BIBLICAL EXEGESIS OF 4QpIs *

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In this paper I intend to prove that the author of Pesher Isaiah of the fourth cave of Qumran, small fragments of which were published by Allegro in Volume 5 of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert,1 was familiar with rabbinic interpretations of some of the passages he dealt with. I shall also discuss the problem of the affinities between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Karaite literature and their relevance to the dating of the scrolls.

The exegesis in the scrolls is sectarian and allegorical. It looks at the Bible from the point of view of the vicissitudes and history of the sect and it interprets the Bible accordingly. That its author was familiar with rabbinic exegesis is proved by the following examples.

1. The author of the Pesher sees in Sennacherib, King of Assyria, mentioned in Isaiah 10, the enemy of Israel (Gog and Magog) of the Messianic period. This corresponds to the opinion of Bar Kappara, who lived at the beginning of the third century, that God wanted to make Ezekiel the Messiah and to make Sennacherib Gog and Magog: בְּנֵקֶשׁ הָקֵיבָּה לְעַשָּׁתָה.

2. The author of Pesher Isaiah interprets the verses 28-34 of Isaiah 10 messianically, describing the march of Sennacherib-

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2 b. Sanhedrin 94a. Cf. ibid., 95b: אָמַר רָב יַד הָדָה אָמַר רָב בֵּא עֵלָיהָ סַוָּה וְחָוָּה הָרָשָׁת וּלְכָךְ עַחוּדֵיהָ לְבָא אֵמָּה וּטְמֵנָה סַוָּה וְחָוָּה הָרָשָׁת וּלְכָךְ עַחוּדֵיהָ לְבָא אֵמָּה וּטְמֵנָה סַוָּה וְחָוָּה הָרָשָׁת וּלְכָךְ עַחוּדֵיהָ לְבָא אֵמָּה וּטְמֵנָה. It means that the war of Gog and Magog will be similar to that of Sennacherib. See also Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 10:32. Cf. P. Churgin, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, 132.
rib and his army towards Jerusalem as referring to the End of Days. He writes: They are a *pilgam* (a hidden parable or interpretation) referring to the end of days, when he (Gog and Magog) will go up from the Plain of Acco to fight against ... and there is none like him and in all the cities ... as far as the boundary of Jerusalem:

A battle in the Plain of Acco in the Messianic period is not mentioned anywhere but in two medieval sources: a *piyyut* (liturgical poem) by Elieser ha-Kalir, who lived in the sixth and seventh centuries, and in a mystical work called “Prayer of R. Simon ben Yohai.” Both sources refer to a battle in the Plain of Acco between the Ishmaelites (the Arabs) and the Edomites (the Byzantines or the Christians). The poem of Elieser ha-Kalir entitled *nir* (That Day) asserts that on the day on which Messiah will come ... the Edomites and Ishmaelites will battle each other in the Plain of Acco:

And the author of the Prayer of R. Simon ben Yohai writes: And after that (i.e., after the rise of an heretical Muslim ruler) the sons of Ishmael will make war against the Edomites in the Plain of Acco:

In Jewish eschatological sources of the early Middle Ages, another plain plays an important role, namely, the Plain of Arbela in Galilee, northwest of Tiberias. Already the Talmud connects the name of this plain with Messianic expectations.

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Elieser ha-Kalir writes in an eschatological poem, entitled ביכם הים בחמת היה, In those days and at that time, that the Messiah will come from the Plain of Arbela.\(^9\) Since the messianic importance of the Plain of Acco is found only in these two references, it is surprising to find it also in our Pesher. Cecil Roth, who overlooked the Prayer of Simon ben Yohai, wonders whether the Pesher and Kalir drew from a common source.\(^10\) It is possible and plausible, but so far this common source has not been found. Roth remarks, “The coincidence is noteworthy,” and he is right. But is it only a coincidence? Are we not entitled to draw conclusions as to the time of the replacement of the Plain of Arbela by the Plain of Acco in Jewish Medieval eschatology?

