
VISUAL REWRITING OF JOHN'S REVELATION

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Abstract

By theory of intertextuality, this study covers the relationship between teaching and prophetic writings of the Old Testament and the 11th chapter of Saint John's Apocalypse, evaluated from the perspective of the written word and of the symbol image. Starting from Psalm 2, which is rewritten in the description of Almighty with 'nations', we observe the overlapping in very few verses of the canonical Revelation of many images inspired by the Old Testament's authors. This approach is necessary to understand the emergence of the images, which transcribed the written word, in the Books of the New Testament, especially the Johannine writings, from the 8th century. From painting biblical images on books files, it spreads through resignification on the walls of churches in northern Moldavia, and through sculpture on the facades of Western cathedrals.

Keywords: intertextuality, Revelation, psalms, temple, miniature

1. Introduction

A particular literary genre, biblical rewritings present themselves as a text with a narrative, sequentially character, which encompass a lot of outside biblical material, which is being melted or inserted in the biblical tradition, but harmoniously integrated. The particular method of exegesis consists of reengineering, recreating the biblical text that is set by the scribe in the new form under the sign of the divine authority as to suggest the natural continuity of revelation. The Deuteronomic effort, the 'repetition' effort, the remembrance of Scripture effort enables us to assimilate up to identify the relationship between rewriting the Bible and the biblical books, corresponding with ratio between the Church tradition and the written text of Scripture. The concept of rewriting the Bible was set in the Anglo-Saxon world by Geza Vermes in his *Rewritten Bible* [1], by Charles Perrot through the French phrase *Texte continue* [2], and at the end of the second millennium by Philip S. Alexander in *Retelling the Old Testament* [3].

The scribe always uses and enriches the received tradition, resizing it [4]. Rewriting the Bible is not meant to simply fill in the 'gaps' or just adding information [5], clarity, is not only an explanatory narration that expands the biblical text, as it is not a simple update in the present, an update in the past

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present of the biblical text. Although in the continuity of time the biblical rewriting is the presence of pure revelation.

The writings of John the Apostle use lavishly the Old Testament by explicit quotes, verbal allusions or fundamental ideas fulfilled in the New Testament. The Revelation, seen as a product of Johannine theological thought, bristles in many biblical texts, allusions and echoes [6]. The biblical psalms are used in the Book of Revelation, but in a lesser extent, by verbal conceptual allusions. Indeed, there are a number of allusions classified in terms of their verbal affinity to a known source as unmarked quotes. But specific to John the Apostle is not introducing them using an introductory wording and not even with a pause in syntax.

For example, the messianic promise of leading the nations with a rod of iron, Psalm 2.8-9, is rewritten as a promise addressed only to Christians of Thyatira in Revelation 2.26-27 [7].

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” (Psalm 2.8-9) “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” (Revelation 2.26-27)

Considered as identity in meanings (“rod of iron”), result (“power over the nations”), and analogy (“the vessels of a potter shall they be broken”), the three actions confirm that Saint John is thinking of Psalm 2 [8]. Furthermore, he quotes the Psalm in two places. The male child, born of woman - in Revelation 12.5 – will “rule all nations with a rod of iron”; and in Revelation 19.15 the rider on a white horse “should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron”. As we shall see, John even uses the same verb ποιμαίνω (to lead, to shepherd) that is found in the LXX text (of the Septuagint), although often incorrectly treated as a translation of the Hebrew verb *raat* (to scatter) [9]. There are other three texts from the Psalms (Psalm 2.1-2; Psalm 85.8-10; Psalm 88.27, 36) which can also be regarded as unmarked quotes [8].

A second category is some psalm texts that have shaped the central idea of a biblical passage, along with some other fundamental aspects of some old testamentary books [9]. For example, the letter to the Church in Sardis contains the warning: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels” (Apocalypse 3.5). This could be from Exodus 32.32 where Moses asks to be removed from the book, if God will not forgive Israel. Or it might owe something to Daniel 12.1, which promises that “thy people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book” [10]. But the closest parallel is Psalm 68.32, because it is not talking only about ‘extinction’ but also it uses the ‘book of life’ compound, and the context itself represents a warning [11]. In addition to this example, there are another 8 Psalms which may be included in the category of ‘the Psalms which support the central

idea of quoted fragment' (Psalms 75.8, 98.1, 105.48, 115.4-7.13, 137.8, 141.2, 144.9).

