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THE LITERARY FORMS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Even in a first approach to the book of Revelation, the reader wishing to grasp its sense will encounter an initial obstacle in the form of the work's textual heterogeneity. Indeed, unlike other contemporary books, whether of the New Testament or the Pseudepigrapha, or classical Greek and Latin works, the book of Revelation appears at first to be an amalgam of texts.

Such diversity makes understanding its message all the more difficult. In light of this, the reader is left with two options: limiting oneself to the idea that the book is a cryptic text and partially closed to the modern reader; or accepting the challenge it poses and attempting to discover that which might confer unity on this variegated melange of literary forms, unconnected as they may seem. The latter is undoubtedly the best course, as it is only in this way that the reader can place themselves in a position to read the work in depth and thereby understand its sense.

1.1 The Book of Revelation: A Multi-form Text

At the very beginning, the reader is presented with an extensive clausal section (Rev 1.1–2), followed by a 'makarism', or beatitude (Rev 1.3), which situates it within the work as a whole. After this comes a series of statements, with subject matter distinct from the preceding verses, and which, in addition, are listed with no apparent organizing principle (Rev 1.4–8). The reader then finds a long section, spanning nearly the entire length of the work (Rev 1.9–22.5), made up of statements articulated according to what John saw and heard. Finally, the reader distinguishes, together with indicators of a thematic continuity, an alternation of short phrases introduced by *verba dicendi* (Rev 22.6–21) that suggest an interchange of voices and interrupt the temporal succession that has been maintained up to this point.

1.1.1 Rev 1.1–3: A Possible Prologue?

In the opening clausal section, the voice of the narrator is hidden by the use of the third-person singular (Rev 1.1–2). Subsequently, this is broken *ex abrupto* by a makarism addressed to a specific audience of listeners (Rev 1.3).

The initial pericope (Rev 1.1–2) is comprised by a short nominal syntagma, accompanied by a series of relative and infinitive clauses that fill out its meaning. The literary form chosen seems to be one that is declarative in nature and allows the narrator gradually to provide the listener/reader with information about the characteristics of the work before them.

First, both the subject of the text and its literary genre are made very clear: Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ‘The Revelation of Jesus Christ’ (Rev 1.1). The three Greek words synthesize the content of the text and the listener/reader obtains from them enough data to frame the entire work, as they communicate that:

- a) The content of the book will be something previously unknown to them, as they know that ἀποκάλυψις proceeds from ἀποκαλύπτω, ‘removing the veil’; that is to say, ‘revealing something hidden to someone else’.¹ At the same time, the term ἀποκάλυψις connects the work with a specific type of literature, which had already been circulating for some time and which was presented as revelatory: a genre that would come to be known as ‘apocalyptic literature’.
- b) It is Jesus who unveils the mystery, as confirmed by the subjective genitive employed and the following relative clause: ἦν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός, ‘which God communicated to him’ (Rev 1.1b).
- c) The work has a sacred character, as the revelation itself is attributed to Jesus, also referred to as Χριστός, a title that identifies him as the Messiah.

Immediately after this, through more relative clauses, the characteristics of the revelation are enumerated:

- a) Its divine origin: ἦν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός, ‘which God communicated to him’ (Rev 1.1b).

¹ *DGENT* 3, col. 868, s.v. ἀποκαλύπτω.

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- b) Its audience: τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ, ‘to his servants’ (Rev 1.1b), i.e., those who constituted the early Christian communities.²
- c) Its contents: events that will take place in the near future, ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, ‘which must soon come to pass’ (Rev 1.1b), making it a revelation that is completely new and distinct from New Testament texts such as Rom 16.25 or 1 Cor 2.7–8, which speak of the wisdom of God that has always existed.
- d) Its mediators: an angel of God and John himself, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ, ‘and made it known by sending it through his angel to his servant, John’ (Rev 1.1c).
- e) His qualifications as a witness, ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅσα εἶδεν, ‘who has given testimony to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all that he saw’ (Rev 1.2).

It is precisely the verbal lexeme³ μαρτυρέω that implies a first-hand witness, and it is therefore significant that the text specifies that John is witness not only to what he hears, τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, but also to what he sees, ὅσα εἶδεν (Rev 1.2).

The information given to the listener/reader in Rev 1.1–2 is so specific and orientative that it may be considered a small map of the text. Indeed, the author, by means of this varied declarative passage, is offering to the audience a series of guidelines for understanding the work itself.

