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The Apocalyptic Imagination

An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature

SECOND EDITION

John J. Collins

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CHAPTER ONE
The Apocalyptic Genre

Two famous slogans coined by German scholars may serve to illustrate the ambivalent attitudes of modern scholarship toward the apocalyptic literature. The first is Ernst Käsemann's dictum that "apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology."¹ The other is the title of Klaus Koch's polemical review of scholarly attitudes, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik*, "perplexed" or "embarrassed" by apocalyptic.² Both slogans are, of course, deliberately provocative and exaggerated, but each has nonetheless a substantial measure of truth. Apocalyptic ideas undeniably played an important role in the early stages of Christianity and, more broadly, in the Judaism of the time. Yet, as Koch demonstrated, the primary apocalyptic texts have received only sporadic attention and are often avoided or ignored by biblical scholarship.

The perplexity and embarrassment that Koch detected in modern scholarship has in part a theological source. The word "apocalyptic" is popularly associated with fanatical millenarian expectation, and indeed the canonical apocalypses of Daniel and especially John have very often been used by millenarian groups. Theologians of a more rational bent are often reluctant to admit that such material played a formative role in early Christianity. There is consequently a prejudice against the apocalyptic literature which is deeply ingrained in biblical scholarship. The great authorities of the nineteenth century, Julius Wellhausen and Emil Schürer, slighted its value, considering it to be a product of "Late Judaism" which was greatly inferior to the prophets, and this attitude is still widespread today. In his reply to Käsemann, Gerhard Ebeling could say that "according to the prevailing ecclesiastical and theological tradi-

1. E. Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," *JTC* 6 (1969) 40.

2. K. Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh: Mohr, 1970); English trans., *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1972).

tion, supremely also of the Reformation, apocalyptic — I recall only the evaluation of the Revelation of John — is to say the least a suspicious symptom of tendencies towards heresy."³ Whatever we may decide about the theological value of these writings, it is obvious that a strong theological prejudice can impede the task of historical reconstruction and make it difficult to pay enough attention to the literature to enable us even to understand it at all. It will be well to reserve theological judgment until we have mastered the literature.

Not all the perplexity is theological in origin. In some part it also springs from the semantic confusion engendered by the use of the word "apocalyptic" as a noun. The word has habitually been used to suggest a worldview or a theology which is only vaguely defined but which has often been treated as an entity independent of specific texts.⁴ Scholars have gradually come to realize that this "apocalyptic myth" does not always correspond to what we find in actual apocalypses. Koeh already distinguished between "apocalyptic" as a literary type and "apocalyptic" as a historical movement. More recent scholarship has abandoned the use of "apocalyptic" as a noun and distinguishes between apocalypse as a literary genre, apocalypticism as a social ideology, and apocalyptic eschatology as a set of ideas and motifs that may also be found in other literary genres and social settings.⁵

These distinctions are helpful in drawing attention to the different things traditionally covered by the term "apocalyptic." The question remains whether or how they are related to each other: Does the use of the literary genre imply a social movement? Or does an apocalypse always contain apocalyptic eschatology? Before we can attempt to answer these questions we must clarify what is meant by each of the terms involved.

The Genre Apocalypse

The notion that there is a class of writings that may be labeled "apocalyptic" has been generally accepted since Friedrich Lücke published the first com-

3. G. Ebeling, "The Ground of Christian Theology," *JTC* 6 (1969) 51.

4. See the comments of E. Storm, "Defining the Word Apocalyptic: A Problem in Biblical Criticism," in J. Marcus and M. L. Soares, ed., *Apocalyptic and the New Testament* (SNTS 24; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) 37.

5. M. E. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," in P. M. Cross et al., eds., *Marginalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 439-48; see also "Apocalyptic Literature," in M. E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT 2/2; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 392-94; P. D. Hanson, "Apocalyptic Genre," in *Apocalyptic Literature*, MD53/69, 27-34. See the comments of M. A. Knibb, "Prophecy and the Emergence of the Genre Apocalypses," in R. Cozzani et al., eds., *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter Ackroyd* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 160-61. Knibb and Stone prefer a twofold distinction between the apocalypses and apocalyptic eschatology.

prehensive study of the subject in 1832.⁶ Lücke's synthesis was prompted in part by the recent edition of *I Enoch* by Richard Laurence (who also edited the *Ascension of Isaiah*, which Lücke discussed as a Christian apocalypse). The list of Jewish apocalyptic works included Daniel, *I Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, and the *Sibylline Oracles*, and he adduced this literature as background for the book of Revelation. Subsequent discoveries have enlarged the corpus and modified the profile of the genre: 2 and 3 *Baruch*, 2 *Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and the *Testament of Abraham* were all published in the latter part of the nineteenth century. While there has been inevitable scholarly dispute about the precise relation of this or that work to the genre, there has been general agreement on the corpus of literature that is relevant to the discussion and can be called "apocalyptic" at least in an extended sense.

Most of the works that figure in discussions of the Jewish apocalyptic literature were not explicitly designated as apocalypses in antiquity. The use of the Greek title *apokalypsis* (revelation) as a genre label is not attested in the period before Christianity. The first work introduced as an *apokalypsis* is the New Testament book of Revelation, and even here it is not clear whether the word denotes a special class of literature or is used more generally for revelation. Both 2 and 3 *Baruch*, which are usually dated about the end of the first century C.E., are introduced as apocalypses in the manuscripts, but the antiquity of the title is open to question. Morton Smith concludes from his review of the subject that "the literary form we call an apocalypse carries that title for the first time in the very late first or early second century A.D. From then on both the title and form were fashionable, at least to the end of the classical period."⁷ The subsequent popularity of the title has recently been illustrated by the Cologne Mani Codex, where we read that each one of the forefathers showed his own *apokalypsis* to his elect, and specific mention is made of apocalypses of Adam, Sethel, Enoch, Shem, and Enoch.⁸ These

6. F. Lücke, *Versuch einer vollständigen Einleitung in die Offenbarung Johannis und in die gesamte apokalyptische Literatur* (Bonn: Weber, 1832). For the early history of apocalyptic literature see P. D. Hanson, *The Danjose Apokalypsis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), and P. D. Hanson, "Prolegomena to the Study of Jewish Apocalyptic," in *Marginalia Dei*, 389-413. A sampling of the older (but still) literature can be found in R. Koeh, and I. M. Schmidt, eds., *Apokalypsen*, p. D. Hanson, ed., *Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft*, 1982). More recent essays are appended in P. D. Hanson, ed., *Witnesses and Their Apocalypses* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

7. M. Smith, "On the History of Apocalypsis and Apokalypsis," in D. Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983) 9-20.

8. R. Cameron and A. J. Dewey, trans., *The Cologne Mani Codex: Concerning the Origin of his Body* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979) paragraphs 47-62 (pp. 34-38). The codex dates from the late fourth or early fifth century C.E. See the comments in "Introduction," in J. C. VanderKam and W. Adler, eds., *The Jewish Apocalypses: Heritage in Early Christianity* (CRINT 3/4; Assen: Van Gorcum, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986) 11-12, and

apocalypses tell of heavenly ascents. The series concludes with the rapture of Paul to the third heaven.

The ancient usage of the title *apokalypsis* shows that the genre apocalypses is not a purely modern construct, but it also raises a question about the status of early works (including most of the Jewish apocalypses) that do not bear the title. The question is complicated by the fact that some of these works are composite in character and have affinities with more than one genre. The book of Daniel, which juxtaposes tales in chaps. 1-6 and visions in chaps. 7-12, is an obvious example. This problem may be viewed in the light of what Alastair Fowler has called the life and death of literary forms.⁹ Fowler distinguishes three phases of genre development. During the first phase, "the genre complex assembles until a formal type emerges." In the second phase the form is used, developed, and adapted consciously. A third phase involves the secondary use of the form — for example, by ironic inversion or by subordinating it to a new context. In historical reality these phases inevitably overlap, and the lines between them are often blurred. It would seem that the Jewish apocalyptic writings that lack a common title and are often combined with other forms had not yet attained the generic self-consciousness of Fowler's second phase, although the genre complex had already been assembled. We should bear in mind that the production of apocalypses continued long into the Christian era.¹⁰

The presence or absence of a title cannot, in any case, be regarded as a decisive criterion for identifying a genre. Rather, what is at issue is whether a group of texts share a significant cluster of traits that distinguish them from other works. A systematic analysis of all the literature that has been regarded as "apocalyptic," either in the ancient texts or in modern scholarship, was undertaken by the Society of Biblical Literature Genres Project, and the results were published in *Semeia* 14 (1979).¹¹ That analysis will serve as our point of departure. The purpose of *Semeia* 14 was to give precision to the traditional category of "apocalyptic literature" by showing the extent and limits of the conformity among the allegedly apocalyptic texts.

The thesis presented in *Semeia* 14 is that a corpus of texts that has been traditionally called "apocalyptic" does indeed share a significant cluster of traits that distinguish it from other works. Specifically, an apocalypse is

D. Frankfurter, "Apocalypses Real and Alleged in the Hasm. Canon," *Numeri* 44 (1997) 60-73, who doubts the existence of these apocalypses.

9. A. Fowler, "The Life and Death of Literary Forms," *New Literary History* 2 (1971) 199-216. The metaphor of life and death suggests too organic a view of forms and genres, but the insight into phases of development remains valid.

10. VanderKam and Adler, eds., *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*; P. J. Alexander, *The Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); B. McGinn, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (New York: Paulist, 1979).

11. J. J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (*Semeia* 14, Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

defined as: "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world."¹²

This definition can be shown to apply to various sections of 1 Enoch, Daniel, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 3 Baruch, 2 Enoch, *Testament of Levi* 2-5, the fragmentary *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, and with some qualification to *Jubilees* and the *Testament of Abraham* (both of which also have strong affinities with other genres). It also applies to a fairly wide body of Christian and Gnostic literature and to some Persian and Greco-Roman material.¹³ It is obviously not intended as an adequate description of any one work, but rather indicates what Klaus Koch has called the *Rechtsgerüstung* or generic framework.¹⁴ The analysis in *Semeia* 14 differs, however, from Koch's "preliminary demonstration of the apocalypse as a literary type." Koch listed six typical features: discourse cycles, spiritual turmoil, paraneitic discourses, pseudonymity, mythical imagery, and composite character.¹⁵ He did not claim that these are necessary elements in all apocalypses. In contrast, the definition above is constitutive of all apocalypses and indicates the common core of the genre.¹⁶ More important, it constitutes a coherent structure, based on the systematic analysis of form and content.

The form of the apocalypses involves a narrative framework that describes the manner of revelation. The main means of revelation are visions and otherworldly journeys, supplemented by discourse or dialogue and occasionally by a heavenly book. The constant element is the presence of an angel who interprets the vision or serves as guide on the otherworldly journey. This figure indicates that the revelation is not intelligible without supernatural

12. Analysis of the Christian material in *Semeia* 14 was contributed by Adela Yarbro Collins, the Gnostic material by F. T. Fallon, the Greco-Roman material by H. W. Attridge, and the rabbinic material by A. J. Saldamini.

