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The Foundations of Early Jewish Mysticism: The Lost Calendar and the Transformed Heavenly Chariot

The milestones marking the historical development of Jewish mysticism were delineated in the fourth decade of the 20th century by Gershom Scholem. In the chapter “Merkabah Mysticism and Jewish Gnosticism” of his groundbreaking book *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York 1941), Scholem outlined the first stage of these literary phenomena pertaining to the early centuries of the first millennium of the Common Era. Twenty years later, in a book devoted to the Merkabah tradition entitled *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York 1960), Scholem explored the historical connections between the second century Sages R. Akiva and R. Ishmael, who were alleged to have authored the Merkabah and Heikhalot literature¹, and their contemporary counterparts who appeared in the Mishnah and the Talmud. Until this point, Scholem considered the Heikhalot and Merkabah literatures, texts pertaining to the heavenly sanctuaries and the angelic world that were written in the period of the Mishnah and the Talmud, to be the first stage in the history of Jewish mysticism. However, in the second edition of *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition*, published in 1965, Scholem added a perceptive remark relating to the newly discovered ancient Hebrew and Aramaic scrolls, written on parchment and stored in clay jars, that had been found between 1947 and 1956 in caves of the Judean Desert. These texts, which were part of a huge ancient library that included only sacred literature, later became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scholem was referring to the previously unknown Merkabah texts found among

¹ The early printed editions of the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the Heikhalot (Heavenly Sanctuaries) and Merkabah (Chariot, as in Ezekiel’s Chariot Vision in the first chapter of Ezekiel) literature were discussed in the chapter mentioned above in: G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York 1941) 40–75, 426–427 and in the introductory chapter of: *idem*, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York 1960). The texts of the Heikhalot and Merkabah tradition were edited synoptically forty years later in: P. Schäfer, M. Schlüter and H. G. von Mutius (eds.), *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 2, Tübingen 1981); P. Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 6, Tübingen 1984).

the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were published in 1960 by John Strugnell as "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran-4Q *Serek Shirot Olat haShabat*"² and which later were identified by Carol Newsom as *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* in the first critical edition of the angelic liturgy³. Scholem stated: "These fragments [of *Serek Shirot Olat haShabat*] leave no doubt that there is a connection between the oldest Hebrew Merkabah texts preserved in Qumran and the subsequent development of Merkabah mysticism as preserved in the Hekhalot texts."⁴ Notably, Scholem, in this short sentence, did not elaborate on the identity of the writers, or on their provenance, but referred only to the writings and their historical and literary context.

Now, forty years later, with the publication of an entire library of these finds from the Judean Desert and with a more comprehensive context of these writings available, I would like to reflect on the historical implications of Scholem's remark. Furthermore, I will attempt to elaborate on the connection between the earliest Merkabah traditions and the angelic liturgy that were set down before the Common Era as found in Qumran and the later Merkabah tradition and angelic hymns that have been deemed to form the early stages of Jewish Mysticism after the Common Era. Naturally, the diversity of the Qumran discoveries and the great number of writings of various kinds that constitute this library and the textual and editorial diversity of Heikhalot literature challenge any simple overview and raise many questions with no simple answers. However, that being noted, I would argue that there are notable conceptual connections between these two literary corpora that reflect a common world-view mirrored in various expressions.

There are four Hebrew concepts pertaining to the early stages of Jewish mystical writings: Merkabah (Chariot of the Cherubim)⁵, Heikhalot (Heavenly Sanctu-

² J. Strugnell, The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran-4Q *Serek Shirot Olat haShabat*, in: Congress Volume: Oxford, 1959 (Vetus Testamentum Supplements 7, Leiden 1959-60) 318-345.

³ C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Harvard Semitic Studies 27, Atlanta 1985).

⁴ G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (JTS, New York 1965) 128.

⁵ See: I Chronicles 28:18; cf. Exodus 25:18-20, 37:7-8; I Kings 6:23-28, 8:7; II Chronicles 3:10-14, 5:7-8; Ezekiel 10:2-19. The spelling of this word is variable and it is written in English transliteration as *merkabah* or *merkavah*. On the transformation of the Biblical concept in Heikhalot literature see G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York 1967) 40-79; J. Maier, *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis* (Kairos Religionswissenschaftliche Studien 1, Salzburg 1964); D. J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (TSAJ 16, Tübingen 1988); P. Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Albany 1992) 193, Index, entry Merkabah; R. Elijor, *From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines: Prayer and Sacred Song in the Hekhalot Literature and Its Relation to Temple Traditions*, in: JSQ 4 (1997) 217-67; *eadem*, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford 2004) Index, entry Merkabah.

aries)⁶, Sabbath Sacrifice (*Olat haShabbat*)⁷, and Songs (*Shir-Shirot*)⁸. The most striking common denominator which can be formulated between these concepts is constituted by their appearance in the Biblical literature wherein they are all connected to the sacred space and to the cycles of the sacred ritual: to the Tabernacle (Lev. 25:18-27), to the Temple, *heikhal*, where the cherubim stood (I Kings 6:24-27; I Chr. 28:18), to the heavenly paradigms of the cherubim in the earthly sanctuary (Ex. 25:9, 17-22, 40; I Chr. 28:18-19), to their mystical transformation (Ezek. 1, 10), and to the cycles of divine worship and sacred song that were performed in the Temple by priests and Levites (Ps. 92:1; I Chr. 6:17; II Chr. 7:6). Notably, the majority of the references to these concepts in Biblical literature are to be found in priestly sources, in those chapters which refer directly to Temple worship or to the mystical prophetic memory of the First Temple after its destruction (e.g. Ezek. 1, 10). Mysticism in the present context refers to literary traditions which assume the everlasting existence of transcendental heavenly counterparts of the ritual world of the Temple and the Levitical priesthood. Scholars have discussed the transformations of *Heikhal*, *Merkabah*, *Cherubim*, *Shir* and *Shirot* into the mystical tradition *after* the destruction of the Second Temple in different perspectives with regard to the Heikhalot literature⁹, but their conceptual origins in

⁶ See the singular form of the holy Sanctuary, *Heikhal*, as the common name of the Jerusalem Temple: I Samuel 3:3; I Kings 6:5, 33; I Kings 7:50; Isaiah 6:1; Jeremiah 7:4; Ezekiel 41:1, 21, 25; Zechariah 8:9; Nehemiah 6:10; Ezra 4:1; Psalms 5:8, 1:4, 138:2, 144:12; II Chronicles 4:22; Daniel 5:2-3; Ezra 5:14, 6:5. The English transliteration of the Biblical word in singular and plural forms could be *heikhal/hekhalot* or *heikal/heikhalot*. On its mystical transformation in the plural form see P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Heikhalot-Literatur* (note 1 above); *idem*, *Konkordanz zur Heikhalot-Literatur*, 2 vols. (TSAJ 12, 13, Tübingen 1986-88), see entries *heikhal*, *heikhalot*; cf. R. Elijor, *From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines* (note 5 above).

