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Elements of Pejorative Wordplay and Language of Enmity in the Qumran Commentary on Nahum in Historical-Religious Context

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Abstract. The article deals with the language of enmity and pejorative wordplay in the Qumran Commentary (*Peshar*) on Nahum (*4QpNah* = *4Q169*). According to the author's reconstruction, this sectarian work could be written in 88 B.C.E. after the defeat of the Judean king and high priest Alexander Jannaeus' army inflicted by the Syrian king Demetrius III Eucaerus, who was invited in Judaea by the rebellious Pharisees, near the city of Shechem: as a result, Alexander was forced to flee to the Ephraim Mountains (see: Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish War*, I, 95; *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 379), in all probability to his mountain fortress Alexandrion. Taking advantage of this, the Pharisees temporarily came to power in Jerusalem – probably for some months in the same 88 B.C.E. In suppressing the rebellion, Alexander executed the Pharisees through crucifixion – hypothetically, more than once.

The author analyzes such pejorative designations and notions as the «interpreters/expounders of smooth things (slippery)» (דורשי חלקות), «false teaching (*talmūd*)», «Ephraim», the «House of Peleg» attested in *4QpNah* in correlation with the Pharisees, as well as the nicknames the «Furious Young Lion», the «Wicked Priest», the «Last Priest» with reference to Alexander Jannaeus. In particular, the high share of probability of the suggestion concerning the correlation of the pejorative designation דורשי חלקות («interpreters of smooth things») with the designation דורשי הלכות, the «interpreters/expounders of the *halakhoth* (laws)», which was used to refer to the teachers of the Law probably since the time of the first Tannaim (cf., e. g.: *M. Nedarim*, IV, 3; *B. T. Betzah*, 15b), allows one to assume that the latter designation was used in Judaea as a *terminus technicus* with reference to the Pharisees' *interpreters of the laws* already in the Hellenistic period.

Keywords: language of enmity, pejorative wordplay, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Qumranites, the Qumran Commentary on Nahum (*4QpNah*), the Qumran Commentary on Habakkuk (*1QpHab*).

Research area: history of Judaea, religious studies, philosophy, theology.

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Элементы пейоративной игры слов и языка вражды в кумранском Комментарий на Наума в историко-религиозном контексте

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Аннотация. Представлен анализ языка вражды и пейоративной игры слов в кумранском Комментарий (*Pesher*) на книгу пророка Наума (*4QpNah* = *4Q169*). Согласно реконструкции автора, это произведение членов Кумранской общины могло быть написано в 88 г. до н. э. (после поражения воинства иудейского царя и первосвященника Александра Янная, нанесенного ему сирийским царем Деметрием III Эвкером, приглашенным в Иудею восставшими фарисеями, под Сихемом: в результате Александр был вынужден бежать в Эфраимитские горы, по всей вероятности, в горную крепость Александрион). Используя данную ситуацию, фарисеи временно захватили власть в Иерусалиме – скорее всего на несколько месяцев 88 г. до н. э. В процессе подавления восстания Александр казнил фарисеев через распятие – вероятно, неоднократно.

Автор анализирует такие уничижительные обозначения и понятия в *4QpNah*, как «истолкователи скользкого (гладкого)», «ложное учение» (*talmūd*), «Эфраим», «Дом Пелега», засвидетельствованные в этом произведении в корреляции с фарисеями, а также прозвища «Яростный молодой лев», «Нечестивый священник», «Последний священник», употребляемые по отношению к Александру Яннаю. В частности, высокая доля вероятности предположения о корреляции пейоративного обозначения דורשי חלקות («истолкователи скользкого») с דורשי הלכות («истолкователи *халахот* (законов)»); оно использовалось для обозначения учителей Закона уже во времена первых таннаев) позволяет предположить, что последнее наименование использовалось в Иудее как *terminus technicus* для обозначения фарисеев в качестве *истолкователей законов* уже в эллинистический период.

Ключевые слова: язык вражды, пейоративная игра слов, фарисеи, саддукеи, ессеи, кумраниты, кумранский Комментарий на Наума (*4QpNah*), кумранский Комментарий на Аввакума (*1QpHab*).

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Научные специальности: история Иудеи, религиоведение, теология, философия.

Introductory words: The radicalism of religious, ideologic, and socio-political views of the members of the Judae an Qumran community (probably of an Essene trend¹; 2nd century B.C.E.– 1st century C.E.) predetermined the esoteric nature of their works, inter alia for reasons of security. So, hints of historic events that took place in Judaea in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, bear an allegoric and metaphoric character in the Qumran manuscripts, almost all of the figures mentioned here and all groups appear under symbols, nicknames, and sometimes ciphers, the absolute dates are absent, and some relative ones are usually of symbolic and eschatological character. In this regard, the Qumran Commentary on Prophet Nahum² (*Pesher Nahum*; *4QpNah* = *4Q169*) is no exception, whereby a broad discussion turned around its interpretation.

Statement of the problem: The Commentary on Nahum (*4QpNah*)³ is the only Qumran composition hitherto discovered in which two real names of Hellenistic historical characters to be found in a more or less coherent historical context⁴, *vid.* the «Kings of Greece (יון; lit. Ionia)», *i. e.* the Seleucids, Antiochus

(*4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:3)⁵ and Demetrius. Of the latter is said that he «sought to enter Jerusalem on the counsel of the interpreters (or “expounders” – *I. T.*) of smooth things (בעצת דורשי הלקות)» (*4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:2). By most scholars this passage is interpreted as an allusion to the Pharisees (= דורשי הלקות; see below)⁶, who assumed leadership of the insurrection against the Judae an Hasmonae an king Alexander Jannaeus (Jonathan II; 103–76 B.C.E.) and invited the Syrian king Demetrius III Eucuerus (97/96–88/87 B.C.E.) to fight on their side⁷, as it was described by Josephus Flavius in *The Jewish War*, I, 92, and *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 376⁸. Based upon these facts it is normally assumed that the text of the first column and the first line of the second column of the Commentary on Nahum (*4QpNah*) provide evidence for some circumstances of this rebellion. According to a widely adopted opinion, the text of the

¹ See, *e. g.*: Tantlevskij, 2016: 61–75.

