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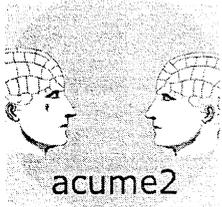
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Elena Agazzi / Enrico Giannetto /  
Franco Giudice (eds.)

## Representing Light across Arts and Sciences: Theories and Practices

With 21 figures

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## Socrates

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## Introduction

This book arises out of a series of seminars we have held at the University of Bergamo on the issue of light in relation to a research in the international thematic Socrates network of *Acume 2*. The book is not the proceedings of these seminars. The collected papers have been substantially revised, even if the contributors display clusters of concerns along a spectrum of method and styles. Consequently, the size of their essays is, in some cases, very different.

The starting point of this research under Subproject 1 of *Acume 2* was the emerging awareness in anthropological, epistemological and historical studies of what we can call the inescapable entanglement between literature and science. Despite the ideal assumptions of being able to provide an autonomous foundation to a specific disciplinary knowledge, every concept appears to overcome the ideal borders which give an epistemic closure. Even if we can define physical time by some measurement procedures, we know that physical time derives its existence from previous philosophical, mythical and so literary forms of conceptualisation to which it is intrinsically and historically bound. Time is only an example. Our conceptualisations are related to semantic, potentially infinite, fields, defined over all kinds of knowledge. The concept of semantic field itself is a metaphor of a physical field and semiotic and disciplinary borders are metaphors of topological frontiers.

There is no doubt that, behind any trial of simplification of meanings and concepts, the topology of disciplinary space is multiply-connected into an inextricable complexity.

This entanglement would be enough to imply the need to develop interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches to the enquiry of literary works and scientific theories.

As well as metaphors, also images are sources of knowledge. Every kind of thinking, even scientific thinking is a sort of internal vision. The first step is hence to overcome all metaphysical and epistemic borders between human and natural sciences, among the various disciplines, between science and literature. So, literature too is not a form of differentiated knowledge.

of light that constitutes an actual entanglement of theology, art, literature and science.

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The translation of Jucci's contribution is by Audrey Taschini, of Roli's by John Coggan, of Castoldi's and of this introduction by Greta Perletti.

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Elena Agazzi  
 Enrico Giannetto  
 Franco Giudice

Elio Jucci

### Between Beginning and End. Glares of Light in the Jewish Tradition

Vista ciega, luz oscura (Rodrigo Cota)

¡Oh noche que guiaste!  
 ¡oh noche amable más que el alborada!  
 ¡oh noche que juntaste Amado con amada,  
 amada en el Amado transformada! (Juan de la Cruz)

abs te est victoria et abs te est sapientia et claritas  
 (1 *Esdras* 4,59)

If the *Torah* is written with letters of fire<sup>1</sup>, as the small crowns of fire decorating the letters of Jewish liturgical texts, and as it is suggested in several interpretations of Exodus 31,8 (“*And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God*”<sup>2</sup>), and if the letters of the Law<sup>3</sup> constitute the Name of God<sup>4</sup> to the point that in Jewish mysticism a technique of visualization of the Letters of Light will be developed<sup>5</sup>, you will understand how fascinating the

- 1 However, following some interpretation letters of a dark fire overlap letters of a bright fire, and the *Torah* is given by means of a combination of hidden light and evident light. By the way, similar remarks are related to the interpretation of the proclamation of the *Torah*, by clear, understandable or dark, or even silent (if the true voice is not properly in those *qolot*: 1 *Re* 19,11 – 13), voice-voices/thunders (*qol* – *qolot*), see Benjamin D. Sommer, ‘Revelation at Sinai in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish Theology’, *The Journal of Religion*, 79 (1999), pp. 422 – 451.
- 2 See *Ex* 34, 1. The relationship among this verse and the successive 27 ff. has not been satisfactorily at all explained. Probably the tension here reflects the same problem of the breaking of the first tables of the law. All that remains is only a copy, cfr. Peter Ochs, “Scripture”, in *Fields of Faith. Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by David F. Ford, Ben Quash and Janet Martin Soskice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 102 – 118, p.107.
- 3 Or perhaps the letters of the Scripture in a wider sense. See also: Gikatilla's interpretation of *Ger* 23,29; Moshe Idel, ‘Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah’, in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. by Geoffrey H. Hartmann and Sanford Budick (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 141 – 157 (p. 150).
- 4 Elliot R. Wolfson, ‘The Mystical Significance of Torah Study in German Pietism’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 84 (1993), 43 – 78.
- 5 See Moshe Idel, *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders*, Budapest New York: Central European University Press, 2005, p. 54. Probably there is also a recovery of more ancient traditions, as gnostic literature seems to witness; see Ioan Petru Culianu, *Gnosticismo*

subject I'm about to discuss is, and the recklessness that is necessary to approach it. On the one hand the immensity of the *corpus* and its majesty, or glory or *doxa*, that after all is in some way referable to the body of God also<sup>6</sup>, on the other the fear that, flying so high, one risks burning one's wings, ruinously falling to the ground as Icarus or like a rebel angel<sup>7</sup>; the comparison will seem less peculiar if we bear in mind that Satan himself is Lucifer.

The sight of light makes life more luminous and pleasant, but in some way this is true for death as well. In the Hellenic period, it was a common idea that, with death, one would become as luminous as angels or stars. Hints to this tradition can also be found in *Daniel* and *Enoch*.<sup>8</sup>

Ajax's prayer to Zeus to allow him to die in the light of the day<sup>9</sup> reminds us of the image of Pasolini's *Accattone*: seeing the scene of his own burial, Accattone asks that his grave may be dug slightly further, where the earth is illuminated by the sun<sup>10</sup>.

We must therefore face some risks, open our eyes and turn them – respectfully – towards the source that illuminates our path, our conduct, *halakah*: path, conduct of life, rule of conduct. For if the Law is Light, the conduct according to the Law or the Light is the Way<sup>11</sup>. Being respectful is nonetheless essential, as

*e pensiero moderno*: Hans Jonas (Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1985), p. 106; Mircea Eliade, 'Spirit, Light, and Seed', *History of Religions* 11 (1971), 1–30.

6 A mystical treatise, *Shiur Qoma*, just deals with the measure of the body of God; see Wolfson, *Mystical Significance*, pp. 48 ff.; Joseph Dan, 'The Religious Experience of the *Merkavah*', in *Jewish Spirituality. From the Bible Trough the Middle Ages*, ed. by Arthur Green (London, SCM Press, 1989), pp. 289–307 (pp. 294–296).

7 See Luke 10,18; *Henoch* 6–11; *Gen* 6,1. See also Otto Böcher, Art. 'Licht und Feuer', *TRE* 21, 1991, pp. 83–119 (p.100).

8 See Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Fenomenologia della religione* (Torino: Boringhieri, 1960) p. 47; Morton Smith, 'The Image of God: Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism, with Especial Reference to Goodenough's Work on Jewish Symbols', *Bullet. John Rylands Library* 40 (1957–1958), 473–512 (p. 499); *Id.*, 'Transformation by Burial (I Cor. 15.35–49; Rom 6.3–5 and 8.9–11)', *Eranos Jahrbuch* 52 (1983), 87–112 (p. 92 ff.); Chistian Cannuyer, 'L'illumination del defunto come ierofania della sua divinizzazione nell'antico Egitto', in *Simbolismo ed esperienza della luce nelle grandi religioni*, ed. by Julien Ries and Charles Marie Ternes, (Milano: Jaca Book, 1997) pp. 53–75; Willem F. Smelik, 'On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous into Light in Judaism', *JSJ* 26 (1995), 122–144, where it is pointed out that in these images and in their interpretation there is a continuous exchange among metaphorical, literary values and mystical ones. The Qumran *Angelic Liturgy* too deals with the luminous clothes of angels; see Giovanni Ibba, *Qumran. Correnti del pensiero giudaico (III b. C.-I. p. C.)* (Roma: Carocci, 2007), pp. 68 ff.

9 *Ibid.*, 48

10 This image expresses that tension which animates the whole movie towards some form of redemption.

11 *Isa* 51,4; *Hosea* 6,5; *Sophon* 3,5; *Psalm* 43,3; 119,105; *Prov* 6, 23. Geza Vermes, 'The Torah Is a Light', *Vetus Testamentum*, 8 (1958), 436–438 (p. 436) shows by numerous exempla "the existence of an interpretative tradition in early Jewish exegetical literature according to which, [...] enlightenment signifies the knowledge and practice of the Law". Beyond the

testified by the miserable fate of three of the four wise men that in the rabbinic tradition dared approach the dwelling of the Light<sup>12</sup>.

