Pushing Sacred Boundaries in Early Judaism and the Ancient Mediterranean

Essays in Honor of Jodi Magness

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Contents

CHAPTER 10

Qumran-Related History: Contemporaries Jannaeus, Absalom, and Judah the Essene

Stephen Goranson

The literature on Qumran by now could fill numerous cave jars or library shelves; much has been illuminated, yet many questions remain.[1] In this essay, I claim that through a configuration of several types of evidence we can learn the probable identities of three individuals known from outside sources, who can be matched with those mentioned in some Dead Sea Scrolls.[2] Such issues have been discussed often, but gradually some old perspectives or assumptions can be put aside, and new or renewed insight becomes available. Our evidence, available in scattered resources, ranges from the fragmentary and difficult, to the very clear, such as, for example, coins from the long reign of Alexander Jannaeus that proclaim him to be both priest and king—an ambitious person, surely. In the overlapping accumulation and combination of evidence—such as archaeology, chronology, individual characteristics, some history of scholarship, and even names—something may be revealed about the lives of these three contemporaries.

1 Some History of Scholarship and Chronology

Because the full history of scholarship cannot all be reviewed here, I note that, fortunately, excellent surveys of earlier discussions are available.[3] To simplify

1 Thanks to the editors, I am privileged to participate in this celebration of the ongoing contributions to knowledge by Jodi Magness.

2 This essay includes assertions but also has limits. It will not offer an attempt to clarify all possible Qumran identifications or interactions; some allusions admittedly remain obscure. For example, whether "the Man of the Lie" (1QpHab 2:2; CD 20:15; and other possibly-related mentions) is identical with the Wicked Priest, or with Absalom, or with someone else will be left unresolved here. Whether the "House of Peleg" (CD 20:22; 4Q169 3–4 iv, 1) refers to those who set up a rival temple in Leontopolis—not approved by the group behind the Scrolls, who hoped for a renewal only at Jerusalem—may be so, but will not be pursued here.

3 See, for example, James C. VanderKam, "Identity and History of the Community," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:501–31; idem, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests*

matters, I consider three main potential times, which are, after all, the three periods most often proposed for the three individuals in question, whose lives overlapped: the rule of Jonathan I (152–142 BCE); that of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE); and that of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra and her two sons (76 BCE and following, with differing dates of office for these three).[4]

Soon after the discoveries in Cave 1Q, André Dupont-Sommer proposed that Aristobulus II, son of Jannaeus and Queen Shelamzion, was the Wicked Priest.[5] Later, Dupont-Sommer changed his proposed Wicked Priest identification to Aristobulus's brother, and obviously his contemporary, Hyrcanus II.[6] Not long after Dupont-Sommer's account featuring Aristobulus II, Geza Vermes proposed Jonathan I (152–142 BCE) as the Wicked Priest, a guess that eventually some came to regard as a nearly consensus view.[7] Following many other developments, James Charlesworth defended the Jonathan I proposal in a book with a rather dire subtitle, *The Pesharim and Qumran History: Consensus or Chaos?*[8] Yet, John Collins, for instance, has described reasons that the mid-second century proposed dating now has "eroded pillars." One such reason is

after the Exile (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004). In the latter, VanderKam examines the proposal that the Teacher of Righteousness served as high priest during the "intersacerdotium" from 159 to 152 BCE (244–50) and finds that it has "no secure evidence" (250). Similarly, he cautions that 4Q523, which mentions a Jonathan, has so few surviving words that little can be reliably made of it (266–67).

4 There are no clear or reliable indications of several "Wicked Priests," as may be illustrated by the lack of agreement as to which two or three or six or unspecified number of candidates have been proposed. Following Occam's razor here, I avoid options that unnecessarily multiply entities.

5 André Dupont-Sommer, *Aperçus préliminaires sur les manuscrits de la mer Morte* (Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1950). To reduce the polemical, biased tone of the villain and hero names, "Wicked Priest" and "Teacher of Righteousness," I considered using the more generic titles "the Priest" and "the Teacher," but decided against that departure from the familiar usage, in part because the Teacher of Righteousness was also a priest (1QpHab 2:8–9; 4Q171 1–10 iii, 15). On another overlapping name situation: Jonathan here, unless in a quotation, usually refers to Jonathan Maccabee, also known as Apphus or Jonathan I, rather than Alexander Jannaeus, though the latter was also named Jonathan (or Jonathan II).

