

Preface to the English Translation & Translator's Note

Between the publication of the first Spanish edition of *Textos de Qumrán* in November 1992 and the appearance of this English translation, research on the manuscripts from Qumran has proceeded at a faster pace and its fruits can be found collected here.

Of particular importance has been the publication of four works, very different in character. Each in its own way has contributed to the preparation of this volume and they account for the obvious differences which this English translation displays in respect of the first Spanish edition.

First and of most importance was the publication in the summer of 1993 of the complete edition on microfiche of all the manuscripts from the Dead Sea: *The Dead Sea Scrolls on Microfiche. A Comprehensive Facsimile Edition of the Texts from the Judaean Desert*, edited by Emanuel Tov with the collaboration of Stephen Pfann (E. J. Brill-IDC, Leiden 1993) which for the first time has placed at the disposal of all researchers the entire collection of material available. The second was the publication of the first two fascicles of *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls*, reconstructed and edited by Ben Zion Wacholder and Martin G. Abegg (Biblical Archaeological Society, Washington 1991 and 1992) in which the text of the various copies of 4QD, 4QMishmarot, a series of Wisdom Texts and Sectarian Scriptures have been reconstructed with the aid of a computer using *A Preliminary Concordance to the Hebrew and Aramaic Fragments from Qumrán Caves 1F-X*. They have also made the reading of some badly preserved fragments much easier for me. The third was the publication by R. Eisenman and M. O. Wise of *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Element, Shaftesbury 1992), a book which contains the transcription and English translation of several previously unpublished texts. The quality of these transcriptions and translations sometimes leaves much to be desired (as shown in my review article 'Notas al margen de *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*', *Revue de Qumrán* 61 [1993] 123-150). Also, a large part of the texts they publish was already included in the Spanish edition. Even so, using this book helped me to read and translate several new texts now accessible in the microfiche edition. The fourth was the publication of the supplement to Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer. Ergänzungsband* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1994) which completes the edition of the Aramaic texts from Qumran with the publication of some previously unpublished.

Thanks to these works and to continual study of the originals, this book claims to offer the reader a translation of the 270 most important manuscripts from Qumran. In other words, it is a virtually complete translation of the non-biblical manuscripts found there. Of course the 'List of Manuscripts from Qumran' has been brought completely up to date, taking new publications into account.

Like the Spanish edition, this English translation omits any kind of note or explanation, since everything needed to understand these difficult texts is in-

cluded in my *Introduction to the Literature from Qumran*, a forthcoming companion volume to this book. While awaiting its publication and as an aid to the reader, I have added a short list of books in English to the Introduction.

I wish to thank Dr. W. Watson for the immense work carried out in transforming the Spanish text into idiomatic and fluent English, for his patience in including the changes I asked him to make as a result of checking the originals again and for his readiness to sacrifice even some of his elegant solutions to my desire for a more literal translation. I thank Hans van der Meij, Acquisitions Editor of Brill Publishers, for the interest and care with which he has directed the publication process of this book at each and every stage.

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The short time elapsed between the first publication of this book and the need of a reprint has made impossible a thorough revision of the work. I have limited myself to correct the most obvious typographical errors and to add references to the new numbers given to some of the *4QDamascus Document* manuscripts. No attempt has been made to incorporate fragments published in 1995 in the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* Series or in preliminary publications. Only the last section of the book, the 'List of the manuscripts from Qumran', has been brought completely up to date, taking all new publications into account.

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The present comprehensive translation of the non-biblical texts from the Qumran library was prepared from the Spanish version by Florentino García Martínez in close collaboration with him and the publisher. The only liberties I have taken have been with the alphabetic acrostic poems, in an attempt to reflect the initial letters within these patterns. Professor García Martínez was patient enough to work through my drafts and solve the many translation problems that inevitably arose. To him and to Hans van der Meij, of Brill, I extend my thanks for their hospitality during my brief stay in Groningen and for their help over the past year.

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