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(RITUALLY) SLAYING THE DRAGON: APOCALYPTIC JUSTIFICATION OF HISTORICAL VIOLENCE IN *PSALMS OF SOLOMON* 2

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The *Psalms of Solomon* have a long and sordid history in relation to the genre designation of 'apocalyptic'. Many early scholars note the presence of certain monstrous tropes used for historical characters and imminent messianic hopes, and thus assumed an apocalyptic genre.[1] Subsequent, detailed studies of apocalypses have called this generic designation into question. More recently, however, the notion of apocalyptic as a static genre has been likewise assailed. It is between these grey lines that we operate in the study of this liturgical compilation, and it is between these lines that these psalms were performed. But how exactly were these rites adjudged for efficacy? In the time between the dragon's victory (*Pss. Sol.* 1, 8), his death (*Pss. Sol.* 2) and the rise of the Royal Messiah (*Pss. Sol.* 17–18), the community that used and compiled these rites saw their prayers, fasting and liturgy as having very real socio-political effects. *Pss. Sol.* 2 is especially central to this discussion, as it narrates: the precipitating events and the eventual destruction of Pompey, as he is presented in the guise of the *Chaoskampf* dragon, which came to be associated with arrogant imperial rulers whom God destroyed in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible. Specifically, *Pss. Sol.* 2.25-27 states,

1. E.g. D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 BC–AD 100* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 104-39; Robert B. Wright, 'Psalms of Solomon', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983), II, pp. 639-70 (642); John Dominic Crossan, *Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), pp. 107, 284-86; *idem*, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 40, 56.

[25]μὴ χρονίσῃς, ὁ θεός, τοῦ ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς εἰς κεφαλάς,
τοῦ εἰπεῖν τὴν ὑπερηφανίαν τοῦ δράκοντος ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ.

[26]Καὶ οὐκ ἐχρόνισα ἕως ἔδειξέν μοι ὁ θεὸς τὴν ὕβριν αὐτοῦ,
ἐκκεκεντημένον ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρέων Αἰγύπτου
ὑπὲρ ἐλάχιστον ἐξουδενωμένον ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης·

[27]τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ διαφερόμενον ἐπὶ κυμάτων ἐν ὕβρει πολλῇ,
καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ θάπτων,
ὅτι ἐξουθένωσεν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ.

[25] Do not delay, O God, to repay them on their heads,
to declare in dishonor the arrogance of the dragon.

[26] And I did not wait long until God showed me his insolence,
pierced, on the mountains of Egypt,
more than the least despised on land and sea.

[27] His body, carried about on the waves in great insolence,
And there was no one to bury,
For he had rejected him in dishonor (NETS).

In this study, I am especially concerned with the efficacy of the prayers for the death of the dragon, an imperial monster whom God used, then discarded in ignominy, when this beast mistook his use in history for true power. What did the historical events behind this psalm mean to the community in light of their specific apocalyptic *Tendenz*?

In this article, I will argue that *Pss. Sol.* 2, in its use of mythical othering, ritual warfare and sense of unique divine election, engages in apocalyptic rhetoric, though not apocalyptic generic writing. While the text itself may not fit with common prescriptive definitions of the apocalyptic genre, it possesses several common traits with several of the prayers and psalms embedded in traditionally-defined apocalyptic texts, and it evinces an understanding of historical interpretation that is common to apocalyptic visions and prophecies. Most importantly, the portrayal of Pompey's hubris, failure and death cohere with early Jewish concepts of divine involvement in this historical death that are congruent with the justification of violence in apocalyptic literature, even in a murder committed by Romans on an Egyptian shore, though they make

the unique claim that their prayers were the true instruments of the dragon's assassination.

1. Violence, Performative Utterance and Apocalyptic Notions of History

Apocalyptic literature seems to require antagonists. Starting with the book of Daniel, we find a diffusion of both human and monstrous enemies against which the forces of Heaven and their pious human counterparts strive; the so-called light needs a so-called dark to illuminate. However, just as the shining forth of light is the cessation of darkness, the apocalyptic enemy must find their final, unqualified destruction at the hands of the righteous and their warrior god. Such violence took many forms but was necessary for the particular vision of victory to be realized in a given apocalyptic text. In this section, I will present several examples of and theories regarding such apocalyptic violence. I will address the need and methods of such violence, and I will note the necessity of such othering rhetoric in this amorphous corpus. I will also take a specific look at how such apocalyptic rhetoric of violence was deployed in ritual, prayer and hymnic texts.

Apocalyptic othering had a variety of impetuses and purposes, and at the heart of this issue is the mythicization of history evinced by such worldviews, which leaves no recourse for equivocation. Lorenzo DiTommaso, John Collins and Tina Pippin have analyzed this need to construct the enemies of the writing community and to portray them in such monstrous forms as multi-headed, hybridized creatures and dragons. At the most basic, social level, 'the fabrication of clearly defined enemies strengthens group identity and solidarity'.[2] According to DiTommaso, apocalyptic texts appeal to both the rational and emotive faculties of the reader as they portray those who stand against the community in absolute terms. On the rational pole, the writers present time, space and human existence in such a way that makes this opposition internally consistent within the document and inevitable in terms of the *telos* of history; such rationality subsumes the emotions of the group and marshals it.[3] In terms of affective reasoning, DiTommaso and John Collins argue that the

2. Lorenzo DiTommaso, 'The Apocalyptic Other', in Daniel C. Harlow *et al.* (eds.), *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism* (Festschrift John J. Collins; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), pp. 221-46 (228).

3. DiTommaso, 'Apocalyptic Other', pp. 223-26.

cognitive dissonance of a community which believes that it is God's elect, though in reality and in the cult it holds a marginal place, leads the group to posit an imminent reckoning in which God will return them to the centre.[4] However, such a return is not a simple replacement, but must result from the destruction of the imperial monsters and the defaming cultic interlopers in the Temple.[5] According to DiTommaso,

> Apocalypticism gives full rein to revenge fantasies, facilitated by a historiography that justifies the reasons and guarantees the results. Violence is an inbuilt feature of the system. Neither benevolent coexistence nor tolerant accommodation is an outcome ... what cannot be assimilated must be smashed.[6]

Such violence is necessary in such literature and cosmological constructions, though it could also have a potentially pacifying effect, despite the violent affect, as the community believes God that will defeat their enemies in clear and decisive manners, which ameliorates any need to fight back in the meantime.[7] However, even if we allow for such quietistic results, Tina Pippin is surely correct that such a role for the God of Israel—i.e. as the destroyer of monsters—forces a terrifying, awe-inspiring role on YHWH as it cleans the hands of his people because it is God who kills God's own historical tools.[8] Thus, the God who has controlled all of the events that have and will occur

4. DiTommaso, 'Apocalyptic Other', pp. 226-27; John J. Collins, *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), pp. 308-25.

5. On the connection between apocalypse and apocalyptic, see Collins, *Apocalypse*, pp. 289-307; *idem*, 'Temporality and Politics in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature', in Christopher Rowland and John Barton (eds.), *Apocalypticism in History and Tradition* (JSPSup, 43; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), pp. 26-43; Richard A. Horsley, *Scribes, Visionaries, and the Politics of Second Temple Judea* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); Anathea Portier-Young, *Apocalypse and Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

6. DiTommaso, 'Apocalyptic Other', p. 229.

7. Collins, *Apocalypse*, pp. 320-23.

8. Tina Pippin, *Apocalyptic Body: The Biblical End of the World in Text and Image* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 79-116.

will smite the forces of evil in order to return the world to its rightful, just order.

But what precisely do these violent fantasies accomplish for the community? Are they merely therapeutic, or are there more complex social and political effects? In a landmark study on the purposes of the Qumran *War Scroll*, Steven Weitzman argues that this document was meant to encourage the members of the *Yaḥad* movement and lead to a fervor for fighting that would be realized only later. For Weitzman, this work stokes the religious and ideological intensity of the ritual performers through both rallying speeches and pre-enacted victory.[9] Alex Jassen offers a more detailed and theoretically-astute argument that the entire drama of 1QM is a propagandistic tool meant to magnify the desire for violence in an imminent martial conflict. Following Ingo Schröder and Bettina Schmidt,[10] Jassen contends that the use of 'violent imaginaries'—i.e. a process in which future violence is imagined in detail in order to translate imaginary violence into practical violence—creates and sustains animosity towards the movement's enemies in order to increase the likelihood of a future war.[11] The preparation for such violence may allow for a present pacifistic stance while preparing for the violence that God will imminently commence.

However, we must also ask if this rhetoric is merely for psycho-social purposes, or if the rhetoric itself might have been an effective performative element of the hoped-for eschatological battle. Especially as we address a performative-hymnic text such as *Pss. Sol.* 2, which claims that the violence has already occurred as a direct result of the prayers of the writer (*Pss. Sol.* 2.25-26), the prayers themselves are clearly portrayed as precipitating this divine violence. The hymns and prayers of apocalyptically-themed texts such as the *War Scroll* may have themselves been effective in both protecting the *Yaḥad* movement in the present and be the figurative ammunition of the future battle,

9. Steven Weitzman, 'Warring against Terror: The War Scroll and the Mobilization of Emotion', *JSJ* 40 (2009), pp. 213-41.

10. Ingo W. Schröder and Bettina E. Schmidt, 'Introduction: Violent Imaginaries and Violent Practices', in Ingo W. Schröder and Bettina E. Schmidt (eds.), *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 1-24.

11. Alex P. Jassen, 'Violent Imaginaries and Practical Violence in the *War Scroll*', in Kipp Davis *et al.* (eds.), *The* War Scroll, *Violence, War and Peace in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Festschrift Marty Abegg; STDJ, 115; Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 175-203.

especially given the performative cues that we find in 1QM.[12] This movement already believed that its liturgical life found its performative context in the presence of angels and the divine—a constituent element of apocalyptic literature—so liturgical warfare at their sides would be a logical corollary. In this context, battling with spiritual and political forces through prayer and liturgy was not merely a future goal and activity, but rather something to be enacted regularly and in a manner that is congruent with what is known of the movement's apotropaic practices. Thus, it is no stretch to say that the *War Scroll* could have functioned as a liturgy of adjuration meant to expel unwanted evil and to purify the performing community socially, morally, spatially and ritually.

Even at this early stage, we find that some early Jewish groups—especially those who produced apocalyptic literature—were developing elaborate systems of afflictive rites in order to protect themselves from the encroachment of demons and other nefarious foes. For example, the Maskil's statement, 'And I, the *Maskil*, declare the splendor of his radiance in order to frighten and to terr[ify] all the spirits ... ' (ואני משכיל משמיע הוד תפארתו לפחד ולבֿ[הל] כול רוחי) in 4QShir[a] 1 i 4–5 is understood as a programmatic statement of *Gerichtsdoxologie* for the communal barring of evil spirits of all kinds from community spaces.[13] That an apocalyptically-minded text—and one

12. See Andrew R. Krause, 'Performing the Eschaton: Apotropaic Performance in the Liturgy of the *War Scroll*', *RevQ* 30 (2018), pp. 27-46; *idem*, 'Protected Sects: The Apotropaic Performance and Function of 4QIncantation and 4QSongs of the *Maskil* and their Relevance for the Study of the *Hodayot*', *JAJ* 5 (2014), pp. 25-39. On the performative elements of 1QM, see Rebecca Haigh, 'Oral Aspects: A Performative Approach to 1QM', *DSD* 26.2 (2019), pp. 189-219.

