

STUDIES ON THE TEXTS OF THE DESERT OF JUDAH

EDITED BY
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P.W. FLINT

VOLUME XLVI



THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AS BACKGROUND TO POSTBIBLICAL JUDAISM AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

PAPERS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
AT ST. ANDREWS IN 2001

EDITED BY

JAMES R. DAVILA



BRILL
LEIDEN • BOSTON
2003

SEVENFOLD HYMNS IN THE *SONGS OF THE SABBATH SACRIFICE* AND THE HEKHALOT LITERATURE:
FORMALISM, HIERARCHY AND THE LIMITS OF
HUMAN PARTICIPATION*

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Introduction

The thematic, verbal and stylistic affinities between the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*¹ and the hymnic material contained in the Hekhalot corpus have raised fundamental questions about the relationship between the liturgical traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls and later Jewish mystical writings. Scholars have diverged widely in their assessment of both the cohesiveness of this complex of related traditions and the continuity of its development in its passage from second temple Judaism to the Hekhalot literature of Late Antiquity.²

* I am grateful to Martha Himmelfarb, Leah Hochman, Annette Reed, and Peter Schäfer for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper and to James Davila, whose astute editorial work greatly strengthened the final product.

¹ Text designations for the *Songs* follow Carol Newsom, "Shirot 'Olat Hashabbat," in *Qumran Cave 4: VI, Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1* (DJD 11; ed. E. Eshel et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 173–401. See also the full critical edition presented in Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (HSS 27; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1985). I have also consulted Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (STDJ 12; Leiden: Brill, 1994); James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (Eerdmans Commentaries on the Dead Sea Scrolls 6; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 83–167. Other textual information can be found in Adam S. van der Woude, "Fragmente einer Rolle der Lieder für das Sabbatopfer aus Höhle XI von Qumran (11QŠirŠab)," in *Vom Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift für J. P. M. van der Ploeg* (ed. W. C. Delsman et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1982), 311–337; Carol Newsom and Yigal Yadin, "The Masada Fragment of the Qumran Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice," *IEJ* 34 (1984): 77–88; Elisha Qimron, "A Review Article of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* by Carol Newsom," *HTR* 79 (1986): 349–71. The cycle was first named and identified in John Strugnell, "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran – 4Q Serek Shirot 'Olat Hašabbāt," in *Congress Volume: Oxford 1959* (VTSup 7; Leiden: Brill, 1960), 318–345.

² Just about every major scholar has weighed in on this discussion, which is far more complex and nuanced than I can do justice to here. Most important among those who have emphasized historical continuity, see Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (3rd ed.; New York: Schocken, 1954); idem, *Jewish Gnosticism,*

As the earliest Hebrew work that combines *Merkavah*-speculation, exegetical activity focused on the book of Ezekiel, and cultic-liturgical forms, the *Songs* offer the most exciting possibility for grounding later literary and religious developments in this earlier period. However, despite the striking correspondences between the *Songs* and the Hekhalot corpus, evidence for *direct literary dependence* between the two traditions has remained elusive.³ The tension between this persistent textual divide and the tantalizing parallels in these texts makes the methodological questions of comparison central to any interpretation of the evidence.⁴

Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition (New York: Schocken Books, 1965); Ithamar Grünwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980); Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Qumran Sabbath Shirot and Rabbinic Merkavah Traditions," *RevQ* 13/49–52 (1988): 199–213; Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Merkavah Speculation at Qumran: The 4Q Serekh Shirot 'Olat ha-Shabbat," in *Mystics, Philosophers and Politicians: Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann* (ed. J. Reinharz and D. Swetschinski; Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1982), 15–47; idem, "Sifrut Ha-Hekhalot ve-Kitve Qumran," *Mehqere Yerushalayim Be-Mahshevet Yisra'el* 6 (1987): 121–38 (Hebrew). Schiffman stands alone in this group, since, in addition to the phenomenological and/or *traditionsgeschichtliche* methodology of the others, he also employs linguistic and text-critical tools. In most other cases, a primarily textual-literary position has emphasized rupture rather than continuity. Ephraim E. Urbach believed the early tannaitic tradition of Merkavah-speculation to be primarily exegetical ("Traditions about Merkavah Mysticism in the Tannaitic Period," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion: Festschrift für Gershom Scholem* [ed. E. E. Urbach, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Ch. Wirszubski; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967], 1–28 [Hebrew section]); he has been followed by David Halperin, *The Merkavah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980); idem, *The Faces of the Chariot* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988). For a principled critique of the comparative method as it is applied in the field of early Jewish mysticism, see Peter Schäfer, "New Testament and Hekhalot Literature: The Journey into Heaven in Paul and in Merkavah Mysticism," *JJS* 35 (1984): 19–35; also idem, "Research on Hekhalot Literature: Where Do We Stand Now?," in *Rashi, 1040–1990: Hommage à Ephraim E. Urbach: Congrès européen des Études juives* (ed. Gabrielle Sed-Rajna; Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1993), 229–235.

³ See the assessment in Johann Maier, "Zu Kult und Liturgie in der Qumran-gemeinde," *RevQ* 14/56 (1990): 572: "Doch die Entsprechungen beruhen zum grossen Teil auf der gemeinsamen Ezechiel'schen Basis und bestehen in bestimmten, kult-theologische zentralen Motiven, keineswegs auf textlicher Abhängigkeit" (emphasis mine). In his later work, even Schiffman concurs with this more cautious assessment. Compare his articles from 1982 and 1987 respectively (Schiffman, "Merkavah Speculation at Qumran," 46–7; idem, "Sifrut Ha-Hekhalot ve-Kitve Qumran," 133–4).

⁴ Recently several review articles have addressed the difficulties and implications of comparing the *Songs* and the Hekhalot literature: Elisabeth Hamacher, "Die Sabbatopferlieder im Streit um Ursprung und Anfänge der Jüdischen Mystik," *JJS* 27 (1996): 119–154; James R. Davila, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Merkavah Mysticism," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in their Historical Context* (ed. T. H. Lim; Edinburgh: Clark, 1999), 249–264; Michael D. Swartz, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Later Jewish Magic and Mysticism," *DSD* 8 (2001): 182–93.

