

Alexandria and Qumran

Back to the Beginning

Kenneth Silver

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Coin: Reverse of minted copper alloy coin showing the philosopher Pythagoras seated; right hand extended measuring a globe on a column. British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals, Image No.: 00102828001 © The Trustees of the British Museum.

(Obverse (not depicted) shows bust of Trajan Decius.)

Alexandria, the Catacombs of Meks, ca. 1890-1910. Photoglob Company, Zürich. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. USA.

The Qumran caves with the Dead Sea in distance. Matson Photo Service, 1947-1961. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. USA.

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Pour se souvenir d'une
bonne soirée à Jérusalem
qui nous a permis d'échapper
à la "Qumran Jail" -
Avec beaucoup d'amitié
14/09/2002

Jean-Baptiste Humbert

'Pour se souvenir d'une
bonne soirée à Jérusalem
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'To remember a
good evening in Jerusalem
that allowed us to escape
'the Qumran Prison'.
With much friendship
14/09/2002
Jean-Baptiste Humbert'

Dedicatory writing in the book
Gaza Méditerranéenne Histoire et archeologie en Palestine,
Editions Errance, Paris 2000. The book was received as a token of friendship on
September the 14th, 2002,
from archaeological director Jean-Baptiste Humbert
at École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem.

Shortly after publishing their book on Qumran, Minna Lönnqvist and Kenneth Lönnqvist visited Father Jean-Baptist Humbert at École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem, in September 2002 and spent an evening with him and Dr Tarragon.

Father Humbert had inherited the whole final publication project of Father Roland de Vaux's excavations and material unearthed at Khirbet Qumran at the Dead Sea. The excavations had been carried out in the 1940s and 1950s after the discovery of the first Dead Sea Scrolls by a shepherd in 1947. Father Humbert had kindly shown us a number of finds from the excavations in the storerooms of the École during the 1990s.

During that evening in September at the École Humbert and Tarragon discussed Qumran. Humbert suddenly showed us a special artefact that he said came from Jordan: a golden seal ring. He asked whether we knew what it was. Having studied it, Minna answered that it appeared to be a golden seal ring from the Hellenistic-Roman period. She added that the signs engraved on the ring suggested that they were Pythagorean, a kind of Pythagorean brotherhood ring. Humbert smiled, but did not say much.

Nearly five years later, it suddenly occurred to Minna one late night when she was falling asleep: 'Jordan!' - 'But Qumran was part of Jordan, when Father Roland de Vaux excavated there, and the ring is most likely an unpublished find from Qumran.'

But why did Father Humbert in the first place show the ring? He knew the book that Minna and Kenneth had written. The ring was apparently the key to several salient questions. At the end of the evening Humbert signed a dedicatory writing in his book *Gaza Méditerranéenne Histoire et archeologie en Palestine*, illustrated above, to Minna and Kenneth saying that 'You are the only ones who have come out of the Qumran prison.'

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Acknowledgements

This book originated as a parallel line of inquiry to the archaeological survey and mapping project in Northern Mesopotamia, which was initiated by the author in the summer of 2014. In 2014 we relocated to Mardin Province to study the border zone of the Graeco-Roman world, the Parthian and Armenian Empires, and for example, the influence of Jews in the region and the Kingdom of Adiabene. There, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Kurds, and many other people lived in coexistence until recently.

Most of the authoring of the book was done in the Old City of Mardin, which is located along the Silk Road and the famous Berlin-Baghdad railway line. Mardin is also known as the 'Little Jerusalem'. We were fortunate to have a traditional Mardin-style of house, which had an amazing view overlooking the great Mesopotamian plains and the Graeco-Roman road network that took Alexander the Great and his army from Greece to Babylon and further. This reconstruction of the trail of Alexander in Mesopotamia lead back to Egypt and Alexandria, and especially the founding of the Library of Alexandria. The subject of a library took us back to the creation of the Qumran Library and the reasons behind it but also the contents of the ancient texts which were viewed from new perspectives.

In the course of preparing this book, I have passed through Northern Mesopotamia, Anatolia, crossed the Atlantic to Harvard University, and to Spain where it all began in 1492. It has been a long and arduous journey, including seven moves during the last year. However, I cannot complain that the journey was not eventful. Anyhow, I could not have made it without the help and support of my dear wife Professor Minna Silver, who has improved the manuscript with numerous useful comments. I am also extremely grateful to my family who had to live with me during this entire process. I tried my best to speed up the process of writing the book, but I regret it came too late for some in the family.

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Kenneth Silver
Oxford, 27th April, 2017

Abbreviations and Periodicals

Regarding the style and template, we have followed the Oxford style-sheet based on the *New Oxford Style Manual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

However, an effort has been made to avoid abbreviations for the Journals and Periodicals in the footnotes, as they tend to slow down the reader who may not be familiar with what is being referred to and would want to access that information. General abbreviations cannot be avoided in a comprehensive work such as this, though they have been kept to the minimum and do appear mainly in the footnotes.

