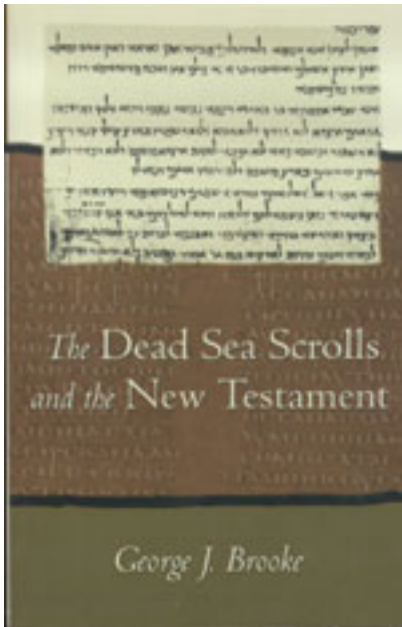


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Brooke, George J.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament

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The publication of this collection of sixteen articles by George J. Brooke, Rylands Professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Manchester, must be highly appreciated for several reasons. The author is known as one of the foremost experts in Qumran studies. He is a member of the editorial team of the DJD edition and has published extensively on Qumran issues, with a focus on aspects of scriptural interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism.

Since the discovery of the first Qumran Scrolls, the scholarly reflection of the relevance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for New Testament interpretation or—as Brooke might say—of the mutual relationship between the Qumran library and the New Testament has been the primary concern of a minority of New Testament specialists, such as Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, or Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, who were also trained in reading Qumran texts and fragments, albeit primarily the texts that had been published in the 1950s and 1960s. However, as the field of Qumran studies has increasingly become a closed area of specialists, with only a few New Testament scholars participating, the issue of the relevance of the Scrolls for New Testament research has lost its prominent place in scholarship. This is in some way due to the texts itself, since the release of the bulk of fragments since 1991 has led to the conclusion that, for example, legal issues, were

much more prominent in the texts from the Qumran library than eschatology, dualism, messianism, and the other topics that had been discussed in comparison with New Testament ideas during the early periods of Qumran research. Therefore, the main topics of Qumran research have changed in some way, even though the public debate continues to be primarily interested in questions such as whether Jesus, John the Baptist, or even Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel had Qumran contacts or whether some aspects of New Testament teaching have been drawn from the religious ideas of the Qumran community. With regard to those issues, serious research has arrived at a very cautious position that differs markedly from some of the early hypotheses and from the kind of speculations sometimes uttered in more popular publications. On the other hand, the more recent developments in Qumran studies have opened up a great wealth of new issues to be considered by Qumran *and* New Testament specialists. If it is true that the Qumran library is not only the heritage of a marginal “sect” but in spite of its selectiveness represents a much wider range of the literary production of Palestinian Judaism in the period between the third century B.C.E. and the first century C.E., the Scrolls gain much more importance for all aspects of the history of Jewish literature and religion within that period, *including* early Christianity and New Testament texts. From that perspective, many more aspects of language, literary genre, scriptural interpretation, and particular ideas can be considered where the Scrolls can illuminate individual passages or phenomena of the New Testament. But, as Brooke aptly states, the relevance of the relationship between Qumran and the New Testament can also be seen the other way: as a part or at least an offspring of early Jewish literature, New Testament texts and traditions can also illuminate some of the texts from the Judean desert and peculiar problems of their interpretation. Such a “mutual illumination” of both areas of literature is the perspective of the present publication, and here we can discern the fertility of the fact that an author who is really familiar with all aspects of Qumran studies enters the discussion on Qumran and the New Testament from the “other” side, the perspective of Qumran studies.

The sixteen articles were originally published between 1989 and 2003 and are now partly revised and updated (but paragraphs and footnote numbering have been kept from the originals so that the reader can easily locate the corresponding sections in the earlier publications). They are arranged in three parts: the first five essays deal with more general issues, six articles explore the value of particular scrolls for illuminating some of their New Testament counterparts, and five articles try to develop a perspective of mutual illumination of Qumran passages and particular texts from the four Gospels.

A brief introduction (xv–xxii) gives the outline of Brooke’s overall view of the Qumran library and of Qumran research: the 850–900 manuscripts that have been preserved fragmentarily form a “Jewish religious library with particular religious concerns and

ideological tendencies” (xvi). Brook adheres to the view that the people who lived at Qumran, who used the texts and brought them into the caves for various purposes, can “almost certainly be associated with the Essenes in some form” (xv). Speculations on any direct links between Qumran and the New Testament “cannot be sustained” (xviii). Rather, the links “are more likely to be indirect”; therefore, “those using the scrolls to illuminate the writings of the New Testament should be as much concerned with the differences as with the similarities” (xviii). Consequently, it should be recognized that “the value of the Dead Sea Scrolls for better appreciation of the Jewish background of much in the New Testament does not lie exclusively in particular matters of organization or messianic belief but much more broadly in the ways in which Jews contemporary with Jesus and Paul constructed their own self-understandings and identities through highly intricate and sophisticated interpretations of inherited traditions” (xxii). As the author aptly states, this “makes comparison both more complicated as well as in the end more fruitful” (xviii).