Next, the makarism suddenly appears, μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες, ‘blessed is the one who reads aloud and the ones who hear . . .’ (Rev 1.3), concluding with the brief but urgent phrase ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς,

² It seems unnecessary to interpret this term beyond its meaning of δούλος, ‘servant, slave’, as some exegetical scholars have done. For example, ‘Christian prophets’ has been proposed by H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1906, rep. 1999), p. 2; and R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John: Introduction, Notes and Indices, also the Greek Text and English Translation*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920), p. 6. However, the term δούλος appears 14 times in 13 different verses of the book of Revelation, and in these verses δούλος does not always refer to the prophets. In fact, δούλος is also used to indicate the opposite of free men (Rev 6.15; 13.16; 19.18), and in reference to Moses (Rev 15.3), and to John himself (Rev 1.1). What is more, when the author speaks of the prophets, he adds to δούλος the term προφητῆς, as in Rev 10.7 or 11.18.

³ For the definition of ‘lexeme’, I take as a reference that of Juan Mateos in *Método de análisis semántico* (Córdoba: El Almendro, 1989), p. 6: ‘any lexical unit with an independent nucleus of meaning’.

‘for the time is near’. The presence of the makarism surprises the reader because, although the expression may seem familiar – because of its similarity to other sayings of Jesus⁴ – it disrupts the textual cohesion that has been maintained up to this point. The text here changes from a series of statements listing the characteristics of the revelation (Rev 1.1–2) to an apostrophe, charged with a strong sense of immediacy, in which the narrator addresses a new set of interlocutors: ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες, ‘the one who reads aloud and the ones who hear’ (Rev 1.3).

In classical Greek, the verbal lexeme ἀναγινώσκω has three accepted meanings: ‘to know with certainty’, ‘to read’, and ‘to induce (an action)’.⁵ Nevertheless, only one of these meanings is used in the NT: ‘to read’,⁶ even though the word appears 32 times in 29 different verses. Once analyzed, it can be observed that ἀναγινώσκω is used on 21 occasions to refer to the reading of the OT,⁷ on nine occasions to the letters,⁸ and on one occasion (John 19.20), to the inscription on the cross of Jesus. From these contexts, one may deduce that the reading to which this verbal lexeme refers is that which is done aloud rather than silently; and, indeed, ancient texts were usually read audibly. Significant in this regard is the episode in which Philip addresses an Ethiopian when he hears him reading aloud from the book of Isaiah (Acts 8.28–30). In the NT, ἀναγινώσκω means ‘to interpret a written text by translating into sounds’;⁹ that is, ‘to read aloud’, and so it is natural that it is used in the New Testament corpus to allude to public readings in the synagogues (Luke 4.16; Heb 13.27) or in the meeting places of the early Christian communities (1 Thess 5.27; 1 Tim 4.13).

From this we can conclude that when the book’s opening makarism is addressed to ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, it refers not to an indeterminate reader, but rather to the one charged with reading the text aloud to the community and, consequently, οἱ ἀκούοντες refers to those who listen to him. Thus, the interlocutors of the makarism are both he who presides over the community and its constituents, i.e., the Christians who are assembled together. As pointed out by M. Eugene Boring and Ugo Vanni,¹⁰ it is as if

⁴ Aune, *Revelation 1*, p. 20.

⁵ *DGE* 2, p. 228–9, s.v. ἀναγινώσκω; *GI*, p. 165, s.v. ἀναγινώσκω.

⁶ *DGENT* 2, col. 452, s.v. ἀναγινώσκω.

⁷ Examples include: Matt 12.3; Luke 4.16; Acts 8.28; 2 Cor 3.15.

⁸ This is the case for: Acts 15.31; 2 Cor 1.13; Eph 3.4; 1 Thess 5.27; Col 4.16(3).

⁹ *DGENT* 2, col. 452, s.v. ἀναγινώσκω.

¹⁰ M. E. Boring, *Revelation: Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1989), p. 67; U. Vanni, ‘Liturgical Dialogue as a Literary Form in the Book of Revelation’, *NTS* 37 (1991), 348.

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the author of the book knew that the text would be read in a particular setting, within a community, as was done with the letters of Paul (Col 4.16; 1 Thess 5.27), and sought to differentiate it from those Jewish apocalyptic writings that were usually read in private.¹¹

Together with the presence of these new interlocutors, the listener/reader also perceives the temporal shift that has taken place. The past tense that was maintained in Rev 1.1–2 is abandoned, and the present, an immediate present, invades the makarism completely through the use of participial forms (ἀναγινώσκων, ἀκούοντες, τηροῦντες) and the eloquent nominal clause ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς. The latter confers to the pericope an inarguable sense of imminence and urgency, and therefore of present time.

