
Two years after the publication of the first volume of the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten (ThWQ)*, co-editors Heinz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Dahmen present the second volume of this projected three-volume set (see my earlier review of volume 1 in *BBR* 23.1 [2013] 85–86). This represents a surprising pace in terms of academic publication schedules and should be applauded.

The volume does not reproduce the introductory section and long list of abbreviations included in volume 1, something I consider an easy-to-fix weakness. Even when one owns all three volumes of ThWQ once they have appeared, it is awkward to always have to return to volume 1 for information regarding abbreviations. Recent reference works by other major publishers (e.g., Oxford University Press) include the list of abbreviations in every volume of a set, thus facilitating a more streamlined workflow.

Following a brief prologue (p. v), mostly expressing thanks and appreciation to contributors, publisher, and sponsoring entities, a list of the contributors and their academic affiliations is included, as well as the table of contents (indicating column numbers, not page numbers!), and a brief update to the list of abbreviations (p. xix). The majority of the 97 contributors (including the two editors) hail from Europe (58), followed by North America (32), and Israel (7). It is remarkable to notice the different centers of Qumran research, represented by both junior scholars and more seasoned scholars (e.g., Emory University or McMaster University in North America). This clustering of expertise is, unfortunately, a trend in academia reflecting similar trends in other areas of our lives.

Volume 2 covers entries from הָנוֹּר, “purity,” to הָנַח, “hide.” Since ThWQ appears to be primarily interested in the development of the theological thinking of the community (located solidly with its time) that produced the scrolls, many entries include distinctions made between a “profane” and a “theological” use. While this distinction may prove helpful in some cases it represents a “pre-installed” filter of the contributor that is communicated to the reader without necessarily defining what precisely is meant by “profane” or “theological”—particularly when we consider the fact that the worldview of people living in the intertestamental period was much more holistic than the modern separation between the two poles would allow.

The diachronic interest of ThWQ is well illustrated in the excellent article on the lexeme הָנוֹּר, “purity,” by Hannah Harrington (cols. 1–11). Harrington notes, for example, that the use of הָנוֹּר at Qumran is generally in line with its OT use. However, at times it moves beyond the conceptual world of the OT, especially considering the substitution of the temple cult, the distinction
between community insiders and outsiders, and the overall importance of holiness (col. 2). The importance of the purity concept in the Qumran community is underlined by usage. The OT includes around 210 instances of the root, whereas Qumran boasts about 260 references (col. 3). Harrington dedicates roughly three columns (cols. 7–11) to discuss the significance of the semantic analysis pointing to the “hegemony of ritual” at Qumran (borrowing a phrase from Robert A. Kugler, “Making All Experience Religious: The Hegemony of Ritual at Qumran,” JSJ 33 [2002] 131–52). This ritual increase was part of a larger development within Judaism and is reflected in the archaeological record. Harrington concludes that ritual purification anticipates the notion of spiritual renewal found in baptismal rites of the NT (col. 11). The article is helpful and provides a useful overview of the relevant data; it should be consulted by anyone interested in ritual and purity at Qumran. Intriguingly, Harrington does not include her own (extensive) work on the topic in the brief bibliography preceding the entry.

Another helpful example of ThWQ’s focus on the theological and literary development of Hebrew (and Aramaic; authors usually discuss also relevant lexemes in Aramaic) terms during the intertestamental period is the entry on מַעַן, “rest” (cols. 905–910), by Gudrun Holtz. In the HB, the root is often related to Sabbath rest and often describes the rest God gave his people after defeating Israel’s enemies. The usage in the DSS follows that practice but there are reduced references to the rest from enemies brought on by Israel’s God (col. 907). Instead, the focus is on the Sabbath, as well as the larger festival calendar, and its close link to God-given rest is more prevalent. I was intrigued to notice the 1QpHab 11:6 reference to “the time of the festival of the rest of the day of atonement” (Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition, 2 vols. [Leiden: Brill, 1997–98] 1:19–20, translate here slightly different “In festival time, during the rest of the day of Atonement”). Rest from sin and purity concerns has replaced the focus on political or military “rest” opposite one’s enemy.

ThWQ also contains the discussion of key individuals referenced in the HB, whose importance for the Qumran community (or Judaism in general) was significant. A good example of a very comprehensive discussion is the entry on מֹשֶׁה, “Moses” (cols. 606–18) by Ulrich Dahmen, one of the general editors of the work. Its extension already signals Moses’ importance in the DSS where it appears about 120 times and thus represents the most regularly referred to biblical person (col. 606). Most narrative traditions in the DSS seem to follow the description of Moses in the HB (col. 608), with a particular emphasis on Moses as the lawgiver (thus representing the crucial factor that makes law authoritative, cf. col. 609). In most instances in the texts from Qumran, God’s word equals Moses’ Torah (col. 611), which—according to CD 16:1–5—also included the apocryphal book of Jubilees. Moses also had a number of titles in the DSS, some of which are surprising. For example, in 4Q377, he is called “the Anointed of God”—a title not associated with Moses in the HB. 4Q374 refers to Moses as “God’s Elect” and as “mediator/interpreter for the people of God” (cf. cols. 612–14).

The volume concludes with a list of the German translations of the Hebrew/Aramaic lexemes (pp. 565–74) included in ThWQ, but does not contain any indexes, which will, most likely, be included in vol. 3. Kudos to editors,
contributors, and the publisher for a very helpful reference work, which, unfortunately, will be out of reach for most scholars due to its high price point (the exchange rate at the writing of this review of €1.00 = $1.08, resulted in a volume price of about $355.00). Considering the importance of ThWQ for the study of the HB, the intertestamental period, as well as the NT, it is hoped that a U.S. publisher will pick up the volumes and provide a quality translation at a—hopefully—more affordable price point.

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In 1887, a discovery of cuneiform tablets took place in Egypt at a site known to most of the scholarly world since then as Tell el-Amarna. That discovery would forever change our understanding of the mid-14th century B.C. ancient Near East and especially of southern Canaan. The more than 380 tablets and significant fragments that have emerged as related to this site, known as the Amarna tablets, mostly represent the imperial and international correspondence of the latter reign of the pharaoh Amenophis III and part of the reign of his successor, Akhenaten. As the largest collection of literature of any type from pre-Hellenistic southern Canaan, other than the OT itself, this material continues to provide a valuable treasure for the study of the rhetorical forms, culture, history, geopolitics, and language (through glosses, morphology, and syntax) of southern Canaan, whether shortly after or more than a century before the entrance of Israel into this Promised Land (depending on whether one accepts the early or late date for the exodus).

Subsequent to the announcement of the discovery of the cuneiform tablets, they were distributed among museums and private collectors. While the majority of the tablets found a home either at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin or at the British Museum in London, a significant additional number were distributed into a half dozen other museums as well as several private collections. This has always made a comprehensive edition of these tablets difficult to create, especially where one attempts to do so by fully examining (collating) each of the tablets and their texts.

In 1915, J. A. Knudtzon published his Die el-Amarna-Tafeln mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen. This work included the most current transliteration and translation of the text of the Amarna tablets to date; along with a full glossary (with concordance) of words, and separate lists of proper nouns. Although many studies on individual and groups of texts have appeared in the last 100 years, none has brought together the full corpus of the Amarna collection. Closest to this goal was the achievement of William L. Moran, The Amarna Letters, that appeared in French in 1987 and in English in 1992. This work provided