

Prophet & Messiahs in the *Community Rule*: A Preliminary Investigation into Immediate and Wider Questions

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This study will consider a popular text appearing in a rule or law book of the Qumran community (the *Yahad*), known as the *Community Rule* (also called *Manual of Discipline*, 1QS being its most complete manuscript), dated paleographically to 100-75 B.C.E.¹ No discussion on the theme of messiahship in the community can afford to ignore this unique passage. A closer examination of pre-Christian Jewish documents has dispelled the notion of a “uniform system of messianic expectation in ancient Judaism.”² In this brief study I cannot consider the breath of this diversity and will restrict myself to the study of just one expectation: the hopes for two messianic figures in some texts and how such an expectation might have come about. It will also be argued that caution is required when drawing conclusions about Jewish communities on the basis of the Qumran texts.³

“They shall depart from none of the counsels of the Law to walk in all the stubbornness of their hearts, but shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.”⁴

A few immediate observations are in order:

First, we see *three* eschatological figures: the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel;⁵ second, the three figures are placed on the same level - even though the Prophet is not included in the category of “Messiahs,” he is not said to be greater or lesser in authority

¹ J. H. Charlesworth, ‘From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives’, *Judaisms And Their Messiahs At The Turn Of The Christian Era* ed. by Jacob Neusner, William S. Green, Ernest Frerichs, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p. 232.

² John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Second Edition, Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), pp. 3-20.

³ Unless otherwise stated, the translations are extracted from *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, ed. by Geza Vermes, (Revised Edition, London: Penguin Books, 2003).

⁴ ... ‘*ad bô’ nābî û-měšîḥē’ āhārôn wě-yiśrā’ēl*, (until the coming of a prophet and the Messiahs [or anointed ones] of Aaron and Israel.” 1QS 9:11 – see L. H. Schiffman, ‘Messianic Figures And Ideas In The Qumran Scrolls’, *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. by James H. Charles (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 119.

⁵ J. H. Charlesworth, ‘From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives’, *Judaisms And Their Messiahs At The Turn Of The Christian Era*, p. 231. Also see: John F. Priest, ‘Mebaqquer, Paqid, and the Messiah’, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Mar., 1962), 55-61, (p. 55). Priest cites Milik as follows (Ibid, p. 55): “However this belief developed later, it is clear that the copyist of this document thought of three persons: grammatically this is the only possible interpretation.”

than the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel;⁶ third, another Qumran document, *4QTestimonia* (4Q175), presents three biblical passages indicating three positive eschatological figures, without offering commentary and making distinctions: *Prophet*: Deuteronomy 18:18-19; *King*: Num. 24:15-17; *Priest*: Deut. 33:8-11;⁷ fourth, this remains the only passage where we find the plural, “messiahs,” a categorical mention of multiple messiahs;⁸ fifth, nothing is said about the Prophet and the Messiahs besides the bare mention of their future arrival. We are not told if they will come together all at once, or at different time periods and how the Prophet will relate to the Messiahs.

Furthermore, the mention of “Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel” is absent in an older copy of the Community Rule, 4QS^e (4Q259) - the words from *byd mwšh* in 8:15b to the beginning of 9:12 are missing.⁹ According to Charlesworth, “the reference to two Messiahs is a later redactional addition.”¹⁰ Collins believes that it is “more likely” that the passage was added “... at a later stage in the development of 1QS.”¹¹ Abegg, on the other hand, has argued that it is “more likely” that the scribe of 4QS^e “skipped an entire column of material.”¹² In another essay, Charlesworth states that according to Larry Schiffman, who found and studied the fragment purported to be the earliest copy of the Community Rule, two fragments of the Community Rule “...were incorrectly stuck together in the fifties.”¹³ Collins also notes that many scholars have argued that part of the omitted passage (1QS 9:3-11) belongs “...to the oldest stratum of the Community Rule...”¹⁴ Whatever the truth, for the purpose of this paper, I note that 1QS remains an important witness for the messianic diarchy paradigm and the fact of its absence in an earlier exemplar may not necessarily by itself lend credence to a thought development theory. We should be content in concluding that in the absence of evidence in any fragment of the Community Rule

⁶ John C. Poirier, ‘The Endtime Return of Elijah and Moses at Qumran’, in *Dead Sea Discoveries*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2003), 221-242, (p. 223).