The third category is the text of the Psalms which enhance the secondary description of the liturgical ministration from Revelation. For example, the pastoral images in Revelation 7.15-17 are drawn mainly of Isaiah 49.10 ("They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them"). The specific use of ποιμαίνω in the positive sense of 'to pasture' along with the image of being driven by still waters, suggests poetic images from Psalm 22.1-2 LXX. There are other 7 Psalm texts that can be categorized as supporting at least *one* of the ideas of the secondary fragments (Psalms 7.10, 47.9, 62.8, 77.42, 78.1, 95.13, 118.137) [10].

2. Verbal quotations from Psalms

2.1. Psalm 2.1-2 from Revelation 11.15, 18

Along with sounding of the 7th trumpet we find proclaiming "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever". A few verses later the 24 elders praise God for His victory, noting that "the nations were angry". These two ideas, "the wrath of the Gentiles" and "God and His Christ" leads to the expression from Psalm 2.1 LXX, which renders the Hebrew word **rgš** (to conspire, to plot) with φρύσσω - (to get angry with/to see red). The text is quoted in this form in Acts 4.25-26, but John uses the most common verb ὀργίζω probably due to the influence of Exodus 15.14, where people raise ὀργιζέσθωσαν or Psalm 98.112 LXX. As we will see later, the last fits more, since John also uses the unusual aorist ἐβασίλευσας for God's rule. Thus the threat from Psalm 2 is now seen as already happened; the people rose against God and His Christ and were defeated.

2.2. Psalm 2.8-9 from Revelation 2.26-27, 12.5, 19.15

Psalm 2.7 is far quoted in the New Testament, but Saint John uses verses 8 and 9 in three occasions. Worship is the central idea, and it is expressed as "ruling with a rod of iron" and applied to the Christians who overcome in Revelation 2.27, to the male child born of a woman in Revelation 12.5 and to the rider on the white horse in Revelation 19.15.

The verb receives a negative meaning in Revelation 12.5, where it refers not to God's men, but to people and is accompanied by the expression 'with an iron rod'. The meaning seems to be 'to rule' in the sense of 'complying'. The allusion at Psalm 2.8, 9 is strengthened in Revelation 2.27 and 19.5 with the adding "ruling over people" and supplementary in 2.27 with the analogy "like pottery". In order to understand the use by Saint John of this psalm we need to discover what John was understanding by the Greek verb ποιμαίνω. In Revelation 7.17 he uses it entirely in a positive sense to 'pastoration' or

‘guidance’ of the saints to the source of water of life. The verse owes something to Psalm 22 where ποιμαίνω is also used.

However, in Revelation 2.27 and 19.15 the word is put in parallel by the expression that rather indicates ‘destruction’ than ‘ruling’. In revelation 2.27 there the analogy used in Psalm 2 (“you will dash them to pieces like pottery”) and in Revelation 19.15, an expression extracted from Isaiah 11.4 (“with the rod of his mouth... shall he slay the wicked”) rewritten “that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron”.

This involves two questions:

- Does Psalm 2 predicts a ‘subjugation’ or ‘destruction’ of the nations?
- Does John understand through the ποιμαίνω in 2.27 and 19.5, ‘to lead’ or ‘to destroy’?

The first question gets more and more complicated due to the fact that the Hebrew consonants derive from the **raa** (an aramaism corresponding to the Hebrew **רַתַּ** which means ‘spreading’ as in MT) or **rah** (meaning ‘shepherd’ or ‘leading’), both solutions being valid. In favour of **raa** we find the parallelism with the analogy of ‘crushing’ vessels of clay, as it was understood by Simahus, Aquila and then by the Masoretic. Now the next verse is to be an exaggerated expression for the final victory rather than for nations’ destruction. Their ephemeral strength will be entirely smashed, but not people themselves [11].

Regarding the second question, the main issue is whether the Greek word ποιμαίνω has also a non-certified meaning of ‘destroying’. Certainly, it is not required in Revelation 2.7 since the psalm is preceded by the promise of authority over the nations. The victory will be as scattering pottery, but people shall remain as a legacy. The erminia of the text from Revelation 19.15 is more difficult because is followed by a series of destructions, where “And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh” (Revelation 19.21). It seemed that there is nothing left for the horse rider in order to finish his ruling; the enemy was completely destroyed. On the other hand, in the next chapter, we have a vision where Satan is chained and the saints and Christ master for thousands years. Of course, it is a well known difficulty on this ‘millennial domination’, but one thing is clear: ‘mastering’ is designed to match the promise of ‘ruling’ in Revelation 2.28. Thus, Saint John borrowed the hyperbole according to which ‘possession’ means ‘submission’, or more specifically ‘destructing’ the entire resistance. Beale considers that the Septuagint translator deliberately chose ποιμαίνω in order to reflect the ambiguity of the Hebrew consonants [12].