13. G. von Rad argued that "apocalyptic" is not a single genre but a "mixture component" of smaller forms; *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (2 vols.; 4th ed.; Munich: Kaiser, 1965) 2:330. It is true that any apocalypse contains several subsidiary forms — visions, prayers, exhortations, etc. This fact cannot preclude the presence of a generic framework that binds the elements together. In the case of a composite work like Daniel, we can identify forms that the apocalypse is the dominant form of the book. For discussion of related forms, see J. J. Collins, *Daniel, with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* (GOTL 26, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

14. This fact may be regarded as a refinement of the more diverse characteristics of the apocalypses presented and discussed by D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 104-39.

15. In this respect it also differs from the "family resemblance" approach advocated by J. G. Gammie, "The Classification, Stages of Growth, and Changing Functions in the Book of Daniel," *JBL* 95 (1976) 192-93. Gammie is correct that a broader corpus of related literature is relevant to the discussion.

aid. It is out of this world. In all the Jewish apocalypses the human recipient is a venerable figure from the distant past, whose name is used pseudonymously.¹⁶ This device adds to the remoteness and mystery of the revelation. The disposition of the seer before the revelation and his reaction to it typically emphasize human helplessness in the face of the supernatural.

The content of the apocalypses, as noted, involves both a temporal and a spatial dimension, and the emphasis is distributed differently in different works. Some, such as Daniel, contain an elaborate review of history, presented in the form of a prophecy and culminating in a time of crisis and eschatological upheaval.¹⁷ Others, such as *2 Enoch*, devote most of their text to accounts of the regions traversed in the otherworldly journey. The revelation of a supernatural world and the activity of supernatural beings are essential to all the apocalypses. In all there are also a final judgment and a destruction of the wicked. The eschatology of the apocalypses differs from that of the earlier prophetic books by clearly envisaging retribution beyond death. Parousias occupies a prominent place in a few apocalypses (e.g., *2 Enoch*, *2 Baruch*), but all the apocalypses have a hortatory aspect, whether or not it is spelled out in explicit exhortations and admonitions.

Within the common framework of the definition, different types of apocalypses may be distinguished. The most obvious distinction is between the "historical" apocalypses such as Daniel and 4 Ezra and the otherworldly journeys. Only one Jewish apocalypse, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, combines an otherworldly journey with a review of history, and it is relatively late (end of the first century C.E.). It would seem that there are two strands of tradition in the Jewish apocalypses, one of which is characterized by visions, with an interest in the development of history, while the other is marked by otherworldly journeys with a stronger interest in cosmological speculation.¹⁸ These two strands are interwoven in the Enoch literature. Two of the earliest "historical" apocalypses, the Animal Apocalypse and the Apocalypse of Weeks, are found in *1 Enoch*. These books presuppose the Enoch tradition attested in the Book of the Watchers (*1 Enoch* 1-36) and may in fact presuppose Enoch's otherworldly journey, although they do not describe it. The Similitudes of Enoch also shows the influence of both strands, although it does not present an overview of history. *1 Enoch* as we

16. A few Christian apocalypses, most notably *Revelation* and *Hermas*, are not pseudonyms.

17. On the apocalyptic treatment of history, see R. G. Hall, *Revealed Histories: Techniques for Ancient Jewish and Christian Historiography* (SPPSnp 6, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 61-121.

18. M. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Chidassaphim: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 61, takes these as two distinct genres.

now have it is a composite apocalypse embracing different types. Yet we can find an apocalypse such as 4 Ezra (late first century) which sharply rejects the tradition of heavenly ascent and cosmological speculation, whereas *2 Enoch* and *3 Baruch*, from about the same time, show no interest in the development of history.

Within the otherworldly journeys it is possible to distinguish subtypes according to their eschatology: (a) only the *Apocalypse of Abraham* includes a review of history; (b) several (Book of the Watchers, Astronomical Book, and Similitudes in *1 Enoch*; *2 Enoch*; *Testament of Levi* 2-5) contain some form of public, cosmic, or political eschatology; (c) a number, *3 Baruch*, *Testament of Abraham*, and *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, are concerned only with the individual judgment of the dead. No apocalypse of this third subtype is likely to be earlier than the first century C.E. The distribution of the temporal and eschatological elements may be illustrated as follows:

	"otherworldly journeys"					"historical" apocalypses				
Cosmogony										
Primordial events										
Recollection of past										
Ex eventu prophecy										
Penitence										
Other eschatological upheavals										
Judgment/destruction of wicked										
Judgment/destruction of otherworldly beings										
Cosmic transformation										
Resurrection										
Other forms of afterlife										

[This grid is adapted from *Syncretia* 14, p. 28, where a more complete form may be found.]

The study of the genre is designed to clarify particular works by showing both their typical traits and their distinctive elements. It is not intended to construct a metaphysical entity, "apocalyptic" or *Apokalyptik* in any sense independent of the actual texts. The importance of genres, forms, and types for interpretation has been axiomatic in biblical studies since the work of Hermann Gunkel and the rise of form criticism. It is also well established in literary and linguistic theory and in philosophy and hermeneutics.¹⁹ E. D. Hirsch, Jr., a literary critic, has expressed the essential point well: "Understanding depends on the listener's or reader's expectations. These expectations are of a type of meaning rather than of a unique meaning." "Because otherwise the interpreter would have no way of expecting them." "Consequently, utterances must conform to typical usages if they are to be intelligible at all. Even the unique aspects of a text (and every text is unique in some respect) can only be understood if they are located relative to conventional signals. As Hirsch has lucidly shown, "the central role of genre concepts in interpretation is most easily grasped when the process of interpretation is going badly, or when it has to undergo revision." "An interpreter always begins with an assumption about the genre of a text. If our expectations are fulfilled, the assumptions will need no revision. If they are not fulfilled, we must revise our idea of the genre or relinquish the attempt to understand. There can be no understanding without at least an implicit notion of genre."

The generic framework or *Rahmungsrahmen* indicated in the definition of apocalypse above is important because it involves a conceptual structure or view of the world. It indicates some basic presuppositions about the way the world works, which are shared by all the apocalypses. Specifically, the world is mysterious and revelation must be transmitted from a supernatural source, through the mediation of angels; there is a hidden world of angels and demons that is directly relevant to human destiny; and this destiny is finally determined by a definitive eschatological judgment. In short, human life is bounded in the present by the supernatural world of angels and demons and in the future by the inevitability of a final judgment.

This conceptual structure already carries some implications for the function of the genre, since it provides a framework for viewing the problems of life. The appeal to supernatural revelation provides a basis for assurance and guidance, and establishes the authority of the text. The prospect of a final

19. L. Hartman, "Survey of the Problem of Apocalyptic Genre," in Hellbohn, ed., *Apokalyptik*, 329-43; D. Hellbohn, *Das Wortschatzbuch des Hebraischen* (Lund: Gleerup, 1980) 14-95; J. Barron, *Reading the Old Testament: Methods in Biblical Exegesis* (London: Westminster, 1984); M. Gertner, "Genre Studies: Their Renewed Importance in Religious and Literary Interpretation," *JAAR* 45 (1977) 309-25.
20. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) 68-102.

judgment creates a context for the clarification of values. The specific problems may vary from one apocalypse to another, and so may the specific guidance and demands. Two apocalypses such as 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch may disagree on particular issues, but their differences are articulated within the framework of shared presuppositions. If we say that a work is apocalyptic we encourage the reader to expect that it frames its message within the view of the world that is characteristic of the genre.

The literary genre apocalypse is not a self-contained isolated entity. The conceptual structure indicated by the genre, which emphasizes the supernatural world and the judgment to come, can also be found in works that are not revelation accounts, and so are not technically apocalypses. So, for example, the *Quran* *War Scroll* is widely and rightly regarded as "apocalyptic" in the extended sense, although it is not presented as a revelation.²¹ Furthermore, the generic framework is never the only factor that shapes a text. The visions of Daniel, for example, must be seen in the context not only of the genre but also of the tales in Daniel 1-6 and of the other literature inspired by the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Consequently there is always a corpus of related literature that is relevant in varying degrees to the understanding of a particular text. Any discussion of apocalyptic literature must also take account of oracles and testaments, which parallel the apocalypses (especially the "historical" ones) at many points. Yet the definition is important for providing a focus for the discussion and indicating a core to which other literary types may be related.

Other Views of the Genre

It may be useful to contrast the view of the genre presented here and in *Semeia* 14 with other views that have been recently advocated. On the one hand, E. P. Sanders has proposed a return to an "essentialist" definition of Jewish apocalypses as a combination of the themes of *revelation* and *reversal* (of the fortunes of a group, either Israel or the righteous).²² The attractiveness of this proposal lies in the simplicity with which Sanders can then view the social function of the genre as literature of the oppressed. However, the proposal suffers from two crucial disadvantages. First, the combined themes of revelation and reversal are characteristic of the whole tradition of biblical prophecy,

21. See further J. J. Collins, "Genre, Ideology, and Social Movements in Jewish Apocalypticism," in J. J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth, eds., *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies Since the Ugaritic Colloquium* (SBSup 9, Sheffield: SOTC, 1991) 23-24 (= Collins, *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* [Leiden: Brill, 1991] 25-26).
22. E. P. Sanders, "The Genre of Palestinian Jewish Apocalypses," in Hellbohn, ed., *Apokalyptik*, 447-59.

as well as of the political oracles of the ancient Near East. All of this literature is, of course, related on a very broad level (the genre apocalypse is a subgenre of "revelatory literature"), but a definition that fails to distinguish between Amos and Enoch is of limited value. Second, it takes no account at all of the cosmological and mystical tendencies in the apocalypse, which have been repeatedly emphasized in recent studies.²³ It may also be that Sanders's view of the social function is too simple. While several major Jewish apocalypses (especially those of the historical type) can be viewed as literature of the oppressed, this is seldom evident in otherworldly journeys, although the latter type frequently bore the label "apocalypse" in antiquity. In the Middle Ages, we also find apocalypses of the historical type used in support of the empire and the papacy.²⁴

On the other hand, a number of scholars have argued that definitions of "apocalypse" or "apocalyptic" should make no mention of eschatology.²⁵ So such a definition is unobjectionable as far as it goes. It would of course cover a much wider corpus than the definition given above, but it is certainly accurate for all apocalypses. If one wishes to give a more descriptive definition of the literature that has been traditionally regarded as apocalyptic, then the question arises whether some revelations of heavenly mysteries are distinguished from others by their content. The issue here has usually centered on eschatology. It is true that the scholarly literature has been preoccupied with eschatology to a disproportionate degree and that it is by no means the only concern of the apocalypses. Yet an approach that denies the essential role of eschatology is an overreaction and no less one-sided.

Yet another, highly original approach to the apocalyptic genre has been pioneered by Paolo Sacchi, and has been very influential in European scholarship.²⁷ Sacchi's approach is distinguished by its diachronic character. Rather

23. M. E. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things": *Idem, Scriptures, Seers, and Visions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); I. Gruenwald, *Apocalypse: A Study of Jewish Mysticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980); C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982); M. Himmelfarb, *Ascension to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

24. B. McGinn, *Visions of the End* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 33-36; J. Quenest, *Le Livre de l'Apocalypse*, in Hellicon, ed., *Apocalypses*, 498-530; *Le Livre de l'Apocalypse*, in Hellicon, ed., *Apocalypses*, 498-530.

