

## I

## Introduction

The Teacher of Righteousness (מורה הצדק) is perhaps the most important and, at the same time, the most enigmatic character in the Dead Sea Scrolls. His significance is evident in the way he is remembered by the later Scrolls community. The *Damascus Document* describes his role as a prominent leader. Prior to his ascension, members of the group are said to have been “like the blind, like people groping for the way,” after which God “raised up for them the Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart” (CD-A 1.9, 11). The basis for his unique role in the community is preserved in the scriptural commentaries (*pesharim*), which describe him as a divinely-inspired exegete whose interpretation of the prophetic writings helped explain contemporary circumstances (1QpHab 2.5–10; 7.1–5). Not only did his prophetic abilities serve to illuminate events in the life of the community, they also provided an identity for a group who sought to define itself against the experience of marginalization. Even in death, the Teacher’s significance did not wane, as his followers believed the time of his passing marked out the timeframe of the eschatological end (cf. CD-B 20.13–15).

But despite the Teacher’s undeniable significance in the textual record, in many ways, he remains a mystery to modern scholars. The reason lies in the paucity of evidence relating to his life and legacy. In total, the Teacher is explicitly mentioned in only a handful of the approximately 930 scrolls that were uncovered at Qumran.<sup>1</sup> Among these texts, there

<sup>1</sup> The list includes: 1QpMic 10 6 [10 4 in Horgan]; 1QpHab 1.13; 2.2 (which reads מורה הצדקה; 5.10; 7.4; 8.3; 9.9–10; 11.5; 4QpPs<sup>a</sup> 1–10 iii 15, 19; 1–10 iv 8, 27; 4QpPs<sup>b</sup> 1 4; 2 2; 4Q172 7 1 (see James H. Charlesworth, *Graphic Concordance to the Dead*

are no biographies that narrate the events of his life or detail his role within the community. Moreover, the few instances in which he is referenced are brief and often situated within polemical discourse. But most problematic, perhaps, is our lack of access to the situational backdrop against which these texts were composed.<sup>2</sup>

The dearth of textual evidence poses a serious challenge for anyone attempting to reconstruct the life of the Teacher. However, many have been undeterred in their efforts to understand this important figure, working strenuously to chart his career in meticulous detail.<sup>3</sup> Yet, over the last few decades, scholarship has gone through a period of transition. In direct response to the historical positivism, which marked a previous generation of research, recent interpreters have challenged conventional views concerning the sufficiency of the written sources for carrying out

*Sea Scrolls* [PTS DSSP; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1991] 361, 390; and Martin G. Abegg et al., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*, Vol. 1, Part 1: *The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran* [Leiden: Brill, 2003] 433–434). Although the restoration is difficult, the title may also be preserved in 4QpIsa<sup>c</sup> 21 6 and 4Q253a 1 5. Similar terminology is found elsewhere: “the Teacher of the community,” מורה היחיד (CD-B 20.1, 14); “the Interpreter of Knowledge,” מליץ דעה (4QpPs<sup>a</sup> 1–10 i 27); and “the Teacher,” מורה (CD-B 20.28; 4QpIsa<sup>c</sup> 21 6). It has also been suggested that the Teacher of Righteousness is referenced in 1QM 10.10: וְשׁוֹמְעֵי קוֹל נֹכְבֵד, “those who hear the voice of the glorious one” (see André Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1961] 184 n. 5); however, this claim is unfounded (see William Sanford LaSor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972] 110–111). There is some debate about whether “the Interpreter of the Law,” דורש התורה (CD-A 6.7 [// 4Q267 2 15]; 7.18 [// 4Q266 3 iii 19 and 4Q269 5 2]) also refers to the Teacher (see Section 10.1.2.1).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “The Legacy of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9–11 January, 2005* (eds. E. G. Chazon et al.; STDJ 88; Leiden: Brill, 2010) 23–49: “the texts about the Teacher preserve interpretations that were shared between the authors and readers of those texts which were but fragments of a larger framework that could be taken for granted (and therefore did not have to be expressed in the sources before us)” (47).

