

## WAR AND VIOLENCE IN THE IDEOLOGY OF THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY

Raija Sollamo

It is a world of war and terrorism that we live in since 11th September, 2001 and since the war in Iraq. There are daily news report of ethnic cleansing and evil cycles of revenge in several countries. Many people, including politicians, ask themselves whether there is still any hope of a peaceful and non-violent world. The famous and popular Finnish author Väinö Linna said in an interview in 1980 that before war breaks out, the idea of war is developed in someone's brain.<sup>1</sup> Thus, to resist war and violence implies purifying the imagination and ideology of violent elements. The imagination, and films and books which are full of violence and warlike phantacies, offer a ready model for violent action and war. Such books and imagination are not a modern phenomenon, the ancient epics of humankind are illustrative examples of war and violence as means to attaining heroism and glory.

This being the case it might be fruitful to study ancient religious texts and inquire to what extent they resort to force, to what extent they accept war and the use of violence, and to what extent they exploit the violent imagination and represent the genre of military fiction, identifying God as a heavenly warrior. These are the questions and problems I have in mind when approaching the Qumran scrolls in order to outline the relation of the Qumran community to the use of force.

After more than fifty years of Qumran studies, there still remains uncertainty as to which texts found at Qumran are really "sectarian" and which are not. The essence of the problem lies in the fact that even mainstream early Judaism at the turn of the common era is insufficiently known because of the lack of primary sources. Even though Jutta Jokiranta and others have shown how problematic the terms "sect" and "sectarian" are with reference to the Qumran community and its

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<sup>1</sup> Väinö Linna's interview by Matti Wirilander in *Kyyhkynen* 4/1980.

writings, as yet we have no more adequate term at our disposal.<sup>2</sup> When selecting the texts for my study I have shown preference for those written by the members of the Qumran community or used and edited by them, which were in that sense – at least unofficially – accepted by the community.<sup>3</sup> Of course, the subject matter of war and violence constitutes another important criterion for the selection of my corpus. The books I have considered crucial are the War Scroll (1QM), the Community Rule (1QS), and the pesharim. Considering the subject war and violence, it is better to begin directly with the War Scroll.

### THE COMPOSITE NATURE OF THE WAR SCROLL

Before we can use the War Scroll to describe the attitude of the Qumran community towards war, we must ascertain whether or to what extent the War Scroll is “sectarian”.

Ever since the text of the War Scroll was edited for the first time by Sukenik in 1955,<sup>4</sup> its composition has been a matter of dispute and debate. The origin of most of its material was fairly soon detected: the scriptural traditions of holy war, liturgical passages in Scripture, 1 Maccabees, other Qumranic texts, and one or two manuals of military tactics written in Maccabean or Roman times. The issue as to whether there was a single writer<sup>5</sup> who compiled it or whether it was created in a redactional process was solved when fragments from Cave Four (4Q491-496 or 4QM1-6) were found and studied.<sup>6</sup> The War Scroll most likely originated as a result of redactional activity. Some of the fragments appeared to represent earlier versions of the later War Scroll (1QM), while some fragments were only related to the final war, but did not form part of the War Scroll. Paleographically some were older, some contemporary, and some younger than the War Scroll.<sup>7</sup> The date

<sup>2</sup> Jutta M. Jokiranta, “‘Sectarianism’ of the Qumran ‘Sect’: Sociological notes”. *RQ* 78 (2001), 223–239.

<sup>3</sup> The biblical manuscripts are not considered in this connection.

<sup>4</sup> E. L. Sukenik, אוצר המגילות הגנוזות. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*. Jerusalem, 1955. A Hebrew edition by Sukenik published in 1954. Of the later editions the following should be mentioned: Y. Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*. Oxford, 1962.

<sup>5</sup> As Yadin suggests in his edition 1962, IX.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Baillet, Qumran grotte 4, vol. III (4Q482-4Q520). *DJD* VII. Oxford, 1982. *Damascus Document, War Scroll and Related Documents*, edited by J. H. Charlesworth with J. M. Baumgarten et al. *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, II. Tübingen, 1995, pp. 80–203. The first study was apparently written by Claus-Hunno Hunzinger, “Fragmente einer älteren Fassung des Buches Milhama aus Höhle 4 von Qumran”. *ZAW* 69 (1957), 131–151.

