

THE ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF JOHN THE SEER:  
AN EXAMINATION OF THE LANGUAGE,  
SCRIPTURAL ALLUSIONS, AND  
DISTINCTIVE MOTIFS OF THE APOCALYPSE

Robert MacKenzie

Religious Studies,  
McGill University, Montreal  
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## ABSTRACT

R.H. Charles, although he rejected apostolic authorship for the Apocalypse, nonetheless argued forcefully that its author was a Jewish-Christian. The three lines of argument he employed have been challenged on an individual basis, but his overall conclusion regarding John's ethnic background has enjoyed almost unanimous acceptance. Part I of this dissertation demonstrates that there is virtually nothing in the subject-matter or literary form of Revelation which could be termed distinctively Jewish or Jewish-Christian. In Part II, the claim that John made use of a Hebrew/Aramaic version of the Old Testament when alluding to Scripture is found to be unconvincing. Part III argues that the Seer's alleged Semitisms and peculiarities of grammar are attributable to his employment of a colloquial and biblicizing style. The dissertation concludes that the case in support of Charles' view is not compelling and that Gentile-Christian authorship cannot be ruled out.

## Résumé

R.H. Charles, même s'il ne croyait pas que l'auteur de l'Apocalypse fût Jean le fils de Zébède, a néanmoins soutenu qu'il était judéo-chrétien. Les trois arguments qu'il a invoqués ont été critiqués l'un après l'autre, mais sa conclusion générale a été acceptée à la quasi-unanimité. Dans la première partie de cette thèse, l'auteur démontre qu'il n'y a presque rien dans le fond ou la forme littéraire de l'Apocalypse qui soit distinctement juif ou judéo-chrétien. En deuxième lieu, il répousse l'idée que Jean a utilisé l'Ancien Testament hébreu/aramaéen lorsqu'il y fait allusion. En troisième lieu, il explique les prétendus sémitismes et particularités de son grec écrit en tenant compte de son style familier et biblique. En conclusion, il estime que l'opinion de R.H. Charles n'est pas si concluante qu'il faille rejeter la possibilité que Jean était pagano-chrétien.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS . . . . . vii  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . . viii  
INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1  
    A. Outline of the Dissertation . . . . . 5  
    B. Questions of Date, Integrity and Text . . . . . 8

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

JOHN AND JUDAISM . . . . . 15  
    A. Name and Birthplace . . . . . 16  
        1. The Name 'John' . . . . . 16  
        2. Birthplace . . . . . 18  
            (a) Mount Zion . . . . . 18  
            (b) 'Dwellers in the land' . . . . . 18  
            (c) Armageddon . . . . . 19  
            (d) Jerusalem . . . . . 20  
        3. Conclusion . . . . . 21  
    B. John's Knowledge of Jewish Religion and Culture . . 22  
        1. The Jewish Nation . . . . . 22  
            (a) 'Jews' . . . . . 23  
            (b) Israel . . . . . 26  
                (i) Literal interpretation . . . . . 27  
                (ii) Symbolic interpretation . . . . . 29  
                (iii) Source-critical interpretation . . . . . 30  
        2. Synagogue and Temple . . . . . 31  
            (a) Synagogue . . . . . 31  
            (b) Temple . . . . . 32  
                (i) Literal interpretation . . . . . 33  
                (ii) Symbolic interpretation . . . . . 34  
                (iii) Source-critical interpretation . . . . . 35  
        3. Dietary and Purity Customs . . . . . 37  
            (a) Commandments . . . . . 37  
            (b) Priests and cult . . . . . 38  
            (c) Cleanness . . . . . 39  
            (d) Immorality and food offered to idols . . . . . 40  
        4. Conclusion . . . . . 43  
    C. John's Dependence on Jewish Literary Traditions . . 44  
        1. Literary Parallels . . . . . 45  
            (a) Jewish Pseudepigrapha . . . . . 45  
            (b) The Old Testament . . . . . 49

2.	Literary Style and Genre . . . . .	51
(a)	<u>The 'midrashic' style</u> . . . . .	51
(b)	<u>The genre 'apocalypse'</u> . . . . .	54
(i)	<u>Formal similarities</u> . . . . .	56
(ii)	<u>Similarities in 'essence'</u> . . . . .	63
3.	Conclusion . . . . .	68
D.	Conclusion: John and Judaism . . . . .	69

CHAPTER TWO

JOHN AND JEWISH-CHRISTIANITY . . . . .	73
A. Alleged Jewish-Christian Motifs . . . . .	74
1. The Johannine Circle . . . . .	74
2. Christology . . . . .	76
3. Eschatology . . . . .	80
4. Church Polity . . . . .	84
5. Prophecy . . . . .	88
(a) <u>Ulrich Müller</u> . . . . .	88
(b) <u>David Aune</u> . . . . .	91
6. Conclusion . . . . .	93
B. Jewish-Christian Typology . . . . .	96
C. Conclusion: John and Jewish-Christianity . . . . .	102

PART II

CHAPTER THREE

SCRIPTURAL ALLUSIONS IN THE APOCALYPSE . . . . .	104
A. Problems of Method . . . . .	105
1. John's Allusive Style . . . . .	106
2. Targumic Parallels . . . . .	109
3. Septuagint Text Traditions . . . . .	112
B. Minor Divergences from the Septuagint . . . . .	116
Table A . . . . .	117
1. Rev. 1:7 . . . . .	119
2. Rev. 4:9 . . . . .	119
3. Rev. 6:16 . . . . .	120
4. Rev. 10:10 . . . . .	121
5. Rev. 14:8 . . . . .	122
6. Rev. 14:15 . . . . .	123
7. Rev. 19:17-18 . . . . .	124
8. Rev. 20:12 . . . . .	126
9. Rev. 21:27 . . . . .	126
C. Major Divergences from the Septuagint . . . . .	127
1. Rev. 3:7 . . . . .	128

2. Rev. 22:2 . . . . .	129
3. Rev. 18:18 . . . . .	130
D. Conclusion: Scriptural Allusions . . . . .	132

PART III

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF THE SEER . . . . .	134
A. Translation Theories . . . . .	137
B. The Jewish-Greek Hypothesis . . . . .	143
C. Bilingualism and Linguistic Interference . . . . .	150
1. R.H. Charles . . . . .	151
2. G. Mussies . . . . .	157
3. Conclusion . . . . .	163
D. Style . . . . .	164
1. Style Relative to a Supposed Language Norm . . . . .	166
2. Style Relative to Usage in Other Texts . . . . .	172
(a) <u>Septuagint Style</u> . . . . .	172
(b) <u>Hellenistic Parallels</u> . . . . .	179
3. Style Relative to Social Status and Setting . . . . .	182
4. Conclusion . . . . .	189
E. Conclusion: Language and Style . . . . .	191

CHAPTER FIVE

ALLEGED SEMITISMS IN THE APOCALYPSE . . . . .	193
I. Distribution of Alleged Semitisms . . . . .	193
II. Semitisms Listed in Appendix A . . . . .	194
A. Nominative of Apposition . . . . .	197
B. Nominative <u>casus pendens</u> . . . . .	204
C. Pleonasm . . . . .	210
(a) <u>A substantive and a pronoun</u> . . . . .	212
(b) <u>A relative and a personal pronoun</u> . . . . .	214
(c) <u>A relative and an adverb</u> . . . . .	217
D. Resolution of a Participle or Infinitive into Finite Verb . . . . .	220
1. <u>Rev. 1:5b-6</u> . . . . .	223
2. <u>Rev. 1:18</u> . . . . .	226
3. <u>Rev. 2:2; 2:9; 3:9</u> . . . . .	227
4. <u>Rev. 2:20; 7:14</u> . . . . .	229
5. <u>Rev. 13:15</u> . . . . .	230
6. <u>Rev. 14:2-3; 15:2-3</u> . . . . .	231

E. Other Alleged Semitisms . . . . .	233
III. Semitisms Not Listed in Appendix A . . . . .	236
A. Parataxis with <u>kai</u> . . . . .	237
B. Abrupt Changes of Tense . . . . .	240
C. Alleged Hebrew Idioms . . . . .	242
IV. Conclusion: Alleged Semitisms . . . . .	246

## CHAPTER SIX

INCONGRUITIES AND IRREGULARITIES . . . . .	248
A. Distribution of Occurrences . . . . .	250
B. <u>Ad sensum</u> Constructions . . . . .	250
C. Attraction . . . . .	257
D. Other Alleged Errors . . . . .	262
1. Intentional Departures from Normal Usage . . . . .	263
2. Septugintal Idioms . . . . .	265
3. Colloquial Usage . . . . .	268
4. Minor Errors . . . . .	274
E. Conclusion: Incongruities and Irregularities . . . . .	277
CONCLUSION . . . . .	278
APPENDIX A . . . . .	283
WORKS CITED . . . . .	304

## ABBREVIATIONS

BDF	Blass, F. and A. Debrunner. <u>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.</u>
BGU	<u>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin: Griechische Urkunden.</u>
LXX	Septuagint, or Greek Old Testament.
MHT	Moulton, J.H., W. Howard, and N. Turner. <u>A Grammar of New Testament Greek.</u>
MT	Masoretic Text, or <u>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.</u>
NA26	Nestle-Aland. <u>Novum Testamentum Graece.</u>
OGIS	Dittenberger, Wilhelm. <u>Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae.</u>

Abbreviations used in Appendix A are listed there.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The issue of the authorship of the Apocalypse is an interesting one because it involves such a variety of claims and arguments. This thesis attempts to demonstrate that the virtually unanimous opinion of scholarship that John was a Jewish-Christian is not well-founded. The Seer may well have been a Gentile-Christian.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the ancient Church the issue of the authorship of the book of Revelation was focused on whether the John who wrote the Apocalypse was the same John, assumed to be the son of Zebedee, who was reputed to have written the Fourth Gospel. While much of the ancient Church, particularly in the West, accepted apostolic authorship, Dionysius, the third-century bishop of Alexandria, argued persuasively that for reasons of differing content and style John the Apostle could not have been responsible for both books.<sup>1</sup>

In the modern period many scholars have adopted a view similar to that of Dionysius. In an important respect, however, recent discussion has departed from that which prevailed in the ancient Church. Whereas interpreters in the earlier period attempted to identify the author of Revelation with a John who was known in Christian tradition, current opinion describes him chiefly in terms of his ethnic background alone. At present, the central affirmation about the author of the Apocalypse is that he was a Jewish-Christian.

The driving force behind the claim that John's ethnic background was Jewish was R.H. Charles. In his opinion, the

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<sup>1</sup>Eusebius affirmed Dionysius' view that John the Elder had written the Apocalypse (Ecclesiastical History III, xxxix.6). In support of his view Eusebius cited Papias, who had mentioned a presbyter John. He also accepted as factual the hearsay report of Dionysius that there were tombs of two Johns at Ephesus.

Seer was "a Palestinian Jew who migrated to Asia Minor when probably advanced in years" (1920, I:xliv). In a largely tendentious treatment of the question, Charles formulated three lines of argument to support his hypothesis. First, he contended that John had made use of Jewish literary and cultural traditions. Second, he asserted that John had drawn his biblical allusions from a Hebrew/Aramaic version of the Old Testament. And third, he attempted to demonstrate that John's written Greek betrayed the fact that he was a bilingual whose first language was Semitic.

Charles' work was so convincing that today it is nearly impossible to find any scholar who does not believe that the Seer's ethnic background was Jewish.<sup>2</sup> In turn, the conviction that John was a Jewish-Christian and probably Palestinian has had a significant impact on the interpretation of the Apocalypse and on efforts to describe first-century Christianity. Some translators and commentators, for instance, have appealed to Semitic syntax and lexicography when confronted with passages in Revelation

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<sup>2</sup>The opinion that he was a Jewish-Christian is held by H.B. Swete (1909, cxxv, clxxxv), Ernst Lohmeyer (1953, 195, 199, 203), Eduard Lohse (1960, 5), Heinrich Kraft (1974, 15), George Beasley-Murray (1978, 35-37), John Sweet (1979, 39), and E. Schüssler Fiorenza (1985g, 194-195). To this number must be added all those who accept apostolic authorship, many of whom are listed by W. Kümmel in his Introduction (1975, 471-472). In light of his survey of critical scholarship, Kümmel offered this assessment of the situation: ". . . concerning the author of Revelation we know nothing more than that he was a Jewish-Christian prophet named John" (472). Adela Yarbro Collins allowed for the possibility that John was a Gentile, although she thought it was "likely that he was a Jew by birth" (1984a, 46).

in which John's Greek is difficult to understand.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars, presuming that Revelation was penned by a Jewish-Christian, have used it as primary evidence in their endeavour to reconstruct the history and theological concerns of Jewish-Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the widespread acceptance of his hypothesis of Jewish-Christian authorship, the evidence which Charles marshalled in his discussion of the issue has never been subjected to a thorough review. Charles himself was primarily concerned to support his own viewpoint on authorship in the strongest terms and consequently did not do justice to alternative explanations. Although some of his key arguments have been severely criticized on an individual basis,<sup>5</sup> no-one has yet attempted to evaluate the strength and validity of his overall claim regarding the Jewish ethnic background of John.

This is surprising, given that the Jewish-Christian

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<sup>3</sup>This approach is evident in the work of R.B.Y. Scott (1928), C.C. Torrey (1958), Steven Thompson (1985), and Kenneth Newport (1986).

<sup>4</sup>Richard Longenecker (1970), François Rousseau (1971), Akira Satake (1966), Ulrich Müller (1972), and M.E. Boring (1982) have treated Revelation in this manner.

<sup>5</sup>E. Schüssler Fiorenza has observed that the literary style of Revelation does not correspond well to a Jewish pattern, due to the contribution of its Christian author (1983, 310). Adela Yarbro Collins (1984a, 47-49) has rejected the assertion that John drew his allusions from the Hebrew/Aramaic version of the Old Testament rather than Greek texts. In an earlier era, H.B. Swete held the same view (1909, clvi, clviii). Heinrich Kraft has disputed the claim that John's Greek had been directly influenced by Semitic languages, claiming that the Seer was composing in the style of LXX and Greek apocalyptic literature (1974, 15-16).

character of Revelation is not immediately evident. The book shows many signs of being a Christian work, but none that would lead to its being characterized as distinctively Jewish. The Apocalypse specifies John's area of ministry as Asia Minor, a predominantly Gentile region, and not Jewish Palestine. Nowhere has it been stated that the Seer's birthplace was Palestine. As to his language, it is obvious that he knew Greek, but not that he knew Aramaic or Hebrew. In short, unless apostolic authorship is accepted, there is no a priori reason to believe that John was a Jewish-Christian. On the contrary, on the basis of internal evidence, a more likely presumption would be that John was a Greek-speaking Gentile-Christian who exercised a prophetic ministry in largely Gentile churches.

A re-examination of the evidence pertaining to the ethnic background of the Seer is clearly in order, and such a review is the intention of this dissertation. This study will attempt to determine whether or not the hypothesis that the author of the Apocalypse was a Jewish-Christian is sufficiently compelling to rule out the possibility that he was a Gentile.

It is impossible to conclude from a study of the Apocalypse alone that John was without doubt a Gentile. If he was addressing a primarily Gentile audience, he may have intentionally minimized references to matters which concerned only Jewish-Christians. As a result, even if the evidence in support of the hypothesis that John was Jewish-Christian can

be shown to be weak, the possibility that he was a Jew by birth cannot thereby be excluded. John may have been, like Paul, one of those Jewish-Christians who played a significant role in the establishment and growth of the early Church.

Although it may not settle the question of John's ethnic background, an evaluation of the basic arguments and evidence pertaining to the authorship of the Apocalypse nevertheless carries with it important consequences for biblical studies. A weakening of the assertion that the ethnic background of the Seer was Jewish would, for example, compel the reconsideration of proposals which are fundamentally dependent upon that claim. As well, the possibility of Gentile authorship opens up new avenues of investigation about first-century Gentile-Christianity and of the significance that John's peculiar Greek style holds for the social description of the early Christian communities.

#### A. Outline of the Dissertation

The present study examines the evidence pertaining to John's ethnic background in accordance with the three lines of argument which have characterized the modern discussion of this issue. The first two chapters comprise Part I of the dissertation. Chapter One attempts to describe John's knowledge of Judaism as far as it can be ascertained from an examination of the content of Revelation. Included in this analysis are indications of the Seer's alleged Jewish

heritage, of his acquaintance with Jewish traditions, and of the extent to which he was indebted to Jewish literature, particularly the literary forms 'midrash' and 'apocalypse.'

Chapter Two considers evidence in the Apocalypse which has been used to support the claim that John was a Jewish-Christian, such as: possible links to a Johannine school or circle; the Seer's supposedly Jewish-Christian views on Christology and eschatology; and the allegedly Jewish-Christian character of the polity of the seven Asian churches and of John's prophetic ministry. An attempt is then made to situate the Seer within a typology of Jewish-Christianity.

Chapter Three, which constitutes Part II of the dissertation, is devoted to the claim that in the Apocalypse John frequently made his own translations of passages from the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament. Several problems with the method commonly used to establish this claim will be reviewed, including: (1) the lack of direct quotations in Revelation; (2) difficulties inherent in appeals to Targumic parallels; and (3) the fluid state of the manuscript tradition of the Greek Old Testament. An examination follows of those scriptural allusions of which the wording diverges from renderings in the Septuagint.

Part III, which is composed of three chapters, is concerned with the language and style of Revelation. Chapter Four outlines the main explanations which have been proposed to account for what is the "very distinct character" of John's Greek, as R.H. Charles has put it (1920, I:cxliii).

Four options are discussed, including: (1) John wrote in a Jewish-Greek dialect; (2) the book has been translated from Hebrew or Aramaic; (3) the Seer was a bilingual Semite whose Greek suffered from linguistic interference; and (4) the Seer composed in a colloquial style which was often similar to that of the Septuagint. Insights from sociolinguistics and research on bilingualism are brought to bear upon these issues when appropriate.

A compilation of eighty-five occurrences of unusual Greek in the Apocalypse, which serves as the chief basis for discussion in Chapters Five and Six, is found in Appendix A. Chapter Five contains an analysis of occurrences of alleged Semitisms in the Greek of the Apocalypse. Violations of concord and other grammatical errors are considered in Chapter Six. In both chapters, an attempt is made to determine whether the alleged Semitisms or incongruities have counterparts in Hellenistic Greek. In addition, a judgment is made regarding the degree to which this unusual usage detracts from the appreciation of the Apocalypse as a work of prophetic and apocalyptic literature.

In the conclusion of the dissertation, the results of the research are summarized with a view to evaluating the strength of the hypothesis that John was a Jewish-Christian. The consequences for scholarship arising from this analysis are then outlined.

## B. Questions of Date, Integrity and Text

Date. There exists no consensus on the precise date of the composition of the Apocalypse. Most scholars seem to assign it to the time of Domitian,<sup>6</sup> but a significant minority prefers a date closer to the reign of Nero.<sup>7</sup> In both cases, the book's references to persecution are taken to be indicative of an official campaign against the Church conducted with Imperial authority. Recent challenges<sup>8</sup> to the view that the persecution motif reflects an actual governmental policy, however, permit the book to be situated at any time between Nero and Domitian, or for that matter later. For the purpose of this dissertation, the Apocalypse

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<sup>6</sup>Irenaeus Adv. Haer. V.xxx.3 is often adduced as evidence in support of this view. For a summary of arguments in favour of a Domitianic date, see W. Kümmel 1975, 466-469.

<sup>7</sup>J.A.T. Robinson has recently argued the case in favour of this position (1976a, 221-253), partly on the grounds that no widespread persecution of Christians occurred during Domitian's reign (232-233). He has proposed instead that John's model for persecution was that which was experienced in Rome under Nero.

<sup>8</sup>J.A.T. Robinson's claim that an actual persecution must have been the basis of John's descriptions, unless they were "the product of a perfervid and psychotic imagination" (1976a, 231), has been challenged by Adela Yarbro Collins (1984a, 69). She rejects the idea that John "wrote his book as a response to pressing external circumstances," asserting instead that ". . . John took a more active role than usually is thought. Rather than simply consoling his fellow Christians in a situation of grave crisis, he wrote his book to point out a crisis that many of them did not perceive" (77). She rightly points out that a perceived sense of deprivation can serve as the psychological equivalent of actual persecution. Leonard Thompson has likewise opted for a broader definition of the concept of 'tribulation', contending that "more is involved than considerations of social oppression and religious persecution" (1986, 169).

will be assumed to date to the last third of the first century. The precise dating of the book is of little consequence for this study.

Integrity. The question of whether source-documents and editorial additions can be identified in the Apocalypse has been much disputed.<sup>9</sup> A few scholars claim that it is possible to reconstruct the pre-history of the text as it now stands, but their proposed reconstructions are so speculative and differ so greatly one from the other that none is convincing.<sup>10</sup>

R.H. Charles, recognizing the problems of excessive

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<sup>9</sup>A survey of older efforts to isolate sources and editorial re-working has been provided by I. Beckwith (1919, 223-239). Frederick Mazzaferri offers an excellent critical overview of recent opinion on the issue (1989, 8-32).

<sup>10</sup>J.M. Ford has proposed that John the Baptist composed the prophecies of chapters 4-11, that his disciples wrote 12-22, and that a Jewish-Christian penned chapters 1-3 and 22:16a,20b,21 (1975, 3-4). Her case, however, is largely based upon arguments from silence regarding Christian motifs that she thinks should have appeared in Revelation (12-22). She also claimed that many Christian "characteristic words" in what she took to be Christian sections of the book were not present in Jewish sections (41-45). These words, unfortunately for her case, are in most instances singular occurrences of terms which are not distinctively Christian. It is difficult to see much Christian significance in the Seer's use of "bed", "door", and "lukewarm". Her supporting argument that chapters 1-3 of Revelation contain more New Testament allusions than other sections of the book is not convincing either, since their presence is no doubt due to the fact that there are many slogan-like titles for Christ used in these chapters. Ford's thesis has been harshly criticized (Robinson 1976b; Yarbrow Collins 1976b; Vanni 1980, 40; Mazzaferri 1989, 26-29). Another proponent of source-analysis, François Rousseau, has used a variety of literary-critical methods to argue that there are five apocalypses represented within the book of Revelation (1971). But his failure to defend the assumptions underpinning his method substantially weakens the credibility of his conclusions.

subjectivity and unsubstantiated speculation, proposed that a stylistic criterion be used to validate efforts to identify sources and editorial re-working (1920, I:clxxxvii). He correctly observed that the mere intuition that certain material was not in harmony with its context constituted an insufficient basis on which to make judgments regarding Revelation's integrity. Stylistic analysis, on the other hand, could provide adequate confirmation of initial observations, since an interpolated passage usually "betrays its intrusive character both by its linguistic form and subject-matter" (lvi).

Charles' key contention was that John's linguistic usage was virtually invariable. Departures from his 'normal' style, therefore, could serve as proof of sources or redactional changes.<sup>11</sup> This assumption has not gone unchallenged. Textual critic J. Schmid, whose work on the Seer's linguistic usage equals or surpasses that of Charles, rejected Charles' contention concerning John's 'normal' style, clearly demonstrating that there was considerably more variation in it than Charles had allowed.<sup>12</sup> In his opinion,

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<sup>11</sup>With respect to word order, Charles contended: "When our author has adopted a certain combination of words he holds fast to it as a general rule. This is an essential characteristic of his style" (1920, I:clvi). Charles also cited these patterns of usage when doing textual criticism (clxxxvii). It should be noted that his research led him to conclude that editorial activity subsequent to John's time was not extensive, and consisted mainly of interpolations, dislocations and minor re-phrasings (I:1).

<sup>12</sup>Of particular significance for Charles was the Seer's use of case after the preposition epi, which, he claimed always corresponded to the case of a preceding kathêmenos

the so-called rules of John's linguistic usage were better described as habits of speech. As such, they were too unreliable to be used to identify sources or editorial additions. Their chief value was instead for textual criticism, in which a reading that accorded with John's customary usage could be granted greater weight.<sup>13</sup>

Charles' assumption that the Seer was rigidly consistent in his style has not been widely accepted by other scholars either, and consequently his criteria for determining textual and redactional integrity are rarely invoked. In her study of the source and tradition history of Revelation 12, for example, Adela Yarbro Collins accorded Charles' conclusions

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(1920, I:cxxxii). If this rule were broken, he asserted, it was because of editorial change or primitive corruption (li). Schmid, on the other hand, has rightly demonstrated that there are many contrary examples in Revelation, the presence of which invalidates the claim that John had always followed the pattern Charles had proposed. Out of 28 such occurrences in the Apocalypse, he noted, six (Rev. 6:4; 7:15; 9:17; 14:6,15; 21:5) did not conform to this alleged invariable pattern. Schmid has also pointed out that there is no justification for the claim that the manuscript tradition does not support these readings (1955, II:209-211). A brief study by G. Mussies supports Schmid. Mussies found that John had often varied his syntax as well as the placement of pronouns and pairs of elements within sequences. In light also of what he considered to be John's "use of a very rich vocabulary," Mussies concluded that in general ". . . John varies wherever he can" (1980, 175-177).

<sup>13</sup>Schmid says: "Die im Sprachgebrauch der Apk nachweisbaren Regeln sind nicht starre Gesetze, an die sich der Verfasser mit absoluter Strenge gebunden hält, sondern haben mehr den Charakter von sprachlichen Gewohnheiten, die dann und wann nicht eingehalten werden. Daraus folgt, daß es methodisch ungerechtfertigt ist, überall dort, wo die genannten Regeln durchbrochen sind, eine spätere Hand zu sehen. Damit wird aber das andere methodische Prinzip nicht preisgegeben, daß dort, wo die Überlieferung geteilt ist, die der Regel entsprechende Lesart den Anspruch auf Ursprünglichkeit behauptet" (1955, II:250).

only suggestive force (1976a, 108). There is now a consensus that although John was acquainted with a variety of literary materials, he adapted his source-materials so thoroughly to suit his purpose that it is impossible to reconstruct them.<sup>14</sup> In the study which follows, the general integrity of Revelation is assumed.

Text. The text of the Apocalypse is well established, chiefly due to the efforts of H.C. Hoskier (1929) and J. Schmid (1955). The number of extant manuscripts of the book is relatively small, compared with the rest of the New Testament,<sup>15</sup> and barring any new finds, no important evidence remains to be considered. The Nestle-Aland twenty-sixth edition (NA26) is generally accepted as the best available text of Revelation. In an excellent survey article, J. Delobel judged that its editors' work had been well done, although he disagreed with a number of individual editorial

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<sup>14</sup>Heinrich Kraft, even though he offered suggestions about the process of revision that led up to the final form of the book, denied that there were clear signs of such activity in the Apocalypse (1974, 11-15). He also ruled out multiple authorship, unless it be conceded that the final redactor was the actual literary craftsman of the Apocalypse (17). W. Kümmel has likewise concluded that "neither connected sources nor secondary interpolations can be convincingly demonstrated" (1975, 464). After careful consideration of the evidence, F. Mazzaferri found no reason to doubt the unity of the Apocalypse (1989, 32).

<sup>15</sup>The general assessment of the value of the major manuscripts has changed little since Charles made his evaluation. He judged that A and C demonstrated a "vast superiority" to S (01) and other witnesses such as 046 and 025 (1920, I:clxii). The NA26 also rates A and C as more valuable than the older p47 and S (01). The NA 26 includes P (025) in Majority Text-Andreas, and 046 in Majority Text-Koine (1983, 53\*).

decisions.<sup>16</sup> Steven Thompson has chosen to use this edition in his efforts to demonstrate direct Semitic influence on the syntax of the Apocalypse, commending it in particular because ". . . an effort was made by the editors to include in the text of the Apc. the more Semitised readings, whenever textual support allowed."<sup>17</sup>

The NA26 will be used in the work which follows, unless otherwise indicated. The Septuagint will be cited in Rahlfs' edition, supplemented by the Göttingen edition.

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<sup>16</sup>Delobel agreed with the editors of the NA26 that both internal and external evidence must be carefully weighed. Of particular importance for him were the many singular readings in the tradition, such as the over 200 that Hoskier (1929, I:xlviiii-lxix) had assembled from the major manuscripts A and C. In most cases, Delobel was satisfied with the readings accepted by the NA26 (1980, 166).

<sup>17</sup>1985, 11. Thompson has proposed that the criterion of conformity to Semitic syntax be employed to substantiate weakly attested readings in Revelation (102). This is a considerably bolder claim than that made by Schmid, whose stylistic criteria were based mainly on actual usage in the Apocalypse. Thompson's criterion is dependent upon the hypothesis that John was a Palestinian Jewish-Christian, the strength of which the present study seeks to evaluate.

PART I

## CHAPTER ONE

### JOHN AND JUDAISM

The allegedly Jewish content and form of the book of Revelation have frequently been adduced as proof that the Seer was a Jew by birth. For many scholars there is no doubt at all that the subject-matter and literary style of the Apocalypse are Jewish in character.<sup>1</sup> Yet when individual passages and motifs are examined, it has often proved difficult to specify why they should be considered distinctively Jewish. In most cases, their source can be traced to the Old Testament, which was accessible to both Jewish-Christian and Gentile-Christian authors.

The present chapter considers whether there are clear indications of distinctive Jewish background in the Apocalypse. Alleged evidence will be considered under three headings: (a) John's name and birthplace; (b) his knowledge of Jewish religion and culture; and (c) his alleged dependence on Jewish literary traditions. A subsequent chapter will examine evidence said to reflect the Seer's

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<sup>1</sup>T.F. Glasson has stated bluntly that "from the contents of the book we may gather with some certainty that he [John] was a Jewish-Christian" (1965, 4). Christopher Rowland has made a similar assertion: "It is obvious that of all the New Testament writings Revelation is the one which is the product of its Jewish background. Not only is the debt to Jewish apocalyptic great but the religious outlook in the document is still dominated by distinctively Jewish practices (e.g. Rev. 2.14 and 20)" (1982, 408-409).

interest in Jewish-Christian matters.

#### A. Name and Birthplace

##### 1. The Name 'John'

Austin Farrer has confidently declared that the Seer's name alone is proof that he was Jewish by birth. In his opinion, "a John at this date would be an Israelite. The name was not adopted by Gentile Christians until later" (1964, 37). Farrer was certainly correct when he observed that the name itself was of Jewish origin, since it is a transliteration of a Semitic form.<sup>2</sup> But he was on much less certain ground when he asserted that only after the first century would a Gentile-Christian have taken 'John' as a second name or been given it as a child. Second names were in widespread use in the ancient world in this period, as G. Horsley has demonstrated (1981, sec. 55).

Farrer's argument is clearly one from silence, in which he shifts the burden of proof to those who would claim that 'John' was a Christian appellation in that early period. Yet a demand of this kind is altogether too stringent, since very

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<sup>2</sup>The name John (Iōannês) is found about a dozen times in I Maccabees (2:2,2; 8:17, etc.). It refers to Jews in the 17 occurrences in Josephus' writings listed by Schalit (1968), four of which are biblical characters. Eusebius claimed to have had documentary evidence that one of thirteen Jewish-Christian bishops of Jerusalem during the first few decades of the second-century was named John (Ecclesiastical History IV.5; see also III.32).

few Christians are known by name in this period. Almost none are known apart from those mentioned in the New Testament, and later writings and inscriptions provide little more pertinent data.<sup>3</sup>

Because several important figures in the New Testament were called John, including John the Apostle and the prophet John the Baptist, it is not unlikely that a Gentile-Christian would have adopted it or borne it from birth. In the early third century, Dionysius of Alexandria testified to the practice of taking the name of an important Christian, and further suggested that this had also been done in the first century.<sup>4</sup>

Had the Seer been called by a Semitic name that was not so well known in Christian tradition, there would be much less doubt that his background was Jewish. As it is, the Seer's name can only be regarded as inconclusive evidence of his ethnic origin.

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<sup>3</sup>'John' is rarely found in Greek literature and inscriptions. Studies by F. Bechtel (1917) and L. Zgusta (1964) contain no references to it. The few references in Pape-Benseler (1959) which are not from Josephus or the New Testament are not helpful. The occurrences of the name in the Oxyrhynchus papyri listed by F. Preisigke in his Namenbuch (1967) date from the fourth century and later.

<sup>4</sup>Dionysius made his remarks in the course of his discussion of the apostolic authorship of Revelation: "Many, I imagine, have had the same name as John the Apostle, men who because they loved, admired, and esteemed him so greatly, and wished to be loved as he was by the Lord, were more than glad to be called after him, just as Paul and Peter are favorite names for the children of believers" (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History VII.xxv).

## 2. Birthplace

References to several localities in Revelation have the potential to support the claim that John was well acquainted with Palestine. These include: (a) Mount Zion; (b) '[dwellers in] the land'; (c) Armageddon; and (d) Jerusalem.

(a) Mount Zion. Mount Zion appears to have been used in the Apocalypse as a symbol for the reign of God. As George Caird has argued, Psalm 2 probably served as the background for its use in 14:1, 11:18 and 12:5 (1984, 178). Heinrich Kraft has proposed that the allusion stems from Joel 3, but acknowledged a biblical background for the image (1974, 187). George Beasley-Murray has affirmed its symbolic significance, concluding that "probably it is not right to think of a location . . ." (1978, 222). Robert Mounce maintained a similar view, contending that this Mount Zion existed in heaven and not on earth (1977, 267). For H.B. Swete as well, it was used primarily as a symbol in both Testaments (1909, 176). Such a use is evident in Hebrews 12:18-24, where Mount Zion is contrasted with Mount Sinai and linked to the heavenly Jerusalem. The same symbolic sense is likely in Revelation; its references to Mount Zion reveal nothing of John's familiarity with Palestinian geography.

(b) 'Dwellers in the land'. R.H. Charles has asserted that the phrase 'dwellers in the land' (hoi katoikountes epi

tês gês) in Rev. 11:10 referred to the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine both in the source-document which he alleged John had made use of and in its ultimate context in Revelation (1920, I:289-290). Alan Beagley concurred, affirming that John intended that Jews be understood here and in several other verses in the Apocalypse, although he voiced this opinion with some hesitation (1987, 34-36,85-86).

The phrase 'dwellers in the land,' occurs often in Revelation (with some minor variations, in 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 13:8,12,14; 17:2,8), but in most cases there is little which would suggest that the phrase referred solely to Palestinians. Inhabitants of the entire Middle East region, if not the Earth as a whole, would suit most of the contexts in which it occurs equally well or better. In 3:10, for example, Asia Minor and its surrounding area is clearly in view. That John had in mind an even broader, symbolic meaning has been convincingly argued by Paul Minear in his study of the cosmology of Revelation. In his opinion, this phrase should be translated 'earth-dwellers,' since it served as the counterpart of the book's 'heaven-dwellers' (1962).

Because its meaning cannot be restricted to the people of Palestine, this phrase is of no worth as evidence of the Seer's knowledge of that region.

(c) Armageddon. The Armageddon spoken of in 16:16 is not known in Palestine and therefore was probably not the name of an actual first-century site. Although it apparently

is a transliteration of a Semitic toponym, the etymology of the name is difficult to reconcile with a Palestinian location.<sup>5</sup> If it refers to a mountainous locale, as the 'Ar' suggests, this would constitute poor terrain in which to undertake the great battle which the Seer has predicted. It seems more likely that John took this name from some unknown Christian tradition or has derived it from biblical references to the battle site of Megiddo.

(d) Jerusalem. The three references to Jerusalem in the Apocalypse (3:12; 21:2,10) clearly pertain to the ideal, heavenly city and not to the actual site in Palestine. But it is possible that the 'great city' mentioned in 11:8 was an oblique reference to Jerusalem, as R.H. Charles has contended. He has asserted that this phrase described the actual Jerusalem in a Jewish source-document, and that John retained this sense when he incorporated this text into the Apocalypse (1920, I:287-290).

Yet Charles' assertion concerning the identification of this city is problematic. A number of commentators have concluded that in 11:8 it is not Jerusalem which was in view, whether portrayed in actual or figurative terms. The great

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<sup>5</sup>A. Beagley has provided a helpful review of recent opinion on the identification and meaning of Armageddon (1987, 87-89). His own view is that it is a misrendering of the Hebrew Har Moed and refers to Jerusalem. Such a misrendering, if indeed it is one, points to John's lack of knowledge of Hebrew and suggests that he was not a Palestinian. It is difficult in any case to account for this alleged corruption of the name, as Beasley-Murray has observed (1978, 244).

city, in their opinion, was Rome or another major urban centre in some other era which stood opposed to Christ (Caird 1984, 138; Mounce 1977, 226). Even many of those who identify the city with Jerusalem do not deny that John intended it to carry a broader, symbolic sense as well. G. Beasley-Murray (1978, 185-186), Ernst Lohmeyer (1953, 93), Leon Morris (1969, 145,150), and H.B. Swete (1909, 138) construe it not only as Jerusalem but also as a symbol for organized evil in other eras and locales. John Sweet has maintained this view, asserting that "to assume from where their Lord was crucified that it must be Jerusalem is to misunderstand all John's 'geography'" (1979, 187). In his opinion, the great city was indeed once Jerusalem, but served as well to designate Rome and other places in rebellion against God. In addition, Alan Beagley (1987, 67-70) and Heinrich Kraft (1974, 158), who believe that the Seer was referring to the actual Jerusalem, both see a good/evil symbolism operative here.

In any case, since John no doubt knew about Jerusalem and its fate from Christian traditions such as that found in Luke 21:24, even if he had that city in mind in 11:8, this would not constitute proof of his acquaintance with the actual site.

### 3. Conclusion: Name and Birthplace

Since 'John' was an important name in Christian

tradition, it is quite possible that Gentile-Christians as well as Jewish-Christians could have borne it, if only as a second name. The few references in Revelation to specific sites do not afford substantial evidence of John's acquaintance with Palestine, his supposed birth-place. The small notice he does take of Palestine reflects his literary need for a setting for End-times events rather than any interest in the existing localities.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, by the same measure, the familiarity with Asia Minor which is John displays (see J. Hemer 1986) suggests that the Seer had been a long-time resident of that Gentile region.

#### B. John's Knowledge of Jewish Religion and Culture

An examination of the Seer's treatment of several issues which were of importance to Jews may provide an indication of the depth of his knowledge and extent of his interest in Judaism. These include: (1) the Jewish nation; (2) synagogue and Temple; and (3) dietary and purity customs.

##### 1. The Jewish Nation

References to the Jews as a people include two

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<sup>6</sup>What Beasley-Murray has concluded about Armageddon could well be extended to cover other geographical references in Revelation: "Whatever the origin of the term, we are not to think in terms of a geographical locality in Israel (the Holy Land does not really feature in John's prophecy). Indeed it is doubtful that any single locality is in mind at all. The name stands for an event" (1978, 246).

occurrences of the appellation 'Jews' (Rev. 2:9; 3:9) and three of 'Israel' (2:14; 7:4; 21:12).

(a) 'Jews'. The Seer's use of the term 'Jews' shows that he was familiar with the Jews as a people, but reveals little more. In both 2:9 and 3:9, Jews are described in strongly negative terms as "those who say they are Jews and are not," but are a "synagogue of Satan." R.H. Charles has taken these references as proof that John saw 'true' Judaism, or Jewish-Christianity, in a positive light. In his words, "the fact that our author attaches a spiritual significance of the highest character to the name Ioudaios shows that he himself is a Jewish Christian" (1920, I:57).

Any conclusion regarding the Seer's views on 'true' Judaism, however, can only be speculative. One can discover nothing clear about his opinions from these passages. As Ernst Lohmeyer has asserted, they are a wholly inadequate basis on which to conclude that John's ethnic background was Jewish: "daß der Seher deshalb 'Judenchrist' sein müsse, ist unrichtig" (1953, 24). Unlike Paul, who was explicit on the issue of 'spiritual Judaism' (Romans 2:28-29), John has made no clear statement on the subject.

Whatever his thoughts on 'true' Judaism, it is obvious from the tone of 2:9 and 3:9 that John was not well-disposed to 'actual' Judaism.<sup>7</sup> For the majority of commentators,

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<sup>7</sup>It would be unjustified to read too much into this harshly polemical portrayal. John should not be regarded as racist or anti-Semitic. He criticized the Jews because in

these "so-called Jews" were indeed Jews, and the two references are taken by them to be evidence of a conflict between Church and Synagogue in first-century C.E. Asia Minor.<sup>8</sup>

Only a minority doubt that the groups described in these verses were composed of Jews. Heinrich Kraft, for example, has contended that second-century evidence such as the Martyrdom of Polycarp does not constitute proof of conflict between Church and Synagogue in the first century. The 'so-called' Jews in Revelation were, according to Kraft, just that. They were uncircumcised Gentiles who called themselves Jews and who had only a loose affiliation with the Jewish synagogue.<sup>9</sup> John's polemic, in his opinion, was directed at Gentiles who had opted for a form of Jewish rather than Christian religion. Lloyd Gaston arrived at a similar conclusion, although he has interpreted the second-century accounts of religious conflict as indicative of intra-

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his view they were enemies and rivals of the Church, not simply because they were Jews. Presumably John would not have warned against them in this way if they had been Jews who had converted to Christianity, or if he had not perceived them to be religious adversaries.

<sup>8</sup>Beagley 1987, 28,32-34; Beasley-Murray 1978, 81-81,100-101; Caird 1984, 35,52-53; Charles 1920, I:57,88; Lohmeyer 1953, 24,36; Morris 1969, 64,79; Mounce 1977, 92-93,118; Sweet 1979, 85,103; Swete 1909, 31-32,37. The second-century Martyrdom of Polycarp (XII.ii) is often cited as proof that the two religions were mutually antagonistic. The Acts of the Apostles also bears witness to such conflict.

<sup>9</sup>Kraft has concluded: "Es müßte sich denn um eine Gruppe Gottesfürchtiger gehandelt haben, Unbeschnittener also, die mit der Synagoge ohnehin nur lose verbunden waren" (1974, 82; cf. 61).

Christian disputes, arguing that the same kind of rivalry gave rise to the Seer's remarks in 2:9 and 3:9 (1986).

Kraft's proposal, while it attempts to take the description of those whom John took to be opponents in as literal a way as possible, is nevertheless unconvincing. There is no clear evidence that there were large enough groups of Gentile God-fearers in Asia Minor either to have posed a threat to the Church or to have had their own synagogue. It is strange as well that if these God-fearers were not an integral part of the Jewish community, as Kraft has claimed, John termed them a synagogue. Such a reference would be ironic, not literal, making it difficult to rule out an ironic, polemical sense for the subsequent phrase 'so-called Jews.'<sup>10</sup> Also a problem for Kraft's view is the fact that the book of Acts consistently portrays God-fearers as receptive to the Christian message (Acts 10:2,22,35; 13:16,26,43; 16:14; 17:4; 18:7), while it is Jews who are cast as antagonistic to it.

Given the difficulties inherent in Kraft's position, it seems best to affirm that John was referring in these two verses to actual Jews. At the same time, these passages reveal virtually nothing about John's knowledge of Judaism.

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<sup>10</sup>Lloyd Gaston has insisted that the statement "who say they are Jews and are not" must be taken literally. Hence he has concluded that actual Jews are not in view, but that this is evidence of an "inner-Christian polemic against the Judaism of the uncircumcised" (1986, 42-44). He greatly weakens his case, however, by claiming that the term "synagogue" in these same passages should be accorded an ironic and not a literal sense.

His brief remarks suggest, if anything, that he had no great concern for the welfare of the Jews nor sympathy for their struggle to retain their ethnic identity. This can be seen in his portrayal of them as opponents of the Christian faith who one day will be forced (poiêsô autous) to "come and bow down at the feet" of the Church (3:9). As Robert Mounce has put it, in Revelation the Jews "will play the role of the heathen and acknowledge that the church is the true Israel of God" (1977, 118). A claim such as this represents a transference of a major Old Testament promise (Isa. 45:14; 49:23; 60:14) from Jews to Christians. The Church and not Judaism was clearly the focus of John's concern (Lohmeyer 1953, 36; Sweet 1979, 103).

(b) Israel. The interpretation of the image of Israelite tribes in 7:4 and in 21:12 has engendered vigorous debate. In both passages it is unclear whether John was referring to Judaism, Jewish-Christianity, or the Church as the new people of God.

Three main views have been advocated regarding the meaning of 'Israel' and 'tribes' in these passages, with Rev. 7:4-8 serving as the focal point of discussion. The first view, represented by Heinrich Kraft and by dispensational premillennialists, interprets the tribes of 7:4-8, the 144,000, in a literal manner. They are taken as faithful Jewish-

Christians who hold a special place in the plan of God.<sup>11</sup> The second view maintains that the tribes are symbolic of a 'new' or 'true' Israel, the Church. This is the opinion of many commentators, including: A. Beagley (1987, 47); G.B. Caird (1984, 94-96); E. Lohmeyer (1953, 69); L. Morris (1969, 114); J. Sweet (1979, 150); and H.B. Swete (1909, 98-99).

A third option, represented by R.H. Charles (1920, I:191-193,199), G. Beasley-Murray (1978, 139-141), and to a limited extent R. Mounce (1977, 165-166), combines elements of the preceding two views. These scholars contend that, even though in its present context the tribes are symbolic of the Church, in the Jewish source-document from which John had taken this passage the restoration of the Jewish nation was in view.

The three views may be labelled respectively: literal, symbolic, and source-critical.

(i) Literal interpretation. Proponents of the literal

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<sup>11</sup>Kraft has denied that the image of the 144,000, the tribes, is an allegory for Christian believers. He has argued that the Seer was instead referring to a holy remnant of Israel: "Es ist der heilige Rest Israels." This group, in his opinion, constitutes the restored twelve tribes which would be active during the End-times period (1974, 128). J.D. Pentecost, in keeping with the premillennial school's comprehensive prophetic scheme, has contended that the 144,000 represent Jewish-Christian evangelists who will minister during the 7-year period of the Great Tribulation: "God will convert and equip these physical descendants of Abraham so that they can go to every nation and kindred and people and tongue and declare the gospel to them" (1971, 149). The fact that the twelve tribes have long since disappeared does not pose a problem for Pentecost, since he believes that the necessary genealogical records "have been kept in the mind of Almighty God so that God can fulfill His purpose in His own time" (147).

view have formulated relatively complex arguments. Heinrich Kraft, for example, claims that the 144,000 in Rev. 7:4-8 differed from the 'great multitude' mentioned in Rev. 7:9 in that they had undergone a special kind of baptism. On the one hand, the 144,000 represent Jewish-Christians who had been 'sealed' but not baptized in water. These 'sealed' Jewish-Christians had only ritually been marked with the sign of the chi. On the other hand, the 'great multitude' comprised Gentile-Christians who had undergone actual water baptism. Full water baptism was obligatory for them alone, not for Jewish-Christians.<sup>12</sup>

Evidence from the New Testament, however, does not support Kraft's assertions. Christians, including Jewish-Christian disciples, were commanded by the Matthean Jesus to baptize as they went about their mission (Mt. 28:19), and in Acts it is recorded that many Jews were baptized (2:41; 9:18). A special unbaptized status for Jews is unknown for this early period, and too little is known about the use of the chi sign in later times to claim that it had earlier served as a substitute for a water baptism. As George Caird has concluded, the claim that two different groups are represented in Rev. 7:4-9, one Jewish-Christian and another Gentile-Christian, although it is attractive, must be judged improbable (1984, 94-99).

The premillenarian assertion that the 'tribes'

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<sup>12</sup>Kraft declares: "Johannes hält anscheinend das Taufwasser nur bei den Heiden für unerlässlich; bei den Juden genügt die bloße Konsignation" (1974, 126).

constitute a renewed Jewish clan system whose task it would be to preach the gospel after the End-times rapture of Gentile-Christians is likewise difficult to accept. It is initially improbable that John actually meant this, given that this motif is an element of the modern, full-fledged, premillenarian interpretation of End-times prophecy. While premillennialism is well-known in certain circles today, it is doubtful that John was aware of what are now its main tenets. John was probably conversant with the traditions which underlie New Testament passages such as Matthew 24, 1 Thess. 4-5, 2 Thess. 2, and 1 Cor. 15, but it would be presumptuous to assume that John's views corresponded to those of present-day interpreters who have systematized these passages, among others, into a relatively complex scheme. Furthermore, since the tribes were not viewed as Jewish-Christian evangelists elsewhere in the New Testament, it is unwarranted to attribute this view to John.

(ii) Symbolic interpretation. The claim that the references to 'tribes' and 'Israel' were symbolic has much to commend it. John used many symbols in his book, often drawing them from Old Testament motifs and imagery. Furthermore, he was not alone among New Testament writers in doing so. Many prophecies or motifs originally applicable to Israel were re-employed by the Church to describe Christians, including the term 'tribes' (James 1:1; see also 1 Peter 1:1).

Another reason that a symbolic interpretation is

probable is that the group numbering 144,00 in 7:4-8 is in all likelihood identical to the 144,000 mentioned in Rev. 14:1-5. This latter group was not composed of 'tribes' nor was it identified with Israel. Moreover, there is not even a hint in Rev. 14:1-5 that the 144,000 were all Jewish-Christians. The factor common to both is their number of members, not their description as tribes of Israel. They were described instead as virgins "who have not been defiled with women." It was probable that he was using the image of the 144,000 in both Rev. 7 and 14 to symbolize a remnant of the Church as a whole; perhaps those of its members who were distinguished by an ascetic lifestyle.

(iii) Source-critical interpretation. The contentions of R.H. Charles and George Beasley-Murray that the term 'tribes' originally referred to Jews in a Jewish source-document used by John is an attractive alternative to the dilemma of deciding between literal and symbolic interpretation. By this reckoning, the motif as it appeared in the source was intended to be taken literally, but in its new context in the Apocalypse it was free to serve a symbolic purpose. Unfortunately, as was noted in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, it is impossible to isolate source-material in Revelation with any acceptable degree of confidence.

The main justification for supposing a source-document is that there is a certain roughness to the flow of Rev. 7 because two similar descriptions reside in close proximity.

Rev. 7:4-8 features a description of a group the size of which is specified to be 144,000 souls. In 7:9-17, a 'great multitude' is described which may represent the same group.<sup>13</sup> For Charles and Beasley-Murray, this apparent duplication has resulted from John's using a source-document in a somewhat clumsy way to supplement his own account. Thus the roughness of style was attributable to John's failure adequately to reconcile the material he took from his source to its new context.

Such abruptness and apparent duplication, however, are a common feature of Revelation and need not be attributed to the use of sources. Source-documents cannot be assumed for all the many occasions on which John's prophecy wanders or reads poorly. Repetition and the piling up of descriptive phrases were part of his style throughout the book. As a result, source-critical interpretation cannot be used to support the claim of Jewish background for this image of the tribes of Israel.

## 2. Synagogue and Temple

(a) Synagogue. As has been noted above (sec. B.1.a), John's use of the term 'synagogue' in Rev. 2:9 and 3:9

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<sup>13</sup>George Caird accounted for the double description by arguing that in Rev. 7 John is describing the same group of people from two different perspectives. He has observed that in 7:4 John heard a number, while in 7:9 he actually saw the group (1984, 96). This argument has been accepted by Sweet (1979, 150). For a contrary view see Kraft 1974, 126-127.

reveals nothing specific about John's knowledge of the synagogue as an institution.

(b) Temple. John's comments on the Jerusalem Temple are more promising. The term 'Tabernacle' (skênê) occurs three times (13:6; 15:5; 21:3) and 'Temple' (naos, 'sanctuary') sixteen times, for a total of nineteen occurrences. The two times naos is mentioned in 21:22 may be discounted, since they serve only to declare that there will be no Temple in the new heavens and earth.

One reference to the Tabernacle (15:5) and eleven to the Temple (7:15; 11:19[bis]; 14:15,17; 15:5,6,8[bis]; 16:1,17) clearly describe a heavenly dwelling and so cannot be expected to reveal anything substantial about John's knowledge of contemporary Judaism. Nevertheless, P. Prigent (1964) has attempted to show that the liturgy of this heavenly Temple has been based partly on the model of actual Jewish worship. In the absence of evidence pertaining to first-century Jewish worship practices, however, such a suggestion can only be speculative. G. Delling's argument that the liturgy was a literary creation of John is more convincing, given that the Seer has made such rich and varied use of Old Testament language and imagery (1959, 134).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>The nature of Revelation's hymns has been much discussed. G. Delling reasoned that since the hymns fit in so well with their literary context and featured imagery taken from the Old Testament, the Seer himself had composed them: ". . . diese Stücke allerdings eine hervorragende Rolle im Ganzen spielen, aber keine selbständige Bedeutung besitzen" (1959, 134). W. Kümmel has affirmed Delling's

The remaining two occurrences of 'Tabernacle' (13:6; 21:3) and three of 'Temple' (3:12; 11:1,2) are not clear references to a heavenly structure. The references to the Tabernacle as the saints (13:6) and as representative of God's presence among humans (21:3) are symbolic. The mention in 3:12 may refer to an End-times structure, but probably describes a symbolic heavenly Temple.