² The Book of Prophet Nahum the Elkoshite was composed between 663/662 and 612 (or 609) B.C.E., probably closer to 612 B.C.E.; see, *e. g.*: Diakonov, 1956: 15, 297, 303; Eissfeldt, 1964: 559–561; Amusin, 1971: 203f.; Pinker, 2005: 6; Richards, 2006: 1250; Coogan, 2009: 297f.

³ The *editio princeps* of the complete text: Allegro, 1968: 37–42, plates xii–xiv. See further: Strugnell, 1970: 204–210; García Martínez, Tigchelaar, 1997: 334–341; Doudna, 2001; Horgan, 2002: 144–155. Berrin, 2004. This Qumran work is orthographically and paleographically dated to the late Hasmonae an or early Herodian periods (see, *e. g.*: Strugnell, 1970: 205; Doudna: 675–682; Berrin, 2004: 205; Chapman, Schnabel, 2015: 517).

⁴ In the fragments of *4QMishmaroth hak-Kohanim*, the names of Si[mon] (sc. Simon Hasmonaeus (?); C^a, fr. 3, 2), Johanan (sc. Johanan (John) Hyrcanus I; C^a, fr. 2, 4–5), Salome (sc. Alexandra Salome, Jannaeus’ wife; C^a, fr. 2, 4; C^c, fr. 1, 5), Hyrcanus (sc. Hyrcanus II; C^a, fr. 2, 6), Ar[istobulus] (sc. Aristobulus II (?); C^b, fr. 3, 6), Aemilius (sc. Aemilius Scaurus, Roman governor in Syria in 62 B.C.E.; C^d, fr. 2, 4) are attested *out of context*. As to the text *4Q448* («A Prayer for King Jonathan and His Kingdom»), it was probably composed by one of King Jonathan’s (*i. e.* most probably Alexander Jannaeus’ [= Jonathan II]; less likely, Jonathan I the Hasmonae an) followers and brought to Qumran by one of the sectarians (possibly, for the purpose of informing the Qumranites).

⁵ It is likely to refer to Antiochus III the Great (cf., *e. g.*: Rowley, 1956: 188–193; Loewenstamm 1956: 1; Tantlevskij, 2012: 135). For the most part, scholars (to begin with J. M. Allegro; 1956: 89–93) identified Antiochus mentioned in *4QpNah* 1:3 with Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see also further, *e. g.*: Dupont-Sommer, 1980: 280f., n. 3; Amusin, 1971: 219, n. 10; and others). F. M. Cross accepted the identification of this person with Antiochus VII Sidetes (Cross, 1958: 92). I. Levy, on the other hand, was of the opinion that this passage deals with Antiochus, brother of the Syrian king Demetrius III Eucuerus (Levy, 1956: 2). See further: Chapman, Schnabel, 2015: 518f.

⁶ See, *e. g.*: Doudna, 2001: 632–634; Charlesworth, 2002: 112–115; Wise, 2003: 70, n. 9; Dąbrowa 2010, 177ff. Cf., on the other hand, doubts and objections in: Rowley 1956: 192; Saldarini 2001: 279–280; VanderKam 2003: 468–477.

⁷ See, *e. g.*: Allegro, 1959: 47–51; Cross, 1959: 91–94; Jeremias, 1963: 127–139; Dupont-Sommer, 1980: 280ff.; Amusin, 1971: 208–210; Stegemann, 1971: 120–128; Idem, 1993: 182–184; Callaway, 1988: 164–168; cf.: Schiffman, 1993: 272–290; Berrin, 2004, 87–130; Dąbrowa, 2010: 175–181. In H. H. Rowley’s opinion, Demetrius of the text *4QpNah* 1:2 was the Seleucid king Demetrius I Soter (162–150 B.C.E.) who was provoked by an intrigue of the Judae an high priest Alcimus to dispatch in 161 B.C.E. his strategists Bacchides and Nicanor against Jerusalem. As to «the interpreters/expounders of smooth things», these are, according to Rowley, members of the Hellenising party of Alcimus (Rowley, 1956: 188–193; see also: Stauffer, 1957: 125f., 128–132; Rabinowitz, 1978: 394–399; Chapman, Schnabel, 2015: 218ff.).

⁸ As E. Dąbrowa notes, «it meant that the Pharisees agreed to the loss of Judean independence if only they could regain control of the Jerusalem temple» (Dąbrowa, 2010: 178; cf.: Doudna, 2001, 633).

Commentary on Nahum, fr. 3–4, col. 2 (first line excluded) – 4, reflects the events that took place during the reign of the queen Alexandra Salome (76–67 B.C. E.), Jannaeus' widow⁹. The advocates of this hypothesis at the same time consider 63 B.C.E., the year Judaea was conquered by Pompey the Great, the *terminus post quem* of the Commentary's composition. An alternative view is that in the Commentary on Nahum *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 2:2–4:9, certain events of the reign of Salome's sons, Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II, are depicted, particularly clashes in the course of their internecine war (60–50s B.C.E.)¹⁰.

Discussion; the author's proposals: It seems to us that the Commentary on Nahum (*4QpNah*) can only have been compiled in 88 B.C.E. – and, consequently, it is the only Qumran composition hitherto discovered which can be dated precisely to within a year: in its surviving coherent text – in all four columns of fr. 3–4 – the situation is reflected which had developed in Judaea in the very same year as a result of the defeat inflicted by Demetrius III on Alexander Jannaeus' troops near Shechem¹¹.

