"When he hears the words of this covenant…": Memory Theory as Framework for the Study of the Reception of Authoritative Texts in Qumran's *Community Rule* (1QS)

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Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls over half a century ago, much effort has gone into identifying the many ways in which their authors interpret and re-use Scripture. A number of studies have been published which attempt to describe this activity, even in the minutest of details.[1] While these are necessary and useful, few attempts have been made to examine the larger patterns. In the conclusion to her study of the use of Scripture in Qumran's *Community Rule*, Shani Tzoref rightly observed that while the biblical book of Deuteronomy is the most significant source for biblical allusions, more work is needed to study this phenomenon at the macro level.[2]

Our goal is to explore the ways in which memory theory can be useful in providing a framework through which we can attempt to make sense of this activity as a whole, by focusing not so much on specific texts, themes, or methods, but rather on the function of exegesis and its importance for the shaping the identity and life of the community. Helpful in this regard is Jan Assmann's synthesis of cultural memory theory, which deals with the use of authoritative texts as memory artifacts, an approach that can be fruitfully applied to text-centered communities such as the group represented in many of the Dead Sea Scrolls.[3] In his work, Assmann distinguishes

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1. See, e.g., the recent studies in Matthias Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

2. Shani Tzoref, "The Use of Scripture in the Community Rule," in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, ed. Matthias Henze (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 230–31.

3. Contrary to Halbwachs, it considers tradition as another form of memory playing a vital role in a community. See Assmann's synthesis of Halbwachs and Nora's work in *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

between communicative memory, which is the memory shared by a living group in a limited temporal horizon, and cultural memory that draws upon tradition, reaching far into the past through the generations.[4] A group will draw on its cultural memory—its tradition—in order to shape its present communicative memory and define its self-understanding. Communities set up *lieux de mémoire*, that is, monuments, rituals, special days, in order to remember things they do not wish to forget. This type of memory is an important part of a group's identity, forging a bond within a community around elements that are commonly valued. Within this framework of bonding memory, the past is always instrumentalized, that is, reconstructed in light of present concerns.[5] Since cultural memory cannot preserve the past exactly as it was, it should not be considered a "value-free" activity.[6] Tradition is therefore a memory store built through the generations, from which the present generation draws based on its needs and circumstances.

The situation at Qumran is complex due to the many theories concerning the origins of the texts and the people that produced them.[7] This, however,

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Press, 2011), 31–33. Halbwachs' classic statement of collective memory can be found in Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire Collective*, 2nd rev. ed., Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968). Assmann departs from Halbwachs' theory when the latter attempts to limit collective memory to a living community. For Halbwachs, what is older is "abandoned" to history. Assmann on the contrary sees much value in a form of memory that reaches far in the past, as we will see. Jan Assmann describes their differences in "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 128.

4. "If we think of the typical three-generation cycle of communicative memory as a synchronic memory-space, then cultural memory, with its traditions reaching far back into the past, forms the diachronic axis" (Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans. Rodney Livingstone [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006], 8).

5. Ibid., 24. He adds: "The past does not just emerge from its own accord; it is the result of a cultural process of construction and representation. This process is always guided by particular motives, expectations, hopes, and aims, each of which takes its form from the referential frame of the present… repetition and interpretation are functionally equivalent processes in the production of cultural continuity" (Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 71–72).

6. George J. Brooke, "Memory, Cultural Memory, and Rewriting Scripture," in *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 59.

7. Ida Fröhlich remarks that nothing concerning the background of the conflicts depicted or the writers of the scrolls has been found ("Qumran Biblical Interpretation in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Historiography," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context: Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Texts, Languages and Cultures*, ed. A. Lange et al., 2 vols., VTSup 140–141 [Leiden: Brill, 2011], 2.821). There are questions as to the number of communities responsible for

does not deprive these texts of all historical value since they can also be approached as memory artifacts, that is, witnesses to how a community of this period understood itself in relation to others and its past.[8] In the words of Maxine Grossman: "After all, the reading of [these documents] tells us more about what the covenant community thought of itself, or could potentially understand itself to be, than it tells us, in any objective way, about 'what really happened' in the history of this community."[9] There is therefore much value in approaching these texts from the vantage point of memory theory, despite all the uncertainty surrounding their authorship and historical context. It is in this light that I propose to examine the scroll commonly named the *Community Rule* (1QS), as both the reception and production of memory of a particular community.