Rev. 11:1,2 are potentially the best evidence of John's concern for a Jewish Temple, since some have argued that the destruction of Herod's Temple or of a reconstructed End-times sanctuary is in view in this passage. The views of commentators on 11:1-2 can be classified in the same way as those which have been outlined above in the discussion of the image of the Israelite tribes in Rev. 7:4-8: literal, symbolic, and source-critical.

(i) Literal interpretation. The literalist option is defended chiefly by premillenarian interpreters, who maintain that in 11:1-2 John was speaking of an actual Temple that was to be constructed in the future, during the 7-year Tribulation period. They buttress their argument with the

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conclusions (1975, 465). P. Prigent, on the other hand, has contended that Delling's observations do not rule out John's having made use of motifs from the liturgy of late Judaism (1964, 9 n.1, 68, 75-76). Prigent's claim is difficult to substantiate, however, in view of the paucity of Jewish evidence from that period and of the overlap of worship motifs in Judaism and Christianity. O. Cullmann has asserted that the hymns of Revelation were "partly of direct Jewish descent and partly modelled on Jewish songs," but he has provided no evidence to support his contention. In spite of his claim as to their origin, Cullmann has nonetheless characterized Rev. 5:9,12,13; 12:10-12; and 19:1-2,6 as representative of "the oldest of Christian songs" (1953, 21).

assertion that the temple of God in 2 Thess. 2:4 is also a reference to this rebuilt Jewish edifice (Lindsey 1973, 33,45-47,98).

The mention of a temple in 2 Thess. 2:4, however, is too brief and too enigmatic to support the notion of a reconstructed Jerusalem Temple. There is no indication that this 'temple of God' (naon tou theou) was to be Jewish. It could merely be "some material building," as Morris has argued (1959, 224). Or, the reference to a temple may indicate in poetic fashion that the apocalyptic 'Man of Lawlessness' will one day seek to dominate the Christian Church by means of some kind of religious authority. To illuminate an obscure reference to the sanctuary in 11:1-2 with an obscure passage from 2 Thess. can accomplish nothing.

The fact that there is no agreement among scholars that the 'great city' in which the Temple in Rev. 11 was located was Jerusalem (see sec. A.2.d above) also makes it difficult to argue that a renewed Jewish Temple was being referred to in 11:1-2. In view of the lack of evidence that John was referring to such a structure, the literal interpretation of this passage is unconvincing.

(ii) Symbolic interpretation. A majority of commentators have opted for a symbolic interpretation of this image, regarding the Temple in 11:1-2 as a symbol for the Church. George Caird (1984, 131-132), for example, as well as L. Morris (1969, 146), R. Mounce (1977, 219) and H.B. Swete (1909, 132-133), support a symbolic interpretation,

noting that in other New Testament passages the Church is spoken of in these terms (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-21; 1 Peter 2:5).

Heinrich Kraft has likewise asserted that the Temple in 11:1-2 was a symbolic reference, although in his judgment it did not symbolize the Church as a whole (1974, 152-155). He thought that the scope of the image was restricted to a Jewish-Christian remnant which was to be active as a witness during the End-times period. Unfortunately for Kraft, there is no indication that the witnesses who are mentioned in this chapter were Jewish-Christians. Their identity is not revealed, and is the subject of much speculation (Caird 1984, 133-137). John's imagery is probably descriptive of the martyr Church, but not in such a way that only its Jewish-Christian component is involved.

(iii) Source-critical interpretation. R.H. Charles (1920, I:270,273-274), G. Beasley-Murray (1978, 176-178), and to a lesser extent John Sweet (1979, 182), have advocated an interpretation of this passage based on source-critical reconstruction. Source analysis of this kind, which dates from the time of Julius Wellhausen, sees in 11:1-2 a short oracle about the siege of Jerusalem. This oracle, it is said, has been linked to another Jewish prophecy which is found in 11:3-13 (Beasley-Murray 1978, 176-178), and both serve in their new context in the Apocalypse symbolically to describe the Church.

A presumption of source-documents in this passage is no

more likely than it is for Rev. 7:4-8 (see sec. B.1.b above). Beasley-Murray has made a rather weak argument that 11:1-2 must have come from a hand other than John's because the Seer would not "deliberately" have contradicted the corresponding eschatological teaching in Daniel about the inviolability of the Temple. Yet he has not satisfactorily explained why the Seer has allowed these verses to stand as he found them in his source if they represented such a serious contradiction. His only defense is to claim that "John saw in this prophecy, discredited though it was, a means of setting forth a real concern of God, as well as of rectifying false ideas" (1978, 176). This suggestion of a re-use of false oracles is weak, and has rightly been characterized by George Caird as "improbable, useless, and absurd" (1984, 131).

In any case, given John's knowledge of the Old Testament and Christian tradition, there is no compelling reason to suppose that he has employed specifically Jewish source-documents in this chapter. No doubt he was acquainted with biblical accounts about the fate of the first Temple, as well as with Christian traditions about the demise of the second. David Wenham has suggested that he alluded to certain Old Testament passages about the Temple and Jerusalem (Zech. 12:3; Dan. 8:13,14) and cited pre-Synoptic Christian tradition about the fate of Jerusalem in the first century (1984, 208). E. Lohmeyer has drawn attention to Synoptic parallels (1953, 88-89), as has Alan Beagley, who concludes that John, ". . . in the same way as Luke, is referring to

the trampling down of the literal city of Jerusalem by the Gentiles (Romans) in A.D. 70" (1987, 62).

The similar descriptions in Revelation and the Synoptic Gospels lend support to the view that the Apocalypse reflects Christian tradition. The Temple is destined to be destroyed in all of the Synoptics (Mt. 24:2; Mk. 13:2; Lk. 21:6), and the attack on the 'great city' by the nations has a counterpart in the trampling of Jerusalem which Luke has related (21:24). Consequently, it would be superfluous to suppose that Jewish source-materials underlie John's temple allusions.

### 3. Dietary and Purity Customs

There is no mention of 'Law' (nomos) as such in the Apocalypse, although several other terms and concepts possibly refer to Jewish dietary and purity customs, such as: (a) commandments; (b) priests and cult; (c) cleanness; and (d) denunciations of immorality and the eating of food offered to idols.

(a) Commandments. The term 'commandment' (entolê) occurs twice in Revelation in the phrase "keeping the commandments of God" (12:17; 14:12). There is no indication in either passage that the term referred to the observance of Jewish ordinances or to a peculiarly Jewish-Christian kind of piety. Elsewhere in the New Testament the word bears a more

general meaning, and this sense is probably what it carries in the Apocalypse as well. Paul, for example, writes that "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor 7:19). Since a distinctively Jewish interpretation of keeping the commandments would have included the need for circumcision, it is clear that Paul has employed the term in this broad, Christian sense. In 1 Cor 14:37, the 'commandment of the Lord' entails Paul's own advice on Church order. In the Johannine writings, it is made explicit that it is the commandments of Jesus that must be kept and not those of Jewish custom.<sup>15</sup>

(b) Priests and cult. The term 'priest' as it is used in the Apocalypse refers to Christians in general and not to a specific class of ministers (1:6; 5:10; 20:6). In the same way, although liturgical matters have been mentioned, there

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<sup>15</sup>In John 15:10, Jesus declares: "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love; just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (cf. John 14:15,21 and 1 John 2:7-8). Victor Furnish, in his study of the Love Command, has observed that "whereas Paul and the Synoptic writers consistently use the word 'commandment(s)' to refer to the ordinances of the Old Testament law, it is never used in this way by the Fourth Evangelist, for whom 'the law' as such is only rarely (1:17; cf. 5:39-47) a matter of direct concern" (1972, 137). S. Pancoro has argued that in the Gospel of John, a Jewish conception of the Law co-exists with a more general Christian sense (1975, 522). Concerning the latter, Pancoro writes: "It is this perception which induces Jn to present the teaching-revelation of Jesus in terms which recall the Law but which dissociate it from the Law. In the new Aeon inaugurated by Jesus 'to do the will of God,' 'to do the work of God,' 'to keep the commandments,' assume a new meaning, yet recall the 'old order'" (526).

is no indication John was commending the establishment or observance of any specific form of ritual. Cultic imagery has instead been used in a figurative sense. Christians were to live as holy priests, to offer their lives and their prayers to God as an offering, and to keep the faith pure by leading lives of moral purity and godly devotion.

It would be difficult to argue that the background of these concepts is to be sought in contemporary Jewish worship. The aspects of cultic worship referred to in the Apocalypse, including sacrifice, the altar, blood, and incense, are also described in the Old Testament, a work with which the Seer and his audience were quite familiar. John has evidently made as good use of the Scriptures as has the Christian author of Hebrews.

(c) Cleanness. The term 'clean' (katharos) occurs five times in Revelation (15:6; 19:8,14; 21:18[bis]), in all but 21:8 referring to the linen clothing worn by certain characters (15:6; 19:8,14). In these three passages it signifies little more than that these figures were wearing ceremonial garments. In 21:18 the term appears twice, highlighting the purity of gold and glass.

The term 'unclean' occurs four times. Twice it describes evil spirits (16:13; 18:2a), as it also does in the Synoptic gospels (Mt. 10:1; 12:43; Mk. 1:23, etc.). In 17:4 the word refers to immoral or idolatrous practices in general rather than to any specific ritual contamination. In 18:2b,

the mention of "every unclean bird" may indicate some knowledge of what constituted dietary or ritual impurity, but the Seer may have gained this knowledge from the Old Testament. The Seer may well have been alluding to Isa. 34:11-13 in 18:2, since the two passages are alike. The various birds mentioned in Isaiah, such as ravens, ostriches and owls, are termed unclean in Lev. 11:15-17 and Deut. 14:11-18, a designation with which John may have been acquainted.

(d) Immorality and food offered to idols. John's denunciations of those who commit immorality and eat food offered to idols (2:14,20) have often been said to have been based on Jewish ethical teaching. Although no particular immoral action or food is specified, his attitude towards them in general is clearly in keeping with Jewish sensibilities, given that charges of immorality and idolatry were prominent in the Jewish critique of the Gentile way of life.

Yet it is apparent from other New Testament writings that these issues were also of great interest to Gentile-Christians. At Corinth, it seems to have been Gentile-Christians who were particularly concerned about "food offered to idols," and it was the Jewish-Christian Paul who was the more liberal interpreter of Christian tradition (1 Cor. 8). The so-called Apostolic Decree had also brought these issues to the attention of Gentile-Christians (Acts

15:21; 21:25).<sup>16</sup> In addition, as Heinrich Kraft has pointed out, abstaining from certain foods was not just a Palestinian or Jewish custom. Such ascetic practices were common in the Hellenistic world as well (1974, 73).

Underlying many of the claims that these verses betray the Seer's Jewish background is the assumption that John was describing actual Christian behaviour. Such an interpretation is questionable. Commentators are divided on whether these references to immorality and abstention from idol-meat should be taken literally or metaphorically. On the one hand, R.H. Charles has proposed that the Seer was referring to the practices of guilds whose feasts involved fornication (1920, I:63,71). In a like manner, G. Beasley-Murray has asserted that John was describing Gnostic libertines (1978, 85-87,90-91). John Sweet, as well, who has contended that the descriptions reflect "some kind of syncretism, probably gnostic, possibly a perversion of Pauline liberalism" (1979, 89).

On the other hand, Heinrich Kraft has asserted that there is insufficient evidence to presume that John was referring to an actual group such as the Gnostics. He preferred to view 'immorality' as a synonym for idolatry and

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<sup>16</sup>Ernst Haenchen is no doubt correct in his assertion that the teaching in the Decree was itself not based directly on Jewish practice, but on the biblical precepts in Lev. 18-19 concerning the applicability of certain laws to resident aliens in Israel (1971, 469). The Old Testament would have furnished a much more authoritative warrant than contemporary Jewish practice, especially for Gentile-Christians.

religious infidelity in general rather than as indicative of a specific situation (1974, 65,73). In much the same way, Ernst Lohmeyer has suggested that both expressions referred to the ever-present conflict between pagan and Christian culture (1953, 31).<sup>17</sup>

There is good reason to believe that John was speaking metaphorically in these passages. It is obvious that the biblical narratives about Balaam and Jezebel have provided the background for the Seer's mention of these two activities. Both idolatry and immorality are mentioned in Numbers 25:1-2 (thusias tôn eidôlôn; ekporneusai), as they are in the Apocalypse (phagein eidôluthuta; porneusai). The fact that John has employed the same phrase to describe different groups in two of the seven churches confirms this notion. Its use in two separate passages points to its being one of the Seer's 'stock' phrases rather than a description of actual practices.

A literal sense is improbable for another reason. Could it actually have been possible that such practices were not only present but even condoned in the congregations of first-

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<sup>17</sup>It is possible as well to view only one of these two activities as a reference to actual behaviour and to construe the other as a metaphor for an evil attitude or inclination. But such a view is, as Robert Mounce has noted, open to the charge of inconsistency. To avoid this criticism, Mounce himself opted for a literal interpretation of both, while nonetheless conceding that they may well simply be metaphorical references to religious infidelity (1977, 98,104).

century Christianity?<sup>18</sup> It would be unlikely, to say the least. In all probability John was simply borrowing imagery from the Old Testament to describe the spiritual state of the Church. His critique, while it overlaps with that voiced by Judaism, does not appear to have been based directly on Jewish ethical teaching.

#### 4. Conclusion: John's Knowledge of Jewish Religion and Culture

The Apocalypse contains no evidence that John's ancestry was Jewish or that he ever lived in Palestine. His name, although ultimately of Semitic origin, was also an appellation which was well-known in Christian tradition. In addition, John has displayed no significant acquaintance with Palestinian geography.

The Seer's brief references to the Jewish nation are largely negative and hostile in tone. He declared that at least some Jews were a "synagogue of Satan" and one day would

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<sup>18</sup>The use of exaggerated language to describe opponents is also found in other New Testament writings. If it is construed in a literal fashion in every case the unlikely portrait emerges of a Church that was rife with numerous shocking and scandalous practices. Surely this was not so, as Frederik Wisse has argued for Jude: "It is beyond belief that persons of this description would have been accepted and tolerated in a Christian congregation, much less have slipped in unnoticed" (1972, 136). Regarding Jezebel's alleged commending of sexual licence, George Caird has rightly remarked: "It is highly improbable that a church in such a healthy condition would have tolerated the preaching of sexual immorality, even by one who claimed the authority of the Spirit" (1984, 44).

bow down to the Church. As George Caird has concluded, John was simply "not interested in the preservation of their religious institutions" (1984, 131). John Sweet likewise comes to the conclusion that "the historical fate of the Jews is not John's concern" (1979, 184).

John's references to Israel, the Temple, the priesthood, and cultic worship were symbolic rather than literal. These concepts had been 'spiritualized' and made to serve a literary purpose in his description of the Christian life and destiny. His comments on purity and dietary customs do not reveal any knowledge on his part of distinctively Jewish traditions.

In view of the virtual absence of material in the Apocalypse which pertains directly to Jewish religion and culture, there is no support for the contention that he was concerned with or knowledgeable about Judaism. His view that there will be no need for a Temple in the New Jerusalem (21:22) in particular bears witness to his indifference to Jewish religious observance.

### C. John's Dependence on Jewish Literary Traditions

The question of the extent to which John was dependent on Jewish literary traditions involves two main issues: (a) whether John's dependence on the Jewish Pseudepigrapha and the Old Testament is of such a kind that would suggest that John was Jewish; and (b) the extent to which Revelation

corresponds to Jewish literary conventions such as 'midrash' and the genre 'apocalypse.'

### 1. Literary Parallels

(a) Jewish Pseudepigrapha. John's dependence on Jewish Pseudepigrapha appears to have been minimal. The few parallels which can be identified indicate that the Seer was probably acquainted with this literature, but little more.<sup>19</sup>

R.H. Charles has listed 17 parallels between Revelation and the Pseudepigrapha. Eleven of these are parallels to 1 Enoch, two to the Testament of Levi, and one each to 2 Enoch, the Assumption of Moses and the Psalms of Solomon (1920, I:lxxxii-lxxxiii). According to Charles, the remaining parallel, which speaks of Gog and Magog and the Gentile invasion of Jerusalem, was found in various works of Jewish apocalyptic including 4 Ezra and the Sibylline Oracles (II:188).

Charles has conceded that many of these parallels were dependent upon biblical accounts. Such parallels, since they may be traced to a common biblical source, are not of great

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<sup>19</sup>George Ladd has contended that John was not acquainted with the such texts at all, asserting that "it is a fact of great significance that, while the Revelation is replete with verbal allusions to the Old Testament, it is completely lacking in similar allusions to the known Jewish apocalyptic writings" (1972, 21). Yet it is difficult to attribute every one of John's allusions solely to an Old Testament source. F. Mazzaferri's source-critical study has led him to the conclusion that apocalyptic literature provided at least some of John's source-material (1989, 49).

value in assessing John's use of non-biblical Jewish literature. Those which Charles classified as close verbal parallels to the Testament of Levi are more significant, although even they are not convincing evidence of dependence. The two phrases constituting the parallels, "permit to eat from the Tree of Life" and "a new name," are neither extensive nor distinctive enough to support his claim.

The remaining parallels on Charles' list are almost all to 1 Enoch. As inexact as they are in most instances, they nevertheless make it likely that John was acquainted with this book. Yet it is unwarranted to conclude from this that John must have been a Jewish-Christian. 1 Enoch was widely known in the Church of John's day, as the literary parallels to it in other New Testament writings attest.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to those on Charles' list, seven parallels to 4 Ezra may also be cited.<sup>21</sup> Most of these involve motifs which are also found in the Old Testament. As a result,

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<sup>20</sup>In the introduction to a recent edition of 1 Enoch, E. Isaac, while overstating his case somewhat, has asserted that a great many aspects of the New Testament were influenced by 1 Enoch: "There is little doubt that 1 Enoch was influential in molding New Testament doctrines concerning the nature of the Messiah, the Son of Man, the messianic kingdom, demonology, the future, resurrection, final judgement, the whole eschatological theatre, and symbolism. No wonder, therefore, that the book was highly regarded by many of the earliest apostolic and Church Fathers" (1983, I:10).

<sup>21</sup>These parallels include: 4 Ezra 2:18, "12 trees loaded with fruit" (Rev. 22:2); 2:40, "clothed in white" (Rev. 3:4; 6:11; 7:1); 2:42, "great multitude on Zion" (Rev. 7:9); 6:20, "heavenly book opened" (Rev. 20:12); 8:52, "Paradise, Tree of Life" (Rev. 2:7; 22:2; 11:1, "eagle from the sea" (Rev. 13:1); and 13:34-35, "multitude against God who is on Mount Zion" (Rev. 16:16; 19:19).

borrowing from 4 Ezra cannot be demonstrated. As B.M. Metzger has put it: "A number of resemblances in thought and diction with the New Testament occur in the Ezra Apocalypse (chs. 3-14), but none of them suggests direct dependence" (1983, I:522).

Adela Yarbro Collins has argued that the parallels between the Apocalypse and Sibylline Oracle 4, a text she identifies as Jewish, constituted evidence of John's Jewish background (1984a, 49,94). She based her case largely upon the claim that both writings expressed a strongly anti-Roman sentiment, contending that this attitude revealed itself in an amalgam of "certain motifs and themes . . . such as opposition to Rome and the legend of Nero's return" (94). Unfortunately, Yarbro Collins must assume that anti-Roman sentiments in Revelation were not simply incidental to the Seer's general critique of non-Christian culture but were central to his message. Such an assumption is unwarranted. A consistent polemic against Rome is by no means obvious in Revelation.

In any case, feelings of alienation from Rome, where they existed, were not confined to Jews. Consequently, there is no necessity to conclude that John was himself of Jewish ancestry. The popularity of the Oracles, portions of which Yarbro Collins herself has conceded were originally composed by pagans (91), meant that they were available as source-material to both Gentile and Jewish authors. Jews, Christians and even pagans appreciated good religious texts,

often making it difficult to ascertain the ethnic background of the author of a given writing.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, there is no justification to claim that only a Jewish-Christian and not a Gentile-Christian could have understood Revelation's apocalyptic imagery. Such imagery was too widely known and appreciated in that era.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Even if it be conceded that the Seer has made use of at least some Jewish writings, this is of little significance, as E. Schüssler Fiorenza has observed. She correctly warns that simply because an apocalyptic text has been influenced by Jewish literature does "not necessarily point to a 'Sitz im Leben' in a Jewish community" (1983, 302). In the case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, an overlapping of Jewish and Christian interests has been widely recognized. M. de Jonge has argued that the work was Christian, since this best accounts for the explicit Christian elements in the Testaments (1975, 1980a). He has continued to meet the challenges posed by those who affirm Jewish authorship, as is evident in his response (1980b) to Patricia Robinson's suggestion (1978) that the description of death in the Testaments must be traced to a Jewish background. H.C. Kee has characterized his proposals as "unwarranted and unnecessary" (1983, I:777). H.D. Slingerland has attempted to deal with the problem by no longer posing the question of authorship in terms of 'either/or,' Jewish or Christian. He prefers to address the issue in terms of 'both/and' (1977, 107-109). This approach, however, begs the question of the ethnic origin of the author. De Jonge's questioning of the easy assumption of source documents and the naive use of parallels from Jewish background to demonstrate Jewish authorship constitutes a welcome and helpful contribution to the methodological discussion.

<sup>23</sup>H.B. Swete has remarked: "The most that can safely be affirmed is that he [John] shared with the Jewish apocalyptists the stock of apocalyptic imagery and mystical and eschatological thought which was the common property of an age nurtured in the Old Testament and hard pressed by the troubles and dangers of the times" (1909, clviii). G.B. Caird has come to a similar conclusion: "The first readers were almost certainly well versed in the sort of symbolic language and imagery in which the book is written. Whether they had formerly been Jews or pagans, they would have read the language of myth as fluently as any modern reader of the daily papers reads the conventional symbols of a political cartoon" (1984, 6). George Beasley-Murray also accepts the

(b) The Old Testament. It is difficult to overestimate the extent to which the Old Testament has influenced Revelation.<sup>24</sup> Although no verbal parallels constituting quotations may be found, many themes, images, and phrasings have unmistakably been drawn from its pages.<sup>25</sup> The motif of plagues in Rev. 16 stems from Exodus 7-10. Rev. 18 echoes much of the lament over Tyre from Ezekiel 26-27, and John's model for the heavenly regions in Rev. 20-22 has in part been

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analogy of modern-day political cartooning (1978, 16-19).

<sup>24</sup>H.B. Swete, on the basis of an analysis of the Westcott and Hort edition of Revelation, has concluded that almost three-quarters of the verses in Revelation, 278 out of 404, contain Old Testament references (1909, cxi). He has enumerated close verbal parallels as follows: Psalms, 27; Isaiah, 46; Ezekiel, 29; and Daniel, 31 (cliii). See also R.H. Charles (1920, I:lxv) and F. Mazzaferri (1989, 385-386), whose list is based on Trudinger's work (1963).

<sup>25</sup>Lists of stylistic and verbal parallels to the Greek Old Testament have been compiled by T.C. Laughlin (1902), H.B. Swete (1909, cxi-cliii) and R.H. Charles (Charles 1920, I:lxv-lxxxii). Others have made studies of John's use of individual books. Isaianic references have been examined by Frederic Raurell (1983), Benito Marconcini (1976), and Attilio Gangemi (1974). A. Vanhoye's study of the Seer's use of Ezekiel (1962) is still widely cited. Philip Carrington has gone as far as to claim that Revelation was a "Christian re-writing" of Ezekiel, arguing that "the plan of Ezekiel is the plan of Revelation" (1931, 63-65). F. Rousseau (1971, 161-171) concurs in this estimate of the importance of Ezekiel. Danielic references have been examined by G.K. Beale (1984a,b). He has challenged the view that Ezekiel provided the overall structure for the Apocalypse, conceding only that it was a major source of descriptive imagery for the Seer. Beale rejected Carrington's use of literary parallels charts (1931, 63-65) to support the contention that Ezekiel furnishes the structural key to the Apocalypse. If 'midrash' charts were employed, he contended, it would become apparent that Danielic motifs served as structural and thematic keys. A thorough survey of prophetic literary forms which appear in Revelation has been attempted by F. Mazzaferri (1989).

based upon the description of the New Jerusalem of Isaiah 65-66.

But John has not used the Old Testament in the way that most other New Testament authors employed it. He has not cited proof-texts to justify his claims, nor has he proclaimed the fulfillment of ancient predictions. Neither has he alluded to Scripture in order to invoke direct recollection of specific Old Testament contexts. It was instead the spirit and tone of certain Old Testament passages that he sought to recall.<sup>26</sup> Scriptural language and imagery served a stylistic and literary purpose by providing him with an appropriate idiom for his prophecies.<sup>27</sup>

The Seer's easy alluding to Scripture has led some to conclude that he had been raised in a Jewish religious environment. Alan Beagley, for example, considered it to be decisive proof, declaring that "the conclusion seems inescapable that the author of the Apocalypse was himself a

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<sup>26</sup>Joseph Bonsirven has observed: "Dans le description de Dieu et de son trône (4:3,6,7,8), réapparaissent des images d'Ezéchiel (1:5,10,18,22,28) et d'Isaïe (6:2,3), mais employées dans une affubulation si différente qu'on ne peut parler d'emprunts . . . ." In his opinion, only expressive elements were involved, not substantial aspects of Old Testament passages. This borrowing was ". . . beaucoup plus dans les éléments d'expression que dans l'esprit et la substance" (1951, 12).

<sup>27</sup>H.B. Swete has offered this description of the Seer's method: "There is not a single instance in which the Christian prophet of the Apocalypse has contented himself with a mere compilation or combination of Old Testament ideas. His handling of these materials is always original and independent, and he does not allow his Old Testament author to carry him a step beyond the point at which the guidance ceases to lend itself to the purpose of his book" (1909, cliv).

Jewish-Christian" (1987, 62,180). Unfortunately, his contention that John was a Jewish-Christian rests on an unsupported stylistic argument which asks merely: ". . . could a Gentile Christian have used the Old Testament in such a unique and skilful manner?" (180). Beagley has provided nothing in the way of argument which would prevent his question from being answered in the affirmative. There is no reason to assume that a devout and intelligent Gentile-Christian could not have been fully proficient in the use of Scripture, since second-century writings such as 1 Clement and works by Justin and Irenaeus testify to just such skill.

## 2. Literary Style and Genre

Two aspects of the literary form of Revelation have been cited as evidence that the Apocalypse stems from a Jewish milieu. First, it has been claimed that John's 'midrashic' style of combining allusions to various Old Testament passages betrays the fact that the Seer was Jewish. A second and more common allegation is that John has revealed his ethnic background through his employment of the Jewish genre-model 'apocalypse.'

(a) The 'midrashic' style. Lars Hartmann, in the course of his study of Mark 13, declared that John's literary style was 'midrashic,' a style which was frequently used by Jewish authors. Appealing to certain aspects of Gestalt psychology,

he asserted that John's combinations of certain Old Testament passages could be attributed to the influence of unconscious principles of selection which had been imparted to him in the course of his Jewish upbringing. To support his contention that John's ethnic background was Jewish, Hartmann has claimed that the subject-matter of the Apocalypse was "to a large extent dependent on the Jewish tradition" (1966, 108-112).

Several objections to Hartmann's claims may be raised. First, as Hartmann has himself conceded, the Christian form of 'midrash' differed from that of Jewish apocalyptic in that it included parenetic elements in its basic structure (174-175). His analysis of Mark 13 in itself also bears eloquent witness to the fact that Christians were familiar with their own particular ways of combining Old Testament passages in 'midrashic' eschatological and apocalyptic discourse. Hartmann has admitted as well that the midrashic technique has been employed in the Old Testament. A Christian or biblical rather than a Jewish model for John's style cannot, therefore, be ruled out.

Second, it is difficult to believe that the unconscious Gestalt impelling the author of the Apocalypse to write in the way he did should be attributed completely to John's Jewish upbringing. His midrashic style, after all, manifests itself in Christian garb. The Christian Apocalypse is the only evidence for John's religious psychological process, and for that reason the Gestalt to which it witnesses should be

viewed primarily as the product of a Christian and not a Jewish mind. Hartmann's contention that the book's content was "dependent upon Jewish tradition" is completely unjustified, as has been shown above. There is virtually nothing in the subject-matter of Revelation which suggests a Jewish background for John. In the absence of such confirmation, the presumption that John's midrashic style stems from a Jewish background cannot be entertained.

Third, as E. Schüssler Fiorenza has warned, it is hazardous to draw conclusions which are based upon suppositions about an author's psychological processes. An appeal to a Gestalt of this kind depends upon evidence which lies hidden behind the text. A sounder approach, in her view, would be to define any 'Gestalt' in terms of a text's visible surface features and distinctive attributes; what she has termed its "overall form-content configuration" (1985g, 188).<sup>28</sup> If her advice is heeded for the Apocalypse, and the concept of Gestalt is transferred from the realm of psychology to the more tangible area of the structural study of literature, it becomes very difficult to claim that John

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<sup>28</sup>Schüssler Fiorenza's approach to Gestalt is exemplified in her response to the assertions of Heinrich Kraft, a source and tradition critic: "Kraft does not sufficiently perceive, however, the unitary composition of Rev., but equates structural elements of the composition with sources or stages of development. He neglects thereby the lesson which structural analysis has driven home that the total configuration (Gestalt) and composition of a work cannot be derived from its sources or traditions but only from the formal expressions and theological intention of the author. The intention is not something that lies behind the text, but it manifests itself in the form-content configuration of a work" (1985f, 164).

was a Jewish-Christian. Not only is the Apocalypse thoroughly Christian in its aims and expressions, it displays little concern for issues that were of importance to first-century Jewish-Christians, as will be argued in Chapter Two below.

A further objection to Hartmann's contention is that he has not acknowledged the great difficulty that scholars have experienced in attempting to define precisely what is meant by 'midrash.'<sup>29</sup> His claim that the Apocalypse or even Mark 13 represents a Jewish form of midrash means little if the concept itself cannot clearly be outlined. Since he has not demonstrated that any passages in the Apocalypse correspond closely to models of Jewish midrash, but only appeals to a general similarity in the use of Scripture, the allegation of a Jewish background for John rests on very weak evidence. It is true that John's manner of alluding to Scripture can be termed 'midrashic,' but only in the broad sense that he combines allusions from the Scriptures in new and creative ways. But such a talent cannot be denied a skilful Gentile-Christian author.

(b) The genre 'apocalypse'. It has often been observed that the Apocalypse of John presents itself as a prophecy as

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<sup>29</sup>For a discussion of the definition of 'midrash,' as well as for guidelines for 'comparative midrash' analysis, see Jacob Neusner, What is Midrash? (1987).

well as an apocalypse.<sup>30</sup> Its epistolary form, especially in chapters 2-3, also marks it as something other than a simple apocalypse. It lacks as well certain typical formal characteristics found in Jewish apocalypses. W. Kümmel, among many others, has noted that the book is not pseudonymous, and that "in distinction from Jewish apocalyptic there is lacking here any look back into the past or any forward view out of that fictional past into the present" (1975, 460-462). Yet because the book shares many formal and stylistic features with biblical and extra-biblical apocalyptic literature and claims to be a work of apocalyptic (1:1), Revelation can still legitimately be termed an apocalypse.<sup>31</sup>

The discrepancies in form and content, however, make it very difficult to characterize Revelation as a Jewish apocalypse. Nevertheless, this view has been advocated by several scholars, of whom John Collins is the most prominent. Collins' research, although its aim was not to prove that John's ethnic background was Jewish, carries with it the consequence that the author of Revelation was a Jewish-Christian. Collins has taken the lead in the attempt to

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<sup>30</sup>The prophetic, or prophetic-apocalyptic character of Revelation is advocated by Aune (1983a, 274-275), Beasley-Murray (1978, 19-23), Boring (1982, 26-28), Caird (1984, 10-11), Kretschmar (1985, 11), Ladd (1974, 293), Minear (1981, 16-17), Mounce (1977, 23-25), Schüssler Fiorenza (1985e, 133-140), and Sweet (1979, 41).

<sup>31</sup>Frederick Mazzaferri has refused to assign it to the genre 'apocalypse,' but has conceded nonetheless that its prophetic style includes eschatological elements, some of which are found in apocalyptic literature (1989, 379).

classify Revelation as a Jewish apocalypse, arguing that: (i) the formal literary characteristics of the book mark it as such; and (ii) although it sometimes departs from a Jewish genre-model in terms of certain formal literary characteristics it is still in essence a Jewish apocalypse.

(i) Formal Similarities. The Apocalypse of John has been classified by John Collins as a Jewish apocalypse because, in his opinion, it conforms to what he has identified as the genre 'apocalypse.' While serving as editor for Semeia 14, Collins advanced what is regarded as the basic working definition of this genre.<sup>32</sup> Having carefully delineated the formal literary features of Jewish apocalypses, Collins proposed a genre typology and formulated a definition which was inclusive of his suggested types.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>John Collins' definition reads as follows: "'Apocalypse' may be 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" (1979, 22).

<sup>33</sup>Collins has tabulated the formal characteristics of Daniel 7-12 and fourteen extra-biblical Jewish apocalypses, grouping this data into four major categories: manner of revelation; temporal axis; spatial axis; and concluding elements. These four categories were then further subdivided (1979, 28). He assigned texts to particular 'types,' according to where they best fit on the chart. His typology included: Type Ia (historical apocalypses with no otherworldly journey); Type IIa (apocalypses with an otherworldly journey and a review of history); Type IIb (otherworldly journeys with cosmic and/or political eschatology); and Type IIc (otherworldly journeys with only personal eschatology) (22-23). Collins' definition had the effect of enlarging the scope of texts which could legitimately be termed apocalypses. Some previous definitions of the genre which had excluded certain writings

Collins' work evoked a spirited reaction that was centered chiefly on the question of the degree of specificity which was appropriate for the definition of the genre. Several scholars, all of whom freely acknowledge that his approach represented an advance on previous definitions, have criticized him for being too specific and restrictive in his defining criteria. His scheme, in their opinion, excluded some texts which they considered to be genuine apocalypses. Lars Hartmann (1983, 338), Jean Carmignac (1983, 165 n.8), and Christopher Rowland<sup>34</sup> all urged him to reduce the number of specifics in his working definition. A broader formulation, they argued, would do greater justice to the diversity of apocalyptic texts and not force them into too narrow a mould. Collins, however, continued to argue for the

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because they lacked what were then considered to be indispensable features were rendered invalid by Collins' research, since he had demonstrated that considerable variation in form was possible within the genre. At the same time, the analytical method by which he formulated his definition permitted 'typical' forms of apocalypses to be more narrowly conceived than was formerly possible.

<sup>34</sup>Rowland's understanding of apocalyptic represents a less specific approach: "All this seems to indicate that we ought not to think of apocalyptic as being primarily a matter of either a particular literary type or distinctive subject-matter, though common literary elements and ideas may be ascertained. Rather, the common factor is the belief that God's will can be discerned by means of a mode of revelation which unfolds directly the hidden things of God. To speak of apocalyptic therefore, is to concentrate on the theme of direct communication of the heavenly mysteries in all their diversity. With such an understanding one can attempt to do justice to all the elements of the apocalyptic literature" (1982, 14). Rowland has characterized apocalypses as "visions or disclosures by heavenly envoys, which unfold various aspects of God's will and other mysteries of the world and man's life in it" (17).

need to define the genre 'apocalypse' in terms of specific, formal literary features (1984a, 8). Anything less, in his estimation, would make the task of classification virtually impossible.

It is unfortunate that Collins has not heeded the appeals of his critics. His claims rest on a very weak basis, especially with respect to his assumptions concerning the function of 'genre.' While Collins has appealed to a chief authority on genre-analysis, E.D. Hirsch, Hirsch's work appears to contradict Collins' implicit contention that the purpose of such analysis is to enable texts to be classified in a meaningful way. Collins (1984a, 6-7) readily accepted Hirsch's assertion that genre plays a key role in a reader's determination of the meaning of texts. Yet he has not paid sufficient heed to Hirsch's warning that interpreters avoid the naive use of a specific genre-model to classify texts into well-defined categories.

In Validity in Interpretation (1967, 110-11) and a decade later in The Aims of Interpretation (1976, 118-21), Hirsch emphasized that the concept of genre must always be considered heuristic, and that its arbitrary nature must be fully conceded. It was too broad a descriptive label to serve as a definition to which various texts were to conform. A failure to recognize this constituted for him a misuse of the concept. If a genre were too closely defined and overly specific, it would not assist in the determination of meaning but instead "set up a barrier to valid interpretation" (1967,

111). Hirsch argued for what could be described as a descriptive role for the concept of genre instead of a definitive one. The concept would thus be useful to broadly classify texts, but unreliable and unwarranted in an application that demanded more precise categorization.<sup>35</sup>

For Hirsch, the proper function of a genre-model was to provide both author and reader with a shared literary 'type.' The use of a particular genre provided a basis for communication between author and audience by establishing the expectations of meaning on the part of the readers. Readers would know from the start by its generic features whether a text were a personal letter, a governmental decree, a story, or some other form of writing. At the same time, an author was rarely obliged to adhere rigorously to a given model.

Hirsch's views are similar to those of literary critic Gérard Genette, who has observed that classical literary criticism from the time of Aristotle has rightly paid much more attention than modern criticism to the "anthropological aspects of literature." The concept of genre was for him also a broad one, and functioned mainly to arouse certain

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<sup>35</sup>An appeal to 'essence' as a precise defining factor of a genre was, in Hirsch's view, similarly mistaken: "To find the essence of a text by such procedures of abstraction is like finding the essence of a random set of objects (flag poles, billiard cues, pencils) in their being oblong. The distortion is complete when we choose one such object -say a phallus- as a primal ground or essence of the others" (1967, 110, n.28).

expectations on the part of the reader.<sup>36</sup> Genette further pointed out that departures from a given genre-model were in fact characteristic of literary works, arguing that literary works normally involved a kind of 'surprise' which was generated by tension "between the 'verisimilitude' expected and desired by the public and the unpredictability of creation" (1988, 73).

There is no reason to suppose that the Seer's work would not have been considered an apocalypse by its readers unless it conformed to a Jewish genre-model. A much less distinct genre-model would have sufficed to provide John's audience with an interpretive framework by means of which they could construe his writing. Their familiarity with similar types of apocalyptic in the Old Testament, for example, would have surely led them to view the Seer as an apocalyptic prophet.

Another problem with Collins' approach involves his apparent assumption that a Christian work such as Revelation can be treated as if it were a Jewish writing. But the subject-matter of Revelation is not distinctively Jewish, and consequently it cannot be presumed to have stemmed from a Jewish background. Only if it could be shown that the author of the Apocalypse was a Jewish-Christian could the notion be entertained that a Jewish genre-model provided the pattern

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<sup>36</sup>Genette says of classical literary criticism: "The distinction between the genres, the notions of epic, tragic, heroic, comic, fictional, corresponded to certain broad categories of mental attitudes that predispose the reader's imagination in one way or another and make him want or expect particular types of situations and actions, or psychological, moral, and aesthetic values" (1988, 72-3).

for his writing. Yet evidence that the Apocalypse derives from a Jewish cultural milieu is lacking. It is manifestly a Christian work, and displays no interest in matters of concern to Judaism or to Jewish-Christians.

E. Schüssler Fiorenza has for similar reasons rejected Collins' assertion that the book should be treated as if it were a Jewish apocalypse. Collins' approach, which ignored the differences which would have resulted from the fact that Revelation had been produced in a cultural context very different from that of Judaism, would in her view only lead to severe distortions. She was particularly disturbed by his efforts to impose a genre-model taken from Jewish tradition upon the Christian Apocalypse of John. Schüssler Fiorenza conceded the validity of grouping together apocalyptic texts stemming from the same cultural background in order to define a genre-model, but cautioned against any attempt to accomplish this across cultural boundaries. Endeavors to apply a "cross-cultural" model to Revelation, she claimed, were what had forced Collins into a fruitless attempt to account for the lack of certain formal literary characteristics in Revelation by appealing to essentialist analysis.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Schüssler Fiorenza has asserted: "Contrary to its own intention the argument [of John Collins] shows that the faith-perspective of early Christian apocalyptic had a creative impact on the structure and composition of Rev. It modified its composition with respect to basic elements of the cross-cultural genre-type of apocalypse. To maintain a significant and creative modification of the genre apocalypse does not deny that Rev represents a special form of this genre" (1983, 310). Schüssler Fiorenza's approach does not

Recent research on apocalyptic texts supports Schüssler Fiorenza's misgivings, in that it highlights the differences between Revelation and Jewish apocalypses. If the data provided by John Collins (1979) for Jewish apocalypses is used to specify 'typical' elements in the Jewish apocalyptic genre-model, and then these are sought in Revelation, a number of discrepancies are immediately evident. On the one hand, among Jewish texts, six of twenty-seven formal literary characteristics occur in nearly every text (13 of 15), including: visions, otherworldly mediator, pseudonymity, judgement/destruction of the wicked, otherworldly regions, and otherworldly beings. Three items are normally absent: epiphanies, present salvation, and parenesis by a Revealer.

In Adela Yarbro Collins' analysis of Revelation, for which she employed the same categories that John Collins had applied to Jewish texts, not all of these nine features occur (1979, 104). Of the six characteristics typically present in Jewish apocalypses, five are found in the Apocalypse.

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force an incongruent Jewish model on the Christian Revelation of John, and so is not required to account for divergences by means of an appeal to a supposed 'essence' of apocalyptic literature. It quite rightly assumes from the start that Revelation will differ significantly from Jewish texts due to the effect on it of its historical and cultural environment. This context was, as Schüssler Fiorenza observes, Hellenistic Asia Minor and the Church, although Jewish influence was by no means to be excluded altogether. In her research on Christian apocalyptic literature, Schüssler Fiorenza applied this principle in order "to delineate Christian apocalyptic as a distinctive type within the overall context of the apocalyptic phenomenon in the Greco-Roman world." In doing so, she was alert to possible influences from Jewish and Hellenistic sources, but above all looked to Christian background (306,310).

Pseudonymity is missing. Moreover, two of the three elements normally absent in Jewish apocalypses, epiphanies and paranesis by the Revealer, occur in Revelation. In total, only six of nine typical features of Jewish apocalypses are paralleled in Revelation.

In view of the substantial differences in formal characteristics between Revelation and Jewish apocalypses, as well as the difficulties on a theoretical level involving the proper function of genre and cultural barriers, it is best, therefore, that John's work not be classified as a Jewish apocalypse.

(ii) Similarities in 'essence'. The assertion that Revelation partakes of the 'spirit' or 'essence' of Jewish apocalyptic literature has long been one of the chief reasons why it and its author have been studied in terms of Jewish background. In addition, this claim effectively renders the evidence of departures from the formal characteristics and style of Jewish writings insignificant for the issue of authorship. Eduard Lohse, for instance, while conceding that Revelation was not overtly indebted to extra-biblical Jewish literary traditions, on the grounds of its tone and spirit included it among works of Jewish apocalyptic literature.<sup>38</sup> Georges Kretschmar as well, although seeking to demonstrate

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<sup>38</sup>Lohse has stated: "Zwar wird von dem Seher Johannes weder aus diesen hier genannten jüdischen Büchern noch aus anderen Apokalypsen an irgendeiner Stelle seines Buches ein wörtliches Zitat angeführt. Aber mit der Gedankenwelt der jüdischer Apokalyptik zeigt er sich auf das Engste vertraut und schöpft aus dem lebendigen Strom ihrer reichen Überlieferung" (1960, 2).

that the Apocalypse was a work of Christian prophecy and not an apocalypse, nevertheless discussed it mainly in terms of Jewish apocalyptic background.<sup>39</sup>

Although John Collins vigorously defended the need for a definition of an 'apocalypse' based on specific formal features so that the genre would be defined a precise manner (1984a, 8), he was not above employing essentialist analysis to strengthen his case for Jewish genre identification of the Apocalypse. It was Collins' contention that while Revelation lacked certain typical formal characteristics of an apocalypse, it nevertheless had motives and purposes in common with Jewish apocalypses. It was legitimate, therefore, to classify the work as a work of Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Collins' argument was formulated in response to an article by Bruce Jones. Jones had argued that because Revelation was formally unlike previous Jewish apocalyptic writings, it should not be termed an apocalypse.<sup>40</sup> In support of his view, Jones noted that the book itself claimed

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<sup>39</sup>Kretschmar asserts: "Traditions-geschichtlich gesehen gehört die Schau des Sehers der Johannesoffenbarung der jüdischen Apokalyptik, sie greift auf die Schriftprophetie des Alten Testaments zurück und sie ist von den prophetischen Traditionen der apostolischen Zeit her zu verstehen" (1985, 23).

<sup>40</sup>Jones was himself responding to James Kallas (1967), who had claimed that the attitude to suffering in Revelation differed from that found in Jewish apocalyptic, and even from the views of Jesus and Paul. Jones (1968, 326-7) replied to Kallas by demonstrating that the Apocalypse of John contained a variety of attitudes to suffering, including some which Kallas had not admitted.

to be a prophecy and not an apocalypse, that it was not pseudonymous, and that it lacked a command that it be sealed until a future time.

Collins, while conceding that there were formal discrepancies between Revelation and Jewish apocalypses, claimed that they represented only "superficial differences which do not reflect a significant change of perspective" (1977, 342). There were, he asserted, good reasons why pseudonymity, historical reviews, and sealing were not present in Revelation. For example, since John had received a revelation from the Risen Christ himself, there was no need to claim that the prophecies were the work of some ancient luminary. In turn, because the book was not said to date from centuries before, there was no need to present a review of history from that ancient time up to John's day, nor to command that the prophecy be sealed until a later era (1977, 332-333,341; cf. 1984a, 210-214).

For Collins, because the motives which had given rise to these features in Jewish writings had also been operative in Revelation, their absence from the Apocalypse was not significant. Shared motives had produced equivalent instead of identical literary expressions. Revelation, for instance, still sought to accredit itself as divinely authoritative, but by invoking the authority of Christ rather than of an ancient prophet. Revelation likewise affirmed God's knowledge of and control over history in ways other than by historical review. Again, Revelation's hortatory appeals to

its audience were, in his opinion, fully equivalent to the customary command to break the seal and expose the contents of an apocalypse to its readers.

In short, Collins concluded that Revelation, although it had "its own distinctive features, just as every apocalypse has," could legitimately be termed a Jewish apocalypse. He even went as far as to assert that the book could be described as an "intensification of Jewish apocalypses" (1977, 342).

The argument that Collins has made is attractive, and one can readily agree that Revelation and Jewish apocalyptic texts sought to accomplish many of the same objectives. Nevertheless, because his case relies on correspondences of motive rather than of specific features, his claim that it must be classified as a Jewish apocalypse cannot be substantiated. Why could a Gentile-Christian not have been motivated by the same concerns as a Jewish-Christian? Surely Gentile-Christians felt the need for warrants for the authority of their pronouncements, and would have cited Christ if they could have. Moreover, it could not only have been Jewish authors who wished to assert that God controlled history or who sought to make their work relevant to a contemporary audience. It would not be surprising that a Gentile-Christian affirmed God's dominion over the world or made forceful appeals to his audience, as has been done in the Apocalypse. Such views are often found in the Old Testament and in early Christian preaching. A Jewish source

for them need not be supposed.

Another attempt to classify apocalypses as Jewish in terms of essence has been made by E.P. Sanders. Sanders proposed as essential themes of Palestinian Jewish apocalypses "revelation and the promise of restoration and reversal" (1983, 458). These motifs, in his judgment, were both characteristic and "generative" of this genre.

Sanders' approach to essentialist analysis represents a helpful contribution to scholarship because it takes into account the social setting which would have given rise to particular literary works. In this case he identified Palestinian nationalism as a dominant factor in the production of apocalyptic literature. Sanders' criteria for classifying Palestinian apocalypses, however, are too general to be of help in determining the ethnic background of the author of the Apocalypse. Although the motifs of revelation, restoration, and reversal, are certainly present in Revelation, they cannot be attributed only to Jewish background. No doubt both Jewish and Christian authors were looking for a future reversal of fortunes for their communities and a restoration of God's kingdom, and both invoked the God of Israel as a guarantee that this would one day come to pass.

Sanders' social scientific analysis is best applied to literature stemming from a known social context. In the case of Revelation, the geographical context was Asia Minor and not Palestine, and the cultural context involved the Church

and not Israel. Jewish concerns are notably absent from Revelation, including any explicit interest in the restoration of Israel as a nation. The Apocalypse claims no connection with the Jewish community, contains few if any parallels to extra-biblical Jewish texts, and has no teaching in it which would have been of importance solely to Jewish-Christians. Without such corroborating evidence, the 'essence' of the work cannot be linked to a Jewish or Jewish-Christian community.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. Conclusion: John's Dependence on Jewish Literary Traditions

There are few parallels to extra-biblical Jewish writings in the Apocalypse. Verbal parallels are rare, and allusions are infrequent and can often be traced to a biblical source. With respect to literary style, the evidence that John was composing in a distinctively Jewish manner is not compelling. Revelation does not conform closely enough to the Jewish midrash style or the genre-model 'apocalypse' to indicate that Jewish rather than non-Jewish influences have shaped his style of composition.

#### D. Conclusion: John and Judaism.

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<sup>41</sup>In the past, the social setting of the Apocalypse of John was alleged to be Asian conventicles which were made up largely of Jewish-Christian refugees from Palestine. For a consideration of this possibility, see Chapter Two below, sec. A.4.

If the standard of what constitutes evidence of Jewish influence were set unreasonably high, it would be a simple matter to assert that there has been little of it in Revelation. There is, however, no need to resort to such a tactic in the case of the Apocalypse. On the contrary, there is so little that can termed distinctively Jewish in the content and literary form of Revelation that it is those who contend that Jewish influence has had a significant effect on the book who are often forced into special pleading to support their claim.

The Seer was uncomplimentary in his remarks about Jews and their synagogues, placing Judaism on a par at best with all other nations. The claim that John proposed a special role for converted Jews during the End-times period cannot be justified. He has not divided the Church into two components, Jewish-Christianity and Gentile-Christianity. He has employed images which describe the entire Church rather than any of its ethnic sub-groups.

John's literary style was very much his own. He did not slavishly follow existing literary forms, but freely drew imagery and descriptive language from the Old Testament, a sacred text common to both Jews and Christians. Appeals to a similarity between Revelation and the Jewish genre-model 'apocalypse' or to the 'essence' of apocalyptic literature are too weak to prove that the Seer was indebted to Jewish literary traditions.

It is true that the mere lack of evidence of Jewish influence and concerns in Revelation does not in itself indicate that the Seer's ethnic background was Gentile. The cosmopolitan nature of Hellenistic society encouraged a sharing of cultural and literary traditions, and there is no question that Jewish authors felt free to utilize forms and traditions which had originally appeared in non-Jewish writings.<sup>42</sup> As Adela Yarbro Collins has correctly observed, the mere presence of Hellenistic motifs does not preclude Jewish authorship.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>John Collins conceived of this interaction in terms of the general cultural development of the nations of the Near East rather than simply in terms of borrowing. He also rejected the traditional procedure of choosing among Old Testament influence, a process of syncretism, and Iranian influence as explanations for unusual motifs. In his opinion, parallel cultural development in Near Eastern societies, particularly the demise of monarchy, best accounted for similarities in literary expression. "We can no longer," he asserted, "consider Israelite tradition and Hellenistic syncretism as mutually exclusive alternatives. Rather we must appreciate that the particular manner in which tradition was adapted in Judaism in the Hellenistic age was molded by the Zeitgeist of the entire Near East" (1975, 34).

<sup>43</sup>Yarbro Collins has contended that any treatment of the background of Revelation which limits itself to only two options, Jewish or Hellenistic, will inevitably be one-sided and misleading. The question must not be framed in terms that demanded an "either/or" solution (1977). In previous discussion of the issue, Hans-Dieter Betz had argued that Jewish background was insufficient to account for the reference in Rev. 16:4-6 to the "angel of the waters," proposing that Hellenistic syncretism was the source of this image (1969; cf 1983). Peter Staples, on the other hand, had maintained that these verses could be adequately explained in terms of a Jewish, Old Testament vindication formula (1972). Yarbro Collins, taking a 'history-of-religions' approach, adopted a mediating position which allowed for both Hellenistic and Jewish influence. In her opinion, the actual situation was characterized by a "complex interaction of inherited tradition and environment" (1977, 367-368). Yarbro Collins has argued elsewhere that John had used Zodiacal

Studies of ancient Judaism by Jack Lightstone (1986) and Alan Segal (1986) convincingly demonstrate as well that non-Rabbinical Judaism was characterized by great theological diversity. Ernst Lohmeyer has even gone as far as to suggest that John was representative of a segment of Judaism that had embraced centuries-old Jewish gnostic speculation, arguing that John's lack of concern for the fate of Jerusalem was one indication of his acceptance of "der Strom einer jüdischen Gnosis" (1953, 196-197). In Lohmeyer's opinion, since the Seer embraced only certain of the cosmological and eschatological teachings which he had derived from Hellenism, he enjoyed the freedom of the more individualistic gnostic religion while still remaining a Jew.<sup>44</sup> In a similar vein, David Aune has contended that John's interest in Roman Imperial court ceremony (1983b) and Hellenistic magical practices<sup>45</sup> co-existed with his concern for traditions drawn

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symbols and other Hellenistic motifs in his work, just as other Jewish authors such as Aristobulus and Philo had in theirs (1984b, 1280,1286).

