

world by attributing to the wicked and rebellious angels the revelation of the "everlasting secrets" to their earthly mistresses (*1 En.* 9.6; see *Gn.* 6.1–4). Enoch, having been granted access to the heavenly mysteries and having seen the holy writings (*1 En.* 103.2; see 4Q417 2.i.14–18), proclaims that he knows "this mystery"—the destinies of the righteous and the wicked at the last judgment. As in Sapiential Work A and the Mysteries, knowledge of the divine mystery serves as a guide for conduct in the present.

Mystery in the New Testament. The New Testament term *mysterion* shows many affinities with the uses of *raz* in the Qumran scrolls. In some cases *mysterion* refers to a puzzle or riddle to be solved (*Rv.* 1.20, 17.5; *Eph.* 5.32; *1 Cor.* 14.2), as in *Daniel* 2 and Peshar Habakkuk (1QpHab vii.4–5). The most common use of *mysterion* is with regard to the divine plan or economy (see *Col.* 1.26–27, 2.2; *Eph.* 1.9; *Rom.* 16.25; *Rv.* 17.7). Often it is synonymous with the "gospel" (*Col.* 4.3; *1 Tm.* 3.9, 3.16; *Eph.* 6.19), and sometimes it points toward a future (eschatological) action of God (*Rom.* 11.25; *1 Cor.* 15.51; *Eph.* 3.3). There is an esoteric aspect to the New Testament *mysterion*: "To you [Jesus' disciples] has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God" (*Mk.* 4.11). Paul describes himself and his co-workers as speaking "the wisdom of God hidden in mystery" (*1 Cor.* 2.7) and as "stewards of the mysteries of God" (*1 Cor.* 4.1). The use of the word *mystery* to describe God's allowing the presence of evil in the world is termed in *2 Thessalonians* 2.7 "the mystery of lawlessness."

Though there are many verbal and conceptual parallels with the Qumran "mystery" texts, the New Testament occurrences of *mysterion* also reflect the distinctively Christian theological conviction that in Jesus' person, and especially in his death and resurrection, there has been a decisive unfolding of the divine mystery in history. Nevertheless, the Qumran texts and related writings (*Daniel* and *1 Enoch*) provide a much more appropriate framework for understanding the New Testament "mystery" texts than do the Greek "mystery" religions.

[See also Creation; Enoch, Books of; Hodayot; Mysteries; Peshar Habakkuk; Rule of the Community; Sapiential Work; Secrecy; Teacher of Righteousness; War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness; and Wisdom Texts.]

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MYSTICISM. A term notoriously difficult to define, for purposes of this article *mysticism* is taken to refer to a type of religious praxis in which an individual engages in techniques specifically designed to give ecstatic access to the realm of the divine. In this narrow sense there is no evidence of mystical praxis in the communities represented by the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Nevertheless, several texts from Qumran bear on related phenomena (the visionary ascents characteristic of many apocalypses, liturgical communion with angelic worshippers, and the disclosure of the mysteries of the chariot-throne of God). [See Apocalyptic Texts; Heaven; and Throne.]

Visionary Ascents. In ancient Jewish apocalypses the visionary often records an experience of ascent from earth into heaven, where he may be accompanied by an angelic guide, see the various structures and beings who occupy heaven (or multiple heavens), come into the presence of God, and receive a revelation, usually about the course of future events (e.g., *1 Enoch*, *2 Baruch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Testament of Levi*). [See Angels.] The oldest of these texts is *1 Enoch*, copies of which were found at Qumran, including portions of the text that describes Enoch's ascent to heaven (*1 En.* 13–16, Enoch^c 4Q204 vi). Enoch's ascent is presented as an intentionally cultivated experience. Having been asked by the fallen Watchers to take their petition to heaven, he sits next to "the waters of Dan" and reads the petitions until he falls asleep, whereupon he has a dream vision in which he ascends to heaven. The practice of incubating revelatory dreams at a holy place is attested already in second-mil-

