

*The Dead Sea Habakkuk Scroll*¹

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The Dead Sea Habakkuk Scroll (1Q p Hab.) is one of the four scrolls from Qumran Cave I which were obtained in June 1947 by the Syrian Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem and subsequently (February 1955) purchased by the state of Israel.

The scroll, which contains 13 columns of Hebrew writing, consists of two pieces of soft leather sewn together with linen thread between columns 7 and 8. The columns are about 10 centimetres wide; the scroll was originally about 160 centimetres long. The first two columns, however, are badly mutilated, as is also the bottom of the scroll; this produces an undulating break along the bottom when the scroll is unrolled. The present maximum height of the scroll is 13.7 centimetres; originally it may have been 16 centimetres high or more.

Palaeographical estimates of the age of the scroll vary by some decades, but a date around the middle of the first century B.C. or shortly afterwards is probable.

The scroll contains the text of the first two chapters of Habakkuk. The book of Habakkuk, as we know it, consists of two documents: (a) 'The oracle of God which Habakkuk the prophet saw' (chapters 1 and 2), and (b) 'A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth' (chapter 3). Our scroll quotes one or several clauses from the former document, and supplies a running commentary on the words quoted; but it does not contain the text of the second document, nor, does it make any comment on it. It is plain from the scroll that it never reproduced or expounded the third chapter of Habakkuk, for the original ending is clear for all to see. The omission of all reference to the 'prayer of Habakkuk' is not due to any idea that such a psalm was unsuitable material for a commentary of the kind that is supplied for the 'oracle' of Habakkuk (commentaries of this kind on the Psalter and other biblical poems have been found at Qumran); it is due, more probably, to the fact that Habakkuk's

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'prayer' was considered to be a separate work, quite distinct from his 'oracle'.

After quoting a section of the text of Habakkuk, our commentator says: 'Its interpretation concerns...'—and then proceeds to give its meaning as he sees it, mainly in terms of persons and events of his own time, or of the times immediately preceding and following his own. The Hebrew word rendered 'interpretation' here is *peshet*, and from its frequency and distinctive usage in this commentary, it has come to be used of the commentary as a whole and of others belonging to the same class. Quite a number of such *pēshārīm* have been found in the Qumran caves, but this commentary on Habakkuk is not only the first to be known, but it is the most complete of those that have come to light thus far.

It is, besides, of more than ordinary interest because it remains our chief source for some of the most fascinating problems of Qumran study—the character and identity of the Teacher of Righteousness (the founder and leader of the Qumran community), and his relations with

¹ The first Bernard LYONS Lecture delivered to the Leeds University Oriental Society on October 22, 1958.

various opponents, such as the Wicked Priest, the house of Absalom, the Man of Falsehood and the Seekers after Smooth Things; together with the identity of the Kittim, the brutal Gentile power whose domination of Judaea is regarded as a divine nemesis on the wicked rulers of the land.

The *peshar* which this commentary (like the others of the same class) provides for the biblical text is an interpretation which cannot be reached by man's unaided wisdom; it is given by divine revelation. A problem which can be solved only with divine aid is evidently no common problem; it is, in fact, a mystery conceived in the mind of God. Such a mystery is denoted in the Qumran literature by the word *rāz*, a loanword from Iranian.

In the Aramaic parts of the book of Daniel the two words *rāz* and *peshar* (the latter appearing in its Aramaic form *pēshar*) are used in this same way. The *rāz* is divinely communicated to one party (e.g. to Nebuchadnezzar in his dreams); the *peshar* is divinely communicated to another party (e.g. to Daniel when the significance of the king's dreams is revealed to him). Not until the *rāz* and the *peshar* are brought together can the message be understood.

It is this principle that underlies the exegesis in the Qumran *pēshārîm*. The divine purpose cannot be grasped until the *peshar* has been given as well as the *rāz*. The prophet received and recorded the *rāz* where God revealed it to him, but its meaning remained sealed

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until God revealed the *peshar* to someone else. The Qumran commentators believed that God had at last revealed the *peshar* to someone else, to none other than their revered Teacher of Righteousness. This is evident, for example, from the comment which our scroll makes on Habakkuk ii 1 f.:

God commanded Habakkuk to write the things that were coming upon the last generation, but the fulfilment of the epoch he did not make known to him. And as for the words, *so he may run who reads it*, their interpretation (*peshar*) concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries (*rāzîm*) of the words of his servants the prophets (1Q p Hab. vii 1-5).

Clearly one important feature of the interpretation, which had not been revealed to the prophet, had to do with the time when his prophecies would be fulfilled. This was revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness: he was told that the prophecy would be fulfilled in the time of the end, the last generation; and the fact that the Teacher had now been raised up as God's chosen interpreter of the prophets of old was a sign that the time of the end was imminent.

Three basic principles of the biblical exegesis current at Qumran may now be stated:

- (a) God revealed the mystery of his purpose to his servants the prophets, but his revelation (especially with regard to the time when the prophecies would be fulfilled) could not be properly understood until its interpretation was revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness.
- (b) All the words of the prophets referred to the time of the end.
- (c) The time of the end is at hand.

