Chapter 9

The Minor Prophets in Revelation

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Introduction

An analysis of the use of an Old Testament book in Revelation is a particularly challenging exercise. In the absence of formal quotations, the readers are left to their own devices in trying to discern allusions and echoes that John has woven into his rich apocalyptic tapestry. Not only is there the problem of identifying John's possible sources but also many an interpreter does not have a well-defined idea of what constitutes an allusion or echo – or how they function in the text. Even scholars who claim to employ identical criteria for detecting allusions can arrive at very different results. All this points to the fact that a study such as the present one is always – despite occasional claims to the contrary – a rather subjective enterprise.[1]

As for John's sources, I am working with the extant texts, though I recognize the complex nature of OT textual witnesses and that he may have had different texts – provided that he had any sources at all, in the sense that we normally think.[2] Furthermore, I have not made an *a priori* judgement concerning the language of John's preferred source(s) but rather examine each case independently.

My approach to allusions is based on Ziva Ben-Porat's account of how readers actualize an allusion in the text.[3] According to her, it is a

1. I have treated the topic of detecting and analysing allusions at some length in my monograph, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), esp. pp. 18–36, 133–9.

2. For possibilities, see S. Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction* (London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 16–18. For a more extended discussion of John's sources, see Jauhiainen, *Zechariah*, pp. 9–13, 140–2. Of course, John did not have our MT or critical Greek editions as such, though he may have had access to texts that are reflected in our MT and LXX/OG.

3. Ben-Porat is one of the leading allusion theorists whose insights started to influence biblical – mostly OT – scholarship in the 1990s. She ('The Poetics of Literary Allusion', *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 [1976], pp. 105–28 [here: 107–8]) defines literary allusion as 'a device for the simultaneous activation

four-stage process where they first recognize a *marker*, an 'identifiable … element or pattern [in one text] belonging to another independent text'.[4] Second, they identify the evoked text that contains the *marked*.[5] Third, they modify their interpretation of the signal in the alluding text on the basis of the marked sign.[6] Fourth – and this stage is optional – they activate the evoked text as a whole in an attempt to form connections between the two texts that are not necessarily based on the marker or the marked. This activating of extra elements is 'the particular aim for which the literary allusion is characteristically employed'.[7]

Ben-Porat uses the term 'literary allusion' to distinguish it from 'allusion in general', by which she means 'a hint to a known fact'.[8] In Revelation, a suspected allusion frequently turns out to be this kind of 'simple' allusion to an OT image, phrase or motif that may be familiar to the author from more than one document. In other words, there is no specific text that is being alluded to (stage two) and thus neither modified interpretation on the basis of the evoked text (stage three), nor activation of extra elements between the marker text and the marked text (stage four).[9]

The Minor Prophets are replete with images and language that John is using, but in the vast majority of cases it is impossible to identify a single text whose context he would wish to evoke by means of an allusion. The present study therefore focuses on 'literary' rather than 'simple' allusions. The goal, then, is not to offer a full picture of John's indebtedness to traditions found in the Minor Prophets, but merely to analyse his use of these documents by means of allusions as perceived by one scholar.

of two texts. The activation is achieved through the manipulation of a special signal: a sign [i.e., a sentence, phrase, motif, pattern, idea, etc. that contains the "marker" or of which the "marker" is one aspect] … in a given text characterized by an additional larger "referent." This referent is always an independent text'. Her definition concludes with an observation that is especially fitting in the context of Revelation: 'The simultaneous activation of the two texts thus connected results in the formation of intertextual patterns whose nature cannot be predetermined'.

4. Ibid., p. 108.

5. I.e., the 'marker' as it appears in the evoked text. In most cases, steps 1 and 2 are virtually simultaneous, but sometimes one can recognize the presence of an allusion without remembering (or even knowing) the text that contains the marked.

6. In other words, a true allusion usually sheds light on the text, as many interpreters have intuitively recognized.

7. Ben-Porat, 'Poetics', p. 111. Thus, although the author plants the allusion in the text, its discovery and actualization ultimately depend on the competence and perception of the reader. Ben-Porat's analysis of how an allusion functions also helps to define and explain marker signs that formally resemble allusions but whose marked signs (if such can be located) have no bearing on the interpretation of the text (i.e., they never reach stage three). I call these marker signs 'echoes' (following B. D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998], pp. 15–17).

8. Ben-Porat, 'Poetics', p. 108.

9. Of course, these 'known facts' may still influence one's interpretation.

Allusions

Zech. 12.10–13.1 in Rev. 1.7[10]

Immediately after the formal letter opening in Rev. 1.4–6, John switches into prophetic gear: **'He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him,** even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail'. **Verse 1.7b–d appears to allude to the Hebrew version of Zech.** 12.10–12,[11] yet it has been suggested that John's immediate source is either the Synoptic (Mt. 24.30; cf. Jn 19.37) or some independent tradition.[12] The hypothesis of a written testimonia or logion tradition as an intermediate source is impossible to disprove,[13] yet as I have argued elsewhere,[14] the data could also be explained by John's direct use of the Hebrew text of Zechariah (in addition to possible influence by the Synoptic tradition).[15]

10. Instead of listing individual verses, I am indicating the unit to which the marked sign belongs.

11. Although the idea of piercing is missing in Zech. 12.10 LXX, there is no need to posit a different Hebrew *Vorlage* (M. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form* [Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996], pp. 172–3).

