



Introduction: Rewriting and Reception in and of the Bible

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Rewriting and Reception in and of the Bible

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Introduction: Rewriting and Reception in and of the Bible

Jesper Høgenhaven, Jesper Tang Nielsen, Heike Omerzu

This volume is presented to Mogens Müller to pay homage to a friend and colleague who held the chair of New Testament Exegesis at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Copenhagen from 1982 to 2017. His scholarly endeavours range over a wide variety of topics within the field of Biblical studies. Müller has always had a keen eye for untested hypotheses and unscrutinized scholarly traditions. His *Habilitation* was an analysis of the expression ›Son of Man‹ in the gospels, with an emphasis on the literary impact of Daniel 7 and its reception in intertestamental literature. Müller thus studied reception history before reception history became fashionable. Against the common opinion, he demonstrated that there existed no ›Son of Man‹-conception in Judaism outside the New Testament. His work on the significance of the Septuagint as the medium through which the early Christians received the Old Testament scriptures points in a similar direction. By studying the reception history of the Old Testament Müller challenged the tradition of translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew text. This idea goes back to the reformation but Müller claimed that a translation of the LXX would make better sense in a Christian context. His more recent investigations into the Gospels as Biblical rewritings challenge another well-established hypothesis. If the Gospels are written in a continuous process of rewriting in which Matthew rewrote Mark, and Luke rewrote Mark and Matthew (and – according to Müller – John), the hypothetical Sayings Source Q loses its *raison d'être* and the Two-Source-Hypothesis must be reevaluated.

While Müller is primarily interested in the Biblical texts as literature rather than in their external historical reference, he has always had a particular love for the historical and geographical framework of the Biblical texts, as well as a deep interest in the history of the Biblical texts themselves and their interpretation and reception.

The contributions to this volume relate to Mogens Müller's scholarly work in a number of ways, covering a variety of topics within the field of Biblical rewriting and reception. In accordance with his own perspective, all of these topics may be viewed as parts of a continuous process that began within the Biblical literature itself and has continued in the history of interpretative communities that have

received and cherished the Bible in innumerable ways until today. Hence the title of this volume: *Rewriting and Reception in and of the Bible*.

We have divided the articles into two major sections: I. *Rewriting and Reception in the Bible*, and II. *Rewriting and Reception of the Bible*. Each section has two subsections, respectively *Ancient Judaism and New Testament and Ancient and Modern Times*.

In Section I, the first essays concern *Ancient Judaism*. *Jesper Høgenhaven's* article deals with the rewriting and interpretation of Biblical texts in the Qumran library. There would seem to be a dichotomy between the practice of interpreting an authoritative text sentence by sentence, as documented in the Qumran commentaries (*pesharim*), and the practice of rewriting ancient sources, remodeling and restructuring the source text into a new literary entity. In the Qumran writings, however, both strategies seem to be employed simultaneously, and in some cases even within the same text. The Cave 4 Commentary on Genesis (4Q252) is often cited as a work that combines features from both strategies. An analysis of this text is attempted, with emphasis on the emergence of a notion of canonicity in the Qumran context.

Ingrid Hjelm focuses on the expectation expressed in Deut 18:15, of the coming of a prophet like Moses, and its inner-Biblical reception and development. Hjelm demonstrates the complexity of the tradition in the Pentateuchal contexts and shows how it could be interpreted within a messianic perspective where the prophet was perceived as an ideal king David. The reception of this tradition can be traced into the New Testament as well as into Samaritan sources.

Thomas Thompson deals with the garden motif in the Old Testament, emphasizing how the rhetoric of reiteration – i. e. repeating, rearranging, and reinterpreting motifs from earlier texts – is a fundamental feature of literary creativity in the ancient world, which should not be narrowed down to a notion of ›rewriting‹ springing from a primarily polemical or competitive motivation. Rather, the omnipresent practice of reiteration serves a rhetorical function, echoing and mirroring facets of a composition's thematic core.

Siegfried Kreuzer's article analyses quotations from the Greek Old Testament in the New Testament. Based on a detailed analysis of a number of New Testament passages, Kreuzer attempts to demonstrate that the quotations are to be taken seriously as witnesses to the Greek Old Testament text. In many cases the New Testament bears the earliest extant witness to the Greek reading. The Greek text is far from uniform, and in particular from the first century CE a tendency to conform the Greek text to the Hebrew text and to ancient Jewish hermeneutics is notable. This development has also left its mark on the textual form of the Greek quotations in the New Testament.

The second part of Section I deals with the New Testament. *Michael Labahn* analyses the verse about the Queen of the South in Matthew and Luke (i. e., Q 11:39). He shows how this remark refers to the Biblical tradition of the Queen

of Saba. It interprets and rewrites the structures of this story so that they partly contradict the original narrative. The Queen of the South does not applaud Salomo's wisdom as the gift of God but appears as an eschatological judge over the Jewish people. This change is due to the rhetorical purpose of the Sayings Source that constructs an identity for its Jewish-Christian readers that separates them from other Jewish groups.

Troels Engberg-Pedersen's article sets out to make a decision on a highly contested issue: did the author of the Fourth Gospel know the Gospel of Mark or not? He focuses the question on whether John knew the Markan secrecy motif and concludes that John indeed knew and used that specifically Markan motif as he transformed it into his own theological composition. Even if Jesus trumpets his identity in the Fourth Gospel, the Son of God must remain hidden, in the sense of not understood, until after Jesus' resurrection when the *pneuma* generates the true understanding.

