

*K. K. Handique*

# THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

A Preliminary Survey

BY

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Fig. 1.—The Wilderness of Judaea (photo by A. Dupont-Sommer)

[Frontispiece

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

During the last one hundred years our knowledge of ancient history has grown enormously. Ancient civilizations, formerly barely known or wholly unknown, have emerged from the darkness in which they have been buried; Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, Hurrian, Elamite, Phoenician, Aegaeon—to say nothing here of the Far East—all these peoples now rise to life before us. In other more classical spheres—Greek, Roman, Hebrew—historical science likewise progresses. Everywhere the discovery of documents year by year throws a clearer light, sometimes even a vivid light, on the great pages of man's past which still remain obscure.

These discoveries which reveal to us what man used to be like and which often enable us better to understand him to-day, are sometimes due to pure chance. Amongst many others, this is the case with the Hebrew manuscripts found near the Dead Sea. Three years ago, quite by chance, a Bedouin discovered an ancient hiding place in the heart of the desert. Formed about 2000 years ago, then broken into at some unknown date, it still contained some books, the remains of the library of an ancient Jewish sect. These ancient documents are the most sensational to have been offered for a long time to the labours of the philologist and the historian and also the most worthy to interest anyone who loves to meditate on the major events of history.

For this reason I have thought that many people, even though not specialists in historical and oriental studies, would be glad to be informed without delay of these recent discoveries made in Palestine. In this little book, I aim first of all to set out the documents so far known. Here, then, will be found the translation of a number of texts, a translation which I have made myself from the original Hebrew. Although in certain places the translation will call for improvements in the future, when the language and style proper to the whole collection of these documents is more completely known, the reader will find in these translated texts material which is purely objective and therefore of lasting value.

But the historian cannot remain passive before these new texts. Already he is confronted with trends of thought, working hypotheses and outlines of solution. I do not think the reader will be annoyed

with me if I now take him to the very threshold of the workshop in which history is constructed, if I show him, frankly and faithfully, the first attempts at making use of a new documentation. Here it is only a question of 'a preliminary survey'; in the light of documents which will ultimately be published, certain views and perspectives will perhaps have to be modified or corrected or discarded. Such is the law of all research! The scholar, no matter in what sphere he works, must always be ready to bow before new evidence: it is thanks to this scrupulous respect for facts, thanks also to absolute sincerity and independence of judgement, that science always progresses.

A. DUPONT-SOMMER.

*Paris, July 14th, 1950.*

#### TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The Dead Sea Scrolls, in the brief time since they were first made known to the world, have been widely and even hotly discussed, and very different views of their age and significance have been advanced. In the present work Professor Dupont-Sommer not only presents his own view of the source and significance of the texts, but offers a fuller account of their finding and their contents than can be found in any other one place in English. It therefore seemed that a service could be rendered to English readers by making it available in their tongue.

I have to acknowledge with thanks help received from my father, Professor H. H. Rowley, in the preparation of the translation. I have also to add that at Professor Dupont-Sommer's request a few modifications of the French text have been incorporated in this translation.

E. MARGARET ROWLEY.

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author takes the opportunity to mention in this English edition two studies which he has recently published which treat in greater detail certain points dealt with in the present book:

1. *Observations sur le Manuel de Discipline découvert près de la Mer Morte* (paper read to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, June 8th, 1951; Paris, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1951);

2. *Le Maître de justice fut-il mis à mort ?* (in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol I, No. 3, July 1951, pp. 200-215; Leiden, Brill).

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

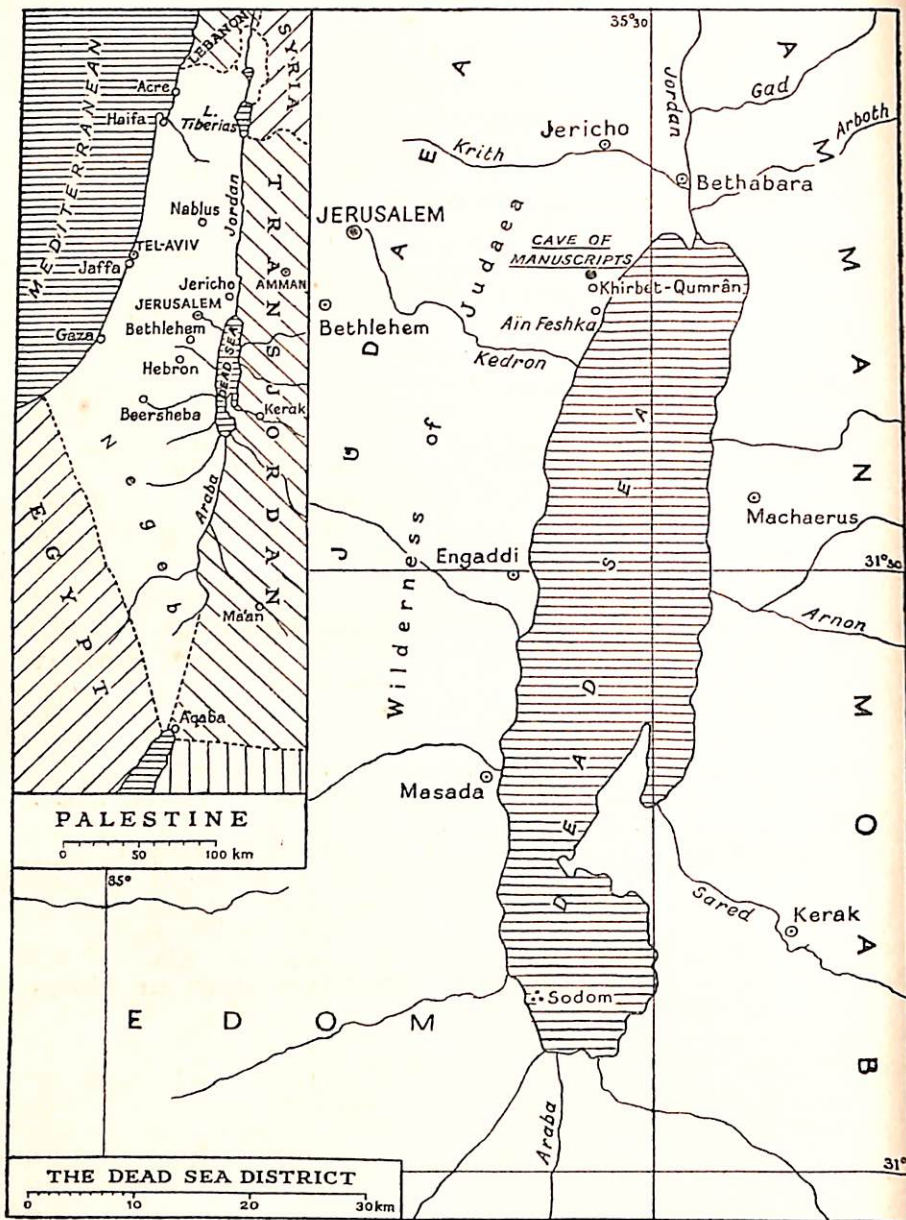
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### NOTE

Professor Millar Burrows, on behalf of the 'American Schools of Oriental Research' and Professor Sukenik, on behalf of the 'Bialik Foundation' have very kindly allowed us to reproduce in the present work various photographs published by them. We thank them very sincerely for their courteous permission.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

<i>Jewish History</i>		<i>Sect of the New Covenant</i>
John Hyrcanus	135—104 B.C.	
Aristobulus I	104—103	Beginning of the ministry of the Master
Alexander Jannaeus	103—76	103 B.C.(?)
Alexandra	76—67	
Aristobulus II	67—63	Passion and death of the Master; the sect flees to Damascus
Capture of Jerusalem by Pompey	October 63	about April 65—63
Hyrcanus II	63—40	Composition of the <i>Habakkuk Commentary</i> about 41
Antigonus	40—37	
Herod the Great	37—4 B.C.	Return of the sect to Judaea about 37 B.C.
Jewish war	A.D. 66—70	Flight and dispersion of the Judaeans communities; hiding of the scrolls at the cave of 'Ain-Feshka about A.D. 66—70



Map. The Wilderness of Judaea and the Dead Sea.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CAVE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, the Gospel tells us, when he fell among thieves, who robbed him and beat him and departed leaving him half-dead. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho still exists to-day; going down from west to east it crosses a wild and barren region about twelve miles broad, separating the mountainous country, where stand Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron, from the deep valley where the Jordan runs and the Dead Sea has its bed. This is the famous Wilderness of Judaea (fig. 1) which, throughout the history of Palestine, has served as a place of refuge for bandits and outlaws and all wanted men. Innumerable caves have been hollowed out there in the limestone rocks; these form excellent shelters and natural hiding-places.

To-day the wilderness of Judaea is inhabited by some semi-nomad Arab tribes who pasture their sheep there. It was one of these Bedouins of the Ta'âmire tribe who, towards the end of Spring 1947, accidentally discovered the now famous cave of the scrolls, while he was looking for a lost sheep. The cave is hollowed out of the steep rock rising along the western side of the Dead Sea a little over a mile from the shore and a thousand feet above the level of the water. It is two and a half miles to the north of the stream 'Ain-Feshka and seven and a half miles to the south of Jericho. The nearest site inhabited in ancient times is Khirbet-Qumrân, rather more than half a mile to the south—to-day only a few ruins adjoining a large, ancient cemetery.

The cave opens on to a narrow gully; there are two openings, the one, fairly high, acts as a window; the other, almost level with the ground, can only be entered on hands and knees (fig. 2). Let us enter the cave with the Bedouin. In the half-light its shape and size can be made out: an irregular corridor twenty-five feet long, six feet wide and eight to nine feet high. On the ground stand some undamaged jars, some few broken jars, and inside the jars the rolls of leather wrapped in cloth (fig. 3): these rolls are 'books', ancient manuscripts in which the Hebrew sacred writings were formerly

copied out column by column in a black ink of an amazingly lasting quality.

\* \* \*

The Bedouin had little idea of what these strange parcels contained. He took them away and showed them to members of his tribe, and together they decided to sell them if they could find a purchaser. First they showed them to a Muslim dealer in Bethlehem, asking £20 for the largest roll, but he declared the price too high. Then the Bedouins went to another dealer in the same town—this time a Syrian—who discussed it with one of his colleagues in Jerusalem. It was in this way that the news reached the Syrian Metropolitan of the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, Mar Athanasius Samuel, who bought four of the scrolls which he thought in the best state of preservation. As he was unable to read Hebrew he showed his purchase to several people, asking their advice, and in particular he went to a well-known school in Jerusalem where one of the professors told him, a little too hastily, that the rolls were of no interest.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of the summer, the Metropolitan questioned a Jewish doctor named Braun; the latter passed the news to the Hebrew University, who immediately sent two of their librarians to the monastery. The librarians did not think they were adequately qualified and decided to call in the help of their more expert colleagues; but the disturbances which arose in Palestine just then cut off all contact between the Syrian Metropolitan and the Hebrew University, so that expert examination had to be postponed.

Meanwhile, on November 25th 1947, Professor Sukenik of the Hebrew University, who had just returned to Palestine, was told by a dealer in Jerusalem that some Bedouins had recently handed over to a dealer in Bethlehem several scrolls, covered with Hebrew characters, which had come from a cave near the Dead Sea. The dealer even showed him a fragment of one of these scrolls. Without wasting any time, Professor Sukenik on the 29th met the dealer from Bethlehem and bought from him several scrolls together with two undamaged jars which had held the scrolls (fig. 4). The same day U.N.O. decided upon the partition of Palestine; tension between

<sup>1</sup> This is recorded both by J. C. Trever, in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 113 (Feb. 1949), p. 16, n. 39, and E. L. Sukenik, in *Megillóth Genázóth . . .*, II, p. 13.

Jews and Arabs increased, but in spite of this Professor Sukenik managed to convey his precious acquisitions from Bethlehem to the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem.

Shortly after, at the beginning of December, he learned from one of the Jewish librarians who had gone to St. Mark's Monastery that other Hebrew scrolls were to be found there. Although the Metropolitan had said that they came from a Syrian monastery near the Dead Sea, Professor Sukenik suspected that in actual fact they were part of the collection found by the Bedouins. He at once tried to see them, but it had become impossible to gain entrance to the old city of Jerusalem where St. Mark's Monastery stands. In the second half of January 1948, a meeting took place on neutral ground between Professor Sukenik and M. Antoine Kiroz, a Syrian of Jerusalem who had himself arranged the purchase from the Bedouins on behalf of the Metropolitan. The Syrian handed over to him the scrolls from St. Mark's Monastery, and further told Professor Sukenik that he had recently visited the cave with the Bedouins. The Syrian entrusted three of the scrolls to him, so that he could examine them at his leisure before purchasing them for the Hebrew University. Professor Sukenik recognized at once in one of the scrolls the biblical book of *Isaiah* and in another the Rule of an old Jewish sect. At home he copied numerous parts and then on February 6th, as agreed, he returned the rolls to M. Kiroz, who promise to keep in touch with him with a view to coming to terms about the sale.

The exceptional interest of these documents was at once communicated to some leading Jews who immediately decided to provide the money necessary for their purchase. But there was no further news from the Syrians, except that, towards the end of February a letter came from M. Kiroz saying that the Metropolitan had decided to postpone the sale until relations with the outside world had returned to normal and the value of the scrolls could be more accurately judged.

In actual fact, on February 19th 1948, a monk from St. Mark's Monastery, Father Boutros, had visited the American School in Jerusalem where he had been received by one of its members, Dr. John C. Trever, who was acting on behalf of the director in his absence.<sup>1</sup> The American scholar was completely unaware of any

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Trever has himself related the details of this interview in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, XI, No. 3 (Sept. 1948), pp. 46—57.

recent discoveries. The previous day the monk had explained to him on the telephone—oh, the cunning of these children of the East!—that while working on the cataloguing of the books in the Monastery library he had come upon several scrolls in old Hebrew which were not listed in the catalogue. But he soon gave up this fiction and revealed what he knew of the exact origin of the discovery to Dr. Trever.

First of all, though not without difficulty, Dr. Trever obtained permission to copy some of the lines from the longest scroll. He quickly recognized in it a verse from *Isaiah* and thereupon asked for permission to photograph the documents. Objections were raised but he persisted, pointing out that once photographed and made known the scrolls would assume a much greater market value! Finally permission was granted, and for four days Dr. Trever photographed the scrolls column by column. The Americans urged that these invaluable documents should immediately be placed in safety outside Palestine where war was then raging. In this way they were finally taken to the United States where they have since remained.

Their publication was ultimately entrusted to the Hebrew scholars of the American school who must be congratulated on, and thanked for, the speediness with which they published in the spring of 1950 a first volume devoted to two of the scrolls belonging to the Syrian Monastery, containing photographs and transcription, column by column, of the book of *Isaiah* and the *Habakkuk Commentary*;<sup>1</sup> The other two scrolls, the *Manual of Discipline* of the Community of the New Covenant and an *Apocalypse of Lamech* (written in Aramaic) will appear in a second volume which has been promised before the end of this year\*.

Professor Sukenik for his part has published two preliminary reports of the highest interest on the 'Ain-Feshka finds; these two works, written in modern Hebrew—which renders them inaccessible

<sup>1</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, vol. I. *The Isaiah Manuscript and the Habakkuk Commentary*, edited by Millar Burrows with the assistance of John C. Trever and William H. Brownlee (published by the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven, 1950).

\*[The first part of this second volume appeared in 1951 under the title *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, vol. II, fasc. 2, *Plates and Transcription of the Manual of Discipline* (American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven)—Translator.]

to many readers—appeared in Jerusalem, one in September 1948 and the other in March 1950<sup>1</sup>. Their most important contents are summaries and extracts of the scrolls acquired by the Hebrew University, namely a collection of *Psalms of Thanksgiving*, coming from the sect of the New Covenant, a work called for the time-being the *War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*, and finally, a second manuscript of the biblical book of *Isaiah*.

\* \* \*

It was in America in April 1948 that news of these discoveries was for the first time made known. I had the pleasure, shortly after, on the occasion of the meeting of the International Congress of Orientalists in Paris in August 1948, of being able to examine some of the photographs of these precious rolls. The writing alone bore witness both to the authenticity and to the antiquity of the documents. Admittedly they are in Hebrew of the square type, that is to say, already essentially of the same kind as that of Hebrew manuscripts of the Middle Ages and of printed Hebrew Bibles, but a square type in which many peculiarities show a distinctly archaic stage in this type of writing, which is derived from the old cursive Aramaic and originated about 200 B.C. They may be particularly compared with a fragment of Hebrew papyrus known for some fifty years—the Nash papyrus, which the highest authorities on oriental palaeography ascribed to approximately the first century B.C.—together with various funerary inscriptions found near Jerusalem, which most certainly belong to a period prior to the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. It is to be observed that only very rare examples of this archaic writing have been found, so rare that a forger would not normally have been tempted to imitate it; in all probability he would have selected a type of writing more clearly and more widely attested.

Nevertheless, in this sphere the scholar has the right and the duty to be on his guard. We may recall for example the story of the manuscript of *Deuteronomy* which was presented to the British Museum about 1885 by a certain Shapira, and was written in a script like that of the Mesha Stele from the ninth century B.C. For some time no doubts were raised about the genuineness of this

<sup>1</sup> *Megillóth Genázóth* . . . ('Hidden Scrolls coming from an Ancient Genizah found in the Wilderness of Judaea'), vols. I and II (Jerusalem, Bialik Foundation).

document, until Clermont-Ganneau, a French orientalist, exposed the impudent fraud. In view of the truly sensational and unforeseen nature of the Dead Sea finds, therefore, caution is essential. However convincing the palaeographic criterion was in itself, throughout 1948 it could be objected, if need be, that no European or scholar had seen or visited the cave of the manuscripts and that the story of the discovery as the Bedouins had told it should therefore be regarded with some suspicion. Bedouins are skilled at making up stories!

It was desirable, then, that the famous cave should be revisited. The Belgian lieutenant, Ph. Lippens, U.N.O. observer at Amman, took a lively interest in this task<sup>1</sup>, and, thanks to his activity, the Arab legion detailed two of its officers, the British Colonel Ashton, and the Arab Captain Akash Bey, to carry out the necessary investigations. Their efforts were very speedily crowned with success; on January 29th 1949 the two officers entered the cave and a guard of the Arab legion was posted near it. Mr. L. Harding, director of the Transjordan Department of Antiquities, went to the spot at the beginning of February. Shortly after, with the help of Father de Vaux, the learned director of the French school in Jerusalem, he carried out an extremely careful examination of the floor of the cave during a period of three weeks, until March 5th, 1949, with the object of discovering all possible remains.<sup>2</sup>

From various indications, the two scholars ascertained that clandestine excavators had been there before them and had completely turned over the soil in the hope of finding further scrolls or even some treasure which had escaped the notice of the Bedouins. It is affirmed that the names of these undesirable visitors, who upset all the archaeological stratum, and also the date of their misdeed (November 1948), are known. In spite of this disaster, however, the excavators discovered many remains of the greatest interest.

In the first place, they found some pieces of linen which had been used to wrap the scrolls. These pieces of linen, of a very closely woven texture, were coated with wax or pitch or asphalt which

<sup>1</sup> See his report, which is full of youthful enthusiasm, in the *Revue Générale Belge*, No. 51 (Jan. 1950).

<sup>2</sup> For an account of this visit to the cave see O. R. Sellers, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 114 (April 1949), pp. 5—9; R. de Vaux, *Revue Biblique*, 1949, pp. 234—237, 586—609.

proves that the scrolls were hidden in the cave for safe preservation, to be recovered and used again later.

In the second place there were a great number of fragments of earthenware. Some come from the Roman period and Father de Vaux has recently defined their date as of the first century of our era.<sup>1</sup> But most of the ceramic remains seem to indicate a slightly earlier date, namely two lamps and especially the fragments of at least fifty covered jars. The shape of the jars is without parallel among the Hellenistic types previously known; nevertheless the composition of the clay and the method of baking are adequate, in the opinion of several particularly competent experts, to date this otherwise commonly found type of pottery at the end of the Hellenistic period: 'the second century B.C., or at the very latest the beginning of the first century'.<sup>2</sup> In any case it would be unwise to define the date too precisely in view of the fact that it is a question of a common type of pottery. It is clear enough that the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 B.C., an event which marked the beginning of the Roman period in Palestine, did not have the effect of bringing about a change in the technique of Palestinian potters overnight, and that the adoption of new methods characteristic of Roman pottery was neither immediate, nor in the first instance general. A margin of several decades must clearly be allowed, should other indications, coming either from palaeography or especially from historical information supplied by the contents of the texts themselves, indicate or necessitate a date slightly later than 63 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

In the third place, about 600 manuscript fragments broken off from the leather scrolls were found. For the most part, they are extremely small, bearing only a few letters or a few words in the square Hebrew script. Nevertheless they are of great interest; indeed, by examining them it has been possible to recognize that certain of these small fragments definitely belonged to the scrolls which were already known, that is, to those which the Bedouins said they had discovered in the cave. This, then, is definite proof

<sup>1</sup> Letter to M. René Dussaud, of the French Institute, dated February 17th, 1950, communicated to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, March 3rd, 1950.

<sup>2</sup> *Revue Biblique*, 1949, p. 596.

<sup>3</sup> On this subject see the wise observations of Albright in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 115 (Oct. 1949), p. 13, n. 3.

of the authenticity of these manuscripts. Furthermore, a little fragment of *Genesis* has definitely been identified amongst the other fragments, and also two from *Judges*, several from *Deuteronomy*, together with a fragment of the original Hebrew of the book of *Jubilees*, and a piece of an unknown Hebrew work of an apocalyptic character. All this makes it obvious that the library hidden in the cave at 'Ain-Feshka was made up both of biblical books recognized as 'Holy Scripture' by the majority of the Jews, and of sacred books peculiar to the Jewish sect from whom the collection came.

It should also be added that there were some forty small pieces of papyrus, mostly bearing Hebrew letters, but occasionally, it seems, Greek letters, though the pieces are too tiny to be of any help. More curious and more interesting is the discovery of some fragments of leather in which several lines of *Leviticus* (xix—xxii) have been made out, and where the writing is no longer in the square Hebrew script—which, we must repeat, is a form of Aramaic writing—like that of the other documents found in the cave, but of an earlier type, the old Hebrew-Phoenician. What is the date of these fragments? At first they were thought to come from the sixth century B.C. because their writing recalls that of the Hebrew ostraca, which were found about fifteen years ago on the site of the ancient city of Lachish in Palestine, and actually date from a little before the fall of Jerusalem, between 597 and 586. But it must be remembered that the old Hebrew script was still used more or less until the second and first centuries B.C., as is borne out by the inscriptions on Hasmonaean coins and also by the presence of such characters in two of the Dead Sea scrolls, namely in the *Habakkuk Commentary*, for the name of Yahweh (YHWH), and in the *Psalms of Thanksgiving*, for the expression 'my God' ('LY). Mr. Harding and Father de Vaux date these fragments of *Leviticus* in the fourth century B.C. According to their theory, the scroll from which these fragments have broken off was an old volume religiously preserved in the library of the sect, a theory which is perfectly plausible. According to Professor Sukenik<sup>1</sup> this scroll of *Leviticus* is merely of the same date as the other scrolls found in the cave.

\* \* \*

The pottery fragments which have been gathered up make it clear

*Megillóth Genázóth* . . . II, pp. 54—55.



Fig. 2.—The 'Ain-Feshka cave (after Sukenik, *Megillóth Genatzóth*, II, frontispiece)

that the cave housed at least fifty jars, as we have already pointed out. As each jar could hold an average of four or five scrolls, it would seem that the hiding-place originally concealed a minimum of 200 or 250 scrolls. We may here recall the story of another famous cave, that of Tun-Huang in Chinese Turkestan, where towards A.D. 1035 under the threat of invasion, the Buddhist monks concealed the library of their monastery. It was only nine centuries later, in 1900, that the hiding-place was accidentally re-discovered by a Tibetan monk. In 1907 Sir Aurel Stein, and then the eminent French orientalist Paul Pelliot in 1908, were able to gain access to the cave, where they found 20,000 scrolls preserved, dating from the sixth and seventh centuries, in Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit and other languages, extremely valuable documents which have greatly enriched our knowledge of the language and history of the Far East. The 'Ain-Feshka cave was certainly less productive, especially because the manuscripts which have come to us represent only a very small proportion of the original deposit. Where have the other scrolls gone? It seems highly probable that the hiding-place had already been broken into some time before 1947; but no one can say definitely at what date or in what circumstances. Furthermore, there is no doubt whatever that not all the documents collected in the cave since 1947 by the Bedouins and by the clandestine excavators have yet been located or are even known.

