

Preface and Acknowledgements

The idea of this collection emerged in March 2018 when I was awarded the Schweitzer Memorial Prize of the Hungarian Society of Hebraists. In his laudatory address, my former teacher Géza Komoróczy, professor emeritus of Hebrew Studies and Assyriology at Eötvös Lóránd State University, Budapest, suggested that the publication of such a collection would be appropriate. Happily enough, Albrecht Döhnert at de Gruyter received the idea favourably. I thank both of them for their enthusiasm towards my work.

The structure of the volume reflects the main directions of my scholarly interest. The first part deals with the Dead Sea Scrolls. The study of the scrolls was my first area of interest, which led me to the excellent universities of Leuven and Groningen. Later on, I gave courses on the scrolls throughout my teaching career. This research culminated in my PhD dissertation written under the wise guidance of Florentino García Martínez at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, and a textbook, which was published in Hungarian as well as in German with the kind cooperation of Peter Porzig.¹

The second part contains papers on the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. When I returned to Hungary and received a teaching position at the Theological Academy of Pápa, I launched—together with my colleague and friend József Zsengellér—the organisation of a series of yearly conferences on the Deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament; a project that provoked scholarly interest for more than a decade. The most important fruit of this period was the editing of eleven volumes of conference proceedings,² several books and a textbook in Hungarian,³ and a monograph on Baruch 4–5. While working on this monograph, I enjoyed the support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, hosted by Tobias Nicklas in the Regensburg University.⁴

1 King, Priest, Prophet. Positive Eschatological Protagonists of the Qumran Library (STDJ 47), Leiden 2003; and G.G. Xeravits / P. Porzig: Einführung in die Qumranliteratur. Die Handschriften vom Toten Meer, Berlin 2015.

2 On this, see [http://www.4enoch.org/wiki4/index.php?title=International_Conference_on_the_Deuterocanonical_Books_\(2004-\),_learned_society](http://www.4enoch.org/wiki4/index.php?title=International_Conference_on_the_Deuterocanonical_Books_(2004-),_learned_society)

3 I would like to mention the two most important of them, the textbook A deuterokanonikus könyvek: bevezetés keletkezés- és irodalomtörténetükbe (Deuterocanonica 4), Budapest and Pápa 2008, and a commented translation of the *Lives of the Prophets*, A Próféták élete: zsidó szentéletrajzok az ókorból (Eulogia 3), Budapest 2010, both available at my academia.edu page.

4 “Take Courage, O Jerusalem...” Studies in the Psalms of Baruch 4–5 (DCLSt 25), Berlin 2015.

The third part deals with the Late Antique synagogues, which have been at the centre of my research during the past half decade. The study of the reinterpretation of biblical figures in early Judaism naturally led me into this exciting field. My research on this topic was greatly enriched by an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship, hosted by Stefan Schorch at Martin Luther University, Halle. The main result of this research was an exhibition at the Hungarian Bible Museum, Budapest, on “Jewish and Christian Holy Places in Late Antique Palestine.”⁵

While working on the manuscript of the present volume, I benefited the friendly assistance of a great number of people. I would like to single out some of them. Zoltán Tringer, László Fejes and Kálmán Ajtay made possible the purchase of a Tobii Eye Tracker that facilitates my work during my illness. Ádám Vér carefully assisted in editorial issues. Eszter Jakab helped finding a translator for one of the papers, the original language of which was French. Attila Lévai, dean at Selye János University deserves deep gratitude for his collegiality and friendship. Special words of appreciation go to Beáta Tóth, for her tireless and heroic struggle with my English for nearly twenty years. Finally, it is a great honour for me that a real *magister*, Friedrich Reiterer, honorary president of the ISDCL—whose scholarly erudition I have always admired—agreed to write introductory words to the volume.

My family has always been a source of support. I thank my children, Ábris, Sára, Dömi, Rézi for their cheerfulness. My dear wife, Krisztina, is a true *’ēšet ḥāyil*, she is strong, wise and tender. With her, life is full of hope and love—I dedicate this book to her.

Géza G. Xeravits

5 Zsidó és keresztény szent helyek a késő-órkori Palesztinában (Jewish and Christian Holy Places in Late Antique Palestine; with a detailed English summary), Budapest 2016, available at my academia.edu page.