William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk* (SBL Monograph Series 24), Scholars Press, Missoula 1979, 220 pp., cloth $10.50 (members $7,—), paper $9,— (members $6,—) (B.’s work is the fruit of a life-long dedication to the understanding and explanation of *1QpHab*. The author tries to embody in a single volume his own conclusions since 1948 as well as the research done by others. The result is more a Summa than a Digest. The volume, densely packed, offers the reader 17 pp. of Introduction, 182 pp. with the vocalized Hebrew text of *1QpHab*, its translation(s) and exposition, plus three excursus (An Historical Excursus on the Identity of the Man of Lies, the Wicked Priest . . . pp. 95-98; an Excursus on *mâšâl*, pp. 143-144, and another on the Omission of Chapter Three, pp. 218-219), and two displays (pp. 42.193) intended to justify the proposed restorations.

In the Introduction B. attempts to define the literary genre pesher, mainly discussing the article of I. Rabinowitz (*RQ* 8 (1973), 219-232), but keeping faithfully his own terminology, already embodied in the title of the book. The author tries to find a place in the interpretative tradition for the *Midrash-Pesher* showing how the Qumran pesharim grew out of the late prophetic and apocalyptic thought of the OT and indicating its relationship to the practice of targuming (*stî*) the Scriptures in the synagogues. At the end of the Introduction, B. lists six purposes which the pesharim could serve. The volume includes the standard list of abbreviations and bibliography, but conspicuously lacks indexes. There is a table (p. 220) that lists the 35 pericopae in which the text has been divided following A. Dupont-Sommer in *RHS* 137 (1950), 129-171, with the corresponding passages of *1QpHab* and the Habakkuk text. The indexes will, hopefully, find a place in the forthcoming volume (or volumes) promised by the author and intended to cover all the other pesharim as well as the historical elements of these and other scrolls.

In a good number of cases in this book, B. changes his own previous translations, giving due credit where necessary to the writers that have proposed the new readings or reconstructions: I, 8.12; II, 1.10.13.14; III, 1.6.12; IV, 3.8.12.13.14; V, 4.10.12; VII, 2.13; IX, 1.11.14; X, 3.11.16; XI, 6.7.14.15; XII, 1.11; XIII, 3 . . . But even so there are a number of occasions in which his reconstructions remain highly problematical:

— I, 2 *twlbt*. But the term, characteristic of the sapiential literature, appears only once in Q. in a non-segolate form: 1Q H IX, 14. For the idea of expectation Q. used rather *mqwb* or *tqwb*.

— I, 11. The introduction of the “Prophet of Lies and the men of his congregation” under the sole assumption that *šr* introduces a long designation.

— I, 15 *b(ywr)*, reconstructed as an antithesis of *mrql*. The traces left could correspond to a *b(k)r* *m*, but there is not enough room in the lacuna for the four reconstructed letters.

— II, 10 *mnw w(diw)*. The adoption of Elliger’s reconstruction against the more common *mnw yl(rP)* is unfortunate, especially in the light of 1QM X, 9. I think that it is even possible to see a part of the middle stroke of the š.

Journal for the Study of Judaism, Vol. XII, No. 1
— II, 13 *rkym* (*w‘ngym*), based on Is 47:1, but with a *k* most unsure palaeographically and against the parallel of VI, 10 *y‘bdw rhyym*.

— II, 14-15. The introduction of a new subject for the verbs is unwarranted and breaks the sequence of applications to the Kittim which flows from II, 10 to IV, 12.

— IV, 6 *yšbwqwm*. Following YALON, B. argues that the corrector cancelled the first *w* because he read the word as a *pš‘el*. But he ignores the clearly different shape of the final *w* and the fact that it is in the space between the words. The first scribe wrote *yšbwq*, corrected later into *yšbwqwm*.

— V, 12 “(d)tm. Is the reference to the “house of Absalom” really the “most probable” interpretation of the possessive pronoun?

— VII, 15-17. The whole reconstruction rests upon the understanding that the pesher refers to the wicked, which is highly unlikely because the preceding and following pesharim talk about “the doers of the Law”, referred to in l. 15 as *śjym*, which would otherwise be incomprehensible.

— VIII, 13 *pt(‘)wm*, following The Scribal Character of the DSS. But, pace MARTIN, the strokes preserved cannot be read as part of an ‘. Read *pt(‘)wm*.

— IX, 16 *b( )r*. Neither letter is palaeographically possible.

— X, 16-17. B. double-brackets the whole restoration, but on the basis of CD XX, 10.14ss.25s. considers his understanding of the lost contents probable. But, how does this fit in with the preserved part of the pesher in XI, 1-2, and with the consistent meaning of *iglb* in the Scrolls?

On some other occasions B. offers translations of the pesher text that are not sustained or are difficult to accept:

— I, 13. In the discussion B. rejects the idea that the Righteous Teacher could refer to more than one individual, without even mentioning STARCKY’s proposal, although he readily admits the titular use of Wicked Priest. Consequently B. identifies “undoubtedly” the priest of II, 7 with this Righteous Teacher.

— II, 2-10. In the thorny question of the three kinds of *bogdim*, B. not only offers in 1.4 a different translation of the same verb of l.2 and 6, but is also forced to give different values to the tenses in order to keep the “future traitors” in the generation of the writer of the pesher.

— VII, 12. I fail to see in which way *śjym* could suggest a subjective connotation to the verb and justify the translation “when to them the last time *seems* to be delayed”.

— X, 4-5. Although the pesher deals with the “House of Damnation”, B. refers the pronominal suffixes to the Wicked Priest and sees in the passage not only the resurrection of the wicked, but also the distinction between the punishment of the intermediate state and that of the Last Judgment, the conception of Sheol as a prison where one awaits the final judgment and even the gathering of the nations for the great assize as indicated in Matth. 25:32.

More troublesome for the reader is the decision of B., consistently carried out, of reading the Habakkuk text in the light of his own understanding of the pesharim. This offers the possibility of a fresh approach to