Cautions against the use of the term *midrash*:

> Following the application of the term to the Gospels by John Drury and Michael Goulder in the 1970s, the following decade saw a spate of studies attempt to understand the Gospel of Mark as a sort of 'midrash'.[128] J. Duncan M. Derrett proposed the Gospel is a 'gigantic midrash on scripture'.[129] The whole Gospel is framed by its use of Lamentations, Canticles and 1 Samuel, whilst Mark 1-12 parallels Exodus, Numbers and Joshua.[130] Derrett's methodology seems to consist of little more than the call-and-response, 'Can that also be found in Lamentations? Indeed it can.'[131] This ad hoc approach leads to more than a few confusing claims, such as that John the Baptist is both Balaam and an Egyptian whilst the Gerasene demoniac is Amalek, or that the Transfiguration is 'an attempt to link the dynamic interpretation of Lamentations with the Hexateuchal theme of the conquest of the Land'.[132] Derrett's eccentric approach is continued in Dale and Patricia Miller's study, which argues the Gospel is 'essentially midrashic', so that every single pericope can be traced back to a 'midrashic source'.[133] Thus Mark composed a 'life-of-Jesus narrative' out of a 'mass of details from the Jewish sacred literature'.[134] (Vette 2022, 23)
>
> Common to all these studies is their uncritical use of the term midrash.[137] The Gospel of Mark bears scant resemblance to any text that can be confidently identified as 'midrash', a contested term usually reserved for Rabbinic exegesis in the form of lemmata followed by commentary like the Genesis Rabbah and the Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, or homiletical discourses like the Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer.[138] What these scholars mean by 'midrash', however, appears to be little more than a creative use of scriptural material.[139]
>
> 137. See Philip Alexander's influential critique of Goulder, 'Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament', ZNW 74 (1983): 237—46; Alexander, 'Midrash and the Gospels', in *Synoptic Studies: The Ampleforth Conferences of 1982 and 1983,* ed. Christopher M. Tuckett, JSNTSup 7 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 1-18.
>
> 138. On the contested nature of the term in recent scholarship, see Carol Bakhos, 'Method(ological) Matters in the Study of Midrash', in *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash*, ed. Carol Bakhos, JSJSup 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 161-88. On distinctive forms of Rabbinic midrash, see Günter Stemberger, *Midrasch: Vom Umgang der Rabbinen mit der Bibel. Einführung - Texte - Erläuterungen* (Munich: Beck, 2002), 22-3.
>
> 139. This criticism may also apply to the more recent article by Robert M. Price, 'New Testament Narrative as Old Testament Midrash', in *Encyclopedia ofMidrash: Biblical Interpretation in Formative Judaism*, ed. Jacob Neusner, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 534-74.
>
> (Vette 2022, 24)

A more restrained 'midrashic' approach is found in Wolfgang Roth's *Hebrew Gospel*.[140] For Roth, the Gospel of Mark follows the 'scriptural model' of 1 Kings 17—2 Kings 13.[141] . . .

Mark used incidents from the Elijah-Elisha cycle to compose episodes in the Gospel. Roth wonders whether this should be compared to haggadic midrash or the Greco-Roman practice of literary imitation, ultimately settling for a poetic classification of the Gospel as 'patterned storytelling' based on 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 13.[146] But by invoking the *imitatio* of Roman writers,

