A NOTE ON THE "FIRST-BORN SON" OF 4Q369

CRAIG A. EVANS
Trinity Western University
Langley, British Columbia V3A 6H4, Canada

The recent publication of 4Q369, in which reference is made to God’s בֵּן בָּרָאשׁ ("first-born son"),¹ may shed some light on an important aspect of Qumran’s messianology² and at the same time contribute to the debate concerning the reading in 1QSa 2:11 and perhaps also to the meaning of 4Q246 and 4Q536.

In a recent study J. Collins challenges the conclusion advanced by J. Fitzmyer to the effect that there is nothing in the Palestinian Jewish tradition that suggests that "Son of God" was understood in a messianic sense.³ He wonders whether 4Q369, which has not yet been studied or translated, may require a reassessment of this position.

With this question in mind this brief study will offer a tentative

² See the succinct summary of Qumran’s messianic views offered by L. H. Schiffman, “Messianic Figures and Ideas in the Qumran Scrolls,” The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 116-29. Schiffman’s essay does not, of course, take into account the most recently published materials from Cave 4.

© E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995

Dead Sea Discoveries 2, 2
translation and interpretation of 4Q369. Before this is undertaken it would be helpful to review the related texts which have already received scholarly attention.

1Q28a (= 1QSa) "The Messianic Rule"

2:11-12

11 הוה Mossכ Atנש חטש [קריאן] מערת לועה והרוה אס ולקך
12 [אל חאק] אמשש אוס אוס [חברו] והאש גול עריא לוכל

"11...[This is the sitting of the men of renown [called] to assembly for the council of the community when [God] will have begotten the [הילוד] Messiah [камша] among them..."

As presented in the text above, Barthelemy restores the last word of line 11 to read: "When God will have begotten [הילוד] the Messiah." However, J. T. Milik thinks that the text should read "when God will have brought [הילוד] the Messiah." S. Talmon agrees; he translates: "when (God) shall lead to them the (Davidic?) Anointed." Rejecting both of these restorations, G. Vermes has suggested the reading: "when the (Priest) Messiah shall summon [הילוד] them." Restoring the text differently at several points, H. N. Richardson proposes the reading: "...when

---

5 Qumran Cave I, 117.