⁷ *Ola* is translated as holocaust or sacrifice offered in the Temple in permanent cycle; see Numbers 28:10; II Chronicles 31:3. On the mystical transformation of the Sabbath sacrifice see Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (note 3 above) 23-58; *eadem*, *He Has Established for Himself Priests: Human and Angelic Priesthood in the Qumran Sabbath Shirot*, in: L. H. Schiffman (ed.), *Archeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (JSP Supplement Series 8, Sheffield 1990) 100-120; J. Maier, *Shirê Olat haShabbat: some Observations on their Calendric Implications and on their Style*, in: J. Trebola-Barrera and L. Vegas-Montaner (eds.), *The Madrid Qumran Congress, vol. II* (Leiden 1992) 543-560; J. Davila, *The Macrocosmic Temple, Scriptural Exegesis and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, in: *Dead Sea Discoveries* 9, 1 (2002) 1-19.

⁸ See Psalms 30:1, 46:1, 68:1, 92:1; I Chronicles 6:16, 25:6; II Chronicles 23:13. On the mystical transformation of the Songs, see C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (note 3 above) 23-39; R. Elijor, *From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines* (note 5 above); C. Newsom, *Merkabah Exegesis in the Qumran Sabbath Shirot*, in: *Journal of Jewish Studies* 38, 1 (1987) 11-30; D. Dimant, *Men as Angels: The Self Image of the Qumran Community*, in: Adele Berlin (ed.), *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda 1996) 93-103.

⁹ I. Gruenwald, *The Place of Priestly Traditions in Consolidating Merkabah Mysticism*, in: *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987) 5-119 (Hebrew); R. Elijor, *The Priestly Nature of the Mystical Heritage in Heikhalot Literature*, in: R. B. Fenton and R. Goetschel (eds.) *Expérience et écriture mystiques dans les religions du livre: Actes d'un colloque international tenu par le Centre d'études juives, Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne 1994* (Leiden 2000) 41-54.

the mystical literature written in the last centuries *before* the Common Era and the overwhelming common concern on angelic priests, angelic liturgy and heavenly sanctuaries, divine chariot and ritual calendar, were not sufficiently recognized.

In the following discussion I will argue that the mystical priestly literature before the Common Era was written as part of a bitter dispute concerning the legitimate priestly hierarchy and the conduct of the Temple service that took place in the second century BCE, in the period of the Hellenized High Priests Jason, Menelaus and Alkimos (175–159 BCE) and throughout the Hasmonean period (152–37 BCE). The dispute between the deposed priests from the House of Zadok (those who had served exclusively in the Temple until 175 BCE) and the illegitimate priests who took their place (the Hellenized priests and the Hasmonean dynasty) is of primal importance among the factors that generated the writing of the Merkabah literature that was found in Qumran. This priestly mystical literature of the last few centuries before the Common Era, mostly unknown until 1947, was found in many of the 950 scrolls of the Qumran library. The huge library which was concerned with an eternal angelic order pertaining to a ritual calendar and concentrated on eternal time cycles preserved by angelic liturgy, focused upon angelic ritual in seven heavenly sanctuaries and on the fourfold world of the Divine Chariot. It affected later stages of early Jewish mysticism that became known as the tradition of Heikhalot and Merkabah in unknown ways.

Merkabah texts that were preserved in Qumran¹⁰ are marked by three distinct characteristics:

I.) The significant place this literature gives to texts which relate to the heavenly chariot of the cherubim known from the vision of the Zadokite priest and prophet Ezekiel is immediately apparent¹¹. The different components of the priestly-prophetic vision that were defined in the Septuagint translation of Ezekiel in the middle of the third or second century BCE as “the Vision of the Chariot” (Ezekiel 43:3) and described by the priest Yehoshua ben Sira as “Vision of the Chariot” in his book that was written in the beginning of the second century BCE are all present¹². The Qumran text of the vision of Ezekiel (chapter 1:4) relates a version that reads: “nogah merkabah”¹³ (“the radiance of the Chariot”) whereas the traditional Biblical reading has only “nogah” (“the radiance”), without the priestly keyword

¹⁰ See C. Newsom, B. Nitzan, E. Schuller et al. (eds.), *Discoveries of the Judaean Desert XI: Qumran Cave 4. VI: Poetical and Liturgical Texts* (Oxford 1998), hereafter DJD; and note 13 below. Cf. E. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden, New York, Köln 1997) 644–671, 804–836, 1016–1030, 1212–1218. Other Merkabah texts are found in DJD I–XXXIX (Oxford 1964–2002), now indexed in vol. 39.

¹¹ See especially Ezekiel chapters 1, 10 and 43:3 and D. J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel’s Vision* (note 5 above) 38–60.

¹² On the Septuagint version for Ezekiel 43:3 see Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot* 56–57. On Ben Sira 49:11 see M. Z. Segal, *Sefer ben Sira ha-Shalem* (The Complete Book of Ben Sira) (Jerusalem 1958); Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot* 48.

¹³ 4Q385, frag. 4:5–6; DJD XXX, D. Dimant and J. Strugnell (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4: Pata-biblical texts, part 4; Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (Oxford 2001) 42.

Chariot that connects it to the Cherubim in the holy of holies in the Temple (I Chr. 28:18).

II.) The Merkabah texts are replete with angels and cherubim who are depicted as primarily fulfilling a liturgical role in the heavenly sanctuaries. The angels are blessing, singing, counting and serving in the seven heavenly sanctuaries in a perpetual manner of seven days cycle that strongly evokes the cycles of priestly ritual responsibilities and liturgical tasks in the Temple¹⁴. A famous example from the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* that has been published and translated a number of times in the last 45 years may illustrate the angelic ritual in the heavenly sanctuary: “By the Maskil (the Instructor): Song of the Sacrifice of the twelfth Sabbath [on the twenty-first of the third month. Praise the God of...] wondrous [appointed times?] and exalt him... the Glory in the tabernacle of the God of knowledge. The Cherubim fall before Him and bless. They give blessing as they raise themselves: The sound of divine stillness [is heard]. [] and there is a tumult of jubilation as they lift their wings. A sound of divine stillness. The pattern of the chariot-throne do they bless Above the firmament of the Cherubim. The splendor of the luminous firmament do they sing Beneath His glorious seat. When the *ofanim* (wheels) go, the angels of the holy place return The spirits of the Holy of Holies go forth Like appearance of fire From beneath his Glorious wheels [...] The spirits of the living God that walks about perpetually With the Glory of the wondrous chariots There is a still sound of blessing in the tumult of their movement And they praise the holy place as they turn back. When they raise themselves, they raise wondrously And when they return they stand still. The joyful sound of singing falls silent And there is a stillness of divine blessing In all the camps of Godlike beings And the sound of praises... from between all their divisions on the[ir] si[des] And all their mastered troops rejoice Each o[n]e in [his] stat[ion].”¹⁵

¹⁴ C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (note 3 above) 23–39; R. Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford 2004) 165–200.

