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RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD
BIBLICAL TRADITIONS IN DIALOGUE

EDITED BY
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In this paper I will propose a reading of the gospel of Mark starting from its final pericope Mk 16,1-8. The challenge is not very surprising, since in order to understand Mark's gospel, one has to understand the end and more specifically its relevance for the perspective on the resurrection. I will use a narrative approach of the text and I will emphasize the participative role of the reader in the process of understanding the meaning of the so-called "open ending" of the gospel. In the context of narrative criticism the 'reader' is to be understood as the implied reader. It is, indeed, of this reader that we are thinking in the first place. The implied reader functions as the mirror of the implied author; he is the perfect reader who understands all signals of communication present in the text. It is, however, our conviction that the study of the implied reader as a fictive and ideal reconstruction, is not without interest for the real reader. We thus want to illustrate that through confrontation and dialogue with the hypothetical implied reader, the real reader is able to gain deeper insight on his own relation to the text. And, after all, should the primary function of exegesis not be to clarify the meaning of biblical texts for real readers?

The main reason for this methodological choice is that the text of the gospel is a narrative story. The final meaning of the text does not arise from the history behind the text but from the reading of the story within the text. With regard to the end of Mark's gospel, this means that narrative critics cannot and will not attempt to answer the question as to whether or not the tomb was empty, since they are convinced that this is not the right question to ask if we are to find the deeper meaning of the text. Without denying the importance of historical critical research, we cannot but conclude that from a historical perspective some important questions remain unanswered. Firstly therefore, it now appears that the results of historical research have reached an impasse. And
secondly, although historical investigation rightly creates a distance in time and space between the reader and the text, it does not provide focus on the opposite movement, i.e. the integration of its results in the life of the reader. In looking for the meaning of the text on a narrative level, we are convinced that we are in line with the narrator of Mark’s gospel.

If one has opted for an exegesis which can explain ancient biblical texts to 21st century readers, then narrative criticism goes hand in hand with the kind of hermeneutics required for reading the gospels. Indeed, this approach raises a simple question: “What is the meaning of the story (and not the history)?” I am fully aware that the unavoidable implication of this approach is that it will be impossible to treat other questions, such as those which attempt to address the veracity of the empty tomb story and the bodily resurrection.

1. A NEW MAJORİTY POSITION: MARK 16.8 IS THE ENDING OF THE GOSPEL

Browsing the recent publications on the ending of Mark’s gospel, we notice that the majority of Markan scholars agree to see the original ending of Mark in 16.8. While it might be premature to talk about a consensus, it is certainly true that since the influential contribution of D.H. Juel in 1994 an increasing number of colleagues are pleading for an interpretation of the empty tomb story that is not followed by an apparition story. According to Juel, the canonical version of Mark that should be printed in official Bible editions is the one that ends with verse 8. Since then, on the basis of internal and external textual critical arguments, most exegetes admit that the original and authentic ending of Mark is the shorter one. Only a small number of authors defend the hypothesis of the longer original ending in 16.9-20 or of one of the other longer variants or accept the hypothesis of a lost version. We only mention some recent publications – without mentioning the commentaries on Mark which all argue in favor of the shorter Markan ending: T.K. Heckel (1999), C. Combet-Galland (2001), F. Combet-Galland, L’Évangile de Marc, Leuven, 2006, 435-472; C. Focant, Un silence qui fait parler (Mc 16.8), in A. Deniaux (ed.), New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegetes, Leuven, 2002, 79-96; F. Combet-Galland, L’évangile de Marc et la pierre qu’il a déjà roulée, in F.S. J. Delobel (BETL, 161), Leuven, 2003, 587-597; C. Focant, Un événement étonnant (BETL, 194), Leuven, 2006, 371-381.


In the following notes I explicitly mention those sections referring to textual criticism. Heckel, Vom Evangelium des Markus (n. 2), p. 35: “Das Mk-EV exklusive ursprünglich mit Mk 16,8, genauer nüt des Worten ἐμφανίσθη τάση”.

6. D.H. Juel, A Master of Surprise, Minneapolis, MN, 1994, pp. 107-121 = A Disquieting Silence: The Matter of the Ending, in B.R. Gaventa – P.D. Miller (eds.), The Ending of Mark and End of Gods: Essays in Memory of Donald Harrville Juel, Louisville, KY, 2005, 1-14: “If we agree that the version of the Gospel in the manuscript tradition with the strongest claim to logical priority deserves to be printed in Bibles, it is this version – ending with verse 8 – that will function as canon” (pp. 3-4).


