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Syntactical Peculiarities in Revelation

"I see his dialect and language not accurately conforming to Greek. I see him making use of idioms of foreign turn and here and there even tending to solecism." So wrote Dionysius Magnus.¹⁾

Since the days of Dionysius Magnus, the style and language employed by the author of Revelation has been variously assessed. Among modern writers on the subject the opinions of Moulton, Swete, Benson, Debrunner, Charles, Howard, Robertson, Radermacher, and Lohr are particularly noteworthy.

Moulton²⁾ writes, "Even the Greek of the Apocalypse does not seem to owe any of its blunders to Hebraism. . . . The author's uncertain use of cases is obvious to the most casual reader. . . . We find him perpetually indifferent to concord. But the less educated papyri give us plentiful parallels from a field where Semitism cannot be suspected. . . . Apart from places where he may be definitely translating a Semitic document, there is no reason to believe that his grammar would have been materially different had he been a native of Oxyrhynchus, assuming the extent of Greek education the same." In a footnote on page nine of the same work, Moulton says, "It will not do to appeal to grammar to prove that the author was a Jew: as far as that goes, he might just as well have been a farmer of the Fayum. Thought and material must exclusively determine that question."

Swete³⁾ does not agree with Moulton. He allows for the possibility that the early years of thinking in a Semitic language were responsible for some of John's stylistic eccentricities in Revelation. His final summary is: "From whatever cause or concurrence of causes, it cannot be denied that the Apocalypse of John stands alone among Greek literary writings in its disregard of the ordinary rules of syntax and the success with which syntax is set aside without loss of perspicuity or even of literary power. The book seems openly and deliberately to defy the grammarian, and yet, even as literature, it is in its own field unsurpassed. No judge who compared it with any other Greek apocalyptic work would hesitate to give the palm to the canonical Apocalypse."

Benson⁴⁾ allows for only a few solecisms in Revelation and attempts to show that the author wrote largely *κατὰ σύνεσιν* (according to the reader's comprehension of truth).

1) Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, VII, 25.

2) J. H. Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 8 f.

3) H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 115—125.

4) E. W. Benson, *The Apocalypse, Essay V: A Grammar of Ungrammar*.

Debrunner⁵⁾ writes, "Of all New Testament authors, the writer of Revelation writes the most commonplace style" ("am vulgaersten schreibt der Verfasser der Apokalypse"). "Revelation, as compared with the other New Testament books and the other writings of John, shows a number of very conspicuous solecisms which rest chiefly on neglect of concord." With respect to the possibility of Semitic influence on Revelation, Debrunner believes that translation Greek is to be found 1) in the LXX and therefore in quotations from the LXX occurring in Revelation; 2) in those writings of the New Testament which probably rest on an Aramaic original (parts of the synoptic Gospels and of Revelation).

Charles⁶⁾ devotes ten pages to a discussion of the Hebraic style of the Apocalypse. His position is: "While the author writes in Greek, he thinks in Hebrew, and the thought has naturally affected the vehicle of expression." Charles then proceeds to make out a strong case for the contention that the Hebrew idiom lies behind the Greek of Revelation.

Howard⁷⁾ agrees substantially with Charles, but poses the question: "The writer's familiarity with Hebrew seems to lie beyond question, but why should not Aramaic be his mother tongue, the language in which his thoughts would first frame themselves?" He believes that the solution of the linguistic problem in Revelation lies in the combination of the following factors:

1. a mind that thought in Aramaic and found in the Greek vernacular of his world many idioms sufficiently close to his mother tongue for his purpose;
2. sources in translated Greek and Hebrew, which he worked into his book in Hebraic Greek;
3. a knowledge of the LXX and of various apocalypses already current in a Greek form, which supplied him with a vocabulary and often suggested an idiom.

His statement: "More importance should be allowed to the influence of the LXX" (484) seems particularly pertinent.

Robertson⁸⁾ takes the position: "The syntactical peculiarities are due partly to *constructio ad sensum* and *variatio structurae*. The solecisms in the Apocalypse are chiefly cases of anacolutha. . . . Moulton denies that the Apocalypse has any Hebraisms. That is possibly going too far the other way, for the book is saturated with the apocalyptic images and phrases of Ezekiel and Daniel

5) Blass-Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, sixth edition (1931), 83, 84.

6) R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, I, 142-152.

7) Moulton and Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, II, 484 f.

8) A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, fourth edition (1923), 135-36; 413-16.

and is very much like the other Jewish apocalypses. It is not so much particular Hebraisms that meet us in the Apocalypse as the flavor of the LXX, whose words are interwoven in the text at every turn."