¹⁵ 4Q405 20–21–22, lines 6–14, see Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifices* (note 3 above) 303–321 for the Hebrew text, discussion and translation. A later edition of the Songs was published in volumes 11 of the DJD. I consulted the translations of D. J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot* 52, 524–525, as well as the translations of J. Strugnell (note 2 above) and L. H.

The details of this exceptional liturgical mystical text are far from being clear as the syntax is most unusual and the vocabulary is unique. Scholars have debated on the exact translation of different words since its first publication in 1960, but there is common agreement that the text is concerned with angelic ritual in the heavenly sanctuary which is described in relation to the tradition of the Chariot. It seems that it is reflecting an angelic transformation or angelic paradigm of the twenty-four priestly courses that were in charge of guarding the sevenfold ritual cycles of time and the fourfold cosmic divisions of eternal temporal order and the corresponding liturgical cycles in the Holy of Holies in the Temple where the chariot of the cherubim stood. The angelic watches are responsible for guarding and preserving all the eternal cosmic cycles and ritual divisions of time in the heavenly sanctuaries and the world of the chariot, where the cherubim are eternal living beings¹⁶.

III.) The Merkabah texts possess a marked calendrical structure: each one of the thirteen Sabbath Songs that were found in the Dead Sea scrolls was designated to be sung on one of the 13 Sabbaths that fall upon undeviating dates and position within one of the four seasons according to the established priestly annual calendar of 52 Sabbaths¹⁷.

The priestly solar calendar of 364 days was brought from heaven by the seventh patriarch Enoch. Enoch, son of Jared, the seventh antediluvian patriarch, is described in Gen. 5: 21–24 as being taken to heaven¹⁸, and in priestly literature as the founder of the priesthood according to I Enoch and Jubilees 4:17–19 (that were found in Qumran), and II Enoch (that was not found in Qumran but was known from the Pseudepigrapha as pertaining to First Century Egyptian provenance of

Schiffman, Merkabah Speculation at Qumran: The 4Q^{Serekh} Shiret Olat Ha-Shabbat, in: *A. J. Reimartz et al. (eds.), Mystics, Philosophers and Politics: Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann* (Durham 1982) 15–47 and *J. Mayers*, Shire Olat hash-Shabbat: Some Observations on their Calendric Implications and on their Style (note 7 above) and amended the translation. The unique poetic Hebrew syntax of *The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* which has no textual precedence makes this text particularly hard for translation; other readings should be consulted as well.

¹⁶ The traditions of the calendar are reflected in I Enoch 82:13–152, Jubilees 6; DJD XI 4Q287 2:7–8 (note 10 above); and the opening of each one of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* offer many examples for this contention.

¹⁷ On the central role of the 364 day calendar that is attested to in the angelic liturgy see *J. Maier*, Shire Olat hash-Shabbat: Some Observations on their Calendric Implications and on their Style (note 7 above); *Newsom*, Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (note 3 above) 1–21. On this priestly calendar see: *J. C. VanderKam*, The Origin, Character and Early History of the 364 Day Calendar: A Reassessment of Jaubert's Hypotheses, in: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979) 390–411; *S. Talmon*, The World of Qumran from Within: Collected Studies (Jerusalem 1989) 147–150, 273–300; *R. Elijior*, The Three Temples (note 5 above) 44–62, 82–110.

¹⁸ On Enoch son of Jared see *J. C. Greenfield* and *M. E. Stone*, The Books of Enoch and the Traditions of Enoch, in: *Numen* 26 (1979) 89–103; *M. Knibb*, The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments, 2 vols. (Oxford 1978); *G. Nickelsburg*, The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch (Leiden 1985); *J. C. VanderKam*, Enoch: A Man for All Generations (Columbia 1995); *R. Elijior*, The Three Temples (note 5 above) 82–110.

priestly circles)¹⁹. The calendar was described in various methods. The calendar was divided symmetrically into a year of four seasons, each possessing 91 days. These were divided into 13 Sabbaths for each season. This calendar of fourfold and sevenfold divisions ($91 \times 4 = 364$; $13 \times 7 \times 4 = 364$; $364 : 7 = 52$) is described in detail through various documents that were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and while some had been known previously within the pseudepigraphic literature, their priestly context went unrecognized. The details of the annually recurring fourfold divisions of the seasons known as *merkabot bashamaim* “heavenly chariots” (I Enoch 75:3) and sevenfold calculations of the Sabbaths of weeks and Sabbaths of years known as *Moadei Dror* (appointed times of freedom)²⁰ are detailed and explained in eight different texts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some of these texts were known previously and appeared in the Pseudepigraphic literature as noted above while some are unique to the Qumran library. The calendar and its different ritual and cosmic components are explained in I Enoch, chapters 72–82²¹; in the Book of Jubilees, chapter 6²²; in the Temple Scroll²³; in the Scroll of the Priestly Watches²⁴; at the conclusion of the Psalm Scroll that was found in Qumran²⁵; in the Qumran version of Noah and the flood story²⁶; in the openings of each one of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and in the calendar appearing in the opening verses of the priestly epistle *Miqsat Maase ha-Tora*²⁷.

The great number and diversity of texts which reflect the priestly interest in the 364 day solar calendar or the 52 Sabbath calendar points to the centrality of this issue in the priestly consciousness. The calendar is probably the single most important component of the priestly tradition that was endangered and threatened after 175 BCE; and it was the central issue of dispute that caused all this literature to be dismissed and censured by later generations who changed the solar calendar into a lunar calendar and challenged the priestly order. Most likely the huge Qumran library was destined to oblivion on account of its devotion to the ancient

¹⁹ On Enoch's priestly role see Jubilees 4: 25; I Enoch 108:1; II Enoch chapters 13–14; 16, 18, 19–23. (*J. H. Charlesworth* [ed.], *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. [New York 1983–1985] vol. 1, 91–222).

²⁰ 4Q286 frag. 1, ii:8–12; DJD XI (note 10 above) 12.

²¹ *J. H. Charlesworth*, *Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (note 19 above) 50–61. The versions of the book of Enoch in Qumran 4Q208–209 are edited in DJD XXXVI, Qumran Cave 4 V 26, Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea, Part 1 (Oxford 2000) 3–191.

²² *J. C. VanderKam*, *The Book of Jubilees*, 2 vols. (CSCO 510–11, *Scriptores Aethiopicci* 87–88, Lovanii 1989) chapter 6; *J. H. Charlesworth* (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (note 19 above) vol. II, 67–69.

²³ *Y. Yadin* (ed.), *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem 1983).

²⁴ *S. Talmon*, *J. Ben Dov* and *U. Glessmer* (eds.), DJD XXI: Qumran Cave 4, XVI: Calendrical Texts (Oxford 2001).