Quite recently, in February 1950, the Palestinian Museum in Jerusalem acquired a number of fragments which had been kept by the dealer in Bethlehem who first received the scrolls. According to the list drawn up by Father de Vaux<sup>1</sup>, this collection includes, in the first place, some fragments difficult to read which seem to belong to the scroll of the *Apocalypse of Lamech*, then five short fragments broken off from an *Isaiah* scroll, probably that in the possession of the Hebrew University, and finally, the initial columns and some fragments from the scroll of the *Manual of Discipline*.

Furthermore, we are on the track of fragments of the biblical book of *Daniel*. The owners of seventeen of these fragments are known, but there are undoubtedly more.<sup>2</sup> It is to be hoped that this ancient scroll of *Daniel*, the gem of Jewish literature from the Maccabean period, will be recovered in as complete a form as possible.

<sup>1</sup> In the letter mentioned *supra* p. 15, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> I derive this information from *Sion*, No. 1 (Dec. 1949), p. 45.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TWO *Isaiah* SCROLLS

In the absence of the *Daniel* scroll which we have not yet recovered, the prophetic books of the Bible are magnificently represented in the Dead Sea documents by the two *Isaiah* scrolls: one of these scrolls (A) belongs to St. Mark's Monastery (figs. 5 and 6); the other (B) to the Hebrew University.

It is not pure accident that these two *Isaiah* scrolls are to be found amongst the few scrolls which have been saved from the ancient deposit. Indeed, the book of *Isaiah*—the first and most important of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament—is the one which pious Jews liked most of all to read and to meditate on in the centuries to which we assign the 'Ain-Feshka discoveries. Let us recall, for example, the incident in the Gospel story where we are told that Jesus, entering the synagogue at Nazareth one Sabbath day, stood up to read: 'He was handed the book of the prophet *Isaiah*', says the Evangelist (*Luke* iv. 16—20), 'and unrolling the book, he found the passage where it is written: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . .* Then he rolled up the book and returned it to the attendant and sat down. . . .' The scroll of *Isaiah* in the synagogue at Nazareth in the time of Jesus was just like the two scrolls which have so recently been found. Let us note, further, that in the *Acts of the Apostles* (viii. 26—39) we are told that a minister of the Queen of Ethiopia, returning from Jerusalem to his own country, was sitting in his chariot reading the book of *Isaiah*, and more precisely, the oracles in chapter liii relating to the suffering Messiah; a Christian deacon, Philip, appeared to him on the road and preached Jesus to him.

\* \* \*

Scroll A which has now been published in its entirety<sup>1</sup> measures exactly 7.34 metres when it is opened out; its average height is about 26 cm. It is made of 17 pieces of leather sewn end to end; many of these pieces have been resewn together in the past, which proves that the roll has been used a great deal. Throughout the roll there are 44 columns of writing each containing 29—32 lines.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 12, n. 1.

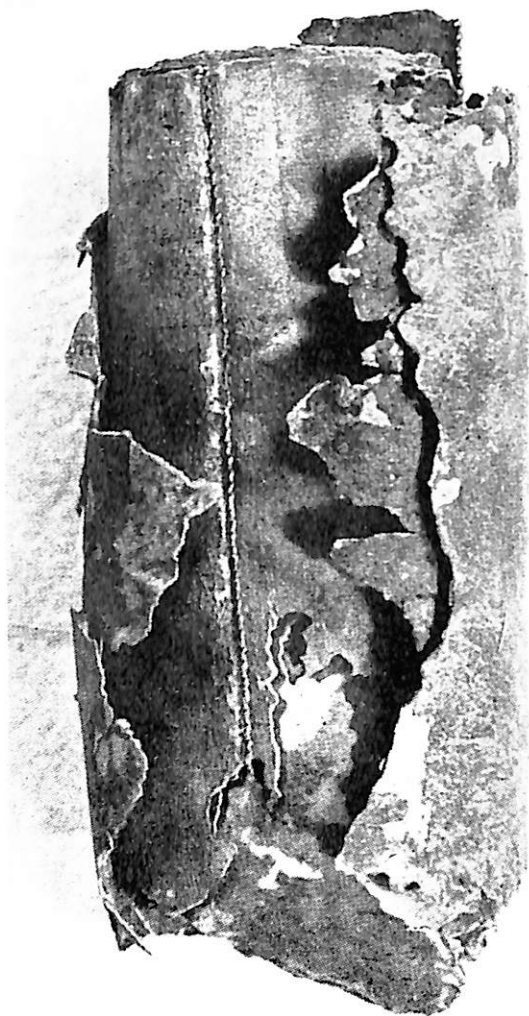


Fig. 3.—A Scroll not yet unrolled (after Sukenik,  
*Megillóth Genúzóth*, I, plate VI)

[To face page 19

The writing is clear and on the whole very legible; in several places there are corrections or additions which are in a different hand from the original manuscript. The text of this scroll gives us in full the 66 chapters of the canonical book.

Scroll B is as yet only very imperfectly known. When it was acquired in November 1947 by Professor Sukenik, the leather pages were so dried up that it was practically impossible to unroll it. It was therefore necessary to submit it to a special preparation, and it was only during the course of the summer of 1949 that it could at length be unrolled. The pages were covered with an opaque deposit caused by the disintegration of the leather; thanks to infra-red photography, however, there is a hope that even the most illegible lines will be successfully revealed. Already it has been possible to identify chapters xli—lxvi. In his second preliminary report Professor Sukenik gives us a photograph of two columns<sup>1</sup>, unfortunately badly damaged, containing *Isaiah* xlvi. 17—xlix. 7 and l. 7—li. 8; the writing is beautiful and carefully done. Furthermore, fragments of the same scroll B have made possible the identification of scraps of chapters xvi, xix, xxii—xxiii, xxviii, xxxviii—xxxix. It would seem therefore that scroll B contained the whole of the canonical book, like scroll A.

The exact date of these two manuscripts is difficult to fix. Their writing indicates approximately the first century B.C.; but from a purely palaeographical point of view there is nothing to exclude a slightly earlier or a slightly later dating, if other considerations point to it. It is perhaps easier to establish a relative chronology; to judge from certain signs, scroll A seems to be older than scroll B. But there again it is necessary to beware of too rigid a judgement; we must bear in mind, for instance, that an elderly scribe who has not changed his style of writing for 50 years, and another younger scribe with a later style of writing, could both in the same year quite easily produce manuscripts which appear to be of different dates.

As for the criterion furnished by the pottery, I have said above that we must remember that in this case, too, no precise dating is possible; if there is a broad indication pointing to the end of the Hellenistic period—I am not questioning the opinion of experts who have claimed this—it is obvious that the period of transition between the 'Hellenistic' and the 'Roman' lasted for some time. Moreover, it

<sup>1</sup> *Megillóth Genázóth* . . . , II, pl. XVII.

is evident that the jars could have been made either shortly before or shortly after the writing of the manuscripts. The latest possible date for this is the time when the 'Ain-Feshka hiding-place was prepared; that is to say, very probably about A.D. 66-70 as I shall explain later.

But of course the library which was then transferred to the cave could consist of much older manuscripts dating back to the time of Nehemiah and Ezra or even earlier; as I have said, it is difficult to fix a precise date for the *Leviticus* fragments in Hebrew-Phoenician script found at 'Ain-Feshka. If it could be established with certainty that they were written before the second century B.C. it would not be surprising, in view of the care that members of the sect must have taken to gather into their library ancient copies of the sacred books.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

What interest have the *Isaiah* scrolls from the standpoint of scholarship? They give us a Hebrew text for a very large part of the Bible which is several centuries earlier than the Massoretic text—that is to say, than the text fixed by learned Jews called Massorettes towards the eighth century A.D. The oldest examples of this Massoretic text are manuscripts of the ninth and tenth centuries, and hence the Dead Sea texts are about 1000 years older.

From the time when the Synagogue was given an official standard text by the Massorettes, the earlier Hebrew manuscripts disappeared from use and were even systematically discarded. Now, in spite of the extreme care which the Rabbis gave to their task, and although they must have chosen and used the best manuscripts which existed in their day, the Massoretic text is certainly not critically faultless. From the point of view of modern scholarship, how could it be otherwise, when we know how difficult it is to edit a text, especially an ancient one? The history of a text is a very complex matter: different manuscripts usually offer a considerable number of variants, and the choice between these is to-day the subject of detailed rules, strictly defined. Naturally the Massorettes did not have the same approach, or the same rigorous method, and they have indicated only a relatively small number of variants—the *kethîbh* and *qerê* well

<sup>1</sup> It may be recalled that according to 2 *Macc.* ii. 14, after the war Judas Maccabaeus gathered together a number of ancient books which had to be hidden during the persecution.



Fig. 4.—Jars found in the Cave (after Sukenik, *Megillóth Genúzóth*, II, plate I)

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known to all Hebraists; but all the other variants which they had before them have been lost to us. There remains only the reading which they chose, and their choice was often purely empirical or guided by subtle doctrinal reasons.

Now we are no longer faced with a single Hebrew text—the Massoretic text—but with three distinct Hebrew texts: if then a doubtful reading is found in the traditional text, it is now possible to check it by the readings of the other two texts. Doubtless these should not be considered *a priori* to be better, merely because they are attested by more ancient manuscripts; each case has to be considered on its merits. Nevertheless they can suggest in many places valuable corrections of the traditional text.

In actual fact, to check and eventually to correct this text we already have at our disposal some ancient versions of the Bible, made prior to the work of the Massoretes: Greek versions (especially that of the *Septuagint*), Aramaic versions (the *Targums*), Syriac versions (in the first place the *Peshitta*), Latin versions (particularly the *Vulgate* of St. Jerome, which has become the authentic text of the Roman Catholic Church), etc. By comparison with the traditional text and with one another these different translations reveal divergences which are sometimes considerable; often the variant indicates that the translator had before him a text differing from the Massoretic text. This Hebrew text, thus indirectly attested, often seems better, and modern exegesis then gives it preference. Since the time of the Renaissance, polyglot Bibles have been published in which the principal ancient versions stand side by side with the Massoretic text. But what a great step forward it is to possess direct witnesses to the Hebrew text dating from about the first century B.C., as is now the case! A new era is thus opening for the study of one of the principal books of the Bible and, indeed, for the history of the biblical text in general.

\* \* \*

Broadly speaking the book of *Isaiah* as we have it in the two scrolls, is substantially the same as in the received text: by this we mean it contains neither addition nor omission nor alteration of major importance. We find there in particular the last 27 chapters, i.e. 'Deutero-Isaiah'—a collection of oracles only composed

in the sixth century B.C. and the following centuries.<sup>1</sup> This fact ought not to cause any surprise. Independent critics have agreed that the addition of these chapters to 'Proto-Isaiah' is to be assigned to about 200 B.C. It is therefore quite natural to find them figuring in manuscripts which were certainly written after this date.

But, failing differences of major importance, what an abundant harvest of minor variants! Moreover, on this point each of the two scrolls shows its own characteristics. Without going too much into detail here, we should first observe that the orthography is noticeably different in A and B. Hebrew writing, like the Phoenician writing from which it is derived, is designed to indicate the consonants of words, to the exclusion of the vowels. That is why the Hebrew-Phoenician alphabet consists of only 22 signs corresponding exclusively to the consonants. When later the Hebrews felt the need to indicate the vowels as well, or at least certain more important vowels, they appropriated to this use some of the consonantal signs, which thus served a double purpose, sometimes as consonants and sometimes as vowels; when they served as vowels they were called *matres lectionis*. Obviously this was a very imperfect system, besides being more or less optional; but it could suffice as long as the language remained living. As Hebrew ceased to be a living language it became more and more necessary to employ a less rudimentary system to indicate the vowels, in order to fix the pronunciation of the text. Thus at a relatively late date the Massoretes adopted the system of vowel points. For the most part these new signs were written above or below the text—the ancient or 'consonantal' text. At the period when the Dead Sea documents were copied this system of vowel points did not exist at all. Now, if scroll B, in so far as the use of the *matres lectionis* is concerned, presents a text in general like the Massoretic text, scroll A, on the other hand, is distinguished by an extraordinary abundance of these signs. In the absence of vowel points certain scribes had therefore sought towards the first century B.C. to ensure a more uniform and certain pronunciation of the sacred texts by extending the old system of *matres lectionis*.

We may note that certain of the *matres lectionis* of A reveal to us

<sup>1</sup> Within this closing division of the canonical book, critics have long distinguished two sections: 'Deutero-Isaiah' (chs. xl—lv) and 'Trito-Isaiah' (chs. lvi—lxvi).

a pronunciation of Hebrew richer in vowels than that fixed by the Massoretic text about eight centuries later. It is thus, for example, that we learn that the pronoun *hû* 'he' was still pronounced *hû'a*; the pronoun *hî* 'she', *hî'a*; the pronominal suffix *-hem*, *-hēma*, etc.

Other variants, both in A and B, concern the grammar. They present a number of archaic forms of the highest interest, which the Massorettes, either consciously or otherwise, eliminated and replaced by more normal forms.

But the most important variants are those which reveal actual and not merely orthographic or grammatical differences when compared with the traditional text. These variants are very numerous—appreciably more numerous in A than in B. The work of collating the variants in the two scrolls and of comparing them patiently and in the greatest detail with those of the ancient versions has already been started. I can scarcely cite any examples here; suffice it to say that the new variants confirm to a surprising degree certain corrections of the traditional text which had already been conjecturally suggested. In certain passages where the traditional text had appeared particularly altered, the new scrolls can throw some valuable light. Take, for example, *Isaiah* lii. 13–liii. 12—the well-known poem on the sufferings of the Servant of the Lord. In these 15 verses I counted as many as 34 actual variants in scroll A. In the light of these variants it is clear that in future it will be necessary to re-examine the exegesis of this very difficult passage, but with a primordial interest in the history of the messianic ideas amongst the Jews.

It has recently been said<sup>1</sup> that scroll B offers only some 'insignificant variants'; but there are no such things as 'insignificant variants' when it is a matter of texts on which so much effort has been expended for four centuries, since the Renaissance and the Reformation. Again, in the same article we read 'The amazing revelation of the 'Ain-Feshka cave is that it proves the solidity of the biblical, canonical tradition. . . . Never have we been closer to the *original* edition of a canonical work, and it is this which makes us dizzy.' Both in form and substance this is all quite unwarranted: no competent scholar has ever doubted that towards the first century B.C. the text of *Isaiah* was more or less as we find it in the received text.

<sup>1</sup> M. André Parrot, in an article entitled *Les manuscrits de la Mer Morte*, in *Le Monde*, June 20th, 1950.

In this connection we have the witness of the ancient versions, more particularly that of the Greek *Septuagint* version, which in the main goes back to this period. As for speaking of the 'original' edition of a canonical work, what is meant by that? What is meant by the 'original edition' of the biblical book of *Isaiah*? This book is an extremely composite collection: first it includes some groups of oracles authentically uttered by the eighth century prophet *Isaiah* himself; then it has been enriched, from time to time, with various additions and new collections which make of this wonderful book the work of generations, the mirror of prophecy in Israel from the eighth century until the second century B.C. At what point can we talk of an 'original edition' in speaking of such a book?

With regard to the *Isaiah* scrolls, it is enough to say that they contribute new material of the highest value towards the establishment of a better critical text. The case is very similar to that of the 'literary papyri' found in great numbers in Egypt, which have made possible a marked improvement of the text of many classical authors. Those are extremely valuable, even sensational, discoveries, but they do not cause 'dizziness'. In sober truth, the outstanding interest of the Dead Sea documents is to be found in another direction: it lies rather in all that they tell us of the religious milieu of the Jews in the last two centuries before the Christian era. It is precisely this that we may now proceed to learn, in the first place, from the *Habakkuk Commentary*.

## CHAPTER III

### THE *Habakkuk Commentary* AND THE 'NEW COVENANT'

The scroll of the *Habakkuk Commentary*, made up of two leather strips, measures about 1.60 metres in length and 13 cm. in height. In all it comprises 13 columns of a very clear and extremely careful writing (fig. 7); the first two are badly damaged, and moreover, at the foot of each column, which originally should have contained 17 or 18 lines, two or three lines have disappeared, and so about one fifth of the text is lost.<sup>1</sup>

The book of *Habakkuk*, I may be allowed to recall, is a work belonging to the canonical collection known as the 'Twelve Minor Prophets'. In a vigorous and animated style it announces and describes the invasion by the Chaldaeans; this would seem to date the work, or at least a part of it, in the beginning of the sixth century B.C. Step by step the author of the *Commentary* follows the canonical text, which he divides into 35 short sections: he first quotes a section of the biblical text; then he immediately introduces his commentary by means of these words: 'The explanation of this refers to . . .' or 'The explanation of this is . . .'

The canonical book is made up of three chapters; chapter iii is a psalm which many independent critics for various reasons consider a later addition. The *Habakkuk Commentary* entirely omits this chapter iii. The last column finishes with the end of chapter ii, and as there are only four lines of writing, all the rest being blank, it is clear that we have the end of the scroll. It may be concluded that quite probably the addition of chapter iii to the biblical book

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew text, photographed and transcribed, will be found in *The Dead Sea Scrolls . . .*, vol. I, pl. LV—LXI. English translation by W. H. Brownlee, in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 112 (Dec. 1948), pp. 8—18; completed in No. 114 (April 1949), pp. 9—10, and No. 116 (Dec. 1949), pp. 14—16. I take the liberty of mentioning here my two studies: *Observations sur le Commentaire d'Habacuc découvert près de la Mer Morte* (a paper read before the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, May 26th 1950; Paris, Adrien-Maisonneuve); *Le Commentaire d'Habacuc . . . : traduction et notes* (*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, cxxxvii, 1950, pp. 129—171).

had not yet been made at the time when the *Commentary* was composed.

\* \* \*

This work, which was entirely unknown before, has a twofold interest. First, in so far as it reproduces the biblical text, it gives us alongside the received text a second Hebrew text of much greater age: as a matter of fact, it contains numerous variants some of which are of great value. Thanks to these variants a new phase is opening in the textual criticism of *Habakkuk*, just as thanks to the two *Isaiiah* scrolls the philological study of that great prophetic work is going to be revived in many respects.

But the chief interest of the *Habakkuk Commentary* is that this work constitutes for us a historical source of the first importance for the study of the Jewish background at the time when it was composed. Indeed, the author did not trouble about an objective interpretation; his exegesis is purely and entirely allegorical. All the biblical sentences are considered by him as 'symbols' and, consequently, are violently transposed to a new historical and theological plane. This is the way the Neo-Pythagoreans proceeded with regard to the Homeric texts. The Essenes treated the biblical texts in a similar way, as is made clear by Philo of Alexandria (*Quod omn. prob. lib.*, § 82): '. . . Then one or other of them takes the Books and reads, and another from amongst the most expert points out in the passage (presumably section by section) that which is not easy to understand. Usually, following an ancient method of study, it is with the help of symbols that they expound their philosophy.' Our *Habakkuk Commentary* shows a remarkable skill in this sort of interpretation. With a certain logical sequence the author has succeeded in distributing amongst the various sections a considerable amount of historical and doctrinal information concerning his own time and the sect to which he belonged.

His manner and his style are essentially 'Sibylline'; just as in *Daniel*, *Enoch*, the *Testaments of the XII Patriarchs* and the *Sibylline Oracles* the persons and the events are indicated by allusions without giving proper names, save very rarely. But these allusions were of course intended to be understood without difficulty by the auditors and by contemporary readers. Thanks especially to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus—our chief source of knowledge

about Jewish history during the Hellenistic and Roman periods—we are able, I believe, to fathom most of the allusions.

\* \* \*

The most transparent historical allusion is that in which the author declares that, owing to the effects of an exceptionally heavy divine punishment, the people of Jerusalem were 'swallowed up' and 'stumbled' on the occasion of a great Jewish festival expressly mentioned. Here is the passage:

*'Woe to him who makes his neighbour drink, pouring out his anger and also intoxicating drinks, so that God may see their feasts! (Hab. ii. 15)<sup>1</sup>*

'The explanation of this refers to the Wicked Priest who has persecuted the Master of Justice so as to swallow him up in the heat of his anger. Thou hast dared<sup>2</sup> to strip him of his clothing; but at the moment of the sacred rest of the Day of Atonement he appeared to them all resplendent, to swallow them up and to cause them to stumble on the Day of the Fast, which for them is a sabbath rest.'

The date is here exactly fixed—with solemnity and insistence, since it is stated twice in the same sentence—it is the Day of Atonement (*yôm hakkîpûrîm*), also called in the Mishnah 'Day of the Fast' (*yôm haššôm*). This fast was celebrated—is still celebrated—on the 10th of the month Tishri (September—October). *Leviticus*, in the two passages in which it is described (xvi and xxiii. 26—32) stresses that this day of fasting is also a day of complete rest: a 'sabbath of rest' (*shabbath shabbâthôn*) an expression which the Dead Sea text translates in a completely equivalent manner (*shabbath menûhâ*).

Do we know of any major catastrophe which befell Jerusalem on a Day of Atonement during the last two centuries B.C.—that is, roughly speaking, the period which as we have seen the palaeographical and ceramic evidence alike suggest as the date of the manuscripts? Yes, this catastrophe is known: it is the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman Pompey in 63 B.C. Josephus formally bears witness to it (*Antiq.*, XIV, iv. 3, § 66): 'The town was taken on the Day of the Fast', he declares, 'in the 179th Olympiad, under the consulship of C. Antonius and of M. T. Cicero'. Josephus ex-

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew text attested by this quotation from *Habakkuk* is considerably different from that of the Massoretic text.

<sup>2</sup> Literally: 'Thou hast desired . . .'; this sentence is addressed to the Wicked Priest.

pressly confirms this date when he reports how once again Jerusalem was taken by Sossius and Herod in 37 B.C. (*Antiq.*, XIV, xvi. 4, § 487): 'This catastrophe,' he writes, 'overwhelmed Jerusalem in the 185th Olympiad, the third month (of the siege), *during the day of the Fast*, as a sort of anniversary return of the misfortune which struck the Jews under Pompey: for the town was taken the same day, 27 years later'.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the date indicated by Josephus is also confirmed for us by Strabo in very clear terms (XVI, ii. 40): 'Pompey took possession of Jerusalem, having watched for *the Day of the Fast*, when the Jews abstain from all work'—a very accurate description of the Day of Atonement, this day of fasting which is also a day of complete rest.

\* \* \*

Here then we have before us a date which is practically certain. Of course, some hypercritical person may object that, after all, the allusion to the catastrophe on the Day of Atonement could relate to some event entirely unknown to us. In the same way, of course, when July 14th is spoken of in France one could ask if it were really July 14th, 1789 which was meant! Certain historic dates stand out; how could Tishri 10th 63, a solemn date which marked the end of the national independence together with the beginning of Roman domination in Judaea, fail to be such a date for the Jews of the time?

Moreover, that our *Commentary* is later than 63, so that consequently it must have been composed in the time of the Roman domination and not in the Seleucid period, seems to me to be demonstrated by many other passages of the book. These passages are the ones in which the author comments on the sections of the biblical text in which are found descriptions of the Chaldaean invaders. By virtue of his allegorical exegesis, he applies the biblical sentences to new invaders whom he calls the Kittim. This word Kittim has different meanings in Jewish texts according to their dates; originally indicating the people of Kition, an ancient city of Cyprus, it has gradually extended to the eastern islands of the Mediterranean, to Macedonia and even to Italy. In *Daniel* (xi. 30), it is used pre-

<sup>1</sup> With regard to this text, it should be made clear that the allusion in the *Commentary* could not point to the events of 37 but only those of 63, since, as we shall demonstrate below, the work was composed towards the end of the reign of Hyrcanus II, and therefore before the capture of Jerusalem by Herod the Great.

