

אחרית הימים IN THE TEXTS FROM QUMRAN (1)

THIS article at first tries to answer the question of how to understand אחרית הימים in the Qumran texts. In a further part, some ideas on Qumranic calculations of אחרית הימים are presented.

1. The use of אחרית הימים in the Old Testament

Before the Qumran writings, אחרית הימים had been quite a well known expression in the Old Testament: in the Hebrew part of the Bible no less than 13 occurrences exist, plus one other in the Aramaic part of the biblical Book of *Daniel*. אחרית הימים — it is always used with the preposition ב — appears in the Torah as well as in the Prophets (2).

Concerning the *history of research*, one can make a striking observation: for a long period of time, scholars translated באחרית הימים as “at the end of the days” or “in the last days”, understanding this expression in a specifically future-eschatological sense (3). Again and again, the fundamental question of an Old Testament eschatology and its dating arose in this context (4).

In the 1960s there was a turn in research history: באחרית הימים was now simply translated as “in the course of time, in future days” (5). This understanding is based on a linguistic analogy to

(1) I wish to express my thanks to Profs. H. STEGEMANN and E. PUECH for their helpful remarks.

(2) באחרית הימים: *Gn* 49, 1; *Num* 24, 14; *Dt* 4, 30; 31, 29; *Isa* 2, 2; *Jer* 23, 20; 30, 24; 48, 47; 49, 39; *Ez* 38, 16; *Hos* 3, 5; *Mi* 4, 1; *Dan* 10, 14. באחרית יומיא: *Dan* 2, 28.

(3) By following W. STAERK (1891) 247-253. On the research history cf. also E. JENNI (1984), 116-118.

(4) An early dating, for example, by H. GRESSMANN (1929), 74ff.82ff; a late dating, for example, by S. MOWINCKEL (1956), 131.

(5) See, for example, G. W. BUCHANAN (1961) and H. KOSMALA (1963).

the accadian *ina/ana achrāl ūmi*, meaning "in future days", or similar expressions (6). The result of this finding was a deschatologized understanding of **אחרית הימים** which is still predominant in research today (7). The troublesome question about an Old Testament eschatology is avoided through this philological explanation.

2. The use of **אחרית הימים** in the Qumran texts

The research history on **אחרית הימים** in the Qumran texts is equivalent: first, scholars translated this term generally as "the end of the days" or "the last days" (8). Then, in recent research, one finds a tendency to use the apparently more cautious translation "in the future, in the course of time" (9). But is this correct? The caution of modern translators is caused not least by a basic uncertainty and disagreement on what we really have to understand if we translate **אחרית הימים** with "the end of days" or "the last days": does it include the everlasting time of salvation, as most of the scholars assume, or the last evil time, an eschatological war, the final judgement, or is it perhaps related to different aspects? A variety of explanations have been developed (10).

It seems worth adding *another attempt at explaining אחרית הימים*, because more Qumran texts have been edited in the meantime which could not have been taken into consideration by earlier investigations. With the help of the "Preliminary Concordan-

(6) Cf. W. VON SODEN, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Band I, Wiesbaden 1965, 21.

(7) See, for example, E. JENNI (1984), 117f (= 1971) who rejects any eschatological meaning of the term in the Old Testament. Other scholars, as for example H. SEEBASS (1973), 27-28, keep an eschatological interpretation for *Dan* 2, 28 and 10, 14 (and, in a restricted way, also for *Hos* 3, 5 and *Ez* 38, 16). The turn in the understanding of **אחרית הימים** is visible in the case of W. GESENIUS, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch*: the original translation of all the biblical **אחרית הימים** evidences was "Endzeit" (1-17 editions); in the eighteenth edition (1987, ed. R. MEYER, H. DONNER) **אחרית הימים** is translated as "in künftigen Tagen", the only exceptions among the hebrew biblical texts are *Isa* 2, 2 (= *Mi* 4, 1), *Ez* 38, 16 and *Dan* 10, 14 where the translation "am Ende der Tage" is still preferred.

(8) See, for example, J. MAIER (1960), G. VERMES (1962), E. LOHSE (1964), and E. PUECH consistently translating "the end of the days".

(9) J. CARMIGNAC (1962), 527-529, established this translation and explained his idea on **אחרית הימים** in many further articles, see, for example, J. CARMIGNAC (1978). G. J. BROOKE (1985) is following J. CARMIGNAC but he tries to keep the eschatological aspect of **אחרית הימים** in translating it as "the latter days". see especially 176; cf. also Sh. TALMON (1989).

(10) See, for example, J. LICHT (1965), J. CARMIGNAC (1978), and K. SCHUBERT in: J. MAIER/K. SCHUBERT (1982), 88-93 (cf. already K. SCHUBERT, *The Dead Sea Community*, New York 1959).

ce"(11) the unpublished material can also be examined now. Therefore, all **אחרית הימים** references from Qumran are included in this study.

The occurrence of **אחרית הימים** in the Qumran texts is as follows: in the Hebrew texts it appears 33 times (12), plus a certain number of references where the term is only fragmentarily preserved but could be reconstructed (13). The Aramaic equivalent **אחרית יומיא** is not attested. All **אחרית הימים** evidences occur in texts which are "original Qumran texts", that means works of Essenic origin (14). The occurrences are spread over the whole timespan of the Essenes' literary production: the oldest evidences stem from *4QMMT* and *IQSa*, the youngest come from the late pesharim. **אחרית הימים** always appears — and this is not unimportant — in the context of Scripture interpretation; often it occurs even within quotation formulas — with the preposition **ל** — where it expresses the temporal relation of the passage quoted from the Bible (15). There is only one exception (16). As in the Bible, **אחרית הימים** occurs in different types of texts: in liturgical texts (*4QDibHam^a*, *4Q509*), in a letter (*4QMMT*), in community rules (*IQSa*, *CD*), and, first of all, in the exegetical literature, that is the thematical midrashim (*11QMelch*, *4QMidrEschal*, *4QPatrBless*) and the pesharim (*1QpHab*, *4QpJes^{a-d}*, *4QpHos^a*, *4QpNah*) (17).