2.3. Psalm 85.7-9 from Revelation 15.3-4

In Revelation 15.3 John the apostle says that those who defeated the beast sing “the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb”. The title intrigued commentators as the following words have little verbal resemblance with the song of Moses, both in Exodus 15 and in Deuteronomy 32, but are

drawn from various psalms, especially Psalm 85: "In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." (Psalm 85.7-9)

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lambe, saying, Great and marueilous are thy workes, Lord God Almightye, iust and true are thy wayes, thou king of saints. Who shall not feare thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name? For thou onely art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgements are made manifest." (Revelation 15.3-4)

Bauckham [13] says that John thinks at the song of Moses in Exodus 15, but he, by verbal association of Exodus 15.11("Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods?") with 3 other texts (Psalm 85.7-9, Jeremiah 10.7 and Psalm 98.2), wrote a new song on "the universalist current line developed from the Old Testament hope".

Beale [14], similarly to Bauckham, considers that Saint John thinks to Moses' song and don't compose arbitrary himself the song. He states: "the real content of the song itself doesn't come from Exodus 15 but from passages of the Old Testament glorifying God's character. Thus, he notes that Deuteronomy 32 is specifically named 'song' in Deuteronomy 31.30 and is applied to the judgement and reward that will come in the world." He also makes the statement that the text: "great and wonderful are your works" is coming from Deuteronomy 28.59-60 (LXX) where Israel is menaced with God's judgement like a "large and endless plague". Thus, Beale wishes to confront Bauckham's point of view, in the sense that John's writing is put in the service of an universal theme [12]. The obvious sources for the beginning expression "great and wonderful are your works" are texts from Psalm 111.2 ("Great are the works of the Lord") or Psalm 139.14 ("your works are wonderful"), and not God's menace that brings on Israel "large and endless plague". In fact Beale's argument, that in Revelation 14-16 the general context is the judgement, makes more remarkable the extensive quotation of Psalm 85.8-9. The verbal matching with LXX appears in 17 words (τὰ ἔργα σου, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὅσα ἐποίησας ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιόν σου κύριε καὶ δοξάσουσιν τὸ ὄνομά σου).

There are many clear evidences that John wants to underline the importance of this text (much more than Exodus 15 or Deuteronomy 32) and contrary to Bauckham, John seems to be dependent of a Greek source [13, p. 18]

2.4. Psalm 88.27, 36 in Revelation 1.5

In the prologue of the Revelation saint John puts in parallel the triple description of God ("who is, and who was, and who is to come") with a triple description of Jesus as "the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the Earth" (Revelation 1.5). This could be a functional-chronological description of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, taking as "faithful witness" and "firstborn from the dead" as basic references and "ruler of

the kings” as essential future. Alternatively, the three titles could have Christological purpose and particularly describing God. Aune, for example, believes that “the faithful witness” means “the glorified Jesus that guarantees the truth of the revelation transmitted through John” [15]. The third description clearly refers to Psalm 88, which says: “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him; With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him....Also I will make him my firstborn (πρωτότοκος), higher than the kings of the Earth.... Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in Heaven.”(ὁ μάρτυς ἐν οὐρανῷ πιστός – Psalm 88.20, 27.36b-38).

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός) and the first begotten of the dead, (ὁ πρωτότοκος) and the prince of the kings of the Earth.” (Revelation 1.5)

There are some evidence that the psalm was seen as messianic (Midr. Rab. Exodus 19.7) [16] and that the New Testament calls ten of his verses. However, there is no direct quotation from Psalm 88 in the New Testament and, most of the allusions being general suggestions.

There are three major differences between Psalm 88 and Revelation 1.5:

1. The Psalm speaks of the moon as “the faithful witness” of God’s covenant, but John applies the quote directly to Christ;
2. The Psalm speaks of “the first born”, but John speaks of “the first begotten of the dead”;
3. The psalm says “higher than the kings of the Earth”, but John says “the prince of the kings of the Earth”.

