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CALENDRIAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE *EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS*

BY

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SUMMARY

The study is focused on the liturgical meaning, according to the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, of the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement in their relation to the feast of Passover. The corresponding tradition is to be found in a recently published pre-Christian Aramaic Targum to *Joshua* and in a Qumranic Joshua fragment (4Q522). The main sanctuary of the addressee community was localized on the Mt Sion.

SOMMAIRE

L'étude se concentre sur le sens liturgique, d'après l'*Épître aux Hébreux*, du Sabbat et du Jour de l'Expiation en rapport avec celui de la Pâque. La tradition correspondante subsiste dans un Targum araméen de *Josué* récemment publié, ainsi que dans un fragment qumrânien, 4Q522. La communauté destinataire avait son sanctuaire principal placé sur le mont Sion.

INTRODUCTION

Liturgy and, in particular, liturgical calendar has been proven to be an excellent tool for studying the religious traditions of the Second Temple period. This is a way of converting our “history of ideas” into an exact science, at least, not less exact than archaeology. The religious ideas of the Second Temple period were attached to some calendarical fea-



tures in a similar manner as archaeological findings to their respective strata... This is especially actual to the *Epistle to the Hebrews* whose main content Nello Casalini has helpfully designated as “Una teologia della redenzione in linguaggio cultuale”¹. So, I will try to trace some ideas of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* in their liturgical and especially calendrical setting.

I will formulate my theses in the form of the answers to seven questions.

1. An unresolved problem: a threefold feast?

It is hard to deny that the author of *Hebrews* knew the Passion story enough to recall that the death of Jesus was accomplished on the feast of Passover. Then, his silence about this fact is rather striking. Indeed, he mentions the feast of Passover only once (11:28) and with no direct connection to Jesus. “Although the gospels relate Jesus’ death with his crucifixion near the Passover feast, said George Buchanan, the author of *Hebrews* interpreted his death in terms of an offering given by himself ... on the Day of Atonement”². One could stress this feature of the *Hebrews*: “apparent disappearance” of the Passover. The Passover seems to be replaced by the Day of Atonement.

But this Day of Atonement that replaces the feast of Passover is even stranger. In *Heb* 9:16 the death of Christ is alluded to as a sacrifice of Testament, that is, of a quite another feast, Pentecost. Therefore we have to notice an “abnormal” behavior of, at least, three major Jewish feasts referred to in the *Hebrews*: Passover, Pentecost, Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)³. It is unlikely that such a fact can be explicated by some exegetical reasons only, without existence of an underlying liturgical tradition known to both author of the epistle and his audience. It is even more unlikely if we take into account that the epistle is an only slightly

¹ Nello CASALINI, *Dal Simbolo alla Realtà. L’espiazione dell’Antica alla Nuova Alleanza secondo Ebr 9, 1-4. Una proposta esegetica* (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. *Analecta*, N 26), Jerusalem, Franciscan Printing Press, 1989, pp. 125-130 (the title of the concluding part of the monograph).

² George BUCHANAN, *To the Hebrews. Translation, Comment and Conclusion* (The Anchor Bible), Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1976², p. 254.

³ As it was noted by Roger LE DÉAUT, “...le Nouveau Testament a compris la rédemption du Christ, le Serviteur de Yahvé, sous les traits des trois grands sacrifices de l’Ancien Testament: celui de l’agneau pascal, le sacrifice de l’alliance et le sacrifice du grand jour de l’Expiation (Hebr 9)” (R. LE DÉAUT, *La nuit pascale. Essai sur la signification de la Pâque juive à partir du Targum d’Exode XII 42* (*Analecta biblica*, 22), Rome, Pontificium Institutum Biblicum de Urbe, 1963, p. 212).



rewritten homily which is itself a part of some liturgy – “a hortatory sermon”⁴. So, we have to elaborate on the liturgical data of the *Hebrews*.

2. Where is the Passover?

Fortunately, there is now a way to find out the Passover within the text of the *Hebrews*. The corresponding data are supplied by a fragmentary pre-Christian Palestinian Aramaic Targum to *Joshua* 5 published in 1991 by H. Fahr and U. Glessmer⁵. In 1999, Robert Murray demonstrated that this Targumic tradition is the base of *Heb* 4:1-12. In all these verses (and not only in the verse 8 where Joshua is mentioned explicitly), the author of the *Hebrews* continuously refers to the situation of the camp of Israel after having crossed the Jordan. In particular, his wording when he says of “the word of God” that is “sharper than any two-edged sword” (v. 12) is paraphrasing *Josh* 5:2 about stone knives for the circumcision⁶.

Targumic fragment itself, as it is, is a *haphtarah* reading for Passover. Indeed, the second circumcision of Israel, described in *Joshua*, was not only a renovation of the Covenant but also a preparation for the Passover (s. *Josh* 5:10). The main idea of *Heb* 3:1–4:16 is also a renovation of the Covenant of Moses, but, this time, not by Joshua but by Jesus. However, the setting is the same: the author of the *Hebrews* stresses parallels with those who died in the wilderness and with those who entered into the Promised Land. From the liturgical point of view, much more important is that, still in the Targumic tradition, the theme of a “renewed” covenant is linked not with the feast of Pentecost, but with the feast of Passover. One of abovementioned liturgical “abnormalities” becomes explicable. The author of the *Hebrews* is attached to the corresponding Targumic exegetical tradition in such an extent that he does not stop to follow it even in the most forced explanations of the biblical text. Namely, for our Targum, the Covenant of Moses starts to be active only after the circumcision made by Joshua, that is, after the

⁴ D. E. AUNE, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, Cambridge, J. Clarke, 1988, p. 212–214.

⁵ Heinz FAHR, Uwe GLESSMER, *Jordandurchzug und Beschneidung als Zurechtweisung in einen Targum zu Josua 5 (Edition des MS T.-S. B 13,12)* (Orientalia Biblica und Christiana, 3), Gluckstadt, Otto Harrassowitz Verl., 1991.

⁶ Robert MURRAY, “‘Circumcision of Heart’ and the Origins of the *Qyāmā*”, in: G. J. REININK, A. C. KLUGKIST (eds.), *After Bardaisan. Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han J. W. Drijvers* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 89) (Leuven, Peeters, 1999), pp. 201–211.



death of Moses. The author of the *Hebrews* expresses this even more openly in chapter 9 when he says, in particular: “For where a testament (covenant) is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it” (9:16), alluding to both deaths of Moses and Christ. A view that the testament of Moses was not active since the day of Pentecost on Sinai, but only from some moment after the death of Moses, would be inexplicable without our Targum. But now, taking this Targum into account, we obtain also an explanation why the feasts of Pentecost and of Passover became united. In the reality corresponding to a “renewed” covenant of Moses the feast of the Covenant is the Passover, commemorating especially the Passover of Joshua in Gilgal, after crossing of the Jordan.