Previous scholarship has privileged comparison of the fractured and sonorous style characteristic of the "numinous" hymns that are found both in the *Songs* and in the Hekhalot literature.⁵ In the hopes of further expanding the range of comparative approaches, this paper will instead focus on the genre of the sevenfold hymn contained in both works. I will demonstrate not only that these hymns share a number of important features, but also that these characteristics are interdependent. The compositions are marked by an extreme formalism that includes but extends far beyond their deployment of various poetic patterns built around the number seven. These highly structured poetic constraints lend themselves in turn to a thematic emphasis on description – in particular accounts of the hierarchies and protocols of the angelic sphere. Finally, the indirect and oblique descriptive discourse that emerges from this confluence of formal and thematic interests has important implications for the way the genre positions the implied human community within the dramatic and narrative structure of the hymns. In this way, the genre thus limits the scope of human involvement in the liturgical act. Human participation is primarily presented indirectly through the detailed description of angelic praise. Like a play composed entirely of stage-directions, the sevenfold hymn records only the procedures by which the angels offer praise to God, suppressing fully the actual words of the imagined heavenly liturgy. Consequently, human participation in the liturgical act is perforce mediated, embedded as it is within its narrative function.

⁵ These hymns have consequently come to play a crucial, if contentious, role in debates concerning influence and continuity in the development of Hebrew "mystical" poetry. See the seminal comments in Scholem, *Major Trends*, 57–63; also idem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 128. Scholem imported the category of the "numinous" from Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 5–7, 17–18. See also Aharon Mirski, "תולדות שרשרת," *Tarbiz* 28 (1958): 171–280 (Hebrew); Johann Maier, "Serienbildung und 'numinoser' Eindruckseffekt in den poetischen Stücken der Hekhalot-Literatur," *Semiotica* 3 (1973): 36–66; Karl E. Grözinger, "Singen und ekstatische Sprache in der frühen jüdische Mystik," *JStJ* 11 (1980): 66–77. Contrast this tradition of scholarship with the more nuanced approach in Philip S. Alexander, "Prayer in the Hekhalot Literature," in *Prière, Mystique et Judaïsme: Colloque de Strasbourg, 10–12 Septembre 1984* (ed. R. Goetschel; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987), 43–64. Others have, of course, analyzed the more conventional poetics of the cycle, although without drawing comparisons with the Hekhalot hymns: see Newsom, *Songs*, 5–21 and passim; Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 173–200; Stanislav Segert, "Observations on Poetic Structures in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice," *RevQ* 13/49–52 (1988): 215–223.

The central portion of the Sabbath cycle is composed of a series of shorter units. In songs 6 and 8, these shorter compositions are made up of seven parallel phrases, each of which shares a series of formal poetic features. These sevenfold hymns, in particular the two independent examples contained in song 6, exhibit a wide range of formal and thematic affinities with a hymn found in the Hekhalot corpus at §271 within the macroform *Hekhalot Rabbati*.⁶ Yet, comparison of these sevenfold compositions shows that, despite their similarities, the *Qumran Songs* and the late antique Hekhalot hymns function within discrete cultural and textual frameworks. Within the context of the Hekhalot corpus, the genre's avoidance of direct hymnic speech and its not unrelated cautious approach to the problem of human participation carries a very different valence than they do in the *Songs*. This is in large measure because, in contrast to the Sabbath cycle's explicit rejection of human participation, §271 occurs alongside a wide variety of compositions in which we do, in fact, hear the unmediated voice of the human community, and even the angels themselves, directly praising God. Indeed, a wide range of divergent opinions about the possibility and desirability of direct human involvement in the liturgical activities of the heavenly sphere is especially evident in the portion of the text that features the sevenfold hymn (§§271–277). It is precisely the shift in the attitudes of these hymnic collections towards the notion of human participation in the heavenly liturgy that highlights the enduring correlation between this genre and its distinctive mode of indirect praise. Only by integrating narrative and dramatic considerations into an analysis of the poetics of these compositions is it possible to address the salient question of the relationship between the genre's formal principles and its discursive style. Ultimately, however, it is comparison of the two sets of hymnic material within their discrete literary systems that will

⁶ Hekhalot paragraph designations are given according to Peter Schäfer's *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981). I also make use of Peter Schäfer et al., *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 2: §§ 81–334 (TSAJ 17; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987). The Hekhalot manuscript tradition is characterized by the fluctuation and instability of both longer and shorter textual units. The macroform *Hekhalot Rabbati* varies widely in the manuscripts (e.g., §§81–193, §§81–277, §§81–335, §§81–321+489–495). For discussion of the fluid nature of the manuscripts, see Peter Schäfer "Tradition and Redaction in Hekhalot Literature," in *Hekhalot-Studien* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 8–16; idem, "Zum Problem der redaktionellen Identität von Hekhalot Rabbati," in *Hekhalot-Studien*, 63–74.

allow us to refine our understanding of the notion of human participation operative in them.

I. The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: *Textual History and Communal Setting*

The Sabbath cycle, composed of thirteen songs, was discovered in nine separate manuscripts at Qumran. Yigael Yadin identified a tenth amongst the textual remains of the Masada excavations.⁷ Although only a fraction of the text has been recovered and many of the manuscripts preserve only fragmentary readings, the impressive philological and editorial work of Carol Newsom and others has yielded significant sections of continuous text as well as evidence for the cycle's overall thematic development. Paleographic analysis dates the earliest manuscript copies to the late Hasmonaean period (c. 75–50 B.C.E.), while the latest copies from Qumran date from the middle of the first century C.E. The large number of manuscripts of the *Songs* found at Qumran suggests that the cycle should be viewed within the larger literary and historical context of the Qumran community, especially in light of the wide variety of thematic and formal features it shares with sectarian material.⁸ The cycle was apparently recited in the community during the thirteen Sabbaths of the first quarterly period of the 364-day calendar used at Qumran.⁹ Neverthe-

⁷ 4Q400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407; 11QShirShab; and Maslk. For a useful and concise review of these manuscripts, see Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 85–6 (note that Davila accidentally miscounts the number of manuscripts of the *Songs*).

⁸ Carol Newsom, in her most comprehensive treatment of the question of the work's origins, argues that the *Songs* was produced outside the sect, but came to play an important and influential role within the community ("Sectually Explicit" Literature from Qumran," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* [ed. W. Propp, B. Halpern, and D. Freedman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 167–187).

⁹ Maier argues that numerical month designations in the *exordium* indicates that the cycle was limited to the Nisan season (Johann Maier, "Shire 'Olat hash-Shabbat: Some Observations on their Calendrical Implications and on their Style," in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18–21 March, 1991* [ed. J. Trebolle and L. Vegas Montaner; STDJ 11, 1–2; 2 vols; Leiden: Brill, 1992], 2:546–52). In contrast, Newsom entertains the possibility that the cycle could have been recited throughout the four parallel periods of the year (Newsom, *Songs*, 19–20). Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones argues that the cycle climaxes in the twelfth song, which would have been recited immediately following the covenant renewal ceremony held on the Feast of Weeks according to the community's calendar (Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "The Temple Within:

less, it is possible that the cycle was not initially of sectarian origin, as suggested by the copy found at Masada. Thus, while it is undoubtedly the case that the sect served as one of the text's primary sites of transmission and performance, we should be careful not to over-emphasize absolute conformity between the cycle and other liturgical and hymnic material found at Qumran. This paper, therefore, analyzes the cycle primarily on its own terms, but makes use of other materials from Qumran where they seem to address similar themes and motifs.

