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Excerpt
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Introduction

This volume is intended to provide a representative selection of extracts from the Qumran sectarian literature under the three categories of legislative writings, poetic and liturgical writings, and exegetical writings. It has been thought more helpful to give substantial extracts from a limited number of works than to attempt to take account of everything.

The Qumran scrolls form only part of the Dead Sea scrolls, which – on the broad understanding given to this term – include the discoveries made at other sites in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, such as Murraba'at, Masada, or Naḥal Ḥever; but these latter discoveries are not our concern. The scrolls from Qumran themselves are by no means restricted to sectarian writings. It is important to bear in mind that manuscripts of the books of the Old Testament form a major part of the manuscripts found at Qumran. These biblical manuscripts, which include copies of every book in the Old Testament except Esther, are important for the history of the text of the Old Testament. Reference should also be made here to the manuscripts of books in the Apocrypha (Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, and a small Greek fragment of the Letter of Jeremiah). Another group of scrolls consists of manuscripts of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works, such as Jubilees or the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, that were known before the discovery of the scrolls. These are works which were accepted by the Qumran community and in some cases may have been regarded as having a canonical status, but they are not sectarian writings in the narrow sense of the term. These manuscripts are again important for the history of the text of the works in question. The remainder of the scrolls consist of works that (apart from the Damascus Document) were unknown before the discoveries at Qumran, and many of these are to be regarded as sectarian in character, that is to say as writings which reflect closely the beliefs and practices of the community based at Qumran in which they were produced. It is these sectarian writings that are our primary concern.

The decision to give substantial extracts from only a limited number of writings has meant that some important works have been excluded. Thus the poetic and liturgical writings from Qumran are represented

here only by three columns from the Hymns, and in the category of legislative writings the War Scroll and the Temple Scroll have been left out. So far as the Temple Scroll is concerned, it is perhaps worth pointing out that it is by no means clear that it is a sectarian writing; there is perhaps more to be said for the view that it is a work, embodying older traditions, that was taken over by the Qumran community. In contrast two works that are probably not sectarian, the Genesis Apocryphon and the Prayer of Nabonidus, have been included because of their interest as exegetical writings.

The following is a list of the Qumran writings referred to in this volume:

CD	Cairo Damascus Document
1QapGen	Genesis Apocryphon
1QDM	Words of Moses
1QH	Hymns (Hodayot)
1QM	War Scroll
1QpHab	Commentary on Habakkuk
1QpMic	Commentary on Micah
1QpPs	Commentary on Psalms
1QpZeph	Commentary on Zephaniah
1QS	Community Rule
1QSa	Rule of the Congregation
1QSB	Words of Blessing
4QD ^{a-g(h)}	Manuscripts of the Damascus Document
4QFlor	Florilegium
4QP Bless	Patriarchal Blessings
4QpHos ^a	Commentaries on Hosea
4QpHos ^b	
4QpIsa ^a	Commentaries on Isaiah
4QpIsa ^b	
4QpIsa ^c	
4QpIsa ^d	
4QpIsa ^e	
4QpNah	Commentary on Nahum
4QpPs ^a	Commentaries on Psalms
4QpPs ^b	
4QpZeph	Commentary on Zephaniah
4QPrNab	Prayer of Nabonidus
4QPsDan ar ^{a-c}	Apocalyptic work in which Daniel speaks
4QPsDan A ^a	'Son of God' text

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4QPssJosh	Psalms of Joshua
4QS ^{a-j}	Manuscripts of the Community Rule
4QTestim	Testimonia
5QD	Manuscript of the Damascus Document
5QJN ar	The New Jerusalem
5QS	Manuscript of the Community Rule
6QD	Manuscript of the Damascus Document
11QMelch	Melchizedek Document
11QPs ^a	Psalms Scroll
11QPs ^a DavComp	David's Compositions
11QTemple	Temple Scroll
11QtgJob	Targum of Job

Eleven of the above writings are presented in this volume: the Damascus Document, the Community Rule, the Rule of the Congregation, the Hymns, the Genesis Apocryphon, the Prayer of Nabonidus, the Commentary on Nahum, the Commentary on Habakkuk, the Commentary on Psalms (4QpPs^a), Florilegium, and Testimonia. For information about the other writings listed above, and about other Qumran writings not mentioned here, see in the first instance J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study* (Society of Biblical Literature, Sources for Biblical Study, 8), revised edition, Missoula, Montana, 1977) and G. Vermes (with the collaboration of P. Vermes), *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective*, revised edition, London, 1982.