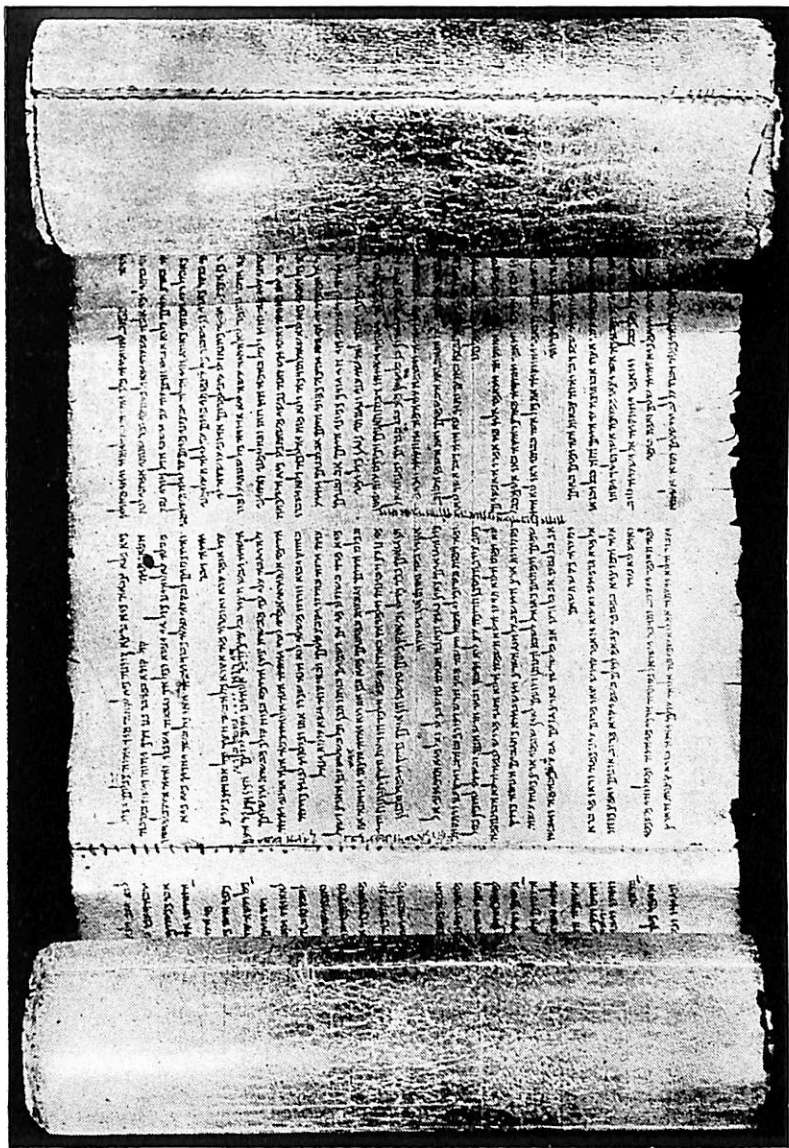


Fig. 5.—Scroll A of *Isaiah* partly unrolled (after *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Sept., 1948, p. 48)

cisely of the Romans. That is also its meaning in the *Habakkuk Commentary*; indeed, in the descriptions of these Kittim all the features exactly fit the Romans, and moreover certain details only apply to them, to the exclusion of the Seleucids in particular. Let the reader judge for himself from the following passages:

*'For lo, I raise up the Chaldaeans, that bi[tter and hasty] nation.* (Hab. i. 6a)

The explanation of this refers to the Kittim, wh[o are] swift and valiant in battle . . .

*'She is terrible and dreadful: her judgement and her dignity proceed from herself.* (Hab. i. 7)

The explanation of this refers to the Kittim who are a source of terror and fear to all the nations.<sup>1</sup> And it is with intent that they perpetrate all their evil intrigues and it is with cunning and guile that they bear themselves amongst all the peoples.<sup>2</sup>

*'And more agile than the panthers are her horses, and more nimble than the wolves of the evening. They leap and their riders (come) from far; they fly like the eagle which swoops down to devour. They come all of them for violence; their faces are set (?) (towards) the East (?).* (Hab. i. 8—9a)

The explanation of this refers to the Kittim, who trample over the country with their horses and their beasts. And *from afar they come*: from the isles of the sea,<sup>3</sup> to devour all the nations *like the eagle*<sup>4</sup>, without being sated. And it is with fury and with [irritation and in the ar]dour of anger, with nostrils dilated with wrath that they face a[ll the peoples. F]or this is what is said: *their [faces are set (?) (towards) the East (?)].*

*'[And as for her, at kings] she mocks and princes she derides.* (Hab. i. 10a)

The explanation of this is that they are insolent towards the mighty, and scornful towards those who are held in respect.

<sup>1</sup> Applied to the Roman conquest these words are not mere hyperbole.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., for example, Pompey 'acute to the point of subtlety, artful to the point of perfidy, etc.' (J. Carcopino, *Histoire romaine*, II, pp. 583 f., 589).

<sup>3</sup> That is to say, following the sense of the Hebrew word 'iyyim, the coast of the sea; here, the shores of Italy. The expression would be quite inexact if it referred to the Seleucid kings and the Syrian armies which did not have to come 'from the isles of the sea' to enter Palestine.

<sup>4</sup> The eagle was precisely the emblem of the Roman legions.

They mock at kings and chiefs and they make fun of a mighty army.

*'And as for her, she laughs at every fortress; she amasses territory and seizes it. (Hab. i. 10b)*

'The explanation of this refers to the lords of the Kittim,<sup>1</sup> who scorn the fortresses of the peoples and laugh insolently at them; and with a mighty army they surround them to take them and owing to terror and fear they are delivered into their hands, and they lay them in ruins because of the wickedness of their inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

*'Then the wind has passed and (this one) has disappeared, and that one has made a god of his strength. (Hab. i. 11)*

'The explanation of this refers to the lords of the Kittim, who with the guilty part of their house disappear one before the other.<sup>3</sup> They take command; [then, one] after the other, they come to destroy the peo[ples].<sup>4</sup> For (so it is said): *he[r] strength has become her god . . .*

*'And thou hast treated men as the fish of the sea, as the wriggling things to have dominion over them. He takes them a[ll] with the fish hook], and he draws them with his seine, and he gathers them [in his net. Therefore he sacrifices] to his seine. Therefore he is joyful [and he exults and burns incense in honour of his net. For, through them], his lot is plentiful [and his food is abundant]. (Hab. i. 14—16)*

'[The explanation of this . . .] the Kittim, and they gather up their riches, with all the fruit of their plunderings,<sup>5</sup> *as the fish*

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew expression which is used here to indicate the great Roman leaders seems to me rather significant: *mōshelīm*, literally 'commanders', 'rulers'; this word would excellently translate the Roman title of *imperator*, the official title of the Pompeys and Caesars. In any case, it is scarcely appropriate to the Seleucid sovereigns, who are properly speaking 'kings'.

<sup>2</sup> A probable allusion to deeds such as those reported by Josephus, *Antiq. XIV*, v. 4, § 89: the Roman Gabinius in 57 attacked the Jew Alexander in the fortress of Alexandreion, and invited the defenders to surrender with the promise of an amnesty; then, when he received the messengers begging for pardon he demanded the delivery of the strongholds of Hyrcania, Machaerus and Alexandreion and razed them to the ground.

<sup>3</sup> In my opinion a certain allusion to the period of the civil wars, from 49 B.C. onwards: Pompey and Caesar successively disappeared with their 'house', their 'party'.

<sup>4</sup> Despite the political instability Rome maintained and pursued its conquests in this troubled period.

<sup>5</sup> An allusion to the vast plunder seized by the Romans, notably by Pompey; Rome, it has been said, was 'through him sated with power and gold' (Carcopino, *op. cit.*, p. 589).

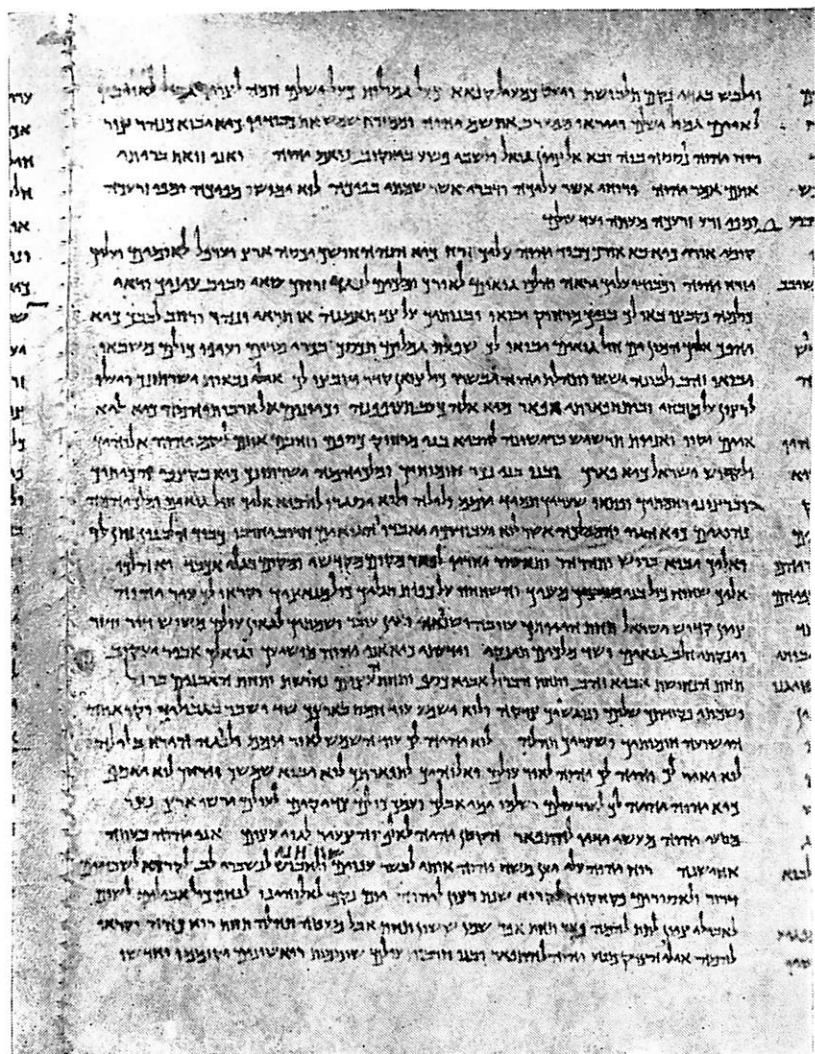


Fig. 6.—Scroll A of Isaiah: col. XLIX (after *The Dead Sea Scrolls . . .* I, plate XLIX)

To face page 30]

of the sea. And when one says: *Therefore he sacrifices to his seine and burns incense in honour of his net*, this means that they sacrifice to their standards<sup>1</sup> and that their arms of war are themselves the object of their religion.<sup>2</sup> *For through them his lot is plentiful and his food is abundant.* The meaning of this is that they divide their yoke and their taxes—(these taxes are) *their food*—amongst all the peoples year by year, laying waste many countries.<sup>3</sup>

'It is why he draws his sword continually to slay the peoples without pity. (*Hab. i. 17*)

The explanation of this refers to the Kittim who put many to the sword, young men, adults, old men, women and children, and had no pity for the fruit of the womb.'<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \*

This is what the Romans are like in the eyes of the author of the *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.

The allusion to the struggle of the parties (on *Hab. i. 11*) is particularly instructive. Indeed, it suggests that the date of the editing of the *Commentary* is not only after 63, *terminus a quo* imposed by the allusion to the catastrophe of the Day of Atonement (on *Hab. ii. 15*), but even after Caesar and after the second triumvirate in which Octavius, Antony and Lepidus were associated in 43. On the other hand, it fixes a *terminus ad quem*: the year 29, the date when the struggle between the parties ceased and Octavius was nominated *imperator* for life by the Senate. I think the date which is most suitable is the year 41 B.C., a little before the Peace of Brundisium, when the political situation kept the whole world in anxiety and the Parthian threat increased in the East.

Whether we retain this date of 41 or put it back by one or two years, the conclusion which we have drawn from the actual contents

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to the cult of *signa* in the Roman legions.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to the trophies.

<sup>3</sup> As soon as the Romans had put their 'yoke' on a people, they submitted them immediately to tribute—to annual tribute (cf. *1 Macc. viii. 4*). As soon as Jerusalem was taken by Pompey it had to pay a very heavy tribute, 'more than 10,000 talents' (Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIV, iv. 5, § 78).

<sup>4</sup> On the massacres carried out by the Romans in Judaea when towns were captured or there were rebellions, see Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIV, iv. 4, § 70; XIV, vi. 3, § 102; XIV, xvi. 2, § 479 f.; etc.

of the text is of considerable importance. Indeed from the evidence it follows that the manuscript of the *Habakkuk Commentary* could not have been written before this date, and likewise that it is later that the 'Ain-Feshka hiding-place was made. As I have shown above, the palaeographical and ceramic evidence does not allow us to fix a precise date; it leaves a margin of at least several decades. On the strength of this evidence alone, some have decided for the second century,<sup>1</sup> others for the first century B.C.<sup>2</sup> If my views are acceptable, it is the latter who are right.

This question of chronology is here of primary importance. Indeed, the documents are to be interpreted quite differently according to the period to which they are ascribed. Furthermore, the identification of the sect from which the manuscripts came depends largely on their date, as does also their historical significance. If indeed, as Father de Vaux asserts, 'none of the manuscripts is later than the beginning of the first century B.C.'<sup>3</sup>, and if the sect disappeared from Palestine about this date, it is clear that the Dead Sea discoveries only remotely concern either the history of Judaism in the first century B.C. or Christian origins. If, on the contrary, it is shown by internal criteria of a historical nature that certain of the writings were only composed about 41 B.C., a completely different perspective is opened before us: the Roman potsherds found in the cave, far from indicating that it was broken into during the first century A.D., as Father de Vaux maintains, quite simply indicate that the books were only transported there at this period. And consequently everything points to the circumstances of the great Jewish war, about A.D. 66—70, a period supremely tragic for the Jews of Palestine. It was at this time that the flight and dispersal of the Jewish sect must have taken place, at the same time as the well-known flight and dispersal of the Christian communities in Palestine. This being the case, it follows that this Jewish sect which had its home in Judaea until this date, has a direct and immediate bearing upon the history of the Palestinian religious milieu at the very time when Christianity came into being.

\* \* \*

And now let us see what the *Commentary* teaches us about the

<sup>1</sup> So de Vaux and Sukenik.

<sup>2</sup> So J. C. Trever and W. F. Albright.

<sup>3</sup> *Revue Biblique*, 1949, p. 236.

actual sect to which the author belonged. This sect had as its founder a person who is generally called the 'Master of Justice' (*mōrē haṣṣedhekē*); twice he is given the title of 'Elect of God' (*beḥīr 'ēl*). Never is he called by his own name. If he is thus anonymous, it is because of the intense veneration of which the person of the Master had become the object: his name was unpronounceable, like the name of Yahweh.

The Master of Justice was a priest (on *Hab.* i. 5). He received divine revelations: 'God,' it is said, 'made him to know all the Mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets' (on *Hab.* ii. 2). He was commissioned to communicate these revelations to the Jews: 'God,' we read again, 'placed him [in the House of Jud]ah to explain all the words of His servants the Prophets' (on *Hab.* i. 5). Thus, as his title already indicates, he was essentially a Master or Doctor (*mōrē*), teaching others what he had learnt 'from the mouth of God' (on *Hab.* i. 5).

This Prophet made disciples. From them he demanded the exact observation of the Jewish law, of the Torah (on *Hab.* ii. 3b). With his followers, who are the 'elect of God' (on *Hab.* ii. 12—13), he founded a Society or rather a Community (*yaḥadh*), also described as a 'party' (*'ēṣā*; on *Hab.* ii. 17); his disciples are called his 'partisans' (on *Hab.* ii. 8b). This Community had for its name the 'Covenant', or more exactly the 'New Covenant' (*habberīth haḥadh-āshā*; on *Hab.* i. 5)<sup>1</sup>. And the members of this Community were the 'poor' and the 'simple'; this is what we read:

*'[For the violence inflicted on Lebanon shall return upon thee, and the oppression exercised against the beasts] shall fan (the fire), because of the human blood which has been shed and the violence which has been inflicted on the country, on the city and on all that dwell therein. (Hab. ii. 17)*

The explanation of these words refers to the Wicked Priest, so that he may receive his retribution for what he has exacted from the poor—for *Lebanon* is the party of the Community, and *the beasts* are the simple of Judah, who practise the Law . . .<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

The Master of Justice, himself a priest, was in violent conflict

<sup>1</sup> In this passage the word *haḥadhāshā* 'new' has disappeared in a gap in the manuscript; but it seems possible to restore it with certainty here (cf. chapter V on 'The New Covenant in the Land of Damascus').

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 40, n. 1.

with the priesthood of Jerusalem. I have quoted above (p. 27) the section of the *Commentary* bearing on *Hab.* ii. 15: it is said there in explicit terms that 'the Wicked Priest persecuted the Master of Justice so as to swallow him up in the heat of his anger', and also that he 'dared to strip him of his clothing', doubtless in order to torture him. Here again is what we learn on this subject in another section, which unfortunately is mutilated, but quite certainly has in view the persecuting Priest as well as his victim, the Master of Justice:

*'Will not thy tormentors suddenly arise and torment thee and get inflamed, and wilt thou not become their prey? . . . (Hab. ii. 7)*

[The explanation of these words refers to the Priest who has rebelled [*space of two lines; towards the end of this space supply something like: . . .* and he persecuted the Master of Justice, who was] struck by him in the execution of iniquitous judgments; and odious profaners committed horrors on him and vengeance on his body of flesh . . .]

From all the evidence this passage alludes to the Passion of the Master of Justice; he was judged, condemned, tortured. He suffered in 'his body of flesh': without doubt he was a divine being who 'became flesh' to live and die as a man.

Who is this Wicked Priest, this persecutor of the Just? The author of the *Commentary*, in his Sibylline style, does not give us his name: is it possible to penetrate the anonymity which covers him? I believe we can. As a matter of fact this is what the following section of the *Commentary* says:

*'Because of the blood which has been shed and the violence inflicted on the country, on the city and on all that dwell therein. (Hab. ii. 8)*

[The explanation of this refers to the Wicked Priest, whom, through sin committed against the Master of Justice and his supporters, God has delivered into the hands of his enemies to humiliate him by beating him to death, in bitterness of soul, because he had committed a crime against his Elect.]

We may note first of all that under the name of Priest, the commentator is certainly alluding to a High Priest, one or other of the Hasmonaean High Priests who governed Israel; only the High Priest could thus condemn anyone to torture. In the second place this High Priest must have reigned before the capture of Jerusalem in 63. This event was indeed considered as a visitation of the

Master, of the glorified Master (see *infra* pp. 43 f.), who must then have been put to death some time before. Now, thanks to Josephus we know of a Hasmonaeon prince whose tragic end corresponds amazingly to the description in the *Commentary*. This was Aristobulus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus and of Alexandra. In 67 he succeeded his mother Alexandra. In 63 he was arrested and imprisoned by Pompey—three or four months before the capture of Jerusalem. Escaping from Rome in 56, he reappeared in Palestine where he caused a certain stir, but he was soon recaptured and again sent to Rome in irons: yes, in precise terms 'God delivered him into the hands of his enemies',—of his enemies the Romans. As to the 'humiliations', as to the 'bitterness of soul', as to the 'blows' which beat him 'to death', it must be remembered that he would have to take part, in chains, in the triumph of Pompey in Rome in 61; that he failed miserably in 56 when he tried to regain power; finally, that he died in his prison in 49 poisoned by Pompey's supporters. Can one imagine a more exact justification of the words of our commentator?

At what date, at what moment in his reign did Aristobulus II commit the sacrilegious crime for which he was punished in so exemplary a fashion? This question can hardly be answered with certainty. To tell the truth, this uncertainty is not very serious in view of the fact that the reign of Aristobulus II lasted only three years and six months (Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIV, vi. 1, § 97). The condemnation and execution of the Master took place during the course of these three years and six months, between 67 and 63; for this event, then, we arrive at a date which is at least approximate and where the margin is very limited.

If we wish to be more precise, we should naturally think of the period that Aristobulus spent at Jerusalem towards April—May 63, after the time when he had evacuated Alexandreion on Pompey's order. During this short stay, Josephus tells us, 'he was occupied in preparing war' (*Antiq.*, XIV, iii. 4, § 52). During these dramatic days when the king, in his madness, was preparing to resist the soldiers of Pompey in his capital, was it not an indispensable measure of precaution for him first to get rid of his declared adversaries: of this priest, who as we shall see further was fanatically hostile to the king and High Priest as well as to the supporters of the latter,

the Sadducees? In the fever of these days, Aristobulus—this 'violent' and 'agitated' man (*Antiq.*, XIV, iii. 2, § 43)—could quite well decide to end this dangerous opposition by condemning its leader, and perhaps also some of his principal supporters, and having them summarily executed.

We can equally think of that other moment of fever when, in the spring of 65, Aristobulus was besieged in Jerusalem by the troops of Hyrcanus and Aretas (*Antiq.*, XIV, ii. 1 f., §§ 18 ff.); the feelings of the parties were then running at their highest, as is clearly shown by the incident of Onias, a 'just man', who was stoned by the people for having refused to curse Aristobulus and the priests, and so taking sides with Hyrcanus.<sup>1</sup>

Be that as it may, let us note that the identification with Aristobulus II finds valuable confirmation in another passage of the *Commentary*:

*'Why do you look at the traitors, and why dost thou remain silent when the wicked swallows up one who is more just than he? (Hab. i. 13b)*

*'The explanation of this refers to the House of Absalom and its supporters, who were silent when the Master of Justice was punished and did not aid him against the Man of Untruth who had scorned the Law in the midst of all the peoples.'*

Here at last is a proper name! What is this 'House of Absalom'? Josephus has preserved for us the name of an Absalom who was made prisoner by the Romans precisely in the year 63, when Jerusalem was taken: he was, so the Jewish historian tells us, the uncle of Aristobulus II and also his father-in-law (*Antiq.*, XIV, iv. 4, § 71); Aristobulus II, then, had married a daughter of this Absalom, his cousin. The commentator reproaches him—whose 'House' was closely allied with the royal House and who ought to have had a substantial influence—with having neither said nor done anything

<sup>1</sup> Was this Onias the Master of Justice himself, as Roger Goossens, professor at the University of Brussels, has so brilliantly maintained (meeting of the Société Théonoé on July 3rd, 1950)? This hypothesis had already occurred to me; nevertheless, in my paper to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, May 26th, 1950, I refrained from formulating it, reserving for a little later a detailed study on the delicate problem. I am truly happy that my learned colleague in Brussels has forestalled me in this study. The text of his interesting paper is to be found in *La Nouvelle Clío*, No. 7 (July 1950), pp. 336—353, under the title: *Onias le Juste, le Messie de la Nouvelle Alliance, lapidé à Jérusalem en 65 avant J.-C.*

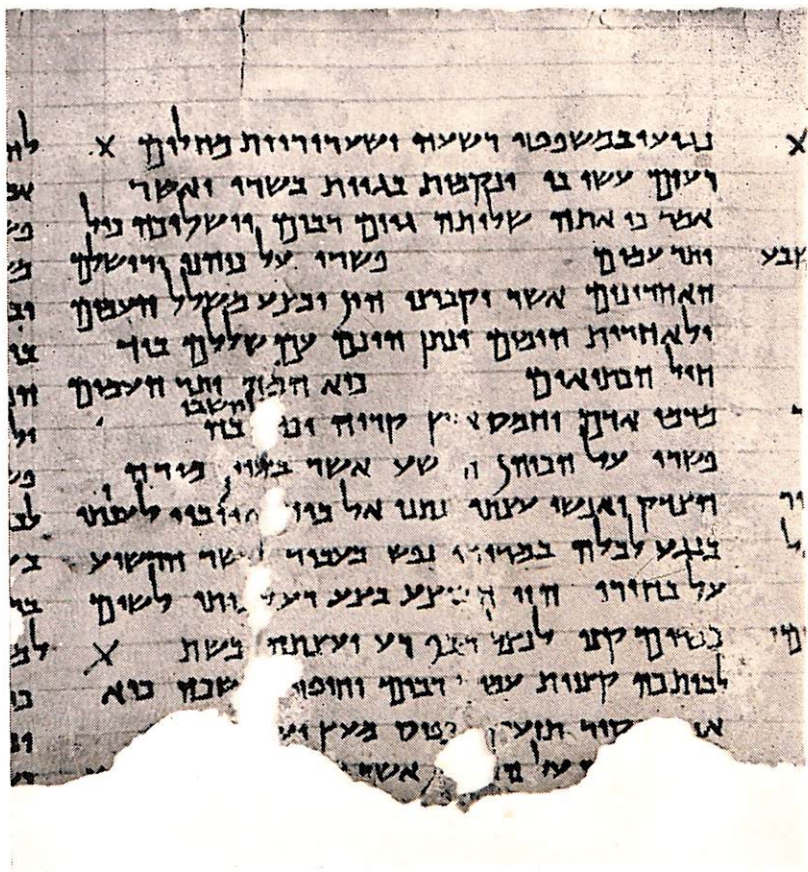


Fig. 7.—Scroll of the *Habakkuk Commentary*: col. IX (after *The Dead Sea Scrolls . . .*, I, plate LIX)

To face page 36]

to try to rescue the Master from the persecution of the 'Man of Untruth', his royal nephew and son-in-law. Such a precise indication, if I am not mistaken, confers a quasi-evidential character on the proposed identification with Aristobulus II.

There is perhaps still more. The text of the *Commentary* speaks of the 'supporters' of the House of Absalom. If it is supposed—and there is nothing against it—that Absalom was a *maternal* uncle of Aristobulus II and consequently a brother of Alexandra, it is quite possible, in view of the fact that Alexandra throughout her reign showed herself favourable to the Pharisees, that Absalom himself had belonged to the party of the Pharisees and that consequently the supporters of his House were none other than the Pharisees. This would mean that at the time of the conflict which set Aristobulus II, and certainly the Sadducees also, in opposition to the Master of Justice and his supporters, the Pharisaic party would be neutral; this would be a very interesting light on the parts played by the three Jewish parties at the time of Aristobulus II.

