mladen Popović, Myles Schoonover, and Marijn Vandenbergh, eds., *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

⁶ Mladen Popović, "Qumran as Scroll Storehouse in Times of Crisis? A Comparative Perspective on Judaean Desert Manuscript Collections," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43 (2012): 551–94.

2.2 Multilingualism

When dealing with the multiple languages and scripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls in relation to actual language use and proficiency of the people behind the manuscripts an important presupposition is often in operation to frame the linguistic evidence: namely, that we are dealing with a small, isolated, marginal (and even weak) community at the site of Khirbet Qumran.

For example, Steven Weitzman (following Chaim Rabin and Bernard Spolsky) has argued for a special status of the Hebrew language, while William Schniedewind has argued for a special form of Hebrew, so-called Qumran Hebrew, over against what is perceived as the vernacular Aramaic and Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, of the time. Weitzman has asked why the presumed Qumran community wrote in Hebrew, whereas Schiedewind asks why they wrote a specific form of Hebrew.

Weitzman, as other scholars, points to Jub. 12:25–27 and 4Q464. The book of Jubilees refers to Hebrew as the language of creation and 4Q464 speaks of the holy language, *lishon ha-qodesh*, most probably referring to Hebrew.⁷ Weitzman refers to an article by Spolsky,⁸ presuming that first-century Jews in their multilingual environment tended to use the language that asserted the most advantageous social membership for them in the proposed interaction. In other words, Weitzman assumes social advantages of using Hebrew. More specifically, he suggests Hebrew may have been perceived as “the linguistic prerequisite for membership in a supernatural community, either the community at the End of Days or that of the angels in the heavenly temple.”⁹ In a multilingual environment, Weitzman sees the use of Hebrew and the avoidance of other “mundane” languages as a linguistic ideology signalling an identity of these people apart from others.

Although Weitzman asks why they *wrote* in Hebrew, his sociological explanation seems to imply more than merely writing in Hebrew. This seems a very idealized view of the people behind the Dead Sea Scrolls and their textual production and ignores other evidence that does not assert the exclusive use of Hebrew. First, it seems that the scribe of the Great Isaiah scroll from Qumran Cave 1 was an Aramaic speaker, or at least influenced by the Aramaic language.¹⁰ More

⁷ See now Willem F. Smelik, “Holy Tongue,” in *Rabbis, Language and Translation in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 42–99.

⁸ Bernard Spolsky, “Jewish Multilingualism in the First Century: An Essay in Historical Sociolinguistics,” in *Readings in the Sociology of Jewish Languages*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 34–50.

⁹ Weitzman, “Qumran Community Write in Hebrew,” 45.

¹⁰ Edward Y. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a)*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1974); Martin G. Abegg, “Linguistic

generally, “[t]he amount of Aramaic influence in the Hebrew Qumran scrolls can best be explained as reflecting the bilingualism of the authors and their readers.”¹¹ Second, the citation of two versions of Hab 2:16 has been adduced as evidence that the writer of the Peshier Habakkuk used a Greek manuscript in addition to a Hebrew one (see also Hab 1:17).¹² I am not arguing that Hebrew was not important, but these two examples show that in our understanding of the scribal process of text production the assumption of monolingual prejudice or preference does not do justice to the variegated evidence, which points to multilingual competencies.

While Weitzman is operating with a notion of the perception of Hebrew in ancient Judaism that is more widespread and in general correct but not in explaining why they wrote in Hebrew, Schniedewind works with a more specific idea of a particular form of Hebrew. This idea he set out in two earlier articles and repeats in his recent book, *A Social History of Hebrew*.¹³ Schniedewind perceives the use of code and symbolic terminology, archaisms or pseudoclassicizing tendencies, an avoidance of Aramaic, and also elements of Emanuel Tov’s Qumran scribal practice (such as long pronominal forms, both independent and suffixed; suffixed *ah* in a variety of adverbials; long forms of the first-person imperfect; writing of the divine name in palaeo-Hebrew), as indicators of the community’s language ideology.¹⁴

The linguistic data Schniedewind uses is not up to date and also does not support the notion of anti-language that he introduces for Qumran Hebrew.¹⁵ To give one example: concrete data relating to the production and use of specific manuscripts is ignored, such as the *tefillin* of which more than half consistently use the long forms, which may speak against the presumed artificiality of Qumran Hebrew. Of the *tefillin* one may ask: “Is this because their scribes wanted

Profiles of the Isaiah Scrolls,” in *Qumran Cave 1.II, The Isaiah Scrolls, Part 2: Introductions, Commentary, and Textual Variants*, Eugene Ulrich and Peter W. Flint, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 32 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2010), 25–41, at 41.

11 Jan Joosten, “Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in the Qumran Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 351–74, at 359.

12 Timothy H. Lim, “The Qumran Scrolls, Multilingualism, and Biblical Interpretation,” in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2000), 57–73, at 70–72. Cf., however, Hartog, *Peshier and Hypomnema*, 154–58.