After all, light can easily blind, as the Enlightenment, in more recent times, has shown. The shower of light can become a shower of blood. Blood, which, after all, isn't just the source of life<sup>13</sup>, but is also important in the context of purification<sup>14</sup>, at least as an element in sacrificial ritual. But in the end, if light is an image of life, a source of light<sup>15</sup>, the difference is smaller than it may seem at first glance.

In the Scriptures, in the *Miqrah* (the Reading) as it is traditionally defined in the Jewish world, the main Hebrew term<sup>16</sup> used to indicate light and brightness 'or. It can be useful to bear in mind that 'ur, a term which is most likely to be related to it (a simple vowel shift, and the vocalic element is secondary in the

parallelism of the symbolic values, also the resemblance of the words 'orah (light) – torah can be relevant. See also Sverre Aalen, Art. "or", *ThWAT* 1 (1973), pp.160–182 (p. 176). However, the Law is also the Word, *devarim* (words) are the commandments. Rudolf Bultmann, 'La simbologia della luce nell'antichità', in *Id.*, *Exegetica. 1. La coscienza messianica di Gesù e la confessione di fede di Pietro*, Torino: Borla, 1971, pp. 69–107 [= *Philologus*, 97 (1948), 1–36] (p. 86) contrasts the dominance of *seeing* in the Greek world to the dominance of *hearing* in the Old Testament world.

12 James R. Davila, 'The Hodayot Hymnist and the Four Who Entered Paradise', *RQ* (1996), 457–78.

13 *Lev* 17,11; *Deut* 12,23.

14 See van der Leeuw, *Fenomenologia della religione*, pp. 271–276, about purification (water); pp. 271 ff.; p. 39 (blood) pp. 274; 43 (fire).

15 *Wisdom* 18,4; *Jer* 25,19; *John* 8,12; *Job* 33,28; *Job* 3,29 ff. In particular, consider such locutions as: light of life or of living beings; see Böcher, 'Licht und Feuer' (p. 104); Aalen, "or", (p. 172). Naturally, darkness and night are related to death, to the *Sheol*, where day and night alternating vanishes, see Aalen, "or", (p. 72 ff.). However, night can be also the time of meditation and prayer, and of divine revelation: following Durand's terminology one can say that it changes from symbolic opposition structures to synthetic structures. A Jewish tradition (*Trg Neophiti Es* 12,42) condenses even the path of salvation within four nights; see Martin McNamara, *Il Targum e il Nuovo Testamento*, Bologna: EDB, 1978, pp. 122 ff.

16 To go in depth in this issue one should deal with not only the terms indicating light and darkness or day and night, but also those indicating seeing or eyes (see Gianantonio Borgonovo, *La notte e il suo sole. Luce e tenebre nel Libro di Giobbe. Analisi simbolica* (Roma, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995), pp.189 f.) and blindness. An analysis of the allusions to *Isa* 9,1; 42,6; 49,6 and of the New Testament developments, particularly in John's Gospel, see L. Sibum, *La luce nella Bibbia* (Bari: Ed. Paoline, 1972), pp. 119–125; Luigi Moraldi, *Dio è amore. Saggio sul concetto di amore in S. Giovanni con introduzione al IV Vangelo*, Roma: Ed. Paoline, 1954, pp. 117 ff., concerning *John* 9, states: "The story clearly explains that the blind man was not healed to see the light of the material sun but to see the Christ and to adore Him" (*Ibid.*, 118); this idea is well realized in the final scene of the *Milky Way* by Luis Bunuel. See also Bultmann, *La simbologia della luce*; Daniel Boyarin, 'The Eye in the Torah: Ocular Desire in Midrashic hermeneutic', *Critical Inquiry*, 16 (1990), pp. 532–550; Roberto Fornara, *La visione contraddetta. La dialettica fra visibilità e non visibilità divina nella Bibbia ebraica* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2004).

evolution of the Hebrew alphabet) means fire<sup>17</sup>, even if it's less used than 'esh<sup>18</sup>. 'Esh on the other hand is also linked to the creation of the world, in fact *ber'eshit*<sup>19</sup>, using the transformative and combinatory technique of traditional Hebrew hermeneutics, can be read as a reference to *bara'* and 'esh, that is "he created in fire, with fire". This reading corresponds to another tradition which interprets 'et, grammatically *nota accusativi*, as a reference to the alphabet in which *alef* and *tau* are respectively the first and the last letter. This alphabet is, precisely, a luminous alphabet, made of fire, and it's probably the same alphabet which constitutes the text of the writing itself and which, in the end, identifies in the Law the source of the world itself or an image of the world. This same *Bereshit* is glossed in an ancient Judaic tradition (*Targum Neophiti*)<sup>20</sup> with the term *Memra*, word<sup>21</sup>.

In the vast biblical corpus – almost a stratification or a geological conglomerate of the eras of the revelation of the God of Israel – we cannot seek for homogeneity. Naturally, there are tensions between visions or tendencies, which philologically are being referred to different moments or events in the history of Israel or of the constitution of the Bible (and the results of this criticism aren't always safe). Religiously, the attempt is that of returning to a unifying understanding of the sacred text, reading the Bible through the Bible<sup>22</sup>. It's needless to say that in this case as well the unification is not unambiguous. We must then bear in mind all the considerable transitions that, in recent years, have brought to a different evaluation of the archeological data, of the biblical material, of the reconstruction of the history of Israel and of its religion (a process which is still in progress and not completely assimilated).

But maybe I should illustrate things from the start, and there is no better starting point than the beginning, *Bereshit*, "in the beginning", precisely.

17 Böcher, 'Licht und Feuer' (p. 90). See *Isaiah* 31,9. "Saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem".

18 The lighting function of fire, as in the case of the fire columns ('esh) that together with the columns of light lead Israel in the desert (*Ex.* 13,21), is often pointed out. See Böcher, 'Licht und Feuer' (pp. 90, 91); Luigi Moraldi, *Dio è amore. Saggio sul concetto di amore in S. Giovanni con introduzione al IV Vangelo*, Roma, Ed. Paoline, 1954, pp. 114 ff.

19 *In the beginning*, the first word of the Bible.

20 At variance with it, in the other *Targumim* there are more references to the *Wisdom*.

21 The repeated frequency of the *Memra*, here and in other verses, and in particular in the extended version of *Ex.* 12,42, is not without relationship with the *Logos* of *John*, strictly correlated to the light. See Martin McNamara, *Il Targum e il Nuovo Testamento*, Bologna: EDB, 1978, pp. 120 – 126; Mary Coloe, 'The Structure of the Johannine Prologue and Genesis 1', *Australian Biblical Review* 45 (1997), 40 – 55. Concerning the idea of God as Light in the Gospel of John, see Moraldi, *Dio è amore*, pp. 111 – 119.

22 "Turn it and turn it again, because therein is every thing" (*Avot* 5,23). See Anne-Catherine Avril – Pierre Lenhardt, *La lettura ebraica della scrittura. Con antologia di testi rabbinici*, Magnano: Qiqiaon, 1984.

The first day

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day. 6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning – the second day. [...] 14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good (*Gen* 1,1 – 18).

We shouldn't be surprised that these few lines have been able to generate a whole world of words, a library of books.<sup>23</sup>

I already hinted to several, rather loose, interpretations of the first line. But even following a literal reading of the text, the first two lines admit at least two different and diverging readings.

Along with the most common interpretation, which I have just quoted, there is another interpretation which finds itself on an alternative reading of the *bereshit bara' 'eloim 'et ashama'im weat haarets* as a genitival chain: *in the beginning of God creating the heavens and the earth*:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth. 2 the earth was formless and empty.

A reading, which, by isolating the first verse, conveys the idea that, in some way, God's creation rests upon a shapeless substratum, structuring it and filling it. A reading which is reminiscent of analogous stories of the creation, beginning with the famous Babylonian poem on creation, *Enuma elish*, "when above the sky was not (yet) nominated, below the earth had no name (yet), the primordial Apsu, their generator, Mummu (and) Tiamat, the generator of all them, their waters

23 In this case one has to make reference to Borges, *La biblioteca di Babele* (in Jorge Luis Borges, *Finzioni*, Torino: Einaudi, 1967, pp. 69 – 78) and to Hans Blumenberg, *La leggibilità del mondo. Il libro come metafora della natura*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

they mingled together<sup>24</sup>. With the slight difference that in the biblical text all that is personified and has a divine value, vital albeit chaotic, tends to become inert matter. Other suggestions come from the reading of the Phoenician cosmogony which, in these lines at least, could be even more present.

