Trials and Universal Renewal—the Priestly Figure of the Levi Testament 4Q541

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1 Introduction

In this paper I will trace the traditio-historical background of the priestly figure in 4Q541, a Levi testament from the second century BCE. Developing themes from earlier texts, 4Q541 describes an end-time priest who will see trials, bring forth an atoning sacrifice, and be a tool for universal renewal. I will survey relevant exilic and postexilic texts about future and end-time leaders, their profile and “job description,” and suggest some diachronic and intertextual lines of development. The servant songs of Deutero-Isaiah are important in this tradition history, and I will make some new suggestions on the understanding of these songs.

2 Predictions about Future Leaders

The different recensions of the Jeremiah scroll, preserved in Greek and Hebrew, reflect an ongoing discourse on the tasks of Israel's end-time leader. Around the time of the fall of the temple, 6Jer 23:5–6 expresses the hope for a coming ruler of the Davidic line:

Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous dawn. This king shall reign, he will have insight and execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel encamp in confidence. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The Lord Yahweh is righteousness.”¹

1 The Greek version reflects the earlier recension of Jeremiah. Translation of biblical texts is adapted from NRSV and JPS (and often polished). Texts from the Septuagint are adapted from the NETS translation and often reflect my own polishing or tentative restoration of the Greek into Hebrew. Qumran texts are adapted from Accordance. 6Jeremiah 23:6b runs καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, ὃ καλέσει αὐτὸν κύριος Ἰωσεδεκ. κύριος Ἰωσεδεκ probably renders אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה צִדֵּק.

Consciously avoiding both royal and priestly terminology, ⚡Jer 37:18–21 (≈ M 30:18–22) also carries the hope of a new ruler. His “job description” will be radically changed in the proto-masoretic recension of the early third century, where the national leader is a priest who risks his life in a sacrificial act before God (see below).

Thus says the Lord:

Behold, I will bring back the exiled Jacob and have mercy on his captivity.

The city shall be rebuilt upon its mound and the sanctuary set on its rightful site.

... their sons shall go in as formerly,
their testimonies shall be rectified before me,
and I will punish those who oppressed them.

Its strong ones shall be set over them,
its ruler shall come from its midst.

I will gather them, and they shall return to me,
because who is this one who has set his heart to return to me?
says the Lord (⚡Jer 37:18–21 ≈ M 30:18–22, there is no verse 22 in ⚡).

The Lord is the main actor in this futurist vision of restoration. The prophecy concludes with a question about a supporting actor: “Who is this one who has set his heart (dedicated his heart) to return to me?” Since this is a figure in the singular it likely refers to the ruler mentioned earlier in the same verse. I interpret this figure (ἄρχων) as a future national leader who will be instrumental in the restoration of the people.²

An earlier version of Ezek 1–39 probably foresaw a restoration in the land without a Davidide. Chapter 34 describes the Lord as the shepherd who will himself take care of his flock that had been maltreated by the earlier shepherds, the leaders of the people. In verses 11–22 and 25–31 the Lord is the single actor who intervenes for his people.

With the introduction of a supporting actor, verses 23–24 appear as a later insert inspired by Jer 23. Ezekiel 34:23, אֶת אֶחָד רֹעֶה וְרֹעֶה אֶתְהֵן אֵת, “I will appoint a single shepherd over them to tend them—my servant David. He shall tend them and be a shepherd to them,” rephrases Jer 23:4–5, וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעִים וְרֹעִים ... וְהִקְמַתִּי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדִיק,

2 While ἄρχων in ⚡Jeremiah usually renders שָׂר (30 out of 33 cases), the Hebrew *Vorlage* here probably used מִשְׁלָּ as in 22:30, cf. מִשְׁלָּ in MJer 30:21.

"I will appoint shepherds over them, and they shall tend them ... and I will raise up for David a righteous branch."

The description of the future restoration in Ezek 36:16–38 is void of a Davidide. In 17:3–24 the branch (נֶזֶךְ, verses 4 and 22) that will grow into a great tree symbolizes the future of the nation with no mention of the son of David or the Davidic מֶלֶךְ. The Book of Ezekiel closes with a symbolic blueprint for the new temple province, chapters 40–48. In this section, 45:7–8 and 46:1–18 foresee a prince (אֲדָפִי) leading the people, a prince with a sacrificial office. No Davidic pedigree is mentioned. This distance to the Davidic tradition supports the view that the Book of Ezekiel, originating with a son of a priestly family, was transmitted and edited by priests in Babylon. Ezekiel 34:23–24 reflects a later editorial hand that maintained a central role for a Davidide in the restoration to come.

When we survey postexilic texts we need to remember that for more than three centuries Yehud was a small province and Jerusalem a tiny and powerless temple village. The population of Yehud grew slowly to perhaps 12,000 in the fourth century BCE, and Jerusalem to 400–500.³ There was a gap between historical reality and eschatological visions of restoration. The poor conditions on the ground may in fact have caused the intense hope for God to restore the fortunes of Zion, a hope reflected in a large array of texts.

In Zech 1–8 we encounter a prophetic scroll from Jerusalem of the late sixth century. The vision of Zech 4 describes two olive trees flanking the menorah: two anointed ones on earth, a priestly and a royal one, both standing in God's presence. The Books of Haggai and Zechariah present no unified picture of the leadership structure of Yehud in the early Persian period. It stands to reason that the high priest was subordinate to the governor during the Persian period. Thus Zech 4 may present a theological ideal—an ideal that would become formative for the double messianism of some Qumran texts. It may also provide some background for the development of the idea of a messiah son of Joseph in the rabbinic period.

3 Avraham Faust, "Social, Cultural and Demographic Changes in Judah during the Transition from the Iron Age to the Persian Period and the Nature of the Society during the Persian Period," in *From Judah to Judaea: Socio-Economic Structures and Processes in the Persian Period*, ed. Johannes Unsok Ro, Hebrew Bible Monographs 43 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012), 108–34; Israel Finkelstein "The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods," *RB* 117 (2010): 39–54; idem, "Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud Rejoinders," in *Focusing Biblical Studies: The Crucial Nature of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods*, ed. Alice Hunt and Jon L. Berquist (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 49–62; Torleif Elgvin, *The Literary Growth of the Song of Songs in the Hasmonean and Early-Herodian Periods*, CBET 89 (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 121–27.

