THE MEANING OF MOREH ŠEDEQ IN THE LIGHT OF 11QTORAH

One of the perennial problems of Qumran research is the role to be attributed to the figure designated Moreh (ha)Šedeq.

This designation is commonly supposed to refer to the leader of the community whose library was discovered at Qumran, or less cautiously, to the founder of the Qumran sect. The Moreh Šedeq plays a crucial role in the historical reconstructions supplied by modern scholars of the Second Temple period, and attempts to identify the Moreh Šedeq with some concrete historical personage have not been uncommon. There has even been speculation concerning possible identifications with supramundane figures such as "dying-and-rising saviors", the Messiah, or Elijah redivivus.

Most of these historical suggestions are intriguing and worthy of careful study, but they retain limitations in their appreciation of the figure of the Moreh Šedeq due to an inadequate understanding

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(1) The term Moreh (ha)Šedeq appears in the following Qumran documents: 1QpHab 1, 13; II, 2; V, 10; VII, 3; VIII, 3; IX, 9; XI, 5 (cf. II, 8); CD 1, 11; XX, 1, 28, 32; 1QpMicah X, 4; 1QpPs 37 III, 15 (cf. II, 18).


(4) A convenient list of proposed identifications can be found in VERMES, Dead Sea Scrolls, 160.

(5) These more speculative suggestions are seldom made in current Qumran research. For a detailed summary of earlier debate, see JEREMIAS, Lehrer, 275-281.
of what the concept *Moreh Sedeq* signifies. This essay will attempt to make upon the basis of philological and literary data a conceptual study of the term *Moreh Sedeq* in the light of some recent textual publications.

The phrase *Moreh Sedeq* is usually translated into English as “Teacher of Righteousness”; (6) this rendering is paralleled by the German “Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit” (7) and the French «Maitre (or Docteur) de Justice». (8) The use of this particular translation appears in the secondary literature includes “Righteous Teacher”, (10) ‘Guide(s) of Righteousness’, (11) “Just Judge”, (12) “the Legitimate Teacher”, (13) “Teacher of Truth (Lehrer des


(9) Schechter, Fragments (see n. 6). Most subsequent commentators appear to follow Schechter in their renderings of the title.


(13) Milik, Ten Years, 76.

(14) L. Ginzberg, Ein 302 (= An Unknown Jewis


(16) H. W. Wolff, Das Damascus: Ancient Library, 148 n. 82; moreh sdeq is apparently de

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16) T. H. Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City, 1976), xii and 565.


18) H. W. Wolff, Dodekaprophelen 2: Joel und Amos (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969), pp. 75-78 suggests that the phrase Moræh Sedeq was a particular coinage of the Qumran sect and had no connection with the biblical passages that are often invoked to explain it. Similarly, R. Meyer, Melchizedek, 230 n. 3.

19) Levi, REJ 61 (1911), 173 n. 5; Lagrange, HB 21 (1912), 216; Bacher, ZHB 15 (1911), 23; Ginzberg, Sedeq, 314 (=Sef, 219). Hamm, Zadokite Documents, 3; idem, Qumran Studies (Oxford, 1967), 190 n. 14; Denis, Connaissance, 55-56; D. Dimant, Qumran Sectarian Literature, in M. E. Stone (ed.), Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period (Philadelphia, 1984), 506.

20) E. Sellin, Das Zwolfprophelenbuch übersetzt und erklärt (Leipzig, 1929), 167; Michal, Malte, 266; J. T. Milik, Dix ans de découvertes dans le desert de Juda (Paris, 1957), 59.