Strategies of Remembering

As George Brooke recently noted, most applications of collective or cultural memory to the field of biblical studies have been concerned with historiography or narrative.[10] This scroll however makes use of cultural

the sectarian scrolls. For example, the *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document* may not the product of the same group, or perhaps not from the same period. For a treatment of this issue in relation to our concerns, see Charlotte Hempel, "Community Structures in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Admission, Organisation, Disciplinary Procedures," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, ed. James Vanderkam and Peter Flint, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1998–1999), 2.67–92.

8. There is thus a layering of memory at hand, one text being simultaneously the reception of a previous tradition and the shaping of this tradition. Jacques Le Goff comments on the fact that this recognition on the part of some historians has brought about a new approach to the past, something he names the "history of representations… [which is] a history of overall conceptions of society or a history of ideologies; a history of the mental structures common to members of a social category or a society in a particular period, or a history of mentalities..." (*History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman [New York: Columbia University Press, 1992], xviii). Philip Davies adds "… memory itself is a historical datum, and it helps to explain the self-understanding of the community" ("Between Text and Archeology," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 18 [2011]: 332).

9. The author references another similar document from Qumran, the *Damascus Document*, but the comments apply equally here. See Maxine L. Grossman, *Reading for History in the Damascus Document: A Methodological Method*, STDJ 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 209.

10. Brooke, "Memory," 58–59. To be sure, some recent efforts have focused on other aspects of memory work, such as the following essays by Ehud Ben Zvi, "Exploring Jerusalem as a Site of Memory in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Period," in *Memory and the City in Ancient*

memory in different ways, extending to language, rituals, and conceptions of time. When examining this document, one is struck by the centrality of covenant, a concept drawn extensively from authoritative texts.[11] The examples provided all draw on the same section of the biblical book of Deuteronomy, the book of the Mosaic covenant, but in different ways, demonstrating the interrelatedness of the use of authoritative texts, touching multiple aspects of religion. For our purposes, we will briefly examine three strategies which illustrate the purpose of this remembering: 1) The language employed is one that connects the community to the Mosaic covenant. 2) Admission into the community requires participation in a ritual similar to covenant rituals portrayed in Deuteronomy. 3) Particular eschatological lenses are employed to read the authoritative text, locating the community in a different period on the Mosaic covenant timetable.

1. Covenant Language

The document is steeped in biblical idiom betraying a close familiarity with the groups' scriptures. This is all the more obvious when describing the community entrance covenant, the language of which closely follows that of similar ceremonies described in Deut 29. The following example is taken from the warnings addressed to those who might be entering the

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Israel, ed. Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 197–217; idem, "Othering, Selfing, 'Boundarying' and 'Cross-Boundarying' as Interwoven with Socially Shared Memories: Some Observations," *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*, ed. Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi, LHBOTS 456 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark: 2014), 20–40. See also Benjamin Wold, "Memory in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Exodus, Creation and Cosmos," in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity: The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium (Durham, September 2004)*, ed. Stephen Barton et al., WUNT 212 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 47–74. More generally, see Jaime Vázquez Allegue, "Memoria colectiva e identidad de grupo en Qumrán," in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. A. Hilhorst et al., JSJSup 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 89–104.

11. James Vanderkam has already demonstrated this by highlighting several links between 1QS and the Pentateuch, see "Sinai Revisited," in Matthias Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, 45–48. Also of interest is the subsequent study by Daniel Timmer which highlights even more sources, especially revolving around atonement and divine presence, see "Sinai 'Revisited' Again: Further Reflections on the Appropriation of Exodus 19–Numbers 10 in 1QS," *Revue Biblique* 115 (2008): 481–98.

covenant carelessly. It borrows heavily from the biblical text but adapts and summarizes to fit the present situation. The text borrowed from Deut 29:18–20a is here broken down in three sections, each of which displays its own characteristics. The reconstructed biblical Hebrew text (BHS) will be set out first and then compared to the Hebrew text of 1QS[12]:

A. Deut 29:18a = 1QS 2.12b–14a

והיה בשמעו את דברי הֵאָלֵה הַזֵּאת והתברך בלבבו לאמר שלום יהיה לי כי בשררות לבי אלך (BHS)

