4:1 Metà tātā éidōn, kai Ídou òúra ÷neugménē ēn tō òúranv, kai ë fōnē ë prōtē ñ òkousa ωs σālpigγos laλousis met' émou lēgou̇n ανάβα òde, kai deëv̇w soi ð de δεi génev̄θαι metā tātā.

idou. Exclamation of vivid emotion. meta tauta. Some editors (Westcott and Hort) connect these words with the beginning of v. 2.

2 Eòðēw̄s ñegenv̄mēn ēn pneù̄mati, kai Ídou òrōnɔs ēkei̇to ēn tō òúranv, kai épí tōn òrōnov kaθμένo̅s,

3 kai ð kaθ̄mēnov̄ ómoo̅s drásai lîðw iáspidi kai sarðiw̄, kai ïrîs kükloθ̄en tou̅ òrōnov òmoo̅s drásai smaraγidian̄ps.

iaspis, old word (Persian), used for stones of different colors, one opaque like opal, one translucent (Rev_21:11, Rev_21:18., possibly here, only N.T. examples), one a red or yellow stone (Isa_54:12). Some even take it for the diamond. Certainly not our cheap modern jasper.

4 Kα̅i kükloθ̄en tou̅ òrōnov òrōnov eîko̅si té̄̄s̄sarīs, kai épî tou̅s òrōnov eîko̅si té̄̄s̄sarīs pré̅bû̅tér̄o̅s kaθ̄mê̅nŏ̅s περιβεβ̄lîmê̅nŏ̅s ēn ì̄mâ̄tio̅s leuκo̅i kai ëpî tās kefâla̅s aûtn̄o̅n stêfâ̅nŏ̅s χρû̅so̅û̅s.

Twenty-four as a symbolic number occurs only in this book and only for these elders (Rev_4:4; Rev_4:10; Rev_5:8; Rev_11:16; Rev_19:4). We do not really know why this number is chosen, perhaps two elders for each tribe, perhaps the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles (Judaism and Christianity), perhaps the twenty-four courses of the sons of Aaron (1 Chron 24:1-19), perhaps some angelic rank (Col_1:16) of which we know nothing. Cf. Eph_2:6.

5 Kα̅i ëk tou̅ òrōnov ekporēû̅ntai âstrapai kai ñønai kai ñron̄taî, kai ëppa lâmpadēs purôs kaiîmê̅nai ënw̄pion toû òrōnov, ò eĩsîn tā ëppa pneû̄matα toû òeû̅n,

A lampades is a torch more than a lamp.

6 kai ënw̄pion toû òrōnov ωs ðâlα̅sα υaλîn̄η ϖmoo̅ïa kruγ̄stâlw. Kai ën më̅w toû òrōnov kai kû̅kû̅lû toû òrōnov té̄̄s̄sarīs z̄hâ γê̄mûntα ðφâlîmûn êmpro̅̄sθê̅n kai ðpiû̅̄stên.

tessera zoã. Not ðêrîa (beasts), but living creatures. Certainly kin to the zoã of Ezek 1; Eze_2:1-10 which are cherubim (Eze_10:2, Eze_10:20), though here the details vary as to faces and wings with a significance of John’s own, probably representing creation in contrast with the redeemed (the elders).

7 kai tō zê̄w où̄ tō ðrw̄tûn ðmoo̅în lê̅̄nînti kai tō deû̄teron zê̄w on ðmooîn mô̅̄ch̄w kai tō tê̄̄tûn zê̄w on ëxw̄n tō prō̅̄swh̄n ωs ãnðrû̅pû n kai tō tê̄̄tûrûn zê̄w on ò mooîn aë̅tû̅ pë̅tò̅më̅n ph.
“The four forms represent whatever is noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest in nature” (Swete).

8 καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῷα, ἐν καθ’ ἐν αὐτῶν ἔχων ἀνὰ πτέρυγας ζῷ, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἐσωθεὶν γέμουσιν ὀφθαλμῶι, καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς λέγοντες: ἄγιος ἄγιος ἄγιος κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

9 Καὶ οὕτως δύσοσιν τὰ ζῷα δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

10 πεσοῦνται οἱ εἰκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβυτεροί ἐνώπιον τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων καὶ βαλοῦσιν τοὺς στεφάνους αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου λέγοντες·

11 ἄγιος εἶ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεός ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἐκτίσας τὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ τὸ θελήμα σου ἠσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

5:1 Καὶ εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίων γεγραμμένον ἐσωθεὶν καὶ ὅπισθεν κατεσφραγισμένον φραγίσεν ἐπτά.