A new investigation of the meaning of **אחרית הימים** in Qumran is somewhat surprising if one keeps in mind the recent research tendencies:

(11) Edited by J. STRUGNELL *et al.* (1988).

(12) *IQSa* I, 1; *1QpHab* II, 5f; IX, 6; *4Qp Isa^a* frg. 2-6 II, 26; frg. 7-10 III, 22; *4QpIsa^b* frg. 2, 1; *4QpIsa^c* frg. 6-7 II, 14; frg. 23 II, 10; *4QpIsa^d* frg. 1, 7*; *4QpNah* II, 2; *4QMidrEschal* (*4Q174 + 4Q177*) III, 2.12.15.19; V, 3; IX, 10.14*; X, 5.7*; XI, 7; XII, 6*; *4Q178* frg. 3, 4; frg. 2, 3; *4Q182* frg. 1, 1; frg. 2, 1*; *4QPatrBless* ALLEGRO-frg., 2; *4QPatrBless* STEGEMANN (1967) — frg., 2; *4QDibHam^a* frg. 1-2 III, 13; *4Q509* frg. 7, 5; *4QMMT* C 15.22; *CD* IV, 4; VI, 11; *11QMelch* II, 4. Occurrences of **אחרית הימים** in the biblical manuscripts from Qumran are not counted here.

(13) See, for example, *4QpHos^a* frg. 1, 11f and *4Q178* frg. 9, 2.

(14) The only exception might be *4QDibHam^a* (*4Q504*). The manuscript itself dates paleographically about 150 BC and the editor, M. BAILLET (DJD VII, 1982), suggested a pre-essenic origin. But see now E. PUECH (1993), 565, who points to dependances of *DibHam* on *Daniel* and who wants to keep also the possibility of an (early-) essenic origin of the work *DibHam* ("... il nous semble qu'une composition essénienne ou hassidéenne et post-daniélique ne peut être exclue, si *Daniel* est daté de 164/3." 565, note 6).

(15) See, for example, *4QMidrEschal* III, 15: "upon which it is written in the book of Isaiah 'the Prophet **אחרית הימים**(concerning)ל'" (quotation of *Isa* 8, 11 follows), or *4QMidrEschal* XI, 7: "**אחרית הימים**(concerning)ל upon which David said" (quotation of *Ps* 6, 2a.3a follows).

(16) *IQSa* I, 1.

(17) No **אחרית הימים** evidences are found in such important essenic works as the *Community Rule*, the *Hodayot* and the — originally pre-essenic — *War Scroll*. Also in the pre-essenic *Temple Scroll* **אחרית הימים** is not attested.

A) Already in the so-called *מקצת מעשי התורה* (4QMMT), the term *אחרית הימים* is related to a “*presently continuing period of time*” (18). The situation here is as follows: the writers of the letter address themselves to the officiating high priest of the time (19), whom they reproach a number of mistakes in cultic practice. At the end of the document (MMT C) they demand that he think over his actions, guided by the Scriptures, and to turn away from his wrong ways. The present situation is described by the aid of an eschatological interpretation of different passages from *Deuteronomy*: Dt 31, 29 and Dt 30, 1f (20) are quoted in a free manner, illustrating that the present time is the time of *אחרית הימים* to which the Scriptures refer, the time to turn back. Thus, also the high priest is admonished to change his attitude, and that at once and presently, and to retain the right way in future for the whole period of *אחרית הימים*.

Other texts also describe *אחרית הימים* as a *period of time* in which mastering a test is at stake. The most impressive examples are given in a thematical midrash, 4QMidrEschat (4Q174 + 4Q177) which contains one third of all *אחרית הימים* references in the Qumran texts. Here, it is the community that has turned away from “the way of the people” (i.e. the evil way) *באחרית הימים*. It is seen as the fulfillment of different passages from the Bible (*Ps* 1, 1, *Isa* 8, 11, and *Ez* 37, 23) which are quoted and interpreted in this context (4QMidrEschat III, 14ff). In Col. IV, 1ff of the same work, we also find a kind of a short definition of *אחרית הימים*: *אחרית הימים היא עת המצרף הבאה*... The translation is: “...*אחרית הימים*, this is the ‘time of refining’ that *has come* (i.e. that has already begun)”. The recognition that one has, in fact, to translate the passage in this way and not as “... this is the ‘time of refining’ (yet) to come” — which is philologically possible as well — results from the stereotyped usage of *עת המצרף הבאה* in the Qumran texts. *עת המצרף הבאה* designates a period of history which has already begun. Probably, the best example illustrating this is found in the pesharim: 4QpPs^a II, 17-19 quotes *Ps* 37, 14f and interprets it as follows: “Its interpretation concerns the wicked of Ephraim and Manasse who have (oftenly) sought to lay hands on (אשר יבקשו לשלוח יד ב) the priest and the men of his council at the time of refining which *has come* (בעת המצרף הבאה) upon them. But

(18) I am obliged to Prof. J. STRUGNELL who gave me the permission to use his preliminary transcriptions of MMT for my studies.

(19) According to E. QIMRON/J. STRUGNELL (1985), 400f, 4QMMT was addressed to Jonathan or Simon; cf. 4QpPs^a IV, 8f. Jonathan seems to be more likely; for dating the Teacher of Righteousness who is assumed to be (one of) the sender(s) of the letter see below.

(20) In Dt 30, 1f *באחרית הימים* is inserted by the author of 4QMMT.

