

NORTHERN SYRIA AS AN AREA OF ADDRESS FOR MANY LANGUAGE REFERENCES AT QUMRAN

Robert Eisenman

California State University, Long Beach

In several papers and my book JAMES THE BROTHER OF JESUS, I have suggested that the addressee of "MMT" is not a king in Palestine at all, but a foreign king and convert to Judaism (therefore his zeal; no 'Jewish' kings in Palestine at this time had this kind of zeal), namely the king Eusebius' is calling "the Great King of the Peoples beyond the Euphrates". The allusion is from a document he claims to have found and personally translated from the Edessene archives. Since Eusebius hardly ranks as a creative writer, we probably to some extent must honor this claim.

In similar venues I have been claiming that Queen Helen of Adiabene and her kinsmen had much to do with the support of the installation we know as "Qumran". I would like to pursue these theses further by analysing the Messianic language of the Damascus Document, which claims that "the fallen tent of David" (Amos 9:11-12) will be resurrected in a land "North" of Damascus and uses the "Damascus" language generally to express this (7:13-16).

It should be noted that this "fallen tent of David" language is used in the speech attributed to James just before he sends his representatives "down to Antioch" with his "epistle" containing these "rulings" in Acts 15:13-21's obviously tendentious account of what has come to be called "the Jerusalem Council". My point will be to show how many of these references, including an emphasis in polemics from all sides on the salvatory state of Abraham, can be looked at in terms of important conversions taking place in Northern Syria at this time, particularly in Edessa but also further East.

In this context, I would like to show as well that "MMT", the first

half of which in large measure focuses on the subject of banning "food sacrificed to idols", links up with these parallel bans in Acts and to some extent as practised by Josephus' "Essenes" -- it should be appreciated from the start that while Paul knows the ban on "things sacrificed to idols", he does not consider it salutary -- which also focuses on Abraham's salvatory comparing is addressee "works" to Abraham's, fundamental.

Before embarking on these goals, I would like to say a few words about AMS carbon dating, which unfortunately in recent times has become a necessity -- because of all the misinformation that has been circulated concerning it. The first persons to call for AMS carbon dating of Qumran documents were the organizer of this very section, Philip Davies, and myself.

This was done in a letter to the Head of the Antiquities Authority, Amir Drori on May 5th, 1989 -- the height of the struggle to free the Scrolls (copied to numerous persons). We had written him earlier in March attaching a copy of a similar letter to Prof. Strugnell at Harvard, asking for specific access to certain Qumran plates of the unpublished fragments of the Damascus Document. By this time we had the computerized printout of all Qumran documents, published and unpublished, and could specify photographs by name and number.

Our request therefore came as something of a shock to the responsible partie, however by May we had given up on receiving any positive response for our request for access to specific plates of the Damascus Document fragments. Therefore we took another tack and addressed our complaints to Drori, enclosing the latest data on AMS carbon dating in case he was not familiar with it. Our contention was that he could at least exercise his fiat by conducting AMS carbon tests on Qumran documents to test dating claims based on palaeographic sequencing. As a caveat, we requested that 'opposition' scholars be included in the process since they felt the most need for such tests and could presumably

specify which documents were worth measuring.

Our response came several months later when the Israelis themselves announced that they were going to conduct carbon testing in association with Jophn Strugnell. Needless to say, it was never acknowledged where the initial proposals came from to conduct such testing. Of course 'opposition' scholars, i. e., those who had proposed it in the first place, were excluded from the process. This was unfortunate as the Israel officials in charge and the representatives of the 'official' team missed the point, having never felt the need for carbon testing to begin with. We on the other hand never had any illusions about the accuracy of carbon testing where absolute dating was concerned. Absolute dating is just what it says, attempting absolute determination of dates. The same can be said for palaeography. What we were interested in was relative dating, i. e., , that is earlier vs. later in the same test run primarily to evaluate the accuracy of palaeographic sequencing. Needless to say, this was never the concern of the Antiquities Authority and their confreres, who did not even know what the problems relating to paleographic sequencing even were.

Absolute dating is a rare thing in radiocarbon sequencing. In the first place in the period of concern to us there are few 'pegs' and much depends on dendrochronology (tree ring sequencing) and the amount of or lack thereof of impurities that may impact the tests. There is also the known prediliction of laboratories to arrive at "results" those requesting the tests expect.

Recently in forensics which does not differe appreciably from radiocarbon, it was found that laboratories as respected as that of the FBI Crime Lab in Washington D.C. were routinely guilty of slanting their reports in exactly that manner and with exactly the same biases. It is doubtful that laboratories as insufficiently credentialed as those involved in the Qumran tests -- most

relatively independent of normal academic oversight -- would have performed any better, rather falling victim to their own initial preconceptions or biases. This is particularly evident in the way all the reports were framed, which were invariably directed against persons like myself, citing palaeography in support of their conclusions.

The problem is, that in the evaluation of radiocarbon evidence, it is little understood by the public at large that a high degree of human interpretation is involved, which can heavily skew final results. Because of the manner in which Qumran materials have been preserved, cleansed, and conserved, there is a huge amount of impurity which has to be associated with the remains themselves. This is not to mention the impact of the inks themselves, plus the known tendency of radiocarbon testing to archaize -- further enhanced by the fact that what is being measured is when a given plant or animal stopped functioning clinically not when a given document actually was produced.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the two runs of testing that were done though producing a certain amount of internal consistency, were heavily skewed, particularly the second run, frustrating in the main any attempt to make any sense out of them. For this reason, if not all the other just cited, it is passingly strange that the general impression which has been let out abroad is that the two runs of testing that were done proved something, when in fact they proved nothing whatever. Despite this, there is a wide impression among many scholars that absolute dates have been achieved and that the tests proved something, when in fact they proved nothing. In particular, that they would preclude a first-century ambiance for some Qumran documents. If this is true, there would be no sense proceeding with this paper.

This is not to say that radiocarbon dating does not have some value. If it did not, Professor Davies and I would not have called for it in the first

place. We were interesting in achieving 'relative' as opposed to 'absolute' dating, that is, 'earlier' versus 'later' on the same test run. In this way interpretive errors and imprecisions -- except where impurities were concerned -- would largely cancel themselves out. But beyond calling for the tests, our reservations were never brought included in the process nor were we.