⁷ John C. Poirier, ‘The Endtime Return of Elijah and Moses at Qumran’ p. 223. See also John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 79-80. There are, in fact, five passages in the *Testimonia*, including a passage from the *Psalms of Joshua*.

⁸ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 80.

⁹ J. H. Charlesworth, ‘From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives’, p. 232; Craig A. Evans, Peter W. Flint, ‘Introduction’, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. by Craig A. Evans, Peter W. Flint (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company U.K., 1997), p. 7; L. H. Schiffman, ‘Messianic Figures And Ideas In The Qumran Scrolls’, pp. 119-120.

¹⁰ J. H. Charlesworth, ‘From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives’ p. 232.

¹¹ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 91.

¹² Martin G. Abegg, Jr., ‘The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?’ in *Dead Sea Discoveries*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (Jun., 1995), 125-144, (p. 131).

¹³ J. H. Charlesworth, ‘From Messianology To Christology: Problems and Prospects’, pp. 26-27.

¹⁴ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 91.

exhibiting hope in the coming of one messiah - and ignoring other Rule documents - we are in no position to suggest the community's evolution of hope from none, one to two messiahs.

A few additional issues need to be discussed in order to place the Community Rule in a broader context.

We encounter a similar phrase - "*messiah of Aaron and Israel*" (the "messiah" is singular here) - in another sectarian document, also a rule or law book, closely related to the Community Rule: the *Damascus Document* (henceforth, CD).¹⁵ There is no mention of "the Prophet" and interpretation of the key phrase is less straightforward since they could also be understood to refer to one messiah, a *composite* messiah - a messiah who is *both* Davidic and Priestly - as opposed to reflecting a messianic *diarchy*.

1. "...until the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel..." (CD 12:23);
2. "...[they shall walk until the coming of the Messia]h of Aaron and Israel..." (CD 14:19);
3. "...the Messiah of Aaron and Israel..." (CD 19:11);

The following phrasing, due to the presence of two prepositions, is more difficult to conform to a composite interpretation (*italics added*):

"...a messiah *from* Aaron and *from* Israel." (CD 20:1).

Once again, nothing is said about the messiah(s) except that the messiah(s) is/are expected to come. The lack of details may, however, imply - and this also applies to the Community Rule - that these figures were intelligible to the immediate readers.¹⁶ Moreover, most scholars favour the diarchical model, whereby the Qumran community was expecting two distinct anointed messiahs, a priestly and a royal messiah.¹⁷ However, this understanding has also been subjected to serious challenge. For example, Hurst argues that the Qumran community used the term "messiah" as a *terminus technicus* for "the Messiah" (the Davidic "redeemer") and "less distinctively" as a term for the anointed priest "...who will be functioning at the time the Davidic figure appears, and through whom, with the Messiah, God will work out his purposes for Israel and the world." That the term "messiah" only acts as a *terminus technicus* for the Davidic Messiah, the Messiah of Israel, is not clear from the texts themselves and is a presupposition *read into* the texts. Besides, Hurst weakens his position thanks to his accompanying acknowledgement that "while appearing to say the same thing," the texts may just be employing "the same or similar language to say

¹⁵ Hempel explores the possible literary relationship between 1QS 8-9 and CD 20 in Charlotte Hempel, 'CD Manuscript B and the Rule of the Community - Reflections on a Literary Relationship', in *Dead Sea Discoveries* 16 (2009), 370-387.

¹⁶ John J. Collins, "'He Shall Not Judge by What His Eyes See': Messianic Authority in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in *Dead Sea Discoveries*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Messianism (Jun., 1995), 145-164, (p. 147).

¹⁷ See the discussion in Shemaryahu Talmon, 'Waiting for the Messiah: The Spiritual Universe of the Qumran Covenanters', *Judaisms And Their Messiahs At The Turn Of The Christian Era*, p. 122.