\* \* \*

Other passages of the *Commentary* speak again of a Wicked Priest; but these other passages, packed with allusions, seem to me to be directed no longer against Aristobulus II, but against Hyrcanus II, the elder son of Alexander Jannaeus and Alexandra, who succeeded his brother Aristobulus II both as high priest and head of the Jewish nation in 63. Here are the passages:

*'And furthermore, surely, riches will lead the proud man to betray, and he will not stop, for his appetite is as wide as Sheol and he is insatiable as Death. And all the nations are gathered together unto him, and all the peoples are assembled before him. And will they not all utter a proverb against him? And he shall have interpreters of riddles and they shall say: Woe to him who increases (his possessions)! And as for that which does not belong to him, how long will it impose upon him a pledge? (Hab. ii. 5—6)*

The explanation of this refers to the Wicked Priest who was called by the Name of Truth at the beginning of his advent<sup>1</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> Hyrcanus II was appointed High Priest by Queen Alexandra, his mother, on the death of Alexander Jannaeus; throughout the reign of this queen he exercised his function of High Priest in a purely religious manner without troubling about politics; it was his mother and the Pharisees who governed. It is by an allusion to this initial period of his royal priesthood that the *Commentary* declares that he 'was called by the Name of Truth at the beginning of his advent': we may take it that he was then really acting as a 'Priest of Yahweh', in such a way as to please the pious.

but when he exercised the command over Israel<sup>1</sup>, his heart was lifted up, and he abandoned God,<sup>2</sup> and he betrayed the precepts because of riches, and he stole and amassed the riches of violent men who had revolted against God, and he took the riches of the peoples, heaping upon himself the worst iniquities, and he led an abominable course in every kind of foul impurity.

*'Woe unto him who commits horrible rapine for his house, setting his nest on high to preserve it from the hand of misfortune! Thou hast accomplished the shame of thy house, when many peoples shall come to an end, and thou hast sinned against thine own soul. For the stone cries out from the wall and from the timber-work the beam answers it. (Hab. ii. 9—11)*

['The explanation of these words] refers to the [Pri]est who [break of two lines] . . . , so that its stones took part in the oppression and the beam of its timber-work in the theft<sup>3</sup> . . .

*'Woe unto him who builds a town in bloodshed and founds a city on iniquity! Is it not thus from Yahweh-Sabaoth: that the peoples toil for the profit of the fire and that the nations wear themselves out for the profit of nothing? (Hab. ii. 12—13)*

The explanation of this refers to the Prophet of Untruth<sup>4</sup>; who has beguiled many in order to rebuild his town of vanity in bloodshed<sup>5</sup>; and in order that (this town) should stand to

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, when he became the sovereign of the Jewish nation in succession to Aristobulus II in 63, a temporal sovereign like the other Hasmonaean rulers.

<sup>2</sup> It is the combination of the priesthood and the temporal sovereignty which, in the eyes of the commentator, is the cause of the wickedness into which the Hasmonaean High Priests fell: the cause of their abandoning the Law of God, of their pride, of their love of riches.—On the riches of Hyrcanus II, see Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIV, ix. 3, § 163; cf. *infra* p. 41, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> In spite of the gap it is clear, since 'its stones' are spoken of, (the stones of the rebuilt town), that here it concerns a High Priest who was a builder: a feature which corresponds perfectly with Hyrcanus II and which is developed in the following section.

<sup>4</sup> The title of 'Prophet' could be given to the High Priest, provided that the High Priest in office was held to possess the gift of prophecy, as we know from various texts.

<sup>5</sup> We know from Josephus that Caesar in 47 authorized Hyrcanus II to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed in the siege of 63 (*Antiq.*, XIV, viii. 5, § 144 and XIV, ix. 1, § 156). This was to compensate for the help he had received from Hyrcanus and Antipater at the time of the battle of Alexandria. It was through this effective support and this military help that Hyrcanus II secured Caesar's favour, that he 'overcame' him; as for the 'bloodshed', was not this the blood of the Jews who died in Egypt fighting for Caesar, and whose death served to purchase the goodwill of the Roman?

bear witness with deceit, by means of its (new) glory<sup>1</sup>; in order that many might toil in his vain service<sup>2</sup>; and in order that they might conceive through deceitful [wor]ks<sup>3</sup>; in order that their labour might be for nothing; in order that they might come to the judgement of fire for having insulted and outraged the elect of God.<sup>4</sup>

*'Thou hast sated thyself with ignominy rather than with glory. Drink, thou also, and stagger. The cup in the right hand of Yahweh turns towards thee, and shame shall be upon thy glory. (Hab. ii. 16)*

'The explanation of this refers to the Priest whose shame has exceeded his glory<sup>5</sup>. For he has not circumcised the foreskin of his heart, but he has followed the ways of drunkenness to quench his thirst. But the cup of the anger of God shall swallow him up . . .

*'[For the violence inflicted on Lebanon shall return upon thee, and the oppression exercised against the beasts] shall fan (the fire), because of the human blood which has been shed and the violence which has been inflicted on the country, on the city and on all that dwell therein. (Hab. ii. 17)*

'The explanation of these words refers to the Wicked Priest, so that he may receive his retribution for what he has exacted from the poor—for *Lebanon* is the party of the Community, and *the beasts* are the simple of Judah, who practise the Law—:

<sup>1</sup> Under Hyrcanus II, in spite of Roman domination, Jerusalem enjoyed a certain revival of glory: Caesar 'loaded Hyrcanus with honours' (*Antiq.*, XIV, viii. 3, § 137); similarly Hyrcanus 'received high marks of honour from the Athenian people to whom he had also been of service' (*Antiq.*, XIV, viii. 5, §§ 149 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Why 'many'? Apparently an allusion to the fact that through a decree of Caesar, Hyrcanus resumed possession of the towns of Galilee, which had previously been transferred to Syria and Phoenicia, together with the port of Joppa (*Antiq.*, XIV, x. 6, § 205). This considerably increased the number of his subjects.

<sup>3</sup> It is a question of the 'work of flesh', of the procreation of children; in the eyes of our mystical author this is a work of deceit, in the sense that bodily generation can only be deceitful through its uselessness; only the spiritual fertility of the saints counts.

<sup>4</sup> This sentence reveals the hostile attitude of Hyrcanus II and his supporters with regard to the members of the New Covenant. Nevertheless, it is not stated that the latter suffered a severe persecution under the high priesthood of Hyrcanus II. The majority of the sect were then in refuge at Damascus, as we shall see in chapter V. The hostility of Hyrcanus prevented their return until at least 40 B.C.

<sup>5</sup> Still Hyrcanus II: on his 'glory', see *supra* n. 1.

for God will condemn him to death, just as he planned to exterminate the poor.<sup>1</sup> And when it is said: *because of the blood shed in the city and the violence inflicted on the country*, the explanation of this is that the city is Jerusalem, in which the Wicked Priest has committed abominable deeds and desecrated the Sanctuary of God;<sup>2</sup> and the violence inflicted on the country means the towns of Judah in which he stole the goods of the poor<sup>3</sup>.

It must be observed that in the last two sections the punishment of the Wicked Priest is spoken of in the future: 'the cup of the anger of God shall engulf him . . .'; 'God will condemn him to death . . .'. It is a matter of threats not of a chastisement already accomplished. Hyrcanus II was deposed and made prisoner in 40 by the Parthian invaders; taken captive by them, he was able later to return to Jerusalem through the efforts of Herod, but the suspicious monarch had him assassinated in 30. It appears that our commentator was ignorant of all these events. When he composed his work, Hyrcanus II was still in office. This is yet another reason for dating the *Commentary* a little before 40, as we have done.

Thus in the sections of the *Commentary* which stigmatize the 'Wicked Priest' or the 'Man of Untruth' or the 'Prophet of Untruth', in actual fact the author, without in any way confusing them, is indicating two distinct persons, two Hasmonaean princes: sometimes Aristobulus II and sometimes his successor Hyrcanus II. The choice between the one and the other is dictated to him in each section by the actual contents of the biblical text to be commented on. In the opinion of our seer, these two High Priests were the 'last Priests of Jerusalem': this is what he calls them in the following passage: ' . . . And when it is said: *Because thou hast plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples will plunder thee* (*Hab. ii. 8a*), the explanation of this refers to the last Priests of Jerusalem who amassed

<sup>1</sup> Who are these 'poor'? Simply unfortunate Jews, perhaps, whom Hyrcanus II had overwhelmed with taxes and forced labour for political ends; but I think the 'poor' here are rather the actual members of the sect of the New Covenant, as is suggested by the phrase which precedes: they gave themselves this name 'poor' (*'ebhyōnim*), precisely because they made a profession of scorning riches.

<sup>2</sup> Here the author is returning to the various violations of the Law, at least as it was interpreted by the sect, in matters concerning things pure and impure.

<sup>3</sup> This sentence could allude to measures for plundering or confiscating goods decreed by Hyrcanus II against the members of the sect.

riches and spoils by plundering the peoples; but at the end of the days their riches with the fruit of their plundering will be delivered into the hands of the army of the Kittim. For it is they who are *the remnant of the peoples.*'

Yes, at this time of the full expansion of their conquest, the Romans are certainly 'the remnant of the peoples', that is to say the very last people called upon to play a part on the stage of human history; for we are 'at the end of the days'. And it surely is into the hands of the Roman generals that the immense riches accumulated by the Hasmonaean rulers were delivered<sup>1</sup>; we may think for example of the tribute of 'more than 10,000 talents' exacted by Pompey from conquered Jerusalem (*Antiq.*, XIV, iv. 5, § 77); of the pillage of 'all the gold which was in the Sanctuary'—8,000 talents—by Crassus in 54 (*Antiq.*, XIV, vii. 1, § 105). The Roman eagles were certainly greedy!

\* \* \*

Thus, at the time when the author wrote the *Commentary*—consequently about 41 B.C., if at least my proof is judged acceptable—he lived in the thought that 'the end of the days' had come, that the supreme Visitation of God, the last Judgement, was at hand. In expectation of the great Day it was necessary to watch, to watch without ceasing:

*'I wish to remain standing at my post and to mount my guard. And I shall watch to see what he will say to me and what [he will answer] to my complaints. And Yahweh replied to me [and said: Write the vision and engrave it on tablets so that it may be read by one who runs. (Hab. ii. 1—2)*

*'[The explanation of this—break of two lines—]. And God told Habakkuk to write the things which are to happen to the last generation; but the consummation of time He has not made known to him.'*

The 'last generation' is the present generation; though this is not to pass away before the Day of Judgement arrives, at least the exact moment is not known. Therefore it is necessary to persevere, to retain an absolute confidence, to remain firmly attached to the truth:

<sup>1</sup> The riches of Hyrcanus II, especially, were such that Josephus felt obliged to explain at length how such great sums could flow to the metropolis of the Jewish world. (*Antiq.*, XIV, vii. 2, §§ 110 ff.)

*'For there is yet a vision for the fixed time; it speaks of the end and it does not deceive. (Hab. ii. 3a)*

The explanation of this is that the final time will be of long duration, and it will exceed all that the prophets have said; for the Mysteries of God will be marvellous.

*'If it delays, wait for it; for it will surely come and it will not be late. (Hab. ii. 3b)*

The explanation of this refers to the men of truth who practise the Law, whose hands do not relax in the service of truth, when the final time is delayed for them; for all the times of God arrive in their due season in accordance with what He has decreed about them in the Mysteries of His Prudence.'

The 'final time' which occurs in these two little sections is the ultimate period of history, that which will follow the great Judgement, the definitive and eternal period which will see the absolute reign of God. God alone knows this crowning event but it will arrive at the exact moment fixed by Him, even if this moment sometimes seems to be excessively slow in coming for those who await it with so much eagerness. Then the happiness of the just 'shall exceed all that the Prophets have said': they are such marvellous Mysteries that no tongue can describe them. It is the same idea that the Apostle Paul expressed later: 'That which the eye has not seen, that which the ear has not heard, that which has not occurred to the heart of man, God has prepared for those who love him . . .' (1 Cor. ii. 9). In this 'final time' the just will be as if overwhelmed with Knowledge—through the Revelation of the divine Gnosis:

*'For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. ii. 14)*

The explanation of these words, [*break of two lines*] . . ., and then Knowledge shall be revealed unto them in abundance like the waters of the sea.'

Woe unto those who lose heart and abandon the Covenant when the Day is at hand:

*'[See among the nations and look, and you will be amazed, astounded; for in your days I am going to accomplish a work: you will not believe it when] it is told unto you. (Hab. i. 5)*

. . . And likewise the explanation of these words [refers to all those who act treacherously at the end of the days. These are the violent ones . . .], who will not believe when they hear all the things which will happen in the last generation . . .'

\* \* \*

These 'things which will happen in the last generation', are described to us in the *Commentary* in a strikingly brief manner:

'[*Art thou not from of old, O Yahweh, my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Yahweh,*] *Thou hast established him for judgement, and (like) a rock Thou hast made him firm for the one who chastises him . . .* (*Hab. i. 12*)

'The explanation of this is that God will not destroy His people by means of the nations. But it is by means of His Elect that God will execute judgement on all the nations; and it is at the time of their chastisement that all the sinful from amongst His people will make atonement. Those who will have kept His commandments will be a rock for them . . .'

Thus the final Judgement will be exercised by the Elect of God, that is to say, by the Master of Justice; it will reach all the heathen nations at the same time as Israel: the only ones saved will be the good who are faithful to the Covenant, who will take part beside the Elect in the chastisement of the wicked of Israel—a just recompense for the persecutions and the wrongs which they will have undergone at their hands.

Here again is another passage about the last Judgement: ' . . . And when it is said: *when many peoples shall come to an end, and thou hast sinned against thine own soul* (*Hab. ii. 10*), the explanation of this is the House of Judgement<sup>1</sup>; for God will give His judgement in the midst of many peoples and then He will translate it into judgement, and in the midst of these He will condemn it, and by a fire of sulphur He will judge it.' Consequently there are two successive acts on the Day of Judgement: the one to condemn the nations, the other to condemn Israel—guilty Israel—in the very presence of the nations. The sin of Israel, a rebellious and ungrateful people, was the more serious; more heavy, too, will be its condemnation and greater its confusion before the supreme Tribunal. What a terrible and solemn day will be that on which God will suppress from the earth 'all those who worship idols and all the wicked' (on *Hab. ii. 19—20*).

Let us stress that at the time of the supreme Visitation the functions of judge are entrusted by God to the Master of Justice: 'It is

<sup>1</sup> This expression here means the 'House of damnation'; it signifies Israel—guilty, fallen Israel.

through His Elect that God will execute judgement . . .' (on *Hab.* i. 12). Furthermore, according to the belief of the commentator, prior to the first Visitation there would be a first divine chastisement of Jerusalem which was guilty of having put to death the Just One. This was the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63; and this first Judgement was already exercised by the Master of Justice. I have already quoted this passage (p. 27; on *Hab.* ii. 15): 'The explanation of this refers to the Wicked Priest who has persecuted the Master of Justice so as to swallow him up in the heat of his anger. Thou hast dared to strip him of his clothing; but at the moment of the sacred rest of the Day of Atonement, he appeared to them all resplendent, to swallow them up and to cause them to stumble on the Day of the Fast, which for them is a sabbath rest.' Thus it is the Master of Justice, shining with a divine splendour, who himself chastises the wicked city. The verb used here, *hóphía*, 'he was resplendent', occurs several times in the Old Testament to describe the appearance of Yahweh himself. Furthermore the biblical text here commented on contains the words: *so that God may see their feasts*; and this text is applied by the commentator to the Master: what an extraordinary apotheosis!

\* \* \*

The divine Master! On the Day of Judgement only those will be saved who will have had faith in Him. Such is the doctrine that the following passage expressly teaches us:

'[*And the just shall live through his faith.*] (*Hab.* ii. 4b)

The explanation of this refers to all those who practise the Law in the House of Judah, whom God will deliver from the House of Judgement<sup>1</sup> because of their affliction and their faith in the Master of Justice.'

The faith which saves, then, is faith in the Master, in the divine founder of the New Covenant. He has been taken away, but he lives still, and his glorious return is awaited. His faithful ones, intimately united within the 'party', remain grouped together in the 'Community' which he himself instituted. Do we know anything of the organization and the rites of this Jewish Church of the New Covenant? Yes, for the 'Ain-Feshka cave has given us just this treasure: the *Rule* of the 'New Covenant'.

<sup>1</sup> Here again we should understand Israel guilty and doomed to damnation.

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Fig. 8.—Scroll of the Rule: col. I (after *The Dead Sea Scrolls . . .*, II, fasc. 2, plate I)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE *Rule* OF THE 'NEW COVENANT'

The scroll of the *Rule*<sup>1</sup> has come to us in two fragments. It is made up of five pieces of leather with a total length of 1·86 metres; its height is 24 cm. In all, there are 11 columns of writing, averaging 26 lines each. It is quite possible, however, that the beginning of the scroll has disappeared with the loss of one or two columns.<sup>2</sup> The writing is not very carefully done, but remains sufficiently clear (fig. 8); it seems to be a little earlier than that of the *Habakkuk Commentary*.

This document has not yet been published.\* But already, by way of specimens, two partial photographs have been issued: the first<sup>3</sup> reproduces the whole of col. I together with the right part of col. II; the second<sup>4</sup>, col. V, but only the first 10 lines. I have transcribed and translated these extracts<sup>5</sup>: scarcely a fifth of the whole manuscript. But the part that can be read gives us an opportunity to recognize the general character of the document and already reveals its immense interest.

This book is none other than the 'customary law' or the 'rule' (*serek*) of the Community of the New Covenant founded by the

<sup>1</sup> The American editors first called this document 'Sectarian Document'; now they call it 'Sectarian Manual of Discipline'.

<sup>2</sup> In the letter mentioned *supra* p. 15 n. 1 de Vaux says that the Palestinian Museum has just acquired a fragment in which 'the two initial columns of the Sectarian Document' figure, together with several other fragments of the same document. Is it a question of a second copy of the *Manual* and are the 'two initial columns' identical with cols. I and II of the roll already known? Or is it rather a fragment broken off from this same scroll, which would then have been composed of 13 columns instead of 11? Doubtless we shall soon be informed on this point.

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 111 (Oct. 1948), pl. II.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 113 (Feb. 1949), pl. II B.

<sup>5</sup> See my study: *La 'Règle' de la Communauté de la Nouvelle Alliance: extraits traduits et commentés*, in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, cxxxviii (1950), pp. 5—21.

\* [It has now been published in facsimile and transcription in *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, Vol. II, fasc. 2, *Plates and Transcription of the Manual of Discipline* (American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven).—Translator.]

Master of Justice. The Hebrew word used to indicate the Community, *yahadh*, only occurs once as a noun in the Old Testament: it signifies 'union, communion', whence 'community', just like the Greek *koinônia* which offers the same meanings. We have already met it in the *Habakkuk Commentary*; it occurs constantly in the *Rule*. It is not a word devoid of meaning: between brothers, the members of the sect, there should exist a deep spirit of communion; together they ought to do battle for the Truth, for the Good; they should abandon themselves wholly to the Community. In the extracts which are the only parts yet known it is not stated that the adherents of the New Covenant lived properly speaking in monasteries; but, to say the least, they formed amongst themselves *assemblies*, little mystical societies, just like the Neo-Pythagorean confraternities, and more or less recalling the *thiasoi* of the Hellenistic mysteries.

\* \* \*

In the extracts only a part of the ritual of initiation is to be found. The description of the ceremonies is preceded by an admonition reminding the neophytes of their fundamental obligations. Here is a translation of this passage which straight away introduces us to the heart of the spiritual doctrines of the sect (col. I, ll. 1—15):

'... To seek God [...]. To do that which is good and right before Him, according to that which He has commanded through Moses and all His servants the Prophets<sup>1</sup>. And to love all those whom He has chosen, and to hate all those whom He has rejected. To keep from all evil and to cling to all good works. And to practise truth, justice and right upon the earth. And not to walk in the stubbornness of a guilty heart and lustful glances<sup>2</sup>, so as to do evil. And to lead into the Covenant of Grace all those who incline to practise

<sup>1</sup> Here Moses, that is to say the Law, and the Prophets are associated. The sect held the writings of the Prophets in high esteem, as is clearly seen in the *Habakkuk Commentary*. But is it not also shown by the simple fact that, of the seven scrolls found at 'Ain-Feshka, there were two scrolls of *Isaiah* and one of *Habakkuk*? We may observe that the Sadducees on the other hand considered only the Law as Holy Scripture.

<sup>2</sup> The members of the New Covenant are 'spiritual'; sins of the 'flesh' are particularly repugnant to them; because of this it is particularly necessary for them to be careful what they look at. Cf. *Habakkuk Commentary* (on i. 13): '*Eyes too pure to behold evil*'. The explanation of this is that they have not been shameless in following (the glances of) their eyes in the time of wickedness'.

the precepts of God so that they may be united in the Party of God<sup>1</sup>, and so that they may walk before Him in perfection in all that has been revealed to their councils,<sup>2</sup> and so that they may love all the sons of light,<sup>3</sup> each according to his portion<sup>4</sup> in the Party of God, and so that they may hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt by virtue of the vengeance of God. And all those who incline towards the truth shall bring all their intelligence and their strength and their power to the Community of God so as to purify their intelligence in the truth of the precepts of God and to regulate their strength according to the perfection of his ways and all their power according to his just Counsel. And not to take a single step outside any of the works of God, (but to accomplish them) in their time;<sup>5</sup> not to anticipate their moments, nor to be late for any of their feasts. And not to depart from their precepts of truth to go either to the right or to the left.'

This programme of religious and moral life in a remarkable way recalls on more than one point that to which the Essenes pledged themselves on oath, and which Josephus puts before us thus (*Wars*, II, viii. 7, §§ 138 ff.): '. . . If the proof is clearly sufficient, (the candidate) is then admitted into the community. But before touching the common food, on formidable oaths he pledges himself before his brothers first to revere the divinity, then to observe justice

<sup>1</sup> Note the insistence on unity, the total union of members of the sect; also the expression 'the Party of God' to indicate the Community.

<sup>2</sup> Literally: 'to the assemblies of their witnesses'; if I am not mistaken the question is one of meetings at which the teachings of the sect are decided. These derive from revelations given to the Master of Justice, and thanks to which the Mosaic Law is completed and brought to perfection.

<sup>3</sup> The 'sons of light' are the good, the elect, the members of the sect while the 'sons of darkness' are all the others, the wicked, the damned. These two expressions are met particularly in the writing which Sukenik calls: the 'War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness' (see *infra*, chapter VII). The good must be loved, the wicked hated: the motive and the measure of this love and hatred, which are directed not against persons but the good or evil in them, are here defined.

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word *gōrāl*, 'pebble' from which comes 'chance, lot, destiny', occurs very frequently in the writings of the sect; an indication of its fatalistic doctrine.

<sup>5</sup> That is to say, at the time desired by God, the time fixed by Destiny; on the 'time of God', cf. *Habakkuk Commentary* on ii. 3b (see *supra* p. 42). The whole development of history is directed by God from age to age: probably a doctrine of Iranian origin. Furthermore, the auspicious moment for each action is inscribed in the stars, an astrological fatalism which was very widespread at that time.

towards men, to do wrong to no man either spontaneously or on command; always to hate the unjust and to come to the help of the just, to keep faith towards all. . . . He swears always to love the truth and to put liars to confusion: to keep his hands clean from stealing, his soul pure from sinful gain: to keep nothing hidden from the members of the sect and to reveal nothing about them to the profane, even should he be tortured to death. He further swears to transmit the rules of the sect exactly as he has received them . . .' I feel it is superfluous to underline the similarities.

\* \* \*

Let us return to the *Rule*. After the admonition, the document describes the initiation ceremonies. The catechumens—doubtless in this first description it is a question of the 'novices'—pass in procession between the priests on the one side and the Levites on the other. During the procession the priests and Levites together pronounce benedictions in honour of God, with which the neophytes associate themselves repeating: 'Amen! Amen!' Then the priests exalt the benefits of God towards Israel, and after this the Levites go through the overwhelming list of ingratitude into which Israel allowed herself to be led throughout her history<sup>1</sup>. Then the candidates recite in unison a formula of confession<sup>2</sup>: the members of the New Covenant are essentially the 'converted', the 'penitents'. Here is the passage (col. I, ll. 16—26):

'And all those who enter into the rule of the Community shall pass into the Covenant in the presence of God, (pledging themselves) to act according to all that He has commanded them and not to depart far from Him through terror however great, or through fear or through ordeal<sup>3</sup>, though they be tempted by the whole empire of Belial<sup>4</sup>. And when they shall pass into the Covenant, the priests and the Levites shall bless God for their deliverance and for all His works of truth. And all those who pass into the Covenant shall say after them "Amen! Amen!"'

