DavarLogos · ISSN 1666-7832 // 18539106
Julio–diciembre · 2025 · Vol. XXIV · N.º 2
Artículo

3. The Revelation-Inspiration of the Book of Revelation: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

La revelación-inspiración del libro del Apocalipsis: un enfoque lingüístico-cognitivo

Elías Georgia

Universidad Peruana Unión
Lima, Perú
eliasgeorggia@upeu.edu.pe

Recibido: 17 de septiembre de 2024
Aceptado: 30 de octubre de 2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.56487/pxt7j190

Abstract

The direct involvement of the divine element in the generation of the book of Revelation, most biblical scholars recognize or affirm it unequivocally, whether as a theophanic reality or literary artifice. However, the specific ways the divine and human parts intervened in generating thought and information in Revelation—and in the Scriptures in general—remain an important epistemological challenge for contemporary theology. Due to the epistemological nature of this task, the present study addresses the problem concerning the divine-human generation of the Revelation and its *modus operandi* specifically, from a cognitive linguistic approach, an integrated approach in which the dynamic cognitive processes of conceptual, linguistic, textual, cultural, and historical complexes can be examined in their interconnectivity. This article concludes that the revelation-inspiration of the book of Revelation as a source of theological data is linguistic-cognitive and historical.

Keywords

Book of Revelation — Revelation-inspiration — Cognitive linguistics — Cognitive grammar — Historical-cognitive model

Resumen

La participación directa del elemento divino en la generación del libro del Apocalipsis, ya sea como realidad teofánica o como artificio literario, es algo que la mayoría

de los eruditos bíblicos reconocen o afirman de forma inequívoca. No obstante, las modalidades concretas en las que intervinieron la parte divina y la humana en la generación del pensamiento y de la información contenida en el Apocalipsis —y en las Escrituras en general— continúan siendo un desafío epistemológico importante para la teología contemporánea. Debido a la naturaleza epistemológica de esta tarea, el presente estudio aborda el problema relativo a la generación divino-humana del Apocalipsis y a su *modus operandi* específico desde un enfoque lingüístico cognitivo, esto es, un enfoque integrado en el que se pueden examinar los procesos cognitivos dinámicos de los complejos conceptuales, lingüísticos, textuales, culturales e históricos en su interconectividad. Este artículo concluye que la revelación-inspiración del libro de Apocalipsis, como fuente de datos teológicos, es de naturaleza lingüístico-cognitiva e histórica.

Palabras claves

Apocalipsis — Revelación-inspiración — Lingüística cognitiva — Gramática cognitiva — Modelo histórico-cognitivo

Introduction

Most biblical scholars recognize or affirm unequivocally the direct involvement of the divine element in the generation of the book of Revelation, whether as a theophanic reality or as a literary artifice.[1] However, the specific ways the divine and human parts intervened in generating thought and information in the book of Revelation—and in the Scriptures in general—remain an important epistemological challenge for contemporary theology.[2] This is not only because it is a theological prob-

---

1 For a visionary or theophanic emphasis, see: Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 150-173; John C. Thomas, "The Spirit in the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 241-256; Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 181-184; and J. Scott Duvall, *A Theology of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2025), 95-97, 317-319. For a more literary or compositional reading, see: David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 274-288; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Early Christian Apocalypses," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 70-72; and Jörg Frey, "Die Bildersprache der Johannesapokalypse," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 98, No. 2 (2001): 161-185. These perspectives are discussed in greater detail below.

2 This epistemic challenge is evident in the many and diverse theories of revelation-inspiration produced throughout the history of Christian theology. See, e.g., Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger,

lem not addressed in the Scriptures but also because this phenomenon has been understood in the light of the ontotheological interpretation of the structure of reason that constitutes the presuppositional foundation of the main models of revelation-inspiration, namely, the classical and liberal models.[3]

Theologians who adhere to the classical revelation-inspiration model generally interpret the role of divine activity in generating the revelation as active-generative and the role of human activity as passive-receptive.[4] Thus, classical theologians seem to believe that the revelation-inspiration of the book of Revelation occurred in a more or less mechanical and non-personal way, in which the intellection of the prophet (*intellectus agens*) reached, with supernatural help, the timeless level of eternal divine

Revelation and Tradition (New York: Herder, 1966); James Tunstead Burtchaell, *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration since 1810: A Review and Critique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1985); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Analogie und Offenbarung: Eine kritische Untersuchung der Geschichte des Analogiebegriffs in der Gotteserkenntnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); Edwyn R. Bevan, *Sibyls and Seers: A Survey of Some Ancient Theories of Revelation and Inspiration* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); Herman Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation: Adapted and Expanded from the 1908 Stone Lectures; Presented at Princeton Theological Seminary*, ed. Cory Brock and Nathaniel G. Sutanto (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019); Balázs M. Mezei, *Radical Revelation: A Philosophical Approach* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017); Balázs M. Mezei, Francesca A. Murphy, and Kenneth Oakes, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Divine Revelation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Balázs M. Mezei, ed., *Divine Revelation and the Sciences: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Revelation* (New York: Routledge, 2025).

3 For a study of the philosophical presuppositional structure of the leading models of revelation-inspiration and their respective categorization into classical and liberal models, see Fernando L. Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: In Search of New Foundations* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 75-125; *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 19-387; Adam J. Graves, *The Phenomenology of Revelation in Heidegger, Marion, and Ricoeur* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 1-206; John C. Poirier, *The Invention of the Inspired Text: Philological Windows on the Theopneustia of Scripture*, The Library of New Testament Studies 640 (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 1-16.

4 In the words of Aquinas: "For just as, in natural knowledge, the possible intellect is passive to the light of the active intellect, so too in prophetic knowledge the human intellect is passive to the enlightening of the Divine light" (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, part II.II, q. 171, a. 2). See also Bernard McGinn, ed., *Apocalyptic Spirituality: Treatises and Letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-En-Der, Joachim of Fiore, the Franciscan Spirituals, Savonarola* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 192-276.

truth.[5] This perspective maximizes, on the one hand, the contribution of the divine element in the process of revelation-inspiration of the Revelation and, on the other hand, reduces the contribution of the human element to its minimum possible expression.

Unlike the classical model of revelation-inspiration, the liberal model maximizes the contribution of the human element in the process of revelation-inspiration of the Revelation and, at the same time, eliminates the contribution of the divine element.[6] Thus, the liberal model seems to relegate the cognitive aspects of divine-human communication to a precognitive stimulus of the human being's internal self-awareness. This presupposes that divine cognition cannot break the unlimited nature of its ahistorical-timeless essence and, consequently, reach human cognition in the finitude of its space-time reality. In a very real sense, then, it seems inevitable that some liberal theologians circumscribe the epistemological origin of the book of Revelation in the human imagination.[7]

---

5 More details in Fernando L. Canale, "Revelation and Inspiration: The Classical Model," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 32 (1994): 7-28.

6 See Fernando L. Canale, "Revelation and Inspiration: The Liberal Model," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 32 (1994): 169-195.

7 Hermann Gunkel shares this critical view of the production of Revelation, arguing basically that Revelation 12 refashions Hesiod's version of the Greek creation myth. Thus, for Gunkel, the book of Revelation is a purely human work. See Hermann Gunkel and Heinrich Zimmern, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen. 1 und Offb. 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895), 171-398. In this line of thought, Wilhelm Bousset assumes that the book of Revelation is primarily the product of a series of older apocalyptic fragments and traditions processed by one apocalyptic writer (*Die Offenbarung Johannis: KritischExegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament*, 6. Aufl. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906], 118-129). See also Joseph Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959), 210; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 58; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 5; Franz Tóth, "Von der Vision zur Redaktion: Untersuchungen zur Komposition, Redaktion und Intention der Johannesapokalypse," in *Die Johannesapokalypse: Kontexte – Konzepte – Rezeption*, ed. Jörg Frey, James A. Kelhoffer, and Franz Tóth, WUNT 287 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 86; José A. Filho, "The Apocalypse of John as an Account of a Visionary Experience: Notes on the Book's Structure," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25, No. 2 (2002): 213-234; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Invitation to the Book of Revelation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 27; Bruce J. Malina, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes: Sternvisionen und Himmelsreisen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), 39; Gregory L. Linton, "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse: The Limits of Genre," in *The*

Regardless of whether certain theologians strictly align with the "classical" or "liberal" models, or articulate a synthesis of elements from different models, the fact remains that such constructs are simplified and reductive representations of a substantially more complex epistemological reality.

