

BOOK REVIEW

Thomas R. Hatina (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels. I. The Gospel of Mark* (London: T. & T. Clark International, 2006). xii + 204 pp. Hbk. US\$130.00.

Thomas Hatina has assembled an excellent collection of essays contributing to the development of current understandings of Mark's use of Scripture. The present volume inaugurates a five volume series devoted to promoting scholarly attention to the use of the Old Testament in Gospel literature. The first four volumes will be devoted to the canonical Gospels, with a fifth exploring the use of Scripture in the pseudepigraphal Gospels.

The volume is initiated by a helpful navigation of its contents by the editor. No explicit structure or order is given to the essays in the book, in hopes of conveying a sense of methodological integration. In particular, the intention is to promote literary, (socio-)historical and historical-critical analysis of embedded texts in Mark's narrative (p. 1). Essentially, anything dealing with Mark's use of Scripture falls within the topical domain of this anthology. A broad array of methodologies is reflected in the diverse approaches to the question of Mark's implementation of Scripture, but there is a clear orientation toward literary models.

The first major essay is by Darrell Bock, and addresses 'The Function of Scripture in Mark 15.1-39' (pp. 8-17). Bock attempts to deal with a series of allusions in the passage, mostly drawn from Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, and concludes by arguing that three Old Testament themes in particular emerge in Mk 15.1-39: the Suffering Servant, the Righteous Sufferer and the Day of the Lord. Bock's lack of explicit definitions and criteria for identifying allusions/echoes/quotations, especially in light of recent discussion over terminology and method, is disappointing. He rightly dismisses Mark's narration of the persecutor's offering of wine to Jesus as an allusion to Prov. 31.6: 'Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those who are

distressed'. Bock's suggestions that Psalm 22 and the righteous suffering servant motif are invoked by the discourse are also feasible proposals, but I question his assumption that the whole context of the suffering servant must be evoked if the motif is evoked at all (p. 11). The use of Psalm 22 in Mark 15 certainly does not seem to evoke the entire context of David's situation, nor is Mark alluding to the entire context of Isaiah 53.

Edwin Broadhead's essay, 'Reconfiguring Jesus: The Son of Man in Markan Perspective' (pp. 18-30), deals with Old Testament tradition in the Markan trial scene (14.53-65) and addresses the christological function of this text within the larger discourse. Broadhead devotes most of his attention to the intertextual 'basis' for and 'negotiations' over 'Son of Man' language. He takes up this theme in the most obvious place first, the book of Daniel, and then moves on to consider various passages in Psalms as well (110.1; 2.1-11; 38.11-13). The emergence of the Son of Man tradition is also considered in late Jewish apocalyptic literature—although the phraseology is not used in many of the texts cited by Broadhead (pp. 21-23)—and in the Q tradition, both difficult tasks. The essay closes by plotting some of the sociological implications associated with the disciples' commitment to follow the Son of Man (pp. 28-30).

S. Anthony Cummins approaches the relation of Scripture to Herod, John the Baptist and Jesus as characters in Mk 6.17-29 in an essay entitled 'Integrated Scripture, Embedded Empire: The Ironic Interplay of "King" Herod, John and Jesus in Mark 6.1-44'. Cummins proceeds from the assumption that the prologue frames the thematic content of the Gospel, a view held by several contemporary Markan scholars. Apparently he understands Mk 1.15 as a termination point for the prologue and therefore sees the kingdom idea as a formative influence upon the entire discourse. This eschatological emphasis is then developed in light of kingship motifs in the Elijah narratives (pp. 42-44) and in the book of Esther (pp. 44-46). Cummins concludes that this analysis 'invites and enables the vibrant ironic comparison between our notable Old Testament types and the Gospel figures of Herod and Herodias, John and Jesus' (p. 48).

The relationship between 'The Servant of the Lord and the Gospel of Mark' (pp. 49-63) is dealt with in James Edwards's essay. Edwards insists that while many have drawn the connection between Isaiah's Suffering Servant and Mark's passion story, few have acknowledged

the significance of this motif for Mark's portrayal of Jesus' ministry. He goes on to suggest that 'Isaiah's Servant of God imagery appears to have provided Mark with a template or prototype for the presentation of Jesus as "the gospel of God" (Mk 1.14), in both his ministry and death' (p. 51). Edwards convincingly illustrates his points through explicating the relation between Servant of God motifs in Isaiah 40–66 and Jesus' baptism (pp. 51-52), the prologue and the binding of the strong man (pp. 52-56), the theme of Jesus' compassion for people (pp. 56-58) and the light to the nations motif (pp. 58-60).