The vast majority of researchers is of the opinion that the king Alexander is mentioned twice in the text of *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:4–8, designated as «the Furious Young Lion»¹², as he is also designated in the Qumran Commentary on Hosea (*4QpHos^b*), fr. 2, 2–3. The passage of the Commentary on Nahum (*4QpNah*), fr. 3–4, 1:4–8 reads as follows:

«The lion (ארי) tears enough for its cubs (and) it chokes prey for its lioness» (*Nah.* 2:13a) <...> [Its interpretation concerns] the Furious (or: the «Fierce». – *I. T.*) Young Lion (כפיר ההרון) who strikes (יכה); or «beats», «defeats». – *I. T.*) his great men and the men of his council ... [«And it fills] its cave [with prey] and its den with torn flesh» (*Nah.* 2:13b). Its interpretation concerns the Furious Young Lion [who has executed (or: «executes». – *I. T.*) revenge on the interpreters (or: «expounders». – *I. T.*) of smooth things and who hangs (יתלה) men alive [on the tree(s), as this is the law] in Israel as of old¹³ (or: “[a thing done] long since in Israel”. – *I. T.*)...

This passage of the Qumran Commentary on Nahum is usually correlated with Josephus Flavius' account of «blasphemy» committed by Alexander Jannaeus (= Furious Young Lion in *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:5–6) towards the end of the civil war, in 88 B.C.E., when, «boozing» in Jerusalem «in a conspicuous place with his concubines, he ordered that some eight hundred (of “the most powerful” rebels, *i. e.*, apparently the Pharisees for the most part¹⁴. – *I. T.*) be crucified (ἀνασταυρωῖσα), and, while they were still alive, their wives and children be killed before their very eyes»¹⁵. That is why the Judaeen king Alexander Jannaeus was called a «wicked one by his nature» by the Judaeans (B. T. *Berachoth* 29a)¹⁶, a «Thracian» (Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 383), *i. e.*, a very cruel man (like a Thracian). It was the most cruel «complex» execution Jannaeus had ever subjected insurgents to¹⁷, but probably by no means the only case of the death penalty by crucifixion (or simply «hanging men alive») being imposed on insurgents during the 94/93–88

⁹ This idea was first suggested in: Flusser, 1961: 456–458, *Idem*, 1970: 133–168; Amusin, 1962: 101–110; *Idem*, 1963: 389–396; Yadin, 1971: 1–12. See also further, *e. g.*: Horgan, 1979: 7f.; Fröhlich, 1986: 391; *cf.*, *e. g.*: Stegemann, 1971: 76–79, 120–128; Callaway, 1988: 164–171.

¹⁰ See, *e. g.*: Dupont-Sommer, 1963: 55–88; *cf.*: Stegemann, 1971: 182ff.

¹¹ Located some 2 km east of modern Nablus in the valley between the Ebal and the Gerizim Mountains.

¹² See, *e. g.*: Allegro, 1959: 47–51; Cross, 1959: 91–94; Jeremias, 1963: 127–139; Stegemann, 1971: 120–128; Dupont-Sommer, 1980: 280ff.; and others. H. H. Rowley supposed that the designation «Furious Young Lion» in *4QpNah* is used either for the high priest Alcimus or the king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Rowley, 1956: 192f.). H. J. Schonfield identifies this person with the Roman Emperor Titus (39–81 C.E.) (Schonfield, 1956: 96f.), while G. R. Driver identifies the «Furious Young Lion» with one of the leaders of the 66–74 Judaeen uprising against Roman domination Simon bar Giora (Driver, 1965: 291f.).

¹³ First reconstruction by Y. Yadin (Yadin, 1971: 12). *Cf.*, *e. g.*: Hartog, 2017: 173ff.

¹⁴ The Pharisees, prior to the uprising, had occupied high posts in the state and had had a majority in the Sanhedrin (= «the interpreters/expounders of smooth things», «great men», «men of the council» in *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:2–8).

¹⁵ Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish War*, I, 97, 113 and *Idem*, *The Jewish Antiquities*, X, III, 380; see also: X, III, 381–383.

¹⁶ *Cf.*: Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 376 and 399.

¹⁷ *Cf.*: Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish Antiquities*, X II, 256.

uprising, in the course of which – according to *The Jewish War*, I, 91, and *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 376, – no less than 50,000 Jews were killed by the Judaeen king and high priest. (Cf. *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:7: «...The Furious Young Lion <...> hangs (תלה); here, the imperfect indicates a *repeated* (or usual, habitual) action. – *I. T.*) men alive [on the trees...].») Besides, it should be noted that, judging from *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:7–8, the crucifixion of state criminals (and particularly traitors who had been in contact with foreigners) was not specifically Qumranic (cf.: *11QT^a* 64:6–13; cf. also: *Deut.* 21:22–33), but a law of the Judaeen state¹⁸.

Special attention should be given the verbs הכה («to strike»), «to beat», «to defeat») and תלה («to hang») used in the above-mentioned text of *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:4–8, in the imperfect that serves here to denote repeated actions (begun in the past and still occurring at the time the Commentary was compiled). Since the agent in this passage is the Furious Young Lion it may be concluded that this character was alive at the time of the composition of the Commentary on Nahum¹⁹. Moreover, this hypothesis is supported by the fact that the author of the text in his «interpretation» of *Nah.* 2:13 substituted the term כפיר («young lion») for the word ארי («lion»), probably to stress the youth of the cruel hero. It would hardly have been appropriate to do so, had the Commentary on Nahum been composed after the death of the «Furious Young Lion» (Alexander Jannaeus died in 76 B.C.E. at the age of 49).

As to the frightening allegory of this wicked Judaeen king – whom the Qumranites appears to consider Alexander Jannaeus²⁰ – it seems to have developed from Ezekiel 19:5–6, where the word כפיר («young lion») is probably used to describe young bloodthirsty and

impious Judaeen king of the pre-captivity period Jehoiakim (609/608–598 B.C.E.; cf.: *2 Kg.* 24:4 and *2 Chr.* 36:5, 8; *Jer.* 26:20–23). Comparison of the royal rage with the «roar of young lion (הכפיר)» evidenced in *Prov.* 19:12 and 20:2.

