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Kyriocentric Visions in Early Judaism: Experiential, Literary, or Performative?

The Kyriocentric conjecture proposed here is based on the assumption that turn-of-the-era Jews experienced visions of YHWH coming to reassure and to save. Is this a realistic assumption? Several eminent scholars of Jewish literature doubt that such an assumption can be supported from the texts at hand (reasons for which are discussed below). So, is it possible that we are only left with literary allusions to visionary motifs that have no historical verisimilitude?

First, let us clarify some of the options to be considered. First-century Jews certainly believed that holy men and women *could have* visions of their God appearing to them—and speaking to them—in human form. They believed that Kyriocentric visions (also known as theophanies) had been granted to their forebears: the patriarchs and matriarchs, the exodus generation, and the prophets.[1] According to the Septuagint (LXX) rendering of theophany texts in Exodus and Numbers, the Lord (*Kyrios*) was seen in the Tabernacle—and, by inference, in the Temple—particularly in association with the high-priestly blessing.[2] A public Kyriocentric vision had also been granted to the citizens of Jerusalem who had suffered under one of the Ptolemies (3 Macc. 5:51; 6:17-18).[3] According to later, Amoraic Rabbis (third–fifth century), *HaShem* was clearly visible in the Temple: visible to the high priest and also to pilgrims who were allowed into the sanctified priestly area.[4] What are we to make of these beliefs? Did they correspond to anything in the practices of their communities?

In much of Christian literature, Old Testament representations of the Deity in bodily form have been treated as figures of speech or anthropomorphisms. Since the pioneering work of people like James Barr, Johannes Lindblom, Arthur Marmorstein, Ulrich Mauser, Anthony Hanson, Tryggve Mettinger, and Terence Fretheim,[5] however, scholars have begun to

take the concrete nature of divine epiphanies more seriously.[6] There were early Jews and Christians who spiritualized the anthropic (humanlike) features of the Deity, but they were clearly in the minority until the late fourth century of the Common Era (a story to be taken up in ch. 9).[7]

Not only did first-century Jews believe that Kyriocentric visions were possible. Eschatologically minded Jews, at least, expected that the Kyriocentric visions of their patriarchs and prophets would be renewed in the near future. As they looked forward to the liberation of Israel, they centered their expectations of a public appearance of YHWH (or the glory of YHWH) in anthropic form.[8]

Present-day discussions, particularly those among Christian and Jewish scholars, generally focus their attention on expectations on the coming of a Messiah.[9] For the Old Testament and Second Temple literature,[10] on the other hand, the predominant eschatological focus was not the Messiah, but rather the coming of the YHWH, Lord God of Israel (Pss. 50:2-3; 80:1-3; 102:16; passim[11]).[12] In view of this widespread expectation,[13] the distribution of this eschatological motif among various strata of the Gospels can be cited as evidence for this expectation among the Jesus' disciples (Mark 13:35-37; Q [Luke] 12:43-46; Matt. 21:40; 25:6; Luke 12:36-38[14]).

In view of the diversity of Jewish beliefs and practices in this era (as described in the Introduction), we need to avoid any suggestion that all the "dialects" were visionary (some like the Sadducees were evidently not). It will be sufficient for our purposes to show that visionary practices may well have occurred among some early Jewish groups, not that they are a universal feature. From an a priori standpoint, such limited occurrence is certainly plausible, but is there any evidence that this was indeed the case? This part of the question is more difficult to answer.[15]

Methodological Reasons for Postponing Discussion of New Testament Texts

The simplest way to answer our question would be to cite the New Testament itself, which contains a variety of visionary accounts. In one of the earliest of these, 2 Corinthians 12:1, for example, Paul clearly states that he had "visions and revelations of the Lord," and such experiences may well have been shared by the Corinthian Christians whom he mimics. If, as argued here, apocalyptic (revelatory) visions were normally Kyriocentric, Paul likely meant just that—a vision in which YHWH was the central figure. Taken on its own, however, this text is filled with grammatical and semantic ambiguities: "visions of the Lord" might simply mean revelations granted by the Lord.[16]

There are a number of other texts in the New Testament that can be viewed as traces of Kyriocentric visions, but most of them could also be interpreted in terms of (empirical) resurrection appearances or two-power traditions.[17] It is methodologically inadvisable, therefore, to make such accounts our starting point.

Once we have secured the basic idea of visionary performances (and their relevance to early Christology), we will be in a better position to examine some of these texts. Such an examination will come in chapter 5—our conjecture must, after all, be consistent with the texts.[18] Given the lack of clarity about the practical milieu of these texts, however, it makes more sense to use the proffered conjecture as grounds for performative readings of the texts (hypothetico-deductively), rather than to argue (inductively) from texts themselves.

An inductive approach will not suffice by itself if the texts are byproducts, rather than literal descriptions, of the life of a community. They are more like chips from a large block (or many different "building blocks") taken from a quarry of faith and practice,[19] and they have as much to do with the common practices of Jewish communities as they do with the special issues that arose in Christian churches.[20] I shall try to show how inductive methods can be supplemented with hypothetico-deductive ones[21] and bolster this top-down methodology with recent research concerning traditions of oral-performance that lie behind the texts.[22]

If we cannot begin with the New Testament itself, where shall we begin? Outside the New Testament and early Christian literature, there are at least four comparable corpora (bodies) of literature in which Kyriocentric visions are clearly described: canonical Hebrew Bible texts, Second Temple apocalypses, [23] early Rabbinic literature, and early texts that celebrate the Heikalot ("Celestial Palaces" or "Sanctuaries").[24] We shall look at particular texts from each of these corpora of literature in the following chapter, but first we need to assess their relevance for the question at hand.

At first glance, it might not seem that an argument for first-century visions could be based on any of these texts: most Old Testament texts originated centuries earlier, the earliest Rabbinic and Heikalot literature is several centuries later (third century at the earliest), and apocalyptic texts are seemingly literary creations.

Such minimalism is based on a dubious assumption, however. It envisions these four corpora as sitting on different shelves of a library and quite separate from each other. In the context of modern academic specialization, requiring expertise in distinct dialects of Hebrew and Aramaic, such demarcations are necessary, but in terms of the history of religious communities they must

be questioned. First-century Jews may have thought of themselves as living somewhere between the time of prophetic visions and that of eschatological renewal, but this in-between space and time was not experienced as a gap so much as an overlap between living memories and anticipated renewal.[25] I shall illustrate this overlap for the biblical-apocalyptic case first, and then for Rabbinic and Heikalot literature.