A number of heuristic labels have been applied to the *Songs*: cultic-liturgical,¹⁰ exegetical-meditative,¹¹ or quasi-mystical.¹² Yet, whatever its ultimate *Sitz im Leben*, on a strictly generic level the cycle is made up of a series of "liturgical invitations."¹³ Bilhah Nitzan has rightly assigned the *Songs* to this category, noting that the cycle does not represent a conventional liturgy in which the actual words of praise or petition are specified.¹⁴ Thus, although the *Songs* seem to be intended for recitation, they, like other such hymns, are primarily structured around the order and manner of praise. Each of the songs begins with a call to praise followed by descriptive material ranging from the activities performed by the angels to the architectural features

The Embodied Divine Image and its Worship in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish and Christian Sources," *SBLSP* 37 [1998]: 399–431, esp. 410).

¹⁰ Maier, "Shire 'Olat hash-Shabbat," 552–53, deemphasizes the experiential and exegetical nature of the cycle, preferring to focus on its liturgical function within the Qumran community. He has argued forcefully that the cycle functioned as an accompaniment to scriptural readings ("Begleittext") performed within the Qumran community by the appropriate priestly watches as a replacement for the cultic sacrifices of the Sabbath ("Kultersatz"). See also Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 137–38.

¹¹ Carol Newsom, "Merkabah Exegesis in the Qumran *Shabbat Shirot*," *JJS* 38 (1987): 11–30. Newsom emphasizes the importance of the exegetical-meditative aspect of the cycle, locating with remarkable acuity exegetical activity in the twelfth song of the cycle based on intertextual use of Ezekiel 1, 3 and 10; Psalm 68; Exodus 19–20; Daniel 7:9–10.

¹² See Newsom, *Songs*, 16–17; Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 273–4, 319–20; idem, "Harmonic and Mystical Characteristics in Poetic and Liturgical Writings from Qumran," *JQR* 85:163–183. For detailed methodological discussion of the applicability of the category "mystical" to the *Songs*, see Elliot R. Wolfson, "Mysticism and the Poetic-Liturgical Compositions from Qumran: A Response to Bilhah Nitzan," *JQR* 85 (1994): 185–202.

¹³ Compare passages such as Pss 148, 150:1–2, and the Song of the Three Young Men (Daniel LXX 3:28–68) in which the various categories of heavenly and earthly creatures are called upon in a hierarchical order to praise God.

¹⁴ Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 183–89, 195–200.

the spontaneity of irregularity. Moreover, when taken as a unit, these hymns draw a direct parallel between the praise offered God by the chief princes and the blessings offered in God's name by the chief princes to the rest of the angelic host. This movement serves to evoke an inclusive depiction of the supernal assembly in which the chief princes function as active hinge figures, mediating between God and the wider community of lower angelic beings.

II. The Praise of the Seven Chief Princes

The praise of the seven chief princes (4Q403 1 I, 1-9; Mas1k II, 1-22) contains seven parallel liturgical proclamations concerning the recitation of hymns of praise to God. Each of these liturgical phrases is characterized by a theme word designating the type of praise offered in each (e.g., "blessings," "magnification," etc.). These designations are recapitulated in nominal form at the end of the hymn in a condensation of the entire composition.

Sev[en] psa[lms of his blessings; sev[en] (8) [psalm]s of the magnification[of his rightcousness, seven psalms of the] exaltation of [His] kingship; [seven] psalms of [the praise of His glory; sev[en] ps[alms of thanks-giving for His wonders;] (9) [seven psalms of re]joic[ing] in His strength; seven[psalms of prai]se for His holiness.²²

As we shall see, this "précis" form is typical of this genre of descriptive hymns of praise. Yet, alongside its fixed verbal constituents, this hymn is remarkable for its deployment of formal variation, and the productive tension it develops between its static and dynamic elements.

The formal poetic patterns are parsed in Table 1 below. This table breaks the hymn into the seven constituent units built around the praise offered by the successive chief princes (first, second, third, etc.). In addition, each of these seven units is broken into three sections, marked 1, 2 and 3 under the leftmost column ("element designation"). Each of these phrases is in turn broken down into three phrases marked a, b, and c according to their function in the phrase, which is described in the column to its right. For example, the designation 1a indicates that phrase 1a serves as the "title of praise" (function "a") within "section 1." It is important to note that these

Table 1. *Order of Praise (4Q403 1 I, 1-7): Overall Structure of Composition*²³

| Phrase Designation | Function of Phrase | First Prince | Second Prince | Third Prince | Fourth Prince | Fifth Prince | Sixth Prince | Seventh Prince |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| theme 1 (underlined) | key word | ברך | נדב | רוב | שבח | יהוה | הן | ומר |
| theme 2 (italicized) | key word | עלם | עדק | מלאך | נבר | כבד | שיב | קדש |
| 1a: <i>THL</i> + theme 1 (nominal) | title of praise | ההלה ברכה | ההלה נדולה | ההלה רומם | ההלה שבח | ההלה הדרה | ההלה הן | ההלה ומר |
| 1b: tongue + ordinal number | instrument of praise | בלשון הראשון | בלשון השני | בלשון השלישי | בלשון הרביעי | בלשון החמישי | בלשון הששי | בלשון השביעי |
| 1c: subjective genitive (3 + 7 only) | actor: addresser | | | לנשיא הוש | | | | לנשיא הוש |
| 2a: theme 1 (3 + 7 only) | title of praise | | | רומם אמרו | | | | ומר עו |
| 2c: divine epithet + theme 2 | actor: addressee | לאֱלֹהֵי עֲלָמִים | לַמֶּלֶךְ אִמְרוּ עֲדָק | לַמֶּלֶךְ מַלְאָכָיו | לַגְבוּרֵי כָל אֱלֹהִים (inverted) | לַמֶּלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד | לֵאלֹהֵי הַדָּבָר | לַאֲלֹהֵי קֹדֶשׁ |
| 2b: 7-fold (static) + theme 1 + <i>PL'</i> | song of praise: instrumental | בְּשִׁבְעָה בְּרָכּוֹת פְּלִיאָה | בְּשִׁבְעָה נְדוּלוֹת פְּלִיאָה | בְּשִׁבְעָה רִמּוֹ פְּלִיאָה | בְּשִׁבְעָה נְבוֹרוֹת פְּלִיאָה | בְּשִׁבְעָה הַדְּרוֹת פְּלִיאָה | בְּשִׁבְעָה הַנִּיחָה פְּלִיאָה | בְּשִׁבְעָה נְפִלְאוֹתָיו |
| 3a: theme 1 (verbal form) | act of praise | וּבִרְךְ | וְנִדְבֹ | וְרֹבֵם | וְשִׁבְחֵה | וְיִהְיוּ | וְהֵן | וּמְרִי |
| 3c: divine epithet + theme 2 | actor: addressee | לַמֶּלֶךְ כָּל קְדוּשֵׁי עֲלָמִים | לֵאלֹהֵי כָל אֱלֹהֵי נְעִדֵי עֲדָק | לַאֲלֹהֵי מַלְאָכָיו רוֹם | לַאֲלֹהֵי נְבוֹרוֹת | לֵאלֹהֵי הַכְּבוֹד | לֵאלֹהֵי הַדָּבָר | לַמֶּלֶךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ |
| 3b: 7-fold, 7-fold (static) + <i>DBR</i> + theme 1 + <i>PL'</i> | song of praise: instrumental | שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי בְּרָכּוֹת פְּלִא | שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי נְדוּלוֹת פְּלִא | שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי רִמּוֹ פְּלִא | שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי הַשְּׁבוּחוֹת פְּלִא | שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי הַדְּרוֹת פְּלִא | שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי הַנִּיחָה פְּלִא | שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי נְפִלְאוֹתָיו פְּלִא |