<sup>44</sup>Lohmeyer has maintained that John was seeking to transcend the nationalism and formal religious observances of Judaism: "Es ist hier ein Mittel gegeben, die zeitgeschichtlich bedingte Form des offiziellen Judentums zu überwinden und seinen Gehalt auf die universalen Wahrheiten einer Gnosis zurückzuführen" (1953, 197). Too little is known about Jewish Gnosticism to assess the validity of Lohmeyer's speculative proposals. One would need to compare Jewish Gnostic texts with the Apocalypse, and such texts are not extant. His notion of 'official' Judaism would also have to be clarified.

<sup>45</sup>Aune attempted to show how John had made conscious and deliberate use of magical motifs both to express a message about Jesus and to criticize the practice of divination. Regarding the mingling of religious traditions, he states: "Indirectly and unconsciously, John emerged from a Judaism

from his Jewish heritage.

In any case, the claim that John was a thoroughly Hellenized Jewish-Christian is of no significance for question of the authorship of the Apocalypse. A fully Hellenized John would, after all, be indistinguishable from a Gentile-Christian who was familiar with the Old Testament and a few important Jewish religious texts. Moreover, the assertion that John's ethnic background was Jewish is quite unnecessary to account for the evidence. Nothing in the subject-matter or form of Revelation demands that the Seer be presumed to have been a Jewish-Christian.

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already unevenly 'orientalized' since the sixth century B.C.E. (centering in Palestine and the eastern diaspora), and Hellenized since the sixth and fifth century B.C.E. (centering in Palestine and the western diaspora) . . . . More directly and consciously, John adapted religious, mythical and cultural traditions for both positive and negative reasons" (1987, 481). As in the case of Lohmeyer's claims about Gnosticism, too little is known about magical practices and John's exposure to them to make a convincing case that the Seer had been influenced by them.

## CHAPTER TWO

### JOHN AND JEWISH-CHRISTIANITY

The Apocalypse, as has been shown above in Chapter One, gives no indication that the Seer had more than a passing interest in Judaism. The situation is much the same with respect to evidence of his interest in Jewish-Christianity. In the letters to the Asian seven churches, for example, where Jewish-Christian issues were most likely to have been addressed, there is virtually nothing which would have been of concern only, or even chiefly, to Jewish-Christians.

Furthermore, unlike the Jewish-Christian Paul, the Seer never declared his ethnic background to be Jewish. He was also silent on two key Jewish-Christian issues, the Law and circumcision, topics on which Paul voiced very definite opinions (Phil. 3:3-7; Gal. 2; Rom. 3), and displayed little interest in matters of diet and purity<sup>1</sup>. As well, John did not speak of a special position for the Jewish nation in the plan of God, in sharp contrast to the Pauline treatment of this topic in Romans 9-11.

On the other hand, the Seer's views on most issues were remarkably similar to those held by the first-century Church

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<sup>1</sup>There is nothing in the Apocalypse resembling Paul's discussion of dietary issues in Galatians 2. The mention of "food offered to idols" in Rev. 2:14,20 probably does not refer to actual practice, as has been argued above in Chapter One, sec. B.2.d. In any case, these issues were discussed among Gentile-Christians as well as Jewish-Christians (1 Cor. 10:25; Acts 15:29).

as a whole. He has exhibited the usual suspicion of the world and moderate dualism which were characteristic of other Christian authors. His language and moral judgments were at times extravagant, but, like other New Testament writers, he did not advocate actual violence against non-Christians (Yarbro Collins 1983; cf. Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:26-39). He seemed to favour the unmarried state (Rev. 14:1), as did Paul (1 Cor. 7:1,8,27,38) and the Matthean Jesus (Mt. 19:12), and his calls for purity and steadfastness in the face of opposition and temptation are also found in the Epistle of James and in other early Christian writings.

Abundant evidence of his 'mainstream' views notwithstanding, a number of scholars have contended that on certain specific issues John has betrayed a Palestinian, Jewish-Christian outlook. These issues include: the Johannine circle; Christology; eschatology; church polity; and prophecy. The strength of such claims will be evaluated below, and subsequently an attempt made to situate John within a recent typology of early Christianity.

#### A. Alleged Jewish-Christian Motifs

##### 1. The Johannine Circle

Parallels in Revelation to material in the Gospel of John strongly suggest that the Seer was familiar with the

Johannine tradition.<sup>2</sup> It is not as clear, however, that this common material indicates that John was a member of a largely Jewish-Christian Johannine 'school' or 'circle.'

The mere fact that similar phrasings occur in both the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse has not induced many scholars to endorse whole-heartedly the contention that John was a 'full member' of such a group. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1985c, 107-108), for example, after having reviewed the list of Johannine parallels compiled by Otto Böcher (1980b, 294; 1981, 319), has rejected his claim that they prove that a Johannine community exerted a direct literary influence on the Seer. She has properly pointed out that mere similarity in diction is never sufficient grounds to assume similarity in meaning (1985b, 29 n.51), herself concluding that only a general familiarity with this broad Christian interpretive tradition can be supposed.<sup>3</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza's remarks have not gone unchallenged.

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<sup>2</sup>Lists of Johannine parallels have been compiled by H.B. Swete (1909, cxxvi-cxxx), R.H. Charles (1920, I:xxxii-xxxiii), and Otto Böcher (1981; 1980, 295-301).

<sup>3</sup>Adela Yarbro Collins has also restricted the evidential force of Johannine parallels, concluding that at best they reveal contact of a general nature. She has concluded that "the superficial similarities between the two works are best explained as the result of independent adaptations of common traditions. The common traditions do not support the idea of a school, but can be explained more simply as distinct early Christian interpretations of Jewish Scripture and tradition, or independent adaptations of certain simple and very early Christian traditions, such as the idea of Christ as paschal lamb" (1984a, 33). Yarbro Collins does not share Schüssler Fiorenza's view that John was a member of a non-Johannine prophetic/apocalyptic school, preferring to characterize him as an itinerant prophet (40-46).

Johannine specialist Raymond Brown has contended that Schüssler Fiorenza has under-estimated the force of the literary parallels (1979, 6 n.5). Nevertheless, Brown himself appears to have left open the question of the Seer's participation in a Johannine circle, since he has chosen not to use the Apocalypse as primary evidence in his attempt to reconstruct the history of the Johannine community (1979, 6).

A recent attempt has also been made by Stephen Smalley to reformulate the arguments in favour of direct dependence. But the stylistic and thematic parallels which he has adduced are by no means exact, and the similarities of expression and imagery he cites are of the sort that could easily be attributed to someone with only a limited knowledge of Johannine tradition.<sup>4</sup> The motif of the Exodus, the use of a two-level theological framework, and the employment of stylized language are by no means unique to Johannine literature.

## 2. Christology

Although the dominant feature of the portrait of Christ

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<sup>4</sup>Smalley has identified five common aspects of Revelation and the Fourth Gospel: (1) an ethos based on the Exodus-motif; (2) a two-level theological structure with a heaven/earth and time/eternity dualism, as well as the use of titles such as the Word, the Lamb and the Son of Man; (3) an early midrashic method of presenting material; (4) an employment of unpolished language; and, (5) a literary structure featuring repetition and dramatic presentation (1987). None of these is convincing in itself, nor is their cumulative force compelling.

in the Apocalypse is that of eschatological vindicator, other important aspects of the work of Christ have not been neglected. Christ is said to have died to redeem people from all nations (Rev. 5:9-10), to have a unique function as revealer (5:4-5), and to reign with God in Heaven (5:13). Thus the description of the work of Christ in the Apocalypse does not differ greatly from that found in other New Testament writings. Despite such similarities, Ulrich Müller has argued that Revelation propounded a distinctively Jewish-Christian 'Son of Man' Christology. This teaching was intended to promote the primitive belief in the imminence of Christ's return, a belief which he thought had been largely abandoned by the time of John (1972; 1976, 43-46).

Were John advocating such a view, it is surprising that he so seldom used the title 'Son of Man.' Indeed, Müller has offered very little in the way of proof for his hypothesis, leading Heinrich Kraft to question the historical basis of Müller's assertion. For Kraft, Müller's contention constituted only an interesting possibility: "Daß er es könnte, hat er bewiesen; nun zeige er, daß er kann" (1973, 88).

Criticism of Müller has also come from Adela Yarbro Collins, who has challenged his criteria for isolating what he alleged to be Jewish 'Son of Man' source material (1976b, 555-557). She concurred with T. Holtz (1971, 244-246) that Müller's method was overly speculative and did not do justice to the variety of expressions of Christology current within

the primitive Church.

M. de Jonge, who has also affirmed Holtz's criticism of Müller, has concluded that Müller has "not been very successful" in demonstrating John's use of Jewish-Christian source-material (1980c, 280). In de Jonge's opinion, the Seer relied chiefly on biblical imagery such as Psalm 2, and possibly some Jewish traditions, in order to enhance his description of Christ as Messiah. As for John's interest in the future coming of Christ, he has pointed out that other Christian authors had promulgated much the same views. This observation has also been made by E. Schüssler Fiorenza, who has likewise noted that the theme of the imminent expectation, which Müller claimed to be central to the thought of the Apocalypse, could be found in paranetic passages in many Christian writings. Consequently, it could not be considered unique to Revelation (1985e, 146-149).

Even scholars who accept the view that John was a Jewish-Christian have found little evidence of Jewish-Christian influence on the book's Christology. L.W. Hurtado, for example, in his investigation of the background of Revelation 4-5, has enumerated several obstacles which prevent the Christology of the Apocalypse from being characterized as distinctively Jewish. Neither the image of the twenty-four elders, he has concluded, nor the fact that the elders sat on thrones, was typical of Jewish portrayals of heavenly ascents (1985, 111-113). In addition, the exalted view of Christ in the Apocalypse represented for him

"a radical mutation of the monotheistic commitment characteristic of most of the ancient Jewish evidences" (117). Hurtado's judgement was that Christian traditions had so affected the Apocalypse that a distinctively Jewish influence was impossible to substantiate.<sup>5</sup>

George Beasley-Murray has also argued that Revelation's portrait of Christ was not significantly indebted to Jewish motifs. The image of the conquering Messiah who was the slain Lamb was in his view not Jewish, but found only in Christian tradition, as was the declaration that Christ had already conquered. Concerning the Christology of Revelation 5, Beasley-Murray, like Hurtado, concluded that Jewish influence could not be demonstrated.<sup>6</sup>

The unwillingness of Richard Longenecker to utilize the Apocalypse as evidence of a distinctively Jewish-Christian Christology lends tacit support to the contention that the Seer's views were not distinctively Jewish-Christian. In the introduction to his study of the Christology of early Jewish-Christianity, Longenecker had asserted that the form and

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<sup>5</sup>Hurtado summed up his study in these words: "The recognition that Rev. 5 reflects a profoundly Christian adjustment of the apocalyptic, heavenly-vision tradition suggests again that we are dealing with an author whose Christian faith served to re-arrange and re-orient, not merely to redecorate in a superficial way, his apocalyptic heritage" (1985, 117).

<sup>6</sup>Beasley-Murray writes: "To my knowledge there is no analogy in all Jewish apocalyptic literature to the eschatological teaching of Revelation 5, and for that there is a simple reason: the vision is an exposition of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ such as only a Christian prophet can give" (1974, 279-280).

language of Revelation pointed clearly to a Jewish upbringing for John. As a result, he listed the Apocalypse among texts which could serve as primary evidence for early Jewish-Christian Christology (1970, 21). Yet Longenecker did not make use of Revelation in his reconstruction of Jewish-Christian Christology, suggesting that its Christology was not of great consequence for his attempts to reconstruction of Jewish-Christian views.

### 3. Eschatology

There is no shortage of parallels in the New Testament to Revelation's eschatological motifs, indicating that the Seer was not alone in his interest in this subject.<sup>7</sup> Counterparts to imagery and themes found in 2 Thessalonians 2 and in the eschatological discourse of Jesus in the Synoptic gospels (Mt. 25; Mk. 13; Lk. 21), and in Didache 16 are particularly prominent in the Apocalypse. One of the stronger parallels has been delineated by R.H. Charles, who has pointed out that John's arrangement of seals in Rev. 6 corresponded in order and in subject-matter to the scheme of woes in the gospel accounts, albeit not to any single evangelist's description (1920, I:158-161). Louis A. Vos,

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<sup>7</sup>Christopher Rowland has affirmed that eschatology was of general interest to the Church. In his opinion, apocalyptic concerns were "not merely deviations from mainstream Christianity, at least in the earliest period, but can with some justification be regarded as the essence of the Christian message" (1982, 443).

following Charles' lead, has also analyzed these parallels, noting carefully the occasions on which Revelation's sequence differs from those of the gospels (1965, 186-187).

The fact that these motifs are common to different Christian texts would indicate that in the first century there existed some sort of Christian eschatological tradition, either written or oral. R.H. Charles, in an attempt to account for the disagreements in order and content among eschatological descriptions in the gospels and Revelation, asserted that a written Jewish or Jewish-Christian apocalypse underlay the gospel material and the similar passages in Revelation (1920, I:158-161). Unfortunately, his hypothesis of a Jewish background was not adequately defended. He did not attempt a reconstruction of this Jewish tradition nor did he explain how and why John had adapted it for use in the Christian Apocalypse.

David Wenham has advanced a better-supported theory regarding a common source for early Christian eschatological teaching (1984). Wenham affirmed Charles' view that a common tradition lay behind much of the eschatological material in the New Testament, but rejected Charles' claim that this was tradition had been based largely on a Jewish Grundlage. This traditional material, in his opinion, could only be termed Jewish in the sense that it had stemmed from Jesus. As a discourse tradition, it was in wide circulation in the first-century Church and constituted the primary source of the

common elements found in various New Testament passages.<sup>8</sup>

The contention that discourse traditions served as a basis for the eschatological views contained in Christian literature has also been affirmed by other scholars. L.A. Vos argued in his study of Synoptic traditions in the Apocalypse that John had directly cited a tradition not only about Jesus, but deriving from Jesus. This tradition he identified with the 'testimony of Jesus' (marturia Iêsou), which is mentioned on several occasions in Revelation (1965, 201-206). John Sweet has attempted to show that the overall literary scheme of Revelation was based on Jesus' eschatological discourse, chiefly as it is recorded in Matthew. In his opinion, the discourse served as the basis for the literary outline of the Apocalypse.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Wenham examined the gospels, Revelation, 2 Thess. 2, Didache 16, and other passages in an attempt to reconstruct a pre-Synoptic version of Jesus' eschatological discourse. He has acknowledged the different ways in which the pre-Synoptic material was treated by John and by the evangelists: "It is notable that both Paul and the author of Revelation appear to be much freer in their use of the traditions of the eschatological discourse than are the synoptic evangelists, which is probably because they are seeking to apply the tradition, not to transmit it. The evangelists, while interpreting the tradition, are seeking to preserve it and to hand it on" (1984, 373 n. 1). Wenham has pointed out that various motifs in the tradition which had once referred to Jewish matters had in their new contexts been made to serve Christian purposes. Of particular interest to him for further study was why John had applied the pre-Synoptic references about Jerusalem and Jews to the Church (372-373). A transfer of imagery from Jewish interests to Christian neither proves nor disproves that John was concerned with Jewish-Christian issues.

<sup>9</sup>"John's apocalypse," writes Sweet, "can be seen as an updating of his Lord's, an elaboration of its themes for his own time, much as his Lord had updated the themes of Daniel" (1979, 19-20). Sweet has done little to support his claim

Confirmation that John employed a tradition which was not specific to Judaism or to Jewish-Christianity is provided by a number of related studies. Parallels in Revelation to eschatological parables found in the gospels have been catalogued by Richard Bauckham (1977). His investigations of common motifs in the gospels, Didache 16, and I Thessalonians 5 led him to conclude that John had made use of the imagery found in Synoptic parables. These images, he asserted, had been "de-parabolized" before being used in their new contexts, although their Sitz im Leben remained that of eschatological paranesis (170). Calls to remain watchful, the image of Christ as guest, the figure of the thief in the night, and the phrase "he who has ears" were in his opinion all taken by John from common Christian tradition and used to enrich his prophecy (176). As well, eschatological images and motifs common to the Catholic Epistles and Revelation have been outlined by J.A.T. Robinson,<sup>10</sup> and George Ladd has observed that the motif of the over-lapping of the two Ages following the advent and resurrection of Christ was found in most Christian apocalyptic literature (1974, 293-294).

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that the written form of the discourse as it occurs in the Synoptic gospels served as John's literary model, but his point that the Seer is building on Christian discourse traditions remains valid.

<sup>10</sup>Robinson's list (1976a, 227) includes: Balaam (Jd. 11; 2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 2:14); charges of immorality (2 Pet. 2:14; Rev. 2:14,20); unclean clothing (Jd. 23; Rev. 3:4); the thief (2 Pet. 2:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15); the morning star (2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28; 22:16); and the new heavens and earth (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

#### 4. Church Polity

Akira Satake (1966), whose conclusions have recently been endorsed by M. E. Boring (1982, 28-29), has contended that the evidence of Revelation 1-3 points to the existence of a distinctive form of church order in Asia Minor. This order, which was dominated by prophets, stemmed directly from the Jewish-Christian practice of Palestine and had been introduced to Asia Minor by Jewish-Christian prophets and refugees. Satake contrasted the relatively free church order he found in the Apocalypse with the hierarchical system of bishops and deacons which he believed to be the norm for Gentile-Christian congregations. John, he concluded, demonstrated that he was a leading member of such a 'Palestinian' charismatic fellowship or conventicle by his display of authority in writing them letters.<sup>11</sup>

Satake's claims, as well as the similar opinions advocated by Ulrich Müller,<sup>12</sup> have been challenged by

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<sup>11</sup>Satake writes: "Diese Umstände weisen darauf hin, daß es sich bei der Gemeinde der Apokalypse um einen besonders jüden-christlichen Konventikel handelt dessen Tradition auf die früheste Zeit der palästinensischen Urgemeinde zurückgeht" (1966, 194).

<sup>12</sup>Satake's proposal has been reformulated by Ulrich Müller. Like Satake, he regarded John's prophecy as a foreign element in the setting of Asia Minor. But in his opinion, because John was a critic of the churches, his views would not have been representative of those of the congregations. The seven groups addressed by the Seer were for him not Jewish-Christian conventicles, although they could have included Jewish-Christians in their membership. Asserted Müller: "Es ist wohl irreführend von 'der Gemeinde der Apokalypse' als einem besonderen 'jüdenchristliche(n) Konventikel' zu sprechen. Diese Gruppe wird nirgends

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. She has criticized Satake for failing to take into account the strong influence of Pauline worship practices and missionary efforts in Asia Minor on the church polity of that area (1985e, 141). Her criticism is well-founded. The existence of Hellenistic oracular traditions bears witness that prophecy as a phenomenon cannot be limited to Judaism (Aune 1983a, 32-79). Christian prophecy also cannot be restricted to the Palestinian region or to Jewish-Christian groups, as 1 Cor. 12-14 demonstrates.

The Corinthian church order, in which prophecy was just one among many ministries exercised within the congregation, did not preclude other forms of leadership. The church order in Palestine as well, as far as it is reflected in the New Testament, was not purely charismatic. Paul termed the leading apostles in Palestine "pillars" (Gal. 2:9), testifying to the considerable authority they exercised as leaders within that community. Acts 15 suggests a similar hierarchical structure in its description of the leadership provided by the apostles and elders, and the account in Acts 6 implies that some sort of hierarchy of service obtained there. Palestinian church polity, therefore, does not provide a good parallel to the free, prophetic church order which Satake has maintained is evident in the Apocalypse.

Schüssler Fiorenza also voiced doubt about the validity of Satake's and Müller's reconstruction of the overall church

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greifbar. Johannes agiert viel mehr gegenüber den angeschriebenen Gemeinden" (1976, 34-35).

situation in Asia Minor. She objected to Müller's view that the church order represented by the writings of Ignatius was in fact intolerant of the practice of the prophetic gift. In her judgment, it was "questionable whether the letters of Ignatius provide a descriptive and historically accurate account of the actual situation in the churches of Asia Minor" (1985e, 142). Those letters had a polemical purpose which had led their author to play down the importance of anyone in authority apart from those who had been sanctioned by a bishop. Thus the letters presented a misleading picture of the actual situation. Prophecy was probably not dead in Asia Minor, an assertion she supports by noting that Ignatius himself (Philadelphians 7.1-2) claimed to have uttered prophecies (142-143).

Schüssler Fiorenza is no doubt correct that John's era was merely a time of transition from a freer church order to one dominated by a monarchical bishop. Although Ignatius' writings testify to a trend toward hierarchical rule in Asia Minor, at this early period in the history of the Church, it would be unwarranted to assume that the practice of congregational participation in worship and ecclesiastical functions had ceased entirely. As a consequence, no contrasting church order can be cited which would indicate that the order in the Apocalypse was foreign to this region.

The stylized and graphic, descriptive language in Revelation should likewise give pause to those who contend that the Seer was describing in detail an existing historical

situation. The addressees of the seven letters to the churches were called angels or messengers, not pastors or ruling prophets. They may or may not have represented actual congregational officials. The title 'angel' may simply have been employed to designate the congregation in general, thereby allowing John to avoid placing responsibility or blame solely on individuals.<sup>13</sup> The evident enigmatic character of these figures represents a serious problem for reconstructions such as Satake's which depend upon the precise delineation of their function.<sup>14</sup> The description of church life in the seven letters, therefore, is unreliable as evidence of the existence in Asia Minor of a Palestinian, Jewish-Christian church order.

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<sup>13</sup>David Aune has argued that John deliberately ignored local leadership because his purpose was to address the entire membership, all of whom he considered to be 'priests' (1983a, 205-206). Schüssler Fiorenza has rejected this view, claiming that it "lacks textual support." She thought that the addressees were prophets and not church officials (1985e, 145). Her contention, however, is no more strongly supported than Aune's. The actual function of these figures will likely never be known.

<sup>14</sup>Adela Yarbro Collins has made this point with respect to Akira Satake's entire case: "Satake's thesis about the origin of the seven congregations is not persuasive because of its highly speculative character. There is simply not enough positive evidence to support it. In any case, his conceptual framework is faulty, in part because of his assumption that prophets were leaders in an official or institutional sense in the early church. It is also very doubtful that Revelation reflects the actual polity of the seven communities" (1984a, 37).

## 5. Prophecy

There is no doubt that the Seer considered himself a prophet, seeing that he termed his work a prophecy (1:3; 22:18) and did not object when an angel referred to him as being among "your brothers the prophets" (22:9). Yet it is by no means clear that John was a Jewish-Christian prophet. The view that he was has been advocated by Ulrich Müller and David Aune. Müller has contended that the form and content of the prophecies recorded in Revelation betray its Jewish-Christian origins. A similar conclusion has been reached by David Aune who has not based his claim on the form and content of John's prophecies, but has instead argued that the pattern of the Seer's prophetic activity indicates that he was a Jewish-Christian.

(a) Ulrich Müller. Based on his analysis of the seven letters to the churches in Revelation 1-3, Ulrich Müller has concluded that John's prophecies were not patterned after Old Testament models, but were representative of contemporary Jewish prophetic practice (1975, 103). However, Müller's rejection of the Old Testament background for John's prophetic ministry is without foundation. Even a cursory reading of Revelation is sufficient to see that the Seer's ministry bears a strong resemblance to those of Old Testament prophets. John's visionary experience, for instance, was much like Ezekiel's. Like Ezekiel, he was in the Spirit and heard a loud voice behind him (Rev. 1:10; Ezek. 3:12). When

confronted by his vision he too fell to the ground and had to be told to rise (Rev. 1:17; Ezek. 1:28-2:1). The vision of heaven in Revelation 4-5 is very reminiscent of the visions in the early chapters of Ezekiel, and Revelation 18 strongly echoes Ezekiel 26-28. Isaianic imagery is prominent in Rev. 21 and common elsewhere. The warnings to the seven churches are similar to the oracles of Amos 1-2 (Rife 1941, 179). Allusions to Daniel abound, and the final warning not to add or take away from the words of John's book reflects injunctions in Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32.<sup>15</sup>

There is no reason to presume that John's style of ministry was more Jewish than biblical and Christian. On the contrary, his audience, which in all probability would have included many Gentile-Christians, would no doubt have appreciated a biblicalizing prophetic style more than one that was closely identified with Jewish models. As David Aune has pointed out, their familiarity with biblical phrasings and imagery would have greatly facilitated the reception of the Seer's message. In adopting this style, John would not have appeared sectarian or overly innovative, but instead to have been a genuine prophetic figure.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>The pervasive influence of Old Testament prophecy on John's work has been outlined at length by Frederick Mazzaferri. Regarding John's sources, he has concluded: "John dips his hand willingly into various diverse sources. But he bathes himself in one alone, classical OT prophecy" (1989, 383).

<sup>16</sup>"This means," Aune has written, "that John's presentation of himself as a prophet and his prophetic proclamation would have been accepted as such by the Christian communities he addressed only if his modes of

The Seer's work is similar to other Christian writings as well. The epistolary framework into which he cast his prophecy was well-known in the Church from the letters of Paul and other Christian authors. Moreover, his use of the Lord's Day as a setting and the inclusion of many apparently 'liturgical' elements and phrasings in his descriptions of heavenly activity suggest that he wished his prophecies to be seen as the product of a Christian worship service, the expected setting for such utterances.

John evidently sought to establish common ground with his Asia Minor audience rather than having himself appear unique or extraordinary. It seems unlikely, therefore, that he would have chosen the model of Jewish-Christian prophetic ministry, if such a distinctive model existed. Even if he were a Jewish-Christian, since his audience would have included Gentile-Christians he would have gained little by addressing them in a style that was not well known to them and which would probably not have been considered to be as authoritative. By adapting an Old Testament prophetic model with which Gentile-Christians were familiar, he would have appealed to and been accepted by a broader range of the

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speech and behaviour were recognizable as characteristically prophetic" (1983a, 207). With respect to the authority of John's work, he concluded: "In summary, John's self-presentation in the Apocalypse is very carefully and calculatngly constructed to obliquely legitimate his prophetic role by making indirect claims and by emphasizing those values, norms and behaviors which he and the Christians of western Asia Minor shared and by securing the absolute and unconditional acceptance of the divine authority of his apocalyptic message" (1981, 22).

faithful.

In any case, too little is known about Jewish prophecy in this period to be able to say that the Apocalypse resembles it.<sup>17</sup> This alone is sufficient to call Müller's conclusions into question. Attempts to distinguish between Jewish and/or Jewish-Christian prophecy simply cannot at this time surmount this obstacle.

(b) David Aune. David Aune has argued that it was the way in which John conducted his prophetic ministry rather than the content and form of his oracles which marked him as Jewish-Christian. For Aune, John's Syro-Palestinian prophetic style indicated that there was "a good deal of probability" that the Seer was originally a Palestinian Jewish-Christian (1983a, 212).

Aune's view of the nature of this Syro-Palestinian prophecy, however, differs from the commonly-held opinion that Palestinian prophets were itinerant, homeless ascetics. According to Aune, not all Palestinian Christian prophets

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<sup>17</sup>Aune has pointed out that in view of the paucity of examples of contemporary Jewish prophecy, Müller was unjustified in making generalizations concerning it let alone comparing it with Christian prophecy. Aune has also made a number of criticisms of Müller's allegations of a Jewish background for John's prophecies, repudiating the claim that on formal grounds Revelation could be identified as an example of contemporary Jewish prophecy. In his opinion Müller had: (a) made an unwarranted assumption that John would have followed a solely Jewish and not a combination of Jewish and Hellenistic oracular patterns; (b) relied on too idealistic a model for Jewish prophecy, presuming a pattern which never actually occurred; and (c) chosen his examples from hortatory sections of eschatological material and not from prophetic speech (1983a, 276-278).

were itinerant. Many fulfilled a prophetic commission to deliver a specific message in a particular place for an extended period of time. The ministry described in Revelation, in his view, was not a truly wandering style of ministry since it resembled "the itinerant ministry of the apostles in Acts and the Pauline letters more closely than it does the behaviour of early Christian prophets" (215).<sup>18</sup>

There is no reason to deny the validity of Aune's claim. As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has correctly concluded, the widely-accepted distinction between itinerant and local community prophets has often been greatly exaggerated (1985e, 144). In her estimation, it was better to view prophets primarily as teachers, some of whom, even though they wandered, always retained and often exercised the option of settling within a community. If this new characterization of prophetic ministry is accepted, the task of identifying prophetic styles becomes much more difficult. The traditional understanding of Palestinian prophetic ministry permitted one to classify a prophet according to either an itinerant Palestinian and Jewish style, or to a more settled, Gentile ministry. The revised view, on the other hand, yields too general a model to be useful in determining the

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<sup>18</sup>In the opinion of Adela Yarbro Collins, Aune has unnecessarily conceded that asceticism was linked with itinerancy in Palestinian prophecy. She does not see why the Seer could not have been an ascetic who concentrated his efforts in a specific locality. Moreover, she has asserted that Aune has not recognized that the ascetic subject-matter of the Apocalypse reflects John's primarily ascetic ministry (1984a, 46).

ethnic background of a given prophet. The broadening of the range of Palestinian prophecy to include both itinerancy and settled ministries has rendered the model much too imprecise for the purpose of categorizing prophetic styles according to ethnic patterns.

Because Aune has included both itinerant and settled styles within Palestinian prophecy and also within ministries in Asia Minor, the possibility that John was an Asian Gentile Christian cannot be ruled out. In addition, given the mix of Christians of various ethnic origins and the relative ease of travel in that era, any distinctive prophetic style, if it did exist, could not long have been limited to a single social group such as Jewish-Christians. If Gentile-Christians had indeed adopted Jewish-Christian habits, the mere fact that a particular style had been employed by a prophet would not point to a particular ethnic background. Aune's claim that John was a Palestinian is as a result no more compelling than Müller's assertion based on the literary form of the prophecies.

#### 6. Conclusion: Alleged Jewish-Christian Motifs

It has generally been recognized that Revelation gives no conclusive indication that John was a full participant in a Johannine community. Even some of those who assert that this was probable have been reluctant to base their contention on the evidence to be found in the book.

The Christological teaching of the Apocalypse is not distinctive enough to differentiate it from views held by other Christian authors. Ulrich Müller's notion that Revelation exhibits a Christology which is uniquely Jewish-Christian is too speculative and weakly supported to be convincing.

As for its eschatology, in view of the similarity of eschatological concerns between the Apocalypse and early Christian literature, the conclusion voiced by E. Schüssler Fiorenza that John had been indebted to what she termed "early Christian apocalyptic traditions" appears very probable (1985c, 103-106). However, because traditions of this kind would have been by nature the common property of all Christians, their presence in Revelation is not a reliable indicator of John's ethnic background.

The great difficulty in describing accurately the church order in Palestine and in Asia Minor renders the attempt to demonstrate Jewish-Christian influence on this basis unconvincing. A similar problem is encountered when John's prophetic style is examined. Not only is very little known about Jewish prophecy and prophetic ministries in Asia Minor, but John's pervasive use of a biblicizing prophetic style makes it impossible to associate him with a particular ethnic or geographical background.

Common to all these attempts to demonstrate Jewish-Christian influence on the Apocalypse is an inability to enumerate any sort of distinctive Jewish-Christian motifs.

The great similarity between Revelation and Christian teaching and practices in general effectively precludes such endeavors. Several reasons why Revelation is better situated within the Church in general instead of Jewish background have recently been outlined by Eduard Lohse, including: (1) Revelation's formal differences with Jewish apocalyptic writings; (2) the use of the epistolary form; (3) the call to Christians to witness to Christ and his death; (4) the presence of Christian hymns and songs about Christ and his kingdom; (5) the declaration of Christ's and God's lordship, and; (6) Revelation's emphasis on faith, hope and the near-expectation of Christ's return (1988, 321-338). It was his conclusion that John's views were neither distinctively Jewish nor exceptional within Christian literary tradition.

Even the cumulative effect of the various attempts to show Jewish-Christian influence cannot overcome the objection that the Apocalypse apparently belongs within the mainstream of first-century Christianity. John has displayed no special interest or concern for matters which would be of particular interest to Jewish-Christians and his opinions are typically similar to those held by other Christians at large.<sup>19</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup>E. Schüssler Fiorenza and John Sweet, both of whom believe John was a Jewish-Christian, have nonetheless acknowledged that his message was representative of more than just Jewish-Christian views. "Rev., therefore," wrote Schüssler Fiorenza, "should not be misunderstood as an only slightly Christianized form of Jewish apocalyptic theology but must be valued as a genuine expression of early Christian prophecy whose basic experience and self-understanding is apocalyptic. If this is the case we must understand Rev. in the context of Christian theology and community" (1985e, 140). Sweet, despite his reservations

conclusion that he was a Jewish-Christian, therefore, is unwarranted.

### B. Jewish-Christian Typology

There is no indication in Revelation that the Seer was interested in matters of importance to Judaism. He has, for example, mentioned neither circumcision nor the Law. It is for the most part solely on the basis of the enigmatic references to food offered to idols in Rev. 2:14,<sup>20</sup> that John has been said to be concerned at all with ritual or dietary matters (see Chapter One, sec B.3.d). His connection with Jewish-Christianity, as has been shown above, is equally tenuous. As a consequence, it is not a simple matter to determine where John should be situated within a typology of Jewish-Christianity.

The typology of early Christianity recently proposed by Raymond Brown appears to have the best chance of locating the Seer within Jewish-Christianity, if indeed he belongs there. Brown has categorized both Jewish-Christians and Gentile-Christians according to four types of what he terms Jewish/Gentile Christianity (1983).<sup>20</sup> Type One Christians

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about John's emphasis on judgement, has in the course of his studies come to an "awareness of a deep community of thinking and feeling between John and other NT writers" (1979, 51).

<sup>20</sup>This merging of Jewish-Christians and Gentile-Christians under the label of Jewish-Christianity has also been advocated by Jacob Jervell. He has asserted, for example, that the Gentile-Christian Luke was in effect a Jewish-Christian, arguing that because Jewish-Christianity

"practiced full observance of the Mosaic law, including circumcision, as necessary for receiving the fullness of the salvation brought by Jesus Christ." Type Two "did not insist on circumcision as salvific for Gentile Christians but did require them to keep some Jewish purity laws." Type Three "did not insist on circumcision as salvific for Gentile Christians and did not require their observing purity laws in regard to food." The final category of Type Four Christians "did not insist on circumcision and Jewish food laws and saw no abiding significance in the cult of the Jerusalem Temple" (1983, 77-78). Advocates of the "radicalized" form of this fourth option believe that "Judaism has become another religion belonging to the old covenant" (78).

If the Seer were characterized according to this typology he would clearly not represent a Type One Christian. No one has argued that he was an extreme legalist of the sort who favoured the circumcision of all Christians and to whom Paul was so vigorously opposed (Gal. 2). If he were classified as Type Two or Three, it would have to be with

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was dominant in the first-century, a Gentile-Christian like Luke should be considered de facto to be Jewish-Christian. He supported his argument by outlining several aspects of Luke's work which he thought pointed to Luke's interest in Jewish traditions, and concluded that "it is not decisive whether Luke himself was by birth a Jew or Gentile. What is important is that he thinks as a Christian Jew and that he is using the categories typical of Jewish Christianity" (1984, 42). Although Jervell's chief indicator, mention of circumcision, is absent in Revelation, he claimed that John must have been a Jewish-Christian because "the term Ioudaios has positive connotations in the Johannine tradition (Rev. 2:9; 3:9; 7:1ff.)" (44). The Seer's description of Judaism, however, is far from positive, nor is it always favorable in Johannine writings.

great caution, given the paucity of evidence in the Apocalypse. He cannot be likened to the Jewish-Christian Paul, since he is silent on the fate of the Jewish nation and on important aspects of its people's customs.<sup>21</sup> Although Paul was strongly opposed to requiring that Jewish practices be required of Gentile-Christians, John has said nothing about this issue. In addition, Paul's statements about his Jewish heritage and his explicit views on Israel in God's plan have no parallel in Revelation.

It may have been the lack of explicit evidence that John was a Jewish-Christian which led Adela Yarbro Collins and Steven Thompson to attempt to argue for John's Jewish background on a different basis. They have both asserted that John's employment of a highly Semitized Jewish-Greek dialect or style betrayed his ardent Jewish nationalism. If he took the trouble to communicate in this peculiar language, they have argued, it was because he was strongly opposed to the prevailing Hellenistic culture.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ernst Lohmeyer believed the Seer to be a Jewish-Christian, but conceded that John's Jewish background was even less of a factor in the formulation of his views than it was for Paul. Lohmeyer writes: "Deshalb ist der Seher höchstens insofern 'Judenchrist', als er wahrscheinlich semitischen Geblütes ist (s.u.). Er ist von Religion und Geist des Judentums gerade in der Aufnahme jüdischer Vorstellungen schärfer geschieden als es ein Paulus war" (1953, 195).

<sup>22</sup>According to Yarbro Collins, "it would have been an act of cultural pride of a Jewish Semite. Such an act fits well with the type of message expressed in Revelation, as we shall see. It is analogous to the refusal of some American blacks to 'talk right'" (1984a, 47). In Steven Thompson's view, John's nationalistic feelings were so strong that he employed this unusual Greek so that "the necessity of

Yarbro Collins has accounted for the Seer's apparent lack of concern for circumcision and Sabbath observance by supposing that he had been alienated from Judaism (1984b). Yet such a disdain would be surprising if John were as much of a nationalist as she has claimed, since Jewish nationalism at that time was closely tied to the observance of important Jewish traditions. Her contention that the Seer was also expressing anti-Roman sentiments provides no support for her view, since these feelings could as easily have been voiced by a disaffected Gentile.

In addition, several studies which call into question the assumption that a Jewish-Greek dialect ever existed (see Chapter Four, sec. A.2.) substantially weaken their case. If no distinctive Jewish-Greek existed, then the Seer could not have been employing it to display his pride in his Jewish heritage. Moreover, if it was only a biblical-sounding style which he had adopted, there is no reason to think that only Jewish-Christians would have appreciated it.

It appears, as a result, that John fits best into the category of Type Four Christian. Not only has he displayed no interest in the traditions of Judaism, but at times was harshly critical of Jews. His references to the synagogue of Satan and to Jews as liars were highly polemical. His concern for the Temple was not for its earthly reconstruction

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expressing sacred themes in a gentile tongue was rendered less distasteful" (1985, 108). The claim that a Jewish social setting has affected the style of the Apocalypse is discussed below in Chapter Four, sec. D.3.

or its for cult, but for its symbolic and heavenly significance. The new heaven and earth would have no need of a Temple. In addition, the claim that the Jews like all other nations would someday come to bow down to the Church (3:9) reflects the stance characteristic of the radicalized form of Brown's fourth category.

It would, however, be straining the available evidence to assign John to Brown's Type Four category. John's attitude to the earthly Temple is not explicit in the Apocalypse. One can only speculate that his interest in the heavenly Temple betrays a negative view of the earthly structure. He may not have had any opinion on the matter at all.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, his critical comments about Jews are not central to his message. He has not engaged in a sustained polemic against Judaism. His stance towards it could best be described as indifferent, although negative in some respects.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>F. Rousseau has proposed that John, having left Jerusalem prior to its destruction to live in Ephesus, sided with the Stephen-party against Peter and James on the issue of the importance of the Temple (1971, 146). Yet the Seer's views in Revelation are not comparable to those found in Stephen's speech in Act 7. Unlike Stephen, John did not recount the history of the Jewish nation, criticize the Jerusalem Temple or explain why he thought that the Jews were not what they should be.

<sup>24</sup>Alan Beagley has argued that the Apocalypse was a polemic against unbelieving Judaism rather than against Rome (1987). Such an attitude would constitute a great concern, albeit negative, for Judaism. The Seer, however, has said far too little about contemporary Judaism for Beagley's argument to be convincing. Moreover, despite Beagley's pleas, it is not at all evident that John was referring to Palestine and its Jewish population in his prophecies. In most cases the meaning of the passages is far from clear.

Conclusion: Jewish-Christian Typology. John cannot easily be situated within Jewish-Christianity, even such a broad typology as the Jewish/Gentile scheme proposed by Raymond Brown. The closest the Seer comes to any of his categories is Type Four. Yet even this category is ill-suited to the portrait of John which can be constructed on the basis of the available evidence for his views. John seemingly had little interest, positive or negative, either in Judaism or in matters of concern to Jewish-Christians. He has not so much as hinted that his heritage was Jewish, let alone shown pride in such an upbringing. His critique of Judaism is at times sharp, but it is not sustained or informed enough to demonstrate a significant negative concern for Jews and their customs.

Brown's typology has been constructed to encompass the views of both Jewish-Christians and Gentile-Christians, and therefore it provides no way of determining the ethnic origin of a given believer. It would be especially difficult to decide this issue in the case of the Seer, since Brown's fourth category is so close to what others have termed Gentile-Christianity.

### C. Conclusion: John and Jewish-Christianity

There is nothing in Revelation that compels and little that might lead one to believe that John was a Jewish-Christian. While his indebtedness to the Old Testament and

his knowledge of Christian tradition is obvious, indications of his acquaintance with issues important to Jewish-Christians are lacking. This does not exclude the possibility of his having been born a Jew. Even if he were, however, his Jewish background has evidently had no effect on his work. His views are indistinguishable from those of a Gentile-Christian.

PART II

## CHAPTER THREE

### SCRIPTURAL ALLUSIONS IN THE APOCALYPSE

The claim that the Hebrew/Aramaic Bible was the chief source of the scriptural allusions in the Apocalypse, if it could be substantiated, would lend strong support to the contention that John's ethnic background was Jewish. It is very likely, though not certain,<sup>1</sup> that a person acquainted with these Semitic tongues would have been Jewish.

The leading advocates of the assertion that John relied on Semitic biblical texts for his allusions are R.H. Charles, Leonhard Trudinger and A. Vanhoye. Charles has maintained that the Seer translated directly from the Hebrew Old Testament, although conceding that John "was often influenced in his renderings by the Septuagint and another later Greek version" (1920, I:lxvi). According to Trudinger, the Seer had been "informed chiefly by the Hebrew Scriptures" (1963, 175; 1966) as well as being conversant with targumic synagogue traditions (1986). Vanhoye, whose research on scriptural allusions in Ezekiel is often cited, has concluded that in the Seer's citations of Ezekiel, "on constate

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Fitzmyer has asserted that knowledge of Aramaic was not restricted to Jews, claiming that the Gentile Luke had learned Aramaic in his native Antioch. Fitzmyer did not think that Luke knew Hebrew, however, and so attributed most of the alleged Semitisms in Luke's Gospel to Hellenistic usage or to the influence of the Septuagint (1985, 116-125).

qu'elles reproduisent le texte hebreu" (1962, 460).<sup>2</sup>

No one has made a systematic effort to determine the extent of John's dependence on the Greek versions of the Old Testament. H.B. Swete has come closest to doing so, concluding on the basis of his own research that dependence upon the Hebrew Old Testament was unlikely. In his opinion, "departures from the LXX may perhaps in every instance be otherwise explained" (1909, clvi).

The first section of this chapter examines problems of method which make it very difficult to decide the question of which version of the Old Testament John had employed. A second section considers nine of the more important passages in Revelation adduced as evidence by Trudinger which diverge from Septuagint renderings of corresponding biblical material to a relatively minor extent. The third part of this chapter is devoted to three passages in the Apocalypse material which differ to a greater extent from what is found in the Septuagint.

#### A. Problems of Method

Attempts to prove that John used Semitic sources for his biblical allusions take as their starting-point the fact that they differ from Septuagint renderings of the passages on

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<sup>2</sup>In like manner, Attilio Gangemi (1974) and Benito Marconcini (1976) have maintained that John was dependent upon the Hebrew for his citations of Isaiah.

which they are based.<sup>3</sup> Trudinger has even gone so far as to assert that these divergences demonstrate that the Seer hardly knew the Greek Old Testament at all. For Trudinger, passages in the Apocalypse for which there was a strong probability of dependence on the Septuagint had actually been indirectly drawn from this source. They represented citations of Christian testimonia-books or of Septuagintal passages, titles or slogans which were well-known in oral form (1966, 175).

Trudinger has not done justice to the allusive style of the Seer. In his judgment, John had quoted the Semitic versions of biblical texts, including the Targums, instead of loosely alluding to the Greek Old Testament. Both he and Vanhoye have also rejected the idea that the Seer's divergences from the LXX can be explained by his familiarity with various other text-traditions of the Greek Bible. Because these issues have so great an effect on the question which version of the Old Testament John employed, they must be given due consideration before individual passages are examined.

#### 1. John's Allusive Style

There is no doubt that the Apocalypse contains no direct

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<sup>3</sup>For the purposes of this chapter, 'Septuagint' will be understood to be the text which is contained in Ralphs' edition of the Greek Old Testament. The Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (Elliger and Rudolph 1977) will be referred to as the MT (Masoretic Text).

quotations of either the Septuagint or other Greek versions of the Old Testament. If he was citing the Greek Bible at all, his utilization of it can only be termed allusive. Some scholars have even eschewed the unqualified use of the term 'allusion' to describe his use of the Old Testament. Jon Paulien, for example, has observed that several different kinds of allusions can be found in Revelation. He has proposed five categories to describe them, ranging from "certain" to "non-allusion," adding as well the category "echo," which describes stock apocalyptic and biblicizing language and imagery in widespread use in the first-century (1988, 46-48). Paulien did not argue that the term 'allusion' should not be used to describe the Seer's use of biblical material in general, only that this more general usage must be conceded if the word was to be employed at all (40-41).

G.K. Beale has likewise attempted to avoid speaking of allusions. In his opinion, it was better to classify John's use of biblical material in terms of 'dependence.' He suggested three categories of dependence: clear, probable, and possible dependence or echo (1986, 543). His approach provided a framework for his attempts to identify which version of the Greek Old Testament John had used for certain of his biblical references.

In whatever manner John's style is described, there is no reason to dismiss the possibility that he was dependent for his 'allusions' on the Greek Old Testament. His allusive

style, since it always avoided quoting the Bible, would necessarily have led to divergences from the LXX. It apparently was not his intention to cite the Bible, but to employ only some of its language and imagery. Such divergences, as a result, need not be explained in terms of his having cited Semitic versions of biblical texts.

Leonhard Trudinger's contention that John translated Hebrew or Aramaic biblical passages is in any case subject to the same problems as is the claim that he was dependent upon the Greek Old Testament. Trudinger has argued that many of John's 'allusions' were in fact quotations of the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament. Since the Seer was obviously not quoting the Hebrew directly, Trudinger characterized these 'quotations' as "word combinations in a form in which one would not have used them had it not been for a knowledge of their occurrence in this particular form in another source" (1966, 82, n.1). An analysis of John's 'quotations,' however, reveals that they can often only be termed 'paraphrases' of the Hebrew. John rarely kept to the biblical text for more than a few words at a time.

In summary, the Seer's allusive style represents a paraphrasing of the Bible rather than a quoting of it. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to use them as evidence that he used the Hebrew/Aramaic version rather than the Greek.

## 2. Targumic Parallels

The Targums which contain parallels to the Apocalypse are very late in date relative to Revelation. Although some may still feature Palestinian traditions from the first-century, it is impossible to be certain which derive from this era. Some have attempted to confirm the early date of certain material by pointing to the occurrence of similar motifs in Revelation, but this is a hazardous procedure given that most of the parallels adduced constitute brief phrases and striking images. To go even further in this line of argument and contend that John took this material from the Targums is clearly an unwarranted exercise of circular reasoning.<sup>4</sup>

As J. Fitzmyer has maintained, it cannot simply be assumed that the Aramaic language of the Targums is

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<sup>4</sup>Daniel Harrington has been highly critical of Martin McNamara's claims (1972) that Targums can be assumed to represent first-century Jewish traditions, claims which have been cited by Trudinger in support of his contentions regarding the Apocalypse. Wrote Harrington: "In my opinion, however, McN.'s arguments for the early dating of these texts (post-exilic midrashic practices, parallels to prayers used in the early synagogue, liturgy, freedom in paraphrase, geography, early forms of midrash, premishnaic halakah, and parallels with the NT) are not sufficiently sharp to be convincing" (1973, 253). In Harrington's judgment, McNamara's dependence on circular reasoning was too great to justify any conclusions based on a "convergence of evidence" (254). He reiterated this criticism with respect to the work of J. Forestell (1979): "The lateness of the manuscript evidence, the late character of the language, and the tendency toward circular reasoning in dealing with the parallels between the targums and the NT all present serious methodological obstacles to those who wish to use these documents in NT research" (1982, 322-323).

representative of what obtained in the first-century (1968a; 1968b). The Aramaic of the Targums was literary and dated to a different period in the history of the language. In addition, Fitzmyer has astutely observed that some scholars have been too quick to assume that the meaning of a certain expression in a Targum corresponds fully to the meaning of a similar expression found in the New Testament. As he has pointed out, a given expression may have borne an entirely different sense in its targumic context. The first step in research involving parallels, therefore, was "to ascertain what the Targum itself means and not to be facilely misled by superficial, verbal similarities" (1968b, 325).

None of the parallels to the Targums in Revelation are distinctive enough to warrant the conclusion that John was dependent upon these traditions. Trudinger, for example, relying heavily on the work of Martin McNamara, has listed only brief parallels such as "who is, was comes" (Rev. 1:4), "kings and priests" (1:6), the "second death"<sup>5</sup> (2:11), hostility against Balaam (2:14), washing of garments (7:14), and "king of kings, lord of lords"<sup>6</sup> (17:4) as passages which have been based on targumic traditions (1986, 78-79; cf. 1966, 86-88). None of these is particularly striking, nor of

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<sup>5</sup>Joseph Fitzmyer has observed that M. McNamara (1966) has not based his claims with respect to the "second death" on evidence from the Palestinian Targum alone, but has cited a number of other targumic texts as well, seriously undermining his assertion (1968b, 325).

<sup>6</sup>G.K. Beale has made a good case that this phrase derives from the non-Theodotionic Septuagint tradition (1986, 540).

a length that would permit a convincing case for dependence to be made. Furthermore, as Earl Richard has argued in his review of similar claims of dependence upon targumic traditions for certain passages in Acts, McNamara and Trudinger must first eliminate other more likely explanations such as redactional changes to Greek biblical texts before recourse is made to Semitic background.<sup>7</sup>

While Trudinger was careful to acknowledge that his case for targumic dependence had not been proven, he nonetheless claimed that it was highly probable that the Seer had been familiar with Palestinian synagogue traditions, whether oral or written (1986, 79). But even this modest assertion is open to question, in view of David Golomb's research on the Targum Neofiti. Golomb has made a convincing case that targumic texts had little to do with oral traditions. He pointed out that the claim that Targums represent synagogue traditions was very weakly attested in the ancient period,

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<sup>7</sup>Richard has concluded that there is no need to resort to Semitic sources of influence to account for non-Septuagintal renderings of biblical passages in Acts. In his opinion, such divergences could usually be explained in terms of redactional adaptations. He writes: "Far from indicating Semitisms in Acts . . . the seemingly aberrant OT quotations . . . increase our knowledge of the author's creativity in the use the Greek OT and the theological/ exegetical traditions of his day" (1980, 341). He has also warned that Luke's use of different recensions of the Greek Old Testament should not be dismissed as readily as it is by some (340). In a similar vein, Francis Fallon has criticized Bruce Chilton's work (1979) on targumic parallels in the gospels, asserting that Chilton "draws his conclusions on the basis of the departure of these quotations from the MT and the LXX. If, however, the thesis of F.M. Cross is correct that there were various Hebrew and Greek textual traditions present in first-century Palestine, then C.'s analysis becomes less certain" (1981, 123-125).

and doubted that written Aramaic translations were in common use in the first century.<sup>8</sup> The fact that translators were known in this era, he added, was insufficient grounds to assert that literary translations such as Targums had been in widespread circulation (1985, 6-7). If Golomb is correct, then this is another reason why Targums should not be cited as evidence of first-century Jewish traditions.