Which brings me to the point of this short excursus, without which as I have explained, there would be not point in my proceeding -- namely a healthy skepticism for psdeudo-scientific processes such as paleographic sequencing or its close neighbor, radiocarbon dating. In the field of Dead Sea Scrolls a healthy skepticism has always been the safest policty, particularly true where the results of archaeology, another of these seemingly quasi-scientific procedures that have been entertained. More recent archaeological finds have brought into question almost everything that was assumed following de Vaux's over-hasty and incomplete efforts.

A conclusion is warranted here -- a conclusion I have been at pains to emphasize in almost all my research on the Scrolls. There is no certainty in these issues, not even a semblance of one despite widespread impressions to the contrary. This cannot be overemphasized. In particular, as I have again often stressed in the past, a corollary to this proposition is in order, that with the questionable nature of the science or the professionalism of the labs under consideratio, external results based on data of this character must take second place to the internal data -- that is, we must be guided by what the Scrolls themselves say to arrive at anything remotely resembling certainty. Put in another way, internal data must take precedence over external data of the uncertain nature we are considering. This is particularly true when the external data seems to contradict the clear thrust of the internal data, rendering it incomprehensible.

This is why references to Northern Syria in the documents under consideration are so important and this is why I must beg the conference's permission to consider them. The references in question largely occur in the Damascus Document, but not exclusively so. These all circulate about the pivotal citation, "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" -- unless taken esoterically, already signalling a Syrian milieu of some kind. This is the very document Professor Davies and I asked for access to over a decade ago -- this, despite the fact that we already had the plates in our possession, but without permission we could not admit we had them. Our point was to break the monopoly, which we did.

There are also references to a quasi-Syrian Milieu, if not a Northern one, in the War Scroll, where "Benjamin" is defined as "the Galut of the desert", a reference not without significance for Paul's "Benjaminite" pretensions, and reference is made -- probably with future intent -- to the return of "the exiled Sons of Light from the desert of the peoples (in our view, the area known as "the Fertile Crescent" or the Syrian Desert) to the Jerusalem wilderness camp".

"The Peoples" usage (here "Amim" but also "Go'im") will be of interest throughout our discussion. The wilderness or desert in question is clearly distinct from the Judean one and probably represents a variation on "the Land of Damascus". The reference here is much like the one to "Galilee of the Gentiles" in Matt 4:15 (here the usual "ethnon"/"amim"). Interestingly enough, there are also references in the New Testament, as well as in early Church literature -- particularly Eusebius above and his story of the conversion King Agbarus -- to Northern Syrian locales. Again, this would be seen at the time as "the Desert of the Peoples", just as the Romans referred to the whole region generally as "Arabia". The same is true in Josephus and his references to conversions in the royal court of Adiabene, also for the purposes of this paper,

a Northern Syrian or in Roman terms "Arabian" locale. The problem is to sort all these cross and overlapping references out, focus them, and relate them to the same, similar, or parallel events.

Many of the debates in Paul's letters, James, and Hebrews not only focus on events and arguments in Northern Syrian and neighboring locales, but often turn on Abraham's salvatory state. As noted above, the same is true for Josephus' (and the Talmud's) picture of the conversion of Queen Helen's sons, Izates and Monobazus, which in particular focuses on the issue of circumcision, as first commanded to Abraham in Genesis 17.

In the writer's view, this focus on Abraham is neither accidental nor coincidental. Even today, citizens of the Turkish city of Urfa north of Aleppo -- formerly the Christian city of Edessa not far from Abraham's Haran -- point proudly to "the pools of Abraham" as a central fixture of their city's topography and the whole area focuses upon him, this being considered his homeland or, at least the area Abraham's father Terah settled after leaving Chaldean Ur and from where he embarked upon his monumental voyage southward to Canaan. Therefore, Abraham's salvatory state could not have failed to be of interest to the local inhabitants of that area seeking a paradigmatic soteriological hero.

This is the way Abraham is presented in Josephus' -- and the Talmud's -- depiction of Izates sudden conversion under the tutelage of a 'Galilean' teacher by the name of Eleazar -- he is reading Gen 17 above about how Abraham circumcized his entire household (implying as it were Gentile or Jew), when asked whether he understood the meaning of episode, whereupon he straightaway proceeds to circumcize himself and his brother Monobazus. For the writer, all such paradigmatic citations of Abraham from the literature of this period have in view this use of Abraham as an exemplary character to be imitated by the inhabitants of this region who identified so much with the story of his origins.

The same is true for the citations of Abraham's faithfulness and his designation as "a friend of God" (as opposed to an "enemey") in the Damascus Document -- but also for Galatians, Romans, Hebrews, and James. The same is true for MMT, which also evokes Abraham's salvatory state both at the beginning and the end, but more about this later. For the writer, this is important in determining its ultimate addressee. It is the position of the present writer that all these documents were ultimately directed at new converts in a Northern Syrian and/or a related missionary framework.

A final piece in this tangle of parallel sources is the identification of "Antioch" in many such materials dating back to the first century (though probably not the second) with what in other contexts is being called "Edessa". Of course, Edessa is the homeland of Eusebius' "King Agbarus", also designated by that writer as "the Great King of the Peoples beyond the Euphrates" (n. b. how "Peoples" here connects with 1QM's "Desert of the Peoples" or Matt's "Galilee of the Peoples"). It is an area contiguous to Queen Helen's (and her successor and son King Izates') homeland, Adiabene, which was probably to some extent under its control.

This is indeed the sense of Eusebius' description, reliable or otherwise, not only as the King of the Edessenes, but also "the Peoples beyond the Euphrates" -- once again, the designation "Peoples" being important in terms of Paul's own mission to these same "Ethne"/Gentiles/Peoples. There is, too, an indication in Syriac and Armenian sources, as there is in Eusebius, that Queen Helen was not only Agbarus' half-sister, but one of the wives of his enormous harem as well. The problem in all these sources have to do with names and their translations from one language to another, as for instance Bazeus and Monobazus in Josephus vs. Abgar or Agbarus in Latin and Greek sources. The same problem exists in the New Testament, where "Peter" is sometimes Peter, sometimes Cephas,

sometimes Simon and sometimes Simeon; "Silas" perhaps Silvanus, Titus perhaps Timothy, Didymus perhaps Thomas, etc.

