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On Angels, Men and Priests (Ben Sira, the Qumran Sabbath Songs and the Yom Kippur Avodah)

Crispin Fletcher-Louis

I. Introduction

In my book *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* I argued for a new approach to some Dead Sea Scroll texts that describe angels and members of the Qumran sect in close contact or communion with the angels. I would like to take this opportunity to return to the arguments in that book; to respond to some criticisms of it and to make some new suggestions, especially about the relationship between the heavenly liturgy at Qumran and mainstream liturgical theology in Jewish antiquity, as that is reflected in the *piyyut* of the Yom Kippur Avodah service.

II. The Principal Propositions of *All the Glory of Adam*

In summary, I argued in *All the Glory of Adam* that some Qumran angelic texts had, until that time, been misinterpreted. The most obvious case of misinterpretation is scholarship on the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. Carol Newsom did a thorough job editing, translating and commenting on the individual portions of this difficult liturgy, but she misconstrued its overall conceptual framework by imposing upon it a dualistic cosmology. There are other mystical and liturgical texts preserved in the Qumran caves which have often been confined, by modern interpreters, to a dualistic straight jacket.

Such texts had begun their bid for freedom already in the early 1990s when Morton Smith showed that 4Q491c had been misinterpreted (through a dualistic lens) by its editor Maurice Baillet.¹ Baillet thought that in 4Q491c (or 4Q491 frag. 11 as he labelled it) there is a description of an archangel - Michael - and his heavenly exaltation. Everyone now agrees with Smith that in fact the text envisages the exaltation of a human to heaven where he is enthroned and counted amongst the *elim* (the “gods”). My *All the Glory of Adam* was an attempt to do for some other texts, especially the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the *War Scroll* (1QM), what Smith had achieved for the interpretation of 4Q491c.

My main contentions were these:

1. The big picture framework – the *cosmology* – that should guide our interpretation of the difficult material in the *Sabbath Songs* (and related texts) is the notion that that the temple is a microcosm; that in all its parts the Jewish

¹ M. Smith, “Two Ascended to Heaven – Jesus and the Author of 4Q491,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 290–301. For Baillet’s interpretation see *DJD* 7:26–30.

temple represents the totality of the cosmos (heaven, earth and sea) in miniature. It is a mistake to think of Jewish temples through the later, rabbinic-era idea that there is a temple in heaven which mirrors the temple on earth (a complete cult “up there” that mirrors the one that belongs “down here”).

2. The *Sabbath Songs* (and related texts) rely on the notion that the original humanity was created to be God’s living image-idol (Gen 1:26–27). They presume, that is, a particular *anthropology* that the Bible sets at the beginning and heart of its theology.

3. There is a genuine *Engelgemeinschaft* – human worshippers united with spiritual, angelic, beings – in the *Songs* (*pace* Newsom).² Whereas Newsom made the human community passive bystanders throughout the *Sabbath Songs*, there are in fact quite a few places where the human community is in view. This is the case especially in Songs I, VI, VIII and XIII where the human community is denoted with language that in other contexts is incontrovertibly used of mortals (they are “priests,” “holy ones,” “holiest of the holy ones,” a “people of discernment,” “princes,” and so forth). In particular, references to “priests” are all to humans, not to angels (as Newsom and others have claimed).

4. There are also places where the human community is ascribed “god” language (as “*elohim*” and “*elim*”), as we might expect from a couple of other Qumran texts (11QMelchizedek; 4Q491c, cf. 4Q511 frag. 35) and some non-Qumran Jewish sources (*Jub.* 40:7; Artapanus frag. 3; *Jos. Asen.* 22:3, 8, cf. Ps 45:7; Isa 9:5; Dan 2:46).

5. There is a kind of ascent to heaven and Song XIII is the climax of the *Sabbath Songs*’ liturgical cycle. (Newsom had denied any progression or ascent towards the end of the cycle, arguing instead that Song VII is the real centre of a liturgical chiasm).

6. The human high priesthood and the glorious high priestly garments of Exod 28 and 39 are the central focus of Song XIII. There, the ritualised journey into God’s presence comes to a climax with a vision of God, not on his throne, but in the human priesthood that to a degree now manifests the presence of the Glory of God of Ezek 1:26–28.

Reviewing once again all the primary sources and the publications that have come out since *All the Glory of Adam*, there are a few details I would now change,³ but overall, I remain convinced of the essential substance of my argument. And I am pleased to see that a number of others have now adopted a similar

² That means it is sometimes possible to draw confidently a line between references to exalted, “angelomorphic” humans and suprahuman angels (who are called “spirits” and “holy angels,” for example).

³ I now incline to the view that in Song VII suprahuman angels are in view throughout. Also some of the language I used to explain or describe the phenomena in view in the scrolls could be more technically appropriate to the terminology of the texts themselves. In particular, I am less attached now to the word “angelomorphic.”

approach.⁴ Most publications on the *Sabbath Songs* since *All the Glory* have accepted some of my arguments.⁵ However, there have also been swift dismissals of my revisionistic thesis, especially from Philip Alexander, and even those who see exalted human beings where Newsom only saw angels are reluctant to go as far as I have gone.⁶

What is at stake? In part, the unwillingness of some to concede the force of my argument is simply a matter of exegesis; what individual passages mean in their immediate literary and linguistic context and as a part of the Qumran Library (QL). I remain convinced that when we read Songs I, VI, VIII and XIII in the context of the Hebrew Bible, the wider corpus of Qumran literature and developing Second

⁴ For other readings which recognise that there are places where the *Songs* have in view an exalted and angelic but still human community see R. Eilior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), 183–192; E.R. Wolfson, “Seven Mysteries of Knowledge: Qumran Esotericism Recovered,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (ed. H. Najman and J.H. Newman; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 177–213 (esp. 191–193, 196–198, 200, 203–204, 206–213); J.H. Newman, “Priestly Prophets at Qumran: Summoning Sinai through the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G.J. Brooke, H. Najman, and L.T. Stuckenbruck; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 29–72; J.R. Davila, “Exploring the Mystical Background of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. T.H. Lim and J.J. Collins; Oxford: OUP, 2010), 433–454 (442–443).

⁵ For publications that accept my principal contention that there is not a rigid dualism between angelic and human realms and that often the language has in view exalted (angelic or, even, “divine”) humans see Christopher Morray-Jones in C. Rowland and C.R.A. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 324; J.R. Davila, “Mystical Background” (see note 4), 442–443; E. Regev, “What Kind of Sect was the Yaḥad,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture. Proceedings of the International Conference held at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem* (July 6–8, 2008) (ed. A.D. Roitman, L.H. Schiffman, and S. Tzoref; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 41–58 (52–54); J. Zilm, “Multi-coloured like woven works: gender, ritual clothing and praying with the angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Testament of Job,” in *Prayer and poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. Penner, K.M. Penner, and C. Wassén; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 437–451.

⁶ Ph. Alexander, *The Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (LSTS 61; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 45–47, 99–100. Newsom is less sweeping in her dismissal of *All the Glory*’s main arguments than is Alexander (see C.A. Newsom, “Review: All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls, by Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis,” *DSD* 10 (2003), 431–435). Even Alexander follows me in thinking (*pace* Newsom), that *human* beings are the recipient of the angelic blessings in Songs VI and VIII (*Mystical Texts*, 27–28, 33), and he thinks that the human worshipper (the “mystic”) dons high priestly garments in the all important Song XIII (*Mystical Texts*, 43, 50, cf. 112–113).

Temple angelology much of the language must refer to the human community.⁷ This is an historical judgement; about the meaning (or *possible* meanings) of the language of a Second Temple Hebrew text. And in the nature of the case, the historical questions are also theological ones. That is, the really decisive questions have to do with the nature of biblical theology and spirituality. *Resistance to the full force of my revisionist, non-dualistic reading comes, I contend, from mistaken judgements about the nature of Biblical theology and emerging post-biblical Judaism; specifically what we think Jews believed about the identity of God, of human beings, of the priesthood, and of the meaning and purpose of temple worship and liturgy.*

In the rest of this paper, I attempt to explain and to justify this statement. By way of initial orientation, it is as well to begin with some comments on the way in which those who read the *Songs* dualistically locate them on the theological or history-of-religions map of Second Temple Judaisms. In several ways, the effect of Newsom's approach is to disassociate the *Songs* from mainstream biblical theology and spirituality.

Following Newsom, quite a few think that the experience of a liturgy in a celestial temple functions as a kind of sociological or psychological compensation for the sectarians' separation from the Jerusalem temple.⁸ The *Songs* are part of a strategy – whether unconscious or conscious – to legitimise a heterodox movement. And that means they are, to a degree, discontinuous with the theology and experience of worship in the Jerusalem temple itself. Their theology and spirituality is created as a response to the experience of rupture from the institution that defines the very heart of biblical religion.

