Baesick Choi, *Leviticus and Its Reception in the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran.* Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020. Hardback. Pp. ix + 229. €36/$49. isbn 9781532692239.

This volume is a revised version of the author’s Ph.D. dissertation, as supervised by George Brooke at the University of Manchester. Its purpose is to illustrate the use of the Leviticus material in the Dead Sea Scrolls and “to show how closely Leviticus influenced the composition of texts in both the Qumran and pre-Qumranic communities or the wider movements of which they were a part” (8–9). Choi effectively achieved this purpose, systematically pointing to quotations, allusions, and interpretations of the text of Leviticus in several late Second Temple period works. He demonstrates how Leviticus, especially the Holiness Code of Lev 16–27, has influenced the structures, theologies, and ideologies of these works.

The book is clearly written and well-organized. After a brief introduction in which he discusses methodological issues and approaches, the second chapter presents the manuscripts from the Judean Desert that contain complete or partial texts from Leviticus. Each manuscript is accompanied by a description of its content, physical characteristics, scribal features, and textual affiliation. In this chapter, Choi correctly considers 4QReworked Pentateuch manuscripts as copies of the Pentateuch, in accordance with the growing scholarly consensus regarding their scriptural status. The Leviticus Scroll from Nahal Arugot and Mur/ḤevLev are not included, following Tigchelaar, who described them as unprovenanced (10–11). However, the classification of the cryptic texts 4Q249j-l as scriptural manuscripts, as well as the identification of 2Q9 with Lev 23:1–3 rather than with Num 18:8–9, as suggested by Baillet in DJD III and accepted by Tov, Kugler and Baek, Himbaza, and others, seems doubtful.

Choi concludes that “there was probably a single edition of Leviticus in circulation” (47), confirming the claim that the text of Leviticus is relatively stable (Ulrich; Kugler and Baek). As most of the data in Chapter II are already accessible elsewhere, Choi stresses that its main contribution is to point to the function of the manuscripts (11). He bases this on their material features, such as size, layout, and script, while relying on the principal editions of the various manuscripts. Unfortunately, in certain cases, such as in 4QLevc (24–25), Choi cites the material considerations without explication or reevaluation.

Choi concludes that many of the Leviticus manuscripts can be classified as large or very large scrolls. These scrolls were prestigious copies that were suitable for public cultic settings, indicating that Leviticus was treated as important in Second Temple Judaism. However, Choi does not consider the possibility that large-format manuscripts, notably those that included not only Leviticus but also Exodus or Numbers, may have contained the entire Pentateuch. If so, these copies attest to the use of the Pentateuch as a whole, and not only of Leviticus.

Chapters III–VII comprise a systematic discussion of the secondary uses of Leviticus in non-scriptural compositions. Following a short survey of the history of the scholarship on each composition, Choi demonstrates the ways that Leviticus was used in these texts, accompanied by brief discussions.

Chapters III-IV focus on two rewritten Bible texts – the book of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll, respectively. Chapter III demonstrates that Leviticus, notably the Holiness Code, highly influenced several themes in Jubilees, notably Shabbat, the Jubilee, and other themes derived from the laws, covenant, chronology, and priestly ideology of Leviticus. Chapter IV discusses the influence of Leviticus on the Temple Scroll. This influence is evident with respect to theology in the context of the re-establishment of the covenant (Lev 26:42 / 11QTa 29:9–10); the strategy of rewriting, i.e., the use of the first person singular in reference to the Lord which is dominant in both Leviticus and the Temple Scroll; and the use of Leviticus motifs, such as cultic practices, placement of lamp and lights, and themes of land and sacrifice. Choi demonstrates that passages from Leviticus served as a base text for the Temple Scroll (93–104), implying that the compiler of the Temple Scroll had the final form of Leviticus in mind during its composition. In my view, Choi fails to interact with the complexity of the textual and reception history of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll. Thus, for instance, he does not consider the possibility that these texts, which themselves claim scriptural status, were possibly reused in later compositions just as Leviticus was.

Chapters V and VI explore the reuse of Leviticus in two key sectarian texts, the Damascus Document and MMT. Choi points to textual evidence which indicates that the Holiness Code influenced the ideology of these texts. However, some of the uses of Leviticus in the Damascus Document and MMT have already been discussed by previous scholars, especially many of the cases in MMT section B. Moreover, although the data provided are generally accurate, there are some minor mistakes. Choi argues that the appearance of the expression ועתה שמעו in CD (1:1; 2:2; 2:14) is influenced by Lev 26. He states that “this expression occurs in the Hebrew Bible in singular” (p. 109), and “even Exodus uses only the imperative of שמע in the singular form” (109, n.13). However, this statement is not correct in the case of Exod 19:5, which Choi does not consider in his discussion. In addition, the expression ועתה שמעו is misspelled in its two occurrences on this page.

Finally, Chapter VII briefly treats several fragmentary texts which offer further evidence for the influence of Leviticus on the Qumran literary corpus. Choi discusses both early or pre-sectarian traditions (the Aramaic Levi Document, the Genesis Apocryphon, and the Apocryphon of Jeremiah) as well as works whose final forms are attributed to the first century BCE (4QTohorot A; the War Scroll; 4QHalakah A; 1QS). He offers evidence for the significance of Leviticus in these texts in relation to sacrificial laws, purity laws, sexual laws, judgment, and covenant. Leviticus 26 is again a major source behind the composition of these texts.

Choi should be credited for creating a volume that provides a quick and useful reference tool for scholars seeking to understand the reuse and reception of Leviticus in late Second Temple period works. The various secondary uses of Leviticus found in these works stimulate new questions regarding the role of Leviticus in Second Temple Judaism and is a fruitful source for future research.

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