This epistemological issue of the book of Revelation has, until now, received little or no attention from the perspective of cognitive linguistics.[8] The intention of the following contribution is, therefore, (a) to stimulate debate in the field of cognitive linguistics, (b) to address again the question of the revelation-inspiration of the book of Revelation, and (c) to recognize its *modus operandi* specifically. To this end, the first part describes cognitive grammar and the historical-cognitive analysis method. In the second

Reality of Apocalypse: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation, ed. David L. Barr (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 9.

8 Although academic research has addressed the problem of the epistemological origin of the Apocalypse from different perspectives (see, e.g., Jon Kenneth Newton, "The Epistemology of the Book of Revelation," *The Heythrop Journal* 59 [2018]: 733-746), the Cognitive Linguistic approach to addressing this problem has been largely, if not completely, overlooked. Very few biblical studies have explored the field of cognitive linguistics. Some of the most notable ones are Bonnie Howe and Joel B. Green, eds., *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014); Ellen van Wolde, ed., *Job 28: Cognition in Context*, Biblical Interpretation Series 64 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003); Ellen van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009); Christo H. J. van der Merwe, "A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective of הִנֵּה in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth," *Hebrew Studies* 48 (2007): 101-140; William A. Ross and Steven E. Runge, *Postclassical Greek Prepositions and Conceptual Metaphor: Cognitive Semantic Analysis and Biblical Interpretation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2022); William A. Ross and Elizabeth Robar, eds., *Linguistic Theory and the Biblical Text* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2023). A Cognitive Linguistic analysis oriented to biblical Hebrew is found in Stephen Coleman, *The Biblical Hebrew Transitivity Alternation in Cognitive Linguistic Perspective*, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 114 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018); Wendy Widder, *"To Teach" in Ancient Israel: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of a Biblical Hebrew Lexical Set*, BZAW 456 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014); Elizabeth Robar, *The Verb and the Paragraph in Biblical Hebrew: A Cognitive-Linguistic Approach*, SSLL 78 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2014). For Hebrew lexicography, see Reinier de Blois, "Cognitive Linguistic Approaches to Biblical Hebrew," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013), 471-473, and the *Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew* (SDBH) project. For Greek linguistics, see Andrea Sansò, "Cognitive Linguistics and Greek," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2014), 308-311. For a Cognitive Linguistic study applied to patristic literature, see Aleksander Gomola, *Conceptual Blending in Early Christian Discourse: A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of Pastoral Metaphors in Patristic Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018).

part, a cognitive linguistic study of the historical-prophetic vocabulary and prophetic formulas of the Revelation are offered in its broader conceptual framework, using especially Ronald Langacker's Cognitive Grammar and the proposed historical-cognitive method of analysis.[9] Finally, the study concludes that the revelation-inspiration of the book of Revelation as a source of theological data is linguistic-cognitive and historical.

Cognitive Grammar and Method of Analysis

Cognitive Grammar

Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, at least three cognitive models of grammar are generally recognized: (a) Langacker's Cognitive Grammar, (b) Goldberg's Construction Grammar, and (c) Croft's Radical

---

9 Regarding Langackerian Cognitive Grammar, see Ronald W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Theoretical Prerequisites*, vol. 1 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987); Ronald W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Descriptive Application*, vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); Ronald W. Langacker, *Essentials of Cognitive Grammar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ronald W. Langacker, *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*, Cognitive Linguistics Research 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991). *Cf.* John R. Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Regarding the foundation of the historical-cognitive method, see Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*. For an overview of the Cognitive Linguistic approach, see Dirk Geeraerts, ed., *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, CLR 34 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006); Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuyckens, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Vyvyan Evans, Benjamin K. Bergen, and Jörg Zinken, eds., *The Cognitive Linguistics Reader*, ACL (London: Equinox, 2007); Friedrich Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006); William Croft and D. Alan Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Brygida Rudzka-Ostyn, ed., *Topics in Cognitive Linguistics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1988); George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Linguistic Society of Korea, ed., *Linguistics in the Morning Calm* (Seoul: Hanshin, 1982); Stephen M. Kosslyn, *Image and Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Gilles Fauconnier, *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Gilles Fauconnier, *Mental Spaces, Language Modalities, and Conceptual Integration* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998); Barbara Dancygier and Eve Sweetser, *Mental Spaces in Grammar: Conditional Constructions*, CSL 108 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

Constructional Grammar.[10] Although each model contributes to a complete understanding of language, numerous theoretical linguistic studies support the view that Langacker's Cognitive Grammar is the most detailed, complete, and innovative model developed within Cognitive Linguistics. Soares and Jakubowicz argue that Langacker's theoretical model is "the one that has contributed most to establishing the foundations of grammatical categories in cognitive processes, to the point that the other models can be considered, to a certain extent, as its 'notational variants'."[11]

From the little-explored realm of biblical studies, Ellen Van Wolde notes that contrary to other cognitive approaches, "Langacker's theoretical model demands extreme concentration on very detailed interaction processes between language elements in their specific textual, historical, and cultural contexts of use."[12] She argues that "this kind of research forces you to examine the unique relations between language, culture, cognition, and context, and offers us the instrument to do so in verifiable steps."[13] Van Wolde describes five mental processes that form the basis of human cognition of language as an object of study in general, in cognitive linguistics, and in grammar in particular.[14]

The first is the process of *schematization and categorization* based on culture. It shows that perceptual and cognitive processes depend on brain capacities such as perception, experience, knowledge, and the ability to compare and consider correspondences. The second is the process of *symbolization*, in which a language is defined by conventional symbolic relations between phonological sounds and semantic concepts that function as schemata or schematic types ready to be selected as instances by language users. The third is the *mental coding process*, in which a language user takes a correspondence between the conventional language

---

10 Augusto Soares da Silva and Hanna Jakubowicz Batoréo, "Gramática cognitiva: estruturação conceptual, arquitectura e aplicações," in *Gramática: História, Teorias, Aplicações*, ed. Ana Maria Brito (Porto: Fundação Universidade do Porto, 2010), 229.

11 *Ibid*.

12 Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies*, 34.

13 *Ibid*.

14 *Ibid*., 48, 49.

type and the specific instance as a starting point. The fourth is the mental process of *justification*, which explains the relationships between the designated entities and the usage event or speech situation. Finally, the fifth is the mental process of *integration* in which the selected paradigmatic instances are established in new hierarchical syntagmatic relations. These syntagmatic relations refer to how prototypical instances of paradigmatic ties are inserted into usage events and related to other cases in texts and discourses.

This explains why, in Cognitive Grammar, words and phrases are not expressions of "something" *per se* but things or relations that stand out as instances in a specific cognitive domain or area.[15] Langacker "defines a cognitive domain as any knowledge configuration that provides the context for the conceptualization of a language unit."[16]

> In this definition, a distinction is made between the domain against which concepts take shape and the more specific base on which an entity is profiled. The base of an expression is the conceptual content that is inherently, intrinsically, and obligatorily invoked by the expression. A cognitive domain is a more generalized "background" knowledge configuration against which conceptualization is achieved. And the profile is what a term explicitly expresses.[17]

Thus, in Langacker's Cognitive Grammar, meaning is related to language and the internal relations between language and to experience, perception, and cognition, which are intertwined in culture and society.[18] For this reason, the present discussion considers it of greater value to apply Langackerian notions of language to the book of Revelation rather than Goldbergian constructions or Croft's radical constructionist conceptions.

---

15 Ellen van Wolde, "Cognitive Grammar at Work in Sodom and Gomorrah," in *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies*, ed. Bonnie Howe and Joel B. Green (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 194.

16 *Ibid*.

17 *Ibid*.

18 *Ibid*.

The Proposed Historical-Cognitive Method of Analysis

The historical-cognitive method of analysis presented here is based on Fernando L. Canale's model of the revelation-inspiration of Scriptures.[19] This method defines the interpretation of its presuppositional structure in light of the historical-temporal understanding of God's being, the cognitive acts of revelation, and the historical-temporal vision of the human agent as a cognitive receiver of divine activity. It aims to clarify whether God's cognitive activity can reach the finite human mind, thus making evident the Scripture's claim about its origin. It also attempts to elucidate the essential characteristics of the cognition involved in the origin of Scripture, answering questions such as the following: Is God able to relate to human history and cognition univocally, that is, directly within the level of reality and cognition that properly belongs to human beings, namely, to our time and space? If so, is the reception process passive so that it does not add or contribute anything to the meaningful forms created by God? Or is reception also active, contributing to the very generation of ideas or contents revealed? What are some of the paths, modes of action, or patterns that God used in the epistemological constitution of Scripture?

The historical-cognitive method of analysis itself consists of three main stages. The first focuses on the being of God and the cognitive acts of revelation. It presupposes that God, in his eternal and infinite reality, experiences the flow of time in its fullness according to his divine nature. Consequently, it recognizes God's direct participation in the generation of Scripture's contents. This stage aims to present briefly the temporal-historical vision of the being and actions of God described in the Revelation. At this point, the questions are: How did God proceed in the origin of the cognitive contents of the book of Revelation? What are God's main patterns of revelation in the generation of the Revelation?

---

19 Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 127-160.

The second stage of the analysis focuses on the *a priori* cognitive categories of the prophet. The *a priori* categories are based on the prophet's historical experience with God's previous revelations in the *Lebenswelt* (life-world). These revelations may include what other biblical prophets have said and written and even personal revelations God gave to the prophet in his experience. Thus, "the *a priori* categories necessary for the reception and interpretation of the given object or meaning-full form come from the past into the present and future."[20] In order of importance, the levels always present in the prophet's rational *a priori* are (a) presuppositional structure, (b) doctrinal conceptions, (c) sociocultural idiosyncrasies, (d) personal life experiences, and (e) individual personal traits.[21] All these cognitive levels are always present in the constitution of meaning, including the specific act in which the prophet receives and interprets meaning-full forms of divine origin.[22]

This second analysis stage aims to identify the nature, origin, and content of the first two facets of John's rational *a priori* as a prophet, namely, the presuppositional structure and the doctrinal teachings.[23] The main questions to be answered at this stage are: What *a priori* cognitive categories of John emerge in the book of Revelation? How does the prophet receive and interpret the meaning-full forms revealed in the book? What is the nature of his contribution?

The third stage focuses on the ontology of language. It emphasizes that language is intrinsically linked to the individual's cognition and that thoughts and words are inseparable. This ontological perspective of language is built from two main patterns. The first is a general pattern of historical supervision. It represents a direct, nonintrusive overview of the entire process of writing the Scriptures, in which the prophet may receive "additional revelation" by divine impression. The second is a remedial-corrective pattern of historical intervention. God imposes a

---

20 Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 137.

21 *Ibid*., 138.

22 *Ibid*.

23 By "John" here, we mean "John the Apostle."

specific restriction on the writer who deviates from the revealed content that he wants to communicate and willingly or unwillingly misrepresents it.[24] This third stage aims to answer questions such as: Does God annul the essential characteristics of human modes of cognition and language to eliminate their limitation, indeterminacy, ambiguity, imprecision, or inexactitude? What is God's involvement in the language of the book of Revelation? Does God deterministically control the words and meaning of the text of the book of Revelation, or allow John's free contribution as a writer?

The Revelation of the Apocalypse as a Cognitive Process

When interpreting the epistemological origin of Scripture, there are different processes to explore. First, the process by which the contents originated in the minds of the biblical writers; and second, the process by which these contents were expressed in oral or written form.[25] Since these processes are particularly important in understanding the nature of revelation and conceptualizing its reality, it is necessary to begin by evaluating the problems raised by some modern critics regarding the metaphysics of the revelation of the book of Revelation. From this, we will attempt to analyze the essence, the mode, and the reception of the revelation of the book of Revelation, which in this study corresponds to the first process.

The Metaphysics of the Revelation of the Book of Revelation

One of the main questions modern scholars have about the metaphysics of Revelation concerns the extent to which actual visionary experience underlies the stereotypical literary patterns and forms that characterize the book.[26] In other words, the question is discussed as to what extent the

---

24 Fernando L. Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of the Revelation and Inspiration of Scripture* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 412.

25 Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 132.

26 Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, 274.

Revelation of John should be seen as a prophetic book of divine revelation based on real experiences or as a purely literary product.[27]

Some theologians argue that not everything designated as a "vision" in the Revelation is grounded in an actual revelatory experience. At this point, Paul Wendland's comment is characteristic: "A man immersed in the apocalyptic world of images may have also had visionary experiences. However, literary reflection did most of the work in the book."[28] David Aune seems to approach this exact position when he concludes that the visions of the Revelation seem to be "a combination of prophetic experience and literary artifice."[29]

Other voices have developed the so-called "desk hypothesis" (*Schreibtisch-Hypothese*), which proposes that the various visions of the Apocalypse were not the result of direct visionary experiences but were rather processed, reformulated, and recreated at the desk of a bold compiler of diverse and heterogeneous apocalyptic literatures.[30]

Further advancing the literary-critical trajectory, Ian Paul maintains that what is presented is not the vision itself, but rather a carefully composed vision report.[31] In Paul's view, John's literary choices, symbolic in-

---

27 Johannes Lindblom, *Gesichte und Offenbarungen: Vorstellungen von göttlichen Weisungen und übernatürlichen Erscheinungen im ältesten Christentum* (Lund: Gleerup, 1968), 206-239. For a discussion of visionary experience in the apocalypses in general, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 110-114.

28 "Dass ein Mann, der sich in die apokalyptische Bilderwelt eingelebt hat, auch selbst visionäre Erlebnisse gehabt hat, ist möglich. Aber an dem Buche hat schriftstellerische Reflexion das meiste getan" (Paul Wendland, *Die urchristlichen Literaturformen*, HNT 1 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1912], 335).

29 Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, 274. See also David A. deSilva, who acknowledges that, although Revelation is carefully crafted with literary resources, the possibility should not be excluded that it is grounded in John's genuine ecstatic experiences, interpreted and shaped in light of his knowledge of Scripture and the visionary tradition (*Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009], 117-146).

30 Günther Bornkamm, *Göttinger Predigten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 397; Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, 14-16, 118-129; Malina, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 39.

31 Ian Paul, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 20, ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel (Grand Rapids, MI: IVP Academic, 2018), 22-25. See also Fiorenza, *Invitation to the Book of Revelation*, 51.

consistencies, and his reuse and reworking of Old Testament texts and theological concepts indicate a text shaped by theological intent rather than by the direct transmission of visionary experience.[32] Thus, the emphasis shifts from an immediate sensory experience to the rhetorical and theological function of the written word.

By contrast, a more experiential and author-oriented perspective is offered by scholars such as Christopher Rowland, who suggest that a proper approach to the phenomenon of revelation in the book of Revelation must begin by considering what the writer himself affirms about its origin.[33] In Rowland's words: "We should pay John the compliment of accepting his claim unless there are strong reasons for denying it."[34] Of course, such "weighty reasons" could hardly find support in a critical and selective reflection on human tradition without thereby questioning the very essence of the divine revelation of the Revelation.

The Essence of the Revelation of the Book of Revelation

The first lines of the book of Revelation point out that the work is a "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 1,1). If, on the one hand, this phrase means that the work is a revelation mediated by Jesus Christ, the dependent clause that follows it, namely, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς, "which God gave Him," would imply that Jesus is the Revealer of the propositional content of the revelation, and God its sender. Nevertheless, if, on the other hand, the phrase Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is understood as "a revelation about Christ," the statement that "God gave Him"

---

32 *Ibid*., 23.