<sup>1</sup> This part of the ritual is clearly inspired by the ceremonies of the renewing of the Covenant described in *Deut.* xxvii and in *Neh.* ix.

<sup>2</sup> Similar formulae of confession stand in *1 Kings* viii. 47, *Psalms* cvi. 6, and *Dan.* ix. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Compare this with ' . . . even should he be tortured to death', in the oath of the Essenes quoted above.

<sup>4</sup> Belial, that is to say, the Evil One, the Devil, Satan.

'And the priests shall narrate the exploits of God in His mighty works and shall proclaim all His Grace and Love towards Israel. And the Levites shall narrate the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their wicked rebellions and their sins (committed) under the empire of Belial.

'[And all] those who enter into the Covenant shall make their confession after them saying: "We have been perverse, we have rebelled, we have si[nned], we have acted wickedly, we [and] our [fath]ers before us, walking [contrary to the precepts of God. But] Truth and Justice [. . .] was His judgement against us and against our fathers . . ."'

The following text (col. II) certainly contains the continuation of this ritual; but there the lines are temporarily damaged for us, and we only discern this: to the neophytes, if they remain faithful, are promised the blessings of God, while they are threatened with terrible curses—the 'curses of the Covenant'—should they violate their undertakings and depart 'far from God, because of their idols'. The company then files past: we shall soon know without doubt where the holy procession goes, and what is done next . . .

\* \* \*

After a long gap—fortunately temporary—col. V of the *Rule* begins with a new enumeration of the obligations to which 'the members of the Community who have pledged themselves' are committed; doubtless here it is a question of the members who have reached a higher degree of initiation, the 'professed': we know that among the Essenes the candidate had to go through several stages before being fully admitted into the community and before taking part in the common meals, and that four classes, strictly separated, were distinguished amongst the members 'according to the time which had elapsed since their admission to the rites' (*Wars*, II, viii. 7 and 10, §§ 137 ff. and 150). The rule of the professed is then the following (col. V, ll. 1—7):

'And here is the rule for the members of the Community who have pledged themselves: to turn away from all evil and to cling to all that (God) has commanded according to His will, to separate themselves from the congregation of the perverse so as to belong to the Community in matters of the Law and goods and <administrative rules>, in the manner of the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the

Covenant, and in the manner of the members of the Community, who have bound themselves to the Covenant in like manner. To execute the decree of Destiny in all things<sup>1</sup> relative to the Law and to possessions and to right. To practise the truth in common, along with humility, justice and right; and to love piety; and to walk modestly in all their ways so that none walks in the stubbornness of his heart, erring after his heart and his eyes and the plottings of his instinct. <But>, on the contrary, to circumcise in the Community the foreskin of instinct and of insubordination, laying a foundation of truth for Israel, for the Community of the eternal Covenant. To expiate for all those who have pledged themselves to (practise) the same holiness as Aaron and (to belong) to the House of truth in Israel, and (for) those who are united to them (in belonging) to the Community even in a matter of legal action and judgement. To condemn all those who transgress the Charter and the Covenant; to rule their ways according to all these precepts, when they have been received into the Community.'

It can be seen that the virtues to be practised are humility and modesty, the spirit of obedience, love of piety, justice and equity, struggle against the instincts, the most scrupulous chastity, a striving after holiness, expiation. The members of the New Covenant form a Society apart. They are separated from the rest of the Jews, from the 'congregation of the perverse'; and they belong wholly to the Community, to the 'House of Truth in Israel'. The novices had to bring 'all their intelligence and their strength and their power into the Community of God' (col. I, ll. 11—12; see *supra*); as for the professed, they are bound to submit themselves to it 'in matters of the Law and goods and rules' (col. V, l. 2)<sup>2</sup>. This formula: 'in matters of the Law', must be understood to mean that the precepts of the Law shall be faithfully observed according to the jurisprudence peculiar to the sect; 'in matters of goods' signifies without doubt that each one must 'abandon his goods to the community', as Josephus says with regard to the Essenes

<sup>1</sup> One cannot fail to recall here that the Essenes attributed to Destiny a total sovereignty: 'The sect of the Essenes professes that Destiny is master of all and that nothing happens to men which has not been decreed by it' (Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIII, v. 9, § 172).

<sup>2</sup> This last word in Hebrew is slightly changed; the interpretation which I give is confirmed by the corresponding formula which occurs a little further on (l. 4): 'relative to the Law and to possessions and to right'.

(*Wars*, II, viii. § 122): 'in matters of the rules' means that the members declare that they submit themselves to the Code and to the tribunals of the sect. This last point is again defined a little lower (l. 6): membership of the Community is all inclusive 'even in a matter of legal action and judgement'. Let us recall that the Essenes had their own tribunals: 'they dispense justice', says Josephus, 'with great strictness and impartiality; to give judgement they gather together to the number of at least one hundred, and the sentence given is immutable' (*Wars*, II, viii. 9, § 145).

The same passage of the *Rule* teaches us that this Community of the New Covenant was also the Community of the 'sons of Zadok'. What does this name mean? Zadok, in Jewish history, was the chief of the priests of Jerusalem at the time of David and consequently the ancestor of the Jewish priestly line. If the sect uses his name, it is because it claims to represent authentically the descent from this Zadok. In fact, the Community in the first place is composed of priests, 'the priests who keep the Covenant', 'who have pledged themselves to (practise) the same holiness as Aaron'—priests, and surely also Levites.

But it receives also laity; those are the ones mentioned in our passage after the priests, by means of this formula: 'the members of the Community who have bound themselves to the Covenant following the example of these (the priests)'<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the new society, the new Israel founded by the Master of Justice, like the ancient Jewish society, includes two essential elements: the clergy and the laity—the laity being very probably much the more numerous.

\* \* \*

After this statement of the duties of the professed, the *Rule* passes on to the actual ceremony of the taking of the oath (col. V, ll. 7—10):

'Whoever enters into the Party of the Community, let him enter into the Covenant of God in the presence of all those who have bound themselves to it; and let him vow on his soul, by a binding

<sup>1</sup> Compare this with the following which occurs a little further on (l. 9).  
' . . . to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the Covenant . . . , and to the body of the members of their Covenant, of those who have pledged themselves in common . . . '

oath<sup>1</sup>, to become converted to the Law of Moses in all that (God) has commanded, (to become converted) with all his heart and with all his soul in all that has been revealed (as issuing) from it to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the Covenant and seek His will, and to the body of the members of their Covenant, of those who have bound themselves in common to (practise) His truth and to walk in His Will. And he who will have vowed on his soul by (the oath of) the Covenant, to separate himself from all the perverse ones, from those who walk . . .'

This oath demanded from 'whosoever enters into the Party of the Community' is of primary importance; indeed, more than any other indication, it indubitably points towards the identification of the sect of the New Covenant with the sect of the Essenes: an essentially important problem raised by the discoveries of 'Ain-Feshka, which we shall directly consider below (chapter VIII).

The fragment of the *Rule* which we have quoted stops in the middle of a sentence. . . . How we should like to know what follows! Fortunately, while waiting for the complete publication of the scroll of the *Rule*, we can gather from other sources much very important information of the highest order about the organisation and the doctrines of the 'New Covenant': in a document which was revealed to the world of scholarship 40 years ago, but which has remained full of obscurities for us—the *Damascus Document*. The following chapter we shall devote to this important document.

<sup>1</sup> The 'binding oath' is, in the language of the Old Testament, one that cannot be violated under any circumstances (cf. *Numbers xxx. 3* (E.V.2)).

## CHAPTER V

### THE 'NEW COVENANT IN THE LAND OF DAMASCUS'

The *Damascus Document* was discovered in 1896, amongst a quantity of other ancient manuscripts, in the genizah of a Karaite synagogue in Old Cairo; it was published in 1910 by S. Schechter under the title: 'Fragments of a Zadokite Work'. Written in Hebrew, it figures in two distinctly different manuscripts<sup>1</sup>, the one of the tenth century, the other of about the twelfth century.

The first manuscript (*Dam. A*) first presents a series of Admonitions, occupying four leaves (pages I—VIII); the end of this section is missing. There follow four other leaves (pages IX—XVI) representing an extensive fragment of an ancient collection of laws, a veritable Code; the beginning and the end are unfortunately lost, and furthermore a number of passages are more or less mutilated.

The second manuscript (*Dam. B*) presents on a single leaf (pages XIX—XX) a fragment closely related to the first section of the first document, the Admonitions: beginning *ex abrupto* in the middle of a sentence, this fragment first follows *Dam. A*, from p. VII, l. 5 to the end of p. VIII—but with very many variants—then it continues alone until the end, apparently, of the Admonitions<sup>1</sup>.

This work itself declares that it comes from a sect called the sect of the 'sons of Zadok' and again the 'New Covenant in the land of Damascus'. From 1910 its publication aroused the greatest interest amongst scholars and inspired a large number of studies. On the date of the composition of the Admonitions and the Code, as on the nature and origin of the sect, the most diverse and contradictory opinions were expressed, which cannot be set out here<sup>2</sup>. Some, especially at the beginning, suggested a date in the seventh or eighth century, or even the tenth century A.D. But most critics soon came

<sup>1</sup> The best edition of the *Damascus Document* is that of L. Rost, *Die Damaskusschrift* (Berlin, 1933). English translation in Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the O.T.*, II, pp. 799—834; French translation in *Revue des Études juives*, 1911, pp. 161—205 (Israël Lévi), and in *Revue biblique*, 1912, pp. 213—240 (M. J. Lagrange).—On the various documents found in the Cairo Genizah, see P. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (London, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> A summary with brief bibliography can be found in A. Lods, *Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive* (Paris, 1950), pp. 915—922.

to the conclusion that the work was much older, prior to A.D. 70, the date of the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem; indeed the text contains various allusions to the Sanctuary, the altar and sacrifices. Then again, as the author of the Admonitions refers particularly to the book of *Jubilees*—a Jewish work of the Hasmonaean period—the dominant view placed the composition of the *Damascus Document* 'at the earliest between 128 B.C. and A.D. 70, more probably between 63 B.C. and A.D. 70'<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, several critics, and these not the least important (E. Meyer, H. Gressmann) maintained an earlier date, prior even to the Maccabaeae period, towards 200 B.C.

As to the source of its origin, some connected 'the sons of Zadok' more or less with the Sadducees, others with the Pharisees, some cautiously with the Essenes. Some made of them a Samaritan sect or even a Judaeo-Christian sect.

\* \* \*

So many important differences show what exceptional difficulties of interpretation the *Damascus Document* presented; and there seemed no hope of ever coming to any really certain conclusion. But now the situation has changed. The relationship between the Cairo document and the Dead Sea documents is strikingly evident—and moreover already generally admitted. Even the terms 'sons of Zadok' and 'New Covenant', both of which serve to indicate the sect, suggest a preliminary point of contact, which is fully confirmed by the language, style and ideas. From the fact that henceforth, thanks to the *Habakkuk Commentary* and the *Rule*, one can fix certain essential points about the history, doctrines and organization of the sect, the Cairo document can at last be understood, and in its turn it throws new and valuable light on the Dead Sea documents.

In the first place, we may consider the date of the *Damascus Document*. As in the case of the *Habakkuk Commentary* the *terminus a quo* is determined by the allusions in the text to the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63. In actual fact these allusions would have remained almost unintelligible without the *Commentary*: but now they become sufficiently clear. Let this be judged by the following passage (*Dam. A. I. 13—II. 1*):

'It is those who have wandered from the pathway;  
it is the time of which it is written:

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 917.

*As an intractable heifer  
so was Israel intractable—*

when the Man of Mockery<sup>1</sup> was in office  
who prophesied for Israel (pouring out) the waters of untruth  
and led them astray in a pathless desert,  
bringing low the former heights  
and straying from the paths of justice,  
and "moving the frontier fixed by the ancestors in their herit-  
age"<sup>2</sup>

so as to bring on them the curses of His Covenant,  
so that He should deliver them to the Sword, the Avenger of the  
Covenant.

Because they had sought after flatteries  
and chosen deceit;  
and because they had watched for breaches<sup>3</sup>  
and chosen the beauty of the neck<sup>4</sup>;  
and because they had declared righteous the Wicked  
and wicked the Righteous;  
and because they had transgressed the Covenant  
and violated the Statute;  
and because they had attacked the life of the Just  
at the very time when they had themselves taken a revulsion  
to all those who walk in perfection,  
and because they had pursued them with the sword  
and because they had rejoiced in the action of the people<sup>5</sup>:  
then the Anger of God burned up against their congregation,  
devastating the whole multitude of them . . .'

Such was the crime: rejection of the Law and the Covenant, the putting to death of the Righteous—i.e., doubtless, of the Master of Justice—the persecution of those faithful to him. Such, too, was

<sup>1</sup> It is the 'Man of Untruth' of the *Habakkuk Commentary*, that is to say Aristobulus II.

<sup>2</sup> A quotation from *Deut.* xix. 14: doubtless it concerns the 'frontier of the Law' in an allegorical sense (cf. *Dam. B.* XX. 25); in this tirade the author denounces the scandalous habits of Aristobulus II and his supporters the Sadducees.

<sup>3</sup> Like someone who is trying to escape; here it is a matter of escaping from the prescriptions of the Law.

<sup>4</sup> An expression which seems to be directed against the affected and effeminate elegance of the young partisans of Aristobulus II; cf. *Josephus, Antiq.*, XIV, iii. 2, § 45.

<sup>5</sup> Allusion to the persecution which Aristobulus II levelled against the Master of Justice and his followers, and to be more precise, even to the action brought against them and the repressive measures involving bloodshed which were taken against the sect.

the punishment: the Anger of God let loose, the avenging Sword, devastation. It is elsewhere clearly stated that the instrument of the divine Wrath was 'the chief of the kings of Yavan' (*Dam. A. VIII. 9—12 = B. XIX. 21—24*):

' . . . those of whom God has said:  
*The venom of dragons is their wine;*  
*and the cruel poison of asps.*  
 The *dragons* are the kings of the peoples,  
 and *their wine* is their ways;  
 and the *poison of asps* is the chief<sup>1</sup> of the kings of Yavan,  
 who has come to execute vengeance upon them.'

The 'chief of the kings of Yavan'—that is to say the chief of the kings of Greece and of the Hellenized kings—can only be the Roman. Indeed, we may refer to the famous eulogy of the Romans which is found in *1 Macc. viii. 1—16*: 'they have established their domination, it is said, over the kings, over the kings far and near'; and their victories over the kings are set out in detail: over 'Philip, and Perseus, king of the Kitians' (i.e. the Macedonians), over 'Antiochus the Great, king of Asia', over 'those of Greece', etc. Here, to be more exact, the 'chief of the kings of Yavan' who executed divine vengeance upon the guilty Jews, is the Roman Pompey, conqueror of Jerusalem in 63.

Furthermore, the *Damascus Document* contains various allusions to the government of Hyrcanus II which in my opinion are quite clear. The *Habakkuk Commentary*, it may be recalled, denounced the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem as a most futile enterprise and the 'glory' of this High Priest as an imposture; the *Damascus Document* on its part says (*A. IV. 12—13*):

'The wall has been rebuilt,  
 the boundary has been moved back;  
 but, in all these years,  
 Belial will be let loose in Israel . . .'

The reconstruction of Jerusalem and the enlarging of the frontiers of the Jewish state are features which characterize perfectly the period of Hyrcanus II; they compel us also to date the composition of the *Damascus Document* at least a little after 47, the date when Caesar authorized the Jews to rebuild their capital. On the other hand, as various signs equally reveal that the author is writing under

<sup>1</sup> In Hebrew, *rôsh* 'head, chief'; a pun on *rôsh* 'poison'.

the actual government of Hyrcanus II, the *terminus ad quem* is fixed in the year 40, the date on which this High Priest was deposed and imprisoned by the Parthians. Thus the composition of the *Damascus Document* should very probably be placed about 45—40 B.C.—more or less the same as the *Habakkuk Commentary*.

On several occasions our text heaps sarcasm on 'the builders of the wall' (A. IX. 19), 'the builders of the wall and the plasterers who daub it with mortar' (A. VIII. 12 = B. XIX. 24—25). In these formulae an allusion to the Pharisees is generally seen: commentators on the Law, who raise a wall around it to protect it; this subtle and, to tell the truth, very forced interpretation ought in my opinion to be rejected. The formulae are to be taken in their literal sense. They are quite simply directed against the work of reconstruction under Hyrcanus II.

It is the High Priest himself—and, as such, likewise a prophet—who is mockingly called the *šaw*<sup>1</sup>: 'The builders of the wall, who walked after the *šaw*—the *šaw* is the prophet of whom it is said: *They pour forth prophecies— . . .*' (A. IV. 19—20); and again (A. VIII. 12—13):

'But all this they have not understood,  
the builders of the wall and the plasterers who daub it with  
mortar.

For it is a weigher of wind  
and a Prophet of Untruth who has prophesied for them . . .<sup>2</sup>,

'Prophet of Untruth': it is precisely thus that the *Habakkuk Commentary* calls Hyrcanus II (see *supra* p. 38). He is also a 'weigher of wind': an expression of mockery which, if I am not mistaken, is directed against the irresolute character of Hyrcanus<sup>3</sup> and the waverings of his policy; how many times must this weak sovereign have followed 'the wind' during this period which was so disturbed with the Roman civil war that even the best informed themselves did not know which leader to follow!

\* \* \*

So far as the history of the sect in its beginnings is concerned, the *Damascus Document* brings us some extremely valuable informa-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Is.* xxviii. 10, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Parallel passage in B. XIX. 25—26: 'For it is a walker (who follows) the wind and a weigher of storms and a prophet of humanity for the untruth.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIII, xvi. § 408; XIV, iii. 2, § 44.

tion. Here is a first passage (A. III. 18—IV. 4):

'... God in His wonderful Mysteries,  
 pardoned their iniquity  
 and overlooked their rebellion;  
 and He built for them a sure House in Israel,  
 the like of which has never existed from times past until the  
 present.

Those who bind themselves to this shall live eternally  
 and all the glory that a man can have shall be theirs,  
 as God has established it for them through the prophet Ezekiel:

*The priests and the Levites and the sons of Zadok  
 who have ensured the keeping of <My> Sanctuary  
 while the sons of Israel wandered far from <Me>,  
 <It is they who> shall offer Me the fat and the blood.*

The priests are the converted of Israel,  
 those who have come out of the land of Judah;  
 and [the Levites are those who] have joined themselves to them;  
 and the sons of Zadok are the elect of Israel,  
 called by the Name, who will continue to the end of the days...'

The 'sure house' is evidently the sect of the New Covenant;  
 and the 'sons of Zadok' are the members of this sect' The text tells  
 us they must have 'come out from the land of Judah'. Where then  
 did they take refuge? At Damascus, as the following passage makes  
 clear (A. VI. 2—VII. 11):

'... Then God remembered the Covenant of the First Ones<sup>1</sup>,  
 and He raised from Aaron intelligent men  
 and wise men from Israel,  
 and He made them listen to (His voice),  
 and they sank the well:  
*a well which was sunk by princes,  
 which was hollowed out by the nobles of the people, guided by the  
 Lawgiver.*

The well is the Law;  
 and those who made it are the converted of Israel,  
 who came out from the land of Judah

<sup>1</sup> The 'First Ones' in the language of the *Damascus Document* (see in particular A. IV. 6—8; VIII. 16—18; B. IX. 29—31), are the disciples of the Master who belonged to the sect during his lifetime; the ministry of the Master lasted for quite a long time, apparently, from about 100 B.C., I believe, until 65—63 B.C.; the faithful to whom the *Damascus Document* is addressed—about 45—40—are of another generation, the 'last generation' according to the author's perspective.

and went into exile in the land of Damascus,  
 God having named them all princes,  
 because they have sought Him  
 and because their <praise> <was not found> in the mouth of a  
 single one!

And the Lawgiver is the student of the Law  
 of whom Isaiah said: *He makes an instrument for his work.*  
 And the nobles of the people are those who have come to hollow  
 out the well

with the help of directions fixed by the Lawgiver,  
 so that one may walk therein during all the time of wickedness,  
 —while outside them no progress will be made—  
 until the advent of the Founder of Justice at the end of the days.'

It was when the Church of the New Covenant, persecuted in  
 Judaea, had transferred its seat to Damascus that it took the title  
 of 'New Covenant in the Land of Damascus' (A. VIII. 21 = B. XIX.  
 33—34; cf. B. XX. 12). The exodus took place before Jerusalem  
 was besieged and taken; indeed at the death of the Master those of  
 his disciples who remained faithful to him left Judaea and thus  
 escaped the horrors of the war (A. VII. 21—VIII. 1; cf. B. XIX. 11):

'These were saved at the time of the first Visitation,  
 while the apostate were delivered to the sword . . .'

The 'first Visitation'—by that we should understand the first divine  
 punishment—was precisely the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans  
 in 63: this is also the teaching of the *Habakkuk Commentary* (see  
*supra* p. 44). Here is another important passage, concerning this  
 exodus to Damascus (A. VII. 12—21):

'When the two Houses of Israel separated,  
 Ephraim separated from Judah,  
 and all the apostate were delivered to the sword,  
 while those who held firm escaped to the country of the North.  
 When it is said: "*I shall bear away the hut of your king  
 and the Kiyyun of your images <in> the tents of Damascus,*  
 the *hut of the king* denotes the books of the Law  
 according as it is said: *I shall raise up the hut of David which  
 has fallen;*  
 the *king* is the president of the Assembly<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> I translate the Hebrew HĶHL (= *hakḵōhēl*) in this way; the 'president  
 of the Assembly' (cf. *Ḳōheleth* 'Ecclesiastes'), is the one who presides at meet-  
 ings where the Law is studied: the expression here seems to indicate the  
 leader of the sect.

As for the *Kiyyun* of the images, they are the books of the Prophets,

whose words Israel has scorned<sup>1</sup>.

And the *star* is the student of the Law who came to Damascus, as it is written:

*A star has come forth from Jacob,  
and a sceptre has arisen from Israel.*

The *sceptre* is the Prince of all the congregation;

and when he comes, he shall overthrow all the sons of Seth . . .'

What must be stressed here is the mention of the person symbolically indicated by the name of 'star', this 'student of the Law who has come to Damascus': in my opinion, it is a reference to the disciple of the Master of Justice who after the death of the latter gathered together his faithful followers and reconstituted the sect at Damascus; a role fairly similar to that of Peter, the Christian Apostle, after the death of Jesus. The Master of Justice in our passage is distinguished from this person: as for him, he is the 'sceptre', the 'Prince of all the congregation', whose glorious advent is awaited<sup>2</sup>.

\* \* \*

Thus the sect was born in Judaea, and it was *circa* 65—63 that it transferred its headquarters to Damascus; it was still there *circa* 45—40 B.C., when the *Damascus Document* was written. But nothing requires us to suppose that it remained permanently settled there. When political circumstances changed in Judaea—probably about the beginning of the reign of Herod the Great (37 B.C.)—the adherents of the New Covenant were able to return in a body to the country and reorganize themselves there, leaving in Damascus only a subsidiary and not very numerous company.

Be that as it may, the Code of which we have a large fragment given to us in the *Damascus Document* (A. IX—XVI) does not allude at all to people living outside Palestine; on the contrary, it legislates expressly for the 'towns of Israel' (A. XII. 19), it speaks of the offerings to be brought to the altar (A. XI. 19), and of the City of the Sanctuary (A. XII. 1—2), that is to say Jerusalem. All these provisions and many others can quite well come from the Master

<sup>1</sup> On the importance the sect attached to the writings of the Prophets, see *supra* p. 46, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> In *Numbers* xxiv. 17, a verse here quoted by the *Damascus Document*, the 'star' and the 'sceptre' certainly indicate one and the same person; our author here subtly distinguishes them; subtlety and violence towards the text are the very law of all allegorical exegesis!

of Justice himself: a veritable Pythagorean sage, he had to concern himself not only with healing souls through Knowledge, but also to reform the city in accordance with wisdom and justice. It is for the new society, for the new Israel that he wished to found, that he issued a new Code. After his time this Code was completed according to the needs which became apparent. The *Damascus Document* indicates 'first' and 'last' rules (B. XX. 8—9; cf. 31). The 'first', I believe, are those which the Master himself issued; the 'last' are those which were added later.

The new Israelite society, just like the other, includes four categories of people (*Dam. A. XIV. 3—5*): 'Another rule for the administration of all the camps: Let them all be counted by name: first the priests, then the Levites, thirdly the children of Israel and fourthly the proselytes. Let them be enrolled by name one after the other: first the priests, then the Levites, thirdly the children of Israel, fourthly the proselytes. This is the order in which they shall sit and in which they shall ask their questions in every case.'

It has been noted that here it is a question of 'camps'. This word recurs as frequently in the *Damascus Document* as 'community' does in the book of the *Rule*. Without doubt it concerns 'encampments' set up outside the towns in desert regions; there they lived if not actually in tents at least in very simple dwellings. They thus avoided the corruption of the towns and once again realized the ideal of the nomad life handed down in the oldest of Israel's traditions.