13. Philip S. Alexander, '"Wrestling against Wickedness in High Places": Magic in the Worldview of the Qumran Community', in Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (eds.), *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* (JSPSup, 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 318-37 (320); Esther Eshel, 'Genres of Magical Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger and K.F. Diethard Römheld (eds.), *Die Dämonen—Demons: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 395-414 (410); *idem*, 'Apotropaic Prayers in the Second Temple Period', in Esther G. Chazon (ed.), *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ, 48; Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 69-88; Florentino García Martínez, 'Magic in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar (ed.), *Qumranica Minora II: Thematic Studies in the Dead Sea*

which is likewise deemed outside of apocalyptic genre—such as the *War Scroll* could possibly use similar performative aspects thus should encourage us to remain open to such afflictive uses in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

So too then the comparable dissident community that produced the *Psalms of Solomon* may have used these eighteen hymns for both praise and spiritual warfare, as well as to ingrain the apocalyptic, dualistic rhetoric of religious violence. Such rhetoric gave an increased sense of control (whether in the hands of the community or their faithful God) and led to a sense that history was 'going according to plan'. Even if there is some question whether these eighteen psalms are sufficiently apocalyptic to fit with the genre, the monstrous Pompey being struck down on both the mountain and the sea in the form of the patently-imperial dragon is sufficiently similar to apocalyptic rhetoric to warrant discussion as apocalyptic violence. That such violence is portrayed as the direct result of the community's rites is further proof that this smiting is in the form and on the timeline of apocalyptic warfare; furthermore, if God has already come to avenge the people against the great dragon, how much more so will he come for the priestly pretenders who are still actively rendering his Temple cult impure?

2. Pompey's Destruction in Pss. Sol. 2 as Apocalyptic Violence

God's defeat of the dragon in *Pss. Sol.* 2 is the result of God's judgment of his rebellious tool, General Pompey the Great of Rome, who overstepped his role as God's punishing force. At the outset of this psalm (vv. 1-21), we find a penitential plea for God's forgiveness of past sins, which leads directly into praise for the destruction of those sinners who have paid (Pompey) and those who are still yet to pay (the corrupt Temple priests) (vv. 21-37). In both cases, these enemies have sullied the Temple by their impure presences. The former identification is made using mythic identification through the common trope of the imperial conqueror who sets himself against YHWH as the Leviathan or dragon. As with the identification of the priests, this historical portrayal is made clear through precise historical events being used in the psalm.

Scrolls (STDJ, 44; Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 109-30 (119); Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (STDJ, 12; Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 248; Krause, 'Protected Sects', pp. 28-29.

However, we would be mistaken to assert that this historical detail is historiographical.[14]

What we find instead is a performative hymn that both interprets history and makes claims to affecting history through the prayers of the community of pious outcasts, whom God will ultimately vindicate as he acts in history to restore a proper order to his chosen cultus, city and nation. In this central section, I will argue that *Pss. Sol.* 2.22-35 present a past series of events which commence God's destruction of enemies on behalf of those who are truly penitent. This violence is the result of both Pompey/the dragon's hubris and the performative entreaties of the righteous, whose penitence has been confirmed through this ongoing action. I will begin by discussing the language, genre and place of the *Psalms of Solomon* in historical study and apocalyptic discourse. I will follow this foundational discussion by arguing that *Pss. Sol.* 2 specifically offers an account of God's saving, apocalyptic violence on behalf of the righteous that point to further violence or violent upheaval as the true sinners, the corrupt priesthood of the Jerusalem Temple, will be removed.

That the extant *Psalms of Solomon* are an ideological unity from the middle of the first century CE are two of the few elements of this collection that are not questioned. For example, while the language of the extant manuscripts is Greek (in manuscripts from no earlier than the tenth century CE),[15] the near unanimity that this corpus originated in Hebrew has only recently been challenged with much success.[16] In a recent book chapter, Jan Joosten challenged this assumption of a Semitic original through a series of linguistic soundings

14. See Benedikt Echkardt, 'The *Psalms of Solomon* as a Historical Source for the Late Hasmonean Period', in Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle (eds.), *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology* (SBLEJL, 40; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), pp. 7-29. Eckhardt argues that not only are the *Psalms of Solomon* a deeply problematic source for historical reconstruction, but that its ongoing use as a source is rooted in the western academy's orientalist past.

15. For an annotated survey of the earliest manuscripts, see Robert R. Hann, *The Manuscript History of the Psalms of Solomon* (SCS 13; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), pp. 3-6.

16. Matthias Delcor, 'Psaumes de Salomon', *DBSup*, II, pp. 14-45; Joseph L. Trafton, 'Solomon, Psalms of', *ABD*, VI, pp. 115-17; Robert B. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (Jewish and Christian Texts, 1; London: T. & T. Clark International, 2007), pp. 11-13.

that found that the original language (at least of the examples used) were most likely Greek.[17] Likewise, the dating of this book was once commonly taken to be soon after the sacking of Jerusalem in 63 CE. However, the key passage of this study actually calls this *terminus ad quem* into question, as Pompey was not murdered in Egypt until ca. 15 years later in 48 CE. As we shall see below, the claim that the author did not have to wait long for the destruction of the dragon after the sack of Jerusalem (2.26a) is part of the malleability of time in apocalyptic rhetoric and ritual.

Genre, however, has become a much more contentious matter of discussion for this psalmic collection. The messianic and mythic elements that pervade this collection led many early scholars to argue that this work was indeed an apocalyptic collection of psalms.[18] However, with the seismic shift in the study of apocalyptic texts that occurred in 1979, with the publication of John Collins's prescriptive definition of the genre, *Psalms of Solomon* was left decisively on the outside of this literary delimitation. According to Collins, apocalyptic is

> A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another supernatural world.[19]

It is clear that our psalmic collection fails in almost every respect, especially in terms of narrative or mediation. These psalms are neither historical nor otherworldy. The belief that these psalms contained apocalyptic elements—if not generic traits—continued to appear, however. For example, Robert Wright contends that the collection contains an apocalyptic messianism and

17. Jan Joosten, 'Reflections on the Original Language of the *Psalms of Solomon*', in Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle (eds.), *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology* (EJL, 40; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), pp. 31-47. Joosten notes (p. 31 n. 1) that Joshua Efron had previously argued that these hymns were originally written in Greek, though he argued this on the grounds that they were Christian, rather than on any specific linguistic traits; see Joshua Efron, *Studies on the Hasmonean Period* (SJLA, 39; Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 230-32.