radically different things.”¹⁸ It is simpler to conclude that they could be saying the same/similar thing and thus using the same/similar language for two anointed figures: the priestly and royal. Besides resorting to weak generalisations,¹⁹ Hurst observes, whilst discussing the above referred CD texts, that the figure concerned is the agent of God and that the only one who wields a sword and who participates in battle (*War Scroll* - 1QM) is the “Messiah of Israel.”²⁰ Suffice it to say, this hardly “disproves” or even weakens the dual/diarchic messiah paradigm. Proponents of the latter do not deny the different roles of the priestly and royal messiahs, the latter is responsible for governance, politics and warfare, the former for jurisprudence and religious observances. Hurst also insists that the “messiah of Aaron and Israel” of CD could be the “Prince” of CD 7:18-20. This is possible, but not more likely than a reading which identifies the star (the Interpreter of the Law), who is mentioned before and linked with the scepter, with Aaron (i.e. messiah of Aaron), and which identifies the scepter - the “prince” of the whole congregation, who will smite the children of Seth - with the messiah of Israel. As Collins explains, the Interpreter, “...can plausibly, though not certainly, be identified as a priestly messiah.”²¹

Next, Hurst presents a rather elaborate argument which I will break-down into four steps below:

- I. In CD 14:19, the messiah of Aaron and Israel will “pardon iniquities”;
- II. *kpr* is the term used for pardoning iniquities in CD (“atone for, expiate”);
- III. The identical verb is applied to God in 1QS 2:8, 11:14, CD 2:5, 3:18, 4:6, 9, 10;
- IV. In other places in the scroll, *kpr* is predicated of *the community* (1QS 5:6, 8:6, 10, 9:4, 1QM 2:5, 1QSa 1:3);

¹⁸ L. D. Hurst, ‘Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?’ in *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 9 (1999) 157-180, p. 160. Hurst is also reliant upon M. G. Abegg, ‘The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?’

¹⁹ The assertion that (p. 164) “...the temporary situation under the Hasmoneans was never accepted by the first-century Jews” can only hold if one puts the label of “apostates” upon those within the Jewish communities who supported and aided the Hasmonean rule and flies in the face of 1 Maccabees. Surely, Jewish opinion remained divided. According to Hurst (‘Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?’ p. 164), only one messiah was to come as per “the average Jew.” Though he supplies the quotation marks himself, this conveys the impression as if the Jewish communities were a monolith, at least on the theme of messiahship, and gives no consideration to the possibility of divergent views on this matter in different time periods within the communities. It also does not sit well with a statement in Hurst’s concluding discussion (Ibid, p. 180): “The problem of differences of opinion within the sect, together with the possibility of changes over a period of time, further complicate our picture of the Qumran evidence. The constant crossreferencing from one document to another—as if by doing so one can illustrate “the Qumran teaching” on this or that subject— should be received with a scholarly grain of salt.”

²⁰ L. D. Hurst, ‘Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?’ in *Bulletin for Biblical Research* p. 168.

²¹ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 82.

Therefore: in the phrase “Messiah of Aaron and Israel,” we may see “the expiatory role of the community, a role that devolves upon its figurehead, the Messiah.”²²

The argument is redundant to the main topic and is *non-sequitur*: the transfer of the expiatory role from the community *does not follow* that we have a single composite messiah in CD 14:19. If the totality of the key references in the sectarian documents leads us to the conclusion that we see hopes for two messiahs, then CD 14:19 may be understood as the devolution of the expiatory role upon the *figureheads* of the community - priestly and royal messiahs. Secondly, even if the royal messiah is argued to be the best candidate for this role, then that does not negate the presence of the priestly messiah.²³ It may also be that in the messianic age, the task of expiation is that of the priestly messiah, the presumable antecedent in CD 14:19, though the community takes this role in the present due to believing the Temple to be defiled.²⁴ In short, nothing here requires a composite/single messiah.

A more convincing case for seeing hopes for two eschatological messiahs is presented by Collins which I will next summarise. Collins urges not to limit ourselves to the expression, “messiah(s) of Aaron and Israel.” The issue is not how many texts explicitly mention two messiahs or to simply scan for the occurrence of the term “messiah” in texts. Instead, the question is: are there texts which mention, “...another figure of authority equal to or greater than that of the Davidic messiah.”²⁵ For Collins the “messiah” is an agent of God in the end-times who is said to have been “anointed” even if the designation “messiah” is not applied.²⁶ Thus, if viewed in these terms, “...the evidence for a “priestly messiah” is considerably more extensive than the revisionist critics allow, since it includes any text that subordinates the King Messiah to priestly authority.”²⁷ Collins demonstrates that once we review all major rule/law books and closely related documents of the community - the *Community Rule*, *Messianic Rule*, the *Damascus Document*, the *Temple Scroll* and the *War Rule* - we observe a “bifurcation of authority in the messianic era.” Due to this “general pattern” of bifurcation of authority, Collins insists that it is legitimate to speak about hopes for two messiahs among the community.²⁸

²² L. D. Hurst, ‘Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?’ p. 168.