II

We can best understand the book of Habakkuk when we read it in the light of its historical setting in the reign of Jehoiakim (608-598 B.C.). We have it on excellent contemporary authority that Jehoiakim was guilty of oppression and violence. (Jeremiah xxii 13-17). Habakkuk complains to God about the oppression and violence which are rife in the nation, and God tells him that the Chaldeans are being raised up to be the executors of his judgment against the unrighteous rulers of Judah. But Habakkuk has to renew his complaint before long, for the Chaldeans are acting with even greater brutality and impiety

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than those upon whom they executed God's judgment. This time God tells him that the Chaldeans, too, will be dealt with when they have served his purpose; righteousness will one day be established throughout the earth, but for the present the prophet and those like-minded must exercise patience and trust in God: 'the righteous shall live by his faith' (Habakkuk ii 4).

While exegetes may differ on details, the prophecy of Habakkuk is generally coherent and intelligible when interpreted along these lines.

But, as the Qumran community viewed the matter, all the prophecies were given in code, and no one could break the code until the Teacher of Righteousness received the key. And if, as the Teacher thought, the prophecies referred to his own days and the days immediately to follow, then they would exhibit coherence and intelligibility when read, not in the light of the prophets' own times, but in the context of these latter days.

Thus, for example, our commentator treats Habakkuk's 'Chaldeans' as a code-word for 'Kitti'im'. The prophet *said* 'Chaldeans', but he was not speaking of the historical Chaldeans of the sixth century B. C.; he was pointing forward to the armies of another Gentile empire which was to arise centuries after his own day. It is a matter of some interest that Bernhard DUHM held that 'Chaldeans' (*Kasdîm*) in Habakkuk should be emended to *Kittîm*; Habakkuk, he believed, prophesied around 332 B.C., and referred to the invading army of Alexander the Great, but *Kittîm* was altered to *Kasdîm* at an early stage in the transmission of the book through a wrong idea about Habakkuk's date. The coincidence between DUHM's emendation and the Qumran commentator's interpretation, however, is only verbal; it was not of Alexander's soldiers that our commentator was thinking.

Our commentator's method requires a thorough atomizing of the prophet's text, as he fits each phrase and clause into a new context. For example, when the prophet says, 'O LORD, thou hast ordained them as a judgment; and thou, O Rock, hast established them for chastisement' (Habakkuk i 12), he refers to the Chaldeans. But the commentator makes these words refer to the righteous remnant. And when the prophet goes on to say, 'Thou who art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on wrong, why do st thou look on faithless men, and art silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?' (i 13), he is obviously voicing his complaint to God. But in the commentary it is not God, but the righteous remnant is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil', and

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it is not God, but a group of men. called 'the house of Absalom', that is upbraided for looking on faithless men without taking action against them, and for being struck dumb when the righteous man is overwhelmed by the wicked—these last words being taken to refer to an occasion when 'the Teacher of Righteousness was chastised, and they did not go to his aid against the Man of Falsehood, who rejected the law in the midst of all their congregation' (1Q p Hab. v 10-12). In order to make the biblical text applicable to a situation of later times, the commentator simply disregards its original setting and even overrides the plain grammatical relation of its component clauses.

Along with this atomizing method there goes an interesting treatment of textual variants. Where one reading suits the commentator's purpose better than another, he will use it, although his comment may reveal that he is aware of an alternative reading.

For example, the MT of Habakkuk ii 5a runs: 'Moreover, wine is treacherous; the arrogant man is puffed up.' But our commentator read *bôn* ('wealth') in place of *hayyayin* ('the wine') and explains the passage as referring to the Wicked Priest, whose 'heart was exalted' when he came to power, so that he 'forsook God and dealt treacherously with the ordinances for the sake of wealth' (1Q p Hab. viii 10 f.): This last remark is amplified in his comment on verse 6, where the man who 'heaps up what is not his own is again identified with the Wicked Priest, who 'looted and amassed the wealth of the men of [v]iolence who rebelled against God, and took the wealth of nations, adding to himself iniquity and guilt' (1Q p Hab. viii 11 f.). But if the commentator had known no reading but 'wine' at the beginning of verse 5, it would have served his purpose quite well, for he tells us later on that wine as well as wealth was a means of the Wicked Priest's undoing, for he 'walked in the ways of drunkenness to quench his thirst' (1Q p Hab. xi 13 f.).

The reference to the Wicked Priest's drunkenness comes in a comment which is a specially good example of our commentator's treatment of textual variants. The MT of Habakkuk ii 15 f. may be rendered: 'Woe to him who makes his neighbour drink, adding thy fury thereto, and makes him drunk, in order to look on their nakedness! Thou art sated with contempt instead of glory. Drink thyself and be uncircumcised! The cup in the LORD's right hand will come round to thee, and shame will come upon thy glory!' Some emendation seems called for here, if only to ease the awkward inconsistency in

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the pronouns used. Two notable variants appear in the text which our commentator quotes. One of these is presupposed by the Greek and Syriac versions, and is adopted by the RSV; it is the imperative *bērā'ēl* ('stagger') instead of *bērārēl* ('be uncircumcised'). But here again the commentator appears to have known both readings, for he combines them in his interpretation. The man who is 'sated with contempt instead of glory' is 'the priest whose shame was greater than his glory, for he did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart but walked in the ways of drunkenness to quench his thirst' (1Q p Hab. xi 12-14).