In his Geography, Strabo of Capadoocia makes it clear that the original name of "Edessa" was "Antioch", a claim echoed in Pliny's reflected works in the next century. The problem was that the founder of the Seleucid Empire, if one can call it this, Seleucus' father was very enamored of his father, named Antiochus, and therefore named almost every city he founded after him. The only way we have to distinguish them is to use a secondary name such as Acts' Antioch in Pisidia or the normal Antioch -- on the Orontes -- as opposed to Antioch by Callirhoe or Assyrian Antioch (i. e., our "Edessa") -- even Antiochia Charax on the lower Tigris, also called Charax Spasini (Basrah), where Queen Helen's son Izates is exiled when he originally encounters the curious character Acts, Josephus, and Eusebius know as "Ananias". In Acts, of course, "Ananias" is carrying on his work in another Syrian locale when he initially makes the acquaintance of Paul at the time of Paul's alleged conversion, which brings us back to Damascus, the original topic of this paper.

Before returning to it, one should cite one more important reference, already noted but missed by most scholars, "re-erecting the fallen tent of David", which is familiar from the speech James makes at the so-called "Jerusalem Council" in Acts 15 before sending his representatives, including Judas Barsabas, Silas, Barnabas, and Paul, down to "Antioch" again. The issue is always to determine which "Antioch" is intended, the relatively inconsequential one on the Orontes in the first century or, where early Christian (and Jewish) conversion episodes are concerned, on the Euphrates by Callirhoe.

For Acts, here Christians "were first called Christians" (11:26), a paradigmatic early Christian, Northern Syrian conversion episode if there ever was one. The only question is, which "Antioch" we are to understand this is,

since the narrator of Acts represents it as the center of a band of Paulinists, that even includes someone from the Herodian royal family itself -- it calls this person "Manaen", probably a garbled version of our "Ananias" again -- and a place from where Paul was said to have set out from for Jerusalem with Barnabas with famine relief supplies (c. 45 CE). It should also be appreciated that the thing which triggers Acts' presentation of the celebrated "Jerusalem Council" is that some representatives (presumably "from James") came down to Antioch and taught the brothers that unless they were circumcized they could not be saved (15:1). Here, once again, the issue is circumcision.

To my knowledge there are only two other texts which stress this Biblical allusion from Amos, the Damascus Document from Qumran in the materials surrounding the elucidation of the meaning of "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" and the curious document from Qumran known as "the Florilegium", so-named by John Allegro, a compendium of Messianic allusions much like 2 Cor 6:14-7:1. The Florilegium interprets this passage in fairly straightforward Messianic terms, applying it apparently to "the Branch of David", "who will stand" or "arise in the last days in Zion to save" (interestingly enough, the usage here is "lehoshi'a" not the usual "lehazil" of the Habakkuk Peshar and elsewhere). But in the Florilegium, attached to this individual is another who also appears in the Damascus Document, called "the Interpreter of the Torah".

This is not the only usage in this curious compendium with parallels and similar language to the Damscus Document, identifying it as part of a cluster probably written at about the same time. There are also "the sons of Zadok", tied to a less esoteric allusion to "seeking Righteousness," the mention of the Prophet Ezekiel, the repeated allusion to "the last days" as well as "amod"/ "stand" or "arise" used in connection with "the Branch of David" and possibly "the Interpreter of the Torah" -- in the Damascus Document it comes amid

evocation of "the Messiah of Aaron and Israel" delineated in a singular manner. There is also the usage "cause them to stumble"/"fall"/or "cast them down" (hamachshilim/ lehachshil) -- here specifically elucidated in terms of "destroying them" and tied to what Belial, not God in this instance, intended to do to "the Sons of Light".

This usage also forms a key aspect of a passage in the Habakkuk Pesher describing what the Wicked Priest did to the Righteous Teacher and those of his persuasion on Yom Kippur -- "cast them down" (11), the parallel allusion "to destroy them" also appearing in a follow-up passage about what the Wicked Priests did to "the Poor", seemingly denoting the followers of the Righteous Teacher, i. e., "destroy them." I should not have to add -- but I will, "casting down" in Greek forms the central thrust of all descriptions of the death of James in all early Church accounts, the followers of whom too were known as "the Poor", as it does the attack by "the Enemy" (Paul) on James in the Pseudoclementine Recognitions!

"Re-erecting the fallen tent of David" is now directly tied to "standing up in Zion of the Branch of David with the Interpreter of the Torah in the last days" (the same language one encounters in the Damascus Document regarding the "standing up" both of "the Sons of Zadok" at "the end of days" and "the Messiah of Aaron and Israel" (a secondary meaning of which is "be resurrected"). Here, strictly speaking,, it is "the allen tent of David" which "will be resurrected to save Israel" (our language of "salvation"/"lehoshi'a" again), but the implication seems to be the same.

In fact, the whole sequence, which as in the Damascus Document not to mention Acts, is arcane in the extreme, is introduced by: "And the Lord declares to you that he will build you a house. I will raise up your seed after you and establish the throne of his Kingdom (one of the unique references to the

language of "kingdom" in the Scrolls -- not to mention that of the throne). I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me" from 2 Sam &:12-14. Paul paraphrases the same passage in the all-important material about "separating" oneself and "Perfect Holiness", not to mention idols in the Temple, in 2 Cor 6:24.

In this overt evocation of the "sonship" language -- one finds it as well in the Qumran Hymns -- the application seems to be to the Davidic Branch if not also the Interpreter of the Torah. But it would also seem to apply figuratively to the "re-erection of the fallen tent of David". Here one has a kind of esoteric Messiah as Temple imagery of the kind one also encounters in 1 and 2 Corinthians. This might point the way to a similar sense in the evocation of it in James' speech in Acts. It will certainly be present in Manuscript A of the Damascus Document. Though the sense in all these documents will be arcane, just the fact of its presence here in the Florilegium not to mention that in the Book of Acts in a speech attributed to James, however tendentious, is significant.