Jesper Tang Nielsen takes up Mogens Müller's idea of the Gospels as ›rewritten Bible‹ but challenges the opinion that Luke should be the fourth Gospel and be dependent on John. On the basis of the techniques and tendencies of rewriting in the Gospel of Nicodemus, he analyses the parallels between John and Luke. He concludes that in most cases the Fourth Gospel contains the more developed version of the pericopes.

Frederik Poulsen explores Luke's use of the prophet Isaiah in both his Gospel and in Acts. Luke not only quotes from Isaiah, he also uses clusters of motifs, themes and metaphors that derive from the prophet. In this way it is demonstrated that Luke expresses fundamental theological ideas by means of Isaianic language. He conceives of both Jesus' time, the time of the apostles and the universal mission of his own time as fulfilments of Isaiah's predictions.

Martin Meiser addresses the issue of the Torah in Paul's letter to the Galatians. He argues that in the time before Christ, Torah had a threefold role, namely announcement, curse, and restriction. In the time after Christ it played a role in the life of the believers as the command of love. Meiser shows that Paul bases his argument on the Greek Old Testament and follows the mode of interpretation that is also found in texts representing the genre ›rewritten Bible‹.

In Section II: Reception of the Bible, the first contributions cover Ancient Times. *Martin Karrer* investigates the reception of the Old Testament in the Apocalypse of John. Even though the Apocalypse does not give any direct quotations, it does make and mark a number of references to Old Testament texts. Karrer analyses the proper textual version of the Old Testament references and presents the significance of these versions for the Apocalypse. In the textual history of the writing, the different variants show how the incorporated textual versions have influenced the reading and development of the Apocalypse. Karrer demonstrates the complexity of intertextual connections, which is often not represented satisfactorily in text-critical editions since they primarily focus on

reconstructing the oldest forms of the texts rather than documenting the wide range of receptions unfolding through the process of textual history.

Heike Omerzu discusses whether and to what extent the category of ›rewritten Bible‹ can meaningfully be applied to early Christian texts as well. She first presents different attempts to regard both the development and reception of the New Testament Gospels as ›rewritings‹, amongst them Müller's notion of Matthew as being a ›rewritten Mark‹, John a ›rewritten Mark and Matthew‹ and Luke a rewriter of all three of his predecessors. Next, she turns her attention to a recent debate about the apocryphal Gospel of Peter as ›rewritten Gospel‹ and discusses the challenges and advantages of this approach. Omerzu concludes that it can be stimulating to read early Christian texts from the ›rewritten Bible‹ perspective if it is not understood as a *genre* but as a *strategy of interpretation*.

Tilde Bak Halvgaard investigates the Gnostic reception of the Johannine *logos* in the Nag Hammadi treatise *Trimorphic Protennoia*. Her aim is to define the specific kind of reception, more precisely whether it is a negative correction or a positive development. She concludes that the Gnostic reception should be understood as a positive interpretation of the Johannine concept in a technical philosophy of language. The *logos* constitutes the first step in a full linguistic manifestation that ultimately leads the reader into absolute silence.

Francis Watson presents a re-examination and a re-evaluation of the relation between Marcion's Gospel and Luke. Tertullian's anti-Marcionite polemics depart from the assumption that Christian truth is to be sought at the chronological beginning and that false doctrine is the result of later corruption. Accordingly, he emphasizes that the four Gospels were known in the church from the beginning and that Marcion's Gospel represents a mutilated version of Luke. However, weighty historical testimonies demonstrate that for Christians of the first two centuries CE a ›Gospel‹ remained an anonymous entity which was rewritten and reshaped in various forms.

Thomas Hoffmann deals with Biblical echoes and references in the Qur'an. In earlier scholarship the dependence of Qur'anic passages on Biblical texts were often regarded as misrepresentations or distortions. From an intertextual perspective, however, the references within the Qur'an to Biblical themes can be shown to form complex patterns – involving confirmation, correction, and critique – that reveal rhetorical strategies in which Biblical prophetic figures become both models for and models of Muhammad. This effectively disarms claims that Islam is an inferior latecomer among monotheistic endeavours.

John Strange presents an overview of major trends in the reception and representation of Biblical themes and figures in art history. From the earliest periods in Christian history, works of art have played a significant role in interpreting and shaping peoples' conceptions of Biblical themes and narratives. A number of central works are discussed in their relation to Biblical reception history more generally.

The essays in the second part of Section II concern reception in Modern Times. *Christina Petterson* analyses a number of Count Zinzendorf's choir speeches. She focuses on the production of gender in Zinzendorf's comments about different stages in life. The Bible functions as Zinzendorf's proof text in a few places but even more so it functions as the silent background for his understanding and construction of gender and social relations among the Moravians.

Halvor Moxnes presents a ›repainting‹ of Christ in a work from the late nineteenth century. The Swedish philosopher Pontus Wikner's book *Thoughts and Questions before the Face of the Son of Man* (1872) consists of a dialogue between the author and Christ. Wikner presents his relationship with Christ in terms of a homosocial romantic friendship that was typical of the nineteenth century and criticizes contemporary rewritings of Jesus as the ideal teacher. Instead, Christ must be understood as the ideal friend with whom one may enter into a personal and romantic friendship.

Gitte Buch-Hansen presents insights from a fieldwork project in a Danish parish that houses a congregation of refugees and asylum seekers. She has followed and interviewed four Afghan men from the congregation. Conversions and photos illustrate their relation to Christianity and the Bible. The reports from the fieldwork are followed by a hermeneutical discussion of the Protestant exegetical tradition that the refugees encounter in Denmark.

The wide range of topics in this volume illustrates Mogens Müller's many academic interests and his openness to innovative ideas. We offer this *Festschrift* to him in gratitude.