

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

THE GOSPEL ON THE MARGINS:
THE IDEOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE PATRISTIC
TRADITION ON THE EVANGELIST MARK

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MICHAEL J. KOK

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Abstract: In spite of the virtually unanimous patristic opinion that the evangelist Mark was the interpreter of Peter, one of the most prestigious apostolic founding figures in Christian memory, the Gospel of Mark was mostly neglected in the patristic period. Not only is the text of Mark the least well represented of the canonical Gospels in terms of the number of patristic citations, commentaries and manuscripts, the explicit comments about the evangelist Mark reveal some ambivalence about its literary or theological value. In my survey of the reception of Mark from Papias of Hierapolis until Clement of Alexandria, I will argue that the reason why the patristic writers were hesitant to embrace the Gospel of Mark was that they perceived the text to be amenable to the Christological beliefs and social praxis of rival Christian factions. The patristic tradition about Mark may have little historical basis, but it had an important ideological function in appropriating the text in the name of an apostolic authority from the margins or periphery.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PARADOXICAL RECEPTION OF MARK'S GOSPEL

Most Markan scholars are preoccupied with the “originary” historical or social context of “the Gospel According to Mark” (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Μάρκον).¹ If the patristic witnesses are consulted at all, it is usually with a critical eye on whether or not they are reliable guides on the origins of the Gospel itself. Their consistent conviction, beginning with Papias of Hierapolis (cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.39.15), that the evangelist “Mark” recorded the eyewitness recollections of the apostle Peter is upheld in many conservative commentaries.² Conversely, other scholars surmise that Papias may have spun the entire tradition out of an erroneous inference from 1 Peter 5:13 (cf. *H.E.* 2.15.2; 3.39.17).³ Yet Mark does not function as Peter’s scribe or interpreter in 1 Peter 5:13 and Papias credits the elder John as his primary source.⁴ As a consequence of the debate

¹ The Gospels are technically anonymous, but I will refer to the texts of the New Testament Gospels by the traditional names of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John for the sake of convenience.

² Henry Barclay Swete, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1913), xiii-xxix; A.E.J. Rawlinson, *St Mark* (4th ed.; London: Methuen & Co, 1936), xxv-xxviii, xxx-xxxii; C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 5-6; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (2nd Ed; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1966), 1-30; William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 7-9; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 1027-1030; Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 20-31; R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 39-41; Robert Stein, *Mark* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 1-9.

³ D.E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark* (Pelican NT Commentaries; Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), 39-40; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark* (Trans. Donald H. Madvig; Atlanta: John Knox, 1970), 25; Joachim Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKKNT; Zürich, Einsiedeln, Cologne: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 32-3; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (2 Vols.; HTKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 1.9-11; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (Black’s NT Commentary; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 6; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (The NT Library; London: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 11; Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 97; K. Niederwimmer, “Johannes Markus und die Frage nach dem Verfasser des zweiten Evangeliums,” *ZNW* 58 (1967): 186; Jürgen Regul, *Die antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe* (Vetus Latina 6; Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 96-97; W.R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 11.

⁴ C. Clifton Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 87-8.

over the historical reliability of the patristic reports on the evangelist Mark, many critics pass over the ideological function of the patristic traditions in the *reception* of Mark.⁵

A. The Gospel that is both Present and Absent

It is for this reason that I will shift the attention towards the reception history of Mark from Papias until Clement of Alexandria. A close analysis brings to light a remarkable incongruity that has not been adequately resolved. On surface appearances, Mark was apparently well-regarded due to the virtually unanimous opinion that the Gospel is based on information deriving from a renowned apostolic figurehead. Along with the emerging legends about Peter's episcopacy in Rome, the imperial capital naturally came to be reckoned as the provenance for the composition of Mark as well (e.g., Clement, in *H.E.* 2.15.2; 6.14.6). For Richard Horsley, the reduction of Mark to a "religious" text in Western Christianity began with its appropriation for a major Western Metropolis under the authority of its first ecclesiastical bishop.⁶ What is perplexing is that there seems to be no discernible motivation for appropriating Mark, for not even Peter's reputation as one of the most revered figures of the apostolic era could rescue the Gospel from its benign neglect throughout most of its history of reception.

The lack of appreciation for Mark is evident when one takes a glance at the frequency of citations from the canonical Gospels in a standard reference work like the *Biblia Patristica*.

⁵ Some notable exceptions on the reception history of Mark include Brenda Deen Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice: The Reception of the Gospel of Mark* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999); James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (WUNT 2/112, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000); Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*; Joanna Dewey, "The Survival of Mark's Gospel: A Really Good Story" *JBL* 123 (2004): 495-507; Willi Braun, "The First Shall be Last: The Gospel of Mark after the first century" in *Chasing Down Religion: In the Sights of History and the Cognitive Sciences Essays in Honour of Luther H. Martin* (ed. Panavotis Pachis and Donald Wiebe; Thessaloniki: Barbounakis, 2010), 41-57; Christine E. Joynes, "The Sound of Silence: Interpreting Mark 16:1-8 through the Centuries" *Interpretation* 65 (2011): 18-29; Thomas C. Oden, *The African Memory of Mark: Reassessing Early Church Tradition* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011); Peter M. Head, "The Early Text of Mark" in *The Early Text of the New Testament* (ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 208-20.

⁶ Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville; London; Leiden: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 30.

Schildgen estimates that it lists roughly 1400 citations of Mark in comparison to 2000 of John, 3300 of Luke and 3900 of Matthew from the earliest period to Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. Excluding Origen, the number for Mark drops sharply in the third century to about 250, in contrast to 3600 for Matthew, 1000 for Luke and 1600 for John. Origen cites Matthew approximately 8000 times, John 5000 times, Luke 3000 times and Mark 650 times.⁷ From this maximalist list, Mark is clearly the least cited of the fourfold canon, but there are two fatal flaws in the statistics gathered in the *Biblia Patristica*. It is extremely generous in what it counts as an allusion to a canonical text, not taking into account the survival of other oral or written sources, and offers no criteria for discerning a specific reference to Mark when dealing with Synoptic triple tradition or with material shared by Mark with either Matthew or Luke.

Studies that implement methodologically rigorous criteria tend to have a lower number of inter-textual references to the canonical Gospels in the second century.⁸ References to Mark, however, can literally be counted on one or two hands. For Helmut Koester, Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 106.3 is the sole sure citation of Mark (3:17) before Irenaeus.⁹ Adela

⁷ Schildgen, *Power*, 40-41; cf. Dewey, "Good Story," 506. See the *Biblia Patristica: Index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique* (6 vols; Paris: CNRS Editions, 1975-1995). Alternatively, Head ("Early Text," 113 n. 22) counts the pages of the *Biblia Patristica*. The first volume devotes 70 pages of citations for Matthew, 26 for Mark, 59 for Luke and 36 for John. The second volume has 64 pages for Matthew, 5 for Mark, 18 for Luke and 31 for John and the third has 57 for Matthew, 5 for Mark, 23 for Luke and 38 for John.

⁸ See Édouard Massaux, *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature Before Saint Irenaeus* (3 vol.; Norman J. Belval and Suzanne Hechte; ed. Arthur J. Bellinzoni; New Gospels Studies 5; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993); Helmut Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* (Bd. 65; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957); Wolf-Dieter Köhler, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums in der Zeit vor Irenäus* (Tübingen: Morh/Siebeck, 1987); Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus* (WUNT 2.169; Tübingen: Morh/Siebeck, 2003); Andrew Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett, *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Massaux and Köhler reach more maximalist conclusions, at least with regard to the widespread use of Matthew in the second century, while scholars who follow in Koester's footsteps reach more minimalist conclusions on the use of canonical sources. I have a detailed discussion on the different criteria these scholars employ on pp. 201-6.

⁹ Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990), 274. Köster (*Synoptische Überlieferung*, 259-60) offers the following certain references to the Synoptic Gospels: Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 1.1; 2 Clem 2:4; 3:2; 4:2, 5; 5:2-4; 6:1, 2; 9:11; 13:4; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2:3; 7:2; 12:3; *Did.* 1:3, 4, 5; 9:5 (?); 15:3 (?). None of these references are to distinctive Markan material without Synoptic parallels (e.g., 2 Clement 2:4 could be a reference to either Mark 2:17b or Matthew 9:13b).

Collins expands the list slightly to the *Papyrus Egerton 2* fragment (Mark 12:14), *Hermas Similitude* 9.7.6 (Mark 13:36), the *Gospel of Peter* 50-57 (Mark 16:1-8) and the Gospel of the Ebionites (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.13.4; cf. Mark 1:4-6).¹⁰ The new Oxford committee on the reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers does not yield much for Mark.¹¹ Eduoard Massaux, who is far more confident than Koester on the extensive use of Matthew in the second century, basically agrees that Mark's influence was negligible even if a few more references survive his scalpel.¹²

C. Clifton Black does not accept that there are demonstrable references to Mark until Irenaeus. Irenaeus labels the evangelist's work as a written Gospel (*A.H.* 3.11.8), explicitly quotes Markan passages (3.10.5, 3.16.3) or unique Markan material (1.21.2, 4.18.4, 4.37.5), and defends Markan Christology (3.11.7).¹³ Out of 626 citations of the Gospels, Peter Head notes

¹⁰ Adela Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia: Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 103-4; cf. F. Neirynck, "The Apocryphal Gospels and the Gospel of Mark" in the *New Testament in Early Christianity/La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 86; Jean-Marie Sevrin; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1989), 143-57, 157-60, 163-7.

¹¹ The following scholars can find no secure references to Mark that cannot be ascribed to the better known Synoptic parallels or to oral tradition: Christopher M. Tuckett, "The Didache and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament" (pp. 83-127); Andrew Gregory, "1 Clement and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament" (pp. 128-51); Paul Foster, "The Epistles of Ignatius and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament" (pp. 159-86); Michael W. Holmes, "Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament" (pp. 187-228); James Carleton Paget, "The Epistle of Barnabas and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament" (pp. 229-50); Andrew Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett, "2 Clement and the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament" (pp. 251-91) in *Reception of the New Testament*. Joseph Verheyden ("The *Shepherd of Hermas* and the Writings that later formed the New Testament," in *Reception of the New Testament*, 302, 316-8, 324-5) offers the most potential examples of Markan influence in passages in the *Shepherd* such as *Mand.* 4.1.6 (Mark 4:11), *Vis.* 3.7.3 and *Sim.* 8.6.4 (Mark 4:18-2; cf. Acts 19:5), and *Sim.* 9.29.3 and 9.31.2 (Mark 10:13-6). Moreover, the expressions "not understanding" (συνίημι) and the hardening of the heart (ἡ καρδία with a form of πωροῶ) in *Mand.* 4.2.1 are used exclusively in Mark. However, even here the evidence may be inconclusive as the verbal agreement with Mark 4:11 may be based on common knowledge of Jesus' ruling on divorce or the parallels in *Vis.* 3.7.3 or *Sim.* 8.6.4 may be common kerygmatic language.

¹² Massaux (*Saint Irenaeus* 2.131-2, 174-5, 193-4; 3.125, 222-6) has a low enough number of sure citations to be listed in a footnote. He finds references in the *Shepherd of Hermas* (*Mand.* 4.1.6 on Mark 10:11; *Sim.* 4.6.8 on Mark 8:38 or Luke 9:26; *Mand.* 5.2.1 on Mark 3:6; 6:52; 8:17; *Vis.* 3.6.3. possibly on Mark 9:50), the *Papyrus Egerton 2* fragment (lines 43-47 on Matt 22:15-22/Mark 12:13-17/Luke 20:20-26 with Mark 10:2; lines 47-50 on Mark 12:17; line 51 from Mark 1:43), Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 106:3), Athenagoras (*Plea* 33:2 on Mark 10:11), the *Gospel of the Hebrews* (Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30.134.5 first three words influenced by Mark 1:4-6) and the *Gospel of Peter* (52-54 on Mark 16:3-4, 55 on Mark 16:5; 3 on Mark 14:43, 59 on Mark 16:10). Other potential examples are dismissed as more likely a citation of the Matthean, or less frequently the Lukan, parallel to Mark.

¹³ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 100.

that Irenaeus explicitly attributes a passage to Mark only three times (*A.H.* 3.10.5 on Mark 1:1-3 and 16:19; 3.16.3 on Mark 1:1; 4.6.1), one of which is misattributed (*A.H.* 4.6.1 on Matt 11:27/Luke 10:22), and borrows from Swete's classic commentary on Mark a handful of verbatim quotes in *A.H.* 1.3.3 (Mark 5:31), 1.21.3 (Mark 10:38); 2.28.6 (Mark 13:32), 2.32.1 (Mark 9:44), 3.10.6 (Mark 16:19), 3.16.5 (Mark 8:31), 3.18.6 (Mark 8:38), 4.6.6 (Mark 1:24), 4.37.6 (Mark 9:23) and 5.13.1 (Mark 5:41, 43).¹⁴ Out of an estimated 1579 references to the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria,¹⁵ Carl Cosaert's meticulous examination discusses a loose, extensive commentary of Mark 10:17-31 in *Quis dives salvetur* 4.4-10 and a few other potential references (Mark 8:38 in *Strom.* 4.70.2; Mark 9:29 in *Ecl.* 15.1).¹⁶

With regards to the manuscript attestation of Mark, or largely lack thereof, the oldest extant fragments are from the mid third century Chester Beatty papyri (P⁴⁵) with no other manuscript evidence before Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in the fourth century.¹⁷ Little was done about the marked absence of patristic commentaries on Mark until Jerome left behind ten sermons on Mark in the late fourth century and a catena attributed to the fifth century Victor of Antioch was compiled from the scattered comments of Origen, Titus of Bostra, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria.¹⁸ Schildgen spots a limited place for Mark's early morning empty tomb scene in a second century Roman liturgy, albeit from post-

¹⁴ Head, "Early Text of Mark," 112, 112 n. 14; cf. Swete, *St. Mark*, xxxii. Head casts doubt on a few of these citations as deriving from Mark: *A.H.* 3.16.5 is more likely a general reminiscence of a Synoptic passion prediction and 4.6.6 is more likely in reference to Luke 4:34. Interestingly, very few of these exhibit distinctive Markan features without a Synoptic parallel with some exceptions such as the reference to the baptism Jesus will undergo in Mark 10:38 (*A.H.* 1.21.2) and the reply to the doubting father of the epileptic child in Mark 9:23 (*A.H.* 4.37.6).

¹⁵ C.P. Cosaert, *The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria* (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 22.

¹⁶ Cosaert, *Clement of Alexandria*, 118-31; cf. Scott Brown, "The Letter to Theodore: Stephen Carlson's Case against Clement's Authorship" *J ECS* 16 (2008): 555 n. 51. Cosaert lists a number of indeterminate Gospel references in the writings of Clement of Alexandria on pp. 311-35. If the *Letter to Theodore* is added to the database, Clement also cites Mark 10:35-6 and 46a.

¹⁷ However, Daniel Wallace has recently claimed that a newly discovered manuscript of Mark may date to the first century (2012, online: <http://danielbwallace.com/2012/03/22/first-century-fragment-of-marks-gospel-found/>).

¹⁸ Lane, *Mark*, 3; Schildgen, *Power*, 39-40. Adela Collins (*Mark*, 105) infers that Origen may have left a commentary on Mark because of the way he exegetes Markan passages in his commentaries on Matthew and Luke, but this is pure conjecture as it is no longer extant.

Constantinian sources where it must be hypothetically reconstructed.¹⁹ Yet she adds that the use of Mark in the paschal liturgies paled in comparison to Matthew or John, with Luke in a distant third, as Mark was read once for every sixteen readings of John or Matthew.²⁰

Schildgen does feel that Alexandria may be the exception to the rule because of the fourth century liturgy named in the evangelist's honour, despite its lack of peculiar references to the text of Mark, and Clement's exposition on Mark 10:17-21 in his *Quis Dives Salvateur* and on an esoteric edition of Mark in the *Letter to Theodore*.²¹ It is impossible to know how far back the hagiography that grew up around Saint Mark as the first bishop of Alexandria can be traced before its earliest extant written attestation in Eusebius.²² The veneration of Mark's martyrdom at Bucalis by Peter, the last martyr of Alexandria, means that this social memory existed prior to the peace of Constantine.²³ Earlier ecclesiastic records may have perished over time and under persecution and Oden reproves western scholars for a trivializing attitude towards the consensual African Christian memory and the archaeological sites related to Saint Mark.²⁴ Be that as it may, the silence of the written sources before Eusebius and the legitimatory function of "apostolic succession" cannot be lightly dismissed.²⁵ Clement may be an early witness for the evangelist's presence in Alexandria if the *Letter to Theodore* is accepted as genuine,²⁶ but this source is silent on his episcopacy or martyrdom. If a tradition of the evangelist's sojourn in Alexandria existed

¹⁹ Schildgen, *Power*, 50-1.

²⁰ Schildgen, *Power*, 52; cf. the lectionaries of Peter Chrysotogus, Maximus Taurinensis or Leo the Great.

²¹ Schildgen, *Power*, 51-2.

²² See Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.16), Jerome (*Comm. Matt.*, Prol. 6; *Ill. Vir.* 7) and John Chrysostom (*Hom. [1:7] Matt.*). For a full discussion of the African sources such as the liturgical synaxaries, the *Martyrium Marci* and the tenth century work of Sawirus ibn Al-Muqaffa, see Oden, *African Memory*, 60-76. See also Birger Pearson, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Some Observations" in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 137-45. Hugh M. Humphrey (*From Q to 'Secret' Mark: A Composition History of the Earliest Narrative Theology* [New York and London: T&T Clark, 2006], 35) even looks to a Venetian tradition where Mark's body was brought from Egypt to Venice under Doge Giustiniano Participazio in 828 CE.

²³ Oden, *African Memory*, 165-7.

²⁴ Oden, *African Memory*, 169-71.

²⁵ I will provide other possible explanations for the Alexandrian Christian myth of origins in chapter 4.

²⁶ See Oden, *African Memory*, 198-208.

in Clement's day, it did not impact Clement's citations of the Gospels. His attention to the tenth chapter of Mark may be due, not to its hypothetical place in an early Alexandrian liturgy, but to his perception that he needed to correct misconstruals of this section of Mark by other interpreters.²⁷ The lack of early manuscript attestation for Mark from the sands of Egypt can be compared against the strong attestation for John,²⁸ a work Clement lauds as the "spiritual" Gospel par excellence (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.14.7), so the canonical edition of Mark hardly had any kind of pre-eminent status in second-century Alexandria.

Evidently the weight of Petrine authority did not compel an active readership of Mark. The reason for this limited use may lie in Mark's glaring absences. Elements missing included the lofty Christological language of John, the ethical guidelines of the Sermon on the Mount or Plain, or the popular infancy or resurrection stories. The shocking closing of Mark on the phrase ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ (for they were afraid) (16:8) impelled a second century scribe to interpolate a more suitable ending.²⁹ Additionally, scribes may have tampered with the beginning of Mark. A few scholars disregard Mark 1:1 as an interpolation,³⁰ though there is no manuscript support for omitting the verse altogether, but most of the debate centres on the point where the manuscript and patristic witnesses divide over the inclusion of the words τοῦ θεοῦ (son of god).³¹ As far as

²⁷ See my discussion of the reception of Mark in Alexandria on pp. 180-93, 219-22.

²⁸ See Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 61; Charles Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 148-52.

²⁹ See especially Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 48-244. I follow the vast majority of scholars in accepting the secondary nature of Mark 16:9-20, but for a robust challenge to the scholarly consensus, see William R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); James Snapp Jr., *Authentic: The Case for Mark 16:9-20* (Amazon Digital Services, 2011). I discuss the longer ending on pp. 226-34.

³⁰ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 250; N. Clayton Croy, *The Mutilation of Mark's Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 114-39. Croy's position is that the original beginning of Mark was accidentally lost and a scribe inserted 1:1 to indicate that, in his manuscript, this was the "beginning" of the "Gospel."

³¹ For the debate between the shorter and longer reading, see Peter M. Head, "A Text-Critical Study of Mark 1.1: 'The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ'" *NTS* 37 (1991): 621-9; Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 85-8; Tommy Wasserman, "The Son of God was in the Beginning (Mark 1:1)" *JTS* 62 (2011): 20-50. I discuss this issue in more depth on pp. 222-6.

the patristic tradition on Mark, two statements sit in uneasy tension with each other: Papias's assertion on the evangelist as the "interpreter of Peter" (*H.E.* 3.39.15) and Augustine's demotion of him to the abbreviator of Matthew (*de Con. Evan.* 1.2.4). The former position ensured Mark's canonization; the latter that Mark's distinctive voice in the canon was silenced.³² Matthean priority already had a long pedigree (cf. Irenaeus, *A.H.* 3.1.1) and Augustine's solution to the Synoptic problem was but the final step in the relegation of Mark to the margins of the canon. Schildgen extracts these two statements as governing Mark's reception down to the modern period, reasoning that, "[t]his contrast explains Mark's absence and presence, for the gospel was present in the canon but essentially absent from attention."³³

The redaction of Mark by Matthew and Luke affords another window into its earliest reception. Taking Markan priority as a starting premise, Matthew reproduces 90 percent of Mark's content but, by correcting Mark's grammar or style, retains 51 percent of Mark's wording. Matthew inserts whole blocks of material into Mark's narrative framework (Matt 5-7), edits or deletes offensive Markan passages (Mark 2:21; 3:19b-20; 6:5; 7:19b, 32-35; 7:33-34; 8:22-26; 10:18) and updates Mark's version of events in light of a new authorial situation (e.g., Matt 23).³⁴ Luke frequently makes identical stylistic revisions as Matthew but retains only 51 percent of Mark's content, mostly due to the omission of huge blocks of Markan material (Mark 6:45-8:26) or the substitution of alternative sources in place of Mark (e.g., Luke 4:16-30; 5:1-11; 22:14-38).³⁵ To be sure, a minority of scholars read Mark as an abridgment or conflation of

³² Schildgen, *Power*, 35.

³³ Schildgen, *Power*, 36.

³⁴ See David C. Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark: Did Matthew Intend to Supplement or to Replace His Primary Source?" *NTS* 57 (2011): 178-81.

³⁵ Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 182-3; Michael Kok, "The Flawed Evangelist (John) Mark: A Neglected Clue to the Reception of Mark's Gospel in Luke-Acts" *Neotestamentica* 46 (2012): 246-7.

Matthew and Luke,³⁶ but, in this scenario, the evangelist made curious editorial decisions in omitting the infancy and resurrection stories and much of the didactic material while expanding individual pericopae with odd details (e.g., Mark 3:21; 7:32-5; 8:23-6; 11:13b; 14:51-2).³⁷ I agree with Sim that the expanded and revised Gospel of Matthew rendered Mark as redundant at best.³⁸ The Lukan prologue states as much in that Luke's well-ordered (καθεξῆς) account supersedes the many who "attempted" (ἐπεχείρησαν) to draw up a narrative (1:2). Loveday Alexander is adamant that this prologue does not mean to subtly denigrate earlier Gospels as much as extol the Hellenistic literary virtue of a proper arrangement as the use of καμὸι puts Luke in the same class as its predecessors,³⁹ but the implication of ἐπεχειρέω is that the past attempts were unsuccessful (cf. Acts 9:29; 19:13).⁴⁰ Given the ambivalent reception of Mark in the patristic period, it is astounding that Mark was preserved at all after its content was almost completely re-absorbed in Matthew and Luke. It could have easily disappeared with other Gospel prototypes lost to the dust of antiquity (cf. Luke 1:1).

B. A Solution for Mark's Survival

To account for the anomaly of Mark's survival, Joanna Dewey conjectures that Mark captivated audiences at the grassroots level as they heard the text in oral performance well into the second

³⁶ See William Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem* (London: Macmillan, 1976); John Bernard Orchard & Harold Riley, *The Order of the Synoptics: Why Three Synoptic Gospels* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), 3-108.

³⁷ For a good introduction to the case for Markan Priority, see Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Nottingham: InterVarsity, 1987), 48-88.

³⁸ Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 182-3.

³⁹ L. C. A. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1* [SNTSMS 78; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994], 115-6; 133-6.

⁴⁰ David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem* (Doubleday: New York, 1999), 14; Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark," 188-9; Kok, "Flawed Evangelist," 248; Francis Watson, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2013), 123. Laird reviews negative examples in the LXX such as 2 Chron 20:11; Ezra 7:23; 1 Esd 1:26; Esth 9:25; 16:3; 2 Macc 7:19; 9:2; 10:15; 15:33; 3 Macc 6:24; 7:5; 4 Macc 1:5 and Sir 9:4 and notes that Origen interprets the Lukan prologue negatively in reference to other "heretical" Gospels (*Comm. John* 10). Alexander (*Preface*, 109-10) reaches similar findings that the use of ἐπεχειρέω in the third person had derogatory implications in other Hellenistic prefaces, but downplays it as a stylistic convention that the Lukan prologue adopted without intending the negative implications.

century.⁴¹ In a primarily oral culture, the Gospels were mostly heard rather than read and Mark must have achieved widespread circulation from early on to become a source for the Synoptics, as well as perhaps other Gospel writers (John, *Thomas, Peter*), and for Papias. However, her main supporting evidence – the high number of textual variants, fewer extant manuscripts and sharp drop-off of citations of Mark at the beginning of the third century – does not quite establish her case.⁴² Her first two arguments may suggest that Mark was infrequently copied, leading to more textual variants as there were fewer controls, and the last misses that the bulk of the references to Mark in the first volume of the *Biblia Patristica* are concentrated in select writers like Justin, Irenaeus, Clement or Tertullian.⁴³ Further, the statistics in the *Biblia Patristica* may be misleading as the most authoritative studies have a drastically lower number of citations of Mark in the second century. It is conceivable that Mark retained a degree of popularity for some lay Christian groups in the second century, but the scarcity of manuscripts and patristic citations confirms that it was not favoured by the Christian *literati* who preserved the texts. Solely the authority of Peter's name, once attached to Mark, saved it from oblivion.

There may be two choices for why such a poorly received text was imputed to one of the most revered founding figures within Christian memory. The first option is that the evangelist really was the interpreter of Peter, a memory which overrode whatever literary or theological qualms the Christian *intelligentsia* had with the Gospel. Since many critical scholars no longer consent to the patristic accounts of the evangelists,⁴⁴ Willi Braun has entertained a second option

⁴¹ See Dewey, "Good Story."

⁴² Dewey, "Good Story," 505-7.

⁴³ See Stephen Carlson, "Dewey, 'Survival of Mark's Gospel' in Fall 2004 JBL," n.p. [cited Oct. 11, 2004]. Online: <http://hypotyposesis.org/weblog/2004/10/dewey-survival-of-marks-gospel-in-fall-2004-jbl.html>. From my tally, Justin, Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian are responsible for over sixty percent of the references in the first volume.

⁴⁴ There are some notable exceptions as I interact with the following authors in chapter 2: Robert Gundry, "The Apostolically Johannine Pre-Papian Tradition Concerning the Gospels of Mark and Matthew" in *The Old is Better: New Testament Essays in Support of Traditional Interpretations* (WUNT 178; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2005), 49-73; Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 46-58; *The Four Gospels and the*

to resolve this paradox. He insinuates that the patristic ambivalence over Mark may be a clue that it initially gained a receptive audience on the “wrong side” in the battle between competing Christian factions and, by means of scribal redactions or patristic traditions superimposed on Mark, Mark was confiscated from their opponents.⁴⁵ In the specifics of Braun’s theory, Mark was amenable to radical Paulinists but stamped with a Petrine imprimatur to make it safe for the canon.⁴⁶ Braun does not back up his theory that Mark became the subject of intra-Christian custody battles in the first few centuries with much textual evidence, though he flags up the interest in Mark by an “Alexandrian secrecy group” and the “anti-Marcionite” prologues as potentially fruitful lines of inquiry.⁴⁷ To wrest Mark from the control of their adversaries, the patristic authorities claimed the text for Peter as the symbolic figurehead of their communities, however little regard they had for Mark’s literary merits on its own terms.

My thesis will be dedicated to testing Braun’s theory on the appropriation of Mark as an “apostolic” document to serve the social agendas of its second century Christian readership, regardless of its originary “authorial intentions.” The outline of my thesis will be as follows. In the next section, I will subject the patristic association of the evangelist Mark with Peter to historical-critical scrutiny. Chapters 1 and 2 will be a broad overview of the ideological trends of different periods of New Testament scholarship that affected the assessments of the authorship of Mark. My survey of the arguments for and against the Petrine origins in Mark is essential because, if there is any historical substance behind the Papiian tradition, there is no reason

One Gospel of Jesus Christ (London: SCM; Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000), 79-89; Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History, History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (WUNT 123; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2000; reprinted Leiden: Brill, 2002), 272-92; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 202-39, Mike Bird, “Mark: Interpreter of Peter and Disciple of Paul” in *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts and Convergences* (ed. Michael F. Bird and Joel Willitts; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 30-61.

⁴⁵ Braun, “The First Shall be Last,” 54.

⁴⁶ Braun, “The First Shall be Last,” 53.

⁴⁷ Braun, “The First Shall be Last,” 48, 54, 56.

whatsoever to pursue a different solution for why the patristic writers consistently attribute a marginal Gospel to Peter. Chapter 3 will re-examine the external references to a figure named “Mark” in the New Testament and early patristic literature to locate when and where Mark was first remembered as Peter’s “son” (1 Pet 5:13) or “interpreter” (Papias, *H.E.* 3.39.15). It is not enough to rest on a negative case against the traditional view of Mark as a Petrine Gospel unless one can make a positive case about *why* the patristic writers belabored this identification.

The second section of my thesis will recommend a new solution to the puzzle of why Mark was propped up with Petrine authority based on Braun’s provocative hypothesis. Chapter 4 will lay out the methodological groundwork for studying the legitimizing strategies utilized by competing Christian social formations. Linking the names of the apostolic “founders” of one’s community to anonymous first-century texts was a way to stake a claim of rightful ownership over them. In chapter 5, I explore the ambiguity underlying select patristic sentiments about the literary or theological qualities of Mark. There must have been some function for Mark other than providing the Christian *literati* with a text of merit. Chapter 6 will survey the textual evidence to substantiate the thesis that there was a battle for the control and proper interpretation of Mark among second century Christian factions. Elite Christian writers who paid any attention to Mark at all, such as in the scribal changes to or patristic *apologia* on behalf of Mark, often did so in the context of refuting readings of Mark labelled as “heretical.” The heart of my thesis is that the patristic traditions may not have much historical value for inquiring about the origins of Mark, but that does not mean that they cease to be worth studying for they may be a window into the ideological struggles of Mark’s second century Christian readership.

CHAPTER 1

THE DECLINE OF THE PATRISTIC CONSENSUS

If Mark's apostolic credentials purchased its admission into the canon, it was not treated as an equal partner alongside the other canonical Gospels. Not until the advent of the theory of Markan priority – partly due to the discovery of Mark as the middle term among the Synoptics and partly in reaction to the radical criticism of Strauss or the Tübingen School – was Mark placed in the spotlight. The result was a new sense of excitement among modernist scholars about Mark as the primary record of the Jesus of history, untainted by legendary accretions or dogma.⁴⁸ Doubt on the Petrine origins or historical veracity of Mark crept in during the twentieth century, but the level of interest has not waned. Schildgen puts her finger on the irony: “[I]ike the gospel's empty tomb, its ambiguities, paradoxes, and ‘open-endedness’ prove to be precisely what interests contemporary commentators.”⁴⁹

Moving beyond the pinnacle of nineteenth century optimism, this chapter explores how the patristic consensus on Mark was slowly chipped away by the implementation of newer critical methodologies. I will select a representative for differing trends of scholarship: the replacement of Peter with the anonymous “community” in the form critical paradigm (Dennis Nineham), the application of redaction or narrative critical methods to drive a wedge between the evangelist and Peter (Theodore Weeden, Richard Horsley) and the historical-critical objections to the authorship of a first-century Palestinian Jew (Kurt Niederwimmer, Pierson Parker). Since

⁴⁸ For some historical overviews of scholarship on the Synoptic Problem from different vantage points, see Farmer, *Synoptic Problem*, 1-117; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 44-52; see Taylor, *Mark*, 9-12; R.P. Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 32-8; Dungan, *Synoptic Problem*.

⁴⁹ Schildgen, *Power*, 21.

a hermeneutics of suspicion is frequently the default position of much of critical scholarship towards the patristic traditions regarding the evangelists, it is necessary to inspect the foundations of the modern skepticism to see if they are stable.

A. The Anonymous Community that Handled the Pre-Gospel Traditions

1. Dennis Nineham's Form Critical Case against the Patristic Tradition

Ever since Wrede's landmark study on the messianic secret,⁵⁰ the distinction of the Synoptics from the overtly theological Gospel of John became a matter of degree, not of kind. If all the evangelists shaped their materials according to their ideological agendas, the same motivations may be inferred during the pre-Gospel oral phase. Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann were pioneers in the development of *Formgeschichte* (form history), better known to English speakers as "form criticism."⁵¹ Schmidt deconstructed Mark's framework: the pre-Markan oral units or pericopae were grouped together topically and attached by artificial seams to give the impression of a straightforward chronological account.⁵² In Dibelius's view, "[t]he composers [of the Gospels] are only to the smallest extent authors. They are principally collectors, vehicles of tradition, editors."⁵³ This launched the project to classify the forms of the oral traditions and uncover their function in their original *Sitze im Leben* (situations in life).⁵⁴

⁵⁰ William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (trans. J. C. G. Grieg; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971).

⁵¹ For a review of the history, see Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 1-6; Vincent Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London: MacMillan, 1933), 1-21; Taylor, *Mark*, 17-24; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 50-2; Martin, *Evangelist*, 41-45.

⁵² K.L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte: Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919).

⁵³ Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. Bertram Lee Woolf; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971), 3.

⁵⁴ Dibelius (*Tradition*, 37-132, 233-65) classifies these forms as Paradigms, Tales, Legends, Myths and Exhortations. Bultmann's categories are Apophthegms (subdivided into conflict, didactic or biographical accounts), Dominical Sayings (subdivided into *Logia*, Prophetic, Legal, I-sayings and Parables), Miracle Stories, Historical Stories and Legends (*Synoptic Tradition*, 11-317). Taylor's categories are Pronouncement Stories, Miracle Stories, Sayings and Parables, and Stories about Jesus (*Formation*, 44-167).