<sup>7</sup> Duhaime 80–81.

of the final composition of the War Scroll (1QM) had to be pushed forward to the end of the first century B.C.E. or the beginning of the first century C.E.<sup>8</sup>

The composition of the War Scroll (1QM) is usually divided in four different parts: The first column indicates the contents of the entire scroll from beginning to end. It is like an introduction written for an otherwise finished book. The biblical framework and interpretative scheme in which the book is placed consist of Dan 11:40–12:3 and Ez 38–39. The second part consists of columns II–IX. They form a greater part of the primary War Scroll, describing the tactics and order of the troops and their flags. The description displays similarities with Maccabean and Roman manuals of military tactics. The priests direct the war by blowing their trumpets. The texts written on the banners, shields, trumpets, and javelins have an important role to play. The traditions of holy war – or the rules of Yahweh's war, Yahweh's war being the term used in the Old Testament – are strictly obeyed. That the traditions of holy war, or Yahweh's war, are of vital importance for the authors of the War Scroll, is due to the aftermath or *Nachwirkung* of the Deuteronomistic history and ideology, where these traditions were formed and developed. Dualism is not present in this part of the War Scroll, with the exception of a few redactional additions.<sup>9</sup> The third part consists of columns X–XIV. These contain prayers and liturgical materials which are to a large extent redactional. The last part, or columns XV–XIX, describe the final episodes of the war, intertwined with liturgical and redactional elements.

For the purposes of this article a detailed analysis of the redaction process is unnecessary.<sup>10</sup> The important issues for consideration are the existence of the redaction and its main contents, a subject which we shall discuss in the next chapter.

<sup>8</sup> Philip R. Davies, "War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness". *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, II, ed. by Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam. Oxford, 2000, pp. 965–968. According to John J. Collins "the essential structure of the War Scroll had probably taken shape by the middle of the first century B.C.E.". John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (The Biblical Resource Series). 2nd ed. Michigan, 1998, pp. 169–170. Jean Duhaime dates 1QM to the last part of the first century B.C.E. Duhaime 83–84.

<sup>9</sup> Philip R. Davies, *1QM, the War Scroll from Qumran. Its Structure and History*. (Biblica et Orientalia, 32.). Rome, 1977, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Even though it does not affect the conclusions of this article I am inclined to think that columns II–IX and XV–XIX formed the primary parts of the War Scroll, which were then completed with the materials of columns I and X–XIV. The final redaction covered the entire Scroll, including columns II–IX and XV–XIX. I am on the same lines with Philip R. Davies, *1QM, the War Scroll from Qumran. Its Structure and History*. (Biblica et Orientalia, 32.) Rome, 1977, but in contrast with J. Van der Ploeg, *Le Rouleau de la Guerre. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, II. Leiden; 1959; and Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial. Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Dualismus in den Texten aus Qumran*. (Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments, 6.) Herausgegeben von Karl Georg Kuhn. Göttingen, 1969; pp. 42–62.

As for the sectarian origin of 1QM, scholarly consensus regards at least the final redaction of 1QM as a product of the Qumran community, and in my opinion this view is well founded.<sup>11</sup>

### DUALISM OF THE WAR SCROLL

As stated above, most of the materials of the War Scroll (1QM) originate in older sources, such as the Scriptures and 1 Maccabees, manuals of military tactics, and other texts from Qumran. Behind the War Scroll there might lie a set of beliefs and writings on the theme of the eschatological battle. What interests us here is the nature of the Qumranic redaction. What novel elements did it introduce to the theme of the eschatological battle? The first novelty is the crucial role played by the priests in this war. By blowing their trumpets they direct the actual fighting,<sup>12</sup> even though they must stand apart from the troops in order not to be polluted by blood (1QM IX, 7b-8). The pre-eminent role of the priests is not surprising, the community being of priestly origin and subject to priestly leadership. According to the rules of Yahweh's war, the priests had several duties to perform in the holy war: they were required to offer sacrifices before the people set out to war, and to ask for a divine oracle in order to ascertain whether Yahweh was willing to wage war on the side of his people and grant them victory. They also needed to encourage the soldiers.