Some authors elaborated quite well on the idea of “crossing” of the Jordan as “entering” into Covenant⁷. Both ideas, that of “crossing” and that of “entering (into Covenant)”, are present in the Hebrew verb עבר, already known in the same liturgical meaning from the *Rule of Community* of Qumran (1QS i-ii)⁸. I mention this here only to recall a huge amount of data connecting the community of our “Hebrews” (the word derived from the root *‘br*) to some Baptist movements of the Second Temple Period⁹. In these movements the most specific rite consisted in a “renewing” of the Covenant of Moses by “crossing” (עבר) the Jordan. Especially important, for the New Testament studies, is the reading “Bethabara” (instead of the alternative reading “Bethany”) in John 1:28 (name of the place of the Baptism of Jesus): “Bethabara” may be translated as “Place of entering/crossing (*‘br*)”, that is, crossing of the

⁷ See, as a modern introduction to this problem, Daniel VIGNE, *Christ au Jourdain. Le Baptême de Jésus dans la tradition judéochrétienne* (Études bibliques, n. s., 16), Paris, J. Gabalda, 1992.

⁸ See, first of all: W. H. BROWNLEE, “The Ceremony of Crossing the Jordan in the Annual Covenanting at Qumran”, in: W. C. DELSMAN, J. T. NELIS, J. R. T. M. PETERS, W. H. PH. RÖMER, A. S. VAN DER WOUDE (Hrsg.), *Von Kanaan bis Kerala. Festschrift für Prof. Mag. Dr. Dr. J. P. M. van der Ploeg, O. P.* (AOAT Bd. 211), Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verl., 1982, pp. 295-302.

⁹ As to the “Baptist” movements in general, beside Vigne’s monograph quoted above, still valid is a very comprehensive thesis of Joseph THOMAS, *Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie (150 av. J.-C. – 300 ap. J.-C.)* (Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis. Dissertationes... Series II. T. 28), Gembloux, J. Duculot, 1935. A “Baptist” etymology of the very name of the “Hebrews”, the addressees of the epistle, was stressed by Hans Kosmala in his attempt to demonstrate that these “Hebrews” were non-converted Essenes (Hans KOSMALA, *Hebräer-Essener-Christen. Studien zur Vorgeschichte der frühchristlichen Verkündigung* (Studia post-biblica, vol. I), Leiden, Brill, 1959). Without going so far, this part of Kosmala’s argumentation remains useful for the understanding of the name of these “Hebrews”, regardless of whether they were converted or not.



Jordan and entering into the Covenant¹⁰. Probably, not all “Baptist” features of the *Hebrews* are still explored properly, but they are beyond the scope of the present study.

Turning back to our passage in the *Hebrews* (3:1–4:16) we now know that it must be read on the ground of the Joshua Passover/Covenant tradition. Then, a key-word of the whole passage, “rest” (κατάπαυσις, σαββατισμός) may be considered as pertaining to the Passover. It was noted long ago, that the biblical term “rest” is applicable to the time when the Promised Land is conquered (cf. not only *Ex* 33:7-14, but also *2 Sam* 7:1¹¹). The context of the Joshua tradition makes this “rest” a festal rest of the Passover. Now, we can reformulate our initial question, “where is the Passover?” We know, that the *Christian* Passover dealt with by the author of the *Hebrews*, is treated as a Sabbath rest, σαββατισμός. It looks as if the day of Resurrection is considered to be Saturday and not Sunday. Is it possible, anyway?

3. Christ’s resurrection on Sabbath?

The earliest history of the Christian veneration of Sunday is still far from being completely studied¹². This is also applicable to the earliest separation between the Hebrew Passover and the Christian one, that is, the memory of the days of the death and resurrection of Christ. So, in such an early text as the *Hebrews* it would be difficult to find out such terms as not only English “Easter” but even Greek Κυριακή. The term πάσχα is in the *Hebrews* (11:28), as elsewhere in the New Testament, the name of an Old Testament feast, but not of that of the Christians. Even in *1 Cor* 5:7 saying that now “our πάσχα (is) Christ”, Paul uses an Old Testament term to explain in the terms of the Old Testament liturgy the meaning of the death of Christ. So, let us examine the situation of the term “rest / Sabbath” in the earliest Christian sources. Like the term πάσχα, the term “Sabbath” was widely applicable to the Christ/Logos in person (Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria quoting some more

¹⁰ See, for the full discussion, VIGNE, *Christ au Jourdain*, pp. 276-279.

¹¹ BUCHANAN, *To the Hebrews*, p. 64.

¹² Cf. Basile LOURIÉ, “Les quatre jours « de l’intervalle »: une modification néotestamentaire et chrétienne du calendrier de 364 jours”, in: Madeleine PETIT, Basile LOURIÉ (éds.), *Mémorial Annie Jaubert (1912–1980)*, in: *Христианский Восток* [*Khristianskij Vostok*], N.S. 4 (10) (2002), pp. 470-497, here p. 480.





ancient tradition, Epiphanius of Salamine¹³). But now, we are more interested in the purely liturgical and calendarical contexts.

First of all, we have a strong early tradition, at least, in Egypt, of the Christian veneration of the Saturday together with Sunday. Its traceable forms are not, however, coinciding with those known from the Second Temple period sources. Therefore this data is not especially relevant to our study, even if it is interesting as a possible evidence of an early Christian veneration of Sabbath¹⁴. But we are not seeking the evidence of the veneration of Sabbath as such, but only of the veneration of Sabbath as the date of Christ's Resurrection.

Christ's resurrection in the night from Saturday to Sunday could be interpreted as pertained to Saturday if one counts the beginning of the

¹³ See, for such contexts, H. DUMAINE, "Dimanche", in: F. CABROL, H. LECRLERCQ (éds.), *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, T. VIII, partie 1 (Paris, Letouzey et Ané, 1920), cols. 858-994, here cols. 924-925. Cf. also a bilingual anthology of sources collected by Willy RORDORF, *Sabbat et dimanche dans l'Église ancienne*. Version française par Étienne VISINAUD, Willi NUSSBAUM [tr. de *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche*, Zürich, Theologischer Verl., 1972], (Traditio Cristiana, 2), Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Nestlé S. A., 1972.

