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**End Time Days and Line Numbers:  
Stichometric Analysis of the Apocalypse of John**

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The Book of Revelation often works with numbers, especially to divide the last times. Stichometric analysis will show that there is a mysterious connection between the line numbers in the outline of the composition and the days of the end times described in it. For this purpose the corpus of the book is separated from the prologue and epilogue and then carefully structured. It seems sensible to distinguish between the seven letters to the churches, which have an auditory origin (chs. 2–3), and the detailed visions that follow – also seven (chs. 4–22). On the basis of the individual paragraphs, the exact number of lines must be determined. After an overview of elements of axial symmetry in the whole composition, the result of stichometry is analyzed for the entire book. At the end is a table summarizing content and stichometric results.

**1. Prologue and epilogue: 1:1-17a; 22:6-21**

It is undisputed that a short prologue and a short epilogue frame the corpus of Revelation. However, these are not uniformly delimited. Usually the entire vision of the calling (1:9-20) is counted as part of the prologue.<sup>1</sup> But then the cut lies in the middle of Christ's speech containing the commission to write and the dictation of the letters (1:17b–3:22), which is scenically unsatisfactory. Some therefore take the call section as beginning of the letter section and limit the prologue to 1:1-8.<sup>2</sup> Yet because the epilogue in 22:8 explicitly looks back to the call vision of 1:9-17, to auditory event and vision and genuflection, it accordingly should be counted as part of the prologue. Holtz for this reason makes the cut before 1:17, but then draws the genuflection into the letter section.<sup>3</sup> Scenically, however, 1:17a still belongs to the call vision from 1:9; the fact that the seer

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Giesen, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (RNT; Regensburg, 1997) 55; W. Klaiber, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (BotschaftNT; Göttingen, 2019) 15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Roloff, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (ZBK.NT 18; Zurich, 1984) 37.

<sup>3</sup> T. Holtz, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (NTD; Göttingen, 2008) 30.

John thereby becomes “as though dead” brings the scene to a conclusion, as similarly the half-hour silence in heaven in 8:1. If one takes 1:9-17a as a scene in itself, one recognizes a well thought out structure: three scenes (1:9, 12a, 17a) frame what John sees and hears (1:10-11, 12b-16). A brief narrative introduction (1:17b) is then followed in direct speech by the long dictation of the seven letters, introduced by the instruction to write (1:17c–3:22).

In this view, the transition from prologue to first main section is fluid on the one hand, but on the other marked by a clear cut, as required by the stichometric analysis. The prologue thus consists of three parts: the heading of the book (1:1-3), the epistolary proem (1:4-8), and the call vision (1:9-17a). The middle section in turn has three paragraphs, after the epistolary proem a doxology on Christ and the statement of the book’s theme, i.e. the announcement of Christ’s return with God’s authentication (1:4-5a, 5b-6, 7-8). These five paragraphs have together  $9 + (6 + 5 + 6) + 26 = 52 = 4 \times 13$  *stichoi*.<sup>4</sup> Exactly half of this is the length of the first two and the third part,  $26 = 2 \times 13$  *stichoi* each.

The epilogue is almost universally placed at 22:6. But Lohmeyer has it begin with 22:8; in his reconstruction he considers 22:6-7 to be a “nine-line stanza” and takes it as the conclusion to 21:5–22:5.<sup>5</sup> As at the beginning, there is also here “no clear caesura, the transition is flowing”.<sup>6</sup>

Section 22:6-21 refers back to the prologue many times. It has three parts with three or five mostly smaller paragraphs, which differ according to speaker or subject. The first part (22:6-9) is about the authentication of the book, that John reports by a voice from heaven (vv. 6-7) which proves to be Jesus’ voice (“Behold, I am coming soon”); he performs the genuflection before the angel who showed him the contents of the book (v. 8), but this is denied him by the voice from heaven (v. 9). The middle section (22:10-16), altogether Christ speaking (“I, Jesus”), contains in the first and fifth paragraphs the commission to publish the book (v. 10) in order to testify to its message for the churches (v. 16). The paragraph in the middle (vv. 12-13) announces that Jesus will soon come in judgment to repay everyone according to his work. It is framed by two paragraphs in which the righteous and the wicked are differentiated, as descriptions of their state (v. 11) and as a rule of judgment (vv. 14-15). The concluding section (22:17-21) contains in the middle of the three paragraphs the firm warning against any change in the wording of the book (vv. 18-19). Before and after

<sup>4</sup> Exact numbers:  $8:09 + 6:00 + 4:10 + 5:08 + 25:06 = 50:02$  *stichoi*; differing from UBS: no paragraph before 1:8, 12, 17a, paragraph before 1:17b.

<sup>5</sup> E. Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT, 2nd ed.; Tübingen, 1953) 177.

<sup>6</sup> Klaiber, *Offenbarung*, 286.

each, Jesus' coming is beseeched in several voices, first as a petition from "spirit and bride" and from the hearers, combined with the call to come to the living water (v. 17), and finally, after Jesus' affirmation of his imminent coming, as a solemn appeal from the author ("Amen, come Lord Jesus"), whereupon he concludes with the epistolary promise of grace (vv. 20-21).<sup>7</sup> According to this analysis, the three parts of the epilogue each show a concentric structure, as does the whole book, for instance, in that the epistolary beginning (1:4-5) finds its counterpart at the very end (22:21).