But it is to the use of this and related allusions in crucial paragraphs of the Damascus Document that we must turn in order to get some indication of how all these conceptualities are connected. Paralleling a description first developed in Columns 4-5 expounding Ezekiel 44:15 about how "the Priests", curiously defined as "the Penitents of Israel", and "the Nilvim" or "Joiners" "went out from the Land of Judah" (probably "Judea") in Column IV, an archaic song embedded in Numbers 21:18 is expounded in Columns 6-7 of the Damascus Document. This song celebrates how the Lord gave the people water in the wilderness and the people sang a welcoming song, singing about "the well" which "the Princes dug, which the Nobles of the People dug with the Staff". Here the usage "the Diggers of the People" in the exegesis (n. b., the emphasis on "People" or "Peoples") take the place of the earlier usages, "Priests" and

"Joiners" (Nilvim). It is they who are now defined as "the Penitents of Israel who went out from the Land of Judah to sojourn in the Land of Damascus".

Properly speaking, this then, taken in its overt sense, constitutes our first reference to the Syrian heartland, the earlier exegesis having spoken only of "departing from the Land of Judah" -- nothing more. It is interesting that since the word "mehoggeq"/"staff" can be seen as including a play of the term "hoq" or "huggim"/"Laws", "ordinances", or "decrees"; "the Staff" in the exegesis which follows is identified as being "the Interpreter of the Torah" whom we have already encountered above, connected to "the fallen tent of David" and "the Branch who will arise in the Last Days" "to save Israel". Now, this "Intepreter" is further delineated in terms of a passage from Isaiah (54:16) about a "Smith creating a weapon" or "instrument for His works" -- in this instance, obviously divine works or God's holy plan.

Whereas the overt meaning of this passage from Isaiah 54:16 is that of a "weapon" created by God (note the atmosphere of imminat military catastrophe) that can destroy any weapon used against the subjects of the poem -- called in Isaiah, the Servants "established in Righteousness" (54:14) or those who "do Righteousness" and "keep Judgement" (56:1), and "love the Name of the Lord" (56:6) -- words having particular meaning for Qumran; here, the Righteousness/Piety dichotomy predicated of all Opposition groups from Essenes, to John the Baptist, to Jesus, and James.

In Isaiah, this passage, which is also a "song" follows directly on or continues the famous "suffering servant" one of Is 53, closing in 56:3-6 with an ecstatic evocation of those same "Nilvim"/"Joiners" just encountered in exegesis of Ezek 44:15 in Column 4 above of the Damascus Document. Here in Isaiah, however, it is explicit that these "Nilvim" (Joiners) are "foreigners who have joined themselves to the Lord" (56:3 and 6), repeated twice. Again, it should

be emphasized that we are speaking about Gentiles or foreigners here and my initial suspicion would appear to be confirmed. It will receive further verification as we proceed.

As long as these Gentiles or Nilvim "keep the Sabbath, choosing what pleases (Him), and hold fast to the Covenant", they will also be found acceptable in the Temple and added to those "already gathered" there (Isaiah 56:8). The "holding fast" or language of "steadfastness" will be of the utmost importance here and will also be found in the closing language of the Damascus Document's exhortation in ms. B, Column 20: "all those that hold fast to the Statutes, coming and going according to the Torah, and listening to the voice of the Teacher (the Moreh) ... not deserting (or "turning back from" -- yashivu) the Laws (hukkei again) of Righteousness...shall prevail against all the Sons of Earth...and see His Salvation (Yesha'), because they took refuge in His Holy Name", i. e., were God-Fearers (CD 20.27-34)

A little over a decade ago, I presented a paper to the counterpart of this section in the U.S. insisting these same "Nilvim" mentioned in the Damascus Document were Gentile converts attaching themselves to the Lord -- here one finds further confirmation of this proposition in these cited passage from Isaiah, all of which reflect the mindset those composing these documents. My point in stressing this, as I will in MMT, is that the address is at least partially to Gentile converts, whether in Edessa or Adiabene in Northern Syria. One can say the same about Paul's counter-positions in Galatians, also evoking Genesis 15 and Abraham, but clearly meant to be the antithesis to these.

For the Damascus Document, therefore, this "Mehokkek" ("Staff"), defined there as "the Doresh" or "Interpreter of the Torah" "decrees (hakak) the ordinances" (here "mehokkekot"/"staves" or "ordinances" (playing on the plural of the obvious parallel) with which "the Princes and the Nobles of the

People dug the well" and "in which they should walk until the standing up" or "arising of one who pours down Righteousness" (Yoreh-Zedek) at the End of Days -- our "amod" symbolism again (CD 6.6-11) .

Though the imagery here is again, admittedly complex, the thrust should be readily clear. Here, "the Penitents of Israel" are now "the Diggers", meaning "the Priests" of the first exegesis. The seeming redundancy represented by the phrase "the Nobles of the People" probably can be cleared away by identifying them with "the Nilvim" or "Joiners" of the first exegesis, the connecting piece being the allusion to "People" or "Peoples" -- meaning here Gentiles. These are the ones who apply the ordinances or "staves" (in the last colum, the Laws of Righteousness") and so the imagery of the well of living waters, picked up later in the narrative, when the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus is elucidated, is complete.

Here too the elucidation of "princes" is slightly different than that of "nobles". One must realize that just as in the "Sons of Zadok" exegesis, one actually has two groups here: "the Princes of the People" and "the Nobles of the People". One must always be cognizant of these slight variations. It would appear that the Interpreter or Doresh/Seeker is to be included among the first group or "Princes", because they like him are described in terms of "seeking God" (the operative word being "seeking" -- CD 6.6). He may, of course, represent also the third group of the first exegesis -- "the sons of Zadok", but however this may be, "the Staff" or Doresh decrees the Laws or "staves" with which "the nobles of the People" dig the well.

The reason all of these are attached to the all-important phraseology of Isaiah 54-56 is that this pericope too is presented as a "song" or "singing" (54:1) -- in the mnds of the exegetes clearly, the song or singing of the classical song signalled in Numbers 21:18. It should be remarked, as well, that

the whole tenor of this section of Isaiah as one of impending tragedy, directed towards "the barren that did not bear", "the sons of the forsaken one being no less than the married", "the ashamed", "the confounded", "the cast-off wife of the youth," "for a moment forsaken", but promising as the Habakkuk Pesher does, an attempt to remain hopeful in the face of overwhelming destruction -- the sense is the same, once more pointing to a common chronological milieu.