Usually these papyrus rolls were written only on the inside, but this one was so full of matter that it was written also on the back side (opisthen), and so was an opisthographon. A will in Roman law bore the seven seals of the seven witnesses”.

2 καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον ἵσχυον κηρύσσοντα ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· τίς ἄξιος ἀνοίξῃ τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λύσαι τὰς φραγίδας αὐτοῦ;

3 καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς ἄνοιξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

4 καὶ ἔκλαιον πολύ, ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἄξιος εὐρέθη ἀνοίξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

ego eklaios polu. Imperfect active of klaio, picturesque, descriptive, I kept on weeping much.

5 καὶ έξι τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγει μοι· μὴ κλαῖε, ἵδον ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰουδα, ἡ ρίζα Δαυίδ, ἀνοίξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ τὰς ἐπτὰ φραγίδας αὐτοῦ;

6 Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν πεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀρνίων ἐστηκός ὡς ἐσφαγμένον ἔχων κέρατα ἐπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπτὰ οἱ εἰσίν τὰ ἐπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεσταλμένοι εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.

7 καὶ ἦθεν καὶ εἶληφεν ἐκ τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου.

8 Καὶ ὅτε ἔλαβεν τὸ βιβλίον, τὰ τέσσαρα ζῷα καὶ οἱ εἰκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβυτεροὶ ἐπέσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου ἔχοντες ἐκαστὸς κιθάραν καὶ φιάλας χρυσῆς γεμούσας θυμιαμάτων, οἱ εἰσίν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἀγίων,

phialas chrusai. Broad shallow saucers
9 καὶ ἀδουσιν φῶς καινὴν λέγοντες· ἡξίος εἶ λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοίξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσφάγης καὶ ἡγόρασας τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ αἵματι σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσας καὶ λαοῦ καὶ θύμων
10 καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλείαν καὶ ιερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύσατε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.
11 Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἦκουσα φωνὴν ἄγγελων πολλῶν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν ζῶν καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ ἦν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν μυριάδες μυριάδων καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων
12 λέγοντες φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· ἡξίον ἐστίν τῷ ἄρνιον τῷ ἐσφαγμένῳ λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ σωφίαν καὶ ἵσχυν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν καὶ εὐλογίαν.
13 καὶ πᾶν κτίσμα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα ἦκουσα λέγοντας· τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἄρνῳ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ τιμή καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

No created thing is left out. This universal chorus of praise to Christ from all created life reminds one of the profound mystical passage in Rom. 8:20-22 concerning the sympathetic agony of creation (ktisis) in hope of freedom from the bondage of corruption. If the trail of the serpent is on all creation, it will be ultimately thrown off.

14 καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζώα ἔλεγον· ἀμήν. καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν καὶ προσεκύνησαν.

epesan kai prosekunēsan. In silent adoration that closes the whole service of praise to the One upon the throne and to the Lamb.

6:1 Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἦνοιξεν τὸ ἄρνιον μίαν ἐκ τῶν ἐπτὰ σφραγίδων, καὶ η ἦκουσα ἐνὸς ἐκ τῶν πεσσάρων ζῶν λέγοντος ὡς φωνὴ βροντῆς· ἔρχου.

Erchou. Present middle imperative of erchomai, but with exclamatory force (not strictly linear). The command is not addressed to the Lamb nor to John (the correct text omits kai ide “and see”) as in Rev. 17:1; Rev. 21:9, but to one of the four horsemen each time.

2 καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθημένος ἐπὶ αὐτὸν ἔχων τόξον καὶ ἔδόθη αὐτῷ στέφανος καὶ ἐξῆλθαν νικῶν καὶ ἓνα νικησθεν.

White seems to be the colour of victory (cf. the white horse of the Persian Kings) like the white horse ridden by the Roman conqueror in a triumphant procession.

3 Καὶ ὅτε ἦνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν δευτέραν, ἦκουσα τοῦ δευτέρου ζῶου λέγοντος· ἔρχου.