<sup>3</sup> Scholarly awareness of the Teacher of Righteousness stretches all the way back to 1897, when Solomon Schechter discovered fragments of the *Damascus Document* (which he described as a Zadokite work) from the geniza of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Cairo (Solomon Schechter, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries*, Vol. 1: *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910] xii–xiii). Thereafter, the Teacher became the subject of much speculation (for a review, see Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the “Damascus Document”* [JSOTSup 25; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982] 5–14). Our focus, however, will be on the scholarly treatment of the Teacher *after* the initial discoveries in the caves around Qumran (1947).

traditional forms of historical inquiry and, by extension, the historical conclusions that have been drawn from them.

### 1.1 The Traditional Perspective on the Teacher of Righteousness

In the decades after the Scrolls were discovered, a number of important studies on the Teacher were produced.<sup>4</sup> Each of these early treatments shared a common methodological aim: the historical reconstruction of the life and impact of the Teacher. This included uncovering the historical identity of the individual behind the sobriquet, ascertaining the details about his rise to leadership within the group, and determining his role in the composition of the community's foundational texts. Among this first generation of Scrolls scholars, the Teacher was understood as the key founding-figure of the community whose influence and instructions provided direction for the group both during his lifetime and even long after his death. As a result, the Teacher figured prominently in virtually all attempts to understand the Scrolls and the history behind them.

Yet even at an early stage, it was evident that wide gaps separated the various attempts to synthesize the historical data. In fact, during his 1956–1957 Haskell Lectures, Frank Moore Cross quipped that “the number of theories evolved almost equals the number of scholars who have put their hands to the task.”<sup>5</sup> Much of this disagreement centered around the historical identity of the Teacher. Many believed that if they were able to identify him, it would help explain the community's origins and

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Gustave Lambert, *Le Maître de Justice et la Communauté de l'Alliance: Étude historique et version du Commentaire d'Habacuc et de quelques "Psaumes" du Désert de Juda* (ALBO II/28; Louvain: Universitaires de Louvain, 1952); Albert Michel, *Le Maître de Justice d'après les documents de la Mer Morte, la littérature apocryphe et rabbinique* (Paris: Maison Aubanel, 1954); F. F. Bruce, *The Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran Texts* (London: Tyndale, 1957); Gert Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (SUNT 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); Per Wallendorff, *Rättfärdighetens lärare: En exegetisk undersökning* (Helsingfors: Aarhus Stiftsbogtrykkeri 1964); Luigi Moraldi, *Il Maestro de Giustizia. L'innominato dei Manoscritti di Qumrân* (Fossano: Esperienze, 1971). For a review of this early discussion, see Håkan Ulfsgård, “Rättfärdighetens Lärare och Qumranförsamlingens historia. En kort skiss över problematiken,” in *Dødehavsteksterne og Bibelen* (eds. N. Hyldahl and T. L. Thompson; FBE 8; København: Museum Tusulanum Forlag, Københavns Universitet, 1996) 129–157. Cf. also Hans Bardtke, “Literaturbericht über Qumran, X. Teil: Der Lehrer des Gerechtigkeit und die Geschichte der Qumrangemeinde,” *TRu* 41 (1976) 97–140.

<sup>5</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958) 80.

perhaps the circumstances surrounding its development. Consequently, there was no shortage of theories attempting to connect the Teacher with historical personages known from other Second Temple sources – despite warnings about the limitations of such an approach.<sup>6</sup>

Some associated the Teacher with the early Christian movement. One controversial hypothesis set forth by Robert H. Eisenman identified the Teacher with James the Just, the brother of Jesus. While this thesis was defended in a number of essays and monographs, the position found few supporters.<sup>7</sup> Among those who situated the Teacher within the first century CE, it was more common to identify him directly with Jesus. This might have been expected given the various parallels that were drawn between the two by early interpreters.<sup>8</sup>

