

Gilayon and “Apocalypse”: Reconsidering an Early Jewish Concept and Genre*

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■ Abstract

This paper examines various ways in which apocalyptic studies can benefit from the introduction of the term and concept of *gilayon*, a reconstructed Hebrew counterpart of the Judeo-Greek *apocalypse*. The term *gilayon*, which combines the meanings of “revealed book” and “book of revelation,” refers to a central image of early Jewish revealed literature and could serve to define an important corpus, the boundaries of which might well overlap with (but still differ from) what is understood by the “genre apocalypse” in modern research. Moreover, this reconstructed concept uncovers additional meanings and associations, which shed light on texts known as “apocalyptic,” and has explanatory power for many phenomena associated with them. The introduction of *gilayon* may modify the entire paradigm of our understanding of early Jewish mysticism and help to divert the discussion of textual genres associated with it from a phenomenological to a historical route.

■ Keywords

genre, revelation, book, gospel, reconstruction, medium, paronomasia, wordplay

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In trying to investigate things which are above us and at present beyond our reach, we become so arrogant that we treat God like a book to be opened¹ and act as if we had already found the unfindable. (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.28.7)

■ Introduction

The scholarly debate over whether the apocalyptic genre² is a tangibly distinguished phenomenon or merely an artificial scholarly construct—with some even proposing “that the terms ‘apocalyptic’ and ‘apocalypticism’ be abandoned altogether”³—can be addressed in two possible ways.

¹ In the original: *pandamus Deum*. Quoted as translated in Irenaeus of Lyon, *The Scandal of the Incarnation: Irenaeus against the Heresies* (ed. Hans Urs von Balthasar; trans. John Saward; San Francisco: Ignatius, 1981) 35.

² This article is not a phenomenological but a historical study. Hence, for the purposes of this particular discussion I use the term “genre” throughout this article in its broadest sense (often interchangeable with “corpus”) to refer to any group of texts defined as such for whatever reason, either by their creators or by recipients (from early editors and readers to modern researchers), and not necessarily identifiable by a recognizable set of intrinsic features. In German, which has more varied terminology in this respect, I would have used the more neutral term *Gattung* rather than *genre*, with all its problematical theoretical baggage. Various more specific definitions of *genre* reflect diverse theoretical schools or the needs of particular types of analysis, as, for example, in the approach of the SBL Apocalypse Group oriented toward an etic and structural understanding of genre: “By ‘literary genre’ we mean a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing” (John Collins, “Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre,” in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* [ed. John J. Collins; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979; = *Semeia* 14 (1979)] 1–21, at 1). For more nuanced definitions of genre as applied to the study of apocalypticism, see also Carol A. Newsom, “Spying out the Land: A Report from Genology,” in *Seeking out the Wisdom of the Ancients* (ed. R. L. Troxel, K. G. Friebel, and D. R. Magary; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 437–50; Michael E. Vines, “The Apocalyptic Chronotope,” in *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies* (ed. Roland Boer; *Semeia*St 63; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007) 109–18. For a comprehensive survey of definitions of the apocalyptic genre, see Lorenzo DiTommaso, “Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity (Part I),” *CBR* 5 (2007) 235–86, at 238–50. For the same reason, I avoid using here Collins’s term “the genre apocalypse” because of its association with his specific definition of this genre. I do use the terms “apocalyptic” and “apocalypse,” but only for brevity and as a tribute to the scholarly tradition. Here they are not exact genre definitions but refer quite inclusively to features or writings belonging to early Jewish revealed literature (and not even “literary form” as in C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* [New York: Crossroad, 1982] 12). I have adopted this approach not because I intend to challenge existing definitions (although, as will be shown below, the reconstruction of *gilayon* may require a revision of this corpus’s boundaries). On the contrary, in the main body of this work I intentionally do not take a stand in these discussions, which are not only irrelevant to but also methodologically premature and counterproductive for this stage of my analysis. My approach there is by nature emic—historical and reconstructural. It is confined to the specific question of how the introduction of *gilayon* may change our understanding of early Jewish mysticism as reflected in early Jewish revealed literature (including the specific genre of vision report). This task, to my mind, requires a certain neutrality towards classificatory conclusions that were achieved before the reconstructed concept had been properly introduced. Thus, I address the etic perspective created by my emic analysis only in the section “Conclusions and New Questions” at the end.

³ Michael E. Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Magnalia Dei*:

The first has been widely applied. Writings considered apocalyptic are examined for a common set of features (mainly, but not exclusively, thematic) that are not only shared amongst themselves but also clearly differentiate them from other types of compositions.⁴ For this method, an “apocalypse” is simply that which scholars can agree to call an “apocalypse” and “the classification ‘apocalyptic’ or ‘apocalypse’ is a modern one.”⁵ The results of this approach, when applied impartially, do not always seem to be very favorable for the validity of the concept. It has even been noticed that “the ‘truly apocalyptic’ apocalypses are the exception rather than the rule,” and many patterns regarded as “apocalyptic” are in fact “not exclusive to the apocalypses.”⁶ This critical challenge has been met by subsequent research that refines and clarifies the modern analytical approach to “the genre apocalypse”⁷ and recognizes it as a *Gestalt* structure of dynamic nature and “blurred edges.”⁸

A second approach would involve not an “objective” textual analysis from today’s perspective but rather an examination of the question of whether ancient authors and readers considered the apocalyptic corpus as something distinct.⁹

The Mighty Acts of God (ed. F. M. Cross, W. E. Lenke, and P. D. Miller, Jr.; New York: Doubleday, 1976) 414–52, at 443. Cf. also statements such as the following: “Studies of apocalyptic literature commonly designate certain Jewish texts as apocalypses on the basis of some modern conception of the genre. Although useful for purposes of categorization and analysis, these classification schemes are strictly scholarly exercises. None of the various Jewish works now known as apocalypses referred to itself by this or by any other single title” (W. Adler, “Introduction,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* [ed. James C. VanderKam and William Adler; Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature 4; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996] 8–32, at 8).

⁴ This approach is most manifestly applied in Collins’s definition of the apocalyptic genre (see above; Collins, “Introduction,” 9; idem, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* [2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998] 5). Cf. also Rowland’s definition, which treats the broad thematic complex of the “revelation of heavenly mysteries” as a literary form (Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 12).

⁵ Collins, “Introduction,” 2. This approach is often labeled by Kenneth Pike’s term “etic” (analysis from the perspective of the observer), as distinct from “emic” (observation from the perspective of the subject), which we discuss below. This distinction is similar to Todorov’s “theoretical” and “historical” approaches to genres (Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic* [trans. Richard Howard; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975] 13–14).

⁶ Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things,” 443 (see more there). Cf.: “Several texts designated apocalypses lacked a majority of the very elements nominated for the purpose, while many of the same elements perversely appeared in compositions not hitherto considered apocalypses” (DiTommaso, “Apocalypses and Apocalypticism,” 239).

⁷ See, first and foremost, the works by Collins and Rowland cited above (nn. 2–5).

⁸ For this, see especially Newsom, who, based on the cognitive prototype theory of genre, suggested an important methodological tuning of the classificatory, “etic” approach and opened the possibility of linking it to a historical, “emic” one (Newsom, “Spying out the Land”).

⁹ For an early example of this “emic” approach as applied to the usage of Greek terminology, see Morton Smith, “On the History of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΙΨΙΣ,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism* (Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979) (ed. David Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 9–20. See also C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jewish Apocalyptic and Apocalypticism,” in *The Handbook of the Study of the Historical Jesus* (ed. S. E. Porter and T. Holmen; 4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 2:1569–1607, at 1582.

On the one hand, the scholarly validity of this second approach would enjoy the fundamental advantage of reflecting an authentic historical viewpoint. This approach, in fact, is not just a means to refine genre classification as a convenience for modern critics but part of a historical inquiry amplifying our understanding of the research object. On the other hand, however, the cost of gaining such an authentic perspective would be a reliance on much scarcer extant data and on more or less convincing reconstructions.

The most instrumental evidence in this respect could be expected to come from usages of the very title “apocalypse.”¹⁰ Indeed, we find this term used as a heading for many writings. Yet the dating of these titles represents a significant problem. Titles, by their very nature, are a paratextual phenomenon, more easily added or altered than other more integrated textual elements. Moreover, nearly all cases where the word appears as a title belong to either Christian writings or ones of dubious (either Jewish or Christian) provenance.¹¹ In any case, all of them are known from Christian transmission and could depend on the New Testament canon with its “Apocalypse” of John as a genre model.

Thus, from the wide usage of the title we can infer that at least late antique Christians did distinguish apocalyptic writings as a distinct corpus. It still remains to check on what basis they did so. One possible mode would be “writings similar to the Apocalypse of John,”¹² but whatever their basis may have been, they succeeded in passing on their perception to modern scholarship.

Yet what may be even more telling here is not the presence of the term but its absence. When we turn to earlier Jewish tradition, the situation becomes much more obscure. The *absence* of the title “apocalypse” from many early Jewish writings considered “apocalyptic” may be meaningful. *Argumentum ad ignorantiam*, inference from absence, however, is methodologically problematic. We know that “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence,” since some evidence may have been lost.¹³ When such lost evidence can sometimes be more or less convincingly reconstructed, the method becomes even more problematic.

¹⁰ Cf. “The title [‘apocalypse’] is not a reliable guide to the genre” (Collins, “Introduction,” 2).

¹¹ The *Apocalypse of Abraham*; *Testament of Abraham* (called *Apocalypse of Abraham* in rec. B, ms E); *Apocalypse of Ezra*; *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* (2 *Baruch*); Greek-Slavonic *Apocalypse of Baruch*; *Apocalypse of Moses*, atypical for the genre; the canonic *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* (Revelation); Gnostic writings, such as the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul*; (First) *Apocalypse of James*; (Second) *Apocalypse of James*; *Apocalypse of Adam*; *Apocalypse of Peter*; and many later Christian “apocalypses.”

¹² Named in fact “the apocalypse of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:1). Some consider the term “apocalypse” here as merely a description of the book’s contents without a declaration of its belonging to a genre (Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 38A; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015] 86).

¹³ See, however, attempts to challenge this principle in, e.g., Efraim Wallach, “Inference from Absence: The Case of Archaeology,” *Palgrave Communications* 5 (2019) art. 94, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0307-9>. Cf. D. Walton, *Arguments from Ignorance* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

With this understanding in mind, in 2009 I published a short paper assembling arguments in favor of a reconstruction of the Hebrew term for “apocalypse” as *gilayon* (גליון).¹⁴ In brief, my reconstruction was based on the following considerations. Most ancient translations interpreted biblical Hebrew *gilayon* as “book, scroll.” In rabbinic Hebrew this term could refer to different things in different sources;¹⁵ one such meaning pertained to a specific kind of book, which may be defined as neither canonical (since the Tosefta says that הגליונים וספרי המינים אינן מטמאות את הידים “the *gilyonim* and the books of the heretics do not defile the hands”), nor heretical (since גליונים here are clearly distinguished from ספרי המינים “the books of heretics”; *t. Yad.* 2.13). Extra-canonical¹⁶ apocalyptic writings are the best candidates for this category for at least four reasons: 1) the semantics of the term *gilayon*, which could be seen as derived not only from the Hebrew root *gll* “roll, fold, unfold” but also from *gly/glh* (or the Aramaic *gl*) meaning “open, reveal,” and whose verbal form was often translated by the Greek ἀποκαλύπτειν; 2) the Syriac equivalent for Hebrew *gilayon*, *gelyānā*/'*gelyōnā* (ܓܠܝܘܢܐ), often means “revelation, apocalypse” (including in the titles of apocalyptic writings); 3) this highly specialized Syriac term was most probably a Hebraism

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion, see Alexander Kulik, “Genre without a Name: Was There a Hebrew Term for ‘Apocalypse’?” *JSJ* 40 (2009) 540–50. The possibility was first raised by Hirsch P. Chajes in 1905 (quite briefly: “Also in *t.Yad.* 2.13, where it deals with books that have a character of sanctity, it is said that הגליונים וספרי המינים are not to be included among them. ספרי המינים—‘heretical books’—are generally explained as Christian books (at the end of the first century CE many Christians lived together with or alongside other Israelites and borrowed their ideas through books written in Hebrew). Had they not been composed in the sacred language, it would not have been necessary to deny them the character of sanctity, since a general rule (as in *m.Yad.* 4.5) ascribes a sacred character only to books written in Hebrew letters, on parchment, and with ink: גליונים—עד שיכתבו, אשריות על העור ובדיו, which we have left untranslated, could mean ‘apocalypses’ to which a character of authenticity was not given, although they were purely Hebrew” [with a footnote: “Heb. גלה means ‘to reveal,’ as does the Greek *apokalyptein*; in the Syriac, e.g., the *apokalypsis* (of John) is translated as גלינא”] (Hirsch P. Chajes, *La lingua ebraica nel cristianesimo primitivo* [Firenze: Galletti e Cassuto, 1905] 9; my translation from the Italian). This idea has not been properly developed in subsequent scholarship. Cf. the references to Chajes in: Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching* (trans. Herbert Danby; New York: Macmillan, 1925) 75; Morris Goldstein, *Jesus in Jewish Tradition* (New York: Macmillan, 1950) 72. Compare also Moris Friedländer’s suggestion that these are “Zauberbücher” in his *Die religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1905) 188–202. See also Shlomo Pines, “He’arot ‘al tiqbolet ha-qayemet ben munaḥim suriyim u-ven munaḥim shel leshon Ḥazal” [Notes on the Parallelism between Syriac Terminology and Mishnaic Hebrew], in *Sefer zikaron le-Ya‘aqov Fridman z”l: Qovets meḥqarim* (Jerusalem: Institute for Jewish Studies, 1974) 205–213, at 209 n. 13; Haggai Ben Shammai, “*Ṣuḥuf* in the Quran: A Loan Translation for ‘Apocalypses,’” in *Exchange and Transmission across Cultural Boundaries: Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean World* (ed. Haggai Ben Shammai, S. Shaked, and S. Stroumsa; Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2013) 1–15.

¹⁵ On גליונים as “blank sheets” or “margins of scrolls,” see Kulik, “Genre,” 543, esp. n. 9. For more alternative readings, see the section “‘*Aven-gilayon* as a Kind of *Gilayon*?’” below.

¹⁶ Similarly to “the Books of Ben Sira and all books written from now on [or: “from then,” or “from the time when prophecy ceased”]” (ספרי בן סירא וכל ספרים שנכתבו מכאן ואילך), mentioned in immediate proximity.

borrowed from the Jewish definition of some corpus of revealed literature (because its only meaning attested in Christian Syriac is “apocalypse,” and the form could hardly have been created in Syriac just for such a narrow usage); and finally, 4) the combination of the meanings “book” and “revelation” in one term made it a perfect expression for the title “book of revelation” and also for the concept of an otherworldly revealed book, central to many apocalyptic writings.¹⁷

The claim I put forward in this paper is that the concept of *gilayon* “revealed book,” with all its meanings and allusions, was closely integrated both into the apocalyptic content and also into the Semitic languages of the early apocalyptic corpus. Even more importantly, it helps us to understand some very central imagery of early Jewish and Christian thought.