18. E.g. Russell, *Method and Message*, pp. 104-39. See n. 1 above.

19. John J. Collins, 'Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre', *Semeia* 14 (1979), pp. 1-19 (9).

eschatology that looks towards an eschatological judgment.[20] Likewise, Paul Franklyn argues that the inclusion of such elements as theodicy, national judgment and expressions of hope that are both individual and national point to eschatological reflections in a synagogal performance.[21] These theologically-based arguments were effectively challenged, however. For example, Brad Embry has rightly argued that Wright entirely imports the category of eschatology himself; Embry tempers this by arguing that the *Psalms of Solomon* instead present a future hope by reading the Roman conquest of Jerusalem through a prophetic paradigm.[22] Rodney Werline argues more substantially that the use of apocalyptic imagery and motifs is not the same as adopting an apocalyptic ideology or literary genre: the hope is that the expelled priestly scribes would one day return to positions of influence and cultic prominence when the Royal Messiah arrived.[23] According to Werline, the *Psalms of Solomon* evince more of a Deuteronomistic retribution for sin and impurity.[24]

Subsequent treatments of apocalyptic literature, however, have challenged not only the rigidity of Collins' definition and typology, but have followed the lead of literary criticism in attacking the use of 'pigeon-holing' generic markers. Scholars who have made such challenges advocate for a variety of more malleable generic typologies, such as family resemblance, prototype theory, or functional models.[25] Carol Newsom notably challenges Collins by

20. Wright, '*Psalms of Solomon*', pp. 643-45.

21. P. N. Franklyn, 'The Cultic and Pious Climax of Eschatology in the *Psalms of Solomon*', *JSJ* 18 (1987), pp. 2-17.

22. Brad Embry, 'The *Psalms of Solomon* and the New Testament: Intertextuality and the Need for a Re-evaluation', *JSP* 13.2 (2002), pp. 99-136 (124-26, 132).

23. Rodney A. Werline, 'The *Psalms of Solomon* and the Ideology of Rule', in Benjamin G. Wright III and Lawrence M. Wills (eds.), *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (SymS, 35; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2005), pp. 69-87; *idem*, 'Formation of the Pious Person in the *Psalms of Solomon*', in Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle (eds.), *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology* (EJL, 40; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), pp. 133-54 (150-51).

24. Werline, '*Psalms of Solomon* and the Ideology', p. 72.

25. For a survey of such models in conversation with Collins's work, see Hindy Najman and Mladen Popović (eds.), *Rethinking Genre: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins* (*DSD*, 17.3; Leiden: Brill, 2010). Collins himself concludes the volume by admitting to some of the ambiguity raised and the fact that genres are not objective

perceiving both the profusion of new genres and sub-genres (both synchronically in early Judaism and diachronically in genre studies), and she notes importantly that no single genre theory dominates others; they are heuristic tools that differ based on one's research needs.[26] Elsewhere, Newsom argues that the term 'apocalyptic' is not merely a genre signifier, but also a rhetorical strategy with specific forms and functions. She observes that the deployment of these strategies are not limited to the genre, but that instead we find a constellation of texts and tasks that come together under the banner of apocalyptic.[27] It is this latter, functional understanding of apocalyptic literature that I will follow here, though due in large part to the unworkability of applying narrative genre categories to communal hymns, and because it fits better with the research questions found herein. Newsom uses the language of the vividness of apocalyptic literature insofar as apocalyptic is evocative and it 'makes evident' its subject matter rather than 'giving evidence'; she notes,

> The insight into the persuasive function of vividness helps account for some of the most distinctive tropes of apocalypses ... vivid description may be employed, as in the description of the chariot throne and the angelic priests in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. While the evocations of transcendent reality are persuasive in and of themselves, the repetition of similar descriptions in a variety of apocalypses and related literature contributes significantly to the socially persuasive nature of a shared apocalyptic rhetorical vision.[28]

Thus, while not rejecting the importance of apocalyptic literature, she reinforces that apocalyptic rhetoric was taken up in a variety of genres, including prayer and psalmic texts. This link will be taken up again in the final section of the present article.

entities but descriptive construals, though he chides his interlocutors for a lack of literary specificity in their critiques.

26. Carol A. Newsom, 'Pairing Research Questions and Theories of Genre: A Case Study of the Hodayot', *DSD* 17.3 (2010), pp. 241-59.

27. Carol A. Newsom, 'The Rhetoric of Jewish Apocalyptic Literature', in John J. Collins (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 201-17. For a similar treatment of Christian apocalyptic, see Greg Carey, *Elusive Apocalypse: Reading Authority in the Apocalypse of John* (StABH, 14; Macon, GA; Mercer University Press, 1999).

28. Newsom, 'Rhetoric', pp. 206-207.

But what has Jewish apocalyptic violence to do with the death of a Roman general in Egypt? Few today would question that the dragon represents Pompey the Great, who entered the city through a gate opened by one faction and used a battering ram to enter the Jerusalem Temple, which held the other faction, during the Roman occupation of 63 BCE. Based on the use of future and aorist forms in *Pss. Sol.* 2.7-9, Kenneth Atkinson initially argued that Sosius, who aided Herod's siege of Jerusalem (*Ant.* 14.468-491; 15.8-10) (which was being held by Antigonus, who was subsequently beheaded by Antony [*Ant.* 15.8-9]), committed sacrilege in the Temple despite Herod's pleas to the contrary (*War* 1.357).[29] However, even Atkinson would later admit that Pompey is the only viable candidate for this role.[30]

Even when we admit that Pompey is the only viable candidate, however, historical problems still exist. For example, various portrayals of his death give contradictory information,[31] even to the point that Cicero must opine that the lack of Roman witnesses has led to a dearth of reliable details.[32] What we do know is that Pompey, after his final defeat by Caesar at Pharsalus on 9 August 48 BCE, sailed for Egypt. On 28 September, he disembarked with a small group (various authors give slightly different accounts of who was on the small boat), but was killed by his companions on the shore as they reached Pelusium in Egypt. A crowd on the shore watched as Pompey was decapitated. Lucan (*Pharsalia* 4.698-699) states that the body of the general was left to be tossed by the waves, whereas Plutarch emphasizes that the freedman Philipus—who is absent from other versions—took the body and buried it on Mt Cassius (*Pomp.* 79-80). It is especially interesting to note that this ignoble

29. See Kenneth Atkinson, 'Herod the Great, Sosius, and the Siege of Jerusalem (37 B.C.E.) in Psalm of Solomon 17', *NovT* 38 (1996), pp. 313-22. Samuel Rocca follows the identification of Herod in *Pss. Sol.* 17; Samuel Rocca, 'Josephus and the *Psalms of Solomon* on Herod's Messianic Aspirations and Interpretations', in Zuleika Rodgers (ed.), *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method* (JSJSup, 110; Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 313-33.

30. Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon Historical Background and Social Setting* (JSJSup, 84; Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 22.

31. See Atkinson, *I Cried*, pp. 32-36. Several Roman authors portrayed this death: Appian, *Hist. rom.* 2.84-86; Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 42.3-4; Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 3.104; Florus, *Epit.* 2.13.52; Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 8.485-870; Martial, *Epigr.* 3.46; Valeius Paterculus, *Hist. rom.* 2.53.3; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 77-79.

32. Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.27.66.

treatment of his body portrays his corpse as being both tossed by the sea and pierced on a mountain in Egypt, as in *Pss. Sol.* 2.26-27. According to Hanan Eshel, the author of this psalm was aware of both traditions.[33] This double death, according to this theory, connotes increased shame, as he has claimed to be the ruler of the earth and the sea, but his corpse was dishonorably cast on both. In the ancient sources, it is unanimously acknowledged that Pompey was an especially adept general at sea; even as Caesar cut him off from the land, he always trusted his naval supremacy. That in the time subsequent to his sack of Jerusalem he vied with Julius Caesar for control of Rome shows that he also likened himself as the ruler of the earth, which the Jewish author of the psalm under investigation portrays as blasphemy against the God of Israel. It is also noteworthy that *Pss. Sol.* 2.24 emphasizes the greed of Pompey and his men for plunder, which coheres well with the portrayal of this general by several Roman historians.[34] This text is not attempting to establish precise, modern historical referents to be reconstructed, but is rather making absolute claims to the God of Israel's full and complete destruction of a pretender to the divine throne. The dragon claimed to be the ruler of the earth and the sea, but was instead killed ignominiously both in the mountains and on the shore (2.26-27).

However, our text also claims in v. 28 that Pompey 'did not consider himself a human' (Οὐκ ἐλογίσατο ὅτι ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν), but this hubris made him the perfect imperial dragon. In the Hebrew Bible and subsequent Jewish traditions, the dragon was the symbol of arrogant imperial rulers who fought with, and were defeated by, YHWH. These dragons are patterned after the primordial enemies of the creator in ancient Near Eastern literature, which are representative of destruction, chaos and death; however, we note that one is conspicuous in its absence in the priestly creation story of Gen. 1.1–2.7. While other texts from the Hebrew Bible do present the Leviathan and dragon as alive, they are hopelessly outmatched by YHWH and only live at YHWH's mercy.[35] However, several prophetic texts present specific rulers in this place, and they are defeated as the dragon is always destined to be. For example, in Jer. 51.34 (LXX Jer. 28.34), Nebuchadnezzar is said to devour the prophet as

33. Hanan Eshel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), pp. 157-58.

34. E.g. Seneca, *Marc.* 16; Lucan, *Pharsalia* 6.622-631; See also Atkinson, *I Cried*, p. 35.

35. Job 7.12; 9.13; 26.12, 13; Ps. 73.3; 148.7.

a dragon (תַּנִּין) and this is specifically translated in the LXX with δράκων. It is noteworthy that this is in a poem that calls the nations to take up implements of war against Babylon now that God has declared that his chosen people have been sufficiently punished. Likewise in Ezek. 29.3 and 32.2, Pharaoh is a great dragon in the Nile, with the same MT terminology, which is translated similarly in the LXX. Finally, in Isa. 27.1, we are told that YHWH will destroy the dragon and leviathan on the day in which 'the trumpet is blown' and YHWH call his people back from Assyria and Egypt. Finally, in Bel 23-30 (LXX Dan. 14.23-30), which is found in the extended Danielic traditions of the LXX, the dragon is explicitly stated to be the zoomorphic embodiment of the majesty and terror of Babylonian religion. As Erik Eynikel and Katrin Haupsie demonstrate, the various translators of the LXX consistently used the term δράκων to translate a variety of land and sea creatures which fit the bill of the primordial enemy of creation and of evil forces that oppose God.[36] This understanding matches with the zoomorphic presentation of Pompey as the great dragon or snake, whom God must destroy for his people and for the protection of his cultus. It is precisely here that the mundane world of human politics is raised to the transcendent in apocalyptic narratives and battle accounts,[37] as God defeats such pretenders to transcendent power, who are ultimately all the same monster. While the pretentious ruler may change, their identity as the *Chaoskampf* dragon remains the same, as does their fate.

To this, however, we should add that the manner of the dragon's death in *Pss. Sol.* 2.26 is consistent with the defeat of God's enemies throughout the *Psalms of Solomon*, regardless of their ontological plane. As Rodney Werline has forcefully argued, the *Psalms of Solomon* frequently employ optative and jussive curses, in which God is called upon to destroy the enemies of the righteous.[38] According to Werline, the *Psalms of Solomon* combines this call

36. Erik Eynikel and Katrin Haupsie, 'The Use of δράκων in the Septuagint', in Bernard A. Taylor *et al.* (eds.), *Biblical Greek Language and Lexicography* (Festschrift Frederick W. Danker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 126-35.