The other variant in our commentator's text is more remarkable: at the end of verse 15 he reads *mō'ādēhem* ('their sacred seasons') instead of *mē'ôrēhem* ('their nakedness'). If indeed he found this variant in his text, and did not simply invent it, it must have seemed to him providentially adapted to his interpretation. For he sees here a prediction of the occasion when the Wicked Priest 'pursued after the Teacher of Righteousness to swallow him up in his hot

fury, even to the place of his discovery,² and on the occasion of the sacred season of rest, the day of atonement, he burst in among them to swallow them up and make them stumble on the fast day, their sabbath of rest' (1Q p Hab. xi 5-8). This incident was evidently one which impressed itself particularly on the memory of our commentator and his friends, and he could not believe that inspired prophecy had overlooked it.

Sometimes, however, neither atomizing nor the judicious selection of textual variants was adequate in extracting a suitable meaning from the prophet's words. Allegorization might then be resorted to. What sense, for instance, could be made of Habakkuk ii 17? Here the prophet, thinking of the Chaldeans' felling of the cedars of Lebanon and hunting of the beasts which lived there, says: 'The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm thee; the destruction of the beasts will terrify them.' For 'them' our commentator reads 'thee', as also do the Greek and Syriac versions. But nothing save allegorization could make the passage yield a sense which he would regard as acceptable. So he comments: 'The interpretation of this saying concerns the Wicked Priest, to repay him his recompense as he recompensed the poor. For *Lebanon* is the council of the community, and the beasts are the simple men of Judah, the doers of the law' (1Q p Hab. ii 2-5).

By one means or another, then, the words of Habakkuk are made to refer to a new situation—to the last generation of the 'epoch of

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wickedness', as the commentator reckoned it. His procedure involved large-scale reinterpretation of the prophet's words. But it is we who speak of a 'new situation' and of 'reinterpretation'; the commentator did not think in that way. To his mind, this was the precise situation which God had in view when he spoke by Habakkuk; this was the true interpretation of Habakkuk's oracle. He did not say to himself: 'The prophecy of Habakkuk enshrines permanent principles which are as applicable to my day as they were to his.' He said rather: 'The situation which has now begun to develop is the situation which God was pointing to when he made known his purpose to Habakkuk, and thanks to the further revelation given by God to the Teacher of Righteousness, I can clearly discern the persons and the tunes referred to in this prophecy.'

To the three propositions in which the basic principles of Qumran exegesis have already been stated, we may now add four more which show how these principles were applied by our commentator and his colleagues:

- (a) The biblical text is atomized so as to bring out its relevance to the situation of the commentator's day; it is in this situation, and not in the biblical text, that logical coherence is to be sought.
- (b) Variant readings are selected in such away as will best serve the commentator's purpose.
- (c) Where a relation cannot otherwise be established between the biblical text and the situation to which the text is believed to point, the allegorical method may be employed.

² Heb. 'abbêt gālûtô ('el-bêt gālûtô); otherwise rendered 'to his place of exile'. Others read 'ābôt gallûtô, 'desiring to strip him'; this would chime in with MT *mē'ôrêhem*.

- (d) Biblical prophecy is interpreted so as to apply to the end-time introduced by the ministry of the Teacher of Righteousness, and not least to the career of the Teacher himself.

III

While our commentator reduces the text of Habakkuk's oracle to incoherence by his atomizing exegesis, his own composition exhibits sufficient coherence and logical order for Dr. W. H. BROWNLEE to analyse its material under five main heads:³

1. *The Religious Situation*
(i 1-ii 10a; commentary on Habakkuk i 1-5)
2. *The Political Situation*
(ii 10b-vi 12a, commentary on Habakkuk i 6-17)

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3. *The Teacher of Righteousness and his Party*
(vi 12b-viii 3a, commentary on Habakkuk ii 1-4)
4. *The Wicked Priest and his Party*
(viii 3b-x 10a, commentary on Habakkuk ii 5-17)
5. *The Doom of Idolatrous Nations*
(xii 10b-xiii 4, commentary on Habakkuk ii 18-20)

It will be convenient to consider the second of these five heads ('The Political Situation') before the first ('The Religious Situation'), the more so as the first goes closely in subject-matter with the third ('The Teacher of Righteousness and his Party') and fourth ('The Wicked Priest and his Party').

The second section is mainly concerned with the impending subjection of the Holy Land to the Kittim. The Kittim are plainly a world-power, pursuing a career of imperial conquest from the west. It may be, then, that we shall have greater success in identifying them than in identifying individuals in Judaea who, for all their importance in our commentator's eyes, may not have left their mark on the pages of history.

The Kittim in their swift advance overthrow all who stand in their way, and impose their own dominion upon them. They take possession of many lands and plunder the cities of the earth, 'to inherit habitations not their own', as Habakkuk says (i 6). 'They trample the earth with their horses and their beasts (*bēhēmāh*); they come from afar, from the coastlands of the sea, to devour all the peoples like vultures, and they are never satisfied' (comment on Habakkuk i 8): 'With wrath and anger, with fury of face and impetuous countenance they speak to all the peoples' (comment on Habakkuk i 9). They mock at kings and mighty men; they scoff at a great army; they laugh at fortresses, for they surround them with a large force and terrorize the defenders into submission. This, too, is a mark of divine judgment, for these

³ M. BURROWS *et al.* (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery* I (New Haven, 1950), p. xix.

fortresses are surrendered because of the sin of those who live in them (all this is a comment on Habakkuk i 10).