6 André Dupont-Sommer, *Les écrits esséniens découverts près de la mer Morte*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Payot, 1960), 361–68.

7 Geza Vermes, *Providential Accidents: An Autobiography* (London: SCM, 1998), 81, recalls that he had dated the Teacher of Righteousness and the Wicked Priest to "the middle of the second century BC" by early January 1952, when he discussed it with Gustave Lambert. Among the many early publications by Vermes, his proposed equation of Jonathan I with the Wicked Priest was presented in most detail in the revised publication of his doctoral dissertation, *Les manuscrits de désert de Juda*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Disclée, 1954), 90–105.

8 James H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History: Consensus or Chaos?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 34–37, 44, 91–92.

the recognition that the high priest was legitimate, unlike what was previously assumed, namely that he usurped the office.[9] Michael Wise has urged a return from settings in the mid-second century to the first century BCE (both of which are anachronistic terms), jumping from Jonathan I to Hyrcanus II, yet skipping over Jannaeus, who lived in both "centuries."[10] There are potential chronological problems with both of these outlier proposals, and both proposals could perhaps be regarded as excessive academic "correctives." The earliest mentions of the Wicked Priest and the Teacher of Righteousness appear in texts probably copied from yet earlier manuscripts that may well predate 76 BCE, the start of Queen Shelamzion's era.[11] Admittedly, this is merely a matter of probability and date-range estimates, not exactitude, but as it is based on radiocarbon and paleographic date ranges, it is not a consideration that can properly be ignored.[12] For practical purposes, the chances of any proposed emergence of the Wicked Priest and Teacher of Righteousness later than 76 BCE are vanishingly small.

Vermes recalled that in December 1951, Dominique Barthélmey "put me fully in the picture about the new situation," namely that the recent excavation at Khirbet Qumran led Roland de Vaux to conclude that the settlement "was occupied from the late second century BC."[13] Though there is not necessarily a one-to-one correlation between the time of the Wicked Priest and the

9 John J. Collins, "The Time of the Teacher: An Old Debate Renewed," in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich*, ed. Peter W. Flint, Emanuel Tov, and James C. VanderKam, VTSup 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 212–29 (213 and 216, respectively).

10 Michael O. Wise, "Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the *Floruit* of His Movement," *JBL* 122 (2003), 53–87; idem, "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.

11 Phillip R. Callaway, *The History of the Qumran Community: An Investigation* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 61, 201. To be precise, Callaway chooses 75 BCE rather than 76 BCE for the terminus. See also Sidnie White Crawford, *Scribes and Scrolls at Qumran* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), 311–12n5, who similarly concludes, based on her analysis of chronology, that "the identification of the Wicked Priest with Hyrcanus II should be rejected" as too late. See further Hayim Lapin, "Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historiography of Ancient Judaism," in *Rediscovering the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Maxine Grossman (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 108–27 (123): "A reconstruction of sect-formation should, I think, take seriously the early first century as the context for sectarian activism, conflict, disappointment, and alienation." Additionally, if the Wicked Priest was a son of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra, one might expect some contemporary allusion to her in this context.

12 Brian Webster, "Chronological Index of the Texts from the Judaean Desert," in DJD 39:351–446.

13 Vermes, *Providential Accidents*, 80.

beginning of the Qumran settlement—for instance, among other things, an exile in "the land of Damascus" (e.g., CD 6:5), if taken literally as somewhere east of the Jordan river, could disrupt such an equation—it is at least justified to think that this archaeological opinion influenced Vermes. Certainly, proponents of the Jonathan I proposal have other arguments, but this archaeological dating claim is weak. In 1950, Dupont-Sommer's view was that Essenes settled Qumran only after Herod held power in 37 BCE, later than the time most would now regard as the sectarian settlement's start.[14] Here is one indication that Vermes presented the archaeology in a way that suited his literary and historical analysis: Vermes eventually claimed, more than once, without archaeological evidence, but in matter-of-fact language, that the beginning of settlement at Qumran happened between 150 and 140 BCE.[15] Vermes wrote: "The excavations of 1951–6 date the beginning, the *terminus a quo*, of the sectarian establishment to 150–140 BC."[16]

