THE ZADOKITE PRIESTS AT QUMRAN:
A RECONSIDERATION

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It is now six years since Geza Vermes delivered a lecture to celebrate the opening of the “Qumran Room,” at Yarnton Manor, Oxford, printed soon thereafter as “Preliminary Remarks on Unpublished Fragments of the Community Rule from Qumran Cave 4,” JJS 42 (1991) 250-55. In that article, Vermes analyzed fragments of MSS B and D of the Manual of Discipline from Cave 4, which parallel the text known to us as 1QS 5:1-4. Vermes’s principal conclusion, which can now be checked by comparison with fuller knowledge of these fragments as edited and translated by Charlesworth-Qimron, was noting the absence of key phrases concerning the place of the Sons of Zadok, the priests in 4QSb and 4QSD. 1QS 5:1-4 established the rule of the community, of those who separated from falsehood and united with respect to the Torah and possessions, as being subject to the authority of:

the sons of Zadok, the priests, who keep the covenant, and of the multitude of the men of the covenant. Every decision shall be determined by them concerning all matters of Torah, property and justice.

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1 My thanks are due to the editor and his readers for having posed a number of pointedly critical questions in response to an earlier version of this paper. I am also grateful to H. Fox, A. Schremer and M. Sokoloff for their help with the material discussed in n. 8. Mindful of the dangers of guilt by implication, I remind the reader that responsibility for the contents is mine alone.

The attitude towards the Zadokite claims of the Qumran community, as developed in this article, is different than the position I took in A.I. Baumgarten, “Who were the Sadducees? The Sadducees of Jerusalem and Qumran,” The Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman World: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern (ed. I. Gafni, A. Oppenheimer and D. Schwartz; Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1996) 393-412 (in Hebrew).

The parallel passages in 4QS\textsuperscript{b} and 4QS\textsuperscript{d}, however, omitted all reference to the role of the Sons of Zadok, the priests. Authority for all those who separated from falsehood and united with respect to the Torah and possessions was in the hands of “the congregation (סנהדרין).”\textsuperscript{3} The congregation was to take all decisions concerning matters of Torah and property.

Vermes recognized the potential significance of these variants for writing the history of the Qumran community, particularly as he realized that 1QS was likely an expanded version of the Cave 4 texts, rather than 4QS\textsuperscript{b} and 4QS\textsuperscript{d} an abridgement of 1QS.\textsuperscript{4} The 4Q fragments have since been subjected to intensive study by Metso, whose results confirm Vermes:\textsuperscript{5} the readings in 4QS\textsuperscript{b} and 4QS\textsuperscript{d} represent an earlier stage in the history of this foundational document of the Dead Sea Scroll sect (in spite of the fact that by paleographic criteria 4QS\textsuperscript{b} and 4QS\textsuperscript{d} were written later than 1QS).\textsuperscript{6} This conclusion is corroborated by the comments of Qimron on the language and orthography of 4QS\textsuperscript{d}, published at around the same time as Vermes’s article. Qimron notes that 4QS\textsuperscript{d} is a conservative text, much closer to Biblical models, and lacking the alternate Qumran forms which came to replace these Biblical examples in the standard Qumran language and orthography.\textsuperscript{7}

Paradoxically, the tracks of scholarly knowledge based on recensional analysis, language and orthography lead to a result opposite to that based on the track devoted to paleographic study. Nevertheless, the

\textsuperscript{3} 4QS\textsuperscript{b} 5 3, and 4QS\textsuperscript{d} 1 i 2. See also Charlesworth-Qimron, in Charlesworth, Rule of the Community, 63 n. 5 and 73 n. 6. The סנהדרין, given authority over communal life in the 4Q passages, included both priests and laymen, if the description in 1QS 6:8 is any indication.

\textsuperscript{4} For a very preliminary evaluation of the merits of 4QS\textsuperscript{d} see E. Qimron, “A Preliminary Publication of 4QS\textsuperscript{d} VII-VIII,” Tarbiz 60 (1991) 437 (in Hebrew).

\textsuperscript{5} See S. Metso, The Textual Development of the Qumran Community Rule (STDJ; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997). For a preliminary summary of some of these results see S. Metso, “The Textual Traditions of the Qumran Community Rule,” Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Second Meeting of the IOQS, Cambridge, 1995 (ed. M. Bernstein and J. Kampen; Leiden: E.J. Brill, forthcoming). Metso provides careful proof to back up the guess of Milik and Vermes that 4QS\textsuperscript{b} and 4QS\textsuperscript{d} represent a text tradition of the Manual of Discipline anterior to that of the 1QS version. I would like to thank Dr. Metso for sharing the results of her work with me prior to its appearing in print.

\textsuperscript{6} The 1QS version was written in the first quarter of the first century BCE, while 4QS\textsuperscript{b} and 4QS\textsuperscript{d} were both written in early Herodian formal script, ca. 30-1 BCE. On the paleographic dates of 4QS\textsuperscript{b} and 4QS\textsuperscript{d}, see F.M. Cross Jr., in Charlesworth, Rule of the Community, 57.

\textsuperscript{7} See Qimron, “Preliminary Publication,” 437 n. b.