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**THE LITURGICAL-PASCHAL DIMENSION
OF THE VISIONS DEPICTED IN
THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

(SUMMARY)

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KEY WORDS: liturgical elements, liturgic dialogue, Sanctus,
Paschal liturgy, hymns, white garments, doxology, sealing

I. Preliminaries

The first contact with the Book of Revelation is extremely challenging. On the one hand, its reading is attractive, exerting a mysterious spell, the reader instantly connecting with the writer, reliving his religious experiences intensely with him. On the other hand, we experience an overwhelming feeling: we are faced with bold, almost hyperbolic images, we witness the strangest cosmic shocks, angelic and demonic beings perishing before our eyes in a fight without armistice, and, in the end, presenting us with a splendid endless „heavenly liturgy”. The symbolism is present everywhere, but rather difficult to understand.

The relationship between the heavenly cult described by the author in the Book of Revelation and the variety of earthly liturgies he may have known, has been the subject of research of several specialists. Six possibilities have been proposed regarding the relationship of the celestial cult presented in the Revelation with the earthly liturgies:

1. The heavenly cult in the book of Revelation is modeled on the earthly Liturgy that the author and his community knew about. This interpretation was supported by Massey Hamilton Shepherd Jr. who brings forward the hypothesis that the structure of the book would have been based on the sketch of an early Paschal Liturgy¹.
2. The heavenly cult is conceived by the author as an idealized version of the earthly Liturgy, a hypothesis that Otto Alfred Piper includes it in his exposure².
3. The heavenly worship presented in the book of Revelation has nothing to do with the earthly liturgy of the Church, but it is based on oral and literary Jewish traditions regarding heavenly worship.
4. The description of the heavenly „Throne Chamber” in the Revelation is based on the lavish description of the ancient Throne Halls of the Middle East, as supported by David

¹ Massey Hamilton Jr. Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse*, coll. „Ecumenical Studies in Worship”, 6, John Knox Press, Richmond, 1960.

² Otto Alfred Piper, „The Apocalypse of John and the Liturgy of Ancient Church”, in *Church History*, 20, no. 1 (martie), published by Cambridge University Press, 1951, pp. 10-22.

Edward Aune³ or of the Roman Imperial Court ceremonial, an idea advanced by Lucetta Mowry⁴. The two researchers argue that the author's purpose is to present God as the true king and subject of worship, not the earthly king whose worship is illegitimate.

5. Klaus-Peter Jörnssupports the theory according to which the scenes of the celestial cult are the author's own literary composition. He considers that the hymns of the Revelation do not come from the early Christian liturgies, but provide for the reader, rather, the narrative function of interpreting the events that appear simultaneously on earth⁵.
6. The whole book is a liturgy. This theory is supported by Carlo Manunza. He points out that the Revelation was not created for an individual reading, but for oral proclamation before a listening congregation. C. Manunza's work, especially the chapter entitled „*Verbal expressios of the Liturgy*” present in the Revelation, notes that the Book of Revelation begins and ends with a „liturgical dialogue”, which makes it reasonable that the whole book should be a liturgy the theologian believes.

Throughout time there have been several researchers who have tried to explain⁶ the liturgical and sacramental elements of the Book of Revelation and to understand if its liturgical

³ David Edward Aune, „Revelation 5 as an Ancien Egyptian Enthronement Scene? The Origin and Development of a Scholarly Myth”, in *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic in Early Christianity*, coll. „WUNT”, 199, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 1999, pp. 233-239.

⁴ Lucetta Mowry, „Revelation 4-5 and Early Christian Liturgical Usage”, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 71, no. 2, Jun. 1952, pp. 75-84.

⁵ Klaus-Peter Jörnss, *Das Hymnische Evangelium: Untersuchungen zu Aufbau, Funktion und Herkunft der Hymnische Stücke in der Johannesoffenbarung*, coll. „Studien zum Neuen Testament”, 5, Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh, 1971.

⁶ O. A. Piper, „The Apocalypse of John...”, pp. 10-22; L. Mowry, „Revelation 4-5...”, pp. 75-84; Allen Cabaniss, „A Note on the Liturgy of the Apocalypse”, in *Interpretation*, 7, 1953, pp. 78-86; M. H. Jr. Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy...*, pp. 1-99; Pierre Prigent, *Apocalypse et Liturgie*, coll. „Cahiers Théologiques”, 52, Editions Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel (Suisse), 32 Grenelle, Paris VII^e, 1964; K.-P. Jörnss, *Das Hymnische Evangelium...*, pp. 1-206; Édouard Cothenet, „Liturgie Terrestre et Liturgie Céleste d'après L'Apocalypse”, in *Exégèse et Liturgie*, coll. „Lectio divina”, 133, Edition du Cerf, Paris, 1988, pp. 263-286; David Edward Aune, „The Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John”, in *Biblical Research*, 28, 1983, pp. 5-26; Carlo Manunza, *L'Apocalisse come „actio liturgica” cristiana – Studio esegetico-teologico di Ap 1, 9-16; 3, 14-22; 13, 9-10; 19, 1-8*, Roma, 2012.

use⁷ was possible. Using the results of these researchers, we express our hope that we will be able to bring more light in understanding these aspects. Throughout the paper we will explore the sources that the author of the book of Revelation used to describe the heavenly cult. Jewish and Christian liturgical practices, contemporary of the book of Revelation, Jewish apocalyptic literature and Old Testament literature, images of the Throne Chamber in the ancient Middle East, the Roman Imperial Court ceremony, or the author's own imagination, can be sources for this description. We will consider the following aspects:

- analysing and establishing the liturgical-paschal dimension of the visions described in the book of Revelation;
- identifying and analysing the liturgical and sacramental elements in the text of the Revelation and establishing to what extent they support the liturgical character of the book;
- determining if a liturgical structure and material can be identified behind the book of Revelation;
- making a balance, if possible, between the two extreme points of view stated in the Preliminaries: on one hand the celestial cult of Revelation is a fictitious composition by the author, while on the another hand the one according to which the celestial cult of Revelation would be a copy of the earthly Liturgy that the author knew about. Revelation was hence called „*the most liturgical book of the New Testament*”⁸. The accounts of the Revelation cannot be mere literary compositions. In order to be understood by the public as a „heavenly liturgy” or a scene of heavenly worship, there had to be elements in the text familiar to the