That unsupported claim by Vermes is, remarkably, even earlier than de Vaux's date estimates. In the revised English version of his Schweich Lectures, de Vaux tentatively ventured about the start of his Period Ia that "[i]t is possible that this would have commenced under one of the predecessors of John Hyrcanus, but we cannot push it back very far because the modest nature of the buildings and the scarcity of archaeological material attest the fact that this first installation was of short duration."[17] It is curious, even if it may be undecidable, to wonder why de Vaux felt any need at all to mention the possibility of attempting to "push" back this dating to earlier than 134 BCE, the start of the tenure of John Hyrcanus. For whatever reason, de Vaux's previously published date description is even less amenable to Vermes's interpretation.[18] And now even de Vaux's estimate of the time of settlement has been questioned as being too early, having been based largely on coins that could have remained in circulation. Jodi Magness and Dennis Mizzi have made a good case that the start of the Qumran settlement was at about 100 BCE at the earliest and likely was later

14 Dupont-Sommer, *Aperçus préliminaires*, 123.

15 Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (Cleveland: Collins World, 1978), 147. And on p. 33: "It was established … that a modest fresh occupation had begun in the second half of the second century (150–140) BC."

16 Vermes, *Qumran in Perspective*, 147.

17 Roland de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Schweich Lectures 1959*, rev. ed. (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1973), 5.

18 Roland de Vaux, "Fouilles de Khirbet Qumrân: rapport préliminaire sur les 3e, 4e et 5e campagnes," *RB* 63 (1956): 533–77 (538): "il est possible mais il n'est pas sûr que la période I*a* ait débuté sous Jean Hyrcan (134–104), car il semble qu'elle eut une courte durée et que le développement de la communauté exigea très vite une extension des bâtiments, qui trouvèrent alors leur plan définitif."

than that.[19] I also, with Magness, consider it most probable that the Second Temple period use of the site was sectarian from the onset. If so, one possible political turning point for occupying Qumran might be the death of Jannaeus in 76 BCE. So, chronology does play an important role, though by itself, this process of elimination method is not, so far, sufficient for our purpose.

2 Who Was the Wicked Priest?

It is widely and correctly recognized that the Wicked Priest, הכוהן הרשע—presumably a pun, mentioned in the Habakkuk Pesher (1QpHab 8:8; 9:9; 11:4) and the Psalms Pesher[a] (4Q171 1–10 iv, 7–10)—was a Hasmonaean high priest, הכון הרוש, though other candidates, some too early or too late to be credible, have also been proposed. Outside historical sources can be expected to provide more information on the public life of the Wicked Priest than on the Teacher of Righteousness, because the former was additionally a political power, a military leader, and an amasser of wealth. Yet, conversely, the Scrolls writers were likely to be more directly familiar with the Teacher of Righteousness than with the Wicked Priest. So, for example, the manner of the death of the Wicked Priest, which is rather confusedly mentioned in a passage of 1QpHab 9:9–12, may be a less reliable indication than some may assume. The Wicked Priest was said to be "in the hand" of gentiles for some time, but not necessarily killed by them, and reportedly he died by disease considered to be divinely predestined. If he died by disease, then he was not killed by gentiles. As for Jannaeus, he had previously managed a close-call escape from Obedas, king of the Arabs (Josephus, *A.J.* 13.375). It is not likely that any of the Scrolls' writers were present for his death, and the account may suggest wishful thinking, as if that is what the writer thought he deserved, rather than being eyewitness evidence. It is for his life rather than his death that the Scrolls writers called him "wicked." According to Josephus, Alexander Jannaeus died of effects of drunkenness and quartan fever at Ragaba, where he fell ill and died after supposedly telling his wife to conceal his death for some time (*A.J.* 13.398–399). The Wicked Priest was a reputed heavy drinker (1QpHab 11:12–15); Jannaeus was a reputed heavy drinker (*B.J.* 1.97; *A.J.* 13.398); the same cannot be said to be known of Jonathan I nor Hyrcanus II. In any case, the death description does not exclude Jannaeus.

19 Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, SDSSRL (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 47–50; eadem, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021), 64–69; Dennis Mizzi, "Qumran Period I Reconsidered: An Evaluation of Several Competing Theories," *DSD* 22 (2015): 1–42.

