

DATING THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE *FLORUIT* OF HIS  
MOVEMENT: AN EVALUATION OF METHODS (1952-2010)

by

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## ABSTRACT

TRINA MARIE RUMFELT. Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the *Floruit* of His Movement: An Evaluation of Methods

(Under the direction of DR. JAMES D. TABOR)

The Dead Sea Scrolls are Hebrew and Aramaic texts representing more than 800 manuscripts. Found between 1947 - 1956 in 11 caves near an ancient Qumran archaeological site, they consist of copies of books of the Hebrew Bible. The Dead Sea Scrolls have deepened our understanding of the texts of the Hebrew Bible and shed light on the history of late 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Judaism (200 BCE to 70 CE). While some scholars believe that the Qumran community produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, others in academia question the accuracy and value of this designation as to what is found in the scrolls because it does not fit so well with the ways the “Essenes” are described in classical sources. The community that wrote the sectarian scrolls had separated from the Jewish priestly establishment in Jerusalem and retreated to the desert to “prepare the Way in the desert” for the end times.

By focusing on the earliest and the most recent attempts to date the flourishing of the so-called “Teacher of Righteousness” and his dissenting movement within the historical framework of late Second Temple Judaism in Palestine, we can examine the methods used by the earliest interpreters and contrast them with more recent publications to serve as comparisons that examine this sixty-year period. Although attempts to date the “Teacher’s movement” involves complex and controversial results, the focus is primarily on textual sources from the Second Temple period that provide us with the opportunity to find a potential “fit” between references in the scrolls to the situational context of the “Teacher” and what we know about the history of second and first century BCE parties and politics from other literary sources.

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## DEDICATION

To my husband and daughter, in memory of a day spent together among scrolls ...

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Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the *Floruit* of his Movement:  
An Evaluation of Methods (1952-2010)

INTRODUCTION

The manuscripts commonly referred to as the “Dead Sea Scrolls” were discovered in 11 caves near the ancient ruins of Khirbet Qumran, thirteen miles south of Jericho, on the northwest shores of the Dead Sea between the years 1947-1956.<sup>1</sup> These scrolls represent 600-800 manuscripts, some in multiple copies, with only a few relatively intact and the rest consisting of as many as 15,000 fragments. They are primarily written in Hebrew and Aramaic with a few in Greek, written primarily on leather scrolls and a few on papyri. These manuscripts fall roughly into three categories — texts written by the sectarian group that appears to be responsible for the collection (30%); texts that ended up in the Hebrew Bible (40%), and copies of other texts not included in the Hebrew Bible — some of which were known to us in later copies, such as portions of Enoch, Jubilees, or ben Sirach (30%).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The details of these discoveries, with both Ta’amirech Bedouin and various scholars involved, is perhaps best narrated by John C. Trever, *The Untold Story of Qumran* (Westwood, New Jersey: Revell), who was one of the first scholars involved from the very beginning. More accessible and available on-line, is the extensive article in *The New Yorker* by correspondent Edmund Wilson, “The Scrolls from the Dead Sea” published in the May 15, 1955, issue. James VanderKam and Peter Flint provide an updated overview in the first chapter of their book, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 3-19. It should be noted that these modern discoveries were not the first mention of ancient manuscripts being discovered in the area. The third century Christian theologian Origen knows of reports by Bishop Epiphanius of “books” of the Hebrew Bible concealed in earthenware jars found near Jericho. In the eighth century CE the Syrian Patriarch Timothy writes of troves of ancient biblical books found near Jericho. See Joan E. Taylor, “The Classical Sources on the Essenes and the Scrolls Communities,” in Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Oxford, 2010), 192.

<sup>2</sup> Ken M. Penner, “Dead Sea Scrolls,” Michael D. Coogan, ed. *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), I:173-192.

Although the group that apparently wrote or preserved these manuscripts has been most often identified with the Jewish sect known as the Essenes, described to us by the first century CE Jewish historian Josephus and other classical writers, what we read in these descriptions do not provide any one-on-one descriptive match with the contents of what are usually called the “sectarian” scrolls.<sup>3</sup> There are remarkable similarities but also very sharp differences, so that using a descriptive term like “Essene” is much less useful than focusing on what we find in the primary sources — the scrolls themselves. Accordingly, in this thesis I will refer to the sectarian group by the neutral designation, the “DSS Community.”<sup>4</sup> Apparently, the Community reflected in the sectarian scrolls had separated from the Jewish priestly establishment in Jerusalem and retreated to the desert to “prepare the Way in the desert” for the end times. They followed and revered an unnamed figure they called their “Teacher,” who apparently arose about twenty years after the founding of the movement and provided them with strict interpretations of Torah observance — particularly in matters of ritual purity and calendar/festival observance. The common designation for this leader in English as the “Teacher of Righteousness,” I use advisedly, recognizing its potentially misleading theological connotations.<sup>5</sup> As John Reeves has noted, the clear meaning within the scrolls themselves is that of a “True Lawgiver” who, like a Moses figure, brings correct or true interpretations of Torah — in sharp contrast to other Jewish

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<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 13 & 18; *Jewish War* 2; Philo, *Every Good Man is Free* 75-91; *Hypothetica* 11; and Pliny *Natural History* 5.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the Essenes in classical sources and their potential identification with the DSS Community see Joan Taylor, “Classic Sources on the Essenes,” 173-199, as well as the very helpful summary discussion in Vanderkam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 239-254.

<sup>5</sup> See the cautionary evaluation by John C. Reeves, “The Meaning of ‘Moreh Sedeq’ in the Light of 11QTorah,” *Revue de Qumrân* 13:1/4 (49/52) (1988): 287-298. Reeves demonstrates that the English phrase “Teacher of Righteousness” can easily be misunderstood given Western views of a wise ethical sage or Christian theological views of the loaded term “righteousness.” The phrase is best understood as a designation for one who brings true interpretations of Torah. In the scrolls this involves such critical matters as using the proper calendar as related to the festivals and various ethical and halachic interpretations.

interpretations that are rejected as leading Israel astray. The Community also looked to this Teacher for definitive prophetic interpretations of texts of the Hebrew Bible and applied the readings to their unique role in God's redemptive plan. They had an intensely apocalyptic outlook, believing they were the elect "New Covenant" community of God's people at the End of Days.

