Violent Legacy of Monotheism [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997]), O’C. gracefully yet firmly responds: “Schwartz has proposed that monotheism is the problem because the brothers offer sacrifices to the one God of wrath. In this view it is no wonder that Cain is devastated by not being accepted, making the real problem of the text to be the character of God. What she does not consider fully is the mythic nature of the story and its purposes. It does not portray a full picture of the divine so much as it provides an account of why relationships are the way they are—broken, alienated, and prone to violence” (p. 75).

Another strength is the wisdom with which O’C. applies “trauma and disaster studies” to overtly theological texts. Noting God’s “grief” (‘אבד, Gen 6:6) over the problem of human wickedness, for example, she contends that “this portrait of the inner world of God serves as a defense of God, who suffers on account of humans, does not want to destroy them, and does so only with the deepest sorrow” (p. 110)—an insight not unlike views found in the Gospels or letters of Paul.

Yet sometimes this balance is not evident. In the story of Lot’s attempt to protect the two מלאכים (“angels,” Gen 19:1-11), for example, O’C. focuses, like so many others today, on the inhospitality of the Sodomites to the exclusion of all other factors. Reading the story of Sodom from the perspective of “the book’s audience” (i.e., an audience that “continues to struggle with the theological consequences of its own destroyed city of Jerusalem,” p. 277), and aware of the sexual connotations embedded in the verb ידוע (“to know”), O’C. nevertheless reads Ezekiel’s critique of Sodom as a city afflicted only by “pride, excess of food,” and the refusal to give “aid to the poor and the needy” (p. 277, citing Ezek 16:49). Yet the very next verse in Ezekiel bluntly condemns Sodom for engaging in תועב (“abomination,” Ezek 16:50), a term used elsewhere to condemn illicit sexual behavior (Lev 18:22; cf. the debate between J. Walsh and S. Olyan referenced in Olyan’s article, “And with a Male You Shall Not Lie the Lying Down of a Woman: On the Meaning and Significance of Lev 18:22 and 20:13,” Journal of the History of Sexuality 5 [1994]: 179-206—not referenced by O’C.). After this, O’C. suggests that the decision to “interpret the sin of Sodom as male-with-male sex seems to have come into the Christian tradition through the writing of ancient Jewish historians” (particularly Philo and Josephus, p. 277)—even though the likelihood is great that this is a much, much older issue (cf., e.g., the Hittite and Middle Assyrian law codes as well as the legislative commentary on sexual תועב in b. Sanh. 54a-b).

Notwithstanding its drawbacks, this commentary is a welcome, refreshingly relevant, elegant look at an ancient Near Eastern scroll that many have come to regard as one of the most influential pieces of literature ever written.

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This comprehensive study of the term gēr in the Dead Sea Scrolls, a revised version of Palmer’s Ph.D. dissertation (University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, 2016; supervised by Sarianna Metso and Judith Newman), seeks to fill a lacuna in Second Temple
scholarship. As Palmer notes in her introduction, “to date, no monograph and only a little over half a dozen articles exist” (p. 17) for this specific topic. Her research question is stated clearly at the opening of the volume: “what is the meaning of \textit{gēr} when the term is employed within the Dead Sea Scrolls?” (p. 1).

The primary reason that this question has far from a simple answer is the distinct terminological shift that occurred in this term from denoting the resident alien in the Hebrew Bible to marking the convert to Judaism in rabbinic parlance. Hebrew will subsequently clarify the ambiguity by references to a resident \textit{gēr} and a righteous \textit{gēr}, but this is a rabbinic development. In Second Temple times the confusion is not yet apparent, and hence it is unclear which of the two, if either, is designated by the term. Evidently, any interpretation carries with it the danger of imposing notions that are foreign to the text in question.

Although P. presents her research question as a limited, almost lexical, inquiry, the scope of the study goes far beyond philology. A remarkably systematic approach guides the discussion, allowing the author to make astute observations and offer firm statements on foundational matters relating to the scrolls.