The connection between the meaning of the word *gilayon* and the content regularly found in the corpus of Jewish revealed literature seems so obvious that it is unclear how it could have been overlooked until now. This connection cannot but cause a noticeable shift in the system of our perception of apocalyptic motifs. Below I will dwell on the following implications of this reconstruction. The first and foremost is 1) actualization of the motif of the *revealed book*. This in turn would demand reevaluation of some other adjacent motifs, such as 2) open versus sealed books, 3) revealed versus secret books, 4) written versus oral teachings, 5) the place of the revealed book among other apocalyptic media, and finally, the connection between *gilayon* imagery and 6) messianic teachings, 7) terminology applied to and in early Christian writings, and 8) theologies of salvation.

■ *Gilayon* and its Attributes

A. *Gilayon* as “*Revealed Book*”

It is not only in titles where this notion of the *revealed book* appears. The combination of the two meanings of “book” and “revelation” in one term makes it the perfect expression not only for a “*book of revelation*” or a “*revealed book*” but also for the more complex concept of a *revealed book of revelation* found in many apocalyptic writings.¹⁸

¹⁷ Thus, titles such as גליון ברוך (as Syr ܩܝܠܝܘܢ ܒܪܘܚܝܢ for 2 *Baruch*), גליון אברהם, and the like may have had a double meaning: “Revelation/Book of. . . .” This double meaning of the hypothetical original Hebrew or Aramaic term may be reflected in the discrepancies in its renderings in other languages, as, e.g., in Origen’s evidence of the “Book of Baruch” (“They summon the Book of Baruch the Prophet [*Baruch prophetae librum*] to bear witness to this assertion, because in it the seven worlds or heavens are more clearly pointed out”), referring in *Princ.* 2.3.6 to an apocalyptic vision possibly identical or close to what is known in Greek as the “Apocalypse of Baruch” (ἀποκάλυψις Βαρούχ). This discrepancy is instructive more as a model than as evidence for a Semitic original of 3 *Baruch*. We do not know if it had one.

¹⁸ That is, writings defined as “apocalyptic” either by their titles or other criteria developed in scholarship (see n. 2 above).

The book (scroll) imagery, often central for apocalyptic settings, may be connected to this double meaning. Such wordplay could follow the near universal topos of the celestial *book(s) revealed*, on the one hand, while also giving it a new impetus, on the other hand. This motif must be a variation of a wider concept of divine knowledge objectively existing in the upper realm and being potentially revealed to humankind. This concept was nearly universal for ancient thought, from Near Eastern myth to Platonic philosophy, but became especially prominent in the early Jewish worldview.¹⁹

The demonstrating and unrolling or unsealing of the *scroll* occupy a central place in some prophetic and many apocalyptic narratives. In Isa 29:11–12 “the whole [prophetic] vision” (חזוֹת הכל) is compared to “the words of the sealed book [scroll]” (דְּבַרֵי הַסֵּפֶר הַחֲתוּמָה). In Ezek 2:9–3:3, revelation is accompanied by eating, “filling the belly” with the “sweet” celestial scroll (Heb. מְגִילַת סֵפֶר or מְגִילָה; Ezek 3:1–3); we find the same motif in Rev 10:9–10. In the *Parables of Enoch*, while receiving a revelation, the seer actually “received books of zeal and wrath as well as the books of haste and whirlwind” (1 *En.* 39:2).

The content of 1 *Enoch* alludes to Ezek 2:9–10, but its “books” are more than lists of eschatological woes: Enoch observes “books of the living” opened before God (*Parables of Enoch* 47:3). According to the *Astronomical Book*, he read “the tablets of heaven, all the writing, and came to understand everything . . . [he] reads the book of all the deeds of humanity and all the children of the flesh upon the earth for all the generations of the world” (81:1–2; cf. also *Apocalypse of Weeks* 93:1 and *Epistle of Enoch* 106:19). The destiny of the “sheep” (Israel) is also written in the book, read to the Lord, and sealed by him (*Astronomical Book* 81:67–77; *Animal Apocalypse* 90:20–21). Enoch, in turn, also writes his revelation down and transmits it in this form to his son: “I have *revealed* to you and given you the *book* about all these things . . .” (*Astronomical Book* 82:1; italics here and henceforth are mine). Enoch copies celestial books and writes down his visions in heaven also in 2 *En.* 22:11; 23:3; 33:2–10; and more.

The sealed scroll (βιβλίον) of Rev 5 has much in common with the Book of Ezekiel, as well as with 1 *Enoch*. When unsealed, it reveals visions of the eschatological future (Rev 6–8). Following Ezek 3:1–3, revelation and prophetic initiation in the Book of Revelation are accomplished through demonstrating and eating a celestial “little opened scroll” (βιβλαρίδιον ἠνεωργμένον; Rev 10:2–11). The *Shepherd of Hermas* develops the same motifs (*Herm. Vis.* 1.2.2; 2.1.3–2.2.1; 2.4.2–3); see, for example, “I transcribed the whole of it [the *book*] letter by letter . . .

¹⁹ On heavenly books and tablets specifically as media preserving and conveying such knowledge, see Lesley Baynes, *The Heavenly Book Motif in Judeo-Christian Apocalypses, 200 BCE–200 CE* (JSJSup 152; Leiden: Brill, 2012); as well as references in Andrei A. Orlov, *Embodiment of Divine Knowledge in Early Judaism* (Routledge Studies in the Biblical World; New York: Routledge, 2022) 3 and 16 n. 9. See there also Orlov’s discussion of alternatives to book modes of the fixation of divine knowledge: writings or depictions on God’s organs (Isa 49:16; 2 *Bar.* 4:2), on the Throne of Glory (3 *En.* 41:1–3), on the Pargod (3 *En.* 45:1–6), on Metatron’s crown (3 *En.* 13), etc.

the knowledge of the writing was *revealed* to me” (2.1.3–2.2.1). The *Cologne Mani Codex* of the fifth century CE also refers to (possibly alleged) “Apocalypses” of Adam, Sethel, Shem, Enosh, and Enoch, speaking about these texts as self-evidently written compositions: “[E]ach one of the forefathers showed his own *apocalypse* to his elect, which he chose and brought together in that generation in which he appeared, and how he *wrote* (it) and bequeathed (it) to posterity” (CMC 47.1–16; 62.9–63.7). Many more examples are provided in the following sections. This motif of a *revealed heavenly book* may be connected to the similar idea of *heaven as a revealed book*, as found in Isa 34:16: וקראו אחת מהנה לא נעדרה אשה: “Search from the book of the Lord and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has commanded it, and his spirit that has gathered them together.” Isa 34:4 even uses the verb from the same root as *gilayon*: ונגלו כספר: “All the host of heaven [= stars] will be dissolved and the heavens will be *rolled up like a book* [= scroll]. All their host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled fruit from the fig tree.” In other words, here we find the idea that in the astrological world the very heavens are themselves a book, recording the human state and enabling him who “reads” them to reveal hidden knowledge.²⁰ Uranology played the central role in apocalyptic narratives, and the very image of *heaven as a book (scroll)* appears also in apocalyptic contexts: “the heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up” (Rev 6:14).

The popularity of the *revealed book* concept may stand behind its extension to the “book of the Torah,” understood not only as a book registering the *teaching* revealed to Moses (as in Exod 34:27; Deut 31:9 and 24; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.15–26; *Jub.* 1:5; 4 *Ezra* 14:4–6; etc.) but also as the actual, ready-shaped “book of teaching” revealed to him. The book could be given or shown or dictated to him in different forms as a whole (as in *b. Git.* 60a: “the Torah was given complete” תורה התומה וניתנה), or at least given in portions as a series of revealed books in different time periods (“the Torah was given scroll by scroll” תורה מגילה מגילה ניתנה). This revelation could even include an entire library:

R. Levi b. Hama said in the name of R. Shimon b. Laqish: “It is said in the Scripture: ‘And I will give you the tablets of stone, the Torah and the commandments, which I have written to teach them’ [Exod 24:12], meaning that the ‘tablets’ refer to the ten commandments, the ‘Torah’ to the Scripture [מקרא, here—Pentateuch], the ‘commandments’ to the Mishnah; ‘which I have written these’ to the books of Prophets and Writings; ‘to teach them’ to the Talmud. All these were given to Moses at Sinai.” (*b. Ber.* 5a)

However, there are recensions, possibly more authentic, where the “Scripture” is not mentioned at all and “Torah” is associated with tablets.²¹ Similarly, Pseudo-

²⁰ Communicated by Michael Stone in the name of Joshua Gutmann.

²¹ For much greater detail on this, see Aharon Shweka, “The Tablets of Stone, the Law, and the Commandment,” *Turbiz* 71 (2012–2013) 343–66 (Hebrew).

Jonathan (eighth century CE or later) argues that both the written and oral Torahs were not given literally but only as the interpretive potential of the tablets: “I will give you the tablets of stone where the rest of the words of the Torah [שאר פתגמי] [אורייהא] and the six hundred and thirteen commandments, which I wrote for their instruction, are implied [רמון]” (*Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 24:12*). Despite this, the idea of the integral nature of the giving of the Torah could possibly follow from the concept of the Torah’s preexistence (*b. Zebah. 116a; Gen. Rab. 1.1, 4; y. Šeqal. 5.15.49a*). The revelation of the Torah in book form was never explicitly stated in pre-rabbinic sources, although some early Jewish traditions might bestow this status on other books given to Moses (*Jub. 1:1; Temple Scroll 51.6–7*). The idea of the Torah’s preexistence in book form might have been known to Sir 24:1 and 23 and Bar 3:37–4:1, which identify the celestial Wisdom not only with “the Law which Moses commanded us” but also with “the *book* of the covenant of the Most High God” (Sir 24:3) and “the *book* of the precepts of God” (Bar 4:1; on this, see more in the section “Revealed Book and Incarnated Word”).

B. Gilayon as “Open Book” versus Closed or Sealed Books

The meanings of “reveal, discover”²² and “uncover, open” are equally expressed by the Semitic root *gly/ghl*. This fact may be connected to a widely developed motif of *opening (and unsealing) the celestial book*.

There may also be a general semiotic/infralinguistic basis for the metaphor of the *book as revelation*. The book—and more especially the scroll, before the widespread introduction of codices—is by definition an object that must be uncovered and unrolled (or opened) in order to reveal its contents.²³

The opened celestial book (an unsealed and/or unrolled scroll) is a leitmotif of Revelation (see chapters 5–6; 10; 20; etc.) and is widely found applied to celestial books in other apocalyptic writings as well: “The [celestial] court sat in judgment, and books were opened” (ויספרין פתיחו; Dan 7:10); “and the Lord of the sheep sat on it, and they took all the sealed books and opened those books before the Lord of the sheep” (*Animal Apocalypse* 90:20); “And in those days I saw the Head of Days sit down on the throne of his glory, and the books of the living (*mašāḥefta ḥeyāwān*) were opened before him” (*Parables of Enoch* 47:3); “And the judge told one of the angels who served him, ‘Open this book for me and find for me the sins of this soul.’ And when he opened the book he found its sins and righteous deeds to be equally balanced” (*T. Ab. A* 12:17–18); “And that man opened one of the books which the cherubim had and sought out the sin of the woman’s soul, and he found (it). And the judge said, ‘Exhibit the sin of this soul.’ And, opening one of the books which were with the cherubim, he looked for the sin of the woman and found (it)” (*T. Ab. B* 10); “When the seal is placed upon the age that is about to pass away, then I will show these signs: the books shall be opened before the face

²² Found together with “books” in the *Astronomical Book* (*1 En. 82:1*; see above).

²³ I thank Cyril Aslanov for this consideration.

of the firmament, and all shall see my judgment together” (4 *Ezra* 6:20); “For behold, the days are coming, and the books will be opened in which are written the sins of all those who have sinned” (2 *Bar.* 24:1); “one of the angels who was standing by, more glorious than that angel who had brought me up from the world, showed me (some) books [or “book” in Slavonic and Latin], but not like the books of this world; and he opened them, and the books had writing in them, but not like the books of this world” (*Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 9:20–21). Compare also “the books of the living ones were open before him” (*Parables of Enoch* 47:3, cited above) and “[The angels] read, they choose, they love . . . their codex is *never closed*, nor is their book ever folded shut. For you yourself are a book to them and you are ‘for eternity’” (*legunt, eligunt, et diligunt . . . non clauditur codex eorum nec plicatur liber eorum, quia tu ipse illis hoc es et es in aeternum*; Augustine, *Confessions* 13.151).²⁴

These open or opening books are found in a natural dichotomy with closed, and especially sealed, books. In addition to *Isa* 29:11–12 cited above (דברי הספר ההתום “the words of the *sealed* book”) and *Rev* 5–6 (βιβλίον . . . κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγισιν ἑπτὰ “a book . . . sealed with seven seals” in 5:1, together with the account of their subsequent opening, etc.), we may recall: “O Daniel, shut up the words, and *seal* the book, even to the time of the end” (*Dan* 12:4 and 9); “the Lord of the sheep sat on it [the throne], and they [or “he,” i.e., the “ram”] took all the *sealed* books and *opened* those books before the Lord of the sheep” (*Animal Apocalypse* 90:20).²⁵ Compare the motif of the “sealed” revelation in *Dan* 9:24 (לחתם חזון ונביא) “to seal up vision and prophecy,” with its diverse interpretations) and 4Q300 1b (נה[תם החזון] מכם התום מכם “the vision is sealed from you”; compare also its “opening” there: ואם תפתחו החזון “and if you open the vision”).²⁶

These passages may be divided into three groups: 1) those referring to celestial books registering human deeds or lists of the righteous (like the books of judgment and the book of life in *Rev* 20:12, etc., well known already in the Hebrew Bible); 2) books that refer rather to the future and are being revealed to an apocalyptic seer, that is, books of revelation per se (also known already to Isaiah and Ezekiel; see the section “*Gilayon* as ‘Revealed Book’” above); 3) some books that are not only referring to the future but are also active agents initiating apocalyptic events

²⁴ Cf. also later mystical traditions of revealed books, such as *Sefer ha-Razim* (3rd–4th cent.), etc.

²⁵ Cf. also *Jer* 32:11: ואת־הגלוי . . . ואת־החתום את־ספר המקנה את־החתום “the sealed book of purchase and the open one.”

²⁶ See Aaron Choueka [Shweka], “Was the Torah Given ‘One Scroll at a Time’ or ‘Sealed?’” *Sidra* 30 (2015) 179–200, at 181–82 n. 13 (Hebrew). Choueka also suggests to read התומה “sealed” in תורה התומה ניתנה in *b. Git.* 60a (discussed in the section “*Gilayon* as ‘Revealed Book’” above) as “complete but closed for reading” as in *Deut. Rab.* 3 where the Torah is “sealed by fire” (cf. also *Isa* 29:11: “And all the vision has been to you like the words of a sealed book. If it is given to one who can read and he is asked to read it, he will say, ‘I cannot, because it is sealed’”) and accordingly מגילה תורה מגילה ניתנה in מגילה (with only one מגילה in some versions) there as “open to reading” (*ibid.*, 184–88).