²⁵ *J. A. Sanders* (ed.), DJD I V: The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave II (11QPs) (Oxford 1965) 48.

²⁶ *G. Brook* et al. (eds.), 4Q252, col. II frags. 1, 3:1–5; 3:1–3, DJD XXII: Qumran Cave 4, XVII: Parabiblical Texts, part 3 (Oxford 1996) 198, 235.

²⁷ *E. Qimron*, *J. Strugnell* et al. (eds.), DJD X: Qumran Cave 4, V: *Miqsat Maase ha-Torah* (Oxford 1994) 6–7.

priestly calendar that was a nonnegotiable issue for its founders who maintained that time is holy and its sacred divisions, which were revealed and imparted from heaven and entrusted to angels and priests, could not be changed by humans. The impressions of this dispute on the structure of the calendar and the appointed times of the Lord would be addressed later in history as part of the controversies on hegemony between *bnei zadok* (*z dokim*) and the Sages (*prushim*) or between Sadducees and Pharisees. However, the various sources that portray this dispute rarely reflect the priestly point of view expressed so strongly in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The priestly solar calendar was founded on the assumption that time is divine and its sacred eternal divisions had been decreed in heaven. Its heavenly seasonal divisions (4) and weekly Sabbath divisions (52) were eternal, predetermined, pre-calculated, and preserved by angelic watches (Jubilees 2:17–29; 6). These divisions and calculations were considered to have been conferred from heaven by the angels to Enoch. The calendar was taught again after the course of 49 Jubilees (after 49 reoccurrences of the passage of 49 years) to Moses, son of Amram from the tribe of Levi, who was instructed in all the details of its calculations on Mount Sinai by the Angel of the Presence²⁸. The calendar was taught to Moses as *Torah veten'da* (angelic testimony on the calendar) after he had received the *Torah vehamitzva* (Divine testimony on the law)²⁹. The holy annual divisions of the calendar formed the very foundation of the worship³⁰. Its cycles were kept eternally in heaven by the angels, and were maintained on earth in the Temple by the priests and the High Priests from the tribe of Levi and the family of Zadok³¹. The heavenly time integrated a fourfold annual division based on solar observations, seasonal changes pertaining to the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, the summer and winter solstices (four seasons *tekufot*) and a sevenfold division of the appointed times specified by God: *moadim*, the 7 appointed holidays of the Lord (Lev. 23); the 52 Sabbaths as well as the seventh year *Shemitah* (year of fallow) and

²⁸ Cf. J. C. VanderKam, The Angel of the Presence in the Book of Jubilees, in: Dead Sea Discoveries 7, 3 (2000) 378–393.

²⁹ The revelation to Moses is described in the opening of Jubilees, see J. C. VanderKam, The Book of Jubilees (note 22 above) 87–88; O. S. Wintermute, Jubilees, in: J. H. Charlesworth, Pseudepigrapha vol. II (note 19 above) 35–53.

³⁰ See: J. A. Sanders (ed.), DJD IV: The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPp) (Oxford 1965) 48; Elijor, The Three Temples (note 5 above) 34–62.

³¹ According to priestly historiography the divine worship was directed by one priestly dynasty for more than a thousand years (between the days of Aaron and his direct descendants Elazar, Pinchas, and Avishua who served in the desert tabernacle, their descendent Zadok son of Ahituv the High Priest who officiated in the days of David and Solomon in the time of the foundation of the First Temple, his direct descendants *Bnei Zadok* who served until the destruction of the First Temple and members of his direct dynasty who served until the year 175 BCE in the middle of the Second Temple period). One may argue about the precision of the historical fact as far as chronology and genealogy, however, one can not deny the importance and centrality of the consciousness of continuity of the dynasty of the high priesthood in the Bible and in the Scrolls. For a critical appraisal see C. Werman, The Sons of Zadok, in: The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years After their Discovery (Jerusalem 2000) 623–630 and cf. Elijor, The Three Temples (note 5 above) 24–29, 165–200.

the seventh of seven of years or *Jubilee*. According to this calendar, as noted above, each year possessed an unchanging and fixed number of 364 days. The year was divided into four parallel seasons of 91 days, each one of the seasons included 13 Sabbaths spread over three months which were calculated mathematically as counting consecutively 30, 30 and 31 days, each month starting respectively on Wednesday, Friday or Sunday according to their order. Each one of the 13 Sabbaths in a quarter fell on a predetermined date, the first being the fourth day of the first month (that starts always on Wednesday), the second Sabbath on the eleventh, the third Sabbath on the eighteenth, and the last one, the thirteenth Sabbath, would always be on the twenty-eighth day of the third month (that will start always on Sunday). In this order each holiday has a permanent pre-calculated day and date in the first seven months of the year that will never overlap with a Sabbath. The synchronization of the dates between the four seasons (4×91), the twelve months of thirty days and four intercalary days ($12 \times 30 + 4$) and the fifty two Sabbaths ($4 \times 13 \times 7$) in cycles of seven years, six years of service and one Sabbatical year (*shemitah*) was vested in the hands of the 24 priestly Courses (I Chron. 24) which were serving in the Temple in weekly cycles of watches known as *mishmeret hakodesh* (holy watch). In a period of six years, each course would serve thirteen times in a weekly order nominated according to the names of the priestly course, as is demonstrated in the scrolls of the priestly courses found in Qumran³².

This eternal divine calendar formed the background and structure for the priestly service in the Temple and was maintained by the 24 priestly watches or priestly courses as recorded in the priestly historiography and mystical literature found in Qumran, ascribed by its authors to “the priests, the sons of Zadok, and their allies”³³. Numerous documents in the Qumran library focus on the priestly leadership of the community in relation to the Biblical order of religious leadership.

The Biblical tradition reserved the rights of the High Priesthood for the children of Moses' brother, Aaron (Lev. 10:12–13; I Chr. 23:13), and his descendants are the sole members of the 24 priestly courses responsible for the order of the eternal calendar of divine worship. The priestly dynasty imparted from Aaron to his son Elazar, from Elazar to his son Pinchas and continued, consecrated by divine decree, from father to a chosen son throughout the course of the Biblical

³² See S. Talmon, J. Ben Dov, and U. Glessmer (eds.), DJD XXI: Qumran Cave 4, XVI: Calendrical Texts (Oxford 2001); S. Talmon, The World of Qumran from Within (note 17 above) 147–150, 273–300; S. Talmon and I. Knohl, A Calendrical Scroll from a Qumran Cave, in: Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical Jewish and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom, David Wright, David Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz (eds.) (Wynona Lake 1995) 267–302; Elijor, The Three Temples (note 5 above) 42–43.