On the one hand, the priestly contribution to the war was strengthened in 1QM; on the other hand, the priests who were obliged to follow the commands of the Torah, including strict purity laws (such as 1QM VII,3-7 and IX,7b-8),<sup>13</sup> could not participate in the actual fighting. The crucial role of religion or priests was not typical of Greco-Roman military manuals. In the final analysis, the question arises, whether the tactics described were in fact intended for an actual war at all, or whether the War Scroll was rather a utopian tactical treatise for an eschatological holy war.<sup>14</sup> The treatise implied an idealistic view of how the war should be waged according to the Torah (years of release 1 QM II,8) and how the prescriptions of Torah should be obeyed in wartime (purity laws). The final form of

<sup>11</sup> Here I refer to Sharon Lea Mattila, "Two contrasting eschatologies at Qumran (4Q246 vs. 1QM)". *Biblica* 75 (1994), 518-538. See also Philip R. Davies and John J. Collins (notes 14-16 below).

<sup>12</sup> According to the rules of Yahweh's war, the blowing of the trumpets was very important. Num 10,9, 1QM X,6-8.

<sup>13</sup> Hannah K. Harrington emphasizes that not only ritual purity but also holiness was demanded of participants in the eschatological war. "Holiness and law in the Dead Sea Scrolls". *Qumran and Rabbinic Judaism*. (DSD, 8(2).) 2001, pp. 124-135.

<sup>14</sup> Jean Duhaime, "1QM and Greco-Roman tactical treatises". *RQ* 13 (1988), 133-151.

the War Scroll was redacted at Qumran, and it mirrored the views of the community, which lacked the wherewithal to wage war. Therefore, the Sons of Light include other people closely related to the community (I,2b-3), and furthermore, the Sons of Light were to be supported by a host of angels (XII,1-5). The final redaction changed the earlier ethnic war of the sources into something more like a dualistic final battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness.

Dualism is the most remarkable novelty represented in the War Scroll in comparison with its sources and the traditions of Yahweh's war in the Scriptures.<sup>15</sup> The dualistic structure is redactional, it is "imposed at a later stage on an earlier non-dualistic war-rule."<sup>16</sup> In a war there are, of course, always two sides fighting against each other. But wars are usually local or national, they do not include the whole world, as in 1QM. In wars of Yahweh it is normal for Israel and its God to form the one side, with another nation or tribe and its god(s) on the other side. Israel and its God belonged together, as did other countries and their god(s). It was assumed that a religion coincided with national or ethnic boundaries. The new dualism implied that in the eschatological battle the battlefield did not run between nations but across the nations; at least the Sons of Darkness did not consist solely of representatives of the other nations, but the "violators of the covenant" joined them (1QM I,2a). The dualism had religious and ethical components, as early Judaism generally emphasized that only a remnant would be saved in future wars and disasters (see for instance Is 10:22-23 and 4QpIsa<sup>a</sup> II,1-8).

The dualism of the War Scroll was, however, of Persian origin and was cosmic and universalistic in its nature.<sup>17</sup> It offered the potential for loosing religion from its national and ethnic bonds and making it universal in scope,<sup>18</sup> but this potential was not exploited in the War Scroll. What happened instead was a narrowing of religious outlook. The Qumran community separated the Sons of Light from the main body of the people of Israel, and assigned the title of the Sons of Light to the members of their own community and others with similar or related beliefs and halakha (1QM I, 2b-3), while excluding their countrymen who had broken the covenant (מרשעי ברית) and were therefore counted among the Sons of Darkness (1QM I,2b). Dualism was adopted at Qumran in order to strengthen the identity of the members of the community. Dualism was an effective weapon for this purpose. Light, goodness and life were confined to the community and its few

<sup>15</sup> Philip R. Davies, "Dualism and eschatology in the Qumran War Scroll." *VT* 28 (1978), 28-33. See also John J. Collins, "Dualism and eschatology in 1 QM. A reply to P. R. Davies." *VT* 29 (1979), 212-215.

<sup>16</sup> Davies, *op.cit.*, 32. In contrast with J. van der Ploeg (1959) and Peter von der Osten-Sacken (1969).

<sup>17</sup> John J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination* 1998, 169-170.