(as in Revelation; cf. Zech 5:1–4; *Odes Sol.* 23).²⁷ In fact, then, these groups often overlap, and all relate to the imagery of closed or sealed celestial books being opened in order to refer to hidden knowledge. Their opening unfolds the divine will and initiates celestial judgment, sometimes through an eschatological train of events. The active character of these books connects them to the imagery of messianic figures (on this see “Revealed Book and Incarnated Word” below).

C. *Uncovered Gilayon versus Secret or Hidden Books*

Just as the image of opened books is found in a dichotomy with closed or sealed books, in similar fashion the very idea of *revealed* books naturally presupposes the concept of *hidden* or *secret* books (or tablets) which may become discovered in a natural way (as “the book of teaching/law” in 2 Kgs 22–23) or, more often, miraculously revealed. Thus, in the very term *gilayon* we have a linguistic representation of the observation that it is the *disclosure* of divine secrets which is “the true theme of later Jewish apocalyptic,”²⁸ rather than eschatology, etc.²⁹

Apocalyptic secret books, even when uncovered, may still preserve their esoteric character, since they are often revealed only to a chosen few, at a prescribed time, or only in part: for example, Dan 12:4 and 9; *1 En.* 32:21–22; 107:3; *2 En.* 35:2; *Jub.* 1:27; 32:21–22; 45:15; *4 Ezra* 12:37–38; 14:6, 26 and 46; *T. Mos.* 1:16–18; 10:11–12; *Ap. John* 31 (NHL 116); *Ap. Jas.* 1.8–32 (NHL I. 2); *CMC* 43 (54.1).³⁰ In this connection, it is also worth mentioning the secret books of Essenes and other Jewish sectarians³¹ and other attested forms of concealed divine knowledge.³²

²⁷ Cf. the survey of different kinds of heavenly books in Baynes, *Heavenly Book Motif*.

²⁸ G. Bornkamm, “Μυστήριον,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. Gerhard Kittel; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967; hereafter *TDNT*) 4:802–28, at 815–16. Rowland notes that the “key to the whole [apocalyptic] movement is that God reveals his mysteries directly to man and thereby gives them knowledge of the true nature of reality so that they may organize their lives accordingly” (Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 9, 11). On secrecy in the Jewish apocalypses, see Adler, “Introduction,” 12 n. 46, with references there; see also Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things,” 414–52; idem, *Scriptures, Sects, and Visions: A Profile of Judaism from Ezra to the Jewish Revolts* (Cleveland: Collins, 1980).

²⁹ We will, however, dwell on the connection between the two in the sections below entitled “Revealed Book and Incarnated Word” and “*Gilayon* and *Ge'ulah*.”

³⁰ On this, see D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 BC–AD 100* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 107–18.

³¹ See Josephus, *B.J.* 2.142; *IQS* 5.7–13, cf. 9.16–17, 8.10–12, *CD*³ 15.8–11; and on the external evidence, see Morton Smith, “The Description of the Essenes in Josephus and the *Philosophumena*,” *HUCA* 29 (1958) 273–313. Cf. also the cryptographic manuscripts of Qumran (see D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave I* [DJJD I; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955] 115). See also Albert de Jong, “Secrecy,” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (ed. Wouter J. Hanegraaff et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 1050–54; M. E. Stone, *Secret Groups in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) esp. 23–24, 67, 75, 79.

³² As, e.g., divine Wisdom, “hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of heaven” (Job 28:28). On the connection of *gilayon* to Wisdom, see the section “Revealed Book and Incarnated Word” below.

In general, there is always a tension (immanent for most mystical traditions) between the axiomatically esoteric character of revealed knowledge and the very fact of its revelation. The nature of a secret is therefore dynamic, since “there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets” (Dan 2:28). Paul Tillich has also identified a concept of so-called “reveal/conceal dialectics”: “Only what essentially is concealed, and accessible by no mode of knowledge whatsoever, is imparted by revelation. But in thus being revealed it does not cease to remain concealed, since its secrecy pertains to its very essence, and when therefore it is revealed it is so precisely as that which is hidden.”³³ Explicitly paradoxical Gnostic expressions can be illustrative in this respect: τὸ μέγα καὶ κρύφιον τῶν ὄλων ἄγνωστον μυστήριον . . . κεκαλυμμένον καὶ ἀνακεκαλυμμένον “great, secret, entirely unknown mystery of the universe . . . veiled and unveiled”; κρυβομένην ὁμοῦ καὶ φανερούμενην “both hidden and revealed”; ἀλάλως λαλοῦν μυστήριον ἄρητον “without uttering, it utters an ineffable mystery” (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.7.20 and 27; 5.8.2). This very equivocality, characteristic for revelatory language, may be rooted in the intrinsic ambivalence of revelation, which often finds expression in a parabolic mode.³⁴

This unity of concealment and revelation is often found in an antithetic form in the New Testament: “the revelation of the mystery [ἀποκάλυψιν μυστηρίου] hidden [σεσιγημένον] for long ages past, but now revealed [φανερωθέντος]” (Rom 16:25–26; see also Mark 4:22; cf. Luke 8:17; Col 1:26–27; 3:3–4; Eph 3:4, 9–10; etc.). Thus, terms like ἀπόκρυφος or ἀπόρητος may refer to the same “hidden” or “secret” knowledge to which ἀποκάλυψις/ῆλιγ and its synonym φανερόν apply.³⁵ See, for example, “For there is nothing hid [κρυπτόν], which shall not be revealed [φανερωθῆ]; neither was anything kept secret [ἀπόκρυφον], but that it should become revealed [φανερὸν]” (Mark 4:22; cf. Luke 8:17; Col 2:3).

With regard to later ἀπόκρυφος and ἀπόρητος applied specifically to a certain class of books, we find them in various meanings and sometimes attributed to Jewish usage. Thus, a reference to ἀπόκρυφα as a Jewish term is found in Origen.³⁶

³³ Paul Tillich, “Die Idee der Offenbarung,” *ZTK* 35 (1927) 403–12, at 406, as quoted in G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Row, 1963) 2:565. Cf. also Yonatan Moss’s work on paradox in theological thinking in his “From Contradiction to Paradox: A New Perspective on Galatians 3.28,” *Marriage, Families, and Spirituality* 26.1 (2020) 26–40.

³⁴ The principle was formulated as early as Heraclitus, who remarked that the oracle “does not say and does not hide, but indicates” (σημανεῖ; Heraclitus apud Plutarch, *Pyth. orac.* 21.404e). Cf. Alexander Kulik, *3 Baruch: Greek-Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch* (CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 49. See also David E. Aune, “The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre,” in *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (ed. Adela Yarbro Collins; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986; = *Semeia* 36 [1986]) 65–96, at 84–86.

³⁵ The verbs φανερόω and ἀποκαλύπτω may interchange in translating Heb פלג, and Paul uses φανερόω and ἀποκαλύπτω synonymously (cf. Rom 1:7 and 3:21, Eph 3:5, Col 1:26; on ἀποκαλύπτω as a more “Jewish” term, see Albrecht Oepke, “Καλύπτω, κάλυμμα, ἀνα-, κατα-, ἀποκαλύπτω, ἀποκάλυψις,” *TDNT* 3:582–87). For φανερός γίνομαι used for eschatological manifestation, see 1 Cor 3:13.

³⁶ See *Comm., ser. Matt.* 55 (on Matt 24:36), 124.10–20 and esp. idem, *Sel. Gen.* (PG 12.101C) referring to what “Jews say.” On ἀπόρητα in connection with secret traditions of Jews, see idem,

This attested Jewish usage may indicate that these Greek terms possibly go back to Hebrew or Aramaic forms, similarly to ἀποκάλυψις/גילויִן.³⁷ In LXX and Aquila ἀπόκρυφος regularly renders forms derived from the root סתר.³⁸ Compare, for example, נסתרות in CD 3:14 (and 4Q267 F1:6, 9; 4Q268 F1:7) and מגילות סתרים “secret [or rather just “private”] scrolls” in y. *Šeqal.* 5.1.49a; b. *Šabb.* 6b; b. *B. Meš.* 92a. Greek ἀπόρητος regularly refers to Hebrew סוד in Aquila.³⁹

The revelation of heavenly secrets through writing a book, even if in a more academic than visionary setting, is a theme found also in rabbinic literature:

When the [Aramaic] translation of the Prophets was composed by Jonathan ben Uzziel based on [a tradition going back to the last prophets] Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Land of Israel quaked over an area of four hundred parasangs by four hundred parasangs, and a Divine Voice said: “Who is the one who has revealed my mysteries [גילה סתריי] to the children of men?” Rose Jonathan ben Uzziel and said: “I am the one who revealed your mysteries to the children of men. It is revealed and known to you that . . . I did it for your honor in order that discord may not abound in Israel.” (b. *Meg.* 3a)

That these secrets could be of a specifically “apocalyptic” nature we see from the immediate continuation: “And he [Jonathan ben Uzziel] also wanted to reveal a translation of the Writings [לגלות תרגום של כתובים], but a Divine Voice said to him: ‘It is enough for you!’ Why? Because it [i.e., the collection of Writings, namely Daniel] speaks about the messianic end [קץ משיח].”

D. Written Gilayon versus Oral “Vision”

The disclosure of secrets may go as far as the occurrence or even prescription of wide *dissemination* (sometimes even among Gentiles and the wicked), as in *1 En.* 82:1–2; 104:11–13; *2 En.* 33:9–10; 35:2–3; 48:5–8; 54:1 (“the books which I have given to you, do not hide them”); *Rev* 1:11.⁴⁰ Given this task of dissemination, the role of *writing* becomes central as the most efficient tool for the preservation and dissemination of knowledge (even if still relatively young and controversial at the time; see on this below). The development therefore entails an image of the *revealed written text*—that is to say, *gilayon*.

Com. Jo. 6.73, 76, 83. On this, see W. Adler, “The Pseudepigrapha in the Early Church,” in *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible* (ed. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002) 211–28.

³⁷ On the reconstruction of the forms based on Heb נגז, see Albrecht Oepke, “Βίβλοι ἀπόκρυφοι in Christianity,” *TDNT* 3:987–1000.

³⁸ Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1975) 134; Joseph Reider, *An Index to Aquila* (rev. Nigel Turner; Leiden: Brill, 1966) 27.

³⁹ Reider, *Index*, 28.

⁴⁰ Cf. Wolfgang Speyer’s more general typology of the revelation of written documents in antiquity and later periods in his *Bucherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970); cf. also his *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum. Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung* (Munich: Beck, 1971).

This new term might serve, *inter alia*, to distinguish later, and more logocentric, apocalyptic experiences or literary genres from biblical prophetic encounters entitled “visions” (מחזיה, חזיון, חזון),⁴¹ “oracles,” or “utterances” (אמרות).⁴² Thus, Paul distinguishes between ὄπτασιαί (“visions”) and ἀποκαλύψεις (“revelations”) in 2 Cor 12:1.

This emphasis on scribal rather than oral prophetic practices must reflect a change in intellectual practices and in the *Zeitgeist* in general. It finds parallels in many apocalyptic contexts, which refer to celestial scribal activity (*I En.* 74:2; *Jub.* 4:17; *2 En.* 22; 23:4–6; 4Q203 8; *b. Hag.* 15a)⁴³ as well as to the scribal activity of apocalyptic seers (*I En.* 12:4; 15:1; 82:1: 92:1; *4 Ezra* 12:36–38; *T. Mos.* 1:16; *Rev* 1:11; etc.).⁴⁴ More generally, we can observe a dichotomy of biblical prophets replaced by apocalyptic sages or scribes, such as Enoch, Baruch, and Ezra or the visionary sages of later Hekhalot literature.⁴⁵

Thus, the semantic ambiguity of the word *gilayon*, which contains the meanings of both “book” and “revelation,” may reflect a certain development of apocalyptic concepts and practices in comparison to the earlier prophetic tradition. In particular, this implies: 1) less figurative conceptions of revelation, including the revealing of *written* materials—that is, revelatory *reading* rather than *seeing*; and 2) a functional form of the genre, *written* rather than *oral*.

It is noteworthy that chronologically this process closely precedes the fixation of the “Oral Teaching,” the Mishnah, which was “sealed” at the end of the second century CE. Might these two phenomena belong to the same conceptual development—a gradual change of approach toward the written fixation of esoteric/oral knowledge, together with a concomitant change in its function and status? The ancient controversy surrounding written fixation applied to various genres and is attested widely, from Plato, who refers to the written word as “not the truth but a semblance of wisdom” (σοφίας . . . δόξαν, οὐκ ἀλήθειαν; *Phaedr.* 275a) and Qohelet, with his skepticism regarding “making many books” (*Ecc* 12:12), to the Talmud’s harsh warning: “Those who record halakhot are like him who burns the Torah. And whoever studies these [written collections] has no reward” (כותבי הלכות כשורף התורה) *b. Git.* 60b and par.).⁴⁶

⁴¹ See, for example, the biblical “Vision of Isaiah,” “Vision of Obadiah,” and others; cf. especially a “picture” of *Apocalypse of Abraham* 22:1 *et pass.*, which we discuss in the section “Revealed Book and Apocalyptic Mediality.”

⁴² Also as a title: “The oracle which the prophet Habakkuk saw” in *Hab* 1:1; etc.

⁴³ See Andrei Orlov, “Overshadowed by Enoch’s Greatness: ‘Two Tablets’ Traditions from the *Book of Giants* to *Palaea Historica*,” *JSJ* 32 (2001) 137–58, at 141–42.

⁴⁴ See Russell, *Method*, 118–19.

⁴⁵ See Kulik, 3 *Baruch*, 90–91; cf. Russell, *Method*, 175–77. See also the distinction made by the rabbis between prophets *per se* and the apocalyptic seer Daniel: “They [Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi] were greater than he [Daniel], and he was greater than they. They were greater than he, as they were prophets and he was not a prophet. He was greater than they, as he saw [his vision] and they did not see [despite being present there, identified as the “men” of Dan 10:7]” (*b. Meg.* 3a).