Zechariah 6 has undergone intensive editing. In 6:9–14 we encounter thrones both for the Davidic Shoot (צִמְחָה) who shall build the temple (Zerubabel) and the priest (Joshua). An earlier text portrayed thrones both for the ruler and the priest (verse 13, וַיֵּשֶׁב וּמָשָׁל עַל כִּסֵּאֵהוּ וְהָיָה כֹהֵן עַל כִּסֵּאוֹ, “he will sit as ruler on *his* throne, and there will be a priest sitting on *his* throne”), probably both being crowned. The edited text leaves the coronation for the priest only, probably reflecting the Persians’ removal of the Davidide Zerubabel from the governor’s seat. The priest’s change from filthy clothes to festal apparel and a glorious turban in 3:1–5 will give colors to later images of a priestly end-time figure.

Zechariah 9–14 is a collage of texts from the Persian and Ptolemaic periods, a discourse with different voices that also touches the question of leadership. Here the role attributed to human kingship in the restoration is progressively abandoned in favor of the cult institution.⁴ Zechariah 9:9–10 transforms the traditional royal ideology in a way that deprives the king of his military role and emphasizes his humility and piety. Against all current forms of leadership these verses expect an anti-David.⁵ Zechariah 12 allows for a prominent role of the Davidic clan in Jerusalem rituals, perhaps a compensation for the renouncement of the idea of a future Davidic king. These reinterpretations of royal Judean ideology are influenced by sociopolitical changes during the early Hellenistic period. The description of a non-military king in Zech 9:9 appears as a counterproject to the martial character of most Hellenistic rulers. However, the revision of traditional royal ideology, now emphasizing the centrality of the cult, only amplifies a strategy already reflected in chapters 1–8.

We then turn to MJer 30:18–22 (≈ 37:18–21), a text casting light on the development of a twofold messianism, and particularly helpful for understanding the text of 4Q541. As outlined above, the earlier 37 version foresees a future ruler with his heart dedicated to the Lord.

The earlier version preserved in 37 talks about the future ruler as “he who has set his heart to return to me,” a text that may be recast in different directions. MJeremiah is 15% longer than the 37 Vorlage. This recension evinces intensive Hebrew rewriting of the Jeremiah scroll in Egypt of the early 3rd century—MJeremiah evinces knowledge of the political development in Egypt in the period 315–290 BCE.⁶

4 Thus Herve Gonzalez, “Davidides in Zech 9–14 and the Transformation of Judean Royal Ideology in the Early-Hellenistic Period” (paper presented at IOSOT, Berlin, 9 August 2017).

5 Thus Jakob Wöhrle, “Concepts of Leadership in Haggai and Zechariah” (response presented at IOSOT, Berlin, 9 August 2017).

6 Armin Lange, “The Textual Plurality of Jewish Scriptures in the Second Temple Period in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Qumran and the Bible: Studying the Jewish and Christian Scriptures in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Nora Dávid and Armin Lange, CBET 57 (Leuven: Peeters,

Jer 37:18, 20–21

¹⁸Thus says the Lord:
Behold, I will bring back the exiled
Jacob and have mercy on his
captivity. The city shall be rebuilt
upon its mound and the sanctuary
set on its rightful site.

²⁰Their children shall go in as
formerly, their testimonies shall be
rectified before me, and I will punish
those who oppressed them.

²¹Its strong ones shall be set over
them, its ruler shall come from its
midst.
I will gather them, and they shall
return to me, for who is this one who
has set his heart to return to me? says
the Lord. (no v. 22)

Jer 30:18, 20–22

¹⁸Thus says Yahweh:
I will restore the fortunes of the tents
of Jacob, and have compassion on
his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt
upon its mound, and the citadel set on
its rightful site.

²⁰Their children shall be as of old,
their congregation shall be established
before me; and I will punish all who
oppress them.

²¹Its chieftain shall be one of its own,
its ruler shall come from its midst;
I will bring him near, and he shall
come near to me, for who is this one
who stakes his life coming near to me,
says Yahweh.

²²And then you shall be my people,
and I will be your God.

Verse 21 runs *וְהִקְרַבְתִּיו וְנִגַּשׁ אֵלַי כִּי מִי הוּא זֶה עָרַב אֶת־לְבָבוֹ לְנִשְׁתׁ אֵלַי נָא־יְהוָה* *hiphil* may constitute sacrificial terminology. Of 13 biblical occurrences, the ones in Isa 5:8, Isa 26:17, Ezek 22:4, and Mal 1:8 have the general meaning “come near”—the other cases in Ezekiel and Haggai all refer to bringing sacrifices before the Lord. With the subsequent “he shall approach me,” v. 21a^β brings us into the priestly, sacrificial realm. Coming into Yahweh’s presence, the leader will pledge his life, risk his life. HALOT renders *עָרַב אֶת־לְבָבוֹ* as “to pawn one’s heart, meaning to stake one’s life.” The evidence suggests that Jer 30:21 refers to a priestly figure.

2010), 43–96 (77–82); Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, “La datation par souscription dans les rédactions courte (LXX) et longue du livre de Jérémie,” in *L’apport de la Septante aux études sur l’Antiquité: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 8–9 novembre 2002*, ed. Jan Joosten and Philippe Le Moigne, LD 203 (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 137–59.

The leader comes out of the people, he is “its chieftain” (אֲדִירוֹ) and “its ruler” (מְשֻׁלֹּ). Perhaps for the first time in Scripture, מְשֻׁלֹּ is used for the priest—probably a reflection of present political reality in Yehud. In contrast to the situation during the Persian period, in Ptolemaic times the high priest was also political leader of the province of Yehud. There certainly was communication between Egypt and Yehud; also Judeans in Egypt had their eyes on the situation in Yehud and the small temple village of Jerusalem.⁷ מְJeremiah 30:20–24 uses the present priestly ruler in Jerusalem as a type for a future priestly figure who in the end-times (בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים, verse 24) will risk his life in a sacrificial act before God—whether he will die in Yahweh’s presence is left open.

Verses 23–24 are the same in 6 and 11. But 11 adds a new verse (verse 22) containing the *Bundesformular*: “And then you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” The ruler’s risking act in God’s presence will lead to a renewed covenantal relation.