In the Qumran Commentary on the Book of Prophet Hosea (*4QpHos^b*), fr. 2, 2–3, the «Furious Young Lion» is designated as the «Last Priest» (כוהן האחרון) – *resp.* the last Hasmonean high priest of Judaea – for, according to messianic-eschatological chronology of the Qumranites, the «End of Days» (אחרית הימים) was to come in the nearest future; and the Qumran sectarians considered themselves as belonging to the «last generation (הדור האחרון)», living in the «last period (הקץ האחרון)». At this one should bear in mind that the terms החרון and האחרון are colloquially almost homonymous, so here is clearly can be seen a play on words.

In *4QpNah* 1:8–2:1 additional information about the «Furious Young Lion» is to be found:

«Behold I am against [you, says the Lord of Hosts. I will burn up] your [multitude in flames], and the sword shall devour your young lions. I will eradicate [from the land the p]illaging. And [the voice of your messengers] shall no [more be heard]» (*Nah.* 2:14). Its [interpretation is: «your multitude» – they are the bands of his (the Furious Young Lion's. – *I. T.*) army (גדודי חילו), that he has lost in Shechem (?). – *I. T.*]; and «his young lions» – they are his great men («nobles». – *I. T.*), [...] and «his prey» – it is the wealth which the [Priests] of Jerusalem have accumulated, which they [have gi]ven away [... It is through the fault of E]phraim (*i. e.*, probably the Pharisees, since the designation «Ephraim» has been used in this Commentary as a synonym of «the interpreters of smooth things». – *I. T.*) that Israel shall be delivered [in the hand of foreigners]... And «his messengers» – they are his envoys whose voice shall no more be heard among the nations.

It seems plausible to assume that this text is an allusion to the shattering defeat of Alexander Jannaeus' army near Shechem (cf.: Jo-

¹⁸ Cf., *e. g.*: *Ezr.* 6:11; *4QA^a* = *4QTestLevi^d*, fr. 24, I, II, 4–6, *Test. Levi* 4:4 (Greek, Armenian, and Slavonic versions) and *Test. Ben.* 9:2–5, *Wis. Sol.* 2:12–20; *Bereshit Rabba* 65:22; *M. Sanhedrin*, V I, 4, *J. T. Hagigah*, 77d–78a, *J. T. Sanhedrin*, 23c, *Sifre Devarim* 21:22; cf. also: *Jn.* 18:31–32, 19:7, 15–16. See further: Yadin, 1971: 1–12; Hartog, 2017: 173ff.

It should also be taken into consideration that in Republican Rome the death sentence by crucifixion was pronounced even on the Roman citizens who had taken an enemy's part in war.

¹⁹ Cf. also: *4QpHos^b*, fr. 2, 3.

²⁰ See, *e. g.*: Tantlevskij, 1995; *Idem*, 2012: 137f.

sephus Flavius, *The Jewish War*, I, 92–95; *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 377–378). The Pharisees had taken the Seleucid's side in the battle. Jannaeus lost most of «the bands of his army», and, together with his remaining partisans, particularly with those representing the aristocratic, priestly «party» of the Sadducees, he was forced to flee to the Ephraim Mountains (see: Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish War*, I, 95; *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 379), in all probability in his mountain fortress Alexandrion built by him (during excavations here were found fragments of fortifications and water supply system of the Hasmonaean period). In Jerusalem, the Pharisees temporarily came to power, supported by thousands of their adherents (cf.: Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish War*, I, 98; *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 383).

In our opinion, it is those events that the next passage of the Commentary – *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 2:2–6 – deals with:

«Woe to the city of blood (Nahum refers to Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian kingdom. – *I. T.*); it is full of [lies and rap]e» (*Nah.* 3:1). Its interpretation: it is the city of Ephraim (*i. e.*, probably Jerusalem captured by the Pharisees. – *I. T.*), the expounders of smooth things in the last days (lit.: «towards the End of Days». – *I. T.*) who walk in lies and falsehood. «The prowler does not want (in Nineveh. – *I. T.*), noise of whip and noise of rattling wheel, prancing horse and jolting chariot, horsemen, a blade and glittering spear, a multitude of slain and a heap of carcasses. There is no end to the dead» (*Nah.* 3:1–3). Its interpretation: this concerns the power (or: «rule», «dominion». – *I. T.*) of the interpreters of smooth things (ממשלת דורשי ההלכות), from the midst of whose assembly the sword of Gentiles (or «foreigners». – *I. T.*) does not want (apparently this phrase hints at Demetrius III being invited by the rebellious Pharisees to help. – *I. T.*) captivity, looting, and starting (lit.: «enkindling». – *I. T.*) of internecine war (וחרהור בינותם), and exile from the dread of the enemy (here, the commentator probably wants to remind the reader of the Pharisees' activities during the civil war. –

I. T.); a multitude of guilty corpses fall in their days (*i. e.*, at the time of their temporary victory. – *I. T.*); there is no end to them being slain. They even stumble upon their body of flesh because they are guilty due to their counsel (this seems to hint at the reprisals the Pharisees carried out in the capital and the territories under their control against their opponents who had failed to flee. – *I. T.*).

Before dealing with the next passage of *4QpNah*, we want to point out the fact that it is the phrase «the power («rule», «dominion») of the interpreters of smooth things» (*4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 2:4) that serves as principal argument of those scholars who are of the opinion that the text of the Commentary's second (first line excluded), third and fourth column refers to the events that took place in Judaea after Jannaeus' death, in the reign of Alexandra Salome or Hyrcanus II, since those rulers relied on the Pharisees for support. We will refer to this question below; here we want to stress that according to the above text the author of the Commentary cites verses 5–7 of chapter 3 of the Book of Nahum where the prophet has foretold Nineveh's ruin and devastation, and connects this prophecy with «Ephraim», «the expounders of smooth things», *i. e.*, the Pharisees. Additionally, from the 7th line of the 3rd column, fr. 3–4, to the end of the manuscript, the Commentary on Nahum deals with the fate of the «Manasseh» group which is opposed to the groups called «Ephraim» (*i. e.*, the Pharisees) and «Yehudah» (*i. e.*, the Qumranites (most probably, an Essene group)). Thus, in the Commentary on Nahum the members of the Qumran community are referred to as «Israel» (*sc.* the «true Israel») and «Yehudah» (*sc.* the «true Judaeans»), while the Pharisees appear under the designation of «Ephraim», and the Sadducees – as «Manasseh», *i. e.*, they bear names of the northern tribes rose in revolt and separated from the southern tribe of Yehudah and the Temple of Jerusalem after the death of king Solomon²¹. (Cf. also, *e. g.*: *4QpPs372*:18–20.)