In terms of scope, the eleven paragraphs of the epilogue add up to  $(6 + 4 + 3) + (2 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 4) + (3 + 9 + 3) = 13 + 20 + 15 = 48$  or  $6 \times 8$  *stichoi*.<sup>8</sup> Together with the prologue this gives  $52 + 48 = 100$  *stichoi*. Behind these numbers is possibly an arithmetical peculiarity of the Fibonacci sequence: the square of one of its numbers, for example,  $5 \times 5 = 25$ , differs from the product of the next two pairs of numbers by  $\pm 1$ , i.e.  $3 \times 8 = 24$  and  $2 \times 13 = 26$ .<sup>9</sup> Prologue and epilogue each have twice as many *stichoi*, so  $52 + 48 = 2 \times 2 \times 13 + 2 \times 3 \times 8 = 4 \times 5 \times 5 = 100$ . To what extent the author was aware of this is another question.

## 2. Dictation of the seven epistles: 1:17b–4:1

The letters to the seven churches dictated to John are clearly delineated (2:1–3:22); they are to be assessed as seven paragraphs.<sup>10</sup> They are introduced, as we have seen (1:17b-20), by Jesus' self-introduction, by the command to write that at the same time defines the content of the book ("what you see and what is and what is to happen afterward") and by the identification of the seven lampstands and stars from the call vision with the seven churches and their "angels".

The epistles are followed by a verse (4:1) that might still belong to them as a counterpart to the introduction, for the seer expressly refers back to the "voice as of a trumpet" which he had heard at the beginning of his visions (1:10). The voice now wants to "show him what is to happen afterwards" and thus describes the content of the following visions in a literal, albeit abbreviated, repetition of the content summary of the introduction (1:19).

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<sup>7</sup> Deviating from UBS: additional paragraph before 22:9, 10, 11, 17, no paragraph before 22:21; total of 11 paragraphs instead of 8.

<sup>8</sup> Exact numbers:  $(5:11 + 3:05 + 2:14) + (2:00 + 3:05 + 3:08 + 5:04 + 3:06) + (2:13 + 8:04 + 2:08) = 12:00 + 17:08 + 13:10 = 43:03$  *stichoi*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. correspondingly:  $3 \times 3 = 9$ ,  $2 \times 5 = 10$ ,  $1 \times 8 = 8$ ; or  $8 \times 8 = 64$ ,  $5 \times 13 = 65$ ,  $3 \times 21 = 63$ .

<sup>10</sup> Deviating from UBS: no paragraph after the introductory formula "To the angel of the church in X write", i.e. no paragraph before 2:1b, 8b, 12b, 18b; 3:1b, 7b, 14b.

The seven letters have a size of  $19 + 13 + 20 + 30 + 19 + 26 + 25 = 152$ , including the two framing parts of  $11 + 152 + 5 = 168$  *stichoi*.<sup>11</sup> The sum is to be resolved as  $21 \times 8$ , that is, as the product of two Fibonacci numbers. This might suggest that these two numbers are also used as moduli elsewhere in the book. The introduction and the first three epistles together number  $63 = 3 \times 21$  *stichoi*, the other four and the conclusion  $105 = 5 \times 21$ . The first five epistles add up with the introduction to  $112 = 14 \times 8$  *stichoi*, the other two with the conclusion to  $56 = 7 \times 8$  – a ratio of 2:1.

This analysis presumes a minor text-critical change. In 2:13, the letter to Pergamum, the UBS text, based on Codices A C 2053, contains a difficult sentence construction: καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστός μου, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη παρ’ ὑμῖν (“... also in the days of Antipas, [who is] my faithful witness, who was killed among you”). True, Ἀντιπᾶς can also be understood as indeclinable and thus genitive.<sup>12</sup> But the nominative phrase that follows, which lacks syntactic connection, must then be resolved as an independent nominal clause. In most other codices the problem does not arise because ἡμέραις is followed by either αἷς or ἐν αἷς (046 or  $\aleph^a$  P, respectively, and many minuscules in each case), i.e. a relative clause (“in the days when Antipas was my faithful witness who ...”). The absence of αἷς is easily explained by *homoioteleuton*.<sup>13</sup> However, it is also possible to resolve the letter sequence ANTIPAS as an itacistic written verb form: ἀντίπας for ἀντεῖπας (“you contradicted”).<sup>14</sup> Of course, this does not change the syntactic difficulty, unless one considers (ἐν) αἷς to be original. With the additional syllable αἷς, the epistle 2:12-17 numbers exactly 19:01, rounded up to 20 *stichoi*.

### 3. The seven great visions: 4:2–22:5

What John sees as a vision in the further course of the Apocalypse is no longer as clearly divided. However, for a number of commentators there are again seven major parts. The delimitation may vary in detail, but the seven thematic focal points are the same in each case. The number seven for the seals, the trumpets,

<sup>11</sup> Exact numbers:  $10:04 + (18:10 + 12:10 + 19:01 + 29:10 + 18:14 + 25:02 + 24:03) + 4:02 = 162:11$  *stichoi*.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (corr. ed.; Stuttgart, 1975) 732.

<sup>13</sup> Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 25; cf. W. Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (KEK 16, 6th ed.; Göttingen, 1906) 212 n. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. M. Karrer, *Johannesoffenbarung I* (1:1–5:14) (EKK 14/1; Ostfildern, Göttingen, 2017) 309-313: deciding rather for the verb form or for a “non liquet” (312).

and the bowls of wrath serves for orientation, whereby the two latter are related to each other in single points. They are the content of the third and fifth visions and the clearest indication that we are dealing at least to some extent with a ring composition. In the following, the seven visions are each broken down separately, so that on the basis of the parts and paragraphs their respective *stichoi* number can be determined. Also to be discussed is how they can be delimited from each other and, if necessary, correlated to each other.

