



Reviews of the Enoch Seminar 2014.05.08

Devorah Dimant and Ingo Kottsieper, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective: A History of Research. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 99.* Leiden: Brill, 2012. Pp. xxii + 684. ISBN 9789004208063. Hardcover. €205/ \$273.

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The Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective offers a unique look at the history of research on the scrolls from the Judean desert. The field of Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship is in a time of transition from the second generation of scholars who had close personal contact with the members of the original international team of editors to a third generation of scholars. The idea for this book was born out of an “urgent need to preserve whatever information has been garnered and kept by scholars of the second generation” (xi). In the words of the editor, Devorah Dimant, this book “offers a moment of retrospection and reflection on the road already traversed, and highlights the pitfalls to be avoided and the direction to be taken in the future” (10).

The book begins with an introduction by Dimant and is then divided into three major sections: (1) Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship in America, (2) Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship in Israel, and (3) Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship in Europe. Essays in the first section include: “The Identification and History of the Qumran Community in American Scholarship,” by Sidnie White Crawford; “Research on the Sectarian Scrolls in North America,” by Eileen M. Schuller; “Biblical Scrolls Scholarship in North America,” by Eugene Ulrich; “‘Rewritten Bible’ in North American Scholarship,” by Sidnie White Crawford; “Qumran Research in the United States: The Non-Sectarian Texts,” by James C. VanderKam; “American Scholarship on Jewish Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” by Alex P. Jassen; “The Aramaic Texts and the Hebrew and Aramaic Languages at Qumran: The North American Contribution,” by Moshe J. Bernstein and Aaron Koller; “The Scrolls and Christianity in American Scholarship,” by John J. Collins; and “Canadian Scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls,” by Eileen M. Schuller.

The second section contains the following essays: “Israeli Scholarship on the Qumran Community,” by Devorah Dimant; “Israeli Research on the Ideology of the Qumran Community,” by Bilhah Nitzan; “Israeli Scholarship on the Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert,” by Emanuel Tov; “Qumran Research in Israel: Rewritten Bible and Biblical

Interpretation,” by Michael Segal; “The Liturgical Texts from Qumran in Israeli Research,” by Bilhah Nitzan; “Trends and Themes in Israeli Research of the Halakhah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” by Aharon Shemesh; “Israeli Research into Hebrew and Aramaic at Qumran,” by Steven E. Fassberg; and “Excavations in the Judean Desert and at Qumran under Israeli Jurisdiction,” by Hanan Eshel.

The third section consists of essays on: “Qumran Research: Contribution of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem,” by Émile Puech; “Qumran Research in France,” by André Lemaire; “Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship in the United Kingdom,” by George J. Brooke; “Research of Qumran Scrolls in the Netherlands,” by Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; “A History of Qumran Scrolls Research in Spain,” by Florentino García Martínez and Julio Trebolle Barrera; “Qumran Research and Biblical Scholarship in Germany,” by Jörg Frey; “Basic Research, Methods and Approaches to the Qumran Scrolls in German-Speaking Countries,” by Annette Steudel; “Qumran Research in Italy,” by Corrado Martone; “Qumran Research in Nordic Countries,” by Sarianna Metso; and “Qumran Research in Eastern and Central Europe,” by Ida Fröhlich.

The essays in this volume are partly histories of research and partly biographical sketches of the lives and contributions of earlier scholars. Most of the authors are second generation scrolls scholars who studied under and worked closely with the first generation of scholars. In many cases, the close relationships between the authors and their subjects give the essays an intimate and personal quality.

As with any collection of essays, some stand out from the rest. Ulrich’s essay is a fine survey of American scholarship on the biblical scrolls, and his Index of Qumran Biblical Manuscripts and Editors is a useful reference tool. Schuller’s essay on Canadian scholarship is delightfully energetic and lighthearted. Puech’s biographical sketches of Józef Milik and Maurice Baillet are particularly passionate, detailed, and colorful. Fröhlich’s essay, which covers central and eastern Europe, is commendable for highlighting many scholars who are not well known in the West.

Other essays strike the reader as being incomplete. Crawford’s essay on rewritten Bible is barely four pages and primarily focuses on the work done by third generation scholars. Nitzan’s article entitled, “Israeli Research on the Ideology of the Qumran Community,” is really only concerned with apocalyptic themes in the scrolls. Nitzan’s second essay, “The Liturgical Texts from Qumran in Israeli Research,” briefly mentions Esther Chazon’s work on the *Words of the Luminaries* from her 1991 doctoral dissertation (pp. 338–39, 341), but it does not discuss Chazon’s more recent research on prayer and liturgical communion with the angels.