⁴⁶ Ascribed to Rabbi Yohanan; see more in *y. Pe’ah* 2, 6, 17a and par.; *y. Meg.* 4, 1, 74d; *Tanh.*

Orality and esoteric secrecy are connected in the rabbinic discussion of putting the oral teaching in writing: “God said to the nations of the world: ‘You say that you are My children. I do not recognize as My children any but those who have My secrets [אלא שמסורין שלי אצלון]’ And which are these? The Mishnah, which was given orally [שניתנה על פה] and from which everything can be learned” (ascribed to R. Yehudah bar Shalom, Palestinian amora of the end of the third century CE; *Tanḥ.* Ki Tisa 34 [Buber 59a, n. 120]; *Pesiq. Rab.* 5, 14b and par.).⁴⁷ Also Paul, when arguing against putting the new message in writing, presents a dichotomy between written things and those revealed directly to the heart, as in Jeremiah’s new covenant passage (31:31–34): “Do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor 3:1–3). A similar dichotomy may be found in Clement’s opposition of Christ as the “living Law” (*nomos empsychos*) to the written Law (*Strom.* 2.18.3–19.3; on this, see more in the section “Revealed Book and Incarnated Word”).⁴⁸

Opposition of different degrees and on diverse bases to the written word was in a fact a wider phenomenon and something not unheard of in Hellenic and Christian circles as well. Some of the arguments of these groups were also connected to considerations of esotericity.⁴⁹ On the other hand, writing practices could be justified

Ki Tisa 34 (Buber 17–18, 58b–59b); *ibid.* Va-Ira 5.

⁴⁷ On the relation between Oral Torah and esotericism (and specifically on this rabbinic source in comparison to Hilary of Poitiers and par.), see A. Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 31–32; *idem*, “Hilary of Poitiers, Judeo-Christianity and the Origins of the LXX,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 59 (2005) 264–85; Marc Bregman, “Mishna and LXX as Mystery: An Example of Jewish-Christian Polemic in the Byzantine Period,” in *Continuity and Renewal: Jews and Judaism in Byzantine-Christian Palestine* (ed. Lee I. Levine; Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute and the Jewish Theological Seminary, 2004) 333–42. See also Yaacov Sussman, “The Oral Torah in the Literal Sense: The Power of the Tail of a Yod” *Mehqere Talmud* 3 (2005) 289–384 (Hebrew); *idem*, *Oral Law Taken Literally: The Power of the Tip of a Yod* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2019 [Hebrew]).

⁴⁸ On the tension between orality and literacy in early Christian discourses, with positioning of the oral gospel over against the written law as “spirit” versus “letter,” see Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). On the other hand, see an early (known since ca. 370 CE) and influential iconographic motif of *traditio legis* in which Jesus hands his New Law in the form of a book (a scroll or rarely a codex) to the apostles Peter or Paul (see Armin F. Bergmeier, “The *Traditio Legis* in Late Antiquity and its Afterlives in the Middle Ages,” *Gesta* 56 [2017] 27–52). Some interpret this as illustrating Rev 10:1–2 (thus Yves Christe, *L’Apocalypse de Jean. Sens et développements de ses visions synthétiques* [Paris: Picard, 1996] 63–65).

⁴⁹ On this see Loveday Alexander, “The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts,” in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (ed. David J. A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl, and Stanley E. Porter; JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 220–47, esp. 237–42. See also W. A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); W. V. Harris, *Ancient*

as divine invention, not merely a tool for registering revelatory knowledge but an integral part of it.⁵⁰

With these polemics in mind, the fuller context of the concept of *gilayon* becomes clearer. Revelation given physically in the written form of *gilayon* (as opposed to a mere record of oral or visual experience) gained, in addition to enhanced authenticity, the further advantage of legitimacy in accordance with the principle that “what has been said orally you may not say in writing, and vice versa” (דברים) שְׁעַל פֶּה אֵי אֶתָּה רִשְׁאִי לְאוֹמֵר בְּכַתָּב וּשְׁבַכְתָּב אֵי אֶתָּה רִשְׁאִי לְאוֹמֵר עַל פֶּה (b. *Tem.* 14b; ascribed to the third-century Palestinian amora, R. Judah ben Nahmani). Given as a written document, *gilayon* could legitimately function as such.

E. Revealed Book and Apocalyptic Mediality

Thus, we are dealing here with one more corroboration of McLuhan’s thesis that “the medium is the message.” That is, media are not just means for communication but rather contain within themselves the conditions of a certain perception of reality. In the early stages of book culture, when the book had only recently been promoted to one of the most efficient and authoritative media, the books could not but become essential for communication between God and humankind as well.

In the previous section we observed some obvious connections between, on the one hand, archaic orality and visuality (although verbalized through ekphrasis) and between innovative writing and verblivity (although quite iconic in its language), on the other. As verblivity is communicatively more efficient than visual language, so too the written text proved to be more efficient in several respects than oral communication. Inter alia, the written text, being an “autonomous discourse” detached from the one who transmits it, cannot be as easily contested as oral speech.⁵¹ We may compare this ancient shift in media to the contemporary comeback of the visual and a concomitant new “iconic turn,”⁵² and especially to the intrusion of the digital into all spheres of life, including religion.⁵³ Even as

Literacy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); P. J. Achtemeier, “*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,” *JBL* 109 (1990) 3–27; R. S. Wollenberg, “The Dangers of Reading as We Know It: Sight Reading as a Source of Heresy in Early Rabbinic Traditions,” *JAAR* 85 (2017) 709–45. Cf. Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

⁵⁰ See, e.g., *Jub.* 4:17 and the discussion in J. Reeves and A. Y. Reed, *Sources from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (vol. 1 of *Enoch from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 56.

⁵¹ Cf. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982) 77–78.

⁵² See, e.g., Burkhard Gladigow, “Von der ‘Lesbarkeit der Religion’ zum iconic turn,” in his *Religionswissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft* (ed. C. Auffahrt and J. Rüpke; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005) 274–88.

⁵³ On religious or spiritual interpretations of the Internet, especially a teleological evolutionary model incorporating Teilhard de Chardin’s idea of the noosphere and its adoption in media theory by Marshall McLuhan, see Oliver Krüger, “Gaia, God, and the Internet —Revisited: The History of Evolution and the Utopia of Community in Media Society,” *Online: Heidelberg Journal of*

modern technological media undergo processes of gradual acceptance into religious discourse, mythologization, and “spiritualization,”⁵⁴ so too the “logocentric turn” of antiquity, together with the relatively new medium of the book associated with it, may have engendered similar phenomena.⁵⁵

Our discussion of the medial aspects of the introduction of *gilayon* would not be complete without raising another question: What other media could compete at the time with the book for expression of God’s communication with humankind? Among written media, the book had clearly begun to replace other, more archaic forms, such as tablets of stone or other materials. We can most demonstratively observe this shift in connection with the *Book of Jubilees*, which still refers to the precedence of tablets but simultaneously builds up its own authority as “Scripture.”⁵⁶ But did the book have competitors among non-written media? For us who live toward the end of book culture, the shift in imagery caused by an ancient medial revolution may be compared to the recent actualization of previously less ubiquitous “networks,” “webs,” or “screens.”⁵⁷ Although images of “web” and especially “net” were popular in prophetic and apocalyptic discourse, they were not yet tied to communication media. It was the *screen*, at that time an imaginary visual medium,

Religions on the Internet 8 (2015) 56–87, <https://doi.org/10.11588/rel.2015.0.20324>. Cf. ideas of a continuous revelation of God through the Internet (Jennifer Cobb Kreisberg, “A Globe, Clothing Itself with a Brain,” *Wired* [1 June 1995], <https://www.wired.com/1995/06/teillard>) and through computer technology in general (Frank Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God, and the Resurrection of the Dead* [New York: Doubleday, 1994]).

⁵⁴ On this, see Heidi Campbell, “Spiritualising the Internet: Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage,” *Online: Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 1.1 (2005), <https://doi.org/10.11588/rel.2005.1.381>.

⁵⁵ Compare also the shift from roll to codex, especially in Christian practice. Some scholars ascribe to this preference a semiotic or theological significance (see L. W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006] 43–94 and the bibliography there).

⁵⁶ As it is characterized in the Damascus Document, col. 16. On tablets, see F. Garcia Martinez, “The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees” (transl. M. T. Davis), in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (ed. M. Albani, J. Frey, A. Lange; TSAJ 65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 243–60. On *Jubilees*’s “fascination with writing” and “authority conferring strategies” connected with it, see Hindy Najman, “Interpretation as Primordial Writing: Jubilees and its Authority Conferring Strategies,” *JSJ* 30 (1999) 379–410.

⁵⁷ These inevitably evolve into the media for religious, including revelatory, experience. Otherworldly communication could be achieved not only through specialized and relatively conservative magic tools (mirrors, cards, rotating tables, etc.) but also through the technologically new visual, aural, and written media of film, phone, radio, telegraph, and especially internet; see, e.g., Stephen D. O’Leary, “Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computer Networks,” *JAAR* 64 (1996) 781–808; Olav Hammer, “Same Message from Everywhere: The Sources of Modern Revelation,” in *New Age Religion and Globalization* (ed. Mikael Rothstein; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2001) 42–56; Kerstin Radde-Antweiler, “‘Ritual is Becoming Digitalised’: Introduction to the Special Issue on Rituals on the Internet,” *Online: Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 2.1 (2006) 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.11588/rel.2006.1.372>; eadem, “Rituals Online: Transferring and Designing Rituals,” *Online: Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 2.1 (2006) 54–72, <https://doi.org/10.11588/rel.2006.1.376>; Marianna Ruah-Midbar, “The Sacralization of Randomness: The Theological Imagination and the Logic of Digital Divination Rituals,” *Numen* 61 (2014) 619–55.

which competed with the more realistic *book* as early as the early centuries CE. The “screen” (a frame showing moving images) was the main medium of revelatory experience in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, which even introduced a special term for it—Church Slavic hapax legomenon *о̀бра̀зѣтѣѡ*—derived from a root with the meaning “image, picture” (possibly from Gk *μορφή*, Heb *מראה* or *תמונה*, as in MT and LXX of Job 4:16). This screen was created by an opening in the spread of the heavens on which the visionary stood (*Apoc. Ab.* 19:4), thus enabling him to see everything beneath his feet through this aperture (22:1, 3, 5, 7; 23:1, 4; 24:1, 3; 26:7; 27:1, 7; 29:3, 11, 17). The seer even orients/describes a *mise-en-scène* of his vision in relation to the left and right borders of this moving “picture” (22:3–5; 27:1; 29:11). Functionally this is very similar to the image of another version of the screening medium, known as *pargod*, a celestial curtain spread before God that also shows moving images (3 *En.* 45:1–6; cf. 1 *En.* 91:2; 4Q180; and many *hekhlot* texts). The similarity between the “picture” presented through a hole in the heavens in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and the celestial curtain of 3 *Enoch* intensifies once one considers that the lowest heaven was widely known as a “curtain” in the rabbinic tradition, including 3 *Enoch* (Heb. *vilon*, from Lat. *velum*; 3 *En.* 17:3; b. *Hag.* 12b; etc.).

In later Christian practices, not imaginary but real-life visual media of religious art not only facilitated visions but were even revealed by themselves, either as an image for copying, like the Man of Sorrows, a “true likeness” of Christ, seen by Gregory the Great in the sixth century, or even physically, as the Veil of Veronica in the thirteenth century or the Virgin of Guadalupe in the sixteenth. However, despite the importance both of visuality in revelatory experience and of visual media in religious practice, the latter has never become as important for the former as the book did: “And all the *vision* has been to you like the words of a sealed book” (Isa 29:11).

■ *Gilayon* and its Contexts

A. Revealed Book and Incarnated Word

We have seen that *gilayon* could be not only a “book about revelation” or a “book about a revealed book” but sometimes also a “revealed book” itself (for the latter see, especially, in 1 and 2 *Enoch* and Revelation quoted above). The motif of an *otherworldly text being revealed*, that is, materialized, has another important variant in addition to the motif of the *revealed book*. I mean the idea of the *incarnated Word* (“and the Word became flesh” *καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο*; John 1:14), whose function is, inter alia, a *revelation* of the Divine Glory (the verse continues: “. . . and we have seen His Glory” *καὶ ἑθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ*) and who is “the

Word of God in its fullness, the mystery that has been kept *hidden* for ages and generations, but is now *disclosed* to the Lord's people" (Col 1:25–26).⁵⁸

Moreover, we have an even closer variant—Christ himself might be depicted not only as the *incarnated Word* but even as an *incarnated book*. Jesus is described as an embodiment of “the living Book of the Living”⁵⁹ in the late-second-century *Gospel of Truth* 19.34–36, where he “puts on that [Father's] book” and, being “nailed to a tree,” thus publishes “the edict of the Father on the cross” (20:24–27).⁶⁰ Baynes suggests that the “Christ-as-a-book” image may be rooted in a Christian reading of the enigmatic Ps 40:7(8).⁶¹ MT: הנה-באתי במגלת-ספר כתוב עלי “Here, I have come, in the scroll of the book [or: “open/unsealed book”] it [or: “which”] is written upon [or: “about”] me”; LXX: Ἰδοὺ ἦκω ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ “Behold, I am coming in the knob of a scroll [or “in a (little) scroll of a book” or “in the beginning of the scroll”] written upon [or: “about”] me.” The verse could be understood as speaking about a book written “upon” a person, and it was quoted as applied by Jesus to himself in Heb 10:7.⁶²

⁵⁸ Cf. also 1 John 1:1–3 and Rev 19:13; see J. D. G. Dunn, “The Word Incarnate,” in his *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980) 239–47.

⁵⁹ Cf. “the book of the living/life” in Ps 69:28; *1 En.* 47.3; *Apoc. Zeph.* 14.5; *Herm. Vis.* 1.3.2, *Herm. Mand.* 8.6, *Herm. Sim.* 2.9; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27. See also Clement's Christ as “Living Law,” discussed below.

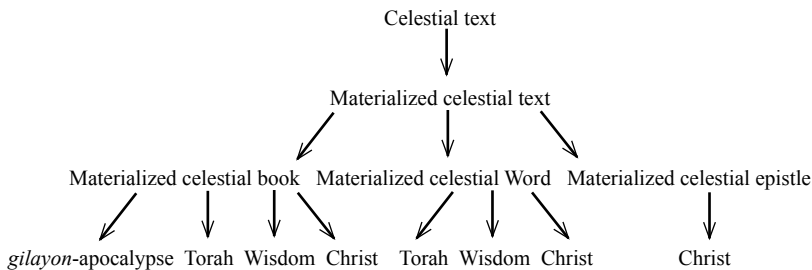
⁶⁰ See especially this portion: “There was manifested in their heart the living book of the living—the one written in the thought and the mind of the Father, which from before the foundation of the totality was within his incomprehensibility—that (book) which no one was able to take, since it remains for the one who will take it to be slain. No one could have become manifest from among those who have believed in salvation unless that book had appeared. For this reason, the merciful one, the faithful one, Jesus, was patient in accepting sufferings until he took that book, since he knows that his death is life for many. Just as there lies hidden in a will, before it is opened, the fortune of the deceased master of the house, so (it is) with the totality, which lay hidden while the Father of the totality was invisible, being something which is from him, from whom every space comes forth. For this reason Jesus appeared; he put on that book; he was nailed to a tree; he published the edict [ΔΙΑΤΑΓΜΑ] of the Father on the cross” (“The Gospel of Truth” [trans. Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae], in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* [ed. James M. Robinson; San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988] [31–37], at 32). See also the reading by Jörgen Magnusson, *Rethinking the Gospel of Truth: A Study of its Eastern Valentinian Setting* [Ph.D. dissertation; Uppsala University, 2006] 134–49, at section “The Living Book of the Living”.