### 3.1 Heavenly throne room and book with seven seals: 4:2–5:14

John is allowed to look into heaven. In the first part of the first vision he describes the heavenly throne room (4:2-11) in three paragraphs: first (vv. 2-6a) the throne itself and around it the thrones of the 24 elders, then (vv. 6b-8) the four heavenly animal figures (lion, bull, man, eagle) and their constant praise of God, finally (vv. 9-11) the genuflection and the praise of God of the 24 elders. The second part (5:1-10) is about the book with the seven seals, also in three paragraphs: first (vv. 1-5) about the book “in the right hand of him who sat on the throne”, with the question of who can open it, then (vv. 6-7) about the Lamb taking the book out of his hand, and finally (vv. 8-10) about the praise of the Lamb, sung by the four animal figures and the 24 elders. The third part (5:11-14) consists of only one paragraph and reports the universal song of praise to the Lamb and the one on the throne.<sup>15</sup>

This results in a nicely rounded scene. Verse 4:1, which still has heaven in view from outside the door, does not belong to it yet. With the opening of the seals, reported from 6:1, a new context begins that leads far beyond heaven, so is a second vision. At the end, however, it leads back to the heavenly throne room (7:9-12), which is why some count the two visions as one.<sup>16</sup>

The length of the three parts with the seven paragraphs is together  $(14 + 12 + 11) + (14 + 6 + 12) + 15 = 37 + 32 + 15 = 84$  *stichoi*.<sup>17</sup> The sum is to be resolved as  $4 \times 21$ , half as large as the letter section, by the way also with the exact numbers.<sup>18</sup> This is hardly a coincidence. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the middle part is in the ratio  $4 \times 8 / 4 \times 13$  to the other two, that is, in a Fibonacci relation.

Here, too, a text-critical change is presupposed. In 5:6 UBS has placed the third ἐπτόα in square brackets, “thus indicating doubt whether it belongs in the

<sup>15</sup> Different from UBS: additional paragraph before 4:2, 9; 5:8.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Lohse, *Offenbarung*, 36; U.B. Müller, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (ÖTK 19; Gütersloh, 1984) 139; Giesen, *Offenbarung*, 145.

<sup>17</sup> Exact numbers:  $(13:14 + 11:06 + 10:10) + (13:08 + 6:01 + 11:02) + 14:03 = 80:14$  *stichoi*.

<sup>18</sup> Cf.  $2 \times 80:14 = 161:13$ , the difference from 162:11 is 13 syllables, less than 1 *stichos*.

text”.<sup>19</sup> No decision seems possible either on the basis of external attestation (P<sup>24</sup> & 046 etc for ἐπτὰ, A P<sup>vid</sup> etc against) or on the derivability of the variants. We opt for deletion on the basis of stichometry. Paragraph 5:6-7 has 6:01 *stichoi* without the two syllables, which should be rounded down to 6 *stichoi* as an exception. Otherwise, one would have to do without the paragraph before 5:8 and would then also come to 32 *stichoi* for 5:1-10.

### 3.2 *Opening of the seven seals: 6:1–8:1*

The second vision has a unified framework. The Lamb opens the seven seals of the book one after the other, setting the apocalyptic events in motion. However, they are differently weighted. The first five seals are reported relatively briefly, but the events after the opening of the sixth seal are reported in great detail.

This suggests taking the five paragraphs of the first five seals together as a first part (6:1-11). First, each of the four apocalyptic horsemen appears singly, seated respectively on a white, fiery red, black, and finally pale horse; they symbolize victory, war, famine and death (vv. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8). With the fifth seal (vv. 9-11) John sees at the heavenly altar the souls of the martyrs crying out for God’s judgment. With the opening of the sixth seal begins a second part (6:12–7:17) that can be divided into seven paragraphs or scenes. It begins with a tremendous cosmic tremor that grips heaven and earth (6:12-17). Then four angels hold four storm winds (7:1) and another instructs them to hold back the damage still until he will have sealed the servants of God (vv. 2-3). John sees the multitude of the 144,000 sealed (vv. 4-8). Then he looks again into the heavenly throne room and sees an immense multitude in white robes paying homage before the throne and the Lamb (vv. 9-10), as do the angelic hosts (vv. 11-12). Finally (vv. 13-17), these many are identified with those who have obtained salvation through the “blood of the Lamb”. The opening of the seventh seal is followed by a half-hour pause (8:1), a significant caesura. Thus the third part of the vision consists only of this one verse.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, some still take the following verses into the seal vision, either up to 8:5 or up to 8:6.<sup>21</sup> But in 8:2, 6, the trumpets are already introduced, which are then blown one after the other from 8:7 on, so that the caesura is better put before. Moreover, some define the passage about the sealed ones (7:1-17) as an “intermediate piece” with a certain special position. But this is nowhere implied

<sup>19</sup> Metzger, *Commentary*, 736.

<sup>20</sup> Deviating from UBS: additional paragraph before 7:2, 4, 11; 8:2.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Holtz, *Offenbarung*, 72; Klaiber, *Offenbarung*, 139; or A. Satake, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (KEK 16; Göttingen, 2008) 236.

in the text; rather it relates the various events that follow the opening of the sixth seal.<sup>22</sup>

In terms of size the first part of the vision has  $6 + 6 + 8 + 8 + 12 = 40$  *stichoi*, the second  $18 + 5 + 8 + 14 + 8 + 8 + 16 = 77$ , and the third 3 *stichoi*.<sup>23</sup> This means that the second and third parts together, with 80 *stichoi*, are exactly twice as long as the first part. In the first part, the third and fourth paragraphs are in a ratio of 2:3 to the rest. In the second part, it is noticeable that three longer paragraphs frame two smaller ones each. The first and the last three paragraphs, with combined 31 and 32 *stichoi*, are actually the same size, so that the middle paragraph is exactly in the middle. First and fourth paragraphs together also stand here to the rest, including part three, in the ratio  $32 : 48 = 2:3$ . The whole vision counts  $120 = 15 \times 8$  *stichoi*. The modulus 8 is immediately recognizable in quite a few paragraphs.

### 3.3 *The seven trumpets: 8:2–11:19*

The opening of the seventh seal initiates the next act of the end-time events: One after the other the seven trumpets are blown and in this way the third vision is divided, but not into seven, but better only into five parts, of which, however, the fourth part almost breaks the frame by its length.

At the beginning (8:2-6) the seven angels with the trumpets are introduced, also an angel with incense, accompanied by elements of theophany. Then (8:7-13) succinctly described is how the first four angels blow their trumpets, with terrible results: one-third each of (1) scorched earth, (2) sea as blood, (3) annihilated sea creatures and ships, (4) darkened days and nights. By the woe-cry of an eagle (v. 13) these acts are combined into a single part, also in view of the stichometric analysis into a single paragraph.

The three following trumpets each stand for a structurally separate part. With the fifth trumpet (9:1-12) come five months of locusts, which are described first (vv. 1-6) as a plague, then (vv. 7-11) in their appearance and at the end (v. 12) as a woe. The fourth section with the sixth trumpet (9:13–11:14), for stichometric reasons, also has only three paragraphs, though relatively long ones. First (9:13-21), four damaging angels are let loose, killing a third of humanity with fire, smoke and brimstone through a many-thousand-headed army of horsemen, while the rest refuses to convert. Then (10:1-11) in a symbolic act, John is

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 67; Lohse, *Offenbarung*, 9. 50; Satake, *Offenbarung*, 66.

<sup>23</sup> Exact numbers:  $5:13 + 5:07 + 7:02 + 7:10 + 11:03 = 37:05$  *stichoi*,  $17:07 + 4:05 + 7:03 + 13:11 + 7:11 + 7:07 + 15:12 = 73:11$  as well as 2:01 *stichoi*.

commissioned to prophesy again over the nations, in the form of a small scroll for him to eat. Finally (11:1-14) this commission is immediately carried out powerfully by two witnesses, for 1260 days; although they are killed in the process, they rise again; in the end the survivors of a great earthquake give glory to God after all. The last part with the seventh trumpet (11:15-19), again a single paragraph, contains the heavenly response to this positive outcome: the world dominion of God and Christ is solemnly established and extolled, and the ark of the covenant becomes visible in the heavenly temple.

The passage 10:1–11:14, i.e. second and third paragraphs of our fourth part, are again seen by some as an “intermediate piece”.<sup>24</sup> But at the end (11:14) all events that follow the sixth trumpet from 9:13 on are taken together as the second woe (of three), so they are to be interpreted as a unity. Lohmeyer additionally separates the seventh trumpet and takes this part (11:15-19) as the starting point for chs. 12–13.<sup>25</sup> But in terms of content, it is clearly a conclusion that declares a result.

According to this analysis the vision has 9 paragraphs, compared to 17 in UBS.<sup>26</sup> Of its five parts, three consist of a single paragraph, the third and fourth of three paragraphs each. They add up to  $16 + 27 + (20 + 14 + 2) + (32 + 37 + 48) + 20 = 216$  *stichoi*.<sup>27</sup> This is the cubic number of 6, which, according to a note in Vitruvius, the Pythagoreans liked to use for the disposition of their books.<sup>28</sup> The number can also be resolved as a product of two cubic numbers:  $27 \times 8 = 3^3 \times 2^3$ . The second part with 27 *stichoi* is exactly one-eighth of the vision, the third with 36 =  $6^2$  exactly one-sixth. Second and fourth parts have together  $27 + 117 = 144 = 12^2$  *stichoi*, which are two-thirds of the whole vision; first and last parts have together  $16 + 20 =$  also 36 *stichoi*. To what extent the author was aware of all these relations remains to be seen. In any case, the vision is very elaborate in this formal respect, too.

### 3.4 *The Woman, the Dragon and the Lamb: 12:1–14:13*

The fourth vision stands between the vision with the seven trumpets and the one with the seven bowls of wrath. However, one should not therefore call it an “in-

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 83; Lohse, *Offenbarung*, 61; Satake, *Offenbarung*, 251.

<sup>25</sup> Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 94: 11:15–13:18 are divided into seven visions.

<sup>26</sup> Instead of paragraph before 8:3, paragraph before 8:2; no paragraph before 8:6, 8, 10, 12, 13; 9:20; 10:8; 11:14.

<sup>27</sup> Exact numbers:  $15:03 + 26:02 + (19:08 + 13:13 + 1:09) + (31:13 + 36:14 + 47:04) + 20:00 = 212:06$  *stichoi*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. F.G. Lang, “Schreiben nach Maß”, *NovT* 41 (1999) 56 n. 90.



termediate piece”.<sup>29</sup> It is rather the “core of the whole book”.<sup>30</sup> Mostly the passage 14:14-20 is also allotted to this vision. But the keyword “wrath of God” (θυμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) connects the image of the grape harvest in 14:19 with the seven bowls of wrath (from 15:1) that follow, so the section can just as well be reckoned to the following vision.<sup>31</sup> Lohmeyer takes the whole of chs. 14 as the middle of seven parts of the book corpus and divides it again into seven visions under the theme “about the coming of the Son of Man”.<sup>32</sup> However, his division is altogether too artful to have set a precedent.

