

Enosh Gomez

Dr. Garcia

BIB460: Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament

02/13/23

The Qumran Community/Dead Sea Sect

The two Dead Sea Scrolls texts that will be selected for this response paper are The Thanksgiving Hymns (Hoyadot) and The (Cairo) Damascus Document.

The Hoyadot was published in 1954-5 by Eleazar Lipa Sukenik, although there is no exact timeline of when it was written. The Damascus Document is believed to be written around 100 BCE; manuscripts A & B were uncovered dating back to the tenth and twelfth centuries respectively; two incomplete medieval copies of the CD were uncovered in 1896-7; and extensive fragments of the CD were recovered from Caves 4-6.

The Damascus Document got its name from the Exhortation's reference of the New Covenant which was stated to have been established in Damascus. The content is divided into an Exhortation and a list of Statutes (*DSSE*, 130), therein containing a symbolical interpretation for three key phrases: 'tabernacle' referring to 'Books of the Law'; 'king' referring to 'congregation'; and 'bases of statutes' referring to the 'Books of the Prophets.' The document is connected to the Feast of the Renewal of the Covenant, since the ritual for this festival is laid out herein.

The content in the Hodayot is similar to, but not the same as, the Psalms in the Old Testament, containing hymns of praise, thanksgiving, and individual prayers with the recurring fundamental themes of salvation and knowledge (*DSSE*, 249). It is commonly believed, yet still uncertain, that The Thanksgiving Hymns was most likely to have been authored by the “Teacher of Righteousness.” The final version of this scroll in its original language took shape most likely during the last pre-Christian century (*DSSE*, 250). The poetry contained herein had been written primarily for the Feast of the Renewal of the Covenant.

The light that these texts can shed on one another is the fact that the name “Teacher of Righteousness” can be found in each of the two texts. In Philip R. Davies’ *What History Can We Get from the Scrolls, and How?*, Davies points out this connection between the two texts in their mention of a Qumran scholar who is believed to have been a prominent figure in the Qumran community whose writings contrasted the writings of Paul the Apostle. Both texts have significant connections to the Feast of the Renewal of the Covenant, in that while the ritual of this festival was outlined in The Damascus Document, the Poyadot contained poetic chants that were seemingly recited in that same festival which was detailed in The Damascus Document.