The introduction presents a careful and thorough survey of scholarship, familiarizing the reader with the problem at hand, demonstrated by the array of possible interpretations of the term \textit{gēr}. Any doubts that this small word merits such close inspection are certainly dispersed by the end of this chapter. The survey also addresses the concept of \textit{gēr} in scholarship of the Hebrew Bible, as well as two crucial concepts for the understanding of Second Temple Judaism: the notion of sectarianism and the debate over its evidence in the scrolls, and the construction of Jewish identity as an ethnic, rather than a religious, identity. Following this survey, P. presents her own methodology and states the conclusions of her research: in the Dead Sea Scrolls, she claims, “the \textit{gēr} is always a Judean convert whether included as a sectarian movement member, or excluded as ‘yet a gentile’” (p. 40).

The conclusion that the terminological shift occurred before rabbinic times and outside of the circles of the scrolls could raise some concern that P. is reading the scrolls through the lens of later Jewish sources. This is plainly not the case, however, as she carefully catalogues each occurrence of the term in the scrolls and thus cements her argument in the internal evidence of the scrolls themselves. Chapter 2 is dedicated to examining each of these occurrences. It opens with some background material that perhaps belongs in the introduction, including the social history of the sectarian movement and whether it should be identified with the Essenes (pp. 42-48). P. is skeptical about this identification but concludes that to link the sect reflected in the scrolls with the Essenes is “neither accurate nor necessary for the present task” (p. 48), setting the debate aside.

A discussion more pertinent to this chapter is the relationship between the \textit{Damascus Document} texts (D) and the \textit{Community Rule} texts (S). P. considers to be extreme Eyal Regev’s opinion (\textit{Sectarianism in Qumran: A Cross-Cultural Perspective} [Religion and Society 45; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007]) that these texts reflect entirely different movements (p. 50), but she nevertheless finds the distinction of these two groups of texts helpful, as they suggest “two dominant traditions within the sectarian movement” (p. 51). This prism proves to be one of the most innovative contributions of the volume, as P. then proceeds to analyze each of the mentions of \textit{gēr} in the scrolls along the lines of one of these traditions: 4QInstruction is identified as an early text that influenced both S and D (pp. 55-58), while
the Temple Scroll is aligned with D, together with more minor texts including 4Q377, 4Q159, and 4Q279 (pp. 63-78). Conversely, Pesher Nahum (4Q169) and 4QFlorilegium (4Q174) are analyzed as correlating with S (pp. 78-86). Three further texts are classified as "alignment indeterminate" (pp. 86-91). The careful analysis of the provenance of each occurrence of the term is promising in its own right and for the overarching purpose of the study. En route, P. suggests a new way to conceptualize texts from Qumran, introducing greater nuance to the common triad of biblical, sectarian, and nonsectarian categories.

This sociohistorical analysis is then followed in chap. 3 by a rigorous philological discussion of each of the occurrences. Placed at the center of the book, the third chapter indeed serves as the heart of P.’s argument. In the light of hermeneutical approaches to rewritten Scripture in the study of the scrolls, P. identifies a plethora of scriptural references to substantiate her argument persuasively that the gēr is conceived of as the convert, at times by omission of the biblical use of the term, at others through modification: “a hierarchical separation in which gēr is listed separately from other Israelite categories need not negate his existence as Israelite/Judean” (p. 115).

The final two chapters proceed from the philological interpretation of the gēr in the scrolls to the social setting of Second Temple Judaism. In chap. 4, P. discusses not only ethnicity but also the language of brotherhood, offering an important contribution to the study of fraternal and familial language in the scrolls, building on the work of Cecilia Wassen and Jutta Jokiranta (see “A Brotherhood at Qumran? Metaphorical Familial Language in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Northern Lights on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Nordic Qumran Network 2003–2006 [ed. Anders Klostergaard Petersen et al.; STDJ 80; Leiden: Brill, 2009] 173-203, here 133-37). P. then proceeds to discuss ethnicity and land, in a way that could have been more greatly engaged with spatial theory, as seen in the work of Liv Ingeborg Lied (e.g., The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch [JSJSup 129; Leiden: Brill, 2008]), but nevertheless resonates with issues that linger to this day.