⁷ Ph. Alexander (*Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 47) counters that “there is nothing unusual” about the disputed anthropomorphic language that he thinks is being used for angels. In *All the Glory* I showed that, on the contrary, as Newsom herself often recognised, time and again the language is highly unusual *if it describes non-human angels*. Alexander's assertion is not backed up with any new primary textual evidence. Instead, by “nothing unusual” he seems to have in mind a comparative, social-psychology understanding of mystical religious phenomena: there is an “apparent ‘inappropriateness’” of language (he concedes) because the *Songs* “project onto heaven the polity and practices of earthly Israel” and this is “probably *not very consciously* done” (47, italics added). Is this not a rather patronising post-Freudian view of Qumran mysticism, that only works if those who used the *Sabbath Songs* were not theologically self-conscious about their choice of language and its place in their own and the biblical tradition?

⁸ E.g. G.J. Brooke, “Moving Mountains: From Sinai to Jerusalem,” in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G.J. Brooke, H. Najman, and L.T. Stuckenbruck; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 73–90 (87): “the worship of the community sublimated the experience of alienation that absence from Jerusalem imposed,” cf. C.A. Newsom, “Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L.H. Schiffman and J.C. VanderKam. Oxford: OUP, 2008), 887–889 (889); Ph. Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 131, 133.

In a similar vein, Alexander places the *Sabbath Songs* (and a whole array of related DSS texts) in an emerging tradition of an early Jewish mysticism. A central, defining feature of that mystical tradition is the experience of ascent to heaven. There is a form of ascent in the *Sabbath Songs*. But in this respect the *Songs* are discontinuous with biblical religion, where, in his view, there is no legitimate ascent to heaven.⁹ For Alexander, it is true that the *Sabbath Songs* are continuous with traditions circulating in pre-Qumran priestly circles. However, those traditions – centred on the idea of a celestial temple – can be confidently reconstructed with recourse to the extra-biblical and later sources (not, that is, the Bible itself). The *Songs* stand, then, between early extra-biblical accounts of an ascent to heaven (in the case of Enoch in *1 Enoch* 14, and Levi, as reflected in the *Aramaic Levi Document* and *T. Levi* 2–8) and the ascent mysticism of the later, rabbinic-era hekhalot texts.

There is here one great benefit of Alexander’s work: as a leading authority on Jewish mysticism he has made a strong case for thinking that the *Sabbath Songs* (and related Qumran texts) are evidence of a Second Temple-era mysticism focused on communion, or perhaps even *union*, with God (and his angels). Though it has its detractors, that case is, to my mind, essentially convincing. However, insofar as Alexander’s mystical interpretation exemplifies the several ways that the *Songs*’ theology has been deemed *discontinuous* with main-stream biblical theology and temple spirituality, his analysis remains problematic.

The connections Alexander and others adduce between the *Songs* and hekhalot mysticism are undeniable. And in some ways, appreciating those connections has helped to liberate the *Songs* from the constraints of a dualistic paradigm.¹⁰ For example, Alexander is not very far from my reading of Song XIII when he thinks that, on analogy with what we have in *3 Enoch* 9–13 (and *2 Enoch* 22:8–10), the human “mystic” is transformed, at the climax of the liturgical cycle, and is clothed with the “celestial priestly robes.”¹¹

However, there are marked differences between the individualistic, parainstitutional hekhalot texts and the corporate, liturgical, mysticism of the

⁹ See *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 75 and Alexander’s comments there on the polemic against the king of Babylon’s claim to have ascended to heaven in *Isa* 14:12–15.

¹⁰ See in particular the work of Christopher Morray-Jones who has seen the connections between the “transformational mysticism” in the hekhalot material and the liturgical transformation in the *Songs* (in C. Rowland and C.R.A. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery* (see note 5), 307–338).

¹¹ Ph. Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 50.

Sabbath Songs.¹² And locating the *Songs* somewhere near the fountain head of an emergent mysticism of the type we find in the much later hekhalot texts all too easily detaches them from their more immediate literary and theological contexts. First and foremost of those contexts is the pattern of life laid out in the Bible; a life centred on the experiential and theological realities of the temple. Secondly, the *Sabbath Songs* should be interpreted in their immediate Hellenistic-era Jewish setting. And thirdly, their meaning should be determined by the context of the distinctive cultic spirituality of the Qumran movement.

It is true that the *Sabbath Songs* cannot simply be interpreted in the context of past (biblical) and present (Qumran community) contexts. Certainly, they are illuminated by the important connections to rabbinic-era mysticism. However, more now needs to be said about their connections to another literary corpus from beyond the Second Temple period; *the synagogue liturgy*. I contend that the *primary* tradition-historical life-setting of the *Songs* is best viewed as a point on the continuum between mainstream biblical theology and temple spirituality, on the one hand, and the liturgical theology that developed all the way down through the later Second Temple period, to continue on after the temple's destruction in the synagogue liturgy, on the other hand. (The hekhalot texts most likely represent a pool that was once joined by a tributary stream to that main, broad river flowing from temple to synagogue). Temporarily, the *Songs* are much closer on that continuum to the Bible itself than to rabbinic-era mysticism. And in terms of their life-setting their meaning is perhaps better discerned through a comparison with the spirituality of the (later) synagogue, than with the world that stands behind the hekhalot texts that have come down to us.

In revisiting the *Sabbath Songs* and their place in a theological and experiential continuum from Temple to post-destruction synagogue, I would like to take a two-pronged approach to a defense and clarification of *All the Glory of Adam*. For the first prong, I consider three topics and explain why it is that, in each case, a biblical framework best explains the *Sabbath Songs*. The three topics are:

1. Temple Cosmology
2. Theological Anthropology
3. The nature of Priesthood

For the second prong, I bring to the table material from the rabbinic period synagogue; namely the *piyyutim* for the Yom Kippur Avodah. Until now the possible relevance of this material for the interpretation of the *Sabbath Songs* has been overshadowed by attempts to explain the *Shirot* through recourse to hekhalot

¹² Alexander notes some differences (*Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 127–128). For the case against too close a relationship between the *Songs* and the hekhalot texts see C. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory*, 265–266, 387, 392; J.H. Newman “Priestly Prophets” (see note 4), 32–34, esp. nn. 8 and 9; N. Mizrahi “*Sh’elat ha-ziqqah ben shirot ‘olat ha-shabbat le-sifrut ha-hekhalot: hebetei lashon we-signon*,” *Megillot* 7 (2008), 263–298 and P. Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 152–153.

texts. Synagogue *piyyutim* and the hekhalot texts are not entirely unrelated, of course. However, they are distinct literary corpora and while the life setting of the former is known (and may well-have a direct connection back to Second Temple period institutions), the setting of the latter remains uncertain and highly contested.

Each of the three topics – 1., 2. and 3. above – that I discuss in the rest of this paper deserves a fuller treatment than is possible here, and I tackle several of them in other publications where I adduce further evidence for my approach.¹³ I confine myself here to a basic statement of my stance in the conviction that what is really at stake in the dispute about the meaning of the *Angelic Liturgy* is the nature of Biblical Theology.

III. The *Mareh Kohen* and the *Avodah*

Before I get to my three topics, a brief introduction to the *Avodah piyyutim* is in order. At least as early as the Amoraic period poems (*piyyutim*) were composed to be sung during the liturgies of the synagogue: long, complex and sometimes theologically adventurous poems that have several times been suppressed by later rabbinic authorities.¹⁴ Some of the poetry is still used in the synagogue service today. Some of it survives through the Cairo Geniza finds and has only recently been published.¹⁵ Study of *piyyut* is now a growth industry.¹⁶

As a textual corpus, *piyyut* is important because it probably testifies to the significance after A.D. 70 of a sphere of Jewish life separate from the authority of the rabbis. *Piyyut* comes from the synagogue, not the *Beit ha-Midrash*. The

¹³ See esp. the forthcoming third volume of my book *Jesus Monotheism* (Oregon: Wipf&Stock, 2015–).

¹⁴ For recent surveys of scholarship see e.g. L. Lieber, “Piyyut,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Judaism* (ed. J. Neusner, A.J. Avery-Peck, and W.S. Green. Leiden: Brill, 2005, 2nd ed.), 2000–2019; M. Rand, “Fundamentals of the Study of Piyyut,” in *Literature or Liturgy? Early Christian Hymns and Prayers in their Literary and Liturgical Context in Antiquity* (ed. C. Leonhard and H. Löhr; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014), 107–125.

