

each of the five groups (proto-Masoretic texts, pre-Samaritan texts, texts written in the Qumran practice, texts close to the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Old Greek, non-aligned texts) without stating whether the figure is a percentage of the total number of individual fragments (does a fragment containing a couple of verses have the same status as 1QIsa^a?), or of the total number of individual biblical texts, or even of the total amount of biblical text found at Qumran. How large does a fragment have to be in order to be identifiable as part of a group? Some explanation of method is surely called for here, as these percentages, however approximate, are likely to end up in many a student essay.

In other places imprecision is not the fault of the author but inherent in the nature of the subject. Take the statement on p. 24, 'The representatives of *M* form a tight group which differs from other texts. Nevertheless, no special characteristics of *M* can be identified on a textual level, except for the accuracy and quality of its text for most of the biblical books.' Here Tov gives the impression of saying, 'I can't describe a Masoretic (or proto-Masoretic) text, but I know one when I see one.' The problem is that his analysis is normally so acute that the reader tends to expect him to bring order out of chaos every time and to forget that this is a divine prerogative.

Further down on the same page, Tov states that 'the preference of *M* by a central stream in Judaism does not necessarily imply that it contains the best text of the Bible'. This begs the question that if so, why do we not base our best text of the Bible on other sources such as the Old Greek or a Qumran text in books such as Samuel, Jeremiah or Ezekiel? Of course the answer is that Tov is dealing strictly with textual criticism of the Hebrew here, not with the reconstruction of the original text of the Bible, but occasionally the reader needs reminding.

But the comment also hints tantalizingly at a more radical position than that which Tov generally adopts. For the most part he makes the Hebrew biblical text central, and defines as the ultimate goal of textual criticism the reconstruction of the single original text, i.e. the copy which contained 'the finished literary product and which stood at the beginning of the process of textual transmission' (p. 171). However, later on he comments on the impossibility of constructing a common stemma, 'partly because there is no certainty that these texts indeed derived from one common text' (p. 190). He is not so pessimistic about the whole exercise that it seems to be a wild goose chase rather than a quest for the Holy Grail, and he is correct in his emphasis on the inadequacy of rules for textual criticism compared with sound common sense and a bit of intuition. The examples of parallel and consecutive literary strata are particularly well presented, and enable the author to draw a distinction between literary and textual criticism. The chapter on conjectural emendations is also very instructive. The last chapter, on critical editions of the Hebrew Bible, is more of an appendix than a discussion, and it therefore ends the book rather abruptly, without warning or conclusion.

None of the criticisms above are in any way significant, and the work is bursting with good things. Because of the sheer range of subject matter as well as Tov's authoritative and crystal-clear treatment of it, this book is essential reading for the student, and a valuable addition to the scholar's library. Not only does it represent a very considerable achievement on the part of Professor Tov, but the publishers have done it full justice by producing it so attractively.

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PATRICK W. SKEHAN, EUGENE ULRICH and JUDITH E. SANDERSON, *Qumran Cave 4: IV Palaeo-Hebrew and Greek Biblical Manuscripts* (Discoveries in the Judean Desert

IX). Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992. xiii, 250 pp. 47 plates. £75.00.

It is nearly forty years since Patrick Skehan started work on this volume. Eugene Ulrich took it over in 1981 following Skehan's death, and was joined by Judith Sanderson two years later. Looking at the photographic plates of the fragments concerned, it is less surprising that the actual research project took so long. More worrying is the fact that the camera-ready copy seems to have taken three years to publish, as was the case with Volume VIII.