Craig Evans's article, 'Zechariah in the Markan Passion Narrative' (pp. 64-80), builds upon research introduced in a previous publication which investigated the impact of the prophecy in Zechariah upon Jesus' thinking and activities, and attempted to differentiate between the influence of Zechariah upon Jesus and the creative liberties taken by the evangelists. Whereas Evans's first publication focused on determining points of contact between Zechariah and Jesus, the present study addresses the same question, but this time with reference to the evangelists. Evans's concise investigation considers ten Markan passages relevant to the passion event: 8.31–9.8 (Zech. 3–4); 11.1-11 (Zech. 9.9); 11.15-18 (Zech. 14.20-21); 11.1, 23; chs. 11–12 (Zech. 4. 14); 13.3-4, 8, 14, 27, 32 (Zech. 14.5; 2.6; 14.6-7); 14.24 (Zech. 9.11); 14.25 (Zech. 14.9); 14.26-31 (Zech. 13.7); 14.28 (Zech. 14.4). Evans's treatment of Zechariah in these passages draws from allusions to the passages rather than from direct quotations, but Evans qualifies his findings by recognizing the difficulties associated with substantiating Old Testament allusions. While tracing Mark's use of Zechariah is undoubtedly a 'complicated' and 'frustrating' task, Evans concludes that several scriptural matrixes drawing from Zechariah probably originated in Jesus' teaching, but were edited and expanded by the post-Easter community and still further by the Evangelists (p. 79)—evidenced especially through comparison between Mark and Matthew.

Thomas Hatina investigates 'Embedded Scripture Texts and the Plurality of Meaning' using 'The Announcement of the "Voice from Heaven" in Mark 1.11 as a Case Study' (pp. 81-99). He suggests that the traditional project of seeking to find 'the echo' or 'the allusion' in a passage—always tracing embedded texts back to a single textual tradition—is misguided and reductionistic. In light of the oral and literary dimensions of ancient texts, particular passages may have evoked a whole range of early tradition in the social memory of the audience,

whether intended by the author or not (pp. 82-83). Hatina illustrates his point compellingly by demonstrating the legitimacy of an allusion in Mk 1.11 to three independent textual traditions: Isa. 42.1 (pp. 85-88), Gen. 22.2 (pp. 88-93) and Ps. 2.7 (pp. 93-98). This article represents an innovative corrective to modern scholarship's emphasis on what might be called 'monosemous intertextuality'. Hatina's point is well taken.

The need for a more thorough literary investigation of the Exodus material in Mark is recognized by Larry Perkins. His essay, 'Kingdom, Messianic Authority and the Reconstructing of the God's People—Tracing the Function of Exodus Material in Mark's Narrative' (pp. 100-15), attempts to situate Exodus material within the larger agenda of the discourse, going beyond previous attempts to discover how 'a particular Exodus quote, allusion or motif functions in one limited context of Mark's narrative' (pp. 100-101). Perkins concludes that Exodus material is employed in the discourse in order to 'compare and contrast' Israel's history with the new work initiated by God in Jesus (p. 115). Like Bock, Perkins fails to make his criteria for identifying allusions and quotations explicit. Although the essay is well-written, it lacks structural divisions, which makes it difficult for those consulting the essay to navigate quickly through its contents.

Stanley Porter puts forward an important essay which begins to fill a void in modern investigations of the use of the Old Testament in the New: the function of citation in Greco-Roman literature. Specifically, he examines 'The Use of Authoritative Citations in Mark's Gospel and Ancient Biography' using 'A Study of *P.Oxy. 1176*' as a test case (pp. 116-30). Porter begins by discussing ancient biography as a literary genre and its relation to Mark and the other Gospels (pp. 117-20). He notes that 'Biography was ideally suited for promoting the Caesar, so it should not be surprising that in the hands of early Christians it was ideally suited for promoting Jesus Christ instead of Caesar, as a form of counter narrative' (p. 120). The function of citations in ancient biography for establishing the 'verisimilitude or veracity of an account' (p. 120) is briefly considered before moving on to an extended analysis of the use of citations in *P.Oxy. 1176*, a fragmentary biographical papyrus of Euripides by Satyrus. One of the major differences between the biography of Jesus by Mark and that of Euripides by Satyrus is the dialogical structure of the latter. Nevertheless, significant similarities are noted in the citation techniques employed in the two narratives: both cite a wide range of authors (named and unnamed; known and

unknown), both often use citations to support the main character and both record citations used by supporters and opponents.