Indeed, most scholars believe that the «Manasseh» sectarians characterized as «the great men» and «honourable men» in

²¹ Cf.: *Isa.* 9:18–20; cf. also: *Judg.* 8:1–3, 12:1–6.

4*QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 3:9, are those representing the aristocratic, priestly sect of the Sadducees whom Alexander Jannaeus relied upon for support and who fought on his side against the Pharisees. Commenting on *Nah.* 3:8, where the prophet speaks of No-Amon (*i. e.*, Thebes) having been captured by the Assyrians in 663 B.C.E. the author of 4*QpNah* likens this Egyptian city and its defenders to the «mighty men of war» (גבורי מלחמה) of «Manasseh», *i. e.*, to the Sadducean warriors, and goes on to «interpret» this verse as being related to the defeat of the Sadducean «army» (היל). As to «Ephraim», *i. e.*, the Pharisees who took sides with Demetrius III in the 88 B.C.E. battle near Shechem, they are correlated in this passage with the Assyrians. In connection with the aforementioned, it is useful to point out that it was in *ca.* 88 B.C.E. that Thebes (which took part in the people's uprising) was seized after a three-year siege and destroyed by the Egyptian king Ptolemy IX Soter II (Lathyrus). If this event happened in the time of the compilation of 4*QpNah*, the comparison of the defeated Sadducees with Egyptian Thebes had a certain association for the author that year.

Of fundamental importance for the identification and dating of the events reflected in the Commentary on Nahum is the passage 4*QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 4:1–4, which reads:

«Yet she (Nahum refers to Thebes here. – *I. T.*) was exiled, she went into captivity; and her children are crushed at the corners of all the streets, they cast lots of her honourable men, and all her great men are bound with chains (*Nah.* 3:10). Interpretation of this concerns Manasseh in the final (or: «last». – *I. T.*) period, when his kingdom (or: «reign»; מלכותו. – *I. T.*) falls (תשפל; lit. «becomes low», «is abased». – *I. T.*) in Israel, <...> his wives, his children, and little ones go (ילכו) into captivity, his mighty men and honourable men [perish] by the sword.

Judging from the verbs שפל («to be or become low», «be abased») and הלך («to go», «walk», «come», «to go off», «depart») being used here in the imperfect form, it may be

concluded that the «kingdom» of «Manasseh», *i. e.*, of the aristocratic party of the Sadducees at Jannaeus' court who supported the king Alexander²², was still in power by the time of the Commentary's composition, though the Sadducees were in a difficult position. This fact, by the way, proves wrong those scholars who are of the opinion that the text of columns two (first line excluded) up to four (including) reflects the events of the period of the Pharisees' absolute rule and authority that distinguished the rule of Alexandra Salome and her son Hyrcanus II (67; 63–40 B.C.E.) from the reign of Alexander Jannaeus.

In the following passage – 4*QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 4:4–9, – the commentator predicts that, despite temporary luck, the lot of «Ephraim», *i. e.*, the Pharisees, will not differ from that of «Manasseh»; and even Jerusalem's powerful fortifications will not save them. In fact, the Pharisees' triumph proved to be short-lived. We have learned from Josephus Flavius' *The Jewish War* (I, 95) and *The Jewish Antiquities* (XIII, 379) that soon after the Shechem battle, in the same year 88 B.C.E., 6,000 of the rebels (evidently, of the Pharisees for the most part), deserted unexpectedly, for reasons unknown (perhaps for fear that the gentile king Demetrius Eucærus would take possession of the holy city of Jerusalem) to Jannaeus and the Sadducees still faithful to him. It is probably this very event that the Commentary's author hints at in the text 4*QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 3:12–4:1:

[«... Put and the Libyans came to you (Nahum means the city of Thebes. – *I. T.*) to help»] (*Nah.* 3:9). Its interpretation: these are the wicked on[es], the house of Peleg (²³ בית פלג, lit.: «the house of divisions». – *I. T.*), who have joined to Manasseh (הגלויים על מנשה).

Probably the «House of Peleg» refers to those of the Pharisees who did not support the invitation of the Gentile king Demetrius III Eucærus to Judaea to help. (Cf. *CD-B (Damascus*

²² See, *e. g.*: Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish War*, I, 113–114; *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 411–414; cf.: 4*Q448* («The Prayer for King Jonathan and his Kingdom») 2:8, 3:6.

²³ Cf.: *Gen.* 10:25, *Jub.* 8:8.

Document) 20:22–24, where this designation evidently refers to the Pharisees.)

It is also known that soon after this event Demetrius III Eucærus had to withdraw from Judaea because of the internecine war in Syria. This made it possible for Alexander Jannæus to defeat the insurgents towards the end (?) of 88 B.C.E., to capture Jerusalem, and to punish those rebels who did not flee from Judaea.

However, the commentator seems to have failed to notice these events. The situation in the country depicted in the Qumran Commentary on Nahum could be characterized as a diarchy of the Pharisees and the Sadducees headed by the king Alexander – the situation that lasted only a few months (?) in 88 B.C.E. Consequently, we think that this work can only have been composed in the very same year, in 88 B.C.E.