¹⁵ For the Yom Kippur poems see M.D. Swartz and J. Yahalom, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

¹⁶ For the possible relevance of the study of *piyyut* for the interpretation of the *Sabbath Songs* see N. Mizrahi, “Aspects of Poetic Stylization in Second Temple Hebrew: A Linguistic Comparison of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice with Ancient Piyyut,” in *Hebrew in the Second Temple period. The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and of other contemporary sources: proceedings of the Twelfth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature and the Fifth International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira, jointly sponsored by the Eliezer Ben-Yehuda Center for the Study of the History of the Hebrew Language, 29–31 December, 2008* (ed. S. E. Fassberg, M. Bar-Asher, and R. Clements; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 147–164.

existence and character of this poetry challenges the older traditional view that from Yavneh onwards rabbinic authority dominated. With its strongly priestly piety *piyyut* is one piece of evidence of a continued priestly leadership after the destruction. (With *hekkhalot* literature and the Targums possibly also pointing to diversity of leadership and a greater role for priests and priestly traditions than one might assume from mishnah, tosefta, the talmuds and midrashim).¹⁷

For our purposes, a *piyyut* that is particularly important is one used as an additional prayer for Yom Kippur. This is the *Mareh Kohen* (or *Emet Mah Nehedar*); an alphabetic acrostic that praises the high priest as he is imagined appearing safely from the sanctuary after completing his ministrations in the holy of holies.¹⁸ Here is the introduction and first six lines of the Ashkenazi rite version of the poem:

Truly, how glorified (*emet mah nehedar*) was the high priest when he came out from the holy of holies safely, without harm!

- ⌘ As a tent (*ke'ohel*) stretched out among the dwellers on high, was the appearance of the [high] priest (*mar'eh kohan*).
- ⌘ As lightning (*keberaqim*) flashes from the radiance of the living creatures (*hahayyot*), was the appearance of the Priest (*mar'eh kohan*).
- ⌘ As the greatness of the fringes on the four corners, was the appearance of the Priest.
- ⌘ As the likeness of the bow in the midst of the clouds, was the appearance of the priest (*kidmut haqqeshet betok 'anan, mar'eh kohan*).
- ⌘ As the splendour with which the Rock clothed those he had made (*tsur litsurim*), was the appearance of the Priest.
- ⌘ As a rose planted in the midst of a delightful garden, was the appearance of the Priest.

The precise origin of this remarkable piece is unknown. As an anonymous *piyyut* that lacks the use of rhyme it is generally reckoned now to be one of the earliest.

¹⁷ See the succinct review of evidence for this revisionist account of post-destruction Judaism in Ph. Alexander, "What Happened to the Jewish Priesthood after 70?," in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Sean Freyne* (ed. S. Freyne, Z. Rodgers, M. Daly-Denton, and A. Fitzpatrick-McKinley; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 5–33, and compare M.D. Swartz and J. Yahalom, *Avodah* (see note 15), 1–15 and M.D. Swartz, *The signifying creator: nontextual sources of meaning in ancient Judaism* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 48.

¹⁸ For the Hebrew see E.D. Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor la-yamim ha-nora'im: le-fi minhage bene Ashkenaz* (2 vols. Yerushalayim: Koren, 1970) Vol. 2, 483–484. For more recent publications with English translations see Swartz & Yahalom, *Avodah* (see note 15), 343–347 and J. Sacks, *Maḥzor Koren le-yom ha-kipurim* (Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 2012), 900–903.

The opening words (*emet mah nehedar*) remind us of the language of the early second century B.C. Wisdom text Ben Sira 50:5, where the high priest Simeon ben Johanan is described appearing from within the sanctuary. Indeed, the whole *piyyut* is formally and thematically similar to the hymn of praise to Simeon in Ben Sira 50:1–21. The parallels are closest at Ben Sira 50:5–10, for which the Hebrew text says:

- 5 How glorified (מה נהדר) he was as he gazed forth from tent (בהשגיוחו מאהל),
and as he went forth from the house of the curtain.
- 6 As a star of light (ככוכב אור) from among the clouds,
and the full moon in the days of festival,
- 7 As the sun (כשמש) shining resplendently on the palace of the king,
and as a bow which appears in the cloud (בקשת נראתה בענן).
- 8 As blossom on branches on festival days,
and as a lily by streams of waters.
As a shoot of Lebanon on summer days.
- 9 And as fire of incense upon the offering,
as a golden vessel, [...],
which is overlaid on delightful stones.
- 10 As a luxuriant olive full of berries, as an oil tree laden with branches.
- 11 When he wrapped himself (בעטותו) in the garments of Glory (בגדי כבוד),
as he clothed himself with garments of beauty (בגדי תאפרת)
When he ascended upon the altar there was majesty,
And he made glorious (יהדר) the court of the holy place.

C. Roth argued sixty years ago that the Avodah service as a whole is deeply indebted to Ben Sira, a Hebrew text which of course has turned up in the Cairo Geniza and that was well-known in rabbinic circles.¹⁹ Besides the clear evocation of Ben Sira chapter 50, there are two other points of connection between the Avodah service and Ben Sira. Ben Sira 50 comes at the climax of an account of the glories of the ancestors (44:1–49:16) and it reprises God’s work in creating human beings in 17:1–15 and the rest of creation in 42:15–43:33. So, too, the order of the Avodah and its poetry proceeds through an account of the creation of the world, of Adam and Eve, the righteous, and the construction of the Tabernacle and priestly worship (with a primary focus on Aaron and his garments).

As I have attempted to show in both *All the Glory of Adam* and in a subsequent longer article, Ben Sira is the most important extant Second Temple Jewish text

¹⁹ C. Roth, “Ecclesiasticus in the Synagogue Service,” *JBL* 71 (1952), 171–178. For Ben Sira in rabbinic literature see J.R. Labendz, “The Book of Ben Sira in Rabbinic Literature.” *AJS Review* 30 (2006), 347–392 and B.J. Wright, “B. Sanhedrin 100b and Rabbinic Knowledge of Ben Sira,” in *Praise Israel for wisdom and instruction: essays on Ben Sira and wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint* (ed. B.J. Wright; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 183–193.

outside the Hebrew Bible.²⁰ Its rich complex liturgical theology confirms what we might otherwise have deduced from the priestly and Temple texts in the Bible. It is a vital witness to the original meaning of central texts in the Pentateuch, especially Gen 1 and Exod 25–40. Supremely, in Ben Sira 50, the high priest plays the role of the Creator (in Genesis 1) in the temple as a microcosm of creation. He is Wisdom incarnate and his appearance from within the “house of the curtain” (v. 5) is a theophany, that makes manifest to the gathered assembly the divine glory that Ezekiel saw in his vision in Ezek 1:26–28. When it says the priest is “as a bow which appears in the cloud (בַּעֲנַן בְּקֶשֶׁת נִרְאָתָהּ בַּעֲנַן)” (50:7b), the hymn’s description of Simeon evokes Ezek 1:28

where the glory of God is כְּמִרְאָה הַקֶּשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר יְהִיָּה בְּעֵנַן בְּיוֹם הַגִּשְׁם.²¹

For reasons that will become clear, I doubt very much that the Avodah was woodenly inspired by the text of Ben Sira, as if the author(s) of this piece of synagogue liturgy stumbled across a text (some time in the 2nd–4th centuries?) that they thought would sound good in a Yom Kippur service. On the contrary, the connections between the Avodah and Ben Sira are best explained if both texts testify to a living tradition, with the poetry of the former a faithful record of the meaning of Yom Kippur. The Avodah *piyyutim* might even reflect pre-A.D. 70 poetry and hymnody attached to the Yom Kippur service in the temple - or similar forms of divine praise that were uttered in synagogues across the Mediterranean world when Jews gathered on the 10th of Tishri to ensure their own participation in the temple service, even at a great physical distance from it.²² Without fresh evidence, that is speculation. But, in any case, there is a direct line of continuity in liturgical theology from Ben Sira, through the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, on towards the Avodah synagogue service. And that line of continuity goes backwards

²⁰ C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory*, 72–87 and C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “The Temple Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira,” in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture* (ed. C.A. Evans; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), 69–113.

²¹ The bow in the cloud after the flood (Gen 9:14) is also in view, but in the context there are other ways in which the high priest specifically manifests the divine presence. Note, for example, the echo of Ps 104:2 – “wrapped in light as with a garment” – in Ben Sira 50:11 (cf. C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “Cosmology of P” [see note 20], 96–113). Such features of Ben Sira 50 make Ezek 1:28 the primary biblical text in the author’s mind at 50:7b. Also, Ben Sira specifically refers to Ezekiel’s throne vision in 49:8 and the Greek translation “as a bow shining in the clouds of glory” shows that it is the theophanic climax of Ezek 1, specifically vv. 26–28, that is in view (cf. Exod 16:10; 24:16; 40:34–35; Num 14:10; 17:7; 1 Kgs 8:11; 2 Chr 5:13–14).

²² For Jewish Diaspora participation in Yom Kippur see Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 2:196. Cf. Ph. Alexander, “What Happened?” (see note 17), 14 on the possibility that there was an older priestly document that antedated both mishnah tractate *Yoma* (which is itself generally reckoned to be an early portion of the Mishnah) and the Avodah *piyyutim*. L.S. Lieber entertains the possibility that the “final chapters of Ben Sirah are, in fact, a form of the Second Temple Avodah prototype” (“Piyyut” [see note 14], 2001).

into the biblical temple texts of which Ben Sira is an interpreter. (Obviously, the *Sabbath Songs* are not designed for Yom Kippur. But they share with Ben Sira and the *Avodah piyyutim* the same basic theological convictions).