3. The Pesher interpreting Isaiah 10:19: השאר על זוז מפסר (The remnants of the trees of his forest will be few) remarks: מפורים ولموضوع אדומ (Its meaning is that there will be few people). The author wanted to stress that we should not understand the verse literally as referring to trees, but as referring to people. This explanation corresponds to that of Targum Jonathan\(^12\) and medieval commentaries ad locum.

4. In contrast to the author of Pesher Habakkuk, who interprets הר הימים ילך יכפר \(^{13}\) (The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you), as referring to הקדש ההוד (The council of the community), Pesher Isaiah, commenting on 10:34, הלאנון באדרי פיול (Lebanon will fall by a mighty one), interprets Lebanon as referring to the enemies of Israel at the End of Days,\(^13\) (The Kittites or Gog and Magog). This interpretation corresponds to that of Targum Jonathan.\(^14\) The interpretation of Lebanon in

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9 Kaufman, ibid. 83.
10 Cecil Roth, The Dead Sea Scrolls. A new historical approach, 79.
11 Discoveries, 19.
12 Discoveries, 13.
13 Discoveries, 13.
14 ארצה דישראל חמוד.
Pesher Habakkuk corresponds to that of the Talmud and of the Church Fathers, who see in Lebanon, Jerusalem or the Temple.

5. Interpreting the Messianic prophecies of chapter II, the Pesher says that God will sustain the Messiah with words of Torah: 17

This brings to mind the expression in the Targum on the Song of Songs 2:5, and also Midrash Shir Hashirim a:1,

There are expressions in Pesher Isaiah which strike us as late. I will deal only with one of them, namely, the expression instead of מְשׁר.

Pitgam in the Bible has the following connotations:

1. “decree” as in Esther 1:20, and Daniel 4:14, ; and
2. “word” as in Ezra 4:17.

In the Talmud and Midrash pitgam has the connotation of “word” or “thing”, and it is an equivalent of the Hebrew דבר. In our Pesher, pitgam is the Aramaic equivalent of which is of later date. Some interpretations in our Pesher sound very strange and make no sense. For example, the author identifies the name of Rezin, the king of Aram, with the Torah. He writes which Allegro translates, “The Torah is Rezin.”

I am aware of the fact that one must be careful in dating Rabbinic material. The following example can serve as an illustration. Our Pesher interprets Isaiah 10:13, (I have removed the boundaries of the people) as referring

15 b. Gittin, 56b.
16 See F. D. Sparks, Journal of Theological Studies, N.S. X (1959), 26ff.
17 Discoveries, 14.
17a Ibid. 12.
18 Cf. R. Payne Smith, Thesaurus Syriacus, p. 3335.
19 Discoveries, 17.
20 Ibid. 18.
to the laws of the people: חוקה עמאם. The identification of boundaries with laws brings to mind the comments of the rabbis on Deuteronomy 19:14: לא תָּמִיס נֵבֶל רֵעַ אֵשֶׁר נִבְּל (You shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark set up by previous generations) and on Proverbs 22:28: אל תָּמִיס נֵבֶל פֶּן אֵשֶׁר נִבְּל רַבִּים (Remove not the ancient landmark which your fathers have set). Both these verses were interpreted by the rabbis as meaning that it is forbidden to change ancient laws and customs. But I was surprised to find the same interpretation in Philo and in the Slavonic Enoch. However, despite this awareness, I believe I have found enough evidence that our Pesher contains later talmudic and even medieval exegesis. I am in full agreement with M. R. Lehmann who wrote, in the first volume of the Revue de Qumran, as follows:

“A first-hand study of the quoted talmudic passages will demonstrate to what extent the men of Qumran lived in the spirit and Law embodied and handed down to the rabbis of the Talmud. The often far-fetched efforts to trace outside influences on the Qumran literature should give way to research on the obvious and natural sources on which the men of Qumran drew for their nourishment, namely, their own Jewish heritage.”