Apocalyptic Texts and the Performance of Hebrew Bible Visions

To illustrate this overlap between prophetic visions and eschatological renewal, consider first apocalyptic literature, major texts of which clearly do overlap the New Testament era.[26] For several decades now, prominent scholars have argued that these apocalypses originated in communities that did, in fact, celebrate ancient models of prophetic activity. Michael E. Stone argued already in 1971 that the apocalyptic accounts of the late Second Temple period reflected a "tradition of active, living ecstatic experience."[27] A decade later, Christopher Rowland suggested that apocalyptic accounts originated among prophetic circles that rehearsed visions as a way of understanding God's will (note the communal dimension here).[28] In 1990, Alan Segal argued that scholars must assume such visionary practices in order to make sense of the statements of the Apostle Paul (like those reviewed above).[29] More recently, visionary practices have been examined from a cross-cultural perspective. Howard Jackson (2000) has built a strong case for the prevalence of visions of the "form of the divine stature" (*shi'ur qomah*) in the first century CE in continuity with earlier Egyptian traditions of dream-incubation.[30] Frances Flannery-Dailey has demonstrated the presence of Greco-Roman dream cults in Syria-Palestine and suggested that the authors of the pseudepigrapha (texts written in the name of heroes of the past) were familiar with such conventions concerning the incubation and interpretation of Kyriocentric visions.[31] If one were to listen only to these scholars, our conjecture would seem to be obvious. However, it is not quite that simple.

The main thing that gives scholars pause in this visionary program is the necessity of relying exclusively on literary texts of apocalypses, most of which were pseudepigraphical. Apocalyptic texts were not written as spiritual autobiographies or even as eyewitness accounts of journeys through the heavens. There is no way, therefore, to induce the practices of the communities from the texts alone. [32] I think we must accept these demurrals at face value.

Even if we do accept them at face value, however, we are not at a loss. Apocalyptic texts were certainly literary creations, but like all such creations

they were reworkings of earlier sources, whether oral or written (or both), sources that were themselves developed for narrative and ritual performance. The most familiar example of this trajectory between performance, literary text, and continued performance is the *Shema*. Christian Bible readers know it primarily as a single verse, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (Deut. 6:4), but the *Shema* actually involves the oral recitation of verses taken from Deuteronomy and Numbers (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41), and it has continued to be performed, along with a series of accompanying blessings, to the present time.[33] Therefore, observations about the literary nature of our written texts are in no way a stopper as far as the performative nature of the contexts in which they originated is concerned. I shall try to bolster this argument in the remainder of this chapter and look at some specific examples in the next.

If, as most scholars would agree, the communities that were responsible for the composition of apocalypses cherished the visions of their patriarchs and prophets, it is plausible to suppose (even if it cannot be proven from the texts) that those visions were actually dramatized and rehearsed in communal settings (so Rowland on prophetic circles).[34] In other words, the "compositional building blocks" for the apocalypses included oral "scripts" for such performances. In the process of composition, these scripts were integrated into narratives (and other forms) and were eventually written up in our texts.[35] The critical point is that even though the texts of ancient apocalypses were new literary creations, they were not entirely fictional—that is, they were not unrepresentative of the practices of their communities.

Our sharp distinction between performative and literary activities of the communities may seem to make the actual life of ancient communities rather remote. This cognitive cost is counterbalanced, however, by the fact that we can wed the idea of visionary experience to that of ritual performance. In post-Enlightenment society, we normally think of visions happening to isolated individuals and coming out of the blue—jokes about "this is God speaking" can sometimes even be funny. Religious rituals, on the other hand, are motions that people go through without expecting anything to happen at all—particularly when they are governed by the clock. This separation of visionary experience and ritual performance is one of the most serious gaps in our worldview that must be overcome if we are to understand non-Enlightenment cultures in which performance is a primary mode of communal activity. The visions with which we are concerned here were scripted far more than we would expect (even in accounts of ecstatic visions), and the rituals involved were performative in ways we are not used to. There was no gap between the two.

What we may hope to find in extant apocalyptic texts, therefore, is not accounts of "historical" visionary experiences, but traces of these "mental scripts" for performances, now embedded in larger narratives.[36] We must expect at the outset that the performative material underwent considerable modification in the processes of narrativization, compilation, and redaction. Unfortunately for us, the writers did not share our anthropological approach to folk traditions. They had more urgent matters to deal with. The people who composed apocalyptic texts had no idea that later generations might consult their works in order to learn about their daily practices. They were invested in issues concerning the wellbeing of their communities, which were largely matters of cohesion, self-propagation, and defection.[37] And what traces they left of their practices were not carefully labeled as such. In short, we cannot expect much by way of inductive proof with regard to the practices that underlie the texts and must rely on what we know from performance theory and studies of extrabiblical literature, particularly that from early Judaism.

If this generalized description sounds unduly contorted and foreign to life as we know it today, perhaps an analogy will help. The challenge we face in retrieving practices from later documents is something like that of finding the features of horse-drawn wagons in later automobiles (or typewriters with QWERTY keyboards in laptops). The features are there, and you easily can find them if you have some idea what you are looking for. It would not be such a simple matter, however, if older wagons had left no material traces like the ones we enjoy looking at on "old home days" in the countryside.

In the case of biblical texts, the situation is rather similar. In Old Testament narratives, we frequently read of people "blessing the Lord" for having delivered or guided either themselves or others on whose behalf they pray. For example, we hear the priest Melchizedek blessing God Most High for giving Abraham victory over his foes (Gen. 14:20). Abraham's servant blessed the Lord, the God of his master, for guiding him on his mission to Haran (Gen. 24:27, 48). Even if we take these narratives to be literary constructs rather than historical fact, we are safe in assuming that the Israelites were religious about everyday affairs and often did utter blessings like these.[38] Even though collecting any number of narrative texts like these would not suffice to prove the fact, we understand that the narratives would have been incomprehensible to their listeners if they made no contact with their own practices.

In short, it is not implausible to suppose that we can use the results of current research to know what we are looking for and thereby to trace at least some apocalyptic texts back to the oral performances they reflect and thereby to lend plausibility (a priori) to the conjecture we have offered.

A great deal of our problem in thinking about the performance of traditions today is that we have learned (particularly since Renaissance humanism) to view texts as distant voices that need to be exegeted.[39] Clearly, apocalyptic circles did not relate to their scriptures in this way. They did not think of themselves as working with (exegeting) texts at all. Rather, as Michael Stone and Christopher Rowland already conjectured, they were rehearsing narratives concerning legendary heroes in whom their hopes and ideals were personified.[40] For the most part, these rehearsals were done from memory, and communities sought to re-experience the visions of some of their heroes, particularly those of prophets like Moses, Miriam, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.[41] Their God was "not a God of the dead, but of the living" (Mark 12:27).

