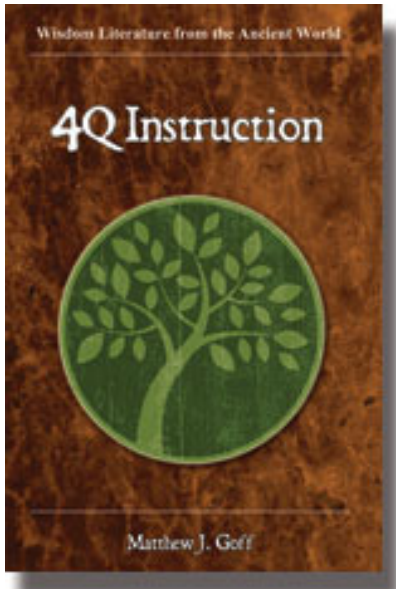


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Matthew J. Goff

4QInstruction

Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World 2

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Kenneth Atkinson
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

4QInstruction is among the most important and mysterious of all the Dead Sea Scrolls. In their 1999 official publication of this text, John Strugnell and Daniel J. Harrington estimated that it was as lengthy as the Temple Scroll and the Hodayot (DJD 34, 2). Discovered in Cave 1 (1Q26) and Cave 4 (4Q415-418, 4Q423) and in several fragments that have surfaced since the composition's official publication (XQ7; 4Q416 23; PAM 43.67 frg. 7), 4QInstruction was clearly an important work for the Qumran community. Formerly referred to in the literature as 4QSapiential Work A (4QSap A) and *Mûsâr lē Mēvîn*, it has been given the name 4QInstruction to reflect its sapiential character. However, the current name for this document is somewhat misleading. The text also describes such diverse issues as the elect status of the *mēbin* (4Q418 81 4–5), farmers (4Q423 5 5–6), poverty (אִיבּוֹן or רֵאשׁ/רֵשׁ; 4Q415 6 2; 4Q416 2 ii 20; 4Q416 2 iii 2, 8, 12, 19; 4Q418 177 5; cf. 4Q418 148 ii 4; 4Q418 249 3), and advice regarding trade (4Q418 126 ii 12–13). The fragment preserved in 4Q415 2 ii, moreover, is unique as it directly addresses a woman. The composition also emphasizes the theme of revelation, which is often associated with the רִזְ נְהִיָּה. Goff translates this difficult phrase as “the mystery that is to be” and believes the author uses the *niphāl* participle to overcome the temporal restrictions of other verb forms and to show that the revealed mystery pertains to the entire chronological order from beginning to end. Although this expression is rare in

Jewish literature, it appears over twenty times in 4QInstruction (see, e.g., 4Q415 6 4; 4Q416 2 i 5 [par. 4Q417 2 i 10–11]; 4Q416 2 iii 9, 14, 18, 21 [par. 4Q418 9 8, 15; 4Q418 10 1, 3]; 4Q417 1 i 3, 6, 8, 18, 21 [par. 4Q418 43 2, 4, 6, 14, 16]; 4Q417 1 ii 3; 4Q418 77 2, 4; 4Q418 123 ii 4; 4Q418 172 1; 4Q418 184 2; and 4Q423 4 1, 4 [par. 1Q26 1 1, 4]). The phrase has been reconstructed in 4Q415 24 1; 4Q416 17 3; 4Q418 179 3; 4Q418 190 2–3; 4Q418 201 1; 4Q418c 8; 4Q423 3 2; 4Q423 5 2; and 4Q423 7 7). Goff notes that this mystery is not the only indication of apocalyptic influence in the text. The work teaches the *mebin* that eschatological judgment is inescapable, and includes two judgment scenes (4Q161 1; 4Q418 69 ii). These apocalyptic elements, and the other diverse topics in 4QInstruction, make it difficult text to classify the work, since it appears to contain many features common to both wisdom and apocalyptic literature.

Matthew Goff, who is widely known for his work on 4QInstruction and other wisdom texts from Qumran, seeks to explore this complicated document through a detailed commentary and critical edition of its main fragments. His book contains an introduction that examines such issues as the extant manuscripts of 4QInstruction and its proposed reconstructions, its language, its genre, some of its major theological concepts (e.g., revelation, eschatology, angels, and apocalyptic worldview), the social location of the *mebin*, the date of the text, and the work's relationship with other Dead Sea Scrolls. Each chapter contains a translation and commentary of the composition's largest and most important fragments (4Q415 2 ii; 4Q416 1; 4Q416 2 ii; 4Q416 2 iii; 4Q416 2 iv; 4Q417 1 i; 4Q417 1 ii; 4Q417 2 i; 4Q418 55; 4Q418 69 ii; 4Q418 81; 4Q418 103 ii; 4Q418 126 ii + 122 ii; 4Q423 1; 4Q423 5). Most chapters include an excursus on a topic relevant to the fragment under discussion. These sections are quite diverse in their content and include such topics as "Marriage and Women in 4QInstruction" (33–35), "Debt Slavery and Indebtedness in Early Judaism" (73–78), "Genesis 1–3 and Marriage in 4QInstruction and Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts" (122–25), "4Q417 1 ii 12 and the Evil Inclination in Ancient Judaism" (178–81), and "The Law of Diverse Kinds in Leviticus, Deuteronomy and 4QInstruction" (269–72).

