Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Intent and importance of the study

Recent publications and studies indicate that more and more scholars are bringing their own well defined agendas to the interpretation of the biblical text. However, Gerald Bray imposes a warning that centuries of Christian tradition is ignored having little concern to find an overall hermeneutical framework in which to place the latest findings of critical scholarship.[1] This will lead to a loss of our treasure of hermeneutical traditions during centuries. My thesis plans to fill this gap.

My dissertation deals with two exegetical traditions, that of the early Jewish and the patristic schools. The research work for this project urges the need to analyze both Jewish and Patristic literature in which specific types of hermeneutics are found. The title of the thesis ("compared study of patristic and Jewish exegesis") indicates the goal and the scope of this study. These two different hermeneutical approaches from a specific period of time will be compared with each other illustrated by their interpretation of the book of Ruth.

Referring to the study of early Jewish interpretation, Richard Longenecker lists some important works and trends. He commented that a great deal of effort has been directed toward identifying, analyzing, and defining the hermeneutical features of ancient Judaism, not only within the Jewish Scriptures themselves, but also within the writings of Early Judaism and the earlier traditions of Rabbinic Judaism.[2] With regard to patristic study, Brian

[1] Gerald Bray, "Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present" (Illinois: Inter Vasity Press, 1996), 7

[2] Richard N. Longenecker, "Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period" 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), xxiv. Leading the field during the past decades have been such Jewish scholars as Daniel Boyarin (see Daniel Boyarin, "Intertextuality and the reading of midrash", Michael Fishbane (Michael Fishbane, "The Qumran Pesher and Traits of Ancient Hermeneutics," in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1977, 1.97-114; *idem*, Biblical Interpretation (1985); idem, "Use, Authority and interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *Mikra: Text, translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. M. J. Mulder, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988, 339-77; idem, *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington-Indiana University Press, 1989) and David Weiss Halivni (see D. W. Halivni, Peshat and Derash: *Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis*. New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991; idem, "Plain Sense and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis," in *the Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. P. Ochs. New York-Mahwah: Paulist, 1993, 107-41; David Weiss Halivni,

Daley remarks that scholars might wish to note two recent, substantial books that draw on patristic exegetical practice as a stimulus for new engagement with figural scriptural interpretation.[3] During the post-war renewal of biblical studies, Charles Kannengiesser pointed out that the debate was open to a hermeneutics of the reception of Scripture in Christian traditions.[4]Hermeneutic research became a dominant field among patristic studies. The scholars were mainly interested in exegetical trends and methods and their hermeneutical debate was to address the question of biblical typology or allegory as understood by the Fathers.[5]

Charles Kannengiesser then added the concerns of scholars for patristic study. The scholarly discussion brought to the attention of many patristic scholars the need for exploring more carefully the ideological thoughts of the Fathers, in particular in their biblical hermeneutics. Jean Danielou, for instance, described the sophisticated intricacies of patristic symbols, always being rooted in traditional readings of Scripture and molded by a variety of cultural settings.[6]

Most important of all, he commented that the interpretation of Scripture through ages could not remain alien to the social and political transformations of late antiquity. Biblical hermeneutics was affected by the general shift within the traditional culture reaching out towards its own challenging future.[7] This dissertation echoes this view. It discusses how the process of interpretation was affected by the interpreters' society in which they lived. This work in turn shows the relationship between the cultural variants of the exegetes and the biblical interpretation.

1.2 Aims and purposes

We concentrate on early Judaism's attitude toward Scripture as evidenced in the principles or axioms, which govern it use. In patristic exegesis, we examine

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Revelation restored: Divine Writ and Critical Responses (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997)

[3] Brian E. Daley, "Is Patristic Exegesis still Usable? *Some reflections on Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms* Ed. Ellen F. Davis & Richard B. Hays, (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003) 69; More patristic works are done. See Christopher R. Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 2001) and John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002)

[4] Charles Kannengiesser, "Handbook of Patristic Exegesis", 86

[5] Idem

[6] Idem

[7] Idem, 89

the approaches of the Fathers to the Scripture, especially the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, we focus the emphasis on the process of interpretation with regard to the interpreters' pre-set beliefs when they practice exegesis under specific historical and religious circumstances.

This work attempts to inform the present by examining the past. The approach used is to employ a historical examination of the use of the Bible in the early church to elucidate the contemporary hermeneutical task in order to help us unfold the meaning of Scripture for the contemporary reader.

1.3 Philosophical supposition and objectivity

The major contribution of this research is its reflection on the principles and framework in which the biblical commentaries were interpreted by different groups and individuals during the early Christian and Jewish periods of time. The principles followed then reflect the methodology by which the language of biblical revelation was examined so that it yielded insight into God's plan of redemption and its ramifications for both the life of the rabbinic as well as the Christian community. David S. Dockery made the good point that it will be noted that not only the theology, but also the philosophical presuppositions and hermeneutical concepts were taken over from the literary culture of the surrounding world, often developed into new and creative paradigms of interpretation.[8]

David Dockery commented that the apostles and the church fathers wrote for their own churches against their opponents, both to advance and to defend the Christian faith as they interpreted it. Even though the articulation of their faith was influenced by their context, culture, tradition, and presuppositions, all shared a common belief in the Bible as the primary source and authority for the Christian faith.[9]

The interpretation of the rabbinic and the patristic literature requires some standards of evidence and verifiability. This means objectivity and logic. The exegetes should carry out their interpretation in a way that is independent of their interests and preconceptions by applying disciplined, methodologically rigorous analysis of the evidence offered in the form of texts and human

[8] David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the light of the Early Church* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), 17
[9] Idem,15

remains. For this reason, the establishment and interpretation of texts from earlier stages is understood to be an inductive process governed by the rules of logic, the recognition of natural cause and effect, and the assignment of probability based on common human experience.

Brain Daley pointed out that the exegetes of the biblical texts have tended to focus their attention on trying to rediscover what the human author may have intended by the words and what the original hearers or readers would have understood by them, on the assumption that such original intent is the main constituent of the text's single, inherent meaning.[10] Brain Daley also pointed out the consequence that "modern historical criticism including the criticism of biblical texts is methodologically atheistic, even if what it studies is some form or facet of religious belief, and even if it is practiced by believers."[11] However, real objectivity of interpretation does not exist. All and every reading of the Bible is done from a specific set of principles and points of departure. This whole issue of objectivity was severely challenged by the theories of modern scholars. Among them are Popper, Kuhn and Gadamer.

Gadamer offers a much more profound and influential account of hermeneutics. Anthony Thiselton commented that Gadamer provided the theoretical and philosophical groundwork for the view that what count as criteria in interpretation depend, among other things, on the goal proposed for this or that process of interpretation.[12]Most theorists of interpretation today would also agree that a reader's understanding of a text will always, necessarily, be largely conditioned by the reader's own interests and prior experience--- by the horizon of understanding he or she brings to the act of engaging with the words of another. Understanding a text is precisely an event of interpretation of horizon: the author's and reader's horizon, along with the entire set of cultural and community assumptions, intellectual models, and religious value system through which each comes to participate in the world of intelligent discourse.

Brian Daley commented that it can never be a simple matter of the recovery of

[10] Brian E. Daley, SJ, "Is Patristic Exegesis still Usable? *Some reflections on Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms* Ed. Ellen F. Davis & Richard B. Hays, (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 72
[11] Idem
[12] Anthony Thiselton, "Biblical studies and theoretical hermeneutics" in *The Cambridge Companion To Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 104

objective, “original” meaning through a scientific historical criticism that is free of the concerns and commitments of the later reader.[13] In the process of interpretation, it is impossible to be completely objective.

1.4 Interpretation as a product of the exegetes’ culture

Indeed, interpretation varies according to the exegetes’ cultural and political background in which they live. Gerald Bray illustrated the real situation of the interpretation and stated that “Christians today are the product of the history of its interpretation.”[14] It showed that interpretation is no longer purely objective. It is within their specific context that the exegetes conduct hermeneutical work. The history of biblical interpretation begins when the first biblical traditions were created. What is selected in this process is a direct result of the perspectives, social norms, religious belief, political and economic needs of the person or community, which affects the exegetes.

Indeed, Daniel Patte commented that the outcome of interpretation necessarily depends upon the culture of the exegete. For the Church and the Church theologian, on the other hand, the same biblical text is Holy Scripture. The relevance of the text becomes important. It becomes the task of the hermeneutic to express the meaning of biblical texts for contemporary men.[15]Patte further added that any exegesis is dependent upon the culture of the exegetes who have to comply with the demand of their culture.[16]

Gerald Bray also echoed the view and pointed out the purpose of interpretation. A written revelation thus serves the double function of giving those who belong to the community of believers a common focus, and of excluding elements, which do not belong within the community. By establishing norms, a written revelation defines the character of the God whom we worship and closes the door to anything, which is incompatible with it. This double function is one of the chief distinguishing marks of any scriptural religion, and Christianity is no exception to this rule. It is the teaching of the church that its written revelation strikes that balance between individual experience and common confession

[13] Brian E. Daley, SJ, “Is Patristic Exegesis still Usable? *Some reflections on Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms* Ed. Ellen F. Davis & Richard B. Hays, (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 73
[14] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Illinois: Inter Vasity Press, 1996), 8
[15] Daniel Patte, *Early Jewish hermeneutic in Palenstine* (Montana: Society of Biblical Literature and Scholars Press, 1975), 3
[16] Idem

which is the special hallmark of the Christian's relationship with God.[17] Therefore, interpretation serves the reader of the community.

Kirsten Nielsen echoed the same view. He illustrated the role of context in the interpretation. He believed that the interpretation is to be read precisely in that context, which at the time in question, with its particular environment and in its specific situation, seems to be in agreement with the text.[18] As readers we are not independent of our own time and surroundings. We belong primarily to one or to several "interpretive communities", and therefore perceive within that/ those particular framework(s) of understanding.[19]

1.5 Research Methodology

In this study a deductive method is used to gather the historical facts from which a conclusion can be made. It is based on the material provided by traditional interpretation of ancient Jewish and Christian commentators. Studying their interpretations and comparing Jewish and Patristic exegesis, we may find patterns and principles in their interpretation of the book of Ruth. Through comparison of the two streams of exegesis of Jewish tradition and patristic fathers on the book of Ruth similarities and differences between them are pointed out aiming at formulating some general patterns and features. The formulated patterns give us insights in the concept of hermeneutics and the role of readers in interpreting the texts. Therefore both synthetic and analytic methods are used. Such comparison does not involve any moral judgment.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter two starts with the question of the forming of the Hebrew text. That is the basis for all interpretation, depending each time on the stage of developing and the form in which it was available at that specific time. We will discuss the theological foundations of the developmental history of the interpretation, since my research is a comparative study of two exegetical schools in antiquity. The model of Farrar[20] on the different periods of interpretation of these writings is used. It next traces out the Second Temple period as an important period for

[17] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Illinois: Inter Vasity Press, 1996), 18
[18] Kirsten Nielsen, *The Old Testament Library: Ruth* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997),11
[19] Idem
[20] Frederic W. Farrar, *History of interpretation* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1961)

the preparation of the formation of early Jewish exegesis. Moreover, the early Jewish documents such as Targumim, Mishnah and Talmud, in which we find indications of how this interpretation was applied in the different periods, are examined. Different Jewish groups are discussed against their backgrounds and the time and circumstances under which they lived. This chapter finally examines the effect of this historical and social background on the Jewish commentators at the time when the interpretative process was carried out.

Chapter three deals with the early Jewish exegetical approach of midrash. Most of the interpretive methods and products of rabbinic midrash could be found centuries earlier in the period preceding the gradual closing of the biblical canon as discussed in chapter two.

Chapter four presents an illustration of Jewish exegesis on the book of Ruth in terms of the social and cultural context of the interpreters. This paves the way for the comparative study of patristic literature in the next chapters. It proves that the pre-set belief system of the interpreters actually dictated their commentaries.

Chapter five studies the development of patristic exegesis, following the same approach used for studying early Jewish interpretation in the previous chapter. We first make a delineation of patristic literature. Once the period of time has been decided upon, the historical, political and social influences on patristic literature are indicated. This may be used to study the influence imposed on commentators of the early Christian church. There was a long tradition of exegetical trends formed during this period. Certain types of patristic exegetical methods were employed by commentators to interpret the book of Ruth. As with Jewish exegesis, we also need to investigate the socio-political and cultural environment of this literature, such as Hellenism, Stoicism and Platonism that affected the patristic interpretation of the book of Ruth in the last part of this chapter.

Chapter six deals with some techniques found, in patristic exegesis. Most scholars will acknowledge some form of development both in exegetical trends and in Christian theology. Various models of development have been constructed in order to characterize what is meant by the idea of development. The most important one is typology. The development of exegetical methods involved the most influential factors that affected the way this method was presented. The context was an influential factor in the early Christian trends of

interpretation. To understand the Christian exegetical features, the context including the historical, political and cultural background has to be understood as playing a major part.

Chapter seven is the illustration of the patristic fathers' interpretation on the book of Ruth. Just like early Jewish commentators, the patristic fathers urged for the protection of their own interests and beliefs under the political, cultural and theological challenges imposed on them.

Finally, chapter eight compares the exegetical patterns and principles found in patristic exegesis of Ruth with the early Jewish exegesis of Ruth. In this chapter the synthesis of the results of the study of two exegetical traditions and some theses are presented in this regard.

Chapter 2

Early Jewish commentary

2.1 Introduction

The process of "early" Jewish interpretation originated from Nehemiah's[1] interpretation of Scripture, in which exegesis was carried out in the Hebrew Bible. Discussing Nehemiah 8:8, Richard N. Longenecker lays out the purpose of the interpreter "to give the sense and make the people understand the meaning".[2] This involved two activities, reading the word of God and interpreting it for application in Israel's life. They are also the fundamental principles of biblical studies in Judaism. The dynamic relationship between concern for the sacred character of the words, their transmission to the next generation and their application to the exigencies of life has been the source of renewal for Judaism throughout its history. Charles Kannengiesser had made a good conclusion that it is the source of development of biblical interpretation in Judaism.[3]

Therefore, the traditional process of forming the Hebrew Bible is definitely determining the development of early Jewish exegesis. It is necessary to have a deeper examination of the way in which the existing tradition both in oral and written form, was used and interpreted. Moreover, the history of the interpretation is continuous. We need to trace out any effects of the continuity on the characteristics of early Jewish exegesis. This chapter deals with the general introduction of early Jewish commentary as follows:

First, in this chapter, we start with the question of the forming of the Hebrew text. That is the basis for all interpretation, depending each time on the stage of developing and the form in which it was available at that specific time. Second, we will discuss the theological foundations of the developmental history of the

[1] There is a common consensus among the scholars that Nehemiah's phase played a dominant role in the origin of early Jewish exegesis. The works include Richard N. Longenecker, "Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period" 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999); Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1996)
[2] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 8
[3] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 120

interpretation since my research is a comparative study of two exegetical schools in antiquity. I will trace these developmental foundations using the model of Farrar[4] on the different periods of interpretation of these writings. Third, as the history of interpretation is continuous, I then next trace out the Second Temple period as an important period for the preparation of the formation of early Jewish exegesis. Fourth, following Farrar on the developmental history of interpretation, I will examine the early Jewish documents such as Targumim, Mishnah and Talmud in which we find indications of how this interpretation was applied in the different periods indicated. Fifth, different Jewish groups who are responsible for these different interpretations are discussed against their backgrounds and the time and circumstances in which they lived. Sixth, all the discussions about the different interpretations are set in the specific historical and social context of their time. This means that the interpreters are influenced by their living historical environment. I will examine the effect of this historical background on the Jewish commentators at the time when the interpretative process was carried out. Finally I will draw my conclusion on Jewish exegesis indicating that I would apply the information in this chapter to a study of the way Ruth was interpreted in the chapter that follow.

2.2 The Forming of the Hebrew Text

2.2.1 Dual Torah

In this part, the Hebrew Bible will be examined showing the way existing tradition, either in oral or written form, was used and interpreted. With regard to the forming of the Hebrew Text, Rabbis believed that revelation consists of a "dual Torah."[5] One part is the Written Torah, or "written law," (*Miqra*) more generally called simply *Torah*.[6] The "written Torah" refers to the Hebrew Scriptures of ancient Israel: meaning the Torah, Genesis through Deuteronomy; the Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets; and the Writings, Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Chronicles, the Five Scrolls, and so on.

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[4] Frederic W. Farrar, *History of interpretation* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1961)

[5] Charles Kannengiesser is concerned with the difficulty of this classification. He said, "In practice, halakah and haggadah can be difficult to distinguish, since individual passages and even entire works (e.g. the Mishnah) often include examples of both categories. Both halakah and haggadah are concerned with resolving questions raised by the Written Torah, and by the reality of observing its commandments." Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 125

[6] Idem,121

The other part is the oral or memorized Torah. It was transmitted from master to disciple, from God to Moses, Moses to Aaron, Aaron to Joshua, and so on down, until it was ultimately recorded in the documents produced by the rabbinic sages of the first six centuries CE. These compilations then claim to preserve the originally oral tradition.[7] Rabbinic tradition holds that the Oral Torah contained a revelation of all possible interpretations of the written Torah to Moses.[8]

What Moses received on Mount Sinai was not simply a written text that needed to be understood in a straight-forward manner, but rather the Torah, the complete and forever authoritative revelation of God's will for his people Israel and for the world. This revelation was given in both oral and written form, the oral form containing the interpretation of the Torah and teachings not found in written Torah[9]. It was the responsibility of the rabbis to study the entire revelation continually in order to comprehend it ever more fully. Since all of God's will was contained in it, it was necessary that each generation deepen its understanding of the wisdom the revelation contained, applying it to its own age.[10]

Howard Schwartz believed that the ancient rabbis drew on the oral tradition they had received and cultivated it, giving birth, in the process, to a rich and vital legendary tradition. Yet it must never be forgotten that the original impulse out of which these legends were created was exegetical. Great importance was put on resolving contradictions and filling gaps in the narrative.[11]

In the opinion of Charles Kannengiesser, God said to Moses: "Write these things, for it is by means of these things that I have made a covenant with Israel" (Exo 34:27). When God was about to give the Torah, He recited it to Moses in proper order, Scriptures, Mishnah, Aggadah, and Talmud, for God spoke all these words (Exo 20:1), even the answers to questions which advanced disciples in the future were destined to ask their teachers did God

[7] Jacob Neusner, *Questions and Answers: Intellectual Foundations of Judaism*, 6
[8] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 121
[9] Julio Trebolle Barrera, *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible: An Introduction to the History of the Bible* (Michigan: Brill Academic Publishers, 1993), 497
[10] Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, "Introduction and Overview" in *A History of Biblical Interpretation Volume 1: The Ancient Period*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003) 26 ; Renee Bloch, *Midrash*, 34
[11] Howard Schwartz, *Re-imagining the Bible: The Storytelling of the Rabbis* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) xi

reveal to Moses! (*Tanuma* Buber (1985), *Ki Tissa* 58b)[12]

The theology of that part of the Torah becomes accessible when we know how to understand language for what it is: this-worldly record of the meeting of the Eternal in time with Israel. This specific type of language indicates some of the philosophies and the beliefs behind the rabbis.

2.2.2 The content and foundation of Torah: Halakhah and Haggadah

The torah stands on a dual foundation: on Halakhah and Aggadah. Halakhah should be the Pentateuch, or the body of (originally) oral teaching contained in Talmud and Midrash, that are legal in nature.[13] The word in rabbinic writing for "law" is halakah, from the Hebrew verbal root *halak*, "to go." Thus, Halakah was "the way", the ethical norm for how things are to be done.[14] Halakhah can either mean the entire corpus of the legal material or one particular religious law. It aims to define the laws and to discover in them the fundamental principles from which new laws for resolving new problems might be derived, as well as arguments for justifying certain customs, which already were traditional.[15] It lists 39 types of work and other activity types forbidden on the Sabbath day (cf Mishnah). It tries to control every aspect of life, from dawn to dusk, from birth to death, even reaching beyond the Jewish people to all humankind by means of the so-called rules of Noah.[16] It is easy to see the development of halakah as essentially developing from rabbinic disputations in the study-houses. Halakic literature develops in a clearly stratified manner. Each generation of rabbis understands itself as the successor and explainer of the preceding generation.[17]

On the other hand, Aggadah is those parts of Torah including written or oral sections that are narrative in nature. Abraham Heschel gives a good definition of Aggadah. "Narrative, the best linguistic equivalent of Aggadah, is meant to include also purported biography, theology, exhortation and folklore." [18]

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[12] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 121
[13] Renee Bloch, *Midrash*, 33; Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah: As Refracted through the Generations* Edited and Translated by Gordon Tucker (New York: Continuum, 2005) 1; Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 126; Jacob Neusner, *Questions and Answers*, 41
[14] Jacob Neusner, *Questions and Answers*, 49
[15] Renee Bloch, *Midrash*, 33
[16] Julio Trebolle Barrera, *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible*, 468
[17] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 126
[18] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah: As Refracted through the Generations*, 1; See

Haggadic teachings are not concerned to prescribe correct behavior or to show what is right or correct opinion. In a given haggadah, contradictory sources can be presented together; there is no need to arrive at a final decision or practice. In this way, differing traditions are all preserved. Howard Schwartz echoed this contradictory nature of Jewish legends. He pointed out that the principles of the midrashic method outline the development of the legendary tradition and discusses the tools developed for interpretation of these sacred texts, that permitted multiple interpretations, often of a contradictory nature, which were all regarded as legitimate.[19]

The distinction between homiletical midrash and legal interpretation also requires explanation. Legal midrash is halakhic, how one should walk or conduct himself or herself in life. Homiletical interpretation on the other hand is haggadic, how one narrates a story or explains a problem in the text. Haggadic midrash was much more imaginative in its attempts to fill in the gaps in Scripture and to explain away apparent discrepancies, difficulties and unanswered questions. Legal rulings were not to be derived from haggadic interpretation.[20]

2.2.3 How are Aggadah and halakah used?

Liturgical reading of the Scriptures held a place of honor in the synagogues. It provided the material for the sermon, which followed immediately upon it and was generally a commentary on the Scripture in the form of aggadah lesson. In the schools, this same biblical text was used for instruction; it was studied and commented on and a rule of life or halakah was drawn from it. Hence the Law became the subject matter for daily instruction and tradition.[21]

2.2.4 The traditional forming process of Hebrew Bible

The exegetical trend and tendency of the early Jewish community is closely related to the textual development and transmission history of the Hebrew Bible. Al Wolters affirmed this connection. He emphasized that the field of Old Testament textual criticism deals with the history of the transmission of the text

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also Renee Bloch, *Midrash*, 33; Jacob Neusner, *Questions and Answers*, 41

[19] Howard Schwartz, *Reimagining the Bible: The Storytelling of the Rabbis* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) xi

[20] Craig A Evans, *Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992) 118

[21] Renee Bloch, *Midrash*, 33

of the Hebrew Bible and the recovery of an authoritative starting point for its translation and interpretation.[22] In this part, we will first describe the historical line of the textual development of the Hebrew Bible and then using the description of this long process we will identify some exegetical trends and directions, which affected the formation of early Jewish exegesis. Now, we first start with the relationship between the discovery of Qumran scrolls and the Hebrew text.

(a) Qumran scrolls and the Hebrew Text

Basically the Qumran scrolls are into two groups. One group hails from the vicinity of Qumran, which is situated some five miles south of Jericho and two miles west of the shores of the Dead Sea. The place precedes the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), which is an important event for the textual history of the Old Testament. The scholars identify this group as coming from a Jewish sect of the "New Covenant".[23] The other[24] group consists of scattered manuscript finds from the region to the south of Qumran, Wadi Murabba'at (halfway between Jericho and 'Ein Gedi), Nahal Ze'elim and Massada, and exhibits the textual tradition of normative Judaism.

Most of the scholars laid emphasis on the Qumran Scroll as indication of the textual development of the Hebrew text. Scholars such as Shemaryahu Talmon found out that new sources of the pre Christian manuscripts from Qumran and from non-biblical writings, which have some pertinence to the issue, have revolutionized scholarly conceptions of the canonical process and of the transmission history of the biblical text, which is intertwined with it.[25] He also discusses the specific question of whether the Qumran finds did indeed shed some light on the crystallization of a closed canon of Hebrew Scripture,

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[22] Al Wolters, "The Text of the Old Testament" in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. David W. Baker & Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic & Apollos, 2004) 19

[23] The reader will find a valuable summary of the literature and the ideology of this group in F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (revised edition, New York, 1961)

[24] One often neglects to bring into play biblical fragments discovered at other sites in the Judaean Desert, which are relevant to the matter under review. See the comments in Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Old Testament Text" in *The Cambridge History of the Bible,* vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to Jerome,* ed. P.R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 159-99; reprinted in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. F. M. Cross Jr. and S. Talmon (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 182-92

[25] Shemaryahu Talmon, "*The Crystallization of the Canon of Hebrew Scriptures*" in the light of Biblical Scrolls from Qumran" in *The Book as book: the Hebrew Bible and the Judaean desert discoveries*, Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov eds (London: New Castle, DE: The British Library; Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 5

and on the societal and religious significance and function of that canon.[26] Furthermore, James Sanders also echoed his point of view. He said that, "the discovery has caused a review of nearly every aspect of biblical study including that of questions relating to the canons of Judaism and Christianity and denominations and groups within them."[27]

The first importance of Qumran scroll relating to the Hebrew text is that some of the biblical manuscripts from Qumran are, dated by scholars as coming from the third and many from the second and first centuries BCE. This dating has added a new dimension to the criticism of the biblical text and to the study of its history both in the original Hebrew and in the earliest ancient versions. Scholars have consensus that the Qumran scrolls precede the oldest extant manuscripts of any part of the Old Testament in the Hebrew Massoretic tradition by more than a millennium as well as those in Greek or any other translation by several centuries.[28] They are therefore of importance for an investigation into the history of the Hebrew text and into the processes of its transmission.