13 See note 3 above.

14 Schniedewind, *Social History of Hebrew*, 173–89.

15 As Eibert Tigchelaar has discussed at the 2013 International Organisation for Qumran Studies meeting in Munich, see “Sociolinguistics and Which Dead Sea Scrolls,” forthcoming in the conference proceedings (for now see Tigchelaar’s academia.edu site). See also Weitzman, “Qumran Community Write in Hebrew,” 37.

to make these biblical texts even more archaic than they already were? Or perhaps because their scribes, who probably wrote these texts from memory, were not constrained by the graphic conventions of written *Vorlagen*?"¹⁶ The quantification of linguistic data and the correlation of data sets in the scrolls should be matched by an assessment of scribal production and profiling that is based on the empirical traces of scribal activity. Furthermore, Schniedewind seems undecided in his 2013 book, *A Social History of Hebrew*, in characterizing the people behind the Dead Sea Scrolls. On the one hand, he repeats from his earlier articles a more traditional framing of the Qumran community as a small, isolated community, while, on the other hand, he refers to more recent scholarship that posits multiple communities behind these texts, without fully integrating such more recent trends and drawing clear conclusions for what this means for the relationship between specific texts and the social reality behind them, especially from his sociolinguistic perspective on a specific language form being an anti-language.¹⁷

In light of the evidence that is now available, the notion of anti-language is not useful to understand the linguistic evidence from the scrolls. There is no basis to see Qumran Hebrew as intentionally set apart from Hebrew used elsewhere in Judaea at the time. Instead, we should consider approaching the heterogeneous material from the perspective of multiple standards.¹⁸ The material from Qumran is linguistically heterogeneous, not just because of multiple languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, but also for example with regard to orthography and morphology in such a way that consistency does not appear (which Schniedewind also acknowledges with regard to Tov's Qumran scribal practice). The point is that we need not reckon with linguistic consistency but allow for multiple standards to understand the evidence in a more complex context than that of a presumed small, isolated, and marginal group at Qumran. I suggest that the manuscripts from the caves near Qumran and what they represent should be no longer framed as centre-periphery in the sense that Qumran was deviating from a standard norm.

16 Tigchelaar, "Sociolinguistics."

17 Compare Schniedewind, *Social History of Hebrew*, 177, 178 ("This small, isolated religious community on the north shore of the Dead Sea used language ideologically as a means of differentiating and further insulating themselves.... Small, weak, and marginal religious communities such as the *yahad* community typically cultivate linguistic idiosyncrasies in order to enhance group identity."), and 180 (but see also 173–74), commenting on the inconsistent implementation of the Qumran scribal practice ("the realization that the sectarian scrolls were copied by a variety of *yahad* scribes in a variety of places over a two-hundred year period accounts for the inconsistencies in sectarian orthography. Indeed, the lack of complete standardization points to a loose social structure of the group....").

18 Tigchelaar, "Sociolinguistics."

Recent sociolinguistic research on multilingualism and minority languages from a centre-periphery dynamics perspective may be useful to reframe our approach to the Dead Sea Scrolls in relation to our presuppositions of the broader linguistic situation in ancient Judaea in the Greco-Roman period.¹⁹

The notions of “centre” and “periphery” are not given, but should instead, Sari Pietikäinen and Helen Kelly-Holmes argue, be understood as discursive constructs, products of social interaction, reflecting the circumstances and dynamics of their construction. Moreover, centre-periphery approaches also allow for the possibility for peripheral sites to become centres of normativity rather than places to which norms are disseminated. While the centre has traditionally been seen as the source of norms to be adopted in peripheries, the dynamics of the centre-periphery relationship might instead lead to the derivation of new and multiple normativities.²⁰ This is important in relation to the heterogeneous character of the evidence from Qumran, allowing for the perspective of multiple standards instead of one standard.

With regard to linguistic evidence, Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes identify

19 In addition to the references in note 4 above, the scholarly literature on multilingualism, bilingualism, diglossia, and code-switching in the ancient world and ancient Judaea specifically is fast-growing. For orientation, see, e.g., James N. Adams, Mark Janse, and Simon Swain, eds., *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); James N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Willem Smelik, “Code-switching: The Public Reading of the Bible in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek,” in *Was ist ein Text? Alttestamentliche, ägyptologische und altorientalische Perspektiven*, ed. Ludwig Morenz and Stefan Schorch (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 123–47; Hannah M. Cotton, Robert G. Hoyland, Jonathan J. Price, and David J. Wasserstein, eds., *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Dorothy J. Thompson, “The Multilingual Environment of Persian and Ptolemaic Egypt: Egyptian, Aramaic, and Greek Documentation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 395–417; Willem Smelik, “The Languages of Roman Palestine,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, ed. Catherine Hezser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 122–41; Alex Mullen and Patrick James, eds., *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Steven D. Fraade, “Language Mix and Multilingualism in Ancient Palestine: Literary and Inscriptional Evidence,” *Jewish Studies* 48 (2012): 1–40; Alex Mullen, *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean: Multilingualism and Multiple Identities in the Iron Age and Roman Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Michael O. Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea: A Study of the Bar Kokhba Documents* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

20 Sari Pietikäinen and Helen Kelly-Holmes, “Multilingualism and the Periphery,” in *Multilingualism and the Periphery*, ed. Sari Pietikäinen and Helen Kelly-Holmes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–16.

at least two language ideological formations that have structured our understanding of multilingualism and consequently have had an influence on how individuals experience “languages” and talk about them. One powerful conceptualization ... has been the idea that languages are autonomous and unified entities ... with an “essential” or natural relationship with a particular territory or the collective identity of a particular group, and essentially “different” and “separate” from each other. ... At the same time, [they] have also documented an alternative ideological formation – that manifests itself, for example, in discourses of plurilingual identities and competencies or “polycentric” and “polynomic” languages and language practices. ... It can be argued that this perspective also captures the experiences of many multilingual speakers more appropriately by recognizing the inherent diversity and hybridity that characterizes multilingual living.²¹

These insights from a centre-periphery dynamics perspective may help us in reframing our ideas about the actual use of Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek and to suggest plurilingual identities and competencies for at least some of the people behind the scrolls, as the examples discussed above of a possible Aramaic speaker that produced the great Isaiah Scroll in Hebrew and the possible use of a Greek *Vorlage* for the Peshar Habakkuk, also in Hebrew, may indicate. And then there is also the reference to the community official of the overseer, the so-called Mebaqqer, who is expected to know every language (Damascus Document 14:8–10; 4Q266 10 i 3), which may indicate an expected plurilingual competency from such an official precisely because of the group(s) that person was overseeing being characterized by plurilingual identities and competencies.²² Insights from a centre-periphery dynamics perspective may aid us so as not to fossilize a new construct of directionality but to broaden our approach to the linguistic and literary landscape of ancient Judaea that accounts for the evidence in a differentiated manner. This may modify how we perceive Jerusalem as a centre for the production and transmission of texts and traditions vis-à-vis other parts in ancient Judaea as well as

²¹ Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes, “Multilingualism and the Periphery,” 8–9.