⁶¹ Baynes, *Heavenly Book Motif*, 188; on Christ as text, see also *ibid.*, 185–96.

⁶² On bodily metaphors applied to scriptural canon and book metaphors applied to celestial beings—and especially “the conception of the Scriptures as a body made of letters shared by Jewish and Christian (and Gnostic) intellectuals”—see in detail G. Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism* (SHR 70; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 82–84. The Christian scriptural canon was known as the “body of Truth” (*membra veritatis* in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.8.1) and simply “body” (*corpus* [σῶμα] in Origen, *Princ.* Praef. 10). The same expression, often applied in classical Latin to collections of books, was used by Marcus Gnosticus for *corpus Veritatis*, the body of the celestial Truth (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.14.3). This description is reminiscent of the cosmic body of God as known from the *Shi'ur Qomah* tradition (cf. also Jewish traditions describing the Torah as a body made of letters in M. Idel, “The Conception of the Torah in Hekhalot Literature,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 1 [1981] 23–84 [Hebrew]). On the other hand, cf. Annus's and Orlov's

Wisdom, often identified with Christ (1 Cor 1:24, 30; etc.),⁶³ can also be represented as a book, specifically the eternal and preexistent Law-Torah: “Afterwards she [Wisdom, ἐπιστήμη] made herself seen [ᾤφθη] on earth and sojourned [συνανεστράφη] among men. She is the book of the commandments [βιβλος τῶν προσταγμάτων] of God, the Law that endures forever” (Bar 3:37–4:1); “Wisdom [σοφία in 24:1] sings her own praises . . . All this is the book of the covenant [βιβλος διαθήκης] of the Most High God, the Law which Moses commanded us” (Sir 24:1 and 23).⁶⁴

The table below presents semantic variants of the broader motif of the *celestial text*, in which the motifs of *gilayon* and *Christ* intersect:



This table shows, of course, only a simplified segment of a richer and more complex cluster of motifs. Thus, the materialized *text* may be represented not only by *book* and *word*, but also by *tablets*⁶⁵ and *epistle*.⁶⁶ The materialized divine *Logos-Word*

interpretation of the Enochic Watchers as an embodiment of celestial knowledge divulged to humans. The Watchers' very names reflect their areas of expertise, similarly to the Mesopotamian antediluvian *apkallus*, which are “fairly transparent titles or Sumerian incipits of learned scholarly compendia” (A. Annus, “On the Origins of Watchers: A Comparative Study of the Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Traditions,” *JSP* 19 (2010) 277–320, at 287–88; Orlov, *Embodiment*).

⁶³ See, e.g., Dunn, *Christology*, 176–95, at section “Christ as Wisdom in Paul.”

⁶⁴ Cf. also 19:20 and several more passages where Schnabel convincingly discerns a consistent identification of “Wisdom” and “Law”; see E. J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Inquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics* (WUNT 2/16; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985) 69–77. On Torah as Wisdom, see C. Mangan, “Wisdom, Torah, and Creation in Targumic Literature,” in *Biblical and Near Eastern Essays: Studies in Honor of Kevin J. Cathcart* (ed. C. McCarthy and J. F. Healey; JSOTSup 375; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 143–53, at 143; M. Maher, “Some Aspects of Torah in Judaism,” *ITQ* 38 (1971) 310–25. “Wisdom” and “apocalypse” are associated in πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως in Eph 1:17.

⁶⁵ Exod 31:18; 32:16; *1 En.* 81:1–2; 93:1–2; 103:2; 106:19; *Jub.* 1:29; 3:10, 31; 4:5; 32:15, 21; 50:13, etc.; 4Q180 1.3–4 (cf. 1QH^a ix.24); etc.

⁶⁶ See Syriac *Odes Sol.* 23:1–18 on Christ as a sealed epistle (“And his [God’s] thought was like an epistle, and his will descended from on high” [23:5]), which eventually “became a large volume (Syr. ܦܨܡܠܐ [*penqīlā*]), which was entirely written by the finger of God” (23:21) (J. Rendel Harris and Alphonse Mingana, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* [Manchester: University Press, 1916, 1920] 2:335). See also Baynes, *Heavenly Book Motif*, 186–87; E. Thomassen, “Saving Letter, Saving Book: The Hymn of the Pearl, the 23rd Ode of Solomon, and the Gospel of Truth” in *Christianisme des origines: Mélanges en l’honneur du Professeur Paul-Hubert Poirier* (ed. E. Créghneur, J. C. Dias Chaves, and S. Johnston; Judaïsme ancien et origines du christianisme 11;

has more representations in addition to *Christ*, and includes also *Sophia-Episteme*-Wisdom and divine *Nomos-Torah-Law*.

In fact, all these concepts could be identified with each other. Philo applied the term *logos* both to an intermediary divine being and to divine Law, which has corporeal representation as a book (see Philo's use of the term *logos* for the Mosaic Law in *Spec.* 1.39.215 and elsewhere, and his explicit identification of them in *Migr.* 130 and *QG* 4.140). Thus, Torah could be not only an incarnation of a preexistent celestial book (on this, see section "*Gilayon* as 'Revealed Book'") but also, in a more philosophically developed model, of the celestial Logos-Word. This knot of meanings is further complicated both by identifications of Wisdom with Torah and of Christ with Wisdom (see above),⁶⁷ as well as especially by the notion of a new messianic Torah and of the messiah not only as its bearer or interpreter but also its embodiment.⁶⁸ Similarly, Clement synthesizes the gospels' Logos-Christ with Philo's Logos-Torah in order to apply Philo's modification of a Hellenistic conception of "living Law" (*nomos empsychos*) to Christ (*Strom.* 2.18.3–19.4 et pass.).⁶⁹ It is noteworthy that, in contrast to most apocalyptic figures, Jesus does not accept any book from heaven to reveal to his followers (save in *Ap. Jas.* 1.8–32; see below). This may possibly be understood in the more general context of a shift of focus from the revealed book-Torah to the revealed messiah. As a kind of compensation for this development, the messiah himself could be perceived as the embodiment of a revealed celestial text, be it the Divine Word, celestial Torah—"Living Law," or the celestial "Book of the Living."

I have adduced here only clearly documented connections, but they can also be regarded as part of a more general context. All these associations are far from being accidental. They express conceptual, functional, and often etiological

Turnhout: Brepols, 2018) 437–52. Michael Lattke disagrees with this interpretation; see his *Odes of Solomon: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 13, 329. Cf. a similar metaphor applied to Christ's ministers: "You yourselves are our epistle, written on our hearts . . . you are an epistle from Christ," etc. (2 Cor 3:1–3; on man as the Word's incarnation, see Philo, *QG* 2.62 on Gen. 9:6).

⁶⁷ See also a concept of hypostatic Wisdom with many attributes of Philo's Logos (Wis 7:25–26; cf. 8:3–5; 9:4 and 10; Sir 24:4; *Book of Parables* 42:1–2; etc.). On this, see G. Sterling, "'The Image of God': Becoming Like God in Philo, Paul, and Early Christianity," in *Portraits of Jesus: Studies in Christology* (ed. S. E. Myers; WUNT 2/321; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 157–73, at 165.

⁶⁸ On this interpretation of the Johannine Prologue, see S. Ruzer, *Early Jewish Messianism Reflected in the New Testament: Images in the Dim Mirror* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives 36; Leiden: Brill, 2020) 141–55, and a rich literature, including: C. S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vol.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003) 1:360–61; S. J. Casselli, "Jesus as Eschatological Torah," *TJ* 18 (1997) 15–41; J. Corbett, "The Pharisaic Revolution and Jesus as Embodied Torah," *SR* 15 (1986) 375–91; J. Schoneveld, "Torah in the Flesh: A New Reading of the Prologue of the Gospel of John as a Contribution to a Christology without AntiJudaism," *Immanuel* 24–25 (1990) 77–94. For the messiah as God's Torah in 1QIsa^a 51.4, 7 and 26.8, see J. V. Chamberlain, "The Functions of God as Messianic Titles in the Complete Qumran Isaiah Scroll," *VT* 5 (1955) 366–72.

⁶⁹ See John Martens, "*Nomos Empsychos* in Philo and Clement of Alexandria," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response Within the Greco-Roman World* (ed. W. E. Helleman; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994) 323–38.

similarity among different variants of the more general motif of embodiment and/or personification of divine knowledge.⁷⁰ It seems that this variability may be explained, at least partially and reductively, by this motif's somewhat spiral development from archaic forms of personification of divine knowledge (the Wisdom of the biblical myth) to its written representation in the age of letters (tablets, Torah, *gilayon*, and other revealed texts of the late prophets and the apocalyptic writings), as well as to a revived but philosophically charged myth of personification (the Logos-messiah of messianic apocalypticism). The result is a richness of imagery and concepts constituting a synchronic paradigm of synonymic, hyponymic, and overlapping elements.

We are interested here particularly in textual imagery and will therefore concentrate in this section on the relations between the *revealed text* and the divine Logos-messiah. We see here that *gilayon*, the revealed book of revelation, is found among other—often synonymic—representations of the divine Text, such as Logos, Wisdom, Torah and Christ. This contiguity of the motifs of the revealed celestial text and an incarnated celestial being enables us to perceive a certain association between the concepts of *revelation* and *incarnation* as one of its manifestations. Such a connection, in turn, reveals the additional link between *apocalypticism* and *messianism* (especially in its Christian form) as a special case of the type.

There are further and more specific similarities between the two conceptions. Thus, for example, the idea of *preexistence* with subsequent incarnation is common to the concepts of revelation and salvation, revealed book and messiah. Both *messiah* and *gilayon*-revealed book may be preexistent and concealed in heaven in order to be revealed. Similarly to the concealed and revealed books (see the section “Uncovered *Gilayon* versus Secret or Hidden Books” above), the Son of Man “was concealed in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits prior to the creation of the world, and for eternity” (*Parables of Enoch* 48:6) and then revealed: “For the Son of Man was concealed from the beginning, and the Most High One preserved him in the presence of his power; then he revealed him to the holy and the elect one” (*Parables of Enoch* 62:7); “the Anointed One will begin to be *revealed*” (2 *Bar.* 29:3); “For my son the Messiah will be *revealed* with those who are with him” (4 *Ezra* 7:28); “the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be *revealed* [φανερῶθῆ] to Israel” (John 1:31); “He was foreknown [προεγνωσμένου] before the foundation of the world but was *revealed* [φανερῶθέντος] at the end of the times for your sake” (1 Pet 1:20); etc.⁷¹

⁷⁰ On this, see H. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund: Håkan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1947); Orlov, *Embodiment*, esp. the chapters entitled “Wisdom as the Hypostasis of the Divine Knowledge” and “Logos as the Hypostasis of the Divine Knowledge.”

⁷¹ For more on hidden (or kept with God) and revealed messiahs, see the diverse traditions reflected in LXX Isa 32:1–2; 4 *Ezra* 12:32; 13:26; 14:52; *Targ. Jon.* to Micah 4:8; *Midr. Ps.* 21, 1, 89a. Cf. John 8:59 and 12:36 on Jesus, who “hid himself,” and the notion of Christ as the hidden/preexistent/predestined and revealed mystery of God (e.g., Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; Rom 16:25–26). God

Nor does the similarity end here. If the celestial Son of Man is “revealed in flesh, justified in spirit, *seen by angels, proclaimed among nations*” (ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν; 1 Tim 3:16), the revealed celestial books are also handled by angels (Dan 7:10; *1 En.* 103:2 [ms B]; 108:7; *Jub.* 1:29; *T. Ab.* A 12; *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 9:20–21; possibly 1QM xii.1–3; Augustine, *Confessions* 13.151; etc.) and should be handed over to “all nations who are discerning, so that they may fear God, and so that they may accept them” (2 *En.* [J] 48:6). Another trait common to the *revealed books* and *messianic figures* may be their sometimes active (even violent) role in starting apocalyptic events (as in Rev 5–6ff.; cf. Zech 5:1–4; *Odes Sol.* 23).

B. 'Aven-gilayon as a Kind of Gilayon?

The Tosefta's הגליונים וספרי המינים may be read not only as “apocalypses and books of heretics” (see section “*Gilayon* as ‘Revealed Book’” above) but inclusively (with הפירושו) as “*gilyonim* and [other] books of heretics [often more specifically “Christians”].”⁷² In this case *gilyonim* would mean rather “gospels” than “apocalypses.”⁷³ I will try to show that, in fact, these two interpretations are not necessarily contradictory.

Both terms, known to us mainly from Paul's usage, had very vague boundaries. Not only the puzzling ἀποκάλυψις but even the better attested εὐαγγέλιον is known in a variety of meanings, even inside the New Testament, ranging from oral preaching or its content, the act of proclamation, or a kind of revelation to a specific written book, corpus, or genre definition. The association of *gilayon* with gospels appears also in *b. Šabb.* 116a–b in the derogatory puns 'aven-gilayon (Heb. און גליון “wicked book”; ascribed to the Tannaic scholar R. Meir) and 'avon-gilayon (עון גליון “sinful book”; ascribed to the early amora R. Yohanan) for εὐαγγέλιον. That is, gospels might be defined here as a specific kind of *gilayon*. In addition, Ishodad of Merv's commentary to Luke 1:1, which Pines cites as an example of the use of

reveals “secret things,” among them the “Light” (*nehira*) which “dwells with him” (Dan 2:22), understood as messiah by *Gen. Rab.* 1.6 and *Lam. Rab.* 1.16.51. Cf. also the preexistent name of messiah in *1 En.* 48:3; *b. Pesah.* 54a; *b. Ned.* 39a; *Gen. Rab.* 1.4 and messiah “suddenly revealed” in *b. Sanh.* 97a.

⁷² Cf. the Amidah of Palestinian rite from Cairo Genizah fragments of the 10th–11th cents. (Cambridge University Library, T-S K27.33b, 1r), which in the twelfth benediction has הנצרים והמינים “the Nazarenes and the *minim*.” Similarly to our case, it is often read as if “the Nazarenes (*nošrim*) are distinguished from *minim*” (thus Efraim E. Urbach, “Self-Isolation or Self-Affirmation in Judaism in the First Three Centuries: Theory and Practice,” in *Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* [ed. E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson; vol. 2 of *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981] 269–98, at 288), while “*minim*” in fact may be a semantic extension of “Nazarenes.”