A second issue of importance is the witness of the formation of an eventual single authorized version from divergent variations of textual tradition. Shemaryahu Talmon pointed out that the biblical scrolls from Qumran are of decisive importance to exhibit practically all types of variants found in later witnesses.[29] This fact indicates that variations as such in the textual transmission cannot be laid exclusively at the door of careless scribes or sometimes unscrupulous and sometimes emendators and revisers. On the contrary, types of variants that have been preserved in the ancient texts both in Hebrew and in different versions may derive from divergent and ancient textual traditions. In the light of all the evidences from Qumran, it is possible to see that authoritative scriptural compositions were often passed from one generation to the next in a variety of text forms or multiple editions.[30]

Becoming aware of this diversity, the text critic can no longer hold on to ideas

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[26] Idem, 6
[27] James A. Sanders, "Canon", in *ABD*, I, 841
[28] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Crystallization of the Canon of Hebrew Scriptures*, 6
[29] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 1-41
[30] See the detailed and important statements on this diversity by Emmanuel Tov, "The Significance of the Texts from the Judean Desert for the History of the Text of the Hebrew Bible: A New Synthesis,' in *QONT*, pp.227-309, and by Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1999

of textual stability[31] and an anachronistic understanding of how scribes were faithful to the letter of the text that they were copying. These divergent traditions are represented in the extant witnesses. Each generation was keen to establish each variation as an officially acclaimed standard text. After the eventual crystallization of an official Massoretic text standard, new copies would have been based from the very start on that so-called *textus receptus*.

(b) The role of scribes

The beginning of the role of scribal learning signifies the end of prophetic inspiration. James Kugel indicated this trend in his work. The scribes being the interpreters of Scripture enjoyed an increasing prominence and authority in the period following the Babylonian exile. They were the guardians of writings preserved from Israel's ancient past.[32] Martin Hengel concluded that Ezra was an important figure during this time.[33] According to Josephus in his apology *Contra Apionem*, the authentic succession of the Prophets lasted from Moses to Artaxerxes. Josephus has Ezra, who in the seventh year of Artaxerxes[34] went up to Jerusalem.[35] The rabbis make him a restorer of the Torah. As a pupil of Baruch, Ezra was identified with Malachi. At the same time he is made author of the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. This means that he is the last inspired prophet. On the other hand, he is reckoned among the men of the "great synagogue."[36] Louis Ginzberg further commented that he is "the binding link between the Jewish prophet and the Jewish sage"[37], which means that he appears as the man of transition who concluded the time of revelation and opened up the era of scribal learning.

Scholars are in agreement about the work of scribes in the transmission. Eugene Ulrich believes that in antiquity certain scribes were engaged in the process of handing on the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures. They intentionally went beyond the simple copying[38] of the text. They worked creatively on the

[31] George J. Brooke, "The Rewritten Law, Prophets and Psalms: Issues for Understanding the text of the Bible" in *The Book as book: the Hebrew Bible and the Judaean desert discoveries* Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov ed.(London: New Castle, DE: The British Library; Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 33
[32] James Kugel, *Ancient Biblical Interpretation and the Biblical Sage*, 6
[33] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 161
[34] Apion 1.40-41
[35] Ezra 7: 1-2
[36] *Ab*. 1.1
[37] Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913) IV, 359
[38] Michael Fishbane's words about the work of scribes are that they not only copied what

traditional sacred text, dared to argument it and enrich it for the community and thus became contributors to the composition of the scriptures.[39] On the other hand, Shemaryahu Talmon connects the work of scribes with the literary process of the Hebrew Bible. He has described this type of scribe as "a minor partner in the creative literary process."[40] So, the role of scribes in the canonical process and the exegetical direction of the Hebrew Bible is significant.

Franz Oppenheim elaborates on the role of scribes in formulating and maintaining the growing biblical literary tradition. He defines the tradition as what 'can be loosely termed the corpus of literary texts, maintained, controlled, and carefully kept alive by a tradition served by successive generations of learned and well-trained scribes.'[41] The creative biblical scribes were actively handling on the tradition but they were also adding to it, enriching it and even making it adaptable and relevant. Insofar as the scribes were handing on the tradition, they became part of the canonical process: handing on the tradition is a constitutive factor of the canonical process. James Sanders refers to this aspect as "repetition."[42] The repetition in a sense works like a hammer, pounding home again and again that this material is important. The texts were authoritative text and through the "traditioning process" they were being made even more authoritative.

Furthermore, the work of scribes is also closely linked with the community's interest. These scribes made the received tradition adaptable to their circumstances and thus gave it another of its canonical characteristics. James Sanders terms it as "resignification."[43] That is the tradition was made important in its setting and concrete situation. Michael Fishbane also shared the same view. He illustrated that the basic role of scribes as custodians and tridents of this *traditum* (in its various forms) is thus self-evident. Scribes received the texts of tradition, studied and copied them, puzzled about their contents, and preserved their meanings for new generations.[44]

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came to hand but also responded in diverse ways to the formulations they found written in earlier manuscripts. Cf. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 23

[39] Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible,* 51

[40] Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Textual Study of the Bible: A New Outlook," in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (ed. F. M. Cross and S. Talmon; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975) 321-400, esp. 381

[41] Quoted in Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Crystallization of the Canon of Hebrew Scriptures*, 6

[42] James Sanders, *Canon and Community*, 22

[43] Idem

[44] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 23

The class of Jewish scribes that emerged in the post-exilic period had a definable historical character. The tasks and procedures of scribes are abundantly referred to in canonical and extra-canonical rabbinical literatures. They had a major part in the epochal transformation of ancient Israel into ancient Judaism and also in ancient Israelite exegesis into ancient Jewish exegesis.[45] However, these scribes were not so much a new class or new beginning in ancient Jewish history but rather the heirs of a long standing and existing multifaceted Israelite scribal tradition, whose own roots in turn were struck in the soil of the great ancient Near Eastern civilizations. Elias Bickerman provides the evidence for this, beginning already in the third millennium BCE, with copies of old Sumerian school-texts. He shows how it continues throughout the second and first millennium BCE using Akkadian text copies from the late first millennium.[46]

Regarding the change of ancient Israelite exegesis in to early Jewish exegesis, Elias Bickerman agrees with Fishbane that the origins of the scribes are to be found in older history. Elias Bickerman concluded that the most important result of the Greek impact on Palestinian Judaism since the fourth century BCE was the formation of a Jewish intelligentsia, different from the clergy and not dependent on the sanctuary.[47] "Scribe" was the technical term used for a public official who entered the civil service as his profession. In both Egypt and Babylonia, where the native writing was still used, the priest was now called "the scribe". The judges and teachers of the people lived at the temples being the centers of native learning. In Egypt and Mesopotamia, there begins a cleavage between the sacerdotal and the secular interpreters of the Divine Law in Judaism.[48] Bickerman pointed out that by about 190 BCE Ben Sira, a Jewish sage, urges his hearers to honor the priest and to give him his portion according to the Law. He does acknowledge the authority of the High Priest over statutes and judicial affairs, but it is the scribe, who advises the rulers and the assembly in the gate where he sits in the seat of the judge and expounds righteousness and judgment.[49] The role of scribe was therefore increasing in importance.

In both Jerusalem and Rome, the administration of justice was no longer in the

[45] Idem, 24
[46] Elias Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees* (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), 67
[47] Idem
[48] Idem, 68
[49] Idem, 68-9

hands of the priests in the third century BCE. Bickerman further quoted the words of Ben Sira inidcating that Ben Sira mentions the jurisdiction of the popular assembly in the execution of punishment for adultery. But for most of the time he speaks of the "rulers." Elias Bickerman commented that He advises his reader: "Gain instruction so that you may serve the potentate."[50] Ben Sira has in mind the agents of the Macedonian kings such as Zenon, well known on account of recently discovered papyri. As servant of his Greek master, the Jewish scribe becomes a legitimate interpreter of the Divine Law.[51] This is the beginning of the foundation of the exegetical and interpretative role of the scribe.

Moreover, the Chronicler also regards instruction in the Law as the privilege and duty of the Levites and considers the scribes as a class of the Levites.[52] In the royal charter given to Jerusalem in 200 BCE the scribes of the sanctuary form a special and privileged body. The foreign rulers of the Orient needed expert advice as to the laws and customs of their subjects. Bickerman pointed out that Antiochus III's proclamation concerning the ritual arrangements at Jerusalem could not be drafted without the collaboration of Jewish jurists.[53] At the same time, the lay scribe, who is powerful in the council of the Greek potentates, became an authority in the Jewish assembly owing to his influence with the foreign master.

Daniel, who explains the secrets and meaning of royal dreams at the Babylonian court, is the ideal scribe as visualized by Ben Sira. On the other hand, the scribe is not only counselor of kings and assemblies, but also a wise man and teacher. Elias Bickerman quoted the words of Ben Sira, "Turn to me, you ignorant," says Ben Sira, "and tarry in my school"[54] He promises as the fruit of his teaching the acquisition by the pupil of "much silver and gold." But he gives to his pupil "wisdom, and all wisdom cometh from the Lord."[55] So his scribe and his school of wisdom are the forerunners of the Pharisaic scholar in the next generation. This Pharisaic scholar regards learning as the highest of human values and teaches that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but is prepared to serve his Master not for the sake of reward. We see here the seed and root for the development of Pharisees exegesis in the early Jewish

[50] Idem, 69
[51] Idem, 69
[52] II Chron. 34:13
[53] Elias Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, 69
[54] Idem, 71
[55] Idem, 71

community.

Most important of all, the work of scribes brought about an important exegetical trend for the next generation. Michael Fishbane described this trend. The traditions and teachings from scribal practice were undoubtedly transmitted orally throughout the biblical period.[56] The interpreted tradition may be regarded as non-Scriptural oral traditions of early Judaism. It is only when these materials achieve literary form that a historical inquiry can examine their developments. A fascinating record of these developments has left its traces in the Massoretic Text (MT) as well as in the other principal textual versions (like the Septuagint, Samaritan, and Peshitta texts). This is central for the present purpose of our study since scribal comments found in these developments are formally exhibiting striking exegetical diversity. Fishbane added a point that they may serve as typological prolegomenon to the interpretations found in inner-biblical legal and aggadic exegesis.[57] It is a primary responsibility of scribes to transcribe the traditum, and scribal practice is necessarily a primary locus for textual interpretation and may therefore serve as a point of departure for an examination of exegesis within the Hebrew Bible as a whole. In sum, scribal practice evokes and marks out the two constituent aspects of tradition: the transmission and reinterpretation of received text and traditions.

2.2.5 Textual development and Transmission history of Hebrew Bible

Shemaryahu Talmon demarcates the period in which the textual development and transmission history of Hebrew Bible is to be discussed. The transmission of the Hebrew text lies between the time of its initial inception (varying from book to book), and its eventual form in the days of Origen.[58] Through this period, we will trace out the exegetical trends associated with textual development and the transmission history of the Hebrew Bible as related to the formation of early Jewish exegesis.

(a) Canonical process varying from book to book

We may discuss the canonical process with respect to the formation of the various books in the Bible. This is important to understand the exegetical development. Martin Hengel advocated that a period of scripture production

[56] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 23
[57] Idem, 23-24
[58] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 164

and many-faceted exegesis are not separated from each other.[59] During the Second Temple Period, the history of interpretation is also the history of the canon. The formation of the canon of the Hebrew Bible took place in a constant process of interpretation.

Now we can go into the issue of canon. There is common agreement that we should rather refer to the "canonical process", than simply using the term "canon". Eugene Ulrich defined the canonical process as follows: "It is the process by which the individual traditions were collected and composed as present books of the Bible, by which books of a similar nature were collected into groupings as sections of our present canon and by which differing parties within Judaism struggled for the supremacy of the section of the canon they believed to be more important (e.g., the Law or the Prophets)".[60] Another scholar, Sid Leiman, has also offered a definition of "a canonical book": "A canonical book is a book accepted by Jews as authoritative for religious practice and/or doctrine, and whose authority is binding upon the Jewish people for all generations".[61] Furthermore, such books are to be studied and expounded in private and in public. The issue of canon is both a historical and a theological issue and these two perspectives cannot be either totally fused or totally kept separate. Eugene Ulrich made the claim that the method of composition of the Scriptures is a process which goes through the dialectical development of scripture."[62] This means that the Scripture, which began as a result of experience, was produced through a process of traditions[63]being formulated about that experience and again being reformulated by interpreters of that tradition in dialogue with the experience of their own communities and with that of the larger culture.[64] As a whole, scholars emphasize the developmental nature and the reaction to communal interest as background involved when we deal with the canonical process in relation to the textual development.

It is also believed that canon denotes a closed list. Bruce Metzger says, the

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[59] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism,* 158
[60] Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, 52
[61] Quoted in Idem, 53-4
[62] Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, 52
[63] It refers to James Sander's words "tradition being retold and reshaped faithfully but creativity". See Sanders, *Canon and Community*, 33
[64] Eugene Ulrich and William G. Thompson, "The Tradition as a Resource in Theological Reflection --- Scripture and the Minister," in J. D. Whitehead and E. E. Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) 31-52, esp. 36

process by which the canon was formed "was a task, not only of collecting, but also of sifting and rejecting."[65] He is speaking of the New Testament, but the same process was at work with respect to the Hebrew Bible. Ulrich echoed and expounded the view that the simple judgment that certain books are binding for one's community is again a matter of authoritativeness. The reflexive judgment that these books are binding while others are not is a judgment concerning canon.[66]

Ulrich argues that there is no canon as such in Judaism prior to the end of the first century CE or in Christianity prior to the fourth century CE, that it is confusing to speak of an "open canon," and that "the canonical text" is an imprecise term.[67] Prior to the end of the first century, we do not have a canon in either Judaism or Christianity. We do have a canon-in-the-making but we do not have a finalized canon. We may approve this point by Qumran evidence. Martin Hengel insisted that the Old Testament canon was still open because the Essenes as far as the Christians spirit-inspired revelation is concerned was still continuing. No fixed canon can be ascertained at this stage.[68]

Do we have a canonical list prior to the end of the first century? It depends and varies. We may make a simplification. Torah is surely already included. Most of the Prophets is likely to be included whereas some parts of the Writings may already exist. However, Ulrich believe that the list was not stable.[69] The contemporary believers were not fully conscious of and were not in agreement on this aspect of the sacred texts. It is better to describe the situation this way: there was a category of sacred, authoritative books to which further entries could be added, and this category contained a number of books that were always included and always required to be included. The contents of "the Law" seem clear: the five books of Moses. However, there is still some controversy about the contents of the Prophets. Barr recommend that, "instead of the three-stage organization familiar to us, there probably was for a considerable time a two-stage conception, using only the two terms, the Torah and the "Prophets".[70] This view will be further discussed later.

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[65] Metzger, Canon of the New Testament, 7. Note Athanasius's directive (cited by Metzger, 212): "Let no one add to these; let nothing be taken away from them."
[66] Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, 57
[67] Idem, 56
[68] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their Interpretation in Second Temple Judaism*, 159
[69] Idem, 60
[70] Quoted in Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, 61

(b) The Tripartite Division of the Old Testament

The three-stage canonization theory comprises the final canonization of the Law at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah at 400 BCE[71], the Prophets about 200 BCE and the Hagiographa by the rabbinic academy of Jamnia (Yabne) 90 CE. H. Graetz apparently was the first to attribute to Jamnia the role of 'closing' the canon: Both the Law and the Prophets were confirmed by the assembly of Nehemiah since the departure of the Samaritans was occasioned in part by the introduction of readings from the Prophets. The majority of the Hagiographa were confirmed by, a rabbinic assembly in 65 CE and the final two books, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs, by the school at Jamnia.[72]

Undoubtedly, this theory that the three divisions of the Hebrew Old Testament represented three successive acts or stages of final canonization was increasingly attractive to nineteenth-century scholars.[73] They had consensus that a collection of the Prophets was probably made by Ezra at the return from the Exile and added to the existing sacred Law. Afterwards the collection of the Hagiographa was completed during the period of Persian supremacy.[74] It also rapidly gained and continued to have widespread acceptance.[75] The Torah received its final recognition by the fifth century BCE and the Prophets by 200 BCE.

However, there are some reservations to this theory. One of the scholars, W. R. Smith, had some criticism on Graetz's work on the formation of the Hagiographa. He stated that the work of Graetz is 'a model of confused reasoning.'[76] Moreover, the third collection (of Hagiographa) was formed after the second division, had been closed by a sifting process not easily explained.[77] Besides some reservation against the three-stage theory, there is also much opposition against it. The scholars made some telling points and

[71] Cf. Neh 8-10
[72] H. Graetz, *Kohelet*, Leipzig 1871, 147-173; However, Graetz, who was followed by S. Zeitlin, offered only a makeshift reconstruction designed to accommodate his first century CE dating of Ecclesiastes and the Maccabean dating of other Hagiographa (12f., 148). Cf. R.T. Beckwith, '*The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*', Compendia, II, 1 (1988), 58-61
[73] E. Earle Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity: Canon and Interpretation in the Light of Modern Research* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1991), 37
[74] For criticism of the nineteenth-century consensus cf. B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, Philadelphia, 1982, 52ff.
[75] G. Wildeboer, *The Canon of the Old Testament*, London 1895, 144; F. Buhl, *Canon and Text of the Old Testament*, Edinburgh 1892, 9-12, 25 ff.; H. E. Ryle, The Canon of the Old Testament, London 1909, 105, 119
[76] W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, (London 1892), 169
[77] Idem, 179

showed a commendable caution.[78] They demonstrate that we have no positive evidence when or by whom the sacred books were collected and arranged. There is only little evidence for the hypothesis that the second division of the canon grew with each prophet adding the book until Malachi completed the collection.

E. Earle Ellis pointed out that the three-stage theory was lacking recognition.[79] First, it was not based on concrete historical evidence but on inferences. It was criticized that it was only based superficially on the estimate of the evidence of Josephus, Ben Sira and the academy of Jamnia (Yabne). However, the testimony of Josephus in 96 CE to a universal, clearly defined and long settled canon[80] contradicts any theory of an undetermined canon in first-century Judaism. Second, for certain books it presupposed a late dating that especially since the discovery of the Qumran library can no longer be entertained.

With the failure of the three-stage canonization theory, at least in its traditional form, the origin and meaning of the tripartite division of the Hebrew Bible remain a very open question. F. F. Bruce rightly describes recent developments as 'the collapse of the century-old consensus."[81] The following suggestions may contribute to a more satisfactory answer. Arrangements other than the tripartite were known in Judaism. Ellis prompted that the Septuagint preserves a fourfold division --- Pentateuch, Historical Writings, Poetic (Wisdom) Literature, Prophets --- that is probably pre-Christian, and other sources indicate that a tripartite pattern was not a fixed or necessary conception.[82] We may witness that the later Masoretic Bible in a number of ancient manuscripts shows a fourfold division: Pentateuch, Megillot, Prophets, Hagiographa.[83]

However, the tripartite scheme was well recognized by the Jewish community. It was attested by Ben Sira, Josephus and the rabbinic tradition and perhaps by the community at Qumran, the New Testament and Philo. It was apparently

[78] W. J. Beecher, 'The Alleged Triple Canon of the Old Testament,' *JBL* 15 (1986), 118-128; W. H. Green, *General Introduction to the Old Testament: the Canon*, London 1899, 19-118
[79] E. Earle Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 38
[80] James Barr, *Holy Scripture* (Philadelphia 1983) 49-74, 51. He views 'canonization' as explicit acts of choosing and listing some books and excluding others concludes that early Judaism had no 'canon'. He seems to confuse the concept with a particular terminology and process.
[81] F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, (Downers Grove IL 1988) 9; For attempts to reconstruct the history of the reception of the Old Testament canon cf. Childs, 54-57
[82] E. Earle Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 44-5
[83] Idem, 45

the prevailing form in which it was used in first century CE Judaism. The prevalence of the tripartite system is upheld because it seems to have arisen from the role of Scripture in the cultic community, in the synagogue readings if the activity and traditional picture of Ezra are accurate guides in this matter.

From the first century CE and probably much earlier the Law and the Prophets were read in the synagogue every Sabbath on a systematic basis.[84] On the other hand, the Hagiographa were used only on special occasions or in the case of the Psalms for different parts of the service. Certain rabbis rearranged the Masoretic Bible into four divisions 'for liturgical or ritual purposes,'[85] and others who at an earlier time transferred two of the Megillot (Ruth and Lamentations) and the book of Daniel from the Prophets to the Hagiographa may have been motivated by similar considerations.[86] That is if Ruth, Lamentations and Daniel were excluded from the cycle of weekly readings or were designated for reading only on special occasions such as holy days, this would on the above analogy have resulted in their transferal to the Hagiographa.

Ellis affirmed the importance of cultic use in the classification of the canon.[87] Jewish tradition associates Ezra and the priests all with the establishment of the public reading of Scripture and with the ordering of the canon. If it in part represents a later idealized picture, it supports nonetheless an early and close connection between the canon and its cultic usage.[88] It also supports the supposition that between the time of Ezra (400 BCE) and of some letters and epistles from Qumran (150 BCE) and the prologue of Ben Sira (132 BCE), when the tripartite canon is first attested, priestly circles or another body or bodies related to them, classified the biblical books to accord with their use in worship. When the use varied, these circles apparently reclassified the affected book within the canonical divisions - a relatively simple procedure before the advent of the codex. They thereby maintained the relationship established by Ezra between the canonical structure and the hermeneutical context.

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[84] Acts 13:15, 27; 15:21; Luke 4:16
[85] Ginsburg, 3
[86] Anti-apocalyptic tendencies in post-70 rabbinic Judaism could have occasioned the transfer of Daniel to the Hagiographa and consequently its removal from the Haftara readings. E. Earle Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 45
[87] E. Earle Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 46
[88] Cf. G. Ostborn, *Cult and Canon* (Uppsala, 1950) 15ff., 96F.

(c) Oral tradition and written transmission of textual development

Shemaryahu Talmon appropriately delineates the initial stage of the biblical literature as an oral phase, which precedes written documentation.[89] Jacob Neusner pointed out that the oral tradition refers to the memorized Torah. It was transmitted from master to disciple, from God to Moses, Moses to Aaron, Aaron to Joshua, and so on down until it was ultimately recorded in the written documents produced by the rabbinic sages of the first six centuries CE. These compilations then claim to preserve the original oral tradition.[90] Rabbinic tradition holds that the Oral Torah contained a revelation of all possible interpretations of the written Torah to Moses.[91] We may witness the trend from the relative preponderance of the two vehicles of transmission of literary material, the oral and the written through the development of Hebrew text.

Talmon described the transition of the process as a gradual one.[92] The period of the Babylonian Exile after the destruction of the First Temple, i.e. the middle of the sixth century BCE could be taken as a rough dividing line. The definite shift of emphasis from oral to written transmission of the biblical books would thus have become clearly apparent during the period of the Return, i.e. at the end of the sixth and in the fifth century BCE. From a wider historical viewpoint, it may be termed the Persian period. These considerations indicate that social and political phenomena contributed to this development.

During the early third century BCE, the written transmission of biblical literature gradually started to gain importance. With this transition went along the compilation and final fixation of the text. This brought about firstly the issue of preserving and handing down the text as faithful as possible and secondly interpreting the text. A new era of basically different literary standards and norms had begun.

During the period under review, the Jewish scribes and sages decided on and carried out the minute fixation of the consonantal text of the scriptures in the original Hebrew tongue. At this stage, we may also witness the favorable conditions for various kinds of exegetical developments. First the absence of

[89] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 164
[90] Jacob Neusner, "Questions and Answers: Intellectual Foundations of Judaism" (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005) 6
[91] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis,* 121
[92] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 165

vowels meant that many a Hebrew consonant group could be differently pronounced[93] and from this resulted the fact that a variety of meanings could be attached to one and the same word in the text. When ultimately vowels were introduced into the Hebrew text of the Bible, these pronunciation variants sometimes became the bases of *variae lectiones*.[94]

The lack of any system of inter-punctuation in written Hebrew at that time was another factor, which gave rise to different interpretations of many passages. These diverging interpretations may also in the end turn up as variants in versions, which are based on fully inter-punctuated manuscripts.[95] The full establishing of these features of the text, which are complementary to the basic Hebrew consonantal text, namely the vowel system, inter-punctuation, and the subdivision of the text into paragraphs, was carried out later on by the various schools of Massoretes, when vocalisers and inter-punctuations flourished in the last quarter of the first millennium CE.[96]

The Massoretic notes found in the margin of present day editions of the Hebrew Bible are a collection of official rabbinic critical and informational notes on the Hebrew text of the Bible. Jacob Weingreen interprets the Hebrew noun as an inflected form of the verb *masar*, meaning “handed over” or “delivered”[97]. *Massoreth* means “that which “tradition” has handed on from one generation to another. This collection of textual notes is attributed to the rabbinic authorities of Tiberias in the seventh and eighth centuries CE who are designated as “the keepers of the traditions”. From this Hebrew word *Massoreth*, the term *Massoretes* was coined to denote the Tiberian textual authorities and the adjective *massoretic* to indicate the traditional and authorized recension of the Hebrew Bible, which has come down to us from them.

Jacob Weingreen emphasized that the Massoretes were not innovators in providing critical and informational notes on the text of the Hebrew Bible. Their contribution rather represents the orderly arrangement of details - the culmination of a literary process, which was in operation centuries earlier. Therefore, this rabbinic preoccupation with the text of the Hebrew Bible may

[93] The vowels had been called *matres lectionis* in the text to help them with correct pronunciation.
[94] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 165
[95] Idem, 160
[96] Idem
[97] The Latin equivalent is *trado*, from which the English word “tradition” comes. See Jacob Weingreen, *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible*, 11

be traced back stage by stage at least to the late post-exilic period of the history of Israel.[98] Weingreen found records in the Talmud, which indicate an established tradition in history, which culminated in these Talmudic records.[99] We therefore have evidence of this kind of literary activity already during the formative years of the Hebrew Bible, which we can even be traced back to the period antedating the Greek version, the Septuagint that is before the third to second centuries BCE. The antiquity of this literary process becomes evident from the presence in the texts of both the Hebrew Bible and of the Septuagint incorporating textual notes. As conclusion, the tradition brought about in late post-exilic period may mix with exegetical direction and tendency and finally shape the final text of Hebrew Bible.

