

## Historical Implications of the Early Second Century Dating of the 4Q249–250 Cryptic A Corpus

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Until 2001, little was known about the corpus of manuscripts found at Qumran that were written in an esoteric script known as ‘Cryptic A’. However, with the aid of twenty diagnostic criteria, it has been determined that what had once been thought to be no more than six manuscripts was actually a corpus of approximately fifty to one hundred manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> Among these manuscripts written in Cryptic scripts mainly on papyrus are the earliest copies of ‘sectarian’ documents, particularly, *Serekh Ha-‘Edah* (4Q249a-i *Serekh Ha-‘Edah*<sup>a-i</sup>, the Rule of the Congregation), previously known only from 1QSa.<sup>2</sup> Radiocarbon dating and an examination of the relative paleographic dating of the titles of sectarian documents in this corpus date the manuscripts to a

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was developed in connection with the author’s dissertation under the able guidance of Prof. Michael Stone, to whom it is dedicated with deep appreciation.

See S. Pfann, ‘Cryptic Texts: 4Q249a–z and 4Q250a–j: Introduction’ in *Qumran Cave 4: XXVI: Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea, Part 1* (DJD XXXVI; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000); ‘4Q249’, *Qumran Cave 4: XXV: Halakhic Texts* (DJD XXXV; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), and ‘The Character of the Early Essene Movement in Light of the Manuscripts Written in Esoteric Scripts from Qumran’ (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation; Hebrew University, Jerusalem: 2001).

<sup>2</sup> At least four of these manuscripts can be dated on relative palaeographic grounds to the first half of the second century BCE. See Pfann, ‘Cryptic Texts’, 515-74.

period no later than the first half of the second century BCE.<sup>3</sup> This fact warrants a re-examination of certain traditional views concerning the early history of the Community associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls,<sup>4</sup> and the emergence of Jewish sectarian movements during the Second Temple Period.

### **Early Twentieth Century Reconstructions of the Group's History**

During the first half of the twentieth century the only window onto the early history of the Essenes was provided by two incomplete copies of the Damascus Covenant (CD) found in the Ibn Ezra Synagogue in Cairo. In that document the author(s) laid out their history with very specific dates which were pinpointed relative to the dates of the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (586/5 BCE), and the emergence of the group 390 years later, as anchoring points. The historicity of the resulting dates for the group's self-professed, early history,

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<sup>3</sup> Radiocarbon testing dates 4Q249aa Midrash Sefer Moshe<sup>b</sup> (*olim* 4Q249 13-14) to 190-91 BCE. Due to a tendency or bias evident among the radiocarbon results for the manuscripts tested at the Tucson facility, the early part of that range is to be preferred; see Pfann, 'Cryptic Texts', 523 and discussion there, and cf. A. J. T. Jull et al., 'Radiocarbon Dating of Scrolls and Linen Fragments from the Judean Desert', *Radiocarbon* 37 (1995) 11–19 and Table 2. Furthermore, it is evident that this manuscript is a copy, not an autograph and thus a span of time must be allowed for the process of composition and copying. The palaeographic date of the title of 4Q249 Midrash Sefer Moshe<sup>a</sup>, written in Jewish square script, can be no later than the early second century BCE; see '4Q249', 4–6.

<sup>4</sup> The author accepts the identification of the community of the scrolls with the Essenes.

including *ca.* 196 BCE for the beginning of the group's formation and *ca.* 176 for the arrival of the Moreh Tsedeg, were almost universally accepted.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Rejection of the Community's Professed Chronology and the Emergence of a Consensus**

With the publication of various key Dead Sea scrolls during the 1950s more details became available for reconstructing the early history of the group. The studies that ensued led to a nearly universal rejection of the professed chronology of CD based primarily upon four assumptions, enumerated below.

These assumptions led to the development of a new consensus that readjusted the historical schema of CD. The majority of scholars who formed the consensus identify the group with the Essenes. They see the reactionary group as having emerged in the second half of the second century BCE during a time of conflict between the early Hasmonean high priests/rulers (especially Jonathan or Simon) and a pious laity or priesthood, followed by the building of a community center at Qumran during subsequent decades. The discussion has tended to revolve around proposed identifications of the various sobriquets of leaders and peoples connected with the group's beginnings (including the Wicked Priest, the Teacher of Righteousness, the Man of Lies, Seekers of Smooth Things, etc.).

The evidence for an early date provided by the 4Q249-250 Cryptic A corpus, calls for a fresh examination and subsequent rebuttal, of these four objections.

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Ed. Meyer, *Die Gemeinde des Neuen Bundes im Lande Damaskus* (1919) 13-14, and R. Travers Herford, *The Pharisees* (1924) 24, and alternatively, L. Ginzburg, *An Unknown Jewish Sect* (New York, 1970; revised and updated edition).

1. *The palaeographic dating of the sectarian scrolls is too late.*<sup>6</sup> The existence of copies of community documents which date to the first half of the second century, i.e., predating the period of Hasmonean rule, has been established.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, as F. M. Cross had pointed out:<sup>8</sup>

... the time of composition must almost certainly be pressed back ... to permit the textual development and parenetic expansions which characterize our earliest copies. Further we should postulate a certain interval between the decisive events which created the sect and sent it and the Righteous Teacher into exile in the desert and the composition of the systematic discipline of the community.

If we apply the same principles to the cryptic documents based simply upon the radiocarbon dates of 4Q249aa and 4Q317,<sup>9</sup> the original composition of these works should then be dated no later than the first half of the second century BCE. Thus, the early second century library has always been present among the Qumran scrolls but had been mislabeled and remained unidentified for the past fifty years. As it turns out, the scrolls produced during the period of the community's genesis were written, for the most part, in Cryptic A script on papyrus.