### 3. Septuagint Text Traditions

Taking their cue from R.H. Charles, L. Trudinger and A. Vanhoye have asserted that divergences from the LXX in John's allusions demonstrated that the Seer had been dependent upon the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament. Although Vanhoye did not deny that many variant text-traditions of the Greek Old Testament were in circulation in John's day, if there was little or no evidence for the Seer's divergent readings, he argued that sound method required that one assume that John

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<sup>8</sup>Golomb argues: "Targum is first and foremost rabbinic literature -- it is no more a collection of orally transmitted stories, random translations, recorded versions, etc. than is the Hebrew Bible on which it is based and which it purports to translate" (1985, 3). Regarding ancient evidence for use of Targums in synagogue meetings, he states: "As many scholars have pointed out, this identification of the Targum with synagogue activities derives from an opinion, given by R. Ika, in the name of R. Hananel who attributed it to Rab in the Babylonian Talmud, (Meg. 3a) where Rab interpreted the word meporas in Nehemiah 8:8 as referring to the Targum" (1985, 5).

had made use of the Hebrew text.<sup>9</sup>

Vanhoye's demand is overly stringent, in view of his acknowledgement that such variant text-traditions of the Greek Bible existed in the first century. The argument from silence to which he appeals is in this case not convincing enough to rule out John's dependence on non-extant Greek versions of the Old Testament.

Trudinger has made a much stronger claim, maintaining that John did not have access to Greek texts other than the LXX. In support of his contention he appealed for support to the theories promulgated by Paul Kahle and A. Sperber that early Christianity relied on a 'standard' LXX, the text of which was very much like what is now known as the LXX. Kahle had argued that there was no such thing as an original Greek version of the Old Testament, or proto-Septuagint. Instead, he thought that the various extant Greek recensions were independent, locally-made Greek targums. Trudinger concurred, affirming that these local texts had been used "in the various centres of worship and learning" (1963, 29-30). Furthermore, he asserted that the Seer had had access to only one of these recensions, a text which could be characterized

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<sup>9</sup>Argues Vanhoye: "Mais pourquoi ne pas penser que l'auteur de l'Apocalypse avait à sa disposition une autre traduction grecque, très fidèle à l'hébreu et indépendante de la LXX? Assurément, cette hypothèse rendrait, elle, parfaitement compte de tous les faits et on ne peut, a priori, la considérer comme impossible. Mais c'est une pure hypothèse, qui ne s'appuie pour le moment sur aucune preuve réelle. En conséquence, la solution la plus normale, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, semble être d'admettre une utilisation directe du texte hébreu" (1962, 461).

as a 'standard' Christian version.<sup>10</sup>

However, this theory of Greek targums has been thoroughly discredited in recent times, a view voiced by S. Jellicoe, who has noted that the "consensus of opinion" has been overwhelmingly contrary" to Kahle's view (1968, 62). Jellicoe has also remarked sardonically that "one looks in vain . . . for some definition of this 'standard Christian text'" (1968, 61). Ralph Klein has observed as well that "recent years have seen the waning of Kahle's theories" (1974, 4).

D. Barthélemy's work on a scroll of the Minor Prophets is often acknowledged as the main reason why Kahle's claims have been set aside. It was Barthélemy's judgment that this scroll represented a recension (often termed kaige) of the LXX rather than an independent translation. As a result, he asserted that "sur un plan général nous pouvons conclure avec fermeté que cette découverte n'apporte aucun fondement à la thèse des targums grecs chère à Kahle" (1963, 272). Barthélemy's conclusion was endorsed in large part by F.M. Cross,<sup>11</sup> and partly on the basis of his study of Göttingen

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<sup>10</sup>Trudinger described this 'standard' version in this way: "The version or text-type which by the third century A.D. came to be recognized popularly as the Septuagint can thus be explained as being, in its over-all textual character, representative of one of the most widely accepted of these Greek versions in the late pre-Christian and early Christian times" (1963, 31). In Trudinger's opinion, John had made little use even of this text.

<sup>11</sup>Cross wrote: "The kaige Recension is of decisive bearing on the debate over Septuagint origins. It brings a qualified victory to the Lagarde school, despite Paul Kahle's protestations to the contrary" (1964, 283). Trudinger

957, John Wevers has declared that "it is now fully established" that the Lagarde approach to the LXX "is in principle methodologically correct even though in detail matters have proved to be more complicated" (1977, 244).

The lack of conformity of John's allusions to the LXX cannot, therefore, be taken as proof that he was dependent upon Semitic texts. The existence of the variant traditions and the likelihood that some incorrect LXX renderings would have been corrected by bilingual copyists<sup>12</sup> makes it possible that the Seer had been utilizing alternate texts. For Adela Yarbro Collins, the discoveries of Barthélemy and others called the assumptions of Charles and those who followed him into question.<sup>13</sup> Trudinger's dependence upon Kahle seriously undermines his contention that divergences from the LXX reflect John's use of Semitic texts.<sup>14</sup>

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remained unconvinced by Cross' evaluation (1963,30).

<sup>12</sup>John Wevers has made the helpful suggestion that a certain amount of "unconscious revising" took place in the pre-Christian period because these bilingual scribes knew the Hebrew text so well (1977, 244).

<sup>13</sup>Yarbro Collins states: "The existence of this recension [the kaige] undercuts Charles' theory that John used the original Hebrew or Aramaic text. It raises the possibility that the deviations from the Septuagint reflect the kaige recension and not the Hebrew and Aramaic text" (1984, 48-49).

<sup>14</sup>Trudinger betrays an inconsistent approach to this issue in readiness to attribute divergences from the 'standard' Masoretic text to variant Semitic text-traditions. "There are indications," he has declared, "that the writer of Revelation knew a Hebrew textual tradition other than that preserved in the Masoretic tradition" (1966, 88).

## B. Minor Divergences from the Septuagint

In the analysis which follows, nine of the fifty-three passages which Trudinger has alleged to be quotations of the Semitic Old Testament will be examined to determine whether the allegation that John depended on the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament can be sustained. These nine occurrences are the only passages for which Trudinger has contended that there are "strong grounds for supposing textual dependence" solely on the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament (1963, 184-187). For this reason they constitute the strongest evidence of his assertion regarding the Seer's use of Semitic texts.

Table A which follows contains the relevant portions of the nine passages in Revelation with their Old Testament counterparts. An attempt has been made to present this evidence in the same form that Trudinger used in his study. References to Trudinger's work are provided for each passage.

Table A  
MINOR DIVERGENCES

(a) Rev. 1:7b (Trudinger 1963, 48): και ὀψεται . . . και οἵτινες αὐτον ἐξεκεντησαν, και κοψονται ἐπ' αὐτον  
Zech. 12:10: και ἐπιβλεψεται προς με ἀνθ' ὧν κατωρησαντο και κοψονται ἐπ' αὐτον

Zech. 12:10 (Theod.): και ἐπιβλεψεται προς με ὄν ἐξεκεντησαν

(b) Rev. 4:9 (63): τῷ ζωντι εἰς τους αἰωνας των αἰωνων  
Dan. 12:7: ἐν τῷ ζωντι εἰς τον αἰωνα

(c) Rev. 6:16 (64-65): και λεγουσιν τοις ὄρεσιν και ταις πετραις· πεσετε ἐφ' ἡμας . . . κρυψατε ἡμας

Hosea 10:8: και ἐρουσιν τοις ὄρεσιν Καλυψατε ἡμας και τοις βουνοις· Πεσατε ἐφ' ἡμας

Hosea 10:8 (MT): ואמרו להרים כסונו ולגבעות נפלו עלינו

(d) Rev. 10:10 (72): και κατεφαγον αὐτο (το βιβλαριδιον), και ἦν ἐν τῷ στοματι μου ὡς μελι γλυκυ

Ezek. 3:3: και ἐφαγον αὐτην (την κεφαλιδα), και ἐγενετο ἐν τῷ στοματι μου ὡς μελι γλυκαζον

Ezek. 3:3 (MT): ואכלה [המגלה] ותהי בפי כדבבש למתוק

(e) Rev. 14:8 (78): ἐπεσεν ἐπεσεν Βαβυλων

Isa. 21:9: πεπτωκε πεπτωκε Βαβυλων

Isa. 21:9 (MT): נפלה נפלה בבל

(f) Rev. 14:15 (80): πεμψον το δρεπανον . . . ὅτι ἐξηρανθη ὁ θερισμος

Joel 3:13: ἐξαποστειλατε δρεπανα . . . ὅτι παρεστηκεν ὁ τρυγητος

Joel 4:13 (MT): שלחו מגל כי בשל קציר

(g) Rev. 19:17,18 (88): λεγων πασιν τοις ὄρνεις τοις πετομενοις . . . Δευτε συναχθητε εἰς το δειπνον . . . ἵνα φαγητε . . . σαρκας ἰσχυρων

Ezek. 39:17,18,20: [εἶπον παντι τῷ ὄρνειῳ πετεινῷ] . . .  
Συνάχθητε και ἔρχεσθε . . . ἐπι την θυσιαν . . . και φαγεσθε . . . κρεα γιγαντων φαγεσθε

Ezek. 39:17,18 (MT): ובארו האספור כל-כנהף . . . [אמר לצפור כל-כנהף]  
על-זבחי . . . ואכלתם בשר . . . בשר גבורים תאכלו

(h) Rev. 20:12 (90): και βιβλια ἠνοιχθησαν

Dan. 7:10b: και βιβλιοι ἠνεωχθησαν

(i) Rev. 21:27 (93): οὐ μη εἰσελθη εἰς αὐτην παν κοινον

Isa. 52:1: οὐκετι προστεθησεται διελθειν δια σου . . .  
ἀκαρθαρτος

Isa. 52:1 (MT): לא יוסיף יבא בהף . . . טמא

(1) Rev. 1:7b (Zech. 12:10,12). The verb exekentêsan has been used in Rev. 1:7b instead of katôrchêsanto, which has been employed in the LXX. Trudinger has conceded that this verb is found in citations of this passage from Zechariah in other Christian texts and Greek versions of the Old Testament. Nonetheless, he has maintained that it is "still possible to speak in terms of the O.T. text on which the quotation was dependent" (1963, 48-50, no. 6). Regrettably, Trudinger has offered no reason why this biblical influence should be considered anything but indirect. A Semitic source need not be assumed if this verb was so well-known in Christian circles. The Septuagint and Revelation have certain other terms in common as well, such as kopsontai.

(2) Rev. 4:9,10 (Dan. 4:34; 12:7). Trudinger (1963, 63, no. 17) has asserted that tôi zônti eis tous aiônas tôn aiônôn was translated from the Aramaic of Daniel 4:31 and the Hebrew of 12:7. However, he has not accorded much weight to the similarity of this phrase to the LXX-Theodotion rendering tôi zônti eis ton aiôna, nor to his own admission that parallels in Christian texts were probable. It is clear that this phrase was commonly employed by Christian authors, the dative form being found in 1 Thess. 1:9 and Heb. 9:14 and the genitive form in Mt. 16:16 and 2 Cor. 3:3.

In view of its Christian use, the source of this phrase can hardly be restricted to Daniel. If a longer version of

this phrase had appeared in Daniel, perhaps one which contained the phrase tôi kathêmenôi epi tôi thronôi which occurs in the Apocalypse, Trudinger's opinion would carry some weight. As it stands, the phrase is too brief and common to warrant the conclusion that it has been quoted from Daniel.

(3) Rev. 6:16 (Hosea 10:8b). Although he has acknowledged the discrepancy in word-order between the MT and Revelation, Trudinger has not shrunk from asserting that this allusion was actually a citation based upon the Hebrew of Hosea (1963, 64-65, no. 19). Since kruptein and petrais have been used in Revelation instead of the Septuagint's kaluptein and bounoi, he has concluded that the Seer was not familiar with the LXX but had "made his own independent translation from the Hebrew text."

Yet Trudinger has not explained why the Seer has chosen to render the Hebrew gibe'âh as petrais. This Hebrew word was never translated in the LXX by this term, no doubt because the Semitic word usually referred to rocky cliffs or heights, whereas petra indicated mere rock. Had he indeed intended to render the Hebrew with petrais, the Seer could be accused of incompetence as a translator. But if it be allowed that John was paraphrasing Greek and not Semitic versions, such a change from bounoi represents no problem at all.

It is clear as well that the word petrais was a better

choice than the Septuagint's bounois because the people who called out for protection were already in the mountains surrounded by rock, as 6:15 indicates (eis tas petras tôn oreôn). Regarding the use of krupsate, it once again is paralleled in the preceding 6:15 by ekrupsan, and better conveys the sense 'to hide' than would the Septuagint's kalupsate, which in its context appropriately bears the sense 'to cover.'

(4) Rev. 10:10 (Ezek. 3:3). According to Trudinger, Rev. 10:10 and Ezek. 3:3 were "so similar in respect to their word-order that the Revelation passage can fairly be called a quotation" (1963, 72-73, no. 26). For confirmation of this, he pointed to the Seer's use of biblion (the NA26 has biblaridion) and gluku instead of the Septuagint's kephalis and glukazon, declaring that the Revelation text had "all the appearances of a straight-forward independent translation from the Hebrew text."

Although there are enough discrepancies between the LXX version of this passage and that of John to preclude it being termed a quotation, there is no reason why Rev. 10:10 cannot be characterized as a paraphrase of the Greek. Its vocabulary is similar enough to suppose that John had been dependent upon the Greek rather than the Hebrew, eight of the twelve words in the Apocalypse passage being identical to those in LXX, and the other four being close. Its word-order is very similar to the LXX as well.

As for the discrepancies in vocabulary noted by Trudinger, John has probably employed biblaridon instead of kephalis for two reasons. First, this was the term he had used to begin this section (10:2) and he evidently chose to retain it throughout. Second, kephalis was in all likelihood not a term that was much used in John's day. It occurs rarely in the LXX, mainly in Exodus and in this section of Ezekiel, and is found only once in the New Testament, in a quotation from the LXX (Heb. 10:7). John cannot be held to account for avoiding such a seldom-used term.

The term glukazon occurs only in Ezekiel 3:3 and not at all in the New Testament. On the other hand, the adjective glukus was more common, and that was no doubt the reason that John used it. The suggestion of an independent translation is entirely unnecessary to account for his usage.

(5) Rev.14:8 (Isa. 21:9). It was Trudinger's contention that the Seer used epesen instead of peptôke in his partial quotation of Isaiah 21:9 because he "was not familiar with the phraseology of this lament as found in any of the Greek O.T. versions" (1963, 78, no. 32).<sup>15</sup> Yet John's use of the

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<sup>15</sup>Trudinger has briefly noted that there are omissions in the Greek rendering of this phrase "in many manuscripts" of the Old Testament. He has nonetheless accepted the double peptôke in his discussion (1963,78). This declaration is also found as a single and double declaration in the manuscripts tradition of Revelation cf. 14:8; 18:2). Since a double declaration is found with the similar phrase ouai ouai hê polis hê megalê in 18:10, 16 (ignoring a weak variant), it is likely that John preferred the repetitive phrasing for this angelic lament.

orist seems to be appropriate in this context. In the LXX, the perfect peptôken indicated that the city lay in ruins, and the description was continued with the aorist sunetribêsan. In the Apocalypse, the reverse was the case. An aorist was used to describe the simple fact of city's fall, and then a perfect (pepotiken) continued the account, stressing the debased state of the nations. The perfects in Revelation and in the LXX appropriately highlighted different actions, and consequently the Seer cannot be expected to have followed the LXX version exactly.

Given that John clearly knew the perfect of piptô (Rev. 2:5 and 9:1), it is strange that if, as has been claimed, John was translating the Hebrew of Isaiah, he did not employ a perfect tense as the professional translator of the LXX had. Was he a better translator, or was he getting it wrong? It is more likely that he was simply paraphrasing the passage, and nothing precludes his having paraphrased the Greek in this case.

(6) Rev. 14:15 (LXX=Joel 3:13; MT=4:13). Trudinger has asserted that two clauses in Rev. 14:15 have been "quoted undoubtedly from the M.T. of Joel 4:13, of which the Revelation text is a straightforward translation" (1963, 80, no. 34). He supported his claim with the contention that "the text differs in every word from the LXX of Joel 4:13." Apparently Trudinger thought that John's use of exêranthê and therismos instead of the Septuagint's parestêken and trugêtos

proved his assertion.

It seems, however, that Trudinger was seriously in error in his view that Rev. 14:15 was dependent upon Joel 4:13. In Rev. 14:15, an angel announced the time for reaping, declaring that the harvest was "dried up" (exêranthê), a term well-suited to describe the circumstance of a grain-harvest. In the Hebrew of Joel, on the other hand, the verb bâshal has been employed, a term which usually referred to ripening in the sense of "to boil, seethe." Such a description was appropriate for a harvest of grapes rather than grain, a notion confirmed by the fact that the account in Joel subsequently mentions wine-presses. Furthermore, the Hebrew verb has been rendered in the LXX by paristêmi rather than xêrainô, the latter never being used to render bâshal in the LXX.

In Rev. 14, it was only when another angel appeared several verses later (14:17-20) that a grape-harvest was in view. Only in that context did the Seer employ the verb trugêson, a cognate of the term which Trudinger had expected in 14:15. Consequently, no parallel to Joel is contained in 14:15 and the question of dependence upon the Semitic text is moot.

(7) Rev. 19:17,18 (Ezek. 39:17-20). Trudinger's main contentions regarding this passage are questionable (1963, 88-89, no. 45). First, he has over-stated his observation that "for the most part the vocabulary used by the writer of

Revelation in these brief phrases from Ezekiel 39, shows no agreement with the LXX version." Most of the discrepancies in vocabulary involve tense and number, not choice of terms. For example, legôn has been used instead of eipon, pasi . . . orneois for panti orneôi, and sunageste . . . phagête for sunachthête . . . phageste.

Second, his contention that "the Revelation text is in substantial agreement with the Hebrew text of these phrases" is also misleading. The allusion in Revelation diverges from both the Greek and the Hebrew. For instance, the Hebrew and the LXX speak of "every bird," while the Seer refers to "all birds." As well, Trudinger is wrong in his assertion that Revelation's deipnon correctly translated MT-Ezekiel's zebach. In LXX-Ezekiel, the context required that the more specific Greek word thusian be used, since the scene was unquestionably one of a sacrificial ceremony. But in Revelation, the context involved mere carnage, so that the more general term deipnon was the appropriate choice to describe the impending feast.

There can be no doubt, as a result, that the Seer was paraphrasing the passage in Ezekiel so that it would suit its new context. At the same time, there is no reason to suppose he was quoting the Hebrew text rather than the Greek. The word-order in the Apocalypse is so similar to that of the LXX that recourse to the idea that he was dependent upon the Semitic Old Testament is unnecessary.

(8) Rev. 20:12 (Dan. 7:10b). Trudinger has argued that the clause kai biblia êneôchthêsan (ênoichthêsan in NA26) was not dependent upon any Greek version of Daniel because it employed the noun biblion instead of biblos (1963, 90-91, no. 48). His claim is weak for two reasons. First, the "book of life" image was too common to concur with Trudinger that it must have been "quoted from the judgement scene of Daniel 7." Second, John's use of biblion can readily be attributed to personal preference. The term biblion occurs over twenty times in Revelation, as opposed to two occurrences of biblos, suggesting that he preferred the former. Since it is evident that he often paraphrased Old Testament texts, there should be nothing surprising in his use of this word.

Trudinger has also failed to concede that two of the three words (kai and êneôchthêsan) he has cited from Revelation are found in the Greek versions of the Daniel text. This similarity would suggest dependence upon the Greek rather than the Semitic version of the Old Testament.

(9) Rev. 21:27 (Isaiah 52:1). Although he has included this passage among those for which there are "strong grounds for supposing textual dependence" upon the MT, Trudinger has admitted that "the writer of Revelation apparently presents a somewhat loose paraphrase of the Hebrew text" (1963, 93, no. 51). Trudinger is correct that the Revelation passage is a paraphrase. The adverb "any longer," which is found in both the MT (yôsîph) and the LXX (ouketi), is absent from the

Apocalypse. In addition, there is no term which corresponds to Revelation's adjective pan in either the Greek or Hebrew versions.

It is difficult to argue that the Revelation passage was dependent upon the Hebrew of Isaiah rather than the Greek. John's use of koinon where the Hebrew has thâmê is very unusual. In the LXX, akathartos has almost always been employed to render this term, as it has been in Isaiah 52:1, while koinos has never been so employed. The fact that the Seer did not follow the lead of the LXX and employ akathartos, therefore, does not indicate that he had based his allusion on the Semitic Old Testament.

Conclusion: Minor Divergences. None of the divergences which Trudinger has adduced as evidence of John's dependence upon the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament is convincing. All are paraphrases of the Old Testament, but the discrepancies in word-order or vocabulary are better accounted for in terms of the Seer's adaptation of Greek versions. In addition, since there is no evidence that John knew Semitic tongues, recourse to the Semitic rather than the Greek Old Testament for the source of his allusions is unwarranted.

#### C. Major Divergences from the Septuagint

Two of the three occurrences in this category involve renderings of Old Testament LXX texts which differ from those

found in the LXX, but conform to the MT (Rev. 3:7; 22:2). In the remaining occurrence, an allusion has been made to a passage which is absent from the LXX but is found in the MT (Rev. 18:18).

(1) Rev. 3:7 (Isa. 22:22). The LXX has rendered the Hebrew maphtecha of Isaiah 22:22a as 'glory' (dôsô tên doxan Daud autô) instead of 'key.' The Seer, on the other hand, has employed 'key' (ho echôn tên klein Daud), which has led some to conclude that he was dependent upon the Semitic text.

However, even those that advocate this view concede that John's allusion does not conform at all well to the Hebrew text either. R.H Charles, for instance, has asserted that the Hebrew was familiar to him but that he "deals independently with the text" (1920, I:86). Charles has also included this allusion in his category "Passages based on the Hebrew of the O.T. (or the Aramaic of Daniel) but influenced (in some cases certainly, in others probably) by a later form" of the Greek Old Testament such as is preserved in Theodotion" (1920, I:1xxx). Trudinger has likewise characterized it as a "free translation of the Hebrew text, or, conceivably, of the Aramaic." Unlike Charles, Trudinger has rejected as a source translations (presumably their precursors) such as those of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, despite the fact that the allusion "shows considerable affinity" with such text-traditions (1963, 59).

Given that Rev. 3:7 diverges to such a great extent from

the Hebrew, and that it bears so much resemblance to various Greek versions of the Old Testament, many manuscripts of which contain a reference to a 'key,' the claim that this allusion must be traced to a Semitic source is unjustified.

(2) Rev. 22:2 (Ezekiel 47:12). The LXX has rendered the Hebrew piryô lâchâdâshâw yebakêr of Ezekiel as 'first-fruit' (tês kainotêtos prôtobolêsei), whereas Revelation translates this passage as 'monthly' (kata mêna hekaston apodidoun ton karpon). In addition, the Hebrew 'âlêhû ('leaves') has been rendered by anabasis instead of phulla, which is found in the Apocalypse. This has led Charles (1920, II:176-177), Vanhoye (1962, 447-448), and Trudinger (1963, 93-94) to the conclusion that John had been dependent upon the MT.

Although R.H. Charles has contended that these divergences prove John's "independent use of the Hebrew text," he has admitted that the Seer has made a free rendering of the Hebrew of Ezek 47:12. Trudinger has also conceded this, claiming that Rev. 22:2 represented a "paraphrase of either the Hebrew text or the Targum" (94). This makes it somewhat difficult to determine whether John was dependent upon the Hebrew or on a non-LXX Greek translation or was adapting the Greek text for his own purposes.

Indeed, such a Greek rendering was in circulation at some time after the Seer's era and may have been extant in

his era, although there is little evidence of this.<sup>16</sup> In its context in Revelation, the idea of 'monthly' fits in quite well, whereas the LXX 'first-fruits' would have been awkward. Twelve trees giving fruit over twelve months appears to be what John is describing, and this image could have been constructed apart from the MT reading of 'months' (cf. twelve tribes in Ezek. 47:13). Context could also have led John to employ phulla rather than anabasis. The term anabasis as a translation of the Hebrew term for 'leaves' is found only in Ezekiel 47:12 in the LXX, and its context would have led readers to suppose 'growth' in the sense of 'leaves' for this singular usage.

(3) Rev. 18:18 (Ezekiel 27:30-33). A. Vanhoye has maintained that John was alluding to the MT of Ezekiel in his declaration tis homoia tēi polei tēi megalēi; in Rev. 18:18.<sup>17</sup> A comparable passage translating the Hebrew mi ketsôr is missing from the LXX.

It is possible that the Seer did not base this statement on Ezekiel, but on some other biblical passage. A similar phrasing is found in the 'Song of Moses' in Ex. 15:11 (tis

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<sup>16</sup>In the Göttingen edition, Ziegler notes that the reading eis tous mēnas autou is found in Marchalianus (Q mg), Lucian (L''), and Theodoret of Cyrillus (1952, 322). The Lucianic reading is significant because many think that a proto-Lucianic text had been employed in the first century by Josephus (Klein 1974,10; cf. Feldman 1984, 800-801). If this were the case, then John could have been familiar with it as well. There is no variant phulla recorded for anabasis, only anadosis.

<sup>17</sup>1962, 447. Vanhoye has also pointed to other discrepancies in this passage in Rev. 18, but they are too weak to serve as proof of dependence upon the Hebrew text.

homoios soi;), a text with which John was well acquainted (Rev. 15:3), as well as in certain Psalms (34:10; 70:19; 88:8). It was also used elsewhere in the Apocalypse in another context (13:4, tis homoios tõi thêrion;). The statement itself in any case seems fairly common and well-suited to its context, which would make recourse to the Semitic text to explain its appearance here unnecessary.

Another possible reason for its use is that John knew Greek biblical translations which contained this passage. Vanhoye himself has conceded (1962, 447) that such an early Greek rendering of this text is found in Origen's Hexapla (tis hôsper turos katasigêtheisa en mesô thalassês, Göttingen edition; Ziegler 1952, 220).

This evidence of variant text-traditions would not be significant had Origen been correcting the LXX with reference to the Semitic version. But it is widely recognized that Origen corrected his 5th column from Greek texts which best reflected the Hebrew, a procedure which would have carried more weight with his Christian colleagues (Jellicoe 1968, 111; Thackeray 1914, 69). S.P. Brock is likely correct in his assertion that Origen was not attempting to reconstruct an original text of the Old Testament, but to provide an up-to-date, authoritative translation for apologetic purposes (1974, 343-346; cf. Klein 1974, 7-8). A fresh translation of the Hebrew would not have been necessary for this purpose. Origen would instead have consulted Greek texts which may have been extant as well in John's day.

Conclusion: Major Divergences. Because John has paraphrased the Old Testament in these three allusions, it is difficult to establish his dependence on the Semitic Scriptures. Had major divergences of this kind been more numerous and of greater length, a better case for such dependence could be made. As it is, dependence on other Greek biblical versions is the likely reason, and there is no need to appeal to Semitic Scriptures.<sup>18</sup>

#### D. Conclusion: Scriptural Allusions

Neither the major nor the minor departures from the text of the LXX are sufficient proof that John was dependent for his allusions on the Hebrew/Aramaic Bible. The few major divergences may be attributed to John's use of one or more of the various text-traditions of the Greek Old Testament. Minor departures are clearly intentional, and due to his adaptation of biblical material for his own purposes. The Seer's scriptural allusions, as a result, cannot be adduced as evidence that he was a Semitic-speaking Jewish-Christian.

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<sup>18</sup>The existence of different Greek text-traditions has persuaded Adela Yarbro Collins that "Charles' conclusion . . . is no longer tenable" (1984, 47).

PART III

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF THE SEER

There is widespread agreement among scholars that the Greek of the New Testament has in some way been influenced by Semitic language and style,<sup>1</sup> with the result that it contains certain unusual constructions, or Semitisms.<sup>2</sup> There has not, however, been the same measure of agreement concerning the nature of such influence. Some have contended that this

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<sup>1</sup>Occurrences of Semitizing language in the New Testament have been well documented. Wilbert Howard's study is one of the more comprehensive surveys of New Testament Semitisms (1929, MHT II:412-485). Nigel Turner's volume on style (1976) is largely devoted to Semitic influence on New Testament language. Turner has brought the discussion up to date, but has not made a significant advance in the area. Elliott Maloney's study of Semitic interference in Mark's syntax (1981, 7-34) contains a helpful survey of research on this issue. David Black has recently compiled a list of New Testament occurrences (1988). The monographs of Steven Thompson (1985, 1-7) and G. Mussies (1971, 3-12) include a brief history of Semitisms research as it pertains to Revelation. See also Appendix A below.

<sup>2</sup>A Semitism is often defined broadly as an 'un-Greek' construction which has a counterpart in a Semitic language. Definitions usually cover both specific uncommon constructions and more general patterns of linguistic usage. J.H. Moulton has defined a Semitism as "a deviation from genuine Greek idiom due to too literal rendering of the language of a Semitic original." Moulton intentionally omitted from consideration cases "in which literal rendering of Semitic produces Greek which is perfectly idiomatic" (1929, MHT II:14). Semitisms which involved the overuse of a Greek phrasing in which Greek idiom was not "violated or seriously strained," occasioned for him the addition of "the adjective 'secondary,'" since they involved what he termed "Semitisms of the milder kind" (15). W.F. Howard defined a secondary Semitism as "a possible but unidiomatic Greek construction, which strains ordinary Greek usage to conform to a normal Semitic construction" (1929, MHT II:477).

influence was direct, attributing it chiefly to immediate linguistic interference from Semitic languages. Others have argued that Semitic influence was indirect, asserting that Semitizing elements in the Apocalypse have been patterned after the language and style of the translation Greek of the Septuagint.<sup>3</sup> Some combination of these sources of influence has also been suggested.<sup>4</sup> Attention continues to be paid as well to the question of whether or not the New Testament was written in a distinctive Jewish-Greek dialect which already contained many Semitic features.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of the Apocalypse, unusual Greek

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<sup>3</sup>H. Thackeray (1909), and Conybeare and Stock (1980) describe the linguistic and stylistic features of the Greek of the Septuagint. The work of R.A. Martin on syntactical features in translation Greek is also of some assistance in this regard (1974). Martin has not applied his method of analysis to determine whether or not Revelation has been translated from a Semitic text because "so much of its language appears directly related to the language of the Old Testament" (1989, 1 n.2).

<sup>4</sup>In his study of alleged Semitisms in Mark, Elliott Maloney has attempted to identify the source of each occurrence. He proposed four possibilities for influence: Hellenistic Greek; Hebrew; Aramaic; and, the Greek Old Testament. Maloney evidently had great difficulty in confidently attributing any given occurrence to a particular source. He has, for example, classified only seven of the seventy-three Markan Semitisms as expressions which could with some assurance be attributed solely to direct Hebrew or Aramaic influence (1981, 246-252). Of these seven, the majority concern minor features in Markan language, and one involves the enigmatic title 'Son of Man.' In a review of Maloney's monograph, John J. O'Rourke concurred with Maloney's assessment: "Rarely, and I think he is correct in this, does he ascribe a phenomenon considered a Semitism to a single possible source" (1982, 682-683).

<sup>5</sup>Nigel Turner's 1976 volume on style represents a recent attempt to demonstrate the pervasive influence of a Jewish-Greek dialect on the language of the New Testament.

constructions have typically been treated under one of two headings; solecisms and Semitisms. The presence of solecisms has frequently been adduced as evidence that John was not a native speaker of Greek, thus opening up the possibility that he was a Semite. The alleged Semitisms have more often than not been cited as proof that the language of the Apocalypse has been directly influenced by a Semitic tongue, and consequently that John was a Jewish-Christian.

Four main hypotheses have been proposed to explain the unusual and Semitizing Greek of Revelation: (a) Revelation has been translated from a Hebrew or Aramaic original; (b) the Seer spoke and wrote a Jewish-Greek dialect; (c) John was a bilingual Semite whose second language was Greek; and, (d) John's Greek style was either idiosyncratic or else deliberately or unconsciously biblicizing in keeping with his message and status as a prophet.

The first three of these proposals assume direct Semitic influence on the language of the Apocalypse, although it is somewhat less direct for the Jewish-Greek hypothesis. All three point to John having been a Jewish-Christian. Of those who advocate the fourth, stylistic option, some assert that direct influence has contributed to the development of what they judge to be the Seer's unique style. Others argue that the Seer's Greek was unusual largely because it was colloquial and was sometimes patterned after the idiom of the Greek Old Testament and other religious discourse. The employment of a biblicizing style entails only indirect

Semitic influence and therefore is not in itself evidence of John's Jewish birth. It has been argued, however, that John's ethnic background was Jewish because he deliberately styled his language after a Semitizing model to honour his Semitic heritage.

The present chapter evaluates the strength of these four hypotheses, as well as the weight each should be afforded in the discussion of the issue of authorship. Individual occurrences of alleged Semitisms and unusual Greek constructions will be discussed below in Chapters Five and Six.

#### A. Translation Theories

The case in support of a translation hypothesis has been made by R.B.Y. Scott (1928) and C.C. Torrey (1958). In their view, Revelation was originally written in a Semitic language, and its uncommon Greek has resulted from its subsequent translation. They pointed to similarities between the vocabulary and syntax of Semitic languages and certain aspects of John's Greek, supporting their hypotheses by translating certain difficult passages in the Apocalypse back into a Semitic tongue. In some cases, they claimed that the translator of Revelation had mistranslated the Semitic original, and asserted that these passages provided decisive evidence that the book had not been freely composed in

Greek.<sup>6</sup>

The translation hypothesis is noticeably absent from recent discussion of the language of the Apocalypse. This is no doubt due to the inability of the proponents of these theories to overcome several basic objections. First, they have not formulated a convincing theory of retroversive translation. As Matthew Black has shown, the kind of comparative study of grammatical systems on which such re-translations depend is beset with methodological problems (1967, 7-28). Their work does not fare well when the three tests which Black has proposed to validate retroversive translations of alleged mistranslations are applied to it. The tests require that: (1) there be a strong probability that there is indeed a mistranslation represented in the Greek; (2) the conjectured Aramaic be probable; and (3) the alleged Semitic construction involve an Aramaic literary context of at least an entire sentence, not just an isolated phrase or verse.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Scott has written: "The strongest evidence is that of transliterations and mistranslations, and if one of these be admitted, the probability in favour of the others is enormously increased" (1928, 7). His assertion, however, is undermined by his tacit admission that only a very few mistranslations can be established with certainty. One surely must demonstrate that many mistranslations are highly probable in order to eliminate simple co-incidence as an explanation.

<sup>7</sup>1967, 8,14. Although Black paid much more attention to issues of method than many others, his use of a comparative approach to Semitisms research has not escaped challenge. L.D. Hurst, for example, has called into question Black's assumption that Jesus' words have frequently been rendered so literally that one can readily reconstruct his sayings. After surveying research in this area, Hurst has concluded

These guidelines have often been ignored or strained by both Scott and Torrey. They have not, for instance, conceded how difficult it is to reconstruct a dialect of first-century Aramaic or Hebrew. Because Aramaic texts which are not essentially translations are scarce, and the extent to which Mishnaic Hebrew represents the Hebrew which was then in common use is unknown, it is not a simple matter to describe common usage in these languages let alone to identify and reconstruct supposed mistranslations. As well, they have not avoided citing rare and infrequent occurrences of Semitic constructions as if they were representative of first-century usage in general, or refrained from supplementing evidence from the first century with texts dating from periods well outside that time.<sup>8</sup>

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that almost all of the leading scholars who have attempted to study the effect of direct Semitic influence on New Testament Greek have not worked with a valid theory of semantics (1986). That is, they have naively assumed a one-to-one correspondence between a Semitic word or idiom and its supposed Greek counterpart. Hurst rightly pointed out that words are polysemic in their source language, making it impossible in practice to know which single component of the semantic range of a Semitic term a translator would have had in mind. Likewise, the range of possible equivalents in the receptor language, Greek, would be too wide to permit one to be certain which corresponding expression would have been chosen to render a given Semitic construction.

<sup>8</sup>That such questionable practices were current in his day is reflected in Black's complaint that "all dialects of the language are ransacked for an expression of usage, however rare and unusual, to explain a difficulty" (1967, 8). Steven Thompson clearly commits this kind of error in his effort to identify a Semitism in Revelation which he terms the "circumstantial accusative participle." Having conceded that "in Hebrew the case-endings have disappeared," Thompson went so far as to invoke classical Arabic to support his contention (1985, 78-79). Darryl Schmidt has noted as well that Thompson himself has admitted that this alleged Semitism

The complexity of Torrey's arguments is exemplified in his comments on 1:15, in which he has argued that the translator of the original Aramaic did not understand the text correctly. Torrey contended that "the true explanation of the difficulty is readily suggested by the fact that in the Aramaic language the neuter gender is regularly expressed by the feminine" (1958, 97). Apart from presuming a hypothetical Aramaic neuter gender, Torrey has assumed that the translator incorrectly took the word for "furnace" to be in the construct state because the translator had rendered the text "word by word as usual" (98). However, Torrey has failed to provide evidence to support this claim, nor has he substantiated his assertion that "any translator of the time would have been likely to render it in just this way."

The advocates of translation theories also appear unable to agree on which Semitic language had been employed in the alleged original text. When set side-by-side, there is little to choose between Scott's assertion of a Hebrew original and Torrey's claim that it was Aramaic. G.R. Driver has based much of his harsh criticism of Torrey's thesis on this weakness, and has concluded "the boldness with which the Aramaic origin of the Apoc. is proclaimed, indeed is only rivalled by the weakness of the arguments to support it" (1960, 384). In Driver's opinion, because Revelation contained both Hebraisms and Aramaisms, a translation hypothesis which advocated translation from a single tongue

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is not found in the LXX (1987, 733).

was unlikely. Driver opted instead for the explanation that John's Greek had suffered linguistic interference from his Semitic mother tongue. Driver's views have gained widespread acceptance among scholars.

The translation hypothesis can also be challenged on the grounds that one cannot discern a consistent translation technique throughout the Apocalypse. If a translator had been at work, one would expect a great deal of consistency in the way that the original had been rendered. Yet the examples of Semitic constructions cited by Scott and Torrey do not occur regularly. Counterparts in more familiar Greek style may readily be found for most of the unusual constructions which allegedly had been based on the Semitic original.<sup>9</sup> The kind of variation which has been described by G. Mussies (1980, 175-177) also makes it impossible to prove that the book was a translation. Even if it were a translation, Revelation as it stands would be indistinguishable in form from freely composed Greek written by a native speaker.

Had a significant number of Semitic words been transliterated into Greek from a Semitic tongue in the Apocalypse, as was done in the Septuagint, this would have suggested that the book had been translated, or written by

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<sup>9</sup>C.G. Ozanne says of the translation hypothesis: "Not only does it fail to account for the deliberate character of so many of the peculiarities, but it does not explain why most of the grammatical rules violated are faithfully observed elsewhere in the book, and thus shown to be perfectly familiar to the author" (1965, 4).

someone who may have been conversant with a Semitic tongue.<sup>10</sup> Yet transliterations are rare in the Apocalypse, and their nature does not suggest that a translator had trouble understanding an original Semitic text or strove to preserve the intrinsic power of the language of the original. This is in striking contrast to the Greek Old Testament, where many Hebrew words whose meanings were unknown were simply spelled out in Greek characters.

A further objection to the translation hypothesis is that its proponents have not taken seriously the influence that the Septuagint and Hellenistic style have had on John's Greek. The book is extant only in Greek, so a presumption must be made that its language and style is primarily Hellenistic. If the translation hypothesis is to be upheld, it must be shown that the Greek of John was in significant ways unlike that of the Greek Old Testament and other religious Hellenistic Greek.

Conclusion: Translation theories. Attempts to support the translation hypothesis by means of retroversive translation are unconvincing, due to the excessive amount of subjectivity inherent in this process. Moreover, the Apocalypse shows no clear sign of having been translated.

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<sup>10</sup>A good example of a non-biblical text containing loan words is P. Paris 574 (Milligan 1910, 113). This magical spell, dating from the 3rd century C.E., contains a number of Coptic phrases, including chaire phnouti n Abraam. Kaire pnoute n Isak, and iêsous pi chrêstos pi hagios n pneuma, among others. Such phrases are rare in Revelation.

## B. The Jewish-Greek Hypothesis

Recent discussion of the existence of a spoken and written form of Jewish-Greek has taken its cue from Henry Gehman. Gehman proposed that Jewish-Greek was in use "in the synagogues and in religious circles" within Judaism, and perhaps in other social contexts as well (1951, 81). To support his contention, he cited the Hebraic grammar and style of the Septuagint, which, in his opinion, had been written in this distinctively Jewish form of Greek.

Nigel Turner found Gehman's arguments persuasive, arguing further that much of the New Testament had also been composed in a Jewish-Greek dialect, or, as he sometimes referred to it, in 'Biblical Greek'.<sup>11</sup> In the case of the Seer's language, Turner, contra Charles' theory of direct

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<sup>11</sup>1955, 208. Turner has stressed that Biblical Greek was a distinct, unique form of Greek: "Our suggestion is that such a body of idiom, as is exposed everywhere in this volume, comprised a distinct dialect or branch of the Koine Greek" (1976, MHT IV:7). In Turner's opinion, Biblical Greek "could well have been a spoken language in common use" among trilingual Jews (7). The term 'sociolect' rather than 'dialect' better describes Turner's view, since he defined this Jewish-Greek in terms of a social group rather than of a geographic region. Moisés Silva has been troubled by Turner's poorly-defined use of the term 'dialect,' rightly warning that confusion is bound to arise unless scholars are more precise in their definitions (1980, 204-206). Stanley Porter has argued that the term 'dialect' should not even be applied to New Testament Greek. He has shown that, in general, Greek philologists have reserved this designation for "the kind of broad phonological, morphological, and lexical differences that distinguish Attic from Doric from Ionic, etc., as independent Indo-European regional languages or dialects" (1989, 596). Porter has concluded that Hellenistic Greek constituted "a single essentially sub-dialectless variety" of Greek (597).

linguistic interference, asserted that John wrote a Semitizing Greek "in which some Hebrew and some Aramaic idioms were already mingled" (1976, MHT IV:149). Steven Thompson has followed Turner's lead, declaring that the Apocalypse can "with no hesitancy be categorised as 'Jewish-Greek,' to the fullest extent of that term, in spite of recent protest" (1985, 108).

The Jewish-Greek hypothesis has been subjected to strong and effective criticism by Moisés Silva and J.A.L. Lee. Regarding Gehman's foundational assertion that the LXX is representative of Jewish-Greek, Silva has rightly objected that there is no such thing as a uniform 'Septuagint Greek.' Its language, he argued, was much too diverse to be considered "a well-defined entity" (1980, 210-11). Lee has made this point as well, stressing that Septuagint Greek was not even uniformly Semitizing. He has found that in many passages in the LXX, the underlying Hebrew idiom had not been reproduced in Greek, leading him to the conclusion that the translators were "often at pains to avoid it." Lee has rightly challenged the advocates of Jewish-Greek to explain why "the idiom of this Hebraic Greek is not used at every opportunity" (1983, 29).

In Lee's estimation, the Semitizing nature of Septuagint Greek was due simply to the exigencies of the translation process. He confirmed this notion by a thorough study of the vocabulary of the LXX-Pentateuch, in which he found that the vocabulary of the Greek Old Testament did not differ

significantly from that found in other Hellenistic Greek documents of the second and third centuries B.C.E. A distinctive Jewish-Greek vocabulary was out of the question for the Septuagint.

A similar criticism can be made of Steven Thompson's claim that the vocabulary of the Apocalypse was peculiarly Jewish-Greek. Thompson attempted to substantiate this contention, as Gehman had endeavoured to do for the LXX, by demonstrating that certain words in Revelation carried distinctively Jewish meanings. But Stanley Porter, like Lee, on the basis of a lexical investigation of contemporary texts found this to be false. Scolding Thompson for not admitting that his lexical survey was quite restricted in scope, Porter pointed out that word-meanings which Thompson had characterized as Jewish were paralleled in the writings of the Hellenistic author Chariton (1989, 585-586). In light of this, and also because Thompson had erred in his assumptions about the nature of verbal aspect in his discussion of the Greek historic present and aorist (588-592; 1987, 123), Porter concluded that Thompson's assertion that the Seer's Greek was peculiarly Jewish was insupportable.

Another argument advanced by Henry Gehman in support of Jewish-Greek was that the first readers and hearers of the Septuagint must have fully understood its unusual Greek. Were it not a living dialect, their sacred text would have

been of little use to them.<sup>12</sup> However, Silva has countered that unusual Greek construction which did not occur in everyday speech were only to be expected in a translation such as the Septuagint.<sup>13</sup> He further pointed out that it would be incorrect to maintain that the unusual Greek in the LXX was largely unintelligible to its readers, noting that even Gehman himself had conceded that much of its difficult language could easily be understood when read in context (211).

Silva's point is well taken. It is very likely that there would have been a considerable degree of tolerance for unusual constructions in the LXX, since its readers would

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<sup>12</sup>Gehman asserted that "if the Jews who read the LXX did not understand Hebrew, we may infer at least that the translation made sense to them and that it was intelligible when it was read in the synagogue" (1951, 81). He further stated that "if the LXX made sense to Hellenistic Jews, we may infer that there was a Jewish Greek which was understood apart from the Hebrew language" (90).

<sup>13</sup>Lee has made much the same point: "That there were some features peculiar to the Greek of Hellenistic Jews is not to be denied. . . . Moreover, it is probable that the 'translation' language which resulted from translation of the OT into Greek exerted an influence on the spoken language of the Jews, particularly in regard to religious terminology. . . . They may also have used certain Semitizing expressions or idioms found in the LXX. What I would deny is that such features were anything like extensive enough to justify regarding the language of the Jews as a dialect separate from ordinary Greek" (1983, 30). Lars Rydbeck was of the same opinion with respect to Turner's claims regarding 'Biblical Greek.' In his view, the Greek of the New Testament was too diverse and too much like Hellenistic Greek to warrant any description of it which implied that 'Biblical Greek' was as an exact concept or represented a unified dialect (1967, 24-25). The few Semitic features found in New Testament Greek he traced to an Old Testament source, asserting that their presence lent an appropriate measure of dignity and solemnity to its style (197 n. 19).

have expected it to be a fairly literal rendering of the sacred original. Furthermore, there were other ways to make sense of the language apart its 'literal' meaning. For example, the Church Fathers coped with otherwise unintelligible Septuagint Greek by resorting to allegorical or etymological explanations, as Marguerite Harl has demonstrated (1971, 261-262). This approach finds little unintelligible, and any lack of comprehension is attributed to a human inability to interpret the spiritual sense correctly.

In addition, as J.A.L. Lee has argued, the Septuagint's translators apparently did not strive to render it fully comprehensible to its readers. The relatively large number of transliterated words and unclear phrasings contained in the Greek Old Testament was for him proof that the translators themselves frequently had not understood what they were rendering (1983, 18). Lee has also made the point that even if the LXX were fully intelligible to a Jewish audience, it did not necessarily follow that its peculiarities would be found in everyday speech. As a modern analogy, Lee cited 'biblical English,' asserting that "no one would suppose that because we can understand the English of the AV its idioms must be a normal feature of the English we speak" (19).

Moisés Silva, freely acknowledging the Septuagint's Semitizing flavour, has described the unusual nature of its language in terms of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's

helpful distinction between langue and parole.<sup>14</sup> The former designates the particular structured language which all speakers of a given group share. The latter, on the other hand, indicates the actual speech utterances of individual speakers, whether or not they always conformed to 'typical' language patterns. In Silva's opinion, the syntactical Semitisms of the LXX, because they were occasional only, could not be said to belong to the structure of the Greek language.<sup>15</sup> Septuagint Greek, therefore, could not be viewed as distinctive on the level of language, only on the level of style.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Lorenz Nieting has criticized Nigel Turner's volume on style (1976, MHT IV) because it did not take into account current linguistic research, for which the langue/parole distinction is foundational: "James Barr has to be taken seriously; those who do research in the languages of the Bible ought to base their work on modern post-Saussurean linguistics. Turner has not done this. His perception of language is through and through nineteenth century, as is his semantics and notion of redundancy. A discussion of style demands some of the fundamental principles of generative grammar. When language is described as a system of choices, then individual patterns of choices can be identified" (1977, 592).

<sup>15</sup>1980, 208-209. Silva writes: "Now since 'style' may be defined roughly as the variations (parole) that grammar (langue) leaves out, we are not surprised to note, also during the past two decades, new interest in the linguistic study of style. It is at this level, I believe, that the discussion of 'Biblical Greek' must take place" (216). By way of analogy, Silva, like Lee, has pointed to the Semiticized English style of the Authorized Version and some sermons and prayers. In his opinion, one could no more argue that there was a separate linguistic structure behind this style than one could assert that the specialized vocabulary of the Stoics pointed to a "Stoic language" (218-219).

<sup>16</sup>This criticism of the Jewish-Greek hypothesis applies with equal force to Charles' claim that John "creates a Greek grammar of his own" (1920, I:xxi). Although he has termed this distinctive language John's 'style,' the very fact that

Texts other than the Septuagint provide no better evidence of Jewish-Greek. As Lee has observed, (1983, 23), Nigel Turner has been unable to show that papyrus documents had been affected by Semitizing influences to any significant degree. As a result, the assertion that the LXX is a product of Jewish-Greek must depend upon the evidence of the LXX itself, which clearly constitutes an unwarranted resort to circular reasoning.

Conclusion: The Jewish-Greek hypothesis. There is insufficient evidence to support the claim that a Jewish-Greek dialect existed in the first-century. The LXX, because of its diversity of style and its general conformity to Hellenistic Greek, cannot serve as evidence of such a dialect. The Semitizing character of Septuagint language can better be explained in terms of translation technique than it can in terms of grammar and syntax. The witness of the papyri to the existence of a dialect of this kind is extremely weak, so that external corroboration of the assertion that the LXX represents Jewish-Greek is impossible. G. Horsley is probably correct in his contention that Jewish-

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Charles has produced a grammar of an individual text, the Apocalypse, indicates that for him, the language of the Seer represented much more than simply one style among many. Charles strongly implied that John could not, or would not, have written in any other way. Such an assertion goes far beyond the evidence. The "grammar" of the Apocalypse which Charles has outlined is in essence a mere description of what grammatical and syntactical choices John has made in the course of writing this particular text. Charles would have had to have analyzed many other texts written by John in order to have substantiated his claim that Revelation represented John's typical style or unwavering grammatical practice.

Greek is best characterized as a 'fiction.'<sup>17</sup>

The contention that the Apocalypse was composed in such a dialect is likewise insupportable. The vocabulary and grammar of the Apocalypse do not greatly differ from Hellenistic and Septuagint usage, and its subject-matter does not demand that one assume a Jewish background for the book.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, there is no reason to maintain that it was written by a Jewish-Christian.

### C. Bilingualism and Linguistic Interference

The classic declaration of R.H. Charles that, although John "writes in Greek, he thinks in Hebrew" (1920, I:cxliii),

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<sup>17</sup>Horsley has argued that the Jewish-Greek fiction was promoted by certain Protestant scholars desirous of emphasizing the uniqueness of the Bible. He writes: "The edifice of Jewish-Greek lacks foundation in reality, neither does it have any cogent linguistic framework. Accordingly, it is built largely using weak arguments and assertions. While it is not denied that certain Semitic features obtrude into Greek written by Jews and Christians in antiquity, where this occurs it is to be understood as the expected phenomenon of interference which manifests itself in varying degrees in the speech and writing of bilinguals" (1989b, 40). Horsley readily concedes that Jews may have spoken Greek with a peculiar accent, but denies that phonological distinctiveness is sufficient to claim that Jewish-Greek constituted a special form of the language.

<sup>18</sup>As has been shown in chapters One and Two above, Revelation lacks distinctive Jewish and Jewish-Christian motifs. Largely for this reason, Heinrich Kraft has rejected the idea that John's Greek was either a Jewish-Greek "Mischsprache" or a "Ghettosprache". On the one hand, he has observed that Revelation lacks the kind of Semitic loan-words which would substantiate the former claim. The latter contention, on the other hand, presupposes a distinct Jewish social community of which there is no mention in the Apocalypse (1974, 15).

has been quoted in most treatments of the Semitizing language of the Apocalypse. By his reckoning, the mind of the Seer was so steeped in Hebrew and Aramaic that he was incapable of writing idiomatic Greek, and employed instead an idiosyncratic, Semitized form of the language (cxliii-cxliv).