As far as possible, terms expected not to be familiar, have been explained in the main text, unless they were considered to belong to general academic usage. In certain instances, original references using for example Latin numerals in the books of the ancient authors have been kept intact, as it seems unreasonable to assume that everybody would be familiar with the equivalent Arabic numerals.

References to online sources in the form of webpages, websites and electronic data have been treated as much as possible as their written counterparts, and in fact, often these have been direct electronic copies of the written sources. Nevertheless, in some cases, it is possible that the page numbers of the digitized material varied from the printed material. We have tried to choose online sources that are easily accessible, reliable and those that are likely to remain stable and durable. However, we cannot guarantee that this will remain the case over time, though we have made every possible effort to check that the references were accurate at the time of printing this book. However, sometimes, digitized material discovered in libraries did not contain all the original bibliographical information, for instance, such as the full name of the author. Consequently, despite the best of efforts, it was not always possible to fully retrieve all the information, for which inconvenience we apologize.

General abbreviations:

p.	page
pp.	pages
vol.	volume
no.	number
chapt.	chapter
fig.	figure
pl.	plate
pls.	plates
ed.	editor or edition of book
eds.	editors
tr.	translated or translator
fr.	fragment
col.	column
<i>et alii</i>	and others
<i>passim</i>	references in the published work are to be found at various places
n.p.	no place of printing
n.d.	no date of printing
repr.	reprint

Abbreviations of common sources:

DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
War	Josephus, <i>The Jewish War</i>
Ant.	Josephus, <i>The Jewish Antiquities</i>
Macc.	<i>The Books of Maccabees</i>
CHJ	The Cambridge History of Judaism
KAI	Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften
NSI	North Semitic Inscriptions

Abbreviations of Biblical books, if such are used:

Ms.	Moses
1 Sam.	1 Samuel
Is.	Isaiah
Neh.	Nehemiah
Dan.	Daniel
Jn.	John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rom.	Romans
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
Eph.	Ephesians
Col.	Colossians
Hebr.	Hebrews
1 Pet.	1 Peter
Rev.	Revelation

Preface and Introduction

When I was first asked to author this book, I soon discovered that no one had attempted to write a comprehensive study on the religious and philosophical roots of the Essenes and Khirbet Qumran, despite the fact that a few articles and shorter monographs had been authored on the subject. On the one hand, this book is the outcome of renewed studies on the diachronical development of the religion and philosophy of the Qumran-Essenes and many of the still outstanding research enigmas, which has plagued the scholarly community for 70 years. On the other hand, it can be seen as a continuation of the first archaeological monograph written by Minna Lönnqvist and Kenneth Lönnqvist in 2002, where the Egyptian roots for the Qumran community were set out for the first time. We hope the reader will not find it difficult to identify with the suggestion that in order to find a greater understanding of the roots of the Qumran-Essenes in Hellenistic and Roman Palestine it is necessary to refer to the great intellectual centre of Alexandria, the Library of Alexandria, and the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean world in general. Thus the title of the book: *Alexandria and Qumran - back to the beginning*.

The special place of Khirbet Qumran in the history of archaeology derives from a mixture of well known factors, such as the discovery of rare and perishable ancient manuscripts at the Dead Sea in 1947, and the violent destruction of the site with its inhabitants in AD 68–73 and an assumed mythological connection to Jerusalem. A myriad of books has been written on Qumran, presenting various beguiling theories over what may have happened in the course of its history. Less well known is still the obvious archaeological connection between the documents discovered in the Qumran caves, the Qumran settlement and the graveyard, and in particular the capability of the ancient Qumran-Essenes to produce cryptic knowledge that has withheld most attempts to decipher it.

Very soon the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (hereafter *DSS*) became a legend. The idea was quickly launched that the Qumran community was to be considered a unique historiographical group. As J. Thiem¹ explained in connection with the Library of Alexandria that we are going to discuss later, it often happens with legends that historical and archaeological actualities receded behind lineaments that gratified cultural and religious desires because they had a certain strong appeal. Clearly in Qumran research, there has been in modern times also a tendency to remove and polish the controversial nature of the philosophical and religious movement that the Essenes without doubt represented already in antiquity.

We thus already reach a critical point of our investigation here. From a research perspective, the scientific approach to the historical documents called the *DSS* preferred the synchronic study of the archaeological remains and the texts to a more diachronic approach, in which the different layers would have been revealed and the historical

¹ Thiem, Jon, 'The great library of Alexandria burnt: towards the history of a symbol', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October-December, 1979), p. 509.

