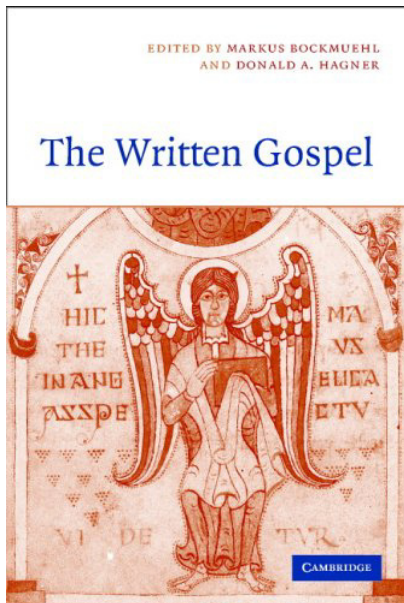


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**Bockmuehl, Markus, and Donald A. Hagner, eds.**

*The Written Gospel*

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David C. Sim  
Australian Catholic University  
Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia

This collection of essays was compiled in honor of Graham N. Stanton, Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, in celebration of his sixty-fifth birthday. Stanton's distinguished career has largely but not exclusively concentrated on Jesus and/or the Gospels, and he is rightly regarded as one of the foremost specialists in the Gospel of Matthew. The essays in this volume reflect Stanton's interest in and contribution to the study of the Gospels and their underlying traditions.

Following a short introduction by the editors, the volume falls into three distinct sections. The first of these, "Before Writing," comprises four essays and deals with different aspects of the pre-Gospel traditions. The initial contribution is by William Horbury and is entitled "'Gospel' in Herodian Judaea." From a wide-ranging review of the relevant texts and traditions, Horbury argues that this concept (and term) has its roots in the Jewish scriptures and possessed in the time of Jesus a range of meaning influenced by everyday life, the ruler cult, biblical interpretation, and Jewish hymnody. Klyne Snodgrass next examines "The Gospel of Jesus." While not daring to attempt to provide a full-scale discussion of this complex theme, Snodgrass argues that the message of Jesus can be divided into four major categories: celebration, compassion, Israel, and kingdom. The third essay in this section is "Q<sup>1</sup> as Oral Tradition," by James D. G. Dunn. Here Dunn

challenges the claim of John Kloppenborg that the initial stratum of Q was compiled as a document and maintains, to the contrary, that this sapiential material bears all the hallmarks of a living and developing oral tradition. The final contribution is by Martin Hengel: "Eye-Witness Memory and the Writing of the Gospels: Form Criticism, Community Tradition and the Authority of the Authors." In this offering Hengel launches a staunch attack against the principles of earlier form criticism and contends that the Synoptic Gospel witnesses (and Mark in particular), although clearly not writing straightforward history were nonetheless in possession of much historical information from both eye-witness testimony and the careful transmission of the Jesus tradition.

The second distinct part of the volume, "Writing the Four Gospels," comprises six essays. Richard Burridge begins with a contribution entitled "Who Writes, Why, and for Whom?" In this essay Burridge continues to support the view, initially championed by Richard Bauckham, that the canonical Gospels were not written for individual Gospel communities. Earlier Burridge and Bauckham had argued for a very broad readership for all the Gospels, but in a revision of this view the former now contends that certainly Matthew and Luke were written exclusively for particular types of Christians. The following four essays are devoted to each of the four Gospels. In "How Matthew Writes," Richard Beaton examines Matthew's use of Mark and concludes, on the basis of the Evangelist's focus on certain themes, that he wrote not merely to expand his source but to compose an entirely new Gospel. Craig R. Evans contributes "How Mark Writes," in which he begins with the Evangelist's careless use of *gar* clauses, then moves on to Mark's employment of the "sandwich" technique in certain sections of the narrative, and concludes with the proposal that the whole Gospel may well conform to this particular Markan motif. "How Luke Writes" is presented by David P. Moessner, who emphasizes that Luke is distinctive among the Gospels because it is connected inextricably to the Acts of the Apostles. After analyzing a number of important themes in Luke-Acts, Moessner suggests that the purpose of these texts is to demonstrate the consistent plan of God through the history of Israel to the appearance of the Messiah and then in the time of the church. In "How John Writes," Judith Lieu discusses a number of important themes, John as a "spiritual" Gospel, narrative and community-history readings, and the relationship between this Gospel and the Synoptics. The final contribution in the second section, Morna D. Hooker's "Beginnings and Endings," examines the beginnings and conclusions of the four Gospels, arguing that at the beginning each Evangelist provides important information about Jesus and the divine plan that is essential for understanding the story that follows, while they conclude with open endings that challenge the reader to continue the story for themselves.

The third major section is entitled "After Writing" and consists of five chapters. In his essay "The Four among Jews," James Carleton Paget investigates whether non-Christian

Jews possessed copies of the Gospels and therefore responded to Christian claims contained in these documents. Following a comprehensive review of the evidence, Paget concludes that there is some evidence for Jews having access to at least some of the Gospels, although which text(s) and in which language is not clear. Loveday Alexander offers "The Four among Pagans," in which she notes that in the late second century Celsus, a Platonist philosopher and critic of Christianity, was familiar with at least the Gospel of Matthew and responded to its claims, while later pagan opponents carried on this tradition. The next essay is Christopher Tuckett's "Forty Other Gospels." In this contribution Tuckett examines the great diversity in genre and content of other ancient Gospels and explores their relationship with their canonical counterparts. In "The One, the Four, and the Many," Ronald A. Piper investigates the early church's attempts to create a single Gospel tradition, either through the choice of a single Gospel or through the creation of the Diatessaron, before it eventually opted for the fourfold canonical Gospels. The final contribution in this section is "The Making of Gospel Commentaries," by Markus Bockmuehl. Bockmuehl begins with the tradition of writing commentaries in the Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions, then proceeds to a summary of the Gospel commentary tradition in the Christian church.

Following the final essay is an appendix that provides a list in chronological order of the publications of Graham Stanton. The volume concludes with a comprehensive bibliography and indices of ancient sources and modern authors.

This is, by any measure, an important and impressive collection of studies. In many edited volumes the quality of the contributions can be uneven, but this is not the case in this instance. The contributors are leading scholars in their designated subjects, and their essays are up-to-date and authoritative. There is, in short, much to be gleaned from quality of the essays and the diversity of topics they cover. For those interested in the Gospels, their prehistory, and their reception history, this is an essential volume. It is a fitting tribute to a fine scholar who has made these areas of New Testament research very much his own.