Introduction

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This volume grew out of an international symposium hosted by the University of Copenhagen in August 2017, and held at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters. While planning the symposium, one of our main goals was to create a space for an open and creative conversation about the Aramaic texts found in the caves at and near Qumran. We put together this open access volume for exactly the same reason. Scholars are increasingly turning their attention to the Aramaic texts from Qumran. Not only are these texts interesting because of their particular literary content and theological concerns, which differ markedly from the Hebrew texts found at Qumran. They also throw new light on the history of the Aramaic language and the linguistic situation in Palestine in the late Second Temple period. Their highly creative authors reworked biblical traditions, reshaping them to address contemporary concerns. When engaging the Aramaic Qumran texts, one encounters multiple genres and voices, as well as a distinct set of perspectives on the religious authorities of the past. We entitled both the symposium and this volume “Vision, Narrative, and Wisdom in the Aramaic Texts from Qumran” to indicate this wide range.

The articles in this volume fall into three distinct groups, each of which illuminates important literary, contextual, and religious features of the Aramaic texts from Qumran. The articles in the first group all explore *memory and expectation*; religious past and eschatological future—as well as the links between these wider horizons of religiously organized time and the present of the texts’ authors and their communities. Each of the four articles in this group makes use of creative methodological and contextual approaches to bring the pasts, presents, and futures imagined in the Aramaic Qumran texts into sharper focus.

Andrew B. Perrin uses insights from memory studies to engage the Pseudo-Danielic manuscripts from Qumran (4Q243–245). He is intrigued by the references in these texts to both life in the exilic diaspora and the antediluvian and ancestral ages. His article explores how the Pseudo-Danielic texts organize and present memories of Israel’s past for a contemporary community. This is achieved, he argues, by positioning Daniel against the backdrop of foundational, ancestral figures, through the use of genealogies and through a creative merging of memories of priestly origins with more recent memories of the priesthood during the Second Temple period.

Mika S. Pajunen is interested in the transmission of patriarchal voices in the Aramaic Qumran texts. He challenges the reliance exclusively on classic theories regarding literary transmission. How, for example, would our study of the transmission of traditions in Second Temple Judaism be affected if we properly factor in oral transmission as well? Exploring the modes of transmission described in the Aramaic Qumran texts, Pajunen goes looking for typical ways in which traditions were transmitted within the social, religious, and historical settings of these texts' authors. He looks to textual descriptions to tease out the concerns about transmission of tradition that the actual authors of these texts may have had. This approach allows Pajunen to highlight technical processes of transmission as well as literary strategies of transmission, interpretation, and embellishment.

Hugo Antonissen's article shines a spotlight on the Aramaic Qumran text *New Jerusalem*. This text is very fragmentarily preserved (in six or seven manuscripts), making it necessary to bring it into dialogue with other sources, including material culture, in order to fill out its many gaps. Antonissen aims to achieve just that in relation to the specific subject of the cult in *New Jerusalem*. He uses Greco-Roman banquet culture from circa 300–150 BCE as a lens with which to read the text, arguing that *New Jerusalem* describes a set-up in which cultic acts are performed not only by temple professionals, but also by Jewish pilgrims participating in pious banquets. Offering a comparison with the *Largest Peristylum*, a banquet house in Alexandria, Antonissen suggests that a very similar typological set-up is intended in the Aramaic *New Jerusalem* text.

Torleif Elgvin hones in on 4Q541, which depicts an end-time priest. Looking for diachronic and intertextual lines of development, Elgvin explores both exilic and post-exilic texts that depict future leaders. How do these texts develop and recast the traditions on which they build? Elgvin demonstrates that 4Q541 plays on figures from earlier texts when depicting its end-time priest, including the suffering servant from Isaiah 53 and the priestly leader from Ezekiel 40–48. Dialoguing with Jeremiah 30 and Zechariah 13, the author of 4Q541 innovates, envisioning a cosmic renewal rather than a restoration of the covenant for Israel.

The second group of articles focuses on *Visions of Amram*: a group of five manuscripts (4Q543–547) that describe the visions and testament of the biblical figure of Amram, father of Moses. Emphasizing the theological priorities, literary structures, and linguistic features of *Visions of Amram*, all four articles in this group offer new ways into this fascinating composition.

Liora Goldman takes her starting point in a unique feature of *Visions of Amram*: these texts are written in Aramaic and concerned with patriarchal figures, but they also contain themes related to Moses and the exodus. As such,

they straddle the dividing lines proposed by Devorah Dimant between the rewritten Bible texts that are written in Aramaic and those written in Hebrew. Goldman aims to identify the main theme of *Visions of Amram*: does this composition prioritize the establishment of the Levitical priesthood or the exodus narrative? She shows that the composition depicts Aaron as Moses' equal, and that in *Visions of Amram*, Moses gets his leading role by being the one who anoints Aaron and his sons for the eternal priesthood. Offering a close reading of the extant text material, Goldman concludes that the interpretation of the patriarchal past in the *Visions of Amram* subordinates the exodus story to the testament of the priestly line.