We now go to the final phase in the textual history of the Old Testament. It may be reckoned to extend from the end of the last century BCE to the beginning of the third century CE. It is regarded as a vigorous process of textual standardization, which affected practically all renderings. Shemaryahu Talmon urged us to take into account the impact of socio-political events on the history of the text, especially the emergence of Christianity and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.[100] The finalization of the rift between the Synagogue and the Church was incomparably more important and decisive than any preceding clash of the main stream of Judaism with deviating movements. The insistence of both Jews and Christians on basing the cardinal tenets of their beliefs on the sacred scriptures necessitated a clear definition of the text on which these claims were to be grounded. Further, the destruction of the Second Temple seriously impaired the social cohesion of Jewry. Where the temple had previously ensured some unity of the text or at least had prevented its dissolution it now divided into innumerable streamlets of textual tradition.

The existence of quotations differing widely from each other in rabbinic writings and therefore differing in their exegetical comments as well, particularly in Midrash literature, indicates the use of texts deviating from the reading of the later Massoretic text. This fact not only deals a severe blow to the so-called *Ur-text* hypothesis, but also to the less rigorous “one recension”[101] theory.

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[98] Idem, 11-12
[99] Idem, 12
[100] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 176
[101] “One Recension” theory refers to a development that the whole range of variants leads to the simple recognition that all surviving codices are relatively late in relation to the *originals.* They all represent one recension and all stem from one source. Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Old Testament Text,” in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. Frank Moore Cross and

Rival theories for these differences have been presented. All of these set out to account for the co-existence of divergent text traditions of the Old Testament in the pre-Christian rabbinic and the early Christian period, both in Hebrew as well as in Aramaic, and also in Greek and possibly also in Latin translations. Shemaryahu Talmon identified three textual developments in this phase of the tradition.[102] They are illustrated in:

(a) divergent textual traditions exhibited in quotations in rabbinical literature;
(b) parallel Aramaic translations of the Pentateuch. It stems from a period later than the one under discussion here. They are most probably from pre-Origenic prototypes. We refer here to the Targum Onkelos (which possibly originated in Babylonia, and certainly was redacted there), Pseudo-Jonathan, of Palestinian origin, and a third Aramaic version which until recently had been unknown but only now has been proved to represent in fact a fully fledged Jerusalem Aramaic translation;
(c) the propagation of diverse Greek translation exhibited in an almost codified form in the parallel columns of the *Hexapla*, and sometimes preserved in the form of variant-quotations from the Old Testament in the Apocrypha, the New Testament and the writings of the early Church Fathers, and also in Jewish hellenisitic culture, especially in the works of Flavius Josephus.

There is common consensus among scholars that the further back the textual tradition of the Old Testament is traced, i.e. the older the biblical manuscripts examined are and the more ancient the records which come to the knowledge of scholars proves to be, the wider is the overall range of textual divergence between them.[103] The existing variants available to us cannot be simply explained as having arisen solely from the cumulative effect of imperfect copying and faulty recopying of the text over many centuries. Rather, we may explain this phenomenon by referring to the nature of a *textus receptus*. The later on accepted Masoretic *textus receptus* was the result of concerted efforts by rabbinic academy, especially that of Jamnia. The eventual emergence of a commonly used *textus receptus* should be conceived of as the end result of a protracted process, which culminated in a *post factum* acclamation during the first or probably at the latest in the second century CE. The already extant form of each single rendering in turn marked the apex of a long chain of developments. In the course of history, however, divergent text-traditions had

Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975),14
[102] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 176-7
[103] Idem, 162-3

been progressively abolished.[104]

2.3 The "Early" Stage of Jewish exegesis

2.3.1 Farrar's historical approach

To be more systematic, we start out with the problem of dividing the exegetical process into periods from a scholarly historical approach. Most influential here is the work of Farrar. As far as the long history of hermeneutics is concerned, scholars had divided it into different historical developmental phases. Fredric Farrar proposed a seven-period system of biblical interpretation in his famous work *History of Interpretation*.[105] His classification of the time framework seems to be basically historical and chronological. There are seven main periods of Biblical interpretation. Roughly speaking, the *Rabbinic* phase lasted for 700 years, from the days of Ezra (180 BCE) to those of Rab Abina (498 CE). The *Alexandrian*, which flourished from the epoch of Aristobulus (BCE 180) to the death of Philo, and which was practically continued in the Christian Schools of Alexandria, from Pantaenus (CE 200) down to Pierius. The *Patristic*, which in various channels prevailed from the days of Clement of Rome (CE 95) through the Dark Ages to the *Glossa Interlinearis* of Anselm of Laon (CE 1117).

The classification of the Rabbinic period coincides with the Patristic period under Farrar's scheme. This delineation of time closely resembles the rabbinic and Jewish period of interpretation. This is why we can make a comparison of interpretation strategies on the book of Ruth in this shared social and cultural framework and context. The dating and specific delineation of patristic literature will be discussed in Chapter Five.

However, Frederic Farrar's classification still needs to be modified and clarified some more. Moises Silva states that the most influential work in English has been Frederic W. Farrar's *History of interpretation*. However, he criticizes his

[104] Talmon cited the creation of the Septuagint as an example. The creation of the Septuagint as portrayed in the pseudepigraphical *Letter of Aristeas*, the compaction of the Aramaic Targums, the eventual forming of the Massoretic text and also the creation of the Samaritan Version are all the crowning event of parallel processes of textual tradition. The Samaritan Version is the crowning event in a process of textual unification. These processed had been set on foot by the needs of socio-religious organizations such as ——the Synagogue, the Samaritan community and the Christian Church. See Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Old Testament Text*, 178

[105] Frederic W. Farrar, *History of interpretation* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1961) 12

work as "impressive and learned but also very misleading."[106] His criticism is mainly aimed at Farrar's negative approach to the history of interpretation. Farrar sets no connection between the periods of biblical interpretation. Indeed, we should be alarmed that there are limitations to his scheme of chronological development of biblical interpretation. The usual chronological approach is convenient and for certain purposes pedagogically more effective. Unfortunately, Silva believed that surveys of this type lead to a somewhat atomistic and item-by-item description that fails to uncover some of the more interesting and suggestive connections.[107]

Despite the criticism, Farrar's theory on the classified and chronological nature of the development does still provide a framework for the comparative study of Jewish and Patristic literature because Jewish commentary and Patristic literature fall in the same period of development and share the same political and socio-cultural environment. In this research, we lay emphasis on the continuity of social and cultural influences on two types of biblical interpretation, both the Jewish and Patristic ones.

With regard to Jewish commentary concerned, modern scholars have made a great contribution to the delineation of the periods of the rabbinic texts.[108] They believed that determining the stages of how rabbinic texts evolved as part of an ancient tradition, embraces identifying specific generations of rabbis with the emergence of particular texts. For example, texts in the Mishnah are identified with Rabbi Judah the Prince. Furthermore, many texts cite the names of important rabbis in connection with specific opinions. Some modern scholars treat such attributions as historically accurate and take their attributions at face value. Other modern scholars rather evaluate these texts, in terms of the historical evolution of rabbinic literature or as apologetics by the later rabbinic elite. [109] Despite the problems involved in historical

[106] Moises Silva, *Has the church misread the Bible*, 32
[107] Idem
[108] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 122
[109] The "historical" approach to rabbinic literature would be represented in the writings of S. Safrai ed., *The Literature of the Sages, Part 1*, Compendia rerum Iudaicarum and Novum Testamentum, section two (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987). The minimalist approach is taken by the school of Jacob Neusner, "The Use of the Mishnah for the History of Judaism Prior to the Time of the Mishnah: A Methodological Note," *JSJ* 11 (1980): 177-85, and in his many books. For a survey of the problem, one may consult the summary, "Handling Rabbinic Texts: The Problem of Method," in September, *Introduction*, 45-55. Stemberger also provides a *status questionis* discussion of the redaction and textual histories of the major texts of rabbinic Judaism.

reconstruction of rabbinic history up to the eleventh century, it is possible to describe genres of rabbinic literature in their chronological sequence. In order to simplify the discussion we shall assign them to the eras, which the medieval rabbis utilized when they described them. The work of Stemberger in the bibliography will provide guidance for the discussions of rabbinic chronology by modern scholars.[110]

As said before, the continuity from the Second Temple period to the early Jewish period is clearly witnessed. David Dockery also elaborated this point and said that, "the developments in early Christian interpretation, noting both continuities and discontinuities were experienced".[111] As stated above we are of opinion that Jewish and Christian exegesis followed more or less the same trends in the same periods. This means that continuity refers to the previous ages and periods whether social or cultural. Both impose influences on biblical interpretation. This causes the history of the interpretation to be continuous. The period of time before the "early" phase of exegesis imposes some variables that all affect the existing era of interpretation. The previous era surely contributes to the tradition and the presupposition of the commentators. On the other hand, discontinuity means that a certain period or age, has its own distinctive features that are different from the previous period. Dockery's work attempts to look at the present by also looking at the past. His approach is to employ a historical examination of the use of the Bible in the early church to elucidate the contemporary hermeneutical task in order to help us unfold the meaning of Scripture for the contemporary reader.[112] It is fair to suppose that the development of early Jewish rabbinic interpretation can be the same as Christian interpretation because they share the same socio-cultural framework and history as framework within a specific set of time. Continuity is a main feature of the historical approach to exegetical development. Frederic Farrar also shared Dockery's view for the study of the interpretation with regard to the view that a certain age should learn from the past.[113]

2.3.2 The age before Nehemiah

The time frame of the early Jewish period is now discussed. It starts with the

[110] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, 122
[111] David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the light of the Early Church* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992),16
[112] Idem,16-17
[113] Frederic W. Farrar, *History of interpretation*,15

early age before Nehemiah. We should make clear how "early" is defined and delineated. A historical and developmental perspective is used as methodology. We first define the early stage of Jewish commentaries by comparing it to the time frame of patristic literature.

The early stage of Jewish tradition urged for a type of hermeneutics, in which its tradition could be upheld and re-interpreted for each following generation of Jews. By the 1st century CE, Jewish interpretation started to standardize after a long process and time of development. We may describe the foundation of Judaism, in terms of "revelation" (Written Torah) and "tradition" (Oral Law). Concerning the concept of revelation, Gerald Bray states that, "the Jewish tradition is distinguished from the great religions of humankind by two fundamental characteristics."[114] First, it is monotheistic. This means that there is one God who is the creator of the universe and who is sovereign over everything in the created order. Second, it is scriptural, believing that this God has revealed his will in a written text, which can be read, studied and applied by those who believe in him.[115]

With the reference to the first aspect of monotheistic sovereignty, the laws are seen as having full divine authority. They exert moral rules on those who interpret and receive them. In terms of the second nature of written tradition, the public character of a written revelation forms the basis for the community of Israel. It is always possible for individuals to read and interpret the written revelation in their own fashion. This is what actually happens to those who were literate in the Israelite community. Moreover, it also served as a legacy of each generation of interpreters long after their theories have come and gone. Gerald Bray emphasized the applicability of the text in a communal situation. This is also the case with the Jewish community. The text itself would be ready to speak anew to the next generation with the same freshness it originally had in the past.[116] James Kugel also echoed this relevance texts have to the community's readers. Kugel's assumption shared by all ancient interpreters was that "Scripture constitutes one great Book of Instruction, and as such is a fundamentally *relevant* text."[117] The biblical figures were held up as models of conduct and their stories regarded as a guide given to later human beings for

[114] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), 18
[115] See also the four assumptions of James Kugel for the ancient interpreters' own understanding of Scripture. James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 14-19
[116] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 18
[117] James Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, 15

leading their own lives. Moreover, biblical prophecies were similarly read as relevant for the interpreter and his audience.

The age of early hermeneutics started before the final canonization of the Scriptures. From about 500 BCE commentaries and interpretations in writing started to appear in which it can be assumed that an authoritative body of Scriptures had already existed in some or another form. Bray made a conclusive statement about these writings that they were "the accumulation of rabbinic sages' interpretation of the sacred texts, that were not intended to be contributions to that sacred literature, but were commentaries on it."[118] They were not continuing the scriptural tradition itself but rather functioned as parallel literature to that tradition.

Scholars indicated the vivid exegetical features of the Jewish community. Nahum Sarna states that the sacred text can yield a multiplicity of meanings when we carefully interpret it. The full richness of rabbinic exegesis cannot be expressed through a single body of doctrine or by any unified system that is logically self-consistent. To the contrary, the intrinsic and endless variety of interpretations reinforced the reality of the divine inspiration behind the text. The sages of the Talmud vividly expressed the matter this way:

The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed: "Behold, My word is like fire --- declares the Lord ---- and like a hammer that shatters rock" (Jer. 23:29).

From the text Jer. 23:29, just as a hammer shatters rock into numerous splinters, so may a single biblical verse yield a multiplicity of meaning.[119] This concept is expressed in several ways. It is stated as: "There are seventy facets to the Torah."[120] The number "seventy" of course is being typological and communicating comprehensiveness. Another manifestation of this phenomenon of creating a multiplicity of meanings is shown in the words of the Tanna Ben Bag-Bag, "Turn it over, turn it over, for everything is in it."[121] In fact, for more than two thousand years, the Hebrew Bible has been accepted and studied by Jews as the seminal body of religious literature, which has been filtered through a continuous process of rabbinic interpretation and reinterpretation within the community of practice and faith whence its

[118] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 47
[119] TB *Sanh*. 34a, cf. *Shab*. 88b
[120] Num. R. *Naso'*, 13:15
[121] M. *Avot* 5:26

immediate authority derived.

2.3.3 The historical period of exegetical influence

The Second Temple period is an undeniably important phase in the affect it had on the formation and development of early Jewish exegesis. It may be divided into the Nehemiah phase (Soferim) and the Knesset Gedolah phase. The latter phase started in 174 BCE and ended with the time of the Talmud. Initially there were five "Zugot" that lasted up to 34 CE. This was the time of the Pharisees and other groups like the Saduccees, Qumran community and Essenes. The sectarian development will also be included in this section. After the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE the time of the Tannaim and of Jabneh followed (40-200 CE) leading to the forming of the Mishna. Then followed the time of the Eretz Israel Amariam (200-500CE) with its different Rabbis and their followers at Tiberias and Sepphoris. Then follows the Babylonian Amaraim at different places like Surah and Pumbedita, paralleled by the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud.

(a) Second Temple Period (516 BCE-70 CE)

The second temple was inaugurated in 516 BCE. This temple was, destroyed by the Roman Titus in 70 CE. We refer to this time as the Second Temple Period (516 BCE-70 CE). It was an important period imposing tremendous effect on the formation of early Jewish exegesis. Undeniably, the developmental process is a continuous one. Early Jewish exegetical method was therefore not a sudden innovation. The scholar, Jacob Weingreen, witnessed this point. He illustrated that there are distinct points of similarity between earlier expository notes and certain categories of exposition found later in the Talmud, being a product of Jewish exegesis. He points to a continuity of pattern from the earlier to the later.[122] He further elaborated the pattern of continuity as a basic nature of Jewish exegetical development. He believed that the third century CE Mishna by Rabbi Judah did not imply sudden innovations of editorial activity. It rather marks the culmination of a cultural

[122] His main theme is that certain attitudes, practices, and regulations, which found their mature expression in the Talmud and which have been generally regarded on that account as Rabbinic in character and origin, are in fact to be detected in the literature of the Old Testament already. Jacob Weingreen, "Exposition in the Old Testament and in Rabbinic Writings" in *Promise and Fulfillment: essays presented to Professor S. H. Hooke in celebration of his ninetieth birthday, 21st Jan, 1964*, Society for Old Testament Society, F. F. Bruce edi. (T & T Clark: Edinburgh, 1963), 187

process, which stretches far back into the history of Israel.[123] We can trace this continuity of exegetical development back to the Second Temple period and even the early Jewish period.

There is common consensus that the Second Temple period is an important period for the formation of the Hebrew Bible, knowledge of which simultaneously enrich our knowledge of the development of early Jewish exegesis. Though scholars differ on the exact period, all are agreed that we are dealing here with a specific period in Jewish tradition.

Eduard Nielsen started his work with the discussion of oral tradition during the post-exilic period. He stated that the written Old Testament is a creation of the post-exilic Jewish community; of what existed earlier than that undoubtedly only a small part was in fixed written form. That is to say that the Old Testament as written literature may in all probability be ascribed to the period between the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC and the time of the Maccabees".[124] Undeniably, this period gives us more information about the relationship between oral tradition and the written record of the Old Testament. In turn, this relationship will impose influence on the form of early Jewish exegesis. This issue will be discussed in a later part of the chapter.

(b) Since Ezra

Why do we start with the post-exilic period? First, Jewish tradition attributes the introduction of script to Ezra, about 430 BCE. Ernst Wurthwein implied that it was a postexilic innovation.[125] Accordingly Jewish tradition tells how the Torah was first given in square script, but because of Israel's sin the script had been changed. In Ezra's time the original form was restored. Though this was obviously apologetic and without any historical value, it clearly reflects the awareness of a change of script in the postexilic period. Moreover, Wurthwein pointed out that most probably the Jews' gradual adoption of the Aramaic

[123] Though he emphasized this Mishnaic-type tradition as consistent with the functioning of an organized social, political and religious order during the pre-exilic period, which is not my main concern here, his work had to prove the validity of continuity for the significance of early Jewish exegesis. Jacob Weingreen, "Oral Torah and Written Records" in *Holy Book and Holy Tradition*, F. F. Bruce & E. G. Rupp ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968) ,56

[124] Eduard Nielsen, "Oral Tradition Studies" in *Biblical Theology* No. 11 (London: SCM Press, 1954), 39

[125] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* translated by Erroll F. Rhodes, Second edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 2

language, the lingua franca of the ancient Near East, was followed by their adoption of the Aramaic script so that by way of influence it was in this script that the sacred writings were first written and only eventually in the square script which developed from it.[126]

The entire life of Israel was reorganized around Scripture, which began to be codified into a canon of sacred Scripture. Renee Bloch witnesses to this essential event where the most remarkable activity of this period, which conditioned the whole future and the entire structure of the religious life of Judaism, was the definitive form given to the Pentateuch as a sacred text having the value of a law for the whole community.[127]

The postexilic period is an important period for the interpretation of ancient Scripture. The Jews had been in exile from approximately 587 to 538 BCE. Being away from their homeland and no longer having any temple or cultic center in Jerusalem, they had to concentrate on the preservation of and reflection on their literary legacy. This introduced a new phase of conserving texts and reflecting exegetically on these religious traditions. This new type of activity was continued when they were, informed by the Persians in 538 BCE that they were free to return home. This right was granted to them by an edict of the Persian king Cyrus. As a result, this new distinctive approach to interpretation was developed and refined further when they were back home again. There began to develop in the following centuries individual interpretations of biblical laws, stories, and prophecies slowly accumulated and coalesced into a great body of lore that came to be known widely throughout Israel. James Kugel gives more attention to these ancient biblical interpretations found in books that did not end up being included in the Jewish canon. These books include expansive retellings of biblical stories, first-person narratives put in the mouths of biblical heroes, pseudonymous apocalypses, the sayings and proverbs of ancient sages. Biblical commentaries, sermons and the like were composed from the third century BCE through to the first century CE.[128] These old texts allow us to reconstruct in some detail the way the Bible was interpreted and understood during this crucial period.

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[126] Idem
[127] Renee Bloch, “Midrash” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, edi William Scott Green (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 35
[128] James L. Kugel, “Ancient Biblical Interpretation and Biblical Sage” in *Studies in Ancient Midrash*, James L. Kugel ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2001) 17. See also the detailed illustration of these examples in Fishbane’s work *Biblical interpretation in Israel,46*

Why do indicate this phase as ending in 70 CE? We need to trace the formation of present available fragment of the Old Testament back to about 100 CE. Originally, the Hebrew Bible was a mere consonantal text, as it is preserved in medieval manuscripts forming the basis of our present editions. According to the older theory of Ernst Wurthwein a great Jewish revival occurred, in the decades after the catastrophe of 70 CE in which the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. In this time, the canonical status of certain disputed books of the Old Testament was defined at the school of Jamnia, in the late first century CE. Moreover, standardized text of the Scriptures was more or less established at that period.[129] Such a fixed text became a necessity, not only to gain uniformity on what exactly was the contents of holy scriptures, but also in distinction to the opinion of so-called "minni'im" (heretics) and the Christian collection. Thus the standard text of about 100 CE should be considered the result of historical developments following the fall of Jerusalem. As already stated this period of influence during the, Second Temple Period should also be seen as the development of the still earlier Jewish period.

2.4 Jewish documents and groups in the Second Temple Period

From the time of the Second Temple Period (516 BCE – 70 CE), a series of Jewish documents can be identified that contributed to the formation of early Jewish exegesis. In this part, we focus on the exegetical development indispensably linked with the political, social and cultural context of that age. As previously set out in my thematic statement, the social and political changes undoubtedly impose their effect on interpreters when the process of exegesis is carried out.

2.4.1 Targum

(a) Origin, dating and character

The word *targum* signifies "translation" and derives from the verb *tirgem* meaning "to translate", "to explain", or "to read out"(Ezra 4:7). It is a denominate of *turgeman* (interpreter) to which an Akkadian origin is generally attributed.[130] In rabbinic usage *tirgem* is employed to designate a version

[129] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 12
[130] Steven T. Katz ed., *The Cambridge History of Judaism* Vol. Two (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006),563

translated from the Hebrew into any language. This period is the Targumim or Aramaic translations of Hebrew scripture, which were read alongside the sacred texts and used to interpret it to the people.

It is known that in postexilic Judaism Hebrew ceased to be used as the common language and was gradually replaced by Aramaic, which had become the official written language of the western Persian Empire. Aramaic remained the common language from Egypt to the borders of India for the next twelve hundred years. Aramaic was displaced by Arabic after the Arab conquest of the seventh century CE.[131] Aramaic gained gradual importance after the post-exilic period. James Kugel stated that Aramaic was the language used not only in diplomatic circles but also in the whole host of activities that confer a culture's prestige.[132] John Bowker also provided the reasons for this change.[133] The Jews accepted Aramaic partly for practical reasons, but also because Aramaic and Hebrew are closely related to each other belonging to the family of Semitic languages. Furthermore, as early as the book of Nehemiah there is a query that Hebrew is inadequately known[134]. It is also obvious that some later parts of the Bible are written in Aramaic (cf Dan 2:4b-7:28). However, Hebrew was of course still understood and used in intellectual circles especially among theologians. Bowker continued to defend the position that Hebrew was still an important language in the Jewish community. The Jews never lost sight of the fact that Hebrew was the language of revelation. The Scrolls recovered from the Dead Sea area indicate how important Hebrew remained to be.[135]

The dating of these Targumim, a collection of Targum, is extremely controversial. Most scholars agree that they contain very early material. Therefore, it is possible to regard them as typical of exegesis in the Tannaitic period. Gerald Bray concluded that recent research has shown that at the time 538-70 the absence of the Targumim may help in dating them more

[131] Stephen M. Wylen, *The Seventy Faces of Torah: The Jewish Way of Reading the Sacred Scriptures* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2005) 3-4.
[132] James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, Library of Early Christianity 3 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986) 29
[133] John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish interpretation of Scripture* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1969) 3
[134] "In those days also I saw Jews *that* had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, *and* of Moab. And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people." (Neh. 13:23-24)
[135] John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 3

accurately.[136] Though the exact date cannot be confirmed yet, targumic translation was done at an early date and certainly pre-Christian. In addition, Ernst Wurthwein believed that the Jewish tradition associating it with Ezra (cf. Neh. 8:8) should well be correct.[137] In Nehemiah 8:8 Richard N. Longenecker lays out the purpose of the interpreters "to give the sense and make the people understand the meaning".[138] This involved two activities, reading the word of God and interpreting it for application to Israel of life. They also indicate the fundamental principles of biblical studies in Judaism. The dynamic relationship between concern for the sacred character of the words, their transmission to the next generation and their application to the exigencies of life have, been the source of renewal for Judaism throughout its history. [139] Charles Kannengiesser had made the logical conclusion that it is the source of development of biblical interpretation in Judaism.[140]

However, Steven Katz pointed out that the meaning "to give sense" is controversial. Some maintained that at that point in time a translation was not called for. However, in W. Rudolph's commentary, he adopts the opinion of H. H. Schaeder, who understands this as a translation into Aramaic.[141] This term indicates the practice of the chancelleries of the Persian empire of translating an Aramaic document into the language of the country or vice versa. We may therefore suppose that a certain kind of translation went hand-in-hand with this conscious effort to put the Torah within the grasp of the people as a whole.

Now we go into the function of Targum. In the worship service, Wurthwein rightly described the nature of Targum as being only oral, not written in a scroll.[142] This was because the rabbis wanted to preserve its distinction from the sacred text, which was written in Hebrew, and being read in the Synagogue. The development of the synagogue liturgy included a public reading from Scripture. The Scripture was read aloud with translations given verse by verse. As Targum was a collection of these interpretative paraphrases or explanatory translations, Wurthwein pointed out that the rabbis had a habitual practice to "incorporate frequently later theological concepts and their own *haggadoth* for

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[136] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*,50
[137] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*,79
[138] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999),8
[139] Cf. note 3 & 4
[140] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*,120
[141] W. Rudolph, *Esra and Nehemia*, HAT I, 20 (Tubingen, 1949),149
[142] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*,79

purposes of clarification and edification."[143] A. Shinan added the point that these targumim were almost certainly oral in nature when these aggadic pluses were inserted. There are traces within them of the "live performance" which the synagogue translator gave.[144] We may now see from this that Jewish exegesis is a "value-added" product originating from its previous influences.