5. K.R. Ivenson, A Further Word on Final Fag (Mark 16:8), in CBQ 68 (2006) 79-94, p. 80: “the current consensus among NT scholars seems to be that 16:8 is the authentic conclusion” (with bibliography).
Aside from the textual critical arguments, which I will not present here, it is above all the narrative approach that has contributed to the accretion of Mark 16:8 as the final verse of the gospel. Compared to reduction criticism — the methodological stage that preceded narrative criticism and that has demonstrated the stylistic coherence between Mark 16:1-8 and the rest of the gospel — narrative readings have emphasized the coherence and unity by pointing to the plot, the characterization or the rhetoric of the gospel. The principle that is playing a major role here runs as follows: if it is possible to integrate Mark 16:1-8, and more specifically the apparent contradiction between the commandment given by the young man in v. 7 ("go and tell ") and the triple negative reaction of the women in v. 8 (fear, flight, silence), within the general perspective of the gospel, there is no need at all for a different ending. If the "emptiness of the silence" in 16:8 can be explained by the preceding gospel story, why would one need to reckon with the "fullness of the apparitions" of 16:9-20 (which moreover is secondary)? Thus, the main criterion for deciding on the shorter ending of Mark is the argument of internal narrative coherence. In what follows we will present three very important indications of narrative coherence between the ending of the gospel and the text that precedes it: the unity of verses 7 and 8, the characterization of the women and the narrator’s perspective on Jesus. Moreover, at the end of each of the three indications we will develop how the narrator applies these narrative characteristics in order to challenge the real reader to participate actively in the construction of meaning.

II. THREE NARRATIVE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE SHORT ENDING IN MARK 16,8

1. The Unity of the Verses 16,7 and 16,8

The quasi consensus about the end of the gospel in v. 8 does not imply a consensus concerning its interpretation. These interpretations could be classified in three general categories. The first group consists of scholars who defend a positive conclusion of the gospel at all costs. They wish to preserve the good news of Mark’s message. At the heart of their exegesis stands the promise by the young man in v. 7. They minimize and tone down the fear and the silence of the women in v. 8. But a thorough analysis of the verbs (ἐξ)αφηδοµένη and ἁγιοθετοµένη does not allow such a limited interpretation and there is nothing in the story to make the reader think that the women’s silence is merely temporary or intended only for those who do not belong to the group of disciples.

The exclusively “positive” interpretations of the fear and the silence, like the one of M. Matjaz (Fürcht und Gotteserfahrung. Die Bedeutung des Furcht motivs für die Christologie des Markus, Würzburg, 1999) who discovers a positive meaning of the theme of fear all over the gospel, have rightly been criticized. In Mk, fear is not an element in the development of faith nor in the progression of the revelation of Jesus’ identity. Schwindt refers in this regard to 4,41; 5,15; 5,36; 6,50; 9,32, but after having considered all references of (ἐξ)αφηδοµένη (7 times) and ἁγιοθετοµένη (11 times), he cannot but conclude that the meaning of those two verbs has a "weithgehend negativ" meaning.

Mk 16,1-8 auf das Mk Ev". The author applies some aspects of narratology to the text, and emphasizes very strongly the role of the reader (pp. 41-48).

19. There are other aspects, like the role of the young man and the role of God.

20. The word ἐπηρεατισµός was used by P. Ketten de to describe this positive approach, because these scholars are looking for a continuation of the story in order to “conclude” it properly. Compare also the analysis of Bourquin, Marc (n. 14), p. 326, and B.K. Blegout, Is the Joke on Us? Mark’s Irony, Mark’s God and Mark’s Ending, in GAVENTA - MILLER (eds.), The Ending of Mark (n. 6), 15-32, pp. 19-20, who mentions D.R. Catchpole, M. Sabín.

21. There are other aspects, like the role of the young man and the role of God.
Since the publication of Sense and Absence (1986) by J. Magnes, it is increasingly accepted that the last verse of Mark be called an open ending (finale ouverte, offener Schluss). This literary technique was not unknown in Antiquity and it can be explained by the double level of communication within the text. On the one hand, there is communication between the characters in the story, the young man and the women. On the other hand, there is communication between the author and the readers with regard to the reception of the text. An open ending offers the opportunity for the reader to continue the story, not in a completely imaginary or fictitious way, but in line with the Markan story and its narrative and stylistic characteristics. It has, for instance, been made clear that the fact that Mark is ending his gospel on a sentence with γάρ is not incompatible with the creation of a proper ending to a story.

A third solution has also been suggested. It contains a combination of both the positive and the negative aspect of the ending of the gospel. The first step consists of ‘liberating’ v. 8 from its isolation and of joining it to v. 7. Thus a reading is created which corresponds to a literary technique used elsewhere in the corpus of the gospel. The sequence of the positive words of the young man (v. 7) followed by the negative reaction of the women (v. 8) is an illustration of a typical Markan scheme. It has been called “(divine) promise – (human) failure”. The scheme occurs several times, most prominently when Jesus’ announcements of the paschal meal are laid against the location of Mark’s ending; against Croy, The Mutilated Ending (n. 20), p. 122, n. 5: “[T]he possibility of ending an entire narrative with the postpositive γάρ no longer troubles scholars the way it once did.””