Radermacher⁹⁾ observes: "No New Testament writer regards himself sufficiently free to despise what is grammatically permissible. Revelation only is an exception, inasmuch as it totally disregards all rules of concord ("indem sie sich ueber alle Regeln der Kongruenz einfach hinwegsetzt"). Following a brief discussion of Rev. 1: 4, 5, in which he points out syntactical peculiarities in these two verses, Radermacher says, "This style is not bound to grammatical rules. But its hardness is of a monumental character, and it is not proper to compare with it crudities in the papyri letters" ("seine Starrheit ist monumental, und es empfiehlt sich nicht, damit die Stuempereien der Papyrusbriefe zu vergleichen").

Rohr¹⁰⁾ concludes, "Revelation speaks the common language of the first century with a pronounced touch of the later *Koine*. . . . The style reflects here and there a certain degree of poverty but also a richness which is capable of providing for every situation and mood the corresponding form, and acquaintance with grammatical rules coupled with a sovereign contempt of these rules. One or the other of the stylistic peculiarities appears here and there in contemporary profane literature, but never with such deliberate logic. Its peculiarity derives not only from the intimate familiarity of the author with the Prophets, for he has taken over from them not only his imagery, but also his mode of expression. And, finally, his native tongue was, like theirs, the Hebrew. Some peculiarities may be explained only as Hebraisms." Lohr then lists ten peculiarities which he regards as Semitisms. Yet, so Lohr believes, the seer was preserved from a one-sided Hebraizing tendency because of the realistic character of his subject matter. In the Gospel we have calm reflection, but in Revelation the excitation and ecstasy of the seer. John continues in this mood, and, as a result of it, his native Aramaic idiom bursts the shackles of his acquired Greek idiom" ("Im Evangelium spricht die ruhige Ueberlegung, in der Apokalypse zittert die Erregung der Ekstase des Sehers und seiner Erschuetterung durch das Geschaute nach, und in dieser Erregung sprengt das heimisch aramaeische Idiom die Regeln des Angelernten, des Griechischen").

From the above analyses of the style and language of Revelation it is evident that investigators are by no means in entire agreement, the chief contention being the relation of the language of

9) Ludwig Radermacher, *Neutestamentliche Grammatik*, 223.

10) Ignaz Rohr, *Der Hebraeerbrief und die Geheime Offenbarung des heiligen Johannes*, 67—69.

Revelation to a Semitic idiom. Though Charles and Howard have made careful studies in this field, an exhaustive investigation is still a desideratum. The solution of the problem seems to lie in further researches in the LXX, and, if it were to be discovered, in Aramaic literature of the two centuries before the Christian era.

Since I undertook this study with the purpose of gaining a general overview of the syntactical peculiarities in Revelation, I did not devote very much effort to a study of Semitisms in Revelation. In this paper I am merely classifying and illustrating various kinds of syntactical irregularities in Revelation, commenting on some, and calling attention here and there to parallels in papyri from the Hellenistic and the early Christian period. Where I believed an irregularity to be due to Semitic influence, I noted it.

In presenting my findings I am not following a pattern set by one or more grammarians, one reason being that there still exists some uncertainty as to what constitutes syntax. Another reason is that the varieties of syntactical irregularities in Revelation seem to defy all attempts at classification. I have studiously avoided commenting on cases commonly classified by Germans under "Lautlehre" and "Wortlehre."

I. Violations of concord (case, gender, number, person).

Repeatedly we find in Revelation an apposition in the nominative in place of an oblique case. Such irregularities appear also here and there in other New Testament books, but only rarely.¹¹⁾

The participle, in particular, violates accepted standards. "Its range in later times becomes more and more uncertain, and the masculine nominative singular gains complete ascendancy. In modern Greek the participle has only one indeclinable form in -ντας (nom)."¹²⁾

Examples:

- 1:5: ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός
 2:20: τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφητῆν
 3:12: τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἡ καταβαίνουσα
 7:9: ὄχλος . . . ἐστῶτες περιβεβλημένους
 8:9: τὸ τρίτον τῶν πλοίων διεφθάρησαν
 9:12: ἔρχεται ἔτι δύο Οὐαὶ (previously ἡ Οὐαὶ, therefore not neuter)
 9:14: λέγουσα τῷ ἔκτῳ ἀγγέλῳ ὃ ἔχων τὴν σάλπαγγα
 11:4: αἱ δύο λυχνίαι αἱ . . . ἐστῶτες
 12:5: ἄρσεν (in apposition to preceding ἰόν)
 14:12: ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ θεοῦ
 14:19: εἰς τὴν ληνὸν . . . τὸν μέγαν
 21:9: τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας τῶν γεμόντων (in place of τὰς γεμούσας)

11) Blass-Debrunner, *op. cit.*, 137, 3.

