Reviews


The thirteen papers constituting this volume, dedicated to the memory of Yigael Yadin, represent the edited version of a series of lectures delivered in May 1985 at a conference held at New York University under the chairmanship of the editor. (Another Yadin Memorial volume is reviewed below on p. 269.) Nine leading Scrolls scholars from the USA, together with two Israeli and two German experts, are among the contributors. The studies are, on the whole, of high quality. The majority of them are intended either to advance the understanding of published texts (the Temple Scroll: B. A. Levine, J. Maier and the editor; the Sabbath *Shirot*: Carol Newsom; and the War Scroll from 4Q: M. Smith), or to examine problems arising from the Scrolls (marriage: J. M. Baumgarten; apocalypticism: J. J. Collins; priestly ideas: D. R. Schwartz). In addition, B. Z. Wacholder attempts a classification of Jewish-Aramaic literature predating Qumran.

The bulk of this review is addressed to the remaining three contributions, of which two discuss editorial principles (H. Stegemann, E. Qimron) and one puts these into practice and actually edits hitherto unpublished Qumran fragments (J. Strugnell).

H. Stegemann’s technique, devised to assist in reassembling scattered fragments so as to form a more continuous text, reflects common sense or shrewd practical observation. His twelve points (cf. pp. 205–6) deserve attention and acceptance. Nevertheless, a note of caution is in order. The time-consuming endeavour to overcome the difficulties created by the poor state of certain sections of a document should not serve as valid justification for further procrastination in granting access to the legible and understandable parts of the manuscript in question. In fact, if those responsible for the edition of these texts had the generosity or decency to release at once the photographs of the unpublished documents with an at least tentative transliteration, they might find many a willing hand to assist their further labours.

Elisha Qimron has come to Qumran studies through work on a historical dictionary of the Hebrew language and this pedigree explains his editorial preoccupations. When examining the large scrolls published in the early 1950s, as well as the Temple Scroll, he has discovered numerous incorrect readings in them resulting from undue haste on the part of Burrows, Sukenik, Avigad and Yadin. Since many of these errors have so far remained unemended, Qimron sees in them potential causes of ‘irreparable damage’. He lists various examples from 1Q Isaiah a, the Temple Scroll, the War Rule, the Hodayot and the Community Rule. But to tell the truth, none of these strikes this reviewer as capable of inflicting ‘irreparable damage’ on Qumran studies. Therefore, although efforts to improve the decipherment of the manuscripts must be warmly welcomed, full scale re-editing of the existing material, proposed by Qimron and undertaken by J. H. Charlesworth, is a luxury likely to divert attention and funds from the number one priority, the issuing of the
unpublished documents. A list of corrigenda will suffice.

It is appropriate to end with the only real novelty in the volume: John Strugnell's preliminary edition of two Hebrew 'Moses-Pseudepigrapha', viz. 4Q375 and 376, the latter closely related to 1Q29. 4Q375 consists of a largish, fairly well preserved fragment and a small one, both perfectly legible on the published photograph. The reproduction of 4Q376, by contrast, is very poor and allows for no independent reading of the text. The document conveys directives by a legislator, no doubt Moses, but his identity is not revealed in the released parts of the composition or, as far as is known, anywhere else. The subject matter concerns prophecy. If the exhortation of 'the prophet' results in the people's repentance, God's anger will cease and salvation will follow. The false prophet, on the other hand, is to be put to death. Both points are biblical commonplaces. The rest of the fragment deals with the scripturally unparalleled prophet of contested credentials, that is, one who is accepted as legitimate within his own tribe, but not outside it. In such a case, the matter is to be referred to 'the anointed priest', whose job it is to discover the truth in the Temple by means of various sacrifices and, according to the less complete account of 4Q376, by the divinatory use of the Urim.

