For the second time\(^1\) the messianic texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls have become the focus of interest:

1) One of the first known texts, 1QSerekh ha-Yahad,\(^2\) speaks of the “messiahs of Aaron and Israel” and thus represents a double messianic expectation, a priestly and a kingly.

2) In the course of the full availability of all the Qumran texts since 1991 many have been published which make the evidence even more colourful and manifold. Some of these “new” texts are as vividly debated as the “old” ones from the fifties.\(^3\)

3) In anticipation we can say: The scrolls found in Qumran represent the three “classical” types of messianic expectations, the munus triplex, i.e. king, priest, prophet.\(^4\)

Before we come to analyze the relevant texts, we have to answer the most debated question: When are we entitled to speak of a messianic figure?

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\(^1\) Fundamental for the first phase Adam S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran* (SSN 3; Assen, 1957).


\(^4\) See the structure of the book by Zimmermann, *Messianische Texte*. 
Two basic types are advocated:

1) Of a "messiah" we only may speak if the word mashiaḥ or mēshiḥa' or an equivalent in translation like χριστός or anointed occurs.5

2) A more general definition is oriented towards the eschatological character of the figure: "It is best to reserve the English term 'messiah' for figures who have important roles in the future hope of the people."6 Such a rather general definition covers not only the instances with the term messiah (and its equivalents) but also figures connected with him or them or having similar eschatological functions.

Another consideration should be mentioned: In spite of the unexpected and unprecedented insight the Qumran texts give us on messianic hope, we cannot say with certainty how representative they are generally speaking. The fact that in the Qumran "library" texts of Essene origin and pre- and extra-Essene origin are represented proves that a broad spectrum of traditions is preserved. As to most of the texts, the Qumran-Essene community was not the author, but the librarian. In Jewish texts before 70 there is only one very explicit use of the term mashiaḥ;7 in Psalms of Solomon. The Messiah King from the House of David, who will besiege the heathens and bring peace to Israel is portrayed according to Isaiah 11 as a just ruler, filled with the Spirit: "May God cleanse Israel for the day of mercy in blessing, for the appointed day when his Messiah will reign. Blessed

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5 This is the view held by Joseph A. Fitzmyer e.g. expressed in his interpretation of 4Q246: "Hence I continue to question the importation of messianism into the interpretation of this text [scil. 4Q246], and continue to insist that there is as yet nothing in the Old Testament or in the pre-Christian Palestinian Jewish tradition that we know of to show that 'Son of God' had a messianic nuance. Consequently, I consider this apocalyptic text to speak positively of a coming Jewish ruler, perhaps a member of the Hasmonean dynasty, who be a successor to the Davidic throne, but who is not envisaged as a Messiah"; J. A. Fitzmyer, "4Q246: The 'Son of God' Document from Qumran," Bib 74 (1993): 153–74, here: 173f.; see also J. H. Charlesworth, "Challenging the Consensus Communis Regarding Qumran Messianism (1QS, 4QS MSS)," in Charlesworth, Lichtenberger and Oegema, Qumran-Messianism, 120–34, here: 124, n. 19.