12) Radermacher, *op. cit.*, 86 ff.; Albert Thumb, *Die Griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus*, 131.

Charles regards some of the cases cited as Semitisms, since in Hebrew a noun or phrase standing in apposition remains unchanged. This rule applies, according to Charles, especially to the Hebrew participle if this is preceded by the article (cf. above 2:20; 3:12; 9:14; 14:12). If the article is absent, the author follows, so Charles believes, the Greek idiom, as in the following examples:

- 7:2: καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἀναβαίνοντα . . . ἔχοντα σφραγίδα θεοῦ ζῶντος
 9:17: εἶδον τοὺς ἔκτους ἐν τῇ ὁράσει καὶ τοὺς καθήμενους ἐπ' αὐτῶν ἔχοντας θώρακας πυρίνους
 13:1: εἶδον . . . θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἔχον κέρατα δέκα
 14:6: εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον . . . ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον
 15:2: εἶδον ὡς θάλασσαν ὑάλινην . . . καὶ τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου . . . ἐστῶτας . . . ἔχοντας
 18:1: εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον . . . ἔχοντα ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην
 20:1: εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον . . . ἔχοντα τὴν κλεῖν

With respect to the participle ἔχων, which in some instances does not follow the rule just given, Charles comments "ἔχων follows an accusative though it is not preceded by the article in 5:6: ἀρνίον ἐστηκός . . . ἔχων (see also 14:14). In 5:6 it seems corrupt for ἔχων. In 14:14 ἔχων is correct and καθήμενον ὅμοιον, which precedes, is a slip for the nominative" (! ?).

Whether Charles is right in saying that some violations of concord in Revelation are due to the Hebrew idiom, is still debatable. The fact of the matter is that one finds this irregularity very often in the papyri.¹³⁾

From Mayser I cite the following:

- Zen. pap. 59443, 12: ἀπεστάλακαί σοι γυναῖκα φέρων σοι τὴν ἐπιστολήν
 Zen. pap. 59665: 8: ταινίαν μέλαιναν ἔχων πλάτος δακτύλων δύο
 Zen. pap. 59665, 10: καὶ κόχλον ναυτικὸν ἔχων πλάτος δακτύλων δέκα
 UPZ 78: 12: ἦκουσα Τοῦθ' ἔλεγον
 UPZ 78, 25: ἐμὲ δὲ ἄφρες, εἰδού (-'ιδού), πολίας ἔχων

Similar examples may be found in Kapsomenakis.¹⁴⁾

I note the following:

- Flor I 50, 66: σὺν τοῖς ἐνοῦσι φοῖνιξι καὶ φουτοῖς πᾶσι καὶ συζαμινέων ὄντων
 PSI VIII 903, 19: τῆς ἐνεστῶτος ἡμέρας

Deserving special comment are the participles λέγων and λέγοντες. These forms are obviously renderings of the Hebrew דַּבֵּר

13) Cf. Moulton, *op. cit.*, 90; Radermacher, *op. cit.*, 106 f.; Blass-Debrunner, *op. cit.*, § 136, 1; Edwin Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemaeerzeit*, II, 3, p. 192 ff. For examples from later Greek see A. N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, § 1181 b.

14) Stylianos G. Kapsomenakis, *Voruntersuchungen zu einer Grammatik der Papyri der nachchristlichen Zeit*, 40 f.

and occur in the LXX (cf. Gen. 15:1; 22:20; 38:13; 45:16; 48:20, etc.). Thus used, they are indeclinable. There is reason to suppose that these forms were perhaps among the first to violate concord and thus set a pattern for other participles which in course of time became indeclinable. Cf. UPZ 78, 12: ἤκουσα Τοῦθ' ἔλεγον.