Immediately following this exegesis of this arcane song from Numbers, CD proceeds into its momentous description of "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" and presumably, the restoration there of "the fallen tent of David", progressing through allusions to "doing according to the precise letter of the Torah" and the use of "Nazirite" language ("lihinazzer" and "lehazzir" of 6.15 and 7.1.) to describe how one "separates from the Sons of the Pit" and "keeps away from "polluted evil Riches", including "the Riches of the Temple" (presumably polluted by Herodian and Roman contributions -- 6.14-16) and "to distinguish between Holy and profane", "separating polluted from pure". Even the use of this language has to be seen as parallel to James' instructions to overseas communities, expressed in terms of "keeping away from" ("things sacrificed to idols", "blood", "fornication", etc.), which as portrayed in Acts directly follows his evocation of "the fallen tent of David." (It is internal data of this kind that has to be seen as calling into question supposedly secure external parameters like palaeography or AMS carbon dating).

A third evocation occurs in 8.8 and this is nazru and has to do with not separating from the "People" possibly "Peoples" -- again using our "Peoples" language in an overt manner -- directly following an injunction against "fornication", in effect, approaching close family relatives.

In the earlier exegesis of the Zadokite Covenant of Ezek 44:15, it was said that one of the reasons the Temple was polluted was because those in control

(referred to as Ezekiel's "the daubers on the wall", and the like) "did not separate according to the Torah", meaning clean from unclean, holy from profane. Rather it was said, they slept with women in their periods -- another aspect of the fornication charge, combining it with the abstention from blood, directly evoked in the James injunctions -- and each one married his niece. The sense of what follows is that the Temple Establishment, who seem to be the object of the castigation did not itself necessarily do this but acquired this pollution by having contact with persons who did -- clearly indicating Herodians, Romans, and/or other foreigners and a firm dating parameter!

However, this may be, these descriptions, which turn on the issue of not "separating holy from profane," are clearly expository of both the second and third "nets of Belial", combining the "Pollution of the Temple" and "fornication" charges, the two areas of concern we shall find dominating the correspondence known as "MMT" as well.

Following this charge "to separate between clean and unclean and distinguish between holy and profane" (compare this with what Peter supposedly learns in Acts 10:15 and 10:28 as the upshot of his heavenly "tablecloth" vision) and of course the imprecation "to keep the day of the Sabbath according to its precise letter" and "the day of fasting"/Yom Kippur (CD 6.17-18 -- we have already encountered this as specifically applied to Gentiles in Isaiah 56:2 and 56:6 above); "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" is for the first time specifically evoked, in the context of the associated commandment, "to set up the Holy Things according to their precise specifications" (6.20), which we shall also find stressed in the instructions of MMT.

Immediately following this and the first in this catalogue of important things associated with this Covenant is the commandment "to love each man his brother as himself" (6.20-21), which all will recognize as "the Royal Law

according to the Scripture of James 2:8 and the basis of the "Righteousness Commandment" of Josephus' "Essenes", his picture of John the Baptist's basic teaching (here he calls it, "Righteousness towards one's fellow man"), the Gospel picture of "Jesus", and Paul's recommendation to pay taxes to Rome in Romans 13:4-10 -- that is, paying taxes to Rome is Righteousness towards one's fellow man!, and the first part of the Righteousness/Piety dichotomy we have signalled above -- the twin parts of the two "love" commandments, the second being "loving God" or "setting up the Holy Things according to their precise specifications"!

Immediately following this enumeration and part of the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus and the "strengthening"/"steadfastness" emphasis we have already encountered in Isaiah 56:6 applied to "Gentiles" and even "eunuchs", is the commandment "to strengthen the hand of the meek, the poor (ebion)," and equally as notable in terms of the implications for a Gentile cadre associated with Qumran, designated under the twin notations, "Nilvim"/"nobles of the People(s) "the ger" or convert!

Following this in this list of ordinances also associated with "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" is the command "not to uncover the nakedness of near kin", that is, "to keep away from (here lehazzir, again our Nazirite vocabulary now put in more normative Qumran terms -- 7:1), "fornication according to the statute". All this is directly summed up by the command to "walk in these things in Perfect Holiness", the point of both the "Nazirite" symbolism and the reason for the extreme purity regulations. This point too is directly evoked by Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:1, also a "florilegium" of sorts, which includes the material about "separate from all pollutions...touch nothing that is unclean -- cf. Isaiah 52:11; 2 Cor 6:17-18).

Also found in the parallel Pauline Midrash of 2 Corinthians 6:17, this

time for a change largely not reversed, is the material about "I shall be a father to you and you shall be my sons and daughters" (2 Sam 7:14), which in fact makes up one of the sections of the Qumran Florilegium above and, by implication, applied to Gentile converts in Isaiah 56:5 above.

It is approximately at this point that the material from Manuscript B, Column XIX, intrudes. It is at the point where Ms. A refers to "those who were steadfast escaping to the Land of the North" (once again, our "strengthening" usage based on the root H-Z-K; 6:21 -- cf. 20.27 and Isaiah 56:7). Simpler, it only refers to "the little ones" or "the meek of the flock" escaping, while consonant upon "the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel" -- here the usage is very definitely singular and "coming" not "standing" but it may be defective as it is not so far paralleled in extant Qumran materials - "the rest will be given over to the avenging sword of the Covenant". There can be little doubt that this is a vengeful war-like Messiah as in the War Scroll, nor can there be any doubt as to the tragicality of the times.

For Manuscript A, which is more detailed, the individual denoted by "the Messiah of Aaron and Israel" in B is that individual denoted by the description in "Star Prophecy" from Num 24:17, the "star which shall go forth from Jacob, the sceptre that shall rise from Israel". Here, once again, the usage is to his "standing up" or "arising", with which "all the sons of Seth" would be destroyed. This directly from the underlying Num 24:17 parallels the kind of thing we hear about "the Branch of David" in the Florilegium, 4Q285, and 4QpIs, "the Star" and "the sword of no mere man" in the War Scroll.