Nor do they rely on military power alone to achieve their ends; for them, diplomacy is another means of making war. 'In the council all their policy is to do evil, and with cunning and deceit they behave towards all the peoples' (comment on Habakkuk i 7). Their rulers (*môshêlê ha-Kitti'im*) follow one another in quick succession: 'by the counsel of a wicked house they come one after another to devastate the earth' (comment on Habakkuk i 11).

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When the prophet describes the Chaldaeans as netting men like fish (Habakkuk i 15), the commentator explains that the Kitti'im 'amass their wealth with all their plunder like the fish of the sea.' And when we are told that the Chaldaeans thereupon pay divine honours to the nets in which they have caught their prey (Habakkuk i 16), the commentator notes that the Kitti'im offer sacrifice to their standards and worship their weapons of war. They impose heavy tribute on the nations, to be paid year by year, thus denuding the lands of their wealth. And in war they are completely ruthless; their sword spares neither age nor sex.

Who were these Kitti'im? The term *Kittîm* in the Hebrew Bible is usually associated with the Greek world, but once at least (Daniel xi 30) it is used of Romans. Our commentator almost certainly had the Romans in mind. Several of the individual points in his description would be applicable to other invaders, but the whole impression fits the Romans better than any other conquering people of whom we know. A strong case has been made out for the Seleucid forces by Professor H. H. ROWLEY,⁴ but the Seleucids, as the Jews knew them at close quarters, did not come from 'the coastlands of the sea' but across the Syrian frontier. The Seleucid kings are indeed said to have hired mercenaries from 'the coastlands of the sea', but these were foreign troops, additional to their regular forces (1 Maccabees vi 2.9; xi 38).⁵

The statement that the Kitti'im pay divine honours to their standards and weapons of war may be an exaggeration, but it is a fact that the 'eagles' and other standards of the Roman army were regarded as sacred objects. The 'eagle', the standard of the legion, was kept in a special shrine in the military camp and was regarded as affording sanctuary. It may be that the Seleucids treated their ensigns with similar veneration,⁶ but the evidence is stronger in the case of the Romans. When Titus's legionaries stormed the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70, they set up their standards over against the eastern gate and sacrificed to them there—a very 'abomination of desolation.' in the eyes of the Jews—but there is no suggestion that this was the first time such a thing had been done. Professor G. R. DRIVER and Dr. Cecil ROTH have expressed the view that this incident (recorded by Josephus in *BJ* vi 316) is what our commentator has in mind;⁷ but our commentator speaks of a regular practice: *hēmâh zôbêhîm lě'ôthô-thâm*.

⁴ E.g. in 'The Kittim and the Dead Sea Scrolls', *PEQ* 88 (1956), pp. 92 ff.

⁵ In 1 Maccabees xv 1 Antiochus VII sends Simon a letter from 'the coastlands of the sea', actually from Rhodes.

⁶ Cf. H. H. ROWLEY, *loc. cit.*, pp. 97 ff. I should draw a distinction between the cult-standards set up in the perforated stones which he mentions on p. 103 (cf. the cult-standard found in Area C at Hazor, described by Y. YADIN in *BA* 20 [1957], pp. 43 f.) and the standards worshipped by the Kitti'im, which the context implies were military standards.

⁷ G. R. DRIVER, as reported in *Daily Telegraph*, June 20, 1957; C. ROTH, in *The Listener*, June 27, 1957, etc.

It has, again, been thought probable that the 'Kitti'im of Assyria'

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and the 'Kitti'im in Egypt' mentioned in the Qumran *Rule of War* are the Seleucid and Ptolemaic forces respectively, and that the Kitti'im of the Habakkuk commentary are therefore more likely to have been Hellenists than Romans. But it is by no means certain that the Kitti'im of the *Rule of War* are Hellenists, and even if they were that would not necessarily determine the sense of the word in other Qumran literature.

When we are told that the rulers of the Kitti'im follow one another in quick succession 'by the counsel of a wicked house' (the Roman senate?), five are reminded of the disconcerting suddenness and frequency with which one Roman governor in the east was replaced by another in the troubled times of the 1st century B.C. Moreover, the phrase 'the rulers of the Kitti'im' (*mōshēlē ha-Kitti'im*) occurs in the Nahum commentary from Cave 4 in a context which indicates that there, at least, the Romans must be meant: an unspecified lapse of time is mentioned 'from Antiochus to the rise of the rulers of the Kitti'im'—and since Antiochus himself was a ruler of the Seleucids it is unlikely that Kitti'im means Seleucids in this setting.

If we could be sure of the identity of the Kitti'im in the Habakkuk commentary, we should have a valuable clue to the date of the commentary (as distinct from the date of the manuscript in which its text has been preserved). At the Strasbourg Colloquium on the Dead Sea Scrolls held in May 1955, Professor VAN DER PLOEG presented an interesting and, I think, successful argument to the effect that 'the author's historical standpoint is later than the clashes which the Teacher of Righteousness had with the Wicked Priest and his men, but earlier than the entry of the Kitti'im into action at Jerusalem.' This argument is based on the usage of the perfect and imperfect tenses in the commentary. If, then, the Kitti'im are indeed to be identified with the Romans, his conclusion seems cogent that 'the tone of the commentary, the author's certainty that the Kitti'im will punish the Jewish adversaries of the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers, are best explained if the document was composed at no distant time from the events which brought the Romans into Judaea'⁸—that is to say, shortly before the summer of 63 B.C.