And when he hears the words of this oath, he will congratulate himself in his heart, saying: "I will have peace, in spite of my walking in the stubbornness of my heart."[13]

והיה בשׁמעו את דברי הַבְּרִית הַזֵּאת יתברך בלבבו לאמור שלום יהי לי כיא בשרירות לבי אלך (1QS)[14]

When he hears the words of this covenant, he will congratulate himself in his heart, saying: "I will have peace, in spite of my walking in the stubbornness of my heart."[15]

Section A reproduces the Deuteronomy language almost word for word, except for "this oath" which is made more explicit in 1QS to reference "this covenant."[16] The word "covenant" (ברית) here replaces the word "oath" (אלה) found in the Deuteronomy text, which deals in this section more specifically with an oath to observe the covenant stipulations. The word covenant is mentioned in the broader context of the Deuteronomy text, and

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12. It is of course possible that the scribe responsible for 1QS was using a text of Deuteronomy which was different from the one represented in BHS. Such variants, when known, will be noted.

13. Our translation, which is purposefully close to García Martínez and Tigchelaar's rendering of the 1QS text in order to highlight similarities and differences. The same is true of the remaining BHS translations.

14. As transcribed in Florentino García Martínez and Eibert Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition: Volume 1. IQI–4Q273* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 72. The remaining Hebrew transcriptions from 1QS are also taken from here.

15. Ibid., 73.

16. To be sure, another difference is the *plene* spelling of vowels in the consonantal text of 1QS, according to the Qumran scribal practice. Notice also how throughout the divine name (YHWH) is changed to the more generic God (El).

so this adjustment is simply linking to the general context of this quote. It perhaps also signals the intention to provide a more explicit association with the concept of covenant at the heart of the Deuteronomy passage. Our text goes on however:

B. Deut 29:18b–19a = 1QS 2.14b–15a

למען ספות הרוה את הצמאה לא יאבה יהוה סלח לו (BHS)

…so as to obliterate the moist and the dry. The Lord will not be willing to forgive him…

ונספתה רוחו הצמאה עם הרויה לאין סליחה (1QS)

However, his spirit will be obliterated, the dry with the moist, without mercy.

The text in section B is much more difficult. Many of the ancient versions disagree on how the Hebrew text should be understood, the plant metaphor being the "root" of the problem.[17] While the Hebrew text in 1QS demonstrates many similarities to its BHS counterpart, the words for moist and dry are inverted, and the word "spirit" (רוח) is inserted as subject.[18] Additional differences are mainly due to the Qumran scribal practice, with its unique spelling and grammatical adaptations. The final clause is abridged, simply stating that there will be no mercy. While the addition of the word "spirit" (רוח) fits nicely with the sect's ideology, its close resemblance to the word "moist" (רוה) suggests that we are perhaps facing a scribal error, and not a case of adaptation as such.[19] Nevertheless, the Deuteronomy idiom remains mostly intact and the main idea remains unchanged. The following section shows important divergences (sections which are similar in BHS and 1QS have been underlined):

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17. According to Jack R. Lundbom (*Deuteronomy: A Commentary* [Eerdmans, 2013], 810), this is a proverbial way of describing the annihilation of everything in one swoop, the good and the bad. The Septuagint goes in a completely different direction, translating ἵνα μὴ συναπολέσῃ ὁ ἁμαρτωλὸς τὸν ἀναμάρτητον ("So that the sinner does not destroy the sinless as well").

18. A minority of Hebrew manuscripts of Deuteronomy show הרוח (spirit) instead of הרוה (moist) but this does not explain why the 1QS text contains both words.

19. In this case, a particular kind of dittography, where the word is repeated although with a minor spelling difference, as note 16 demonstrates. For a different explanation, see Tzoref, "The Use of Scripture," 220.

