Over a decade in the planning and publication, this volume is a collection of essays offered by colleagues, friends, and former students of Martin Abegg in honor of his 65th birthday.

After introductory comments by Dorothy Peters, who discusses the road by which Abegg came to the scrolls, the volume presents two essays which frame the legacy and impact of Abegg’s scholarship. Emanuel Tov specifically recounts Abegg’s pivotal role in the computerization of the Qumran corpus “from concordance to words and words to concordance.” Jason Kalman illuminates the process by which Abegg produced the now famous Preliminary Edition from a card-catalogue system, including a never before published transcript of Abegg’s ground-breaking presentation delivered in 1991 at Hebrew Union College. The remainder of the volume is divided into three sections: The War Scroll, War and Peace in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and War and Peace in Early Jewish and Christian Texts and Interpretation.

The first section surveys one of Abegg’s central passions, the War Scroll. Drawing upon Abegg’s work as a framework, George Brooke reflects upon the textuality, eschatological landscape, and thematic violence of 1QM, combining to present a vision of anticipated victory over the Sons of Darkness. Utilizing the noun phrase in 1QM as a model, Robert Holmstead and John Screnock offer a vision for the writing of a descriptive grammar of distinct scrolls in service of illuminating issues of syntax and semantics. Set in relation to 4QEn⁶, Anthony Meyer explores the use of “mystery” in 1QM postulating the role the “mysteries of God” play in the ordained suffering of the righteous. In a thought-provoking essay revisiting the core of Abegg’s HUC dissertation, Kipp Davis argues, based on digital analysis, for re-joining the 4QM⁴ fragments which Abegg had separated. The first section concludes with studies by Dongshin Chang on the varied significance of the phrase “the covenant of perpetual priesthood” in 1QM and 1QSb and Robert Kugler on 1QM and the Cave 4 fragments as literary artifacts evidencing a diversity of viewpoints within an emerging ethnic group.

The second section broadens the focus to the greater Qumran corpus. Alex Jassen envisions the violent imagery found in the Scrolls, and especially that of 1QM, as a rhetorical device, a violent imaging—one that frames an “us versus them” orientation and empowers the disempowered. Revisiting 4QSefer ha-Milhamah, Brian Schultz carefully argues for a reading that includes a seafaring battle with a return to dry land, something unknown in Israelite warfare, but indeed plausible based on a new reading of Num 24:24. John Kampen compares the wisdom writings of Ben Sira, 1 Enoch, and Daniel with Instruction finding common themes of non-violent responses to oppression. Focusing on the liturgical aspects of 1QM and expanding through the corpus, Daniel Falk argues persuasively that the use and re-use of prayer formulas at Qumran as evidence of worship as a form of spiritual warfare. Also included are essays presenting a reading
of the re-discovered Rylands Genizah fragment of the Aramaic Levi Document, shedding new light on Gen 34 (Dorothy Peters and Esther Eshel), the rhetoric of warfare at Qumran with the larger horizon of ideological warfare found in the Second Temple period (James Bowley), and the essential role of ritual purity within warfare as presented in 1QM (Ian Werrett and Stephen Parker).

The final section further broadens the approach by exploring issues of war and peace within wider early Jewish and Christian texts. Torlief Elgvin places the “Qumran sectarian resistance texts” in juxtaposition with the wider Hasdownean state-craft ideology. Craig Evans argues for shared eschatological features between various writings in the Qumran corpus, most notable the War texts and 4QMessianic Apocalypse, and the writings of the New Testament, while Kyung Baek explores the Gospel of Matthew’s presentation of Jesus taking up the “sword-in-the-mouth” not the hand. The volume is rounded out with Michael Wise’s exploration of P.Hever 30 and the Bar Kochba revolt and a textual history of Ethiopic Psalm 151 by Steve Delamarter.

What is particularly impressive about this volume is the depth of analysis and treatment it achieves. First, the collection of essays dealing specifically with the War Scroll compromise a truly unique treatment on the topic, as there are very few volumes in recent years which deal specifically with the War Scroll. Each essay represents a substantive and nuanced presentation on a manuscript which, in my opinion, is ripe for fresh engagement. Second, the volume brings together in one location a wide-ranging collection of essays on violence, war, and peace in the ideological landscape of the late Second Temple period. It is here that this volume is an indispensable work for those interested in how and why these issues take textual and ideological shape within the late Second Temple period, both within Qumran and without.

Whereas some Festschriften are more of a testament to the honoree and can suffer from a lack of focus and theme, this volume is to be highly commended for its scope and original engagement on the subject—while also reflecting on Abegg’s legacy and impact upon the field of Scrolls scholarship. For those indelibly influenced by Marty Abegg’s work, this important volume is a welcome addition to the discussion of themes of war and peace, violence, and of course, the War Scroll itself.

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