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Students of God in the House of Torah: Education in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Introduction

Elias Bickerman called the Hellenistic period “the Age of Education.”¹ The Torah came to prominence in this era as a written book that became the basis of the education of the Jewish people, he argued, in part as a response to Homer, the central text of Greek *paideia*.² The full publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls provides a valuable new vantage point to understand Jewish education during the late Second Temple period. They do not demonstrate that Jews turned to the Torah to oppose Homer. The scrolls provide no indication of a pervasive opposition to Hellenism. The scrolls also do not support the view, attested in rabbinic literature, that by the first century BCE there were institutionalized schools, including at the level of primary education, throughout Israel.³ The scrolls do, however, affirm the centrality of authoritative writings for Jewish pedagogy, as Bickerman stressed, and show that their study and interpretation were not restricted to a priestly elite.

I thank Kyle Roark, Blake Jurgens, and David Skelton for their helpful comments on this essay. I am also grateful to the participants of the Fifth Nangeroni Meeting for their lively discussion and insightful reactions to an earlier version of this paper.

1 Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 176. For a similar perspective, see Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1.77. Consult also Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Period: An Interpretation*, JSJSup 55 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 118–19.

2 Plato famously states that Homer educated Greece (*Rep.* 10.606e).

3 According to y. Ket. 8:11, 32c, Shimon b. Shetaḥ (first century BCE) mandated that children should go to school (cf. y. Meg. 73b). The Babylonian Talmud records a tradition that Joshua ben Gamla, the high priest from 63–64 CE, appointed teachers of Torah throughout Palestine and that children were to start school at age six or seven (b. B. Bat. 21a; cf. m. 'Abot 5:21). This material likely reflects an ideal placed on literacy and Torah study shaped by the spread of synagogues in late antiquity, which required congregants to read Torah. See Catherine Hezser, “Private and Public Education,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, ed. idem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 465–81 (471); Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1.81–83; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 241–51, 271.

In this essay I assess what the scrolls can teach us about Jewish education in the late Second Temple period.⁴ The scrolls provide evidence for pedagogical techniques which were used at the time, such as the memorization and recitation of scriptural texts. The scrolls also indicate the priority of learning and study within the Dead Sea sect, which legitimated various teachings by endowing them with the status of esoteric, revealed knowledge made available through the Teacher of Righteousness. The centrality of learning within the sect became institutionalized through the development of leadership offices that have important teaching functions, such as the Instructor and Overseer. I also examine the question of whether sectarian education included the entire family, and argue that children were taught typically at home by the father (at least according to the Damascus Document), as was the case more broadly in Judaism at the time. The Dead Sea Scrolls indicate not only that the *yahad* had a particularly stringent mode of education. They also suggest that the study of scriptural writings was done under the supervision of authoritative teachers, who developed various ways to make a complex web of texts and traditions coherent and meaningful to their students.

Education and the Torah in the Hellenistic Age

The designation of Mosaic law as “Torah” testifies to its pedagogical significance. The word means “instruction” and is derived from the root ירה (“to teach”).⁵ The Pentateuch repeatedly uses the term *torah* in this way, signifying teachings on specific issues (e.g., Lev 7:1, 11, 37). The book of Deuteronomy repeatedly refers to itself as a *torah* (as in 32:46), marking it as a book of instruction. This biblical book embodies a pedagogical ideal, stressing that through the study of “this *torah*” (i.e., Deuteronomy itself) Israel can become “a wise and discerning people” (4:6). The Hebrew Bible also records the tradition that priests are not simply ritual specialists but also teachers of the “Torah of Moses” (e.g.,

⁴ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 215–39; Bilhah Nitzan, “Education and Wisdom in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Light of Their Background in Antiquity,” in *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, 9–11 January, 2005, ed. Esther G. Chazon, Betsy Halpern-Amaru, and Ruth A. Clements, STDJ 88 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 97–116. See also Laura Quick, “Recent Research on Ancient Israelite Education: A Bibliographic Essay,” *CBR* 13 (2014): 9–33.

⁵ John J. Collins, “Wisdom and Torah,” in *From Musar to Paideia: Pedagogy in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Emma Wasserman, SBLEJL XXX (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, forthcoming).

Ezra 7:6), a designation for some early form of what became the Pentateuch. Nehemiah 8 calls Ezra both a priest and a scribe, depicting him as reading publicly from the Torah, while his learned associates help the hearers understand it (vv. 1–8). Numerous texts from the late Second Temple period continue the trope that the priests have a special prerogative to teach (e.g., Sir 45:17; Jub. 31:15).

The Dead Sea Scrolls, both compositions that reflect practices of the *yahad* and those that do not, stress the priority of understanding the Torah and following it halakhically.⁶ The scrolls, however, also complicate the issue.⁷ They demonstrate that the textual form of the Torah was multivalent in this period. The scrolls preserve a range of pentateuchal texts that do not cohere neatly into distinct known text-types (e.g., the MT, LXX, and the Samaritan Pentateuch), an issue exemplified by the 4QRevised Pentateuch texts. Moreover, the scrolls also indicate that the meaning of the term “Torah” was not restricted to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The Damascus Document, for example, recommends following the “Torah of Moses” by understanding it as explicated in the “book of the divisions of the periods,” very likely a reference to the book of Jubilees (CD 16:1–4). Mosaic authority could be appropriated and utilized by authors of texts like Jubilees and the Temple Scroll, who produced creative representations of material from the Pentateuch.⁸ This literary phenomenon stretches, as it were, the meaning of “Torah” beyond the pentateuchal books themselves. The scrolls also show that numerous other traditional texts were studied and interpreted aside from the Mosaic Torah, as, for example, the pesharim indicate vis-à-vis the prophetic books. The decentralized and pluriform nature of our ancient Jewish evidence for the Torah and other authoritative writings testifies to their pedagogical deployment. The compilers and copyists who produced this material were intellectuals, who had attained mastery over a diverse body of scriptural traditions, which they transmitted and creatively refashioned in myriad ways, as is evident from the many compositions found at Qumran. This underscores an even looser and very important meaning of the term *torah*: “instruction” from a teacher. People studying the Torah and other writ-

⁶ See, for example, CD 4:8; 6:7; 1QS 5:2, 16; 4Q171 1–2 ii 14; 4Q525 2 ii + 3 4; 11Q5 18:12. The educational practices of the sect are discussed below.