The identification of Jesus as the Teacher of Righteousness actually predates the discoveries at Qumran, when George Margoliouth began publishing what would become a series of articles in which he set forth the case that the Cairo *Damascus Document* belonged to a group of Sadducean Christians.<sup>9</sup> More specifically, Margoliouth argued that this

<sup>6</sup> Shortly after the last cave at Qumran had been discovered, Józef T. Milik warned, “it is hopeless for us to try to identify [the Teacher] with a known figure” (*Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* [trans. J. Strugnell; SBT 26; London: SCM Press, 1959] 74), an assessment that was based on the scarcity of data about the Teacher’s life and work.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Eisenman, *Maccabees, Zadokites, Christians and Qumran: A New Hypothesis of Qumran Origins* (StPB 34; Leiden: Brill, 1983); idem, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians: Essays and Translations* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1996) 332–351; idem, *James, the Brother of Jesus: The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Viking, 1997); cf. also Robert H. Eisenman and Michael O. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered: The First Complete Translation and Interpretation of 50 Key Documents Withheld for Over 35 Years* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1992) 1–16. For a review of Eisenman’s theory, see Marianne Dacy, “Is James the Just the Teacher of Righteousness?” *AJJS* 12 (1998) 6–24.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Edward J. Young, “The Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus Christ: Some Reflections Upon the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *WTJ* 18 (1955) 121–145; Jean Carmignac, *Christ and the Teacher of Righteousness: The Evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (trans. K. G. Pedley; Baltimore, MD: Helicon, 1962); Håkan Ulfsgård, “The Teacher of Righteousness, the History of the Qumran Community, and Our Understanding of the Jesus Movement: Texts, Theories and Trajectories,” in *Qumran between the Old and New Testament* (eds. F. H. Cryer and T. L. Thompson; JSOTSup 290; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998) 310–346.

<sup>9</sup> George Margoliouth, “The Sadducean Christians of Damascus,” *Athenaeum* 4335 (1910) 657–659 (for the numerous works in which Margoliouth developed this thesis, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Prolegomenon,” in *Documents of Jewish Sectaries* [ed. S. Schechter; New York: Ktav, 1970] 1–34 [30]). This view was later revived by Jacob L. Teicher,

group viewed the apostle Paul, with his law-free gospel, as the Wicked Priest out to overturn the work of the Teacher of Righteousness, who was none other than Jesus of Nazareth. According to another theory, Jesus and John the Baptist were both raised as Essenes, and as they grew older, the former adopted the title, Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>10</sup> This Jesus-Teacher identification was later turned on its head by Barbara Thiering, who claimed that the Teacher of Righteousness was actually John the Baptist. His ministry, she contended, was interpreted and even set in contrast to another contemporary figure, the Wicked Priest, whom Thiering asserted was Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

Others moved up the timeframe further into the first century CE, locating the Teacher around the time of the first Jewish revolt against Rome. More specifically, it was claimed that the Teacher was either Menahem, son (or grandson) of Judas the Galilean, who was known for invading the fortress of Herod at Masada (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.433–435), or Eleazar, son of Jair, the leader of a group of Jewish rebels known as the

“The Damascus Fragments and the Origin of the Jewish Christian Sect,” *JJS* 2 (1951) 115–143; idem, “Jesus in the Habakkuk Scroll,” *JJS* 3 (1952) 53–55.