> Roth introduces the third and most illuminating compositional approach to the use of the Jewish scriptures in the Gospel. . . .
>
> Building on the work of his supervisor Thomas Brodie, Adam Winn argues that Mark modelled their Gospel on the Jewish scriptures using the Greco-Roman practice of *mimesis* or *imitatio*.[147] Just as Virgil used the Homeric corpus when composing the Aeneid, so Mark used the Elijah-Elisha cycle of 1 and 2 Kings to compose episodes in his life of Jesus.[148] 'The methods of imitation and adaption used by Virgil in his composition of the Aeneid existed and were known in the ancient world at the time of Mark's composition', so '[Mark] likely would have been aware of the method of Virgilian imitation that is found in it'.[149] (Vette 2022, 24–25)
>
> . . . the nature and function of midrash is often misunderstood by New Testament scholars . . . . I suspect the reason for this misunderstanding is rather simple: New Testament scholars have had insufficient exposure to midrash itself . . . . Their knowledge is largely secondhand, being derived from the general discussions in the handbooks and introductions. (Alexander 1984, 1)
>
> Certain New Testament scholars who believe that the infancy narratives in Luke are loosely modelled on Old Testament stories such as the birth of Samuel, apparently want to call such free adaptation of Bible midrash.[11] I am convinced they are mistaken, for in so doing they seem to be denying the tightly controlled and closely argued character of midrash. Some imaginative borrowings from Old Testament may, perhaps, be found in certain folkloristic aggadot, but it gets us nowhere to label this phenomenon 'midrash'.[12] (Alexander 1984, 10–11)

Philip Alexander's was directing his criticism primarily at Michael Goulder. Goulder responded in his next book by withdrawing the term "midrash":

> The other important modification is that Goulder drops the term 'midrash' under fire from Philip Alexander who argues convincingly that the term should be reserved for a particular genre of rabbinic literature of the form biblical lemma + commentary.5 Goulder abstains from using the word because 'he has no wish to offend purists' (LNP, p. 128), but he argues that the technique of embroidering sacred texts was indeed widespread, 'and that it should be allowed as a possible method of procedure for Luke also' (LNP, p. 128). (Goodacre 1996, 21)
>
> What name is to be given to this technique of embroidering? The Chronicler twice speaks of his sources with the word midrash: 'the midrash of the prophet Iddo' (2 Chron. 13.22), and 'the midrash of the book of kings' (2 Chron. 24.27). I used this word in the title of my Midrash and Lection in Matthew, and it has been employed by others in recent years. But Philip Alexander has observed correctly that this is not the usage of the rabbis;[25] and having no wish to offend purists, I have abstained from using the word in the present book. But the practice of embroidery is not disputed by him for contemporary Judaism; and it should be allowed as a possible method of procedure for Luke also. (Goulder 1989, 127f)

> Let us first get the use of the word “midrash” straight. “Midrash” is used for related yet different phenonema. (Teugels 2021, 207)

> The Epistle to the Hebrews has been understood as a “Jesus midrash”, but this is set out as an explicit argument; it is not in the form of gospel narratives based on OT passages:

> Elke Tönges is so struck by midrashic elements in Hebrews that she understands the entire homily to be a “Jesus Midrash.”[14] She lists seventeen authors who have identified entire chapters of the sermon or parts of chapters as forms of midrash. Collectively these authors have found midrash in almost every chapter of Hebrews save chapters 8 and 13 (Heb 1:1–2:18; 3:1–6; 3:7–12; 3:16–19; 4:1–11; 5:1–7:28; 9:1–28; 10:1–39; 11:8–19; 12:1–29). One distinction she draws, however, is that although the author of Hebrews employs a Jewish method of scriptural interpretation, his midrashic exposition distinguishes itself from Jewish midrash because it is christological.[15] Tönges acknowledges that the biggest obstacles to her hypothesis are the lack of documentary evidence to support this kind of midrash within a synagogue worship service, and the lack of conformity of Hebrews to the later midrashic form of a homily. Consequently, her conclusion is tentative. If Hebrews is a Jesus midrash, it may possibly be a version of a homiletic form that originated in a first century Hellenistic-Jewish synagogue service.[16] (Mitchell 2021, 395)

Thomas Brodie was cited above. Some passages from Brodie:

> This reworking of earlier texts is sometimes called 'midrash', but since there is a dispute about the meaning of the term, especially whether its reference to scripture must be explicit (Porton 1 979: 1 1 2; 1 985: 5), it is usually better to avoid it.