21) Rost, Damaskuschriften, 7; Brownlee, Midrash Pesher, 47-48; Gross, Ancient Library, 148 n. 82; Jeremias, Lehrer, pp. 312-313. The Karaite designation moreh sedeq is apparently derived from a combined exegesis of Hosea 10, 12; Joel 2, 23, and Malachi 3, 23-24. See the commentary of Daniel Al-Qumasi on the first two passages (I. Markon [ed.], Commentarius in librum duodecim prophetarum quem composuit Daniel al-Qumasi [Jerusalem, 1957], pp. 18, 29).
to additional biblical passages such as Isaiah 30, 20ff. (22) or Deuteronomy 33, 9-10. (23) Finally, arguments have been made on the basis of the antithetical construction moreh seger (Isaiah 9, 14; Habakkuk 2, 18) "teacher of falsehood, false teacher", thus attempting to define Moreh 'Seqeq by means of its assumed opposite. (24) All of these suggestions regarding the possible biblical derivation of the designation Moreh 'Seqeq contain a kernel of truth, and when considered together, provide a remarkably coherent description of what the sect may have understood by this term. As long as we confine our discussion to the realm of Hebrew discourse, there is little difficulty in apprehending the semantic range of the title Moreh 'Seqeq. It is only when we attempt to transplant this concept into Western, post-Christian modes of expression that misunderstandings arise.

This problem is already evident in the Vulgate rendering (25) of Hosea 10, 12 and Joel 2, 23 mentioned above. Hosea 10, 12 ('ad yabo' weyoreh seged lakem) is translated cum venerit qui docebit vos iustitiam, and Joel 2, 23 (ki natan lakem 'et ha-moreh lisedaqa) becomes quia dedit vobis doctorem iustitiae. The latter clause is rendered in turn by Luther as "... der euch Lehrer zur gerechtig-
keit gibt". (26) It is in these renderings that the familiar English "Teacher of Righteousness" (and its concomitant Western reflexes) first rears its head. No one would deny, of course, the association of moreh or yoreh with the idea of authoritative instruction, or for that matter, the connection of derivatives of the stem seq with the concept of "justice" or "rightness". What remains puzzling is the possible connotation of the combined phrase "Teacher of Righteousness" in a setting such as Joel 2, 23 or the Qumran community.

(22) Moore, HTR 4 (1911), 337; Carmignac, RJ 3 (1961-62) 530. Note that LXX Isaiah 30, 20-21 curiously reverses the positive message of the Masoretic Text: "...and the Lord will give you the bread of affliction and scant water, and no longer will those who lead you astray (= MT morekha) draw near to you, for your eyes will perceive those who lead you astray (= MT morekha), and your ears will hear the words uttered behind you by those who would lead you astray, those who say: This is the path; we will walk on it either to the right or to the left!" Does this Septuagint passage conceal polemic against the Qumran Moreh?

(23) Gaster, Scriptures 6, cf. Cross, Ancient Library, 148 n. 82.


(26) Quotation from the Luther Bible taken from M. Luther, Die ganze Heilige Schriiff Deutsch: Wittenberg 1546 (München, 1972).
saiah 30, 20ff. (22) or have been made on 'eh seger (Isaiah 9, 14; teacher", thus attempting assumed opposite. (24) The biblical derivation of truth, and when heretofore described of term. As long as we new discourse, there is range of the title translate this concept understand rendering (25) of e. Hosea 10, 12 ("ad venerit qui docet vos I ha-morke lishedaqah) The latter clause is Lehrer zur gerechtigkeit the familiar English tant Western reflexes) /course, the association concern to instill a proper appreciation for the distinction between virtue and vice among his followers? One hardly thinks so. There is a danger here of confusing the Qumran Moreh Sedeq (and for that matter the rabbinic hakamim) with the familiar figure of the Greek philosophical teacher expounding aphoristic wisdom to a small circle of disciples. (29) This confusion is the direct result of employing words like "righteousness" or "righteous" to describe the character of the Moreh Sedeq or the content of his instruction. There is furthermore another connotation to the terms "righteousness" or "righteous" that subtly influences the interpretation placed upon these concepts by Christian scholars. It is the so-called "forensic" understanding wherein the person who is pronounced "righteous" (saddiq, δικαστικό) is the one vindicated in a court of law. (30) This usage is of course familiar to us from the Hebrew Bible, (31) but it plays a particularly prominent role in the polemic of Paul. (32) Here is not the place to go into the problem of the concept of "righteousness" or "justification by faith" in Pauline theology. It is invoked only to point out the danger of equating the notions of "righteousness" at Qumran and "righteous-