⁷³ On this interpretation, see Karl G. Kuhn, “Giljonim und sifre minim,” in *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias* (ed. W. Eltester; BZNW 26; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964) 24–61; Urbach, “Self-Isolation,” 290–91; Gedalia Alon, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age, 70–640 CE* (2 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 1:276.

the term *gelyānā*/'*gelyōnā*' (ܓܝܠܘܢ/ܓܝܠܘܢ), meaning “gospel,” may mean rather “revelation” in a more general sense, that is to say, including both apocalypses and gospels under the same genre definition.⁷⁴

The proximity of the meanings “apocalypse” and “gospel” may find expression not only in their unification under the same Semitic term (*gilayon* or *gelyana*’) but also in the use of their Greek counterparts (ἀποκάλυψις and εὐαγγέλιον) in combination with each other. This combination is found in both rabbinic and Christian texts. Thus, we saw that the Tosefta’s phrase המינין וספרי הגליונים can be understood also as “apocalypses and Christian books.” This reading has close parallels in the conjunction of “revelation” and “gospel” in the Pauline epistles: “I went in response to a *revelation* and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the *gospel* that I preach among the Gentiles” (Gal 2:2); “I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the *gospel* I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by *revelation* from Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:11–12); “Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my *gospel*, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the *revelation* of the mystery hidden for long ages past” (Rom 16:25). Compare also, “It has now been *revealed* through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the *gospel*” (2 Tim 1:10).⁷⁵

In general, in the New Testament *evangelion* regularly refers to Jesus’s disclosure as a *revelation* of the messianic secret. The term has obvious revelatory aspects in Rev 14:6–7; more importantly, the “gospel” there is held by an angel (ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον), similarly to the revealed “book” in 5:1–5, 8–9 and 10:2–10 of the same work. “Gospel” interchanges with “book” in Mark 1:1/Matt 1:1, where it appears as a book title (similarly to *gilayon/gelyana*’ and ἀποκάλυψις, which also often serve as book titles).

Thus, the semantic relations between *gilayon*-ἀποκάλυψις and εὐαγγέλιον in different instances could be at least hyponymic (the latter as a kind of the former) or intersecting (both might have the meanings of “revelation” and “revealed book”).

The data above may witness an authentic understanding that early Christian documents belonged to the apocalyptic corpus as defined more broadly. Gospels (or the texts standing behind them) could be understood by the ancients as a kind of apocalyptic writing.⁷⁶ *Gilayon* might thus be applied to a wider spectrum of genres

⁷⁴ “This of ‘For as much as many have wished to write,’ etc. He is not speaking about Matthew and Mark; as he does not call two ‘many’; but about those who were in the habit of writing of the *gospel* [ܓܝܠܘܢ; ܓܝܠܘܢ] without investigation; inasmuch as not only the Twelve and the Seventy wrote *revelations* [ܓܝܠܘܢ]; but many others also” (Margaret D. Gibson, *The Commentaries of Isho’dad of Merv, Bishop of Hadatha (c. 850 A.D.), in Syriac and English* [5 vols.; *Horae Semiticae* 5–7, 10–11; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911, 1916] 3:1 [Syrc.], 1:146 [tr.]). See also Pines, “He’arot,” 209.

⁷⁵ Some of these were adduced by Pines in his “He’arot,” 209 n. 13.

⁷⁶ Cf. Käsemann’s “discovery” of Jewish apocalyptic as the “mother of early Christian theology”

and be rendered not only by ἀποκάλυψις but also by εὐαγγέλιον and possibly even λόγιον (which is a perfect metathesis of *gilayon*). Greek λόγιον, often used for God's oracles and the Scripture in general, was central for early Christian usage as a specialized term for Christ's sayings (and sometimes also deeds), often in fact synonymous to εὐαγγέλιον. However, in distinction from other paronomasic associations we discuss below (see especially in the section "Paronomasia of *gl* and the Role of Wordplay in Hebrew Religious Rhetoric"), this one has no syntagmatic representation and is thus just a guess based only on phonetic and functional similarity.

Traces of the chronological development of this association between *gilayon* and εὐαγγέλιον in the context of the Jewish-Christian "parting of the ways" might be traced in the rabbinic tradition. As we have seen above, there might be a progression from a genre definition common for apocalypses and gospels and the neutral rendering of *gilayon* in the Tosefta to a later polemic distancing as documented by the Babylonian Talmud.

Thus, we can now raise the question: could Heb גליין or Aram גליינא* (and not בשורה) be behind Jesus's invitation to "believe in the *gospel*" (Mark 1:15)?⁷⁷ Could it have originally sounded like "believe in the *gilayon*," with all the rich complex of meanings this would have entailed, including "salvific revelation," "incarnate celestial text," and even a personal application to Jesus himself, understood as the preexistent Word or an incarnated celestial book (as discussed in the previous section)?⁷⁸

The more general association of *gilayon* with "salvation" will be treated in the next section.

C. *Gilayon and Ge'ulah*

We find not only essential and functional similarities between messianic figures and celestial books, but also their association in the same scenarios. Thus, messianic figures receive their authority through approaching celestial books (as in Daniel) or receiving them (as in Revelation): "The court was seated, and the books were opened . . . and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power" (Dan 7:10–14); "He [the Lamb] went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell

(E. Käsemann, "Die Anfänge christlicher Theologie," *ZTK* 57 [1960] 162–85; idem, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," in *Apocalypticism* [ed. R. W. Funk; JTC 6; New York: Herder and Herder, 1969] 17–46).

⁷⁷ I thank Juan Carlos Ossandón Widow for raising this possibility in his response to my oral presentation of this work at the 11th Enoch Seminar: Apocalypticism—History, Method, and Reception/LMU Munich Congress on Apocalypticism in Antiquity (online), 2021.

⁷⁸ For more on possible associations of the genres of apocalypse and gospel, see below in the section "Conclusions and new questions."

down before the Lamb” (Rev 5:7–8).⁷⁹ Sometimes the messiah’s very disclosure of secrets takes a book form: “I send you a secret book which was revealed to me and Peter by the Lord . . . a secret book which the Savior had revealed to me” (*Ap. Jas.* 1.8–32 [NHL I. 2]).

More generally, the affinity between *revelation* of hidden knowledge and *salvation* (especially at the end of days) are two motifs closely connected not only by the conceptual similarity of their agents, but also syntagmatically. That is, they are often found in conjunction with each other. The messianic age of salvation is among the main themes of biblical prophecy. The centrality of this topic in the Apocalypse of John stands behind the vulgar usage of “apocalypse” in modern languages in the meaning that refers to the most striking details of the apocalyptic scenario.

It has already been noticed that there is “an intrinsic relation between the revelation which is expressed in an apocalypse as a whole and the eschatological salvation promised in that revelation.”⁸⁰ Among the most obvious reasons for this union of concepts is that salvation could be understood as an expression of God’s or of his messiah’s epiphany. The very term *apocalypse* could be applied not only to a “revelation” of God’s secret (ἀποκάλυψιν μυστηρίου; Rom 16:26) but also to an “unveiling” of God’s Glory (ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης; 1 Pet 4:13) as the main content of such a divine secret.

In the early Jewish context the time and details of salvation were among the most desired “secrets” to be revealed, and thus salvific eschatology figured among the most common elements in the content of revelatory writings.

Conversely, it is in the eschatological setting, and sometimes through a messianic figure, that revealed knowledge of various kinds (not only concerning salvation) is given. The messiah is not only revealed but also reveals: “And he has revealed the wisdom of the Lord of the Spirits to the righteous” (*Parables of Enoch* 48:7). The secret books are hidden or sealed only until the proper eschatological time comes for them to be opened (*I En.* 82; *4 Ezra* 12:36–38; 14:24ff.); only then will knowledge be given (*Astronomical Book* 91:10 and *Apocalypse of Weeks* 93:10 [esp. in Aramaic version]; cf. 1 Cor 2:7, Eph 1:9–10; etc.). That is, when prophecy has ended (as in *I Macc* 4:46; 9:27; 14:41), revelation is expected to be renewed only at the end of days: “The Torah which a man learns in this world is as nothing compared with the Torah of the messiah” (*Eccl. Rab.* 11, 8). The messianic kingdom itself will be “revealed” (אִיתְגַּלִּיֵּא מַלְכוּתָא; *Targ. Jon.* to Is 52:7; Ezek 7:7).

Salvation, be it cosmic, national, or personal, is often conditioned by a revelation of otherworldly, hidden, or esoteric knowledge. This linkage of the revelation of secrets with soteriology seems immanent for the early Jewish system of concepts;

⁷⁹ On this, see G. K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and the Revelation of St. John* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984) 211; Baynes, *Heavenly Book Motif*, 152 n. 47.

⁸⁰ Collins, “Introduction,” 11.

however, it is attested mainly with esoteric (and sometime possibly even secret) groups that cultivated an actualization of salvific eschatology along with esoteric practices.⁸¹ Thus, the “mystery to be [revealed?]” (רזו נהיה) seems to be connected to eschatology in the Book of Mysteries (1Q27; 4Q299–301) and 4QInstruction.⁸² Disclosure of μυστήριον in the New Testament denotes salvific secrets.⁸³ The very concept of gnosis involves revealed esoteric knowledge being the only means of personal salvation for “the Knowing ones.”⁸⁴ Similarly, *Shi‘ur Qomah* promises the reward of afterlife to everyone who knows the mystical dimensions of the divinity.⁸⁵ One may compare also salvific interpretations of Greco-Roman mystery rites as granting salvation (σωτηρία) in the form of immortality and the dispensing of cosmic life.⁸⁶

To sum up: salvation is the ultimate revelation of God; salvation and revelation are produced through the same or related agents; salvation and the savior are revealed; revelation is given by the savior and/or through the salvific process; revelation is a condition of salvation. This multifaceted conjunction of *revelation* with *salvation* and salvific eschatology, inherent already to the earliest apocalyptic texts, finds its pronounced theoretical conceptualization only in later Jewish thought, when it becomes a commonplace of Zoharic and Lurianic kabbalah. Similarly to Philo, these modes customarily applied philosophic patterns to ancient mythological thought.⁸⁷

⁸¹ See Stone, *Secret Groups*.

⁸² See M. Goff, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction* (STDJ 50; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 14–17. For more on the salvific nature of hidden or secret knowledge at Qumran, see Samuel Thomas, *The “Mysteries” of Qumran: Mystery, Secrecy, and Esotericism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (EJL 25; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2009). See esp. his interpretation of the Damascus Document, which he claims is “explicit about the relationship between knowledge of “hidden things” [נסתרות] and redemption, and about the atoning power of God’s “mysteries of wonder” [רזי פלא]. Those who are “outside the wall” (CD 4:19) are finally people without any insight at all [בינה אין בהם]. Correct knowledge —limited, special, esoteric knowledge – is presumed a necessary precursor to election and, by extension, to salvation” (ibid., 67).

⁸³ Bornkamm, “Μυστήριον”; Stone, *Secret Groups*, 17–19.

⁸⁴ See, e.g., Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (3rd ed.; Boston: Beacon, 2001) 31–36.

⁸⁵ P. Schäfer, with M. Schlüter and H. G. von Mutius, *Synopse zur Hekhaloth-Literatur* (TSAJ 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981) §377; cf. the opposite idea in *Synopse*, §335.

⁸⁶ On this, see Bornkamm, “Μυστήριον”; Marvin W. Meyer, “Mystery Religions,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; 6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 4:941–45.

⁸⁷ See Moshe Idel, “On Apocalypticism in Judaism,” in *Progress, Apocalypse, and Completion of History and Life after Death of the Human Person in the World Religions* (ed. Peter Koslowski; Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002) 40–74, at 45–47. The reasons for the conjuncture of disclosure and dissemination of secrets with eschatology listed in the evidence surveyed by Idel are very diverse: “because through them [secrets] all of Israel and those who are drawn to them, will be strengthened” (R. Abraham Abulafia, 13th cent.) or because “the supernal [entity] will become lower, and the lower will become supernal” and “because their [Israel’s supernal] power is gradually enhancing” (R. Nathan ben Se‘adya Harar, 13th cent.) or “the disclosure of this lore nowadays, in these bad generations, is to safeguard us by its means” (R. Hayyim Vital; 16th–17th cents.); etc. Some of these are possibly applicable to the earlier period as well.

I would like to suggest that the connection between *revelatory genre* and *soteriology* (as its frequent content) could be rooted not only in myth and speculative thought but also in the spirit of the language itself (as often found in the Hebrew tradition; see “Paronomasia of *gl* and the Role of Wordplay in Hebrew Religious Rhetoric” below). It may be traced inter alia to the homeonymy of the roots *g'l* and *gly* (Aram *gl'*), whose similarity may be based on a metathesis of *alef* and *yod*. Puns based on metathesis are quite common in the Bible: see חלד and חלל in Ps 39:5–6(4–5); פאר and אפר in Isa 61:3; compare also metathetic plays with the roots *bkr* and *brk* in Gen 27:19 and 36 or 'qb/'bq/ybq in Gen 32:23–25(22–24).

According to a similar pattern, a wordplay with the roots *g'l* and *gly*, expressing affinity between the actions of (*self*-)revealing and salvation, is widely found in midrashic texts and also in many early *piyyutim* (I adduce only some): אתה גואל את ר' ברכיה בשם ר' לוי אומר כגואל הראשון כך גואל האחרון [נגלה להם]; “You redeem your sons and reveal your kingdom in the world” (3 En. 44:7); וחזור ונכסה מהם מה ראשון נגלה להם וחזור ונכסה מהם מהם [גואל], so the last savior [גואל]. As the first one was revealed [נגלה] to them and then hidden from them again, so also the last savior [גואל] was revealed [נגלה] to them and then hidden from them again” (Pesiq. Rab. Kah. 5; Song Rab. 2, 3; Pesiq. Rab. 15, 1; Ruth Rab. 5, 10; Num. Rab. 11, 2); שנו רבותינו בשעה שמלך המשיח נגלה בא ועומד על הגג של בית “Our teachers have taught: when the King Messiah is revealed [נגלה] he stands on the roof of the Temple and declares to Israel: ‘The humble ones! The time of your salvation [גאולתכם] has arrived!’” (Pesiq. Rab. 36, 1); שנגלה הקב"ה במקום ע"ז ובמקום טומאה . . . that God has revealed himself in the place of idol worshipping, impurity and filth in order to redeem them (Exod. Rab. 15, 5); כך “Thus Israel, God has revealed himself to them in order to redeem them” (Exod. Rab. 15, 52 [19, 7]); א"ר שמעון בן יוחאי . . . ולמה נגלה . . . “R. Shimon bar Yochai has said: . . . Why did he [God] reveal it [his name] to Moses? Because he was going to redeem Israel” (Tanh., Vaera 1); “You have revealed yourself in Egypt, killed all their firstborn by your word, and redeemed your firstborn (Birkot keriat shma be-shaharit, Emet ve-Yatsiv; New York, Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), ENA, 2174, 22–24, l. 31–33 [second century CE]);⁸⁸ “A sprout will be revealed to the tribes of Jacob. And those redeemed by the God of Jacob will sing to the one who will speedily redeem the seed of Jacob” (Ma'ariv, Vetomar; Oxford, Bodleian Library, e.39 (2712), 102, ll. 21–23 [6th cent.]); ותגאל זרע תמימים / ותגלה “And you will redeem the seed of the innocent ones and will reveal yourself from heaven on high” (Yannai, Kedshtot le-shabbatot ha-pur'anut ve-

⁸⁸ Hereafter, the references are according to the Historical Dictionaries Project of the Academy of the Hebrew Language (<https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il>).

ha-nehama; Cambridge, University Library, T-S Collection, H 13, 4, 16, 188, ll. 1–2 [sixth century]); וְבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל / וְיִגְלֶה תְּשִׁבִי בְּמַעֲמֹד הַדְּרִיִּאֵל “And the redeemer will come to Zion and will reveal [Elijah] the Tishbite in [?] Hadriel” (Eleazar Kalir, *Shiv’atot le-arba parshiyot*; Oxford, Bodleian Library, e.34 (2716), 6–7, ll. 68–69 [before 640]); וְכִסֵּא מְלוּכָה יִגְלֵ אֲרִיאֵל / (וְתַגְּלוּ? לִי) וְתַגְּלוּ לִי בְּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן [אֵל] / גּוֹאֵל “Ariel will reveal the Throne of the Kingdom. And you will be redeemed [or: “will rejoice”] when [God?], the Redeemer of Israel, will come to Zion” (Eleazar Kalir, *Krovot ve-hashlamot krova le-Tish’a be-Av*; Cambridge, University Library, T-S Collection, NS, 71, 46, ll. 68–70 [before 640]).