Kannengiesser illustrated clearly the relationship between the Targum and the sacred text in view of serving the community's purpose in the Synagogue. He stated that, "the Synagogue was the home of the Targums because a reader read from the Hebrew Scriptures and an interpreter paraphrased the text into Aramaic to bring out its meaning and explicate its significance for the congregation."[145] John Bowker also affirmed the close relationship between Targum and synagogue. He stated that, "the origin of the Targums is closely connected with the synagogue."[146] He traced back the origin and function of the synagogue. The origin of the synagogue in Judea was closely connected with the *ma'amadoth*,[147] which were divisions of the people throughout Judaea, which were intended to correspond to the twenty-four courses of the priests in the Temple. In this way all the people were involved in the duties and sacrifices of the Temple, even though they could not be present in Jerusalem. Each *ma'amad* assembled when its turn came to read passages of scripture corresponding to the sacrifices taking place in Jerusalem. It was from these assemblies that synagogues in Palestine seem to have developed. So, the origin of the synagogue was closely connected with the reading of Torah from its earliest days. From these beginnings it developed into places where Torah was read and studied in a much wider way, and that remained its function and purpose until the fall of Jerusalem. In Heinemann's and Petuchowski's work, targum may be regarded as "literature of the synagogue", in which he states that literature of the synagogue is brought to our knowledge by means of prayer and liturgical poetry, as well as the Targum and different public sermons

[143] Idem, 80
[144] Cf. A. Shinan, "Live Translation: On the Nature of the Aramaic Targums to the Penteuch", *Prooftexts* 3 (1983), 41-49.
[145] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 129. Moshe Benstein also shared the same view. He believed that the Aramaic versions of the Bible may indeed have found their existence in the synagogue, the *bet ha-keneset* as is likely, or in the study hall, the *bet ha-midrash*, which is less likely. See Moshe J. Bernstein, "The Aramaic Targumim: The Many Faces of the Jewish Biblical Experience" in *Jewish Ways of Reading the Bible*, 137
[146] John Bowker,*The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 9
[147] It literally means as "places of standing."

incorporated in rabbinic literature.[148]

(b) Edition and compilation

We now go to details of the edition and compilation of Targumim. Whereas the ancient practice of the oral Targum was not in doubt, scholars are in common agreement that the *written* Targums could not be anterior to the Talmudic period (200 BCE-500 CE) [149] We know that the Jews of the Greek Diaspora had not hesitated to translate the Scriptures. Steven T. Katz pointed out that where Aramaic had become the language of the people in Palestine and Babylonian, they must have done likewise in these areas and that "written Aramaic translations of most of the biblical books did certainly exist under the Hasmoneans". It was the targumic activity in Palestine, which might have stimulated the composition of the LXX.[150] Other scholars, like Karen Jobes and Moises Silva confirmed the corresponding relationship between Targum and Septuagint in term of the date of formation. They quote Kahle's insistence that "originally simultaneous Greek translations were produced over time, in a manner not unlike that of the Aramaic Targumim."[151] They further elaborated the close relationship between Targum and Septuagint in the role of the Synagogue. They again quote Kahle's word that "various versions originated in the synagogues in a situation analogous to that of the Aramaic Targumim, so that more than one independent translation of the same Hebrew book would have been produced."[152] Therefore, it can be said that the written Targum's formation period is associated with the version of the Greek Septuagint.

With regard to the characteristics of the composition of the Targumim, Ernst Wurthwein gives us a good picture. There was not any first or single original standard and authoritative Targum text but rather a whole series of different Aramaic versions.[153] John Bowker further elaborates the characteristics of variant Targums. He pointed out that there was a continuous process of exegesis, which produced traditions of interpretations in different areas of

[148] Cf J. Heinemann and Petuchowski, *Literature of the Synagogue* (New York, 1975)
[149] Steven T. Katz ed., *The Cambridge History of Judaism* Vol. Two (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006),568
[150] C. Rabin, "The translation process and the character of the Septuagint", *Textus*, 6 (1968), 20
[151] Karen H. Jobes and Moises Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005),36
[152] Idem,275
[153] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*, 80; See also John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*,15

Judaism and the synagogue targums undoubtedly reflected that process. Bowker claimed that "there was no such thing as the Targum, but only a Targum tradition, or perhaps more accurately Targum traditions."[154]

In the collections of Targumim, running Aramaic translations are found of all the books of the Hebrew Bible with the exception of Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah. They both contain texts in Aramaic and perhaps for that reason have no targum.[155] Of the varied profusion of Aramaic versions that once existed only a small fraction has survived. Two basically different forms should be distinguished: those texts, which represent the early Palestinian, and those which were revised in Babylon --- Onkelos for the Pentateuch and Jonathan for the Prophets.

(i) The Palestinian Targum

Wurthwein made a brief description of Targum composition as follow. The Palestinian Targum was never edited officially and consequently it has never had any single authoritative form of text. All the manuscripts differ from each other to a greater or lesser extent.[156] Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch is also called Targum Jerusalem I. It is peculiar in combining along with the text of the official Targum also Onkelos midrashic material, which was usually omitted. Earlier on it was thought that the midrashic material had been introduced into the Targum Onkelos only after it was accepted as standard in Palestine --- the people were accustomed to it and missed it in the new Targum.[157]

The Fragment Targum, also known as Targum Jerusalem II, is called a "fragment" because it contains only the midrashic comments on individual verses, omitting the continuous translation of the text itself. Actually, Moshe Bernstein on the other hand states that it contains "aggadic expansions of biblical narratives, shared with other representatives of the Palestinian targum tradition."[158] Wurthwein quoted Kahle's word that it was regarded "as a collection of midrashic material from the Palestinian Pentateuch Targum, which was considered too valuable to ignore when Targum Onkelos was introduced

[154] John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*,15
[155] See Moshe J. Bernstein, "The Aramaic Targumim: The Many Faces of the Jewish Biblical Experience" in *Jewish Ways of Reading the Bible*
[156] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*, 81
[157] Idem
[158] Moshe J. Bernstein, *The Aramaic Targumim*, 143

as the standard Targum for Palestine as well."[159]

Pseudo-Jonathan represents a Palestinian Targum more or less thoroughly revised from the Onkelos text. Possibly both were derived from an earlier Palestinian Targum apparently going back to pre-Christian times. It contributes significantly to our understanding of Judaism in the period of Christian beginnings. Its language is the Aramaic spoken in Palestine, so that we can find here valuable material for the study of Aramaic as it was spoken in the Palestine of Jesus' time.[160]

(ii) Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan

Targum Onkelos for the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan for the Prophets are the best known of the Targums, being authoritative for Judaism. They are quite distinct from the Palestinian Targums with their differing forms. These are *official* Targums, whose definitive wording was evidently established in Babylon in the fifth century CE after a long history of development.[161]

They are based on older material that probably derives ultimately from Palestine.[162] Their names are probably derived (erroneously) from the Greek translators. Aquila (Onkelos) and Theodotion (Jonathan in Hebrew), who were known for their literal versions of the Bible. Actually these two Targums can hardly have been the work of single individuals. They were more probably produced by commissions appointed to replace the various forms of the text then in circulation with an official version conforming to orthodox Jewish interpretation, revised according to the Hebrew text, and largely purged of midrashic elaborations. Thus they mark a definitive point in the history of the Targums and only later came to establish themselves firmly in Palestine. Both Targums attempt to reproduce the Hebrew text quite literally, so that as in the earlier Greek versions of Aquila the language had to suffer. They also contain

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159 Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*, 82
160 Idem
161 Idem, 82-3
162 On the debate over the Palestinian origin of Onqelos, see Philip S. Alexander, "Targum, Targumim", *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 6,321, where he concludes "that Onqelos originated in Palestine in 1st or early 2nd centuries CE. The Babylonian redaction of Onqelos probably took place in the 4th or 5th century CE". On this theme, see most recently P. V. M Flesher, "Is *Targum Onqulos* a Palestinian Targum? The Evidence of Genesis 28-50", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 19 (1999), 35-79. It is important that we should not view the arguments for a Palestinian origin for Onqelos as dissociating it too strongly from its traditional Babylonian context.

numerous subtle interpretative differences from the Septuagint.[163]

The Targum Onkelos appears to have been in use as early as the first century after Christ, though it attained its present form only about CE. 300-400.[164] It explains the Pentateuch, adhering in its historical and legal parts to a type of Hebrew text, which is, at times, nearer to the original of the Septuagint than to the Massoretic, but straying in the prophetic and poetical portions so far from the original as to leave it hardly recognizable.

Another paraphrase of the Pentateuch is the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, or the Jerusalem Targum. Written after the seventh century of our era, it is valueless both from a critical and an exegetical point of view, since its explanations are wholly arbitrary. The Targum Jonathan, or the paraphrase of the Prophets, was written in the first century, at Jerusalem but it owes its present form to the Jerusalem rabbis of the fourth century CE. The historical books are fairly faithful translation from the original text; in the poetical portions and the later Prophets, however, the paraphrase often presents fiction rather than truth.

(iii) Hagiographa

Moshe Bernstein gives a clear definition of the Hagiographa. It is a mélange of Targumim with differing exegetical agenda, translation techniques and probably provenances.[165] The paraphrase of the Hagiographa deals with the Book of Job, the Psalms, Canticle of Canticles, Proverbs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, and the Paralipomena.

In the present form of Targum, the latest are those on the Hagiographa. Sperber advances the argument that the so called Targums on the Hagiographa in fact represent a transition from genuine Targum method to midrash on the various books. That is to say that they are commentaries on the books, which at first sight resemble Targums, rather than presenting genuine Targums as such.[166]

[163] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*, 83
[164] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 129
[165] Moshe J. Bernstein, *The Aramaic Targumim*, 135
[166] Quoted at John Bowker, 14-5

2.4.2 Targum and Midrash

This part is the main theme of the discussion of Targum. There is widespread scholarly recognition of the close connection between Targum and midrash. Richard N. Longenecker even commented on the contribution of Targum to midrash exegesis. He said that, "they are of great significance to the discussion of early Jewish exegesis".[167] Moreover, Miss Bloch also echoed the view. She suggested that, "it was the synagogue targumim that provided the basis for the later rabbinic haggadah"[168]

Most important of all, the exegetical work of Targum places its greatest emphasis on the paraphrase of the texts in the Hebrew Bible. Some of the Targumim provide elaborations in order to explain "gaps" in the biblical text. Charles Kannengiesser confirmed that the Targumim had to share a common characteristic with that body of rabbinic literature called midrash.[169] Wurthwein also shared the same view with Kannengiesser. He described Targum that "the interpreter paraphrased and added explanatory phrases and they reinterpret the text according to the theological temper of their time and relate the text to contemporary life and political circumstances."[170] He laid greater emphasis on the value of exegesis than the textual witness. He stated that "this approach to the text of the Targums, which occasionally almost ignores the meaning of the Hebrew text, reduces their value as textual witnesses but makes them important documents for the history of Old Testament exegesis." [171] Undeniably, we can see again this continuity of the earlier exegesis of Targum to the later development of the midrasic method. This will be further elaborated later.

It is obvious that the Targum is not a halakic midrash with legislative modality and it cannot be compared with homiletic midrashim, in which a biblical verse is developed with a long, haggadic and edifying speech. However, scholars witness midrashic tendencies in Targum. Josep Ribera found out that in all ancient versions there is evidence of midrashic tendencies.[172] He further

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[167] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 9
[168] Cf. G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* Leiden: Brill, 1961, 9ff
[169] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 129
[170] Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*, 80
[171] Idem
[172] Josep Ribera, "The Targum: From Translation to Interpretation" in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, JSOTSS 166 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 225

commented that the exegetical method has its own continuity. Of course, every book has its own textual evolution and also its translations. Notwithstanding, there are common exegetical rules available in all ancient translations. The translators employed literary devices, which are found in all ancient versions and which belong to the Jewish hermeneutic method called *derash*.[173]

In terms of Jewish aggadic study, Avigdor Shinan's paper studied thousands of aggadic traditions in the Targums that are found in Midrash as well.[174] He stated that the common assumption is that the Aggadot reflected in Talmud and Midrash are the source from which the Targums drew. Moreover, this is in effect the assumption propelling the disregard with which many scholars tread the path of Aggadah or otherwise deal with the world of rabbinic literature and ideas.[175]

The affinity between Targum and Midrash is clear and it is with hundreds of such examples that I would shape the first part of this paper. Since it is difficult to believe that Targum and Midrash shared the same tradition and language by taking separate and independent roads, we can of course advance one of two possibilities:

(a) direct dependence between Targum and midrashic tradition (in this direction or that);

(b) indirect dependence: that is, use of a common source (written or oral) which stood before the author of the Midrash and the Meturgeman. Yet the difference between these two answers is not all that is significant. Both postulate an intertextual affinity, whether direct or indirect, based on a written or oral source.[176]

Next we will discuss the aims of interpretation of Targum compared to that of midrash. Moshe Bernstein defined this kind of technique as "an approach to the solution of syntactical awkwardness, which is typical of the targumim and of rabbinic midrashich readings and conveys the meaning of the Hebrew prose

[173] Idem, 218
[174] Avigdor Shinan, Ann Brener trans. "The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some Methodological considerations" in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, JSOTSS 166 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 204
[175] Idem, 205
[176] Idem, 207

in sensible Aramaic for the audiences."[177] If we examine the nature of some of the translations, the emphases in some of the paraphrases and the subjects of some of the expansions, we see that the theological themes, which the translator brings to the texts are those, which he/she wishes to teach his readers.[178]

Bowker elaborated on the aim of the interpreters and showed that the tendency in translations to express meaning rather than merely being literal, was reinforced by the efforts of Jews in every generation to interpret scripture and apply it to their own situation and time. Scripture was the foundation of life because it was the self-revelation of God, a particularly vital way in which he had made himself known. But scripture had been revealed in the past and it was essential for one generation after another to penetrate its meaning.[179] He added one more point with regard to the aim of the interpreters. All these exegetical methods of making the text of scripture relevant and meaningful to later generations were in use in Judaism generally.[180]

2.4.3 In a specific historical and religious context

Undeniably, any biblical translation is the product of its socio-cultural context. Targum is no exception. We can say that Onqelos is much closer to being a straightforward translation than the other recensions of the Palestinian Targum. It stays as it does closer to the Hebrew text and it contains abbreviated interpretations, which seem to be a slightly variant form of the Palestinian Targum-tradition.[181] Therefore, John Bowker pointed out that Onqelos is something of a compromise and perhaps it was deliberately intended to be so. He provided a possible solution for this.[182] It was a deliberate attempt to make an Aramaic translation and that it may well have been a part of the general attempt in Judaism from the second century CE onward to provide authoritative translations as a safeguard against Christian interpretations of scripture based on LXX. This would perhaps explain and justify the ascription of the Targum to Aquila (Onqelos) and it would also explain the distinct nature

[177] Moshe J. Bernstein, *The Aramaic Targumim*, 145
[178] Idem, 161
[179] John Bowker, 5
[180] Idem, 6
[181] The Palestinian Targum-tradition, whatever stage it had reached at the time when Onqelos was produced, was not a translation: its purpose was to expound the Hebrew text as well as to represent it. See John Bowker, 24
[182] Idem, 24-5

of its Aramaic. This discussion is closely related with the socio-political culture in affecting the Jewish exegetical trends and will go on in deep with the illustration of examples on the book of Ruth in Chapter Four.

2.5 Dead Sea Scrolls and the history of Judaism

2.5.1 Importance

Scholars agree that one of the most important events in recent history of the Old Testament study is the successive discovery of different manuscripts in the caves at Qumran by the Dead Sea since 1947. They regard these discoveries as a precious treasure because the manuscript materials found were several centuries older than any known before. Discoveries of the Dead Sea scrolls may contribute to various fields of study in the Old Testament and Judaism. Ernst Wurthwein related his work on the text of the Old Testament and the formation of the Hebrew Bible, to the study of the Qumran scrolls.[183] We may also say that the Qumran scrolls are closely related to the development of Judaism. Scholars attempted to place the scrolls within contemporary Judaism.[184] This is particularly true of the work done on the textual character of the biblical scrolls, the study on the relationship between Qumranic Bible exegesis and Jewish exegesis, and on the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha discovered at Qumran. The Hebrew language and orthography used in the Scrolls were also investigated.[185] As a whole, a variety of focuses in the study of Dead Sea Scrolls may be evident. It is especially important for us to also find the continuity between the Dead Sea Scrolls and early Jewish exegesis. The exegetical trends and tendencies formed in Qumran community definitely had to impose influence on early Jewish exegesis.

2.5.2 Dead Sea Scrolls, Second Temple Period and Judaism

Qumran's Jewish character and links to Second Temple Judaism are well

[183] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*, 30-38
[184] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The history of Judaism, the background of Christianity, the lost library of Qumran* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 16
[185] On the biblical text, see Cross, *The Ancient Library*. On biblical exegesis, see G. Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), and W. H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk* (SBLMS 24; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979). One of the first scholars to review the scrolls and Judaism was G. Vermes, "The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on Jewish Studies During the Last Twenty-Five Years," *JJS* 26(1975) 1-14; reprinted in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice* (ed. W. S. Green; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 201-214

recognized. The recent more advanced carbon-14 tests dated most of the Qumran manuscripts to two or one centuries before the birth of Christianity.[186] Wurthwein stressed the importance of archaeological evidence[187] as a proof for the Qumran texts dated before 70 CE. The jars found in the caves are from the Roman period. A piece of linen found in Cave 1 has been dated by its radioactive carbon-14 content between 167 BCE and 233 CE. The results of the excavation of Khirbet Qumran since 1952 under the direction of G. L. Harding and R. de Vaux make it most probable that the manuscripts were hidden during the first Jewish war during 66-70 CE.[188] They must all therefore have been written before then. This dating is supported by the texts from Wadi Murabba'at, which may be dated with certainty at the time of the revolt of Bar Kochba (132-135 CE). Wurthwein quotes the words of de Vaux: "The script is more developed, the biblical text is definitely that of the Masora. It must be concluded from this that the documents from Qumran are older and earlier than the second century."[189]

Most scholars agree on the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls to study the political, cultural and social background during the Second Temple Period. Eugene Ulrich believed that the biblical manuscripts found in the Judain Desert represent the Scriptures of general Judaism during the late Second Temple period. They show us what the Scriptures probably looked like in the last few centuries BCE and the first century CE.[190] The biblical manuscripts found at Qumran are representative of the books, which the wide spectrum of first century CE Jews would have called 'the Law and the Prophets' ---- including the High Priest and the Sadducees, the Rabbis, Jesus and those Jews who preached the well-intentioned folk at Qumran, and yet others. Ulrich make a conclusion that the scrolls found at Qumran are the sacred texts of Second Temple Judaism in general.[191]

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[186] See G. Bonani et al., 'Radiocarbon Dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls,' *Atiqot* 20 (1991) 27-32; J. A. Timothy et al., "Radiocarbon Dating of Scrolls and Linen Fragments from the Judaean Desert,' Atiqot 28 (1996) 85-91. However, isolated attempts to identify the scrolls as Christian always rested on a dubious literary and theological analysis, typified by the recent publication of R. Eisenman. See the Introduction to R. H. Eisenman and M. O. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Rockport, MA: Element, 1992) 1-16.

[187] Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of Old Testament*, 31

[188] Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)

[189] de Vaux 1953: 267

[190] Eugene Ulrich, "The Scrolls and the Study of the Hebrew Bible" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Fifty* Robert A. Kugler and Eileen M. Schuller ed. (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1999), 35

[191] Idem

Scholars also paid attention to identifying the contemporary groups in Palestine and compare them to the Qumran community. Devorah Dimant believed that the Qumran community was regarded as a group existing at the fringes of Judaism in open antagonism to the political rulers and the official priesthood of Jerusalem.[192] The non-sectarian writings of Qumran community, however, have much in common with the more general Jewish literature of the time.[193]

2.5.3 Dead Sea Scrolls and exegetical trends

(a) Rewritten/rework bible

We may identify as one of the specific types of exegetical trends the so-called "Rewritten Bible" in the Qumran community. This was atypical trend during the late Second Temple Period (cf Jubilees). This had direct influence on early Jewish exegesis. The term "Rewritten Bible" was coined by Geza Vermes to indicate the earliest forms of haggadah interpretation. His famous work *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* first published in 1961,[194] has been one of the most influential works in a number of the fields, which were represented at which this paper was originally read, particularly those of Qumran and early biblical interpretations.[195] G. Vermes stated that "in order to anticipate questions and to solve problems in advance, the midrashist inserts haggadic development into the biblical narrative – an exegetical process which is probably ancient as scriptural interpretation itself.'[196] There are instances where "midrash" appears in the Qumran texts (e.g., 1QS 6.24; 8.15, 26; CD 20.6; 4QFlor 1, 14) though in these cases the word is used in a non-technical

[192] Devorah Dimant, "The Scrolls and the Study of Early Judaism" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Fifty* Robert A. Kugler and Eileen M. Schuller ed. (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1999), 44
[193] The earlier tendency of Qumranic research to emphasize the uniqueness in the scrolls is now being replaced by the emphasis on the common ground they share with contemporary Judaism. This shift is already reflected by a few of the recent surveys. Typically represented by Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Scrolls*. Some recent encyclopedia articles devote space to the theme of "the Scrolls and Judaism"; e.g. J. J. Collins, "Qumran" and A. Lange and H. Lichtenberger, "Qumran," *TRE* 28 (1997). See also the recent survey of H. Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Taufer and Jesus* (Freiburg: Herder, 1993); ET, *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist and Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans / Leiden: Brill, 1998) where an effort is made to understand the Qumran community against its Jewish environment.
[194] Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadah Studies*, Studia Post Biblica, 4, 2nd edn (Leiden: Brill, 1973)
[195] Moshe J. Bernstein, "Rewritten Bible": A Generic Category Which Has Outlived its Usefulness? In *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project* edi. Alexander Rofe, Vol. XXII (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 2005), 169
[196] Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 95

sense to mean only "interpretation" in general. Moreover, scholars continued to lay emphasis on the studies of Rewritten Bible. There are some excellent introductory studies on various aspects of the Rewritten Bible compositions.[197]

The original and common practice of Rewritten Bible originated from inner-biblical exegesis itself.[198] The inter-textual framework of smaller units of biblical material has, been examined in detail within the framework of Old Testament studies by Michael Fishbane in his book *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Fishbane offers numerous detailed examples of what he calls 'inner-biblical' exegesis. These are instances in which, to use Fishbane's own terminology, a later biblical (Old Testament) writer takes up an earlier biblical text in order to 're-use', 're-contextualize', 'extend', 'reformulate', 're-interpret' or 'transform' it.[199] Thus the pre-existing text as 'deposit of tradition' (*traditium*) is pressed into the service of the active ongoing tradition (*traditio*).

Other scholars such as James Kugel also believed that "the very fact that texts written in the eighth or tenth or earlier centuries BCE must have been recopied many times within the biblical period in order to reach us suggests that these ancient writings must have been pondered and mulled over even then."[200] In these ways, the interpretation of the Bible goes back as far as the oldest texts represented in it. Indeed, evidence of this process is to be found within the final Hebrew Bible itself. Later biblical books frequently mention or allude to words and issues found in earlier books. They often modify or change the apparent sense of the earlier text. For example, the book of Daniel specially interprets a prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10), in which Jeremiah's reference to

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[197] See George W. F. Nickelsbrg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', in J*ewish Writing of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo and Josephus*, ed. by Michael E. Stone, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum (vol. p12) (Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 89-156; Philip Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," in *It is written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays Honor of Barnables Linders, SSF*, ed. by D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 99-121

[198] For the discussion of inner-biblical exegesis, see Michael Fishbane, *"The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics"* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989) However, He notes that inner-biblical and non-biblical exegeses are fundamentally different from each other. Rabbinic midrash is formally and stylistically different from inner-biblical exegesis; Gary G. Porton, "Rabbinic Midrash" in *Judaism in Late Antiquity* Vol. 1 Edited by Jacob Neusner, 219

[199] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 1, 140, 410, 414, 440, 473 *et passim*.

[200] James L. Kugel, "Ancient Biblical Interpretation and Biblical Sage" in *Studies in Ancient Midrash*, James L. Kugel eds (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2001), 2

"seventy years" is asserted to mean in reality 490 years (Dan. 9:2, 24).[201] In a lesser dramatic fashion, the entire book of Chronicles might be seen not only as an independent writing but also as an interpretation of the biblical books of Samuel and Kings with numerous additions or modifications of the earlier material plus a few omissions by the author(s) or redactor(s). We may evidently see that there are some kinds of exegesis already developed in the Bible itself.

Now we look again at the re-written narratives in the Qumran library. Scholars indicated the sources of the retold narratives in the Qumran library. George J. Brooke pointed out that the dependence of a rewritten scriptural text on its source is such that the source is thoroughly embedded in its rewritten form, not as an explicit citation but as a running text.[202] Philip Alexander further elaborates the distinctive features of the running text. It may resemble word for word that which may be deemed to be its source. Otherwise it may be more free in its handling of the supposed source --- paraphrasing, abbreviating, omitting, glossing and expanding it as may be deemed appropriate by its composer. In Alexander's word, it is stated that "the Bible is serially in proper order but they are highly selective in which they represent."[203] This shows that this exegetical approach is dominated by the interpreters' own belief and his perception about the text they received. It imposed great influence on the development of midrashic exegetical interpretation.