²³ The table represents a composite of Mas1k ii 1-19 and 4Q403 1 i, 1-7 (Newsom, "Shirot," 243-44 and 256). For detailed parsing of this unit's poetic structure, see also Newsom, "Shirot," 249-50.

²² 4Q403 1 I, 7-9 (Newsom, "Shirot," 260).

function designations (a, b and c) do not appear in the same order in all three sections, further enhancing the tension between fixity and variation, which is vital to the poetic motion of the composition. This tension can most clearly be seen in the contrast between the static use of the numeric designations and the dynamic use of progressive enumeration. For instance, the "tongue" (לשון) with which the praise is spoken (phrase 1b) builds to its logical climax as it progresses through the ordinal numbers. In contrast, the other numerical designations in the hymn (2b and 3b) use as their constant the number seven, which in each case modifies the medium of praise. At the same time, the phrases containing the static number designation vary in their use of the two theme words that mark each of the seven proclamations.

Alongside this tension within each of the seven units, the composition exhibits significant variation amongst these units. Scholars have noted that each proclamation contains two parallel statements: a noun phrase describing the type of praise to be recited and a verbal clause declaring its actual recitation.²⁴ For example, in the psalm of the fifth chief prince, the nominal phrase "seven wondrous thanksgivings" is immediately followed by the statement "he will give thanks."²⁵ In each proclamation, a single theme word is used in parallel constructions. This twofold structure constitutes the inner logic of each of the seven phrases from which the composition is built. The potentiality of the noun phrase is set in motion by its verbal realization.

As shown in Table 1, however, the double structure does not characterize the entire composition. While the hymn generally follows this pattern, it diverges from it in a number of crucial cases. In two crucial instances, the hymn deviates from this twofold pattern. In the praise of princes 3 and 7, the proclamation breaks down into 3 separable sections of 3 phrases each (1a-b-c, 2a-c-b, 3a-c-b) rather than 2 units with 4 and 3 phrases respectively (1a-b + 2c-b, 3a-c-b), as in the other five units.²⁶ Rather than a 4+3 metrical

rhythm, the proclamations of princes 3 and 7, have a 3+3+3 metrical pattern.²⁷ This contrast between the twofold and threefold structure is laid out in the analysis in Tables 2a (the third chief prince) and Table 2b (the fourth chief prince).

Table 2a. *Praise of Third Chief Prince (4Q403 1 I, 1): Unit Structure*

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Psalm of exaltation (title) by the tongue of the third (instrument) of the chief princes (actor) | 1a: title 1b: instrument 1c: addresser | תהלה רומם בלשון השלישי לנשיא רומם |
| an exaltation <of His faithfulness to the King of angels with its seven wondrous exaltations | 2a: title 2c: addressee 2b: instrument | רומם <אמרו למלך מלאכים בשבעה רומי פלאיה |
| he will> ²⁸ exalt the God of lofty angels seven times with seven words of wondrous exaltation. | 3a: action 3c: addressee 3b: instrument | <רומם לאֱלֹהֵי מַלְאֲכֵי רוֹם שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי רוֹם פֶּלֶא |

Table 2b. *Praise of Fourth Chief Prince (4Q403 1 I, 2-3): Unit Structure*

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Psalm of praise by the tongue of the fourth | 1a 1b (1c) | תהלה שבה בשִׁלֹן הָרְבִיעִי |
| to the Warrior who is above all heavenly beings with its seven wondrous acts of power and he will praise the God of power seven times with seven words of wondrous praise. | (2a) 1c=(2c) 1b'=(2b) 2a=(3a) 2c=(3c) 2b'=(3b) | לנבחר על כול אֱלֹהִים בשבע נבחרות פלאה ושבחה לאֱלֹהֵי נְבוֹרוֹת שִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁבְעָה דְּבָרֵי הַשְׁבֻּחוֹת פֶּלֶא |

This reconstruction is supported by my poetic analysis, since, if we read לנשיא, we expect it to be followed by the modifier רומם and, most likely, also element 2a, for which there is not enough room in the line. Concerning the possibility that elements 1c and 2a did occur in the preceding line we must remain entirely agnostic, since we have no basis on which to reconstruct the section between the end of the first fragment of song 6 (Maslk I, 8-21) and the beginning of the praise of the seven chief princes. I prefer to reconstruct the words preceding line 1 of the fragment simply as תהלה ברכה בלשון הראשון. Contrast the reconstruction in Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 116-7.

²⁷ Compare Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 299 n. 84.

²⁸ See Newsom, *Songs*, 181: "The text of 4Q403 1 i 1 is haplographic. MasShirShah ii 7 must have contained elements D-F, though unfortunately this material is lost in the lacuna. The schematic reconstruction is modeled after the psalm account of the seventh chief prince. The word אמרו appears to be preserved in 4Q405 3 i 13."

²⁴ For discussion of this twofold pattern, see especially Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 299.

²⁵ 4Q403 1 I, 3-4 (Newsom, "Shirot," 260).

²⁶ The first line of the praise of the first chief prince is missing in all available fragments, although Maslk II, 1-6 seems to begin in the middle of this unit. Newsom has reconstructed this fragmentary first line in the following manner: [פלאיה וברך], favoring לאֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיּוֹתִים בְּשִׁבְעָה בְּרָכוֹת (Newsom, "Shirot," 244).