Papias may be an ally for some form critical suppositions. After all, he characterized Mark as a loose arrangement of anecdotes that had a “situation in life” in the *ad hoc* missionary preaching of Peter and attested to an oral medium for the circulation of Jesus traditions was not instantly supplanted by the written word (*H.E.* 3.39.4, 15). Bultmann’s next move, partially influenced by Kähler’s protest on the irrelevance of the “historical” Jesus when measured against the lasting impact of the “historic” biblical Christ,⁵⁵ was to advance that many of the oral units were not just edited but invented *de novo* by several anonymous communities in accordance with their conception of the Christ of faith.⁵⁶ Burton Mack pushes the form critical contention that every reconstructed source belongs to its own *Sitz im Leben* to the limit by conjecturing a variety of groups in Syria-Palestine such as the Itinerants in Galilee (Q), the True Disciples (Gospel of Thomas), the Jerusalem Pillars, the Family of Jesus, the Congregation of Israel (the sea and feeding miracle chains in Mark and John) and the Synagogue Reformers (the pre-Markan pronouncement stories) that envisaged Jesus in divergent ways.⁵⁷

This new trend in form criticism does stand in tension with Papias, though not all the form critics followed Bultmann’s lead. Vincent Taylor benefitted from the form-critical classifications but wrote the oft quoted rebuttal, “If the Form Critics are right, the disciples must have been translated to heaven immediately after the resurrection.”⁵⁸ Taylor’s apologetic for the eyewitness testimony behind Mark on the basis of the vividness of the narrative may be weak in light of the gains of literary criticism on the Gospels, for vivid detail is a mark of an effective

⁵⁵ Martin Kähler, *The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ* (trans. Carl E. Braaten; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964). Note the translator trying to capture the German distinction between *historisch* and *geschichtlich*, between a figure as the mere object of historical inquiry and a so-called “scientific” biography and the enduring historic significance of the kerygmatic Christ (pp. 20-22).

⁵⁶ While Dibelius was confident in the paradigms as true to the voice of a Galilean preacher (*Tradition*, 37-69), Bultmann thought he overlooked the implications of form criticism for issues of historicity (*Synoptic Tradition*, 5)

⁵⁷ Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Fortress, 1988), 84-96; *Who Wrote the New Testament: The Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 43-74.

⁵⁸ Taylor, *Formation*, 41.

storyteller.⁵⁹ Dennis Nineham, who did much to plant form criticism on English soil, forcefully contended in a series of articles that there could be no compromise of the traditional view of Gospel authorship with the tenets of form criticism.⁶⁰

Nineham cautiously states his premise that, “[a]ccording to the form-critics, eyewitnesses played little direct part in the *development* of the Gospel tradition, however much they may have had to do with its original formulation.”⁶¹ From there, he distinguishes the *a posteriori* insights of the form critics from the *a priori* assumptions of traditionalist scholars. On internal grounds, the formal and stereotyped character of the individual sections, the lack of biographical or topographical precision, and the conventionality of the connecting summaries conforms to a long pre-history of impersonal communal traditions before Mark.⁶² Just as Matthew or Luke modify the wording or literary contexts of Markan pericopae, the doublet of the feeding narratives show that Mark or an earlier tradent made similar alterations.⁶³ Nineham lays down the gauntlet that, if Taylor grants the mediatory role of the community in *some* traditions, the onus is on him to produce evidence that *any* traditions were mediated directly from an eyewitness.⁶⁴

Moreover, Nineham set aside the apologetic of firsthand participation in some of the New Testament sources as late (Luke 1:1-4; John 15:27; 21:24; Acts 1:21-22; 4:20; 5:32; 10:39-41; 1 Pet 5:1; 2 Pet 1:1-18; 1 John 1:1-3), while Paul lists the name of witnesses (1 Cor 15:5-8) solely in relation to the resurrection.⁶⁵ The weight on what was seen and heard from the beginning in the Johannine literature cannot be accepted uncritically because of the vast differences from the

⁵⁹ Taylor, *Mark*, 135-40; cf. Martin, *Evangelist*, 55; Turner, “Dependence upon Peter,” 162.

⁶⁰ Dennis Nineham, “Eyewitness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, I” *JTS* 9 (1958): 13-25; “Eye-witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition II.” *JTS* 9 (1958): 243-52; “Eye-witness Testimony and the Gospel Tradition, III” *JTS* 11 (1960): 253-264.

⁶¹ Nineham, “Gospel Tradition, I,” 13. Emphasis original.

⁶² Nineham, “Gospel Tradition, I,” 13-16, 18-20; “Gospel Tradition, II,”

⁶³ Nineham, “Gospel Tradition, I,” 17-18; “Gospel Tradition, II,” 243-244.

⁶⁴ Nineham, “Gospel Tradition, I,” 17. Nineham is skeptical of C.H. Turner’s argument that Peter’s *oratio recta* was retained and debunks the argument on vividness through a comparison with the apocryphal gospels (pp. 20-2).

⁶⁵ Nineham, “Gospel Tradition, III,” 253.

Synoptic reportage.⁶⁶ Rhetorical conventions guided the Lukan prologue, but, in Nineham's reading, Luke 1:1-4 is not contradictory to the form critical model that "eyewitnesses" from the beginning were followed by a lengthy transmission period during which their witness was "handed down."⁶⁷ Nineham is not sure why it matters to some Christians that the Gospels originated with eyewitnesses, for the notion that eyewitness testimony is irreproachable is contradicted by the cross-examination of witnesses in a court of law.⁶⁸ Hence, the impersonal community stands between Peter and Mark in Nineham's form critical model.

2. *Evaluation of the Form Critical Objection*

Contrary to Nineham's rhetoric, form criticism is not free of its share of *a priori* presuppositions. Bauckham helpfully summarizes the assumptions that are open to question if not negated by later scholarship.⁶⁹ These include: (1) the existence of original "pure" forms by which to strip away accretions; (2) the strict correlation of one form per *Sitz im Leben*; (3) the perfect correspondence between a tradition and their use in the society that transmits them;⁷⁰ (4) the set scientific laws or trajectories in the growth of tradition;⁷¹ (5) the analogy to folklore despite the shorter time gap in the transmission of the traditions; (7) the misleading Palestinian or Hellenistic dichotomy; (8) the expectation of the imminent end as an impediment to writing;⁷² and (9) the application of a

⁶⁶ Nineham, "Gospel Tradition, I," 19-20; "Gospel Tradition, III," 254.

⁶⁷ Nineham, "Gospel Tradition, I," 18; "Gospel Tradition, III," 254.

⁶⁸ Nineham, "Gospel Tradition, III," 257-259.

⁶⁹ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 246-49. Other critiques may be found in T.W. Manson, *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962), 5-8; Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Theme: The Gospel and the Gospels" in *The Gospel and the Gospels* (ed. Peter Stuhlmacher; Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1991), 2-8; E. Earle Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 20-27.

⁷⁰ A frequently cited counter-example in the literature is where Paul distinguishes between the "words of the Lord" and his only practical advice for the Corinthians in their specific social context is his teachings on marriage and divorce in 1 Cor 7:8-16. See Manson, *Studies*, 29; Ellis, *Making*, 72; Stein, *Synoptic Problem*, 176.

⁷¹ This plank of form criticism was deconstructed by E.P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

⁷² Many scholars note that imminent eschatological expectations existed alongside copious writing at Qumran (cf. Stuhlmacher, "Theme," 6; Stein, *Synoptic Problem*, 163; Ellis, *Making*, 22). Other scholars have pointed out how

literary model (e.g., layers, editing) for a primarily oral culture.⁷³ Increasingly scholars are turning towards the interdisciplinary study of social memory or the processes of transmission in oral cultures as a replacement for the tenets of classic form criticism.⁷⁴ Time will tell whether the new approaches will prove itself to have better explanatory power for the whole range of the Synoptic data than Bultmann's monograph had for a previous generation,⁷⁵ but this should put to rest the false dichotomy Nineham sets up between accepting the form critical paradigm in its entirety or opting for uncritical fideism.

It is not my intent to undertake a full-scale refutation of form criticism. Actually, it may be to the detriment of the discipline if the positive contributions of form criticism are ignored, among them that the oral traditions were shaped into literary forms (e.g., pronouncement story) as they were remembered and adapted to meet all sorts of needs for the Christ congregations. The opportunity for unbridled communal creativity in this process may have been held in check by restraining factors such as the existence of written sources or other stabilizing factors in the oral transmission. Among these stabilizing factors may have been the ongoing presence of some eyewitnesses in the transmission process. Nineham's deduction that, if some Markan pericopae are communal products then all must be, does not necessarily follow.⁷⁶ Robert Stein remarks on the irony that the smooth, rounded forms were thought by other form critics to be earlier than the

the early Christians may have used notebooks. See George Kennedy, "Classical and Christian Source Criticism" in *The Relationship among the Gospels: an Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (ed. William O. Walker; San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1978), 136-43; Graham Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 186-9. Finally, Maurice Casey (*Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 111-252) has made the most robust case for reconstructing Aramaic sources behind certain sections of Mark (2:23-3:6, 9:11-13, 10:35-45; 14:12-26).

⁷³ This is the chief complaint of James Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 36-7.

⁷⁴ For a major example of the implementation of memory research in Jesus studies, see Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, imagination, and history* (Grand Rapids: SPCK, 2010), 1-30. For a study of the stabilizing factors in oral tradition, see Dunn, *Gospels*, 22-44.

⁷⁵ Paul Foster lays down this challenge for New Testament scholars exploring these new avenues in his critical reaction to the work of Dunn and Allison among others. See Paul Foster, "Memory, Orality, and the Fourth Gospel: Three Dead-Ends in Historical Jesus Research," *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 191-227.

⁷⁶ Martin, *Evangelist*, 57.

impure forms and that stories repeated on a yearly basis by firsthand participants in the ministry of Jesus would naturally take on a generalized and stereotyped quality.⁷⁷

A fundamental insight of form criticism is that Papias simplified a complex process by excluding oral traditions for Mark save for Peter. But if some eyewitnesses could have been part of the process of oral transmission, then it is possible, in theory, that Peter had a substantial role in shaping some of the traditions that reached Mark. Each example, such as the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31) or the denials (14:66-72), would have to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Form criticism on its own may not invalidate Taylor's compromise that the patristic tradition "[b]ecomes vulnerable only when too much is based upon it, and when regard is not paid to the probability that other sources of information were open to the Evangelist, not only from the testimony of individuals, but in the life and worship of a living Church."⁷⁸ Before I move on, let me underscore that I am not making a positive case that Peter did play a role in formulating *any* of the pericopae incorporated into Mark. My contention at this point is that the method of form criticism to classify the pre-Synoptic oral units according to form and seek out their functions among the congregations is inadequate to render a final verdict.

B. The Anti-Petrine Tendencies of the Redactor

1. Theodore Weeden's Redaction Critical Case against the Patristic Tradition

The form critical belittlement of the evangelists as compilers gave way to redaction criticism, which respected them as theologians in their own right. Distinguishing the contribution of the evangelists from the sources they inherited is easier with Matthew or Luke for we can observe how they modify Mark. To detect the editor's hand in Mark, redaction critics look to the Markan

⁷⁷ Stein, *Synoptic Problem*, 196-97; *Mark*, 5;

⁷⁸ Taylor, *Mark*, 27.

seams, insertions, summaries, pericopae, selection, arrangement, omissions, introduction, conclusion, vocabulary and titles.⁷⁹ In terms of Markan scholarship, Willi Marxsen opened the floodgates to studying Mark as a creative theologian and shifting the attention to the third *Sitz im Leben* of the evangelists. Marxsen rightly stressed their pivotal role:

The transmission leads rather to ultimate ‘fragmentation.’ The redaction, on the other hand, contradicts this natural development. This counteraction cannot be explained without taking into account an individual, an author personality who pursues a definite goal with his work.⁸⁰

The renewed attention on the evangelists did not revive the traditional consensus.

Marxsen reads Mark as an urgent call to assemble in Galilee for the *parousia* (14:28; 16:7),⁸¹ another nail in the coffin for the patristic tradition, this time on the Roman provenance of Mark.⁸² Rather than seeing Peter’s imprint on Mark, many redaction critics discerned the polar opposite intention in Mark – a fierce polemic against Peter, the Twelve and the family of Jesus.⁸³ The most thorough-going polemical reading is in Theodore Weeden’s revised doctoral thesis *Mark – Traditions in Conflict*. For Weeden, the disciples are the interpretive key to Mark’s redactional

⁷⁹ See the summary of such criteria as originally proposed by Robert Stein in C. Clifton Black, *The Disciples according to Mark: Markan Redaction in Current Debate* (JSNTS 27; Sheffield: JSOT Press; Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 29-38, 65-181.

⁸⁰ Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* (Trans. Roy A. Harrisville; Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), 18.

⁸¹ Marxsen, *Evangelist*, 83-92.

⁸² Not all scholars have abandoned the traditional Roman provenance of Mark. See Hengel, *Studies*, 28-30, Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark’s Gospel* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2003), and Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark’s Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperialism* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2008), 76-91. Other scholars opt for a Syrian origin such as Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark’s Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 100-5, Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 236-58 and Horsley, *Whole Story*, 37-51. A Galilean provenance for Mark is a minority view, but it has been recently defended by H.N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in Its Historical and Social Context* (NovTSup 114; Leiden: Brill, 2004) and is represented in the commentary by Ched Myers, *the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 421-2.

⁸³ Joseph Tyson, “The Blindness of the Disciples in Mark,” *JBL* 80 (1961): 261-68; John Dominic Crossan, “Mark and the Relatives of Jesus,” *NovT* 15 (1973): 81-113; Telford, *Theology*, 127-63.

agenda. Weeden parallels this to the robust interest in characterization and the moral lessons imparted by the attitudes, speeches and behaviours of the characters in Greek drama.⁸⁴

Weeden divides the depiction of the Markan disciples into three stages: imperceptiveness (1:16-8:26), misconception (8:27-14:10), and rejection (14:10-16:8).⁸⁵ In stage one, the disciples are insiders, commissioned on a successful healing and exorcism mission (3:14-15; 6:7, 13) and privy to private explanations of the parables (4:11-2). Incongruously, they are the most obtuse, unable to fathom their master's supernatural abilities (4:40; 5:30; 8:4, 14-21) while the crowds and even a Greek (7:24-30) have better perception. After momentary insight at Caesarea Philippi (8:29), the second stage is marked by their inability to grasp the redefined nature of the messianic task (8:30-33; 9:5-6, 10, 32, 33-35; 10:23-31, 35-45). The disciples would rather have an exclusive monopoly on positions of power (9:38; 10:13-4). Last of all, in the third stage, Jesus is betrayed (14:43-52), abandoned (14:50) and denied (14:66-72) by the Twelve. On the whole, Mark “[p]aints them as obtuse, obdurate, recalcitrant men who at first are unperceptive of Jesus’ messiahship, then oppose its style and character, and finally totally reject it.”⁸⁶

The source of the disciples’ cognitive dissonance stems from Mark’s re-definition of messiahship (8:29-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34, 45) and discipleship (8:34-38; 8:33-37; 10:35-44).⁸⁷ Mark reconfigured the identity of Jesus around the suffering Son of Man and Isaianic Servant in a head-on conflict with a θεῖος ἀνὴρ Christology represented by the disciples, a “divine man” theology lurking behind the pneumatics in Corinth or the Johannine “signs source.”⁸⁸ The Markan eschatological discourse sheds light on the proponents of this Christology. Pneumatic Christ followers had infiltrated the Markan community and boasted of their mystical union with

⁸⁴ Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 13-6.

⁸⁵ Weeden, *Traditions*, 26-32 (for stage 1), 32-38 (stage 2) and 38-51 (stage 3).

⁸⁶ Weeden, *Traditions*, 51.

⁸⁷ Weeden, *Traditions*, 52-69.

⁸⁸ Weeden, *Traditions*, 60-6.

the risen Lord, performing “signs and wonders” in the name of Jesus (ἐγὼ εἶμι) (Mark 13:5-6, 21-2; cf. 6:50; 14:62; Matt 24:5; John 8:58) in imitation of the apostles (cf. Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12).⁸⁹ Mark responds by removing the Son of Man from the human plane until the denouement of history (13:24-7).⁹⁰ The closest parallel to the message of the discourse is in Mark 8:34-9:1, the context of which is a bitter dispute between Peter’s divine man and Jesus’s suffering Christology (8:31-33).⁹¹

Since the pneumatics claimed to be in continuity with the Twelve with their epiphanies of the risen Lord and access to esoteric truth taught by Jesus, Mark demeans the disciples to undercut their claims to authority at the root. Confronted with resurrection visions of the *kerygma* that legitimized the Twelve (e.g., 1 Cor 15:5), Mark translates Jesus straight to heaven and keeps the disciples in the dark about his resurrection (Mark 16:6, 8).⁹² This does not falsify the prediction that the disciples “will see” (ὄψεσθε) Jesus in Galilee (16:7; cf. 14:28), for Weeden takes the future tense of ὀράω as a reference to the *parousia*.⁹³ Mark converts an Easter story into an event that occurred during the ministry, the transfiguration, and inserts Jesus’s instruction to keep silent about the event until after Easter (9:9) to explain the confusion that the disciples had visions of the risen Jesus.⁹⁴ As for the idea that Jesus imparted hidden teachings to his disciples (4:1-20, 24-34), Mark inherited this section from the pneumatics as it contains non-Markan esoteric language (e.g., μυστήριον) and contradicts the rest of the narrative where Jesus does not exclusively address the crowd in parables (4:11-12, 34). Mark turns their tradition on its head by inserting the metaphor of a lamp on its stand for all to see (4:21-25) and

⁸⁹ Weeden, *Traditions*, 73-81.

⁹⁰ Weeden, *Traditions*, 81-90.

⁹¹ Weeden, *Traditions*, 99.

⁹² Weeden, *Traditions*, 108-10.

⁹³ Weeden, *Traditions*, 111-7; cf. Marxsen, *Evangelist*, 83-92.

⁹⁴ Weeden, *Traditions*, 124-6.

transforming an item of their vocabulary (λόγος) (4:14-20) into a “word” of suffering (8:32, 38; 14:39).⁹⁵ The “insiders” possess less insight than “outsiders” like the Syrophenician woman, the alien exorcist or the Centurion.⁹⁶ Weeden concludes, “He [Mark] saw that the most convincing way to discredit the claims of a secret gospel would be to take its basic components (its rationale, terminology, secret motif and so on) and either expose them as absurd or eviscerate them by turning them into weapons in the service of his own position, or both.”⁹⁷ To overcome the pneumatics, the evangelist discredits the apostles who they held up as worthy of emulation.

2. Evaluation of the Redaction Critical Objection

There are some critical weaknesses with Weeden’s reconstruction of the evangelist’s *Sitz im Leben*. The θεῖος ἀνὴρ as a generalized, unified concept in Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish sources has come under heavy fire for assimilating too much disparate data about sages, magicians and deified heroes.⁹⁸ It may have no heuristic value in reconstructing a shadowy group within the Markan community and the evidence is slim of any genetic link to the Twelve. Along these lines, Weeden elides too easily the distinct beliefs of the evangelist’s contemporary foes and the historical Twelve.⁹⁹ The missionaries whom Paul sarcastically dubs “super-apostles” in Corinth (2 Cor 11:5; 12:12) may be unrelated to either the Twelve in Jerusalem or the members of the Markan community. The book of Acts cannot be admitted as evidence that the Twelve represented themselves as thaumaturgists over against a Pauline and Markan *kerygma* of the cross, for Paul is a miracle worker in Acts too (19:11-2; 28:1-6, 8-9).¹⁰⁰ Mark

⁹⁵ Weeden, *Traditions*, 140-5; 150-3.

⁹⁶ Weeden, *Traditions*, 148-9.

⁹⁷ Weeden, *Traditions*, 148.

⁹⁸ For a summary of the debate, see J.D. Kingsbury, “The ‘Divine Man’ as the Key to Mark’s Christology: The End of an Era?” *Interpretation* 35 (1981): 243-57. See also Kee, *Community of the New Age*, 24-9.

⁹⁹ Black, *Markan Redaction*, 139-40.

¹⁰⁰ Martin, *Evangelist*,

rules out the Twelve as advocates of a wonder-working, quasi-divine Christology as they recurrently fail to comprehend the miraculous deeds of Jesus (6:51-2; 8:17-21; 9:10).¹⁰¹

If Mark had an axe to grind against the Twelve, a Hellenistic θεῖος ἄνθρωπος Christology is an improbable target. In its place, Joseph Tyson and William Telford submit that Mark repudiated the aspirations of the Jerusalem Pillars to a nationalistic, royal Davidic dynasty with rigid social boundaries excluding non-Jews.¹⁰² This is a more realistic appraisal of a messianic movement headquartered in Jerusalem but may be no less speculative. It contradicts Paul that the Pillars were in agreement with expanding the social boundaries in principle even if it was fiercely debated how to carry this out in practice (Gal 2:1-14). We have no first-century evidence that the family of Jesus saw themselves as part of a royal dynasty or that the Pillars held Law-observance was incompatible with notions of an atoning death (cf. 2 Macc 7).¹⁰³ Paul was no less “nationalistic” if by that one means that he anticipated a kingdom (1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Cor 15:50; Gal 5:21) led by a messianic ruler (Rom 1:3-4; 1 Cor 15:24-5) and saw his commission to turn the nations from their native customs to obedience to Israel’s deity. Ironically, the Markan Jesus stands up for the disciples when their *Torah* piety is criticized as too lax (2:18, 23-4, 7:2, 5) and affirms the priority of the mission to Israel with the nations in a distinctly secondary position (cf. 7:24-30), which undermines the likelihood that Mark intended to criticize the Twelve’s attitudes about the *Torah* or the “Gentile mission.”

Weeden’s project may also be derailed by weaknesses inherent in the redactional-critical method. Without the aid of Mark’s sources, the goal of discriminating tradition from redaction

¹⁰¹ Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 46; Mary Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark’s World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Fortress, 1996), 77 n. 4; 220.

¹⁰² Tyson, “Blindness,” 261-268; Telford, *Theology*, 135-6, 50-1; cf. Crossan, “Relatives of Jesus,” 111-13.

¹⁰³ James Crossley, “Mark’s Christology and a Scholarly Creation of a Non-Jewish Christ of Faith” in *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maurice Casey* (London: Equinox, 2010), 120-1, 124-5. I suppose as a counter example one might cite the reporting of Hegesippus on Domitian’s prosecution of Jude’s grandson as a Davidid (Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.19-20), but this may only be evidence that the *belief* in Jesus’ Davidic sonship sounded threatening to imperial power and not that they saw themselves as royalty.

may be tentative and inconclusive. For a case in point, the redaction critic Ernest Best argues that Mark broadened traditional references to the “Twelve” to the “disciples” (μαθηταὶ) or “those around him” (οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν), for the “disciples” are not confined to the Twelve but are equivalent to all Christ followers.¹⁰⁴ He reaches the opposite conclusion that the tradition was harsher on Peter and softened by Mark through widening the negative focus on Peter to the other disciples (8:33a; 9:6b; 14:31b, 33, 38b) or by positively introducing Peter as the spokesperson or head of the group (3:16; 10:28a; 11:21; 16:7).¹⁰⁵ As an example, Best conjectures that Mark took over the story of Peter’s denials (14:66-72) yet omitted “Christ” as the object of “to curse” (ἀναθεματίζειν) and added Peter’s sorrow to soften the negative characterization of Peter.¹⁰⁶ Without Mark’s sources, it cannot ultimately be decided whether Weeden or Best is correct in which direction the evangelist edited the tradition. Although Best operates with a more transparent methodological procedure than Weeden in extricating the editorial additions on the basis of distinctive Markan vocabulary and style, C. Clifton Black exposes inconsistencies in Best’s method and is skeptical of the whole enterprise as word statistics may show that a given term is preferred by a writer and nothing more.¹⁰⁷ The fact that the evangelist may write up a story with characteristic Markan vocabulary or literary devices is not a guarantee that a source was not re-narrated in the evangelist’s style.

There may be limited cases involving authorial asides or narrative disjunctions that may enable a scholar to discern in Mark where a redactor imposed a new point of view onto the

¹⁰⁴ Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel According to Mark* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 102-4; idem, *Story*, 83.

¹⁰⁵ Best, *Disciples*, 131, 162-76,

¹⁰⁶ Best, *Disciples*, 167-70.

¹⁰⁷ Black, *Markan Redaction*, 116-7. For examples of Best’s inconsistencies, Black shows that παραπορεύεσθαι and ἐμβλεπεῖν both occur four times in Mark but Best only takes the former as redactional. Best’s characteristic “Markan” vocabulary is not more frequent than other Gospels such as γρηγορεῖν (6 times in Matt, 6 in Mark, 1 in Luke and none in John), ἐχουσία (10 times in Matt, 10 in Mark, 16 in Luke and 8 in John), εἶδον (58 times in Matt, 42 in Mark, 67 in Luke and 36 in John) or συναγεῖν (24 times in Matt, 5 in Mark, 6 in Luke, 77 in John).

sources, but Robert Tannehill issues a reminder from a narrative critical standpoint that a preserved tradition can be of much more significance at times than a minor editorial change.¹⁰⁸ It does not matter if Mark 4:11-12 was culled from a source, for, if Mark wanted to combat the veneration of the disciples, it was a dangerous account to retain.¹⁰⁹ Retelling the miracle stories was counter-productive if Mark wished to debunk a too triumphant image of Jesus stemming from the Jerusalem Pillars at the expense of his role as a suffering saviour. Mark does not give the reader any clues that the second half of the Gospel cancels out the image of Jesus established by the heavy concentration of miracles in the first half.¹¹⁰ Mark's outline enables other scholars like Gundry or Winn to plausibly read an overwhelming Christology of Power as infusing both halves of the text.¹¹¹ If Mark contains a polemic against Peter and the Twelve, it will not be uncovered by the subjective decisions of the critic in weeding out bits of redaction from the tradition. It requires reading the text of Mark as a narrative whole.

C. The Progressive Flow of the Narrative towards the Downfall of the Disciples

1. Richard Horsley's Narrative Critical Case against the Patristic Tradition

Refocusing on the decisive role of the evangelists in shaping the final form of the Gospels in redaction criticism flowed into narrative critical approaches. As Tolbert recognizes, "If choice and construction, no matter how unpretentious, stand behind any parts of the story (e.g., the so-called 'redactional units'), then that same choice and construction must have presided over the

¹⁰⁸ Robert C. Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role" *JR* 57 (1977): 386.

¹⁰⁹ Tannehill, "Narrative Role," 394. However, Tolbert (*Sowing the Gospels*, 160-1) notes that Jesus addresses his explanations to a wider circle than the Twelve (οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα) (4:10) and letting the audience in on the secret, but Mark still portrays the Twelve as part of this larger circle of insiders.

¹¹⁰ Horsley, *Whole Story*, 74-75; Mack, *Myth of Innocence*, 335.

¹¹¹ Gundry, *Apology*; Winn, *Purpose*, 108-36. In the latter half of Mark, Jesus still exhibits amazing predictive power (14:18-21, 30), will return in amazing glory (13:27-8), and refuses to go quietly into the good night as his death is accompanied by cosmic disturbances (compare 15:33 with 13:24) and a great cry (15:37).

selection, placement, and development of all parts of the narrative.”¹¹² The goal of source, form and redaction criticism is to get behind the text, but the advantage of narrative criticism is that it restores the text itself as the primary object of study. The text’s narrative features such as genre, setting, narration, plot and characterization take centre stage. While knowledge of the historical context in which a literary work was produced guards against anachronistic or fanciful readings, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon articulates the benefit to researching the text and the historical context in relative isolation to see how they might mutually inform one another.¹¹³

Literary critics have not resolved the enigma of the Markan disciples as the act of balancing out the positive and negative features of their characterization makes Mark amenable to multiple interpretations. The ambiguity of narrative and language allows for some choice in how readers connect the relationships between sentences, paragraphs or sections with what came before or after and fill in the narrative gaps in different ways.¹¹⁴ For Tannehill, the tension between the early positive identification with the disciples (Mark 1:16-20; 3:13-9), and the repulsion at their increasing failures, invites the active reader to see their own shortcomings in the disciples and to repent.¹¹⁵ Like Best and Tannehill, Malbon reads a paraenetic purpose in Mark’s construal of the disciples. Departing from Best’s correlation of the disciples with the church and the crowds with the non-evangelized masses,¹¹⁶ she discerns a closer correspondence

¹¹² Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 2.

¹¹³ Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Texts and Contexts: Interpreting the Disciples in Mark” in *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark’s Gospel* (Louisville, London, Leiden: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 115. Some literary critics combine the results of historical-criticism with the newer literary approaches. Tolbert (*Sowing the Word*, 35-47) has some introductory comments about the authorship and date of the work along with insights about the affects of Hellenism, social mobility and rhetorical education on the author’s world. Robert Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes: The Function of the Feeding Stories in the Gospel of Mark* (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1981), 43-90 employs redaction criticism to determine that Mark 6:30-44 is a redactional reworking of the traditional feeding source in Mark 8:1-10 before exploring the narrative effect on the reader in doubling the feeding accounts.

¹¹⁴ Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 7. Her approach is indebted to Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns in Communication in Prose Fiction From Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 274-94.

¹¹⁵ Tannehill, “Narrative Role,” 393.

¹¹⁶ Best, *Mark as Story*, 83.

of the disciples and the crowds. Both groups hear the command to follow Jesus, get fed or healed by Jesus, and react with astonishment to Jesus.¹¹⁷ Discipleship for Mark, according to Malbon, is neither restrictive by being limited to an inner circle nor permissive as the call to follow Jesus comes with a heavy yoke.¹¹⁸ She senses in Mark “[t]he pulling of the rug out from any and all such groups, including the audience. Neither the disciples nor the hearers/readers can rest on their insider status; in this the two groups are alike, not different.”¹¹⁹

The literary critic Mary Ann Tolbert has the opposite interpretation of the Markan disciples. For her, the parable of the Sower (4:1-20) stands front and centre as an outline of the varied reactions to Jesus throughout Mark. The seed on “rocky ground” (πετρῶδης), standing for those whose initial enthusiasm vanishes under threat of persecution (4:16-17), represents Simon the “rock” (Πέτρος) and the rest of the Twelve who take flight rather than take up their crosses.¹²⁰ Peter wept over his denials (14:72), but his deep sorrow may not be a sign of repentance as the parallel of the wealthy young man shows all too well (10:22).¹²¹ She agrees with Tannehill that Mark invites the active participation of the reader, except, through the device of narrative irony, the reader has the inside scoop to avoid the faults that caused the disciples to fall away.¹²² Robert Fowler accentuates the effect of Mark’s doubling of the feeding narratives on the reader, for the bewilderment of the disciples about how Jesus expects to feed the crowds twice (8:4) and their qualms about lacking bread (8:16) after Jesus miraculously multiplied food comes across as extraordinarily obtuse.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark” in *In the Company of Jesus*, 44.

¹¹⁸ Malbon, “Fallible Followers,” 44

¹¹⁹ Malbon, “Texts and Contexts,” 120.

¹²⁰ Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 123-4, 145-56, 176-230.

¹²¹ Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 218.

¹²² Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 223-5.

¹²³ See Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes*, 93-6.

I want to take up Richard Horsley's reading of Mark in detail because of his insistence on Mark as an interconnected story, against the form critical disassembling of the text into a clutter of disconnected pericopae from diverse communities,¹²⁴ and his consistently polemical reading of the disciples. He reserves some criticism for the new literary critics who treat Mark as an autonomous fiction, as if language and meaning can be detached from the social context in which it is generated and heard.¹²⁵ His fresh take on Mark combines literary and ideological criticism. For Horsley, "Mark as a story about a renewal movement among people subjected by empire has been obscured in its reading as Christian Scripture in the modern Western world."¹²⁶ Mark narrates the mission of Jesus throughout the Galilean villages and their local assemblies (synagogues) while scrupulously avoiding major urban centres (e.g., Sepphoris); his opposition to the imperially-backed Jerusalem Temple establishment costs Jesus his life but could not stop the persistence of the Galilean mission (Mark 16:7).¹²⁷ Mark concentrates on a village-based renewal program that, presumes knowledge of Israel's history and covenant as a guide to socio-economic life despite the occasional aside for readers less versed in these customs, and resonates with the popular Israelite tradition against the imperial demonic "legion" (Mark 5:1-20) and Roman-designated Judaeans elites.¹²⁸ An extra clue to Mark's implied audience is that, while urbanites regularly interacted with individuals of different ranks, a villager would be amused by the disciples as arrogant and pretentious would-be leaders.¹²⁹

Horsley has many provocative insights into Mark's hostility to Roman imperialism, but my focus will be on his chapter on the Twelve.¹³⁰ His stress on Mark as a story leads him to

¹²⁴ Horsley, *Whole Story*, 5-6.

¹²⁵ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 7, 10.

¹²⁶ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 27.

¹²⁷ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 40-42.

¹²⁸ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 47-51.

¹²⁹ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 50.

¹³⁰ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 79-97.

firmly contest a reading of Mark as a theology of discipleship and an exhortation to “disciples” in Mark’s audience to a life of discipleship and self-sacrifice.¹³¹ At best, a reading that narrows in on the disciples substitutes a secondary sub-plot for the dominant plot line that pits the kingdom against the Jerusalem elites and their scribal retainers.¹³² An ancient writer was not interested in the inner motivations of the characters but in their concrete actions as relative to the plot.¹³³ As the plot unfolds, the Twelve repeatedly demonstrate themselves to be inadequate representatives of the kingdom movement and regress from disciples to deserters of Jesus. If the Twelve were paradigmatic of discipleship in Mark, Matthew and Luke would not have had the need to rehabilitate the faltering image of the disciples.¹³⁴

Horsley first downplays the positive episodes about the Twelve in the earlier parts of the narrative. The Twelve are a subset of a larger group that gathers to listen to Jesus (4:10) and are commissioned to spread the news of the kingdom (3:14-5) as part of Mark’s broader agenda to expand the movement.¹³⁵ As the story progresses, the Twelve misunderstand the nature of the sea and feeding miracles as symbolizing the new exodus renewal (6:52; 8:4, 16-21) and act as foils for how not to respond to the kingdom vision of Jesus and the egalitarian social-economic relations that it demands (cf. 8:22-10:52).¹³⁶ Peter’s confession of Jesus as “Christ” is rebuffed as parcel to the satanic opposition to Jesus’s program (8:27-33). Horsley, in fact, thinks that the Markan portrait of Jesus does not conform to a “messianic script” at all but is closer to the image of a liberating prophet like Moses or Elijah.¹³⁷ Finally, when the disciples cannot stay awake in

¹³¹ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 81-6.

¹³² Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 85.

¹³³ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 84.

¹³⁴ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 91.

¹³⁵ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 80, 85, 89-90.

¹³⁶ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 91, 93.

¹³⁷ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 92-3; 250-3. Horsley argues that Jesus rejects the acclamation “son of David” from the Jerusalem great tradition (cf. Mark 12:35-37), that a later scribe inserted the first verse of Mark (1:1) and

Gethsemane, Jesus reverts back to Peter's ("the rock") name Simon before the disciples scatter and have no role in the crucifixion, burial and resurrection scenes.¹³⁸ The movement resumes in Galilee but the women do not relay the call (16:7-8) and the ever misguided disciples take up residence in Jerusalem.¹³⁹ This last swipe caps the polemic against the hierarchical leadership of the "Jerusalem Pillars" throughout Mark from the rejection of the prestige of the kin of Jesus (3:31-5) to the disapproval of the Twelve's conceit that they have the authority to regulate who belongs in the movement (9:38-41).¹⁴⁰ In Horsley's reading, Peter and the Twelve deserted the social ideals of Jesus as Mark understood them.