God has (always) redeemed them (יפ[ד]ם) from out of their hand." (21) There can be no doubt that the events reported here have a real historical background: the sudden attack(s) against the Teacher of Righteousness and his community. (22) At the time when this pesher was composed, sometime in the first third of the first century BC, the Teacher of Righteousness was already dead and the events described in our passage belonged to the past. (23) Thus, the "time of refining" (עת המצרף הבאה) has already begun long ago. In *4QMidrEschal* which originates a little later than *4QpPs^a* there is a further evidence with exactly this meaning of *עת המצרף הבאה* as a synonym for *אחרית הימים*: the *אחרית הימים* is the time of refining, that is the time of separation and affliction for the pious, a time of temptation and suffering in which the community has to stand the test. (24)

B) That *אחרית הימים* as a period of time reaches back into the past, is shown by other Qumran texts. The passages referred to in the following are well and largely concurrently explained in the literature, so a new demonstration of the explanation is not necessary. One of these texts is *4QpNah*, composed not before the year 63 BC. Col. II, 2ff of this pesher alludes to the powerful influence of the Pharisees, designated as *דורשי החלקות* ("those who seek smooth things") *אחרית הימים*, and harks back historically to the reign of Alexandra Salome and her sons Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II in the 70s and 60s of the first century BC. (25)

Another text is *IQpHab IX*, 6; described here are the "last priests of Jerusalem" (*כוהני ירושלם האחרונים*), who "gather wealth

(21) The verbal forms *יבקשו* and *יפקדם* (impf.) are translated here according to D. MICHEL, *Tempora und Satzstellung in den Psalmen*, Bonn 1960, 150-152 (§ 24). 176 (§ 27.6) as an iterativ; cf. for example E. LOHSE (1986), 275. It is also possible to keep a temporal meaning (future) of these verbal forms; in this case the text should be read as a kind of prophecy (post eventum) for its readers. The first solution might fit better with the character of the pesharim which were composed to show that a book of a biblical prophet has just been fulfilled.

(22) See the detailed explanation of this text by H. STEGEMANN (1971), 82-84. As difficult as it is to identify the historical events with certainty (see the debate on "Ephraim" and "Manasse" in the literature), it is clear that this text is not prophecy, a prediction of things that will happen in the future, but a *valicinium ex eventu* about history.

(23) The dating of this pesher results first of all from formal criteria (*4QpPs^a* is close to *CD*, the thematical midrashim and the early pesharim as *4QpIsa^a*) and from its content (for example, lack of the Kittim; the 40 years mentioned in *CD* are not yet over, see below).

(24) *4QMidrEschal VIII*, (especially) 1-3.

(25) See for example M. HORGAN (1979), 158-162; even G. STEMBERGER (1991), 104 who is very cautious and sceptical towards any concrete historical identification of the allusions in the Qumran texts agrees in this case.

and profit from the spoils of the nations", and this wealth is given (26) **לאחרית הימים** into the hands of the Kittim. The historical reference here is to the illegal enrichment of the Temple's treasure under the administration of avaricious priestly circles in Jerusalem and the plundering of the Temple's treasure by the Romans in the year 54 BC. (27) This event belongs to the immediate past of the author of *pHab* who composed his work around 50 BC. (28)

C) In addition to all previous implications, there are also events which are expected *within the* **אחרית הימים** *as lying in future*. First of all, this concerns the coming of the messiahs, who are still awaited in the last period of time, **אחרית הימים**, before the actual end. Although we have to be very careful in generalizing — especially in case of messianology in Qumran — it can be seen at least in *IQSa*, *4QMidrEschat* and *4QpIsa^a* that the messiahs should come *within* **אחרית הימים**, before the time of the final salvation. (29) It is the same with the building of God's everlasting future Temple which is probably to be distinguished from the **מקדש אדם** ("Sanctuary of men"). Connected with the building of the everlasting Temple is the establishment of the kingdom of God **אחרית הימים**; this is found only in *4QMidrEschat*. (30) By the way, the time of salvation, the time after **אחרית הימים**, is rarely reflected in the Qumran texts. (31)

Finally, one remark concerning *IQSa* should be made. **אחרית הימים** occurs here — at the very beginning, in col. I, 1 — for the only time not in an exegetical context. *IQSa* has been understood as a rule for the future time of salvation, (32) because the text speaks of the coming of the messiah. Irritations were caused by the striking parallels to community rules, which were indeed already in practice among the Essenes. H. STEGEMANN (1993) has now shown that *IQSa* was by no means a rule for the future time of salvation but for the immediately preceding period of time, **אחרית הימים**. (33)

(26) On the translation of **ינתן** as "is given" and not as "will be given", which is also possible, cf. note 21.

(27) Cf. also *4QpNah* I, 11f. See the explanation of both texts by H. STEGEMANN (1971), 115-120, cf. also H. STEGEMANN (1983), 522.

(28) See H. STEGEMANN (1983), 522.

(29) *IQSa* II, 11f, *4QMidrEschat* III, 10-13, *4QpIsa^a* III, 15-29.

(30) *4QMidrEschat* III, 2-6.

(31) But see for example *4Q521* ff. 5ii + 7, cf. E. PUECH (1993), 650-658, and *4QpPs^a* II, 10f.

(32) See, for example, still L. H. SCHIFFMAN (1989) and Sh. TALMON (1989), 297-300.

(33) The war against the nations (I, 21) is still to come and simpletons (I, 19) and people who are "smitten with any human uncleanness" (II, 5ff) still exist. See

Summary:

Summarizing the evidences of **אחרית הימים** in the Qumran texts we have to conclude: **אחרית הימים** does not mean the time of salvation, it also does not mean a "punctual end" of history, nor does it mean "future". Rather, what is meant by the term **אחרית הימים** is a limited period of time, that is the last of series of divinely pre-planned periods into which history is divided. *This last period of time directly before the time of salvation covers aspects of the past (A), as well as aspects of the present time (B) and of the future (C).* Thus, the Essenes are reporting events which already belong to **אחרית הימים**, but which are, from the author's point of view, events from the past; the present time of the community's own existence is dated to the **אחרית הימים**, in early as well as late compositions; also the coming of the messiahs and the final judgement are expected to happen within **אחרית הימים**. The best translation for **אחרית הימים** in the Qumran texts is therefore "the end of the days", or even better but more freely "the final period of history".