Qumran-Essenes discussed.² Often the Qumran discourse consisted of interpreting interpretations only, rather than discussing the hard archaeological facts. The DSS quickly became like a subplot in this colourful drama, which manipulated time, place, and contents. However, when the texts were removed from their archaeological context, they naturally became disconnected from the rest of the archaeological material for decades. Consequently, the DSS are often treated like stray-finds in research literature. For instance, only few scholars paused at asking the vital questions *why* the texts were there or *what* was the relationship of the Biblical material to the clearly non-Biblical literature in what may be called the Qumran library. It is still typical to emphasize the presence of the Biblical texts at Qumran, while at the same time omitting the fact that they only represent a small portion of the original library. Thus, the emphasis was always on the temporal and geographically-limited in scale.

Already in August 2002 when the first archaeological monograph written by professional archaeologists on the Dead Sea scrolls and the archaeology of Qumran entitled *Archaeology of the hidden Qumran, the new paradigm*, was published by M. Lönnqvist and K. Lönnqvist,³ it was clearly demonstrated that Qumran research had focused mainly on the interpretation of the documents *per se* from the initial discovery of the DSS in 1947. However, the notion that the DSS can be interpreted separately from the settlement history or the bulk of the archaeological material from Qumran is a historical fallacy. Because a systematic consideration also of the contemporary cultural-historical and politico-religious as well as the intellectual environment outside ancient Israel was missing, research was simply lost. The present writers fortunately escaped the ‘labyrinth of Qumran research’ a long time ago, a fact also acknowledged by the archaeological director Father Jean-Baptiste Humbert of École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem, on the title page of this book.

When the Biblical texts were found at Qumran during the archaeological explorations of the site and the nearby caves in the 1940s and ’50s, scholars were quite rightly over the moon. However, the investigation of the main settlement, the cemetery and the publication of the archaeological material groups were neglected. We are thus still waiting for the bulk of the archaeological material in general to be published, more than 60 years since the work finished, which is scientifically quite unacceptable. Thus, nothing of an archaeological *longue durée* could develop regarding Qumran because there was no genuine interest in understanding the historical development of the site; why it originally developed, and in response to what situations and circumstances, and what the relationship of this phenomena was to parallel cultures or external stimuli. In practice, the internal development of the settlement at Qumran such as the socio-political and religious-philosophical dimensions, as well as the technical dimensions of the geographical and geometrical layout of the settlement or the unusual water system,

² Following what G. Cornelli said for the Pythagoreans, Cornelli, Gabriele, ‘Pythagoreanism as an historiographical category: historical and methodological notes’, in *On Pythagoreanism*, Gabriele Cornelli, Richard McKirahan, Constantinos Macris, eds, *Studia Praesocratica*, Volume 5 (Göttingen: de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 36-37.

³ Lönnqvist, Minna, and Lönnqvist Kenneth, *Archaeology of the hidden Qumran, the new paradigm* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2002), p. 16.

received virtually no attention at all until very late. Even serious scholars in their own discipline cast aside sound historical criticism, as well as old and reliable sources that had long been accepted. The continuous stream of new data emerging in particular from the natural sciences was also largely rejected.

What happened was that scholars assumed *a priori* that the people who inhabited the site at Khirbet Qumran must have been Jews because Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts were found in the caves. Therefore, scholarship adopted the tendency to oscillate between the DSS and Judaism, and the dual focus of what the DSS meant for Judaism, and the development of ways of making improvements in the reading of the scrolls. The main interest has been conventional – and still seems to be – to compare how well these texts fulfil or elucidate the Jewish *Halakhah* or early Christian creeds prior to the emergence of rabbinic Judaism or Christianity. Because this approximation of Qumran-Essenism to Judaism, all archaeological or historical explanations until the 1990s were presupposed axioms. The role of archaeology was limited to the functioning as an *ancilla*, to prop up the already given prerequisites or to illustrate the textually reconstructed world of Qumran. In the past, we have been left into the hands of scholars or specialists representing other disciplines than archaeology or in the worst case scenario, dilettantes in archaeology. The trustworthiness of de Vaux's archaeological accounts came to be questioned already in the early 1990s, when more and more evidence especially from natural sciences was brought to light, elucidating the foundation and development of the site in a very different way than had been done before in the preliminary reports.

In addition, in the modern world, archaeology is a discipline in its own right and has the full capability of theory building.⁴ We have to understand that all ancient remains whether material or textual, which an archaeological site can provide, are to be treated equally in order to form an integrated picture of the ancient past. Excluding one group or another of the source pool of material or leaving one to govern the other, will never lead to the emergence of general theories or satisfactory explanations concerning the origin and nature of the people that created the DSS.⁵ Given the fortunate situation, i.e. the fact that all the known DSS from the Qumran library have been available for scholarly research in published form, some even in on-line facsimile copies, it can also seem contradictory to point out that the historical information on the community was surprisingly scanty until the early 2000s. Many of the fundamental questions regarding the details of the origin and history of the community, its organisation, religious ideology

⁴ Hodder, Ian, 'Introduction: a review of contemporary theoretical debates in archaeology', *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. Ian Hodder (Oxford: Polity Press, 2001), pp. 1-13.