²² See also below on 4Q477. This passage from the Damascus Document and its possible implications for language competence has not received much attention in scholarship, in part perhaps because of the fragmentary manuscript evidence; see Martin Hengel, “Qumrân und der Hellenismus,” in *Qumrân: Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu*, ed. Matthias Delcor, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium 46 (Paris: Duculot and Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1978), 333–72, at 340; G. Wilhelm Nebe, “Das Sprachvermögen des Mebaqqer in *Damaskusschrift* XIV, 10,” *Revue de Qumrân* 16/62 (1993): 289–91; Weitzman, “Qumran Community Write in Hebrew,” 35 n. 1; Marcus K. M. Tso, *Ethics in the Qumran Community: An Interdisciplinary Investigation*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 292 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 125 n. 20. The relationship between the Damascus Document manuscripts and the Rule of the Community manuscripts as well as their connection with a community or communities behind the collections of scrolls are issues not dealt with here.

how we see ancient Judea as part of an ancient Mediterranean network of textual and intellectual communities engaged in knowledge transfer.

Furthermore, there is no need to isolate evidence on the basis of presumed language competencies. This has often been done for the evidence from Qumran Cave 7, where only Greek manuscripts were found. Cave 7 is often distinguished as the cave of a single inhabitant with a particular interest in Greek manuscripts.²³ However, this impression of exclusively Greek writings from Cave 7 is in need of some correction. There is an inscription of the name *Rom'a* in Aramaic characters that occurs twice on a large jar that was found in Cave 7 (7Q-Arch 2 heb/ar), and in one of his preliminary publications, Roland de Vaux refers to a small leather fragment in Hebrew from Cave 7, which was either a mistaken attribution or this fragment has since been overlooked. In most other Qumran caves, we find Aramaic texts alongside Hebrew and, of course, some Greek manuscripts were also found in Cave 4. This does not suggest a linguistic division within the collection or collections of scrolls. The presence of only Greek texts in Qumran Cave 7 should not be over-interpreted without other evidence of writing from this cave also being taken into account.²⁴ Instead, the evidence points to broader plurilingual competencies.

In addition to this centre-periphery dynamics perspective that stresses heterogeneity of linguistic practices, I would like to add another important observation concerning multilingualism in the ancient Mediterranean. James Clackson has argued against the suggestion of Ramsay MacMullen that “after the advent of Roman rule the local vernaculars were situated in socially or geographically isolated pockets of the Empire: the rural population of the countryside were largely monolingual in the local vernacular, but urban dwellers and upper classes were proficient in Latin and Greek.”²⁵ Instead, for the Roman Near East and Egypt he argues that: “Rather than a monolingual countryside, with some bilingual speakers resident in towns and cities, it seems that there was stable bilingualism in the countryside, where local languages were used alongside Latin and Greek, and the bulk of the monolingual speakers were urban dwellers, proficient in Latin or Greek (or both) but often not in the local vernaculars.”²⁶

The impression of a bilingual or multilingual countryside in the Roman Near East is confirmed when we look at the Judaean Desert manuscript finds, taking

²³ See recently, e.g., Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 325–26, 334.

²⁴ Popović, “Qumran as Scroll Storehouse,” 571.

²⁵ James Clackson, “Language Maintenance and Language Shift in the Mediterranean World during the Roman Empire,” in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, ed. Alex Mullen and Patrick James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 36–57, at 47.

²⁶ Clackson, “Language Maintenance,” 49.

this more broadly to include not only the Dead Sea Scrolls from the eleven caves near Qumran, but all manuscript finds in the desert area west of the Dead Sea. Personal archives that were left in Judaeen Desert caves, such as the first to second-centuries CE Babatha and Salome Komaise archives from Naḥal Ḥever that have Greek next to Aramaic and Nabatean, show a multifaceted engagement with different languages in the different settings of everyday life, not only in urban centres but also in the countryside.²⁷ With regard to the Bar Kokhba letters there is the famous example of the letter in Greek (P.Yadin 52) in which the writer, Soumaios, apologizes for not having written it in Hebrew, which, scholars suggest, may have been expected from him.²⁸

When considering the literary texts from Naḥal Ḥever, Wadi Murabbaʿat and also Masada it is clear that Hebrew was used in the countryside next to Aramaic, Nabatean and Greek. One might object, saying that the text finds from Naḥal Ḥever and Wadi Murabbaʿat date to the second century, but some of the literary texts, in Hebrew and Greek, are dated to the late first century BCE and early first century CE. These texts may have been in a family for several generations. Those who were unable to read them would still have had access to such literary texts: those who had attained a sufficient level of literary literacy would have read such literary manuscripts to those who could not read, perhaps in the social context of family or friends, or even in the larger social context of the village.²⁹

27 Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 81 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 309–19; Wise, *Language and Literacy*. Different legal systems are sometimes related to different languages; see Jacobine G. Oudshoorn, *The Relationship between Roman and Local Law in the Babatha and Salome Komaise Archives: General Analysis and Three Case Studies on the Law of Succession, Guardianship and Marriage*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 69 (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

28 Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, 277–79; Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 245–51.