¹⁴ It would be beyond my scope here to go deeper into discussion of the origins of the Sabbath cult in Egypt. Some modern scholars are still following Theodor Zahn (1878) denying its pre-4th century origin (e. g., Rordorf, *Sabbat et dimanche...*, p. XIII). For Zahn's viewpoint (based on very limited data), see his *Geschichte des Sonntags vornehmlich in der alten Kirche*, Kiel, 1878, reprinted in: Th. ZAHN, *Skizzen aus dem Leben der alten Kirche*, 3. Aufl., Leipzig, A. Deschert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1908, pp. 160-208, 351-375, here Anm. 50 zu S. 197 (pp. 368-373). The question seems to me needing a re-examination with the methods of the comparative liturgy. Here I will limit myself to enumerating the most pertinent scholarly publications: Jacob MUYSER, "Le Samedi et le Dimanche dans l'Église et la littérature coptes", in: Togo MINA, *Le Martyre d'Apa Epima*, Le Caire, Imprimerie nationale, Boulâq, 1937, pp. 87-111; W. S. BISHAI, "Sabbath Observance from Coptic Sources", *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 1 (1963), pp. 26-31; Robert A. KRAFT, "Some Notes on Sabbath Observance in Early Christianity", *Ibid.* 3 (1965), pp. 18-33; K. A. STRAND, "A Further Note on the Sabbath in Coptic Sources", *Ibid.* 6 (1968), pp. 150-157; Heinzgerd BRACHMANN, "Zur Geschichte der eucharistischen Nüchternheit in Ägypten", *Le Muséon* 84 (1971), pp. 197-211; Klaus GAMBER, *Liturgie übermorgen. Gedanken über die Geschichte und Zukunft des Gottesdienstes*, Freiburg, Herder, 1966, pp. 81-91 [critical review: H. BRACHMANN, "Die angeblichen eucharistischen Mahlzeiten des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts. Zu einem neues Buch Klaus Gammers", *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 65 (1970), pp. 82-97; GAMBER's reply: *Ibid.*, 67 (1972), pp. 65-67]; Ernst HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Stellung und Bedeutung des Sabbats in Äthiopien* (Studia Delitzschiana, 7), Stuttgart, O. Harrassowitz Verl., 1963; R. BEYLOT, "La controverse sur le Sabbat dans l'Église éthiopienne", in: Alain LE BOULLUEC (éd.), *La controverse religieuse et ses formes* (Patrimoines – Histoire comparée des religions), Paris, Cerf, 1995, pp. 165-187. Cf. also a modern review of the most known sources in: Heather A. MCKAY, *Sabbath and Synagogue. The Question of Sabbath Worship in Ancient Judaism* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, vol. 122) (Leiden etc., Brill, 1994), pp. 176-200 (Ch. 6: Debate over keeping the Sabbath: Early Christian Sources).



day from morning and not from evening. Both ways were accepted in the Jewish circles of the Second Temple period. They are not mutually exclusive even in the liturgy. For instance, they are both preserved in the modern Byzantine rite.

Such a great scholar as Harald Riesenfeld, as early as in 1959, was the first who put forward the view that the Sunday cult in the early Christianity has never been introduced as a “substitution” of the previous Jewish Sabbath cult, but was in fact a mere development of the Jewish Sabbath cult where the night between Saturday and Sunday was comprised as belonging to Saturday¹⁵. So, if one calls Sunday “Saturday”, there is nothing strange in this, providing that we are still in the earliest Christian epoch. What really makes a difference is the method of counting “three days” between Jesus’ death and resurrection. But, as Annie Jaubert pointed out long ago, there is an ancient document explaining how to count three days between Friday and Saturday – the so-called “Syriac” *Didaskalia* (3-hour darkness is to be considered as a separate night)¹⁶. Only in the middle of the 3rd century, in a letter from Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, to the Pope of Rome Sixtus II (257–258) which survived only in the fragments in Armenian¹⁷, we have an

¹⁵ H. RIESENFELD, “Sabbat och Herrens dag i judendomen, Jesu förkunnelse och urkristendomen”, *Nathan Söderblom-Sällskapets årsbok* 13 (1959); English tr.: “The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day in Judaism, the Preaching of Jesus and Early Christianity”, in: H. RIESENFELD, *The Gospel Tradition*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1970, pp. 111-137, here p. 124, 137.

¹⁶ See especially Annie JAUBERT, *La date de la Cène. Calendrier biblique et liturgie chrétienne*, (Études bibliques), Paris, J. Gabalda, 1957. The “Syriac” *Didaskalia* (named “Syriac” because it survived only in a Syriac version from Greek) is published in: Paul DE LAGARDE, *Didascalia Apostolorum Syriace*, Lipsiae, 1854 [repr.: Osnabrück, Zeller-Verl., 1967]; English translation: R. H. CONNOLLY, *Didascalia Apostolorum. The Syriac Version translated and accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929.

¹⁷ This letter (CPG 1560) survived only in an Armenian version where it is a part of a *florilegium* added to a polemical work of Timothy Aeluros *Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon*. The same work of Timothy survived also in Syriac, but without any *florilegium* added (R. Y. EBIED, L. R. WICKHAM, “Timothy Aeluros, *Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon*”, in: C. LAGA, J. A. MUNITIZ, L. VAN ROMPAY (eds.), *After Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert Van Roey* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 18), Leuven, Peeters, 1985, pp. 115-166). This leads to conclusion (while not to a final proof) that the *florilegium* as a whole was added by the Armenian translator whose ultimate source is unknown. See Armenian text in: K. TER-MĒKĒRTTSHIAN, E. TER-MINASSIANTZ, *Timotheus Älurus’ des Patriarchen von Alexandrien Widerlegung der auf der Synode zu Chalcedon festgesetzten Lehre. Armenischer Text*, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1908, pp. 318-319 (no translation provided); English translation (sometimes conjectural and open to discussion) by Fred C. CONYBEARE, “The Patristic *Testimonia* of Timotheus Aelurus”, *The Journal of the Theological Studies* 15 (1914), pp. 437-442, here pp. 438-439. Unfortunately, Riesenfeld was unaware of



elaborate polemics against this view. If the night of resurrection belongs to the previous day, said Dionysius, then, we have to celebrate the Sabbath; but we left this custom to the Jews, because we, Christians, have the Κυριακή. In another fragment of the same letter Dionysius said that the manner of counting when the night after the Sabbath belongs to Sabbath would lead to the Resurrection on the second day after the Crucifixion and not on the third. Our author of the *Hebrews* was writing long before Dionysius of Alexandria, having no need to fear to commemorate the Resurrection of Christ as Sabbath. The day and the event that we now call “Christian Passover” (Easter) might have been easily treated by him as a Sabbath of Christ. But there is another impending problem: how the Passover Sabbath could become *Yom Kippur*.

4. Sabbath as a Day of Atonement?

We must not forget the largest liturgical context of the *Hebrews*, that of the Day of Atonement. How is it compatible with the theme of the Passover Sabbath? Once more, I would like to emphasize that the solution must be found on a liturgical ground, that is, without any references to “metaphors” of a purely theological origin. In the Second Temple period, there were several types of Jewish calendars. In some of them the days of months were not assigned fixed days of the week, in some others they were. The latter calendars contained 364 days a year¹⁸.