33 Christopher Rowland, *By an Immediate Revelation: Studies in Apocalypticism, Its Origins and Effects*, WUNT 473 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 400. See also Mathias Rissi, *Alpha und Omega: Eine Deutung der Johannesoffenbarung* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, 1966), 26; Richard Krämer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes in überzeitlicher Deutung* (Wernigerode: Koezle, 1930), 16; Frederick David Mazzaferri, *The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective*, BZAW 54 (New York: de Gruyter, 1989), 300-303; Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Development*, JSNTSup 93 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 71-73, 290; Thomas, "The Spirit in the Book of Revelation," 241-55.

34 Rowland, *Revelation*, 23.

could probably point to the authoritative character of the revelation of the book of Revelation, and not so much to the source of the revelation itself, which, in this case, would be Christ and his acts of salvation in history. Although the first option is mainly preferred for contextual reasons, both meanings correspond with the events and "history of revelation" (*Offenbarungsgeschichte*). As such, it can be said that in Revelation, Jesus Christ is both the revealer and the axial center of revelation.[35]

This epistemological conception of the Revelation presupposes the generation of the entire content of the work through God's self-communication and, in turn, through the self-revelation of the incarnate "Word of God" (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, 19,13), seems to be configured most clearly in the affirmation that this book is the "Word of God" (λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, 1,2; 17,17; 19,9). The same epilogue reaffirms that the cognitive origin of the content of the Revelation lies in "the God of the spirits of the prophets" (22,6). With this, the author reveals the operation of the divine mind, at least at the ontological and epistemological levels of human cognition, and confirms that God can act historically about an individual's life experience and, therefore, influence the development of their *a priori* cognitive categories.

Furthermore, this interpretation of the divine origin of Revelation's cognitive content is strengthened by the legal warning that God will punish those who alter "the words of the book of this prophecy" (22,18.19). No other apocalyptic book employs the "integrity formula" of Revelation 22 to protect the divine authority of its content (*cf.* Deut 4,2; 12,32), and none, before the Revelation and outside the biblical canon, claims to be God's Word.

Although some Greek commentators, such as Democritus (c. 370 BC) and Dio Chrysostom (c. 120 BC), attributed the authorship of Homer's works to divine inspiration, and Chrysostom even compared Homer

---

[35] This double reading of Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ rests on the semantic flexibility of the Greek genitive, which in verbal constructions may be subjective ("revelation given by Jesus Christ"), objective ("revelation about Jesus Christ"), or even "plenary" (intentionally encompassing both nuances). See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 113-121, esp. 120-121.

to a prophet, there is no scriptural evidence in any of Homer's works to support such a claim.[36] Non-canonical Jewish and Greek writers did not attribute divine authorship to their writings. In contrast, canonical Old Testament writers often used the phrase "The Word of Yahweh," as well as its variants, to identify God as the source of their writings and revelatory experiences.[37] Therefore, John's designation of "all that he saw" and heard as the "Word of God" could imply an actual revelatory experience inspired by the same Author who inspired the Old Testament prophets.[38] Being so, it seems logical to conclude that any attempt to analyze the book of Revelation in terms of authentic and inauthentic visions will inevitably yield speculative results.

The Mode of Revelation of the Book of Revelation

From the perspective of the historical-cognitive model, divine revelation, as regards the cognitive origin of Scripture's contents, is situated in the realm of communication between two minds.[39] Quoting Emilio Betti, Canale states that the mind that originates communication produces a variety of "meaning-full forms."[40] These forms may include

> From fleeting speech to fixed documents and mute remainders, from writing to *chiffres* and to artistic symbol, from articulated language to figurative or musical representation, from explanation to active behaviour, from facial expression to ways of bearing and types of character.[41]

---

36 See Chrysostom, *Discourses* 53,1.6.10.

37 See here Paul Avis, *Revelation and the Word of God* (London: T&T Clark, 2024), 29-33; Brian Gregor, "Meaning and Persons: The Ontology of the Word as Revelation," in *Paul Ricoeur, Philosophical Hermeneutics, and the Question of Revelation*, ed. Christina M. Gschwandtner (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2024), 241-263.

38 *Cf*. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 4-5; deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way*, 119; Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB 38A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 213; Duvall, *A Theology of Revelation*, 422.

39 Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 133.

40 *Ibid*.

41 Emilio Betti, "Hermeneutics is the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," in *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy, and Critique*, ed. Josef Bleicher (London: Routledge, 1980), 53.

Based on this premise, it does not impede the cognitive process of considering the propositional revelation of the book of Revelation. Rather, in this book, God is revealed using a variety of meaningful ways, ranging from images and symbols to active behaviors, which, in effect, communicate cognitive contents from the mind of God to the receiving human mind. Below are some of these meaningful forms created by the divine mind.

Visual Representations

One striking feature of the book of Revelation is its profuse use of symbolism, especially vivid and composed symbolism. Already at the beginning of the book, John expresses his intention to report everything that he "has seen" (εἶδεν, 1,2), that is, everything that God "made known" to him through symbols (σημαίνω, 1,1b); with the purpose of "showing" (δεῖξαι, 1,1a) "the things which must soon take place" (1,1), as well as "the things which must happen after this" (1,19). In describing all these things, John repeatedly uses the terms "see" (ἰδού, 4,1.2; 7,9; etc.) and "show" (δείκνυμι, 4,1; 17,1; 21,9.10), which definitively confirms that the dominant mode of communication throughout the book of Revelation is symbols and imagery.

Now we must ask ourselves: How is it possible that the symbolism of the Book of Revelation, while remaining a product of the divine mind, can also reflect human thought, and vice versa? The answer to that question naturally requires a prior philosophical understanding of symbols.

The present study assumes that symbols and images intrinsically have a cognitive component generally constituted in history. Paul Ricoeur expresses the cognitive-constitutive nature of the symbol in the well-known Kantian phrase: "The symbols are food for thought."[42] From Ricoeur's philosophical reflection, this sentence means that the symbol, insofar as it grants, offers a meaning that gives food for thought.[43] So, instead of thinking "behind the symbols" (*derrière les symboles*), Ricoeur advocates

---

42 Paul Ricoeur, *Le Conflit des Interprétations: Essais d'Herméneutique* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 283.

43 *Ibid*.

thinking "from symbols" (à partir des symboles).[44] He concludes that symbols "constitute the revealing background of the word that dwells among men."[45] In short, symbols communicate the content of thoughts through their historical expressiveness.

Avery Dulles explains that

> the symbol has power to evoke more than it can clearly represent because it addresses itself not simply to the senses and the abstractive intelligence, but to the entire human psyche. It works on the imagination, the will, and the emotions, and thus elicits a response from the whole man.[46]

Gadamer, following Heidegger, interprets the symbol's original technical meaning as a kind of passport in ancient times, something with which one recognizes an old acquaintance.[47] Gadamer writes:

> The symbol allows us to recognize something as the host recognised his guest by means of the *tessera hospitalis*. But what is recognition? It is surely not merely a question of seeing something for the second time. Nor does it imply a whole series of encounters. Recognition means knowing something as that with which we are already acquainted.[48]

It follows from the above that the conception of the book of Revelation as a revelation made known through symbols conveys the idea of thought inherent in the symbol, which leads to a thought from it. In other words, divine thought moves through the symbol's historical constitution to the realm in which human reason functions. This is consistent with the psychological and neurobiological teaching that symbols derive their cognitive impact from the ideas and beliefs with which they are associated. For example, the symbol of the sealed book in Revelation 5 impacts the prophet because he recognizes what it represents. This historical

---

44 *Ibid*., 295. "Ma conviction est qu'il faut penser non point derrière les symboles, mais à desde des symboles, selon les symboles, que leur substance est indestructible, qu'ils constituent le fond révélant de la parole qui habite parmi les hommes; bref, le symbole donne à penser."

45 *Ibid*.

46 Avery Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," *Theological Studies* 27 (1966): 2, 3.

47 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Die Aktualität des Schönen: Kunst als Spiel, Symbol und Fest* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977), 41, 42.

48 *Ibid*., 62.

convention of the symbol fulfills the primary condition for the diffusion of the divine mind into the prophet's mind. Thus, God's thoughts manifest in the mode of human cognition and language that permeates the entire book of Revelation.

It might be argued that, from a rhetorical perspective, the symbolism of the book of Revelation could result from literary strategies such as *imitation* or ekphrasis.[49] Such an interpretation, however, would tend to raise questions concerning the extent to which John's visionary experience parallels that of Old Testament prophets and might implicitly challenge the notion of divine agency in generating meaning-full forms. An alternative perspective, drawing on Canale's conceptual framework, suggests that the divine mind is not constrained by the forms available to human cognition but can encompass and create any meaning-full form accessible to the human mind.[50] As Canale puts it: "The lower is not capable of the higher, but the higher is capable of the lower."[51]

Speech Acts

Within the framework of the philosophy of language, John Searle has shown that any form of communication through language involves the performance of speech acts.[52] Acts include making statements, asking

---

[49] Broadly speaking, *imitatio* refers to the intentional use of earlier sources within a later work. As Garrett E. Best explains: "The underlying assumption of *imitatio* is that the works of the classical past possessed an authority and majesty, and the creation of a new impressive work did not arise from sheer innovation, but from the creative interaction with and reworking of the great works of the past" (*Imitatio Ezechielis: The Irregular Grammar of Revelation Reconsidered* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2025], 237-306, esp. 300). *Ekphrasis*, on the other hand, is defined as a rhetorical device that employs descriptive language to vividly bring the object described before the eyes of the listener or reader, transforming listeners into spectators. Robyn J. Whitaker defines it as "to use what is unseen to produce something seen, thus creating a visual representation through the medium of language" (*Ekphrasis, Vision and Persuasion in the Book of Revelation*, WUNT 410 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015], 15). See also Alexander E. Stewart, "Ekphrasis, Fear and Motivation in the Apocalypse of John," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 27 (2017): 227-240.

[50] Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 134.

[51] *Ibid*., 140.

[52] John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Searle builds his philosophy of language

questions, giving orders, making promises, and, more abstractly, referring and preaching.[53] In this sense, says Searle, speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication.[54] Although most systematic theologians view revelation as a linguistic discourse between God and human beings, this is not always understood as a cognitive communication originating from God and received by human beings.

The anthropic notion of revelation, according to which divine speech does not suppose pure and immediate communication, starts from the premises that God has no body and that his word is nothing more than mere human language.[55] However, this anthropomorphic description of the being of God reveals a puerility that is disconcerting. If God is not a personal being, capable of communicating through language with other intelligent beings, then he is inevitably a being lower than a human and, therefore, a God conceived by humanity. In line with Emile Brunner, it is unacceptable to think that a "Supreme Object" gained through a process of abstraction is a more worthy conception of God than the concept of "Person."[56] As Brunner points out, the highest thing known is not the "it," the "thing," but the person.[57]

> We know the person as that which makes itself known to us through speaking to us, through revealing himself in speech. Hence, since God Himself speaks to us, and in so doing manifests Himself to us, the idea of 'person' is the only one which is appropriate to describe Him.[58]

---

based on Austin's theories. See John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975). For a study of speech acts from a theological-philosophical perspective, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 19-201.

53 Searle, *Speech Acts*, 16.

54 *Ibid*.

55 Bernard Ramm, *Special Revelation and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 54.

56 Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 139.

57 *Ibid*., 140.

58 *Ibid*. See, also, Alister E. McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 28-32.

On the other hand, the fact that the word of God is given in human language does not seem to be an argument that should be used to reject the existence of direct cognitive communication between God and humans. On the contrary, the fact that the Word of God is the word of humans confirms that God can communicate with humans in his language. As Anna Cho observes, "the Bible as God's revelation is not a cryptic statement of mystical language."[59] God spoke in human language when God spoke to humans, and in human language, God also spoke at the human level, considering situations, circumstances, culture, and background.[60]

In the book of Revelation, John hears and reports the voice of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit forty-three times.[61] For example, in 1,10-12 and 4,1, John hears the voice of Jesus and associates it with the sound of the trumpet. If this sonorous description of Christ's theophany is a Sinai motif, then John may have a particular purpose in describing his visionary experience in the same theophanic terms of Exodus 19,16.19 and 20,18-19. John apparently wishes to emphasize that the God who had spoken directly to Moses on Mount Sinai is the same God who spoke to him on Patmos and commanded him: "Write in a book what you see" (Rev 1,11).[62] Thus, John's words "are the true words of God" (Rev 19,9; *cf*. 21,5; 22,6).

---

59 Anna Cho, "Revelation as a discourse of language through speech act theory," *Theological Studies* 77 (2021): 33.

60 *Ibid*.

61 Ap 1,8.11.12.17; 2,1.2.7.8.11.12.17.18.24.29; 3,1.6.7.13.14.22; 4,1; 6,6.11; 9,4.14; 10,3.4.8.9.11; 11,1; 14,3.18; 16,1; 18,2.4; 19,5.9; 21,3.5.6; 22,17.20. On the subject of the voice of Jesus in the Apocalypse from a literary point of view, see M. Eugene Boring, "The Voice of Jesus in the Apocalypse of John," *Novum Testamentum* 34 (1992): 334-359.

62 In connection with this, Peter J. Leithart observes: "At Sinai, Israel 'saw' the voice that spoke (Exod. 20:18), and Moses saw the voice (Deut. 7:11; LXX). Israel saw no 'similitude' on the mountain, but 'only a voice' (Deut. 4:12; Douglas 1938: 149). 'Seeing the voice,' John is Moses on Sinai, standing on the mountain before Yahweh, commissioned to write what he sees and hears, and to take it down the mountain (on 'seeing words,' see Isa. 2:1; 13:1; Jer. 23:18; Amos 1:1; Mic. 1:1; Hab. 1:1)" (*Revelation 1-11*, ITC [London: T&T Clark, 2018], 108).

Nonverbal Behavior

While it would not surprise anyone that verbal communication has a cognitive basis, messages transmitted and received non-verbally also have their basis in cognitive processes.[63] Marcel Danesi points out that nonverbal communication is intrinsic to communication *per se* and the creation of meaning in all its dimensions.[64] Nonverbal communication involves discourse elements independent of the referential content of what is expressed, such as bodily activity, gestures, facial expressions, orientation, posture, spacing, touch, smell, etc.[65]

Of the different categories of nonverbal communication, kinesics is the most evident in the New Testament.[66] Kinesthetic studies include hand gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and other body schemas conveying some culturally or socially relevant meaning.[67] In the book of Revelation, for example, John sees God "sitting" (κάθημαι) on his throne. From a kinesthetic perspective of Semitic and Greco-Roman culture, the image of God "sitting on his throne" could evoke concepts of power, authority, stability, and divine judgment. The idea of a throne further reinforces the image of a place of power and sovereign rule.

On the other hand, the folkloric gesture made by the angel of raising his right hand when taking an oath (Rev 10,5-6) would have been easily recognizable to John.[68] Raising one's hand in oath was common in the

---

63 Jessica L. Lakin, "Automatic Cognitive Processes and Nonverbal Communication," in *The SAGE Handbook of Nonverbal Communication*, eds. Valerie Lynn Manusov and Miles L. Patterson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 59.

64 Marcel Danesi, *Understanding Nonverbal Communication: A Semiotic Guide* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), ix.

65 Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics*, vol. 2, Approaches to Semiotics 73 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986), 609.

66 A kinesthetic analysis of the New Testament is found in David M. Calabro, "Nonverbal Communication in the New Testament," in *New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Texts of the New Testament*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2019), 555-572.

67 For a detailed kinesics study, see Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication*, Conduct and Communication 2 (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990). Birdwhistell first coined the term kinesics in 1952.