More recently, G. Mussies has proposed a similar theory to account for the Semitizing aspects of Revelation's language. Like Charles, Mussies advocated a psychological approach to the question of Semitic influence, although he did not think that evidence of Semitic influence was to be found primarily in individual occurrences of unusual Greek grammar and syntax. A better indication of Semitic influence was John's consistent overuse or underuse of verb forms or syntactical constructions which in themselves were quite acceptable in Hellenistic Greek. It was Mussies' contention that because the language of Revelation had been unconsciously patterned on a broad Semitic model, John's use of Greek verb forms corresponded to 'typical' Hebrew and Aramaic usage (1971; 1980).

#### 1. R.H. Charles

R.H. Charles concluded that John was a bilingual, Palestinian Jewish-Christian because he observed that some of the Seer's grammatical constructions appeared to have counterparts in Semitic languages. Few biblical scholars

ability. Significantly, he found that the poorest correlation between his indirect measurement techniques and actual bilingual performance was achieved in the case of writing skills tests.<sup>20</sup> It was found that the results of tests of writing ability did not correspond well with estimates of the degree of bilingual competence or lack thereof which had been ascertained by means of other tests and direct inquiry. Macnamara did not attempt to explain why this should be so. It would seem likely, however, that because even native speakers often experience more trouble in expressing themselves in writing than in comprehending, reading, or speaking, that skill in writing would be a poor indicator of a bilingual's general performance.

Unfortunately, the lack of non-literary data for the Seer's language cannot be remedied. The gathering of data from interviews or transcripts of oral discourse, a basic component of linguistic research, is out of reach for the biblical scholar.<sup>21</sup> So too is a Language Background Questionnaire which would reveal which language was normally spoken at home and by close relatives. The Apocalypse itself

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<sup>20</sup>"It seems likely," wrote Macnamara, "that the indirect measures are as effective in determining degree of bilingualism over a wide range of linguistic skills as the direct measures. Indeed, except for skill in writing, the indirect measures fare surprisingly well" (1969, 89-90).

<sup>21</sup>Oral data would be extremely valuable, especially because it would provide a sample of the Seer's pronunciation. According to H. Baetens Beardsmore, the clearest indicator of bilingualism is found in pronunciation, in which errors in phonemes, rhythm and intonation are readily apparent (1982, 76-80).

provides no details about John's birthplace, upbringing, or formal education in Greek composition.

A great deal of caution must be exercised, therefore, when the possibility that John was bilingual is considered. The fact that all that is available to measure his alleged bilingual ability is a single sample of his writing should give pause to those who would assert that his language betrays his Palestinian, Jewish-Christian roots. John's religious social setting and status as a prophet may well have led him deliberately to employ a colloquial or biblicizing style in this particular text (see sec. D.3 below). It would, as a result, be useless as an indicator of his normal capability. As was noted in Macnamara's study, it is vital to take into account the social factors obtaining at the time a sample is obtained, since they can greatly influence the responses of the participant.

A further difficulty involved in the measurement of bilingualism is that a standard form of 'typical' Greek must be enumerated so that intrusive elements in a sample may be identified and quantified. For linguists, a standard of this kind, or monoglot norm, is indispensable. Without one, a comparative analysis indicating the degree of interference associated with a given subject would be impossible.

A monoglot norm representing the common oral speech of the first century is, once again, inaccessible to biblical scholars. How Greek was ordinarily spoken in the first century cannot be known, since only texts remain. A standard

can be constructed on the basis of various writings, it is true, but it must be acknowledged that these texts, by their very nature, represent a range of styles rather than a monoglot norm. Since any reductionistic treatment of them would be highly suspect, their value as a comparative basis for determining bilingual interference is greatly limited (see also sec. D.1 below).

Current practice in linguistics does, however, recognize that occurrences of lexical error in written discourse may point to bilingual influence. The intrusion of foreign terms and expressions or the blatant misuse of words in the second language, for example, are often taken as a strong indication of interference due to bilingualism. Yet in the case of the Apocalypse, lexical interference is minimal. The book contains only a few loan-words, and most of them are either proper names or familiar Christian expressions such as 'alleluia' and 'amen.' Code-switching involving longer passages written in Hebrew or Aramaic is unknown. Even where one would expect code-switching, none is found. In Rev. 22:20, for instance, John has employed the Greek erchou kurie Iêsou, not the Aramaic Maranatha, which was used in 1 Corinthians 16:22 and Didache x.6. If the Seer had been a bilingual Jewish-Christian who was as keen to promote his Jewish heritage as some have claimed, it is strange that he did not cite this solemn phrase in its Semitic version.

In addition, attempts by Charles and Thompson to prove that Greek words have been misused due to Semitic

interference are unconvincing. As Stanley Porter has demonstrated, Hellenistic Greek encompassed the word-meanings they believed to be peculiarly Semitic (1989, 584-586; cf. sec. B above). Indeed, John has displayed a very good knowledge of Greek vocabulary, as is evinced in part by Revelation's relatively large number of Greek hapax legomena, most of which refer to trade goods or natural objects.<sup>22</sup>

The unusual grammar and syntax of the Apocalypse also does not constitute strong evidence of linguistic interference or general incompetence in Greek. A cursory examination of the incongruities and irregularities reveals that they are virtually all minor violations of concord in ad sensum constructions, instances of attraction to intervening relative pronouns, or case changes attributable to ellipsis. Almost none of what could be termed senseless blunders are to be found (see Chapter Six below). Alleged Semitisms are relatively few in number and are not evenly distributed throughout the book. Direct Semitic influence need not be supposed in order to account for them. It also appears that

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<sup>22</sup>H. Swete's commentary on the Apocalypse contains a helpful chapter on Revelation's vocabulary, grammar, and style which includes a long list of hapax legomena and other rare terms (1909, cxx-cxxx). R. Morgenthaler's comparative statistical analysis of New Testament vocabulary shows that Revelation does not differ significantly from the rest of the New Testament (1958, 164). John matches the New Testament pattern in terms of the three most frequently occurring words ho, kai, and autos, and is not far off thereafter. The particle de is fourth in frequency in the New Testament, while it occurs only five times in the Apocalypse, but this is no doubt due to John's preference for paratactic sentence structure. The particle te occurs once and gar sixteen times by Morgenthaler's count, indicating that John was not ignorant of such hypotactic usage.

the Seer was not prone to errors in spelling, the presence of which could indicate bilingual interference.

To sum up, the theoretical basis of Charles' contention that John's Greek suffered from linguistic interference is extremely weak.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, his conclusions regarding John's bilingualism are probably incorrect. The few indicators that are present in Revelation which are recognized as significant by linguists do not strongly point to linguistic interference attributable to bilingualism.

## 2. G. Mussies

G. Mussies was unconvinced by Charles' claim that incongruities and Semitisms in Revelation constituted proof of bilingual interference. In his judgment, Semitic influence revealed itself chiefly in the Seer's unconscious use or neglect of particular Greek verb forms which in themselves represented entirely correct Greek usage.<sup>24</sup> Mussies has compared the use of verb forms in Revelation with a general verbal paradigm of his own construction of both

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<sup>23</sup>Moisés Silva has pointed out that it was not only Charles whose knowledge of linguistic theory was inadequate. He noted that many others were guilty of the same practice: ". . . the very frequent comments made regarding bilingualism are usually based on haphazard personal observations and even on purely speculative assumptions" (1980, 206).

<sup>24</sup>In Mussies words: "St. John betrays his Semitic vernacular therefore by the choice which he makes involuntarily of the Greek categories, and not so much by striking Semitisms in the use of each category" (1971, 349).

Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic verbal usage, concluding that John's usage corresponded better to a Semitic paradigm than a Greek pattern.<sup>25</sup>

Mussies' conclusions are far from compelling. First, he has failed to justify his assumption that languages which are as distinct as Hebrew and Greek could have had such a subtle, yet pervasive effect on one another. Mussies has not explained why a speaker would not have been able to avoid confusing two tongues which exhibit such wide-ranging differences in vocabulary and grammar, not to mention vast differences in basic structure.

Citing the work of Uriel Weinrich on bilingualism (1953), Mussies has contended that interference in the Seer's Greek would have been inevitable because "the Greek language of John has been in contact with Hebrew and/or Aramaic" (1971, 311). Weinrich, however, has warned that the type of influence which he was describing could not be restricted to the interaction of two separate languages. The same principles of contact and influence, he argued, were equally applicable to varieties of style within a single language.<sup>26</sup> But Mussies, like Charles, has not given serious

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<sup>25</sup>1971, 307-349. Mussies' conclusion is that Revelation's Greek pattern of verbal usage [aorist indicative/ aorist imperative/ aorist infinitive/ present participle and indicative/ middle perfect participle/ future indicative and aorist subjunctive], is "wholly identical to that of a subsystem of the Semitic verb" [qatal/ getul/ getol/ qotel/ qatul/ yigtol] (349).

<sup>26</sup>Weinrich maintains: "But the mechanism of interference, abstracted from the amount of interference, would appear to be the same whether the contact is between

consideration to this possibility, especially to the strong probability that the Septuagint provided the linguistic 'point of contact' and was the major influence on John's Greek. The Seer's intimate acquaintance with the language and style of the Septuagint and early Christian religious discourse cannot be overlooked as the reason that the Seer's language at times differed from everyday speech.<sup>27</sup>

Mussies' overall approach, which relies on research based on studies of generative grammar such as those of Noam Chomsky, would benefit from a thorough revision that takes into account recent trends in linguistics. Linguists in general now supplement Chomsky's approach with sociolinguistic analysis, with the result that 'linguistic competence' no longer involves only grammatical theory (Hymes 1972, 280-281). During the past two decades, 'communicative competence,' which takes note of the effect which social

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Chinese and French or between two sub-varieties of English used by neighboring families. And while control of two such similar systems is not ordinarily called bilingualism, the term in its technical sense might easily be extended to cover these cases of contact as well" (1953, 1-2).

<sup>27</sup>Mussies has argued that John's "actual blunders against Greek" ruled out the possibility that the Seer had composed in a biblicizing idiom (1971, 312), asserting that John "commits various other crimes against Greek syntax which betray Semitic influence" (1980, 171). One can only regret that Mussies has chosen to describe mere linguistic phenomena in such exaggerated and evocative terms. This is all the more unfortunate because Mussies himself attempted no detailed analysis of these unusual constructions to back up his strongly-worded assertions. In effect, he has supported the hypothesis of Semitic interference with an unproven assumption of linguistic incompetence. These "blunders," most of which are minor incongruities that are easily explicable, are examined in Chapter 6 below.

factors have on language performance, has been accorded a leading role in linguistic study. With respect to Revelation, the Seer's biblicizing style would be studied in relation to the kind of prophetic message he was delivering (see sec. D.3 below).

Another objection to Mussies' claim is that he has made invalid use of statistical analysis. This is particularly evident in his discussion of the Seer's use of perfect middle participles.<sup>28</sup> In Mussies' judgment, the strikingly large number of perfect middle participles in the Apocalypse is decisive proof of bilingual interference. This participial form, he argued, corresponded to the Hebrew passive participle in its gatul form,<sup>29</sup> and its overuse in the Apocalypse clearly showed that the Seer was writing Greek on the basis of a Semitic and not a Greek verb paradigm.

Mussies' total of 67 occurrences of perfect middle participles is certainly impressive, and as a gross figure it stands out significantly in his chart of verb usage in the

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<sup>28</sup>Mussies has usually not described these occurrences as 'passives,' no doubt because of his belief that "Koine Greek tended to unify middle and passive by giving up the opposition in the categories where it was present, i.e. in the aorists and futures." For this reason, he concluded, "we feel free to oppose them [middles and passives] indiscriminately to the active verbs" (1971, 310-311).

<sup>29</sup>Mussies has argued that the passive participle is found in Mishnaic Hebrew "only in the active part of the system in the gal, not in piel, hiphil," and that the same was true for Palestinian Aramaic (1971, 318-319). Mussies apparently thought that the high number of Greek middle perfect participles in Revelation reflected this concentration in the gal and the corresponding lack of opposition in forms other than the gal.

Apocalypse. Yet Mussies has failed to take into account duplicates and multiples in his frequency-of-use calculations. When duplicates and multiples of middle participles are accounted for, only a net total of 24 separate occurrences may be cited.<sup>30</sup> This greatly reduces the significance of this verb form for his argument. Its significance is further minimized by Hans Schmoll's observations about its occurrence in other Greek texts. Schmoll, by comparing Mussies' chart of frequency-of-use statistics with Xenophon's usage in Anabasis I.1-III.2, found that the occurrence of the perfect middle/passive participle relative to other verbal categories was the same for both texts. From this, Schmoll concluded that Mussies' statistical analysis could not be adduced as evidence of direct Semitic influence on the language of Revelation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>The repetition which is so characteristic of the Seer's style no doubt accounts for the many duplicates and multiples. The participle gegrammenos, for example, occurs thirteen times in various declined forms (1:3; 2:17; 5:1; 14:1; 17:5; 19:12,16; 20:12,15; 21:12,27; 22:18,19) and peribebêmenos nine times (4:4; 7:9,13; 10:1; 11:3; 12:1; 17:4; 18:16; 19:13). A much sounder approach to statistical analysis obtains in J. Macnamara's study of bilingual performance, in which only 'different' mistakes and types of interference were counted (1969, 91).

<sup>31</sup>Schmoll has written: "Das Überwiegen der Passivformen im Part. Perf. hat also für die Apc. gar nichts Auffälliges. Die Abnahme der Formen des aktiven und die Zunahme der des passiven Partizips fügt sich in die sprachgeschichtliche Entwicklung ein, so daß daraus nicht auf semitischen Einfluß geschlossen werden kann. Damit fällt aber das Hauptergebnis von Kap. 12" (1974, 290). The fact that Schmoll's sample was twice the length of Mussies' is not significant, since it was the number of occurrences in various verbal categories relative to one another which was being investigated, independent of the length of the texts under study.

It should also be noted that these participles have been used appropriately and correctly by John. Mussies has not accorded this fact the weight it deserves in his discussion of possible direct Semitic influence. Since he has not suggested plausible alternatives to this means of describing various characters and objects by perfect middle participles, it is difficult to judge whether the number of times John used this construction was as unusual as he has contended. Mussies must specify the other ways in which the Seer could have or should have accomplished this end.

A third objection to Mussies' claim is that he has not accounted satisfactorily for the fact that the imperfect tense has almost never been used in the Apocalypse.<sup>32</sup> It is certainly remarkable that an author who was supposedly so open to Semitic influence has used this characteristically Semitic tense so infrequently. Mussies has only acknowledged this unexpected absence in passing, and offered as an explanation the weakly-supported assertion that marked tenses such as the imperfect "tend to be less frequently used than unmarked ones" such as the aorist (1971, 309-310). Yet he himself has admitted that other New Testament authors whom he believed to have come from a Semitic background showed no reluctance to make frequent use of the imperfect. Mussies

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<sup>32</sup>Charles has observed that only nine different verbs are involved, with seventeen imperfects of eimi accounting for half of the total number of 34 occurrences which he cited (1920, I:cxxiv). Mussies lists only nineteen occurrences in his imperfect category, omitting "the 19 past tenses of eimi, keimai, mellô, because they are not opposed to aorists, and are neutral past tenses" (1971, 309,310 n.1).

appears to plead that the Seer was a special case who, unlike other Jewish-Christian authors, chose to employ present participles with an imperfect sense instead of the imperfect tense itself.<sup>33</sup>

In summary, Mussies' argument is unconvincing because it relies on outdated linguistic theory, makes invalid use of statistical analysis, and treats the Seer's linguistic usage as a special case.

### 3. Conclusion: Bilingualism and Linguistic Interference

Charles' evidence in support of the bilingualism hypothesis is narrowly based and therefore a poor indicator of linguistic interference. In the absence of knowledge about John's background and without an opportunity to analyze his oral speech or other writings, the presumption of his bilingualism is unjustified. In addition, there is little clear evidence in the Apocalypse of either linguistic interference or grammatical incompetence. Loan-words are few, code-switching is conspicuous by its absence, and the

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<sup>33</sup>R.H. Charles dealt only briefly with the problem of the absence of imperfects in Revelation, arguing that "the place of the past imperf. (or historic present) is frequently taken by the (imperfect or perfect) participle . . . . This use of the participle for a finite verb is frequent in late Hebrew (very frequent in Aramaic, customary in Syriac), and its displacement of the past imperf. in our author is no doubt due largely to Hebraic influences" (1920, I:cxxiv). Unfortunately, Charles has not quantified what he means by "frequent in late Hebrew." Moreover, Charles was commenting on a trend in Semitic languages, and not on a trend in Greek written by a Semite.

misuse of terms and misspellings are not evident.

The argument of G. Mussies that John's unconscious selection of Greek verb categories corresponds to that of a Semitic sub-system has not been convincingly formulated. He has not employed statistical analysis with appropriate caution, nor has he made comparative studies based on other Hellenistic texts. As well, he has too quickly dismissed the influence of the Septuagint on the Seer's Greek style.

#### D. Style

Interpreters appear to have assumed one of three views of style when discussing the language of the Apocalypse.<sup>34</sup> Some have treated style as if it were a description of John's vocabulary, grammar and syntax in relation to a supposed

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<sup>34</sup>The terms 'stylistics' and 'style' will be used interchangeably in this discussion, in keeping with the manner in which many biblical scholars have employed them. M.H. Abrams has stressed that stylistics involves comparative study, and that much of current research attempts "to identify the stylistic features, or 'formal properties,' which are held to be distinctive of a single work, or of an author, or of a literary tradition, or of an era" (1981, 193). Abrams declared style to be a descriptive account of "the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse - it is how a speaker or writer says whatever it is that he says" (190). He has listed several aspects of such study, including: diction, sentence structure, figurative language, and rhetorical devices. In BDF (sec. 458-496), style is considered mainly in terms of rhetorical categories such as sentence structure, figures of speech, and word and clause order. Attention is also paid to the possible presence of Semitic grammatical patterns. This rhetorical approach to style, even with the broader categories employed by current research (Nida 1983, 172-191), has not been applied to the Apocalypse. Scholars have also not paid much attention to the poetics of Revelation.

language norm. This norm has usually been formulated by means of statistical analysis of usage in texts dating from various periods in the history of the language. Others have taken style to be a description of lexical, grammatical and syntactical data in relation to actual usage of authors in specific historical periods.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the first approach, which attempts to establish a general language norm which is not tied to individual texts, this view recognizes the validity of usage in a particular document whether in 'textbook' terms it be deemed correct or not.

Both of these approaches to style have been employed in the past in the study of the language of the Apocalypse. A third view of style, which takes its lead from socio-linguistic research, has only recently begun to make itself felt. This approach to style evaluates linguistic data in relation to the social status and social setting of the author and the author's intended audience. Correct usage is defined largely in terms of what is appropriate in a given

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<sup>35</sup>K.J. Dover, a classicist whose study of Greek word order is often cited by biblical scholars, has emphasized that style is a matter of choice, and that a particular author's linguistic usage can only become stylistically significant if it is viewed in relation to that of other texts or eras. At the same time, he has argued that the number of times a particular usage is employed is significant for style but not for linguistics (1960, 67). Consequently, comparative study based only on statistical analysis would not yield valid linguistic information about an author's command of or difficulties in a particular language. Such study would serve only to characterize a given author's style in relation to other possible styles. If one wished to argue that an author's style was 'incompetent' or 'untutored,' this claim would have to be substantiated in relation to actual usage in the period contemporary with the text under study.

situation.<sup>36</sup>

### 1. Style Relative to a Supposed Language Norm

This view of style is best represented by R.H. Charles. It was his belief that John's Greek, despite its evident charm and power, was very poor.<sup>37</sup> Taking what he judged to be normal Greek as a comparative base, Charles concluded that

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<sup>36</sup>In general, sociolinguists are concerned with what in Ferdinand de Saussure's lectures was termed parole, rather than with mere langue. By parole, sociolinguists do not mean simply the idiosyncratic use by an individual of a commonly-spoken langue. Parole refers instead to the discourse of specific groups of speakers within a 'speech community.' 'Style' is linked to the typical pattern associated with the social setting in which a person is found at a given moment, be it a formal, informal, religious, secular, or some other context. In recent times, the structural model of Noam Chomsky has been significantly modified. What structural linguists had considered to be aspects of linguistic 'performance,' sociolinguists now take to be indicators of 'communicative competence' (Hymes 1972, 280-281). One of the leaders in the field of sociolinguistics, Dell Hymes, has described stylistic analysis in these terms: ". . . it is taken as concerned with departures or deviations from a norm only in those cases in which departure or deviation is indeed the intention of the source (as with some writers and speakers). In the vast majority of communities and cases, style is understood rather as the arousal and accomplishment of expectations, following the lead of Kenneth Burke (1931) in his essay on 'Psychology and Literary Form'" (1974, 106). Hymes' definitions of the terms speech community and speech situation (1974, 47-52) are foundational in this field.

<sup>37</sup>Wrote Charles: "He had never mastered the Greek of his own day. The language of his adoption was not for him a normalized and rigid medium of utterance: nay rather, it was still for him in a fluid condition, and so he used it freely, remodelling its syntactical usages and launching forth into unheard of expressions" (1920, I:xxi). Surprisingly, Charles has also claimed that John composed "some of the sublimest passages in all literature" (xxi), and had even been "more accurate in the use of certain Greek idioms than the Fourth Evangelist" (cxliv).

the Seer's language was idiosyncratic, comparable neither to literary Greek nor to the Hellenistic vernacular.<sup>38</sup> His style was "absolutely unique," due in part to his unconscious rendering of "many Hebrew expressions literally and not idiomatically" (1920, I:xxi; cxliii).

The validity of Charles' approach is open to question. His inclusion of Classical usage in his language norm, for instance, is highly suspect. Not only was John not attempting to write Atticizing Greek, but Charles, as many others have done, has invoked a caricature of actual Classical style. Attic style was not as uniform as he has implied, and even in the best of authors, unusual Greek usage was not uncommon.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, his norm was a modern,

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<sup>38</sup>In his section headed "The Hebraic Style of the Apocalypse," Charles states: "Its language differs from that of the LXX and other versions of O.T., from the Greek of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and from that of the papyri. Of course it has points in common with all these phases of later Greek, but nevertheless it possesses a very distinct character of its own. No literary document of the Greek world exhibits such a vast multitude of solecisms" (1920, I:cxliiii).

<sup>39</sup>On the basis of his study of Greek word order, K. Dover has concluded that Attic authors often intentionally avoided employing a 'normal' pattern of usage because they regarded variety so highly. In his opinion, New Testament rules of order are "much more easily defined in syntactical terms than they are in Classical Greek" (1960, 68). Unusual usage in Plato's works, which contain many of what by 'textbook' standards would be termed solecisms, are generally not considered to be errors due to ignorance. Instead, Plato's loose colloquial style is deemed to be appropriate to the kind of oral discourse he was imitating. Noting these anacolutha, BDF comments: "On the other hand, when a natural conversational tone is imitated, as in Plato, it is quite inoffensive and can even be allowed in epistolary style provided that it does not impair understanding" (sec. 458). Paul Shorey has described the language of the Republic this way: "Provided the meaning is plain and the emphasis right,

hypothetical construct which took little account of the historical development of the language. Texts which were similar in content and roughly contemporary with the Apocalypse language usage have not been accorded the priority they obviously deserve, nor have the works of ancient grammarians been consulted.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, for Charles, the Seer's style in Revelation was no different from the sum total of his language skills. When writing other texts, he would not have been capable of altering his style to suit the occasion. A single piece of evidence, the Apocalypse, was for him fully representative of his literary ability, so much so that Charles could even compile a "Grammar of the Apocalypse." But his description of usage in the Apocalypse has no validity if it is

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he [Plato] allows himself unlimited freedom in anacoluthons, short cuts, sharp corners, ellipses and generally in what I have elsewhere called illogical idiom." Shorey attributes much of this loose style to Plato's colloquialism, some of which, "if rightly rendered, shock the taste of critics who approach him with a stronger sense of the dignity of philosophy than they have of Greek idiom" (1935, II:1xxii). Lars Rydbeck has found that the style of Hippocratic texts dating from the Classical period departed from the Attic conventions characteristic of literary works of that era (1967, 189). Stanley Porter has observed as well that some Classical texts contain constructions which have been classified by biblical scholars as Semitisms (1989, 590-591).

<sup>40</sup>Charles' commentary would also have benefited from a thorough study of the textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the Apocalypse. Such research could suggest the extent to which certain usages were thought by ancient copyists to be irregular or incorrect, and provide some degree of control over modern notions of what was erroneous in that period. Charles has seldom taken note of variants, citing them chiefly to support his arguments for Semitic influence, as in his treatment of a variant of epoiêsen in 1:5-6 (1920, I:cxliv, n.1).

extrapolated to cover everything which John might have written.<sup>41</sup> Only if other documents from his hand were extant could an assessment of his language abilities be attempted.

In the absence of any other texts written by John, Charles' claim that Revelation's language was the best that the Seer could muster is without foundation. Only if other texts from the hand of John were extant, preferably texts not of a religious nature, could a convincing estimate be made of his linguistic habits and capabilities. Apart from a comparative study of such texts, there is no way to be sure that the Apocalypse represents the Seer's habitual style of composition. It is quite possible that, like Luke writing in the prologue to the Third Gospel, John was capable of composing excellent Greek. Yet, as Luke had chosen to do in the rest of his Gospel, John may have employed a less literate style for his prophecy.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>K. Dover's warning about equating stylistic observations with linguistic facts is pertinent in this regard. Comparing two hypothetical authors who use dei and chrê in inverse proportion, he writes: "Of the two authors, one has chosen differently from the other; and as soon as the possibility of choice is seen to exist, we can begin to speak of style. Or again: suppose that the first author concentrates all his instances of chrê in the first third of his work, while in the second author's work chrê and dei are evenly distributed. These are stylistic facts, which are out of place in an account of the author's language" (1960, 66). Charles has not conceded that John's choice of vocabulary, grammar and syntax was largely a matter of choice among various alternatives and probably not indicative of his customary use of language.

<sup>42</sup>H. Thackeray has observed a similar change in manner of composition in the Septuagint: "One of the strongest arguments which may be adduced to disprove the existence of 'Jewish-Greek' as a separate dialectical entity is the striking contrast between the unfettered original Greek

Charles has also greatly overstated the unusual nature of John's language by treating virtually all occurrences of uncommon Greek in the Apocalypse alike. His claim that the book contained a "vast multitude of solecisms," far beyond the number which a literary document should contain, is greatly exaggerated. He has offered no evidence for his assertion, nor has he justified his designation of Revelation as a 'literary' work. Most of the solecisms in the Apocalypse, as will be shown in Chapter Six below, are minor in nature, and others are explicable in terms of personal choice among a variety of acceptable alternatives. The majority of solecisms may be classified into one of two different categories, ad sensum occurrences and instances of attraction. The same is true of the book's Semitisms, the greater number of which fall into one of four categories.

In the same vein, Charles' habit of treating multiple occurrences of the same stylistic feature as separate instances of poor Greek leaves the impression that the language of the Apocalypse is much worse than it actually is. Yet such a procedure is surely unjustified for a document which features such a repetitive style. Charles, for example, has argued that the frequency-of-occurrence of certain prepositions differed significantly from general New

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writings of Jewish authorship and the translations contained in the Greek Bible. Of primary importance is the difference in style noticeable when we pass from the preface of the son of Sirach to his version of his grandfather's work - a contrast which is analogous to that between Luke's preface and his story of the infancy" (1909, 27-28).

Testament usage. To confirm the significance of this observation, he cited differences in usage between three Classical authors and John, as well as between the Apocalypse and what he termed "literary koine" (1920, I:cxxvii-cxxviii). However, he did not acknowledge that the Seer's repetitive style would have had an effect on his calculations, despite his own declaration that John frequently chose a particular phrasing and then used it over and over again.

Charles has also repeatedly emphasized the differences between the Seer's language and that of other authors while minimizing that which they have in common. Although he normally compared John's Greek with a language norm which was not derived from any single text, when differences between Revelation and an individual text could be adduced as evidence to support his case, he was quick to do so. On the other hand, when John's style bore similarity to that of the Septuagint or the papyri, he generally has discounted this evidence as weak and extraordinary.

Charles' portrayal of Revelation as a text which exhibits a "vast multitude" of errors is thus manifestly unwarranted and misleading. As a result, his assertion that John was a Semite handicapped by a deficient knowledge of Greek is not credible.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>G. Mussies, Nigel Turner, and Steven Thompson have like Charles assumed that it is possible to formulate a language norm by which to measure John's linguistic competence. Turner claimed that his Greek was identical to Jewish-Greek, a form of the language "in which some Hebrew and some Aramaic idioms were already mingled" (Turner 1976, MHT:148-9), a view with which Thompson has concurred (1985,

## 2. Style Relative to Usage in Other Texts

A comparison of Revelation with texts which are similar to it in content or date to its period is a much sounder basis upon which to characterize the language and style of the author of the Apocalypse. The best bases for comparison are the Septuagint and Hellenistic writings.

(a) Septuagint style. First-century Christian apocalypses would obviously be writings with which the style of the Apocalypse should first be compared, but few are extant. If it could be shown that Revelation was similar in style to these apocalypses, John's unusual language would not seem so strange. It is only because apocalypses of this kind are largely unknown that some scholars have described the Seer's Greek style as unique or idiosyncratic.<sup>44</sup> The basis

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108). The existence of such a dialect, however, is by no means certain (see sec. 2.B above). G. Mussies has formulated norms for both Greek and Hebrew, relying mainly on textbook patterns. His Semitic categories, for example, have been formulated on the basis of usage in classical Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, and Aramaic. The criticisms levelled at Charles' language norm apply in this case as well.

<sup>44</sup>A. Hilhorst has made a study of the Shepherd of Hermas, a writing which poses many of the same questions of authorship as does Revelation. Rather than accepting the traditional view that the style and language of Hermas are idiosyncratic and Semitic, Hilhorst compared it with the Septuagint and early Christian religious texts. His conclusion was that its language represented a biblicalizing religious style rather than a sub-standard Greek which had been directly influenced by Semitic tongues (1976).

for this claim, however, must be seen for what it is; an argument from silence. This does not invalidate it, but it does require that it not be accepted uncritically.

The Septuagint is a text which is close in content and purpose to the Apocalypse. Its prophetic books are of particular importance in this regard. Although it predates the New Testament by two centuries or more, its language is similar to that of first-century Christian writings, and it is generally considered to have been written in Hellenistic Greek.<sup>45</sup>

The influence on the grammar, vocabulary, and style of later religious texts is widely conceded to have been pervasive.<sup>46</sup> There is no doubt that the peculiar language of the Septuagint, attributable for the most part to the exigencies of translating a sacred text, has clearly had a

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<sup>45</sup>H. Thackeray has maintained that the language of the Septuagint was basically Hellenistic *koinê* and not a special form of Greek. Its distinctiveness, in his opinion, was due chiefly to the fact that "the LXX, being a translation, has naturally a Semitic colouring" (1909, 16). A recent study of Septuagint vocabulary by J.A.L. Lee has confirmed Thackeray's assessment. Like Thackeray, Lee has concluded that "in order to account for the peculiarities of LXX Greek it is sufficient to refer to the fact that the work is a translation" (1983, 30).

<sup>46</sup>Marguerite Harl has shown that distinctive vocabulary from the Septuagint occurs in some of the writings of the Church Fathers but not in the New Testament. The possibility of an intermediate Christian source for the terms thus being ruled out, she concluded that the Fathers were directly influenced by Septuagint vocabulary (1971). Moisés Silva has observed: "It is interesting to notice that Septuagintisms (other than theological terms) are found primarily in Luke-Acts and in Revelation . . . . Conversely, Aramaisms are hard to find in these writings, thus supporting the view (shared by this writer) that the authors in question intentionally imitated the style of the LXX" (1976, 108).

great impact on the religious Greek of the New Testament and other Christian writings. The translation Greek of the Greek Old Testament had become the stylized, biblicizing Greek of the Christian religious community.<sup>47</sup> It represented a parole as opposed to a langue.<sup>48</sup>

There is good reason to presume that Septuagint style has also had an effect on the Apocalypse, even though some scholars have not readily acknowledged this.<sup>49</sup> John has

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<sup>47</sup>In his remarks on the language of the Shepherd of Hermas, A. Hilhorst, borrowing terms from classical philology, described its biblicizing style as a langue stylisée or Kunstsprache (1976, 41, 44-45). Regarding alleged Semitic influence on the Shepherd, he has asserted: "Pour les sémitismes, nous sommes parti du principe que les phénomènes linguistiques qui se présentent déjà dans le Septante ne peuvent en général servir de preuve pour la connaissance de l'hebreu et de l'arameen" (183).

<sup>48</sup>Moisés Silva's correctly points out that Adolf Deissmann's contention that the Greek of the New Testament was biblicizing in style (parole) does not call into question its fully Hellenistic character at the basic level of language (langue). Silva has been supported in this assertion by Stanley Porter (1989, 593-594). Nigel Turner's research lends support to the assertion that there was a definable biblical style, although he equated this style with a Jewish-Greek dialect. While he recognized varying degrees of Semitic and Septuagint influence in the New Testament, Turner nonetheless affirmed its overall stylistic unity: ". . . though there is a comparative style for each author, I believe that the styles are not so far apart as to impair the inner homogeneity of Biblical Greek; even the extremes of, say, Mark and James share a stylistic generic likeness" (1976, MHT IV:2). With respect to Revelation, Turner rejected R.H. Charles' contention (1920, I:cxliii) that "the linguistic character of the Apocalypse is absolutely unique." In Turner's opinion, John's language fell within the range of styles of Biblical Greek (149).

<sup>49</sup>W. Howard has criticized R.H. Charles for neglecting to take Septuagint influence into account (1929, MHT II:485). More recently, this criticism has been made of Steven Thompson's work by J.L. Houlden (1987, 123) and D. Schmidt (1987, 733). Marius Reiser has noted that Klaus Beyer's monograph on Semitic constructions in the New Testament

borrowed imagery and descriptive phrasings from Greek versions of the Old Testament<sup>50</sup> so freely that Septuagintal phrasings and descriptive language can be said to abound in the Apocalypse. Many of the Seer's allusions, or 'echoes' as Jon Paulien has correctly termed them (1988, 48), are, for example, very close to the Septuagintal wording of the passages from Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel. The Psalms were likewise a rich source of striking locutions for Revelation's hymns and confessional declarations.

Various reasons have been given for John's adoption of Septuagint style. W. Howard has argued that it was likely that John had consciously borrowed idioms from Hellenistic writings, the Septuagint, and other apocalyptic texts because Greek was not his mother-tongue. Because he had great difficulty in communicating in it, the Seer looked to those sources for ready-made idioms.<sup>51</sup> Certain Hellenistic and

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(1962) is of no value for the question of possible direct Semitic influence because he too has not considered such influence (1984, 25-26).

<sup>50</sup>Only the extent of the Seer's dependence upon Greek versions and not their use per se is in dispute. Charles, who believed that John had based most of his allusions on the Hebrew Old Testament, has cited many passages in Revelation which he thought had been influenced by Greek versions of the Bible (1920, I:lxxviii-lxxx). Similarly, L. Trudinger, who like Charles argues in favour of John's dependence upon Semitic texts, has also conceded that John had adopted many striking phrases from Greek translations (1963, 174). T.C. Laughlin was of the same opinion (1902). H.B. Swete contended that John had always made use of the Greek Old Testament (1909, clv-clvi).

<sup>51</sup>For Howard, it was inconceivable that John would not have availed himself of linguistic models from the LXX: "Is it not likely that one who was trying to write in Greek, a language with which he was not perfectly familiar, would

Septuagintal constructions were particularly well-suited to his purpose, since they were "in accord with his Semitic habit of speech" (1929, MHT II:484). By favouring such Semitizing idioms, John wrote in a manner which would have been acceptable to Greek-speakers yet which reflected the Semitic languages with which he was more familiar.

Other interpreters have asserted that John adopted a biblicalizing manner not on account of his linguistic inadequacy, but because it was the most appropriate style for a prophetic text. J.H. Moulton has likened this kind of Greek, appearing most often in Luke, to the 'biblical English' used in modern-day prayers and hymns (1929, MHT II:18). In his opinion, it would have been natural for a religious writer such as John to have expressed himself in such a biblicalizing idiom.<sup>52</sup>

Ernst Lohmeyer has maintained that by using archaic phrasings, particularly those found in the prophetic

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prepare himself for the sacred task of declaring his heavenly message by studying the revelation of bygone seers, not only in the sacred tongue of the Hebrews, but also in the version which was hallowed as the Bible of the Greek-speaking Dispersion and of the Gentile Christian Church?" (1929, MHT II:485).

<sup>52</sup>1929, MHT II:16. Moulton has concluded that many of the Semitic phrasings in Revelation were due to "imitations, conscious or unconscious, of the Greek OT, where the translators had perpetrated 'translation Greek.'" While asserting that translation Greek "abounds" in Revelation, he did not contend that it was the only cause of John's grammatical peculiarities. He thought that John wrote in colloquial Hellenistic Greek, accepting at the same time Charles' claim that the Seer's command of Greek was somewhat limited and flawed because it was not his native tongue (33-34).

literature, John sought to forge a link from his work to the prophetic tradition of the past. Although he attributed some of the peculiarities in the Seer's Greek to linguistic interference from John's Aramaic first language (1953, 199), Lohmeyer asserted that John had adopted the literary style of the sacred text of Jews and Christians so that his paranesis would carry added weight and authority. A stylized language of this kind was an entirely fitting, and indeed necessary vehicle to deliver a written prophetic message: ". . . es wäre nicht Prophetie, wenn es nicht in der Sprache der alten Prophetie spräche" (198).

Heinrich Kraft also concluded that John's Greek had been patterned on the language and poetic style of the Septuagint's prophetic literature as well as of apocalyptic texts so that it would carry a sense of inspiration and authority. For Kraft, as it was for Lohmeyer, this stylized, biblicizing language was a literary idiom which did not reflect oral discourse: "Die Sprache der Apokalypse ist niemals und von niemand gesprochen worden" (1974, 15).

Kraft, however, went further than Lohmeyer, contending that deliberate Greek stylizing alone was sufficient to account for the peculiar character of Revelation's language. Even though he believed that it was probable that John was an Aramaic-speaking Jewish-Christian, Kraft denied that linguistic arguments could be used to support this claim. Kraft reasoned that because John had written Greek so fluently in some sections of the Apocalypse, his good

knowledge of that language could not be denied (15).

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has found Kraft's view persuasive, concluding that since John had imitated the style of the language of worship in some sections of the Apocalypse, it was likely that he had adopted a hieratic style elsewhere as well.<sup>53</sup> Despite this assertion, Schüssler Fiorenza, like Kraft, was not willing to forego the hypothesis of a bilingual John, although she conceded the need for "much more careful study" in this area (1985b, 15).

Although it is difficult to specify precisely the extent to which Septuagint style has affected the language and style of Revelation, there has clearly been enough to undermine claims that his Greek was incompetent and stained by Semitisms. It appears, for instance, that many of the unusual aspects of the language of the Septuagint are also found in Revelation. These include a goodly number of those which H.J. Thackeray has enumerated in his study of Septuagint grammar, most of which he has found in Hellenistic texts as well. These included: frequent breaching of rules of concord; use of nominative casus pendens; a "drifting" into the nominative or accusative in long lists of dependent words joined by kai; ad sensum constructions; and the

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<sup>53</sup>Wrote Schüssler Fiorenza: "That the author was capable of writing poetic-hymnic language is substantiated by the research on the hymns in Revelation which the author composed using traditional-liturgical language in order to comment on the apocalyptic actions of the book. Even though the attempts to render the text of Rev. in strophic form are not conclusive, they support the assumption that its style and language were intentionally created" (1985b, 16).

employment of both singular and plural verbs with neuter plural substantives (1909, 23).

If one were to characterize the Seer's dependence upon Septuagint style, it would best be termed allusive. The Seer has made stylistic allusions to the Septuagint just as he has alluded to its subject-matter, and in as liberal a fashion. Yet his debt to the Greek Bible should not be overestimated; it was also elusive. He did not slavishly copy all the mannerisms of the Greek Old Testament, nor was he consistent in his use of its peculiar syntactical constructions. Instead, he sprinkled his prophecy with Septuagint idioms in much the same way that he selected only some of its imagery to suit his literary purpose. Just as he has not tied himself too closely to the Old Testament by quoting it directly, neither has he fully adopted its style.

(b) Hellenistic parallels. Several recent studies of Hellenistic language and style are relevant to the study of John's Greek. In the work of Lars Rydbeck, it was found that a straightforward, unliterary kind of prose had been employed in Hellenistic medical and technical texts. This language was neither vulgar<sup>54</sup> nor Atticizing, was often paratactic,

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<sup>54</sup>Lars Rydbeck has asserted that the so-called Semitisms of the New Testament were intentionally included because they were appropriate to its elevated and dignified style (1967, 197 n.19). With respect to the vulgarisms in the language of the New Testament, Rydbeck has concluded: "Irgendwelche wirklich vulgären Züge sehe ich in der Sprache des NT nicht (abgesehen von sehr speziellen Dingen in der Apokalypse)" (197).

and sometimes contained grammatical peculiarities which in other texts had been attributed to Semitic influence.<sup>55</sup> For Rydbeck, traditional descriptions of style such as Volkssprache and volkstümlich, simply meant non-classical, and so were inadequate to characterize this kind of language (15-16). Rydbeck advocated instead that the language of these technical writings be termed an 'intermediate' style, or Zwischenschichtsprosa (1967, 188; 1975).

Although John was not writing a technical or a medical text, the fact that this prose style existed and was used by educated authors should give pause to those who assume an Attic standard as a language norm. John's prophetic message may well by convention have demanded that he employ a simple and sometimes biblicalizing style, in the same way that technical texts required a straightforward style of

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<sup>55</sup>Steven Thompson has noted Rydbeck's warning about attributing grammatical peculiarities too quickly to direct Semitic influence, concurring with his view on the Hellenistic use of the indefinite third person plural active verb (apart from verbs of speaking) as an alternative to the passive voice (1985, 18-22). Nevertheless, Thompson attempted to avoid the force of Rydbeck's observation by countering that Rydbeck had not taken into account occurrences in which God was the agent, arguing that these were attributable to Semitic influence. It is, however, far from obvious that God is the agent of the third person plural verb forms which Thompson has cited. In 10:11, the subject is clearly the angels. The angels may also be the subject in 12:6, or this occurrence may be a simple passive which assumes an indefinite agent "they." It should be noted that God is specified as agent in the passive construction hêtoimasmenon apo tou theou in 12:6, indicating that John was not as averse to naming God as agent as Thompson has implied in his argument invoking Aramaic usage. In 16:15, it makes much better sense to view hina . . . blepôsin as an indefinite construction rather than assuming that God was the agent.

composition. Prophecies in the Greek Old Testament are quite similar in style to John's, indicating that his language was not as unconventional as it has been portrayed.

The work of Marius Reiser involved a comparison between the style of folk discourse and that of the Gospel of Mark. On the basis of a study of Aesop's fables and Christian stories from the second to sixth centuries, Reiser identified what could be called a popular style of composition; one which was often used for story-telling. It included many elements that Reiser has argued were also characteristic of everyday speech: parataxis, simple sentence structure, anacolutha, little variation in vocabulary, repetitions, and an interest in portraying emotion and passion (1984, 34-42). Although Revelation was not a narrative, it too contains a number of these stylistic traits. This would indicate, as Reiser has concluded for Mark (45), that these supposedly Semitic aspects of the language of Revelation were not due to direct Semitic influence, but to Hellenistic style.

It is true that John's work would at times have been more easily understood if his language had been less peculiar. His prophecies, however, are extremely difficult to understand in themselves and would probably have been no less opaque had there been an improvement in his style. Complete intelligibility was obviously not his primary concern. In any case, the effect which John's use of unusual language had upon his work should not be over-estimated. There are relatively few alleged Semitisms and errors in the

book, and those that are found do not prevent a reader from grasping an intended meaning by means of a quick reference to context.

### 3. Style Relative to Social Status and Setting

The careful description of the social context in which discourse occurs, which is one of the tasks of sociolinguists, is invaluable in gaining a proper understanding of what is being communicated. Rather than using a hypothetical model by which to describe grammar and syntax, sociolinguists attempt to analyze individual speech situations in order to formulate a relevant linguistic model.

Style is also not defined in relation to an overall scheme which stipulates norms of language use. It is instead defined in terms of the expectations of those who are engaged in communication within a particular social context. Correct style is thus not characterized as conformity to 'textbook' patterns formulated on the basis of universal and not particular usage.<sup>56</sup> What would be usual and correct in one setting could be unusual and incorrect in another. According to Dell Hymes, one of the leading figures in this area of research, the chief factors which determine proper usage, or competence, include: systemic potential, occurrence,

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<sup>56</sup>A. McIntosh's essay features a helpful discussion of the link between style and context. He has argued that usage is largely determined by style, and that style in turn is chosen for its appropriateness in a particular situation (1972, 241-251).

feasibility, and appropriateness (1974, 95; cf. 9,79,206).

It is true that much of the work of sociolinguistics concerns living, oral discourse. John Gumperz, for example, depended heavily upon analysis of the prosody of oral speech in order to describe and classify contemporary styles of speaking, including that of religious discourse<sup>57</sup>. Despite the claims of Heinrich Kraft and others, it is doubtful that any intonational or rhythmical scheme can be discerned in Revelation. At the same time, however, it is apparent that Revelation was meant to be read aloud (1:3), probably in the context of a worship service as a substitute for the author's presence. As a result, there is some warrant for examining Revelation in the context of the speech community of the first-century Christian congregations.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, sociolinguists themselves have claimed that their analysis is sometimes relevant to written as well as to oral discourse. This is evident in Hymes' discussion of sociolinguistics and texts, in which he commends research on the parables of Jesus

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<sup>57</sup>1982, 100-129. Like many other sociolinguists, Gumperz finds the African-American religious community a fruitful area for research. He has, for example, made helpful studies of the use of African-American sermonic style in political speeches (187-203).

<sup>58</sup>Walter Ong's concept of a 'manuscript culture,' a stage of cultural development midway between orality and literacy, is well-suited to describe the context in which Revelation was produced. In his view, a manuscript culture included aspects of both oral and written discourse: "Still tied to the commonplace tradition of the old oral world, it deliberately created texts out of other texts, borrowing, adapting, sharing the common, originally oral, formulas and themes, even though it worked them up into fresh literary forms impossible without writing" (1982, 133).

for taking cultural context into account (1974, 98-101).

Disciplines which are not primarily concerned with oral discourse have also acknowledged that social context plays a decisive role in creating and construing texts. In philosophy, the speech-act theory of J.L. Austin (1975) and John Searle (1972) asserts that the shared conventions of members of a community are of paramount importance in the determination of the 'force,' and hence meaning, of any utterance.<sup>59</sup> In literary criticism, reader-response critic Stanley Fish has made a good case that the outlook of an interpretive community is in fact what determines meaning for the individual reader.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>The inclusion of Searle's essay "What Is a Speech Act?" (1972, 136-154) in an important collection of articles about sociolinguistics bears witness to the close relationship between this type of analysis and that of sociolinguistics. Speech-act theory has made itself felt as well in biblical studies, Semeia 41 (1988) being devoted to the application of its principles to biblical texts.

<sup>60</sup>Fish has radicalized Searle's speech-act theory, arguing that Searle did not go far enough in attributing the production of meaning to contextual factors (1980b, 243). In his opinion, the concept of context included the very process of reading, conceived of as an interpretive activity and not merely as the extraction of the inherent, or original meaning of a text. Fish has gone as far as to contend that reading was equivalent to the re-writing of a text: "Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around" (1980a, 171). Robert Fowler, a leading proponent of reader-response criticism in New Testament studies, has rightly criticized Fish's extreme views. Nevertheless, Fowler has acknowledged that reading must be accomplished within a specific context. For Fowler, it was "a matter of text and reader meeting in the context of the critical community" (1983, 45).

There is little doubt that an approach which takes into account the social context of Revelation greatly facilitates the understanding of the intentions of New Testament writers, including John. For J.L. Houlden, recent developments in sociolinguistics hold the key to advances in the study of the syntax of the Seer (1987, 123). Sociolinguistic theory has also been cited explicitly by Stanley Porter, who has adopted its term 'register' to describe New Testament style in terms of its social setting (1989, 596-598). The sociolinguistic approach is implicit as well in the work of Adela Yarbro Collins and Steven Thompson, who appeal to 'appropriateness,' the fourth of Hymes' criteria, in order to support their claims. They have maintained that the unusual aspects of the language of Revelation were appropriate for a Jewish-Christian author and social milieu.

Yarbro Collins has argued that John deliberately sought out Semitizing idioms in order to honour his cultural heritage. She could not accept that second-language difficulties had caused John to write a defective form of Greek. He could, she reasoned, have easily overcome such difficulties, as many other Jews had done.<sup>61</sup> Steven Thompson

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<sup>61</sup>Adela Collins' argument differed from that of Charles in that she asserted that John's style had been adapted deliberately and not unconsciously. "But why," she writes, "was his mastery of Greek so imperfect? Charles's theory is not persuasive. If a man of John's creative intelligence was unable to master Greek because of personal circumstances, one would expect him to have sought and received assistance. It is more likely that John wrote a peculiar, contemporarily Semitizing Greek on purpose. Such an act may have been a kind of protest against the higher forms of Hellenistic culture. It would have been an act of cultural pride of a

has likewise asserted that nationalism had much to do with the Semitizing style of Revelation. In his opinion, John's nationalistic feelings were so strong that he employed this unusual Greek so that "the necessity of expressing sacred themes in a gentile tongue was rendered less distasteful" (1985, 108).

Although Yarbrow Collins and Thompson are to be commended for affirming the importance of the cultural setting of the Apocalypse in the study of its language, their contention that its social situation was Jewish-Christian cannot be supported. There is no indication that the Apocalypse should be situated within a Jewish or Jewish-Christian context. As was outlined in Chapters One and Two above, the content and form of the book show no dependence on distinctively Jewish or Jewish-Christian motifs or traditions. Nowhere is it even intimated that John was a Jew or that his birthplace was Palestine. Moreover, there is no clear evidence that he knew Semitic languages, nor can the suggestion that he composed his work in a Jewish-Greek dialect be substantiated.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that John was

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Jewish Semite. Such an act fits well with the type of message expressed in Revelation, as we shall see. It is analogous to the refusal of some American blacks to 'talk right'" (1984, 47). Having accepted G. Mussies' claim that John avoided Septuagint Semitisms in favour of constructions based on Mishnaic Hebrew, Collins has declared that "it is hard to avoid the conclusion that John was at least bilingual" (47). Collins' view is similar to that of W. Howard, who argued that John deliberately employed Semitizing Septuagintal phrasings (1929, MHT II:484). Howard, however, argued that the Seer had employed a biblicizing style simply to compensate for his inadequate command of idiomatic Greek.

intimately connected with the greater Church community. He addressed his work to Asian congregations and reflected views on Christian doctrine and ethics which were widely held. The hymns and doxologies in the book have probably been based on Septuagint models and on songs and confessions used in Christian worship. They display no clear dependence upon Jewish patterns (see Chapter One above, sec. B.2.b). If any community was likely to have had an influence on his style, it was the Church at large, not just its Jewish-Christian component.

In addition, although John's style was sometimes biblicizing and therefore indirectly Semitizing, there is no reason to think that only a Jewish-Christian audience would have appreciated it. Christians of all ethnic origins would have considered biblical-sounding phrasings and Septuagintal idioms to be entirely appropriate to his message. Indeed, despite there being no evidence extant of the everyday speech patterns of Christians at worship, it seems likely that both John and his audience would have shared a style of speech in this setting which employed biblicizing phrasings.<sup>62</sup>

John's biblicizing style may well have been much more pronounced than that of the ordinary believer. Yet it would have differed only in degree and not in kind, and this

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<sup>62</sup> King James' English as used in some hymns and prayers provides a modern analogy for this kind of religious discourse. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress is a good example of a literary text which employs such an idiom. A style such as this can informally be called a 'register' (Porter 1989, 596-598).

difference is readily attributable to his social status as a prophet. Such a figure would have been to reflect a more stylized form of speech, as Robert Wilson, in his sociological study of prophetism, has observed. Wilson found that the utterances of some prophets were entirely unintelligible to those hearing them, but that in other cases, "the language of the intermediaries is intelligible to normal individuals, although it may be slightly different from the language currently in general use" (1980, 65-66). According to Wilson, prophetic speech included unusual changes in morphology and uncommon circumlocutions.

