

law. Can the origin of this distinction lie elsewhere than in the Decalogue?

In earliest times, the criminal law derived from the Decalogue would have been administered by the clan elders like any other ancient customary law (Lev. 18:7ff.). During the settlement period it appears that there were officials appointed to maintain general oversight over and obedience to Hebrew law (Judg. 10:1-5, 12:7-15; 1 Sam. 7:16), though they may have exercised their authority over a much more limited area than previously thought.⁷¹ This would have been a difficult period as the distinctive traditions of Hebrew law were imposed on the indigenous population. The *Mishpatim* contain a collection of their authorised rulings. But with the advent of the monarchy, the ultimate responsibility for the administration of law passed to the king. It was his duty to uphold justice (Ps. 72; Is. 9, 11). Indeed I have argued that the original Book of the Covenant built around the *Mishpatim*, but before the Proto-Deuteronomistic revision, dates from the early days of the Davidic monarchy.⁷² Throughout the pre-exilic period, legal power increasingly became centred in the monarchy as Jehoshaphat brought the administration of justice much more firmly under his authority and Hezekiah both reformed the law and attempted some centralisation of worship, which under Josiah was finally secured, together with a further reform of the law. But during this period, there is no indication of any attempt by the king to abolish the distinction between crime and tort based in my view on the Decalogue.

It therefore still seems most natural to accept Mendenhall's contention, though not his attempt to prove this from the Hittite suzerainty treaties, that the Decalogue created Israel as a peculiar people both in its religious and legal practice.⁷³ But these were not distinct parts of Israelite life, for, as well as the distinction between crime and tort based on injury to person or property, monolatry,⁷⁴ the absence of images⁷⁵ and black magic,⁷⁶ and the institution of the sabbath⁷⁷ all derived from the Decalogue. Law through which her religion found its expression thus characterised Israel from Sinai to Babylon. It has characterised Judaism ever since.

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⁷¹ Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges*, pp. 65ff.

⁷² Phillips, *AICL*, pp. 158ff. and in a review in *JTS* xxvii, 1976, pp. 425f.

⁷³ See above, n.2.

⁷⁴ Phillips, *AICL*, pp. 37ff.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 48ff.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 53ff.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 64ff.

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Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist*

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Somewhere between the end of the third and the beginning of the first century BCE,¹ a Jewish poet, probably in Alexandria but possibly elsewhere,² wrote a drama about the exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt. The poet's name was Ezekiel,³ the play was called *Exagôgê*,⁴ and only about 20 to 25% of it has been preserved in bishop Eusebius' excerpts from Alexander Polyhistor's work, *Peri Ioudaiôn*, in the ninth book of his *Praeparatio Evangelica* (IX 28, 2-4; 29, 5-16).⁵ It is a drama of great importance in more than one respect. First, almost all of the extensive Greek dramatic literature of the Hellenistic period has been lost; Ezekiel's *Exagôgê* is the only play with considerable portions still extant (altogether 269 iambic trimeters). It is thus an important source for the study of the

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¹ There is a *communis opinio* about a second century BCE dating of Ezekiel. He must have written after the completion of the LXX version of Exodus and before Alexander Polyhistor, who made his excerpts from Ezekiel most probably in the first half of the first century BCE.

² See P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* I, Oxford 1972, 707. For contrary opinions see e.g. K. Kuiper, "Le poète juif Ezéchiel", *Revue des études juives* 46 (1903), 174ff. Y. Gutman, *Ha-sifrut ha-yehudit ha-hellenistit* II, Jerusalem 1963, 66ff. M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, New York 1959, 100. A. M. Denis, *Introduction aux pseudépigraphe grecs d'Ancien Testament*, Leiden 1970, 276.

³ Very probably this was the man's real name, not a pseudonym. It was admittedly used as a pseudonym by the author of the so-called "Apocryphon of Ezekiel" (see Denis, *Introduction* 187ff. and the text in Denis, *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca* . . ., Leiden 1970, 121ff.), but the name was in use, albeit seldom, among Jews (and Christians), as were other great biblical names (like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah, Daniel, etc.); see the prosopographies and name-lists in *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* vol. III and *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* vol. I: *Epistula Aristaeae* 50 mentions an Ezekiel as one of the LXX translators; there was an early Amoraic Babylonian rabbi with that name; *CIJ* I 630 has an instance (*CPJ* has not). A Christian named Ezekiel is mentioned in an Egyptian inscription in F. Preisigke, *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten* I, Strassburg 1915 (repr. Berlin-New York 1974), nr. 643,6.