68 Calabro, "Nonverbal Communication in the New Testament," 558.

first century AD.[69] So it seems that the body language used by God in the Apocalypse is the same as that which has been passed down through generations in Semitic culture. God's adaptation to Semitic forms of nonverbal communication demonstrates his univocal ability to relate to human history and cognition.[70]

At this point, it is pertinent to mention that the generation by God of meaning-full forms does not in any way annul the reason of the receiving agent. On the contrary, as discussed below, God's originating mind seems to allow the free contribution of the receiving mind inspired by the Holy Spirit.

John as a Cognitive Recipient of the Revelation of the Book of Revelation

Nicolai Hartmann observes that a general characteristic of human cognition is its receptive-creative function: "In the cognitive relationship, the subject behaves in a receptive way towards the object. This does not mean that you should be passive. [...] Consciousness can be creatively involved in constructing the image, that is, in its own 'objective' content."[71] The same dynamic is present in the reception of meaning-full forms created by God. Abraham J. Heschel puts it succinctly: "The prophet is responsive, not only receptive."[72]

---

69 *Ibid*. See also D. G. Burke, "Gesture," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 449-450; John J. Pilch, "Gestures," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 499.

70 For discussion of God's adaptation to historical and cognitive contexts, see Jerry H. Gill, "Divine Action as Mediated," *Harvard Theological Review* 80, No. 3 (1987): 369-378; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 2005).

71 Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1941), 47. "Das Subjekt verhält sich in der Erkenntnisrelation prinzipiell rezeptiv zum Objekt. Es braucht deswegen nicht passiv zu sein. Sein Erfassen des Objekts kann Spontaneität enthalten. Aber diese erstreckt sich nicht auf das Objekt als solches, dessen Erfaßtwerden an ihm ja nichts ändert, sondern zielt auf das Bild im Subjekt zurück. Am Aufbau des Bildes, d. h. an seinem eigenen, objektiven Inhalt, kann das Bewußtsein sehr wohl schaffend beteiligt sein."

72 Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2001), 457.

Such interaction is made possible by the prophet's *a priori* cognitive categories, without which he could not receive or process any meaning-full form.[73] Thus, "both the receptive and creative operations of reason are related to the *a priori* categories brought by the cognitive agent to the event of revelation."[74] These *a priori* categories, far from being timeless possessions of the nature of reason or general abstract principles, are based on the prophet's historical experience with the previous revelations of God in the *Lebenswelt*.[75] These prior revelations may include the sayings and writings of other biblical prophets and personal revelations given to the prophet by God in his experience.[76] Thus, "in the moment of vision the prophet, through the possession of previously originated categories, receives and interprets the meaning-full forms created by God."[77]

In the book of Revelation, several case texts seem to support the idea that John the Revealer was not just a passive recipient but also an active contributor in generating the revealed content. The first case text is in Revelation 20,2: "And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years." Note that in this scene, John sees a "dragon," not an "old serpent," nor the "Devil" or "Satan." The sentence τὸν δράκοντα, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὅς ἐστιν Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, "the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan" (v. 2), may be better translated as "the dragon, that ancient snake, who is the devil and Satan."[78] Thus, the designations given to the dragon in the prophetic account could be part of the prophet's categorical history. This shows that John interprets the symbol of the dragon, having as a presupposition the referential sense of "that ancient snake" or "primordial serpent" (NBE) of the account of Genesis 3,1-15 (*cf.* Rev 12,9).

---

73 Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 136.

74 *Ibid.*

75 *Ibid.*

76 *Ibid.*

77 *Ibid.*, 140.

78 See Robert Hanna, *A Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), 454: "The nominative noun ὁ ὄφις is in apposition with the accusative noun τὸν δράκοντα, 'the dragon, that ancient snake' (cf. 1:5)."

The second case text is presented in Revelation 20,4:

> And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Here, John is not told who those who sit on thrones to judge are; however, he seems to identify two groups. The first group consists of "the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God." The second was "those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand."

It should be noted that in the presentation of the first group, most Greek manuscripts omit the verb εἶδον, "I saw." For this reason, it is stated that perhaps the conjunction καί "and" fulfills an epexegetical or explanatory function here.[79] In that case, the conjunction καί can be translated as "that is." So, instead of "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded," a better translation might be: "And I saw thrones, and those given authority to judge sat upon them, *that is*, the souls of those who had been beheaded." In any case, John is not just a passive recipient. John identifies the first group with the souls he had seen under the altar in the vision of the fifth seal (6,9-11). Likewise, considering the vision of the two beasts (13,1-17), he identifies the second group with those who did not worship the beast or its image (20,4b).

Another example of John's receptive-creative function is found in Revelation 4,5b. In this text, John sees "seven lamps of fire" burning before the throne of God, which he interprets as "the seven spirits of God," probably designated in Isaiah 11,2. Also, in Revelation 5,6b, John identifies the "seven eyes" as the "seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth." Furthermore, in this same chapter, John's confession that he wept

---

79 According to David E. Aune, this epexegetical usage defines more closely those whom John saw seated on thrones (*Revelation 17-22*, WBC [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017], 1073).

much because no one in heaven or on earth was able to open the scroll or break its seals (v. 4) suggests that the prophet, through his *a priori* categories, grasps the significance of the vision or at least understands the more profound implications of this situation without needing a heavenly being to explain it to him.

On the other hand, in Revelation 17, when John sees the woman sitting on a scarlet beast, he is literally "astonished with great astonishment"[80] (v. 6, θαῦμα). Ranko Stefanovic states: "The real reason for John's astonishment could be that this seductive woman somehow seemed familiar to him. The fact that he sees her in the wilderness (17,3) might remind him of the other woman he had seen earlier in the vision of Revelation 12."[81] Although this assumption is very logical, John does not explain his astonishment. However, this experience opened a space for interpretation and dialogue (vv. 7-18). The Greek word θαῦμα, "astonishment," expresses in cognitive terms "an attitude of criticism, doubt or even censure and rejection, though it may also express inquisitiveness and curiosity."[82] Such an understanding confirms John's active reception at the time of the vision.

The Inspiration for the Book of Revelation as a Linguistic Process

Having explored the process by which the content of Revelation originated in John's mind, it now remains to investigate how this content was expressed in written form. To achieve this objective, we will analyze in this section the question of the ontology of the language of the Revelation, as well as the sociocultural and personal facets of John's rational *a priori*. We will use the conceptualization idea developed by Langacker as a supporting tool, which includes the profile-base-cognitive domain relationships of the words in the different events of use.

---

80 *Ibid*., 910.

81 Ranko Stefanović, *La revelación de Jesucristo: comentario del libro del Apocalipsis* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2013), 522.

82 Georg Bertram, "θαῦμα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 28.

The Ontology of the Language of the Book of Revelation

Some theologians have emphasized a highly deterministic or free-will perspective in elucidating the relationship between thought and language, divine language, and human language. Theologians who adhere to the determinism of the classical model of inspiration tend to "bypass the human agency because they assume God acts according to the Augustinian-Calvinistic notion of divine, sovereign providence."[83] Vern Poythress, for example, believes that God controls not only an individual's immediate memory of using a word but also the entire process of centuries of English-speaking culture that transmitted that word to him.[84] Thus, for Poythress, God's involvement in the inspired biblical language consists of his exhaustive and absolute control over words and their meaning.[85]

For theologians who hold a free-will view, however, God's involvement in inspired biblical language is primarily a general oversight that enables legitimate human contribution through the free and creative choice of words.[86] In other words, "God is not causing the thoughts or the words, but supervising the process of their free production in the mind of the writers, making certain that the contents are being recorded in a trustworthy way."[87] Thus, far from God controlling the human writing process (inspiration) and miraculously converting it into his cognitive verbal expression, God "adapts" and "adjusts" to imperfect human language and writing patterns.[88] This historical-cognitive understanding of inspiration fits better with the Revelation's linguistic peculiarities and statements.

---

83 Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 393.