With this change in discourse, the listener/reader discovers a new guideline for reading the work. The generic οἱ δοῦλοι (Rev 1.1) is transformed in Rev 1.3 into ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες, the community that is now listening to the content of the book. This ‘now’, given the reiterated use of present participles (ἀναγινώσκων, ἀκούοντες, τηροῦντες) and a total absence of personal forms, endows the makarism with a timeliness that in a sense transcends the text itself; it may even be said that this constitutes a performative act of language.¹² It is thus logical that the listener/reader, upon hearing it, should feel that they are being addressed directly, given that each reader may identify themselves with ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, ‘the one who reads aloud’, or with οἱ ἀκούοντες, ‘the ones who hear’ (Rev 1.3). It is as though the implicit readership, to whom the author has directed the work, has been widened; the reader is no longer identified exclusively with those early Christians who assembled together in the past, but also with the present-day readers of the text.

The formal discontinuity between Rev 1.1–2 and 1.3, then, is quite marked. In spite of this, however, both pericopes serve the same function within the work; i.e., they provide the listener/reader with guidelines for

¹¹ Aune, *Revelation 1*, p. 21.

¹² John L. Austin establishes three conditions necessary for an act to be performative: a) the acceptance of the statement by the community; b) its complete and correct diction; c) its reception in the appropriate circumstances and by the appropriate persons; see J. L. Austin, *Palabras y acciones. Cómo hacer cosas con palabras*, compiled by J. O. Urmson, trans. G. R. Carrio and E. A. Rabossi (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1971), pp. 66–80. All three of these requirements are met in Rev 1.3; makarisms are frequent in both the OT (1 Kings 10.8; Ps 1.1) and the NT (Matt 5.3–11), from which it can be deduced that they were accepted by the society; they begin with the adjectival lexeme μακάριος, as in Rev 1.3, and were pronounced by figures of authority; in the case of the book of Revelation, this is John, the mediator of the revelation.

reading. This common purpose allows us to conclude that Rev 1.1–3, its diversity notwithstanding, has a unity within the totality of the book. Furthermore, its function, to provide the listener/reader with guidelines for understanding the work, is the same as that of the prologue of any work,¹³ and so it may be argued that Rev 1.1–3 in fact constitutes the prologue to the book of Revelation.¹⁴

What is more, Rev 1.1–3 does indeed bring together some of the other requirements of a good prologue. These include: establishing the novelty or degree of originality of the text, as the pericope indicates that the work is a new revelation; the importance or repercussions of the work in terms of its documentary, intellectual, or religious use (Rev 1.1–3 states expressly that blessedness will come to whoever reads it); the unity that Rev 1.1–3 reflects, by its avowal that what the book contains is a unique revelation; and its truthfulness,¹⁵ that is to say, the effort taken to show that the text is true, as in the opening expression Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, by which Jesus is presented as the author of the revelation, and John as its visual and auditory witness.

1.1.2 Rev 1.4–8: From Textual Amalgam to Initial Liturgical Dialogue

After the prologue, the listener/reader expects the revelation to begin, above all, given the sense of urgency transmitted by the makarism. However, what they find in place of this is a series of literary units that are very different from each other (at least at first glance): units that lack a temporal or causal nexus and whose subject matter is somewhat different from that of the prologue (Rev 1.1–3).

The *incipit*,¹⁶ Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ‘John to the seven churches of Asia’ (Rev 1.4a), in itself constitutes a novelty. For the first time, an individual voice, i.e., John’s, is identified. Along with

¹³ G. Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), pp. 7–8.

¹⁴ See: *NBE, JB, B-UNAV*, Rev 1.1.

¹⁵ Genette, *Seuils*, pp. 202–10, 184–5, 186–192. Genette refers to this quality as *véridicité*, a term that does not correspond exactly either to ‘veracity’ or to ‘credibility’. I have chosen to use here the approximation ‘truthfulness’, which I believe is closer to the French author’s meaning.

¹⁶ The *incipit* is the first phrase of the text that makes the narrator’s intention known and functions as a type of reading protocol by providing information to the reader; see Marguerat and Bourquin, *Per leggere, Glossario*, pp. 129, 175, s.v. *incipit*.

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this, further new addressees of the text are mentioned: the seven churches of Asia.