12. For detailed treatments on Rev. 1.7, see D. E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5* (WBC, 52A; Dallas: Word Books, 1997), pp. 53–7; R. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), pp. 318–22; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 196–9; and L. Vos, *The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1965), pp. 60–71; cf. also Menken (*OT Quotations*, pp. 167–85), who discusses the verse in connection with Jn 19.37.

13. M. C. Albl ('*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken': The Form and Function of the Early Christian* Testimony *Collections* [NovTSup, 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999], p. 286) acknowledges that there is no direct evidence for written *testimonia* in NT times, yet argues that their existence is 'probable by analogy with excerpt collections from contemporary Greco-Roman literature… [and] Qumran documents' and 'made virtually certain by the presence of authoritative non-standard quotations' in the NT, of which 'close verbal parallels' to Zech. 12.10 (here Albl relies on Menken's analysis), Isa. 6.9–10 and Isa. 28.16 are 'especially persuasive'. From the perspective of this study, the argument is partly circular as the weightiest evidence for written *testimonia* consists in part of the NT references to Zech. 12.10.

14. Jauhiainen, *Zechariah*, pp. 102–5.

15. So also R. H. Charles (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* [ICC; 2 vols; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920], I, pp. 17–18), who thinks that John's wording derives directly from Zechariah 12 MT, but that its combination with Dan. 7.13 comes from Matthew. If Matthew was written before Revelation (see, e.g., a recent analysis of Matthew's date in J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005], pp. 14–16), it seems very likely that it would have reached Ephesus, an important Christian centre with which John was associated, fairly quickly (on the circulation of documents in early Christianity, see R. Bauckham [ed.], *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]). Yet even if Matthew was not available to John, it is probable that John and his audience were nevertheless aware of the Synoptic traditions in oral format, if they indeed go back to Jesus himself.

However, all scholars agree that 1.7b–d is ultimately derived from the Hebrew version of Zech. 12.10–12, regardless of possible intermediary sources, and it is almost certain that John knew the same text as well.[16]

There are a number of ways readers could benefit from actualizing an allusion to Zechariah 12 in Rev. 1.7. First, the context shows that while Zechariah apparently envisaged the scope of mourning to be the land of Israel/Judah, John has the whole earth; hence the understanding of πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς as 'every tribe of the earth' rather than 'every family of the land'. As the first of many instances, this paves the way for John's habit of universalizing his sources. Second, John does not say whether the mourning has a positive or negative sense, but the allusion to Zechariah suggests that it may be a sign of repentance.[17] Third, the fact that Zechariah compares the mourning for the pierced one to the way one mourns for the only child, or for a firstborn, fits well the early Christian emphasis on Jesus as God's 'only son' and the 'firstborn' in more than one sense, thus enhancing the reading experience.[18] Fourth, while Zech. 12.10 is enigmatic in the way it seems to meld Yahweh and his representative, Rev. 1.7 makes the pierced one Christ, thus removing – or heightening, depending on one's theological presuppositions – the ambiguity.

Finally, the placement of the allusion – at the beginning of the letter embedded in John's prophecy – is significant, for in ancient documents the first sentence or first paragraph would often give important information regarding the subject matter of the document.[19] The allusions in 1.7 to Zechariah 12 and to the motif of Christ's coming (Mk 14.62; Mt. 24.30; 26.64; ultimately pointing to Dan. 7.13) offer important interpretive keys, suggesting at least three things. First, the coming of Jesus is a central theme in Revelation – an observation that will be amply confirmed by the rest of the document. Second, if John saw the coming of the pierced one, who in Zechariah 12 is Yahweh, in terms of Jesus' coming, then this

16. The evangelists certainly expected their audiences to recognize the allusion. The piercing in Jn 19.37 and the mourning by all the tribes of the earth in Mt. 24.30 are clearly not stock prophetic expressions but rather attempts by the authors to show how Jesus fulfils the prophecy found in Zechariah 12. While they may have understood the fulfilment differently from John the Seer, all three marker texts still point to the same marked text.

17. John may also have intentionally left this ambiguous, for while Yahweh's coming in Zechariah initiates renewal and deliverance of the remnant of God's people, it also means judgement for the oppressing nations.

18. **Cf. Jn 1.14; 3.16, 18; Rom. 8.29; Col. 1.15, 18; Heb. 1; 1 Jn 4.9; Rev. 1.5.**

19. Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1414b; Lucian, *Vera Historia* 53; D. E. Smith, 'Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory', *Semeia* 52 (1990), pp. 1–9. The most important key for locating the central theme(s) of Revelation is obviously the prologue (1.1–3); see further M. Jauhiainen,'Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rev. 1:1): The Climax of John's Prophecy?', *TynB* 54.1 (2003), pp. 99–117.

could lead the audience to expect other instances in Revelation where Jesus takes the role that traditionally belongs to Yahweh. This is, of course, precisely what the reader will encounter throughout Revelation.[20] Third, the double allusion activates the eschatological framework of the three primary narratives that were available to the early church regarding the details of the final events: Zechariah's version, Daniel's version and Jesus' version, known to us as the Synoptic Apocalypse.[21] In Mt. 24.3, when Jesus' disciples ask what the '*sign* of your coming and of the close of the age' would be, Jesus first warns them of false *signs* (24.24) and then proceeds to describe the '*sign* of the Son of Man', as he comes on the clouds and all the tribes of the earth will mourn (24.30). The reference to this same sign at the beginning of John's prophetic letter thus helps to orient his audience: the close of the age is at hand – and so are the final tribulation and the subsequent deliverance and restoration of God's people.