37. For the classic statement of this distinction, see Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), pp. 1-5.

38. Rodney Werline, 'The Imprecatory Features of *Psalms of Solomon* 4 and 12', in Mika S. Pajunen and Jeremy Penner (eds.), *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period* (BZAW, 486; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), pp. 48-

for the destructions of enemies with the *Gerichtsdoxologie* tradition, which affirms the righteousness of God to judge and punish.[39] As I have argued above, this praise tradition stands at the heart of Second Temple apotropaic traditions, especially at Qumran. The various blessings and curses found in the *Psalms of Solomon* consistently reinforce the social division of sinners and righteous, outsiders and the in-group, and this division is a major theme throughout the *Psalms of Solomon*.[40] We must note, however, that, while we do not find the verbal forms we might expect for the cursing of the dragon in psalm 2, the psalmist specifically narrates his cursing of the dragon in 2.25: μὴ χρονίσῃς, ὁ θεός, τοῦ ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς εἰς κεφαλάς, τοῦ εἰπεῖν τὴν ὑπερηφανίαν τοῦ δράκοντος ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ ('Do not delay, O God, to repay them on their heads, to declare in dishonor the arrogance of the dragon').

This is then said to be immediately fulfilled by God in 2.26 (Καὶ οὐκ ἐχρόνισα ἕως ἔδειξέν μοι ὁ θεὸς τὴν ὕβριν αὐτοῦ, 'And I did not wait long until God showed me his insolence'), despite the fact that this occurred 15 years later and at the hands of those loyal to Julius Caesar. The fact that the

62. It should also be noted that curses were often used in the context of actual historical battles, e.g. the use of Assyrian curse forms in Amos 5.11 and Isa. 5.8-17; see Jeremy D. Smoak, 'Assyrian Siege Warfare Imagery and the Background of a Biblical Curse', in Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames (eds.), *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (SymS, 42; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2008), pp. 83-91.

39. Werline, 'Formation', pp. 141, 147-50. For recent articles on the socio-political power of curses in first-century Judaism, see Jutta Jokiranta, 'Ritualization and the Power of Listing in 4QBerakhot[a] (4Q286)', in Ariel Feldman, Maria Ciotă and Charlotte Hempel (eds.), *Is There a Text in this Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Festschrift George J. Brooke; STDJ, 119; Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 438-58; Andrew R. Krause, 'Community, Alterity, and Space in the Qumran Covenant Curses', *DSD* 25 (2018), pp. 217-37; Mika S. Pajunen, 'Creation as the Liturgical Nexus of the Blessings and Cursings in 4QBerakhot', in John Anthony Dunne and Garrick V. Allen (eds.), *Ancient Readers and their Scriptures: Engaging the Hebrew Bible in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, 107; Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 27-39.

40. Werline, 'Formation', p. 147. Mikael Winninge likewise stresses the importance of this social and theological division in the *Psalms of Solomon* and psalm 2 specifically; Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (ConBNT, 26; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), pp. 23-36.

historical events did not cohere to this psalm in either event or timing is of little concern, however. The point of the psalm is to highlight the *Gerichtsdoxologie* of the events, as it was truly YHWH who engineered these events. These events take on heightened, theological importance as God smites his enemy in a dishonorable way far from his home within this apocalyptic rhetoric. Likewise, the chronological dissonance is of little consequence, as apocalyptic rhetoric is able both to mark turning points in history and to collapse time, as I will argue in the following section. For the psalmist, the God of Judea used the backstabbing Romans who killed Pompey to punish this hubristic sinner, just as he used Pompey as a tool to punish the wayward people of Jerusalem; the preceding penitence of the righteous and their call for Pompey's comeuppance were the true means of the general's demise at God's hands.

However, it is not merely the dragon who oppresses Jerusalem and is in need of denunciation. In *Pss. Sol.* 2.1-5, 11-14, the 'sons of Jerusalem' (υἱοὺς Ιερουσαλημ) are said to have been mocked and punished by the nations because they sinned against God and brought about the metaphorical rape of the city because their cultic sins led to the 'penetration' of the city and temple by Pompey and his army. The violence of the entry with a battering ram in 2.1 should be read as commensurately violent with the profanation of the daughters of Zion and Zion herself (vv. 12, 14). These were the enemies who both profaned the Temple with improper service (2.3-5), but then welcomed the invader at the gates (*Pss. Sol.* 8.16-22). That these sinning Judeans would also be punished is made clear, as they stand outside the righteous, and they should therefore expect the same fate. However, it is important that we acknowledge that the cursing of those who have sinned can be thought to teach social values[41] and point to the coming judgment that might be avoided through the same sort of penitence shown by the psalmist in 2.1-21. The text seems to hold out little hope, however.

Thus, the dragon received the divine punishment that he deserved and that was pleaded for by the righteous, and the priests should know that they are

41. Werline, 'Features', pp. 61-62; Werline here cites Jeff S. Anderson, 'Curses and Blessings: Social Control and Self-Definition in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in Armin Lange *et al*. (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context* (2 vols.; VTSup, 140; Leiden: Brill, 2011), I, pp. 47-60. However, we should note that Anderson places greater emphasis on the social distinction between the in-group and outsiders in the act of cursing (see p. 52).

next. That the retribution occurred fifteen years later is of little consequence to the psalmist. This writer seems to be well-informed about the various versions of Pompey's fate, and these versions have been brought together in a celebration of this imperial monster's ignoble fate. It is also of no concern that a small band of assassins placed their knives in Pompey's back and brought his head to the true Roman ruler, as the psalmist's prayers and need for mythic destruction for the dragon were much more powerful than these daggers and Julius Caesar. The writer's familiarity with the events of Pompey's death makes them better able to reinterpret and to construe these events in a way that accords with their theology of history and belief in the efficacy of penitential prayer and the curses of the righteous. This reworking and reimagining of history utilizes rhetoric that is common to apocalyptic discourse, though in a hymnic literary context. Thus, again, we are left to consider what this means both for apocalyptic and for its use of performative genres.