⁷ Erik Peterson, *The Angels and the Liturgy*, trans. by Ronald Walls, Herder and Herder, New York, 1964; Günther Bornkamm, „The Anathema in the Early Christian Lord's Supper Liturgy”, in *Early Christian Experience*, trans. by P. L. Hammer, SCM Press, London, 1969, pp. 169-176; Geoffrey J. Cuming, „Service-Endings in the Epistles”, in *NTS*, 22, 1975-1976, pp. 110-113; Ugo Vanni, „Liturgical Dialogue as a Literary Form in the Book of Revelation”, in *New Testament Studies*, 37, 1991, pp. 348-372; Michael Aelred Kavanagh, *Apocalypse 22:6-21 as Concluding Liturgical Dialogue*, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma, 1984, pp. 1-241; David L. Barr, „The Apocalypse as Oral Enactment”, in *Interpretation*, 40, 1986, pp. 243-256;

⁸ Thomas F. Torrance, „Liturgie et Apocalypse”, in *Verbum Caro*, XI, no. 41, 1957, pp. 28-40; Gerhard Delling, „Zum gottesdienstlichen Stil der Johannes-Apokalypse”, in *Novum Testamentum*, III, 1959, pp. 107-137; Leonard Thompson, „Cult and Eschatology in the Apocalypse”, in *The Journal of Religion*, 49, 1969, pp. 330-350; Panagiotis Bratsitis, „L'Apocalypse de saint Jean dans le culte de l'Eglise grecque orthodoxe”, in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, 42, 1962, pp. 116-121;

public, corresponding to the reality, which would make the description clear. On the other hand, even though the scenes in the Book of Revelation contain elements of Jewish and Christian first century worship, as well as elements found in the Throne Chamber of the Near East or in the ceremonial of the Roman Imperial Court, however, some of these descriptions bear the stamp of the author's originality, the aim being to present in an ideal form the appropriate cult for the „heavenly liturgy”.

- throughout the exegesis, the six positions presented in the Preliminaries will be critically analyzed; we will see to what extent we can know certain aspects of the worship related to the Early Church. It is important to develop a methodology that examines liturgical evidence, refutes some hypotheses, and highlights what we can say for sure about primary liturgical practices, especially early liturgical practices, such as hymns and doxologies, the use of the Sanctus hymn, and that of the incense;
- analysing what was the teaching about heaven at the moment when the book of Revelation was written, especially what were the Jewish traditions about heaven as a place where God is seated in the royal temple, presiding over the divine Council and being worshipped. It is necessary to see what was the concept of heaven in the Jewish apocalyptic literature, including: *1 Enoch 1-36*, *1 Enoch 37-71*, *Levi Testament*, *2 Enoch*, *3 Baruch* and *The Revelation of Abraham*. The Qumran texts must be taken into account, especially *The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* to understand what traditions were used in contemporary Jewish and apocalyptic literature for the description of God in the heavenly „Throne Chamber” and what is the original creation of the author of Revelation;
- identifying the author's sources for the description of the heavenly worship, focusing on what can be derived from an early service of Christian worship. The analysis of the book, the exegesis on the text, chapters four and five especially, will give us this opportunity. We will examine the hymns of Revelation, the opening text and the final text that Ugo Vanni⁹, Michael Aelred Kavanagh¹⁰ and Carlo Manunza¹¹ called them „liturgical dialogues” between the reader and the congregation. The examining of these texts will help us to see if we can

⁹ U. Vanni, „Liturgical Dialogue...”, pp. 348-372.

¹⁰ M. A. Kavanagh, *Apocalypse 22:6-21*..., pp. 1-241.

¹¹ C. Manunza, *L'Apocalisse come „actio liturgica” cristiana*..., pp. 19-33.

postulate a liturgical framework for this book, if we can identify the elements of the primary Christian worship and the biblical and extra-biblical traditions related to heaven;

- establishing whether the author's intention was for the Revelation to be read as a liturgy or as a part of it. This issue of The Book of Revelation read as part of a liturgy is different from that of the Revelation which is based on a liturgy. The two aspects have not yet been clearly differentiated in the literature. The Book of Revelation was written for the purpose of being read aloud in church meetings, as it can be clearly understood from the very first blessing presented in the book (Rev 1, 3);
- establishing to what extent the Jewish synagogue worship in the first century influenced the worship of the early Church and the Book of Revelation;

Regarding the research activity, in order to achieve the objectives mentioned above, we intend to analyse some of the most well-known patristic¹² and modern¹³ commentaries to the text

¹² St. Andrew of Caesarea, *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου*, PG 106, 210-457; Sf. Andrei, Arhiepiscopul Cezareei Capadociei, *Tălmăcire la Apocalipsă, tălmăcire îndreptată de Florin Stuparu*, Sophia, București, 2007; ΑΡΕΘΑΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, *Συλλογὴ ἐξηγήσεων ἐκ διαφόρων ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν εἰς τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ ἡγαπημένου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου*, PG 106, 493-785; St. Victorinus of Poetovium, *Commentarius in Apocalypsim*, in: J. Hausleiter ed., *Victorinus Episcopi Petavionensis Opera*, coll. „Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum”, 49, Freytag, Leipzig, 1916; Oikoumenios, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς Ἀποκαλυψεως τοῦ θεσπεσίου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ καὶ θεολόγου Ἰωάννου*, in: H. C. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1928; Origen, *Σχόλια εἰς Ἀποκάλυψιν*, coll. „ΒΕΠΕΣ”, 17, pp. 134-160 and in C. Diobouniotis & A. Harnack, *Der Scholien-Kommentar des Origenes zur Apokalypse-Johannis*, coll. „Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur”, 38, 3, Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1911; St. Neophyte the Locked, *Commentary on Revelation*, in B. ΕΓΓΛΕΖΑΚΗ, „Ανέκδοτον υπόμνημα του οσίου Νεοφύτου του Εγκλείστου εις την Αποκάλυψη”, in *Επετηρίς του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*, III, Nicosia, 1975-1977 and in ΑΓ. ΝΕΟΦΥΤΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΓΚΛΕΙΣΤΟΥ, *Συγγράματα*, vol. III, Pafos, 1999, pp. 212-247.

