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The Day of the King. Sabbath and kingship of God in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and in Qumran.

Found in the Qumran caves and in Masada the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice form a group of liturgical songs for thirteen Sabbaths of the year. They describe angels celebrating the Sabbath liturgy with hymns, prayers and blessings in the heavenly realms.

One of their most remarkable features is their strong emphasis on the kingship of God. The text describes God as מלך and his reign as מלכות, quite in contrast to the ממשלה and מלכה of the angels. In doing so מלך and מלכות are much more frequently used in the Songs than in any other ancient text.

One aim of my research project is to enlighten the correlation between the kingship of God and the explicit dedication of the Songs to the Sabbath, a connection which in this form is not known from the Old Testament.

However, the O.T. builds in various ways the background of the theological concept of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, not only in matters of the kingship of God, but also with its texts concerning the sanctuary. As I will argue, the purpose of the Sabbath Songs is to describe the erection of a sanctuary for the heavenly king. This sanctuary is constructed by the hymns and praises of the angels and thus refers to texts like Ex 24-40, the revelation of the sanctuary at the 7th day and its erection.

Moreover, terminological references and similarities in content point to relations to other texts from Qumran, especially to 1QM and to 4Q174. 4Q174 describes the erection of a "sanctuary of man" for JHWH, the king, after the victory over the enemies. Similarly, some columns of 1QM also deal with the topic of the kingship of God, which will be constituted after the victorious battle of the sons of light against Belial and his sons of darkness.

In my opinion the calculation of time in Ex 24-40 as well as in 1QM allows a theological thinking which connects the kingship of God to the Sabbath and which is explicated in a much more poetical way in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice as well. It is this connection that makes the Sabbath become the day of the "holy reign" (Jub), respectively the day of the king and his sanctuary.