Strictly speaking, the “core piece” 12:1–14:13 consists of three partial visions. The first part (12:1-18) deals in three paragraphs with the woman and the dragon. First (vv. 1-6) the woman, who has just given birth to her son, flees from the dragon into the wilderness for 1260 days. Then (vv. 7-12) the dragon is cast out of heaven by Michael and his angels. After that (vv. 13-18) he pursues on earth the woman, who escapes from him. In the second part (13:1-18) two beasts appear. The first rises from the sea (v. 1) and causes the whole earth to worship the dragon (vv. 2-8); the second beast (vv. 11-17) rises from the earth and powerfully causes the first beast to be worshiped. In two of the five paragraphs, in the middle and at the end, the readers are directly addressed concerning possible martyrdom (vv. 9-10) and the mysterious number 666 (v. 18). In the third section (14:1-13) the Lamb stands on Mount Zion with the 144,000 who were ransomed (vv. 1-5) and three angels pronounce judgment on Babylon (vv. 6-12); in conclusion those who die in the Lord are extolled as blessed (v. 13).<sup>33</sup>

The three parts of the vision with a total of 11 paragraphs have  $(20 + 23 + 17) + (5 + 24 + 5 + 25 + 4) + (19 + 28 + 5) = 60 + 63 + 52 = 175$  *stichoi*.<sup>34</sup> Apparently the vision is disposed with square numbers, because the sum 175 is  $= 7 \times 5^2$ , the sum of the first and third part is  $112 = 7 \times 4^2$ , and the size of the middle part is  $63 = 7 \times 3^2$ . The numbers 3, 4 and 5 form the simplest form of a so-called “Pythagorean triple”, from which one can easily construct a right-angled triangle. Was the author aware of such connections?

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<sup>29</sup> Anders Satake, *Offenbarung*, 276.

<sup>30</sup> Lohse, *Offenbarung*, 68.

<sup>31</sup> In contrast, the keyword θυμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in 14:10 still belongs to the vision of the two beasts, cf. 14:11.

<sup>32</sup> Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 1: 14:1-5, 6-7, 8, 9-12, 13, 14-16, 17-20.

<sup>33</sup> Deviating from UBS: additional paragraph before 13:2, 18; no paragraph before 13:5; 14:8, 9.

<sup>34</sup> Exact numbers:  $(19:09 + 22:01 + 17:00) + (4:01 + 24:00 + 4:05 + 24:12 + 3:05) + (18:08 + 27:03 + 4:09) = 169:08$  *stichoi*.

### 3.5 *The seven bowls of wrath: 14:14–16:21*

If we take 14:14-20 for the fifth vision, it also has three parts. The first one concerns just this paragraph. It deals with the One like the Son of Man with the sharp sickle, who through three angels carries out the judgment, which is described in images of grain harvest, grape harvest and wine press. The second part (15:1–16:1) with the “other sign” (15:1) probably refers back to 14:14 as the first sign, which would confirm our delineation of the visions.<sup>35</sup> This part has three paragraphs. First (v. 1) the seven angels are introduced with the seven plagues. Then (vv. 2-4) follows the heavenly victory song to the Pantocrator. Finally (15:5–16:1), the seven angels receive the seven bowls full of God’s wrath and the command to pour them out upon the earth. The third part (16:2-21) has seven paragraphs in which the seven angels pour out their bowls on (1) the earth, (2) the sea, and (3) streams of water, on (4) the sun, (5) the throne of the beast, (6) the Euphrates, and (7) on the air, each with terrible results (vv. 2, 3, 4-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-16, 17-21).<sup>36</sup>

The eleven paragraphs of the vision have  $25 + (4 + 14 + 15) + (5 + 4 + 10 + 7 + 17 + 17) = 25 + 33 + 67 = 125$  *stichoi*.<sup>37</sup> The sum can be resolved as  $5^3$ . As a cubic number of 5 it corresponds to the sum of the third vision, i.e. the axis-symmetrically associated vision with the seven trumpets, whose size is  $6^3 = 216$  *stichoi*. Moreover, the first part numbers  $25 = 1^2 \times 5^2$  *stichoi*, the other two together are  $100 = 2^2 \times 5^2$  *stichoi*; second and third parts are factually in the relation of 1:2. Again it is to be asked to what extent the author was aware of these connections.

A text-critical change is again implied by these figures. In 15:6 the [οἱ] enclosed in square brackets is deleted, with  $\mathfrak{P}^{47}$   $\aleph$  P 046 051 against A C. The repeated article emphasizes the relation to 15:1, to “the seven angels who have the seven plagues” (οἱ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄγγελοι [οἱ] ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπὶ τὰ πληγὰς) and is likely secondary. The deletion leaves paragraph 15:5–16:1 with 15:01 *stichoi*, as an exception rounded down to 15 *stichoi*.

<sup>35</sup> Referring the verse to the “sign” of 12:1: Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 392; Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 130; H. Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT 16a; Tübingen, 1974) 201.

<sup>36</sup> Deviating from UBS: no paragraph before 14:17; 16:1.

<sup>37</sup> Exact numbers:  $24:02 + (3:05 + 13:06 + 15:01) + (4:04 + 3:02 + 9:02 + 6:05 + 6:03 + 16:02 + 16:02) = 24:02 + 31:12 + 61:05 = 117:04$  *stichoi*.

### 3.6 *The fall of the harlot Babylon: 17:1–19:10*

The sixth vision has a uniform theme. The three parts are about the harlot Babylon: she is described (17:1-18) and her downfall is proclaimed (18:1-24) and sung about (19:1-10).

First the description in three paragraphs: First (17:1-6) John sees the woman sitting on the scarlet beast, then one of the bowl angels interprets this vision in a two-paragraph direct speech, first looking at the seven heads of the beast and its dominion (vv. 7-14), finally looking at the ten horns that will destroy the woman (vv. 15-18). The following proclamation of Babylon's downfall (18:1-24) occurs in seven paragraphs in artful axis-symmetrical arrangement: at the beginning (vv. 1-3) an angel states the downfall as God's judgment. At the end (vv. 21-24) another angel anticipates the desolation of the city and justifies it with its misdeeds. In between, a voice from heaven speaks, addressing "my people" at the beginning (vv. 4-8) and urging them to leave the city; corresponding to this in its final verse (v. 20) is the call to the "saints, apostles, and prophets" to rejoice in God's judgment. In the three paragraphs in the middle the voice of heaven anticipates the lamentation over the fall of the great city, intoned by the "kings of the earth" (vv. 9-10), the "merchants of the earth" (vv. 11-17a), and the mariners on the sea (vv. 17b-19), the latter as an account in past tense. The third part (19:1-10), the heavenly rejoicing over Babylon's downfall, again has three paragraphs: (vv. 1-4) the heavenly hosts sing a three-fold hallelujah, then (vv. 5-8) they exult over the marriage of the Lamb, with the bride as the antitype of the harlot Babylon, and at the end (vv. 9-10) John is invited to write, though he is denied a genuflection before the heavenly messenger.<sup>38</sup>

The scope of this vision totals in the 13 paragraphs  $(21 + 27 + 12) + (13 + 17 + 7 + 22 + 10 + 3 + 14) + (13 + 13 + 8) = 60 + 86 + 34 = 180$  or  $3 \times 60$  *stichoi*.<sup>39</sup> The first part numbers with 60 *stichoi* exactly one-third of it, the other two parts with 120 *stichoi* together are two-thirds.

### 3.7 *Millennial Kingdom and Heavenly Jerusalem: 19:11–22:5*

The seventh and last vision has three themes and thus also three parts. The first part (19:11-21) of three paragraphs is about the rider on the white horse. First (vv. 11-16) he is described, with his name "Word of God" and with his army, then (vv. 17-18) the birds are summoned from high above for a great feeding,

<sup>38</sup> Deviating from UBS: new paragraph before 17:7 (instead of before 17:6b); 18:20.

<sup>39</sup> Exact numbers:  $(20:07 + 26:03 + 12:00) + (12:08 + 17:00 + 6:13 + 21:12 + 9:10 + 2:11 + 13:14) + (12:12 + 12:02 + 7:14) = 58:10 + 84:08 + 32:13 = 176:01$  *stichoi*.

finally (vv. 19-21) the rider is victorious in the war against the beast and its armies, “and all the birds were filled with their flesh”. In the second part (20:1-15) five paragraphs deal with the millennial kingdom and the Last Judgment. First (vv. 1-3) an angel binds Satan for 1000 years, then (vv. 4-5), after the “first resurrection” the resurrected martyrs reign with Christ for 1000 years; they are given a special blessing (v. 6). After the 1000 years (vv. 7-10) Satan is set free, his host is consumed by the fire that falls from heaven, and he himself is thrown into the lake of fire. Lastly (vv. 11-15) God’s judgment of the dead takes place; death itself and those not in the book of life also end up in the lake of fire. The third part (21:1–22:5) is the vision of the New Jerusalem, again five paragraphs. First (vv. 1-8) John sees the new creation of heaven, earth and Jerusalem, hearing thereto the “great voice from the throne”. Then (vv. 9-14) from a mountain an angel shows him the holy city, the “bride of the Lamb”. This is followed (vv. 15-21) by a detailed description of its dimensions and its walls and gates. Then (vv. 22-27) he states what is lacking, namely a temple, sun or moon, night, and “nothing unclean will enter”. At the end (22:1-5) he is shown the river with the water of life.<sup>40</sup>

Some divide these chapters into five parts, taking the paragraphs dealing with the Last Judgment (20:11-15) and the new creation (21:1-8) as parts in themselves.<sup>41</sup> But in ch. 20 the paragraphs are bracketed together by the keywords “second death” (20:6, 14) and “lake of fire” (20:10, 14-15) and in 21:5 there is already mention of the “water of life”, whose stream John is shown in 22:1, connecting the paragraphs in question in a ring composition. Holtz still takes 19:11-21 as part of the preceding main section (from 17:1).<sup>42</sup> But the end of the beast and its prophet in the lake of fire (19:20) is closely connected with the end of the devil and death there (20:10, 14), so that the caesura is to be placed before 19:11.

The vision with its 13 paragraphs in three parts has a total of  $(19 + 8 + 14) + (10 + 10 + 5 + 13 + 16) + (26 + 19 + 23 + 14 + 15) = 41 + 54 + 97 = 192$  *stichoi*.<sup>43</sup> The sum corresponds to  $24 \times 8$  *stichoi*. It is noteworthy that the first two parts, together having 95 *stichoi*, are almost the same size as the third part with 97, which is in each case almost half the vision. The result would be even hand-

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<sup>40</sup> Deviating from UBS: additional paragraph before 19:19; 20:6; no paragraph before 21:5.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. H. Lichtenberger, *Die Apokalypse* (ThKNT 23; Stuttgart, 2014) 9; Klaiber, *Offenbarung*, 248, 264.

<sup>42</sup> Holtz, *Offenbarung*, 113.

<sup>43</sup> Exact numbers:  $(18:06 + 8:00 + 13:01) + (9:04 + 9:12 + 4:09 + 12:14 + 15:07) + (25:07 + 18:13 + 22:08 + 13:02 + 14:08) = 39:07 + 52:01 + 94:08 = 186:01$  *stichoi*.

somer if they each had exactly half, i.e. 96 *stichoi*. But this would require two textual changes, which admittedly cannot be sufficiently justified.<sup>44</sup>

In one place, however, a text-critical change is presupposed in these figures. In 21:12 the bracketed words [τὰ ὀνόματα] are deleted, with codices **ℵ** P etc, and Nestle<sup>25</sup> (with all three sources), against codex A etc. Apparently this is a clarifying repetition of the simple ὀνόματα mentioned only four words earlier: the city “had twelve gates ... and names written on them, namely [the names] of the twelve tribes ...” If we dispense with the 5 syllables, the paragraph 21:9-14 still has 18:13 = 19 *stichoi* and the part 21:1–22:5 adds up to 97.