2. *Evaluation of the Narrative Critical Objection*

Horsley, in my opinion, correctly perceives that the key character flaw of the disciples is their desire for status and glory, while the exemplars of the kingdom movement are the Son of Man who surrenders his life (10:45) and others on the lower end of the social scale (e.g., children, servants). Where Horsley may be critiqued is in forcing a dichotomy between Mark as a story of a prophetic movement in resistance to the powers that be or a summons to "disciples" who wish to join the movement of the high cost that may be entailed. For readers who enter into Mark's story, the blunt Exposé of the foibles of the Twelve might lead to serious introspection of whether they have embraced the egalitarian socio-economic vision of the kingdom. Moreover, Horsley has a too one-sided reading of the Markan disciples, for the stories of them abandoning everything to follow Jesus and successfully ministry on behalf of Jesus are quite positive.

Peter's acclamation of Jesus as the "Christ" in the discipleship section – framed between the

that Jesus' affirmative answer to the high priest's question is probably a corruption of an originally deflective answer on the basis of the Synoptic parallels to Mark 14:61-62 (cf. Matt 26:63-64; Luke 22:67-70).

¹³⁸ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 93-94.

¹³⁹ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 94-96.

¹⁴⁰ Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 96.

two-stage healing of the blind man at the beginning (8:22-26) and the cry of blind Bartimaeus to the “son of David” before he is healed and accompanies Jesus on the “way” to Jerusalem (10:46-52) – implies that Peter has partial insight into the identity of Jesus.¹⁴¹ Peter’s unwillingness for Jesus to undergo suffering as part of the re-definition of the messianic task reveals that Peter remains partially blind (8:28-33). Even if Horsley is correct on the debatable textual conclusions at Mark 1:1 and 14:62, he overlooks how the disciples belong to “Christ” in 9:41. Many of the episodes of the disciples in the first half of Mark are positive and Tannehill’s thesis on the initial identification with the disciples remains compelling.

Nevertheless, I cannot but agree with Horsley that the progressive flow of the narrative is on the increasing failure of the disciples. Whether Mark leaves the disciples in the condition of utter failure or hints at a restoration beyond the narrative may be predicated on how one reads the ending. A minority of scholars favour the solution that Mark’s original ending was lost.¹⁴² It seems unlikely that damage occurred to the ending long after Mark was in circulation and left no trace in the other Synoptics or the manuscript tradition,¹⁴³ but the ending could have been restored by the evangelist or the first readers in it was quickly damaged when the Gospel began to circulate. The move from positing a lost ending to inferring the contents of that ending may be too speculative, so the soundest approach may be to interpret Mark’s ending as it stands at 16:8, in which case the appearances of the risen Jesus are not narrated. It is implausible that Mark put a false prediction on the lips of Jesus that the disciples would see him in Galilee (16:7). The narrator represents Jesus as a reliable commentator with accurate prophetic powers (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; 11:2-6; 13:1-23; 14:18-21, 27-30), so it can be assumed he accurately predicts

¹⁴¹ Best, *Discipleship*, 3.

¹⁴² The best case is advanced by Croy, *Mutilation*, 45-68. See also Gundry, *Apology*, 1009-12; France, *Mark*, 684; Stein, *Mark*, 734-6; Witherington, *Mark*, 48-9, 415-8.

¹⁴³ Gundry (*Apology*, 1009-12) argues the lost ending is present in Matthew and Luke, but Croy (*Mutilation*, 156-7) responds that Matthew and Luke appear to redact the abrupt ending of Mark 16:8 in different ways.

the post-Easter role of the disciples as fishers of people (1:17), as sharers in his cup (10:39) and as persecuted on account of his name (13:9, 11).¹⁴⁴ Although Weeden navigates around this by making 14:28 and 16:7 a prediction of the *parousia* in Galilee, the tense change of προάγω (go before) from future in 14:28 to present in 16:7 signals that the prediction became a present reality and the cosmic imagery accompanying the *parousia* of the Son of Man (8:38; 13:24-27; 14:62) is absent in 14:27 and 16:7.¹⁴⁵ Mark 16:7 assumes that the disciples met the risen one in Galilee. This is one reason why Croy cannot imagine that Mark deliberately left the matter ambiguously open-ended, reminding modern literary critics that, “Mark is a Gospel, a proclamation of good news; not a brooding, inexplicable, existential riddle.”¹⁴⁶

There must be another way to read the double negative in the Greek of Mark 16:8 that the women told literally “nothing to no one” (οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν). Some interpret their fear before the messenger in white negatively as cowardly fear¹⁴⁷ and others positively as a fitting reaction to the *mysterium tremendum*.¹⁴⁸ The women could not have remained in fearful silence, for there are no other options in Mark for how the story got out in the first place. I am drawn to the solution of Larry Hurtado to the conundrum at 16:8 as it circumvents positing a hypothetical lost ending and does not discredit the women that verify the truthfulness of Mark’s story. Hurtado interprets 16:8 as meaning that the women did not make the announcement public and spoke to no one beyond whom the angel directed them to tell in 16:7. Mark 16:8 does not use a conversive particle (δέ, ἀλλά) to signal the women’s disobedience to the command of 16:7 and the construction οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν is paralleled in Mark 1:44 (cf. 7:36) where Jesus commands the

¹⁴⁴ Tannehill (“Narrative Role,” 394) notes that the eschatological discourse is addressed to Peter, James and John.

¹⁴⁵ Croy, *Mutilation*, 114. Mark’s earliest interpreters do not understand these references in terms of the *parousia* as Matthew 28:7, 10 uses the future tense of ὀράω and the active voice is used in John 20:18, 25 (cf. 1 Cor 9:1). But I base the above arguments on Mark because redaction and literary critics seek to read Mark on its own terms.

¹⁴⁶ Croy, *Mutilation*, 42.

¹⁴⁷ Weeden, *Traditions*, 47-50.

¹⁴⁸ Lane, *Mark*, 591-92; Nineham, *St. Mark*, 441; Collins, *Mark*, 803.

leper to say “nothing to no one” (μηδενὶ μηδέν) before directing him to go to the priest.¹⁴⁹ The women went straight to the disciples with the good news to rejoin the risen Jesus in Galilee. A final criticism of Horsley on this point is that he imports the picture of the disciple’s hierarchical leadership in Jerusalem into Mark from another story, the Acts of the Apostles. Mark does not criticize the disciples for going to Jerusalem and the eschatological discourse assumes that they had a role in the suffering community. To conclude, the fact that Mark sets up the disciples as adversarial foils for the social praxis of Jesus may be a serious obstacle to the indirect authorship of Mark by Peter. I will return to this objection in the next chapter, but a one-sided polemical reading of the disciples cannot be sustained from Mark’s narrative.

D. The Evangelist as an Anonymous Non-Jewish Christ Follower

1. Kurt Niederwimmer’s and Pierson Parker’s Historical Case against the Patristic Tradition

Thus far, the objections have touched upon Peter’s role in the composition of the Gospel text but left the identification of the evangelist as “Mark” unscathed. This individual has long been identified with the “Mark” who pops up in the New Testament as one “from the circumcision” (Col 4:10) or as a resident of Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). A direct historical-critical case against this identification was made in the highly influential studies of Kurt Niederwimmer and Pierson Parker. Niederwimmer’s first argument treats *Form-und-Redaktionsgeschichte* as established facts.¹⁵⁰ Detailed Markan episodes involving Peter, especially unflattering accounts (8:33; 9:5; 14:30, 66), do not require an eye-witness for they serve a parenetic or hortatory purpose for the edification of the church.¹⁵¹ Niederwimmer’s foremost contribution is the contention that the

¹⁴⁹ Larry Hurtado, “The Women, the Tomb and the Ending of Mark” in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Sean Freyne* (eds. Zuleika Rodgers & Margaret Daly-Denton; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 449-50.

¹⁵⁰ Niederwimmer, “Johannes Markus,” 175.

¹⁵¹ Niederwimmer, “Johannes Markus,” 175-6, 185.

evangelist was ignorant of Palestinian geography and customs, rendering it unlikely that a Jewish author by the name of (John) Mark had anything to do with this Gospel.

From the sources, Niederwimmer deduces that the evangelist had vague information on the regions of Galilee, Judaea, Idumea, Tyre, Sidon and the Mount of Olives and inserted place-names into the tradition (cf. 1:21, 29-31).¹⁵² This does not outweigh Mark's geographic deficiencies. First, the trouble with the exorcism story that takes place in "the region of the Gerasenes" (τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν) (5:1-20) is that the city of Gerasa is 55 kilometres (34 miles) from the lake. Mark 5:1 has the notable textual variants Γαδαρηνῶν (Gadarenes) (cf. Matt 8:28) or Γεργεσηνῶν (Gergesenes) (cf. Origen, *In. Ion.* 6.41), but Gerasenes is likely the earliest reading as the *Lectio difficilior*.¹⁵³ Second, if Jesus is on the eastern side of the lake in 6:31f, crossing "to the other side" (εἰς τὸ πέραν) (6:45) wrongly puts Bethsaida on the western shore.¹⁵⁴ Third, 7:31 has the odd itinerary from Tyre to 22 miles (35 kilometres) north to Sidon, then southeast through the middle of the Decapolis and finally northwest to the Sea of Galilee. Niederwimmer bluntly writes, "Es ist sinnlos, diese Angabe mit den wirklichen Verhältnissen vereinen und daraus eine komplizierte Reiseroute Jesu rekonstruieren zu wollen."¹⁵⁵ Joel Marcus puts it into perspective: imagine a comparable journey from Portland to Denver via Seattle and the Great Plains or from Liverpool to London via Glasgow and Norfolk.¹⁵⁶ Mark 11:1, too, mixes up the route from Jordan to Jerusalem as Bethphage and Bethany are placed in

¹⁵² Niederwimmer, "Johannes Markus," 178-79. One sign that Capernaum is a redactional insertion into the healing of Peter's mother-in-law is that it contradicts the tradition of Peter and Andrew's origins in John 1:44.

¹⁵³ Niederwimmer, "Johannes Markus," 177-85. Gadara hardly alleviates the problem, as Niederwimmer notes, for it is 8 kilometres (5 miles) southeast of the lake.

¹⁵⁴ Niederwimmer, "Johannes Markus," 179-80. Niederwimmer finds another mistake in the description of Bethsaida as a village (κώμη) since Josephus (*Ant.* 18, 28) describes how Philip renamed it after Julia Livia and raised it to the rank of a πόλις (cf. Luke 9:10; John 1:44).

¹⁵⁵ Niederwimmer, "Johannes Markus," 180. "It is pointless to combine this information with the real conditions and to want to reconstruct it into a complicated route of Jesus."

¹⁵⁶ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 472.

the wrong order.¹⁵⁷ Niederwimmer's second argument is that the evangelist had an inadequate Jewish religious praxis, expressly in the representation of ritual purity in Mark 7:1-23. While some Pharisees wished to extend the priestly regulation of hand washing to the 'am ha-aretz (the people of the land), Mark's aside that this was the custom of "all" the people is literally false. Moreover, Niederwimmer argues that washing with the "fist" (πυγμῆ) is an unparalleled description and Mark 7:4 is a caricature of what the evangelist regarded as "strange and arcane rituals" (befremde und obskure Riten).¹⁵⁸

Parker supplements Niederwimmer's case with numerous examples, albeit his chief aim is to topple the consensus on Markan priority by showing it to be secondary to the Jewish Gospel of Matthew.¹⁵⁹ Parker adds new geographical blunders: the wild beasts in the wilderness (1:13), the speedy delivery of John's head to Antipas in Tiberius (6:21),¹⁶⁰ the plural "towns of Caesarea Philippi" (8:27) as if not itself a town, the "rushes" (στριβάδας) from the "fields" or "hamlets" (ἀργός) (11:8) in the area between Bethany and Jerusalem, the unawareness of early spring figs (11:13), the unfeasibly rapid spread of news from Capernaum to all the regions of Galilee (1:28) and the uncertainty of whether Capernaum is by a desert or on the sea (cf. 1:35, 2:1, 18; 3:1, 7).¹⁶¹ Political inaccuracies abound from the title of Herod as "king" (6:14, 25, 26, 27) instead of "tetrarch" (Matt 14:1; Luke 9:7; Acts 13:1) to Herod's stealing Philip's wife (6:17; contra Josephus, *Ant.* 15.5.4).¹⁶² Aramaic terms are consistently mistranslated and treated as an exotic element in healing incantations.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Niederwimmer, "Johannes Markus," 181-82.

¹⁵⁸ Niederwimmer, "Johannes Markus," 183-85.

¹⁵⁹ Pierson Parker, "The Posterity of Mark" in *New Synoptic Studies* (ed. William Farmer; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 68-73.

¹⁶⁰ Josephus, *Ant.* 18.5.2 has John the Baptist imprisoned in Machaerus.

¹⁶¹ Parker, "Posterity," 68-70.

¹⁶² Parker, "Posterity," 70.

¹⁶³ Parker, "Posterity," 73. Cf. Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:1; 7:34; 8:10; 9:49-50; 10:46; 15:34.

If that was not enough to establish reasonable doubt, Parker catalogues all the mistakes about Second Temple Judaism(s). According to Parker, Mark wrongly suggests that the Pharisees had disciples (2:18), that a holy man could be adjured by a demoniac (5:7), that a local synagogue has more than one ruler (5:22), that Jesus could halt the sacrificial worship of the entire temple complex (11:16), that the kingdom of David is eschatological (11:10), that the high priest rendered his underclothes (χιτῶνας) (14:63) instead of his outer robe (ἰμότιον) (Matt 26:65), that Jesus would be acclaimed “king of the Jews” in Jerusalem (15:2), that Joseph would bury Jesus on the Sabbath as Friday ended at sunset (15:42, 15:46) and that the cloth around Jesus’s body was “wound” (ἐνειλέω) (15:46) rather than enveloped or folded in a Jewish manner (Matt 27:59; Luke 23:53).¹⁶⁴ Mark misquotes or misattributes the scriptures and tones down or sets aside the Mosaic Law six times.¹⁶⁵ As a result, a non-Jewish Christ follower is a more likely candidate for authorship. This is supported by the absence of Israelite exclusivism (contra Matt 10:5-6; 15:24), the harsh portrait of the Twelve, the universalistic interest (e.g., 3:8; 5:18-20; 7:31; 8:1-9, 20-1; 13:27) and the clarifications of Jewish customs.¹⁶⁶

2. *Evaluation of the Historical Objections*

To engage the most glaring errors on the geography and culture of Palestine, the trivial ones must first be swept aside. Parker may be guilty of taking Mark’s descriptive language in a pedantic and flatly literalistic fashion. Mark exaggerates with buzzwords like “immediately” or “all” for dramatic effect or employs rich symbolism in the wilderness as a mythical liminal place

¹⁶⁴ Parker, “Posterity,” 74-75.

¹⁶⁵ Parker (“Posterity,” 76, 80) argues that 2:27 sets aside the Sabbath, 7:10 tones down the commandment to honour parents by attributing it to Moses rather than the deity (contra Matt 15:4), 7:19 dismisses the dietary laws, 10:6-9 does not attribute divorce command to scripture (contra Matt 9:4-6) and sets it aside, and 12:29-33 misquotes the Shema and has the love commandment supersede it (contra Matt 22:40). Mark often misquotes or misattributes the scriptures (1:2; 2:26; 4:29; 10:19; 12:26) and reverses the order of importance of Elijah and Moses (9:4).

¹⁶⁶ Parker, “Posterity,” 82-92; cf. Niederwimmer, “Johannes Markus,” 187-8.

with the beasts as participants in a cosmic struggle (*T. Benj.* 5.2; *T. Naph* 8.4), the scriptural resonances in calling Herod a “king” (βασιλεύς), the demonic legion who plunge into the Sea like the Egyptians, or the barren fig-tree as a symbol of the fruitless Temple.¹⁶⁷ Parker’s rapid fire criticisms mask how weakly supported are some of his allegations: what evidence does he have that the Pharisees had no disciples when they enjoyed popular support (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.4), that a demoniac would not try to gain magical power over Jesus by invoking his name, that the Romans would not apply “king of the Jews” to Jesus in derision and a warning to political insurgents, or that this-worldly Davidic messianism could not be reworked in an eschatological direction in light of the diversity of messianic expectations? The idea that Jesus shut down the whole cult is a Markan hyperbole (11:16), but the stance that the Temple establishment was corrupt was not unique (cf. *Jub.* 23:21; *T. Levi* 14.1-6; *I Enoch* 89.73; 1QS 9:3-4; CD 6:11-15; Josephus, *War* 6.5.3; *m. Ker.* 1.7). Mark’s departure from the Jewish way of reckoning time from sunset to sunset may be to accommodate non-Jewish readers, though there may be evidence of a Jewish morning to morning reckoning.¹⁶⁸ Transliteration errors, poorly-chosen terms (e.g., χιτῶνας) or awkward phraseology (e.g., “one of the ___s” in 5:22) shows a typical bilingual without full command of either language struggling to translate between cultures.¹⁶⁹ This needs to be weighed against Martin Hengel’s observation that he knows of no other Greek work that employs so many Aramaicisms in such a limited space.¹⁷⁰

If I did not rebut the full catalogue of minor errors, a Jewish author from Palestine was not magically exempt from the human propensity to err. The major geographical mistakes may

¹⁶⁷ See especially Myers, *Strong Man*, 191; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 147-8.

¹⁶⁸ Collins, *Mark*, 6; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 20. Cf. Lev 7:15-16; Judg 19:4-9; 1 Sam 19:11; 28:19; Bel and the Dragon 15-17; Joseph and Aseneth 20:5-21; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.335.

¹⁶⁹ For a sophisticated discussion of bilingualism, translation studies and cross-cultural communication, see Casey, *Aramaic Sources*, 93-107. A person may learn both languages growing up, acquire a second language in reaching adulthood or move to a monoglot speaking environment where they forget aspects of their first language. Mark’s facility in a second language may also be hampered by Semitic interference and the significant cultural differences.

¹⁷⁰ Hengel, *Studies*, 46

be more relevant to the question of authorship. It should not be overlooked how much Mark gets right: the author has accurate knowledge of several place names not available from the biblical texts or Strabo (e.g., Bethany, Bethphage, Bethsaida, Caesarea Philippi, Capernaum, Dalmanutha, Gennesaret, or Gerasa) and accurately places many of the references.¹⁷¹ Heidi Roskam has recently turned the critical opinion on its head by insisting that Mark was familiar with Galilee but uninformed about Judaea or the Decapolis.¹⁷² She evaluates the geography in chapters 1-4 and 8-9 to be impeccable and faults Niederwimmer for locating the feeding of 6:34-44 on the east side of the lake when Jesus did not cross the lake in 6:32. Hence, 6:34-44 takes place on the west coast in the vicinity of Tiberius, situating Bethsaida correctly on the north-east coast of the lake (6:45). The one slip-up she spots on the otherwise sensible journey from a coastal area (Tyre) to the middle of Decapolis via the Galilean Sea (7:24-30) is that Mark does not quite realize how north Sidon was in relation to Tyre and the Sea.¹⁷³

Other scholars have attempted to explain away the other geographical abnormalities in Mark. Regarding why Bethphage and Bethany seem to be in the wrong order in 11:1, Robert Stein offers the possible solutions that Bethphage may have been physically closer to Jesus' ultimate destination of Jerusalem,¹⁷⁴ it may be meant to recall the order of Jesus's journey from Jerusalem through Bethphage to Bethany in 11:11, or the ancient road from Jericho to Jerusalem

¹⁷¹ Dean W. Chapman, "Locating the Gospel of Mark: A Model of Agrarian Biography" *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 25 (1995): 21. Mark correctly places Nazareth (in Galilee 1:9), Gerasa (in the Decapolis 5:1, 20), Capernaum (1:16, 19, 21), Gennesaret (6:53), Bethsaida (on the Sea of Galilee 6:45) and Bethany (on the Mount of Olives 11:1). Mark also has accurate sequences of geographical references such as when Jesus comes to shore at Bethsaida (8:22) when destination is Caesarea Philippi (8:27) or when he travels from Jericho (10:46) to Bethany (11:1) to Jerusalem (11:11).

¹⁷² Roskam *Purpose*, 95-100. She stands by the observation that Mark is unfamiliar with the region of the Decapolis in Mark 5:1-20 and Mark 11:1 has incorrectly reversed the order of Bethany and Bethphage on the journey to Jerusalem. She also sees Mark's descriptions of Jerusalem as too vague for a resident of the city.

¹⁷³ Roskam, *Purpose*, 104-110.

¹⁷⁴ Mark has a habit to mention the final destination of the journey and the intervening places next (cf. 7:31; 11:1).

might have passed through Bethphage before Bethany.¹⁷⁵ As for Mark 5:1, in spite of the limited textual support, Robert Gundry makes a case for the variant Gergesenes as the original reading. Gundry identifies Gergesa with the modern town of Kursi, which has a nearby steep slope and caves for tombs, but believes that a scribe less familiar with Palestinian topography than a figure like Origen mistakenly changed it to the better known Gerasa.¹⁷⁶ Other scholars accept that “Gerasenes” is more likely to be original as the more difficult reading, but interpret “the region of the Gerasenes” to be a wider reference that “Gerasa” and assume Mark had a more suitable location nearer the lake in mind.¹⁷⁷

If not all of Mark’s geographical blunders can be excused, the issue may be moot for Markan authorship for two reasons. First, the New Testament locates (John) Mark in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), Syria (12:25; 13:5; 15:37) and Asia Minor or Rome (Phlm 24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; 1 Pet 5:13) but not Galilee. Maps were not a ready commodity in the ancient world so there is no reason to expect a fully accurate knowledge outside one’s home region.¹⁷⁸ Dean W. Chapman in particular argues that critics may be imposing modern standards of cartographic exactness onto the ancient source like Mark which has a colloidal conception of familiar space and a cosmographic understanding of space outside of the range of the author’s experience.¹⁷⁹ Chapman’s point is that Mark exhibits a deep knowledge of areas that the author is acquainted such as Jerusalem and Judea (Bethany, Bethphage, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsamane) and

¹⁷⁵ Stein, *Mark*, 6 n. 11.

¹⁷⁶ Gundry, *Apology*, 255-6.

¹⁷⁷ See some of the solutions entertained in Taylor, *St. Mark*, 279; Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 176; Lane, *Mark*, 181; Gnilka, *Markus*, 201; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical*, 180; France, *Mark*, 227; Stein, *Mark*, 250.

¹⁷⁸ Hengel, *Studies*, 46; Marcus, *Mark 1-7*, 21.

¹⁷⁹ Chapman (“Agrarian Biography,” 31) defines colloidal geography as characterized by 1. egocentrism (all locations exist in relation to the subject rather than “objective” coordinate system), 2. lack of scale (distant places in same direction as subject seem closer together while nearer spaces expand with familiarity), 3. limits (based on subject’s experiences or conversations with other members of his community, outlying places never to be experienced not physically related to anything but float in outer world) (30), 4. topographical (correct proximities, separation, order, surrounding or enclosures, continuity), 5. plasticity (locations are flexibly described based on the author’s experience), and 6. three-dimensionality (no plans, schemas, symbols).

the Jewish lands surrounding it (Galilee, Beyond the Jordan, Idumaea), while boundary lands on the West (Tyre and Sidon) and the East (Gerasa) of which the author has less familiarity are flattened out and represented on a small scale (e.g., Gerasa near the Lake).¹⁸⁰ If the round-about journey in Mark 7:1 is seen as less than practical, there may be a theological rationale in bringing Jesus into contact with mixed populations (cf. 7:23-31) and perhaps the Jesus movement had some successes in these regions.¹⁸¹

Niederwimmer's case about Mark's ignorance of Jewish customs stands or falls around the representation of ritual purity in Mark 7:1-23. One must remember that Mark does not want to give an impartial review of the custom of the elders but to subject it to a polemical treatment. The remark that "all" the Jews wash their hands, while not technically correct, is paralleled in a Jewish text directed to a largely non-Jewish readership known as the *Epistle of Aristeas* (305-6).¹⁸² Far from an unfair caricature in 7:4, Crossley's detailed analysis of the purity background has shown plenty of rabbinic parallels to the washing of cups, pots, vessels and even beds.¹⁸³ Washing with the fist (πυγμῆ) may be an unusual expression, but it denotes that the water should cover the entire hand and distinguishes from full body immersion (cf. *m. Yad.* 1.1f; 2.3; *b. Hul.* 106a-b; *b. Sota* 4b).¹⁸⁴ For many scholars, though, a Jewish writer would not have penned the parenthetical aside "cleansing all foods" (καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα) (7:19b), consigning the biblical dietary laws to the rubbish bin.¹⁸⁵ For Gundry, Mark's point is explicitly

¹⁸⁰ Chapman, "Agrarian Biography," 31-3.

¹⁸¹ Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 242-5, 249; Collins, *Mark*, 359; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 21. Marcus parallels this with the 6th century mosaic Medeba map as another example of a "theological map."

¹⁸² See especially Marcus (*Mark 1-8*, 20, 440-43) and Collins (*Mark*, 344-49), who also note that the archaeological and literary evidence (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.2.13;; *Sib. Or.* 3.591-94; *Jud.* 12:5-7; Dead Sea Scrolls; the popular support of the Pharisees in *Ant.* 13.10.6; 16.16.2) that purity practices were widespread.

¹⁸³ James G. Crossley, "Halakah and *Mark* 7.4... and beds" *JSNT* 25 (2003): 433-47; idem, *Date*, 186-8.

¹⁸⁴ Crossley, *Date*, 183.

¹⁸⁵ Nineham, *St. Mark*, 191-2; Schweitzer, *Good News*, 150; Lane, *Mark*, 254-6; Hurtado, *Mark*, 111; Meyers, *Strong Man*, 220; Juel, *Mark*, 105-6; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 179-80; Gundry, *Apology*, 354-5; Witherington, *Mark*, 228-

Christological: “[i]t is the prerogative of Jesus as God’s Son to change the Law. Such a change does not count as human tradition, for Jesus’ word is divine.”¹⁸⁶ Alternatively, Joel Marcus takes Mark 7:19 as indicating that Jesus ushered in an apocalyptic change in the law that restored the conditions in the beginning when all foods were permitted to be eaten (cf. Gen 9:3).¹⁸⁷ Marcus is a sensitive reader of the Jewish context, so he grasps that the Pharisees could have thrown back the charge imputed to them of substituting their precepts for the commandments back at Mark.¹⁸⁸ If Mark relaxed a huge swathe of biblical law relating to clean and unclean, especially in the context of rebuking the Pharisees for trumping the command to honour one’s parents with their oral traditions, there may be justification for Niederwimmer’s point on the evangelist was looking at Jewish religious practices from the vantage point of an outsider.

James Crossley has proposed a novel re-reading of Mark’s editorial aside “cleansing all foods” as applying only in the narrow sense of the foods that the *Torah* already permits.¹⁸⁹ The benefit of this reading is that it does not divorce this passage from its intra-Jewish context; the debate revolved around whether unwashed hands can render the food unclean (Mark 7:3-4) and it would be assumed by all parties that the only food up for discussion was that which was already permitted by *Torah*. Crossley offers a coherent reading of the chapter as a whole, unlike the efforts of some commentators to divide chapter 7 up into various traditional and redactional

31; France, *Mark*, 290; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 453-58; Maloney, *Mark*, 142-3; Boring, *Mark*, 203-4; Collins, *Mark*, 353-6; Stein, *Mark*, 344.

¹⁸⁶ Gundry, *Apology*, 356.

¹⁸⁷ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 457. The main problem is that there is nothing in the passage that ties Jesus’ pronouncement in with his eschatology, so Marcus must import the word “now” when it is not there in the Greek text.

¹⁸⁷ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 450-1. He argues that Mark.

¹⁸⁸ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 450-1. He argues that Mark follows the Pauline strategy to spiritualize the Law and subsume it under the love command, so that Mark could technically claim the higher ground that the Christ community truly kept the Law while not observing it to the letter. This strategy would hardly convince other first century Jews.

¹⁸⁹ Crossley, *Date*, 192.

layers.¹⁹⁰ In Crossley's reading, the chapter has a logical progression. It begins with the sharp accusation against the disciples for not washing their hands, is followed by a countercharge that the Pharisees lift up tradition at the expense of the *Torah* with the example of the *korban* vow, and concludes with the answer that food eaten with unwashed hands (what comes in) does not make one unclean, hence "cleansing all foods." If this is the case, Mark enters into a technical *halakhic* debate over an extra-biblical tradition about the transmission of impurity from the hands to the food via a liquid.¹⁹¹ In spite of how Parker exaggerates minute differences in the scriptural translations in Mark, Mark 7:1-23 coheres with the other *halakhic* debates in the Gospel. For instance, the *Peah* was a provision for the poor (Lev 23:22) and plucking grain on the Sabbath was not a violation of the biblical law (cf. Mark 2:23-8), though some of Jesus's interlocutors had different oral traditions about what constitutes work (CD 10:22-3; Jub. 2:29f; 50:9; Philo, *Mos.* 2.22; *y. Shabb.* 7.2) in order to put a hedge around the *Torah*.¹⁹²

If Crossley is correct in his reinterpretation of 7:19b, Mark never sets aside the biblical laws. Yet Michael Bird offers one more possible interpretation of the verse: it is solely an aside to non-Jewish readers that, for them, all foods are cleansed.¹⁹³ This solution also overcomes the problem that the evangelist would blatantly contradict biblical law in the midst of sermonizing on how the Pharisees exalt their customs above scripture, for the nations were not required to adopt the covenant charter of Israel. The strength of this interpretation is that 7:19b is read in light of the other parenthetical aside in 7:3-4 which elucidates the purity rules for non-Jewish readers, though it does sacrifice some of the coherence of Crossley's reading of the whole. If the

¹⁹⁰ Marcus (*Mark 1-8*, 447-8), divides the chapter up into a primitive core surrounding the issue of handwashing and eating (7:1-2, 5, 15), two later Christian polemical replies against the traditions of the Pharisees (7:6-8; 9-13), an explanation (7:18b-19) and a catalogue of evils (7:20-23) that shift the dispute to the distinction of clean and unclean in general, and Markan editorial touches such as the clarifications or the disciple's ignorance (7:3-4, 14, 17-18a, 19).

¹⁹¹ Crossley, *Date*, 193-7.

¹⁹² See Crossley, *Date*, 160-72; Maurice Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching* (London and New York: T&T Clark), 321-3.

¹⁹³ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 49.

evangelist advocated a similar line to Paul that the laws of clean and unclean are passé for Gentiles in Christ (Rom 14:14), it would say no more about the author's ethnic identity than it does about Paul who was a trained Jewish Pharisee (cf. Phil 3:4-6). The insinuation that the evangelist was a dilettante on the geography and customs of Palestine may be unwarranted. The Jerusalem John Mark could still potentially be the author.

E. Summary of Results

The critical methodologies introduced in the twentieth century had a definite impact on modern assessments of the patristic tradition. No longer was the evangelist a stenographer for Peter, but a collector of anonymous communal traditions which he or she shaped into a coherent literary narrative. Not even the authorship of Mark was safe from the relentless attack of historical criticism. I have endeavored to evaluate this scholarly heritage as it relates to the authorship question. The gains of form criticism rendered it problematic that Peter was the sole source of Mark, but its methodology to classify the oral units into form-critical categories and clarify their function in their original life setting cannot rule out the option that Peter had a substantial role in shaping a substantial portion of the tradition that reached Mark. Redactional and narrative approaches that accentuate the negative features of Mark's portrait of Peter are more to the point, but a purely polemical reading against Peter may be too one-sided. Lastly, the evangelist is often lambasted for ignorance on the geography or customs of Palestine, but the charge is questionable in light of recent research. The data may not contradict the authorship of a Palestinian Jew. At this point, the prosecution may rest and the defense can now take the stand.

CHAPTER 2:
THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE PATRISTIC TRADITION

Much of Gospel scholarship proceeds on the assumption that form, redaction and literary criticism has dispensed once and for all with the patristic accounts about the evangelists, oblivious to the rebuttals of some of their conservative academic peers. In this chapter, I will track the backlash against the new methodological approaches to the Gospels and the re-emergence of the patristic tradition in some quarters of scholarship, exemplified in the work of Robert Gundry, Martin Hengel, Samuel Byrskog, Richard Bauckham and Michael Bird. There is a pressing need for dialogue between scholars with very different conceptions of the origins of the Gospels and a fresh evaluation of the evidence to determine if any of the tradition on the evangelist Mark, the interpreter of Peter, can be salvaged.

A. The Source of Papias is an Apostolic Authority

1. Robert Gundry's Defense of the Patristic Tradition

Robert Gundry is one of the more vocal champions of traditionalist conclusions and is unafraid to test much of the passing or current fads of Markan scholarship. On the first page of his commentary, he discards many of the *shibboleths* in the critical study of Mark over the last century, dismissing that there is any messianic secret, corrective Christology, hidden symbolism or inner-ecclesiastical tensions in the pages of Mark.¹⁹⁴ In similar fashion, he bucks the critical underpinnings of the cynicism with regards to the value of Papias's testimony. I will interact with his most recent restatement of his position in his 2005 collection of essays.¹⁹⁵ Gundry joins

¹⁹⁴ Gundry, *Apology*, 1.

¹⁹⁵ Gundry, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 49-73.

the growing chorus of scholarship that dates Papias within the first decade of the second century.¹⁹⁶ I am persuaded by the arguments on this front and I will attend to the dating of Papias in the next chapter, but a slightly earlier dating may be irrelevant to the historical reliability of Papias if his source was untrustworthy. For this reason, Gundry's case centres on the identification of "the elder John" with none other than the apostle John.

As a result, there was not a lengthy transmission process between the first generation apostolic leaders and a third generation bishop like Papias with the inevitable distortions that might have taken place in the process. In Gundry's view, there are three links in the chain of transmission: the apostles (i.e. elders), those who heard the apostles, and Papias.¹⁹⁷ Whenever "someone who had followed the presbyters" (παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις) came along, Papias inquired about the "words of the elders" (τῶν πρεσβυτέρων... λόγους), about "what" (τί) Andrew, Peter, Phillip or the rest of the "disciples of the Lord" (τῶν τοῦ κυρίου μαθητῶν) had said (*H.E.* 3.39.4). Gundry takes the τί as an appositive that makes the further specification that the elders were the Lord's disciples, rather than an accusative of general reference that means the words of the elders *concerning* what the Lord's disciples said.¹⁹⁸ There is nothing explicit about the "disciples" handing on their words to a separate group of "elders" who, in turn, passed them on to their students and the terms πρεσβύτερος (elder) and μαθητής (disciple) may be used interchangeably (cf. 1 Pet 5:1; Acts 15:2; 16:4).¹⁹⁹ That Papias did not

¹⁹⁶ Gundry, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 50-1; cf. *Apology*, 1027-8. For a growing trend to date Papias earlier in the second century, see V. Bartlet, "Papias's 'Exposition': Its Date and Contents" in *Amicitiae Corolla* (Ed. H.G. Wood; London: University of London Press, 1933), 15-44; U.H.J. Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis* (FRLANT 123; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 236, 261; R.W. Yarbrough, "The Date of Papias: A Reassessment," *JETS* 26 (1983): 181-91; William R. Schoedel, "Papias" in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.27.1 (ed. Wolfgang Haase; Berlin, 1993), 261.