⁴ Philo also sometimes calls the book of Exodus *Exagôgê* (e.g. *Migr. Abr.* 14, *Quis heres* 251); see further J. Daniélou, "Exodus", *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* VII (1969), 22.

⁵ On Alexander Polyhistor see J. Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor (Hellenistische Studien* 1 + 2), Breslau 1875; A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, Bern 1971³, 273. The extant fragments of Ezekiel's drama can be found in Denis' *Fragmenta* 207-216 (Denis prints the text from Mras' edition of Eusebius' *PE* in the GCS series), but have been better edited by B. Snell in his *Tragicorum graecorum fragmenta* I, Göttingen 1971, 288-301. The only commentary is by M. Wieneke, *Ezechielis Judaei poetae Alexandrini fabulae quae describitur EXAGOGAE fragmenta*, diss. Münster 1931 (a very one-sided treatment by a classicist). A new commentary has been announced by Prof. Howard Jacobson of the University of Urbana-Champaign, Illinois. It is to appear at the Cambridge University Press.

history of post-classical drama.⁶ Second, it is the earliest Jewish play in history, and as such a fascinating example of what can happen when a hellenized Jew tries to mould biblical material into Greek dramatic forms by means of techniques developed by Greek tragedians. (I leave aside here the debate concerning whether or not the play was ever produced, but I think it was).⁷ Third, in the curious passage on which I wish to focus in this paper, we find one of the earliest post-biblical merkavah-visions.⁸ Fourth, in the same passage, the earliest instance occurs of the idea of a viceregent or plenipotentiary of God, a concept which was to occupy a more important role in later Jewish and Christian circles.⁹

Before translating and discussing the text in quest on, let me give a brief outline of the play in order to clarify the position of this passage within the work as a whole. The play probably consisted of five acts, in Hellenistic fashion.¹⁰ In the first (vv. 1-65), Moses summarizes in a long monologue the events recorded in Exodus 1 and 2, and this is followed by the encounter with Jethro's seven daughters.¹¹ The second act (vv. 56-69) contains a scene that is non-biblical, a dialogue between Moses and Jethro (here called Raguel = Reuel),¹² in which Moses relates a strange dream or vision. His father-in-law tries to interpret the vision. The third act (vv. 90-192) describes how, from the burning bush, God commands Moses to lead his people out of Egypt (Exod. 3) and how he removes Moses' doubts by performing the miracles with the rod and the leprous hand (Exod. 4). Subsequently, God enumerates and describes in a long monologue the ten plagues that he will bring down upon Egypt (Exod. 7-11),¹³ and the institution of Pesach (Exod. 12).¹⁴ In act four (vv. 193-242), an Egyptian messenger gives an eye-witness

⁶ See K. Ziegler, "Tragoedia", Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* VI 2A (1937), 1967ff., esp. 1971-81. A. Lesky, "Review of Wieneke's dissertation" (see n. 5), *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 3. Folge 3 (1932), 217ff. A. Lesky "Das hellenistische Gyges-Drama", *Hermes* 81 (1953), 1-10. B. Snell, "Ezechiels Moses-Drama", in his *Szenen aus griechischen Dramen*, Berlin 1971, 170-193.

⁷ On this question see especially the discussion (and bibliogr. phy!) in H. Jacobson, "Two Studies on Ezekiel the Tragedian", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 22 (1981), 167ff.

⁸ See I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, Leiden 1980, 127-129. Gruenwald was the first scholar to draw attention to this text as an early example of merkavah-literature. See my article "De Joodse toneelschrijver Ezechiël", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 36 (1982), 97ff., esp. 112 n. 75.

⁹ See J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord. The Origins of the Idea of Intermediation in Gnosticism*, diss. Utrecht 1982, *passim*. Unfortunately, Fossum nowhere draws Ezekiel into his discussion.

¹⁰ See Ziegler, *PW* VI 2A (1937), 1973 (see n. 6); Snell, *Szenen* 172ff. (see n. 6).

¹¹ Ezekiel follows faithfully, with some notable exceptions (see below), the LXX text of Exodus 1-15.

¹² For the different traditions about the name of Moses' father-in-law see W. F. Albright, "Jethro, Hobab, and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963), 1-11; H. W. Schmidt, *Exodus*, Bibl. Komm. Lieferung II 2, Neukirchen 1977, 85f.

¹³ In a slightly different order than the biblical text. To make God predict the ten plagues is, of course, a dramatic technique to avoid playing them on stage, which would be impossible.

¹⁴ It is notable that in the elaborate rendering of the institution of Pesach, the obligatory circumcision of the participants (Exod. 12:44 and 48) is omitted by Ezekiel; see P. Dalbert, *Die Theologie der hellenistisch-jüdischen Missionsliteratur*, Hamburg 1954, 54.

account of the complete destruction of the Egyptian army in the sea (Exod. 14).¹⁵ In act five (vv. 243-269), scouts report to Moses that they have found a suitable and excellent place for the encampment, viz. Elim (Exod. 15:27),¹⁶ and describe at length a marvellous bird they have seen there, a phoenix: the second major non-biblical scene.¹⁷

Turning now to the most puzzling passage of all, Moses' vision and its explanation by Raguel, the lines translated run:

- (68) I dreamed that on the summit of mount Sinai
 (69) was a great throne which reached to the corners of heaven.¹⁸
 (70) On it was seated a noble man,
 (71) who had a diadem (on his head) and a great sceptre
 (72) in his left hand. And with his right hand
 (73) he beckoned me, and I took my stand before the throne.
 (74) He handed me the sceptre and he summoned me
 (75) to sit upon the great throne. And he also gave me
 (76) the royal diadem, and he himself descended from the throne.
 (77) And I saw the full circle of the earth
 (78) and what was below the earth and above heaven.
 (79) And a multitude of heavenly bodies fell on their knees
 (80) before me and I counted all of them.
 (81) And they moved past me like a host of mortals.
 (82) Thereafter I awoke from my sleep in a frightened state.

Moses' father-in-law then interprets the dream:

- (83) Stranger, it is a good thing that God has shown to you.
 (84) I hope to be still alive when these things happen to you.
 (85) For behold you will raise a great throne
 (86) and you will sit in judgment and be a leader of mortals.
 (87) And that you saw the earth and the whole inhabited world
 (88) and the things below it and the things above God's heaven,
 (89) (this means that) you will see what is, and what was before,
 and what will be hereafter.¹⁹

¹⁵ Most probably, his message is delivered to the Egyptian queen. This is a striking parallel to Aeschylus' *Persae*, where the crushing defeat of the Persian army is reported to the Persian queen, another well-known device for realizing dramatic scenes impossible to stage.

¹⁶ On Elim see L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* III, Philadelphia 1911, 40-41, and VI, 228, 15-16 nn. 86-88.

¹⁷ On this scene see my article mentioned in n. 8, where special reference is made to R. van Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix in Classical and Early Christian Traditions*, Leiden 1972. Lit. "folds of heaven", but see R. Kannicht, *Euripides: Helena* II, Heidelberg 1969, 31 Hel. 44).

¹⁸ The Greek text translated here is that constituted by Bruno Snell (see n. 5), with the exception of v. 85, where Snell prints *megan tin' exanasteseis thronou* (instead of *thronon* in the mss.), "you will drive away a great one (sc. Pharaoh) from his throne"; but this conjecture implies that the *phōs gennaios* in v. 70 should be taken to refer to the Pharaoh, which is impossible (see my article, n. 8, p. 108).

The first feature to be noted is that the introduction of a dream into a play is a classical dramatic device. Dreams predicting future events occur, for instance, in Aeschylus' *Persae* (a drama having much in common with the present work), in Sophocles' *Electra*, and in Euripides' *Hecuba*. These dreams foretell disaster, however, and are interpreted by the dreamer himself (or herself).²⁰ But in the play *Brutus*, by Ezekiel's contemporary, the Latin dramatist Accius, one of the main actors, has a dream that is interpreted by someone else.²¹ The contents of Moses' dream-vision, nevertheless do not have classical antecedents. No doubt, the vision of God in human shape seated on the throne is based on the first chapter of the biblical Ezekiel. Furthermore, our author has been influenced by Exodus 24, with its anthropomorphic representation of God on Sinai. The same holds true for the scene in Daniel 7, where God bestows eternal kingship and most probably a throne on someone of human appearance. Finally, Joseph's dream in Genesis 37 also has the motif of heavenly bodies falling on their knees before a mortal, and in Psalm 147 we read that God counts all the heavenly bodies.