Philip S. Alexander commented that within the corpus of post-biblical Jewish literature there are a number of texts devoted to retelling in their own words the story of the Bible. He regarded these texts as constituting a literary genre.[204] He emphasized the relationship of Rewritten Bible to Scripture and to the midrashic tradition as a whole. We may find some connection and continuity between them. First, The Rewritten Bible texts read the Bible with close attention to noting obscurities, inconsistencies and narrative lacunae. The methods by which they solved the problems of the original are essentially

[201] Idem; See also the detailed illustration of these examples of Fishbane's work *Biblical interpretation in Israel*.
[202] George J. Brooke, "The Rewritten Law, Prophets and Psalms: Issues for Understanding the text of the Bible" in *The Book as book: the Hebrew Bible and the Judaean desert discoveries* Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov ed. (London: New Castle, DE: The British Library; Oak Knoll Press, 2002),32
[203] Philip S. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament" in *It is written: Scripture Citing Scripture*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 117
[204] Idem, 99

midrashic, i.e. similar to those found in the rabbinic midrashim.[205] Second, Rewritten Bible texts make use of non-biblical traditions and draw on non-biblical sources, whether oral or written By fusing this material with the biblical narrative the rewritten Bible texts appears to be aiming at a synthesis of the whole tradition (both biblical and extra-biblical) within a biblical framework: they seek to unify the tradition on a biblical base. Their intention may be seen as both exegetical and eisegetical: they seek to draw out the sense of Scripture and to solve its problem, and at the same time to read non-biblical material into Scripture, thereby validating it and preventing the fragmentation of the tradition.[206] Moreover, the rewritten bible introduces a format and pattern to the structure for midrashic tradition. The narrative form of the texts means that they can impose only a single interpretation on the original. The original can be treated only as univalent. By way of contrast, the commentary form adopted by the rabbis and by Philo allows them to offer multiple interpretations of the same passage of Scripture, and to treat the underlying text as a polyvalent.[207]

One of famous Jewish commentators, Flavius Josephus extensively used this genre. His famous work *Antiquities*, spans the whole of biblical history. They are basically centrifugal. Rewritten Bible texts are centripetal: they come back to the Bible again and again. The rewritten Bible texts make use of legendary material, but by placing that material within an extended biblical narrative (in association with passages of more or less literal retelling of the Bible), they clamp the legends firmly to the biblical framework, and reintegrate them into the biblical history. The single legendary expansion constitutes a separate genre.[208]

This approach of retold narratives is widespread in Jewish literature. Devorah Dimant pointed out that the technique of ‘rewriting the Bible’ was used in a wide range of writings.[209] Close re-workings of the biblical text are such as the *Temple Scroll*, *Jubilees*, and the *Reworked Pentateuch* which are the representative of the time before Christianity, i.e. third-second century BCE. It seems that during Second Temple times there exists a considerable body of Hebrew literature, which reworked the Bible. Yet none of these texts displays

[205] Idem, 117
[206] Idem
[207] Idem
[208] Idem
[209] Devorah Dimant, *The Scrolls and the Study of Early Judaism*, 50

any sectarian element.[210] Obviously this type of literature was not authored by the Qumranites but probably taken over from other, non-sectarian sources. It remains to be explained why the Qumranites had such a keen interest in reworked Bible texts.

There were other writings modeled on the Bible in a looser way such as *Pseudo-Ezekiel* and the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*. Even apocalyptic visions such as those of *1 Enoch*, the *Testament of Levi* and *Pseudo-Daniel* depended on biblical motifs and forms, and often closely reworked specific passages from the Bible. Each of these re-workings and re-modelings displays it's own exegetical framework. Thus the Qumran manuscripts offer a whole gamut of evidence ranging from small textual variants to major reworking and loose modeling. It seems that in the phase mirrored by the Qumran documents not only was the canon not fixed but also the dividing lines between textual corrections, textual amplifications and full-fledged reworking or exegesis was still in flux.

We may conclude that the openness to various kinds of interpretation is a phenomenon suitable for the development of various streams of exegetical approach in coming ages. Therefore, it is obvious that early Jewish exegesis bears continuity of the vivid and diversified scholastic atmosphere in Second Temple Period. We may note that this initial trend had influence on midrashic and rabbinic exegesis indeed.

(b) Pesharim

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the middle of the twentieth century, another hermeneutical method common in Judaism has come to our attention. This approach, known as "pesher", which stems from the Aramaic word *pishar* meaning "solution" or "interpretation"[211], is usually described as an exegetical method or collection of such interpretations (*pesharim*) that suggests that the prophetic writings contain a hidden eschatological significance or divine mystery. Philip R. Davies identified the structure of pesher as "formulated in a series of phrase-by-phrase commentaries on consecutive scriptural text where text and commentary are set side by side in

[210] Some groups are deviant from main social and cultural environment and tend to move away from the center to have a distinctive and separated life. We will discuss in terms of Qumran and non-Qumran groupings.
[211] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Biblical Exegesis in Apostolic Period*, 23

the manner of a modern scholarly commentary."[212]

The commentaries appear to have been written during the second half of the first century BCE and are extant in only one copy of each --- perhaps in some cases the autograph (original copy). George W. E. Nickelsburg further elaborated that they are evidently a compilation of the sect's history, from the Teacher's conflict with the Wicked Priest to the Roman occupation of Palestine.[213] We may conclude that the commentaries are the earliest examples of a literary genre that became popular in rabbinic circles from the second century CE and later on. Nickelsburg identified some similarities.[214] There are the techniques of commenting on lengthy blocks of Scripture, the format of quotation and interpretation and the quotation of parallel passages from Scripture. However, the differences are just as significant and help us to understand the peculiar nature of the Qumran commentaries. The rabbinic commentaries concentrate on the Torah and the Writings. The exposition is of two types: halakhic and haggadic. This will be discussed in the Chapter of Midrash. The commentaries compile the opinions of many rabbis, who are mentioned by name. In Qumran commentaries the interpretations are anonymous and reflect community interpretation.

Devorah Dimant believed that the pesher was continued in the development of Jewish hermeneutics. The pesher was also implemented in the rabbis' interpretation. She stated that some of these methods are similar to those used by the rabbis[215], connecting two different biblical verses through the occurrence of the same word in both.[216] B. Nitzan has included a perceptive discussion on the interpretative method of the pesharim in her edition *Pesher Habakkuk: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea (1QpHab)*.[217] Yet other methods used by the pesharim such as symbolism and allegory are analogous to the methods of Jewish apocalypses and Ancient Eastern interpretation of dreams.[218] Moreover, George Nickelsburg also witnessed that such a method

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[212] Philip R. Davies, "Biblical Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls" in *A History of Biblical Interpretation Volume 1: The Ancient Period*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003) 149

[213] George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981),127

[214] Idem.

[215] Devorah Dimant, *The Scrolls and the Study of Early Judaism*, 52

[216] Cf. Brooke's comment at *Exegesis at Qumran*.

[217] B. Nitzan eds., *Pesher Habakkuk: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea (1QpHab)* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986 〔Hebrew〕) 29-80.

[218] M. Fishbane, "The Qumran Pesher and Traits of Ancient Hermeneutics," *World Congress of Jewish Studies* 6 (1977) 97-114; idem, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient*

of interpretation was used in various forms in a number of second century texts.[219] The author of the *Testament of Moses* rewrites Moses' prophecy so that it makes explicit reference to contemporary events. In Jubilees 23, Daniel 10-12, and 1 Enoch 85-90 phrases from the prophets and allusions are employed to describe contemporary events and to flesh out descriptions of the imminent *eschaton*. The author of Daniel 9 reinterprets Jeremiah's seventy years as seventy weeks of years that reach their culmination in the author's own time.

However, for modern scholars this exegetical method has a negative connotation. David S. Dockery criticizes the structure of the biblical text found in Qumran library as " a forced and even abnormal construction of the biblical text."[220] Moreover, F. F. Bruce in his detailed work on the texts of the Qumran community has discovered that "pesher often involved manipulation of textual intricacies and can be frequently described as atomistic interpretation."[221] In fact, the pesher may be strange to us in terms of structure and methodology. However, we can't separate this distinctive method from the communal context in its historical environment. They used it for its theological purpose. Indeed, the pesher played an important role in shaping Jewish exegesis as Devorah Dimant declared. The continuity was undeniably present in the formation of rabbinic interpretation when Judaism took over its form.

Referring to the comparison between Pesher and midrash, we should know that the pesher is not identical to midrash. Indeed, we can also identify the difference between pesher and midrash. There was a close relationship between pesher and midrash that is difficult at times to distinguish.[222] Other scholars, Richard Longenecker comments that Qumran's pesher interpretation of the Old Testament is neither principally "commentary" nor "midrashic exegesis," though it uses the forms of both.[223] Scriptural study in Qumran is no longer the privilege of a few leaders, but the duty of all those who belong to the true Israel. Because of this, the verb *daras*[224] becomes a keyword for scriptural studies. It signifies the search for the secrets, which are concealed in

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Judaism and Early Christianity (ed. M. J. Mulder; CRINT 2.1; Assen: Van Gorcum/Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990), 339-77.

[219] George W. E. Nickelsburg, 127

[220] David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation: Then and Now*,30

[221] F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959),14

[222] William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habbakkuk*, SBLMS 24 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1979),25

[223] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Biblical Exegesis in Apostolic Period*, 97

[224] Cf. 1 QS 1.1-2; 5.9, 11; 6.6-7; 8.12, 24; 1QH 4.6; CD 6.6-7; 7.18.

the scriptures. But since not all students are able to grasp these secrets in the same way, some must be given prominence as "successful researchers."[225]

Isaac Rabinowitz offers a more specific understanding of pesher: "a literary composition which states in ordinary language the realities thought to be presaged, that is prefigured or portended by the works of some portion of the Hebrew Bible, words regarded whether as already fulfilled or as still awaiting fulfillment."[226]Dockery illustrated that Rabinowitz's argument is built upon the accepted consensus of the connection between pesher and dream interpretation as found in Genesis 40:5-22; 41:8-18 and Daniel 2:1-45; 4:4-27; 5:5-17, where the word pesher was actually used within the context of dream interpretation.[227]

It is believed that pesher as used in these Old Testament sources provides the foundation and background for its meaning in Qumran literature. In both settings, the dream or prophecy was perceived to contain a divine mystery, which required interpretation, whether by Joseph, Daniel, or the Teacher of Righteousness. Pesher, therefore, was a form of interpretation presenting a solution that could be reached only through divine revelation. We can distinguish pesher from midrash by understanding midrash as a contemporizing treatment of Scripture that sought to make God's Word relevant to the present circumstances and ongoing situations whereas pesher looked upon the biblical material from the standpoint of imminent apocalyptic fulfillment. We can describe midrash as "this has relevance to this" while pesher is "this is that."--- "that" is our present situation depicted in what is written in Scripture.[228] The time dimension in terms of the fulfillment of God's will revealed by exegetical methods found in. Pesher may have affected the typological exegesis by Christian interpreters. This relationship will be examined in the following chapter.

(c) Conclusion

[225] Martin Hengel, "The Scriptures and their Interpretation in Second Temple Judaism" in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, JSOTSS 166 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 169
[226] Isaac Rabinowitz, "Pesher / Pittaron: Its Biblical Meaning and Its Significance in the Qumran Literature," *RevQ* 8 (1973): 219-32. Additional helpful discussions are found in Elieser Slomovic, "Toward an Understanding of the Exegesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *RevQ* 7 (1969): 3-15; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament," *NTS* 7 (1961): 297-333
[227] David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation: Then and Now*, 31
[228] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Biblical Exegesis in Apostolic Period*, 43

The main aim of scriptural interpretation should be kept in mind. In the Qumran community, as Philip Davies pointed out, scriptural explanation was regarded as a historical lesson to the people of God.[229] He believes that a large number of texts present figures from the past who, issue warnings about the behavior of Israel, exhorting Israel to observe the will of God and avoid catastrophe. While such compositions at times contain predictive elements and anticipating future events, their main function is usually exhortation. In order words, eschatological judgment and salvation are not the subjects of detailed prediction but rather are prompts to ethical behavior.[230] Therefore, from the perspective of its communal context the aim of exegesis and interpretation of the scriptural text, is ethical behavior according to the will of God. It is the task of commentators in Jewish and even Christian exegesis to present values and norms. Also in Qumran exegesis, modeling is the main aim of interpretation. We will show that the emphasis on morality in Midrash Ruth is rooted in this trend. We will discuss this in a next chapter.

2.6 Sectarian Development

The Dead Sea scrolls are regarded as valuable literature for understanding the different Jewish groups active during the late Second Temple period. Lawrence H. Schiffman indicated that the Dead Sea library could reshape our understanding of all the groups of Second Temple Judaism.[231]

First, we go into Schiffman's definition of a sect. A sect can be defined as a religious ideology that may develop the characteristics of a political party in order to defend its way of life.[232] The way the term is generally used in the study of ancient Judaism differs from its usual usage in religious studies, wherein sect commonly denotes a group that has somehow split from a mainstream movement.

Competing sects or groups each sought adherents among the people. Although all were Jewish and regarded the Torah as the ultimate source of Jewish law, Schiffman made a point that each had a different approach or

[229] Philip R. Davies, *Biblical Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 157
[230] Idem
[231] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The history of Judaism, the background of Christianity, the lost library of Qumran* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 72
[232] Idem

interpretation of Jewish law and considered other groups' approaches illegitimate.[233] The various sects also held differing views on such theological questions as the nature of God's revelation, the free will of human beings, and reward and punishment. The greatest conflict, however, arose over the most important symbol of Jewish life --- the Temple itself.

In this part, we may identify several Jewish groups, who impose their influence on the interpretation of Biblical texts. These influences may be explained against the historical and social changes that occurred in the context. Sadducees and Pharisees were the major participants in the Jewish religious and political affairs of Greco-Roman Palestine. In fact, the gradual transfer of influence and power from the priestly Sadducees to the learned Pharisees went hand in hand with the transition from the Temple to Torah that characterized the Judaism of this period. At the same time, a number of sects with apocalyptic or ascetic tendencies also contributed to the texture of Palestinian Judaism. Some of these sects played a crucial role in creating the backdrop against which Christianity arose. Others encouraged the messianic visions that led the Jews into revolt against Rome. Still others served as the locus for the development of mystical ideas that would eventually penetrate rabbinic Judaism. Each of these groups was characterized by its adherents' extreme dedication to its own interpretation of the Torah and the associated teachings it had received. The following groups can be identified.

2.6.1 Apocalyptic group

Traditionally, some theologians are often reluctant to admit that the apocalyptic material in antiquity played a formative role in early Christianity. There is consequently a prejudice against apocalyptic literature, which is deeply ingrained in biblical scholarship. However, John Collins restored the right place and role of apocalyptic groups in the development of Judaism and Christianity. He elaborated that apocalyptic ideas undeniably played an important role in the early stages of Christianity and Judaism. It played an important role in the works of Ernst Käsemann[234] and Klaus Koch[235], who has made tremendous and significant contributions to apocalyptic studies.[236] Therefore, we may

[233] Idem
[234] It was stated that, "Apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology." See Ernst Kasemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," *JTC* 6 (1969) 40
[235] English trans., *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1972)
[236] John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 1

trace back the development of early Jewish exegesis to the apocalyptic groups, who adopted a specific kind of exegesis during the Second Temple Period.

(a) Origins

The origins of apocalyptic seem to be controversial.[237] First, apocalyptic exegesis is found in an approach in which Scripture is used as history to disclose and warn about the future. During the Second Temple Period, most of the Qumran texts from the Dead Sea discoveries that explicitly treat Scripture as predicting the future[238] adopt a different hermeneutic, which is called "mantic."[239] Manticism is the culture of divination and a major science in the ancient world especially in Babylonia. It took the form of examining natural or unnatural phenomena interpreted as heavenly "clues" to what would happen.[240] Devorah Dimant added the point that Babylonian Manticism may not include the component apocalypses usually have to contain forecasts for the final eschaton or for an eschatological future.[241]This future is cosmological and transcendent. Second, some may argue that Jewish apocalyptic trends originated from and were influenced by Persian culture. This thought was strengthened when it was shown that the Qumran scrolls pay much attention to dualism.[242] Others, however, may link Hellenistic influence to the development of apocalyptic ideas. Martin Hengel is an advocate of this stance.[243]

Most important of all it is to be remembered that apocalyptic development originated from Jewish ideas and culture. Frank M. Cross pointed out the valuable fusion of apocalyptic transformation of the old and new in Jewish origins.[244] The events of Exile and Return caused the old functions of the

[237] Cf. John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998) Chapter. One: The Apocalyptic Genre
[238] In interpretation "the future" often means the "last days".
[239] The wisdom of Daniel and Enoch has close affinities with the mantic wisdom of the Babylonians. See John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (HSM 16; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977) 67-88; J. C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (CBQMS 16; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984) chapter 3
[240] Philip R. Davies, *Biblical Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 157
[241] Devorah Dimant, *The Scrolls and the Study of Early Judaism*, 58
[242] Cf. N. Cohen, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993)
[243] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 210-218
[244] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997) 343-346

prophetic office to be replaced by a new form of faith. Apocalyptists would salvage the ancient faith but in radically new forms.[245] F. M. Cross indicated the distinctive traits of this development.[246] One is the democratizing and eschatologizing of classical prophetic themes and forms. A second is the doctrine of two ages, an era of "old things" and an era of "new things". We detect here the beginning of a typological treatment of historical events. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, especially patristic exegesis on the book of Ruth. The significance of history was increasingly discovered in future fulfillment. New things were imminent. A third element is the resurgent influence of myths of creation used to frame history and to lend history transcendent significance not apparent in the ordinary events of horizontal history.

(b) An Apocalyptic group in the Qumran community

Apocalyptic literature should be examined in a Jewish context, Frank M. Cross identified four Jewish groups from extant classical texts during the second century B.C.E. in Judaea: the Hasidim, a pious "congregation" which disappeared in the Maccabaean era, and three other orders which emerged no later than the early Hasmonaean era and presumably have their roots in the Maccabaean period. These are the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Saducees.[247] Of these three, only the Essene order can be described as separatist in the radical sense that they regarded themselves as the only true Israel and separated themselves fully from contact with their fellow Jews.[248]

The community at Qumran was organized precisely as a new Israel and a true sect, which repudiated the priesthood and cultus of Jerusalem. F. M. Cross identified the Qumran community as Essene. He believed that neither the Pharisees nor the Saducees can qualify. The strongest argument, which has been raised against the identification of the Qumran sect with the Essenes is as follows. Its own sectarian literature was enormous, exercising considerable

[245] F. M. Cross gave some examples of the "old faiths" in new form. The Second Isaiah and later oracles of the book of Ezekiel induced a vast transformation in the character of prophecy. Old oracle types persisted but were radically altered. Moreover, the myths of creation were given an eschatological function (Isa. 25:6-8; 65:17-25) Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 345.
[246] Idem, 346
[247] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 330
[248] Josephus informs us that the Essenes rejected even the sacrificial service of the Temple as unclean and "offered their sacrifices by themselves." Pliny (or rather his sources) tells us of their "city" in the wilderness.

influence upon later sectarian, literature including Christian literature. Two major parties formed communal religious communities in the same district of the desert of the Dead Sea. They lived together for two centuries, holding similar bizarre views, performing similar or rather identical lustrations, ritual meals and ceremonies.[249]

We may find the characteristics of the Essenes coincident with other apocalyptic groups. The constitution of the Essene community crystallized in an apocalyptic vision. Each institution and practice of the community was a preparation for and anticipation of a realization of life in the New Age of God's rule. On the other hand, their communal life was a reenactment of the events of the end-time both the final days of the Old Age and the era of Armageddon. Moreover, their community, being heirs of the kingdom, participated already in the gifts and glories, which were the first fruits of the age-to-come.[250] On this basis, the Essene camp in the wilderness found its prototype in the Mosaic camp of Numbers. Here the Essene retired to "prepare the way of the Lord" in the wilderness as God established his ancient covenant in the desert.[251]

The community may be regarded as an anti-political and anti-social group. They arose against the existing system and law of order. This is characteristic of the apocalyptic vision. The community referred to its priesthood as "sons of Zadok," that is members of the ancient line of high priests established in Scripture. At the same time, they heaped scorn and bitter condemnation upon the ungodly priests of Jerusalem who were illegitimate in their eyes. This animosity against the priests in power in Judah in opposition to the part of the priests at Qumran, did not stem merely from doctrinal differences. The animosity rather reflected a historical struggle for power between different high priestly families. The Essenes withdrew in defeat and formed their community in exile, being organized as a counter-Israel led by the true Israel of God and the legitimate priesthood. Even in exile, according to their view, the theocrat of Jerusalem, the so-called Wicked Priest, attacked the Essenes and made an attempt on the life of the Righteous Teacher their priestly leader. For their part, the Essene priests confidently expected divine intervention to establish their cause. F. M. Cross pointed out the expectation of the Essenes that they searched Scripture for prophecies of the end of days when they would be

[249] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 331
[250] Idem, 333
[251] Idem

re-established in a new and transfigured Jerusalem.[252]

The above arguments can easily be explained in a social and historical context. The political vicissitudes caused by external forces in part coincided with an internal socio-religious disintegration, which resulted in the emergence of diverse separatist communities and sects.[253] This mesh of centrifugal challenges threatened the unity of Judaism and demanded centripetal responses, which at first were intuitive and determinate. The more deeply disruptive the factors which impacted the socio-political and religious structure of Judaism, the stronger was the will to counter the negative effects by cultivating stabilizing values.[254] It is generally agreed that apocalypse is not simply "a conceptual genre of the mind"[255] but is generated by social and historical circumstances. On the broadest level "the style of an epoch can be understood as a matrix insofar as it furnishes the codes or raw materials --- the typical categories of communication --- employed by a certain society."[256] More literature review will be included.[257]

(c) Apocalyptic exegetical method

We may regard apocalyptic exegesis as an inspired method, in which one had only to read the biblical prophecies with the understanding given to the inspired interpreter. That means a type of pneumatic exegesis exploring all the secrets of events to come in the last days, as they were, foretold by God through the mouth of his holy prophets.[258] In this way the Essenes searched

[252] Idem
[253] The roots of this intense process of socio-religious diversification can be traced in the early post-exilic historiographies (Ezra-Nehemiah), and prophetic literature (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, esp. ch. 3). See Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period", in *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel: Collected Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1986), 165-201
[254] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Crystallization of the Canon of Hebrew Scriptures*, 14
[255] R. Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," *Int* 27 (1973) 438. Knierim suggests that "myth" may be considered such a genre.
[256] Idem, 464
[257] J. G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975); P. R. Davies, "The Social World of the Apocalyptic Writings", in R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 251-71; L. L. Grabbe, "The Social World of Early Jewish Apocalypticism," JSP 4 (1989) 27-47; S. L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 1-84
[258] As in early Christianity, the teacher in order to interpret the inspired texts of the prophets depends on the gift of the Holy Spirit, a charisma which is passed on to all members of the sect because they all shall become 'scripture scholars." Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 170. We meet with a hermeneutic principle, which we find again in Paul and which has analogies in Greek thought also: what has been revealed by,

the Scriptures. Not only does the priestly messiah become the inspired interpreter of Holy Scripture but the teacher of righteousness is also himself inspired by the Holy Spirit to interpret the texts of the prophets with regards to their fulfillment in the present time. According to the Habakkuk pesher the teacher is the representative of the new covenant. He is the priest to whom God has granted permission to interpret all words of the prophets, his servants[259] because to him alone "God made known all secrets of his servants, the prophets".[260] Martin Hengel commented that the teacher becomes the model eschatological exegete.[261]

The Essenes developed a body of traditional exegesis. This was no doubt inspired by patterns laid down in their biblical commentaries, called pesharim, in which their common tradition was fixed in writing.[262] This eschatological exegesis is basically an actualizing type of allegory, which ignores the context and wording. The texts are directly related to concrete events in the present time or the awaited end. They therefore disclose information, as the book of Daniel does, not only about the eschatological anticipation of the sect, but also about its history.[263]

Unlike the Pharisees' interpretation, the Essene exegesis does not refer to an oral tradition of interpretation. They made the Torah more accessible to the people. This does not exclude the fact that with regard to eschatology, the sect, because of their common Chasidic origin, is more closely connected with the Pharisees than with the Sadducees, though they also have a priestly leadership. Thus an obvious high regard for the book of Daniel is evident in both groups.[264]

In apocalyptic exegesis, F. M. Cross summarized and advocated that there are three principles to be kept in mind. First, prophecy openly or cryptically refers to the last days. Secondly, the so-called last days are in fact the present, the days of the sect's life. And, finally, the history of ancient Israel's redemption, her offices and institutions, are prototypes of the events and figures of the new

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the Spirit can only be understood through the Spirit. Like can only be known by like (1 Cor. 2:13)

[259] 1QpHab 2.1-10
[260] 1QpHab 7.4-5
[261] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 170
[262] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 333
[263] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 170
[264] Idem, 171

Israel.[265]

(d) Messiah

Scholars thoroughly studied the concept of the Messiah in apocalyptic and Qumran literature. We next focus on this exegetical trend of the Messiah as it was developed from the Second Temple Period to early Judaism. Lawrence H. Schiffman advocates that the messianic idea in Judaism has a complex history and commented that within this history, we can distinguish certain patterns or trends of messianic thought.[266] F. M. Cross agrees with Schiffman that the messianic idea had been central to the development of post-biblical Judaism in all its various forms.[267]

Generally speaking, the Messiah concept envisions the eventual coming of an anointed redeemer, a descendant of David, who will bring about major changes in the world, leading to world peace, prosperity and the end of evil and misfortune. Essential to the messianic idea in Judaism is the expectation that when the time comes, the ancient glories of the Davidic kingdom will be re-established in the Land of Israel. This worldly messianism expresses its ideas in concrete terms. It looks forward to the messianic era when the spiritual level of humanity will rise, resulting in and from the ingathering of Israel and the universal recognition of Israel's God. This will help me understand the exegetical trends and tendencies in both early Judaism and Christianity.

(i) Terminology

It is necessary at the outset to define the term, Messiah. The Hebrew word means simply "anointed." It is used some thirty times in the Hebrew Bible with reference to kings, but it can also refer to other figures, especially the anointed high priest. In the Dead Sea scrolls, it is sometimes used with reference to the prophets of Israel (CD 2:12; 6:1; 1 QM 11:7). John Collins states that "the English word "messiah," however, has a more restricted meaning in common usage and refers to an agent of God in the end-time, who is said somewhere in the literature to be anointed." [268] Not all eschatological agents are

[265] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 333
[266] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 317
[267] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 333
[268] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London; New York: Routledge,

messianic.[269] It is important to recognize that messiahs can be referred to by titles other than Messiah. So, for example, the Branch of David is simply another way of referring to the Davidic messiah. Even in the eschatological sense of the word, messiahs may be of various kinds.