In all these documents, the Messiah comes primarily to destroy Gentiles not Jews -- a Messiah of the cut of Shimon bar Kochba/"the Son of the Star". But in Column 8, this same Judgement or "Visitation" as it is called, was to be upon "those who entered the Covenant but did not fast to these" laws or Statutes --

again the "steadfastness" imagery (8.2); but now they were to be destroyed by "the hand of Belial" -- presumably the Herodians or Rome.

But in Ms. A of CD, "the Star" is actually identified with "the Interpreter of the Torah who came to Damascus." It is rather a new individual, called "the Nasi chol ha-edah"/"the Prince of the entire Congregation" who is identified as "the Sceptre", as if the two were different personalities. Again, there is no way of penetrating the mind of the exegete here, but the term is also used by Bar Kochba on his coinage and familiar from an assortment of Qumran documents, as for instance, 4Q285, where "the nasi ha-edah" is specifically used in apposition with "the branch of David", and would also seem to be identified with "the shoot of Jesse."

But the peshar identifying "the Star" with "Interpreter of the Torah who came to Damascus" would appear not just to have a parallel but a parody in the present Book of Acts. In CD, however, "the Doresh" or "Interpreter" actually assumes Messianic proportions because of what he appears to be achieving at Damascus or in the wilderness thereof -- this may be the Aaronite component of the conjunction represented by the Messiah of Aaron and Israel.

This exposition is immediately followed by the material paralleling Manuscript B, alluding to both a First Visitation -- presumably the first Exile -- and a coming second, involving the Judgement at the hand of Belial noted above on backsliders from "the New Covenant", which very definitely has overtones with James' evocation of a "visit" upon new Gentile converts preceding his rulings in Acts' version of the Jerusalem Council.

But to go back a bit. In 7.12-13, these escapees are compared to the Ephraimites escaping from the Judeans and once again includes a reference to "steadfastness" -- "Ha-Mahzakim"/"the Steadfast Ones". In the Nahum Peshar, for instance, "the Simple of Ephraim" would again appear to be a euphemism for

Gentiles (or what in other contexts might go by the name of "Samaritans "). Here the basis of the exegesis are these famous passages from Amos 5:26-27 and 9:11 about the "exiling of the Kings's tabernacle" and "resurrecting the fallen tent of David". The indication is to a land even further North than Damascus for the focus of at least some of the activity being described, which clarifies these links with the area where the deportees from the Assyrian conquest are being exiled.

Not only are we speaking about escaping to "the Land of the North", which would clearly appear to have overtones with such an earlier Assyrian exile, but the way the quotation from Amos is being parsed, all the words are deconstructed and taken separately. The whole, however, is being interpreted Messianically, as its conjunction with the Star prophecy of Numbers 24:17 irrefutably proves. Needless to say the exposition is extremely arcane, as we have seen. "The King", as per Pauline exposition about Jesus in 1 and 2 Corinthians is definitely stated to be "the Community", while "the Tabernacle of the King" in an allegorical exposition of immense importance are definitely said to be "the books of the Torah". For these purposes, "the bases of the statues", also referred to in Amos 5:27, are "the books of the Prophets, whose words Israel despised.

Even the original in Amos is extremely arcane and the Damascus Document struggles manfully to make sense out of it. Other than a completely esoteric meaning, the only sense that can be made out of it seems to imply that something is being exiled beyond Damascus or to a land "north" of Damascus -- for our purposes, Northern Syria. All these things are connected in some manner with the "re-erecting the fallen tent of David" quotation from Amos 9:11, which in the context seems to imply in a land north of Damascus. However one interprets these passages, we are in a "Damascus" milieu and surrounding allusions to a "tent"

being exiled from Damascus, seem to point to a land even further North than this. These passages from Manuscript A are extant at Qumran (4Q 266, Fr. 3, Column 2), though the compressed variant represented in Ms. B so far is not.

In our view, this points to Jewish Messianic hopes being focused upon a royal family North of Damascus, in turn bearing on the contemporary conversions of King Agbar in Edessa/Antiochia Orrhoes and Queen Helen and her son Izates East of this in Adiabene. Since the events are contemporary, they are hard to separate and minor differences in data may largely be due largely to variations in source viewpoint. It is clear that to more nationalist Jewish Zealots like Izates "Galilean" teacher Eleazar and probably including Qumran-style "Nazirites", of whom Helen seems to have been inordinantly fond; the royal family of Adiabene was seen as a fitting replacement for the hated Herodians and members of the family were prominently involved in the earliest engagements of the war against Rome, dying in them. They were also involved in R. Akiba's marriage to a scion of this family prior to Bar Kochba uprising. In such a context, one could easily see Bar Kochba as the Nasi ha-Edah and R. Akiba as the Doresh ha-Torah or Star.

Before moving on to how these things may or may not link up with events being described in Acts "north of Damascus", it would behoove one to just briefly deal with the parallels represented by the "letter" or "letters" known as "MMT". In our view this too had a Northern Syrian addressee or destination. It is widely acknowledged that this correspondence is addressed to a king of some kind. Most look for a Jewish king, though why he cannot be a foreign convert is rarely considered. The "king" part is made clear by the reference in the second part to this king's "own good and that of his people", recapitulated in line 33 with the evocation of the words applied to Abraham in Genesis 15, "works reckoned to you as Righteousness", and therefore part of the whole "reckoned as

Righteousness"/"Justification" debate, whether in Paul's Romans or Galatians, Hebrews, or James, as I and Prof. Abegg have noted in other works. In "MMT" we are certainly in a Jamesian Justification by "works" or a "works"/Righteousness framework (as we are in the derivative Koran, also with Northern Syrian connections), though why a "Jewish" king would need such instructions is never addressed.

The idea of referring to this king's "people" makes it look as if they are distinct and possibly foreign to those writing the letter. This is not provable, but the implication is there. Then, too, the reference to "People" in view of all the concerns already raised surrounding this term and its plural "Peoples"/Ethne further fuels this suspicion. The second part repeatedly refers to "the Book of Moses" ("the Torah") and "the words of the Prophets" (lines 6, 10,11,16, 24, etc.), recapitulating the words of the exegesis in CD 7, Ms A, that "the Tabernacle of the king is the Books of the Torah" and "the bases of the statues are the Books of the Prophets" and firming up the connection to these curious passages in CD.