A few examples from Revelation are the following:

4:1: ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἦν ἤκουσα ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλοῦσης μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων

11:15: καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ μεγάλαὶ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγοντες

14:6, 7: εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον . . . λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ

II. The resumptive pronoun.

Frequently the construction in Revelation is disturbed by the addition of a personal pronoun (occasionally an adverb of place) after a relative or participial clause.¹⁵⁾

Charles regards this a Semitism, commenting, "The pronoun is pleonastic in Greek, though not in Hebrew, where, since the pronoun is uninflected, it supplies the inflection needed." Examples in New Testament books other than Revelation are: Mark 1:7; 7:25; John 1:27; Acts 15:17. Debrunner recognized the relation of this peculiarity to the Hebrew $\text{וְ} . . . \text{וְ} . . .$ and the Aramaic $\text{וְ} \text{וְ}$, but he also attributes this redundant use of the pronoun to carelessness of speech not unknown in classical Greek and very common in the Hellenistic period.

Examples from Revelation are:

3:8: δέδωκα . . . θύραν . . . , ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλείσαι αὐτήν

6:4: καὶ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐδόθη αὐτῷ λαβεῖν τὴν εἰρήνην

7:2: οἷς ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἀδικῆσαι τὴν γῆν

7:9: ἰδοὺ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο

12:6: ὅπου ἔχει ἐκεῖ τόπον (Heb. $\text{וְ} . . . \text{וְ} . . .$)

13:8: οὐ οὐ γέγραττά τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς

13:12: οὐ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ

17:9: αἱ ἑπτὰ κεφαλαὶ ἑπτὰ ὄρη εἰσὶν, ὅπου ἡ γυνὴ κάθηται ἐπ' αὐτῶν

20:8: ὢν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης

Here must be added a word about the frequent use of the *hanging nominative* in Revelation. Though this construction appears here and there in New Testament books other than Revelation, as in Matt. 12:36 and Luke 12:10, and though it is a frequent phenomenon in classical and especially in Hellenistic Greek,¹⁶⁾ Charles believes that its frequency in Revelation is due to the LXX, which borrowed it from the Hebrew. It should be noted, however, that the author of Revelation seems fully aware of this construc-

15) Radermacher, *op. cit.*, 217; Moulton-Howard, *op. cit.*, 423 f.

16) Radermacher, *op. cit.*, 21 f.

tion, since he occasionally avoids it where one would expect him to employ it (cf. 2:7, 17). A few instances of the hanging nominative in Revelation are:

2:26: ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν . . . δώσω αὐτῷ

3:12: ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον

3:21: ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ

III. *The resolution of the participle in one of the oblique cases, 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 by an infinitive respectively.*

Charles regards this a Hebrew idiom and says that it cannot be explained from the vernacular Greek. He refers to Driver, *Hebrew Tenses* (163). The idiom occurs in the LXX, as in Gen. 27:33; Is. 14:17; Is. 5:8, 23; Ezek. 22:3, and elsewhere. Examples in New Testament books other than Revelation are: 2 John 2 and Col. 1:26. Howard has adopted Charles' explanation.¹⁷⁾

Examples in Revelation are:

1:5, 6: τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λύσαντι ἡμᾶς . . . καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν

1:17, 18: ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος καὶ ὁ ζῶν καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς (some scholars, so Charles says, have misrepresented this, and others, like Wellhausen, have excised τὸ ζῶν). The passage is translated by Charles, "Fear not: I am the first and the last and He that liveth and was dead."

2:2: καὶ ἐπείρασας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν

2:9: οἶδα . . . τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτούς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ

2:20: ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ ἣ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἐμοὺς δούλους

2:23: ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἔραυνῶν . . . καὶ δώσω

3:9: διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται

7:14: οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης καὶ ἔπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἔλευκαναν αὐτάς . . .

14:2, 3: ἡ φωνὴ ἦν ἠκουσα ὡς καθαρωδῶν καθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς καθάραις αὐτῶν καὶ ἄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν

15:2, 3: καὶ εἶδον . . . τοὺς νικῶντας . . . ἐστῶτας . . . ἔχοντας . . . καὶ ἄδουσιν τὴν ᾠδὴν Μωϋσέως . . .

20:4: πεπελεκισμένον . . . καὶ οἴτινες οὐ προσεκύνησαν (Charles believes, though he has no textual evidence, that the οἴτινες is a late insertion).

17) Moulton-Howard, *op. cit.*, 429.

