

BOOK REVIEW

Giovanni Ibba, *Le Ideologie del Rotolo della Guerra (IQM)*. Studio sulla genesi e la datazione dell'opera, Associazione Italiana per lo Studio del Giudaismo, Testi e Studi, 17; Editrice Giuntina, Firenze 2005, ISBN 88-8057-237-7.

Readers who have never approached at some length and in some depth the world of the Qumran texts, will find this monograph on the ideologies of the War Scroll (IQM) the right place to start with, even if this work does not offer a general introduction on this subject matter or on the issue of what the Qumran texts actually are. Giovanni Ibba teaches at the *Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Centrale* situated in Florence, Italy, is not new in this area of research. He has already three other books accredited to his name, all in Italian: *Il Rotolo della Guerra*, Edizione Critica, Zamorani, Torino 1998; *La Sapienza di Qumran*, Città Nuova, Rome 2000; and *La Teologia di Qumran*, EDB, Bologna 2002. The present monograph deals with the War Scroll and its ideologies, with the last word in the plural since Ibba maintains that this principal Qumran document went through four redactions, each with its own interpretation of the material. For several aspects of his study, Ibba employs and develops his previous contributions (cf. p.15 note 2).

In this presentation of such interesting volume, the reviewer will describe briefly its contents and offer one or two comments on the subject-matter it discusses.

Le Ideologie del Rotolo della Guerra has eleven chapters. After a short introduction where Ibba enumerates the reasons for his new contribution (pp.15-17), he offers a general description of this Scroll (pp.19-28): the manuscript as a whole, its contents, datation, hypotheses concerning its origins, and a brief and introductory descriptions of the four redactions of the Scroll. In chapter two (pp.29-62), the author reproduces the Hebrew text in its entirety, column by column, section by section. For readers meaning to read this text Ibba has prepared on pp. 29-30 a number of diacritical helps which should be read.

In the next four chapters, the author presents the Scroll by redaction. It is useful at this stage to keep in mind what Ibba writes on p.63 on the military language of the document: this language as well as the descriptions of the personnel and armoury do not reproduce that of particular armies like those of the Romans, "ma dovranno essere intese come rappresentazioni metaforiche del primato sacerdotale. Il motivo

per cui è stato scelto l'argomento della guerra per esprimere tale supremazia deve essere forse ricercato nella volontà di sviluppare il tema del combattimento a partire da Dt 20, dove il sacerdote incoraggia i guerrieri alla battaglia rassicurandoli che Dio è alla loro testa per condurli alla vittoria, nonostante una palese inferiorità militare in rapporto al nemico. Il sacerdote, essendo il vero mediatore tra Dio e il popolo, è colui che ha il potere d'infondere questa certezza". The Scroll therefore is meant to be metaphorical. But was it taken in that manner by its first generations of readers?

In chapter 3 (pp.63-87) Ibba discusses various particular aspects of the first redaction: the priests and their role in the army, purity norms, military tactics, armoury, the war years, the temple, the calendar and its liturgy, citations and references of biblical texts, shields 'on towers', and the place within the camp for women and children. The second redaction is dealt with in the next chapter 4 (pp.89-96); according to Ibba, this second redaction is represented by a number of words and phrases that tie the document to the Maccabean period and there are parallels in vocabulary and phraseology with the Books of Daniel and I Maccabees. Chapter 5 (pp.97-102) instead deals with the 'third redaction' which allowed influence from the Book of Jubilees, that divided the world into the threefold division of Genesis 10 in that the war against the entire world was to be waged with Semitic, Hamitic, and the peoples who had Japhet as their ancestor. The following chapter 6(pp. 103-126) is much longer and therein Ibba discusses words, expressions, and doctrines that were added or have replaced other elements in the text, and testify to the fourth redaction of the Scroll; this new edition saw the light of day during the early period of the settlement in Qumran and was undertaken to make this important document fit the more recent doctrinal orientations of the community as expressed in other Qumran documents.

In chapter 7 (pp.127-138) Ibba compares the War Scroll (1QM) with a number of other similar Qumran manuscripts while in the subsequent chapter 8 (pp. 139-172) he offers a slightly functional equivalent translation of the text and its textual mapping according to the four redactions. In the following chapter 9 (pp.173-201) we are offered the same translation, but the redactions are given as whole so that the reader would be able to appreciate how the various editors understood the text from their point of view. This is a useful service indeed. A major contribution is furnished by Ibba in chapter 10(pp.203-261) where he gives the widest list of explicit and implicit citations of biblical texts in this Qumran document according to the redactional levels. He builds his work on that of J. Carmignac in his 1956

article “Le citations dell’Ancien Testament dans ‘La Guerre des Fils de la lumière contro les Fils des Ténèbres’” published in *Revue Biblique*, 3(1956)375-390, and on that of the other French scholar M.Dupont-Sommer, *Aperçus préliminaires sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte*, Maisonneuve, Paris 1950. This contribution together with those of its predecessors testify not merely to how deeply biblical are the roots of this theological construct, but also how necessary was the hermeneutics carried out by Jesus of OT texts that were meant to promote the Holy War ideology. In this very useful exercise I found one possible methodological mistake: the inclusion of 1Maccabees (pp.223.239.254). By the time 1QM was written, the issue of the ‘scriptural canon’ was probably ‘still not an issue’ as this entered the debate forum late in the first century AD. Did the author and later editors make any difference between what later became qualified as ‘Holy Scriptures’, and any contemporary writings? But the inclusion of this book in the above mentioned list of books could simply mean to complete the list of books known and used at Qumran. The later *Letter of Jude* would suggest that such a difference between what started to be held as canonical and what was never revered as Holy Scripture was not always sharply kept. And this would explain the references to 1Maccabees in the War Scroll.

The last chapter, chapter 11, is dedicated to the motivation for dating the various editions of the scroll mostly in the second half of the second century BC. The book comes to an end with an alphabetical index of texts cited mixing together Biblical and Qumran texts.

Anthony Abela
Department of Holy Scriptures
Faculty of Theology
University of Malta.