Scholars advocated that two basic ideals of Jewish messianism could be identified: the restorative and the utopian.[270] The restorative seeks to bring back the ancient glories and the utopian to bring about an even better future surpassing all that ever came before. First we discuss the former one. The restorative represents a much more rational messianism, anticipating only the improvement and perfection of the present world.

Moreover, Philip Davies uses a similar definition and describes the classification of the Qumran haggadic texts. They can be broadly divided into two kinds: those reflecting on the past and those deducing the future, describing prophetic exegesis as a distinct type.[271] His classification also implies the dimension of the past and future, which coincides with the restorative and utopian idea of Jewish messianism.

The utopian messianism on the other hand is much more apocalyptic inclined and looks forward to vast, catastrophic changes with the coming of the messianic age.[272] The perfect world of the future can be built only upon the ruins of this world after the annihilation of its widespread evil and transgression. Collins also agrees with Schiffman's classification. John Collins classified Messiah as indicating two main messiah figures. They are the messiah of David origin and the heavenly messiah.[273] In Collins' words, the royal and Davidic messiah may also be referred to as the messiah of Israel, the Branch of David, the Prince of the Congregation, or even the Son of God. There I also a priestly messiah. He is the messiah of Aaron, but he is also known as the

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1997), 72

[269] E.g. the archangel Michael and Melchizedek are never called Messiah. See idem.

[270] Gershom Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism", *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 1-36. See also S. Talmon, "Types of Messianic Expectation at the Turn of the Era," *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987), 203-5. Contrast the approach of W. S. Green, "Introduction: Messianism in Judaism: Rethinking the Question," *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (ed. J. Neusner, W. S. Green and E. Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1-13. An article by the writer continues the analysis presented here through the rabbinic period (L. H. Schiffman, "The Concept of the Messiah in Second Temple and Rabbinic Literature," *Review and Expositor* 84 [1987] 235-46

[271] Philip R. Davies, *Biblical Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 150

[272] On the apocalyptic genre, see J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 1-32

[273] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 72

Interpreter of the Law, and may be described on occasion without the use of a specific title. One may also speak of a prophetic messiah, but the role of the eschatological prophet is somewhat elusive.[274] Collins' second type of messiah is the heavenly messiah such as the heavenly judge who is called both messiah and Son of Man in the Similitudes of Enoch. Heavenly agents (Michael, Melchizedek and the Prince of Light) play a prominent part in some of the scrolls but they are not called messiahs and are not anointed and so we shall not consider them as messianic figures.[275]

(ii) Biblical Background

Although we are concerned mainly with messianism of the Second Temple period, we first need to examine briefly how the concept was understood in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, we can view all Jewish concepts of messianism as interpretations of biblical traditions.[276]

The primary form of messianic expectation in ancient Judaism focuses on the restoration of the Davidic line. Nathan's oracle in 2 Samuel 7 promised David that his kingdom endures forever.[277] The messianic ideal emerges from the biblical doctrine that David and his descendants were chosen by God to rule over Israel forever. God also gave the Davidic house dominion over alien peoples (II Samuel 22:44-51 = Psalm 18:44-51; Psalm 2). In II Samuel 22:50-51 (=Psalm 18:50-51), we read of King David as the "anointed one", whose descendants shall rule forever.

In general the scrolls follow Deuteronomy 17:14-19 in emphasizing that the king must be a native Israelite and in setting limits to his power in various ways. It elaborates the commandment that he should not multiply wives: he must be monogamous. It adds a provision that he should not pervert judgment. Most of the passage, however, is concerned with the conduct of war against the enemies of Israel.[278]

In the Psalms, the king is sometimes given a superhuman status. Psalm 2, which refers to the king as the Lord's anointed, tells of the decree of the Lord:

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[274] Idem
[275] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 72
[276] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 318
[277] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 73
[278] Idem, 80

"You are my son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm 110 bids the king sit at God's right hand, and tells him that he is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. An oracle in the book of Isaiah announces the birth of a royal child, who is named "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6; cf. 1 QH 11:9-10). These three texts, Psalms 2 and 110 and Isaiah 9, have all been plausibly related to enthronement ceremonies in ancient Judah. An oracle in Isaiah 11 predicts that "a shoot shall come out of the stump of Jesse" in whose wonderful reign the wolf shall live with the lamb and the leopard lie down with the kid. It is uncertain whether this oracle was, uttered by Isaiah while the Davidic line was still intact, or whether it was composed later after it had been, dethroned by the Babylonians.[279]

After the Israelite kingdom split when Solomon died and the size of the kingdom dwindled, hope arose among the people that the ancient glories of the past would one day be restored. Such a reunited Davidic monarchy would also control the neighboring territories that were originally part of the Davidic and Solomonic empires. Isaiah describes the qualities of the future Davidic king, especially the justness of his rule (Isaiah 11:1-9).[280] This trend is brought about by Ruth's pretended historical situation. This will be further examined in the chapter of Early Jewish Exegesis on the Book of Ruth.

The Babylonian exile and the subsequent restoration of Judah as a Persian province without its own king, created a glaring discrepancy between God's promise to David and historical reality. The concern for the fulfillment of prophecy is apparent in Jeremiah 33:14-16. The "good word" refers to an earlier prophecy in Jeremiah 23:5-6.[281] The passage continues emphatically. The historical failure of the promise led to the hope that it would be fulfilled at some time in the future.[282]

The idea of a return to the bygone days of Davidic rule and to Israel's place as a world power typifies the restorative tendency: That which was and is no more

[279] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 73
[280] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 318
[281] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 73
[282] Idem

will be again. On the other hand, the notion of the Day of the Lord[283]--- that catastrophic upheaval that will usher in a new age --- is utopian, calling for the utter destruction of all evil and wickedness, something never before seen in the history of humanity: That which never was will be. These two approaches together molded the eschatological speculation on the part of all Jewish groups.[284]

It is important to note that in the Hebrew Scriptures these ideas were still separate. It was their combination in Second Temple times that unleashed the powerful forces that eventually propelled the Jews to revolt against Rome and led the Christians to embrace a messianic figure.[285]

We may say that the root of early Judaism and Christianity can be found in the apocalyptic vision. Early Judaism and Christianity have the same common historical and religious background. At the turn of the first century CE, they were divided into two main streams practicing various exegetical methods but shared the same origin. Jewish exegesis trends focuses on the Davidic line as the hope of the Jewish community while Christians projected their destiny to Jesus, as Messiah by using various exegetical methods. To this I will return later.

(iii) The Second Temple Period

These two messianic trends could both be found in the Second Temple period. Restorative views and utopian views of the Jewish future vied with one another as part of the melting pot of ideologies forging the varieties of Judaism in this era. The restorative trend emphasized primarily the reconstitution of the Davidic dynasty; the more utopian and apocalyptic varieties, taking their cue from the biblical notion of the Day of the Lord, focused mainly on the destruction of the wicked.[286]

In early Second Temple times, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah anticipated that the Davidic kingdom would be renewed under Zerubbabel, a scion of King David who governed Judaea in the Persian period. At the same time,

[283] "Day of the Lord" is a term for the illustration of destruction of the world and Israel community in older prophecy and as day of salvation in newer prophecy. Apocalyptic group refers to the last view.
[284] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 318
[285] Idem
[286] Idem, 319

Zechariah prophesied about two “messianic” figures --- the high priest and the messianic king (Zechariah 6:9-16). This essentially restorative approach would eventually be combined with some more apocalyptic ideas in the thoughts of the Dead Sea sect.[287]

Despite the clear biblical basis for a messianic hope, however, there is little evidence for such an expectation for much of the Second Temple period. There is reason to believe that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah regarded Zerubbabel, the governor at the time of the Persian restoration, as a figure who would fulfill the promises and who would restore the Davidic line. Haggai, speaking in the name of the Lord, refers to Zerubbabel as “my servants, the branch” (Zech 3:8, a reference to the prophecy of Jeremiah). While we do not know what eventually happened to Zerubbabel, it is clear that the prophets’ hopes were disappointed.[288]

Messianic oracles are rare in post-exilic prophecy. There is a famous messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9 (“Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey”; cf. Matt. 21:5). This oracle has often been related to the campaign of Alexander the Great in 333 BCE, because of a reference to “your sons, O Greece” in 9:13; but the reference is suspect on grounds of meter and parallelism and can easily be explained by dittography. The provenance of the oracle is quite uncertain. Remarkably, we find no messianic references in the literature from the time of the Maccabean revolt. The book of Daniel uses the word messiah with reference to Joshua, the high priest of the Persian period (cf Dan 9:25) and again with reference to the murdered high priest, Onias III (9:26), but it makes no mention of a messianic king. The savior figure to which it looks is the archangel Michael (Dan 12:1) who comes on the clouds like a human being (Dan 7:13)[289]. Neither is there any clear reference to a messiah in the books of Enoch from this period (although 1 Enoch 90:37, which refers to a white bull in the eschatological period, is sometimes interpreted as messianic).[290] The bull is better explained as a new Adam. The absence of any messianic expectation in the apocalyptic writings of the early second century BCE is a strong indication that such expectation was dormant in this period. Apart from the Dead Sea scrolls there is only one clear messianic

[287] Idem
[288] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 74
[289] See Collins 1993: 304-10
[290] See Tiller 1993: 20, 384.

passage in the literature of the last two centuries BCE. This is in the Psalms of Solomon, from the middle of the first century BCE.[291]

(iv) Conclusion

John Collins admitted that the importance of messianic expectation in the Dead Sea scrolls should not be exaggerated. There is no evidence that such expectation played a causal role in the origin of the sect.[292] Moreover, Kenneth Pomykaka's dissertation also echoed this view that there did not exist in early Judaism a continuous, widespread, or dominant expectation for a Davidic messiah.[293] It was not the central and continuous theme despite sporadic description of messianic hopes in Jewish literature and biblical texts. However, we do indeed find some lines of the images of Davidic dynasty in a series of literature. Despite no continuous and dominant expectation for a Davidic messiah, the analysis of the Davidic dynasty tradition in the biblical material prior to the late Persian period indicated that the tradition of a Davidic dynasty was marked by diversity.[294] It is undeniably that the thoughts on this issue are not in agreement but was an important theme. This means that one and the same thought is presented in different ways.

One of Jewish scholars, Josephus, paid much attention to it. Josephus' view of the Davidic dynasty tradition does not seem to have attracted the attention of scholars. There are more general studies treating Josephus' use of the Jewish scriptures[295] examining his portrayal of various scriptural heroes.[296] It can be shown, however, how Josephus' interpretation of this biblical tradition fits well into the early Jewish approach to biblical literature.

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[291] John J. Collins, *Apocalyptism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 74
[292] Idem.
[293] Kenneth Pomykaka formulated some observations about the Davidic description in the texts. He concluded that the exilic and post-exilic usage of the Davidic dynasty tradition illustrated ways in which the tradition could be interpreted in the absence of the Davidic monarchy, and indicated that at the dawn of the early Jewish period evidence for an ongoing Davidic royalist or messianic hope was very limited. Moreover, evidence for the use of the Davidic dynasty tradition in texts from the early post-exilic period was sparse. Kenneth Pomykaka, "The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism" *JBL Early Judaism and its literature* 7 (Atlantic: Scholar Press, 1995) 265-6; 270
[294] Pomykaka further elaborated the diversity by "providing later authors with a rich array of concepts and terminology upon which to draw." Kenneth Pomykaka, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 265-6
[295] See for example H. W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (HDR 7; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); L. H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship* (1937-1980) (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984) 121-130
[296] See Feldman, *Modern Scholarship*, 143-190

Josephus' comments about the Davidic dynasty all appear in his work *The Jewish Antiquities*, a history of the Jewish people written in 93-94 CE, which is essentially a paraphrase of biblical material. Taken together the various references to the Davidic dynasty indicating it as a glorious phase in the history of Israel, shows that it nevertheless came to an end because of the failure of the Davidic kings to obey the Law of Moses. This construal is evident in the very first reference to the story of Ruth, where Josephus paraphrases Ruth 4:17 as: "Of Obed was born Jesse, and of him David, who became king and bequeathed his dominion to his posterity for one and twenty generations."[297] Josephus' point here is to show how God can promote a person, like David, descended from ordinary folk like Ruth and Boaz, to greatness.[298] The failure of the Davidic dynasty thereby provided a moral example of how God punished disobedience.[299]

On the other hand, we can interpret the tradition of a Davidic line through different ages within a historical and social context. During the early Jewish period around 60 BCE, the literature from Pharisaical circles provides the first evidence in the early Jewish period of hope for a Davidic messiah, being the Son of David.[300] This hope was based on an interpretation of the Davidic dynasty tradition that posited an eternally valid dynastic promise on the basis of which God would raise up an ideal Davidic king --- a king who would rule Israel and the world.[301] The catalyst for this interpretation was the rise of the Hasmoneans and their claim to kingship. As opposition to the Hasmoneans increased, this reading of the Davidic dynasty tradition functioned to attack the legitimacy of the Hasmoneans, exploiting the contradiction between an eternally valid Davidic dynasty and a Hasmonean rule. Moreover, the characterization and role of this Son of David served to articulate the author's vision of an ideal social and political order, free from foreign oppression and full of righteousness, holiness, and wisdom. Indeed, the Davidic king, who was ascribed every kind of charismatic endowment --- but especially wisdom and righteousness would be the mediator of these divine blessing. On the other hand, temple and priest-had no place in this ideal Israel.

The Davidic messiah would act as God's agent of salvation in the final conflict

297 *Ant*. 5. 336
298 *Ant*. 5.337
299 Kenneth Pomykaka, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 270
300 *Pss. Sol*. 17
301 Kenneth Pomykaka, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 268

against Israel's enemies and therefore was an important component in the author's vision of the eschatological landscape.[302] This is to investigate specifically how the Davidic dynasty tradition was interpreted and applied in various early Christian and rabbinic texts in terms of the particular characterizations and functions ascribed to the Davidic messiah. Only in this way would one be able to explain how and why Davidic messianism became an important idea for these two religious traditions that emerged from early Judaism.

2.6.2 The Pharisees

(a) Origins

Lawrence H. Schiffman quoted from rabbinic sources to trace the origins of the Pharisees back earlier to the Persian and early Hellenistic periods when the Men of the Great Assembly were said to have provided Israel's religious leadership. It was believed that the Men of the Great Assembly should be identified with the *soferim* (scribes), thereby making them the forerunners of the Pharisaic movement.[303]

Scholars believed that the Pharisees and Essenes were the successors of the Hasidim. This was the trend during the nineteenth and twentieth century.[304] Those who held this view form an endless list of persons.[305] The argument for historians was to look for connections between the Hasideans and the scribes, being an enigmatic category in Second Temple Judaism. They were supposed to be the tactical core of resistance to the hellenization of Jewish Palestine. However, these hypotheses gave way to a rather simple identification of the scribe-Hasideans with the resistance viewpoint as it is expressed in apocalyptic literature.[306] This oversimplification of the forces at play in Jewish life during the second century BCE has found some resistance. The simple explanation of "hellenization" to be the mere explanation for the origins of the

[302] Idem, 269
[303] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 77
[304] John Kampen, "The Hasideans and the Origin of Pharisaism: A Study in 1 and 2 Maccabees" Septuagint and Cognate Studies 24. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 33-38
[305] Please refer to Kampen's list in footnote 145 on p. 38
[306] John Kampen, *The Hasideans and the Origin of Pharisaism*, 41; See also L. H. Feldman, "Hengel's Judaism and Hellenism in Retrospect," *JBL* 96 (1977) 371-82; F. Millar, "The Background to the Maccabean Revolution: Reflections on Martin Hengel's "Judaism and Hellenism", *JJS* 29 9(1978) 1-21; L. H. Feldman, "How Much Hellenism in Jewish Palestine," *HUCA* 57 (1986) 83-111.

Pharisees and the Essenes was found to be deficient.

The Pharisees derived their name from the Hebrew *perushim* meaning "to be separated". Lawrence H. Schiffman connected this designation to their probable self-imposed separation from ritually impure food and from the tables of the common people, termed *'amha-'aretz* (people of the land) in Talmudic sources. In their eyes the people, were not scrupulous regarding laws of Levitical purity and tithes.[307]

(b) Who are Pharisees?

Lawrence H. Schiffman identified the Pharisees as the middle and lower classes.[308] As a consequence of their lower social status, they really did not become Hellenized but seem to have remained primarily Near Eastern in culture because those attached to Hellenistic power were regarded as the upper class. To be fair, they may have adopted Greek words or intellectual approaches but they viewed as authoritative only what they regarded as the ancient traditions of Israel. Martin Hengel also shared the same view. He believed that the leading Pharisees were indeed also scribes who formed an elitist movement. They turned to the people to educate them in the observance of the law.[309]

(c) Exegetical method

Schiffman pointed out that the Pharisees accepted what they termed the "traditions of the fathers" --- non-biblical laws and customs believed to have been passed down orally through the generations.[310] These teachings supplemented the written Torah and were part of what the Rabbis later would call the Oral Law. They are said to have been extremely scrupulous in observing the Torah and to have been experts in its interpretation.

They tried therefore to extend the holiness of the Temple to the whole "Eretz Israel". Furthermore they gradually tried to impose their understanding of the laws on the people. In order to do this it was necessary to interpret the laws in such a manner that they could be practiced in every-day life. Therefore, Josephus as well as the New Testament emphasizes the influence and the

[307] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 76
[308] Idem, 77
[309] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 172
[310] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 78

high esteem the Pharisees enjoyed among the people.[311] The thoroughness in exegesis and observance of the laws was a typical characteristic of them.[312] The Pharisees' popularity[313] together with their unique approach to the Jewish law laid the groundwork for their eventual ascendancy in Jewish law, and also laid the groundwork for their eventual ascendancy in Jewish political and religious life. The Oral Law concept that grew from the Pharisaic 'traditions of the fathers" allowed Judaism to adapt to the new and varied circumstances it would face during Talmudic times and later. In time, Pharisaism would become rabbinic Judaism --- the basis for all of subsequent Jewish life and civilization.[314]

Furthermore, D. I. Brewer has tried in his dissertation[315] to describe the exegetical methods of the Pharisees on the basis of about 100 tannaitic texts, ascribed to experts before 70 CE. These stem from discussions of Pharisees, Sadducees and the Schools of Shammai and Hillel. He comes to the conclusion that the 'scribal exegesis' of the Pharisees must be clearly distinguished from the 'inspired exegesis' of Qumran, the apocalyptic texts and Philo.[316] We are to give credit to Brewer's conclusions having point out two main streams of ancient Jewish exegetical methods. The scribes considered all of the scriptures as law dictated by God, in which the exact wording was extremely important and in which every detail was of great significance. In this context, Brewer speaks of 'nomological exegesis'.[317] Any search for a deeper meaning in a text (*deras*), which went beyond the literal, for example through allegorical interpretation, would have been rejected. Martin Hengel further qualified both types of exegesis, the scribal "nomological" *pesat* and the sectarian "inspired" *deras,* to proceed from two identical presuppositions:

(1) holy scripture is consistent and
(2) every text in scripture is significant.

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311 Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 172
312 Cf. A. I. Baumgarten, "The Name of the Pharisees", *JBL* 102 (1983), 411-28 (413)
313 Josephus stresses the popularity of the Pharisees among the people. Given his firsthand knowledge of the last years of the Second Temple people, we should credit this view, although we also need to acknowledge Josephus's definitely pro Pharisaic prejudices.
314 Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 78
315 Cf. D. I. Brewer, *"Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE"* (Texte und Studien zum Antike Judentum 30; Tubingen: Mohr, 1992)
316 Idem, 173
317 Idem

However for "scribal exegesis" every text supposedly has only one meaning.[318]

Hengel affirmed that Brewer's observations are worthwhile but too one-sided.[319] He found that a mixture of *pesat* and *deras* exegesis, as it occurred in the literature of later rabbis and already existed before 70 CE. The reason for the predominantly nomological interpretation among the scribes was that they were most of all jurists of the Torah. The literal interpretation of law texts was therefore part of their daily praxis as judges or advisers. This does not exclude the possibility that such a scribe could be an apocalyptic or mystic at the same time. On the other hand, that the Essenes also were able to argue on this nomological basis is evident in QMMT as well as in the legal parts of the Damascus Document.[320] One must conclude that the exegesis of the Pharisaic scribes was surely not as one-sided as Brewer suggests. The scribes made use of multifarious exegetical forms, which were current in Jerusalem before 70 CE.[321]

Both forms of exegesis, the nomological and the inspired, were present right from the start in the Torah and in the prophetic corpus. It stood in the conflict between the idea of the salvific presence of God in the cult and in the observance of the law and the expectation of the coming of God's reign on the other hand. Both types of interpretation were fruitful in universal history. Early Christianity developed with the help of this inspired eschatological exegesis. Rabbinic Judaism indeed preferred the nomological interpretation.[322]

2.6.3 The Sadducees

(a) Who are Sadducees?

The Sadducees were a recognizable group by about 150 BCE. Predominantly aristocratic, they were mostly either priests themselves or had intermarried with the high priest families. They tended to be moderate Hellenizers whose primary loyalty was to the religion of Israel but whose culture was greatly influenced by the Greek environment in which they lived.[323]

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[318] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 173
[319] Idem
[320] Idem
[321] Idem, 174
[322] Idem, 175
[323] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 73

The Sadducees derived their name from Zadok, the high priest of the Jerusalem Temple in the time of Solomon. The Zadokite family of high priests served at the head of the priesthood throughout First Temple times except when foreign worship was brought into the Temple --- and again during Second Temple times --- until the Hasmonaeans wrested control of the high priesthood from them.[324]

(b) Sadducees' teaching

The Sadducees rejected the "traditions of the fathers" that the Pharisees considered as law. For this reason, later rabbinic sources picture them as rejecting the Oral Law. However, the notion promulgated by some church fathers that the Sadducees accepted only Torah as authoritative, rejecting the Prophets and the emerging corpus of Writings, is unsubstantiated.[325]

The Sadducean approach had a major impact on political and religious developments in the Judaism of the Second Temple period. Sadducean offshoots played a leading role in the formation of the Dead Sea sect. There is even evidence that some Sadducean traditions remained in circulation long enough to influence the Karaite sect, which came to the fore in the eighth century CE. Yet despite their important role in these phenomena, the Sadducees ceased to be a factor in Jewish history with the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The sacrificial system, in which they had played such a leading role, was no longer practiced. Their power base, the Jerusalem Temple, was gone, and their strict legal rulings augured poorly for the adaptation of Judaism to the new surroundings and circumstances of the years ahead.[326]

(c) Sadducees and Pharisees

Why did the Sadducees disagree so extensively with Pharisaic tradition? What made the two diverge on so many maters of Jewish law?

Later Jewish tradition claimed that all the differences revolved around the Sadducean rejection of the Oral Law. Based on this assumption, modern scholars have argued that the Sadducees were strict literalists, who followed the plain meaning of the words of the Torah. Yet such an approach does not

[324] Idem
[325] Idem, 74
[326] Idem, 76

explain most of the views on legal matters attributed to the Sadducees.[327]

The Sadducees also differed from the Pharisees on theological questions. They denied the notions of reward and punishment after death and the immortality of the soul, ideas squarely accepted by the Pharisees. They did not believe in angels in the supernatural sense, although they must have acknowledged the "divine messengers" mentioned in the Bible. To them, because of human beings' absolute free will, God did not exercise control over human affairs.[328]

As recorded in rabbinic literature, the primary dispute separating the Sadducees from the Pharisees pertained to the calendar. The Sadducees held that the first offering of the Omer (barley sheaf; Leviticus 23:9-14) had to take place not on the second day of Passover, in accord with Leviticus 23:11, "on the morrow of the Sabbath." To ensure that this Festival was observed on the proper day of the week, the Sadducees adopted a calendar that, like the one known from the Dead Sea sect and the Book of Jubilees, was based on both solar months and solar years.[329]

2.6.4 Wisdom groups

(a) Who are the wise?

James L. Crenshaw gave four accounts for the rise of wisdom group.[330] The existence of a professional class of sages in Israel has been postulated in analogy to Egypt and Mesopotamia. Their presence is confirmed by a literary corpus that reflects sapiential concerns, attacks upon the wise within prophetic texts[331] and the general probability that any royal court would need the special talents of sages.

Among them, Egyptian origin is given high priority. A professional class of intelligentsia arose in the third millennium BCE in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. In Egypt these courtiers instructed the children of the pharaohs and other potential bureaucrats. Their insights concerning proper speech,

[327] Idem, 74
[328] Idem
[329] Idem, 75
[330] James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 20
[331] Cf. Isa. 5:21; 31:2; 29:14; Jer. 8:8-9

correct etiquette and interpersonal relationships proved indispensable to aspiring rulers. Consequently a monarchal system of private education developed and instructors composed texts that survived for centuries in a tradition-oriented culture. Similarly, schools in or near temples became the instrument by which Sumerian and Babylonian scribes acquired special skills that enabled them to assist the government in its various projects and to provide numerous services for wealthy private citizens.[332]

The division between the wealthy and the vast majority of people in society was much greater in antiquity than at present. There was really no middle class. Most wealth came from the land. There seem to have been few who made a fortune by trading or commerce. Therefore, wealth and a high position in society usually went together. Many of those with wealth would also have been involved with the court and administration in some way or the other. Such people had the opportunity for education and the interest in pursuing or promoting intellectual activities for personal gain, for advancement of status among their peers, for entertainments, and for their own personal interest.[333]

A second group who had interest in intellectual pursuits was the priests. It is often assumed that priests had no concerns beyond the cultic. On the contrary, with a secure income and plenty of spare time when not serving directly in the temple, they were the ideal group to be concerned with preserving the tradition and composing theological and other works.