### Limitations of this Thesis

As a non-specialist in the field of late Second Temple Judaism, and in view of the enormous body of academic Dead Sea Scroll research over the past seven decades, I have tried to strictly limit and define the scope of my thesis and its primary research question.<sup>6</sup> In the course of my undergraduate studies, including my Honors Thesis in Religious Studies, I became intrigued with how widely the divergence of scholarly attempts to date the Dead Sea Scroll (DSS) movement, its unnamed Teacher, and his opponents varied by a hundred years — from the Maccabees to the Roman occupation of the land of Israel (c. 160-60 BCE). I became interested in examining in more depth the complex history of interpretations over the past seven decades since their discovery. I had become familiar with some of the major textual references to these central figures mentioned in the scrolls, and the basic chronological framework of periodization: 390 + 20 years, + the unknown span of the career of the Teacher, + forty years following his death — perhaps making up some prophetic period of 490 years or 10 Jubilees (49

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<sup>6</sup> No single bibliographical resource catalogues the hundreds of thousands of entries related to Dead Sea Scroll research. The "Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature" at the Hebrew University maintains one of the more comprehensive bibliographies: <http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il/resources/bib/current.shtml>. This extensive index is updated weekly and currently contains over 21,000 entries, but primarily showcases materials appearing since 1995 when it was begun, although there is an ongoing attempt to reach back and include materials that date back to the beginning of DSS research in the early 1950s.

x 10 years) — but what potential fit this might have within the history of second to first century BCE Jewish history remained an open question.

I begin by examining the methods and conclusions of two of the earliest interpreters of the Dead Sea Scrolls, beginning in the 1950s, to situate the unnamed “Teacher” or leader of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) movement within the historical contexts of late Second Temple Judaism in *Eretz Israel* in the two centuries before the Common Era. I then want to compare those initial efforts of dating the DSS movement to what has emerged sixty years later in the opening decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For the early period I will examine the views of Geza Vermes and André Dupont-Sommer, and for the later period the more recent publications of Michael O. Wise and John J. Collins.<sup>7</sup> My primary research objective is to ask how far we have come in six decades in settling upon any definitive or concrete historical identifications of the Teacher and his movement, given the full publication of the scrolls in the 1990s.

The publication of the initial scrolls from Cave 1 was remarkably fast. The Habakkuk pesher (1QpHab) and the Community Rule (1QS) were published, along with the great Isaiah scroll, based on John Trever’s photography, by ASOR in 1950-51.<sup>8</sup> E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University subsequently published the War Scroll (1QM), the Thanksgiving Hymns (1QH) and another section of Isaiah by 1954-56.<sup>9</sup> The Damascus Document (CD A & B) had already been

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<sup>7</sup> For Vermes I rely on the first edition of his *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 1962) which reflects his initial 1952 doctoral dissertation and subsequent publication in French (1953) and in English translation, *Discovery in the Judean Desert* (New York: Desclee Company, 1956); André Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Preliminary Survey*. Trans. E. Margaret Rowley, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952); Michael O. Wise, “Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the Floruit of his Movement,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003): 53-87; John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Millar Burrows, John C. Trever, and William Brownlee, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark’s Monastery* I (New Haven, 1950), and II:2 (New Haven, 1951).

<sup>9</sup> E. L. Sukenik, ed. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1955).

published by Solomon Schechter in 1910 under the title *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* and was soon associated with these early Qumran texts.<sup>10</sup>

Although various manuscripts subsequently discovered from Cave 4, especially 4QMMT, as well as the Temple Scroll (11QT) from Cave 11, have added immensely to our evaluations of the DSS overall, whether viewed as a single library or a more disparate collection of Second Temple period manuscripts, it is remarkable that most all of the arguments that are put forth on this question of historical dating turn on readings of these core documents that we have had since the 1950s.

More recent attempts to solve the dating problem involve complex and controversial results from the fields of paleography, archaeology, coin evidence, carbon-14 dating, and assumptions about the excavated ruins of Qumran and its caves as a kind of headquarters of the movement. However, in my analysis I focus primarily on textual sources from the Second Temple period that provide us with the opportunity to find a potential “fit” between references in the scrolls to the situational context of the Teacher of Righteousness and his enemies — namely the “Wicked Priest” and the “Liar,” and what we know about the history of second and first century BCE parties and politics from other literary sources.

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<sup>10</sup> Solomon Schechter, *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910).

## THE MAINSTREAM HYPOTHESIS: VERMES AND DUPONT-SOMMER

Early in the 1950s, Geza Vermes put forth the “Maccabean theory,” which came to be considered to be the “mainstream hypothesis.” This interpretation, first formulated in Vermes’s doctoral dissertation in 1952 that was published in French in 1953, placed the period of the Teacher of Righteousness in the time of the Maccabean priest Jonathan (143-135 BCE) or Simon (134-104 BCE), and this position was largely shared by Milik, Cross, and deVaux.<sup>11</sup> The core idea was that dissident priests in time of Jonathan or perhaps Simon, under leadership of Zadokite priests and eventually led by the Teacher of Righteousness, separated from and opposed the Maccabean dynasty. This would place the *floruit* of the movement in the second century BCE. Vermes has largely maintained this view in the introductions to his various editions of *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, published from 1962 to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Penguin edition of 2011.<sup>12</sup> However, in surveying his position I have relied primarily on his 1<sup>st</sup> edition published in 1962, which closely reflects his primary thesis from 1953.

Vermes lays out three main views on dating the Teacher and his movement. The first identifies that the occurrences alluded to in the scrolls take place in the time of the Hellenistic period and during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes and Demetrius I (circa 175-160 BCE). The second recognizes it as the Maccabean theory with an inclination that the Wicked Priest is either Jonathan (160 – 143 BCE) or Simon (143-134 BCE). The third theory concedes to the time of the Hasmonean period, especially during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103 – 76 BCE) or Hyrcanus II (63 – 40 BCE). According to Vermes, “whichever of these three periods is adopted,

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<sup>11</sup> J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* (London, SCM: 1959) based on the French edition published in 1957; Frank M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), based on the first edition of 1958; R. de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Rev. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) based on the 1959 edition.

