An especially noteworthy feature of the Book of Revelation is its consistent liturgical character within a visionary setting. In its epistolary framework (ch. 1 and 22:6–21) as well as in its series of visions (4:1–22:5), liturgical terminology figures frequently. This fact, together with the central role of the Lamb for unfolding the scenic heavenly and earthly drama, contributes to the particular theological and christological message of this Christian apocalypse. Alternating with events on earth, scenes in heaven where God and the Lamb are praised are recurring elements. Starting with the vision of the worshipping celestial community in front of the heavenly throne in chs. 4–5, these scenes of heavenly worship are found in 7:9–17, 11:15–19, 12:10–12, 14:1–5 (though located on Mount Zion), 15:2–8 and 19:1–8.

It is a well-known fact that many features of the heavenly scenery and liturgy in Revelation, particularly in ch. 4, seem to have been inspired by the visionary descriptions of God’s throne and his temple in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1. But some highly interesting similarities with the heavenly scenery and liturgy of Revelation are also found in the so-called ‘Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice’ (henceforth Shirot) from Qumran and Masada. Like Revelation, these texts seem to have been inspired by cultic and prophetic scriptural concepts, especially from Isaiah and Ezekiel. If the Shirot could provide relevant comparisons with features
found also in Revelation, this might illuminate not only its liturgical language and conceptual universe, but also contribute to its interpretation at large and to the understanding of the relationship between this singular NT text and the Jewish world of thought to which it obviously is very closely related.\(^5\)

**Research on the Relations Between Revelation and the Dead Sea Scrolls—Some Brief Remarks**

In view of the great interest in Qumranite-Christian relations ever since the first publication of the scrolls, the shortage of studies focussing especially on the relation between Revelation and the Dead Sea Scrolls is all the more surprising. After 40 years the section on Revelation in Herbert Braun’s *Qumran und das Neue Testament* still provides the perhaps most exhaustive survey of passages with possible Qumranite points of contact.\(^6\) Obviously, however, there can be no deeper penetration into single texts in a study covering the whole New Testament.\(^7\) But specialized study on the relations between Revelation and the Dead Sea Scrolls will certainly prove to be a fruitful task in coming years (judging from the Cave 4 texts that finally have been brought to light and com-

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5 After my Helsinki paper, the important studies of Elior (2004; Hebrew original 2002) and Alexander (2006) have confirmed my observations on the similarities between the liturgical language and imagery of Revelation and corresponding features in the ‘Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,’ as well as the importance of understanding Revelation against the background of the conceptual world of Jewish mysticism. Of the two, Elior is more speculative, being mainly concerned with locating the mystical-liturgical writings from Qumran, especially the *Shirot*, within a priestly *merkabah* tradition which goes back to Ezekiel and continues into the *hekalot* literature. In Alexander’s sober and detailed study of the mystical writings from Qumran, with the *Shirot* as the key documents, special attention is paid to the heavenly liturgy in Revelation 4–5 as one of the New Testament passages that show clear signs of belonging to the same mystical tradition as the *Shirot* (2006, 140f.). See also Davila 2000, 91.

6 Braun 1966, 307–25; altogether he lists 49 passages out of which 43 are considered as not particularly related to the Qumran writings and one as indicating a possible contact (11:19); only five remain as suggesting certain shared ideas (10:7; 11:7–10; 16:16; 21:22; 21:27).

7 Cf. the general survey by LaSor 1972 and the bibliographical section in Fitzmyer 1990.