Focant, Un silence (n. 7), pp. 352-352; Bourquin, Marc (n. 14), pp. 318-321; and many others. Anyway, eddical analysis and Markan style clearly show that the construction cannot be an argument against the shorter ending.


29. See also BOURQUIN, Marc (n. 14), pp. 318-321; and many others. Anyway, eddical analysis and Markan style clearly show that the construction cannot be an argument against the shorter ending.

30. FOCANT, Un silence (n. 7), p. 353: “Ce n’est pas le v. 8 qui constitue à lui seul la finale pertinente, mais bien la juxtaposition des vv. 7 et 8”.

sion and resurrection (8,31; 9,31; 10,32-34: the promises) are not understood by the disciples (8,32-33; 9,32-34; 10,35-41: failure). Each time, these moments of incomprehension lead to a new teaching by Jesus – clearly an indication that failure is not the final stage in the scheme. In fact, instead of a two stage scheme it would be more accurate to speak of a three stage procedure: promise – failure – new teaching. In 16,7b and 16,8, one can find the sequence of the first two stages where the promise (Jesus will proceed you in Galilee) is followed by a failure (the women run away).

I would like to further comment on this pattern, since it could appear that insufficient attention is being paid to the differences between 16,7-8 and the other instances of the scheme. Nevertheless, it is precisely these differences that cause the particularity of the ending of Mark. I would like to mention three of them.

1) The third step is lacking in Mark’s finale. The women simply disappear from the stage and there is no continuation of the dialogue between them and the young man. In the preceding instances Jesus takes the opportunity to teach his disciples. In his teaching he explains in a catechetical parabasis the meaning of the passion and resurrection (8,34-38; 9,35-37; 10,42-45). But after 16,8 no additional explanation is given about (the passion and) the resurrection. It is the end.

2) The context of the promise in v. 7b differs at several points from the one in the preceding promises. This helps the reader to identify the specificity of the use of the scheme “promise – failure” in 16,7-8. While in earlier instances the “promises” were given in the form of a teaching of Jesus on the passion and resurrection, in the words of the young man (16,6-7) further elements can be found that precede the promise: the encouragement not to fear (v. 6a), the recognition of the aim of their visit of the tomb (v. 6b), the announcement of the resurrection that had taken place already (v. 6c), the confirmation of the empty tomb (v. 6d), the commandment to tell the disciples to go to Galilee (v. 7a) and, finally, the repetition of the promise made by Jesus in the past (v. 7b; cf. 14,28). In fact, most of the “promises” that were made in the gospel are now fulfilled in the last pericope: the death on the cross, the empty tomb (†νεκράσκειν; the resurrection θηρέ του μαθητή από το στῆμα); the resurrection of the disciples after the flight of the women. And even if they may hope that everything will happen just as the young man has said it would35, the fact that Mark did not want to mention the succeeding events must have a meaning of its own, a meaning that should be investigated.

3) Another difference relates to the Markan literary pattern. The reaction of the women does not only show their incomprehension of a mystery (as is also the case in the other instances where the promise-failure pattern appears), but also and most of all their disobedience vis-à-vis the commandment that was given. The young man demands that the women undertake some action (θετούσε εστάτες) but they don’t do anything. The scheme “promise – failure” is integrated in a larger pattern of “commandment and fulfillment”. This pattern is repeated more than 40 times in the gospel, but only a few times there is no fulfillment36. The attitude of the women is even more surprising when one considers the fact that the message they hear is entirely positive, because the passion, the “difficult” point par excellence in the previous announcements, is no longer part of the content of the message. The passion belongs to the past.37

Let us suggest some concluding remarks on the unity between verses 7 and 8 by pointing at one consequence of this approach. It is not surpris-

