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A Review by Kenneth Atkinson of Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method, Society of Biblical Literature, by George J. Brooke

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REVIEWS

George J. BROOKE with the assistance of Nathalie LaCoste, *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method, Society of Biblical Literature*, Atlanta 2013, pp. xxi + 286. Paperback \$42.95; Hardcover \$57.95 [=Early Judaism and Its Literature, vol. 39]. ISBN 978-1-58983-901-4 (paper); ISBN 978-1-58983-903-8 (hardcover).

This diverse collection of essays by George Brooke, the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, explores how some of the Dead Sea Scrolls might be read and analyzed. The book includes essays that urge scholars to refine traditional methods of studying ancient texts in light of the Scrolls, as well as chapters devoted to text criticism, literary traditions, lexicography, historiography, and theology. Brooke also highlights the relevance of newer methods for the study of the Scrolls, such as deviance theory, cultural memory, hypertextuality, intertextuality, genre theory, spatial analysis, and psychology. With two exceptions, all the essays in the volume are reprinted from previous books or journals with only minor changes and corrections. Only chapter ten has never been published, while the final chapter has been extensively revised. Nathalie LaCoste “assisted with the overall consistency of the manuscript and compiled the concluding biography” (p. xiv). The book includes indices of ancient sources and modern scholars.

The contents of the volume are as follows: “Introduction” (pp. xv-xxi); “Chapter One: The Qumran Scrolls and the Demise of the Distinction Between Higher and Lower Criticism” (pp. 1-17); “Chapter Two: The Formation and Renewal of Scriptural Tradition” (pp. 19-36); “Chapter Three: Justifying Deviance: The Place of Scripture in Converting to the Qumran Self-Understanding” (pp. 37-50); “Chapter Four: Memory, Cultural Memory, and Rewriting Scripture” (pp. 51-65); “Chapter Five: Hypertextuality and the ‘Parabiblical’ Dead Sea Scrolls”

(pp. 67-84); “Chapter Six: Controlling Intertexts and Hierarchies of Echo in Two Thematic Eschatological Commentaries from Qumran” (pp. 85-97); “Chapter Seven: Pešer and Midraš in Qumran Literature: Issues for Lexicography” (pp. 99-114); “Chapter Eight: Genre Theory, Rewritten Bible, and Pesher” (pp. 115-35); “Chapter Nine: Room for Interpretation: An Analysis of Spatial Imagery in the Qumran Pesharim” (pp. 137-49); “Chapter Ten: The Silent God, the Abused Mother, and the Self-Justifying Sons: A Psychodynamic Reading of Scriptural Exegesis in the Pesharim” (p. 151-73); “Chapter Eleven: Types of Historiography in the Qumran Scrolls” (pp. 175-92); “Chapter Twelve: What Makes a Text Historical? Assumptions Behind the Classification of Some Dead Sea Scrolls” (pp. 193-210); “Chapter Thirteen: The Scrolls from Qumran and Old Testament Theology” (pp. 211-27). Because the book does not reflect a single theme, since nearly all the individual chapters were published separately from 1997 to the present, this review will highlight a few significant topics covered by Brooke that should interest readers of the *Qumran Chronicle*.

The first five chapters largely focus on matters of Scriptural interpretation in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls and textual criticism. Brooke argues that the so-called biblical manuscripts from the Qumran caves contain much to dissolve the supposed distinction between higher and lower criticism in biblical studies. He challenges the traditional notion of ancient scribes as slavish copyists to emphasize their creative roles in the way the scriptural text was presented for readers and hearers. Through examples drawn from the biblical Scrolls, Brooks seeks to show how these texts provide a new window into the development and gradual growth of the biblical text.

