CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the present study was to explore the purpose and function of the epilogue of 4QMMT. The aim was to investigate how the epilogue functions as a part of 4QMMT on the one hand, and how the results of the analysis of the epilogue advance our understanding of the whole document on the other. This study began with an inspection and synopsis of the manuscripts containing text from the epilogue, 4Q397, 4Q398, and 4Q399, which resulted in an alternative composite text of the epilogue. The calendar and the halakhic section have also received some attention, albeit more limited and purpose oriented. After the relationship of the epilogue to the other sections of 4QMMT was investigated it became clear how the document has a purposeful structure that reflects the theological intentions of its author/redactor. Even though the structure of 4QMMT had clear scriptural predecessors, it was demonstrated that the genre of this text is an innovative combination of elements from several previously known genres. In 4QMMT, the author/redactor skillfully created a text in which both the structure and the scriptural subtext(s) are used to argue in favour of the legal interpretations of the author/redactor. The purity of the Temple cult and covenantal faithfulness are linked for the author/redactor of 4QMMT. For him, the Jerusalem Temple is the only legitimate sanctuary, which needs to be purified in order to avoid the curses resulting from covenantal disloyalty.

6.1. THE TEXTUAL BASIS OF THE EPILOGUE

The text critical part of the work began with a simple transcription of the manuscripts of the epilogue and some brief comments on the individual readings. In order to facilitate a comparison of the manuscripts of the epilogue, 4Q397, 4Q398, and 4Q399, and to demon-
strate the difficulties of the composite text in *DJD X*, a synopsis of these three manuscripts, was created. Finally, to make the results of the textual work of Chapter 2 more accessible, an alternative arrangement of the composite text of the epilogue with an English translation was presented.

A brief analysis of the variant readings both in the halakhic section and in the epilogue was carried out. It indicated that in the halakhic section hardly any variance of real importance is discernable in the text form. This could reflect the nature of the halakhic section as general halakhic legislation with a focus on all Israel in contrast to laws pertaining to community organization needing regular updating. According to Hempel, in the Laws of D the halakhic material shows virtually no evidence of recensional activity; whereas the sectarian communal legislation contains traces of redactional activity and updating. If Hempel’s division of the legal material of D in these two groups is accepted, the lack of redactional activity in the halakhic section of 4QMMT can be compared with the result of her analysis of the two strata of legal material of the Damascus Document. Both corpora contain no specifically communal laws governing the life of a particular group, and neither shows signs of redaction.

In the manuscripts of the epilogue, however, the relatively small amount of common material contains some significant variant readings. For instance, the main witnesses of the text of the epilogue, namely manuscripts 4Q397 and 4Q398 overlap surprisingly little. Even in the overlapping sections variant readings are recorded. Some of them are of minor importance, but the comparison between 4Q397 and 4Q398 shows that these manuscripts contain textual variants and different readings that cannot at each point be combined into a single reliable composite text. Apparently, the text form of the epilogue was not fixed and varied from scribe to scribe, and it is possible that some of the manuscripts of the epilogue, or at least some passages of the manuscripts of the epilogue, represent variant literary editions of the text. Yet, the level of variance is difficult to determine with certainty because of the fragmentary state of the manuscripts.

Based upon the synoptic comparison it can be demonstrated that manuscripts 4Q397 and 4Q398 contained a different text form in the following lines: 4Q397 frgs 14-12, lines 10-12a versus 4Q398 frgs 14-17, lines 2-4. These variant readings make it impossible to combine these two manuscripts into an intelligible composite text in this