lennium BCE literary texts (e.g., the Kirtu legend from Ugarit). Dan, the site of one of the ancient sanctuaries in northern Israel, would be such a holy place. [See Archaeology.] Rivers also are often mentioned in connection with mystical experiences (cf. the occurrence of Ezekiel's vision "by the river Chebar," *Ezek.* 1.1). Although the significance of rivers as a propitious site for incubating visions is debated, it may be that waters were thought to reflect the heavens above and so to provide a means of gazing into the mysteries of heaven. Enoch's ecstatic ascent is described as a "summoning" by clouds and mist, as he is carried by winds and hastened along by lightning flashes. The numinous quality of the heavenly palace is suggested by the description of it as composed of fire and hailstones, snow, and water, simultaneously hot and cold. Characteristically, Enoch is terrified to find himself in the divine presence (cf. *Ezek.* 1.28) and has to be lifted up by the divine command.

Three other texts from Qumran (like *1 Enoch*, in Aramaic) contain accounts of revelatory dream visions, although only in one case does the vision apparently include an ascent. The Apocryphon of Jacob (4Q537) recounts a dream vision, presumably occurring at Bethel (cf. *Gen.* 28), in which an angel shows Jacob heavenly tablets concerning his future and the Temple that is to be built at Jerusalem, not Bethel. [See Jacob.] In the Visions of Amram^{a-f(2)} (4Q543–548), Amram sees two angelic beings, Melchiresha' and (presumably) Melchizedek, quarreling over him and receives instruction concerning the dualistic division of humankind into children of light and darkness. [See Amram, Visions of Amram.] In neither of these texts, however, is there an indication that the dream vision is intentionally brought about or incubated, or that it involves the transportation of the visionary to heaven. By contrast, the Aramaic Levi texts (1Q21, 4Q213–214b, 4Q540–541), although fragmentary, appear to refer to techniques of incubation (prayer, followed by sleep). [See Levi, Aramaic.] Although the mechanism of transportation to heaven is not described, there is reference to a mountain (Mount Zion?) upon which Levi stands, a mountain that reaches to heaven, where gates are opened and Levi presumably enters. [See Levi.]

All these texts are literary fictions describing the experiences of ancient and legendary characters and as such cannot be used as direct evidence for the existence of mystical praxis in late-Second Temple Judaism. However, Paul's reference to his own mystical ascent to Paradise where he heard "things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat" (2 *Cor.* 12.2–4) is clear evidence that such ascents were part of actual religious experience at least in some segments of Judaism. No evidence exists, however, for such practice at Qumran. The Aramaic texts discussed above are generally considered

to be literature read but not composed by the Qumran community. In the texts composed by the Qumran community there are references to a sense of communion with angels but no language that suggests the practice of ascent.

Liturgical Communion. Several passages in texts composed by members of the Qumran community speak of an experience of entering into communion "with the congregation of the sons of heaven" (Hodayot^a from Cave 1 at Qumran, 1QH^a xi.19–23 [iii.18–22], xix.11–13 [xi.8–11]; Rule of the Community from Cave 1 at Qumran, 1QS xi.7–8). [See Hodayot; Rule of the Community.] In one instance the language used to express this conviction echoes that of visionary ascent, as the speaker describes being lifted up from Sheol and Abaddon "to an everlasting height" (1QH^a, xi.19–20 [iii.18–19]); but the description appears to be figurative rather than literal, as in Paul's account. These passages probably refer less to specific experiences than to convictions about the status of the sect as an elect body integrated into the lot of the angelic hosts. The Damascus Document, for instance, excludes the physically and mentally impaired from the community "because the holy angels are in its midst" (Damascus Document CD xv.15–17, Rule of the Congregation 1Q28a ii.3–9; cf. War Scroll, 1QM vii.3–7). [See War Scroll.] This language is dependent upon *Leviticus* 21.16–21, which refers to qualifications for priestly service in the sacrificial cult.