Nevertheless, we now have the long-awaited edition of some very important biblical and parabiblical texts from Qumran. Most are in Hebrew, written in Paleo-Hebrew script, and others are in Greek. All are fragmentary, some to the point of being unidentifiable. The remnants known as 4QpaleoGen-Ex¹, Deut^r, Deut^s, Job^c, do not belong to any particular text group overall, and 'document the pluriform nature of the ancient biblical tradition before the text became standardized.' In contrast, 4QpaleoExod^{dm} is very close to the Samaritan text type, including the expansions characteristic of the Samaritan Exodus, but lacking its tenth commandment of worship on Mount Gerizim. This implies that the 'Samaritan' text was not originally a product of the Samaritan community but arose from a textual tradition already extant in Palestine and even found in the library at Qumran.

The Greek biblical manuscripts are, at least to this reviewer, even more interesting, since 4QLXXLev^a and Num have a text that differs from what has been reconstructed as the 'Old Greek', or original Septuagint translation, in the Göttingen edition. The Leviticus text is brief but shows fifteen variants in twenty-eight semi-extant lines, and these are not errors but legitimate renderings of a Hebrew text approximating to MT. This is where the fun starts: do we therefore have in this fragment a more original Old Greek translation (either freely rendering a proto-Masoretic text or literally rendering a Hebrew *Vorlage* differing from MT), or is it part of a very early (early first century B.C.E.) revision? Ulrich takes the former line, against Wevers and the later view of Skehan. His theory may be borne out by 4QLXX Num, and this would suggest that the Old Greek reconstructed in the Göttingen edition merely represents a later revision to MT. Whichever theory proved to be correct, the implications would be enormous for Septuagint and related studies. But frustratingly the fragments are too few and too small for any real conclusion to be drawn from them.

Much of this is hardly new to scholars, since Skehan, Ulrich and Sanderson had published their analyses of the more important material some years previously. Consequently, discussion of the significance of the fragments tends to be rather brief in this volume, with the reader invited to refer to the bibliography for further details. This is a pity, but it is possible that any expansion would have resulted in further delay in publication and an even more expensive volume.

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GEZA VERMES, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*. SCM Press, London / Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1993. x, 244 pp. £12.50/\$13.00.

Twenty years ago, Geza Vermes worked a small revolution in New Testament studies with the publication of his now-classic *Jesus the Jew*. Placing gospel traditions in a religiously Jewish and linguistically semitic context, he put forward a compelling portrait of a Galilean *hasid* and charismatic holy man whose practice and piety were firmly rooted in strata of Second-Temple Judaism still visible in later rabbinic texts. Now, drawing on more recent work in both Christian origins and late Second-Temple

Judaism, Vermes enhances and refines his earlier reconstruction in *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*.

Our increased knowledge of Jesus' early first-century Palestinian Jewish context, Vermes states, allows the historian to derive 'historically reliable information from non-historical sources', namely, and primarily, the Synoptics (p. 2). These will never provide all we want to know; nevertheless, critically handled, they can help us to grasp 'significant and central' aspects of Jesus' life, personality and teaching, especially when they are interpreted, for the purposes of this effort, as documents pertaining to the broader map of Jewish cultural history (pp. 2, 9). The lay readers who comprise the audience Vermes primarily intends may well marvel that such a claim need be defended, much less made, but Bultmannian agnosticism is far from dead: in every generation, scholars take thousands of pages to proclaim that we can know nothing of true significance about Jesus (Vermes, in this connection, mentions A. E. Harvey, but the list could be added to without effort), or that what we can know somehow divides him from a Palestinian Jewish context ('Jesus-as-Cynic': again, the list goes on). Against such sophisticated professional erudition, Vermes's opening statement of principle, clear and commonsensical, is the intellectual equivalent of fresh air.

In the remaining seven chapters, Vermes proceeds to locate Jesus as a religious man within the Judaism of his day. Chapter 2, 'Jesus and the Law', explores the Synoptic portrait of Jesus as a Torah-observant Jew 'who conforms to the principal religious practices of his nation' (p. 13): frequenting synagogues on Shabbat, keeping Passover, honoring the Temple-tax, wearing *tzitzit*. Passages on Jesus' teaching about the Law (as opposed to his behaviour)—mandated sacrifices, Sabbath and food laws—Vermes subjects to careful analysis, bringing pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls and rabbinic writings to bear. He concludes that Jesus was most concerned with religious-ethical questions—which in later chapters he presents as a concentration on private prayer and individual piety—but that these were pronounced as expressions of, not attacks against, esteem for Torah (see also p. 148).

