

# THE WICKED PRIEST OF 1QP<sup>HAB</sup>

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## Introduction

The information provided in the pesher Habakkuk is significant in offering data regarding the historical period and events relating to a sect of Judaism known as the Qumran Community. Nevertheless, this text is problematic as the pesherist refers to certain individuals using code names: the Teacher of Righteousness, the Man of the Lie, the Wicked Priest and the Kittim. Paramount to understanding the period and events of this community is deciphering to whom these code names refer. In order to better determine the identity of these characters, scholars have considered information found in other Dead Sea Scrolls, notably 1Qp<sup>Nah</sup>, CD, and 4Qp<sup>Ps</sup>37. For the purpose of this study, however, I will limit the information to that provided in the pesher Habakkuk in reference to one of the characters: the Wicked Priest.

The pesher Habakkuk is an interpretation of the book of Habakkuk. Column vii, 4-5 states that God had given the wisdom of interpretation to the one called the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore assumed that the

Teacher of Righteousness provided the interpretation found within the commentary. The interpreter perceived the current events of his day, as relating to his community as opposed to the wider Jewish community, as fulfillment of the prophecies foretold in the prophetic Book of Habakkuk. The pesher speaks of a conflict among the Teacher of Righteousness, possibly the founder of the Qumran community, the Man of the Lie and the Wicked Priest. Unfortunately, the pesher does not provide specific references as to whom these cryptonyms may apply. Nevertheless, an analysis of the characteristics ascribed to the Wicked Priest together with historical and current sources may provide some clues as to aid in uncovering his identity. For purposes of dating the text, I will be looking to archeology and paleography.

## 1. Dating

The archeological surveys from the Dead Sea and paleographical studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls, although yielding valuable information for dating the origins of the community, do not, with any certainty, fix a precise date. We can, however, assume a general time frame. Still it is important to bear in mind that the composition of the text succeeded the occupation of the site. Moreover, the historical allusions in the text provide criti-

<sup>1</sup>Maurya P. Horgan, "1Qp<sup>HAB</sup>" in M.P. Horgan, *Pesharim and Other Related Documents*, Washington D.C.: 2002, Vol. 6B, p.181. All textual references are by Horgan unless otherwise stated.

cal information in helping to identify characters which archeology cannot.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, archeology provides crucial information pertaining to the origins of the community and thus offers the earliest date for the composition and/or events of the text, while paleography provides the latest possible date.

### 1.1 Archeology

Archeologists have discovered and studied the findings of two strata at Qumran which reflect the original occupation of the site during the Intertestamental Period. These have been termed Period 1a and Period 1b. Although Period 1a has yielded little physical evidence, Period 1b has proven significant in the effort to establish a date. Initial surveys of the site concluded that it can be dated approximately at the beginning of the rule of John Hyrcanus I, 134 – 104 B.C.E. Therefore, we can date period 1a somewhat earlier, but, because of lack of physical evidence, we do not know how

<sup>2</sup>G.R. Driver, "Historical Allusions in the Scrolls", in G.R. Driver, *The Judean Scrolls: The Problem and a Solution*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965, p. 143, 176; proposes that since the Kittim are described in menacing terms, the setting would thus be during or just prior to the occupation of Jerusalem by Rome, as they were previously considered allies of the Jews. He also asserts that "some allusions [to the Kittim] may refer to the time of the Seleucid domination, and others to the Roman period. But the power of the Romans was known in Palestine long before the time of Pompey. The commentator may have expected them to come sooner than they did." Contra: James H. Charlesworth, "Historical Allusions in the Pesharim", in J.H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History: Chaos and Consensus*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans' Publ. Co., 2002, p. 111, bearing in mind the pesher reflects the community and not the wider Jerusalem population; it is possible that due to this alliance between Jerusalem and Rome, the community perceived the Romans as enemies.

far back we can push the date.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, recent studies on the archeology at Qumran have led some scholars to conclude that the origins of the community may be as late as the first half of the first century B.C.E.<sup>4</sup> As many scholars favor R. de Vaux's conclusion of approximately 134 BCE, the dating of the origins of the community may be during the reign of John Hyrcanus I, or, at the earliest, sometime around the end of Simon's reign.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.2 Paleography

Paleographic evidence, has aided in determining the period in which the text was written. A study of the script of the Habakkuk Commentary has determined that this scroll was written in early Herodian script, circa the second

<sup>3</sup>Roland de Vaux, *Archeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 5, bases his conclusion on the evidence of pottery and coins. Nevertheless, in reference to Period 1a, he warns that "dates can be established only approximately by its relation to the better documented period which follows." In agreement with de Vaux cf. Frank M. Cross, "The Essenes, The People of the Scrolls", in F.M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran, 3rd Ed.*, Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1995, p. 59, and Edmund. Wilson, "The Teacher of Righteousness" in E. Wilson, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1955, pp. 54-76.

<sup>4</sup>Pierluigi Piovanelli, "Some Archeological, Sociological, and Cross-Cultural Afterthoughts on the "Groningen" and the "Enochic/Essene" Hypothesis," in Gabrielle Bocaccini (ed), *Enoch and Qumran Origins*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans' Publishing Company, 2005, pp. 367, holds the position that Qumran dates between 100 – 50 B.C.E.; this view is due to recent surveys of the site, carried out by Jean-Baptiste Humbert (1994;1998) and Jodi Magness (2002); Geza Vermes. "The Chronological Framework" in Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English Revised Edition*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p.58, footnote 1 in reference to Jodi Magness states "...her theory is compatible with the early Hasmonean beginnings of the sect based on literary considerations, albeit without supporting archeological evidence."

<sup>5</sup>F.M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher and the Wicked Priest", in *The Ancient Library* p.105; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994, p. 235; W.H. Brownlee, "The Wicked Priest, The Man of Lies, and the Righteous Teacher: The Problem of Identity", *JQR* 73 (1, 1982), p. 1.

half of the first century B.C.E.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the appearance of two distinct handwritings in the scroll establishes that the Habakkuk Peshier is a copy. Furthermore, whether this is a copy of the original or of a copy is undetermined. Consequently, the science of paleography is helpful only in dating the latest period in which the text was written.

In sum, while archeological evidence is significant in providing a general time frame to the study of the origins of the Qumran community, it is limited to the survival and discovery of physical evidence. Although the commentary on Habakkuk does not, implicitly or explicitly, state that the Wicked Priest is related to the founding of the community, the dating of the origins of the Qumran community through archeology provide the earliest date within which the Wicked Priest is to be found.<sup>7</sup> Paleography, on the other hand, offers a period for the final draft of the peshier. Thus, the sciences of archeology and paleography supply a general time frame beginning approximately around the end of Simon's reign (142-134 B.C.E.) or beginning of John Hyrcanus I reign and ending with Antigonus (40-37 B.C.E.). Therefore, the Wicked Priest or Priests will be identified

as one or more of the Hasmonean rulers.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Methodology and Hermeneutics of the Peshierist

The Habakkuk peshier is an interpretation of the prophetic Book of Habakkuk. The peshierist interpreted the prophetic book in light of his current situation and its effect on his community at Qumran. In addition, the ideology of the community emphasized eschatology or the end times. His community was the favoured people of God and they adhered rigidly to the Torah. Thus, everyone else, specifically other Jews, were impure and corrupt. This ideology is particularly emphasized in 1QpHab in the criticisms of the Wicked Priest who ruled in Israel.<sup>9</sup>

In order to understand the peshier, it is essential to first recognize the methods the peshierist utilized in his interpretation of the biblical text. 1QpHab is categorized as a continuous peshier as it follows the biblical text verse by verse and offers an interpretation of each. In this manner, the peshierist is limited to the biblical verse or lemma. His interpretation has to make sense in light of the biblical verse. This creates an atomization or fragmentation of the text. Miller Burrows states clearly:

<sup>6</sup>Deborah Dimant, "Pesharim, Qumran," in David Noel Freedman (ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol.5*, New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 245; Moshe Bernstein "Peshier Habakkuk," in Lawrence H. Schiffman & James C. VanderKam (eds), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls Vol. 2*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 647.

<sup>7</sup>John J. Collins "The Time of the Teacher: An Old Debate Renewed" in Peter Flint, Emmanuel Tov & James C. VanderKam, *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran and the Septuagint*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, p. 224-225. The conflict between the Wicked Priest and the Teacher of Righteousness need not date back to the origins of the community, but may have occurred later. Collins asserts that it may have occurred thirty to forty years after the emergence of the Righteous Teacher.

<sup>8</sup>W.H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 1, posits that the Wicked Priest in the Habakkuk peshier was one or more of the Hasmonean chief priests, as he had to have the ability to attack and loot foreign nations, whereas the pre-Hasmonean high priests were subservient militarily to the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. Moreover, he was viewed as a faithful adherent of the Truth at the beginning of his rule, and this excluded the immediately preceding Hellenizing chief priests, who were popularly charged with compromising the Jewish faith; G.R. Driver, p. 136 "The Maccabean allusions in the Scrolls, if they are rightly identified, preclude a pre-Maccabean date, i.e. any date before circa 165 B.C.E."

<sup>9</sup>1QpHab viii. 8-13; Yigael Yadin, *The Message of the Scrolls*, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1957, p. 95.

The exposition is governed by the order of the text of Habakkuk; each sentence or phrase brings to the commentator's mind events and persons in the history of his nation and his own religious community, and he mentions them as they occur to him. No chronological sequence, therefore, can be inferred from the commentary.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, the significance of understanding the methodology is crucial in analyzing the text.