These 'camps' were organized in a quasi-military fashion (*Dam. A. XII. 22—XIII. 4*): 'Here again is a rule for the administration of the camps . . . (Each camp shall include) at least ten persons. (They shall be divided) into thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens. Moreover, when there are ten see that they do not lack someone who is a priest instructed in the book of *Hagu*: it is according to his instructions that they shall be all governed. If he is not expert in all these matters, but someone amongst the Levites is expert in them, Destiny will then have decided that all the members of the camp have to conduct themselves after the instructions of the latter . . .' As for the priest placed at the head of the camp, in another article it is laid down that he must be 'aged between 30 and 60, instructed in the book (of *Hagu*) concerning all the ordinances of the Law, so as to impose their obligations upon them according to their Code' (*Dam. A. XIV. 7—8*).

These passages are very instructive. First they indicate that the sect was composed of a numerous following: if the basic unit, the 'cell', is ten members, the members are also counted by 'thousands'. Moreover the division into thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens seems to imitate or be derived from strictly military rules: the sect is an army, it is the army of God, the army of the Good, the army of Salvation: its members are soldiers—militiamen and also militant men. Finally, the role devolving upon the priests as heads of each camp clearly stresses the dominant position which the clergy maintained in the new society. It is clearly specified that in default of a priest sufficiently instructed, a Levite will be chosen: an interesting detail, for it apparently reveals that the priests who adhered to the sect were not then very numerous; the laity constituted most of the members.

One of the most important innovations that the organization of the sect shows is the presence in each camp of a person called the 'inspector' (*mebhakkër*), side by side with the priests and above them: it is he who has supreme control over all the administration. He decides on the admission of new members, supervises the conduct of all, levies the contributions and makes the necessary expenditure. He also has a spiritual role (*Dam. A. XII. 7—10*): 'He will instruct the multitude concerning the works of God and will make them to understand His wonders and mighty acts, and he will relate before them the great deeds of past times . . . He will love them as a father his children, . . . as a shepherd his flock . . .'

On the other hand it appears that in addition to the inspectors of each camp an 'inspector of all the camps' is to be recognized—the bishop of bishops as it were (*Dam. A. XIV. 9—10*): 'As for the inspector established over all the camps, he shall be between 30 and 50 years old, competent in the organization of men and in all sorts of languages according to their (various) families<sup>1</sup>.'

Naturally the sect of the New Covenant, since it had its own Code, likewise had its own tribunals; I have already spoken about them in connection with the *Rule*. The *Damascus Document* lays down the following regulations for the judges of these tribunals (*A. X. 4—10*): '(They shall be) up to ten persons chosen from the congrega-

<sup>1</sup> A feature which seems to indicate that the recruitment of the sect was very varied; some must have spoken Hebrew, others the Aramaic of Palestine or Syria, others Eastern Aramaic, and finally others Greek.

tion, according to the circumstances: four belonging to the tribe of Levi and Aaron and six to Israel, instructed in the book of *Hagu* and the statutes of the Covenant, from the age of 25 to 60. Let them not remain in office from the age of 60 and upwards as judges of the congregation; for, because of the infidelity of men their days have been reduced, and in His anger against the inhabitants of the earth God has ordained that their intelligence shall wane before they have ended their days'. Here are some very lofty reflections to justify this retirement of the judges at 60! For the 'inspector of all the camps' we have seen it is at 50 that he must retire: so heavy are his duties and responsibilities! No officers for life! At a relatively early age one has to hand over his office to others.

Other articles of the Code relate to witnesses and also penalties: imprisonment, execution, excommunication. Let us recall with regard to this last penalty what Josephus said of the Essenes (*Wars*, II, viii. 8, §§ 143 f.): 'Should one of them be found committing a serious offence, he is excluded from the community. Often the expelled person finds a miserable death; for, bound by his oaths and his customs, he cannot touch the food of the profane: reduced to feeding himself on herbs, he dies, his body exhausted with hunger. Thus, through pity they have often received these miserable people back just when they were about to utter their last sigh, considering this torture right to death's door sufficient for their sins.'

\* \* \*

Such a precise and strict legislative and judiciary system implies a strong, numerous and very active society. Certainly this powerful institution was founded by a personality of the first order. On the career of the founder—the Master of Justice—the *Damascus Document* only adds little to what we have learned from the *Habakkuk Commentary*; in particular, no details are given about his tragic end. But on the titles and the attributes of the Master it brings us some very important additional information. Here and there for instance this Master is called 'Unique', 'Unique Master', 'Unique Founder', 'Founder of Justice', 'Lawgiver', especially 'Anointed One', 'the Anointed One who has descended from Aaron and Israel'.

This title of 'Anointed One'—that is to say 'Messiah' or 'Christ'—deserves special attention. The *Habakkuk Commentary* only said

the 'Elect of God', a title not without messianic significance, indeed, as it appears in Enoch; but in the *Damascus Document* the messianic quality of the Master is perfectly explicit. If it is said that this Anointed One is 'descended from Aaron', it is because the Master—a priest, as we have seen—belonged at least through his father to the priestly tribe, that of Levi; if 'and of Israel' is added, perhaps this is to say that his mother was of another tribe, for example that of Judah. But the author is not precise, for in his thought and in his terminology, it is really Israel and not Judah which is the people of the Covenant: 'When the time is fulfilled, they shall no longer unite themselves with the House of Judah, but each shall remain at his <post>' (*Dam. A. IV. 12*).

It is necessary to 'remain at one's post': the expression is borrowed from *Hab. i. 13*. Yes, it is necessary to keep watch, for the Master must return 'at the end of the days': this belief—which we remember is also that of the author of the *Habakkuk Commentary*—is clearly and frequently stated in the *Damascus Document*. The day of the last Judgement is at hand; life is lived in this expectation which is at once terrible and consoling: 'These (the faithful ones) will be saved at the time of the Visitation, while the others will be delivered to the sword when the Anointed One (descended) from Aaron and Israel shall come, as it was at the time of the first Visitation<sup>1</sup>; this is what was said through Ezekiel: *The sign shall be traced on the brow of those who sigh and grieve . . .*' (*Dam. B. XIX. 10—12*; cf. *A. VII. 21—VIII. 1*). The Master will be the sovereign judge: 'When he comes he will overthrow all the sons of Seth' (*Dam. A. VII. 20—21*). Woe unto those who lose heart, who abandon the New Covenant (*Dam. B. XIX. 33—XX. 1*):

'Thus all the individuals who entered into the New Covenant  
in the land of Damascus,  
but who changed their minds and turned traitor  
and wandered from the well of living waters,  
will no longer be counted in the Council of the people  
nor inscribed in its register,  
from the day when the Unique Master was taken away  
until the advent of the Anointed One descended from Aaron  
and Israel.'

At what date, at what precise moment will this event take place ?

<sup>1</sup> The capture of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63.



Fig. 9.—Scroll of the *Psalms of Thanksgiving*: Psalm C (after Sukenik, *Megillôth Genûzôth*, II, plate VIII)

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No one knows; but it is certain that the present generation will not pass away before it arrives. Indeed, in my opinion it is in this way that the following passage must be understood (*Dam. B. XX. 13—15*): 'Now since the day when the Unique Founder was taken away until the disappearance of all the militant who walked with the Man of Untruth (there will be) about 40 years.' As we have seen, it was under Aristobulus II *circa* 65—63 that 'the Unique Founder was taken away'; the 'Man of Untruth' is precisely Aristobulus II, as in the *Habakkuk Commentary*. As for the 'militant who walked with him'—this expression apparently designated the members of the sect who during the persecution turned apostate and joined themselves to him—their total 'disappearance' is foreseen in all probability on the day of the last Judgement. Thus, we are told equivalently, the interval of time between the death of the Master and the last Judgement will be 'about 40 years': a round figure which according to the Hebrew way of speaking simply means the period of a generation. If the 40 years begins to run from *circa* 65—63, and if the *Damascus Document* was written *circa* 45—40, there was not much more time to wait: yes, the present generation is certainly the last generation.

\* \* \*

The Master of Justice has revealed the Mysteries of God: 'God', it is said, 'through His Anointed One, has made us to know His holy Spirit' (*Dam. A. II. 12*). In this sentence is outlined something like a trinitarian theology: God, the Anointed One of God, the Spirit of God, such are the three great divine entities in the sect of the New Covenant. On God himself this is what the sect teaches (*Dam. A. II. 1—9*):

'Now then, hearken unto me, all ye who have entered into the Covenant,  
and I shall reveal unto your ears the ways of the wicked.  
God loves knowledge<sup>1</sup>:  
Wisdom and Counsel He has set up before Him;  
Prudence and Knowledge are His ministers.  
Long-suffering is beside Him  
and also abundance of Pardons,  
to absolve those who repent of their Rebellion.  
But Power and Might

<sup>1</sup> Note this reference to Knowledge—Gnosis—which is quite characteristic: cf. *supra* p. 42.

and intense Anger, with flames of fire, are within Him  
 —all the Angels of destruction  
 (sent) against those who stray from the way  
 and who abhor the Statute,  
 with none surviving or escaping.  
 For God did not elect them before (the creation) of the world,  
 and before this was founded He knew their works;  
 and He abhorred the generations (descended) from the blood,  
 and He hid His face from the land,  
 in such a way that they came to an end . . .'

The Master of Justice further revealed the divine precepts without whose observation no one could be saved; in this connection he finished the work of Moses himself with whom he found himself specifically associated in the following sentence (*Dam. A. V. 21—VI. 1*): '. . . for they had preached revolt against the commandments of God (revealed) by Moses and also by His holy Anointed One.' To all these regulations formulated by Moses and also by the Master, the new Moses, the members of the Covenant must remain strictly faithful (*Dam. A. VI. 14—VII. 6*):

'Yea, they will keep (the Covenant),  
 in acting according to the tenor of the Law in the time of  
 iniquity  
 and in separating themselves from the sons of perdition;  
 and in preserving themselves from the riches of iniquity . . . :  
 and in distinguishing between the impure and the pure,  
 and in making known (the differences) between the sacred and  
 the profane,  
 and in observing the day of the Sabbath wholly  
 and the festivals and the Day of Fasting  
 <according to> the Comman<dments> of those who entered into  
 the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus;  
 in setting quite apart the holy things;  
 each loving his brother as himself,  
 and holding by the hand the poor and the needy and the  
 stranger,  
 and seeking each the good of his brother;  
 preserving himself from prostitutes according to the Law  
 and avoiding all transgression each against the flesh of his flesh  
 reproving each his brother according to the commandment  
 and bearing no malice one towards another;  
 and separating themselves from all impurities according to

the Law (which is) theirs,  
 and each not staining his holy spirit  
 according to the distinctions which God has fixed for them.  
 All those who thanks to this (conduct) walk in the perfection  
 of holiness,  
 in obedience to all the statutes of the foundation of the Covenant  
 of God,  
 possess assurances as though they shall live a thousand genera-  
 tions.'

Alas! all will not be faithful until the end; already several  
 allowed themselves to be led 'into the ways of wickedness'—  
 the 'wicked' are in particular the Sadducees. That is what we learn  
 in this passage (*Dam. B. XIX. 16—21*):

'For (certain) entered into the Covenant of conversion,  
 but they did not leave the way of traitors,  
 and they wallowed in the ways of lewdness  
 and in the riches of iniquity;  
 and they avenged themselves and bore malice each against his  
 brother  
 and they each one hated his neighbour  
 and each satisfied his virility with the flesh of his flesh,  
 and they had shameful traffic;  
 and they increased in riches and loot,  
 and they did each as he pleased;  
 and they chose each the obstinacy of his heart  
 and they did not keep themselves from the multitude and its  
 sins;  
 and they delivered themselves up to debauchery with a high  
 hand,  
 walking in the ways of wickedness . . .'

What a contrast on the Day of Judgement between these renegades  
 and those who will have persevered! Here is the diptych—it stands  
 at the very end of the Admonitions (*Dam. B. XX. 25—34*):

'And all those who will have transgressed the frontier of the Law,  
 amongst those who have entered into the Covenant  
 when the Glory of God will appear to Israel,  
 will be cut off from the midst of the camp,  
 and with them all those of Judah who will have committed sin  
 in the days of the testing to which it was subjected.  
 But all those who will have remained true to these command-  
 ments,

coming and going in accordance with the Law,  
 and who will have heard the voice of the Master,  
 and who will have confessed before God:  
 "As for us, we have sinned, we and our fathers,  
 walking contrary to the decrees of the Covenant,  
 (but Justice) and Truth were Thy judgements towards us";  
 and who will not have lifted up their hand against His holy  
 decrees  
 and His just commands  
 and His true witnesses;  
 and who will allow themselves to be instructed in the first orders  
 to which the men of the Unique One submitted themselves;  
 and who will have hearkened to the voice of the Master of Justice  
 and will not have answered the decrees of justice by listening  
 to them:  
 they will rejoice and be joyful,  
 and their heart will be in <gladness>,  
 and they will increase above all the children of the earth,  
 and God will pardon them;  
 and they will see His Salvation,  
 because they will take refuge in His holy Name!'

What faith, what fervour in this supreme exhortation! The same  
 faith, the same fervour are found in another work which the 'Ain-  
 Feshka hiding place has given us: the *Psalms of Thanksgiving* of the  
 New Covenant, of which we must next speak.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE *Psalms of Thanksgiving* OF THE 'NEW COVENANT'

The collection of the *Psalms of Thanksgiving* has come to us in four leaves of leather, more or less damaged, all four acquired by the Hebrew University. Three of them could be unrolled without too much difficulty but the fourth needed much care and its contents were not revealed until later. The writing, which is quite good, is not in the same hand throughout: two scribes, apparently, have worked at the manuscript. In its entirety the scroll must be more than 2 metres long. The height of the leaves exceeds 30 cm., each leaf containing four columns of about 35 lines (fig. 9).

Professor Sukenik has so far made known only five of the psalms of this collection, which seems to include about twenty in all. They are hymns of thanksgiving—'eucharists'. Of course, they are composed in verse, following the law of parallelism, but with a rather loose rhythm. The style closely imitates that of the *Psalms* and other poetic writings of the Old Testament. Biblical reminiscences abound: the psalmist's spirit has been nourished and saturated with reading the sacred books, and the quotations shine out at every moment like so many precious stones drawn lavishly from the treasure of inspired Scriptures. In this respect the songs of our collection are exactly comparable with the ancient Christian hymns which are to be found inserted in the *Gospel according to Luke*: the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, the *Nunc Dimittis*; they also have the same flavour, the flavour of the pure essence of the Bible and a profoundly mystical accent.

But if these songs are as if woven from quotations from the Old Testament, it would be a serious mistake to consider that they express only its religious ideas. For the members of the sect all biblical texts are to be interpreted allegorically; the *Habakkuk Commentary* has shown us this abundantly; and the same is true of the *Damascus Document*. Let us be very careful: if the spiritual songs of the New Covenant keep the expressions of the Old Covenant, the general sense and spirit are different. In actual fact, it is new wine which has been poured into old bottles.

The *Habakkuk Commentary*, the *Rule* and the *Damascus Document* have already shown us something of this new spirit and of these new doctrines. It is in the light of these new perspectives which have thus been opened to us that we must now read these *Psalms of Thanksgiving*. Here I give the translation of all those which have been published; the reader will be able to recognize the intense spirituality which animates them and doubtless also to appreciate their lyrical quality and their unquestionable literary value. There is no author's name; perhaps they are by several authors. It is possible that one psalm was composed by the Master of Justice himself. In Psalm D, for example, it would certainly seem that it is talking about him, his role of prophet and teacher, his tribulations and his glorious reinstatement, but the 'I' may be fictitious; or rather, if the psalm is the work of a follower, he may have used the 'I' by mystically identifying himself with the Master in these fervent meditations, when his spirit became wholly absorbed in the Master's in these ecstatic transports.

PSALM A<sup>1</sup>

I give Thee thanks, Adonai!  
 For Thou hast placed my soul in the bundle of life,  
 and Thou hast protected me from all the snares of the Pit<sup>2</sup>.  
 And the violent sought my soul,  
 when I trusted in Thy Covenant<sup>3</sup>.  
 But they are an assembly of worthlessness  
 and a congregation of Belial;  
 they do not know that it is from Thee that my existence comes  
 and that through Thy mercies Thou wilt save my soul.  
 For from Thee proceed my steps,  
 and if they attack my soul, this also comes from Thee,  
 that Thou mayest be glorified when the wicked are judged  
 and Thou mayest be strengthened in me in the presence of the sons  
 of men.  
 For it is by Thy mercy that I have my being,

<sup>1</sup> Sukenik, *Megillóth Genázóth*, II, pl. VII (= I, pl. XII).

<sup>2</sup> The infernal Pit, i.e. Hell; Psalm C also says *Sheol* (that is the kingdom of the dead in ancient Israel), and *Abaddon* (literally 'Perdition').

<sup>3</sup> Cf. below: 'My soul has laid hold on Thy Covenant'. Note the frequent reference to the idea of the Covenant in all these psalms. This reference is perfectly natural on the part of the disciples of the 'Covenant', or the 'New Covenant'.

and I said: 'The valiant pitched their camp against me,  
 they surrounded <me> (armed) with all their weapons of war,  
 and they let fly arrows for whose wounds there is no healing  
 and the flashing of the lances was like a fire which devours the forest,  
 and like the tumult of mighty waters was the roaring of their voices:  
 an overwhelming hurricane, bringing destruction for many.  
 In their brooding they will hatch the asp and worthlessness!  
 While their waves rose up,  
 and, as for me, while my heart melted like water  
 my soul laid hold on Thy Covenant!  
 The net which they have spread for me entangles their feet;  
 into the snares which they have hidden for my soul, they have them-  
 selves fallen,  
 while my foot remains standing on solid ground!  
 (In) the assemblies, I will bless Thy Name!

PSALM B<sup>1</sup>

I give Thee thanks, Adonai!  
 For Thine eye wat[ches] over my soul,  
 and Thou hast delivered me from the envy of the interpreters of lies  
 and from the congregation of those who seek flattery<sup>2</sup>.  
 Thou hast redeemed the soul of the poor<sup>3</sup>,  
 him whom they intended to cause to disappear,  
 so that he might shed his blood in Thy service:  
 so ignorant were they that it is from Thee that my steps proceed!  
 And they made of me an object of scorn and of shame,  
 in the mouth of all those who seek deceit.  
 Then Thou, O my God, didst succour the soul of the poor and needy  
 (to snatch it) from the hands of one stronger than he.  
 And Thou hast redeemed my soul from the hand of the mighty;  
 and in the midst of their outrages, Thou hast not left me without  
 courage,  
 so that I should desert Thy service for fear of the evil blows of the  
 wicked . . .

<sup>1</sup> Sukenik, *op. cit.*, II, pl. VII.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to the Sadducees and to the laxity of their behaviour.

<sup>3</sup> The 'poor' is the one faithful to the New Covenant; cf. *supra* p. 40,  
 n. 1.

PSALM C<sup>1</sup>

I give Thee thanks, Adonai!  
 For Thou hast redeemed my soul from the Pit  
 and from Sheol-Abaddon Thou hast brought me up again to the top  
 of the world<sup>2</sup>.  
 Then I wandered on an endless plain<sup>3</sup>;  
 and I knew that there was hope  
 for him whom Thou hast formed from the dust (and destined) for the  
 eternal Assembly<sup>4</sup>.  
 Yea, the perverse spirit hast Thou purified of a great sin  
 so that he might mount guard with the army of the Saints  
 and that he might enter into communion with the congregation of  
 the Sons of Heaven<sup>5</sup>.  
 Yea, Thou hast caused to fall on man an eternal Destiny<sup>6</sup>  
 amongst the intelligent Spirits,  
 that he should praise Thy Name in communion [with them]  
 and that he should tell of Thy Wonders before all Thy works<sup>7</sup>.  
 But I, creature of clay, what am I?  
 Formed with water, for whom have I worth? And what strength  
 can I have?  
 For I stood in the realm of malice  
 and amongst the wretched, through (the working) of Destiny.  
 Then Thou didst stir the soul of the poor in the midst of many  
 tribulations,

<sup>1</sup> Sukenik, *op. cit.*, II, pl. VIII (cf. I, pl. XIII).

<sup>2</sup> Towards the celestial heights, towards heaven, abode of the just. Cf. Josephus (*Wars*, II, viii, 11, § 155) on the beliefs of the Essenes: '... the soul, once detached from the ties of the flesh, ... takes its joyful flight towards the heights'.

<sup>3</sup> It refers to the plain of heaven—of the heaven where Pythagorean belief transported the Elysian Fields; cf. Josephus (*ibid.*): 'Like the Greeks, they (the Essenes) think that for virtuous souls alone an abode beyond the Ocean is reserved, etc.'

<sup>4</sup> It is the celestial Assembly, that of Angels and Spirits.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Saints' and the 'Sons of heaven' are the Angels, the Spirits and also the just souls; a widespread belief at that time assimilated them to the stars. Cf. my article entitled: *De l'immortalité astrale dans la 'Sagesse de Salomon'*, in *Revue des Etudes grecques*, LXII (1949), pp. 80—87.

<sup>6</sup> On the importance of the idea of Destiny in the sect of the New Covenant cf. *supra* p. 50, n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Man, mystically transported into the society of the 'intelligent Spirits'—that is to say the Angels or the stars—extols the glory of the divine creation, like the stars and amongst them.

and overwhelming misfortune accompanied my steps<sup>1</sup>:  
 while all the snares of the Pit opened up  
 and all the pitfalls of wickedness were spread out  
 and the net of the wretched (stretched out) on the surface of the  
 waters;

while all the arrows of the Pit flew forth, straight to their target,  
 and were shot without (leaving) any hope;  
 while the rope (of destruction) descended on the damned,  
 and the Destiny of anger on the abandoned,  
 and the overflowing of wrath on the outcasts,  
 and it was the time of Fury for all Belial.

And the bonds of Death surrounded so that there was no escape,  
 and the torrents of Belial overflowed all their banks.  
 The fire consumes all beings who draw from it,  
 causing to disappear from their rivers every tree, both green and  
 withered;

and it lashes with whirlwinds of flame  
 until there is no longer any creature who drinks there.

It consumes the foundations of asphalt  
 and the base of the earth;

the foundations of the mountains are the prey of burning,  
 and the roots of flint become torrents of pitch.

And it consumes even as far as the Great Abyss,  
 and the torrents of Belial break into Abaddon,  
 and the creatures of the Abyss endowed with reason<sup>2</sup> make their din  
 resound

amongst the tumult of the eddies of mud.

And the earth cries out because of the misfortune which has come  
 upon the land,

and all the beings endowed with reason utter cries,

and all those who are thereon are in panic,

and they stagger in a g[rea]t misfortune.

For God thunders in the tumult of His Strength,  
 and His holy Dwelling resounds with the truth of His Glory,  
 while the host of the heavens<sup>3</sup> makes its voice to be heard.

The foundations of the world totter and tremble,

<sup>1</sup> Before his conversion, before his entrance into the sect, the just lived in a veritable Hell. The psalmist first describes the assaults of Hell to which he has been subjected, then the final extermination by fire, an apocalyptic theme characteristic of Mazdaism and Stoicism and of the Jewish apocalypses.

<sup>2</sup> The demons?

<sup>3</sup> The stars.

and the host of the Valiant of the heavens<sup>1</sup> scourges the earth and does not withdraw before executing the decree of extermination, (extermination) final and unparalleled!

PSALM D<sup>2</sup>

I give Thee thanks, Adonai!  
 For Thou hast illumined my face by Thy Covenant,  
 and [ . . . ] I sought Thee:  
 then, like a veritable dawn, like Destiny<sup>3</sup> Thou didst appear unto me.  
 But as for them—Thy people—[the prophets of untruth through  
 their wor]ds flattered them,  
 and interpreters full of guile led them astray,  
 and they rushed to their destruction without understanding  
 for their works are those of pure folly.  
 For <I> was an object of scorn to them  
 and they did not esteem me when Thou wast strengthened in me!  
 For I was driven from my country, as the bird from its nest,  
 and all my companions and acquaintances were thrust far from me,  
 and they treated me as a useless thing.  
 And they, interpreters of lies and seers full of guile,  
 they formed against me plots of Belial,  
 bartering Thy law, which Thou hast engraved on my heart,  
 for the flatteries which they address to Thy people.  
 And they prevented the thirsty from drinking the draught of Know-  
 ledge<sup>4</sup>,  
 and when they were thirsty they made them drink sour wine:  
 so that God saw their error,  
 so that they were in madness at their feasts<sup>5</sup>,  
 so that they were taken in their nets.  
 For as for Thee, Thou art God:  
 Thou scornest every thought of Belial,  
 and Thy decision it is which shall remain  
 and the thought of Thy heart shall endure for ever.

<sup>1</sup> The Angels.