The Wicked Priest candidate must be known by personal characteristics and deeds. And Jannaeus fits the bill. Neither Jonathan I nor Hyrcanus II is associated with as much sectarian strife as Jannaeus. Josephus may have misled some readers by introducing Essenes, Sadducees, and Pharisees during his account of the time of Jonathan I, even though there is no persuasive narrative reason for doing that. Elsewhere, I have proposed that this placement occurred because one of Josephus's known historical sources, Strabo. Strabo's text, and one of Strabo's sources, the *History* of Posidonius, begins in 146 BCE, when Polybius had ended his *History*.[20] And 146 BCE is precisely when Josephus placed the Essenes in his *Jewish Antiquities* (*B.J.* 2.119–166 does not say when he thought they began), following the probable ethnological introductions by these earlier historians. Strabo (*Geogr.* 16.2.34–46), likely following Posidonius, also wrote that Moses was a good and admirable teacher, but that later "superstitious men were appointed to the priesthood, and then tyrannical people" (*Geogr.* 16.2.37). And Strabo specifically singled out Alexander Jannaeus as pivotal in this unfortunate change: "when now Judaea was under the rule of tyrants, Alexander [Jannaeus] was first to declare himself king instead of priest" (*Geogr.* 16.2.40).[21] Jannaeus was the Lion of Wrath mentioned in the Nahum Pesher (4Q169); he feasted with concubines while crucifying (Josephus, *B.J.* 1.92–98; *A.J.* 13.376–383; 4Q169 3–4 i, 6–8). According to Vermes, this happened at a later time than the Wicked Priest. At the other extreme, Millar Burrows wrote: "If Alexander Jannaeus was the lion of wrath, he was also probably the wicked priest who persecuted the teacher of righteousness."[22] Though I would not go that far with such if/then reasoning, these two do in fact appear to be a good match, well worth considering.[23]

Jannaeus was tyrannical, drunken, cruel, warlike, and an amasser of wealth. 4QApocryphal Psalm and Prayer (4Q448), in my view, was a sectarian text against King Jonathan, preceded by an Essene and *Yaḥad* psalm. This was not

20 Stephen Goranson, "Posidonius, Strabo, and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa as Sources on Essenes," *JJS* 45 (1994): 295–98.

21 Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Arts and Sciences and Humanities, 1974), 1:295–303.

22 Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls: New Scrolls and New Interpretations* (New York: Viking, 1958), 215.

23 Though Philo wrote explicitly about the Essenes, the names Sadducees and Pharisees do not occur in his extant writings. He did, though, in *Every Good Man is Free* refer to two varieties of disapproved rulers over Judaea, likely Hasmonaean rulers (*Prob.* 88–91). One group was cruel and savage like wild animals; another deceived with flattery. Is it coincidence that these may implicitly parallel the Lion of Wrath, Jannaeus, and, secondly "those who seek smooth things," such as Shelamzion Alexandra, from the view of the Qumran pesharists?

just written, but also selected for cave preservation, which may weaken any imagined scenario that it may have been written when, early on, Jannaeus might have been well-regarded. It would be a striking anomaly if it were positive. The Wicked Priest was "called by name of truth" (1QpHab 8:9) at first. He was a possible recipient of the legal (anachronistically called "halakhic") letter Miqṣat Maʿaśe Ha-Torah (4QMMT), an appeal that 4Q171 may buttress in this view that he may have been or seemed approachable at first. But the Wicked Priest assaulted the Teacher of Righteousness, whether because of a different calendar (such as different dates for Yom Kippur) or for other differences, possibly abetted by having his brother Absalom fill in for him as high priest.[24]

"Jannes and his brother" make an appearance in the Damascus Document (CD 5:18–19). Long ago, before World War I, though published only much later in an English translation, Louis Ginzberg wrote a learned and significant observation on the name Jannes in CD 5:18–19. This passage draws a parallel between a former time when Moses and Aaron were opposed by two nameless Egyptian priests (Exod 7:10–12) and a more recent time when the priests Jannes and his brother opposed the Teacher of Righteousness.

Here is Ginzberg's passage, translated from German, exactly as published, including his footnote 54:

> יחנה (5, 18) name of a sorcerer contemporary with Moses. In talmudical sources (Exodus Rabba, 9, 4; Menaḥoth 85a) he is called יוחני, in NT (II Timothy 3:8) and in the Pseudipigrapha: Iannes. The mentioning of Moses' opponent by name, may be a disguised attack on (King Alexander) Jannaeus or on King Ioannes [note 54] Hyrcanus.

Ginzberg mistakenly called Hyrcanus a king. Here is his note 54:

> יחנה respectively יוחני or יוחנא are abbreviated forms of יוחנן or יהוחנן. Since the vernacular pronounced the ח in יחנה as hardly audible, the differences between ינאי—יהונתן and יחנה = יחני = יהוחנן was scarcely perceptible. In the Talmud we find ינאי for both Alexander Jannaeus and his father John Hyrcanus, cf. above, p. 273, note 6 (and our *Legends of the Jews* VI p. 144).[25]

24 For a possible precedent of a brother substituting as priest, see Josephus, *B.J.* 1.73–74. See also VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 316.