### 3. Text

While the archeological and paleographical data aid in establishing a viable time frame, the allusions within the text pertaining to the personal characteristics and events of the Wicked Priest will further facilitate uncovering his identity. Initially, an examination of the grammatical constructs, various designations applied to the character in addition to an analysis of specific Hebrew terminology, will not only facilitate his discovery, but may reduce the number of nominees.

#### 3.1 *Man of the Lie / the False Prophet / Dripper of Lies*

While the majority of scholars concur that the Wicked Priest and the Man of the Lie/Dripper of Lies are separate individuals, there is disagreement as to whether they are, in fact, the

same person.<sup>11</sup> As this bears on the issue of the identity of the Wicked Priest, their arguments in support of or against will be expounded upon.

Four passages in the pesher mention an individual opposed to the Teacher of Righteousness. He is referred to as the Man of the Lie (Col. ii.1-3; iv.11;) or the Spouter of Lies (x.9-11; x.17-xi.1).<sup>12</sup> The terms 'Spouter of Lies' and the 'Man of the Lie' are believed to refer to the same individual.<sup>13</sup> The appellation 'Spouter of Lies', however, is variously translated as 'Dripper of Lies' and 'the False Prophet' or 'False Oracle'. Brownlee asserts that the latter interpretation is due to the use of the verb *mattif hak-kāzāv* which lies behind 'dripper' that is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible for the 'distilling' of prophetic speech.<sup>14</sup> Brownlee further states that the 'Man of Lies' parodies the Old Testament title "man of God" for a prophet as the hiphil of *mattif*

<sup>10</sup> Miller Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls with Translations by the Author*, N.Y.: the Viking Press, 1955, p. 160; Moshe J. Bernstein, p.649; James H. Charlesworth, pp.85-86. Contra: A.S. van der Woude, "Wicked Priest or Wicked priests: Reflections on the Identification of the Wicked Priest in the Habakkuk Commentary", *JJS* 33 (1982), p. 353, asserts that the pesherist referred to the wicked priest in chronological order.

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Wilson, p. 6; Lawrence H. Schiffman, p. 232; A.S. van der Woude, "Once Again: The Wicked Priests in the Habakkuk Pesher from Cave 1 of Qumran", *RevQ* 17 (1996), p. 381; James H. Charlesworth, p. 94-95; Michael A. Knibb, "The Commentary on Habakkuk", in Michael A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 235; Timothy H. Lim, "Wicked Priest" in Lawrence H. Schiffman & James C. VanderKam, *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls Vol. 2*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 200, p. 973; William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p.10; John J. Collins, p.225; Phillip R. Callaway, "The Pesherim and the History of the Qumran Community, in P.R. Callaway, *The History of the Qumran Community*, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1998, p.153; Contra: Frank M. Cross "The Righteous Teacher", p. 116-117; Geza Vermes, p. 54; A. Dupont-Sommer, "The Habakkuk Commentary and the New Covenant" in A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952, p. 261.

<sup>12</sup> 'Spouter' is also translated as 'Dripper'. cf. William H. Brownlee, *JQR* p.9.

<sup>13</sup> Michael A. Knibb, p. 243; John J. Collins, p. 225; G.R. Driver, p. 144.

<sup>14</sup> William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p.10 cites Deut. 32:2 as Scripture reference.

is used for both true and false prophecy.<sup>15</sup> Of this connection F.M. Cross asserts:

“The title is taken from Micah 2:11 and is regularly combined in sectarian exposition with Ezekiel 13: 8-12.<sup>16</sup> This provides a link between the Man of the Lie and the False Prophet/Spouter of Lies, thus most probably both terms are synonyms for the same man.”

### 3.1.1 *The Man of the Lie. Is He the Wicked Priest?*

There is disagreement among scholars as to whether the Man of the Lie is a separate individual apart from the Wicked Priest. Arguments for and against this theory are based on passages containing information of the crimes with which they are accused, in addition to passages concerning their location.

For instance, a strong argument in favour of the Man of the Lie being a separate entity from the Wicked Priest is found in the crimes which they are each accused of committing. Column v. 10-11 states that the Man of the Lie, at some point, accused the Righteous Teacher ‘in the midst of their counsel’. He is further accused in column x. 9-13 of causing, “many to err, building a city of emptiness with bloodshed and establishing a congregation with falsehood.”<sup>17</sup> The Wicked Priest, on the other hand, is accused of arrogance and greed, “when he ruled in Israel” (col.xiii. 8-13). Many scholars posit that the Man of

the Lie was originally a member of the Qumran community who had strayed and caused other members of the community with him, presumably with his lies.<sup>18</sup> The difficulty with this thesis is that the Wicked Priest is not accused of lying, but rather, as previously stated, arrogance and greed. Moreover, there remains uncertainty surrounding the exegetical technique employed by the pesherist. Cross argues that the mention of ‘building a city of vanity and blood and establishing a congregation in falsehood’ (column x. 9-13), “may reflect the public occasions upon which the Righteous Teacher opposed the building of a false high-priestly house, and it concomitant, a false congregation.”<sup>19</sup> This implies a literal understanding of “build a city”. This is not, however, necessarily indicated as the parallel ‘establish a false congregation’ denotes.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, the solution to this debate may be found by looking at the functions of the wicked priest, who appears to be outside the community, as suggested by the reference to ‘his rule in Israel’ and the Man of the Lie, who appears to be within the group.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup>William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979, p. 168. True Prophecy cf. Am. 7:16; Ezek. 21:2,7; false prophecy cf. Mic. 2:6,11.

<sup>16</sup>Frank M. Cross, “The Righteous Teacher”, p. 154.

<sup>17</sup>Column x. 17 also makes reference to the Spouter of Lies, unfortunately lines 15-17 are badly corrupted, making it difficult to determine what the accusation is.

<sup>18</sup>Geza Vermes, p. 30; The Manual of Discipline states “where a man had been a member of the Council for at least ten years and had then defected to ‘walk in the stubbornness of his heart’. Not only was he to be expelled, but the same judgment was extended to any of his former colleagues who might take pity on him and share with him their food or money.” (1Qs vii. 22-23).

<sup>19</sup>Frank M. Cross, “The Righteous Teacher”, p. 117; A. Dupont-Sommer, p. 39 states: “The title of ‘prophet’ could be given to the High Priest, provided that the High Priest in office was held to possess the gift of prophecy...” cf. argument on issue of legitimacy p. 10 of this paper.

<sup>20</sup>Michael A. Knibb, p. 243; Contra; William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p.14, states that the False Prophet is charged with two types of building and that “there is no reasonable way to try to equate these two parallel building operations as one, the spiritual.”

<sup>21</sup>James H. Charlesworth, p. 94.

Additional support pertaining to the 'Man of the Lies' membership within the community is found in the commentary's reference to 'traitors' (col. ii. 3-4). The use of the term traitors in column ii. 3-4 connotes membership within a group. In reference to the Wicked Priest sharing the same identity as the Man of the Lie, it is suspected that members of the community would follow after a priest/ruler of Israel in conjunction with their philosophy equating all outsiders as the enemy.

### 3.1.2 Historical Allusions

As previously indicated, the commentary alludes to other figures, notably, the Teacher of Righteousness and the Kittim. Although the identification of this character would assist in the identification of the Wicked Priest, the text is silent as to the identity of this character. The Teacher of Righteousness is the one to whom God gave the wisdom to interpret and is credited with founding the community at Qumran.<sup>22</sup> Although he insists on a rigid observance of the Law, he opposes the cult at Jerusalem. It is unclear whether the Righteous Teacher was a deposed high priest from the Jerusalem Temple or whether he acted in the capacity of priest exclusively at Qumran. The information provided in the Dead Sea Scrolls underscore the importance of the priest at Qumran, yet imparts little information pertaining to the identity of this individual.<sup>23</sup> His main opponent appears to be the Wicked Priest, who, it

is believed, was the high priest of Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, although it is generally agreed that the designation 'Righteous Teacher' refers to one individual, as opposed to the title of 'Wicked Priest', identifying him remains highly improbable and so will not be discussed in the attempt to identify the Wicked Priest.

Additional historical allusions cite the Kittim. It is widely accepted among scholarship that the Kittim in the commentary refer to the Romans rather than the Greeks.<sup>25</sup> Column 6. 4-5 state that they, "sacrifice to their standards, and their weapons are the objects of their reverence." This description corresponds to the description provided by Josephus after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. "Now that the rebels had fled the city, and the temple itself and every thing around was burning, the Romans brought their standards into the sacred spot. And, setting them up facing the eastern gate, they sacrificed to them."<sup>26</sup> Additionally, column 9. 6-7 predicts the plundering of the Temple by the 'Kittim' which describes the occupation of Jerusalem by the Romans in 63 BCE.<sup>27</sup> As the passages alluding to the Kittim are never mentioned in connection with the Wicked Priest, they provide no information in reference to the identity of the Wicked Priest.

In conclusion, two suppositions may be established. First, the Man of the Lie and the False Prophet refer to the same individual.

<sup>22</sup> James H. Charlesworth, p. 83, argues against the theory that the Teacher of Righteousness is to be identified with the founder of the community.

<sup>23</sup> Robert A. Kugler, "Priests" in Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls Vol 1*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 689; James H. Charlesworth, p. 88.

<sup>24</sup> Edmund Wilson, p. 64; Deborah Dimant, p. 245-246.

<sup>25</sup> Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 98 note 2; Edmund Wilson, p. 63; Miller Burrows, p. 142; William H. Charlesworth, p. 111-113

<sup>26</sup> Jos. Wars. 6.6.1.

<sup>27</sup> John J. Collins, p. 221; James H. Charlesworth, p. 110-111.