29 Popović, “Qumran as Scroll Storehouse,” 575; Mladen Popović, “Scribal Culture of the Hebrew Bible and the Burden of the Canon: Human Agency and Textual Production and Consumption in Ancient Judaism,” in *Jeremiah’s Scriptures: Production, Reception, Interaction, and Transformation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Konrad Schmid, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 173 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 253–58, at 257–58. Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 279–355 supports these inferences. Wise argues that Hebrew was the usual language of literature in multilingual Roman Judaea, not only at Qumran but also elsewhere. On the basis of his research into signature literacy as an indicator not only of writing but also of reading abilities, Wise suggests that during the first century BCE until the second century CE 65–80 per cent of Judaeans spoke a form of Hebrew (a vernacular termed proto-Mishnaic Hebrew). While Aramaic was the primary language of daily and documentary writing for ordinary people, Wise argues that Aramaic literary texts were the domain of elite intellectuals (Wise rules out Mas1p as a possibly Aramaic literary text from Masada, pp. 302, 327). As for Greek, Wise suggests that it was spoken to a considerable amount in Roman Judaea. He understands the Greek manuscripts from the Judaeen

Not only was the Judaeen countryside multilingual, but also “multi-literary” in the sense that high literary culture in Hebrew was not limited to urban centres but was also to a certain degree accessible in the countryside. Comparative analysis of the text finds in the Judaeen Desert indicates the spread of literary texts within various strata of ancient Jewish society, outside of urban centres such as Jerusalem.³⁰ Michael Wise has argued that these strata were not limited to the top 1–2 per cent of society but that they should be understood as to include the top quartile percentage of the population. This does not mean that all those in the top quartile had mastered a sufficient level of literary literacy: this level Wise attributes to 5–10 per cent of Judaeen men by one definition of literacy or up to 16 per cent by another definition. Different levels of literacy together with interdependency, often within the context of family, between literates of various levels and illiterates would have ensured a broader access to literary texts.³¹

The context, number of literary texts, and character of texts of the Judaeen Desert manuscript finds reveal a differentiated engagement with literary texts by different kinds of people in Jewish society at the time. Members of the local rural elite indeed had access to some of their society’s literary texts, but they did not engage with them in the same manner as, for example, someone such as Flavius Josephus or some of those behind the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many, if not most, of the literary literates among the rural, local elite had less time and money, and therefore leisure, to spend on studying their ancestral literary traditions. They mostly were positioned considerably farther down the social scale than those at the centre of power, such as Flavius Josephus, or those, such as some of the people behind the scrolls from the caves near Qumran, whose social infrastructure apparently supported an intensive and scholarly engagement with study of the ancestral traditions and other bodies of learned knowledge. The movement behind the scrolls can be characterized as a milieu of Jewish intellectuals or

Desert find sites to be examples of the phenomenon of alternative literacy: paralleling a Semitic track, there was an alternative educational path in Greek, up until the level of literary literacy. And then there were also tandem or dual literacies: those, presumably very few, who mastered both the Semitic and the Greek educational path, Flavius Josephus being a prime example of this phenomenon, but Wise also suggests a lesser well-known but fascinating example in the figures of Masabala b. Simon and his brothers.

30 Popović, “Qumran as Scroll Storehouse.”

31 Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 40, 309–16, 344, 349–50. These calculations make more concrete earlier proposals for a smaller scale of dissemination in ancient Judaea, limited to leaders and their followers coming from the better off strata; see Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 55 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 127.

scholars who were engaged at a very high level with their ancestral traditions.³² The Dead Sea Scrolls from the caves near Qumran attest to the vibrant and exciting presence in Graeco-Roman Judaea of a scholarly literacy that was connected with scholarly learning from elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world.³³

Insights from a centre-periphery dynamics perspective, that stresses heterogeneity of linguistic practices, need to be taken together with the manuscript evidence from the Judaeian Desert as it attests multilingual competencies, congruent with other evidence from the Roman Near East that indicates a bilingual or multilingual countryside. All this calls for a more nuanced interpretation of multilingualism that cannot be neatly cut into isolated pockets of monolingual language ideology.³⁴

2.3 Multiscripturalism

When it comes to the use of scripts in ancient Judaism, the more general observation seems often to be applied that “there existed in ancient times a strong bond between a language and its script.”³⁵ Assuming that different languages tend to use different scripts, “when a second language is imposed on or taken up by a people, they may also acquire a second script Bilingualism thus interacts in interesting ways with biculturalism.”³⁶ Ancient Judaism presents us with the interesting case that the Hebrew language remained in use but that sometime since the late sixth century BCE a switch was made to write that language in the Aramaic script (now referred to as the square script). The details for the

32 Popović, “Qumran as Scroll Storehouse.” Likewise, Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 327–31 characterizes the people behind the scrolls as hyperliterate. He emphasizes the presence of Aramaic literary texts as a key element for such a characterisation. Charlotte Hempel, *The Qumran Rule Texts in Context: Collected Studies*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 154 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 303–37 has argued that the Cave 4 manuscripts reflect a learned collection intended for an elite group within the movement.

33 See the discussion further below.

34 See Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 227, 243, 251 for a discussion about the preference under Bar Kokhba for Hebrew and use of the bookhand in letters.

35 Joseph Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet* (Jerusalem: Magnes and Leiden: Brill, 1982), 114; Willem F. Smelik, “Ashurit and Alphabet,” in *Rabbis, Language and Translation in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 271–322, at 275.