25 Louis Ginzberg, *An Unknown Jewish Sect* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1976), 288n54, lexigraphic item no. 51. This passage does not appear in Ginzberg, *Eine unbekannte jüdische Sekte* (New York: Im Selbsteverlage des Verfassers, 1922).

It is important to add that we now know that Alexander was called Jannaeus or Yannai, but that John Hyrcanus was not.[26] Talmudic literature includes discussion of this confusion. The accounts in Josephus (*A.J.* 13.288–298) and the Talmud (b. Qidd. 66a) of sectarian-upset dinners are complex to evaluate, but Vered Noam has given an excellent history of scholarship of these accounts compared.[27] It does appear that there is less sectarian strife attested in the reign of John Hyrcanus than in that of Jannaeus, when such strife was extreme, such as an incident of throwing citrons at him while he was at the altar. If anything of this sort actually happened, as recounted in *A.J.* 13.372–374, m. Sukkah 4:9, and t. Sukkah 3:16 (= b. Sukkah 48b), it surely suggests some contemporaries hated him.[28] Perhaps John Hyrcanus was more tolerant; additionally, or more likely, the sectarian differences had probably not yet hardened as much as they would later. It is interesting that Raba reportedly said (b. Ber. 29a, my square brackets added): "Johanan and Jannai are different [i.e., John Hyrcanus was not Jannaeus—correct]; Jannai was originally wicked, רשע, and Johanan was originally righteous." This reflects polemic between Essenes and Pharisees, a polemic echoed in rabbinic writings. In the Essene view, Jannaeus was at first "called by the name of truth" (1QpHab 7:9) and then became wicked—the Wicked Priest; for Raba, the opposite obtained.

To be brief, apparently Ginzberg was right. This passage in CD 5:18–19 (// 4Q266 3 ii, 6; 4Q267 2 2) draws a parallel between the time that Belial raised wicked and powerful opponents against Moses and his brother, and the writer's present day when the Teacher of Righteousness was opposed by the Wicked Priest, Jannaeus, and his brother. That brother, his only surviving brother, was Absalom, recorded here merely as "his brother." In the pseudepigrapha, the name of the brother of Jannes was filled in with a similar-sounding name, Absalom having been forgotten—Jambres or Mambres and other variations. Quite independently of Louis Ginzberg's book, *An Unknown Jewish Sect,* the editor of *Jannes and Jambres*, Albert Pietersma, discussed the Cairo Damascus passage and proposed that the same Jannes may be a reference to a Jonathan, though in his case, that Jonathan is the earlier Jonathan, Jonathan Apphus,

26 Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, Part 1: *Palestine 330 BCE–200 CE*, TSAJ 91 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 144, 147n44.

27 Vered Noam, *Shifting Images of the Hasmoneans: Second Temple Legends and Their Reception in Josephus and Rabbinic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 76–116. Whether Judah ben Gudgeda (or Gedidia) in b. Qidd. 66a is identical with Judah the Essene is not decidable on current evidence, even though it is intriguing that Jannaeus had just before their encounter returned from Koḥalith, a term known from the Copper Scroll found in Qumran Cave 3Q.

28 Noam, *Shifting Images*, 117–40.

along with his brother Simon.[29] Again, that earlier Jonathan was not known as Jannaeus or Yannai. Alexander Jannaeus was the Wicked Priest.

3 Who Was Absalom, Who Did Not Help the Teacher of Righteousness?

According to 1QpHab 5:10, the House of Absalom kept quiet and failed to help the Teacher when he was aggrieved:

> "Why do you heed traitors, but are silent when a wicked one swallows up one more righteous than he?" (vacat) Its interpretation concerns the House of Absalom and the men of their counsel, who were quiet at the rebuke of the Righteous Teacher and did not support him against the Man of the Lie (vacat) who rejected the Torah in the midst of all their counsel.[30]

Without, for now, wishing to enter the fraught conversation about the identity of the Man of the Lie, it seems safe to say that he is either identical to the Wicked Priest or to an ally and agent of his.[31]