4 καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἄλλος ἵππος πυρρός, καὶ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ αὐτῶν ἔδόθη αὐτῷ λαβεῖν τὴν εἰρήνην ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἓνα ἄλληλουσ σφάξουσιν καὶ ἔδόθη αὐτῷ μάχαιρα μεγάλη.

hippos purros. Old adjective from pur (fire), flame-coloured, blood-red. This is what war does to perfection, makes cannon fodder of men.
5 Καὶ ὅτε ἦνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τρίτην, ἠκούσα τοῦ τρίτου ζυόου λέγοντος: ἔρχου. καὶ ἐίδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος μέλας, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ αὐτὸν ἔχων ζυγὸν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.

*hippos melas*. “The colour of mourning and famine.

6 καὶ ἠκούσα ὡς φωνὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγουσαν: χοῖνις τίτου δηναρίου καὶ τρεῖς χοῖνικες κριθῶν δηναρίου, καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον καὶ τὸν οἶνον μὴ ἀδικήσῃς.

A measure of dry things; and although the capacity is not exactly known, yet it is generally agreed that it contained as much as one man could consume in a day; and a penny, the Roman denarius, was the ordinary pay of a laborer. So it appears that in this scarcity each might be able to obtain a bare subsistence by his daily labor; but a man could not, in such cases, provide for a family. Barley was given to the Roman soldiers instead of wheat, by way of punishment.

7 Καὶ ὅτε ἦνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τετάρτην, ἠκούσα φωνὴν τοῦ τετάρτου ζυόου λέγοντος: ἔρχου.

8 καὶ ἐϊδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος χλωρός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ὄνομα αὐτῷ ὃς θάνατος, καὶ ὁ ἄδικος ἠκολούθει μετ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔδοθεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσία ἐπὶ τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς ἀποκτείναι ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν λιμῷ καὶ ἐν θανάτῳ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῆς γῆς.

The symbol of death.

9 Καὶ ὅτε ἦνοιξεν τὴν πέμπτην σφραγίδα, ἐϊδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡ ν εἴχον.

The seal is intended to comfort the followers of God under their persecutions, and to encourage them to bear up under their distresses.

10 καὶ ἔκραξαν φωνὴ μεγάλη λέγοντες· ἔως πότε, ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἁγιός καὶ ἀληθινός, οὐ κρίνεις καὶ ἐκθεικές τὸ ἁμα ἡμῶν ἐκ τῶν κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς;

Ο Νεποτης· Sovereign Lord, supreme Ruler; one having and exercising unlimited and uncontrolled authority.

11 καὶ ἔδοθεν αὐτοῖς ἐκάστῳ στολὴ λευκὴ καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ἴνα ἀναπαύσωσιν ἐπὶ χρόνον μικρὸν, ἐως πληρωθῆσιν καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτῶν οἱ μέλλοντες ἀποκτέννεσθαι ὡς καὶ αὐτοὶ.

12 Καὶ ἐϊδον ὅτε ἦνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἑκτην, καὶ σεισμὸς μέγας ἐγένετο καὶ ὁ ἡλίος ἐγένετο μέλας ὡς σάκκος τρίχινος καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὅλη ἐγένετο ὡς αίμα
hos sakkos trichinos. Sakkos (Attic sakos), Latin saccus, English sack, originally a bag for holding things (Gen_42:25, Gen_42:35), then coarse garment of hair (trichinos, old word from thrix, here only in N.T.) clinging to one like a sack, of mourners, suppliants, prophets leading austere lives.

13 καὶ οἱ ἀστερεῖς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔπεσαν εἰς τὴν γῆν, ὡς συκὴ βάλλει τοὺς ὀλύνθους αὐτῆς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου μεγάλου σεισμοῦν,

tous olunthous autēs. An old word (Latin grossi) for figs that grow in winter and fall off in the spring without getting ripe.

14 καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπεχωρίσθη ως βιβλίον ἐλισσόμενον καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ νησος ἐκ τῶν τόπων αὐτῶν ἐκκινήθησαν.
15 Καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ μεγιστάνες καὶ οἱ χιλίαρχοι καὶ οἱ πλουσίοι καὶ οἱ ἱσχυροὶ καὶ πᾶς δοῦλος καὶ ἐλευθερος ἐκρυφαν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς τὰ σπῆλαια καὶ εἰς τὰς πέτρας τῶν ὅρεων
16 καὶ λέγουσιν τοῖς ὀρεσίν καὶ ταῖς πέτραις: πέσετε ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ κρύψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου,
17 ὁτι ἠλθεν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν, καὶ τίς δύναται σταθῆ ναι;