This is an interpretation which has a long story<sup>25</sup> and which has recently found many followers, even if I believe that the actual text, with its vocalization, encourages the first reading<sup>26</sup>. But whether you decide to follow one alternative or the other, from the text emerge confusion and chaos, *tohu* and *bohu* nouns (empty and formless desert), which are almost always translated as adjectives like *empty* and *formless*<sup>27</sup> darkness (*hoshek*) abyss (ocean) *theom*, spirit/wind of God *ruha*, waters (*mayim*).<sup>28</sup>

In this context, in the first outline of creation, that is in the substratum that constitutes its base, God's order, a creative verbal<sup>29</sup>, introduces light<sup>30</sup>, recognizes its goodness – “and he saw that it was good” – and separates it from the darkness<sup>31</sup>. The positive qualification of a creative act should be stressed, for it is not

24 See Walter Beyerlin, ed., *Testi religiosi per lo studio dell'A.T.* (Brescia: Paideia, 1992), p. 122.

25 See Centre d'Études des Religions du Livre, *In Principio. Interprétations de premiers versets de la Genèse*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1973 J. M. Powis Smith, ‘The Syntax and Meaning of Genesis 1:1 – 3’, in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 44 (1928), 108 – 115; *Books of the Bible. Genesis, Volume One. A New English Translation. Translation of the Text, Rashi, And Other Commentaries (English and Hebrew)* by Rabbi A.J. Rosenberg, New York: Judaica Press, 1993, pp. 2 ff.

26 I have to point out that if *bereshit* is not in the constructed state, the translation in the *beginning* seems to be not a natural one, while the most correct translation, with adverbial value, is *first of all*.

27 This interpretation is possible because one has to take into account the fact that Hebrew language has the tendency to replace adjectives with other grammatical forms.

28 Giovanni Garbini, *Note di lessicografia ebraica*, Brescia: Paideia, 1998, pp. 177 – 182, points out the mythical background under these images, as in the Phoenician cosmogony (as expounded by Philo from Biblos, and preserved by Eusebius); see Lucio Troiani, *L'opera storiografica di Filone da Byblos*, Pisa: Editrice libreria goliardica, 1974, pp. 77 – 89; Walter Beyerlin, *Testi religiosi per lo studio dell'A.T.*, Brescia: Paideia, 1992, p. 339. Garbini, *Note di lessicografia ebraica*, has the suspect that in the biblical text there is still a trace of the Desire, *Pothos*, of the Phoenician source, in the term *Tohu*, which one can lead back to a root with a primary value “to desire” and a figurative sense “to be empty”. The Bible would have received the figurative sense as a synonym of *Bohu*, giving up the meaning “desire”, not congruent with the proper conception of Deity. This interpretation is enhanced by the addition of a series of secondary modifications spread in other verses. See also Oswald Loretz, ‘Gen 1,2 als Fragmente sud einem amurritisch-kanaanäischen Schöpfungsmythos in neuer ägyptozentrischer Deutung’, *UF* 33 (2001), 387 – 401; Dagmar Börner-Klein, ‘*Tohu und Bohu*. Zur Auslegungsgeschichte von Gen, 1 – 2a’, *Henoch* 15 (1993) pp. 3 – 41.

29 *Wortbericht*, as it is defined by the German hermeneutics in *op* position to other kind of creative acts *Tatbericht* expressed by means of the terminology related to the “making”.

30 Aalen, “*or*”, p. 170, proposes an adjectival interpretation of “*or*” “become it clear”, in the sense of the first daybreak which illuminates the darkness.

31 In the word and in the light there is the capacity of distinguishing and of revealing the

generalized. And the goodness or positivity of light characterizes a great part of its symbolic connotations. It will be shown that obscurity<sup>32</sup> isn't a simple absence of light: there is something disturbing, even menacing in it<sup>33</sup>.

In the indefiniteness of the primordial beginning, an alternation of light and darkness establishes itself. Light and darkness are defined at first through an act of separation (*badal*)<sup>34</sup>, the separation constitutes one of the main modalities to create an order<sup>35</sup>, and then with a new intervention of the word, this time through an act of denomination (*qarah*): day (*yom*) and night<sup>36</sup>. It's the first day<sup>37</sup>, or better still “day one”, for, contrarily to the other days of the creation, it is indicated with the cardinal number, instead of the ordinal, almost to underline its unique character<sup>38</sup>.

differences, or of separating. See Clémence Hérou, ‘Il conflitto delle tenebre e della luce negli scritti giovannei’, in *Simbolismo ed esperienza della luce nelle grandi religioni*, ed. by Julien Ries and Charles Marie Ternès, (Milano: Jaca Book, 1997) pp. 175 – 190 (pp. 178 ff.). One has to remember the distinction present in Durand, *Le strutture antropologiche dell'immaginario*, between the diaretic antithesis of the daily phase and the synthesis of the nocturnal phase. See Borgonovo, *La notte e il suo sole*, pp. 31 ff., 329 ff. Borgonovo shows how a dynamical path from the daily phase of the diaretic antithesis (prevailing in the dialogues among friends) to the nocturnal one of the synthesis prevailing in chapter 28 and in the dialogues with God is realized in *Job*.

32 In spite of what Aalen thinks on the matter, “*or*”, p. 170 ff., I believe it is not simply inferiority. Aalen rightly points out the absence in *Gen* 1 of the explicit values of chaotic force of the elements of darkness and disorder, but I would rather say silence: they seem deprived of words more than absent. Indeed, the same vanishing of darkness in certain eschatological visions (see *Zec* 14,7), the triumph of external light seems to show the transient character of that primeval order which was founded on a simple partition of spaces and times between light and darkness (see Aalen, “*or*”, pp. 171, 174). In an eschatological perspective one can see the darkening of stars and then they will again brighten up (Aalen, “*or*”, p. 173). The tension among the different images present for instance in *Is*. 24,33; 30,26; 60,19 has induced a part of the rabbinic tradition to distribute the succession of them in the different phases of the eschatological epoch; see Smelik, *Mystical Transformation*, p. 142.

33 See also *Amos* 6,18 – 20.

34 In some text, separation adds a spatial meaning to the temporal one. See Mitchel Ringgren, *Art. hoshek*, *ThWAT* 3 (1982), pp. 265 – 278 (p. 266); *Job* 26,10; 38,19 ff. The horizon would be the limit between light and darkness (See Aalen, “*or*”, p. 170).

35 See Gian Luigi Prato, ‘L'universo come ordine e come disordine’, in *Ordine cosmico e prospettiva ultraterrena nell'ultimo periodo dell'A.T. Atti del 2° Convegno di Studi Veterotestamentari. Susa 15 – 17 settembre 1981*, ed. by Gian Luigi Prato [= *RivBibl* 30 (1982), 3 – 156], 51 – 77.

36 See Borgonovo, *La notte e il suo sole*, pp. 105, 111, 114 – 124, on the different species of darkness and on the possibility of distinguishing between an “earth night” and a “cosmic night”; see also Borgonovo, *La notte e il suo sole*, pp. 202 – 207, and *Job* 4,12 – 21, on the “euphemist” interpretation of night and its mutation in a night of revelation.

37 Day, *yom*: the same Hebrew term indicates, as well as in English language, the day in its wholeness and its diurnal hours.

38 In the succession of its moments evening and morning one can perhaps see an allusion to the tradition dominating within the Hebrew world (however, there was also the inverse order, in

Compared to the ambiguity of the text of *Genesis, Isaiah 45,7* (in the discourse speech of regal-messianic investiture spoken by God to Cyrus)<sup>39</sup> seems way more linear:

7 I form the light and create (*bara'*) darkness (*hoshek*), I bring peace (*shalom*) and create (*bara'*) disaster (*ra'*); I, the LORD, do all these things.[...] 12 I have made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts. 13 I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight.

Note the repeated use of the word *bara'*, a technical term which – in the verbal form *qal* – indicates, in the Bible, the act of divine creation. This repetition accentuates the parallel between *hoshek* and evil *ra'*, both explicitly denoted as a work of God<sup>40</sup>. It is a text that poses itself in sharp contrast with several aspects of *Genesis 1*. This appears ever more evident as we go on with the reading. Some lines later *Isaiah 45,18* continues:

For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it, he did not create it to (as) *tohu*, (chaotic and formless), but formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord and there is no other.

These lines affirm not only the creation of evil and of darkness, but also, with a tone that could hardly be interpreted as something other than open polemic, that the earth is not *tohu* confusion, but rather an ordered world, as its function of being inhabited clarifies.

The object of the controversy could be *Genesis 1* (“and the earth was *tohu* and *bohu*”) or one of its forms<sup>41</sup>, but maybe even more than one or a few inter-

particular where the solar calendar was dominating, like in *Jubilees*) to collocate at the sunset the passage from a day to the other one.