3. The use of **אחרייה הימים** and its equivalents in "contemporary" literature

Considering these Qumran evidences, it is not surprising to see how more or less contemporary literature deals with the term **אחרית הימים**:

The *Targums* translate the biblical **באחרית הימים** always as "at the end of the days" (**בסוף יומיא**) (34) or "at the end of the heel of the days" (**בסוף עקיב יומיא**), that is "at the ultimate end of the days". (35) The *Targums*, whose origin is certainly difficult to date, therefore contain a consistent future-eschatological interpretation of the expression **אחרית הימים**. (36)

The *LXX* has a slightly broader spectrum of translations for **באחרית הימים**. There are mainly two different groups: **אחרית הימים** is translated as $\xi\pi' \ \xi\sigma\chi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\nu \ \tau\omega\nu \ \eta\mu\epsilon\rho\acute{\omega}\nu$ (37) or as

H. STEGEMANN (1993), 159-163; cf. also H. STEGEMANN, "Some Remarks to 1QS_a, 1QS_b, and Qumran Messianism" (paper presented to the IOQS Paris Meeting 1992). According to H. STEGEMANN *1QS_a* is the oldest community rule found in Qumran.

(34) See for example the *Targum Onkelos* on *Gn* 49, 1 and *Num* 24, 14.

(35) See for example the *Palestinian Targum* and the *Neophyti Targum* on *Dt* 4, 30.

(36) Cf. also the eschatological understanding of this term still in the Rabbinic Literature where usually קץ is the equivalent for **אחרית הימים** (see for example *Genesis Rabbah* on *Gn* 49, 1).

(37) For example *Gn* 49, 1 and *Ez* 38, 16.

ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν (sg.). (38) The number of both translations is nearly the same. A deliberately distinguishing use of both expressions — for example, one used to mean “in future” and the other “at the end of the days” — cannot be found. Rather, their use seems to reflect the particular stylistic preferences of the various translators concerned. Therefore, we have to understand ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν as an equivalent for ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν, or, put another way, for the translators “in the last days” meant the same as “at the end of the days”.

The *New Testament* which always uses the equivalents for **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים** freely, that means in text not representing biblical quotations, favours a formulation rarely found in the LXX: the most frequent equivalent for **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים** in the New Testament is ἐν (ταῖς) ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις. (39) This expression is used in the LXX only in the translation of *Isa* 2,2. Beside this, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν — well known from the LXX — is used once in *2Petr* 3, 3. There is a clear tendency in the New Testament to state formulations in the plural, although the statistical basis for this assertion is very small with only 5 references in all, singular and plural. The only expression which occurs in the singular is ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων in *Hebr* 1, 2. It is impossible to say for sure why the formulation in the plural “in the last days” is preferred in the New Testament to the singular “at the end of the days”. Maybe, this preference was a result of the popularity of *Isa* 2,2 and, of course, of *Isaiah* in general in early Christianity, so that this term from the LXX impressed itself on the mind especially strongly. A difference in the meaning of “in the last days” and “at the end of the days” does not exist. As in the Qumran texts also, these formulations designate in the New Testament the last period of time before the actual end, (40) never the actual end itself or the time of salvation. The most important event within this last period recognized in the New Testament is the appearance of Jesus. The *Epistle to the Hebrews* accordingly starts with the following sentence: Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ ὃν ἔθροικεν κληρονόμον πάντων, δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας, *Hebr* 1, 1f.

(38) For example *Num* 24, 14 and *Dan* 10, 14.

(39) *Acts* 2, 17; *2Tim* 3, 1; *Jas* 5, 3; cf. *Did* 16, 3; *Barn.* 4, 9.

(40) That is the present time of the authors (even in *2Tim* 3, 1 and *2Petr* 3, 3 where — including also the future before the actual end — the future tense is used). That the equivalents for **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים** in the New Testament cover aspects of the past — as the Qumran texts — is clear from *Hebr* 1, 2; there are decades between the words of God once spoken by Jesus in **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים** and the composition of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

4. Suggestions on the duration and limits of אחרית הימים in the Qumran texts

One point that is nowhere explicitly mentioned in the Qumran texts is the *duration* of אחרית הימים. When did אחרית הימים start? Perhaps with the appearance of the Teacher of Righteousness, the foundation date of the community? And when would אחרית הימים come to an end, that is, when will the actual end of the world come?

Speculations concerning the date of the end of the world or the duration of the world are numerous in contemporary Judaism: thus, *Daniel* — by interpreting *Jer* 25,11 — dates the exact year of the end 70 weeks of years, that is 490 years, after the destruction of Jerusalem. A particularly popular method calculated the end from the creation of the world onwards: 7000 years was the expected duration of the world, (41) or 6000 years; (42) others probably calculated with 5000 years (43) or 4231 years (44).

That the Essenes indeed *calculated the date of the end* is shown by a passage in *pHab* (45) to which we will refer later on: here, a literary attempt to cope with the disappointment of the hope that the end was close at hand was undertaken; the end had not come at the calculated date.

11QMelchisedek:

One example of such Essenic calculations of the date of the end is found in *11QMelchisedek*. (46) As difficult as the interpretation of this thematical midrash is in detail, the two protagonists are clear: these are the heavenly high priest Melchisedek and the "messenger of good news", who announces the reign of Melchisedek. The important passage for the calculation of the end is found in Col. II, 6-7: the report here is of a future "Day of Atonement" on which Melchisedek will act as heavenly high priest and judge. This "Day of Atonement" is expected to take place at the *end of the 10th jubilee*. The proclamation of the

(41) *TestAbr* 7, 17; *ApokrPhilo* 28, 8; *MidrTehill. Ps* 90, 15. See on the calculations of the duration of the world P. Volz (1934), 143f, from whom I have taken the informations.

(42) *VitAd.* 42; probably *SIHen* 33, 1; different Talmudic calculations (for example *b. sanh.* 97b); Samaritan eschatology (*Asalir* 4, 20).