The Day of Atonement, 10.VII, could have a fixed day of the week only within the framework of a 364-day scheme. A calendar where 10.VII is Sabbath is theoretically imaginable. However, it is so far neither known directly nor hypothetically reconstructed from the sources. So, in the calendar of the *Temple Scroll*, 10.VII is Friday, and this is, probably, the most widespread 364-day scheme of the pre-Christian epoch. Alternatively, in my reconstruction of the 364-day scheme of the calendar of the Gospels¹⁹ the day 10.VII is always Tuesday. It seems very unlikely that the connection between the Day of Atonement and the Sabbath in the *Hebrews* might be derived from a calendar where 10.VII is always Saturday. Such a calendar hardly existed at all.

this letter to be able to include it into his discussion of the earliest Christian Sabbath/Sunday veneration, while it corroborates his view very much.

¹⁸ See, as a modern introduction into this topic in general: James C. VANDERKAM, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (The Dead Sea Scrolls, [1]), London/New York, Routledge, 1998.

¹⁹ LOURIÉ, “Les quatre jours « de l'intervalle »...”



But let us turn to a specific kind of the 364-day calendars where all the feasts were grouped basically around the Saturdays. This kind of such calendars was probably the most productive one. The earliest specimens are the calendars of the *Temple Scroll* and the *Songs of the Sacrifice of Sabbath*, and the latest ones exist even in our days (such as the liturgical calendar of the Nestorian Christians, and, in a somewhat corrupted form, the liturgical calendar of the Ethiopian Beta Israel (Falashas)). In such calendars, the liturgical year is based on a framework of seven 49-day periods, and the most prominent feasts are connected with the corresponding Sabbaths. Probably, the same was the calendar of the *therapeutae* who were especially venerating each seventh Sabbath (according to Philo, *De vita contemplativa*, 65), while we don't know the whole structure of their liturgical year²⁰. For instance, in the calendar of the *Temple Scroll*, the Day of Atonement 10.VII is Friday (the last day) of the 3rd 49-day period, and the following autumn festivals mark the first week of the 4th 49-day period, that is, the central one. So, in the *Temple Scroll*, we have the most prominent festivals in the beginning of the initial 49-day period (Passover cycle), in the beginning of the middle 49-day period (*Yom Kippur-Sukkoth* cycle), and in the end of the latest period (a post-Biblical festal cycle connected with the feast of *Purim*). In such calendarical structures some kind of redistribution of the meaning of feasts becomes inevitable.

The possibility of a name "Sabbath" for the Day of Atonement in Jewish sources was, at first, mentioned by Max Radin long before Qumran²¹, and then, after Qumran, stressed by W. H. Brownlee in his study of 1QpHab²². Radin noted a correspondence between *šabbat šabbātōn* (שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן) in the Hebrew Bible and *σάββατα ἀνάπαυσις* in the Septuagint (in *Ex* 31:15; 35:2; *Lev* 23:3) that, according to Philo (*De specialibus legibus* II, 194), is the normative Hebrew ("in our ancestral language") name of the feast called by Philo simply "Fast", that is, Day of Atonement. 1QpHab xi 6-8 is, in this respect, even more remarkable: "In festival time, during the rest of the day of Atonement

²⁰ Here I basically agree with an interpretation by J. M. Baumgarten. Cf. Joseph M. BAUMGARTEN, "4QHalakah^a5, the Law of *hadash*", *JBL* 95 (1976), pp. 59-78 [repr. in J. M. BAUMGARTEN, *Studies in the Qumran Law* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity. Vol. 24), Leiden, Brill, 1977, pp. 131-142, here pp. 135-137].

²¹ Max RADIN, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1914, p. 400.

²² W. H. BROWNLEE, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk. Text, Translation, Exposition with Introduction* (SBL, Monograph Series 24), Ann Arbor, MI, Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1979, here p. 189, commentary to XI, 7-8 (quoting Rabin).





(ובקץ מועד מנוחת יום הכפורים), he appeared to them, to consume them and make them fall on the day of fasting, the Sabbath of the rest (ביום צום שבת מנוחת מנוחת)''²³. Here the Day of Atonement is named explicitly שבת מנוחת that Brownlee rightly translates into Greek as σάββατον ἀνάπαυσις.

The author of the *Hebrews*, in chapters 3 and 4, prefers to say κατάπαυσις instead of ἀνάπαυσις, but the meaning is the same, and both words are suitable for translation of the Hebrew term מנוחה that will be, in turn, rather important for our study (see below, point 6, concerning use of *Ps* 95 by the author of the *Hebrews*). In fact, κατάπαυσις appears in the text of the *Hebrews* as a translation of מנוחה used in the original of *Ps* 95. Finally, from the early Christian side, we have also a confirmation of the usage of the term “Sabbath” in atonement contexts. Among the Oxyrhynchus *Logoi* of Jesus, there is the following one (*logion* VIII): ἐὰν μὴ νηστηύσῃται τὸν κόσμον, οὐ μὴ εὑρηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ· καὶ ἐὰν μὴ σαββατίσῃτε τὸ σάββατον, οὐκ ὄψεσθε τὸ(ν) πατέρα (‘‘If you don’t abstain [*lit.*, fast] from the world, you will not find the Kingdom of God, and if you don’t keep Sabbath [*lit.*, sabbatize] on Sabbath, you will not see the Father’’)’²⁴. Here, the terms “fast” and “Sabbath” are used as close to each other. Both mean some kind of abstinence from a worldly activity.

The above evidences, and especially Philo and *Pesher of Habakkuk*, prove that the name “Sabbath” was quite acceptable as a (the?) name of the Day of Atonement. So, we are allowed now to look more closely at the *Songs of the Sacrifice of Sabbath*, which might shed some light on the liturgy of the *Hebrews*.

5. The liturgy of the *Songs of the Sacrifice of Sabbath* in the community of “Hebrews”?

The liturgy of the *Songs of the Sacrifice of Sabbath* presupposes seven *dabirim* where seven priesthoods are celebrating some sacrifices. Formally, these sacrifices within the Holy of Holies are analogous to the

²³ Text and translation according to Florentino GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ and Eibert J. C. TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scroll Study Edition*. Vol. 1 (1Q1 – 4Q273), Leiden etc., Brill / Grand Rapids, MI–Cambridge, UK, Eerdmans, 1997 (pbk 2000), pp. 18, 20 (txt) / 19, 21 (tr.).