This conclusion conflicts with the view expressed by Professor A. DUPONT-SOMMER,⁹ that Pompey's capture of the temple area in 63 B.C. is referred to by our commentator in the words already quoted: 'on the occasion of the sacred season of rest, the day of atonement, he burst in among them (*or* shone forth upon them) to

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swallow them up and make them stumble or, the fast day, their sabbath of rest' (see p. 10 above). He takes these words to refer to a *parousia* of the martyred Teacher of Righteousness, appearing to the discomfiture of his enemies at the very moment of Pompey's victory, as a token that this victory was a nemesis on them for their treatment of him. But the subject of the clause, to judge by the context, is not the Teacher of Righteousness but the Wicked Priest; and

⁸ 'L'usage du parfait et de l'imparfait comme moyen de datation dans le commentaire d'Habacuc', in *Les Manuscrits de la Mer Morte: Colloque de Strasbourg* (Paris, 1957) pp. 25 ff.; the passages quoted are on pp. 33, 35.

⁹ *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford; 1952); pp. 27 f., 44.

in spite of Josephus's statement (*Antiquities* xiv 66), it was probably not on the day of atonement that the Romans stormed the temple area.¹⁰ Professor DUPONT-SOMMERS's interpretation of the text at this point is too unnatural, and his inference from it too precarious, to constitute a substantial argument against Professor VAN DER PLOEG's dating of the commentary.

IV

The approach of the Kittim convinced our commentator that the hour of judgment was about to strike, when the Teacher of Righteousness would be vindicated and his adversaries punished. So we may now consider how he finds the religious situation of his day foretold in the oracle of Habakkuk, and what references he discerns thereto the Teacher of Righteousness, his followers and his opponents.

The warning; addressed in Habakkuk i 5 to those who would not believe in the work which God was to do in their days, even if they were told about it, is directed by the commentator against 'deceitful men, with the Man of Falsehood', who pay no attention to the things which 'the Teacher of Righteousness [told them] from the mouth of God'—covenant-breakers, 'who will not believe when they hear all that is c[oming upon] the last generation, from the mouth of the priest into [whose heart] God has put [wisdo]m to interpret all the words of his servants the prophets, [through] whom God told all that was to come upon his people and up[on his land] (1Q p Hab. ii 1 ff.). Here it is most natural to conclude that 'the priest' is identical with the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom, as we have seen, 'God made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants the prophets' (p. 7 above).

The exegetical viewpoint at Qumran might well be expressed in New Testament language, in the words spoken by Peter to the crowd in Solomon's colonnade: 'looses... and all the prophets who

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have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterwards, also proclaimed these days' (Acts iii 22, 24). And this exegetical viewpoint, which interpreted all that the prophets had spoken in terms of the epoch which had now set in, was the viewpoint from which their 'teacher of Righteousness had taught them to understand the sacred scriptures. Who was this man, whose interpretation of those scriptures exercised so great an influence on the thought and life of the Qumran community?

As soon as the Habakkuk commentary from Qumran began to be studied, it was recognized that the Teacher of Righteousness mentioned in it must be the same as the Teacher of Righteousness already known from the 'Zadokite Work' of which two considerable, but imperfect, manuscripts had been discovered half a century earlier in the Cairo *genizah*. (This work is now also represented by manuscript fragments from the Qumran caves, many centuries older than the two Cairo manuscripts.) There are further references to the Teacher of Righteousness in other Qumran commentaries, discovered after the Habakkuk commentary which we are considering. From all these references the Teacher was evidently the effective founder of the Qumran community, as well as its spiritual leader, raised up by God for the godly remnant 'to lead them in the way of his heart and to make known to the last generations

¹⁰ Cf. M. B. DAGUT, 'The Habakkuk Scroll and Pompey's Capture of Jerusalem', *Biblica* 32 (1951), pp. 542 ff.

what he was going to do in the last generation—the congregation of the faithless' (Zad. i 11 f.).

It is plain, too, from the Habakkuk commentary that the Teacher was not only a spiritual leader but a figure of eschatological significance. Acceptance of his teaching, loyally keeping to the path which he marked out for his followers—this was the way to eternal life. So the well-known affirmation of Habakkuk ii 4b, 'the righteous shall live by his faith', is explained thus: 'Its interpretation concerns all the doers of the law in the house of Judah, whom God will save from the house of judgment because of their labour ('*āmāl*) and their faith in (or faithfulness to) the Teacher of Righteousness' (1Q p Hab. viii 1-3).

It is not certain that this Teacher can be identified with any historical personage known to us from sources outside the Qumran or Zadokite literature. This being so, we might consider whether some of his contemporaries are more easily identifiable. But here too we are faced with a difficulty: his contemporaries are referred to in such vaguely allusive terms that their identification is almost as precarious as his, although some of them at least should be people of whom we have independent knowledge.

