There are more than twenty non-biblical works found at Qumran that contain quotations from Leviticus, and it comes as no surprise that in the legal texts found at Qumran the book of Leviticus figures prominently. Excellent analyses on cases of halakhic use of Leviticus in non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls have been published by Lawrence Schiffman, Esther Eshel, and Robert Kugler, among others. But there are many Scrolls with quotations from Leviticus that fall outside the legal genre, and even in legal texts, quotations and allusions of Leviticus are often used to bolster arguments that in fact fall outside legal discourse.

This article is part of my broader exploration of the innovative ways Essene writers combined different genres, or different modes of discourse, in their scriptural interpretation. In an earlier article I focused on covenantal ceremonies included in the Scrolls, and I detected a motivational shift from Law to Wisdom, particularly heightened in the language of blessings and curses. For example, in the Hebrew Bible curses are a function of the conduct-consequence relationship of covenantal discourse. In the Essene writings, however, they are often used in expressions of the dualistic worldview to declare the predestined fate of those outside the lot of the sons of light. In contrast to the sages who produced the earlier wisdom materials and who demonstrated little interest in the covenant, the Essene scribes envisioned the covenant as enveloping the realm of wisdom as well as that of legal discourse.

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In this paper I will continue exploring contexts in which Leviticus is used for ideological purposes. The text of Leviticus was essential in the battle of drawing the borderline between the outsiders and the insiders of the community and in the battle of guarding the community’s self-understanding in its dualistic framework. Essene scribes, in their quest to silence dissenters, effectively used in their interpretation of Leviticus elements from types of discourse foreign to the original legal discourse of Leviticus.

(1) The Disobedient as Those Who Shall not Live

The first example comes from the historical preamble of the Damascus Document. In a section describing the origins of the movement, a phrase from Leviticus is used to draw a line between those obedient to the law and those who reject it:

But with those who held fast to the commandments of God, who were left over from them, God established his covenant with Israel for ever, revealing to them the hidden things in which all Israel had gone astray: his holy Sabbaths and his glorious feasts, his righteous testimonies and his true ways, and the desires of his will which a man must do that he may live through them (אשֶר יְעַשֵּׁה יָדֵי יְהוָה בָּהֶם) [cf. Lev 18:5]. (These) he laid open before them, and they dug a well of abundant waters; those who reject them shall not live (יחֵי לֹא). They had defiled themselves through human transgression and through impure ways, and they had said: ‘This is ours’. But God in his wonderful mysteries made expiation for their iniquity and pardoned their transgression. He built for them a sure house in Israel, the like of which has not appeared in Israel from former times until now. Those who hold fast to it are (destined) for eternal life (נצח לחיי), and all the glory of Adam (אדם כבוד כל) shall belong to them.” (CD 3:12–20)

The phrase “which a man must do that he may live through them” comes from Lev 18:5, and the way the Essene scribe has interpreted it in this section is quite interesting, especially when contrasted with its original context. In the book of Leviticus this phrase, obviously referring to the commandments of God, forms part of an introductory exhortation to laws pertaining to sexual taboos. Some commen-

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4 The section on these laws comprises Lev 18:1–30. Similar laws are listed in Lev 20:9–21, but while the laws in ch. 18 are formulated apodictically, in ch. 20 they are