Secondly, that the Man of the Lie and the Wicked Priest, while accused of different offences against the community also performed their function in different localities, i.e. one from inside the community, the other from the outside. This would support the theory that the Wicked Priest and the Man of the Lie are two separate individuals.

### 3.2 Literary Tools

The author of the pesher uses sobriquets to refer to certain individuals. Specifically, the title of the “Wicked Priest” is problematic in scholarship as some scholars understand this to mean that the priest has assumed the office illegitimately. This position rests largely on the question of lineage; i.e. he was not from the priestly line.<sup>28</sup> Since some scholars assume that the community originated from a pro-Zadokite group, therefore, according to this theory a legitimate priest could only descend from the Zadokites. Other scholars contend that the use of the designation “Wicked Priest” is a play on the Hebrew words for “high priest” and not a reflection on his legitimacy. As this is a key element to uncovering the identity of the wicked priest, the function of this appellation vis-à-vis his legitimacy of position and/or wordplay will first be established.

Other literary aspects, central to discovering the Wicked Priest’s identity, include a study on the use of the relative pronoun ‘who’, and the use of the perfect and imperfect tense. Some scholars posit that references to the Wicked Priest containing these literary elements support the theory that there is, in fact,

more than one priest.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, there are the various dooms ascribed to the Wicked Priest. It is important to bear in mind that none of these elements, except possibly the various dooms credited to the wicked priests, can be understood as differentiating among individuals. Rather, there are numerous ways in which they may have been employed.

#### 3.2.1 *hak-kōhēn hā-rāšā. Pun or Question of Legitimacy?*

A common Hebraic literary feature is paronomasia or pun. In the Habakkuk pesher, there is a reference to the Wicked Priest, *hak-kōhēn hā-rāšā*. Bearing in mind that the Hebrew language is consonantal, it is highly probable that this is a pun on the term high priest, *hak-kōhēn hā-rō’š*, which uses the same letters. Although it is commonly accepted that this is, in fact, the circumstance, some authors debate the legitimacy of his claiming the office of high priesthood, and conclude that dissention arose initially over this issue.<sup>30</sup>

The argument of priestly illegitimacy is based on the community originating due to non-Zadokites claiming the position of high priest-

<sup>29</sup> A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, 1982, was the first to publish a theory concerning the plurality of Wicked Priests followed by Florentino García Martínez “Qumran Origins and the early History: A Groningen Hypothesis”, *Folia Orientalia* 25 (1988), p. 133-136 as cited by Timothy H. Lim “The Wicked Priest’s of the Groningen Hypothesis,” *JBL* 112 (3, 1993) p. 415.

<sup>30</sup> Håkan Bengtsson “Three Sobriquets, their Meaning and Function: The Wicked Priest, Synagogue of Satan, and the Woman Jezebel,” in J. H. Charlesworth (ed), *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, N. Richland Hills: BIBAL Press, 2000, p. 246; Miller Burrows, pp. 150; John J. Collins, p. 217; A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p.354. Although van der Woude suggests that ‘wicked priest’ need not necessarily refer to a ‘high priest’, he does so in order to support his argument that one of the wicked priests was a de facto high priest; Nevertheless, his candidates for the role of wicked priest are all to be found holding the office of high priest.

<sup>28</sup> Robert A. Kugler, 691.

hood.<sup>31</sup> There are several problems with this theory as relating to the Habakkuk pesher. Onias III, the last Zadokite high priest, who ended his tenure in 175 B.C.E., predates the origins of the community by roughly forty years. Although, there is no indication in the pesher which mentions the origins of the community, it does suggest that the community was already in existence. Column xi. 4-6 states: "Its interpretation concerns the Wicked Priest, who (5) pursued the righteous Teacher – to swallow him up with his poisonous (6) vexation – to his house of exile." That the Teacher was followed to his 'house of exile' implies that the site at Qumran already existed. Its existence is further supported by the following lines 6-8: "And at the end of the feast, (during) the repose of the Day of Atonement, he appeared to them to swallow them up (8) and to make them stumble on the fast day, their restful Sabbath." While the first part of the interpretation speaks of an attempted attack on the teacher to his place of exile, i.e. Qumran, the latter reveals an additional attempt by the Wicked Priest, however, this time it is against the community as

noted by the plural 'them'.<sup>32</sup> This statement presupposes an established community. Additionally, the argument of illegitimacy applies to several priests following the death of Onias III, as corruption set in with the selling of the high priesthood to the highest bidder.<sup>33</sup>

An alternative argument against the issue of illegitimacy is based on column viii, 8-9 which states that the Wicked Priest was 'known by the true at the beginning of his standing'. If his position in office was in question, however, he would not have had a good reputation at all.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the commentary on Habakkuk does not list illegitimacy as one of the crimes of the Wicked Priest, but rather he is accused of arrogance and greed, after he began to rule. The specification of his crimes occurring after his rule, place his crimes more in the political arena.

Thus, the play on words *hak-kōhēn hā-rāšā* and *hak-kōhēn hā-rō'š*, suggests that the Wicked Priest is one who held the position of high priesthood in Jerusalem. Accordingly,

<sup>31</sup> Robert A. Kugler, p. 691; cites Jacob Liver (The Sons of Zadok, the Priests in the Dead Sea Sect", *RevQ* 6, 1967, p. 3-30): "... although the priest of Qumran may have been Zadokites, their lineage was not the reason for the community's separation from the Hasmonean; there is no polemic against Hasmonean descent in the scrolls, and the use of the term Aaronide as a priestly title indicates the coexistence at Qumran of priests from various lines."

<sup>32</sup> A. Dupont-Sommer, "The Biblical Commentaries" in A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961, p 266, understands the referent of the phrase 'he appeared before them' as the Teacher of Righteousness, whom after his death appeared to the unfaithful Jews and not the sectaries. Furthermore, the catastrophe alluded to on the Day of Atonement, was the fall of Jerusalem to Pompey in 63 BCE. He further posits that scholars who suggest the referent to be the Wicked Priest also posit that since the community followed a different calendar, the Day of Atonement would have left no mark in history. On the contrary, Dupont-Sommer states that this event indeed left a mark – the date of the capture of Jerusalem and the ensuing loss of independence. This theory is not supported by other scholars.

<sup>33</sup> 2 Macc. 4:7-26; Jason usurps the office of high priesthood through bribery. Menelaus, who was chosen by Jason to bring the bribe money to the king, outbid Jason by 300 talents in an effort to secure the office of high priest for himself. The king accepted Menelaus' bribe and made him high priest in place of Jason.

<sup>34</sup> Phillip R. Callaway, p. 156.

the Wicked Priest will be found among those who held the office of High Priest in Jerusalem; however, his identity will be discovered through his actions and events which correspond to the data found in the peshet and not the legitimacy of his position.

### 3.2.2 Multiple Dooms

The commentary lists four different dooms for the Wicked Priest:<sup>35</sup> Column ix. 1-2, 11, states that he died through evil disease and vengeful acts perpetrated on his body; verse 11 continues with “disease for annihilation in bitterness of soul”; column xi. 13-15 alludes to death by excessive drinking and; column xii. 5 rains divine judgment on him. W.H. Brownlee succinctly states:

The most telling blow to many theories of the identity of the Wicked Priest is to be found in the multiple dooms which befall him, not all of which can be made to fit a single man in known history, nor in any history, if more than one of these dooms is fatal. Attempts to make the details fit the career of a single individual result in mistranslations and forced interpretations.<sup>36</sup>

What remains problematic among scholarship is determining, not only who the referent is, but if the verses, in fact, relate separate deaths, or if the passages describe different afflictions endured by one individual, before his death? In this respect, theories range from one, two,

three and six Wicked Priests.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, there is wide speculation as to which individual specifically the peshet refers. Identification of the Wicked Priest in scholarship range from Judas in 160 B.C.E to Jesus in the early Common Era.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.2.3 Function of the Relative Pronoun ‘Who’

Van der Woude proposes that the relative pronoun is used in the Habakkuk Peshet to distinguish the individual referred to in the immediate interpretation apart from other wicked priests in other passages. This supports his theory that each interpretation which refers to the wicked priest is, in fact, referring to separate individuals. Thus, he asserts that there are six Wicked Priests listed in the commentary in chronological order. Additionally, the absence of the relative pronoun in column xi. 12-xii. 10, van der Woude argues, is suggestive of the contemporaneity of the Wicked Priest to the Habakkuk peshet.<sup>39</sup>

The use of the relative pronoun ‘asher,’ in Biblical Hebrew, was not employed for the purpose of designation, but rather to add

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<sup>35</sup>Scholars generally agree that Col. X. 1-4 refers to an eschatological end and therefore is excluded from the list of various dooms. W.H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup>W.H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 4.

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<sup>37</sup>Karl Elliger, as cited by W.H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 2; Contra a plural identification, Håkan Bengtsson, p. 262, 264, considers it unlikely that the various allusions in the peshet should be understood as evidence for a plurality of priests. He further states that although the wicked priest may have been afflicted with a disease this may not necessarily intend his death. In addition, the use of the perfect refers to a time before his death while imperfect verb refers to his upcoming vindication; A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 35-37 argues for Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II as the Wicked Priests; W.H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 18-34, argues for Aristobulus I, Alexander Janneus and John Hyrcanus; A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, posits Judas, Jonathan, Simon, John Hyrcanus I Alexander Janneus and John Hyrcanus.

<sup>38</sup>The majority of scholars reject theories identifying individuals alluded to in the peshet to any personages dating after 30 B.C.E.