(43) Presumably *AssMos* 10, 12.

(44) *b.Abod.* 9b.

(45) *IQpHab* VII, 1ff.

(46) Confer for the following the reconstructed text of this manuscript edited by E. PUECH (1987).

liberation definitively realized at the "Day of Atonement" happens in the first week of the jubilee that follows after the preceding nine jubilees, that is the *first week of the 10th jubilee*. If we now ask how long such a jubilee lasts and from which date in history these jubilees were counted, Col. II, 18 provides us with further information: in a quotation-formula, the biblical prophet *Daniel* occurs. Unfortunately, the quotation itself is lost; the fragment breaks off here and we can only guess that perhaps an excerpt from *Dn* 9, 25 was quoted in the gap. But, what is fundamentally much more important than the lost quotation is that this quotation-formula represents the oldest proof for *Daniel* as a recognized scriptural authority. At the time when *11QMelchise-dek* was composed, about the end of the second century BC, the *Book of Daniel* belonged to the "canon" of the Essenes. Therefore, it may be suggested that — if *Daniel* is quoted as an authority in *11QMelch* — the system of calculation in *11QMelch* corresponds to that of the biblical *Book of Daniel*, that is, the 10 jubilees of *11QMelch* are identical with the 70 weeks of years of *Daniel*.(47) Thus, the 7 years — the usual duration of one jubilee — should be understood with *Daniel* as 7 weeks of years and the jubilees should be counted starting with Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem.(48) The "Day of Atonement" which is expected to come at the end of the 10th jubilee should then be calculated $10 \times 7 \times 7$ years, that is 490 years, after this event. Following an ancient chronology — as will be shown below — this leads us in the case of the "Day of Atonement" to about the year 72 BC and in the case of the proclamation by the "messenger of good news" to about the years 121-114 BC.

Before dealing with the next text, some thought should be given to the "messenger of good news" in *11QMelch*.(49) Scholars justly propose to identify the "messenger of good news" with the "Teacher of Righteousness".(50) In the peshar on *Isa* 52,7, the "mountains" are interpreted as the "prophets" who have heard the word of God and who handed it down faithfully. The quotation

(47) Already suggested by A. CAQUOT (1973), 389-392; cf. E. PUECH (1987), 509.

(48) The identification of the 10 jubilees in *11QMelch* with the 70 weeks of years from *Daniel* would speak against the suggestion of J. T. MILIK (1972), 109-126, that *11QMelch* is a third copy of the "Peshar des Périodes" (*4Q180* and *4Q181*) where the history of the world is divided into 10 jubilees. This seems to be supported by the different use of the word פשר that functions — attested only in the formula פשר על (*4Q180* frg. 1, 1.7) — as a kind of title in the "Peshar des Périodes". פשר על occurs nowhere else in the Qumran texts; the pesharim and the thematic midrashim, as also *11QMelch*, have always פשרו על or פשר הדבר על.

(49) See for the following *11QMelch* II, 15-20.

(50) See, for example, J. T. MILIK (1972), 126, cf. E. PUECH (1987), 509.

from *Isaiah* says now that "the feet of the messenger" are "on the mountains". This can only mean that the proclamation of salvation by the "messenger" is based on the Prophets or, put another way, that the "messenger of good news" bases his announcement of salvation on the interpretation of the biblical books of the Prophets. He himself is also characterized as a person of prophetic abilities: he is the **משיח הרוח**, the "anointed of the spirit" — perhaps a better translation would be the "anointed with the spirit" — which implies that his proclamation, like that of the Prophets, is authorised by God.⁽⁵¹⁾ His announcement of salvation is connected with the "comforting of those who mourn" (*Isa* 61,2-3 in col. II, 19). What this "comforting of those who mourn" consisted of, is said in col. II, 20: "'To comfort those [who mourn], its interpretation is: to make them understand all the ages of the w[orld] (**קצי העולם**)...'". Thus the messenger's way of comforting was to give information about all the periods of history — including, of course, the final one which was the present time — based on the biblical Prophets.

PHab now describes the Teacher of Righteousness as the interpreter of the Prophets par excellence. *IQpHab* II, 5-9 tells of a certain group, "the ones who are faithless concerning the end of the days" (52) (**הבוגדים לאחרית הימים**), which do not believe in the eschatological interpretation of the biblical Prophets offered by the Teacher of Righteousness.⁽⁵³⁾ That the Teacher of Righteousness might himself have calculated the date of the end on the basis of his exegesis of the Prophets — above all probably on the basis of his lecture of *Daniel*, as *IQMelch* has led us to suggest — seems to be mentioned in the text *IQpHab* VII, 1-14 already referred to above:

"and God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but He did not make known to him when time would come to an end. And as for which He said, *That he who reads may read it speedily*: interpreted this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets. *For there shall be yet another vision concerning the appointed time. It shall tell of the end and shall not lie* (*Hab* 2. 3a). Interpreted, this

(51) See the designations for the biblical prophets in the Qumran texts: **משיחו** **רוח קדוש** in *CD* II, 12 (read **משיחי**), **משיחו הקודש** in *CD* VI, 1 (read **משיחי**), and **משיחיה** in *IQM* XI, 7.

(52) **לאחרית הימים** should be translated here with H. STEGEMANN (1971), 56, as "concerning the end of the days" and not, as it usually is, as "at the end of the days", although in *IQpHab* IX, 6 **לאחרית הימים** is used in the sense of "at the end of the days".