2. *The archaeological dating of the Essene occupation of Khirbet Qumran is too late.*<sup>10</sup> The community professed to have spent a considerable period of time (i.e., no less than sixty-five years) in exile in Syria before returning to the land. Thus, the buildings and stratigraphic layers at Qumran should not be considered germane to the questions of the time and place of the

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<sup>6</sup> So argued, e.g., F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 95-6.

<sup>7</sup> See introduction and notes 1-3, above.

<sup>8</sup> Cross, 95-6.

<sup>9</sup> See Pfann, 'Cryptic Texts', 523, and Jull, 'Radiocarbon Dating', 11-19.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. most recently, F. M. Garcia-Martinez and A. S. van der Woude, 'A "Groningen" Hypothesis of Qumran Origins and Early History', *RevQ* 14 (1990) 521-41.

community's origin. On the other hand, these data may be of interest when pursuing questions bearing on their subsequent history, for example, as to when, after forty years of waiting, they entered the land to possess it (and to reactivate the covenant; see below).

3. *Chronological records of the post-exilic period are notoriously inaccurate.*<sup>11</sup> The sources cited to sustain this assumption are either too distant from the region (Alexandrian) or too late (Rabbinic) to be considered compelling for the discussion. The existence of archives from Egypt and the Levant with papyri and ostraca which contain exact records and regnal years of kings spanning the entire Persian and Hellenistic Periods also works against such an assumption.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the most reputable sources for determining chronology during the Second Temple Period, including in particular the lists kept by the high priests, unfortunately were lost during the First Revolt, and these plausibly lie behind the dates in CD.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> So argued, e.g., H. H. Rowley, *Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to Revelation*. (rev. ed.; New York: Association Press, 1963); *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952) 63; 'The Teacher of Righteousness', *BJRL* 40 (1957) 116; 'The History of the Qumran Sect', *BJRL* 49 (1966) 218. Although he confirmed that the dates 196 and 176 BCE almost exactly coincided with his own suggested dates based upon his identification of the sobriquets, he maintained that the coincidence was only 'accidental'.

<sup>12</sup> These sources include especially both Jewish and non-Jewish archives from Egypt; cf. B. Porten, NEED TO FIND REFERENCE.

<sup>13</sup> These were maintained, updated, and corrected by the current High Priest and apparently included a sequential list of the high priests and their years of tenure; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 20.244-

That such a high priestly chronology may have been kept by the Qumran community is supported by the fact that an introduction to such a list is likely preserved in CD IV 5-6:

The Sons of Zadok are the elect of Israel, the men called by name who are standing at the end of days. Here is the precise list of their names according to their generations/genealogy and the duration/period of their tenure, and the enumeration of their trials and of the years of their sojourn and the precise list of their deeds.

Unfortunately, the actual list that was intended to follow was deleted in CD<sup>a</sup>. Although this intended list may have been only a partial list ('at the end of days'), it represents a practice traditionally maintained by the Zadokite line of priests as described by Josephus.

4. *The time periods '390 years' and '40 years' are only symbolic, derived from Ezek 4:4-6, and thus should not be taken as an exact time period.* However round, symbolic, or approximate the numbers of years are in any given prophecy, the readers of subsequent generations tend to take the numbers quite literally. This is especially so if they anticipate the conclusion of an era will take place during their own lifetime. This religious community, living at the end of the third-beginning of the second centuries BCE, had calculated the beginning of the 390 year period to coincide with the exile under Nebuchadnezzar and thus anticipated that the period would end in

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251. Concerning Josephus' intermittent use of this source elsewhere, cf. G. Hölscher, *Die Quellen des Josephus für die Zeit vom Exil, bis zum jüdischen Kriege* (1904) 73-75. Also cf. D. Schwartz who notes: 'It thus seems likely that for this third period [i.e., from the return from exile to Antiochus V Eupator] Josephus used the high priestly chronicle as an auxiliary source, inserting the data from it at the proper points (as he thought) in his narrative' in 'נתן נתשת -ת-ב: Josephus' Source on Agrippa II,' *JQR* 72 (1982) 252.

ca. 196/5 BCE, the point at which they, as a group, would make their decisive move to the 'Land of Damascus'.

These findings, warranted by the early radiocarbon and palaeographic dating of the Cryptic A manuscripts, press for a fresh examination of the early second century BCE as the time of the community's inception.

### **The Second Century BCE: Sects and Parties**

Since the various parties mentioned in the scrolls are said to have existed at the time of, or very near the time of, the inception of the movement itself, a *terminus ad quem* for their activity must be taken as being prior to the dating of the earliest community documents (i.e., the first half of the second century BCE).<sup>14</sup>

This was a time of major turmoil in the history of the Jewish people, instigated primarily by the annexation of the southern Levant to the Seleucid empire in 198 BCE. The ensuing acceleration of Hellenization posed a major challenge to the Jewish institutions which had emerged under Persian rule and which continued to evolve slowly under Ptolemaic rule, with Seleucid policies not only challenging the economic and political balance in the region, but, more dramatically, the religious and national traditions of the Jews. Reactions to the challenge varied. However, three basic and diverse responses followed which promised to divide the people, not just along party lines, but even within each religio-political party. These responses would have major consequences for the party structures for the remainder of the Second Temple Period and beyond. The three types of response were:

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<sup>14</sup> 4Q249a-i, see n. 2 above.

1. Self-enforced exile from Jerusalem and/or from the land itself;
2. Armed revolt against the Seleucid government on the local level;
3. Negotiation with, or accommodation to, Seleucid policies.

Two of the institutions or parties which were most affected by this time of upheaval were the Zadokite priesthood and the group known as the Hasidim (or Hasideans). Both groups manifested these three types of response, as can be discerned from the ancient historians' portrayal of them during this period.