¹³ Ernest-Bernard Allo, *Saint Jean, L'Apocalypse*, coll. „Études Bibliques”, Gabalda, Paris, 1933; David Edward Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, coll. „Word Biblical Commentary”, 52a, Word Books, Dallas, 1997; David Edward Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, coll. „WBC”, 52b, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1998; David Edward Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, coll. „WBC”, 52c, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1998; Savvas Agouridis, *Comentariu la Apocalipsa Sfântului Ioan*, Ed. Bizantină, București, 2004; Cristian Bădiliță, *Noul Testament – Apocalipsa lui Ioan – ediție bilingvă. Traducere inedită și comentariu*, Ed. Adevărul Holding, București, 2012; Gregory K. Beale *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, coll. „The New International Greek Testament Commentary”, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U. K. & The Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1999; George

of the book of the Revelation, as well as to specialized works that analyse the visions described from both a liturgical and a sacramental point of view.

We will use the diachronic method, following the semantic evolution over time of some terms in different texts on the same topic, as well as the synchronical method, trying to establish the meaning of some ideas-terms of the same period. We will also use the comparative method through which we will try to establish connections and logical deductions between different

R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, coll. „New Century Bible Commentary”, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London 1974; Joseph Bonsirven, *L'Apocalypse de saint Jean. Traduction et commentaire*, coll. „Verbum Salutis”, XVI, Beauchesne, Paris, 1951; M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation*, coll. „Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for teaching and Preaching”, John Knox Press; Louisville, 1989; G. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John Divine*, coll. „Harper's/Black's New Testament Commentaries”, Harper & Row, London and New York, 1966 (2nd 1969); Lucien Cerfaux, Jules Cambier, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean lué aux chrétiens*, coll. „Lectio Divina”, 17, Cerf, Paris, 1955; Robert Henry Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John with Introduction, Notes and Indices, also the Greek Text and English Translation*, coll. „International Critical Commentary”, 2. vol, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1920; J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, coll. „Anchor Yale Bible Commentary”, 38, Doubleday, New York, 1975; Charles Homer Giblin, *The Book of Revelation. The Open Book of Prophecy*, coll. „Good News Studies”, 34, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1991; Martin Kiddle, M. K. Ross, *The Revelation of St. John*, coll. „The Moffatt New Testament Commentary”, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1940; George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1972; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, coll. „Handbuch zum Neuen Testament”, 16, Tübingen, 1926, neu herausgegeben von Günter Bornkamm, Mohr-Siebeck, Tübingen, 3rd 1970; Edmondo Lupieri, *Apocalisse di Giovanni*, Milano, 1999; Daniel Mihoc, *Apocalipsa Sfântului Ioan. Introducere, traducere și comentariu*, vol. I, Ed. Astra Museum, Sibiu, 2015; Pr. Dr. Ioan Mircea, *Apocalipsa. Introducere, note și comentariu*, Ed. Harisma, București, 1995; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, coll. „New International Commentary on the New Testament”, William Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U. K., 1977, revised edition: 1998; Pierre Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, édition revue et augmentée, coll. „Commentaire du Nouveau Testament”, XIV, deuxième série, Éditions Labor et Fides, Genève, 2000; John Sweet, *Revelation*, coll. „SCM Pelican Commentaries”, SCM Press, London 1979; Leonard I. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation. Apocalypse and Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990; Arthur Wainwright, *Mysterious Apocalypse. Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1993.

terminological elements, ideas or events that could shed more light on the events that are subject of this research. In direct relation to the comparative method is the methodological interpretation method which is also part of our research strategy. We will try to establish links between certain liturgical-paschal, sacramental-Christian elements and the symbolism they have in Judaism or even in certain mystery cults.

II. SACRAMENTAL-LITURGICAL ELEMENTS IN THE PROLOGUE AND LETTERS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION (1-3)

In the second part of our research we set out to identify and analyse the numerous liturgical and sacramental allusions in the seven Letters of the book of Revelation. Using the diachronic, comparative, but also typological method, we will follow the semantic evolution of some terms such as: tree of life (2, 7), candlestick (2, 5), crown of life (2, 10), hidden manna (2, 17), new name (2, 17), morning star (2, 28), white garments (3, 4). We will see what is the meaning of the terms in Judaism or even in certain mystery cults (eg. the crown given to those initiated into the mysteries of Isis). The verse from Rev 1, 3: «*Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ εἰρημαμένα, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς*» shows that Revelation was written to be read out loud. The aspect of orality implies a different attitude as that to a word read in silence, even having changes of meaning, especially in the Liturgy. The listeners can only be members of the liturgical gathering. The specific orality of the Book of Revelation is a liturgical feature. The „initial liturgical dialogue” (1, 4-8) and the numerous liturgical allusions in the Letters to the seven Churches are elements that support the liturgical character of the text of the book.

The text at the beginning of the book (Rev 1, 4-8) was called by Ugo Vanni "*liturgical dialogue*", the dialogue being one of the literary forms through which the Liturgy is expressed. John's writing is intended to be read in liturgical gatherings¹⁴, the revelation actually touching each and every one of the Christians to whom it is intended: «Blessed is he who reads and listens to the words of the prophecy» (Rev 1, 3). We notice that the text refers to what exactly happens

¹⁴ Lect. Dr. Daniel Mihoc, „Elemente de teologie sacramentală în Apocalipsa Sfântului Ioan”, în: Pr. Marian Vild, Pr. Cosmin Pricop, Diac. Alexandru Mihăilă (eds.), *Lucrările Simpozionului „Identitatea ortodoxă a studiilor biblice” – București, 11-12 nov. 2016*, Editura Universității din București, București, 2017, (pp. 131-148), p. 132.

when listening it read out loud. The Book of the Revelation was written with the intention to be read in public, not as a private reading. There are different relationships between a word read in silence and a word read aloud and listened to by others, with implications even at the level of meaning, especially in the Liturgy. The text and message of the Book of the Revelation are designed for orality. Being read aloud, the seven Letters have an impact not only on the owner of the text, but also on the listeners who are members of the liturgical gathering. The hagiographer's message comprises not only what the recipient of the book will hear, but it also includes what he can perceive and live. The gestures described, the testimony it gives, the pressure it exerts on the recipient, must be taken into account during the exegesis. The alternation or sometimes the gesture-word overlap is specific to the Liturgy. In a public reading, the pauses and parentheses generated by solecisms, combined with changes in the tone of voice, help to better understand the meanings and solemnities of expressions.