As an example of the resolution of an infinitive into a finite verb I append the following:

13:15: και ἐδόθη αὐτῇ δοῦναι . . . και ποιήση

IV. *The joining of different tenses and moods without any clear reason for the change; the partiality for the perfect tense, especially in the case of εἰρηκα (7:14; 19:3) and εἰληφα (2:28; 3:3; 5:7; 8:5; 11:17).¹⁸⁾*

That there are traces in the New Testament of the late vernacular historical perfect is admitted by Robertson¹⁹⁾ and by Debrunner.²⁰⁾

The latter refers to 5:7 (ἦλθεν και εἰληφεν) and 8:5 (εἰληφεν . . . και ἐγέμισεν); also to 7:14, where some texts have εἶπον. Other examples from Revelation are:

2:2f.: ἐπειρασας . . . ἔχεις . . . ἐβάστασας . . . κεκοπίακας

3:9: ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἤξουσιν και προσκυνήσουσιν . . . και γινῶσιν

9:5: ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μη ἀποκτείνουσιν αὐτούς, ἀλλ' ἵνα βασανισθῆσονται

21:24 ff.: περιπατήσουσιν . . . φέρουσιν . . . οὐ μη κλεισθῶσιν . . . οἴσουσιν . . . οὐ μη εἰσέλθῃ

V. *The bold substantivizing of such words as participles, interjections, and letters of the alphabet.*

Examples:

1:4 ἀπὸ ὃ ὦν και ὃ ἦν και ὃ ἐρχόμενος

1:8: ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα και τὸ ὦ

9:12 and 11:14: ἡ οὐαί ἡ μία, ἡ οὐαί ἡ δευτέρα, ἡ οὐαί ἡ τρίτη

Of special interest is 1:4. The name of God, ὃ ὦν και ὃ ἦν και ὃ ἐρχόμενος (arranged chronologically in 4:8: ὃ ἦν και ὃ ὦν και ὃ ἐρχόμενος) rests according to Debrunner²¹⁾ and Howard²²⁾ on the current exegesis of Ex. 3:14.²³⁾

The name of God is deliberately left in the nominative after ἀπὸ²⁴⁾ "in order to preserve the immutability and absoluteness of the divine name from declension."²⁵⁾

For a fuller discussion see an article by Debrunner in *Goett. Gel. Anz.*, 1926, 147 f.

18) Moulton, *Die Sprache des Neuen Testaments*, 225—31, where he discusses the problem with special reference to εἰληφα, εἰρηκα, and γέγονα.

19) *Op. cit.*, 898—902.

20) *Op. cit.*, § 343, 1.

21) *Op. cit.*, § 143 and p. 297 f.

22) *Op. cit.*, 154.

23) Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, III, 788; LXX ὃ ὦν = הוּא הוּא הוּא .

24) "An intentional *tour de force*," Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 9.

25) James Moffatt, quoted by Howard, *op. cit.*, 154.

On the other hand, proper names were frequently not declined in the Hellenistic period, not even after the prepositions *διά*, *εις*, *παρά*, *περί*, and *ὑπέρ*, as Mayser has convincingly demonstrated.²⁶⁾

VI. *The author of Revelation repeats the article or the preposition before every member of a series for, so it seems, no particular reason.*

Examples:

- 9:20: τὰ εἶδωλα τὰ χρυσᾶ καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα
 15:2: τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνης αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ
 16:13: ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ δράκοντος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου
 17:6: μεθύουσιν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν μαρτύρων Ἰησοῦ

VII. *The author is very fond of the instrumental dative preceded by ἐν. A few examples will suffice.*

- 2:16: ἐν ὄμοφαίᾳ
 2:27; 12:5; 19:15: ἐν ὀβάβδω
 14:2: ἐν ταῖς καθάραις
 16:8; 17:16: ἐν πυρὶ

VIII. *The writer of Revelation more so than any other New Testament author favors the transition in a final clause from the subjunctive to the future indicative. While, according to Radermacher (216), one finds such instances even in Plato and Herodotus, the usage of a future indicative after ἵνα and μή becomes a very common practice in the Koine.²⁷⁾*

Examples from Revelation:

- 3:9: ἵνα ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν
 6:4: καὶ ἵνα ἀλλήλους σφάζουσιν
 9:4: ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀδικήσουσιν
 9:20: ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν
 14:13: ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται

Note: The rich and varied use of *ἵνα* in Revelation (also in John's Gospel) requires special investigation. The subject is too large to be discussed here.

IX. *Peculiar constructions in Revelation which seem to rest on a Hebrew or Aramaic idiom.* Charles lists a substantial number of such constructions. I have selected only those which seemed convincing:

26) Mayser, *op. cit.*, II, 2, § 368, 8.

