

In the light of the conclusion reached at the end of the previous section identifying the Essenes with the Qumran Community,⁴⁶ this very patchy picture can be filled in a little. Since the Qumran writings are notoriously alien to historiography proper—most of the relevant data derive from Bible interpretation of the *peshet* type⁴⁷—it is thought preferable to limit the present reconstruction of Qumran/Essene history to the main outline without integrating into the picture the more speculative secondary traits elaborated by some scholars.⁴⁸

Accepting the interpretation of archaeological discoveries which date the beginning of the Essene settlement at Qumran to between cca. 140–130 B.C.,⁴⁹ the events which gave rise to the sect belong to the earlier decades of the second century B.C.⁵⁰

The original nucleus of the Essenes was born during the epoch of the Hellenistic crisis culminating in the persecution launched by Antiochus Epiphanes (CD 1:5).⁵¹ It was the 'plant root' which God 'caused to spring . . . to inherit his land' (CD 1:7), i.e. the congregation of the

46. Cf. pp. 583 f. above.

47. Cf. above, p. 580.

48. One should in particular, be very careful in employing poetic allusions extracted from certain Hodayoth on the assumption that not only is the leader to whom they refer the Teacher of Righteousness but that the latter is the author of the poems in question. For the literary-historical theory, cf. G. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (1963). For the amalgamation of his data into a historical reconstruction, see H. Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (Diss. Bonn 1965, privately published in 1971), and J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Essenes and Their History', RB 81 (1974), pp. 215–44. Cf. Vermes, *DSS*, pp. 145–6.

49. R. de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1973), pp. 5, 18, etc.

50. The synthesis that is outlined here has been propounded with minor variations by the following: Vermes, *Discovery* (1956), pp. 66–97; *DSSE*, pp. 61–8; *DSS*, pp. 142–62; F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (1958, ²1961), pp. 135–53; 'The Early History of the Qumran Community', *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, ed. D. N. Freedman and J. C. Greenfield (1971), pp. 70–89; J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery* (1959), pp. 84–7; G. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (1963); R. de Vaux, *Archaeology* (1973), pp. 116–17; H. Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (1971), pp. 200 ff.; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism I* (1974), pp. 224–7; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *art. cit.* [in n. 48], RB 81 (1974), pp. 215–44; 'Demetrius I and the Teacher of Righteousness', *ibid.* 83 (1976), pp. 400–20; H. Burgmann, 'The Wicked Woman: Der Makkabäer Simon', RQ 8 (1974), pp. 323–59; 'Gerichtsherr und Generalankläger: Jonathan und Simon', RQ 9 (1977), pp. 3–72. For alternative theories, cf. H. H. Rowley, 'The History of the Qumran Sect', BJRL 49 (1967), pp. 203–32 [pre-Maccabaeen age]; J. Carmignac, *Les textes de Qumrân II* (1963), pp. 48–55 [age of Alexander Jannaeus]; A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings* (1961), pp. 351–7 [age of Hyrcanus II]; C. Roth, *The Historical Background of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1958) and G. R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls* (1965) [age of the first Jewish war].

51. Murphy-O'Connor, *art. cit.*, pp. 221–3, argues for a Babylonian pre-history of the sect before its return to Palestine. This is based on the questionable exegesis that Damascus is a symbol for Babylon. On the Damascus symbolism, see Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition* (²1973), pp. 43–9.

Hasidim.⁵² Twenty years later the Teacher of Righteousness appeared (CD 1:10-11), the founder-organizer of the Qumran/Essene community, a priest (4QPp 37 ii 19, iii 15) of no doubt high Zadokite lineage.⁵³ A conflict arose between him and Jonathan, who in 153/2 B.C. accepted the pontifical office and became the 'Wicked Priest'. It is noteworthy that the first mention of the Essenes by Josephus is placed during Jonathan's rule.⁵⁴ The Teacher and his followers were forced to withdraw to a place of exile, possibly Qumran, where their opponent visited them on their day of Atonement (1QP Hab 11:4-8). Jonathan's downfall and execution by Tryphon in 143/2 B.C. was seen by the Essenes as a divine punishment (1QP Hab 9:2, 9-12). In 4QTestimonia, he is cursed as one of two brothers, 'instruments of violence', the other being Simon Maccabaeus.⁵⁵

Chronologically, the next reference to the Essenes comes from Josephus who mentions an Essene prophet, by the name of Judas, under the reign of Aristobulus I.⁵⁶ Reverting to the Qumran evidence, the later Hasmonaeans, in particular Alexander Jannaeus, 'the furious young lion' (4QP Nah 1:5; cf. 4QP Hos 2:2-3), continued to be held in intense hatred by the Essenes, who rejoiced in the defeat by Pompey of the Jewish rulers, 'the last priests of Jerusalem' (1QP Hab 9:4-7).

Essene history covering the second half of the first century B.C. and the first half of the first century A.D. is attested only by the references in Josephus, and by the archaeological evidence from the Qumran site. According to Josephus the sect appears to have flourished under Herod, who dispensed them from the obligatory oath of allegiance,⁵⁷ no doubt on account of the prophecy of the Essene Menahem foretelling that Herod would become king of the Jews.⁵⁸ Whether the occupation of the Qumran site was discontinued for a time under Herod after the earthquake in 31 B.C. remains uncertain despite R. de Vaux's claim,⁵⁹ especially because of the discovery of at least ten Herodian coins among the ruins.⁶⁰

There are two further Josephus testimonies regarding the period

52. Cf. vol. I, pp. 145, 157, etc.

53. Murphy-O'Connor conjecturally identifies him with the (anonymous and hypothetical) acting High Priest who functioned between Alcimus and Jonathan Maccabaeus. Cf. *art. cit.*, RB 81 (1974), pp. 229-30.

54. *Ant.* xiii 5, 9 (171).

55. F. M. Cross prefers to see Simon as the 'Wicked Priest'. Cf. *op. cit.* [in n. 15 above]. See also G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Simon—A Priest with a Reputation for Faithfulness', BASOR 223 (1976), pp. 67-8.

56. *Ant.* xiii 11, 2 (311-13).

57. *Ant.* xv 10, 4 (371-2).

58. *Ant.* xv 10, 5 (373-8).

59. Cf. *Archaeology*, pp. 20-4.

60. Cf. Vermes, *DSS*, pp. 33-4.