⁷ John J. Collins, *Scriptures and Sectarianism: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, WUNT 1.332 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 19–50; Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Developmental Composition of the Bible*, VTSup 169 (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 23.

⁸ Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSup 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

ings, and interpretive traditions surrounding them, did so by receiving instruction (*torah*) about them from an authoritative teacher. The evidence of Ben Sira, a crucial source for understanding the pedagogy of the period, supports this perspective. He does not simply urge one to study Torah, but that one should do so under the tutelage of a learned teacher, as the rabbis would later stress (Sir 6:34–37; cf. m. 'Abot 1:6). The presentation of the Torah of Moses in the book of Ezra also presumes learned men guide people's comprehension of it. As discussed below, the form of education practiced by the Dead Sea sect was likewise dominated by a mode of Torah study guided by authoritative teachers.

The pedagogical importance of Jewish scriptures has been understood as an act of cultural resistance. Carr, echoing the earlier scholarship of Bickerman, attributes the origins of authoritative scripture within Judaism to a "Hellenistic-style anti-Hellenistic curriculum" promoted by the Hasmoneans.⁹ He argues that they encouraged the study of pre-Hellenistic scriptures written in Hebrew in part to oppose Hellenistic *paideia*, which involved the study of Greek texts, above all Homer. While the Maccabean literature attests conflict between Jews and broader Hellenistic cultural norms (2 Macc 4:12–13), it is not clear that one should ascribe the formation of authoritative scriptures to Hasmonean cultural policy. Parts of the Hasmonean period, such as the reign of Jannaeus, attest far more Jewish popular sentiment against the Hasmoneans than Homer or Greek education. The diversity of the textual materials from this period suggests that the study of sacred writings was not implemented according to a fixed curriculum standardized by the state.

The Hellenistic context for the centrality of the study of scriptures in ancient Judaism is nevertheless important. The loss of native political control throughout the ancient Near East in the Hellenistic era led to a renewed interest in older writings that affirm the antiquity and importance of cultures indigenous to the region.¹⁰ The Torah and other writings helped establish a sense of Jewish identity in Palestine and the Diaspora. It is reasonable to think of the status of such writings in this period in Hellenistic rather than anti-Hellenistic terms. Judaism during this era exhibits a strong interest in writtenness, evident in texts such as Jubilees and 1 Enoch, which repeatedly appeal to heavenly books as authoritative sources of knowledge. This is consistent with broader Hellenistic trends, such as the foundation of libraries and an increased importance of written texts

⁹ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 253–72.

¹⁰ I explore this issue further in "A Blessed Rage for Order: Apocalypticism, Esoteric Revelation, and the Cultural Politics of Knowledge in the Hellenistic Age," *HeBAI* (forthcoming).

(cf. 2 Macc 2:14–15).¹¹ The translation of the Pentateuch into Greek in the third century BCE testifies to a broad readership. Both Homer and the Torah attest the prominence of written textuality in the Hellenistic age.

It is not impossible that Homer was studied in Palestine. If one grants the historicity of the gymnasium in Jerusalem recounted in the Maccabean literature (1 Macc 1:14; 2 Macc 4:9), then Homer, the centerpiece of Greek *paideia*, was taught in Jerusalem in the early second century BCE.¹² The gymnasium, however, seems to have been restricted to elite circles (2 Macc 4:12) and it is not clear that it had an extensive cultural impact throughout Palestine. I know of no Palestinian Jewish text from this period that explicitly cites or alludes to Homeric literature.¹³ The use of Greek in Palestine in this period is attested in the Cave 7 documents from Qumran, and acquisition of this language may have involved the study of Homeric texts. If so, pedagogical techniques derived from the study of Homer may have shaped Jewish Torah pedagogy.

The Dead Sea Scrolls do in fact attest pedagogical uses of scripture that are similar to that of Homer in Greek *paideia*. The recitation, copying, and memorization of passages from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were central in Hellenistic ed-

11 Steve Johnstone has argued that the Hellenistic period is characterized by the spread of libraries, which helped instill a widespread belief in the importance of books, triggering what he calls a “biblio-political revolution.” See his “A New History of Libraries and Books in the Hellenistic Period,” *CLAnt* 33 (2014): 347–93. For a similar perspective, see van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 23–26.

12 Robert Doran, “Paideia and the Gymnasium,” in Hogan, Goff, and Wasserman, *From Musar to Paideia*, forthcoming; idem, “The High Cost of a Good Education,” in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, ed. John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling, *CJAS* 13 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 94–115; Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 34–36; Henri I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), 214.