Goff's book should be read alongside the 1994 official edition (Strugnell and Harrington, DJD 34) of 4QInstruction for the clarifications it offers on the placements of some fragments associated with this work. Goff proposes that the extant fragments of this composition derived from seven or perhaps eight copies of the text (1Q26; 4Q415; 4Q416; 4Q417; 4Q418; 4Q418a; and 4Q423). This places 4QInstruction in the same category as the War Scroll and the Damascus Document, both of which are preserved in a similar number of copies. The exact number of copies, as noted by Goff, is related to the debate over the number of fragments associated with 4Q418. The DJD 34 edition of Strugnell and Harrington can be misleading. Although they number 303 fragments of 4Q418, several of these numbers are null and do not represent distinct fragments of

4QInstruction. The difficulty in determining which fragments actually belonged to 4QInstruction has great implications for our interpretation of many of the fragments examined in Goff's book. The DJD editors, for example, suggested that 4Q418 69 ii 4–15 is a separate text that was incorporated into 4QInstruction (DJD 34, 14). Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar (*To Increase Learning for the Understanding Ones: Reading and Reconstructing the Fragmentary Early Jewish Sapiential Text 4QInstruction*, STDJ 44 [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 208–24) expanded this proposal to argue that 4Q418 55 and 69 have a different literary form and language than the rest of 4QInstruction. Because 4Q418 69 ii parallels 1 En. 91 and 103:1–104:6, this proposal has important ramifications for the interpretation of 4QInstruction. Goff here and throughout his study takes a cautious approach to the many theories regarding the reconstruction and placement of the fragments associated with 4QInstruction. He notes that, because many of the themes in these fragments have much in common with other fragments of 4QInstruction, they probably do not have a separate provenance from the rest of the work. Goff is correct to be cautious and reject any theories of a direct reliance of 4QInstruction on 1 Enoch, since it is equally plausible that the author of this Dead Sea Scroll was exposed to some of the Enochic materials that make up 1 Enoch, which were widely circulated in the late Second Temple Period.

In lieu of engaging in complicated reconstructions of 4QInstruction, Goff seeks to reconstruct, translate, and interpret each of the major fragments of the composition to understand their theology and social location. He notes that several passages of 4Q423 suggest that some of the intended audience of this document were farmers, while 4Q512 is among the few Jewish compositions to directly address a woman. Poverty appears to be a central theme of 4QInstruction, as the word “poor” frequently appears as a description of the audience. Goff's study of the social location of the author represents a significant advance in the study of 4QInstruction. Through his rigorous examination of each significant fragment of this work, he shows that the issue is not whether the *mebin* is actually poor or not but that the text repeatedly asserts that he is. This figure addresses those who are both self-sufficient and those who have lost their means of support. This economic diversity of the intended audience, Goff proposes, suggests that the *mebin* has a means of financial support that can fluctuate. He also suggests the addressee of 4Q423 5 may have been an actual farmer. Although much of the advice of this person in 4QInstruction is reminiscent of Sir 38:24–34, Goff convincingly shows that the author of this Dead Sea Scroll, unlike Ben Sira, addresses a variety of professions that are all low in the economic hierarchy of society.

Because 4QInstruction describes a group whose members were taught they have been separated from the rest of humankind, Goff regards the community behind this document as a sect. It is a wisdom text with an apocalyptic worldview, which has important ramifications for understanding its unique author and his community. In this

text God has ordained the *mebin* to have an elect status that makes him like the angels (4Q418 81 1–5) and that gives him access to supernatural revelation and life after death. It is useful to compare Goff's understanding of this revelation with the insightful work of Jean-Sébastien Rey, who views 4QInstruction as a sapiential work in which this knowledge is universal to all humanity (*4QInstruction: Sagesse et eschatologie*, STDJ 81 [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 338). Goff proposes that 4QInstruction was likely written in the second century BCE. Although the extant manuscripts show that 4QInstruction is widely represented among the Dead Sea Scrolls, Goff is certainly correct not to make any direct association between the community of this text and the Qumran sect. Several key terms found in the Dead Sea Scrolls such as the *yahad*, *maskil*, *mebaqer*, as well as the Teacher of Righteousness, are not found in 4QInstruction. The addressee of 4QInstruction, moreover, appears free to make his own decisions. This is a radical departure from the highly regulated lifestyle found in the Damascus Document or the Community Rule. However, 4QInstruction contains many similarities with several sectarian documents, especially the Community Rule, the Damascus Document, and the Hodayot. 4QInstruction even shares an entire phrase with one of the poems in the Hodayot (4Q418 55 10 = 1QH 18:29–30). Goff suggests that the author of the Hodayot possibly used 4QInstruction as a source. The frequency of *רז נהיה* in 4QInstruction is reminiscent of 1QMysteries (1Q27 1 I 3–4) and the Community Rule (1QS 11:3–4) and may indicate some relationship between 4QInstruction and the Qumran sect. The focus of 4Q415 and 4Q418 on marriage, and a secular lifestyle, suggest that these texts likely reflect a pre-Qumranic period, or may have been intended for members who lived in Jewish society.

Goff has incorporated all significant readings and scholarship pertaining to the major fragments of 4QInstruction in this volume. His book is perhaps best read in conjunction with DJD 34 both for its expanded treatment of many fragments and because Goff's volume does not include all the fragments commonly associated with 4QInstruction. The only flaws with Goff's book are its lack of a comprehensive index of all the valuable material scattered throughout the many excursus sections and the absence of a conclusion that summarizes the findings of the work. Nevertheless, this is a major contribution to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls that should be read by anyone interested in 4QInstruction or in the early history of the Qumran sect and its possible precursor groups. It also contains much valuable information for the study of sapiential and apocalyptic Jewish literature.