> One of the first modern people to sense clearly the vastness and complexity of the way biblical writings depend on each other was Renee Bloch in the 1950s. She used the term midrash, but realized that she was entering new territory, almost completely unexplored: 'domaine encore a peupres completement inexplore' (1957: 1 279). (Brodie 2004, 24)

> The 'rewritten Bible', however, is not a clear category. *Genesis Apocryphon*, for example, is sometimes called a 'haggadic midrash'. But the meaning is much the same as 'rewritten Bible', and the latter term is clearer and is generally less likely to suggest a definite category of literature. (Brodie 2004, 29)

> It may seem, from certain points of view, that the use of the Old Testament in Lk. 7. 11 - 1 7 should be described not as an imitation but rather as a midrash. After all, the use of rather similar techniques in Luke 1 -2 is often described as midrash.[13] Insofar as 'midrash' may be used broadly to refer to any adaptation or updating of the Old Testament, then Lk. 7. 11 - 1 7, like Luke 1-2, as well as being called an imitation, may also be described loosely as a midrash; and there is nothing inherently impossible or incongruous about the combination of Jewish and Hellenistic literary techniques.[14] But insofar as midrash strictly defined involves

explicit citation and interpretation of the Old Testament[15] then neither Luke 1-2 nor Lk. 7 . 11 - 1 7 should be called midrash. It is largely for this reason that R.E. Brown expressed reservations about describing Luke 1-2 as a midrash (Brown 1977: 557-62 [560-61]), and that J.A. Fitzmyer, in the same context, declared the term 'midrash' 'quite unsuitable' (198 1 : 309). Fitzmyer does not ask if Luke 1 -2 should be described technically as an *imitatio*, but it seems significant that he adopts the term 'imitative historiography' and states that 'the infancy narrative was in large part freely composed by Luke on the basis of information obtained from earlier models and in *imitation of some Old Testament motifs'* .[16] While Fitzmyer's categorization and description of Luke 1-2 thus represent something of a turning point, this chapter indicates that that categorization and description may be given greater clarity and precision through an examination of the world of *imitatio*.

The same must be said of Lk. 7. 1 1 - 1 7: though the passage may indeed contain some thing of the searching spirit of midrash, it seems better that it be described as an imitation. (Brodie 2004, 310f)

Luke's use of Hellenistic methods of composition does not exclude his use of Jewish methods as well. The two were often interwoven[18] and Luke's apparent use of a certain form of word-play, for instance, coincides with the Jewish tradition of word-play. But it seems better that Luke's reworking of the Old Testament should not be called a midrash. 'Midrash' is often used only in cases of explicit citation and interpretation; it seems better not to use the term to describe Luke 1 -2 ; [19] and for the same reason it seems better not to use it of Lk. 7.36-50. (Brodie 2004, 337)

Luke's use of the Old Testament does not necessarily mean that his narrative should be described as a midrash. The term 'midrash', of course, is difficult to define, but there seems to be increasing support for the idea that it should be used only of the explicit citation and development of Scripture.[21] Hence, just as R.E. Brown has reservations about applying the term to the infancy narrative (1977: 557-62 [560-6 1]), and as J.A. Fitzmyer, speaking in the same context, declares the term 'quite unsuitable' (1981 : 309), so here too it seems better to avoid the term. Luke's use of unacknowledged sources seems to belong not so much to the techniques of midrash, but to those of Greco-Roman paraphrase and imitation. (Brodie 2004, 399)

Insofar as Luke uses his sources without citing them explicitly, his literary method seems closer to Greco-Roman paraphrase and imitation than to Jewish midrash. (Brodie 2004, 401)

Dennis MacDonald, Ronald Hock, Gregory Riley, Robyn Walsh, Mark Bilby, Thomas Brodie, Michael Kochenash and Margaret Froelich are among the scholars demonstrating gospel narrative intertextuality and imitation with pagan literature – Homer, Euripides, etc. The techniques they discuss are the same as those narratives' use of OT pericopes. The terms used are imitation, emulation and intertextuality.

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