Just what does "Teacher of Righteousness" mean? Hosea 10, 12 appears to supply an explanation: it refers to the one qui docetvel bis iustitiam or "who teaches righteousness to you". But this answer only restates the question in declarative form; namely, the Teacher of Righteousness is one who teaches righteousness. (27)

What indeed is the nature of the "righteousness" communicated by a so-called "Teacher of Righteousness"? The terms "righteousness" or "righteous" sound a moral ring in Western ears, conjuring up images of pious behavior and saintly demeanor associated with the acceptance of authoritative ethical guidance. (28) Was the Qumran Moreh Sedeq merely a wise sage concerned to instill a proper appreciation for the distinction between virtue and vice among his followers? One hardly thinks so. There is a danger here of confusing the Qumran Moreh Sedeq (and for that matter the rabbinic hakamim) with the familiar figure of the Greek philosophical teacher expounding aphoristic wisdom to a small circle of disciples. (29) This confusion is the direct result of employing words like "righteousness" or "righteous" to describe the character of the Moreh Sedeq or the content of his instruction.

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(27) Compare F. Rosenthal, Sedaka, Charity, Hebrew Union College Annual 23 (1950-51), 411-412 n. 4: "Our understanding of the word 'righteousness' is entirely dependent on the meanings which many centuries of theological interpretation have given to Hebrew ṣeḏeq. For clarifying the semantic range of ṣeḏeq, the statement that _PROPANE_ means righteousness" is about as valuable as to say: ṣeḏeq means ṣeḏeq."

(28) Note the definition of "righteous" provided by the Oxford English Dictionary: "...just, upright, virtuous; guiltless, sinless; conforming to the standard of the divine or the moral law; acting rightly or justly; morally right or justifiable."

(29) See, for example, Diogenes Laertius 7.5-31 for anecdotes about Zeno of Citium and his teaching activity; idem, 8.9-45 for Pythagoras; and idem, 10.9-22 for Epicurus.

(30) Weingreen, JSS 6 (1961), 166 (= From Bible, 104).

(31) E.g., Exodus 23, 7; Deuteronomy 25, 1; 1 Kings 8, 32 (= 2 Chronicles 6, 23); Isaiah 5, 23; 9, 21; Proverbs 17, 15; and cf. Genesis 38, 26.

ness" in Paul, an equation facilitated and abetted by this identical rendering. We need not assume that Qumranic ideology exerted any influence upon the development of Paul’s thought, despite the ardent attempts of some scholars to establish such a connection. (33) The Moreh Ṣedeq does not pronounce a "righteousness ... apart from the Law" (Romans 3, 21, 28). Torah was, as we know, central to the ideology of the Qumran sect. The terms "Teacher of Righteousness" or "Righteous Teacher" encourage, if only unconsciously, confusion and misconception among otherwise well-meaning exegetes, and one would hope that the moral and theological impact of the words "righteousness" and "righteous" would be carefully weighed in future discussion of the issue.

If we banish such theologically loaded terms as "righteousness" or "righteous" from the concept of the Moreh Ṣedeq, we take the first step toward a redefinition of this problematic expression. The task called for now is a brief rehearsal of the philological possibilities present in the components of the phrase Moreh Ṣedeq. To assume that there is a rigid connection between derivatives of the Semitic stem ṣdq and the concepts of "righteousness", "Gerechtigkeit", et al. is quite misleading. The fundamental meaning connoted by the stem ṣdq in the cognate Semitic corpus would appear to be "that which is legitimate, proper, true". (34) The noun ṣedeq occurs with precisely this connotation in Hebrew literature, most prominently in adjectival formations that refer to "proper or true measures". In Leviticus 19, 36 we read: mo'zney ṣedeq 'abeney ṣedeq 'efal ṣedeq wehin ṣedeq yihyeh lakem "you shall employ correct scales, exact weights, a true 'efah-measure, and a true hin-measure" (compare also Ezekiel 45, 10 and Deuteronomy 25, 15). (35) The Targumim to these biblical passages support such a meaning by rendering the Hebrew ṣedeq with


(35) Ezekiel 45, 10: 'eben 'eledeq wa'sedeq wehi ṣedeq yihyeh lakem; Deuteronomy 25, 15: 'eben 'eledeq wa'sedeq yihyeh lakem...and note verses 13-14. Compare also Job 31, 6: ṣeqeleni bemo'zney ṣedeq...