3. Performative Psalmody as Apocalyptic Warfare

To this point, I have argued that *Pss. Sol.* 2 evinces the dual belief that performative ritual can affect history and that the rhetoric of this psalm is itself intending further historical change. However, these convictions should lead us to ask certain other questions. That performative rites were intended to 'do things' is almost axiomatic. But how pervasive can such change be? Also, as we move beyond the *Psalms of Solomon*, are there other prayer and liturgical texts that seek similar results? Do any of these other texts show the same apocalyptic view of spiritual warfare? What relation do such texts have to the various prayers and psalms embedded in apocalyptic texts such as the wider Danielic traditions, *4 Ezra*, the Qumran *War Scroll* or the Apocalypse of John? In this final, short section, I will argue that several of these texts have similar intentions of enacting apocalyptic violence for which they deploy similar apocalyptic, violent rhetoric in their performative rites in order to initiate the beginning of the new, restorative periods of history and to fight battles that will lead to this restoration of God's intended order. I will contend that it is within these aims that we find the purpose of many of the prayer, psalm and liturgy portions of the texts within the traditionally-defined genre of apocalyptic.

As I have argued above, the *Psalms of Solomon* are replete with afflictive rites, which are intended to wage war with the imperial, monstrous forces and

to bring about an end to the illegitimate, desecrating service of the illegitimate priesthood in the Jerusalem Temple. I have argued that *Pss. Sol.* 2.22-31 is itself quite explicit that the former effect has already been achieved because God has heard and honored the prayers of the righteous, while the latter should be expected imminently. But what of other ritual texts that are not as explicit regarding such intentions, but which nonetheless hold to similar aims and expectations? While there is no specific, typologically-defined genre of such texts, early Jewish and Christ-believing authors made use of genres and forms from scriptural texts, which they took, molded and repurposed for current needs. As Judith Newman has recently shown, such creative activity with what would become canonical texts actually reciprocally led to the increased codification and conceptualization of this scripture.[42] Notably, Newman argues that the performance of the Qumran *Hodayot* is one of the mechanisms for both forming the *Yaḥad* movement and producing its boundaries.[43] The creation and maintenance of such boundaries was of great importance, as the proliferation and variegation of apotropaic, curse and exorcistic texts at Qumran—both sectarian and non-sectarian—illustrates. Thus in texts such as 1QH[a] IV, VII and XXIV-XXV, we should not be surprised to find the dual themes of community formation and demonic expulsion in psalms that utilize mythic, Enochic and demonic imagery.[44] Furthermore, as Carol Newsom has argued, the chariot throne and angelic priests in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice from Qumran and Masada should also be considered apocalyptic rhetoric.[45] Likewise, the Qumran *Words of the Luminaries* employs the true 'We, Israel ... ' in opposition to the nations, who comprise the apocalyptic other (e.g., 4QDibHam[a] XVI 3-6) as the progression through the week's performance leads to God fulfilling his covenant commitments to his people in a

42. Judith H. Newman, *Before the Bible: The Liturgical Body and the Formation of Scriptures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

43. Newman, *Before the Bible*, pp. 107-39.

44. Andrew Krause highlights the importance of ongoing apotropaic usage of column IV, which is bolstered by Lutz Doering, who presents IV 26 as an important text pointing towards the eschatological salvation of the community after the forgiveness of their sins. Krause, 'Protected Sects', pp. 25-39; Lutz Doering, 'Urzeit-Endzeit Correlation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Pseudepigrapha', in Hans-Joakim Eckstein, Christof Landmesser and Hermann Lichtenberger (eds.), *Eschatologie—Eschatology* (WUNT, 277; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), pp. 19-58 (42-43).

45. Newsom, 'Rhetoric', p. 206.

national deliverance, in the Land and the Diaspora, striking down the oppressive nations.[46] The inclusion of a return to Zion after admission of sin is also a key element in this collection (4QDibHam[a] XVIII 12-18; XIX 5-10), which accords well with *Pss. Sol.* 2.

However, these impulses towards community formation and divine warfare are heightened in performative texts embedded in apocalyptic texts. For example, the curses in the *War Scroll* stress a dichotomy between the lot of the wicked versus that of the righteous, as well as heavenly versus chthonic spatial markers for the two lots, as the elect practice heavenly worship and those of Belial's lot are cursed along with him to Sheol. 1QM XIII 4-6 states:

> And cursed is Belial for his contentious purpose, and accursed for his reprehensible rule (וארור בליעל במחשבת משטמה וזעום הואה במשרת אשמתו). And cursed are all spirits of his lot for their wicked purpose. *vacat* Accursed are they for all their filthy dirty service. For they are the lot of darkness, but the lot of God is light eternal.

We find similar language in 4QM[a] 8-10 i 15: 'as a fire bur]ning in the dark places of the damned. Let it bu[rn] the damned of Sheol, [as an eternal burning among the tra]nsgressors' (אש בוערת במחשכי אבדונים באבדוני שאול תוק[ד לשרפת עולמים פ]ושעים). While these texts seem at first to be future oriented psalms of praise for the final victory, the use of both perfect and imperfect verbs in the text should force us to treat the temporal nature of these texts as ambiguous. Following a petition for God to destroy his enemies, 1QM XII 12-14 implores:

> O Zion, rejoice greatly, and shine with joyful songs, O Jerusalem. Rejoice, all you cities of Judah, open your gate[s] forever that the wealth of the nations might be brought to you, and their kings shall serve you.

Thus, YHWH as divine warrior is called upon not only to destroy the enemies of the movement and to take the plunder of such a warrior deity. As a response, Jerusalem is enjoined to praise this divine warrior.[47] This theme of

46. Esther G. Chazon, 'Prayer and Identity in Varying Contexts: The Case of the *Words of the Luminaries*', *JSJ* 46 (2015), pp. 484-511. On the communal and performative nature of this text, see *idem*, '4QDibHam: Liturgy or Literature?' *RevQ* 15 (1991), pp. 447-56.

47. According to Daniel Falk, this hymn in 1QM XII is likely a pre-existing hymn that was 'awkwardly' redacted here. Falk highlights a number of

praise as the response to the saving of national space is also found in the later hymn of 1QM XIX:

> Fill Your land with glory, and Your inheritance with blessing. An ab[undance [ ]in Your palaces. O Zion, rejoice greatly, and rejoice, all you cities of Ju[dah . . . [ ] Your [camp]s and Israel for an [un]ending dominion. (1QM XIX 4b-5, 8)

Zion and all the cities of Judah are again told to praise God for this work. This recurrent theme gives a sense that the ongoing performance of these prayers and rituals has ongoing ritual efficacy, which can only be the continued protection of God's elect and God's city from their enemies.