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Outstanding among these contemporaries is the Teacher's inveterate enemy, called the Wicked Priest. From what we are told of him, we gather that he was a man of high eminence and authority in the Jewish nation.

There appears to have been one specially offensive display of hostility by the Wicked Priest towards the Teacher of Righteousness. This was on the occasion referred to above, when he invaded the meeting-place of the Teacher and his followers on the day of atonement. Presumably the Teacher and his companions were observing the sacred day in accordance with their own calendar (probably identical, or almost identical; with the calendar of Jubilees),¹¹ when the Wicked Priest, who followed the temple calendar and kept the fast on another date, polluted the purity of their gathering by his unceremonious intrusion in order to make them commit what was in their eyes a sacrilege on a 'sabbath of rest'.

At one time better things might have been expected of the Wicked Priest, 'who was called by the name of truth when first he arose, but when he ruled in Israel his heart was lifted up and he forsook God and betrayed the ordinances for the sake of wealth' (1Q p Hab. viii 8-11). His greed for wealth combined with his craving for strong drink to work his undoing. Not only did he 'walk in the ways of drunkenness to quench' his thirst' and seize the wealth of the ungodly, but the 'violence done to the land' of which Habakkuk complains in Ch. ii 17 is interpreted. of 'the towns of Judah', where the Wicked Priest 'plundered the wealth of the poor' (1Q p Hab. xii 9 f.).

The 'poor' ('*ebyônîm*) are probably not merely those who had little of this world's goods; the word, as so frequently in the Psalms, will have a religious as well as an economic connotation, indicating in this context those who sympathized with the Teacher of

¹¹ Cf. A. JAUBERT, 'Le calendrier-des Jubilés et de la secte de Qumran', *VT* 3 (1953); pp. 250 ff.; see also bibliography in F. M. CROSS, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (1958), p. 36, n. 71, to which should now be added S. TALMON, 'The Calendar Reckoning of the Sect from the Judaean Desert', *Scripiae Hserosolymitana* 4 (1958), pp. 162 ff.

Righteousness and his followers. It may be that one form of persecution which the community had to endure at the hands of the Wicked Priest was confiscation of their property.

But this ill-gotten gain would not profit those who amassed it. The words 'Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples will plunder you' (Habakkuk ii 8); are interpreted of 'the last priests of Jerusalem, who pile up wealth and unjust gain from the plunder of the peoples, but in the latter days their wealth with their plunder will be given into the hand of the army of the Kittim, for they are *the remnant of the peoples*' (1Q p Hab. ix 4-7)—i.e. they are the last Gentile nation that will dominate Israel. The

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Wicked-Priest in particular would come to a bad end: 'because of the [e]vil done to the Teacher of Righteousness and the men of his council, God gave him into the h[ands of] his [en]emies, to make him waste away in bitterness of soul, because he treated his elect wickedly' (1Q p Hab. ix 9-12). And if the Wicked Priest is indicated a few lines earlier by 'the priest who rebelled [and transgressed the ordinances of [God]]', then we have a further account of his fate: 'they smote' him with the judgments of wickedness, and 'wrought horrors of sore diseases upon him, and deeds of vengeance on his body of flesh' (1Q p Hab. viii 16-ix 2).

It is not so easy as might have been expected to identify the Wicked Priest among the successive priests who 'ruled in Israel' during the two centuries or so preceding the end of the Second Temple. Unfortunately, the history of those times reveals too many well-qualified candidates! Perhaps the best qualified of all is Alexander Jannaeus, who became king and high priest of the Jews in 103 B.C., and held the dual office until his death in 76 B.C. My reasons for preferring to identify him as the Wicked Priest have been stated elsewhere,¹² and need not be repeated here.

But strong arguments have been put forward for other identifications, ranging in time from Menelaus, appointed high priest by Antiochus IV in 171 B.C., to Eleazar, captain of the temple in A.D. 66. A surprisingly impressive case has been made out by Professor F. M. CROSS¹³ in favour of his identification with Simon, the brother of Judas Maccabaeus, under whom the high priesthood was definitively transferred by popular choice from the Zadokite to the Hasmonean line. The statement that the Wicked Priest 'walked in the ways of drunkenness to quench his thirst' agrees excellently with what Josephus tells us of Jannaeus;¹⁴ but it can also be linked with the account of Simon's murder in 1 Maccabees xvi 16, which took place 'when Simon and his sons were drunk': I am not disposed to abandon the identification of the Wicked Priest with Jannaeus until stronger evidence is available; Dr. CROSS, however, writes with knowledge of texts which have not yet been published, and he assures us that 'positions which must be won now by complicated combinations of bits and tatters of evidence will establish themselves automatically once the vast corpus is laid out for all to see'¹⁵.

¹² In *The Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran Texts* (London, 1957), pp. 18 ff. [http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/qumran_bruce.pdf]

¹³ *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, pp. 101 ff.; see also P. WINTER in *PEQ* 91 (1959), pp. 38 ff.

¹⁴ *Antiquities* xiii 398.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. vii. Whatever may be said of the Wicked Priest, it is to my mind unlikely that the identification of Jannaeus with the 'raging lion' of 4Q p Nahum will be overthrown. Again, even if Dr. CROSS is right in identifying Simon as the 'man of Belial' on whom, according to 4Q *Testimonia*, the curse of Joshua vi 26 falls (*op. cit.*, pp. 112 f.), it does not necessarily follow that Simon is also the Wicked Priest.