Chapters 3 and 4 ('Jesus the Teacher', 'Proverbs and Parallels') will be most familiar to readers of *Jesus the Jew*. Chapter 5, 'Jesus and the Kingdom', presents Vermes's interpretation of apocalyptic eschatology and Jesus' idiosyncratic (or 'possibly unique', as he later says, p. 190) expression of it. I shall say more on this below. Chapter 6 ('Abba, Father': The God of Jesus'), besides carefully analysing the New Testament passages where Jesus speaks of or to God as 'Father', once again demolishes the perennially popular and absolutely untenable opinion, most associated with Joachim Jeremias, that the Aramaic 'Abba' signals something unique, intimate and infantile in Jesus' address to God. Between this fine chapter, and James Barr's excellent 1988 article in *JTS*, can we hope to have seen the last of this position? Alas, probably not (see pp. 181–82 and n. 39).

Chapter 7, 'Jesus the Religious Man', further develops Vermes's views on Jesus' eschatology, and seeks to unite this to Jesus' ethical teaching, his rootedness in a spirituality of *teshuvah* and *emunah*, and his call to live in the *imitatio dei* (see here the parallels between *bSotah* 14a, p. 202, and Mt. 25:35 f., p. 205). Finally, Chapter 8, 'The Religion of Jesus and Christianity', surveys the chasm that widened between what Jesus lived and preached and what the Gentile church eventually wrought. Paul and John, not Jesus, stand at the fountain-head of Christianity, concludes Vermes; and he closes with the rhetorically and theologically powerful observation that the greatest religious challenge to traditional Christianity 'does not come from atheism, or agnosticism, or sheer materialism, but from within, from the three ancient witnesses, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, through whom speaks the chief challenger, Jesus the Jew' (p. 215).

This is a vigorous and self-confident study, its picture of Jesus and his religious

convictions clear and appealing. Inevitably, as one who has struggled with this same material, I must hesitate or criticize at certain points.

My two chief criticisms are linked: I think Vermes's emphasis on Jesus as an 'existential teacher' (p. 137 and *passim*) concerned with individual ethical effort sits poorly with other facts that we have about him, especially the Temple tantrum (which I, as Vermes, take to be historical) and his death at Rome's hand. It also obscures the trajectory of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology which passes through Jesus and Paul to the Christian communities of antiquity.

To the first point: Vermes's existential preacher ends by emphasizing 'the inner, not the outward, aspects of the Law' as had the prophets before him (p. 195); he calls individuals to commit totally to seeking 'the Kingdom' (p. 196); he preaches something awfully close to the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man (cf. 204 bottom). This is good liberal Protestant stuff, demolished most recently by E. P. Sanders in *Jesus and Judaism*. Vermes, well aware of Sanders's work, remains drawn to this liberal Protestant Jesus, the hero of Buber and Klausner as well. Evidently, one need not be a liberal Protestant oneself to find this Jesus appealing.

Why does Rome concern itself with such a teacher? Vermes does not directly address this question in his book, as he acknowledges (p. x), but his reconstruction would not really allow him to. The villains of the piece, implicitly, remain the priests, who take umbrage with Jesus' 'affray in the Temple' (p. x; cf. 207, where Jews seem to do the mocking at the crucifixion. Over Pesach?). Why did he overturn tables in the Temple court? 'The unholy atmosphere reigning in the merchants' quarter' provoked him (p. 14; again, cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, esp. 61–76). There must have been plenty of getting and spending in the Temple's court just before Passover: how could it have been otherwise? What would Jesus (or Vermes) expect? Yet even if Jesus found this offensive, and even if the priests were the primary agents in his arrest—I take neither point—could they not have simply incarcerated him until after the holiday? Why the hearing before Pilate, the rushed execution? Too many details point to Rome, I think, to support this reconstruction of events.