<sup>39</sup>A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 351.

information. Rather, the pronoun **הַזֶּה** -“the one who” would have been utilized. Thus, the use of the relative pronoun may simply be indicative of additional information concerning a previously mentioned individual rather than defining a newly introduced character.<sup>40</sup>

### 3.2.4 Use of the Perfect and Imperfect

The use of the perfect and imperfect tense in the passages relating the death(s) of the Wicked Priest may be a significant indication that the pesher does, in fact, refer to a plurality of Wicked Priests.<sup>41</sup> According to this theory, the passages that contain the perfect tense refer to previous priests who had already died while the imperfect relates to the current

wicked priest.<sup>42</sup> Conversely, it is possible that the use of the perfect and imperfect tense suggests that the wicked priest had suffered some physical affliction but that death had not yet occurred.<sup>43</sup>

In sum, the use of various literary devices such as word plays, grammar and descriptive allusions, although providing valuable data relating to the identity of the Wicked Priest, may also be interpreted variously by scholars thus obfuscating the discovery of the Wicked Priest. Hence, a clarification of these issues is justified in order to establish particular literary conventions. While these factors may indicate that there was more than one wicked priest, the solution to the dilemma of whom and how many wicked priests will be found in establishing parallels between the events cited in the pesher and the events in the lives of the candidates.

### 3.3 Terminology

The first mention of the Wicked Priest is in column viii. 8-13. Lines 8-11 provide us with two important clues as to his identity. The passage reads, “(8) Its interpretation concerns the wicked priest who (9) was called by the true name (*niqra ‘al šem ha’emet*) at the beginning of his standing, but when he ruled (*mšl*)

<sup>40</sup> A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 350, while he recognizes that the relative clause may be used to provide additional information, he states that it cannot be presumed that this usage applies to the Habakkuk pesher. He finds further support that the interpreter is introducing new individuals through the appellation ‘the priest’ (viii 16; xi 12) and ‘the wicked priest’. He maintains that here too, it should not be assumed that ‘priest’ signifies one specific priest, nor that it necessarily refers to the aforementioned ‘Wicked Priest’; Contra, Timothy H. Lim, *JBL*, p. 416, claims that “The position of the relative pronoun and clause after some intervening comments in this sentence can be explained by the characteristically complex and intertwined thought of the pesherist (e.g. 10. 9-13)”; Bruce K. Waltke & M. O’Conner, “An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax”, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990, p. 306: “The ‘near’ or ‘immediate’ demonstratives refer to someone or something that is relatively near the speaker or relatively present to the imagination. The ‘far’ or ‘remote’ demonstratives refer to someone or something relatively different.” Thus, in order to indicate an intended referent rather than add information, the pesherist would have used the pronoun **הַזֶּה** - “the one who” rather than **הַהוּא**. In addition, to signify contemporaneity of the sixth wicked priest to the Teacher of Righteousness, rather than using an absolute, the pesherist would have used the expression **הַהוּא**. Moreover, the use of **הַהוּא** “may introduce dependant or attributive relative clauses...specifying the role of the relative pronoun in the subordinate clause.” p. 333.

<sup>41</sup> A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 351.

<sup>42</sup> A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 351-352; contra, Timothy H. Lim *JBL*, p.417, argues that van der Woude’s explanation of the use of the future in column ix. 5 [‘they continue to amass’] as “describing a habitual action is by no means necessary.” Lim notes that the imperfect is also used in passages describing “divine judgment in one form or another is associated with only four of the six wicked priests”. Furthermore, the future tense which used in conjunction with the fourth wicked priest [ix. 16-x.2] is inadequately explained away by van der Woude “as being influenced by the concept of the last judgment.” p. 417.

<sup>43</sup> Håkan Bengtsson, p. 276.

(10) in Israel, his heart became large and he abandoned God, and betrayed the statutes for the sake of (11) wealth.”<sup>44</sup> The pesharist identifies two distinct stages in the Wicked Priest’s career. He was first recognized as high priest, during which time he was considered to possess a good reputation, and was later given the position of ethnarch. It was sometime during the second phase that he became ‘wicked’.

### 3.3.1 *Niqra ‘al šem ha’emet*

The first characteristic the pesherist gives is that the Wicked Priest was called by the true name or name of truth. The expression “ ‘al šem ha’emet” can be understood in various ways.<sup>45</sup> The usage of this term “ ‘al šem”, in the Hebrew Bible, denotes a person “considered as belonging to” a tribe or family.<sup>46</sup> For the Qumran community, however, this term was not used in the physical sense as belonging to the community but rather to their religious beliefs.<sup>47</sup> In this sense, he would have

been held in high esteem and regarded as reputable.<sup>48</sup> Additional arguments posit that the usage of the term ‘truth’ is significant in establishing a relationship between the Wicked Priest and the Qumranites. The reference to ‘truth’ solidifies the inference that there was, indeed, a connection between his reputation and their religious beliefs. Conversely, some scholars maintain that this allusion to truth suggests that the Wicked Priest was initially a member of the Qumran community.<sup>49</sup> The basis of this position rests on the definition of ‘truth’. According to Brownlee, the community perceived themselves to be, ‘a house of truth in Israel’ and its members to be ‘men of truth’ and ‘sons of truth’. Their function was to be ‘witnesses of truth’ and truth was to be the object of their service.<sup>50</sup> Since the community viewed this man as ‘being called by the name of truth,’ he was initially recognized as belonging to their group, but later defecting. Furthermore, this argument of membership claims that since this episode antedates the rift between the Wicked Priest and the community, the community is to be identified as the Hasidim and

<sup>44</sup>Maurya P. Horgan, “1QpHAb” p. 175.

<sup>45</sup>W.H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, p. 134-137, lists nine different interpretations of the term; Miller Burrows, p. 150, posits that “he was named according his end” i.e. he was given a name indicating his fate, is closer to the intended meaning of the expression. However, he does not state how or why he came to this conclusion; I.R. Tantlevskij, *The Two Wicked Priests in the Qumran Commentary on Habakkuk*, Kraków: The Enigma Press, 1995, p. 5, states: “It seems that this very appointment to the high priestly office of the hero of the antihellenizing Maccabean movement for national liberation and religious purity Jonathan (this name means: “the Lord has given” [or “put”, “placed,” etc.]) could be considered by the Sectarrians a calling “in the name of Truth”, that is, in the cause of the (re-)establishment of a correct temple service, and hence, the restoration of the violated universal harmony.”

<sup>46</sup>Gen. 48:6; Ezra 2:61; Neh. 7:63; 1 Chron. 23:14.

<sup>47</sup>M. A. Knibb, ‘The Commentary on Habakkuk,’ in Michael A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 238-239; A.S. Woude, JJS p. 354; A. Dupont-Sommer, p. 37; J.J. Collins, p. 219.

<sup>48</sup>A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952, p. 37, see footnote 1, asserts: “...he was called by the name of Truth at the beginning of his advent: we may take it that he was then really acting as a “Priest of Yahweh”, in such a way as to please the Pious.”

<sup>49</sup>Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, p. 135-136; A.S. van der Woude, JJS, p. 353-354.

<sup>50</sup>Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher*, Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979, p.135.

not the Essenes.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the Wicked Priest would have initially belonged to or have been associated with the Pious whose main concern was with the Zadokite priesthood. According to the commentary, and as previously established, the legitimacy of the position of the high priest is not in question. This is illustrated by the interpreter's use of the sobriquet 'Wicked Priest' which is the antithetic opponent of 'high priest'. The moniker 'wicked' emphasizes that it is his actions as high priest and not his claim to the office which was disputed.

An alternative understanding of *niqra' al šem ha'emet*, is 'called by a trustworthy name.'<sup>52</sup> This may simply mean that when he took the office of high priest he had a good reputation. To reiterate, at the beginning of his time in office as high priest he was regarded as trustworthy or reputable by the community, but it was afterward, when he began to rule, that he lost his credibility with the community. Evidently, the community initially viewed him as having a good reputation as a high priest but hostility arose when he began to

rule. Thus, having a "true name" refers to his reputation with the community as opposed to his membership within the community.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.3.2 *mašal*

As mentioned above, it was during the period of the high priest's rule that he began to be perceived as 'wicked'. There is, however, some debate over the ambiguous meaning of the *mašal*, 'to rule' in column viii. 9.<sup>54</sup> This bears on the identity of the Wicked Priest as it will help to define his role as ruler. For instance, if he is to be defined as 'King', then we may include Aristobulus I in our list of possible candidates. Should the term *mašal* not be used to refer to a king, but rather an ethnarch or governor, this would then exclude Aristobulus I. According to certain scholars, the term *mašal* does imply kingship.<sup>55</sup> Conversely, it is also accepted that the term, in fact, implies a governor or ethnarch as per Milik who succinctly states: "*mašal* can never be translated 'be king' – in this the usage at Qumran is consistent: the Seleucid Kings are always *malkê Yawan* and the Roman governors are always *mošêlê hak-kittim*. In our text then, *mašal* cannot refer to a

<sup>51</sup> A.S. van der Woude, *JJS* p. 352, posits that *niqra' al šem ha'emet* means "reckoned among the adherents of the truth", and therefore the priest is one who was acceptable to the Pious of Qumran as far as the earlier date part of his life is concerned, which by necessity antedates the rift between the Hasmonean dynasty and the Qumran community. He continues that, since this is the case, "We are forced back to the time of the Hasidim from whom the Essenes trace their origins." This argument presupposes two issues: (1) the conflict between the Righteous Teacher and the Wicked Priest occurred and caused the formation of the community and (2) the Essenes are in fact the sect that occupied Qumran. Pertaining to the former, the Commentary offers no suggestion relating to the origins of the Community, while the latter is still open to much debate. Josephus speaks of a sect called 'Essenes' but they lived in the towns, married and had jobs. The evidence at Qumran suggests that it was a male-only society whose members shared everything they had with the other. In addition, their time was spent studying the Torah and the prophets. It has not been established, however, whether they were part of the Essene movement.