D. Paronomasia of gl and the Role of Wordplay in Hebrew Religious Rhetoric

A brief methodological digression is needed here, although some aspects may possibly be obvious already. Methodologically we have approached the problem of *gilayon* from three intersecting perspectives, which in conjunction may verify each other: 1) We began with *semantic* considerations, involving constructing a paradigm of similarities in content with the potential to be realized historically. Thus, for example, from a purely semantic viewpoint *logos* as *incarnated Word* and *gilayon* as *incarnated book* are co-hyponyms of *incarnated text*. But the question then arises: were they really connected in the minds of contemporaries? 2) To answer this question, it is important to introduce the *syntagmatic* aspect, verifying if the two were associated together in the same texts; that is, whether this affinity has any documented *historical* corroboration. 3) A less trivial perspective we want to test here is *linguistic*. Could the association of ideas have additional material basis in linguistic similarities?

In previous remarks we placed some weight on what we called a “spirit of the language,” which at times could be either a cause or an accomplice of both mythological imagination and speculative thought. The homonymy or polysemy of *gilayon* or a bilingual word-play between *gilayon* and *evangelion* is quite evident, and paronomasia of *gilayon* and *ge’ula*, which would connect the roots *glh* (*gl’*) and *g’l* (see above), seems at least plausible. However, further puns might have seemed too far-fetched, were it not for the abundant precedents of paronomasia in ancient Hebrew rhetoric that grew into a widespread propensity for puns in rabbinic discussions. It is well known how significant was “allusive paronomasia specifically for the purpose of constructing theological discourse.” Moreover, its “important role in the growth of the biblical text as a whole and in the development of ancient Israelite and early Jewish theological traditions” is well documented and may be relevant also for texts preserved or even composed in Greek in the multilingual setting of Hellenistic Judaism.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Jonathan G. Kline, *Allusive Soundplay in the Hebrew Bible* (AIL 28; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016) 1. On ancient Hebrew paronomasia, including the lists of the puns and their research, see also the references in *ibid.*, 6–7 n. 14, 8 n. 19; and among recent publications, esp. Scott B. Noegel, “Paronomasia,” *EHL* 3:24–29; Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Name*

gll and glh 1: One such Hebrew pun uses the same roots—*glh* “open, reveal” and *gll* “roll, revolve, fold, unfold”—as are involved in the polysemy (of the originally homonymic) *gilayon*. It is explicitly pronounced by Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite in his etymology of Ezekiel’s term for the wheels of the divine Chariot: “For, as the theologian [i.e., Ezekiel] has pointed out, they [the winged wheels] are called *gelgel* [γελεγελ in LXX 10:13; in MT *galgal*, גלגל, from the root *gll*], which in Hebrew signifies both ‘revolving’ and ‘revealing’” (*Celestial Hierarchy* 15.9; 337D).⁹⁰ Here it is noteworthy that we are dealing not only with the same roots but also with the same model of suggested polysemy of an apocalyptic term, which may take on the meaning “revelation” in addition to its main meaning (much as *gilayon* takes the meaning of “revelation” in addition to its basic meaning of “book-roll”).

This association of the wheel with revelation is especially interesting in the light identification of wheel with christological imagery: with the star of Bethlehem and the cross in a Sahidic fragment of an apocryphal gospel (British Museum Oriental 3581)⁹¹ and with the celestial epistle (possibly identified with Jesus) in Syriac *Odes Sol.* 23:1–18.⁹²

The very possibility of such word plays invites more, and probably more convincing, arrays into vulgar etymology than the one ventured by Pseudo-Dionysus. The semantic complex of paronomasia of roots containing *gl* may in fact unite the concepts of *revelation*, *salvation*, *exile*, and *book*.

gll and glh 2: Another pun with the same roots is found in Amos 5:5: הגלגל גלה יגלה “Gilgal shall surely be exiled.”⁹³ Here *gll* is juxtaposed with the the same root, *glh*, but used with a different meaning, “exile, banish” (we call this meaning hereafter *glh 2*). The same wordplay may possibly be found in the Qumranic *Book*

Derivations and Puns (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991); *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (ed. Scott Noegel; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000); Ronald Androphy, “Paronomasia in the Former Prophets: A Taxonomic Catalogue, Description, and Analysis” (DHL diss.; Jewish Theological Seminary, 2011); L. J. De Regt, “Wordplay in the OT,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld; 5 vols.; Nashville, TN: Abingdon) 5:898–900.

⁹⁰ As translated in Rosemary A. Arthur, *Pseudo-Dionysius as Polemicist: The Development and Purpose of the Angelic Hierarchy in Sixth Century Syria* (Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) 20. I thank Sergey Minov for drawing my attention to this passage.

⁹¹ Published in F. Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels* (Cambridge: University Press, 1896) 162–64. On *merkabah* as the cross, see H. J. W. Drijvers, “Kerygma und Logos in den Oden Salomos,” in *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Carl Andresen* (ed. A. M. Ritter; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979) 153–79, at 165–66.

⁹² See above on the celestial epistle in the *Odes of Solomon* (in the section “Revealed Book and Incarnated Word”) and the analyses of Baynes, *Heavenly Book Motif*, 189–95 and Thomassen, “Saving Letter,” 440–43.

⁹³ *Gilgal*’s (correct) etymology from *gll* “roll” is given in Josh 5:9: היום גלותי את-הרפת מצרים “Today I have rolled away [גלתי] the reproach of Egypt from you. So the name of that place is called Gilgal [גלגל].”

of *Mysteries*— וגלה הרשע מפני הצדק כגלות [ה]ושך מפני אור “and wickedness is banished before righteousness, as darkness is rolled away before light” (1Q27 1, col. 1 and 4Q300 3)—if the second גלה is understood as גלל, as in גולל אור מפני חושך in *b. Ber.* 11b.⁹⁴

glh 1 and glh 2: Both meanings of *glh*, “revelation” and “exile,” exist and are played upon in the Palestinian Talmud in a saying ascribed to the most celebrated mystic of the Tannaic era: תני ר' שמעון בן יוחי בכל מקום שגלו ישראל גלת השכינה עמהן; גלו למצרים וגלת השכינה עמהן מה טעמא הנגלה נגליית אל בית אביך בהיותם במצרים לבית פרעה “R. Shimon ben Yochai taught that anywhere the people of Israel were exiled, the Divine Presence was exiled with them. When they were exiled to Egypt, the Divine Presence was exiled with them. Because it is said: “I surely revealed [also: “exiled”] Myself to your father’s house when they were in Egypt [subject] to Pharaoh’s house” [1 Sam 2:27] (y. *Ta’an.* 3.1a). Later Jewish mystical teachings have also developed this conjecture: כמו זה שאמר רבי יוחנן, כל הגלויות שגלו ישראל מארצם, כלם היה גלוי לכל, והגלות הרביעית לא נגלה לעולם (Zohar *Hadash*, Gen. 346). Beyond the wordplay, the motif of *revelation of hidden knowledge through exile* may be seen in the exile from heaven of the Watchers (as agents of communication of celestial knowledge) in *Book of Watchers* 8,⁹⁵ as well as in Christ’s exile to earth as possibly implied in Phil 2:6–8.

glh 2 and g’t: This second meaning of *glh* “exile” is also found in a no less meaningful connection with “salvation.” The motif of “exile and redemption,” *golah/galut* and *ge’ulah*, is an apocalyptic variant of the viable Jewish “exile and return” trope based on the model of redemption from the Egyptian and Babylonian exiles.⁹⁶ We can say that the two concepts of *exile* and *redemption* construct a dialectic unity (similar to the “reveal/conceal dialectics” discussed in the section “Uncovered *Gilayon* versus Secret or Hidden Books”). This finds its spiritualized expression in the concept of the Divine Presence’s concealment or exile and expected restoration.⁹⁷ In certain forms these words are almost identical (see, e.g.,

⁹⁴ See L. H. Schiffman, “4Qmysteries^b,” in *Qumran Cave 4, XV: Sapiential Texts* (ed. T. Elgvin et al.; DJD XX; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997) 105–6. See also Choueka, “Was the Torah Given,” 187 n. 46.

⁹⁵ See A. Y. Reed, “Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in *I Enoch* 6–16,” in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* (ed. R. S. Abusch and A. Y. Reed; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 47–66, at 55–56; Annus, “Origins of Watchers,” 287–88; Orlov, *Embodiment*.

⁹⁶ See P. R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BC* (London: SCM, 1968) 247–56; M. A. Knibb, “The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period,” *The Heythrop Journal* 17 (1976) 253–72; J. M. Scott, “Exile and Restoration,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. J. B. Green, J. K. Brown, and N. Perrin; 2nd ed.; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013) 251–58; Nicholas G. Piotrowski, “The Concept of Exile in Late Second Temple Judaism: A Review of Recent Scholarship,” *CBR* 15 (2017) 214–47. Cf. the themes of exile, revelation and salvation intertwined in the “Song of the Pearl” in the *Acts of Thomas* 108–13 (discussed in the section “Revealed Book and Incarnated Word” above).

⁹⁷ The rabbinic concept of *histalkut ha-Shekhinah* or *Shekhinta ba-galuta* (*Lam. Rab.* Intr. 24; etc.; see, e.g., Norman Cohen, “Shekhinta ba-Galuta: A Midrashic Response to Destruction and

golah and *ge'ulah* or *galutkem* and *ge'ulatkem* below), but the attested play on the proximity of the two roots is found not earlier than in the sixth-century *piyyut*, for example, in *לְיוֹשֵׁב תְהִילָה / וַיְחִישׁ גְּאוּלָּה לַגּוּלָּה* “. . . to the One who sits in glory / and He will hasten redemption to the exile” (*Krovat Shmona-Esreh le-hol ha-Moed Sukkot*; Cambridge, University Library, T-S Collection, H 16, 5, l. 10–11 [sixth century]); *בַּעַת תָּם יֵצֵא / גְּאוּלָּה בַּגּוּלָּה מֵצָא*; “when the innocent went out / he found salvation in exile” (Shimon bar Megas, *Kravot le-Shabbot ha-Shanah*, Genesis; Oxford, Bodleian Library, c. 20 (2736), 5–6, l. 2–3); etc.⁹⁸ Compare the thirteenth-century Zohar: *סֵפֶר ה' וְקִרְאוּ, וְשֵׁם תִּמְצְאוּ בְּמָה תִּלְוִיָּה גְלוּתְכֶם וְגֹאֲלֹתְכֶם* “Seek from the book of the Lord and read it, and you will find there on what depends your exile and your salvation” (*Zohar*, Exod. 129b).

■ Conclusions and New Questions

The reconstruction of *gilayon* as both “revealed book” and “book of revelation” pertains to a central image and genre definition of an important corpus of early Jewish literature. Although based on admittedly scant direct evidence, it has explanatory power for many phenomena of early Jewish mysticism. The semantic ambivalence of the term *gilayon*, which is absent in its Greek counterpart *apocalypse* (ἀποκάλυψις), exposes meanings and associations that shed additional light on apocalyptic texts. It enables us: 1) to properly evaluate the centrality of the concept of the *revealed book* in apocalyptic narratives; 2) to understand how this concept is related to the oppositions of *open* and *sealed*, *discovered* and *hidden* otherworldly books; 3) to connect apocalyptic imagery to the “logocentric turn,” that is, the growing actuality of *written culture* for religious experience and the shift in media in late antiquity; 4) to reevaluate relations between different kinds of otherworldly, preexisting, and incarnated texts in early Jewish thought and to refine the *paradigm of motifs dealing with embodiment of divine knowledge*; 5) to question boundaries between *apocalypse* and *gospel* as genres and to discern an authentic understanding that early Christian documents belonged to the widely understood “apocalyptic” corpus; 6) to suggest additional connections between the revelatory genre and soteriology based on the similarity of the motifs of *revealed book* and *incarnated Word*, on the motif of Christ as book, on the association of *apocalypse* and *gospel*, and also on the metathetic paronomasia of *g'l* and *gl'* which connects the concepts of *gilayon* and *ge'ulah*, the disclosure and dissemination of secrets with salvific eschatology; and 7) finally, to perceive the latter phenomena within the broader context of the widely attested paronomasia of *gl* in Hebrew religious rhetoric, which connects not only *gilayon* and *ge'ulah* but also *gl'* and *gilgal*, *gilgal*

Persecution.” *JSJ* 13 [1982] 147–159) should also imply a connection between the future restoration of the Divine Presence and its exile. Cf. the mirrored motif of Christ’s exile to earth, as discussed above.

⁹⁸ Texts and references are from the Historical Dictionaries Project of the Academy of the Hebrew Language (<https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il>).

and *golah*, *gilayon* and *golah*, *golah* and *ge'ulah*, thus forming a phonosemantic complex uniting the concepts of *revelation*, *exile* and *salvation*.⁹⁹

These preliminary conclusions cannot help but raise new questions, pertaining not only to reconstruction of ancient genre perception (emic perspective) but possibly also to the modern set of categories (etic perspective).

A. Emic Perspective

If we accept the reconstruction of *gilayon*, we should ask to what extent this concept could be integrated into the early Jewish corpus and what could be its scope: 1) Was *gilayon* synonymous with “revealed literature,” of which “apocalyptic” was only a subset? 2) Or, vice versa, did it narrow down the wider corpus of early Jewish revealed literature and refer to a specific variety of “apocalyptic literature” characterized by *gilayonic* imagery and/or semantic implications of the term *gilayon*? 3) Or, rather, did “*gilayonic* literature” overlap with what we now recognize as the “genre apocalypse” (especially if we include the genres of *evangelion* and/or *logion* under the category of *gilayon*)?¹⁰⁰

The extant data is more sufficient for raising these questions than answering them, but I will try to play with all three possibilities below.

To this end, we should check the entire apocalyptic corpus for three aspects of the concept’s functionality: 1) *gilayonic* imagery (revealed books); 2) use of the term (as reflected in its assumed Greek and Syriac calques); and 3) authentic corpus/genre definition (the use of relevant Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek terms as book titles or corpus/genre labels).