27) See also Debrunner, *op. cit.*, § 369.

a. 12:7: ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος. Charles translates this verse: "Michael and his angels had to fight with the dragon." Debrunner (§ 400) questions, on good authority, the genuineness of the τοῦ which precedes πολεμῆσαι and regards the nominative ὁ Μιχαὴλ a poetic license, which the writer employed in place of using the genitive or dative. On p. 315, however, Debrunner agrees with Charles and with Howard (448 f.) that the τοῦ πολεμῆσαι is a translation of the Hebrew imperative הָ followed by the infinitive. Charles and Howard both cite Hos. 9:13 (LXX). Howard also refers to Ps. 25:14; 1 Chron. 9:25; and Eccles. 3:15. He also quotes Guillemard (*Hebraisms in the Greek Testament*), who says, p. 3, in connection with Matt. 2:6: "An apt example of the practice almost universal in the LXX, of rendering הָ with infinitive, after neuter or passive verbs, by τοῦ with the infinitive; to the loss very often of all intelligibility or sense. . . . The translators appear to have concluded that a Greek idiom, which was the appropriate interpretation of the Hebrew idiom under certain conditions, was always to be employed as its equivalent and so have introduced into their version renderings which are otherwise inexplicable. And to this we owe, in great measure, the strange and startling instances of the τοῦ with infinitive, occasionally met with in the New Testament."²⁸⁾

One is inclined to agree with Charles and Howard, because of the few instances in Revelation of τοῦ with the infinitive the function of none is clearly established.²⁹⁾

b. 4:9, 10: ὅταν δώσουσιν τὰ ζῶα . . . πεσοῦνται οἱ εἰκοσι . . . πρεσβύτεροι . . . καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζῶντι . . . καὶ βαλοῦσιν τοὺς στεφάνους. . . . The future tenses must here be rendered by the present, for they represent the Hebrew imperfect in a frequentative sense.

c. 6:16: κρύψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ. . . . The ἀπὸ is the rendering for מִפְּנֵי. The entire phrase (it occurs also 12:14 and 20:11) is the rendering for יִחְבְּאוּ

d. 19:5: αἰνεῖτε τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν. Αἰνεῖτε with the dative in 19:5 is well established in the LXX. There it occurs with the dative for לְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ and לְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ

X. Other syntactical peculiarities:

1:13; 14:14: ὅμοιον ὕδιν (acc.). Debrunner regards this a solecism.³⁰⁾

28) Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

29) Radermacher, *op. cit.*, 189.

30) *Op. cit.*, § 182, 4 note.

Ordinarily the writer of Revelation uses the dative with *δμοιος*, as in 2:18.

3:17: οὐδὲν χρεῖαν ἔχω. Though Debrunner regards the construction possible, he does not think it probable.³¹⁾

Some important readings have οὐδενός.

8:4: ἀνέβη ὁ καινός ταῖς προσευχαῖς. Perhaps the dative is one of interest, though other interpretations are suggested.³²⁾

13:3: ἐθαύμασθη ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου. Debrunner reconstructs this difficult reading as follows: ἐθαύμασαν ἐπὶ τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ ἐπορεύθη ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ (§ 196). Howard regards it a Semitism (476).

8:13: οὐαὶ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

12:12: οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν. Οὐαὶ with the accusative is no doubt the true reading in 8:13 and 12:12. Debrunner suggests its combination with the accusative or with the dative (Matt. 11:21) may be analogous to the Latin *vae me* or *vae mihi* (§ 190, 2).

16:10: ἐμασῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνου. The *ἐκ* used in phrases such as this to express the cause by which an act is aided, sustained, or effected is exceedingly common in Revelation as well as in John's Gospel and in the First Epistle of John.³³⁾

This concludes this brief examination of some of the peculiarities of style in Revelation. The examination is in no sense a criticism. Who are we imperfect mortals to find fault with the language of any Biblical writer? What impresses us rather is that when John, under the Spirit's guidance, attempted to put in writing the grand visions revealed to him, he felt compelled here and there to burst the shackles of accepted form, to give priority to his Aramaic idiom, to draw on the translation Greek of the LXX, and in other ways, like a great poet, allow himself a large measure of freedom of speech, which one may admire but not emulate. Revelation is the striking example in the New Testament of the truth that while the Holy Spirit ordinarily had the sacred writers comply with accepted regularities of style, He did not make them mechanical slaves of such regularities. These very stylistic peculiarities do not detract from, but rather enhance, the value of Revelation.

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31) *Op. cit.*, § 154.

32) Debrunner, *op. cit.*, § 188, 1.

33) Cf. Debrunner, *op. cit.*, § 212.