CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

INTERTEXTUALITY AND REDAKTIONSGESCHICHTE

In a recent article on the Gospel of Mark and Redaktionsgeschichte (hence RG) it was correctly observed that in spite of new approaches in Marcan research during recent times, RG has dominated this research for the last thirty years and still does so in some circles (cf. Black 1988:19–39). This observation holds true of Gospel research in general in spite of the awareness of manifold uncertainties concerning the theory and practice of RG and the fact that in some circles it is argued that a paradigm shift is taking place in New Testament scholarship calling into question the assumptions on which RG, for example, is based (see Martin 1987:370–385 and also Vorster 1988d:31–48). In such a situation it seems appropriate to reconsider the basic assumptions of such a method of interpretation and to investigate the appropriateness of current views in the light of other methodologies and theories dealing with the same problems. Since intertextuality is a modern theory about relationships between texts and RG has to do with the relationship between texts, the assumptions of RG should be tested in the light of current views on text relationships. It is the purpose of this article to compare the agreements and differences between RG and intertextuality in order to point out the possibilities which an intertextual approach to the relationship of texts and fragments of texts in the New Testament offers. The term intertextuality will be reserved in this essay for the modern concept of intertextual relationships as it will be developed below.

The relationship between early Christian writings, precursor and contemporary ancient writings has been of great interest in the study of the New Testament. Studies on the use of the Old Testament in the New, the use of sources, and literary dependence between documents of the New Testament abound. This illustrates the great importance scholars attach to the existing or supposed relationships between texts in the writings of the New Testament.

Very few of these studies focus on the function of traces of anterior texts in later texts. And normally there is little awareness of the importance of the study of textual relationship with regard to the
production and reception of these writings. Scholars are mostly interested in the study of sources and their influences in the focused texts. Such studies furthermore tend to focus upon agreements and differences between texts in order to prove that sources were in fact used and to demonstrate the originality of users of other texts or their conservativeness in the transmission of tradition. Developments in this regard which have taken place in literary circles urge us to consider the possibilities which these developments offer the New Testament scholar in the study of intertextual relationships. The shift in focus from author-oriented to text—and reader-oriented study of New Testament texts simply compels us to look at matters such as intertextual relationships afresh. In addition there also seems to be a great difference between perceptions which focus on the growth of texts and those which attend to the making and reception of texts. I will attempt to address some of the implications involved by focusing on RG as a methodological strategy to address the relationship between texts and on intertextuality as a modern theory concerning text relationships. In the first part of the essay I will develop the main assumptions underlying the theory and practice of RG with regard to text relationships. Then I will pay attention to the phenomenon of intertextuality and lastly I will take Mark 13 as an example of a complicated text in order to demonstrate the differences and agreements between redaktionsgeschichtlich and intertextual approaches to this text with regard to production and reception.

The thesis I wish to propose in this essay is that the literary notion of intertextuality can be fruitfully applied in the study of the production and reception of New Testament writings with regard to the relationship between these texts and texts or fragments of texts produced prior to or after the New Testament writings were written.

1. Redaktionsgeschichte

RG is concerned with the composition of texts. The redactors of the individual Gospels are regarded as persons concerned ‘. . . with the composition of new material and the arrangements of redacted or freshly created material into new units and patterns, as well as with the redaction of existing material’ (Perrin 1970:1; see also Rohde 1966:1–22). Practitioners of RG are therefore interested in the activities of the redactors of texts, who are moreover regarded as the-