The twofold pattern, here exemplified by the proclamation of the fourth chief prince, suits well the dramatic setting of the hymn in which two parties are involved, God and the group of chief princes. Yet, those proclamations structured in this twofold pattern lack two important elements present in proclamations 3 and 7. These threefold proclamations repeat the nominal use of the theme word in element 2a. More importantly, the designation לנשיא רוש ("of the chief princes") is found only in the threefold structure of proclamations 3 and 7. Aside from this designation, the composition nowhere indicates the identity of those who sing these praises to God. This genitival construction with *lamed* is, therefore, crucial to the basic meaning of the hymn. Without it, we would not be able to grasp the relationship between the actors in the hymn and the recipient of the praise. Of course, we might anticipate that the praise of the seventh chief prince, as the culmination of the hymn, would deviate from the dominant twofold pattern. Yet, the hymn's typological use of the number seven does not account for the deviation from this pattern in the third proclamation. It seems that for the author of the hymn the sevenfold structure composed of threefold phrasing serves as the model for a perfectly balanced composition. The twofold structure, lacking as it does all mention of the pivotal actors in the liturgical performance and limping along in its imbalanced rhythm, seems provisional alongside the more comprehensive arrangement. By setting apart the third and seventh proclamation, the work highlights the importance of the typological numbers 3 and 7, which were central to the author's conception of order in the heavens. By subtly replacing the twofold pattern with the more stable threefold one, the hymn prefigures in its formal structure the three-tiered image of the heavenly community realized in the second portion of song 6.

III. *The Blessings of the Seven Chief Princes*

Unlike the previous composition, the blessings hymn found in the second half of the sixth song (4Q403 1 I, 10-29; 4Q404 1-2; 4Q405 3 II, 1-19; Mas1k II, 23-26) maintains a regular structure throughout. Despite a few minor discrepancies,²⁹ each of the seven units of which the hymn is composed can be divided into a threefold pattern; each

Table 3. *Blessing of Seventh Chief Prince (4Q403 1 I, 23-26): Unit Structure*³⁰

| Phrase | Function of Phrase | Translation | Hebrew Original |
|--------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 1a | title of unit: ordinal number (variable component) + chief prince (fixed) | The seventh among the chief princes | דסכני כנשיא רוש |
| 1b | verb of blessing (fixed) | will bless | יברך |
| 1c | instrumental epithet: ³¹ "name" (fixed) + attribute of God [theme word 1] (variable) | in the name of His holiness | בשם קדשו |
| 1d | recipients of blessing: "all" (fixed) + substantive [theme 1 in units 3, 4, 6, 7] (variable) + ethical/epistemological terms (units 3-7) | all the holy ones who establish knowledge | לכול קדושים ממיסדי דעה |
| 1e | instrument: "seven words" (fixed) + nominal [theme 1 in princes 3, 4, 6, 7] (variable) + <i>PL</i> (fixed) | with seven words of His wondrous holiness | בשבעה דברי קדש פלא |
| 2b | verb of blessing (fixed) | and he will bless | וברך |
| 2d | recipients of blessing: "all" (fixed) + substantive (variable) + object (often ethical/epistemological) | all who exalt His statutes | לכול מרימי משפטי |
| 2e | instrument: "seven words" (fixed) + <i>PL</i> (fixed) | with seven wondrous words | בשבעה דברי פלא |
| 2f | function of blessing (only in princes 6, 7) | to be as strong shields | למני עז |
| 3b | verb of blessing: fixed | and he will bless | וברך |
| 3d | recipients of blessing: "all" (fixed) + substantive in construct with object, often ethical/epistemological (variable) | all who are appointed for righteousness | לכול נעדי צדק |
| 3g | attributes of recipients: participle + object + adverb (only in song 7) | who praise His glorious kingship [...] forever | מהללי מלכות כבודו [...] נצח |
| 3e | instrument: "seven words" (fixed) + <i>PL</i> (variation in units 4, 5) | with seven wondrous words | בשבעה דברי פלא |
| 3f | function of blessing (missing in unit 3) | for eternal peace. | לשלום עולמים |

²⁹ Text and translation are from Newsom, "Shirot," 257, 261. Lacunae are supplied from 4Q404 2, 5-8 (Newsom, "Shirot," 295) and 4Q405 3a II, 15-19. For detailed parsing of this unit's poetic structure, see Newsom, "Shirot," 268; Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 301-7.

³¹ I understand this element instrumentally because of its similarity to the phrase

²⁹ These variations are noted in Newsom, *Songs*, 196.

section is demarcated by the verb "to bless" (elements 1b, 2b and 3b). As in the previous table, I have categorized each phrase according to both the section in which it occurs (1, 2, and 3) and its function (a, b, c, d, e and f). Each of these phrases is composite, made up of both variable and fixed elements.

This hymn shares a number of important similarities with the previous one. Most noticeable is a passage at the close of the main body of the hymn which recapitulates its foregoing action: "And all the [chief] princes [will bless togethe]r the divine [g]od[s] in [His holy name with] all (27) [their] sevenfold t[estimonies. And] they will bless those appointed for righteousness and all the bles[sed . . . bles]sed for e[ve]r [. . .] (28) to them."³² Yet, since the composition is not characterized by the use of theme words, the recapitulation is not as extensive. In fact, paronomasia is employed in the blessings of only princes 3, 4, 6, and 7. And, where it does turn up, it is only employed in the first section of the unit. This relatively restricted use of variation is further emphasized by the recurrent use of פלא, which is incorporated into a number of fixed expressions throughout the hymn (e.g., element 2e: בשבעה פלא (דברי פלא בשבעה)). Thus, the blessings hymn subordinates to its rigid phraseology the modes of variation so characteristic of the preceding composition. The few deviations from the established pattern are no more than minor shifts within the predictable pattern (e.g., phrase 3e in units 4 and 5). Those deviations that do perform a significant function within the composition (such as phrases 2f, and 3f, which clarify the function of the blessing and the identity of the recipients) are located primarily towards the culmination of the hymn in the praise of the sixth and seventh princes.

This remarkably rigid and stable threefold structure should in large measure be read as a formal expression of the hymn's dramatic action, the reciprocal three-way exchange among the hymn's primary actors. Unlike the praise of the seven chief princes, which restricts its dialogue to two actors, the giver and the recipient of praise, the blessings of the seven chief princes incorporate the broader community of angels into its dramatic setting. The seven chief princes are introduced in the first element of the song (1a), followed imme-

³² "by the tongue of" in the preceding cycle. Newsom interprets the phrase as an invocation (Newsom, *Songs*, 195).