<sup>12</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1962; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1975; 3<sup>rd</sup> 1987; and 4<sup>th</sup> Penguin 1995, and his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Penguin edition of 2011.

the life and ministry of the Teacher of Righteousness will fall between the years of 175 – 63 BCE.”<sup>13</sup>

Vermes examines the historical allusions and concealed references found regarding the Teacher of Righteousness and the history of his followers that one can find throughout the various scrolls, but particularly in the Damascus Document (CD) and the various *Pesherim*, or commentaries, on the Prophets and other texts now in the Hebrew Bible. In the opening column of the Damascus Document, we read that 390 years after the Babylonian captivity, when the Jews were carried into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar, God caused a “plant root” to spring up, apparently a reference to the founding of the movement.<sup>14</sup> If one adopts our modern dating of the Exile as 586 BCE we arrive at 196 BCE.<sup>15</sup> The Community repented, “yet for twenty years they were like blind men groping for the way.” God observed their good deeds and “raised up for them the Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart.” The Teacher and his followers encountered opposition and hostility from other sects, perhaps to be identified as the Pharisees and Sadducees. These adversaries, whom they call “the seekers of smooth things” prefer illusions and are described as “abolishing the ways of righteousness and removing the boundary” of the Covenant and leading Israel astray, led by “the Scoffer who shed over Israel the water of lies,” who is elsewhere referred to as “the Liar,” the “Man of Lies,” and the “Wicked Priest” — whom Vermes takes to be the same figure. They caused Israel to embrace false doctrine, particularly regarding definitions of sexual immorality, laws of purity and impurity, and lovers of riches (CD IV-V). The despised and persecuted members of the DSS Community

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<sup>13</sup> Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. (London, 1962), 58.

<sup>14</sup> In this section quotations from the Scrolls are taken from Vermes’s translation.

<sup>15</sup> As we will see it is not at all certain that one should take the 390 years literally, as it appears to be taken from Ezekiel 4:4-8, and further, it is unlikely that our modern dating of the Exile in 586 BCE corresponds to the DSS Community’s understanding of the chronology of the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek periods.

abandoned the Temple and entered a “New Covenant in the land of Damascus,” which is understood as a reference to their own Exile to the desert. The Community was forbidden to rejoin the Jewish people who continued to be governed and misled by the Priests of Jerusalem and its sanctuary even after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness. Although God’s anger was kindled against them and the Kings of Javan (Greece) came to wreak vengeance upon them, they persisted in their evil ways. Their rule would be brought to an end by the “Scepter,” or “Prince of all the Congregation” (CD 7).

The vague imagery emerging from this analysis of the Damascus Document is brought into sharper focus when set beside the information provided by the Habakkuk Commentary. The principal opponent is also described as the “Man of Lies or “Wicked Priest” in the Commentary on Psalm 37 where it is said that the Wicked Priest seeks to lay hands on the Teacher and in chastisement for this deed, God delivers him “into the hands of dreadful nations for judgment” (4Q171). In the Commentary of Nahum, there is no allusion to the Teacher, but this commentary contributes a point of great historical interest in naming “Demetrius, King of Greece,” supported by “the counsel of those who seek smooth things” to enter Jerusalem, but failed, until the coming of the rulers of the Kittim — understood as the Romans (4Q169).

Vermes finds correspondence between these kind of cryptic references within the historical period dominated by the two Maccabee brothers, Jonathan and Simon — with the “Wicked Priest” most likely Jonathan (160-142 BCE). Vermes takes the 390 years after Nebuchadnezzar as way to identify the Teacher’s general timeline, and he suggests that the Teacher made his appearance around 155 BCE.<sup>16</sup> The war against the Seleucids had ended with the nation being governed by Jonathan who was purging the country of all remnants of

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<sup>16</sup> Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. (London, 1962), 63.

Hellenism - with the Hellenistic calamity being the age termed as an age of wrath that founded the religious party known as the Hasidim. From their known history, it is believed to have constituted the nucleus of the Teacher's first disciples and, as it appears from the Scrolls, they must have included a strong priestly element firmly attached to the Zadokite pontifical dynasty which held supreme power in the Temple of Jerusalem from the time of Solomon to that of Antiochus Epiphanes. All is being purified until Jonathan's promotion to High Priest by Alexander Balas, the usurper of the Seleucid throne, in 152 BCE. Jonathan accepts this appointment of High Priest even though he is not of Zadokite descent — that is the lineage of High Priests that had held office for centuries. To the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers this illegitimate appointment was without merit and Jonathan's behavior unacceptable. Jonathan was called the Wicked Priest who had been "called by the name of truth."<sup>17</sup> In this regard, Jonathan would have been considered a true disciple of Moses before he assumed the offices of High Priest and ruler, but that he came to power and betrayed God for the sake of the riches amassed. With Simon, scholars believe that Jonathan fortified Jerusalem and built strongholds throughout Judea.

The Teacher's opposition was resented by the two brothers and the Teacher was eventually eliminated. Some scholars believe that the Teacher went to live in the house of exile and there the "Wicked Priest pursued [him]."<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the author of the Habakkuk Commentary reproaches the House of Absalom, a family which played an important part during the rule of Simon and Jonathan, for not having intervened on the Teacher's behalf during the

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<sup>17</sup> 1QpHab VIII, 7-9.

<sup>18</sup> 1QpHab XI, 5, as interpreted in Florentino García Martínez and Wilfred G. E. Watson, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 201.

conflict between them.<sup>19</sup> The Wicked Priest is deemed punished by his foreign enemies who took “vengeance upon his body of flesh,”<sup>20</sup> with some scholars believing that the foreigners were the “Chief of the Kings of Greece.”<sup>21</sup> Vermes believes that the allusions found in the scrolls refer to Jonathan’s arrest by Diodotus Tryphon, a general of Alexander Balas and Antiochus VI, who proclaimed himself king and dominated the Seleucid scene for about ten years. 1 Maccabees 12:39-48 relates how Tryphon tricked and trapped Jonathan in Ptolemais in 143 BCE after massacring his escort of one thousand men and then putting Jonathan to death at Baskama, a town located northeast of the Sea of Galilee.<sup>22</sup> In this reconstruction of the history of the sect, most of the allusions contained in the scrolls have been given highly specific referents. The founding members are the group identified with the Hasidim, the Wicked Priest to be Jonathan, the two instruments of violence to be both Jonathan and Simon, the enemy of the Wicked Priest to be Tryphon, and the last High Priest of Jerusalem to be the remaining Hasmonean ruler, Alexander Jannaeus, with the Kittim understood as the Romans.