⁵ In our view, there is archaeologically little doubt that the texts discovered in the nearby caves originate from the settlement at Khirbet Qumran. This has become clear through the evidence of the pottery, such as the cylindrical jars and the oil lamps found both in the settlement and the caves to be discussed, and the inkstands elucidating scriptural activities originating from the settlement. That these people were Essenes or a closely related group is in accordance with the general description of the ancient authors, such as Pliny the Elder, Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, the location and nature of the settlement and the contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This will also be abundantly clear through the discussion of the philosophical tradition of the Qumran-Essenes below. For Pliny, see Pliny, *Natural History*, Vol. 2, Books 3-7, tr. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, William Heinemann Ltd, 1942, repr. 1961), Book 5, chapter 15, 73.

and philosophy, and, for instance, composition of textual evidence as displayed in the DSS, have still not been properly discussed. The Qumran community has only gradually started to emerge from the primordial waters when alternative theories emerged.

Starting with the ideological roots of the Qumran-Essenes,⁶ even a short review of the history of research shows that there have not been very many scholars who have understood the deep philosophical essence of the DSS, and who devoted themselves to the study of the origins of this ancient philosophy. The five most influential scholars in this field were: Isidore Lévy (1871–1959),⁷ Moshe Weinfeld (1925–2009),⁸ André Dupont-Sommer (1900–1983),⁹ Charles Guignebert (1867–1939)¹⁰ and David Flusser (1917–2000).¹¹ What unites these great scholars of their age was that they all belonged roughly to the same generation. Most of them had also the good opportunity to study the Palestinian Essenes from Josephus and other ancient textual sources before the secret books of the Essenes, assumed lost,¹² were discovered in the form of the DSS. Therefore, their scientific views were not blurred by the sensational discovery of the

⁶ Schürer, Emil, *The history of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ (175 BC -AD 135)*, Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, Matthew Black, eds., Volume 2, A new English version (rev., Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1979), p. 562. A handy collection of information from Pliny on the Essenes and the Jews is found, for example, in Kraft, Robert A., 'Pliny on Essenes, Pliny on Jews', *Dead Sea Discoveries*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2001), pp. 255-261. However, the author's closing statement 'But I would not want to try to build much on this part of Pliny's reporting!', undermines largely that something relevant was achieved.

⁷ See, Février, James-G., 'Isidore Lévy (1871-1959)', *École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences historiques et philologiques. Annuaire 1960-1961, Année 1961, Vol. 93, Numéro 1*, pp. 13-20, at http://www.persee.fr/doc/ephe_0000-0001_1960_num_1_1_4527.

⁸ Weinfeld's monograph (Weinfeld, Moshe, *The organizational pattern and the penal code of the Qumran sect, a comparison with guilds and religious associations of the Hellenistic-Roman period*, *Novum Testamentum et orbis antiquus 2* (Göttingen, Fribourg: éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) is, in fact, the only one on the subject. See, Gillihan, Yonder Moynihan, *Civic ideology, organization, and law in the rule scrolls: comparative study of the covenanters' sect and contemporary voluntary associations in political context*, *Studies on the texts of the Desert of Judah*, Vol. 97 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 42-47.

⁹ For example, Dupont-Sommer, M. André, 'Le problème des influences étrangères sur la secte juive de Qoumrân', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, Vol. 35 (1955), pp. 75-94; Dupont-Sommer, M. André, 'Exorcismes et guérisons dans les écrits de Qoumrân', *Vetus Testamentum*, Supplements, Vol. VII, Congress Volume, Oxford 1959 (Leiden: 1960), pp. 246-251; Dupont-Sommer, M. André, 'Deux documents horoscopiques Esséniens découverts à Qoumrân, près de la Mer Morte', *Comptes-rendues de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, des séances de l'année (June 1965), pp. 239-253; Dupont-Sommer, M. André, *The Essene writings from Qumran* (Gloucester, Mass.: 1973).

¹⁰ Guignebert, Ch., *The Jewish world in the time of Jesus*, tr. S.H. Hooke from the French, *The History of Civilization* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1939). We thank Daniel Fournier for bringing this important publication to our attention.

¹¹ Flusser, David, *The spiritual history of the Dead Sea sect*, tr. Carol Glucker (Tel Aviv: MOD Books, 1989).

