University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies Department

Classics and Religious Studies

1-1-1998

Review of *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls,* edited by Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint

Sidnie White Crawford
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, scrawford1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/classicsfacpub

Part of the Classics Commons

Crawford, Sidnie White, "Review of *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls,* edited by Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint" (1998). *Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies Department.* Paper 108.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/classicsfacpub/108

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Classics and Religious Studies at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies Department by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Published in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 312 (1998), pp. 90–92.
Copyright © 1998 American Schools of Oriental Research.

Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, edited by Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997. xii + 176 pp. Paper. $20.00.

Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls is the first volume of a new series, *Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature,* being published under the auspices of the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute at Trinity Western University in British Columbia. The volume is a collection of eight essays presented at the first public Symposium of the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute on September 30, 1995; it also contains an introduction by the editors Evans and Flint, the transcript of a panel discussion and a select bibliography. The essays are aimed at a public, nonspecialist audience, and thus provide rather more background and explanation than would be needed by a scholarly reader. As with any collection of symposium papers, some are of better quality than others. All of the essays take as their subject some aspect of eschatology or messianism, but not all are directly concerned with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Rather, the first two essays—"Moses' Birth Story: A Biblical Matrix for Prophetic Messianism," by Paul E. Hughes, and "The Redeeming King: Psalm 72's Contribution to the Messianic Ideal" by Craig C. Broyles—discuss topics in the Hebrew Bible, while the last two—"Throne-Chariot Mysticism in Qumran and in Paul," by James M. Scott, and "'And When That One Comes': Aspects of Johannine Messianism," by Dietmar Neufeld—are concerned chiefly with the

New Testament. The four central essays of the book—"The Daniel Tradition at Qumran," by Peter W. Flint; "Who Ascended to Heaven? 4Q491, 4Q427, and the Teacher of Righteousness," by Martin G. Abegg, Jr.; "The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls," by John J. Collins (the keynote address); and "Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran Cave 4," by Craig A. Evans—take as their topic some aspect of the Dead Sea Scrolls. There is very little discussion of archaeology, which may make the volume of peripheral interest to *BASOR's* audience.

Several of the essays make particularly interesting use of the new material coming to light in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Outstanding in this regard are the essays by Abegg, Evans, and Scott. Abegg's essay, which contains a good explanation of the importance of a Qumran manuscript's physical characteristics, palaeography, and orthography for those not familiar with the terms, discusses 4Q491, a manuscript of the *War Scroll.* Abegg proposes, evidently on good grounds, that 4Q491 should actually be divided into three separate manuscripts, two of which—Manuscripts I and II—are manuscripts related to the *War Scroll.* Manuscript III, according to Abegg, is not related to the *War Scroll* at all, but rather is an independent hymnic composition. He suggests that this hymn, on the basis of verbal parallels, may have been part of the *Hôdâyôt* (*Thanksgiving Hymns*). This appears to be a reasonable conclusion. However, Abegg goes on to suggest that the *Hôdâyôt* (including 4Q491 III) were composed by a single author, and that author was the Teacher of Righteousness. Here Abegg is standing on shakier ground. While he is correct in seeing certain themes that run throughout the *Hôdâyôt*, and while it is true that certain of the *Hymns* are deeply personal in tone and appear to be written by a person in a position of leadership, we know far too little about the Teacher of Righteousness and his role in the Qumran community to be able to attribute the authorship of any of these compositions to him. Therefore Abegg's final conclusion should be viewed with caution.

Craig Evans' essay looks at new, smaller texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls that shed light on the early Christian understanding of Jesus. He notes that the use of the epithet "Son of God" in 4Q246, which he understands as a messianic text, points to a Jewish background for the use of the title in Mark. The beatitudes contained in 4Q525 shed light on their use in Matthew and Luke, and "tell against the proposal of some members of the Jesus Seminar that Jesus' teaching is best understood against the backdrop of Graeco-Roman philosophy, especially Cynicism" (p. 95). 4Q500, a very fragmentary text which appears to be an interpretation of Isa 5:1-7, demonstrates the Jewish background to Jesus' parable of the Wicked Tenants. Finally, Evans underscores the importance of 4Q521, a clearly messianic text, to the portrait of Jesus in the synoptics. 4Q521, which describes the activity of a prophetic messiah, expects the release of captives, the restoration of sight to the blind, the exaltation of the downtrodden, the healing of the slain, the announcement of good news to the poor, and the *resurrection of the dead.* As Evans notes, the expectations of 4Q521 are based on Isa 61:1–2 and 35:5–6. These passages also form the basis for the Q saying in Matt 11:5 (Luke 7:22), where Jesus cures diseases, restores sight to the blind, makes the lame walk, cleanses lepers, makes the deaf hear, preaches good news to the poor, and *raises the dead*. However, the Isaiah passages do not contain the resurrection of the dead; this is only found in 4Q521 and Q. Thus, Evans is correct in seeing that an important link has been established between at least one view of Jewish messianic activity and Q's view of Jesus' messianic activity. However, I do not agree with Evans that "4Q521 significantly supports the traditional view that *Jesus* [emphasis mine] did indeed see himself as Israel's Messiah" (p. 97); what 4Q521 shows is that Q and its view of Jesus as messiah are deeply embedded in contemporary Jewish thought.

James Scott uses the Dead Sea Scrolls to bolster his contention that Paul is using the language of *merkabah* or throne-chariot mysticism in 2 Cor 2:14. In this context he discusses the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, and concludes, "the Dead Sea Scrolls help us see that contemplation of the divine throne-chariot was already practiced in pre-Christian times" (p. 119); therefore it would not be surprising to find such language in the first century C.E. letters of Paul. It should be noted that Gordon Fee raises some objections to Scott's method in the panel discussion (pp. 142–43). Evans' and Scott's papers, along with Neufeld's paper on Johannine messianism, illustrate the new importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls in New Testament studies, an importance that will continue to grow.

John Collins and Peter Flint both focus exclusively on the Qumran texts. Collins, drawing on his seminal work on Qumran messianism, discusses the end-time expectations of the community, while Flint focuses on the noncanonical Daniel traditions at Qumran. These texts are part of a body of Aramaic texts from the Qumran caves that are due to come under more intense study.

One minor problem with the book is the presence of a number of typesetting errors, especially in Flint's essay. On p. 55, f. 24 has a rather peculiar layout. F. 28, which should appear on p. 56, appears on p. 58; f. 30 appears on p. 60 rather than on p. 58; and f. 32 is missing altogether. These unnecessary errors detract from the quality of the volume.

Sidnie White Crawford
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
scrawfor@unlinfo.unl.edu