In other words, apocalyptic circles carried on the practice, already witnessed in canonical texts like Second and Third Isaiah, of adopting a spiritual giant of the past as their model for performance.[42] The Kyriocentric visions they attributed to earlier prophets functioned as models of the visionary ecstasy to which they aspired and which they sometimes authentically experienced.[43] Even if their descriptions were not written as descriptions of actual prophetic visions, they therefore have historical verisimilitude in the sense that they evidence the occurrence of such visions in the apocalyptic community and count toward the plausibility (or at least, the non-implausibility) that we seek to establish. In fact, the best evidence for vital interest in such visions in the New Testament era is the proliferation and preservation of apocalyptic texts (many of them in Christian Jewish circles), at great expenditure in terms of money and resources.[44]

So what can I say to literary-minded readers who might think that most of this discussion is based on mere supposition? For starters, I would point out that supposition is necessary for any research project, particularly in its early stages—it only sticks out like this when the research challenges longstanding methods of reading and interpreting texts. Beyond that, I would argue that the oral performance of prophetic and apocalyptic visions is a good supposition: it coheres with what we know of semi-literate societies; it maintains contact with Jewish scholarship of the development of Rabbinic texts (from whom we shall hear more); it holds out the promise of explaining the form of apocalyptic visionary texts (to be examined in chs. 2, 3); and, most importantly for our purposes, it can provide a realistic scenario for the emergence of deity Christology among the early disciples of Jesus (chs. 4, 5). The main values that will guide our investigation are plausibility and fruitfulness.

Rabbis, Heikalot Adepts, and the Performance of Hebrew Bible Visions

What about appealing to classic, "Tannaitic" Rabbinic sources like the Mishnah, Tosefta,[45] *Sifra*, *Sifrei*, and *Mekilta* (composed in the third to fourth century)?[46] As often stated, these texts often reflect conditions that arose following the destruction of the Herodian Temple and the failure of the Bar Kokhba restoration (130s CE). True enough, but they were not independent constructions, emerging in isolation from the practices of previous generations (or from other sectors of contemporary Judaism).

Early Rabbinic groups continued to recite the *Shema* and the Psalms (e.g., the *Hallel*), and they based their formal invocations and benedictions on Old Testament forms that had been passed on in oral (not yet formalized) modes of prayer.[47] As in the case of apocalyptic communities, there was more overlap than a gap with their biblical traditions. While we cannot reason backwards from the Rabbis to the New Testament, we can hope to corroborate our conjecture about the visionary practices of earlier communities. The complete absence of such material, at any rate, would make our conjecture less plausible than desired.

Throughout the Rabbinic era, Scripture was known primarily from oral recitation.[48] It would therefore be a serious mistake to sequester biblical texts to the life and times of ancient, "historical" Israel. The prophets continued to be recited, re-imagined, and rehearsed in the Common Era. The Psalms continued to be prayed or sung—sometimes in Hebrew, but also in Aramaic, Greek, and other languages. The wording in which they were recited might sometimes match canonical forms only in places, mostly in stock phrases used to address and describe the Deity. Jesus' recitations of Psalm verses in the Gospel narratives are familiar examples (Mark 15:34; Luke 23:46). The virtual explosion of biblical phrases and motifs in the *Aleinu* prayer is a good example from the siddur.[49] These prayer forms were more like scripture bytes than what we know as formal scripture readings. We shall run into them again when we consider the prayer forms of the New Testament in chapter 6.

If we take the reception of biblical texts by the Rabbis into consideration, therefore, we may think of them not simply as the product of the times in which they were composed, but as the spiritual language of succeeding generations—the language of prayer, the stuff of imagination, and the models for fresh visions of *HaShem*.

The same considerations hold true for the communities responsible for the Heikalot ("Celestial Palaces") texts. For the most part, these texts are far too late

to help in our project, but some of the hymnic material they contain is likely to be much earlier (as discussed in the following chapter). Heikalot communities developed biblical and apocalyptic traditions in ways that diverged from the Rabbis who produced "normative Judaism." As pious Jews, however, they overlapped with their normative colleagues in Torah observance and liturgical practice.[50] Again, we look for corroboration, not for proof.

Notes

1. Examples are Gen. 3:8; 15:16; 16:13 (Hagar); 18:1-3; 26:2; 28:13; 32:24-30; Exod. 3:4-6; 17:6; 24:9-18; 33:9—34:7; 1 Kgs. 22:19; Pss. 16:8; 27:8; 42:2; 63:3; Isa. 6:1-3; Ezek. 1:26-8; 3:23-4; 8:2-4; 43:2-5; Dan. 7:9-10, 22; Amos 9:1; *1 En.* 89:16; 89:22; 89:30-31 (Dream/Animal Visions of appearances to Moses and the Israelites). Ithamar Gruenwald lists six characteristic features of these visions, the first two of which are (1) that YHWH sits on a throne, and (2) that he has the appearance of a man; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, AGAJU 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 31. Andrew Dearman aptly states the possibility of tracing early Christology to this theophanic tradition: "the anthropomorphism of the Old Testament can be understood as divine preparation, pointing forward to a Christophany/theophany in which the difficulty of 'seeing' God has given way to the Lord who appears in the fullness of time"; Dearman, "Theophany, Anthropomorphism, and the *Imago Dei*: Some Observations about the Incarnation in the Light of the Old Testament," in *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31–46 (44). Whereas Dearman concludes that the connection he describes was simply the disciples' way of understanding the person of Jesus in the context of Old Testament theophanies, I shall argue that it was rather due to the rehearsal of theophanies in the context (or sequel) of the life and death of Jesus.

2. See particularly LXX Exod. 25:8; Num. 6:25; cf. C. T. R. Hayward, "Understanding of the Temple Service in the LXX Pentateuch," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 422 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 385–400 (386–88, 391–92, 397, conclusion #1). Hayward makes an important point of associating these epiphanies with invocational prayer; ibid., 388–95, 397, conclusions #2–3. We take up the topic of prayer in ch. 2.

3. I am unable to account for the claim that late Second Temple literature avoided portraying the coming or appearance of YHWH and consistently substituted an intermediary angel; e.g., John E. Alsup, *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition*, Calwer Theologische Monographien A 5 (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1975), 264. Alsup assumes that the Gospel traditions had to "reach back" to the ancient tradition complex in order to utilize visionary language (ibid.); cf. Dearman, "Theophany, Anthropomorphism, and the *Imago Dei*," 45–46. Alsup and Dearman overlook the continued performance of Kyriocentric visions.

4. *Mekilta of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai* 79:5 to Exod. 23:17 (pilgrims); *Sifrei Devarim* 143 (pilgrims); *Sifra* 16:12-13 (the high priest); cf. Max Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind*, 3rd ed. (New York: Bloch, 1972), 240–41, 245–48. On traditions concerning the admission of pilgrims to the sanctified area of the temple, Israel Knohl's article is helpful even though he overstated the historicity of these traditions with respect to the Second Temple era; Knohl, "Post-Biblical Sectarianism and Priestly Schools of the Pentateuch: The Issue of Popular Participation in the Temple Cult on Festivals," in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid, 18–21 March, 1991*, ed. Julio Trebolle Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2:601–9 (602–3). For critique on the latter point, see

Steven D. Fraade, "The Temple as a Marker of Jewish Identity Before and After 70 C.E.: The Role of the Holy Vessels in Rabbinic Memory and Imagination," in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 130, ed. Lee I. Levine and Daniel R. Schwartz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 235–63 (244, 247).