<sup>10</sup> See Upton Clary Ewing, *The Essene Christ: A Recovery of the Historical Jesus and the Doctrines of Primitive Christianity* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1961) 48–51, 62–63; cf. also Kenneth V. Hosking, *Yeshua, the Nazorean: The Teacher of Righteousness* (London: Janus, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> See Barbara E. Thiering, *Redating the Teacher of Righteousness* (ANZSTR; Sydney: Theological Explorations, 1979) 207–214; cf. also idem, *The Gospels and Qumran: A New Hypothesis* (ANZSTR; Sydney: Theological Explorations, 1981) 71–77, 108–110; and idem, *Jesus & the Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Unlocking the Secrets of His Life Story* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992) 66–72. Although this view is most commonly associated with Thiering (due to the publicity her work has received), she is neither the first to suggest this identification, nor is she the only one who currently holds this view. The theory predates Thiering by a few decades, having been proposed even before the discoveries at Qumran. It was first suggested by Robert Eisler, “The Sadoquite Book of the New Covenant: Its Date and Origin,” in *Occident and Orient: Being Studies in Semitic Philology and Literature, Jewish History and Philosophy and Folklore in the Widest Sense, in Honour of Haham Dr. M. Gaster’s 80th Birthday* (eds. B. Schindler and A. Marmorstein; London: Taylor’s Foreign Press, 1936) 110–143 (125, 137), as part of an elaborate attempt to re-date the Cairo *Damascus Document*. More recently, Arthur E. Palumbo, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Personages of Earliest Christianity* (New York: Algora, 2004) esp. 73–82, has attempted to extend the theory, building on the works of Eisler and Thiering. For a thorough critique of this view, see N. T. Wright, *Who Was Jesus?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993) 19–36; Otto Betz and Rainer Riesner, *Jesus, Qumran and the Vatican* (London: SCM Press, 1994) 99–113; David M. Paton, “An Evaluation of the Hypothesis of Barbara Thiering concerning Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *QC* 5 (1995) 31–45.

*Sicarii* (J.W. 7.252–255).<sup>12</sup> In this way, scholars challenged the traditional pacifist reading of the Scrolls community. However, based on the dates assigned to the Scrolls as well as the archaeological discoveries related to the site of Qumran, the life of the Teacher was generally located much earlier.

Most situated the Teacher prior to the turn of the era. Occasionally, one would find theories that identified the Teacher with Jewish leaders from the Persian period, including Ezra and Nehemiah,<sup>13</sup> and there were some who placed the Teacher within the Hellenistic era, identifying him with figures such as Simeon the Just (third century BCE), Zadok (ca. 200 BCE), and Onias III (170 BCE).<sup>14</sup> But by far the most common time period in which the Teacher's identity was

<sup>12</sup> E.g., Henri E. del Medico, *Deux manuscrits Hébreux de la Mer Morte: Essai de traduction du "Manuel de Discipline" et du "Commentaire d'Habbakuk"* (Paris: Geuthner, 1951) 132–137; idem, *L'énigme des manuscrits de la Mer Morte: Étude sur la date, la provenance et le contenu des mss découverts dans la grotte I de Qumrân* (Paris: Plon, 1957) 181–188, 342–357; Cecil Roth, *The Historical Background of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958); Godfrey R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls: The Problems and a Solution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965) 267–281.

<sup>13</sup> Ezra: Annie Jaubert, "Le pays de Damas," *RB* 65 (1958) 214–248 (236–237); Norman Walker, "Concerning the 390 Years and the 20 Years of the Damascus Document," *JBL* 76 (1957) 57–58. Nehemiah: Isaac Rabinowitz, "A Reconsideration of 'Damascus' and '390 Years' in the 'Damascus' ('Zadokite') Fragments," *JBL* 73 (1954) 11–35 (15 n. 13).