A somewhat more vivid account of access to the heavens is found in a hymn of self-glorification (War Scroll^a 4Q491), part of a copy of the War Scroll from Cave 4 at Qumran. In this text the speaker asserts that he has been given "a mighty throne in the council of the gods," where he claims to have "taken my seat in the [council] in heaven." Although Morton Smith (1990, pp. 187–188) has argued that the text should be understood in relation to visionary ascent traditions, War Scroll^a says nothing about the techniques of ascent or about the revelations characteristically given to such visionaries. Instead, analogously to the 1QHodayot^a, the text uses heavenly enthronement imagery to assert a claim about the status of the speaker, who may plausibly be the priestly Messiah who officiates in the eschatological war (see Collins, 1995, pp. 148–149). [See Messiahs.]

The analogy between the community and the priests who serve in the Temple suggests that the distinctive sense of communion with the angelic hosts in the Qumran community is developed not so much from the apocalyptic ascent tradition as from priestly and temple traditions. [See Temple.] Johann Maier (1964) argues that there was a tradition of priestly mysticism based on the understanding of the Temple as the place of God's presence and so, uniquely, the place where heaven and earth

intersect. Already in the prophetic vision in *Isaiah* 6 there is an ambiguity or, perhaps better, a blurring of the heavenly or earthly locus of the temple in which the vision occurs. Little evidence exists, however, to substantiate the existence of a developed tradition of priestly mysticism, although numerous texts assert the correspondence between earthly and angelic priests (e.g., *Jub.* 31.13–14; *Testament of Levi* 2–5, 8) and common service with the Angels of the Presence in the heavenly temple is part of the eschatological expectation at Qumran (see Rule of the Blessings 1Q28b). [See Priests; Rule of the Blessings.]

Liturgical traditions, however, do provide a basis for the experience of common worship with angels and thus for a type of quasi-mystical praxis. Already in biblical psalmody, references occur to the joining of angelic and human praise (Psalm 148, Psalm 150; *The Song of the Three Children*). Later, the Qedushah de-Yotser in the synagogue liturgy explicitly incorporates a vivid description of the praise uttered by the ministering angels, the celestial 'ofannim (wheels), the holy *hayyot* (creatures), and the seraphim as part of the human act of praise, thus creating an experience of common worship with the heavenly beings. Such a cultivation of liturgical communion with the angels is extensively developed in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, a text found in multiple copies at Qumran (4Q400–407, 11Q17) and in one at Masada (Maslk). Probably a presectarian composition, the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice comprise a liturgical cycle for the first thirteen Sabbaths of the year, to be recited presumably at the time of the Sabbath Musaf offering. The tradition of coordinating song with sacrifice is attested in *Chronicles* (2 Chr. 29.27–28). Since the boundary between heaven and earth was considered to be especially “permeable” at the time when the smoke of offerings went up to God, it was considered a propitious time for prayer (see *Jdt.* 9.1, *Lk.* 1.10, Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.23; B.T., *Ber.* 26b). Similarly, it would be a suitable time for an act of worship that cultivated a sense of being present in the heavenly temple and witnessing angelic worship. Moreover, the Sabbath itself, as a holy day observed by the angels and by Israel (*Jub.* 2.18), was considered the distinctive occasion for common praise with the angels (Words of the Luminaries^{a-c} 4Q504–506). [See Sabbath; Words of the Luminaries.]

Since there is no indication that the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice functioned as a technique for ecstatic or dissociative experience, they are not, technically speaking, mystical texts. Nevertheless, they are crafted, both individually and as a cycle, to produce an intense religious-aesthetic experience of worship in the heavenly temple. Each song begins with a call to praise God addressed to the angels, so that human praise and angelic praise are intimately interrelated. Within the cycle three