5. James Barr, "Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament," *Congress Volume: Oxford 1959*, VTSup 7 (1960): 31–38; Johannes Lindblom, "Theophanies in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion," *HUCA* 21 (1961): 91–106; Arthur Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God*, Vol. 2: Essays in Anthropomorphism (New York: Ktav, 1968), 49, 51–52; Ulrich Mauser, "Image of God and Incarnation," *Interpretation* 24 (1970): 336–56; Anthony T. Hanson, *The Image of the Invisible God* (London: SCM, 1982), 121–43; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*, Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series 18 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982), 15, 23–4; Terence Fretheim, *The Suffering God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984), 79–106.

6. It is well known that the concreteness of the divine presence is more muted (ambiguous, abstract) in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history than in other parts of the Hebrew Bible, apparently due to a concern for limitations that could be inferred from the destruction of the temple; cf. Michael Hundley, "To Be or Not to Be: A Reexamination of Name Language in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history," *VT* 59 (2009): 533–55 (552–55). Anthropic concreteness is there nonetheless (e.g., Deut. 12:7, 11-12, 18; 23:14; 1 Sam. 3:10; 2 Sam. 7:6; 1 Kgs. 3:5; 8:13; 9:2).

7. The anthropic imagination of Talmudic-era Jews is strikingly confirmed by depictions of the "Binding of Isaac" like those in the entablature above the Torah shrine of third-century Dura Europos on the Euphrates and the mosaic floor of the sixth-century Beth Alpha (Kirbet Beit Ilfa) synagogue in Galilee. Both depictions clearly show the hand of *HaShem* reaching out from heaven to prevent Abraham from striking his son; see the plates and descriptions in Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period,* 13 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953–68), 1:231, 246–8; vol. 3, figures 602, 638; Avigdor Shinan, "Synagogues in the Land of Israel: The Literature of the Ancient Synagogue and Synagogue Archaeology," in *Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, ed. Steven Fine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 130–52 (131, 134, 146). The fact that the divine form is largely hidden (indicated only by the hand reaching through the firmament) clearly evokes the looming presence of the gigantic anthropic form of YHWH in keeping with the promise in Gen. 22:14 ("The Lord will provide . . . on the mountain of the Lord"; cf. the LXX, "On the mountain the Lord appeared") and the traditional blessing cited in *m. Ta'an.* 2:4, 5 ("May he that answered Abraham our father at Mount Moriah answer you and hearken to the voice of your crying this day!"). Note that this anthropic motif is not among those assigned to Christian influence by Zeev Weiss, "Between Rome and Byzantium: Pagan Motifs in Synagogue Art and Their Place in the Judeo-Christian Controversy," in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, TSAJ 130, ed. Lee I. Levine and Daniel R. Schwartz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 366–90 (377–81).

8. As Jewish scholars like Moshe Weinfeld and Alan F. Segal have argued, the *Shekinah* Glory was commonly visualized in a human form; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 200–201; Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 61; Segal, "The Resurrection: Faith or History," in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in Dialogue,* ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 121–38, 210–12 (126). Texts like Exod. 24:16-17; Isa. 40:10; 60:2 (from the Jerusalemite temple theology) parallel the appearance of Glory with that of the visible form of YHWH; cf. see Tryggve Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 15, 32–36, 110, 112, 133. Mettinger's program was to recover the role of iconic visualization in Old Testament theology; cf. Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 20; Mettinger, "Israelite Aniconism: Developments and Origins," in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book*

Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East, ed. Karel van der Toorn (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 173–204 (187).

9. See, for example, Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs, *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

10. Late Second Temple literature is Jewish literature dating (approximately) from the third century BCE to the first century CE. It includes portions of canonical books like Daniel and deuterocanonical ones like *1 Enoch*.

11. See also Isa. 35:4 LXX; 40:5, 10; 52:8; 60:1-3; 66:15; Jer. 4:13; Hos. 6:3; Mic. 1:3; Joel 2:28, 32; Hab. 2:3 Greek LXX; Zech. 14:5; *1 En.* 1:3-4, 9; 25:3 (Book of Watchers); 90:15 (Visions of Enoch); *Jub.* 1:26, 28; *T. Moses* 10:3, 7. For methodological simplicity, I am limiting citations of noncanonical ("intertestamental") material to texts regarded "beyond reasonable doubt" as (non-Christian) Jewish rather than Christian (Jewish); James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?*, SJSJ 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2005). Davila's rigorous research yields a short list (in addition to the standard Old Testament Apocrypha) including *1 Enoch* (including the Similitudes), *4 Ezra*, *2 Bar.*, *T. Moses*, *Jub.*, Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.*), 3–4 Macc., and the *Psalms of Solomon*; summarized in Davila, "The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha as Background to the New Testament," *Expository Times* 117 (2005): 53–57 (56b). As far as we are concerned, it is best not to add to the risks of this study by basing the case on texts whose provenance is debatable.

12. A possible counterexample from the early Middle Ages could be helpful here. *Pesiqta Rabbati* describes an eschatologically minded group of "Mourners for Zion," who acted out the words of Isa. 61 as a way of invoking the appearance of the Messiah ben Ephraim (*Pesiq. Rab.* 34:2, following the numbering of William G. Braude, trans., *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts and Special Sabbaths*, Yale Judaica Series 18, 2 vols. [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968]). As Rivka Ulmer has shown, the messianic contours of the text were developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to counter the challenges of European Christianity; Ulmer, "The Contours of the Messiah in *Pesiqta Rabbati*," *HTR* 106 (2013): 115–44 (128–29; cf. 121, 124, 134). This powerful text is not an exception to our Kyriocentric rule, however, because its hoped for eschaton is still centered in the revelation of the glory and kingship of *HaShem* (*Pesiq. Rab.* 1:2 [citing Ps. 42:2]; 35:2 [Zech. 2:9]; 35:3 [Mic. 2:13]; 36:2 [Isa. 60:1]), and nothing is said about the Mourners having a vision of their Messiah. In our terms, the main difference is that there was more of an eschatological "gap" in this period than there was in first-century Palestine.

13. As Frances Flannery-Dailey states, Jewish dreams and visions of the Hellenistic and Roman eras typically culminated in the pseudepigraphic hero being granted a vision of YHWH; Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests: Jewish Dreams in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras*, SJSJ 90 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 122, 203, 262. In addition to *1 Enoch* and rewritten Scripture texts, Flannery-Dailey cites examples from *2 Enoch*, *T. Levi*, and the *Ladder of Jacob* even though they are not independent of Christian influence in their present forms.