13 The extant writings of Philo the Epic Poet and Theodotus, preserved by Eusebius from the collection of Alexander Polyhistor, are in epic verse and may have been authored in Palestine. Writing in this style of Greek would unequivocally indicate familiarity with Homer. I thank Gregory Sterling for pointing this out during the Naples conference. The likelihood of a Palestinian provenance is more likely for Theodotus than Philo the Epic Poet. The evidence for Diaspora authors engaging Homer is more explicit. Philo cites the *Iliad* (*Il.* 2.204–5 in *Conf.* 170). Aristobulus mentions Homer by name and attributes statements to him that allude to lines from the *Odyssey* (frag. 5.14; cf. *Od.* 10.513; 12.1). A Jewish sibyl ‘predicts’ that Homer (a “false writer”) will learn and speak her words (*Sib. Or.* 3.419–32; cf. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.256). See John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids/Livonia: Eerdmans/Dove, 1998), 54–60; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1.75.

ucation.¹⁴ The abundance of scriptural manuscripts at Qumran (over two hundred) constitutes material evidence for a Torah-centric education which likely involved the recitation and memorization of texts.¹⁵ The pluriform nature of the Qumran evidence for scripture can be explained by appealing not simply to the existence of discrete text-types in circulation at the time, but also by positing that scribes at times copied texts from memory.¹⁶ The evidence from Qumran shows that scriptural texts were not always copied out to produce Torah scrolls or other collections of authoritative writings. 4QGenesis^f (4Q6), for example, is a copy of Gen 48:1–11, written on a single sheet in an unskilled hand; it was never sewn to another sheet on its right side (the left column is not preserved). The fragment was, in all likelihood, not produced as part of a Torah scroll. 4Q6 may be a snapshot of the use of the Torah in Jewish education in the period, the product of someone copying out a passage from memory.¹⁷ Texts of the Hebrew Bible endorse the memorization of material by urging one to write it on the “tablet of the heart” (Prov 3:3; 7:3).¹⁸ The Qumran corpus also contains numerous instances of citations of scriptural material. One doubts that in every such instance a scroll was unwound to ensure flawless reproduction of a text. The acrostic texts from Qumran, particularly in the non-masoretic hymns of the Cave 11 Psalms Scroll, also attest to the memorization of texts, as do the acrostics of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁹

The Dead Sea Scrolls also suggest that the study of Torah and other scriptures had both oral and written dimensions, not unlike the study of Homer, as David Carr and others have stressed.²⁰ Paragraph markers and other indicators of textual units in Qumran texts accord with similar markers that are attested

14 For the role of Homer in ancient Greek education, see Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 21–34, 226–27; Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 220–44. Consult also Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

15 Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 98.

16 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 230. See also Carol Bakhtos, “Orality and Writing,” in Hezser, *The Oxford Handbook of Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, 482–99.

17 Emanuel Tov understands 4Q6 as a “scribal exercise.” See his *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, STDJ 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 14.

18 This is the basis of the title of Carr’s important book on the subject.

19 11QPs^a 21:11–17; 22:1–15; 24:3–17. These texts are, respectively, a version of Sir 51:13–30, the Apostrophe to Zion, and Psalm 155. For acrostics in the Hebrew Bible, see, for example, Proverbs 31 and Psalm 119. See Hanan Eshel and John Strugnell, “Alphabetical Acrostics in Pre-Tannaitic Hebrew,” *CBQ* 62 (2000): 441–58.

20 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 229; Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 75–76.

in later scribal traditions among Jews, Christian, and Samaritans.²¹ Traditions of reading the text aloud may also be evident in the stichometry of poetic texts from Qumran.²² The ways in which scriptural texts were written down may reflect traditional ways they were read aloud, presumably not simply in liturgical contexts but pedagogical ones as well. Also, it seems that the scriptural books most important in Jewish education at the time were Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms. More manuscripts of these scriptural books were found at Qumran than any other composition of the Hebrew Bible. Extensive engagement with these three books is also found in the New Testament. The broad agreement between these two corpora suggests a common Jewish pedagogical milieu, in which these three writings were prominent.²³

The Teacher of Righteousness and His Torah

The practices of the Dead Sea sect attest the centrality of the Torah in Jewish pedagogy during the late Second Temple period. According to the Community Rule, whenever ten or more members were together, one of them had to interpret Torah (1QS 6:6–8). The B text of the Damascus Document describes people who are expelled from the sect as no longer having a share in the “house of Torah” (CD 20:10, 13), a statement that asserts the Torah to be the central locus of sectarian life.

The word “Torah” in CD and other Qumran texts likely denotes, as discussed above, not simply the Pentateuch. In the writings of the Dead Sea sect the pedagogical value of the Torah cannot be separated from the position that its comprehension requires instruction (*torah*) from a teacher. The major authoritative interpreter of Torah in the sectarian writings from Qumran is the Teacher of Righteousness (מורה הצדק). This figure is also described as a priest (4Q171 3 15; 1QpHab 2:8–9), which coheres with the tradition that priests taught the Torah

21 Josef M. Oesch, “Formale und materiale Gliederungshermeneutik der Pentateuch-Handschriften von Qumran,” in *From Qumran to Aleppo: A Discussion with Emanuel Tov about the Textual History of Jewish Scriptures in Honor of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Armin Lange, Matthias Wiegold, and József Zsengellér, FRLANT 230 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 81–122; Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 231.

22 Note, for example, 4Q44 [4QDeut^f] and 4Q365 6b 1–5 [4QReworked Pentateuch^c], which contain, respectively, versions of Deut 32:37–43 and Exod 15:16b–21. The placement of long gaps between phrases often accords with the parallelism of the text, which may suggest that the way some texts were placed on the page reflects how they were recited. See Shem Miller, “The Oral-Written Textuality of Stichographic Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *DSD* (2015): 162–88.