C. Deut 29:19b–20a = 1QS 2.14b–15a

כי אז יעשׁן אף יהוה וקנאתו באישׁ ההוא ורבצה²⁰ בו כל האלה הכתובה בספר הזה ומחה יהוה את שׁמו מתחת השׁמים והבדילו יהוה לרעה מכל שׁבטי ישׂראל... (BHS)

But rather may <u>the Lord's anger and his wrath</u> smoke against that man, and <u>stick fast to him all the curses</u> written in this book, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. <u>May the Lord separate him for evil</u> **from all the tribes of Israel**…

אף אל וקנאת משׁפטיו יבערו בו לכלת עולמים ידבקו בו כול אלות הברית הזות ויבדילהו אל לרעה ונכרת מתוך כול בני אור ... (1QS)

<u>May God's anger and the wrath</u> of his verdicts consume him for everlasting destruction. <u>May stick fast to him all the curses</u> of this covenant. <u>May God separate him for evil</u>, and may he be cut off **from the midst of all the sons of light**…

Finally, section C shows how the remainder of the Deuteronomy text is compressed in 1QS to retain the idea of God's enduring wrath, the curses that will befall the unfaithful, and God's delivering him to evil (all underlined). But as the last phrase of this example demonstrates, there is more going on than the condensing of the source text. An important modification is introduced where the backsliding are to be cut off not from the people of Israel, but from the sons of light (בני אור), which aligns the source text with the group's dualistic ideology.

While 1QS does not formally introduce this quotation, it is for practical purposes, at least partly, a quotation of an authoritative text. Yet the combination of ideas and the context in which it is used displays not only appropriation, but a degree of transformation. The community members who enter into this covenant are not the people at Sinai who entered into the mosaic covenant. The entrance into the covenant is for the purpose of creating an "elite," the sons of light, who are the true Israel, and will maintain the mosaic covenant through their obedience. Language such as this is typical of this scroll and cannot but establish a close connection with its scriptural counterpart and underline the common identity and heritage

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20. Manuscript 4QDeutᶜ found in Qumran has ודבקה in the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy, which may be what our scribe had in front of him. Our translation reflects this possibility.

that is being constructed. The language is thus borrowed for the purposes of identity creation and formation.

In the context of Deuteronomy, the curses apply to the people of Israel as a nation while individuals can be cut off from the nation upon disobedience. In contrast, the curses found in 1QS apply to a group within Israel, which as a whole is never considered to be part of the covenant. The same is true of the blessings, which in this case apply to the "sons of light" and serve to delineate the boundaries of the group.[21] It is a reflection of the group's particularities and perhaps the indication of a setting where its social structure and beliefs were contested.[22]

There are a few instances of explicit quotations of authoritative texts in the *Community Rule*, but it is not the main "tool."[23] The scriptural tradition is not usually drawn upon by explicit quotes, but by relying on pervasive allusions and borrowed vocabulary. There is thus a fascinating interplay of language where a new text is composed by people steeped in scriptural idiom, who through their recourse to legitimization techniques, draw from the cultural memory store to bolster their community-shaping project. The same can be said of the way in which some linguistic forms are adopted, such as the spelling of independent pronouns, which, according to sociolinguists, betray an attempt to make their Hebrew dialect appear old and identify themselves with Mosaic or even pre-Mosaic traditions.[24] The

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21. Werline also describes how other blessings and curses attached to the entrance covenant are inspired from authoritative texts. For example, the blessings promised for obedience (1QS 2.2–4) draw their language from the priestly blessing found in Num. 6.24–26. The curses are a reversal of this blessing, yet do not display such obvious textual links to pentateuchal material. Their formulation relies instead on similar language found in other authoritative texts, in this case, sections of 1 Enoch and Jubilees 23. See Rodney A. Werline, "The Curses of the Covenant Renewal Ceremony in 1QS 1.16–2.19 and the Prayers of the Condemned," in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. R. A. Argall et al. (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 285–288.

22. See the suggestion to that effect made by Sarianna Metso, "Biblical Quotations in the Community Rule," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judean Desert Discoveries*, ed. E. Tov and E. D. Hebert (London: The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 89.

23. Sarianna Metso (*The Serekh Texts*, CQS 9 [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 43) identifies only three explicit citations, two of which are in column V and the other in column VIII. Neither are analyzed in this paper.

24. See Steven Weitzman, "Why Did the Qumran Community Write in Hebrew?" *JAOS* 119 (1999): 35–45; William Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," *JBL* 118 (1999): 235–52;

result is a combination of old and new that strengthens the community's self-understanding in opposition to outside forces. While this may appear to be a manipulation of tradition, it also speaks of the authority that the scriptural tradition—especially the Torah texts—had on the community and how it viewed its practices in continuity with the scriptural ones.