The opening salutation continues (Rev 1.4b–5) and is extended by means of a triple ἀπό. The preposition imposes homogeneity on the pericope, at the same time that this anomalous use demands attention from the listener/reader:

^{4b} χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ^{4c} ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἦν καὶ τοῦ ἐρχόμενου ^{4d} καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ ^{5a} καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ μάρτυρος, τοῦ πιστοῦ, ^{5b} ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν ^{5c} καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς (Rev 1.4b–5).

^{4b} Grace and peace to you ^{4c} from the One who is, who was, and who is to come, ^{4d} and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and ^{5a} from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, ^{5b} firstborn from among the dead ^{5c} and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Both the *incipit* and the salutation bear a great similarity to the way in which NT letters usually begin.¹⁷ They include the name of the author of the text, Ἰωάννης, ‘John’; its addressees, ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ‘the seven churches of Asia’; and a phrase that corresponds strictly to the initial salutation, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ . . . , ‘grace and peace from . . .’.¹⁸ This type of opening recalls the *praescriptio* common to the epistolary genre, which consists of three elements: a) the *superscriptio*, the name of the sender, in the nominative case; b) the *adscriptio*, the recipients in dative; and c) the *salutatio*.¹⁹ Nor is it surprising that the author of the book of Revelation has adopted this literary form to make his revelation known, as letters were one of the means through which the Apostles supported each other and strengthened the faith of the early Christian communities. It is logical, then, that he should use the

¹⁷ Rom 1.7; 1 Cor 1.3; 2 Cor 1.2; Gal 1.3; Eph 1.2; Phil 1.2; Col 1.2; 1 Thess 1.1; 2 Thess 1.2; 1 Tim 1.2; 2 Tim 1.2; Titus 1.4; Philem 3; 1 Pet 1.2; 2 Pet 1.2.

¹⁸ Although the second-person plural pronoun in Rev 1.4 has traditionally been translated into Latin and the Romance languages as masculine (see *NBE, NT-BOVER, B-UNAV, JB*), in the Spanish version of the present work I use the feminine, as the referent of this pronoun is feminine: αἱ ἐκκλησίαι.

¹⁹ J. W. Bowman, *The Drama of the Book of Revelation: An Account of the Book with a New Translation in the Language of Today* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1955), p. 12; Roloff, *Revelation*, pp. 22–3; Aune, *Revelation 1*, p. 26; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge – Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1999), p. 186; A. Yarbro Collins, ‘Revelation, Book of’, *ABD* 5, pp. 694–708.

epistolary genre to disseminate his text, defined as οἱ λόγοι τῆς προφητείας, ‘the words of the prophecy’ (Rev 1.3).

The *praescriptio* is followed by a doxology, ending with an ἀμήν, a formula pronounced by the community at the end of a prayer:²⁰

^{5d} Τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ,

^{6a} καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, ^{6b} αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων]: ἀμήν (Rev 1.5d–6).

^{5d} To him who loves us, who freed us from our sins by his blood
^{6a} and made us a royal lineage, priests to his God and Father,
^{6b} to him is the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Although doxologies also appear in the New Testament letters,²¹ this one presents certain distinguishing peculiarities. It begins with an unexpected dative, τῷ ἀγαπῶντι, which does not exist in any other doxology.²² It is also dominated by the use of the first-person plural pronoun, as opposed to the second-person plural found in the opening salutation.²³ Lastly, the opening dative, τῷ ἀγαπῶντι, reappears at the end of the doxology in the pronominal lexeme of the third-person singular, αὐτῷ.

Once the doxology has concluded, a new clausal section begins. It opens with the expression ἰδοῦ, addressing a clear appeal to an interlocutor who, in turn, responds with the affirmation ναί, ἀμήν. Literary unity, led by ἰδοῦ, is developed through the use of the third person, dominated by the future tenses ἔρχεται,²⁴ ὄψεται, κόπονται:

Ἰδοῦ ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, ^b καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς ^c καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, ^d καὶ κόπονται ἐπ’ αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς.

^e ναί, ἀμήν (Rev 1.7).

²⁰ This is the transcription of the Hebrew word יְבִשׁ, which in turn corresponds to the expression ἀληθῶς γένοιτο, found in LXX. According to David E. Aune, *Revelation 1*, p. 44, ἀμήν is one of the four elements of which doxologies are comprised.

²¹ See: Rom 16.26–27; Gal 1.5; Phil 4.20; 2 Tim 4.18; Heb 13.21; Jude 24–25.

²² Aune, *Revelation 1*, p. 46.

²³ U. Vanni, ‘Un esempio di dialogo liturgico in Ap 1,4–8’, *Bib 57* (1976), 459; ‘Liturgical Dialogue’, 350.