14. The New Testament also looks forward to the coming of the Son of Man, usually identified with Jesus (e.g., Mark 13:26). I shall argue in chs. 6 and 7 that these eschatological Son of Man texts were originally modeled on visions of the coming Lord.

15. Of course, if we were to accept the contrarian view that visions and prophecies had ceased in Israel (according to *t. Sotah* 13:3, this happened right after the prophet Malachi), it would be necessary to settle for an unprecedented renewal of these spiritual gifts among the early disciples. In that case, Christian Judaism would be qualitatively different from other contemporary Judaisms from the outset. It is well known, however, that the gift of prophecy was attributed to the Essenes (Josephus, *J. W.* 2.159), and several of the Dead Sea Scrolls claimed gifts of the Spirit and visionary phenomena for the Dead Sea Covenanters (particularly in 1QS, CD, and 1QH).

16. Concerning the problematic grammar, see Victor Furnish, for example, who interprets the genitive as a "subjective" one of origin (a vision granted by the Lord) and confidently states that "the experience . . . seems to have involved no appearing of Christ to Paul"; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, Anchor Bible 32A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 524. One might reduce the

grammatical ambiguity in favor of an objective genitive by appealing to the similar grammatical difficulty in Gal. 1:12 (*apokalypsis Iēsou Christou*) in parallel with Gal. 1:16 (*apokalypsai ton huion en emoi*), or simply appealing to the criterion for Paul's apostleship in 1 Cor. 9:1 (*Iēsoun ton kyrion hēmōn eoraka*); so Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, "Paul's Rapture: 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 and the Language of Mystics," in *Experientia, Volume I: Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity*, SBLSS 40, ed. Frances Flannery, Colleen Shantz, and Rodney A. Werline (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 159–76 (168–69). But that would only heighten the semantic difficulty. Working a parallel with Paul's temple vision in Acts 22:17, as Christopher Morray-Jones does, leads to the same result; Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor. 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate," *HTR* 86 (1993): 177–217, 265–92 (285–6). A better way to resolve the ambiguity on both fronts would be to work from the clear verbal parallels in Ezek. 1:1; 8:2-4. Although the Hebrew, *mar'ot elohim*, probably originally meant visions granted by God (a subjective genitive; cf. Ezek. 8:3; 40:2), the reader anticipates that the narrative will eventuate in a vision of the divine glory; so Peter Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 37.

17. The oft-noted difference between the Gospel narratives of encounters with Jesus and first-person visionary descriptions in Paul and the Revelation of John could largely be a matter of genre. Gospel appearance texts like Mark 13:26; Matt. 28:8-10, 16-20; John 1:14; 20:18-21 can be read as references to Kyriocentric visions that were later reinterpreted in terms of the Danielic Son of Man, the Logos, or the resurrected Jesus in order to differentiate the Lord Jesus from God the Father and to emphasize the flesh-and-blood character of Jesus' resurrection body. This "spin-down" of early deity Christology will be treated in ch. 7.

18. There are also visions in the New Testament that are not Kyriocentric. The Deity is sometimes assumed to be in the background, evidenced only by the divine voice (e.g., Mark 1:11; Acts 10:13-14), but these visions are not centered on YHWH.

19. According to one early chronology, *Seder Olam Rabbah* 21 (46a), every city in the land of Israel had its prophets, but only those whose prophecies were intended for future generations were actually written down; Abraham Heschel, *Prophetic Inspiration after the Prophets: Maimonides and Others Medieval Authorities* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1996), 7 n. 10. The *Seder* nicely captures the historical reality that lies behind the seemingly authoritative nature of the few written texts that have survived. John Miles Foley similarly described written versions of ancient poems as "textual shards of a once-living work of verbal art"; Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 47. Foley's work makes the case for imagining "voices from the past" as a "realistic representation of what we know" from surviving texts while remaining agnostic about their original composition and subsequent literary history; ibid., 47–49.

20. An inductive method like form criticism searches a variety of documents to discern a group or family (*Gattung*) based on common patterns and attempts to trace those patterns back to an original *Sitz im Leben* in the early Christian community. For example, John E. Alsup finds an "appearance story *Gattung*" that includes the group appearances (Matt. 28:16-20; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29), the Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-35), the Galilean appearance story in John (John 21:1-14), and the story of Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18); Alsup, *Post-Resurrection Appearance*, 146, 190, 211–13). From a historian's viewpoint, the adequacy of this method depends on the likelihood that the New Testament documents exhibit the great majority of patterns known to the community in practice. It is often necessary to postulate the existence of other patterns and practices where needed to explain features of the New Testament that cannot otherwise be accounted for (anomalies like the dilemma of early high Christology). As Martin Jaffee states for the parallel case of Rabbinic texts: "We may at best offer a fictionalized representation or reconstruction of the multi-tonal quality of the living tradition. That is, on the basis of written survivals of oral-traditional material in performance, we seek to reconstruct the echoes lost from the tradition as it was transformed into manuscript"; Jaffee, "What Difference Does the 'Orality' of Rabbinic Writing Make for the Interpretation of Rabbinic Writings?" in *How Should Rabbinic*

Literature Be Read in the Modern World? ed. Matthew Kraus (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006), 11–33 (18).

21. As I see it, coordinating inductive and hypothetico-deductive methods is like digging a tunnel from both sides of a body of water. The objective is to meet somewhere in the middle (depending on obstacles in the way). I work out a case of this sort in ch. 6, dealing with the controversial question of prayers to Jesus.

22. It is fairly standard today to view biblical texts as scripts for performances. Such performances involved what Scott C. Mackie has termed "mystical visuality," or recollection of past (historical) encounters in order to provoke a new theophany (as in the reading of the Epistle to the Hebrews); Mackie, "Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JTS* 62 (2011): 77–117 (79, 97, 99, 117). In contrast to Mackie, I suppose that communities did not shift into performance mode only after they wrote their texts. The oral-ritual life out of which the texts emerged was already performative; see, for instance, Werner H. Kelber, "Modalities of Communication, Cognition, and Physiology of Perception: Orality, Rhetoric, Scribality," *Semeia* 65 (1994): 193–216 (esp. 210–11 on Homeric orality and classical rhetoric); Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism*, SJSJ 59 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 217, 224 ("guided imagination," "performative exegesis"). As David Nelson phrases it (in speaking of Rabbinic oral traditions), written texts represent "fleeting glimpses of traditions that were otherwise fluid, dynamic, and ever changing"; W. David Nelson, "Oral Orthography: Oral and Written Transmission of Parallel Midrashic Tradition in the *Mekilta of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai* and the *Mekilta of Rabbi Ishmael*," *AJS Review* 29 (2005): 1–32 (30). In the absence of firsthand reports about such performances (with a very few possible exceptions like Philo's report of the Therapeutae), the best way imaginatively to reconstruct the details of such practices is to study Jewish writings from later periods when firsthand accounts were more common. See, for example, descriptions of individual and community performances among Isaac Luria and his disciples in the sixteenth-century Safed, many of which were based on received (oral) texts; Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and his Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 113 (performing incidents from the *Zohar*), 233 (reciting Ps. 67), 242–4 (reciting Ps. 25 in the context of prayer), 249 (reciting Pss. 29, 92, 93). On the reticence of Jewish mystics to describe their own experiences prior to the sixteenth century, see Louis Jacobs, *Jewish Mystical Testimonies* (New York: Schocken Books, 1996), 4–7 (citing Gershom Scholem); and Morris M. Faierstein, trans., *Jewish Mystical Autobiographies: Book of Visions and Book of Secrets*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1999), xi, 3–4.