Since the author’s concerns are not only directed from New Testament issues but at least equally from the interpretative problems of the Qumran texts, he can conclude the introduction by stating that those dealing with exegetical details preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls “would do well not to omit the evidence of the New Testament in their search of contemporary Jewish literature which might help in the explanation of challenging fragmentary passages” (xxii). If the questions are also posed in this way, the author can see “the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament ... entering a new era of *mutual illumination*” (xxii, italics added).

More general issues are dealt with in the five articles of part 1: “The Qumran Scrolls and the Study of the New Testament” (3–18); “Jesus, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Scrolls Scholarship” (19–26); “The ‘Canon within the Canon’ at Qumran and in the New Testament” (27–51); “Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Scrolls and the New Testament” (52–69); and “Shared Intertextual Interpretations in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament” (70–94).

I can skip the short article on Jesus, which only sketches different patterns scholars have used to describe the relationship between Jesus and the Scrolls but does not give any clear indication of how the relation could be established more precisely. Much more important are the other four articles.

In the opening essay the author gives a short account of the history of Qumran studies, adopting Roland de Vaux’s periodization of the Qumran site for the description of the periods of the discussion of the Qumran texts and their relevance for New Testament scholarship. Since the release of the *Temple Scroll* in 1977 and even more since the

subsequent publication of 4QMMT and other legal texts, halakic topics became prominent in Qumran research, and the “largely Christian reading of the scrolls” that dominated the first period of research “no longer seemed so self-evident” (10). In the numerous fragmentary texts published since 1991, many new textual parallels could be discovered, but in most cases the differences appeared to be far greater than the similarities. Yet, “the closer a New Testament passage and a Qumran scroll seem to be, the more likely is it that both merely share a feature of Palestinian Judaism common at the time” (13). Consequently, “the scrolls have helped us to see the Jewishness of much of the New Testament at all levels, but they have not provided the source material scholars so often seek” (13). Moreover, all the “so-called parallels with the Jesus tradition come predominantly from nonsectarian texts and so say little or nothing about Jesus’ relationship with Qumranians or Essenes” (14). Therefore, those nonsectarian texts might be the most important part of the library. They illuminate the kinds of Judaism John the Baptist, Jesus, and the earliest community were a part of (16). What was stated first in 1999 is also valid for 2005: the full range of exegetical traditions preserved in the Scrolls is yet to be appreciated. But in future research we should “not look for literary dependence but for intertextual sensitivity as the better understanding of one text illuminates another” (16).

Equally important is the insightful article on the “canon within the canon,” that is, the parts of Scripture considered most important within the Qumran texts. Using various methods of inquiry, the author establishes Qumran’s “canon within the canon” as being formed by the biblical books of Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms. They were preserved in greater numbers than any other book, they were quoted and alluded to in the main “sectarian” texts, and they also provided the patterns for other compositions in which these “basic” texts were rewritten, echoed, or commented on. Furthermore, the author asks why those books were so significant and for which purpose they were used. The reception of Genesis and pre-Sinaitic exodus traditions provided the link with the created order and the relation between the community’s *Endzeit* experience and the mythological *Urzeit* (36–37). From Deuteronomy came the perspective on Israel’s history and the law for the land, even the tendency of toughening the laws; it also became “a key indicator for how the hidden law should be revealed in the community” (40). The Prophets, especially Isaiah and the Twelve, were read and commented as being informative for the covenanters’ experiences. The same is true for the Psalms, which were also seen as prophecy; moreover, they inspired the composition of numerous poetic and liturgical texts. The brief comparison of this “canon within the canon” with what could be called “canon within the canon” in the New Testament shows similarities and—even more—differences: New Testament authors cite roughly the same books most frequently, and the prominence of these traditions seems to come from the earliest layers of the New

Testament. The Prophets and the Psalms are also read as prophetic texts waiting for fulfillment. However, the New Testament use of, for example, Deuteronomy or Isaiah is much more selective and focused on a number of messianic proof texts, and the content adopted is characteristically different, due to the universalistic tendency of early Christianity.