23 Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 102.

of Moses and other writings.²⁴ Since not all the members of the *yahad* are priests, Carr is surely correct when he understands the Dead Sea sect as offering a priestly form of education to non-priests.²⁵ The sect also offers a counterpoint to Ben Sira, in that the sect provides evidence that advanced instruction of Torah took place in this period outside of elite, aristocratic circles.²⁶

The importance of the Teacher of Righteousness as an inspired interpreter of scripture is particularly evident in the Damascus Document. This composition offers a pesher-style interpretation of Num 21:18, which reads “A well which the princes dug, which the nobles of the people delved with the staff (מחוקק)” (CD 6:3). The “well,” while a multivalent symbol, clearly signifies the Mosaic Torah. This explanation is consistent with a tradition, found elsewhere in early Jewish and rabbinic literature, of describing the Torah as a source of nurturing water.²⁷ The nobles are “the returnees of Israel” (שבי ישראל; 6:5). While the exact meaning of this phrase can be debated, it denotes the sectarian community which possesses the knowledge necessary to live in accordance with God’s covenant. This is because of the staff with which they dig the well. The staff in Num 21:18 is identified as the “interpreter of the Torah” (דורש התורה; CD 6:7; cf. 1QpHab 7:4–5). The “diggers” follow the teaching of this figure, who, the text assumes, lived in the past. The “interpreter” is reasonably understood as a reference to the Teacher of Righteousness (cf. 1QS 8:11–12).²⁸ The group carries out and continues the teachings of this interpreter. They dig “with the staves that the staff decreed (במחוקקות אשר חקק המחוקק), to walk in them throughout the whole

²⁴ In continuity with these tropes, elsewhere “the sons of Zadok” are presented not only as custodians of scripture, but also of the revelations possessed by the sect regarding how it should be followed (cf. CD 13:2–5). According to 1QS 5:8–9, people who join the group make an oath to follow “the law of Moses ... with a whole heart and whole soul, in compliance with all that has been revealed of it to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant and interpret his will” (cf. 1. 2). See John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 60–65.

²⁵ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 215.

²⁶ See also the discussion of 4QInstruction below.

²⁷ The image of the well appears in CD 3:16 and 19:34–35. See also, e.g., Sir 24:23–27; 4 Ezra 14:38–41. Consult further Michael Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water: A Biblical Motif and its Ancient Transformations,” in *Sha’arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. idem and Emanuel Tov (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 3–16.

²⁸ The phrase “interpreter of the law” can also denote an eschatological figure who will arrive at the end of days. See CD 7:18; 4Q174 3 10–12 (cf. 4Q177 2 5). The epithet is a title that can be applied to more than one individual. The use of the expression in CD 6:7 may suggest that the estimation of the Teacher of Righteousness within the sect influenced its eschatological expectations. See Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 38.

age of wickedness” (CD 6:9–10). The passage explores nuances of the word *מחוקק*. It can denote not only a staff but also a scepter, symbolizing the authority of a ruling figure who establishes laws that others must follow.²⁹ This is exactly what the staff of CD 6 does. The root *חקק* can likewise denote writing and decrees that have been promulgated (e.g., Isa 30:8; Prov 31:5). The sectarians are to “walk” (*להתהלך*) with the staves which the interpreter has given to them. The exegesis involves not one staff but several. The staves likely signify teachings, halakhic tools provided by the “interpreter of the law” that members of the sect are to use in their daily life. They pertain to a number of halakhic subjects, as the passage goes on to describe (CD 6:14–19; cf. 3:14–16).

The perspective that the sectarian community is beholden to halakhic teachings that are grounded in scriptural interpretation and given legitimacy through association with an idealized teacher from the past, is also evident from the B text of the Damascus Document. CD 20:13–15 reads: “And from the day of the gathering in of the unique teacher (*יורה היחיד*), until the end of all the men of war who turned back with the man of lies, there shall be about forty years” (cf. l. 1).³⁰ The “unique teacher” is likely the Teacher of Righteousness.³¹ Although he is deceased, his followers nevertheless hear and heed his voice. The members of the sect are described as “all those who remain steadfast in these regulations, [co]ming and going in accordance with the law and listen to the teacher’s voice” (20:27). Lines 32–33 likewise envision the ideal community as comprised of members who hear “the voice of the Teacher of Righteousness and do not reject the just regulations when they hear them.” The passage also describes members of the sect as being “taught by God” (*למודי אל*), as if they were instructed not by a human but by God himself, highlighting the high value the sect placed on the Teacher (CD 20:4). The B text of the Damascus Document describes the sect as devoted to continuing the teachings and ideals of its beloved and departed teacher.

Pedagogical Leadership

The Qumran rulebooks describe several leadership positions held by people within the sect. Despite the differences among these offices, they have a common

²⁹ Deut 33:21; Isa 33:22; Gen 49:10; Judg 5:14; Prov 8:15.

³⁰ Notice the pun in the epithet for this teacher with *yahad*. The passage asserts that there will be some sort of major eschatological event forty years after the death of the Teacher.

³¹ This is suggested by CD 20:32, which associates the teachings of “the men of the Unique (Teacher)” (*אנשי היחיד*) with the Teacher of Righteousness.

interest in pedagogy. The key ones are the *maškil* (“Instructor”) and the *mebaqqer* (“Overseer”). The Overseer (מבקר) is important according to the Damascus Document. Decisions made by sectarians regarding marriage and finances must be approved by the Overseer; for example, no one can be introduced to the group without his permission (CD 13:4–6; cf. 14:13). The Overseer is also involved in people’s admission into the group and their regular evaluation (13:11; 15:14). The office moreover has an important pedagogical function: “He shall instruct the many in the deeds of God and shall teach them his mighty marvels” (13:7–8; cf. 15:14–15). It is not stated that this office must be held by a priest but, given the sect’s emphasis on priestly leadership, this is a reasonable assumption.³²

In the Community Rule the major pedagogical office is not the Overseer but the Instructor (משכיל). The Treatise of the Two Spirits, which gives sectarians a comprehensive teaching about the dualistic and cosmological forces that determine human conduct, is presented as a lesson conveyed by this functionary: “The Instructor (משכיל) should instruct and teach all the sons of light about the nature of all the sons of man” (1QS 3:13). 1QS 9:12–19 stipulates the pedagogical responsibilities of the Instructor: “He should lead them with knowledge and in this way teach them the mysteries of wonder and of truth in the midst of the men of the community (אנשי היחד), so that they walk perfectly, one with another, in all that has been revealed to them” (ll. 18–19). He also has a role in the annual evaluation of sectarians and is responsible for giving reproach and judging group members (1QS 9:15–18).