25. Rowland later (p. 50) points to the eschatological structure of legends, visions, and admissions, but neither the legends nor the admissions are consistent features of the genre.

27. P. Sacchi, *L'apocalittica: guida a un genere letterario* (Trent: Zanichelli, 1977). See G. Boccacini, "Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 1977. See Collins and Charlesworth, eds., *Mysteries and Revelations*, 33-50, with bibliography up to 1990.

than look for essential characteristics of the corpus as a whole, Sacchi identifies the underlying problem of the oldest apocalypses, which he takes to be the Book of the Watchers, and traces its influence on a developing tradition. The underlying problem is the origin of evil, and the distinctively apocalyptic solution lies in the idea that evil is prior to human will and is the result of an original sin that has irremediably corrupted creation. This motif can be traced clearly in the Enoch corpus and identified in a somewhat different form in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. F. Garcia Martinez has effectively shown the influence of this trajectory in the Dead Sea Scrolls.²⁸

It is to Sacchi's credit that he has highlighted an important motif in apocalyptic literature, especially in the Enochic corpus. But the genre cannot be identified with a single motif or theme, and the early Enoch literature, important though it is, cannot be regarded as normative for all apocalypses. Gabriele Boccacini has pointed out that by Sacchi's definition, the book of Daniel should not be classified as apocalyptic.²⁹ Other themes and motifs, including eschatology, are no less important than the origin of evil. Nonetheless, Sacchi has had a salutary impact on the discussion by directing attention to the diachronic development of apocalyptic traditions.

Apocalyptic Eschatology

The debate over the definition of the genre leads us back to the question of apocalyptic eschatology. The touchstone here must be the kind of eschatology that is found in the apocalypses. Two problems have been raised. First, some have questioned whether the apocalypses exhibit a consistent eschatology.³⁰ We must bear in mind that as there are different types of apocalypses, there are correspondingly different types of apocalyptic eschatology. The common equation of "apocalyptic" with the scenario of the end of history is based only on the "historical" type like Daniel, and scholars have rightly objected that this is not typical of all apocalypses; however, involve a transcendent eschatology that looks for retribution beyond the bounds of history. In some cases (3 Baruch, *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*) this takes the form of the judgment of individuals after death, without reference to the end of history. We should bear in mind that retribution after death is also a crucial

28. F. Garcia Martinez, "Les traditions apocalypses à Qumran," in C. Kasperl, ed., *Apocalypses et voyages dans l'au-delà* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 201-32.

29. G. Boccacini, *Stile e struttura di un genere letterario*, in Hellicon, ed., *Apocalypses*, 29-99; D. 126-50.

30. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 29-71. I. Carmignone argues that the term "eschatology" is too diffuse to be of any service ("Les Dangers de l'Eschatologie," *NRS* 17 [1971]: 365-90).

component in a "historical" apocalypse like Daniel and constitutes a major difference from the eschatology of the prophets.³¹ The fact that apocalyptic eschatology has often been erroneously identified with the "historical" type in the past does not justify the denial that there is any apocalyptic eschatology at all.

Second, neither the judgement of the dead nor even the scenario of the end of history is peculiar to apocalypses; hence the objection that there is no *distinctive* apocalyptic eschatology.³² Insofar as this objection bears on the definition of the genre, we must note that visions and heavenly journeys are not distinctive either. The genre is not constituted by one or more distinctive themes but by a distinctive combination of elements, all of which are also found elsewhere. A more significant problem arises if we wish to speak of apocalyptic eschatology outside of the apocalypses, for example, in the Gospels or Paul. What is at issue here is the affinity between the eschatological allusions and the scenarios which are found in more elaborate form in the apocalypses. Affinities vary in degree, and, although the label "apocalyptic eschatology" may be helpful in pointing up the implications of some texts, we should always be aware that the adjective is used in an extended sense.

Apocalypticism

We may now return to the relation between the apocalypses and apocalypticism. Koeh's "preliminary demonstration of apocalyptic as a historical movement" singled out eight clusters of motifs: (1) urgent expectation of the end of earthly conditions in the immediate future; (2) the end as a cosmic catastrophe; (3) periodization and determinism; (4) activity of angels and demons; (5) new salvation, paradisaic in character; (6) manifestation of the kingdom of God; (7) a mediator with royal functions; (8) the catchword "glory."³³ Koeh does not claim that all these elements are found in every apocalypse, even in his rather limited list, which essentially corresponds to the "historical" apocalypses of *Semelia* 14. It is apparent, however, that these characteristics do not correspond to all to an apocalypse like 2 *Enoch* and that they ignore much of the speculative material that is prominent even in the earliest works of the Enoch tradition. So Michael Stone has argued that "there are some of the books which are conventionally regarded as apocalypses which

are for all practical purposes devoid of apocalypticism" and that "truly apocalyptic apocalypses are the exception rather than the rule."³⁴ Hence the conclusion that a clear distinction must be maintained between apocalypses and apocalypticism.

It is obvious that there are indeed distinctions to be made, but to speak of apocalypses that are not apocalyptic can only compound the semantic confusion. We may begin by clarifying the valid distinctions and then try to sort out the terminology. Insofar as apocalypticism is a historical movement or "refers to the symbolic universe in which an apocalyptic movement codifies its identity and interpretation of reality,"³⁵ it is not simply identical with the content of apocalypses. There are apocalypses that are not the product of a movement in any meaningful sense. Equally, there are movements, such as the sect of Qumran and early (pre-70 CE) Christianity, that did not produce apocalypses but are nonetheless commonly regarded as apocalyptic. The question remains, however, when a movement can appropriately be called apocalyptic. Since the adjective "apocalyptic" and the noun "apocalypticism" are derived from "apocalypse," it is only reasonable to expect that they indicate some analogy with the apocalypses. A movement might reasonably be called apocalyptic if it shared the conceptual framework of the genre, endorsing a worldview in which supernatural revelation, the heavenly world, and eschatological judgment played essential parts. Arguably, both the Qumran community and early Christianity are apocalyptic in this sense, quite apart from the production of apocalypses. We should remember, however, that the argument depends on analogy with the apocalypses and that the affinity is always a matter of degree.

If the word "apocalypticism" is taken to mean the ideology of a movement that shares the conceptual structure of the apocalypses, then we must recognize that there may be different types of apocalyptic movements, just as there are different types of apocalypses. Koeh's list of features corresponds well enough to the "historical" type. We must also allow for mystically oriented movements which are "apocalyptic" insofar as they correspond to the "heavenly journey" type of apocalypse. We are only beginning to explore the historical setting in which Jewish mysticism developed.

The debate over the relation between apocalypses and apocalypticism arises from the fact that previous scholarship has been preoccupied with the "historical" apocalypses and neglected those that incline to mysticism and cosmic speculation. One of the more significant developments of recent years has been the rediscovery of the mystical side of apocalyptic literature. The mystical component cannot be neatly isolated from the historical, but is an integral factor in all apocalyptic literature. A comprehensive understanding of

31. J. J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death," *CBQ* 36 (1974) 21-43 (= *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages*, 75-98).

32. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 29-37, 71.

33. Koeh, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, 28-33.

34. Stone, "Last of Revealed Things," 440, 443.

35. Hanson, *IDB Sup.* 30.

the genre apocalypse in its different types also calls for a more complex view of the social phenomenon of apocalypticism.

Apocalyptic Language

Up to this point we have been concerned with the generic framework that enables us to identify the apocalypses as a distinct class of writings. We must now turn to two other aspects of the genre that were not examined in *Semata* 14: the nature of apocalyptic language and the question of setting and function.

The literary conventions that determine the manner of composition and the nature of the literature are no less important than the generic framework. On this issue we may distinguish two fundamentally different approaches, one of which is associated with the name of R. H. Charles and the other with that of Hermann Gunkel. This is not, of course, to suggest that the approaches of these scholars were always incompatible with each other or that every subsequent scholar can be neatly aligned with one or the other. They do, however, represent two divergent tendencies in the study of apocalyptic literature.³⁶

The Influence of R. H. Charles

The study of apocalyptic literature in the English-speaking world has to a great extent been influenced by R. H. Charles. His textual editions, translations, and notes remained standard reference works for most of the twentieth century, and his knowledge of the material was undeniably vast.³⁷ Yet such a sober critic as T. W. Manson wrote that "there was a sense in which the language of Apocalyptic remained a foreign language to him. He could never be completely at home in the world of the Apocalypsts. And this made it impossible for him to achieve that perfect understanding which demands sympathy as well as knowledge."³⁸ Charles's lack of empathy with the material is apparent in two characteristics of his work. First, he tended to treat the texts as compendia of information and paid great attention to identifying

36. See my essay, "Apocalyptic Literature," in R. A. Kraft and G. W. E. Nickelsburg, eds., *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 345-70.

37. In addition to his monumental *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Charles published editions of *1 Enoch*, *Ascension of Isaiah*, *2 Baruch*, *Jubilees*, *Testaments of the Twelve Apostles*, *Assumption of Moses*, and (with W. R. Morfill) *2 Enoch*.

38. On 93. Bart, "Jewish Apocalyptic in Recent Scholarship Study," *BRL* 58 (1975) 32 (from the *Dictionary of Midwestern Biography* [1951-40] 170).

historical allusions and extracting theological doctrines. In contrast, he gave little attention to such matters as literary structure or mythological symbolism. The second characteristic is related to this. Since he assumed that the original documents presupposed a doctrinal consistency similar to his own and that the canons of style that governed them were similar to those of his own day, he posited interpolations and proposed emendations rather freely. So F. C. Burkitt wrote in his obituary of Charles: "If he came to have any respect for an ancient author he was unwilling to believe that such a person could have entertained conceptions which to Charles's trained and logical western mind were 'mutually exclusive,' and his favorite explanation was to posit interpolations and a multiplicity of sources, each of which may be supposed to have been written from a single and consistent point of view."³⁹

Of course Charles was a child of his age. The principles of literary/source criticism typified by J. Wellhausen were still dominant in biblical studies when he wrote. It is to Charles's credit that he did not share Wellhausen's negative evaluation of apocalypticism. The underlying assumptions of this type of approach have continued to play a prominent part in the study of apocalyptic literature. In large part this has been due to the persistence of a tradition that "has tended towards clarity and simplicity, and . . . has tended to lose from sight the essential problem of understanding the apocalyptic books as literary texts with their own strange form and language."⁴⁰ This tendency has been especially, though not exclusively, evident in British scholarship. The two most comprehensive and widely read books on "apocalyptic" in the last half century were by British authors — H. H. Rowley and D. S. Russell.⁴¹ Both books contain much that is still valuable, but as James Barr has pointed out, they are characterized by the "reduction of the very enigmatic material to essentially simple questions."⁴² It is also significant that Charles, Rowley, and Russell all sought the sources of apocalyptic language primarily in Old Testament prophecy. While prophecy may indeed be the single most important source on which the apocalypsts drew, the tendency to assimilate apocalyptic literature to the more familiar world of the prophets risks losing sight of its stranger mythological and cosmological components.