The third main group of people able to devote time to reading and composing literature was the scribes. They were the main group involved in administration.[334]

The wise were not a specific class or profession but encompassed all sorts of individuals from various strata of society. The wise par excellence are the learned, the advisers, the counselors, the viziers --- whether spiritual, political, or even private.[335]

[332] James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 21
[333] Lester L. Grabbe, “Priests, Prophets, Diviners and Sages”, 169
[334] Idem, 170; See also James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 22-3
[335] Idem, 176

(b) Ben Sira as Scribe

The first scribal personality we meet once Ezra had receded into the shadows is Ben Sira of the second century BCE. The fact that his grandson made this collection of wisdom poetry under his grandfather's name is a sign of the new epoch although it was prevented from becoming part of the eventual Hebrew canon.[336] Sira appears as author of wisdom sayings in the sense of traditional experienced-wisdom, but he is in fact a scribe that acted as exegete of Holy Scripture.[337] Lester Grabbe also confirmed this connection by elaborating on the definition of the wise. He stated that the association of the scribe with wisdom and the wise counselor is found in *Ahiqar* as well. He is referred to as "a wise and skillful scribe" (Ahiqar 1.1), "the wise scribe, counselor of Assyria" (Ahiqar 1.12) and "the wise scribe and master of good counsel" (Ahiqar 2:42).[338] The sage was inseparable from the scribal tradition. Ability to read and write was confined to the relatively small elite group of trained scribes.[339] Scribes were needed in the court and economic administration, the temple, and even the army. Because of the need for administrative staff, schools were established in the royal court. They were devoted to the production, study and preservation of texts, especially religious texts.[340]

Just as *hakham* and *sofer* are merged in one person, we meet for the first time in Sira's work with a revolutionary identification: true universal wisdom, which comes from God and permeates creation is identical with the law given only to Israel. The "Creator of the universe" himself has allocated wisdom to Zion as its dwelling place so that it will bear fruit in his people.[341] But this is not all; wisdom is put on a level with the deed of the covenant, which was handed to Moses as Holy Scripture. This means that the five books of Moses truly "embody" the unfathomable wisdom of God. The task of Torah exegesis must therefore become an unending and always new exercise. Through interpretation the exegete participates in God's universal wisdom.[342]

This thought proved to be very fruitful in that it not only became the root of the

[336] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of life in Israel and Early Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 12
[337] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 164
[338] Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners and Sages*, 163
[339] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and law in the Old Testament*, 10
[340] Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners and Sages*, 164
[341] Sir. 24. 1-12
[342] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 164

rabbinic idea that the Torah is the "instrument through which God created the world"[343] but also that in the Torah, all divine secrets have been revealed. Consequently the rank of scribe was exalted to a metaphysical level.[344]

Ben Sira still understands the exegesis of the Torah as a priestly privilege. The offices of priest and prophet do not exist in opposition to one another because for him prophets had only a temporary function between Joshua and the construction of the Second Temple. In the present time the priestly exegete of the Holy scripture, enlightened by God's Spirit has replaced the prophets.[345]

Ben Sira thus forms a spiritual-intellectual pivotal point. He is a wise man of synthesis, who unites contrary aspects: Wisdom and Torah, universal knowledge and observance of the scriptures, sapiential reason and faith based on revelation, priestly concern with order and prophetic inspiration, Temple cult and ethical action. But he finds himself faced with a threatening crisis. This daring synthesis cannot hold in this form. Therefore his emphatic warning to all the priests to remain united.[346]

This crisis becomes evident in the experiment of the "Hellenistic reform" in Jerusalem during the second century BCE, which was initiated by some of the leading priests. This reform lead the community in Jerusalem to the brink of self-destruction as it is witnessed in the book of Daniel.[347]

In effect he has arrived at a crossroad: how can it continue to be true that exegesis of scriptures remain only a privilege of the priests, when he himself does not any more regard wisdom as a privilege of an aristocratic group, but instead invites all who want to learn into his school?[348] And if he himself describes his activity as exegete and poet in prophetic terms and claims to do his work by the divine charism of the Spirit, will this not lead to a new form of "inspired exegesis", such as one meets in the apocalyptic texts?[349] And if the priestly aristocracy rejects the commandments of the Torah, must not the laity step into the breach and take over the exegetical task? The crisis, which soon

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[343] *Ab*. 3.14 R. Aqiba.
[344] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 164
[345] Idem, 166
[346] Sir. 41.8-9; cf. 2.3; 4.19 etc; Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 271
[347] Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 166
[348] Sir. 51.23; cf. 51.29
[349] Idem

followed shows that trust in salvation in the cult and in the traditional action-consequence rule, broke down with the desecration of the Temple, which referred to the acts of Antioch Epiphanes in the years 167 BCE and the bloody persecution. New answers had to be found whereby prophetic preaching of the coming of God's kingdom would be of central importance.[350]

Reference to these Chasidic scribes are found in Daniel 11 and 12[351] where the maskilim are mentioned as those who are acting as teachers and exegetes, who "inform" many among the people and "lead them to justice" and who suffer persecution because of their actions.[352] In this respect, we found an important point about how the interpreter is affected by his/her pre-conceptions and belief. The communal leader has a moral need to lead his community to take right actions. This may lead to induce exegesis with a moral end of the interpreters.

(c) The teaching of the wise

The literature of the sages covers a wide range, much of it with parallels to the OT wisdom writings: instructions, admonitions based on traditional Egyptian concerns for order, skeptical literature, treatises in praise of the scribe, religious writings, and what might be termed magical literature. Both of these question traditional beliefs and expectations about afterlife and the mortuary cult, showing that at least some sages were not afraid to go against established beliefs.[353]

Wisdom literature, however, reflects a different type of writing. It comes in the category of attempts to understand the world and how it works. It can be called philosophical literature in the broadest sense. It may be theological literature in the narrow sense. It shows a desire to reflect on life and to ask questions, to wonder why, to seek out specialized (or hidden) knowledge. Despite the difficulties of defining "wisdom" and the justified criticism about finding wisdom influence too widely (Crenshaw), there is common consensus that a wisdom tradition exists.[354]

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350 Idem, 167
351 Dan. 12:33, 35; 12:3, 10
352 Martin Hengel, *The Scriptures and their interpretation in second temple Judaism*, 167
353 Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners and Sages*, 164
354 Idem, 171

2.7 Developmental period of Early Jewish and Rabbinic exegesis

Covering nearly a millennium (1st century-11th century CE), the rabbinic period is a lengthy and complex era, during which exegetical approaches and traditions developed that link up with inner-biblical and early post-biblical interpretation at one end and with medieval interpretation at the other. Rabbinic tradition developed primarily in two centers: the land of Israel and in Babylonia, with the latter gradually becoming more important and influential.[355]

2.7.1 Schools and Academies

Schools or academies were the locus of Jewish religious education. Charles Kannengiesser commented that the origin of these schools may be discovered in the scriptural commandment to provide religious education for children (Deut. 11:19).[356] On the basis of rabbinic literature, we may reconstruct how this commandment was fulfilled in the early period of rabbinic Judaism. A communal tutor met the students in the house of the book. These academies probably consisted of a small number of students who lived near the residence of the rabbi. The schools were formed due to the religious persecution. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus and he expelled all Jews from the city. The prosecution led to the establishment of some learning centers. That contributed largely to the forming of schools all over the country. The most famous one was at Jamnia. There are two types of learning places. The schools may distinguish between synagogues erected as local centre for religion and education and schools erected around Rabbis.

There were two rival schools of thought among the rabbis. The more conservative of these schools was led by Shammai whereas the more liberal by Hillel. It was Hillel's school, which eventually triumphed and left its mark on later Jewish exegesis.[357] Hillel and Shammai and their schools (1st c. BCE to 1st c. CE) argued points of law during the late Second Temple period, up to the time of the Temple's destruction in 70 CE. That date is a convenient marker for the start of the classical rabbinic era, which is conventionally divided into the four periods following, with overlapping beginnings and endings. These

[355] Yaakov Elman, "Classical Rabbinic Interpretation", in *Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 1844
[356] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 122
[357] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1844

periods are subdivided into generations, with a "generation" generally indicating the passing of a school of teaching from master to student.[358]

2.7.2 The Rabbinic Period

The rabbinic writings of this period fall into two broad periods of time: tannaic (or tannaitic) and amoraic.[359]

(a) *Tannaitic* period

The tannaic period extends roughly from 70 C.E. to 300 C.E.,[360] that is, from the establishment of the early academies, Bet Shammai ("House of Shammai") and Bet Hillel ("House of Hillel"), to the compiling and editing of the Mishna under Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi ("the Prince" or "Patriarch": 135-217 CE) in the first decade of the third century CE[361]

A *tanna'* is one who "repeats" tradition,[362] i.e., a transmitter or tradent of oral teaching. There are five generations of *tanna'im*, beginning with the schools of Hillel and Shammai and extending to the era of Gamaliel III.[363] The achievement of the tannaic period was the production of the Mishna (Mishnah). Tannaic sayings found in later writings outside of Mishna are called *baraitot* [364]

(b) *Amoraic* period

The second period is that of the *'amora'im*. An *'amora'* is a "speaker" or interpreter.[365] The Amoraim were the interpreters or commentators on the Mishnah. The compiling of the principal commentaries on the Mishnah and the

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[358] Idem
[359] Craig A Evans, *Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 115
[360] Jacob Neusner and many other scholars argue that it is difficult to make any definitive statements about teachings, which are prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. The Mishnah itself defines the end of the Tannaitic period. This would mean that by the mid-third century C.E., the Tannaitic period came to an end. See Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 124
[361] Craig A Evans, *Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 115
[362] The earliest group of the sages in Rabbinic Judaism is called *Tannaim*. The term *Tanna* is an Aramaic word associated with the Hebrew root, *shanah*, "repeat," or 'learn". See Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 123; Craig A Evans, *Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 115
[363] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1845
[364] An Aramaic word literally means "standing outside"
[365] It originates from the root amar, "say", "name", or "explain" Cf. Craig A. Evans, *Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 115

two Talmuds define the Amoraic period. This definition implies the development of two groups of scholars in Eretz Israel and Babylonia and the eventual redaction of two Talmuds, the Palestinian and the Babylonian.[366] This material is divided into halakah, which covers matters of behavior and conduct, and haggadah, which is meant to illustrate scriptural texts and edify the reader, though this distinction is not always maintained in practice.[367] The Babylonian *'amora'im* is divided into seven "generations" and in the land of Israel *'amora'im* is divided into five.[368] This period, beginning in the 3rd century, lasted until about the 6th.

Midrashim are concerned mainly with scriptural exegesis. They are largely but not entirely halakic in content. Eventually this material was gathered together and supplemented by still later commentaries into the Talmudim, which were produced independently at Jerusalem and at Babylon towards the end of the Amoraic period (ca 500 CE). Dating is a major problem with all of this material. The codifications were relatively late, but in a highly traditionalist society there is no doubt that much of the contents goes back to New Testament times or earlier.[369]

The Amoraic period in Eretz Israel follows the contours of the political developments in the eastern Roman Empire. After Constantine's final conquest of Israel in 324 CE, Roman legislation became increasingly anti-Jewish, and by the end of the fourth century the Patriarchate and synagogues were principal targets of anti-Jewish laws.[370] In mid-fourth century there was a rebellion, followed by a decline of the capital cities (Tiberias, Sepporis, Lydda) noted in the archaealogical records. Tradition recorded that many rabbis emigrated to Babylonia at this time, possibly as a result of these events. The Patriarchate was abolished by Roman edict by 429 BCE, and in the latter half of the century the academies declined, and, perhaps responding to these political turns, the Jerusalem Talmud (JT) was redacted and the Amoraic period in Erez Israel came to a close ca. 400 CE. In Babylonia, it extends another century, since the Babylonian Talmud (BT) received

[366] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 124; Craig A. Evans stressed the importance of this period as that the achievement of the amoraic period was the production of the two Talmuds and several of the Midrashim, Craig A. Evans, *Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 115
[367] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present,* 50
[368] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1845
[369] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 51
[370] see Codex Theodosianus 16.8.1, 5, 6, 13, 26, and 16.9.1,2

significant redactions ca. 500, only to assume its final form in the following period.[371]

The Amoraic period in Babylonia extends from the third through the fifth centuries C.E. Relations between the Jewish communities and their non-Jewish rulers there seem to have been more harmonious than in the Roman Empire.[372]

(c) Other periods

The third, little-known period is that of the *savora'im*. A *savora'* is an "expositor." These rabbis were members of academies in Babylonia in the 6th century BCE.

The fourth period, which at its end crosses over into medieval interpretation, is that of the *ge'onim*. A *ga'on* is the leader of one of the academies in Babylonia; *ga'on* means "pride" and is a short form of the title *ro'sh yeshivat ga'on Ya"akov* "head of the academy [that is] the pride of Jacob." The geonic period extends from the mid-6th century to the 11th century, and saw the first efforts at systematic legal commentary of the Talmud. The greatest among the Rabbis was Saadia ben Joseph Gaon (10th century), who began rabbinic study of philosophy and literature, as well as study of the Bible (rather than only study of the Talmud).[373]

2.8 Foundational Documents of Rabbinic Literature

The major works of the rabbinic period are of two types: those arranged topically, of which the main ones are the Mishnah and the Talmud; and those arranged around the biblical text, Midrash, including the ten collections in the so-called *Midrash Rabbah*.[374]

2.8.1 Works arranged topically

(a) Mishnah

[371] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 125
[372] Idem
[373] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1846
[374] Idem

The Mishnah is a compilation of the written records of oral discussions on various laws. "Mishnah" means "oral instruction".[375] The Mishnah is, believed to have been compiled in its final form by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi[376] around 200 CE,[377] though it contains material from generations long before the Rabbi's time.[378] The Mishnah is the basic halakic document, containing sixty-three tractates (*Massektoth*) of material not necessarily attached to a text of Scripture and organized under six major headings (Sedarim). All the later halakic developments in Judaism were built on or related to the Mishnah.[379]

The Mishnah constitutes a seminal collection of the traditions, which answered the community's needs for guidance regarding religious practice, ethics, and social problems. The Mishnah is organized into six divisions, or sedarim, "orders".[380] Each seder is then divided into masekhtot, "tractates", which are then divided into peraqim, "chapters"), and, finally, into the smallest unit, which is called mishnah.

(1) The first order, Zeraim ("Seeds"), focuses on acknowledgement of the Divine (prayer) and, primarily, on the holiness of the land of Israel, which is demonstrated through providing tithes to the temple in Jerusalem.[381]
(2) The second order, Moed ("Set Festivals") treats the Sabbath and the festivals of the year.
(3) *Nashim*, deals with "Women" (primarily marriage laws)[382]
(4) "Damages", the third seder, focuses on property and personal injury.[383]
(5) *Kodoshim*, deals with "Holy Things" (Temple procedures)[384]
(6) *Teharot*, deals with "Purities" (ritual impurities and purification)[385]

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[375] From Heb. *Shanah*, "repeat," equivalent to Aramaic *teni*", from which *tanna'* is derived
[376] It is "the title of the head of the Jewish community in the land of Israel. He is known as "Rabbi."
[377] It was codified by, Rabbi Judah "the Prince" (*ha Nasi*), who, according to tradition, was born the year Rabbi Akiba died at the hands of the Romans in 135 CE. Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 51
[378] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1846
[379] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 51
[380] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 127; They are called "tractates. See Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1846
[381] The orders are: *Zera"im*, "Seeds" (rules about agriculture) See Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1846
[382] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1846; Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 128
[383] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 127
[384] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1846; Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 128
[385] Idem

(b) Tosefta

The Tosefta closely resembles the Mishnah in its organization and contents. The Tosefta, Aramai, means "addition" and has traditionally been regarded as a supplement to the Mishnah.[386] The structure of the Tosefta parallels that of the Mishnah, though it is composed of extra-Mishnaic material.[387] Its authorship is ascribed to Rabbi Hiyya, a pupil of Judah the Prince, though various features in its manner of treatment have left the question of provenance unresolved in many minds.[388] It consists of a collection of baraitot, statements external to the Mishnah which come from the Tannaim, and the earliest generation of the Amoraim.[389] The Tosefta contains many rabbinic opinions that Rabbi Judah did not record in the Mishnah. It never achieved the same sacred status as the Mishnah. Whenever the two books disagree on a point of law, Judaism follows the Mishnah.[390]

(c) Talmud

The term Talmud, which means "study" or "learning", is used to refer, to opinions received from predecessors, to a whole body of learning within the Oral law, or to teaching derived from exegesis of a Scripture text. It refers to the redacted collections from the Amorain in Eretz Israel and the Amoraim and Geonim in Babylonia. "Talmud" is used in a number of ways. Usually it designates the Mishnah and the Babylonian Gemaras together, as distinct from the Midrashim and the other writings. Narrowly, however, it refers to the Gemaras, Palestinian and Babylonian ---- though it can also be used broadly to mean "talmudic" or "rabbinic" literature generally.[391]

Talmudic literature is an extensive and varied body of traditional Pharisaic material that was codified during the period from the end of the second century through the sixth century C.E.[392] It is divided by subject matter into either *halakah*, having to do with behavior and the regulation of conduct, or

[386] Yaakov Elman, *Classical Rabbinic Interpretation*, 1846; Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 51
[387] Idem,1846
[388] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 51
[389] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 128
[390] Stephen M. Wylen, *The Seventy Faces of Torah*, 33-34
[391] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 11
[392] Idem, 10; The Talmuds were compiled during the 3rd through the 6th centuries CE, first in Israel (until 370), and later in Babylonia (6th century)

haggadah, which concerns discussions about theological and ethical matters because halakic pronouncements colored the expressions of haggadah and haggadic exegesis often embodies considerations pertinent for halakah. The literature exists in a few main collections, with a number of peripheral codifications in addition.[393] The Talmud, the major work of Jewish rabbinical interpretation, exists in two forms: "Talmud Yerushalmi," the Jerusalem Talmud and "Talmud Bavli," the Babylonian Talmud. In references these are abbreviated as y. and b. respectively. The Talmud consists of pericopes of the Mishnah, accompanied by a commentary called the Gemara ("leaning").

(i) Jerusalem Talmud

The literary production, which represents the most extensive development of Mishnah commentary in Eretz Israel is the Jerusalem Talmud (also called the "Talmud of the Land of Israel," and the "Palestinian Talmud"). The JT is composed of the Mishnah and the Gemara by the Amoraim in Eretz Israel.[394]

In the early fifth century CE, the great rabbinic academies of the land of Israel in Tiberias and Caesarea were closed. The scholars of the age wrote down a compilation of their oral Torah teachings. They organized these teachings around the Mishnah. The collection of continued teachings of the oral Torah that the Sages of the academies wrote down is called the Gemara, which, like the word *mishnah*, is another word for "teaching." The Mishnah and the Gemara together are called the Talmud, also "teaching".[395]

Each discussion in the Gemara begins with the topic of the relevant Mishnah, but it may then drift to any other topic. Following the oral nature of the material, like a conversation between the groups of friends, the Gemara leaps unpredictably from topic to topic. Because of the hurried nature of the writing process, the Jerusalem Talmud is rather disordered and difficult to follow. Also, following the original oral nature of the material, the Gemara is not written down in complete sentences. Its style is elliptical ---- that is, with clipped and enigmatic phrases, like reminder notes that contain just enough information to jog the memory of a person who has all the rest of the necessary information in his head.[396]

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393 Idem
394 Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 128
395 Stephen M. Wylen, *The Seventy Faces of Torah*, 34
396 Idem

(ii) Babylonian Talmud

With the academies of the land of Israel closed, the two Babylonian academies founded by Rabbi Judah the Prince took over the lead in the ever-unfolding Jewish interpretation of Scripture. In Sura and Nehardea, later in Sura and Pumbeditha, the Rabbis of Babylon continued to study and interpret the written and oral Torahs that were handed down to them by previous generations of Rabbis. Eventually the Rabbis of Babylon composed their own Gemara and published their own Talmud.[397]

The Rabbis of Babylon had time to polish and edit their Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud is much longer than the Jerusalem Talmud. In print, the Babylonian Talmud fills three thousand two-sided folio sheets. The Mishnah is about the same size as the Hebrew Bible, but the Talmud is many times larger, large enough to fill a three-foot shelf with its many volumes. Like the Talmud of the land of Israel, the Babylonian Talmud disorganizes what the Mishnah organizes. Any subject may arise on any page. The Gemara is a literary creation, but it is written in the form of minutes to a conversation between friends. Possibly this style recreates the pattern of discussion between the scholars that took place in the classes at the Babylonian academies.[398]

The Babylonian Talmud was published between the fifth and seventh centuries CE. The Gaonim, the heads of the Babylonian academies, promoted their Talmud to other Jewish communities. By the ninth century, Jews throughout the world recognized the Babylonian Talmud as the ultimate authority on questions of Torah. If one wants to know what the Torah teaches on any given subject, one discovers this by reading not the Hebrew Bible but the Talmud. The Talmud, in rabbinic Judaism, is the ultimate word of the Torah. This remained true for nearly all Jews for a millennium, from the ninth to the nineteenth century. For Orthodox Jews today, the Talmud remains the final word on Jewish law, belief, and practice.

The Babylonian Talmud, containing the Mishnah and expanding on it, holds a place in Judaism parallel to that which the New Testament holds in Christianity. Just as Christians read the Hebrew Bible through the lens of the New

[397] Idem
[398] Idem, 35

Testament, so Jews read the Torah through the lens of the Talmud.

(d) Targum

The Targumim are Aramaic translations of Hebrew scripture, which were read alongside the sacred text and used to interpret it to the people. The dating of these Targumim is extremely controversial but most scholars agree that they contain very early material, so it is not impossible to regard them as typical of exegesis in the Tannaitic period.[399]

The synagogue liturgy during the first century CE included public reading from Scripture. The Scripture was read aloud while translation into Aramaic was given verse by verse. Being interpretative paraphrases or explanatory translations, they frequently incorporated later theological concepts and their own *haggadoth* for purposes of clarification and edification. The Synagogue was the home of the Targums, for a reader read from the Hebrew Scriptures and an interpreter paraphrased the text into Aramaic to bring out its meaning and explicate its significance for the congregation. The exegetical work of the Targum seems to have placed greater emphasis on the paraphrase of texts in the Hebrew Bible. Some of the Targumim followed the biblical text with an attempt at literal translation, while others provided elaborations in order to explain "gaps" in the biblical text. The latter Targumim share a common characteristic with that body of rabbinic literature called midrash.[400]

The Targums are important in the determination of early Jewish exegetical practice, for their purpose in rendering the Hebrew into Aramaic was not just to give a vernacular translation of the Bible, but "to give the sense and make the people understand the meaning" ---- as did the Levites in Neh. 8:8.[401] In giving "the sense," the Targumists attempted to remain as faithful as possible to the original text and yet to bring out the meaning of what the text had to say for their hearers. The Targums, therefore, "lie halfway between straightforward translation and free retelling of the biblical narrative: they were clearly attached to the Hebrew text, and at times translated it in a reasonably straightforward way, but they were also prepared to introduce into the translation as much interpretation as seemed necessary to clarify the sense".[402]

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399 Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 50
400 Cf. Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 129
401 Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 8
402 J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 13

Evidently Targums originally existed among the Jews for all the biblical books, except those that already contained sizable Aramaic portions (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel). They are extant today in five collections (*Neofiti, Targum Jonathan Fragments, the Cairo Geniza Targum Fragments, Onkelos,* and *Pseudo-Janathan*). None of can be dated in their existing forms specifically to pre-Christian or Christian times. All of them evidence varying textual traditions. Nonetheless, informed opinion believes that the targumic traditions that have been codified into our existing Targums represent both Palestinian and Babylonian (i.e., *Onkelos*) Jewish hermeneutics of a very early time, possibly originally coming from various pre-Christian synagogues. As such, they are of great significance to the discussion of early Jewish exegesis.[403] Perhaps, in fact, as Bloch suggested, it was the synagogue targumim that provided the basis for the later rabbinic haggadah[404]

The literal exposition is mainly represented by the so-called Chaldee paraphrases or Targumim, which came into use after the captivity, because few of the returning exiles understood the reading of the Sacred Books in their original Hebrew. The first place among these paraphrases must be given to the Targum Onkelos, which appears to have been in use as early as the first century after Christ, though it attained its present form only about 300-400 CE.[405] It explains the Pentateuch, adhering in its historical and legal parts to a Hebrew text, which is, at times, nearer to the original of the Septuagint than to the eventual Massoretic form, but straying in the prophetic and poetical portions so far from the original as to leave it hardly recognizable.

Another paraphrase of the Pentateuch is the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, or the Jerusalem Targum. Written after the seventh century of our era, it is valueless both from a critical and an exegetical point of view, since its explanations are wholly arbitrary. ––The Targum Jonathan, or the paraphrase of the Prophets, was probably written down in the first century, at Jerusalem; but it owes its present form to the Jerusalem rabbis of the fourth century. The historical books are fairly faithful translations; in the poetical portions and the later Prophets, the paraphrase often presents fiction rather than truth.

The paraphrase of the Hagiographa deals with the Book of Job, the Psalms, Canticle of Canticles, Proverbs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, and

[403] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 9
[404] Cf. G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 9
[405] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 129

Paralipomena. It was not written before the seventh century, and is so replete with rabbinic fiction that it hardly deserves the notice of the serious interpreter. The notes on Cant., Ruth, Lam., Eccles., and Esth. rest on public tradition; those on the other Hagiographa express the opinions of one or more private teachers; the paraphrase of Par. is the most recent and the least reliable.