1. Temple Cosmology

I turn now to the matter of cosmology; to the issue of *place*. What a thing is depends, in large measure, on *where* it is. So, for a proper understanding of the identity of the actors in the drama of the *Angelic Liturgy*, it is of the utmost importance that we are careful in our reconstruction of the cosmology of the *Sabbath Songs*.

Numerous sources say that the tabernacle and temple carried complex symbolic functions. And those functions were not *merely* symbolic; they were “sacramental” in the sense that the stability of the cosmos depended upon the fulfilment of those functions in a properly constituted temple (e.g. *m. Aboth* 1:2: “the world is sustained by three things: by Law, by temple service (*avodah*), and by deeds of loving kindness”). In the temple we find the centre of the world, a restored Eden, and the whole structure functions as a cosmos in miniature. The temple-as-cosmos idea is plainly spelt out in Philo and Josephus (Philo *Moses* 2:71–145; *Spec. Laws* 1:82–97; *Quaestions and Answers on Exodus* 2:51–124; Josephus *War* 5:212–13, 218; *Ant.* 3:123, 132, 146, 182, 179–187). In the past such ideas have been dismissed as the product of the influence by Greco-Roman philosophy.²³ However, the temple-as-microcosm idea is already present in Ben Sira, and in recent decades it has become increasingly clear that the notion is essential to the architectural design of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6–8) and that it is embedded in the account of the tabernacle (in Exod 25–40).²⁴

²³ E.g. C.R. Holladay, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic Judaism: A Critique of the Use of This Category in New Testament Christology* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1977), 82–89 and Ph. Alexander, “Jerusalem as the Omphalos of the World: on the history of Geographical Concept,” *Judaism* 46 (1997), 147–158.

²⁴ See esp. J.D. Levenson’s two books *Sinai and Zion* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985) and *Creation and the Persistence of Evil. The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: a Biblical Theology of the Temple* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 29–80; V.A. Hurowitz, “YHWH’s Exalted House – Aspects of the Design and Symbolism of Solomon’s Temple,” in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* (ed. J. Day; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 63–110; J.H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern thought and the Old Testament: introducing the conceptual world of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 123–127; J.H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), 77–85. For the wider ancient Near Eastern context see B. Janowski, „Der Tempel als Kosmos – Zur kosmologischen Bedeutung des Tempels in der Umwelt Israels,“ in *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World: Ägypten – Tempel der gesamten Welt* (ed. S. Meyer; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 163–186.

The decision on whether or not to allow this view of the relationship between the temple and the cosmos to affect our interpretation of the *Songs* is critical. Cosmology determines identity. For Newsom the *Sabbath Songs* describe a liturgy in a heavenly temple “up there.” On this view the *Sabbath Songs* envisage a cultic experience in which the temple “down here” synchronises with the one “up there.” But, as Alexander acknowledges, this is a rather dualistic, platonic cosmology that carries with it a negative view of the earthly realm.²⁵ Alexander and others confidently assert that this understanding of heaven and earth in relation to the category “temple” was widespread within Second Temple Judaism.²⁶

If the belief in a celestial temple “up there” were indeed widespread, and also securely attested in the Qumran Scrolls and based on an older biblical tradition, I concede that my reading of the *Songs* would be unlikely. It would make good sense that the *Sabbath Songs* liturgy describes heavenly (suprahuman) priests offering bloodless sacrifices *up there*.

However, in a book published the same year as Alexander’s *Mystical Texts*, Jonathan Klawans forcefully challenged scholarship to think more carefully about the relationship between cult and cosmology. Klawans showed that modern scholarship has all too quickly lumped together ideas about the relationship between the temple and the cosmos that are discrete in ancient Jewish texts.²⁷ Indeed, there is much less evidence for the notion that there is a temple-in-heaven than is normally assumed. I would go further: *there is no clear evidence anywhere in Second Temple texts for the celestial temple-in-heaven notion*. Although I laid out the evidence for the temple-as-microcosm cosmology in *All the Glory of Adam* it is disappointing that that part of my overarching thesis has often been missed. Alexander does not discuss it. Indeed, to my mind, he ignores a phenomenon for which there is ample, indisputable, evidence and introduces a cosmology for which there is precious little or, even, none.²⁸

²⁵ Ph. Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 61: “This stress on heaven as a place of knowledge implies, in a rather platonic or gnostic fashion, that earth is a place of ignorance.”

²⁶ Ph. Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 72, cf. J. Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 86; Leiden: Brill, 2010), xxxii, 48, 81. The texts that Alexander (following Newsom) adduces for the celestial temple are *I En* 14; *Jub* 2:17–19; 15:26–27; 31:13–14; *Tob* 12:15; *T. Levi* 13:3–5 (see *Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 54–55, 81).

²⁷ J. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 103–144. Despite the clarity with which he sees the issues, Klawans’ own reading of the evidence of *I En* 1–36, *T. Levi* and the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* is still overly influenced by the confused and ineptly dualistic categories that have dominated the discussion of temple cosmology (and which he successfully criticises at other points in his important book).

One problem here seems to be a basic misunderstanding of the reality denoted by the word “temple.” With the notable exception of Klawans, modern scholarship has had no difficulty in thinking that ancient Jews would quite happily imagine a temple “building” (or supernal structure) up there in heaven. Perhaps modern notions of sacred space that owe more to twentieth century church buildings and their lack of symbolism are evoked when scholars think “temple.” In any case, if we are to accurately understand ancient assumptions about cultic spaces we have to reckon with carefully differentiated regions and complex symbolic functions. A temple in antiquity is composed of several parts, principally a roofed sanctuary and an open air courtyard. *In Israel’s temple, the roofed sanctuary, especially its inner most portion, is heaven and the outer, open air, courtyard corresponds to the earth, or a particular point on the earth.* The cosmology of this layout is succinctly described by the aristocratic priest Josephus this way:

Every one of these objects is intended to recall and represent the universe ... Thus, to take the tabernacle, 30 cubits long, by dividing this into three parts and giving up two of them to the priests as a place approachable and open to all, Moses signifies the earth and sea, since these too are accessible to all; but the third portion he reserved for God alone, because heaven also is inaccessible to men. (*Ant.* 3:180–181)

What Josephus says about the “tabernacle” as a cosmos in miniature is assumed, *mutatis mutandis*, by numerous texts that talk about Israel’s temple. This means that texts describing only the roofed portion of God’s dwelling place should not be simply equated with “the temple.” The temple, like Josephus’ tabernacle, is a complex whole comprising both roofed and unroofed portions that symbolise, or actualise, all parts of a several-tiered cosmos. Sadly, modern translations of biblical and ancient texts have not helped us understand these finer points because they rarely respect the subtle but important differences in the meanings of distinct Hebrew and Greek words and phrases (אלהים בית, היכל, מקדש, הקדש, ναός, ἱερόν, ἄγίασμα, ἁγιαστήριόν, τὰ ἅγια).

The fact that individual parts of the Temple cannot always be simply equated with the Temple in its entirety is critical for a proper interpretation of the *Songs* and, of texts, which it is alleged witness the temple-above-temple-below cosmology. Take *1 Enoch* 13–14, for example. The entire staging of the drama roughly equates to the layout of the Jerusalem temple complex. There is a cosmic mountain (Hermon), there are waters that flow from the foot of the mountain, and

²⁸ Alexander’s view of temple cosmology is similar to the one adopted in J. Angel’s *Otherworldly Priesthood* (see note 26), a book which in other respects provides a more balanced assessment of the non-dualistic framework of Qumran priesthood traditions. In his review of *All the Glory of Adam* J.J. Collins also passed over the temple cosmology strand of my argument (see J.J. Collins, “Review of: Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*,” *JSJ* 34 (2003), 73–79). It is as if temple- as-microcosm is an idea too strange or offensive to be taken seriously in some scholarly circles. What fearful ghosts does it conjure for a modern consciousness?

up above there is a three-tiered house. Enoch's journey from the foot of the mountain to the inner reaches of the house corresponds to the priest's journey from the forecourt outside the roofed sanctuary up the steps through the vestibule (*ulam*), the *hekhhal* and on into the holy of holies at Yom Kippur. Enoch proceeds from the *chatser* (the courtyard), where there is an altar that symbolises the cosmic mountain – "*hahar'el*," "the mountain of God" (Ezek 43:13–17) – upwards into the sanctuary.

