The article of Harry F. van Rooij comparing hapax legomena in MT, LXX and Peshitta Ezechiel is worth noting. Van Rooij concludes that the Peshitta did not consult the LXX when dealing with the translation of hapax legomena and went its own way. A series of further articles cover very diverse but still LXX related topics, such as the metatexts that are often accompanying translations (by Jacobus A. Naudé), an article on Kingship ideology as found in the Letter of Aristeas (by Jonathan More), an excellent reflection on the background of Eunouchos as used in the LXX (by Sakkie Cornelius), showing that the idea of castration most likely should be cut out from the concept, an article on reading Judith as therapeutic narrative (by Pierre Johan Jordaan), a great article (by Eugene Coetzer) on how to apply the ‘speech act theory’ of John L. Austin to the text of Susanna, and finally an article by Dichk M. Kanonge investigating the efficiency of the simplified Greimassian method as constructed by Nicole Everaert-Desmedt for ‘Reading Narratives in the Septuagint’.

A bibliography may have been useful. Multiple indices conclude the volume.

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This Oxford ‘Handbook’, a true handful of a book with its 800 pages, is the characteristic example of a new genre that has started to proliferate. I am referring to multi-authored introductions to important and controversial topics, written largely by recognized authorities and advancing with occasional exceptions opinions generally agreeable to the majority of readers. To facilitate the further study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, each contribution is accompanied by a selection of suggested readings and a detailed list of bibliography. The volume is the work of second and third generation Qumran scholars under the dual editorship of a British and an American specialist, Timothy Lim of Edinburgh and John Collins of Yale. The contributors’ register comprises 28 further names. The bulk is Anglo-American (nine from the UK and ten from the USA). Israel is underrepresented by three, and as far as the rest of the world is concerned, Austria, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, each has a single flag bearer.

Another noteworthy phenomenon concerns the authorities cited in the volume. In a similar work published, say, thirty years ago, Józef Tadeusz Milik and Roland de Vaux would have been the most frequently quoted authorities. They have not disappeared yet, but stand no longer in the front row. Other erstwhile grandees like Eleazar L. Sukenik, Millar Burrows, André Dupont-Sommer, and even H.H. Rowley and Yigael Yadin, are hardly remembered. They all made their substantial mark on Qumran studies in their time, but as their innovations bit by bit became common opinion, they have progressively faded away from the consciousness of the younger generations. Sic transit gloria mundi.

The first of the eight sections of
the Handbook deals with archaeology and covers both the site of Qumran (Eric Meyers) and the cemetery (Rachel Hachlili). Both authors subject to critical analysis the numerous recent theories. Meyers seems to embrace Jodi Magness’s view, emending de Vaux’s earlier thesis, and proposes that the surviving remains of the Qumran settlement must be dated after 100 BCE. He notes, however, that Magness leaves the door slightly ajar for a pre-100 BCE occupation of the site. I myself believe that the massive building activity that took place at the beginning of the first century BCE must have been preceded by a more modest occupation during which the founding fathers of the community sheltered in tents, huts or the neighbouring caves, an occupation that may have stretched back to the 120s or 130s BCE, but left little or nothing for modern archaeologists to examine. In sum, both Meyers and Hachlili conclude that the evidence as a whole is compatible, to say the least, with the theory of a sectarian-Essene occupation of the Qumran area.

In sections 2 and 3 the impact of the scrolls on the study of Jewish history and sectarianism is investigated. Some of the authors (John Collins, Joan Taylor and James VanderKam) largely confirm mainstream opinion regarding the nature of the settlement, others (Martin Goodman, Michael Wise and Sacha Stern) propound revolutionary theses. Goodman questions the dereliction of the Jerusalem Temple by the priestly founders of the community; Wise dates the Teacher of Righteousness not to the second half of the second century BCE, but to the period following the reign of Alexander Jannaeus who died in 76 BCE. Finally, Stern thinks that the sectarianst followed not a solar, but a lunar calendar and any dispute based on different time reckoning is without foundation. As the editors tactfully put it, it is to be seen whether these revisionist ideas will succeed in shaking long-established assumptions of scholarship.