¹² A fact deplored, for example, by Guignebert 1939, p. 173. The exact manner in which the rules of the secret society were to be transmitted, and how the secret books should be preserved, is explained in detail by Josephus. See, Josephus = Josephus Flavius, Josephus II, *The Jewish War, Books I-III, the Loeb Classical Library*, tr. Thackeray, H.St. J. (London, Cambridge, Massachusetts: William Heinemann, Ltd, Harvard University Press, 1927; repr. 1956), *War*, 2, 142. For a general account of the Essenes also in relation Egypt and the Therapeutae, see Betz, Otto, 'The Essenes', in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 3: The Early Roman Period*, Chapter 15, William Horbury, W.D. Davies, John Sturdy, eds, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 444-470. For the life of Josephus, see Bartlett, John. R., *Jews in the Hellenistic world, Josephus, Aristaeus, The Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus*, Cambridge commentaries on writings of the Jewish and Christian world 200 BC to AD 200, Vol. 1 i (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, UK, 1985), pp. 72-191.

DSS in 1947.¹³ Finally, all of them were ‘old-school’ scholars who fully understood the meaning of using available ancient sources without putting anything valuable aside, as well as the importance of old-fashioned, good historical source criticism. However, of these five now all late scholars, Lévy and Flusser saw the light. In addition, Flusser¹⁴ in contrast to many others, did not try to conceal the dark sides of the Qumran theology and philosophy. He correctly stated that the ‘divine spirit of Qumran’ is not the same as God’s Holy Spirit in the Bible. This is a revolutionary statement, though not surprising in the light of what is advanced in this book. Furthermore, one would also need to ask here the questions as to why the works of these five great scholars have been downgraded in the contemporary assessments of Qumran, though the answer is, of course, quite obvious. However, this is not the pattern that we are seeking to further highlight in this book.

Without any doubt, I. Lévy was the most important of these five scholars as to the precise identification of the source of the ideology of the Qumran-Essenes. He should be hailed as a pioneer and an important forerunner also in the field of Qumran research. As far as his education was concerned, Lévy spent extended amounts of time in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. He thus became familiar with the ancient Graeco-Roman mystery cults called *mystēria* and their related archaeological culture, such as the worship of Sarapis and Osiris and the religious architecture used in these cults, which gave him for the period a unique perspective on the history of the Orient.¹⁵ Lévy’s wide knowledge of the Mediterranean area and Near East enabled him also to look for new solutions to the questions of the history of ancient Israel outside the country, something that most other scholars then – and even much later – failed to do. When Lévy in 1927 took his Ph.D. with the double thesis ‘*La légende de Pythagore de Grèce en Palestine*’ and ‘*Recherches sur les sources de la légende de Pythagore*’, it provoked already then much discussion. Without doubt, this discussion will continue after the publication of this work, which demonstrates the validity of the former claims.

This book, which adds the latest results of cross-scientific research, demonstrates in a much-enlarged format that Lévy was definitely correct in his assertion of the contacts between the Palestinian Essenes and Pythagoreanism as presented in his last work in 1965.¹⁶ Therefore, when the DSS are put into a proper historical and archaeological context, they also help to settle a long-standing controversy over whether Qumran was an Essene site and whether Essenism was essentially Jewish. Naturally, Lévy, who ‘only’ studied the Essenes from the pre-Qumran sources, did not fully realise the importance

¹³ Ralf Marcus said in 1954 while the Qumran excavations were still in progress and the publication of the DSS had just started: ‘...but in the light of the texts so far published one may justifiably wonder whether the new material does not present as many new problems as solutions of old ones’. See Marcus, Ralph, ‘Pharisees, Essenes, and Gnostics’, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (September, 1954), p. 157.

¹⁴ Flusser 1989.

¹⁵ Février, James-G., ‘Isidore Lévy (1871-1959)’, *École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences historiques et philologiques. Annuaire 1960-1961, Année 1961, Vol. 93, Numéro 1*, pp. 13-20. Available at http://www.persee.fr/doc/ephe_0000-0001_1960_num_1_1_4527.

¹⁶ Unfortunately, it is not possible due to the limitations of space for example to discuss in this work what is early Pythagorean, first generation, if you will, and what is later. The relevance is based on normal criticism and external sources, were such exist.

of his discoveries, meaning that his conclusions would also apply to Khirbet Qumran and the DSS. Lévy died in 1959 when the publication of the DSS was yet in its infancy and the contents of the documents were largely unknown to the general public as well as to most scholars working in the scientific community. Lévy's last article entitled '*Le très saint nombre 50 et la clé des faveurs éternelles dans le Manuel essénien de discipline*' was actually finished post-mortem by his wife.¹⁷ Anyhow, thanks to Lévy, we no longer have to assume, for example, that the most tangible elements in the doctrine of Essenism would have been a local and isolated invention. The most important conclusions of the work '*Le très saint nombre 50 et la clé des faveurs éternelles dans le Manuel essénien de discipline*' are included in the publication of Lévy¹⁸ called *Recherches Esséniennes et Pythagoriciennes*, published six years after his death in 1965 by his wife. Sadly, it was printed only in 100 copies and this may unfortunately have contributed to the fact that the results remained inaccessible to many scholars, though not necessarily unknown. To our knowledge, Lévy's interpretations have never been challenged with any rational arguments based on scientific evidence.