Enoch does not enter a temple. This is critical. He enters a roofed sanctuary that equates to the roofed sanctuary of Israel's temple. The whole drama of *1 Enoch* 13–14 is set on a stage (comprising the earth below, waters issuing from the cosmic mountain, heaven-as-roofed-building containing God's throne) that is a primeval precursor to the temple (that comprises a courtyard, the altar-as-cosmic-mountain, the bronze laver of the waters of calmed-chaos, and multilayered roofed sanctuary wherein there is set God's throne). This is how it always was: in biblical religion, every time a priest enters the sanctuary(-that-is-heaven) from the forecourt(-that-is-earth) there is an ascent to heaven. So there is nothing in the *Book of Watchers*, or in similar texts, to support a quasi-Platonic interpretation of the *Sabbath Songs*.²⁹

There is no temple "up there" synchronised to a temple "down here" in *1 Enoch*. Indeed, if that idea were current in the Second Temple we would expect to find it in the writings of Philo where it would do wonders for the Alexandrian statesmen's argument that Moses and Plato can be combined.³⁰ But we do not find it there, or in any other Jewish texts written with an openness to Greek Philosophy. The notion that Jews in the Second Temple period believed in a heavenly temple up there as a model for the one down here is, I submit, a modern scholarly myth.

What we do clearly have in the *Sabbath Songs* is the notion that the roofed sanctuary of the temple was identified with heaven (see Songs IX–XII). This is not a "spiritualisation" of temple architecture in the late Second Temple period.³¹ This is simply a fine example of the everywhere-assumed symbolic language of ancient Near Eastern temples; where physical structures are animated by the life force of that which they make present.³² Temple building structures in antiquity are a sacramental instantiation of the cosmic realities that their artwork represents; that artwork is not mere "decoration."³³

²⁹ *1 Enoch* 25–26 describes the cultic arrangements when God descends to earth at Zion (with the building of the Solomonic temple) and there too there is no temple above in parallel to a temple below.

³⁰ In *Life of Moses* 2:74 the pattern that Moses sees in Exod 25:9, 40 is simply an archetypal sketch, like an architect's set of drawings.

³¹ As Ph. Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 129 seems to think. For my point in this paragraph cf. R. S. Boustán, "Angels in the Architecture: Temple Art and the Poetics of Praise in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice." *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* (2004), 195–212 (203–204).

Appreciating all this also means that angelic language for humans in liturgical texts likely has a quite specific, and narrow, function. When “angel” language is predicated of human worshippers, especially priests, in the context of the cult as microcosm, the language is natural because, in a sense, sacred space is theatre, and liturgy is a performance. As I tried to express in the subtitle to *All the Glory*, this is a “liturgical anthropology,” and as Jennifer Zilm has described it what we have in the *Sabbath Songs* is a “liturgical immortality” where “communion with angels is realised by human beings temporarily acting as and embodying angels during the performance of the liturgy.”³⁴ Whether and in what way the experience of the liturgical performance has an effect beyond the same place and time of the cult (as a sacrament should) for those who participate in it, is not clear. That is a question that merits further investigation towards an understanding of the place of the *Sabbath Songs* in the life of the Qumran community.

This holistic temple cosmology is also, I propose, a key to a proper understanding of the *Mareh Kohen*. Michael Swartz and Joseph Yahalom argue that the *Avodah piyyutim* preserve priestly traditions that are unattested in rabbinic literature but that are known from Second Temple material in Josephus, Philo and Ben Sira.³⁵ Certainly, there are places in the ancient *Avodah piyyutim* now known to us where the cosmological interpretation of the temple and the priesthood is preserved or assumed. Equally, there is no interest in a temple above mirroring a

³² In Mesopotamia temple structures had to undergo the washing and opening of the mouth rituals to bring them to life. For the notion that the temple building is alive see, for example, the prayer of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.) to the sun-god: “may doorsill, doorbolt, locks, and door leaves of Ebabbar ceaselessly voice words in my favour before you.” See B.R. Foster, *Before the muses: an anthology of Akkadian literature* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005, 3rd ed.), IV.8 (j) (p. 848). On the temple in Egypt as a “cosmophony” – a living manifestation of the cosmos that is coming into being – see R.B. Finnestad, *Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator. On the Cosmological and Iconological Values of the Temple of Edfu* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1985), 79.

³³ As Alexander evidently assumes was originally the case in the Jerusalem temple (*Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 54). Zainab Bahrani’s essay on the relationship between the ancient Near Eastern understanding of the visual image and modern understandings of representational art gets to the heart of the issue (Z. Bahrani, *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria* [Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003]).

³⁴ J. Zilm, “Woven Works” (see note 5), 440–441.

³⁵ M.D. Swartz and J. Yahalom, *Avodah* (see note 15), 1–15; M.D. Swartz, *The signifying creator* (see note 17), 39–54.

temple below in these texts.

Crucially, the fact that the *Mareh Kohen* is indebted to the temple-as-microcosm idea explains its most striking feature. In line 2 the high priest is likened to the lightning flashing from the living creatures of Ezekiel's throne chariot vision (Ezek 1:13). Then in line 4, as was the case in Ben Sira 50:7, the climax of Ezekiel's opening vision (Ezek 1:28) –

כְּמִרְאָה הַקִּשְׁתֹּת אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בְּעֵינַי בְּיוֹם הַגִּשָּׁם בֵּן מִרְאָה הַנְּגִיף סְבִיב הוּא מִרְאָה

דְּמוּת כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה

– is applied to the priest:

בְּדְמוּת הַקִּשְׁתֹּת בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵנַן מִרְאָה כֵהֵן

It may seem astonishing that the *Mareh Kohen* could include a poem praising the high priest with language that identifies him with the Kavod. How did this *piyyut* escape the rabbinic censure against a Two Powers in heaven heresy?³⁷ Once we recognise its debt to the tradition that is also attested in Ben Sira 50, along with the other places in the Avodah *piyyutim* where the old temple-as-microcosm idea are in evidence, this is easy to explain. The high priest's appearance from behind the veil is theatrically, or sacramentally, God's appearance from heaven. (Or it is the appearance of God's image and likeness from heaven; the difference is slight, though of course important). *Kohen Gadol* is not a second god. It is because he is dressed the way God is dressed that he is, so to speak, God-in-human-form. This way of thinking is reflected in another Avodah *piyyut* where the high priest's

³⁶ In places Aaron's blue robe is identified with the firmament (*Atah Konanta 'Olam Me-Rosh*, 103; *Azkir Gevurot Eloah*, 165) as in Philo *Dreams* 1:215 and Josephus *Ant.* 3:184, 186). *Az be-'En Kol* 635–640 (M.D. Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah* [see note 15], 188–189) compares the high priest's sash to the sea in a way that recalls Josephus *Ant.* 3:154–156, 185. *Az be-'En Kol* 740–744 refers to the tradition that the temple altar is the mountain of God (ההראל) in Ezek 43:13–17. In places the priest is compared to the sun and moon (e.g. *Azkir Gevurot Eloah* 268; the Sephardi *Mareh Kohen*) and specifically because his precious stones shine like the luminaries: *Azkir Gevurot Eloah* 171). The solar and lunar symbolism of the priesthood is widely attested in Second Temple texts (e.g. *T. Levi* 14:1–3; *T. Naph.* 5; 4QTLevi^a 8 iii 4–6; 4QTLevi^d frag. 9; Josephus *Ant.* 3:185; *2 En.* 22:8–10; 69:10). *Azkir Gevurot Eloah* 279 knows the tradition that the foundation stone (*eben hashetiyyah*) in the holy of holies was the place from which the world was created, on which see R. Patai, *Man and Temple: In Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1947), 84–87 and P. Schäfer, “Tempel und Schöpfung. Zur Interpretation einiger Heiligtumstraditionen in der rabbinischen Literatur,” in *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums* (ed. P. Schäfer; AGJU 15; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 122–133.

³⁷ The Sephardi version of the *Mareh Kohen* lacks the “divine” language. If the Ashkenazi rite version is older presumably this is because it was judged theologically troubling for the tradents of the Sephardi version of the liturgy.

garments are identified with the garments God wears in Isa 59:17 (*Az be-'En Kol* 569–70, 645–6).³⁸

All this is of the utmost importance for the interpretation of the *Sabbath Songs* because the XIIIth Song, at the climax of the liturgy, also has a description of chief priests dressed in their multi-coloured garments.³⁹ The XIIIth Song describes the garments as “multicoloured,” and, as Newsom noted, in several places the Song uses the technical terminology of Aaron’s garments in Exod 28 and 39.⁴⁰ And once again, in 4Q405 23 ii the language of Ezek 1:28 is applied to the garments of Exod 28.

Ezek 1:28: [...] This was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the LORD

(הוא מראה דמות כבוד יהוה).

4Q405 23 ii 9: [...] in the midst of the appearance of majesty and the likeness of the spirit of (the) Glory ...

מתוך מרא' חוד ודמות רוח כבוד

The divine Glory of Ezek 1:28 extends itself (by its “spirit”?) in and through the priestly garments.⁴¹ There is no explicit mention of a “bow” in “clouds” in the surviving portions of Song XIII. But the context stresses the multiple colours in the priest’s clothing in a way that naturally evokes the rainbow of Ezek 1:28.⁴² Line 8 of 4Q405 23 ii picks out the colour red perhaps to recall the fire of Ezek 1:27 (cf. Josephus *Ant.* 3:183).⁴³

³⁸ M.D. Swartz and J. Yahalom, *Avodah* (see note 15), 178–179; 188–189.