Aramaic gešeq “true” is ambiguous with its English instances. There are ḥeqeq connotes "exact usage of ḥeqeq and theological dimensions.

The employment has also been remarkably prominent. Example, ḥeqeq occurs in 4QPatriarcha davvid "until the advent of David". The formal (ha)jashedeq is obvious. Messiah" or "Messiah.

The noun moreh "teaching" or "guiding" has also been prominent. Exercise of this activity no reason to doubt the terms moreh or the term moreh at Qumran's semantic evolution of and rabbinic Hebrew to priestly, halakhic this usage occurs in ṣedeq "and there w

(36) Targum Onkelos, whyynu ṣeqel yhwh ikon; yhwh lq malkin ṣeqel ṣeqel Targum Onkelos rely upon Pentateuch According to T. Neofiti and PSEUDO-JONATHON: ṣeqel whynu ṣeqel ubiq Aramaic...Volume III: The 1962).


(41) Cf. MEYER, Melch the Old Testament (Lund, 19 to connote authoritative conundrums. See Leviticus Ezekiel 44, 23; 2 Chronicles
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In Leviticus 19, 36 we seekin sedeq gihyeh lakem his, a true efah-measure, also Ezekiel 45, 10 and these biblical passages the Hebrew sedeq with

Aramaic qedol "true" (36) The Septuagint however is more ambiguous with its employment of δίκαιος for sedeq in each of these instances. There are instances in earlier Greek literature where δίκαιος connotes "exact, correct, genuine", (37) but the Septuagint usage of δίκαιος and its derivatives already displays certain theological dimensions absent from the earlier usage. (38)

The employment of sedeq to mean "legitimate, proper, true" has also been remarked in the qumran corpus. The most prominent example, pointed out long ago by F. M. Cross, (39) occurs in 4QPatriarchal Blessings 3: "ad be' mesiah ha-qedeq semah davud" "until the advent of the true anointed one, the descendant of david". The formal similarity of mesiah ha-qedeq and moreh (ha)sedeq is obvious. To translate the former as "righteous messiah" or "messiah of righteousness" borders on the absurd. (40)

The noun moreh is used in the hebrew bible to signify a "teaching" or "guiding" function, and is used to describe the exercise of this activity by both priest and prophet. (41) There is no reason to doubt this general semantic background for the use of the term moreh at qumran. One must however reckon with the semantic evolution of moreh as evidenced by later biblical hebrew and rabbinitic hebrew wherein the word comes increasingly to refer to priestly, halakhic pronouncements. An excellent example of this usage occurs in 2 Chronicles 15, 3: "alelo' kohen moreh alelo' torah "and there was no law-giving priest and (hence) no


(39) cross, ancient library, 113 n. 3; Brownlee, Midrash Pesher, 48.

(40) The phrase mesiah ha-qedeq probably possesses here a polemical edge as it does in later Judaism. Note also the term qedeqmoreh in mark 15, 22 (par. Matthew 24, 24).

(41) Cj. Meyer, melchisedek, pp. 232-235 and in general G. Östrosn, tora in the old testament (Lund, 1945). Forms of the hiphil stem (horah) are often employed to connote authoritative direction delivered by priests regarding ritual or legal conundrum. See leviticus 10, 8-11; 14, 54-57, Deuteronomy 17, 10-11; 21, 6-22, 10; Ezekiel 44, 23; 2 Chronicles 15, 3.
The rabbinic use of word moreh is preserved in Haggai 2,11-14 where the prophet is commanded to procure a pronunciation of lorah from the Temple priests. These priests might properly be designated morim or "law-givers". Further instances of this refinement of meaning appear in the rabbinic exegesis of Deuteronomy 17,8-13 (a passage concerned with priestly lorah-pronouncements) found in Sifre Deuteronomy § 155 and Mishnah Sanhedrin 11,2. The latter passage especially illustrates the use of horah and horayah with the meaning of a decision pronounced upon some practical question of ritual or legal significance.