This raises an important question about how John places this psalm in the reader’s mind, to emphasize the changes on the meaning of the text that he makes. Comblin argues that changing “the first born” into “the first begotten of the dead” clarifies that there are references to the victory of death on the cross, through Jesus. Thus “the first born instead of being an honorific title, is the guarantee that the others will go with Him through death to the kingdom” [17]. In Caird’s opinion John does not indicate Psalm 88, because he capitalizes the theme of “the glory of the Messiah” in a paradoxical antinomy with the cross of Christ [18].

On the other hand, Aune believes that the most likely the source of “the first begotten of the dead” is the tradition outlined in Colossians 1.15-18 (“the firstborn of every creature... the beginning, the firstborn from the dead”).

Saint John, the author of Revelation, already has in mind the expression “the first begotten of the dead” and uses Psalm 88 to highlight it, combining it with other functions and titles [17, p. 255]. For John, Christ is “the first begotten of the dead” and “Lord of lords and King of kings” (Revelation 17.14). It is surprising how each of these 4 allusions to Psalms offers a special perspective on nations. Psalm 2 highlights their anger and therefore the conquest presumed by God and His Messiah Psalm 88 emphasizes rather the character of King David

but includes the statement that God makes “higher than the kings of the Earth” that Saint John turns into “the prince of the kings of the Earth”. The changing moves the emphasis towards the fate of nations (who are ‘led’) rather than to the person of the Messiah (which is the ‘highest’). Finally, Psalm 85 offers the promise that the greatness of God’s acts will determine people to come worship and glorify His name. Thus, these four psalms contain seemingly contradictory themes such as:

1. nations would be destroyed by Messiah, and
2. Messiah will rule them as His legacy.

Probably it is significant that the same paradox is found to be the culmination point of John’s book: “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the Earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” (Revelation 20.7-9) “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.” (Revelation 21.23-24)

Regarding the text used by John, despite the consensus opinion that John favoured Semitic texts, there is little evidence suggesting that here. The verbal similarities [13, p. 12] to the LXX Psalm 85 contain 16 or 17 words, and there is strong evidence of the dependence on hagiographer John on the Greek text. The keywords taken from Psalm 88 (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός ἢ πρωτότοκος) appear in LXX and Beale [14, p. 606] said that John deliberately kept the nominative form of verbs ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός (ἀπο must be followed by genitive) in order to emphasize this. John, therefore, changes “higher than the kings” with “the prince of the kings of the Earth” but this is a change of meaning applicable to the official testamentary versions.

3. Psalms contributing to the main idea of a passage

3.1. Psalm 68.32 in Revelation 3.5 (13.8, 17.8, 20, 14-15, 21, 27)

One of the salvation metaphors from the book of Revelation is if someone’s name is written in the book of life. In the book of Revelation in most cases the metaphor emphasizes the division between the saved ones (whose names are written in the book) and the cursed ones (whose names are not written). If we look at the biblical text, the best source is Daniel 12.1 (“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be

delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book”). However, in Revelation 3.5 the promise to the Church of Sardis is framed as a warning: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out (ἐξαλείψω) his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels”. The most likely source here is either Exodus 32.32 (where Moses asks to be removed from the book) or Psalm 68.32 (“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”) Beale does not agree with the interpretation that Christians should be erased from the book of life and suggests that the warning is addressed to false Christians who just *think* their names are written in the book. Knowing that the Church from Ephesus is threatened with removal from the candlestick of Revelation 2.5, the people of Sardis must win or they risk being erased from the book of life.

3.2. Psalm 74.8 in Revelation 14.9-11

The fate of the wicked in Revelation 14.10 is that they “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb”. The idea of a ‘cup of wrath’ is frequent in the Old Testament (Psalm 74.8, Isaiah 51.17, Jeremiah 25.15, Ezekiel 23.31, Habakkuk 2.16).

3.3. Psalm 98.1 in Revelation 11.17-18

When the 7th angel blows the trumpet in Revelation 11.15, we hear the victory of God and His Christ and the wrath of people. As we have seen, this leads to Psalm 2, but the unusual expression of καὶ ἐβασίλευσας καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὠργίσθησαν is commonly believed to be an allusion to the LXX of Psalm 98.1 κύριος ἐβασίλευσεν ὀργιζέσθωσαν λαοι. The Hebrew acclamation is played by κύριος ἐβασίλευσεν in four psalms (92.1, 95.9, 96.1 and 98.1) but only in Psalm 98.1 is followed by a reference to its negative consequences for all nations of the earth. Swete used this verse as one of his key examples of John's dependence on LXX, noting that the Hebrew verb **rgt** means rather ‘tremors’ than ‘wrath’ [19].

