

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies  
Department

Classics and Religious Studies

---

10-2005

Review of C. D. Elledge, *The Statutes of the King: The Temple Scroll's Legislation on Kingship (11Q19 LVI12-LIX21)*

Sidnie White Crawford

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, [scrawford1@unl.edu](mailto:scrawford1@unl.edu)

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



Part of the [Classics Commons](#)

---

Crawford, Sidnie White, "Review of C. D. Elledge, *The Statutes of the King: The Temple Scroll's Legislation on Kingship (11Q19 LVI12-LIX21)*" (2005). *Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies Department*. 94.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/classicsfacpub/94>

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.

BOOK REVIEW

C. D. Elledge, *The Statutes of the King: The Temple Scroll's Legislation on Kingship (11Q19 LVI12-LIX21)* (CahRB 56; Paris: Gabalda, 2004). Pp. xviii + 270. Paper €35.

C. D. Elledge has presented a thorough study of the section of the *Temple Scroll* known as "The Statutes of the King" (cols. 56-59 of 11QTemple<sup>a</sup>). Since Yigael Yadin's magisterial edition of the most complete manuscript of the *Temple Scroll*, 11Q19, in 1977 (rev. Eng. ed. 1983), two or three further manuscripts of the *Temple Scroll* have been published: 11QTemple<sup>b</sup> and 11QTemple<sup>c</sup>? by Florentino García Martínez et al. in 1997, and the important 4QRouleau de Temple (4Q524) by Emile Puech in 1998. E. uses all the available manuscript evidence for cols. 56-59 to construct a critical edition with notes and commentary.

The book contains five chapters. In the first, introductory chapter, E. gives a helpful overview of the general issues involved in the study of "The Statutes of the King," including the manuscript evidence, provenience, date of composition, exegetical method, and comparative data. Chapters 2-5 each deal with a section of "The Statutes," presenting the Hebrew text, an English translation, notes to the text, and a commentary. The book concludes with a "Summation of Research," bibliography, and indexes.

The most useful aspect of the book for many will be the reconstructed Hebrew text of "The Statutes of the King." E. brings all the manuscript evidence to bear, and his notes are thorough, including alternative readings. When the redactor of the *Temple Scroll* is working with a specific biblical passage, as with Deut 17:14-20 in col. 56, E. gives all the versional evidence for the variant readings. His conclusions are sound, although of course not everyone will agree with him on every detail.

In his commentary on each section, E. outlines the contents and discusses the scriptural passages the redactor is utilizing to create his text and the theological/ideological point(s) of the section. E. does an excellent job of explicating the details of the text and tracing the exegetical method of the redactor. He then attempts to tie the subject matter of the section to the historical context of Judea in the Second Temple period, specifically the reigns of the first three Hasmoneans, Jonathan, Simon, and John Hyrcanus.

It is with E.'s historical reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the redaction of the *Temple Scroll* that I find myself in disagreement. E. argues for a date of composition between 143 and 125 B.C.E. His arguments in support of this date are a combination of the paleographical date of 4Q524 (150-125 B.C.E.), and the political and religious activities of the early Hasmoneans, against whom he believes "The Statutes of the King" are polemicizing (pp. 37-45). In particular, he argues, "these laws reflect familiarity with events from both the prior history of Israelite kingship and more recent events in Judaeian history. Among the latter is a striking allusion to Jonathan's death at the hands of the Seleucid Trypho. The distinctive nature of Jonathan's death and the distinctive language of the *Temple Scroll* allow for a clear correlation between the two that cannot be confused with other political events of the period" (p. 39).

I take issue with his arguments for date of composition on two grounds. First, 4Q524 appears to be a copy, not the autograph, of the *Temple Scroll* (p. 13). Therefore, the date of composition for "The Statutes of the King" must be earlier than the paleographical date of 4Q524. E.'s upper date of 143 B.C.E. does not allow sufficient time for composition, circulation, and copying. Second, it is precarious to attempt to tie the statutes in the *Temple Scroll* too closely to contemporary political events. Early arguments for a date of composition in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, for example, have foundered on the paleographical date of 4Q524. As E. himself admits, the redactor could well have had events from the biblical period in mind as the negative antecedents of the royal laws (pp. 155-56). It is en-

tirely possible that the activities of the early Hasmoneans reminded (in a negative fashion) the scribe of 4Q524 of the royal laws found in the *Temple Scroll*, which led him to make a fresh copy. But it is not at all clear that "The Statutes of the King" is a specific polemic against the Hasmoneans. For these reasons, a date of composition no later than the early second century B.C.E. is preferable.

That disagreement aside, E.'s work is a helpful addition to the burgeoning bibliography on the *Temple Scroll* and should be on the shelf of all serious scholars of that work.

Sidnie White Crawford  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*  
*Lincoln, NE 68588*