

Reviews

James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, UK, Eerdmans, 2012, 202pp ISBN 978-0802866790, USD 25.

Reviewed by Anne E. Gardner

As the title suggests, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, discusses aspects of the relationship between the former collection of texts and the latter. It does so in seven chapters, six of which had their genesis as individual addresses delivered in the series, Speaker's Lectures at Oxford University in 2009.

Chapter One, entitled 'The "Biblical" Scrolls and their Implications', enumerates the copies found at Qumran of all works later recognised as belonging to the Bible with the exception of Esther. It is duly pointed out that only 1QIsa^a is complete and the copies of other Biblical works are fragmentary. Nevertheless VanderKam adds that the finds at Qumran include portions of Greek language translations of the Pentateuch, three targums (one of Leviticus; two of Job), as well as quotes from Biblical works that appear in the Pesharim and in Tefillin and Mezuzot, all of which supplement our knowledge of the early Biblical texts. VanderKam also lists the copies of Biblical works found at Masada, Murabba'at, Nahal Hever, Se'elim and Sdeir. His main interest though is in the implications of the evidence from the ancient sites for what they impart to scholars about the history of the textual tradition. He stresses the importance of the texts as the oldest original language copies in existence and the fact that they were transmitted with great care. He shows that the Qumran texts often illuminate variants between the MT, SP and OG but also include interpretive insertions. Such new and expanded versions of Biblical texts can demonstrate textual fluidity, indicating a multiplicity of textual traditions thus going beyond the older scholarly notion of three versions. The variations are not apparent in the later texts from the sites other than Qumran; rather they stand in line with the MT, suggesting a greater uniformity, for whatever reason, by the end of the first century CE.

Chapter Two entitled, 'Commentary on Older Scripture in the Scrolls' examines the interpretation of older texts in the scrolls and/or where the writers use older texts as support. The extent of such links is underlined by Vanderkam when he says "the Qumran scrolls are scripturally-saturated literature, whether through explicit citation, paraphrase, allusion or commentary" (p.26). He points out that this accords with the instructions for continuous study given in IQS6, 6-8 but warns that the interpretive techniques in the scrolls are those of the time and place of the authors and thus very different to modern ones. He draws the reader's attention to the existence of the interpretation of older texts within scripture itself e.g. Chronicles reinterprets Samuel-Kings as well as other works; parts of the Pentateuch are re-presentations

of older law codes and in Daniel 9 Jeremiah's prophecy of the Exile lasting seventy years is interpreted through the medium of other scriptural texts. Beyond scripture, VanderKam points to 1 Enoch, Jubilees and Aramaic Levi, (fragments of all have been found at Qumran) which reinterpret and elucidate scriptural passages. The continuous Pesharim e.g. Commentary on Habbakuk (1QpHab) interpret the events and people of the time of the prophet concerned to the events and people of the time of the author of the Peshar. VanderKam says that in the case of the Habbakuk Peshar it is clear that the author looked closely at the Book of Habbakuk for a past tense in Habbakuk is related in the Peshar to the actions of the Wicked Priest and a future tense to what will happen to the Wicked Priest. VanderKam also discusses other forms of interpretation. For instance in Commentary on Genesis A (4Q252) col 4 there is a collection of Biblical references involving the keyword "Amalek". Some are allusions, some quotations but there is also a prediction and a fulfilment. Some texts e.g. 4Q 158 and 4 Q 265 wrestle with what they see as a problem or difficulty in a particular scriptural passage which they "overcome" through reference to other scriptural passages. A thematic peshar like 11Q Melchizedek evidences the steps that led to an eschatological interpretation of the figure of Gen 14:18-20. This was accomplished through reference to scriptural passages associated with the function of Melchizedek in Genesis 14 i.e. the release of captives and the restoration of prophecy.