(53) Historically, **הבוגדים לאחרית הימים** probably can be identified with the Sadducees.

means that the final age shall be prolonged, and shall exceed all that the Prophets have said; for the mysteries of God are astounding. *If it tarries, wait for it, for it shall surely come and shall not be late* (*Hab* 2, 3b). Interpreted, this concerns the men of truth who keep the Law, whose hands shall not slacken in the service of the truth when the final age is prolonged. For all the ages of God reach their appointed end as he has determined for them in the mysteries of his wisdom".(54)

Another important thing can be seen here: from the point of view of the author of *pHab*, the calculated date of the end has already passed by, of course, without the end actually having come. The origin of the work *pHab* about the year 50 BC thus supports the interpretation of the *11QMelch*-evidences given above to the effect that the coming of the end was forecast for about the year 72 BC.(55)

The Damascus Document (CD):

Beside *11QMelch* there exists another Qumran text which provides information on calculations of the date of the end, namely the so-called *Damascus Document (CD)*. H. STEGEMANN (1983) has already drawn attention to this fact.(56) The beginning of the *Damascus Document (CD I, 5-11)* contains a short historical review. The first epoch which is described here is the "age of wrath" (קץ חרון), the 390 years of wrath following the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. But then God caused a "plant root" (שורש מטעת) to shoot, whose members distinguished themselves on the one hand by perceiving their iniquity and recognizing their guilt and on the other hand by being like blind men. This "plant root" existed for 20 years until God raised for them a "Teacher of Righteousness" (מורה צדק) to guide them in the right way. There can be no doubt, that what is reported here is the rise of the Teacher's community out of its predecessor group. But there is much debate on the question whether the numbers mentioned in this text (390 and 20) have any historical meaning, or whether they are nothing else than a kind of apocalyptic play on biblical numbers. Did the group preceding the Teacher's community indeed form itself 390 years after the fall of Jerusalem, and did the Teacher's community itself come into being 20 years

(54) Translation with G. VERMES (1987), 286f, but "he has determined" instead of VERMES' "he determines" because of *IQS* IV, 18f, cf. also III, 18 and its context.

(55) Concerning the Teacher of Righteousness as the one who might himself have calculated the date of the end we have to add that *IQpHab* VII, 2 (and its context) could be read as an apologetical text, which has to explain why the Teacher erred and the calculation failed. See also below "5. Conclusion".

(56) H. STEGEMANN (1983), 522 note 98.

later? This was hitherto justly questionable because in the year 197 BC (predecessor community) and in the year 177 BC (Teacher's community), to which the respective numbers seem to lead, no historical events can be identified which could have caused the rise of those groups.

A solution of the problem has been found by A. LAATO (1992). He tries to show that the *Damascus Document* follows the chronological system of the Jewish historiographer DEMETRIUS (57) which is — as he demonstrates — 26/27 years shorter than our modern chronology. (58) According to this, the striking observation can be made that the origin of the "plant root", the predecessor community, would date to the year 171/170 and that of the Teacher's community to the year 151/150. These dates fit well with those been suggested on historical grounds: the murder of Onias III, which may be expected to have been an event that could have caused the rise of the "plant root", happened in the year 170 BC. Also, Jonathan — who is supposed to have driven the "Teacher" out of his position as high priest in Jerusalem, thus causing him to found his own community — became high priest in the year 153/152 BC. (59) Although we do not arrive at a total correspondence between the dates given in the *Damascus Document* and the historical events, they are indeed strikingly close if we take into consideration the substantial period of time (410 years) covered by the calculation.

Another — even more precise — solution was suggested by E. PUECH (1993). (60) According to E. PUECH the author of the *Damascus Document* follows a type of chronology which is represented by 2Ba 1, 1ff dating the first siege of Jerusalem to the 25th year of the reign of Jechonias (Jojakin), i.e. 572 BC. (61) According to this chronology the second siege of Jerusalem took place 10 years later, in the year 562 BC. In this case, the foundation of the predecessor community would have taken place in the year 172 BC, (62) this is exactly the year when Menelaos became

(57) Third century BC. On DEMETRIUS' chronological system see CLEMENS' *Strom.* I, 21, 141 where CLEMENS follows the chronology of DEMETRIUS.

(58) Concerning the intertestamental period. Another inaccurate chronological system is found in *Daniel* and JOSEPHUS which is about 70 years longer than the actual chronology.

(59) This would speak for an identification of the Wicked Priest with Jonathan, see G. JEREMIAS (1963), H. STEGEMANN (1971) and others, and not with Simon, as it is suggested by F. M. CROSS (1958) *et al.*

(60) See E. PUECH (1993), 506 note 29. For the following calculations cf. table 1 and 2.

(61) $597 \text{ BC} - 25 = 572 \text{ BC}$. Cf. 2Kgs 24,8 see P. BOGAERT (1969), 281.

(62) $562 \text{ BC} - 390 = 172 \text{ BC}$.

highpriest. The foundation of the Teacher's community would date 20 years later, in the year 152 BC. Jonathan became highpriest in the year 153/2 BC.

If this interpretation is accepted, certain implications for an *absolute chronology of Essenic calculations of the date of the end* result. Important information still lacking in this context is found in *CD XX*, 13-15. According to this text, the actual end should come *about 40 years* after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness: "And from the day on which the Teacher of the community was taken away (= died) until the end of all Men of War who turned around with the Man of Lies there would be about forty years". Unfortunately, we do not exactly know for how long the Teacher was living in the community. But when the *Damascus Document* was composed about 100 BC, he was already dead, though his death had occurred not too long ago as some regulations concerning the admission of members show. (63) The calculation can now easily be made: if we add the 390 years from Nebuchadnezzar until the foundation of the "plant root", the 20 years until the rise of the Teacher of Righteousness, the circa 40 years of his life in the **יהוד** (from about 152 BC until shortly before 100 BC), and the *about 40 years* between his death and the end, we obtain the 490 years known from *Daniel* which we already met in *11QMelch*. The term "about 40 years" between the death of the Teacher and the end does mean that it was thought impossible to date the end exactly, rather "about" is used here because of the historical date of the Teacher's death, which did not happen exactly 40 years before the expected end. The biblical support for the "about 40 years" is *Dtn 2*, 14. It says that it took 38 years, or about 40 years, until the "Man of War" (**אנשי המלחמה**), who had grumbled during the time in the desert, had died.