¹⁹⁷ Gundry, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 52; *Apology*, 1029. For others who identify the "disciples" and the "elders" as one group, see Bartlet, "Date and Contents," 16-8; Rupert Annand, "Papias and the Four Gospels" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 9 (1956): 47-8; David G. Deeks, "Papias Revisited" *ExpTim* 88 (1977): 296-7.

¹⁹⁸ Gundry, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 53; *Apology*, 1030.

¹⁹⁹ Gundry, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 54.

mean to differentiate the “elders” from the “disciples” is implied, avers Gundry, by appending the tag “disciples to the Lord” to the names of Aristion and the elder John.²⁰⁰

A reason for distinguishing the elder John and Aristion from the list of seven disciples is that it would be redundant to name John twice. Gundry’s response is that the name John appears in both lists because John was a member of the apostolic circle, most of whom were deceased at the time of writing, and one of two “disciples of the Lord” alongside Aristion alive in Papias’s day. The other reason for discerning two distinct figures is that the second reference to John is prefaced with the title *πρέσβυτερος*, but Gundry deals with this by proposing that the term was a honourific title set apart for the apostles. This is why Aristion, who was every bit as much of a disciple of Jesus, was excluded from the title of *πρέσβυτερος*. Aristion was not one of the Twelve and rose to prominence after most of the apostolic band had died.²⁰¹

The judgement of critical scholars that Papias refers to two distinct Johns is an interpretation as old as Eusebius (cf. *H.E.* 3.39.5-6), but Gundry exposes Eusebius’s tendentiousness in this matter. Eusebius’s distaste for Papias’s chiliasm and the book of Revelation (cf. *H.E.* 3.39.2, 6, 8-14) led him to desperately resort to Dionysius’s weak supposition (οἶμαι “I think”) of two Johns based on the existence of two tombs (μνήματα) in Ephesus (*H.E.* 3.39.6; cf. 7.25.16).²⁰² Gundry calls Eusebius’s bluff when he lets slip that Papias interviewed those who followed the apostles (*H.E.* 3.39.7).²⁰³ If we discount the partiality of Eusebius, Irenaeus has Papias as the “hearer of John” (*A.H.* 5.33.4; cf. *H.E.* 3.39.1), which would place Papias in direct touch with John rather than through intermediaries. Papias does not let on

²⁰⁰ Gundry, “Pre-Papian Tradition,” 53.

²⁰¹ Gundry, “Pre-Papian Tradition,” 55; *Apology*, 1029; 55; cf. Köstenberger, “Witness, Author, Apostle,” 219.

²⁰² Gundry, *Apology*, 1033-34; “Pre-Papian Tradition,” 54, 57-8. Gundry proposes other equally plausible explanations to the existence of two burial sites such as that they were rival claimants for the correct burial place of the apostle John, or the second tomb referred to a different John but was quite unrelated to the John mentioned by Papias, or the word *μνήματα* refers not to a tomb but to two different memorial sites for the apostle (i.e. one from his house church and the other his burial).

²⁰³ Gundry, “Pre-Papian Tradition,” 54; *Apology*, 1029.

that he had interviewed John himself in the extant Papiian fragments, but Gundry supposes that it may be based on something Papias had written which is now lost to us.²⁰⁴ In Gundry's view, then, there was no opportunity for legendary accretion through the lengthy process of oral transmission as Papias had direct contact with the apostle John, a close associate of Peter.

2. *Evaluation of Robert Gundry's Defense*

If many scholars have found support for two Johns in Eusebius's reading of the Papiian prologue, Gundry could claim equal support from a different reader of Papias: Irenaeus of Lyons. Gundry would disagree with Bauckham's view that Irenaeus was well aware that Papias and his own teacher Polycarp (cf. *A.H.* 3.3.4; Letter to Florinus in *H.E.* 5.20.4-8) were disciples of the elder John, not the apostle John,²⁰⁵ and Bauckham redefines the most natural meaning of "apostle" when Irenaeus identifies John as one (*A.H.* 1.9.2.3, 3.21.3, 3.5.1, 3.11.9, 3.22.5, 3.3.4).²⁰⁶ A.C. Perumalil accepts that in most instances Irenaeus had the apostle John in his purview except for his reference to Papias as the "hearer of John" (*A.H.* 5.33.4), for elsewhere Irenaeus tags John as "the disciple of the Lord" 16 times in *Adversus Haeresis* and once in a letter to Victor (*H.E.* 5.24.6) or has an accompanying quote from the Johannine Gospel, epistles or the Apocalypse (e.g., *A.H.* 3.1.1; 5.18.2).²⁰⁷ Perumalil writes off the other reference to "John" alone (2.22.5) as clarified by the "other apostles" in the same context, but I am not sure that the absence of these identifying markers would be enough to alert the reader that Irenaeus had a different John in mind in 5.33.4. To make it transparent, Irenaeus could have prefaced John with "elder" or

²⁰⁴ Gundry, "Pre-Papiian Tradition," 57; *Apology*, 1032.

²⁰⁵ See Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 452-63.

²⁰⁶ See Andreas Köstenberger and Stephen O. Snout, "The Disciple Jesus Loved? – Witness, Author, Apostle: A Response to Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*" *BBR* 18 (2008), 224-5; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 464 n. 48 (contra Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 461-2)

²⁰⁷ A.C. Perumalil, "Are not Papias and Irenaeus Competent to Report on the Gospels?" *Exp.Tim.* 91 (1980): 333-4.

explicitly differentiated him from the son of Zebedee. Bauckham infers that a Papiian fragment survived in the Muratorian Canon due to the latter's concern for order (*per ordinem*) and the distinction of John as one of the "disciples" from Andrew as one of the "apostles" (10-33).²⁰⁸ Bauckham may read too much into the distinction of "disciples" and "apostles" as John is not directly contrasted with Andrew, for they are separated by a group of fellow "disciples and bishops," perhaps to explicate the first person plural of John 21:24.²⁰⁹

By the time of Irenaeus, the apostle John, the elder John, the seer John (Rev 1:9) and the anonymous "elder" of the Johannine epistles (2 John 1:1; 3 John 1) may have all been conflated into a single apostolic authority figure.²¹⁰ This was aided by reading the fourth canonical Gospel with the Synoptic tradition in hand to put the pieces together that the anonymous disciple with Peter in John 1:40 was the son of Zebedee (cf. Mark 1:16-20; Matt 4:18-22; Luke 5:3-11), for he tends to be grouped together with Peter or in the inner circle of three throughout Christian tradition (e.g., Gal 2:9; Mark 1:16-20; 9:2; 14:33; Acts 3:1-11),²¹¹ and is the same figure as the beloved disciple. That this disciple had a special relationship with Jesus is displayed in the upper room where the Twelve were present (John 13:23; cf. Matt 26:20; Mark 14:17; Luke 22:14) and he is claimed in the Johannine epilogue as the author of the Gospel (John 21:20).

Gundry's translation of the Papiian prologue as equating the disciples and the elders may be a valid reading. Yet if the $\tau\acute{\iota}$ is not read appositionally but as an inquiry into the contents of "what" the elders taught, then Papias's point is that the elders were passing on the words of the

²⁰⁸ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 425-33.

²⁰⁹ Köstenberger, "Witness, Author, Apostle," 222.

²¹⁰ Maurice Casey, *Is John's Gospel True* (London: Routledge, 1996), 164-9; Watson, *Gospel Writings*, 464-7.

²¹¹ Köstenberger, "Witness, Author, Apostle," 227-31. Peter and Andrew are named in John 1:40-42, so the other anonymous disciple could be either sons of Zebedee, but James was martyred in 44 CE (Acts 12:1-2) while the Beloved Disciple was believed to have had a long life (Jn 21:23). I am not convinced by Bauckham (*Eyewitnesses*, 415) that the naming of the "sons of Zebedee" in John 21:2 rules out the apostle as the beloved disciple, for the name "John" is still conspicuously absent.

original seven disciples.²¹² In favour of the latter reading, it would have been simpler for Papias to use a single term for the disciples and the elders if they were one and the same group and it would be redundant to list the same John twice a line apart.²¹³ This debate cannot be decided on syntax or lexical grounds. The term πρέσβυτερος may not apply strictly to an office or distinct class of teachers, but may be a respectful address to any elderly figure with some authority (Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22f; 16:4; 21:18; Phlm 9; 1 Tim 5:1, 17, 19; 1 Pet 5:1; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1; Irenaeus, *A.H.* 3.2.2; 4.26.2; 5.20.2, Clement, *H.E.* 6.14.5).²¹⁴ For Köstenberger and Snout, the term “elder” befits an aged apostle believed to have lived until the time of Trajan (Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.23.3).²¹⁵ But if it was not strictly a title, this undermines Gundry’s reasoning that πρέσβυτερος was reserved as a title for John but not Aristion because only the former was an apostle. If Aristion was really old enough to have been a personal disciple of Jesus, as Gundry presumes, his name should have been prefaced with “elder” as well.

It may be a better reading of Papias to understand the disciples and the elders as two separate groups and to distinguish the “elder” John from the first John in the list of seven disciples. It is unlikely that Papias meant to equate the Johns because he calls the elder John a disciple of the Lord, for he uses the same term for Aristion and there is no other record of Aristion in the company of Jesus.²¹⁶ Bauckham’s identification of the two anonymous disciples

²¹² Hill, “Papias of Hierapolis,” 310 n.4

²¹³ Munck, “Presbyters,” 238; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 31-33; David H. Sim, “The Gospel of Matthew, John the Elder and the Papias Tradition: A Response to R.H. Gundry” *AHR* 63 (2007): 292. The description of John and Aristion as also “disciples of the Lord” is the more difficult reading on text critical grounds and a point in Gundry’s favour, but this term may only equate their authority as charismatic leaders on par with the original disciples.

²¹⁴ See especially Johannes Munck, “Presbyters and Disciples of the Lord in Papias: Exegetic Comments on Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, III, 39” *HTR* 52 (1959): 233-36; Deeks, “Papias Revisited,” 296. However, other scholars see a distinction between the disciples or apostles and the elders in the above passages: see Körtner, *Papias*, 116-21; 293-4; David H. Sim, “The Gospel of Matthew, John the Elder and the Papias Tradition: A Response to R.H. Gundry” *AHR* 63 (2007): 293-4.

²¹⁵ Köstenberger, “Witness, Author, Apostle,” 219. However, if Papias distinguished the elder John from the apostle, this tradition may have been the result of confusing the elder who lived until the time of Trajan with John the son of Zebedee.

²¹⁶ Sim, “Response,” 292, 294; Körtner, *Papias*, 125-6.

in John 21:2 as Aristion and John, or Perumalil's inclusion of the two among the 72 disciples commissioned by Jesus (cf. Luke 10:1f), is pure speculation.²¹⁷ The present tense λέγουσιν denotes that the elder John and Aristion may have been alive when Papias was writing, but the likelihood of two personal disciples of Jesus living into the early second century is minute. Papias may have called the elder John and Aristion "disciples of the Lord" to set them on an equal footing in authority with the previous circle of disciples. Eusebius's ulterior motives are suspect when he leaps from the sound inference that Papias refers to two figures named John to the ascription of the book of Revelation to the second John to discredit its apostolicity.²¹⁸ Despite his unfair insult on Papias's intelligence, Eusebius was a more careful reader of Papias than Irenaeus who conflates the two Johns for his own ideological purposes.

B. The Titles of the Gospels as Early Evidence

1. Martin Hengel's Defense of the Patristic Tradition

Much of the prodigious output of the late Martin Hengel confronted the tenets of form criticism and he is candid in what he sensed as its wrong-headed approach to the Gospels. He writes, "[n]othing has led research into the Gospels so astray as the romantic superstition involving anonymous theologically creative community collectives, which are supposed to have drafted whole writings."²¹⁹ Hengel juxtaposes the key creative role of the anonymous community in the form critical model to the ascription of the four canonical Gospels to named authors, two of which were non-apostolic names, in the ecclesiastical tradition. These four names were agreed upon in Lyons (Irenaeus), Carthage (Tertullian), Rome (Muratorian Canon) and Egypt (Clement of Alexandria). The uniformity and unconventionality of the titles (e.g., τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ

²¹⁷ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 415; Perumalil, "Papias and Irenaeus," 334.

²¹⁸ Schoedel, "Papias," 252.

²¹⁹ Martin Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 81.

Μάρκον), contrasted with the usual form of placing the genitive of the author's name followed by the title of the work, supports that the titles were fixed relatively early.²²⁰

In answering the question of how early the standard titles emerged, Hengel conjectures that Christian scriptoria existed at the turn of the century in major centres (Rome, Ephesus, Antioch), like other libraries and book shops in the Hellenistic world, for Christian scribes to copy their texts.²²¹ Titles were a practical necessity upon the publication of multiple copies of a text and anonymous works in a library may be given titles with pseudonymous authors, so Hengel argues that the striking uniformity of the Gospel titles points to their early origin rather than that one authoritative Christian leader or institution dictated to everyone else what the titles would be in the latter half of the second century when the fourfold Gospels were collected together in a codex.²²² The early classification of these texts under the “gospel” genre may have been affected by the opening title of Mark 1:1.²²³ Graham Stanton is in substantial agreement with Hengel’s thesis on the early dating of the titles, though he thinks that it was Matthew’s encapsulation of the teachings and actions of Jesus as “this gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 26:13; cf. 24:14) that spurred on this development.²²⁴

The information Irenaeus supplies on the four Gospels also resembles the catalogues of ancient libraries (e.g., Museion in Alexandria) and was acquired from a Roman Christian archive where he learned of the founding of the Roman Church by Peter and Paul and a list of bishops from Linus to his contemporary Eleutherus.²²⁵ Papias had an alternative source for his tradition, the elder John, whom Hengel identifies as the illustrious head of the Johannine School. Far from

²²⁰ Hengel, *Studies*, 64-6; *The Four Gospels*, 44-5, 48-50.

²²¹ Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 28.

²²² Hengel, *Studies*, 74-5; *Four Gospels*, 50-4.

²²³ Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 118.

²²⁴ Graham Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 56-8.

²²⁵ Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 36, 38.

an apologetic for Mark or Matthew, the elder John disparages them both in comparison to his own superior Gospel.²²⁶ Hengel backs up his weighty case on the external evidence with observations internal to the text of Mark about the prominent role Peter plays in Mark. Mark names Peter 25 times, often as the head of the Twelve or the Three, and exhibits a rhetorical *inclusio* where Peter is the first and last named disciple (1:16; 16:7).²²⁷ Since Bauckham elaborates on Hengel's arguments about the elder John and the internal evidence in Mark, I will withhold that discussion for my review of Bauckham and concentrate on his hugely influential theory that the titles would have been appended to the Gospel texts as soon as they began widely circulating and more than one copy was available.

2. *Evaluation of Martin Hengel's Defense*

Contrary to Hengel, a Gospel like Mark could have circulated anonymously for quite some time in a Jewish milieu. The anonymity of the Gospels may be in deliberate imitation of the historical books of the Hebrew Bible and there are plenty of examples of anonymous Jewish texts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls or the numerous anonymous sayings in rabbinic literature.²²⁸ But if Hengel's theories that the circulation of multiple copies of a Gospel text necessitated the addition of a title and that an anonymous text would have been ascribed to a pseudonymous author as soon as they were collected in a library are correct, this does not mean that the scribes correctly ascribed these anonymous texts to the actual authors. The original authors may have been unknown to the formulators of the standard Gospel titles.

²²⁶ Hengel, *Studies*, 48, 154 n. 67, 150 n. 36; *Four Gospels*, 66-8; *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity International, 1989), 20. Actually, Hengel's position is that John the Elder slightly disparaged Matthew and Mark in favour of his own work in the Gospel of John. For a critique that Papias was contrasting Mark's "order" unfavourably to the fourth gospel, see pp. 170-1, 172-3.

²²⁷ Hengel, *Studies*, 50-52, 59; *Four Gospels*, 83-84. Mark's 25 mentions of Peter has a greater frequency ratio than Matthew (25 times), Luke (30 times) or John (times).

²²⁸ Crossley, *Date*, 15-6; Armin D. Baum, "Anonymity in the New Testament History Books. A Stylistic Device in the Context of Greco-Roman and Ancient Near Eastern Literature" *NTS* 50 (2008): 130.

Hengel's study should be compared with Koester's detailed examination of the term εὐαγγέλιον in early Christian literature. Koester's findings are that the usage of the term almost unanimously denoted the content of the *kerygma* and not a literary genre, with a few debatable exceptions (*Did.* 8:2; 15:3, 4; cf. 11:3; 2 Clem 8:5), and that the titles of some Nag Hammadi texts (e.g., the Gospel according to Thomas or Mary) were formulated by scribes in imitation of the canonical Gospels.²²⁹ Against Hengel, there is no mention of any Gospel by name of the author before 170 CE in Theophilus of Antioch (*Autol.* 2.22).²³⁰ Koester's analysis is confirmed by as conservative a critic as Robert Gundry.²³¹ Koester's hypothesis is that Marcion was the innovator of εὐαγγέλιον in his equation of Paul's "Gospel" (Rom 2:16) with his version of Luke,²³² a solution Hengel too quickly discards out of revulsion to the idea that the patristic church could ever be influenced by a "heretic" like Marcion.²³³ James Kelhoffer has taken Koester to task for underestimating the evidence of "Gospel" as a designation for a written work in 2 Clement, which Koester postdates after Marcion, and the Didache (*Did* 8:3-11; cf. Matt 6:9-13).²³⁴ The use of the term εὐαγγέλιον for a literary genre may have emerged between the writing of Matthew and the Didache in some local quarters.

The titular usage of εὐαγγέλιον may have pre-dated Marcion, but Koester has established his point that it was not widespread in the first half of the second century and, aside from Papias (*H.E.* 3.39.15-16; cf. Justin, *Dial.* 106.3), a "Gospel" is not named by its author until the last half of the second century. If the Gospels were given titles early on, these were not

²²⁹ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 14-23.

²³⁰ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 27 n.1.

²³¹ Robert Gundry, "ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ: How Soon a Book?" *JBL* 115 (1996): 321-5.

²³² Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 35-36.

²³³ Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 55 (cf. p. 32). Hengel argues that Marcion was attracted to the Gospel that was associated with Paul's companion Luke, but the earliest explicit attestation for that identification is not until Irenaeus.

²³⁴ James A. Kelhoffer, "'How Soon a Book' Revisited: ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ as a Reference to 'Gospel' Materials in the First Half of the Second Century." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 95 (2004): 1-34. Kelhoffer notes that the kind of harmonization of written gospel texts in 2 Clement is present in Mark's longer ending (16:9-20) and John 21, so that cannot be used as an argument to date it late.

necessarily the standard titles they are known by today. Andrew Gregory, noting Irenaeus' interest in the beginnings of each of the four Gospels (*A.H.* 3.11.7), suggests that the opening verses of the Gospels may have once functioned as their titles.²³⁵ We simply do not know what early second century Christians called the Gospels. Hengel's case on the uniformity of the titles may be tempered by the fact that the earliest evidence rests on three papyri and as late as the fourth century copies of Mark circulated anonymously.²³⁶ If I may hazard a guess about the origins of the standard titles, they presume a theological vision that does not speak of multiple "Gospels" (εὐαγγέλια), but one unitary "Gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) proclaimed "according to" the vantage points of each author. The titles presuppose more than one text under the heading εὐαγγέλιον, a counterpoint to figures like Marcion who privileged a single Gospel text. There is no evidence that the standard titles predate or are independent of Papias.

C. The Importance of *Autopsy* in Writing History

1. Samuel Byrskog's *Defense of the Patristic Tradition*

Samuel Byrskog is another important voice seeking to replace the form critical paradigm. Form criticism places weight on the present *Sitz im Leben* of the oral tradents and redaction criticism on the evangelist's role in constructing a new fiction by integrating the sources into a narrative. Byrskog recommends a more nuanced relationship between story and history, between a literary approach that treats the Gospels as holistic narratives mediating a plot and a diachronic approach that excavates the historical layers beneath the Gospels by means of historical, sociological and

²³⁵ Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts*, 51.

²³⁶ Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts*, 50; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 17.

cultural anthropological criticism.²³⁷ Eschewing apologetic motivations, his work “[h]as the general purpose of better understanding the dynamics involved behind the past in the present and the present in the past as the gospel tradition evolved.”²³⁸ Byrskog wants to restore the oral informants of the evangelists to their rightful place, though he is aware that they were not disinterested in the events they may have participated in firsthand and which they interpreted to meet their present social needs.

Byrskog begins with something akin to a fall narrative: the “professionalization of history” by such luminaries as Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), Johann Gustav Droysen (1808-1884) and Ernest Bernhem (1850-1942) resulted in privileging literary over oral sources and detached objectivity over subjective personal involvement.²³⁹ Byrskog aligns his project with the “history from below” approach of E.P. Thompson or the anthropological research of Jan Vansina on oral history (i.e. reminiscences, hearsay, eyewitness accounts) and oral tradition (i.e. memorized speeches, proverbs, sayings, epics, tales, narratives).²⁴⁰ His contribution is to compare the Gospels to the standards of Greco-Roman historiography, especially the demand on ancient historians to write based on their own firsthand participation in the places and events narrated or to rely on personally-involved informants. He explains, “[t]he basic intention of the comparison is to unravel the essential and culture-specific patterns of oral history in the Greek and Roman antiquity as a means to conceptualize some important aspects of the origin and

²³⁷ Byrskog, *Story as History*, 1-3. See also Byrskog’s criticisms of the radical disjunction of oral and literary medium drawn by Kelber and view that the oral and written material was in a constant process of re-oralization at every stage of the composition of the Gospels (pp. 128-144).

²³⁸ Byrskog, *Story*, 6.

²³⁹ Byrskog, *Story*, 19-23.

²⁴⁰ Byrskog, *Story*, 26-33. He disagrees with Vansina, though, in his too sharp distinction between oral history and oral tradition as both are representations of the past that can emerge contemporarily. But one approach set up as a foil for the author’s own is Jack Goody and Ian Watt’s theory of dynamic homeostasis with its complete congruence between present societal needs and their oral traditions (cf. pp 11, 29, 131-132)

development of the gospel tradition.”²⁴¹ Since we no longer have access to the oral informants apart from the literary remains, a pivotal aspect of his study is to unearth clues of the once “living voice” encoded in the ancient texts.²⁴²

Byrskog defines “autopsy” as the visual means to gather information about and relate to a certain object, be it a geographical location, a historical event or archaeological item.²⁴³ Against Loveday Alexander, who limits “autopsy” in historiography to Polybius and Josephus in contrast to its extensive function in scientific treatises, Byrskog broadens his focus from her narrow study on the term αὐτοψία and its cognates to the basic principle of firsthand participation advocated in historians like Thucydides.²⁴⁴ Henceforth, his usual *modus operandi* is to survey the ancient historiographers for how they shed light on the cultural milieu of the evangelists. For example, Byrskog explores the dictum of Heraclitus that the “eyes are surer witnesses than the ears” in the rhetoric of the historians (Herodotus, 1.8; Thucydides, 1.73.2; Polybius 12.25.6) or the explicit comments of Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Josephus and Tacitus on methodology.²⁴⁵ As it was unfeasible to be present everywhere at once (cf. Polybius 12.4.4), the interrogation of oral sources was a supplement for direct autopsy.²⁴⁶ Despite the value on the cultivation of memory

²⁴¹ Byrskog, *Story*, 45.

²⁴² Byrskog, *Story*, 46.

²⁴³ Byrskog, *Story*, 48.

²⁴⁴ Byrskog, *Story*, 49 (contra Alexander, *Preface*, 34-41)

²⁴⁵ Byrskog, *Story*, 49-64. Herodotus undertook numerous journeys to go to actual locations to gather information and stresses the importance of seeing firsthand (2.29, 44, 75, 99, 147; 3.115; 4.16) to test his sources (1.51; 2.5, 10, 12, 131, 148, 156; 3.12; 4.195; 5.59; 6.47; 7.129). Thucydides wrote about the Peloponnesian war which he had lived through and followed with close attention from its outbreak in 431 BCE (1.1.1; 5.26.5) and his deprivation of his post as commander and exile from Athens made him familiar with both sides of the war. Polybius chose a period of time from the second Punic War in 220 BCE to the third Punic War in 168 BCE which he had lived through (4.2.1-2) and denounces the historian Timaeus for relying exclusively on literary sources in Book 12 when personal experience of events or interrogation of eyewitnesses is the superior method (12.25.4-6). Josephus boasts that he knew the Jewish War from both sides (*War* 2.569; 3.141-339; *Life* 28-29; 412) and that he was a direct eyewitness as well as inquired from other eyewitnesses (*Apion* 1.47; 1.53). Finally, with the exception of the literary methods in Livy’s extravagant history of Rome, most Latin historians followed the Greek historians. Tacitus consulted oral sources from Pliny the Elder (6.16.22) to aged senators (*Ann.* 3.16).

²⁴⁶ Byrskog, *Story*, 94-99. Here he surveys Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon, but he does note the exception of the 4th century sophist Isocrates (*Panathen.* 150) and the geographer Strabo (2.5.11) who regarded oral sources as even more trustworthy than direct sight.

and the *topos* of the living voice as superior to the written word, ancient historians did rely on written sources, though they supplemented them wherever possible with their own observations, and they themselves wrote to create a permanent record for posterity.²⁴⁷

If greater attention thus far has been accorded to the “history” aspect in the oft-repeated “history as story” line, Byrskog redresses the balance. The ideal witness was socially involved, such as family members, the local populace or direct participants.²⁴⁸ With the inevitable biases that entails, prejudices were freely acknowledged (e.g. Herodotus, 7.152; 2.3; Thucydides 7.44.1-3; 1.20.1; 2.48.2; 6.2.2; Polybius 4.78.3-4; 6.11.11; 12.4.5; 10.3.2; 10.28.3; 12.5.5; Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 50) and overcome by careful interrogation of the informants (e.g., Polybius, 12.27.6, 28.9; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 5.7:9-32). Byrskog complicates his picture further with a chapter on the polemic against “lying historians” (Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 10; Seneca *Quaestiones Naturales* 7.16.1-2). He launches from T.P. Wiseman’s renowned study on seven types of mendacity in ancient historiography: writing with tendentious aims, indulging in fantastic myths, inventing traveller tales, falsifying history for dramatic purposes, evading responsibility for what is included in the narrative, including too many details, and leaving key details unelaborated.²⁴⁹ Trained in rhetoric, it was too easy for historians to give more consideration to the art of oratory than to factual narration of the past.²⁵⁰ Autopsy itself served an apologetic function and not all historians practiced what they preached (Lucian, *Hist. Consc.*

²⁴⁷ Byrskog, *Story*, 122-6. For statements about why they undertook the task of writing, see for example Herodotus 1.1; Thucydides 1.22.4; Josephus, *War* 1.15-16; Quintilian 10.31.

²⁴⁸ Byrskog, *Story*, 149-53. For example, Herodotus is vague on informants (cf. 1.137; 1.92; 2.75; 2.131; 3.117; 4.81; 7.3; 9.84), but three informants he notes by name (3.55; 4.76; 9.16) were all socially involved and none of them neutral. Thucydides sought information from family members (1.138.6; 6.55.1) or the local people (2.5.5-6; 2.48.2; 3.88.3) and Polybius’s sources were from the local people (e.g., 3.48.12; 9.25.2, 4; 10.3.2; 34.16.1; etc).

²⁴⁹ Byrskog, *Story*, 200-2. See T.P. Wiseman, “Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity” in *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (ed. by Christopher Gill and T.P. Wiseman; Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993), 122-46.

²⁵⁰ Byrskog, *Story*, 203-9. A prime example given here is Livy’s *History of Rome* which, unlike the other major historians, noticeably relies on literary sources and rhetoric. Other rhetoricians such as Quintilian recognized that Livy’s “creamy richness” did not necessarily translate into credibility for his history (*Or.* 10.1.32).

29).²⁵¹ Rhetoric was not denounced per se, only the use of rhetorical cunning to pass off forgeries as fact. Ideally, “[P]ersuasion and faction credibility were supplementary rhetorical virtues, not contradictory.”²⁵² Conceding this much, Byrskog repeats, without irony, that the best historians (e.g., Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius) obeyed the dictum of Lucian that “the historian’s task is one: to tell it as it happened” (*Hist. Conscr.* 39).²⁵³ Even so, narrating the past involves selection and interpretation in accordance with present needs.²⁵⁴

Byrskog scours the Gospels for encoded clues of their oral informants. He posits that some stories derive from local persons who heard Jesus teach or experienced a healing and agrees with Theissen’s notion of protective anonymity in Mark as a way to not disclose the identities of firsthand participants whose actions ran afoul of the political authorities.²⁵⁵ Jesus’s brothers may be informants, though they have a minimal role in Mark (3:21-35; 6:1-6), and Mary may have been a source of some traditions in the infancy narratives (cf. Luke 2:19).²⁵⁶ The named women in Mark 15:47-16:8 verify the events of the crucifixion and its aftermath, though their testimony is both accepted and diluted in the patriarchal culture of the evangelists.²⁵⁷ While the Twelve were not remembered collectively as a source of oral information, individuals such as Peter acted as oral informants.²⁵⁸ Form criticism underplayed that “[t]he historical Jesus event was experienced through their eyes and their ears and soon became historic by entering into the

²⁵¹ Byrskog, *Story*, 214-22.

²⁵² Byrskog, *Story*, 223.

²⁵³ Byrskog, *Story*, 176-83.

²⁵⁴ Byrskog, *Story*, 256-264. Thus he criticizes the sharp distinction between the tradition and redaction of redaction critics as arbitrary since the event and its interpreted meaning

²⁵⁵ Byrskog, *Story*, 67-9; cf. Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 186-7.

²⁵⁶ Byrskog, *Story*, 82-90; 267-8. Byrskog also denies a polemical purpose against the family of Jesus in 3:21-35 or 6:1-6 as James is not named and Matthew and Luke omit 3:21 but do not read 3:31-35 in a polemical way.

²⁵⁷ Byrskog, *Story*, 73-82, 190-7. He notes that the kerygma only names male witnesses (1 Cor 15:3-5, Mark 16:7).

²⁵⁸ Byrskog, *Story*, 71-73.

present, oral currencies of observers such as Peter, the women, James and Mary; it became their own oral history which they proclaimed to others.²⁵⁹

In his final chapter, Byrskog aligns Papias with the ideals of a historian.²⁶⁰ He argues that 1 Peter 5:13, Acts 12:12 and the unanimity of the patristic tradition in support of a link between Mark and Peter should be given its due.²⁶¹ On internal grounds, he reiterates Hengel's arguments that Peter plays a prominent role in Mark's narrative world as the first and last named disciple and that the Petrine kerygma (Acts 10:34-43) and Servant Christology of 1 Peter (1 Pet 2:22-25; cf. Acts 3:13, 26) conforms to Mark's outline.²⁶² He takes up Vincent Taylor's efforts to assign a minority of *chreiai* (1:21-39, 4:35-5:43; 6:30-56; 7:24-37; 8:27-9:29) directly back to Peter, though, interestingly, he is only reasonably certain that two *chreiai* in Mark 1:21-39 can be directly attributed to Peter.²⁶³ He accepts Pesch's argument for the origins of a pre-Markan passion narrative back to the Peter-led Jerusalem Church, though Byrskog is less confident on Pesch's dating it before 37 CE.²⁶⁴ A new argument that Byrskog puts forward to maintain that Peter had an influential role behind both Mark and Matthew is that Mark's alleged liberalism on *Torah* reflects Peter's stance before the Antioch incident (Gal 2:11-13; cf. Acts 10:28) and Matthew Peter's conservative retrenchment after Antioch.²⁶⁵

2. Evaluation of Samuel Byrskog's Defense

Byrskog has an informative summary of the methods of ancient historiography and exhibited the role of autopsy in the rhetoric of ancient historians. Byrskog does allow that the rhetoric did not

²⁵⁹ Byrskog, *Story*, 106.

²⁶⁰ Byrskog, *Story*, 172-8.

²⁶¹ Byrskog, *Story*, 279-80.

²⁶² Byrskog, *Story*, 270, 274-5.

²⁶³ Byrskog, *Story*, 290-2; cf. Taylor, *Saint Mark*, 120. He makes this decision based on the personal information about Peter's mother-in-law and the somewhat intrusive reference to Peter in 1:36.

²⁶⁴ Byrskog, *Story*, 269-70; cf. Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2.1-25.

²⁶⁵ Byrskog, *Story*, 296-7.

always match the reality. It can be queried how many historians in practice, not just in theory, lived up to the ideal of a Polybius or resembled the historian Timaeus whom Polybius chastises for an overreliance on written sources. Many historians may have merited the disdain of Seneca or Lucian for “lying historians.” Not all ancient historians narrated what was experienced first-hand as can be seen in Livy’s history of the foundations of Rome or Josephus’s quite interpretive retelling of the Israelite epic which he styles a “translation” of the scriptures (*Ant.* 1.5). Byrskog disregards the distinction between the genres of *historia* and *bios* on the one hand, yet elsewhere accepts that it was permissible for Plutarch to abundantly mine from literary sources instead of witnessing the scenes for himself because he was a biographer (*Alex.* 1.2; *Galb.* 2.3).²⁶⁶ Peter Head notes that the *bios* genre has implications for Byrskog’s research as biographers either had personal connections with their subjects or relied on literary sources (e.g., Plutarch).²⁶⁷ The biographies on Moses by Philo or Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus belong in the latter category as they could not make a claim to autopsy.

More problematic is that Byrskog assumes, but does not defend, the link of Papias and the evangelists with elite Greco-Roman historians in the upper echelons of society. Byrskog and Bauckham argue that the proverb on the living voice was meant to illustrate Papias’s top notch historiographical practice, paralleling how Polybius attacks the historian Timaeus as too bookish when the best practice of the historian was to directly inquire of living witnesses (12.25.1-3),²⁶⁸ but Loveday Alexander remains more convincing that Papias picked up the importance of learning from a “living and abiding voice” (ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης) as a piece of wisdom

²⁶⁶ Byrskog, *Story*, 43-45, 216.

