

# **Notes on the Greek text of Hebrews 1-11**

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## Introduction

The ‘letter’ to the Hebrews does not begin as a letter, although it does have an epistolary closing (13:22-25). The letter describes itself in 13:22 as ὁ λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως (‘the word of exhortation’) and it has been suggested that it represents a written homily or sermon. No author is indicated, although 2:3-4 suggest a person closely connected to the apostles. We can never be sure, but long ago Frederic Gardiner make a fair case for the authorship of Barnabus.<sup>1</sup>

Structurally the letter is built upon a series of formal comparisons.<sup>2</sup> These are known as συγκρίσεις in Greek and were a standard element of the basic literary education known as ‘progymnasmata’, that is, preliminary exercises to writing speeches. An outline of the letter follows:

1:1-14	σύγκρισις: Jesus as God’s Son better than angels (7fold catena)
2:1-4	application: pay attention to Jesus’ words
2:5-18	σύγκρισις: Jesus as ruler of all better than angels (Pss. 8, 22; Isa. 8) incarnation to save His brothers from temptation, suffering, death (Jesus announced as <u>merciful</u> and <u>faithful</u> high-priest)
3:1-6	σύγκρισις: Jesus as high priest and Moses, both <u>faithful</u> , but Jesus worthy of more honour as Son (cf. Num. 12)
3:7-4:13	application: don’t harden your heart at his voice (Ps. 95 +)
4:14-5:10	σύγκρισις: Jesus as high priest and Levitical high-priesthood in terms of <u>mercy</u> (Pss. 2, 110) <sup>3</sup>
5:11-6:20	admonition: —advance from elementary things to solid food —warning against falling away, non-renewal to repentance —encouragement unto full assurance
7:1-10	σύγκρισις a: Melchizedek and Abraham / Levitical priests (Gen. 14)
7:11-28	σύγκρισις b: Melchizedekian Jesus and Levitical priests (Ps. 110)
8:1-10:18	σύγκρισις: old and new testament and their worship (Exod. 25, Jer. 31, Ps. 40)
10:19	application: draw near w. confidence, warning (Hab. 2)
11:1	defn. and examples of faith culminating in Jesus
12:4	encouragement to endure suffering / discipline of Lord (Prov. 3)
12:14	admonition to pursue peace, not to sell birthright (i.e. apostatise)
12:18	σύγκρισις worship at Sinai and now (true Mt. Zion)
13:1	miscellaneous admonitions, including admonition to leave Jerusalem (cf. Eus. <i>H.E.</i> 3:5)
13:22-25	letter closing

1 See the separate handout. It was written as an introduction to the American edition of Chrysostom’s homilies on Hebrews in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* series (ed. Schaff, pp.341-57) published in 1889.

2 It should be noted that the first two comparisons of Jesus as Son (with the angels) form a background for the following two comparisons of Jesus as high-priest. The first comparison as Son emphasises his exalted position, the second his suffering on earth, in which way it pleased the Father to bring many sons to glory. This leads the author straight into the concept of Jesus as a merciful and faithful high-priest. The third comparison takes up Jesus as faithful high-priest in comparison to Moses and emphasises again his glory herein as Son. The fourth comparison takes up Jesus as merciful high-priest and once again emphasises his need to learn obedience through suffering “despite being Son” so that God, on the basis of this experience, could appoint him high-priest.

3 There is a chiasmic structure to this comparison as follows:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 4.14 | Jesus a high-priest able to sympathise with our weakness, yet without sin                |
| 5.1  | Levitical high-priest able to sympathise because of his sin                              |
| 5.4  | Aaron appointed by God, not by himself   |
| 5.5  | Jesus appointed by God after his ascension (Ps. 110) on the basis of his life-experience |

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# Chapter One

## v.1

προφήταις

Jewish Greek. See the note to *Animal Story* 14.

## v.2

ἐποίησεν

The use of ποιέω for God's creation of the world is also used in LXX Gen. 1:1. Hebrews does not use the typically Jewish verb for creating (κτίζω). In 11:2 καταρτίζω is used of creation.

τοὺς αἰῶνας

The meaning 'world' comes from Jewish Aramaic ܨܠܘܢ. It is not Greek.

## v.3

ἀπαύγασμα ... φέρων τε

The first two participles are tied together (τε). Radiance and imprint are metaphors showing that Jesus makes God himself known and visible as he is. Φέρων is used here in the sense of 'producing'/'creating' and is a reference to the Son's work in creation, speaking the word (Gen.1). Is our author's definition of God in the sense of 1 Tim. 6:16, immutable, unseeable, and thus incapable of action in the material world without a secondary agent?

ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης

The δόξη is that belonging to God.

ὑπόστασις, ἡ

One would expect, on the basis of the -σις termination, that this noun would describe an action (see 'A note on formation of nouns' following *Animal Story* 16). In fact it does, taking the sense 'standing under' / 'supporting'. However, it is more commonly used in the sense of a 'thing'. The main nuances for this sense are categorised by LSJ as follows:

- I. (of liquids) sediment (= τὸ ὑπόστημα)
- II. (of a building) foundation / substructure
- III. substantial nature / substance

Under II. LSJ also propose a metaphorical sense 'confidence' / 'courage'. This has, however, correctly been criticised by Helmut Koester in his entry for this word in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, a critique which BDAG has taken over.

The reason for providing the overview of this word here is that it is not only used in Hebrews here, but also in 11:1. Here the author is using the metaphor of the imprint caused by a die or clay stamp. Jesus is the imprint of God the Father's 'substance'.

καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος

Periphrasis for καθάρισας ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. The noun καθαρισμός (from καθαρίζω) is Jewish Greek for ὁ καθαρισμός (from καθαίρω).

This seems to be a good place to summarise a number of different periphrastic verbal constructions typically used in non-colloquial writing.

### *Common Periphrastic Verbal Constructions*

The periphrastic constructions illustrated here are those used when one is intentionally amplifying his speech or engaging in a register of speech above that of regular conversation.

1. The future tense can be replaced by μέλλω + (fut.)<sup>4</sup> infinitive.

4 Hellenistic Greek tends to use the present infinitive. However, Smyth § 1959 argues that the present infin. is used for *will*, the future infin. for *thinking* and the aor. infin. as *ingressive*.

2. The past indicative + ἄν (to express contingency) can be replaced by ἔμελλον + infinitive.
3. A finite present or imperfect verb can be replaced by a present or perfect participle with the verb 'to be'.
4. A verb, or the verb 'to be + adjective' can be replaced by a prepositional phrase and the verb 'to be', e.g. διὰ φόβου εἶσιν = φοβοῦνται ('they fear'), ἐν ἀθυμίᾳ ἐστίν = ἀθυμεῖ ('he is despondant'), δι' ἐρίδων εἶσιν = ἐρίζουσιν ('they quarrel').
5. A finite verb indicating a habit, state or condition (of body or spirit) can be replaced by ἔχω + the cognate noun, e.g. ἔχει τέλος = τελεῖται ('he/it comes to an end'), ἔχει ἐπιθυμίαν τινός = ἐπιθυμεῖ τινός ('he/it desires someone/thing'), ἔχει φροντίδα τινός = φροντίζει τινός ('he/it has a concern/thought for someone/thing'), ἔχει ἡσυχίαν = ἡσυχάζει ('he/it keeps silence'). The latter is also used in the imperative with an adjective: ἔχε ἡσυχος ('you, keep silent!'). This construction is not infrequently inverted, e.g. ἡσυχία αὐτὸν ἔχει = ἡσυχίαν ἔχει.
6. A finite verb (intransitive or transitive) can be replaced by the middle voice of the verb ποιέω + the cognate noun. For intransitive verbs ποιέομαι + noun (acc.), e.g. ποιεῖται ἐπιθυμίαν = ἐπιθυμεῖ ('he desires'). For transitive verbs a double accusative is required, e.g. ποιεῖται δῶρον αἰλουρον = δίδωσιν αἰλουρον ('he gives a cat').
7. A finite active verb can be replaced with γίνομαι + the cognate noun, a construction used especially to indicate solemnity, e.g. σωτήρ μοι ἐγένετο = ἐμὲ ἐσωτήρισεν ('he saved me'). This construction is also used as the passive of ποιέομαι + noun, e.g. εἰρήνη γίνεται as passive of ποιεῖται εἰρήνην.
8. A finite verb related to conceiving feelings and the like can be replaced by λαμβάνω + noun, e.g. λαμβάνει φόβον, = φοβεῖται ('he is afraid'); αἰδῶ λαμβάνει = αἰδεῖται ('he feels ashamed'); λαμβάνει ὀργήν = ὀργίζεται ('he becomes angry'); λαμβάνει ἀρχήν, = ἀρχεται ('he begins', cf. Heb. 2:3); λαμβάνει ὕψος = ὑψοῦται ('he exalts himself').
9. A verb can be replaced by its cognate verbal noun (e.g. λόγος) + χρᾶμαι, e.g. ἀληθεῖ λόγῳ χρᾶται ('he uses true speech', i.e. 'he speaks the truth')
10. The deliberative subjunctive (1<sup>st</sup> person) can be replaced by δεῖ or χρή or -τεον. (τί χρή ποιεῖν; = τί ποιητέον; τί ποιῶμεν;)

ἐν ὑψηλοῖς (sc. τόποις)

Given 7:26, which states that Christ is ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν, it seems better to understand τόποις than οὐρανοῖς.

#### v.4.

γενόμενος

This participle is coordinate to ὧν and dependent upon ὅς.

διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοῦς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα

Hyperbaton (type 1). The use of the comparative with παρά (favoured by Hebrews) is a good moment to revise the possibilities for comparatives. Comparisons can be achieved in several ways after using a comparative form. One can use ἤ, or simply the genitive. The following prepositions can also be used: ἀντί + gen., πρό + gen., πρὸς + acc., or παρά + acc. The phrase 'The cat is better than the dog' could be stated in the following ways:

ὁ αἴλουρος κρείσσων ἢ ὁ κύων.

ὁ αἴλουρος κρείσσων τοῦ κύνος.

ὁ αἴλουρος κρείσσων ἀντὶ τοῦ κύνος. ('... instead of the dog')

ὁ αἴλουρος κρείσσων πρὸ τοῦ κύνος. ('... before the dog')

ὁ αἴλουρος κρείσσων πρὸς τὸν κύνα. ('... in respect of the dog')

ὁ αἴλουρος κρείσσων παρά τὸν κύνα. ('... beyond the dog')

#### v.5

Τίτι γὰρ εἶπέν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων

Hyperbaton type 2, unusual in that this type normally goes with an intransitive verb. Of course here the direct object is the ensuing quotation, perhaps making this case a little different.

εἰς πατέρα ... εἰς υἱόν

The use of the preposition here is a Hebraism.

**v.6**

ὅταν ... εισαγάγη, λέγει

ὅταν + subj. cannot refer to the past. It refers either to repeated actions from the present into the future, or a single event yet future. Both cases are adequately covered by the translation 'whenever'. If ὅτε ... εισάγαγε was meant then the verb of the main clause (λέγει) would have been past tense. Therefore the entrance into the inhabited world cannot be the incarnation, but must refer to the second coming. This also makes sense with the ensuing quotation from the end of the song of Deut. 32 (v.43 following the Hebrew text also found among the Dead Sea Scrolls) which is taken to refer to the last judgment.

εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην

Sc. γῆν. The term οἰκουμένη is defined by Strabo (*Geography*, 1,4,6) as follows: καλοῦμεν γὰρ οἰκουμένην ἣν οἰκοῦμεν καὶ γνωρίζομεν. (Note that γνωρίζω here is not 'to cause to know', but 'to discover', i.e. 'to cause to be known')

**v.8**

ὁ θεὸς

Must be treated as a vocative.