The Letters to the seven Churches - representative of all types of local Churches - are a proper preface to the Book of Revelation. Meant to examine the members of the Churches concerning the "baptism of fire" at the coming of the great day, these letters are a call to go together through the ordeal of the death to-come.

The vision takes place on Sunday, the Day of the Lord, the day of the resurrection which is relived in the liturgical gathering.

The numerous sacramental references present in the book also highlight the liturgical character of the visions described.

The expression „*the tree of life*” (Rev 2, 7) is also found in Judaism. The baptized person is taken to paradise, where he tastes from the forbidden fruit of Adam. Most of the oldest fathers of the Church, understand the symbol of *the tree of life* and paradise as referring to the inaugurated realities Christians have already internalised. Both *the tree of life* and *the candlestick* are symbols of God's presence. The tree of life is the prototype of Christ, the One who will make those who remain unchanged in the faith partakers in the fulfillment of the latter¹⁵. Part of the theology of early Christianity states with certainty that the believer is restored to Eden, and this through the Holy Sacraments.

¹⁵ Pr. Ioannis Skiadaresis, *Apocalipsa Sfântului Ioan Teologul. Cele dintâi și cele de pe urmă în dialog*, trad. din limba greacă de Dr. Nicolae Burăș, Doxologia, Iași, 2014, p. 98.

The crown of life that Christians who do not step back from martyrdom will receive is an allusion to a baptismal practice, that of wearing the crown received by the newly baptized. The text of Rev 2, 10 shows that the crown is a reward given at the moment of death, but anticipated in part even from now, because in Rev 3, 11, the Philadelphians are commanded: «... *keep what you have, so that no one will take your crown* ». The victorious Christian is already in paradise and he is there undoubtedly through his Baptism.

The text of Rev 2, 17, which speaks of *the hidden manna*, may well be situated at the borderline of two traditions: thus, from Judaism it takes the idea of the hidden manna and the idea of its giving it back again by the Messiah into the new world, and from the Christian tradition, especially from John, it takes a Eucharistic typology. For the third time, the endings of the Letters to the Churches use a symbolic language or, rather, use traditional metaphors that express gifts conferred through the Holy Sacraments. The promise of *the hidden manna* is only a metaphorical image of communion that will exist at the end of time, identifying with Christ.

The white pebble that the victorious Christian will receive is the image of the righteousness of the saints who would not make compromises and did not defile themselves (Rev 3, 4), as a result of which they were absolved. Everywhere in the Book of Revelation, „white” is the metaphor for justice or righteousness.

The new name is a Christological and baptismal seal. The name given to the overcomer is the same as that of the Savior and his Lord. The Christian is with Christ in such close communion that he participates equally to the title of the Lord; the Christian bears the seal of the Lord; it is in himself and not in the idolized emperor. Calling the name of Jesus was an essential element of the worship of the early Christians. Moreover, it seems that the first confessions of faith were centered on the recognition and acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord¹⁶. One of the foremost important occasions of this confession, by which the Christian rejects the imperial claim and recognizes Jesus Christ as the only Lord, is Baptism.

According to Wilhelm Bousset¹⁷, the utterance of Jesus' name on the baptized could explain why Baptism was called „*seal*” (σφραγίς). At Baptism, the name of the Lord is

¹⁶ See Oscar Cullmann, *La foi et le culte de l'Eglise primitive*, Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel, 1963, pp. 67 and following.

¹⁷ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos. Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1913, pp. 278 and following.

pronounced above the one who is being baptized to show that the Christian in question is the property of Christ, but not before the candidate confesses his faith in Lord Jesus, first.

Believers bear the name of Christ even from this life, and the future promise of THE name refers to the eschatological moment when they are entirely identified with Christ for their perseverance in faith. The attributes and power of this name are unknown to unbelievers until the final manifestation of Christ to all men. Christians, being priests of the new covenant, will have access to this new name.

Christ promises that those who will not make compromise with the teaching of Jezebel will reign with Him in His kingdom.

The morning star is in the view of the author of the Revelation a Christological symbol. The victorious man adheres to the death and victory of the Lord, fully receiving Christ. John's Christology is expressed in terms like these: «*He who eats My flesh... it remains in Me and I in Him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; and he who eats me will live through me*» (Jn 6, 56-57). This is an important clue that allows and recommends understanding the meaning of the text of Rev 2, 28, a Eucharistic reference: he gave the victorious the chance to resemble with Him, so He can share the Supper with him.

The words: «*they have not defiled their garments*» (Rev 3, 4) are an allusion to Baptism, when the neophyte received the new, white garment, a sign of regained purity. Besides, baptismal symbols are, as we have seen, omnipresent in the Book of Revelation. Here, the filthy garments refer to the defilement of the soul after Baptism. Every sin is a stain on the baptismal garment¹⁸. From the context of the Revelation it appears that white is the colour of Christ (white is equivalent to brightness, to light, to the morning star).

White garments represent not only purity, but also faithfulness, spiritual non-compromise, which contrasts to those who have soiled their clothes, that is, they have made compromises. The association of feast and triumph with *white garments* in a wider biblical and pagan context can be clearly seen, from this context it can be noticed that promise and reward are linked to the victorious one. Some see the cleansing of the garments in the blood of the Lamb as a symbol of redemption in the baptismal context. The reward of receiving the *white robes* will be given after death, upon entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Through the Holy Sacraments, the

¹⁸ C. Bădiliță, *Apocalipsa lui Ioan...*, pp. 169-170.

believer receives the eschatological promises in advance. Thus the symbolic garment offered to the candidate for Baptism is, from now on, the (final) heavenly salvation eagerly awaited.