2. Covenant Ritual

This borrowing and adaptation of biblical language has to be understood in light of the ritual being described. In other words, we are not only dealing only with a text, but also with the ritual it prescribes. We have no way of verifying whether that ritual was practiced in this particular way, but the importance of this scroll at Qumran would hint in favor of such a ceremony being performed.[25] The centrality of ritual in the Qumran texts, and in the life of the community it portrays, has been abundantly demonstrated.[26] What needs to be highlighted here is the role ritual plays in the remembering of the community. Assmann rightly points out that access to cultural memory is not a given. In many circles, the process is controlled.[27] The entrance

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Gary A. Rendsburg, "Qumran Hebrew (With A Trial Cut [1QS])," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60*, ed. L. H. Schiffman and S. Tzoref, STDJ 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 217–46.

25. This ritual also matches in many ways the description made by Josephus of the Essenes and the similar ritual in the *Damascus Document*. Despite the differences, it seems likely that an admission ceremony similar to what is described in 1QS was being practiced, although probably not at the scale described here when it assumes groups of "thousands".

26. See for example Robert A. Kugler's conclusion that "… the rituals entangled community members inextricably with God's will for the cosmos and drew them away from the profane world of their Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors. As a result, ritual at Qumran was hegemonic, making every aspect of their experience religious in Durkheim's sense of the word. Indeed, the scrolls apply the rationale for ordered entry into the community meal to much of the group's life: they did these things so they would know their standing … 'in the community of God, in conformity with an eternal plan' (1 QS 2:22–23)" ("Making All Experience Religious: The Hegemony of Ritual at Qumran," *JSJ* 33 [2002]: 152).

27. "[Cultural memory's] distribution is controlled, and whereas on the one hand it makes participation obligatory, on the other it withholds the right to participate. It is subject to restrictions which are more or less rigid. In some cases, people must prove their competence (or their membership) by means of formal tests… Meanwhile, others are excluded from such knowledge. In Jewish and Ancient Greek culture these 'others' included women…" (Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 40).

covenant ritual is certainly part of the identification with God's special people, a privilege that is closely guarded. It demonstrates the group's concern for securing true obedience and purity. It is through this ritual that new members are admitted into the community and that existing members see their connection to the community confirmed.[28]

The covenant ceremony described in 1QS can be broken down into four parts, with the participants playing different roles:

	Priests	Levites	People
(1.18–20)	Bless God and his works		"Amen, Amen"
(1.21–2.1a)	Recite the deeds of God and his favor towards Israel	Recite the iniquities of Israel	Confess sins
(2.1b–10)	Pronounce a blessing	Curse the "men of Belial"	"Amen, Amen"
(2.11–18)	Curse those who would enter the covenant with idols or iniquity		"Amen, Amen"

The short section that follows describes the procession that leads to this oath-taking ritual. The priests enter first, one after the other, followed by the Levites and then the people, also one at a time. They are to do so in their thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, according to their standing in the community (2.19–23).

The format of this ceremony follows closely the one portrayed in Deut 27 which was to take place on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. There, the priests, the Levites, and the people all played a role in this antiphonal recitation, pronouncing similar blessings and curses. Also, the organization of the community in thousands, hundreds, and so forth is a direct allusion to the organization of the Israelite community at Sinai, where on account of Jethro's advice, Moses is said to have divided God's people into such groups (see Ex 18:21, 25). There is no doubt that the ritual is in many respects patterned on the scriptural model.

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28. Metso (*The Serekh Texts*, 24) states that although the introduction ceremony is described in 1QS 1.16–2.18 and the renewal in 2.19–25a, they probably describe the same ceremony. The new members would be introduced during the yearly renewal ritual.