Flusser's major contribution has already been mentioned. Then there is the case of Moshe Weinfeld. Weinfeld's possibly most important contribution to the discussion of the origin of Qumran was *The organizational pattern and the penal code of the Qumran sect, a comparison with guilds and religious associations of the Hellenistic-Roman period*, published in 1986. Weinfeld's study debunked the myth that the structure and hierarchy of the Qumran community was a local invention in Judaea. It most certainly originated with the Hellenistic and Roman associations and guilds in Egypt. The groundbreaking and innovative results showed conclusively that the two main features, the organisational model and the penal code of the Qumran community, were derived from Egypt, as Lönnqvist and Lönnqvist also concluded in 2002¹⁹ based on an archaeological and cross-scientific study of the material. Then the same Weinfeld, despite demonstrating extraordinary knowledge of the ancient evidence of the origins of the organizational model and hierarchy of Qumran, nevertheless, concluded that the nature and character of the Qumran community was in no way affected by the origin of numerous foreign elements. That Weinfeld eventually favoured a Jewish origin for all of this is, of course, impossible to accept for a number of reasons stated already by himself. We cannot have had at Qumran two or several mutually exclusive systems operational at the same time.

In their then new approach, the Lönnqvists also used contextual archaeology, and what is called the 'palimpsest analogy' in heritage studies, i.e. a methodology that unites an analysis of the settlement plan and a preliminary GIS and spatial study to investigate the religious and symbolic significance of the archaeological forms and remains, which

¹⁷ Lévy, Isidore, '*Le très saint nombre 50 et la clé des faveurs éternelles dans le Manuel essénien de discipline*', Académie Royale de Belgique, *Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences morales et politiques*, Vol. 45, 1959, pp. 117-128.

¹⁸ Lévy, Isidore, '*Recherches esséniennes et pythagoriciennes*', Publications du centre de recherches d'histoire et de philologie de la IV^e section de l'école pratique des hautes études, Paris, Série III, hautes études du monde gréco-romain 1 (Genève, Paris: Librairie Droz, Minard, 1965).

¹⁹ Lönnqvist and Lönnqvist 2002.

gave a clue to the distinctive 'spirit of the place'.²⁰ As such, it was observed by the former for the first time that the physical traces and marks left by the earlier eras in the settlement record had not been properly recorded, documented and interpreted, and the collective memory that existed in the form of the DSS was not integrated in the general archaeological interpretation. Based on this approach and other historical comparisons, the characteristics and cosmic forms of the settlement were explained in an entirely new way.

Furthermore, there has been something unsatisfactory in the approach to the DSS by the so-called Qumran research establishment from the very beginning, which must be shortly detailed here. As we see it, the problem with the Qumran research has been twofold. Firstly, as said, research up to the present-day, with only a few exceptions, has been characterised by a research methodology with preconceived ideas, one way or the other based on the religious inclinations of the scholars. Secondly, it is not that our main literary sources on the subject are scanty and ambiguous; it is just that researchers in Qumranology frequently have made *anachronistic* interpretations based on a biased and selective use of sources. Clear patterns, which had emerged already in textual research phase in the 1950s, '60s and '70s were later disregarded, not only because they did not fit the picture, but because they became unpleasant and difficult to explain with all the preconceived ideas in mind. This described accurately the situation for nearly 60 years.

Methodologically, it is also important that the starting-point for our discussion here is not to point out that the rabbinic literature is untrustworthy in historical matters, as some scholars earlier explained. However, it is necessary to remind the reader that the concept of writing scientific research must be based on the existence of contemporary historical sources. As a rule two independent sources are generally needed from a period in order to say that something is a 'fact' or that it may have happened. In general, the 'Jewishness' of the Qumran-Essene community and its assumed use of the Jewish Halakhah from the second century BC to the early Roman period in the first century AD, is still discussed on the basis of rabbinic sources from late antiquity.²¹ Even a great deal of agreement does not prove that Judaism was the real source of Qumran-Essenism, in view of the possibility that what we have in common was passed down from Greek sources. In fact, there is a sharp difference between Judaism and Essenism. Sometimes interpretations of Graeco-Roman Qumran have even been made from the point of view of present-day Jewish Halakhah. In practice, what existed in late antiquity or is used today, has been projected half a millennia earlier into a period when no Talmud

²⁰ This is largely the definition by Khirfan, Luna, 'Traces on the palimpsest: heritage and the urban forms of Athens and Alexandria', *Cities*, Vol. 27, Issue. 5, 27 (2010), pp. 315-325, especially p. 315.