The term משכיל denotes a sectarian office in numerous other instances elsewhere in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 4Q298, entitled 4QWords of the Maškil to all Sons of Dawn, this term signifies, not unlike 1QS 9, a teacher-figure who instills a commitment to righteousness in members of the sect. This text, except for its title, is written in a cryptic form of Hebrew and it sounds like an admonition that was heard. This portion begins: “List[en to me, a]ll men of heart” (ll. 1–2). The composition may preserve teachings that individuals holding the office of Instructor were to memorize and recite to members of the group as part of their instruction.

32 Robert A. Kugler, “Priests,” in *EDSS*, 2.688–93 (689).

Qumran Sapiential and Didactic Literature

The reference to 4Q298 highlights that the Dead Sea Scrolls contain numerous texts that are generally identified as wisdom literature.³³ Texts that are so identified include not only this composition but also 4QInstruction (1Q26, 4Q415–418, 423), the Book of Mysteries (4Q299–301), 4Q184, 4Q185, 4Q420–421, and 4Q525. “Wisdom” in this context signifies an etic category of genre rather than a precise literary *Gattung* that authors consciously deployed in antiquity. Scholarly definitions of the genre and their list of Qumran texts that should be so categorized vary.³⁴ But in general the Qumran wisdom texts provide teachings on various topics, seek to instill a desire for learning, and encourage that one heed a teacher. It should also be stressed that didactic themes, such as stressing the importance of study, are found throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls, and are not restricted to the sapiential texts.³⁵

The wisdom texts 4QBeatitudes (4Q525) and 4QInstruction are particularly relevant to the topic of education.³⁶ 4QBeatitudes begins with a pedagogical prologue, not unlike Proverbs, that stresses the value of “wisdom and instruction” (חוכמה ומִסְרָה; 4Q525 1 2). The composition encourages students to learn by having them imagine that by the time they die they will have become great teachers, to be mourned by their students who will carry on their teachings (4Q525 14 ii 14–15). The lengthiest and most important Qumran wisdom text is 4QInstruction.³⁷ It is explicitly pedagogical. It is written to a *mebin* or “understanding one.” He is to bring his shoulder under all instruction (4Q416 2 iii 13) and learn from all his teachers (4Q418 81 17). Many of the lessons of 4QInstruction pertain to topics of daily life, such as marriage and finances, which is also reminiscent of Proverbs.

The way one acquires wisdom according to 4QInstruction is, however, quite different from Proverbs. He is repeatedly urged to study the *raz nihyeh* (רַז נִהְיֶה),

³³ Matthew J. Goff, *Discerning Wisdom: The Sapiential Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, VTSup 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

³⁴ Matthew J. Goff, “Qumran Wisdom Literature and the Problem of Genre,” *DSD* 17 (2010): 286–306; Jean-Sébastien Rey, Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, and Hindy Najman, eds., *Rethinking the Boundaries of Sapiential Traditions in Ancient Judaism* (forthcoming).

³⁵ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 234–36.

³⁶ Matthew J. Goff, *4QInstruction*, WLAW 2 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

³⁷ John Strugnell, and Daniel J. Harrington, *Qumran Cave 4.XXIV: Sapiential Texts, Part 2. 4QInstruction (Mūsār Lē Mēbīn): 4Q415 ff. With a re-edition of 1Q26, DJD 34* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999). See also Matthew J. Goff, “Recent Trends in the Study of Early Jewish Wisdom Literature: The Contribution of 4QInstruction and Other Qumran Texts,” *CBR* 7 (2009): 376–416.

which is often translated the “mystery that is to be” (e.g., 4Q417 1 i 6–8). In apocalyptic texts the term *raz* denotes revelation disclosed to visionaries (Dan 2:27–30; 1 En. 106:19 [4QEn^c 5 ii 26–27]). In 4QInstruction the “mystery” has likewise been revealed to the *mebin* (4Q416 2 iii 16–17). The focus of the text is not on the moment in which revelation is disclosed. Rather it is on the study of revealed knowledge. God created the world by means of the mystery that is to be, according to 4Q417 i 8–9. Three times the expression is associated with a tripartite division of time (that which was, that which is, and that which will be; ll. 3–4 [2x]; 4Q418 123 ii 3–4).³⁸ The mystery that is to be denotes a comprehensive divine plan that orchestrates history and creation, presented to the addressee as a revealed truth. This helps explain why the *mebin* can learn so much from this mystery. 4QInstruction provides very little indication, unfortunately, with regard to how one should study the *raz nihyeh*.

4QInstruction is generally regarded as written originally to a sect that predates the *yahad*. The original addressees, the document teaches, have elect status. The *mebinim* are taught that they have a unique affinity with the angels (4Q418 81 4–5). The elect status of the addressee is signified by the incredible claim that he has been entrusted with tending the garden of Eden (4Q423 1). The disclosure of the mystery that is to be also indicates their special status before God. Although the *mebin* possesses such exceptional knowledge, with regard to social class he is quite ordinary. The text repeatedly states that he is poor (e.g., 4Q416 2 ii 20; 4Q416 2 iii 2). The *mebin* is urged to be honest when borrowing money from creditors, even though they may have him flogged (4Q417 2 i 24–26). The social setting of 4QInstruction is starkly opposed to that of Ben Sira, a contemporary wisdom text. This sage works with upper class students, giving them the skills in literacy and moral instruction needed for employment in a range of administrative and courtly professions. He praises the leisure of the scribe as necessary for the acquisition of wisdom, while scoffing that anyone who pushes a plow, while displaying practical skills, could never attain truly valuable knowledge (Sir 38:24–34). Much of the intended audience of 4QInstruction, by contrast, were farmers (4Q418 103 ii 3–4; 4Q423 5 5–6). This Qumran text gives no indication whatsoever that its stress on learning is driven by professional concerns, such as training students to become scribes or court bureaucrats. Rather the economic goal of 4QInstruction is basic survival, providing advice about how one can meet essential material needs, such as getting enough food, which at times can be difficult (e.g., 4Q417 2 i 17–22). The document establishes that an advanced level of education, involving sophisticat-