Of special importance for dating the Commentary on Nahum and identifying the person designated as the Furious Young Lion is the text *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 2:8–9, which says that due to «Ephraim's» (*i. e.*, the Pharisees') fault «the cities and clans, the kings (מלכים), superiors, honourable men and rulers, the priests and the people along with the proselytes will perish (יובדו)». Since in the Qumran texts the terms «king», «kingdom», «reign» and «rule», «ruler» are distinguished²⁴, it is possible, in the light of the passage cited above, to draw the conclusion that the head of the Judæan state at the time *4QpNah* was compiled (and this undoubtedly is the time when the Furious Young Lion lived, as the quoted texts of *4QpNah* show²⁵), bore the title «king». Until 63 B.C.E., when Pompey conquered Judaea and abolished the Judæan kingdom, there had been five persons in Judaea bearing the title of a «king» (during the Hellenistic period, of course): Aristobulus I (104–103 B.C.E.), Alexander Jannæus (103–76 B.C.E.), Alexandra Salome (76–67 B.C.E.), Hyrcanus II (for three months in 67 B.C.E.), and Aristobulus II (67–63 B.C.E.). Evidently, the short reigns of both Aristobulus and of Hyrcanus can be ignored here because, firstly, the actions of these rulers do not correspond at all with what is said

in the Commentary on Nahum about the Furious Young Lion, and secondly, none of these persons was a contemporary of Demetrius III Eucærus who died in 88/87 B.C.E. For this reason the only «candidate» for the Furious Young Lion's «role» is the king and high priest Alexander Jannæus who was 32 years old at the time the reprisals against the rebels started (these events are probably the reason for his epithet). Apart from the aforementioned passage *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 2:8–10, evidence for the year 63 B.C.E. being the *terminus ante quem* of the Commentary's composition is provided by the fragment *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:3–4:

<...> from Antiochus to the time when the rulers of the Kittim will appear, and then (ואחר) [the land [הארץ] (or: «Jerusalem»; cf.: *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 1:1–2). – *I. T.*] will be trodden down (תרמס).

The context – and above all the adverb אחר («then», «afterwards») – implies that the verb נרמס (*Ni.*, *sing.*, *fem.*; der. from רמס, «to tread down», «to trample») is congruous here with the future tense, and the agent will be the Kittim, *i. e.*, the Romans of the Republican period. Consequently, the appearance of the army of the Kittim-Romans in Judaea is regarded by the Commentary's author as an event in the future, in time yet to come²⁶. According to *4QpNah*, fr. 3–4, 2:2, 3:3, 4:3, the author of the Commentary on Nahum thinks that the events the Commentary deals with take place «in the last days» (lit.: «towards the End of Days»), «at the end» of the «last (or «final») period» immediately preceding the coming of the Eschaton. As it was noted above, in the Qumran Commentary on Hosea the designation «the Last Priest» (see: *4QpHos*^b, fr. 2, 2–3; cf. also: *1QpHab* 9:4–5) is used as a synonym for the «Furious Young Lion» (*i. e.*, Alexander Jannæus) «who stretches out (ישלח) his hand in order to strike Ephraim (*sc.* the Pharisees)». The imperfect form of the verb שלח (here: to «stretch out») employed in *4QpHos*^b, fr. 2, 3, for the description of the action of the «Last Priest» shows that the latter

²⁴ See, *e. g.*: Milik, 1959: 65f.; Stegemann, 1971: 100–106, 120–127, 204.

²⁵ Cf. also: *4QpHos*^b, fr. 2.

²⁶ It is possible that a highly fragmented text *4QpNah*, fr. 1–2, predicts the final defeat of all Kittim on the world scale (see especially: ll. 3–5).

one was alive at the time of the composition of the Commentary. The denomination the «Last Priest» corroborates this conclusion as well, for it would be meaningless, if the Commentary on Hosea was being composed after the person's death, in the period of the pontificate of one of the next Judaeen high priests.

In our view, the eschatological background of the *4QpNah* text as well as the fact that at a certain historical stage the conviction existed among the Qumranites that Alexander Jannaeus would be the *last* of the wicked Judaeen high priests and kings can be explained by the Community's messianic and eschatological chronology. According to the so-called Midrash Melchizedek (*11QMelch* 2:7–8), Second-Ezekiel (*4Q390* 1:7–8) and Damascus Document (see esp. 1:5–12, 20:13–15), the sectarians originally expected the coming of the End of Days and the advent of the Messiah to take place after the expiration of the «ten jubilees» (10×49), *i. e.*, 490 years, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Judaea (in 587/586 B.C.E.), *viz.* in 97/96 B.C.E.²⁷ We would like to point out that not only the Qumranites at a certain historical stage regarded Alexander Jannaeus as the last Hasmonaeen high priest and king, but that a corresponding tradition is also mentioned in Josephus Flavius' *Antiquities*, XIII, 301. According to Josephus' chronology the last, 70th «heptad» (7 years) of Daniel 9:26–27, preceding the triumph of the Messiah and the coming of the Eschaton, begins with the accession of Alexander Jannaeus in 103 B.C.E. (cf.: *Dan.* 9:24–27 and *Test. Levi* 16:1, 17:1; cf. also: *1 En.* 89:59).

Also worth mentioning here is the «Demonstratio Evangelica», VIII, 2, 87–88, where Eusebius of Caesarea refers to an exegesis of Daniel 9:26 (apparently a Jewish work taken over into Christianity), in which «an anointed one» is mentioned, who «shall be cut off» after 69 «heptads» (since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians), and is connected with the line of Judaeen high priests from Jeshua to *Alexander Jannaeus*. The Qumranites' disappointment at the fact that there was no advent of the Messiah and no coming of the Eschaton within the expected time found its expression in the Qumran Commentary on the

Book of Prophet Habakkuk (*1QpHab*) 7:1–14. Nevertheless, the author of the composition keeps believing that the End of Days is *near at hand* (cf. *1QpHab* 2:5–6, 5:7–8; cf. also: 9:6). Moreover, in the passage *1QpHab* 7:5–6, 9–10, 13–14 he writes as follows:

<...> «For the vision is yet for the appointed time: it speaks of the End and does not lie (*Hab.* 2:3a). <...> If he (in the Qumranites' interpretation evidently the Messiah – the «Elect One» of God (see: *1QpHab* 5:4; cf.: 9:12). – *I. T.*) tarries, wait for him; for he shall surely come and shall not delay» (*Hab.* 2:3b). Its interpretation concerns the men of truth who observe the Law (*sc.* the sectarians. – *I. T.*), whose hands do not slacken in the service of truth when to them the (final) period (seems) to be delayed (or, «prolonged». – *I. T.*) (בהמשך הקץ האחרון עליהם); for all the periods of God come to pass at their appointed times as He decreed for them in the mysteries of His Providence.