ἡ ράβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ράβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου

The Septuagint has incorrectly reversed complement and subject. In the Hebrew, the pronominal suffix makes the second construct chain definite. (מִשְׁפָּט מִיֶּשֶׁר מִלְכוּתְךָ). The word מִיֶּשֶׁר has been translated in a very literal manner ('straightness'). In Hebrew it is metaphorical referring to fairness or justice.

**v.10**

κατ' ἀρχάς

This is an idiom for 'in the beginning', 'at first'.

**v.13**

κάθου

For the distinction between καθήμαι and καθίζω see the note to *Animal Story* 8.

ἐκ δεξιῶν

Idiomatic for 'on the right'.

**v.14**

μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν

Periphrasis for κληρονομήσοντας. The use of the present – and not the future – infinitive after μέλλω is in accord with Hellenistic Greek.

## Chapter Two

### v.1

προσέχειν

Sc. νοῦν.

παραρυῶμεν

Literally, 'to flow alongside'. It is often used metaphorically/idiomatically and always in a negative sense, either of people/things flowing alongside and becoming a bad influence, or of people/things drifting off from where they ought to be.

### v.2

ἐγένετο βέβαιος

Periphrasis for ἐβεβαίωσε.

παράβασις

Seems to be a Hellenism in the sense 'transgression'.

παρακοή

Neither παρακοή nor ὑπακοή are regular Greek. ὑπακούω could mean to obey, even in Attic and the noun has been coined on that basis. It is used by Paul, Hebrews and 1 Peter.<sup>5</sup> παρακοή is found in Galen frequently and once in Ps.-Plato's epistles, but apart from this is purely Christian, twice in Paul, once in Hebrews. The cognate verb can mean 'to hear carelessly', 'take no heed of' in Hellenistic Greek, but it becomes especially common among Jews. The use in Paul and Hebrews must stem from this Jewish use of the verb.

μισθαποδοσίαν

A coinage (also found in 10:35 and 11:26) based on the more common expression ἀποδίδωμι μισθός, cf. the coinage at 11:6 of μισθαποδότης.

### v.3

τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας

Hyperbaton of the most common sort, namely the separation of a restrictive adjective from its noun.<sup>6</sup> In this kind of hyperbaton the restriction is emphasised and the noun just forms the tail end. Normally the noun will be easily understood from the context and thus its delay in the syntax will not suspend the understanding of what is being said.

ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα

λαμβάνω is frequently used in periphrasis, e.g. λαμβάνειν φόβον, = φοβεῖσθαι; αἰδῶ λαμβάνειν, = αἰδεῖσθαι; λαμβάνειν ὀργήν, = ὀργίζεσθαι: so generally λαμβάνειν ἀρχήν, = ἄρχεσθαι; λαμβάνειν ὕψος, ἐπίδοσιν, αὐξήσιν, = ὑψοῦσθαι, ἐπιδιδόναι, αὐξάνεσθαι, etc.<sup>7</sup>

### v.4

δυνάμεσιν

The use of δύναμις in the concrete sense of 'miracle' is specifically Christian. This usage probably just represents another case of a typically Semitic use of a noun both in the sense of the faculty or cause of an action and the action itself. Given that δύναμις regularly denotes 'power' or 'capability', it is then a small step to 'miraculous deed'. We find this sense in the synoptic Gospels, Acts, Hebrews and letters of Paul.

The triple designation σημεῖα, τέρατα, δυνάμεις is found quite a few times in the New Testament: Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; 2 Thess. 2:9 and here, cf. Rom. 15:9, but the double designation σημεῖα, τέρατα is more common.

<sup>5</sup> It is also used in LXX 2 Sam. 22:36, but in the unrelated sense of 'answer'

<sup>6</sup> A restrictive adjective restricts a general noun by putting it in a smaller subset category.

<sup>7</sup> See LSJ, s.v. λαμβάνω.

**v.5**

τὴν οἰκουμένην [*sc.* γῆν] τὴν μέλλουσαν  
See note to 1:6.

**v.6**

διεμαρτύρατο

διεμαρτύρομαι literally means ‘to call gods and men to witness that ...’, but it also comes to mean ‘to solemnly protest’.

τις

*Sc.* ἄγγελος. Psalm 8 is here interpreted as the solemn protest song of an angel. The idea of angels protesting at the high place given to man is further developed in the *Life of Adam and Eve*. In the Latin version the devil describes his fall as follows ...<sup>8</sup>

12

And the devil sighed and said, “O Adam, all my enmity and envy and sorrow concern you, since because of you I am expelled and deprived of my glory which I had in the heavens in the midst of angels, and because of you I was cast out onto the earth.” Adam answered, “What have I done to you, and what is my blame with you? Since you are neither harmed nor hurt by us, why do you pursue us?”

13

The devil replied, “Adam, what are you telling me? It is because of you that I have been thrown out of there. When you were created, I was cast out from the presence of God and was sent out from the fellowship of the angels. When God blew into you the breath of life and your countenance and likeness were made in the image of God, Michael brought you and made (us) worship you in the sight of God, and the LORD God said, ‘Behold Adam! I have made you in our image and likeness.’

14

And Michael went out and called all the angels, saying, ‘Worship the image of the LORD God, as the LORD God has instructed.’ And Michael himself worshiped first, and called me and said, ‘Worship the image of God, Yahweh.’ And I answered, ‘I do not worship Adam.’ And when Michael kept forcing me to worship, I said to him, ‘Why do you compel me? I will not worship one inferior and subsequent to me. I am prior to him in creation; before he was made, I was already made. He ought to worship me.’

15

When they heard this, other angels who were under me refused to worship him. And Michael asserted, ‘Worship the image of God. But if now you will not worship, the LORD God will be wrathful with you.’ And I said, ‘If he be wrathful with me, I will set my throne above the stars of heaven and will be like the Most High.’

16

And the LORD God was angry with me and sent me with my angels out from our glory; and because of you, we were expelled into this world from our dwellings and have been cast onto the earth. And immediately we were made to grieve, since we had been deprived of so great glory. And we were pained to see you in such bliss of delights. So with deceit I assailed your wife and made you to be expelled through her from the joys of your bliss, as I have been expelled from my glory.”

**v.7**

βραχύ τι

‘Somewhat short’, here an adverbial expression that could either be taken with the verb (‘you made him slightly lower ...’), or interpreted in terms of time, *i.e.* ‘for a brief time’. The Hebrew text is similarly ambiguous.

**v.8**

οὐδὲν ἀφῆκεν αὐτῷ ἀνυπότακτον  
Type 2 hyperbaton.

**v.9**

τὸν δὲ βραχύ τι παρ’ ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν  
Hyperbaton, emphasising the adjectival material before the verb.

γεύσεται

This verb, as also in English, was in Greek often used metaphorically.

<sup>8</sup> Translation taken from M. D. Johnson, ‘Life of Adam and Eve’ in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p.262.



**v.10**

ἀγαγόντα

ἀγαγόντα is a predicate substantive of the indirect object of πρέπω, i.e. αὐτῷ. When such a predicate noun or substantive becomes the subject of an ensuing infinitive it can either remain dative, or (as here) become accusative, cf. Smyth, § 1978.

**v.11**

ὅ τε γὰρ ἀγιάζων καὶ οἱ ἀγιαζόμενοι

ἀγιάζω is Jewish Greek for ἀγίζω.

**vs.12-13**

LXX Isa. 8:16-18a reads:

Τότε φανεροὶ ἔσονται οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι τὸν νόμον τοῦ μὴ μαθεῖν. καὶ ἔρεϊ Μενῶ τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἀποστρέψαντα τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου Ἰακωβ καὶ πεποιθῶς ἔσομαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ. ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδία, ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός.

The letter to the Hebrews treats this prophecy as referring to the days when Jesus was on earth. The subject of ἔρεϊ is Jesus himself.

**v.14**

καταργήση

This verb is very rare outside of Christian literature. It originates from ἀργέω 'to be idle'/'to be unoccupied'. The verb is strengthened by adding the preposition κατά and in this form becomes common in the letters of Paul. In addition to Paul, it is used once by Luke and once by Hebrews, both writers within the Pauline circle. In its strengthened form, it is mostly used in the sense 'to render useless'.

τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου

Type 2 hyperbaton (with transitive verb, albeit in participial form).

τὸν διάβολον

As a substantive it literally means 'the slanderer' (cf. ἡ διαβολή, 'false accusation', 'slander'; διαβάλλω, 'to slander'). It is used in the LXX to translate שָׂטָן ('the satan' = 'the accuser').

**v.15**

ἔνοχοι

Meaning 'held in' (cf. ἐνέχω) or 'subject to', it would take the dative in Attic, but can take either the dative or genitive in Hellenistic Greek.

ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας

Hyperbaton.

**v.16**

ἐπιλαμβάνεται

In the Middle, this means 'hold oneself on by', 'lay hold of', + genitive. The problem here is that the author seems to have intended ἀντιλαμβάνεται, which would mean 'to help'. Is this a textual error? Two attempts at explanation are known to me: 1. Taking one's cue from Jeremiah 31 as cited in Hebrews 8:9, to understand τῆς χειρός.<sup>9</sup> 2. Understanding, with the manuscripts of the Peshitta Syriac version, 'death' from the previous verse to be the subject of ἐπιλαμβάνεται.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews the Greek text with notes and essays*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan, 1903) 54-55.

<sup>10</sup> Bonus (*ExpTim* 33 [1921-22] 235-36) as cited by W. L. Lane, (1998). *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 47A, (Dallas: Word Books, 1991) 63-64.

**v.17**

ἐλεήμων γένηται καὶ πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς  
Hyperbaton emphasising ἐλεήμων.

τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν

Acc. of respect: Smyth §§1600-1605. Actually less common in the accusative in Hellenistic Greek and more common in the dative, probably under the influence of the Latin ablative of limitation.

εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ

The verb ἰλάσκομαι means to appease and takes the acc. of the person (usually god(s)) to be appeased. This usage here does not appear to come from the Septuagint and strikes me as rather odd. We would have expected εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὸν θεὸν περὶ τῶν ἀμαρτίων τοῦ λαοῦ.

**v.18**

ἐν ᾧ

Bauer's lexicon suggests the following possibility:

W. attraction ἐν ᾧ = ἐν τούτῳ ὅτι *for the reason that = because* **Ro 8:3; Hb 2:18; 6:17.**<sup>11</sup>

This abbreviation would be otherwise unknown in Greek. Given that the letter to the Hebrews exemplifies a high standard of Hellenistic Greek, it seems to me unlikely that we ought to go the route of inventing new abbreviations. Particularly when in regular Greek ἐν ᾧ not infrequently is an abbreviation for ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ.

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<sup>11</sup> W. Arndt, F. W. Danker, & W. Bauer, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 329.

## Chapter Three

### v.1

τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα

When two successive nouns share a definite article they are viewed as combining into a single idea. (see Smyth, 1143)

### v.2

τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτὸν

ποιέω in the sense of 'to appoint' is rare. It is used in this sense of the appointment of Moses and Aaron in LXX 1 Sam. 12:6 translating נָשָׂא, but even that verb is rare in this sense. Apart from this text, we also find it of the appointment of the 'twelve' in Mark 3:14.

This verse quotes from LXX Num. 12:7

οὐχ οὕτως ὁ θεράπων μου Μωυσῆς, ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ μου πιστός ἐστιν ... ;

### v.3

πλείονος γὰρ οὗτος δόξης

Noun phrase hyperbaton.

πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου

Genitive hyperbaton.

### v.8

τῷ παραπικρασμῷ

παραπικρασμός is derived from παραπικραίνω, a coinage from the Septuagint also used twice in Philo. παραπικρασμός is only found in LXX Ps. 94 (= 95). A coinage in -μος implies an action, 'provoking to bitterness'. Both words ultimately derive from the more common πικραίνω 'to embitter'.

