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T&T Clark Companion to The Dead Sea Scrolls (ed. George J. Brooke and Charlotte Hempel). London et al.: Bloomsbury 2018. [Book review]

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2020

Jokiranta , J 2020 , ' T &T Clark Companion to The Dead Sea Scrolls (ed. George J. Brooke and Charlotte Hempel). London et al.: Bloomsbury 2018. [Book review] ' , Biblische Notizen : aktuelle Beiträge zur Exegese der Bibel und ihrer Welt. , vol. 187 , pp. 141-143 .

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/350114>

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Please cite the original version.

2020 Nr. 187

ISSN 0178-2967
WWW.BIBLISCHE-NOTIZEN.ORG
WWW.BIBLICAL-NOTES.ORG

BN *Biblische Notizen* *Biblical Notes*

*Neue Folge. Herausgegeben von Kristin De Troyer und
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HERDER FREIBURG · BASEL · WIEN

George J. Brooke / Charlotte Hempel, T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls (Bloomsbury Companions) 576 p., £ 117,00, London et al.: Bloomsbury 2018, ISBN 978-0567352057.

This excellent collection may serve several purposes. It serves as an introduction to the field of Dead Sea Scrolls studies but can also be used, as its name indicates, as a companion for students reading the ancient texts. It offers scholars valuable updates on recent developments in the field.

The book has six sections. The first section includes "Background" chapters on the discoveries and their publication as well as on archaeology of Khirbet Qumran. The chapter "Scholarly and Popular Reception" is a welcome addition that is often not found in introductory volumes.

The second section, "Context" is in my view the most ambitious as it dwells on multiple aspects of the wider context, in terms of people (ethnicity, Hellenistic group formation), lands and cultures (area of the Dead Sea, Ancient Near East, Early Judaism, Early Christianity), and sources (Philo, Josephus, Hellenistic and other literature). It is very fine to have separate entries to Philo and Josephus and to carefully discuss the nature of these sources and their passages on the Essenes. The chapter on the Ancient Near East is very welcome but I doubt that all readers will easily follow its discussion on calendars and astronomy; the reader is advised to first read the chapter on calendars that appears later in the volume.

As scholarship on the scrolls has grown extensively, it has become increasingly difficult to present short and representative overviews on any topic. Many chapters, however, like the one on Early Christianity and the scrolls, manage to present a meaningful overview of major themes and changes in research settings, and thus demonstrate the reader how scrolls offer material and comparative evidence at many levels and for many types of questions.

In few places, the "Essene hypothesis" is still characterized as the consensus view (p. 149.121). It is always difficult to *measure* consensus, but I do not think those scholars who are either against the hypothesis or wish to present it with substantial commentary and open questions, would describe it as a consensus view without hesitation. The Essene associations certainly have gone through critical re-evaluation and thus the "Essene hypothesis" without any specification does not any more serve the field very well. George Brooke provides ways forward by a more nuanced understanding of elite diversity and commonality (p. 121-122).

The title of the third section, "Methods," may be a little misleading for a student who expects to learn the methods of studying the scrolls. The section continues to illuminate the wider context (such as languages and other collections of writings) and is framed according to various research interests and areas of study. The chapter "Physicality of Manuscripts and Material Culture" does not so much describe the methods of studying the material culture of the scrolls as the results and observations of the artefacts; the chapter on material reconstruction by Annette Steudel offers some more practical hints. The chapter "Biblical Scholarship and Qumran Studies" gives a helpful example of how reworkings already started within the Hebrew Bible and continue so in the Scrolls, so that no firm boundary can be drawn between the "biblical" and later material. The chapter "The Dead sea Scrolls and the Study of the Ancient World" provides helpful history of scholarship and rethinking of the antiquity and multiculturalism. Every user of the term "sect" should read the overview on sectarianism by David Chalcraft. The section ends with rare and helpful entries on sociolinguistics and social identity theory, and finally on postmodernism and gender by Maxine Grossman.

The fourth section, "Key Texts," presents short introductions to 28 scrolls or scroll groups, as well as four chapters on authoritative scriptures (on torah, prophets, writings and other texts). It is noteworthy that there is not attempt in these chapters to form a unified understanding of authority or authoritative texts but they have partly heterogeneous set of criteria for identifying authority. This may not be a fault as the field is still struggling to approach authority in the first place; here this is sensed in the way in which internal textual features (claims of authority) are mixed together with indications or implications of authority. In two later chapters, "Bible" and "Parabiblical Texts / rewritten Scripture," issues relating to these criteria are discussed in more length.

The introductions to key texts are set in alphabetical order. These introductions also do not follow any strict plan shared by all chapters; some include subtitles, which could have been helpful also in other chapters although probably left out because of brevity. Most authors concentrate on key issues of the texts themselves (e.g., manuscript evidence, datings, contents, significance) and less on research and controversies of the scroll(s) in question.

In the fifth section, "Types of Literature," scrolls are viewed from the perspective of literary genres or later categories (such as halakhah; wisdom; magic). The authors are well aware that categories direct and thus also restrict the view of what is seen, but exactly because categories are unavoidable and needed tools in scholarly work (as stated on p. 405), the authors seek to define and redefine the categories at hand and evaluate how the modern conceptualization relate to ancient ones. Thus this section includes a lot of useful reflection.

The final section, "Issues and Topics," gives more space to a set of beliefs that may be of interest to students of scrolls, such as messianism, purity, temple, and revelation. But it also includes chapters on topics not often discussed, such as patriarchs, and chapters on practices such as community formation, daily life, and scribes.

The six appendices in the end provide a welcome timeline and further literature and resources. The few photographs included in the volume are nice but the reader might wonder why these particular images. The field is also not used to presenting data and ideas in tables which are rare (but see, e.g., p. 22).

The editors can be congratulated for putting together this impressive collection. They have also made a conscious effort to include younger scholars and new perspectives. If I read the volume correctly, it does not wish to present the *status quaestionis* and differing views in equal manner but allows the authors to present their own stance only. Perhaps the next volume of this sort needs to shake the discipline even further and frame the questions unexpectedly or even in more various ways, in order to communicate the results to others in religious studies and invite dialogue with humanities, social sciences, and even natural sciences.