How can the last phrases of the Commentary on Habakkuk be interpreted? Answering this question, it is first of all useful to remember that in *The Jewish War*, I, 70 (cf.: *The Jewish Antiquities*, XIII, 301) and *The Jewish Antiquities*, XII, 322, Josephus Flavius mentions the eschatological chronology according to which the coming of the End of Days was expected to take place *ca.* 86 B.C.E. (This chronology is connected by him with Daniel's prophecy about the «seventy heptads», *i. e.*, 490 years (see: *Dan.* 9:24–27).) This date of the coming of the Eschaton could be determined by those Jews who expected the beginning of metahistory after the expiration of ten jubilees on the destruction of the First Temple (as, for instance, the Qumranites did, see: Second-Ezekiel (*4Q390*), *11QMelch*, 2), and considered a jubilee (on the basis of *Lev.* 25:10–11) a period of time consisting of 50 years, not of 49²⁸.

²⁸ Rabbis generally assumed a 50-year-jubilee for the period of the First Temple. A jubilee was held to be a cycle of time consisting of 49 years by the author(s) of the Book of Jubilees, by some rabbis (see, *e. g.*: B.T. *Arakhin*, 12b; *Nedarim*, 61a (R. Yehudah); cf.: *Seder 'Olam*, 15), and the Samaritans.

²⁷ Cf.: *Test. Levi* 17:1–18:2.

It was possible to «correlate» the eschatological chronology based on a 50-year-jubilee (10×50) with the one mentioned in *Dan.* 9:24–27 by assuming that God’s «word» about the future restoration of Jerusalem (*Dan.* 9:25) was not the one proclaimed by Jeremiah *ca.* 587/586 B.C.E. (*Jer.*, 32) but the one recorded in Jeremiah, 50 and/or the deuterocanonical Epistle of Jeremiah 1:3 (composed before the 1st century B.C.E.; cf.: 7Q2). On the basis of the last two passages some interpreters assumed that God’s «word» recorded there (*sc.* the «word» about the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of the Land) was *pronounced* in the first years (approximately, ten) after the destruction of the First Temple. It is possible that the Qumranites, after they had abandoned their hopes around 96 B.C.E., used both of the above-mentioned methods of chronological reinterpretation of Second-Ezekiel’s (4Q390; cf.: 11QMelch 2:7–8) and Daniel’s (Daniel 9:24–27) visions on the time of the End of Days.

As for the Commentary on Habakkuk (*IQpHab*), written in all probability in the first quarter of the 1st century B.C.E.²⁹, its central theme is the conflict between the charismatic leader of the Qumran community (in all probability a priest of the Zadokite lineage), who attested in the Qumran manuscripts under the designation of the Teacher of Righteousness, and the Judaeen ruler and high priest, denoted as the Wicked Priest. It should be noted that on the plausible assumption first made by K. Elliger³⁰ and W. H. Brownlee³¹, the very designation הכהן הרשע, *hak-kōhēn hā-rāšā’*, *i. e.* «the Wicked Priest», arose in consonance with and as a parody of the official title of the Jewish high priest – הכהן הראש, *hak-kōhēn hā-rō’š*, lit. «head (*sc.* chief) priest» (cf., *e. g.*: 2 *Sam.* 15:27; *Ezr.* 7:5; 2 *Chr.* 31:10; *IQM* 2:1; 15:4; 16:13; 18:5; 19:11; *IQSa* 2:12). In H. Stegemann’s opinion³², the definition *hā-rāšā’* («the wicked») hinted at the allegiance of the high priest because of his non-Zadokite origin. This hypothesis suggests *a priori* that the expression «wicked priest»

could have been used not as the name of a particular person, but as a kind of Qumranic «title», a special *terminus technicus* for those of the Hasmonean high priests whose deeds were disapproved by the sectarians. More precisely, the Commentary on Habakkuk speaks probably of two «Wicked Priests»: Jonathan I the Hasmonean (*IQpHab* 8:3–10:5, 11:2–8; also *4QpPs37* 4:7–10) – an antagonist of the Teacher of Righteousness (conditionally, Teacher I), perished by the time of *IQpHab* compilation, and Alexander Jannaeus, *i. e.* Jonathan II, – an oppressor of the sectarians headed by another Qumran leader (conditionally, Teacher II), who was alive at the period of *IQpHab* composition. The latter could most likely be identified with «the priest» «Judah the Law Doer» mentioned in *IQpHab* 2:5–10:12:4–5; *4QpPs37* 2:13–19³³. In connection with our supposition of the *duality* of «the Wicked Priests» (as the main enemies-antipodes of the two Qumran priestly leaders of the second half of the 2nd century B.C.E. – the beginning of the 1st century B.C.E.) in *IQpHab*, A. S. van der Woude, in particular, noted: «Tantlevskij <...> convincingly proves that XI 10 – XII 10 refer to Alexander Jannaeus, who was looked upon by the pesharist as the ‘last priest’. This means that we encounter with not one but at least two Wicked Priests in the Habakkuk commentary and (consequently) the the expression «Wicked Priest» is used in generic sense <...>³⁴. This conclusion which puts an end to the identification of “the Wicked Priest” with one Hasmonaeen high priest, paves the way for a reconsideration of the historical allusions of *IQpHab*»³⁵.

³³ This figure could be identified with the Essene leader Judah mentioned by Joseph Flavius in *The Jewish War*, I, 78–80 and *Antiquities*, XIII, 311–313. Judging by these two passages, he was an «old man» at the time of Aristobulus I (104–103 B.C.E.) and Alexander Jannaeus (cf.: B. T. *Kiddushin*, 66a and *Antiquities*, XIII, 290–292) and had the ability to portend future events.

