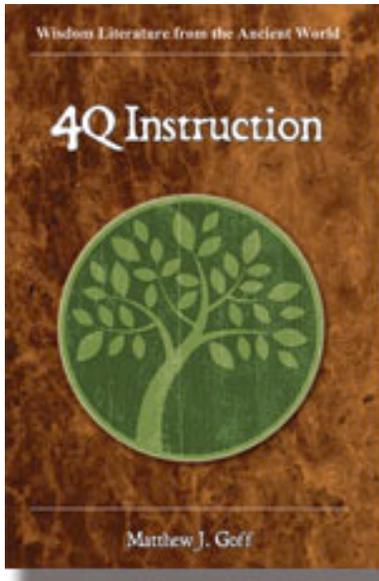


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Matthew J. Goff

4QInstruction

Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World 2

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Matthew J. Goff's *4QInstruction* "offers a critical text of the major fragments of 4QInstruction" (xv). However, this work is much more than a presentation (and translation) of a critical text, as it also offers a line-by-line commentary with periodic excursions on related topics. The volume consists of an introduction and fifteen chapters dealing with the "largest and most important fragments" (2) from cave 4. The fragments are presented numerically, thus 4Q415–418 and then 4Q423, although this is not an indication of the original order.

Goff's introduction deals with several preliminary matters. The chapter is divided as follows: "Manuscripts and Discovery," "The Structure of 4QInstruction," "Language and Style," "Genre: 4QInstruction as a Wisdom Text," "Revelation, Eschatology and Determinism in a Qumran Wisdom Text," "The Elect Status of the *Mebin*," "The Lot of Angels and the Prospect of Eternal Life," "The Elect Status of the *Mebin* and Genesis 1–3," "4QInstruction: A Wisdom Text with an Apocalyptic Worldview," "The Poverty and Social Location of the *Mebin*," and "The Composition's Date and Relation to the Dead Sea Sect." The introduction offers thorough enough treatments of the aforementioned topics that those unacquainted with 4QInstruction, wisdom literature in general, or relevant Second Temple points of interest will be able to engage and benefit from the critical text without much difficulty.

Each chapter deals with a particular fragment, and each shares the same layout: a presentation of the Hebrew fragments with possible reconstructions, which are largely facilitated from previous editions of the text (esp. DJD 34), an English translation, textual notes, a commentary on each line of the text, and periodic expanded discussions on relevant early Jewish themes related to a particular line or fragment.

The first chapter deals with 4Q415 2 ii, which is quite fragmentary. Goff notes that all that survives is a portion of the right side of the column (32). From what has survived, it appears to deal with teachings on marriage and divorce. As a result, Goff provides two brief expositions on “Marriage and Divorce in 4QInstruction” and “Women and Divorce in Early Judaism.” This chapter is the only fragment that is presented from 4Q415. Indeed, many of the fragments from 4Q415, which indicate that it was a very large scroll, are so damaged that little could be said about them, apart from where there are parallels in other texts, such as 4Q418. Other 4Q415 fragments that have identifiable text were not included in this volume (e.g., f2i+1ii:1–9; f6:1–7, f9:1–11; see DJD 34, 41–71). No reason is given for the absence. Perhaps it is because they contain themes that are paralleled elsewhere in later and less-damaged fragments.

The next four chapters deal with fragments from 4Q416. In the first fragment, 4Q416 1, only portions of the right column have survived. Goff’s reconstruction is partially facilitated by parallels from 4Q418 f1–2c, f209, f212, and f229. As Goff notes, this is generally considered to be the opening text of 4QInstruction (45). The fragment preserves two themes: the structure of the cosmos, which Goff notes is a primary theme in early Jewish literature; and eschatological judgment with the destruction of the “fleshly spirit.” 4Q416 2 i–ii, the next in this series, preserves portions of two columns of which the second has the most surviving material. The reconstruction of these columns is partially done by parallels with 4Q417 2 i–ii + 23, 4Q418 7b, and 4Q418 8. This fragment, according to Goff, breaks down into five discrete units: charity and God as a provider of food, discouraging surety, the danger of an unsound financial arrangement, an upright attitude to one’s work, and restrained use of resources (62). When dealing with this fragment Goff also discusses “Debt Security and Surety in the Ancient Near East and the Wisdom Tradition” (65–68) and “Debt Slavery and Indebtedness in Early Judaism” (73–78). According to Goff, the next text, 4Q416 2 iii, is one of the best-preserved texts of 4QInstruction. A number of previously mentioned themes are present in this text, as well as the need to study and learn, the nature of the elect’s status, and instruction on parents and marriage. Goff also utilizes lines 8–9 of fragment iii to discuss the “The Inheritance of the *Mebin*” (101). The final chapter of the 4Q416 fragments deals with f2 iv and is the last surviving column of this scroll. Marriage is also a theme in this text, and Goff discusses as part of his commentary “Gen 1–3 and Marriage in 4QInstruction and Ancient Jewish and

Christian Texts” (122–125) and “The Vows and Oaths of Wives in Num 30 and Early Jewish Texts: 4QInstruction, the Damascus Document and the Temple Scroll” (132–33).