Zech. 3.1–4.14 in Rev. 5.6

Before the throne of God, John sees a Lamb that has 'seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth' (5.6). The marked text of the 'seven eyes' is Zechariah 4, where the Interpreting Angel identifies the seven lamps of the golden lampstand as seven eyes of Yahweh that 'range through the whole earth' (4.10).[22] This understanding is supported by three observations: (1) the operating range of the eyes in both verses is worldwide; (2) 'seven eyes' in the OT are only found in Zechariah;[23] and (3) John weaves together other motifs from Zechariah 4 with the seven eyes.[24]

In addition to Zechariah 4, the seven eyes also appear in Zech. 3.9, which is part of the wider marked context of Rev. 5.6. There is no consensus regarding the interpretation of 3.9, yet one's interpretation of the allusion depends on one's reading of Zechariah 3. In my judgement, the seven eyes belong to Yahweh; they are introduced in 3.9, where they are merely focused on the stone; and they are identified several verses later in ch. 4 which provides the extra elements that the reader is intended

20. See R. Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 54–65.

21. For a classic treatment of the words and sayings of Jesus in Revelation, see Vos, *Synoptic*.

22. So the MT; the LXX has eyes that 'are looking at the whole earth'. On the various interpretive issues of Zechariah 4, see Jauhiainen, *Zechariah*, pp. 46–9.

23. 2 Chron. 16.9 mentions the eyes of Yahweh ranging 'throughout the whole earth', but apparently assumes two rather than seven eyes.

24. See further ibid., pp. 85–92.

to activate.[25] More specifically, John's allusion to the 'seven eyes' makes another contribution to his relatively high Christology: the 'seven eyes of Yahweh' from Zechariah 4 are now the eyes of the Lamb.

Zech. 1.8–17 in Rev. 6.1–8

The four horsemen in Revelation 6 are frequently seen to allude to two visions in Zechariah – the vision of the horses in 1.8–17 and the vision of the four chariots in 6.1–8. However, a closer analysis reveals that there are only two obvious links between the visions of Zechariah and John: (1) all three visions feature a number of *horses*, and (2) they are of *different colours*, even if the only colours they have in common are white and red.[26] There are a number of differences between the visions as well, yet in the larger context of ancient Jewish and Christian writings, these two similarities are enough to suggest that John is alluding to Zechariah 1 and/or Zechariah 6.

However, recognizing the presence of an allusion is not sufficient; we also need to ask whether John intended to allude only to one of the two visions in Zechariah, or to both. While the latter possibility is usually favoured by commentators, there are nevertheless two good reasons for seeing Zechariah 1 as more prominent.[27] First, the use of horsemen rather than chariots in Revelation 6 quite naturally forms a stronger link with Zechariah 1. Second, both passages reflect a situation where the nations have the upper hand over the people of God, and there is the question of when the roles will be reversed. Moreover, in both contexts, the description of the horses is not only followed by the cry, 'How long?', but also by God's comforting answer.

How, then, do aspects of Zech. 1.8–17 enhance the interpretation of Revelation 6, provided that we have identified the marked text correctly? Zech. 1.8–17 follows Zechariah's exhortation to his audience to respond appropriately to Yahweh's gracious initiative. The vision of the horsemen

25. Another stream of interpretation sees the stone as having the eyes, thus claiming that the primary purpose of the allusion is the demonstration of the slain Lamb as the mysterious stone that is set before the high priest Joshua and functions as some kind of a sign of the coming Branch and his work. For Jesus as the fulfilment of various OT 'stone' texts, see, e.g., Acts 4.11; Rom. 9.33; Eph. 2.20–21; 1 Pet. 2.4, 7; and the discussion in B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961), pp. 169–86.

26. Furthermore, though the number of the horses is different, Zechariah 1 LXX, Zechariah 6 and Revelation 6 all have horses in *four* different colours (Zechariah 1 MT has only three colours).

27. Contra Beale (*Revelation*, p. 372), who sees Zechariah 6 as the 'most obvious' background; similarly H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1906), p. 84.

and the accompanying prophetic oracle begin a series of visions concerning the imminent restoration of the fortunes of God's people. Though the nations are currently at peace, they will be punished, Yahweh will come, his dwelling place will be built, Jerusalem will be restored and the people will prosper. The horsemen are thus a preliminary step before Yahweh acts to fulfil various promises of restoration. They also function as messengers or tokens of the fact that God is in control and that the day of reckoning is approaching.