<sup>14</sup> Simeon the Just: Mark J. Geller, "Qumran's Teacher of Righteousness: A Suggested Identification," *SJC* 1 (2002) 9–19; Nikos Kokkinos, "Second Thoughts on the Date and Identity of the Teacher of Righteousness," *SJC* 2 (2003) 7–15. Zadok: Ben Zion Wacholder, *The Dawn of Qumran: The Sectarian Torah and the Teacher of Righteousness* (HUCM 8; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1983) 99–140, although later he argued that Teacher of Righteousness was not a historical personality from the community's past but a future eschatological figure (see idem, "The Teacher of Righteousness Is Alive, Awaiting the Messiah: מִשְׁחָה in CD as Allusion to the Siniatic and Damascene Covenants," *HUCA* 70–71 [1999–2000] 75–92; idem, "The Righteous Teacher in the Pesherite Commentaries," *HUCA* 73 [2002] 1–27). Onias III: Harold H. Rowley, *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952) 67–68; idem, "The Teacher of Righteousness and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *BJRL* 40 (1957) 114–146; Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins: Studies in the Jewish Background of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1961) 20–21; cf. also Russell Gmirkin, "Historical Allusions in the War Scroll," *DSD* 5 (1998) 172–214 (209–212); Stephen J. Pfann, "Historical Implications of the Early Second Century Dating of the 4Q249–250 Cryptic A Corpus," in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone* (eds. E. G. Chazon, et al.; JSJSup 89; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 171–186 (185).

pursued was the reign of the Hasmoneans.<sup>15</sup> While some connected the Teacher directly with Maccabean rulers,<sup>16</sup> most claimed that the authors of the Scrolls were antagonistic toward the Hasmoneans; thus, they set the Teacher in opposition to this ruling party. A large number of scholars identified the Teacher with the anonymous individual who served in the role of high priest in Jerusalem during the *intersacerdotium* (159–152 BCE)<sup>17</sup> but who was later removed by Jonathan Maccabeus.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> A number of candidates have been set forward, e.g., Yose ben Yoezer, second century BCE (Ethelbert Stauffer, “Der gekreuzigte Thoralehrer,” *ZRGG* 8 [1956] 250–253; idem, *Jerusalem und Rom im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* [Bern: Francke, 1957] 130); the author-compiler of the book of Daniel (John C. Trever, “The Qumran Teacher – Another Candidate?” in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hulse Brownlee* [eds. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1987] 101–121); Judas the Essene, 100 BCE (Adam S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran* [SSN 3; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1957] 239; Jean Carmignac, “Qui était le Docteur de Justice?” *RevQ* 10 [1980] 235–246, 585–586); the alleged miracle-worker, Honi the Circlemaker, ca. 65 BCE (Roger Goossens, “Onias le Juste, le Messie de la Nouvelle Alliance,” *La Nouvelle Clío* 1–2 [1949–50] 336–353; Roger Goossens, “Les éléments messianiques des traditions sur Onias le Just, chez Josèphe et dans le Talmud,” *Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques* 5/36 [1950] 440–469). None of these proposals has gained many adherents, however.

<sup>16</sup> Mattathias and Judas Maccabeus (ca. 167–162 BCE): James C. G. Greig, “The Teacher of Righteousness and the Qumran Community,” *NTS* 2 (1955) 119–126; Isaac Rabinowitz, “The Guides of Righteousness,” *VT* 8 (1958) 391–404. Hyrcanus II (76–67, 63–40 BCE): Gregory L. Doudna, *4QPesher Nahum: A Critical Edition* (JSPSup 35; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 683–754; idem, “Allusions to the End of the Hasmonean Dynasty in *Pesher Nahum* (4Q169),” in *The Mermaid and the Partridge: Essays from the Copenhagen Conference on Revising Texts from Cave Four* (eds. G. J. Brooke and J. Høgenhaven; STDJ 96; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 259–278 (265–268).

<sup>17</sup> On the *intersacerdotium*, see Maria Brutti, *The Development of the High Priesthood during the Pre-Hasmonean Period: History, Ideology, Theology* (JSJSup 108; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 98–107.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., Hartmut Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität 1971) 211–212, 220; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Demetrius I and the Teacher of Righteousness (I Macc X, 25–45),” *RB* 83 (1976) 400–420; idem, “Judah the Essene and the Teacher of Righteousness,” *RevQ* 10 (1981) 579–585; Hans Burgmann, “Das umstrittene intersacerdotium in Jerusalem 159–152 v. Chr.,” *JJS* 11 (1980) 135–176; Michael O. Wise, “The Teacher of Righteousness and the High Priest of the Intersacerdotium: Two Approaches,” *RevQ* 14 (1990) 587–613; Paul A. Rainbow, “The Last Oniad and the Teacher of Righteousness,” *JJS* 48 (1997) 30–52; Émile Puech, “Le grand prêtre Simon (III) fils d’Onias III, le Maître de Justice?” in *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum: Festschrift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag* (eds. B. Kollmann et al.; BZNW 97; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997) 137–158.