By receiving a new name at Baptism, the name of Christ, Christians are written in the book of life (βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς), because this name is a life-giving name. And as the Christian confessed his faith before the Church, but especially before God and his angels (who traditionally play a great part in Baptism), so will Christ confess him¹⁹.

The coming of the Bridegroom at midnight (the master in the middle of the night), the reasons of the watch, the knocks on the door by the returned Messiah, the theme of open doors (then closed, because we are in eschaton), the image of the wedding, the wedding feast of Jesus' promises in during the last earthly Passover, all this requires the assumption of the context (background) of these parables, an ordinary Easter holiday lived under the sign of watching, waiting for the return of Christ and culminating in a Eucharist, it itself strongly focused on the eschatological hope of the Eucharistic communion with the Lord returned²⁰. In the Paschal Liturgy of early Christianity, the Church awaited the return of her Lord, which was considered at the door.

The phrase «*I will come soon*» from Rev 2, 5, 16; 3, 3, 20 do not refer to the Second Coming, but are conditions addressed to the Christians of the Churches. As we have seen, Professor G. K. Beale proposes to distinguish between conditioned comings, as local interventions of Christ during the activity of the Church, and the unconditional coming of the Parousia. Therefore, when we speak of the comings before the Parousia (such as the coming of Christ in the Holy Sacraments), we say that He is come or is present, and when we speak of the coming of the Parousia, we say that He will come, although in the divine reality we refer to a continuous present.

The double theme of the Eucharist, of promise and judgment, is woven throughout the Letters of the Revelation, and some of the images are elaborated from a Eucharistic background (see Rev 2, 17, 20). In the Eucharist, believers live in the present timean anticipation of the effects of judgment and salvation, of the final coming of Christ. This Eucharistic background in

¹⁹ P. Prigent, *Apocalypse et Liturgie...*, pp. 29-30.

²⁰ P. Prigent, *Apocalypse et Liturgie...*, pp. 34-35.

the Letters of the Revelation suggests that Christ is present and comes in the Church, therefore His Parousia is not just a future event²¹.

Massey Hamilton Jr. Shepherd launches a very bold hypothesis about the Letters of the Revelation, believing that their purpose is equivalent to the bishop's thorough research of baptismal candidates in the week or day before the initiation ritual, the initiation ritual held at Easter. We consider that the information we have about the ritual of Baptism in the first century and the first half of the second century are too scarce to restore a complete scheme of the proper ordination or thorough research done by the bishop on the eve of Easter, research that precedes the mystery of initiation. The institution of the catechumen developed later, starting with the 2nd century AD. The roots of the cult are obviously in the period of the beginning of Christianity, but in an unstable or generalised form. The problem is that we are not always able to fill the basic scheme with more details or to put these smaller elements together to form a larger and more complete picture. We cannot borrow from a later context possible references or comments to a liturgical celebration and use them to prove what was done in a previous period. It is only from the time of Hippolytus (3rd century) that we have reliable data that entitle us to say that the institution of the catechumen was given a formal and stable status.

III. „THE HEAVENLY LITURGY”.

THE ASSEMBLY BEFORE GOD'S THRONE (4-5).

In the third part, the exegesis of chapters 4 and 5 will help us understand whether the presentation of the „heavenly liturgy” is inspired by the Liturgy known to the author of the book of the Revelation. Chapters 4-5 constitute the first vision or scene with a liturgical character.

The specific elements of the Christian Liturgy from the time of the author are obviously reflected in the text, but the hypothesis that the „heavenly liturgy” in chapters 4-5 closely mirrors such a Liturgy simplifies the value of the text too much and cannot be supported by arguments. We will see that these passages contain, in addition to elements which are specific of the early Christian cult and references to the Old Testament, combined with images from contemporary apocalyptic writings, with elements of the imperial ceremonial or the author's own imagination.

²¹ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation...*, p. 233; R. H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation...*, p. 70.

Thus, the author of the Revelation used a series of templates to build his vision of the heavenly „Throne Chamber” and the worship of God in it, including elements of primary worship, biblical and extra-biblical heavenly traditions, and elements of his own creativity.

Regarding the singing of hymns in the heavenly „Throne Chamber” from the Revelation, we can say from the beginning that this practice really existed among the early Christians. Thus, in 1Cor 14, 26 it is said: *«What then, brothers? When you come together, each one of you has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a language, an interpretation: all to be built »*. Also, in Ephesians 5, 19, singing is mentioned as a characteristic of the early Christian gatherings: *«Speak among yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, praising and singing to the Lord in your hearts»*.

One of the major challenges regarding the hymns of the Apocalypse is to identify whether the author of the book takes them from the cult of his community he is familiar with or whether he himself composed them to use them in his narrative. Some scholars mentioned above, such as L. Mowry or P. Prigent, have argued that the hymns of the Revelation 4-5 are the echo of the most common hymns in the Jewish cult or Christian liturgies of the first centuries. K.-P. Jörns, the researcher we talked about in the first part of our paper, believes that these hymns were composed by the author of the Revelation. David R. Carnegie²² also rejects the idea that the hymns in the text of the book have their origin in a liturgical context, urging researchers to consider a different alternative, namely that the author of the Revelation himself is their composer. If the hymns in chapters 4-5 would have been taken from an early cultic framework, then, says D. Carnegie, we should have encountered in them a vocabulary that is not specific to the author of the book. However, the vocabulary and style of these hymns are identical to those found throughout the text of the book. The mentioned researcher also considers that these hymns are closely related to their contexts in the book.

However, the fact that the hymns fit well with the language and structure of the text of the Book of Revelation does not mean that they could not have been used liturgically. The fact that these hymns fit very well in the context of chapters 4-5 does not mean that they could not have fit very well in the context of the cult. Although D. Carnegie rightly points out that the presence of the hymn Sanctus in Rev. 4, 8 does not necessarily reflect an early Eucharistic

²² David R. Carnegie, „Worthy is the Lamb: The Hymns in Revelation”, in Harold H. Rowdon (ed), *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology presented to Donald Guthrie*, Inter-Varsity, Leicester, (pp. 243-256).

celebration, he does not question this hymn in the context of the reasoning he uses to argue that the hymns from Revelation 4-5 are composed by the author. It is certain that no one would claim that the author of the Revelation composed Sanctus, although it fits well with its context and shows no signs of interpolation. Why couldn't that be the case for the other hymns as well?