The characteristics enumerated by Wilson are among those that occur in the language of John. His language is stylized and repetitive to such an extent that it would be unlikely that it would have been appropriate for normal, everyday discourse. But such a peculiar demeanour on the part of a prophet like John would likely not have surprised or discomfited a Christian audience. Such behaviour was evidently closely associated with Christian prophets. The Didache, for example, advised Christians to be tolerant and not to condemn prophets when they acted in an eccentric manner. Even in extreme cases, an attitude of benign neglect was recommended.<sup>63</sup> It would be unjustified, therefore, to

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<sup>63</sup>The Didache states: "But no prophet who has been tried and is genuine, though he enact a worldly mystery of the Church, if he teach not others to do what he does himself, shall be judged by you: for he has his judgement with God, for so also did the prophets of old" (XI.11; Lake's translation). Peculiarity in speech would no doubt have been accorded the same respectful treatment. Robert Wilson has

claim that John's work would not have been appreciated by Christians of all ethnic backgrounds.

#### 4. Conclusion: Style

A study of the style of the Apocalypse does not support the claim that the Seer must have been a Jewish-Christian. The language norm proposed by Charles has little validity, and cannot serve to characterize John's Greek as idiosyncratic and incompetent. It only demonstrates that John's language was in some ways different from 'textbook' Greek.

The Septuagint appears to have been the model for much of John's style. Revelation's language, as a result, may properly be described as 'biblicizing.' It can only be termed 'Semitizing' if it is acknowledged that the Semitic influence was indirect rather than direct. That this style was somewhat rough is not a liability which must evoke apology.<sup>64</sup> John's Greek is generally intelligible, and its

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observed a connection between the unusual behaviour of some prophets and their odd manner of expressing themselves: "Just as intermediaries act in a stereotypical way, so they also use stereotypical speech patterns" (1980, 65).

<sup>64</sup>The Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky, writing in 1917, made a good case that poetic language is typically rough in style. It was his contention that such language served to 'de-familiarize' the world for its audience by rendering aesthetic response less casual and automatic. He reasoned: "In studying poetic speech in its phonetic and lexical structure as well as in its characteristic distribution of words and in the characteristic thought structures compounded from words, we find everywhere the artistic trademark - that is, we find material obviously

unusual style imparts force and power to his prophecy. Indeed, in the absence of such stylizing, the work would not be the literary masterwork it is.

When John's style is considered in relation to his social situation, it is clear that his way of expressing himself was appropriate in an early Church setting. There is no justification for supposing that John was working within or addressing only a Jewish-Christian community. Both Gentile-Christians and Jewish-Christians would have appreciated his biblical-sounding idioms and neither group would have been surprised by his unusual prophetic speech patterns.

John's social status of prophet was a major factor in his choice of so unusual a style. Indeed, the use of a more grammatically correct Greek style may well have constituted a

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created to remove the automatism of perception; the author's purpose is to create the vision which results from that deautomatized perception. A work is created 'artistically' so that its perception is impeded and the greatest possible effect is produced through the slowness of perception. As a result of this lingering, the object is perceived not in its extension in space, but, so to speak, in its continuity. Thus 'poetic language' gives satisfaction. According to Aristotle, poetic language must appear strange and wonderful; and in fact it is often actually foreign: the Sumerian used by the Assyrians, the Latin of Europe during the Middle Ages, the Arabisms of the Persians, the Old Bulgarian of Russian literature, or the elevated, almost literary language of folk songs. The common archaisms of poetic language, the intricacy of the sweet new style, the obscure style of the language of Daniel Arnaut with the 'roughened' forms which make pronunciation difficult - these are used in much the same way" (1988, 27). Shklovsky's characterization of poetic language and style is well-suited to describe the Greek of Revelation. The book's rough style as well as its enigmatic subject-matter demand that its audience pay close attention to the work and spend time in its interpretation and appreciation.

grave social error. Any undue departure from the biblicizing idiom with which the 'speech community' of his hearers were accustomed would have created more of a barrier to communication than his peculiar language would have. Thus, his biblicizing style is fully explicable apart from the claim that he was a Jewish-Christian.

#### E. Conclusion: The Language and Style of the Seer

Of the four explanations advanced to account for the unusual Greek of the Apocalypse, the bilingual and Jewish-Greek hypotheses are clearly too weak to be accorded serious consideration. The bilingual hypothesis has more to commend it, since linguistic interference is known to stem from the influence of a first language upon the speech and writing of some bilinguals. This is, however, a difficult claim to substantiate for written discourse. If the background of John were known or if Revelation contained many loan-words obviously borrowed from its author's native Semitic tongue, the explanation that he was a native Greek-speaker who was a poor writer of his first language could be discounted. But nothing is known about John's background, nor does Revelation contain Semitic loan-words or transliteration of the kind which indicate that he was a Semite.

The stylistic explanation for his unusual language is the most convincing of the four hypotheses, and the sociolinguistic option appears to explain best the reason why

John's Greek was so unusual. But because his prophetic office would have been acknowledged by both Gentile-Christians and Jewish-Christians, and his biblicizing style appreciated by Christians from both ethnic backgrounds, there is no basis to conclude that the author of the Apocalypse must have been a Jewish-Christian.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ALLEGED SEMITISMS IN THE APOCALYPSE

The assertion that John was a Palestinian Jewish-Christian rests chiefly upon the claim that his Greek grammar and syntax betray a familiarity with Semitic languages. The present chapter evaluates the evidence adduced to support the claim that there has been direct Semitic influence on John's Greek. The thirty-nine occurrences of alleged Semitisms listed in Appendix A form the main basis of discussion. Each of them has been classified under one of five general headings, in accordance with categories which scholarship has customarily employed for their description.<sup>1</sup> Several Semitisms not listed in Appendix A, including parataxis, abrupt changes of tense, and supposed Hebrew idioms are also examined.

#### I. Distribution of Alleged Semitisms

The thirty-nine occurrences of alleged Semitisms are not

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<sup>1</sup>The distribution of occurrences by category is as follows: nominative of apposition, eight; nominative casus pendens, four; pleonasm, twelve; resolution of a participle or an infinitive into a finite verb, ten; and, other alleged Semitisms, five.

distributed evenly throughout the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> Nine chapters, or nearly half of Revelation's twenty-two, are free of these constructions. Only four chapters contain four or more, including Rev. 2, which has eight. This uneven distribution suggests that these constructions are linked to specific contexts, and are not used so indiscriminately that they are characteristic of the Seer's Greek as a whole.

The distribution of paratactic constructions, abrupt changes of tense, and supposed Hebrew idioms is not as significant as evidence of Semitic influence. The occurrences of these constructions are discussed in the sections devoted to them below.

## II. Semitisms Listed in Appendix A

Three aspects of the alleged Semitisms bear investigation: (i) the frequency of occurrence of the alleged Semitisms; (ii) the extent to which they are incompatible with Greek style and usage; and (iii) the degree to which they correspond to a Semitic pattern.

Frequency of occurrence. Frequency-of-occurrence calculations provide a general indication of the extent to which the Seer was affected by Semitic patterns of usage. Both a gross total of occurrences and a net total which

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<sup>2</sup>The distribution of the 39 alleged Semitisms by chapter is as follows, with the number of occurrences in brackets following the chapter number: 1(5), 2(8), 3(5), 4(0), 5(0), 6(4), 7(3), 8(1), 9(1), 10(0), 11(0), 12(3), 13(3), 14(2), 15(1), 16(0), 17(1), 18(0), 19(0), 20(2), 21(0), and 22(0).

discounts duplicates and multiples of similar phrasings will be given for each of the five categories of Semitisms. John's habitual use of stock phrasings and his penchant for repetition make it necessary that a net total of different occurrences be calculated, in addition to the gross figure for alleged Semitic constructions. Conclusions based upon gross totals alone are bound to be misleading (see Ch. Four above, secs. C.2, D.1).

Greek usage. If a particular construction in Revelation is uncommon in Greek, this has often been taken as proof in itself of foreign linguistic influence. There are, however, uncommon constructions found in every language, the purpose of which is to enhance the style of an author's work. They can contribute added power and impact to an author's message by imparting a measure of strangeness to the text, or, as in the case of archaisms or biblicisms, lend it an air of dignity and authority. Thus, stylistic factors rather than linguistic interference may account for the unusual usage.

After a brief discussion of Greek usage, the context in which Revelation's Semitisms occur will be examined in order to determine whether there is a stylistic explanation for these unusual constructions.

Semitic correspondence. It is unfortunate that often very little attention has been paid to the frequency-of-occurrence and to the prominence in its own Semitic language of the counterpart to a given Greek Semitism. In some cases, no close parallel exists at all in Hebrew or Aramaic. This

is true, for example, of Greek constructions which are identified as Semitisms because they feature incorrect inflection. In these instances, no Semitic correspondence can be expected, since Semitic languages are not inflected.

No study is available which indicates the extent to which Greek typically was Semitized by non-native speakers. Research of this nature would require a careful examination of the written Greek of authors whose first language was known to be Semitic. The writings of Josephus would qualify, but his Greek is of such good quality it cannot be termed Semitizing. The same is true for other extant authors who knew Semitic tongues. The Septuagint is a translated text, so its Semitisms cannot readily be cited as indicative of how Semitic writers would have written when freely composing in Greek.

In the absence of such a control, claims of correspondence between John's Greek and Semitic languages can only be considered speculative. They cannot be accorded the weight which is granted to well-substantiated conclusions based on thorough research.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, in the study of alleged Semitisms which follows, the possibility of direct Semitic influence will be accepted without prejudice for the

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<sup>3</sup>J.A.L. Lee has made a similar point in his discussion of an alleged Jewish-Greek dialect: "I am not suggesting that one cannot speak of a 'Semitic mind,' or that there is no relationship of any kind between thought and linguistic structures. But such matters are irrelevant to the linguistic question we are dealing with. Any given feature of LXX Greek must be accounted for first of all on the linguistic level, not by reference to the 'Semitic mind' of the Jew" (1983, 18).

sake of discussion.

#### A. Nominative of Apposition

Frequency of occurrence. This construction involves a nominative substantive which has been placed in apposition to a substantive in an oblique case (e.g.: Rev. 2:20, tên gunaika Iezabel hê legousa heautên prophêtin). It accounts for eight of the thirty-nine alleged Semitisms listed in Appendix A.<sup>4</sup> Six of these eight involve different phrasings. Only 1:5-6 and 2:13, which both contain ho martus and ho pistos, are similar enough that they could be termed duplicates. Because they are descriptive of different persons, however, they will be treated as separate occurrences.

Greek usage. These eight occurrences are not the only sort of apposition found in the Apocalypse. Other kinds of apposition are also found, including apposition of substantives in the same case. This latter usage is well-attested in Greek and is not normally attributed to Semitic influence.<sup>5</sup> The eight instances of two-case apposition found

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<sup>4</sup>1:5; 2:13; 2:20; 3:12; 8:9; 9:14; 14:12; 20:2. The employment of a nominative in apposition to a pronoun in an oblique case is a defining characteristic of nominative casus pendens (see sec. B. below).

<sup>5</sup>R.B.Y. Scott has attributed instances of same-case apposition in Revelation to the influence of Hebrew because this construction occurs in that language. As proof, he cited Rev. 6:11 (ignoring kai), 12:5, 13:17, 17:5, and 21:5 (1928, 8). Yet since apposition is not at all foreign to Greek (Turner 1963, MHT III:206), and these occurrences are

in the Apocalypse are much more striking, due in part to their infrequent occurrence in Greek as a whole. No doubt for this reason, Semitic influence has been proposed to account for their appearance.

The use of apposite nominatives as a means to describe important figures was not unknown in the Hellenistic period. Eduard Norden, for example, has shown that this was one way in which prayers were addressed to divine figures in certain inscriptions. Norden observed that participial phrases in the nominative case were typically employed when describing a god. One of his Hellenistic examples, "kluthi moi, ho en Leontôpoli . . .," involves an incongruity, although the nominative in this case serves as a vocative (1956, 227).<sup>6</sup>

Other epigraphic evidence testifies to a similar practice. Inscriptions 611 and 660 in Dittenberger's OGIS contain nominatives in apposition to substantives in oblique cases, all of which refer to particular persons. In the case of 611, which contains the ascription Huper sôterias Autokratoros Traianou Neroua Sebastou huios Sebastos Germanikou Dakikos, Dittenberger has concluded that the

neither extraordinary nor ill-suited to their context, his accounting for them as Semitisms is entirely unnecessary. Concerning the unusual case of apposition in Rev. 12:5, BDF has concluded that "arsen . . . is substantival and in apposition to huion (hos refers to huion), therefore correct; in addition eteken arsen is an allusion to LXX Is 66:7" (sec. 136, 3).

<sup>6</sup>Among the New Testament occurrences he has listed, Norden includes the congruent use of descriptive nominative phrases in Rev. 2:18 and 3:7, as well as the incongruent usage in 1:4, where he no doubt assumed an unstated theou.

opposition demonstrates "ignorantiam sermonis Graeci" (1970, II:307). Although there are a number of other peculiarities involved in this phrase,<sup>7</sup> it is possible that scribe responsible for it employed huios as a descriptive nominative apposed to Traianou. Dittenberger has likewise characterized Popliou Iouentiou Rouprou metal(1)archê Zmaraktou in OGIS 660 as an anomaly (II:368-369). However, the occurrence of another such construction later in the text, Popliou Iouentiou Agathopous apeleutheros autou, suggests that the scribe's usage was intentional and consequently quite acceptable.

In the papyri, several instances may be cited in which descriptive apposite nominative phrases have been employed to describe particular persons. P. Oxyrhynchus 527, for example, which dates from the second or early third century C.E., contains the phrase peri Serênou tou gnaphêôs ho sunergazomenos meta Phileou. The writer of this letter clearly was aware of the demands of grammatical concord, since he described Serenus with the congruent genitive phrase "the fuller." Nevertheless, he has continued his description

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<sup>7</sup>The scribe was evidently following the convention for Latin inscriptions. According to B.F. Cook, the Latin Sextus Numonius Sexti filius Maturus would be rendered Sextos Noumônios Sextou huios Martouros in Greek (1987, 23-24). This Greek form is similar to OGIS 611, although the second Sebastos and Dakikos are not genitives to match Germanikou. If an apposite nominative is assumed for 611, it would read: "For the salvation of Emperor Trajan, son of Nerva Augustus, Augustus Germanicus Dacicus." P. Rylands 174 contains a more common form of Trajan's title: Autokratoros Kaisaros Neroua Traianou Sebastou Germanikou Dakikou (Hunt 1932, vol. I no. 74; cf. vol. II nos. 316, 350).

with a nominative of apposition, "who works with Phileas."

Other evidence of this sort may also be adduced. P. Oxy. 2124, for instance, from the early fourth century, has para Aurêliôn . . . hoi g' genomenoi apaitêtai sitou; three men being described as collectors of grain. As well, in addition to P. Oxy. 527, Moulton has cited BGU 1002 (Antiphilou Hellên . . . hipparchês) as an occurrence of such apposite usage (1908, MHT I:60 n.1).

The various editors of these texts and inscriptions have, as a matter of course, pointed out the incongruity involved in the use of apposite nominatives and corrected them accordingly in their accompanying notes. Yet the fact that this construction is found in so many non-biblical sources serving the same descriptive purpose which it does in the Apocalypse points strongly to its having been a correct and acceptable means of expression.

Some uses of substantives in the nominative instead of in oblique cases, especially those in lists, are clearly erroneous. In P. Oxy. 2123, Dionusios after para Aurêliôn appears to be an error, although the following amphoterói kôarchôn may be an apposite nominative, as is probably true of the similar construction in P. Oxy. 2124, cited above. In P. Oxy. 2134 (l. 5), the use of a nominative form of the name of the recipient instead of a dative is clearly an oversight. Both of these instances, however, unlike those in the Apocalypse, involve just proper names and not descriptive

epithets or phrases.<sup>8</sup>

Although it may have been correct in Hellenistic Greek to employ this apposite construction, it is evident nonetheless that this was not frequently done. But this is no reason to suppose that John should not have employed it as often as he did. Uncommon usage is permissible in any language if it serves a useful purpose. In Revelation, it appears that this unusual, 'marked' construction was used for the most part to describe in vivid fashion key 'actors' in the Apocalypse, including Christ, the Dragon, Jezebel, and the saints.<sup>9</sup> It is names or titles (substantives in oblique cases) to which, with one exception, nominative substantives are apposed.<sup>10</sup> More mundane substantives have not rated such

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<sup>8</sup>Adolf Deissmann, commenting on the erroneous use of a nominative in a second-century ostrakon text from Thebes, has asserted that "the use of the cases (nominative for genitive) is vulgar, as in the Revelation of John" (1927, 121 n.9). In view of its widespread use, however, this construction, at least when it involves descriptions, may not be as vulgar as he has supposed.

<sup>9</sup>The Seer describes the chief 'characters' of the Apocalypse as follows:

Christ, the faithful witness, first-born from the dead, ruler of the kingdoms of the Earth (1:5);

The Dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan (20:2);

Antipas, my [Christ's] faithful witness (2:13);

Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess (2:20);

The Saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (14:12); and,

The Sixth Angel, who has the trumpet (9:14).

Part of the 'setting' of the Apocalypse is also accorded this stylized treatment:

The New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God (3:12).

<sup>10</sup>The phrase "a third of the creatures in the sea" clearly does not describe a main character in Revelation. It is possible, however, to take the phrase ta echonta psuchas

treatment. The Seer has only accorded especially significant persons the privilege of bearing descriptive epithets in the form of apposite nominatives.

The fact that he has employed this unusual construction to draw attention to the traits or activities of only the chief characters in his prophecy strongly suggests that stylistic considerations motivated the Seer. That this usage produced a lack of agreement in case was apparently subordinate to the felicity obtained by the use of so apt a means of depicting the major players in the Apocalypse.<sup>11</sup> The Seer's use of the nominative of apposition clearly highlights better the particular character being described than a more 'correct' form of phrasing would have done. Indeed, in terms of appropriate usage, it is fair to say that they constitute 'more correct' usage in their literary contexts than would the grammatically more proper forms.

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as apposite to the neuter to triton in an ad sensum construction. This would then constitute an instance of acceptable, same-case apposition.

<sup>11</sup>A modern analogy of this usage is the epithet "She Who Must Be Obeyed," employed by John Mortimer in the Rumpole of the Bailey stories to describe the character of Hilda, Horace Rumpole's sometimes over-bearing wife. Such a striking description could hardly have been inflected to conform to the demands of 'proper' English usage. The use of the objective form of the pronoun would have destroyed the effect of the phrasing. Had Mortimer, for example, in Rumpole and the Expert Witness, written the grammatically correct "I was at breakfast with her who must be obeyed," his description would have lacked the pointed force which was lent to it by his stylized "I was at breakfast with She Who Must Be Obeyed . . ." (Mortimer 1988, 128). The capitalization of the words in Mortimer's description provides reinforcement in print, but the effect is equally striking in the oral, television version of the story.

Semitic correspondence. Hebrew and Aramaic are not inflected to indicate case so that one cannot, on formal grounds, cite Semitic examples of two-case apposition which correspond to the eight cases under study in Revelation. One could perhaps concur with R.B.Y. Scott's view that the use of the nominative in apposition to substantives in other cases stemmed from an acquaintance with Hebrew which rendered him indifferent to the requirements of proper inflection in Greek. In keeping with his contention that the Apocalypse had been translated from a Hebrew original, Scott has declared that ". . . failure in concord is most likely to occur in translation from a language without case-endings into a language in which they are used" (1928, 7-8).

Unfortunately, Scott has offered nothing in the way of evidence from ancient or modern translated texts to support his claim. In any case, if the Semitic influence were indeed only of so general a kind, entailing no reproduction in Greek of a specific Semitic construction but only a general tendency to error, one would expect to find the nominative case used incorrectly many times and in many contexts in the Apocalypse. For example, instances in which both substantives in an occurrence of apposition had incorrectly been put in the nominative case instead of oblique cases should not be unknown. Such blatant disregard for appropriate case would point to interference from a Semitic or other non-inflected tongue. Yet apart from the stylized nominative ap' ho ôn in 1:4, and a few other minor

irregularities, this kind of incongruity is absent from Revelation. This claim of Semitic correspondence, therefore, is unsubstantiated.

Conclusion: Nominative of apposition. John's use of this construction can much more readily be attributed to stylistic considerations than to direct Semitic influence. Since precedents for this usage are found in non-biblical sources, there is no reason to assume that John invented this construction or utilized it because he knew no better. Indeed, far from pointing to his incompetence in Greek, the Seer's eminently appropriate use of the nominative of apposition is a testament to his literary craftsmanship.

#### B. Nominative casus pendens

Frequency of occurrence. This construction, in which a nominative substantive stands outside of the usual structure of a sentence and may be accompanied by a redundant pronoun, occurs only four times in the Apocalypse. Three of the four instances of nominative casus pendens involve the same phrase, ho nikôn, so that only two different occurrences of the construction may be cited.<sup>12</sup>

Greek usage. According to BDF (sec. 466, 4), nominative

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<sup>12</sup>BDF defines the construction in this way: "nom. pendens: the psychological subject precedes the clause as if it were the grammatical subject" (sec. 466, 2). The phrase ho nikôn is found in three passages: 2:26, with dôsô and autôi; 3:12, with poiêsô and auton; and 3:21, with dôsô and autôi. The remaining occurrence, 6:8, features ho kathêmenos and autôi.

casus pendens involving an introductory participle but no corresponding relative clause is an anacoluthon which occurs in the New Testament, the Septuagint, and in classical texts. It is possible to label such occurrences in Revelation anacolutha as well, but there are reasons to think that they have been used deliberately for a stylistic purpose.

First, John has displayed his knowledge of 'textbook' rules of grammatical concord for this phrase in Rev. 2:7 and 2:17, in which he has employed the dative tôi nikônti in agreement with the indirect object autôi. In 2:11, 3:5, and 21:7, ho nikôn has been used in common fashion, serving as the grammatical subject of its clause. These patterns of usage suggest that his use of the nominative casus pendens in 2:26, 3:12, and 3:21 was intentional and not due to ignorance or unconscious Semitic influence.

Second, the context in which John employed this unusual, incongruent construction points to intentional usage. These three occurrences are found in a somewhat formulaic phrasing in each of the letters to the seven churches.<sup>13</sup> The use of casus pendens, as in "to him who conquers, I will give to him," is one way in which this 'formula' has been expressed. Had the Seer not introduced a certain amount of variation

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<sup>13</sup>The seven occurrences of the phrase "he who conquers" in chapters 2-3 include: 2:7, dative (tôi nikônti); 2:11, nominative (ho nikôn ou mê adikêthêi); 2:17, dative; 2:26, nominative casus pendens (ho nikôn . . . dôsô autôi); 3:5, nominative; 3:12, nominative casus pendens; 3:21, nominative casus pendens. The dative usually follows the recurring clauses beginning with ho echôn, and nominative forms precede them. Verse 2:11 is the exception.

into these statements, his style would have been quite tedious. The use of casus pendens has enlivened his prose without sacrificing intelligibility, testifying better to the Seer's grasp of the possibilities of Greek style than to any literary incompetence on his part.

The redundancy occasioned by casus pendens usage in 2:26, 3:12 and 3:21 has no doubt arisen because the Seer has employed in each passage one of his favorite stock phrasings,<sup>14</sup> the combination of didômi and autos. The use of this stylized phrasing inevitably produced a pleonasm when John employed a casus pendens construction. Yet this occurred even when he employed a congruent participial phrase.<sup>15</sup> Any redundancy, therefore, is more readily attributable to the Seer's penchant for this combination of didômi and autos than it is to direct Semitic influence.

It is interesting to note that casus pendens usage in the Apocalypse occurs in the speech of Jesus. This corresponds to its usage in the Gospels, in which this

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<sup>14</sup>The terms didômi and autos occur together in 1:1; 6:2,4,11; 8:2,3; 9:1,3,5; 13:2,5,7,14,15; etc. In most cases, there is no substantive nearby which would produce a redundancy.

<sup>15</sup>Although R.H. Charles assumed Semitic influence for both congruent and incongruent participial phrases, he has nonetheless claimed that there is a significant difference in the degree of Semitic influence between same-case redundancy (e.g., 2:7, tôi nikônti dôsô autôi) and nominative casus pendens. He comments: "In ii.26, ho nikôn . . . dôsô autôi is more Hebraistic than the expression in ii.7" (1920, I:53). Unfortunately, he has not explained what he meant by it being "more Hebraistic," thereby betraying the undue measure of subjectivity inherent in his approach to the question of Semitic influence.

construction is also usually found in that context.<sup>16</sup> It is possible that such a coincidence in stylistic usage is attributable to a quotation by John of otherwise unknown sayings of Jesus, but this is unlikely. A more probable explanation is that the speech of the risen Jesus in Revelation has unconsciously or deliberately been modeled upon the style of known sayings of the Lord. Thus the Jesus of the Apocalypse would have 'sounded' like the 'authentic' Jesus who was known to the readers and hearers of gospel traditions.<sup>17</sup>

Words of Jesus are not involved in the remaining case of nominative casus pendens in 6:8. Again, the Seer's use of the nominative ho kathêmenos is apparently not due to ignorance. John's knowledge of correct, 'textbook' inflection of this substantive is evident in 6:4, where he has employed the dative form of this phrase (tôi kathêmenôi) in agreement with the unemphatic dative pronoun autôi. The

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<sup>16</sup>Matthew Black, employing a broad definition of casus pendens, has observed that 22 out of 28 instances of this construction in the gospel of John are found in sayings and speeches of Jesus (1967, 52). From this he has concluded that such speech-material was Semitic in character, and further that it represented a translation of a sayings-source which sought to preserve Jesus' actual utterances as literally as possible. Black has not considered the possibility that Jesus' speech in John has been cast into this form simply for stylistic reasons. Such an explanation should not have been overlooked, given that Black himself has asserted that the parables of Jesus, in which Semitisms are not as frequent, have undergone literary re-working. He has not explained why this re-working took place in one class of utterance and not another.

<sup>17</sup>J.A.L. Lee's helpful study of deliberate stylizing in Markan speeches of Jesus is suggestive in this regard (1985).

nominative form ho kathêmenos has probably been used in 6:8 because its case is governed by the preceding formulaic eidon kai idou. This introductory formula, common in the Greek translation of Ezekiel, typically requires that subsequent substantives be in the nominative case. In 6:8, the substantive hippos, which occurs immediately before ho kathêmenos, is also in the nominative in accordance with this usage.

As for the redundancy in 6:8, it appears that the Seer has simply used the dative autôî as a possessive with onoma, instead of indicating possession by using a genitive or dative form of ho kathêmenos. The same idiom occurs in Rev. 9:11, in which the dative of autos again serves as a possessive with onoma.<sup>18</sup> In any case, even if 6:8 is translated in a strictly literal manner as "and he who sits (ho kathêmenos) upon it, a name to him (autôî) [is] Death," the pleonasm is not at all intrusive.

In summary, it is difficult to argue that the mere presence of casus pendens is in itself proof of direct Semitic influence. The construction is found in the Greek of the Septuagint, which opens up the possibility of indirect influence stemming from that source.<sup>19</sup> The casus pendens

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<sup>18</sup>Nigel Turner terms the occurrence of onoma and autos with a substantive an idiom in which there is "an ellipse of the copula." He notes that in addition to Rev. 6:8 and 9:11, it is found in John 1:6 and 3:1 (1976, MHT IV:155).

<sup>19</sup>Charles argued that the presence of this construction in the LXX constituted proof of direct Semitic influence, contending that "this construction is very frequent in the LXX owing to its frequency in the Hebrew" (1920, I:cxlix).

construction is found in Hellenistic Greek as well.<sup>20</sup> As Wilhelm Havers has convincingly argued, the construction occurs in so many languages and historical periods that its occurrence in Revelation cannot be termed a Semitism (1926, 227). In his opinion, its primary purpose was stylistic; it emphasized certain substantives so that they would stand out in their contexts (224).

Semitic correspondence. Since Hebrew did not employ case endings, no nominative case can be distinguished formally in that language. The only Semitic correspondence which can be established is that in both languages, the casus pendens is placed at the head of a sentence.<sup>21</sup>

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Charles, however, has not allowed for the possibility that John has modeled his Greek style on that of the LXX, in which case the Semitic influence on his language would have been indirect.

<sup>20</sup>Elliott Maloney has attempted to make a case for direct Semitic influence with respect to this construction in Mark's gospel. He argued that the particular instance of a casus pendens resumed by an unemphatic personal pronoun was so rare in Hellenistic Greek that it must have stemmed from Semitic influence. Its four occurrences in Mark he attributed to this cause, although he conceded that imitation of the style of the Greek Old Testament was also possible (1981, 90). Maloney's case is weakened by his claim of special status for this infrequent usage of an otherwise common construction. BDF says of the occurrences in Revelation and elsewhere in the New Testament: "This construction is Semitic, but a comparable usage is found in classical" (sec. 466, 4). While acknowledging that "a substantive placed at the head of a clause without regard for the construction (casus pendens) is a common Semitic construction," BDF has also cited occurrences from non-translated Greek texts (sec. 466, 2).

<sup>21</sup>Because this construction functions as a rhetorical or stylistic device in Hebrew, any direct influence on John's language would be a matter of style rather than of grammar. In his monograph on Hebrew syntax, Ronald Williams has described it as follows: "Rhetorical absolute (casus

Conclusion: Nominative 'casus pendens'. The nominative casus pendens construction occurs rarely in the Apocalypse. Because it was a stylistic device, the use of which was not confined to Semitic languages, it should not be characterized as a Semitism in the Apocalypse. In 2:26, 3:12 and 3:21, it was probably employed to inject some welcome variety into a oft-repeated formulaic phrasing. Redundancy arising from its use was no doubt due to the Seer's persistent use of the stock combination of didōmi and autos. In 6:8, the construction occurs because of the influence of a nearby introductory formula, its redundancy being attributable to the use of the dative pronoun as a possessive.

### C. Pleonasm

Frequency of occurrence. The twelve occurrences of pleonasm<sup>22</sup> may be divided into three groups: (a) three instances of a substantive and an unemphatic personal pronoun; (b) six occurrences of a relative and an unemphatic personal pronoun; and (c) three instances of a relative and an adverb. All three occurrences in the first group involve similar phrasings, as do two in the third group.

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pendens), a nominative case in exposed position resumed by a later word" (1976, para. 35). Williams, it should be noted, had previously acknowledged that it was "strictly speaking, incorrect to speak of cases in Hebrew (para. 31)." In his treatment of word order, he has pointed to examples of redundancy in 1 Kings 15:13; 22:14; and Gen. 13:15 (para. 574).

<sup>22</sup>2:7,17; 3:8; 6:4; 7:2,9; 12:6,14; 13:8,12; 17:9; 20:8.

Consequently, nine different occurrences of pleonasm may be cited.

Greek usage and Semitic correspondence. Greek usage and Semitic correspondence will be considered in the course of the treatment of each of these three groups. As a preface to the discussion, it should be noted that grammarians are agreed that the pleonastic construction was not foreign to Hellenistic Greek,<sup>23</sup> especially colloquial discourse.<sup>24</sup> W.F. Bakker has attempted to define a uniquely Semitic quality for this usage. He has argued that when redundant pronouns were

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<sup>23</sup>Henry Thackeray (1909, 23) has observed that pleonasm occurs in both non-translated and translated portions of the LXX, and has concluded from this that its use was acceptable in Hellenistic Greek. For support he cited J. Moulton (1908, MHT I:94-95), who had adduced analogies from English and Modern Greek. The views of Moulton and Thackeray have been accepted by Nigel Turner (1963, MHT III:325), C.F.D. Moule (1959, 176), and A.T. Robertson (1914, 683). BDF (sec. 297) notes that examples from both Greek and Semitic texts may be cited. W. Howard has found pleonasms in Classical and Hellenistic Greek, as well as in the Latin of 4 Ezra (1929, MHT II:435). He has also pointed out that in LXX-Isa. 1:21, a redundant construction had been employed even though there was no corresponding Hebrew construction underlying the Greek, suggesting that the pleonastic construction was a Greek idiom in its own right. R.H. Charles has played down the significance of the Greek evidence, conceding only that "examples of this idiom occur exceptionally in the papyri" (1920, I:cxlix).

<sup>24</sup>J. Moulton has commented: "Dependence on Semitic would surely need to be strongly evidenced in other ways before we could readily accept such an account of elements affecting the whole fabric of everyday speech. Now a redundancy of personal pronouns is just what we should expect in the colloquial style, to judge from what we hear in our own vernacular" (1908, MHT I:85). It should be noted that one could argue as readily for Coptic as for Hebrew influence, since Coptic also used pronominal suffixes which resulted in redundancy. Elliott Maloney has attributed some of the occurrences of pleonasm in the papyri to Coptic interference (1981, 117; see also J. Vergote, 1938).

found in essential clauses, the usage is Semitic, but when they occurred in a non-essential clause, it was Greek.<sup>25</sup> He has not, however, considered the effect that the Septuagint's style has had on the language of the Apocalypse.

(a) A substantive and a pronoun. All three occurrences of a pleonastic pronoun and a substantive (2:7,17; 6:4) contain the stock combination of didômi and the unemphatic personal pronoun autos. A redundancy has arisen because, in addition to this pronoun, each verse contains a dative substantive which also serves as an indirect object (e.g.: Rev. 2:7, tôi nikônti dôsô autôi phagein). Unlike instances of nominative casus pendens, two different cases are not involved.

There is good reason to suppose that the redundancy in these three occurrences is due to stylistic considerations rather than to linguistic interference. John has used the combination of didômi and autos many times in Revelation, indicating that for him it constituted a 'stock' phrasing (see n. 14 above). If, as appears to have been his custom throughout Revelation, John has here persisted in employing this phrasing, his usage should not be viewed as a

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<sup>25</sup> (1974, 41-41). Bakker assigned 3:8; 7:2,9; 12:6; 13:8,12; and 17:9 to a Semitic category and 12:14 and 20:8 to Greek usage. Outside of the Apocalypse, he has cited Mark 7:25 as an example of a Semitic construction. He has not commented on Rev. 2:7, 17 and 6:4 in his study, perhaps because no relative was involved. Bakker's judgement regarding essential and non-essential use is, of course, inevitably subjective.

grammatical peculiarity or as a Semitism.

Moulton has cited a non-biblical text containing a redundancy which has resulted from the use of didômi and autos. Commenting on the first-century papyrus P. Oxy. 299, (Lampôni . . . edôka autôi), he observed that "the syntax is exactly that of Rev. 2:7, etc." (1908, MHT I:85). This Hellenistic occurrence of redundancy with didômi and autos also demonstrates that the Seer's use of that combination was not unique or idiosyncratic, although his repeated employment of this combination may certainly be said to be characteristic of his style.

A Semitic parallel in which an indirect object and a redundant pronominal suffix both occur with the Hebrew verb nâtan, "to give," is seldom found in the Hebrew Bible. In most cases, this Hebrew verb carries no suffixal pronoun when the indirect object has been specified. A more general correspondence than this close parallel has been advocated by Steven Thompson. He has argued that the meaning of didômi in Revelation is Hebraic, claiming a semantic rather than syntactical parallel (1985, 13-14). Stanley Porter, however, has rightly accused Thompson of having a poor grasp of semantic theory, and has pointed out that didômi had a broad enough range of meanings in Hellenistic Greek to include what Thompson alleged to be its Semitic sense (1989, 586). Heinrich Kraft has likewise rejected the claim of a Hebraic source for the Greek idiom in which didômi followed by an infinitive means "to be empowered to," arguing instead that

it was a biblicalizing phrase: "Das ist kein Hebraismus, sondern biblisch gefärbte Sprache" (1974, 20).

(b) A relative and a personal pronoun. There are six occurrences of a redundant unemphatic personal pronoun following a relative (3:8; 7:2,9; 13:8,12; 20:8).<sup>26</sup> One of these redundancies, 7:2, may once again readily be attributed to John's use of the stock phrasing involving didômi and autos. Because the unemphatic dative autois is part of this stock phrase in 7:2, the pleonasm caused by the presence of the relative hois is best viewed as the result of stylistic preference. It is unlikely that John has imitated the Septuagint in this case, even though such a pleonasm involving dative pronouns is common in its prophetic writings.<sup>27</sup> It is much more probable that the Seer's fondness for the combination didômi and autos has given rise to this redundant construction.

Three other occurrences of this kind of pleonasm (13:8,12; 20:8) involve a relative in the genitive case (hou or hôn) followed by a genitive personal pronoun (autou or

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<sup>26</sup>The relative pronoun is employed in the Apocalypse in a manner consistent with common Greek usage. There are instances of assimilation (1:1,11,19; 2:10,25; 3:11; 4:1; 10:4; 22:6), attraction (18:6), non-attraction (1:20), ad sensum usage (4:5; 5:8; 14:14), and of the epexegetic construction featuring "that is, . . ." (20:2; 21:8). The relative appears many other times (5:6; 8:2; 9:20 [bis]; 10:5,6,8; 14:4,8; 16:14,18; etc.) on its own or in combination with a preposition.

<sup>27</sup>Dative pleonasms in the LXX include: Ezekiel 11:15; 14:7; 16:37, and Jeremiah 2:6; 5:17; 7:14; 8:2; 9:12; 14:16.

autôn), as in Rev. 13:8, hou ou gegraptai to onoma autou. This particular usage does not occur consistently in the Apocalypse. In 17:8, for example, the Seer has employed a genitive relative without a redundant genitive pronoun.

John was not alone in employing a pleonastic genitive pronoun following a genitive relative. This construction, although not a regular feature in the Greek of the Old Testament, is found in one of the more prominent places in the Greek Bible, the first chapter of Genesis.<sup>28</sup> In the New Testament the construction is rare, but is found in Mark 7:25 and in the speech of John the Baptist (Mk. 1:7; Lk. 3:16,17; Jn. 1:27).<sup>29</sup> The fact that the speech of both the Seer and the other prophet John employ this unusual, biblicizing idiom suggests that this uncommon usage was identified with prophetic utterance. The same kind of pleonastic construction has also been used in Clement's First Letter to

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<sup>28</sup>Gen. 1:11,12. The phrasing in these verses is poioun karpon hou to sperma autou en autôi. A pleonastic construction also occurs in a prepositional phrase in the words of God in Jacob's vision (Gen. 28:13). See also Jeremiah 5:15 (genitive relative) and 11:11 (genitive prepositional).

<sup>29</sup>Note also Jn. 1:33, which is not as clearly redundant. A pleonasm involving a preposition occurs in Acts 15:17, but in a Septuagint citation. There is a difficulty in the text at 1 Peter 2:24, rendering this occurrence of little value. Elliott Maloney has attributed Markan occurrences to Semitic interference, but concedes that it may have come indirectly by way of the influence of the Greek Old Testament (1981, 116, 118). He has not treated Markan occurrences featuring a redundancy with a genitive relative as a separate category.

the Corinthians.<sup>30</sup>

The remaining two occurrences of pleonasm are more difficult to attribute to stylistic factors. John may have considered the redundancies in 3:8 ("which no one is able to shut it") and 7:9 ("which, to number it, no one was able") to have been appropriate for the 'biblical' style of Greek in which he was composing his prophecy. Both occurrences lent a certain dignified 'ring' to his work, harking back to the Semitizing translation Greek of the Septuagint. This idiom would have been especially appropriate in 3:8, since this verse records the speech of the risen Jesus. But whatever their origin, because this particular kind of redundancy occurs infrequently in the Apocalypse, it is not strong evidence of direct Semitic influence.

In the Hebrew Bible, relative clauses introduced by asher seldom included redundant pronouns.<sup>31</sup> There is, as a

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<sup>30</sup>1 Clement 21.9 reads "ereunêtês . . . hou hê pnoê autou en hêmin." It has been cited by BDF (sec. 297), J. Moulton (1908, MHT I:95) and W. Howard (1929, MHT II:435) in their discussions of pleonasm. In the Septuagint, this kind of pleonasm has clearly resulted from direct Semitic influence. By the time of the Seer, however, this construction would have been known simply through acquaintance with the Greek Old Testament.

<sup>31</sup>One could point to Gen. 5:29; 45:4 and 1 Chron. 6:50 as passages which contain asher clauses featuring redundant pronouns. Elliott Maloney has cited only 1 Chron. 6:50 as an example of a redundant personal pronoun following the relative asher. He has adduced it as evidence in support of his assertion that "in Hebrew and Aramaic the relative particles asher and di are undeclined and often specified by the addition of an adverb or a suffixal pronoun on a noun, verb, or preposition" (1981, 117). This verse is also one of only two Septuagint occurrences which he has cited as proof of his contention that "the OG frequently translates the redundant pronoun in question" (118). However, in the

result, no reason to suppose that a pleonastic syntactical construction of this kind would have had an influence on the Greek of the Seer.

(c) A relative and an adverb. Revelation contains two examples of a redundant adverb (12:6,14) and one of a redundant adverbial phrase (17:9) following a relative. Of these three, 17:9 should not be considered an instance of redundancy. The relative hopou in this verse is followed by the prepositional phrase "upon them" (ep' autôn), the antecedent of which is "mountains". If the prepositional phrase had not been used, it would not have been clear that the woman was actually sitting on several of the mountains and not simply among them or on just one. The added phrase "upon them" simply provides further descriptive information helpful in setting the scene for this vision.

The pleonasms in 12:6,14 constitute two occurrences of a single construction, hopou . . . ekei. Although the adverbs are clearly pleonastic in a way that other New Testament occurrences involving these two terms are not,<sup>32</sup> it does not appear that this kind of pleonasm was characteristic of John's Greek. On four other occasions when John could have

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Hebrew Bible, suffixal pronouns are more readily found in conjunction with prepositions in asher clauses (as is the redundant adverb sham) than attached to nouns and verbs.

<sup>32</sup>In many New Testament and LXX occurrences, the relative and the adverb are used in separate clauses (e.g.; "where A is, there is B"); hence the adverb is not redundant (see Mt. 6:21; Mk. 6:10; Jn. 12:26).

employed a pleonastic adverb following hopou, he did not do so (2:13 [bis]; 11:8; 20:10).

It is likely that the Seer was adapting an idiom involving the relative and ekei which had been used in the Greek of the Septuagint. The use of a redundant ekei after a relative is common in the Greek Old Testament, particularly in Ezekiel, to which John has alluded for other purposes on many occasions.<sup>33</sup> John, himself a prophet, would understandably have employed phrasings that were reminiscent of those used by his prophetic forebears. This is especially likely because it has been used so inconsistently and infrequently. Were it due to an unconscious Semitic interference in his Greek, one would expect that it would be found more often than it is.

Biblical Hebrew sometimes added a pleonastic adverb sham following the relative asher (e.g., Gen. 12:4; 13:3). An exact parallel is not found in Revelation, since the Apocalypse employed the adverb hopou instead of the relative pronoun hon or hou. The Hebrew relative asher in Greek

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<sup>33</sup>The same construction occurs in Ezekiel, although the relative hou rather than hopou is used (Ezek. 6:9,14; 12:16; 28:25; 29:13; 34:12; 36:20,21,22; 37:21,25; 46:20,24). As in Revelation, so in Ezekiel this construction has been employed mainly with terms involving location, including "place," "nations," and "land." It should, therefore, not be characterized as a Semitism which occurs indiscriminately in the Septuagint with no regard for context. Pleonastic constructions are also found in Jeremiah (8:3; 13:7; 16:15; 23:3; 39:37). The relative hou is also sometimes paired with redundant phrases which employ the dative case, such as en autais (Ezek. 11:17) and ep' autôî (Jer. 7:11). The LXX does not use the construction with echô or trephô, words with which it is associated in the Apocalypse (2:14; 12:6,14).

translation represents "which" (topon hon; as in "the place which he went there") rather than "where" (hopou). The sham which accompanies the relative in Hebrew is thus not truly redundant; it specifies a place. As W. Bakker has put it, because the use of the indeclinable nota relationis was often not sufficiently clear in Hebrew, "for this reason the Semitic languages used to clarify this word by means of a personal or demonstrative pronoun" (1974, 33).<sup>34</sup>

In the Greek of Revelation, the relative hopou provides a redundant indication of "where." The adverb ekei is indeed pleonastic which precludes a Semitic correspondence. The Greek equivalent of "the place [of] which he went there" would have had to have been employed if a close parallel to the Semitic idiom were to be established. Such a rendering is found in LXX-Ezekiel, which consistently features hou with ekei in its renderings of asher clauses.

Conclusion: Pleonasm. The few examples of the three kinds of pleonasm do not constitute compelling evidence of direct Semitic influence. On the contrary, there is a strong likelihood that stylistic factors have given rise to them. Of the twelve occurrences of pleonasm which have been considered, four (2:7,17; 6:4; 7:2) may be attributed to the effect of the Seer's use of the stock combination of didômi

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<sup>34</sup>The LXX usually rendered asher by a preposition and/or relative pronoun when it indicated "place where." For example, in Deuteronomy 12:5, êl hamaqôm asher . . . sham is translated eis ton topon hon . . . ekei. This contrasts with Revelation's use of the relative adverb hopou with ekei.

and autos. The redundancy in 17:9 may readily be explained as an acceptable way of specifying the locale in which a particular character was to be found.

Three occurrences (13:8,12; 20:8) involve a genitive pronoun and the genitive relative, a construction which is also found in the Greek Old Testament and in the New Testament, where it occurs in the speech of another prominent prophet, John the Baptist. A non-biblical Christian text contains it as well, indicating that it was an acceptable Greek idiom, at least in religious discourse.

The use of redundant pronouns in 3:8 and 7:9 may have been intentional also, since they impart a biblicizing tone to the speech of the Seer. But these two occurrences are not as easily explained on stylistic grounds as are the other redundancies in the Apocalypse.

The two occurrences of hopou with ekei (12:6,14) are not typical of John's use of hopou. In other passages in Revelation, a redundant pronoun has not been used with this relative. A similar idiom is common in LXX-Ezekiel, and this has probably provided the model for John's usage.

#### D. Resolution of a Participle or Infinitive into a Finite Verb

Frequency of occurrence. The ten occurrences<sup>35</sup> of this alleged Semitism include three which feature the clause kai

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<sup>35</sup>1:5-6,18; 2:2,9,20; 3:9; 7:14; 13:15; 14:2-3; 15:2-3.

ouk eisin (2:2,9; 3:9) and two kai aidousin (14:2-3; 15:2-3). As a result, only seven different occurrences may be cited. In three of the ten occurrences (1:18; 2:20; 7:14), the change is from a participle in the nominative case to a finite verb. In six others, there is a change from a participle in an oblique case to a finite verb (e.g.: Rev. 2:2, tous legontas heautous apostolous kai ouk eisin). A change from an infinitive to a finite verb occurs only once, in 13:15.

Greek usage and Semitic correspondence. Until R.H. Charles had argued the case, no one had claimed that there was a direct Hebrew-Greek correspondence involving abrupt changes from one part of speech to another. Such constructions were instead viewed as anacolutha or as colloquialisms (Robertson 1914, 445-441; Swete 1909, 8; cf. BDF sec. 468). Although Charles was aware of these explanations (1920, I:cxlv n.1), he argued nevertheless that this kind of change constituted not only a Semitism, but a "pure" Hebraism.<sup>36</sup>

The mere change from a participle to a verb in a Greek sentence is neither uncommon nor remarkable. The nominative participle frequently precedes a Greek verb as a circumstantial clause ("having gone ...") or as a substantive

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<sup>36</sup>1920, I:15. Elsewhere Charles calls it "the first and most common Hebraism" in Revelation (1922, 30). Steven Thompson has testified to the great influence which Charles' views have had on his successors: "The resolution of a participle into a finite verb, along Hebraic lines, has been given considerable attention by a wide range of scholars as one the best-attested Hebraisms in the Apc." (1985, 81).

("she who says . . . "). W. Howard has cited many examples of the shift from participle to finite verb in Classical authors, in most of which the participle is in the nominative case (1929, MHT II:428). In the New Testament, various combinations of participles and verbs are also found (BDF sec. 468), including the change from a participle to a finite verb (menousan . . . kai . . . estai; 2 Jn. 2).

To deflect the force of this evidence, Charles argued that the change from a participle in an oblique case to a finite verb represented a usage which was virtually unparalleled in contemporary Greek literature. In his opinion, this idiom could not be accounted for in terms of simple paratactic co-ordination with kai.<sup>37</sup> It was his view that the resolution of a participle or infinitive into a finite verb, although infrequent in Greek, was common in

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<sup>37</sup>In an early study, Charles declared: "In the present instance I am limiting our consideration to the co-ordination of the participle in an oblique case and the finite verb, in order to avoid the possibility of an explanation of this idiom from vernacular Greek" (1913, 90, n.2). In subsequent treatments of this phenomenon, he employed much strong language, defining it as follows: "The resolution of the participle in one of the oblique cases (gen., dat. or acc.), or of an infinitive, into a finite verb in the following clause, which finite verb should have been rendered idiomatically in Greek by a participle or an infinitive respectively" (1920, I:cxliv). Charles asserts that this construction "cannot be explained from vernacular Greek" and indeed is "impossible and unintelligible in Greek" (cxlvi). Charles' change in terminology from the weaker "co-ordination" to the stronger "resolution" is unwarranted. Given that parataxis with kai had been employed so frequently in Revelation, it was inevitable that many changes from one part of speech to another would be found, some of which by simple co-incidence would conform to Charles' patterns of "resolution."

Hebrew.<sup>38</sup> From this, he concluded that the Seer must have been influenced by a Semitic pattern when he employed the corresponding construction in Greek.<sup>39</sup>

Since Hebrew and Aramaic do not use case-endings, however, a close syntactical parallel cannot be drawn between the sequence of oblique participle and finite verb in Revelation and an equivalent Semitic pattern. At best, only an abrupt change from one part of speech to another is common to Semitic languages and Greek.

(1) Rev. 1:5b-6. This passage is a doxology featuring two participles in an oblique case (agapônti and lusanti) followed by an aorist verb (epoiêsen) and a dative personal

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<sup>38</sup>Charles cited S.R. Driver's work on Hebrew tenses, the key statement of which reads: ". . . it is a common custom with Hebrew writers, after employing a participle or infinitive, to change the construction, and, if they wish to subjoin other verbs which logically should be in the partcp. or infin. as well, to pass to the use of the finite verb" (1892, 136). Driver has cited several occurrences of this construction in the Hebrew Bible, arguing that when the participle was followed by a perfect, it referred to "something indefinite or undetermined," and when followed by the imperfect tense, to an "actual, concrete event" (137). Neither Driver nor Charles has provided many examples of this supposedly common Hebrew idiom.

<sup>39</sup>Charles supported his contention by arguing that his translation of the passages in which the construction was found were much more convincing than those of his predecessors and contemporaries. He further claimed that ancient copyists had had trouble understanding the text as it stood in terms of Greek, and so had altered it to improve the Greek style. As proof, he pointed to Rev. 1:5-6, where, he observed, 046 and a few later manuscripts read poiêsanti for epoiêsen. Charles has not conceded, however, that few of the other occurrences of this construction have been corrected by copyists. Indeed, if Charles' standard is applied to all the occurrences, it appears that scribes usually had no difficulty in understanding the sense of the passages.

pronoun (autôî). Charles has argued that there can be no doubt that there is sequence of parts of speech represented here which had been modelled on a similar Semitic construction. He rejected suggestions that kai epoiêsen hêmas . . . constituted a parenthetical remark or an anacoluthon: In his judgment, this possibility was precluded by the fact that this clause was an integral component in a parallel structure of a poetic unit which extended from verse 4b to verse 7. A simple anacoluthon or parenthetical addition was inconceivable, since either would have destroyed the parallelism of this unit.<sup>40</sup>

An examination of Charles' arguments reveals them to be very weak. In order to justify his claim that verses 4b-7 represent "three stanzas of three lines each" (1920, I:9), he has been forced to amend the text. To establish a parallel structure, he removed 4c (kai apo tôn hepta pneumatôn . . .), declaring that it could be "without hesitation bracketed . . . as an early interpolation" (11) because John would never have "put forward such a grotesque Trinity" as was found in this passage (9).

Such a line of argument is clearly overly subjective and appears to have been employed solely to suit Charles' own exegetical purposes. In addition, verses 4-5a are most easily construed as a full salutation rather than as a brief

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<sup>40</sup>Charles writes: "The second line is to be taken as forming a perfect parallelism with the first . . . . The second line is therefore no parenthesis, nor from the standpoint of the Seer is there the slightest irregularity in the construction" (1920, I:15; cf. 9).

salutation followed by a separate "benediction from God" (9). Verse 4b does not serve as naturally as the first element of the poetic unit as Charles has proposed. Verses 5b-6 likewise form a discrete unit; a doxology which concludes with amên. Verse 7, a strong allusion to Old Testament prophecies, also stands very well on its own. Charles, therefore, cannot rule out the parenthetical explanation of kai epoiêsen on the basis that it is integral to a poetic sequence.

Charles has also not shown that Hebrew doxologies ever utilized resolution of the sort found in 1:5b-6. The change from participles to a finite verb in 1:5-6 does not correspond closely to the Hebrew examples cited by Charles and Driver. For the most part, their Semitic examples feature only one participle followed by one or more verbs, whereas in this construction two participles are followed by a single verb and then a resumptive pronoun. No close Semitic correspondence can be established.