This argument is somewhat softened by the fact that the wrath of nations may derive from Psalm 2 or even from Exodus 15.14, but the unusual aorist confirms Swete's intuition. John borrows from Psalm 98.1 the twin ideas of “the reign of God” and “the wrath of nations” and finds in Psalm 2 the specific reference on “God and His Christ”.

3.4. Psalm 105.48 in Revelation 19.4

Hardly surprising, the language of psalms has often echoed in the hymns and the praises of the Revelation. In Revelation 19.4 there is an acclamation of

“amen, hallelujah” that could simply be the combination of John, but many commentators see it as an allusion to Psalm 105.48 [14, p. 587], [18, p. 133], [17, p. 258]. The call to praise God with the words ‘Alleluia’ occurs 23 times in the Psalms (and nowhere else), but Psalm 105.48 is the only place where the Hebrew ‘Amen’. is used. The Greek version is a transliteration of the Hebrew letters, LXX generally playing the Hebrew ‘Amen’ through ‘so be it’. This would be evidence for John’s usage of the Hebrew text, though more likely the phrase came to John by liturgical repetition.

3.5. Psalm 113 in Revelation 9.20

Revelation 9.20 says that those who were not killed by plague “repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk”. The list of materials for creating idols comes from Daniel 5.4, 23 [14, p. 612], but the expression “human work of the hands” and the sequence “sees, hears, go” (from the prophet Daniel we find the group of verbs “sees, hears, knows”) lead to a more complete list from Psalm 113.12 to 15 “says, sees, hears, smells, feels, walk” [20].

3.6. Psalm 136.8 in Revelation 18.6

The fact that Babylon will be punished according to his works is mentioned several times in Jeremiah (27.15, 27.29 and 28.24) but in Psalm 136.8 he speaks of the reward for bad deeds, using different times of the same verb. Saint John uses the imperative and the aorist of ἀνταποδίδωμι. The psalm uses the future and the aorist of ἀνταποδίδωμι. It is rather a stylistic variation, since John uses ἀπόδιδωμι in three cases, but never uses ἀνταποδίδωμι. John the Apostle has literally used the most common word, finding in the Psalm 136 the description of God’s enemies fate, namely, that punishment will be the measure of wickedness.

3.7. Psalm 140.2 in Revelation 5.8-10

The song of praise from Revelation 5.8-10 has multiple verbal correspondences, but the prayer analogy that rises as incense is found only in Psalm 140.2 and in a slightly different context, like Wisdom 18.21. The idea of the angels rising prayers to God is found in Tobias 12.12, 15, while the ‘new song’ appears frequently, but combined ‘with harps’ only in Psalm 143.9 It is difficult to deduce the used text since we find the verbal resemblance only in a few isolated words. Instead of ψαλτηρίον John called the instrument from LXX κιθάρα. John finds in these psalmic words a description of the eschatological victory of God’s people.

Many of the psalms from this second category claim the judgment of nations by God. Thus Psalm 136.8 provides the idea that the penalty would be appropriate to wickedness, while Psalm 74.8 describes the complete drinking of God's wrath cup. Psalm 98.1 combines with Psalm 2 in order to talk about nation's wrath, adding the idea that God has established His ruling. Psalm 113 provides a description of people's sins, namely worshipping idols.

The apostle capitalizes the prayer acclamation from Psalm 105.48, the analogy of prayers that rise as incense from Psalm 140.2, the faithfully singing the new song from Psalm 143.9, the description of God's people as those fearing Him - both of the small and big ones - from Psalm 113.21 and the warning on avoid being erased from the book of life from Psalm 68.32.

Based on the first two categories under consideration, we conclude that the psalms use of by Saint John reveal:

1. Judging idolatrous nations by God (Psalm 2.1-2, 8-9; 75.8; 98.1; 113.12-15; 136.8).
2. Nations Salvation (Psalm 85.7-9).
3. Pictures of God's people salvation (Psalm 68.32, 105.48, 113.19, 140.2, 143.9).
4. The attributes of God's Messiah (Psalm 88.27, 36).