In its essence, Strugnell's editorial work displays thorough competence, though by his own admission it is rather loquacious (see p. 255, n. 2). He characterizes both texts as 'pseudepigraphic', pre-Qumranic (dating somewhere between the Persian period and the early Hasmonaenae age), and non-sectarian. Although other Scrolls scholars have quite some time ago tumbled to the idea that non-biblical Qumran texts are not ipso facto to be treated as of Essene origin, the concept strikes Strugnell as an innovation. Whether the absence of sectarian features necessarily implies that the document was composed outside the Community is less obvious. The classification of the composition as 'pseudepigraphic' seems inadequate because of the vagueness of the term. It appears rather to belong, together with the cognate 'Words of Moses' (1Q22), to the genre nowadays referred to as the 're-written Bible'. Strugnell's comments on the eschatological prophet are also overdone, but at the end he himself acknowledges that it would be more prudent to have recourse to a general notion of prophecy.

In his opening paragraph, Professor Strugnell informs his readers that the present work had lain undisturbed in its wrappings for several years, apparently since the mid-1970s. It is, one imagines, the pressure that he has had to bear since his appointment as editor-in-chief of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert that has persuaded him to open his dusty folders ... to the great benefit of us all. Rumour has it that there are several other unpublished 'pseudepigraphic' writings as well as 'Pentateuchal paraphrases'. Their availability to public scrutiny would enable experts in Jewish Bible interpretation to determine more precisely the distinction between the 're-edited Bible' (e.g. the Temple Scroll) and the 're-written Bible', and to understand the evolution leading from one to the other.

After a lapse of eight years, another volume of DJD now sees the light of day. It displays several novel peculiarities. Volume VIII of the series is the first to be produced by an Israeli author, albeit with the help of notes inherited from D. Barthelemy, the scholar originally designated to edit the fragmentary scroll of the Greek Minor Prophets. Barthelemy issued in 1963 an epoch-making preliminary publication of this document under the title Les devanciers d'Aquila, hence the substance of the contents and their implications regarding Greek Bible translation
have been known for over a quarter of a century. The second novelty, partly attributable to Barthélemy's preparatory spade-work and to help received from R. A. Kraft (Description of the materials) and P. J. Parsons (Palaeography), is the unusual speed with which Tov brought his work to completion between 1982 and 1987. The production has taken almost another three years despite (or because of?) the use of computer technology. Thirdly, the present volume is the first to appear under the general editorship of Professor John Strugnell, nominated by 'the body of editors' and confirmed by 'the governmental authorities' as successor to Pierre Benoît, who in 1987 submitted his resignation to 'the competent authorities' (Preface, p. vii). It is only on p. x, in Tov's Foreword, that the reader discovers that the anonymous authorities are IDAM, the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums.

DJD VIII is a first-class piece of text edition. The manuscript contains twenty-five (or twenty-six) fragmentary columns of the Minor Prophets, covering the books of Joel, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Zechariah. On facing pages, the editor reproduces, on the left, the diplomatic transcription and, on the right, the reconstructed text. As has been noted by Barthélemy and others, the Hebrew basis of the translation is closer to the Masoretic Text than that used by the interpreters of the LXX. It is noteworthy that the Tetragram, which figures twenty-four times, is always written with palaeo-Hebrew characters.

In sections E and F (pp. 83–158), Professor Tov justifies his reconstructions and offers a careful and detailed description of the translation technique, spelling peculiarities of the manuscript and a statistical analysis of this recension (R) compared to MT and LXX. To illustrate his findings on the basis of the non-reconstructed material, the following table will suffice.

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<td>R = LXX against MT:</td>
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<td>LXX = MT against R:</td>
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<td>All three are different:</td>
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Bearing in mind the importance of this new witness to the Greek Bible, the dating of the fragments is of the highest significance. Professor Tov has been fortunate in securing cooperation from such an expert as Professor Peter Parsons, who himself benefited from advice from the late C. H. Roberts and Mr T. C. Skeat. Colin Roberts stuck to his original estimate of '50 B.C.–A.D. 50', but both Parsons and Skeat incline to place the script towards the end of the first century B.C. According to the latter, nothing would bring the date down to the Christian era. This finding, if correct, is likely to affect Barthélemy's historical theory for which a mid-first century A.D. date is required.

As a wise editor, Professor Tov keeps clear of such an area of argument and hypothesis as well as of questions of exegesis, leaving it to other scholars to build on the solid foundations he has laid in this excellent publication.

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Geza Vermes


The chronological notices in the Hebrew Bible are usually thought of by scholars