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Markus Mülke. *Der Autor und sein Text: Die Verfälschung des Originals im Urteil antiker Autoren*. Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 93. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008. Pp. 419. ISBN 978-3-11-020250-2

This dissertation was written in the Department of History and Philosophy at the University of Münster. Although it is not the work of a theologian, it is in many respects also relevant for several areas of biblical studies.

According to M., ancient texts were falsified by transpositions, interpolations, deletions, and the alteration of the original wording. He discusses numerous statements by ancient authors about the (deliberate) falsification of literary works. In five chapters he deals with (A) the means by which ancient authors protected their work, (B) their attitude toward works in progress, (C) falsification in epitomes and florilegia, (D) the role of the translator as falsifier or new author, and (E) comprehensive recensions of complete works. Four appendices treat additional topics such as Rev 22:18-19, complaints about incorrect manuscripts, the criticism of literary works before their publication, and Jerome's remarks about the *ad sensum*-translation.

Ancient authors enjoined their readers to copy their texts faithfully and not to alter the wording of their books. The conviction that the content and wording of an independent and original piece of work must not be altered was already prevalent among ancient authors. M. is not sure if Christian authors and readers had a higher respect for the original wording of biblical or exegetical texts than the average pagan reader had for juridical or philosophical texts. But the supposition which a large part of the secondary literature makes - that the ancients did not have the same feelings of respect towards the written word as we moderns do - is certainly untenable. According to M., it is also wrong to assume that the ancients saw their books as "works in progress" and regarded it as legitimate if others interpolated or altered them. As M. demonstrates from the available sources texts, interpolators were regarded as deceivers and forgers (11-82).

This conclusion is not disproved by the fact that ancient authors were known to publicly request that others assess and improve their texts, since this kind of feedback and criticism was usually obtained before the publication of a book. Even if the preface invited the dedicatee to comment on the book's style and content and to make suggestions for improvement, the author's intention was not that the dedicatee should alter his text on his own authority. Rather, the normal procedure was that the author himself would revise his text in light of the comments of his friends. Subsequently he would publish it together with a preface that, in order to honor the dedicatee before his readers, included the now obsolete request for criticism. Ancient books were only regarded as "works in progress" as long as they had not yet been published. After the author's official publication of his work unauthorized revisions by others were considered illegitimate (83-94).

Epitomes and florilegia were both rather popular genres of ancient literature because they saved their audience from the task of reading voluminous works. Yet, these abbreviated texts were often met with suspicion and contempt. It was regularly called into question whether the wording and the content of the original work had been represented correctly. In order to protect their intellectual property, authors such as Galen of Pergamum decided to epitomize their books by themselves rather than leaving this exercise to others (95-108).

In ancient literature the boundary between a close translation and a very free adaption of a source text was often fuzzy. Some translators saw themselves as creative authors and took great liberties with the original works. It was understood that the producer of a very free translation could himself be considered an author. Consequently, literarily ambitious

translations often displayed not only the author's name, but also the name of the translator. This led to further discussions as to whether it was adequate to omit the author's name and to mention only the name of the translator. In some cases this did indeed happen. But critical readers classified such a procedure as literary theft. A number of ancient Christian translators such as Rufinus added new material and deleted passages they considered heterodox. Sometimes they admitted this in their prefaces. Still, the observation that falsifying translations were not uncommon in ancient literature does not, in itself, imply that audiences accepted such a procedure without objection. At the same time, literal translations were not unknown and in some contexts highly regarded. This is particularly true for biblical texts that were presumed to be holy and inspired. Regrettably, M.'s long chapter on ancient translations and translation theory does not have a concluding summary (109-201).

Some ancient texts were distributed in different recensions that departed considerably from each other. Whereas some of these recensions were the work of the authors themselves, others were produced after their authors' death. Philological recensions became necessary in order to carefully reconstruct the original wording of a severely corrupted text and often presented alternative readings in the margins. Other editors did not follow any philological guidelines but produced gravely distorted versions of a text without communicating to their readers that they were presenting them with a heavily revised text. Such recensions that obviously distorted an author's original text were severely criticized. We should not assume that in the ancient world it was considered legitimate to annotate, enlarge, and update medical and technical texts. Adulterated text recensions were not regarded as the products of innocent minds. Even church fathers, who freely corrected the books of theological opponents (and saw this as a pious work), were well aware that they were tampering with the intellectual property of others and did not tolerate similar corrections by others to their own books. There are no indications of a limited awareness of literary property in any period of Greek and Latin literature (202-260).

M. quotes the relevant statements by ancient authors in their original languages Greek and mostly Latin. For a number of selected proof texts he offers a German translation in a separate paragraph at the end of his book. M.'s extensive bibliography appears to include most of the secondary literature that has been published on his topic so far.

This monograph may be of interest for textual critics, particularly when they are dealing with the longer ending of Mark, the Pericope Adulterae, or the Western text of Acts. But it also contains useful information for the cognate study of ancient and New Testament pseudepigraphy since the ancient statements adduced by M. confirm the assumption that in ancient literature no kind of falsification of texts was regarded as an innocent or legitimate literary device.

Armin D. Baum
Freie Theologische Hochschule Giessen (Germany)