Vermes's vision of Jesus' existential ethics, to my mind, likewise obscures his view of eschatology. Now Vermes never had to fight his way through throngs of flying saucer cultists and Melanesian islanders to get to the gospels. I did. My view of the social workings of eschatology might accordingly be exactly that—too social. But his Jesus' Kingdom is so focused on the individual, and to that degree so emptied of social and historical consequence, that it evaporates as a concept. What are Jesus and his followers actually *doing*, one day at a time, as they 'search for the Kingdom'? Is the Kingdom not something that *comes*, not something simply existentially and ethically created? (Here one sees the continuing influence of Dodd, Vermes's critique notwithstanding.) Indeed, says Vermes, true eschatological consciousness dissolves the future and emphasizes the present, 'not from a communal but from a personal perspective' (pp. 189–91). I wonder. I would see eschatological consciousness as community-building and intensely forward-looking: the present moment might be a crisis, but that is precisely because the future impinges so immediately. (See esp. J. Gager, *Kingdom and Community* (1975), not cited here; on Paul within this context, W. Meeks, *First Urban Christians* (1983), esp. ch. 6; more recently, my essay in *JTS* 1991.)

Other disagreements: I would see Paul as closer to Jesus, and both closer to traditional apocalyptic strains within Judaism, than Vermes would seem to allow. Also, Paul's view of Torah is much less consistent, hence much more positive, than Vermes's summary statement would suggest (p. 212); and the meaning of 'the Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16) is contested. Most Pauline scholars, too, would hesitate to take 2 Thessalonians as Paul's (cf. p. 193). Vermes, further, sees subsequent Christian eschatology dying an early death (p. 190, dying flames and lip-service): in fact, energetic millenarianism—

the belief that Christ is about to return soon to establish his Kingdom—is one of the most paradoxically long-lived convictions of the Church; and, if we can speak of normative beliefs in an age of so much variety, one that characterized Christians High Church and Low from the first century on well past the fall of the Empire in the West—the best efforts of Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine notwithstanding.

Finally, a small point, but one that is to a patrologist what the *abba*-business, so nicely done in by Vermes, is to the New Testament scholar: Origen is the last person in the early church whom we should expect to take anything literally. Did he really, in 'an excess of ascetical enthusiasm', castrate himself (p. 198, n. 16)? See H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, p. 68.

But these are the objections of an enthusiast. Vermes has produced an erudite and elegant essay whose value, especially in light of the author's peerless command of Scrolls material and Aramaic and Hebrew sources, will enrich and aid the serious student in quest of the Jesus of history. And I can only hope that the authority with which he states his judgment that Jesus' Judaism stands closer to that of the ancient hasidim and the rabbis of the Mishnah than to that of his nearer contemporaries, the covenanters of Qumran, will spare us all further silliness about Jesus and the Scrolls.

Finally, let me close in praise of Pam Vermes, ל"ד. The author states in his preface that much of the substance and the style of his work has been the fruit of their common collaboration, and that *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* was no exception. We have her also, then, to thank for the great clarity, learning, and humanistic spirit of this essay:

תנו לה מפרי ידיה ויהללוה בשערים מעשיה (Prov. 31:31)

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P. W. VAN DER HORST, *Essays on the Jewish World and on Early Christianity* (Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus XIV). Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1990. 255 pp.