<sup>52</sup> F.M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 110.

<sup>53</sup> Michael A. Knibb, p. 239.

<sup>54</sup> Although the majority of scholars limit the distinction between king and governor, Håkan Bengtsson, p. 253, cites Elliger who proposes that *mašal* "was a technical term for the possession of priesthood in postexilic times." This view is not suggested by other scholars. William H. Brownlee, pp. 133-134, 143, suggests that the term *mašal* is used as pun on the biblical term used in Hab. 2:6, *mašal* rendered 'taunt'.

<sup>55</sup> John J. Collins, p. 219, suggests that although it may be significant that the priest is never said to rule, the term may, nevertheless, be used to describe a kingly rule as in 4QpIsa 3:25; A. Dupont-Sommer, p. 263; proposes Hyrcanus II as his career is clearly divided into two stages: High Priest during the reign of mother, Queen Alexandra and after her death, he assumed the throne along with the title of King.

Jewish king.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, the office that the Wicked Priest held was of a ruling ethnarch as opposed to one who assumed the title of ‘King’.

The BDB, on the other hand, defines this term as “rule, have dominion, reign” in the sense of kingship.<sup>57</sup> Correlation to the usage of this term in reference to kingship may be found in the book of Daniel [11:4] which uses the term *mašal* when referring to King Alexander. Scholarship has dated the book of Daniel to sometime during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV, 175-164 BCE. Although this predates the community by several years, it is highly plausible the term *mašal* retained the same meaning throughout the Greek dominion. Additionally, many current scholars posit characters who bore the title ‘king’ as possible candidates for the Wicked Priest.<sup>58</sup>

Although there is some ambiguity surrounding the intended meaning of this term and its usage at Qumran, the evidence points to the literal understanding of ‘to rule’. Therefore, the Wicked Priest may be one who assumed the title ‘king’.

#### 4. Exclusion of Characters

After the usurpation of the office of high

priest by Jason, the hereditary control of the office by the Zadokites ended. Corruption further set in as the office of high priest was now under the domain of foreign kings; they had the authority to set in office whomever they chose. For this reason, all high priests from Alcimus to Antigonus are possible candidates for the role of the Wicked Priest. The archeology of Qumran Khirbert becomes significant in this respect because it gives a date at which to begin our quest. Also significant is the textual information of 1QpHab, which does not appear to relate information regarding the origins of the community, but rather implies that it was already in existence.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, archeology from Qumran is relevant to this study.

##### 4.1 Judas

Some scholars argue against the necessity of the Wicked Priest being a *de jure* high priest. A.S. van der Woude asserts that Judas acted as *de facto* high priest, when he cleansed the temple in 164 B.C.E.<sup>60</sup> His argument, based on two premises: (1) that the wicked priest may not necessarily refer to a high priest and (2) traditionally Judas was considered a high priest, is fraught with difficulties.<sup>61</sup> Both theories stem from a citation in Josephus which

<sup>56</sup> J.T. Milik, p. 65; Phillip R. Callaway p. 157, cites Stegemann in that the Wicked Priest is never referred to as ‘king’ in the commentary, therefore “the pesherist is probably referring to a time when the high priest was the highest political ruler of the Jewish people”. G.R. Driver, p. 149 also references that the commentary does not distinguish the Wicked Priest as king.

<sup>57</sup> Brown, F., S. Driver, C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004, p. 605.

<sup>58</sup> Lawrence H. Schiffman, p. 236 posits John Hyrcanus I; Igor Tantlevskij, p. 12, favors Alexander Janneus; John J. Collins, p. 228 proposes Alexander Janneus and Hyrcanus II.

<sup>59</sup> Column xi. 5-6, the pesherist describes an incident in which the Wicked Priest pursued the Righteous Teacher to his ‘house of exile’.

<sup>60</sup> 1 Macc. 4: 36-51; 2 Macc. 10:1-8; Igor Tantlevskij, p. 4, asserts that while Judas may have cleansed the Temple in 164 BCE, it remained under the direction of Menelaus until 162 BCE, who was considered a “traitor both to the laws and to his country (2 Macc. 5:15), and who was guilty of the destruction of the Temple (2 Macc. 4-8; Jos, *Ant.* 12, 9.7). Although, G.R. Driver proposes Menelaus as the Wicked Priest, as he would have been considered an illegitimate high priest. Miller Burrows, p.165, he can by no means be considered as ever bearing a good name, nor is there any indication that he suffered from ‘horrors of evil diseases’ – Miller Burrows, p.165.

<sup>61</sup> A.S. van der Woude, 1982, p. 354.

states that Judas succeeded Alcimus as high priest:

But now as the high priest Alcimus was resolving to pull down the wall of the sanctuary, which had been there of old time, and had been built by the prophets, he was smitten suddenly by God and fell down...he at length died, when he had been high priest four years. And when he was dead, the people bestowed the high priesthood on Judas...<sup>62</sup>

This statement, however, does not correspond to 1 Maccabees 9 and, in fact, Josephus later contradicts himself in Ant. 20.10.3, "Now when Jacimus (Alcimus) had retained the priesthood three years, he died, and there was no one that succeeded him, but the city continued seven years without a high priest."<sup>63</sup> Van der Woude reasons that the act of cleansing the Temple would have resulted in the community considering Judas with high regard and thus deeming him as *de facto* high priest.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, the dating of Judas predates the community. As has been determined the community originated approximately 134 B.C.E

or shortly before this date. Judas died in 160 B.C.E. It is highly unlikely that the pesher would recount a conflict between the possible founder, at any rate a leader of the community, and an historical figure. Therefore, Judas is excluded, not only on the basis of dating, but because it cannot be reasonably argued that he was high priest, *de facto* or otherwise.

#### 4.2 Alcimus

Few scholars suggest Alcimus as the Wicked Priest.<sup>65</sup> His reception by the Hasidim at the beginning of his term as high priest is suggestive of a 'good reputation' (viii. 8-9). The Hasidims were first among the Israelites to seek peace from them, for they said:

A priest from the line of Aaron has come with the army, and he will not harm us. Alcimus spoke peaceable words to them and swore this oath to them. We will not seek to injure you or your friends. So they trusted him; but he seized sixty of them and killed them in one day...<sup>66</sup>

Column ix. 1-2 is cited as corresponding to the death of Alcimus:

"The text of ix. 1-2 matches extremely well the information we have about the death of Alcimus...Josephus states explicitly that a sudden stroke from God seized the high priest, a characteristic trait similar to the wording of col. ix. 1-2. Furthermore, the use of *marad*, which occurs in col. viii. 11, in connection with the members of the Hellenistic party, seems to underline the

<sup>62</sup>Jos. Ant. 12.10.6.

<sup>63</sup>Contra van der Woude, Timothy H. Lim, *JBL* 112 (3, 1993,) p. 419, stresses the contradiction in Josephus (Ant. 12.10.6; 1, 20. 10.3) and 1 Macc. 9:18, 54-56, as support for his argument against identifying Judas as the Wicked Priest.

<sup>64</sup>A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, 1982, p. 354. "According to early rabbinic traditions, even Mattathias and all his sons functioned as such (high priests)." Contra: Lim highlights that these sources and their traditions post date the Qumran community, and most likely use Josephus as their source. Moreover, it is a question asked from silence as there is no evidence from this period attesting to the traditions in questions. Furthermore, van der Woude claims that the wicked priests are listed chronologically in the Habakkuk pesher, however, according to Josephus (whom van der Woude relies on as a source concerning Judas), Judas became high priest after Alcimus' death. This would decimate van der Woude's chronological order as the arrangement would thus proceed Alcimus-Judas rather than Alcimus-Judas. The latter being the order van der Woude posits.

<sup>65</sup>A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, makes the only connection.

<sup>66</sup>1 Macc. 7: 14- 16; Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 103-104 notes that this event in relation to CD 1.5-12 may signal the beginnings of the Qumran community. Nevertheless, Cross posits Simon as the Wicked Priest.

philhellenism of the high priest.”<sup>67</sup>

Notwithstanding the lack of harmonization with the archeological evidence, there is also a lack of correspondence with the textual data. Alcimus was given the position of high priest by Antiochus V; however, he was never given the higher status of ruler. He committed his atrocities while in the office of high priest. The text, however, is explicit in stating that it was during the rule (mašal) of the Wicked Priest that he began to perpetrate his crimes. Moreover, Alcimus did not suffer at the hands of the enemy, but rather died in office.<sup>68</sup> Thus, Alcimus is disqualified as a candidate for the role of the Wicked Priest.<sup>69</sup>

#### 4.3 Jonathan

Many scholars propose Jonathan as the Wicked Priest, despite the lack of harmonization in dating.<sup>70</sup> Seven years after the death of Alcimus, Jonathan was appointed high priest in 152 BCE and later governor in 150 BCE by Alexander Balas.<sup>71</sup> Thus, Jonathan meets the requirement for holding two offices. Column ix. 11-12, states that the Wicked Priest met

his death at the hands of his enemies, “with disease for annihilation in bitterness of soul, because he had acted wickedly (12) against chosen ones.” Scholars consider this passage to refer to treatment and death of Jonathan at the hands of Trypho.<sup>72</sup> However, the charge in this passage is that, “he had acted wickedly against his chosen ones.” The only groups, of which we are aware, against whom Jonathan acted violently were the hellenizers and the apostates, and we can reasonably assume that the members of the community supported this opposition.<sup>73</sup> While these passages may correspond to Jonathan they may equally be applied to other individuals, especially Simon.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, bearing in mind the earliest date for the establishment of the community around 134 B.C.E., Jonathan may be eliminated as a possible candidate.<sup>75</sup>

In sum, while the science of archeology is invaluable in the quest for the identity of the Wicked Priest, it narrows down the players among whom this character is to be found as the text provides data which facilitate reducing the candidates for the role of the Wicked Priest. Accordingly, Judas, Alcimus, and Jonathan have been eliminated.