²⁴ The verb form ἔρχεται with a future value is frequent in New Testament Greek, especially in prophetic texts, see *ibid.*, note 8.

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Look! He is coming with the clouds,^b and every eye will see him,^c even those who pierced him;^d and all the peoples of the earth will wail for him.

^c Yes, Amen!

In terms of content, another change is also at work here, as the acclamation of Christ is abandoned and a prophetic oracle appears in its place.²⁵ Finally, however, the voice of God is heard in the first person, breaking unexpectedly into the text and introduced by a reporting verb:

Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ (Rev 1.8).

‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘the One who is, who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’

In synthesis, Rev 1.4–8 is made up of four distinct literary units: an initial salutation similar to that of a letter (Rev 1.4–5c); a doxology (Rev 1.5d–6); a prophetic oracle responded to with *vai* ἁμῶν (Rev 1.7); and, finally, a discourse in tagged direct speech (Rev 1.8).

The only nexus of union with the prologue in this amalgam of textual units is the *incipit*, in which the voice we hear is introduced as John’s, as not even the addressees of the revelation are consistent: these are now the seven churches. In any case, despite this diversity of literary units and their heterogeneous content, there is a strong sense of textual cohesion in Rev 1.4–8, achieved through co-referentiality, the repeated use of the connector *καί*, lexical cohesion, and the verb tenses employed.²⁶

Co-referentiality in Rev 1.4–8 is established by the use of personal pronouns, which both pervade the text and fight for attention. Thus, following the *incipit*, the pronominal lexeme is inserted into the pericope in the dative second-person plural, ὑμῶν (Rev 1.4b), a pronoun that has as referent αἱ ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαι, ‘the seven churches’ (Rev 1.4a), the reference here being anaphoric. This pronoun is then substituted by the first-person plural pronoun in the accusative and genitive, ἡμᾶς/ἡμῶν (Rev 1.5d[3], 6a), which has the same referent as the dative ὑμῶν (Rev 1.4b): the seven churches. In this way, a close link is created between Rev 1.4 and 1.5, as

²⁵ Vanni, ‘Un esempio di dialogo’, 455.

²⁶ M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan, ‘Dimensions of Discourse Analysis: Grammar’, in T. Van Dijk (ed.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, vol. 2 (London: Academic Press, 1985), p. 48.

both refer to the seven churches, which appear first as the addressees of the salutation and then as voices within the text itself.

Another recurring pronominal lexeme is that of the third-person singular αὐτός, whose referent is in most cases Jesus (Rev 1.5d, 6ab, 7bcd), and on one occasion God (Rev 1.4d).

Lastly, in the final section, there is the first-person singular pronoun. Ἐγώ, unlike the other pronominal lexemes, has a later referent, κύριος ὁ θεός, ‘the Lord God’, and is thus the only cataphoric reference.

Despite the wide range of pronouns used, their referents may be reduced to three: the seven churches, Jesus, and God. This gives strong cohesion to the text in terms of subject matter, as the three appear at significant moments of the pericope: the seven churches in the first part – the *incipit*, the opening salutation, and the doxology; Jesus throughout the entire section, except at the end, when the referent is God, who is also mentioned earlier in the opening salutation. Thus, it may be said that a reference to God both opens and closes the pericope.

The conjunction καί acts as a connector in Rev 1.4–8, appearing 16 times. Its function, like that of the rest of the connectors employed, is to indicate the relationship between discourse segments²⁷ and to specify how they are linked.²⁸

In effect, καί is used especially to coordinate elements, as occurs in: the opening salutation,²⁹ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη, ‘Grace and peace to you’; in the titles of God, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ‘the One who is, who was, and who is to come’; τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, ‘the Alpha and the Omega’; and in those of Christ, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς, ‘firstborn from among the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth’. However, the most notable function of καί is to establish unifying links, either additive or clarifying,³⁰ within each discourse unit. Thus, in the opening salutation, the triple ἀπό is united by two instances of καί, which have an additive value:

²⁷ M. M. Rivas Carmona, ‘El concepto de cohesión’, in G. Álvarez, *et al.* (eds.), *Comunicación y discurso* (Seville: Mergablum, 2003), p. 51.

²⁸ M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London: Longman, 1976), p. 227.

²⁹ LOUW and NIDA, 89.92, s.v. καί.

³⁰ M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd edn (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), pp. 323–30. LOUW and NIDA, 89.93, s.v. καί have also suggested this value for the conjunction καί.