³³ 4Q403 1 I, 26-28 (Newsom, "Shirot," 261).

diately by the fixed phrase "will bless" (יברך). The agent in whose name this action is accomplished, namely God himself, is then given. The subsequent two sections (2 and 3) do not recapitulate the actions of the princes and God, only briefly echoing the verb of blessing (phrases 2b and 3b). Instead, they describe in detail the attributes of the recipients. In this way, they focalize the set of actors entirely missing from the previous hymn. This emphasis on the comprehensive scope of this community of recipients is further evident from the application in each of the three sections of the word "all" (כול) to the angelic ranks (1d, 2d and 3d). The chief princes, rather than being solely concerned with praising God, are here described as turning outwards toward the multitude of angels in order to mediate to them the fruits of their praise, God's blessing. The composition closes with a blessing formula, the only portion of either of the hymns of song 6 formulated in direct discourse, recited by the seven chief princes along with the larger multitude: "Blessed be the Lord, the K[ing of] all, above all blessings and pr[aise]."³³ This benediction is then followed by a statement that confirms the triangle of reciprocity prefigured by the formal structure of the composition: "And he will bless all the holy] ones who bless [Him and declare Him right]eous (29) in the name of His glory. [And He will bl]ess all the everlastingly blessed ones."³⁴

The emphasis on the recipients of blessing in this hymn and their inclusion in the liturgical action is striking, raising important questions about the boundaries of this tripartite congregation. This is especially true since the text often characterizes these recipients of blessing using either "ethical" or "epistemological" qualities (elements 1d, 2d, and 3d). For example, such phrases as חַיִּים דְּרִךְ³⁵ ("those whose way is perfect") and נְעִדִי צְדָק³⁶ ("those appointed for righteousness") are applied to this group. These attributes raise crucial questions concerning the identity of the actors depicted in the hymn,

³³ 4Q403 1 I, 28 (Newsom, "Shirot," 261).

³⁴ 4Q403 1 I, 28-29 (Newsom, "Shirot," 261).

³⁵ 4Q403 1 I, 22. For the use of this phrase, see especially IQS II, 2; CD II, 15-16; IQM XIV, 7. Davila writes: "With small variations, the phrase 'those whose way is sound' appears often in the Q[umran] L[iterature] . . . always referring to human beings, especially the sectarians. Presumably it applies to human beings here as well" (*Liturgical Works*, 121-2).

³⁶ 4Q403 1 I, 27. In IQSa II, 2, the phrase הַנְּעִדִים לְעֶצֶת הַיְּהוָה is applied to members of the covenantal community (the *yahad*).

found at the Dead Sea, most notably a fragmentary hymn that has been termed the "Self-Glorification Hymn" by Esther Eshel, the text's primary editor.⁴⁴ According to Eileen Schuller, this poetic composition is found in two separate recensions at Qumran, the first in three manuscripts (4Q427 6 III, 1-2 + 7 I, 5-23 [= 4QH^a], 4Q471b, and 1QH^a XXVI, 6-14) and the second in a closely related, but distinct, text, 4Q491 11 I.⁴⁵ A fifth fragment, 4Q431 (= 4QH^c), written in a hand very similar to 4Q471b, contains a hymn that follows the "Self-Glorification Hymn" in that manuscript.⁴⁶ This complex textual situation has raised important questions concerning both the place of this material within the wider *Hodayot* corpus⁴⁷ and the redactional activity it underwent in its transmission within the Qumran community.⁴⁸ From her synoptic analysis of these fragments, Devorah Dimant has concluded that the first person "Self-Glorification Hymn" was initially an older, independent unit that was juxtaposed with a second-person plural address and thereby incorporated into a new textual complex.⁴⁹

of Maurice Baillet [ed. D. K. Falk, F. García Martínez and E. M. Schuller; STDJ 35; Leiden: Brill, 2000], 98-102).

⁴⁴ Esther Eshel, "4Q471b: A Self-Glorification Hymn," *RevQ* 17/65-68 (1996): 186-94; idem, "4QSelf-Glorification Hymn (= 4QH^a frg. 1?)," in *Qumran Cave 4: VI, Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2* (DJD 29; ed. E. Chazon et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 421-32.

⁴⁵ Eileen Schuller, "4QHodayot^a," in DJD 29, 100-102. For text and translation of 4Q427 6 III, 1-2 + 7 I, 5-23, consult idem, "4QHodayot^a," 95-108; idem, "A Hymn from a Cave Four *Hodayot* Manuscript: 4Q427 7 i + ii," *JBL* 112 (1993): 605-28; idem, "The Cave 4 *Hodayot* Manuscripts: A Preliminary Description," *JQR* 85 (1994): 137-150. For emendations and comparison of three of these manuscripts, see Devorah Dimant, "A Synoptic Comparison of Parallel Sections in 4Q 427 7, 4Q491 11 and 4Q471B," *JQR* 85 (1994): 157-61. See also in the same volume John J. Collins and Devorah Dimant, "A Thrice-Told Hymn," *JQR* 85 (1994): 151-55. For 4Q491, consult Maurice Baillet, *Qumrân Grotte 4. III (4Q482-4Q520)* (DJD 7; Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 26-29.

⁴⁶ Schuller, "4QHodayot^a," 199-208.

⁴⁷ See Eileen Schuller, "The Classification *Hodayot* and *Hodayot*-like (with Particular Attention to 4Q433, 4Q433a, and 4Q440)," in *Sapiential, Liturgical, and Poetical Texts from Qumran*, 182-93.

⁴⁸ Eshel maintains that the "Self-Glorification Hymn" was initially a separate composition, which was subsequently interpolated into the *Hodayot* corpus (Eshel, "4Q471b," 191-4). For differing opinions concerning the relationship amongst these various fragments as well as of these fragments to the *Hodayot* corpus, see Martin G. Abegg, "4Q471: A Case of Mistaken Identity?," in *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of B. Z. Wacholder on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. J. C. Reeves and J. Kampen; JSOTSup 184; Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 136-8.

⁴⁹ Dimant, "Synoptic Comparison," 161: "4Q491 and 4Q427 share not only the transition from a first person hymn to a second personal plural address, but also

The speaker of this independent poetic unit makes the claim that he has achieved an exalted status among the angels. This claim has made the question of the identity of the speaker central to the interpretation of the hymn and its potential significance for our understanding of the Qumran community.⁵⁰ Yet, whether the speaker should be identified as Michael, the Teacher of Righteousness, or the eschatological high priest, what makes the hymn most important for comparison with the *Songs* is the paradoxical tension it maintains between the speaker's apparent degradation at hands of men and his elevated status among the angels. The speaker described himself as "despised," "despicable," and "shunned" by men,⁵¹ while at the same time claiming that he "dwells in the holy council"⁵² and is even permitted to take a seat in heaven.⁵³ The speaker's rhetorically effective self-deprecating stance functions as an emblem of his special status.