1QpHab was first edited by William Brownlee, a scholar who did much fine work that is sometimes insufficiently appreciated. But I disagree with his comment on Absalom. Brownlee wrote, "A cryptic reference. The commentator does not give us the real name of a rebel leader. He refers to a party which lived up to the name Absalom who rebelled against his own father."[32] This note, the first analysis of the passage, is in some respects unsatisfactory, even though it can be admitted that the pesher writer may have wished to allude to the negative association of the biblical name Absalom. The Absalom of the pesher—quite unlike David's son—is not shown as rebelling, and much less against his father. Rather, he is shown as *acquiescing*, the very antithesis of rebelling. As

29 Albert Pietersma, ed., *The Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres the Magicians*, RGRW 119 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 20–23. Pietersma's book does not anywhere refer to Ginzberg's *An Unknown Jewish Sect*.

30 Translation by Maurya Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*, CBQMS 8 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979), 15.

31 To illustrate that practically all possibilities have been raised, note that Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Judah the Essene and the Teacher of Righteousness," *RevQ* 40 (1981): 235–46, actually suggested that, supposedly using Jean Carmignac's method, Judah the Essene could be argued as identical with the Man of the Lie! But that is mere rhetorical mischief.

32 William H. Brownlee, "The Jerusalem Habakkuk Scroll (1QpHab)," *BASOR* 112 (1948): 8–18 (17n36).

it happens, Jannaeus's sole surviving brother is also described by Josephus, twice, precisely as acquiescent. This brother, Absalom, was "the survivor, who was content with a quiet life" (*B.J.* 1.85) and the "brother who preferred to live without taking part in public affairs" (*A.J.* 13.323). Hence, Jannaeus did not kill him, unlike others; he was no rival for power. David Noel Freedman responded to Brownlee the following year, suggesting that Absalom was more likely not merely a symbolic name but a historical one, and, as such, it could serve as an important peg for dating some events described in the Qumran texts.[33] That Absalom is the name of Jannaeus's sole surviving brother is given in Josephus's *A.J.* 14.71, where Absalom is identified as the uncle and father-in-law of Aristobulus II, when both were under siege in Jerusalem and then taken prisoners (*B.J.* 1.154). Because Josephus reveals his name in a setting somewhat removed from the time of Jannaeus, it may not have been as readily noticed as if he had specified it earlier. And who was Jannaeus's only surviving brother, as specified in CD? If Jannaeus and Absalom were, in different ways—the former by commission and the latter by omission—unhelpful to the Teacher of Righteousness, then these identities match the evidence.

4 Who Was the Teacher of Righteousness?

Once the Wicked Priest and Absalom have been identified, the Teacher of Righteousness is not far to seek. He must be their contemporary. Most probably he was an Essene. Even the name has been provided.[34] 1QpHab 8:1–3 comments on the theologically important verse Hab 2:4b, "the righteous man will live by his faithfulness," as follows (with my additions in square brackets):

33 David Noel Freedman, "The 'House of Absalom' in the Habakkuk Scroll," *BASOR* 114 (1949): 11–13.

34 For example, Michael O. Wise, in the provocatively titled work *The First Messiah: Investigating the Savior before Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), based largely on historical interpretations of Qumran hymns, allows that there was some evidence for the name Judah as Teacher of Righteousness—though without mentioning "the Essene." He states: "The name of the first messiah is nowhere stated outright, but a few clues in the Dead Sea Scrolls suggest that it may have been Judah" (41). The word "Essene" does not appear in his *The First Messiah* main text, only in his bibliography. Wise, in later learned though not necessarily historically persuasive works (see note 10), can be said largely to agree with Dupont-Sommer on chronology and on suggesting parallels between the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus, but, on the other hand, Wise may simultaneously provide an example of the term Dupont-Sommer coined: "essénophobie" (Essenophobia). See Dupont-Sommer, *Les écrits esséniens*, 160. There is also a potential echo of the name Judah in the Micah Pesher (1Q14), but by itself, this would not provide strong evidence.

> The interpretation of it concerns all who observe the Law [that is, in the writer's view, Essenes] in the House of Judah [here with a double meaning, both biblical and, to Roman period readers, contemporary], whom God will save from the house of judgement on account of their tribulation and their fidelity to the Teacher of Righteousness.[35]

In the same passage, we have Judah and the Teacher of Righteousness; they are identical. Further, we read in 1QpHab 12:4 of Judah the Law Doer—in the singular, עשה התורה. Was this a mistake or was it intentional? Before assuming an emendation is warranted, we should try reading it as the text stands.