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32. These examples are given by FOCANT, Un silence (n. 7), pp. 352-353.
33. Jesus’ words in Mk 8,31 and 9,31 are introduced by a form of 
34. CUVILLIER, La résurrection (n. 12), p. 107: “Chez Marc, la résurrection de Jésus est clairement proclamée. La parole du jeune homme ne souffre aucune ambiguïté… Pas de moindre doute chez Marc: Jésus est ressuscité”.
35. One often forgets that the disciples have already heard Jesus’ promise (14,28); they do not necessarily need the communication by the women to go to Galilee. The question is left open since nothing is told about their actions after Jesus’ death. The same is true for the other “promises” made by Jesus which reach beyond the story time (other passion and resurrection predictions; Mark 13); see below n. 53.
36. The list can be found in F. NEIRYNCK, Duality in Mark: Contributions to the Study of the Markan Redaction (BETL, 31), Leuven, 1988, category 21. Mark 16,7-8 is the only case in direct discourse that does not follow the general structure of commandment and fulfillment.
37. The perfect tense ἐσταυρωμένον emphasizes the identity between the dead and the risen Jesus.
ing that the recognition of this Markan pattern at the end of the gospel, and especially the lack of the third stage, has contributed to emphasizing the role of the reader in the construction of meaning. I also wonder whether one could not speak of a growing consensus on this point. Nobody in the story ever fully understands the message of the young man. The necessary condition to grasp the meaning is a cooperative reader who wants to explore the possibilities offered by this commandment. Or as Driggers recently wrote: “The future has been refused by characters but not by the Gospel’s hearers” 38. The story demands continuation, but as there is no sequel for and by the characters within the story, only one person is left over to do what the women did not do: the reader.

After such a final, the question ‘What will happen in the life-story of the reader?’ is far more relevant than what happened afterwards in the story of the protagonists of the gospel. ... The epilogue is a prologue that sets the reader to work 39.

Our analysis has also shown what the readers are supposed to do when they finish reading: they should not in the first place try to understand the empty tomb or the resurrection as events of the past, but they should act in the future. They will have to go and look for Jesus, since this is the only “promise” that has not been fulfilled yet. Where is Jesus? The women have remained silent. The readers are therefore the only “disciples” who have heard the young man’s message.

2. The Characterization of the Women

One thing has become clear after the narrative analysis of verses 7 and 8: the pattern of commandment and fulfillment leads us to taking a closer look at the characterization of the women. And indeed, the presentation of the women is the second narrative critical argument to indicate the unity of the final pericope and the rest of the gospel. With regard to the characters, the women provide the link between the crucifixion story and the story of the empty tomb or the resurrection as events of the past, but they should act in the future. They will have to go and look for Jesus, since this is the only “promise” that has not been fulfilled yet. Where is Jesus? The women have remained silent. The readers are therefore the only “disciples” who have heard the young man’s message.

38. DRIGGERS, Following God (n. 20), p. 94. It is not easy to find the origins of this interpretation of the role of the real reader. Driggers refers to M.A. TOLBERT (Sowing the Gospel: Mark’s World in Literary-Historical Perspective, Minneapolis, MN, 1989). Anyway, it is true that this interpretation “or some form of it, has gradually come to dominate the scholarly literature on Mark’s ending” (DRIGGERS, Following God (n. 20), p. 95).

41. THE EMPTY TOMB STORY IN MARK (15,40-41.47) and the story of the empty tomb. Through their presence from the beginning until the end of these last moments of Jesus’ life, they become the protagonists of the epilogue of Mark’s story. This narrative hinge function should not be underestimated. It is thanks to them that the story continues. After having read that the women were present at the moment of the crucifixion (although only ἁδεῖον ρητορεῖον) and at the burial, readers will spontaneously follow them as they want to visit the tomb. They seem to be trustworthy characters, a characterization that is even more supported by the comments of the narrator in 15,41 (in Galilee, follow, serve) 40. As they go through the process of reading the gospel, the readers have learned to have more confidence in the minor characters than in the main characters, especially if, like the women, they are portrayed in a positive and ironic contrast to the disciples. But as soon as the reading of 16,1-8 begins, this spontaneous enthusiasm of the readers will be overshadowed by some doubt about the action undertaken by the women. As the semantic analysis of P. Danove (1996) clearly has shown, starting from the first verse of chapter sixteen on, the readers start to take distance from the women because of their ambiguity. Their motivation to go and visit the tomb “(go and anoint him)” is not the right one, since the body of Jesus had already been anointed “beforehand for his burial” (14,3-9, v. 8). This primary ambiguity will be confirmed and even further developed into a negative presentation in the second part of the pericope (vv. 5c-8). The characterization of the women in the final pericope of Mk provokes a mixture of emotions, expectations and frustrations, both among the women and among the readers, except that the women and the readers react differently as the story advances. The readers and the women have the same information. However, while for the readers this information confirms the good news of resurrection, for the women it becomes a source of fear. In sum, we can say that from the narrator’s point of view, the women went out in search of a dead body, and nowhere in the story is there even the beginning of a positive change in this perspective. Their philosophy is diametrically opposed to what the narrator wants the reader to do 41.

40. The analysis which has inspired most of these authors can be found in P. DANOVE, The Characterization and Narrative Function of the Women at the Tomb (Mark 15,40-41.47; 16,1-8), in Bib 77 (1996) 275-297. See a.o. BOURQUIN, Marc (n. 14), pp. 297-303: the author mentions the elements in the text that turn the women into the protagonists of the story (they have a name; the reader follows their perspective); see G. VAN OYEN, Het slot van Marcus in het licht van de narratieve kritiek. De tekst van Mc. 16, 1-8 teruggebracht bij de lezer [La finale de l’évangile selon Marc à la lumière de la critique narrative: Le texte de Mc. 16,1-8 et le lecteur], in Tijdschrift voor Theologie 43 (2003) 40-51.