This brief philological excursus enables us to return to the designation Moreh Sedeq with some fresh insights. It would seem that a more accurate review in the light of possible textual evidence would be along the line of novel understanding of anticipated by several problem. Their additional evidence then years. It is being real: factor in the rift between authorities in Jerusalem interpreting the ritual Torah. This should no differences of interpretive rabbinic accounts of the: of disputes is the question of the pronouncement of a title Moreh Sedeq or "'T Qumran sect to possess null and void.

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that a more accurate rendering of the phrase Moreh Šeḏeq when viewed in the light of both the philological possibilities and the probable textual evidence which remains of this figure's function would be along the lines of "True Lawgiver". This is hardly a novel understanding of the significance of the title. It has been anticipated by several scholars who have wrestled with this problem. (46) Their earlier analyses can now be bolstered with additional evidence that has accumulated over the past several years. It is being realized, with increasing clarity, that a central factor in the rift between the Qumran sect and the priestly authorities in Jerusalem was an irreconcilable divergence in interpreting the ritual prescriptions contained in the Mosaic Torah. This should not surprise us, as we find the same sort of differences of interpretation among Pharisees and Sadducees in the rabbinic accounts of their controversies. (47)

The most important textual evidence for this revised understanding of the title Moreh Šeḏeq is provided in the so-called Temple Scroll, (48) or as B. Z. WACHOLDER (49) has aptly rechristened it, 11QTorah (henceforth 11QT). This composition provides numerous instances of interpretations and rulings which diverge from what later came to be viewed as normative halakah. (50) While one cannot decide with certainty whether the physical authorship of 11QT is to be attributed to the Moreh Šeḏeq, one can say that the nature of the interpretations contained within the document implies the activity of a person or persons engaged in the pronouncement of authoritative law. Corroboration for this statement can be found in the very structure of 11QT itself. The
text purports to be an authentic revelation of God to Moses delivered in the setting supplied by Exodus 34. (51) It is thus a Torah (one is tempted to say the Torah) revealed to Moses on Sinai, and it partakes of the venerable authority accorded to the “traditional” Pentateuch by the remainder of the Sages. This claim to the Mosaic imprimatur grants to the contents of 11QT an impeccable authority. The Moreh Šedeq, if indeed he is the one responsible for this fiction, could be said to be transmitting halakhut lemosheh missinay. (52)

One might go further and point out that by invoking the Mosaic mantle the Moreh Šedeq implicitly assumes the role of a “second Moses”. This employment of a Moses typology, probably based upon Deuteronomy 18, 15-18, has often been remarked both in the Qumran texts and in secondary literature. (53) It is interesting that the name Mosheh does not occur in the surviving lines of 11QT; in fact, the only sure reference is the elliptical allusion to “Aaron your brother” in Column XLIV. (54) Could not this be another means of increasing the identification of Moses and the new “lawgiver” by supplying some ambiguity as to the recipient of the revelation? At one level it is indeed Moses who is addressed in the familiar Pentateuchal style, but on another level it is conceivably the Moreh Šedeq who is entrusted with the promulgation of 11QT, either as the original recipient or as the trustee of a Mosaic autograph (CD V, 4-5). (55)

Other sectarian writings support the conception of the Moreh Šedeq as one who pronounces authoritative law. (56) The most important example remains as yet unpublished. J. STRUGNELL and E. QIMRON have announced the existence of a so-called “halakhic epistle” tentatively designated 4QMiqsal ma’asey ha-torah (4QMMT). (57) And it was sent possibly by the Jerusalem. The epistle regarding which the Qumran differed, all of which were seen to revolve around one responsible for excising an author of this epistle, he described in our revised Table, namely, giving “true leg

External evidence question of viewing the sect. In the description of the Essenes in his Bellum, "lawgiver" (yad kamed) was blaspheme. (58) Many as an indication of the sect. (59) This pro similar prohibition available to us (i.e., compositions masquerad usually represented by I accorded this same tre.

(51) See 11QT II, 1-15 and the commentary of YADIN; also WACHOLDER, Duam, pp. 1-32.