Other passages in the enlarged proto-masoretic recension of Jeremiah foresee a future son of David—23:5–6 (reworked from the 6 Vorlage) and 33:14–22 (not in 6)—who will execute righteousness in the land, for Judah and Israel. But it is the noble priestly ruler (מְJer 30:21) who will be the tool for the renewal of the covenant people, when God by his wrath fulfils his will toward the nations (30:23–24).

In Zech 13:7–9 we find a related text, also from the Ptolemaic period.⁸

Sword, awake against my close friend,⁹
the man who is my associate, says Yahweh of hosts.
Smite the shepherd, so that the flock will be scattered
when I turn my hand against the small ones.
In the whole land, says Yahweh,
two thirds shall be cut off and perish,
one third shall be left alive.

7 Cf. the communication between the Judeans of Elephantine and Jerusalem in an earlier period. Josephus reports of a migration of Judeans, including a leading priest named Hezekiah, to Egypt following the conquest of Gaza by Ptolemy I in 312 BCE (*Ag. Ap.* 1.186–87).

8 My discussion here is inspired by Hartmut Gese. Cf. his *Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1983, 150–51).

9 Preferably read רֵעִי, “my close friend,” for the masoretic pointing רֵעִי, “my shepherd”—רֵעִי constitutes a better parallel to the subsequent עֲמִיתִי, “the man who is my associate.” This reading gives a word play between רֵעִי in 13:7a and רֵעָה in 13:7b. Isaiah 44:28 is another example of the masoretic pointing רֵעִי, thus changing “my close friend” to “my shepherd”: הָאֲמִיר לְכוּרֵשׁ רֵעִי, “He who says to Cyrus, ‘my close friend’”—suggested by Moshe Weinfeld in personal communication. Alluding to Isa 44:28, the singer of the Self-Glorification Hymn declares that he is יְדִיד הַמֶּלֶךְ רֵעֵ לְקְדוּשִׁים, “the King’s beloved and friend of the holy ones” (1QH^a 26:6; 4Q427 7 i 10; 4Q431 i 6; 4Q471b 1 7).

I will put this third into the fire,
 refine them as one refines silver,
 test them as one tests gold.
 He will call on my name,
 and I will answer him.
 I will say, "He is my people";
 and he will say, "Yahweh is my God."

In prophetic literature "sword" signifies a violent death. Verse 7 foresees the death of God's associate, but not necessarily a sacrificial death. Is this figure who gives his life in a process that will lead the people to a covenantal renewal, a priestly or a royal figure? The concluding, "I will say, 'He is my people' and he will say, 'Yahweh is my God'" closely echoes "and then you shall be my people, and I will be your God" of Jer 30:22. And the terms "my close friend" and "the man who is my associate" bring "I will bring him near, and he shall come near to me, for who is this one who stakes his life coming near to me" of Jer 30:21 to mind.

These parallels suggest that the death of this associate of God represents a reinterpretation of the priest of Jer 30:21 who risks his life in a sacrificial act, although Zech 13:7 contains no priestly, sacrificial terminology. The nation's shepherd who is close to God is probably a priest—analogue to the ruling priest in Jerusalem. However, in contrast to Jer 30, the term "sword" rather suggests a death by the hand of enemies than in temple precincts and God's presence. The trials the people will undergo (verse 8) is a *novum* compared to earlier prophetic texts on the coming restoration.

"Shepherd" may elsewhere designate the Davidide (2 Sam 5:2; Mic 5:3–5), but here (Zech 13:7b α) it seems to be used with reference to a priestly figure. The text describes the violent death of the shepherd (cf. the later rabbinic image of the slaying of the messiah son of Joseph) and the annihilation of two thirds of the people. The wars of the Diadochi that led to the devastation of Jerusalem in the third century (cf. Dan 11:14, 16, 20) may provide some background for this scenario of the end-times.

3 The Suffering Servant

At this stage of the discussion I want to make a detour to Deutero-Isaiah's suffering servant, often suggested as a backdrop for the description of the priestly figure in 4Q541. Does the suffering servant of Isa 50:4–9 and 52:13–53:12 give color to the description of the priestly figure in $\mathfrak{M}$ Jer 30:20–22 and the slaying

of the God-associate in Zech 13—as it later will color the Teacher Hymns of the Hodayot, the text of 4Q541, and the Self-Glorification Hymn?¹⁰ The servant songs cannot be thoroughly discussed here, but I will give a short survey of how I interpret these texts.

Parallels in Persian royal inscriptions lead me to see Isa 42:1–7 and 49:1–6, 8–9a as Deutero-Isaiah's songs about Cyrus as liberator of Judah and the nations (with "Israel" of 49:3 as a later gloss), sung in the years 540–537.¹¹ The Cyrus cylinder and inscriptions of Darius I (522–486) portray the ideal king according to Achaemenid royal ideology.

Marduk ... sought a just ruler to suit his heart, he took him by the hand: Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called, for dominion over the totality he named his name. Marduk, the great lord, who cares for his people, looked with pleasure at his good deeds and his righteous heart. Like a friend and companion he went by his side ... I allowed the inhabitants of Babylon to find rest from their exhaustion, their servitude I relieved ... From Ashur and Susa ... whose dwelling-places had of old fallen into ruin—the gods who dwelt there I returned to their home and let them move into an eternal dwelling. All their people I collected and brought them back to their homes. And the gods of Sumer and Akkad ... I caused them to move into a dwelling-place pleasing to their hearts in their sanctuaries ... The lands in their totality I caused to dwell in a peaceful abode. (Cyrus cylinder)¹²

By the favor of Ahuramazda I am king; Ahuramazda bestowed kingship upon me. These are the peoples who obey me ... in all twenty-three peoples. These are the peoples who obeyed me; by the favour of Ahuramazda they became my faithful subjects, they brought me tribute. (Darius' account of how he accessed the throne)¹³

A great god is Ahuramazda, who created earth and heaven, created mankind and gave well-being to man, who made Darius king and bestowed

10 On the use of Isa 50 and 53 in the Teacher Hymns, see Torleif Elgvin, "The Individual Interpretation of the Servant Songs," *Mishkan* 43 (2005): 25–33.

11 Reinhard G. Kratz attributes only chapters 40–48 to Deutero-Isaiah and identifies the hero of 42:1–7 as Cyrus: "The Book of Isaiah and the Persians" (paper presented at SBL Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, 19 November 2017).