Chapter Three entitled, 'Authoritative Literature according to the Scrolls' explores the question of whether there was such a collection and, if so, which works belonged to it. Caveats precede the discussion: the word "canon" is to be avoided for it was first applied in the fourth century CE to a Christian collection of scriptures; it must not be assumed that there was a three-fold division of authoritative works for that was not established until some point in the Rabbinic period; where Law and Prophets are mentioned, it should not be assumed that the works in these categories are identical to the works in the later divisions of the MT. Nevertheless it is clear that in both the Scrolls and the NT (considered for the sake of comparison) there are references to "what is written" and both collections quote or allude to scriptural works. The corollary is that there were esteemed written works which had authority for a particular community or communities and other works which did not (e.g. the books of Maccabees). It is questioned whether all communities agree which ones were authoritative and how they described such works in collective terms. By mid-first century CE Paul uses *ἡ γραφή* to refer to works in the Torah and Prophets (Gal 3:8; 4:30). Law and Prophets are also referred to in Rom 3:21; Matt 5:17-18; 22:40; Acts 28:23; 1 QS 1, 1-3; 8, 15-16. However, it is possible a three-fold division appears in the Prologue to Ben Sira (Law, Prophets and others); in Philo's *Contemplative Life* 3,25; in Josephus *Contra Apionem* 1,38-42 (where he talks of twenty two books: five books of Moses; 13

Prophets) and 4 hymns and in 4 Q 394-99 which some scholars have claimed refers to three or four categories, although the text has been reconstructed. Although not stated as such by VanderKam, it is clear that there is no absolute certainty as to the exact composition or arrangement of an authoritative collection in the Second Temple period. As he points out though, at Qumran there are several indications of what was revered: copies of all Biblical works, except Esther; citations to Isaiah, Ezekiel and David's Psalms as being from God; the use of the phrase, "as it is written" with reference to Exodus to Deuteronomy; some prophets, Daniel, Psalms and Proverbs and possibly Jubilees and Aramaic Levi; commentaries on Biblical books (Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, Habbakuk, Nahum, Zephaniah and Psalms) or on parts of Biblical books (Genesis, Jeremiah, Ezekiel). VanderKam thinks Enoch may also have been authoritative at Qumran and in the NT (cf Jude).

Chapter 4 entitled, 'New Copies of Old Texts' provides a review of copies or fragments of works found at Qumran in Aramaic or Hebrew but which were known from elsewhere, usually in another language. The works concerned, which all relate to the tradition, are Jubilees, Aramaic Levi, the Book of Giants, The Wisdom of Ben Sira, Tobit, Enoch, the Epistle of Jeremiah and Psalms 151, 154, 155. In some cases, the finds have laid to rest scholarly debate about the original language of a particular work or helped to clarify the likely period in which a text was composed. The earliest fragment of Jubilees, for instance, has been dated to c. 125 BCE, indicating that its original composition was no later than the second century BCE; AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) dating of 4Q 213 (Aramaic Levi) is second century BCE so the autograph may well have been composed earlier (VanderKam speculates that it originated in the third century BCE). It expresses a view of Levi parallel to that which appears in Jubilees for both works praise his action against the men of Shechem in Genesis 34 for he thereby protects communal purity. Fragments of all sections of 1 Enoch were found, with the exception of the Similitudes. Two fragments, one from the Book of the Watchers and One from the Astronomical Book were copied c.200BCE indicating a likely date of origin in the third century BCE. Small fragments of a Greek translation of the Epistle of Enoch (chapters 91-107) dated to c.100BCE indicate that the usual dating of the Aramaic version to the late second century BCE is likely to be too late. The very existence of a translation though testifies to the popularity of the work. The find of Psalms 151 (attested in the Greek Bible) and 154 and 155 (known from Syriac witnesses) indicates that the tradition was not fixed, nor the order of Psalms for 151 appears at the end; 154 after 145 and 155 after 144 and before 142! Not all the works considered in this chapter can be adduced as having special theological value for the Qumran community e.g. Ben Sira.