²⁴ Cf.: Joseph A. FITZMYER, “The Oxyrhynchus Logoi of Jesus and the Coptic Gospel According to Thomas”, *Theological Studies* 20 (1959), pp. 505-560, reprinted with bibliographic additions in: J. A. FITZMYER, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament*, London, Chapman, 1971, pp. 355-433, here p. 390.



sacrifices of the Day of Atonement. But the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, according to *Leviticus*, is to be presented only once a year and in the unique Holy of Holies. Seven Holies of Holies present a liturgical problem that is still not resolved by means of the known parallels from the Second Temple and *Hekhaloth* literature. “It is extremely difficult to supply parallels for the notion of seven heavenly sanctuaries”, said Carol Newsom in her seminal study on the Qumranic work²⁵. There are, however, some other sources that so far have been not referred to in the discussion of the *Songs*. In light of this data, both *Songs of the Sacrifice of Sabbath* and a *Yom Kippur*-like liturgy of the *Hebrews* may be placed into an appropriate liturgical context.

First of all, a *Yom Kippur*-like liturgy on Sabbath, as it is described in the Qumranic *Songs*, is very close to the priestly service of Christ as it is described in the *Hebrews*. Indeed, the author of the *Hebrews* insists that this expiatory sacrifice was, in the same time, a σαββατισμός of Christ who is the most High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary: “we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus”, said the author of *Hebrews* after having explained the sense of the Sabbath of Christ (4:14).

Secondly, a very close link between the *Hebrews* and the Qumranic *Songs* is an elaborated teaching on the angelic priesthood as is attested by the latter²⁶. The initial chapters of the *Hebrews* are dedicated to a correction of some theology dealing with the angelic priesthood. The author says that the priesthood of Jesus is superior, while, of course, the angelic priesthood known to his audience is a correct one. But this theology of angelic priesthood, that the author of the *Hebrews* approves of while trying to improve, is quite compatible with that of the *Songs*.

Third, we have a document whose links to both *Hebrews* and Qumranic *Songs* are already well known: 11QMelkisedeq. It is not a place here to recall everything known about this, but I would simply stress that the final judgment and atonement performed by the messianic figure of Melchizedek has also a sabbatical nature being timed to the end of the tenth Jubilee²⁷. Thus, a “translation” of the Day of Atonement to

²⁵ Carol NEWSOM, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Harvard Semitic Studies, vol. 27), Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, 1985, p. 50.

²⁶ For *Songs*' doctrine on the angelic priesthood, see NEWSOM, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, pp. 23-38 (that is, probably, the most important), and, for a larger context, Maxwell J. DAVIDSON, *Angels at Qumran. A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (JSP Suppl., 11), Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1992, especially on the *Songs* see pp. 237-238.

²⁷ Cf. Paul J. KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa* (CBQ Monograph Series 10), Washington, The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981.



the end of each 49-day period (that is, of a small Jubilee) is probably an eschatological feature.

So, we have, at least, three strong links between the *Hebrews* and the Qumranic *Songs*: a *Yom Kippur*-like rite on Sabbath and a teaching on the angelic priesthood (that the author of *Hebrews* tries to improve). The third one is 11QMelkisedeq: doctrine on Melchizedek as a messianic and “sabbatical” priestly figure. Apparently, the text of the *Hebrews* contradicts the rite of the *Songs* when the author insists that the sacrifice within the Holy of Holies is to be presented only “once a year” (*Heb* 9:7). However, this contradiction is only apparent. Even according to the Qumranic *Songs*, the sacrifice within every one Holy of Holies is to be presented only once a year. This is because of the necessity to perform such rite seven times a year that the number on the Holies of Holies became seven! Indeed, to each of the seven Holies of Holies the expiation rite is allotted only once a year. So, a Day of Atonement seven times a year is allowable. Moreover, it should be added, that it is very probable that this was the case of the earliest Christian Sion²⁸.

EXCURSUS: A SEVENFOLD STRUCTURE OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN SANCTUARY ON MOUNT SION

In the early Christian Sion traditions are to be found the closest parallels to the Qumranic *Songs*, namely, to their structure of a temple with seven sanctuaries. I will enumerate, at least, the most important texts because all of them are dropped out of sight of the Second Temple scholars. I will not enumerate here many other sources that I consider as being of a secondary value. A large-scale study of the sevenfold sanctuary pattern in the Christian Church is a task for further investigations.

My goal will be limited here only to demonstrate that there were, in the Second Temple period, some liturgical traditions presupposing seven Holies of Holies instead of the unique one, and that such a tradition was, in particular, that of the earliest Christian sanctuary on Sion.

1. A Jewish liturgical parallel: “Seven clouds of the glory”

“Seven clouds of the glory” with the camp of Israel (instead of “one cloud” mentioned in the biblical sources), according to many *Targumim*

²⁸ For the sake of uniformity, I will prefer throughout this paper this “Greek/Christian” spelling, “Sion”, instead of the “Semitic/Jewish” one, “Zion”.



(in *Exodus*, *Deuteronomy*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*) and some other Jewish works, are already interpreted as tabernacles by Rafael Vicent²⁹, but with no connection to the liturgy of the Qumranic *Songs*. Indeed, even the earliest sources among those that were discussed by Vicent are posterior to the *Hebrews*, not to say to the Qumranic *Songs*. However, as Vicent shows, these sources are representing not a purely literary, but a liturgical Jewish tradition. The liturgical traditions are normally accessible through the liturgical books or other literary texts that postdate by hundreds years the date of their origin. An obvious parallel between two kinds of a seven-tabernacle structure, that of the seven clouds with the camp of Israel in Targums and that of the seven heavenly *dabirim* in the Qumranic *Songs*, marks some common liturgical tradition where the Holy of Holies is presupposed to be sevenfold. The Christian parallels that I will provide below are also pertinent to localization of the corresponding liturgical tradition in a pre-Christian Jewish milieu (and so, to exclude, in this regard, a possibility of a Christian influence on the Targums). Dealing with the liturgical traditions, we have to apply the rules of the “comparative liturgy”³⁰. If both early Christianity and Judaism reflect some similar liturgical practices, a common root of both kinds of practices in pre-Christian Jewish traditions must exist. An alternative hypothesis, that some liturgical borrowing took place from Christianity to Judaism or *vice versa* after their “parting of the ways”, seems to be untenable: such borrowings occur rarely even in purely literary traditions (while a bit more often in exegetical works) and are *a fortiori* hardly possible in the traditions of worship that are much more rigid and conservative than the literary ones.

When dating the “seven clouds” tradition, we have corroborating parallels from both early Christian and pre-Christian Jewish (Qumranic) sides, and so, are able to reasonably conclude that our Targumic “seven clouds/tabernacles” are going back to the common ground of both Judaism and Christianity.