41. DANOVE, Characterization (n. 40), p. 393: “the women’s alignments with the dis-
A comparative analysis of the behavior of the women and the actions of the disciples clearly shows that both groups are manifesting a similar attitude. Neither seems to understand the message of the resurrection, be it in the form of a promise (towards the disciples) or in the form of a proclamation (in the case of the women). The characterization of the women does not differ from that of the disciples. Within this context, some scholars rightly refer to Mk 9,9 (by the way, a verse that is not mentioned in Neirynck's list of the promise → failure pattern)\(^4\). After the "transfiguration" on the mountaintop where the disciples have seen the glorified Jesus, they are forbidden to speak about their experience and Jesus explicitly adds a time period for the embargo: "until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead". They respect the interdiction, but they were "questioning what this rising from the dead could mean" (9,10). Thus, although both scenes (9,9-10 and 16,7-8) are situated in a completely different context, the result is very similar: the resurrection remains a topic that is not understood by the characters in the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commandment 9,9: to tell nothing until after the resurrection</th>
<th>Commandment 16,7: the resurrection has taken place, so speak</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response: a positive action; obedient disciples(^4)</td>
<td>Response: no action; disobedient women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result: they do not understand the resurrection</td>
<td>Result: fear, flight, silence</td>
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Nowhere in the gospel do the disciples give the impression that they understand Jesus' teaching about the resurrection. At the end, the women as well are not capable of understanding the message of the resurrection, although they find themselves in the privileged situation of being in the place where they could, as it were, hear and see the resurrection (the stone has been rolled away, the presence of a young man in white, the message they hear).

The characterization of the women and of the disciples is another indication that the reader - and no one else - can and must continue the story. In the gospel of Mark, the women do not function as witnesses for the resurrection. Who else then but the reader will become a witness? Again we can conclude: the reader is the only candidate to prolong the story. This analysis of the characterization leads us automatically towards the third example of coherence between the ending and the rest of the gospel: what is so difficult about the resurrection that nobody in the story is able to understand? What is the core message of the narrator?

3. The Narrator's Point of View on Jesus

We have seen how Mark aims to get his message about the resurrection across through the literary pattern of commandment and fulfillment and through the characterization of the women. Is there anything to add about the perspective of the author? In order to better understand his point of view, one could have a closer look at the way he presents his main character, Jesus, for the last time in the story. Two paradoxical dyads emerge from the text. First, Jesus is both the crucified one and the risen one. Second, he is both the one who is absent and the one who is present by way of promise.

The emphasis on the unity between crucifixion and resurrection in the gospel of Mark is a well-known theme in Markan exegesis\(^47\). The passion is at the heart of the gospel. And the difficulties for the disciples to accept the reality of the passion as part of Jesus' message and fate is a substantial aspect of the so-called messianic secret (see, e.g., 8,27-33). But the emphasis on the passion does not stand on itself. It helps to shine a correct light on the meaning of the resurrection. The resurrection is not a kind of victorious moment that destroys all passion and pain. On the contrary, there is always an inseparable unity between passion and resurrection.

45. It is this particular question that has been developed by CUVILLIER, La résurrection (n. 12), p. 106: "l'évangéliste offre-t-il à son lecteur une autre figure de témoins de la résurrection que celle de personnes agées et blanches?".
46. HARTIN, The role of Women Disciples (n. 42), pp. 98-99: "The disciples had had the privilege of being the initial insiders in the narrative. The male disciples relinquished this position in the women disciples, who in their turn have ultimately relinquished it to the reader. The narrator has shared his omniscience with the reader and in this way the reader is given a wider perception of the whole unity of the narrative. The open ending of the narrative invites the reader into the role of the new insiders".
47. Here one can say that exegesis and theology run together.
The new way of being will not be experienced through a physical encounter as it was before his death. One should rather say that "the deepest sense of the resurrection of Christ appears in the revelatory dimension of his earthly existence"51. The events of the past contribute significantly to understanding this new way of being. But Mark does not provide a clear and ultimate answer about the concrete manifestation of the risen Jesus' presence. Instead of giving an answer he creates a mystery. The end of Mark does not solve the issues the reader has encountered while reading about the disciples' incomprehension and the women's escape. Jesus is still portrayed as before, i.e., as the great unknown who is not recognized by anybody. The disciples and the women have left the scene. Again, the task of searching for meaning lies upon the readers52.

The second paradoxical tension created at the end of the gospel is about the "absent presence" of Jesus. Jesus is absent: "He is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him" (v. 6b). The only way to speak about his presence, would be as a promise: "he proceeds in Galilee, as be told you" (v. 7). This promise is a very strong one: it repeats Jesus' own words (14,28) to which the young man adds καὶ σήμερα εἶναι ὁ θάνατος, as if he would like to insist on the certainty of the promise53. These are the last spoken


52. FRANKEMOÎLE, Theodizee-Problematis? (n. 43), p. 120: "Letztlich kann der Leeren Endes des Markusevangeliums aufgrund des offensichtlichen Widerspruchs von Verkündigungsauftrag in Vers 7 und Verwegerung in 8 wahrnehmen, daß er trotz oder gerade wegen der Auferstehungsbotschaft an der Verschlüsselungstheorie festhält" (with reference to F. Schweizer).

53. Because the readers have experienced that Jesus' promises within the temporal framework of the gospel were fulfilled, they may expect that the promises that go beyond the story will be accomplished as well. Two categories could be mentioned: promises related to the fate of the disciples after Jesus' death and promises about the parousia. See FRANKEMOÎLE, Theodizee-Problematis? (n. 43), p. 122 (Mk 2,20; 9,1; 13,26 and 14,62; 14,9; 14,25; 10,30-40; 13,1-37); DRUGER, Following God (n. 20), pp. 92-93; HECKEL, Vom Evangelium des Markus (n. 2), pp. 52-53 (1,17; 10,9-14,9; 10,26-30; 13,6-23; 13,20; 13,2; 8,38-9,1; 13,24-27; 14,62); and many more authors. – On the function of doublets in Mk for the reading process of the reader, see G. VAN OYEN, Repetitious Style and the Interpretation of the Gospel of Mark, in G. VAN BELLE – M. LABAISN – P. MARCU (eds.), Repetitions and Variations in the Fourth Gospel: Style, Text, Interpretation (BETL, 223), Leuven, 2009, 109-125.
words in the gospel and they remind the reader of the beginning. The gospel opened with the sentence καθὼς γέγραμαι... and ends (or continues) with καθὼς εἶπεν τῷ θάνατι. From chapter one to chapter sixteen Jesus’ identity is the predominant theme throughout. Now a new theme emerges: where is Jesus? Where can Jesus be met? The young man’s words send the reader in two directions: rereading the past (earthly Jesus) and looking ahead to the future. While the first dyad had led the reader to understand the identity of the risen Jesus from his earthly existence (Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified one), the second dyad leads the reader to rethink the temporal and topographic dimension. I agree with those authors who read v. 7 symbolically. Together with “Jesus of Nazareth” (v. 6), the words προφήτης, Γαλατία and διάνοια in v. 7 refer back within the text of the gospel. Jesus can be found if one rereads the gospel. The risen Jesus thus becomes a very concrete presence in the life of the readers: he can be met in the places where words and deeds like his are done and said. But these encounters with the glorious Christ in the life of the readers contain a temporary aspect of incompleteness, because they always have the structure of the pre-Easter meetings in which passion and resurrection are blended. This is very well observed by Schwinn:41

The risen one is no other person but the man from Nazareth. This explanation is confirmed by v. 7 which opens the future in an ironically ambivalent way with elements from the past. The semantic and pragmatic meaning of this last logion are determined by the concepts προφήτης, Γαλατία, διάνοια which are to be interpreted in a symbolic way. It does not suffice to read this verse as a historical reflection of an apparition story. The announcement of the young man that the disciples will see the risen one in Galilee has to be understood as a hermeneutical and parennetical statement for the readers. Thus, the fact that Jesus’ ‘will precede’ is a resumption of his ‘preceding’ in 10,32. In both instances those who ‘follow’ will only fully understand when they keep in mind the meaning of the cross. Along the same lines, the indication ‘towards Galilee’ reminds the reader of what


55. A good description of the tension between the implied reader and the real reader can be found in BLOUNT, Is the Joke on Us? (n. 20), pp. 27-31. He concludes: “Indeed, the flesh-and-blood reader is the only one the angel can count in anyway. The story cannot do anything to the implied reader. He is enslaved to Mark’s narrative. The implied reader is a statue moved only when the narrator moves it. He has no life of his own; he cannot do anything of his own. Not so with the flesh-and-blood reader. With her, we move out of the passive realm into the world of active, knowledgeable possibility. For her, the call to Galilee-like discipleship, while still just as frightening, is possible” (p. 30).
resurrection in Mk is not possible if it is not followed by an appeal to action: "The power of Mark’s Gospel consists, not in the information that it communicates to the reader, but in what it challenges the reader to do."56 This is not a minor additional note, invented by practical theologians or spiritual gurus. This "practical" dimension is an essential part of the text. To Jesus’ promise in Mark 14,27, repeated by the messenger in 16,7, corresponds human responsibility. In this sense, Mark 16,8 is like a "bridge" between the world of the story and the world of the real reader.