It is not my intention to enter the arena of the Battle of the Scrolls which has been going on for decades. I am not a palaeographist and not an archaeologist. I consider myself a student of rabbinic biblical exegesis and as such I ask that the challenge to the great antiquity of the Scrolls should be

22 Philo, De posteritate Caini, 89 (ed. Loeb Classical Library, II, 377); De specialibus legibus, IV, 149 (ibid. VIII, 101).
met. Even as the challenge from the Karaite literature is still to be met, the challenge of the Scrolls must not be brushed aside or ignored.

Nobody today denies the great affinities between the Qumran (Dead Sea) Scrolls and Karaite literature. These affinities include linguistics, exegetics, religious concepts, customs, etc. and have been the subject of extensive scholarly research. It is enough to mention the studies of Adolf Büchler25 and Alexander Marmorstein26 on the Zadokite Fragments, and the studies of Solomon Zeitlin,27 Naphtali Wieder,28 Norman Golb,29 Sidney Hoenig,30 and others on the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is true that the conclusions to which some of the scholars such as Büchler, Marmorstein, Zeitlin and Hoenig came, namely, that the Scrolls are of Karaite origin, represent the opinion of a very small minority. The scholars who champion the great antiquity of the Scrolls—and they are today in the majority—explain that the affinities are due to the fact that the Scrolls fell into the hands of the Karaites, after their discovery in a cave in the neighborhood of Qumran by a hunter at the end of the eighth century (to be exact, in the early nineties of that century).31 Paul Kahle was the first to make this assumption and thus explained the presence of the MSS of the Zadokite

25 *JQR* (NS), III, 429-485.
26 *Festschrift Adolf Schwarz* (1917), 469f.; *Theologische Tijdschrift*, 1918, 92ff.
27 *JQR*, passim for the last twenty years, and in his two books: *The Zadokite Fragments*, 1952; *The Dead Sea Scrolls and modern scholarship*, 1956.
30 *JQR*, passim for the last fifteen years.
31 Sergius, the metropolitan of Elam to whom the letter was written, died circa 805. Timotheus I, who wrote the letter to Sergius, reports that the writings were found "ten years ago." We don't have to assume that this was the last letter of Timotheus to Sergius. The terminus ad quem is the year 795.
Fragments in the Cairo Geniza, as well as the influence of the Qumran writings on early Karaism. Kahle’s assumption was accepted by Saul Lieberman and is now repeated by all who accept the great antiquity of the Scrolls (Second Commonwealth). To me, however, this theory seems too artificial. It is impossible to ascribe the deep and normative influence of the Qumran literature on Karaism to sheer accident, an accident the details of which are still obscure and whose connections with Karaism have still to be proved. It has still to be proved that קהירבאה ד׳אדריה refers to Qumran and that, at that time (ca. 790-795), Karaites were already living in Jerusalem and that these writings fell into their hands.

G. R. Driver, evidently recognizing the untenability of this theory, and looking for a more plausible reason for the affinities, came to the conclusion that the Qumranites survived the destruction of the Temple. Driver identifies the Qumranites with the Zakodites or with the Zealots of the Fourth Philosophy which, according to Josephus, was founded by Judas the Gaulanite and a man called Zadok. Driver writes as follows:

“Since the Sadducees of the New Testament and of the Talmud are generally thought to have ceased to exist as a party with the cessation of the priesthood after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. . . . the persons here meant by Zaddukim must then be the Zadokites, who will have lingered on as a distinct and recognizable group till their absorption into the Qaraites of the eighth century.”