²⁶⁷ Peter M. Head, “The Role of Eyewitnesses in the Formation of the Gospel Tradition: A review article of Samuel Byrskog’s *Story as History – History as Story*” *Tyndale Bulletin* 52 (2001), 294. For a few examples, Nicocles was taught by Isocrates, Agricola was Tacitus’s father-in-law or Demonax was the teacher of Lucian.

²⁶⁸ See Byrskog, *Story*, 107-144; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 23-4. The “living voice” has no historiographical parallel, but Bauckham pulls in a different proverb about not navigating out of books from Polybius (12.15d.6).

in the Hellenistic schools.²⁶⁹ Papias relates extravagant details about the gruesome death of Judas or the miraculous drinking of deadly poisons with no ill-effects (*H.E.* 3.39.9) that Lucian would have detested as μῦθοι (myths).²⁷⁰ As for the evangelists, they certainly did not have the resources or leisure to live up to the methodological strictures of Thucydides, Polybius or Josephus. Luke is the sole author with the literary ambition to imitate a conventional Greco-Roman literary preface (1:1-4).²⁷¹ Although the closest analogue to the Gospels may be in the *bios* genre, the Gospels were children of the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds. Armin Baum has made a compelling case that the anonymity of the Gospels conforms to the practice of the historiographical books in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern historians rather than the overwhelming convention of Hellenistic prefaces to name the author and the sources.²⁷²

The evangelists may have consulted some eyewitness informants if they were available. The inclusion of Alexander and Rufus as the sons of Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21), a detail omitted as superfluous in Matthew and Luke, may be due to the fact that they were known to Mark's readers. But I am not convinced by some of the encoded clues that Byrskog finds for oral informants. The family members of Jesus would not have been too pleased by their juxtaposition with the blaspheming scribes (Mark 3:22-30) through the Markan technique of intercalation (3.21, 31-5). The divergences between the Matthean and Lukan infancy narratives make it doubtful that Mary was available to set the record straight. Nor were oral sources the sole, or even the primary, source for the evangelists. Byrskog extracted a pre-existing, *written* passion narrative incorporated into Mark. The level of verbatim agreement in the Synoptics

²⁶⁹ See L. Alexander, "The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts" in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in celebration of forty years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (ed. David J.A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl, Stanley E. Porter; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 221-247; idem, *Preface*, 83-84, 186. The addition "abiding" (μενούσης) comes from 1 Pet 1:23.

²⁷⁰ See Wiseman, "Lying Historians," 123, 128-31.

²⁷¹ Although most scholars accept that Luke deigned to imitate a historiographical preface, Alexander (*Preface*) departs from the consensus and views scientific or technical treatises as Luke's model.

²⁷² Baum, "Anonymity," 124-42

indicates *literary* borrowing and some of the differences of Matthew and Luke from Mark are explicable as the conscious redaction of a *literary* source.

When it comes to Peter, Byrskog does not rely solely on internal clues. I will examine the external evidence in greater detail in the next chapter, but the rest of the patristic evidence is weighty only if it can be shown to be independent of Papias. The elder John, in turn, may have picked up and elaborated on the relationship of Mark and Peter from an earlier source (cf. 1 Pet 5:13) and, of the two New Testament references to link Mark and Peter (1 Pet 5:13, Acts 12:12), it is possible that one influenced the other. Internally, a number of scholars agree with Byrskog that the *kerygmatic* outline of Peter's sermon in Acts 10:36-41 conforms to Mark's narrative skeleton,²⁷³ but Luke harmonizes the distinct views of Peter and Paul into a unified *kerygma* by attributing similar speeches to both figures over a range of dates (Acts 2:22-39; 3:12-26, 13:26-41). Nor can it be forgotten that Luke may be summarizing the narrative outline of Mark as the author's main source texts. Some might hesitate to glean the Christology of the historical *Cephas* from 1 Peter as the status of its authorship is disputed, but it is a controversial matter if Mark alludes to the suffering servant as Mark 10:45 shares little terminology with the LXX Isaiah 53 and expounds on the vicarious death of the Danielic Son of Man.²⁷⁴ Finally, the prominence of Peter in Mark's story may show that Peter is a major literary character but not necessarily the evangelist's primary source. I will have more to say on the internal evidence in the review of Bauckham who expands on the Petrine perspective to Mark, but Byrskog's case that Greco-Roman historiographers are analogous to the evangelists may be mistaken.

²⁷³ Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 25, 230; Lane, *Mark*, 10-11; Stuhlmacher, "The Theme," 22; Otto Betz, "Jesus Gospel of the Kingdom" in Stuhlmacher, *The Gospel and the Gospels*, 69 n. 32; Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 37-8.

²⁷⁴ Hooker (*St. Mark*, 248-51) notes the only word in common with Isa 53 LXX is "many" and that Mk 10:45 evokes the imagery of the suffering yet vindicated saints embodied in the Son of Man of Dan 7. Crossley (*Date*, 49) suggests the passage be read in light of the Maccabean martyrs (2 Macc 7:32-38; 4 Macc 17:20-22; cf. Dan 11:35).

D. Uncovering Eyewitness Testimony from the Internal Evidence of the Gospels

1. Richard Bauckham's *Defense of the Patristic Tradition*

Richard Bauckham sets himself the ambitious task of building on Byrskog's foundation to isolate the eyewitnesses from the encoded clues within the Gospels. But first, against those who dismiss Papias as an apologist, Papias's claims are considerably modest in removing himself by four links in the chain of transmission from the disciples of the Lord, the elders, the followers of the elders and himself.²⁷⁵ Even so, Bauckham affirms that the elder John is a reliable source because Bauckham identifies him, in agreement with Hengel, with the beloved disciple in the Gospel of John and the elder behind the Johannine epistles (2 John 1; 3 John 1).²⁷⁶ The elder's status as a witness of Jesus and his apostolic band, even if he was not part of the circle of the Twelve, ensures that he is a reliable commentator on the origins of Mark.

Turning to the internal evidence of the Gospels, Bauckham propounds three lines of evidence for the presence of eyewitness testimony. First, he elaborates on the phenomenon that, on the acceptance of Markan priority, the presence of named characters diminishes in later Gospels.²⁷⁷ The named characters accord with standard Palestinian Jewish names as backed up by the list of the 99 most popular names in Tal Illan's standard lexicon.²⁷⁸ Bauckham's hypothesis is that the named characters in the earliest Gospels are based on real people who joined the Jesus movement and were known to specific circles of Jesus followers who recorded

²⁷⁵ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 16.

²⁷⁶ Hengel, *Johannine Question*; 124-32; cf. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 384-471. Both agree in identifying the elder John of Papias with the beloved disciple, an upper class Judaeen follower of Jesus. Where they differ is that Hengel complicates the picture by arguing that the Gospel of John merges the beloved disciple with John the son of Zebedee and presents the enigmatic figure as a Janus head of the elder John and the Apostle John, while Bauckham's solution that the beloved disciple is just a Judaeen disciple of Jesus who was not a part of the Twelve and may have been the host of Jesus' final meal is simpler.

²⁷⁷ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 42.

²⁷⁸ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 42.

their testimony.²⁷⁹ Bauckham's second and third arguments about the eyewitness testimony behind Mark relate more specifically to vindicating Papias's account of Mark.

In his second proposition, Bauckham builds on Hengel's observation that Peter is mentioned 25 times in Mark, always as the head of the Twelve or the Three, and has a rhetorical *inclusio* where Peter is the first and last named disciple (1:16; 16:7).²⁸⁰ Bauckham notably takes Hengel's argument in a new direction by treating the *inclusio* as a standard technique of ancient historians to single out the main eye-witness source of a work and points to Lucian's *Alexander* and Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* as analogies.²⁸¹ Luke and John are cognizant of the Petrine *inclusio* in Mark: John brackets it with an *inclusio* of the beloved disciple (1:35-42; 21:24) and Luke brackets much of the ministry with named itinerant female disciples (8:2-3; 24:10) while keeping the Petrine *inclusio* intact (4:38; 24:34).²⁸² Next, borrowing Cuthbert Turner's observation that Mark shifts from a plural verb without an explicit subject immediately to a singular verb or pronoun in reference to Jesus alone in 21 passages, Bauckham sees another literary device at work by which Mark supplies narrative focalization from the vantage point of the disciples and especially Peter (1:29-31; 11:19-25; 14:26-31; 32-42).²⁸³ Bauckham rebuts a polemical anti-Petrine reading of Mark as inconsistent with three datums: Peter must have been the first to retell the story of his denials, Peter's leadership was respected across early Christian texts, and Matthew or Luke did not recognize Mark's intent to denigrate Peter in reproducing much of Mark's portrait.²⁸⁴ For Bauckham, Mark is a thoroughly Petrine work.

²⁷⁹ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 46.

²⁸⁰ Hengel, *Studies*, 50-52, 59; *Four Gospels*, 83-4. The number of times Mark mentions Peter in so short a text has a greater frequency ratio than Matthew (25 times) or Luke (30 times).

²⁸¹ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 132-145.

²⁸² Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 129-32.

²⁸³ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 156-68. He calls this the Plural-to-Singular-narrative device.

²⁸⁴ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 178-9.

2. *Evaluation of Richard Bauckham's Defense*

The first issue that might be raised against Bauckham's defense is his confident identification of the elder John with the beloved disciple, the evangelist of the fourth canonical Gospel and the elder of the Johannine epistles. Hypothesis after hypothesis must be stacked up on each other, namely that we can peer behind the anonymity of the beloved disciple, that the epilogue is not a secondary redaction and correctly makes the beloved disciple out to be the author of the Gospel (cf. 21:24-25), that the evangelist and the anonymous elder of the epistles are one and the same person, and that Papias's John is the same person as the author of the epistles based on the commonplace term "elder." On the first hypothesis alone, scholars have entertained a variety of proposals on the identity of the beloved disciple from the apostle John, the elder John, Lazarus, John Mark, Thomas, Matthias, Paul, James or Mary Magdalene.²⁸⁵ I have rehearsed how a second century Christian might have read the apostle John into the beloved disciple, but the few stray references (13:23-5; 18:15-6; 19:26-7; 20:3-8; 21:7, 20-4) to the character do not leave much of a dossier to be sure about any positive identification. The beloved disciple may even be a literary fiction and an emblem for the whole Johannine community.²⁸⁶

As mentioned above, all the references to figures named "John" (John the son of Zebedee, John the elder, John of Patmos) were conflated into a single apostolic authority in order to promote the doctrine of apostolic succession and authorize all the writings of the Johannine corpus and the book of Revelation. Thus, I disagree with Körtner's theory that the letters were pseudonymously attributed to "the elder" (2 John 1; 3 John 1) to give Johannine theology a

²⁸⁵ James Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge: Trinity International, 1995), 127-224.

²⁸⁶ Maurice Casey, *Is John's Gospel True?* (London: Routledge, 1996), 154-64. Before the beloved disciple is introduced in 13:23, the chapter begins with how much Jesus loved all of his own (13:1). One hurdle for Casey's interpretation is that the death of this disciple before the *parousia* seems to have shocked some members of the community (21:23), but the epilogue may be a later addition with a different understanding of the beloved disciple.

foothold into Asia Minor.²⁸⁷ The elder John may have had no relation to the anonymous writer of the Johannine epistles apart from the generic term “elder;” the epistles and the Gospel were attributed to the *apostle* John to authorize them in the second century.

With regard to the internal evidence, I have no objection in principle that some of the named figures in the Gospels may have been oral informants of the evangelists, though it is not a stretch for the competent Jewish writer to have contextually appropriate names for the characters in the narrative. As for the prominence of Peter in Mark, this echoes his stature in Christian social memory across the board (Matt 16:18; Mark 16:7; Luke 22:32; 24:34; John 21:15-19; Acts 1-12; 1 Cor 1:12; 9:5; 15:5; Gal 1:18; 2:7-8, 19; 1 Pet 1:1; 5:1; 2 Pet 1:1). It is not wrong to stress Peter’s significance on the literary level, but neither the *inclusio* nor the Plural-to-Singular narrative device proves Peter to be Mark’s chief source. Two parallels do not make the *inclusio* of eyewitness testimony a customary historiographic device and the evangelists themselves do not seem to recognize it. One must first grant Bauckham’s premises that the beloved disciple is the anonymous disciple of John 1:35-40, rather than the figure first introduced in Jerusalem in 13:23-4, and that the Johannine epilogue was an integral part of the Gospel rather than a scribal redaction after the original ending at 20:31 to accept an *inclusio* in John.²⁸⁸ I am not sure how delaying the appearance of the named women until Luke 8:2 and once more in Luke 24:10, in dependence on Mark’s list of women (16:1) with Susanna substituted for Salome, constitutes an *inclusio* of eyewitness testimony in Luke. And it must be asked why an *inclusio* does not appear in Matthew, especially as there are signs the evangelist wanted to identify the apostle Matthew as a source by altering Levi’s call narrative into Matthew’s (9:9-10; 10:13). Mark may not intended

²⁸⁷ Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis*, 198-202.

²⁸⁸ The disciple Jesus loved may not be a fitting description for an individual Jesus just met in John 1:35-40, but the gospels do not hesitate to foreshadow Judas as the betrayer early in the narrative (Matt 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16; John 6:70-71). Kelhoffer (“‘How Soon a Book’, 11) argues that John 21, in a similar way to the longer ending of Mark, may be a later addition reflecting knowledge of Lukan special material (Luke 5:1-11).

a Petrine inclusion, but clumsily singled out Peter in 16:7 because Peter was remembered as a key witness to the resurrection in the primitive *kerygma* (cf. 1 Cor 15:5; Luke 24:34). Regarding the Plural-to-Singular narrative device, I agree with Stephen Patterson that a simpler explanation is that Mark tells a vivid story of the movements of plural disciples with a singular teacher and that a more explicit way to identify oneself as an eyewitness would be to use the first person plural (cf. *Gos. Pet.* 26-7, 60).²⁸⁹ Or Mark could have identified Peter explicitly as a source as the Johannine epilogue does with the beloved disciple (21:21) or the *Gospel of Thomas* with Judas Didymus Thomas. The internal evidence for Peter's eyewitness testimony is weak.

Bauckham may not deal adequately with the negative or ambiguous evidence in Mark about the disciples, but he is not alone in this. One way scholars have dealt with the texts where the Twelve come across in a less than flattering light, such as their repeated miscomprehension of Jesus's person or mission (4:13, 40-1; 6:51-2; 7:17-8; 8:4, 14-21, 31-3; 9:10, 32-4, 38-41; 10:35-45; 14:4-5), the bold request of James and John for seats of honour beside Jesus (10:35-40), the rebuke of Peter as the mouthpiece of Satan (8:33) or Peter's threefold denials and pathetic weeping (14:66-72), is to assume that this harsh treatment must have been sanctioned by apostolic warrant.²⁹⁰ It is assumed that, in Mark, Peter bluntly recalls his foibles and the later Gospels of Matthew and Luke re-sanitize Peter's image. For instance, noticing the dramatic differences in the scene at Caesarea Philippi in Mark 8:29-33 and the praise heaped upon Peter in the parallel account in Matthew 16:15-23, R.P. Martin contends, "[o]nly the humbled apostle

²⁸⁹ Stephen J. Patterson, "Can You Trust a Gospel? A Review of Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*" *JSHJ* 6 (2008): 194-210.

²⁹⁰ Turner, "Dependence upon Peter," 162; cf. Rigaux, *Testimony of St. Mark*, 49; Gundry, *Apology*, 1040; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 176-9.

who was willing to relate, in such detail, his denial of the Lord would have left out the words of the same Lord's blessing upon him."²⁹¹

But it is not just that Mark is transparently honest about the character blemishes or misjudgments of the disciples. Their extraordinary powers of incomprehension – worrying over bread after their master miraculously multiplied food twice (8:16-21) or caught completely off-guard in Gethsamane despite three fairly straightforward passion predictions (8:31-32; 9:31-32; 10:32-34) – seem not only unrealistic but borders on parody. It is true that their lapses in judgement may be retained in Synoptic parallels (Matt 16:5-12; Matt 16:21-22/Luke 9:22; Matt 17:22-23/Luke 9:44-45; Matt 20:17-19/Luke 18:31-34), but Mark alone has their hearts collectively hardened (6:52; 8:17) like Pharaoh of old (Exod 7:3, 13-14, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4) or the adversaries of Jesus (Mark 3:15). Peter's denials may not be suppressed, but Matthew, Luke and the scribe behind the Johannine epilogue balance it out with an explicit commission to Peter to lead the post-Easter community (Matt 16:17-19; Luke 22:32; John 21:15-19). The group vague identified as “the ones with him” (οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ) (Mark 3:21), probably the family members of Jesus (cf. 3:32-5), do not fare much better when they try to restrain Jesus like an insane person and are put side-by-side with the scribes who demonize Jesus (3:22-30). Mark may not be actively polemicizing against James because the brothers are unnamed and may have an eye to comforting readers feeling the sting of familial betrayal (13:12).²⁹² The focus may be on the redefinition of kinship relations to a wider group (3:35) and Jesus' mother exemplifies her devotion in going to anoint his body (15:40, 47; 16:1).²⁹³ At any rate, the ambivalent picture of Peter, the Twelve and the brothers of Jesus makes it difficult to

²⁹¹ Martin, *Evangelist*, 56.

²⁹² Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 51-2.

²⁹³ Horsley, *Whole Story*, 223-5. Crossan (*Relatives of Jesus*, 105-10) argues that the words “and Joses” in Mark 15:40 and 47 are redactional to link Mary with the mother of “James and Joses” (6:3). In Crossan's eyes, this is one more example of the failure of a family member of Jesus, but I have contested this reading of 16:7-8.

fathom how the evangelist could have worked at the behest of one of the Jerusalem Pillars. Nor can the negative be swept away by Christian memory of Peter as a faithful martyr,²⁹⁴ for, while Mark alludes to the deaths of James and John (10:39), there is no indication that Mark knew the tradition of Peter's martyrdom (contra John 21:18-9). Joel Marcus is right that downplaying the negative edge to Mark's portrait as a testament to apostolic humility overlooks the gravity of the ideological struggles for leadership in the early period.²⁹⁵ If not for the promise of reconciliation at 14:28 and 16:7, Mark would have terminated the career of the disciples negatively.

It is now time to state some conclusions about Mark's complex portrayal of the disciples. Since Mark introduces the disciple in a positive manner and they are redeemed and included in the post-Easter community in the end (Mark 13:9-13; 16:7), the reader is invited to identify with them. On the one hand, their increasing negative features alienate the reader from them and encourage the reader to not fall into the same trap.²⁹⁶ The dense inquiries of the disciples provide the opportunity for the Markan Jesus to illuminate his identity or the nature of discipleship for them and the reader,²⁹⁷ but the major character flaw held up for the sharpest reproach is the ambition of the disciples for power and status, standing in stark contrast to the Son of Man who relinquished his right to be served but chooses to serve and surrender his life (cf. 10:45). Mark grants the Twelve their due as the disciples of Jesus who spear-headed the new movement, but protests that they or anyone else should have special position or privilege in a community of equals.²⁹⁸ To this end, Mark exposes the Twelve's consistent misperception as indicating that they do not possess any superior insight than any other follower of Jesus, sets up a child or a

²⁹⁴ Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, xxix; Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 316.

²⁹⁵ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 23-24.

²⁹⁶ Thus, I agree with the major thrust of the readings of Tannehill ("Narrative Role," 393) and Tolbert ("Fallible Followers," 44; "Texts and Contexts," 120).

²⁹⁷ Best, *Disciples*, 113.

²⁹⁸ A hierarchal relationship, though, is maintained between Jesus and the community. See Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel" *JSNT* 73(1999): 18-20.

servant as a model against the Twelve's desire to lord their authority over others like foreign tyrants (9:36-37; 10:13-16, 42-5), denies the right of the Twelve to dictate who belongs to the movement in the story of the alien exorcist (9:38-50), and demands absolute self-renunciation in the act of taking up the cross (8:34-38). Since Mark has no room for human hierarchies in the community, it may be the height of irony that Mark required the apostolic authority of Peter in order to be admitted into the canon.

E. The Petrine and Pauline Features in Mark

1. Michael Bird's Defense of the Patristic Tradition

Peter is not the only apostolic authority who has been presumed to stand behind Mark. Other scholars sense in the evangelist's outlook on the soteriological significance of Jesus death, the characterization of the disciples, the advent of a new eschatological age, the attitude towards the *Torah* and the endorsement of the Gentile mission a decidedly Pauline flavor to the text.²⁹⁹ A case could be made for both Petrine and Pauline elements in Mark. In one scholarly paradigm, Mark is the great synthesizer, merging a Palestinian teacher with the dying and rising Christ of the Pauline *kerygma* to construct a new myth of origins, though whether a stroke of genius or an unmitigated disaster is in the eye of the beholder.³⁰⁰ No less an authority than Bultmann states forthrightly, "This in fact marks the purpose of the author: the union of the Hellenistic kerygma

²⁹⁹ For just a few examples, see J. C. Fenton, 'Paul and Mark', in D. E. Nineham (ed.), *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 89-112; Martin, *Evangelist and Theologian*, 156-205; Michael Goulder, *St. Paul versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994); Telford, *Theology*, 164-169; 473-487; Joel Marcus, "Mark- Interpreter of Paul" *NTS* 46 (2000): 473-87.

³⁰⁰ Telford writes, "Mark's *genius* was to wed these [Palestinian] traditions, by means of the secrecy motif, to a theological perspective on the death and resurrection of Jesus that unites him, as we have seen, with Paul" (*Theology*, 170, emphasis mine). In contrast, in narrativizing the Pauline *kerygma* in real time and casting the blame for the murder of Jesus and the persecution of his innocent followers on the outside world and particularly the Jewish leadership, Mack blames all the evils perpetuated under the name of Christendom and western imperialism on Mark's foundational "myth of innocence" (*Myth of Innocence*, 351-71)

about Christ, whose essential content consists of the Christ myth as we learn of it from Paul (esp. Phil. 2^{6ff}; Rom 3²⁴) with the tradition of the story of Jesus.”³⁰¹

Michael Bird agrees that “it does not seem possible to put all the eggs in either the Pauline or the Petrine baskets concerning the origins of the Gospel of Mark,”³⁰² but turns this into evidence for the accuracy of the authorship of “Mark” as the New Testament associates a “Mark” with Paul (Acts 12:25; 13:5; 15:36-41; Phlm 1:24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11) and Peter (Acts 12:12; 1 Pet 5:13). Bird grants that the evangelist may have obtained an assortment of traditions from communities in Palestine, Syria and Rome in his travels, but he pictures the apostles as the primary custodians of the Jesus tradition in the first generation and a significant influence on the tradition was mediated to the evangelist from Peter and Paul.³⁰³ Bird sums up Mark as “Petrine testimony shaped into an evangelical narrative conducive to Pauline proclamation.”³⁰⁴ This is comparable to R.P. Martin’s view that Mark captures the essence of Paul’s thought and distills it in the language or imagery inherited from the Jerusalem Church to prevent a one-sided, distorted reading of Paul.³⁰⁵ Bird largely rehashes Bauckham’s points on the Petrine inclusio, the plural-to-singular narrative device and the *kerygmatic* outline of Peter’s speech in Acts 10:36-41 as the “Petrine” elements in Mark.³⁰⁶ Bird admits that Matthew has a comparatively better treatment of Peter than Mark, but Matthew retains the rebuke of Peter (Matt 16:23-8) and the unflattering portrait of the disciples as dull in the yeast saying (16:6-12).³⁰⁷

³⁰¹ Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 347-8.

³⁰² Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 31-2.

³⁰³ Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 33.

³⁰⁴ Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 32.

³⁰⁵ Martin, *Evangelist and Theologian*, 161.

³⁰⁶ Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 34-8. He also has an appendix (pp. 53-61) where he supports Hengel’s arguments for the primitiveness of the standard Gospel titles, the early second century dating of Papias and the possible genuine authorship of 1 Peter by Peter

³⁰⁷ Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 33-4.

Stronger, in my opinion, is Bird's case for associating Mark with Paul. Bird begins by looking at the centrality of the cross in Mark and Paul, though he weakens his case by denying that there were any pre-70 Jesus communities that did not factor the soteriological significance of the crucifixion into its identity-formation and worldview.³⁰⁸ Bird runs through a checklist that isolates Markan features that he abstracts as notably Pauline:

These features include nullifying the application of proselyte models of conversion to Christian Gentiles (Romans 4; Galatians 3-4), a general antithesis between Jesus' death and the Mosaic law in light of his apocalyptic worldview (Gal. 2:15-21; Rom 7:1-6), a highly specified soteriology that employs various images for what the cross achieved (e.g., justification, forgiveness, reconciliation, adoption and atonement) and an identification with the crucified Jesus establishes the grounds for a new meta-identity that includes Gentiles, Greeks and Jews within its scope (1 Cor. 7:18; 12:13; Gal. 3:28; 6:15; Col. 3:11).³⁰⁹

Getting into specific detail in Mark, Jesus walks through the Via Delorosa as the anti-type of an imperial procession.³¹⁰ This is comparable to Paul's proclamation of the victory over the powers achieved at the cross (cf. Rom 8:37-8; 1 Cor 2:8; 15:24; Col 2:15).³¹¹ The cosmic darkness and rending of the temple veil (Mark 15:38) represent the crucifixion as the apocalyptic turning point of the ages (Gal 1:4; 6:14; 1 Cor 2:7-9; Col 1:12-14; 25-26).³¹² The cross is the apex of Christological revelation when a Gentile publically affirms Jesus's divine sonship (Mark 15:29; cf. Gal 2:19-20; 4:4-5).³¹³ Both Mark and Paul understand Jesus to exercise his power

³⁰⁸ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 39.

³⁰⁹ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 39-40.

³¹⁰ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 42-43. Bird draws attention to parallels such as the whole Praetorian guard, the purple ceremonial garb, the crowning of the triumphator, the accolades from the soldiers, the official leading of the sacrificial victim, the offer and refusal of the wine poured on the altar, the placard naming the conquered people, the two consuls or generals, and the confession of the emperor as "son of god."

³¹¹ Bird, "Interpreter of Paul," 43; Fenton, "Paul and Mark," 102-3; Marcus, "Interpreter of Paul," 475, 485-86. For the conflict with demonic forces in Mark, Marcus draws attention to the temptation, the exorcisms, the human plot "to liquidate" (ἀπολέσσαι) Jesus (3:6; 11:8) as mirroring the fear of the demons that Jesus will liquidate them (1:2) or the loud cry of Jesus (φῶνη μεγάλη) (15:37) as similar to the screams of demoniacs when exorcised (1:26; 5:7).

³¹² Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 42; cf. Martin, *Evangelist and Theologian*, 163-4; Marcus, "Interpreter of Paul," 479-80, 482.

³¹³ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 43; Martin, *Evangelist and Theologian*, 174

through the weakness of the cross (1 Cor 1-2).³¹⁴ Bird sees Mark's metaphor of Jesus's death as a ransom (λύτρον) (10:45) as Pauline, though Paul's preferred term when using the metaphor of the manumission of slaves is ἀπολύτρωσις.³¹⁵

On to the use of the noun εὐαγγέλιον, Bird again wants to have it both ways. He argues that the announcement of "good news" goes back to the historical Jesus as it passes the criterion of multiple attestation (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:18; Luke 7:22/Matt 11:5),³¹⁶ though Bird does not factor in that Luke 4:18 may be redactional (compare Luke 4:16-30 with Mark 6:1-6; Matt 13:54-8), while insisting that the noun in Mark has a characteristically Pauline spin. In Paul and Mark, εὐαγγέλιον commences a text with the announcement of the messianic status of Jesus (Mark 1:1; cf. Rom 1:1, 3; Phil 4:15), has god as the subject (Mark 1:14-5; Rom 1:1; 15:16; 1 Thess 2:2, 8-9; 2 Cor 11:7), is worth forsaking all else to obtain (Mark 8:35; 10:29; cf. Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 4:15; 9:14, 23; 2 Cor 9:13; Phil 1:7, 12, 16; 1 Thess 3:2-3; Phlm 1:3), is proclaimed among the nations (Mark 13:10; cf. Rom 15:16, 19; 2 Cor 10:14) and honours the service of specific individuals (Mark 14:9; cf. 2 Cor 8:18; Phil 2:22; 4:2-3; 1 Thess 3:2).³¹⁷

Regarding Mark's stance on the *Torah*, Bird agrees with Crossley to the extent that the pericope in Mark 7:1-23 is mainly a *halakhic* debate over the issue of hand-washing and that a blanket abrogation of the dietary laws would be in contradiction with the charge against the Pharisees for nullifying the Law for the sake of their traditions. Where he disagrees is that he reads 7:19b as an aside, much like the clarifying comments in 7:3-4, directed towards non-Jewish readers to inform them that all foods are clean for them.³¹⁸ Comparing this to Paul's confidence

³¹⁴ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 42; cf. Marcus, "Interpreter of Paul," 482-4.

³¹⁵ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 46. Bird lists Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 1:14; cf. Luke 21:28; Heb 9:15; 11:35. He also sees the ideas of representation and substitution in Mark 10:45 to parallel Rom 5:8.

³¹⁶ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 44.

³¹⁷ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 44-5.

³¹⁸ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 49.

“in the Lord Jesus” (ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ) that “nothing is unclean in itself” (οὐδὲν κοινὸν δι’ ἑαυτοῦ), Bird argues that Mark shares a particular Pauline interpretation of a dominical *logion* in Romans 14:14 that the food laws are dispensable in the context of the Gentile mission.³¹⁹ Bird sees a further agreement in Paul and Mark championing the spirit of the Law in the Decalogue over accumulated human traditions.³²⁰ The vision in Acts 10 where Peter is commanded to eat unclean foods cannot be brought in as a non-Pauline parallel to Mark 7:19b for the surrounding narrative makes clear that it symbolizes the inclusion of foreign peoples and is not a matter of what Bird calls “culinary license.”³²¹ Thus, Bird concludes his case that Mark is a marriage of Petrine stories about Jesus with the Pauline *kerygma*.

2. Evaluation of Michael Bird’s Defense

Bird has not changed my opinion on Peter’s role in the composition of Mark. In the Matthean parallels noted by Bird, the disciples comprehend Jesus’s teaching (Matt 6:12) and are not hard of heart (contra Mark 8:17), while Mark ends on a note of bafflement at their incomprehension (8:21). Goulder outlines how Matthew 16:15-23 rehabilitates Peter by expanding Peter’s confession to Jesus’s divine sonship, inserting a commendation of Peter, separating Peter’s confession from Jesus’s rebuke by an interval of time (cf. “from that time” in Matt 16:21), citing Peter’s direct speech, and softening Jesus’s rebuke with the warning that Peter has become a stumbling block and by having it take place in private.³²² If the character flaw of the Markan

³¹⁹ Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 50-2; cf. Marcus, “Interpreter of Paul,” 476; Sim, “Matthew’s Use of Mark,” 180-1, 185.

³²⁰ Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 51.

³²¹ Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 51 (contra Crossley, “Question of Influences,” 13). Philip Esler (*Community and Gospel*, 95-96) disagrees to some extent with Bird that the vision does not just authorize an outreach to non-Jewish peoples but also the practice of mixed table fellowship, but in any case Esler sees it as an invention by the author of Acts to credit Peter with initiating the Gentile mission.

³²² Goulder, *Two Missions*, 18. My only disagreement with the list is that Mark may have seen “Christ” and “Son of God” as synonymous (cf. Mark 14:61b).

disciples was their longing for power, Mark would not have accepted Matthew's investment to Peter with the keys of the kingdom and the authority to bind and loose on earth as it will be in heaven. The traditional authorship may be partly salvaged, though, by appeal to Mark's Pauline traits. Although Bird underestimates Paul's distinctiveness, Joel Marcus contends, "If Paul was a lonely and contentious figure rather than a universally approved one, it is more remarkable than it would otherwise be that Mark frequently agrees with him."³²³ In his article, Marcus treats Mark as a later example of Paulinism, like the deutero-Pauline epistles, Luke-Acts or Marcion with all of their lines of continuity and discontinuity. On the other hand, his commentary has a note of openness on the authorship of the Gospel by John Mark, a minor co-worker of Paul.³²⁴ Marcus hints that the depiction of the Twelve deserting Jesus (14:27-31, 50, 66-71) parallels John Mark's regret for abandoning Paul (Acts 13:13; 15:48).³²⁵ Michael Goulder believes that the evangelist, after a short stint with Peter (cf. Acts 12:12) and a temporary falling-out with Paul (Acts 13:5; 15:37-39), rejoined Paul in Rome and saw his *Torah*-free policy as the way to go.³²⁶ The arguments that Mark is a Pauline Gospel, then, need to be put to the test.

It is a pity that Bird does not have a detailed comparison on the Christologies of Mark and Paul except for a footnote arguing that Mark adhered to a pre-existence/suffering/exaltation pattern that was shared across the Jesus movement,³²⁷ for Mark has major differences from Paul in this area. For one thing, Paul meditates on Christ's pre-existence (Phil 2:6-7; Col 1:15-20; cf. Rom 8:3; 1 Cor 8:6; 10:4; 15:47; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 4:4; Col 1:15-20),³²⁸ benefiting from the language about lady wisdom (cf. Prov 8:22-31; *Wis. Sol.* 7:25-26), but this concept is missing in

³²³ Joel Marcus, "Mark- Interpreter of Paul" *NTS* 46 (2000): 474.

³²⁴ Compare Marcus, "Interpreter of Paul," 476-7 with *Mark 1-8*, 17-24.

³²⁵ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 24.

³²⁶ Goulder, *Two Missions*, 20.

³²⁷ Bird, "Interpreter of Peter," 39 n. 29.

³²⁸ I agree with Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 23-30 that pre-existence is probably entailed in these passages.

Mark. Simon Gathercole has challenged the consensus that there is no notion of pre-existence in the Synoptics, advancing the “I have come” (ἦλθον) plus purpose in the infinitive formula as analogous to statements made by supernatural beings or the heavenly Elijah.³²⁹ Gathercole makes too fine a distinction of a “coming” for a single event versus a “coming” that sums up one’s entire career or purpose so as to exclude human parallels (cf. Josephus, *War* 3.400).³³⁰ Although not exactly in the form of an “I have come” saying, the Baptist anticipates a stronger one who “comes” (ἔρχεται) to baptize in the spirit, a human agent as evinced by John’s self-deprecating remark to be unworthy to untie his sandals (1:7-8). The “I have come” sayings may denote a strong sense of divine commission, whether a human or angelic envoy.³³¹ There is nothing explicit in Mark about the personal pre-existence of Jesus.

It may be objected that Mark is a narrative Christology, not a theological treatise.