Whether or not this ceremony actually took place in this precise format, what is important for our purposes is how the appropriation of a past ritual gives shape to the community. The reason for the ceremony is stated explicitly in the text: it is normative in its design, so as to promote perfect obedience to the divine commands (1.16–18), as interpreted by the leaders of the community (5.7–10a). This perfect obedience also results in distinguishing the community from other Jews, thus shaping their attitudes towards outsiders. Thus the ceremony is to be performed:

> in order to welcome all those who freely volunteer to carry out God's decrees into the covenant of kindness; in order to be united in the counsel of God and walk in perfection in his sight, complying with all revealed things concerning the regulated times of their stipulations; <u>in order to love all the sons of light, each one according to his lot in God's plan, and to detest all the sons of darkness.</u> (1.7b–10a)[29]

As García Martínez notes, "here the distinction between 'us' and the 'other' is absolute, detached from any principles of ethnicity."[30] The rhetorical effect of such an exercise should not be underestimated, as memories are being instilled into the new members and reinforced in existing members. This type of collective remembering does not happen primarily in the isolated individual, but in interaction with the group. Ritual performance is how the memory becomes collective, bonding, and formative, and allows such tradition to be embodied and perpetuated.[31] The reenactment of oaths, the procession, and antiphony in yearly repetition is critical in strengthening the group's self-understanding. Many characteristics of cultural memory are combined in this exercise, including the "reconstruction" in the present time of a true Israel, the organization of the community according to rank

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29. García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1.71.

30. Florentino García Martínez, "Invented Memory: The 'Other' in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Qumranica Minora II: Thematic Studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E. J. C. Tigchelaar, STDJ 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 212.

31. "Social memory is iterable, habitual, persuasive recollection. In order to be more than the sum of individual, psychological memories, collective memory must institutionalize itself externally as ritualized, performative memory. Such performance rituals display in turn cognitive and affective as well as evaluative and bodily habitual components" (Ian H. Henderson, "Memory, Text, and Performance in Early Christian Formation," in *Religion und Bildung: Medien und Funktionen religiösen Wissens in der Kaiserzeit*, ed. Christa Frateantonio and Helmut Krasser, PAwB 30 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010), 167.

and standing, and the system of values that it promotes. All these converge to produce a counter-memory, that is, a construction of the past that sets the identity of the group in contrast with other prevalent reconstructions of its time. After all, this community was not alone in drawing on these authoritative texts to address present concerns.

3. Covenant time

While memory is intimately related to time, such as calendar cycles and special days, our interest here is slightly different. To be sure, the Dead Sea sectarian texts, like other Jewish writings of their time, demonstrate an acute interest in matters of ritual calendar. What is of interest at this point however is the community's understanding of history in relation to the covenant, and especially where it locates itself on its historical timetable.

Ida Fröhlich has explored the way historiography is done in Qumran and how the periodization of history[32] is one strategy employed to situate the community and shape the group's self-understanding.[33] Their interest in history, while not of the expected historiographic nature, is nevertheless real.[34] In the *Community Rule*, this can be seen most clearly in the section called the discourse on the two spirits (3.13–4.26) where the group is described as living in a period dominated by evil, the domination of Belial (בממשלת בליעל). Four events are said to follow this period in a not-too-distant future:[35]

1. The dominion of evil broken, coming of the Messiah(s) (4.18–19, 9.10–11).
2. Purification of the sons of light and their deeds (4.20–21).
3. Recompense for the sons of light and sons of darkness (4.6–8, 11–12).
4. Eternal life or punishment/annihilation (4.7–8, 13–14).

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32. What Assmann refers to as "theologizing of cultural memory" (*Religion and Cultural Memory*, 37).

33. Fröhlich, "Qumran Biblical Interpretation," 2.855.

34. Ibid., 821.

35. I owe these in part to Daniel C. Timmer's insightful study of the eschatology in the Rule of the Community, see "Variegated Nomism Indeed: Multiphase Eschatology and Soteriology in the Qumranite Community Rule (1QS) and the New Perspective on Paul," *JETS* 52 (2009): 344.

The covenant ritual described earlier is to be practiced annually, "all the days of the domination of Belial" (כול יומי ממשלת בליעל),[36] which is the current period for the community. The fascination with *periods* and *times* implies that the community sees itself as living in a particular time, which has been labeled by some as a "semi-eschatological" time.[37] This understanding of living at the end of human history may be drawn in part from Torah texts with clear references to the "end of days,"[38] a period described as a turning point for the covenant-keeping nation. Deuteronomy 31:29 is a clear example, announcing the evil that will befall the disobedient nation, "in later days" (באחרית הימים), and Deut 4.30 further announces that a period of disobedience will be followed, "in later days" (באחרית הימים), by a return to God, who will remember his covenant and deliver his people. These texts, as well as several others, came to be understood eschatologically in this period and in the sectarian scrolls where the expression "later days" refers to the time of testing preceding the end, the "end of days."[39] This is a time of difficulty but also a time of fulfillment of the Mosaic covenant where God intervenes for his people. In a clear allusion to Isa 40:3, the goal set for the community is to prepare the way of YHWH.[40] By becoming the

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36. 1QS 2.19.