²³ Hurst also appeals to Klausner, who is quoted to describe the postbiblical Jewish messianic thoughts: the Messiah “must be *both* king and redeemer” (italics original). The Messiah “must” overthrow the enemies of Israel, establish the Kingdom of Israel, rebuild the Temple, put an end to sin, be wise and pious. I should note again that this does nothing to shed light upon Qumran messianic expectations, that they expected one or two messiahs. It does nothing to call into question the predominant paradigm. L. D. Hurst, ‘Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?’ p. 168.

²⁴ I owe this insight to Professor John J. Collins, private email correspondence, 21/01/2017.

²⁵ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 81.

²⁶ John J. Collins, “‘He Shall Not Judge by What His Eyes See’: Messianic Authority in the Dead Sea Scrolls”, p. 146.

²⁷ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 81.

²⁸ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 81-82.

We also need to briefly explore the possible origin of the diarchic understanding - the notion of two messiahs. The origin may be sought in biblical writings. The concept of an anointed priest, or a priestly messiah, is present in Leviticus 4:3, 5 and 16. The leadership of the Jewish community after the Babylonian exile was shared by the High Priest Joshua and Zerubbabel, the Davidic heir. Both are addressed as the “two sons of oil” in Zechariah 4:14 - note should be made that this can have implications upon the interpretation of 1QS 9:11 (“...*messiahs* of Aaron and Israel.”) and might hint towards the influence of the former. Zechariah envisages “...a dual leadership of priest and king.” Yet the High Priest managed alone and was supreme for the most part. Collins senses a dissatisfaction with the current Temple cult and proposes that the CD hoped for a messiah of Aaron who would atone for iniquity and replace the existing setup.²⁹ Talmon too traces “shared responsibilities” between the eschatological priestly and royal messiahs to Zechariah.³⁰

Finally, how widely representative the Qumran writings are is an important matter. Given the nature of these and a few related documents (the “core group”) - being sectarian documents and rule/law books - and coupled with the likelihood of the composition of much, if not all, of this material “within a relatively brief period,” Collins deems them to be generally representative of the views of the community as a whole, even though differences may emerge even within this core group.³¹ Both Flint and Evans, whilst denying the presence of a unified and consistent eschatology and messianic ideas in the Qumran writings, are nonetheless receptive to the presence of “central ideas or a common-core.”³²

Charlesworth is surely to be commended for advising general caution when approaching the Qumran writings. He notes that the Qumran community was active for three centuries. The original group, following the Righteous Teacher, was not the same as the later community around the time of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.E.). The views of the community could have fluctuated from time to time on a variety of issues. In addition to this, given the presence of non-sectarian writings in the “Qumran library,” it is not necessary that everything in the documents represent the views of the Qumran community.

²⁹ See discussion in John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 36, 92.

³⁰ Shemaryahu Talmon, ‘Waiting for the Messiah: The Spriritual Universe of the Qumran Covenanters’, pp. 124-126. See also the discussion in L. D. Hurst, ‘Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?’ in pp. 177-178.

³¹ The “core” writings were produced around the “...late second and early first centuries BCE.” See John J. Collins, “He Shall Not Judge by What His Eyes See”: Messianic Authority in the Dead Sea Scrolls’, p. 146. Collins recognises that there are also non-sectarian documents in the “Qumran library” and that not all were necessarily produced at Qumran and he allows for the possibility of development over time.

³² Craig A. Evans, Peter W. Flint, ‘Introduction’, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 5.

Realistically, we should expect to find both minority views and widely held views in different periods in the life of the community.³³ Charlesworth concludes, “Qumran theology was not a monolith.”³⁴ Most importantly, their general opinions, at any period, may not necessarily be reflective of the views of the *wider Jewish communities*, of which they were one member.³⁵

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³³ Craig A. Evans, Peter W. Flint, ‘Introduction’, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 7.

³⁴ J. H. Charlesworth, ‘From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives’, *Judaisms And Their Messiahs At The Turn Of The Christian Era*, p. 233.

³⁵ See the discussion in John J. Collins, “He Shall Not Judge by What His Eyes See”: Messianic Authority in the Dead Sea Scrolls’, in *Dead Sea Discoveries*, pp. 146-147.

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