12 Cyrus cylinder (lines 12–15, 25, 30–36) from Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London: Routledge, 2007), 71–72.

13 Darius' account of how he accessed the throne, Bisitun. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 142–43.

upon king Darius kingship over this wide earth, in which there are many lands.

Ahuramazda, when he saw this earth in commotion, thereafter bestowed it upon me, made me king. By the favor of Ahuramazda I put it down in its place; what I said to them [my subjects], that they did, as was my desire.

I am a friend of what is right, not of what is wrong. It is not my wish that the strong should inflict harm on the weak, neither that the strong should have harm done to him by the weak.

My desire is what is right. To the man who is a follower of the lie I am no friend. (Darius' tomb inscription)¹⁴

The first addition to the second song (Isa 49:7), introduced by "Thus says Yahweh," brings in new perspectives, a servant despised by nations and being a slave under rulers. The final edited version of 49:1–6, 7, 8–9a suggests identity between the figures in the two oracles of verses 7–9, the one despised by nations and the restorer of the land. In neither of them the term "servant" is used, so 49:1–9a leaves it open whether this figure should be identified with the servant of verses 1–6.

Isaiah 50:4–9 is the song in the first person of a prophetic figure who listens to the Lord Yahweh and sustains the weary with his word (verses 4–5a). In verses 5b–7 the speaker complains of trials and torments, in verses 8–9 he is confident that Yahweh will rescue and vindicate him. Subsequently there is a change of speaker in verses 10–11, only here is the term "servant" used about the suffering figure. The term יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ "the Lord Yahweh" is used four times in 50:4–9, while it occurs only three times in chapters 40–49 (40:10; 48:16; 49:22). This is one of many indications that the third and fourth servant songs should be seen as later inserts into the Deutero-Isaianic book.¹⁵

The servant of 52:13–53:12 is portrayed with traits that could fit the exiled people, but also as an individual—a member of the people—with a ministry vis-à-vis Judah (the we-group) in front of "the many"—a phrase that may signify the nations but more probably the Judean people at large, the small population in Judah as well as the majority residing in the diaspora. Both royal,

14 Darius' tomb inscription, Naqsh-e Rostam: <http://www.livius.org/articles/person/darius-the-great/g-death/-26>.

15 Cf. Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012), 136: "In the course of time the basic Deutero-Isaiah writing was expanded repeatedly ... we should also mention the Servant Songs, which in the traditional view were first created independently but now are more frequently thought also to be redactions added to the main text."

prophetic, and sacrificial terms and themes can be identified in the description of the servant. The servant takes upon himself God's judgment on the errant people and carries their transgressions as an offering for sins. Isaiah 53:7–8 seems to be influenced by Jer 11:19—in both texts God's elect is led as a lamb to the slaughter (although different terms are used for lamb), and the servant shall be “cut off from the land of the living.” Such a use of an already recognized Jeremiah scroll emphasizes the prophetic character of the servant and suggests a postexilic date for Isa 53.

I thus see a process of *Fortschreibung* in the servant songs. Possibly recognizing the reference to Cyrus in the first two songs, an early fifth century scribe struggles to see the Deutero-Isaianic predictions realized in Zion, a small temple village in a poor and powerless province. Perhaps meditating on the Persians' violent removal of Zerubabel (commonly assumed by scholars) and Isa 40:2 (בְּכָל־חַטָּאתֶיהָ כִּי נִרְצָה עֲוֹנָהּ כִּי לִקְחָהּ מִיַּד יְהוָה כָּפָלִים בְּכָל־חַטָּאתֶיהָ), “for her iniquity is expiated, for she has received at the hand of Yahweh double for all her sins”), he sees the need for a servant of Yahweh of a different kind (neither emperor nor Davidide),¹⁶ who through trials will take upon himself God's judgment on the errant Judean people and carry their trespasses as a sin offering. I see this scribe as the author of the addition in 49:7 and of the last two songs, 50:4–9, 10–11 and 52:13–53:12.

The earliest textual witness to the last servant song is 1QIsa^a from around 90 BCE. In 52:14, 1QIsa^a reads “so I anointed his appearance above any man (בֶּן מִשְׁחַתִּי מְאִישׁ מְרָאֵהוּ), and his form above any sons of man,” for מ “so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance (בֶּן־מִשְׁחַתִּי מְאִישׁ מְרָאֵהוּ), and his form beyond that of any sons of man.”

The text-critical value of 1QIsa^a is a subject of controversy. It has often been brushed aside as a “vulgar” scroll, or as a scroll written by creative, independent scribes. One must keep in mind that it is the oldest of the well-preserved Isaiah scrolls. Further, recent material analysis of small margin-pieces of 1QIsa^a and 1QS demonstrates that these two scrolls from around 90 BCE are made of parchment of remarkable high quality, processed with techniques earlier known only from the medieval period.¹⁷ 1QIsa^a should therefore not be classified as a vulgar scroll. While the two scribes at times handled the text in a creative way, this scroll was highly valued by the (sectarian) community

16 There is no Davidic hope in Isa 40–66. In 55:1–5 God's love towards David is transformed into a covenant with the nation, which is exhorted to listen to the prophet. If Zerubabel's fate plays in the background, this can explain the royal features in the last servant song.

17 Ira Rabin, “Material Analysis of the Fragments,” in *Gleanings from the Caves: Dead Sea Scrolls and Artefacts from The Schøyen Collection*, ed. Torleif Elgvin, Kipp Davis, and Michael Langlois, LSTS 71 (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 61–77 (66–67).

behind the scroll—as was its “cousin” 1QS, whose parchment was prepared in the same workshop.

The masoretic pointing מְשַׁחַת hardly makes sense and is usually corrected to מְשַׁחַת, “blemished”—and 1QIsa^b indeed confirms the reading מְשַׁחַת, as do 6 and 6.¹⁸ For the creative (second) scribe of 1QIsa^a, the servant is anointed, 52:13–15 is consistently referring to the elevation of the servant.¹⁹ 1QIsa^a contains a *lectio facilior* that makes better sense in the context of 52:13–15; this reading should not easily be brushed aside as a secondary one. מְשַׁחַת may either be the original reading or represent a conscious “messianic” interpretative rereading around 100 BCE—the suffering servant is Yahweh’s anointed who will bring forth redemption, as Cyrus was in his time and his way.²⁰ According to Deutero-Isaiah as preserved in 1QIsa^a, there are three anointed ones: Cyrus (45:1), the anonymous prophet of 61:1 (whom I identify with Deutero-Isaiah himself),²¹ and the suffering servant.