37. See Timmer, "Variegated Nomism Indeed," 342.

38. באחרית הימים.1QS does not use this particular expression but a similar one קץ אחרון.

39. Gen 49:1 and Num 24:14 are other texts that employ the same phrase. John J. Collins describes this process in detail in *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 56–58. García Martínez's study is also very helpful, see "Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1 (New York; London: Continuum, 2000), 162–92, esp. 177–179, which shows how the "end of days" is related to the domination of Belial. The consecutive accounts of blessings and curses found in Deuteronomy are transposed diachronically as a pattern of Israel's history; see David Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 84.

40. Isa 40:3 is alluded to in two places (1QS 8.14 and 9.19–20), both of which have to do with the blameless obedience to the revealed Torah for which the members are expected to strive. "He should lead them with knowledge and in this way teach them the mysteries of wonder and of truth in the midst of the men of the Community, so that they walk perfectly, one with another, in all that has been revealed to them. This is the time for making ready the path to the desert and he will teach them about all that has been discovered so that they can carry it out in this moment [and] so they will be detached from anyone who has not withdrawn his path from all injustice" (1QS 9.18b–21a, trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1.93).

ideal, the ultimate covenant community, they will atone for the land in the expectation of the coming deliverance and judgment.

That the covenant tradition is read with particular, eschatological lenses is confirmed in the text. The *Community Rule* insists in many places that the leaders of the community are to interpret the law "according to each period."[41] While this indicates that the community understands itself as living in a particular time, it also underlines the fact that this knowledge is not obvious to all. It is carefully guarded. These mysterious exegetical keys, concealed from Israel but discovered by the interpreter, are to be shared only with the men of the community (8.11–12).[42] This is to be done until the coming of the "prophet and messiah of Aaron and Israel."[43]

Much more could be said concerning the apocalyptic tendencies present in the Qumran texts. For our purposes, however, we should first note that this self-understanding as eschatological covenant community is closely linked to the practice of the covenant ritual and the behavior that it entails. This carefully shaped identity gave the group significance and, as Louise Lawrence notes, "allowed them to conceive of themselves as significant players in the eschatological drama."[44] Associating themselves with the foundational memory of the Sinai community not only contributed to generate a common identity, but also provided support for the hopes

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41. The following is a choice example: "These are the regulations for the Instructor by which he shall walk with every living being in compliance with the regulation of every period and in compliance with the worth of each man: he should fulfill the will of God in compliance with all revelation for every period; he should acquire all the wisdom that has been gained according to the periods and the decree of the period" (1QS 9.12–13, ibid.).

42. See also 1QS 8:15–16a: "This is the study of the law wh[i]ch he commanded through the hand of Moses, in order to act in compliance with all that has been revealed from age to age, and according to what the prophets have revealed through his holy spirit" (ibid., 89). Joseph Blenkinsopp's more general comment applies here: "What sets the Qumran groups and Christianity apart as sectarian is their radical reinterpretation of the traditions constitutive of normativity and their conviction about their own centrality in the context of those traditions" ("The Qumran Sect in the Context of Second Temple Sectarianism," in *New Directions in Qumran Studies: Proceedings of the Bristol Colloquium on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 8–10th September 2003*, ed. J. G. Campbell et al., LSTS 52 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 11–12.

43. 1QS 9.11.

