DUALISM AND ESCHATOLOGY
IN THE QUMRAN WAR SCROLL
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In his article “The Mythology of Holy War in Daniel and the
Qumran War Scroll: a Point of Transition in Jewish Apocalyptic”,
VT 25 (1975), pp. 596-612, J. J. Collins has attempted to illustrate
what he regards as a significant development within the Jewish
apocalyptic tradition by comparing the book of Daniel and the
Qumran War Scroll (1QM). According to Collins there is a difference
between the two books "in their basic conception of holy war... which marks a highly important point of transition in the develop-
ment of Jewish apocalyptic" (p. 597).

Collins finds in the book of Daniel all the major mythological
elements of Israel's ancient holy war tradition, which, in his view,
combined the notion of heavenly wars between the gods reflected
in the earthly wars between nations with the myth of Yahweh the
divine warrior, the conqueror of chaos. Collins sees the introduction
of angels representing the nations, and Michael as the angel of Israel
in Dan. x 20-21 as only a slight modification of this ancient mythol-
gy; and the four beasts rising from the sea in ch. vii function both
collectively in taking the place of the sea-monster in the chaos-myth
and individually as representing other nations. But the author of
the book of Daniel, it is observed, does not appear to represent
the purely nationalistic viewpoint of the OT holy war mythology; his
identification with the "wise" in Israel (xi 33, 35; xii 3) rather than
with the nation as a whole betrays an "incipient sectarian attitude"
(p. 603).

Now, not only the use but even the existence of holy war mythol-
ogy in the book of Daniel seems to me rather questionable. So far
as the practice of holy war and the revival of OT holy war rites is
concerned, there is abundant evidence in 1 Maccabees that these
played a prominent part in the revolt1). But it has been generally

1) P. von der Osten-Sacken, Gott und Belial (Göttingen, 1969) pp. 62 ff.;
recognised that the author of Daniel expresses little interest or confidence in such endeavours, referring to the Maccabean resistance as "a little help" (xi 34) and in relying on a divine act to resolve the historical and theological dilemma posed by the crisis he uses no war imagery. Even if the myth of the victory over chaos is echoed in ch. vii (which is far from certain) we are not entitled to assume that this myth belongs intrinsically or exclusively to the holy war complex.

However, it is not the purpose of this article to pursue the above objections to Collins's interpretation of the book of Daniel, but rather to take issue with him on his understanding of the War Scroll. Collins finds traces of Canaanite and Israelite mythical conception of holy war in 1QM but stresses that the scroll "derives its basic structure" (p. 606) not from the chaos myth but from Persian dualism. By "basic structure" Collins refers of course to the conceptual, not the literary, framework of the Scroll. But he does maintain that this basic dualistic structure is found in cols. I and XV-XIX, which constitute the literary "core-work" of 1QM, the remaining material being of later origin.

In the postulated "core-work" Collins finds several ingredients which seem to him to demand a Persian origin: the schematization of the war into six periods, the imagery of light and darkness, and the leaders of the two factions. But in all three respects, he notes, there has been a modification prompted by Jewish traditions, so that the final product is the result of both Persian and Jewish mythological influence.

The result is not, however, a complete fusion. "Under the influence of Daniel, the earthly sons of darkness are identified in political terms as the Kittim and the nations" and the ambivalence with which an opposition between light and darkness is used side by side with a nationalistic opposition of Israel and the nations shows that "the War Scroll was written at a point of transition." Traditional terminology is still retained "to express a new world view which has not yet clearly emerged" (p. 609).

Collins dates the War Scroll at a point prior to the foundation of the Qumran sect. The dualistic and the nationalistic outlooks which stand side by side in 1QM I, XV-XIX show no signs of sectarianism, unlike later material in the scroll such as col. XIV. But, in Collins's view, the new dualistic conception opened the way to a universalistic religion which transcended national