The problem with the source-critical method is obviously one of degree. No one will deny that it is sometimes possible and necessary to distinguish sources and identify interpolations. We have learned, however, that the apocalyptic writings are far more tolerant of inconsistency and repetition than Charles and his collaborators realized. Consequently, we must learn the con-

39. Cited by Barr, "Jewish Apocalyptic," 31.

40. *Ibid.*

41. H. H. Rowley, *The Revelation of Apocalyptic* (London: Athlone, 1944; reprint, Greenwood, SC, 1980); D. S. Russell, *Method and Message*.

42. Barr, "Jewish Apocalyptic," 52.

ventions that are actually employed in the text rather than assume that our own criteria of consistency are applicable. In short, our working assumptions should favor the unity of a document, unless there is cogent evidence to the contrary. The burden of proof falls on the scholar who would divide a text into multiple sources.

The methodological assumptions that posit sources and interpolations to maintain an ideal of consistency are frequently coupled with a lack of appreciation of symbolic narratives. The tendency of much historical scholarship has been to specify the referents of apocalyptic imagery in as unambiguous a manner as possible. This enterprise has indeed contributed much to our understanding of passages like Daniel 11. Yet Paul Ricoeur has rightly protested against the tendency to identify apocalyptic symbols in too univocal a way.⁴³ This tendency misses the element of mystery and indeterminacy that constitutes much of the "atmosphere" of apocalyptic literature. In short, Ricoeur suggests that we should sometimes allow several concurrent identifications *plausibly* and that the text may on occasion achieve its effect precisely through the element of uncertainty. It has been common to assume that apocalyptic symbols are mere codes whose meaning is exhausted by single referents. So Norman Perrin contrasted the rich and multidimensional use of the "Kingdom of God" in the teaching of Jesus (a "tensive" symbol) with what he conceived to be the one-dimensional usage of the apocalypses ("steno-symbols").⁴⁴ Such a contrast shows little appreciation for the allusive and evocative power of apocalyptic symbolism, but we must admit that Perrin's approach was consistent with much English-language scholarship.

The Influence of Hermann Gunkel

Hermann Gunkel, who pioneered so many creative developments in biblical study, also pointed the way to a more satisfactory appreciation of the apocalypses.⁴⁵ Much of Gunkel's work on apocalyptic literature was directed to the recovery of traditional, and especially mythological, materials embedded in the apocalypses. On the one hand, this work suggested that the various seams detected by the so-called literary critics (e.g., when an interpretation ignores

⁴³ P. Ricoeur, preface to A. Lacroque, *The Book of Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979) xxii-xxiii.

⁴⁴ N. Perrin, "Eschatology and Hermeneutics: Reflections on Method in the Interpretation of the New Testament," *JBL* 93 (1974) 3-14. See my critique, "The Symbolism of Transcendence in Apocalyptic," *BR* 19 (1974) 5-22.

⁴⁵ H. Gunkel, *Sprache und Gestalt in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895); idem, *Die Apokalypsen*, in E. Kaatzsch, ed., *Die Apokalypsen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* (München: Mohr-Siebeck, 1910) 2331-401. See J. M. Schmitt, *Die jüdische Apokalyphe*, 195-204; Hanson, *Prolegomena*, 385-506.

some elements in a vision) need not point to multiple authorship but only to the use of traditional material by a single author. In short, authors who work with traditional material do not conform to the standards of consistency and coherence presupposed by Charles and Wellhausen but may well allow loose ends and even contradictions to stand in their work. On the other hand, by pointing to the mythological roots of much apocalyptic imagery, Gunkel showed its symbolic and allusive character. Apocalyptic literature was not governed by the principles of Aristotelian logic but was closer to the poetic nature of myth.

Gunkel's critique of the principles of "literary" criticism was long neglected by students of apocalyptic literature but has been repeatedly vindicated in recent study. The insight that the apocalypses did not aspire to conceptual consistency but could allow diverse formulations to complement each other is especially important. The juxtaposition of visions and oracles, which cover essentially the same material, with varying imagery is a feature of a great number of apocalypses and related writings — Daniel, *Sibylline Oracles*, Similitudes of Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, Revelation. This phenomenon cannot be adequately explained by positing multiple sources, since we should still have to explain why sources are consistently combined in this way. In fact, repetition is a common literary (and oral) convention in ancient and modern times. A significant parallel to the apocalypses is found in the repetition of dream reports — for example, the multiple dreams of Joseph or of Gilgamesh. The recognition that such repetition is an intrinsic feature of apocalyptic writings provides a key to a new understanding of the genre.

Biblical scholarship in general has suffered from a preoccupation with the referential aspects of language and with the factual information that can be extracted from a text. Such an attitude is especially detrimental to the study of poetic and mythological material, which is especially language-articulating feelings and attitudes rather than describing reality in an objective way. The apocalyptic literature provides a rather clear example of language that is expressive rather than referential, symbolic rather than factual.⁴⁶

Traditional Imagery

The symbolic character of apocalyptic language is shown especially by its pervasive use of allusions to traditional imagery. Like much of the Jewish and early Christian literature, the apocalypses constantly echo biblical phrases. This point has been demonstrated especially by the Swedish scholar Lars

⁴⁶ On the various nonreferential aspects of biblical language see G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

Hartman. The title of Hartman's basic book, *Prophecy Interpreted*, may be somewhat misleading, if it is taken to suggest that the use of the biblical material is primarily exegetical. To be sure, the direct interpretation of older prophecies is a significant factor in apocalyptic writings; the interpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy in Daniel 9 is an obvious example. In many cases, however, the use of older texts consists only in the use of a phrase that brings a biblical passage to mind without claiming to interpret it in a definitive way. So the opening chapter of *1 Enoch* is a patchwork of biblical phrases, alluding to the language by building associations and analogies between the biblical contexts and the new context in which the phrase is used. It also means that this language lends itself to different levels of meaning and becomes harder to pin down in a univocal, unambiguous way.

The importance of biblical allusions in apocalyptic literature is generally admitted. Far more controversial is the use of mythological allusions. In part, "myth" is used, sometimes as a genre label, sometimes as a mode of thought, sometimes implying an association with ritual, and sometimes even as a derogatory term for what is false or "pagan."⁴⁸ A case can be made, I believe, for using "myth" as a genre label (on a broader level than apocalypses) in any of a number of senses — for example, as a paradigmatic narrative (à la M. Eliade) or as a story that obscures or mediates the contradictions of experience (à la C. Lévi-Strauss). In view of the ambiguity of the word, however, such a generic use of "myth" is scarcely helpful. The word is used in biblical studies primarily to refer to the religious stories of the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world. When we speak of mythological allusions in the apocalyptic literature we are referring to motifs and patterns that are ultimately derived from these stories.

The importance of Near Eastern mythology for understanding the apocalyptic literature was forcefully suggested by Gunkel in his famous book *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* in 1895. The insight was kept alive by writers of the "myth and ritual" school such as S. H. Hooke and especially by A. Benzen and S. Mowinkel.⁴⁹ In English-language scholarship it has been revived especially by Paul D. Hanson, building on the work of Frank M. Cross.⁵⁰ Whereas Gunkel sought his mythological parallels in

47. L. Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1-5* (Lund: Gleerup, 1979).

48. I. W. Rogerson, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974).
 49. S. H. Hooke, "The Myth and Ritual Pattern in Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic,"
 in: *The Labyrinth* (London: SPCK, 1935) 213-33; A. Benzen, *Enoch* (2d ed.; Tubingen:
 Mohr-Siebeck, 1952); S. Mowinkel, *He That Cometh* (Nashville, 1952).
 50. Hanson, "Jewish Apocalyptic Against Its Near Eastern Background," 78 (1971)
 31-58; Cross, "New Directions in the Study of Apocalyptic," *JTC* 6 (1969) 157-65.

The Quest for Sources

The recognition of allusions, and of the sources from which they derive, is an important factor in the study of apocalyptic literature. Yet it is important

51. For elaboration of the following see my essay, "Apocalyptic Genre and Mythic Allusions in Daniel," *JOTF* 21 (1991) 83-110.
 In: M. Cross, *Cambridge Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

the Babylonian material then available and subsequent scholars posited vast Persian influence, more recent scholarship has looked to the Canaanite-Ugaritic myths — especially in the case of Daniel.

There is still widespread resistance to the idea that Jewish apocalypses use mythological motifs.⁵¹ In large part this resistance is theological, when the myths are viewed as "false" or "pagan." In fact, however, Canaanite motifs had been domesticated in the religion of Israel from very early times;⁵² in some measure, the resistance arises from misconceptions. The Ugaritic texts come from the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., more than a thousand years before the earliest apocalypses. However, no one would claim that the authors of Daniel or Enoch had before them the exact texts we now have. We have very little documentation of the Canaanite religious tradition. The Ugaritic myths provide examples of a tradition that is largely lost. They are not the immediate sources of the apocalyptic imagery, but they illustrate the traditional usage that provides the context for the allusions. Before the Ugaritic texts were discovered, Gunkel appealed primarily to the Babylonian myths. The Ugaritic parallels now appear more adequate at some points. Future discoveries may yield even better comparative material. Gunkel was not wrong to appeal to the Babylonian material, since the issue is not the exact derivation but the kinds of allusions involved.

It should also be clear that a mythological allusion does not carry the same meaning and reference in an apocalyptic context as it did in the original myth. If the "one like a son of man" who comes on the clouds in Daniel 7 alludes to the Canaanite figure of Baal, this is not to say that he is identified as Baal, or that the full story of Baal is implied. It merely suggests that there is some analogy between this figure and the traditional conception of Baal. In the same way, the "Son of Man" passage in Mark 13:26 alludes to Daniel, but the figure in Mark does not have the same reference as it had in Daniel, and the full narrative of Daniel 7 is not implied. Mythological allusions, like biblical allusions, are not simple copies of the original source. Rather they transfer motifs from one context to another. By so doing they build associations and analogies and so enrich the communicative power of the language.

to distinguish the *generic* approach advocated here from the *genetic* approach which has long been dominant in this field of study.

An extraordinary amount of the scholarly literature has been devoted to the quest for the "origins of apocalyptic." For much of this century opinion was divided between those who viewed "apocalyptic" as the child of prophecy (e.g., Rowley) and those who regarded it as a "foreign" adaptation of Persian dualism.⁵³ More recently Gerhard von Rad suggested that it was derived from wisdom.⁵⁴ The renewed interest in mythological, especially Canaanite, sources is usually combined with the derivation from prophecy.

Much of this quest must be considered misdirected and counterproductive. Any given apocalypse combines allusions to a wide range of sources. The book of Daniel has obvious continuity with the prophets in the vision form and the use of Jeremiah's prophecy among other things. Yet we will argue that Canaanite imagery plays a crucial role in Daniel 7, and the schema of the four kingdoms is borrowed from the political propaganda of the Hellenistic Near East. While the importance of Persian dualism was greatly exaggerated in the past, it cannot be dismissed entirely. It is widely admitted in the Qumran scrolls and is quite compatible with the extensive use of Israelite traditions. Ultimately the meaning of any given work is constituted not by the sources from which it draws but by the way in which they are combined.

The quest for sources has often led scholars to view apocalypticism as a derivative phenomenon, a product of something other than itself. This tendency reflects a theological prejudice, inherited from the Wellhausen era, which views the apocalyptic writers (and postexilic Judaism in general) as inherently inferior to the prophets. In fact, the designation of sources has often been used as a covert way of making theological judgments. If "apocalyptic" is the child of prophecy it is legitimate; if it is a Persian import it is not authentically biblical. This logic is patently defective. The sources from which ideas are developed do not determine the inherent value of those ideas. Many of the central biblical ideas were in any case adapted from the mythology of the Canaanites and other Near Eastern peoples.