### ***The Hasidim/Hasideans***

The fragmentation of the Hasideans can be deduced from the historical sources.

1. Self-imposed exile: It is likely that a portion of this group, both priests and laity, comprised the remnant that formed the original core of the group that according to CD I preceded the Moreh Tsedeq. (Many scholars have long suggested that the term 'Essenes' is related to the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew term חסידים = Greek 'Hasideans'.)<sup>15</sup>

2. Armed revolt: Another faction of the Hasidim formed a company of 'mighty warriors of Israel, every one who offered himself willingly for the law' (1 Macc 2:42).

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* (London, SCM Press: 1959)

80. He also notes the Teacher's proclamation in 1QH<sup>a</sup> XV (VII) 20: תשימני אה לבני חסד where חסד is equivalent to חסידים or Hasideans.

3. Negotiation or accommodation: Some of the Hasidim chose to remain in (or return to) Jerusalem and sought peaceful co-existence with their Seleucid overlords (1 Macc 7:13).<sup>16</sup>

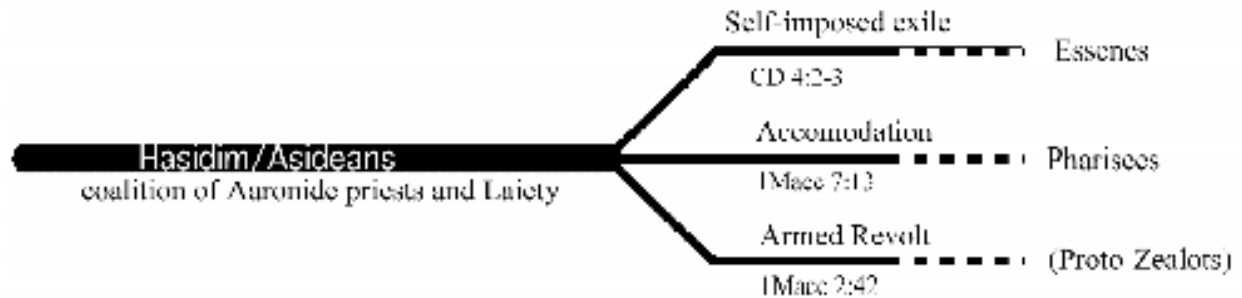


Figure 1. The Fracturing of the Hasidim Movement

### ***The Zadokite Priesthood***

The Zadokite priesthood faced major challenges when the Zadokite high priest Onias III was ousted through a bribe to the emperor by Jason his brother. Responses to this catastrophic state of affairs included the following:

1. Self-imposed exile: Onias III sought refuge in Syria (2 Macc 4:33).<sup>17</sup> A few years later, his son Onias IV also moved to Egypt to institute a rival sanctuary and cult (Jos., *Ant.* xiii.3.1 [62]).

<sup>16</sup> It is precisely during this time that the first *zugot* (i.e., Yose ben Yo‘ezer and Yose ben Yochanan) gained power and controlled the two courts of Jerusalem. It seems likely that the group known as the ‘Pharisees’ emerged from Yose b. Yo‘ezer and his followers.

<sup>17</sup> Earlier, a group of Zadokites must have joined the Essenes in exile since CD III 21 - IV 4 relates that the Moreh Tsedek became the leader of a group of Zadokite priests, Aaronide priests and laity in Syria, helping them to reconstitute a righteous remnant of Israel through a ‘renewed

2. Armed revolt: Jason, who at first endeared himself to Antiochus IV and introduced Hellenistic reforms, revolted and attacked Jerusalem with a band of followers after he had been ousted and exiled (2 Macc 4:26, 5:5-8).

3. Negotiation or accommodation: A number of Zadokite priests still remained and served in Jerusalem after Jason's Hellenistic reforms and exile, despite the fact that the Zadokite line of high priests had been broken (cf. 2 Macc 4:10-17). This line of Zadokites, with noted Hellenistic leanings, likely led to the formation of the 'Sadducees'.<sup>18</sup>

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## Figure 2. The Fracturing of the Zadokite Line

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covenant' and via the unbroken Zadokite line of high priests in exile. The Zadokite leadership of the Essenes derived from this group.

<sup>18</sup> According to Josephus the three major sects of the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes already existed during the reign of Jonathan (152-143 BCE), *Ant.* xiii.5.ix (13.173). It is unlikely that the actual names of these groups were current in Jonathan's time, though the early roots of these movements had already begun.

### ***Resulting Coalitions***

Noted scholars have drawn lines of opposition over the issue of Essene origins by stressing either the Hasidean<sup>19</sup> character or the Zadokite<sup>20</sup> character of the Essene movement as reflected in the sectarian scrolls. The present author presents another option which would indicate that both positions are, at least to some degree, correct. The same religio-political pressures and reactions that caused movements to fracture also caused certain factions to coalesce. With irreconcilable differences fracturing movements from within, shared locality, problems, and enemies led to accommodation and the formation of coalitions which would not have been possible under other circumstances. For example, driven by a similar militant zeal for the law versus Hellenism, the Hasidean warriors joined forces with the Maccabees against the Seleucids (1 Macc 2:42).<sup>21</sup> And, faced with a shared need and willingness to find a way for Jews to live under foreign rulers, the group that would eventually become the Pharisees allied with the Sadducees and formed the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The present author would like to suggest that the relationship that was forged between the Moreh Tsedeq and the Hasidean followers of the Doresh HaTorah (see below) led to an unexpected coalition between the self-exiled factions of both the Hasidean and

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<sup>19</sup> Cf., e.g., Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery* 80-83.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., e.g., L. Schiffmann, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism and the Backgrounds of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia and Jerusalem: 1994) 73-76, 113-17, 154-57, 252-55; and S. Schechter, 'Fragments of a Zadokite Work' in *Documents of Jewish Sectaries* (New York: 1910, rep. 1970) ix-lxix and 1-20.