These are some of the elements of Zech. 1.8–17 and its context that enhance the portrayal of the four horsemen in Revelation 6, suggesting similar developments. However, unlike Zechariah's horsemen, John's riders – among whom Death and Hades are counted – are not God's faithful servants.[28] Yet even these evil forces are portrayed as ultimately under God's control as they traverse the earth, seriously undermining the *Pax Romana* ushered in by Caesar Augustus.[29] For those familiar with the traditions reflected in the Synoptic Apocalypse (Matthew 24 par.), these horsemen function as necessary preliminaries of the coming Day of the Lord and the havoc they wreak is merely the beginning of the birth pains. As in Zechariah, the horsemen thus signal the imminent restoration of the people of God, who has once again taken the initiative and is calling the audience to make sure that they respond appropriately.

Zech. 1.8–17 in Rev. 6.9–11

It is not uncommon to understand the martyrs' cry, 'How long, O Lord?' after the opening of the fifth seal as a reference to Zech. 1.12.[30] The cry itself occurs several times in the Old Testament, yet the proximity of the horsemen in both visions and the perceived similarities between their contexts is considered to make a direct allusion to Zechariah likely.

If John intended to allude to the LXX version of Zechariah, then the lack of verbal links between Zech. 1.12–13 and Rev. 6.9–11 becomes a potential problem. The latter, together with the LXX of every other possible background passage, has ἕως πότε as the question, whereas

28. Some see the first rider as Christ or some other positive figure; for different interpretations and their merits, see D. Aune, *Revelation 6–16* (WBC, 52B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), pp. 393–4; and Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 375–8.

29. As J. M. Court (*Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* [London: SPCK, 1979], p. 58) has observed, '[t]here may well be some irony in the reapplication of Zechariah's "peaceful patrols" and "messengers of promise" to the subject-matter of the Apocalypse'.

30. See, e.g., Beale, *Revelation*, p. 393; A. Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images: The Making of St John's Apocalypse* (Westminster: Dacre, 1949), p. 111; and S. W. Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse: Discourse, Structure, and Exegesis* (SNTSMS, 128; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 84.

the former has ἕως τίνος.[31] Furthermore, though Yahweh is addressed in a number of ways in these OT passages, only Zechariah uses 'Lord Almighty' (κύριε παντοκράτωρ) and only John uses 'Master' (ὁ δεσπότης). Had John wished to establish a stronger link with Zech. 1.12 LXX, he could have used κύριε παντοκράτωρ instead. However, if John was dependent on Hebrew, then the lack of verbal links is not so striking: עד־מתי ('how long?') can be translated with either ἕως πότε or ἕως τίνος[32] and ὁ δεσπότης is occasionally used to translate 'LORD of hosts' (יהוה צבאות) (Isa. 1.24; 3.1; 10.33), though κύριος παντοκράτωρ is more frequent.

Yet, regardless of the language of John's source(s), it could be argued that since the context of Zech. 1.8–17 has just been opened and accessed, there is no need to employ an exact verbal parallel in order to establish a link between the marker text and the marked text.[33] Both texts not only concern the coming reversal of the roles of the oppressed and the oppressors, but also have the cry for vindication followed by God's comforting answer, missing in other possible background texts. Thus, while the question 'how long?' on its own would not allude specifically to Zechariah, its placement in Rev. 6.1–11 strengthens the possibility that the pericope as a whole is drawing on Zech. 1.8–17, among other texts. The extra elements being activated between the two contexts are largely the same as with the previous allusion, the expectation that God will act decisively on behalf of his people perhaps being the uppermost.

Joel 2.18–32 in Rev. 6.12

After the opening of the sixth seal, John describes the arrival of the Day of the Lord by using a collage that draws on various Old Testament passages. Though the imagery may with good reason be described as 'stock-in-trade', many have nevertheless identified Joel 3.4 (ET 2.31) as the marked text of Rev. 6.12.[34] The reason behind this lies primarily in the observation that while the idea of the sun becoming dark or black occurs frequently in the OT, the image of the moon turning to 'blood' or becoming 'like blood' is unique to Joel and Revelation (and Acts 2.20

31. The following LXX verses all contain 'how long?' addressed to the Lord or God: Ps. 6.4; 12.1–2; 73.10; 78.5; 79.5; 88.47; 89.13; 93.3; Isa. 6.11; Hab. 1.2. The last one has ἕως τίνος; all the others have ἕως πότε.

32. A good example of this is Dan. 8.13, where θ has chosen the former and the OG the latter.

33. See further Pattemore (*Apocalypse*), especially the discussion on the application of Relevance Theory to the intertextuality in Revelation, pp. 36–50.

34. Beale, *Revelation*, pp. 396–7.

which cites Joel 3.4). Usually the moon is merely darkened along with the sun, and is not giving its light.[35]

How might John's audience benefit from actualizing this allusion to Joel? There are several possible connections that can be made between John's narrative and Joel's prophecy. First of all, the marked text in Joel is part of an extended description of the Day of the Lord,[36] apparently well known in the early church. Joel's pictorial language signals the nearness of this great event and John's imagery does no less. The readers are therefore encouraged to think in terms of the Day of the Lord as John's vision unfolds.[37] Second, embedded in the oracles regarding the approaching Day in Joel there is a call to return to the Lord. The original admonition in Joel was addressed to believers and, judging by the tone of Revelation 2 and 3, John undoubtedly would have liked many in the seven churches to hear this call as well. Third, also embedded in Joel's prophecy are various important promises: the fortunes of God's people will be reversed and, despite the impending judgement, those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved and will be 'in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem' (3.5 [ET 2.32]). Such turns of event have not yet been explicitly articulated in John's narrative, but if the evoking of Joel 2 creates these expectations in the readers, they do not have to be disappointed. Finally, by alluding to an important text that has already been partly fulfilled (Acts 2.16–21), John reminds his audience of their prophetic vocation – another theme which will be further developed later in the book.

Hos. 10.1–15 in Rev. 6.15–16

John continues his description of the arrival of the Day of the Lord by alluding to the reaction of the earth-dwellers: they 'hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us."' The first part of this portrayal draws from Isa. 2.6–22, while the desire to die rather than experience divine wrath appears to allude to Hos. 10.8 and its context.

At first sight, these allusions help to explain why the one seated on the throne and the Lamb are about to unleash their wrath. It is due not only to the developments that the horses symbolize, or to the killing of the servants of the Lord, but also to idolatry, prevalent among earth-dwellers from all walks of life and – to John's horror – making inroads even into the seven churches. In Isaiah 2, the larger context is the judgement

35. Isa. 13.10; Ezek. 32.7; Joel 2.10; 4.15; cf. Matt. 24.29; Mark 13.24; Rev. 8.12.

36. Indeed, as D. Stuart (*Hosea–Jonah* [WBC, 31; Dallas: Word, 1987], p. 231) points out, 'the concept of the Day of Yahweh permeates the book'.

37. See further M. Jauhiainen, 'Recapitulation and Chronological Progression in John's Apocalypse: Towards a New Perspective', *NTS* 49.4 (2003), pp. 543–59.

of Judah, though vv. 12–22 especially use language that is appropriate for the judgement of human pride and human trust in wealth and power in general. The context of Hosea 10 is likewise the judgement of Israel, yet the scope of the imagery is narrower, focusing more clearly on the problem of idolatry among God's people.

While John is obviously interested in the future of the nations, it must be kept in mind that his prophetic letter is addressed to churches where some people are involved in idolatry and thus in danger of suffering the fate of idolaters when the Day of the Lord arrives. If an allusion to Hosea 10.8 is intended, the audience would do well to meditate on the significance of the evoked text as a whole to John's narrative. Do they think there is no reason to fear the Lord or his judgement (10.3)? Do they think that their religious leaders are somehow exempt from wrong influences (10.5)? Do they think that it is acceptable to be involved with pagan shrines and practices (10.8)? If so, they are foolish and will be disciplined (10.10). Yet they can still avoid the judgement of the idolaters if they repent and seek the Lord (10.12). Undoubtedly John would like his audience to seriously ponder these issues, lest they be among those who unsuccessfully attempt to hide from the coming wrath.

Joel 1.2–2.17 in Rev. 9.7–9

The blowing of the fifth trumpet in Rev. 9.1 releases a plague of locusts that come to torment those dwelling on the earth and not having the protective seal of God. In describing their appearance, John alludes to two 'invading locust[-like] army' passages in Joel: their teeth were like lions' teeth (1.6) and the sound of their wings is like the sound of chariots (2.5). If John did not intend these allusions to be mere echoes, how might his audience modify their interpretation of Rev. 9.7–9 or activate extra elements between the two texts?

There are various possibilities of how readers familiar with Joel might benefit from actualizing the allusions. First, though the description of the first locust attack in Joel 1 appears to be in the past, the second attack was expected to take place on the Day of the Lord – which is precisely what John has started to narrate after the opening of the seals. Second, the description of the impending attack in Joel 2 begins with a call to blow a trumpet and is repeated later in the pericope after the exhortation to the people to repent. In Revelation, the locusts likewise follow the blowing of a trumpet. No exhortation to repent is narrated and the reader does not know what effect the locusts will have. Perhaps they will be effective in inducing repentance, as was the case in Joel? Another trumpet blows and the question of the reader is answered: those not killed by the plagues 'did not repent' (9.20), suggesting that the locusts were not effective, either. Third, John uses again the semantic range of the word אֶרֶץ/γῆ

('land, earth') to his advantage: in Joel, the Day of the Lord should cause the inhabitants of the land to tremble, but in Revelation this has been universalized – it is the inhabitants of the whole earth that ought to tremble. Finally, Joel 2.2–11 is adamant that nothing escapes the locusts, suggesting that the tormentors in Revelation 9 are equally thorough in their operation. Yet this time – and this should increase the gratefulness of John's readership – there is an exception: those having the seal of the living God are not harmed.

Zech. 4.1–14 in Rev. 11.4

In Rev. 11.3, John introduces two witnesses to his audience and in v. 4 tells them that 'these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth'. From this we may deduce that John expects his audience to recognize these particular olive trees and lampstands. Indeed, his comment would remain rather puzzling without any knowledge of Zechariah 4. However, in Zechariah's vision there is only *one* lampstand, flanked by two olive trees, and nothing in the context suggests the kind of identification of the lampstand(s) with the olive trees that the reader encounters in Rev. 11.4. What is John trying to communicate by transforming the imagery this way?

