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Leviticus at Qumran

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Robert A. Kugler and Kyung S. Baek, *Leviticus at Qumran: Text and Interpretation*. VTSup 173. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Hardback. Pp. x + 124. €105/\$120. ISBN 9789004329782.

Leviticus at Qumran is a modest book of intentionally limited scope. Kugler and Baek explicitly set a minimalistic agenda for the book of presenting the raw textual data for Leviticus “with as little interpretive intervention as possible” (VIII) in a user-friendly way that can be used as a springboard for further research by others working on the book. I would say that they have effectively achieved their goal of producing a convenient reference work with (almost) all of the most significant evidence presented in a single, clearly structured and easily searchable volume. This low bar, however, greatly reduces the potential impact the book may have had within the field if the authors had made a point to include more of their own analysis and innovative contributions. Since Kugler and Baek are obviously very familiar with the Leviticus materials, it seems a missed opportunity to hear more of their original thoughts.

The first chapter lists and describes all of the copies of Leviticus from the Judean Desert, as well as surveying the history of research on each manuscript. Kugler and Baek accept Ulrich’s division of 1Q3 into 1QpaleoLev-Num^a and 1QpaleoLev^b?. For 2Q5 they misunderstand ink guide dots at the end of a sheet for markers indicating line endings. 4Q24 seems to have been shorter than the MT and SP for Lev 3:1–11. Kugler and Baek accept Tigchelaar’s 2014 corrections to the DJD edition of 4Q26a. They also highlight the unusual example of 4Q26b, which in one case has the tetragrammaton in the Paleo-Hebrew script and in another case on the same fragment has it written in the square script. They concur with Stuckenbruck and Freedman that 4Q156 (4QtgLev) reflects an independent textual tradition of Leviticus. They unfortunately do not address the topic of the authenticity of the Schøyen fragments published by Puech. To this list we must also add the Leviticus scroll from the En-Gedi synagogue (EGLev), which Kugler and Baek discuss briefly in a footnote (9 n. 25), but do not fully incorporate into the book. Yardeni has dated this to the late first or early second century CE, but in an article in *Textus* I prefer a later date—probably from the third or fourth centuries—meaning that EGLev provides a unique window into a dark period in the transmission of the Hebrew scriptures.

There are two striking features of this listing. First, Kugler and Baek include the cryptic texts 4Q249j-l in their survey of the Leviticus scrolls, even though they admit that these probably were not even copies of Leviticus. Second, they omit the 4Q(Reworked) Pentateuch manuscripts, even though a growing consensus might have suggested including them at this point as simply

revised versions of Leviticus. Kugler and Baek instead include these manuscripts under their section on the secondary reuse of Leviticus, arguing from purely pragmatic concerns that the current handbooks have not yet changed the nomenclature (71–72). Their classification of the (Reworked) Pentateuch manuscripts as “re-presented” texts of Leviticus (99), however, may imply that their decision was indeed guided also by a perception of the manuscripts as “reworked” texts, rather than copies of Leviticus proper. An unfortunate consequence of this decision is that we do not find transcriptions of the (Reworked) Pentateuch manuscripts in chapter 2.

Chapter 2 reproduces the transcriptions and variants from Ulrich's *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls*, with changes to 4Q26a adopted from Tigchelaar. Thus, readers will not find the Aramaic targum or any scrolls from sites other than Qumran in the transcriptions or variants. This is disappointing, since including them would have required only a minimal amount of additional work and would have rounded out the entire corpus well. Kugler and Baek then rearrange the variants in chapter 3 in chapter and verse order. Chapter 4 lists in the order of Leviticus numerous (but not exhaustive) secondary reuses of Leviticus, mostly culled from the work of others.

Chapters 5 and 6 are the only truly original contributions in the book and are worthwhile discussions. Chapter 5 systematically summarizes each use of Leviticus in a secondary source according to the manuscript in which it is found, with often very useful comments. Here we find the (Reworked) Pentateuch manuscripts, the Temple Scroll, Damascus Document, and MMT featuring especially frequently.

Chapter 6 summarizes their conclusions rather succinctly. Kugler and Baek essentially confirm Ulrich's assertion that the text of Leviticus was remarkably stable, with only minor variation, though they do not factor in the (Reworked) Pentateuch manuscripts. Kugler and Baek agree with Metso and Ulrich that the need for strict conformity in legal practice probably promoted this general textual restraint (97–98). A longer text in Lev 17:4 in 4QLev^d is supposed to be the most important variant discovered in the Leviticus scrolls, and it could be understood either as an accidental omission or a harmonistic addition (96–97). Each part of Leviticus is represented approximately proportionally in secondary reuses, but the Holiness Code of Lev 17–26 is cited somewhat more frequently. Kugler and Baek then group their examined uses of Leviticus into three categories of usage: the use of the rhetoric (i.e., language) of Leviticus for inspiration, the use of the substance of the texts for argumentative purposes, and reworking the text of Leviticus (the use of the language of “subversion” in this context seems unnecessarily hostile).

Thus, for those looking for a handy, one-stop quick reference tool for working on the text of Leviticus at Qumran, this is an ideal volume. The lack of transcriptions for the non-Qumran and non-“biblical” manuscripts is a major limitation, however. Likewise, Kugler and Baek’s failure to interact with the complexities of the (Reworked) Pentateuch tradition, or the Temple Scroll, or others for that matter, is problematic. But the most problematic aspect of the book is simply its lack of originality. Almost everything in *Leviticus at Qumran* is readily accessible elsewhere. I would have appreciated at least a synthetic discussion on how Kugler and Baek understand the textual history of Leviticus in light of their research, beyond the simple comment that the text is relatively stable. The one redeeming section in this regard is their systematic discussion of secondary uses, where Kugler and Baek make a unique contribution to the study of the reception of Leviticus.

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