Chapter Five entitled, 'Groups and Group Controversies in the Scrolls' investigates whether the Essenes, Sadducees and Pharisees that are mentioned in Josephus

and other ancient literature appear in the Scrolls. Here difficulties arise for the Scrolls do not name the groups, although it is clear that they indicate, in cryptic language, groups other than themselves. It is not even clear what the community called their own group. Scholars have theorised though that they should be identified with the Essenes because their views and actions appear similar and their location at Qumran is likely to reflect Pliny the Elder's description (Nat. Hist 5.73) of the location of the Essenes as being close to En-gedi. However, there has been some dispute about the derivation of the name "Essenes" which appears in Josephus in a Greek form and in Pliny in a Latin one. There are four suggestions: that it is derived from 1) an Eastern Aramaic adjective אִיסָה meaning "holy" 2) the Aramaic אִיסָה meaning "healer" 3) the Hebrew הַסִּידִים or the Aramaic הַסִּידִין meaning "pious ones" 4) the Hebrew עֲשֵׂי הַתּוֹרָה meaning "doers of the law". VanderKam favours the fourth for linguistic and literary reasons. Indeed it is the only one of the four to appear within the scrolls as a self-designation and so is the most probable. In the Scrolls "Ephraim and Manasseh" appear as enemies of the community and scholars have theorised that Manasseh is a cipher for the Sadducees and Ephraim for the Pharisees. VanderKam rightly points out the weakness of the former identification in that "Manasseh" appears only 12 times in the Scrolls and the evidence is confusing in that in the case of the purity of liquids, the Sadducean view (cf m.Yad 4:6-7) is similar to that of the community (4QMMT B 55-58) but the Sadducean view of life after death stands in opposition. In the section on the Pharisees, VanderKam reviews passages (Damascus Document, Hodayot, Peshar Nahum) where "(seek) smooth things" occurs for that is what is predicated of Ephraim. In common with the majority of scholars he sees "smooth things" as indicating seeking an easy road in legal terms. He thinks there may be a pun between חֲלֻקוֹת (smooth things) and הַלְכוֹת (legal rulings). The Hodayot mentions "their folly concerning their feast days" while in Peshar Nahum the "seekers of smooth things" advised King Demetrius to enter Jerusalem at a time between Antiochus and the advent of the Romans. As punishment, the "furious young lion" (identified by scholars as Alexander Jannaeus) hung them. However, despite linking what is said in Peshar Nahum with passages in Josephus, scholars do not have any definite proof that the "seekers of smooth things" are the Pharisees. VanderKam readily admits the weakness of the identification although is inclined to accept it. What he does not do, however, is provide any information about scholarly theories as to the derivation of the name "Pharisees" which he does in the case of the Essenes (in detail) and the Sadducees (in passing). VanderKam wishes that works written by the Sadducees and Pharisees could be found but, whether or not that eventuates, it is clear that further research on the enemies in the Scrolls is required. This links, of course, with the history of the community which is notoriously difficult to pinpoint and which VanderKam does not address in the present work.