36 James N. Adams and Simon Swain, “Introduction,” in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text*, ed. James N. Adams, Mark Janse, and Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1–20, at 5–6.

reasons why this shift occurred remain elusive. The influence of the international Aramaic culture on Judah at the time of the Persian Empire may have been an important factor in the change of script.³⁷ Despite this change in script, it is possible that both scripts, the older form of palaeo-Hebrew and the more recent form of Aramaic script, remained in use simultaneously since the Persian period to write the Hebrew language.³⁸ Even if there was an awareness that the Aramaic or square script and the Hebrew language had distinct histories, script and language were inextricably linked in the perception of their users.³⁹ While this may indeed apply to some if not most of the users in ancient Judaea, it is also important to recall another general observation that “script and language are not the same thing, and neither of them is an unambiguous marker of ethnic identity.”⁴⁰

A similar complexity as with multilingualism in ancient Judaea applies to the instances of multiscripturalism, not just in the scrolls from Qumran but also from elsewhere in the Judean Desert. By far, most manuscripts from the scrolls near Qumran were written in the Aramaic or square script, but the use of other scripts – palaeo-Hebrew, Greek, and Cryptic – is clearly attested. Explanations for the use of these various scripts have sometimes focused only on one script, but examples of manuscripts in which more than one script was used remind us that in practice the decision to use such scripts was not made in splendid isolation and that at least some people possessed “pluriscriptural” competencies.

Attesting to Greek language and script use are Greek literary manuscripts (and perhaps also a few documentary manuscripts)⁴¹ that were found in Caves 4

37 Smelik, “*Ashurit* and Alphabet,” 275.

38 Smelik, “*Ashurit* and Alphabet,” 275–78. Another possibility is that the palaeo-Hebrew script was reintroduced during the Hasmonean period in the second century BCE. See also David Vanderhooft, “el-mēdīnā ūmēdīnā kiktābāh: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphratene,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lakes: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 529–44, at 539; Eibert Tigchelaar, “The Material Variance of the Dead Sea Scrolls: On Texts and Artefacts,” *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72/4 (2016): 1–6, at 2–3.

39 Smelik, “*Ashurit* and Alphabet,” 271–73.

40 Fergus Millar, “Introduction: Documentary Evidence, Social Realities and the History of Language,” in *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, ed. Hannah M. Cotton, Robert G. Hoyland, Jonathan J. Price, and David J. Wasserstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–12, at 6 (Millar refers to studies by Michael C. A. MacDonald). See also Mullen, *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean*, 14: “No direct equation can be made between ethnicity, culture and language, though all three are deeply entwined.”

41 Only a few examples of documentary texts, such as accounts, lists of names and scribal practices, were found, although the provenance of a number of them from Qumran Cave 4 is disputed; see Hannah M. Cotton and Ada Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Ḥever and Other Sites, with an Appendix Containing Alleged Qumran Texts*, Discoveries in

and 7 near Qumran, and Greek documentary texts, and also a few literary texts, that appeared at other Judaean Desert sites.⁴² Recalling the discussion above about the plurilingual competencies of the functionary of the Mebaqqer and what this indicates about the plurilingual identities of the group(s) this functionary was overseeing, the text *Rebukes Reported by the Overseer* (4Q477) serves as a further indicator of such plurilingual identities. In addition to two people with Hebrew surnames, 4Q477 2 ii 5 lists the Greek epithet of one Ḥananiah Notos.⁴³ The Greek epithet here may indicate a deeper engagement with the Greek language and signal a bilingual identity or competency.⁴⁴

The scrolls have also provided us with evidence for the use of palaeo-Hebrew script: fifteen manuscripts from Qumran were written entirely in palaeo-Hebrew, and an additional one comes from Masada. These are mainly copies of the books of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy) and Job.⁴⁵ Also, individual palaeo-Hebrew

the Judaean Desert 27 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2010), 6, 283–317. With regard to 4Q350, representing a record in Greek that lists quantities of cereals and being the re-used *verso* of 4Q460 9, Hannah Cotton and Erik Larson, “4Q460/4Q350 and Tampering with Qumran Texts in Antiquity?” in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov*, ed. Shalom M. Paul, Robert A. Kraft, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Weston W. Fields, Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 113–25 argue that “the penning of an ephemeral list in Greek on the back of a sacred text in Hebrew points to non-Jewish occupants of the site” (122). But opistographs such as 4Q201 (4QEn^a ar) and its *verso* 4Q338 or the papyrus manuscripts 1Q70/1Q70bis and 4Q518/4Q519 indicate that manuscripts were reused and that different compositions were written on the *recto* and *verso* at an earlier stage, before the site of Qumran was destroyed and occupied by an auxiliary unit of the Roman army; see Mladen Popović, “Roman Book Destruction in Qumran Cave 4 and the Roman Destruction of Khirbet Qumran Revisited,” in *Qumran und die Archäologie: Texte und Kontexte*, ed. Jörg Frey, Carsten Claußen, and Nadine Kessler, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 278 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 239–91, at 249; Matthew Richey, “The Use of Greek at Qumran: Manuscript and Epigraphic Evidence for a Marginalized Language,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 19 (2012): 177–97, at 184–86.

⁴² Joosten, “Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in the Qumran Scrolls,” 369. For Greek loanwords in the Copper Scroll (3Q15), see Florentino García Martínez, “Greek Loanwords in the *Copper Scroll*,” in *Qumranica Minora II: Thematic Studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 145–70. Greek epigraphic evidence points to the use of Greek in trade and economy, not only at Qumran but also elsewhere at Judaean Desert manuscript find sites; see, e.g., Richey, “The Use of Greek at Qumran.” More generally on Greek in ancient Judaea, see Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 331–45.