<sup>2</sup> Sukenik, *op. cit.*, II, pl. IX (cf. I, pl. X).

<sup>3</sup> In Hebrew: L'WRTWM; in common with Sukenik I recognize in this the word *Ur-tum*, singular of *urim-tummim*, an expression which indicated the sacred lot in ancient Israel. I believe that in the language of the sect *Ur-tum* means Destiny—the *heimarmenē* of the Greeks—as is often the case with the word *gōrāl* 'pebble, lot, chance'.

<sup>4</sup> Knowledge—Gnosis—is one of the essential concepts of the sect; cf. *supra* p. 42, p. 65 and n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Hab.* ii. 15; see *supra* p. 27.

But as for them, they are the wretched,  
and they form thoughts of Mōth-Belial<sup>1</sup>,  
and they seek Thee with a double heart,  
and they are not firm in Thy truth.

A root giving poisoned and bitter fruit like wormwood is in their thoughts,

and the obstinacy of their hearts accompanies their inquiries,  
and they have sought Thee amongst the idols;  
and him who caused them to stumble in sin have they set before them,

and they have come to seek Thee on the faith of the words of the prophets of untruth,  
who propagate error.

And as for them, it is with barbarous lips  
and in a strange tongue that they speak to Thy people,  
so that they cunningly bring their works to foolishness.

For they [have not hearkened] unto Thy [voice],  
and they have not given ear to Thy word;  
for they have said of the intelligent vision: 'It is not true!'  
and of the way dear to Thy heart: 'It is not that!'

For Thou, O God, Thou wilt answer them,  
judging them in Thy might [according to] their idols  
and according to the multitude of their rebellions,  
so that they might be taken in their thoughts,  
they who have wandered far from Thy Covenant;  
and when [judge]ment is made, Thou wilt suppress all men of deceit,  
and seers of error will no longer be found.

For there is no foolishness in all Thy works,  
nor cunning in the projects of Thy heart.

And they who are in accord with Thy spirit shall stand before Thee for ever,  
and they who walk according to the way dear to Thy heart will remain steadfast for ever.

[And as for m]e, in leaning upon Thee  
I shall raise myself up and take my stand against those who reject me,

And (I shall bring) my hand against those who scorn me.  
I shall raise myself up and stand up against those who reject me,  
And (I shall bring) my hand against those who scorn me.  
For they had no regard [for me when] Thou wast strengthened in me;

<sup>1</sup> *Mōth* is Death, here personified and associated with Belial the Prince of darkness.

but Thou didst appear to me in Thy strength, as Destiny !  
 And Thou hast not covered with shame the face of those who in-  
 quired after me,  
 who have united together in Thy Covenant, and have hearkened  
 to me,  
 and who have walked in the way dear to Thy heart,  
 and who have (all) set themselves (to join) Thee in the assembly of  
 the Saints.

And Thou wilt bring forth their cause with success  
 and truth with justice ;  
 and Thou wilt not let them stray through the acts of the wretched,  
 when they plot against them.

But Thou wilt set their fear on Thy people,  
 together with destruction for all the peoples of the lands,  
 in order to suppress those who transgress (the orders of) Thy mouth,  
 when judgement is made,

And through me hast Thou illumined the face of many,  
 and Thou hast strengthened them until they were countless.  
 For Thou hast caused me to know Thy marvellous mysteries,  
 and in Thy marvellous Assembly<sup>1</sup> Thou hast exalted my place ;  
 and Thou hast worked wonders in the presence of many because of  
 Thy Glory

and to make known to all living Thy mighty works.

What is a creature of flesh like this,  
 and what is a creature of clay, to exalt such Marvels<sup>2</sup> ?

Yea, he (man) is plunged in sin from his mother's womb,  
 and in the guilt of infidelity until old age.

Yea, I know that justice does not belong to man,  
 nor perfection of way to the son of man :

it is to the Most High God that all the works of justice belong,  
 while the way of man is not sure—

if it is not through the spirit that God has created for him,  
 making perfect a way for the sons of man,  
 so that they may know all His works,  
 (those which He has accomplished) in the power of His Might  
 and the abundance of His Love towards all the sons of His good  
 pleasure.

And as for me, [agitation] and trembling have seized me,  
 and all my bones are shattered,

<sup>1</sup> The celestial Assembly, to which the just souls are admitted; called a little above 'the Assembly of the Saints'—that is to say, of the Angels and the just (cf. *supra* p. 72, n. 4 and 5).

<sup>2</sup> The Marvels of Creation, especially the stars.

and my heart melts as wax before the fire,  
 and my knees slip like water which falls on a slope;  
 for I have remembered my faults,  
 and the infidelity of my fathers,  
 when the wicked rose up against Thy Covenant  
 and the wretched against Thy word.  
 And I said: 'It is because of my rebellions  
 that I was deserted by Thy Covenant.'  
 Then, remembering the strength of Thy Hand,  
 and the greatness of Thy Love,  
 I rose and stood up,  
 and my spirit recovered its balance before the blows.  
 For I relied upon Thy mercies.  
 and upon the greatness of Thy Love.  
 For Thou pardonest iniquity,  
 and Thou pu[r]ifest ma[n] of his sin through Thy justice . . .

PSALM E<sup>1</sup>

And what is man? Yea, he is only earth:  
 [it is of clay that] he was made,  
 and it is to dust that he will return!  
 For Thou wilt instruct me in such wonders,  
 and Thou wilt teach me about the Assembly [. . .]!  
 Yea, I am only dust and ashes:  
 what could I meditate, unless Thou didst will it,  
 and what thought could I have without Thy good pleasure?  
 How could I display my powers, if Thou didst not keep me alive,  
 and how could I be intelligent if Thou didst not form my thoughts?  
 and how could I speak if Thou didst not open my mouth,  
 and how could I answer if Thou didst not instruct me?  
 It is Thou Who art the Prince of the Gods and the King of the  
 Venerable Ones<sup>2</sup>,  
 and the Lord of every Spirit, and the Master of every work!  
 And without Thee nothing is done,  
 and nothing has understanding without Thy good pleasure;  
 and there is naught apart from Thee,  
 and no power exists beside Thee;

<sup>1</sup> Sukenik, *op. cit.*, II, pl. X.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Gods', the 'Venerable Ones' are here the Angels, the Spirits: in *Enoch*, God is the 'Lord of Spirits'.

and nothing exists before Thy Glory,  
and no price is equal to Thy Power !  
And who, amongst Thy great and wonderful works,  
will have enough strength to stand before Thy Glory ?  
And what then is he who returns to dust,  
that he should have [strength] ?  
It is for Thy Glory alone that Thou hast created all this !

## CHAPTER VII

### THE *Rule of Battle for the Sons of Light*

After this collection of songs in which are poured out all the feelings of adoration, joy and gratitude of those who have been converted and have entered into the Covenant, it remains for us to speak of another work discovered at 'Ain-Feshka<sup>1</sup>, of a quite different character. Though it is certainly no less mystical, it is at the same time specifically military and ardently warlike. This scroll, like the preceding one, belongs to the Hebrew University. It measures 2.90 metres long; the bottom of the roll is damaged; its actual height is about 16 cm. In all there are 19 columns of writing, each of 16—18 lines (fig. 10).

Up to the present, of this work we only know the general account and the few extracts published by Professor Sukenik<sup>2</sup>. The latter has called it the book of the 'War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness'. We have already met in the *Rule* the expressions 'sons of light' and 'sons of darkness'. Here the 'sons of light' are defined as 'the sons of Levi, the sons of Judah and the sons of Benjamin'. As for the 'sons of darkness' their army—the army of Belial—includes on the one hand 'the bands of Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites and Philistines' and on the other 'the bands of the Kittim of Asshur'. Such are the adversaries confronting one another on the one side, the Jews—the Jews of Judaea (Levi, that is to say the priestly tribe; then Judah and Benjamin, to the exclusion of the tribes of the North); on the other side the neighbouring peoples of Israel, to the South (Edom), to the East (Moab, Ammon), and to the West (Philistia), and also the Syrians. It is in fact the Syrians, the kingdom of the Seleucids, who without any doubt are meant by the expression 'Kittim of Asshur'; the same work mentions elsewhere the 'Kittim of Egypt', an expression which can only mean the kingdom of the Ptolemies. In the *Habakkuk Commentary* the

<sup>1</sup> We do not yet know anything of the *Apocalypse of Lamech*; as we have said this will appear in Vol. II of the American publication. We must therefore reserve the study of it for another work which will be a continuation of the present one: *Nouveaux aperçus sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte*.

<sup>2</sup> *Megillóth Genázóth*, I, pp. 18—26; II, pp. 51—52.

word Kittim, we have seen, meant the Romans as in *Daniel*; here it means the Macedonians, as in 1 *Macc.* i. 1, viii. 5, or rather the successors of Alexander the Great, the Macedonian: Seleucids in Syria, Ptolemies in Egypt.

The mention of the Seleucids is most important for the dating of the work; in point of fact it was in 64 B.C. that Pompey put an end to the dynasty of the Seleucids. It was against the armies of the Seleucids, and also against the Idumaeans (Edom), against the Nabataeans (Moab and Ammon), and against the inhabitants of the Shephelah (Philistia), that the Jews had to fight on many occasions throughout the Maccabaeen and Hasmonaeen period between about 165 and 64 B.C. It is the struggles of this period which provide the historical background of this book; this then cannot be of the Roman period, like the *Habakkuk Commentary* and the *Damascus Document*, but the Hellenistic period. For the moment I dare not try to be more precise.

\* \* \*

With our still very imperfect information, it is difficult to determine as yet the exact character of the work. Apparently it is not an apocalypse, a description of the great battle at the end of all time. It is rather, in my opinion, a *rule of battle for the sons of light*, that is to say, a statement of the manner in which these presumably pious Jews ought to conduct war, as much on the religious level as on the actual military level. For their war is God's war; it is in the strictest sense of the term the holy war.

The army is divided into thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. It is made up of four classes: infantrymen, aged 25—30; cavalry, aged 30—40; officers, aged 40—50; commanding officers, aged 50—60. Surely it is by no chance that the *Damascus Document*, as we have seen, likewise divides into thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens the army of the sect of the New Covenant, nor that it fixes for certain offices age limits which cannot but recall those indicated here. Undoubtedly a certain relationship between the two writings exists—also between the combatants alluded to in the *Rule of Battle* and the mystical combatants of the *Damascus Document*. I think that if the latter kept a certain military organization it was because in reality they were the successors of the former, and the continuers

החצונות תהינה פרישת לבנה אנשי הקלע שי בלוחם להשליך שבע  
 פעמים ואחר ותקע לחם הנהחם כחצונות המשוב ובא לוי המערכת  
 הראשונה לחתוב על פעמים ותקע הנהחם כחצונות המקרא ויא  
 שליש ואלו כולם פני השערות ועשו כן הצענות ולוחם אנשי הרב  
 צינן ובשמש ותקע הנהחם כחצונות קול פרוץ ויא סדר מלחמה  
 והראשון והוא בשמות לסדרותם אש לפעמי ובעומים שלוש סדרות  
 ותקע לחם הנהחם תרועה שנת קול עה וסנף ויא פגשע עי קורבם  
 למערת האוב ונסו וים כבל המלחמה והנהחם ורוע בשש חצונות  
 חללים קול חי טרוי לבנה מלחמה וחללים וכל עם השונות ורוע  
 קול אחר תרועת מלחמה גיולה לחם לב האוב ועם קול חצונות ויא  
 ורקות המלחמה לחיל חללים קול השונות ויא וכן רות וחו  
 הנהחם פריעם קול חי טרוי לבנה ויא מלחמה עי השלבים למערת  
 האוב שבע פעמים ואחר ותקע לחם הנהחם כחצונות המשוב  
 קול עה פרוץ סנף כסך חו ובקש יעם לשלש חללים ועם  
 חיל הראשון ויא חו קול תרועה  
 גיולה לבנה  
 כדור

Fig. 10.—Scroll of the Rule of Battle for the Sons of Light: col. VII (after Sukenik, *Megillôth Genüzôth*, I, plate VIII)

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of their work as soldiers of the Party of God, although henceforth without arms.

The *Rule of Battle*, as I have said, alludes to the armed combatants: archers, slingers, horsemen, and charioteers. In the most technical way the manoeuvring and the use of the different armies are set forth; this can be judged from this page—worthy, without any doubt, of holding the attention of historians of Hellenistic wars:<sup>1</sup>

‘ . . . The trumpets shall sound without ceasing, until the slingers have finished hurling (stones) seven times. And then the priests shall blow the trumpets for them (on the note) of withdrawal, and (the slingers) shall come beside the first line to take their posts. Then the priests shall sound the trumpets (on the note) of fall-in, and the three standards of the attacking troops shall come out of the gates (of the camp) and shall take up a position between the lines<sup>2</sup>, having beside them the charioteers, to the right and the left. Then the priests shall sound the trumpets with a mighty sound for the battle formation. Then the (file) leaders shall spread out in their formations, each to his post; and when the three formations have taken up their position, the priests shall sound for them a second blast for the march, with a sustained and steady note, until they have approached the enemy line. Then they shall take hold of the weapons of war, and the priests shall sound six trumpets (on the note) of the slain with a quick shrill sound so long as the battle lasts; and the Levites and all, at the same time as the horns, shall with one voice make one great battle-cry resound to make the heart of the enemy melt. And at the sound of this cry the javelins of war shall come out to overthrow the slain. They shall hasten the sound of the horns and the priests shall ceaselessly sound the trumpets for the battle with a quick shrill blast, until they have hurled (the javelins) on the enemy line seven times. And then the priests shall sound for them the trumpets (on the note) of withdrawal with a broad, steady and sustained sound. It is in this way that [the priests shall sound for the three standards . . . ]’

It can be seen that the priests and the Levites if they are not actually combatants, have a role to play in the battle right in the midst of the combatants: they are responsible for the giving of the signal with appropriate blasts of the trumpet and the horn to mark

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, pl. VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Between the Jewish and the enemy lines.

the different phases of the engagement. It can also be seen that this *Rule of Battle* is filled with mystico-magical conceptions: seven times stones must be thrown; seven times javelins must be hurled; and the trumpets in the mouths of the priests have a supernatural efficacy like those whose sacred blast once made the walls of Jericho fall. This *Rule of Battle* is then just as much a *Ritual of War*. For all ancient peoples and for ancient Israel itself, war was undoubtedly a sacred act: but here the liturgy of war is fixed with a precision which makes it difficult to apply it in real battle. It is an ideal making of rules and utopian in character, but at least it reveals with what rigorous devotion the 'pious' in the Maccabean age supposed that the battles of God should be carried on!

\* \* \*

This mystical conception of war is expressed in particular in the mottoes which must figure on the standards of the army: 'On the great ensign placed at the head of all the army shall be inscribed: *Army of God*, together with the name of *Israel and Aaron* and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. On the ensign of the thousand group shall be inscribed: *Wrath of God, full of anger, against Belial and all the people of his party, without any survivors*. On the ensign of the hundred group shall be inscribed: *From God comes the energy to fight against all sinful flesh*. On the ensign of the fifty group shall be inscribed: *Thanks to the Power of God the position of the wicked has yielded*. And on the ensign of the ten group shall be inscribed: *Jubilation of God on the harp of ten strings!* Other inscriptions according to the different phases of the battle will serve to recall to the combatants the sacred cause which they are defending: 'When they go to battle, they shall inscribe on their banners: *Truth of God, Justice of God, Glory of God, Judgement of God*. When they engage in battle, they shall inscribe on their banners: *The Right Hand of God, Feast of God, Tumult of God, the Slain of God*. And when they return from battle, they shall inscribe on their banners: *Exaltation of God, Majesty of God, Praise of God, Glory of God*.' These expressions, we may note, are just like the 'words of command' chosen by the companions in arms of the hero Judas Maccabaeus: *Help of God, Victory of God*, if at least the author of 2 *Mace.* (viii. 23; xiii. 15) is to be believed; in any case, this similarity does not lack a certain interest.

Before the battle the chief priest encourages the troops: 'Fear not! Tremble not before them! Do not retreat!'; then, turning towards the enemies: 'This is a congregation of wickedness! In darkness they do their works! Their desires turn towards the darkness!' Then the priest intones a warlike song, woven entirely of biblical texts—truly a song of triumph of this mystical army<sup>1</sup>:

Rise up, O Valiant One!

Lead away Thy captives, O Glorious One,  
and take away Thy spoils, O brave Hero<sup>2</sup>!

Put Thy hand on the neck of Thine enemies  
and Thy foot on the heaps of the slaughtered!

Strike the nations who are hostile to Thee  
and let Thy sword consume the guilty flesh!

Fill Thy country with glory  
and Thy heritage with blessing!

A multitude of cattle in Thine estates,  
silver and gold and precious stones in Thy palaces!

O Zion, rejoice exceedingly;  
shine forth amidst cries of happiness, O Jerusalem;

exult, O all the towns of Judah!

Open [Thy] gat[es] for ever,

to bring the riches of the nations into Thy dwelling!

And may their kings serve Thee,

and may all Thine oppressors prostrate themselves before Thee,  
and may they lick [the dust] from Thy feet!

O daughters of my people, break forth into cries of gladness,  
deck yourselves with magnificent adornments . . .'

And here, to end, is the liturgy for after the battle<sup>3</sup>: ' . . . And after they have gone from the dead to return to the camp, they shall all intone the hymn of the withdrawal. And in the morning they shall wash their clothes and they shall bathe them in the blood of the bodies of the sinners. And they shall return to the place where they took up their positions, where they formed the line of battle, before the dead of the enemy fell. And there they shall all bless the God of Israel, and they shall exalt His Name in joyful unison, and

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, II, pl. XI. Cf. 2 *Macc.* xii. 36—37: ' . . . Judas called upon the Lord to appear and fight on their side, leading them into the battle; then, in the language of his fathers (Hebrew) he struck up the battle songs and he put to flight the people of Gorgias . . .'

<sup>2</sup> The 'Valiant', the 'Glorious', the 'brave Hero' is God fighting with His people; the ancient 'Yahweh of hosts'.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, pl. IX.

they shall say: 'Blessed be the God of Israel, who keeps His love for His Covenant and proofs of salvation for the people whom He has redeemed [. . .], while He has carried away and destroyed the assembly of the nations, without any survivors . . .'

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE 'NEW COVENANT' AND THE ESSENES

If the scrolls found in 1947 in the cave at 'Ain-Feshka were hidden there by the followers of the New Covenant, it is quite natural to think that it was because one of their 'camps' was quite near there: when danger forced them to leave their monastery—very probably about A.D. 66—70 as we have said—before fleeing, they hid their most precious possessions, that is their library, in a neighbouring cave, doubtless hoping to get their books again when they returned to the country after the danger had passed; but they never returned.

Now, Pliny the Elder tells us that in his day—he died in A.D. 79—there actually lived to the west of the Dead Sea at some distance from the shore, some strange Jewish ascetics: 'To the west' (of Lake Asphaltites), he writes, 'the Essenes live at a distance from the shores along the whole length where they are noxious. They are a people (*gens*) unique in kind, stranger than any others in the whole world: without women, renouncing all that is of Venus; without money, having only the society of palm-trees. From day to day they maintain their numbers, thanks to the multitude of new recruits; for very many are there, who, tired of life, are led by the tide of fortune to adopt their way of life. It is thus that for thousands of centuries this eternal people has existed where no one is born, for so fruitful for them is the repentance of others for their past life!'<sup>1</sup> This is an extremely valuable notice which another author of the first century A.D., Dio Chrysostom, further confirms, so far as the location of this Essene 'camp' is concerned. According to the report of Synesius, he 'also praises somewhere the Essenes for the happiness enjoyed by their whole city which is situated near the Dead Sea, in the heart of Palestine, not far from Sodom'<sup>2</sup>.

Thus we are clearly informed that to the west of the Dead Sea, in the first century A.D. there thrived an ancient colony of Jewish monks, completely cut off from the world; there they formed a sort of 'city' where they lived happily. Pliny and Dio call these fervent ascetics the Essenes. The question inevitably arises whether the

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. nat.*, V. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Synesii opera* (ed. Petav.), p. 39.

monastery of the Jewish sect of the New Covenant which hid its library at 'Ain-Feshka was not precisely the Essene monastery of the Wilderness of Judaea mentioned by Pliny and Dio<sup>1</sup>. In other words, are the followers of the New Covenant and the Essenes to be identified? This is an important problem on which we have indirectly touched in the preceding chapters, but which we must now examine directly.

\* \* \*

The Essenes are known to us chiefly through Philo of Alexandria<sup>2</sup> and Josephus<sup>3</sup>, both of whom wrote in the first century A.D. Countless works have been devoted to them, and I do not propose to deal in detail with such a complex subject here.<sup>4</sup> The very name of the Essenes (in Greek *Essēnoi* or *Essaioi*) has given rise to all sorts of discussions. The most common explanation, and the one that seems to me the most probable, is that which derives the name from the Aramaic word *hesê* (emphatic state *hasyâ*) 'pious, holy', which was current in Syriac. To this word has been added the Greek termination *-ēnoi*, whence the form *Essēnoi*, or *-aioi*, whence the form *Essaioi*. This etymology seems to have been known to Philo who

<sup>1</sup> It is generally admitted that the Essene colony described by Pliny was situated near the spring of Engedi, towards the centre of the western shore of the Dead Sea; in fact the text of Pliny continues thus: 'Below them (*infra hos*) was the town of Engada . . .'. But I believe this means not that the Essenes lived in the mountains just above the famous spring, but that this was a little distance from their settlement, *towards the south*. Pliny then actually goes on to describe Masada, further to the south: 'from thence (from Engada) one comes to Masada . . .'. Thus from north to south we have the Essene 'city', then Engada, then Masada. If Pliny's text is to be understood in this way, the Essene 'city' would be found towards the north of the western shore; that is to say, precisely in the region of 'Ain-Feshka itself. Should this explanation not be acceptable, it could be supposed that the Essenes possessed monasteries other than that mentioned by Pliny and Dio in the same Wilderness of Judaea, and that the monastery of the New Covenant from which come the 'Ain-Feshka scrolls was one of these Essene monasteries. This is a very plausible hypothesis since in the Wilderness of Judaea, a veritable 'Thebaid' of Palestine, it was perfectly possible then, as later in the Christian era—and even to-day—for several monastic settlements to exist together.

<sup>2</sup> *Quod omn. prob. lib.*, §§ 75—91; also in Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.*, VIII, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Wars*, II, viii. 2—13, §§ 119—161; *Antiq.*, XVIII, i. 5, §§ 18—22.

<sup>4</sup> Here I will only indicate amongst French works the following: E. Renan *Histoire du Peuple d'Israël*, V, pp. 55—66; Isidore Lévy, *La légende de Pythagore de Grèce en Palestine* (1927), pp. 264—289; M. J. Lagrange, *Le judaïsme avant Jésus-Christ* (1931), pp. 307—330; Ch. Guignebert, *Le Monde juif vers le temps de Jésus* (1935), pp. 228—246.

says that the name of Essenes means 'pious, holy' (*hosioi*): the only serious objection which has been made is that the word *hesé* is not attested in Palestinian Aramaic, but only in Eastern Aramaic. But this Eastern Aramaic word is simply the indication that the mystical sect of the Essenes took its rise in the Jewish colonies of Mesopotamia from which place they later spread to Palestine—a fact suggested, moreover, by the Irano-Babylonian influences which can be recognized in its doctrines.

It may be noted that, explained in this way, the name of Essenes is exactly similar to that of the Hasidim—the name of a group of devout Jews who brought their whole-hearted support to Judas Maccabaeus in the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup>; indeed, the word Hasidim is derived from the Hebrew *hāsīdh* 'pious', the equivalent of the Aramaic *hesé*. I am persuaded that Essenes and Hasidim are in fact identical. They are the 'pious', the Jews who were ardently and fanatically attached to the Law and the Covenant. The name Hasidim, of Hebrew origin, provisionally used in Palestine, has simply yielded to the name Essenes of Aramaic origin, which is older and more traditional. In both the forms Hasidim and Essenes, the termination indicates that these 'pious' were considered to form a sect or party, like the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The members of the sect called themselves simply the 'pious' or the 'saints', names which are met here and there in the Dead Sea texts to designate the followers of the New Covenant—and names which the members of the early Christian church similarly gave themselves later.