³⁹ For the language of Exod 28 and 39 in 4Q405 23 ii see Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory*, 357–358, 362–373.

⁴⁰ I do not understand M.D. Swartz’s claim (in his “Angelic Liturgy,” in *Outside the Bible. Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture* [ed. L.H. Feldman, J.L. Kugel, and L.H. Schiffman; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013], 1985–2017 [2014]) that the fact that the garments in 4Q203 23 ii line 16 are multicoloured shows that they belong to angelic, not human, priests.

⁴¹ The addition of the word “spirit” to the phrase in Ezek 1:28 could perhaps be explained with the evidence adduced by Benjamin Sommer for a notion of what Sommer calls divine fluidity in parts of the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish tradition (B. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009]).

⁴² For insightful comments on the theological importance of the mixture of colours in the scene in Song XIII see N. Mizrahi, “The ‘Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice’ and Biblical Priestly Literature: A Linguistic Reconsideration,” *HTR* 104 (2010), 33–57 (53–55).

⁴³ In *All the Glory of Adam* I spoke of the chief priests “embodying” the divine Glory. Because the glory is identified with their clothing, not their physical bodies, a better word would be “manifesting.”

So we have a string of passages in which *at a critical moment in the liturgy* the priesthood is identified with the divine glory of Ezek 1:26–28.⁴⁴ All this goes back to the original purpose of the priesthood. In Exodus 28 Aaron’s garments are specifically designed to mark out Aaron as the true image-idol of God and as such, to be “for glory and for beauty” (vv. 2, 40). Generically, Aaron’s garments are the kind that would adorn a cult statue.⁴⁵ Aaron in the temple of the one true God is what any ancient pagan would expect to find in their own gods’ temples: the cult statue of the deity. In the cult-as-microcosm, he is the living cult statue – *tselem* and *demut* – of the Creator. This takes us to our next topic.

2. *Theological Anthropology*

Although I wrote a good deal about “angelomorphism” in my book, with the title – “All the Glory of *Adam*: Liturgical *Anthropology* [...]” – I attempted to highlight the more foundational conceptual category without which the primary texts really do not make sense. The *Songs* and related material (in the *Hodayoth*, in 4Q491, the *War Scroll*, 4Q504–506, for example) have a high view of humanity’s original identity and destiny. The dualistic, quasi-platonic reading of the *Songs* might bring them closer to the hekhalot texts, but it inevitably detaches the texts from the Qumran community’s pursuit of the restored and perfected *human* life (the life of

⁴⁴ In all I count *four* witnesses to this tradition, since the Son of Man figure in *1 Enoch* 37–71 is also identified with the divine glory of Ezek 1:26–28 in *1 Enoch* 46:1, and the portrayal of the Son of Man is also indebted to priestly traditions; see C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “The *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1 Enoch* 37–71): The Son of Man, Apocalyptic Messianism & Political Theology,” in *The Open Mind: Essays in Honour of Christopher Rowland* (ed. J. Knight and K. Sullivan; London: T&T Clark, 2014), 58–79. Quite a few texts identify the priesthood with glory and, specifically with divine glory; see C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “Priests and Priesthood,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. J.B. Green, J. K. Brown, and N. Perrin; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2013), 696–705.

⁴⁵ See C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (ed. T.D. Alexander and S. Gathercole. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 81–99; C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “The Worship of the Jewish High Priest by Alexander the Great,” in *Early Christian and Jewish Monotheism* (ed. L.T. Stuckenbruck and W.S. North; JSNTS 63. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 71–102; C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “Humanity and the Idols of the Gods in Pseudo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities,” in *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism, And Christianity* (ed. S.C. Barton; Edinburgh: Continuum, 2007), 58–72; C.L. Meyers, *Exodus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 242–244; W.H. Propp, *Exodus 19–40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 525–526.

those who are “the perfect of way”).⁴⁶

One of the Hebrew Bible’s central propositions is a radical answer to the cry “*mah enosh?*” (Ps 8:5). To that question Genesis 1 answers humanity is, at least in its original God-intended identity, the living image-idol of God (Gen 1:26–27), “*divine*” therefore in being and action;⁴⁷ the living manifest presence of the Creator in the world. The idea is well-known in post-biblical literature and is a prominent feature of the *War Scroll*.⁴⁸

Aside from cosmology, we should always start with Adam: it is where the Bible starts and it is where the Avodah starts.⁴⁹ The Avodah begins with a rehearsal of creation, of Adam and Eve, and the glories of the ancestors, and it ends climactically with the high priest appearing safely from behind the veil (following the sequence in Ben Sira chs. 17, 42–50). He appears as one like the four living creatures, and as one who uniquely bears the divine glory, and *he is the true man, who recapitulates the identity of Adam with which the liturgy began*. Line 5 says:

כְּהוֹד אֲשֶׁר הִלְבִּישׁ צוֹר לִיצוּרִים
כִּהֵן מִרְאָה

⁴⁶ It is not insignificant that Alexander discusses 4QWords of the Luminaries (4Q504–506) but strangely ignores that text’s most important passage – 4Q504 frag. 8 recto – where, in a liturgical piece addressed to God, the text says “Adam our [fa]ther you created in the likeness of [Your] glory” (line 4). His survey of mystical texts does not include material in the *War Scroll*, where angelology and mystical themes are combined with Adam and Eden motifs (see esp. 1QM 10:8–16 and 12:1–16), nor any of the related material in 1/4QInstruction. Again, in the case of the *War Scroll*, we are bound wonder whether for Alexander the shape of a rabbinic-era mysticism devoid of eschatology has not determined the terms of reference for the study of Second Temple texts. Also, in contrast to the narrow scope of Alexander’s *Mystical Texts*, my *All the Glory* attempted to show that the *Sabbath Songs* should be set in the wider context of DSS texts which articulate a particular kind of theological anthropology. For the importance of Adam theology for the *Sabbath Songs* see also Wolfson, “Seven Mysteries” (see note 4), 190–192, 197.

⁴⁷ I realise this raises questions about the meaning of the word “divine” (hence the scare quotes). I attempt to address those questions in my *Jesus Monotheism* (4 vols.).

⁴⁸ See C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “Further Reflections on a Divine and Angelic Humanity in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings on the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9–11 January, 2005* (ed. E.G. Chazon, B. Halpern-Amaru, and R.A. Clements; STDJ 88. Leiden: Brill, 2010), 185–198.

⁴⁹ To start with the highly fragmentary *Sabbath Songs* (as does Alexander), or with priestly traditions which are unintelligible without a proper understanding of Gen 1–3 and its post-biblical interpretation (as does J. Angel in his *Otherworldly Priesthood*), is bound to get one off on the wrong footing. For other texts, whose conceptual framework is defined by the story that starts with Adam see: *Jub.* (chs. 2–3); 4 *Ezra* (see e.g. 3:1–11, 26; 4:30, 6:53–54; 7:11); *Apoc. Abr.* (esp. chs. 21–23); 2 *Bar.* (see 14:18–19); 2 *En.* (ch. 30); Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* (ch. 1; 13:8–9; 26:6, 13–15).

As the splendour with which the Rock clothed those he had formed (*tsur litsurim*), was the appearance of the Priest.

This is densely packed poetic genius. It obviously evokes Gen 2:7 (וַיִּצְרֶה [...] אֶת-הָאָדָם). It also alludes to Isa 51:1 where Isaiah calls the people to “look to the rock from which you were hewn” (הַבֵּיטוּ אֶל-צוּר הַצִּבְתֶּם). In so doing, it takes “rock” in that passage as a reference to God himself. And by that allusion to Isa 51:1 the line picks up the “image of God” concept in Genesis 1. The playful repetition of *וַיִּצְרֶה לְיִצְוֵרִים צוּר חַוָּו* conveys the essence of Gen 1:26: Adam and Eve were made *in the image* of their God, *conformed* to the one who *formed* them. (This *piyyut* then is a kind of icon whose playful linguistic ambiguities testify to the truth of which it speaks).⁵⁰ The line also evokes the extra-biblical tradition attached to (the third generation Tana) Rabbi Meir that God clothed Adam and Eve in garments of light (אור), not garments of skin (עור)(Gen 3:21).⁵¹

Even if line 5 depends on traditions about Adam and Eve’s garments that are not as old as the *Sabbath Songs*, the idea that after appearing from the sanctuary the priest has the status and identity originally intended for Adam is firmly established in Ben Sira (esp. 50:11–13, cf. 49:16–50:1). There it is a function of the temple-as-microcosm: the priesthood in the temple fulfills the identity that God intended for Adam on the sixth day of Creation. He is the one crowned with glory and honour, standing over the sacrificial portions just as Adam was created to have dominion over the sheep, oxen and the rest of creation (Psalm 8).⁵² Ben Sira is simply a faithful interpreter of Exod 25–40 where Aaron is dressed as the true image-idol that Adam was created to be; with garments of glory and beauty like those that would adorn the statue (the *tselem*) of a deity.