⁴³ Esther Eshel, “4QRebukes Reported by the Overseer,” in *Qumran Cave 4.XXVI: Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea, Part 1*, ed. Philip Alexander et al., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* 36 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 474–83.

⁴⁴ On the spread of Greek names and what this may indicate about the spread of language proficiency in Greek, see Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 287.

⁴⁵ Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches*, 246–48.

characters were used as scribal markings in the margins of texts written in the square script.⁴⁶ In addition, in twenty-eight or twenty-nine scrolls, which are otherwise written in the square script, the four letters of the Hebrew name for God (the letters YHWH, also referred to as the Tetragrammaton) are not written in the square script – maybe out of respect or to prevent the name from accidentally being spoken when reading the text aloud – but in the paleo-Hebrew script.⁴⁷ Observing correlations within the corpus of Qumran scrolls, scholars understand “the use of palaeo-Hebrew characters for the divine name ... to be exclusive and characteristic for texts written according to the ‘Qumran scribal practice’ within the corpus.”⁴⁸ A special link is suggested between the writing of the divine names in palaeo-Hebrew characters and the Qumran community.⁴⁹ Such a link may be suggestive, but there is evidence arguing against perceiving this practice of writing the divine name in palaeo-Hebrew as special to Qumran-specific manuscripts and a presumed Qumran community behind the scrolls. First, there are thirty-six manuscripts written in the so-called Qumran scribal practice that did not use this special system for writing the divine name.⁵⁰ Second, the phenomenon of writing the divine name in palaeo-Hebrew characters also occurs in Greek manuscripts, from elsewhere in the Judaean Desert (Naḥal Ḥever: 1/8ḤevXIIgr) and from Egypt (Oxyrhynchus: POxy 1007; POxy 3522).⁵¹

46 Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 206–8.

47 Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 238–46. See also Kristin De Troyer, “The Names of God, Their Pronunciation and Their Translation: A Digital Tour of Some of the Main Witnesses,” *Lectio Difficilior* 2 (2005): http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/05_2/troyer_names_of_god.htm; Smelik, “*Ashurit* and Alphabet,” 8–10.

48 Tigchelaar, “Assessing Emanuel Tov’s ‘Qumran Scribal Practice,’” 199–200.

49 See, e.g., recently Stephen Reed, “The Linguistic Diversity of the Texts Found at Qumran,” in *The Scrolls from Qumran and the Concept of a Library*, ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Cecilia Wassén, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 116 (Leiden, 2016), 132–54, at 145.

50 Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 244.

51 The late first-century BCE Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever contains twenty-eight fully or partially preserved occurrences of the Tetragrammaton in palaeo-Hebrew; see Emanuel Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever* (8ḤevXIIgr), Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 8 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990). Apart from a number of finds dating to the Chalcolithic period, the refugee caves 5/6 and 8 of Naḥal Ḥever seem not to have been in use before the second century CE; see Popović, “Qumran as Scroll Storehouse,” 561, 563; Yohanan Aharoni, “Expedition B – The Cave of Horror,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 12 (1962): 186–99; Yigael Yadin, *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of the Letters*, Judean Desert Studies 1 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1963). The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll (1/8ḤevXIIgr) cannot, therefore, have made its way to Naḥal Ḥever before the Bar Kokhba revolt. This context indicates that Greek manuscripts with the Tetragrammaton in palaeo-Hebrew script circulated in a Jewish context until at least the first third of the second century CE. For the two examples from

Completely unexpected was the discovery of several script systems among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were unknown until then. They have been conveniently named the “cryptic” scripts. Only Cryptic A has been deciphered thus far – the Cryptic B and C scripts, of which only a few fragments have been preserved, have not been deciphered.⁵²

With regard to the use of multiple scripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls, we encounter a heterogeneity that resembles our findings with regard to multilingualism. The manuscript evidence attests to “pluriscriptural” identities and competencies. This is not to say that everyone had such “pluriscriptural” competencies, but the evidence especially of “mixed” or “multiscriptural” texts points further in the direction of an intellectual and scholarly identity for at least a number of people behind the scrolls from the caves near Qumran.

There are examples of Cryptic A texts that start with Hebrew in square script, such as 4Q298 (4QcryptA Words of the Maskil to All Sons of Dawn) and 4Q249 (4Qpap Crypt A Midrash Sefer Moshe).⁵³ And then there is a unique astrological and physiognomic manuscript, 4QZodiacal Physiognomy (4Q186). This exceptional manuscript from Qumran Cave 4 combines several scripts: square, palaeo-Hebrew, Greek, and Cryptic A. Moreover, it is written in reverse order: from left to right.⁵⁴

The latter example of the “multiscriptural” text 4QZodiacal Physiognomy (4Q186) paves the way to see how elements of multilingualism and multiscripturalism in the Dead Sea Scrolls connect with knowledge transfer and strategies of sharing and hiding knowledge. This will allow us to understand how cultural encounters and language contact entangled the intellectuals behind the scrolls with other intellectual and textual communities in the ancient Mediterranean.

Oxyrhynchus, see, e.g., Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Second Revised Edition* (Minneapolis: Fortress and Assen: Van Gorcum: 2001), 220; De Troyer, “The Names of God.”

⁵² Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 259–60. See now also Eshbal Ratzon and Jonathan Ben-Dov, “A Newly Reconstructed Calendrical Scroll from Qumran in Cryptic Script,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136 (2017): 905–36.