Isaiah 53:10–12 specifies that the servant will be vindicated, die as an offering for sin, and see the many as his offspring. Like the national leader in 6Jer 37:18–21, the suffering servant is portrayed in open terms that leave space for future interpreters. With a fifth-century dating of these servant songs, they are clearly older than 3Jer 30:18–22 and Zech 13:7–9, they colored the Jeremiah oracle and perhaps also Zech 13. The sacrificial terminology in the last servant

18 The 6 translation of Isaiah is commonly dated to the 160s, two generations before the writing of 1QIsa^a. 6Isaiah 53 is slightly targumic in style and should only be used with caution as a text-critical witness. Two tendencies can be identified: 1) God is not depicted as willingly causing the servant’s suffering, but as wanting to save and vindicate him (4b, 5bα, 6b, 9a, 10aα, 10b–11a); 2) The we-group is depicted as siding with God and the servant throughout the text (1a, 2b–3, 4b, 8aα). I am indebted to Joanna Bauer for these observations. 1QIsa^b is a quality M-like scroll from 50–25 BCE.

19 The creative targumist behind Ps-Jon. to Isa 52:13–53:12 opens with מְשַׁחַת עַבְדִּי מְשִׁיחָא, “See my servant the messiah will prosper”—he clearly shared the interpretation (and perhaps the reading) of 1QIsa^a. The targumist attributes all the suffering to the nations and makes the messiah the vindicator throughout the text. This chapter may belong to the earliest strata of Pseudo-Jonathan (second century CE?)—the targumist does not know the later idea of the suffering and dying messiah of Ephraim/Joseph.

20 If the removal of Zerubabel colors the last two servant songs (see above), the anointing would make sense with the original fifth century author.

21 Thus Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 536–42: “In the first three verses ... Deutero-Isaiah’s appointment to prophecy is described (in the first-person) and his mission delineated” (p. 536). Duhm saw chapter 61 as Trito-Isaiah’s programmatic presentation and suggested that chapters 61–66 originally opened the Trito-Isaiah scroll; see Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja über- setzt und erklärt*, 3rd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), xx, 423–24.

song (and his possibly “anointed” character, if the 1QIsa^a reading is early) may have influenced the third-century Jeremiah-scribes in their description of the priestly leader. Where Isa 53 promises offspring to the servant and healing to the we-group when the servant carries their iniquities, the two later texts speak clearly of a renewed covenant for the bruised nation at large, not only a part of the people.

Summing up: Ezekiel 40–48 expects a future priestly prince; Zechariah 3–6 regards both a priest and a royal figure as anointed; the suffering servant of Isa 50 and 53 will bear the iniquities of the many and provide healing for them; in M^jJer 30:18–20 the priestly leader of the nation will risk his life in a sacrificial act before the Lord and thereby open for a renewed covenant for the nation. Zechariah 13:7–9 foresees the violent death of the national leader and tribulations for the people before a renewed covenant comes into being.

While other prophetic texts expect a coming Davidide, the texts listed above are not the only ones who concentrate on Zion, temple, and/or priestly service in their visions of the time of redemption. Sirach 36 envisions a renewed Zion without mention of a Davidide (see verses 17–22), and the panegyric praise of the high priest Simon in Sir 50:1–24 hardly allows for a Davidic ruler alongside the priest.²² The contemporary hymn in Tob 13:8–18 similarly envisions a renewal of the temple city with no royal servant in view.

4 The End-time Levitical Priest of 4Q541

In contrast to previous texts in this line of tradition, 4Q541 is in Aramaic. Does the language point to texts of a different kind? By the time of Ben Sira there seems to be in place a collection of authoritative prophetic books in Hebrew—although they still could undergo (in part radical) editing. Like Danielic writers, the author of 4Q541 could hardly expect Judeans at large to accept his work

22 According to Sir 45:24–26, the covenant with Aaron is greater than that with David. The Hebrew version of verse 25 limits the Davidic promise to Solomon, while the covenant with Aaron is lasting: “And there is also a covenant with David, son of Isai, from the tribe of Judah; the inheritance of a man [i.e. David] is to his son alone, the inheritance of Aaron is also to his seed” (ms B); Greek “an inheritance of the king for son from son only.” However, the section on David and Solomon in Ben Sira’s praise of the fathers could suggest a possible future fulfillment of Davidic promises: “The Lord ... exalted his [i.e. David’s] horn forever; he gave him a royal covenant and a glorious throne in Israel ... But the Lord would not go back on his mercy, or undo any of his words, he would not obliterate the issue of his elect, nor destroy the stock of the man who loved him; and he granted a remnant to Jacob, and to David a root springing from him” (Sir 47:11, 22).

as authoritative on a par with previous prophetic scrolls. But a testamentary form could be read as a sign of authority by priestly or Levitical circles close to the author.²³ We may note the appeal to patriarchal figures as authority rather than to the Mosaic tradition as well as intertextual links to other Aramaic texts from Qumran (see below).

Émile Puech dates the script of 4Q540–41 to around 100 BCE or slightly earlier and regards it as a pre-*yahad* composition in line with 4QTQahat, 4QTLevi and 4QVisions of Amram.²⁴ He notes that this Hasmonean hand is of the same type as 1QS, 1QIsa^a and 4Q175. Thus it was copied after the foundation of the *yahad*, but long before *yahad* members took over the Hasmonean estate at Qumran in the early Herodian period.²⁵

4Q541 is entitled “4QApocryphe de Lévi^b? ar” and likely preserves some kind of testament.²⁶ 4Q540 may be another copy of the same text. In different fragments we encounter a figure with a unique teaching role who is led through trials.