This transition from the implied reader to the real reader is embedded in the text of the gospel57. It is indeed the result of the message of the young man: "He has been raised; he is not here... He is going ahead of you to Galilee" and the frustration created by the negative action of the women. But where is Jesus? Where can the real reader find him? If the topos (τόπος) where he was laid before is empty, where is the new place where he can be met? Where is "Galilee"? I would like to call the places of encounters with the risen Christ heterotopias. The term was coined by Michel Foucault who used it for the first time in 1967 in a conference entitled Of Other Spaces (Des espaces autres). The text was published in French in 1984 and, shortly after in English58. This is Foucault’s definition of heterotopia:

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.

I notice that several theologians like Hans-Joachim Sander and Erik Borgman use it59. Sander speaks of the "where-identity" of the God of the Bible (Wo-Identifizierung). According to him, the question "who is God?" may have become less important and less relevant than the question "where is God?"60. This approach is very appropriate to describe the situation of the reader at the end of the gospel of Mark. The question that dominates the gospel from the beginning is "Who is Jesus?". At the end of the gospel this question is answered (albeit in a mysterious way) for the reader. But from now on a new question is on the agenda: where is Jesus? The answer to that question lies in the rereading of the gospel. Jesus with his message of the reign of God can be met in all kinds of heterotopias as they are mentioned in the gospel. These are real events (not "utopias") that go against and turn around dominant culture and institutions that do not create space to put an end to suffering and passion. We mentioned before that the first thing the real reader should do is to reread the gospel. Scholars have rightly noticed that Mark’s text is the road map that leads to the risen Jesus. Élian Cuvillier says that the gospel of Mark is "saturated" with resurrection. Corina Combet-Galland writes that "the whole text of Mark is guided by the understanding of the resurrection"61. It is indeed the text of the gospel that will become the source of heterotopias where one can meet Christ.

This reading back of the theme of the resurrection into the gospel of Mark is more than simply recognizing these verses in the gospel that would anticipate what lies beyond the limits of the story.62 These texts are well known. One may for instance think about the announcements of the passion and resurrection (8,31; 9,31; 10,32-34), the transfiguration...
tion (9.1-9), the recognition of Jesus’ true identity as Son of God by the voice from heaven (1.11; 9.7) or by the demons (1.25; 3.11; 5.9), the references to the parousia (13.1-37). Or one can add these passages that clearly reflect the faith of the early church communities, like Jesus’ walking on the water (6.45-52), the stilling of the storm (4.35-41) or the multiplication of the loaves (6.34-44; 8.1-9). But I think we must think further: it is all of the text of the gospel that contains signposts towards the presence of the risen one. The stories within Mark’s gospel do not only function as anticipations but also as realizations of the presence of Jesus, or at least as models of possible heterotopias in the real world. If someone wants to discover the meaning of resurrection, he has to read how Jesus speaks and acts in the gospel. The open ending opens the door to the stories that precede it. The text of 16.7 δημοσίευσιν ἐλέγχαμεν could easily be continued in 11.18-15 ἃς ἐν τῷ Ιεροσόλυμα ἐλέγχαμεν... When the reader is reading the text of the gospel he is preparing himself to better understand the ending of the gospel, but when he reaches the end he better understands what he has read before. Thus he will clearly see the resurrection motifs in the miracle stories like the raising of Jairus’ daughter (5.41-42) or the epileptic boy (9.26-27) that contain language that makes one think about the resurrection. But these are only examples. The whole gospel is witness to the resurrection, even when there is no explicit resurrection language. As Corina Combet-Galland has written in her typical exegetical-poetical style:

64. In fact, this remains one of the major important contributions made by form criticism: preaching is at the origin of the gospel tradition.

65. There are many good suggestions in the article by Cuvillier, La résurrection (n. 12). Thus, for instance, the reading of Mk 6.14-16 leads him to think that the miracle tradition might contain resurrection language: “Il vaut peut-être alors la peine d’interroger les miracles pour voir si des indices permettent d’accéder...” (pp. 111-112). Cuvillier applies this insight to 1.1: 2.9-12; 3.3 and, more extensively, to 5.41 and 9.26-27: “Il n’est pas question de parler ici d’allusions explicites textuelles,... Ce qui agit au jeune homme annonce peut-être la mort et la résurrection du Fils de Dieu dans cet acte de puissance comme préfiguré de la destinée du théâtre.” Personally, I am not sure if one has to see in those pericopes anticipations of what will happen to Jesus himself later on in the gospel. I would rather see the healing of Jairus’ daughter and the exorcism of the epileptic boy as anticipations of the mystery of resurrection in daily life. See the critical remarks by Poucet (Marc: Un évêque dormant. [n. 6], p. 213) with regard to a reading that considers the healing of Jairus’ daughter “une anticipation symbolique de la résurrection de Jésus, sur base de la présence des verbes ‘éveiller’ (épecré, v. 41) et ‘se dresser’ (antistheni, v. 42).” Combet-Galland, L’évangile de Marc (n. 8), pp. 108-109; refers to 5.1-3, 5.4-9.