In order to appreciate John's creative craftsmanship we need to take into account what the reader already knows. In Zechariah, the olive trees are two unidentified 'anointed ones' (literally, 'sons of fresh oil'[38]) who stand by Yahweh and through whom the lamps in the lampstand are kept burning, which symbolizes and guarantees Yahweh's presence in his temple and among his people. In the context of the vision, the lampstand itself functions as a token of the glorious future temple that will be built, by the power of Yahweh's Spirit, regardless of any opposition.[39]

In John's narrative, the olive trees do not appear before chapter 11, but the lampstands have already been introduced to the reader. In fact, Rev. 11.4, usually seen as the only 'lampstand' verse that directly alludes to Zechariah, is actually the last occurrence of the word (λυχνία) in the book, though its interpretation is connected to that of the earlier occurrences.[40] In the opening scene of John's vision, the reader encounters seven lampstands (1.12–13) and is told that they symbolize the seven churches (1.20), which are in the presence of Christ (2.1) but in certain circumstances may forfeit this privilege (2.5). John leaves the obvious

38. So the MT; LXX has οἱ δύο υἱοὶ τῆς πιότητος.

39. See further Jauhiainen, *Zechariah*, pp. 46–9.

40. *Pace* Farrer (*The Revelation of St. John the Divine* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1964], p. 65), who claims that John picks up Zech. 4.1–2 LXX already in Rev. 1; and Aune (*Revelation 1–5*, p. 89), who suggests that 1.12 is also at least partly based on Zechariah 4.

unstated: a lampstand is a stand for a lamp or lamps and in order to fulfil its purpose (i.e., give light), a lampstand needs to have one or more burning lamps.[41] However, since he has chosen to portray God's Spirit as a sevenfold Spirit, symbolized by seven burning, fiery lamps (4.5), we may conclude that the lampstand imagery in general speaks of the church as a locus of God's Spirit.

The change from Zechariah's one lampstand to two of Revelation 11 may have been prompted by various concerns. John may have simply wanted to match them with the number of witnesses, two of whom were traditionally required for a testimony to be binding.[42] Another option is that the close identification of two lampstands with two olive trees (rather than equating the two witnesses collectively with one lampstand) intimates that they both ultimately represent the same entity, though from two different angles. A third reason may be that having more than one lampstand suggests that, contrary to the way it was normally perceived in the OT, God's presence is no longer tied to one particular location, but goes into all the earth with his people whom he indwells.

As for the identification of the lampstands with the olive trees, since both are equated with the two witnesses, this becomes ultimately a question of why the witnesses are called lampstands. There seem to be at least two reasons for this. First, the lampstands symbolize churches, as the audience has already been told (1.20). The story of the two prophetic witnesses, then, is a story about the prophetic witness of the church(es).[43] Second, the narrative of the witnesses has both implicit and explicit allusions to the career of Jesus himself, whom the early church identified as Yahweh's servant, with a mission to be a light to the nations (Isa. 42.6; 49.6; cf. Lk. 2.32). After the death and resurrection of Jesus, this mission was understood to be part of the call of the church (Acts 13.47). Equating the two witnessing prophets, servants of the 'Lord of the earth' with lampstands is thus very appropriate.[44] Yet unlike the cultic lampstands of the old era, these are not hidden in the temple or tabernacle but shine their light in the world.

41. Cf. M. McNamara, *New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), p. 192: 'Each of the branches of [the lampstand in the tabernacle] bore a lamp (λύχνος), and we can presume that the lampstands of the Apocalypse, whether we understand these as separate or merely as the branches of the seven-branched lampstand, did the same'.

42. Num. 35.30; Deut. 17.6; 19.15; cf. Mt. 18.16; Jn 5.31; 8.17; Acts 5.32; 2 Cor. 13.1; 1 Tim. 5.19; Heb. 10.28.

43. Bauckham, *Climax*, pp. 273–83.

44. In Zechariah, the 'Lord' is obviously Yahweh, but John may have Jesus in mind instead (cf. 1.12–2.1). The reference to the 'Lord of the earth' in Zechariah emphasizes the power and universal lordship of Yahweh at the time when the people are struggling to rebuild the nation. In Revelation the emphasis shifts slightly; the witnesses are on the offensive as they are testifying to the universal lordship of their master before the inhabitants of the earth.