These biblical reminiscences can, however, only be assessed when our passage is compared to later merkavah-treatises or hekhalot-literature, especially the *Hebrew Book of Enoch* (called *3 Enoch* by H. Odeberg).²² Although this book was probably composed after the fourth century CE, much of its traditional material (especially in chapters 3-15 from which we draw the parallels)²³ is considerably older. The story told there of Enoch, who is identified with the highest angel Metatron, bears a striking resemblance to what is said of Moses in the dream-vision.²⁴ For instance, God makes a throne for Enoch which is similar to the throne of Glory, God's own throne (10:1); God gives him a garment of Glory and a royal crown (12:1-3); God makes him ruler over all kingdoms and all heavenly beings (10:3); all the angels of every rank, and the angels of sun, moon, stars, and planets, fall prostrate when Enoch sits on his throne (14:1-5); he knows the names of all the stars (46:1-2; here is an explicit reference to

²⁰ A. Kappelmacher, "Zur Tragödie der hellenistischen Zeit", *Wiener Studien* 44 (1924-25), 78-80. E. Starobinski-Safran, "Un poète judéo-hellénistique: Ezéchiel le tragique", *Museum Helveticum* 31 (1974), 220.

²¹ This fragment of Accius is quoted by Cicero in *De Divinatione* I 22, 44-5.

²² On this literature see G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York 1946; *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, New York 1965; I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, Leiden 1980. The publication by H. Odeberg referred to in the text is his edition and translation of *3 Enoch: 3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch*, Cambridge 1928, repr. New York 1973 with Prolegomenon by J. C. Greenfield. This is the only critical (?) edition of a merkavah-treatise. The accessibility of this literature has very recently reached a new stage with P. Schäfer's *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, Tübingen 1981.

²³ See P. S. Alexander, "The Historical Setting of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," *JJS* 28 (1977), 156-180.

²⁴ This was already seen by W. A. Meeks, "Moses as God and King", in *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*, Leiden 1968, 354ff., esp. 367f.

Psalm 147:4 "He [sc. God!] counts the number of stars"); God reveals to him all the secrets and mysteries of heaven and earth so that Enoch knows past, present and future (10:5; 11:1; cf. 45:1; 48(D):7); God calls him "YHWH ha-qaton", the lesser Adonai, with reference to Exod. 23:21, where it is said of the angel of the Lord: "My name is in him" (12:5).²⁵ It should be noted that some of these elements already occur in the earlier *1 Enoch* (Eth.) and *2 Enoch* (Slav.). Like Moses, Enoch is assigned a cosmic and divine function that involves the wearing of regalia.

The similarities are clearly striking. But there is also a striking difference. In Moses' vision, there is only one throne, God's. And Moses is requested to be seated on it, not at God's side, but all alone. God leaves his throne. This scene is unique in early Jewish literature and certainly implies a deification of Moses.²⁶ In effect, since the publication of Wayne Meeks' important article, "Moses as God and King",²⁷ we know that in some Jewish circles Moses was indeed regarded as a divine being. Alan Segal has in addition demonstrated that Jewish traditions existed concerning divine rule in which "a principal angel was seen as God's primary or sole helper and allowed to share in God's divinity. That a human being, as the hero or exemplar of a particular group, could ascend to become one with this figure — as Enoch, Moses or Elijah — seems also to have been part of this tradition".²⁸ The theme of Moses' divine kingship over the universe can also be found in Philo of Alexandria. "Philo came to connect Moses' installation as ideal king with (1) a mystic ascent read into the Sinai episode, and (2) the scriptural report that Moses was called *theos*".²⁹ In *Quaestiones in Exodum* I 29, Philo writes that on Sinai Moses was changed into a truly divine person (cf. *ibid.* 40); and in *De Vita Mosis* I 155-158 he says that God placed the entire universe into Moses' hands and that all the elements obeyed him as their master. Philo calls Moses god and king, probably alluding to God's words in Exodus 4:16 that Moses will be as a god to Aaron, or in Exodus 7:1, that he makes him a god over Pharaoh (cf. *Sacrif.* 9). Meeks remarks that "the analogy between Moses and God . . .

²⁵ The name "the little YHWH" also occurs in the Gnostic writing *Pistis Sophia*, see Odeberg (n. 22) 188ff. In later Hekhalot-literature Metatron is simply called YHWH, Elohim, Shaddai; see Odeberg 111ff. Sometimes Metatron is just one of God's names; see P. S. Alexander (n. 23) 166f. The seminal function of Exod. 23:21 is rightly stressed by Fossum in his diss. (n. 9).

²⁶ Contra I. Gruenwald, *op. cit.* (n. 8) 129.

²⁷ See note 24. Cf. also his important book *The Prophet-King. Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, Leiden 1967, esp. 147ff.

²⁸ A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, Leiden 1977, 180; idem, "Ruler of this World: Attitudes about Mediator Figures and the Importance of Sociology for Self-Definition", in: E. P. Sanders (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* II, London 1981, 245ff. Segal nowhere discusses Ezekiel.

²⁹ Meeks, *The Prophet-King* 111. Meeks has collected the relevant passages from Philo.

approaches consubstantiality".³⁰

The same or similar traditions can also be found in rabbinic literature, again most often in the context of Moses' meeting with God on Sinai, which was widely regarded as an ascent to heaven.³¹ One example may suffice. In *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* (Supplement 19),³² the expression "Moses, the man of God" (*Mosheh 'ish ha'elohim*) in Deuteronomy 33:1 is explained as, Moses, a man ('ish), a god ('elohim); sc. he was a man when he ascended Mount Sinai, he was a god when he descended from Mount Sinai. Elsewhere, it is indicated that Moses in a sense shared God's kingship.³³ Nowhere in rabbinic literature, however, is Moses represented as a hypostasis of God or as a second god reigning in heaven. That traditions of this kind were opposed by the rabbis is clear, e.g., from Bavli *Hagiga* 15a, where Metatron is punished and humiliated as soon as Aher (Elisha ben Abuya) thinks that there are "two powers in heaven" (*shte reshuyot bashamayim*), or from *Sanhedrin* 38b, where R. Idi says, "Do not put Metatron in God's place".³⁴ Segal has demonstrated that in some Jewish circles such traditions did circulate, and in his recent dissertation, the Norwegian scholar Jarl Fossum has pointed out with ample evidence that certain Jewish groups came to identify the figure of the angel of the Lord in different ways: as Adam, Moses, Enoch (-Metatron), Melchizedek, Michael or Jesus.³⁵ This plenipotentiary of God, who possessed God's name (Exod. 23:21!), was really the "Little Adonai" of 3 *Enoch*. Many Jews speculated about a principal angelic mediator hypostasis of God with charge over the world. And, as Segal says, these intermediaries "are not just angels, but become dangerously close to being anthropomorphic hypostases of God himself". Often these intermediaries "began as humans and later achieved a kind of divine status in some communities".³⁶

In a recent publication, Saul Liebermann argues convincingly that "Metatron" is not a name but a title, to be identified as the Greek word *metathronos*, which has the same meaning as the more common *synthronos*.³⁷ Liebermann also says that a *synthronos theou* need not

³⁰ Meeks, *op. cit.* 104f. In *De Artapan.* I 164 there is a prayer to Moses (see Meeks, *ibid.* 125 n. 3). It should be noted here that Artapanus (2nd cent. BCE) regarded Moses as a divine being (Hermes); see Eusebius, *PE* IX 27.

³¹ Meeks, "Moses as God and King", 354-371. On the link between Sinai and merkavah see now also D. J. Halperin, *The Merkavah in Rabbinic Literature*, New Haven 1980, 128-133.

³² See the translation by W. G. Braude and I. J. Kapstein, *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana*, London 1975, 451.

³³ Meeks, *The Prophet-King* 192ff.

³⁴ Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven* (n. 28) 60-73.

³⁵ J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* (n. 9).

³⁶ Segal, "Ruler of this World", (n. 28) 248, 255-6. In Josephus' description of the end of Moses' life (*Ant.* IV 326), there are traces both of a tradition that Moses was translated to heaven, and of one expressing the fear that this notion leads to idolatry! (see Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 140f.). The same holds true for a passage in *Piṭirat Mosheh* (Jellinek, *BM* I p. 118; see Meeks, *ibid.* 211).