44. See Louise J. Lawrence, "'Men of Perfect Holiness' (1QS 7.20): Social-Scientific Thoughts on Group Identity, Asceticism and Ethical Development in the Rule of the Community," in J. G. Campbell et al., *New Directions in Qumran Studies*, 87 n. 21.

and aspirations of the group. Strategies such as these are most obvious in situations of oppression where the memory is reconstructed for the purpose of questioning the current situation and to call for change.[45]

Conclusion

The *Community Rule* is a great example of the type of memory work performed by a community that sees itself not only in continuity with tradition, but as its only legitimate fulfillment. The community is structured in such a way as to become the continuation and realization of the perfect covenant community as described in the Pentateuch. This eschatological understanding is perhaps the most significant differentiating factor in terms of how this group understands itself in relation to its Sinai counterpart. Much could be said of other strategies embedded in this text that make use of cultural memory. But for now, three observations are in order:

First, this "excavation" of cultural memory is done through interpretation of authoritative texts. As Assmann notes, cultural memory always implies special agents, memory specialists, whose social status is consequently elevated.[46] In the context of the *Community Rule*, the role of the scribe as agent of memory is brought to the forefront. The text describes him not only as the author of such a work, but also highlights his role as a leader of the community. He is the agent of memory and is steeped in the group's tradition. He is the facilitator of the identity-forging memory. He orients the community around the study of the law of Moses and subsequent traditions, keeping his special knowledge of God's mysteries for his people.[47]

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45. According to Assmann (*Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 62–64), movements such as messianism and millenarianism use memory in this way, as a mythomotor, the book of Daniel being a prime example.

46. Ibid., 39.

47. As Assmann aptly puts it, "… there is a gulf between the established text and the changing reality that can only be bridged by interpretation. In this way interpretation becomes the central principle of cultural coherence and identity. The normative and formative impulses of cultural memory can only be gleaned through the incessant, constantly renewed textual interpretation of the tradition through which identity is established. Interpretation becomes the gesture of remembering, the interpreter becomes a person who remembers and reminds us of a forgotten truth" (*Religion and Cultural Memory*, 43). Another reason is the fact that people further removed from the texts

Secondly, such an approach to the use of authoritative texts highlights the formative and normative impulses of cultural memory. The authoritative tradition is not a passive repository from which one draws. It is a power that is constitutive, even while taking different forms as various groups and people draw upon it. One does not appeal to such traditions unless they are regarded as normative.[48] And if these are normative, it can explain at least in part how texts and rituals such as those found in 1QS came about. There is thus a kind of reciprocity in the relationship between the past and the present.[49] In the context of the Qumran sectarian documents, the interaction with this tradition is very much tainted by the present reality and particular outlook of the group, which nevertheless remains profoundly shaped by its authoritative texts.

Lastly, the framework of memory allows for thinking about the various characteristics of the group and their exegesis of authoritative texts in a holistic manner. Such exegesis is done at many levels, concurrently deploying several strategies, so that one must look at the whole picture to start making sense of it. The different "mnemotechnics"[50] are necessary, complimentary, and essential to the identity of the community. Thus,

do not have access to a direct understanding of its forms and formulas, and the exegete is therefore required to interpret (see Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 49–50).

48. Thus Metso's conclusion appears warranted when she says that such a practice demonstrates how "…ultimately the community regarded its own regulations as resting on the Old Testament authority…from the point of view of the modern reader, the connection between a regulation and a citation supporting it may be artificial. The community, however, considered its laws to be in accordance with the Torah" ("Biblical Quotations," 89).

49. This is not a presentist position that would see the present and its needs as the determining factor in the shaping of the past and the way it is remembered. After all, the Deuteronomy text was in the same caves as the *Community Rule* and continued to be copied alongside the composition of 1QS. The *Community Rule*, while primarily concerned with present realities and concerns, evolved out of the Torah texts. In a way, it is a guide to the "proper" interpretation of Deuteronomy and other authoritative texts. Mary B. Spaulding's comments are appropriate here: "[the presentist model] is unable to explain adequately the continuity of practices and beliefs observed across extended periods of time in multiple cultures. If we can acknowledge the impact of the present upon the past, is there no impact of the past upon the present?" (*Commemorative Identities: Jewish Social Memory and the Johannine Feast of Booths* [London: Bloomsbury, 2009], 11).

50. "As cultural memory is not biologically transmitted, it has to be kept alive through the sequence of generations. This is a matter of cultural mnemotechnics, that is, the storage, retrieval, and communication of meaning. These mnemotechnics guarantee continuity and identity, the latter clearly being a product of memory" (Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 72).

the relationship between the community and its cultural memory is of a complex nature. Cultural memory theory emphasizes the historical and social situatedness of the act of interpretation and thus holds considerable explanatory power in this particular context and should continue to supply promising avenues for future research.