The writings included in this volume have been presented as a group because of their common origin, but in terms of their literary form and their content they could well have been placed in other volumes in this series, particularly volume 3, *Early Rabbinic Writings*, or volume 4, *Outside the Old Testament*. Thus, for example, the Hymns deserve to be read alongside the Psalms of Solomon, and the Genesis Apocryphon alongside Jubilees (see *Outside the Old Testament*, pp. 159–77, 111–44). Every effort has been made throughout this volume to indicate parallels of both form and content with other writings.

The story of the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls has been told many times and is not repeated here. But something needs to be said about the results of the excavation of the site of Qumran and about the history of the community which occupied the site in order to provide a framework for the writings presented in this volume.

The earliest occupation of Khirbet Qumran ('the ruin of Qumran') belongs in the Israelite period and is perhaps to be associated with the

building activities of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17: 12) or Uzziah (2 Chron. 26: 10). The occupation of the site in this period did not last beyond the end of the monarchical period, and the presence of ashes suggest that the settlement suffered a violent destruction, perhaps at the hands of the Babylonians during the course of one of their invasions. Thereafter the site remained unoccupied for several centuries.

It is the next period of the occupation of the site, from the second half of the second century BC to AD 68, that is our real concern. During this period the buildings at Qumran served as the centre for a quasi-monastic community whose members lived in the surrounding caves or in huts or tents. The beliefs and practices of the members of this community are reflected in the Qumran sectarian writings. It is assumed here, in common with the views of many scholars, that this community formed part of the wider movement of Essenes, whose members – according to the accounts in Philo and Josephus – were to be found living in the towns and villages of Palestine, and that Qumran is the site of the settlement of the Essenes on the shore of the Dead Sea to which the Roman author Pliny refers in his *Natural History* (v.15(73)).

The occupation of the site by the Essenes divides clearly into three phases. The first of these (phase Ia) was on a very modest scale. The remains of the Israelite buildings were reused and some additions made. The buildings would have served for only a small number of people, perhaps a few dozen. It is impossible to say exactly when this phase of occupation began, but its end can be dated reasonably precisely to about 100 BC. (This date, like most of those to do with the history of the occupation of the site, is based on the evidence of the coins that were found there.) In view of this the start of phase Ia is to be placed in the second half of the second century, perhaps not long after 150 BC (see below for further discussion of this point).

At the end of the second century BC or the very beginning of the first century the community buildings were considerably enlarged. This expansion, which marks the start of phase Ib, points to a sudden and dramatic increase in the membership of the community. It is not known where these new members came from. It is often assumed that they were Pharisees who were seeking to escape from the hostility of John Hyrcanus (134–104 BC), a hostility apparently caused by their opposition to his tenure of the office of high priest (cp. Josephus, *Ant.* XIII. 10.5–6 (288–98)). However, it is also possible that the new members were Essenes from other parts of the land; the Essenes are equally likely to have opposed the tenure by John Hyrcanus of the office

of high priest and may have been caught up in the quarrel with him. Whoever the new members were, phase Ib, which lasted some seventy years, formed the most flourishing stage in the life of the community.

The end of phase Ib was marked by a fire and an earthquake and was followed by a period during which the site was completely or largely abandoned. It has often been assumed that the fire and the earthquake were connected, and that the former was caused by the latter. But it is also possible that the two occurred independently of one another, and that the fire was the result of a deliberate attempt to destroy the settlement. In this case it has been suggested that the settlement was burned during the course of the struggle for the throne between the Hasmonaean Antigonus and Herod the Great (40–37 BC); Antigonus had the support of the Parthians, who had invaded Syria and Palestine at that time, whereas Herod was supported by the Romans. On this view the fire preceded the earthquake and was the cause of the abandonment of the site. The earthquake itself has been associated with a major earthquake which, according to Josephus (*War* 1.19.3(370); *Ant.* xv.5.2(121–2)), occurred in 31 BC and can be dated with some confidence to that year.