³⁸ Goff, *4QInstruction*, 143–47.

ed interpretation of scriptural texts combined with appeals to esoteric claims of revelation, took place outside of elite circles.³⁹ 4QInstruction is, however, not necessarily evidence for widespread literacy—it was written to a community that distinguished itself from the rest of society. The work nevertheless demonstrates that advanced forms of instruction could not only exist but also thrive among the poor. 4QInstruction problematizes the common view that wisdom literature was written for and promulgated by scribes who work in an elite context, such as the temple or the royal court. Also, since numerous copies of 4QInstruction were found in the Qumran caves (at least six), it is reasonable to imagine that members of *yahad* studied the document. In particular, given 4QInstruction's focus on marriage and financial affairs, one can posit that the text circulated among the “camps” described in the Damascus Document.

The Education of Children within the Dead Sea Sect

A major issue with regard to education in the Dead Sea movement is whether its rigorous directives guiding daily practice and the study of scriptures entail a process that involved only men. The Rule of the Congregation (1QSa) construes education within the movement as a process that is not restricted to men, but rather as one that involves the entire family: husband, wife, and children—“they shall assemble all those who come, including children (יֶטֶס) and women, and they shall read into [their] ea[rs a]ll the precepts of the covenant and shall instruct them in all their regulations, so that they do not stray in [the]ir e[rrors]” (1:3–5). This passage has been interpreted as describing the participation of one's whole family in the sect's annual covenant ceremony (cf. 1QS 1:18–3:12; 4Q266 [4QDa] 11 17–18).⁴⁰ The text understands the mode of instruction as primarily oral, relying upon the recitation of written texts. Children are also, according to 1QSa, taught “the book of Hagu” (סֵפֶר הַהֲגוּ): “From [his] yo [uth, they shall edu]cate him in the book of Hagu [or book of Meditation], and according to his age, instruct him in the precept[s of] the covenant, and he

³⁹ This conclusion is similar to that of William Schniedewind with regard to education in ancient Israel. See his *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and his paper in the present volume.

⁴⁰ Cecilia Wassén, “On the Education of Children in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *SR* 41 (2012): 350–63 (352); Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, SBLMS 38 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 13, 16.

will [receive] his [ins]truction in their regulations” (ll. 6–8). The nature of this Hagu book is enigmatic, but the passage presumes it is an actual document. The Damascus Document stipulates that priests are to be well-versed in this composition (10:6; 13:2; 14:7–8). The book of Hagu may be a cryptic reference to some sort of authoritative scriptures, perhaps the Torah, if not a major sectarian composition such as the Community Rule.⁴¹ Josephus claims that all Jewish children were taught to read and knew the Torah well (*Ag. Ap.* 2.204; cf. 2.178).⁴² While such a claim should be likely understood not as a historical fact but as attesting the Jewish ideal enshrined in the Pentateuch itself of educating children (e.g., Exod 12:26), some children were at the time taught the Jewish scriptures, most likely within the domain of family and the home. The format of education with regard to children has been understood as primarily oral.⁴³ The education of children and women in 1QSa is consistent with this perspective, since it envisages that they learn by listening to the recitation of regulations. The emphasis on the verb *הגה* regarding the book of Hagu may denote the repetition and memorization of scriptural passages. The Rule of the Congregation also states that the education of youth continues until the children reach adulthood. 1QSa 1:8–9 states that one “shall be enumerated among the children (*טף*) for ten years” and then at the age of twenty he shall join the “holy community.” This reference to ten years is ambiguous but may denote the years ten through twenty, during which period youth in families belonging to the sect undergo education.⁴⁴

The Rule of the Congregation is for “the end of days” (*אחרית הימים*; 1:1). The meaning of this phrase in the Dead Sea Scrolls is debated but it is generally acknowledged that it refers to a future time when used with regard to messianic expectation; this appears to be the case in 1QSa.⁴⁵ This problematizes the extent to which the composition’s guidelines regarding education were actually carried out. The document’s inclusionary stance with regard to the education of women and children may represent an ideal more than a historical reality.

⁴¹ The reliance on the verb *הגה*, which can mean “to mediate” and “to mutter,” denotes the study of the authoritative writings elsewhere in the Dead Sea Scrolls and has a similar meaning in the Hebrew Bible (4Q525 2 ii + 3 6; Ps 1:2; Josh 1:8).

⁴² Josephus also states that Essenes received training in the holy books when they were young (*J.W.* 2.159; cf. *Ant.* 4.211; *T. Lev.* 13:2).

⁴³ Wassén, “On the Education of Children,” 354. Catherine Hezser has estimated the literacy rate of Roman period Palestine to be 10–15% of the population. See her *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*, TSAJ 81 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 496.

⁴⁴ Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community*, 16.

⁴⁵ 1QSa 2:14–22; CD 6:11; 4Q174 1 11. See Annette Steudel, “אחרית הימים in the Texts from Qumran,” *RevQ* 16 (1994): 225–47.