Brooke devotes much attention to the issue of translation in his discussions of the work of ancient scribes. He observes that translation and exegesis often overlap as the translators of Scripture are also both transmitters and adaptors of tradition. Concerning the manuscripts often labeled Rewritten Pentateuch, Brooke writes that the activity of the scribes responsible for these books can be labeled as both textual and literary. For this reason, he emphasizes that scholars should seek to understand each tradition and/or manuscript and not harmonize them. Brooke also urges scholars to take a greater interest in the Samaritan Pentateuch since the Dead Sea Scrolls show that many of its readings are quite ancient and were known in Second Temple Palestine beyond the confines of the Samaritan community. Brooke rejects the recent move towards the production of eclectic editions. He writes on this issue: “...

it seems to me that eclectic texts should be avoided for the very reason that they minimize the contribution of individual scribes and the specific creative traditions to which they may severally belong” (p. 13). In this regard, Brooke represents an opposing approach to that represented by the forthcoming “The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition” under the editorial direction of Ron Hendel (now to be published by the Society of Biblical Literature). This project seeks to produce an eclectic text that reflects the likely earliest inferable text (see further, Ron Hendel, *The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition*, “Vetus Testamentum” 58 (2008): 324-51). Although scholars will undoubtedly learn much from Hendel’s project, Brooke is correct to highlight the faults of such an approach because it fails to recognize that each ancient version represents a unique text with its own history of transmission and interpretation.

In several chapters Brooke discusses the roles that memory—both individual and cultural—played in the transmission of texts. He notes that scribes operated within collective codes that often defined, endorsed, and encouraged certain processes and practices as normative, and that individual and collective memory are entirely interdependent in some way. This, for Brooke, is helpful for understanding the so-called Rewritten Bible manuscripts from Qumran. He emphasizes that we should not merely read these texts through variants in other scriptural traditions, but we should recognize that “. . . as processes, they are not markers of literary genres, so much as indicators of the way texts are brought into their transmitter’s present” (p. 61). Because both authors and scribes participated in the re-presentation of the traditions they inherited, scholars are well-advised to heed many of Brooke’s insightful comments on the importance of working within each textual tradition. Instead of creating new literary genres, scholars should try to understand the history behind each text and the way the scribe who produced it sought to transmit it to ancient readers. Brooke stresses that it is important to discuss the particulars of the individual manuscripts within which works classified as rewritten Scripture are found, and the individual scribes behind them, to understand how collective or cultural memory might illuminate the phenomenon of rewritten Scripture.

In chapters six through nine, Brooke primarily focuses on the Qumran pesharim and other commentaries from Qumran. He also devotes much attention to “Eschatological Commentary A” (4Q174) and “Eschatological Commentary B” (4Q177). He argues that in these two texts there is an intertextual hierarchy: the authoritative base text select-

ed by the author of the commentary and the writer's explicit reference to other authoritative texts to support the interpretation (pp. 85-97). Yet, Brooke also stresses that the situation is a bit more complicated, for these texts suggest that their writers echo other authoritative traditions that may not be recognized by the contemporary reader. Brooke builds on this observation to examine the use of intertexts and echoes of earlier traditions in the pesharim with a special focus on their vocabulary.

In chapter seven, Brooke explores the meanings of the words "pesh-er" and "midrash" to show that scholars should not use a single template in examining any lexeme, since context also determines meaning. He stresses that words have a range of meanings that often overlap with other similar words. Brooke was inspired to write this chapter in light of the current work on the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumranschriften* (=ThWQ) (Hanz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Dahmen, eds.; Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2010-present) to which the present reviewer is a contributor. Brooke emphasizes that the writers of the individual entries in this volume need to consider the following three factors: "...the role of Semitic philology, the place of context in determining meaning, and the ongoing tension between diachronic and synchronic evidence in the construction of semantic fields" (p. 99). He cautions that there can be no single template in writing entries for the ThWQ since words often have different meanings in the contexts of different texts. It is important, as Brooke notes, to recognize that the members of the Qumran community and/or its wider movement were influenced by other contexts that no longer survived. He suggests that the ThWQ should allow space for semantic fields explained through context, along with discussions of synonyms derived from word chains and particular pairs. Unfortunately, Brooke's essay fails to adequately discuss the purpose and methods of the ThWQ through published examples from this volume. The articles of Kirsten Schäfers (*Towards a Theology of Qumran: The 'Theological Wörterbuch zu den Qumranschriften, ThWQ*, "Journal of Ancient Judaism" 1 (2010): 320-26), which summarizes the methods and goals of the ThWQ, along with an example of one entry published by Heinz-Josef Fabry (*Towards a Theology of Qumran: The Theological Dictionary of the Qumran Texts: Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten, ThWQ: The First Paradigm: אב 'ab 'Father*', "Journal of Ancient Judaism" 1 (2010): 327-335), provide a full account of the purpose and methods used in the production of the ThWQ. This section of the book should have been updated to reflect these essays as well as the first published volume of the ThWQ (see the review of volume one