What is remarkable is the way lines 4–5 of the *Mareh Kohen* represent substantially the same themes – the priest as the Glory of God and as Adam – that

⁵⁰ Coming straight after the Ezek 1:28 line, to talk of God as *צוּר* perhaps means also that he is the visible “form,” *the Kavod*, after whose image the new priest has now been remade. For *צוּר* meaning “form” see Ps 49:15 and BDB 849. For the heavenly divine “form” see Phil 2:6. It is well known that the notion that humanity is made *according to* the eternal image of God in heaven is attested in the Septuagint of Gen 1:26. That idea may also be attested in 4Q504 frag. 8 recto, line 4.

⁵¹ *Gen. Rab.* 21:12. For Adam’s garments see esp. G.A. Anderson, “The Garments of Skin in Apocryphal Narrative and Biblical Commentary,” in *Studies in Ancient Midrash* (ed.

J.L. Kugel; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 101–143 and the discussion of the material in Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities* in C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*,” 58–72. The high priest as a new Adam is also a feature of *Az be-’En Kol*. See lines 238, 569–570, 657–658 (cf. Swartz, *Signifying Creator* [see note 17], 40–42).

⁵² See C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “Cosmology of P” (see note 20), 105–107.

we find in Ben Sira 50, *but with no real evidence of a slavish copying of the older Wisdom text*. The Adamic theme in Ben Sira 50 is far from obvious from a surface reading of a modern translation of the Hebrew and the Greek. But it is plain to see for any who would read the original versions with a good knowledge of biblical literature. It is expressed through a careful application of the language of Psalm 8 to the high priest, and by the use of a literary structure to the whole of Ben Sira 50:1–21 that depends on an intimate knowledge of the intratextualities between Genesis and Exodus. But the *Mareh Kohen* expresses substantially the same point in its own distinctive way, with no recourse to the language of Psalm 8 nor the literary structure of Gen 1 and Exod 25–40. The Avodah simply expresses a traditional priestly theology, for which Ben Sira 50 is itself another, much earlier, witness.

(i) *Theological Anthropology and the Scrolls*

What about the Dead Sea Scrolls? Taken as a corpus, the scrolls assume essentially the same connections between the original glory of Adam and the role Israel's priesthood plays as true Adam and unique bearer of the divine glory that we find in the Hebrew Bible, Ben Sira and the Avodah. And those connections almost certainly presume the kind of temple cosmology we find in other places. In any case, *if we approach the Scrolls without a full appreciation of the biblical vision for a high, even a "divine," theological anthropology we will misconstrue them*.

Morton Smith got to the real meaning of the Self-Glorification Hymn in 4Q491c despite his view that the author is a "preposterous poet with an exaggerated notion of his own sanctity."⁵³ Alexander evokes a similar view of humanity's proper place when he says that in the biblical worldview, for a human being to ascend to heaven is "the height of meglomania and presumption."⁵⁴ Now it is true that Alexander's evaluation of the words of the speaker in 4Q491c would be fair comment on Isa 14:12–15, where the king of Babylon *exalts himself in competition* with the heavenly beings and the Most High. But a human being who is graciously called up to the highest heaven and given by God a position there is quite another thing. Within the overarching theological shape of the biblical story, it is the very thing we expect to happen after Gen 1:26–28. The biblical vision of a humanity created to be God's *tselem* and *demut* sets up the expectation that communion, or even *union*, with God will be the story's telos.

So what we have in 4Q491c should not be "astonishing and deeply puzzling."⁵⁵ And we do not need to scabble around for ways to avoid the most natural reading of similar texts. Essentially, the speaker's sense of self is grounded in a biblical

⁵³ M. Smith, "Two Ascended" (see note 1), 298.

⁵⁴ Ph. Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 75.

⁵⁵ So Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 109.

notion of what it means to be human.⁵⁶ That he is faithful to his biblical heritage is indicated by the ways he sets himself apart from contemporary pagan “divine” rulers. He does not boast of his own achievements – his deeds of power – or his personal virtue.⁵⁷ He has not earned his equality with the gods the way Greco-Roman divine rulers did. So he is far superior to the “kings of the East” (line 5).

It is also not surprising that the Self-Glorification Hymn describes a present reality. What we have here, and in the *Sabbath Songs*, might look like an over-realised eschatology. But we should resist the temptation to interpret such texts as only accounts of future eschatological scenarios (where a totally transcendent new heaven and earth has invaded and replaced the current one). As with the Avodah and Ben Sira, the purpose of the liturgical context – in the temple-as-microcosm – is to transcend linear historical time through a reconstitution of protological realities. So the Self-Glorification Hymn is of a piece with those portions of the *Sabbath Songs*, especially Song XIII, where the human community are in view. *In the liturgical moment*, wearing the “garments of glory” (בגדי כבוד – Ben Sira 50: 11 and parrs.) the priest *is*, or *possesses*, all the glory of Adam and of God (and of the angels). This is not an overrealised eschatology. The primary frame of reference is not a matter of eschatology *per se*. This is biblical theological anthropology articulated and realised *in a transcendent liturgical time and space*.⁵⁸

It is utterly appropriate that this should all happen *on a Sabbath*: the one day when the true humanity(-that-is-Israel) shares in the divine life. The gods of the ancient Near East would rest after their ordering of the world and their bodies would take up a position of rest in a temple shrine, where they would be waited on by their servants and priests – human beings (see the *Enuma Elish*). In Genesis God rests after his work of creation, but humanity does not become his slave. As his true image-idol humanity was created to share with God in his rest. Keeping Sabbath is one way that Israel celebrates and nurtures its participation in the divine

⁵⁶ It is also not the case that the speaker “has become an angel” (so Ph. Alexander, *Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 109, cf. J. Angel, *Otherworldly Priesthood* [see note 26], 139), if by that we mean he has ceased to be human.

⁵⁷ So it is injudicious of Alexander to say that the individual in the Self-Glorification Hymn has “achieved transformation” (*Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 110).

⁵⁸ The fact that Alexander does not engage with my proposals for the temple-as-microcosm and the specific function of the liturgy means that I am not surprised that he criticises me for importing into the scrolls an overrealised eschatology (*Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 47). And it is not surprising that his criticism imputes to me views I do not hold: for example that “the ultimate destiny of the righteous is to become immortal spirits” and that in the Qumran community the priesthood has “transcended its humanity” (*Mystical Texts* [see note 6], 47). That is not my language. Community members, especially its priests, have transcended an identity constituted by a bare, naked, “flesh”; but *they have entered into* their true humanity.

life as the people who are gifted with the recovery of a truly human identity. So it is also unsurprising that an exalted, angelic, and divine humanity appears in a liturgy for the “Sabbath of Sabbaths” (Lev 16:31) - Yom Kippur.

On the other hand, what would be surprising – indeed what would be shocking and astonishing – would be to find the *Scrolls* set non-human angels and non-human priestly angels centre stage; in the position where the Bible places humanity. If the *Sabbath Songs* really do put the angels at the centre of the cosmos (alongside God, of course) *at the expense of humanity* then theirs is a strange, heterodox kind of Judaism. And since the platonic reading means the praise of Song XIII is *directed at angels*, it would surely be one that has slipped into the kind of idolatrous worship of angels that Jews otherwise scrupulously avoided. Against that scenario, the way in which Song XIII has the chief priests identified with the glory of Ezek 1:28 makes good sense given the wider, biblically-grounded, tradition I have just sketched.⁵⁹

3. *Priestly Angels and Angelic Priests*

So, for several reasons, it is unsurprising to find that there are texts that describe human beings, especially in the liturgical context, as exalted, heavenly or even “divine.” I turn now to the specific issue of *priests* and angels.

There are principally two points to make here. First, there is plenty of evidence that priests could be thought, and spoken of, as angelic, even as “angels.” This is easy to explain. Secondly, and conversely, there is no clear evidence that angels were thought of as priests. That too is as we would expect. This is unsurprising because it really would be a category mistake for Jews in antiquity to say that an angel is “a priest.”

(i) *Evidence for priests as “angels”*

There are texts in which a priest, or a human being with priestly characteristics, is either called “an angel,” ascribed angelic characteristics, or compared in some way to the angels (e.g. *Jub* 31:14; 1QSb 4:24–28; 4Q545 frag. 1 17; *Prayer of Joseph*). When I first studied this topic twenty years ago, this was not widely acknowledged. Thankfully, that has now changed and further evidence for the phenomenon has come to scholarly attention since I wrote *All the Glory*. For

⁵⁹ And we have other texts in which there is a kind of “worship” offered to the high priest (e.g. Hecataeus of Abdera XL.3.4–6; Ben Sira 50:1–21 [esp. v. 21]).

example, the idea appears quite a few times in the Avodah *piyyutim*.

