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This is a revised doctoral dissertation written under the direction of Stephen Westerholm and Eileen Schuller in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University. Meyer comments at the outset that his advisors’ “expertise in Paul and the Hodayot respectively made the topic of this dissertation an obvious choice, a gift waiting in the wings, as it were, needing only to be claimed” (vii). How these two textual traditions are related in the study is summed up in Chapter One: “Although they share a related cultural space, the Hodayot do not depend upon Paul, and Paul, in all likelihood, does not depend upon the Hodayot.” These two corpora are juxtaposed for heuristic purposes, “to assist us to ask new questions, perhaps answer old ones, and engender fresh insights” (5). This monograph consists of three main chapters: Chapter Two is concerned with the Hodayot and dichotomizing anthropogonies; Chapter Three is focused on Adam and the Image of God “outside of Romans” (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:7–12; 15:20–28; 15:45–50; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4, 6; Phil 2:6–11; 3:20–21); and Chapter Four is devoted solely to Romans (5:12–21; 7:7–12; 8:8–23). Chapters Five and Six offer final conclusions on Pauline writings and the hymns respectively.

The rationale for the study is further articulated in the opening chapter when questions about human origins in these texts are raised in relationship to creation traditions, especially as associated with: (1) human purpose and destiny, and (2) a negative anthropology. Both Paul and the hymns offer a pessimistic view of human nature which is addressed vis-à-vis divine agency. In regard to the hymns, Meyer offers a substantive footnote where he cites, among others, Jörg Frey’s research on Qumran sapiential traditions as the background for Paul’s negative use of “flesh” (3 n. 6), in which Frey draws heavily upon the Hodayot and 4QInstruction. Paul’s anthropology, depiction of Adam, and anthropogony have been discussed in previous studies in relationship to the Hodayot and 4QInstruction, which raises questions why Meyer’s study is limited to just the hymns and Paul.

Meyer makes explicit that 4QInstruction is important to this study, but it is not given sustained attention. In Chapter One, Meyer offers a brief overview of how Genesis 1:26–27 is used for the transformation of a negative anthropology into exaltation, and states that his study addresses this issue in the Hodayot “with the aid of 4QInstruction and the Treatise on the Two Spirits (1QS III 13–IV 26), which are widely thought to stand in the same tradition,
perhaps even to have influenced the Hodayot” (8–9). Although Meyer returns to 4QInstruction and the Treatise on the Two Spirits in the conclusions to both Chapter Two (91–92) and Chapter Six (232), and not peripherally, the absence of a thoroughgoing treatment of 4QInstruction is notable. 4QInstruction is mentioned on only a few occasions; the most substantive section is a circa one-page (41–42) treatment of the Vision of Hagu Passage (4Q417 i 13–18). Meyer does not present, critically or otherwise, this pericope, but rather assumes a translation and interpretation without noting research that presents divergent translations and interpretations of anthropogony and anthropology. In the conclusion to Chapter Two he notes (92 n. 218) that in the Vision of Hagu the two creations of Genesis 1 and 2 are merged “by dichotomizing the ‘people of spirit’ formed in the ‘pattern of the holy ones’ and the ‘spirit of flesh’ which ‘did not know the difference between good and evil.’” This is similar, he states, to the dichotomous anthropogonic traditions in the Hodayot, namely the adam-of-dust motif (Gen 2:6–7) and the creation of humanity in the divine image (Gen 1:26–28). While this is one way to understand 4QInstruction, it is not the only one, and the problems and challenges to this dichotomous view of humanity in the Hagu passage are not presented, nor are the resulting implications which are so central to Meyer’s conclusions on the Hodayot.

Throughout chapters Three and Four on Paul the Hodayot scarcely make an appearance. When the hymns do come into focus, the value of reading these two corpora together is illustrated. The best example is the theoretical precedent for the “adamic I” (200) found in 1QS 3:17–19; 2 Bar 54:19; and also 1QHa 20:27–31. However, the paucity of reference to Qumran discoveries in these two chapters, given the orientation set, is surprising. This is especially the case in the section on “Adam, Sin, and Flesh” (211) where, conspicuously, neither the hymns nor 4QInstruction are mentioned. At one point Meyer suggests that Paul has comparable concepts to rabbinic notions of הַיֵּשׁ תַּחַר and הַיֵּשׁ תַּחַר, citing Joel Marcus’ 1986 article, which is unaware of Qumran Cave 4 materials (213 n. 110). Bringing Paul into dialogue with the Qumran materials would radically alter this conclusion since the יֵשׁ is no longer seen to operate within this binary model in early Jewish literature, particularly in light of Cave 4 discoveries.

Individual studies on pertinent Pauline passages are competently presented, fresh insights are offered, and synthesis occurs under a common theme. Relatively unpronounced is how the marrying of the Hodayot and these Pauline epistles results in heuristic sparks. Chapter Five, which is devoted to Paul, concludes in two ways. First, Chapters Three and Four on Paul are brought into conversation with one another. Second, from the outset, Meyer sets for himself questions about anthropogony, which he explicitly asks of both Paul and