²⁹ Rafael VICENT, *La fiesta judía de las Cabañas (Sukkot). Interpretaciones midrásticas en la Biblia y en el judaísmo antiguo*, Estella (Navarra), Editorial Verbo Divino, 1995, pp. 196-203.

³⁰ A discipline created by Anton Baumstark and described mainly in A. BAUMSTARK, *Liturgie comparée. Principes et méthodes pour l'étude historique des liturgies chrétiennes*. 3e éd. revue par Dom Bernard BOTTE, Éditions de Chevetogne, 1953. For applicability of Baumstark's method to the pre-Christian liturgical studies, see, e. g., Paul F. BRADSHAW, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, Oxford etc., Oxford University Press, 1992.



2. “Seven (Christian) synagogues” on Mount Sion

Three Christian authors of the 4th century, two Latin and one Greek (the latter being Epiphanius of Salamis, a renowned collector of the Christian ancient traditions, in his *De mensibus et ponderibus*) report that when the Emperor Hadrian visited Mt Sion (in about 132 AD), there were here seven Christian synagogues, among whose only one survived until the time of Constantine the Great. The Latin authors are the anonymous Pèlerin from Bordeaux (about 333 AD, that is, earlier than Epiphanius; he presents himself as an eyewitness of the one remained synagogue) and Optatus of Mileve (*De schismate Donatistarum*, III, 2)³¹. This earliest architectural pattern of seven sanctuaries in separate buildings seems to be replaced (in the 4th century at the latest) by another one, with a sevenfold division of the unique building (see below).

3. Barsabas of Jerusalem

A homily *On Christ and the Churches* attributed to some mysterious bishop of Jerusalem Barsabas survived in the Georgian version only, being a part of a lost pre-500 AD homiliary of Jerusalem. The text itself is datable from the 2nd to the early 5th century³². The homily is connected to a liturgy in the cathedral church of Jerusalem (or, at least, in some very important church). This liturgy is clearly divided into seven parts, each of them being dedicated to one “prophet enlighten by Christ”. The complete list of these seven prophets includes Adam, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Judas. This corresponds quite well to the sevenfold structure of the sanctuary of the Sion basilica dedicated in 394 (see below), and so, the homily may be delivered either in this basilica (in this case, its attribution to bishop Barsabas is untenable) or, more probably, in some building that served as the Sion church before 394.

4. John II of Jerusalem

Another homily, surviving in the Armenian version only, describes the liturgical arrangement of the Sion basilica (dedicated in 394 and de-

³¹ All three pieces of evidence are brought together by F.-M. Abel in: Hugues VINCENT, F.-M. ABEL, *Jérusalem. Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*. Tome II. *Jérusalem nouvelle*. Fasc. III. *La Sainte-Sion et les sanctuaires de second ordre*, Paris, Gabalda, 1922, pp. 472-474.

³² Michel VAN ESBROECK, Barsabée de Jérusalem, *Sur le Christ et les Églises. Introduction, édition du texte géorgien et traduction française* (Patrologia Orientalis. T. 41, fasc. 3. N° 187), Turnhout, Brepols, 1982.



stroyed by the Persians in 614). It was delivered on the day of the dedication of this basilica by the Patriarch of Jerusalem John II³³. It is difficult to understand the architectural meaning of the seven “circles” of the basilica where the seventh circle contained a device called “propitiatorium”, but this problem of the history of the church architecture is irrelevant here. In any case, a sevenfold pattern of the Sion sanctuary is clear.

5. A Coptic magical incantation

I would like to add a source that seems to be of a secondary value, but still interesting because it deals with a heavenly temple where the most important section is a sevenfold baptistery. Giving a general importance for the “Baptist” thematic in any analysis of the *Hebrews*, I think that it might be useful here. Moreover, this text should never be overlooked because it quotes the *Hebrews* exactly in its most pertinent part describing the gathering on Mt Sion. It is a Coptic magical incantation to Archangel Michael³⁴: “I invoke you now by seven angels (ἄγγελος) who are standing over the seven basins (λουτήρ) of the Church (ἐκκλησία) of the firstborn that is in the heaven whose names are Iao, Iak, Piak, Siak, Artolē, Artolan, Artolar (...ΖΙΧΕΝ ΜΠCΑΩΒΕ ΛΟΥΤΗΡ ΝΤΕΚΛΗCΙΑ ΝΕΩΗΡΕ ΠΜΙCΙ ΕΤ ΖΕ ΝΑΜ ΠΗΥΕΙ ΕΤΕ ΝΑΙ ΔΕ ΝΕΥΡΑΝ ΙΑΩ ΙΑΚ ΠΙΑΚ CΙΑΚ ΑΡΤΩΛΗ ΑΡΤΩΛΑΝ ΑΡΤΩΛΑΡ)”. Compare *Heb* 12:23, that is, immediately after *Heb* 12:22, when the description of a festal gathering on Sion still continues: “...Church of the firstborn which are written in heaven...” In Coptic, the wording used for “the Church of the firstborn” (ΤΕΚΛΗCΙΑ ΝΕΩΗΡΕ ΠΜΙCΙ) is a standard rendering of the wording of the author

³³ Edited, with a Latin translation, by M. VAN ESBROECK, “Une homélie sur l’Église attribuée à Jean de Jérusalem”, *Le Muséon* 86 (1973), pp. 283-304, but see now an improved French translation, with a study, in M. VAN ESBROECK, “Jean II de Jérusalem et les cultes de S. Étienne, de la Sainte-Sion et de la Croix”, *Analecta Bollandiana* 102 (1984), pp. 99-134, and some further precisions in B. M. ЛУРЬЕ, “Из Иерусалима в Аксум через Храм Соломона: архаичные предания о Сионе и Ковчеге Завета в составе *Кебра Негест* и их трансляция через Константинополь [B. LOURIE, “From Jerusalem to Aksum through the Temple of Solomon: Archaic Traditions Related to the Ark of Covenant and Sion in the *Kebra Nagast* and their Translation through Constantinople]”, *Христианский Восток* [Khristianskij Vostok] N. S. 2 (8) (2000), pp. 137-207, here pp. 195-196, n. 145.

³⁴ Angelus KROPP, *Der Lobpreis des Erzengels Michael (vormals P. Heidelberg Inv. Nr. 1686)*, Bruxelles, Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1966, here pp. 22/23 (German tr./txt); in my quote the manuscript punctuation is omitted. The editor did not mark the quote from the *Hebrews*.



of the *Hebrews*, ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων³⁵. The phrase “written in heaven” is, in the Coptic text, altered into “in the heaven” (*sc.*, Church), but the pattern of the verse of the *Hebrews* is still recognizable. It is also important, that the “basins” are enumerated not alongside with altars, but rather instead of them. It looks like the basins are the main elements of the heavenly sevenfold sanctuary. This small Coptic phrase is a remote echo of an early Christian tradition where the heavenly Church of the *Hebrews* was comprised as a temple with a sevenfold sanctuary – [End of Excursus].