84 Vern Sheridan Poytress, *In the Beginning was the Word: Language – A God Centered Approach* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 54.

85 *Ibid*., 39, 40, 51. For an analysis of the ontology of language in Poythress's selected works, see Iriann Marie Hausted, "God's Involvement in Inspired-Biblical Language in Selected Works of Vern Poythress and Fernando Canale," in *Scripture and Philosophy: Essays Honoring the Work and Vision of Fernando Luis Canale*, eds. Tiago Arrais, Kenneth Bergland, and Michael F. Younker (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 2016), 93-108.

86 Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 404, 405.

87 *Ibid*., 407.

88 Canale, "Revelation and Inspiration," 64; Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 129, 140.

For example, some barbarisms and solecisms have been observed in the Greek of the Revelation, including disagreements in case, number, and gender, verbal inconsistencies, and incorrect use of prepositional phrases. Some scholars attribute this phenomenon to John's thinking in Hebrew or Aramaic while writing in Greek.[89] Others suggest that these grammatical irregularities may have been due to John's more excellent command of the vernacular Greek of the time than classical or literary Greek.[90] Others, on the other hand, see the solecisms of the Revelation as possible literary and rhetorical resources used by the writer to transmit the message more effectively.[91] In any case, God did not annul the essential characteristics of the author of the book of Revelation's mode of cognition and language, allowing his creativity and accepting his limitations in communicating divine thought.

Further proof that God allowed John's free contribution to the language of Revelation is evident in John's introductory statement about the circumstances in which he received the revelation (1,4-10). John did not require divine revelation or instruction to know and describe

---

89 See R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), cxliii, cxlv; T. Cowden Laughlin, "The Solecisms of the Apocalypse" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1902), 4, 11-21; Charles C. Torrey, *The Apocalypse of John* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1958), 19, 27, 57; Nigel Turner, *Christian Words* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 24; Gerard Mussies, *The Morphology of the Koine Greek as Used in the Apocalypse of St. John* (Leiden: E. J: Brill, 1985), 66; Henry B. Swete, *Commentary on Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906), cxxiii-cxxiv; Steven Thompson, *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax*, SNTSM 52 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For an analysis of the different perspectives on the language of Revelation, see Allen Dwight Callahan, "The Language of Apocalypse," *Harvard Theological Review* 88 (1995): 453-470.

90 James H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908), 9; Stanley E. Porter, "The Language of the Apocalypse in Recent Discussion", *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 582-603.

91 C. G. Ozanne, "The Language of the Apocalypse", *Tyndale House Bulletin* 16 (1965): 3-9; Laurențiu F. Moț, *Morphological and Syntactical Irregularities in the Book of Revelation: A Greek Hypothesis*, LBS 11 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2015), 107-201; Laurențiu F. Moț, "Semitic influence in the use of New Testament Greek prepositions: The case of the Book of Revelation", *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics* 6 (2017): 44-66; Martin Karrer, *Die Johannesoffenbarung: Einleitung und Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1-5,14* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 94; Best, *Imitatio Ezechielis*, 1-113.

these circumstances or even include them in the book. Still, he did require God's guidance and supervision throughout the writing process (inspiration).

On the other hand, in the book of Revelation, it is notable that John lacks the adequate vocabulary to describe his visions accurately. This is reflected in the frequent use of terms such as ὅμοιος, "like," and ὡς, "as."[92] Since this lexical limitation is primarily due to the significance and complexity of the symbols that John is attempting to convey, it is logical to assert that John composed the book of Revelation within the cognitive confines of his human limitations. This historical-cognitive conception departed from the classical/deterministic vision of an ontology of language inseparable from the ontology of God and intended to elevate the inspired writer's linguistic and cognitive capacities.

The Essence of the Inspiration of the Book of Revelation

According to the historical-cognitive model, the essence of inspiration is historical-linguistic. It is historical in the sense that God condescends to work with human beings directly at the level of general and personal history, and it is linguistic because inspiration pours God's thoughts into the linguistic mold of human writing. Of course, the essence of inspiration also has a cognitive component, namely language, which is intrinsically linked to the individual's cognition.[93] As Fathi Malkawi explains,

> Language serves thought when an individual needs to express his or her thought and bring it out into the linguistic realm, where the idea becomes a subject of communication. At the same time, thought serves language in helping choose the most accurate articulation and terminology that best expresses meaning.[94]

---

92 The term ὅμοιος, "alike," appears 45 times in the NT, with Revelation being the book that uses it most. On the other hand, the comparative particle ὡς, "as," is used 504 times in the NT, with Revelation being the second book in frequency of use (58x), only surpassed by Acts (62x).

93 Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 402-404.

94 Fathi Hasan Malkawi, *Mapping Intellectual Building and the Construction of Thought and Reason* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2020), 137.

This historical-linguistic process of inspiration involves a harmonious cooperation between divine and human agencies. While the prophet actively contributes using his finite cognitive and linguistic abilities, God participates not only by historically supervising the production of Scripture but also by directly intervening when necessary. Below are some examples of divine oversight and assistance in the inspiration process of the Revelation.

The Mode of Inspiration of the Book of Revelation

According to Canale, God's intervention in the linguistic process of inspiration manifests itself in two main patterns: a general pattern of historical supervision that encompasses all of Scripture, and an occasional, remedial and corrective pattern of historical intervention. One of the remedial and corrective patterns of direct intervention that God probably used in the inspiration of the book of Revelation is granting an "additional revelation."[95] Such a revelation refers to the content that God can impress on the prophet's mind while he writes some divine message or a vision previously received. Thus, while writing the Scriptures, no words may be audible to the prophet's ears, but they are spoken to his mind.

From a cognitive linguistics perspective, "speaking to the mind" can be understood as a form of direct conceptual processing, wherein the prophet receives information in an internal linguistic format through cognitive models or sensory simulations, bypassing conventional auditory perception. This phenomenon is analogous to the mental reconstruction of a familiar voice or the internal "hearing" of a melody, even in the absence of an external auditory stimulus.

---

[95] Among the remedial and corrective patterns of the direct intervention of God, Canale highlights the following: (a) "An aid to Memory," (b) "selection of literary sources," (c) "New revelation" or "additional revelation," and (d) "overruling prophetic thinking" (*The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 407-412).

In harmony with this, and taking into account the visual-auditory form of the revelations of the book of Revelation,[96] it is highly significant that during the vision of Revelation 20, no divine or heavenly agent tells John when the redeemed would reign with Christ (as is the case with the prophetic periods described in Daniel [7,23.25; 8,14; 9,22.24; 12,7-12] or in the book of Revelation itself [9,4a.5; 11,1-3; *cf*. 12,6.14]). However, he affirms they will reign with Christ for a thousand years. This factor suggests that an "additional revelation" may have been given to John while he was writing down the vision. John Walvoord points out at this point: "John visually saw the angel bind Satan and cast him into the pit. But John could not see how long Satan was to be bound, or the purpose of the binding. This was given to John by divine revelation that constituted the interpretation of the vision."[97] If so, the data that the reign of Christ with his saints will last a thousand years does not derive from the author or from the surrounding ideas of the time; instead, it constitutes an "additional revelation" given to the prophet through the remedial and corrective pattern of God's direct intervention in the process of inspiration.

Another example of divine oversight and assistance in the process of inspiration is found in Revelation 10,3-4. This passage mentions that John "was about to write" what the seven thunders uttered. However, a voice from heaven explicitly ordered him: "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not" (v. 4). This episode indicates that God was directly involved in writing the book of Revelation, which ensures the proper representation of divine thoughts in the book. As demonstrated by the following cognitive analysis of the use of the word γράψο in the book of Revelation.

---

96 Boring notes 91 instances in the Apocalypse "in which John hears and reports the voice of Jesus or of some other heavenly being as a member of the cast, a voice which remains contained in the vision and is not directed immediately to the churches of Asia Minor" ("The Voice of Jesus in the Apocalypse of John," 337).