The explanations of parenthesis and anacoluthon are not as problematic as Charles has maintained. Ibson Beckwith, like Charles, denied parenthesis, but viewed this change in parts of speech as an anacoluthon from which John subsequently recovered with the dative pronoun autôî (1919, 429). An observation by Eduard Norden lends support to the hypothesis of an parenthetical insertion. As Norden has shown, a standard Hellenistic method of describing important figures was to employ the relative hos with a finite verb.

This pattern is seen in prayers and in dedicatory inscriptions, as well as in Rev. 2:8 and 10:6 (1956, 382-385). In 1:5-6, he has suggested, the Seer abbreviated the normal pattern, omitting the relative hos before epoiêsen (387).

It is possible as well that the Seer inserted kai epoiêsen hêmas into an existing, well-known Christian doxology, indicating this by the use of a finite verb instead of another participle.

(2) Rev. 1:18. R.H. Charles had originally alleged that kai ho zôn kai egenomên nekros formed the second line of a stanza about Christ and so all its words were "to be taken closely together." Rejecting common opinion, he claimed that kai ho zôn should not be taken with the preceding egô eimi ho prôtos kai ho eschatos, but with the following kai egenomên nekros (1920, I:31). Charles amended his argument somewhat in response to the criticism of J. Burney. Burney had argued that in Hebrew, such a series of participles and verbs always constituted a temporal sequence (1921, 375). Because this was not the case in 1:18, "he lives" (ho zôn) preceding in time "I became dead" (kai egenomên nekros), Burney rejected Charles' claim. R.B.Y Scott (1928, 9) concurred with this view, as did Ernst Lohmeyer (1953, 19).

For Burney and many others, "and he lives" was to be construed as a substantive and taken with the two clauses which immediately preceded it ("I am the first and the last

and the living one"). This judgment is supported by the fact that all three predicate nominatives following ego eimi begin with the article ho. The three substantives can very naturally be read as a three-fold description. Heinrich Kraft expressed a similar interpretation, contending that, on rhythmical grounds, ho zôn should be joined to what preceded (1974, 48).

Charles replied to Burney by acknowledging that his own view had been partly incorrect. Nonetheless he continued to assert that the Hebrew idiom of 'resolution' underlay this verse (1922, 31-34). Charles now claimed that the present participle "he lives" actually served as a past participle (33), and therefore was in correct chronological sequence with what followed ("he that was alive and died"). As proof of his contention, he cited similar phenomena in Rev. 15:2 and 7:14 (treated below).

The complexity of Charles counter-argument contrasts sharply with the much simpler explanation that in 1:18, John employed a three-fold title joined to what followed by parataxis. His contention depends upon special pleading, rendering his claim of a resolution sequence unconvincing.

(3) Rev. 2:2; 2:9; 3:9. These three verses contain a participial form of legô in an oblique case, followed by the clause "and are not" (e.g.: Rev. 2:2, kai epeirasas tous legontas heautous apostolous kai ouk eisin). Charles has argued that the clause containing the finite eisin formed

part of a grammatical sequence which included the preceding participle. It was his contention that normally in Greek, an accusative form of the participle eimi would have been used in 2:2,9 and a dative form in 3:9 to match the case of the participle which it followed (e.g., legontas . . . ontas).

However, as in the case of 1:5-6 and 1:18, it is not at all obvious that the clause containing the finite verb constitutes an integral part of a sequence begun by a participle, as in "those who say they are apostles [or Jews] and are not." The clause kai ouk eisin may well have been intended to stand on its own or to be taken with what follows. In 2:2 and 2:9, this clause has a strongly adversative force which is reinforced by the change to a finite verb. A simple continuation of participial forms would not have accomplished this nearly as well.

In English translation, this adversative relationship is best expressed by treating the kai before ouk eisin as a full stop. Thus 2:2 would read: "I know your works. . . and that you have tested those who call themselves apostles. They are not, however, and you have found them to be liars." In 2:9, one would read: "I know your affliction . . . and the blasphemy of those who call themselves Jews. However, they are nothing but liars." The presence of a parenthetical insertion containing a finite verb in this verse, alla plousios ei, lends support to the view that kai ouk eisin is not to be taken in direct sequence with what precedes it.

In 3:9, kai ouk eisin alla pseudontai probably

represents a parenthetical remark. The NA26 has placed a comma after legontôn heautous Ioudaious einai, indicating that it did not consider the two clauses to be inextricably related. In English, this separation can be indicated by means of parentheses: "Behold, I give you the synagogue of Satan of those who say they are Jews (but they are not, they are lying). Behold I will make them come . . . ."

Although the Greek of these passages is so difficult that no translation of these verses is entirely satisfying, there is no reason to assume with Charles that kai ouk eisin was part of a Semitic resolution sequence. Moreover, his assumption that John did not employ participial forms of eimi because his Greek was poor or Semitizing is unwarranted. Such participles were indeed known to him; he described Christ as ho ôn on several occasions (1:4,8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5). While he knew them, however, he evidently avoided using them elsewhere in the book, preferring instead finite forms of eimi. Consequently, his usage of eisin in these three verses is better attributed to personal taste, for which there can be no accounting.

(4) Rev. 2:20; 7:14. Both of these passages feature a change from a nominative participle to a finite verb (e.g.: Rev. 2:20, Iezabel hê legousa heautên prophêtin kai didaskei; see Nominative of Apposition, sec. A above). In Greek, nominative participles often precede finite verbs, although without an intervening kai as is found here.

In 2:20, it is evident that hê legousa describes the preceding substantive, Jezebel. There is no need to suppose that there was a direct connection between this participle and the subsequent verb didaskei. The kai immediately preceding didaskei can easily be taken as equivalent to a full stop, its use here instead of a hypotactic particle being dictated only by John's preference for parataxis. In this case the verse would read: "You tolerate . . . Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. She both teaches and deceives my servants to commit . . . ."

In 7:14 also, a full stop can be inserted after megalês, and the following kai eplunan taken as the beginning of a new thought. It would then read: "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their clothes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." There is no compelling reason to think that kai eplunan constitutes an integral part of a resolution sequence with the preceding participle hoi erchomenoi.

(5) Rev. 13:15. Only a single instance of this kind of alleged resolution has been cited by Charles, edothê autôi dounai . . . hina kai lalêsêi . . . kai poiêsêi [hina] hosoi ean mê proskunêsôsîn. This does not speak well for his claim that John has reproduced a Semitic idiom of this kind in Greek. Had it been more prominent in Revelation, his case would have been strengthened, especially since, as S.R. Driver has observed, this sort of sequence in Hebrew was

"more conspicuous in the case of the infinitive" (1892, 138). Charles has not conceded that the virtual absence of such a "conspicuous" construction may well indicate that John had in fact not been affected by Semitic grammar and syntax.

Charles has contended that dounai, which governed hina kai lalêsêi, had been resolved into poiêsêi, which governed hina hosoi. In his opinion, a second infinitive poiêsai, parallel to dounai, would have been employed had not Semitic influence been at work (1920, II:420 n.5). His argument, however, presumes that both verb forms are followed by hina, which reinforces this supposed parallel structure. Yet, as is noted by the NA26 which has enclosed it in parentheses, it is not certain that the second hina after poiêsêi was original. In support of the inclusion of the second hina are A and P; against are 01 and 046.<sup>41</sup>

If the second hina is not accepted as original, it would make good sense to assume that the hina which governed kai lalêsêi also governed the later kai poiêsêi. Such an interpretation is as likely as Charles' proposal, given the textual problem in this verse.

(6) Rev. 14:2-3; 15:2-3. Many editors and commentators, including those of the NA26, have punctuated these two

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<sup>41</sup>In p47, an aorist infinitive (poiêsai) is found instead of a subjunctive. It would be unwise to put much confidence in this reading because it is so similar to the subjunctive form. The infinitive is likely a scribal error or misreading rather than a correction based on a Semitic idiom of 'resolution.'

passages so that the second part of the alleged resolution sequence, kai aidousin, begins a new sentence; the kai being taken as the equivalent to a full stop. If this is the correct punctuation, then there is no basis on which to claim that these passages represent a series of verb forms patterned on Semitic-style resolution. The Greek of the Septuagint and subsequent religious texts often employed a similar paratactic style with kai frequently introducing new thoughts or sentences and having the force of a full stop. The ease with which these passages are read if full stops are assumed makes it highly probable that this is the proper way in which they should be construed.

Conclusion: Resolution of a Participle or Infinitive into a Finite Verb. The evidence which Charles has adduced for the occurrence of this Semitic idiom is very weak. The change from a participle to a finite verb may be more easily explained on other grounds in almost all cases. The strongly adversative sense of kai, together with the Seer's preference for finite forms of eimi, accounts for the changes in 2:2, 2:9, and 3:9. In 1:18, 2:20, and 7:14, the change is from a nominative participle, which is not unusual in Greek. In 1:18, the claim of a sequence is contested even by many who advocate that such a Semitic idiom occurs elsewhere in Revelation. The single occurrence in 13:15 of a change from an infinitive to another verb form does not demand a Semitic explanation, especially if the reading upon which Charles

relied is not accepted. In 14:2-3 and 15:2-3 the conjunction kai probably has the force of a full stop, so that no series or sequence involving resolution is involved.

The most difficult passage to explain in terms of Greek usage is 1:5-6.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, however, it is not easily explicable in terms of Semitic usage either, since it does not conform well to Semitic examples of this idiom.

#### E. Other Alleged Semitisms

Frequency of occurrence. This category contains five different occurrences: 1:16a, 16b; 6:1a,1b; and, 12:2.

Greek usage and Semitic correspondence. R.H. Charles has asserted that in 1:16a and 12:2, participial forms of echô (echôn and echousa, respectively) have been used in a Semitic way in place of what should properly in Greek have been finite verbs (1920, I:29). This claim goes far beyond what is necessary to account for the Seer's usage in these verses. The Seer's fondness for extended descriptions has often led him to employ various circumstantial participles, a usage which was entirely acceptable in Greek. In 12:2, kai

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<sup>42</sup>This is also the conclusion of G. Mussies. In his judgment, Semitic influence in the other alleged occurrences was "less evident" than it was in 1:5-6 (1971, 326). Rev. 1:18 and 7:14 represented instances of the co-ordination of a copula and an indicative, so were "of course not peculiar." Mussies acknowledged that in 14:2-3 and 15:2-3, proper punctuation precluded any sequential construction involving resolution. He found the claim of Semitic correspondence in 2:2,9 and 3:9 unconvincing, and took little note of it in 2:20 (327).

echousa en gastri simply continues a description begun in 12:1. The earlier portion of this description also contains a participle, peribeblēmenē.<sup>43</sup> In 1:16a, echôn, a participle which is frequently found in the Apocalypse, likewise continues the description of the one "like a son of man" begun in 1:13.<sup>44</sup>

In 1:16b, the Seer, Charles has contended, accomplished the exact opposite of what he did in 1:16a. Whereas in the latter a participle served as a verb, in 1:16b, he claimed, the Seer employed the finite verb phanei after hôs ho hêlios instead of the participle phainôn (1920, I:36). Once again,

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<sup>43</sup>E. Mayser has observed that a nominative participle of echô frequently accompanied phainomai and certain other verbs in the papyri (1926, II:sec. 51.7.A.a). For this reason, it is possible that the Seer's usage in Rev. 12:1-2 was not unprecedented. Although ôphthê rather than ephanê has been used, the adverbial use of the nominative participle appears to serve the same purpose that it would have served with phainomai.

<sup>44</sup>The participial usage is probably not to be accounted for as an acceptable Hellenistic practice of employing participles as verbs. Although even Charles has conceded that "the participle is used in the Koinê occasionally as a finite verb," this contention has been effectively challenged by Edwin Mayser. Mayser has taken great pains to demonstrate that, contra Moulton, participles did not serve as a finite verbs in the papyri (1926, II:sec. 51.3). Asserts Mayser: "Aber auch als Stellvertreter des Indikativ oder eines anderen Modus finitus hat das Partizip in ptolemäischer Zeit sicher nirgends gedient: entweder sind Entgleisungen und Anakoluthe (namentlich Ergänzungen eines naheliegenden Verbalbegriffs) anzunehmen oder treten lautliche bzw. syntaktische Erklärungen und Richtigstellungen in Kraft . . ." (sec. 51.3.b). Mayser's alternative explanations can readily account for the alleged use of participles as finite verbs in the Apocalypse. His general approach is helpful as well for other aspects of the allegedly improper use of parts of speech in John's Greek. Problems of unusual usage should be solved in the simplest way possible, and a major new grammatical category not be invented for every peculiar construction.

his allegation of Semitic influence is not strongly supported. Charles himself has cited Septuagint parallels for this usage, and a number of other occurrences in the Apocalypse of hôs with a finite verb may also be cited (2:24,27; 3:21; 9:2, etc). In any case, the sense is clear enough to make recourse to a theory of linguistic interference unwarranted.

In 6:1b, Charles has attributed the Seer's use of hôs with a nominative substantive to Semitic influence, although to make his case he was obliged to claim that John had reproduced the supposed Semitic pattern incorrectly. In his judgment, the Hebrew equivalent for hôs phônê was kebeqôl; "as in a voice," not "as a voice." The Seer, he contended, had "inadvertently" written the nominative phônê instead of the dative phônêi, or else the text had been corrupted at a later time to yield this reading (1920, I:36,161).

The assertion of a mistranslation of an idiom or of textual corruption substantially weakens Charles' case for Semitic influence in 6:1b. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that John was here using a nominative with hôs in a rather loose manner, perhaps as an acceptable colloquialism (Beckwith 1919, 438,516). In Rev. 16:13, a nominative has been employed with hôs in a similar way. Charles has termed the instance "unique" in the Apocalypse, dismissing this parallel usage as an error attributable to the inclusion in the text of "a marginal gloss" (1920, II:47).

In 6:1a, the use of the cardinal mian rather than the

ordinal prôtên has been alleged to be due to the influence of a Semitic pattern. Yet it is clear that John was conversant with the use of ordinals. He used several in this same chapter (6:3,5,7,9,12), and has shown elsewhere that he knew the ordinal prôtos (4:1,7; 8:7; 13:12, etc.). His usage in 6:1a was probably not due to Semitic influence, since this idiom was a well-known feature of Septuagint and biblicalizing Greek. Josephus, for example, in his comments on its appearance in Genesis 1:5 in the opening section of the Antiquities (I:1), noted the prevalence in the Greek Bible of the use of the cardinal instead of the ordinal for the numeral heis.<sup>45</sup> John's familiarity with the Greek Bible is more than sufficient to account for his use of the cardinal mian.

Conclusion: Other Alleged Semitisms. The five occurrences in this category can readily be accounted for in terms of Greek style. None of them is so odd or so like a Semitic idiom that a Semitic explanation is warranted.

### III. Semitisms Not Listed in Appendix A

Several other aspects of John's language have been

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<sup>45</sup>See BDF, sec. 247. Heinrich Kraft has offered an alternative explanation for this usage, arguing that the Seer employed a cardinal to mark a departure from a sequence he was enumerating (1974, 116). The verse may also simply be translated as it stands: "And I looked when the lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures . . ." Since this seal is the first in a series, context would have led a reader to understand it as such, despite the absence of an ordinal.

attributed to Semitic influence, including: (a) the book's paratactic style; (b) its abrupt changes in tense; and (c) its use of certain allegedly Semitic idiomatic expressions.

A. Parataxis with kai.

The use of parataxis with kai was an appropriate style for many different types of writings. It was prominent, for example, in the range of styles between classical and vulgar (Zwischenschichtsprosa) which have been described by Lars Rydbeck (1967, 188-198), with whose assessment A. Hilhorst (1976, 118) and Marius Reiser have concurred (1984, 35-42). The straightforward technical prose, or Fachprosa, of medical and legal texts was especially well-suited to this kind of simple co-ordination. Reiser has noted as well that parataxis was employed in popular fables and stories such as those attributed to Aesop.

Adolf Deissmann has characterized Johannine parataxis as representative of a Greek style which was current not only in John's era but probably in Classical times as well.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>For Deissmann, "the Johannine writings, including the Revelation, are also linguistically deep-rooted in the most popular colloquial language" (1927, 69, cf.248). Concerning the legitimacy of parataxis as a style, he asserted: "Of course it is certain that artistic Attic prose prefers hypotaxis to parataxis. But the texts on stone and papyrus, written by people who were not Semites, prove that parataxis was as natural to the popular language of unconventionalised Greek as to the Semites. If we possessed more texts from Greece of the classical period of direct popular origin, we should probably find parataxis in living use even there" (132).

Deissmann cited the second-century B.C.E. text P. Paris 51 as an example of this style. Like Revelation, this text recounted a vision; in this case received in a dream. Parataxis is relatively frequent in it, kai occurring as a conjunction five times in its first eight lines: kai anapiptomai . . . kai anthrôpos . . . kai hôsper kekleimenoï . . . kai exaiphnês anugô . . . kai horô (Milligan 1910, 18-21). The fact that its subject-matter is similar to Revelation's makes it valuable as evidence of the appropriateness of this usage in such contexts. The conjunction kai is also prominent in the accounts of visions in Acts 10, in addition to its frequent occurrence elsewhere in the New Testament (BDF 442).

Nigel Turner has argued that the Seer employed parataxis in a distinctively Semitic manner in the Apocalypse. It was his opinion, voiced with some hesitation, that a number of John's uses of kai "seem to reflect idiomatic uses of waw" (1976, MHT IV:154). Among these he counted: the use of kai as "seeing that" (12:11; 18:3; 19:3); as an adversative "but" (2:13,21; 3:1,5,8); its use to introduce an apodosis (3:20S[01],Q; 10:7; 14:10); and, its consecutive usage (3:7). For the most part, however, his examples may be attributed to simple co-incidence. Revelation's frequent use of kai would have inevitably led to its bearing all of the senses which he has enumerated.<sup>47</sup> The strongest of his instances of unusual

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<sup>47</sup>A. Hilhorst has argued that even the more complex constructions in the New Testament involving kai are attributable to stylistic preference: "C'est une erreur

usage, the apodotic use in 3:20 which Charles also cited (1920, I:cxlviii), involves a difficult textual problem and so is unsuitable as evidence. If, as is likely, John was composing in the style of the Septuagint, these uses of kai cannot be considered unusual enough to warrant the assumption of direct Semitic influence.

Lest his use of parataxis be exaggerated, it should be noted that John was not ignorant of hypotactic Greek style. Upon occasion, he has used post-positive particles: gar, sixteen times (1:3; 3:2; 9:19 13:18, etc.); te, once (19:19); and de, five times (1:14; 2:24, etc.). Furthermore, while the genitive absolute, in its complete form at least, is absent from the book, this indicates no more than that the Seer accomplished the same result by means of another construction, parataxis.<sup>48</sup>

Conclusion: Parataxis. There was a definite stylistic precedent for paratactic usage in popular texts as well as in the Septuagint and in Christian writings. That style was

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d'opposer les langues sémitiques au grec et au latin en disant que les premières ne connaissent guère l'hypotaxe, alors que les dernières l'utilisent presque toujours lorsqu'il faut exprimer des choses de valeur inégal dans une seule phrase. En grec et en latin aussi, les exemples de parataxe sont légion pour la liaison de grandeurs inégales. C'est la style qui détermine le choix" (1976, 116).

<sup>48</sup>G. Mussies has termed the lack of a genitive absolute an "absence Semitism" (1980, 167). This is going far beyond the evidence, especially since he depends upon an argument from silence. Ephesians, which like Revelation makes frequent use of kai, also did not employ the genitive absolute. In both cases, the use of parataxis rendered genitive absolutes unnecessary. In any case, an elliptical form of the genitive absolute may have been employed by John, as is argued below in Chapter Six, sec. D.3.

well-suited to John's literary task, given that he claimed no more than to be providing a matter-of-fact account of the visions he had received. Evidence of distinctive Semitic usage is lacking.

#### B. Abrupt Changes of Tense

Revelation's relatively abrupt changes from one tense to another have led some scholars to conclude that John had been directly influenced by Semitic syntax. R.H. Charles, for example, has asserted that the future tense has been used as a present in 4:9-11, the future representing "the Hebrew imperfect in a frequentative sense."<sup>49</sup> R.B.Y. Scott has also pointed out what he considered to be incorrect use of sequence-of-tense as proof that Revelation was a translation (1928, 13). A. Lancellotti has attempted to describe these alleged Semitisms in a systematic fashion (1964).

Semitic influence, however, should not readily be conceded. Although there is little consistency in John's use of tense, his relatively abrupt changes occur so

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<sup>49</sup>1920, I:cxlviii. Charles claimed that 9:6 represented an opposite kind of transfer, a present tense carrying a future sense since the present form "pheugei represents the Hebrew imperf. in our author's mind" (I:cxlix). He argued that present tenses in 7:10, 12:4, and 16:21 represented past imperfects, again citing Hebrew influence. He also contended that in 13:8, a future tense verb represented an imperfect. Charles has not conceded that the 'prophetic' perspective of John makes it difficult to establish from which temporal viewpoint John was speaking when he described his visions. Nor has he admitted that a great deal of subjective interpretation is required on his part when correcting John's use of tense.

inconsistently that they are as difficult to explain in terms of Greek style as they are in terms of direct Semitic influence. If in fact there was Semitic influence, it was sporadic and confused. In addition, as G. Mussies has demonstrated, the Seer's choice of Greek tenses does not always correspond well to the Semitic tenses which one would expect to have been in the mind of John.<sup>50</sup> This presents a major impediment to those who would attempt to divine the Semitic 'outlook' that was supposed to have coloured John's Greek. And indeed it is impossible to ascertain the thought-patterns of John to the degree necessary to predict what tenses he would have used if he had been influenced by Semitic tongues.<sup>51</sup>

In his careful analysis of the claims of Lancellotti and Charles, Mussies has also demonstrated that the changes of

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<sup>50</sup>Mussies has noted that it would be difficult to reconstruct the alleged Semitic original of Rev. 4:9-11 in the way that Charles and Lancellotti have proposed: "Even when we accept influence from Biblical Hebrew we must say that St. John could hardly have chosen any Greek category which was more remote in value from a past-iterative tense than the non-past and non-durative Greek future indicative, even less so, as it appears from elsewhere in the Apc. that St. John knew how to handle the imperfect" (1971, 344). Mussies perceptively asks "why he did not avoid to use the future at all" if the influence of biblical Hebrew on the Seer was so strong (335).

<sup>51</sup>Steven Thompson, has attempted to enumerate the patterns of tense usage of a bilingual Semite by cataloguing some of the correspondences between the Hebrew tenses of the Old Testament and their respective Greek equivalents in the Septuagint. He has not conceded, however, that the greater part of this correspondence would have arisen because the Hebrew was being translated literally. Thompson has not established that these patterns of usage were commonly found in freely composed Greek written by Semites.

tense are often not as abrupt as they have been portrayed. He has found that a string of a particular tense usually preceded a change, and that there was a relatively slow transition from one tense to another (1971, 336,340). Furthermore, as had been maintained by others, Mussies emphasized that these shifts in tense typically occurred in accounts of visions, in which it was entirely understandable that the Seer would have described his experience from various temporal perspectives. At times he described the events as if they were in the past. On other occasions his descriptions portrayed events in the present or the future (340). For these reasons, stylistic considerations rather than Semitic linguistic interference best explains his use of tense.

Conclusion: Abrupt Changes of Tense. The Seer's use of tense is not consistent enough to serve as proof of pervasive Semitic influence on his grammar. The various temporal viewpoints he adopted were only to be expected in this sort of literature, and this accounts for much of his inconsistency in usage.

### C. Alleged Hebrew Idioms

It was the claim of R.H. Charles (1920, I:ccxlvii-cxlviii), who was followed by Nigel Turner (1976, MHT IV:153-158) and Steven Thompson (1985, 12-17), that the Seer sometimes used Greek words to express "un-Greek," Semitic

meanings. In their opinion, certain Greek words did not bear their "primary" Greek sense, but bore instead the "primary" or even "secondary" meaning of their Semitic equivalent.

The assumptions concerning the nature of language on which they reasoned have, however, long been abandoned. Since the time of Ferdinand de Saussure, it has been commonplace to affirm that the definition of a given term should not be sought in diachronic studies which presume that words possess 'dictionary' meanings. The meaning of any individual term is instead to be determined by a synchronic analysis of the word as it was used in its context. So-called primary and secondary meanings, by this reckoning, would be irrelevant in the case of a particular occurrence of a word.

Moreover, it is virtually impossible to determine which Hebrew word, and hence Semitic meaning, might lie behind a Greek term. L.D. Hurst forcefully made this point in his criticism of attempts to reconstruct the Aramaic words of Jesus, endeavors which are similar to Charles' efforts to stipulate the Semitic meaning of certain Greek words in the Apocalypse (1986, 63-80). For Hurst, such attempts would always be unconvincing, since the semantic range both of the Greek terms and their supposed Semitic equivalents was normally much too broad to permit any correspondence to be established.

A further challenge has come from Stanley Porter, who has shown that several of the words which Thompson alleged

bore a Semitic sense could be found with these same meanings in the writings of the Greek author Chariton (1989, 583-586). G. Horsley has voiced similar reservations (1989d, 55-59; 1989e, 71-74) about the supposed Semitic meanings of Greek words which Nigel Turner has proposed.

Charles (I:cxlviii,259), followed by Turner (1976, MHT IV: 154), cited 10:1 and 2:22 as passages which contained Hebrew idioms, asserting that in these verses the Greek could not be understood unless direct Semitic influence was assumed. In 10:1, Charles argued that the expression "his feet were like pillars of fire" was "unintelligible" because only 'legs' and not 'feet' fit the image being portrayed. John was actually thinking of the Hebrew word for 'foot,' regel, he contended, although only of one of its "secondary" meanings, 'leg.'<sup>52</sup>

But there is no need to invoke Semitic influence to explain this image. The context in which it appeared makes it clear that the figure being described was standing with his legs apart, astride the land and the sea. Any flame which originated from his feet would have travelled upwards and given his feet the appearance of two pillars of fire (cf. Ex. 13:21,22; 14:24). Charles' assertion that the meaning 'leg' must be assigned to podes is for this reason without

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<sup>52</sup>In Charles' words, the Seer "thinks in Hebrew, and as he embodies Hebrew idiom in his Greek, so also has he transferred to a Greek word a meaning which only legitimately belongs to the Hebrew of which it is a rendering" (1920, I:259). In support of his claim that regel sometimes meant 'leg,' he has cited 1 Samuel 17:6 and Ezekiel 1:7, as well as Palestinian Aramaic and Arabic usage.

foundation.

As for 2:22, Charles has asserted that the threat made by Christ, ballô eis klinên, was "as a piece of Greek . . . meaningless in its context" (I:cxlvi). He proposed that only by assuming a Hebraic sense for the term klinê could the necessary meaning 'sickbed' be justified (I:71). Yet once again the suggestion of Hebrew influence is unnecessary to account for this idiom. In many languages 'bed' means both a place to sleep and a place to retire to in case of sickness, as well serving by metonymy to indicate sexual relations. Greek cannot be denied the meaning 'sickbed.'<sup>53</sup> The term may well here imply previous sexual immorality, thus highlighting the irony of Christ's threat. The bed of illicit sexual relations had become the bed of Jezebel's punishment by illness.

Conclusion: Alleged Hebrew Idioms. The assertion that certain of John's images and idioms must be understood in Semitic terms is in no way compelling. The semantic theory of Charles and those who have followed his lead is outdated and inadequate. In the two examples of what they have characterized as Hebrew idiomatic usage, the meanings are clear enough as they stand. No Semitic explanation is warranted.

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<sup>53</sup>Charles himself has conceded that the meaning 'sickbed' obtains in the Greek of 1 Macc. 1:5 and Judith 8:3 (1920, I:71). Ernst Lohmeyer has cited these two verses in his discussion of Rev. 2:22, but has not invoked direct Semitic influence as an explanation for John's use of the term (1953, 28).

#### IV. Conclusion: Alleged Semitisms in the Apocalypse

The thirty-nine occurrences of alleged Semitisms listed in Appendix A may be reduced to thirty-one when duplicates involving similar phrasing are accounted for.<sup>54</sup> Of these thirty-one, twenty-eight, including the eight occurrences of the Nominative of Apposition, the two different occurrences of nominative casus pendens, seven of the nine pleonastic constructions, six of seven instances of resolution, and all five occurrences in the category Other Alleged Semitisms, may with confidence be attributed to factors other than direct Semitic influence. Some are readily explicable as they stand, some have resulted from indirect Semitic influence via the language and style of the Greek Old Testament. Others represent nothing more than uncommon but acceptable Hellenistic usage, and, as Mayser has astutely commented, this simple explanation of a peculiarity is always to be preferred to more complex hypotheses (see n. 44 above).

Of the remaining three occurrences, including one of resolution (1:5-6) and two of pleonasm (3:8 and 7:9), explanations in terms of Greek style are not so readily apparent. The usage in 1:5-6, however, does not correspond

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<sup>54</sup>In the category Nominative of Apposition, 8 of 8 occurrences are different; Nominative casus pendens, 2 of 4; Pleonasm, 9 of 12; Resolution, 7 of 10; and Other, 5 of 5. This represents a total of 31 different occurrences of the 39 treated.

well to a Semitic pattern either. As for the peculiarities in 3:8 and 7:9, they are not serious barriers to a proper understanding of the passages in which they occur. They may simply be instances of a biblicalizing style modeled on that found in the Septuagint and other Christian writings.

The alleged Semitisms not listed in Appendix A are likewise attributable to factors other than direct Semitic influence. Paratactic style was common not only in the Septuagint, but also in certain Hellenistic texts. The account of a dream-vision in P. Paris 51 is a good example of such usage. John's abrupt changes of tense are best attributed to his prophetic temporal perspective and his idioms said to carry a Semitic sense are capable of explanation in terms of their context.

It is evident that Revelation does not contain numerous Semitisms, as has been alleged. Consequently, hypotheses which assert that the Apocalypse was translated from a Semitic tongue, that it was composed in some sort of Jewish-Greek dialect, or that it was the work of a bilingual Semite, cannot be accorded any standing as explanations for the unusual style of the book. It is much more likely that the language of the Apocalypse represents the colloquial Hellenistic idiom of John's era expressed in an appropriately biblicalizing style reminiscent of the Greek Old Testament.

## CHAPTER SIX

### INCONGRUITIES AND IRREGULARITIES

The incongruities and irregularities in the Greek of the Apocalypse have often been adduced as corroborating evidence that John was a Jewish-Christian whose mother-tongue was Semitic.<sup>1</sup> It has been argued that these peculiarities were not simply Greek anacolutha characteristic of a colloquial and biblicizing style of composition, but were blunders which betrayed the fact that Greek was not the Seer's first language.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nigel Turner has compiled a list of John's irregular usage (1976, MHT IV:146-147). His category of improper use of gender includes: (a) Masculine instead of feminine (11:4; 14:19 17:3); (b) Masculine for neuter (4:8; 5:6, 17:4; 13:14; 21:14; 22:2); (c) feminine in place of masculine (1:15; 14:1); and, (d) feminine for neuter (19:20).

His list of instances of incorrect use of case includes: (a) accusative instead of nominative (4:4; 6:14; 7:9; 10:8; 11:3; 13:3); (b) nominative for accusative (2:20; 14:14; 20:2); (c) nominative for genitive (2:13; 3:12; 7:4; 8:9; 14:12); (d) genitive for dative (1:15); (e) genitive for accusative (21:9); (f) accusative instead of genitive (1:20); (g) nominative for genitive (1:5); and, (h) nominative for dative (6:1; 9:14).

Peculiarities in 1:10 and 11:1 were classified as "sense-constructions," and 17:4 as a special case. In some instances, Turner has included in his list constructions which are found only in strongly attested textual variants.

<sup>2</sup>G. Mussies has asserted: "In our opinion it is even conceivable that original Greek works were composed in some kind of Biblical Greek which imitated Semitizing translations, but in that case actual blunders against Greek as we find them in the Apc. will have been avoided" (1971, 312). He reiterated his claim at a later date, claiming that John "commits various other crimes against Greek syntax which betray Semitic influence: he blunders with case and gender, uses participles as finite verbs, [and] co-ordinates indicatives with participles . . ." (1980, 171). Joseph

The validity of this claim depends upon the evaluation of the nature of the Seer's unusual usage. On the one hand, if his peculiarities were numerous, highly irregular, and a serious impediment to a reader's understanding of the text, it would be justified to suppose that John was incompetent in writing Greek. Whether this deficiency were due to linguistic interference from a Semitic tongue or to an inadequate education in his native Greek language would remain to be determined.

On the other hand, if the incongruities and irregularities were relatively infrequent, not unparalleled in the Greek of that era, and do not constitute a barrier to interpretation, one could conclude that they were merely indicative of the choices that the Seer has made among various acceptable means of expression. Simply because he has not fully exploited the grammatical and syntactical richness of the language is no reason to assume that he was unfamiliar with literary Greek style or that he was experiencing difficulty in a second language. He may intentionally have been composing in a colloquial and sometimes biblicizing style because he thought this was an

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Schmid has voiced much the same opinion, deeming unlikely a stylistic explanation for the biblicizing language of Revelation: "Was ich nicht glaube, ist nun dies, daß diese beständigen Verstöße gegen die griechische Grammatik vom Verf. der Apk beabsichtigt waren, seinem Werk einen eigentümlichen hieratischen Charakter geben sollten und so ein Analogon bilden zu den Septuagintismen des Lk. Sie sind vielmehr, wie namentlich die Vernachlässigung der Kongruenz, aus einer unzulänglichen Beherrschung der griechischen Syntax zu erklären" (1966, 306).

appropriate idiom in which to deliver his prophetic message.

Forty-six occurrences of incongruity and irregularity (see Appendix A) are examined below. They have been classified into one of three categories: (i) ad sensum constructions; (ii) instances of attraction; and (iii) other alleged errors.

#### A. Distribution of Occurrences

The forty-six incongruities and other peculiarities in Revelation are unevenly distributed. Eight of its twenty-two chapters are free from these unusual constructions, and concentrations of four or more are found in each of seven chapters. The fact that they are not randomly distributed suggests that certain contexts have given rise to irregularities of one kind or another.<sup>3</sup>

#### B. Ad sensum Constructions

Ad sensum usage accounts for twenty of Revelation's forty-six occurrences of incongruity and irregularity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The distribution by chapter, with the number of occurrences in brackets following the chapter number, is as follows: Chapter 1(5), 2(0), 3(0), 4(6), 5(4), 6(0), 7(2), 8(0), 9(3), 10(1), 11(4), 12(1), 13(4), 14(4), 15(0), 16(1), 17(6), 18(0), 19(3), 20(0), 21(2), 22(0).

<sup>4</sup>Rev. 4:1,7,8(bis); 5:6(bis),11-12,13; 7:4; 9:13; 11:15; 13:8,14(bis); 17:3(bis),11,16; 19:1,6. The ad sensum construction which occurs in 7:9 (Bousset 1906, 284; Charles 1920, I:210; Schmid 1955, II:231) has not been included (see Appendix A). There is little dispute that these are indeed

Sense constructions as such are not extraordinary in Greek or in other languages,<sup>5</sup> certain types of them being so common in Greek that few have considered it necessary to note their occurrence, even in the Apocalypse. Revelations's ad sensum usage involving number, for example, has not been deemed worthy of more than passing notice.<sup>6</sup>

Their frequent appearance in Greek notwithstanding, some scholars have implied that the sense constructions in Revelation constitute outright errors in the Seer's Greek. That is to say, these occurrences have often just been termed violations of concord, with no regard for their context or for Hellenistic usage. Nigel Turner, for instance, has included ad sensum constructions among his lists of solecisms in the Apocalypse, classifying them according to incongruity

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ad sensum constructions. R.H. Charles, for example, has classified most of the incongruities in gender as ad sensum usage: "As a rule the concord of gender is observed, but there are many exceptions. The greater number of these can be explained as constructions kata sunesin" (1920, I:cxlii). J. Schmid has provided a comprehensive study of ad sensum occurrences in the Apocalypse (1955, II:230-238).

<sup>5</sup>BDF has observed that ad sensum usage was "very widespread in Greek from early times and is found in the NT as well as in the papyri." It describes three types of ad sensum usage: (1) singular collectives treated as plural; (2) feminine or neuter personal collectives treated as masculine; and (c) neuter nouns designating personal beings treated as masculine (sec. 134). See also its discussion of specific New Testament occurrences (sec. 282, 296).

<sup>6</sup>Incongruities in number usually stem from the use of collective nouns, as in 8:9, in which the subject of the singular to triton tôn ploiôn is the plural diephtharêsan. In 9:18, apektanthêsan is used with to triton tôn anthrôpôn, and in 13:3-4, prosekunêsan appears with holê hê gê. Charles has asserted that plural verbs were used with neuter plural substantives because in many cases "neuter nouns [were] being conceived of as masculine or feminine" (1920, I:cxli).

in gender, number and case. In his opinion, most were errors which had resulted from John's "failure to revise," although some possibly represented "the foreshadowing of later Greek" (1976, MHT IV:146-147).<sup>7</sup> R.B.Y. Scott also treated many ad sensum occurrences as solecisms, grouping them under the heading "Failure of Concord" (1928, 8).

Had they been able to show that the Seer had made lavish use of incongruent constructions, and that he had employed them in contexts which did not permit ad sensum constructions, Turner and Scott would have been in a good position to argue that he had a poor command of Greek. Ad sensum constructions, however, are not so numerous in Revelation that they set the book apart from other Greek texts. Nor are they uniformly distributed throughout the book. Fifteen of the twenty ad sensum occurrences appear in only four chapters; four are found in each of chapters 4, 5, and 17, and three in Rev. 13. They are absent from over two-thirds of the chapters in the Apocalypse.

This uneven distribution of occurrences shows that the Seer employed the ad sensum construction in a limited fashion, not lavishly and indiscriminately. Confirmation of this is found in the fact that seven occurrences, or about one-third of the total, are found in just two passages describing the evil Beast (13:8,14[bis]; 17:3[bis],11,16).

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<sup>7</sup>Turner's proposal should not be dismissed too quickly. G. Horsley has made a brief but convincing case that Modern Greek is often helpful in the study of ancient Greek, particularly for philological research (1989e, 70-71; 1989a, 114-119).

In these instances, the Beast (neuter thêrion), is clearly being portrayed in personal or human terms by means of masculine parts of speech. In 17:11, for example, the neuters in to thêrion ho have been followed by masculines in kai autos hogdoos estin.

It is evident elsewhere that John was not unaware of grammatical concord when describing the Beast (11:7; 13:1,2,11). In certain cases, however, he appears to have chosen to express himself in a less common, though still fully acceptable manner. The fact that a grammatical incongruity has resulted from this usage appears to have been subordinate to the Seer's concern to bring out the symbolic, personal nature of this image.<sup>8</sup> Such a device is entirely appropriate and creates no impediment to the understanding of the various passages in which it is found.

John evidently sought to highlight this same personal sense in three of his references (4:7,8[bis]) to heavenly living creatures (neuter zôia). In these passages he employed masculine instead of neuter forms of participles of echô and legô to describe the activities of these characters. Because they and the twenty-four elders are often grouped together (5:6,8,11,14; 7:11; 14:3; 19:4), it is not

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<sup>8</sup>Although commentators have disputed the identity of the person whom the Beast represents, few would deny that John intended some sort of personal, as opposed to impersonal reference. Ernst Lohmeyer has written with respect to 13:8: "In proskunêsousin auton (masc. statt Neutr.) bricht wohl Deutung durch das apokalyptische Bild. Daß sie wegen auton den römischen Cäsar meinen müssen, ist unbewiesen; näher liegt der Gedanke an den menschlich vorgestellten Antichrist" (1953, 112).

surprising that on some occasions the living creatures have been described in personal terms as if they too were human figures. Once again, it cannot be said that John was unaware of the correct grammatical concord with respect to the living creatures, since it has been observed in 4:6 (zôia gemonta).

The Seer has accorded a similar treatment to feminine and neuter substantives in the remaining eight ad sensum occurrences. Although masculine parts of speech have been used as modifiers, these occurrences of incongruity cannot be characterized as blunders. As sense-constructions, they are appropriate in their context and create no barrier to the appreciation or understanding of the passages in which they occur. In four instances, for example, a masculine participle of legô has quite understandably been employed with forms of the feminine phônê (4:1; 5:11-12; 9:13-14; 11:15). Although the noun phônê was grammatically feminine, it undoubtedly referred to the voice of a 'male' character in 4:1 (christos or theos), and to the voices of groups which contained males in 5:11-12 and 11:15. Far from detracting from the sense of the passages, this ad sensum usage properly focussed attention on the 'male' speakers rather than on the marvelous sounds from heaven.

A similar situation obtains in 9:13-14, in which a voice is heard coming from one of the horns of the altar. By using the masculine legonta to modify the feminine noun phônên, the Seer no doubt sought to portray this heavenly figure as a 'male' character, perhaps God or Christ. That John was not

ignorant of the demands of grammatical concord when referring to the voice is evinced by the fact that in ten other passages containing the phônê and participial forms of legô, agreement in gender has been observed.<sup>9</sup>

There can be little doubt that in 5:6 the masculine participle apestalmenoi following the neuter pneumata has been employed because the masculine noun ophthalmous and relative hoi immediately precede pneumata. The spirits and the eyes are so closely linked that either the masculine or neuter gender would be appropriate to describe them. Also in 5:6, the use of the masculine echôn with the neuter arnion, poses no serious problem, since the Lamb was the christos. Evidence that the Seer was fully cognizant of the gender of arnion as well as of the requirement that its modifiers be congruent may be seen in his use of the neuter hestêkos with arnion in this same verse.

In 5:13, the group which included every creature in existence (neuter pan ktisma . . . kai ta en autois panta) would have included many male human figures, justifying the use of legontas. The same is true for 7:4, in which the people who made up the sealed tribes of Israel were described by the masculine esphragismenoi instead of by a feminine

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<sup>9</sup>Congruent participial forms of legô occur with declined forms of phônê in 6:6; 10:4; 11:12; 12:10; 14:13; 16:1,17; 18:4; 19:5; and 21:3. John's has employed congruent forms with nominatives (16:17; 19:5), genitives (11:12; 14:13; 16:1; 21:3), and accusatives (6:6; 10:4; 12:10; 18:4). Three similar incongruities may also be cited (1:10-11, 4:1, 10:8). These three occurrences are discussed under 'Attraction' in section C. below.

participle which would have agreed with chiliades. Collectives are also in view in 19:1 and 19:6, in which the plural form of the participle of legô is found with the singular collective noun ochlou. In neither of these passages is the meaning in doubt as a result of the incongruity. A plural participle (hestôtes) has likewise been employed with ochlos in 7:9.

Conclusion: 'Ad Sensum' Constructions. It is clear that John felt free to use the ad sensum construction in certain contexts. He often did so when describing the evil Beast, although not always. In addition, he seems to have chosen to use sense-constructions when referring to the speech of angels or other symbolic figures. Most of his ad sensum constructions, therefore, cannot be termed errors. The fact that most of his ad sensum usage involved the verbs legô and echô,<sup>10</sup> both of which appear in sense constructions in the Greek Old Testament and in contemporary documents, lends support to this conclusion. Indeed, incongruent nominative forms of legô have been employed so frequently in the Septuagint to render the indeclinable lemor that this idiom can be termed characteristic of it.<sup>11</sup> As well, the papyrus

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<sup>10</sup>Fifteen of Revelation's eighteen ad sensum occurrences involve these two verbs: eleven legô (4:1,8; 5:12,13; 9:14; 11:15; 13:14 and 19:1,6); and four echô (4:7,8; 5:6; 17:3). Three of the four occurrences of attraction feature them as well (see sec. C. below).

<sup>11</sup>According to Conybeare and Stock: ". . . the form [lemor] being fixed in Hebrew, the tendency is to keep it so in the Greek also. Hence it is quite the exception to find the participle [of legô] agreeing with its subject" (1980, sec. 112).

P. Par. 51, like Revelation an account of a vision, contains irregular forms of participles of both legô and echô.<sup>12</sup>

Such a limited and entirely justifiable use of this construction does not indicate that the Seer was incompetent in Greek. On the contrary, one can argue that it demonstrates that he had sufficient confidence in his knowledge of Greek style that he could violate 'textbook' rules of concord when it was appropriate. Had the Seer been uncertain of his competence in a second language, he might well have been unwilling to take this kind of risk.

#### C. Attraction

Attraction, like the ad sensum construction, occurs frequently in Greek. Its most common form involves the attraction of a relative to the case of its antecedent. Also found are cases in which the antecedent is incorporated into the relative clause and attracted, and instances of inverse attraction in which the antecedent is attracted or assimilated to the case of the relative (BDF sec. 294-5; sec. 466: 1,3).

The four occurrences of attraction in Revelation (1:10-11; 4:1; 10:8; 17:8), in all of which a participle has been

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<sup>12</sup>P. Paris 51 is the record of a certain Ptolmey's dream, c. 160 B.C.E. The clauses êkousa Tothês legôn: Epeuchomai (l. 12) and eme lelukas polias echôn (l. 25) both contain incongruities of this type (Milligan 1910, 21). Robertson has treated them as instances of nominative apposition (1914, 414).

attracted to the case of a nearby substantive or relative, do not correspond to any of these three kinds of usage. As a result, they have not been treated as instances of attraction in most grammars.<sup>13</sup> 'Attraction,' however, seems best to describe what is going on in these verses, and this term has been used by some interpreters in their comments on these passages.

The four occurrences may be classified into two sub-groups. In 10:8 and 17:8, a participle has taken the case of a preceding relative: hê phônê hên is followed by lalousan and legousan in 10:8; and blepontôn follows hoi katoikountes hôn in 17:8.<sup>14</sup> In the two other cases, a participle has been attracted to the case of a preceding substantive: phônên megalên hôs salpiggos legousês in 1:10-11; and phônê . . . hên êkousa hôs salpiggos lalousês in 4:1.

As was the case for many of the Apocalypse's ad sensum constructions, these instances of attraction usually involve verbs of speaking (legô and laleô) and the noun phônê. Only in 17:8 is phônê and a verb of speaking absent. Elsewhere in the Apocalypse John has employed similar phrasings in which

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<sup>13</sup>BDF has not discussed these verses. A similar phenomenon is discussed in its section 'Anacoluthon after an intervening clause or sentence' (sec. 467). Robertson (1914) has not remarked on these passages either.

<sup>14</sup>Since the antecedents of the relatives hên and hôn have not been attracted, these two occurrences cannot be classified as instances of inverse attraction, at least as it has traditionally been defined. Only if the antecedents of the relatives had been attracted instead of the subsequent participles could they be characterized as such.

attraction has not occurred.<sup>15</sup>

In 10:8, the meaning of the passage is not greatly affected by the fact that the participles lalousan and legousan are incongruent. H.B. Swete, acknowledging that "the sense is clear," has described this usage as "another example of mixed construction." He has asserted that "normally," finite verbs in the imperfect tense rather than participles would have been used, or else phônê would have been put in the accusative case (1909, 130). But Swete's term, "mixed construction," does not describe the problem in this passage very well, since his proposed alternatives show little sign of any combination of constructions. Had he shown that John was thinking of two sentences and had combined them into one, "mixed construction" would have been a more appropriate description. As the passage stands, such a conflation is unlikely.<sup>16</sup> The incongruity is better explained as a minor error due to the attraction of the

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<sup>15</sup>See 6:1, êkousa henos . . . legontos; 6:6, êkousa hês phônên legousan; and 12:10, êkousa phônên . . . legousan. John also demonstrates proper agreement in 6:7: êkousa phônên tou tetartou zôiou legontos. In Ezekiel 2:1 (êkousa phônên lalountos) and 2:2 (êkouon autou lalountos), which represent similar phrasings, attraction has not occurred. The participle has been used substantively, referring to the angel and not the voice.

<sup>16</sup>If hês phônên were to be understood after kai hê phônê . . . palin in 10:8, then the participles lalousan and legousan would serve as congruent modifiers of this phônên. However, a similar phrasing in 1:15 (although lacking the intervening relative clause hên êkousa) places hês phônê after kai hê phônê autou.

participles to the case of the relative hên.<sup>17</sup>

In 17:8, there is little doubt that the Seer employed the genitive blepontôn under the influence of the relative hôn, as Swete has concluded (1909, 219). Although a nominative agreeing with hoi katoikountes, should have been used, the verse is still readily intelligible. John's Greek should not be condemned for featuring such a slight solecism.

A certain degree of ambiguity has been introduced into 1:10-11 and 4:1 by incongruous usage, but again it represents no great difficulty in comprehension. Since the participle legousês agrees in case with salpiggos instead of phônên, it is even possible that it was intended to modify salpiggos, as Heinrich Kraft has suggested. He argued that John employed the genitive legousês in 1:10-11 in order to highlight a marvel of nature, "daß eine Trompete verständlich spricht" (1974, 43). However, John's prophecies were themselves so exotic that gratuitous references to minor physical miracles conveyed by means of grammatical subtlety would have been superfluous.

Another explanation has been advanced by H.B. Swete, who proposed that John, by using incongruent genitives in 1:10-11

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<sup>17</sup>There are too few examples of similar phrasings to determine whether or not the Seer was aware of the congruent form in which this phrase could be expressed. In 4:1, attraction to the relative has not occurred, although another form of attraction is found. In the only other occurrence in Revelation involving êkousa and the relative hên (14:2), there is no attraction. The participle kitharizontôn is clearly a congruent modifier of the preceding genitive kitharôidôn rather than an attracted modifier of the direct object phônên.

and 4:1, was employing the figure of speech known as 'hypallage' (1909, 13,66). Yet it is not obvious that the Seer had anything to gain by using this device. Hypallage is best suited to convey parody or irony, constituting a clever play on words or emphasizing a connection that would otherwise not have been made. But neither of these uses is evident in Revelation.<sup>18</sup> Swete's suggestion appears to be an over-working of rhetorical theory of the sort warned against by A.T. Robertson, who counselled restraint in the identification of minor abnormalities as figures of speech (1914, 1204).

Neither Swete's nor Kraft's proposal is sufficiently convincing to overcome the objection that the usage here is in error. Even so, the error can hardly be termed a blunder. It can better be described as a momentary and understandable departure from the more common usage with which the Seer was evidently familiar. Such constructions were not unknown in the papyri. G. Milligan, for example, has observed that P. Paris 26 (ll. 41-43) contains a participle which, instead of agreeing with the understood subject of the verb grapsei, has been attracted to the case of a preceding proper name (epi Dionusion . . . hopôs grapsêi . . . epilabonta; 1910, 17 n.43).

Conclusion: Attraction. As in the cases of ad sensum

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<sup>18</sup>R. Evans has observed that this figure usually appears in poetic works. He cites Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream V.i.189-190 as an example of parody: "I see a voice. Now will I to the chink,/ To spy and I can hear my Thisby's face" (1974, 358-359).

usage, in none of these four occurrences is the meaning of the verse seriously in doubt as a result of an incongruity. Attraction of this sort may occasionally be found in Hellenistic texts, demonstrating that while it was uncommon usage, its appearance in John's Greek is not unique nor is it proof of the Seer's literary incompetence. It points instead to the Seer's having employed a somewhat colloquial style which was not overly concerned with 'textbook' rules of grammatical concord.

#### D. Other Alleged Errors

Twenty-two of the forty-six instances of incongruity and irregularity fall into this category. They are unevenly distributed, being found in only thirteen of Revelation's twenty-two chapters. Moreover, half of them occur in just three chapters: 1, 11 and 14. In both 1:12-13 and 14:14 the phrase homoion huion anthrôpou is found, and the participle legontôn occurs with the noun ochlou in 19:1 and 19:6. As a result, nineteen different occurrences may be cited. In addition, similarities are found in 4:4, 7:9, and 14:14, which feature inconsistent use of case following eidon kai idou.

Four of these occurrences seem to have been intentional (1:4; 1:12-13; 11:18; 14:14b). The remaining eighteen may be equally divided among three other categories: Septuagint style (4:4; 7:9; 9:12a; 12:7; 14:14a; 14:6-7); colloquial

usage (1:15; 1:20; 11:1; 13:3; 19:20; 21:9); and minor errors (9:12b; 11:4; 14:19; 16:13; 17:4; 21:14).