39 See Ringgren, *hoshek*, p. 265. Concerning the text of *Isaiah 45, 7 e 18* one has to take into account the variants present in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. See the remarks present in W.A. Wordsworth, ‘The Bodmer Papyrus and the Prologue of St. John’s Gospel’, *NT 2*(1957), 1–7, where the v. 7 of the Qumran text is translated as “Forming light and separating darkness: making good [*tob*] and separating evil”, and the v. 18 “Separating the heavens” [italics are used to point out the variants]. If the difference between *shalom* and *tov* is sharp, the translation “separating” in place of “creating” depends on the difference of a consonant (*brh* in place of *br*), that however could be considered only a orthographical variant. On the Greek version of *Isaiah 45,18*, one has to see the remarks given in Garbini, *Note di lessicografia ebraica*, p. 181.

40 See Borgonovo, *La notte e il suo sole*, pp. 335 ff.

41 Given the uncertain date of the texts, one has to be prudent; see the relevant remarks contained in Morton Smith, ‘II *Isaiah* and the Persians’, *JAOS*, 83 (1963), 415–421, where the relevance of the contact of the Jewish world with, and the probable dependence from, the Persian world is pointed out.

pretations which sprang from the ambiguous formulation to which I have alluded<sup>42</sup>. The autonomy of the dark world is denied: where darkness is, this darkness is wanted by God. Can we find here the premises to those further developments that can be found in Qumran<sup>43</sup>, in the doctrine of the two spirits? There certainly is the testimony of interpretative tensions of a certain importance. It is more difficult to accept the idea that the polemic was in *Gen 1*, because its ambiguity seems to be a compromise solution. Similarly, *Gen 6*, where the fall of angels in some way related into the book of Enoch together with the origin of evil is discussed, is a text that “shines” for its obscurity<sup>44</sup>.

Only at the fourth day (*Gen 1,14 ff.*) there is the creation of the sun, of the moon and of the stars, that is of the great and the small luminaries. The stars are not indicated by their names (*shemesh, yareah*): here, one can see the echo of the ant idolatry and anti-astral polemic which crosses through many pages of the Bible, starting from Deuteronomy<sup>45</sup>. The stars are simply indicated by their function of illumination<sup>46</sup>, of governing and being signs of the succession of day and night, or that of days and seasons. It is stated again the function of distinguishing between light and darkness<sup>47</sup>.

Also this work is completed with the consideration of its goodness. This goodness, therefore, is including also all that is worrying within the darkness and anyway has its place in the total order<sup>48</sup>. The vanishing of this order could lead also to the end of life (see *Ger 31,35 ff.*). However, this order, first of all, depends on God (see *Sal 74, 16 ff.*). Men, in particular Jewish people, must praise

42 Michael Deroche, ‘*Isaiah XLV 7 and the Creation of Chaos?*’, *VT 42* (1992), 11–21, where a brief synthesis of the research is given, rejecting the interpretation here followed. The distinction here pointed out between the literary genus of *Isaiah 45* and of *Gen 1* has to be taken into account, but it is not a sufficient explanation. On the other side, the syntactic structure proposed in S. A. Hirsch, ‘*Isaiah XLV. 18, 19?*’, *JQR 14* (1901), 134–135 is persuasive: here, *tohu* is considered to be the subject of the successive proposition, “It is not the vain (idol) that created it”.

43 See Elio Jucci, ‘Un Eden glorioso nel deserto’, in *Miti di origine, miti di caduta e presenza del femminile nella loro evoluzione interpretativa. XXXII Settimana Biblica Nazionale (Roma, 14–18 settembre 1992)*, ed. by Gian Luigi Prato, *RSB 6* (1994), 153–165 (pp. 154–157).

44 See Alessandro Castani, *Attese messianiche nel Giudaismo*, in *Il salvatore del mondo. Prospettive messianiche e di salvezza nell’Oriente antico*, ed. by Beniamino Melascechi (Roma: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, 2003) pp. 29–61 (pp. 32, 35).

45 See in particular *Deut 4,19*, included within the wide polemic section of *Deut 4,15–19*.

46 See Aalen, “*or*”, p. 164. If the sun is one of the two great luminaries, however, in many verses its description does not include light among its attributes; furthermore, the verb “to shine” (*nagah*) is not used in relation to the sun, which is mainly characterized by heat (Aalen, “*or*”, p. 165).

47 *Gen 1,17 ff.*

48 See also Aalen, “*or*”, 171. These statements again allow us to speak of a compromise or, in positive terms, of a trial of synthesis, which has been without any doubt successful and has become a dominant tradition.

God, Whose mercy<sup>49</sup> and power show themselves also in the defeat of the forces of Chaos<sup>50</sup> and of the enemies of Israel<sup>51</sup>, and Whose glory shows itself and is praised within a song in this same order<sup>52</sup>.

In particular, in the morning thinking ascends to God<sup>53</sup>, Who preserves the fixed order<sup>54</sup>. In this sense the Morning Prayer – indeed very widespread – could sometimes present particular shades and is directed at the sun<sup>55</sup>.

On the other hand, together with texts that as *Gen 1* demythologize, or like *Deuteronomy* that openly oppose the possible manifestations of an astral cult, there are numerous texts that preserve the signs of a solar or astral symbolism. Thus, at least up to the conclusion of the monarchic epoch, the astral symbolism could not be simply used for its analogical values, but also in a more proper sense for a solar cult or at least for a cult within which the fact of being solar was considered a divine attribute<sup>56</sup>. Also in this case, as well as in the case of the presence of a divine mate of Yahweh, Ashera,<sup>57</sup> the biblical text has tried to hide or to discredit and condemn all that in the development of Yahwism was no more acceptable. However, in some case rejected things could come back to be again suitable within a new interpretation of Judaism<sup>58</sup>, or when certain images, having lost their primeval reference within new historical and cultural contexts, can be used without any risk of deviating from the new “orthodoxy”<sup>59</sup>.

In an important work<sup>60</sup> and in its synthesis for the *ThWAT*<sup>61</sup>, Aalen points out that the concept of light present in the AT, with its underestimation of the role of

49 See *Psalm* 136, 5–9.

50 The Leviathan is present in *Psalm* 74,14. However, the Leviathan is also the image of Egypt.

51 See the same sequence in *Psalm* 74,13–17.

52 *Psalm* 5,2; *Psalm* 104,22 ff.

53 See *Isa* 33,2.

54 See *Soph* 3,5.

55 Remember the morning prayer of the Essenes (Giuseppe, *Guerra giudaica* 2,128).

56 *Hos* 4,15 “Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven, nor swear, The LORD lives”; see Herbert Gordon May, ‘Some Aspects of Solar Worship at Jerusalem’, *ZAW* 55 (1937), 269–281 (p. 269).

57 For a synthetic discussion of this issue, see: Miriam Carminati, *L’Ashera di JHWH. Attestazioni tra Ugarit e Israele del culto di una dea dimenticata*, Thesis, Univ. Pavia, 2004–5.

58 See John Rogerson, ‘Ancient Israel to the fall of the Second Temple’ in *A Handbook of Ancient Religions*, ed. by John R. Hinnells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 214–265 (pp. 227 ff.).

59 I am using this term with an allusive meaning. I am conscious of the limits of such a use can have within Judaism: traditionally Judaism defines itself as an orthopraxis. However, there have been lively fights and divisions even on problems which do not concern only a difference of cult praxis.

60 Sverre Aalen, *Die Begriffe Licht und Finsternis im AT, im Spätjudentum und im Rabbinismus*, Oslo: Skifter utgitt av det Norske Videnskaps Akademi i Oslo, Historisch-filosofisk Klasse 1951, 1951.

61 Aalen, ‘or’.

the stars, and with the emphasis on an atmospheric luminosity<sup>62</sup>, and even a lunar domination on the sun (also in the subdivision of time), corresponds to a pre-solar phase, which would have some parallel at Ugarit, in the Sumerian world or in the old phase of the Egyptian or Mesopotamian cultures<sup>63</sup>. Aalen’s remarks can be accepted, but with some reserve. For instance, the definitive affirmation of the lunisolar calendar probably occurred only when Palestine passed under the Seleucid influence in the second century b. C.<sup>64</sup>. Strong resistances within the Enochic or Essene-Qumranic literature contrasted this affirmation. In the same biblical literature some texts were submitted to a revision, which could adapt them to the new scheme, as Garbini showed for the book of *Proverbs*<sup>65</sup>. We should therefore ask ourselves to what extent certain of the elements underlined by Aalen are to be related to an active survival of a pre-solar conception, or, on the contrary, are the result of a successive revitalization, functional to new needs that spring from the consolidation of a specific form of Yahwism.