2.8.2 Biblical Text: 2nd type categories

(a) Midrash

The group of texts, which reflect biblical interpretation dating from the Amoraic period (ca 500 CE) in Eretz Israel is called midrash. The term darash, "to seek," "inquire", "investigate" refers to a method of expounding the text and to a collection of such texts. These texts are commentaries and elaborations on the Written Torah. The various collections, which fall under the head of midrash, however, can focus on deriving rabbinic halakah based on Scripture, or provide elaborations on narrative passages in the Bible. They may be organized according to the order of the biblical text, or arranged as homilies corresponding to the lection on Sabbaths and Holy Days.[406]

The Midrashim are writings dealing principally with the exegesis of Scripture, as distinct from the Mishnah, where the material is recorded independently of Scripture for the most part. The Tannaitic Midrashim are largely halakic in nature, though not entirely; the Homiletic Midrashim are made up of a number of synagogue sermons; and the Midrash Rabbah, meaning the "Great Midrash", is a complete commentary on the Pentateuch and the five Megilloth (Songs of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther). In addition to these larger collections of traditional halakic and haggadic materials, rabbinic literature includes a number of more individual and somewhat peripheral writings. Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, a narrative midrashic treatment, and Aboth de Rabbi Nathan, a haggadic tractate similar to the famous Pirke Aboth ("Sayings of the Fathers"), are two of the most illustrious.[407]

(i) Tannaitic Midrashim

The Tannaitic midrashim may be said to form a continuous commentary on the

[406] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 130
[407] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 11

Pentateuch from Exodus to Deuteronomy. In these midrashim there is extensive use of rabbinic hermeneutics to demonstrate how various expansions of the Oral Law are grounded in Scripture. Despite the use of the name "halakic midrashim", these collections all contain commentary on narrative passages in their respective biblical books.[408]

(ii) Exegetical Midrashim

A second set of midrashim consists of those referred to as "exegetical" and "homiletic." The "exegetical" midrashim are later than the *midreshei halakah*, but a number were compiled during the fifth century CE. It is important to remember that the *midreshei halakah* are exegetical, but modern scholars refer to them as "exegetical" because these collections are organized according to the biblical verse order. The term "exegetical midrashim" distinguishes them from the next group called "homiletic midrashim."[409]

Genesis Rabbah explicates the book of Genesis. Scholars postulate that it was redacted in the fifth century CE. It is considered by some to be the best example of the exegetical midrashim, because the rabbis reveal deep layers of meaning within the text. The meanings the rabbis sought in the Scriptures included truths, which pertained to their own age. *Genesis Rabbah* provides many examples of rabbinic apologetics against pagan and Christian arguments. In the narratives about the patriarchs and matriarchs, it is possible to discern their veiled arguments against Christian claims that these biblical figures reached their true fulfillment only in Christ.[410]

In this period exegetical midrashim were also written on the five books in the Hebrew Bible called the Five Megillot, or "Five Scrolls." These biblical books were read as part of the synagogue liturgy for the three pilgrimage festivals: Passover (Canticles), Pentecost (Ruth), and Tabernacles (Ecclesiastes); and on Purim (the Feast of Esther) and the Ninth of Ab commemorating the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (Lamentations). The earliest description of the liturgical role for these books is in the Mishnah, tractate Megillah. These midrashim would include Canticles Rabbah; Midrash Ruth (also called Ruth Rabbah[411]; Lamentations Rabbah; Midrash Qoheleth (also

[408] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 131
[409] Idem
[410] Idem
[411] See Chapter four

called Ecclesiates Rabbah); and the first half (1-6) of Esther Rabbah.[412]

(iii) Homiletic Midrashim

These collections do not follow the order of the biblical text. Rather, they are developed thematically. As we have them now, these homilies have been subjected to abbreviation or other editorial reformulation one time or another.

Modern scholarship has concentrated considerable effort on the structure of these homilies, especially the formal conventions used for their beginning and conclusion. The *petiah*, which is generally understood to be a kind of proem or introduction to the homilies, is the most common rhetorical form in midrashic literature. The *atimah*, or peroration is a homily with a message of hope in the messianic deliverance of the Jewish people from the harshness of its exile. These *atimot* may offer students of patristic literature some understanding of the development of early Christian typological exegesis.

2.8.3 Rabbinic Literature relating to the Book of Ruth

Amoraic midrashic literature includes *Midrash Rabbah* ("The Long Midrash"). It consists of commentary on the five books of Moses and commentary on the five Megillot, or "Scrolls" (*Song of Songs Rabbah, Ruth Rabbah, Lamentations Rabbah, Qohelet Rabbah, and Esther Rabbah*) The work as a whole ranges between ca. 450-1100 C.E. with Genesis being the oldest (ca. 425-450), followed closely by Lamentations (ca. 450) and Leviticus (550). The Middle Age Midrashim include Song of Songs (ca. 600-650), Qohelet (ca. 650), and Ruth (ca. 750).[413] Although much of the material is tannaic and amoraic, there is material from later authorities and there are numerous glosses (and later interpolations). Moreover, much of this material has been taken from other Midrashim and talmudic writings. Study of these Midrashim should bear this in mind.[414]

Concerning the Targums to the Writings, there is no official version of the targums to the Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Qohelet, Esther, and 1-2 Chronicles). There are no traditions of authors or relationship, as in the case of the Pentateuch or the Prophets, and

[412] Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 131
[413] Craig, A. Evans, *Non-canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 133
[414] Idem, 134

so it is probably best to treat them as relatively independent works. Furthermore, these targums played no official role in the synagogue, though the Five Megillot (Ruth, Qohelet, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Esther) functioned in the holiday liturgy.[415]

2.8.4 Conclusion

Since about 400 CE writings start to appear for which it can be assumed that an authoritative body of Scriptures already exists. These writings are not intended to be extensions to that sacred literature, but are rather commentaries on it as Gerald Bray have said.[416] They are the exegetical products of Jewish socio-political circumstance starting from the Second Temple Period. We also witness some continuity of the trends and directions of previous exegetical methods, which definitely imposed their effect on the interpreters in their exegesis of existing literature.

2.9 The Historical and Socio-cultural Background for the Formation of Jewish Commentary

The Jewish co-edition of the commentating views started with rabbinic sages. Their interpretation formed the foundation of Jewish exegesis, which reflected their tradition, culture and society at that era. Behind the Jewish interpretations, we may identify some principles or patterns, indicating the pre-concepts and pre-traditions of the commentators when their hermeneutics is carried out. The early Jewish commentary was not something new, but was influenced and evolved from a specific historical and socio-cultural context.

2.9.1 The rise of library scrolls

James Kugel agrees that the growth and the importance of Israel's sacred library was an importance event for the rise of the interpretation of the Scripture.[417] The available scripture is analyzed as to its true meaning and applicability in changed circumstances. This process of interpretation as it was, fostered by different forces will be examined below. This exegetical technique grew more and more elaborate towards the end of the biblical period. It clearly laid indicated the purpose of interpretation of the Jewish community. The

[415] Idem, 105
[416] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*, 47
[417] James Kugel, *Early Biblical Interpretation,* 51

Jewish people pored over their sacred texts with a single-minded intensity, seeking in them not only a history of their ancestors and the glories of days gone by but also a corpus of divine instructions, a guide to proper conduct and some clues to God's future plans for his people.[418]

Before the final formation of the Hebrew Bible, Eugene Ulrich stated that "the first and most obvious learning that the biblical scrolls taught us was that there were variant forms of the text for many books of the Bible in the last two centuries BCE and the first century CE."[419] At the outset it should be stated explicitly that a large number of manuscripts display impressive agreement with particular books of what emerged in the Middle Ages to be called the Masoretic Text. So we can be assured that our present biblical text is a copy, preserved with amazingly accurate fidelity, of nearly stabilized ancient collection of 'biblical texts' from the period when the Temple still stood.

Ulrich further elaborated the characteristics of variant literary editions of the biblical text. While the scrolls do demonstrate the accuracy of one line of transmission, they also demonstrate at the same time the creative pluriformity, which characterized the process of the development and transmission of the Bible as well as the fact that only one of the multiplicity of various forms of the text has come down to us in the Masoretic Text. Thus, the accumulated variants and literary editions teach us that the text of what we now call our Bible was certainly still in a period of pluriformity and probably still in a period of organic growth during of the Qumran community.[420]

Literary critics have been demonstrating for centuries now that virtually all the books of the Bible are products of a long series of contributors whom we can call --- depending on the activity of each --- authors, tradents, editors, and scribes. When did that period of composition end? The period of evolutionary growth ---- the production of revised literary editions --- was still in progress at the time of the First Jewish Revolt (66-74 CE). The view has been proposed that the multiplicity of text-types at Qumran reflects the confusion caused by the introduction of the several text-types from different localities, especially Babylon.[421] Ulrich even supposed —pluriformity in the text of the Scriptures

[418] Idem, 13
[419] Eugene Ulrich, *The Scrolls and the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 31
[420] Idem, 33
[421] See F. M. Cross's article in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Dead Sea Scrolls Jubilee Symposium Held at Princeton University, November 1997*, vol. 1 (ed. J. Charlesworth; North Richland, TX: Bibal Press, 1998).

for most of Judaism right up to the end of the first century CE, and possibly up to the Second Revolt (132-135 CE).[422]

Ulrich listed three factors putting a halt to the developing, organic stage of the composition of the books of the Scriptures.[423] One factor was that there were serious threats to the very life of the nation and the religion by the Roman victories in 70 and 135 CE. Another factor was the serious challenge to some fundamental beliefs by the claims of those Jews who followed Jesus. A final one was the emerging need for a fixed text, as the religion changed from being centered around-–the Temple to being centered around the Torah and the Prophets as the halakhic debates between quarreling parties became more text-based.

The Hebrew Bible's first interpreters established the basic patterns by which the Bible was to be read and understood for centuries to come and they turned interpretation into a central and fundamental religious activity. The story of this great movement begins logically in the biblical period itself. From earliest times, Israel had conceived of what might be called an ongoing "discourse" between itself and its God, a discourse that was embodied in various forms. The most prominent of these was the institution of the sacrificial cult. At various sacred spots ("sanctuaries") and notably in the great Temple of Jerusalem, the people of Israel made offerings to their God. Kugel regards this as part of the divine side of divine-human discourse.[424] On the other hand, God's words and deeds were transmitted and interpreted by a variety of human beings. There had also developed in Israel a particular office, or amalgam of offices, specially associated with such acts of interpretation: that of the prophet.

A divine-human discourse was perceived and carried out daily between Israel and her God, a discourse in which some figures, particularly the prophets, sought to announce God's judgments and desires and to explain the course of present and future events in terms of them.[425] God's part in the divine-human discourse was not alone mediated by live human beings; it was also carried by texts. Long before the Babylonian exile, the word of God and his messengers had been committed to memory and to writing, and Israel had cherished these

[422] Eugene Ulrich, *The Scrolls and the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, 34
[423] Idem
[424] James Kugel, *Early Biblical Interpretation,* 13-14
[425] Idem, 15, 17

words. The word was then transformed into the text.[426]

The divine word was, eventually passed on by scrolls. At this stage of development, Kugel compares it to oral tradition and names it as "a greater literalization of the word of God in action."[427] There was a text, a written document, by which people were to guide their own lives. Indeed, in key speeches inserted throughout the Deuteronomic history, as well as in numerous passages in Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, there emerges clearly the notion that the contents of "Torah" constituted a written code of behavior. Some of this mentality may be discerned in the description of a public reading of the Torah contained in the Book of Nehemiah.[428]

Kugel pointed out that it is most significant that there is a desire to have the entire populace actively instructed.[429] The Torah was to be internalized to become a generative force at the level of each individual community member written as in Jeremiah's "new covenant."[430] The message is unmistakable: "The Torah, if it is to function as the central text for the community, must truly be their common property, and be properly understood by everyone."[431]

2.9.2 Political change and influence

(a) The return after the Exile (538-516 BCE)

The period following the Babylonian exile created a number of specific conditions favorable to the activity of interpretation. The Jews began to return from Babylon to their homeland. Kugel calls it a "mode of return"[432] in which the Jews found themselves after the exile. One of the reasons for the Jews to return may be a straightforward desire to return to the place and way of life of their ancestors. These desires depended on the restored community's collective memory, a memory embodied in its library of ancient texts.[433] Thus, the very "mode of return" --- the desire to go back to something that once

[426] Idem, 51
[427] Idem, 19
[428] Idem, 19, 21
[429] cf. Deut. 31:11-13
[430] Jer. 31:33
[431] James Kugel, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, 22
[432] James L. Kugel, "Ancient Biblical Interpretation and Biblical Sage", in *Studies in Ancient Midrash* James L. Kugel edi., (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2001) 4
[433] Idem

existed ---- probably made this community book orientated to an abnormal degree. This was a dramatic and important phenomenon. Memory or oral tradition indeed affects written tradition.

Moreover, the stories, prophecies, songs, and prayers saved from before the Babylonian exile were used by the returning Jews for political purposes to support their own views on various issues. For example, the book of Chronicles has been shown to contain a detailed program for the restored Jewish community after the Babylonian exile: its author was a firm supporter of the Davidic monarchy. He was in favor of uniting the northern and southern parts of the country into a single polity, a state whose very existence was predicated on what he saw as the people's eternal as Kugel explained.[434]

In line with this "mode of return", the author of the literature is to present his ideas not as innovations but as a return to the glorious past. By omitting some things and adding others, the author reshaped the past and made it into a more perfect model of what he himself wished to prescribe for the future.

Texts from the ancient past not only served as a general guide to how life had been lived before the exile but also to how it was to be lived after the return from the exile. These texts and in particular the Torah or Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, contained numerous laws and commandments from an earlier day. An important result of this "mode of return" in which the returning Jews found themselves was the heightened importance these laws now acquired. It was crucially important that all members of the restored community do their utmost to conform to these divinely given statues of old.

(b) Late Second Temple Period (64 BCE- 70 CE)

The Roman Empire putting down two Jewish efforts at rebellion in 70 CE and 135 CE marked a new age for the development of biblical interpretation. These political events were not the sole cause of the increasing emphasis on study in Judaism, but the first put an end to Temple worship and the second crushed any hope of its restoration. Thereafter, as Yaakov Elman concluded the effect of this political change on Jewish community was that Jewish religious practice was marked to an even greater extent by study of the Bible and comment on it

[434] Idem

as major religious activity.[435]

In Palestine the defeat of 70 CE decisively ended the last vestige of political independence and of the Temple as the religious center and the basis of priestly power. Strack and Gunter Stemberger recognized that a reorganization of Jewish self-government had developed only gradually from Yabneh, the new center of religious learning.[436] Soon after 70 CE Yohanan ben Zakkai began to gather around himself Jewish scholars primarily from Pharisaic and scribal circles, but also from other important groups of contemporary Judaism. From these early beginnings there slowly developed a new Jewish leadership of Palestine, able to guide Judaism through a period without a Temple and state of their own. Strack and Stemberger put emphasis on this leadership, who found its institutional expression in the patriarchate with its academy and its court. The latter became the successor to the Sanhedrin of the Second Temple period.[437]

(c) After the Second Jewish Revolt (135 CE)

The Jews of Palestine apparently did not participate in the great diaspora revolt against Roman rule in 115-17 CE. But under the leadership of Bar Kokhba they then allowed themselves to be driven into the tragic second great revolt against Rome in 132-35. Reconciliation with Rome came only after the death of Hadrian in 138. Peaceful reconstruction began under the dynasties of Antoninus and Severus, culminating in the powerful patriarchate of Yehudah ha-Nasi (known as 'Rabbi').[438] After 135 the bulk of the Jewish population of Palestine was no longer in Judaea but in Galilee. Following the Bar Kokhba revolt, the center of Jewish self-government had to change from Yabneh to Usha.[439]

The third century witnessed a consolidation process of previous trends. It brought structural consolidation for Palestinian Judaism in the form of

[435] Yaakov Elman, "Classical Rabbinic Interpretation" in *The Jewish Study Bible*, Tanakh Translation Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1844
[436] H. L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 2
[437] Idem
[438] Idem
[439] The center of influence was mobile in accordance with the political and social situation. It moved to Beth Shearim then to Sepphoris, and finally to Tiberias by the middle of the third century. See idem.

leadership by the now hereditary patriarchate, and in the rise of the rabbinate. At the same time, Strack and Gunter Stemberger witnessed that Palestine shared in the political confusion and economic decline of the Roman Empire.

Two facts in particular stand out:[440] First Constantine's Christianization of the Roman Empire was the great turning point: the 'edict' of Milan in 313 made Christianity *religio licita*; with Constantine's sole rule from 324 that became significant for Palestine as well. The subsequent period experienced a drastic change of the religious sphere of influence. Strack and Gunter Stemberger described it as a "continual advance of Christianity so that Judaism even in Palestine found itself increasingly on the defensive."[441] A brief respite was afforded by the rule of Julian (361-63), who even permitted the rebuilding of the Temple. Then Christianity finally triumphed. The primary external documentation of this is a law of 380 CE making the Nicene Creed binding on all subjects of the Empire, thereby *de facto* establishing Christianity as the state religion. Between 415-429 the institution of the Jewish patriarchate was abolished.

A long period of stable prosperity ended abruptly in the second half of the fifth century with a number of persecutions of Jews (and Christian), culminating in 468: Jewish self-government was abolished, the Exilarch executed, synagogues were closed and many rabbis were killed. Although the situation normalized in the first half of the sixth century, the exilarchate was not restored. Strack and Gunter Stemberger concluded emphatically stating that Jews in Babylonia and in Palestine were thus without any strong leadership in that time.[442] This provides the political context for the writing and commenting on the Book of Ruth.

(d) Conclusion

The loss of political independence and of the Temple was the main reason for the rise of rabbinic Judaism. It took quite a long time for the rabbinate to prevail as a new establishment, and to reduce the diversity of pre-70 Judaism to a certain degree of uniformity. Rabbinic Judaism probably never represented the only manifestation of Jewish life and it was only through power play and centuries of development that it became the normative Judaism, which it was

[440] Idem
[441] Idem
[442] Idem

unfortunately often assumed to have been for the entire period.

The destruction of the Temple and the cessation of the sacrificial service there brought about its substitution by the synagogue and its devotional prayer service, together with the introduction of readings from Scripture. Lections from the Torah and the Prophets (Haftaroth) became part of the synagogal service on Sabbaths, and on two weekdays (Mondays and Thursdays). Books of the Hagiographa were read on festival days, foremost the Five Megilloth, which for this reason are conjoined in the canon: Song of Songs on Passover, Ruth on Pentecost, Ecclesiastes on Tabernacles, Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab,[443] and on Purim the Book of Esther. Shemaryahu Talmon illustrated that these practical necessities furthered the crystallization of a clearly circumscribed and fixed canon of Scripture.[444]

2.9.3 Hellenism

Kugel emphasized the importance of Hellenism for the development of the Jewish exegesis on the Bible. He links Hellenistic influence with Alexander's growing of power since 333 BCE. He stated that, "the period from Alexander's conquest and the rise of Hellensim in Judea to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E. was a period of crucial importance in the history of Jewish biblical interpretation because the contact with Hellenism had proven decisive in both its positive and its negative aspects."[445] He further elaborated that Hellenism provided a wealth of new ideas and techniques that helped to shape Jewish attitudes toward their own ancient writings and influenced the interpretation of those writings.[446]

The development of Judaism is not a single island in the world. Francis Young followed Kugel's direction that ancient religion was indistinguishable from culture.[447] We may witness the process of Hellenization as the involvement of assimilation of a mass of local pious practices to the dominant perspective of the Greek classics, while retaining local variety.[448] In fact, Jews adopted a

[443] It is for the commemoration of the destruction of the First and later also of the Second Temple.
[444] Shemaryahu Talmon, *The Crystallization of the Canon of Hebrew Scriptures*, 14
[445] James Kugel, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, 50
[446] Idem
[447] Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (New York: Hendrickson Publishers' edition, 2002), 50
[448] Cf. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenisim*, 2 vols. (ET London: SCM Press, 1974)

more passive and repelling approach toward the Hellenism. Moreover, as Frances Young proclaimed, there is a conflicting and mutual-expelling dimension between Hellenism and Judaism under Greek dominance over Palestine.[449] The Jews still maintained a literary culture of their own, rather than developing a kind of Hellenised classical tradition. Despite their resisting attitude, the Hellenistic challenge to the literary culture shaped the ancient Jewish world.

We may see the influence of Hellenism on the Jewish community and its literature. Froehlich's famous work is *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, discussing David Daube's parallels and connections between Jewish law and hellenisitc techniques. According to Froehlich, [450] David Daube "has convincingly argued that Jewish rules reflect the logic and methods of Hellenistic grammar and forensic rhetoric." In fact, the bulk of Daube's article is concerned with legal judgments.[451] He parallels the taking over of Greek norms in Latin jurisprudence with the systematization of legal deductions in rabbinic interpretation, suggesting that the borrowing took place when the Rabbis were masters, not slaves, of the new Hellenistic influences. Lieberman also echoed Daube's contribution in his work *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*. Both Lieberman and Daube in different ways were reaching the same nuanced position that Jewish interpretation had ancient traditional roots but responded to the Hellenistic environment by systematizing these traditions in a rationalistic way.[452]

Lieberman's work showed a series of remarkable parallels between the development of the activity of the *Soferim* in Jewish tradition and the practices of the Hellenistic grammarians. He first explored texts and book productions because for scripture there were no publishing houses. The official texts were deposited in the Temple. Lieberman parallels the tension between official and popular texts of the Bible with the circulation of Homeric texts.[453] The textual corrections undertaken by the *Soferim* began too early to have been directed

[449] Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 51
[450] Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, 4
[451] David Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric", *Hebrew Union College Annual XXII* (Cincinatti, 1949), 239-64
[452] Discussing how far interpretation was rightly traced back through Jewish tradition to Sinai and how far it emerged under the influence of Alexandrian scholarship, Michael Fishbane (in Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) suggest that "neither answer seems particularly wrong nor particularly right for that matter." Rabbinic interpretation was certainly deductive and rationalistic. See the article by Geza Vermes, "Bible and Midrash: Early Old Testament Exegesis", in Ackroyd and Evans (eds.), The Cambridge History of the Bible.
[453] Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 92

by Hellenistic influence but the parallels in method were striking. Both scribes and Alexandrian scholars developed systems of critical marks.

The Greeks systematized, defined and gave form to interpretations and the Jews "would certainly not hesitate to borrow from them methods and systems which they could convert into a mechanism for the clarification and definition of their own teachings."[454] Lieberman adduces a series of parallels, which take him beyond the Rules. Literary problems he concludes were solved in a similar way in the schools of Alexandria and Palestine. Again Lieberman concludes that what Jews learned from Greek scholars was application and systematization of their own ancient traditions.

One of the Jewish scholars, Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-50 CE), can be regarded as a significant figure to explain the relationship between Hellenism and Judaism. He stands as the most important example of Jewish allegorical interpretation of the scriptures. Philo can also be regarded as a genuinely representative of a hellenized Judaism in the *diaspora*. Samuel Sandmel regards him as in many ways unique in the context of a broadly Hellenistic Judaism.[455] Philo was primarily an apologist who is firm in his Jewish faith, but is "poised between the Greek and Jewish thought-worlds."[456] In particular, Anthony C. Thistleton rightly comments that he chooses the role of a philosophical and theological exegete of scripture but works on the basis of a Greek text with Greek conceptual tools.[457] Moreover, Klaus Otte argues that Philo's theory of language is also bound up with this amalgam of Jewish and Greek ideas, including the Therapeutae, the Essenes, and the translators of the Septuagint.[458]

Thistleton illustrated very well the relationship between Hellenism and Judaism through the exegetical example of Philo. Philo went as far as he could towards adopting the ideas and thought-forms of the educated Greek intellectual, while remaining in principle loyal to the teaching of the Jewish Scriptures.[459] In

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[454] Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 64
[455] Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 and Philo's Place in Judaism 2nd edi. (New York: Ktav, 1971)
[456] David Winston, *Philo of Alexandria: the Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections* (London: S. P. C. K. 1981) xi (comment from John Dillon's Preface).
[457] Anthony C. Thistleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (London: Alpha Graphics, 2006), 160
[458] Klaus Otte, *Das Sprachverstandnis bei Philo von Alexandrien: Sprache als Mittel der Hermeneutik* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1968) 1-44; cf 105-118.
[459] Anthony C. Thistleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 160

Michael Young's words, it is "Christian enculturation." This means that Greek culture is subordinated to the scriptures.[460]

These two poles, the Greek and the Jewish, provide the frame of reference, which determines all his thinking and his use of allegorical interpretation. On the one hand, Scripture is the inspired word of God. On the other hand, Philo frequently quotes Homer, Pindar, Euripides, or Sophocles, and is saturated in the thoughts of Zeno, Cleanthes, and the Pythagorians, and quotes and speaks of the great Plato. Thistleton again pointed out that Philo's criteria for the use of allegorical interpretation raised not from the style or genre of biblical texts, but from questions about their theological implications especially for a doctrine of God. He would seem to be entirely culture-relative to Judaism from a wider Hellenistic perspective.[461] Philo thus uses allegorical interpretation to broaden meaning in accordance with a less narrowly religious frame whereas the Fathers used allegorical interpretation to focus meaning more narrowly on Christological doctrine. This issue of patristic exegesis in the early church under the influence of Hellenism, will be dealt with later in a chapter on patristic exegesis.

2.9.4 The Greek Old Testament

The work of interpreting the Bible within Judaism was proceeded on many fronts and in various ways in respect to its historical developmental background. During the two centuries or so before Christ, the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (Septuagint, LXX) was an enterprise in interpretation, for every translation inevitably involves interpretation and reflects the particular translator's understanding of the text.[462]

However, the role of Septuagint is limited. The LXX should be looked upon as a theological commentary, as has sometimes been suggested. To use it as a primary source for knowledge of the hermeneutical procedures of the day, is an overstatement of the facts. As Jellicoe points out in speaking of the various translation units in the LXX and their respective philosophies of translation: "Style and method vary considerably, but this is no more than would be expected in a production which extended over some decades and which was the work of different hands. Liberties are taken at times, more so with the later

[460] Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 68
[461] Idem
[462] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 7

Books, but here literary rather than theological interests seem to be the governing principle".[463] For our purpose, therefore, the LXX will not be considered to be of major significance in determining the exegetical practices of first-century Judaism.[464]

[463] S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968),316
[464] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*,7