

Lorne R. Zelyck, *John among the Other Gospels. The Reception of the Fourth Gospel in the Extra-Canonical Gospels* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II/347; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013). Pp. 262. € 69. ISBN 978-3-16-152399-1

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The monograph is a revised version of the Ph.D. dissertation written under the supervision of Simon Gathercole. The author tries to resolve an interesting problem concerning the Gospel of John, which was present in the early Christian literature (Zelyck includes sources dated up to the 3rd century). The problem can be encapsulated in the following question: Did the authors of the other gospels betray any knowledge of the Gospel of John and in which way they utilize this Gospel?

Before carrying out a lexical analysis of specific texts that show the influence of the Fourth Gospel (FG), the author clearly presents his methodology. To avoid either a maximalist or a minimalist approach, Zelyck has decided to apply a method, which he describes as “realistic”, and utilized the following criteria to establish the investigated influence: 1) the presence of common terminology (parallels, overlaps and paraphrases); 2) the presence of terminology which is distinctive to the FG; 3) cumulative evidence; 4) contextual similarities; 5) purposeful alternation of the FG; and the final one: 6) the criterion of the traditional interpretation.

The initial criteria are self-evident and therefore do not require much comment. There are, however, a few further ones which need a short explanation. The first of them seems to be the criterion of cumulative evidence. It is applicable, when “the common terminology is imprecise, but it has already been argued that the extra-canonical gospel was influenced by the FG, this would increase the probability of influence from the FG” (p. 18). The second one, the criterion of purposeful alternation, is useful, when it can be proved that the author altered the passage from the FG according to his own theological concept. The final criterion which is introduced by this study, the criterion of traditional interpretation, refers to cases when the extra-canonical gospel seems to interpret passages from the Gospel of John similarly to other early Christian authors.

Although the author selects six different criteria, only the first one – comparison of verbal similarities – is decisive. On this basis the author differentiates between three different levels of influence: probable, plausible and possible. One can speak about probable influence in case of significant verbal parallels between the texts, about plausible influence when there is a significant verbal overlap; and about possible influence when the particular text seems to paraphrase the FG. Criteria 2-6 are subsidiary in their nature, the case for any influence can only be strengthened by them.

The analysis undertaken by the author enabled him to draw some interesting conclusions. Zelyck demonstrated that, based on the extant evidence, the Gospel of John had the greatest impact on the Gospel of the Saviour and on the Egerton Gospel. In the first of the documents one can find nine instances of probable influence and six of plausible influence. In the next document there are four instances of probable influence, and five of plausible influence. This is the work with the highest concentration of parallels (taking into account its length). The author also indicates nine other writings influenced by the FG: the Gospel of Philip, the Sophia of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, the Dialog of the Saviour, the Gospel of Thomas the Contender, the Gospel of Judas and Papyrus Oxyrynchus 840.

There are two aspects of this book which are really valuable. Both are related to setting the issue in a broader context of the early Christian literature. The first one is the introduction of the criterion of traditional interpretation itself, and the second one is pointing out theological factors, which may account for the differences between the parallels. On the basis of the criterion of traditional interpretation, Zelyck was able to explain differently the pairing of John 5:39 and 5:45 in the Egerton Gospel, not just by referring to a third source which made this omission (Daniel's proposal), but by arguing that this juxtaposition can be found in the writings of ancient authors, who are explicitly dependent on the FG (like Origen, Irenaeus and Cyprian) which makes it probable that the Egerton Gospel represents the traditional interpretation of the FG itself.

The other interesting aspect of this book pertains to the author indication on how different passages were reworked from different theological points of view (especially when the passages are not so common). For instance, the author argues that the Gospel of the Saviour was influenced by John 19:34. This verse is about piercing the crucified Jesus and sounds in the FG: "Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out" (NRS). In the Gospel of the Saviour one can find the following: "I will be [pierced] with a spear [in my] side". The author of the gospel omits the mention about "water and blood". Zelyck explains that this omission is meant to avoid the depiction of the Saviour as really suffering. A similar omission can be

found in *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (62.2) and in Ephrem's *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron* (21.12).

When it comes to the way in which the material from the FG may have been transferred to the apocryphal sources, Zelyck (similarly to his supervisor) opts for the most economic solution – he avoids citing hypothetical sources, since these theories cannot be verified and “simply undermine the probability that one work influenced the other” (p. 19). He also argues that the lack of quotation formulas and some changes among the parallels are absolutely acceptable in that period of time and can potentially indicate the influence.

As a whole this book is a detailed investigation based on the extant evidence and therefore an interesting reading for anyone concerned with the development of early Christianity(ies) and the interrelation between their different sources.