τοῦ πειρασμοῦ

πειρασμός is found in Jewish writings from the Septuagint onwards. It is also found twice in first century medical writings, but is probably a separate coinage there. The word seems to have become current among Jews as a coinage from πειράζω, 1. 'to make proof/trial of' + gen., 2. 'to tempt'. The noun denotes the action related to either meaning, 1. 'trial' in the sense of the process of 'making trial of something/someone', 2. 'temptation' in the sense of the process of tempting.

### v.10

τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη διὸ προσώχθισα

The exegesis of these words in v.17 shows that we have textual corruption in the quotation at this point. The author to the Hebrews actually read: τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη προσώχθισα. This also accords with the Septuagint text he is quoting. At some point early in the transmission history the word διὸ has crept in. See further my essay 'Aspects of the NT Sabbath: Ps. 95 as Exegeted in Hebrews 3 and 4'.

### v.11

εἰ εἰσελεύσονται κτλ.

An oath formula. The unspecified apodosis would be: 'May I die'.

κατάπαυσιν

In regular Greek this noun would mean 'stopping', but in the Septuagint it is used in the sense of 'rest'.

### v.13

ἄχρις οὗ κτλ.

See the note to 1 Enoch 6 on temporal clauses.

τις ἐξ ὑμῶν

‘someone from among you’ as opposed to τις ὑμῶν ‘one of you’.

ἀπάτη

Moeris, the second century grammarian states (p. 65): ἀπάτη· ἢ πλάνη παρ’ Ἀττικοῖς ... ἢ τέρψις παρ’ Ἑλλησιν.

#### v.14

τῆς ὑποστάσεως

It used to be thought that ὑπόστασις in the NT must mean ‘confidence’, however this has been severely criticised.<sup>12</sup> It is now interpreted in the sense of a concrete ‘resolve’ / ‘intention’ / ‘plan’, which better accords with its general use.

#### v.16

ἀλλ’ οὐ κτλ.

ἀλλά is frequently used in answers and objections, particularly with negatives, as here. One could retain English ‘but’ in the sense ‘But is it not ...?’ The sense is, however, more ‘Is it not *indeed* ...?’

#### v.17

τὰ κῶλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ

LXX Num. 14:29a, 32 read:

ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ταύτῃ πεσεῖται τὰ κῶλα ὑμῶν ... καὶ τὰ κῶλα ὑμῶν πεσεῖται ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ταύτῃ

#### v.19

ἠδυνήθησαν

δύναμαι used ἠ- for the augment in Ionic and also frequently in Hellenistic Greek, although ἐ- is also regularly found.

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<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Helmut Koester’s entry in TDNT.

## Chapter Four

### v.1

καταλειπομένης επαγγελίας κτλ.

This verse is a nice example of περίοδος. As one reads, the genitive participle and following genitive noun look like a genitive absolute. It is only at the very end of the sentence that one realises that they are in fact the indirect object of ὑστερέω.

### v.2

ἔσμεν εὐηγγελισμένοι

The periphrastic construction usually only occurs for the perfect or pluperfect middle/pass. indicative 3rd person plural of stems ending in a consonant. In those cases the perfect uses the midd./pass. participle + present tense εἰσί while the pluperfect uses the past tense ἦσαν. We might have expected the perfect indicative midd./pass. form εὐηγγελίσμεθα.

κάκεῖνοι = καὶ ἐκεῖνοι

### v.3

καίτοι ... γενηθέντων

καίτοι often functions just like καίπερ ‘although’, taking a participle after it.

τῶν ἔργων ... γενηθέντων

Literally ‘the works having become (i.e. having come about)’. The meaning is that the works have ‘taken place’, compare τὸ ψήφισμα γίνεται ‘the vote has taken place’.

### v.4

κατέπαυσεν

Quoted from LXX Gen. 2:2. The verb καταπαύω (active) ought to be transitive, meaning ‘to stop’ / ‘to put an end to’ and it is so used in Acts 14:18. Here in the Septuagint, however, it has an intransitive meaning ‘to rest’. This letter in explaining the text uses the verb transitively in v.8 referring to Joshua and intransitively in v.10 referring back to the quotation in Genesis 2:2.

### v.6

ἀπολείπεται

Idiomatic impersonal passive: ‘to remain to be done’.

### v.7

τινὰ ὀρίζει ἡμέραν

Hyperbaton emphasising τινά.

### v.8

περὶ ἄλλης ἐλάλει μετὰ ταῦτα ἡμέρας

Hyperbaton emphasising ἄλλης.

### v.9

ἄρα

Jews tended to give this postpositive particle first position in a clause.

σαββατισμός

A coinage, which with the termination -μός must refer to ‘sabbath observance’. See my essay ‘Aspects of the NT Sabbath: Ps. 95 as Exegeted in Hebrews 3 and 4’.

### v.11

ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι

Enclitic Hyperbaton.

**v.12**

Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος  
Conjunct hyperbaton.

τομώτερος ὑπὲρ

We would normally expect either ἢ or the genitive after a comparative. ὑπὲρ is used in this way several times in the Septuagint as well as here and in Luke 16:8.

**v.13**

κτίσις

Literally the action of creation. Paul (cf. Rom. 1:25; 8:39, and other Jewish authors) use the word incorrectly of a created thing (one would have expected κτίσμα). But the whole association of κτίζω / κτίσις with creation is Jewish. In regular Greek the word-group refers to colonising, founding, building.

ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ

The same thought (in different words) is found at 1 Enoch 9.

τετραηλισμένα

τραχηλίζω literally refers to twisting the neck (ὁ τράχηλος). In wrestling it referred to getting someone in a head-lock.

**v.16**

λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν  
Note the chiasm.

## Chapter Five

### v.1

Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος

The letter neatly sidesteps the fact that the genuine high-priestly line of Zadok was discontinued in Jerusalem when Onias III was murdered ca. 175 BC. His son and successor Onias IV set up a temple in Egypt according to the prophecy of Isaiah 19.

τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν

Accusative of respect.

### v.2

μετριοπαθεῖν

A Jewish coinage found also in Philo and Josephus based on the adjective μετριοπαθής ‘moderating one’s passions’, a term taken from Aristotelian philosophy.

περίκειται ἀσθένειαν

περίκειμαι + acc. = ‘to lie around one’, therefore ‘to wear’.

### v.3

προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν

In Hebrew the word חטאת can mean both ‘sin’ and ‘sin offering’. However, the Septuagint always translated the word as ἁμαρτία and the Hebrew expression חטאת (‘for a sin offering’) is therefore translated περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (read as חטאת). Thinking in terms of Hebrew, one might translate ‘he must offer sin offerings’. However, if our letter is read in terms of Greek (perhaps to be preferred), we must read ‘he must offer for (his) sins’.

### v.4

τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν

καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ

Certainly a sideswipe at all the high priests since Onias III. It had become an office appointed annually by the Romans.

### v.5

γενηθῆναι

Hellenistic Greek tends to use aorist passive forms instead of deponent. We would have expected γενέσθαι.

### v.6

ἐν ἑτέρῳ

Sc. either ψαλμῶ or τόπῳ.

### v.7

εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας

ἀπό here has the Semitic meaning ‘because’ (cf. 72).

### v.8

ἀφ’ ὧν ἔπαθεν = ἀπὸ τούτων ἃ ἔπαθεν

See Smyth § 2522.

τὴν ὑπακοήν

Neither παρακοή (in the sense ‘disobedience’) nor ὑπακοή (‘obedience’) are regular Greek. ὑπακούω could mean to obey, even in Attic and the noun has been coined on that basis. It is used by Paul, Hebrews and 1 Peter.<sup>13</sup> παρακοή is found in Galen frequently and once in Ps.-Plato's epistles, but

13 It is also used in LXX 2 Sam. 22:36, but in the unrelated sense of ‘answer’

apart from this is purely Christian, twice in Paul, once in Hebrews. The cognate verb can mean ‘to hear carelessly’, ‘take no heed of’ in Hellenistic Greek, but it becomes especially common among Jews. The use in Paul and Hebrews must stem from this Jewish use of the verb.

#### v.9

αιωνίου

αιώνιος literally means ‘lasting for an age’, *i.e.* a long time. Greeks distinguish this from the adjective αἰδῖος which means ‘everlasting’. Jews tended to feel comfortable with αἰώνιος given that the equivalent word in Hebrew (עולם) could either mean ‘a long time’ or ‘everlasting’, depending on the context.

#### v.11

ἡμῖν

The authorial plural.

ταῖς ἀκοαῖς

Dative of respect (very common with parts of the body, ἀκοή has, here, the meaning ‘ear’).

#### v.12

τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τινὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα κτλ.

The order here is a little confusing: infinitive – object – subject – second object: ‘in order that someone teach you the elemental things ...’ Metzger notes on this passage that the Textus Receptus reads the interrogative τίνα (‘that [one] teach you what the principles ... are’), adding naturally that the early manuscripts are without accent markings, meaning that the modern editors of the Greek text need to decide what is most appropriate. Metzger says: ‘the Committee felt that the indefinite pronoun (τινά) gives a sharper antithesis to εἶναι διδάσκαλοι in the preceding clause’.<sup>14</sup>

#### v.14

τελείων

*Sc.* ἀνθρώπων (‘mature men’).

διὰ τὴν ἔξιν

ἔξις refers here to the state of maturity (τελειώσις) achieved.

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14 B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1971).



## Chapter Six

### v.1

τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον

The emphasis falls on ἀρχῆς: ‘the word of the *beginning* of the Christ/Anointed one’. What this ‘beginning’ amounts too is spelled out in the explanation of the ‘foundation’.

ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερόμεθα

φερόμεθα could be taken either as middle or passive (present subjunctive). As middle it would be an absolute use implying ἑαυτούς as object. It is more likely to be taken as a passive: ‘Let us be (being) brought to completion’. The passive implies the need for teachers such as the author of the epistle. The image of ‘beginning’ to ‘completion’ is filled out by the parallelism of ‘laying a foundation’ (= beginning) and is one of the construction of a building. One might perhaps compare the image used elsewhere in the New Testament of the congregation being a temple, or a temple under construction.

θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι μετανοίας κτλ.

Hyperbaton (type 2, purely stylistic). The succeeding genitives phrases all depend upon θεμέλιον.

### v.2

βαπτισμῶν

A curious choice of word. Although rare, it would seem that the word began its life in Jewish Greek as a description of Jewish washings. It is first found in Mark 7:4, 8, but is unlikely to be his coinage. It is used of Christian baptism in Col. 2:12 and presumably here. Interestingly, Josephus uses it of the baptisms of John the baptist (*Ant.* 18,117).

βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς ἐπιθέσεώς τε χειρῶν

Chiasm. In this way ‘instruction in baptisms’ is closely connected to ‘laying on of hands’. In Acts we frequently see the laying on of the hands of an apostle closely following upon baptism as a means of imparting special gifts of the Spirit.

### v.3

ἐάνπερ ἐπιτρέπη ὁ θεός

The subject, coming last in the phrase, is emphasised.

### v.4

μετόχους γεννηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου

Hyperbaton (type 2).

### v.5

καλὸν γευσαμένους θεοῦ ῥῆμα κτλ.

Hyperbaton.<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to understand why the object of γεύομαι (which should be an indirect genitive) all of a sudden becomes accusative. Given the relative purity of the Greek of this epistle, we should perhaps consider the use of an accusative of respect: ‘having tasted (things) with respect to the good word of God and the powers of the coming age’.

### v.6

ἀνασταυροῦντας

Although the prefix ἀνα- with this verb does not normally carry extra significance, given the context here and the use of ἀνακαινίζω, it should be interpreted as ‘to crucify again’.

### v.7

γῆ ... ἡ πιοῦσα κτλ.