Amid the functions that light assumes and the images that bring it into play, we must not forget the particular role of the crepuscular phases and of dawn<sup>66</sup>, considered as independent from solar light<sup>67</sup>, at times explicitly distinct<sup>68</sup>. Dawn itself, more than sunrise, is seen as the restoration of creation<sup>69</sup>. For what concerns dawn we must also remember the Star of morning, Venus, whose mythological value is made functional to the satirical confrontation with the king of Babylon<sup>70</sup>.

Images of light, whether the sun or a generic source of light, are used to indicate wellness, fortune, joy and salvation<sup>71</sup> for the individual, but also for the household or the palace or the regal dynasty<sup>72</sup>. Of course obscurity is represented with opposite values, and it must be added that in the obscurity the wicked ones weave their evil plans, relying on the fact that darkness will hide their actions<sup>73</sup>. But they deceive themselves, because the eyes of God penetrate

62 *Job* 37,21 (Aalen, “or”, p.165) *Eccl* 12,2; *Isa* 30,26 (Aalen, “or”, p. 166).

63 Aalen, ‘or’, pp. 163–164.

64 See Paolo Sacchi, ‘Testi palestinesi anteriori al 200 a.C.’, *RivBibIt* 34 (1986), 182–204 (p. 199); *Id.*, *Storia del secondo Tempio. Israele tra VI secolo a.C. e I secolo d.C.* (Torino: SEI 1994), pp. 454–461.

65 Giovanni Garbini, ‘Proverbi per un anno. Il libro dei Proverbi e il calendario’, *Henoah* 6 (1984), 139–146.

66 Aalen, ‘or’, p. 165 ff.

67 *Job* 38,12–15. See Aalen, “or”, p. 166.

68 See Aalen, ‘or’, p. 166, where 2 *Sam* 23,44 is interpreted; however, this interpretation rises perplexities.

69 *Psalm* 46,3 ff.; *Job* 38,4 ff. Aalen, “or”, p. 173.

70 *Isa* 14,12; see note 7.

71 Aalen, ‘or’, p. 174.

72 Aalen, ‘or’, p. 175.

73 Aalen, ‘or’, p. 177.

and brighten the darkness, and to them nothing is hidden. This value of the sight and of the light of God is also connected to the theme of Justice and of God's Judgment in everyday life, but also in an eschatological sense, and in this case, fire may also be part of the picture<sup>74</sup>.

God Himself is light, shining on the people or on Israel<sup>75</sup>, Aalen warns us not to follow an interpretation that reads in it an indication of the divine essence.

The expression "Light of God" has analogous meanings: it indicates God as a spring of positive gifts, symbolized by the light<sup>76</sup>. The expressions "to see the face of God", or "to make one's own face bright"<sup>77</sup> are related to the divine presence in the temple and to its frequentation by the believer within a cult context. However, as we shall see discussing expressions related to a solar and theo-political symbolism, they assume a particular meaning. If it is true that at the beginning these expressions had no mystical value, just the terminology related to the face of God will have a development in this direction<sup>78</sup>.

Only God can change light into darkness or vice versa. In general, this can be interpreted as a demonstration of the power of God or of His/Her domination over creation; and, in particular, in an eschatological context, it can be considered as a turning upside down of the cosmic order or a coming back to the primeval chaos. However, mankind has to obey to the divine order and can never overthrow it: *Isaiah* 5,20 ("Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter"). God shows Himself/Herself to mankind by means of His/Her Glory (*kavod*). In the most ancient texts, Glory was particularly related to fire (natural or the fire of sacrifice cult), volcanic, atmospheric manifestations of divinity<sup>79</sup>.

74 In particular, one has to point out its appearance just at the end of the Hebrew Bible (following the order that has prevailed), in *Mal* 4,1–2 where "the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven" and it will be with "the Sun of righteousness". On the other side, the image of Light appears also at the end of the Christian Bible in *Rev* 22,5 with a brightness that has its source directly within God: this implies some considerations also on the nature of the primeval Light within the tale of creation.

75 See *Psalms* 27,1.

76 Aalen, 'or', p. 175.

77 See Luigi Moraldi, *Il Maestro di Giustizia. L'«innominato» dei Manoscritti di Qumrân* (Fossano: Esperienze, 1971), p. 149.

78 See Aalen, "or", p. 175; Sacchi, *Storia del secondo Tempio*, pp. 295–297; Giovanni Filoramo, *Luce e Gnosi. Saggio sull'illuminazione nello gnosticismo* (Roma: Institutum patristicum "Augustinianum", 1980), p. 15. Concerning the developments of the mystic tradition in the ancient Judaism, see: Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light. The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935; Peter Schäfer, *Le Dieu caché et révélé. Introduction à la mystique juive ancienne* (Paris: Cerf, 1993), pp. 21 ff.; 61 ff., 116.

79 *Ex* 24,16–18; *Lev* 9,23 ff. The brightness of the Glory of the God of Israel can be compared with the supernatural brightness, the *melammu* which characterizes the Mesopotamian gods and goddesses: see Jean Bottéro, *La religión más antigua: Mesopotamia* (Madrid: Trotta, 2001), p. 33.

The *Ex* 24,9–11 text is exemplar: "⁹...¹⁰ and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself".

The testimony is undervalued by Aalen<sup>80</sup>. However, this verse could be considered in relation to the successive hekalotic texts. That floor does not refer only to the sky vault, but also to the floors which, in the successive traditions, mystics shall have to overcome for reaching the divine throne. This floor will appear changing and terrible to their eyes<sup>81</sup>.

However, for Ezekiel the manifestations of light in theophanies are fundamental<sup>82</sup> and assume a dominant character<sup>83</sup>. There is a possible influence of Babylonian solar images and the link with the sun of equinoxes and with daybreak. The relations with *Ex* 24 are also evident. One has to consider that the piling up of images of different nature is functional to point out the transcendence. The strong emphasis on the approximation ("something like") of descriptions points on the same direction<sup>84</sup>.

One can remember that Moses, as being in touch with the divine glory, shares its luminosity: his famous "horns" or "rays" give this witness<sup>85</sup>.

80 Aalen, 'or', p. 179.

81 See Schäfer, *Le Dieu caché et révélé*, p. 43 ff. Furthermore, one has to remember at least the echo of Dante: see Caron Ann Cioffi, "Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro": A Gloss on "Purgatorio" 1.13', *Modern Philology* 82 (1985) 355–364. *Psalms* 104,1 ff. refers to the luminosity of the sky vault: "1: Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. 2: Who covers thyself with light as with a garment: who stretches out the heavens like a curtain". Here, the reference is certainly to the sky imagined as the mantle of God. However, within the rabbinic tradition it is interpreted as related to the heavenly origin of Light.

82 *Ezek* 1,26–28; 10,4; 43,2. One can see that in *Ezek* 1,26–27 the *chashmal* is quoted and translated in different ways like electro, metal, of which in the Treatise of Hekhalot is written: "in the *chashmāl* there are three hundreds seventy eight qualities of luminaries of refulgence and splendour [...] the least among them is similar as long as refulgence to the solar sphere [...] And not only this, but it extends over the splendour of the luminary of Glory, something like a source of Light to which no one is equal in all the species of luminaries that are in the height of heavens..." (See *I sette santuari*, trans. by Elio Piattelli (Milano: TEA, 1990), p. 28. See Michele Carmine Minutiello, 'Il cielo, la luce e altri simboli del sacro. Tra oriente e occidente', in AA.VV., *Simbolismo e simbolismi. Raffronti, analogie e differenze* (Fossombrone: Metauro Edizioni, 2002), pp. 61–73.

83 Concerning a previous use, see Aalen, 'or', p. 178.

84 Here, the strong anthropomorphism of the similitude of the divine image is evident. Ezekiel in the chapters 1–3; 8–11; 40–48 describes as Glory of God the whole of the human form (1,26) that appears to him as fire and radiance; see Rimmon Kasher, 'Anthropomorphism, Holiness and Cult: A New Look at Ezekiel 40–48', *ZAW* 110 (1998), 192–208.

85 *Ex* 34,29–34. See Howard Schwartz, *Tree of Souls, the Mythology of Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2004, pp. 389–391.

Mark S. Smith<sup>86</sup>, trying to reach a balanced conclusion, remarked that, even if limited, the use of a solar language in relation to Yahweh represents an important feature of His personality and of the Jewish religion at the epoch of monarchy.

The *Psalm* 84 (a pilgrimage text) resorts to a solar language in a context related to the temple for a description of God (“For the LORD God (*yahweh elohim*), is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favour and honour” (84,12)<sup>87</sup>) and to give expression to the idea of “seeing God” or “being seen by God”<sup>88</sup>, or for a manifestation of the presence of God<sup>89</sup>. From a present context of cult or of a theophany it will change to a vision of God or of His/Her Glory in the future<sup>90</sup>.

A solar language seems to emerge also in some Psalms of watch, related to a particular orientation of the temple<sup>91</sup> (with the entrance at East) in which they are placed<sup>92</sup>.

These texts recall by antithesis to our mind the Angel comment (“Is it a trivial matter for the house of Judah to do the detestable things they are doing here?”) to which *Ezekiel* 8,16<sup>93</sup> gives voice after this verse:

He then brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD, and there at the entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. With their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east<sup>94</sup>.

86 Mark S. Smith, ‘The Near Eastern Background of Solar Language for Yahweh’, *JBL* 109 (1990), 29–39.

87 McCarter (quoted by Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, p. 37 e n. 37) suggests to vocalize *umagan* in place of *umagen* and so to read: “because a sun and a sovereign is Yahweh”.

88 *Psalm* 84,9b “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed”.

89 *Psalms* 11,7; 17,15; 27,4.13; 42,3; 63,3; see also *Ex* 24:10; *Judith* 14,20. 22; *1 Sam* 1,22.

90 *Isa* 35,2; 52,8; 66,5.18.

91 Probably, the very the temple of Jerusalem and the dates of its consecration support the intuition of a solar symbolism related to the rise of the sun at east and at the dates of equinoxes: see Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 30.

92 *Psalm* 27,1 “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? [...] 8 When thou said, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. 9 Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation”; *Psalm* 62 “1 O God, thou art my God; early since the daybreak will I seek thee [...] 3 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary”; *Psalm* 17,7 ff.

93 See also the indignation of *Zephaniah* 1,5 ff. against “them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham; 6 And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired for him”.

94 Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 31 points out: “The location of the practice points to priests as the participants”.

They evoke also the description of the reform brought about by Josiah, widely presented as a coming back to the purity of the origins and occurred more than one hundred years before<sup>95</sup>:

He did away with the pagan priests appointed by the kings of Judah to burn incense on the high places of the towns of Judah and on those around Jerusalem – those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations and to all the starry hosts (*2 Kings* 23,5)<sup>96</sup>.

He removed from the entrance to the temple of the LORD the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were in the court near the room of an official named Nathan-Melech. Josiah then burned the chariots dedicated to the sun (*2 Kings* 23,11)<sup>97</sup>.

However, this reform, if it did actually happen, in any case does not imply a turning point determining the cult of the successive sovereigns, as the polemic of the just quoted text of *Ezekiel* shows.

The interpretation here followed for some Psalms of watch finds a basis in *Sirach* 50,1 ff.<sup>98</sup>:

Simon the high priest, the son of Onias, [...] 6 He shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full. 7 And as the sun when it shines, so did he shine in the temple of God. 8 And as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds [...] 11 when he put on the robe of glory, and was clothed with the perfection of power. 12 When he went up to the holy altar, he honoured the vesture of holiness.

These words cannot be understood without an existing background of cult praxis and a sensibility in which a solar semantic already found a wide space<sup>99</sup>.

95 At least following the biblical reconstruction, but today one asks for what really happened.

96 See *1 Kings* 22,19 e *Jer* 8,1 that demonstrate how the image of the heavenly court was not extraneous to the Hebrew tradition, even if just in these two texts emerges a certain differentiation in the valuation. One has to remember also the criticism of an apparently innocent gesture which gleams through *Job* 31,26–28.

97 In Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 31, the finding of little statues of horses or oxen bearing the sun is considered a confirmation: “The weight of the evidence points to an indigenous solar cult, although not that of a separate solar deity” (*Ibid.* 34); “The solar language and imagery in Judean culture in the final decades of the monarchy seem rather to have constituted one aspect of the cult of Yahweh in the Jerusalem temple. The theopolitical function of Yahwistic solar language may be further understood in the context of solar language predicated by the monarchy, both in Judah and elsewhere”, *Ibid.*

98 Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, p. 31.

99 A solar semantics is also involved in the use of the verb *zarah* (to rise) within texts like *Deut* 33,2; *Isa* 60,1; *Hos* 6,3.

Indeed, the solar splendour of the high priest implies a similar and even superior splendour of the divinity whom he adores.

A reference to the illuminating role of stars is certainly present in the Menorah, the well-known seven-branched candlestick with seven lights<sup>100</sup>. However, in the biblical text this feature is confused with the representation of the presence of God<sup>101</sup>. As the angel explains to Zechariah<sup>102</sup>: “These seven [lamps] are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth” (*Zech* 4, 10). If this candlestick would be alight only in the night, the parallelism with nocturne stars would be enhanced<sup>103</sup>, but the interpretation is dubious<sup>104</sup>. However, the astral reference made just by allusion in the Bible is indeed more widely expressed in post-biblical literature<sup>105</sup>. Even a representation of the heaven had to be present on the curtain of the Holy of Holies<sup>106</sup>.

The estimation of these data has been of course modified in time and is partially controversial. What is the relationship between the Yahwism of the biblical times and some forms of solar or astral cult? Is this cult an integrating element or is it the evidence for the penetration of heterogeneous elements? Is the possible answer to these questions ever valid for every witness, or has one to valuate case by case (as the biblical text itself seems to suggest)?

Often, the possibility that those practices condemned in the quoted verses by Ezekiel or from the Book of Kings were imported elements to be related to the Babylonian or Assyrian influence has been suggested<sup>107</sup>. It was believed that this kind of cult was not related to Yahweh but to stranger divinities. However, even if

100 *Exodus* 25,31 – 40. One has to point out that using the branch and the almond flowers as a metaphoric model for the lamps is related to the kinship between the Hebrew word *shaqed* – almond – and the verb *shaqad* – to watch over, to keep awake, to observe – which has given inspiration also to Jeremiah 1,11 – 12 “11: Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what see thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. 12: Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it” (with a possible allusion in 31,28; 44,27. See *Dan* 9,14). See also M. Cocagnac, *I simboli biblici. Lessico teologico e spirituale*, Bologna: EDB, 1994, pp. 46 – 47.

101 Aalen, ‘or, p. 174.

102 *Zech* 4,1 – 10.

103 *Ex* 27,20 – 21 seems to have this implication.

104 Aalen, ‘or, p. 174. The reductive position of Aalen on the secondary value of the symbolic meaning is dubious, but his emphasis on the obvious practical function is correct.

105 See Morton Smith, *The Image of God*, pp. 497 – 512.

106 *Ibid.*; see also Margaret Barker, ‘Beyond The Veil of the Temple. The High Priestly Origin of the Apocalypses’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51 (1998) and also <http://www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/BeyondtheVeil.pdf>.

107 See Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 31. The collocation of an idol within the temple is also attributed to Manasseh (*2 Chron* 33,7): “He took the carved image he had made and put it in God’s temple”. Following May, *Some Aspects of Solar Worship*, 269 – 271, one could say that it was an image of Assur in honour of the solar divinity of the dominant state, but it could be interpreted also as assimilated to Yahweh.

this possibility must not be excluded for some form of cult, in some other cases one has to recognize that the continuity of the witness and of the criticism, as well as the evident integration with the Yahwist cult, here we deal with a form of the religion of Israel<sup>108</sup>.

Smith adds: “The question is whether this devotion was purely a matter of natural idolatry or part of a more complex religious practice”<sup>109</sup>.

In Israel, as well as in the rest of the world, describing the divinity with images taken from different spheres of the natural world (or appropriating traditional attributes of other divinities) could be a way of alluding to the transcendence of the divinity. This divinity was not to be limited by univocal identifications with some kind of elementary force. For instance, there were frequent associations of solar elements with tempest elements (cloud, lightning, rain), or with volcanic or other cosmic elements<sup>110</sup>.

However, a more specifically theological (theo-political) component was added with all its importance. The sovereign appears as “divine sun” in the titolatures of Mesopotamian sovereigns already at the half of the third millennium b. C., but it spreads in the late bronze epoch (1600 – 1200) in the letters of El Amarna and Ugarit and it applies to kings of Egypt, Hatti and Ugarit.

A letter from El Amarna gives us even an expression we find in *Psalms* 42,3, in a cult context: “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and see the face of God?”<sup>111</sup>. In *EA* 147. 59 – 60 one can read: “Here I am, I have sent [a message] to the Sun, the father of my king, my Lord: When can I see the face of the king, my Lord”? One can attribute to the sovereign qualifications and roles that elsewhere are considered to belong to the divinity. David will say: “... ‘When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, <sup>4</sup> he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.’ <sup>5</sup> ‘Is not my house right with God?’” (*2 Sam* 23,3 ff.)<sup>112</sup>.

108 Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 34: “the ‘idolatry’ of *Ezek* 8:16 and *2 Kings* 23:11 was an indigenous form of Yahwistic cult”... “the notion that neo-Assyrian conquerors imposed their religious practices on their subjects has been discredited”. Naturally, there is a very important debate on this issue: see Enzo Cortese, ‘I tentativi di una teologia (cristiana) dell’Antico Testamento’, *Liber Annuus* 56 (2006), 9 – 28.

109 Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 32.

110 See *Ez* 43,1 – 5. In 43,2 there is even an assimilation to the primeval waters, whereas in *Ez* 43,4 the solar analogy is dominant. See also *Hos* 6,3 (one of these verses is related to the equinox in May, *Some Aspects of Solar Worship*). See also Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, (pp. 33 – 36) where is stated: “Like Ningirsu and Marduk, Yahweh is super-natural” (*Ibid.* p. 33).

111 As it is shown by v. 5.

112 See *Psalms* 72,5 – 6 “May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth”!

This trend continues but is also developed in an eschatological perspective, finding application in the figure of the future saviour:

“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall” (Mal 3,20 = 4,2)<sup>113</sup>.

In *Isa* 58,8 the images will be applied to the ransom of the righteous men (thus, in a development for which, by a process of “democracy”<sup>114</sup>, king and priest prerogatives are extended to Israel and to righteous ones, in some cases there will be an interpretation of the law, particularly of more binding cult norms.

“Then your light will break forth (*titsmah*)<sup>115</sup> like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard”<sup>116</sup>.

This text becomes more eloquent if read in contraposition to the words of the successive chapter *Isa* 59, 9 ff., describing the fate of the wicked men:

“We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.  
<sup>10</sup> Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead”<sup>117</sup>.

In *Isa* 60, 1–3 there is a persistent contrast between light and darkness, but in this case the reference is to Jerusalem, Israel and other peoples.

In *Isa* 30,26 ff.:

In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill.<sup>26</sup> The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.<sup>27</sup> See, the Name of the LORD comes from afar, with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke; his lips are full of wrath, and his tongue is a consuming fire.

113 Concerning the winged sun, see the bibliography in Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 37.

114 Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 37.

115 In Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 37 there can be read an allusion to the regal ideology; *tsema* (with *tsade*) is used in 2 Sam 23,24 in relation to the dynasty of David (see *Jer* 23:5; 33:15; *Zech* 3:8; *Zech* 6:12; *KAI* 43:10-11; *Isa* 11:1,4–5, 10; see 4:2; *Ben Sira* 47:22; 51:12 h).

116 In Smith, *Near Eastern Background*, 37, there is a suggestion of a comparison with *Judges* 5,31 “But may they who love you be like the sun when it rises in its strength.”

117 This way of walking was found also within the *Damascus Document* at Qumran just for pointing out the condition of those men who, even being conscious of their iniquity, are still “like blind” because they have not found a teacher (*CD* 1,8–10).

As previously said, a blood bath and a light bath are not so different. However, for the Old Testament, this is not the only possible conclusion. In the biblical *corpus* there are many different tensions, and this characteristic is part of its greatness.

In *Isa* 60,1–3 a radiant scenery is shown<sup>118</sup>:

<sup>1</sup>“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.  
<sup>2</sup>See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.  
<sup>3</sup>Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn”.

The conflict is kept in the shade: it is only briefly noted in verse 12 (“For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined”<sup>119</sup>). The scene is dominated by the glorious light of God: “...the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.” (*Isa* 60,19).

The contrast between light and darkness, which as we have noted is present in the Old Testament many times and in different forms, will have a more sharp and radical expression in the Qumran manuscripts<sup>120</sup>. In the *War Scroll* (*IQM*)<sup>121</sup> the great eschatological war between the “sons of light” (the righteous men of Israel) and the “sons of darkness” (the “Belial army”, the wicked men of Israel<sup>122</sup> who joined the foreign peoples: the seven peoples that Israel should have expelled from Canaan at the moment of the conquest, and the Kittim united in a symbolic synthesis of all the enemies of Israel<sup>123</sup>) is described:

The war which has alternate phases ceases with the victory of the “sons of

118 See the analysis developed in: Thomas P. Osborne, ‘Luce contro luci: uno studio di Isaia 60’, in *Simbolismo ed esperienza della luce nelle grandi religioni*, ed. by Julien Ries and Charles Marie Ternes, pp. 151–164.

119 This indeed could belong to a successive redaction phase; see Osborne, *Luce contro luci*, pp. 152–154. Concerning the complex relationship among God’s nations and Israel, see D.W. Van Winkle, ‘The Relationship of the Nations to Yahweh and to Israel in Isaiah XL-LV’, *VT*, 35 (1985), 446–458.

120 This is in the interval from the third century b. C. to the first century p. C. See Elio Jucci, ‘I manoscritti ebraici di Qumran: a che punto siamo?’, *Istituto Lombardo (Rend. Lett.)* 129 (1995), 243–273; *Id.*, ‘Qumran. A cinquant’anni dalla ricorrenza della scoperta dei manoscritti’, *Athenaeum* 86 (1998), 272–286. Concerning the issue of light, see Maurice Gilbert, ‘La luce nei testi di Qumran’, in *Simbolismo ed esperienza della luce nelle grandi religioni*, ed. by Julien Ries and Charles Marie Ternes, (Milano: Jaca Book, 1997), 165–173

121 *I Manoscritti di Qumrân*, ed. by Luigi Moraldi, (Torino: UTET, 1986), pp. 271–326 (with a widespread comment). In *Testi di Qumran*, ed. by Florentino García Martínez, (Brescia: Paideia, 1996), pp. 196–234, there is also the translation of the fragments of the fourth cave (pp. 221 ff.).

122 However, in this text the war seems to be fought when the coming back of all the Israel tribes has already happened.

123 Here, also the mythical Gog is evoked, as long as it is the model of the eschatological enemy (*IQM* 11,16).

light” and the destruction of enemies. This way, the great fight, which has seen the contraposition of the two groups in the history of mankind since creation and leads to the Kingdom of God, ends with “the time of salvation for the people of God” and of the “eternal annihilation for the whole party of Belial”. The “sons of light” shall have to respect rigorously the detailed rules of conduct contained in the *Rule*. The *Rule* gives a dominant role to the priests and to the rituality and makes this fight almost a liturgical action. The war develops on many different plans. On one side, it is an earthly fight between two human groups; on the other side, it is a fight between “Belial and all the spirits of his party” (13,2) and “a prince of splendour [...] and all the spirits of truth” (13,10). This prince of splendour can be identified with Michael (17, 6 ff.), and sometimes God himself seems to participate into the fight (1,15 ff.; 18,1). In the final fight, as in the past – in 11,1 ff. the example of David is remembered<sup>124</sup> – the hand of God and its power defeat the enemy and deliver it in the hands of the sons of light.

In 13,11 one can read an important specification: “you have made Belial to damage, angel of hostility, whose domain is in the darkness and whose plan is to do evil and to make guilty”. Therefore, the world, earthly and spiritual, in its components of light and darkness, is as a whole created by God. The idea that a chaos, which is arbitrarily free from His/Her determination, cannot exist recalls to our mind the already commented words of *Isa* 45,7. However, this idea is widely expressed in a section of the *Community Rule* (1QS), denominated “doctrine of the two spirits” (1QS 3,13 – 4,26)<sup>125</sup>. Since the origins, God has been creating two groups of spirits, in equal number and already predetermined to good or to evil, and related to the prince of light or angel of truth and to the angel of darkness, Belial, as their respective head. There is eternal hate between them and they are loved or hated by God since eternity<sup>126</sup>. Their unequal distribution in history and in single individuals determines not only the eternal fight between the two groups of the sons of light and of the sons of darkness, but also the interior fight within the soul of every single individual. In both cases destiny is already determined: the final triumph of the sons of light in the historical plan and the fatal conclusion, implied by the proportion of the parts of light and of darkness received by every man in the individual plan<sup>127</sup>.

124 See Elio Jucci, ‘Davide a Qumran’, in *Davide: modelli biblici e prospettive messianiche*. Atti dell’VIII Convegno di studi veterotestamentari (Seiano, 13 – 15 Settembre 1993), ed. by Gian Luigi Prato, *RSB* 7 (1995), 157 – 173.

125 See Jucci, *Un Eden glorioso nel deserto*, pp. 157.

126 The community members similarly will hate all the sons of darkness and will love all the sons of light (1QS 1,11). In Elliot R. Wolfson, ‘Light through Darkness. The Ideal of Human Perfection in the Zohar’, *HTR* 81 (1988), 73 – 95, the possibility of very different conceptions of the equilibrium between light and darkness is pointed out.