The authors of *11QMelch* and *CD* seem to have awaited the "end" 490 years after Nebuchadnezzar, historically — according to the chronology represented by *2Ba 1*, 1ff — about the year 72 BC. (64) In the case of *11QMelch* the heavenly highpriest Melchisedek was expected to come at that date of the "end" for the final judgement. Nothing is mentioned about the time which Melchisedek would need for his judgement. (65) In the case of *CD* the final judgement, which would start with the coming of the messiahs was expected to take place about the year 72 BC. (66)

(63) *CD XIX*, 33ff.

(64) This date — about 72 BC — was already suggested by H. STEGEMANN (1983), 522, note 98.

(65) Would it take a day, some weeks or even years?

(66) That the coming of the messiahs is still expected for the future is clear from *CD XII*, 23 and *XIX*, 10.

The time which starts with the coming of the messiahs is called קץ הפקדה (CD XIX, 10). How long this time of "judgement" would last is never mentioned in CD. Maybe, according to IQM, another 40 years? (67) As was shown above, in the Qumran texts the coming of the messiahs was seen as an event which would take place within the אחרית הימים. Whether the time of the messiahs itself, that is the judgement, was also included into אחרית הימים is not absolutely sure, (68) at least the beginning, about the year 72 BC, was part of it. Concerning the אחרית הימים as the last period of history this means: we know its calculated "end", that is the date of the coming of the messiahs/Melchisedek, the beginning of the final judgement. Whether אחרית הימים meant the whole period of 490 years (+ probably the time of the judgement) or perhaps again only the last period within these 490 years is impossible to state with certainty. It is at least striking that hardly any of the events explicitly referred to with אחרית הימים in the Qumran texts seems to date before the time of the community's foundation. (69) Another thing that we have to keep in mind is that after the calculated date had passed and the "end", the coming of the messiahs, had not taken place, the Qumran texts continue to speak about this time as אחרית הימים, too. (70)

We also have to be very careful in identifying אחרית הימים with similar sounding expressions from Qumran, like הקץ האחרון, (71) הדור האחרון, (72) קץ הרשעה, (73) and אחרית הקץ. (74) Which

(67) CD VIII, 2f speaks of a certain "day" of judgement, but this surely only as allusion to יהיה יום known from the Scripture.

(68) The formulation באחרית הימים seems to speak for this, otherwise one would expect an expression like "at the end of אחרית הימים."

(69) But see the debated אחרית הימים-evidence in the *DibHam*; cf. note 14. See on 4QDibHam^a now also E. CHAZON (diss 1991). According to her reconstruction the term אחרית הימים is found in Col. XVI (frg. 1-2 III 13) where it designates the present time of the author and seems to include already the period of the Exile, see E. CHAZON 226 (text) and 253 (commentary). Cf. the reconstruction of this manuscript proposed by E. PUECH (1993), 564f.

(70) See, for example, *pHab* and *pNah* referring with אחרית הימים to historical events after the year 70 BC.

(71) While in the case of *IQpHab* VII, 7.12 and *4QpNah* IV, 3 (cf. H. STEGEMANN [1993], 183f) the term seems to designate the present time of the author, in the case of *IQS* IV, 17 it seems to mean the time of the judgement (or is ער used here in an inclusive way?).

(72) *IQHab* II, 7; VII, 2; *IQpMich* 18, 5; CD I, 12 (cf. דורות אחרונים in the same line). הדור האחרון occurs already in the Old Testament in *Dt* 29, 21, and — undetermined — in *Ps* 48, 14; 78, 4.6; 102, 19, but only in *Ps* 102, 19 it might have an eschatological meaning.

(73) קץ הרשעה occurs in CD VI, 14; XII, 23; XV, 7 (cf. קץ הרשע CD VI, 10) and *IQpHab* V, 7, where it seems to designate the present time of the community and differs from the קץ הפקדה (CD XIX, 10), the time of the messiahs. It is impossible to know whether also the time between the destruction of Jerusalem and the community's foundation was designated by the Essenes as קץ הרשעה.

(74) *4QpNah* III, 3; *4QpPs*^b 1, 5 (?).

timespan is actually meant by them must be examined in every single case, because none of these formulations became technical terms like **אחרית הימים**.

Among the *other texts from Qumran there seem to be some which also attest to an eschatological 490 years/10 jubilees-scheme*:

There is first of all a group of manuscripts, now counted as *4Q385-390*, already mentioned by J. T. MILIK (1972) who found there a system of 70 weeks of years/10 jubilees, that is 490 years, (75) just as in *11QMelch*. The two largest fragments of one of these manuscripts, *4Q390*, are now completely published by D. DIMANT (1992). (76) As we have suggested for *11QMelch* and *CD*, the reckoning of the 490 years seems to start with the destruction of Jerusalem the "desolation of the land". (77)

Another text which might contain this scheme has been edited by E. PUECH (1992), *4QAha bis = 4QTestLevi^c (?)*, representing possibly a copy of an *Aramaic Testament of Levi*. (78) At the beginning of frg. 1, 2 after a final *nun* the signs of a number are preserved, that is $20 + 20 + 10 + 2$ (?), (79) probably 52. E. PUECH proposes to complete $50 + 2$ (?) **שבעין** and suggests that the 52 weeks might be interpreted as "weeks of years", as in *Daniel*, *11QMelch* and also in *TestLevi* 16,1 and 17,1ff. (80)

It seems that at least some Qumran texts calculated the date of the end in following the tradition represented by the *Testament of Levi* and not the *Book of Jubilees*. (81)

(75) J. T. MILIK (1976), 254f.