97 John F. Walvoord et al., *Revelation*, JWPC (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2011), 334.

Cognitive Analysis of γράφω in the Book of Revelation

The verb γράφω appears 412 times in biblical Greek, including γραπτός in Romans 2,15. The standard Greek lexicons gloss γράφω with meanings such as "write," "record," "compose," "redact," "engrave," and "draw."[98] In the New Testament, this term is found 192 times. Approximately 91% (174 times) of these instances refer to prophetic or epistolary writings. In particular, the book of Revelation contains 29 occurrences of γράφω—the highest frequency of this verb in any New Testament book. Of the 12 verb forms of γράφω in Revelation, γράψον is the most common form in the book (41%, aorist active imperative), followed by γεγραμμένον (21%, perfect passive participle). The cognitive categories and domains of both verbal forms manifest God's condescension within John's sociocultural and personal *a priori*.

Cognitive Categories and Domains of γεγραμμένον and γράψον

An analysis of the use of γεγραμμένον in the LXX shows that this term denotes the absolute validity of what is written, both in royal and legal terms.[99] G. Schrenk explains that this validity is based on Yahweh's binding authority as King and Lawgiver.[100] This meaning can also be seen in the book of Revelation, where the βιβλίον γεγραμμένον, "written book" (5,1), has a strong legal sense, as it is related to a sealed document. "Legal documents were sealed, often with roughly six seals imprinted with

---

98 See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 395-396; and Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and Felix W. Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 206-207.

99 T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 136-137. The entry for γράφω notes that the verb can denote inscribing on a hard surface, such as πλάκας λιθίνας γεγραμμένας τῷ δακτύλῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, "stone tablets inscribed by God's finger" (Exod 31,18), as well as recording authoritative decrees or visions (γράψον ὅρασιν, Hab 2,2). The semantic range thus reflects both the physical act of engraving and the authoritative, binding character of what is written—particularly in legal or covenantal contexts.

100 Gottlob Schrenk, "γράφω, γραφή, γράμμα, ἐγγράφω, προγράφω, ὑπογραμμός," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:748-749.

the attestations of the same number of witnesses."[101] This format—common for contracts and wills—was popularized in Roman documents and found in Jewish texts from Palestine.[102] Likewise, the ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον "a new name engraved" (2,17) refers to a legal context. In the Greco-Roman world, it was common to use a white stone to indicate that a person had been vindicated in court.[103] This practice was also used in voting to indicate acceptance and in honorific contexts to represent victory and recognition.

Thus, the linguistic unity of the Greek γεγραμμένον outlines the conceptual entity of [LEGAL DOCUMENT] and [HONORIFIC ENGRAVING]. This profile includes the conceptual basis of [DOCUMENTS SEALED WITH MULTIPLE SEALS], [LEGAL FUNCTION], [VICTORY], and [HONOR]. The domain in which this profile-base relationship appears is, among others, that of [ROMAN JURISPRUDENCE] and [HONORIFIC DIMENSION].

Since this conceptual background was present in the *a priori* John's rationale (since it was part of the sociocultural idiosyncrasy of his time), it is possible to deduce that in the inspiration of the book of Revelation, God adapted his way of thinking to the dynamic relationships of human words, linking his revelations with routines or culturally rooted schemes in the *Lebenswelt* of the prophet. In this way, divine thought permeated the words through which the revelation of the book of Revelation was communicated to the world.[104]

Concerning γράψον, an almost exclusive use of this form is observed in prophetic or apocalyptic texts. Specifically, of the 24 occurrences of γράψον in biblical Greek, 21 occur in a cognitive domain of prophecy, as shown in the following table.[105]

---

101 Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 739.

102 *Ibid*.

103 Koester, *Revelation*, 263.

104 See Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 405.

105 According to Langacker (*Cognitive Grammar*, 70), when a relationship is outlined, different degrees of prominence are conferred on its participants. The most prominent participant, the

Text	Agent	Trajector	Relationship	Landmark	Cognitive Domain
Exod 34,27	God	\Μωυσῆς\ (Moses)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα\ (these words)	Covenant
Hab 2,2	God	\ὁ προφήτης\ (the prophet)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\ὅρασιν\ (vision)	Prophecy
Isa 8,1	God	\ὁ προφήτης\ (the prophet)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\τόμον καινοῦ μεγάλου\ (large new roll)	Prophecy
Isa 30,8	God	\ὁ προφήτης\ (the prophet)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\πυξίου\ (board) and \βιβλίον\ (book)	Prophecy/ Document preservation
Jer 22,30	God	\ὁ προφήτης\ (the prophet)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον\ (this man)	Prophecy/ Court registration
Jer 37,2	God	\ὁ προφήτης\ (the prophet)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\πάντας τοὺς λόγους\ (all words)	Prophecy
Jer 43,2	God	\ὁ προφήτης\ (the prophet)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\χαρτίον βιβλίου\ (book scroll)	Prophecy/ Document preservation
Jer 43,28	God	\ὁ προφήτης\ (the prophet)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\χαρτίον ἕτερον\ (another scroll)	Prophecy
Ezek 24,2	God	\ὁ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου\ (son of man)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\εἰς ἡμέραν\ (on a specific day)	Prophecy/ Chronicle prophetic
Ezek 37,16	God	\ὁ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου\ (son of man)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\ῥάβδον\ (stick)	Prophecy/ Distinctive inscription
Luke 16,6.7	A religious administrator	\ὁ χρεώστης\ (the debtor)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\τὰ γράμματα\ (document)	Legal document
Rev 1,11	Jesus	\ὁ Ἰωάννης\ (John)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\εἰς βιβλίον\ (in a book)	Prophecy
Rev 1,19	Jesus	\ὁ Ἰωάννης\ (John)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\ἃ εἶδες\ (what you saw)	Prophecy

trajector (tr), is the central entity or focus of the profiled relationship. The other participant, the landmark, becomes prominent as a secondary focus.

Rev 2,1.8.12.18; 3,1.7.14	Jesus	\ὁ Ἰωάννης\ (John)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\τῷ ἀγγέλῳ\ (to the angel)	Letter/ prophecy
Rev 14,13	God	\ὁ Ἰωάννης\ (John)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ\ (blessed are the dead)	Prophecy
Rev 19,9	An angel	\ὁ Ἰωάννης\ (John)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\μακάριοι οἱ εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου\ (blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb)	Prophecy
Rev 21,5	God	\ὁ Ἰωάννης\ (John)	\γράψον\ (writes)	\οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί\ (these faithful and true words)	Prophecy

In most of these different usage events, God's direct involvement in the writing process of Scripture is evident. In particular, it is notable that of the twelve times John is commanded to write (γράψον), eleven come from a divine agent and only one time from an angel commissioned by God. Thus although in the book of Revelation, the subject of the active form of γράφω is John, the subject of the imperative mood is God. Therefore, God must be recognized as directly involved from beginning to end in the writing of the book of Revelation.

Conclusion

This epistemological investigation has demonstrated that the revelation-inspiration of the book of Revelation is best understood through an integrated historical-cognitive framework that accounts for its fully divine and fully human nature. Grounded in the premise that God, acting within the space-time scope of human history, generated the cognitive content of Revelation through the modes, characteristics, and limitations of human cognition and language, this study affirms that divine and human activities were continuously present throughout the entire revelation-inspiration process. Drawing on Langacker's Cognitive Grammar and Canale's historical-cognitive model, it shows that both the cognitive content and linguistic form of Revelation emerge within the prophet's *Lebenswelt*, embedding divine thought in human symbolic, linguistic, and cultural structures.

By employing analytical categories such as cognitive domains, profile-base relationships, and speech acts, this study further reveals that revelation in the Apocalypse functions as a dynamic communicative event in which divine agency operates through the prophet's active cognitive engagement. This participatory perspective circumvents both reductionist determinism and anthropocentric subjectivism by framing revelation not as a unilateral transmission but as a dialogical act situated within human cognition and history. Accordingly, the revelation-inspiration of the book of Revelation can be rightly understood as a source of theological data that is both linguistic-cognitive and historical.