<sup>21</sup> Mattathias who, along with his followers, was cast in the role of Phineas (the archetypal zealot; cf. Sirach 45:23, 1 Macc 2:54) as being violently 'zealous for the law' (1 Macc 2:24-27).

the Zadokite traditions. This coalition came to be known at its center of power as the ‘Yah:ad’, more broadly as the ‘Sons of Light’, and by outsiders as the ‘Essenes’.

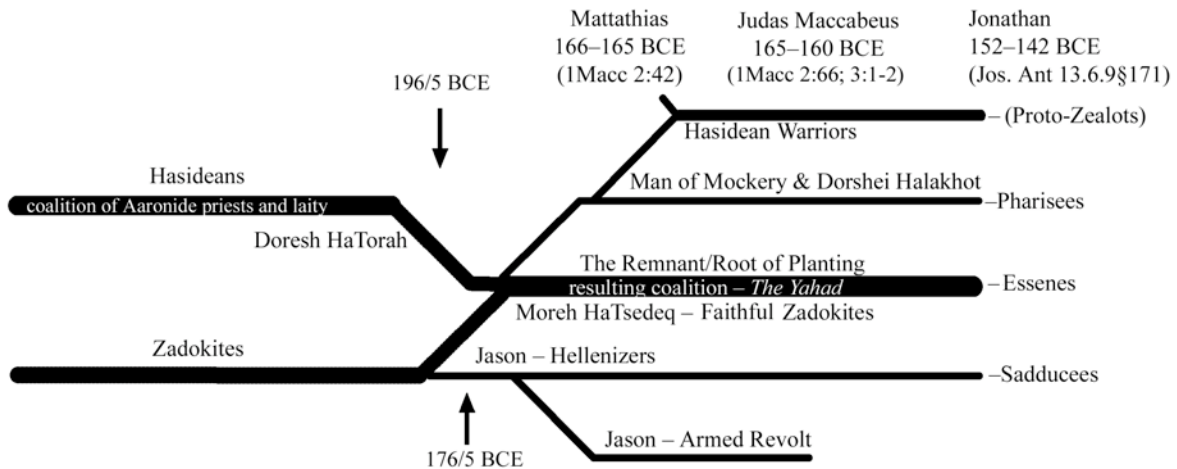


Figure 3. The Resulting Coalition: the Yah:ad

### The Community’s Autobiographical History: CD and the New Evidence of the Cryptic Texts

In light of the weakened arguments for rejecting CD’s own testimony concerning the early second century origins of the group and in light of the witness of the corpus of cryptic manuscripts, the feasibility of those dates should be critically considered anew. The basic phases of the community’s history and the duration of each are laid out in two passages in the Damascus Covenant, CD I 1-11 and XX 13-15:

1. The Period of Wrath: 390 years (CD I 5-6);
2. The Period of Groping: 20 years (CD I 9-10);
3. The Tenure of Moreh Tsedeq: unspecified duration (CD I 10-11);
4. The Last Days/Generation: ‘about 40 years’ (CD XX 13-15; 4Q171 pPs<sup>a</sup> 1-10 ii 6-8);

5. Eternal Inheritance: a thousand generations/forever (CD XIX 1f, XX 22; 4Q171 pPs<sup>a</sup> 1–10 ii 26–iii 2).

**1. The Period of Wrath: 390 years (CD I 5–6; 586/5–196 BCE)**

Therefore hear now, all you who know justice and comprehend the works (2) of God! For He tries all flesh and will judge all those who scorn Him. (3) For because of the unfaithfulness of those who abandoned Him, He hid His face from Israel and its Sanctuary (4) and delivered them up to the sword. But remembering the Covenant of the Patriarchs, He left a remnant (5) to Israel and did not deliver them to destruction. And in a time of wrath, three hundred and (6) ninety years after He had delivered them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, (7) *He visited them*, CD I 1–7 (Dupont-Sommer/Vermes)

CD I 5 speaks of the קִץ הַרְוֵן, the ‘time of wrath’ while CD VII 21 and XIX 11 speak of the קִץ הַפְּקוּדָה הַרְאִשׁוֹן, ‘the time of the first visitation’. These phrases refer to a perceived time of punishment for Israel’s iniquity which extended from the destruction of the First Temple to the time of the emergence of the community in its self-awareness as the remnant of Israel.<sup>24</sup> CD specifies 390 years as the duration of this period. Thus taken literally, the beginning of the movement is placed by CD at 196/5 BCE (586/5 BCE + 390 years = 196/5). The arrival of the exiled Moreh Tsedeq is placed 20 years later (i.e., at 176/5 BCE), at the end of the period of ‘groping’.

Although the entire 390 year period is understood in CD to be a time of wrath due to the unfaithfulness of Israel while in the land of the covenant, God had throughout that time

<sup>22</sup> במועלם אשר מעלו-בי cf. Lev 26:40 בי במועלם אשר עזבוהו.

<sup>23</sup> זכרתי ברית ראשנים cf. Lev 26:45 ובזכרו ברית ראשנים.

<sup>24</sup> The group’s self-identification as the remnant of Israel who had embraced the renewal of the covenant between God and Israel is reflected in many passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls, e.g., CD I 4; 1QM XIII 8, XIV 8f; 1QH<sup>a</sup> XIV 8; 4Q174 Flor 4 2; 4Q390 PsMos<sup>e</sup> 1 10. The biblical basis for the remnant is seen in passages including 2 Kings 19:31; Is 37:30-32, 46:3; Jer. 23:3, 31:7; Mic 2:12, 4:7, 5:7f; Zeph 2:7-9, 3:13 and Zech 8:11f.

preserved for himself a remnant from the people who were destined to be reconciled with Him under the provisions for reconciliation detailed in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 26). These events served as the foundation that must proceed the revitalization of the covenant (as the *ברית החדשה*) and the provisions for life in the land promised to them under that covenant.