In contrast, around the same time, André Dupont-Sommer published an alternative interpretation that appeared in English in 1952 titled *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Preliminary Survey*.<sup>23</sup> He argued that the Teacher of Righteousness was opposed by the Hasmonean High Priest Aristobulus II (67-63 BCE) whom he interprets as the “Wicked Priest” referred to in these

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<sup>19</sup> 1 Maccabees 11:70 mentions an Absalom, otherwise unknown, but is entirely possible that the reference to the “House of Absalom” is a symbolic reference to the rebellion of King David’s son who tried to kill his father—thus indicating betrayal and disloyalty (2 Samuel 15).

<sup>20</sup> 1QpHab IX, 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> 4QpNah frags. 3+4, col. I.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Maccabees 13:23.

<sup>23</sup> André Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Preliminary Survey*. Trans. E. Margaret Rowley, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952). I note here that Dupont-Sommer, in a subsequent work, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), proposed that the Wicked Priest was Hyrcanus II, a view subsequently taken by Michael Wise, as we shall see.

early scrolls, placing the DSS Movement around the time of the Roman occupation in the mid-first century BCE. For Dupont-Sommer, one of the most important historical allusions in the scrolls is the declaration in the Habakkuk Commentary that the people were *swallowed up* and *stumbled* on the occasion of a Jewish festival where the passage states, “Woe to him who causes his neighbors to drink; who pours out his venom to make them drunk that he may gaze on their feasts!” (1QpHab II, 15-17). As Dupont-Sommer says that “... this refers to the Wicked Priest who has persecuted the Master of Justice [subsequently known as the Teacher of Righteousness] so as to swallow him up in the heat of his anger ... to strip him of his clothing ... [on] the sacred rest of the Day of Atonement ... to swallow them up and to cause them to stumble on the Day of the Feast, which for them is a sabbath rest.”<sup>24</sup> The fixed date is the Day of Atonement, which is also called Yom Kippur or the Day of the Fast, and is celebrated with fasting and complete rest. Josephus writes his historical account of the major catastrophe that befell Jerusalem on a sabbath day of rest when the Roman General Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey) invaded and captured the city of Jerusalem in 63 BCE. In his *Antiquities of the Jews* chapter 14.4.3, Josephus writes, “... for although the city was taken on the third month, on the day of the Fast, upon the hundred and seventy-ninth Olympiad, when Caius Antonius and Marcus Tullius Cicero were consuls, and the enemy then fell upon them, and cut the throats of those that were in the temple ...”<sup>25</sup> Given Josephus’s witnesses of how the city was taken on the Day of the Fast, Dupont-Sommer understands the date to match the very specific allusion in the Habakkuk Commentary pointing to the events that occur in 63 BCE. Accordingly, this commentary work was composed toward

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<sup>24</sup> Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 27.

<sup>25</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Josephus: The Complete Works*. Trans. William Whiston, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 444.

the end of the reign of Hyrcanus II (67 BCE) and before the capture of Jerusalem by Herod the Great in 37 BCE.

Dupont-Sommer argued that this reference to the struggles between the Romans and Jews is remarkably enlightening as it suggests that the date of the rewriting of the Habakkuk Commentary is not only after 63 BCE, but also after Caesar and the Second Triumvirate of 43 BCE, when Octavius, Antony and Lepidus shared power. The Habakkuk Commentary must have been composed in the time of the Roman domination and not during the Seleucid period because of these referents. Dupont-Sommer asserts that these passages are about the “author’s own comments on the section of the biblical text in which are found [to be] descriptions of the Chaldean invaders.”<sup>26</sup> Dupont-Sommer continues, “This is what the Romans are like in the eyes of the author of the Habakkuk Commentary: valiant in fight, eager for domination, brutal in war, wily in diplomacy, having the cult of *signa*, taking trophies, exacting annual tribute pitilessly from conquered peoples.”<sup>27</sup> The author of the Habakkuk Commentary applies the biblical sentences to the new invaders whom he calls Kittim which was also used previously in Daniel 11:30. In concluding Dupont-Sommer’s analysis of dating the Habakkuk Commentary he states with the utmost precision, “I think the date which is most suitable is the year 41 BCE, a little before the Peace of Brundisium, when the political situation kept the whole world in anxiety, and [when] the Parthian [Empire] threat increased in the East.”<sup>28</sup> The question of chronology is of primary importance in dating the Habakkuk Commentary because the identification and dating of the sect that produced the commentary allows the dating of the Teacher and his movement during this time of historical significance.

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<sup>26</sup> Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 28.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

The Teacher was in violent conflict with the priesthood of Jerusalem, and it says in the Habakkuk Commentary that the Wicked Priest persecuted or “pursued the Teacher of Righteousness to consume him with the ferocity of his anger in the place of his banishment, in festival time, during the rest of the day of Atonement.”<sup>29</sup> The passage alludes to written evidence that the Teacher of Righteousness was judged, condemned, and tortured.

In order to determine a date range of this occurrence, Dupont-Sommer questions who the Wicked Priest might be and that an evidentiary deduction can be comprised of his identity. The Habakkuk Commentary (1QpHab) provides some insight where it says, “Because of the blood [spilt] and the violence done to the country, the city and all its occupants.”<sup>30</sup> This passage suggests that the person is the Wicked Priest who committed sin against the Teacher of Righteousness with God delivering him into the hands of his enemies thereby humiliating him by having him beaten due to his crime against God’s chosen Elect. The author also alludes in the Habakkuk Commentary that the Wicked Priest is a Hasmonean High Priest who governs Israel because only a High Priest could condemn anyone to torture. Additionally, this High Priest would have ruled before the capture of Jerusalem and must have put to death the Teacher of Righteousness sometime before the 63 BCE invasion.

Thanks to Josephus we know of the Hasmonean priest and prince whose tragic end corresponds to the descriptions in the Habakkuk Commentary because historical records indicate that it is Aristobulus II, the son of Alexander Jannaeus and Salome Alexandra. Aristobulus II succeeds his mother Salome Alexandra in 67 BCE, but in 63 BCE he is arrested and imprisoned by Pompey — about 4 months before the capture of Jerusalem. Aristobulus II was able to escape Rome in 56 BCE and reappeared in Palestine where he caused an uprising that drew attention to

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<sup>29</sup> 1QpHab XI, 5.

<sup>30</sup> 1QpHab IX, 8.

himself. Aristobulus II was then recaptured and sent back to Rome in chains which is the precise way “God delivered him into the hands of his enemies” – the Romans being his enemy.<sup>31</sup> As to the humiliations and blows that beat him to death, it should be remembered that Aristobulus II would have had to take part in Pompey’s 61 BCE Third Triumph while being held in chains. In 49 BCE, Aristobulus II died in those chains while in his Roman prison cell as it is believed some of Pompey’s supporters poisoned him. This is perceived as a literal explanation of the words written in the Habakkuk Commentary.