⁵³ Jonathan Ben-Dov and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, “4Q249 Midrash Moshe: A New Reading and Some Implications,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 21 (2014): 131–49.

⁵⁴ For a more general discussion about the combination of several scripts and the writing in reverse order, see Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 26, 227–30.

2.4 Knowledge Transfer

Scholars assume that the Cryptic A script was devised for the internal purposes of the community, but this is not evident.⁵⁵ This explanation often occurs in tandem with the notion of a group that is presumably isolated from its surroundings. As I explain in the introduction above, a selection of manuscripts has informed the scholarly construct of a Qumran sect or community as the sociological matrix for all manuscripts. Such a framework has influenced how other texts were contextualized within the scholarly narrative. Thus, the Cryptic A texts were categorized as “sectarian” and, for example, the Aramaic texts were not only seen as older than Hebrew non-biblical texts but also understood categorically as so-called “non-sectarian” texts. Thus, the Cryptic A script from Qumran has often been explained in terms of secrecy strategies, to hide learned knowledge from outsiders or insiders who were not fully initiated.

Specific strategies of sharing and hiding knowledge may indeed have been intended, but this perspective must now be divorced from the notion of an isolated and marginal community at the site of Khirbet Qumran. In order to better gauge the situation, two aspects need to be discussed: 1. The connections between learned knowledge in Graeco-Roman Judaea and scholarly knowledge elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, and the character of this connectivity; 2. The extent to which such scholarly literacy was spread and shared within Graeco-Roman Judaea.

A fascinating feature of the Dead Sea Scrolls is that they contain the oldest examples of scholarly writings within a Jewish context, such as astronomical, astrological, calendrical, and physiognomic texts.⁵⁶ In order to discuss the aspect of intercultural connectivity and its character, I will briefly consider one example.

⁵⁵ Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 10; Mladen Popović, “The Emergence of Aramaic and Hebrew Scholarly Texts: Transmission and Translation of Alien Wisdom,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, ed. Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 81–114, at 99–100, 105–6. The announced example of a cup discovered in 2009 during excavations in Jerusalem is as of yet unclear evidence for the occurrence of this script outside of a Qumran context; for images and an excerpt from the preliminary report, see <http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/12012013/article/digging-into-first-century-jerusalem-s-rich-and-famous>. See also Emanuel Tov, “Scribal Characteristics of the Qumran Scrolls,” in *The Caves of Qumran: Proceedings of the International Conference, Lugano 2014*, ed. Marcello Fidanzio, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 118 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 87–95, at 88.

⁵⁶ For references and discussion, see Popović, “The Emergence of Aramaic and Hebrew Scholarly Texts”; Mladen Popović, “Networks of Scholars: The Transmission of Astronomical and Astrological Learning between Babylonians, Greeks and Jews,” in *Ancient Jewish Sciences and the*

The Aramaic text 4QZodiology and Brontology (4Q318) consists of two parts. The first part (*selenodromion*) describes the synodic movement of the moon through the zodiac during twelve months of thirty days each, counting a 360-day year, as in Babylonian tradition. The second part (*brontologion*) has predictions for when it will thunder. This sort of text appears both in the Babylonian and Graeco-Roman astrological traditions.⁵⁷ The 360-day year scheme suggests a derivation from Babylonian tradition, but the zodiacal names in 4Q318 point to Hellenistic origins.⁵⁸ What direction of cultural influence does this text exemplify? Is the text to be taken as an example of the Aramaic language being a medium of transmission of Babylonian learning westward? But such a one-sided directionality makes it difficult to account for the Hellenistic elements in the text. The idea of cultural influence together with directionality seems to be the wrong approach for understanding the character of intercultural connectivity that the text of 4QZodiology and Brontology attests to. What we have here is a fascinating glimpse of a tradition that is not so easy to pinpoint for us. The text of 4QZodiology and Brontology (4Q318) indicates the existence of an Aramaic tradition of astrological and astronomical knowledge that circulated in the eastern Mediterranean between or within Babylonian and Hellenistic traditions, not unlike what we encounter in late antique and early medieval traditions in Syriac, Mandaic, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic.

Scholars often assume that the Neo-Babylonian period was the moment when Judeans came into direct contact with learned knowledge from the Babylonian realm. The prophet Ezekiel from the Hebrew Bible is one example often put forward for such direct contact. However, in this case, and also with regard to astronomical, calendrical, astrological, and physiognomic learning from Qumran, the Neo-Babylonian period is an unlikely time-frame for that to have happened.⁵⁹ What we know of Babylonian culture at the time suggests that the elite was stricter

History of Knowledge in Second Temple Literature, ed. Jonathan Ben-Dov and Seth L. Sanders (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 151–91.

57 Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 128.

58 See, e.g., Jonas C. Greenfield and Michael Sokoloff, “4QZodiology and Brontology ar,” in *Qumran Cave 4.XXVI: Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea, Part 1*, ed. Philip Alexander et al., Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 36 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 259–74; Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der astrologischen Literatur der Juden*, Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 21 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 23–24; Helen R. Jacobus, *Zodiac Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Their Reception: Ancient Astronomy and Astrology in Early Judaism*, IJS Studies in Judaica 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

59 Mladen Popović, “Ancient Jewish Cultural Encounters and a Case Study on Ezekiel,” in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, ed. Mladen Popović, Myles Schoonover, and Marijn Vandenbergh, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1–12.

in maintaining their boundaries with regard to cuneiform culture and their learned knowledge, not sharing it with those belonging to non-Babylonian elites.⁶⁰

In the Late Babylonian period, however, we have clear evidence – literary, documentary, and epigraphical – of the transfer of learned knowledge from the Babylonian to the Hellenistic realm. We also have possible evidence of Aramaic scribes (*sepinu*) involved in the production of Babylonian scientific texts on scrolls,⁶¹ showing that what seemed an impermeable boundary in the Neo-Babylonian period between different kinds of scribes in relation to different kinds of textual and intellectual production was not so anymore in the Late Babylonian period.