(52) On this category of legislation see J. D. EISENSTEIN (ed.), Ozig Yisrael (New York, 1951), IV, pp. 148-151; Ensiklopediyah Talmudil (Jerusalem, 1947- ); VIII, cols. 363-387; W. BACHER, Satzsg vom Sinai, in Studies in Jewish Literature Issued in Honor of Kaufmann Kohler (Berlin, 1913), pp. 56-70 (which is substantially reproduced in idem, Tradition und Traditionen in den Schulen Palatina und Babylonien [Leipzig, 1914], pp. 31-46).


(54) 11QT XLIV, 5 : lbny hruw hykh.


(56) E.g., texts like CD IX-XVI; 4Q159; 4Q512-514; 4QHalakah; 4QTerahol. Cf. also MILIK, Dib and, 36.
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tah (4QMMT). (57) According to these editors, it is a letter that was sent possibly by the Moreh Sedeq to the priestly authorities in Jerusalem. The epistle recounts approximately twenty matters regarding which the Qumran community and the Jerusalem leaders differed, all of which were of a ritual nature. Again the question is seen to revolve around the issue of authority and the persons responsible for exercising it. If the Moreh Sedeq is indeed the author of this epistle, he can be observed here exercising the office described in our revised understanding of the concept Moreh Sedeq; namely, giving "true legal decisions".

External evidence may also be brought to bear upon the question of viewing the Moreh Sedeq as the "True Lawgiver" of the sect. In the description by Josephus of the customs of the Essenes in his Bellum Judaicum there is reference made to a "lawgiver" (אברתמש) whose name the Essenes were forbidden to blaspheme. (58) Many scholars interpret this curious prohibition as an indication of the respect accorded Moses by the members of the sect. (59) This proscription is joined by Josephus with a similar prohibition against blaspheming the name of God. Now while the name of God is avoided in the sectarian compositions available to us (i.e., apart from copies of biblical texts and compositions masquerading as biblical texts such as IIQT), being usually represented by the innocuous 'el, the name of Moses is not accorded this same treatment. One must then question on the basis of this parallel whether the word אברתמש in fact refers to the traditional Jewish lawgiver. A. Dupont-Sommer (60) has expres-


(58) Bellum 2.145; cf. 2.152.


(60) A. Dupont-Sommer, Aperçus preliminaires sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte (Paris, 1950), 111-112 (= idem, The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Preliminary Survey
sed the opinion that the νομοθέτης of this passage refers to the particular “lawgiver” of the sect, the Moreh Ṣedeq. In light of our preceding discussion it would appear that this suggestion has some merit. JOSEPHUS does on occasion apply the designation to figures other than Moses. (61) It is even possible that the term νομοθέτης is intended to allude to the word moreh in the title Moreh Ṣedeq. Aside from such speculation, it is clear that the term νομοθέτης, as applied to the Essenes, coheres nicely with the concept Moreh Ṣedeq as outlined in this essay.

In conclusion, we summarize here the main points of our discussion. 1) The translations “Teacher of Righteousness”, “Righteous Teacher”, and their Western language reflexes for the Hebrew phrase Moreh Ṣedeq, while philologically permissible, result in misleading and even erroneous conclusions about the nature of this figure, due to the popular ethical and Christian theological understandings of the words “righteousness” and “righteous”. 2) By contrast, viewing the Moreh Ṣedeq as the “True Lawgiver” of the Qumran sect is both philologically possible and functionally meaningful. Certain of the later Qumran finds, unavailable to the earliest scholars, demonstrate the wide-ranging halakhic disputes that divided the sect from the Jerusalem establishment. The existence of 11QT, 4QMMT, and other legal texts from Qumran embody the activity of one who pronounced authoritative decisions; that is, the Moreh Ṣedeq or “True Lawgiver”.

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(61) Antiquities 1.22 (pagan lawgivers); Contra Apionem 2.154 (pagan lawgivers); 2.161 (Minos and other pagans); 2.172 (pagan lawgivers); 2.175 (pagan lawgivers); 2.225 (Lycurgus); 2.239 (pagans); 2.250 (pagans); 2.276 (pagans); 2.280 (pagans).
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ÉTUDES QUMRÂNIENNES

ÉDITÉES PAR

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