Dibelius labels Mark as a “book of secret epiphanies,” veiling the divinity of Jesus apart from a few revelatory moments.³³² Many hear echoes of the sovereignty of Yahweh over the waters (cf. Job 9:8; Ps 89:9) and of a divine epiphany in the words “to pass by” (παρελθεῖν) and the divine name ἐγώ εἰμι (cf. Exod 33:7-34:8) in Mark 6:48-51.³³³ Horsley objects that Mark would not

³²⁹ Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son*, 113-145. See Mark 1:24, 38; 2:17; 10:45; Matt 10:34/Luke 12:51; Matt 5:17; 8:29; Matt 10:35; Luke 12:49; 19:10. Note Rudolf Bultmann (*Synoptic Tradition*, 150-66) classifies the “I have come” sayings as distinct formulations from Hellenistic Christian prophets speaking in the name of Christ as a divine being, but Gathercole challenges Bultmann’s examples and opts for a Jewish background (*Pre-existent Son*, 95-9).

³³⁰ Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son*, 96. Josephus uses the “I have come” plus infinitive formula to announce a message of good tidings to Vespasian. Gathercole distinguishes this as a one-time event, but several other Markan examples may be to one-time events such as “coming” to destroy the demons specifically inhabiting a man (1:24) or to go public in preaching to other Galilean cities (1:38). Gathercole (*Pre-existent Son*, 148-57) reads too much into 1:24 and 1:38 as summing up Jesus’s whole mission to destroy the demonic realm or proclaim the kingdom.

³³¹ For trenchant criticisms of Gathercole’s thesis, see James Dunn, “Review of *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark and Luke*, by Simon Gathercole” *RBL* (online: http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/5607_6160.pdf), n.p.

³³² Dibelius, *Tradition to Gospel*, 266-86, 229-30. Interestingly, Dibelius only classified the baptism, the temptation and the transfiguration scenes in Mark as “myth,” a category which he defined somewhat unsophisticatedly as the many-sided doings of the gods.

³³³ Hurtado, *Mark*, 81; Gundry, *Apology*, 336-7; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 421-35; Boring, *Mark*, 189-90; Stein, *Mark*, 324-6; Marco Frenschkowski, *Offenbarung und Epiphanie: Band 2 Die vergorgene Epiphanie in Spätantike und frühen Christentum* (WUNT 2. Reihe; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1997), 179-80.

replicate an Ancient Near Eastern imperial myth of the divine king conquering the waters of chaos,³³⁴ but the evangelist disdains *Roman* imperialism, not imperial imagery re-applied to Jesus. Alternatively, Mark's combination of sea and feeding miracles may bring to mind Moses and Elijah;³³⁵ Moses could be imaged in exalted terms as god and king of the nation who could command the elements (Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.55-8).³³⁶ Both readings are plausible and there may be a way to mediate between the two: the divine authority to trample the sea in Psalm 89 is extended to a human, the Davidic king (89:25).³³⁷ Gathercole reads the transfiguration as a revelation of Christ's glorious pre-existent form which is similar in appearance to other heavenly beings,³³⁸ but the transfiguration may be proleptic of Jesus's eschatological glory, especially as it is closely tied into the prediction that some would not see death until they see the kingdom come in power (9:1). There are parallels with Moses: the ascent of a mountain with three men, the transfigured appearance and the voice declaring "listen to him" (cf. Deut 18:15).³³⁹

Mark's Christology does not soar to Pauline heights. At best, it is implicit, arising out of Jesus's unrivalled authority to act on the deity's behalf in forgiving sins (2:5-10) or exercising cosmic judgment on the basis of the response to himself (8:38; 13:26-7). Telford finds a parallel in Mark's repudiation of the political connotations of the title "son of David" (12:35-37) with the virtual absence of Davidic sonship in the Pauline letters (Rom 1:3-4; cf. 2 Tim 2:8).³⁴⁰ But Paul hardly rejects Davidic sonship if it is in his acute summary of his *kerygma* at the outset of his letter to Rome, to a Christ association he had not founded, and he rarely defines "Christ" because

³³⁴ Horsley, *Whole Story*, 105.

³³⁵ Mack, *Myth of Innocence*, 218; Horsley, *Whole Story*, 104-5; James Crossley, "Mark's Christology and a Scholarly Creation of a Non-Jewish Christ of Faith" in *Judaism, Jewish Identities and the Gospel Tradition* (ed. James Crossley; London & Oakville: Equinox, 2010), 140-2.

³³⁶ Crossley, "Christ of Faith," 136.

³³⁷ I owe this point to Daniel Kirk, "David and God" (online: <http://www.jrdkirk.com/2011/01/10/david-and-god/>).

³³⁸ Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son*, 48-9, 276; cf. Gundry, *Apology*, 451.

³³⁸ Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 347-8.

³³⁹ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 631, 636, 1113-5

³⁴⁰ Telford, *Theology*, 50-1; cf. Tyson, "Blindness of the Disciples," 266

he wrote occasional letters to his congregations who did not need it rehearsed. As for Mark, Horsley insists that Mark did not embrace the script of Davidic Messiah from the Jerusalem “great tradition” at all.³⁴¹ For Crossley, “son of David” (10:47-48) is a respectful address, like calling Jesus a “good Jew” or a “son of Abraham,” and the crowd chants for “the *kingdom* of our father David” (11:10).³⁴² In my review of Horsley, I argued that the framing of Peter’s confession with two blind men is the key. Bartimaeus’s petition to the “son of David” is equivalent to Peter’s acclamation of Jesus as the “Christ,” but the two-stage healing of the blind man suggests that Peter has partial insight. Full recovery of sight happens when one follows Jesus on the “way” to the cross like Bartimaeus.³⁴³ Seen in this light, Mark 10:45-7 does not contradict Jesus’s Davidic sonship; it re-defines it to his enthronement in heaven. The widespread use of Psalm 110 as a Christological proof-text shows that others beyond Paul and Mark were re-working the meaning of Davidic messiahship.³⁴⁴

Paul frequently uses the title υἱὸς θεοῦ (son of god), but divine sonship is attested in the Synoptic double tradition (Matt 4:3, 6/Luke 4:3, 9; Matt 11:27/Luke 10:22) and may be rooted in the familial prayer language of Jesus (Mark 14:36; cf. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). The title needs to be interpreted in its Markan context, which differs from the sending of the pre-existent son from heaven in Paul (Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4). Telford interprets it in the sense of a θεῖος ἄνθρωπος, endowed with power in his command over nature, supernatural knowledge and divine splendor at the transfiguration.³⁴⁵ This concept may be more of a modern construct than an ancient one and the

³⁴¹ Horsley, *Whole Story*, 247-53. He makes his case by arguing 1:1 is a later scribal addition and using the synoptic parallels of Mk 14:61 (Matt 26:64 /Lk 22:70; cf. Mk 15:2) to change Jesus’ affirmation of the high priest’s question to a more ambiguous “you say so,” but the manuscript evidence is strongly against both suppositions.

³⁴² Crossley, “Christ of Faith,” 126; “Question of Influences,” 24; idem, *Date*, 77-8 (emphasis mine).

³⁴³ See Best, *Discipleship*, 3.

³⁴⁴ Mark 12:36 (Matt 22:43-45/Luke 22:42-44); 14:62 (Matt 26:64/Luke 22:69); Acts 2:33-34, 5:31; 7:55-56; Rom 8:34; I Cor. 15:25; Eph 1:20; 2:6; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev 3:21; 1 Clem 36:5; *Barn.* 12:10.

³⁴⁵ Telford, *Theology*, 40-1.

title is better understood from the evangelist's scriptural heritage. The baptism scene is filled with scriptural allusions (Ps 2:9; MT Isa 63:19) and features the divine voice or the *bath qol*; the transfiguration recalls the theophanies to Moses and Elijah on a mountain (cf. 1 Kg 19:8) and has an allusion to Tabernacles (9:5).³⁴⁶ The divine voice in both scenes alludes to a royal coronation Psalm and the election of the Davidic king as the deity's son (Psalm 2:8; cf. 2 Sam 7:14). The "beloved son" is heir of the vineyard, but the sending of the son is not qualitatively different from that of the servants (12:1-9), and, for the high priest, the terms Messiah and son of the Blessed are synonymous (14:62).³⁴⁷ Michael Peppard has suggested another analogue in that the Roman imperial line was frequently perpetuated through the act of legal adoption.³⁴⁸

Mark's Son of Man Christology is a significant difference from Paul. When Paul alludes to a tradition reminiscent of the apocalyptic Son of Man sayings (Mark 8:38; 13:27; 14:62), he shifts to his favourite term κύριος (Lord) (1 Thess 4:16). For Telford, future (Matt. 24.27, 37-9/Luke 17.24, 26-7) and present (Matt 8:20/Luke 9:58) Son of Man sayings were present in the tradition, but Mark creates predictions of a suffering Son of Man (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-4) to baptize the title into Pauline theology.³⁴⁹ If Maurice Casey is right that one son of man saying connected with Jesus's death reflects the generalizing Aramiac idiom (Mark 14:21),³⁵⁰ this may counter Telford's theory that the suffering Son of Man sayings are purely redactional. Without Mark's sources, there may be no way to be certain. Telford parallels the Son of Man to an archetypal human or Paul's heavenly Adam,³⁵¹ but a Danielic background is more likely and the symbolism

³⁴⁶ Crossley, "Question of Influences," 26-8. See also the arguments against the concept of a Hellenistic θεῖος ἄνθρωπος (divine man) category in my review of Weeden.

³⁴⁷ Gathercole (*Pre-existent Son*, 188) argues that the reader would import the revelation of Christ's pre-existent glory from the baptism and the transfiguration to the parable of the tenants, so that the sending of the son alone implies pre-existence, but this depends on whether one accepts Gathercole's interpretation of these prior scenes.

³⁴⁸ Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁴⁹ Telford, *Theology*, 112-3.

³⁵⁰ Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 365.

³⁵¹ Telford, *Theology*, 108, 166.

of Daniel 7 is of the humane kingdom against the beastly empires. Joel Marcus spots Adamic imagery in Mark's depiction of Jesus living at peace with the wild animals (1:9-15; cf. Gen 1:26-27; 2:19-20; Isa 11:6-9; *Apoc Mos* 39:1-3) and Jesus's sparkling white clothes as Adam's radiant garments (9:3; cf. the Targums on Gen 3:21),³⁵² but white clothing may denote purity before God (Dan 11:35; Jos. *War* 2.123; cf. Isa 1:18; 6:1-7).³⁵³ The wilderness scene is not a tranquil Edenic paradise and the wild animals may be arrayed with Satan against Jesus and the angels (cf. Ps. 91; *T. Naph.* 8:4; *T. Iss.* 7.7; *T. Benj.* 5:2).³⁵⁴ The Ancient Near Eastern combat myth and Daniel 7 may underlie this encounter of the envoy of the divine kingdom with the beastly imperial powers and the evil spiritual forces pulling the strings.³⁵⁵ In the end, Mark lacks key elements of Paul's Christology (e.g., pre-existent divine wisdom, Adam typology) and Paul lacks Mark's "Son of Man" title. Where they have overlapping titles, their conceptions differ markedly. To maintain his image of Mark as a Pauline theologian, Goulder speculates that Mark left a primitive, non-Pauline Christological outline intact as an accidental oversight.³⁵⁶

Closer to Paul is Mark's focus on "Christ crucified." Much of the weight of Mark falls squarely on the cross, so much so that Kähler exaggeratingly called it a "passion narrative with an extended introduction."³⁵⁷ From Mark 8:31 onward, the cross is a divine necessity (δεῖ),

³⁵² Marcus, "Interpreter of Paul," 475-76; *Mark 1-8*, 173-74; *Mark 8-16*, 636. In favour of the former, Marcus cites a tradition where Adam's meals were catered to by angels (*b. Sanh.* 59b). For the latter, he argues that Moses face shown when he came down from the mountain (Exod 34:29-35; cf. 2 Cor 3:7-18) but Mark only has a reference to Jesus' clothing (unlike the Synoptic parallels).

³⁵³ Crossley, "Question of Influences," 27.

³⁵⁴ Lane, *Mark*, 61; Gundry, *Apology*, 58-9; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 50-1; Witherington, *Mark*, France, *Mark*, 83-4; Collins, *Mark*, 152-3; Stein, *Mark*, 63-64

³⁵⁵ Meyers, *Strong Man*, 131.

³⁵⁶ Goulder, *Two Missions*, 130. Goulder makes this argument in reference to Mark 1:9 and the fact that Mark did not edit the language of the spirit descending "into" (εἰς) Jesus at the baptism.

³⁵⁷ Kähler, *Historic Biblical Christ*, 80 n.11. The early form critics accepted a pre-Markan passion narrative (cf. Dibelius, *Tradition*, 179-83; Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 273-81, 347-8; Taylor, *Formation*, 44-66) and this seems to be the majority position today. See Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* 2:1-27, 319; Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 166-99, Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 216-30; 288-; Collins, *Mark*, 621-27, 819; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 924-27. Yet a minority of scholars assign the whole of the Passion to the evangelists literary creativity; see Mack, *Myth of Innocence*, 247-312; Arnal, "Reflection on Exile," 58-9.

epitomized in statements on the purpose of Jesus to surrender his life for “many” (10:45; 14:22-24), and the early chapters contain hints of the bridegroom to be taken away (2:20) or a full-fledged conspiracy to kill Jesus (3:6). It is a valuable reminder for scholars of religion to not posit an essentialized Christian identity as the cross may not be the *sine non qua* of every Jesus association, but not all contemplation on the execution and post-mortem vindication of Jesus can be confined to Paul. Paul transmits a creed on Christ’s atoning death and resurrection signaled by the technical terms to deliver and receive (παραδίδωμι, παραλαμβάνω) and assumes the tacit approval of the leaders at Jerusalem (1 Cor 15:3-5; cf. Gal 1:18-20), without excluding hypothetical Jesus groups extracted from source and form criticism that cannot be subsumed under this creed.³⁵⁸ Paul uses the same technical language when passing on a dominical tradition on the ritual meal (1 Cor 11:23-6). The Passover setting of the meal (Mark 14:1-26) may have been transformed by Paul into a regular cultic meal at Corinth and a textual variant adds κοινῆς to bring Mark into line with Paul (1 Cor 11:25; cf. Luke 22:20).³⁵⁹

Rather than narrativizing the Pauline *kerygma*, Mark’s preoccupation with the tribulation of Jesus may be due to the author’s experience of persecution, real or perceived, as a daily reality (4:17; 8:34-38; 10:30, 38-39; 13:9, 11-13). Recruits are counselled to take up a cross (8:34), a revolting image for one familiar with this form of capital punishment,³⁶⁰ and Jesus’s suffering

³⁵⁸ Mack’s (*Myth of Innocence*, 113 n. 11) move to sever the creed from the individuals or groups named in it is unconvincing. Paul assumes their consent to this minimalistic statement and notes that many were alive to ask.

³⁵⁹ Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2.323-8; Casey, *Aramaic Sources*, 248-49; Crossley, *Date*, 51; idem, “Mark, Paul and the Question of Influences” in *Paul and the Gospels: Christology, Conflicts and Convergences* 13. Paul may be aware of the Passover context in describing Christ as the Paschal Lamb (1 Cor 5:7). Contra Mack’s (*Myth of Innocence*, 298-303) argument that Mark combined Paul’s memorial meal with the wisdom tale (e.g. interpreting “handed over” to mean handed over or betrayal by a friend), reducing the cultic presence (e.g., deleting “for you”) and painting this as a final meal with his disciples.

³⁶⁰ Some scholars argue this demands a Roman context with official trials and the threat of crucifixion (cf. Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 90-2), but Collins is right that the reference could be metaphorical (cf. Plutarch *Moralia Sera* 554A-B) and crucifixion was a reality in the East (*Mark*, 99-100). Further, Mark describes the disciples as hauled before synagogues or local governors and kings (13:9) rather than prosecuted under an official imperial edict, while

served as a model to aspire to and a comfort for readers in their dire plight. The advocacy of a “kingdom” and the replication of royal titles for Jesus engendered forms of social ostracism and repression, hence the fixation on the crucifixion, but Mark envisions a regime change at the arrival of the kingdom. In this way, Mark uses colonial mimicry to de-legitimatize the current political order but internalizes and re-inscribes imperial ideology with Jesus as the unrivalled authority and the insider-outsider binary based on those who submit or oppose his rule.³⁶¹

There may be no need to call in Paul to comprehend Mark’s emphasis on the death of Jesus. In Mark, the death of Jesus is set in the context of the story of Israel, evoking memories of the exodus and the covenant renewal ceremony (14:22-24). Mark’s term λύτρον (ransom) is absent in Paul (but cf. λυτρόομαι in 1 Tim 2:6; Tit 2:14) and invokes the heroic memory of the Maccabean martyrs (2 Macc 7:32-38; 4 Macc 17:20-22; cf. Dan 11:35).³⁶² What Paul saw as the cosmic implications of Jesus’s death are noticeably lacking.³⁶³ Paul’s dilemma of how members of the nations could be adopted into Abraham’s family apart from taking on the covenant charter generated his metaphorical apparatus of the divine law court with its *dikai*-root words (e.g. righteousness, justification) and of Christ bearing the curse of the Law (Rom 3:19-29; Gal 3:1-14) or made to be sin (2 Cor 5:21), but this system of thought is not in Mark. Jesus never cites his impending death as a rationale for a legal verdict on sacrifice (Mark 1:44; 11:15-17), Sabbath (2:23-3:6) or purity (7:1-23). Mark does not ever note that the cross annulled “proselyte models of conversion.”³⁶⁴ Matthew has more emphasis than Mark on the crucifixion as an apocalyptic turning point with the earthquake and multiple resurrections (Matt 27:51-3), but for Matthew it

Incigneri’s take on Mark 13:9 as a veiled tribute to Paul in his beatings in the synagogue (cf. 2 Cor 11:24) and worldwide mission (cf. Rom 10:19) seems a little farfetched to me.

³⁶¹ See Liew, “Colonial Mimicry,” 13.

³⁶² Casey, *Aramaic Sources*, 209; Crossley, *Date*, 49; Crossley, “Question of Influences,” 16-7.

³⁶³ See Rom 3:21-6; 5:12-21; 2 Cor 5:14-21; cf. Eph 2:11-16; Col 1:19-22; 2:9-17. For example, I dispute that Mark reflects any Adam-Christ typology in the section on Christology below.

³⁶⁴ Contra Bird, “Interpreter of Peter,” 39.

does not annul the *Torah* (cf. Matt 5:17-9). The ministry praxis of the Markan Jesus may be incompatible with the oral traditions of the Pharisees (Mark 2:21-2), but the removal of the bridegroom leads to a reinstatement of a traditional act of piety in fasting (2:20), albeit not one mandated by biblical law aside from on *Yom Kippur* (cf. Lev 16:29; 23:26-32).

Hitherto, Mark has not drawn the same implications as Paul from Jesus's death for the whole of humanity, but the Roman centurion (15:37-8) may be an exception if he symbolizes the "Gentile" response to the *kerygma* of the cross. There is grammatical ambiguity about whether the anarthrous υἱὸς θεοῦ and imperfect tense of εἰμί implies a full Christological confession or the assimilation of Jesus into the centurion's categories of a hero or demi-god.³⁶⁵ Conversely, this so-called confession may be akin to the sarcastic jeers about the "Christ" or "king of Israel" in the chapter that at a deeper level were unwitting confessions of the truth.³⁶⁶ Even if it is a genuine reaction to the cosmic portents and the great cry of Jesus before expiring (15:33-7), there is no sign that the centurion repented and joined the community. The demons acknowledged Jesus's divine sonship too (3:11; cf. 5:7). The import of his words is that an agent of imperial power confesses that the son of god does not reside in Rome but is hung up on a cross.³⁶⁷

Of the remaining parallels, Paul and Mark picture the conflict of Jesus on a human and a cosmic plane. There may be no need to look further than the book of Daniel, which influenced Mark's ideas about a kingdom and the son of man, where earthly political structures are mirrored

³⁶⁵ For discussions of the Greek, see Nineham, *St. Mark*, 430-31; Schweizer, *Good News*, 355; Lane, *Mark*, 576; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 378-9; Painter, *Mark's Gospel*, 207; France, *Mark*, 658-60; Witherington, *Mark*, 400-1; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 1067-8. Generally, predicate nouns that precede the verb to be do not require an article, but E.S. Johnson, Jr. ("Mark 15,39 and the So-Called Confession of the Roman Centurion" *Biblica* 81 [2000]: 410-1) is right that the debate cannot be solved on grammatical grounds alone.

³⁶⁶ Juel, *Mark*, 227-28; Johnson, "Roman Centurion," 411-12; Myers, *Strong Man*, ; Horsley, *Whole Story*, 251.

³⁶⁷ See Tae Hun Kim, "The Anarthrous υἱὸς θεοῦ in Mark 15:39 and the Roman Imperial Cult" *Biblica* 79 (1998): 239-40; Collins, *Mark*, 767-8. Johnson ("Roman Centurion," 407-10) criticisms include that we can read the Latin *divi filius* behind υἱὸς θεοῦ and that Mark's language need not specifically refer to Augustus any more than any other divinized emperor or divinity, but the political titles (Christ, King of the Jews) in the chapter and the parody of a royal procession (see n. 310 above) suggest the title "son of god" has the imperial cult in mind.

in the heavenly spheres (cf. Dan 10:13, 20). The intertwining of human political conflicts and their angelic counterparts is apparent when the Markan Jesus expels the demonic “Legion” into a “herd” of unclean pigs which plunge into the Sea like Pharaoh’s army (Mark 5:1-20).³⁶⁸ Marcus reads Mark’s passion narrative as exemplifying the Pauline principle of power in weakness (2 Cor 12:9), writing, “The truth is that, if the Pauline gospel is to be expressed in narrative form, that narrative *has* to be one that combines strength and weakness, glory and abasement, life and death in the picture of the earthly Jesus.”³⁶⁹ Assuming Marcus has a fair reading that Mark emphasizes the weakness and debasement of Jesus,³⁷⁰ rather than Gundry or Winn’s attempts to swing the pendulum in the opposite direction that Mark presents an overarching Christology of power,³⁷¹ Mark is filled with paradoxical statements such as “whoever loses his [or her] life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it” (8:35) or “the first will be last and the last first” (10:31). The situation of the readers is paradoxical: promised a kingdom, their present experience is one of a beleaguered minority alienated from the socio-political establishment, following a leader who was shamefully crucified. Turning a tragic defeat into a paradoxical victory is an example of Markan irony without having to resort to Paul.

As for the *Torah*, Paul’s non-Jewish audience had no use for the fine details about what constitutes work on the Sabbath or the transmission of impurity to food, for they were not obligated to obey the Sabbath or dietary restrictions at all (Rom 14:1-23). Translations of

³⁶⁸ This is especially demonstrated by Myers, *Strong Man*, 191-94 and Horsley, *Whole Story*, 141-48. Both cite a modern parallel from the study of Frantz Fanon of how the Arabs of colonial Algeria displaced their resentment of the imperialist oppressors (the French) and attributed them to malevolent spirits.

³⁶⁹ Marcus, “interpreter of Paul,” 478.

³⁷⁰ Marcus, “interpreter of Paul,” 480-4. Marcus reads this emphasis as diluted in Matthew and Luke. His argument for Matthew is weak and depends on the change from “he became depressed” (ἠρξαστο ἐκθαυμβεῖσθαι) to “he became sad” (ἠρξαστο λυπεῖσθαι) (Mk 14:33; Matt 26:37), but he may have a case with Luke in omitting any sign of depression in Gethsemane, adding final words of Jesus that express more confident self-assurance (Lk 23:28-31; 27:50) and omitting the passive participle τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον (the crucified one) in Mark 16:6.

³⁷¹ Gundry, *Apology*; Winn, *Purpose*, 108-36. In the latter half of Mark, Jesus still exhibits amazing predictive power (14:), is portrayed as the returning Son of Man in glory (13:27-28), and refusal to go quietly into the good night as his death is accompanied by cosmic disturbances (compare 15:33 with 13:24) and a great cry (15:37).

Romans 14:14 mask that the Greek parallel is not precise and a free-floating *logion* may have been interpreted in different ways in Paul, Mark and *Thomas* (saying 14).³⁷² If Bird is correct that Mark 7:19b abrogates the food laws for non-Jews, it may be independent of Paul. By Paul's admission, the Pillars placed no requirements on his non-Jewish converts (Gal 2:6) and the apostolic decree does not stipulate a kosher diet (Acts 15:20-1). There may be historical questions about whether there was a formal decree or if compromises were informally worked out in mixed congregations, but the prohibition against meat sacrificed to "idols" is sufficiently attested (Acts 15:20; cf. 1 Cor 8, 10; Rev 2:14, 20; *Did.* 6:2; Justin, *Dial.* 34-35) to accept that this was a widespread compromise. Mark assumes an outreach beyond Israel (13:10) and translates terms (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 15:22, 34) or clarifies customs (7:3-4; 14:12; 15:42-3) for the benefit of non-Jewish readers, but the treatment of the Syro-Phoenician woman (7:24-30) and the second feeding narrative (8:1-9) relegates foreigners to a secondary position and fits the expectation that the ingathering of the nations occurs after the salvation of Israel.³⁷³ Paul may instinctively revert to the link of "Gentile sinners" (Gal 2:15) or scold the Corinthians for immorality that exceeds the "Gentiles" (1 Cor 5:1), but Paul reserves the insult "dog" (κυνών) for those who enforce circumcision on non-Jewish Christ followers (Phil 3:2).

The last parallel on the singular neuter noun εὐαγγέλιον really is striking. Of the 72 occurrences in the New Testament, the noun occurs 60 times in the whole Pauline corpus, 48 times in the undisputed epistles and about half of those passages in the absolute. The verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is found a further 21 times in the Pauline corpus, 16 times in the undisputed epistles and in 6 passages the noun and verb are juxtaposed (Rom 10:15-6; 1 Cor 9:18; 15:1; 2 Cor 11:7; Gal 1:6-8, 11). Mark has 7 occurrences, 8 if the longer ending (16:9-20) is included,

³⁷² Crossley, "Question of Influences," 14.

³⁷³ Crossley, "Question of Influences," 19. Cf. Isa 25:6; 45:22; 56:6-8; Zech 2:11; 8:20-23; Tob. 14:6-7; *1 En.* 90:30-33; *Sib. Or.* 3.616, 716-718, 752-753; *t. Sanh.* 13.2; *b. BQ* 38a.

while the noun is absent in the double tradition (Q), Luke and John. Matthew omits 3 of Mark's usage (Mark 1:15; 8:35; 10:29) and expands the other two (Mark 13:10 [Matt 24:14]; Mark 14:9 [Matt 26:13]).³⁷⁴ Steve Mason has another batch of pertinent statistics: of the 22,000 times the *euangeli*-forms appear in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, the vast majority of occurrences are in post-New Testament Christian texts. Of the 7,367 times the neuter singular is attested, virtually none are pre-Christian and it never occurs with the article.³⁷⁵

Given its rarity in the Septuagint and Greco-Roman literature, there is debate about the origins of the Christian usage. If Jesus saw his mission in light of Isaiah's call to bring good news,³⁷⁶ the use of the verb εὐαγγελίζω in the double tradition (Luke 7:22/Matt 11:5) and special Lukan material (Luke 4:18) does not explain what led to the unusual singular neuter noun (Mark 1:15). Stuhlmacher and Betz provide a parallel from the Targum of Isaiah 53:1,³⁷⁷ but this may be too late to be relevant to the early Christian texts.³⁷⁸ Since there is difficulty moving from the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι in the LXX to the noun, Stanton attributes the noun to Greek-speaking Christ followers in Antioch (or Jerusalem) in 37-40 CE who felt the impact of the imperial cult through the actions of Gaius Caligula (37-41 CE).³⁷⁹ In support of this interpretation, the opening announcement of Mark (1:1) may mimic the Priene inscription dedicated to the "good

³⁷⁴ I owe these statistics to Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 18, 20-1.

³⁷⁵ Steve Mason, *Josephus, Judaea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009), 285-6. The singular is found twice in Homer (*Odyssey* 14.152, 166), once in Josephus (*War* 2.420; the plural *euangelia* in 4.618, 656) and 4 times in Plutarch (*Ages*. 33.4; *Demetr.* 17.6; *Mor.* [*Glor. Ath.*] 347d twice), once with the article (*Demetr.* 17.6) and with the plural 12 times. The plural *euangelia* in pre-Christian literature is so rare so that all the examples can be listed: Aristophanes (*Eq.* 647, 656; *Plut.* 765), Isocrates (*Areop.* 10), Xenophon (*Hell.* 1.6.37; 4.3.14), Aeschines (*Ctes.* 60), Menander (*Peric.* 993), Diodorus Siculus (15.74.2), and the LXX (2 Sam 4:10) have 1, 2, or 3 occurrences each. In the Septuagint, the verb *euangelizomai* or the feminine singular noun *euangelia* occur 27 times (2 Sam 18:20, 22, 25, 27; 2 Kgs 7:9), while the plural form of *euangelion* only once (2 Sam 4:10) and the singular neuter not at all.

³⁷⁶ Stuhlmacher, "The Theme," 21; Betz, "Jesus Gospel," 70-1.

³⁷⁷ Stuhlmacher, "The Theme," 20 n. 74, ; Betz, "Jesus Gospel,"

³⁷⁸ Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 21.

³⁷⁹ Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 24-25. Paul recounts his call to proclaim "good news" in or near Damascus (Gal 1:14-17; 2 Cor 11:32) but does not use the noun. On his visit of Cephas and travels through the regions of Syria and Cilicia (36-37 CE) he is still using the verb (Gal 1:1-21-24; cf. Acts 11:19-20). Antioch is the place where first called "Christians" (Acts 11:26) and where the gospel word group began as the group's distinct sociolect.

news” (εὐαγγέλιον) of the birth of Augustine, the son of god.³⁸⁰ The earliest hearers likely heard anti-Roman implications behind the proclamation of a “gospel” of a “son of god,” but it runs into the same problem of the rarity of the neuter singular.

Since the predominant New Testament usage is in Paul, it is no wonder why Mason interprets “the Announcement” to be a distinctly Pauline phenomenon.³⁸¹ Mason writes, “Wherever he got it [εὐαγγέλιον] from – and that seems impossible to determine – he [Paul] understood it as a proprietary and quasi-technical term of his peculiar mission outlook, and patronage circles.”³⁸² Mason interprets Paul’s references to “my gospel” (Rom 2:16; 16:25; cf. Gal 2:2) as a proprietary term.³⁸³ The book of Acts attributes the noun to Peter and Paul (Acts 14:7, 21; 15:7; 16:10; 20:24), but Acts may be a third generation, synthesizing document.³⁸⁴ Mason considers Mark’s use of εὐαγγέλιον as evidence that it was a “Pauline” work.³⁸⁵ However, we must be careful not to buy too much into Paul’s rhetoric of his private revelations when the rhetorical aim of Galatians is to fight for his independence from Jerusalem. Since 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 seems to be a creedal fragment, Paul may have received the term εὐαγγέλιον in his tradition (1 Cor 15:1-2), though it quickly became a favourite of his to encapsulate his *kerygma*. Either we are dealing with a rare term coined by Greek-speaking Christ followers and independently picked up by Paul and Mark or, in this instance, the Pauline usage indirectly influenced Mark. Although in a rare form, it may have seemed close enough to the evangelist to allude to the Isaianic background (cf. Mark 1:2-3) and the imperial cult (cf. 1:1). This may be the strongest parallel, but it falls short of a compelling proof that Mark be classified as Pauline

³⁸⁰ Kim, “Roman Imperial Cult,” 223-; Johnson, “Roman Centurion,” 407.

³⁸¹ Mason, *Methods and Categories*, 287. By calling it “the Announcement” rather than “good news,” Mason hopes to defamiliarize readers with the term and highlight how striking it may have sounded to its first hearers.

³⁸² Mason, *Methods and Categories*, 285.

³⁸³ Mason, *Methods and Categories*, 287-95.

³⁸⁴ Mason, *Methods and Categories*, 300.

³⁸⁵ Mason, *Methods and Categories*, 297.

because of the dearth of other Pauline terminology in Mark. Mark lacks the key Pauline terms δικαιοσύνη, δικαίω, δοκιμάζω, δόκιμος, οἰκονόμος, πιστός, σωτηρία, φρόνιμος, ταπεινῶ or φῶς and has a different slant on “faith” (πίστις).³⁸⁶ In contrast, Luke not only fittingly put a reference to “justification” in a sermon by Paul (Acts 13:39), but squeezed the term into a parable of Jesus (Luke 18:14). As Mark was not cognizant of Paul’s conceptual apparatus in dealing with how non-Jews can join the covenant people, Mark lacks most of the shorthand terminology in which Paul expresses his system of thought.

Since Bird wants to link Mark with Paul *and* Peter, he has not dealt with one more argument in favour of Mark as Pauline. That is, some see Paul’s impatience with the Pillars (Gal 2:6ff, 11-2; 2 Cor 11:4-6, 22-3; 12:11) or quarrel with James or *Cephas* (Gal 1:8-9; 2:11-12) as affecting Mark’s depiction of the disciples.³⁸⁷ Goulder takes the moral of the story of the alien exorcist (Mark 9:38-50) to be that those whom the Twelve spurn for not “following us” may be on Jesus’s side; anyone who refuses to support travelling missionaries (i.e. Paul) and causes little ones (i.e. Gentiles) to stumble (i.e. by imposing *Torah* observance) deserves to be drowned.³⁸⁸ While this story attacks the presumption of the Twelve to relegate to themselves positions as authoritative brokers of access to Jesus, Goulder imports allusions to the Gentile mission into a story that is totally silent about it. Quite the reverse, Mark has Jesus consistently defend the disciples when they are accused as too lax in their *Torah* piety (2:18, 23-4; 7:5). The greatest cognitive dissonance of the disciples is over Jesus’s suffering Christology and a complementary vision of discipleship. Paul’s fierce disagreements centered on Judaizing rites and he is relatively silent on their Christological differences.³⁸⁹ Paul sarcastically refers to those reputed

³⁸⁶ Taylor, *Mark*, 128.

³⁸⁷ Contra Fenton, “Paul and Mark,” 100-1, Goulder, *Two Missions*, 11-14, 17-20; Telford, *Theology*, 165.

³⁸⁸ Goulder, *Two Missions*, 13

³⁸⁹ Crossley, “Question of Influences,” 27-8.

to be Pillars (Gal 2:9) or chastises Peter for hypocrisy (Gal 2:11-14), but he respects their authority within their respective domains (Gal 2:7-10; 1 Cor 3:22; 9:5; 15:5-7). In the end, there may be some evidence of indirect Pauline influence on Mark, but none of the arguments may strong enough to posit a direct historical relationship of the evangelist with Paul.