The designation of sources also sometimes serves as an indirect way of expressing the character of the phenomenon. Scholars who relate the apocalyptic literature exclusively to prophecy tend to concentrate on the eschatology and neglect the cosmological and speculative concerns that are also found in the apocalypses. Von Rad's theory that apocalypticism is derived from wisdom sought to correct that emphasis, but the issues have

53. For example, W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im synthalenstischen Zeitalter* (3d ed., ed. H. Gressmann, Tübingen: Mohr, Siebeck, 1926).

54. G. von Rad, *Theologie*, 2:315-54. A connection between wisdom and apocalyptic literature was proposed as early as 1857 by L. Nothe.

been confused by the genetic formulation of his thesis. The apocalypses do indeed present a kind of wisdom insofar as they first, offer an understanding of the structure of the universe and of history and, second, see right understanding as the precondition of right action. This wisdom, however, is not the inductive kind that we find in Proverbs or Sirach, but is acquired through revelation. The wisdom of Daniel and Enoch has close affinities with the *magical* wisdom of the Babylonians.⁵⁵ The quest for higher wisdom by revelation is well attested in the Hellenistic age,⁵⁶ and it is significant that the biblical wisdom book that shows most correspondence with the apocalypses is the Hellenistic (deuterocanonical) Wisdom of Solomon.⁵⁷ There is also an analogy between the wisdom literature and some apocalypses on the level of the underlying questions, insofar as both are often concerned with theology or the problem of divine justice. The use of the dialogue form in 4 Ezra recalls the book of Job in this regard, although the culminating revelations in the two books are very different.⁵⁸ The relation to wisdom is seldom a matter of derivation but concerns the way we perceive the nature of the apocalypses. The most fruitful effect of von Rad's proposal has been to redirect attention to those aspects of the apocalypse which are cosmological and speculative rather than eschatological.

The Settings of the Genre

The study of the apocalyptic genre rejects the genetic orientation of previous scholarship and places its primary emphasis on the internal coherence of the apocalyptic texts themselves. It is apparent that the apocalypses drew on various strands of tradition and that the new product is more than the sum of its sources. There is, however, a different genetic question that must be considered, concerning the historical and social matrix of the genre. In 1970 Klaus Koch could still assume that "if there was really a community of ideas and spirit between the different books which we now call apocalypses, these

55. H. P. Müller, "Magische Weisheit und Apokalyptik," in *Congress Volume: Lippstadt 1971* (VTSup 22; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 268-93; J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (HSM 16; Missoula, MT: Sola Scriptura Press, 1977), 67-88; J. C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (CBQMS 16; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), chapter 3. Note also the critique of von Rad by P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Die Apokalyptik in ihrem Verhältnis zu Prophetie und Weisheit* (Münster: Kaiser, 1969).

56. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 1:210-18; J. J. Collins, "The Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age," *JRHS* 117 (1977), 121-42; G. S. Ogden, *Enoch*, and Sages, 317-50.

58. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 205-8.

books must go back to a common sociological starting point; they must have a comparable *Sitz-im-Leben*.⁵⁹ Koehli went on to complain that "the secondary literature shows an unsurpassed jumble of opinions" and concluded that apocalyptic is a genre whose *Sitz im Leben* we do not yet know.

More recent study has shown that this formulation of the problem is inadequate. In an important critique of Old Testament form criticism in 1973, Rolf Knierim argued that "the conclusion seems unavoidable that 'setting' in the sense biblical form criticism has understood it, cannot be regarded indispensably as one of the factors that constitute genres."⁶⁰ The reason is not only the obvious practical one that we often do not have the necessary information to establish the setting of a text. More fundamental is the realization that settings are of different sorts, and so there is need of a typology of settings. The "jumble of opinions" about which Koehli complains is due in large part to the lack of such a typology.

It is generally agreed that apocalyptic is not simply "a conceptual genre of the mind"⁶¹ but is generated by social and historical circumstances. On the broadest level "the style of an epoch can be understood as a matrix insofar as it furnishes the codes or raw materials—the typical categories of communication—employed by a certain society."⁶² Much of the traditional debate about the sources of apocalypticism is relevant here insofar as the "codes and raw materials" are thought to be provided by late prophecy, Persian dualism, etc. On another level we may consider Philip Velihauser's thesis that "the home of Apocalyptic is in those eschatologically excited circles which were forced more and more by the theory into a kind of conventionalized existence."⁶³ A more specific variant of this type of setting would assign apocalypses to a particular party, such as the Hasidim or the Essenes. A different type of setting is reflected in Velihauser's further claim that the apocalypses "were frequently written out of actual distresses and for the strengthening of the community in them."⁶⁴ There is no necessary assertion about the existence of apocalyptic groups on this level. Yet another type of setting concerns the manner of composition. Do apocalypses reflect authentic biculate popular beliefs? Are they products of learned scribes? Or do they articulate a social or historical setting at all. Recently Lars Hartman and David Hellmoulin have focused on the *illocution* of a text, or that which it does

59. Koehli, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, 21.

60. Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," *Int* 27 (1973): 441.

61. *Ibid.*, 464. Knierim suggests that "myth" may be considered such a genre.

62. P. Velihauser, "Apocalypses and Related Subjects," in *New Testament Apocalypses* 12 vols., ed. E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 2:598.

64. *Ibid.*

in saying what it says.⁶⁵ Hartman suggests that exhortation and consolation are typical *illocutions* of apocalypses. Even on this level, the function of a text may be more or less specific. Exhortation to pacifism is distinctly different from exhortation to violence, and either may be the function of a given text. We should also note that a text remains in existence and may be reread in various settings at different times.

The General Matrix

Postexilic Prophecy

We may begin with the question of the matrix of the genre on the most general level. In an influential study published in 1975, Paul Hanson argued that "the dawn of apocalyptic" should be located in postexilic prophecy in the late sixth century B.C.E.⁶⁶ Hanson was well aware that the main corpus of apocalyptic literature comes from a much later time. His point was that the basic configuration of apocalyptic thought can already be found in the late prophetic texts. Hanson distinguishes two patterns in the postexilic community: the hierocratic party represented by Haggai, the early chapters of Zechariah, and Ezekiel 40-48 and the visionary heirs of Second Isaiah, represented by Isaiah 56-66, Zechariah 9-14, and a number of other passages, most notably Isaiah 24-27.⁶⁷ The closest formal analogies to the apocalypses are found in the "hierocratic" literature, especially in the visions of Zechariah that are interpreted by an angel.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Hanson sees in the visionary literature the dawn of apocalyptic eschatology, which he associates with the eclipse of human instrumentality in the divine intervention in history. The oracles of Isaiah 56-66 are written out of a growing sense of alienation from the hierarchy. The prophet calls on God to "rend the heavens and come down"

65. Hartman, "Sprung", Hellmoulin, *Das Historische*, 1:52-58. The term is taken from J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (2d ed.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 98-108.

66. P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*. On the significance of the Persian period for the development of apocalypticism, see further J. J. Collins, "From Prophecy to Apocalypticism: The Expectation of the End," in J. J. Collins, B. McGinn, and S. Stein, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, forthcoming) vol. 1.

67. Hanson, *IBDSup*, 33.
68. H. Gese, "Anfang und Ende der Apokalypik dargestellt am Sacharjahu," *ZTK* 70 (1973): 20-49; R. North, "Prophecy to Apocalyptic via Zechariah," in *Congress Volume: Uppsala 1971* (VTSup 22), 14-71. See now E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *Prophecy of Old and the Dawn of Apocalypticism: The Books of the Prophets and Apocalypses* (OTS 35; Leiden: Brill, 1986), and S. L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 123-65.

(64:1). Divine intervention is necessary to set the situation right. The vision of the future is a new creation, new heavens and a new earth. In addition to the hope for a transcendent future, these oracles anticipate the use of mythological language in the apocalypses. The most striking illustrations are found in Isaiah 24-27. God will swallow up Death forever (25:8, an allusion to the figure of Mot or Death in Canaanite mythology) and will punish Leviathan and slay the dragon that is in the sea (27:1). Further, the social and historical matrix of these oracles has significant affinities with that of at least some later apocalypses. The sense of alienation from the present order is fundamental to many apocalypses, especially the historical type.⁶⁹

Hanson has indeed shown that there is significant continuity between the apocalypses and the prophetic tradition, and especially that the apocalyptic use of mythological imagery has ample biblical antecedents. Yet some major defining characteristics of apocalyptic thought are lacking in these oracles. One is the interest in the heavenly world. Angels play some part in Zechariah, but scarcely any in the so-called visionary literature. Nothing in these books prepares for the mystical and speculative aspects of the Enoch literature.⁷⁰ The eschatology too is rather different from the later apocalypses. In the "new earth" of Isaiah 65 "the child shall die a hundred years old and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed" and "like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be." Life will be transformed, but it will still be distinctly this-worldly ("they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit"). It will also be finite, however lengthened it may be. This conception is quite different from the expectation of resurrection or of the judgment of the dead as we find it in Daniel and *Enoch*. When the goal of life is located beyond death, then there is evidently a greater impulse also to speculation about the world beyond and to the mystical elements in the apocalyptic literature.

While postexilic prophecy shares some significant features of the apocalypses, it still lacks the generic framework of apocalyptic thought.⁷¹ The so-called Apocalypse of Isaiah in Isaiah 24-27 comes closer to the later literature than the other oracles. Isaiah 25 speaks of the destruction of Death,

69. Note the critique of Hanson's eschatological model in Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, 55-84. Cook points out that millennialism can never be a goal since it enjoys power, power and deprivation, are notoriously relative terms. Zechariah was not in the province of Judah, because of his support for Josiah and Zerubbabel, but the whole province was marginal in the Persian empire.

70. See my essay, "The Place of Apocalypticism in the Religion of Israel," in P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride, eds., *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1987) 539-58 (= *Serms, Studies, and Sagas*, 39-58). See, however, the interesting attempt of Tighehlan, *Prophecy of Old*, to trace connections between Zechariah and the Book of the Watchers.

71. A. Kuhn regards Zechariah 1-8 as an apocalypse but admits that its form is inchoate ("The Apocalyptic Background of the Jewish Apocalypses," 175). His claim that the visions express an eschatology, however, requires a very broad definition of that term.

and Isa 26:19 of the resurrection of the dead. From the context it would seem that this language is metaphorical for the restoration of Israel, as is explicitly the case in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37). The dead who shall live are contrasted with the hosts who ruled over Israel, who are gone without remembrance.⁷² Yet the use of such language is a significant factor in the development of apocalyptic thought. An intriguing passage in Isa 24:21-22 speaks of a day when God will punish "the host of heaven in heaven and the kings of the earth on the earth" and they will be shut up in prison for many days until they are punished. This passage, like all of Isaiah 24-27, remains enigmatic, but it suggests an underlying mythology that is more elaborate than anything expressed in the texts, and which may well have been significant for the development of apocalyptic eschatology.⁷³

The Earliest Apocalypses

Postexilic prophecy undoubtedly supplied some of the codes and raw materials utilized by the later apocalypses. However, if we wish to examine the matrix in which the configuration of the genre emerged, we must surely begin with the earliest actual apocalypses, rather than with their partial antecedents.⁷⁴

The earliest apocalypses, by the definition given above, are found in *I Enoch*. Substantial fragments of the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book have been found at Qumran in manuscripts from the early second or even late third century B.C.E., and the antiquity of these works is also corroborated by allusions in the Book of *Jubilees*.⁷⁵ The early date of this Enoch material is significant for our perception of the genre, since the contrast with the prophetic literature is much greater than in the case of Daniel. The non-canonical apocalypses can no longer be dismissed as "second-rare imitations" of Daniel. Both the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book involve otherworldly journeys and a good deal of cosmological speculation.