Some of the differences are further unfolded in the programmatic article on biblical interpretation. Here the author compares the different manner of interpreting biblical law, the Prophets, narratives, and poetry in Qumran and the New Testament. Most characteristic is the different attitude toward the law. Here “the Qumranic evidence suggests an attitude to Scripture which leads to its extension,” with the prescriptions being interpreted in a rigorous and hard-line way, so that “the Law is all-pervasive, it affects every area of life and can be extended so to do” (58). On the other hand, “the New Testament suggests an attitude which leads to a minimalist approach” (57), so that the author can even state: “the majority perspective on the Law ... is that it is a problem in itself” (58). Of course, such a statement is quite general and not equally true for all New Testament traditions and authors. In terms of exegetical methods, the Qumran texts and the New Testament have much in common, being parts of the same Jewish heritage. The author gives examples for altering the scriptural text, juxtaposition of two or more texts, catchword association, the awareness of the context of the scriptural text cited, and so forth. From the exegetical subtleties in the Qumran texts, New Testament scholarship can see “how much was common in early Judaism’s handling of Scripture” (67–68) in order to gain a better understanding of the transmission and interpretation of Scripture in New Testament texts as well. Especially in the field of scriptural interpretation there are many possibilities for the mutual illumination of early Christian and Qumran texts.

A few examples of such an enterprise are given in the essay on shared intertextual interpretations. Here, the author briefly discusses the reception of 2 Sam 7 and Ps 2 in 4Q174 and Heb 1, the use of Isa 35 and 61 and Ps 146 in 4Q521 and Luke 7:18–23, of Isa 61 and Lev 25 in 11Q13 and Luke 4, of Ezek 1 and 10 in 4Q385 and Rev 4, of Ezek 37 and Lev 26 in 4Q119, 11Q19, and 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 and, finally, of Ps 82 in 11Q13 and John 10:34. The shared exegetical combinations in texts found at Qumran and the New Testament are remarkable, but the author also hints at the differences, which should not be neglected. There is no reason to suspect any direct literary relationship. Rather, we should allow the conclusion that “some scriptural texts ... readily suggest their own intertextual spheres” (93). So the shared intertextual interpretations can only demonstrate “that much in the New Testament is the common stock of eschatologically oriented first-century Palestinian Judaism” (94). New Testament scholarship that all too often looks “to Alexandria or Athens to explain the context of the form and content of much of the New

Testament” (68) would do well to recognize the deep Jewishness even of the later traditions of the New Testament.

The second part provides six studies on the value of particular Qumran texts for New Testament interpretation: “The Temple Scroll and the New Testament” (97–114); “Levi and the Levites in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament” (115–39); “The *Apocryphon of Levi*^{b?} and the Messianic Servant High Priest” (140–57), “Luke-Acts and the Qumran Scrolls: The Case of MMT” (158–76); “The *Commentary on Genesis A* and the New Testament” (177–94), “From Qumran to Corinth: Embroidered Allusions to Women’s Authority (195–214). All these articles are full of learning. Most of them provide valuable overviews on the various aspects that that can be compared, even if not all of the subtleties of intertextual relations will convince New Testament scholarship. Here I begin with the more problematic articles and end with the most important one.

The article on the *Temple Scroll* briefly discusses the relevance of that Scroll as a witness for the application on Deut 21:22 on crucifixion in pre-Christian times and as a Jewish parallel for Jesus’ view on divorce as expressed in Mark 10:1–12. The other parts of the article discuss some alleged relations with the Gospels of Mark and John, but the suggestions made there are less convincing: in some way the *Temple Scroll* may confirm that even David could be used as a halakic example (as in Mark 2:25-6). But the use of Jacob traditions in John (cf. John 1:51; 4:12) can be understood quite well without the speculation that members of the Johannine community were linked to Levites who had formerly “thought that their aspirations for Bethel had been realized in Jerusalem” and then came to “recognize that their desire for the temple was misplaced” (113). The construction of the history of certain groups behind the text of the Gospel cannot be sustained on the basis of the traditions adopted, and neither the *Temple Scroll* nor any other Second Temple text can give enough evidence to reconstruct such a history of a subgroup within the Johannine community.