<sup>18</sup> John J. Collins, "The mythology of Holy War in Daniel and the Qumran War Scroll: A point of transition in Jewish apocalyptic." *VT* 25 (1975), 596-612.

allies in Israel, while the violators of the covenant, all outsiders and all other nations were counted among the Sons of Darkness. It was like a small group facing the entire world. The story of David and Goliath comes to mind (1QM XI,1–2), but God, and Michael and the host of angels secured victory for the Sons of Light, even though their enemies were such great empires as Assur and Egypt, and the Romans (“kittim”).<sup>19</sup>

The Sons of Light were determined to win the battle (1QM I,5.10). According to the final redaction, the battle has seven “lots”: in the first three the Sons of Light are stronger, while in the following three lots the Sons of Darkness thrust them back. Finally, in the seventh lot God’s mighty hand brings down Belial and his hosts (1QM I,13–15). The Sons of Darkness and everything evil had to be totally destroyed (1QM I,5 and XVIII,1–6). After this the Sons of Light would be able to live in peace and happiness, being blessed by God (1QM I,8–9). This dualistic ideology, which would have had the potential for a universalistic development of religion at Qumran, finally led to a narrowing of outlook.<sup>20</sup> Their sights were not focused on the cosmic, universalistic fight between good and evil, light and darkness, but on the dichotomy between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness among their co-religionists and the various parties and groups. By this sharp dichotomy, the Qumran community endeavoured to strengthen its “sectarian” identity and invoke confidence in its good eschatological lot among the Sons of Light. In the Maccabean era, early Judaism was divided into different religious groups or parties. Dualism was not the reason for these divisions but an effective means of justifying the position taken by a group and detaching their ideology from that of others. This was one part of the process where nationalistic and ethnic identity was narrowed down to a “sect”. This particularistic development is already attested in CD and 1QS.<sup>21</sup> Another aspect of dualism was to introduce it

<sup>19</sup> In the earlier parts of the composition the *kittim* might refer to people in Assur and elsewhere (the Seleucids?), but in later redactional sections they became a name for the Romans and almost a synonym for the Sons of Darkness.

<sup>20</sup> John J. Collins (“The Mythology of Holy War ...”, p. 609) speaks about “a point of transition”, typical of the War Scroll, where “the traditional nationalistic language still predominates but the new language of Persian dualism has also been introduced to express a new world view which has not yet clearly emerged”. In the new world which would emerge the opposition of light and darkness would transcend national boundaries. This seems to imply that subsequent developments in early Judaism or at Qumran were heading towards a universalistic religion. Later, in his reply to P. R. Davies, Collins clarified that he meant only of a potentiality of the new dualistic conception as a way to a universalistic religion. He also said that he “was far from suggesting that the potential was realized”. John J. Collins, “Dualism and eschatology in 1 QM. A reply to P. R. Davies”. *VT* 29 (1979), 212–215.

<sup>21</sup> Ellen Juhl Christiansen, “The consciousness of belonging to God’s covenant and what it entails according to the Damascus Document and the Community Rule”. In: *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments* (JSOT, Suppl. Series, 290. Copenhagen International Seminar, 6), edited by Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas Thompson. Sheffield 1998, pp. 69–97. She



into the microcosm of the individual's heart and the inner struggle between the spirit of truth and the wicked spirit. This is the famous doctrine of the two spirits as expounded in the Community Rule (1QS III–IV).<sup>22</sup>

The self-understanding of the community had changed quite substantially since the time when 4QMMT was written. While the Qumran Community of the second century B.C.E. was open to negotiations with other religious groups concerning the right halakha, and in particular with the priestly circles around the Temple (4QMMT C, 1–17 and 25–30), in the final redaction of the War Scroll we encounter a sectarian community making a sharp distinction between the community and outsiders. This development would perhaps be more understandable if the community had experienced a threat to its existence and felt that it lived in a hostile environment without hope of being understood by outsiders or political and religious leaders. They had had bitter experiences from their countrymen's breaking the covenant and joining their adversaries, the Sons of Darkness. The labels such as "The Wicked Priest", "The Man of Lie" and "the traitors of the new covenant" or "violators of the covenant" in 1QpHab (for instance II, 1–6 and VIII, 8–13) demonstrate this atmosphere. Dreadful incidents such as the fate of the Teacher of Righteousness (1QpHab XI,4–8) and the fates of eighth hundred Pharisees who were crucified by Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.E.) were likely to create horror and insecurity in all religious groups, including the Qumran Community (4QpNah I,6–9).<sup>23</sup>

The dualism adopted in 1QM was intolerant in nature but still non-violent in practice, except for the eschatological battle. For this dualism no compromise was allowed. With the representatives of darkness and evil, the sons of Belial, the

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states that in CD a change of identity can be seen from an ethnic covenant to a particularistic covenant. She supposes that the scriptural idea of a remnant might have been a fruitful ground for this change. According to her, 1QS proceeds one step further into the sectarian theology by emphasizing that "human acceptance of God's covenant is the factor that establishes a covenant relationship" (p. 96).