F. Summary of Results

I have tried to fairly evaluate the arguments, pro and con, to see if the patristic consensus on the authorship of Mark remains a viable option for critical scholarship today. If some of the critical objections to Markan authorship no longer hold water, it does not mean that we can uncritically return to Papias. Papias attributes the information he received to the elder John, a figure who remains as elusive as ever. He was not literally a personal disciple of Jesus and was probably a second generation charismatic leader in Asia Minor, but we have no idea about his connections outside Asia Minor or his general reliability. We do know that Papias was credulous in his acceptance of local traditions about the grotesque death of Judas or the wonders performed by charismatic individuals (*H.E.* 3.39.7). Regarding the internal evidence, it would help if the evangelist stated that Peter was a vital source of information or dedicated the work to Peter. The numerous references to Peter indicate his prominence in Christian memory, but the ambivalent portrayal of Peter in the narrative weighs against Peter having a direct role in the composition of Mark. Before I move on, I must pause for a concession. I have no objection in principle to the inference that some of the stories that Mark re-narrates may have originated with Peter or other disciples or local eyewitnesses. I simply do not find the evidence on behalf of Peter having a quintessential role in the composition of Mark as demanded by Papias to be compelling.

The odds that the evangelist had a connection with Paul may be slightly higher. There are early external references to a Jewish co-worker named Mark in the Pauline epistles (Phlm 23; Col 4:10). Internally, the soteriological significance of the cross, the portrait of the Twelve and the family of Jesus, or the noun εὐαγγέλιον could be taken as Pauline. On the other hand, there are huge variances from Paul to discount a direct co-worker of Paul as the author, just as the differences of Luke-Acts from the Pauline epistles sway many critical scholars against the authorship of Paul's companion Luke. A recent wave of scholarship has concluded that Mark is a developed expression of Pauline thought, a narrativization of the Pauline *kerygma*, but I would issue a word of caution. Undoubtedly, there is much in Mark that may be congenial to a Paulinist, but I have tried to point out that many of the similarities can be explained in other ways and the significant differences in Christology or on the significance of a *Torah*-free Gentile mission should not be sidelined. Mark does not quite fit comfortably with either Jewish or Pauline strands of the Christ movement and it is small wonder that the Jewish author of Matthew or the Pauline centrist author of Luke-Acts strove to replace Mark.

The evidence is insufficient to ascribe the Gospel to an associate of Peter or Paul, albeit it is not inconceivable that some Petrine or Pauline traditions were mediated to the evangelist from various congregations. There is no way to peer behind the screen of the evangelist's intentional anonymity. This does not mean that scholarship can say nothing about the evangelist from the internal clues of the narrative. The author may have been Jewish, though the Aramaic translations and explanations of Jewish customs point to an ethnically mixed audience, and his or her work has all the signs of a local intramural dispute within Second Temple Judaism(s) over messianism and religious praxis. The work seems to have been written from a vantage point of social marginality with the frequent references to persecution. The product of a disenfranchised

individual, alienated from the symbolic world that centred on the temple cult and the Judaeen aristocracy as backed by Roman imperial authority, its author dared to envision a new egalitarian social order that (s)he called the “kingdom of god.” Pursuing this social program engendered opposition from the political and religious authorities, leading to the preoccupation with the absolute demand to follow Jesus on the way to the cross. The “good news” for the author is that there would be a dramatic reversal in fortunes at the full consummation of the kingdom.

The message was much more important than the medium. In comparison to the patristic anxiety for the proper apostolic credentials of the messenger, the evangelist was not prone to self-aggrandizement and Baum writes that, “The anonymity of the Gospels is thus rooted in a deep conviction concerning the ultimate priority of their subject matter.”³⁹⁰ Competing visions of the “good news” made it an eventual necessity to validate some versions over others by ascribing them to legitimate channels and this anonymous Gospel came to be tagged with the title “According to Mark.” Who was this “Mark” and why was he chosen to be the author of this Gospel? In the next chapter I will evaluate the references to “Mark” in the first two centuries to sort out how a figure named Mark came to be associated with Peter and a written Gospel. I will try to answer the questions of “when” and “where” these moves first took place. The “why” question, as in why was Mark and Peter associated with this particular Gospel, will be the subject of my investigation in the second half of the thesis.

³⁹⁰ Baum, “Anonymity,” 142.

CHAPTER 3

FROM PAUL'S CO-WORKER TO PETER'S INTERPRETER

The verdict of the last chapter was that the external and internal evidence is insufficient to substantiate the Papiian tradition. In this chapter, I want to put the New Testament and patristic references to “Mark” under the microscope to pinpoint when he became linked with Peter and identified as the author of a Gospel. Confidence on the grounds that “[t]he evidence of the tradition supporting Markan authorship can be described in general as early, universal and extensive”³⁹¹ is less secure if all the patristic witnesses are part of the same stream of tradition that has its source in Papias. An additional favourite argument, that “Mark” was not an obvious choice as a minor, non-apostolic character, has more force.³⁹² Then again, apocryphal Gospels were attributed to all sorts of names, apostolic or not, such as Thomas, Judas, Matthias, Mary, Bartholomew, Nicodemus or Gamaliel.³⁹³ “Mark” may have been an ideal candidate as a figure of some repute through his association with the apostles and as an intermediary who could bear the blame for the shortcomings of the Gospel in the place of Peter himself.³⁹⁴

To move beyond this impasse, it is crucial to subject the earliest Christian references to a figure named Μάρκος to careful scrutiny. Given the popularity of the name, the identity of the evangelist with the Mark(s) found in the Pauline corpus (Col 4:10; Phlm 24; cf. 2 Tim 4:11), the Acts of the Apostles (12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37-39) or 1 Peter 5:13 cannot be assumed from the outset. For C. Clifton Black, a single individual does not lie behind the disparate New Testament

³⁹¹ Stein, *Mark*, 1.

³⁹² Many Markan commentaries that otherwise reject the patristic testimony are willing to accept the authorship of some otherwise unknown “Mark.” See Nineham, *Mark*, 39-40; Schweizer, *Mark*, 25; Boring, *Mark*, 12.

³⁹³ Boring, *Mark*, 20.

³⁹⁴ Crossley, *Date*, 14.

references and he writes, “[i]t seems that there is not one but at least two, and perhaps three, figures of Mark explicit in the Christian canon.”³⁹⁵ On the contrary, I will argue that Mark (or John Mark) was a member of a circle of Pauline associates in the earliest sources (Phlm 24; Col 4:10), which was not forgotten in some of the later sources (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:37-39; 2 Tim 4:11), and was transformed into a close associate of Peter (1 Pet 5:13; Acts 12:12) in the service of constructing a unified apostolic past. This will become clear as I move back from the patristic writers into the texts of the New Testament.

A. Mark as Peter’s Interpreter: The Origins of the Patristic Tradition

1. *The Date of Papias of Hierapolis*

Papias is a fixed point of entry to begin an exploration of the patristic tradition. Regrettably, we have only a few tantalizingly short fragments of his five-volume *Exposition of the Lord’s Logia* (λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγησέως) in lieu of his pivotal role in shaping the reception of Mark for nearly two millennia. Past scholars dated this treatise between 130 and 160 CE.³⁹⁶ Lightfoot dispelled the evidentiary value of the seventh century *Chronicon Paschale*, which includes Papias among the martyrs of Pergamum at the time of Polycarp’s death (ca. 164 CE), because it has a copyist mistake substituting “Papias” for “Papyrus” (cf. *H.E.* 4.15.48).³⁹⁷ Lightfoot kept the post-130 date, assuming that Papias aimed to neutralize “Gnostic” exegesis of the *Logia*.³⁹⁸ Likewise, Koester reads Papias’s term “remember” ([ἀπο]μνημονεύειν) in light of a similar claim in the *Apocryphon of James* on what the disciples remembered (NHC 1.2.7-15).³⁹⁹ Papias

³⁹⁵ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 66.

³⁹⁶ For a survey of dates, see Yarbrough, “The Date of Papias,” 181-2.

³⁹⁷ Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Essays on the Work Entitled Supernatural Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1893), 147-9; cf. Bartlet, “Papias’s ‘Exposition,’” 21.

³⁹⁸ Lightfoot, *Supernatural Religion*, 160-1; cf. Niederwimmer, “Johannes Markus,” 186.

³⁹⁹ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 34.

may have responded to Basilides' 24-volume *Exegetica* (cf. Clement, *Strom.* 4.81.1) and the genealogical relationship set up between Basilides and Glaucias, Peter's interpreter (cf. *Strom.* 7.106),⁴⁰⁰ but it is just as plausible that the Basilideans reacted to the older tradition of the elders in Asia Minor. The utter silence on Marcion and the Gnostics in the extant fragments and the failure of the heresiologists to enlist Papias in the battle against them is a strike against a late date. At most, Papias scorns those who "say many things" (πολλὰ λέγουσιν) or relate "foreign commandments" (ἄλλοτρίας ἐντολάς) (*H.E.* 3.39.3), which is too vague for the developed systems of Valentinius, Basilides or Marcion. As Körtner puts it, "[d]ie etwaigen Konkreta verbergen sich im Prolog weitgehend hinter floskelhaften Allgemeinplätzen."⁴⁰¹

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Rupert Annand dates Papias's treatise as early as 80 CE because he equates the disciples with the elders and considers the Lukan prologue to be modeled on Papias.⁴⁰² The relationship of the Papias and Lukan prologues will be examined below but, in my earlier review of Gundry, I contended that the disciples and the elders are two separate groups in Papias. Papias's familiarity with late first-century texts like 1 Peter, 1 John and Revelation militates against an early dating.⁴⁰³ A date in the first decade of the second century has the following arguments to commend it: 1. Irenaeus calls Papias an "ancient man" (ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ) (*A.H.* 5.33.4); 2. Eusebius groups Papias with Ignatius and Polycarp during the reign of Trajan (ca. 98-117 CE) (*H.E.* 3.36.1-2; 3.39.1) and the bishopric of Evarestus at Rome (ca. 101-8 CE) (*H.E.* 3.34-9); 3. Papias juxtaposes what Aristion and John are saying (λέγουσιν) with what the deceased disciples of the Lord had said (εἶπεν) (*H.E.* 3.39.4) and is acquainted

⁴⁰⁰ Charles E. Hill, "Papias of Hierapolis" *Exp. Tim.* 117 (2006): 312-3; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 22-3.

⁴⁰¹ "[T]he possible concrete facts hide in the prologue to a large extent behind cliché general platitudes." Körtner, *Papias*, 172.

⁴⁰² Rupert Annand, "Papias and the Four Gospels" *SJT* 9 (1956): 46-62.

⁴⁰³ See Irenaeus *A.H.* 5.33.4; Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.15.2; 3.39.17. The same argument may rule out Perumalil's dating around 95 CE as a little too early ("Papias and Irenaeus," 335).

with other first century notables like the prophetic daughters of Philip (*H.E.* 3.39.9; cf. Acts 21:9); and 4. there is an absence of anti-Marcionite or Gnostic polemic.⁴⁰⁴

The De Boor fragment is the solitary piece of counter-evidence in that it credits Papias with the contention that those raised by Christ lived until the reign of Hadrian (ca. 117-38 CE).⁴⁰⁵ Philip of Side wrote a century after Eusebius and may have garbled Papias's marvelous report of someone raised from the dead in his own time (*H.E.* 3.39.9) with the apologist Quadratus, for Eusebius relates that Quadratus addressed an apology to Hadrian and speaks about those whom Jesus had raised from the dead living in his own day (*H.E.* 4.3.2-3).⁴⁰⁶ Eusebius's low estimate of Papias's intelligence (*H.E.* 3.39.8-14) could have motivated him to date Papias as close to the origins of the tradition on the evangelists as possible to secure its antiquity and reliability,⁴⁰⁷ but the collective weight of the evidence for a date around 110 CE for Papias's treatise is impressive. As Papias conducted interviews over a period of time, it may be reasonable to surmise that his tradition on Mark may have circulated a decade or so before he put it into writing.⁴⁰⁸

2. *The Dependence of Justin Martyr on Papias*

Justin is the next writer to concern himself with the authorship of the Gospels, which he entitled the "memoirs of the apostles" (ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων) (*Dial.* 100.4; 101.3;

102.5; 103.6; 104.1; 106.1; 106.4) or the abbreviated form "memoirs" (ἀπομνημονεύματα) (*I*

⁴⁰⁴ See V. Bartlet, "Papias's 'Exposition,'" 15-44; Körtner, *Papias*, 236, 261; Yarbrough, "The Date of Papias," 181-91; Gundry, *Apology*, 1027-8; "Pre-Papian Tradition," 50-2; Schoedel, "Papias," 261; Dennis MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: the Logoi of Jesus and Papias's Exposition of Logia about the Lord* (SBL: Atlanta, 2012), 47; Kok, "Flawed Evangelist," 250.

⁴⁰⁵ See David G. Deeks, "Papias Revisited" *ExpTim* 88.11 (1977): 324; Hengel, *Studies*, 47; Johannine *Question*, 16, 154-5 n. 97; *Four Gospels*, 65.

⁴⁰⁶ Gundry, *Apology*, 1027-8; "Pre-Papian Tradition," 51-2, Körtner, *Papias*, 91; Schoedel, "Papias," 236, MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 46, 46 n. 5. Gundry supplements this with the fact that Eusebius refers to another prophet named Quadratus who was associated with the original disciples and their successors and with the daughters of Philip the evangelist (*H.E.* 3.37.1).

⁴⁰⁷ For this objection, see Sim, "Gundry," 286.

⁴⁰⁸ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 18. However, Bauckham's dating of the tradition as far back as around 80 CE when the other Synoptic Gospels may be circulating is groundless.

Apol 66.3, 67.3; *Dial.* 103.8; 105.1; 105.5; 105.6; 106.3; 107.1). This is not to say that the titular usage of εὐαγγέλιον was unknown in his repertoire (*1 Apol* 66.3; *Dial.* 10.2; 100.1).⁴⁰⁹ Some scholars presume that Justin's philosophical training encouraged his preference for "memoirs" as the encapsulation of the words or deeds of a philosopher. They match his choice of terminology with Xenophon's Ἀπομνημονεύματα Σωκράτους (Memoirs of Socrates), for Justin admires Socrates as a forerunner of the Word (λόγος) (*1 Apol.* 5.3; *2 Apol.* 10.5, 8; 11.2-7).⁴¹⁰

A major difference between Xenophon and Justin is that the latter names the "memoirs" by their authors, not their primary subject,⁴¹¹ but the shift in focus to the legitimate authorship of Gospels may be an apology against their detractors.⁴¹² More damaging is that Justin never calls Xenophon's work by this title (cf. *2 Apol.* 11.2).⁴¹³ Koester is not sure that Justin could have been aware of the meaning that the term ἀπομνημονεύματα took on for writers of the Second Sophistic for the memorabilia of a philosopher.⁴¹⁴ Dungan, though, lists works preceding or contemporary with Justin with titles like the ἀπομνημονεύματα of Diodorus Siculus (Diog. Laert. 4.2) (ca. 30 BCE), the ἀπομνημονεύματα of *the Sayings of Famous Men* collected by Dioscurides (Diog. Laert. 1.63) (ca. 10 CE) and the ἀπομνημονεύματα published by the court philosopher Favorinus of Arelate (Arles) during the reign of Antoninus Pius (ca. 138-61 CE) (Diog. Laert. 3.48) and judges the Pythagorean tradition to express the same basic idea of notes

⁴⁰⁹ Luise Abramowski ("The memoirs of the apostles in Justin" in *The Gospels and the Gospel* [ed. Peter Stuhlmacher; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 323, 326) refutes the argument that this term has been interpolated in *1 Apology* 67 as an explanatory gloss.

⁴¹⁰ Dungan, *Synoptic Problem*, 31-3; Abramowski, "memoirs," 328; Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 95.

⁴¹¹ Richard Heard, "ΑΠΟΜΝΗΜΟΝΕΥΜΑΤΑ in Papias, Justin and Irenaeus" *NTS* 1 (1954), 125.

⁴¹² Abramowski, "Memoirs of the Apostles," 329.

⁴¹³ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 213. Koester (*Ancient Christian Gospels*, 38-9) notes that the Latin title to Xenophon's work first appears in a 1569 edition by Johann Lenklau; the Latin equivalent *commentarii* to the Greek plural ἀπομνημονεύματα occurs in the second century writer Aulus Gellius (*Noct. Att.* 14.3.5) and the Greek term is only applied to Xenophon's writings in later manuscripts and a pseudonymous epistle dating from the same period.

⁴¹⁴ Koester (*Ancient Christian Gospels*, 38-9) argues that earlier the term ἀπομνημονεύμα was used for an anecdote that was written down (cf. Plutarch, *Pomp.* 2; *Cato maior* 9; Diodorus Siculus 1.14).

of a philosopher's teachings under the slightly different term ὑπομνήματα.⁴¹⁵ Justin may have enculturated the Gospels by likening them to memoirs, but Papias exercised a greater influence on Justin's concern to stress the origins of the memoirs in the apostles and their followers (*Dial.* 103.8; cf. *H.E.* 3.39.15-6). The title ἀπομνημονεύματα is reminiscent of Papias on Mark as a record of what was "remembered" (ἀπεμνημόνευσεν) of Peter's preaching (*H.E.* 3.39.15) and Justin's emphases on what was "recalled" (ἀπομνημονεύσαντες) (*I Apol.* 33.5; 66.3) or handed down (παρέδωκαν) (*I Apol.* 66.3) resonates with the privileging of "tradition" (παράδοσις) that was handed down (παραδίδωσιν) in Papias (*H.E.* 3.39.3-4).⁴¹⁶

If Justin adapted Papias's phraseology, we should expect Mark to be among the memoirs. In a key piece of evidence to this effect, Justin relates that the story of Jesus changing the name of one of the apostles to Peter was written in the "memoirs of him" (ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ) along with the account of the nickname of the two sons of Zebedee as βροναεργές or the "sons of thunder" (*Dial.* 106.3). As the title "memoirs" is always in conjunction with their apostolic authors in the plural or in an absolute form, numerous scholars render the αὐτοῦ as a possessive genitive ("his memoirs") and take the pronoun in reference to Peter as its nearest antecedent.⁴¹⁷ Paul Foster has opted for a different reading in taking "memoir" in the absolute sense and translating it as an objective genitive ("memoirs about him"). Since there is no explicit change of subject, Foster takes the pronoun "him" to refer back to Jesus as the subject of the previous clause.⁴¹⁸ Ehrman contests Foster's reading on the grounds that objective genitives usually occur

⁴¹⁵ Dungan, *Synoptic Problem*, 31-2. Dungan considers Koester to be too hasty in dismissing this evidence because of the difference in terminology. Kennedy ("Classical and Source Criticism," 136-7) argues that ὑπομνήματα were private aide-memoirs while ἀπομνημονεύματα were more refined for publication.

⁴¹⁶ Heard, "APOMNĒMONEUMATA," 125-6.

⁴¹⁷ Heard, "APOMNĒMONEUMATA," 127; Orchard, *Order*, 125-6; Peter Pilhofer, "Justin und das Petrus-evangelium" *ZNW* 81 (1990): 67; Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 101; Bart Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 325.

⁴¹⁸ Foster, "Gospel of Peter," 108; cf. Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 96.

with nouns of action (e.g., love) while a genitive of possession better applies to a “memoir,” as in the owner or creator of a memoir,⁴¹⁹ but Tim Henderson responds that the noun is related to the action verb “to remember” (ἀπομνημονεύειν) and that Ehrman overlooks analogous cases of objective genitives.⁴²⁰ Justin’s grammar can be reasonably construed either way and he can be faulted for a lack of clarity, but his precedent of the genitive following memoirs as indicating possession inclines me to read a possessive genitive here as well.

To supplement this reading, Justin may be drawing on Mark in particular. While the change in Simon’s name is not specific to one Gospel (Matt 16:18; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; John 1:42),⁴²¹ the nickname βοανεργές seems to be unique to Mark (3:17). Black demurs from this judgment, for the nickname may have been in a lost source.⁴²² Pilhoffer and Ehrman specifically equate “Peter’s memoirs” with the *Gospel of Peter* and adduce a number of parallels to this text in Justin.⁴²³ It is impossible to verify if the elements mentioned in *Dialogue* 106.3 were in the *Gospel of Peter* from the fragmentary evidence we possess and the key word βοανεργές seems to be a distinctly Markan feature. Aramaic specialists have puzzled over it,⁴²⁴ but Maurice Casey outlines step by step the reasoning behind Mark’s torturous transliteration of בני (sons of) and

⁴¹⁹ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 325

⁴²⁰ I owe this point to Tim Henderson, “Ehrman on Justin Martyr’s Use of the Gospel of Peter (Part 2)” (<http://earliestchristianity.wordpress.com/2012/12/05/ehrman-on-justin-martyrs-use-of-the-gospel-of-peter-part-2/>). Henderson cites ἡ ἀκοή αὐτοῦ from Mark 1:28 and Matthew 4:24, which is translated “the news about him.”

⁴²¹ Ehrman (*Forgery*, 327 n. 8) argues that the name change in Mark is not permanent as Jesus reverts back to Simon in Mark 14:37, but it is questionable whether Justin would have picked up this subtle nuance.

⁴²² See the caution of Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 96.

⁴²³ Pilhofer, “das Petrus-evangelium,” 69-75; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 326; cf. Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 379-80. For a counter-argument against literary dependence between Justin and the *Gospel of Peter*, see Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 330-2; Foster, “Gospel of Peter,” 108-11. The major parallels under debate include a Jewish mob “dragging” (Justin διασύροντες; *Gos. Pet.* σύρωμεν) Jesus away for execution and sitting him on the judgment seat (*I Apol.* 35.6; *Gos. Pet.* 3.6-7; cf. Isa 58:2; John 19:13), the agreement in the rare phrase λαχμὸν βάλλοντες (casting lots) (*Dial.* 97.3/*Gos. Pet.* 4.12), the flight of the disciples after the crucifixion (*Dial.* 53.5/*Gos. Pet.* 26, 27, 59; cf. John 20:10) and the role of “king” Herod in the trial of Jesus (*Dial.* 103.4; *Gos. Pet.* 1.2; cf. Luke 23:6-12).

⁴²⁴ See, for instance, Parker, “The Posterity of Mark,” 70-1.

רעם (thunder).⁴²⁵ It is implausible that this exact transliteration was reproduced independently of Mark, while sources dependent on Mark, like Matthew and Luke, could have edited it out. There is a good probability that Justin was familiar with the Papiian tradition on Mark.

3. *The Dependence of Irenaeus of Lyons on Papias*

Irenaeus is the next explicit commentator on the evangelists. He respected Papias as a “hearer of John” and affirmed his chiliastic worldview (*A.H.* 5.33.4). Irenaeus learned from Papias (*H.E.* 3.39.15) that Matthew wrote among the Hebrews “in their same dialect” (τῆ ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν διαλέκτῳ)⁴²⁶ and that Mark was “the disciple and interpreter of Peter” (ὁ μαθητῆς καὶ ἑρμηνευτῆς Πέτρου) (*A.H.* 3.1.1). Justin may have been his source on the memoirs as products of the apostles and their followers (*Dial.* 103.8) and the authorship of the Apocalypse by the apostle John (*A.H.* 5.30.3; cf. *Dial.* 81.4).⁴²⁷ Irenaeus’s placement of Mark after the “departure” (ἔξοδος) of Peter and Paul, whether meant as a euphemism for their deaths or a departure from the city of Rome, may have sought to make explicit what is implicit in Papias. Grammatically, Papias is ambiguous about whether the aorist participle γενόμενος (having become) should be read as prior to, or concurrent with, the main aorist verb ἔγραψεν (he wrote). Either the evangelist functioned as Peter’s interpreter before sitting down to write what he (i.e. Mark) remembered of Peter’s words or acted as Peter’s interpreter and scribe simultaneously and

⁴²⁵ Casey, *Aramaic Sources*, 198; idem, *Jesus*, 66, 189-190. First, the *shewa* can be represented by the short Greek vowels α, ε, or ο, but Mark’s combined οα is nonsense, and Mark left it out when transliterating the word for “thunder.” Mark transliterated ‘ayin (ʿ) in Greek by a γ. Finally, Mark misread the 𐤃 for a 𐤄 when he transliterated it with a *sigma* (ς) rather than a *mu* (μ) because the orthography of the Aramaic letters is nearly identical.

⁴²⁶ Josef Kürzinger (*Papias von Hierapolis und die Evangelien des Neuen Testaments* [Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1983], 24; 33-42) re-reads Papias as referring to a Hebrew style of argumentation rather than the Hebrew language and enlists Irenaeus as support since Irenaeus does not mention the “translation” of Matthew into Greek. But part of Kürzinger’s case for his re-reading of Papias was the lack of an article, but Irenaeus includes the article. See my discussion on whether Papias intended to refer to a Hebrew style or language on p. 168 n. 735.

⁴²⁷ Heard, “APOMNĒMONEUMATA,” 128-29.

transcribed everything that he (i.e. Peter) remembered (*H.E.* 3.39.15).⁴²⁸ Irenaeus's seems to have accepted the former reading. He may have removed Peter from the scene to explain the lack of an explicit Petrine endorsement for the evangelist Mark in his source.⁴²⁹

Perumalil is resolute on Irenaeus's independence from Papias because he had a source close to the apostolic generation: Polycarp, the disciple of John (*A.H.* 3.3.4; cf, Eusebius, *H.E.* 5.20.4-8).⁴³⁰ Irenaeus may have shortened the gap from the apostles to Polycarp in his legitimating narrative of his teacher. Polycarp is silent on his relationship with John in his extant epistle, which seems primarily indebted to Paul, while Polycarp is ordained by Bucolus and installed into the bishop's office upon the agreement of the deacons and laity after Bucolus's demise in Pionius's *Life of Polycarp*.⁴³¹ Or Irenaeus mixed up the acquaintance of Polycarp with the elder John in Asia Minor with the apostle John.⁴³² Perumalil disbelieves that Irenaeus made such a mistake about a teacher from his youth (*A.H.* 3.3.4; *H.E.* 5.20.5),⁴³³ but cases of mistaken identity due to homonymity were common in the ancient world.⁴³⁴ Contrary to Peramulil, we saw how Irenaeus confused the two Johns to validate Papias's witness. Irenaeus was willing to shorten the length of apostolic succession and we have no idea what information Polycarp had on the evangelists. From the evidence at hand, we know that Irenaeus had read Papias.

Martin Hengel advocates for Irenaeus's substantial independence from Papias via an alternative route. Hengel argued that Irenaeus's notices on the evangelists were derived from a Christian archive in Rome.⁴³⁵ After all, he opens his account on them with the foundation of the

⁴²⁸ See also my discussion of the grammatical issues in *H.E.* 3.39.15 on p. 162.

⁴²⁹ Hengel, *Studies*, 2-3.

⁴³⁰ Perumalil, "Papias and Irenaeus," 336-7.

⁴³¹ Casey, *Is John's Gospel True*, 167-8.

⁴³² Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 465.

⁴³³ Perumalil, "Papias and Irenaeus," 336-7. Since Irenaeus travelled to Gaul and Rome in *H.E.* 5.25.5, Perumalil argues that Irenaeus was not a mere "child" (παις) and may have been 15 years old when he was with Polycarp.

⁴³⁴ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 47-9.

⁴³⁵ Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 36, 38.

Christian mission in Rome by its two apostolic pillars, Peter and Paul. None of this is in Papias, notwithstanding his knowledge of 1 Peter (*H.E.* 2.15.2; 3.39.17), albeit Irenaeus's point is not on the provenance of Mark but on the timing of the transmission of Mark in relation to the activity of Peter and Paul in Rome.⁴³⁶ But Irenaeus may have borrowed from other sources about the apostolic founding of the church in Rome to fill out the skeleton on Matthew and Mark that he inherited from Papias. Irenaeus was also free to make his own deductions from the data, such as coupling the "we" in the book of Acts with the reference to "Luke" in 2 Timothy 4:11 to prove the Lukan authorship of the third canonical Gospel (3.14.1).

3. The Dependence of Clement of Alexandria on Papias

Clement expands on his predecessors on the circumstances that led to the composition of Mark (cf. *H.E.* 2.15.1-2, 6.14.5-7; *Adumb. in I Pet.* 5:13). T.W. Manson is confident that Clement was in a position to give trustworthy information about Mark, for the evangelist was the first head of the catechetical school in Alexandria (*H.E.* 2.16.1; 17.23; 3.23.2, 6; 5.6.1.; Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 8).⁴³⁷ The role of the evangelist in starting up a catechetical school in Alexandria is not mentioned by Clement, not even in the contested *Letter to Theodore*, just as Clement does not indicate that the evangelist was revered as a bishop or martyr there. Moreover, Eusebius's image of a catechetical school, including Clement's teacher Pantaenus and his "pupil" Origen, may be anachronistic. Clement did not hold a presbyterial office, though a former student lauds him as a

⁴³⁶ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 100; Ellis, *Making of the New Testament*, 363. Ellis is less convincing in arguing for a significant gap between the writing and transmission of Mark. On this further, see pp. 177-9.

⁴³⁷ Manson, *Studies*, 39.

presbyter (cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.11.6), and his “school” may have been for private or informal instruction of students like Justin’s “school” in Rome.⁴³⁸

Nevertheless, Clement had contacts with elders across the Mediterranean from his extensive travels, though he only names his teacher Pantaenus (*Strom.* 1.1.11; Eusebius, *H.E.* 5.11.3-4), and he credits his tradition (παράδοσιν) to the original elders (ἀνέκαθεν πρεσβυτέρων) (*H.E.* 6.14.5).⁴³⁹ There are two ways to interpret his statement. Clement either received the whole tradition from the elders collectively, or, more likely in my opinion, he pieced it together from several different sources as one elder made a claim about the Gospels with the genealogies (*H.E.* 6.14.5), a second on the intent of John to supplement the other Gospels (*H.E.* 6.14.7b) and a third on the relationship of Peter and Mark (*H.E.* 6.15.5-7).⁴⁴⁰ The “elder” Papias is the most likely source on Mark, but the Clementine excerpts contain a number of elements that are not present in the surviving Papiian fragments. The request of Peter’s auditors in Rome to the evangelist to write down what Peter had preached to them and the report of Peter’s reaction (*H.E.* 6.15.6-7; cf. 2.15.1-2) are among the new details.⁴⁴¹

Since Eusebius names Papias as in agreement with Clement (*H.E.* 2.15.2), Charles Hill attributes each major element of Clement’s testimony – the composition of Mark in Peter’s lifetime, its Roman provenance, the request of Peter’s hearers for a written record – back to Papias. Similarly, Clement has John urged on to write by others as well (*H.E.* 6.14.7), which is repeated in the Muratorian Canon (I.10) and Victorinus of Pettau (*Comm. Rev.* 11.1), and Hill believes Papias to be the source of this assertion that the evangelists wrote as necessity

⁴³⁸ Cosaert, *Clement of Alexandria*, 7-8. See also Judith L. Kovacs, “Clement (Titus Flavius Clemens) of Alexandria” *ExpTim* 120 (2009): 262. She observes that many scholars think it was Origen who started up a catechetical school, though she notes that the honourable title “presbyter” given to Clement and his access to a Christian library offer some support for Eusebius.

⁴³⁹ William Farmer, “The Patristic Evidence Re-examined: A Response to George Kennedy” *New Synoptic Studies: The Cambridge Gospel Conference and Beyond* (ed. W.R. Farmer; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983): 7.

⁴⁴⁰ Farmer, “Patristic Evidence,” 7-8.

⁴⁴¹ I discuss the excerpts of Clement of Alexandria on Mark in further detail on pp. 180-93.

demanded (cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.24.5).⁴⁴² But Eusebius may have meant that Papias and Clement agreed to the extent that they took 1 Peter as confirming the relationship of Mark and Peter.

Papias was more ambiguous than Clement about the timing of the writing of Mark in relation to the evangelist's activity as Peter's interpreter, which allowed Irenaeus and the Latin prologue to place the transmission of the Gospel after Peter's "departure" (ἐξοδος, *excessionem*) if this is a euphemism for his death. Neither Papias nor Irenaeus explicitly locate the evangelist in Rome, which may be Clement's own inference from the cipher "Babylon" in 1 Peter 5:13 (cf. *H.E.* 2.15.2; *Adumbrationes on 1 Peter 5:13*). Clement had a wealth of knowledge about the production of books that he may have brought to bear on the Papias tradition.

The rest of the patristic writers repeat that the evangelist was the interpreter of Peter *ad infinitum*. By the fourth century, the evangelist's ministry in Alexandria (*H.E.* 2.16.1) and the succession of Annianus on the Alexandrian episcopal chair in the eighth year of Nero (2.24.1) became for Eusebius an "organizing principle" to integrate a number of accepted traditions about the apostles (2.16-25), including the journey of Peter and Mark to Rome in the time of Claudius (2.17.1).⁴⁴³ It is to be expected that, as the foundations of Roman "Christianity" under Peter was moved back in time, the evangelist would accompany Peter to Rome at an earlier date.⁴⁴⁴ An obstacle to accepting the evangelist's ministry in Alexandria uncritically is the lateness of the sources and the signs of legendary embellishment. For instance, Birger Pearson notices that the evangelist's martyrdom account mirrors the death of the Arian bishop George in the reign of Julian the Apostate.⁴⁴⁵ Eusebius wrongly equates Philo's *Therapeutae* with the Alexandrian community founded by Mark (2.16.2-17.24). There may yet be a historical core to the tale.

⁴⁴² Hill, "Papias Fragment," 586. I will engage Hill's argument that Eusebius *H.E.* 3.24.5-16 is an uncredited testimony of Papias on pp. 170-1.

⁴⁴³ Humphrey, *Compositional History*, 25-6

⁴⁴⁴ See my discussion of the Roman Christian myth of origins where Peter battles Simon Magus on 178-9.

⁴⁴⁵ Pearson, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt," 143-4; contra Oden, *The African Memory*, 153-69.

Oden dates it right back to Clement's *Letter to Theodore*,⁴⁴⁶ but this source reflects only a *belief* that the evangelist had been present in Alexandria and entrusted a special edition of the Gospel to them. From these modest beginnings, the legend of his time in Alexandria may have blossomed. A different option, without resorting to the controversial *Letter to Theodore*, is that followers of Basilides and Valentinus mimicked Papias in identifying Basilides as a disciple of Glaucius, an interpreter of Peter, and Valentinus of Theudas, an interpreter of Paul (cf. Clement, *Strom.* 7.106).⁴⁴⁷ The rejoinder was that Peter's interpreter Mark was the first bishop of Alexandria, tying Alexandrian Christian origins to Peter, Mark and Rome. Apart from the hagiographic lore that developed around the evangelist, succinctly summarized in Jerome's "life" of Mark (*De Vir Ill* 8), there are no independent lines of evidence besides Papias. The tradition on which Papias relied probably circulated in Asia Minor at the turn of the century. It is time to dig beneath the layers of patristic overlay about the character of Mark into the New Testament (NT) writings.

