Preface

I became interested in tefillin and mezuzot from the Judean Desert while writing an essay on the book of Deuteronomy in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Prior to this, I knew almost nothing about these curious objects. Having spent long hours in their company, I still feel that I know less than I should. It is, however, my hope that this study contributes to the important task of bringing these precious artifacts to the attention of those who are interested in the history of biblical texts, their early reception, and Second Temple Judaism in general. I am very grateful to Professor Reinhard Kratz and his distinguished colleagues on the editorial board of BZAW, Professors John Barton, Nathan MacDonald, Sara Milstein, and Markus Witte, for accepting this monograph for publication in their prestigious series. The staff at De Gruyter has been, as always, extremely efficient. Sophie Wagenhofer, Aaron Sanborn-Overby, Alice Meroz, and Sabina Dabrowski have generously offered the much-needed support and guidance. Dr. Marilyn Lundberg Melzian has kindly provided the permission to include here the images of 1QPhyl taken by Bruce and Kenneth Zuckerman. Atalya Fadida, Beatriz Riestra, and Orit Rosengarten of the Israel Antiquities Authority have graciously responded to my multiple requests and granted the permission to publish the images of the texts. Zachary Poppen has generously given of his time to proofread the entire manuscript. I offer my sincere thanks to them all.

The work on minute fragments written in minuscule scripts is challenging yet rewarding. I am truly blessed to have a spouse with whom I could share the challenges and joys of this project which grew out of our joint work on deciphering the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is even more gratifying to see our kids showing interest in our academic endeavors. It is to our two sons, Jonathan and Tal, that this book is dedicated.

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Fall 2021

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110725377-201