All of the above proves that the sevenfold pattern of the liturgy and sanctuary as presupposed by the Qumranic *Songs* is a Second Temple tradition accepted, among others, by the Christians in their earliest sanctuary on Mount Sion.

However, we know nothing about such a sevenfold pattern from the text of the *Hebrews*. So, we can ask from another side: did the author of the *Hebrews* have in mind the sanctuary on Mount Sion? If the answer is positive, then, we have to reasonably conclude that the liturgy of the community of the “Hebrews” had basically the same liturgy as the one presupposed by the Qumranic *Songs*.

6. “Hebrews”: community of Mount Sion?

The author of the *Hebrews*, according to the literal meaning of his words, localizes his addressees in the situation of a festal gathering on Sion: “But you have come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering...” (12:22). Is this phrase to be read literally? Scholars (and even those who are disposed to treat the “Hebrew” community as having a more or less “Essene” nature) normally do not think so³⁶. Even Bargil Pixner who placed the Jerusalem Essene community (supposed addressee of the *Hebrews*) on Mount Sion did not challenge the scholarly

³⁵ See especially W. E. CRUM, *A Coptic Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1939 [repr.: Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000], p. 185a, s. v. **ΜΙCΕ**.

³⁶ Cf. a commentary by BUCHANAN, *To the Hebrews*, pp. 222-223, 256-257, 263 (polemics against those who deny any earthly realm of this gathering of the saints and angels, but with no accent on the precise localization within earthly Jerusalem). Cf. a very close attitude of Bargil PIXNER, “The Jerusalem Essenes, Barnabas and the Letter to the Hebrews”, in: Zdzisław J. KAPERA (ed.), *Intertestamental Essays in Honour of Józef Tadeusz Milik* (Qumranica Mogilanensia, 6), Kraków, Enigma Press, 1992, pp. 167-178.



consensus that the liturgical practices described in the *Hebrews* are those of the Herodian Temple on Temple Mount³⁷.

In fact, a community with a liturgy having so specific distribution of the main biblical feasts was certainly not involved in the official Temple services (if we are still relying on the Mishnah in our knowledge of the latest period of the Temple liturgy). Therefore, the main obstacle to understand *Heb* 12:22 literally disappears: the community-addressee of the *Hebrews* was, in any case, with no specific connection to the Temple destroyed in 70 AD. The liturgy patterned after the Qumranic *Songs* or something similar was certainly performed in another place, and if, as it is stated in *Heb* 12:22, this place is named Sion, why we should not take this testimony as it is? Our previous surprising parallel between a Coptic incantation and *Heb* 12:23 prepares us to take this possibility even more seriously.

Let us go back to the Joshua passage in chapters 3 and 4. It is clear that “Mount Sion” mentioned in 12:22 is the “rest” of God dealt with in the exegesis of psalm 95 (94 LXX) in 3:7–4:10. When the author of the *Hebrews* calls Sion “the city of the living God”, he attaches himself to a mainstream biblical tradition of Sion/Jerusalem of the “abode” or “rest” of God. Of course, this tradition is attached primarily to the Temple. This is why Solomon as Temple’s builder is named “a man of the rest” (*1 Chr* 22:9). But this is not the case of the *Hebrews* where Solomon is not even mentioned (cp. especially omitting Solomon in 11:32: “or the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets”). The *Hebrews* knows a “man of rest” of its own, and this is not Solomon, but David. In his exegesis of *Ps* 95, the author attributes the situation of those who did not enter the rest of God (“They shall not enter my rest”, *Ps* 95:11) to the people lead by Joshua (explicitly in 4:8). He underlines that David said these words “after so long time” (4:7) since Joshua. Here, the author’s timescale seems to be realistic. Then, suddenly, he switches over to a “today” mode: the word “today” from the same psalm (95:7) becomes a quite literal “today” of the present reality: we are “today” hearing the voice of God (4:7), and so, we have now in our midst the σαββατισμός (Sabbath rest) of the people of God (4:9).

³⁷ PIXNER, “The Jerusalem Essenes...”; cf. Bargil Pixner, *Wege des Messias und Stätten der Urkirche: Jesus und das Judentum im Licht neuer archäologischer Erkenntnisse* (Studien zur biblischen Archäologie und Zeitgeschichte). 2. Aufl., hrsg. von Rainer Riesner, Gießen, Brunnen Verl., 1994.



David here is represented as if alive, as a contemporary of the author and his audience sharing with them the same “today”. David is also the person who invites the whole people of God to the Sabbath rest. Such an absolute preponderance of the Davidic cult is a very discernible feature of the cult of the early Christian and the late pre-Christian Mount Zion, that is, of Zion already divided from the Temple Mount and closely connected with the Tomb of David on the hill that is known as Sion from the New Testament times until now. I deal with this at length elsewhere³⁸. The main pieces of evidence of this cult, apart from the tomb of David itself excavated on Mount Sion by Jacob Pinkerfeld in 1949–1950, are the following: *Acts* 2:29 (Peter’s words about the tomb of David “with us” pronounced on Sion), Feast of David on December 25 in Sion according to the earliest *stational liturgy* of Jerusalem, the words “and king David in the midst of them” in a liturgical text belonging to the earliest Sion traditions (*Inscription on the Chalice of Solomon*; this part of text is known only in Slavonic), description of David’s tomb on Sion in *Life of Isaiah* within the *Vitae Prophetarum* (a Jewish work roughly contemporaneous to the NT³⁹).

Let us explore some more Davidic connections of the *Hebrews*. According to the above considerations about the Sabbatical nature of the Atonement rite as it is depicted in the *Hebrews*, it is allowable to suppose that the “rest” of God of *Ps* 95:11 interpreted as the Sabbath rest of the people of God (4:9) has here, among others, a quite literal sense of a sanctuary. Such a hypothesis can be confirmed and even proven. It can be confirmed by the *Targum Psalms*⁴⁰ to *Ps* 95:11 where the Hebrew word corresponding to “my rest” (מְנוּחָתִי) is rendered as בֵּית מְקֹדֶשׁ, that is, “my house of holiness” which means “sanctuary” and

³⁸ В. М. ЛУРЬЕ, “Чаша Соломона и скиния на Сионе. Часть 1. Надпись на Чаше Соломона: текст и контекст [B. Lourié, “The Chalice of Solomon and the Tabernacle on Sion. Part 1. Inscription on the Chalice of Solomon: text and context]”, *Византиноворосси́ка / Byzantinorossica* 3 (2005), pp. 8-74, here pp. 59-66.