The importance that Leviticus 26 held in the community's thought is made clear by the allusions to it in CD I 3-4 and by the presence of three manuscripts from the 4Q249-250, second-century Cryptic A corpus that specifically relate to it: 4Q249j cryptA Leviticus<sup>h?</sup>, 4Q249k Text Quoting Lev 26 A, and 4Q249l Text Quoting Lev 26 B.<sup>25</sup> Although the three fragmentary copies of these related or identical works contain no restorable material beyond the actual text of Leviticus 26, the additional, unrecognizable lines on at least two of the copies imply that the Biblical text has been elaborated upon in some way. The proposed paleographic dating of these three manuscripts ranges from the first half of the second century BCE (4Q249j) to the last quarter of that century (4Q249l). The fact that these copies span the entire early period of the community's history would imply that the concerns and doctrines of the group continued to revolve around Leviticus 26 throughout that period.

It was not just the carrying out of the covenantal obligations of the law that was necessary for Israel to be considered righteous and worthy of the covenant promises. According to the Books of Moses, especially the book of Deuteronomy, the heart was intended to play a major role in Israel's obedience to the covenant (Deut 4:29; 6:5-6; 10:15-16; 11:13-18; 13:3; 15:7-10; 17:20; 26:16; 24:47; 30:2-6, 10, 14). In Leviticus 26, so often cited in these early documents, humility of heart lay at the center of the reconciliation process (Lev 26:41).

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<sup>25</sup> See Pfann, '4Q249j-l', in DJD XXXVI, 575-82.

The prophets, as God's spokespersons, were considered champions of the principles laid out in Leviticus 26. The emphasis on repentance by the faithful remnant and the issue of the uncircumcised heart (Lev 26:41, cf. Deut 30:6) is taken up and elaborated upon by several of the later biblical prophets. The allegory which depicts God as transplanting this remnant-shoot, restoring it and providing it with water in the land of the covenant is also a favorite theme throughout the prophets. The prophetic writings rose to a level of authority among this group resulting in a marriage of the Torah and the Prophets, in which the Torah could only be properly understood within the purview of the Prophets.<sup>26</sup>

The Seleucid annexation of the land in 198 BCE may have indicated to pious thinkers that the terms of the covenant had been breached in such a way that Israel was again being punished. In light of Ezekiel 4:4-5, they may have regarded these events as an important crossroads in history at which to arise and seek God's mercy and guidance.<sup>27</sup> The nation still lacked the blessings, prosperity and sovereignty it had been promised for abandoning idolatry and embracing obedience to monotheism and the covenant. In fact, there was no convincing evidence that the terms of reconciliation with God had ever been properly enacted since the expulsions under Nebuchadnezzar. The nation could be seen as under a constant term of punishment over the past 390 years for their sins and the sins of the fathers. Surely the author of CD I perceived the entire

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<sup>26</sup> Most of these elements are drawn together in the Book of Jubilees (cf., e.g., 1:15-18; 16:26; 21:21-24; 36:6). Jub 1:15-18, in addition to treating these themes, also introduces the theme of building (a sanctuary) among the people which in the scrolls functions as a motif that contributes metaphorical terms for community structure (cf. מוֹסָד, יִסָד, תְּבַנִּית, סוֹד, etc.).

<sup>27</sup> It is possible that the community felt it was necessary to return to exile in 'the land of Damascus' in order to fulfill the prophecy of Amos 5:27-6:1 and their call to be the remnant of Israel; cf. CD III 21- IV 4.

period as having had no redeeming value, since an act of true repentance had never actually taken place. In fact, since the process of reconciliation after a breach of the covenant as laid out in Leviticus 26 was never enacted satisfactorily, the return to the land at the time of Zerubabel, Ezra and Nehemiah had been premature and could only incur the wrath of God.

Due to this, it seemed to this group that the only proper response for this repentant remnant was to leave the land and to seek God's forgiveness and atonement according to the conditions of the covenant laid out in Leviticus 26.<sup>28</sup>

## **2. The Period of Groping: 20 years (CD I 9–10; 196/5-175 BCE)**

He visited them, and caused a root of planting (שורש מטעת) to spring from Israel and Aaron to possess His land and to grow fat on the good things of His earth. And they understood their iniquity, and recognized that they were guilty men. But they were like blind men, and like men who groping seek their way for twenty years. CD I 9-10 (Dupont-Sommer/Vermes)

The faithful community which had returned to exile is identified as the remnant of Israel (CD I 4, 1QM XIII 8; XIV 8f; 1QH<sup>a</sup> XIV 8; 4Q174 4 2; 4Q390 fl 10) whom God had preserved for himself according to the prophets and Lev 26:39. This remnant is also depicted here as the 'root of planting'<sup>29</sup> that comprises a coalition of both laity and Aaronide priests which, although presently

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. CD IV 2-3: "The priests" are the repentant of Israel who go out from the Land of Judah and the Levites are those who go with them'. Here the priests and Levites probably further define the group which derives from both the Sons of Aaron and the Sons of Israel (here typologically cast as the 'Levites' who formed a coalition with the Aaronide priests and left the land; cf. CD I 7).

<sup>29</sup> An allegory that is also popular in the prophetic writings and the book of Jubilees; see n. 26 above.

in exile, were destined to inherit the promised land<sup>30</sup> and be blessed in it. Key factors separated them from their contemporaries including the fact that they had become aware of and confessed their guilt and the guilt of their forefathers (cf. 1QS I 24–26), had acted according to God’s good pleasure, and had sought God with a perfect (lit. ‘circumcised’) heart. In so doing, they had fulfilled the terms for reconciliation between the wayward nation and its God as laid out in Leviticus 26 (especially Lev 26:40-45).