The place of composition of these documents is far from certain. There has been a general tendency to assign them to Palestinian Judaism. There are

72. See, however, E. Puech, *La Cosmogonie des Eschirons en la Vie Future: Immortalité, Résurrection, la Révolution?* (Paris: Gabalda, 1993) 66-73, who argues for a belief in individual resurrection here.

73. For contrasting assessments of Isaiah 24-27, see W. R. Miller, *Isaiah 24-27 and the Origin of Apocalyptic* (SIS 11; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); I. Vermeylen, *De prophète Isaïe à l'Apocalypse* (Paris: Gabalda, 1977) 1,349-91; and D. Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration: An Interpretive Reading of Isaiah 24-27* (SOTSUP 61; Sheffield: ISOT, 1988).

74. This starting point is shared by Sacha, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*.
75. I. T. Mink, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments from Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) 5-7; Mink (p. 31) argues that these Enochic books are presupposed in Genesis, but his arguments have been widely rejected.

induced some references to Palestinian geography: Enoch is located in "Dan which is southwest of Hermon" (13:7) and the description of the "middle of the earth" in *1 Enoch* 26 is in fact a description of Jerusalem and its surroundings.⁷⁶ Yet it is doubtful whether this evidence necessarily requires that the author lived in the homeland. Several scholars have noted the prominence of Babylonian lore in both the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book.⁷⁷ The possibility that this literature originated in the eastern Diaspora cannot be discounted. It is noteworthy that the tales in Daniel 1-6 are set in Babylon. There again a Diaspora origin is possible, although the visions in Daniel 7-12 were certainly composed in Judea. In no case can we point to an apocalyptic writing that was definitely composed in Babylon or the eastern Diaspora, nor can we assume that all were definitely composed in Judea. Later we will find that some apocalyptic writings also originated in the Hellenistic Diaspora.

A Babylonian Matrix?

In view of the manifest associations of the earliest Enoch and Daniel literature with Babylon, we must consider whether the apocalyptic genre owes its distinctive shape to a Babylonian matrix. Our question here is not whether the earliest apocalypses were written in the eastern Diaspora, since this possibility cannot be decisively verified at present. Rather the question is to what extent the "codes and raw materials" of the apocalypses were Babylonian in origin.

Several scholars have noted affinities between apocalyptic revelation and the "mantic wisdom" of the Chaldeans.⁷⁸ Daniel in the tales (Daniel 1-6) operates as a Babylonian wise man, skilled in the interpretation of dreams. The figure of Enoch is to some degree modeled on Enmeduranki, founder of the guild of *bārû*, or Babylonian diviners. There is also a general similarity between the methods of apocalyptic revelation and of divination, insofar as both involve the interpretation of mysterious signs and symbols, and both carry overtones of determinism. Yet it must also be said that the apocalyptic visions of Daniel 7-12 and the actual revelations of Enoch are

quite different from the literature of divination and omen collections.⁷⁹ Some scholars have tried to find a mediating link in the Akkadian prophetic, which has only come to light in recent years.⁸⁰ This genre has been described as follows by A. K. Grayson: "An Akkadian prophecy is a prose composition consisting in the main of a number of 'predictions' of past events. It then concludes either with a 'prediction' of phenomena in the writer's day or with a genuine attempt to forecast future events. The author, in other words, uses *vaticinia ex eventu* to establish his credibility and then proceeds to his real purpose, which might be to justify a current idea or institution, or, as it appears in the Dymastic prophecy, to forecast doom for a hated enemy."⁸¹ Five examples of the genre have been recognized, ranging in date from the twelfth century to the Seleucid era: the Marduk and Shulgi prophetic speeches, Text A, the Uruk prophecy, and the Dymastic prophecy. The Marduk and Shulgi speeches provide early examples of pseudonymity. The affinity of these prophecies with the Jewish apocalypses lies primarily in their "predictions" of past events, or *vaticinia ex eventu*. The cryptic manner in which these predictions are presented ("A prince will arise . . . another man who is unknown will arise") has rightly been compared to Daniel 11, or Daniel 8:23-25.⁸² More extensive parallels can be found in the *Sibylline Oracles*. In this respect at least the Akkadian prophecies provide noteworthy precedents for a prominent characteristic of the historical apocalypses. Yet the Babylonian prophecies fall far short of providing a comprehensive model for the apocalypses, even for the historical type. The extant examples provide no parallel for the apocalyptic reception of revelation in a vision or heavenly tour and have no suggestion of an eschatology involving the judgment of the dead. In all, they seem closer to such political prophecies as the *Sibylline Oracles* than to the apocalypses. We will have occasion to discuss them further in connection with Daniel.

There are, however, also Babylonian antecedents for the apocalyptic manner of revelation. The tradition of Akkadian dream visions has been brilliantly outlined by Helge Kvanvig, in a major contribution to the study of

79. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 62: "However similar Mesopotamian divination and Jewish apocalypticism may be in some respects, they certainly have not produced comparable literature."

80. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* 18 (1964) 7-30; W. W. Hallo, "Akkadian Apocalypses," *IEJ* 16 (1966) 231-42. Hallo's designation "apocalypses" has been generally rejected. For sober evaluations see W. G. Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: Athlone, 1978); S. A. Kaufman, "Prediction, Prophecy, and Apocalypse in the Light of New Akkadian Texts," in A. Shiran, ed., *Predicings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies, 1973* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1977) 221-28. For the definitive presentation of these prophecies, see A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

81. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, 6.

82. *Ibid.*, 21; Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 13.

76. *Ibid.*, 36-37. On Enoch's association with Galilee, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Re-examination of Revelation in Upper Galilee," *JBL* 100 (1981) 575-600.

77. Milk, *Revelation of Enoch*, 151-18, 28-30; P. Grenet, "La géographie mythique d'Enoch et ses sources orientales," *RB* 65 (1958) 35-69; Stone, *Scriptures, Sects, and Visions*, 39; VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 35-71; H. S. Kvanvig, *Noahs of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man* (WMANT 61; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988) 60-542.

78. Above, n. 55.

The potential significance of Persian apocalypticism can be seen from a consideration of one of these Pahlavi works, the *Zand-i Vohuman Yasn*, or *Bahman Yasht*.⁹⁶ This work is allegedly a "zand" or interpretation of a lost book of the Avesta, the *Vohuman Yekt*. The lost Yasht is also widely thought to have influenced other Persian apocalyptic writings and, perhaps, some non-Persian oracles, such as the Egyptian *Potter's Oracle*. The Zand also claims (1:1) to depend on the lost *Sihkhr Nask* of the Avesta.

According to the Zand, chapter 1, Zarathustra asked for immortality from Ahura Mazda but was granted instead "wisdom of all-knowledge." He then saw a tree with four branches, one of gold, one of silver, one of steel, and one of mixed iron. Ahura Mazda explained the vision, saying that the four branches were four kingdoms of which the last is ruled by the "divs who have disheveled hair." The fourth kingdom is said to come when the tenth century, or millennium, of Zarathustra is at an end. Chapter 3 of the Zand contains an extended version of this incident, in which Zarathustra sees seven branches which are again interpreted as kingdoms, and concludes with the "divs" of disheveled hair and the end of the millennium of Zarathustra. In chapter 4 Zarathustra inquires about the signs of the tenth century and end of the millennium, and Ahura Mazda replies by describing a long series of upheavals and disturbances, both political and cosmic. Chapters 7-9 prophecy what will happen when Zarathustra's millennium will end and Astiār's will begin (8:8). Near the end of the second millennium Peshyādan son of Visatšp will appear as a savior figure who will destroy the divs. The millennium of Absharnah follows when men will not even die because they "will be so versed in medicine" (9:12). Then at the end of this millennium "Šōšyōs will make the creatures pure again" and the resurrection will follow (9:23).

The *Bahman Yasht* contains all the key features of an apocalypse of the historical type. It has the appearance of a compilation of sources, but in the

Persian Apocalypses," in Collins and Charlesworth, eds., *Mysteries and Revelations*, 114-34;idem, "Mythe et histoire dans l'Iran ancien," in W. B. E. Perry and Philonardo, *Apocalypse: Mythe et histoire*, 11-22;idem, "L'apocalypse iranienne: est-elle vraiment la source d'un apocalypses?" *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 31 (1988): 67-78; L. P. Culham, *Psychonodai I: A Survey of the Evidence concerning the Ascension of the Soul and Its Relevance* (Lanham: Bnll, 1983); "Ascension," in M. Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987): 435-41.

C. G. Ceram, *The Zand-i Vohuman Yasn* (Bombay: Curney Oriental Institute, 1967); Rome: Istituto Iranico, *Il manoscritto di esoterismo orientale*, (1995). See A. Huligård, "Bahman Yasht: A Persian Apocalypsis," *idem*, "Mythe et histoire," for a contrary assessment see P. Gigoux, "Sur l'existence d'un Bahman Yasht avestique," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 32 (1988): 53-64.

words of Anders Huligård: "the intention of the compiler seems to have been to create a coherent apocalypse, since he orders his materials so as to form a consistent narrative, starting with an account of the manner in which divine revelation comes to Zarathustra, and ending with the description of the final renewal of the world."⁹⁵ This is in fact the only extant Persian work that combines the apocalyptic manner of revelation with the elaborate periodization of history and eschatology. There is no doubt that periodization and the succession of millennia with the attendant sense of determinism, is an integral feature of Persian theology. The classic expression of this view of cosmic history is found in the *Bundahishn*, a late (twelfth-century) compendium of traditional teaching. There the course of history is divided into twelve thousand years. The last nine thousand involve a conflict between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. Three thousand years pass according to the will of Ahura Mazda, three thousand according to the will of both, and in the final three thousand Ahura Mazda triumphs. The *Bundahishn* contains also an account of the resurrection and the purification of the world by fire (chapter 34).

It is by no means certain that the full schema of history and eschatology that we find in the *Bundahishn* was already developed in the Hellenistic period.⁹⁶ We do have a brief early account of Persian religion in Plutarch's treatise *On Isis and Osiris* (47:97). There we are told that Ahura Mazda (Horo-mazes) and Ahriman (Arimanus) have an ongoing struggle: "for three thousand years alternately the one god will dominate the other and be dominated, and that for another three thousand years they will fight and make war, until one smashes up the domain of the other. In the end Hades will perish and men shall be happy." It is not clear whether this schema should be understood as corresponding to the last nine thousand years of the *Bundahishn* or whether it represents a different, earlier system. It is also not certain how far Plutarch's account was representative of Persian theology. Plutarch ascribes this account to Theopompus, who flourished in the fourth century B.C.E. Although much is uncertain, the passage in Plutarch corroborates the idea that the dualistic struggle of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman and the division of world history into set periods were at home in Persian thought at the beginning of the Hellenistic age. We know from Theopompus that the belief in resurrection was also developed by this time.⁹⁸

95. Huligård, "Bahman Yasht," 121.

96. Kippenberg, "Die Geschichte," 53, argues that the schema of twelve thousand years was derived from the Babylonian zodiac and cannot be earlier than the second century B.C.E.