³⁷ S. Liebermann, "Metatron, the meaning of his name and his functions", Appendix in Gruenwald's *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* 235-241, esp. 237-9.

necessarily be one with whom God shares his throne; it can also refer to one who has a throne beside the throne of God, like Metatron. This may be right, but my hypothesis is that the idea of a *synthronos theou* in the sense of one who sits on God's own throne, either alone or together with him, is the origin of the notion of a Metatron, a viceregent of God. In 1 Chronicles 28:5 and 2 Chronicles 9:8, we already come across the idea that God has set Solomon "on the throne of the Lord".³⁸ In Wisdom of Solomon 9:4 and 10, Wisdom herself is presented as sharing God's throne with Him. In the Similitudes of 1 *Enoch*, we find Enoch a co-occupant of God's throne, albeit only for the eschatological judgment.³⁹ In our Ezekiel, Moses is the sole occupant of God's throne. I surmise (for reasons that I have advanced elsewhere)⁴⁰ that in pre-Christian times there were (probably rival) traditions about Enoch and Moses as *synthronoi theou*; and I think that these ideas were suppressed (for obvious reasons) by the rabbis and replaced by the less unacceptable notion of a *metathronos* in the sense of one whose throne comes only second, after (*meta*), God's throne.⁴¹ True, the original idea of the *synthronia* of Moses and God has been drastically modified by Ezekiel the dramatist in that he causes God to leave the throne. With this bold and almost shocking symbolic scene, he probably meant to convey that it is only in and through Moses that we can know God. To quote John 14:6 with a slight variation: "No one can come to the Father except through Moses".^{41a} It is only in and through Moses that God is active in this world, Moses' kingship expresses God's kingship. For Ezekiel, Moses is "an active and present power",⁴² which is also divine. It is clear that all this has implications for the development of christology.⁴³

Some scholars have pointed out that a certain discrepancy exists between Moses' vision and Raguel's interpretation of it.⁴⁴ Whereas in the vision the emphasis is on the divine kingship, in the interpretation more emphasis is

³⁸ G. Widengren, "Psalm 110 und das sakrale Königtum in Israel", in P.H.A. Neumann (ed.), *Zur neueren Psalmenforschung*, Darmstadt 1976, 187ff.

³⁹ 1 *Enoch* 45:3; 51:3 (v.1.); 55:4; 61:8, 69: 27-9. It is not necessary to enter here into the thorny question of the dating of the Similitudes (1 *Enoch* 37-71), but a date before the second century CE seems to be defensible.

⁴⁰ See my article mentioned in note 8.

⁴¹ For this explanation of the term *metathronos* see Odeberg, 3 *Enoch* (n. 22) 138ff. On "rabbinische Ausschaltung der Henoch-Spekulationen" see Odeberg, "Henoch", *TLWNT* II (1935), 555 (*TDNT* II, 1964, 558-559) and P. S. Alexander, *art. cit.* (n. 23) 176.

^{41a} In this connection, it may be useful to remark that according to some scholars the background of John 12:41 is a tradition that the Lord on the throne in Isaiah 6:1 is not God but Jesus; see Segal, *Two Powers* 214.

⁴² The expression is E. R. Goodenough's, who uses it for Philo's view of Moses in *By Light, Light. The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism*, New Haven 1935 (repr. Amsterdam 1969), 233. Goodenough's interpretation of Ezekiel (*ibid.* 289-291) is to be rejected. See in general on this book, A. D. Nock, "The Question of Jewish Mysteries", in his *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* I, Oxford 1972, 459-468.

⁴³ See esp. Meeks, *The Prophet King*, Leiden 1967, *passim*.