The children of sectarians did, however, go through some type of education, even if one should not regard the Rule of the Congregation as accurately describing this process. A Cave 4 version of CD 13:17–18 stipulates that the Overseer shall “guide [one who divorces; מגרש]” and “instruct their sons ... and their children (טפם) [in a spi]rit of hu[mil]lity and lov[ing-kindness]” (4Q266 [4QD^a] 9 iii 5–7).⁴⁶ The instruction by the Overseer of children whose father is divorced suggests it is the exception rather than the rule, at least in the portrait of sectarian life provided by the Damascus Document, and that the Overseer did not teach children whose parents did not divorce. A traditional locus of education in ancient Israel is the family.⁴⁷ This was likely the case regarding members of the Dead Sea sect as well, with regard to women and children. The Overseer, who dominated the daily life of sectarians within the “camps,” likely usurped the traditional authority of the father with regard to the education of his children in the case of divorce.⁴⁸

The Dead Sea Scrolls as Material Evidence of Advanced Education

The possibility that children received education within the Dead Sea sect raises an important issue. One of the major sources of evidence for education in antiquity is rudimentary level, ‘school-boy’ exercises. Such work, often completed by young males, provides a snapshot into the early stages of the acquisition of basic written literacy. Such material is often easy to identify, since it typically includes

46 It is clearer in the 4QD text than the Cairo Genizah version of the passage that the Overseer gives instruction not only to the children of a divorced male but also the man himself. CD 13:17 lacks the word יבן after יבן found in 4Q266 9 iii 5. There is some ambiguity in the passage with regard to whom the Overseer teaches. In CD 13:17 the singular noun (“the one who divorces”) is followed by nouns that have plural suffixes—“their” sons and “their” children. This may mean that the passage understands the singular מגרש as denoting a category, signifying that divorced men within the sect would have “their” children instructed by the Overseer. The singular noun does not survive in the version of the text in 4Q266 9 iii, but the plural suffixes affixed to “sons” and “children” do. See Joseph M. Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4.XIII: The Damascus Document (4Q266–273)*, DJD 18 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 71.

47 James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 86.

48 Philo (*Hypoth.* 7.14) and 4 Macc 18:10–16 depict the education of children within the family as the father teaching Torah stories to his children (cf. Sir 7:23; m. Pesah. 10:4). The beginning of the instruction of Ahiqar is introduced as the words of a wise scribe to his son (Ahiqar 1.1). See further Nitzan, “Education and Wisdom,” 100; Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects*, 116.

lists of repeated words and phrases, and, quite often, mistakes. There is ample evidence for writing exercises of this sort in the ancient Near East.⁴⁹ There is not a single unambiguous example of analogous material among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scrolls as physical artefacts attest to advanced training in literacy. The scribal norms they attest with regard to paleography that vary from generation to generation (late Herodian, early Herodian, etc.) are a product of the standardization of writing, indicating formalized training in this craft.⁵⁰ The extensive evidence from Qumran for the copying of documents over successive generations implies a transmission of technical knowledge regarding writing.

Only a handful of Qumran texts have been interpreted as produced by people learning to write. The evidence for reading these texts in this way is not overwhelming. Three Qumran texts have been classified as writing exercises. They are entitled “Exercitium Calami A-C.” They are, respectively, 4Q234, 4Q360, and 4Q341.⁵¹ 4Q234 is a small fragment on parchment in which several words, in an early Herodian hand, are written in three different directions. The different directions of the writing suggest that the text is a fragment of some sort of writing exercise. The words, such as *ישחק*, *ויאמר* and *גשה* (“approach”), accord with Gen 27:19–21. These admittedly common terms may suggest that someone copied them from a Torah passage, not as part of the production of a Genesis or Torah manuscript but as writing practice. This is not necessarily evidence, however, of someone learning how to write. The scribe may have simply been testing the functionality of his stylus. 4Q360 has a small number of letters, written horizontally and vertically, suggesting that this work is also some sort of practice text.

⁴⁹ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 20–30. See Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, American Studies in Papyrology 36 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Niek Veldhuis, “Levels of Literacy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, ed. Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 68–89.

⁵⁰ Writing as a skill in which some individuals received advanced training is particularly evident in letters from Naḥal Ḥever and Wadi Murabbaʿat. The writing of the body of the letter is at times much more consistent and smooth than that of the signatures. The signatories obviously had some written competency but not the same training as whoever copied out the letters. See, for example, Mur 42 (Murp) Letter from Beit-Mashiko to Yeshua b. Galgula) or XḤev/Se 7 (XḤev/Se) Deed of Sale A ar). Consult Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 13. Note also Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 97–118. She (p. 97) cites a relevant quote from John Chrysostom: “Teachers write letters of great beauty for the children in order that they imitate them, even if at an inferior level” (MPG 59.385.56).

⁵¹ These texts are available in Stephen J. Pfann et al., *Qumran Cave 4.XXVI: Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea, Part 1*, DJD 36 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000). See (going from A to C) pp. 185–86, 297, and 291–93; and plates 9, 20, and 18. Exercitia Calami A and B are edited by Ada Yardeni and Exercitium Calami C by Joseph Naveh.

The only legible word is the name Menahem, which is written three times. 4Q360 may be the only Qumran text that contains the name of its scribe!

4Q341, which for the most part has horizontal text, consists of a list of several names and apparently meaningless words. The spaces between words are at times virtually non-existent. Its *editio princeps* was published by John Allegro in 1979, who understood the text as an intentionally obscure medical document, titling it 4QTherapeia.⁵² Joseph Naveh critiqued this perspective, arguing that the text is a writing exercise by a skilled scribe who copied out letters to test out his stylus and accustom his hand to it.⁵³ The writing is quite clear, suggesting it was not written by someone learning to write. 4Q341 begins with a series of letters (לבעפסאצגדרה) that do not constitute a word. The last portion of this sequence follows alphabetical order (from *aleph* to *waw*, although a *sade* is where one would expect a *bet*). Lines 4–5 has a list of names that begin with the letter *mem*. Lines 6–7 contain a list of names which are in alphabetical order, from *bet* to *zayin*. This is similar to an abecedary ostrakon believed to have been found at Heriodion which was published by Puech.⁵⁴ This text begins with the alphabet and then proceeds to a sequence of personal names that are also in alphabetical order. Fragments of the same list of alphabetic names were found in two ostraca from Masada (#608 and 609), suggesting that the names comprise some sort of fixed formula, most likely a mnemonic to learn the alphabet.⁵⁵ 4Q341 appears to be a variation of this theme. It contains the name נני in line 7 (cf. the name נניה in Ezra 10:36); this name also appears in the two Masada alphabetical ostraca and the one published by Puech. The latter also has the name דליה and 4Q341 7 attests the similar name דלי. 4Q341, according to Naveh, is not that of a beginner but the product of a scribe practicing with his stylus, presumably by recalling an established alphabetical sequence of names. This little known Qumran text may provide evidence of a mnemonic used at the time to learn the alphabet, even if the fragment is not necessarily the product of a beginner scribe.