Mark's problematic phraseology in describing the timing of the resurrection is considered by Mark Proctor in light of Hos. 6.2. The title of Proctor's essay is "'After Three Days He Will Rise': The (Dis)Appropriation of Hosea 6.2 in Markan Passion Predictions' (pp. 131-50). Mark predicts on multiple occasions that Jesus will rise *after* three days or on the fourth day (μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας). Why does Mark differ from the standard tradition represented in the other Gospels, which placed the resurrection on the third day? Proctor claims that Mark's theological agenda led him to misapply Hos. 6.4 to enable 'his readers to understand the passion predications as climaxing with the all-too-familiar affirmation of Jesus' resurrection "on the third day"' (p. 149). Proctor concludes by seeking support for his proposal from William James's pragmatic epistemology (pp. 149-50). An appeal to explanatory power, however, would probably have offered a more convincing framework.

Tom Shepherd enters well-trodden territory in his discussion of the extent of the Markan prologue. He asks the standard questions: What is its extent and function, and how should the citation in Mk 1.2 be understood, especially in relation to 1.1? Shepherd attempts to answer these questions through a narrative analysis of the prologue, structuring his analysis according to setting, character, action/plot, temporal, and narrator/(implied)reader categories. He argues that at the heart of the prologue is the theme of 'Jesus displayed in parallel and in contrast to John the Baptist. He is Christ, Lord, the strong one, son' (p. 166). This essay represents an important contribution to a discussion that typically has been governed by the subjective hunches of various authors regarding the thematic/theological flow of the passage. Hatina utilized linguistic principles tentatively to analyze this passage in his *In Search of a Context* (SSEJC; LNTS; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), but not much else beyond this has been put forward that attempts to ground the discussion in the formal features of the text. Shepherd is to be commended for redirecting scholarly attention to the text itself and for introducing a potentially useful set of functionally-based descriptive categories.

The final essay is by Jesper Svartvik: 'The Markan Interpretation of the Pentateuchal Food Laws' (pp. 169-81). Svartvik contends that we are currently at an impasse and that in order for scholarship to reach 'higher levels of insight', a more holistic approach to the use of Scripture in the New Testament must be adopted (p. 169). Svartvik

suggests six programmatic agenda items (three related to Mark and three related to the Hebrew Bible) that are designed to aid scholarship in this task: (1) Mark should be read as narrative; (2) the Markan *Wirkungsgeschichte* must be considered; (3) early Christian texts must not be isolated from contemporary Judaism; (4) more emphasis should be placed on the Psalms and the Pentateuch; (5) a text-interpreting community of scholars should be fostered; (6) not only quotations, but foundations should be considered (i.e. themes and motifs should be treated, not just direct citations). Besides perhaps points (1) and (4), these concerns are very traditional and are widely implemented in biblical (and even Markan) scholarship. Further, (1) is greatly increasing in recent discussion and, while the Psalms may have suffered some neglect, the study of Pentateuchal emphases is far from absent. Several studies have shown that Mark employed the Exodus tradition. (For a recent treatment, see W.M. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994]). Perhaps Svartvik intends to say that other parts of the Torah should be emphasized as well. Point (3) especially strikes me as strange since the Jewish background for the New Testament's use of the Old Testament has probably dominated recent discussion more than any other issue, and there is no lack of it in Markan studies. In fact, what seems to be needed is not more studies in first-century Jewish exegesis and custom, but greater emphasis upon the Greco-Roman use of cited material. So perhaps Svartvik's agenda items are more accurately understood (and intended) as admonitions to biblical scholars to continue many of the trends that are currently being pursued.

The first volume of *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels* is an excellent, much-needed contribution to biblical scholarship. The majority of the essays are characterized by a literary-critical orientation. This is its strongest point. The editor assembles an important collection of progressive essays that illustrate the value that literary sensitivities bring to contemporary discussion of the New Testament's use of the Old. The treatments of ancient genres, character development, irony, plot structure and multiple layers of meaning in this volume all demonstrate how modern literary methods can be brought to bear on biblical texts in a way that significantly illumines the strategies of Scripture in narrative discourse. The few more traditional essays, by contrast, are reminiscent of the kind of work that has pervaded the discussion for the last 30 years. This does not minimize their

importance or impact, however. Each essay in this volume makes an important contribution to the present state of the question revolving around Mark's use of the Old Testament. Scholars will eagerly anticipate the release of subsequent volumes.

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