] wounds upon w[ounds ...] 2 [... you will be found innocent in your] case, and you will not be guil[ty ...] 3 [...] the tracks of your wounds

- 23 Machiela suggests that didactic Aramaic texts including testaments/deathbed discourses were composed in Judah during the late Persian to Hellenistic period, being written by priestly circles who promoted the Aaronic priesthood, Daniel Machiela “Situating the Aramaic Texts from Qumran: Reconsidering Their Language and Socio-Historial Setting,” in *Apocalyptic Thinking in Early Judaism: Engaging with John Collins’ The Apocalyptic Imagination*, ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Cecilia Wassén, JSJSup 182 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 88–109.
- 24 Émile Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4.XXII: Textes Araméens, première partie: 4Q529–549*, DJD 31 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 213–16, 227; idem, “Fragments d’un apocryphe de Lévi et le personnage eschatologique. 4QTestLévi^{c-d}(?) et 4QAJa,” in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18–21 March, 1991*, ed. Julie Treballe Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner, STDJ 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2:449–501 (485–89).
- 25 Here I follow Taylor and Humbert: Joan Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 250–61; Jean-Baptiste Humbert, “Reconsideration of the Archaeological Interpretation,” in *Khirbet Qumrân et ‘Ain Feshka II: études d’anthropologie, de physique et de chimie*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Humbert and Jan Gunneweg (Fribourg: Editions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 419–44; idem, “Arguments en faveur d’une résidence pré-Essénienne,” *ibid.* 467–82; idem, “L’architecture de Qumrân avant des Esséniens” (lecture, Lausanne University, 26 April 2017): <https://www.unil.ch/irsb/home/menueinst/multimedias/multimedias-actualites-even.html>.
- 26 “Jacob (?) dévoile à Lévi un figure eschatologique que est certainement le grand pretre de l’ère messianique” (Jean Starcky, “Les quatre étapes du messianisme à Qumrân,” *RB* 70 [1963]: 481–505 [492]). Puech, DJD 31:214, leans toward Levi talking to his offspring Qahat and Amram.

th[at ...] 4 [...] what has been entrusted to you and all [...] 5 [...] your heart from [(4Q541 6)

The hid[den mysteries] he shall reveal [...] 2 [for the one] who does not understand he shall write [...] 3 the Great Sea shall be calmed because of him²⁷ [...] 4 Then the books of wis[dom] shall be opened [...] 5 his command; and like [...] his] wis[dom ...] 6 [his t]eaching [(4Q541 7)

]and do not mourn in sackclo[th ...] 3 redeeming error[s ...]revealing errors [...] 4 Search and seek and know what the dove has sought. And do not renounce him by means of exhaustion and hanging li[ke ...] 5 Do not bring a diadem close to him! Thus you will establish a good reputation for your father and a proven foundation for your brothers. 6 You will grow and see and rejoice in eternal light; and you will not be among the enemy [(4Q541 24 ii)

4Q541 2 ii contains a reference to a wise person with a persecutor wanting to kill him, רדף לה ובער, "persecute him and seeking [to kill(?) him]." 4Q541 2 i 5 refers to the powerful teaching of the priestly figure: מל[ל] וברעות אל, "w[or]ds he [shall] speak and according to the will of [God he shall teach." יאלי

According to Starcky, the text foresees an eschatological high priest.²⁸ Puech points to parallels in the later Testament of Levi:

The light of knowledge you shall kindle in Jacob, and you shall be as the sun for all the posterity of Israel. (4:3)

And then the Lord will raise up a new priest
to whom all the words of the Lord will be revealed.
He shall effect the judgment of truth over the earth for many days.
And his star shall rise in heaven like a king;
kindling the light of knowledge as day is illumined by the sun.
And he shall be extolled by the whole inhabited world.
This one will shine forth like the sun in the earth;
he shall take away all darkness from under heaven,
and there shall be peace in all the earth. (18:2–4)

27 The text reads *ימא רבא מנה* ישתמק, "the Great Sea will become red because of him." One may read *ישתתק*, "be calmed," for *ישתמק*, "become red."

28 Starcky, "Quatre étapes," 492, cf. Puech's introduction to 4Q540–41 (DJD 31:213–16).

4Q541 9 i, the longest preserved passage in 4Q540–541, continues the line from *M*Jer 30:20–24. But instead of God's wrath poured out on the nations and a restoration and renewed covenant for Israel only, here an end-time priest will be a tool for universal renewal. The more peaceful period under Antiochus III from 198 BCE, when the temple city was given prerogatives and the king ordered the rebuilding of the city, could provide some background for this new opening towards the gentiles.²⁹ The text runs as follows:

כל [] בני דרה [] כול [] כָּמָתָה וְיִכְפֹּר עַל כּוֹל בְּנֵי דָרָה וְיִשְׁתַּלַּח לְכוֹל בְּנֵי	1
[] כָּמָתָה וְיִכְפֹּר עַל כּוֹל בְּנֵי דָרָה וְיִשְׁתַּלַּח לְכוֹל בְּנֵי	2
[ע] מָה מֵאֲמָרָה כְּמֵאֲמַר שְׁמִין וְאַלְפֹנָה כְּרַעוֹת אֶל שֶׁמֶשׁ עֵלְמָה תִּנְיָר	3
וְיִתְזָה נֹרָהָ בְּכוֹל קִצּוֹי אֲרַעָא וְעַל חֲשׂוֹכָא תִּנְיָר אֲדִין יַעֲדָה חֲשׂוֹכָא	4
[מ] אֲרַעָא וְעַרְפֵּלָא מִן יְבִישְׁתָּא שְׁגִיָּאן מִלִּין עֲלוּהִי יֵאֲמָרוּן וְשִׁגָּה	5
[כדב] יָן וּבְדִיאָן עֲלוּהִי יְבִדוֹן וְכוֹל גְּנוּאִין עֲלוּהִי יִמְלִלוּן דָּרָה בְּאִישׁ יֵאֲפִיד	6
[די דחה] לְלוּהִי וְדִי שְׁקָר וְחֲמֹס מִקְמָה [ו] יִטְעָה עֲמָא [בְּיֹמֵהוּ וְיִשְׁתַּבְּשׁוּן	7

Notes on readings, lines 1–2:

Puech's reading *כָּמָתָה* [ח] [לְהוֹ] at the beginning of line 2 is creative. In PAM 41.938 (January 1956) only a single baseline can be seen early in the line (above *מֵאֲמָרָה*), before the baseline of the *kaph* in *כָּמָתָה* [ח]. And his suggested readings in line 1 are similarly far off the track. My readings have been tested with a Dino-Lite AD413T–I2V digital microscope in the scrolls lab of the IAA, April 23 and 25, 2018, cf. the recent infrared photo B-37055 (not available to Puech when he made his DJD edition).³⁰

The first preserved traces in line 1 are two specks of ink followed (above על) by a descender (*qoph*?) and a possible final *mem* [Figure 1]. In the subsequent word a *yod* is preceded by a possible *he* and followed by *khet* (alternatively *waw* or *ayin*) [Figures 2, 3]. Later in the line the reading *בְּנֵי דָרָה* seems quite probable [Figures 4, 5], cf. the same term recurring in line 2. Following a word space one can see a speck of ink, possibly the beginning of a baseline. The last letters of the line can safely be read as כל [], perhaps the last two letters of a verbal phrase [Figure 6].