What then is the relationship between this "false modesty" and the expression of human limitation in the *Songs*? Just as in the *Songs*, the author of the "Self-Glorification Hymn" employs the root *השב* in the *hitpa'el* in order to articulate his place in the hierarchy of creation. Yet, the speaker here arrives at the opposite conclusion. Consistent with his identity as "beloved of the king and companion to the holy ones" (*ידיד מלך רע קדושים*),⁵⁴ he states: "I am reckoned

actual and preceding lines . . . It would mean also mean that the two distinct literary units were already juxtaposed in the textual tradition reflected by the two texts. Thus, these texts indicate the complexity, and perhaps the antiquity, of the textual and literary history lying behind these works."

⁵⁰ For differing opinions on this question, see Baillet, DJD 7, 2-72; Morton Smith, "Ascent to the Heavens and Deification in 4QM^a," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin* (ed. L. H. Schiffman; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 181-88; see also a revised version of this paper: idem, "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; John J. Collins, "A Throne in the Heavens: Apotheosis in Pre-Christian Judaism," in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys* (ed. J. J. Collins and M. Fishbane; Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1995), 43-58; Martin G. Abegg, "Who Ascended to Heaven? 4Q491, 4Q427, and the Teacher of Righteousness," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. C. A. Evans and P. W. Flint; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 61-73. Most recently, Eshel argued that the speaker should be identified as the eschatological high priest (Eshel, DJD 29, 424-7).

⁵¹ 4Q471b 2-3. For texts and translations, I follow Eshel, DJD 29, 428-31.

⁵² 4Q471b 1.

⁵³ 4Q471b 4.

⁵⁴ 4Q471b 6.

with the angels" (אני עם אלים אחשב).⁵⁵ And, whereas the speakers in the *Songs* doubt the purity of their tongues, the speaker here wonders "who could measure the flow of my lips (ומול שפתי מי יכיל); who can associate with me in speech (מי בלשון יעדני)?"⁵⁶ The singular speaker of this hymn is accorded precisely the exalted status and function that the communal collective denies itself in the Sabbath cycle. The polemic contained in the *Songs* need not be seen as a refutation of the specific claims put forward in this hymn. Certainly we need not seek theological uniformity in the collection, especially considering the possible nonsectarian nature of the Sabbath cycle.⁵⁷ Yet, even if we are to view these two texts as parts of a unified system, we should be careful not to conflate their intended meaning by seeking a stable notion of "angelification" or "participation" throughout the Qumran corpus. The "Self-Glorification Hymn" explores the special and unique status of one exceptional figure, whereas the *Songs* seek to articulate a hierarchical relationship between the human narrators and the angelic actors in the heavenly liturgical drama.

Although comparison between works within the broader corpus of materials found at Qumran can often unlock the meaning of individual works, this approach just as often lead to pitfalls in interpretation. My formal analysis of the *Songs* has demonstrated the coherence between the literary genre of the cycle and its theological stance concerning the role of the human in liturgical acts of praise. In so far as the human community functions as the implied narrators of the heavenly drama, they do participate in the liturgy, but only in this limited sense. This form of participation in no way constitutes experiential or ontological transformation. In fact, the descriptive and indirect discourse of the hymns lends a voyeuristic quality to the *Songs*. The human narrators stand outside the threefold drama depicted in the sixth song of the cycle. Through its use of highly formal patterns of description, the hymn maintains the rigid internal boundaries within the celestial community and between the heavens and the earth. The structure of the sevenfold hymn thus serves an essential function in shaping the significance of the work. In order to grasp more fully the nature of the sevenfold hymn, the following

section will explore the way this form maintains its essentially descriptive character within a vastly different literary setting.

IV. *Sevenfold Praise in the Hekhalot Corpus: הַהֲלֹת רַבָּתִי §271* (Hekhalot Rabbati §271)

The hymn analyzed in this section, "You are Lord" (§271), is contained in the Hekhalot literature, the earliest independent corpus of Jewish mystical writings. This composition falls at the end of the most stable and prevalent configuration of the macroform *Hekhalot Rabbati*, §§81–277.⁵⁸ In this context, it is found embedded in a short collection of primarily liturgical compositions (§§268–277). A fragment detailing the alternate names of the angel Metatron (§277), which concludes with a benediction, marks the end of this section. In fact, most of the compositions which comprise this portion of *Hekhalot Rabbati* (except §268 and §277) are first attested in the oldest identifiable fragment of the Hekhalot corpus found amongst the textual remains of the Cairo Geniza, T.-S. K 21.95.S, although often only in partial form and in a radically dissimilar order.⁵⁹ This fragment, written on a leather scroll (*megillah*), was likely copied before the 9th century.⁶⁰ Johann Maier is the last scholar to have subjected any of these hymns to thorough formal analysis.⁶¹ To my knowledge, the formal and discursive features of the sevenfold §271 have never been compared to those of the Qumran *Songs*.

All of the hymns contained in this discrete textual unit are characterized by highly formal poetic features. §271, however, is unique for its use of the number seven as a structuring principle. This composition

⁵⁸ Schäfer, *Übersetzung*, 2:xv–xix. The *Sar-torah* section that follows it (§§278–306) constitutes an independent redactional unit.

⁵⁹ Schäfer has published this as fragment G1 in his *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 9–32. On the implications of this fragment for the formation of the Hekhalot corpus as a whole and of *Hekhalot Rabbati* in particular, see Schäfer, "Zum Problem der redaktionellen Identität von *Hekhalot Rabbati*," 70–72; also see the English summary of this section in idem, "Tradition and Redaction in Hekhalot Literature," 10–12.

⁶⁰ Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 10.

⁶¹ Johann Maier has treated two of these units separately in two brief articles. On §271, see "Hekhalot Rabbati xxvi, 5," *Judaica* 21 (1965): 129–33; on §274, "Hekhalot Rabbati xxvii, 2–5," *Judaica* 22 (1966): 209–217. My analysis is indebted to Maier's work. See also Johann Maier, "Poetisch-liturgische Stücke aus dem 'Buch der Geheimnisse,'" *Judaica* 24 (1968): 172–81.

⁵⁵ This line is fullest in 4Q491 11 7 (Baillet, DJD 7, 26–9). Eshel reconstructions 4Q471b frag. 1c using 4Q491 (Eshel, DJD 29, 428).

⁵⁶ 4Q471b 5–6, reconstructed from 4Q491 11, 10.

⁵⁷ See footnote 8 above.

consists of two sections. The first is a short introduction, which prefigures the structure of the cycle to follow: the seven theme-words used in the hymn are listed as substantives in apposition to the main title of God, i.e., Lord (אֲדֹנָי). In fact, this introductory précis lends an added dimension to these theme words, which are used as substantives nowhere else in the composition. The final line of the introduction, forms an *inclusio*, recapitulating the first line. The phrase "You are Lord" thus functions as a title, which introduces the main fixed element of the hymn, but is not included in the body of the hymn. In this way, the hymn can be read as an expansion on the "lordship" of God. This introductory section functions in very much the same way as the concluding summaries so typical of the seven-fold hymns of the *Songs*, in this case adumbrating the form and content of the hymn that follows.