Section 4 is devoted to the text, languages and interpretation of the Bible in the scrolls (Ronald Hendel, Timothy Lim, Molly Zahn, Bilhah Nitzan and Jan Joosten). While voicing mainstream opinions, the contributors also advance some important controversial views. For instance, Molly Zahn dedicates a whole chapter to the problem of the ‘Rewritten Bible’, a concept that I launched in Scripture and Tradition in Judaism fifty years ago, but questions, as some other scholars have done before her, the appropriateness of the use of the term ‘Bible’ in the Second Temple period. She restricts (wrongly in my view) the notion of ‘Rewritten Scripture’ (not ‘Bible!’), to the Dead Sea Scrolls. I would argue that, although the text of sacred books may still have been somewhat fluid in the late Second Temple era, Jews of that age already possessed a canon of the Bible. The debate merely concerned the question whether the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes should remain in the canon and it was decided that they should. Josephus’s assertion that only 22 books, no more, no less, were authoritative in Jewish circles, is highly significant, and he lists the five books of Moses, 13 books of the prophets and four books of hymns and wisdom, that is to say the traditional number of the biblical books among Jews.

Section 5 surveys religious themes: purity (Jonathan Klowans), apocalypticism and Messianism (Michael Knibb), mysticism (James Davila), wisdom literature (Armin Lange), Iranian connections (Albert de Jong)
and penitential movements (David Lambert). Section 6 turns to the scrolls and early Christianity, discussing the relationship between the Essene scrolls and the New Testament (Jörg Frey) and the background of Christology (Larry Hurtado). The latter oddly perceives in certain Qumran apocalyptic characters the prototypes of the early Christian ‘binitarian’ Jesus devotion. The section ends with a useful survey of shared exegetical traditions between Qumran and the New Testament (George Brooke).

In section 7 the relation between the scrolls and later Judaism is investigated. The themes include Essene and rabbinic halakhah (Aharon Shemesh); Qumran and Jewish liturgy (Daniel Falk) and the links that connect the scrolls with the Cairo Genizah and the Karaites (Stefan Reif).

Section 8 is the spice of definite novelty in the Handbook. The scrolls are subjected to rhetorical criticism by Carol Newsom; Postmodernism in Roland Barthes’s style is practiced on the Teacher of Righteousness by Maxine Grossman; and Hector Macqueen uses the lawsuit between Elisha Qimron and Hershel Shanks to clarify the law relating to the copyright of a reconstructed ancient text.

The editors conclude by expressing their hope ‘that the essays brought together here are sufficient to show that little, if anything is definitively settled in the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and that they are likely to remain a source of vibrant debate for generations to come’ (p. 16). This is indeed one way of reading this book. Nevertheless, an old Qumran hand like this reviewer, who has lived with the scrolls for the last 63 years, closes The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls with the impression that whatever the young lions of today pretend, the main lines of research have been successfully completed during the first 50 years of Qumran research and what remains to achieve is in-depth-study and an effort to integrate the scrolls into the main body of ancient Jewish literature, history, religion and culture.

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With the subtitle’s declaration that ‘son of man’ is an expression originating with the historical Jesus, the suggestion that it was a Christological title created by the early community is excluded from the beginning. It then remains the authors’ task to explore what it possibly meant in the mouth of Jesus, and if the use in the gospels corresponds to this or has developed its content. Already on the first page of the first of eight contributions, Albert L. Lukaszewski, in ‘Issues Concerning the Aramaic Behind ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἄνθρωπου: A Critical Review of Scholarship’, points to Tertullian, the first known author to suggest that Jesus hinted at his being the Son of Man of Daniel 7. In the overview of older and newer ‘Aramaic’ solutions it becomes clear that the main polemical target is Maurice Casey. Where Geza Vermes, in a seminal study from 1967, concluded