CHAPTER ONE

A WISDOM TEXT WITH AN APOCALYPTIC WORLDVIEW:
4QINSTRUCTION (1Q26; 4Q415-18, 423)

1. INTRODUCTION

4QInstruction was published in 1999 by John Strugnell and Daniel Harrington. Portions of at least six manuscripts of this document have survived (1Q26; 4Q415-18, 423). The work contains practical instruction on topics such as marriage, the payment of debts and the moderation of food. 4QInstruction often uses the admonition form. It constantly refers to its addressee as mēbin (מֵבִן), or “understanding.

1 J. Strugnell and D.J. Harrington, *Qumran Cave 4-XXIV: Sapiential Texts, Part 2. 4QInstruction (Musar le-Mevin): 4Q415ff. With a re-edition of 1Q26* (DJD 34; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999). They entitle the text “Musar Le-Mevin” (“Instruction for a Maven”). The work was often called “Sapiential Work A” before the publication of *DJD 34*. Some scholars use designations such as 1Q/4Q Instruction. This study uses the common title 4QInstruction. Elgvin is the official editor of 4Q423.

one. 4QInstruction is eudemonicistic and has a pedagogical ethos. There is a teacher-student relationship between author and addressee, although the office of teacher is never mentioned in the composition. In terms of genre it is a wisdom text.

But 4QInstruction differs from traditional wisdom in several ways. The composition often appeals to supernatural revelation in the form of the rāz nihyeḥ (ירַּחְנַק), which can be translated as "the mystery that is to be." The rāz nihyeḥ is the main tool by which the addressee acquires wisdom. The work includes other themes, such as eschatological judgment, that are more in keeping with apocalypticism than Proverbs. 4QInstruction can be considered the best example available of a wisdom text with an apocalyptic worldview.

2. THE TEXT OF 4QINSTRUCTION

4QInstruction is a large composition in fragmentary condition. Over 425 fragments have been classified as part of this document. They are in Herodian script. The majority of the fragments belong to 4Q418, which itself may have once been as long as the Hodayot or even the Temple Scroll. The largest 4QInstruction text is 4Q416 2,