With historical evidence reflecting the reign of Aristobulus II to last only about three years and six months, the condemnation and execution of the Teacher of Righteousness would have occurred during that time period – between 67 and 63 BCE. A more fairly accurate time frame would be when Aristobulus II spent time in Jerusalem sometime around April or May in 63 BCE when Pompey commanded him to flee from Alexandrion, the Hasmonean palace that sat on a hilltop over the Jordan Valley in the west. While in Jerusalem, it is believed that Aristobulus II desired to purge his opponents, especially High Priests and their supporters, by executing them as Josephus explains in his *Antiquities of the Jews* 14.3.2 and Dupont-Sommer mentions in his writings, “In the fever of these days, Aristobulus II [was] this ‘violent’ and ‘agitated’ man [and] could quite well decide to end this dangerous opposition by condemning its leader, and perhaps also some of his principal supporters, by having them summarily executed.”<sup>32</sup> This moment of “fever” could have occurred in the Spring of 65 BCE when Hyrcanus II and King of the Nabataeans, Aretas III, lay siege to Aristobulus II.

By identifying Aristobulus II as the Wicked Priest, it allows confirmation of that identity when looking at another passage of the Habakkuk Commentary where it states, “Why are you

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<sup>31</sup> 1QpHab IX, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 36.

staring, traitors, and you maintain your silence when a wicked person consumes someone more upright than himself?”<sup>33</sup> Dupont-Sommer explains that the interpretation here is believed to be referring to the House of Absalom since Josephus writes that Absalom, the uncle and father-in-law of Aristobulus II, was made prisoner by the Romans in the year 63 BCE. Dupont-Sommer goes further in his argument due to the Habakkuk commentator implying that the House of Absalom should have been a close ally with the royal House and ought to have substantial influence in trying to rescue the Teacher of Righteousness from the persecution of the Wicked Priest – his royal nephew and son-in-law – but said and did nothing in helping him before Pompey arrived in Jerusalem.

Dupont-Sommer explains that there are other passages in the Habakkuk Commentary alluding to and pointing toward Hyrcanus II as the Wicked Priest since he succeeded his brother Aristobulus II as high priest of Judea in 63 BCE when Pompey invaded Jerusalem. This can be found in 1QpHab VIII, 3-8 as follows:

Surely wealth will corrupt the boaster and one who distends his jaws like the abyss and is as greedy as death will not be restrained. All the nations ally against him, all the peoples collaborate against him. Are they not all, perhaps, going to chant verses against him, explaining riddles at his expense? They shall say: Ah, one who amasses the wealth of others! How long will he load himself with debts?<sup>34</sup>

Hyrcanus II is called by a name of loyalty, the Name of Truth, at the start of his royal priesthood but it is believed by the commentator that when he ruled over Israel, his heart became conceited with richly pleasures and he abandoned God. It appears to the commentator of the Habakkuk

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<sup>33</sup> 1QpHab V, 7-9.

<sup>34</sup> Block quotations from the Scrolls are from the translation of Florentino García Martínez and Wilfred G. E. Watson, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

Commentary that the combination of the priesthood and the earthly sovereignty is the cause of the wickedness into which the Hasmonean priest fell. Additional excerpts also place the writing of the Habakkuk Commentary to occur during the time Hyrcanus II was still residing in the high priest office as evidenced in 1QpHab XI, 8-10 and 1QpHab XII, 1:

You are more glutted with insults than with awards. Drink up also and stagger! The cup of Yahweh's right hand [anger] *will* turn against you and disgrace come upon your glory. ... *will* appall you owing to the human blood and the violence (against) the country [Lebanon], the city, and all its occupants.

Dupont-Sommer believes that an explanation of these words refers to the Wicked Priest, so that he may receive his retribution for what he has exacted from the poor because it is believed that "*Lebanon* is the party of the Community" and that the occupants are the poor and "simple people of Judah who strictly practice the Law of Moses."<sup>35</sup> These passages reveal the hostile attitude of Hyrcanus II and his supporters toward the members of the New Covenant with the majority of the sect seeking refuge in Damascus since they could not return until around 40 BCE. Accordingly, it must be noted that the punishment of the Wicked Priest in 1QpHab XI, 8-10 and 1QpHab XII, 1 is written as if it will occur in the future. These segments of the Habakkuk Commentary can be taken as warnings with the deeds not yet achieved. History recites that Hyrcanus II was deposed and made a prisoner in 40 BCE by the Parthian invaders. Hyrcanus II escapes from them and returns to Jerusalem with help from Herod, a suspicious king who assassinates him by 30 BCE. Since it appears that the commentator does not know of these events, it can be concluded that Hyrcanus II was still the high priest which allows the dating of the Habakkuk Commentary to be around 41 BCE.

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<sup>35</sup> Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 33.

At the time the author wrote the Habakkuk Commentary, there was significant belief that the end of days had come with the invasion of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. It was further believed that the visitation of God and the day of Judgment was to come. In expectation of the Day of Judgment, the author necessitated a watchful gaze and to do so without ceasing as reflected in 1QpHab VI, 12-16:

I will stand firm in my sentry post, I will position myself in my fortress to see what he says to me, what he answers to my allegation. Yahweh answered me and said: Write the vision, inscribe it on tablets so that [he who reads it] takes it on the run.

In this passage, God tells Habakkuk to write the things which are going to happen to the last generation, but that the conclusion of time will not be made known to him. This duration of time and to continue with steadfastness is the basis of the Teacher of Righteousness's movement. He and his supporters must retain absolute confidence and remain firmly attached to the truth as it states, "For the vision has an appointed time, it will have an end and not fail. Though it might delay, wait for it; it definitely has to come and will not delay."<sup>36</sup> The author and his followers know they must wait and that the men of truth who practice the Law and stay faithful to God will arrive in their due time in accordance with what God has decreed for them through the marvelous mysteries of God. Yes, this final or end of days is only known and fixed by God and those who wait with much eagerness will receive their just rewards that exceed all that the Prophets have ever tried to describe since it is believed that no tongue can describe it. As found in the Commentary, "For the earth will become full of the knowledge of Yahweh's glory just as water

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<sup>36</sup> 1QpHab VII, 9-10.

fills the sea.”<sup>37</sup> In the final days, the just will be as if astounded with the knowledge of God when that knowledge is revealed in profusion – like the waters of the seas.