As this debate reveals, early scholarship was marked by sharp disagreements over – among other things – the identity of the Teacher. Yet, there was one point on which virtually all interpreters seemed to have agreed. They were optimistic that all of the necessary information required for the task of historical reconstruction could be accessed in the available source materials using the standard tools of historical criticism.<sup>19</sup> In other words, this traditional perspective was constructed on the basis of historical positivism.<sup>20</sup>

A case in point is the previously referenced study by Cross. Due to the multiplicity of conclusions that scholars had reached, Cross judged their efforts to be less than successful. What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that his solution was not to move away from a historical approach. His suggestion was simply to refine the historical method by allowing it to be further informed by the related (and newly emerging) fields of archaeology and paleography.<sup>21</sup> It was from this perspective that he subsequently attempted his own detailed historical reconstruction of the life and career of the Teacher. And even after nearly four decades had passed, his method remained unchanged.<sup>22</sup> This positivistic approach would define the first generation of Scrolls scholarship.

## 1.2 The New Perspective on the Teacher of Righteousness

Over the last few decades, the interpretive landscape has undergone a dramatic shift. Many have begun to recognize that a new perspective on the Teacher has emerged and has replaced the traditional approach as the dominant paradigm within Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship. In a recent review of the *status quaestionis*, Angela Kim Harkins has provided a

<sup>19</sup> Evidence for this positivistic perspective can be found in the work of Harmut Stegemann, who felt confident enough to claim, “The access to the historical ‘Teacher of Righteousness’ is much easier than the approach to the historical Jesus” (“‘The Teacher of Righteousness’ and Jesus: Two Types of Religious Leadership in Judaism at the Turn of the Era,” in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* [ed. S. Talmon; Philadelphia, PA: Trinity, 1991] 196–213 [198]).

<sup>20</sup> Historical positivism is a theoretical framework for interpretation, which “aims to produce an accurate and complete picture of the past on the basis of ‘historically pure’ sources” (René Latourelle, “Positivism, Historical,” in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* [eds. R. Latourelle and R. Fisichella; New York: Crossroad, 1995] 785–788 [785]).

<sup>21</sup> Cross, *Ancient Library*, 80–119.

<sup>22</sup> See idem, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (3rd edn.; BibSim 30; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 88–120.



helpful survey of how this new perspective was formed. She notes that “the scholarly analysis of ancient texts has moved away from historical origins toward an interest in recovering how these writings were experienced by living communities.” Behind this diverted focus lies a “shift in attitude from an optimism to a pessimism toward traditional historical-critical approaches.”<sup>23</sup> For Harkins, the new perspective on the Teacher is, thus, defined by its theoretical framework (historical skepticism) and its interpretive focus (an audience-oriented approach toward the Teacher materials),<sup>24</sup> with the latter flowing out of the former. That is to say, increasing skepticism about the ancient source materials has led modern scholars to become pessimistic about the possibility that traditional historical methods might be able to extract sufficient information from those sources to reconstruct the life of the historical Teacher with any degree of precision. As a result, the focus of scholarship has shifted toward the only historical reality to which the Scrolls provide access: the communities who composed and consumed the texts.

In what follows, we will provide a detailed explanation of why this change occurred and how it has impacted scholarship.

### 1.2.1 *The Theoretical Framework of the New Perspective*

One defining characteristic of this new perspective on the Teacher is the theoretical framework by which it is informed. In the 1980s, interpreters began to challenge the historical positivism that pervaded Scrolls

<sup>23</sup> Angela Kim Harkins, “How Should We Feel about the Teacher of Righteousness?” in *Is There a Text in This Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke* (eds. A. Feldman et al.; STDJ 119; Leiden: Brill, 2017) 493–514 (494).