Early in line 2 there are two (unidentifiable) traces above *מֵאֲמָרָה* [Figure 7], and a trace of the last letter of the word preceding *כָּמָתָה* [ח] [Figure 8].

29 Thanks are due to IAA for allowing the publication of photographs from working under the auspices of the IAA at its DSS conservation laboratory.

30 *Ant.* 12.138; 13.133–144, cf. Ben Sira's report of Shimon 11's building activities at the Temple Mount (Sir 50:1–4), traces of which may be identified archaeologically, see Elgvin, *Literary Growth*, 121–22, 125.

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4

FIGURE 5

FIGURE 6

FIGURE 7

FIGURE 8

Translation:

1 [] all]the children of his generation[] 2 []his [w]isdom.
He shall make atonement for all the children of his generation, and he
shall be sent to all the children of 3 his peo[ple]. His words are like the
words of heaven, and his teaching like the will of God. The everlasting
sun³¹ will shine 4 and its fire will give warmth unto the ends of the earth.

31 The phrase שמש עלמה is difficult in the context. The plain text reads “His everlasting sun,” with the suffix more likely referring to the priest than to God (thus Puech, DJD 31:242–43: “Pour la proximité du ‘Levite’ avec Dieu, voir Test. 12 Patr. Lévi 2:10”). I follow the

It will shine on darkness; darkness will vanish 5 from the earth and mist [fr]om the dry land.

They will speak against him many words and many 6 [lie]s, invent fables about him, and speak all kinds of shameful things about him. His generation will be evil and perverted 7 [so that] it will be [rejected.] Lies and violence will be his office, in his days the people will go astray and be confounded.

The second paragraph must refer to a period before the breakthrough of universal renewal. There is internal strife in the people, the priest is controversial, and he is the victim of slandering and perhaps persecution. Are we in the 170s, close to the short terms of office of Jason, Menelaus, and Alchimus? Could Onias III, who was killed by enemies in 175 BCE, be some kind of a type for this figure, or perhaps his son Onias IV, who found refuge in Egypt and built a temple in Leontopolis?

Here Isa 53 plays in the background:³² וישתלח לכול בני [ע]מָה, “be sent to all the children of his peo[ple],” recalls the we-group of Isa 53; עמא [ו]יטעה עמא, “in his days the people will go astray,” echoes Isa 53:6; כָּלֵנוּ כְּצֹאֵן תָּעִינוּ, “all we like sheep have gone astray,” the verb טעה recurring in the later text. שְׂגִיאוֹן מִלֵּין עֲלוּהִי יֵאֱמֵרוּן וּשְׂגָה [כדב]ן וּבְדִיאֵן עֲלוּהִי יִבְדּוּן וְכוּל גְּנוּאִין עֲלוּהִי יִמְלִלוּן, “They will speak against him many words and many [lie]s, invent fables about him, and speak all kinds of shameful things about him,” recalls Isa 53:3; נִבְּזָה וְחָדַל אִישׁ מִכָּאֲבוֹת וִידוּעַ חֲלִי וְכִמְסָתֵר פָּנִים מִמֶּנּוּ נִבְּזָה וְלֹא חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ, “He was despised and rejected by men ... he was despised, and we did not recognize him.” “You will grow and see and rejoice in eternal light” (4Q541 24 ii 6, see above) recalls Isa 53:11; “Through his soul’s anguish he shall see light” (“light” with 1QIsa^{a,b}, 6). Our author clearly relies on Isa 53 in his new reading of Jer 30 and perhaps Zech 13.

This Levitical priest “shall make atonement for all of his generation”—perhaps a reference to the eschatological day of atonement.³³ In contrast to Isa 53, MJer 30, and Zech 13, the text does not signal the sacrifice of his life. The priest will teach powerfully: “his words are like the words of heaven and his teaching like the will of God.” His ministry will have cosmic consequences.

Accordance translation “the sun everlasting,” emending עֲלָמָה to עֲלָמָא (cf. the phonetic similarity between *aleph* and *ayin*). The idea that the priestly figure is the originator of the everlasting sun remains problematic.

32 For the following, cf. George J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005), 140–51. With Puech, Brooke interprets 4Q541 also in light of the later Testament of Levi.

33 Brooke, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 151.

Even if שמש עלמה, “his everlasting sun,” is emended to שמש עלמא, “the everlasting sun,” it is the godlike teaching and sacrificial ministry of the priest that open for a cosmic renewal.

There are other texts from this time period that foresee redemption for the nations in the name of Yahweh and a universal renewal, such as 4Q215a (4QTime of Righteousness) and 1Q27 (1QMysteries) 1 i 5–7.³⁴ In the latter text we find the images of light and darkness, prominent also in 4Q541.

This shall be the sign that this shall come to pass: when the times of evil are shut up and wickedness is banished from before righteousness, as darkness from before light, or as smoke vanishes and is no more, thus will wickedness vanish forever and righteousness be manifest like the sun. The world will be made firm and all the adherents of the “secrets of wonder” shall be no more. Knowledge shall fill the world and there will never be any more folly. (1Q27 1 i 5–7)

5 Aramaic Noah Traditions

There are parallels between the priestly image of 4Q541, the portrayal of the elect one in the Birth of Noah (4Q534–536), and descriptions of Noah in 1 En. 106 and the Genesis Apocryphon.³⁵ In 1QapGen 5–15 the righteous Noah is contrasted with the wicked ones of mankind. His eyes shine like the sun (5:12, cf. 1 En. 106:6), he is given wisdom and separates from the ways of deceit that lead to everlasting darkness (6:1–6), and he atones for all the earth (10:13–17). The elect in 4Q534–536 is not named, the figure is often identified with Noah.³⁶

34 Torleif Elgvin, “The Eschatological Hope of 4QTime of Righteousness,” in *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition*, ed. Florentino García Martínez, BETL 168 (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 89–102; idem, “Priestly Sages? The Milieus of Origin of 4QMysteries and 4QInstruction,” in *Sapiential Perspectives: Wisdom Literature in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins, Gregory E. Sterling, and Ruth A. Clements, STDJ 51 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 67–87.