<sup>22</sup> John J. Collins has argued that 1QS is younger than 1QM because of its more developed dualism. *VT* 25 (1975), 596–612. I do not think that the grade of dualism or the way how it is applied in a book is a solid basis for dating a document. The way in which a dualistic view is developed depends to a large extent on the content and target of the book. In the Community Rule it was relevant to deal with the dualism in people's hearts in order to encourage the members to do right choices in their daily lives. It contributed to the purpose of the book, obedience to orders and rules. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the development of an ideology proceeds along the same lines at the same time in all different writings.

<sup>23</sup> Professor Tapani Harviainen, to whom this volume is dedicated, has translated and commented on the Nahum Peshet (4QpNah) for the Anthology of Finnish Translations of the Texts of Qumran, edited by me under the title *Qumranin kirjasto. Valikoima teoksia*. Helsinki, 1997, pp. 157–165. Tapani Harviainen and I have worked together for many years in the ongoing project of translating the Bible into Finnish. The Old and New Testaments were completed in 1992. At the present time, we are members of the translation committee for the Apocrypha.

Prince of Darkness, one must not negotiate; they must be destroyed. It did not even suffice to subjugate the Sons of Darkness to divine rule, although one liturgical section (1QM XII,10b–18, repeated in XIX,1–8) has preserved the notion, often attested in the Scriptures, that other nations must bow down and serve victorious Israel and Judah.<sup>24</sup> It was impossible for a small group, like the Qumran community, to destroy its enemies, the Sons of Darkness, who comprised the majority of the human race, nor was revenge allowed to individuals. The solution was to turn the final decision into an eschatological battle where divine and angelic hosts, led by archangel Michael, would secure victory for the Sons of Light. This war was to be more than its models, the war against Gog of Magog on the mountains of Israel (Ez 38–39) or the battle of the king of south against the king of north in Dan 11:40–12:3. The enemies were to be destroyed once and for all, as according to the traditions of the holy war they were a sacrifice (חרם) to God (1QM XVIII,4–5).

## VIOLENCE AND APOCALYPTIC IMAGINATION

For the members of the Qumran community violence was only allowed in connection with the eschatological war. But another kind of violence typical of apocalyptic imagination even outside of Qumran frequently appears in their writings.

Apocalypticism is a feature of apocalyptic literature. Neither the War Scroll nor the pesharim nor the Community Rule (1QS) are apocalypses. When I use the term “apocalyptic imagination” here I refer to imagination typical of the apocalyptic era (c. 200 B.C.E.–200 C.E.). Defined in this way, apocalyptic imagination may also appear outside the genre of the apocalypse. The period when apocalypticism flourished coincided with the time of the Qumran community. Thus it is reasonable to investigate what kind of apocalyptic thinking occurs in the “sectarian” texts of Qumran. The War Scroll, the Community Rule and the pesharim are here examples of “sectarian” literature. It was characteristic of apocalypticism to suggest that this age was approaching its end. Following the end of the age the dawn of a new better age was to be expected. At the turn of the era a period of great distress and cruel suffering was due to occur. This idea is most clearly expressed in 1QS, where the *terminus technicus* מועד פקודה “time of visitation”

<sup>24</sup> Subjugation is suggested as a solution, following universal chaos and violence, in another document found at Qumran 4Q Aramaic Apocalypse, which apparently does not represent a “sectarian” way of thinking. Sharon Lea Mattila, “Two Contrasting Eschatologies at Qumran (4Q246 vs 1QM)”. *Biblica* 75 (1994), 518–538. God will establish an everlasting kingdom to his people. He himself will create peace, order, justice, and harmony for all nations under the dominion of his people.



occurs (1QS III,18; IV,18–19.26).<sup>25</sup> In the time of visitation the faithfulness of the people of Yahweh would be tested (1QM XVII,8–9). In the new world there would be room only for the people of God, the chosen ones, the faithful ones, while the wicked men would be completely destroyed. The faithful ones would not be able to avoid the hardships of the final age; quite the opposite, it was a hard time for them, too, but the interpretation of the community took utmost suffering as indicative of the sufferers' being elected by God<sup>26</sup> and certain of access to the new age.

