
The main purpose of the volume is to examine “the overlap and intersection of interests that reflect the current state of scholarship in the field, as well as its potential for future development” (2). In order to achieve this admirable yet difficult task, the contributors of the volume were “unusually collaborative” as they shared drafts with one another. Therefore, many of the contributors have dialogue partners within the same volume. This unorthodox approach for a collected volume of essays has produced a stimulating and enjoyable reading experience.

Due to the constraints of space, this reviewer will discuss only a few essays that were found to be especially interesting. After the introduction, Sarianna Metso begins the discussion with methodological reflection based upon an important question for Dead Sea Scrolls scholars: “Is the problem in the data, or is it the traditional concepts and criteria that scholarship has constructed?” (12). She
chooses three areas that might help answer the question. The first issue Metso addresses is the concept of biblical texts. She helpfully summarizes this particularly important issue and concludes that while the Masoretic text had initially been the standard for judging the biblical text, the important evidence from such texts as 11QPs\textsuperscript{s} and 4QRP call into serious question the priority of the MT. The second issue Metso addresses is the concept of halakhah. Some scholars have argued that halakhic traditions attested at Qumran were solely based on scriptural exegesis. Metso, however, argues that this is only partially the case. The experience of the community also required it to create new halakah. In addition, Metso addresses the question of the feasibility of a historical reconstruction for the community based upon the various legal texts. She makes the important point that literary studies have demonstrated the composite nature of these texts. Finally, Metso points out that such new evidence “raises a broad range of methodological and theoretical questions, and an even broader range of not-yet-asked questions must be raised in our attempt to understand the treasury of documents illuminating Second Temple Judaism” (25). Metso’s contribution is programmatic for the entire volume.

The remaining chapters are generally grouped according to subject matter. The first cluster of essays deals with the material evidence from the scrolls themselves. After defining the concept of a manuscript, Tigchelaar discusses the task of sorting and assembling the fragmentary manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He demonstrates this difficult process by using the example of 4Q184. Finally, Tigchelaar raises the possibility that on occasion, it might be necessary to deconstruct the editor’s work on a particular manuscript. His essay is complemented by that of Zuckerman who discusses how the technology of digital imaging hardware and software can have significant methodological implications. Martin Abegg provides “a primer on linguistic analysis in the editions of the Dead Sea Scrolls” (48). His contribution consists of a discussion of paleography, morphology, phonology, and syntax. Abegg concludes his essay by applying these methodological tools to the discussion of the tefillin and their relationship to the Qumran manuscripts.

It is a fitting end to an excellent essay.

Jodi Magness provides a bridge between the material evidence and more theoretical concerns in her essay about archaeology and Qumran. She helpfully discusses how archaeologists do their work, and provides an excellent status questionis with regard to archaeology. Other contributions of interest include Carol Newsom’s essay on rhetorical criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls. As Newsom points out, rhetorical criticism is a method little used by scholars in this field. One reason for this might be that we do not know how or by whom the scrolls were used. Since this is the case, she argues that it is too simplistic to suggest the rhetorical model of “an author addressing an audience in a particular context” (201, emphasis hers) with regard to the Dead Sea Scrolls. With this in mind, Newsom uses two case studies in her discussion demonstrating the rhetoric used by the community: