

# THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF DEUTERONOMY 18.15, 18-19 IN ANCIENT JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE\*

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Not confrontation but ‘dialogue between Judaism and Christianity’<sup>1</sup> is a necessity which has been recognized by Christians unfortunately only after centuries of Christian anti-Judaism during which ‘Good Things’ for Christians too often included suffering for Jews. Meanwhile a new sensitivity has appeared in academic debate as Jews and Christian read texts which had been important for the development of their own religious traditions. The work of Antti Laato and his colleagues and friends at the Åbo Akademi is also dedicated to this principle.

In this dialogue one cannot seek to conceal problematic texts whose history within Christianity often reflects only all too well-known Christian claims to truth. Deuteronomy 18.15, 18-19 is just such a text in which the ‘Heralding of Good Things’ has been reclaimed by Christians in order to foster their own claimed theological superiority. In some way, this study shows what we should no longer think and do. Where Christians reclaim the text as fulfilled, Jewish exegesis focuses on Jewish daily life under the aegis of the continuity of God’s will within expectation. This should give Christians pause.

It is however necessary to examine the mechanisms of ancient exegesis in order to explain how this re-claiming of texts could function at all. Generally, an ancient reader faithful to religious tradition ‘was convinced that as the biblical text mirrors reality it is, therefore, necessary to fill

\* I warmly thank J. Andrew Doole for improving my English.

1. Antti Laato, *Who is the Servant of the Lord? Jewish and Christian Interpretations of Isaiah 53 from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (SRB, 4; Turku: Åbo Akademi University; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 8.

all the gaps therein so that its referential world fits the reader's own social, historical and religious context.<sup>2</sup> We will detect this procedure of adapting in the reception history of Deut. 18.15, 18-19, which has already been demonstrated to a certain extent.<sup>3</sup> The following study is arranged according to the different contexts of reception.

I will mention passages where Deut. 18.15 is absent though it would have been beneficial to quote this text. Reception and non-reception sometimes astonishingly stand side-by-side. We should also acknowledge the limits of our understanding of pre-Enlightenment tradition.

First, I will present the different versions of this text.

Deut. 18.15, 18-19 MT	Deut. 18.15, 18-19 LXX	English Translation of the MT (NRSV)
נביא מקרבך מאחיך כמני יקים לך יהוה אלהיך אליו תשמעון	<sup>15</sup> προφήτην ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου ὡς ἐμὲ ἀναστήσει σοι κύριος ὁ θεὸς σου, αὐτοῦ ἀκούεσθε	<sup>15</sup> The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.
נביא אקים להם מקרב אחיהם כמוך ונתתי דברי בפיו ודבר אליהם את כל-אשר אצונו	<sup>18</sup> προφήτην ἀναστήσω αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν ὡσπερ σε καὶ δώσω τὸ ῥῆμά μου ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ λαλήσει αὐτοῖς καθότι ἂν ἐντείλωμαι αὐτῷ	<sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command.
והיה האיש אשר לא ישמע אל-דברי אשר ידבר בשמי אנכי אדרש מעמו	<sup>19</sup> καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ ὅσα ἐὰν λαλήσῃ ὁ προφήτης ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι μου, ἐγὼ ἐκδικήσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ.	<sup>19</sup> Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable.

2. Laato, *Who is the Servant of the Lord*, p. 5.

3. Ingrid Hjelm, 'The Coming of a "Prophet Like You" in Ancient Literature', in Jesper Høgenhaven, Jesper Tang Nielsen and Heike Omerzu (eds.), *Rewriting and Reception in and of the Bible* (WUNT, 396; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), pp. 33-48, covers the reception of Deut. 18.15 in the Samaritan and Masoretic traditions and the New Testament.

The context of this text<sup>4</sup> is the ‘Law on Prophecy’ of Deut. 18.10-22 which is part of the section dealing with the duties of special officials (Deut. 16.18–19.21). The ‘Law of Prophecy’ begins with a severe warning against mantic practices, which are seen as typical of the nations, not for Israel. Obedience to the word of the prophet raised by God is obligatory; the word of the prophet represents the voice of God. Not every prophecy, however, is legitimate; only the prophet who is sent by God is a legitimate prophet. Deuteronomy 18.20-22 develops a criterion for how to distinguish between true and false prophecy: If the prophecy does not become true, then this prophet is a false prophet.

### 1. *Jewish Reception*

#### 1.1. *Reception in the Literature of Second Temple Judaism*

The reception history of Deut. 18.15, 18 focuses on the authority of Moses who is seen as a model for subsequent prophets or authoritative agents.

Within so-called Hellenistic Judaism, Deut. 18.15 is taken up in order to characterize Moses himself. In his treatise on the prophecy of Elijah, Eupolemos mentions Moses, Joshua and Samuel as prophets and predecessors of Elijah.<sup>5</sup> Aristoboulos praises Moses’ wisdom and divine Spirit, on the basis of which Moses is called a prophet.<sup>6</sup> In *LAB* 35.6, Moses is mentioned as the preeminent of all prophets.<sup>7</sup>

In some Qumran texts, Deut. 18.15, 18 together with Deut. 5.28-29 testifies to a distinctly eschatological expectation. 4Q175,5-8 quotes Deut. 18.15, 18-19 together with Deut. 5.28-29 as the eschatological

4. The variations between these versions are not relevant for the reception history of this text. The synopsis of *מקרבך מאחיד* (MT), *מקרב מאחיד* (SamP) and of the Septuagint reveals an uncertainty with regard to the precise wording. Perhaps the reading of SamP is the parent reading for the text of the Septuagint (John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* [SBLSCS, 39; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995], p. 301). In v. 18, *πάντα*, which would be expected for *כל*, is missing; the conjunction *καθότι* may presuppose *כ* instead of *כל*. In v. 19, the Septuagint repeats *ὁ προφήτης* in order to clarify the sentence.

5. Eupolemos, in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praep. ev.* 9:30.1 (GCS 43/1:538).

6. Aristoboulos, in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praep. ev.* 8:10.4 (GCS 43/1:452).

7. Perhaps, Deut. 18.15 is also taken up in OrSib 5:256-259, but this text could be a Christian interpolation (at least v. 257, whereas v. 258 fits better to Joshua), cf. Helmut Merkel, *Sibylinen* (JSRZ, V/8; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998), p. 1126.

announcement of a new prophet, in combination with Num. 24.15-17 and Deut. 33.8-13. The formula כַּמֶּנִי ('like me') is leading. Due to the influence of 1QS IX, 11 (עַד בּוֹא נְבִיא 'until the coming of a prophet') scholars interpreted the text as announcing three eschatological figures, a lawgiver, a royal figure, and a priestly messiah.<sup>8</sup> 4Q175 probably served as proof-text for the author of 1QS in order to support his three-fold concept of messianic figures in 1QS IX 11.<sup>9</sup> According to Johann Maier, 4Q158 Frgm. 6,6-9 quotes Deut. 18.18 in order to corroborate the authority of the 'Teacher of Righteousness'.<sup>10</sup>

The combination of Deut. 18.15, 18 and Deut. 5.28-29 may be attested earlier than at Qumran; SamP Exod. 20:18<sup>ef</sup> includes the same combination in order to emphasize the binding character of the divine commands.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps this hope for a *Moses redivivus* is a contrast to the canon of prophets that had been forming since the second century BCE.<sup>12</sup> Deut. 18.15 may also have served as a corroboration of the actual claims of historical persons. Perhaps the Samaritan mentioned in Josephus (37-100), *Ant.* 18.85 regarded himself as within the tradition of a prophet like Moses, the Samaritan 'who rallied the mob to come with him to Mount Garizim: He assured them that on their arrival he would show them the sacred vessels which were buried there, where Moses had deposited

8. Eric Mason, 'You are a Priest forever': *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle of the Hebrews* (STDJ, 74; Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 107. John Lübke, 'A Re-Interpretation of 4QTestimonia', *RevQ* 12 (1986), pp. 187-97 (190-91), regarded 4QTestimonia as warning against the apostates of the Qumran group; the figure announced in Deut. 18.15, 18 is the Teacher of Righteousness and to be identified with the 'star' mentioned in 4Q175,12 (due to CD VII) whereas the figure announced in Deut. 33.8-13 is not a priestly messiah but the Qumran group itself in its contemporary priestly function for the whole of Israel.

9. Géza G. Xeravits, *King, Priest, Prophet: Positive Eschatological Protagonists of the Qumran Library* (STDJ, 47; Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 58. Hans Gerhard Kippenberg, *Garizim und Synagoge: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur samaritanischen Religion der aramäischen Periode* (RVV, 30; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1971), pp. 307-308, assumes that the texts from Qumran are dependent on Exod. 20.18<sup>SamP</sup>.

10. Johann Maier, *Die Qumran-Essener: Die Texte vom Toten Meer*, II (Munich: Reinhardt, 1995), p. 60 n. 3. According to Maier (p. 324), also 4Q375 Frgm. 1 i 1 presupposes this concept.

11. It is debated whether the lacuna in 4Q22 includes a similar expansion (cf. Hjelm, 'Coming', pp. 38-39).

12. Kippenberg, *Garizim*, p. 313; Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (VTSup, 128; Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 284.

them'.<sup>13</sup> In the third century CE, Origen (185–253) claims of Dositheus of Samaria (perhaps first or second century CE) that he referred Deut. 18.15 to himself and presented himself as the Messiah announced by Moses<sup>14</sup>—within Samaritan theology, the claim of Dositheus is not acknowledged.<sup>15</sup> We cannot say whether Dositheus understood himself as part of Samaritan religious identity, centered on the cult at Mount Garizim and a refusal to acknowledge the prophetic books.

### 1.2. *Reception in the Rabbinic Literature*

The author of *Sifre Deuteronomy* deals with Deut. 18.15, 18 in the context of Israel's dissociation from paganism and apostasy but also of counterbalancing antagonistic biblical claims.

The wording מִמֵּינֵיכֶם 'from your brethren' means 'not from others': Jews should not obey gentile prophets. The wording לְיִשְׂרָאֵל means: God will send a prophet to Israel, not to the gentiles. The author asks how to counterbalance this with Jer. 1.5 ('I have called you prophet for the nations'). He answers: Jer. 1.5 relates to someone who is accustomed to gentile customs. Jer. 1.5 refers to Jewish apostates who should be brought back to the Torah.<sup>16</sup> The author of *Sifre Deuteronomy* continues: 'You shall hear him', even if he calls for a parabasis of one of the commands of Torah like Elijah who, according to 1 Kgs 18.31-32 built an altar at Mount Carmel (it contrasted to the command of cultic centralization in Deut. 12, but Elijah brought the Israelites back to the worship of the true God).<sup>17</sup> In Deut.

13. Hermann Lichtenberger, 'Qumran and the New Testament', in Ian H. Henderson and Gerbern S. Oegema (eds.), *The Changing Face of Judaism. Christianity, and Other Greco-Roman Religions in Antiquity* (JSHRZ, 2/2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006), pp. 103-29 (107).

14. Origen, *Cels.* 1:57 (SC 132:252).

15. Simeon Lowy, *The Principles of Samaritan Bible Exegesis* (SPB, 28; Leiden: Brill, 1977), p. 247; Hjelm, 'Coming', p. 41.

16. The problem of an apparent antagonism between Jer. 1.5 and Deut. 18.15 is sometimes debated even by Christian authors, for example, by Origen: the fact that Jeremiah was destined to be a prophet for the nations (Jer. 1.5) proves true with regard to himself (cf. the oracles against Elam, Damascus, Moab etc.), but also in a spiritual sense with regard to the prophet Jesus, announced by Moses, who to this day works among the nations with his power and with his spirit and leads people to salvation (Origen, *Hom. Jer.* 1.12 [SC 232:220-222]).

17. *Sifre Deut.* § 175. Hans Bietenhard, *Der tannaitische Midrasch Sifre Deuteronomium übersetzt und erklärt* (Mit einem Beitrag von Henrik Ljungman; Judaica et Christiana, 8; Bern: Peter Lang, 1984), p. 444, feels that the author only discusses this as theoretical possibility. Bietenhard's second consideration, the justification of

18.18, the author of *Sifre Deuteronomy* states the adequacy of the phrasing להם אקים להם נביא 'I will awake a prophet for them': due to their fear of God, they are worthy of this. The phrase ונתתי דברי בפיו 'I put my words in his mouth' is used in order to dissociate the prophet's authority from the authority of Moses: 'I do not speak to him face to face (as God did with Moses, Exod. 33.11; Deut. 34.10). Another explanation: you shall learn and know how the Holy Spirit is given in the mouth of the prophet.' The text-external aim is to corroborate the everlasting validity of the Torah. In what follows, the author paraphrases אליהם ודבר 'he shall speak to them' with 'he should not allow a translator to speak'. Perhaps a general mistrust in translations is implied. The end of the verse, את כל-אשר אצוונו 'all that I command' is explained by: 'You shall speak on the First at first and on the Last at last.'<sup>18</sup>

In *b. Yeb.* 90b, we again find the problem of counterbalancing Deut. 18.15 and 1 Kgs 18.31-32, yet this time expanded to a debate on the authorization of rabbinical teachings. The text reads:

Come and hear: Unto him ye shall hearken, even if he tells you 'Transgress any of all the commandments of the Torah' as in the case, for instance, of Elijah on Mount Carmel, obey him in every respect in accordance with the needs of the hour!—There it is different, for it is written 'Unto him shall ye hearken'. Then let [Rabbinic law] be deduced from it! The safeguarding of a cause is different.<sup>19</sup>

The first part of this statement lays the ground for the second. If there are 'needs of the hour', i.e. danger for the religious identity of Israel, even deviations from pentateuchal law are allowed, whether suggested by a

Elijah's actions, is more plausible in my view. Sometimes even Christian authors discuss this problem. Theodoret (c. 393–c. 466) justifies Elijah's actions through use of 1 Tim. 1.9 ('There is no law for the righteous one.') but offers also arguments fitting the time: the law of cultic centralization should prevent the worshipping of idols, and the prophet intended to demonstrate the frailty of demons and the power of the true God, but the kingdom was divided, and Jerusalem was unattainable (Theodoret, *Qu. 3Reg* 46 [PG 80:729b]).

18. *Sifre Deut.* § 176. According to Bietenhard, *Sifre Deuteronomium*, p. 445 n. 15, this could relate to the order of the commandments of Torah or to the distinction between important and less important matters of doctrine.

19. Israel W. Slotki, *Yebamoth*, translated into English, with Notes, Glossary and Indices by Israel W. Slotki, in *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nashim. Yebamoth*, translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices under the Editorship of Rabbi Dr I. Epstein (London: The Soncino Press, 1936), II, p. 614.

prophet or by the Rabbis. The ‘cause’ meant here is the danger of Israel’s apostasy, the ‘safeguarding’ means an act which is literally seen as a violation of pentateuchal law but helps to save Israel’s religious identity. ‘Different’ means ‘different from the normal teaching of the Rabbis’ which precludes any inconsistency with the Torah; it means different ‘from an ordinary measure. Elijah by his act, saved Israel from idolatry and brought them back to the worship of God.’<sup>20</sup>

In *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* 13.6, the author tries to counterbalance Deut. 18.18 (כמוך ‘like you’) with Deut. 34.10 (ולא־קם נביא כמשה) ‘and there did not arise a prophet ... like Moses’). The wording כמוך refers to speeches of punishment, just as Jeremiah’s words were speeches of punishment. Also other biographical details (prophesying for forty years; adversaries within Israel) are similar in the cases of both Moses and Jeremiah.

Deuteronomy 18.15 is not interpreted in rabbinical Judaism as an indicator of the end times. Perhaps they wanted to distance themselves from the Samaritans or from emerging Christianity.<sup>21</sup> Against Christian re-claiming of the text, Jews referred Deut. 18 to Joshua or to David.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3. Reception in Later Samaritan Literature

At least in the fourteenth century CE,<sup>23</sup> Deut. 18.15, 18 was used in order to formulate the expectation of the Tāhēb (probably ‘The Returning One’). The interpretation of the Tāhēb as a prophet like Moses is

20. Slotki, *Yebamoth*, II, p. 614.

21. For the first option cf. Kippenberg, *Garizim*, p. 313.

22. Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld Vol. 1. 1.–11.Jh.* (EHS, 23/172; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2nd edn, 1990), pp. 366, 397, referring to Isidor of Pelusium; Ep. (PG 78:797, 800: Joshua) and Gregentius of Taphar, *Disputatio cum Herbano Judaeo* (PG 86:632a: David). Against the Jewish referral of Deut. 18.15 to David, Gregentius maintains that David was occupied with war and was composing Psalms but was no lawgiver like Moses.

23. Ambrosiaster takes Jn 4.25, spoken by the Samaritan woman, as real statement concerning the Samaritans waiting for the Messiah and combines it with Deut. 18.15 (Ambrosiaster, *App. Qu. N.T.* 48 [CSEL 50:444]). The context is confusing: Ambrosiaster justifies I Cor. 9.20 and identifies ‘those under the law’ with the Samaritans, even though he of course knows that obedience to Torah is a general Jewish identity marker. From a historical-critical point of view, Kippenberg, *Garizim*, p. 303, states: ‘Joh 4,25 hat mit dem Taheb nichts zu tun’. We can however ask whether Ambrosiaster was able to distinguish between the Samaritan concepts of messiah and of Tāhēb.

attested all the more frequently the younger the material is.<sup>24</sup> The Hymn of Abisa Ben Pinhas perhaps does not inaugurate but presupposes the contamination between the expectation of a ‘prophet like Moses’ and the expectation of the Tāhēb.<sup>25</sup>

## 2. Christian Reception

The structure of the following explanations considers chronological aspects but is not exclusively chronological. I will not anticipate the reception of the New Testament as a prerequisite for later reception, but will thematically assign it to the various aspects where it can often be considered the earliest reception. The later Christian reception of Deut. 18.15 shows parallels in many respects to the New Testament uses of the passage. However, the Acts of the Apostles was recognized only late in the West, and Deut. 18.15 is received without any hint of Acts 3.22;<sup>26</sup> therefore, a genealogy between Acts 3.22 and the reception of ancient Christian theologians cannot easily be established. In the fourth century, Acts 3.22 was sometimes understood as corroborating the truth of Deut. 18.15.<sup>27</sup>

### 2.1. *The Function of the Prophets for Israel before the Coming of Christ*

This motif already presupposes an elaborate Christian view of Israel’s history, but is only really significant in the period before 325. In his account of Israel’s history, Theophilus of Antioch (second half of second century) regards the prophets ‘from their (i.e. the Israelites) brethren’ as warning against sin—Israel’s enslavement under foreign (i.e. Roman) rule

24. Kippenberg, *Garizim*, pp. 285-86. In some Samaritan eschatological texts, references to Deut. 18 are missing, but this does not denigrate the importance of Deut. 18 and Exod. 20.18<sup>SamP</sup> for the Samaritan movement (Lowy, *Principles*, p. 197). Concerning medieval sources referring to Deut. 18.15, cf. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NTSup, 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967), pp. 250-52.

25. Dexinger, ‘Taheb’, in Alan D. Crown, Reinhard Pummer and Abraham Tal (eds.), *A Companion to Samaritan Studies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), pp. 224-26 (225), against Kippenberg, *Garizim*, p. 327. One can regard texts in Ps.-Clem., *Rec.* 1:54.5 (GCS 51:39) and Origen, *Cels.* 1:57 (SC 132:252), as slight support for Dexinger’s position—but of course these documents are foreign descriptions.

26. Cyprian, *Test.* 1:18 (CCSL 3:18) combines Deut. 18.18-19 with Jn 5.39-40, 46-47, but not with Acts 3.22; 7.37.

27. Ambrosiaster, *In Gal* 3.21 (CSEL 81/3:40); Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Io.* 24.7 (CCSL 36:247): Acts 3.22 proves that Deut. 18.15 is to be referred to Jesus Christ.

shows that the warnings were futile.<sup>28</sup> Origen appreciates the effectiveness of prophetic preaching in the history of Israel. Pagans, he says, are accustomed to trust divine voices whereas this is forbidden to Israel (Deut. 18.14). Prophets kept Israel safe from idolatry and prophesied therefore also with regard to things of daily life in order to make people happy and to prevent apostasy.<sup>29</sup> Alluding on Deut. 18.15, Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315–367) mentions Moses as a prophet and leader in a collection of examples which prove the truth of Ps. 52[53].3, the ongoing divine cure for humanity against sinning. In Hilary's text, the Christological aspect is not emphasized explicitly.<sup>30</sup> In the Ps.-Clementine Recognitions (second or early third century), a quotation of Deut. 18.15 is part of the long speech of Peter to Clement concerning Israel's history. For a time, sacrifices were allowed but only sacrifices to the true God, not to idols, and only at one Holy place. Moses wanted to prevent the Israelites from worshipping false gods. Deuteronomy 18.15 announces the true prophet who was to reject at once the sacrifices *and* the holy place.<sup>31</sup>

## 2.2. *The Authority of Jesus for his Adherents*

Most interpreters of the scene of Transfiguration<sup>32</sup> regard the ending of Mk 9.7 par. Mt. 17.5 as an allusion to Deut. 18.15.<sup>33</sup> I follow this interpretation suggested already by Tertullian (c. 160–220) and the Venerable

28. Theophilus, *Autol.* 3:11.1 (PTS 44:111), referring to Isa. 55.6; Ezek. 18.21-22; Isa. 31.6; Jer. 6.9.

29. Origen, *Cels.* 1:36 (SC 132:174).

30. Hilary of Poitiers, *Psalm* 52.5 (CSEL 22:120).

31. Ps.-Clem., *Rec.* 1:36-37 (GCS 51:29).

32. In the context of this study, there is no need here to ask for earlier forms of this narrative and their understanding of Jesus' transfiguration. In any case, one cannot achieve methodical certainty and Mk 9.7 must be seen as an original part of the text because it is improbable that someone would have employed the motif of Elijah and Moses without any further comment and leave Peter's misapprehension without correction, cf. Adrian Wypadlo, *Die Verklärung Jesu nach dem Markusevangelium* (WUNT, 308; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), pp. 276-77; Dieter Zeller, 'Die Verwandlung Jesu (Mk 9,2-8): Ein motivgeschichtlicher Versuch', in Dieter Zeller, *Neues Testament und hellenistische Umwelt* (BBB, 150; Hamburg: Philo, 2006), pp. 109-22 (110); Markus Öhler, 'Die Verklärung (Mk 9:1-8): Die Ankunft der Herrschaft Gottes auf der Erde', *NT* 38 (1996), pp. 197-217 (200-201).

33. But cf. Pellegrini, *Elija—Wegbereiter des Gottessohnes: Eine textsemiotische Untersuchung im Markusevangelium* (HBS, 26; Freiburg: Herder, 2000), p. 327, who suggests Exod. 23.20 as biblical pretext for the divine command in Mk 9.7, due to Exod. 23.21 (*προσέχε σεαυτῷ καὶ εἰσάκουε αὐτοῦ*).

Bede (673–735).<sup>34</sup> The textual criticism of Mk 9.7 par. Mt. 17.5 reveals this understanding already in ancient textual transmission.<sup>35</sup> The evangelists transfer the announcement of the eschatological prophet to Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

Yet we have to ask what this divine admonition ‘Listen to him’ means concretely for the recipients of the Gospels who here are represented by Peter, James, and John. Composition criticism is helpful for an answer: in Mk 8.22–10.52, the predictions of Jesus’ suffering are intertwined with discipleship demands between two healing stories of blind men (Mk 8.22–26 and 10.46–52), which form an *inclusio* around this section. What is asked of the disciples is oriented towards their ongoing existence within this world while Jesus is not present with them between his resurrection and return. His teachings on suffering and discipleship (Mk 8.34–8) are obligatory<sup>37</sup> but so are his teachings on relations within the Christian community (Mk 9.33–50; 10.35–45), family (Mk 10.1–16), and wealth (Mk 10.17–31) as rules for life in this age. On the other hand, if one takes into account God’s relative lack of prominence as an actor in Mark’s Gospel narrative, the command of the divine voice at the transfiguration speaks even louder, justifying the application of the injunction ‘Listen to him’ to Jesus’ teaching in general as it is presented in the Gospel of Mark,<sup>38</sup> including his teaching on fasting and the Sabbath (Mk 2.18–28), on purity (Mk 7.1–23), and also on topics of future persecution and endangerment

34. Tertullian, *Marc.* 4:22.10 (CCSL 1:602-3); The Venerable Bede, *In Mc.* (CCSL 120, 545).

35. In Deut. 18.15 LXX (προφήτην ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου ὡς ἐμὲ ἀναστήσει σοι κύριος ὁ θεός σου, αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε), the word order αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε with the pronoun first followed by the verb, which corresponds to the MT, נשמע ליה is not changed in any extant manuscript; variations concern only the form of the imperative (cf. John William Wevers and Udo Quast [ed.], *Deuteronomium* [Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, 3/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977], p. 225). However, in some New Testament manuscripts of both Mk 9.7 and Mt. 17.5, the most likely original word order ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ is sometimes reversed from imperative–pronoun to pronoun–imperative, with the latter clearly betraying the influence of the Greek version of Deut. 18.15.

36. Dieter Sänger, “‘Von mir hat er geschrieben’ (Joh 5,46). Zur Funktion und Bedeutung Mose im Neuen Testament”, in *Von der Bestimmtheit des Anfangs: Studien zu Jesus, Paulus und zum frühchristlichen Schriftverständnis* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), pp. 241–65 (252–53).

37. Bas van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), p. 297; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 264.

38. Nützel, *Verklärungserzählung*, p. 147.

(Mk 13.5-13). In other words, the divine voice reveals Jesus as the only teacher.<sup>39</sup> Concerning Christian discipline, the voice's command 'listen to him' emphasizes Jesus' unsurpassable teaching authority<sup>40</sup> in the readers' present,<sup>41</sup> just as Exod. 19.9 did with regard to Moses.<sup>42</sup>

Even at the beginning of the third century, an allusion to Deut. 18.15 can be used in order to circumscribe a perfect understanding of Jesus Christ: ἀλλὰ νομικοῦ μὲν τελείωσις γνωστικὴ εὐαγγελίου πρόσληψις, ἵνα γένηται ὁ κατὰ νόμον τέλειος. οὕτω γὰρ προεθέσπισεν ὁ κατὰ νόμον Μωυσεῆς ἀκοῦσαι δεῖν, ἵνα ἐκδεξώμεθα κατὰ τὸν ἀπόστολον πλήρωμα νόμου τὸν Χριστόν.<sup>43</sup> Moses announced 'a prophet like me, from your brethren'; by Jesus (Joshua), the son of Nun/Nave, Moses meant Jesus, the Son of God; for the name Jesus was a shadow image of the Lord, and had been proclaimed beforehand in the Law.<sup>44</sup> Also at later points, the mere fact that Moses announced Jesus confirmed the importance of the Savior.<sup>45</sup>

In the New Testament Jesus is often referred to as a 'prophet'.<sup>46</sup> The evangelists usually put this term in the mouth of the masses. In the

39. Hilary of Poitiers, *Comm. Matt.* (SC 258:64; *vox de nube significat. ut idoneus ipse praeceptorum talium auctor esset* 'the voice of the cloud means that he himself is the convenient author of such commands'); Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, p. 151. In my mind, this motif is more important than the often-emphasized contrast between Jesus on the one hand and Elijah and Moses on the other; cf. Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* (SC 259:32): '*hic est filius meus, illi sunt servi* (he is my son; those are slaves); Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium. II. Teil* (HThK, 2/2; Freiburg: Herder, 4th edn, 1991), p. 77; William Richard Stegner, 'The Use of Scripture in Two Early Narratives of Jewish Christianity (Matthew 4:1-11 and Mk. 9:2-8)', in Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (eds.), *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scripture of Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 98-120 (119).

40. Gudrun Guttenberger, *Die Gottesvorstellung im Markusevangelium* (BZNW, 123; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2004), p. 90.

41. Zeller, 'Verwandlung', p. 113. Mark for one did not understand the transfiguration story as the story of a vision of realities.

42. Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 355.

43. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-220), *Strom.* 4:130.3 (GCS 15:305).

44. Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1:60.3 (GCS 12:126).

45. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 12.17 (Rupp 22). Cyril promises an explanation of the phrase *ὡς ἐμέ* but does not fulfill this promise. Within an argumentation in canon law, the motif of Christ as prophet of God the Father enjoyed a reception based on the subordination of a prophet to God himself: just as the son is the prophet of the father, so the deacon is subordinated to the bishop but an authority for the laity—therefore they are obliged to obedience (*Ap. Const.* 2:30.2 [SC 320:248-250]).

46. In later debates on the Trinity and Christology, this fact had to be balanced with the emphasis on the divinity of Jesus. However, ancient Christian theologians

judgment of the evangelists, this term does not fully capture the essence of Jesus; Jesus is more, he is Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God. In the sense of a narrative hierarchy of authorities, the popular masses occupy the lowest positive place.<sup>47</sup> Yet the evangelists do not criticize this designation, because the title of prophet denotes an inalienable function of Jesus towards Israel. They distinguish the masses of the people who arrive at this assessment of Jesus from the elites who are not capable and not willing to make such an assessment. At the same time, this term ‘prophet’ makes it possible to integrate the behavior of those who reject Jesus into the traditional line of Israel’s rejection of the former prophets, thus ascribing guilt. The fact that this accusation of the Jews who rejected him at the time was then extended to subsequent generations is probably due to the disappointment of the mission to Israel. Unfortunately such an accusation, mostly connected with the establishment of a connection between the destruction of Jerusalem and the rejection of Jesus, has often been misused in anti-Jewish verbal and non-verbal contexts.

The reception history of Mt. 21.11, 45; Lk. 7.16; Jn 6.14, where Jesus is called a prophet, raises the question as to whether Deut. 18.15 is reflected or not. Origen concedes that the people who regard Jesus as a prophet (Mt. 21.45), have a notion which is true, due to Deut. 18.15.19, but do not perceive Jesus’ μέγεθος (greatness).<sup>48</sup> John Chrysostom (340–407) does not quote Deut. 18.15 in his comments on Mt. 21.11 and Jn 6.14—he interprets the statements of the masses in a negative way.<sup>49</sup> According to Isidore of Pelusium (c. 360–c. 440), the people who confessed Jesus as a prophet (Jn 6.14) are witnesses against the unbelieving Jews.<sup>50</sup> On the

never denied that Jesus was also to be considered a prophet. Deut. 18.15 has made it easier to consider the corresponding New Testament documents in which Jesus is called ‘prophet’ as positive because they are confirmed by the Holy Scriptures.

47. The narrative hierarchy presented here has its criterion in the question as to what extent the narrative voice can agree with the statements of the individual narrative figures. God stands in the highest place, then Christ and the Holy Scriptures follow, then the disciples, then those seeking help, then the masses. In the narrative hierarchy even further down are the figures to whom (at least as a group) no positive statement or positive behavior is attributed (the Jewish elites, Herod Antipas, then the demons—their positive testimony for Jesus according to Mk 1.32 and 3.11 does not change the fact that the work of Jesus will lead to their destruction (Mk 1.24; 5.7).

48. Origen, *Comm. Mat.* 17.14 (GCS 40:622).

49. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Joh.* 42.3 (PG 59:242-43); id., *Hom. Matt.* 66.3 (PG 58:629). In his commentary on Mt. 21:45-46 however, he uses the contrast between the opinion of the people and that of the elites to accuse them (*Hom. Matt.* 68.2 [PG 58:643]).

50. Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 3:94 (PG 78:800ab).

base of the wording *ὁ προφήτης* instead the simple *προφήτης* in Mt. 21.11, Jerome states that the masses characterized Jesus as the prophet like Moses.<sup>51</sup> In his homily on Jn 6, Augustine (354–430) does not criticize the statement of the masses: Jesus was both a prophet according to Jn 4:44 and Lord of the prophets.<sup>52</sup> Caesarius of Arles (c. 470–542) criticizes the disciples who, according to Lk. 24.19, saw Jesus as a prophet: Jesus, according to Caesarius, is not a prophet but Lord of the prophets. Peter correctly identifies Jesus as Son of God and refers Deut. 18.15, 18-19 to Jesus.<sup>53</sup> The Venerable Bede justifies the witness of the people according to Jn 6.14 by Lk. 13.33 where Jesus characterizes himself as a prophet, but he does not refer to Deut. 18.<sup>54</sup> To conclude this paragraph: Deut. 18 is not always reflected in the history of exegesis of Mt. 21.11 and Jn 6.14.

Sometimes Deut. 18.15 proves the superiority of Jesus over John the Baptist: the Baptist is not greater than Jesus whom Moses announced (Deut. 18.15), Lk. 7.28a (greater than anyone born of a woman) does not include Jesus Christ who is born by the Virgin Mary.<sup>55</sup>

### 2.3. *Deuteronomy 18.15 in the Apologetics of the Second and Third Centuries*

There was a double necessity for apologists in the second and third centuries: they had to prove both the antiquity of their own religion against Greco-Roman criticism and the unity of both Testaments against proponents of a theological dualism.

Lactantius (c. 250–c. 325) uses the reference to the prophet Moses, who lived long before the Trojan War, as one among several arguments to prove the antiquity of the Christian religion.<sup>56</sup>

51. Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 21.11 (SC 259:110). In his exegesis on Mt. 21.45, however, Jerome alludes to the well-known topos of the dull and inconstant masses; he compares this estimation of Jesus with the cry of ‘Crucify him, crucify him!’ (*Comm. Matt.* 21.45 [SC 259:138]).

52. Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Io.* 24.7 (CCSL 36:247).

53. Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 169.8 (CCSL 104:694). In this context, he justifies Jesus’ statement *o stulti et tardi corde* ‘oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart’ (Lk. 24.25) with a comparison between the disciples and the robber at the cross: they ‘had hoped’ and are desperate, he believed in the coming ruler.

54. The Venerable Bede, *In Io.* (PL 92:708ab). In his commentaries on Mt. 21.11 and Lk. 7.16, he does not discuss the motif ‘Jesus as prophet’.

55. Ambrose, *In Luc.* 5:110 (CCSL 14:172).

56. Lactantius, *Inst.* 4:5.6 (CSEL 19:284).

Sometimes Deut. 18.15 is an argument for proving the unity of both Testaments.<sup>57</sup> According to Novatian (third century), Deut. 18.15 and Gen. 49.10 are proofs of the Old Testament for Jesus whom we worship as (Son of) God.<sup>58</sup> Epiphanius (c. 320–403) once quotes it together with Gen. 49.9-10; Isa. 7.14; Jer. 17.9; Mic. 5.2; Mal. 3.1; Ps. 109.1; Jn 5.46 as proof for the unity of both Testaments against Marcion.<sup>59</sup> Against Mani's diminishing of the God of the Law, Epiphanius quotes Deut. 18.15 and Jn 5:46 corroborating that it is the same Spirit who spoke in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Gospel.<sup>60</sup>

#### 2.4. Jesus' Authority against the Unbelieving Jews

In the reception history of Deut. 18.15 this motif has dominated since the time of Acts, i.e. between 90 and 120 CE.<sup>61</sup>

Peter's speech according to Acts 3.12-26, which follows the healing of the paralytic in the temple, testifies to the miraculous power of Jesus, whom the Jews of Jerusalem had rejected, as the source of healing. Through repentance and acceptance of the apostolic preaching on Jesus as the messiah und divine servant, the addressees will participate in the coming time of redemption.<sup>62</sup> In this context, the mixed quotation

57. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3:12.3 (SC 100:186; quoted as statement by Peter); Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4:22.10-11 (CCSL 1:602-603). There is no reception in Augustine, *Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum* (CCSL 49:35-151).

58. Novatian, *Trin.* 9.5/47 (CCSL 4:25). Also Isa. 11.1 and Isa. 7.14 demonstrate it (*Trin.* 9.6/48 [CCSL 4:25]). *Trin.* 10.1/50 (CCSL 4:26) shows an anti-Marcionite horizon of this argumentation.

59. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 42.11.17 (GCS 31:136).

60. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 66.72.3 (GCS 37:113).

61. Concerning the debate on the dating Luke–Acts, cf. Martin Meiser, 'Der theologischeschichtliche Standort des lukanischen Doppelwerkes', in Wolfgang Kraus (ed.), *Beiträge zur urchristlichen Theologiegeschichte* (BZNW, 163; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 99-126 (101-11). Schreckenber, *Adversus-Iudaeos-Texte*, 1, pp. 366, 374, 397, 466, 476 lists texts with a reception of Deut. 18. We should note that Deut. 18.15 is not necessarily part of anti-Jewish agitation—it is lacking in Justin, *Dialogue avec Tryphon*. Édition critique, traduction, commentaire (ed. Philippe Bobichon, Par. 47/1-2; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2003); Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos*, cura et studio Aemilius Kroymann; CCSL, 2; Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), pp. 1337-96; John Chrysostom, *Orationes VIII contra Iudaeos* (PG 48:843-942); *Anonymus Dialogus cum Iudaeis saeculi ut videtur sexti* (ed. José H. Declerck; CCSG, 30; Turnholt: Brepols; Leuven: University Press, 1994).

62. The ἀποκατάστασις 'universal restoration' is not the revitalization of an ideal state but the epoch of salvation itself. The καιροὶ ἀναπύξεως 'times of refreshing' (v. 20) are identical with the epoch of salvation (Hans Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*

of Deut. 18.15 and Deut. 18.18 in Acts 3.22<sup>63</sup> proves the authority of the eschatological prophet, but leads to the mixed quotation of Deut. 18.19 and Lev. 23.29 in Acts 3.23<sup>64</sup> which warns against contempt for the prophet: this contempt would result in exclusion from the coming redemption, in accordance with the annunciation Lk. 2.34.<sup>65</sup> Further, Acts 3.22 corroborates that Moses is also one of the prophets who announce Jesus Christ (Lk. 24.27, 44).<sup>66</sup>

[HNT, 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963]), pp. 40-41). Against this view, Charles Kingsley Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. I. Preliminary Introduction and Commentary on Acts I-XIV* (ICC; London: T. & T. Clark, 1998), p. 205, refers to the plural *καιροί*: these 'times' are fulfilled in the earthly epoch by repeated conversions.

63. The word order of Acts 3.22 is in accordance to Deut. 18.18, the comparison particle *ὡς*, throughout witnessed in Acts 3.22 (Holger Strutwolf *et al.* [ed.], *Novum Testamentum Graecum. Editio Critica Maior. III. Acts of the Apostles, Part 1.1. Text Chapter 1-14* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2017]), p. 92), is taken from Deut. 18.15 (Deut. 18.18: *ὡσπερ*; the occurrence of *ὡσπερ* in Acts 3.17; 11.15 assures that Luke had no tendency to avoid this word). The second person singular is changed to the second person plural, as an adaptation to the speech situation (cf. *ἀδελφοί*, Acts 3.17). Luke may have quoted from memory, which would explain the additional *πρὸς ὑμᾶς*. The hexaplaric reading *ἐκ μέσου σου* of Deut. 18.15 (Wevers, *Notes*, p. 301), corresponding to the MT, is nowhere witnessed in the manuscripts of Acts or in ancient reception of Acts 3.22. The verb *ἀκούω* in Acts 3.22 is offered in different variants: *ἀκούσετε* (43 Or), *ἀκούσασθε* (180 636 1243), *ἀκούεσθε* (383\*), *ἀκούετε* (1838). Sometimes the thesis of an early Christian *testimonium* is debated (cf. Barrett, *Acts*, p. 210); Gert Jacobus Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and Pauline Speeches of the Acta Apostolorum* (CBET, 12; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995), p. 142, correctly characterizes such theses as 'problematic, questionable and unprovable'. Georg Gäbel, 'The quotations of Acts in the Gospel Commentary of Fortunatianus of Aquileia', in *Novum Testamentum Graecum. Editio Critica Maior. III. Acts of the Apostles, Part 3. Studies* (ed. Holger Strutwolf *et al.*; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2017), pp. 68-69 (69), mentions the transposition *hunc sicut me audietis* in the Gospel Commentary of Fortunatianus of Aquileia, but this has no parallel in the manuscript tradition of Acts 3.22 and Deut. 18.15.

64. In Acts 3.23, the verb *ἀκούω* is taken from Acts 18.19, the end of the verse incl. *ἐξολεθρεύω* is taken from Lev 23.29.

65. Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte, Übersetzt und erklärt* (MeyerK, III; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), p. 169. Acts 3.22 does not pick up 'on the immediately preceding v 21, but rather on v 19' (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB, 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998], p. 290).

66. Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations*, p. 151.

Within Stephen's speech, Acts 7.17-43 contrasts the function of Moses in the divine history of salvation and the rejection by Moses's contemporaries; their behavior is considered typical of Israel's behavior not only towards Moses.<sup>67</sup> Within the encomium Acts 7.35-40,<sup>68</sup> the quotation proves the ongoing divine cure for Israel and indirectly (only for the readers who have Acts 3.22 in mind<sup>69</sup>) reminds Jesus as the announced prophet, *Moses redivivus*.<sup>70</sup> The quotation in Acts 7.37 offers a shorter reading than in Acts 3.22:<sup>71</sup> the reading *κύριος ὁ θεός* in Acts 3.22, in accordance with Deut. 18.15, is shortened to *ὁ θεός*;<sup>72</sup> the final words *αὐτοῦ ἀκούεσθε* of Deut. 18.15, repeated in Acts 3.22, are missing in many textual witnesses.<sup>73</sup> The term 'prophet' in this quotation makes it possible to integrate the rejection of the proclamation about Jesus into the motif 'Israel and the violent fate of the prophets.' Luke's interest in Moses is thoroughly christological.<sup>74</sup>

Cyprian of Carthage (c. 205–258) summarizes Deut. 18.18-19 under the heading 'There is another prophet like Moses promised, who will provide a New Testament and who should be heard as a greater authority.'<sup>75</sup> The context of Cyprian's summary is that the Jews who refute Jesus are in error.<sup>76</sup>

67. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 239.

68. Conzelmann, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 54, referring to the fourfold demonstrative pronoun; Gottfried Schille, *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas* (THKNT, 5; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 3rd edn, 1989), p. 183.

69. Cf. also Barrett, *Acts*, p. 365.

70. Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 183.

71. The words *ὑμῖν ἀναστήσει* are attested sometimes in reverted order *ἀναστήσει ὑμῖν* (61, 254, 326, 1563, 1837), sometimes *ὑμῖν* is changed to *ἡμῖν*, sometimes *ὑμῖν* is omitted (2147). Within the textual transmission of Deut. 18, sometimes *ὑμῖν* instead of *σοι* is also attested in quotations of Deut. 18.15 in patristic exegesis but not in the manuscript tradition (cf. Weves and Quast [ed.], *Deuteronomium*, p. 225).

72. Ps.-Oecumenius, *In Act.*, PG 118:145b offers the full formula *κύριος ὁ θεός* in the Lemma; this may however only be a witness to common biblical language; it is not evidence for a reading of Acts 7.37 in accordance to Acts 3.22.

73. In some manuscripts this phrase is added, cf. Barrett, *Acts*, p. 365, Strutwolf, *Editio Critica Maior*, p. 228. In one manuscript of Acts 7 (ms. 1844), the genitive *αὐτοῦ* is transformed to the accusative *αὐτόν*; the final verb is offered in variants: *ἀκούσεσθε* (04 etc., cf. Strutwolf, *Editio Critica Maior*, p. 228), *ἀκούεσθε* (05\* 181 876 1536CV, L 11178), *ἀκούσασθε* (326, 1837), *ἀκούσετε* (378), *ἀκούετε* (1175; these readings have a few parallels also in the manuscript tradition of Deut. 18); 2344 adds *αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε κατὰ πάντα ὅσα ἂν λαλήσει πρὸς ὑμᾶς*.

74. Sängler, "Von mir hat er geschrieben", pp. 258-59.

75. Cyprian, *Test.* 1:18 (CCSL 3:18).

76. C.f. only Cyprian, *Test* 1:5 (CCSL 3:10-11): *Nihil posse Iudaeos intellegere de scripturis, nisi prius crediderint in Christum*.

Concrete Jewish challenges to Christian claims of truth or Christian fear concerning possible attacks<sup>77</sup> forged Christians to interpret the formula *ὡς ἐμέ* in Deut. 18.15 in such a way that it could not be applied *against* the uniqueness of Jesus. This Christological claim is also the focus when Origen tries to counterbalance Jn 1.21 on the one hand and Mt. 13.13 and Lk. 1.76 on the other. John the Baptist does not lie when he denies that he is the prophet (Jn 1.21); he is one of the prophets but not *the* prophet who in reality is Jesus Christ. Characteristic of the one prophet is mediating between God and humanity and mediating the new covenant; thus none of the well-known prophets of the Old Testament was the one announced by Moses.<sup>78</sup> According to this exegesis, Origen prevents the use of *ὡς ἐμέ* for comparison with the other Old Testament prophets which would make a one-sided christological reclaiming of the text impossible.

According to Eusebius of Caesarea (265–340), the wording σοι ‘for you’ of Deut. 18.15 is circumscribed with τοῖς ἐκ περιτομῆς ἀναστήσεσθαι which is realized by Jesus during his earthly lifetime (Mt. 15.24). Due to the unbelief of Jesus’ Jewish contemporaries, he announced the transition of the Kingdom of God to non-Jews (Mt. 21.43).<sup>79</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea states that no prophet raised in Israel could come close to Moses in giving the law and introducing piety other than Jesus Christ. This is true also due to Deut. 34.10 (‘and henceforth no prophet raised like Moses’).<sup>80</sup> Moses led only one nation, Jesus Christ became the lawgiver for all of humanity.<sup>81</sup> According to Eusebius, the reference of Deut. 18.15 to Jesus Christ is given also by the exact wording *ὡς ἐμέ*; Eusebius refers this wording to

77. According to Athanasius (c. 295–373), *C. Ar.* 1:54.6 (SC 598:274), Jews refer Deut. 18.15 to one of the scriptural prophets (cf. above). On the other hand, Ps.-Clem., *Recogn.* 1:43.1 (GCS 51:33) suggests that the Christian reference to Deut. 18.15 caused difficulties for the Jews. We certainly do not know whether this assertion, which is addressed to Christian readers in order to corroborate the irrefutability of Christianity, is proved by facts.

78. Origen, *Comm. Io.* 6:90 (SC 157: 194-196); similarly Theophylact of Achrida (1050–1107), *In Jn* (PG 123:1168a). Also within his homily on 1Reg 28, Origen states the superiority of Christ in comparison to Moses and the prophets. Jesus Christ cured for the whole human race, and he went to the Hades in order to save. Jesus is announced by the prophets, as it is proven by Deut. 18.15 and Jn 5.46 (Origen, *Reg. Hom.* 6 [GCS 6:289]).

79. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Dem.* 9:11.11 (GCS 23:429).

80. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Dem.* 9:11.2 (GCS 23:428). Also in *Dem.* 3:2.29-30 (GCS 23:100-101), Eusebius used Deut. 34.10 as additional argument to strength the reference of Deut. 18.15 to Jesus Christ.

81. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Dem.* 9:11.4 (GCS 23:428); *Ecl. Proph.* 1.15 (PG 22:107).

Moses' function as a νομοθέτης; this function of lawgiving is nowhere imitated by the scriptural prophets.<sup>82</sup> Ps.-Gregory of Nyssa justifies the reference of Deut. 18 to Jesus in two ways: on the one hand, none of the classical prophets is regarded as a new lawgiver, while on the other hand the prophets speak 'in the name of the Lord' whereas Jesus speaks in his own authority, so that the wording 'I will put my words into his mouth' only fit Jesus.<sup>83</sup> Isidor of Pelusium rebukes the Jewish ascription of Deut. 18.15 to Joshua by the thesis that the end of v. 15 (αὐτοῦ ἀκούεσθε) and v. 19 would not fit Joshua; the future tense instead of the perfect suggests a coming figure; John the Baptist was a prophet, but not *the* prophet (Jn 1:21); finally those who confessed Jesus as prophet (Jn 6.14) are witnesses against the unbelieving Jews.<sup>84</sup>

### 2.5. Deuteronomy 18.15 proves the Abrogation of (parts of) the Torah

This use of Deut. 18.15 is attested since the third century.<sup>85</sup> John Chrysostom refers Deut. 18.15 to Gal. 2.19a: Moses announced Jesus Christ and thus the abrogation of the Law.<sup>86</sup>

Ambrosiaster (fourth century) uses Deut. 18.15 in order to explain Gal. 3.21: *Lex igitur adversum promissa? absit. absit utique quia non est lex inimica promissionis, quippe cum confirmet eam. nam primus Mose dixit « prophetam vobis excitabit deus de fratribus vestris. » hoc de Christo dictum Petrus apostolus probat in Actis Apostolorum* ('Is the Law opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! Certainly not, because the law is no adversary of the promise because it corroborates it. Moses says "God will raise up a prophet for you of your brethren." Peter proves in the book of Acts that this is said of Christ.').<sup>87</sup> In Gal. 3.21, the rhetorical objection evokes the answer 'Certainly not.' Ambrosiaster tries to substantiate this answer 'Certainly not!' by emphasizing the function

82. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Dem.* 1:7.9; 3:2.4 (GCS 23:36, 96).

83. Ps.-Gregory of Nyssa, *Adv. Iud.* (PG 46:204ab).

84. Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 3:94 (PG 78:797c-800b). Lanfranchi, 'L'image du judaïsme', p. 231, suggests the influence of Acts 3.22 on Isidore. This is probable but cannot be proven because Isidore does not explicitly refer to Peter's speech.

85. Cyprian, *Test.* 1:18 (CCSL 3:18); Lactantius, *Inst.* 4:17.6 (CSEL 19:345). In later times cf. Ps.-Anastasius Sinaita, *Disputatio adversus Iudaeos* 2 (PG 89:1228b). This *Disputatio adversus Iudaeos* is a pseudepigraphon (Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Iudaeos-Texte*, I, p. 466).

86. John Chrysostom, *In Gal.* 2:6 (PG 61:645). This motif is also present in his interpretation of 2 Cor. 3.14: The Law itself announces its ending (John Chrysostom, *Hom. in 2 Cor.* 7:3 [PG 61:446]).

87. Ambrosiaster, *In Gal.* 3.21 (CSEL 81/3:40).

of the Law in salvation history presupposed by Christians and proven by Peter's speech.

## 2.6. Deuteronomy 18.15 within Debates on the Trinity and Christology

Within debates on the Trinity and Christology, the wording *ὡς ἐμέ* is discussed; Jesus is a prophet with regard to his human nature.