distinct sections occur, songs 1 through 5, songs 6 through 8, and songs 9 through 13, each section distinguished both by content and by style. The first five songs describe and praise the angels who serve as priests in the heavenly temple. The style is characteristic of late-Second Temple poetry, parallelistic, but somewhat more free than biblical poetry. The central songs, 6 through 8, which form an initial climax for the cycle, contain highly repetitious and formulaic structures. The sixth and eighth songs are constructed of long formulaic accounts of the praises and blessings offered successively by each of the “seven chief princes” and the “seven deputy princes,” each account highlighting the number seven in its formulas. The central, seventh song begins with a call to praise addressed to each of seven angelic councils, followed by an account of the animate heavenly temple itself bursting into praise, and concluding with an account of the inner shrine of the heavenly temple, the throne of God, and the praises uttered by the chariot thrones and their attendant cherubim and 'ofannim (wheels). The final group of songs, 9 through 13, contains a progressive description of the heavenly temple and the praise uttered by its various structures, culminating in a description of the divine chariot-throne and the angelic high priests. This section of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice is written in a style that features long construct chains in nominal or participial sentences, with few finite verbs, apparently an attempt to create a numinous style befitting the subject.

The fascination with angelic worship so evident in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice is attested also in apocalypses that recount descriptions of angelic attendance upon God and the hymns sung by the angels (e.g., *1 En.* 39; *Apocalypse of Abraham* 17). Although little is known about liturgical and ritual practices by which human worshipers attempted to experience such angelic ceremonies, it may be such practices that Paul refers to when he cautions the Colossians not to be “disqualified by the decisions of people who go in for self-mortification and angel worship and access to some visionary world” (*Col.* 2.18).

Chariot-Throne. Late antique and early medieval Jewish communities did give rise to a genuine mystical literature, known as *merkavah* (“chariot”) or *heikhalot* (“palaces”) mysticism (see esp. *Ma'aseh Merkavah* and *Heikhalot Rabbati*). Although the extent to which this was a literary phenomenon or a genuine religious praxis is still debated, it seems certain that there was some systematic attempt to cultivate ecstatic experiences of the heavenly realm, particularly the immediate presence of God, which was imaged in terms elaborated from Ezekiel's vision of the chariot-throne. Although it is not possible to trace a direct line of influence from the description of the *merkavah* in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice to later

merkavah texts, these compositions nevertheless belong to the same complex stream of religious tradition. Certain types of general continuity may be indicated. Much of the early Jewish literature concerning the *merkavah*, for instance, reflects exegetical interpretation of Ezekiel's vision of the chariot-throne, concerned in particular with the way in which the creatures of the *merkavah* generate the sounds of praise. So, too, the description of the *merkavah* in the twelfth of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice is largely generated by a systematic attempt to explicate how the creatures of the *merkavah* praise God.

As striking as the similarities, however, are the differences. One of the distinctive features of the *merkavah* or *heikhalot* tradition as it is found in the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71), in the synagogue liturgy (the Qedushah de-Yotser and the Qedushah de-'Amidah), and in *Ma'aseh Merkavah* and *Heikhalot Rabbati*, is the interest in the hymns sung by the angels and by the attendants of the chariot throne. It is just this feature, however, that indicates the complexity of the relationship between the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice from Qumran and the later mystical literature. The Qedushah, the angelic hymn based on Isaiah 6.3 and usually complemented by the blessing from Ezekiel 3.12 ("Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts . . . ; blessed be the Glory of the Lord from His place"), is the centerpiece of the heavenly worship as described in 1 Enoch 39 and in the synagogue liturgy, and it is a regular feature of the angelic hymns cited in the *heikhalot* literature. Yet the Qedushah is conspicuous by its absence from the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. Nor is there any other indication of elements from Isaiah's vision in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: no seraphim and no description of the throne as "high and lifted up," a formula that appears often in *heikhalot* hymns. Such differences are scarcely accidental. At the least it points to two divergent streams of tradition and possibly to a polemical rejection by the authors of Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice of the tradition that set the recitation of the Qedushah at the center of the representation of angelic song.

The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice also have different emphases than do other *heikhalot* texts. The representation of heaven as a temple served by angelic priests, central to the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, is not prominent in later *heikhalot* texts. Whereas the *heikhalot*

tradition contains the texts of long hymns praising God, Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice are much more concerned with describing the angels in the act of praising God than they are with quoting the words of praise uttered by the angels. Stylistically, although some general comparisons can be drawn, the techniques of composition are not strikingly similar between the Qumran Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the later *heikhalot* hymns.

[See Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers; Religious Beliefs, Qumran Sect.]

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