Jesper Høgenhaven explores the function of geography in *Visions of Amram*: part of Amram's farewell address to his children is a description of a journey he undertook from Egypt to Canaan and—though this return is not described in the preserved parts of the narrative—back to Egypt again. Høgenhaven ties together the time-line of the narrative in *Visions of Amram* with its geography to describe the importance of each. Further, he shows that the geographical names in the *Visions of Amram* are symbolic, enabling the author of this composition to tie his story to the exodus narrative. The familiar, geographical setting evoked by the author of *Visions of Amram* serves to link Amram closely to the patriarchs of the exodus story, boosting the authority of his vision. Finally, Høgenhaven addresses the intriguing contrast between the well-known geographical framework of Egypt, wilderness, and Canaan and the transcendent spirituality of Amram's vision.

Søren Holst turns to the mammoth task of piecing together the fragments of 4Q543–547—4Q*Visions of Amram*. While two longer sequences of text can be reconstructed with a high degree of certainty due to overlaps between surviving manuscripts, much remains fragmentary or entirely missing. Holst looks anew at the state of the textual fragments of *Visions of Amram*: do the overlaps between the surviving manuscripts tell us more than we have assumed? If we assume that the five manuscripts of *Visions of Amram* are copies of the same text, might we then be able to identify not only overlaps between the different manuscripts, but also deduce the extent of missing material? Can a base text of *Visions of Amram* that fits all surviving manuscripts be constructed?

Finally, Kasper Siegismund examines a supposedly ambiguous form of the verb NTN in a passage in the Amram texts (4Q543) which gives rise to divergent understandings of the text: Does Amram refer to a past event in which God “gave” (past tense) wisdom to Moses, or is Amram, speaking in the plural as a representative of the ancestral line, stating (in the future tense) that “we will give” wisdom, thus underlining his important role vis-à-vis Moses? Siegismund tests Robert Duke's claim that NTN is widely used in the suffix conjugation,

noting that a significant number of the attested suffix conjugation forms of NTN occur in one single Aramaic document. In the Aramaic documents from Qumran specifically, Siegismund finds no instances of NTN in the suffix conjugation. If the verbs in lines 1 and 2 in 4Q543 are indeed in the suffix conjugation, they would represent the only example in the corpus of this usage of NTN.

The articles in the final group in the volume are interested in *context and reception*—the larger lines that connect the Aramaic Qumran texts as a corpus, as well as the ways in which these compositions may resonate with texts outside of this corpus. Misuse and manipulation come into play too as one article discusses the thorny issue of provenance.

Daniel A. Machiela approaches the Aramaic texts from Qumran as a corpus. He offers a hypothetical socio-historical scenario for this corpus of texts. Working with the basic assumption that the Aramaic Qumran texts are non-sectarian, Machiela argues that a small group of elite priests, living in Judah from the fourth to the mid-second century BCE authored the bulk of the Aramaic Qumran texts. The cultural environment in which they lived was internationally oriented and their Judean constituency was surrounded by other peoples. In addition, Judean diasporas were spreading. Maintaining their national and religious identity was an important priority to this group of priests, and one way in which they took action was by creating a new kind of religious literature: texts that built on ancestral stories, but reshaped them to address their contemporary concerns.

George J. Brooke argues that some of the special material in Luke's Gospel resonates with material from the Aramaic texts associated with Qumran. Brooke proposes that Luke had access, directly or indirectly, to Aramaic traditions and that he made use of them during his own retelling of the gospel story. He compares a number of passages, demonstrating their similarities. For example, Luke 1:32–35 and 4Q246 use the same pair of titles, as well as the phrase “he will be great,” and the form of Luke's genealogy appears to be based on Aramaic traditions preserved in the Books of Enoch. Brooke suggests that Luke uses the Aramaic traditions available to him to place his particular presentation of Jesus as Son of God, Son of the Most High into a longer tradition that supports his narrative emphasis.

Melissa Sawayd Bach focuses on another text that is often brought into dialogue with the New Testament, namely 4QApocryphon Daniel ar (4Q246), because of the mention in this text of a “Son of God.” Bach, however, turns to another designation in the text, namely the “People of God.” She argues in favour of a collective interpretation of this figure, innovating by interpreting the role of the “People of God” separately from the “Son of God.” Bach argues that when the text is read as a narrative in its own right, the collective

interpretation of the figure of the “People of God” works well. Within the narrative arc of the text, the uprising of the “People of God” ends a time of tribulation and ushers in a time of peace. Regardless of how one chooses to understand the “Son of God” figure, the “People of God” plays a decisive role in the eschatological scene in 4Q246.

Finally, Årstein Justnes looks at eight unprovenanced fragments from Aramaic texts, all of which he considers modern forgeries. He both presents a chronology for these fragments, and analyzes the available information about their origins. Justnes shows that none of the lists of previous owners and none of the stories about the provenance of the fragments are trustworthy. His excavation of the history of forged Qumran texts is fascinating and encourages us to remember that Dead Sea Scrolls scholars allowed unprovenanced fragments into their data set up until very recently.

We owe thanks to all of our contributors and to all participants at the “Vision, Narrative, and Wisdom” symposium. Thank you for your time and for sharing your insights with so much generosity. We would also like to thank the Danish foundations *Professor Johs. Pedersens og hustru Thora, født Gertz’ legat*, and *H. P. Hjerl Hansen Mindefondet for Dansk Palæstinaforskning* for their financial support. We hope you will enjoy this volume as much as we have enjoyed—and are still enjoying—the process of working together on the Aramaic texts from Qumran. In particular, we hope that the ideas and approaches sketched in this volume will lead to further research on both the individual Aramaic compositions and the cultural, religious, and social environments that produced and used them.