97. J. G. Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Isis et Osiride* (London: University of Wales Press, 1970) 193. See M. V. Ceram, *Antropologia egyptica* (Rome: Boringhieri, 1990) 19-62. A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Lanham: Bnll, 1997) 17.

98. Diogenes Laertius, *Proem* 6-9; Huligård, "Das Idennum," 543.

Another witness to Persian apocalyptic thought that can be dated to pre-Christian times is found in the *Oracle of Hystaspes*.⁹⁹ References to this oracle are found in Justin, Clement, and Aristokritos, but our main source is the *Divine Institutions* of Lactantius. The nature of the oracle can be seen from *Div. Inst.* 7.15: "A wonderful dream, upon the interpretation of a boy who uttered divinations, announcing long before the interpretation of a boy Roman name would be taken from the world." The manner of revelation is reminiscent of Daniel 2. The content is political upheaval, but there is also a reference to the destruction of the world by fire (*Justin, Apol.* 1.20). Other features of the oracle may be gathered from passages in Lactantius where Hystaspes is not explicitly mentioned but appears to be used. In *Div. Inst.* 7.16 there is a description of the signs of the end that shows several parallels with the *Bahman Yashn*, and to a lesser extent with the *Bundahishn*. In *Div. Inst.* 7.17 there is a reference to a "great king" who has been variously identified as Mithras, Sosiyans, or a national king.¹⁰⁰ Further, Aristokritos, in the passage that refers to Hystaspes, indicates that "the fulfillment would take place after the fulfillment of 6,000 years." Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* 7.14) says that six saecula would elapse before the reign of Christ. Presumably, then, Hystaspes had a schema of six thousand (or seven thousand) years, in contrast to the twelve thousand of the *Bundahishn*. The *Oracle of Hystaspes* has been dated to the first, or possibly the second, century B.C.E.¹⁰¹ It is not an apocalypse in form, but it throws important light on Persian eschatology, in a pre-Christian form.

It appears then that several key features of the historical apocalypses were paralleled in Persian writings already in the Hellenistic age, notably the periodization of history, eschatological woes, resurrection, and the supernatural forces of good and evil. Further, the *Bahman Yashn* presents its overview of history in a revelation that is interpreted by a divine being, and in the form of an *ex eventu* prophecy. If this accurately represents the Avestan Yashn, then it may well be that the generic framework or *Rahmehguzarung* had already been developed by the Persians and was adapted by the Jews. In view of the problems of dating, this can be no more than a possibility. Even if it were

99. J. R. Hinmels, "The Zoroastrian Doctrine of Salvation in the Roman World: A Study of the Oracle of Hystaspes," in E. J. Sharpe and J. R. Hinmels, eds., *Man and His Salvation: Studies in Manichaeism*, O. A. Brannan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973) 123-48; D. Pinner, "Hystaspes," in S. Shaked, ed., *Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1982) 12-25; among other studies see also S. Shaked, ed., *Jews and Christians: "Hystaspes," Redaktionen für Antike und Gegenwart* 161 (1991) cols. 1057-1062.

100. Krippeberg, "Die Geschichte," 7.
101. Hinmels, "The Zoroastrian Doctrine of Salvation," 145-46. The Persian character of the oracle was established by H. Windisch, *Die Orakel der Perser* (Konstanzer Akademie, menschenlicher Prototypen," *Katze* 12 (1970) 81-112.

ture, we should still have to allow for considerable freedom in the Jewish adaptations, since the Persian conception of a sequence of millennia is quite different from what we find in the Jewish apocalypses. The *Bahman Yashn* itself cannot be regarded as the prototype of any Jewish apocalypse, although it is certainly relevant to the discussion of Daniel.¹⁰²

Persian analogues can also be found for the second type of apocalypse, which involves a heavenly journey.¹⁰³ There is a full-blown apocalypse of this type in the *Book of Avda Vraf*, but it dates from the ninth century.¹⁰⁴ Vraf was a priest who drugged himself to release his spirit to explore the fate of the dead. The book describes his visions of heaven and hell, attended by interpreting angels. The name Vraf occurs in the Avesta, and the book has been thought to have an old kernel; but, of course, any earlier form is hypothetical. The motif of the ascent of the soul is certainly old in Persian tradition.¹⁰⁵ Here again the general outline of this type of apocalypse may have had Persian precedents, but we cannot be certain, because of the dating problem.

The Persian parallels to the apocalyptic genre are more comprehensive in nature than what we find in either postexilic prophecy or the Babylonian prophecies. Yet even if the Persian apocalypses could be dated securely to the Hellenistic age, the Jewish genre cannot be regarded as a simple borrowing, since it is adapted to the needs of Jewish monotheism. Some features of the apocalypses, such as the periodization of history, do indeed seem to be Persian in origin, but the actual motifs in which the Jewish revelations are expressed are drawn predominantly from Jewish tradition. In short, whatever was taken over from Persian apocalypticism was thoroughly reconceived and integrated with other strands of thought.

The Hellenistic Milieu

Neither the Babylonian nor the Persian material can be conceived as an exclusive matrix for Jewish apocalypticism. There was some interpenetration of Persian and Babylonian ideas in any case, and both circulated widely in the Hellenistic world.¹⁰⁶ The division of history into a set number of periods

102. J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 163-64.

103. See P. Gignoux, "Apocalypses et voyages extra-terrestres dans l'Iran Mazdeen," in C. Kappler, ed., *Apocalypses et voyages dans l'antiquité*, 251-74, especially 364-70.

104. M. Haug and E. W. West, *The Book of Avda Vraf* (London: Tamesis, 1972); P. Gignoux, *Le Livre d'Avda Vraf* (Paris: Editions Recherches sur les civilisations, 1969); F. W. Bahman, *Avda Vraf: Nimgah: The Iranian Divine Comedies* (Copenhagen: Carlsens, 1961), 126-27.

105. Hultgård, "Das Judentum," 527-28; W. Hombert, "Iran," *Iranica* 1, 126-27.

106. See the classic study of J. Bidez and P. Carnot, *Les Mages Hellénisés* (2 vols.; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1938).

is attributed to the pagan sibyl of Cumae in Italy, and the famous schema of four kingdoms, which may also be Persian in origin, is attested in several Roman sources.¹⁰⁷ Chaldean astronomy and astrology enjoyed widespread currency in the Hellenistic age.¹⁰⁸ Analogous material is found in the astrological oracles of Nechepso and Petosiris from Egypt in the second century B.C.E. In the broadest sense the matrix of the Jewish apocalypses is not any single tradition but the Hellenistic milieu, where motifs from various traditions circulated freely.¹⁰⁹

The affinities of the apocalypses with widespread Hellenistic concepts can be seen by considering two clusters of texts, the first involving otherworldly journeys, the second, eschatological prophecy. The motif of the otherworldly journey, both ascent to heaven and descent to the netherworld, was widespread in antiquity and is found already in Homer's *Odyssey*, Book 11.¹¹⁰ The motif was sufficiently widespread in the early third century B.C.E. to inspire the satire of Menippus of Gadara (in Palestine). In Plato's *Myth of Er* (*Republic*, Book 10) the journey motif is used to convey a revelation about the judgment of the dead, and Plato's work served as a model for Cicero in the *Somnium Scipionis* and for Plutarch (*De genio Socratis* 21–22 and *De sera numinis vindicta* 22–31).¹¹¹ This classical tradition is marked by strong philosophical interests, which are quite different from what we find in the Jewish apocalypses, but the similarities in the conceptual structure are nonetheless noteworthy. Another, less philosophical kind of otherworldly journey is found in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book 6, where Aeneas is accompanied to Hades by the sibyl.¹¹² In this case there is also a "prophecy" of the future greatness of Rome. The parodies of Lucian, based on those of Menippus, would suggest

that the motif of the otherworldly journey must have been well known in the Greco-Roman world. In the *Nekyomantia*, Menippus is said to go to Babylon to find a magus to accompany him on his descent. The parody requires that such meddling in the supernatural was associated with magic or with the exotic East. It is possible that the Greek use of this motif was influenced by Eastern prototypes to some extent, although it was developed in a thoroughly Hellenistic way.

These otherworldly journeys provide parallels for the apocalypses that deal primarily with personal eschatology or life after death. The most noteworthy similarities are found in the Diaspora apocalypses, such as *2 Enoch* and the *Testament of Abraham*, which probably date from the first century C.E. There are, of course, significant differences in detail — for example, the belief in reincarnation, Plato's *Myth of Er* is quite alien to the Jewish tradition. Yet the interest in the judgment of the dead is one of the motifs that clearly distinguish the Jewish apocalypses from the earlier biblical tradition. It is noteworthy that belief in afterlife was widespread in the Hellenistic age in many forms, from Plato's adaptation of the Orphic myths to popular notions of astral immortality.

The second cluster of relevant texts consists of eschatological prophecies.¹¹³ We have already noted the use of *ex eventu* prophecy in the Babylonian tradition. An early Hellenistic example of this phenomenon is found in the *Alexandria* of Lycophon, an obscure learned poem that purports to be the prophecy of Cassandra or Alexandra.¹¹⁴ Its purpose is apparently to glorify the Trojans and their descendants, the Romans. The four-kingdom schema apparently originated in the context of Near Eastern resistance to Greek and Roman rule, but it was then adapted by the Romans for their purpose. The most significant parallels to the Jewish apocalypses are found in the anti-Hellenistic oracles of various Near Eastern traditions. Here mention should be made of the Babylonian *Dynastic Prophecy* and the Persian *Oracle of Hystaspes* (and possibly *Babylonian Zashû*). In Egypt there was an ongoing tradition of such prophecy, which had its native antecedents in ancient works such as the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* and the *Vision of Nefertiti*.¹¹⁵ From the Hellenistic

107. D. Eissler, "The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 148–75.

New York: E. Curzon, *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans* (1912; reprint New York: Dover, 1952), pp. 220–23. On the Chaldeans see Diotimus Siculus 2, 29–31; Philo, *Mig.*

109. For elaboration of the following see my article, "Cosmos and Salvation" and "Jewish Apocalyptic against Its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment," *BJSOJH* 2, 20 (1975): 27–36 (= *Sera, Spinks, and Seges*, 59–74).

110. Atridge, "Greek and Latin Apocalypses," *Semita* 14 (1979): 162–67; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:210–17. For the motif in general see C. Colpe, "Die Himmensreise der Seele ausserhalb und innerhalb der Gnostics," in U. Bianchi, ed., *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo* (Leiden: Brill, 1967): 429–47; A. F. Segal, "Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity and Their Environment," in W. Haase and H. Temporini, eds., *ANRW* 11, 23.2 (1980): 1535–54. For Greek parallels on the afterlife, heaven, and the netherworld, see T. F. Glasson, *Greek Myths on Jewish Eschatology* (London: SPCK, 1961).