#### 4. Axis symmetry among the seven visions

The seven great visions are related to each other like the arms of a seven-armed candelabrum. Between the first two and the last two visions this is shown by individual motifs: The three precious stones mentioned at the very beginning to characterize “the one on the throne” and his environment (4:3), jasper, sardius and emerald, reappear at the end at the heavenly Jerusalem and among the twelve pearls of its gates (21:11, 18, 19-20). The blood of the martyrs in the second vision (6:10) is mentioned several times in the sixth vision: with the harlot of Babylon, drunk with the blood of the saints and witnesses of Jesus (17:6), at the fall of the city where the blood of the prophets and saints was found (18:24), and at the rejoicing over God’s judgment with which he avenged the blood of his servants (19:2). Likewise, the white robe of the martyrs (6:11; 7:9, 13) has its counterpart in the “beautiful pure linen” with which the bride of the Lamb clothes herself (19:8).

Especially the vision with the seven trumpets and the one with the seven bowls of wrath, i.e. the third and fifth visions, show clear parallels.<sup>45</sup> The seven angels are explicitly prepared for the blowing and the pouring out in both visions (8:2, 6; 15:7–16:1). There are parallels in the plagues when the respective trumpet is blown or the respective bowl is poured out. In the first the earth is

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<sup>44</sup> At the end of 19:18, for instance, one could insert τῶν before μεγάλων, with **ℵ** etc; the paragraph 19:17-18 would thus have 8:01, rounded up to 9, the part 19:11-21 correspondingly 42 *stichoi*. As a counterpart, in 21:27 the bracketed [ὁ] before ποιῶν would have to be deleted, with **ℵ**<sup>2</sup> A etc; the paragraph 21:22-27 would thereby have 13:01, exceptionally rounded down to 13, the part 21:1–22:5 the desired 96 *stichoi*.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. the synopsis in G. Bornkamm, “Die Komposition der apokalyptischen Visionen in der Offenbarung Johannis” (1937), in: idem, *Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum: Gesammelte Aufsätze II* (BEvTh 28; Munich, 1959) 204–222, here 206; Klaiber, *Offenbarung*, 119–120.

affected (8:7; 16:2), in the second the sea (8:8; 16:3), in the third the rivers and springs of water (8:10; 16:4), in the fourth the sun (8:12; 16:8), in the fifth there is a darkening, first of the sun and the air, then of the kingdom of the beast (9:2; 16:10), in the sixth it strikes the great river Euphrates (9:14; 16:12), and in the seventh there are lightning, thunder and great hail (11:19; 16:18, 21). Finally, the two visions are connected by the motif of the opened temple in heaven (11:19; 15:5).

In addition, there are other relationships between the seven visions that do not fit the scheme of a ring composition. The 144,000, for example, are the subject of the second and fourth visions (7:4; 14:1), or a three-fold woe is mentioned in the third and sixth visions (8:13; 9:12; 11:14 and 18:10, 16, 19). In the fourth and sixth visions the fall of Babylon is reported (14:8; ch. 18); in the final section (14:1; 19:7) the Lamb appears to John and at the very end there is a beatitude (14:13; 19:9), in each case connected with an explicit writing command. At the beginning of the fifth and seventh visions John sees respectively the Son of Man on a white cloud, and the rider “Word of God” on a white horse (14:14; 19:11-13). In view of such varied parallels, a warning against attempts to discover a single macro-chiasmus in the text is justified.<sup>46</sup> Rather, in addition to the elements of a ring composition it is evident that in the course of the book the final events unfold linearly. What is still sketched in enigmatic outlines at the beginning is then broadly elaborated in the later visions.<sup>47</sup>

## 5. Stichometric analysis of the whole composition

After the stichometric analysis of each of the main parts, further tallies can be made. Three interesting results can be distinguished: the sum of the seven great visions, the sum of the book corpus, i.e. including the main part with the seven epistles, and finally the sum of the whole Apocalypse, i.e. including prologue and epilogue.

The seven visions together have  $84 + 120 + 216 + 175 + 125 + 180 + 192 = 1092$  *stichoi*. That is  $52 \times 21$  or  $84 \times 13$  *stichoi*, if one traces the sum back to Fibonacci numbers. So the first vision is not only by far the shortest, but has a length exactly one-thirteenth of the seven visions. The first three add up to  $420 = 20 \times 21 = 84 \times 5$ , the four that follow to  $672 = 32 \times 21 = 84 \times 8$  *stichoi*. The ratio 5:8 results, as a ratio of two adjacent Fibonacci numbers, with 0.625 in an approxi-

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. D.A. deSilva, “X Marks the Spot? A Critique of the Use of Chiasmus in Macro-Structural Analyses of Revelation”, *JSNT* 30 (2008) 343–371.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Bornkamm, “Komposition”, 219.

mation to the golden section (= 0.6180339...). It is also noticeable that first and third, second and sixth, and fourth and fifth visions each add up to 300 *stichoi*. By these numbers the delimitations of the visions, which we have substantiated in content, are surprisingly confirmed arithmetically.