The evoking of Zechariah 4 in Rev. 11.4 speaks about the mission of the church(es) in many ways. With his 'X is Y' statement, John identifies his two witnesses as the two mysterious Zecharian olive trees. Just as the olive trees in Zechariah 4 are necessary for the realization and proper functioning of the coming temple, so the witnesses are crucial in the preparation of the eschatological temple, the New Jerusalem. With the same 'X is Y' statement, John also identifies the witnesses as lampstands, which speaks of the churches as the locus of God's Spirit. John's changed theological circumstances thus enable him to both preserve and enlarge the original imagery: the witnesses as olive trees are not merely necessary for the temple; as lampstands they themselves *are* temples.[45] Yet unlike Zechariah, John does not explicitly mention the lamps, though one may assume that the lampstands give their light and are able to fulfil their prophetic vocation only insofar as they have lamps that are burning. This is clearly a challenge to some of the lampstands of Revelation 2–3. Finally, just as in Zechariah, the temple in Revelation is not to be built by [human] might, nor by [military] power, but by God's Spirit (Zech. 4.6); the beast and the Lamb have completely opposite methods of expanding their kingdom and achieving their purposes.[46]

Joel 4.1–21 (ET 3.1–21) in Rev. 14.14–20

There seems to be broad agreement that the description of the harvest(s) of the earth in Rev. 14.14–20 alludes to Joel 4.13 (ET 3.13): 'Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the wine press is full. The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great'. According to this view, the [grain] harvest in 14.14–16 points to 4.13a while the grape harvest in 14.17–20 points to 4.13b–c. All agree that Joel 4.13 and Rev. 14.17–20 are images of judgement, but there is disagreement over the precise nature of the harvest imagery in 14.14–16. Is it another portrayal of judgement or does John have something else in mind?[47]

45. Though John uses OT cultic imagery, he seems to have shared the early Christian understanding of God's faithful people forming a temple insofar as the temple was understood as the locus of God's presence; cf., e.g., Mk 14.58; 1 Cor. 3.16; 1 Pet. 2.4–5; Rev. 3.12.

46. Cf. Bauckham, *Theology*, pp. 110–5.

47. **Bauckham** (*Climax*, p. 290) maintains that John has seen two different harvests, a grain harvest and a grape harvest, in the Hebrew text of Joel 4.13, and has then transformed the first into a positive image that speaks about the conversion of the nations. Beale (*Revelation*, pp. 770–9), on the other hand, insists that the harvests in Rev. 14.14–20 must both be images of judgement because that is how Joel uses them. Furthermore, he points out that LXX has a plural, **'sickles' (which John has presumably understood as two sickles,** one for each image). The problem with the invoking of the LXX is that the *grain* harvest is thereby lost, as the Greek text speaks of 'vintage' (τρύγητος) instead of 'harvest' (θερισμός). G. R. Osborne (*Revelation* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], pp. 550–3) straddles the fence, interpreting the first harvest as a judgement of mercy of the redeemed.

In the larger context of John's narrative, it makes most sense to connect the harvest depicted in 14.14–16 to the first fruits mentioned earlier in 14.4. While this in itself does not necessarily require that the later image is also positive, it certainly suggests as much. Likewise, all Gospel traditions refer to the coming redemptive harvest of the kingdom of God.[48] Furthermore, in contrast to the description of the grape harvest, the nature of the grain harvest is not explicitly stated (and thus the debate). The issue therefore has to do with the primary background: would the audience take their clues from the harvest imagery of 14.4 and, in light of the Jesus tradition, infer that the image is positive, or would they recall Joel 4.13 instead? I suggest that the context tips the balance in favour of the former.[49] What we find in 14.14–16 is thus a portrayal of 'one like the Son of Man' first receiving an authorization from an angel coming from the presence of the one seated on the throne and then reaping the harvest that he himself has sown.[50]

While the audience would not necessarily use Joel 4.13 as a hermeneutical key in their interpretation of Rev. 14.14–16, the situation is different when they encounter the grape harvest of 14.17–20. Rather than finding two different harvests in Joel 4.13,[51] the description in 14.17–20 seems to follow the (chrono)logical development of Joel: the harvest is ripe and it is time for the sickle(s) (4.13a / 14.18); once the grapes have been gathered, the winepress is full and needs to be trodden (4.13b / 14.19); and the treading results in the overflowing of 'wine' (4.13c / 14.20).

Yet it is not enough to show that John's description follows the pattern in Joel – we also need to offer an account of the purpose for which he has employed the allusion. It seems that there are at least three extra elements between the marker and marked contexts that the reader may activate. First, the reason for the judgement in Joel is the mistreatment of 'my people' by the nations (4.2–3, 19); Yahweh 'will avenge their blood' (4.21). In Revelation, the judgement depicted in ch. 14 can thus be seen as a partial answer to the martyrs' cry in 6.10. Second, the judgement of the nations is accompanied by the restoration of the fortunes of God's people (4.1, 17–18, 20). Third, the means of judgement in Joel is war (as opposed to other possible calamities). This suggests that the beast and those siding with him will suffer a similar fate in the narrative of Revelation as well, despite their apparent initial success. Of course, such

48. Mt. 9.37–38; Mk 4.26–29; Lk. 10.2; Jn 4.35–38.

49. Note also the immediately preceding macarism in 14.13: 'Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord'.

50. Mt. 13.3–23 par.

51. The theory of two harvests would seem to require that John had no access to the LXX (cf. n. 47 above) and that John understood קָצִיר as a semantically marked noun signifying only grain harvest rather than as an unmarked noun capable of denoting both harvest in general or grain harvest in particular, depending on the context.

an expectation is manifestly vindicated by the approaching climax of John's story.

