

Hans BURGMANN

WHO WAS THE "WICKED PRIEST"?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ad personam: I am "Religionsgeschichtler". I am not a theologian. I am not a historian. I am a bit between both ...

ad rem: I published in 1986 and 1987 two books. The first one is a collection of articles, written between 1971 and 1981 about Simon the Maccabee - this is the "Man of Lie" - and also about the intercalation of the solar calendar of Qumrân.

You would like to know the contents of my second book. The title is: Prehistory and Early History of the Essene Communities of Qumrân and Damascus.

If it is needed to write the history of the Essenes it is necessary to identify the "Wicked Priest" ("WP")! It is a cover-name in the Habakkuk pesher and in the pesher of Psalm 37. It must be a cover-name for a highpriest of the Maccabean and the Hasmonean period. For me this term is clear. The "Wicked Priest" must be the Maccabean highpriest Jonatan and nobody else! My arguments are as follows:

1. The "WP" held two offices (pHab VIII, 8-10) - Jonatan the Maccabee held two offices: He was elected as chief of the partisans against the Syrians anno 160 ante, as "ethnarchos" and "strategos"! Seven years later Jonatan was nominated by the Syrian king as "strategos" and "highpriest" anno 152 ante! Nobody else held two offices! Jonatan is therefore the "Wicked Priest"!

2. The "WP" held two offices. In his first office he was an intimate friend of the Essene sect. He had the name of "fidelity" = 'āmāi! 'āmāi must be translated as "fidelity", "loyalty", "faithfulness", "constancy", "firmness". 'āmāi is not aletheia, is not "truth", is not "Wahrheit"! 'āmāi is "Treue"! The most faithful of the faithfuls was "Jonatan", the son of the king Saul, and "Jonatan", the son of the highpriest Abjatar. Both - even in peril of their lives - were loyal to David. And David was a very important person in the thinking of the Essene sect. "Jonatan", the name and also his person was for this community

But wer don't need these portions and these persons, because no text in the pesharim can be related to any other person than Jonatan the Maccabee. Jonatan the Maccabee is the "Wicked Priest" and nobody else. I name these scien-

ABEL / STARCKY, Les Livres des Maccabées

tists in German "Sheibchen-Schneider". This "Scheibchen-Schneiderei" is the extremely modern knowledge, the "Wicked Priest" in question... It's a pity...

3. Other scientists say - and this is right: The most brutal ruler in Judaea at that time was Alexander Jannai. Therefore: Alexander Jannai must be the "Wicked Priest"! But this argumentation is wrong. The scientists have forgotten the internal policy in the state. The Maccabean Jonatan and Simon were friends of the Pharisees. The chief of the state and the religious-political association unanimously oppressed the Essene sect. It was a hard situation for the "elected of God". But Hyrcan I, the disciple and friend of the Pharisees broke with his former friends, went over to the Sadducees and persecuted the Pharisees. At this moment the Essene sect was freed from the double oppression, from the oppression of the chief of the state and the oppression of the "secte rivale", the Pharisees. The Essenes lived in fully freedom. And in the times of Alexander Jannai the internal and external situation of the Essene sect was the same. Jannai crucified 800 Pharisees. The men of Qumran even defended this brutal action of this brutal highpriest-king in the Temple Scroll (11QT) - perhaps in the Nahum peshet, too. The reign of Alexander Jannai was the high-time in the history of the Essenes. Many many coins of this king have been found in the Qumran area, and the settlement was mightily expanded. It's clear. Jannai was of course not a special friend of the Essene sect. But he was not the "Wicked Priest"! The "Wicked Priest" was Jonatan the Maccabee!

Hermann LICHTENBERGER

REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST'S COMMUNITIES

One of the central questions concerning the relationship between John the Baptist and the Dead Sea Scrolls is whether John was an Essene or had been influenced by the Essenes - and we assume in this context that Essene and Qumran are not mutually exclusive entities.

This moot question is significant both for our knowledge of early Christianity, and the development and message of John the Baptist himself. There are clear and striking similarities, e.g., concerning the baptism especially, but also concerning the message: the baptism of John is a βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, "a baptism in token of repentance, for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk. 1:4; NEB, Oxford, 1970).

Anyone familiar with, e.g., IQS (Serekh ha-Yahad), has observed the close similarities between John and Qumran concerning baptismal rites and repentance. The obvious question arising from this evidence is, "Was John an Essene?" The answers usually given are:

- (1) John was an Essene and remained an Essene, or
- (2) John had at one time been an Essene but later left Qumran, viz. the Essene community.

Since all arguments concerning the two theses have been presented elsewhere we will consider them here only briefly.

Ad (1): John was an Essene and remained an Essene. This presupposes that John lived at Qumran but travelled to the Jordan for his preaching and baptizing and, even more important, that he was preaching Qumran doctrines! But are the Qumran doctrines compatible with John's preaching as we know it from the New Testament and Josephus? While those concerning baptism and repentance perhaps have much in common, a glance at the entire set of Qumran doctrines shows that, on the whole, they are not compatible with John's preaching, as in, e.g., John's general call to repentance.