Chapter Six entitled, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament Gospels' is the first of two chapters that show how the Scrolls illuminate aspects of the NT which grew out of a Jewish context, although in certain respects there are major differences between the two collections of texts. Five topics are addressed in the present chapter: Messiahs; Works of the Messiah: Scriptural Interpretation; Legal Matters and Rebuking. Under the heading "Messiahs", VanderKam points out that whether or not Jesus claimed the title, he is hailed as "Messiah" (e.g. Matt 16:16). It is known from the NT that the Pharisees expected a Messiah, son of David (Matt 22:41-42) and the Psalms of Solomon 17-18 express the same belief. It is clear from Josephus that messianic fervour was current for he mentions a number of would-be messiahs. There is scholarly argument over whether one or two messiahs were expected by the community of the Scrolls - one of Aaron and one of Israel - for 1QS 9:9-10 has messiah in the plural although it is singular in the Damascus Document (CD 12:23; 14:19; 19:10). The Messiah of Israel is also called the "Branch of David" and "Prince of the Congregation". The Messiah(s) is mentioned also in the context of the "last days" (probably in 4Q 285,7 as well as in the Community Rule). In the latter text bread and wine which the priest will bless and the Messiah extend his hand over are cited. Bread and wine, of course, are familiar to Christians from the Last Supper and in Hebrews, Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. As far as the "works of the Messiah are concerned, VanderKam draws attention to 4QS 521 which has "messiah" in the first line and then later lists miracles drawing from the same Isaianic passages (Isa 61:1-2; Isaiah 35) as Lk 7:19-23 which cites miracles as proof of Jesus' messiahship. Interestingly, both the passage from the Scrolls and Luke include "resurrection of the dead" in their lists although that feature does not appear in either of the passages from Isaiah. VanderKam though differentiates between 4QS521 and Lk 7:19-23, saying that in the former the miracles are performed by God, thus implying that the Gospels would not agree. One wonders whether the theology behind the performance of the miracles in the NT is really different for its implication is that God works through the messiah - who for the writers is Jesus. Even though they used the same scriptural texts, VanderKam points out that both the authors of the Scrolls and NT interpreted those texts in the light of their own communities e.g. "way" in Isa 40:3 is understood to apply in 1Q58 to the study of the law by the community who were situated in the wilderness but the gospels relate it to John the Baptist in the Judaean desert and his urging of people to repent. Topics of debate in the case of legal matters appear in the New Testament and obscurities in Gospel passages e.g. Mth 12:9-14 with its mention of pulling a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath can be illuminated (although not paralleled) by reference to early Rabbinic and DSS passages. The regulations for rebuking a fellow Christian in Matthew 18 have much in common with those cited in 1QS 5:2; 6:1. Both sets of texts draw

their inspiration from Leviticus 19 and all three reflect the necessity of preserving harmony in society.

Chapter 7 is entitled 'The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of Paul'. As with the New Testament Gospels, VanderKam says the DSS provide a backlight for Acts and Paul. He provides a few examples only. The holding of possessions in common appears in Acts 4:2-37 and in less detail in Acts 2:42-47. Amongst the Scrolls 1QS 6:19-22 regulates that by the third year of membership an individual's property will be merged with that of the community. VanderKam demonstrates that in 1QS the holding of property in common was based on Deut 6:5 ("You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your might) for "might" has the implication of "wealth" in a number of Targumic and other texts (as it can in the Hebrew Bible, although that is not recognised by VanderKam). He thinks that Acts 4:32 explicates Deut 6:5 in a similar way. As seen in earlier chapters of the work under review, the DSS community saw ancient prophecies actualised in their own time and this happens also in Acts 2:15-17 where the pouring out of the spirit is seen as a fulfilment of a passage in Joel. In another example, VanderKam points out that there are a number of allusions to the story of Moses on Mt. Sinai in Acts 1 and then in Acts 2 Pentecost is the setting. This he relates to the association of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) with Moses and the making of the covenant on Mt Sinai in the Book of Jubilees and the Scrolls. He points out that the book of Exodus pictures Israel as a special entity at Sinai ("answered as one"; "treasured possession") and as a corollary Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer 41 contrasts the dissension of Israel on its journey through the wilderness with its unity at Mt. Sinai. According to Exodus then Israel was an ideal society when it received the Torah as were the first Christians in Acts when they received the Spirit. VanderKam turns next to Paul. He says that the people of the Scrolls believed the secrets of ancient prophecies had been revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness by God (1QpHab 7:1-5) and that Christians thought that the secrets were revealed through Jesus (Lk 24:44-45). Both the Scrolls and Paul cite Hab 2:4b "the righteous shall live by their faith/fullness". Their interpretations of how it applied in their own time were different. Further, VanderKam indicates that there are a variety of scholarly views as to how such interpretations should be understood for there is no agreement about the implication of the Hebrew אמונה translated as faith/fullness. 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is also considered. It has no clear connection with what precedes it and it includes six words that do not occur elsewhere in either Paul or the NT. However, VanderKam refers to Fitzmyer's work which shows that the passage contains a number of elements that appear in the Scrolls. The phrase, "works of the law" which occurs in the Pauline letters is also in the Scrolls and VanderKam provides a discussion of whether the phrase encompasses the whole law or parts of it.