I begin by first considering Jewish communities in late antiquity, speaking Greek on one side of the divide and Aramaic or Hebrew on the other. I think it is important, when we want to try to speak about late ancient Judaism, that we do not fracture the deep and interesting discourse between these contemporaneous communities. But neither do I want to ignore the significant differences between the various communities in late ancient Judaism.

Indeed, it is often assumed that the Judean communities of late Second Temple times that speak Greek and those that speak Aramaic (writing in Hebrew and in Aramaic) inhabit separate worlds—that is, the idiom and the conceptual frameworks are so different that we ought to speak of them as separate. To be sure, it is a convenient claim for those of us who want to focus on a particular language or a circumscribed geographical area. And of course, there are significant differences in degrees of interaction with Greek culture and thought. In addition, we must not overlook bilingualism across the communities. Still, the two communities share important concepts, understandings of the divine, inherited traditions, and even genres.

In this brief essay I want to begin to explore the conceptions of the revelatory in the writings of Philo of Alexandria and the Dead

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* This essay is dedicated to the memory of my colleague and friend David Hay. Professor Hay’s work on Philo’s interpretation and his discussions of Philonic inspiration, both in the Allegorical Interpretations and in On the Contemplative Life, served as an inspiration to me in this essay. The generosity and kindness he showed me early in my career encouraged me to continue working on the writings of Philo of Alexandria. I first thought of organizing the SBL session on Linguistic Border Crossing, which resulted in a thematic section of the annual, in response to a presentation he gave on his commentary on The Contemplative Life at SBL a few years ago. May his memory be recalled as a blessing and may the contribution of his scholarship continue to illuminate our work and the work of the next generation of Philo scholars. This essay was originally published in SPhilo 19 (2007): 101–11, reprinted in this volume with permission from SBL.
Sea Scrolls. I will argue that there is significant overlap between these corpora.

Before I consider some of the texts, I want to first address the question of whether we can speak of persistent prophecy in late Second Temple Judaism. Although prophecy, as a dominant aspect of revelation, is often said to have been removed from the Second Temple Jewish community in mid-to-late Second Temple Judaism, it is clear from the texts that we have from this period that the communities did not understand themselves to be without ongoing revelation. This study is intended in part to shed light on the claim that revelation did not cease in the Second Temple period, but was understood to persist even outside of the space of Jerusalem and temple practice.

To be sure, the destruction was never overcome, even for the temple community. It is clear that the rebuilding of the Second Temple was not understood as a complete recovery from exile. Ezra 3:12–13 is a very poignant example—where we are reminded of the loss of that first destruction even at the point of the greatest joy and celebration:

Many of the priests and Levites and the chiefs of the clans, the old men who had seen the first house, wept loudly at the sight of the founding of this house. Many others shouted joyously at the top of their voices. The people could not distinguish the shouts of joy from the people’s weeping, for the people raised a great shout, the sound of which could be heard from afar.

1 There are important connections to my earlier published article, “Towards a Study of the Uses of the Concept of Wilderness in Ancient Judaism,” DSD 13 (2006): 99–113, reprinted in this volume, ch. 7 on pages 143–60. These are both intended to anticipate my forthcoming monograph entitled Destruction, Mourning, and Renewal in 4 Ezra and its Precursors, 2011. The quotations in English from the writings of Philo of Alexandria are taken from PLCL. The Dead Sea Scrolls’ translations are taken from The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (ed. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 1997, 1998). I have, in certain cases, modified the Colson translation on the basis of the Greek in consultation with the critical edition of PCW, and in certain cases I have modified the translations of the Dead Sea Scrolls.