³³ On the priests the sons of Zadok in the scrolls see *Community Rule* V, 2, 9; G. Vermes (ed.), The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English (hereafter CDSSIE) (London 1997) 103–104; *Messianic Rule* (1Q28a) I, 23–5, CDSSIE 158; *Damascus Document* III, 21–IV, 1; IV, 3–4, CDSSIE 130; *Florilegium* (4Q174 I 16–18), CDSSIE 404.

collection³⁴. The consecrated dynastic continuity relates to the genealogy of the High Priesthood which was limited to one branch of the priestly dynasty, the direct descendants of Aaron. Since the days of David and Solomon, Zadok, son of Ahituv (a direct descendant of Aaron), was the high priest, and his children, generation after generation, were described and identified as sons of Zadok who served as High Priests in the Temple³⁵. This dynastic line of priests, the sons of Zadok, served exclusively according to the Biblical tradition and Ben Sira's testimony until the year 175 BCE when Antiochus IV, the Selucian emperor, conquered the Land of Israel and imposed a new calendar on his empire, the Selucian lunar calendar³⁶.

Onias III, serving as high priest at this time (II Mac. 3:1), rejected the royal imposition pertaining to the new lunar calendar order while his brother Jason conceded, deposed his brother, purchased the high priesthood from Antiochus³⁷, and instituted a new royal-priestly order. From this moment, the unity of holy time, holy place, and holy service ended, the Biblical order and the priestly solar calendar ceased to exist. In the course of the second century BCE, various differing calendars were imposed and accepted in a defiled temple by the Hellenized priests Alkimos and Menelaus, and the Hasmonean priests Jonathan, Simon, and John Hyrkanus, and in the first century BCE by Alexander Janeus and his descendants. The former ruling priestly circles of *Bnei Zadok*, those who perceived themselves as keepers of the holy heritage, were deposed and abandoned the Jerusalem Temple, taking with them the Temple library. The remains of the vast priestly library, which most probably had originated in the Jerusalem Temple, were found in Qumran. The 950 Dead Sea Scrolls which include only sacred literature associated in various ways to the Biblical priestly tradition, can be divided into four sections: I. 250 copies of Biblical scrolls; II. Rewritten bible or Para-Biblical texts which represent various traditions of combined Biblical texts explicitly connected to the Biblical tradition but retaining different versions and different divisions; III. Liturgical scrolls and mystical traditions concerning angels and priests, heavenly chariot and celestial sanctuaries, and legal traditions pertaining to the Temple; IV. Polemic scrolls that were written against the Hasmonean priests, those who had unlawfully deposed the priests, the Sons of Zadok. Most of this vast literature was entirely unknown until 1947³⁸.

This oblivion was not entirely accidental as the library legitimized the old group who served in the Temple for centuries and was the source of threat for the new usurping group who nominated itself against the Biblical order and the

³⁴ Ex. 28–30, 40:13–16; Lev. 8:21–22; Num. 17–18, 25; I Chr. 6:34–38, 23:13, 28–32, 24:1–5.

³⁵ On the priests sons of Zadok see I Kgs. 1:32, 35, 38–9, 2:35; I Chr. 5:29–41, 9:11, 24:3–6, 29:22; Ezra 7:2–5; Neh. 11:11.

³⁶ Cf. Daniel 7:25; I Mac. 1:41–47; II Mac. 6:6–7. See O. Morkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria* (Copenhagen 1966).

³⁷ Cf. I Mac. 1:11–15; II Mac. 4:7–14.

³⁸ See E. Tov (ed.), *DJD XXXIX. The Texts from the Judaen Desert: Indices and Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series* (Oxford 2002).

priestly heritage. The deposed priests had every reason to rescue the Temple library and to keep and guard it as best as they could from the hands of the new regime since their entire authoritative-historical claim to a sacred position, as well as their rights to exclusive consecrated legitimacy according to a divine decree, were attested and preserved in the sacred writings. The deposed priests copied the holy documents of the Pentateuch and the Prophets, the priestly historiography and the entire Biblical library (with the exception of Esther that does not have sacred value) and they copied many other sacred texts that did not find their way to the canon that was edited by the Sages after the destruction of the Second Temple. They continued to create new compositions which corroborated their ancient status by linking it to the angelic world and to the beginning of history as reflected in Genesis and in the parallel traditions of Jubilees, Enoch, The book of Giants and The Testaments of the Twelve Tribes. For the same reasons that the old priesthood (*beit zadok veanshei britam*) defended the library and continued to extend it, their opponents (*beit hashmonai*) most likely wanted to leave this library in oblivion since it casted a shadow on their legitimacy and unsubstantiated authority. The deposed priests wrote legal literature that addressed the new ruling priesthood and urged the reinstatement of the old priestly order and the ancient divine calendar (*Miqsat Maase Hatorah*; The Temple Scroll; Scrolls of Priestly Courses). At the same time, they also copied old texts and composed new mystical literature in order to demonstrate the divine paradigm of the priestly calendar (The Book of Enoch; The Book of Jubilees; The Qumran Psalm Scroll; Blessings) and the divine origins of the priesthood (Testimony of Levi; Enoch; Jubilees 30–32); and they copied in many versions the angelic paradigm of the divine worship according to the solar calendar (Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice; Scroll of Blessings). The angelic world where the solar calendar is kept eternally through holy liturgical cycles was described in close relation to the ancient priestly calendar and its liturgical divisions. Different traditions pertaining to the heavenly chariot as a counterpart of the holy place were written as well. They wrote further scrolls aggressively attacking those who had dethroned them; the new priests who changed the calendar into a lunar calendar obeying the Antiochian order of the Selucian calendar were identified as “sons of darkness” and “sons of evil” as opposed to the Zadokite priests, the keepers of the solar-angelic calendar, who are called “sons of light” and “sons of justice” (Rule of the Community; Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness; Peshar Habakuk)³⁹.

In the year 45 BCE, on the first of January, the Roman Julian solar calendar of 365 days replaced the old lunar Selucian calendar then standard in Judea, which had been conquered by the Romans two decades earlier. In the period when the Sages began to consolidate their hegemony under Roman rule and particularly after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the Sages established defiantly a new lunar calendar, free from calculations and pre-computations and of the priestly angelic liturgical calendar on one side and free from the Roman solar cal-

³⁹ See G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London 1997).

endar on the other. This new calendar of the Sages did not relate explicitly to the number of days in a year, neither to the number of days of each month, nor to the specific day upon which a year should commence or a month should start. The calendar of the Sages was founded on human sovereignty since the calculations were based on human testimony concerning the rising of the moon and therefore not upon a predetermined division of time springing from a divine source comprised of eternal dates and seasons reckoned by angels and priests. The Sages started the year in the seventh month Tishrei while the Biblical priestly calendar states explicitly that the first month in the spring (Nisan) is the beginning of the year (Ex. 12: 1-3) and thus formed the basis of annual counting. The ancient calendar of the deposed priests of the house of Zadok had not been maintained in the Temple since 175 BCE. However, it was preserved in multifold writings, notably the mystical and liturgical literatures, which were believed to have been based on testimonies from those angels and mystical heroes who transcended heavenly and mundane boundaries. These mystical traditions may vary but they always elaborate upon the sacred numbers of the solar calendar: seven (days) and thirteen (Sabbaths in a season); four (seasons) and twelve (pre-calculated months), the divine source and angelic framework (Enoch the seventh patriarch learned the calendar of four seasons, twelve months and fifty two Sabbaths from the angels), its liturgical cycles (13 Sabbath Songs, four times a year; a year of 52 weeks/Sabbaths maintained by 24 priestly watches changing weekly) and its ritual preservation (24 Priestly courses monitored the sevenfold divisions of time *shabatot*, *shivaa moadim*, *shemitot*, *yovlim*; Sabbath, seven appointed times of the Lord, fallow years, Jubilees) alongside the angels in their seven heavenly sanctuaries in the world of the chariot.