23. Limiting our purview to Second Temple apocalypses should not be taken to imply that such literary endeavor was later abandoned by Judaism. For an introduction and texts of Jewish apocalypses of the seventh to the thirteenth century, see John C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalyptic Reader*, Resources for Biblical Study (Atlanta: SBL, 2005).

24. There are no descriptions of Kyriocentric visions in Qumran literature (aside from copies of *1 Enoch* and possibly missing sections of Pseudo- (Second) Ezekiel [4Q385] and the *Testament of Levi*). Nor are there any in Josephus (largely historical) or in Philo (largely exegetical), although noetic apperceptions of God are described in general, idealized terms in *Drunkenness* 152 (*thean tou agenētou*); *Contempl. Life* 11 (*tēs tou ontos theas*), and perhaps, more vaguely in *Names* 81–2; *Dreams* 1.165; *Spec. Laws* 1.165. Philo was undoubtedly aware of visionary performances (like those of the Therapeutae), but was uncomfortable with the concreteness of biblical anthropomorphisms, at least, when he was addressing a sophisticated, philosophically trained audience. So he attributed visual, biblical theophanies to the Logos and/or the two Powers (creative and executive), and he directed the mind of the reader to the Archetype that is beyond all forms (*ta paradeigmata kai tas ideas*, *ta eidē*); *Creation* 71; *Questions on Genesis* 4.1, 4. Scott C. Mackie aptly refers to Philo's practice as "noetic visuality"; Mackie, "Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria: Means, Methods and Mysticism," *JSJ* 43 (2012): 147–79 (159–60).

25. As Brevard Childs explained half a century ago, Israelite memory bridged the gap with the patriarchs and matriarchs and actualized the past; Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel*, Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (London: SCM, 1962), 74.

26. The most widely accepted definition of the genre of apocalypse is that of the Apocalypse Group of the SBL Genres Project; see John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," in J. J. Collins, ed. *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, Semeia 14 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1979), 1–20 (9–10). The important part of the definition for our purposes is the dramatic disclosure of a transcendent, supernatural reality that promises and mediates eschatological salvation.

27. Michael E. Stone's 1974 lecture, "Apocalyptic—Vision or Hallucination?" reprinted in his *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha with Special Reference to the Armenian Tradition*, SVTP 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 419–28 (421, 428). Stone's view is updated in his *Ancient Judaism: New Visions and Views* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), esp. 104, 116. I differ from Stone by seeing in the texts echoes of oral scripts for the performance of visionary experiences, rather than the experiences themselves.

28. Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 226, 246; Rowland, "Visions of God in Apocalyptic Literature," *JSJ* 10 (1979): 137–54 (153). Rowland viewed such practices belonging to mainstream Judaism (ibid., 246). Unfortunately, the apparent opposition in mainstream texts like Jesus ben Sira (Sir. 3:21-24; 24:5, 23) prevents us from settling this issue.

29. As Alan Segal stated in a recent article, "Paul's visions make most sense as a new Christian development within an established Jewish apocalyptic and mystical tradition. . . . Only the identification of the Christ as the figure on the throne was novel by most Jewish standards, yet that [identification] would have been normative in the Christian community"; Segal, "The Afterlife as Mirror of the Self," in *Experientia, Volume I: Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity*, SBLSS 40, ed. Frances Flannery, Colleen Shantz, and Rodney A. Werline (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 19–40 (24 n. 10); cf. Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 58. The hypothesis of this essay simply extends Segal's important insight about Paul and the "Christian community" to the events during the few weeks after the execution of Jesus.

30. Howard M. Jackson, "The Origins and Development of *Shi'ur Qomah* Revelation in Jewish Mysticism," *JSJ* 31 (2000): 373–415 (389–91, 394–95, 398–99, 407). Significantly, Jackson argues that social contexts of acute uncertainty (particularly military uncertainty) tended to foster visions with greater visual, bodily (even numerical) specificity as assurances that the Deity was still accessible to his people; ibid., 401–4, 407–8.

31. Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests*, 261–62. Flannery-Dailey points out the prominence of temple and priestly themes in Kyriocentric dream-visions and concludes that many of the authors were of priestly lineage, even if they lived and operated outside the Jerusalem temple; ibid., 258–59, 262–63, 269. A similar conclusion is entertained by Benjamin G. Wright III, particularly with respect to Enoch's ready access to the inner sanctum of the heavenly temple (and his subsequent Kyriocentric vision) in *1 Enoch* 14; Wright, "*Sirach* and *1 Enoch*: Some Further Considerations," in *The Origins of Enochic Judaism, Proceedings of the First Enoch Seminar, University of Michigan, Sesto Fiorentino, Italy, June 19–23, 2001*, Henoch 24, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini (Torino: Silvio Zamorani Editore, 2002), 179–87 (180–2). Scribal features like Enoch's writing down a memorial prayer, thus operating outside the Jerusalem temple, in *1 Enoch* 13 have been noted by David W. Suter, "Revisiting 'Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest,'" in *The Origins of Enochic Judaism*, 137–42 (141). Unfortunately, we have very little information on how lay groups outside of Jerusalem could have accessed these priestly traditions prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. According to Luke 1:5-23, John the Baptist was a holy man of priestly lineage, whose father was remembered to have witnessed a vision of the archangel Gabriel in the temple, and who made disciples in the Judean wilderness. Qumran influence is another possibility to consider, particularly in view of the emphasis on prayer as parallel to temple sacrifice in its liturgies; see, for instance, Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Emergence of Institutionalized Prayer in Israel in Light of

Qumran Literature," in *The World of Qumran from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989), 200–43 (209, 239). The problem with positing a Qumran connection, however, is the relative lack of theophanic visions in the sectarian scrolls (as noted in note 24 and in ch. 2). Mishnah traditions may also be relevant even if they are not strictly historical. According to *m. Tam.* 5:1, the priests recited the *Shema* and its blessings (a model of visionary prayer for "pietists," as discussed in ch. 2) along with the people (cf. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.97). A similar mixing of Levites and "men of piety" is described in *m. Sukkah* 5:4, where they chant the words "our eyes are turned to the Lord."