The second part of the composition forms the main body of the hymn. This seven-part song details the praise offered to God by a series of figures. As in the Sabbath *Songs*, the actual words of praise are not given; instead the order of praise is described. Each of the seven phrases which make up the hymn contain three units. Each unit has a constant element and a variable element constructed from the unit's theme word. The poetic structure of these phrases can be expressed as a simple formula: constant 1 + variable 1, constant 2 + variable 2, and constant 3 + variable 3; or, more precisely, 'attah hu + theme word as predicate (masculine singular), lekha + theme word in participial form (masculine plural), and kol ba'ale + theme word in nominal form (abstract noun). This can best be seen in Table 4 below.

The formal similarities between this hymn and the earlier hymns of the sixth Sabbath song are striking. In addition, the hymns share a common vocabulary of praise. Some of this vocabulary has roots in the second temple period. For example, the first two elements of this hymn, נְדוּלָה and נְבוֹרָה, are also the first two elements of the liturgical series found in 1 Chr 29:11. Even more noticeable, however, is the common emphasis on the fullness and comprehensiveness of the liturgical activity. Both the "blessings" hymn and the Hekhalot hymn make the systematic use of the word כָּל. This sense of inclusiveness is further enhanced by the comprehensiveness of the formal structure.

As in the "blessings" hymn, the identity of those offering praise to God is left indeterminate. While it is true the phrase כָּל בְּעַלֵּי is

Table 4. *The Sevenfold Structure of Hekhalot Rabbati* §271⁶²

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. You are Lord, 2. the great (1) the mighty (2) and the awesome (3), the righteous (4) the pious, (5) and the holy (6), and the faithful (7), | Introductory précis: 1. title phrase 2. chain of seven substantives using theme words in apposition to title | 1. אַתָּה הוּא אֲדֹנָי 2. הַנְּדוּלָה (2) הַנִּיבּוֹר (3) הַנִּמְרָא (4) הַצְדִּיק (5) הַחַסִּיד (6) הַקֹּדֶשׁ (7) הַנֶּאֱמָן |
| 3. [long-suffering and full of grace and truth]. ⁶³ | 3. liturgical insertion from Exodus 34:6. | 3. [אֲדֹנָי אֱפִיס וְרַב חַסֵּד וְאֱמֶת] |
| 4. You are Lord, God of gods and Lord of Lords. | 4. <i>inclusio</i> expanding on title phrase | 4. אַתָּה הוּא אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים |
| 5. You are great, (1A) they declare You great, (1B) all the great ones. (1C) You are mighty, (2A) they declare You mighty, (2B) all the mighty ones. (2C) You are awesome, (3A) to You rejoice (3B) all who rejoice. (3C) You are righteous, (4A) they declare You righteous, (4B) all the righteous ones. (4C) | 5. 7 threefold units: 1. 'attah hu + variable (predicate) 2. lekha + variable (m. pl. partic.) 3. kol ba'ale + variable (nominal) | 5. אַתָּה הוּא נְדוּלָה לְךָ מַגְדִּילִים כָּל בְּעַלֵּי נְדוּלָה אַתָּה הוּא נִיבּוֹר לְךָ מַגְבִּירִין כָּל בְּעַלֵּי נִיבּוֹרָה אַתָּה הוּא נִמְרָא לְךָ מַרְגִּיעִין כָּל בְּעַלֵּי הַנֶּמֶת אַתָּה הוּא צְדִיק לְךָ מַצְדִּיקִין כָּל בְּעַלֵּי צְדִק |

⁶² I follow the version of the text found in MS V228 of Schäfer's *Synopse*, except for the first phrase (אַתָּה הוּא אֲדֹנָי הַנְּדוּלָה), which is given in a shortened form (אַתָּה הוּא אֲדֹנָי נְדוּלָה). Several of the other versions deviate from the strict formal pattern, leaving out a phrase and placing the elements out of order (e.g., M22) or incorporating foreign material (e.g., M40 which adds הָאֱלֹהִים to some phrases). The order of the verbs of praise in V228 corresponds exactly to G1 B/16-27 (Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 13).

⁶³ Exodus 34:6. Though present in all major manuscripts, the phrase is outside the formal constraints of the composition. It is entirely absent from the version found in G1 at B/18.

The implication here is that it is the task of angels, and not of humans, to offer praise to God.

Conclusion

This modest comparison of several select hymns from the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the Hekhalot corpus suggests that the genre of the sevenfold hymn carried with it an implicit answer to the question of human participation in the heavenly liturgy. I have argued that the oblique, descriptive discursive style of this genre was well suited to the emphasis on organization and hierarchy characteristic of formulaic poetic structures. In this way, the sevenfold compositions we have looked at offer the human community an opportunity to participate in the heavenly liturgy drama, while at the same time asserting a fundamental boundary between human beings and the angelic host they describe. Despite the increasing emphasis in the Hekhalot literature on the permeability of the boundary between heaven and earth and between the human and the angelic, the sevenfold hymn retained its primarily indirect character. I have argued that in the highly specific form of the sevenfold praise there exist important similarities between the poetry of the Qumran sectarians and of the Hekhalot authors. In particular, the location of the human participant within in the cosmological structure imagined in the hymn, the relative directness of the poetic discourse, and even the symbolic significance of the formal sevenfold arrangement of the hymns point to a significant continuity between these compositions.

I have shown that literary influence need not be conceptualized as a process that can occur only at the poles of *oral tradition* and *concrete textual dependence*. Instead I have pursued a model of influence that takes seriously the mediating force exerted by formal poetic structures in conjunction with notions of literary genre. These alternative media are all the more potent as agents of continuity within a ritual-liturgical tradition, in this case one whose performance and musical history is virtually unrecoverable. Both of these compositions apparently belonged to a continuous tradition of postbiblical religious poetry, *the sevenfold invitation to praise*. I believe that this more cautious approach reveals that, although the *Songs* did not serve as a direct link in the evolution of Hebrew mystical poetry throughout Late Antiquity, they – like the Hekhalot hymns – can serve as snap-

shots of a widespread, dynamic and tenuous process of development. As I have shown, a certain style of indirect and descriptive speech constituted an intimate component of this liturgical genre. In our search for continuity in the history of Hebrew religious and mystical poetry, it is necessary to attend not only to isolated formal or thematic features of the disparate compositions, but also to their larger literary and cultural contexts.