This priestly mystical literature relating to holy time was concerned both with the seven heavenly sanctuaries that were associated as spatial dimensions with the sevenfold divisions of time (Lev. 23) as well as with the four spatial dimensions of the heavenly chariot that pertained to the fourfold division of the seasons and cosmic directions. This mystical literature which delineated holy time and holy place in relation to the priestly solar calendar, as well as its authors and keepers, in a first stage was suppressed by the Hasmoneans, as suggested from *Pesher Habakuk*, and in a second stage was constrained by the Sages who held to the lunar calendar. The Sages defined the priestly writings on holy time and holy place as "books that should remain outside of the canonic literature", books which became known as *Sefarim Hitzonim*, Pseudepigrapha or Apocrypha. The Sages constrained and prohibited "expounding on the deeds of the chariot" (Mishnah Hagigah 2:1; BT Hagigah 13b) without explaining the background of this ruling and its connection to ancient priestly perceptions of holy time and holy place.

The protagonist of the priestly literature found in the Judean desert is Enoch son of Jared, the seventh patriarch (Gen. 5: 21-24), he who had brought the calendar from heaven to earth and who is considered the founder of the priestly order and the source of the priestly dynasty of written knowledge derived from an angelic source. Enoch was the first human being who learned to read from the an-

gels, to write and to calculate heavenly divisions of *holy time* (Jubilees. 4; I Enoch 72-82) and was further granted the vision of the heavenly *holy place*, the vision of the chariot of the cherubim (I Enoch 14:8-25). The heavenly paradigm of the holy place later would be depicted in the Holy of Holies in the Temple (I Chronicles 28:18). Enoch, the founder of the priestly library that was imparted to him by the angels (Jubilees 4), was the first man to be taught the complexities of the astro-nomic divisions of the calendar, known as *merkabot hashamayim* [heavenly chariots] (I Enoch 75:3). He is described as enjoying direct contact with the heavenly retinue, notably with the angel Uriel or with the Angel of the Presence, who revealed the heavenly knowledge on holy place and holy time first to him, and later to Moses on Mount Sinai (Jubilees 1, 8:19). The library and the divine knowledge of reading, writing and calculating was transmitted directly and indirectly to a priestly line according to *Jubilees*, *The Testament of the Twelve Tribes*, *5Q13* and *II Enoch*, starting with Enoch, and continuing with his descendants Methuselah, Lemech, Noah, Shet/Malkizedek, Abraham, Yitzhak, Jacob, Levi, Kehat, Amram and Moshe. It seems that the myth of the priestly library transmitted from heaven to earth and kept by the children of Enoch, the children of Abraham and the children of Levi, written mainly in the second and first century BCE, had to do with the fact that the actual Temple library was severely endangered in the second century BCE. It was in this period that the Hellenized priests and the Hasmonean priests were serving against the Biblical order and the ancient priestly authority. The unique role of the priestly protagonist Enoch is described in detail in the Aramaic Book of Enoch that was found in Qumran⁴⁰ and in its Ethiopic translations and various recensions that were known in the Pseudepigraphic literature before their original Aramaic and Hebrew versions were found in Qumran⁴¹. Enoch's heavenly position as an eternal dweller of paradise is described in Genesis Apocryphon⁴², in The Book of Giants⁴³ and in chapters of Jubilees that were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls⁴⁴. Enoch, who is described as a heavenly scribe dwelling in paradise after he brought the calendar and as a witness to the angelic liturgy and the divine chariot that he saw and heard in heaven is also described in II Enoch, a Slavonic translation of a version from the first century, as well as in other ancient sources⁴⁵. In this literature, we cannot overemphasize Enoch's mystical ascents, the heavenly knowledge acquired in relation to calendar and chariot, the

⁴⁰ See J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments from Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford 1976); and DJD XXXVI, *Qumran Cave 4: XXV: Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea* (note 21 above) 3-191.

⁴¹ I Enoch in: J. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (note 19 above) 5-90.

⁴² See N. Avigad and Y. Yadin, *Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea* (Jerusalem 1956).

⁴³ See DJD XXXVI (note 21 above) 8-94.

⁴⁴ See Jubilees, DJD XIII.

⁴⁵ On II (Slavonic) Enoch see F. Andersen, in: J. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (note 19 above) 91-222.

priestly role assumed, as well as the cardinal role of angels in regard to priestly worship, priestly calendar, and priestly chariot tradition. Major parts of this literature were written by deposed Zadokite priests who argued for the sanctity of their own perception of holy time (calendar of the angels) and holy place (chariot of the cherubim) and the exclusive legitimacy of their priestly service as descendants of the ancient priestly line at a time when other priests were serving in the temple under false pretenses, according to an erroneous calendar with illegitimate claims to sovereignty.

As mentioned above, Jason, who supported the demands Antiochus IV imposed on his empire which included a change of the calendar as part of the hellenization, deposed his brother, Onias, the legitimately appointed high priest in 175 BCE. Jason himself was deposed shortly thereafter by Menelaus in 172 and in turn was replaced by Alkimos in 169. The Hasmonean dynasty assumed the position of high priests from the year 152 BCE until 37 BCE; however, their first appointments were nominated by the Selucian kings Alexander Balas and Demetrius II. The Hasmoncans who belonged to *mishmeret Yehoyariv* (the priestly course of Yehoyariv) were not members of the high priestly family that belonged exclusively to *mishmeret Yedayah* (the priestly watch of Yedayah). The Hasmoncans were nominated and appointed by the Selucian kings who imposed a lunar calendar on their empire, and thus the Hasmoncans did not or could not maintain the ancient priestly solar calendar. The deposed priests, the sons of Zadok, distinguished themselves as "Sons of Light" and "Sons of Righteousness" while defaming their opponents who were serving in the temple as "Sons of Darkness" and "Sons of Evil". From 175 BCE onward, in the long period during which this illegitimate priestly dynasty served in the Temple and functioned under a spurious calendar, the deposed priests, the sons of Zadok and those who accepted their exclusive authority, continued to write and contend with the establishment of the priestly legitimacy about the sanctity of priestly knowledge as expressed as well in the priestly library that originated in divine and angelic knowledge, as in the priestly solar calendar. Central in their writings were Enoch's heavenly knowledge on holy time and holy place, the angelic source of knowledge and paradigm for divine worship, calendars of 364 days and 52 Sabbaths as the foundation for holy time, and the heavenly chariot of the Cherubim as the origin for holy place. The heavenly sevenfold divisions (Sabbath; seven Heikhalot) and fourfold divisions (four seasons; fourfold Merkabah) pertaining to holy time and holy place, as well as sevenfold groups of angels and fourfold divisions of the living creatures of the Merkabah were elaborated in diverse ways in their written tradition.