³⁹ As to the *Sitz im Leben* of the *Vitae Prophetarum*, I agree with Anna Marie SCHWEMER, *Studien zu den frühjüdischen Prophetenlegenden. Vitae Prophetarum*, 2 Bde (TSAJ, 49-50), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1995-1996, and disagree with David SATRAN, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine. Reassessing the Lives of Prophets* (SVTP, 11), Leiden, Brill, 1995. Anna Marie Schwemer is preparing an edition of the *Vitae Prophetarum* for the *Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum*.

⁴⁰ I quote the *Targum Psalms* according to the electronic edition on the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* web-site (<http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/>) that reproduces the text from Paul DE LAGARDE, *Hagiographa haldaise*, Lipsiae, 1873 [repr.: Osnabrück, Zeller-Verl., 1967] with the variants from Luis DIEZ MERINO, *Targum de Salmos. Tradición sefardí de Alfonso Zamora. Edición Príncipe del Ms. Villa-Amil no. 5*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto ‘Francisco Suárez’, 1982.



especially “Holy of Holies”. This is evidence that the “rest” of God mentioned in *Ps* 95:11 was in fact sometimes interpreted quite literally and in the sense of sanctuary.

There also a parallel that helps to acknowledge the possibility of another literally interpretation of *Ps* 95:11, namely, as pertaining to the sanctuary on Sion. This is *Ps* 132 (131 LXX):8, 13, 14. Here, verse 8 (“Arise, o Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength”) mentions the ark, thus, implies the Holy of Holies, verse 13 (“For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired *it* for his habitation”) mentions Sion as an abode of God, and finally, verse 14 (“This *is* my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it”) states that this rest of God is the eternal one. In the *Targum Psalms* tabernacle associations are even more explicit: “my rest forever” (מְנוּחָתִי עַד־עַד) in *Ps* 132:14 is rendered as “rest of my *shekhina* forever” (וַיֵּיה שְׁכִינָתִי עַד עַל־מָא). So, we have here, in *Ps* 132, an important parallel to the *Hebrews* that often remains overlooked. All the above parallels led us only to a *possibility* of a literal interpretation of the “rest” as a sanctuary in the *Hebrews*. For the final step, we still need more direct evidence. This is a fragmentary Qumranic text, 4Q522 (known under different titles given by different editors), a prophecy about David put in mouth of Joshua⁴¹.

Now we know that a link between Joshua and David is, *per se*, a very close parallel to the *Hebrews*, especially in the part dealing with the Sabbatical rest of the Christians that is based of an ancient Targumic tradition of the *Book of Joshua*.

Joshua prophesizes that David will establish the house of God on the “Rock of Sion” where he will establish some kind of new priesthood (“he will officiate (יִכְהֶן) here first”; there is a lacuna in the manuscript that prevents us to decide definitively who is this “he”, David himself or someone else, but it is clear, however, that David will be responsible for establishing of some new priesthood). Anyway, this is another parallel to the *Hebrews* where the author stresses that the priesthood of Jesus, being “according to the order of Melchizedek” (5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 17), is connected with his provenance from the tribe of Judah, “of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood” (7:14).

Even more important is a genealogy of David in our document: David is “a son of Jesse, a son of Perez, a son of Judah”. So, as Rachel

⁴¹ Text and translation in GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ and TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scroll Study Edition*. Vol. 2 (4Q274–11Q31), 1998 [2000], pp. 1046-1049. Here I avoid any discussion of relations between 4Q522 and other Qumranic Joshua texts.



Elior notes⁴², David is here the seventh from Abraham while, according to other biblical data, he is the fourteenth (or 15th according to Luke). A symbolism here is obvious: David, who has to construct the house, that is, the “rest” of God, is the seventh leader of the people of God. So, he is the man of the Sabbatical rest.

Let us recall here a parallel with Melchizedek from another text already quoted, 11QMelkisedeq. Melchizedek here is a messianic figure appearing at the end of the tenth Jubilee, that is, also marked by the figure “7” and by the symbolism of Sabbath rest. The most interesting in 4Q522 is the following phrase: “his [*sc.*, God’s] people will dwell forever” (עֲמֹ יִשְׁכֹּן לְעֶד). This means that “the house of God” will be, as well, a “dwelling place” of the people of God. The same is a σαββατισμός in the *Hebrews* – Sabbath rest of Christ open to the whole people of God. The *Hebrews* looks from the Joshua “past” to the Davidic “present”, while 4Q522 looks from the Joshua “present” to the Davidic “future”, but their respective pictures are basically identical. Both attribute to David establishing of some abode of God together with the whole people of God, this abode being localized on Mt Sion. This is precisely the same idea as the σαββατισμός dealt with in the *Hebrews*.

On the one hand, 4Q522 is, like the *Hebrews*, a document where the reality of the times of David is portrayed as an accomplishment of the deeds of Joshua. Like the *Hebrews*, the Qumranic document deals with the temple/tabernacle which is, at the same time, an eternal dwelling place of the people of God. The Qumranic prophecy is explicit in treating a Sion sanctuary as not only symbolical, but also a sanctuary in a very literal sense. On the other hand, as it was stated above, the same literal sense is compatible with the text of *Hebrews*. Therefore, now, after having known a document belonging to almost the same tradition, we have the right to conclude, that:

1. the sanctuary described in the *Hebrews* was a real sanctuary on Sion,
2. this sanctuary was considered as previously announced and pre-figured, in some way, by Joshua.

⁴² Rachel ELIOR, *The Three Temples. On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*. Transl. by David LOUVISH, Oxford/Portland, OR, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004, p. 191-192, n. 106. I am grateful to Andrei Orlov for drawing my attention to this book.

**RECAPITULATIO: What is this all about?**

A study of both liturgical time and liturgical space of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* leads us to a sanctuary on Mt Sion considered as the eschatological Holy of Holies. A Joshua tradition as reflected in a fragmentary Palestinian Aramaic Targum to *Joshua* and in 4Q522 is responsible for both distribution of the major feasts in “Hebrews” community’s calendar and community main sanctuary’s Sion localization. The liturgy of the community of the “Hebrews” has had no connection to the official services in the Temple on Temple Mount, regardless of the possible date of the *Hebrews* (before or after 70 AD). The date of 70 AD must be excluded from the discussion of the date of the *Hebrews*. The Sion sanctuary was sevenfold, as is testified by later Christian traditions, and the liturgy within this sanctuary was of the same type as that of the Qumranic *Songs of the Sacrifice of Sabbath*. The theology of angelic priesthood, as is exposed in these *Songs*, is, most probably, aimed at by the author of the *Hebrews* when he tries to apply to a conception of angelic priesthood his conception of the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek⁴³.

⁴³ I am grateful to Mikhail Kholodov for improving my English.