The title “Aramaic New Jerusalem” (henceforth NJ) refers to a composition that has been fragmentarily preserved in seven manuscripts found in the Caves at Qumran (1Q32, 2Q24, 4Q554, 4Q554a, 4Q555, 5Q15, 11Q18). Overall, the contents of those manuscripts are known, and accessible in a series of editions and translations, even though we are still waiting for the official publication of the manuscripts from Cave 4. The preserved fragments show that NJ was written in accordance with the model of Ezek 40–48: a visionary gives an account of a guided tour through a city and its temple. NJ gives architectural details, including the measurements of walls, gates, houses, rooms and windows; the seer reports of the rituals he witnessed in the temple, and of the words the guide spoke to him. In view of the correspondences with Ezek 40–48 and other texts adhering to this model, the guide may be identified as an angel, and the city as some kind of new Jerusalem.

Many of the aspects of NJ have been critically discussed by Florentino García Martínez in a series of surveys. More recently, Lorenzo
DiTommaso has focused on the Cave 4 NJ manuscripts and contested some of the hitherto commonly held interpretations. In this paper, I will discuss matters that pertain to the otherworldly character of the new Jerusalem, and respond to some of the issues raised by DiTommaso.

1. The Visionary of the New Jerusalem

The identity of the seer of NJ is not mentioned in the preserved fragments of the manuscript. Recently, I argued that the combined evidence of indications in NJ, other texts from Qumran, as well as other Second Temple literature, suggests that NJ, even though it offers a reinterpretation of Ezek 40–48, might be related to speculations that Jacob saw Jerusalem and the temple during his second stay at Bethel, and that Jacob is the imagined seer of NJ. (1) 4Q554 13, a section which will be discussed below, preserves a direct address to the seer, “and they will do evil to your seed,” suggesting that the seer is one of the ancestors of Israel or one of its tribes; (2) virtually all Aramaic texts from Qumran have either an Eastern Diaspora setting (such as, e.g., Tobit, Proto-Esther, Daniel), or a pre-Mosaic protagonist (running from Enoch, Noah, up to Levi, Qahat, and Amram), Therefore, it is unlikely that Ezekiel would be the imagined seer; (3) 4Q537 12

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7 This fragment was numbered 4Q554 3 in the Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 6 and 4Q554 2 in DiTommaso’s book.