of the *ThWQ* by Brent A. Strawn in: “Journal for the Study of Judaism” 43 (2012): 398-99).

One significant point Brooke highlights throughout the essays collected in this book is the issue of genre. This is especially so regarding the pesharim. He rightly emphasizes that all classifications of the Scrolls typically reflect modern understandings of these texts in light of the received canon of Scripture. His discussion should now be read in light of the important study of the title of 4Q249 by Jonathan Ben-Dov and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra (*4Q249 Midrash Moshe: A New Reading and Some Implications*, “Dead Sea Discoveries” 21 (2014): 131-49), which demonstrates that the heading “Midrash Sepher Moshe” written on the verso of this scroll is actually a correction of the earlier title “Sepher Moshe.” Because this scroll is connected with Leviticus 14, the writer of the first title likely misidentified it as a Pentateuch text when it is actually a rewriting of it. A later reader apparently recognized its true nature and corrected the title. This study suggests that the Qumran community may have used the terms *sefer* and *midrash* in ways different than modern scholars. This should caution all researchers of the Scrolls, as Brooke emphasizes, to avoid rigid definitions of genre since our understanding of a given lexeme is not necessarily identical with its meaning as understood by the author or copyist of a Qumran text.

Brooke highlights one topic related to the interpretation and classification of the Qumran texts that is in need of additional study, namely the history of the original research and publication of the Scrolls and how it has affected subsequent study of these documents. Brooke stresses that the methods used by the original publication team to divide texts among themselves often influenced subsequent work and categorization of these writing. As one example, he notes that works containing the word *peshar* were originally put together as a set and assigned to John Allegro. J. T. Milik later realized that the fragment Allegro had called Patriarchal Blessings (now part of 4Q252) was actually part of a commentary on selected passage on Genesis. The two agreed to swap fragments, and Milik gave Allegro 4Q341. Brooke comments on the significance of this story: “My introductory point here is that lexicographers must take into account the scholarly epoch when the principal discussion of certain terms was undertaken” (pp. 101-2). This important issue has now been addressed in greater detail in a new study by Hindy Najman and Eibert Tigchelaar (*A Preparatory Study of Nomenclature and Text Designation in the Dead Sea Scrolls* “Revue de Qumran” 103 (2014): 305-25). Important light on this topic is also provided by the

works of Weston Fields (*The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History: Volume 1, 1947-1960*, Brill, Leiden 2009) and Zdzislaw J. Kapera and Robert Feather (*Doyen of the Dead Sea Scrolls: An in depth biography of Józef Tadeusz Milik (1922-2006)*, The Enigma Press, Kraków 2011). Brooke's observations on the importance of the scholarly history of the texts should also be extended not only to their initial classification, but also to the locations of their discovery. Fields' investigation reveals that fragments from unknown caves were typically thrown in with the Cave 4 fragments by the original publication team even if they could not be connected with them by archaeologists (see, especially, Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 231, 546 notes 107-8).

Those interested in the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls should find much of value in this book. The bibliography is quite extensive, and an important resource. The Society of Biblical Literature is to be congratulated for preparing this volume, and making these essays available in a convenient format. Students should especially profit from reading this book because of its many discussions of innovative methods for the study of the Scrolls.

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