Likewise, in the New Testament book of Revelation, the adoration of God and the Lamb in Revelation 4–5 has both present and future elements, as God will defeat the enemies of his chosen people both now and in the final battle. Here, the dragon is struck down by the archangel Michael (Rev. 12) before God and the Messiah are praised specifically for their violent destruction of the dragon. As with *Pss. Sol.* 2, much of this apocalyptic battle should be read in light of Roman domination and emperor cults.[48] Steven Friesen has written persuasively, in my estimation, that the book of Revelation offers competing worship systems between the Roman imperial cultus and the worship of YHWH and the Lamb, in which the praise of Revelation 4–5 takes an important place.[49] *Pss. Sol.* 2.29 sets up the competition for who should be

inconsistencies in this text, including alternating from speaking of God in second- and third-person and an awkward transition to a 'we' section for the performative community. He notes that the latter section of praise is a shorter sort of 'Apostrophe of Zion', given the clear parallels to 11QPs[a] XXII. Daniel K. Falk, 'Prayer, Liturgy, and War', in Kipp Davis *et al*. (eds.), *The* War Scroll, *Violence, War and Peace in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Festschrift Marty Abegg; STDJ, 115; Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 275-94 (283).

48. Craig R. Koester, 'Heavenly Prayer and Christian Identity in the Book of Revelation', in Reidar Hvalvik and Karl Olav Sandnes (eds.), *Early Christian Prayer and Identity Formation* (WUNT, 336; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), pp. 183-207 and Gottfried Schimanowski. 'Connecting Heaven and Earth: The Function of the Hymns in Revelation 4–5', in Ra'anan S. Boustan and Annette Yoshiko Reed (eds.), *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 67-84.

49. Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 194-209.

considered the 'Lord of Earth and Sea' (κύριος γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης), which God has already said to have won when Pompey's corpse was left both tossed in the waves and pierced on the mountain, and he is declared as less than the least despised on earth and sea (ἐλάχιστον ἐξουδενωμένον ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης) in 2.26-27; likewise, Revelation sets up the Roman leaders as pretenders to rule the earth.

Such present performative usage that looks to final destruction is precisely what we find in *Pss. Sol.* 2.26-31. Chronologically, these prayers and hymns both mark the periodization of history[50] as God moves to the culmination of his covenants and point to this culmination in non-eschatological freedom from the nations, both of which are patently apocalyptic rhetoric. This collapsing of chronological boundaries just as YHWH begins to bring a lasting victory to his true followers is, however, not contradictory. Sacha Stern contends that abstract notions of time did not exist in early Judaism, which would obviate the idea of ancient apocalyptic texts as offering absolute, future endings.[51] Likewise, Jonathan Ben-Dov argues that at Qumran daily time (*chronos*) and the time of redemption (*kairos*) are not mutually exclusive.[52] According to Ben-Dov, when reading texts like Daniel 11, 'readers cannot miss the robust sense of the present occurring in the vision'.[53] This apocalyptic time is still linear and unidirectional, though it focuses on the reality of the divinely-elect community with an eye to the true meaning of history from a transcendent perspective.[54] Thus, the need for this restorative violence is likewise ongoing, as the future destruction of those who would work against YHWH and his people is performed and entreated regularly.

50. For discussion of the periodization of history as a key apocalyptic trope, see John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 52-70.

51. Sacha Stern, *Time and Process in Ancient Judaism* (Portland: Littman, 1999).

52. Jonathan Ben-Dov, 'Apocalyptic Temporality', *HBAI* 5 (2016), pp. 289-303.

53. Ben-Dov, 'Apocalyptic Temporality', p. 297; see also Devorah Dimant, *History, Ideology, and Bible Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (FAT, 90; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), pp. 307-308.

54. See Lorenzo DiTomasso, 'Apocalyptic Historiography', *EC* 10 (2019), pp. 1-26 (4-10); Krause, 'Performing the Eschaton', p. 46.

This pervasive use of apocalyptic language in both psalmic collections and the prayers and hymns embedded in apocalyptic texts should force us to take seriously the acceptability of the claims that the prayers of the righteous will bring about the apocalyptic violence against the mythic enemies of YHWH and his people, despite long periods of time elapsing. Such prayers, psalms, hymns and other ritual texts took on apocalyptic-rhetorical language as they are effectively weaponized by the faithful who are otherwise powerless, though who worship a warrior deity.

Conclusion

Despite the prescriptive element of narrative in Collins's definition of apocalyptic, then, we find that ongoing spiritual warfare, which directly affects historical events, may be said to be common in communal, performative psalms and prayers in Second Temple Judaism. Whether embedded in apocalyptic traditions or compiled as free-standing psalmic collections, such performative texts were not apocalyptic stories, but rather active exemplars of ritual expression meant to accomplish something in life through its participation in dialogue with more conventional apocalyptic traditions. This use of what Newsom terms 'apocalyptic rhetoric' allows for a workable malleability in terms of literary intent, while still respecting that these texts were not generically apocalyptic. Instead, these texts were part of a larger constellation of texts that allowed otherwise powerless sectarians to fight at God and the angels' sides in this conflagration. Even if they took up neither sword nor shield, these individuals employed weaponized prayers and psalms in this battle.

As an example of this weaponization of ritual, *Pss. Sol.* 2 unequivocally takes credit for the defeat of their monstrous foe through their prayers. The dragon, who claimed to be more than human as the lord of earth and sea, is killed both on the mountains and at sea, as the psalm playfully combines the various traditions of Pompey's assassination. This provides explicit claims to the efficacy of the community's prayers and confirms their claims to be YHWH's chosen group after their penitent period. These claims also place the equally hubristic and impure temple priests on notice that they will soon meet a similar end because of these same, lethal prayers and hymns.