Zech. 14.1–19 in Rev. 22.3

It is widely recognized[52] that Rev. 22.3a, 'there will no longer be any curse' [NET] (καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ **ἔσται** ἔτι), is an allusion to Zech. 14.11b, 'there shall be no more anathema' [NET] (καὶ οὐκ **ἔσται** ἀνάθεμα ἔτι).[53] In addition to the verbal links, the larger context of both texts is the same, namely, the description of the (re)new(ed) Jerusalem. Moreover, there are a number of points of contact with Zechariah 14 and Revelation 21–22.[54] But how does the allusion function in its context?

Rev. 22.3a is not a simple fulfilment of Zech. 14.11. Indeed, καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ **ἔσται** ἔτι does not refer to the city itself, which has never been destroyed, but to something else. It seems likely that 22.3a is yet another example of John's universalizing tendency. Zechariah's concern is the safety of Jerusalem and he continues his account with a description of the plague that strikes the nations that have come against Jerusalem. In contrast, John emphasizes that there are no longer any curses, including bans of destruction on the nations (cf. Isa. 34.1–2; Jer. 50–51); indeed, the nations will be healed (22.2) rather than devoted to destruction. Moreover, while Zechariah leaves open the possibility that some survivors from the nations will not come and attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem annually, John appears to assume that the survivors from the nations have all become God's servants and serve him

52. See, e.g., D. E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22* (WBC, 52C; Waco: Word Books, 1998), pp. 1178–9; Bauckham, *Climax*, pp. 316–8; Beale, *Revelation*, p. 1112; and Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 296.

53. MT וחרם לא יהיה־עוד. κατάθεμα is a hapax, but a near synonym for ἀνάθεμα and an acceptable translation of חרם; cf. Mt. 26.74 and its parallel, Mk 14.71. All three words can denote either the thing accursed or devoted to destruction, or the curse or ban of destruction itself (**BDB, pp. 355–6; BDAG, pp. 63, 517). In the OT,** חרם is most frequently found in military contexts, where the enemy and their property are dedicated to Yahweh and destroyed completely. The immediate context of Zech. 14.11 is the security of Jerusalem, which suggests that חרם/ἀνάθεμα denotes the ban of destruction rather than the thing devoted to destruction; the restored and renewed Jerusalem will never again be destroyed by the attacking nations (C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB, 25C; New York: Doubleday, 1993], p. 448). As for Rev. 22.3, translations and commentators are divided on the meaning of πᾶν κατάθεμα. While some see it as a reference to accursed things or people (e.g. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 296), most take it as denoting the ban of destruction itself (e.g. Bauckham, *Climax*, p. 316; and Charles, *Revelation*, II, p. 209). Yet this is a moot point, since the net effect of both views is the same: if there is no ban of destruction, then there will be nothing that is devoted to destruction; and if there will no longer be anything devoted to destruction, then there is no ban of destruction either.

54. **See further Jauhiainen,** *Zechariah*, pp. 121–3.

in the New Jerusalem.[55] Thus, just as John's announcement regarding the absence of the temple (21.22) is highlighted when seen against the background of Ezek. 40–48, so the appreciation of John's statement is increased when considered in light of Zechariah 14.

Conclusion

John's use of the Minor Prophets does not appear much different from his use of other Old Testament prophetic texts. He seems especially attracted to passages that speak of the coming, imminent reversal of fortunes (i.e. when sinners will be judged, the faithful will be delivered, and various other 'eschatological' expectations will be fulfilled). While many of the passages deal with the judgement of the oppressing nations, some also contain a warning to idolaters within God's people: repent or perish with the wicked when the Day comes.

Yet unfulfilled promises of restoration are not the only texts John wishes to evoke in the minds of his audience. Some passages are shamelessly harnessed for the service of his high Christology: Jesus/Lamb now takes the role belonging to Yahweh. Other passages are used to remind Christians of their true vocation as followers of Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. John is also not afraid to clarify perceived ambiguities in the marked text, or to exploit the semantic range of certain words and expressions. Frequently knowing the OT context of John's allusion gives insight into what is presently taking place in his narrative and also prepares the reader for what will follow later.

As for the language of John's preferred sources, everything obviously hinges on the question of how closely our critical editions resemble the texts to which he may have had access. Our limited analysis suggests that had John been using texts known to us, almost all of the perceived allusions would have been actualizable through both languages. In only one case – albeit rather important – the marker sign is found in the Hebrew but not in the Greek text of the OT passage in question.

In terms of individual documents within the Twelve, the Book of Zechariah appears to be by far the most popular marked text. This is undoubtedly due to its length, its subject matter and its style. In relation to its length, Joel is not far behind. It does not contain visions à la Zechariah and Revelation, but its singular focus on the approaching Day of the Lord has certainly made it easier for John to utilize its rich imagery. In our analysis, only one allusion was detected to books other than Joel and Zechariah. However, had there been space to also examine echoes and

55. This thus completes the process described in 7.9–17 (cf. 21.3–4), where people from all nations are coming out of the great tribulation and are said to serve God day and night in his temple.

less certain allusions, another five prophets – Amos, Zephaniah, Nahum, Micah and Malachi – would have entered the discussion. There is more to the influence of the Minor Prophets on John's narrative than meets the eye in the present study.