The reasons why this idea would be well-established in late Second Temple literature (and beyond) are not hard to see. In the first place, *there is a biblical text which says the priest is “an angel.”* Malachi 2:7 says:

For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, *for he is the angel of the LORD* (יהוה ךַּ מלאך, ἄγγελος κυρίου) of hosts.

Secondly, within the cosmology of the temple(-as-microcosm), the priest travels between heaven and earth in a way that is analogous to the journeys an angel makes. When a priest appears from the sanctuary he comes, like an angel, from heaven to earth. Thirdly, there are biblical passages which can plausibly be taken to mean that when a human being is in the heavenly realm – a priest in the temple sanctuary, for example – they take on something of the realities that belong to that world (cf. Exod 32:29; Zech 3, cf. 2 En 22:8–10). Fourthly, priests do things that angels also do – worship God, serve him, teach or reveal secrets to human beings – and they refrain from other activities, especially sex (and also sleep), in a way that means their lifestyle in the course of their duties can seem to be otherworldly and, therefore, angelic. Fifthly, there can be a visual or physical similarity between priests and angels, especially when priests are dressed in simple, pure white garments.

(ii) “An angel who is a priest” is a category mistake

On the other hand, there is not a single text from the Second Temple period where an angel is clearly and indisputably said to be a priest. There are places (in the *Sabbath Songs*, in 11Q13, in *T. Mos* 10:2, for example, where either priests are angels, or angels are priests, and the matter is disputed). But there are no texts in which a being that is clearly, indisputably, an angel is also said to be a priest. We never hear of “Michael, the priest,” or “the Archangel, the priest of God Most

⁶⁰ E.g. *Az be-‘En Kol* 541 “he serves like an angel”; *Azkir Gevurot Eloah* 157 “he rejoiced like an angel”; *Atah Konanta ‘Olam Me-Rosh*, Swartz and Yahalom, *Avodah* [see note 15], 74–75: “he is girded in all of these like a ministering angel.” Besides the fresh evidence now available from the Avodah *piyyutim*, A. van der Kooij’s argument that LXX Exod 23:20–23 thinks of the high priest as an angel is particularly important (see his “LXX Exod 23 and the Figure of the High Priest,” in *On Stone and Scroll. Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies* (ed. J.K. Aitken, K.J. Dell, and B.A. Mastin; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 537–549). His argument should be correlated to some material in C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “The Worship of the Jewish High Priest by Alexander the Great,” in *Early Christian and Jewish Monotheism* (ed. L.T. Stuckenbruck and W.S. North; JSNTS 63; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 71–102. For recognition that the phenomenon was “widespread” see, for example, J. Angel, *Otherworldly Priesthood* (see note 26), 45.

High”.⁶¹

Some allege that there are passages in which angels are priestly. But, on careful reflection, the texts adduced for the case really do not bear the burden they are asked to carry. For example, Joseph Angel makes much of the way angels in *I Enoch* intercede on behalf of humans.⁶² It is true that priests can intercede between God and the world, but that function is by no means a peculiarly priestly function (it is a task of the king in 2 Sam 24:17; Isa 37:15–20; 1 Chr 21:17; 29:10–19, of Moses in Exod 33:12–23; Num 14:13–19 and of Daniel in Dan 9).

The absence of texts that clearly have in view priestly angels is easy to explain. In the first place, *there is no biblical basis for the idea that angels are priests; nothing quite like Mal 2:7*. Secondly, and which ever strand of texts and traditions in the Hebrew Bible we take, the idea that there can be angels who are priests is a biblical theology category mistake.

Priesthood is essentially a human office. And it is a composite, multi-dimensional one that means angels are hardly natural candidates for the priestly role. Priests represent the people in sacrificial and other rituals, and they are immersed in the very physical world of sin, confession, animal butchery and the regular feasting at high holy days that celebrate the fruitfulness of the material world. In the Pentateuchal laws, and in the post-biblical interpretation of them, priests also function sacramentally as the true Adam, as God’s image-idol (see above). This is the task God gave at creation *to humanity*, not to angels. In the same vein, the high priest is said to wear a crown or diadem as we would expect of someone who is the true Adam; the one who was created to rule and have royal dominion (Gen 1:26–28).⁶³ Angels were not given royal dominion in the original order of creation; that is a human task.

Insofar as the priesthood is defined by the chief priest and by the description of Aaron and his ordination in Torah it is a multi-representational office. The priest is, sacramentally so to speak, all of these: Israel, the cosmos, an angel and God himself. If one is a priest one does not become an angel (in the way that a Catholic or Anglican priest may be promoted to a bishopric and then remain a bishop for

⁶¹ Very occasionally angels are ascribed priestly characteristics, but careful examination shows that even those cases show that in antiquity Jews knew that “priest” was not a fitting category for angels. In *Apoc. Abr.* 11:1–3 the angel Iaoel is just a little bit priestly – he wears a *kidaris* and has purple clothing – but in other ways he is not at all priestly (he has a golden staff, he has a sapphire body, and a chrysolite face). In particular, nothing of the priestly get-up that Jews in antiquity thought identified the high priest with the lower regions of the cosmos is ascribed to Iaoel.

⁶² J. Angel, *Otherworldly Priesthood* (see note 26), 27–30, on *I En.* 9:2–3, 10; 15:2.

⁶³ For the high priest’s crown see e.g. Ben Sira/Sirach 45:12; Josephus *War* 5:235; *Ant.* 3:172, 187; 20:12; Philo *Moses* 2:114. For his royal “diadem” see Wis 18:24; Philo, *Flight* 111; *T. Levi* 8:10. See further the texts and discussion in chapter 6 of my *Jesus Monotheism* vol. 1.

life). There are times in the liturgical drama when the priest may be said to be and to act as an angel. For example, when he brings revelation to the people from God, as in Mal 2:5–7, he is a מלאך יהוה (cf. Hecataeus of Abdera XL 3.5). It is understandable that we would find a tradition in various places that when he wears his simple linen garments in the holy of holies – beyond the material world, that is – the high priest is an angel, not a man.⁶⁴ *But these are moments in a complex drama.* The high priest is *not* an angel when he carries Israel over his heart into God’s presence. He is not an angel when he stands at the altar over the sacrificial portions fulfilling the vision of Adam ruling and reigning in all creation.

It is not just that a variegated liturgical time defines a variegated identity. His variegated clothing also articulates his complex identity. Some parts identify him with the heavenly bodies (Philo *Dreams* 1:214; Josephus *Ant.* 3:185), others with the sea (see Josephus *Ant.* 3:154–6, 185 on the sash and compare Avodah *piyyut Az be-’En Kol* 635–640). The blue in the garments was believed to symbolise the air, the sky or heaven (Josephus *Ant.* 3:183–4, 6; *War* 5:213; Philo *Moses* 2:88) and other parts symbolise vegetation and the beauty of the earth (see Josephus *Ant.* 3:159; Philo *Moses* 2:110; *Spec. Laws.* 1:93).⁶⁵

So, it is basic to the nature of the biblical priesthood that it is an office with a multifaceted portfolio.⁶⁶ This, an angel cannot be. Priests can be angels (just as they can “be” the sea, the heavens, Israel, Adam). The fact that the garments the high priest wears on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:4) for his entry into the inner shrine recall those worn by angels in Ezekiel (9:2–3, 11; 10:2) certainly means that he is angelic at that time, but it does not mean that the angels in Ezekial are priestly. The point is analogous to one which needs to be made about the relationship between the temple and heaven: the temple complex *includes* structures that are identified with heaven (the *hekhal* and *debir*), but heaven is not a temple and heaven does not include a temple.

Once again, all this can be very well illustrated from the Avodah. How could it ever be true that all that is said of the priest in the *Mareh Kohen* would also be true of an angel?

⁶⁴ See Philo *Rer. Div. Her.* 84; *Somn.* 2:188–89; 2:231 and the parallel tradition in *Lev. Rab.* 21:12.

⁶⁵ We moderns like identity to be simple, discrete. To have a complex personality is to suggest disorder; a “multiple personality disorder.” But Israel’s (high) priest is a kind of “multiple personality order.”

⁶⁶ Alexander’s criticisms of me in his third point at *Mystical Texts* (see note 6), 46 is nullified once we recognise that Qumran community members are capable of taking on a composite identity. Alexander assumes that to be “ontologically” an angel means one has to be a “pure spirit” and can no longer be a human being. This is to impose anachronistic assumptions about identity and ontology onto the texts.

IV. Conclusion

So there are rather weighty conceptual reasons why it is highly unlikely that any Jewish text from the Second Temple period would mean what Newsom and Alexander think the *Sabbath Songs* mean. But these big picture questions are by no means simply *a fortiori* arguments against their case. They conspire with a strong set of exegetical arguments *about the precise language used in the Songs*, to produce a wholly different, non-dualistic reading of the texts. And the texts should now be treated, not as vital witnesses to a mystical kind of Judaism that left its biblical moorings midway through the Second Temple period, but to a living, enduring, theology and spirituality that flows straight out of the biblical vision for Israel's life with God in the temple.