²¹ The Jewish Oral Law represented by the Mishnah, was authored in the period AD 200-400, the Jerusalem Talmud maybe about AD 400, and the Babylonian Talmud perhaps ca. AD 500, i.e. in the early Byzantine period. Neusner, Jacob, *Oral tradition in Judaism, the case of the Mishnah*, The Albert Bates Lord studies in oral tradition, Vol. 1, Garland reference library of the humanities, Vol. 764 (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1987), p. 20. Feldman, Louis H., *Judaism and Hellenism reconsidered*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, Vol. 107, editor John J. Collins, Associate Editor, Florentino García Martínez, Advisory Board, J. Duhaime, A. Hilhorst, P.W. van der Horst, A. Klostergaard Petersen, M.A. Knibb, H. Najman, J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, J. Sievers, G. Stemmerger, E.J.C. Tigchelaar, J. Tromp (Leiden: Brill, 2006), p. 763.

or Mishnah even existed, apart from the Jewish Torah. As J. Neusner²² pointed out, 'Normative Judaism' did not even exist in the Hellenistic period from where heretical groups might have diverged.

Answers must be sought in what *existed then*, what was contemporary or earlier, not in what was *not* there or what was *to come* half a millennia later. Therefore, we must look like Lévy, outside the box and beyond the horizon to find meaningful answers. The soul purpose of this book is thus to show that the ancient enigmas regarding the DSS can be answered in a fully satisfactorily manner. Systematic interpretation of the ancient evidence is therefore what is attempted here without modern manipulation of the material.

As we shall see below, the religion, as well as the literal tradition and composition of documents and the type of library exposed at Qumran, were based on models derived from Egypt.²³ However, the present study does inevitably also raise the troubling question why many prominent modern scholars²⁴ in the Qumran field have maintained that there is an absence of facts in the DSS for an exposition of the community's history, constitution and laws. Then there is the relevant question, which can only be hinted at in this book, that is: what was the Greek and Roman knowledge of Jewish culture and literature, and how are certain similarities that exist to be explained?²⁵ For example, in

²² Neusner, Jacob, *Judaism in the beginning of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973; repr. Whitstable, Kent: Whitstable Litho Ltd, SPCK, 1984), p. 29.

²³ The Egyptian influence on Judaism in the Graeco-Roman period is still treated in an archaic fashion, omitting important information such as new palaeopathological evidence, epitaphs, and to a large extent inscriptions from sites such as Tell el-Jehudieh. This is ever so surprising as works like *Cambridge History of Judaism* provides a very one-sided picture of the Jewish involvement in Egypt in the Graeco-Roman period, omitting information such as that the Jews in Egypt were – based on epigraphic evidence and papyri – mostly polytheists and following non-Deuteronomic practices. For a general account, see Griffiths, J. Gwyn, 'The legacy of Egypt in Judaism', in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 3: The Early Roman Period*, Chapter 31, William Horbury, W.D. Davies, John Sturdy, eds, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 1025-1051. Griffiths cannot be warmly recommended as a source of information on the impact of Egypt on the Jews, as already seen from the rather confused and vague statement of the Temple of Leontopolis under Onias IV. He said: 'During a previous reign, that of Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-145), had probably occurred the erection of the Temple of Onias IV at Leontopolis in the south of the Delta, following the desecration of the Jerusalem Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. This, however, was intended to function, on a small scale, on the lines of the Jerusalem Temple, with the maintenance of sacrifices. It does not stand, thus, in the sequence of synagogues in Egypt, but bears witness to Jewish religious vitality in Lower Egypt' (p. 1030). As seen, the sources are mostly old. Of the about a dozen or so sources from the 1990s that are included in the book, a significant portion represents the author's own production in the field of Egyptology, not updated archaeological sources in the Archaeology of Egypt, as one might have expected. For the inscriptions from Leontopolis, see also, Williams, Margaret, 'The contribution of Jewish inscriptions to the study of Judaism', in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 3: The Early Roman Period*, Chapter 4, William Horbury, W.D. Davies, John Sturdy, eds, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 75-93. For example, the extensive data involving important information also on the Jews was published by R.S. Bagnall and Frier, B.W. in 1995, also at Cambridge. For the latter, see Bagnall, R.S., and Frier, B.W., *The demography of Roman Egypt*, Cambridge Studies in population, economy and society in past time: 23 (Cambridge, 1995).

²⁴ Vermes, Geza, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Rev. ed., St Ives plc: Penguin Books, Clays Ltd, 2004), p. 26.