The format of the essays is surprisingly inconsistent for a volume with such a unified purpose. It is curious that American and Israeli scholars were given their own sections in the book with the essays arranged by topic, whereas the third section on European scholarship is arranged by country or region. As a result, the essays in the first two sections of the book primarily serve as histories of research while the essays in the third section are mostly biographical surveys. There is irregularity as well in the biographical information supplied in each essay. Some list the date of birth and death of the scholars under consideration while other essays do not. Segal’s essay is unique in that he lists scholars with dates, professional title, and institutional affiliation. In

addition, the structure of the individual essays lacks uniformity. Many are arranged chronologically, but several are organized topically or by scholar. The length of the essays also varies considerably. Crawford's four page essay on rewritten Bible is the shortest while Jasson's essay is the longest at 53 pages.

The organization of this book by geographical region is both a strength and a weakness. Dimant explains the reason for this arrangement: "The idea to survey Qumran scholarship through the lenses of the respective countries involved sprang from the conviction that each of them reflected the events surrounding the discovery and research of the Scrolls in its own way" (xi). Indeed, this geographical survey of Qumran scholarship highlights the different interests that scholars from particular countries have in the Dead Sea Scrolls. For example, Ulrich notes that North American scholars have been the primary force in studying the biblical texts from the Judean desert. Collins comments on the American "fascination with any light they [the scrolls] may shed on Jesus and his messianic claims" (215). While subjects such as these have been staples of American scholarship, Bernstein and Koller observe that Americans have done little work on Hebrew and Aramaic grammar in the scrolls (188, 191).

Israeli scholars have their own particular interests. They have been on the forefront of archaeological research in the Judean desert, and they have played a central role in the study of liturgical practices, the use of scripture, and legal interpretations in the scrolls. Israeli scholars have used the scrolls to reconstruct the history and development of Jewish *halakhah*. It is interesting to note that both North Americans and Israelis have been interested in legal interpretations in the scrolls, but Israelis have focused on how the scrolls relate to the development of rabbinic *halakhah*, while Americans have been more concerned with what the legal interpretations reveal about the origin and identity of the Qumran community.

There are also certain regional interests evident among Europeans. Scholars in the United Kingdom have had a large role in contextualizing the scrolls within the breadth of late Second Temple Judaism, and they have devoted significant attention to Jewish mysticism and scriptural interpretation in the scrolls. German scholarship has focused on developing research tools and investigating how the scrolls shed light on the origin of Christianity. Until the 1970s, Dutch scholars mainly concentrated their research on studying the Targum of Job and the manuscripts from Cave 11 since the publication rights for these documents were committed to the Royal Netherlands Academy. The Dutch have also been involved in advancing the publication of research on the scrolls by transforming Brill into a primary outlet for such research, launching new journals (e.g., *DSD* and *JSJ*), and founding the International Organization for Qumran Studies.

The geographical organization of this book is not without its drawbacks. When scholars have moved from one country to another during their career, their biographical information is spread out over two or more essays. The organization is also problematic for readers who want to get a complete picture of the history of a particular subject. To do so, one has to read separate essays together. One should read Ulrich's essay on biblical texts in combination with Tov's. Crawford's essay on rewritten Bible must be read together with Segal's. Jassen's essay on Jewish law needs to be read with Shemesh's. Bernstein and Koller's essay on Hebrew and Aramaic has to be read with Fassberg's. It would seem that these problems are simply a result of the editor's attempt to

combine histories of research, biographical sketches, and regional contributions all in one volume.

In spite of its deficiencies, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective* accomplishes what it set out to do: it preserves the knowledge and memories of the second generation of scrolls scholars for posterity. This book will take its place with works like Weston Fields' *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History* as a resource for those who are interest in the history of scrolls scholarship. The book's practical significance in the present will mostly be for the third generation of scholars. Each essay concludes with a brief discussion of directions for future research which will be of value for graduate students who are interested in the scrolls. This book will also allow those who are relatively new to the field to become acquainted with the major figures and their research. The *Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective* is a memorial to those who have gone before us, and it reminds us that we all stand on the shoulders of others.