There may be some other Qumran texts that were produced by people learning to write. There is a relatively crudely written abecedary on an ostrakon from

⁵² John Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth* (London: Westbridge Books, 1979), 235–40.

⁵³ Joseph Naveh, “A Medical Document or a Writing Exercise? The So-Called 4QTherapeia,” *IEJ* 36 (1986): 52–55.

⁵⁴ Émile Puech, “Abécédaire et liste alphabétique de noms hébreux du début du II^e s. A.D.,” *RB* 87 (1980): 118–26.

⁵⁵ Yigael Yadin and Joseph Naveh, “The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions,” in *Masada: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965. Final Reports*, 6 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989), 1.61–62.

Khirbet Qumran (KhQOstracon 3).⁵⁶ There are also some Qumran texts that have been understood as written by apprentice scribes who had not fully mastered their craft.⁵⁷ This is certainly possible and one can understand the Dead Sea Scrolls as attesting various levels of expertise among the individuals who produced them. Some of these texts, however, may have simply been by scribes who were not that good rather than individuals in the early stages of their scribal training.

Even if one interprets the above material as evidence of basic training in writing, a position which is by no means clear, it constitutes scant evidence for such rudimentary learning in relation to the sheer amount of the Dead Sea Scrolls as a whole. The writings found at Masada and Murabba'at, both sizable but much smaller corpora when compared with that of Qumran, include more abecedaries than the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁵⁸ There are also numerous ostraca from Masada on which letters were repeatedly copied, along with other scribbles.⁵⁹ Such rudimentary writing exercises are not present among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Qumran scrolls attest at best minimal evidence of basic, low level education in written literacy. Neither the content nor material evidence of the Qumran scrolls suggest that the sect needed to teach its members how to write.⁶⁰ This

⁵⁶ This text is available in *DJD* 36, published by Esther Eshel. See pp. 509–12 (pl. 34). It is striking that one of the few discoveries of texts from the site of Khirbet Qumran itself (KhQO 3) is rather rudimentary, a striking contrast to the Dead Sea Scrolls themselves.

⁵⁷ Skehan, for example, argued that a manuscript of Psalm 89 (4QPs^a; 4Q98 g; this manuscript was once classified as 4Q236), which has numerous inconsistencies in its orthography, was written as a practice exercise from memory by a scribe who in the process made several mistakes. See also the discussion of 4QGen^f above. Consult Patrick W. Skehan, "Gleanings from Psalm Texts from Qumrân," in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. André Caquot and Mathias Delcor, AOAT 212 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 1981), 439–52 (439–45); Eugene Ulrich et al., *Qumran Cave 4.XI: Psalms to Chronicles*, *DJD* 16 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 163–67 (pl. 20); Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 14.

⁵⁸ In addition to the abecedarial list texts #608 and #609 from Masada (discussed above), #606 is an abecedarial and this also appears to be the case with regard to #607. Five abecedaries were found in Murabba'at, two on leather (Mur 10B, 11) and three on potsherds (Mur 73, 78–80), all of which were published in *DJD* 2. See Yadin and Naveh, *Masada*, 1.61–62; Pierre Benoit, Józef T. Milik, and Roland de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabba'at*, 2 vols., *DJD* 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 1.91–92, 175, 178–79.

⁵⁹ See texts #616–41, available in Yadin and Naveh, *Masada*, 1.61–64 (plates 51–53).

⁶⁰ It is also significant that ostraca, a common medium for the writing exercises and abecedaries from Masada and Murabba'at that was widely available and easy to procure, is not a medium on which the Dead Sea Scrolls were composed. The majority of these writings are on leather skin.

of course may have happened, but the Qumran scrolls provide no evidence that rudimentary education in writing was in any way regulated or organized.

Conclusion

The Dead Sea Scrolls confirm the centrality of the Torah for Jewish pedagogy during the late Second Temple period, in several senses of the term. They attest abundant evidence that study of the Pentateuch (Torah of Moses) was critical at the time. The scrolls also suggest the importance of studying Torah in a broader sense, denoting a range of authoritative texts and not only the Pentateuch. Learned individuals mastered a body of traditions and produced new works that reformulate this material in various and creative ways. This indicates another way that the scrolls show the importance of *torah*—in the sense of denoting instruction. The compilers and scribes of the Dead Sea Scrolls all likely studied authoritative scriptures under the guidance of a teacher. The interpretation of scripture and the halakhic practices of the Dead Sea sect were legitimized through attribution to an idealized teacher, whom the scrolls refer to as the Teacher of Righteousness. The stringent mode of education formalized within the *yahad* attests one manifestation of this broader cultural process. The Qumran scrolls show that in this period sacred writings were highly disputed. All Jews at the time regarded them as important but not how they should be interpreted. This helps explain the formation of sects in this period, whose founders and leaders can be understood as teachers who espoused a particular type of education (cf. CD 1:13–21). Key for understanding the diverse and rich contribution the Dead Sea Scrolls make to our comprehension of the pedagogy of ancient Judaism during the late Second Temple period is not simply their affirmation of the importance of studying authoritative writings in the period but also that to do so required heeding a good teacher.