Similar methodological problems are posed by the article on Levi and the Levites. Here the author provides a valuable account of the numerous texts referring to Levi, Qahat, or Amram or presenting traditions linked to Levi and the Levites. On the other hand, the discussion of the New Testament references to the tribe of Levi (Rev 7:4–8), the Levites (Heb 7), to individual Levites such as Barnabas or to other individuals named Levi are not sufficiently significant to allow any conclusions about relations to Levitical groups in early Christianity. Thus, for instance, when the author suggests, that the mention of Levites in John 1:19, where “priests and Levites from Jerusalem” question the Baptizer on his identity, “may reflect the origin and status both of John and of some of his followers” (128), this conclusion is quite implausible. The same is true for the idea (previously proposed by Richard Bauckham) that Luke’s genealogy should be seen to

depend on an Enochic tradition. Equally unlikely is the further speculation that the order of pericopes in Luke 3–4 should therefore depend on Levitical concerns (131) or having been formulated “to satisfy a section of the early Christian community which may have had either Levitical or Essene connections or both” (132). Even the data from the Dead Sea Scrolls does not give enough evidence to reconstruct the history of certain subgroups within early Christianity from the traditions presented in the Gospels.

The article on Luke-Acts and 4QMMT first enumerates some of the Qumran parallels for Luke and Acts discussed by scholars before 1991 and since then. Then some aspects of comparison from the halakic “letter” 4QMMT are discussed, such as form and genre, content, and the argument from Scripture. The result, however, is rather thin: even if there are some issues in common, the differences are much clearer. Thus the only conclusion is that “we can see that his [Luke’s] literary concerns cannot be entirely divorced from the issues around in Palestinian Judaism of his day” (176).

The article on the *Commentary on Genesis A* largely describes the exegetical techniques of that important new text on the chronology of the flood. This text provides the only pre-Christian Jewish example of dating by the days of the week; it calls Abraham “friend of God” (cf. Jas 2:23). It may also add some aspects to the discussion of some other New Testament: the author mentions the motif of Noah and the flood, the chronology of Abraham, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, the binding of Isaac, and the blessings of Isaac and Jacob. The text “provides one more significant strand in the tapestry of early Palestinian Jewish eschatological exegesis” (194).

The last article in that second part with its provocative title “from Qumran to Corinth” discusses some translations of the difficult word *rwqmh* in a manuscript of the *Damascus Document* 4QD^c 7 I 14, which is used in a passage that mentions the lower status of women in the community and describes something that they do not have. Although other occurrences of the word may denote some kind of garment (embroidered robe?), the author interprets the term here (joining Joseph M. Baumgarten) as an indication of an “authoritative status.” This opens up a field of speculation about what Paul might have meant when he mentioned the *exousia* of women in 1 Cor 11:10. Brooke is cautious enough not to suggest any direct historical connection between both passages, but he suggests to take the language and argument of 1 Cor 11:10 “to illuminate how best the strange phraseology of the *Damascus Document* should be understood” (214). Here we might have a case of mutual illumination of two passages: what Corinthian women should wear on their head to take part in the worship of the community was a sign of “authority.” On the other hand, the lower status of women in the community represented by the *Damascus Document* “comes about because they were not permitted to wear a mark of authority in the congregation” (214).

In my view, the most fruitful and challenging article of this part is the study on the so-called *Apocryphon of Levi*^b, which provides new insights that may be relevant for the history of the impact of Isa 53 and for the reception of the idea of the Suffering Servant in the New Testament. One fragment of the Aramaic *Apocryphon of Levi* includes the idea of an atoning priest in a future time (4Q541 9 I 2–3: “he will make expiation for all the sons of his generation and he will be sent to all the sons of his people”) who “will suffer falsehood and violence” (147; 4Q 541 9 I 6–7); another fragment (4Q541 24 II 2–6) seems to describe “the violence done against the priest” (147–48). In the fragment mentioned first, the author identifies the textual influence of Isa 52:15, and even more parts of the text represented in the manuscripts 4Q540 and 541 show more verbal associations with the servant texts of Isaiah. The conclusion is obvious: “If 4Q541 is indeed speaking of an eschatological high priest servant, we may have in this composition the earliest individualistic interpretation of the Isaianic Servant Songs in a particularly cultic direction” (151). So, the widespread view that the “erratic” text of Isa 53 had almost no pre-Christian, and especially no individualistic, reception must be corrected in view of these (and possibly also other) fragments. This also has consequences for the interpretation of its reception in the New Testament. There are still interpreters who think that the reception of Isa 53 in early Christianity is only slight and that the clearer receptions are only late (e.g., the quotation in 1 Peter). But if they restrict their investigation for whatever reason on Greek parallels and neglect the (Hebrew and) Aramaic texts, they may miss the most important information potentially relevant for the interpretation of the earliest Jewish-Christian interpretations of the death of Jesus. For “it now seems that there is a Jewish text whose author used the Servant passages of Isaiah to support the idea that there was to be an eschatological priest who would suffer, possibly even that the suffering involved death, death that would lead to joyous benefits for others” (153). This is important not only for the early Christian reception of Isa 53 as an interpretation of the death of an individual, Jesus; it is equally relevant for understanding the cultic or priestly elements of the interpretation of Jesus’ death, as the author suggests in his article.