See the handout on *Greek Word-order* under ‘Adjectives’. This construction (noun – article –

15 W. L. Lane in his commentary on this verse writes: “In the expression καλὸν γευσαμένους θεοῦ ῥῆμα, the direct obj of the verb is virtually a substantival clause, i.e., “the goodness of God’s word,” not “the good word of God” (as in NASB, JB)” (in *Hebrews 1–8*, [Dallas: Word, 1998]). Let this be an object lesson in the fact that just because someone has published a commentary in what seems to be a reputable series, it does not mean that he cannot spout nonsense.

adjective) emphasises *this kind* of land as opposed to land that has not drunk up the rain etc.

## v.9

ἐχόμενα

ἐχομαι (middle) + gen. = *hold fast to, cling to* and therefore *next to, bordering on* and also *pertain to*. Here 'things pertaining to salvation'.

### The Verb ἔχω

Up to now we have had various little notes on ways in which the verb ἔχω is used. This seems a good point to summarise them once again and add a new dimension.

#### The forms

The verb itself, although transitive, does not have a separate 2<sup>nd</sup> aorist passive form. For the aorist passive it uses the middle. So we get:

	present	future	imperfect	2 <sup>nd</sup> aorist	perfect
active	ἔχω	ἔξω	εἶχον	ἔσχον	ἔσχηκα
passive	ἔχομαι	ἔξομαι		ἐσχόμεην (mid. form)	ἔσχημαι

#### Basic meaning

'to have / hold', esp. (of property) 'to possess'.

In the aorist the meaning 'to possess' can also mean 'to come to possess' / 'to acquire'. We have seen this in 2 Pet. 2:16.

#### Idiomatic uses

1. ἔχω + adverb

καλῶς ἔχω  
I am well

2. ἔχω + infin. = δύναμαι + infin. (i.e. ἔχω δύναμιν + infin.).

We encountered this in 2 Peter 1:15 (see notes), but it is also found elsewhere, cf. Matt. 18:25; Eph. 4:28 etc.

3. ἐχομαι (middle) + gen. (frequently used as participle)

'to cling to' / 'to come next to' (We encountered this in Heb. 6:9)

#### Compounds with ἔχω

Thus far we have encountered the following common compounds:

προσέχω, 'to hold fast'; and then + νοῦν (which is sometimes omitted), 'to pay attention'

παρέχω, 'to provide'

## v.10

τῆς ἀγάπης ἧς ἐνεδείξασθε

ἧς depends on ἀγάπης and is genitive by attraction (it's functional case is accusative, being the object of ἐνεδείξασθε). See further 'The attraction of the relative pronoun' following *Animal Story* 16.

τοῖς ἁγίοις

In the Old Testament there were four different ritual categories indicating relative proximity to God:

Most Holy—*sphere of God's personal presence (e.g. the most holy room in the temple)*

Holy—*sphere of God's personal property (e.g. the temple and its courts)*

Clean—*sphere of things which are acceptable to God's presence*

Unclean—*sphere of things which are not acceptable to God's presence*

In Israel, the priests, belonging to God as his temple slaves, were designated 'holy'. The New Testament takes over this designation 'holy' and applies it to all believers in Christ, who are deemed to be slaves of God and therefore his priests.<sup>16</sup>

16 See further my essay *The Laws for Uncleaness in the Pentateuch and New Testament Baptism*.

**v.11**

τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδῆν  
Hyperbaton.

τὴν πληροφορίαν

Coinage found in Paul's letters and Hebrews based on the predominately Jewish Greek πληροφορορέω (LXX and later), which etymologically one would expect to mean 'to bear along fully' and in the passive 'to be fully borne', which in Paul receives the nuance 'to be fully assured', hence πληροφορία, 'fully borne', that is, 'fully assured'.

**v.13**

κατ' οὐδενός εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμόσαι

Hyperbaton. The verb ὁμνυμι / ὁμνύω (both forms are acceptable) has a bewildering variety of acceptable ways of indicating the thing sworn by:

acc.

dat.

κατά + gen.

ἐπί + gen.

εἰς + acc.

Jewish Greek tended to use ἐν + dat.

**v.14**

εἰ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε

Gen. 22:17 LXX. The LXX text, however, begins correctly ἦ μὴν ('surely'). While εἰ is the reading of many of the older Greek codices, the Byzantine text has ἦ μὴν. The difference is probably no more than a matter of spelling, given that ἦ and εἰ in this period were identical in pronunciation and indeed the papyri often spell what should be -ει- with -η-.

The participle followed by its cognate finite verb is a Hebraism. The underlying Hebrew construction serves to emphasise the verb (e.g. 'I will surely bless'). Needless to say, this emphasis would not be recognised by a Greek reader unfamiliar with Hebrew idiom.

πληθύω is a regular transitive Greek verb 'to multiply'. πληθύνω is an *intransitive* Jewish Greek verb 'to multiply'.

**v.16**

πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας  
Hyperbaton.

ὁ ὄρκος

Placing the nominative at the end of the clause gives it emphasis.

**v.17**

ἐν ᾧ

ᾧ must be taken as neuter: 'In/by which thing ...' = 'For this reason/since ...'. This manner of speaking is also found in Paul, cf. Rom. 8:3.

βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδειξάι

A good example of the nominative subject of an infinitive.

**v.18**

ἔχομεν οἱ καταφυγόντες

Placing the subject last in the clause emphasises it.

**v.19**

ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς

Hyperbaton (type 2, noun fronted) which is purely stylistic. The verb is normally intransitive for this type.

The metaphor was more common:

**Epictetus, *fr.* 30**

Οὔτε ναῦν ἐξ ἑνὸς ἀγκυρίου οὔτε βίον ἐκ μιᾶς ἐλπίδος ἀρμοστέον.	One ought not to fit out a boat with one anchor, or a life with one hope.
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**Heliodorus, *Aeth.* 7.25.4**

Πᾶν, τοῦτο δὴ τὸ τοῦ λόγου, πείσμα διέρρηκται, πᾶσα ἐλπίδος ἄγκυρα καὶ παντοίως ἀνέσπασται καὶ οὐδὲ μετ' ὀνόματος γούν ἐλευθέρου δυστυχοῦμεν ἀλλὰ δοῦλοι γεγόναμεν αὖθις.	Every ship's cable, that is of speech, is broken, every anchor of hope has been completely drawn up, and yet we are not unhappy with a word of freedom but we have become slaves again.
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τοῦ καταπετάσματος

This was the term used by Jews for the veil of the temple (coined from καταπετάννυμι, 'to spread out over').

**v.20**

πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσηλθεν Ἰησοῦς

Hyperbaton which contravenes rule 1 of Devine and Stephens.

## Chapter Seven

The exegesis is based on LXX Gen. 14:17-20.

17 Ἐξῆλθεν δὲ βασιλεὺς Σοδομων εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῷ—μετὰ τὸ ἀναστρέψαι αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς κοπῆς τοῦ Χοδολλογομορ καὶ τῶν βασιλέων τῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ—εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα τὴν Σαυη (τοῦτο ἦν τὸ πεδῖον βασιλέως). 18 καὶ Μελχισεδεκ βασιλεὺς Σαλημ ἐξήνεγκεν ἄρτους καὶ οἶνον, ἦν δὲ ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου. 19 καὶ ἠλόγησεν τὸν Ἀβραμ καὶ εἶπεν Εὐλόγημένος Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ὑψίστῳ, ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν, 20 καὶ εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὑψιστος, ὃς παρέδωκεν τοὺς ἐχθροὺς σου ὑποχειρίους σοι. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων.

### v.1

Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Μελχισεδεκ

The demonstrative pronoun is here emphasised given that demonstrative pronouns are usually placed *after* personal names.

ὑποστρέφοντι

Christian-Jürgen Gruber<sup>17</sup> looks at the use and modification of the Melchizedek story (Gen 14:17–20) by the author of Hebrews. While certain words that retain their basic meanings are left unchanged, the author replaces ἀναστρέφω with ὑποστρέφω. The papyrological evidence suggests that by the Roman era the meaning of ἀναστρέφω had changed from ‘to return’ to ‘to behave.’ As for ὑποστρέφω, it is not attested before the second century AD and always means ‘to return’. Therefore, the author of Hebrews is likely to have made the change in line with current usage, rather than accessing a different septuagintal manuscript.

ὁ συναντήσας ... καὶ εὐλόγησας

When two successive nouns share a definite article they are viewed as combining into a single idea. (see Smyth, 1143) Here, the idea is the person who interacted with Melchizedek.

### v.2

πρῶτον μὲν ... ἔπειτα δὲ

Using ἔπειτα instead of δεύτερον is good idiomatic Greek.

### v.3

ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος

The listing continues without enumeration and without conjunctions. This is a rhetorical device known as ἀσύνδετον.<sup>18</sup>

ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος

Note the chiasm AB - BA.

### v.4

Ἀβραὰμ ἔδωκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀκροθινίων ὁ πατριάρχης

An unusual hyperbaton.

### v.5

ἀποδεκάτω, to give or collect a tithe / tenth from τινα (Jewish Greek with or without the prefix ἀπο-, regular Greek is δεκατεύω). Note that the verb takes a direct object (acc.).

τὴν ἱερατείαν λαμβάνοντες

Periphrasis for ἱερατεύοντες.

ἐντολὴν ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν λαὸν

17 “The Lexical Constancy and Changes in Heb. 7:1–3 Compared to Gen. 14:17–20”) in Arzt-Grabner, Peter, and Christina M. Kreinecker, eds. *Light from the East: Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament*. Akten des internationalen Symposions vom 3.–4. Dezember 2009 am Fachbereich Bibelwissenschaft und Kirchengeschichte der Universität Salzburg Philippika—Marburger altertumskundliche Abhandlungen 39 Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.

18 See R.D. Anderson, *Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms connected to Methods of Argumentation, Figures and Tropes from Anaximenes to Quintilian* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 24). Leuven, Peeters 2000, *sub voce*.

According to the law of Moses the Levites collect tithes from the people and pay from this income tithes to the priests. However, after the exile the ratio of priests to Levites was very different. This meant that the priests received the tithes from the people. Josephus in *Against Apion* (188) quotes from the work of Hecataeus of Abdera, a Greek historian from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, who says:

καίτοι, φησίν, οἱ πάντες ἱερεῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἱ τὴν δεκάτην τῶν γινομένων λαμβάνοντες καὶ τὰ κοινὰ διοικοῦντες περὶ χιλίους μάλιστα καὶ πεντακοσίουσ εἰσίν.	“Although”, he says, “the whole group of priests of the Jews who receive the tithes of produce and administer public affairs are about 1,500.”
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Josephus, himself a priest towards the end of the first century, says of himself (*Life*, 80):

πάντων δὲ τῶν διδομένων ὡς μὴ χρήζων κατεφρόνησα, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὰς ὀφειλομένας μοι ὡς ἱερεῖ δεκάτας ἀπελάμβανον παρὰ τῶν κομιζόντων·	I scorned all presents offered to me as having no use for them; I even declined to accept from those who brought them the tithes which were due to me as a priest. (LOEB)
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**v.7**

χωρὶς δὲ πάσης ἀντιλογίας

A legal phrase, as the papyri have shown.<sup>19</sup>

**v.8**

ζῆ

See the note to *1 Enoch 5a* on this type of -αω verb.

**v.9**

ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν

A common idiom ‘so to speak’, qualifying a too absolute expression.

**v.10**

συνήνητησεν αὐτῷ Μελχισέδεκ

The subject at the end of the clause is emphasised by position.

**v.11**

τελείωσις

The noun implies ‘completion’ or ‘maturity’. In regular Greek, at least, there is no implication of moral perfection. The use of τελειώω and cognate words in this letter, however, do suggest that the author is using this word-group in an idiosyncratic way to refer to ‘completion’ in the sense of moral ‘perfection’ (e.g. attained by having been cleansed of sin).

ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ’ αὐτῆς νενομοθέτηται

NKJV/ESV are inaccurate here. Hebrews is saying that on (the basis of) the Levitical priesthood the people have been furnished with laws. In other words, the (ceremonial) law of Moses is based on the Levitical priesthood, and the letter will argue that if the priesthood is changed, so *must* the laws be changed.

ἕτερον ἀνίστασθαι ἱερέα

Hyperbaton.

**v.12**

νόμου μετάθεσις γίνεται

Periphrasis for ὁ νόμος μετατίθησιν.

<sup>19</sup> G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. Vol. 2 (Macquarie University Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1982) entry 31.

**v.13**

θυσιαστηρίῳ

Jewish Greek for the altar of God's temple. Pagan altars are referred to by the regular Greek word for altar: ὁ βωμός.

**v.14**

οὐδὲν Μωϋσῆς ἐλάλησεν

The word-order stresses the object.

**v.18**

ἀθέτησις ... γίνεται προαγούσης ἐντολῆς

Type 2 hyperbaton (purely stylistic). It is also periphrasis for προαγούση ἐντολή ἀθετεῖται.

ἐπεισαγωγή δὲ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος

The verb γίνεται is understood, which makes the phrase periphrasis for κρείτων ἐλπίς ἐπεισάγεται.

**v.20**

ὀρκωμοσία, ἤ, oath-swearing (Jewish Greek)

οἱ μὲν

Sc. ἐξ Λευι.

εἰσὶν ἱερεῖς γεγονότες

The complement is rather unusually wedged in between the periphrastic construction. The phrase is periphrasis for ἱερευκότες or ἱερατευκότες or ἱερημένοι (all synonyms, although only the third option is actually found in the perfect).

**v.21**

ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὀρκωμοσίας

Sc. ἱερέα γεγονώς ἐστίν

**v.22**

κατὰ τοσοῦτο

Answers the καθ' ὅσον of v.20.

κρείττονος διαθήκης

See the note to *Animal Story* 7.

γέγονεν ἄγγελος Ἰησοῦς

The subject is emphasised. The phrase is periphrasis for ἠγγύηται Ἰησοῦς.

**v.23**

οἱ πλείονες, the greater number, the mass or crowd

εἰσὶν γεγονότες ἱερεῖς

The periphrastic construction usually only occurs for the perfect or pluperfect middle/pass. indicative 3rd person plural of stems ending in a consonant. We should have expected γεγόνασιν ἱερεῖς, which would still be periphrasis for ἱερήνται.

**v.24**

ἀπαράβατος, ον, unalterable, not able to be transgressed (cf. παραβαίνω)

ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην

Type 1 hyperbaton.

**v.25**

εἰς τὸ παντελές

This phrase is the later Greek equivalent of παντελῶς ('altogether' / 'utterly'), however it also comes to mean 'for ever'. Given the emphasis on τελείωσις or lack thereof in this chapter, we should probably interpret the phrase here of a salvation which is altogether complete.

**v.26**

Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ ἔπρεπεν ἀρχιερεύς

Hyperbaton (type 1).

ὅσιος ἄκακος ἀμίαντος, κεχωρισμένος κτλ.  
ἀσύνδετον.

τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ

Still dependent on ὑπέρ. *Scil.* ἀμαρτιῶν.

**v.28**

ὁ νόμος γὰρ ... ὁ λόγος δὲ

This word-order emphasises νόμος and λόγος as opposed to ὁ γὰρ νόμος ... ὁ δὲ λόγος.



## Chapter Eight

### v.1

τῆς μεγαλωσύνης  
Periphrasis for 'God'.

### v.2

ἔπηξεν ὁ κύριος, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος  
The subjects, placed last, are emphasised.

### v.4

καθὼς κεχηματίσται Μωϋσῆς  
We have here χρηματίζω used in the sense of an oracular warning. See the note below ...

*χράομαι → χρήμα → χρηματίζω*

**χρήμα** is a noun derived from χράομαι *of need or experience* (see the note after *Animal Story* 21).

I. *a thing that one needs or uses*

The plural τὰ χρήματα is used of *goods, property*, and especially *money*.

II. more generally, *thing, matter*

**χρηματίζω** is in turn a causative verb derived from χρήμα ...

I. χρηματίζω

*to deliberate / conduct business on + acc.*  
*to conduct business with + dat.*

from the act of deliberating flows the decision of such deliberations (Hellenistic) ...

*to issue orders / administer justice*  
*(of an oracle) to give an oracular response*

Pass. *to warn* (i.e. to be given an oracular response), cf. Matt. 2:12, etc.

another different Hellenistic development (often used in the NT) is ...

*to bear a title or name (i.e. to be called)* e.g. χρηματίζειν βασιλεύς ('to be called king')

II. χρηματίζομαι (Mid.)

*to conduct business for oneself / to make money*

### v.5

οἷτινες

The relative ὁ / ἡ / αἱ / οἱ (in the nominative case only) is frequently replaced in Hellenistic Greek with forms using -τις.

ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων  
Type 2 hyperbaton.

ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνὴν

Tents can be 'made' (ποιέω), 'fastened' (πήγνυμι – used in v.2), or 'set up' (ἀνίσταμαι), but I am not aware of another example of a tent being 'completed'. This terminology does not come from the LXX. It does not appear to be a Hebraism (in Hebrew one 'spreads out' a tent).

ὄρα γάρ φησιν κτλ.

The quotation is from LXX Exod. 25:40. The use of ὄρα in this way is a Hebraism.

ἐν τῷ ὄρει

This is actually good idiomatic Greek for "on the mountain".

**v.6**

διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας  
Type 1 hyperbaton.

κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης  
Type 1 hyperbaton.

ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται

Although νενομοθέτηται is often translated ‘enacted’, given the parallel with 7:11 we might better translate ‘furnished with laws’.

**v.7**

δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος  
Type 1 hyperbaton.

**v.10**

ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διαθήσομαι

διατίθημι in the middle is used of ‘disposing’ or ‘settling’ matters, such as a testament.

## Chapter Nine

### v.1

ἡ πρώτη

Sc. διαθήκη.

δικαιώματα

The sense 'ordinance / decree' is Septuagintal and not regular Greek.

τό τε ἅγιον κοσμικόν

The word ἅγιον is used as a substantive here, while κοσμικόν is in the predicate position (implying the participle ὄν), see *Greek Word-Order*. While both τὸ ἅγιον and τὸ ἱερόν are used in regular Greek for a holy place or sanctuary, Jews seem to have preferred τὸ ἅγιον to refer to the Jerusalem sanctuary. The ensuing description is based on the tabernacle as it stood in the wilderness period. It is this which Moses built upon the divine pattern shown to him (Heb. 8:5).

### v.2

ἡ πρώτη

Each of the 'rooms' of the tabernacle is identified as a separate σκηνή ('tent'). The idea is therefore that of two tents pitched next to each other.

ἥτις λέγεται

Here we see the ambiguity of Hellenistic Greek, which frequently represented ἦ by ἥτις (as also οἱ and αἱ by οἵτινες and αἵτινες respectively, and sometimes also ὅς by ὅστις, but never in the oblique cases). If taken in its proprietary sense we would translate: 'which sort of thing is called ...'

### v.3

καταπέτασμα

Jewish Greek, used primarily for the inner veil of the tabernacle (the outer curtain was generally called τὸ κάλυμμα), from καταπέτομαι 'to fly down'. This suggests a curtain which is hauled up and let down much like modern blinds.

σκηνή ἡ λεγομένη

See the handout on *Greek Word-order* under 'Adjectives'. This construction (noun – article – adjective) emphasises *this kind* of tent, 'a tent, the kind called ...'.

### v.4

χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα θυμιατήριον

Type 1 hyperbaton. Given that the θυμιατήριον is described as 'golden', it may refer to the altar of incense, although the censers (fire-pans) could also be made of gold (cf. 1 Kgs 7:50). The word itself just means 'a thing used for burning incense' derived from θυμιάω 'to burn incense'. The word usually refers to a censer (as it does in the Septuagint), but it is also used in a (pagan) first century inscription to refer to an incense altar.<sup>20</sup> If interpreted in the sense of an altar, the phrase here does not necessarily mean that this altar was inside the 'Holy of Holies', but that it *served* the 'Holy of Holies'.

τὴν κιβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης

In accordance with the LXX, 'the chest of the testament'. The ark itself never returned from the exile.

τὸ μάννα

The transliteration μάννα is also found in the LXX. It represents the Aramaic spelling ܡܢܢܐ.

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<sup>20</sup> See G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. Vol. 3 (Macquarie University Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1983) entry 40.

**v.5**

Χερουβὶν ... κατασκιάζοντα

This form of the plural is Aramaic. In the LXX the word (transliterated as Hebrew Χερουβίμ) is also considered to be neuter plural.

τὸ ἰλαστήριον

The word is Jewish from ἰλάσκομαι ‘to appease’ meaning literally ‘instrument of appeasement’. It is used by Jews to refer to the mercy seat above the ark.

ἔστιν

This is the impersonal use followed by the infinitive, meaning ‘it is possible’.

κατὰ μέρος

Distributive κατά, that is, ‘part by part’ / ‘in detail’.

**v.8**

ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν

The letter makes it quite clear that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing when it was written.

**v.11**

τῆς κτίσεως

See note to Heb. 4:13.

**v.12**

αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν

The adjective should be two-termination, i.e. αἰωνίον. We see a feminine form occasionally both among Jews and Hellenistic Greeks.

**v.13**

τὸ αἶμα ... καὶ σποδὸς

See the note to 3:1, although it much less common when the subsequent noun is of a different gender.

τοὺς κεκοινωμένους

The verb κοινῶ ‘to make common’ was used by Jews in the sense of ‘to make profane’, cf. βεβηλός in regular Greek.

ἀγιάζει

Jewish Gk for ἀγίζω.

**v.14**

καθαριεῖ

καθαρίζω is Jewish Greek for καθαίρω.

**v.15**

τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν λάβωσιν οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας

Hyperbaton type 2. The use of a transitive verb with this kind of hyperbaton is unusual.

**v.16**

θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου

Hyperbaton type 2. The infinitive φέρεσθαι ‘to be brought’ has the sense of ‘to be announced’ (the noun ἀγγελίαν needs to be understood), see LSJ φέρω IV.4.

**v.17**

ἐπεὶ μήποτε

The use of μή after causal ὡς, ὅτι, διότι, ἐπεὶ is a late Hellenistic development (Smyth §2689c).

**v.18**

ἐγκεκαίνισται  
Jewish Greek.

**v.19**

ἐρράντισεν  
Jewish Greek for ραίνω.

ύσσώπου

The word ἡ ύσσωπος is etymologically related to the Hebrew צִיָּפֹר.

**v.20**

τοῦτο τὸ αἶμα κτλ.

Interestingly this quotation from Exod. 24:8 is not taken from the Septuagint, neither does the vocabulary and description of the ritual in the previous verses conform to the Septuagint. It would appear that for this section the author had a different (Jewish) source.

**v.22**

αἱματεκχυσίας  
Coinage based on ἔκχυσις αἵματος.

**v.23**

ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις

Theoretically ‘in these heavens’ would initially appear possible, but when the rest of the sentence is read it transpires that τούτοις, balancing κρείττοσιν θυσίας, ought to be taken as an instrumental dative in the neuter plural.

**v.24**

εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσηλθεν ἅγια Χριστός

Type 1 hyperbaton, emphasising ‘made with hands’. The subject, placed last, is also emphasised.

ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν

In apposition to ἅγια. The heavenly sanctuary is the actual stamp, the earthly sanctuary is its imprint. The substantive ἀντίτυπον is also used frequently in the papyri in the sense of a ‘copy’ of a document.