A comparison of the three groups of texts containing one or more of these phenomena produces interesting results. 1) The image of a revealed book or tablets, known already to the prophets, is almost universal for Jewish apocalyptic writings since the early Enochic texts, central to the Book of Revelation and known also outside the apocalyptic corpus, found for instance in *Jubilees*, *Testament of Moses*, and rabbinic literature (see references in sections 1–4 above). 2) At the same time, the very term ἀποκάλυψις (the assumed Greek calque of *gilayon*)—not as a title and in the sense of “revelation of divine knowledge”—may be found, out of all the apocalyptic writings, only in the *Testament of Abraham* (6:8); it is used once in the gospels (Luke 2:32) and found in abundance only in Pauline and deutero-Pauline

⁹⁹ The hypotheses presented in this paper are of varying degrees of plausibility and are only as good as the extant data permits. Sometimes independently weak assumptions can be justified by the cumulative effect they engender. Thus, for example: even at the resolution level of particular cases, the semantic similarity of the motifs of *gilayon as revealed book* and *Christ as revealed word* finds corroboration in the images of other *divine beings* (often associated with *Christ*) as books and even of *Christ as a book*; the possible identification of *apocalypse* and *gospel* by the rabbis is strengthened by the conjunction of these terms in the Pauline epistles or by Revelation’s imagery; arguments *ad paronomasiam* would be weak unless corroborated by other attested connections of concepts associated phonetically; etc. And there is, of course, also a general cumulative effect of placing *gilayon* at the center of many different systems of relations.

¹⁰⁰ On this, see more below in the section “Etic Perspective.”

epistles.¹⁰¹ 3) As a title, the Greek term (and its equivalents in other languages) appears widely, but only in books dated not earlier than the late first century CE: The *Apocalypse of Abraham*; *Testament of Abraham* (called *Apocalypse of Abraham* in rec. B, ms E); *Apocalypse of Ezra*; Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch* (2 *Baruch*); Greek-Slavonic *Apocalypse of Baruch*; *Apocalypse of Moses*, atypical for the genre; the canonic *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* (Revelation); Gnostic writings, such as the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul*; (First) *Apocalypse of James*; (Second) *Apocalypse of James*; *Apocalypse of Adam*; *Apocalypse of Peter*;¹⁰² and many later Christian apocalypses. The Syriac equivalent is used in the titles of 2 *Baruch*, Revelation, the Syriac *Apocalypse of Daniel*, and several pseudepigraphic books used by the Audian Gnostics. Its Hebrew equivalent as applied to some corpus of books appears in the Tosefta and refers to gospels in the Babylonian Talmud.

Groups 1 and 3 above largely overlap: early Jewish apocalypses titled as such often also have revealed book imagery (see especially 2 *Baruch*; 4 *Ezra*; *Testament/Apocalypse of Abraham* and Revelation). Group 2 is represented mostly by Paul, so all three groups overlap only in the *Testament of Abraham*. This is not very helpful for our purposes, since that text is not even a “classic” apocalypse: it bears the title “Testament” in most versions, and its images of celestial books registering human deeds have no connection to the usage of the term at 6:8. Thus, the term is not found in classic “apocalypses” at all.

Even as little as we can expect a balanced picture to emerge out of partially preserved evidence, the situation as described above may seem unbalanced. However, if we take into account that a polysemic Semitic term had in different contexts to be translated by different Greek words, we will see that it could not have been otherwise. Translators could not but render the term *gilayon* with terms for “book” in some cases and with terms for “revelation” (and possibly “gospel”) in other instances.

If we were to attempt a highly speculative reconstruction of the destiny of *gilayon* in translation, it might appear as follows: 1) The Hebrew *gilayon* (and/or Aramaic *gelyana*) was used to designate revealed books in the Semitic *Vorlagen* of apocalyptic writings and was rendered in Greek as βιβλος, βιβλίον, βιβλαρίδιον, etc. Or alternatively, a less bold suggestion: if the word *gilayon* was not behind these terms, perhaps it was only the image of revealed books that inspired the wordplay of *gilayon* used in the titles of apocalyptic writings (since these were books about revealed books that often claimed to be revealed as well). 2) The Judeo-Greek term ἀποκάλυψις was reinvented as a calque of *gilayon*, and the bilingual Paul (or his sources) adopted it. If so, can we discern in these later works any traces of the term’s Semitic ambivalence, including with regard to the meaning of “book”?

¹⁰¹ See the analysis in Smith, “On the History,” 15–18. For details on Syriac materials here and below, see Kulik, “Genre,” 544–46.

¹⁰² Thus, among twelve to sixteen Gnostic texts which by various evaluations may be defined as “apocalyptic,” only five are entitled as such; see Lorenzo DiTommaso, “Apocalyptic Eschatology and Gnostic Eschatology” (under preparation).

For example, if ἀποκάλυψις τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ in Rom 8:19 implies “*Gilayon* of the Sons of God,” might it refer to something like the “*Book of Watchers*”? Christoffersson has already suggested that the “Sons of God” here might refer to the Enochic *bene ha-’elohim* (Sons of God) rather than to the sonship of believers as in Rom 8:15 and 23.¹⁰³ This, in fact, could even be an intentional wordplay, placing believers in the role of the redemptive angels of *I Enoch*.¹⁰⁴ In this case, the reconstruction of *gilayon* would have helped us to discover a new meaning in Romans and the fourth reference to the Enochic corpus in the New Testament. 3) As a following step, we would want to ask: Is it possible to find any traces of an association between revelation-*gilayon* and gospel-*evangelion* in Pauline and other Greek usage (beyond their sometimes vague distinction in the New Testament as well as combined usage and possible rabbinic echoes of this association, as presented in section “*Aven-gilayon* as a Kind of *Gilayon*”? 4) Furthermore, even if all book titles using ἀποκάλυψις are late Christian interpolations imitating the title of the Book of Revelation, the usage of the latter would still require an explanation. As Morton Smith wondered, “If its [the canonical Apocalypse’s] title did not come from Paul [since “little else in the work seems to be Pauline”], *what was the source from which both it and Paul derived this somewhat unlikely term for such material?*”¹⁰⁵ I hope that in this article we have made some progress toward answering this important question.

This entire discussion brings us to more general but unavoidable questions about ancient *genre taxonomies* and their possible connections to implicit *language philosophies*. How did ancient Jewish authors understand textual categories? We know that biblical authors already distinguished explicitly among “teaching,” “law,” “song,” “vision,” “oracle,” etc. It is reasonable to assume that this genre-consciousness, inherent to any developed written culture, would have only increased during the Hellenistic period. Thus, the assumed absence of a Hebrew or Jewish-Aramaic term for a group of popular texts with such distinct commonalities contrasts sharply, at the very least, with hypothetical but grounded expectations. Yet if they did recognize revelatory literature as a genre, was their taxonomic thinking binary (Aristotelian/Porphyrion) or rather based on a more complex conceptual system, perhaps less “orderly” from the point of view of modern perception? Such a system could have reflected either dynamic relations between texts and historically situated practices and social structures,¹⁰⁶ or else the mode of textual “participation

¹⁰³ Olle Christoffersson, *The Earnest Expectation of the Creature: The Flood-Tradition as Matrix of Romans 8.18–27* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1990) 120–24.

¹⁰⁴ Thus Robert Jewett (assisted by Roy D. Kotansky), *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 512 n. 52.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, “On the History,” 18 (italics mine).

¹⁰⁶ See, e.g., Anis S. Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff, *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy* (Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition; West Lafayette, IN: Parlor, 2010) esp. 13–40.

in” rather than “belonging to” genres (to use Derrida’s language).¹⁰⁷ They might even represent prototype structures (in cognitivist jargon), where some elements of a single class are “more equal” than others.¹⁰⁸ Thus, for example, association of texts by similarity could be based not only on their content, literary form, function, structural devices, setting, medium, etc., but also on such factors as linguistic features, particularly specialized language. In our case genre connections based on common imagery (*revealed book* and associated matters) could be strengthened by the phonetic similarities within a set of key concepts connected to this imagery (*book–discovery–revelation–salvation–gospel*). Behind this association must lie a conception of language in which linguistic similarity is inseparable from essence (a mode of thinking compatible with metaphysical realism, as formulated in Plato’s *Cratylus* and quite common for premodern thought in general).¹⁰⁹

B. Etic Perspective

Although this study was declaratively emic, it may provide an alternative to our conventional thinking about early Jewish mystical literature and afford an opportunity to reconsider the categories we create, addressing, in particular, the following questions: the extent to which our etic taxonomy is or should be dependent on emic reconstruction, how the latter is influenced by the former, and why delineation between the two may be difficult or artificial.

Thus, for example, the etic category *apocalypse* as defined in *Semeia* 14 became so influential that it has effectively become naturalized as an inherent part of the textual landscape of early Judaism; that is, in many cases it has become implicitly emic. As a result, it became hard to look for alternative and less expected ways that ancient authors could understand and categorize their key texts and motifs.

In this respect, the term *gilayon* may prove useful in certain discourses instead of *apocalypse*—in much the same way as we sometimes resort to other original Semitic forms instead of their Greek and other equivalents, like *memra* instead of *logos*, the Tetragrammaton instead of *Lord*, *messiah* instead of *Christ*, etc.

As we know, every new or modified element changes the entire paradigm. We can see all the effects of the introduction of a new term only if we regard it as part of the system of early Jewish concepts. Thus, the Aramaic term *memra*¹¹⁰ enables

¹⁰⁷ Jacques Derrida, “The Law of Genre,” in *Modern Genre Theory* (ed. David Duff; Essex: Longman, 2000) 219–31, at 224, 230; see Newsom applying this to apocalypses (Newsom, “Spying out the Land,” 439).

¹⁰⁸ Michael Sinding, “After Definitions: Genre, Categories, and Cognitive Science,” *Genre* 35 (2002) 181–219, at 186.

¹⁰⁹ See n. 89 above. On possibly competing implicit philosophies of language found in early Jewish texts, see, e.g., the chapter “A Rabbinic Philosophy of Language” in Samuel Wheeler, *Deconstruction as Analytic Philosophy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

¹¹⁰ Whether a “buffer-idea” or “buffer-word,” associated with or dissociated from the Greek *logos* (see, e.g., G. F. Moore, “Intermediaries in Jewish Theology (Memra, Shekinah, Metatron),” *HTR* 15 [1922] 41–85, at 53).

one to narrow down the semantic field of the Greek *logos*, which denotes not only “word” but also “reason,” etc. The original form of the Tetragrammaton exposes archaic verbal associations of the Divine Name; *messiah* (משיח) “the anointed one” makes evident its paronomasic association with “savior” (מושיע), etc. So too the concept of *gilayon*, with all its implications, alters and refines the paradigm of our understanding of early Jewish mysticism.

For example, can we speak about “*gilayonic* literature” instead of (or rather in addition to) “apocalyptic literature”? On the one hand, and despite all the criticism directed at scholarly terminology based on the word “apocalypse,” the Greek term has the advantage of being actually attested, and not solely as a title, whereas our *gilayon* is a mere reconstruction based on a debatable interpretation of rabbinic texts and on Syriac translations of the Greek ἀποκάλυψις. Another argument against the reconstruction of *gilayon* could be that the term and its imagery are neither unique nor universal for what is customarily defined as the genre apocalypse. That is, they are found not only in “apocalypses,” and they are not found in all apocalypses. On the other hand, the latter notion is true for most elements of the apocalyptic set of features.¹¹¹ Even more crucially, the Greek term ἀποκάλυψις, with its usage unprecedented in non-Jewish Greek literature and newly acquired meanings, was in fact a Jewish Greek innovation, and as such must be strongly suspected to be a Semitism, a semantic calque devised in order to reflect terminology absent in Greek.¹¹² It is also telling that while the Greek term did not carry any semantics additional to the most basic meaning of “uncovering,” examination of the original Hebrew *gilayon* (or Aramaic *gelyana*) reveals a rich world of meanings and associations, all inherent to the genre which the term defines.

With a more inclusive definition in mind, we may ask: can this new element of the apocalyptic paradigm tilt the balance in favor of a more functional rather than thematic definition of the genre? On the one hand, the basic meaning of the term is connected to the disclosure of divine secrets—“the true theme of later Jewish apocalyptic”¹¹³—rather than the specific content of these secrets, such as eschatology, otherworldly journeys, and other frequent thematic elements of the genre.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, we have seen (in section “*Gilayon* and *Ge’ulah*”) that some associations of the term may connect it to salvific eschatology as well.

A real game-changer for both emic and etic perspectives would be if some ancient readers understood both *apocalypse* and *gospel* (and possibly also *logion*) as belonging to the same group of texts labeled as *gilayon*, thus providing a new and

¹¹¹ Cf. “A few elements are constant in every work we have designated as an apocalypse” (Collins, “Introduction,” 9).

¹¹² For expanded argumentation on this point, see Kulik, “Genre,” 546–47, at section “Greek, Aramaic or Hebrew?”. For speculation that even secular usage of ἀποκάλυψις could be a Semitism as well, see Smith, “On the History,” 13. Jerome witnessed that the word “*proprie scripturarum est et a nullo sapientum saeculi apud Graecos usurpatum*” (*Comm. in Gal.* 1.12).

¹¹³ Bornkamm, “Μυστήριον,” 815; cf. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 12.

¹¹⁴ Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 5.

wider category than *apocalypse*. In this case, we could attempt to regard the relations between these two kinds of *books of revelation* in terms of a graded continuum or at least a common genre system (attested by the term *gilayon*, if it really was applied to both). When exploring these directions, we should take into account the well-known dynamic nature of genres as historical entities that tend to evolve and, moreover, intentionally challenge their own traditional forms and conventions. An even more fruitful angle would be to view *apocalypse* and *gospel* in Bakhtinian terms of the dialogue of genres:¹¹⁵ gospels did provide a long-awaited response to apocalyptic hopes. This approach could dovetail with the view that among the generic features of gospels “the ones that are most promising for defining the heart of that circle are ‘subject’ and ‘purpose,’”¹¹⁶ since the main subject of *gospels* is fulfillment of the scenarios predicted in the *apocalypses*. From this perspective we can see the innovative *good news* genre (and oral tradition behind it) coming into existence due to its *functional connection*, not to foreign Greek *bioi* or ancient Hebrew prophecies, etc.,¹¹⁷ but rather to local and relatively contemporary texts documenting actual apocalyptic expectations.

All these frameworks would require a series of separate studies, beyond the scope of this work.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Newsom, “Spying out the Land,” as well as David Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 35–52; Vines, “The Apocalyptic Chronotope.”

¹¹⁶ Thus Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), though classifying gospels with Greek *bioi*, as referenced in Adela Yarbro Collins, “Genre and the Gospels,” *JR* 75 (1995) 239–46, at 241.

¹¹⁷ For various genre definitions of the gospels in connection to their origins, see Loveday Alexander, “What is a Gospel?” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels* (ed. Stephen C. Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 13–33.