### 1. Intentional Departures from Normal Usage

The jarring use in 1:4 of the nominative substantive ho ôn with the preposition apo was apparently not due to ignorance on the part of John. In the twenty-eight other occurrences in Revelation in which apo appears with substantives, only the expected genitive case has been used.<sup>19</sup> The Seer has no doubt cleverly exploited this incongruity in order to lend striking force to his words and thus call attention in a most effective manner to the nature of the god he was describing. That god was the God of Israel, whose name in the Greek of Exodus 3:14 was revealed to Moses as ho ôn. In both Revelation 1:4 and Exodus 3:14 it was a title for God which highlighted God's continuing presence. Elsewhere in the Apocalypse the ho ôn title served a similar purpose (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5; as a predicate

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<sup>19</sup>It is possible that there has been an ellipse of the genitive substantive theou in 1:4. John's usage would in this case represent a nominative of apposition. But his departure from standard practice is more readily explicable in terms of deliberate stylizing. There is clearly no need to go as far as G. Mussies did in his attempt to explain this construction. He has suggested that ho ôn was a nominative of apposition which appeared in the original text beside a Hebrew cipher of the divine tetragrammeton YHWH. In his opinion, this cipher, probably composed of four dots, could "easily have been effaced by thumbing or decay of the scroll," leaving a gap which later copyists ignored (1971, 94-95). Because other Hebrew terms are rare in the Apocalypse, there is little reason to think that John had employed this device.

nominative or vocative).

The use of the accusative huion after homoios instead of the dative huiôî is likely another instance of a stylized phrasing. It occurs only in the Apocalypse in 1:12-13 and 14:14b as part of the phrase homoion huion anthrôpou. In the nineteen other instances when homoios was used, it appears with the dative case. It may have been that the phrase huion anthrôpou held some special significance for John, but this can only be a matter for speculation. Whatever his reason for this usage, the fact that it was employed only twice in Revelation and both times in the same phrase, strongly suggests that this usage was intentional.

In 11:18, the phrase tous mikrous kai tous megalous appears in the accusative case while the four preceding substantives are datives. At first glance, it seems that in the course of recording a relatively long list of dative substantives, John has carelessly employed the wrong case. Yet a closer examination of the Seer's usage indicates that he probably intended tous mikrous kai tous megalous to be taken as a modifier in apposition to the preceding dative substantives tois doulois sou tois prophêtais, tois hagiois, and tois phoboumenois to onoma sou. In the three cases Seer used this phrase, which could be translated "both small and great" or "both young and old," he employed it in apposition to other substantives, albeit in a congruent case. In 13:16 tous mikrous kai tous megalous is in apposition to pantas and several other substantives. In 20:12, it stands apposed to

tous nekrous, in 19:5 the nominative form of the phrase occurs in apposition to hoi douloi autou and hoi phoboumenoi.

In addition, apposite accusatives are found elsewhere in the New Testament, including Paul's use of tên logikên latreian in Romans 12:1. As BDF has proposed for Romans 12:1 and several other passages, some form of hos estin preceding the accusative phrase should perhaps be understood (sec. 480,5). There is, as a result, precedent for the Seer's use of this idiom.

## 2. Septuagintal Idioms

The occurrence of the cardinal mia instead of the ordinal prôtê in 9:12a is a well-known Septuagintalism and so cannot be termed a 'blunder' (see above, Chapter Five, sec. II.E). The incongruent use of legôn with the accusative allon aggelon in 14:6-7 is probably also attributable to John's biblicalizing style. In the Greek Old Testament, the indeclinable Hebrew lemor was often translated by incongruent forms of legô (see n. 11 above). T.C. Laughlin has listed several Septuagint examples of this usage, including Gen. 15:1, 22:20, and 38:13 (1902, 16). Charles adds Gen. 22:20 (1920, I:274), terming the incongruent use of legôn in Rev. 4:1 an ad sensum construction (I:108).

There are grounds as well for supposing that the unusual grammar of 12:7 is due to Septuagint influence. In this verse, a nominative substantive (ho Michaêl) serves as the

subject of an infinitive, while the genitive article tou accompanies the infinitive polemêsai.<sup>20</sup> Although Charles has characterized the use of a nominative as a subject and the genitive for the article as Hebraic, he has conceded that this usage is found several times in the LXX (1920, I:322). W. Howard was more willing than Charles to admit direct Septuagint influence,<sup>21</sup> and Eduard Lohse pressed this point in even stronger terms. In Lohse's opinion, John had in this verse and elsewhere adopted a Septuagint idiom in spite of any difficulties this may have posed for a reader.<sup>22</sup>

Most of the Septuagint background for the uncommon usage in 12:7 is found in Daniel 10:20-21. The phrase Michaêl ho archôn, which is found in the nominative case in 10:21, has probably been taken over and used undeclined by the Seer in

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<sup>20</sup>G.D. Kilpatrick has suggested that the article before the infinitive was not the original reading. Since an articular infinitive had not been employed in Rev. 13:10, where it could have been used, nor had this construction been used elsewhere in the New Testament, he concluded that "probably we should omit the article at Rev. 12:7" (1990, 95). Kilpatrick, however, has not dealt with the issue of John's intentional adoption of a Septuagint phrasing, which seems to have been the case in this passage.

<sup>21</sup>Howard argued: "But we are convinced that more importance should be allowed to the influence of the LXX. One instance must suffice. We have already referred to Dr. Charles' acute perception of the Hebraic idiom behind the crux in 12:7. But why should le c. inf. in Hebr. be rendered by tou c. inf. by one who has to give a desperately literal translation? He might have used eis to c. inf." (1929, MHT II:484-485).

<sup>22</sup>Lohse employed the principle of Septuagintal influence as a criterion for the textual criticism of Revelation, asserting: ". . . zur Lösung textkritischer Probleme in der Apokalypse muß beachtet werden, daß der Seher sich ständig alttestamentlicher Redewendungen bedient - selbst dann, wenn die Gefahr könnte, mißverstanden zu werden" (1961, 126).

his prophecy. The genitive articular infinitive occurs in the Theodotonic text of Daniel 10:20, from which John no doubt borrowed it (kai nun epistrepsô tou polemêsai meta tou archontos Persôn). The genitive article with polemêsai was not unique to Daniel, being found also in Judges 1:1, etc. in the text of Codex Alexandrinus, as well as in 1 Kings 17:33 and 2 Chron. 18:31; 32:2.

A further instance of unusual usage appears to have resulted from the Seer's unsuccessful attempt to maintain a consistent biblicizing style. In the Greek Old Testament, the formulaic eidon kai idou was often used to introduce prophetic visions, and was usually followed by substantives in the nominative case. That eidon required a direct object in the accusative case was disregarded. In Revelation, eidon kai idou is normally also followed by nominatives, but in three passages (4:4; 7:9; 14:14) both accusatives and nominatives have been employed. The likeliest explanation of this inconsistency is that the Seer, in his attempt to reproduce a biblicizing idiom, has failed to maintain the Septuagintal pattern.<sup>23</sup> If any 'blunder' is present here, it is not in writing ordinary Hellenistic Greek.

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<sup>23</sup>It is possible that in 4:4, John has used the nominative tessares incongruently to modify thronous. This incongruous usage, however, is not restricted to Revelation. As BDF has pointed out, the endings -es and -as were apparently interchangeable in the Hellenistic era and in later times (sec. 46). It should be noted that the Seer has also employed the more common accusative ending in this verse.

### 3. Colloquial Usage

Several peculiarities in John's language are best explained as colloquialisms. All of them involve ellipses of one kind or another, of the sort that would occur in everyday discourse. The use of an independent legôn after edothê moi kalamos in 11:1, for example, requires only that a preparatory clause such as "and the angel spoke" be understood to precede the participle "saying." Nigel Turner has classed this occurrence as an ad sensum construction, noting as well that this construction is found in the Septuagint (1976, MHT IV:147).

In 13:3, it is generally agreed that the verb eidon has suffered ellipse, and that it must be supplied from 13:1 (Charles 1920, I:348; Lohmeyer 1953, 111). A similar explanation is probable for 1:20. It is not as obvious as some have claimed that in 1:20 the accusative luchnias should modify mustêrion and so should have been put in the genitive case. It makes good sense to take luchnias as the object of grapson in 1:19 just as the relative ha and mustêrion also serve as direct objects of this verb. The verse would then read: "Write therefore about the things which you saw . . . , the mystery of the seven stars . . . , and about the seven golden lampstands."

Three other occurrences of uncommon Greek feature striking incongruities involving the use of independent genitive participles. In 1:15, 19:20 and 21:9, pepurômenês,

tês kaiomenês, and tôn gemontôn, respectively, do not fully agree with other substantives in their contexts. Torrey's suggestion that some sort of direct Semitic influence was at work to produce this construction is too complex to be convincing, since he must argue not only for an Aramaic original of the verse, but also for a mistranslation of the Aramaic (1958, 97-98). A translator's error is also alleged in the case of 21:9 (156). Most interpreters regard them instead as simple errors attributable to John or to later copyists.

However, a better explanation than that of error is that in all three cases John was employing what could be termed an elliptical genitive absolute, a colloquial construction in which the customary accompanying substantive has been omitted.<sup>24</sup> This has been proposed for 1:15 by H.B. Swete (1909, 17), Ibson Beckwith (1919, 439) and C. Hemer (1986,

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<sup>24</sup>This undermines the contention of G. Mussies that Semitic influence in Revelation is evinced by its lack of genitive absolutes. He has argued that since this construction did not occur in Semitic languages, the Semite John would have avoided it when writing Greek (1980, 167). Mussies' case is weak in itself because he is comparing an inflected with a non-inflected language. How could a genitive absolute occur in a tongue which lacked case-endings? Also, his claim that a genitive absolute is absent from Semitic languages is misleading. Hebrew had an equally striking way of accomplishing what the genitive absolute did in Greek. As Ronald Williams has observed, simultaneous action was expressed in Hebrew by altering the normal sequence of verbal predicate followed by noun subject and noun object. If the noun were put in first position, simultaneous action was indicated. He has cited several biblical examples, including 1 Sam. 9:5,11,14; and Judges 15:14 (1976, sec. 235-237; 573,5). Had John wished to express this same sense, he would probably, had he chosen to, have used an absolute construction, since word order is usually not significant in Greek.

247, n.25), all of whom have maintained that the Seer omitted tês chalkolibanês.<sup>25</sup> Their suggestion is well worthy of consideration. It is not unlikely that John left out tês chalkolibanês to avoid repeating it, seeing that chalkolibanôi had just been used. It would have posed little problem for a reader to supply this noun in order to complete the parenthetical 'absolute' construction, as in: "And his feet were like burnished bronze, [burnished bronze] which had been purified in a furnace."

In 19:20, a similar situation obtains. In this case, limnês, the genitive form of a noun which occurs in this verse in the accusative case, limnên, has not been repeated. The fact that the participle tês kaiomenês was feminine would have been sufficient to signal a reader that the genitive form of the feminine limnês had to be supplied to complete the construction. The verse would then read: "The two were cast alive into the lake of fire, [the lake] burning with brimstone."<sup>26</sup>

It is evident that the Seer was aware of the more common attributive usage with respect to the image of the lake of

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<sup>25</sup>The gender of the substantive chalkolibanôi is not known, the word being unattested outside of Revelation and only occurring there as an anarthous dative. It is possible, therefore, that its gender was feminine. For a discussion of this term, see Hemer 1986, 111-117.

<sup>26</sup>The genitive absolute, "the lake burning with brimstone," is virtually equivalent to the relative clause "the lake which burns with brimstone." There is no need, consequently, to accept Torrey's argument that an Aramaic relative clause introduced by di lay behind this Greek construction (1958, 50-51).

fire. In 21:8, têi kaiomenêi, the dative form of this same participle, has been used in agreement with têi limnêi. This usage also confirms that the participle in 19:20 was intended to modify limnês and not some other substantive in this verse.

As for 21:9, the substantive which is missing in the elliptical genitive absolute is tôn phialôn. Again, its omission is understandable, since the accusative form of this noun, tas phialas, had been used immediately before. The notion that a genitive absolute clause was intended here is supported by the fact that verse 17:1a is identical to 21:9a, except that in the 21:9a tôn gemontôn tôn hepta plêgôn tôn eschatôn appears between phialas and kai elalêsen.<sup>27</sup> Thus this clause represents an 'insertion' in 21:9, which strongly supports the view that it was a separate clause rather than erroneous usage involving an independent genitive participle. The verse would be read: "And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, [bowls] filled with the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me."

Evidence from papyri shows that this construction was not unique to the Apocalypse. Independent genitives are found as well in Hellenistic texts dating from the first or early second centuries C.E. In these documents are found

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<sup>27</sup>H. Swete has suggested that John employed a genitive clause to describe the angels rather than the bowls. In his opinion, such a clause would have stressed that "these angels were still full of the great task they had accomplished" (1909, 283). This interpretation, however, unduly forces the meaning of the passage.

constructions in which genitive participles have been employed, instead of dative participles which would have been fully congruent with nearby dative substantives. This is the case in Rev. 1:15 and 19:20.

In the will of a certain Thaeisis, P. Tebtunis 381, G. Milligan has noted that the genitive participle tês gegonueiês autêi has been used instead of a dative which would have agreed with the subsequent dative substantive thugatri Thenpetesouchôi (1910, 78). As in the Apocalypse, the genitive thugatros may have been omitted from an elliptical genitive absolute clause because it occurred in the dative later in the passage. It makes good sense to read: "She wills . . . after her death, [the daughter] having been born to her and her late departed husband Pomsais, to daughter Thenpetesuchus . . ." (ll. 7-8).

In P. Michigan 121 (II.x.1), a descriptive clause also occurs in the genitive and not the dative case, with no genitive substantive included: Malleti Orseut(os) oudepou ontos tôn (etôn). A. Boak (1933, II:43-44) has termed this an error in the use of case. But once again, the missing substantive is present in another case in the same passage (Malleti), making it a simple matter for a reader to supply the genitive of this name to complete a genitive absolute clause, as in: "To Malles, son of Orseus, [Malles] not yet being an adult."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>A congruent example of this formula is found in P. Oxy. 275: ton huion Thoônin . . . oudepô onta tôn etôn (Hunt and Edgar 1932, I:38; no.13).

The likelihood that these two occurrences in the papyri and those in Revelation represent elliptical genitive absolutes is increased in light of genitive absolute usage in other texts. A.T. Robertson has observed that occasionally in the Classical period and more often in Hellenistic times, the substantive in a genitive absolute construction was omitted and only the participle employed. He has cited as evidence the unaccompanied use of the participles elthontôn and eipontos in Mt. 17:14 and 17:26 respectively, as well as several occurrences in the papyri (1914, 513). In addition, Robertson has listed instances in which a genitive absolute clause was used when a congruent attributive clause would have served the purpose just as well.<sup>29</sup> The three occurrences in Revelation and the two in the Egyptian papyri fit these two patterns. Their genitive participles are not accompanied by genitive substantives, and in all cases an attributive participle congruent with some other substantive in the sentence could have been used.

It is possible, of course, that all these occurrences of independent genitive participles constitute outright errors in Greek composition. Later copyists evidently were troubled by them, as is attested by the many variants in which the participles apparently have been made congruent. But John's usage may well represent colloquial practice in the first

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<sup>29</sup>Robertson states: "Then again the genitive absolute occurs when as a matter of fact the noun or pronoun is not absolute and the participle might have merely agreed in case with the word in question" (1914, 513-514). He has cited Mt. 1:18,20; 18:25, Mk. 9:28, and BGU 423 to support his claim.

century. Although later scribes may not have recognized this idiom or have considered it too colloquial to have been used in a sacred text, the fact that these readings have persisted in the tradition suggests that earlier copyists may have been familiar with this construction and routinely reproduced it.

In any case, it is clear that at worst, John was committing an error to which native-speakers of Greek were also prone. His usage here is therefore not in itself indicative of second-language difficulties of a Semitic Jewish-Christian.

#### 4. Minor Errors

Most of the occurrences in this category are errors of inconsistency or oversight, or mistakes of the kind that would have been made even by native-speakers of Greek. The use of both the accusative (akatharta) and the genitive (bdelugmatôn) following gemon in 17:4, for example, appears to have been inconsistent usage rather than an outright blunder. The use of either case following the verb gemô was permissible in Hellenistic times, as BDF and Bauer's lexicon (ad. loc.) have acknowledged for Rev. 17:3, BDF terming gemonta onomata blasphemias "vulgar" (sec. 172).

In 16:13, the use of the nominative batrachoï following hôs instead of an accusative form of this noun may have been acceptable in common usage as well. The Seer was quite flexible in his use of hôs, as may be seen in 1:16 (hôs ho

hêlios phainei) and 6:1 (hôs phônê). It should not quickly be assumed that the Seer's language does not represent what sort of usage would have been considered permissible in the Greek of that era. John was, after all, much better acquainted with Hellenistic Greek than are modern interpreters. The use of an incongruent masculine participle echôn with the neuter to teichos in 21:14 is more clearly in error, although this type of mistake was not peculiar to the Apocalypse. P. Paris 51 (l. 25) likewise contains an incongruity involving the nominative of echô (eme lelukas polias echôn; Milligan 1910, 21).

In 11:4 and 14:19, it is probable that confusion of antecedents gave rise to incongruities in gender. In 11:4, while the article hai accords with the substantives elaiai and luchniai, the masculine participle hestôtes has probably been made to agree with the preceding masculine demonstrative houtoi. The two witnesses being described were no doubt male, which was all the more reason why John could have mistakenly employed a masculine participle. In 14:19, the Seer may have written the masculine adjective ton megan instead of a congruent feminine form because he mistook the endings of the feminine accusative nouns of the second declension, ampelon and lênon for masculine endings. It is easy to imagine that the masculine ton megan had carelessly been patterned after the -on endings of the preceding feminine substantives. Errors of this sort represent oversight rather than incompetence.

The most puzzling occurrence in this category is found in 9:12b. Although John's use of the cardinal mia instead of the ordinal prôtê in hê ouai hê mia was acceptable in biblicizing style, his employment of the ordinal duo in idou erchetai eti duo ouai meta tauta is highly irregular. It is possible that he erred in employing the erchetai instead of the plural erchontai (i.e.: "two woes come"). The singular form of this verb would only have been appropriate if ouai were a neuter noun. But the article hê accompanying the first mention of ouai in this verse masks it as feminine. Another explanation for this usage is that John was here numbering the woes individually, referring to "woe number two," which was to follow "woe number one." Both the first and second numerals would thus be true cardinals, and the use of the singular verb correct. Such an interpretation is speculative, although adequate to explain the peculiarity.

In any case, this verse represents an isolated instance of unusual usage among the many other examples of John's correct employment of numerals. In view of the good command of both cardinals and ordinals he has demonstrated elsewhere (see Chapter 5 above, sec. II.E), his overall command of this aspect of the language must be judged good.

Conclusion: Other Alleged Errors. The occurrences in this category are not of the sort that prove that the Seer was incompetent in writing Greek. Some of his unusual usage was due to his biblicizing style. Other uncommon constructions were colloquial, but acceptable. On the few

occasions when he did commit outright errors, these were relatively minor in nature and often attributable to oversight of the kind that would be found in the writings of native-speakers of Greek.

#### E. Conclusion: Incongruities and Irregularities

These forty-six occurrences are hardly proof of the Seer's difficulties in Greek and hence Semitic background. If anything, they demonstrate that he was aware of popular Hellenistic usage and was secure enough in this knowledge to have made good literary use of the occasional incongruity or irregularity.

## CONCLUSION

The evidence in the Apocalypse which is pertinent to the issue of authorship does not support the claim that John was a Jewish-Christian. There is virtually nothing in the content or literary form of the book which suggests that his ethnic background was Jewish. His scriptural allusions cannot be traced to Semitic biblical texts and his language and style do not betray direct Semitic influence. Apart from statements in certain writings of the ancient Church which identify him as John the Apostle, there is, as a result, no reason to deny that he may have been a Gentile-Christian.

If the traditional assertion of apostolic authorship is also rejected, Revelation cannot be employed as primary evidence of Jewish-Christian beliefs and practices.<sup>1</sup> In any

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<sup>1</sup>E. Corsini is not correct in his assertion that the question of authorship is no longer a major concern of interpreters of Revelation because it contributes little to the understanding of the text (1984, 25). The Jewish-Christian hypothesis is still productive for many scholars. Adela Yarbro Collins, for example, has suggested that John's Palestinian background exposed him to Zealot ideology, which is reflected in the Apocalypse. Moreover, she has contended that his acquaintance with the Essene movement "may have influenced him" on the issue of purity and continence (1984a, 126-129). E.S. Fiorenza has appealed as well to John's Jewish background in her attempt to outline the rhetorical situation of Revelation. She saw in the Apocalypse evidence of the struggle which John was undergoing personally as he tried to reconcile Jewish and Gentile interests within the Christian community (1985g, 194-195). John Sweet has maintained a similar view, asserting that the Seer was grappling with Jewish-Christian and gnostic views (1979, 30-34). As well, M.E. Boring has declared that Revelation is "a source that can be judiciously used as in some sense a witness to pre-70 Palestinian Christian prophecy" (1982, 28-29; cf. Chapter Two, sec. A.5, above).

case, the absence of distinctively Jewish and Jewish-Christian concerns in Revelation precludes it from contributing anything significant to our knowledge of Jewish-Christianity. Jewish influence on the Apocalypse must be described in much less specific terms.

Revelation bears witness to the rapid divergence of Judaism and Christianity in the first century in matters of religious practice. This same phenomenon is evident in the letters of Paul, some of which circulated among churches in this same region of Asia Minor. Distinctive Jewish piety was quickly replaced by equivalent customs that the young Christian fellowships could call their own. At the same time, however, the Apocalypse testifies to the debt which Christianity owes to Judaism in terms of theological and humanitarian interests. Jewish tradition had preserved and developed biblical teaching about such matters as creation, sin and redemption, as well as maintained a high standard of ethical behaviour. John, whether he was a Jewish-Christian or a Gentile-Christian, benefitted immeasurably from this religious legacy.

Several other consequences for the study of Revelation flow from this study. First, the effect which style has had on the language of John must be given more attention than it has been accorded in the past. Most of the alleged Semitisms in his Greek are clearly explicable in terms of the style in which he had chosen to deliver his message. As a prophet, he was likely to have composed in a marked biblicalizing idiom

which would have helped to set him apart as an authentic representative of God. Direct Semitic influence need not be supposed to explain his biblicizing style. Similarly, most of the incongruities in his grammar do not unduly strain the limits of colloquial Hellenistic usage. They are much too minor in nature to prove that his first language was not Greek but a Semitic tongue.

Second, the likelihood that John adopted an uncommon style for his work must be taken into account by translators of the Apocalypse. They should not presume that John's Greek was often only Hebrew in disguise and so resort to Semitic grammar and syntax to make his 'true' meaning fully intelligible.<sup>2</sup> John's Greek was unusual even to those who first heard it. It differed from everyday discourse because it was biblicizing, and was decidedly unliterary because it employed so many colloquial constructions. Translators should strive to preserve this rough, striking style, conceding at the same time that the meaning of his words was not always readily apparent.

Third, the probability that stylistic factors have

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<sup>2</sup>It was Charles' contention that at a number of points Revelation could not be interpreted properly unless Greek phrasings were rendered by retroversion into Semitic idioms. He claimed that ". . . we have been enabled to recognize as Hebraisms phrases which hitherto have been either obscure or wholly unintelligible, and so a flood of light and meaning has been thrown on the text" (1922, 65). Elsewhere he declares that his study "revolutionizes the translation of the Apocalypse" since "frequently it is not the Greek but the Hebrew in the mind of the writer that has to be translated" (1920, I:clxxxvii). This principle still carries weight with some translators, as the comments of Kenneth Newport demonstrate (1986).

served to shape the Seer's Greek means that his language cannot be adduced as evidence that his social status was low. It is quite possible that John was well-educated and wealthy but chose to express himself in a colloquial, Semitizing manner. Although such a style which would have been considered barbarous and unliterary by many even in his own day, the Seer may have judged that such criticism was worth the price to compose his prophecy in an appropriate idiom.

This study also has implications for scholarship which go beyond the Apocalypse of John. Research on the language of early Christianity, for instance, must not ignore the contribution that sociolinguistics and the philosophy of language can make to such inquiries.<sup>3</sup> There was clearly a greater degree of freedom exercised by ancient Christian authors in their choice of style than has been imputed to them in the past. In Semitisms research in particular, direct Semitic influence must no longer be the first explanation to which recourse is made in order to explain biblicalizing language. Christians evidently developed a religious style of their own at an early time in the history

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<sup>3</sup>It is apparent that for R.H. Charles and many who followed him, meaning was primarily and almost invariably communicated by the discursive structures of a language. Hence the tremendous pressure to find the exact translation of grammatical constructions and idioms even when there was little within the Greek language which would indicate what the precise meaning was. The work of Speech-act theorists such as J.L. Austin (1975) and John Searle (1972) serves as a corrective to this restrictive approach. They have distinguished between what a language says and what it does, the latter often being more important for the communication of meaning (or the 'force' of an utterance) than the former.

of the Church.

In the same vein, John's scriptural allusions demonstrate that Christians were not averse to employing the Old Testament creatively to enhance their own message. Scripture was for them not simply a source of proof-texts or ethical warrants, but also a rich repository of striking religious imagery. Explanations of divergences from known Greek versions of the Old Testament that propose that Christian authors were citing the Hebrew Bible, targumic traditions, or Greek testimonia-books which are no longer extant, miss the point that Christian authors were at liberty to use the Scriptures in a refreshingly artistic and imaginative fashion.

## Appendix A

### Unusual Greek Usage in the Apocalypse

The occurrences of relatively uncommon Greek constructions listed below have been drawn from studies by leading interpreters of the book of Revelation, including those by Ibson Beckwith, Wilhelm Bousset, Josef Schmid, Nigel Turner, Ernst Lohmeyer, Heinrich Kraft, and R.H. Charles, among others. The listing provides a brief description of eighty-five separate occurrences, each accompanied by page references to the work of the above-mentioned scholars. Each construction is assigned to one of two main categories: (a) Semitisms; and (b) Incongruities and other grammatical and syntactical irregularities.

Alleged Semitisms have been placed into one of five sub-categories which have been employed for the most part by Charles, Turner, and Schmid. These include: (1) nominative of apposition, i.e., a nominative substantive appearing in apposition to a substantive in an oblique case; (2) nominative casus pendens, i.e., a nominative substantive accompanying an indirect or direct object in an oblique case; (3) pleonasm, i.e., a redundant personal pronoun or adverb following a substantive or a relative; (4) the resolution of a participle or infinitive into a finite verb,

i.e., the allegedly abrupt change from one verb form to another; and (5) other usages said to be due to direct Semitic influence.

Several aspects of the language of the Seer which have also been attributed to direct Semitic influence are not treated in this listing. These include parataxis, unusual change or use of tense, and "non-Greek" meanings of idioms or other grammatical constructions. They have been discussed in Chapter Five.

Incongruities and irregularities are divided into three sub-categories: (1) ad sensum constructions, in which the natural or psychological subject instead of the grammatical subject is used for the purpose of establishing concord; (2) instances of attraction in which a relative pronoun or a nearby noun or participle has been used for establishing concord; and (3) other peculiarities, many of which are alleged to be outright errors and blunders.

In a few cases one scholar may have identified a particular construction as an incongruity or irregularity and another scholar as a Semitism. In such cases, and when classification is not straightforward, note is taken of the problem (e.g., 2:26; 3:21; 4:1; 4:7; 9:12; 21:14). To simplify statistical analysis, each entry has been assigned to only one category, even if it could have been classified under more than one.

The Greek text has been printed directly from the

Nestle-Aland 26th edition on diskette. Since the purpose of this list is simply to describe and to classify unusual Greek constructions in the Apocalypse, only the relevant portion of a verse is quoted. Enough of the context is provided, however, to demonstrate the nature of the uncommon usage under study. The works of the interpreters cited have been abbreviated as follows: Bkw= Beckwith 1919; Bou= Bousset 1906; Chs= Charles 1920; Kft= Kraft 1974; Lhm= Lohmeyer 1953; and, Sch= Schmid 1955, II.

In keeping with the scheme outlined above, the various occurrences have been classified as follows:

(i) S= Semitisms (sub-category S1= nominative of apposition; S2= nominative casus pendens; S3= pleonasm; S4= resolution of a participle or infinitive into a finite verb; and, S5= other alleged Semitisms); and,

(ii) I= Incongruities and irregularities (sub-category I1= ad sensum constructions; I2= occurrences of attraction; and, I3= other alleged errors).

A summary of the occurrences arranged by category is provided at the end of the listing.

(1) 1:4: εἰρήνη ἀπὸ ὃ ὦν καὶ ὃ ἦν καὶ ὃ ἐρχόμενος καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ. The preposition ἀπο normally requires the genitive case, not the nominative as here (Bkw 424; Bou 184; Chs I:10; Kft 31; Lhm 10; Sch 246). I3.

(2) 1:5-6: καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ

πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς. Τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ, <sup>6</sup> καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων]. ἀμήν. The nominative substantive ὁ μαρτυς does not accord in case with the genitive Χριστου (Bkw 427). Charles has argued that since John acts as if Greek were uninflected, this construction is a Hebraism (I: cxlix-cl, 13). S1.

(3) The use of the finite verb ἐποίησεν following the participles ἀγαπῶντι and λύσαντι has been designated by Charles as a "pure Hebraism" (I: cxliv-cxlv, 14-15; Lhm 11; Sch 242). Beckwith has termed it an anacoluthon (429). S4.

(4) 1:10-11: καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος <sup>11</sup> λεγούσης· ὁ βλέπεις γράψον. An accusative participle should have been employed to agree with φωνην, not the genitive λεγούσης. Kraft has suggested that this was due to a scribal error. It is likely that λεγούσης has been attracted by the preceding genitive σαλπγγος (Bkw 436; Bou 193; Chs I:24; Kft 43; Lhm 16; Sch 244). I2.

(5) (1:12)-1:13: (εἶδον) . . . ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν ὅμοιον υἶδόν ἀνθρώπου ἐνδεδυμένον ποδήρη. The dative case should follow ὅμοιος here, not the accusative (Bou 194; Bkw 437; Chs I:27,36; Kft 45; Lhm 17; Sch 249). I3.

(6) 1:15: καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένης. The participle πεπυρωμένης does not

fully agree with any other substantive in this clause (Bkw 439; Bou 196; Chs I:29; Kft 46; Lhm 17; Sch 245). Torrey has attempted to show that the problem stems from a mistranslation of an Aramaic phrase (1958, 97-98). I3.

(7) 1:16: καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ . . . καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ. Charles has asserted that the use of the participle ἔχων instead of a finite form of this verb is probably due to Semitic influence (Chs I:29; Sch 242). S5.

(8) Charles has argued that the use of the finite verb φαίνει after ὡς instead of a participial form is due to the influence of Hebrew (I:cxlvii,31). Beckwith has characterized it as a loose Greek construction (438). S5.

(9) (1:17)-1:18: (εἶμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος) . . . καὶ ὁ ζῶν, καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἶμι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. There is a change here from a participle to the finite verb ἐγενόμην (Chs I:31; Kft 48; Lhm 11). S4.

(10) (1:19)-1:20: (γράψον οὖν ἃ εἶδες καὶ ἃ εἰσὶν καὶ ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.) <sup>20</sup> τὸ μυστήριον τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων οὓς εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς μου καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας τὰς χρυσᾶς. This verse would read more easily if the phrase τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας τὰς χρυσᾶς were in the genitive case and taken with μυστηριον (Bkw 444; Bou 199; Chs I:33; Lhm 19; Sch 245). I3.

(11) 2:2: καὶ ἐπείρασας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν. A change from the participle

λεγοντας to the verb εἰσιν has been noted in this passage. Charles has contended that οντας should have been employed (I:cxlv,50; Sch 242). S4.

(12) 2:7: Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν. The pronoun αὐτῷ is redundant (Chs I:53; Sch 241). S3.

(13) 2:9: ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτοὺς καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγή τοῦ σατανᾶ. There is a change here from the participle λεγοντων to the verb εἰσιν. Charles has argued that ὄντων should have been employed (Chs I:57; Sch 243). S4.

(14) 2:13: καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστός μου, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη. A nominative phrase modifies Ἀντιπᾶς instead of one in the genitive case (Bkw 459; Bou 212; Chs I:52). S1.

(15) 2:17: Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ. The pronoun αὐτῷ is redundant (Chs I:65; Sch 241). S3.

(16) 2:20: ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἣ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφήτιν καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ. The nominative substantive ἣ λεγουσα is not accusative to agree with γυναῖκα (Bkw 466; Bou 218; Chs I:70; Lhm 28). Bousset has suggested that ἣ is a relative pronoun. S1.

(17) The change from the participle λεγουσα to the verb διδασκει has been labelled a Semitism (Charles I:70; Lhm 28; Sch 243). S4.

(18) 2:26: Καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν. The nominative phrase ὁ νικῶν

should have been in the dative case instead of the nominative in order to agree with the indirect object *αὐτῷ* (Bkw 470; Chs I:cxlix, 74; Sch 241) The dative *αὐτῷ* is pleonastic, in Schmid's view. S2.

(19) 3:8: ἦν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλεῖσαι αὐτήν. The pronoun *αὐτήν* is redundant, in view of the preceding relative pronoun *ἦν*. (Bkw 481; Chs I:cxlix,87; Sch 241). S3.

(20) 3:9: τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται. The change from the participle *λεγοντων* to the finite verb *εἰσιν* has been termed a Semitism (Charles I:88; Sch 243). S4.

(21) 3:12: Ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον . . . καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἡ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. The nominative phrase *ὁ νικῶν* has been employed rather than an accusative form, which would have agreed with *αὐτόν* (Bkw 485; Charles I:cxlix,90; Sch 241) S2.

(22) The substantive *ἡ καταβαίνουσα* is nominative and not genitive, which would have agreed with *τῆς πόλεως* (Bkw 424; Bou 229; Chs I:cxlix-cl,92; Sch 241). Bousset has suggested that *ἡ* is a relative pronoun. S1.

(23) 3:21: Ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσαι. The nominative substantive *ὁ νικῶν* is not congruent with the indirect object *αὐτῷ* (Bkw 491; Chs I:102; Sch 241). Schmid lists *αὐτῷ* as a pleonasm. S2.

(24) 4:1: ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἦν ἤκουσα ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλούσης μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων· ἀνάβα ᾧδε, καὶ: The participle λαλούσης, which should agree with the understood accusative φωνην, appears to have been attracted by σάλπιγγος (Bkw 495; Bou 243). I2.

(25) The participle λεγων should be feminine, the gender of its antecedent φωνη. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Bkw 495; Bou 243; Chs I:108; Lhm 45; Sch 236). It has also been suggested that λαλούσης . . . λεγων is a Hebraism (Chs I:108; Lhm 45; Sch 240). I1.

(26) 4:4: (Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα . . . ; 4:1) . . . Καὶ κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρες, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρας πρεσβυτέρους καθημένους περιβεβλημένους. It is customary in LXX-Ezekiel for [ἐ]ιδον και ἰδου to be followed by nominatives (Ezekiel 1:4; 2:9; 10:9; etc.). While this is for the most part observed in this passage, verse 4 contains several accusatives, including θρόνους and πρεσβυτερους (Bkw 498; Bou 245; Lhm 46; Sch 245). This inconsistency led Charles to suggest a later editorial insertion (I:116). I3.

(27) 4:7: τὸ τρίτον ζῶον ἔχων τὸ πρόσωπον ὡς ἀνθρώπου καὶ. The participle ἔχων should have been neuter and not masculine so that it would agree with ζῶον. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Sch 233). Charles has argued that Semitic influence has led the Seer to use the participle ἔχων instead of the finite verb ἔχει (I:124).

11.

(28) 4:8: καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα, ἐν καθ' ἐν αὐτῶν ἔχων ἀνά πτέρυγας ἕξ . . . καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς λέγοντες· ἅγιος: The masculine participle ἔχων should be neuter to agree with ἐν. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Bou 250; Sch 233). 11.

(29) The masculine participle λεγοντες should be neuter to agree with ζῶα. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Bou 161). 11.

(30) 5:6: ἀρνίον ἐστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον ἔχων κέρατα ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑπτὰ οἳ εἰσιν τὰ [ἑπτὰ] πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεσταλμένοι εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν: The masculine participle ἔχων should be neuter to agree with ἀρνιον. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Sch 232). 11.

(31) It is difficult to determine whether the participle ἀπεσταλμένοι is to be taken with the neuter πνευματα or the masculine relative οἳ and its antecedent ὀφθαλμοι. This may be an ad sensum construction, the masculine gender being taken from the previous ὀφθαλμοὺς, or being due to the spirits having been conceived of as angels (Bkw 510; Bou 161; Chs I:142; Sch 238). 11.

(32) 5:11-12: καὶ εἶδον καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἀγγέλων πολλῶν . . . καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων <sup>12</sup> λέγοντες φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· ἄξιόν. The participle λεγοντες should be feminine to agree with the preceding φωνην or with χιλιαδες. This is probably an ad sensum construction, the angels and elders being the

masculine natural subject (Bkw 513; Bou 261; Chs I:136; Sch 240). I1.

(33) 5:13: καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα ἤκουσα λέγοντας· τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ. The masculine participle λέγοντας should be neuter to agree with τα πάντα. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Bou 161; Chs I:136; Sch 238). I1.

(34) 6:1: ἤνοιξεν τὸ ἀρνίον μίαν ἐκ τῶν ἐπτὰ σφραγίδων, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγοντος ὡς φωνὴ βροντῆς· ἔρχου. Charles (I:36, 154) and Lohmeyer (59) have argued that φωνή should be in the dative case, labelling the use of the nominative with ὡς a Semitism. Beckwith has suggested a nominative of apposition (516), Kraft is unsure of the original reading (116), and Bousset has proposed that this usage represents a shortened form of a common expression (263). S5.

(35) The use of the cardinal μίαν instead of an ordinal has been designated a Semitism by Bousset (263), Charles (I:161), and with reservation by Lohmeyer (59). Kraft has argued that the grammar is correct since a particular item in a series is intended (116). S5.

(36) 6:4: καὶ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐδόθη αὐτῷ λαβεῖν. Schmid (241) includes this use of αὐτῷ in his list of pleonasms. S3.

(37) 6:8: καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος χλωρός, καὶ ὁ καθημένος ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ὄνομα αὐτῷ [ὁ] θάνατος. The

nominative ὁ καθημενος is not congruent with the dative pronoun αὐτῷ (Bkw 523; Bou 268; Chs I:cxlix; Sch 241). S2.

(38) 7:2: τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ἀγγέλοις οἷς ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἀδικῆσαι. The pronoun αὐτοῖς is redundant in view of the preceding relative οἷς (Bkw 481; Bou 160,281; Chs I:191, 205; Sch 241). S3.

(39) 7:4: Καὶ ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐσφραγισμένων, ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες, ἐσφραγισμένοι ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ. The participle ἐσφραγισμένοι occurs in the genitive case earlier in this verse. Beckwith views this as an instance of nominative of apposition (542). If the participle were to be taken with χιλιάδες, it should have been feminine. This is probably an ad sensum construction, the people comprising the tribes being taken as the natural subject (Bou 161; Sch 238). I1.

(40) 7:9: Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο, ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν ἐστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου περιβεβλημένους στολὰς λευκὰς καὶ φοίνικες ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν. The personal pronoun αὐτὸν after the relative ὃν is redundant (Bkw 543; Bou 160; Chs I:190). S3.

(41) Nominatives are normally employed following εἶδον καὶ ἰδου, not accusatives such as περιβεβλημένους (Bkw 544; Chs I:210; Lhm 71; Sch 245). The participle ἐστῶτες is an ad sensum construction, and no doubt modifies the singular collective noun ὄχλος (Bou 284; Chs I:210; Sch 231)

I3.

(42) 7:14: οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης καὶ ἔπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐλεύκαναν αὐτάς. The change from the participle ἐρχόμενοι to the finite verbs ἔπλυναν and ἐλεύκαναν has been designated a Hebraism (Chs I:cxlν,202,213; Sch 243). S4.

(43) 8:9: καὶ ἀπέθανεν τὸ τρίτον τῶν κτισμάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ τὰ ἔχοντα ψυχὰς καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν πλοίων διεφθάρησαν. The substantive τα ἔχοντα is in the nominative case in apposition to the genitive κτισμάτων (Bkw 557; Bou 295; Chs I:234; Lhm 76). S1.

(44) 9:12: Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ μία ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ἔτι δύο οὐαὶ μετὰ ταῦτα. The cardinal μία is used here instead of the ordinal πρώτη (Bkw 564; Bou 302). Charles views this usage as Hebraic (I:247). I3.

(45) The use of δυο οὐαὶ is unusual. The noun is apparently feminine plural, yet it occurs with the singular verb ἔρχεται (Bou 302; Lhm 81; Sch 246). I3.

(46) 9:13-14: καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μίαν ἐκ τῶν [τεσσάρων] κεράτων . . . λέγοντα τῷ ἔκτῳ ἀγγέλῳ, ὁ ἔχων τὴν σάλπιγγα· λῦσον. The participle λεγοντα should be feminine to agree with μίαν. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Sch 236) Schmid suggests it is a Hebraism (240). I1.

(47) The nominative substantive ὁ ἔχων stands in apposition to the dative ἀγγέλῳ (Bkw 566; Chs I:cl,248). S1.

(48) 10:8: Καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἦν ἤκουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πάλιν λαλοῦσαν μετ' ἐμοῦ καὶ λέγουσαν· ὕπαγε. The accusatives λαλοῦσαν and λέγουσαν are not congruent with the nominative subject of the sentence, φωνή. They appear to have been attracted to the accusative case of the relative ἦν (Bkw 583; Bou 312; Chs I:267; Kft 150; Lhm 86; Sch 246). I2.

(49) 11:1: Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων· ἔγειρε. The participle λέγων is not grammatically dependent upon any other word in the sentence (Bkw 583; Bou 315; Chs I:274; Lhm 90; Turner MHT IV, 147). I3.

(50) 11:4: οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαί αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες. The masculine ἐστῶτες has been paired with the feminine article αἱ (Bkw 600; Bou 161; Chs I:284; Lhm 92; Sch 238). I3.

(51) 11:15: καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ μεγάλαι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγοντες· ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία. The masculine λεγοντες should be feminine to agree with φωναί. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Bkw 608; Bou 331; Sch 236). Schmid has termed this construction a Hebraism (240). I1.

(52) 11:18: καὶ δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δούλοις σου τοῖς προφήταις καὶ τοῖς ἀγίοις καὶ τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν. The substantives τους μικρους και τους μεγαλους are not in the dative case, unlike those that precede them (Bkw 610; Bou 332; Lhm 96). I3.

(53) 12:2: καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα, καὶ κράζει ᾠδίνουσα

καὶ βασανιζομένη τεκεῖν. Charles (I:301,316) and Schmid (242) have asserted that the use of the participle ἔχουσα instead of finite verb form is due to Semitic influence. Schmid also lists κραζει as an example of the resolution of a participle into a finite verb (243). S5.

(54) 12:6: εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ὅπου ἔχει ἐκεῖ τόπον ἠτοιμασμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ἐκεῖ τρέφωσιν αὐτήν. The use of ἐκεῖ after ὅπου is redundant (Bkw 624; Bou 160; Chs I:301). S3.

(55) 12:7: Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος. The nominative ὁ Μιχαὴλ has been used with the infinitive πολεμῆσαι instead of an accusative form. Charles has characterized this usage as a Semitism (I:321), but others have termed it abnormal or erroneous (Bkw 625; Bou 339; Lhm 101). I3.

(56) 12:14: εἰς τὴν ἔρημον εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς, ὅπου τρέφεται ἐκεῖ καιρὸν. The adverb ἐκεῖ following ὅπου is redundant (Bkw 629; Bou 160; Chs I:301,320; Sch 242). S3.

(57) 13:3: καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον. The accusative μίαν stands far from a governing verb, making it appear independent (Bkw 635; Chs I:348-349; Kft 176; Lhm 111; Sch 246). I3.

(58) 13:8: καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ. The antecedent of the masculine pronoun αὐτον

appears to be the neuter *θηριον* in verse 4. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Kft 177; Lhm 112; Sch 232). I1.

(59) The personal pronoun *αὐτου* following the relative *οὗ* is redundant (Bkw 637; Bou 160; Chs I:cxlix; Sch 242). S3.

(60) 13:12: τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, οὗ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ. The pronoun *αὐτου* following the relative *οὗ* is redundant (Bkw 640; Bou 160; Chs I:cxlix; Sch 242). S3.

(61) 13:14: καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας . . . λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν. The masculine participle *λεγων* should be neuter, since its subject seems to be *θηριον* from verse 11. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Sch 232). I1.

(62) The antecedent of the relative pronoun *ὃς* appears to be *θηριον* from verse 11. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Kft 181; Lhm 116; Sch 232). I1.

(63) 13:15: Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ. The infinitive *δοῦναι* has been followed by *ποιησῃ* (Chs I:cxlvi). S4.

(64) 14:2-3: ὡς κιθαρῳδῶν κιθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς κιθάραις αὐτῶν. <sup>3</sup> καὶ ᾄδουσιν. Charles has argued that the change from the participle *κιθαριζόντων* to the finite verb

ἄδουσιν is a Hebraism (II:cxlv,2,7). S4.

(65) 14:6-7: Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον . . . λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλη· φοβήθητε. The participle λεγων should be in the accusative case to agree with ἄγγελον (Bou 160; Chs II:2,13). Schmid lists this as a Hebraism (240). I3.

(66) 14:12: Ἔσδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ. The nominative οἱ τηροῦντες is in apposition to the genitive ἁγίων (Bkw 659; Bou 386; Chs I:369; Kft 195; Lhm 126). S1.

(67) 14:14: Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ νεφέλη λευκή, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενον ὅμοιον υἷον ἀνθρώπου, ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς. The accusative υἷον has been used after ὅμοιον, which regularly takes the dative (Bkw 662; Bou 388; Chs II:3,19; Lhm 127; Sch 249). I3.

(68) The nominative case is usually employed following εἶδον καὶ ἰδοῦ. In this case the accusative participle καθήμενον has been employed. Nominatives are resumed with ἔχων (Bou 388; Chs II:3; Sch 247). I3.

(69) 14:19: καὶ ἐτρύγησεν τὴν ἄμπελον τῆς γῆς καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μέγαν. The adjective τὸν μέγαν should be feminine if it is to agree with τὴν ληνον (Bkw 664; Bou 161; Chs II:24; Kft 199; Lhm 129; Sch 247) I3.

(70) 15:2-3: ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν ὑαλίνην ἔχοντας κιθάρας τοῦ θεοῦ. <sup>3</sup> καὶ ἄδουσιν τὴν ᾠδὴν. Charles has contended that the participle ἄδοντας should have been

used after ἔχοντας, not the finite verb ἄδουσιν (Chs II:34; Kft 201-202). S4.

(71) 16:13: πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι. The nominative βατραχοι would normally be in the accusative case, parallel to πνευματα (Bou 160; Chs II:47-48; Kft 208; Lhm 136; Sch 247). I3.

(72) 17:3: Καὶ εἶδον γυναῖκα καθημένην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον, γέμον[τα] ὀνόματα βλασφημίας, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα. If the masculine γεμοντα is the proper reading, this is probably an ad sensum construction (Bkw 693; Bou 403; Chs II:64; Kft 213-214; Lhm 141). I1.

(73) The neuter θηρίον is followed by a masculine ἔχων. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Kft 213-214; Sch 232-233). I1.

(74) 17:4: ἔχουσα ποτήριον χρυσοῦν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῆς γέμον βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς. The substantive τα ἀκαθαρτα is not in the genitive case, as is the preceding noun βδελυγματων (Bkw 693; Bou 404; Chs II:65; Sch 247). I3.

(75) 17:8: καὶ θαυμασθήσονται οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, βλέπόντων τὸ θηρίον. The genitive plural participle βλέποντων seems to have been attracted to the case of the preceding relative ὧν (Bkw 698; Bou 406; Chs II:68; Sch 247). I2.

(76) 17:9: Αἱ ἑπτὰ κεφαλαὶ ἑπτὰ ὄρη εἰσὶν, ὅπου ἡ

γυνή κάθηται ἐπ' αὐτῶν. The phrase ἐπ' αὐτῶν is considered redundant, in view of the preceding adverb ὅπου (Bkw 699; Bou 160; Chs II:68; Sch 242). S3.

(77) 17:11: καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ αὐτὸς ὄγδοός ἐστιν καὶ. The masculine αὐτός and ὄγδοός refer to the neuter θηριον. This is probably an ad sensum construction (Sch 233). I1.

(78) 17:16: καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα ἃ εἶδες καὶ τὸ θηρίον οὗτοι μισήσουσιν τὴν πόρνην. This is probably an ad sensum construction, the masculine demonstrative οὗτοι referring to the neuter κερατα and θηριον (Sch 233). I1.

(79) 19:1: Μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν μεγάλην ὄχλου πολλοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λεγόντων· ἀλληλουϊά. The plural λεγοντων does not accord with the singular collective noun ὄχλου. This is probably an ad sensum construction. (Bou 426; Chs II:114,119; Sch 231). I1.

(80) 19:6: Καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ὄχλου πολλοῦ καὶ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῶν ἰσχυρῶν λεγόντων· ἀλληλουϊά. The plural λεγοντων does not accord with the singular collective noun ὄχλου. This is probably an ad sensum usage (Bkw 725; Bou 427; Chs II:115,125; Sch 240). I1.

(81) 19:20: ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δύο εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ. The genitive feminine τῆς καιομένης does not accord fully with either the accusative λιμνην or with the masculine πυρος (Bkw 735; Bou 433; Chs

II:139; Kft 253; Lhm 160; Sch 248). I3.

(82) 20:2: καὶ ἐκράτησεν τὸν δράκοντα, ὁ ὄφεις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὅς ἐστιν Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς. The nominative ὁ ὄφεις stands in apposition to the accusative δράκοντα (Bkw 738; Chs II:141; Kft 255-256). S1.

(83) 20:8: εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, ὧν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης. The pronoun αὐτῶν is redundant in view of the preceding relative ὧν (Bkw 746; Bou 160; Chs II:189; Sch 242). S3.

(84) 21:9: Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας τῶν γεμόντων τῶν ἑπτὰ πληγῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων καὶ ἐλάλησεν. The participle γεμόντων should have been accusative to agree with φιάλας (Bkw 756; Bou 446; Chs II:156; Lhm 172; Sch 248). I3.

(85) 21:14: καὶ τὸ τεῖχος τῆς πόλεως ἔχων. The participle ἔχων should be neuter to agree with τὸ τεῖχος (Bkw 758; Bou 447). Charles has contended that the participle is being used as a finite verb, a Semitic construction (II:155). I3.

### Summary by Category

Verse references to the unusual Greek constructions

listed above have been arranged here according to category and sub-category. In some cases, the same words occur in two or more passages. The phrase  $\acute{o}$   $\nu\lambda\kappa\omega\nu$ , for example, accounts for three of the four occurrences in sub-category S2, nominative casus pendens. Such duplication has been ignored for the purposes of this summary.

#### I. Alleged Semitisms

S1 (nominative of apposition): 1:5-6; 2:13; 2:20; 3:12; 8:9; 9:13-14; 14:12; 20:2. Sub-category total: 8.

S2 (nominative casus pendens): 2:26; 3:12; 3:21; 6:8. Sub-category total: 4.

S3 (pleonasm): 2:7; 2:17; 3:8; 6:4; 7:2; 7:9; 12:6; 12:14; 13:8; 13:12; 17:9; 20:8. Sub-category total: 12.

S4 (resolution of participle/infinitive): 1:5-6; 1:18; 2:2; 2:9; 2:20; 3:9; 7:14; 13:15; 14:2-3; 15:2-3. Sub-category total: 10.

S5 (other Semitisms): 1:16 (bis); 6:1 (bis); 12:2. Sub-category total: 5.

Semitisms, category total: 39.

#### II. Incongruities and Other Irregularities

I1 (ad sensum constructions): 4:1; 4:7; 4:8 (bis); 5:6  
(bis); 5:11-12; 5:13; 7:4; 9:13; 11:15; 13:8; 13:14 (bis);  
17:3 (bis); 17:11; 17:16; 19:1; 19:6. Sub-category  
total: 20

I2 (attraction): 1:10-11; 4:1; 10:8; 17:8.  
Sub-category total: 4

I3 (errors): 1:4; 1:13; 1:15; 1:20; 4:4; 7:9; 9:12  
(bis); 11:1; 11:4; 11:18; 12:7; 13:3; 14:6-7; 14:14 (bis);  
14:19; 16:13; 17:4; 19:20; 21:9; 21:14. Sub-category  
total: 22.

Incongruities, category total: 46.

Grand total of unusual constructions: 85.

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