With regard to the most likely time-frame for a type of connectivity to exist that enabled direct or indirect knowledge transfer from the Babylonian realm westward it is interesting to consider for a moment the ongoing creation of literary traditions about the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus. Caroline Waerzeggers argues that cuneiform historical literature from the late Persian and Hellenistic periods invites us for the Aramaic Nabonidus material at Qumran “to rethink models that assume centuries of transmission through texts, memories, or both. Instead, these materials offer the possibility of considering a more collateral, synchronic development—one that engaged literary communities across regions.” The lively and productive debate about Nabonidus that Babylonian scholars in the Hellenistic period were engaged in may have provided a general cultural context, Waerzeggers suggests, in which Babylonian-Jewish interactions that are behind such literary texts as Daniel 4 or the Prayer of Nabonidus may well have occurred, rather in a third or second century BCE context than three centuries earlier.⁶²

Thus, a time-frame in the Hellenistic period would be plausible for the existence of an intellectual connectivity between Graeco-Roman Judaea, Hellenistic Babylonia, and the eastern Mediterranean. That cultural context may have provided the circumstances most conducive for the exchange of scholarly literacy exemplified by the astronomical, astrological, calendrical, and physiognomic texts from Qumran. These texts attest to direct or indirect contact between intel-

60 For references and discussion, see Popović, “Networks of Scholars,” 169–74. See also Eleanor Robson’s contribution in this volume.

61 For six references to such *magallatu* (“scrolls”), see Seth L. Sanders, *From Adapa to Enoch: Scribal Culture and Religious Vision in Judea and Babylon*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 167 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 188–94.

62 Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Prayer of Nabonidus in the Light of Hellenistic Babylonian Literature,” in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, ed. Mladen Popović, Myles Schoonover, and Marijn Vandenberghe, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 64–75, the quote is from 65.

lectuals and scholars in Graeco-Roman Judaea and intellectuals and scholars from elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean.

If indeed intellectuals and scholars in Graeco-Roman Judaea were connected with broader, international developments of scholarly learning, possibly via an Aramaic learned tradition that circulated in the eastern Mediterranean, to what extent was such scholarly learning accessible within Graeco-Roman Judaea? Invoking Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, we can appreciate the scholarly literacy, multilingualism,⁶³ and multiscripturalism evinced by a number of the Qumran texts to have been perceived as prized pieces of knowledge signaling and confirming the status of those having access to and possessing it.⁶⁴ On one level, that of international ancient Mediterranean scholarly literacy, the evidence does not invite us to construct a dichotomy between Aramaic and Hebrew, Babylonian, Hellenistic, and Judaeic. On another level, differentiating within Graeco-Roman Judaea between different types of literacy, explicit and implicit boundaries will have controlled the dissemination of and access to this scholarly learning. Even if having had the chance to read one, Aramaic literary texts will have been difficult to grasp for many.⁶⁵ A Cryptic A text would probably prove difficult even for those who had attained a fluent level of literary literacy, and a mixed and reversely written text such as 4QZodiacal Physiognomy (4Q186) even more so.

In Babylonia, secrecy formulae appear as important topoi in the colophons of scholarly texts. They signal a form of boundary maintenance with regard to literary and scholarly texts, limiting the accessibility and mobility of scholarly knowledge. Instead of interpreting these secrecy formulae as signals for a single, abstract body of "secret knowledge," Kathryn Stevens has argued to consider these formulae as a type of protective mechanism chosen by Babylonian scholars to protect texts closely associated with their scholarly expertise and their personal professional identity.⁶⁶ For Graeco-Roman Judaea, we have no evidence for such colophons,⁶⁷ but the mechanism of intellectual protection because of a

63 One may think of the relationship between the Hebrew astrological and physiognomic text 4Q186 and the Aramaic physiognomic text 4Q561; see Popović, "The Emergence of Aramaic and Hebrew Scholarly Texts," 103–6.

64 Mladen Popović, "Physiognomic Knowledge in Qumran and Babylonia: Form, Interdisciplinarity, and Secrecy," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 13 (2006): 150–76, at 166–76; Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 81–83, 100, 227–31.

65 Wise, *Language and Literacy*, 317–31.

66 Kathryn Stevens, "Secrets in the Library: Protected Knowledge and Professional Identity in Late Babylonian Uruk," *Iraq* 75 (2013): 211–53. See also Eleanor Robson's contribution in this volume.

67 Mladen Popović, "Pseudepigraphy and a Scribal Sense of the Past in the Ancient Mediterranean: A Copy of the Book of the Words of the Vision of Amram," in *Is There a Text in This Cave?*

correlation between scholarly expertise and personal professional identity may have been in operation as well. In Graeco-Roman Judaea, specific strategies for sharing or hiding that knowledge were in operation by means of multilingualism, multiscripturalism, and scholarly literacy.

The concrete manifestations of knowledge transfer and connectivity in which intellectuals and scholars in Graeco-Roman Judaea took part – on the ancient Mediterranean level and on the level of Graeco-Roman Judaea – argue against characterising the people behind the Dead Sea Scrolls as an isolated and marginal community. Rather, the scrolls provide us with unique access to a textual and intellectual community that can function as a lens through which we can observe a rich intellectual, multilingual, and multiscriptural world that not only connected but embodied elements from Hellenistic, Babylonian, and Judaeen cultures of writing and learning.

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