Following the fire and the earthquake the site was abandoned for several decades. It is not known why this was so, or where the members of the community went – perhaps to other centres of the Essene movement. It has been argued that the abandonment of the site was total, but some have thought it likely that a limited number of Essenes did remain in occupation of the site during the interval. Whatever the truth of these matters, it is clear that the site was reoccupied shortly after the end of the reign of Herod the Great, more precisely in the period 4 BC – 1 BC/AD; this marks the beginning of phase II of occupation, which lasted until AD 68. The community that reoccupied the site was the same as the one that had occupied it previously. The buildings of phase Ib were reused, but with some modifications and with some rooms no longer used.

The end of phase II can be dated fairly precisely to AD 68. The buildings suffered a violent destruction at that time as a result of military action, and this suggests that the members of the community, or some of them, had become involved in the revolt against the Romans which culminated in the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) and the fall of Masada (AD 74). The destruction of Qumran is not mentioned in Josephus, but we do know that Roman troops were in the area at that time, and there is no doubt that it was they who were responsible for the destruction. It was at this time (AD 68) that the Qumran manuscripts were hidden

in Cave 4, the cave in which by far the largest hoard of manuscripts were found and which seems clearly to have been intended as a safe hiding-place for the manuscripts. Perhaps those who hid the manuscripts hoped to recover them fairly quickly. The year AD 68 provides a clear date before which all the manuscripts found at Qumran must have been copied.

The occupation of the site of Qumran by the Essenes came to an end in AD 68. For a few years after this the Romans occupied part of the site as a military post, but this occupation (phase III) appears to have come to an end in 74, at the time when Masada was taken and the Jewish revolt was brought to a final end. Subsequently the site was briefly occupied by insurgents during the second Jewish revolt of AD 132–135. These two periods of occupation lie outside our concern.

The above provides the bare bones of the history of the occupation of Qumran by the Essenes. (No attempt has been made to describe the remains of buildings, pottery, and so on that were found in the course of the excavation of the site, or to describe the picture, that can be built up on the basis of these remains, of the day-to-day life of the community that lived there, for these matters lie outside the concerns of this book.) Much more deserves to be said by way of elaboration or justification of the various points that have been made, but in practice, although the excavation of Khirbet Qumran provided very clear and reliable evidence for the various phases of the occupation of the site by the Essenes, the results of the excavations cannot take us very much further in reconstructing the history of the community that occupied the site than has been given in the sketch above. To get any further we need to turn to the scrolls themselves, but unfortunately the evidence they provide is limited in extent and not easy to interpret. Such evidence as there is relates primarily to the first phase of the community's existence, phase Ia.

The majority of the Qumran sectarian manuscripts do not contain information about the history of the community, but statements of a historical kind are to be found in the Damascus Document, the biblical commentaries, and – less clearly – the Hymns. The information given in these writings is not straightforward, but is cast in language that is indirect and opaque, rather like the language used in Dan. 11. Nicknames ('the teacher of righteousness', 'the wicked priest', 'the liar') are used instead of real names, and in the case of the commentaries the language used is often strongly influenced by the language of the biblical text that is commented on rather than by the actual character of the event that is described. With this in mind, it is possible to consider

what light the texts cast on the earliest phase of the community's history.

We have seen that the archaeological evidence indicates that the first phase of the occupation of Qumran falls in the second half of the second century BC and came to an end at about 100 BC. We are pointed to the same period (the second half of the second century BC) by the dates of two important manuscripts. The Cave 1 manuscript of the Community Rule, which was intended to govern the life of those living at Qumran, dates from 100–75 BC. But since that document represents the final stage of a composite work that was put together over a period of time and presupposes the evolution of the structures governing the community, it is clear that the origins of the community's occupation of the site have to be pushed back into the second century BC. Similar conclusions follow from the evidence of the Damascus Document, the oldest manuscript of which dates back to the first half of the first century BC. This writing presupposes the settlement at Qumran, but it too has a complex literary pre-history and points us back to the second century BC for the origins of the settlement at Qumran.