ἐμφανισθῆναι

The subject is still Χριστός and because it is nominative it is not repeated (Smyth § 1973).

**v.26**

ἐπεὶ ἔδει αὐτὸν κτλ.

ἐπεὶ (or ἐπειδὴ) is often used in the sense of ‘otherwise’. In fact, grammatically, one needs to supply the words ‘if not’ so that ἐπεὶ means ‘since (if not) ...’ Here that gets a bit convoluted: ‘If it is not the case that Christ would not offer himself frequently ...’

εἰς ἀθέτησιν [τῆς] ἁμαρτίας

The phrase εἰς ἀθέτησιν is the usual legal terminology referring to the annulment of a contract.<sup>21</sup>

**v.28**

τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας

Hyperbaton (type 1). The phrase is taken from LXX Isa. 53:12 καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν translating נֶשֶׁךְ יָרִיבֵי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי וְהוֹרֵג. This explains the unusual sense of ἀναφέρω here (‘to bear sin’).

21 G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. Vol. 2 (Macquarie University Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1982) entry 29.

ὀφθήσεται τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεκδεχομένοις

While we might have expected ὑπό + genitive instead the dative of agent, Jewish Greek uses the passive of ὀράω in an active sense 'to appear'. I am not sure whether this is generally true of Hellenistic Greek as well.

## Chapter Ten

### v.1

Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν

Reversing the natural word order like this, places particular emphasis on image of a ‘shadow’. Note the type 2 hyperbaton, once again *without* an intransitive verb.

οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων

The choice of terms is interesting. A ‘shadow’ is contrasted with a ‘representation’. The matters themselves are, of course, the heavenly sanctuary. The author is saying that the law is not even an accurate ‘image’ or ‘representation’. It is only a ‘shadow’. Translations often wrongly give the impression that the contrast is between ‘shadow’ and ‘reality’. It is between ‘shadow’ and any good ‘representation’ (e.g. ‘mirror reflection’ or ‘painting’).

### v.2

ἐπεὶ

See note to Heb. 9:26.

ὃν ἐπαύσαντο

See the notes on contingency to *Animal Story* 10. The verb παύω is a transitive verb meaning ‘to stop’ *someone or something*. It is often paired with a participle in the sense ‘to stop someone from doing something’. When used in the passive or middle with a participle it comes to mean ‘to leave off (cease) doing something’. The following examples should illustrate this:

ὁ αἴλουρος τὸν κύνα ἀποτρέχοντα ἔπαυσεν. *The cat stopped the dog from running away.*

ὁ κύων ἀποτρέχων ἔπαυσατο (οἱ ἐπαύσθη). *The dog left off/ceased running away.*

προσφερόμεναι

Sc. αἱ θυσίαι.

μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν

Type 1 hyperbaton.

τὸ μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν τοὺς λατρεύοντας

Note the unusual word-order, with the object placed before the subject. Given that both subject and object are in the accusative case, context determines which is which.

### v.5

σῶμα δὲ καταρτίσω μοι

The author states that Jesus is the one speaking this psalm text (Ps. 40, = LXX Ps. 39:7-9). He seems to imply that Jesus deliberately punned the Greek Septuagint translation to make it fit his personal situation. So we have here a portion of Jesus’ teaching not recorded in the Gospels. The Septuagint (following the Hebrew) states: ὡτία δὲ καταρτίσω μοι. It is also interesting to note that the use of the middle of καταρτίζω in the sense ‘to equip / furnish’ is first attested in the Septuagint, but is also found in regular Greek from the first century AD onwards.

### v.6

ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ εὐδόκησας

περὶ ἁμαρτίας is the standard translation in the Septuagint for a ‘sin offering’. It is questionable whether the phrase would have been recognised as such. The verb εὐδοκέω is intransitive and should take the dative case.

### v.7

ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου

Obviously this is supposed to translate the Hebrew ‘in the scroll of the book’. ἡ κεφαλίς, however, means ‘little head’. It was also used to designate the capital of a column. Apart from a few uses in the Septuagint (such as that quoted here) the word is otherwise unattested in the sense ‘scroll’. τὸ

κεφάλιον can refer to the ‘chief point’ of a discourse, or even a ‘chapter’ of a book. Might a Greek read this as ‘in a little chapter of (the) book’?

ὁ θεός

Must be treated as a vocative.

#### v.10

ἡγιασμένοι ἔσμεν

ἡγιαζω is Jewish Greek for ἀγίζω (see also v.14). The periphrastic construction usually only occurs for the perfect or pluperfect middle/pass. indicative 3rd person plural of stems ending in a consonant. In those cases the perfect uses the midd./pass. participle + present tense εἰσί while the pluperfect uses the past tense ἦσαν. Here we would have expected ἡγιάσαμεθα. While Hellenistic Greek did tend to use more periphrastic constructions, Jews under the influence of Aramaic abounded in them.

#### v.11

τὰς αὐτὰς πολλάκις προσφέρων θυσίας

Type 1 hyperbaton.

περιελεῖν

The verb αἰρέω uses both a 1<sup>st</sup> and a 2<sup>nd</sup> aorist (ἤρῃσα, εἶλον). περιαιρέω seems to be a deliberately chosen verb here, meaning to remove or strip off something that encompasses (i.e. is all ‘around’) something else.

#### v.12

μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν

Type 1 hyperbaton.

ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ

The quotation of Psalm 110 (LXX) at 1:13 used κάθημαι. Has our author silently corrected the verb? (καθίζω refers to the act of sitting down, while κάθημαι refers to the position of sitting)

#### v.17

καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν

The context demands that we read something like ‘then he adds’ to follow the μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εἰρηκέναι of v.15 and make sense of the conclusion in v.18. A few mss have added suitable words here such as ὕστερον λέγει or τότε εἶρηκεν and indeed some such phrase must have been dropped very early on in the copying of the text.

#### v.20

ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ

The words τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ have often been understood in apposition to τοῦ καταπετάσματος. This seems to me quite unlikely. We would then expect the preposition διὰ to be repeated. More probable is that τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ depends on ὁδὸν, i.e. ‘the way of his flesh’.

#### v.22

πληροφορία

A coinage based on πληροφορέω, itself a word which (apart from one case in Ctesias, 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) seems to originate in a Jewish milieu.

ῥεραντισμένοι τὰς καρδίας ... καὶ λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα

Accusatives of respect. See notes to *Animal Story* 23.

#### v.24

εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης καὶ καλῶν ἔργων

The verb παροξύνω means ‘to spur on’ or ‘stimulate’. Given a negative context it means ‘to provoke’. The cognate noun, παροξυσμός is usually used in the negative sense, but the context here demands the sense ‘stimulation’.



**v.25**

ἐγκαταλείποντες

The extra prefix ἐγ- (from ἐν + κ) usually has semantic significance in this verb, either attending an indirect object (e.g. ὁ αἴλουρος τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα ἐν τῇ κήπῳ ἐγκαταλείπει, *The cat leaves the other animals behind in the garden.*), or with the sense of leaving someone or something in the lurch, as here.

τοσοῦτω μᾶλλον ὄσῳ

See ‘A note on demonstrative pronouns’ in the *Notes on 2 Peter*. Indeed τοσοῦτω here refers back to the preceding participle. Literally ‘encouraging (one another) and by so much the more (you do this), by this much you are seeing the day approaching’.

**v.26**

τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας

Periphrasis for ἐπιγνῶναι τὴν ἀληθειάν.

The background to this verse can be found in Numbers 15:27-31 which reads as follows in the LXX:

<sup>27</sup> ἐὰν δὲ ψυχὴ μία ἀμάρτη ἀκουσίως, προσάξει αἴγα μίαν ἐνιαυσίαν περὶ ἀμαρτίας, <sup>28</sup> καὶ ἐξιλάσεται ὁ ἱερεὺς περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς ἀκουσιασθείσης καὶ ἀμαρτούσης ἀκουσίως ἔναντι κυρίου ἐξιλάσασθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ. <sup>29</sup> τῷ ἐγγωρίῳ ἐν υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ προσηλύτῳ τῷ προσκειμένῳ ἐν αὐτοῖς, νόμος εἷς ἔσται αὐτοῖς, ὃς ἂν ποιήσῃ ἀκουσίως. <sup>30</sup> καὶ ψυχὴ, ἣτις ποιήσει ἐν χειρὶ ὑπερηφανίας ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτοχθόνων ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν προσηλύτων, τὸν θεὸν οὕτως παροξύνει, ἐξολεθρευθήσεται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκείνη ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτῆς, <sup>31</sup> ὅτι τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ἐφάλυσεν καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ διεσκέδασεν, ἐκτρίψει ἐκτριβήσεται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκείνη, ἡ ἀμαρτία αὐτῆς ἐν αὐτῇ.

*Notes on the LXX text*

**v.27**

ψυχὴ μία = ἄνθρωπος τίς

**v.28**

ἀκουσιάζω = *hapax legomenon* based on ἀκούσιος  
ἔναντι, *Adv.* in the presence of, *c. gen.* (typically Jewish Greek)

**v.29**

προσήλυτος, *ον*, *one that has arrived at a place*, stranger, sojourner (Jewish Greek, cf. προσέρχομαι)  
ποιήσῃ ἀκουσίως, ποιέω + adverb intransitively ‘to act’ is correct usage

**v.31**

ἐκτριψις, εως, ἡ is a coinage based on the verb ἐκτριβῶ (here in the sense of ‘to rub/wipe out’).  
ἐκτριβήσεται, a late spelling for ἐκτριφθήσεται.

The letter to the Hebrews has substituted ἐκουσίως (being the opposite of ἀκουσίως) for the Hebraism ἐν χειρὶ ὑπερηφανίας.<sup>22</sup>

**v.27**

ἐκδοχή

The sense ‘expectation’, which the word must have here is unique, but not unintelligible given that it is based on one of the regular senses of ἐκδέχομαι.

πυρὸς ζῆλος ἐσθίειν μέλλοντος τοὺς ὑπεναντίους

Type 2 hyperbaton. God’s zeal is often spoken of in the Old Testament in terms of burning fire, cf. LXX Ps. 78:5 ἐκαυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ὁ ζῆλος σου.

**v.28**

οἰκτιρμῶν

Jewish Greek. The word originates from the cry of lament: οἶ. It is virtually only used in the plural,

<sup>22</sup> For the meaning of the Hebrew phrase translated ἀκουσίως, see C. van Dam, “The Meaning of *bishegahah*” in: *Unity in Diversity* (Canada: Senate of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, 1989) pp.13-24.

representing םימק׳. <sup>23</sup> The regular word would have been ὁ οἶκτος.

**v.29**

δοκεῖτε

This word is parenthetical and does not belong to the syntax of the sentence.

χείρονος ἀξιοθήσεται τιμωρίας

Type 1 hyperbaton.

κοινὸν

Jewish Greek for βέβηλον.

ἡγιάσθη

Jewish Greek for ἡγίσθη.

**v.32**

πολλὴν ἄθλησιν ὑπεμείνατε παθημάτων

Type 2 hyperbaton. This is the only figurative usage of the noun ἄθλησις known. It denotes a ‘contest’ or ‘combat’.

**v.33**

τοῦτο μὲν .., τοῦτο δέ .. ‘on the one hand .., on the other ..’ / ‘partly .., partly ..’

ὀνειδισμοῖς

This -μοσ termination noun for ‘reproach’ appears first in the Septuagint (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) and from there becomes popular among Jewish writers, but it is also known in non-Jewish authors from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. By far the more regular word for ‘reproach’ is τὸ ὀνειδος (-εος). Nouns terminating in -μοσ generally denote *action*, while nouns terminating in -μα denote the *result of action*. See *A note on formation of nouns* from *Animal Story* 16.