The Teacher and his supporters know that God will not destroy His people – the elects of God – by annihilation from other peoples or nations. It is believed that God will destroy by gathering His Elect and then execute judgment on all of the nations. Those found to be sinful will make atonement and keep his commandments as reflected in the Habakkuk Commentary where it says, “You have appointed him to judge; Rock, you have installed him to correct.”<sup>38</sup> In the final Judgment it will be exercised by the Elect of God, believed to be the Teacher of Righteousness, and the destruction will reach all of the *heathen* nations with the only ones being saved to be the faithful servants of the New Covenant. At the time of the visit from God, the one entrusted by God is believed to be the Teacher of Righteousness. It is according to this belief that a first divine punishment of Jerusalem is found guilty of putting to death the Elect of God – the Teacher of Righteousness. Dupont-Sommer maintained that this punishment came about when Pompey captured and devastated Jerusalem in 63 BCE.

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<sup>37</sup> 1QpHab X, 14-15.

<sup>38</sup> 1QpHab V, 1-2.

## THE DATING PROPOSALS OF COLLINS AND WISE

Before moving to the dating proposals of Michael O. Wise and John J. Collins that take us into our own more recent time, I want to briefly consider as a “stop along the way,” a landmark article by William Brownlee in 1982 with the engaging title “The Wicked Priest, the Man of the Lies, and the Righteous Teacher: The Problem of Identity.”<sup>39</sup>

Brownlee agrees with Vermes that the “sectarian documents were probably composed no later than the last quarter of the second century BCE.” Brownlee argues for dismissing theories of historical interpretation which he believes do not arise until the sect’s history begins in the second century. This viewpoint is based on writings obtained from the books of I and II Maccabees and Josephus that assist in providing an exceptionally thorough historical account of the Jewish nation at that time. Brownlee centers his opinion on the Wicked Priest being mentioned in the Habakkuk Commentary, which he believes to be a Hasmonean Maccabean Priest who had the ability to attack foreign nations, since the pre-Hasmonean High Priests were “subservient militarily to the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria” Additionally, this Wicked Priest is further believed to be one that was viewed as a faithful devotee of the Truth at the beginning of his leadership, which eliminated the earlier Hellenized chief priests that were widely blamed with compromising the Jewish faith. Brownlee believes that André Dupont-Sommer’s theory is incorrect in that the sect must already be established in the second century and that “none of the texts bring any of the principal characters referred to in the [Scroll] literature into association with the Kittim or their times.” Brownlee goes further in his analysis and claims that the biblical commentaries from the scrolls refer to the activities of the Wicked

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<sup>39</sup> William Brownlee, “The Wicked Priest, the Man of Lies, and the Righteous Teacher: The Problem of Identity,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 73 (1982): 1-37. Page numbers of direct quotations are cited in parentheses.

Priest and the Man of Lies “as events of the past, speaking of them in the Hebrew perfect tense whereas all references to the Kittim speak of them in the present or future tense, [thereby] employing the Hebrew imperfect.” Brownlee argues that the descriptions of the Kittim never mention the capture of Jerusalem by general Pompey in 63 BCE. Brownlee points out that, “Attempts to make the details fit the career of a single individual result in mistranslations and forced interpretations,” but scholars of the 1950’s should not be blamed for this early investigation of historical interpretation since the Dead Sea Scrolls had just been found and that those scholars were in the beginning stages of analyzing them. He points out that the many theories of the identity of the Wicked Priest fail to be convincing since the various “dooms” that are said to befall him cannot be made to fit into a single man known to us in our historical records. I mention these midway evaluations by Brownlee to emphasize that what follows with Wise and Collins does indeed represent a watershed change in attempts to locate historically the flourishing of the Teacher and his movement, taking us beyond this 1980s assessment by a major Dead Sea Scrolls interpreter who had worked on the scrolls from the very beginning.

Turning to an evaluative overview of Michael Wise’s 2003 *Journal of Biblical Literature* article “Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the Floruit of his Movement,” Wise states that the early “consensus locates the Teacher of Righteousness and the beginning of his movement in the early to mid-second century BCE” with three types of evidence used: the archaeology of the Khirbet Qumran site, the paleography of the writings produced by the Teacher and his followers, and certain statements in the manuscripts. Wise goes on to state in his evaluation that the “totality of the evidence now available offers at best only ambiguous support”<sup>40</sup> with new data providing viable academic support that lends itself to place the Teacher “later in the second

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<sup>40</sup> Michael O. Wise, “Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the Floruit of his Movement,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003): 54.

century BCE and closer to being in the first century.”<sup>41</sup> Wise continues with analyzing how the three conventional methods do not truly support the consensus ideologies of mid-second century BCE beginning first with how de Vaux “was mistaken in some of his dating for the site’s habitation phases”<sup>42</sup> and focusing on how Jodi Magness argues that the foundation date for “the first phase of Period 1b (or Stratum I) of the Second Temple period is reasonable to date the initial establishment to the first half of the first century BCE”<sup>43</sup> which is sometime between 100 BCE and 50 BCE. If this is correct, then the Teacher and his followers did not inhabit the Qumran area in the middle of the second century thereby allowing a “first century dating for the Teacher [to] comport nicely with revised views.”<sup>44</sup> Wise continues with a second type of analysis that is supported by paleographic dating of the manuscripts found in the caves in that this method of dating is not objective, but rather subjective, due to not having dated literary comparisons of other known Dead Sea Scrolls which could be utilized for objective evaluation. Wise argues, “In the absence of dated literary hands, the prosecution of paleographic dating necessarily becomes even more subjective than usual.”<sup>45</sup> Scripts often change at different rates in different locations and Wise argues that geography is a factor in dating the paleography objectively since not all texts can be assumed to have been copied at the Qumran site or area the scrolls were located. Moreover, the presence of hundreds of different scribes seems unfathomable unless the majority of the scrolls originated elsewhere than at the Qumran site. Regarding the third analysis, Wise demonstrates there are nonbiblical manuscripts from the Qumran area which include both sectarian and nonsectarian compositions with sectarian meaning those texts that include language

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<sup>41</sup> Wise, “Dating the Teacher of Righteousness,” 54.

<sup>42</sup> Wise, “Dating the Teacher,” 55.

<sup>43</sup> Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 2002), 63-72.

<sup>44</sup> Wise, “Dating the Teacher,” 55.