In the Merkabah literature which appeared in poetry and narrative centuries later, after the destruction of the Second Temple, that became known as the Heikhalot literature (or the seven sanctuaries mystical tradition), the angels hold a central position as well. Here, too, Enoch is a major protagonist appearing in some of its traditions, though he is re-named Enoch-Metatron (most likely in relation to the number four; *tetra* in Greek). The sevenfold division of the heavenly world to seven Heikhalot is a noticeable characteristic of Heikhalot literature as well as the

fourfold structure of the chariot, and the sevenfold angelic liturgy is a distinct feature of the Heikhalot and Merkabah tradition⁴⁶.

No direct connection may be ascertained between traditions which were written in the last few centuries before the Common Era and between those emerging in the early centuries of the Common Era or in the Byzantine Era. However, it is interesting to note that the ancient priestly mystical traditions are revived in the latter tradition through both confirmation and struggle. Enoch, the protagonist of the priestly literature of the calendar and the chariot before the Common Era – also described as an eternal scribe residing eternally in paradise – is the heavenly angelic hero of the third book of Enoch known as *Sefer Heikhalot*. In this book the number of the days of a solar year (365) is mentioned time and again in various mystical connections as well as the seven heavenly sanctuaries, the angelic retinue and the four-fold divisions of the seasons and the Merkabah⁴⁷.

Of great interest as well, Enoch-Metatron, the admired hero of the priestly calendar, appears in the rabbinic literature as a subject of punishment and an object for denunciation. Enoch who is depicted in the Bible as a unique individual, one who was taken to heaven *alive* (Gen. 5:24) is now described in the Aramaic translation of this verse as a person who was *executed* by heavenly decree (Onkelos translation Gen. 5:24). Noticeably, the older Enoch traditions relate that he was taken to heaven while still alive for an eternal life in paradise on the first day of the Biblical reckoning of the year, the beginning of the solar priestly calendar (the first

⁴⁶ I will not discuss here the question of the dating of Heikhalot Literature and the identity of its authors as opinions are far from being unanimous or utterly convincing and the literature was not necessarily composed in one single period. Scholars argued that Heikhalot literature has been written in the second and third century (Scholem) or in the fifth and sixth century of the Common Era (Alexander, Schäfer, Abusch). This issue is treated extensively in the scholarly literature of the last fifty years and the reader can find references to it in the bibliography below. On seven Heikhalot, angels and sevenfold angelic liturgy, on Chariot and on Enoch-Metatron in Heikhalot and Merkabah Literature see sources mentioned in notes 1, 4, 5 above as well as in *D. J. Halperin*, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (American Oriental Society, New Haven 1980); *idem*, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (TSAJ 16, Tübingen 1988); *J. Davila*, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People Behind the Heikhalot Literature* (JSJ Sup. 70, Leiden 2001); *J. Dan*, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism* (Tel-Aviv 1993); *idem*, *Jewish Mysticism: Late Antiquity*, 2 vols. (Northvale 1998); *N. Deutsch*, *Guardians of the Gate. Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Brill's Series in Jewish Studies 22, Leiden, Boston 1999); *I. Chernus*, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism* (Studia Judaica 11, Berlin, New York 1982); *P. Schäfer et al.*, *Übersetzung der Heikhalot Literatur*, 4 vols. (TSAJ 17, 22, 29, 46, Tübingen 1987–1995); *R. Abusch*, *Sevenfold Hymns in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Heikhalot Literature: Formalism Hierarchy and the Limits of Human Participation*, in: *J. Davila* (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls As Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (Leiden, Boston 2003) 220–247; *R. Elijor*, *Sifrut haHeikhalot uMasoret haMerkavah* (Tel Aviv 2004) (Hebrew).

⁴⁷ The annual number of days mentioned in Third Enoch, 365, is mentioned also in II Enoch. No sufficient explanation to the change from 364 to 365 days is known to me. On Third Enoch see *P. Alexander*, *Hebrew Apocalypse of Enoch*, in: *J. H. Charlesworth*, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. I (note 19 above) 223–316.

day of the Nisan month according to Ex. 12:2–3)⁴⁸, the same day that the Tabernacle was set forth (Ex. 40:1) and the day that Levi, the father of the priesthood, was born⁴⁹. In opposition to this priestly tradition before the Common Era, the rabbinic alternative tradition after the Common Era relates that Enoch was *executed* on the first day of the seventh month (Tishrei), the day that was chosen to be nominated as *Rosh haShana* – the celebration of the new year – according to the new rabbinic calendar, a date that has no substantiation in the Biblical narrative of the holidays (although this date does appear as a day of memorial in the seventh month)⁵⁰.

Many of the principal features of the Heikhalot mystical literature show significant precedents from the priestly literature that was written before the Common Era in historical circumstances marked by dispute and despair; when ancient perceptions of holy place and holy time, divine chariot and angelic calendar were challenged, the ancient priestly order was changed, when *Bnei Zadok* were replaced by *Bnei Hashmonai*, and written law based on sacred library of numerous scrolls was gradually replaced by oral law that related to a canonized version of the written law. This oral law excluded the canon of priestly writings that related to calendar and holy time, chariot and holy place, angels and holy service and traditions on the origin of the priestly dynasty from Enoch to Amram. The Masoretic version started the priesthood with Aaron son of Amram, while the priestly tradition found in Qumran and in parallel texts in the books that remained outside of the Masoretic Canon and came to be known as Pseudepigrapha claim a dynasty that has started with Enoch and his descendants until Noah and Malkizedek and culminates with Levi and his descendants.

These historical processes of changing hegemony took place under the Selucian-Greek rule that imposed the Greek Lunar calendar on the Empire (175–66 BCE) and the Roman Rule that imposed a Solar Calendar on the Roman Empire (from 66 BCE). They excluded the previous orders, deliberately forgot priestly traditions, and, through later canonization and censorship, generated complicated spiritual responses which were reflected in the mystical “war of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness” (*Bnei Zadok* against *Bnei Hashmonai*). The first stage (175–37 BCE) of this war of the solar calendar against the lunar calendar is well reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Its later stage is reflected in the dispute between Sadducees (*Tzadokim*, *Bnei Zadok*), who held to the ancient angelic-priestly solar calendar of 364 days (relating to a year commencing in Nisan according to the Biblical calendar according to Ex. 12: 2–3), and the Pharisees (*Prushim*, the Sages) that chose the human lunar calendar of a variable number of days (a year could be 354–358 or 384 days), a year which started in Tishrei, the seventh month, and which required the addition of a leap year (something which has no

⁴⁸ II Enoch 19:2 Hebrew version; cf. E. J. Andersen, (note 45 above) 196, chapter 68:1.