⁴⁴ E.g. Kuiper (n. 2) 59.

given to Moses' prophetic function. The final line of the interpretation runs as follows: "You will see what is, and what was before, and what will be hereafter" (v. 89). The late W. C. van Unnik demonstrated convincingly that throughout antiquity — pagan, Jewish and Christian — this was a "formula describing prophecy".⁴⁵ Already Homer, in the first book of the *Iliad* (A 70), describes the prophet (*mantis*) Calchas as one who "knew what is, what will be, and what was before", and from Homer onwards it becomes a standard formula, as the wealth of material collected by van Unnik clearly shows. This observation led the American scholar Carl Holladay to believe that Ezekiel wished to depict Moses as a *mantis*, a prophet or seer, and that it is only in this way that the discrepancy between the throne-vision and its interpretation can be solved. He argues that the enthronement should be seen in the light of what Aeschylus says about Apollo's being enthroned by Zeus: he is to be Zeus' prophet (*mantis*) (*Eumenides* 18, 29, 616). Here Moses is modelled on Apollo, Zeus' spokesman sitting on a mantic throne, and Ezekiel "is consciously placing Moses in direct competition with Apollo". The point of the dream-scene, according to Holladay is that "Sinai replaces Delphi as the place where the divine oracles are issued; Moses replaces Apollo as the spokesman for God; accordingly, the whole of mankind is to seek the divine will not from the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, but from the law of God given to Moses at Sinai".⁴⁶

Fascinating as this interpretation may be, it fails to do justice to several elements in the dream-vision, which as I have tried to show can only be explained against the background of merkavah-speculation or -mysticism, and of theories relating to a human, yet divine, plenipotentiary of God. Moreover, Apollo never sits on Zeus' own throne. The seeming discrepancy between vision and interpretation is probably due to Ezekiel's making use of two different traditions about Moses, that of king of the universe on the one hand, and of great prophet on the other, traditions which were already merging in this period.⁴⁷

Compared to later merkavah-literature, Moses' vision is very

⁴⁵ This is the title of his article of 1961, now to be found in his *Sparsa Collecta* II, Leiden 1980, 183-193. Lines 88 and 89 of Ezekiel are strongly reminiscent of *mHag*. 2:1 and *Sifre Zutta* 84, quoted by Meeks, *The Prophet-King* 208.

⁴⁶ C. R. Holladay, "The Portrait of Moses in Ezekiel the Tragedian", in G. MacRae (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1976*, Missoula 1976, 447-452 (the quotations on 452).

⁴⁷ See Meeks, *The Prophet-King* 100ff. Already 80 years ago, Kuiper (see n. 2) defended, albeit on very weak grounds, the thesis that Ezekiel was a Samaritan. This theory won little acceptance, but has now become attractive once more, not only in view of conspicuous parallels between Ezekiel and the Samaritan Pentateuch, as well as the *Memar Marqa*, but also because Samaritan Moses traditions show many striking similarities to Ezekiel's dream-vision in our play, including the merging of Moses' prophetic and royal functions. The similarities can easily be found by reading J. MacDonald's chapter "Moses, Lord of the World", in his *The Theology of the Samaritans*, London 1964, 147-222. and in Meeks, *The Prophet-King* 216-257. Nevertheless, this does not yet constitute sufficient evidence of what Samaritans believed in the second century BCE.

rudimentary. It contains no elaborate descriptions of the hosts of angels and their leaders, or of heavenly palaces, or of the throne itself. Furthermore, the human shape of God receives no elaborate treatment, and no attention is paid to the fabulous dimensions of his limbs, so often discussed in detail in the Shi'ur Qomah speculations of later hekhalot-treatises.⁴⁸ Even when compared with the earliest post-biblical merkavah-vision, *I Enoch* 14, Ezekiel's description is much more sober. He was not interested in merkavah-mysticism in itself. But he did see that the literary form of a merkavah-vision⁴⁹ was quite suitable as a medium for expressing a notion of more importance to him: namely that Moses is God's viceregent, that the man who liberated the people of Israel from the Egyptians is not merely a personage from the distant past but still present and ruling over the universe, and that through his heavenly enthronement the nation of the Jews is validated as divinely established.⁵⁰

[*Postscript.* In the meantime, Howard Jacobson's commentary, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*, has appeared (January, 1983). His interpretation of the dream-vision is very different from mine. My review-article, "Some Notes on the Exagoge of Ezekiel", will be published in *Mnemosyne*].

⁴⁸ See G. Scholem, *Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit*, Zürich 1962, 7-47.

⁴⁹ This merkavah-vision has here the function of a "Deute-Vision", as it has been described by F. Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe Jesu nach den Synoptikern*, Frankfurt 1970, 195-248.

⁵⁰ See F. T. Fallon, *The Enthronement of Sabaoth. Jewish Elements in Gnostic Creation Myths*, Leiden 1978, 48.

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