<sup>45</sup> Wise, “Dating the Teacher,” 56.

and concepts aligning their origin with the Teacher and his movement. These nonsectarian copies contain writings of other groups or sects because there is an absence of “recognized linguistic and/or conceptual features [wherein] one cannot assume sectarian origin for any text merely because it was found at Qumran.”<sup>46</sup> Only sectarian materials will serve to support the Teacher’s presence at Qumran when evaluated against the central sect’s writings found in the Damascus Document. Notably, the figure of the “Teacher of Righteousness” is not mentioned by title in the Community Rule, and this charter might well have been composed in its original form before the Teacher came onto the scene, yet it reflects a fully functioning movement. We cannot be sure of this, but the Damascus Document specifically refers to the group “wandering like blind men groping for the way” when God observed their deeds and their pure hearts and raised up their Teacher to guide them (CD I, 10-11). So dating the “Teacher” would not solve the question of the more general history of the movement when considering the title as mentioned in the Damascus Document.

Adding to Wise’s 2003 overview and looking ahead to Wise’s chapter in the 2010 *Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* titled “The Origins and History of the Teacher’s Movement,” the question of connecting the Khirbet Qumran site with the scrolls in the caves is at issue.<sup>47</sup> The first link connecting the scrolls to the site in the 1950s was the claim that the pottery found at Qumran was unique to the site and pottery found at the caves. This has proven to be false in that subsequent excavations have found similar pottery scroll jars at other locations in Jericho. Wise goes on to state, “If the pottery from the site is not unique, then the discovery of the same sorts of

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<sup>46</sup> Wise, “Dating the Teacher,” 60.

<sup>47</sup> Michael O. Wise, “The Origins and History of the Teacher’s Movement,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 92-122.

pottery in the caves holding the scrolls means nothing in particular.”<sup>48</sup> The link between the site and the scrolls provided by the archaeology of Khirbet Qumran appears to not hold the major conclusions of the old consensus. Putting archaeology aside, the consensus view for dating the Teacher and his movement has been relied upon in two ways: literary analysis of the texts and dating by paleographic analysis. Utilizing Frank Moore Cross’s recognized typology based on how Aramaic and Hebrew scribal handwriting changed over time with the rate of change being generational, Wise disagrees with Cross in how he assigns twenty-five years to each generational change and instead offers a “paleographic punctuated equilibrium or evolutionary theory”<sup>49</sup> and supposes short, rapid periods of change were followed by longer periods of relative stasis. This more realistic approach would be to compare the scrolls with other evidentiary dated Hebrew and Aramaic literary texts from not only Qumran but from other locations. Wise states the problem is “for Palestine, we have no dated literary *comparanda*.”<sup>50</sup> Wise goes further when he says, “The situation for documentary hands is different. In that realm dated texts are available, and one can tentatively apply the known interplay between documentary and literary hands to help somewhat with the problem of dating the scrolls, but the subjective element in such a procedure is considerable.”<sup>51</sup> The study of ancient manuscripts allows us to know that scripts often changed at different rates in different locales.

As Wise mentions in his 2003 and again in his 2010 publication, the writings that are closely associated with the Teacher and qualify as central sectarian writings are the Damascus Document and Habakkuk Commentary, among other dead sea manuscripts, and are “dated by their own editors palaeographically, [with] the vast majority of the copies of these works

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<sup>48</sup> Wise, “Origins,” 94.

<sup>49</sup> Wise, “Origins,” 98.

<sup>50</sup> Wise, “Origins,” 98.

<sup>51</sup> Wise, “Origins,” 98.

originated in the first century BCE ... more specifically, over half date to the final script phase or generation of that century [and] not a single one dates to the mid-second century in which the consensus chronology locates the Teacher, nor even to the second century as a whole.”<sup>52</sup> So whether one rejects or embraces paleographic dating as precise, the method does not positively support the consensus chronology for the Teacher. This has Wise going back to what he believes to be the only reliable method for establishing the time of the Teacher’s rise and that is the literary analysis of the *Hodayot* or Thanksgiving Hymns which allow scholars to utilize it as a proper starting point for historical investigation of the Teacher’s movement. After considering the Thanksgiving Hymns as possibly having the voice of the Teacher, we can then present at any given point the *pesharim*, the Damascus Document and other sectarian texts, writings of Josephus and Pliny the Elder for historical dating of events, and potentially any relative non-sectarian scrolls. It must be noted that there is nearly a decade of references to historical figures by name and all seem to come from non-sectarian texts written within a generation of time that fit the first century BCE with Wise concluding that “the Teacher and his movement appear to belong to the first century BCE.”<sup>53</sup> This conventional dating of the Maccabean period (circa 176 BCE) is based on the 390 + 20 year period after the Babylonian exile that is referenced in the Damascus Document and might well be inaccurate, but since we simply do not know what dating the Teacher’s Movement might have had for the exile, the 176 BCE date can be useful to use as the date 100 years later.

As we investigate John J. Collins’s book, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, for a supplementary representation of subsequent interpretations when questioning about what we have learned in sixty years, Collins brings forth arguments by several scholars, namely, J.T.

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<sup>52</sup> Wise, “Origins,” 99.

<sup>53</sup> Wise, “Origins,” 119.

Milik, Frank Cross, Geza Vermes, Cecil Roth and G.R. Driver from the 1950s and 1960s, and then moves forward to more recent variations from Robert Eisenman and Barbara Thiering who have sought to explain the scrolls against the background of early Christianity. Collins points out that, “If one at all accepts paleography as a tool of dating, however, these settings are too late ... the historical figures who are mentioned by name in the Scrolls all date to the pre-Christian period, mainly to the first century BCE. The only credible alternative to the second century dating of the Teacher is one that places references to him, or his eschatological title, to be in the first half of the first century BCE.”<sup>54</sup> Although the most authoritative calculations from the time of Cross and Milik place the consensus to be mid-second century for the activity of the Teacher, Collins writes, “Several of the pillars on which the consensus was based have eroded, and there is good reason to ask whether it still deserves the status it has enjoyed.”<sup>55</sup> One noteworthy observation by Collins is that in some ways we may have come full circle, in that he suggests Dupont-Sommer’s proposal that the Wicked Priest might be identified with Hyrcanus II in his later work might well deserve reexamination.