It also repeatedly refers to "the Last Days" and "the End Time" (13,15,24, 33) and the whole framework, mentioning Jereboam and Zedekiah, is similar to the disastrous background of these passages in CD. So too is the interest this king would appear to have in David, reckoned as "a man of pious (works)...saved from many sufferings and forgiven" (28-29), otherwise why evoke him? This parallels the interest in David in these passages in CD and earlier 5.5. It should be remembered that both Helen and her favorite son Izates went through similar trials and penances.

Even the words "never to turn back" in line 5 of the first section have a ringing parallel in the fulsome condemnations of those who "turn back and betray the well of living waters" in succeeding descriptions of events relating

to erecting "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" in CD 7.22ff. (Ms B: 20.1ff.) . Most of what occupies the first fifty or so lines, as announced in lines 3-4 of the letter, have to do with gifts, primarily Gentile gifts to the Temple and purity regulations related to these (i. e., pollution of the Temple, the third of Belial's nets according to the reckoning of Columns 4-6 of CD).

This concern for purity of the Temple in Columns 4-5, but also 7-8 of the Damascus Document roughly breaks down into the areas of James' instructions to overseas communities. These, as we have seen, follow directly upon the speech attributed to him in 15:7, evoking "re-erecting the fallen tent of David", that is "to abstain" or "keep away from (language echoed, as we have also seen, in the Nazirite language of three passages from CD above having to do with lehinnazer/lehazzir/and linzor/"keep way from") things sacrificed to idols, fornication, blood, and strangled things.

In fact, one could almost view MMT as a midrash on at least two if not three of these categories. "Things sacrificed to idols" is actually mentioned in lines 8-9, where it is directly connected to "Gentile gifts in the Temple", an issue which would have been particularly significant for Gentile converts and Paul's Gentile mission per se. The language used here in MMT, "it is the idol that seduces them", has almost a direct riposte by Paul in 1 Cor 8:4, "we know that an idol has no real existences, followed by approximately eight lines of dissimulation. In fact, the whole subject of "things sacrificed to idols" is discussed by Paul in 1 Cor 8-12, leading into his proclamation of "the cup of the New Covenant in (Christ's) blood" in 11:25, seemingly banned by James' directives, and the Community as Christ's body in 12:13 and 27, echoing CD 7.17's exposition of Amos 5:26-27.

MMT takes up the issue of fornication starting from line 47, focusing particularly on mixed marriages, a subject clearly of no mean concern to overseas

converts. Lines 83 and 89 actually mention "fornication" per se and mixed marriages are specifically banned from 47-59; for Holy persons -- meaning here priests. Qumran viewed itself as an entire community of "Holy Ones"/ All such holy penitents and/or Nazirites "consecrated to God" would be "Priests" (85-89).

Since "strangled things" in Acts' defective version of James' directives to overseas communities can be directly comprehended as carrion -- the sense given it in the Pseudoclementines and the Koran thereafter -- are directly touched upon in the passage banning bringing dogs into the Holy Camp -- Jerusalem (lines 66-70). The ban on blood, while not specifically alluded to -- nor is it in the Koran, is part and parcel of CD's combination of the "fornication" and "pollution of the Temple" charges, and can be thought of as operative throughout. CD 3.6 specifically bans it, blaming its consumption for the "cutting off of the males in the wilderness", language Paul enjoys parodying in his "cutting off" ribaldry in Gal 5:12.

I would now like to attempt a reconstruction based on Acts handling of similar materials. In particular, these come in the more reliable last third of Acts, particularly the "we" materials which begin directly following the somewhat tendentious "Jerusalem Council". I have already treated the issue of which "Antioch" is intended where Acts' "Jerusalem Council" is concerned. For the purposes of Northern Syrian renderings, it really doesn't matter -- but let us assume it was the more substantial one in first century CE terms, the one "by Callirhoe" on a tributary of the Euphrates. Where Agbarus and Queen Helen are concerned, this is the significant "Antioch". Then Agbarus' Kingdom in Northern Syria and its extension in relations with Queen Helen's and that of her two sons further East can be thought of as the focus of where Paul's initial "Christian Community" according to Acts was located. I find this aesthetically more

pleasing.

This too would consolidate the activities of Josephus' "Ananias", prominent in Acts version of Paul's activities in "Damascus" and mentioned as the intermediary between King Agbarus and Jesus' brothers in Jerusalem in Eusebius' presentation, into a single Northern Syrian context. The same for both Queen Helen's and Paul/Barnabas' famine relief activities which Eusebius anyhow treats as a single whole (according to Josephus, these would have to be in the mid-40s). I have treated this subject at length in James the Brother of Jesus.

We have also already signalled the importance of the issue of circumcision in Josephus' description of Izates' conversion (backed too by the Talmud). This subject, not surprisingly, also form the backdrop to Acts' account of the Jerusalem Council (not to mention the veiled thrust of its "Ethiopian" Queen's eunuch materials). It is also the issue dominating Paul's letters and the Damascus Document's presentation of Abraham.

Putting all these materials together, it is possible to consider MMT as the letter brought down by Judas Barsabas and Silas, which Acts claims was addressed to "the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch (Edessa and beyond) and Syria and Cilicia" (15:23) -- the idea of "brothers who are of the Gentiles in Syria" harmonizes perfectly without picture of parallel passages in the Damascus Document and MMT. To carry this synthesis further. In our view, these are the same letters Eusebius insists were delivered to a king there, perhaps the first conversion to the new religion he and Acts are now calling "Christianity".

Setting aside what Acts considers to be the upshot of of the so-called Jerusalem Council and James' "rulings" there, "rulings" very much in the character of the powers accorded the Mebakker at Qumran in CD as well, it is possible now to actually turn to the content of its, the Florilegium, and

the Damascus Document's mutual evocation of "re-erecting of the fallen tent of David," which all seem to consider applies, however tendentious the redaction, to these events.