The first time God planted the nation, the results were unfruitful and the nation or ‘vineyard’ had to be abandoned (Jer 45:4; Ps 80:7-19; Ps 44:2-3; Ezek 17:1-24). But the promise remained that if the nation should repent, then God would plant it again and not abandon it (Is 60:21, 61:3, 7; Jer 24:5–7, 42:10; Amos 9:15; 2 Sam 7:10 [=1 Chron 17:9]).

The metaphor of ‘the planting’ must have been applied to the community’s self-understanding during this period of groping, or shortly after, since it was combined with the promise of rain in Hos 10:12 and Joel 2:23 that came to form the designation of the sect’s founder, the Teacher of Righteousness (מורה צדק). Admittedly, it is difficult to know whether the ‘Righteous Rain’ (יורה צדק) metaphor was introduced before (prophetically) or after (retrospectively) the arrival of the Priest who was called by that name. However, if 1QH<sup>a</sup> XVI 16f was written by the Moreh Tsedeq, then the interpretation was already current during his life and ministry (see below).

It is likely that the earliest form of *Serekh ha-‘Edah* (represented in 4Q249a-i) was compiled

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. CD I 1-11 and VII-VIII with Isa 37:30-32: ‘And this shall be the sign for you: this year eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs of the same; then in the third year sow and reap, and plant (נטע) vineyards, and eat their fruit. And the surviving remnant (שאריה) of the house of Judah shall again take root (שרש)

during this period (or shortly thereafter, during the time of the Moreh Tsedeq). *Serekh ha-Edah* provided an elaboration on the biblical covenant pattern as it was interpreted by the early remnant-community. It set forth rules for community instruction and fulfillment of the covenant. In order to carry out properly the principles of repentance and reconciliation according to the guidelines of Leviticus 26, the group had to repent as representatives of the nation, even if numerically they constituted only a remnant of the whole. This meant that the nation, both priesthood and laity together, had first to reconstitute itself in a place of exile. This reconstitution would have to be carried out according to the pattern for the nation laid out in the Books of Moses.

Midrash Sefer Moshe (4Q249 and 4Q249aa) was also likely composed during this period. This, the earliest of the group's halakhic works, already reflects a rather developed methodology. The method bears certain striking similarities to that used in the Pharisaic and Rabbinic traditions. There is no reason to assume that this form of midrash was developed by the remnant community, nor introduced by the Moreh Tsedeq, since the methodology was not unique to it. The fact that two disparate, competing branches of Judaism share this methodology may point to their shared traditions or even to common origins. One potential candidate for a common provenance is both groups' purported origins in the Hasidim/Hasideans, headed by a skilled interpreter of the Law.<sup>31</sup> In the *Damascus Covenant* and in the various *pesharim* we learn that the commands of the Torah were initially elucidated by an individual known as the *Doresh ha-Torah* (likely modeled on Ezra the Priest/Scribe; cf. Ezra 7:10: *כי עזרא הכין לבבו לדרוש את-תורת*

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downward, and bear fruit upward; for *out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors*. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this'.

<sup>31</sup> Another indication that this group already existed in the third cent. BCE.

(יהוה ולעשת וללמד בישראל הק ומשפט). His work was observed and carried on by the faithful community which was chosen to separate itself for this purpose (CD I 7-10, VI 7-11) and to move to the land of the north, the land of Damascus.

### **3. The Tenure of Moreh Tsedeq (unspecified duration; CD I 10-11; perhaps 175-170 BCE)**

And God considered their works, for they had sought Him with a perfect heart; and He raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness (מורה צדק) to lead them in the way of His heart and to make known to the last generations what He <would do> to the last generation, the congregation of traitors.

CD I 10-12 (Dupont-Sommer/Vermes)

Since the discovery of the first copies of the Damascus Covenant over one hundred years ago, the terms מורה צדק and יורה צדק have been translated ‘Teacher of Righteousness’.<sup>32</sup> The term has consistently been understood to signify the individual who played a decisive role in helping to crystalize the group’s self-understanding in its early years. Lexicographically, מורה may equally be used to mean ‘early rain’ or ‘teacher’ while יורה is used to signify only ‘early rain’ (or ‘archer’) and never ‘teacher’.

The primary scriptural, and for the community of the scrolls, the prophetic, basis for the figure known as the ‘Moreh Tsedeq’ is found in two biblical passages, Hos 10:12 and Joel 2:23.

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<sup>32</sup> The occurrences in question are: מורה צדק CD I 11, XX 32; יורה הצדק CD VI 11; מורה יח>יד CD XX 1; יורה היח>יד CD XX 14; הבהן מורה הצדק 4Q171 pPs<sup>a</sup> 1-10 iii 15; הבהן 4Q171 pPs<sup>a</sup> 1-10 ii 18.

The symbolic language surrounding these terms originally bore agricultural overtones as seen in these passages.<sup>33</sup>

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain salvation upon you. Hos 10:12 (RSV)

MT: זָרְעוּ לָכֶם לְצִדְקָה קַצְרוּ לְפִי־חֶסֶד נִירוּ לָכֶם נִיר וְשֵׂת לְדָרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה עַד־יָבֹוא יוֹרֵה צִדְקָה לָכֶם

LXX: σπείρατε ἑαυτοῖς εἰς δικαιοσύνην τρυγήσατε εἰς καρπὸν ζωῆς φωτίσατε ἑαυτοῖς φῶς γνώσεως ἐκζητήσατε τὸν κύριον ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῖν

It is noteworthy that the LXX of Hos 10:12 omits ‘and’, reading instead עַד יָבֹוא יוֹרֵה

לָכֶם, bearing witness to a text that understands not that God will come, but rather a

יוֹרֵה צִדְקָה.