127 This point of view can explain also the fragmentary horoscopes of Qumran with the determination of the parts “in the house of light” and “in the house of darkness”. However,

However, within the scroll of the *Hymns* (1QH) there is a more personal reflection on the experience of the enlightenment of the sons of light<sup>128</sup>, and maybe even on the same experience of the Teacher of Righteousness, mediator, in respect of the community, of a more complete revelation of the mysteries of God, of the meaning of the history, of the interpretation of the Law<sup>129</sup>.

God shows himself/herself to the believer illuminating his/her own face<sup>130</sup>, and the face of the believer too illuminates itself<sup>131</sup>. However, the action of light does not stop: “By me, you have illuminated the face of many persons, and have allowed for their growing and they so became innumerable”<sup>132</sup>, “you appeared to me at dawn, and you do not cover my face by shame. All that come toward me join into your covenant”<sup>133</sup>.

In the New Testament the images of light (and darkness) have a meaningful development in the John’s Gospel<sup>134</sup>. In the Prologue<sup>135</sup> “the «light of Yahweh» and of «His Servant» join into the one of the “Word Incarnate”<sup>136</sup>.

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very recently, in Maden Popovic, *Reading The Human Body Physiognomics And Astrology In The Dead Sea Scrolls And Hellenistic-Early Roman Period Judaism*, Dissertation, Rijk-suniversiteit Groningen, 2006 (<http://irs.ub.rug.nl/ppn/297613987>) a different interpretation has been proposed. The debate will continue for the state of the fragments.

128 See Moraldi, *Il Maestro di Giustizia*, pp. 141 – 150; Ibba, *Qumran. Correnti del pensiero giudaico*, pp. 59 – 73.

129 See Moraldi, *Il Maestro di Giustizia*, pp. 129 – 135. Concerning the possible relationship with a tradition of specific mystical techniques, one can only elaborate hypotheses; see Davila, *The Hodayot Hymnist*.

130 *Inni* 3,3. (Moraldi, *Manoscritti*, p. 372, see 9,26 ff., *Ibid.*, p. 420).

131 *Inni* 4,5 (Moraldi, *Manoscritti*, p. 380).

132 *Inni* 4,27 (Moraldi, *Manoscritti*, p. 385). In Moraldi, *Ibid.*, p. 341, it is rightly remembered that “all that makes reference to the divine benevolence [...] is exclusively reserved to the members of the community”, just indicated with the terms “many” (*harabbim*). The same terminology can be found in the New Testament (*Mt* 26,28; *Mc* 14,24; *Acts* 6,2.5; 15,12.30; 2 *Cor* 2,5 – 6.), where the persons who had received the baptism are called “enlightened” (*Hebr* 6,4; 10,32; *Ephes* 5,14). The connection between enlightenment and baptism had a development also in the practice of merging into the font a wood from the cross or a lit church-candle, “symbol of the crucified Christ, Who inspires the luminous virtue of the Spirit into the water”; see Hugo Rahner, *Miti greci nell’interpretazione cristiana* (Bologna: Mulino, 1957), pp. 99 ff.

133 *Inni* 4,23 ff. (Moraldi, *Manoscritti*, p.384); one has to remember the morning prayer of the Essenes (see Moraldi, *Il Maestro di Giustizia*, p. 148). What elsewhere, at Qumran (*Raccolta di benedizioni* (1QS<sup>b</sup>) 4,27) and already in the Old Testament (*Num* 6,25), is more ritually attributed to the role of priests, in the text of the Hymns is emphasized to assume a more personal and intimate value.

134 Moraldi, *Dio è amore*, pp. 110 – 119; Clémence Hérou, ‘Il conflitto delle tenebre e della luce negli scritti giovannei. Un approccio simbolico’, in *Simbolismo ed esperienza della luce nelle grandi religioni*, ed. by Julien Ries and Charles Marie Ternès, pp. 175 – 190; Max Pulver, ‘Die Lichterfahrt im Johannes-Evangelium, in ‘Corpus Hermeticum, in der Gnosis und in der Ostkirche’, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 52 (1983), pp. 253 – 296.

135 One has to consider that here, like in the Old Testament, the terminologies of light and glory converge: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory,

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (*John* 1,1–5).<sup>137</sup>

As in a new beginning, the darkness of the world is illuminated by a new light, the “true light”:

<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him<sup>138</sup>.

If one has to recognize “the universality of the mission of Christ into the world and the universality of the love of the Father”<sup>139</sup> for every man (*John* 1,4)<sup>140</sup>, one has to remember that this light as such, with its diairetic<sup>141</sup> value, implies the

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the glory of the One and Only, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (*John* 1,14); and, just as the enlightenment of the Teacher reflects itself on the Qumran community, in the same way in the community of the Christ: “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (*2 Cor* 3,18).

136 Moraldi, *Dio è amore*, p. 112. See *Isa* 42,6–7 (where it is said, in reference to the Servant: “... I will keep you and will make you be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, <sup>7</sup> open eyes that are blind, free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness”); 49,6; 60,1.3. Concerning the connection of the Messiah with light – starting from the Balaam prophecy on the star which will rise from Jacob (*Num* 24,17) –, see William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ*, London: SCM Press, 1998, p. 99.

137 See Elliot R. Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau. Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 9 ff.

138 *John* 1,6–10.

139 Moraldi, *Dio è amore*, p. 116.

140 In Moraldi, *Dio è amore*, p. 115, it is remarked that if “the light diffusion ray which is the Christ [...] extends itself to the whole mankind”, indeed “one could interpret these verses as referring more universally”, including every created living being.

141 The same symbolic dynamics is present in the words of Simeon in *Luke* 2: “<sup>30</sup>For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the sight of all people, <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (*Luke* 2,30–32); “<sup>34</sup>... This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup>so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too” (*Luke* 2,34 ff.). Here, also the symbol of the sword is appearing: see Durand, *Le strutture antropologiche*, p. 158; Hérou, *Il conflitto delle tenebre e della luce negli scritti giovannei*, 184 ff. Here, I would like to quote, among many contributions which

judgement and a differentiation among men, which depends on their answer to light:

<sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God –<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. (*John* 1,11–13)  
[...]Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. (*John* 3,19).

Therefore, we are not surprised if the death of Jesus is coupled with the darkening of the sun:

<sup>44</sup>It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, <sup>45</sup>for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup>Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.  
(*Luke* 23,44–6)

However, as in the case of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, here we come into the nocturne phase of the imagery and in this darkness salvation is actuated<sup>142</sup>.

However, just within the representation of the crucifixion, the opening up of the eyes or the bowing head, the play of lights and shadows, shows their complementarity, their integration in a different luminosity<sup>143</sup>.

Light of the beginning, light of the end and without end. As the Old Testament concludes with the image of the “sun of justice” of *Malachi*, the New Testament concludes itself with the Apocalypse, with the image of a new, luminous world, with the descent of the celestial Jerusalem, with the light flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.<sup>144</sup>

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I have used to prepare this paper, the very dense pages of Anita Seppilli, *Poesia e magia* (Torino, Einaudi, 1971).

142 See Borgonovo, *La notte e il suo sole*, pp. 323 ff.

143 The two theologies of light and darkness have also been expressed in the figurative representation that very great artists have given in relation to the crucifixion; see Luigi Mezzadri, ‘Il Volto di Cristo nella pietà, nella devozione popolare e nell’arte’, in *Il volto di Cristo: Via verità e Vita. Atti del Convegno Diocesano. Marina di Sibari (Cosenza), 26–27 settembre 2008*, Diocesi di Cassano all’Ionio (Gorle: Editrice Velar, 2008), pp. 391–401. Mezzadri concludes with these words: “When the clutch of pain catches us, we could evocate the Crucified Christ of Velasquez and accept to understand that we do not understand; when the fogs vanish, we shall have to trust opening eyes and looking at height like the Crucified Christ of Reni” (p. 400).

144 *Revelation* 21,1–22,5. See Hérou, *Il conflitto delle tenebre e della luce negli scritti giovannei*, 187 ff.; Ombretta Pisano, *La radice e la stirpe di Davide. Salmi davidici nel libro dell’Apocalisse* (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2002), pp. 388–402; 422–

Todas las nubes arden  
Porque yo te he encontrado,  
Dios deseante y deseado;  
Antochas altas cárdenas  
(granas, azules, rojas, amarillas)  
En alto grito de rumor de luz<sup>145</sup>.

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424. If it is true, following this text, that there will be neither the sun nor the moon, indeed Christian interpretation, after a first rigorous differentiation, will not renounce to the images of the sun and of the moon. These symbols will be translated to the new reality of the Christ, of the Church and Mary. See Rahner, 'Il mistero cristiano del sole e della luna', in *Id.*, *Miti greci nell'interpretazione cristiana*, pp. 107-197.

145 Juan Ramón Jiménez, *Animale di fondo*, ed. by Rinaldo Froldi (Firenze: Fussi - Sansoni, 1954), p. 38.