Whether the hymns of Revelation are compositions of the author or fragments used in the worship of the early Church, these verses must reflect at least the kind of liturgical typologies used by the author of the Revelation and the Churches to whom he wrote. It is unlikely that the author would not use hymns that he knew, composing instead some that would not resemble those used in the worship of his community and then, claiming that the listening congregation accept them as heavenly liturgical hymns. Even if the hymns of the book were the product of the imagination to the author, they can offer us a perspective on the primary Christian worship. Paul Bradshaw states: „*This conclusion is confirmed by a comparative analysis of the fragments in question which reveals a large number of common stylistic and linguistic features, persisting beyond differences in authorship, theology and context, thus suggesting that this common character derives from the similarities of different liturgical traditions*”²³.

Regarding the origin of the hymn Sanctus in Rev 4, 8, our conclusion is this: it is possible that the author of the book of Revelation, while writing this hymn, had in mind the Triassic of the Jewish cult, but it is not excluded that he referred to the text from Isaiah 6. Our evidence is insufficient to be categorical and exclusive. The texts of the Old Testament were an important source for the visionary Prophet. Moreover, let us not forget that the text of Isaiah 6 was at the basis of the Qedouscha hymn of the Jewish cult. In connection with the influence that the hymn Sanctus of the Christian Liturgy might have had on the text of the book of the Revelation, honesty obliges us to state that our evidence of the existence of the Trisagion in Christian liturgies is later than the 1st century AD, being related to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD and cannot be applied to an earlier context. It is simply important to point out that we cannot be sure that the hymn was used liturgically in an early period, such as the end of the 1st century AD. Therefore, it is clear that the mere presence of Sanctus in Rev. 4, 8, it does not automatically mean that the images in this chapter have their origin in the Liturgy known to the author. There are texts that contain the Trisagion and are contemporary or close to the date of the Revelation (*1 Clement*

²³ Paul Frederick Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, Oxford University, London, 2002, p. 59.

XXXIV, 5-8, *The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas* and Tertullian's *De oratione III*), but which do not necessarily involve a liturgical context. They also seem to have Isaiah 6 as their source.

The identification of the seven-sealed book of Rev 5, 1 with the Old Testament is in line with the old interpretation proposed by Origen, Hippolytus and Victorinus. They could not truly reveal their content before the coming of Christ. Those who identify the scroll with the Old Testament, and its opening by the Lamb, with Jesus, the one who reveals its true meaning, have been influenced by the liturgical context that they perceive to be behind the text²⁴. The reading of the Old Testament was a part of Christian worship coming from Judaism.

The identification of the Lamb in Rev 5, 6 with Christ is based on the typological importance of the Passover lamb and the mysterious prophetic figure of the Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 52, 13-53, 12. The Lamb from the Revelation expresses both states: the state of sacrifice and the resurrection. Thus, the author of the Revelation shows the Christians of his time, Christians in danger of death because of their faith, that only through sacrifice can the resurrection be reached; Christ, the Lamb slain and risen, became the prototype of this state. In the book of the Revelation, the paschal characteristic is supported especially by the fact that the Lamb is stabbed, just like the paschal lamb in Isaiah 12, 6. Chapter 5 ends in an eminently liturgical way. Thus, v. 14 mentions: «*And the four beasts said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshiped*». *Amen*, as a liturgical answer, will move from Judaism to Christian worship very early. *Amen* is not a sign that the Mass is coming to an end, but rather that it is now beginning.

Regarding the hypothesis of M. Shepherd Jr., according to which the author of the book of Revelation wrote his work on the structure of the Paschal Liturgy, we believe that it is possible that the first Christians had celebrated an annual Easter Liturgy by the end of the 1st century, but it is difficult to assume that Baptism was a component part of it before the first ecumenical synod. Thus, M. Shepherd Jr. overevaluates the already existing evidence. If this is the case, then the thorough research of the one who was to receive Baptism and the Easter vigil that M. Shepherd Jr. considers to precede Baptism, could not have existed at this early date. Regarding the other hypothetical elements that formed the basis of the Paschal Liturgy (scriptural readings, psalms and the reception of the Eucharist), they were approached in this

²⁴ Ardea Caviggiola Russo, *Behind the heavenly door: earthly liturgy and heavenly worship in the Apocalypse of John*, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 2009, p. 195.

chapter of our work. We must emphasize that we have no evidence to reconstruct the way Christians celebrated their Easter liturgies at the earliest.

The Christian worship services of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD did not necessarily have clearly established structures in which the final form of these liturgies had already been decided. And even if it had been in some places, we can't detect the editing layers in the texts we have to recover these early prayers and practices. Therefore, we cannot use a more developed text, such as that of *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, to learn about the primary cult that was formed over time, containing information from several periods and places.

The image from Ezekiel 1, of the vision with the chariot on which the divine throne was placed, had a great influence on the later Jewish apocalypses, as well as on the vision of the throne in the book of Revelation.

The concept of heaven as having several levels (sometimes it is considered to have seven such levels) was common in the first Christian century. However, the author of Revelation does not share this view. Throughout the text he speaks of the universe as being made up of heaven, earth, sea, and the underworld (Rev 5, 3, 13; 10, 6; 14, 7; 20, 11; 21, 1), but does not mention more heavens. The view of the author of the book of Revelation can be found in *1 Enoch* and reflects an older cosmology, consisting of a three-storey universe: the earth as a flat circle surrounded by water, with the underworld below (Sheol or Hell), and heaven above. The cosmology of the Revelation is surprising because it did not develop during the Hellenistic period, replacing the old model. In the new model, the earth was perceived as a sphere surrounded by the sun, moon, and the stars (also spherical), which moved around the earth. A larger (eighth) sphere surrounded the others, and this region was considered the place where God²⁵ lived.

It is important to note that in the 1st century AD there was not only one conception of the appearance of heaven or the heavenly „Throne Chamber”.