66. Combet-Galland, L’évangile de Marc (n. 8), p. 107: “Dans une seconde lecture de l’évangile, celle à laquelle renvoie le tombeau vide, grâce à la dimension métaphorique des figures, de multiples signes de la résurrection posent la vie concrète et sociale; ils excèdent toute appropriation, toute possession. Le lever d’un malade, l’expulsion d’un esprit de confusion, une traversée de la mer, toute la marche souffrante de l’histoire humaine en voie de libération sont ainsi éclairés de leur fin, cela permet d’affronter la mort et donc de vivre debout”. The last section of the article (“Une écriture qui fait brèche”, pp. 105-109) resumes in a very fine way what the actualization of the “emptiness” of the short ending could mean for the reading of the entire gospel of Mark. The empty tomb story becomes “a story which is preceded by what comes beyond it” (“c’est précédé de ce qui le dépasse”, p. 108). For a similar expression, see Hecker, Vom Evangelium des Markus (n. 2), p. 55: “das Evangelium als literarischer Werk ist also eine Erinnerung an die Zukunft” — On one particular point I am hesitant to follow Combet-Galland’s interpretation, that is the exclusively positive reading of the centurion’s confession (15,39) which makes him be a model of the perfect believer (pp. 104-105). See G. Van Oyen, Irony as Propaganda in Mark 15:39?, in P.W. Van den Hove — M.J.J. Menken — J.F.M. Smij — G. Van Oyen (eds.), Persuasion and Dissuasion in Early Christianity, Ancient Judaism and Hellenism (CREB, 33), Leuven, 2003, 125-141.

67. The work of John Dominic Crossan on the historical Jesus could be criticized for many reasons, but I think his personal “credo” is worth to be quoted here: “Easter means for me that the divine empowerment which was present in Jesus, but once upon a time limited to those people in Galilee and Judea who had contact with him, is now available to anyone, anywhere in the world, who finds God in Jesus. As far as I’m concerned, it has nothing to do, literally, with a body coming out of a tomb, or a tomb being found empty, or visions, or anything else. All those are dramatic ways of expressing the faith. The heart of the resurrection for me is that the power of God is now available through Jesus, unconscouomed life by time or space, to anyone who believes and experiences it” (J.D. Crossan — R.G. Waddy, Who Is Jesus?, Louisville, KY, 1996, pp. 127-128). See also the psychological perspective of E. Drewermann, Dios inmediato: Conversaciones con Gwendolyne Jaryczek, Madrid, 1997 [chapter 13: “Where Lives Jesus?”]. Unfortunately, the work is not translated to English (Prenou 1995; Dutch 1996; German 1996).

68. Doggare, Following God (n. 20), pp. 94-95.

We have reached the end of this paper. One particular challenge remains, which should be addressed: to examine how the individual pericopes of the gospel can make the presence of the crucified-risen Christ real in the lives of those who live "between fear and hope".

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PROMISE AND POWER  
A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF THE RESURRECTION STORY IN MARK 16  
IN CODEX VATICANUS AND CODEX WASHINGTONIANUS

INTRODUCTION

The resurrection story at the end of the Gospel of Mark is a fascinating study in textual criticism. For a long time the focus of textual studies has been to determine as clearly as possible the earliest recoverable text of the New Testament. In this approach, textual scholars generally have concluded that the original ending of Mark is at 16,8 and a great amount of discussion of the said ending has ensued. However, a new emphasis in textual studies is arising. Some scholars are now giving their attention to the history of the transmission of the text and the ending of Mark seems a fruitful location for such study. At some point in the transmission of the text of Mark a much longer ending (16,9-20) was added with major parallels to Matt 28, Luke 24, John 20, Acts 1, and even Heb 2. This seems to have arisen in the second century. Still later, as attested in codices L and Ψ, from the 8th and 9th centuries respectively, a much shorter additional ending to 16,8 arose, evidently without knowledge of the longer ending (16,9-20). However, even more intriguing is the text of Codex Washingtonianus (W) from the 5th century that adds to the longer ending a unique paragraph known as the Freer Logion. Codex W, therefore, has the longest ending to the Gospel of Mark. In contrast, Codex Vaticanus (B) has the shortest ending, concluding Mark at 16,8. These

1. I wish to thank Tobias Nicklas for his gracious critique and helpful suggestions regarding this paper.  