²⁵ For what seems to be a compelling study on the subject, see Radin, Max, 'Roman knowledge of Jewish literature', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (December, 1917), pp. 149-176. Radin's convincing conclusion

the recent book of collected essays by L. H. Feldman, the proposal of Judaism influencing Pythagoreanism faces a variety of difficulties and provokes opposition.²⁶ In general, it is easy to concur with M. Radin that the Hellenistic Jews eagerly accepted their role as preceptors of Greek philosophy, and that their intermediary role was a direct result of *their* initiative rather than the other way around.²⁷

A watershed in the research of the DDS and Khirbet Qumran may have been the international conference organised by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which was held in Vienna in 2008, and entitled '*The Dead Sea scrolls in context, integrating the Dead Sea scrolls in the study of ancient texts, languages, and cultures*'. The significance of this conference was that for the first time scholars representing Biblical research, the study of Jewish culture, Christian literature, linguists, archaeologist as well as scientists representing natural sciences, were brought together in an open-minded manner.²⁸

Finally, this study concerns itself mainly with the significant religious and philosophical elements, which can be identified as Greek and Pythagorean and belonging to the

(p. 176) is that regardless of the presence of a multitude of Jews in Rome, and various documented contacts between Jews and Romans in Roman and Jewish literature, there is no hard evidence of that Jewish culture or literature – including the Bible, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha – not to speak of profane Jewish literature, would have been known to the Romans to any large extent. That the Romans were aware of the Jews as a nation needs of course no confirmation, but this general knowledge did not penetrate the hard surface. With respect to this conclusion, which seems hard to define existing evidence, there is a strong hesitance in accepting that the situation had for some reason been quite the opposite in the classical and Hellenistic period with the Greeks, as Feldman kind of indicated in his arguments. The so-called 'monotheistic argument' in favour of the knowledge of Jewish literature is neither tenable, as the idea of monotheism is prominent already in the works of Xenophanes (ca. 550-478 BC). For the latter, see Jaeger, Werner, 'The theology of the early Greek philosophers', *The Gifford Lectures 1936* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 51, 'The One God'. There is no evidence that the Greek classical ideas of 'monotheism' would have been the result of knowledge or adaptation of a Biblical connection whatsoever. Besides, as will be discussed later in detail, it is vital to keep in mind that many of the religious sects flourishing in the Orient in the Roman period such as Mithraism and the Orphic religion, which were Gnostic and syncretistic, were actually monotheistic too. Another example is, of course, Pythagoras who often spoke about 'God' or 'the God'. Besides, how would the Greeks in the classical period have been aware of specific Jewish literature such as the Bible, as the oldest written copies of Biblical documents are the DSS? This statement recognises that Iron Age grave finds on jewellery in Jerusalem have documented single fragments of e.g. Psalms, though this is no evidence of that complete hard copies of the Old Testament had been circulating. See also Schuré, Edouard, *Pythagoras and the Delphic mysteries*, tr. F. Rothwell (London: Philip Wellby, 1906), p. 79. For the philosophy of Pythagoreanism, see e.g. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 'Pythagoras', ed. Carl Huffman, first published 2005, revised 2014, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pythagoras/>.

²⁶ Feldman 2006, p. 18. Feldman notes the striking similarities between the two brotherhoods, communal organization, diet, sex, and dress, and the strict rule marked by absolute discipline under a leader, and e.g. the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but makes no conclusions of this, nor tries to trace the influences to a common source. There is very little if any evidence for that the Essenes would be traceable to the Nazirites, contrary to what Feldman suggested. Besides, it would contradict what the Essenes said of their own origin, which is far more important evidence. For the general attitude of the Graeco-Romans towards Judaism, and for example, the relationship between Judaism and Pythagoreanism, see Baltrusch, Ernst, 'Bewunderung, Duldung, Ablehnung: Das Urteil über die Juden in der griechisch-römischen Literatur', *KLIO*, Vol. 80, Issue 2 (1998), pp. 403-421, especially 406-410.

²⁷ Radin 1917, p. 158.

²⁸ However, the template for this approach was already presented in the book by Lönnqvist and Lönnqvist published in 2002.

syncretistic culture of Egypt and Asia Minor during the Roman ascendancy of the Hellenistic period. We will show in this book, which is based on new studies of the archaeological evidence from Egypt, Alexandria and the area of Marea, and Italy, including a thorough scrutiny of the Pythagorean and Orphic documents and texts, that there are not just strong similarities between the Essene doctrine and life and Pythagoreanism, but that the Pythagorean philosophy was the core and base for the non-Biblical literary material that we know by the name of the DSS. Therefore, this book will deal with the early history and religious ideology of the Qumran community from a philosophical point of view, including its organisation into a religious brotherhood, its everyday life, and the origin and composition of the Qumran literary tradition and library. It is quite possible that some of the conclusions or threads of them have been presented earlier in some publications since the amount of studies on the subject is so vast. Nevertheless, it must be strongly emphasised here that everything in this book is the result of our own investigations of the region, which have been going on since the 1990s.



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THE PHILOSOPHER PYTHAGORAS SEATED AND MEASURING GLOBE.
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