According to Horgan,

> The form *ʿwśh* looks like the singular participle, where the masculine plural participle *ʿwśy* would be expected, if it refers to *pt'ym*, "the simple ones." Most authors translate the participle as if it were plural and explain the form either as a scribal error or as an orthographic variant for *ʿwśy*. A scribal error seems more likely, and on the photograph it looks as though the right side of the h has been written over to alter it to a y. If the singular were to be kept, then the phrase could modify *yhwdh*, "the simple ones of Judah, who observes the Law."[36]

The final state of the neatly written corrected text clearly reads as singular; the letter *he* is plain. One should first read the text as it stands, before considering emendations; and the written text is coherent, so no emendation need be called for, even if the reading may have seemed surprising to some. In other words, Judah the Doer or Observer is identical with Judah the Essene (Josephus, *B.J.* 1.78–80; *A.J.* 13.311–313).

5 The Name Essene

This audaciously outlandish name claim was of course not accepted by the Pharisees nor the Sadducees.[37] Perhaps in reaction to such audacity is the characterization in b. Soṭa 22a of one type of separatist who asks "what is my duty that I may do it?"

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35 Translation by Horgan, *Pesharim*, 14.

36 Horgan, *Pesharim*, 53, with abbreviations spelled out.

37 The etymology of Essenes is discussed more fully in Stephen Goranson, "Others and Intra-Jewish Polemic as Reflected in Qumran Texts," in Flint and VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years*, 2:525–540.

In 1532, Philipp Melanchthon, who had learned Hebrew from his uncle, Johann Reuchlin, wrote about Essenes, "Essei / das ist / Operarii / vom wort Assa / das ist wirken."[38] Others, with variations, followed this proposal up until shortly before the discovery of the Qumran scrolls. For example, Isaak Jost noted it in 1838,[39] and H. M. J. Loewe, in 1938, included among the suggested etymologies: "*ʿAsah* (he acted) and *ʾAnshē Maʿaseh* (men of action)."[40] By identifying the Hebrew root עשה, Melanchthon gave the shortened or clipped form of the name.[41] David Chytraeus, in 1578, presented the proposal in fuller form from the same Hebrew root translated as *factores legis*, "doers of the law" (*torah*).[42] This collocation was, in effect, a prediction that was fulfilled when 1QpHab was read. In 1583, Joseph J. Scaliger, in *De Emendatione Temporum*,

38 Johann Carion, *Chronica* (Wittemberg: Rhau, 1532), folio 68 verso. Melanchthon's friend, the mathematician and astrologer Carion, had sent him a chronological outline, which Melanchthon thoroughly rewrote and expanded. Though published under the name Carion, this portion was written by Melanchthon. For Melanchthon's role, see Mark A. Lotito, *The Reformation of Historical Thought*, SASRH (Leiden: Brill, 2019). Lotito's index indicates "passim" for both Melanchthon and Carion. As detailed in the book, Carion sent Melanchthon a chronological draft that Melanchthon completely rewrote and supplemented, even though the original publication does not mention the name Melanchthon.

39 Isaak Jost, "Die Essaer," *Israelitische Annalen* (1839): 145–47.

40 H. M. J. Loewe, "Essenes," *EncBrit* 8:717–20 (718).

41 The full self-designation *ʿosei ha-torah* appears in Qumran sectarian texts (e.g., 1QpHab 8:1, 12:4; 4Q171 1–10 ii, 15) but not in the Hebrew Bible; it is characteristic only in Qumran texts. Clipping is evident, for example, in the rabbinic term *tannaim*; they were not repeaters in general, parroting generally, but were tradents of oral Torah. *Haredim* or the *haredi* community was not named as omni-phobes but as those who tremble (in awe at the commandments of the Lord). Similarly, in English, we may refer to a doctor (of medicine) or a custodian (of a building) or a superintendent (of schools). Though, of course, the English name "Essenes" does not appear in Qumran texts, nor the various Greek spellings (Εσσαιοι and Εσσηνοι in Josephus; Οσσαιοι and Οσσηνοι in Epiphanius, *Pan*. 19: Ossenes, a law-observant Jewish sect), the Hebrew source of the name is indeed present as a self-designation. Josephus (*A.J.* 15.371–372) uses both spellings, interestingly indicating that "we" Jews call them Εσσαιοι, but that in the "genre of history"—a hapax in Josephus—his Hellenistic source, probably Strabo, used the other spelling, Εσσηνοι. See Goranson, "Sources on Essenes."