(76) J. T. MILIK (1976), 255, already quoted some passages of this manuscript. D. DIMANT (1992) designates *4Q390* as "Pseudo-Moses" She suggests that it is not a specific Qumran text but that it comes from a "priestly-parent group" and that it dates no later than Joh. Hyrcanus (134-104 BC). By the way, D. DIMANT's placement of the two big fragments of *4Q390* (first frg. 1 and then frg. 2) is absolutely right (which is important for identifying the periods). It can be verified by a material reconstruction according to the "Stegemann-Method": frg. 1 must be placed on the right side of frg. 2 at a distance of corresponding points of about 9.5 cm, cf. Pl. 24 and 25 (reduced size) which led us to conclude that the preserved fragments probably come from the middle part of the former scroll. The order of the fragments was rejected and changed from the contents point of view falsely by M. A. KNIBB (1992), 170ff, referring to F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ (1991), 131.133.

(77) Frg. 1, 7f has **ביובל השביעי לחרבן הארץ**. Cf. J. T. MILIK (1976), 255, and D. DIMANT (1992).

(78) See E. PUECH (1992), 479-489 and Pl. 22.

(79) Or **ב** (?) = 2, see E. PUECH (1992), 482.

(80) Note that *CD* IV, 15f is quoting from *Testament of Levi*.

(81) The *Book of Jubilees* calculates 49 jubilees — each jubilee consisting of 49 years — from creation to Mose. According to the *Book of Jubilees* 2450 ($49 \times 49 + 7 + 2 + 40$) years — Israel enters Canaan at that time — are half of the duration of the world; 4900 years (= 100 jubilees) would be the whole duration of the world.

5. Conclusion: Some aspects of Essenic eschatology

In conclusion, some aspects of Essenic eschatology may be summarized:

From the very beginning the Essenes were conscious of living in the **אחרית הימים** (*MMT*, *IQSa*), probably much like pious circles before them. In the context of interpreting the Prophets — a prescribed activity among the Essenes along with interpreting the Torah (82) — they must at some stage have encountered *Daniel* whom they thought to be a Prophet from the Exile and whom they therefore included in their "canon" at an early time. From the *Book of Daniel* they gained information about the end of the **אחרית הימים**, and they calculated it to be 490 years/10 jubilees after the (second) siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, probably about the year 72 BC. Might this calculation have been inaugurated by the Teacher of Righteousness himself? Perhaps the Teacher realized towards the end of his life that the end of the **אחרית הימים** would not come during his own lifetime as it had originally been expected by him and his followers? The fact that the idea of calculating the end came relatively late in the history of the community, about half a century after its foundation, but was then the subject of intensive work, could perhaps speak for this view. Was the calculation of the end the fruit of the old age of the Teacher of Righteousness, his bequest? Maybe, after his death those calculations were adopted and pursued in more detail. In the *Damascus Document*, which dates shortly after the Teacher's death, the 490 years of *Daniel* are divided into four periods. The last of these was given as spanning about 40 years and was counted from the Teacher's death onwards. These last 40 years within the **אחרית הימים** became important in later Essenic works: in *4QpPs^a*, originating from the first third of the first century BC, this period of the 40 years is seen as not yet finished. (83) In *4QMidrEschat*, very probably from the time of Alexandra Salome or her sons, (84) the calculated date of the end had just passed by. While *4QMidrEschat* is marked by struggle and intensive desire to continue to believe in this date, *IQpHab* shows that about 20 years later the date — ca. 72 BC — had been given up. The pesharim, aimed exclusively at proving that the end was near because a book of the Prophets was completely

(82) *IQS* VIII, 14-16.

(83) *4QpPs^a* II, 6-8.

(84) Alexandra Salome 76-67 BC, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II 67-63 BC.

fulfilled, originate in large numbers after the year 72 BC. They show on the one hand that the Essenes had not managed to penetrate the "astounding mysteries of God" until then and on the other hand that the expectation that the end was close at hand as well as the significance of the biblical Prophets for the **אחרית הימים** was never given up by them. (85)

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(85) Recently, H. STEGEMANN (1993), 186 f. suggested that after the calculated date about 70 BC had passed the Essenes established a new calculation — again on the basis of the biblical *Book of Daniel* — interpreting the fourth kingdom *Dan 7, 23* as the Roman empire; this second calculation would lead to the year 70 CE. As H. STEGEMANN concedes, there is no explicit proof in the Qumran texts for such an assumption, but the striking number of copies of the biblical *Book of Daniel* among the Qumran manuscripts which originate to the middle of the first century CE could speak for it.

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TABLE I

<i>11QMelch</i>	Statements	according to the chronology represented by <i>2Ba</i> 1, 1ff
II, 6f	The proclamation of liberation happens in the first week of the jubilee that follows after the nine preceding jubilees	562 BC $- 9 \times 7 \times 7$ <hr/> $= 121 \text{ BC}$
II, 18f	The one who proclames the liberation is the "messenger of good news", the "anointed of the spirit" (Teacher of Righteousness?)	$\Rightarrow 121-114 \text{ BC}$ (first week of 10 th Jub.)
II, 7	The "Day of Atonement" (liberation) is the end of the 10 th jubilee	562 BC $- 10 \times 7 \times 7$ <hr/> $= 72 \text{ BC}$
II, 13	Melchisedek — heavenly high priest and liberator — will execute God's judgement on that day	

TABLE II

<i>CD</i>	Statements	according to the chronology represented by <i>2Ba</i> 1, 1ff	Historical Events
I, 5-8	390 years from Nebuchadnezzar until the rise of the "plant root" (= predecessor group)	562 BC — 390 = 172 BC	Menelaos becomes high priest 172 BC
I, 9-10	for 20 years this predecessor group existed "like blind men"	172 BC — 20 = 152 BC	
I, 10f	then God caused to rise the Teacher of Righteousness (= foundation of the Teacher's community)	= 152 BC	Jonathan becomes high priest 153/152 BC
[—	for circa 40 years the Teacher of Righteousness lived in the community (when the Damascus Document was composed about 100 BC he was already dead)	152 BC — 40 (ca.) = 112 BC (ca.)]
XX,13-15	about 40 years between the death of the Teacher of Righteousness and the end	112 BC (ca.) — 40 BC (ca.) = 72 BC (ca.)	