What, then, is to be said of the 'house of Absalom' which was 'struck dumb when the Teacher of Righteousness was chastised' instead of taking his side against the man of Falsehood? they may

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be given that name because to our commentator their conduct appeared as treacherous as that of Absalom, King David's favourite son. If, however, they were so called because of their association with a historical character whose actual name was Absalom, there is no lack of men bearing that name within the period of the community's residence at Qumran. Either Jannaeus or his wife Salome Alexandra had a brother named Absalom, who became the father-in-law of their younger son Aristobulus (Josephus, *Ant.* xiv 71). An earlier Absalom figures in 2 Maccabees xi 17 as a member of Judas Maccabaeus's embassy to Lysias in 164 B.C.; he may have been the father of Mattathias (1 Maccabees xi 70) and Jonathan (1 Maccabees xiii 11) who appear among the officers of Jonathan and Simon. And a much later Absalom is mentioned by Josephus (*BJ* ii 448) as an ally of Menahem the Zealot in A.D. 66. All three have been thought of in connection with the 'house of Absalom' upbraided by our commentator; and no doubt there were many other bearers of the same name whose memory has been lost. In the present stage of our knowledge, the 'house of Absalom' will not provide a pointer to the solution of our main problems.

What can be said about 'the Man of Falsehood, who rejected the law in the midst of all their congregation' on the occasion when the house of Absalom failed to support the Teacher of Righteousness? In his interpretation of Habakkuk ii 12 f. ('Woe to him who builds a town with blood, and founds a city on iniquity...') our commentator says that the reference is to 'the prophet of falsehood (*or* the spouter of falsehood, *maṭṭîph hakkākāh*) who has led many astray, to build a worthless town with blood and to raise up a congregation with lying for the sake of its glory, to make many weary themselves in worthless labour and to direct them in deeds of lying, with the result that their toil will be in vain, for they will come to fiery judgment because they have reviled and defamed God's elect ones' (1Q p Hab. x 9-13). Is this 'prophet of falsehood' identical with the 'Man of Falsehood'? If he is—and there is some reason to think so then it is evident from this and other references in the Qumran and Zadokite literature¹⁶ that he was the leader of a rival religious group—perhaps the group referred to elsewhere as the 'Expounders of Smooth Things',¹⁷ whom I take to be the Pharisees. I have thought of a Pharisaic leader like Simeon ben Shetach as being intended by the 'Man of Falsehood';¹⁸ if the Teacher, however, is held to belong to an earlier generation, one may think of the 'Man of Falsehood'

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as a leader of the majority group of the *ḥāsîdîm* about the time when that group begins to appear as the Pharisaic party; the Teacher and his followers might then be envisaged as a minority group of *ḥāsîdîm* who broke with the main body.

¹⁶ 1Q p Micah on Micah i 5 f.; Zad. i 14 f.; viii 13 ff.; xx 14 f.

¹⁷ 1QH ii 32; 4Q p Nahum i 2, 7; Zad. i 18 f. For the origin of the expression cf. Isaiah xxx 10.

¹⁸ *The Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran Texts*, p. 26.

These considerations may help us to reconstruct the setting in which the Teacher of Righteousness embarked upon his ministry; they cannot be said as yet to point to his identity. I should regard it as certain that he was persecuted by a Hasmonean ruler, and that he also found himself at variance with the Pharisees, although they too had to endure much trouble at the hands of the Hasmoneans. For the rest, the wisest course is to say 'We don't know', and to hope that further accessions to our knowledge will enable us to reach a more satisfying conclusion.

V

Thus far, scarcely any reference has been made to the views of Dr. Cecil ROTH, which have come to the notice of the general public by means of lectures and articles in various periodicals. A more detailed statement of Dr. ROTH's thesis is awaited in his forthcoming book on the subject;¹⁹ anything that is said about it at this stage has therefore an interim character.

Dr. ROTH connects the events to which the Habakkuk commentary alludes with the incident recorded by Josephus in *BJ* ii 433 ff. About the time of the outbreak of the Jewish revolt against Rome in A.D. 66, Menahem, son of that Judas who had led a revolt sixty years earlier, raided Herod's armoury at Masada and armed a band of followers whom he thereupon led to Jerusalem. There he assumed leadership of the revolt, and directed the siege of the fortress of Antonia, which capitulated on the 6th of Gorpiaeus (approximately 3rd Tishri). But Menahem's tyrannous behaviour soon became intolerable. He assumed regal state, and his followers paid off old scores against their opponents in Jerusalem, their most distinguished victim being the former high priest Ananias the son of Nedebaeus. But Ananias was the father of Eleazar, captain of the temple, whose recent action in calling a halt to the sacrifices offered on behalf of the Roman Emperor had constituted the official declaration of war against Rome. Eleazar was bound to avenge his father's death. So, with his associates, he attacked Menahem when the latter was worshipping in the temple in kingly apparel. Menahem and his followers resisted for a time,

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and then fled; Menahem sought refuge in hiding-place in Ophel, south of the temple area, but was discovered, dragged out, tortured and killed, together with his chief lieutenant Absalom. The remnant of his party escaped to Masada, where they held out, under the leadership of his kinsman Eleazar ben Jair, until their stronghold was stormed by the Romans in May, A.D. 73.