It is the Damascus Document which, in an important passage (1.1–12), tells us something of the origins of the Qumran community and of the events which preceded its establishment. According to this passage, three hundred and ninety years after the start of the exile God brought into existence a reform movement ('a root of planting'), but this movement was confused and unsure of itself until, after twenty years, God 'raised up for them a teacher of righteousness to lead them in the way of his heart'. The Damascus Document also refers to an opponent of the teacher of righteousness called 'the scoffer', 'the liar', or 'the preacher of lies'; this individual was the leader of a group which broke away from the group led by the teacher of righteousness. These same two individuals, the teacher and the liar, are also mentioned in the biblical commentaries. In these there is also reference to a further opponent of the teacher of righteousness called 'the wicked priest'.

The significance of the three hundred and ninety years of Damascus Document 1.1–12 will be discussed below, but here it is sufficient to notice that although the figure cannot be relied on as exact, it carries us down into the second century BC. The emergence of the reform movement (the 'root of planting') mentioned in the Damascus Document has often been associated with the emergence of the Hasidim, who played a leading role in the resistance to the measures imposed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The Hasidim are, however, only mentioned three times in our sources (1 Macc. 2:42; 7:13; 2 Macc.

14:6), and we know far less about them than is often assumed. It is perhaps more important to observe that there are significant links between the Damascus Document and Jubilees. The latter book very probably dates from about 170 BC; it represents the viewpoint of a group of conservative Jews who were concerned about the increasing threat which hellenisation posed to the Jewish faith. It is plausible to connect the 'root of planting' with the group that lies behind the book of Jubilees and to find here the beginnings of the Essene movement. The Damascus Document gives the impression that the emergence of this movement was marked by the occurrence of some specific event, but we do not know what this was, and the text does not go into any details. In any case it is unlikely that the emergence of the movement occurred suddenly; it represented rather the culmination of a gradually developing attitude towards the religious and political circumstances of the time.

What has been said so far presupposes that the emergence of the Essenes is to be associated with the activities of Jews living in Palestine. As an alternative view it has been argued that the origins of the Essene movement are to be traced to the exiles who went from Judah to Babylon in the sixth century BC, although it is not clear exactly when the movement came into existence. On this view some members of the movement returned from Babylon to Palestine shortly after 165 BC, where they attempted to win support for their views. Such a view of the origins of the Essene movement is not impossible, but there is insufficient evidence to make it appear convincing, at least at present, and it is assumed here that the origins of the Essene movement belong in Palestine.

The Damascus Document indicates that for the first twenty years of its existence the 'root of planting' remained in an uncertain and confused state until God 'raised up for them a teacher of righteousness to lead them in the way of his heart'. It is unfortunately not clear when exactly the twenty-year period began, or whether the twenty years provide an exact figure or have primarily a symbolic value. But if it is right to link the emergence of the 'root of planting' with the group that lies behind the book of Jubilees, the composition of which is very probably to be dated at about 170 BC, the twenty years would carry us down to about 150 BC. The teacher of righteousness is associated with Qumran, and although it is nowhere stated in the scrolls, it is plausible to link the appearance of the teacher of righteousness with the move of part of the Essene movement to Qumran, a move reflected in the scrolls in the oldest layer of material in the Community Rule,

i.e. columns VIII–IX. Thus from what has been said so far, the appearance of the teacher of righteousness and the start of the settlement at Qumran are to be placed at about 150 BC. Support in general terms for this view can be found in the biblical commentaries in the information they provide about the identity of one of the opponents of the teacher of righteousness, namely the wicked priest.