42 David Chytraeus. *Onomasticon Theologicum* (Wittenberg: Anton Schleich, Clemens und Schöne, 1578), 785. Early modern debates about Essenes cannot be fully documented here, but included the question whether monasticism was an early part of Christianity or a later addition. One portion of the debate relevant here is whether Hebrew was a living language at the time of the Essenes. Those who thought Hebrew was not, tended to prefer Aramaic proposals for the name Essene. However, the Qumran discoveries demonstrate that Hebrew indeed was being used for new compositions in the late Second Temple period. Those interested in these debates may do well to start with the bibliography in Siegfried Wagner, *Die Essener in der wissenschaftlichen Diskussion: vom Ausgang des 18. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts; eine wissenschaftliche Studie*, BZAW 79 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1960).

wrote that this etymology was a hallucination. Scaliger influentially assumed that the name origin would be in Aramaic not Hebrew.[43]

Though he may have later changed his mind, in a letter to William Brownlee dated 14 January 1953, Józef T. Milik congratulated Brownlee on his proposed identification of "Juda l'Essénien" as the "Mâitre de Justice."[44] Some of the early guesses were right. Albert Baumgarten, who urges that Qumran and Essenes first be studied separately, writes that this etymology, though without endorsing it, is the "the best suggestion" among the many etymological proposals.[45] In 2019, Eibert Tigchelaar reconstructed a new reading, *hpt*]*ym ʿose*[*y ha-torah*], "the simple who observe the law," in 4Q281 frag. f.[46] Compare 1QpHab 12:4–5: "the simple of Judah who observe the law." If this new reading is correct, as it does appear to be from the photograph and the parallels, then we have yet another potential example of this self-designation.

6 Conclusion: Three Contemporaries Identified

The people behind the Scrolls did not live outside of history. Despite the difficulties in attempting to retrieve some of that history, this essay started with the fact that these three individuals were certainly contemporaries. Considering three figures within the Scrolls together is a more fruitful method than attempting piecemeal identifications, and a few of those other proposals were found

43 Joseph Juste Scaliger, *De Emendatione Temporum* (Lutetiæ [Paris]: Sebastianum Niuellium, 1583), 251–52 (quote on p. 252): "Sed & multi alij in etymo Essæorum hallucinati." For more on Scaliger's view, see Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, Vol. 2: *Historical Chronology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), esp. 299–300. Scaliger's preference for Aramaic influenced, for instance, Johann Ulrich Tresenreuter, *De Essaeorum Nomine*, 4 parts (Coburg: Georg Otto, 1743–1744). This work was formerly ascribed to Johann Casimir Happach (1726–1783). Also important in the history of scholarship is Jacobus Triglandius, *Trium Scriptorum Illustrium de Tribus Judaeorum Sectis Syntagma* (Delft: Adrianum Berman, 1703).

44 This letter is in the William H. Brownlee collection archived at the University of Manchester. Though offering much documented evidence, Weston W. Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History*, Vol. 1: *1947–1960* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 175, mistakenly reported the Teacher of Righteousness identification as being with "Judas Maccabaeus."

45 Albert I. Baumgarten, "Who Cares and Why Does it Matter? Qumran and the Essenes, Once Again!" *DSD* 11 (2004): 174–211 (176n8). "Best" here may be notable, given the numerous etymological proposals made over several centuries, and the probability that one of them may be correct.

46 Eibert Tigchelaar, "Pesher on the True Israel, Commentary on Canticles? Józef Milik's Designations for Unidentified Qumran Cave 4 Manuscripts on Museum Plates 303 and 304," *DSD* 26 (2019): 61–75 (66–67).

wanting. Some scholars may assume that identifications are not possible, but that is a counsel of despair that deserves challenge. The results here take into account that ancient general historians likely were more familiar with the Wicked Priest, but that the people behind the Scrolls had relatively more direct acquaintance with the Teacher of Righteousness. That three outside views and three inside views are largely confluent in character and in chronology make the chances of overlap no mere coincidence, but indications of history.

Of course, this is not the last word on the subject, and any historical proposal can be refined or challenged and tested. New finds and interpretations are welcome. One of the future means in testing will be further radiocarbon dates of Scrolls. What such data may or may not confirm, for example, is whether some alternate identifications are too late to be credible. In any case, this essay offers an attempt to find some portion of Qumran-related history.

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