

***Einführung in die Qumranliteratur: Die Handschriften vom Toten Meer*, by Géza G. Xeravits and Peter Porzig**

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This volume is aimed at students and offers a concise, up-to-date and comprehensive introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Of particular value is that the authors aim to take the writings, as much as possible, at their face value without superimposing a meta-thesis on them regarding the community of Qumran and the coherence of the various writings or otherwise (without denying the legitimacy and necessity of such a comprehensive thesis). This approach allows the authors and readers not only to see and describe the unity of the material but also to appreciate the full force of its diversity.

The authors begin with an introduction to the corpus of manuscripts at Qumran (pp. 1–22): survey of research, locations and number of findings—900 texts, of which 238 are “biblical,” 520 texts are “non-biblical,” 128 texts cannot be identified (p. 4)—definitions of the character of the texts, the problem of differentiating “biblical” and “non-biblical” texts, the relationship of the so-called “sectarian” and “non-sectarian” manuscripts, the various literary genres, editions and important resources for working with the manuscripts, explanation of the nomenclature, the presentation of the texts in the major critical editions, issues of dating the manuscripts and challenges in the material reconstruction of the manuscripts (including critical discussion of the so-called “Stegemann-hypothesis”).

After the introduction, the authors present the material according to broadly defined literary genres: “biblical” manuscripts, para-biblical texts, exegetical texts, regulations and legal texts, texts regarding calendar issues, liturgical and poetical texts, wisdom texts, historical texts and, in closing, eschatological and apocalyptic texts. The volume closes with a list of all Qumran texts (pp. 298–318). Each section opens with a survey,



including text editions and resources for study and secondary literature (at times also surveys or research), followed by the particular issues raised by this genre (e.g., for the biblical manuscripts the question regarding their authority and the process of canonisation, pp. 35–40; for exegetical texts an introduction to the hermeneutics of the Qumran community, pp. 102–107, and the significance of historical references in continuous *pesharim*, pp. 113–115; for historical texts detailed discussion of the relationship of the Qumran community and the Hasmonean dynasty, pp. 253–264) and selected examples (e.g., for biblical texts Judges 6 and 4QJudg^a, Nahasch and the Ammonites in 1 Samuel 10–11 and in 4QSam, “news from Mount Sinai” in Exodus 24:18; 25:1 according to 4Q364=4QRP^af15 and “explicit blessings”—Genesis 32 according to 4Q 158 f1–2). The authors summarise the current state of research as follows (pp. 3–4):

a) Die gefundenen Texte weisen bei allen Verschiedenheiten dennoch gemeinsame Züge auf. Insbesondere was die sogenannten “genuinen” Qumrantexte ... angeht, erscheint es möglich, gewisse Rückschlüsse auf eine gemeinsame theologische Anschauung hinter den Einzeltexten zu ziehen. Diese Anschauung ist weder die eines “Mainstream”-Judentums (das es wohl nie gegeben hat), noch einfach als der Realität entflohene “Sektenliteratur” zu kennzeichnen, sondern spiegelt, wie Dokumente wie etwa 4QMMT zeigen ..., deutlich auf der Linie etwa einer strengen Toraobservanz liegend, eine unter anderen Positionen einer jüdischen Gruppenbildung wieder [*sic*]. ... Für eine Gruppenüberlieferung einer Strömung im damaligen Judentum spricht außerdem, dass die Werke aus Qumran sich zum Teil regelrecht gegenseitig zitieren können.

b) In Qumran wurden praktisch keine “profanen” Texte gefunden, anders als an den anderen Fundstellen in der judäischen Wüste ... Das spricht dafür, dass es sich um Literatur einer religiösen Gruppe handelt.

c) Paläographische Untersuchungen der Handschriften zeigen, dass es sich wahrscheinlich nicht nur um gesammelte Handschriften unterschiedlicher Herkunft, sondern in der Masse um vor Ort erstellte Abschriften von Schriften handelt. Autographen sind nur sehr selten und ausnahmsweise zu finden Das Schriftbild ist einigermaßen homogen, was für eine bestimmte Schreibertradition sprechen könnte.

The authors provide a helpful survey and resource for students (quite demanding!) and scholars alike. The volume is based on Xeravits’s Hungarian introduction to the non-biblical Qumran literature (2008).