



Reviews of the Enoch Seminar 2013.12.15

Martone, Corrado. *Lettere di Bar Kokhba*. Testi del Vicino Oriente antico 6.2. Brescia: Paideia, 2012. € 13,80. ISBN: 978-8839408440.

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This short book (112 pages, 21cm.) offers the text of all eighteen letters related to Bar Kokhba, leader of the second Jewish revolt against Rome, found in Wadi Murabba'at and Naḥal Hever. Each letter is given in its original language (Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) and is followed by an Italian translation with historical and linguistic notes.

In the introduction (13-33) Martone reviews the modern scholarship about the Jewish war against the Roman Empire in A.D. 132-135, discussing its causes and consequences. These pages provide an accurate and up-to-date *status quaestionis*, helpful as an introduction to the growing literature on the subject.

After describing the circumstances of their discovery (37-41), Martone presents the letters following the order of their first publication (42-77). In general he adopts a cautious approach both in the reconstruction of the text and in its interpretation.

Two appendices and a rich bibliography round out the book. The first appendix (79-82) contains a document of the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt, discovered and published recently (E. Eshel - H. Eshel - A. Yardeni, "A Document from 'Year 4 of the Destruction of the House of Israel,'" *Dead Sea Discoveries* 18 [2011]: 1-28). Martone translates the Aramaic text into Italian and adds a comment.

In the second appendix, under the title, "La Bibbia di Bar Kokhba" (83-88), the author reproduces some previously published reflections on the origin of a standard text of the Hebrew Bible ("Osservazioni sulla formazione del testo biblico e la testimonianza di Qumran e delle antiche versioni," in *Tanti affetti in tal momento: studi in onore di Giovanna Garbarino* [ed. A. Balbo, F. Bessone, and E. Malaspina; Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2011], 589-92), to which he adds a complete list of the "biblical" texts found in the caves belonging to the Jewish rebels. These pages touch a subject of great interest, but I would have liked a more extended discussion (or maybe a more modest title).

Finally, it must be noted that in the presentation of the Aramaic letter P. Yadin 57 אכסלה should be אכלסה.

The author is to be commended for this book, which can be read with profit by Italian and international scholars alike.