By way of minor critique, three items are worthy of mention. One is a query whether Radner has attempted too much in one go? Each of the chapters could themselves have been books on their own, giving space to flesh out the contours of Radner's reflections on human mortality more fully. Yet the downside to this is that Radner's vision is to treat the various sub-topics together as a whole within the context of human mortality and life. Breaking up the discussion into multiple volumes would then lose the strength and character of *A Time to Keep* itself. Secondly, one may ask if it is a missed opportunity that Radner did not develop more of a sacramental ontology in relation to human life. To be sure, he speaks deeply of the Eucharist and the reality of human existence in Christ. Though the intimations are present, more could (needs to?) be said regarding an ontology of participation in which something like theosis is at once a participation in the triune life of God, as well as a recovering of authentic humanity through participation in the life of Christ (ie, theosis as anthroposis). Finally, specialists in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur should recognize Radner as a kindred spirit and friend. *A Time to Keep* contains a narrative theological quality in respect to human existence, mortality, and finitude that is potentially resonate with the narrative philosophical hermeneutics of Ricoeur. However, though Ricoeur could complement Radner's insights in significant and substantial ways, the inclusion of Ricoeur (beyond his brief mention) would likely also make *A Time to Keep*, in the best ways possible, even more of a challenging and productive read.

In reality these three critiques are minor and should be held loosely. *A Time to Keep* stands up well on its own as a theological reflection on human creaturely life under the triune God in conversation with Scripture, culture, and tradition. Radner has presented us with a work that is equally rigorous and academic, as well as in touch with the heart of human mortality and finitude. Radner's prose requires effort but for the genuinely theologically reflective, patient, and imaginative it will yield fruit for scholar, student, and layman alike.

Malka K. Simkovich, *Discovering Second Temple Literature: The Scriptures and Stories That Shaped Early Judaism.* Philadelphia: JPS, 2018. (xxx + 354 pp.) ISBN: 978-0-8276-1265-5

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Discovering Second Temple Literature is an entry-level survey of the people, places, history, texts and ideas of Jews in the Second Temple period (2TP). It is designed to work as a complement to JPS's *Outside the Bible* (2013). Simkovich, herself an Orthodox Jew (p. xxvi), and holder of the Crown-Ryan Chair of Jewish Studies and director of Catholic-Jewish Studies at the Catholic Theological Union, aims to help both Christians and Jews appreciate this period in Israel's history. She claims that both groups tend to view it as an "in-between stage", defining it, in the case of Jews, by the biblical period and the Rabbinic period, and in the case of Christians, by the Old and New Testaments. Indeed, many Christians do continue to refer to this time in Jewish history as the "intertestamental period", although the dates do not exactly coincide. For Simkovich,

the 2TP begins with the construction of that temple in 520-515 BCE and ends with its destruction in 70 CE, that is, it is "the extensive period of time between the end of the biblical period and the beginning of the Rabbinic period" (p. xxiii). This means that some late biblical literature was composed in this period, e.g. Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel.

Simkovich emphasizes both the diversity of and the commonalities among different groups of Jews in the 2TP. She argues that there were several elements that almost all Jews held in common: the Torah, the practices of circumcision, dietary law and Sabbath observance, and belief in the nation's "divine chosenness" (p. xvii). But for the most part she highlights "the richly diverse chorus of Jewish conversations" (p. xvii). She demonstrates throughout that some Jews favoured separatism while others favoured assimilation, and in her words, there is a "lack of correlation between where Jews lived, the language they spoke, and their level of religious piety" (p. xix).

In the first part of the book ("The Modern Recovery of Second Temple Literature"), focusing on one aspect of "discovering" 2TP literature, Simkovich narrates the fascinating (and sometimes controversial) discoveries of the 400,000 fragments of the Cairo Genizah (ch. 1), manuscripts preserved in Christian monasteries from Ethiopia to the Vatican to Afghanistan (ch. 2), and of course the Dead Sea Scrolls (ch. 3), all of which set the stage for the next sections.