²⁵ D. E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5...*, pp. 317-319; Matthew R. Wright, *Cosmology in Antiquity*, Routledge, London/New York, 1995, pp. 16, 40.

IV. SACRAMENTAL AND LITURGICAL-PASCHAL ASPECTS IN THE VISIONS OF "THE SEALS", "THE TRUMPETS", AND OF "THE CUPS"(6- 18).

In the fourth part of the work, of a special significance is the picture of those slaughtered for the word of God (ch. 6), below the altar, an image that represents the second liturgical vision. A new liturgical scene, the third and a new hymn unity appear in chapter 7. There is described the sealing of God's 144.000 chosen ones. We will present the hypothesis advanced by the researcher M. H. Shepherd Jr., of chapter 7's drafting on the scheme of the initiation ceremony within the Paschal Liturgy, respectively of chapters 8-19 on the structure of the Easter Synax and Eucharist. In this part we will also analyze the fourth liturgical and hymn unit (the last) from the book of Revelation, found in chapter 19. *Hallelujah Doxology* (Rev 19, 1-8), in which references to martyrs appear (Rev 19, 1-2), the four «*Hallelujah*» (Rev 19, 1; 19, 3-4; 19, 6), an «*Amen*» (Rev 19, 4), the exhortation addressed to all, young and old (Rev 19, 5) and the comprehensive hymn (Rev 19, 6-8) with its theological, Christological, and ecclesiological references, they make up the last and most important hymn unity of the book of Revelation.

The introductory and final passages of the book were considered by Ugo Vanni, Carlo Manuza, and Michael Aelred Kavanagh „liturgical dialogues” that support the idea that the Revelation was written to be read at Mass. It is interesting to see if there is any evidence to support the hypothesis that this book was read aloud in the Christian cult, regardless of its source of inspiration. We will analyze the text from Rev 22, 17-21, called by the researchers M. Kavanagh, U. Vanni, and C. Manunza: „The final liturgical dialogue”. This text was the subject of Michael Aelred Kavanagh's doctoral thesis. Ugo Vanni reiterated the conclusions of M. Kavanagh, in his 1991 study, developing some implications of some of the dialogical-liturgical characteristics. Carlo Manunza argues that it is about a liturgical text specially designed to fulfill a certain function in a given liturgical situation. The dialogic character of the text is determined by certain indicators such as: change of recipients, different text constructions in the form of question-answer, choral groups, use of acclamations, existence of various dialogue partners. The frequency with which appears the verb *to say* (Rev 22, 6, 9, 10, 17a, 17b, 20) which is of a particular importance to our goal.

The text of Rev 6, 9 sends us to the practice of the Mass on an altar covered with antimis containing a fragment of the relics of a martyr. It replaced a consecrated altar and was indispensable for the Liturgy. Father professor Ion Bria emphasizes: „*The relics of the martyrs, whether placed under the altar table or caught in antimis, represent the heavenly Church on which the earthly Church stands. The sanctified antimis is necessary for the performace of the Eucharistic sacrament*”²⁶.

The white garments that the martyrs receive are a baptismal symbol. The biblical and apocalyptic literature is full of such symbols. In general, white is the symbol of heaven, purity, holiness, and salvation.

A new liturgical scene and a new hymnunity appear in chapter 7, where the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand God’s chosen ones is described. The sacramental tradition of the Church states that this sealing is accomplished through the Sacrement of Anointing. Lecturer PhD. Daniel Mihoc believes that by this reference to the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, St. John brings an important testimony to the practice of this Holy Sacrement in Asia Minor at the end of the apostolic age, the context forcing us not to separate it from the Sacrament of Baptism²⁷.

The text of Rev 7, 14 is about the baptismal and eschatological cleansing through blood. For the author of the Revelation, the sacrament of Baptism means a foretaste of martyrdom and resurrection, the martyrdom being the fulfillment of Baptism. This is why we believe that the methaphor of cleansing of the garments in the blood of the Lamb can be best understood from a baptismal perspective. He who dresses in white at Baptism, like a bride, meets the Bridegroom Christ and thus the Baptism of every Christian can be seen as an anticipation of the eschatological wedding between Christ and His Bride, the Church.

The book of Revelation states that those victorious Christians «*are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple*» (Rev 7, 15). Therefore, victorious Christians become priests in the temple of God, which is the Kingdom of heaven. The sacrament of the Holy Baptism is the foundation of the universal priesthood. In the Church, the only priestly consecration by anointing is that of the royal priesthood²⁸. This dignity becomes effective only

²⁶ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, „Antimis”, în *Dicționar de teologie ortodoxă*, Ed. IBMBOR, București, 1994, p. 23.

²⁷ Lect. Dr. D. Mihoc, „Elemente de teologie...”, p. 143.

²⁸ Paul Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie*, Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel, 1959, p. 15.

through communion with the Holy Eucharist, Christians becoming members of His Body. From the beginning, the Church ordained the Eucharistic communion immediately after receiving the first two Holy Sacraments. This is why it is very difficult to identify in Revelation precise references to one or the other of these Mysteries. Most of the time they are presented together in the same image, even if the reference to one is more obvious, as is the case with Baptism²⁹..

M. Shepherd Jr. launches a very bold hypothesis, considering that we can see in this interlude from chapter 7 of the book of Revelation the initiation ceremony (Baptism and Anointing) within the Paschal Liturgy, and in ch. 8-18 The Synax and the Paschal Eucharist. It is possible that the sealing leads to anointing and the laying on of the Mystery of the Anointing, but from the evidence we have it does not appear that chapter 7 was written on the scheme of the baptismal ceremony in the Paschal Liturgy, nor that chapters 8-18 were written on the scheme of the Synax and the Eucharist of the same Liturgy.

As far as *the Hallelujah Doxology* in Rev 19, 1-8 is concerned, as doxologies appear more frequently in the Revelation and early Christian literature, it is reasonable to assume that this form penetrated the Christian writing from the cult practices of the oldest Church. Because of the lack of evidence, this conclusion remains speculative, but the characteristic presence of this formulation in Christian literature and the absence of Jewish and Hellenistic concordances point to this. The hymns of Rev. 19 seem to have been composed for the narrative context, but they contain elements extracted from early liturgical practices.