According to Dr. ROTH, Eleazar, captain of the temple, was the Wicked Priest, while the Teacher of Righteousness was either Menahem or else his kinsman Eleazar ben Jair. The Wicked Priest's rude intrusion upon the Teacher and his company when the latter were celebrating the day of atonement is identified with Eleazar's attack on Menahem and his followers while they were worshipping in the temple. Certainly the time of year is close enough, especially if the two parties followed different calendars.

¹⁹ This book, *The Historical Background of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Blackwell, Oxford), was published in December 1958. My comments on Dr. ROTH's position are based mainly on his article 'The Jewish Revolt against the Romans (66-73) in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls', *PEQ* 90 (1958), pp. 104 ff. Dr. ROTH's position is also maintained in most material particulars by Professor G. R. DRIVER, and has several points of identity with that of Dr. H. E. DEL MEDICO.

The identification of the Qumran community with a Zealot group is not to be rejected out of hand. (If, on other, grounds, we think of the Qumran community as an Essene group, let us remember that Hippolytus²⁰ describes one Essene party as Zealots and sicarii.) But has the account of Eleazar's attack on Menahem anything of material significance in common with the Wicked Priest's attack on the Teacher of Righteousness? True, Josephus can be thoroughly tendentious, and he has a strong bias against the Zealots. But his account of the killing of the former high priest seems objective enough. And if in fact Ananias was the father of the Wicked Priest, and had been assassinated by the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers, then the Wicked Priest had some excuse for 'pursuing after the Teacher of Righteousness to swallow him up in his hot fury'. The Qumran commentator would be as suspect a writer as Josephus if he could perpetrate such a *suppressio veri* as this.

The character and career of the Teacher, in so far as we can reconstruct there from the Qumran and Zadokite texts, make a different impression from what we know of Menahem or Eleazar ben Jair. The Teacher was most probably a priest; there is not even a hint that Menahem or Eleazar ben Jair came of a priestly family. Menahem's claims were royal rather than priestly; perhaps he wished to be recognized as the warlike 'Messiah of Israel' mentioned in a number of Qumran documents. Josephus calls him a 'sophist' (as he also calls his father Judas); but that is part of Josephus's technique. He turns the various parties in Judaism into philosophical schools after the Greek fashion, and accordingly refers to their leaders as sophists.

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It is evident that the Teacher of Righteousness of the Habakkuk commentary and related texts was the effective founder of the Qumran community; his was the original and creative mind which stamped its impress on the whole brotherhood. But the movement led by Menahem, and by Eleazar ben Jair after him, received its distinctive character not from either of them but rather from Menahem's father Judas and from Judas's colleague Sadduk. If Menahem's party was indeed the Qumran community, then either Judas or Sadduk would be a better choice for identification as the great Teacher of Righteousness.

Some of the Qumran documents were composed a considerable time after the Teacher of Righteousness was 'gathered in' (an expression more suitable for a natural death than for the way in which Menahem and Eleazar ben Jair died). But less than two years elapsed between Menahem's death and the destruction of the headquarters at Qumran, according to Père de VAUX's reading of the archaeological evidence; less than seven years elapsed between Menahem's death and the fall of Masada, the last outpost of his followers.

Dr. ROTH suggests that the Damascus residence of the community is to be literally understood, and that it is to be dated between 4 B.C. and A.D. 6. But if it was in the literal Damascus that the community found refuge at that time, it is surely to that time that the Zadokite work must be ascribed. Yet in the Zadokite work the Teacher of Righteousness is already dead: twice over he is said to have been 'gathered in',²¹ and in the second of these passages about forty years elapse between his 'gathering in until the destruction of all the men of war who returned with the Man of Falsehood'. Dr. ROTH's identification of the Man of

²⁰ *Refutation of All Heresies*, ix 21.

²¹ *Zad.* xx 1, 14.

Falsehood with Simon bar Giora is, fortunately, only tentative; if it were put forward as an integral part of his reconstruction it would increase the complication still more. The complication is acute enough already, unless the Teacher of Righteousness introduced at the beginning of the Zadokite work is a different person from the Teacher of Righteousness in the Habakkuk commentary.

Above all, it seems impossible to reconcile Dr. ROTH's view with the palaeographical evidence. The discovery of a number of dated manuscripts at Murabba'at has made it possible to establish not only a relative, but an absolute; chronology for the Qumran manuscripts. If the manuscript of the Habakkuk commentary was copied as late as A.D. 25—the latest date which palaeographers have suggested for it

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(and it was probably copied half a century before that)—the composition of the work itself can have been no later; and the clash between the Wicked Priest and the Teacher of Righteousness was an event of the past when the commentator wrote.

Dr. ROTH's thesis is attractive and stimulating, and one can only admire the skill and vigour with which it has been presented. But the view which will ultimately triumph will do equal justice to the internal evidence as interpreted by historians and philologists, to the archaeological evidence as interpreted by archaeologists, and to the palaeographical evidence as interpreted by palaeographers. It cannot be said that Dr. ROTH's view does this.

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