<sup>67</sup> A.S van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 355; Miller Burrows, p. 169, asserts that while “the similarity is impressive...there is at least a faint suggestion that his suffering was inflicted by his enemies.”

<sup>68</sup> Geza Vermes, p. 61; *Jos. Ant* 12.10.5; 1 Macc. 9: 54-55; Alcimus suffered a stroke and died three days later.

<sup>69</sup> He was received by the scribes positively at the beginning of his term as high priest and then proceeded to slaughter sixty of them. In this regard he may fulfill the description of ‘called by a true name at the beginning of his standing. 1 Macc. 7:9-16.

<sup>70</sup> See especially Igor Tantlevskij for an exhaustive exposition of the parallels between Jonathan and the Wicked Priest; also Geza Vermes, p. 62; J.T. Milik, p. 66, Michael A. Knibb, p. 238-239.

<sup>71</sup> 1 Macc. 10:18-20; 63-66.

<sup>72</sup> 1 Macc. 12:46-48; 13:23; John J. Collins, p. 222; Frank M. Cross, “The Righteous Teacher”, p. 111. Timothy H. Lim, *Encyclopedia*, p. 974, challenges this theory: “Does the death of the Wicked Priest by a bitter affliction fit well with the sudden execution of Jonathan at the hands of Trypho?”

<sup>73</sup> Igor Tantlevskij, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> J.T. Milik, p. 66; Frank M. Cross, “The Righteous Teacher”, p. 111; A.S van der Woude, *JJS*. P. 356; Geza Vermes, p. 61-62.

<sup>75</sup> G.R. Driver, p. 137-140, argues persuasively against Jonathan as the Wicked Priest, as it cannot be demonstrated that the allusions apply to Jonathan. He further accuses scholars of “inventing a slander to prove a theory”.

## 5. Who was the Wicked Priest?

As previously stated, identifications of the Wicked Priests in the Habakkuk peshar currently range from Judas in 160 BCE to Antigonus in 37 BCE. However, the archeological data aid in limiting the timeframe within which this character is to be found. The science of paleography has further determined that the latest period for the composition of the text is approximately 30 BCE. Accordingly, we have eliminated Judas, Alcimus and Jonathan. As a result, Simon, John Hyrcanus I, Aristobulus I, Alexander Janneus, John Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus II and Antigonus remain. The candidates will be examined only as they correspond to the specified passages.

### 5.1 The Text

#### 5.1.1 1 QpHAb viii. 8-13

The first mention of the Wicked Priest is found in column viii. 8-13. As has previously been established, line 9 alludes to the Wicked Priest's reputation in the community, while lines 9a – 13 describe his transgressions during the period of his rule. When Jonathan was being held captive by Trypho, Simon assumed command in his place. He encouraged the people to remain steadfast and assured them that he would continue the fight his father has initiated and the people then declared Simon as their leader and their high priest.<sup>76</sup> In 140 BCE, the Jews of Jerusalem elected Simon as their high priest in addition to military leader and governor.<sup>77</sup> Simon then

established peace with the Ptolomies and had the taxes removed. It was, however, qualified "until a trustworthy prophet should arise", which suggests that there were some who opposed his religious position. Moreover, an official decree was sent out, which stated in part

None of the people or priests shall be permitted to nullify any of these decisions or to oppose whatever he says, or to convene an assembly in the country without his permission, or to be clothed in purple or put on a gold buckle. Whoever acts contrary to these decisions or rejects any of them shall be liable for punishment.<sup>78</sup>

These conditions strongly intimate that there was resistance to his political power as well. Although Jonathan was appointed *de facto* high priest and ruler, the decree of the assembly and laity officially recognized and converted "the *de facto* rights and privileges enjoyed by Jonathan into rights *de jure* for Simon's house."<sup>79</sup> Consequently, Simon, John Hyrcanus I, Aristobulus I, Alexander Janneus, John Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II and Antigonus qualify for the role of the Wicked Priest as they all held a dual office.

In relation to the crimes he is accused of during the period of his rule, Simon corresponds well to the accusation. In addition, Hyrcanus I may have been regarded as bearing a good reputation with the community is attested to by his rigid observance of the Sabbath.<sup>80</sup> He not only halted his efforts to free his mother and brothers from Ptolemy, in order to observe a sabbatical year, but sought a truce dur-

<sup>76</sup> 1 Macc. 13: 1-8; 1 Macc 13: 42.

<sup>77</sup> 1 Macc. 14: 41-42.

<sup>78</sup> 1 Macc. 14: 44-45.

<sup>79</sup> Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 109.

<sup>80</sup> Jos. Ant. 13.8.1; William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 18-19.

ing a siege in order to observe the festival of Tabernacles. In addition to his reputation for piety, he is also distinguished for his cupidity as he opened the tomb of David to appropriate funds, specifically three thousand talents of silver, and levied taxes on the Jewish people for purposes of maintaining his foreign army.<sup>81</sup>

On the other hand, Aristobulus II, in his attempt to usurp the reign of his brother Hyrcanus II, negotiated with Pompey to hold off the siege of Jerusalem for an amount of money, in addition to the city of Jerusalem. Upon agreeing to the terms, Pompey sent an emissary to retrieve the money and the city; however, Aristobulus II underwent a change of heart and shut the gates of Jerusalem against him. This action led to the overthrow of Jerusalem by Pompey.<sup>82</sup>

Regarding column viii. 8-13, the data we retain concerning Simon, Hyrcanus I, and Aristobulus II coincide with the data related in the text.

### 5.1.2 *1QpHab viii. 16-ix. 2*

Column viii. 16 –ix. 2 refers to the priest who rebelled; however viii.16-17 is severely

corrupted, and therefore is uncertain.<sup>83</sup> The punishments include evil diseases and acts of vengeance perpetrated on his carcass of flesh.<sup>84</sup> Collins posits that the term used for diseases נְגוּעוֹ may be used as a verb “to plague him” or as a noun “his injury.”<sup>85</sup>

This passage is consistent with what we know of Alexander Janneus who suffered for three years from an alcohol related disease before dying and Aristobulus I who endured a painful intestinal disease for the duration of his one year reign.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, if the intended meaning of נְגוּעוֹ is to be understood as ‘injury’ rather than ‘disease’ then Hyrcanus I would be the Wicked Priest in this passage as he was mutilated, by having his ears cut off by the Parthians.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> G.R. Driver, p. 140 asserts that, due to the corruption on viii. 16-17, it cannot be proven that the ix. 1-2, refers to the wicked priest; J.T. Milik, p. 68 states that because of the lacuna, it is difficult to establish who the ‘him’ refers to in line 17 “...but they will plunder him”; A. Dupont –Sommer, p. 264, understands the referent of ‘him’ to be the Teacher of Righteousness. Current scholarship assumes the text alludes to the Wicked Priest; cf. John J. Collins, p. 223; Michael A. Knibb, p. 239; Frank M. Cross, “The Righteous Teacher”, p. 113.

<sup>84</sup> Igor Tantlevskij, p. 7 asserts the evil diseases refer to the torture Jonathan may have experienced while in captivity. Additionally, the acts of vengeance perpetrated on his carcass of flesh pertain to the improper burial Jonathan received from Tryphon; A. Dupont-Sommer, *DSS*, p. 34-35, suggests Aristobulus II for this Wicked Priest. His argument, however is unfounded. He states: “...at what moment in his reign did Aristobulus II commit the sacrilegious crime for which he was punished in so exemplary a fashion? This question can hardly be answered with certainty. To tell the truth, this uncertainty is not very serious in view of the fact that the reign of Aristobulus II lasted only three years and six months.”

<sup>85</sup> John J. Collins, p. 221; contra William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 4 states that the passage should be understood literally and interprets נְגוּעוֹ literally as disease. Thus, he maintains that this passage cannot be applied to John Hyrcanus II or Aristobulus II.

<sup>86</sup> *Jos. Ant.* 13.11.3.

<sup>87</sup> *Jos. Ant.* 13.15.5 ; 14.13.10.

<sup>81</sup> *Jos. Ant.* 13.8.4; Paolo Sacci, p. 253. Further arguments cite his withdrawal of support from the Pharisees. This theory, however, is based on the identification of the Pharisees with the Hasidim, who are considered to be the forerunners of the Essenes. As it has not been established that the community were, in fact, the Essenes, this argument will not be considered. Cf. Miller Burrows, p. 172, William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 24.

<sup>82</sup> *Jos. Ant.* 14.3. 4-14.4.1.