Part two ("Jewish Life in the Second Temple Period") begins the discussion proper of the Second Temple period, focusing on the Jewish communities of Jerusalem (ch. 4), Alexandria (ch. 5) and Antioch (ch. 6). Each chapter describes key people and events in the cities' histories, and their complicated relationships with their Hellenistic and Roman rulers.

Part three ("The Worldviews of Second Temple Writers") introduces significant individuals and groups of the 2TP: the "Wisdom Seekers" (ch. 7), Philo of Alexandria and the author of the Letter of Aristeas, who both argue that Jewish tradition is superior in some ways to Hellenism; the Sectarians (ch. 8), including the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Qumran community, Hasideans, Sicarii, Zealots and Therapeutae; and, "Interpreters of Israelite history" (ch. 9) in the Books of Chronicles, Jubilees and the Psalms of Solomon. In ch. 10, she writes in detail about the Jewish historian, Josephus Flavius, although his work features in many chapters.

Finally, in part four ("The Holy Texts of Second Temple Judaism") Simkovich covers different collections of Jewish texts (ch. 11): the Hebrew Bible/Tanakh, the Septuagint, and the Syriac Peshitta. She compares the Hebrew and Christian canons and describes the Aramaic Targumim. In "Rewriting the Bible" (ch. 12) she discusses texts which elaborate on stories in books that would later be canonized into the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Greek versions of Daniel and Esther) and in ch. 13 characters of biblical origin who fascinated authors in the 2TP, and were strikingly developed, including various devils and angels.

Throughout the book and especially in part 4, Simkovich deftly navigates issues of canon and authority, suggesting that Jews of this period may not have felt "pressured to make absolute fault lines that divided texts into the categories of 'holy' and 'profane'" (p. 53). She comments on the ease with which one could add to or remove scrolls from a collection, compared with the planning and precision required when

combining texts into a codex (by and large a later book form). For example, "An owner of two scrolls might have placed Judges, a text that would come to be regarded as canonical, on a shelf next to Jubilees, a document that would later be excluded from the canon, and this owner might have considered both scrolls to be equally sacred" (p. 203). Even in 200 CE, she shows that whether a text was biblical or non-biblical was still disputed, especially among the Writings. In particular, she highlights three pairs of similar texts, one of which was later canonized and one of which was not (Proverbs and Ben Sira; Esther and Judith; Daniel in Hebrew and Aramaic and Daniel in Greek), ultimately suggesting that dating and language may have been factors in canonization.

One disappointing aspect of the book concerns the Septuagint, which the author presents for the most part simplistically. She presents the myth of its origins from the Letter of Aristeas, and although she admits that scholars debate whether Ptolemy II really initiated the translation and talks about the motivations of the author (pp. 108-109), she appears to accept most of the account as historical. Critically, she assumes that Aristeas refers to the translation into Greek of all the books in the Hebrew Bible (which, as she has explained elsewhere, had not yet been canonized) whereas it is commonly thought to refer only to the translation of the Torah. Her bibliography lacks any standard introductory work on the Septuagint.

The timeline (pp. xxvii-xxviii) is useful to refer to, but it is regrettable that no maps or images are provided. Scripture and other ancient source references (included in the endnotes) would definitely serve the reader better in parentheses in the main text. An extensive glossary is included (pp. 275-80) and some definitions are provided in the main text where new jargon is introduced.

By design there is some repetition between chapters, enabling teachers to set readings in whichever order they choose. The book is intended to be used "in college and other adult education settings" and the author gives guidance to this end (pp. xxiii-xxv). There is also an accompanying study guide available online (https://jps.org/books/discovering-second-temple-literature, prepared by Rachel Slutsky).

Although the book claims to appeal to Christians as well as Jews, and makes reference to New Testament accounts where relevant, it does lean more toward a Jewish audience and references to Rabbinic literature are more frequent. For a recent introduction to Second Temple literature that focuses more on the person of Jesus one might consider Matthias Henze's Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017). Nevertheless, Simkovich has written an engaging, easy-to-read introduction to the 2TP, with a wealth of information, and she certainly succeeds in presenting the period as one of diversity and "literary productivity" (p. xvii).