The next series of fragments come from 4Q417, chapters 6–8. The first chapter, on 4Q417 1 i, has one column that preserves a good deal of text (especially the middle portion of the column), parts of which parallel 4Q418 43–45 i and 4Q418^a 11. As Goff notes, the first part of the column appears to deal with the great knowledge, especially divine revelation, one can learn through the “mystery that is to be” (*raz niyheh*). The fragment also deals with God’s creation, God’s deterministic plan, and the distinction between “the fleshly spirit and the spiritual people.” Goff utilizes the important contents of this text to offer two brief excurses on “Tripartite Divisions of Time in 4QInstruction” (146–47) and “Gen 1–3: Dualistic Conceptions of Humankind, and Two Adams” (166–68). The next fragment, 4Q417 1 ii, is exceedingly fragmentary and is partly reconstructed by parallels in 4Q418 123 i. The column, according to Goff, is part hymnic composition, ethical teaching, and discussion of the evil inclination. In fact, the evil inclination as referenced in 4Q417 1 ii 12 leads to another brief discussion on the evil inclination, “4Q417 1 ii 2 and the Evil Inclination in Ancient Judaism” (178–81). The excursus deals partially with the appearance of the “evil inclination” in early Judaism and correctly notes the differences between it and the later developments of the “inclinations” in rabbinic Judaism.

The last of these fragments, 4Q417 2 i + 26, preserves a large text that partly parallels 4Q416 2 i, 4Q418 7a, 4Q418 7b (+ 64, 199, 66, 26, 27), and 4Q418^a 22. This fragment dealing with the borrowing of money, indebtedness, and eschatological judgment shares thematic content with fragments that appear previously in the volume. Goff’s commentary is supplemented with a discussion on “Third Isaiah, Mourning, and Eschatological Joy” (196–98).

The next five chapters, 9–13, treat a series of fragments from 4Q418. The first, 4Q418 55, deals with the acquiring of wisdom. Goff notes that, unlike other fragments, this one distinguishes itself by the use of the second-person plural rather than the first-person singular. Goff also notes that it is unique in its presentation of angels as models of conduct for the audience of the scroll. 4Q418 69 ii, the following chapter, deals with “theophanic judgment” and preserves an eschatological scene. Goff here, however, deviates from Elgvin’s suggestion that this scroll relies “directly” on elements from 1 Enoch and more cautiously suggests that this fragment shows “some awareness of Enochic traditions” (226). Direct reliance in ancient literature is always difficult to assert (or prove conclusively), and Goff’s caution is warranted. The next fragment, 4Q418 81 + 81a, is partially reconstructed from parallels in 4Q423 8 and 4Q423 23. It is said to offer some insight in the elect’s relationship with the angels and his separation from general humanity. In the treatment of f81:10, Goff states that others (e.g., Fitzmyer) have noted

the connection between the phrase “from the men of (God’s) favor” (*me-anshei ratzon*) and Luke 2:14, “men of good pleasure” (254). While the Greek *eudokia* (goodwill, pleasure) seems to have been used several times to translate the Hebrew *ratzon* (will, favor) in the LXX, recent scholarship has suggested that the Lukan phrase should be read “good will to men,” thus reading the *eudokia* as a nominative rather than a genitive, *eudokias* (“of good will”). This reading seems to fit better with the idea uttered in Luke 2:10 where good news will come “to *all* men” (*panti to lao*), rather than simply the elect. So the connection between this fragment and the gospel appears tentative. In the next chapter Goff deals with 4Q418 103 ii, which partially parallels 4Q418^a 4. Goff notes that this fragment is significant because it is halakic and is addressed to people with “humble and modest professions.” In this chapter he provides a comparison and brief exposition on “The Law of Diverse Kinds in Leviticus, Deuteronomy and 4QInstruction” (269–72). The final fragment, 4Q418 126 ii + 122 ii, deals with God’s creation and the recompense to the wicked and the righteous. The expressed determinism of God’s cosmic order shifts to an eschatological scenario where the wicked will be “locked up” but the head of the poor will be “lifted up.”

The final two chapters treat fragments from 4Q423. The first fragment, 4Q423 1, is a short seven-line text that presents the *mebin* as having been give authority over the garden of Eden. Goff suggests that the scroll may have presented Adam and Eve as a paradigm for marriage, thereby encouraging the *mebin* to marry and have children. It should be noted, and it is not, that with the many implied references/allusions to Gen 1–3, Adam (or Eve) does not explicitly appear in any of the surviving fragments. Indeed, this is only a minor critique, since much of 4QInstruction has been lost. The final fragment in this series is 4Q423 5. The ten lines in the fragment are partially reconstructed with parallels from 4Q418^a 3. The fragment here is unique because of its mention of Korah’s rebellion (Num 16), which is only mentioned in one other postbiblical wisdom text (Sir 45:18–19), although the context seems quite different. Otherwise the fragment fits well with other 4QInstruction texts.

One of the great disappointments is that so much of 4QInstruction has been lost, yet Goff shows how much can be ascertained from some of its most important fragments. His work does an admirable job of balancing text and commentary, complementing the critical side of these texts with a commentary whose scope is wide enough that scholars otherwise unfamiliar with 4QInstruction can gain a great deal from one of Qumran’s most important wisdom texts. Furthermore, his presentation of the major fragments prevent the reader from being mired in hundreds of fragments—some of which only preserve a handful of legible letters. That said, this work is also a valuable resource for those who work with the scrolls. Goff’s *4QInstruction* is a welcome volume, and anyone

interested in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Second Temple Judaism, and wisdom literature in general should read it.