32. Martha Himmelfarb, for example, has argued that the visions in apocalyptic texts are fictional narratives and do not give any information about actual experience; Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 105–6. Himmelfarb specifically rules out the possibility that apocalyptic narratives could be oral performances; ibid., 102–4, 110–14. Her critique is supported by Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 63–65, 84, which is discussed in more detail below.

33. The *Shema* will be found in any siddur (prayer book). Its component parts are nicely laid out and explained in *My People's Prayer Book* (hereafter MPPB), ed. Lawrence A. Hoffman, 10 vols. (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1997–2013), vol. 1.

34. As Christopher Rowland comments, "The way in which other biblical imagery merges into the production of the various visions may all point to a seeing in which a free meditation took place on the chariot-chapter [Ezek. 1], so that as in Rev[elation], the visionary's own experience could make an important contribution to the 'seeing again' of Ezekiel's vision"; Rowland, "Visions of God in Apocalyptic Literature," *JSJ* 10 (1979): 137–54 (153). Rowland further comments, "The visions would have arisen within a situation where an individual started with the scriptural description of God's glory of Ezekiel 1 and, on the basis of this passage, believed that he saw again the vision which had once appeared to the prophet"; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 226). See also the insightful (though oppositional) comments of Schäfer, *Origins of Jewish Mysticism,* 338–9. This performative mode of vision carried over into other bodies of literature that we shall cite. Daniel Boyarin sees in the Psalms (Pss. 48:14 [15]; 105:1-2) and in midrashim like *Mekilta of Rabbi Ishmael* the desire to relive the vision of the Presence of God that Israel enjoyed at the Red Sea and at Sinai; "The [seemingly] absent moment of theophany is thus transformed into an evocation of a present moment of vision of God . . ."; Boyarin, "The Eye in the Torah: Ocular Desire in Midrashic Hermeneutic," *Critical Inquiry* 16 (1990): 532–50 (546). Elliot Wolfson reviews both Rowland's and Boyarin's analyses and applies them to merkavah visionaries and medieval kabbalists who sought to re-experience Ezekiel's vision of the chariot in what he calls the "pneumatic interpretation" of Scripture; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 119–22, 326–9. According to Wolfson, "Study [of Ezek. 1] was viewed as a mode of 'visual meditation' . . . in which there is an imaginative recreation of the prophetic vision within the mystic's own consciousness"; ibid., 331. Joel Hecker develops Wolfson's terminology and describes mystical practices of the kabbalists in the *Zohar* in terms of "pneumatic" or "experiential hermeneutics," which he define as "the imaginative capacity to place oneself in the very scene of the text being read"; Hecker, "Eating Gestures and the Ritualized Body in Medieval Jewish Mysticism," *HR* 40 (2000): 125–52 (128, 143); Hecker, "Mystical Eating and Food Practices in the *Zohar*," in *Judaism in Practice from the Middle Ages through the Early Modern Period*, ed. Lawrence Fine (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 353–63 (354); Hecker, *Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals: Eating and Embodiment in Medieval Kabbalah* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 5–6. It should be noted, however, that even in medieval times practitioners cited biblical and Rabbinic texts from memory, rather than by consulting written texts; cf. Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1941), 172–3; Elliot R. Wolfson, *The Book of the Pomegranate: Moses De Leon's* Sefer Ha-Rimmon, BJS (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 34.

35. The idea of the "compositional building blocks" of oral tradition was developed by Albert Lord and has been applied to the role of oral traditions in the Mishnah by Elizabeth Shanks

Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah: The Shaping Influence of Oral Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13, 38–40, 74. Shanks Alexander agrees with Steven Fraade and Martin Jaffee that oral and literary modes of distribution overlapped and influenced each other in Rabbinic texts; ibid., 15–17, 22–4. Even after it is stabilized, therefore, the text is still "performative" in that it invites readers to reenact the exercises (in this case, legal analysis) that its wording presents; ibid., 169, 221–2. On the quest for pre-literary "building blocks" in the Talmud, originating in the context of a master and his circle of disciples, see Baruch M. Bokser, *Post-Mishnaic Judaism in Transition: Samuel on Berakhot and the Beginnings of Gemara*, BJS (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1980), 471–84.

36. I adapt the phrase *mental script* (or *mental text*) from studies of oral performance, such as Minna Skafte Jensen, "Performance," in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. John Miles Foley (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 45–54 (49). A mental script differs from a written script in that it is stored in (collective) memory and performed in ways that may vary from one rehearsal to the next. However, the adjective *mental*, by itself, may not do justice to the active, participatory nature of these "scripts." Empirically speaking, the scripts only exist in performances (aided in some cases by written notes).

37. Paul Heger points out that *1 Enoch* was compiled as a means of preaching with the aim of instilling hope in the righteous and persuading sinners to repent; Heger, "*1 Enoch*—Complementary of Alternative to Mosaic Torah?" *JSJ* 41 (2010): 29–62 (57–58).

38. In this particular case, of course, it helps that we find similar blessings in liturgical documents like the Psalms (Pss. 18:46; 28:6; 31:21; 41:13; passim).

39. Again, I have to play with words. Since the European Renaissance, we view texts as artifacts of bygone times and we try to exegete them. Exegesis is not the only mode of interpretation, however. For example, an actor interprets a role by embodying it, not just by studying it. Interpretation is therefore a broader category than exegesis.

40. Compare Rebecca Lesses's point about prayers and adjurations in the Heikalot literature—they were meant to be performed, not read as literature (and were recorded only as talismans); Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*, Harvard Theological Studies 44 (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 161–62 (citing Sam Gill's work on Navajo prayers). The idea that ancient biblical texts are collections of oral *traditions* is as old as form criticism itself, going back to Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis: The Biblical Saga and History*, trans. W. H. Carruth (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1901), 124–5. The more recent focus on oral *performance* takes us beyond Gunkel's idea of orality as folk tradition, impersonally handed down in a fixed genre (*Gattung*) for a given social context (*Sitz im Leben*); cf. Richard S. Sarason, "On the Use of Method in the Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, Brown Judaic Studies, ed. William Scott Green, 6 vols. (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1978–85 [1978]), 1:97–172 (131–7). Instead, we view orality more as live performances, creatively acted out in concrete devotional events. In contrast to Gunkel, current scholars also allow more freedom of reformulation to the redactors (based on redaction criticism) making reconstruction of oral traditions (based on stereotyped patterns) a more tentative procedure than Gunkel's scientific classification. Oral performance does not completely negate the results of form criticism (especially the identification of genre) or redaction criticism, but it does add another dimension—construal of texts in terms of liturgical practice.