### 5.1.3 *IQpHab ix. 3-7*

This passage refers to the ‘last priests’ of Jerusalem and their fate. The majority of scholars agree that they are to be equated with Alexander Janneus, John Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, the latter two, who initiated the interference of the Romans which escalated to the capture of Jerusalem in 63 BCE.<sup>88</sup> Although the first part of the interpretation corresponds with all three high priests, it adds that their wealth will be taken by the army of the Kitim in the latter days (lines 6-7). This aspect presupposes the occupation of Jerusalem by Herod, and thus speaks more strongly to Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, the tense of this passage is in the future and thus has a prophetic overtone. Burrows allows that as the passage refers to the ‘last’ priests, the preceding allusions may not refer to either Hyrcanus II or Aristobulus II.<sup>90</sup>

### 5.1.4 *IQpHab ix. 9-12*

The reference in this passage alludes to suffering in bitterness of soul in the hands of enemies. As per Brownlee, this passage does not necessitate a death, and provides little information.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, it corresponds well with Hyrcanus II, who was disfigured by the Parthians in 40 BCE and subsequently

strangled in 30 BCE, or Aristobulus II, who was taken prisoner by Pompey in 63 BCE and sent back to Palestine, “so that he must have been forced ‘in bitterness of soul’ to take part in Pompey’s triumph.”<sup>92</sup> A. Dupont-Sommer firmly asserts that this passage does, in fact, refer to Aristobulus II:

...in precise terms ‘God delivered him into the hands of his enemies’, - of his enemies the Romans. As to the ‘humiliations’, as to the ‘bitterness of soul’, as to the ‘blows’ which beat him to ‘death’, it must be remembered that he would have to take part, in chains, in the triumph of Pompey in Rome 61; that he failed miserably in 56 when he tried to regain power; finally, that he died in his prison in 49 poisoned by Pompey’s supporters. Can one imagine a more exact justification of the words of our commentator?<sup>93</sup>

F.M. Cross posits that this passage refers to the death of Simon at the hands of Ptolemy, however, most scholars disagree with this position as Simon was drunk, died immediately, and could hardly be said to have ‘suffered’.<sup>94</sup>

### 5.1.5 *IQpHab ix. 16 - x. 3-5*

Although lines 16 and 17 of column ix are badly corrupted, we can assume that the priest mentioned is, in fact, the Wicked Priest

<sup>88</sup> Jos. *Ant.* 14.3-14.4; Geza Vermes, p. 62, suggests that the allusion to the last priest refers, in fact, to all priest succeeding Simon, from John Hyrcanus I to Aristobulus II inclusive; John J. Collins, p.221; A. Dupont-Sommer, p. 40, prefer Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II while Igor Tantlevskij, p. 13, favors Alexander Janneus.

<sup>89</sup> A. Dupont-Sommer, p. 40.

<sup>90</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 14.2.3-14.4.5; Michael A. Knibb, p. 240; John J. Collins, p. 221; Miller Burrows, p. 182.

<sup>91</sup> William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 8; Håkan Bengtsson, p. 256.

<sup>92</sup> Edmund Wilson, p. 66; John J. Collins, p. 222; G.R. Driver, p. 152.

<sup>93</sup> A. Dupont-Sommer, *DSS*, p. 35; Nevertheless, the literal translation of this passage, as per Horgan, is “...because of wrong done to the Righteous Teacher and the men of his council – God gave into the hand of his enemies to humble him (11) with disease for annihilation in bitterness of soul, because he had acted wickedly...” (emphasis mine).

<sup>94</sup> Frank M. Cross, “The Righteous Teacher”, p. 113; James H. Charlesworth, p. 93; contra Simon, John J. Collins, p. 223; J.T. Milik, p. 68.

as the lemma proclaims ‘woe to the one who makes evil profit’. This accords well with the crimes the Wicked Priest is accused of. Nevertheless, there is an ambiguity in the punishment pronounced on the Wicked Priest in x. 3-5, which appears to be a continuation of the interpretation in x. 1. Some scholars understand the reference to building to refer to building activities performed by the Wicked Priest during his reign.<sup>95</sup> Simon is considered by some to be ‘a master builder of the Hasmoneans’, due to allusions that he built up fortresses, city-walls and monuments.<sup>96</sup> Thus, some scholars suggest Simon is the Wicked Priest referred to in column ix. 16.<sup>97</sup>

Brownlee posits that reference in the lemma to a ‘nest on high’ indicates that this priest had built for himself a lofty residence and therefore Hyrcanus II is warranted consideration. Although his manner of death was natural, this does not negate his consideration as the Wicked Priest, as the death implied in this passage appears to be eschatological.

Furthermore, there is the argument of literal understanding. For instance, column x. 3-5:

Its interpretation: This is the house of judgment when God will give (4) his judgment in the midst of many peoples, and from there he will bring him up for judgment, (5) and in their midst he will condemn him as guilty and with a fire of brimstone he will punish him.

Scholars disagree as to whether the passage

implies two judgments: one at the end of his life and another, an eschatological judgment, or whether the entire passage should be understood as two stages of eschatological judgment. The hypothesis of judgment in two stages rests on the understanding of ‘in the midst of many peoples’ as an interpretation of ‘the borders of many peoples’.<sup>98</sup> This appears to suggest that the Wicked Priest will meet or had met his death outside of Judah. The eschatological stage is undisputed among scholars, “...and from there he will bring him up for judgment, (5) and in their midst he will condemn him as guilty and with a fire of brimstone he will punish him.”

On the other hand, the theory which states that both judgments are eschatological interprets both references ‘in the midst of many people’ as belonging to Sheol and after the resurrection.<sup>99</sup> The eschatological understanding accounts for the use of the term “house of judgment” from which God gives his initial judgment.<sup>100</sup> Support for this claim is found in the Book of Jubilees which describes the house of judgment as a place of detention in Sheol.<sup>101</sup> After this first punishment, the Wicked Priest is then resurrected to undergo a second punishment with fire and brimstone. Although two eschatological judgments appear to be implied by the passage, there are no specific characteristics that can be applied to any particular individual. Rather, many priests who died of natural causes or un-

<sup>95</sup>Michael A. Knibb, p. 240.

<sup>96</sup>A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 356; A.S. van der Woude, *RevQ*, p. 379; Igor Tantlevskij, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup>A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 356.

<sup>98</sup>Micheal A. Knibb, p. 241.

<sup>99</sup>William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p.7, A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 357.

<sup>100</sup>William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshet of Habakkuk*, p. 158, ‘House of Judgment’ is also translated as ‘House of damnation’.

<sup>101</sup>William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 7.

eventful deaths could fit this description.<sup>102</sup> kill him'.<sup>105</sup>

### 5.1.6 1QpHab xi. 4-8

Although there are no references in any source which suggests, implicitly or explicitly, that any of the high priests of Jerusalem pursued the Righteous Teacher (or a priest) to his place of exile, this passage is significant in supporting the existence of the community at the time of the pesher's composition in addition to illuminating religious aspects of the community.

There are two aspects to this passage. The first part states that the Wicked Priest 'pursued the Righteous Teacher to his house of exile'. Although most scholars agree that there is no external evidence to support any high priests of Jerusalem making this journey, some scholars nevertheless posit that the Wicked Priest in this case could refer to Simon, John Hyrcanus I, and Alexander Janneus.<sup>103</sup> Support for Simon and John Hyrcanus I appears to be based solely on archeological evidence.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, it is unclear from the text whether the Wicked Priest succeeded in his attempt to end the life of the Righteous Teacher as denoted by the expression 'to swallow him up', literally 'to

Some scholars connect a tradition concerning Alexander Janneus and the event on the Day of Atonement. Josephus recounts an anecdote in which Alexander Janneus was pelted by citrons by the people as he stood at the altar to offer a sacrifice at the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>106</sup> As a result of this provocation, Alexander Janneus appeared to the community on their Day of Atonement.<sup>107</sup>

Another important element in this passage, which provides insight into the history of the community, is the reference to the Day of Atonement. As the Wicked Priest was the High Priest of Jerusalem, it would have been impossible for him to take any action on the Day of Atonement as he would have had to

<sup>105</sup> During a private conversation with Robert David pertaining to the meaning of 'to swallow' in the Habakkuk pesher, he informed me that the literal definition of the verb לבלע' to swallow' is to be preferred rather than the interpretation of the verb rendered 'to cause to stumble or confuse'. cf. Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 154; Håkan Bengtsson, p. 254; Igor Tantlevskij, p. 9, for the latter interpretation; A. Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings*, p. 266, assumes that this passage to allude to a struggle which took place between Hyrcanus II in which the Righteous Teacher was executed; however he offers no basis for this assumption; contra: John J. Collins, p. 226, suggest that in light of the information we possess concerning the weak submissive character of Hyrcanus II "It is unlikely that he concerned himself with sectarian squabbles during his very brief reign as king."; Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 118, posits that this passage reflects the 'exile' which took place in response to Simon's persecution of those who opposed his assuming office. Moreover, even in exile the Righteous Teacher was not safe from attacks from the Wicked Priest *ex hypothesi* Simon.

<sup>106</sup> Jos. Ant. 13.13.5.

<sup>107</sup> Miller Burrows, p. 175; William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 34, contra G.R. Driver states that there is no reference of an attack on the community in any source, by Alexander Janneus on that day, however, there is no mention of an attack by any of the high priests on that day (of Atonement). Moreover, the community followed a different calendar and so it is difficult to state precisely which day their Day of Atonement fell on, although there are many theories.

<sup>102</sup> A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 356-357; Igor Tantlevskij, p. 7; Michael A. Knibb, p. 241.

<sup>103</sup> Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 116; A.S van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 357; Miller Burrows, p. 175, respectively.