According to Epiphanius, Theodotians conclude from the formulas 'from your brethren, like me', spoken by Moses (Deut. 18.15), that Jesus Christ is also a human being like Moses.<sup>88</sup> Epiphanius rebukes this exegesis: *ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὑμῶν ἐγερεῖ* refers to birth from the virgin Mary (Isa. 7.14). Jesus Christ is both God and human.<sup>89</sup> In another context, Epiphanius states that the characterizations of Jesus as high priest, prophet, 'from you' (Deut. 18.15), lamb etc. refer to Jesus' humanity—they are titles given 'after his sojourn on earth'<sup>90</sup>—but do not prove any 'Arian' subordination.<sup>91</sup> In a possible allusion to Deut. 18.18, Epiphanius justifies the designation of Jesus as 'prophet' though he really is God and the designation 'messenger/angel' though he really is Son of God.<sup>92</sup> According to Cyril of Alexandria (†444), Jesus really is a prophet but in the status of humanity—therefore Deut. 18.15 does not allow any concept of subordination.<sup>93</sup> And according to Augustine, *ὡς ἐμέ* 'like me' means 'according to the form of the flesh, not to the eminence of majesty.' Therefore we find the Lord Jesus called a prophet.<sup>94</sup>

Even when the debates about the Trinity and Christology became less relevant, theologians still felt the necessity to explain how Jesus is superior despite the wording *ὡς ἐμέ*. Anastasius Sinaita (c. 610–701) refers to the function of mediation, the fate of the adversaries, and the earthly existence.<sup>95</sup> Ps.-Oecumenius of Tricca (tenth century) explains this wording by comparison of the biographical details of Moses and

88. Julian the Apostate takes up this interpretation of Deut. 18.15: a prophet like Moses can only be a human being but not be God (Cook, *Interpretation*, pp. 311–12).

89. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 54.3.1 (GCS 31:319–20). He replaces *ἀνίστημι* with *ἐγείρω*, but this does not have any consequence for the transmission of both the Old Testament and the New Testament texts cf. Wevers and Quast (eds.), *Deuteronomium*, p. 225.

90. English Translation: Williams, *Panarion*, p. 355.

91. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 69.37.4 (GCS 37:185).

92. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 8.5.6 (GCS NF 10/1:191).

93. Cyril of Alexandria, *Quod unus sit Christus* 15/751 (PG 75:1316cd).

94. Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Io.* 15:23.1 (CCSL 36:159–60, dealing with Jn 4.19); *idem*, *Tract. Ev. Io.* 24.7 (CCSL 36:247).

95. Anastasius Sinaita, *Disp. adv. Iud.* (PG 89:1228bc).

Jesus (Jewish ethnicity; sojourn in Egypt; Pharaoh or Herod the Great as enemies), in order not to compare the master with the servant but to describe the truth within the shadow.<sup>96</sup> The Venerable Bede explains the formulation of Acts 3.22 with reference to the origins of both Jesus and Moses from Israel, with the analogy between the *literally* understood purifying work of Moses and the *spiritually* understood purifying work of Jesus, and with the fate of their opponents.<sup>97</sup> In his *Expositiones in Acta*, Bede explains Acts 7.37 as follows: *Tamquam me carne uisibilem, sed super me maiestate terribilem; ne nova, inquit, et adventicia Christi dicatur esse doctrina, ipse Moyses, cui noluerunt oboedire patres uestri, praedicat et in hominis hunc forma futurum et cunctis animabus vitae praecepta daturum* (“‘Like me’ visible in the flesh but superior to me with regard to his terrifying majesty. So that the teaching of Christ cannot be called new and accidental, Moses, whom your fathers would not obey, proclaims that he will be there in the form of a man and give the commandments of life to all.’”).<sup>98</sup>

### 2.7. Deuteronomy 18.19 Describes the Fate of Israel, which is not Willing to Believe in Jesus

Due to the Christological interpretation of Deut. 18.15, some Christian theologians read Deut. 18.19 as a condemnation or as announcement of Israel’s fate after Jesus’ death.<sup>99</sup> The motif of condemnation for Jewish unwillingness to hear Jesus is predominant for Epiphanius of Salamis.<sup>100</sup> According to Eusebius of Caesarea, Deut. 18.19 announces the fate of those who put Jesus to death and cried, ‘His blood upon us and upon our children!’ (Mt. 27.25). The fate of the Jews after Jesus’ death is also predicted in Amos 5.1 and 1 Thess. 2.16.<sup>101</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea interprets even Psalm 89[90] along these lines: because Moses was a prophet, he described in Psalm 89[90] the fate of the Jewish nation after the coming of Christ and wrote down this text as *φάρμακον...σωτήριον και θεραπευτικόν* ‘saving and therapeutic remedy.’ Moses delivered this Psalm separately from his other writings, and this text, not really being a psalm, was later inserted in the book of Psalms.<sup>102</sup> Christians misuse an inner-Jewish

96. Ps.-Oecumenius of Tricca, *In Act.* (PG 118:92b).

97. The Venerable Bede, *Retract. Act.* (CCSL 121:120-121).

98. The Venerable Bede, *Expos. Act.* (CCSL 121:35-36).

99. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Dem.* 1:7.20 (GCS 23:38).

100. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 42.12.3 (GCS 31:159).

101. Eusebius, *Ecl. Proph.* 1.15 (PG 22:1073bc).

102. Eusebius, *Comm. Ps.* (PG 23:1132b).

warning in this way corroborating the Christian view of Israel's history whereas Christians claim indeed to listen to Moses' announcements.

Eusebius combines this with another motif found already in Origen: gentiles are willing to believe in Jesus.<sup>103</sup> This idea, at that time only conditionally confirmed by the missionary success among non-Jews, provides a contrast for the purpose of indictment.

### 3. Conclusion

Jewish literature of the Second Temple period includes three lines of reception history of Deut. 18.15: the characteristic of the 'historical' Moses, eschatological expectation, and claims of fulfillment of this prophecy. In rabbinic literature, counterbalancing Deut. 18.15 with Deut. 34.10; Jer. 1.5 and 1 Kgs 18.31-32 are important. Deuteronomy 18.15 allows the estimation of figures like Jeremiah though the restriction of Deut. 34.10; Deut. 18.15 justifies abrogation of a Pentateuchal law in specific emergency situations, as attested by the illegitimate building of an altar on Mt. Carmel (in contradiction to Deut. 12) through which Elijah saved Israel from idolatry. Deuteronomy 18.15 suggests a restricted interpretation of Jer. 1.5: this relates to someone who is accustomed to gentile customs, to Jewish apostates who should be brought back to the Torah. The rabbinic reception of Deut. 18.15 focuses on the efforts to save Israel's religious identity centered on the Torah. In later Samaritan literature, Deut. 18.15 is used to formulate the expectation of the Tāhēb.

In Christian reception, the formula *ὡς ἐμέ* corroborates in one way the continuity between Jesus and Moses but must be justified with regard to the other prophets of the Old Testament in order to prove the singularity of Jesus Christ and the uniqueness of Christian claims to truth. In later Trinitarian debates, this wording must be interpreted against tendencies to subordinate Jesus. The dative *σοι* was used for accusation. The formula *ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου* was not important in ancient Christian exegesis. The imperative *ἀκούεσθε αὐτοῦ* in some New Testament texts emphasized the obligatory nature of Jesus' words for the in-group, whereas other New Testament texts and later ancient Christian texts understood it as warning to the unbelieving Jews. It was for themselves alone that Christians re-claimed the 'heralding of good news'.

103. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Dem.* 1:7.22 (GCS 23:38); Origen, *Comm. Io.* 13:374 (SC 222:240).

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