35 Edward Cook in Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 539–40; Dorothy M. Peeters, *Noah Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conversations and Controversies of Antiquity*, EJL 26 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2008), 100–106; Robert Jones, “A Priest like Noah: 4Q541 in Its Qumran Aramaic Context” (paper presented at SBL Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, 18 November 2018).

36 “If this personage is *not* Noah, he is at least related!” (Peeters, *Noah Traditions*, 106). Peeters doubts that the main actor in 4Q541 is eschatological, and finds a teaching figure merging priestly features of Noah and Levi more likely (*Noah Traditions*, 101). Cook, however,

This sage will teach and reveal mysteries, his wisdom will reach all people, and he will not die during the days of wickedness.

There are intertextual relations between these Aramaic compositions, but uncertainty about their various times of composition makes it difficult to postulate lines of dependence. While some texts may preserve pre-Maccabean tradition, others may be inspired (positively or negatively) by the coming to power of Hasmonean ruling priests. Chapter 106 of 1 Enoch is a late addition to the early-second century Epistle of Enoch. 1QapGen is palaeographically dated to the mid-first century BCE, while the book often is dated to the second century. 4Q534–536 were copied in the second half of the first century BCE.³⁷

Noah is the first biblical sage to bring forth an animal sacrifice. Aramaic Levi, possibly going back to the third century, portrays Noah as progenitor of Levi and the priestly line, a portrayal to be followed up by subsequent Aramaic texts. 4Q541 was copied before 1QapGen and 4Q534–536, so it remains problematic to draw lines of dependence from the two latter to the former. And the portrayal in Jubilees of Noah's atoning sacrifice (7:3–5) should not be used as a backdrop for these Aramaic texts—Jubilees is probably a composite text growing throughout the first century, building on the earlier chapters 1–2.³⁸

Summing up, in the footsteps of Aramaic Levi a number of Aramaic compositions portray Noah in priestly clothing. The portrayal of the end-time priest in 4Q541 may be colored also by this wider Noah tradition. For Robert Jones, the author of 4Q541 used Noah traditions to advance an Urzeit-Endzeit eschatology, according to which the last days mirror the time of the primordial flood. A critical question remains: would the author of 4Q541 regard Aramaic Levi and other Aramaic compositions on a par with the Torah and the Prophets, with the same need of subsequent interpretative texts?

doubts the identification with Noah and (with the majority of scholars) regards the figure as a future messiah. The testamentary form does suggest a future figure.

- 37 Starcky suggested a date of composition of the Birth of Noah to the Herodian period (Puech, DJD 31:131, 126). Due to his reconstruction of Essene history and his early dating of Jubilees, Puech suggests a date between 164 and 155. Puech provides the following palaeographical dates: 4Q534 and 4Q535—the last third of the first century BCE, 4Q536—the last half of the first century BCE (DJD 31:131, 155, 162).
- 38 Matthew P. Monger, "4Q216 and the State of Jubilees at Qumran." *RevQ* 26 (2014): 595–612; idem, "4Q216. Rethinking Jubilees in the First Century BCE" (PhD diss., MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, 2018).

6 Conclusions

Some scholars have drawn lines from the servant songs to 4Q541 and regarded the main actor of this text as an eschatological priestly figure (Starcky, Puech, Hengel, Brooke, Knibb). John J. Collins differs somewhat: 4Q541 is a *yaḥad* composition and the author described the eschatological high priest expected by the community, crafted as a Teacher of Righteousness *redivivus*.³⁹ However, to ascribe 4Q541 to the *yaḥad* remains problematic—most scholars locate Aramaic compositions such as the Genesis Apocryphon, 4QVisions of Amram, 4QBirth of Noah, and 4Q541 outside the *yaḥad*, as pre-sectarian or extra-sectarian texts. And as shown above, a wide array of biblical texts should be considered as interpretative background of 4Q541.

There is no Davidide in the eschatological hope of 4Q541, the priest is Yahweh's only agent. The author found the motive of opposition, trials, suffering, and atonement in Isa 50 and 53, the central role of the priestly leader in Ezek 40–48, his role in redemption in *ṾJer* 30:18–24 and perhaps Zech 13, and wisdom, teaching, and sacrifice in the Noah traditions. But in contrast to the Jeremiah and Zechariah oracles he has a universal perspective. In the context of universal renewal (lines 3–5), the statement “he shall make atonement for all the children of his generation” probably encompasses the nations.⁴⁰ Here the author could build on prophetic oracles such as Isa 2:1–4, 11:10, 19:23–25, and Zeph 3:9–10 as well as Noah as progenitor of mankind. The author moves from a renewed covenant for Israel (as in Jer 30 and Zech 13) to cosmic renewal, spoken of in other prophetic texts.

There are intertextual lines from Isa 50 and 53 and the Aramaic 4Q541 to the Hebrew Self-Glorification Hymn, a *yaḥad* text in which a priestly figure sings about his trials, a unique teaching role, and enjoying a seat in God's heavenly presence—perhaps using the Teacher of Righteousness as a type for the eschatological high priest. And the wider priestly tradition surveyed here would in turn influence the Letter to the Hebrews.

Through this diachronic survey we have seen intertextual lines between texts that expressed Israelite hope for the future. Some of these texts reflect aspects of the sociopolitical situation experienced by the Judeans. The hope of Israel was expressed during centuries when a tiny Yehud and a backwater

39 John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 100–101.

40 “He shall make atonement for all the children of his generation, and he shall be sent to all the children of his people” (lines 2–3) may constitute either a synonym parallelism (with both stichs referring to the people) or a synthetic parallelism (the first stich referring to mankind in general and the second to the people). The cosmic renewal described in lines 3–5 pulls the evidence toward the second option.

of a temple village were all they had—before things would radically change with the Hasmonean state. The trials and subordination the Judeans experienced under the Persians and the Ptolemies colored prophetic visions of a coming redemption through tribulation, while the new state of the art with Hasmonean ruling priests stimulated or provoked hopes for an eschatological priest that would inaugurate final redemption.

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