In Deut 11:14 and Jer 5:23-25, the מוֹרֵה/יוֹרֵה (‘early showers’) was promised (along with the מַלְקוֹשׁ or ‘late showers’) as a grace or blessing from God awarded to Israel as it remained righteous (i.e., faithful to obey the covenant). Yet, it is likely that although in these passages the terms מוֹרֵה צִדְקָה and יוֹרֵה צִדְקָה initially signified ‘the early rain of righteousness’ that would be awarded to those who sought God when the remnant-movement was like a young sapling, the terms underwent a transition in their interpretation in the early history of the group. The multiple meanings of the term מוֹרֵה in particular, which reflected God’s blessing through the gifts of rain and his teaching/teacher, led to a realization of the fulfillment of God’s promise in and through

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<sup>33</sup> The eventual reading of the terms on two levels, signifying both the promise of the rain/presence of God and of a teacher as the vehicle for such, may have begun in passages such as Is 30:20, where the terms are intended to have a double meaning.

the specific person of the Moreh Tsedeq. Indeed, the Moreh's own writings reflect his self-awareness as the fulfillment of that very prophetic promise.

בפי כִּיּוֹרָה גִּשְׁם לְכוּל [צמא] וּמְבוּעַ מִים חַיִּים: וְלֹא יִכּוּב לִפְתּוּחַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא יִבוּשׁוּ  
וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי שְׂמַתָּה

But You, O my God, have placed Your words in my mouth, as showers of early rain, for all [who thirst] and as a spring of living waters. The heavens shall not fail to open, nor shall they run dry,  
1QH<sup>a</sup> XVI 16-17 (Wise et al.)

During his ministry the Moreh was able to illustrate to the community the method by which one should interpret the prophets and the psalms, a method that can already be discerned in the Thanksgiving Hymns that are attributed to him. Evidently it was according to this method that the Teacher made 'known (12) to the last generations what He <would do> to the last generation, the congregation of traitors' (=CD I 11-12; cf. also 1QpHab II 1-10; VII 1-8).

The method of interpretation of the Prophets (including the Book of Psalms), was developed and crystallized under the tutelage of the Moreh Tsedeq. The Prophets, seen as authoritative by the community, deserved to be treated with a special form of inspired interpretation (or *peshar*) which defined the world-view of the community, past, present and future. It seems unlikely that this method of interpretation, which was to develop in the coming decades as the community produced its biblical commentaries,<sup>34</sup> was actually applied to entire, or even large portions of biblical books during the tenure of the Moreh.

Although the length of time between the Moreh's exile to the land of Damascus and his death is not specified in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the probable day and month of his death are indicated in

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<sup>34</sup> In the pesharim (4QpIsa mss, 4QpHos, 1QpHab, 4QpNah, 4QpPsa, etc.) the period of the Teacher is viewed as part of the group's past history.

1QpHab XI 7: on the Day of Atonement in the seventh month; i.e., the month of Tishri. In addition, two passages in CD predict that approximately forty years after the Moreh's death the second period of wrath would come to an end and the faithful would inherit (or begin to inherit) the land. If the *terminus a quo* for the end of the forty year period is indicated by the earliest presence of the community at the site of Kh. Qumran, dated by Roland de Vaux at *ca.* 130 BCE (Period 1b)<sup>35</sup>, then the beginning of the forty years, coinciding with the death of the Moreh Tsedeq, would be *ca.* 170 BCE. His tenure in the land of Damascus would then have been approximately five years, from about 176/5-170 BCE. It is likely that 4Q249m Hodayot-like Text<sup>36</sup> and the Teacher's Hymns in 1QHodayot<sup>37</sup> were composed during this period.

#### **4. The Last Days/Generation (CD XX 13-15; 4Q171 pPs<sup>a</sup> 1-10 ii 6-8; 170-130 BCE?)**

Now from the day when the Unique Teacher was taken, until the overthrow of all the fighting men who turned back with the Man of Lies, (there shall pass) about *forty years*.

CD XX 13-15 (Dupont-Sommer/Vermes)

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<sup>35</sup> For a discussion of the archaeology of Qumran and its link to the early history of the group, see 'Appendix C' in Pfann, 'The Character of the Early Essene Movement'.

<sup>36</sup> See Pfann, '249m. Hodayot-like Text E' in DJD XXXVI, 583.

<sup>37</sup> Those hymns which, by and large, are typified by the use of a highly individualized 'I', have widely been attributed to the Moreh Tsedeq. Cf. J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Judean Desert' in R. A. Kraft and G. W. E. Nickelsburg, eds., *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press and Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 130-33.

The rebellion against the Moreh that was instigated by the Man of Lies and his followers in the land of Damascus seems to be compared here with the rebellion against Moses at Sinai. And, as the faithless generation at Sinai had to perish before the people could enter the Promised Land, so the current generation of rebels had to perish before the remnant could re-enter the land and renew the covenant. As forty years had served as the defining period in which the Sinai generation perished (Num 14:33, 32:13), and as the duration of the Babylonian Exile (Ezek 4:6), so it would be with the period of punishment for those who fell away in the Land of Damascus, *ca.* 170-130 BCE.

The trauma of the rebellion against the Moreh by one of the community's own members led them to understand the event in eschatological terms. Thereafter in their literature, they referred to the event and the generation that followed with characteristic eschatological language (e.g., ממשלת הרשעה 4Q166 pHos<sup>a</sup> 1 12; קצי הרון 1QpHab I 2f; דור האחרון CD IV 4; אחרית הימים, etc.). In the mind of the community, the end of days had already begun: 4Q398 MMT 11-13 4 (C21) 'Now this is the Last Days: when all those of Isra[el] shall return.'