The use of the term Hallelujah is scarce in the New Testament and it is reasonable to believe that it penetrated the Christian Liturgy through contemporary Jewish worship.

It seems quite clear that the term *Amen* entered the Christian liturgical use of the Hebrew Bible and first-century Jewish prayer. It is important to remember that the presence of the word does not always signal a liturgical work. As we have seen above, Jesus did not use the word Amen as the end of a prayer, but rather to emphasize the truthfulness of what he was to say. We have also seen that in Rev 3,14, *Amen* it is used as a divine title given to Jesus³⁰.

F. Cabrol considers that most early texts did not contain Amen, but it was rather added later to those texts by their use in Christian worship, as it became a practice in the early centuries of the Church. The researcher notes that the evidence suggests that the term Amen was

²⁹ Lect. Dr. D. Mihoc, „Elemente de teologie...”, pp. 137-138.

³⁰ D. E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5...*, p. 255.

later added to New Testament writings, especially at their ends, something that indicates the liturgical use of the texts. General use is fast becoming the norm, but this is not necessarily the case from the very beginning³¹. Therefore, in the early period of the church, the use of the term Amen did not necessarily have a liturgical usage.

As for proposing the existence of the liturgical framework for reading the book, it is possible that Revelation was read at early Christian gatherings, as the text of the book itself shows and as we have seen supported by U. Vanni and M. A. Kavanagh, who name the introductory passage and final as being „liturgical dialogues”. However, even if this reasonable statement is accepted, it must be emphasized that, in the absence of evidence, almost nothing can be known about the details of this early Liturgy. We do not know if these dialogues were part of the Liturgy or what Bible readings were used. We also have no information whether the cultic celebrations in which the Revelation was read had a Eucharistic character involved a liturgy or were simply hours of prayer for the early communities. If the reading of the book of Revelation was ordained in the early Christian Liturgy, then we rightly wonder how this ordinance has evolved in the Christian Cult. What happened to this service in the structure of which a book as long as the Revelation was read entirely? How could this be possible? When was the reading of the Revelation interrupted? What was it replaced with? The evidences of Christian worship in the 1st century AD are incomplete and very brief to be used in providing objective answers.

V. THE LITURGICAL CHARACTER OF THE TEXT OF THE BOOK

In the fifth part we will emphasize certain elements, expressions, features, which highlight the liturgical-paschal dimension of the visions described in the book of Revelation.

A repeated feature of the Revelation of John is that its author and others have described it as a communion with angels in a common worship in heaven. This characteristic is specific to the Christian liturgy, a fact reflected in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, in the *Entrance Prayer*, before *the Little Exit*.

From Rev 5 one can see that Old Testament was considered a sealed book whose key was held by Jesus. The revelation can only be understood through Jesus Christ. In the Liturgy of St.

³¹ Fernand Cabrol, „Amen”, in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, I, Première Partie, Librairie Letouzey et Ané, Paris, 1924, (col. 1554-1573), col. 1561.

John Chrysostom, in *Prayer before the Gospel*, the priest prays to Christ, the true interpreter of Scripture, to open the eyes of believers to the understanding of the Gospel. Therefore, this characteristic that the Revelation reveals to us, representing Jesus as the only one worthy to interpret the Scriptures, is also found in the Christian Liturgy.

The similarities between the book of Revelation and the first liturgies can be explained as being due to a common origin in the Old Testament and in Jewish forms of worship. The Christian cult, although certainly based on a Jewish background, acquires a new content. The name of Jesus Christ was not added to the classical Jewish formulas, but rather His person was considered to be the center of all worship.

The liturgical character of the Revelation is also given by many liturgical elements such as temple, altar, incense, by the acts of worship that make up the description of the celebration, as the act of incense and prostration, by the liturgical verbal expressions present in the Liturgy of the early Church. It's not just a matter of vocabulary. The book contains hymns, doxologies, prayers specific to liturgical terminology.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

- The Revelation of St. John was intended for reading in liturgical assemblies: «*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy...*»(Rev 1, 3).
- The numerous sacramental references found in the book also highlight the liturgical character of the visions described. Without using later sacramental terminology, through complex images, Revelation states that the actualization of Christ's saving work is accomplished through the Mysteries of Initiation: Baptism, Anointing, and the Eucharist.
- Regarding the description of the „heavenly liturgy” in Rev 4-5, we can say that it was inspired by the earthly Liturgy known to the author, but the argument according to which the writing mirrors the order of such a liturgy oversizes the text and overestimates our knowledge. The text of the book contains a series of references to the Old Testament, but it is also based on images from contemporary Jewish revelations, as well as the ceremonial customs of the Roman Imperial

Court. Thus, the author of Revelation used a series of templates to construct certain visions, including elements of primary worship biblical and extra biblical heavenly traditions, and elements of his own creativity.

- Whether the hymns of the Revelation are compositions of the author or fragments used in the worship of the early Church, these verses must reflect at least the kind of liturgical typologies used by the author of the Revelation and the Churches to which he wrote. It is unlikely that the author did not use hymns that he knew, instead composing some that bore no resemblance to those used in the worship of his community and then, claiming that the listening congregation recognized them as heavenly liturgical hymns. However, the main question that arises in the book of Revelation, whether these hymns found in the text were ever sung by Christians in the early worship or were composed by the author to be used in a particular context, remains unanswered because of the lack of evidence.
- Regarding the origin of the hymn Sanctus in Rev 4, 8, it is possible that the author of the Revelation, while writing this hymn, had in mind the Trisagion of the Jewish cult, but it is not excluded that he referred to the text in Isaiah 6.
- Regarding the supposition of the existence of a liturgical framework for reading the book, it is possible that Revelation was read at early Christian meetings. Because of the lack of evidence, almost nothing can be known about the details of this early Liturgy. We have no information whether the cultic celebrations where the Revelation was read had a Eucharistic character, involved a liturgy, or were simply hours of prayer for the early communities. A number of questions remain unanswered: What happened to this service in the structure of which a book as long as the Revelation was read entirely? How could this be possible? When was the reading of the Revelation interrupted? What was it replaced with?