The wicked priest is mentioned in the Commentary on Habakkuk and the Commentary on Psalms. From what is said about him it is clear that he was a high priest, and he can only have been one of the Hasmonaean high priests of the second half of the second century BC. Many scholars have in fact identified the wicked priest with either Jonathan (high priest from 152 to 143) or Simon (high priest from 143 to 134), and it seems fairly clear that he is to be identified with one or other of these figures. It is difficult to decide with certainty between the two on the basis of the evidence of the biblical commentaries because much of what is said in them about the wicked priest is cast in language that is by its very nature susceptible of more than one interpretation. However, on balance the view that Jonathan was the wicked priest seems to make best sense of the evidence, and it is this view that is followed in this book. It is easy to see why the Essenes would have regarded Jonathan's tenure of the office of high priest with hostility. Jonathan belonged to a priestly, not a high-priestly family. Furthermore, he was appointed high priest not by Jews, but by Alexander Balas, the Seleucid king (1 Macc. 10: 18–21). In the eyes of pious Jews Jonathan must have been regarded as an illegitimate holder of office. From the scrolls it is clear that the Essenes who settled at Qumran viewed the religious situation in Jerusalem with considerable disquiet: the law was not being observed properly, the proper religious calendar was not being followed, the temple cult itself had been defiled. It is argued that in these circumstances it was in response to Jonathan's assumption of the office of high priest that part of the Essene movement, under the leadership of the teacher of righteousness, withdrew into the wilderness to settle at Qumran. This must have happened sometime after 152 BC, but when exactly between 152 and 143 is not known.

The evidence provided by the Damascus Document and the biblical commentaries about the origins of the Essene movement and the settlement at Qumran fits in with the archaeological evidence about the first phase of Essene occupation of Khirbet Qumran (phase Ia), but with one element of uncertainty. We have seen that although the end of phase Ia can be dated on archaeological grounds to about 100 BC, the beginning of this phase cannot be dated precisely – it belongs

somewhere in the second half of the second century BC. Phase Ia must have lasted some time, and it is highly unlikely that the beginning of this phase belongs in the time of either Aristobulus I (104–103 BC) or John Hyrcanus (134–104 BC), not least because the things said in the biblical commentaries do not fit the identification of either as the wicked priest. We are thus pushed back to the time of Simon or Jonathan for the beginning of phase Ia, but it is impossible to say on the basis of the archaeological evidence in which of their periods of office this phase began. The archaeological evidence is compatible with the view that phase Ia began in the time of Jonathan, i.e. with the view that he is the wicked priest, and that the appearance of the teacher of righteousness and the withdrawal of part of the Essene movement to Qumran belong in the period 152–143 BC, but it does not demand such an interpretation.

There is evidence in the scrolls to suggest that at one stage the teacher of righteousness functioned as high priest in Jerusalem, and some scholars have thought that the teacher held office as high priest between the death of Alcimus in 159 BC (1 Macc. 9:56) and the appointment of Jonathan in 152 (1 Macc. 10:18–21). Nothing is said in 1 Maccabees as to whether there was a high priest in this period, while Josephus states that ‘the city continued for seven years without a high priest’ (*Ant.* xx.10.3(237)). But the evidence of Josephus is unreliable in this matter (he elsewhere says that Judas was high priest (*Ant.* xii.10.6 (414)), and it is historically unlikely that there was no high priest – if only because without one the ritual of the day of atonement could not be celebrated. The view that the teacher of righteousness was the high priest, and that he was ousted from office by Jonathan in 152 is attractive and has a good deal to be said for it. It would fit in with the view of the origins of the Qumran community outlined above and would explain the hostility between the teacher of righteousness and the wicked priest. The actual name of the teacher is unknown and is likely to remain so.

As we noted earlier, the teacher of righteousness was opposed not only by the wicked priest, but also by a figure called ‘the scoffer’, ‘the liar’, ‘the preacher of lies’. This figure appears as the leader of a group which broke away at an early stage from the group associated with the teacher. It is not known who this person was, nor is it entirely clear what became of the group associated with him. It has been argued that this group ultimately became the Pharisees, and this view, although not certain, seems likely. But it has also been suggested that this group consisted of those Essenes who did not accept the authority of the teacher and did not withdraw with him to Qumran.