The forty year period was to be a time of purging (4Q171 pPs<sup>a</sup> 1-10 ii 6-8: 'This refers to all of the wicked at the end of the forty years. When they are completed, there will no longer be any wicked person in the Land'), a time of testing and purification (4Q174 Flor II 1-3), and the time of 'the three nets of Belial' (CD IV 12-21).<sup>38</sup>

While utilization of the Cryptic A script declined in this period, there was a renewed productivity in sectarian writing. Compositions deriving from this period likely include the early

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<sup>38</sup> Jub 50:1-5 notes that the last generation would be a time of teaching.

portions of the Damascus Covenant<sup>39</sup> and the Peshar on Psalm 37, in both of which the inheritance of the land and the dawning of the Messianic Age have not yet taken place. Other compositions of this period may include the *Midrash HaTorah Ha'Acharon*,<sup>40</sup> the second edition of *Serekh Ha-'Edah* (4QSE f-i),<sup>41</sup> *the Community Hymns* from Hodayot,<sup>42</sup> and the first edition of *Serekh Ha-Yah:ad*. In these writings, particularly in the Damascus Covenant and the Peshar on Psalm 37, the Community is in a state of waiting and anticipates the realization of these expectations at the end of the forty years.

**5. Eternal Inheritance: A Thousand Generations/Forever (CD XIX 1f, XX 22; 4Q171 pPs<sup>a</sup> 1–10 ii 26 -iii 2; after 130 BCE)**

‘They [will no]t be put to shame in [an evil time]’ (Psalm 37:19a). This refers to[ ]the ones who return from the wilderness, who will live a thousand generations in virtue. To them and their descendants belongs all the heritage of Adam for ever.

4Q171 1–10 ii 26 – iii 2 (Dupont-Sommer/Vermes)

And God told Habakkuk to write down the things which will come to pass in the last generation, but the consummation of time He made not known to him.... *For there is yet another vision relating to the appointed time; it speaks of the end and does not deceive.* The explanation of this is that the final time will last long and will exceed everything spoken of by the Prophets; for the Mysteries of God are marvellous. *If it tarries, wait for it; for it will surely come and will not delay.* The explanation of this concerns the men of truth who observe the Law, whose hands do not slacken in the service of Truth when the final time delays for

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, 126-28.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. 4Q266 D<sup>a</sup> 11 20 (=4Q270 D<sup>e</sup> 7 ii 15) and the discussion in Pfann, ‘The Character of the Early Essene Movement’ 28-30.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Pfann, ‘Appendix 2’ in DJD XXXVI, 544-46.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, 130-31.

them; for all the seasons of God come to pass at their appointed time according to His decree concerning the Mysteries of His Prudence.

1QpHab VII 5-14 (Dupont-Sommer/Vermes)

We can assume that the community, poised to follow in Joshua's footsteps, may have crossed the Jordan to possess the land when the forty year period of wrath came to an end. After crossing the Jordan, it quickly became apparent to the community that the full inheritance of the Land would not be immediate. The 'last generation' (i.e., the 40 years) and its punishments had been prolonged 'due to the mysteries of God' (1QpHab VII 1-14). The beginning of the era of eternal blessing and faithfulness to the covenant was necessarily and mysteriously delayed due to the continued existence of the wicked in the Land and the Holy City.

The group settled in the Judean wilderness in 'camps' and towns, and especially at Qumran, which seems to have become the premier camp. Here the elite Yah:ad Community carried out essential rites and determined doctrine.<sup>43</sup> The opinions or interpretations as to when and how the group would finally inherit the land in its totality seem to have been varied, ranging from gradual settlement and permeation, to the sudden dispossession of the land by military force (as in the case of the War Scroll),<sup>44</sup> each of which would lead to the ushering in of the Messianic Age. However, for decades in the meantime, the community was left with no other choice than to carry on with the task of building and sustaining the community of the righteous until the

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<sup>43</sup> These rules were compiled in the Rule of the Community (1QS).

<sup>44</sup> Although an immediate battle upon the return to the 'desert of Jerusalem' was predicted in the War Scroll, in actuality no battle took place. Thus, in the understanding of the community, the acquisition of Jerusalem, which was to be the final prize (1QM XI 7), had been delayed.

Messianic Age would begin. Left thus, they would continue to ‘prepare the way of the Lord’ in ‘the wilderness of Jerusalem’ as they had previously in the wilderness of the Gentiles.

## **Conclusion**

Both radiocarbon and paleographic dating of the manuscripts written in the Cryptic A script indicate that the earliest manuscripts originate in the early second century BCE. The strength of this dating compels a re-examination of the beginning of the second century as the period in which the community of the scrolls emerged and allows for a serious reconsideration of the dating of the community in light of its own self-professed history, utilizing the schema provided in sectarian compositions like CD and pHab. Such an early dating of the community begs as well a re-examination of the emergence of the leading Jewish sects of the Second Temple Period. In addition, in the context of an early second century BCE dating for the genesis of the Community of the Scrolls, the identification of key figures such as the Teacher of Righteousness, the Wicked Priest, and the Man of Lies bears reconsideration—only a few candidates are possible for each sobriquet. The merging of the self-defined history of the movement with the events and characters recorded in the ancient histories provides additional details for building the history of this group and others. Identifications such as Onias III as the Teacher of Righteousness and Menelaus as the Wicked Priest warrant serious reconsideration in the light of the early second Cryptic A manuscripts from Qumran Cave 4.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> This reconsideration will be explored at length in the forthcoming publication of the author’s dissertation by Sheffield Press.