The hardships of the final age provide an interesting angle on the relation of the Qumran community to force and violence. Suffering, including unjust suffering, was the lot of the elect. Apocalyptic imagination concerning these hardships was full of violence and the use of force, but it is never permissible for the faithful ones to participate in violent activities or to resort to force. They have to suffer and wait until God intervenes. It is one of the principal messages of the Habakkuk Peshar that individual people need to be patient and wait for Yahweh's intervention and the Day of Judgment. The faithful will be saved if they remain faithful (1QpHab VIII,1–2), even though enemies surround the righteous and the final age is delayed (1QpHab VII,7–13). The dualism is as pointed as in the War Scroll and the Community Rule. The Habakkuk Peshar places foreign nations and traitors in the nation of Israel on the same side; both will be punished by God (II,1–6, V,3–5). The pesherist describes "the men of violence" as those "who had rebelled against God" (1QpHab VIII,11). This closely resembles the dualism of the War Scroll and clearly indicates that the community regarded violence as wickedness. The Habakkuk Peshar states that "on the Day of Judgment God will destroy from the earth all idolatrous and wicked men" (1QpHab XII). Similarly, the War Scroll declares that the fate of the Sons of Darkness is defeat. According to 1QS, all those who walk in the wicked spirit will incur severe sufferings until they are totally defeated (1QS IV, 12–14).

Apocalyptic imagination is a kind of sublime form of revenge which is entrusted into the hands of Yahweh. It could be called "eschatological vengeance". There are no trace of a furious "zeal of Phinehas", even though this righteous zeal was approved by Moses in Num 25:10–15 and the writer of 1 Maccabees described it in an idealistic light.<sup>27</sup> The description of the horrors of the final age is at

<sup>25</sup> For more details and related terms see Martin G. Abegg, Jr, "Day of visitation". *Encyclopedia of the DSS*, II, pp. 958–959.

<sup>26</sup> Jutta Jokiranta, "Pesharim: A mirror of self-understanding", to be published in SBL Symposium Series. The preliminary title is *Reading the Present*, editors are Armin Lange and Kristin De Troyer.

<sup>27</sup> John J. Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the legitimation of violence". *JBL* 122 (2003), 3–21 (especially 12–14). I am grateful to John J. Collins for his inspiring article.

times cruel and dreadful, but it does not exceed the sufferings of real life in war-time. The description is mostly dry and without pathos. I have noticed only few occasions where the vengeance is so vivid that it apparently arose from personal emotions. One example is the passage where the Wicked Priest, who pursued the Teacher of Righteousness, is threatened with the anger of Yahweh (1QpHab XI, 1–14). Even though the emotions are involved in the presentation of the fate of the Wicked Priest, the vengeance is Yahweh's. Because his fate was already history, it could be used as an encouraging example of the righteousness of Yahweh and the divine intervention that the community had experienced earlier. Except for the final eschatological battle, the use of force was not an ideal taught to the members of the Qumran Community.

In the apocalyptic imagination the emphasis often lies on the negative side, on descriptions of the sufferings and horrors of the fates of the traitors or wicked people (e.g. 1QS IV, 12–14). The positive side is, however, also recounted (1QS IV, 6–8). The spirits of the community should be raised by dreams of a happy and peaceful time of salvation.

#### THE FATE OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE JEWISH WAR

What do we know about the final battle and circumstances at Qumran when the Roman legions approached Qumran on their way to Masada? We know that the members of the community hid their precious scrolls in caves before the legions reached Qumran. But did the members of the community attempt to fight the Romans (the kittim) or did they hide in the caves, too, or did they capitulate without resorting to force? In his *Jewish War* II, 149–153, Josephus tells that Essenes were terribly tortured by the Romans, but they did not blaspheme their lawgiver or eat any forbidden thing. Josephus' description resembles of Maccabean legends, as they appear in 2 Macc and 4 Macc.<sup>28</sup> It seems likely that his story is not totally trustworthy, but he made the Essenes martyrs and heroes of their faith in the Maccabean spirit. Nevertheless, Josephus does not maintain that they refused the use of arms. On the contrary, he relates that they carried arms on their journeys to protect themselves against brigands (*Jewish War* II, 125). One interesting detail in this connection is that Josephus mentions in *Jewish War* II, 567 that one of the Jewish military leaders who were appointed at the beginning of the revolt against

<sup>28</sup> Josephus uses vocabulary which sounds conspicuously Maccabean. I refer to the noun βασιανιστήριον (*Jewish War*, II, p. 152) which being a *hapax legomenon* in Josephus occurs five times in 4 Maccabees (6:1, 8:1.12.19.25). The adjective εὐθυμος is a *hapax legomenon* in the LXX, found only in 2 Macc 11:26. According to TLG it occurs several times in Josephus, but unfortunately the word is absent from *Josephus' Concordance. A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus, I–IV*, ed. by Karl Heinrich Rengstorf. Leiden, 1973–83.