4. Examples of re-writing the prophetic text

Using descriptive phrases and statements that puts Jesus in relation to God, God is described indirectly and implicitly as being the source, the origin, the giver and the sustainer of the heavenly bread, of the lamb, of the light, of the water of life, of the life and of the other. Such images, as far as they describe God in familiar terms - the one who sends, or the one who feeds or the one who saves - depicts God as continuing God's portrait from the Old Testament. Jesus is the Lamb of God, the true bread, the light of the world and as Him there is no other. Therefore, the image of God as the Giver is enhanced when paired to the unique gift that is Jesus. All images that John gives are reflections of the images from the Old Testament. The Gospel renders or reflect events from Scripture where God of Israel nourishes and sustains his people, frees them from slavery and exile, claims worship and honour, demands justice and righteousness from his people.

We can distinguish two relevant symbolism domains in John's Revelation. First of all are the basic symbols of the human life as: light, water and birth that have prevailed the antique world. On the second place, there are specific symbols from the Jewish tradition, as the temple, the vine and the Heaven. In this case, we would like to talk about 'religious symbols'.

A specific characteristic of John's writings is the link and overlapping between different images in a small number of verses. From the technical point of view one can discern two types of arrangements, which, however, can't be easily identified in the specific texts according to the type. On the other hand, the images are placed one next to the other into an appropriate succession, so

that we can talk about a kind of *polyptychon* or the mosaic technique (succession of images), as in the Gospel according to John (chapter 4), when Jesus is figuratively associated with 'water', 'the bridegroom', 'the prophet', 'the new temple', 'Christ' and 'the Saviour', or in John 10, where Jesus can be seen as 'shepherd', 'door', 'temple', 'the Son of God'.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. The Bible Ottheinrich: (a) Revelation 10.8-10 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottheinrich_Folio293r_Rev10.jpg?uselang=de), (b) Revelation 11.1-7 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottheinrich_bible_relevations_294r.jpg).

By building the temple, Jerusalem becomes the religious centre in the land promised by God to the patriarchs and given to their descendents, the focus toward which is straightening the faith, the hope of Israel. In this way has to be understood the episode of book swallowing by Saint John, as the prophet Ezekiel has done at a sky order (Revelation 10.8-11 and Ezekiel 2.8-3.3) (Figure 1a). Regarding the measurement of the Temple and the exception of its exterior court and of Jerusalem, about which is told that it will be occupied for 42 months (Revelation 11.1-2), it is the event from Ezekiel 47.1-5, where the prophet receives the same order as John in vision (Figure 1b). The numbers mentioned in the text and the ordered measurement regard the offered frame of time and place. The meaning would be that everything – both the place where will occur different events of the end and their duration – is in God's hands and under an absolute control.

After this symbolic confirmation of Church's guarding by God, fact that has happened and will happen again with other occasions, is made a reference to the two prophets-witnesses of God. Alongside the idea that the two prophets represent in reality two concrete persons, there is also another opinion according to which the two persons are just a more general symbol of the apostolic prophecy of the Church. The two prophets are to be alike two olive trees and two candlesticks staying permanently in front God, symbolism also used by the prophet Zacharias 4.2-3: "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." The prophet speaks about Zerubbabel and the priest who had remade the destroyed Temple of Solomon. Revelation uses the same image borrowed from there but with another content. The two candlesticks and the two olive trees symbolize the strong bond, of a special nature that these two persons have with God. The two prophets will be endowed with an exceptional thaumaturgic charisma, but they will also prove a life full of holiness, symbolized by trees and candlesticks linked with the olive oil. The repentance message brought by them will be like the burning fire presented by Jesus Sirach 48.1: "Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp".

5. Conclusions

The dichotomy between rewriting and intertextuality may seem surprising, given that the current definition of intertextuality conveys a sense very close to that of rewriting. The researcher notes that the difference lies in the plural texts. The intertextuality focuses on what lays between the texts, in other words it is diverging the text as a discrete entity, while rewriting reactivates the concept of text [21].

Researching the Psalms and their influence on the apostolic kerygma confirms the verbal or conceptual interdependence between the Old and New Testaments, being seized from the theological point of view - by divine inspiration - for believing that Jesus Christ is Lord and Master of all.

The action verbs, by themselves, serve as images of God, for simple verbs such as 'work, love, investigate, sanctify, keep/guard, dwell/abide, send, cut, teach', require an exercise of imagination in representing God doing all these things. Chapter 11 of Revelation, can be read and viewed through the helpful lens of the Old Testament, opening our mind's eye towards the the Eschaton.

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