THE STRUCTURE OF THE APOCALYPSE
OF ‘SON OF GOD’ (4Q246)

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The Apocalypse of the ‘Son of God’ (4Q246) was first published in a preliminary edition by Émile Puech, “Fragment d’une apocalypse en araméen (4Q246 = pseudo-Dan) et le ‘royaume de Dieu,’” RB 99 (1992): 98–131. Puech produced an exemplary edition of the text that was originally assigned to J. T. Milik to edit. It became widely known as early as 1972 when Milik lectured in the United States on the important text and passed out handouts recording the text and his interpretation.1 Milik proposed a reading in which the ‘Son of God’ was identified with a historical figure, a self-deified king. Puech supported such a reading in part, at least the view that the figure was a historical person, presumably Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), but Puech left open the possibility that the figure was the royal messiah of the apocalyptic future.2

The apocalypse is written in Aramaic, and more specifically, in the language and idiom of the Aramaic portions of Daniel. There can be no doubt that this work, along with the Additions to Daniel, belongs to a wider Daniel literature of which the canonical Daniel is a single exemplar. For common linguistic usages see the notes to the text.

The manuscript dates in the interval between the late Hasmonaean scripts and the Early Herodian scripts, between 50 B.C.E and 1 B.C.E.\(^3\) The original composition must go back to the early second century B.C.E., coeval with the four apocalypses of Daniel (Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10–12 of the Book of Daniel).

The clue to the understanding of the fragmentary text and the resolution of the disputed identity of the ‘Son of God’ is to be found, I believe, in an analysis of the poetic structure of the text. This can be diagramed as follows.

**Prologue**

The apocalyptist [Daniel] falls before the king and announces that he will interpret the king’s disturbing dream.

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\(^3\) Its script is slightly more advanced than that of 4QSам\(^b\) and 1Qisa\(^b\), and slightly less advanced than the Early Herodian script of 1QM. See F. M. Cross, “The Development of the Jewish Scripts,” in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (ed. G. Ernest Wright; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961), 138, lines 3–4. The script charts are republished in Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, Figure 17 (between pages 128 and 129), lines 3 and 4.