I have just mentioned the Sadducees and the Pharisees. There is no one who does not in fact know that at the time of the Hasmonaeans and Romans there existed three distinct sects in the Jewish world, according to Josephus: the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes. The Sadducees—this word means 'descendants of Zadok'—were recruited from the priestly caste (we have already said that Zadok was the ancestor of the Jewish priestly line). The 'Epicureanism' of their conduct, like that of their doctrines, set them in radical opposition to the Master of Justice and his followers. Hence, on the day when the holy priests separated themselves from the wicked priests, they declared themselves 'sons of Zadok', as if to save the honour of this sacred name. The Pharisees, on the other

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Macc.* ii. 42, vii. 13—18, 2 *Macc.* xiv. 6.

hand—this word means the 'separated ones', or better perhaps 'the distinguished ones'—were recruited especially from amongst the scribes, the lawyers, official interpreters of the Law. They were doctors, or casuists, charged with determining jurisprudence, and consequently guardians of the whole juridical tradition; their prestige as scholars and acknowledged commentators on the divine Torah was very great amongst the people. In matters of doctrine they had certainly been influenced by the 'pious' of Israel, and therefore on many points their beliefs resembled those of the Essenes, so far as we can gather from Josephus. But although their caste was so exclusive, they had no oath of initiation: were it only for this reason, it would be quite impossible to connect the Pharisees in any way whatsoever with the sect of the New Covenant, a brotherhood admission to which was reserved for the initiated after they had taken a solemn oath 'on their soul'.

It can only be, therefore, that the sect of the New Covenant is to be identified with that of the Essenes. Josephus knew intimately the religious and political history of the Jewish world in his time; and if the 'New Covenant', whose adherents could be counted by 'thousands' as the *Damascus Document* testifies, had constituted a sect distinct from the Essenes, he could not have failed to be aware of this and to have informed us of it. I have minutely compared all the sources relative to the Essenes and all that is now known about the New Covenant. This examination has brought out so many resemblances on characteristic points that I believe I can without hesitation reach the conclusion that they are identical. Certainly the Essenes who were very numerous were able to form different congregations, governed by slightly different rules. For example, Josephus tells us that though the Essenes in general rejected marriage, a certain Essene 'order' adopted another rule on this point (*Wars*, II, viii. 13, § 160). Neither Philo nor Josephus went into all the details. But I am convinced that the sect of 'Ain-Feshka' is an Essene sect and not one which existed alongside the Essenes.

I cannot here give a complete proof of this, since it would require a whole book. I would only briefly observe that the oath of the New Covenant is substantially—and sometimes even quasi-textually—identical with the Essene oath; that the virtues most honoured by the Essenes, namely scorn of riches, love of one's neighbour.

humility, continence, are exactly those on which the sect of the New Covenant insists; that the characteristic doctrines of the Essenes—marked spiritualism, divine rewards and the torments of hell, sovereignty of Destiny, abundant angelology, recognition of the Prophets as sacred books, allegorical exegesis, sacredness of the writings peculiar to the sect—are all found in the New Covenant; finally that the organization of the Essene groups—with regard to tribunals and punishments, including excommunication—and the role assigned to the 'officers' is fully in line with what we know of the New Covenant.

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In my opinion, the resemblances are numerous and characteristic. However, differences appear on certain points. Thus, on the question of sacrifices, while the Code of the New Covenant in the *Damascus Document* envisages sacrifices in the Temple, Josephus declares that the Essenes did not take part in these sacrifices because of the difference of their own purification rites, but that they performed sacrifices 'amongst themselves', outside the common precincts<sup>1</sup>. But there is no real disagreement here. The Code legislates as if the rules of the sect had become the law of all; since, however, the 'sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the Covenant', found themselves obliged to abandon the service of the Temple, they could only then sacrifice 'amongst themselves' outside the Temple itself.

Moreover, Philo explains to us that the Essenes serve God, 'not by sacrificing animals, but by seeking to order their thoughts duly in accord with holiness'<sup>2</sup>. If this does not involve the absolute condemnation of sacrifices it at least suggests a deeply spiritual attitude which could easily accept their suppression. Now, the suppression of animal sacrifices must have imposed itself more and more on the members of the sect, after a certain period, owing to the fact that the priests—i.e. the sons of Aaron and of Zadok, the hereditary priests—became less and less numerous amongst them and even practically disappeared. It must indeed be observed that the Essenes were for the most part sworn to celibacy; by virtue of this 'enocratism', the priests of the sect who were already not very numer-

<sup>1</sup> *Antiq.*, XVIII, i, 5, § 19. In the sentence 'they did not perform sacrifices (in the Temple)', certain witnesses to the text suppress the negation; the reading with the negation seems to me the more probable.

<sup>2</sup> *Quod omn. prob. lib.*, § 75.

ous in the first century B.C. (see *supra*, p. 62), saw their numbers growing less and less. I believe that in the first century A.D., at the time when Philo and Josephus wrote their accounts of the Essenes, the sect only included a very few priests—that is priests descended from Aaron. Through this progressive extinction the very conception of the priesthood, together with its recruitment, necessarily underwent a radical change; henceforth the priests were *elected*, and their essential function was no longer to sacrifice, but to prepare the bread and other foods, and to offer prayer before and after meals<sup>1</sup>. We must not forget that amongst the Essenes the meals were taken in common and were essentially sacred meals. Here then are priests who are no longer necessarily descendants of Levi and who have ceased to be sacrificers and have become principally ministers of the Communion, the most important liturgical act of the sect.

It is perhaps a little surprising that Josephus has preserved such complete silence about the Master of Justice and the New Covenant after telling us about the Essenes. But indeed, this silence can be easily explained by those who know Josephus, a man as clever in his behaviour—though sometimes ingloriously—as he is tendentious in his way of writing history. He did not want to reveal anything in Jewish history which could appear unpraiseworthy or unintelligible to the Gentiles who would read his works. Now, the Master of Justice was at the root of a schism which brought the Essenes often violently into opposition to official Judaism—that of the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Moreover he, the Just One, was officially condemned and executed by the Jews. This was a bloodstain and a disgrace over which Josephus the Pharisee threw a modest veil. Again, the very idea of 'Covenant', a peculiarly Semitic idea, was not very comprehensible to the pagans, while the 'New Covenant' would suggest the idea of a revolution or of a schism within Judaism. Hence when he spoke of the Essenes whose noble and pure life—which, as he stressed, conformed to the Pythagorean ideal which was then in great favour in so many pagan circles—could only win the respect of these pagans for Judaism, he remained silent on everything in the history of the Essenes which was not wholly to the credit of his fellow-countrymen. I am convinced that it is for similar reasons that he said nothing of another Master, another Just

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiq.*, XVIII, i. 5, § 22; *Wars*, II, viii. 5, § 131.

One, who was put to death under Pontius Pilate with Jewish complicity.<sup>1</sup>

But has Josephus in fact said absolutely nothing about the Master of Justice, the divine Founder of the New Covenant? He tells us that amongst the Essenes 'the name of the Lawgiver was, after God, an object of great veneration' and that 'he who blasphemed it was punished by death'<sup>2</sup>. The 'Lawgiver' here is not Moses, for Josephus generally mentions Moses by name. I believe it was just this Master of Justice, who was martyred under Aristobulus II. The *Damascus Document*, it must be recalled, also gives the title of 'Lawgiver'. In the documents of the New Covenant, as in Josephus, he remains anonymous: his name is a sacred name which cannot be uttered. Similarly the Pythagoreans did not utter the name of their master: *autos epha* 'He said': this celebrated formula well shows with what respect they avoided uttering the august name.

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Another objection can be made to the identification of the sect of the New Covenant with the Essenes: the *Rule of Battle of the Sons of Light* reveals a violently warlike attitude, absolutely incompatible with what Philo tells us of the pacifism of the Essenes<sup>3</sup>. The contrast is obviously striking. Nevertheless it seems to me that here again the explanation is simple, if only the respective dates of the different documents are remembered. The *Rule of Battle*, as we have seen, is of the Seleucid period—prior to 64 B.C. and perhaps even of the time of Judas Maccabaeus. At that time, the 'pious'—the Hasidim-Essenes—devoted themselves body and soul to the holy cause which the sons of the priest Mattathias defended by force of arms; we are even told that Judas Maccabaeus was 'the chief of the Hasidim' (2 *Macc.* xiv. 6). What is there surprising then, if an Essene work dating from this period of the great epic struggle is filled with a martial spirit?

But the 'pious', these pure and fanatical partisans of God, who were prepared to pour out their blood for God when the war was God's war, were constrained to modify their attitude, towards the end of the second century B.C., when in the reign of John Hyrcanus

<sup>1</sup> The famous passage of Josephus on Jesus (*Antiq.*, XVIII, iii. 3, §§ 63 f.), it is well known, is generally held to be interpolated; cf. Ch. Guignebert, *Jésus*, pp. 19—22.

<sup>2</sup> *Wars*, II, viii. 9 f., §§ 145, 152.

<sup>3</sup> Philo, *Quod omn. prob. lib.*, § 78.

(135—104) the war became a war of conquest, a wholly profane war serving the ambitions of the rising dynasty much more than the interests of God. Under Aristobulus I (104—103) matters completely deteriorated. Here was the High Priest, great nephew of the purest hero of the Jewish faith, behaving like a monster towards his brothers, and to crown the scandal substituting for the title 'ethnarch', which had satisfied his predecessors, the quite new title of 'king'—an abominable Hellenistic title which in the eyes of the 'pious' cruelly stressed the abandonment of the high ideal of the first Maccabaeen princes. From this time the 'pious' completely changed their attitude and this change is wholly logical. From being the most ardent supporters of Judas, Jonathan and Simon, they became an opposition party.

Doubtless it was then that the Master of Justice intervened. To the people and their leaders he uncompromisingly preached the pure ideal of Israel, the people of the Divine Covenant. The 'pious' grouped, or rather regrouped, themselves behind this Prophet, this Man of God. The official priesthood had betrayed the Covenant; the Covenant had to be renewed. Let all the true 'sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the Covenant', and all those amongst the Jews who wished to remain faithful to the Covenant, come after him. In this way was created the New Covenant, the pure and authentic continuation of the former Essenism—of the Essenism which Josephus tells us existed already about the time of Jonathan (160—147)<sup>1</sup>, that is to say in the middle of the second century B.C., and which is doubtless to be identified, I repeat, with the 'congregation of the Hasidim' of the time of Judas Maccabaeus.

But further, the Master of Justice introduced a radical reform into Essenism opening an entirely new phase in the history of the sect. This is what won him the title of Lawgiver, Founder, Unique Master. If Essenism had been earlier influenced largely by Zoroastrianism, whose influence was not wholly eliminated afterwards, the Master of Justice himself brought about its reform under the influence of another mystical movement, Neo-Pythagoreanism. If Essenism, as described by Philo and Josephus, offers so many actual Pythagorean traits in its spirit, doctrine and organization—as Josephus expressly notes and as most historians recognize—it is precisely the Master

<sup>1</sup> *Antiq.*, XIII, v. 9. § 171.

of Justice who endowed it with this character towards the beginning of the first century B.C. We should not forget that it was about this time that Pythagoreanism began to revive and to spread throughout the whole of the Mediterranean world. The Master of Justice became the echo of this great spiritual movement in Palestine, a movement filled with Gnosis which for some two centuries, after about 100 B.C., drew to itself so many souls eager for certainty and mystical hopes<sup>1</sup>.

The great Jewish Teacher exercised his ministry apparently for quite a long time. When he underwent martyrdom under Aristobulus II we have seen that his supporters fled from Judaea—which enabled them to escape some time later the bloody events of the capture of Jerusalem on Tishri 10th, 63—and the sect reformed itself in Damascus, beyond the reach of the High Priest. It remained there throughout the reign of Hyrcanus II who was unfavourably disposed towards the party of the 'poor'—that is to say the Essenes (see *supra* p. 39, n. 4). When Herod the Great got possession of Jerusalem in 37, the 'pious' readily rallied to the new regime, which in their eyes had at least the advantage of bringing to an end the temporal sovereignty of the High Priests. In fact Josephus tells us that the monarch 'held the Essenes in high esteem and showed them more consideration than ordinary mortals deserved'<sup>2</sup>. Through respect for one of their fundamental rules, he even exonerated them from swearing the oath of allegiance to himself and to Augustus. There can be no doubt then that in the reign of Herod the Essenes returned to Judaea and reorganized themselves there.

There they remained completely undisturbed—submissive to the authority of Rome and to that of its mandatories. Josephus even specifies that through his oath of initiation the catechumen expressly promised 'to keep faith towards all, especially towards the authorities; for it is always through the will of God that power falls to a man'<sup>3</sup>. The saying in the Gospel: 'Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's' exactly expresses the opinion then adopted by the Essenes: withdrawn

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Carcopino, *La Basilique pythagoricienne de la Porte Majeure* (1926), pp. 161—206.

<sup>2</sup> *Antiq.*, XV, x. 4, § 372.

<sup>3</sup> *Wars*, II, viii. 7, § 140.

from the world, the spirit striving towards invisible realities and absorbed in an apocalyptic world, they entirely abandoned to God and to Destiny all the affairs of this world. Those who were able to attempt plans of revolt against the occupying Romans had found their place in the new party which was formed early in the first century A.D., that of the Zealots. These Zealots, like the Essenes at the time of the first Maccabees, were not in any way opposed to the use of arms; they even used the dagger so well that they were called 'Sicarii'. But they were no longer Essenes; the sect had rejected them. From being the most ardent warlike people they had passed over to a complete pacifism, a development perfectly explained by the profound changes which took place both in Jewish history and in the history of the sect after the Maccabean period.

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Another argument in favour of the identification of the Jewish New Covenant with the Essenes is the following fact which has considerable implications: it happens that a number of writings whose Essene origin was formerly held by serious scholars to be at least very probable, can equally be connected with the sect of the New Covenant in the light of the recent discoveries. Thus in the first place there is the book of *Jubilees*, a Hebrew fragment of which has been discovered in the 'Ain-Feshka cave and which is moreover known to have been familiar to the author of the *Damascus Document*<sup>1</sup>. A further example is that of the *Apocalypse of Lamech*, one of the Dead Sea scrolls, which is certainly connected with the writings of *Enoch*, which are thus themselves brought into relation with the sect of the New Covenant. The Essene origin of *Enoch*, indeed, had already been suspected for a long time.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from *Jubilees* and *Enoch*, I am convinced that many other writings figuring amongst the 'Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament' should likewise be assigned to the sect of the New Covenant—and also to the Essenes—in particular the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, to which the *Damascus Document* alludes many times<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> On the Essene origin of *Jubilees*, see e.g., M. J. Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus-Christ*, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 263 f., 329 f.

<sup>3</sup> On the Essene origin of the *Testaments*, cf. *op. cit.*, p. 130.

the *Assumption of Moses*<sup>1</sup>, the *Psalms of Solomon*<sup>2</sup>, and indeed certain of the 'Apocrypha'. All questions of literary and historical criticism relative to this literature must be reopened afresh. Here is a whole collection of documents whose historical study presented extreme difficulty, as so many of the allusions they contained remained for the most part undecipherable. Now the religious history of the last two centuries B.C. has been illuminated with fresh light; a thousand details in the writings of this period now become intelligible, emerging at last from chaos.

I have already made a number of soundings and I can announce that the first results of this hasty exploration are of an amazing richness. It is impossible to set it all out here. I shall only say a word about the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which is an incomparable mine for the understanding of the doctrines of the Jewish sect of the New Covenant, and consequently, if the views set out above are acceptable, of the doctrines of Essenism, of reformed Essenism. In particular an abundant harvest of texts relative to the dead and glorified Anointed One is to be found there; a whole 'Christology' developed at length; a whole 'mystery of salvation' perfectly elaborated. There can be no doubt that this Anointed One was the Master of Justice who founded the New Covenant.

Hitherto perplexed exegetes faced with such texts have usually found in them the interpolations of Christian copyists. But now that there is positive information about the actual historical existence of a Messiah who suffered and died under Aristobulus II, thanks to the *Habakkuk Commentary*, such excisions which could formerly be understood are now no longer to be tolerated; these 'Christological' passages, taken as a whole, henceforth seem to be of the greatest worth, and to continue to reject them *a priori* as being of Christian origin would appear to be contrary to all sound method. It is now certain—and this is one of the most important revelations of the

<sup>1</sup> On the Essene origin of this book, cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 259, 329.

<sup>2</sup> A work certainly later than 63 B.C. in view of the number of allusions it contains to the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey. It has generally been considered to be of Pharisaic origin; but its author was a priest and various allusions to the Covenant and certain points of doctrine suggest rather that it belongs to the sect of the New Covenant, in my opinion. This list is by no means complete; the *Damascus Document*, for example, expressly refers to a Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch*; if this is not actually our Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch*, at least it must be connected with it.

Dead Sea discoveries—that Judaism in the first century B.C. saw a whole theology of the suffering Messiah, of a Messiah who should be the redeemer of the world, developing around the person of the Master of Justice.

Moreover, the *Habakkuk Commentary* makes it apparent that very probably the canonical writings of the Prophets could still receive additions even after 40 B.C., since it deals with only two chapters of the biblical book. I have reason to think that chapter iii of *Habakkuk*—an eschatological psalm—is itself of Essene origin. Now that the warning has been given, many passages of the Old Testament itself must be examined with a fresh eye. Everywhere where there is a more or less explicit question of an Anointed One or of a Prophet carried off by a violent death, how is it possible to avoid asking whether the person indicated is not precisely our Master of Justice? I mention only the following in a brief list: *Daniel* ix, *Zechariah* xii. 10—14, *Psalms* xxii, and above all in 'Deutero-Isaiah' the passages called 'songs of the Servant of Yahweh' (*Isaiah* xlii. 1—4, xlix. 1—6, l. 4—9, lii. 13—liii. 12). For twenty centuries people have been asking who was this humble and gentle Prophet, this suffering righteous individual whose death saved multitudes. In truth, apart from Jesus, the Christian Messiah, only one is known in the whole of Jewish history, and this one has only been known for a very short time; it is the pious Teacher who was martyred by Aristobulus II. It is not a *single* revolution in the study of biblical exegesis which the Dead Sea documents have brought about; it is, one already feels, a whole cascade of revolutions<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> I reserve for the work announced *supra* (p. 79, n. 1) the account of some of these completely new researches on which I have already drafted numerous notes.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE JEWISH 'NEW COVENANT' AND THE CHRISTIAN 'NEW COVENANT'

At the point at which we have arrived, the Essenes do not appear to be a restricted or very small group, developing more or less on the fringe of Judaism as a whole, but, on the contrary, a strongly organized sect full of vitality and life, the creator of a mystical, apocalyptic and moral literature of the greatest richness. Its active members in the first century of our era were numerous: Philo gives the number as 'more than 4,000', which is considerable for a little country like Judaea. Moreover, this perhaps refers only to the cenobites, to the exclusion of the ordinary members who, like the tertiaries, lived outside the monasteries. An ardent centre of spiritual life, the range of its influence was as wide as it was deep.

Moreover, if the Essenes lived chiefly in Judaea, it is certain that Essenism did not remain confined there: the Jewish world at that time extended far beyond the borders of the Holy Land, and it is not possible that a movement so intense failed to find an echo in the *Diaspora*. Rather were its links with the *Diaspora* close and fundamental. Indeed, if the Essenism of the second century B.C., impregnated with Iranian influence, seems to have come to birth in Mesopotamian Jewry, the reform brought about early in the first century by the Master of Justice, a reform of Pythagorean inspiration, seems to have been of Egyptian origin from Alexandria, where the Pythagorean renaissance had its centre. The Master of Justice, even if he never left Judaea, could not be ignorant of what was taking place in a country so close at hand, where the Jews were extremely numerous and in constant touch with Jerusalem.

Philo has described to us at great length a colony of Jewish ascetics living in Egypt, near Lake Mareotis, the famous 'Therapeutae'<sup>1</sup>: many characteristics recall very closely the Neo-Pythagorean communities, and also the Essene communities of Palestine; in actual fact the Therapeutae of Egypt were in my opinion simply Essenes, save that they gave themselves more exclusively to a

<sup>1</sup> In *De Vita Contemplativa*.

contemplative life. Was it they who served as a model for the Essenes of Palestine? Or, on the contrary, do they represent an offshoot of the Palestinian communities, of a more speculative type such as would better suit the Alexandrian Jews? Whatever may be the answer, the presence in Egypt of mystical Jewish brotherhoods of Pythagorean inspiration certainly reveals the extent of the movement of which the Master of Justice was the instigator in Judaea.

Philo tells us, in connection with the Therapeutae, that 'this sect was to be found everywhere in the world', both amongst the Greeks and the Barbarians, and especially 'in Egypt, in each of the nomes and especially around Alexandria'. This statement of Philo's is often questioned; some even deny that the Therapeutae existed at all. For my part, I believe that Philo knew perfectly well what he was talking about, and that the existence of Jewish communities of the Pythagorean type in many regions of the *Diaspora* is far from being a myth. Philo's own thought is saturated with Gnosticism; and the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a Judaeo-Alexandrian work which is dated, in my opinion, about 30 B.C., seems to me more and more like an exhortation, or protreptic, addressed by a 'pious' Jew from Egypt—perhaps one of the Therapeutae or, broadly, by an Essene—to all those whom Wisdom tempts<sup>1</sup>.

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Thus, the revelation of the Jewish 'New Covenant', which has just been brought to us in such detail by the Dead Sea discoveries, enriches very substantially our knowledge of Essenism. In the last two centuries B.C. and the first century A.D. this represented a movement in Judaism as widespread as it was deep, both inside and outside Palestine. It is from the womb of this religious ferment that Christianity, the Christian 'New Covenant', emerged. In history there are scarcely any absolute beginnings, and Christianity is no exception to the rule. Already eminent historians have

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the protreptic only occupies the first part of the book (ch. I—X). The second part (ch. XI—XIX) is an allegorical commentary on *Exodus* emanating from the same milieu but of a slightly later date, towards A.D. 30 in my opinion; in actual fact, it is an apocalypse packed with allusions to the tortures of hell and the rewards of heaven. The whole of this *Beyond* is set forth in a way which recalls in a most surprising way, the classical descriptions of the Greek and Latin writers. I hope to demonstrate this at some future time.

recognized in Essenism a 'foretaste of Christianity'. This expression is one of Renan's, as also is: 'Christianity is an Essenism which has largely succeeded'<sup>1</sup>. That scholar, at all events, hesitated to affirm a 'direct connection' between Essenism and Christianity despite their deep resemblances. It was a wise and prudent attitude, in the light of the sources available in his time; but to-day, thanks to the new texts, the problem presents itself in an entirely new way.

Everything in the Jewish New Covenant heralds and prepares the way for the Christian New Covenant. The Galilean Master, as He is presented to us in the writings of the New Testament, appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation of the Master of Justice. Like the latter He preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbour, chastity. Like him, He prescribed the observance of the Law of Moses, the whole Law, but the Law finished and perfected, thanks to His own revelations. Like him He was the Elect and the Messiah of God, the Messiah redeemer of the world. Like him He was the object of the hostility of the priests, the party of the Sadducees. Like him He was condemned and put to death. Like him He pronounced judgement on Jerusalem, which was taken and destroyed by the Romans for having put Him to death. Like him, at the end of time, He will be the supreme judge. Like him He founded a Church whose adherents fervently awaited His glorious return. In the Christian Church, just as in the Essene Church, the essential rite is the sacred meal, whose ministers are the priests. Here and there at the head of each community there is the overseer, the 'bishop'. And the ideal of both Churches is essentially that of unity, communion in love—even going so far as the sharing of common property.

All these similarities—and here I only touch upon the subject—together constitute a very impressive whole. The question at once arises, to which of the two sects, the Jewish or the Christian, does the priority belong? Which of the two was able to influence the other? The reply leaves no room for doubt. The Master of Justice died about 65—63 B.C.; Jesus the Nazarene died about A.D. 30. In every case where the resemblance compels or invites us to think of a borrowing, this was on the part of Christianity. But on the other hand, the appearance of faith in Jesus—the foundation of

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire du Peuple d'Israël*, V, p. 70.

the New Church—can scarcely be explained without the real historic activity of a new Prophet, a new Messiah, who rekindled the flame and concentrated on himself the adoration of men.<sup>1</sup>

Of the Master of Justice, whose career preceded that of the Galilean Rabbi by about a century, we knew practically nothing until now. The *Damascus Document* remained too obscure for us to define with any precision the figure of the great Teacher, the date of his ministry or the significance of his work. Everything is now changed, and all the problems relative to primitive Christianity—problems earnestly examined for so many centuries—all these problems henceforth find themselves placed in a new light, which forces us to reconsider them completely.

It goes without saying that I cannot here offer even an outline of so vast a work. I only wish to stress for the present that the contribution of the new texts is in reality most constructive. Many problems in primitive Christian texts, which baffled the historian and could incline him to denials—in the first place the denial even of the historical existence of Jesus—will at last find a clear and positive explanation; since the historical milieu is better known, Jesus and the nascent Christian church will find themselves more firmly rooted in history. Certainly many obscurities will remain, but never has such a wealth of light been offered to the Christian historian.

<sup>1</sup> This is not the place to discuss the actual career and work of this new Messiah. It is scarcely necessary to say that the author in no way wishes to deny the originality of the Christian religion. He has here noted the resemblances, but differences also clearly exist. Specialists in the history of Early Christianity will not fail to point these out. But Christianity is grafted on to the tree of Judaism; it is the point where this grafting is effected that interests the author.