³⁴ The idea that the designation «the Wicked Priest» could have been «superpersonal» rather than «individual» was first expressed in: Brownlee, 1952, 10–20; Idem, 1979: 49; Idem, 1982: 15–37; cf.: Dupont-Sommer, 1951: 35f. (in later works, this researcher identified the «Wicked Priest» of *IQpHab* and *4QpPs37* with Hyrcan II alone; see, *e. g.*: Dupont-Sommer, 1980: 361–368); Vermès, 1954: 92–100. See also, *e. g.*: Woude, 1982: 349–359; Fröhlich, 1986: 392f.

³⁵ Woude, 1995: 387f.

²⁹ See, *e. g.*: Tantlevskij, 1995; Idem, 2012: 98–123.

³⁰ Elliger, 1953: 266.

³¹ Brownlee, 1979: 49; Idem, 1982: 9.

³² Stegemann, 1971: 109–116.

As scholars supposed, it was Alexander Jannaeus who was designated as «the Young Lion of Wrath» (כפיר ההרון) in the Qumran Commentary on Nahum (4QpNah), fr. 2, 2–3 (this designation seems to contain ultimately the reminiscence of *Jer.* 26:20–23 and *Prov.* 19:12 and 20:2); in the Qumran Commentary on Hosea (4QpHos^b), fr. 2, 2–3, «the Young Lion of Wrath» is called as «the Last Priest» (כוהן האחרון) – *resp.* the last Hasmonaeon high priest. He was thus «last» among «the last priests of Jerusalem» living in «the last days» (1QpHab 9:4–6). As for the designations איש הכזב («Man of Lies»), מטיף הכזב («the Exuding Falsehood»), הבוגדים («traitors»), בת אבשלום («the House of Abshalom») ³⁶ attested in 1QpHab, it seems to us that they refer to the leader of the dissenters in the Qumran community and his adherents³⁷.

Conclusion: Taking into account all the information given above it is very likely that at the beginning of the first century B.C.E. the Qumranites held Alexander Jannaeus to be the last (wicked) Judaeon high priest and king because they believed that they lived on the eve of the Eschaton and the advent of the priestly and lay Messiah. That is the reason why the author of the Commentary on Nahum, compiling it (*ex hypothesi*) in 88 B.C.E., is sure that the events he describes in the composition take place «in the last days».

Designation of the Pharisees – with whom the Qumranites were at enmity – as דורשי הלכות, in all likelihood, originated as a pejorative parody of close-sounding name דורשי הלכות, *i. e.*, the «interpreters/expounders of the *halakhoth* (laws)», which was used to refer to the teachers of the Law (probably already since the time of the first Tannaim; cf., *e. g.*: *M. Nedarim*, IV, 3; *B. T. Betzah*, 15b). The Pharisees (Gr. Φαρισαῖοι; from Aram. פרושיא, lit.: «separated» (from the «people of the land», *resp.* from the profane life); another possible interpretation: «commentators», «expounders» (of the Law)) were the most numerous and influential religious group in Judea in the 2nd century B.C.E. – the 1st century C.E. (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVII, 42) and considered to

be «the most skilled (people) in the strict interpretation of the laws» (Josephus, *Jewish War*, II, 162), so that the prayer rituals and sacrifices were made «in accordance with their interpretation» (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, 15).

Let us note *ad hoc*, that the term הלכה, *halakhah*, *resp.* plural הלכות, *halakhoth*, is found in the literature of Tannaim and Amoraim. It is not used in the Hebrew Bible and is not attested in the *extant* sources of the Second Temple period. Verbal noun הלכה, lit.: «walking», formed according to the Aramaic word formative model from the verb הלך, lit.: to «go», which has a connotation in the Hebrew Bible – to «observe» laws and regulations (see, *e. g.*: *Ex.* 16:20; *Lev.* 26:3; *Ez.* 37:24). Thus, the high share of probability of the suggestion concerning the pejorative correlation of דורשי הלכות with דורשי הלכות allows us to assume that the latter designation was used in Judaea as a *terminus technicus* with reference to the Pharisees' interpreters of the laws already in the Hellenistic period.

Of particular interest is the use of the term תלמוד (*talmud*, lit.: «teaching») in the Qumran Commentary on Nahum in the context of the activity of the «interpreters/expounders of smooth thing (slippery)». In 4QpNah, fr. 3–4, 2:8–10, it is stated that they «lead many (people) astray by their false teachings (בתלמוד שקרם), the language of deceit and cunning mouth» and that it will lead people to destruction. Before the Qumran discoveries, the term תלמוד, *talmud*, was attested only in the late postbiblical literature. This term is used to denote the Jerusalem Talmud (codified in the second half of the 4th century C.E.) and the Babylonian Talmud (the end of the 5th century C.E.) containing the system of laws, crystallized from the *halakhah* which was elaborated by the Pharisaic teachers of the Law (proto-Tannaim) already in the period of the Second Temple (see, *e. g.*: *M. Avoth*). The first pair of teachers of the Law – Yose, son of Yoezer, and Yose, son of Yohanan, – acted in the period of the persecution of the Judaeans initiated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (the middle of the 160s B.C.E.). It was among the Pharisaic teachers of the Law that the Oral Law received its initial clearance, which subsequently finds its classic expression in the Mishnah and the Gemara (the Jerusa-

³⁶ Abshalom was King David's son who rebelled against his father.

³⁷ See in detail, *e. g.*: Tantlevskij, 2012: 98–123.

lem and Babylonian Talmuds). The nucleus of this Pharisaic teaching – in the form in which it existed at the time of the composition of the Qumran Commentary on Nahum – in all prob-

ability, gets the designation תלמוד, *talmûd*, in it. Probably, this term used in the meaning of the «teaching» of the Pharisaic masters was widespread in Judaea in that time.

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