Of the fourteen essays in this volume, nine are reprints, three of them from this journal, and five others are either new or translations from the Dutch. Those not published in English before are on Pseudo-Phocylides and the New Testament, biblical women in Pseudo-Philo, the Samaritan Diaspora, the Aphrodisias inscription and Nimrod in post-biblical literature. The distinction of van der Horst's contribution to the study of Hellenistic Judaism is such that this collection may be signalled as a major resource. He has an eye for what is unnoticed and fruitful, seemingly a little out-of-the-way, but, by the end of his investigations, demonstrably important. This is certainly true of the ethical maxims of Pseudo-Phocylides, van der Horst's original subject of research. And it is equally true of one of his more recent concerns, the evidence, some of it uncertain, for the Samaritan dispersion: this is evidence which ought not to be overlooked in studying the Jewish diaspora, and one might wish for more on the subject.

Van der Horst has long been alert to women's history, and he makes perceptive observations on the extraordinary role assigned to some female figures in the *L.A.B.* It should be noted that the women in that work, along with some of those in Josephus' *Antiquities*, are now the subject of a book-length study by Cheryl Anne Brown (*No Longer be Silent*, 1992). Van der Horst has also been one of the few scholars to deal with Bernadette Brooten's women leaders in the ancient synagogue, to whose conclusions he is sympathetic.

An interesting short introduction explains lines of development in his thinking; it groups the essays helpfully, and places them within a New Testament agenda and, even more, within a context of current scholarly debate on Judaism. There are valuable comments on the controversy about the origins of Jewish mysticism, to which the papers on Moses' vision in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel, and on the last three chapters of the Testament of Job, make their own particular contribution.

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P. W. VAN DER HORST, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 B.C.E.–700 C.E.)*. Pharos, Kampen, 1991. 179 pp. Fl. 44.90/\$29.75.

This introductory handbook will be welcomed by all students of ancient Jewish history. The author surveys over a thousand Jewish funerary inscriptions from Palestine and from the Diaspora in the late Antique period. Considering the evidence as a whole, he assesses the languages of the inscriptions (ch. 2), their terminology, formula and motifs (chs. 3–4). The next chapters deal with Jewish professions, civic and communal functions (ch. 6), the status of women (ch. 7), and notions of death and afterlife (ch. 8)—thus indicating how much about the life and culture of the Jews of late Antiquity can be inferred from these inscriptions. The final chapter (ch. 10) supplies the reader with a small but informative selection of epitaphs, edited with translation and brief commentary.

Rather than an original study, the author presents in this book a balanced account of the current state of epigraphic and historical research. I would praise him for his caution and soundness of judgment. Scholarly debates, concerning for instance the status of 'women leaders' in synagogues (pp. 105–9), are presented in a fair and impartial manner. The extent to which the Jews appear to have drawn on pagan epitaphic motifs, as against exhibiting distinctively Jewish traits, is carefully weighed out (in favour of the former, especially in Leontopolis; chs. 3–4). The method suggested for identifying inscriptions as Jewish (pp. 16–18) may appear rather arbitrary, but it is difficult to think of any workable alternative. With much lucidity, the author draws frequent attention to the problems inherent in statistical data or, more generally, to the problems of using inscriptions as historical 'evidence', for instance in the context of demography (ch. 5—a speculative, but nevertheless interesting chapter).

Regional variation is frequently emphasised by the author, even though his thematic approach conveys at times a misleading impression of uniformity and consistency (for instance, with reference to communal functions or titles such as that of the *archon*, in Diaspora communities—pp. 89–98). It may be argued, indeed, that regional variation is likely to constitute a most productive area of study, for whereas the date or authorship of inscriptions can often be contentious, their place of origin is usually, for obvious reasons, unquestionable. However, the author should have taken into account that in sites such as Beth Shearim, where many Diaspora Jews were buried, inscriptions may often be of uncertain place of origin and unrepresentative of local, Palestinian Jewry (see pp. 118–22, 130 and 151–3).

As to the general scope of this work, the author specifies in his preface (p. 7) that his work concerns itself exclusively with the text of the inscriptions, and ignores pictorial representations which often went together with them. The study of palaeography and of onomastics has also been left out, as these topics are adequately treated in other, recent publications (p. 7). It is regrettable, however, that the author does not even refer