Rome in 66 C.E. was called John the Essene. Thus, Josephus does not “explicitly describe the Essenes as pacifists”.<sup>29</sup> Josephus speaks of the Essenes in general, but the Qumran Community hardly represented totally pacifistic ideology, either.<sup>30</sup>

That the Romans destroyed the main building of the community<sup>31</sup> points to at least some skirmishes at Qumran. Of course, the members of the community, were destined to loose the fight. Whatever torture or hardships they had to suffer after the battle as prisoners of the Romans, they possibly interpreted them as indicative of the final age when they had to prove faithful.

## CONCLUSION

It comes as no great surprise that religious texts are full of war, violence and bloodthirsty imagination. The sectarian texts of Qumran are no exception. The Qumran community lived in the tradition of Yahweh’s war and in apocalyptic imagination embedded in both the Scriptures and apocalyptic and para-biblical literature. In the War Scroll the scriptural tradition of Yahweh’s war has been transformed into a final eschatological battle in which the Sons of Light wage war alongside the angelic hosts commanded by the Archangel Michael, the Prince of Light. The supreme leader and hero of the eschatological war is Yahweh himself (1QM XII,7–12). In fact, the eschatological war is his war, a dualistic battle between good and evil, light and darkness, Yahweh and Belial, the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. At Qumran, dualism and war are related. Strict dualism upholds antagonistic images, the belligerents on opposite sides being absolute enemies. This dualism cannot be reconciled, but must be defeated. Evil, darkness, Belial and his hosts (evil spirits), and the Sons of Darkness will be utterly destroyed at the conclusion of the eschatological war (1QM XVIII,1.5), bringing dualism totally to an end.

Dualism is also present in other sectarian writings, even though they do not concern the eschatological battle. The use of force is confined to the eschatological battle. Vengeance is Yahweh’s alone. But force and violence are an essential part of the apocalyptic imagination characteristic of sectarian writings, too. In the

<sup>29</sup> Per Bilde, “The Essenes in Philo and Josephus”. In: *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments* (JSOT, Suppl. Series, 290. Copenhagen International Seminar, 6), edited by Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas Thompson. Sheffield, 1998, pp. 32–68.

<sup>30</sup> John J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination* 1998, pp. 170–171. See also IQSa I, 20–21 which presupposes that the Community had an enrollment of the members for “going out to war to subdue the nations”.

<sup>31</sup> Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 61, cf. 184.

scheme of apocalyptic thinking Yahweh will wreak revenge on his enemies at the end of the present age. Divine judgment functions as a means of vengeance in the apocalyptic imagination. The punishments inflicted are often very severe, for instance defeat and being consumed by fire (e.g. 1QpHab X,5.13, XI,15). The objects of God's wrath are always human beings, but other people, enemies, the Sons of Darkness. Divine vengeance may be regarded as a form of the sublimated human lust for revenge. The role of eschatological rulers and instruments of vengeance is readily accepted by the chosen ones, the Sons of Light, when it is offered to them. The descriptions of divine vengeance overflow with force and violence at Qumran and in apocalyptic literature in general. On the other hand, divine vengeance was combined with a human hope of justice on earth. This hope was of vital importance to the Qumran community, too, as 1QpHab demonstrates.

The idea of final vengeance is closely related to the apocalyptic idea of a time of great testing at the end of days. This idea is most clearly verbalized in 1QS, where the *terminus technicus* מועד פקודה "time of visitation" occurs (1QS III,18; IV,18–19.26). The time of testing signified purification, suffering and distress. By standing the test the chosen ones were able to display their faithfulness to Yahweh. In this case, the party that suffered was they themselves, the good, the Sons of Light, while the party that caused the suffering was the opposition, the violent ones, the Sons of Darkness. This suffering was interpreted in a positive way: it was a necessity ordained by God and indicative of being counted among the chosen ones who have access to the world to come.

Through apocalyptic imagination, violence was present in the Qumran community. It formed part of their ideology. But it was not active violence, rather it was a means of providing a theological interpretation of the war and violence in the world. This ideology was also an effective means of maintaining the identity of the community and ensuring its members' loyalty.