From the beginning of the 1960s, the connections between the texts of Qumran and the Epistle to the Ephesians have been highlighted by biblical scholars. Indeed, a good number of expressions, stylistic elements and theological themes characteristic of Qumran’s vocabulary are to be found in the Epistle. J. Murphy-O’Connor has even suggested that the author of the Epistle may have been a colleague of Paul who was influenced by Essene ideas. In considering the relationship between the literature of Qumran and the New Testament, I will concentrate on one text in particular: the family code (Haustafeln) of Eph 5:21–6:9.

Most scholars are of the view that the origins of family codes are to be found in Aristotle or Stoic morality via Judeo-Hellenistic

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1 I wish to thank Professor George J. Brooke for his valuable comments, Benjamin G. Wold for our fruitful discussions, and Jill Husser-Munro for her English translation.
3 In addition to the articles of K.G. Kuhn and F. Mussner, a list of similarities is given in the introduction of most recent commentaries on the Epistle, see for example: J.-N. Aletti, Saint Paul épître aux Éphésiens (EBib 42; Paris: Gabalda, 2001), 34–37; M. Barth, Ephesians 1–3 (AB 34; New York: Doubleday, 1986), 405–406; Chantal Reynier, L’épître aux Ephésiens (Commentaire biblique: Nouveau Testament 10; Paris: Cerf, 2004), 39.
5 Politica I 1253b–1255b; Ethica nichomachea VIII 1160a 23–1161a 10; V 1134b 9–18.
literature. However, despite the obvious similarities, scholars also agree that there are fundamental differences between the New Testament family codes and texts originating in the Hellenistic tradition. In particular, the texts’ motivations differ. Some are essentially ethical, economic or political, while others are theological or Christological.

The publication of 4QInstruction may shed new light on the family code of Eph 5:21–6:9 and on the controversial origins of this text. 4QInstruction is a Wisdom text which most likely was written in the second century B.C. Originating in the Judaism of Palestine, it is close to the book of Sirach, both in language and content. Columns three and four of 4Q416 contain two pericopes on the relationships between parents and children, and husbands and wives. These merit comparison with Eph 5:21–6:4.

First, the author of 4QInstruction comments on the fifth commandment of the Decalogue (4Q416 2 III 15–19). Then he writes at some length about the relationship between spouses (4Q416 2 III 20–IV 13). As in Eph 5:21–6:4, the author draws on two quotations from the Pentateuch to justify the order of family relationships: Deut 5:16 (Exod 20:12) and Gen 2:24.

The author of the Epistle to the Ephesians presents things the other way round: first comes the teaching about the relationship between husbands and wives in Eph 5:21–33, and then the teaching about parent-child relationships in 6:1–4. Most scholars agree that Eph 5:21–6:9 is dependent on the parallel text, Col 3:18–4:1. There are significant differences, however, between the two texts, differences which scholars

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8 J.E. Crouch distances himself from the hypotheses of M. Dibelius and K. Weidinger by linking the family codes of the New Testament with Judeo-Hellenistic literature (J.E. Crouch, The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafeln (FRLANT 109; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972). K.H. Rengstorf and D. Schröder argue that the family codes are a purely Christian creation, but this hypothesis has not received the support of scholars (see K.H. Rengstorf, "Die neutestamentlichen Mahnungen und die Frau, sich dem Manne unterzuordnen,” in Verbum dei manet in aeternum, Festschrift für O. Schmitz (ed. W. Foerster; Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1953), 131–145; D. Schröder, Die Haustafeln des Neuen Testament: ihre Herkunft und theologischer Sinn (Ph.D. diss., Hamburg University, 1959).

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