PART ONE

THE TEMPLE SCROLL
CHAPTER ONE

THE LAW OF THE TEMPLE SCROLL AND ITS PROVENANCE

The discovery of the Temple Scroll and its subsequent publication by the late Professor Yigael Yadin has provided us with a gold mine of information pertaining to the views of its author(s) on Jewish law, what the Rabbis later termed halakhah. This scroll of 66 columns, larger than the Great Isaiah Scroll (54 columns), covers numerous topics in Jewish law. When first unrolled, and in the publications of Professor Yadin, it was assumed that this text testified to the traditions of the same group usually termed the Qumran sect, identified by most scholars with the Essenes (a matter about which we have elsewhere raised questions). Beginning soon after publication, a series of articles to which this writer also contributed, took issue with this point, arguing that the Temple Scroll did not accord with various teachings of the better known Dead Sea sect and that it had to be considered as emerging from a closely related, but different group. It was also argued that the existence of a text in the sect’s library did not indicate its provenance. In fact, we are only now realizing the extent to which the library at Qumran was eclectic. This past summer, at the meeting of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament in Jerusalem, Israel, Professor Hartmut Stegemann masterfully laid to rest the claim of Qumran sectarian authorship for the Temple Scroll.