<sup>24</sup> This understanding of the new perspective on the Teacher is consistent with the way that others have described the recent state of scholarship. See, e.g., Reinhard G. Kratz, “The Teacher of Righteousness and His Enemies,” in *Is There a Text in This Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke* (eds. A. Feldman et al.; STDJ 119; Leiden: Brill, 2017) 515–532: “A number of contributions have abandoned historical reconstruction, and try to explain the findings using the approaches of literary studies, social studies, and cultural memory studies” (516). This summary of the new perspective is also consistent with the specific methodological claims found in recent research projects. See, e.g., Kelli S. O’Brien, “Runner, Staff, and Star: Interpreting the Teacher of Righteousness through Scripture,” in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam* (eds. E. F. Mason, et al.; JSJSup 153; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 429–447: “even if [the *Damascus Document*] cannot lead us to the historical Teacher, it seems appropriate to ask what we can learn about the community’s beliefs about the Teacher from the way its members used Scripture to interpret his life” (429).

scholarship.<sup>25</sup> The primary target of their criticisms was the attempt to extract historical information from the brief and enigmatic references found in texts like the *pesharim*. Informed by a thoroughgoing historical skepticism, scholars expressed hesitation about connecting sobriquets with named individuals from other Second Temple sources and locating the allusions to historical persons and events within a specific chronological framework – whether that be within the landscape of Second Temple Judaism or within an independent history of an otherwise unknown community (i.e., the Qumran community).

Much of the credit for redirecting the course of scholarship can be attributed to three prominent scholars: Philip R. Davies, George J. Brooke, and Phillip R. Callaway.<sup>26</sup> Although each scholar made his own unique contributions to the discussion, it was their concentrated efforts that served to expose the weaknesses of the earlier positivistic approaches toward the relevant source materials.<sup>27</sup> What they successfully

<sup>25</sup> Concerns about the emphasis on historical reconstruction were occasionally raised in the early days of Scrolls research. One such precaution was expressed by Bleddyn J. Roberts, who warned, “By becoming over-concerned about their ‘historicity,’ we might be losing sight of the real significance of the scrolls” (“Bible Exegesis and Fulfilment in Qumran,” in *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas on his Retirement from the Regius Professorship of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, 1968* [eds. P. R. Ackroyd and B. Lindars; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968] 195–207 [199]). But warnings like this marked the exception rather than the rule.

<sup>26</sup> One could argue, perhaps, that the situation was somewhat more complex and that other factors contributed in equally important ways. To a large extent, this assertion would be true. For instance, two works on the *pesharim*, published in the same year, helped move scholarship away from a strictly historical approach to a focus on the purpose and function of the texts (see William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk* [SBLMS 24; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979]; and Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* [CBQMS 8; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979]). But it was the work of Davies, Brooke, and Callaway that created the greatest impetus for the change, as indicated by the frequent citation of their work by subsequent scholars. It is perhaps not coincidental then that the three have combined to write an (extremely helpful) introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls (see Philip R. Davies et al., *The Complete World of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [London: Thames & Hudson, 2002]).

<sup>27</sup> From the perspective of Hartmut Stegemann, a representative of the positivistic approach, which once dominated scholarship, it was quite natural to say that “literary sources [like the *pesharim* and *Damascus Document*] provide us with reliable information about the ‘Teacher of Righteousness’” (“The Teacher of Righteousness,” 197). This view stands in sharp contrast to the reservations that more recent interpreters have voiced over the historical value of the *pesharim*. Philip R. Davies, for instance, claims that “it is difficult to establish whether any reliable information may be found in these *pesharim*” (“Historiography,” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls* [eds. G. J. Brooke and C. Hempel; London: T&T Clark, 2019]