⁴⁹ Jubilees 28:14. cf. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. II (note 19 above) 110.

⁵⁰ Lev. 23:23–25; cf. Jubilees 6:23; cf. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. II (note 19 above) 68.

foundation in the Bible). This dispute between priests (364 days) and Sages (354 + 30) is also well reflected in the different instances in the Mishnah whenever a dispute over the dates of the holidays confronts Sadducees with Pharisees. Those who held to the lunar calendar and the new leap year censured out texts that related to the ancient priestly solar calendar and the priestly history of its divine origin and nominated these texts as *sefarim hitzonim* or books that should remain outside of the Canon. They further wrote negative and derogatory accounts concerning the messenger of the priestly solar calendar, Enoch (Bereshit Raba 25). These stories distorted the priestly traditions concerning his ascent to heaven as well as his instruction from the angels regarding the details of this priestly calendar. The new stories further replaced the ancient admiring narratives with new plots relating to Enoch's humiliation, punishment and death (B.T. Hagiga 15a). These supporters of the lunar calendar also replaced the priestly orientation of the stories relating to the origin of the solar calendar with an alternative story connecting Enoch with the greatest calendric prohibition, changing the number of days in a year (Jubilees 6:30–38) which is required by *sod halbur* (the secret of the leap year required by lunar calendar, cf. *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* chapter 8). The fact that these pro-Enoch and anti-Enoch traditions were being debated centuries after the Temple was destroyed and the priestly calendar or priestly service was abolished allows for speculations concerning our historical perspective and the role of mystical memory. Mystical literature reflects much more than heavenly perspectives, devotional experience and transcendental spiritual yearning, it also reveals very interesting historical dimensions often biased by earthly disputes and competing human interests.

In light of all the above I suggest that there were two chapters of Jewish Mysticism in late antiquity.

The traditions centered on Enoch and the priestly library that have commenced in angelic teaching of divine knowledge and concentrated on the priestly solar calendar, the angels, the chariot and the sevenfold angelic liturgy which were written before the Common Era should be reconsidered as its first chapter. The Heikhalot and Merkabah literature, written after the destruction of the Temple and incorporating similar topics, should be reconsidered as the second chapter of Jewish Mysticism that reflects the dialectical continuity with its priestly sources.

The Qumran priestly library of “the Sons of Zadok and their allies” originated in the Temple library that was created and guarded for centuries by priests and prophets and was taken by the deposed priests when they were forced to leave the defiled sanctuary. The deposed priests that guarded the endangered temple library took it most likely in the commencement of the Hasmonean era and developed from it new traditions that were clad with ancient origins that centered on holy time, holy place, holy service and holy dynasty, holy tablets and holy books. The Qumran documents in general and the rule of the community in particular discuss the centrality of study in books in the daily life of its members. The community was keeping the books in high degree of sanctity as the foundation of all their historical claims and demanded high degree of purity in relation to the angelic pres-

ence that was attested in the books. Remnants of these traditions on angels and chariots, sanctuaries and holy books and divine tablets, sacred calendars and sevenfold divine liturgy that were found in Qumran and were known from the Pseudepigrapha found their way centuries later to the circles who took upon themselves to keep the priestly memory after the destruction of the Temple in hymns and narratives that commemorated the ideal service in the Temple in relation to its heavenly paradigm. It is interesting to note that the new mystical traditions abandoned the direct polemical framework of the old tradition (*Sons of Light* against *Sons of Darkness*, *Sons of Justice* against *Sons of Evil*) while adopting old themes such as Chariot-Merkabah, sevenfold sanctuaries and sevenfold angelic ritual, knowledge from angels and Enoch as a central hero pertaining to issues which were debatable in rabbinical circles. The new writers of the Chariot tradition who are focusing on the heavenly world are integrating important elements from the world of the Sages, notably the names of the earthly protagonists R. Akiva and R. Ishmael as the new partners of the ancient priestly and heavenly protagonist Enoch-Metatron. The relationship between the priestly tradition and the rabbinic tradition are dialectical and complicated and pertain to developments in the synagogue tradition and the liturgical tradition, but this relationship certainly informs in various ways the new stages of Merkabah Mysticism which continued the ancient tradition and developed new directions in the first millennium after the destruction of the Temple.

Martha Himmelfarb

Merkavah Mysticism since Scholem: Rachel Elijor's *The Three Temples*

More than sixty years ago in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Gershom Scholem delineated three stages of merkavah mysticism: the literature of the "anonymous conventicles of the old apocalyptics"; the speculation of the tannaim, the rabbis of the period from the destruction of the temple in 70 to the completion of the Mishnah around 200; and finally the hekhalot texts¹. Of the three stages, it was the last stage to which Scholem gave most of his attention. He saw ascent to heaven as its central concern, and, in conformity with his view that mysticism was at the heart of Judaism in every age, he argued that its practitioners were deeply imbued with the values of rabbinic Judaism. But despite his claim that merkavah mysticism was the earliest phase of the ongoing tradition of Jewish mysticism, it is clear that Scholem saw it as of minor significance for understanding the culmination of that tradition, the kabbalistic systems of the Zohar and Isaac Luria. Indeed, Scholem concluded the chapter on merkavah mysticism in *Major Trends* by noting the distance between ancient merkavah speculation and the symbolic interpretation of the merkavah of later Jewish mystics².

The decades since Scholem's pioneering work have seen important advances in the study of merkavah mysticism, including the publication of a synoptic edition of the major manuscripts of the hekhalot texts by Peter Schäfer³. The new scholarship develops Scholem's ideas further, but it also calls into question important aspects of his understanding of merkavah mysticism⁴. Some scholars have argued

¹ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York 1961; first ed. 1941) 43.

² Scholem, *Major Trends* 79. Merkavah mysticism receives little attention in: Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, London 1988), though he reads many rabbinic texts as reflecting a theurgic understanding of the meaning of the commandments similar to that of later kabbalistic texts (156–72, esp. 157). It plays a more important role in: Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Mysticism* (Princeton 1994). Wolfson understands merkavah mysticism as standing in continuity with later Jewish mysticism both because the hekhalot texts were redacted in the Middle Ages and because the medieval transformations of the vision of the merkavah are central to his project (9–10).

³ Peter Schäfer, *Synopsis zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen 1981).

⁴ To the best of my knowledge, there is no article or book chapter devoted to a critical discussion of scholarship on the hekhalot literature since Scholem. For recent listings of publications that supplement each other, see Rebecca Macy Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harvard Theological