θεατριζόμενοι

The verb θεατρίζω is virtually unknown<sup>24</sup>, but the verb ἐκθεατρίζω is quite common, ‘to make a public show of’, typically used in a metaphorical sense.

**v.34**

τοῖς δεσμίαις

Sc. ἀνθρώποις.

κρείττονα ὑπαρξιν καὶ μένουσαν

Noun phrase hyperbaton.

See the Reader on *Josephus and the New Testament*, ‘Political Turmoil leading up to the Jewish Revolt’.

**v.35**

μισθαποδοσίαν

See the earlier note (at 2:2) on μισθαποδοσίαν.

**v.36**

ὑπομονῆς γὰρ ἔχετε χρείαν

Type 1 hyperbaton. Jewish used the noun ὑπομονή in the sense of ‘endurance’ with a positive connotation. Regular Greek would normally restrict the use of this noun in this sense to patiently enduring something negative (an overview of the cognate verb and its noun shows that Jews, probably unconsciously, used the noun just as the verb was generally used). Either sense would work here.

<sup>23</sup> Exceptions are single poetical uses in Pindar and Aristophanes.

<sup>24</sup> It is found in one early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD inscription in Gerasa where the meaning is obscure.

**v.37**

ἔτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον

*Sc. χρόνον.* The repetition of ὅσον is unusual, but not completely unheard of, literally ‘up to this much (but not further)’.

**v.38**

ὑποστέλλομαι, (mid.) to shrink back / draw back

**v.39**

οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑποστολῆς ... ἀλλὰ πίστεως

LSJ categorise six semantic fields for εἰμί + gen. as follows (a summary):

- a) to express descent or extraction.
- b) to express the material of which a thing is made.
- c) to express the class to which a person or thing belongs.
- d) to express that a thing belongs to another, *e.g.* τὸ πεδῖον ἦν μὲν κοτε Χορασμίων Hdt. 3.117.
- e) to express one’s duty, business, custom, nature, and the like.
- f) (*a Semitism*) to be occupied about, *e.g.* ἦσαν τοῦ θύειν LXX 2Chron. 30.17.



**v.6**

μισθαποδότης

A coinage. See the note at 2:2.

**v.7**

χρηματισθεις

In regular Greek this verb is used intransitively in the active voice “to give a (divine) response to someone consulting an oracle”. In the LXX, however, it is used as a parallel to προφητεύω (in the Jewish sense ‘to prophesy’) and hence also used transitively (cf. LXX Jer. 32:30; 33:2 etc.). This verb appears to be used in the passive only in the NT in the sense “to warn by oracle”, nevertheless this is but a small step from its transitive use in the LXX.

οἴκου αὐτοῦ

οἶκος in the sense of ‘family’ is a Semitism. Compare the vocabulary of LXX Gen. 7:1 Καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Νωε Εἰσελθε σὺ καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκός σου εἰς τὴν κιβωτόν.

τῆς κατὰ πίστιν δικαιοσύνης ἐγένετο κληρονόμος

Hyperbaton.

**v.8**

ἤμελλεν λαμβάνειν

Periphrasis for λήγεται. In Attic the infinitive would have been future (λήψεσθαι).

εἰς κληρονομίαν

A Hebraism, often found in the LXX. We might have expected ὡς κληρονομίαν or simply κληρονομίαν.

**v.9**

παρόκησεν εἰς γῆν

The verb παροικέω with εἰς is odd and to my knowledge not found in either regular or Jewish Greek. The meaning ‘to sojourn in’ would normally require παροικέω + acc. although ἐν was often used by Jews.

**v.11**

αὐτὴ Σάρρα στεῖρα δύναμιν εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος ἔλαβεν

This Greek text is impossible. It would read: ‘Sarah herself, barren, received power for ejaculating seed’. The words καταβολὴν σπέρματος are a standard Greek phrase for the male ejaculation of semen, not for females who conceive.<sup>26</sup> This fact makes it probable that the subject ought to be considered to be Abraham (from v.10). In fact, the words ‘καὶ αὐτὴ Σάρρα στεῖρα’ may even have been a gloss – originally merely a marginal comment from a scribe. However, when they are read with οὐσα (present in some textual witnesses) they form a Semitic circumstantial clause ‘although Sarah herself was barren’ allowing the rest of the sentence to be construed with Abraham. This is Black’s solution (see previous footnote), but it still seems a little forced to me given the reasonably high standard of the Greek in this epistle.<sup>27</sup>

**v.12**καὶ ταῦτα, *adding a circumstance heightening the force of what has been said*, ‘and that ...’διὸ καὶ ἄφ’ ἐνὸς ἐγεννήθησαν, καὶ ταῦτα νεεκρωμένου

The explanatory statement produces hyperbaton. The genitive noun understood is ἀνθρώπου, the implied subject of the verb is ‘descendants’.

Compare LXX Gen. 22:17b καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου ὡς τοὺς ἀστέρας τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ὡς τὴν ἄμμον τὴν παρὰ τὸ χεῖλος τῆς θαλάσσης

<sup>26</sup> See discussion in M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.84ff.

<sup>27</sup> Black’s attempted demonstration that Hebrews also uses such Semitic idiom elsewhere is quite unconvincing.

**v.15**

ἐκείνης

Sc. γῆς.

**v.16**

Both κρείσσων and ἐπουράνιος are two-termination adjectives and go with γῆ (understood) here.

θεός ἐπικαλεῖσθαι αὐτῶν

Hyperbaton. θεός is nominative here (with the infinitive) because it is also the subject of the main verb.

**v.17**

προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραάμ ... προσέφερεν,

The sequence of tenses seems rather unusual here, namely a perfect tense followed by the imperfect of the same verb. This must be deliberate, but why? The verb itself does not come from the Septuagint, which (together with James and others) uses ἀναφέρω “to offer up” instead of “to present (as offering)”.

**v.19**

ἐκ νεκρῶν

Sc. ἐκ τοῦ τόπου τῶν νεκρῶν.

ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ ... ἐκομίσατο

Although the verb κομίζω in Hellenistic Greek often simply has the sense ‘to carry / bring’. The verb is actually used here in its specific sense ‘to convey for safekeeping’ (often used in the middle voice). This was a sense derived from the meaning ‘to care / provide for’. As such the verb was often used for carrying away dead bodies from a battlefield, or (in the middle voice) of getting something (or someone) back for oneself.

ἐν παραβολῇ

The term παραβολή was frequently used for a hypothetical example (as opposed to a παράδειγμα, which is a concrete example).<sup>28</sup>**v.21**

ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ

This is quoted from the LXX. The MT reads: עַל־רֵגֶל שֵׁנֵי הַמֶּטֶח (‘upon the edge of his bed’). It is clear that the LXX translators read the consonants as מַטְּחָה (‘staff’).

**v.22**

περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἐμνημόνευσεν

The verb should take a direct object. I am not aware of it being used elsewhere with a prepositional phrase. However the synonym μμνήσκομαι in the sense ‘make mention of’ frequently uses a construction with περί + gen.

**v.23**

διότι = διὰ τοῦτο ὅτι.

ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ

This follows LXX Exod. 2:2b which has plural verbs (of both parents, not just the mother). The verse reads: καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔλαβεν καὶ ἔτεκεν ἄρσεν, ιδόντες δὲ αὐτὸ ἀστεῖον ἐσκέπασαν αὐτὸ μῆνας τρεῖς. Indeed the term πατήρ (*lit.* ‘father’) in the plural can refer to both parents (*i.e.* father and mother). For the description of Moses, cf. Acts 7:20 Ἐν ᾧ καιρῷ ἐγεννήθη Μωϋσῆς καὶ ἦν ἀστεῖος τῷ θεῷ· ὃς ἀνετράφη μῆνας τρεῖς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ πατρός.

28 See further R. D. Anderson, *Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms connected to Methods of Argumentation, Figures and Tropes from Anaximenes to Quintilian* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000) s.v. παραβολή.

**v.24**

The reference is to LXX Exod. 2:11 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταῖς πολλαῖς ἐκείναις μέγας γενόμενος Μωϋσῆς ἐξήλθεν πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραηλ.

**v.25**

ἐλόμενος

The verb αἰρέω can take a standard first aorist ἤρησα, as far as I'm aware not used in the NT apart from the aor. passive (ἠρέθη). In addition it can take a second aorist form εἶλον, which is also used with first aorist endings. The same ambivalence is found in the future where both αἰρήσω and ἐλέω are possible (the latter form is Hellenistic).

συγκακουχεῖσθαι

A common coinage (by adding a prefix to an existing verb), cf. κακουχέω, 'to maltreat'.

πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἀμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν

Hyperbaton type 1. Note that the word-order emphasises (for the purpose of deprecation) the final word in this phrase.

**v.26**

μείζονα πλουῶν ἠγησάμενος τῶν Αἰγύπτου θησαυρῶν τὸν ὀνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
Type 1 hyperbaton.

μισθαποδοσίαν

See the note at 2:2 on this noun.

**v.27**

μὴ φοβηθεῖς

Hellenistic Greek tends to use μή (instead of οὐ) with the participle generally. Attic would restrict this use to a condition or a generality.

τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὄρων ἐκαρτέρησεν

The ἀόρατον should probably be construed as the object of ὄρων, not of ἐκαρτέρησεν.

**v.28**

πεποίηκεν τὸ πάσχα

This word πάσχα is Aramaic, כּהּנִּסֵּה, and can mean (in both Aramaic or Greek) either the passover feast or the passover *sacrificial lamb*. The verb ποιέω here could quite easily be taken in the sense 'to institute', however it is used in the LXX for *observing* the passover, cf. LXX Exod. 12:48a ἐὰν δέ τις προσέλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς προσήλυτος ποιῆσαι τὸ πασχα κυρίῳ, περιτεμεῖς αὐτοῦ πᾶν ἀρσενικόν, καὶ τότε προσελεύσεται ποιῆσαι αὐτὸ.

τὴν πρόσχυσιν τοῦ αἵματος

The term πρόσχυσις is a coinage based on the cognate verb προσχέω as used in the LXX for the Mosaic ritual of splashing the blood of a sacrificial victim against the altar. Here, of course, the reference is to the smearing of the blood of the paschal lamb on the doorpost (LXX uses different verbs to describe this, however, which suggests that the author of Hebrews did not have a copy of the book of Exodus on hand when writing the letter).

ὁ ὄλεθρεύων

Compare LXX Exod. 24:23 καὶ παρελεύσεται κύριος πατάξει τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους καὶ ὄψεται τὸ αἶμα ἐπὶ τῆς φλιαῖς καὶ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρων τῶν σταθμῶν, καὶ παρελεύσεται κύριος τὴν θύραν καὶ οὐκ ἀφήσει τὸν ὄλεθρευόντα εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὰς οἰκίας ὑμῶν πατάξει.

**v.29**

τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν

This is the LXX rendering of רִדְדַי ('reed sea', e.g. Exod. 13:18), which was a known Greek phrase referring to the Indian ocean and sometimes the Red sea.

πειραν λαβόντες

The use of λαμβάνω with a noun is a common periphrasis, = πειρησάμενοι, ‘having made trial of’ + gen.

κατεπόθησαν

κατα + πίνω. The verb πίνω repays a little attention. Fut. πίομαι or πίομαι, aor. έπιον, perf. πέπωκα, aor.pass. έπόθην.

v.32

Καί τί έτι λέγω;

The λέγω must be parsed as subjunctive, see ‘Contingency in Greek’ following *Animal Story* 10.

v.33

έφραξαν στόματα λεόντων

A clear reference to Daniel 6.

v.34

έσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρός

Referring to Daniel 3.

στόματα μαχαίρης

The expected spelling would be μαχαίρας, however papyri from Roman times onwards tend to spell it this way. The phrase ‘mouth of sword’ is a common Hebraism.