111. Cf. also material see H. D. Betz, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre in Greek and Hellenistic Literature: The Case of the Oracle of Trophimus," in Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism*, 577–97.

112. See H. Cancik, "Der Einzug in die Unterwelt: Ein religionswissenschaftlicher Versuch zu Virgil, Aeneis 6, 236–72," in *Der antwortliche Herrschaft* (Gütersloh, 1985): 55–66.

113. Atridge, "Greek and Latin Apocalypses," 168–70; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:181–202.

114. A. W. Mau, *Callimachus, Lycophon, and Aratus* (LCL; Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1921; 1955). The poem is Alexandrian and dates to either the third or the second century B.C.E.

115. C. C. McCown, "Hebrew and Egyptian Apocalyptic Literature," *ATR* 18 (1925): 357–411; J. G. Griffiths, "Apocalypse in the Hellenistic Era," in Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism*, 273–93. On the earlier material see J. Assmann, "Königsregeln in Heliopolis: Politische und kultische Kosmosentwürfen in altägyptischen Texten," in Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism*, 345–77. For other apocalyptic motifs in Egyptian tradition, see J. G. Griffiths, *The Divine Word* (Leiden: Brill, 1991): 201–42.

When we approach the question of social setting inductively, it is apparent that some commonplace assumptions are in need of qualification. There is no basis for the assumption that all the apocalyptic literature was produced by a single movement.¹²² We may speak of apocalyptic movements in specific cases such as Qumran and early Christianity. There are also clusters of texts, such as the early Enoch books, which belong to a common tradition. In those cases we may assume some social and historical continuity on the part of the authors. It is not apparent, however, that the authors of Daniel belonged to the same circles as those of *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* represent a very different theological tradition from the Enoch literature. It is misleading, then, to speak of "the apocalyptic movement"¹²³ as though it were a single unified social phenomenon.

P. Viehauer's thesis that the apocalypses were conventicle literature¹²⁴ finds some support in the case of Qumran (where the sectarian literature is "apocalyptic" in a broader sense, though not in the form of apocalypses). It is possible, but only hypothetical, that the Enoch literature originated in conventicles. The thesis would have to be modified somewhat for a work like Daniel and has no apparent justification in the case of *4 Ezra* or *2 Baruch*. The "conventicle" theory of apocalypticism is at best an unwarranted generalization.

Viehauer's broader thesis, that the apocalypses were "written out of actual distresses," holds true, if we allow that the distresses may be of various kinds.¹²⁵ Daniel 7-12 was written in the heat of persecution, but this seems to be rather exceptional. *4 Ezra* and *2* and *3 Baruch* reflect the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem after a considerable interval. The kind of division within the community which Paul Hanson posits as the matrix of postexilic prophecy may have been generative in the case of the Qumran community, but it is by no means a constant factor.¹²⁶ In some cases, such as the Book of the Watchers, we cannot specify the underlying crisis with any confidence. We must also reckon with the fact that what is perceived as a crisis by an apocalyptic author may not have been universally so perceived.¹²⁷

122. Compare R. R. Wilson, "From Prophecy to Apocalyptic: Reflections on the Shape of Israelite Religion," *Semiotica* 21 (1987) 79-95.

123. W. Speyer, *Die apokalyptische Bewegung* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975). The original German title was *Die apokalyptische Bewegung und Dichtung*.

124. P. Viehauer and G. Steiner, "Apocalypses and Related Subjects," in E. Hennecke, W. Schneemelcher, and R. McL. Wilson, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* (2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster, 1991) 2:558.

125. *Ibid.*

126. See Adler, "Introduction," in Vanderkam and Adler, eds., *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 19-20.

127. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Social Aspects of Palestinian Jewish Apocalypticism," in Helheim, ed., *Apocalypticism*, 639-42.

The Compositional Setting

The apocalyptic literature is a "scribal phenomenon,"¹²⁸ a product of learned activity rather than popular folklore. The pseudonymous authors are frequently identified as wise men or scribes — Enoch, Daniel, Ezra, Baruch.¹²⁹ The pervasive allusions to biblical and other traditional lore most probably reflect systematic study. Our clearest illustrations of the use of scripture in this period are found in the Qumran writings, which reflect the constant study of the sacred writings that was practiced by the members of the community. This literature was esoteric insofar as it was produced by the learned few, but it was not necessarily designed to be kept secret. The wise in Daniel were to instruct the masses, presumably by divulging their revelations. Even in *4 Ezra* 14, where we are told that seventy books are reserved for the wise among the people, it would seem that the time has come to make this material available to the larger public.

A more difficult question concerns the authenticity of the visionary experiences recorded in the apocalypses. On the one hand there are manifold resemblances between the vision accounts and the experience of visionaries and shamans elsewhere (e.g., the visionaries often fast or make other preparations for reception of visions).¹³⁰ On the other hand the phenomenon of pseudonymity complicates the issue, since we do not hear elsewhere of pseudonymous shamans.

Pseudonymity was very widespread in the Hellenistic age.¹³¹ It is attested in Babylonian, Persian, and Egyptian prophecy, and in various Greek and Latin genres. It cannot be explained simply as a consequence of the decline of Israelite prophecy,¹³² although it does imply a heightened veneration of the past. The theory that it was intended to shelter the real authors from persecution is also unsatisfactory,¹³³ not all the apocalypses would have provoked persecution, and some apocalyptic writers would in any case have welcomed martyrdom (see, e.g., Daniel 11). While the reasons for pseudonymity may have varied from case

128. J. Z. Smith, "Wisdom and Apocalyptic," 140.

129. On Enoch, see *Apocalypse* 2:316.

130. M. S. Smith, "Apocalyptic — Vision or Hallucination?" *Mitteilungen der Kommission für biblische Theologie*, 21:4-47; S. Niditch, "The Visionary," in G. W. E. Nickelsburg and J. Collins, eds., *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1980) 153-79; D. Metzger, "The Visionary Practices of Jewish Apocalypists," in L. Bryce Boyer and S. A. Grubb, eds., *The Psychanalytic Study of Society* 14 (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1989) 119-48.

131. B. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *JBL* 91 (1972) 3-24; W. Speyer, "Religöse Pseudographie und literarische Fälschung im Antiken Judentum," *Frihles Christentum im antiken Strömungsfeld* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 1:131-33; "Fälschung pseudographische freie Erfindung und echte religiöse Pseudographie," *ibid.*, 100-33.

132. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon, 1913) 2:ix.

133. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 252.

to case, the most fundamental reason would seem to be bound up with a claim to authority. There is no doubt that a pseudonym such as Enoch or Abraham enhanced the authority of a writing. It also augmented a sense of determinism, especially in the "historical" apocalypses, by affirming that the course of history or the structure of the cosmos was determined long ago. In many cases, the presumed analogy between the situations of the ancient sage and the real author helped to provide perspective on the present. In view of the extent of the phenomenon, we must assume that the authors of this literature were conscious of its conventional character. At the same time, the effectiveness of the device presupposes the credibility of the masses.¹³⁴

To say that pseudonymity was a device is not to say that it was used arbitrarily. The pseudonym had to be appropriate for the subject matter. So heavenly revelations could apply be ascribed to Enoch, but a wisdom book was more appropriate to Solomon. How far the real author can be said to have identified with his pseudonymous counterpart is more difficult to say. Christopher Rowland appeals to Johannes Lindholm's discussion of visionary psychology for the view that "frequently the visionary distinguishes between two persons representing himself: the one being his everyday ego, the other the extraordinary ego,"¹³⁵ but he admits that this phenomenon is still some distance from the pseudonymity of the apocalypses. The psychology of pseudonymity is closely related to the question of the authenticity of the visions. Rowland suggests that many (not necessarily all) apocalyptic visions were experienced in the context of reflection on scripture. In general, though, it would seem that the underlying problems addressed in the visions were not exegetical but concerned historical and existential matters. The scriptures provided at most the occasion of the revelation, and the authority of the apocalypses was not derived from scripture but from new revelation.¹³⁶ The contrast between "authentic religious experience" and literary activity may be overdrawn. The composition of highly symbolic literature involves a vivid use of the imagination, which may be difficult to distinguish from visionary experience in any case. Similarly, the apocalypses may have felt an intense and emotional kinship with their pseudonymous counterparts, while still being aware of the fiction involved. It is worth bearing in mind that even shamans have to learn the cosmology and mythology of their ascents before they can "experience" them in ecstasy.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ See further my discussion in *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, 67-74. ¹³⁵ See also *The Open Heaven*, 243; J. Lindholm, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982). ¹³⁶ D. S. Kassel appealed to the supposedly Hebrew notions of corporate personality and continuity as a necessary to suggest a quasi-mystical identification with the pseudonymous hero (*Method and Message*, 132-39). ¹³⁷ M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: University Press, 1964) 266; R. K. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 54-56.

The Literary Function

From the preceding discussion it is apparent that the settings of the apocalyptic genre present complex problems and that generalizations are of limited value. It is possible, however, to speak of the illocution or literary function of a text apart from the social setting. David Hellholm has proposed that the definition of apocalypse in *Semeia 14* be amended by the following addition: "intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority."¹³⁸

The reference to a "group in crisis" is appropriate for many apocalypses, though scarcely for all; but it is perhaps too suggestive of the conventional theory of apocalypticism. It is true, however, that all apocalypses address some underlying problem. It is obvious enough that the manner of revelation is designed to lend supernatural authority to the message (the divinity is always directly invoked).¹³⁹ The main problem with specifying the function in the definition is that even on this general level the purpose of a text may be a matter of dispute. Is the function of 4 Ezra to console or to instruct and refute? Even if we concluded that its purpose was refutation (of a heretical party represented by Ezra, as some have claimed), 4 Ezra would surely be still an apocalypse.

In fact, however, the illocutionary functions of exhortation and consolation can generally be maintained for the Jewish apocalypses, for two qualifications must be kept in mind. First, the nature of the exhortations may vary. The Animal Apocalypse in *I Enoch* encourages support for the Maccabean revolt. The message of Daniel, in the same setting, is quite different. Second, the literary function must be seen to be integrally related to form and content in what may be called the "apocalyptic technique." Whatever the underlying problem, it is viewed from a distinctive apocalyptic perspective. This perspective is framed spatially by the supernatural world and temporally by the eschatological judgment. The problem is not viewed simply in terms of the historical factors available to any observer. Rather it is viewed in the light of a transcendent reality disclosed by the apocalypse. The transcendent world may be expressed through mythological symbolism or celestial geography or both. It puts the problem in perspective and projects a definitive resolution to

¹³⁸ D. Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John," in A. Yvanov Collins, ed., *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (Semeia 36, Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1986) 27. Hellholm would accept the somewhat vague "paradigmatic" definition. He is primarily concerned with developing a "syncretistic" approach; see his *Das Visionenbuch des Hieronimus als apokalyptische*, 139. Cf. Adler, "Introduction," in VanderKam and Adler, eds., *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage*, 19-21. ¹³⁹ *Compere Semeia 14* (1979) 9, 12. On the hortatory function of the apocalypses, see further C. Michalson, *Ethik und Eschatologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).