<sup>104</sup> A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 357; Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 116.

perform his priestly duties. Therefore, the reference is to the community's Day of Atonement, which supports the premise that Qumran did indeed follow a different calendar.<sup>108</sup>

### 5.1.7 1QpHab xi. 12-15

There is general agreement among scholars that this passage is referring to Alexander Jannaeus.<sup>109</sup> M. Burrows suggests that the glory referred to in line 12 connotes Alexander Jannaeus' success in obtaining territory equal to that of David and Solomon. Conversely, his shame refers to his actions during his reign which was marked by blood, cruelty and hatred.<sup>110</sup> In addition, column xi. 15 reports that "the priest whose shame prevailed over his glory[...]but walked in the ways of inebriety in order that the thirst might be consumed, but the cup of wrath of [Go]d will swallow him up...". In 134 BCE, Simon and two of his sons were deceived by Ptolemy, Simon's son-in-law. Ptolemy induced them to drunkenness at a banquet and then murdered them.<sup>111</sup> Nonetheless, there is no allusion in the historical sources to

Simon suffering from a drinking problem.<sup>112</sup> Conversely, Josephus states quite explicitly that Alexander Jannaeus, in fact, was a "hard drinker" and suffered for three years from quartan fever due to his excessive drinking.<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, it is unclear whether the allusion to inebriety in line 14 should be understood literally or metaphorically as the first part of the sentence indicates in line 13, "he did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart."<sup>114</sup> J.T. Milik argues against a literal understanding of inebriety, he states:

The whole phrase is derived from Deut. 29:18 (EVV: 29:18): 'to devastate the dry and the irrigated land together', and is repeated in the curse on apostates in 1QSII. 14, in a metaphorical sense. We consider it to be so used here too, just as 'he did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart'. Accordingly, we do not find in this passage any allusion to the historical circumstances of the Wicked Priest's death but only to his unfaithfulness.<sup>115</sup>

Nevertheless, the majority of scholars understand this phrase to be taken literally and thus posit Alexander Jannaeus or Simon as the Wicked Priest referred to in this passage.

<sup>108</sup> Miller Burrows, P. 176; Michael A. Knibb, p. 244; Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 116; Håkan Bengtsson, p. 259, fragments of Jubilees and 1 Enoch found at Qumran presuppose a solar calendar of 364 days.

<sup>109</sup> William H. Brownlee, *JQR*, p. 34; Timothy H. Lim, *Encyclopedia*, p. 974; G.R. Driver, p. 146; Michael A. Knibb, p. 244; John J. Collins, p. 227; A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 358; Igor Tantlevskij, p. 358.

<sup>110</sup> *Jos. Ant.* 13.13.5, reports that after the people pelted Alexander Jannaeus with citrons, he flew into a rage and killed about six thousand Jews. Shortly after, there was another uprising of the people against Alexander, which resulted in a six year battle during which fifty thousand Jews were slaughtered.

<sup>111</sup> *1 Macc.* 16:11-16; G.R. Driver, p. 140; Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 113; Håkan Bengtsson, p. 261; John J. Collins, p. 223.

<sup>112</sup> Deborah Dimant, p.246 suggests that Simon corresponds to the allusion in ix. 1-2, but does not elaborate; J.T. Milik, p. 68, suggests that, at the time of his murder, "Simon was probably too drunk too what was happening to him."

<sup>113</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 13.15.5; John J. Collins, p. 223; Michael A. Knibb, 239; Håkan Bengtsson, p. 261.

<sup>114</sup> Håkan Bengtsson, p. 261.

<sup>115</sup> J.T. Milik, p. 70.

### 5.1.8 1QpHab xii. 2-10

Although this passage speaks of the end of the Wicked Priest, it is set in the future and thus little information is provided as to his identity. Few scholars speak of the reference to lines 7- 8 which allude to an incident in which the Temple sanctuary was defiled.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, this supports the argument for Alexander Janneus as per the tradition cited by Josephus wherein Alexander was pelted by citrons and subsequently killed about six thousand Jews.<sup>117</sup>

### Conclusion

The Habakkuk Commentary is significant in that it provides information relating to the history and events of the Qumran community. Deciphering this information is problematic, however, as the individuals are not referred to by their personal names, but rather by monikers. Although several individuals are indicated in this scroll, this study is concentrated on the identity of the Wicked Priest. The difficulty is further compounded by the widespread discussion surrounding the issues of dating, textual interpretation, and theories of singular or plural identifications of the Wicked Priest. Nevertheless, studies into the identity of these individuals are worthwhile as they not only supply further understanding into the events of the Intertestamental period, but identifying the characters will facilitate know-

ledge of the dating of the community as well.

Current studies from archeology and paleography aid in providing a time frame in which the community may have existed and produced the Habakkuk pesher. There is, however, disagreement among some scholars as to the dating of the origins of the community; therefore dates ranging from the second half of the second century BCE to the first half of the first century BCE have been suggested.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, the dating of the community is a critical area in determining the identities of the characters within the pesher as it offers a more precise date within which to find the identities. The approximate date offered by R. de Vaux as well as recent archaeological surveys have been considered and employed in this study, setting the date circa 134 BCE.

Equally important in this endeavor is understanding the methodology in addition to the eschatological ideology of the pesherist. Concerning the former, the pesherist is guided by the biblical citation or lemma. Consequently, the interpreter of the prophetic book is limited in his interpretation to what is mentioned in the lemma. Thus, the text does not follow a narrative form, but rather appears fragmented and atomized. Some scholars have recently posited that the pesherist introduces the Wicked Priests in chronological order. Although this theory has currently been incorporated into an important study, the Groningen Hypothesis, many scholars dispute the theory of

<sup>116</sup>Michael A. Knibb, p. 246, asserts that accusations of this kind, i.e. murder, defiling the Temple, robbery, were no doubt made against all the Hasmoneans high priests and so provide little information.

<sup>117</sup>G.R. Driver, p. 146; Igor Tantlevskij, p. 12, asserts that since this passage does not fit with what we know of the activities of the Hasmonean high priests except Alexander Janneus, therefore Janneus is the Wicked Priest mentioned in this passage.

<sup>118</sup>The majority of scholars accept the date of approximately 134 BCE or a little earlier, thus placing the origins to the final years of Simon's reign or early in Hyrcanus I's reign. cf. Frank M. Cross, "The Righteous Teacher", p. 108, 116; A.S. van der Woude, *JJS*, p. 357; Paolo Sacchi, p. 232.

a chronological scheme of the pesherist.<sup>119</sup>

Paramount in the pesherist's interpretation of the lemma is the belief that he is living in the end times. He perceives himself and his community as the chosen ones of God, the remnant who endures to the end, because they are the chosen of God. This aspect may be reflected in their interpretations as hyperbole. Therefore, it is plausible that the characteristics and many dooms have been exaggerated in the text.

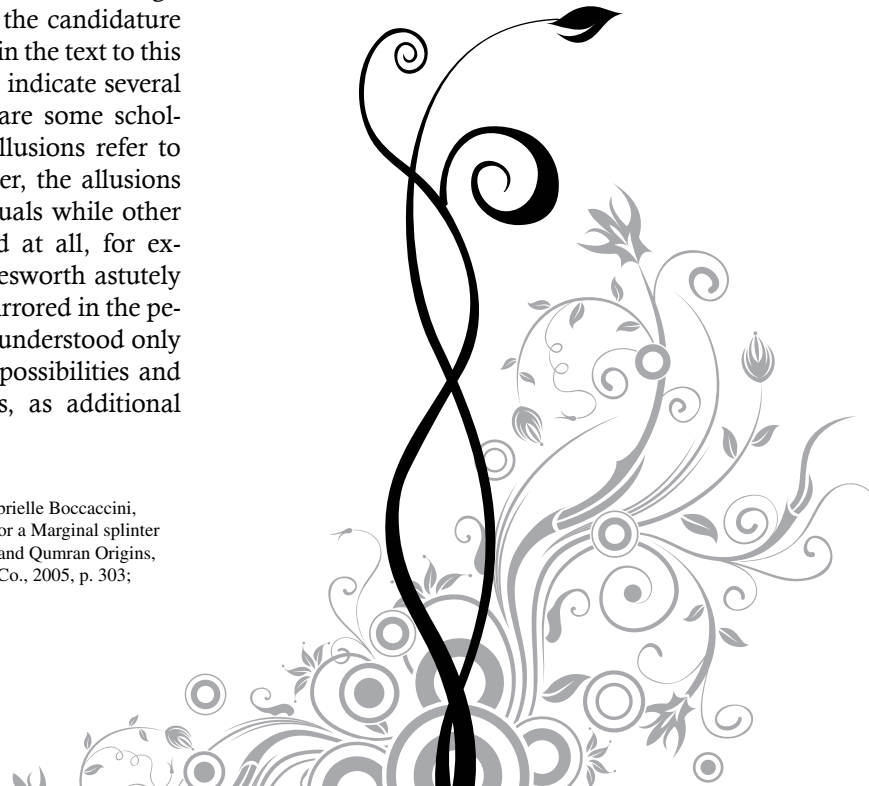
Further considerations are the use of expressions and the correct understanding of them. Establishing their connotation as it pertains to the characters is essential to discovering their identity. For instance, the meaning of the term *mašal*, if understood as denoting a reigning ethnarch as opposed to King, would eliminate all possible candidates after Simon. This inference, together with the archeological evidence, would result in the candidature of only Simon. The allusions in the text to this character, however, appear to indicate several individuals; although, there are some scholars who maintain that the allusions refer to only one individual. Moreover, the allusions appear to suit several individuals while other characters are not referenced at all, for example, Antigonus. As Charlesworth astutely states, "The historical data mirrored in the pesherim can be recovered and understood only within a balance of delicate possibilities and probabilities."<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, as additional

understanding of the scrolls and the community from whence they originated comes to light, the better equipped we will be to identify the characters alluded to therein.

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<sup>119</sup> See especially Timothy H. Lim; also Gabrielle Boccaccini, "Qumran: The Headquarters of the Essenes or a Marginal splinter Group" in Gabrielle Boccaccini (ed) *Enoch and Qumran Origins*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans' Publ. Co., 2005, p. 303; Pierluigi Piovanelli, p. 366.

<sup>120</sup> Charlesworth, p. 116.



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*List of Abbreviations*

JQR.....	The Jewish Quarterly Review
JJS.....	Journal of Jewish Studies
JBL.....	Journal of Biblical Literature
RevQ.....	Revue de Qumran