παρεμβολάς έκκλιναν άλλοτρίων

The word παρεμβολή does not mean ‘army’ in regular Greek. Jews used it in this sense, as well as it’s regular sense of ‘encampment’ due to the fact that the equivalent Hebrew word (מַחֲנֵה) can take both meanings. The phrase is an example of type 2 hyperbaton.

v.35

Έλαβον γυναίκες κτλ.

The reference is to the two cases under both Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 17:17ff. and 2 Kings 4:17ff. The second example also uses the verb λαμβάνω as verses 36-37 in the LXX show: και έξεβόησεν Ελισαιε προς Γιεζι και ειπεν Κάλεσον την Σωμανίτιν ταύτην, και εκάλεσεν, και εισήλθεν προς αυτόν. και ειπεν Ελισαιε Λαβέ τον υίόν σου. και εισήλθεν ή γυνή και έπεσεν επί τους πόδας αυτού και προσεκύνησεν επί την γήν και έλαβεν τον υίόν αυτής και έξήλθεν.

άλλοι

Masculine, referring to άνθρωποι in the sense of ‘other people’. Given that it is not feminine, it does not appear to be referring to other *women* such as the mother of the seven sons in 2 Macc. 7. Furthermore the use of τυμπανίζω would suggest 2 Macc. 6 (see below).

έτυμπανίσθησαν

For this verb, it seemed to me a good idea to present a way of examining an obscure word, rather than merely presenting my own conclusions.

When we consult LSJ (Liddell/Scott *et al*) we learn that the verb τυμπανίζω is derived from the noun τὸ τύμπανον ‘frame drum’, and would regularly mean ‘to beat a drum’. However τύμπανον can also refer to an instrument of torture (which is obviously in some way related to a drum or roller). The cognate verb related to this is usually άποτυμπανίζω which comes to mean ‘to execute’, not necessarily implying a method of torture (originally connected to beating to death, as one would beat a drum). The problem is, therefore, that according to LSJ there is no other recorded use of τυμπανίζω in the sense of ‘to torture’, which seems to be the sense required here, especially if we take into account the background in 2 Maccabees 7.

The next source to consult is BDAG (Bauer/Arndt *et al*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). This dictionary supplies many more



references to literature around the time of the New Testament, particularly with respect to New Testament vocabulary. It needs to be used with caution, however. Many of the references to Hellenistic literature are inappropriate or at least dubious. In its entry on τυμπανίζω BDAG suggest that the term can in fact mean ‘to torture’ and give three references to literature preceding the letter to the Hebrews. In addition they (incorrectly) assert that ἀποτυμπανίζω is synonymous. Let’s look at the three references allegedly using τυμπανίζω in the sense of ‘to torture’.

The first comes from Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* 2,5. This is actually quite a vague reference, but reading through the whole section, one only comes across ἀποτυμπανίζω at 2,5,14. I found no use of τυμπανίζω at all. The second reference is to Plutarch’s *Moralia* 60A (ca. AD 46 – AD 120). This comes from a treatise on flattery.

<p>οὕτω δὲ καὶ Πτολεμαίῳ φιλομαθεῖν δοκοῦντι περὶ γλώττης καὶ στιχιδίου μαχόμενοι καὶ ἱστορίας μέχρι μέσων νυκτῶν ἀπέτεινον· ὁμότητι δὲ χρωμένον καὶ ὕβρει καὶ <b>τυμπανίζοντος</b> καὶ τελοῦντος οὐδεὶς ἐνέστη τῶν τοσούτων. ὥσπερ οὖν εἴ τις ἀνθρώπου φύματα καὶ σύριγγας ἔχοντος ἰατρικῶ σμιλίῳ τὰς τρίχας τέμνει καὶ τοὺς ὄνυχας, οὕτως οἱ κόλακες τὴν παρρησίαν πρὸς τὰ μὴ λυπούμενα μέρη μὴδ' ἀλγοῦντα προσφέρουσιν.</p>	<p>So it was with the flatterers of Ptolemy, who posed as a lover of learning; they would contend with him about an obscure word or a trifling verse or a point of history, and keep it up till midnight; but when he indulged in wanton cruelty and violence, <b>played the cymbals</b> and conducted his initiations, not one of all these people opposed his course. Just imagine a man using a surgeon’s lancet to cut the hair and nails of a person suffering from tumours and abscesses! Yet this is the sort of thing that flatterers do, who apply their frankness to those parts that feel no hurt or pain. (LOEB translation)</p>
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The LOEB translator obviously has a somewhat novel idea of what Plutarch was referring to with τυμπανίζω, and may have done better to translate ‘played the drums’. However, the idea that Plutarch is referring to initiation into religious mysteries with his use of τυμπανίζω and τελέω is commonly accepted (cf. LSJ *sub* τελέω IIIa). This second reference, therefore, also falls away. The final reference is to Lucian’s *Juppiter Tragoedus* 19 (second century AD). Momus, the Greek god of mockery, is speaking to the gods about all those who ignore them.

<p>ἢ τί γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἀξιώσειέ τις ἂν φρονεῖν, ὅπταν ὀρῶσι τοσαύτην ἐν τῷ βίῳ τὴν ταραχὴν, ... καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἱεροσύλους οὐ κολαζομένους ἀλλὰ διαλανθάνοντας, ἀνασκολοπιζομένους δὲ καὶ <b>τυμπανιζομένους</b> ἐνίοτε τοὺς οὐδὲν ἀδικοῦντας;</p>	<p>Why, what could one expect them to think when they see so much confusion in life, ... and that temple robbers are not punished but escape, while men who are guiltless of all wrong-doing sometimes die by the cross or the <b>scourge</b>? (LOEB translation)</p>
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Quite clearly τυμπανίζω is used here of some kind of punishment leading to death, presumably beating or whipping (see below). Although a century later than the letter to the Hebrews, its use in this sense is suggestive.

We next check Muraoka’s *Lexicon of the Septuagint*. There we find that τυμπανίζω is used in its regular sense of playing the drum (1 Kgs 21:14). The noun τύμπανον, however, is used both in the sense ‘drum’ and as follows:

2. *block* or *stake* to which those who were beaten for punishment were fastened: 2M 6.19, 28, see Owen 1929.260f.<sup>29</sup>

The reference to 2 Maccabees 6:19, 28 is very interesting as it relates the martyrdom of a 90 year old Jewish scribe under Antioches Epiphanes.

<sup>29</sup> The reference is to E. C. E. Owen, 1929. “ἀποτυμπανίζω, ἀποτυμπανισμός (τυμπανισμός), τυμπανίζω, τύμπανον (τύπανον)” *Journal of Theological Studies* 30.259-66, an article also referenced in BDAG, but not available to me.

18 Ελεάζαρος τις τῶν πρωτευόντων γραμματέων, ἀνὴρ ἤδη προβεβηκὸς τὴν ἡλικίαν καὶ τὴν πρόσοψιν τοῦ προσώπου κάλλιστος, ἀναχανὼν ἠναγκάζετο φαγεῖν ὕειον κρέας. 19 ὁ δὲ τὸν μετ' εὐκλείας θάνατον μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν μετὰ μύσους βίον ἀναδεξάμενος, αὐθαιρέτως ἐπὶ τὸ τύμπανον προσῆγεν, ... τοσαῦτα δὲ εἰπὼν ἐπὶ τὸ τύμπανον εὐθέως ἤλθεν. 29 τῶν δὲ ἀγόντων πρὸς αὐτὸν τὴν μικρῶ πρότερον εὐμένειαν εἰς δυσμένειαν μεταβαλόντων διὰ τὸ τοὺς προειρημένους λόγους, ὡς αὐτοὶ διελάμβανον, ἀπόνοιαν εἶναι, 30 μέλλων δὲ ταῖς πληγαῖς τελευτᾶν ἀναστενάξας εἶπεν Τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ τὴν ἀγίαν γνώσιν ἔχοντι φανερόν ἐστιν ὅτι δυνάμενος ἀπολυθῆναι τοῦ θανάτου σκληρὰς ὑποφέρω κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ἀλγηδόνας μαστιγούμενος, κατὰ ψυχὴν δὲ ἠδέως διὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ φόβον ταῦτα πάσχω.

18 Eleazar, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. 19 But he, welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went **up to the rack** of his own accord, spitting out the flesh ... (after rejecting an offer of release for pretending to eat swine's flesh) ... When he had said this, he went at once **to the rack**. 29 Those who a little before had acted toward him with goodwill now changed to ill will, because the words he had uttered were in their opinion sheer madness. 30 When he was about to die under the blows, he groaned aloud and said: "It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul I am glad to suffer these things because I fear him." (NRSV)

It is clear from this passage that Eleazar went to the τύμπανον in order to receive his whipping (μαστιγιέω). For this reason Muraoka, apparently relying upon the discussion in Owen, interprets the τύμπανον as what we might here in Western Australia call a whipping post (such as was used up until the 1960s in Freemantle Prison). The term τύμπανον may suggest the form of a wheel to which a person is strapped and spread-eagled, but it is also possible that this may only be the origin of this use of the term, and that by Hellenistic times it had just come to mean any kind of whipping post. Given the association with the verb ἀποτυμπανίζω, which had come to mean 'to execute', a whipping on the τύμπανον surely implies a whipping to the death.

Now the fact, that the simplex τυμπανίζω is not extant in literature in the sense of punishment at the time Hebrews was written, may suggest that the author is reflecting upon this passage in 2 Macc. 6 and has simply turned the noun τύμπανον into a verb form. The passage from Lucian, cited above, suggests something similar. Lucian uses τυμπανίζω to suggest the use of the τύμπανον, since ἀποτυμπανίζω had come to mean 'to execute' without necessarily implying a particular method.

οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν

If the reference is indeed to Eleazar, we should translate: "not having welcomed redemption". Note that ἀπολύτρωσις is more specific than "release", strictly speaking referring to release by payment of ransom. If applied to Eleazar it is metaphorically used of the offer made to him to be released by pretending to eat swine's flesh. On the noun ἀπολύτρωσις see my "An Exegesis of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 1:3-8" (online at my website) at the discussion of verse 7.

### v.36

ἕτεροι δὲ

In vv.35-36 we have the sequence γυναῖκες ... ἄλλοι δὲ ... ἕτεροι δέ. This is a good point at which to reflect upon the meaning of ἕτερος.

#### *The Use of ἕτερος*

Without the article ἕτερος refers to one of many (not of two), but with a sense of difference. So in the singular with the article we would expect ὁ ἕτερος ... ὁ ἕτερος (or ἄλλος) to mean "the one ... the other", but here the use of ἕτεροι is referring to a different category. J. B. Lightfoot puts the difference between ἄλλος and ἕτερος well as follows:

ἕτερος implies a difference of kind, which is not involved in ἄλλος. The primary distinction between the words appears to be that ἄλλος is another as "one besides," ἕτερος another as "one of two." The fundamental sense of ἕτερος is most clearly marked in its compounds, as ἑτερόφθαλμος, "one-eyed." Thus ἄλλος adds, while ἕτερος distinguishes.

ἐμπαιγμῶν

The noun is Jewish Greek coined from ἐμπαίζω ‘to mock’ (*i.e.* παίζω to play [like a child / παῖς] + εν ‘against’).

πεῖραν ἔλαβον

See *Common Periphrastic Verbal Constructions* # 7.

**v.37**

ἐπίσθησαν

This is a reference to Isaiah (see *Life of Isaiah*). This punishment was also used by the emperor Caligula (Suetonius, *Caligula*, 27.3).

**v.38**

ἐπὶ ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσιν καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὄπαϊς τῆς γῆς

The extended prepositional phrase is in hyperbaton.

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30 It ought to be noted, however, that this distinction is very improbable in less literary documents, cf. Matt. 16:14 οἱ μὲν ... ἄλλοι δέ ... ἕτεροι δέ where there is no distinction.