If we add the main part with the seven epistles (1:17b–4:1), we come to  $1092 + 168 = 1260$  *stichoi* for the corpus of the book. That is exactly as many lines as the repeatedly mentioned period of three and a half “times” = years (12:14) or 42 months (11:2; 13:5) in days, as explicitly stated in 11:3; 12:6. This is a really astonishing result: the author connects the seriousness of the last days, an aspect of the content, directly with the stichometric calculation, that is, with a formal aspect of the structure. In addition, the number  $1260 = 60 \times 21$  serves as the starting point of an elaborate disposition: the epistle part as well as the first to third and the seventh visions have together  $168 + 84 + 120 + 216 + 192 = 780$  *stichoi* or  $60 \times 13$ . The fourth to sixth visions add up to  $175 + 125 + 180 = 480$  *stichoi* or  $60 \times 8$ . Of these the first two numbers together are 300 or  $60 \times 5$ , the third  $60 \times 3$ . The numbers 3 through 21 from the Fibonacci sequence, each with the multiplier 60, are used in this way to define the proportions of the visions.

Finally, the entire Revelation of John including the Prologue and Epilogue: The so-called total stichometry is  $52 + 1260 + 48 = 1360$  or  $40 \times 34$  *stichoi*. The author thus uses the modulus 34, as was apparently customary for books having more than 1000 *stichoi*. In any case, this can be observed in the New Testament in the seven correspondingly large books, most clearly in Romans and 1 Corinthians, one of which, with  $30 \times 34 = 1020$  *stichoi*, is just over, while the other is, with  $47 \times 21 = 987$ , just under 1000 *stichoi*.<sup>48</sup> In structuring the corpus of the book the author then worked with modulus 21, and on the level of the individual visions mainly with partial modulus 8. The number of *stichoi* in five of the eight main parts is divisible by 8, in two (the fourth and fifth visions) by 5.

With this elaborate stichometric disposition the author has obviously followed the usual authorial procedure, whose use we have proven elsewhere in the New Testament. It is highly unlikely that he was not aware of many of these proportions. Behind the idea of this disposition is a calculating mind. Thereby he has done more than use the usual procedure. Rather, he has artfully combined it with his subject and thus made his book a literary opus.

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<sup>48</sup> The other books with more than 1000 *stichoi* are the four Gospels and Acts.

## Outline of the Revelation of John

Revelation Chapter	Parts Content	Sti-choi
<b>1:1-17a</b>	<b>1. Prologue: Book title, proem and mandate to write</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>1:17b-22:5</b>	<b>2. Body of the book: Visions of “what is, and what is to take place”</b>	<b>1260</b>
<b>1:17b-4:1</b>	<b>2.0 Preparatory vision: Dictation of the seven letters</b>	<b>168</b>
1:17b-20	2.01 Introduction: Christ’s self-presentation and interpretation of the vision	11
2:1-3:22	2.02 The seven letters: Praise and rebuke of the individual churches	152
4:1	2.03 Conclusion: Vision of open heavenly door	5
<b>4:2-5:14</b>	<b>2.1 1st Vision: Heavenly throne room and book with seven seals</b>	<b>84</b>
4:2-11	2.11 View into heaven: God’s throne with 24 elders and 4 animal figures	37
5:1-10	2.12 Book with seven seals: Handed over to the Lamb	32
5:11-14	2.13 Heavenly beings and all creatures: Praise to God and the Lamb	15
<b>6:1-8:1</b>	<b>2.2 2nd Vision: Opening of the seven seals</b>	<b>120</b>
6:1-11	2.21 1st-5th seals: Four deadly horses and riders, souls of the martyrs	40
6:12-7:17	2.22 6th seal: Cosmic quake, salvation of the sealed and martyrs	77
8:1	2.23 7th seal: Half-hour silence in heaven	3
<b>8:2-11:19</b>	<b>2.3 3rd Vision: Seven trumpets and three woes</b>	<b>216</b>
8:2-6	2.31 Introduction: Seven angels with trumpets and angel with incense	16
8:7-13	2.32 1st-4th trumpets: Cosmic firestorms and threefold woes	27
9:1-12	2.33 5th trumpet: Plague of locusts as first woe	36
9:13-11:14	2.34 6th trumpet: Killing of many thousands as second woe	117
11:15-19	2.35 7th trumpet: Heavenly praise to God	20
<b>12:1-14:13</b>	<b>2.4 4th Vision: The Woman, the Dragon and the Lamb</b>	<b>175</b>
12:1-18	2.41 Two signs in the sky: The Woman and the Dragon	60
13:1-18	2.42 Two beasts of the Dragon: One from the sea and one from the earth	63
14:1-13	2.43 The Lamb on Zion: Redeeming his own, judging the idolaters of the Beast	52
<b>14:14-16:21</b>	<b>2.5 5th Vision: Seven bowls of wrath</b>	<b>125</b>
14:14-20	2.51 One like the Son of Man and angel: Judgment of wrath with reaping knives	25
15:1-16:1	2.52 Seven angels: Handing over seven bowls full of God’s wrath	33
16:2-21	2.53 Seven Bowls: Devastating effects when poured	67
<b>17:1-19:10</b>	<b>2.6 6th Vision: Fall of the harlot Babylon</b>	<b>180</b>
17:1-18	2.61 Harlot Babylon: Symbol of the evil, world-dominating city	60
18:1-24	2.62 Heavenly message: Babylon’s fall and lamentation of her associates	86
19:1-10	2.63 Heavenly rejoicing: Judgment on Babylon and marriage of the Lamb	34
<b>19:11-22:5</b>	<b>2.7 7th Vision: Millennial kingdom and heavenly Jerusalem</b>	<b>192</b>
19:11-21	2.71 Rider “Word of God”: War against the Beast and its prophet	41
20:1-15	2.72 Thousand-year kingdom: Christ’s reign, end of devil and death	54
21:1-22:5	2.73 Heavenly Jerusalem: Presence of God and the Lamb with their own	97
<b>22:6-21</b>	<b>3. Epilogue: Authentication of the book and order for publication</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>1:1-22:21</b>	<b>1.-3. Revelation: John to the seven churches in Asia</b>	<b>1340</b>