The mutual illumination of particular passages is intended by the five articles of the third part: “The Wisdom of Matthew’s Beatitudes” (217–34); “4Q500 1 and the Use of Scripture in the Parable of the Vineyard” (235–60); “Qumran: The Cradle of Christ?” (261–71); “Songs of Revolution: The Song of Miriam and Its Counterparts” (272–81); and “4Q252 and the 153 Fish of John 21.11” (282–97). I omit here the short articles on the “cradle of Christ,” which offers only a few brief comparisons of passages related to Jesus’ birth story, and the article on the song of Miriam, which inserts the new song from the *Reworked Pentateuch* manuscript 4Q365 into a series of songs of women in early Judaism. Not too convincing is the speculation that the chronology of the flood as given

in 4Q252 may provide a key for understanding the riddle of the 153 fish in John 21:11. The fact that one of the eleven dated incidents, the resting of the ark on Mount Ararat, on the seventeenth day in the seventh month, happened on the 153rd day after the flood is not stated in the text but can only be calculated. So, without entering the problems of John 21 in detail here, I can only indicate my skepticism against this (maybe the 153rd?) attempt to solve the riddle of that number. Much more important are the two articles on the makarisms and on parable interpretation.

The study on 4Q525 (already from 1989) discusses Émile Puech's suggestions on that important sapiential text and provides some interesting suggestions for the comparison with the Matthean beatitudes text. 4QBeatitudes "should act as a corrective influence on those who assign all the differences between Matthew's and Luke's Beatitudes to the creative genius of Matthew" (233). Comparison may show, rather, that Matthew "is standing firmly in line with the developing Wisdom traditions of some section of first-century Palestinian Judaism and Jewish Christianity" (234). On the other hand, 4Q525—as many other sapiential texts from Qumran—represents a type of wisdom that is not clearly separated from eschatological teaching or even apocalyptic elements. One of the consequences is that the relation between wisdom and eschatology or apocalypticism has to be considered afresh within early Jewish tradition as well as within earliest Christianity and the tradition and transmission of the sayings of Jesus.

Such methodological consequences are also suggested by the last article to be discussed here, the insightful study on 4Q500 1. Here the author points out the metaphorical elements from the text, which takes up the vineyard motif from Isa 5 in a blessing addressed to God. The vineyard is clearly associated with the temple ("the gate of the holy height") and also with a planting ("the branches of your delights"), an imagery combination that occurs more frequently in Qumran texts, the most well-known being 1QS VIII 4–8. "4Q500 1 thus seems to stand at a highly potent metaphorical interchange. In just a few words there are hints of the vineyard which is the chosen people of God, there are hints that the vineyard was associated with Jerusalem and with the sanctuary in particular." The sanctuary traditions are further linked with the idea of the heavenly sanctuary or with the garden of Eden as sanctuary, and in the network of Qumran texts all these traditions are related with the chosen community. This opens up new perspectives for the interpretation of the vineyard parable in the Synoptic Gospels (and also in the *Gospel of Thomas*, a version that the author views as secondary). Exegesis has been influenced strongly by some form-critical dogmatism that parables—at least in their "original" form—can never have allegorical overtones and that all kinds of scriptural allusions can only be secondary additions. It is time to correct these biases from what we know about early Jewish exegetical traditions from Qumran and elsewhere. There is absolutely no reason for the dogma that a parable of Jesus can only have one point of

comparison! In view of 4Q500 1, the Synoptic parable can easily be read as a parable about “Israel in miniature, that is Jerusalem, its temple and its cult” (250), and also the quotation from Ps 118 that is linked with the parable in all three Synoptic versions may well be “an integral part of the pericope” (260). Therefore, the Qumran fragment not only shows the way for a better understanding of a particular passage in the New Testament; it can also be seen as a call for a methodology that considers the textual data from early Judaism, the numerous ways of linking oneself to Scripture or scriptural imagery that must challenge the well-known paths of form-critical or redaction-critical interpretation.

George Brooke’s collection of articles on the relation between the Qumran library and the New Testament is a most valuable book that provides a mass of information on the more recent developments in Qumran research, thorough discussion of numerous points of comparison (quite easy to find by the fine indexes), and a number of serious challenges to New Testament scholarship. It demonstrates impressively that the Hebrew and Aramaic texts found at Qumran should not be neglected by New Testament scholars but rather be read as intensely as they read Greek and Roman literature.