32 Theologische Literaturzeitung, 1952, 401; The Cairo Genizah, 2nd ed. 16.
33 Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, XX (1951), 403.
35 Josephus, Antiquities 18.4.
36 G. R. Driver, The Judaeans scrolls (1965), 264. In his differen-
Driver quotes a number of passages from the Talmud as evidence that the Zadokites are mentioned in the Talmud as contemporaries of scholars of the third and fourth centuries. It escapes Driver, who used the printed and censored text of the Talmud, that in all passages which he quoted the uncensored Munich MS of the Talmud has, instead of \( \text{כדריך} \), the reading \( \text{כדריך} \), i.e., heretic or Judaeo-Christian. The name \( \text{כדריך} \) disappears from the Talmud completely after the Bar-Kokhba revolt. A good many scholars have dealt with the problem of the link between the Sadducees and the Karaites. I would like to mention some of them. Abraham Geiger was of the opinion that the Karaites were the physical inheritors of the Sadducees. He wrote as follows:

"Was war seit der Zerstörung des Tempels aus den Sadduzäern geworden? Untergegangen waren sie sicher nicht ganz, wenn sie auch dahinsiechenten... Durch die Entstehung des Islam mit seinen Geisteskräften angeregt, erstehen sie nun als Karäer. (What happened to the Sadducees after the destruction of the Temple? They did not disappear completely. They pined away slowly. With the rise of Islam with its spiritual powers they rose again as Karaites.)"

May I quote several more opinions of modern scholars. Zvi Ankori, in his book *Karaites in Byzantium* writes:

"Indeed, the resemblance (between the Qumranite and the Karaites) appears so striking in some aspects

Driver had a predecessor, namely, the Hebrew writer and journalist Ben Zion Katz, who also derived the name \( \text{כדריך} \) from Zadok, the co-founder of the Fourth Philosophy. See Ben Zion Katz, *פרושות צדוקי מלומדים נתירים*.

Driver quotes: b. Erubin 101a, Yebamoth 63b, Sanhedrin 33b, 38a, Niddah 33b-34a.


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that certain scholars, both forty years ago and now, have found sufficient comparative material to build a case for the Karaite authorship of the said documents. The fact that such a theory was at all possible points to an unusual affinity which cannot be shrugged off by the objective researcher. Whether the ancient works were circulating all along among interested nonconformists or reached them only as late as the ninth century is still debatable. The latter thesis is now quite popular with many serious students in the field. Yet it still leaves many questions unanswered and can by no means be taken as the last word on the matter.

Naphtali Wieder assumes that the Qumranites survived the destruction of the Temple and continued to exist until the rise of Karaism. Wieder writes in his book, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism*, as follows:

“It may be reasonably assumed that the remnants of the Qumranites formed one of the dissident elements that went into the formation of the Karaite sect and that the Qumran element was able, either through sheer spiritual and intellectual weight, or through numbers, or both, to exert a preponderent influence on the motley of heterogenous groups that rallied to Anan’s banner. The Qumran section was obviously able to assert itself as a dominant force and thus imprint many of its characteristics on the single grouping that ultimately crystallized out as the Karaite sect.”

There is no historical proof whatsoever for the existence of organized Jewish sects in the Talmudic period who could have served as a link between the Sadducees or the Qumranites and the new anti-talmudic movements which arose in the seventh century under the influence of Islam.

41 p. 254.
Salo W. Baron, who tried to shed light on this thorny problem, has to admit that “there have been no direct vestiges of ancient Sadducean writings and oral traditions.” But despite this admission, he assumes that the movement created by Anan was a direct offshoot of these ancient schizmatics. Baron writes:

“They (i.e., the Karaites) and their followers must have received their main stimuli from heterodox teachings transmitted orally from generation to generation... and from many unorthodox practices which they could readily observe in their respective communities.”

What interests us most is the consensus of opinion of the quoted scholars that the affinities cannot be ascribed to an accidental find or writings or an admission that the sectarian circles who have produced the Dead Sea Scrolls must have been contemporaries of the various heretical sects or schizmatics who were the immediate forerunners of the Karaites.

The puzzle of the Sadducean influence on Karaism, or the puzzle of the influence of Dead Sea Scrolls on Karaism, as well as the puzzle of talmudic and even late rabbinic exegesis in the Scrolls are still waiting for their solution.