In Acts' presentation, James' speech -- no introduction of who this James could be, as the other James has supposedly already died -- is preceded by a short description of how "Simeon (Peter -- or could this be with more logic, Simeon bar Cleophas? -- has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." Here there are two expressions that jump immediately from the page, "words of the Prophets" and "visited". Though CD, as we saw, uses the possibly defective "books of the prophets"; MMT repeatedly uses this allusion "words of the Prophets". Though "words of the Prophets" also permeated documents like 1QpHab, where they are applied to the exegetical powers of the Righteous Teacher (7.15), it is not necessarily an uncommon expression.

But the allusion "visited" is and, once again, it is found almost exclusively in the Damascus Document, where it occurs throughout from the description of how God "visited them and caused a root of planting out of Aaron and Israel to grow" in Column 1 to "visiting their works" (with Wrath) in 5.16, the "Era of the First Visitation" of Column 7.21 to the "visitation" of "Judgement on all those who entered His Covenant but did not remain steadfast to the Law" (our "steadfast"/"strengthening" imagery again -- literally, this is "the Judgement Day" or "the Day on which God visits" or "commands" (8.2-3).

As James is presented as using the term and applying it to Gentiles being saved in Acts, it is a visitation for a reward or goodness. If one looks closely, one will find the same sense emanating from MMT's promise to its royal addressee of "works of the Law" for his "own good and that of (his) people's".

The operative term in all these is "people" or "peoples" -- "Peoples" generally being the Qumran term for Gentiles, as it is, for instance, in Eusebius' rendering of Agbarus' title: "the Great King of the Peoples beyond the Euphrates", meaning both the Land of the Edessenes and Adiabene -- areas to which inter alia Josephus appears to have first addressed his Aramaic and original version of the Jewish War. This is the same in Greek as it is in Hebrew and the next section of the Damascus Document will deal with a term well known to Roman jurisprudence, "Kings of the Peoples".

Though in James' speech the general rendering of the biblical passage is closer to the Septuagint than the Masoretic, still the operative words, even as they appear in Amos 9:12, are "Gentiles" (in Greek Ethne), and this is clearly why they are being evoked here in Acts, because what is ostensibly being debated is requirement issues for Gentile Nilvim/Joiners or more specifically Paul's Gentile Mission. Here to "called by My Name" is also evoked, an expression familiar throughout the whole of Acts -- where normally it is applied to Jesus' Name rather than God's, if the two can be separated. The variant in CD, "called by Name" is specifically applied to the Sons of Zadok in Column IV.

For MMT, too, the issue is Gentiles, but of course the outcome is quite a bit different than Acts' alleges if the parallel is acknowledged. In the Florilegium, the passage is once again applied to those "who turn aside from the path of Evil", seemingly identified with Gentiles and their idols, and as in MMT and CD, the time is that of the Last Days. Again the sons of Zadok are evoked, but the exegesis, as we have seen, is rather straightforward -- to the branch of David and/or the Interpreter of the Torah and the presentation is definitely applied to a Bar Kochba like Messianic saviour. As in MMT, which is also interested in David, the Ammonite/Moabite allusion to Gentiles is also raised.

In CD, too, the use of this allusion to "turning back" is extremely

widespread, particularly as concerns those who turned aside from or retreated from carrying out all that was required by the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus -- certainly interpreted as including Gentiles as we have seen. Though in CD, the thrust of "raising the fallen tent of David" would appear to be more esoteric and aimed at the Syrian hinterland or an area North of there, as we have explained, unlike the Florilegium but similar to James in Acts there are intimations of an application to righteous Gentiles observing the Law in the final passages of the exhortation where the Royal Law of Scripture is once more evoked (20.18) and the "fortifying" language once more evoked (20.19), as is "a book of rememberances before (God) for God-Ferears and those reckoning" or "considering His name" (20.19-20).

Again, the parallel here with "God visiting the Gentiles to take out a People for His Name" should be clear, as should the central thrust of the last lines of MMT: "You will rejoice at the End of Time, when you find some of our words are true...for your own good and that of Israel".

In CD, it is clear that this is directly applying to Gentiles and the parallel with James' speech in Acts again becomes tangible. This is reinforced by the language of the very next clause: "Until God shall reveal Salvation (Yesha) and Righteousness (or Justification) to those Fearing His Name." Here is the powerful parallel to Amos 9:11-12's "all the Gentiles who are called by My Name", loosely quoted by James in Acts 15:17 and James' own reported actual variation of this: "how God first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a People for His Name."

This language of "strengthening"/"steadfastness" and emphasis on God's Holy Name continues to the end of the recitation, declaring as does MMT that "all those who hold fast to these statutes, coming and going in according with Torah (20:27-28)," who have "lifted up (their) hand againt the Holiness of His Laws

and the Righteousness of His Judgements...and not deserted the Laws of Righteousness (a more anti-Pauline recitation could not be imagine)...their heart(s) ill be strengthened and they shall prevail against all the sons of Earth (direct connections with the War Scroll are not hard to imagine)...and they shall see His Salvation (Yeshu'a), because they took refuge in His Holy Name."

This seems to me the gist, not only of these words in the Damascus Document, but also James' evocation of a parallel passage in Acts. It is for this reason that I consider both the confirmation of King Agbarus in Christian tradition and Helen's household in Jewish -- in Eusebius' rendering, one follows the other -- relevant to these passages here and for that matter the whole sense of both these passages in CD and the instructions on the subjects of Gentile gifts in the Temple -- however arcane these may at first strike the reader -- and fornication in MMT. The veiled allusions there both to David and ultimately Abraham just further this conjunction.

That "things sacrificed to idols" form the backbone of James' directives in Acts 15, are actually evoked in MMT above and are the gist of what lines 1-47 convey, are discussed disingenuously by Paul in 1 Cor 6-10 as a seeming reposte to James, and are the essence of what Josephus claims Essenes martyred themselves -- this even more clear in Hippolytus' version of his testimony -- not to mention what Pliny describes in correspondence with Trajan as a fundamental precepts of "the Christians" he is examining; just further reinforces this synthesis. In my delineation, all these references are pointed towards events we now only shadowly recollect, but with insight can be gingerly teased from the debris of the past as DNA from long-discarded human teeth or bones. It all depends on one's chronology -- and one's insight.