

C. D. Elledge, *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (SBL Archaeology and Biblical Studies 14; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature: 2005). Pp. xii + 148. ISBN 13:978-1-58983-183-4. XXX \$

In spite of its name (see below), this book provides a brief introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls, describing their nature and importance for scholarship. The largest section (pp. 55–86) describes the most important non-biblical scrolls, providing the most basic details in an attractive and effective way. This description includes technical details about these scrolls as well as the basic facts regarding their content and literary analysis. Other chapters deal with the discovery of the scrolls (chapter 1), the archaeology of Qumran (ch. 2), the people living at Qumran (ch. 3), the biblical scrolls (ch. 5), the scrolls and Second Temple Judaism (ch. 6), and the scrolls and the NT (ch. 7).

This monograph serves as an introduction to the scrolls and their importance for the understanding of ancient Judaism in the full sense of the word. Therefore, the book is *not* what it claims to be, a monograph on, or introduction to, “The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls.” The author wants the book to be such an introduction, as stated on p. vii: “First, this book concentrates on what the Scrolls can teach us about the world of the Bible and the unique place of the Qumran Community within it. … The book should, therefore, be read as a companion for all who desire to understand the world of the Bible more fully in light of historical research.” However, most readers will expect something else from a book carrying this name.

The topics analyzed in this introduction are treated also in other introductory monographs, such as those by Vermes, VanderKam–Flint, and Schiffman. The present monograph, however, is more compact and lacks the full apparatus of scholarly notes (some footnotes are included). It is a pleasant, well-written short introduction to the scrolls, covering what needs to be covered, although each reviewer would probably prefer to see some topics covered to a greater or lesser degree. This reviewer would like to have seen more attention given to the biblical scrolls found at Qumran, especially as the book bears the word “Bible” as the first component of its title. Among other things, the author could have explained what a variant is, and could have given examples of the different types of variants, rather than the present brief four-page discussion of biblical manuscripts (followed by five pages about “Rewritten Bible” compositions). After all, the biblical scrolls found at Qumran comprised 200 out of a total of what were once some 930 different compositions.

The book is written by someone who has a good grasp of the topics described, but nevertheless some criticisms may be in order. The introductory chapter should have

presented the tools in greater detail, I suggest. The major focus of the book is the Qumran scrolls, which are named here as the Dead Sea Scrolls, as often elsewhere; however, the distinction between the scrolls found at different locations should have been better clarified (so-called Dead Sea Scrolls that were not found at Qumran are mentioned on pp. 27–31). The nature of the *pesharim* should have been better defined (pp. 73–74). Further, although modern analyses of the archaeological data are mentioned, the description depends too much on de Vaux, whose views are described in great detail.

Following the sequence of the pages, the following inaccuracies were spotted: The *DJD* series was not “organized” but rather published by Oxford University Press (p. 4). After cave 11 (1956), new caves with “Dead Sea Scrolls” were found, in Jericho (p. 8). The scrolls published by Charlesworth in 2000 were not “newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls,” but scrolls that were “brought out of the closet” at a late stage (p. 8). The description on p. 9 does not refer to the nationalization of the Palestine Archaeological (or: Rockefeller) Museum in 1966. MMT was not published “in a series of documents regarding the Scrolls controversies prepared by Hershel Shanks” (p. 10). The quotation system of the fragments (bottom of p. 11) is imprecise. The important English translation of the scrolls by Wise–Abegg–Cook is not mentioned on p. 12. The discussion of the “rival assessments” of the Qumran archaeological data on p. 18 is insufficient; references to other pages in the book should have been provided. Were the “tables” found in locus 30 really tables (p. 21)? The uncertainty regarding the reading of the most critical details of the “to the yahad” ostraca should have been mentioned (p. 24). The scrolls found at Qumran are not only the “writings” of the group living at Qumran (p. 25). The calendrical text named 4QMMT A (the first two fragments of MMT) has not necessarily been considered part of MMT since the separate publication of that text as 4QCal. Doc. D. (p. 67). Stegemann’s reconstruction of the Thanksgiving Scroll should have been mentioned on p. 81. “*Great Isaiah*” (for example, “*Great Isaiah* has provided ...”) is a strange name for the large Isaiah scroll (pp. 89–90). Joseph Baumgarten is named “Joel” (p. 133).

Elledge’s style is very attractive and makes for easy reading. The indexes are helpful, but the photographs are badly reproduced.

The general public that does not want to turn to a long introduction to the scrolls may prefer this brief one. It is informative and attractive, but occasionally has to be used with caution.

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