The final chapter is a tour de force for the conclusion of the study. Here P. offers a brilliant comparison of notions of inclusion and exclusion among the sectarians with Greco-Roman associations. This contemporaneous historical phenomenon has not been closely studied in conjunction with the discoveries from Qumran since the work of Moshe Weinfeld (e.g., The Organizational Pattern and the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect: A Comparison with Guilds and Religious Associations of the Hellenistic-Roman Period [NTOA 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986]), with the exclusion of Yonder Moynihan Gillihan’s work (Civic Ideology, Organization, and Law in the Rule Scrolls: A Comparative Study of the Covenanters’ Sect and Contemporary Voluntary Associations in Political Context [STDJ 97; Leiden: Brill, 2012]). Developments in scholarship call for more of these comparisons, and P. demonstrates their usefulness in a fascinating manner. The distinction between these two cultures remains evident from the chapter, but it plays an important role in clarifying concepts of ethnicity and kinship as they relate to biological fraternity and spiritual brotherhood.

The inclusion of the final chapter reflects P.’s overall methodology. This marvelous volume offers a broad range that opens with a specific terminological problem in the scrolls, then answers it by suggesting a new way to classify the scrolls and by simultaneously highlighting implications of this research for the ancient Mediterranean broadly conceived.
The original and meticulous work of this excellent study offers new and exciting directions for social studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

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One review comment on the back cover of this book aroused my interest in Segal’s work. The writer of the excerpt, Rabbi Harold Kushner, recounts that his Hebrew high school teacher warned him not to read Koheleth. “Since then,” he says, “I’ve read every commentary on Kohelet I could find.” His appraisal of S.’s work in light of that remarkable statement engendered my eagerness to read: “Segal’s is the most insightful, most lucid, most persuasive one I have ever read.”

For anyone who is preaching or teaching the Book of Ecclesiastes, I recommend this commentary for its unique translation alone. Though the comments and translational notes are not thorough, on some of the more complicated portions of Ecclesiastes they will give you another voice with which to interact without taking up much of your time—and there are some very insightful notes. The main portion of the commentary (pp. 11-97) contains the whole of the Hebrew text of Ecclesiastes (by and large the MT) divided into sections and interspersed with translation and commentary. The author usually does not “show his work” (i.e., how he came to his translation), which does make the work of less use for those primarily interested in the technicality of the Hebrew.

Yet, having seriously engaged the words of Ecclesiastes and an impressive array of commentators, S. offers a thoughtful and intriguing—and not obviously objectionable—vision of the whole. For S., Ecclesiastes is “a tale of a failed search for certain knowledge” (p. 1). S.’s “principal contention” is the following: “This is not a philosophical tract, but the tale of Kohelet’s search” (p. 114). It is a narrative of one man’s experience of life “under the sun,” that is, “in the empirical world” (p. 139), “a retrospective collection of pieces composed over a lifetime” (p. 140), presented with all of their seeming contradictions. “Kohelet sees and describes life unadorned and undisguised, honestly and movingly” (p. 155; quoted from Haim Shapira, Ecclesiastes: The Biblical Philosopher [in Hebrew] [Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2011] 223). The author of Ecclesiastes, who, according to S., is responsible for creating Koheleth and the narrator, gives “advice as to how to best survive” in a world whose way “is beyond the ken of mortal man” (p. 1). “The purpose of [Ecclesiastes] . . . is . . . to be a goad to further thought by offering challenges” (p. 147). It “has a lot more to do with asking questions than supplying definitive answers” (p. 113). “It is not an answer to all challenges, but a challenge to all answers” (p. 150).

The above assessments occur in the “Brief Introduction” (pp. 1-7) and final section of the commentary, entitled “Review Essays and Further Thoughts” (pp. 101-62). These sections “expand upon points included in the introduction and in the commentary and offer new perspectives,” emphasizing “wherein the commentary differs from others” (p. 99). Here, too, S. offers a discussion of his theory of reading texts (texts are complex and often multivalent but not unlimited), a contention that there is change and progression in