With recent archaeological findings at the Qumran site not being supportive to the “mainstream” hypothesis of Vermes, DeVaux, and others, the mid-second century dating faces real problems. Collins erodes what he calls “the pillars” of previous consensus when he states, “De Vaux had proposed that the settlement at Qumran was established in the mid-second century BCE, but he admitted that the earliest phase was poorly attested. The small amount of pottery from Period 1a is indistinguishable from that of Period 1b and there are no coins associated with it,”<sup>56</sup> while pointing out that “neither the pottery nor the coins provide evidence for any

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<sup>54</sup> John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 89.

<sup>55</sup> Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 90.

<sup>56</sup> Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 90.

settlement before 100 BCE.”<sup>57</sup> This allows for a concluding reasonable argument to date the origins of the community to be in the first half of the first century BCE as there are not any findings or strong enough evidence to link the Teacher to the site of Qumran because the “archaeological evidence does not provide any solid support for the second century dating of the Teacher or the community.”<sup>58</sup> Moreover, paleographic dating is qualified to be comparative, but Wise has argued that the scripts may have evolved differently and at different locations with some scrolls being copied at sites other than the Qumran site. With these evaluations, the most widely accepted dating places the majority of sectarian texts to be in the first century BCE with an agreed upon margin of error allowing the spectrum to be no earlier than 100 BCE.

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<sup>57</sup> Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 91.

<sup>58</sup> Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 91.

## CONCLUDING METHODOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

So, have our methods and conclusions advanced or remained primarily the same due to the lack of definitive evidence? Based on my own reading, I found Wise and Collins very convincing and the passages that mention a conflict with the Teacher could well refer to Hyrcanus II. This conflict may have occurred toward the end of the Teacher's career and the beginning of Hyrcanus's first term as high priest. As Collins emphasizes, "... [the] movement did not arise because of a dispute over the high priesthood. Rather, it arose over a distinctive interpretation of the Mosaic law which was in conflict with that of the Pharisees and the majority of the people. The Wicked Priest was not the catalyst for the emergence of the sect ... [with] the authors of the *pesharim* [believing] the death of Jannaeus and the capture and disfigurement of Hyrcanus II [as] providing fine examples of divine retribution"<sup>59</sup> thereby serving to indicate that prophecy was being fulfilled.

I want to give some concluding attention to recent efforts by scholars such as Charlotte Hempel, who are attempting to challenge the "Particularist" paradigm that the Dead Sea Scrolls even represent some form of dissenting sectarian "Judaism," but rather that they are part of "the main Jewish movement in Late Second Temple times," as Hartmut Stegemann puts it.<sup>60</sup> Hempel has argued that the textual pluriformity is a "shared fluidity between a range of manuscripts from Qumran, some of which were to become biblical [that] helps us appreciate the scribal mindset of

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<sup>59</sup> Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 121.

<sup>60</sup> Charlotte Hempel, "The Dead Sea Scrolls: Challenging the Particularist Paradigm," in *Torah, Temple, Land*, edited by Markus Withe, Jens Schröter, and Verena M. Lepper (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 94. See Hartmut Stegemann, "The Qumran Essenes – Local Members of the Main Jewish Union in Late Second Temple Times," in Julio Trebolle Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner, eds., *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Madrid, 18 – 21 March 1991, (STDJ 11; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 1:83– 166.

the movement.”<sup>61</sup> It appears that the evidence of biblical manuscripts from Qumran may represent some of the earliest biblical texts, but also “text forms that testify to scribal traditions that would later part company.”<sup>62</sup> Given this wide representation portrayed by biblical texts and ancient manuscripts, there is no wisdom in considering that the evidence from Qumran is distinctive in evidencing a textual embodiment that is unusually pluriform. Additionally, as covered by the works of John J. Collins, the Qumran site is not considered the geographical site of the sect since other sites can be contributed to the shared history of the scribes that wrote the scrolls. Finally, Hempel observes elements of a broader Jewish culture, discourse and thinking that were present at Qumran while pointing out that “before the custom of attributing positions to particular rabbis had become established, groups of Jews are likely to have debated and contested noteworthy halakhic topics and the scriptures.”<sup>63</sup> It must be established that the literary quality of the Dead Sea Scroll texts and the analysis by many scholars, the larger geographical coverage of the movement, along with the diverse and productive place of Jerusalem and the Temple in the texts all suggest to us to think about the people, places, and ideas that incorporate a more abundant, intelligent, social and cultural life that is habitually thought of as a dissident group that had parted from that life.

In the end all of these dating proposals assume that the Teacher is a person, rather than the possibility of the references being a title or indicative of some sort of eschatological function. Also, it remains the case that the initial interpretations of Vermes and the “mainstream” theory is as defensible as that of Wise or others who put the flourishing of the movement a hundred years

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<sup>61</sup> Hempel, “Challenging,” 95.

<sup>62</sup> Hempel, “Challenging,” 95.

<sup>63</sup> Hempel, “Challenging,” 102.

later. Given our paucity of references to the Teacher, we simply do not have enough information to make dogmatic judgments.

In thinking about the generic language used in the scrolls for both its principal characters as well as their activities, all conclusions about the Teacher and the Wicked Priest must remain tentative. Although I lean toward the conclusion that the “mainstream theory” as pioneered by Geza Vermes, but questioned by Dupont-Sommer, has serious difficulties, it seems all proposals remain on the table and none can be dismissed. Clearly various qualified scholars continue to favor a Maccabean second century BCE dating, but from my reading it appears that some measurable and definitive progress has been made over sixty years. It is worth observing that the flood of newly published scrolls since 1991 has had little direct effect on the dating question, but it seems the archaeological data favors the flourishing of the Teacher and his movement sometime in the first century BCE and before the Roman period. The Dead Sea Scrolls, specifically the *Habakkuk Commentary*, seems to reflect a time in which the prophetic timetable once held by the group had passed, which could well take us into the Roman period.

Finally, the appeal to archaeological data can stand or fall upon the assumption of an identification of the Dead Sea Scroll community with that site. Although this is held likely by most interpreters, it has been questioned by others. Overall, I found Jodi Magness’s analysis, which attempts to combine textual with material data, most impressive so that the more recent arguments of Wise, and the summary discussion of Collins — both published in 2010 — offer us as “definitive” a position as we are likely to have unless new decisive evidence emerges. These concluding remarks about dating the settlement of the Qumran site in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE may hold up, but the history of the Teacher’s Movement is a complex one that is

not necessarily centered at Qumran. Additionally, there is no hard evidence linking the Teacher, or even the Community, to the site of Qumran — assuming that the Teacher is a historical figure.

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