41. We have a fairly clear example of such leadership in Luke 4:16-22, where Luke's Jesus performs the synagogue Haftarah reading from the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 61:1-2). Since this account is missing from earlier strata of the Gospels, the historical basis is more likely to be a prayer leader of Luke's personal acquaintance (perhaps Paul; cf. Acts 13:14-16) than an authentic Jesus tradition.

42. For example, the servant of Second Isaiah (Isa. 40–55) was probably a representative of the righteous remnant, perhaps the "tremblers" (*haredim*) described in Isa. 66:2, 5; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 24; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation*, AB

19B (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 51–53; Blenkinsopp, "The Qumran Sect in the Context of Second Temple Sectarianism," in *New Directions in Qumran Studies*, Library of Second Temple Studies 52, ed. Jonathan G. Campbell et al. (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 10–25 (14–15). Similarly, the seer Daniel represented those gifted with wisdom (*hakhamim*) in Dan. 1:4; 2:20-23; cf. 12:3 (*maskilim*). The model for such praxis could also be a celestial figure, for example, the heavenly "one like a son of man," who was depicted as a heavenly counterpart to the community of holy/righteous ones on earth in Dan. 7:10c-14, 22; *1 Enoch* (Similitudes) 38:6; cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, trans. G. W. Anderson (Nashville: Abingdon, 1954), 384–85. The angels (seraphim and cherubim) were the model for Israel's antiphonal praise of YHWH at Qumran (e.g., 1QH 11:22-23) and in the third blessing of the *Amidah* benedictions (which cites Isa. 6:3; Ezek. 3:12). From this perspective, I must agree with Seth L. Sanders's treatment of the illumination of Moses (Exod. 34) and the glorification of the Servant (Isa. 52–53) as models for corporate ritual practice in the Hellenistic era, although I doubt his assumption that such practice was a Hellenistic-era novelty; Sanders, "Performative Exegesis," in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*, SBLSS 11, ed. April D. DeConick (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 57–79 (67–70). It is just as reasonable to view the biblical Moses as the historicization of a liturgical role, as the reverse (Sanders follows the historicization tack in treating Exod. 15 as a "liturgical piece" embedded in a narrative; ibid., 73).

43. According to Moshe Idel, Enoch was a "paradigm for attaining experiences similar to his in the present"; Idel, "Adam and Enoch According to St. Ephrem the Syrian," *Kabbalah* 6 (2001): 183–205 (193). Note the correspondence between Enoch, the "righteous and blessed one," and the blessed righteous ones in the superscription, *1 En.* 1:1-2. Pierluigi Piovanelli's socio-rhetorical analysis of the Book of Watchers similarly concludes that "the text [in this case, *1 En.* 13:7-8] shows the path to be followed to the practitioners that would imitate Enoch's approach, namely, triggering oneiric, visionary, ecstatic, and other altered state of consciousness experiences . . ."; Piovanelli, "'Sitting by the Waters of Dan,' or the 'Tricky Business' of Tracing the Social Profile of the Communities that Produced the Earliest Enochic Texts," in *The Early Enoch Literature*, JSJSup 121, ed. Gabrielle Boccaccini and John J. Collins (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 257–81 (277–8). It should be noted, however, that treating Enoch as a model visionary does not require viewing him to be the model in all parts of the Enoch narratives. For example, the narrative of Enoch's acquisition of esoteric knowledge could be for the edification of the community (e.g., *1 En.* 36:4), rather than for their emulation; cf. Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests*, 274–75; Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6-16," in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, ed. Ra'anan S. Boustan and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 47–66 (65–66).

44. Methodologically our approach to history is what Jacob Neusner termed a "post-structuralist reversion to questions of a fundamentally historical character," the purpose of which is "not to tell a one-time event, but to create a paradigm" within a particular, historical social context; Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 310, 316, 323.

45. The Mishnah and Tosefta are said to be "Tannaitic" in the sense that most of their material is attributed to the Tannaim ("Repeaters" or "Rehearsers") of the first two centuries of the Common Era. Talmudic lemmas taken from the Mishnah do show a moderate degree of fluidity, but the current recension of the Mishnah can safely be dated to the third century; Martin S. Jaffee, "Writing and Rabbinic Oral Tradition: On Mishnaic Narrative, Lists and Mnemonics," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 1 (1991): 123–46 (123 n. 1).

46. Midrashim of the early Palestinian Amoraic era (c. 220–400) are similarly Tannaitic in the sense that much of their material is continuous with the historical Tannaim. Although they are classified as "halakic" (*midrashei halachah*) because they focus on the interpretation of scriptural law, they also contain homilies and haggadic commentaries much like the later amoraic "haggadic midrashim" (*midrashei 'aggadah*). Reuven Hammer suggests that the least confusing title for these

early (Tannaitic) texts is simply "classic midrash"; Hammer, trans., *The Classic Midrash: Tannaitic Commentaries on the Bible*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1995), 16.

47. On the recitation of the *Shema* and Psalms in private prayer as well as in public services associated with the temple, see Stefan Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 57–58, 76. 83. Other synagogue prayers that were probably inherited from Second Temple times include the Kedushah and the Kaddish. Marc Brettler and Lawrence Hoffmann suggest that the Kaddish was composed as early as the first century; MPPB 6:152–3 (cf. 160).

48. In formal synagogue settings, the Torah, prophets (*Haftarah*), and Esther (*Megillah*) were read aloud from Hebrew scrolls; *m. Shabb.* 16:1; *m. Meg.* 1:1; 4:3, 4; *t. Shabb.* 13:1; cf. Luke 4:16–17; Acts 13:15. The Talmud actually forbade the audible recitation of Torah portions by heart (*b. Git.* 60b; *b. Tem.* 14b). The Aramaic translation (*Targum*) and the homily would have been recited, however, as were the congregational recitations of the *Shema*. Evidence from medieval Europe indicates that biblical verses included in prayer services (the *Shema*, *pesukei de-zimrah* [including the *Hallel* and the Song of the Sea], the sacrificial portions, etc.) were often recited by memory by the congregation; Ephraim Kanarfogel, "Prayer, Literacy, and Literary Memory in the Jewish communities of Medieval Europe," in *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History: Authority, Diaspora, Tradition*, Jewish Culture and Contexts, ed. Ra'anan S. Boustan, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 250–70, 397–404 (254–6, 265).

49. MPPB 6:133.

50. Peter Schäfer, "The Aim and Purpose of Early Jewish Mysticism," in his *Hekhalot-Studien*, TSAJ 19 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 277–95 (294); Schäfer, "Jewish Liturgy and Magic," in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 1:541–56 (esp. 552–3).