B. A Minor Co-worker of Paul

1. Mark in Philemon and Colossians

The earliest NT references to "Mark" occur in Paul's epistles to Philemon and to the Colossians. The abundant overlaps between the two, from Paul's imprisonment (Phlm 9-10, 13; Col 4:3, 10, 18) and the greetings from Paul and Timothy (Phlm 1; Col 1:1) to the identical list of co-workers excluding Jesus Justus (Phlm 23-4; Col 4:10-4) and instructions about Archippus (Phlm 2; Col 4:17) and Onesimus (Phlm 10-8; Col 4:9), may indicate that both were sent to Colossae.⁴⁴⁸ The

⁴⁴⁶ Oden, *African Memory*, 198-208.

⁴⁴⁷ For further discussion of the ideological function of "apostolic succession," see pp 145-9.

⁴⁴⁸ See Murray J. Harris, *Colossians and Philemon* (Exegetical Guide to the Greek NT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 3-4; Marianne Meye Thompson, *Colossians and Philemon* (The Two Horizons NT Commentary; Cambridge and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 4-5.

setting of Paul's imprisonment, whether in Caesarea,⁴⁴⁹ Ephesus⁴⁵⁰ or Rome,⁴⁵¹ has not been settled. The so-called *Marcionite Prologue* to Colossians, the close distance to Colossae for messengers and a runaway slave (Onesimus) to travel to and fro (Phlm 10, 12; Col 4:7-9), and Paul's request for lodging upon his release (Phlm 22) instead of plans to go westward to Spain (Rom 15:24-8) favours an Ephesian origin. On the other hand, the subscripts in some manuscripts, the firm tradition of Paul's Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:14-31; 2 Tim 1:17; Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.22.1) in contrast to the speculative reconstruction of an Ephesian one (cf. 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Cor 1:8-10), and the development on Pauline thought in Colossians favours Rome. There is no evidence for Paul's Caesarean imprisonment outside of Acts 24:23-26:32 and, according to the narrative, Paul was to be transferred as a prisoner from there to stand trial in Rome. My leaning is toward a Roman origin of both epistles.

Complicating matters on the origin and destination of Colossians is its classification in the "disputed epistles" category.⁴⁵² It exhibits a liturgical-hymnic manner and stylistic features (e.g., plene asms) not wholly a piece with Paul's characteristic way of writing. The presence of

⁴⁴⁹ J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976), 65-7; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 347-8; Ellis, *Making*, 266-75.

⁴⁵⁰ Ralph P. Martin, *Colossians and Philemon* (New Century Bible; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1974), 22-32; N.T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary* (The Tyndale NT Commentaries; Leicester: InterVarsity; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 35-7; Roy Yates, *The Epistle to the Colossians* (Epworth, London: Epworth Press, 1993), xxv; Carolyn Osiek, *Philippians and Philemon* (Abingdon NT Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 28-30. David M. Hay (*Colossians* [Abingdon NT Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000], 23) argues that they are not necessarily the same imprisonment as Paul does not repeat his request for lodging in Colossae (Phlm 23) in Colossians, but the intertextual links and almost identical list of co-workers implies that both letters are written close together. Eduard Lohse (*Colossians and Philemon* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971], 166-167) and Petr Pokorny (*Colossians* (Trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991, 5-10) accept an Ephesian origin for Philemon but, as a later pseudonymous epistle, the allusion to Paul in "chains" in Colossians afford no clues to its origins.

⁴⁵¹ Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco: Word; 1982); xlix-liv; James Dunn, *The Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (The New International Greek NT Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 39-40; Jongyoon Moon, *Mark as Contributive Amanuensis of 1 Peter?* (PhD diss, University of Pretoria, 2008), 126-9; Harris, *Colossians*, 4.

⁴⁵² The following summarizes the objections to authenticity of commentaries including Jeremy L. Sumney, *Colossians* (The NT Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 1-9; Yates, *Colossians*, xi-xii; Pokorny, *Colossians*, 1-10; Lohse, *Colossians*, 178-80; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 171-82.

new vocabulary,⁴⁵³ combined with the absence of usual Pauline terminology (ἁμαρτία, νόμος, δικαιοσύνη, πιστεύω) even when dealing with the same matters of Jewish legal observance (Col 2:16), is noticeable. Additionally, there are theological developments such as the developed cosmic Christology (1:15-20; 2:9-10; cf. Phil 2:6-11) with Christ as the “head” of the ecclesiastical body (1:18; cf. 1 Cor 12:12-27; Rom 12:4-5), the shift to a realized eschatology (2:11-2; 3:1, 3) with the experience of participating in Christ’s resurrection through baptism (2:12; contra Rom 6:5, 8), and the implementation of a household code (3:18-22). Granting these differences, the letter is saturated in Pauline theology and does not get rid of the futuristic element of eschatology entirely (3:4, 6, 24). Given the natural variation in all of Paul’s letters, the assistance of an amanuensis, and the distinctive Christological ideas entertained in Colossae (cf. 1:15-20; 2:8, 18, 20), many scholars defend the authenticity of the epistle.⁴⁵⁴

There has been no resolution to this longstanding debate, hence the category “disputed.” A forger may have copied Philemon,⁴⁵⁵ but the name “Philemon” is conspicuously absent and Colossians does not anachronistically allude to the earthquake that struck the Lycus Valley region (ca 60 CE).⁴⁵⁶ Some scholars think that the earthquake, which decimated Laodicea and surely affected the neighbouring cities of Hierapolis and Colossae, created the perfect conditions to forge a letter to a group in Colossae no longer in existence to falsify it.⁴⁵⁷ There is no evidence that the Christ congregation was wiped out by the disaster. It remains in the realm of

⁴⁵³ For instance, there are 34 *hapax legomena*, 28 terms not in the undisputed Pauline letters, 10 terms shared only between Colossians and Ephesians, and 15 terms shared between Colossians and Ephesians with other New Testament books but not in Paul.

⁴⁵⁴ Defending authenticity, see Brien, *Colossians*, xli-xlix; Dunn, *Colossians*, 35-39; Harris, *Colossians*, 3-4; Hay, *Colossians*, 19-24; Martin, *Colossians*, 32-40; Thompson, *Colossians*, 2-6; Wright, *Epistles of Paul*, 31-34.

⁴⁵⁵ Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 181; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 174.

⁴⁵⁶ Dunn, *Colossians*, 37.

⁴⁵⁷ Pokorny, *Colossians*, 21; Sumney, *Colossians*, 9-10. Tacitus is clear that Laodicea was quickly rebuilt (*Ann.* 14.27.1). The evidence that Hierapolis and Colossae were damaged is late (cf. Orosius, *Adv. Paganos* 7.7.12), but a major earthquake that rocked Laodicea likely affected its neighbours. Colossae declined in importance (cf. Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 5.41.145), but there is evidence (inscriptional, numismatic) that it was not completely destroyed.

possibility that Paul composed this letter. James Dunn accounts for the stylistic discrepancies by positing Timothy as writing at Paul's behest (1:1),⁴⁵⁸ but, in Ehrman's monograph on forgery, the evidence for an amanuensis drafting up a writing from scratch or equally contributing to its content is virtually non-existent and for an amanuensis improving the style of a literary work seems limited to writers from the upper echelons of society like Cicero.⁴⁵⁹ If Pauline authorship is maintained, the epistle's distinctive elements may be influenced by Paul's interaction with a pre-existing Christological hymn (1:15-20) and the maturation of his thought at the end of his career. Conversely, if the epistle is pseudonymous, it should be dated as early as possible. Margaret Macdonald takes it as implicit in 4:7-18 that Paul will never again visit Colossae, Hierapolis or Laodicea and considers Colossians to be the product of the Pauline "staff" scrambling to re-organize after the death of their leader.⁴⁶⁰ This may explain the veneration of Paul as the ideal sufferer, filling up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions (1:24),⁴⁶¹ and the more impersonal tone of the letter (1:23; 2:1).⁴⁶² Whether by Paul or by his immediate circle shortly after his death, Colossians offers real information about Paul's co-workers.

Paul wrote to Philemon to intercede on behalf of the slave Onesimus. Without further elaboration, he delivers final greetings from his fellow workers (συνεργοί), Mark among them (Phlm 23). Colossians increases our knowledge of Paul's team considerably. In comparison to the closing chapter of Romans where the addressees are prominent and a few greeters are tagged on at the end, the ones *sending* greetings are front and centre in Colossians 4:7-18,⁴⁶³ lending support to Macdonald's thesis that the epistle validates the leadership of a circle of associates

⁴⁵⁸ Dunn, *Colossians*, 35-8; cf. Hay, *Colossians*, 22-4. Ehrman (*Forgery*, 172) argues that self-reference in Colossians 1:23 and 4:18 blatantly contradict Dunn's view.

⁴⁵⁹ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 218-22.

⁴⁶⁰ Margaret Macdonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (Sacra pagina Series; Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000), 7-8.

⁴⁶¹ Sumney, *Colossians*, 8-9

⁴⁶² Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 55-6.

⁴⁶³ Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 176.

after Paul's demise.⁴⁶⁴ Readers learn that Mark was Barnabas' cousin (ἀνεψιός) (4:10). Since the word ἀνεψιός is not used elsewhere in Paul as figurative of a bond of affection, Colossians brings up Mark's familial kinship with Barnabas to clarify a lesser known figure by a famous one.⁴⁶⁵ Like Aristarchus and Jesus Justus, Colossians identifies Mark as ethnically Jewish. Colossians lauds the three as among the few circumcised Christ followers who worked together with Paul for the "kingdom" and were a source of comfort for him (4:11).

The expression "those from the circumcision" (οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς) for a few of Paul's co-workers, rather than fellow Ἰουδαῖοι (Judeans/Jews) (Gal 2:14) or Ἰσραηλιταί (Israelites) (Rom 9:4; 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22), seems unusual. Since Paul struggled against those who compelled non-Jewish Christ followers to Ἰουδαῖζειν (to Judaize) through circumcision (Gal 2:12-4), it may be a deliberate point that some of the "circumcision" assented to Paul's stance.⁴⁶⁶ Ellis's interpretation that Colossians 4:11 (cf. Acts 10:45; 11:2; Gal 2:12; Tit 1:10) refers to a ritualistically strict party that conducted a distinctive mission among the "Hebrews" as opposed to the more lax group of "Hellenists" (Acts 6:1ff) may be an over-reading.⁴⁶⁷ "Circumcision" is frequently a taxonomic indicator signifying "Jewishness" in the Pauline epistles (cf. Rom 3:30; 4:9, 11-2; 15:8; 1 Cor 7:18-9; Gal 2:7-9; Col 3:11; Eph 2:11). The primary meaning of Colossians 4:10 is to identify the ethnicity of Paul's missionary partners, though it may subtly allude to the internal controversies over circumcision.

The last conspicuous feature in Colossians 4:10 is the conditional clause "if he [Mark] comes to you" (ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς) coupled with "commands" or "instructions" (ἐντολαί) to

⁴⁶⁴ Macdonald, *Colossians*, 185.

⁴⁶⁵ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 54.

⁴⁶⁶ Dunn, *Epistle to the Colossians*, 278; Macdonald, *Colossians*, 180-181; Hay, *Colossians*, 159. This is hardly a "faint echo" of Paul's old conflicts regarding eschatology and *Torah* (contra Lohse, *Colossians*, 172).

⁴⁶⁷ E. E. Ellis, "The Circumcision Party and the Early Christian Mission" in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (WUNT 18; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1978), 116-28. See also O' Brien, *Colossians*, 251-52; Yates, *Colossians*, 88; Martin, *Colossians*, 132.

“receive him” in the imperative (δέξασθε). If there is no hint of uncertainty about Mark’s reliability, the question mark over Mark’s intentions to travel to Colossae and the command to welcome him in fairly strong terms is puzzling.⁴⁶⁸ It may be methodologically problematic to read back the divisive separation of Paul from Barnabas and John Mark in the later narrative account of Acts (15:37-9), but there is some plausibility that Mark took the side of his relative Barnabas in the dispute over mixed table fellowship at Antioch in Galatians 2:11-4. If that is the case, Paul must have patched things up with Mark before writing to Philemon, but this did not dispense with some of the lingering tensions.

2. *Mark in 2 Timothy*

2 Timothy 4:11 has the last digression on Mark in the Pauline corpus. If the category “disputed” is indicative of a level of indecisiveness about Colossians, far more scholars take the “Pastorals” as a collection to be representative of the concerns of a second or third generation Paulinist.

When taken together,⁴⁶⁹ numerous lines of evidence ring against their authenticity: their weaker attestation (i.e. their absence from P⁴⁶ and Marcion), their linguistic and stylistic unity against the rest of the Pauline corpus,⁴⁷⁰ their replication of traditional formulas (e.g., πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Tit 3:8), their engagement with “false teaching,” their

⁴⁶⁸ Dunn, *Epistle to the Colossians*, 277; Macdonald, *Colossians*, 180.

⁴⁶⁹ For an excellent introduction to the history on reading the “Pastorals” as a literary corpus, what Jens Herzer terms the “idealistischen Paradigma,” see Jens Herzer, “Fiktion oder Täuschung? Zur Diskussion über die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe” in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen: Pseudepigraphy and Author Fiction in Early Christian Letters* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2012), 502-13.

⁴⁷⁰ The classic study of the major vocabulary differences from the Pauline epistles is by P.N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 20-40; 67-83. He notes that the Pastorals has 306 words without parallel in the other Pauline epistles, that 211 of these words are paralleled in the second century, and that there are 175 *hapax legomena* unparalleled in the rest of the New Testament. Some of the distinctive terms that occur in all three Pastorals include σοτήρ (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 1:3-4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6), ἐπιφάνεια (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13), εὐσεβεια (1 Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim 3:5; Tit 1:1) and so on.

chronological discrepancies with the epistles or Acts,⁴⁷¹ and their ecclesiology.⁴⁷² 1 Timothy and Titus have a bishop/overseer (ἐπίσκοπος) (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7), elders/presbyters (πρεσβύτεροι) (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:1f, 17, 19; Tit. 1:5; 2:2f), deacons (διάκονοι) (1 Tim. 3:8, 12; 4:6) and an order of widows (1 Tim 5:3-16). The offices are vague and undefined in comparison to Ignatius of Antioch,⁴⁷³ but there may be evidence that a monepiscopacy has emerged in some areas (1 Tim 3:1f; Tit 1:6, 7f).⁴⁷⁴ The forbidding of women in leadership roles (e.g., 1 Tim 2:11-15) does not seem to align with Paul (e.g., Rom 16:1-3, 6-7) and the Pastor may be in a battle for the Pauline legacy against images of Paul as the charismatic champion of asceticism and celibacy in oral legends that found their way into the apocryphal Acts.⁴⁷⁵

Some of these objections have been chipped away.⁴⁷⁶ A few missing leaves may account for the absence of the Pastorals and Philemon from P⁴⁶, but more likely these letters were omitted because, as letters to individuals, they did not easily fit into a Pauline letter collection

⁴⁷¹ Discrepancies include the mission to Crete and plans to winter in Nicopolis (Tit 1:5; 3:12) or that Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 4:12), an ill Trophimus at Miletus (2 Tim 4:20) and his coat at Troas (2 Tim 4:13). Robinson's (*Redating*, 67-85) attempt to fit 1 Timothy between 1 Corinthians (16:10f) and 2 Corinthians (1:1) in the autumn of 55 CE, Titus between 2 Corinthians (8; 12:17f) and Romans (16:21-23) in 57 CE, and 2 Timothy during Paul's Caesarean imprisonment ignores the unity of style and theology of the Pastorals over against the rest of the Pauline corpus, and his argument that Onesiphorus mistakenly searched for Paul in Rome (2 Tim 1:17) before finding him in Caesarea is unpersuasive.

⁴⁷² Martin Dibelius, Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (trans. Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 1-5; A.T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (The New Century Bible; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982), 2-11; J.L. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity, 1976; reprint 1989), 18-35; J. Jouette M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Abingdon NT Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 18-20; Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (The NT Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 2-3, 9; Benjamin Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus* (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville: Liturgical, 2007), 15-8;

⁴⁷³ Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 19-20

⁴⁷⁴ Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 4.

⁴⁷⁵ See especially Dennis Ronald Macdonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: the Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 59-77.

⁴⁷⁶ For a sample, see J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Black's NT Commentaries; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1963, 2nd ed 1981), 1-34; Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Tyndale, 1957; 2nd ed 1990), 11-52; Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Good News; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), xv-xi; William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Word; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), lxxxiii-cxxix; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (Anchor; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 55-90.

that was rhetorically shaped to address the “universal” church.⁴⁷⁷ Holes have been poked in Harrison’s famous statistical analysis.⁴⁷⁸ The stylistic differences that do exist are explained by the use of an amanuensis such as Luke (cf. 2 Tim 4:11),⁴⁷⁹ though the secretary hypothesis runs into the problems covered by Ehrman above, or by factors such as Paul’s advancing age, the address to individual leaders rather than communities at large, or the distinctive situation of the congregations under the care of Titus or Timothy.⁴⁸⁰

On to the more substantive differences, some scholars reconstruct a ministry after Paul’s *first* Roman imprisonment to reconcile the chronological discrepancies of the Pastorals with the other Pauline epistles or Acts.⁴⁸¹ Although an early tradition has Paul released and fulfill his plans to go to Spain (1 Clem 5:5; Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.22), which may itself derive from reading

⁴⁷⁷ Henry Y. Gamble, “Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon” in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, 337; cf. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 2; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 13-14; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 12; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 3-4, Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, lxiv

⁴⁷⁸ Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 46-48, 212-228; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 24; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, cxiii-cxvii. To return to the statistics, Mounce point out that 211 of the 306 words in the Pastorals not found in Paul but in the second century is skewed by ignoring other first century evidence (286 of them occur before 50 CE). 80 of the 175 *hapax legomena* occur in the LXX and fewer than 20 of the 306 words are unattested before Paul with 165 in Philo. Kelly adds that Harrison’s method would disqualify other Paulines (e.g., 1 Corinthians). Johnson (*Timothy*, 69-71) takes a different track by showing the considerable range of terminology in all the epistles attributed to Paul. Take the δικαί-root words: δίκαιος is used 7 times in Romans, 2 in Philippians, twice in 2 Thessalonians, once in Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and not at all in 1and 2 Corinthians, 1Thessalonians and Philemon. Δικαιοσύνη is used 12 times in Romans, 7 in 2 Corinthians, 5 in Galatians, 3 in Ephesians, Philippians and 2Timothy, once in Titus, 1 Timothy, 1 Corinthians and not at all in Colossians, Philemon, and 1and 2 Thessalonians. Δικαίόω is used 15 times in Romans, 8 in Galatians, 2 in 1 Corinthians, once in 1Timothy and Titus, and not at all in 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians.

⁴⁷⁹ See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 590; Moon, *Contributive Amanuensis*, 77-78; tentatively Fee; *Pastoral Epistles*, xxxvii. Stephen Wilson (*Luke and the Pastoral Epistles* [London: SPCK, 1979]) is the most careful defender of this thesis, though interestingly he holds that “Luke” composed the Pastorals well after Paul’s death in the 90s CE and after writing the book of Acts (ca 85-90 CE). The weaknesses of Wilson’s thesis seem to be that the two volume work Luke-Acts is formally anonymous and the author is not explicitly named before Irenaeus (*AH* 3.1.1; 3.14.1) and that “Luke” would have created chronological discrepancies with his earlier work of Acts. The parallels that exist may point to a common milieu in the late first or early second century.

⁴⁸⁰ Johnson (*Timothy*, 60) especially appeals to προσωποποιία, the rhetorical art of “writing in character.”

⁴⁸¹ Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 9-10; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 20-21; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, xvii-xix; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, liv-lvi, lxxxv-lxxxvi; Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1989), 396-402. Some of the above (Kelly, O’Connor, Mounce) accept the tradition that Paul went on to Spain while others are more hesitant or reject the mission to Spain (Guthrie, Fee, Hemer). Surprisingly, Hanson (*Pastoral Epistles*, 16-23), who judges the Pastorals to be pseudonymous, accepts Paul’s release from Rome, mission to Spain and the historicity of some of the details in the Pastorals (e.g., a mission to Crete, the visit of Onesiphorus in Rome).

Romans 15:28, the Pastorals are silent on an earlier release of Paul as 2 Timothy 4:16 may mean an earlier phrase of the same trial and there are cryptic forebodings in Acts that Paul's journey to Rome terminated in death (20:25, 29, 37-38; 21:10-13; 27:24).⁴⁸² Luke Timothy Johnson weakens the force of the chronological objection, though, with the reminder that Acts is a highly selective account.⁴⁸³ I am less persuaded by the efforts to tone down the evolved ecclesiology by insisting that the singular ἐπίσκοπος is generic, that the qualifications or responsibilities of the offices are undeveloped and interchangeable (1 Tim 3:1-13; 5:17-18; Tit 1:5-9), or that Paul gives evidence of a leadership structure in his other epistles (e.g., ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνους in Phil 1:1) as his congregations were modeled upon a club or synagogue.⁴⁸⁴ Paul confronts all sorts of issues that arise in his congregations but does not dictate to the leaders to bring dissident members into line because they did not have that level of organization.⁴⁸⁵ The organizational structure presupposed as the means to guard “the faith” (ὁ πιστός) as a “sound deposit” bespeaks the defensive strategy of a post-Pauline generation.

If the critical consensus is correct, the personalia that crop up in the Pastorals poses a dilemma. Name-dropping was a familiar device to create verisimilitude,⁴⁸⁶ but scholars troubled by the implications have taken refuge in the hypothesis that the names belong to genuine Pauline fragments that have been inserted into their present context. Harrison extracted five lost Pauline letters in his classic study: one during his stay in western Macedonia (Tit 3:12-15), a second from Macedonia (2 Tim 4:13-15, 20, 21a), a third from Caesarea (2 Tim 4:16-18a), a fourth from

⁴⁸² Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 731-2; Richard Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 524-6, 662; Bassler, *1 Timothy*, 177; Dibelius, *Pastoral Epistles*, 126.

⁴⁸³ Johnson, *Timothy*, 61-2, 65-6.

⁴⁸⁴ Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 24-32; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 13-16; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, xxxii-xxxiv; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, lxxxvi-lxxxvi Johnson, *Timothy*, 74-76;

⁴⁸⁵ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 204-5.

⁴⁸⁶ Lewis R. Donalson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1986), 23-42; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 122-3.

Rome (2 Tim 4:9-12, 22b) and a fifth as martyrdom quickly approached (2 Tim 1:16-8; 3:10-1; 4:1-2a, 5b, 6-8, 18b-9, 21b-22a).⁴⁸⁷ It is unclear why these stay “travel notes” were preserved at all and it does not alleviate qualms about pseudonymity if the Pastor incorporated them into the letters to authenticate them.⁴⁸⁸ Updating Harrison’s thesis, James Millar argues that the Pastorals were composite documents subject to complex scribal editorial procedures such as compiling, interpolating, appending, or prefixing.⁴⁸⁹ Behind 2 Timothy, he isolates two letters labelled 2 Timothy “A” (1:1-2; 3-5, 15-8; 4:6-8; 4:22a) and “B” (4:9, 10-8, 19-21, 22b) on which a scribal school appended a variety of pastoral traditions.⁴⁹⁰ It might be more persuasive if there were clear stylistic differences to set these fragments apart from the abundance of “redactional” material. The price of salvaging the authenticity of some of the material is to sacrifice the authorial unity and internal coherence of the letters.

The fragment theories do not do justice to a text like 2 Timothy, in which Paul bids a moving farewell to his young apprentice Timothy and encourages him to imitate his example of suffering. Some scholars rescue 2 Timothy for Paul, rather than a few scraps in a pseudonymous whole, by repudiating the validity of reading the “Pastorals” as a literary corpus.⁴⁹¹ When 2 Timothy is read on its own, many of the objections about the ecclesiastical organization or the “Pastor’s” authoritarian tone fade away. The differences of 2 Timothy has long been noted as the Pastorals have been compared to a tryptich: the purpose of 1 Timothy or Titus is to exhort

⁴⁸⁷ Harrison, *Problem*, 115-27.

⁴⁸⁸ Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 24; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 11; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 28-30; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 3-33; Bassler, *1 Timothy*, 21; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 4-5; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, cxxi-cxxii.

⁴⁸⁹ James D. Miller, *The Pastoral Letters as Composite Documents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 19-56.

⁴⁹⁰ Miller, *Composite Documents*, 149-50.

⁴⁹¹ Jerome Murphy O’Connor, “2 Timothy Contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus,” *RB* 98 (1991): 403-418; Herzer, “Fiktion oder Täuschung,” 513-28. I am grateful to Michel Gourgues for providing me with his SBL paper “The Research of the Pastorals at a Turning Point,” London SBL 2011 on this point. As for the commentaries, Johnson (*Timothy*, 63-64, 82) is highly critical of the affect of “grouping” in the research on 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.

and instruct while 2 Timothy tugs on the emotional chords and arouses sympathy in the reader.⁴⁹² Jens Herzer complains that the “Pastorals” cannot be meaningfully interpreted as a single corpus with its odd mixture of genres and styles of personal admonishments or public church orders.⁴⁹³ In Herzer’s view, 1 Timothy alone fits the school context usually proposed for the production of Pauline pseudepigraphy as it is mostly lacking in personal notices or the customary closing greetings.⁴⁹⁴ Arguing the likelihood that at least one of the Pastorals had to be authentic for the early church to be so easily swayed to accept all three, Jerome Murphy O’Connor outlines 30 points where 2 Timothy stands out from the other two letters.⁴⁹⁵

A growing number of scholars have joined the protest against reading the Pastorals together as a literary corpus, but what must be accounted for is their stylistic unity in the areas that most differ from the other Pauline epistles. One solution is that the Pastor deliberately copied the style of 2 Timothy, but Ehrman responds that “[i]f one of the books served as the model for the other, the author of the second happened to pick out as the words to be replicated an inordinate number that are not found commonly elsewhere in the New Testament or Paul.”⁴⁹⁶ Michel Gourgues has offered a variant of the fragment hypothesis but with the virtue of not chopping up 2 Timothy into little pieces: he takes the two sections in 2 Timothy beginning with “I-you” (1:1-2:13; 4:6-22) as a whole coherent letter of Paul to Timothy, while the middle section beginning with “you” (2:14-4:5) was interpolated by the Pastor as it conforms to the

⁴⁹² For a typical example, see Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 20-1.

⁴⁹³ Herzer, “Fiktion oder Täuschung,” 513-17. Herzer notes that many scholars classify 1 Timothy and Titus as a *mandata principis* (authoritative mandate letters) and 2 Timothy as a Testamentary letter.

⁴⁹⁴ Herzer, “Fiktion oder Täuschung,” 521-3. Herzer explains that in a school context (e.g., Socratic letters), pseudepigraphy is a matter of open consensus so it does not rely on personalized information in order to deceive. However, I am not so sure that only 1 Timothy is the odd letter out as the agreements of Titus and 1 Timothy with regards to the impersonal tone and the anachronistic church structure seem to outweigh the differences. Ehrman, (*Forgery*, 105-19) has also called into question the prevalence of the legitimate practice of pseudonymity in philosophical schools and its heuristic value in interpreting the phenomenon in early Christian literature.

⁴⁹⁵ Jerome Murphy O’Connor, “2 Timothy Contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus,” *RB* 98 (1991): 403-418.

⁴⁹⁶ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 198-9.

impersonal style and themes of the other two Pastorals.⁴⁹⁷ The simplest solution may be to read the three Pastorals as products of a single author while accepting the criticisms of the pernicious affects of reading all three letters as addressing the same topics and concerns. We would never treat the separate epistles of Paul, each the product of a single author, in this way.⁴⁹⁸ On its own, 2 Timothy conforms to a Testamentary letter with Paul's martyrdom in hindsight. The advice to "Timothy" to be wary of youthful indiscretions (2 Tim 2:22) is difficult to square with the chronology of when Timothy met Paul (cf. Acts 16:1) and his role as co-sender of several Pauline letters (2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1).⁴⁹⁹

The "trivial" circumstances in 2 Timothy 4:9-20 are part of the authorial fiction in imagining a heroic Paul, imprisoned and deserted by virtually all his companions for legitimate or illegitimate reasons.⁵⁰⁰ Some spy a contradiction with this idealized image as Paul passes on greetings from his fellows at Rome in verse 21,⁵⁰¹ but 2 Timothy differentiates close companions (4:9-18) from the ordinary members of the congregation of Rome (4:21).⁵⁰² For this reason, Timothy is summoned from Ephesus to join Paul in Rome, though the time it would take to undertake this journey and fetch Paul's cloak and parchments diminishes some of the pathos created by the threat of an imminent martyrdom.⁵⁰³ In this context, Paul charges Timothy to bring along Mark for he has proven to be useful (εὐχρηστος) for service (δικονία) (2 Tim 4:11). Mark (4:11b), Luke (4:11a) and Tychicus (4:12) are examples worthy to be emulated,

⁴⁹⁷ Gourges, "The Research of the Pastorals."

⁴⁹⁸ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 195. Ehrman catches the irony that Johnson strongly denounces the havoc on the interpretation of the Pastors by imagining the letters to be products of a solitary pseudonymous writer, yet he also considers all three letters to be the product of a single author – Paul.

⁴⁹⁹ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 210.

⁵⁰⁰ Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 122, 128; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 134.

⁵⁰¹ Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 122; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 134.

⁵⁰² Davies, *Pastoral Epistles*, 88.

⁵⁰³ Margaret Davies, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Epworth Commentaries; London: Epworth, 1996), 89;

unlike the deserter Demas who loved the present age (4:10).⁵⁰⁴ Mark's "service" (δῆλον) is probably as a fellow minister with Paul (1 Tim 1:12) and Timothy (2 Tim 4:5).⁵⁰⁵ It is doubtful, though, that 2 Timothy includes the names of "Mark" and "Luke" because the Pastor knew them to be Gospel authors.⁵⁰⁶ In articulating Mark's usefulness, there may be a pun on the name Omnesimus ("useful") in Philemon 11, another individual who was formerly useless to his master.⁵⁰⁷ If Mark was once alienated from Paul (cf. Gal 2:11-4; Acts 15:37-9), 2 Timothy continues the trajectory started in Colossians of re-affirming the bond of Mark with Paul.

C. The Spiritual Son of Peter

1. The Authorship and Date of 1 Peter

The memory of Mark as a member of Paul's entourage is displaced by 1 Peter 5:13, which pictures a close familial bond between the aged apostle and the one warmly described as "Mark my son" (Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου) (5:13). Some commentators accept that 1 Peter was a letter of Peter from Rome (i.e. Babylon) in the early 60s CE before his martyrdom under Nero.⁵⁰⁸ This agrees with the testimony of Irenaeus (*A.H.* 4.9.2) and is supported by the quick acceptance of the epistle in 2 Peter 3:1, Polycarp (*Phil.* 1:3; 2:1; 8:1) and Papias (*H.E.* 2.15.2; 3.39.17). An obstacle to Petrine authorship is the epistle's excellent facility in Greek, rhetorical skills that require a middle education and extensive reliance on the Septuagint.⁵⁰⁹ It is questionable that an

⁵⁰⁴ Black, *Images of an Apostolic Interpreter*, 58; Davies, *Pastoral Epistles*, 88.

⁵⁰⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 591; Fiore, *Pastoral Epistles*, 184; contra Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 243-44; Johnson, *Timothy*, 440, 449.

⁵⁰⁶ Contra Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 281. It is likely that 1 Tim 4:10 when combined with the "we" in Acts led to the assumption of Lukan authorship of Luke-Acts as evident in Irenaeus.

⁵⁰⁷ Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158; Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 281

⁵⁰⁸ Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter* (Tyndale; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1988), 21-36; J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 30-33; E.G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1955), 7-17.

⁵⁰⁹ Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 3-7; John H. Elliot, *1 Peter* (Anchor 37B; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 44-68, 120.

“illiterate” (ἀγράμματος) Galilean fisherman (cf. Acts 4:13) was able to compose a carefully crafted Greek document,⁵¹⁰ but Grundem argues that ἀγράμματος does not mean any more than one not formerly educated (cf. ἰδιώτης, “layperson”) and the Hellenization of Galilee made it a necessity for Peter to have sufficient Greek to conduct regular business transactions.⁵¹¹ Some commentators caution not to exaggerate the quality of the Greek.⁵¹² Even so, it is beside the point that 1 Peter may not live up to the standards of classical texts or that a Galilean might pick up a little spoken Greek, which is a very different skill from writing a polished literary work in a second language, for it is unrealistic that the Galilean *Cephas* acquired the literary and rhetorical training to better rival an educated, letter-writing member of the diaspora like Paul.

In order to save authenticity, there is the familiar recourse to an amanuensis.⁵¹³ Some commentators have seized upon the phrase διὰ Σιλουανου̇... ἔγραφα (through Silvanus... I wrote) (1 Pet 5:12).⁵¹⁴ In light of other evidence (cf. Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 12:1; *Phil.* 11:1; *Magn.* 15:1; *Rom.* 10:1), this phrase probably denotes Silvanus as the letter-carrier.⁵¹⁵ Jongyoon Moon switches Silvanus with Mark as the amanuensis, “[s]ince Mark was clearly a literate man, if, as is likely, he was Peter’s ἑρμηνευτής and the author of the Gospel of Mark on the grounds of

⁵¹⁰ Francis Wright Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Oxford: Blackwell & Mott, 1958), 28.

⁵¹¹ Grundem, *1 Peter*, 25-31; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 32. In support of this reconstruction, Markus Bockmuehl (*The Remembered Peter* [Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2010], 153-87) emphasizes that Simon, his brother Andrew (a Greek name) and Philip all come from the Hellenized, Greek-speaking village of Bethsaida (cf. John 1:44). In contrast, Ehrman (*Forgery*, 242-6) follows the Synoptics in locating Simon’s upbringing in the tiny, insignificant village of Capernaum and casts significant doubt on the extent of the Hellenization and the literacy rates of rural Galilee outside of major urban areas (e.g., Sephorius, Tiberius).

⁵¹² Kelly (*1 Peter*, 31) writes, “Its style certainly does not deserve the extravagant eulogies it has received, being unimaginative, monotonous and at times clumsy.” With less rhetorical force, Achtemeier admits the level of Greek should “not be exaggerated” (*1 Peter*, 2). Moon (*Contributive Amanuensis*, 15-16) relies on a prior statistical analysis to show that the “translation Greek” of 1 Peter is the author’s second language and exhibits “Semitic interference.”

⁵¹³ Moon (*Contributive Amanuensis*, 36-66) demonstrates how common this practice was in antiquity.

⁵¹⁴ Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 215; Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 10-17, 241. Curiously, Beare also thinks the phrase indicates a scribe, though he regards Silvanus as part of the epistle’s pseudonymous framework and deems appeals to an amanuensis to be a “device of desperation” (*First Epistle*, 183).

⁵¹⁵ The most up-to-date refutation of this view is found in Moon, *Contributive Amanuensis*, 105-112.

Papias' note."⁵¹⁶ This is a circular argument that assumes the correctness of the Papiian tradition. He buttresses his case by looking at the shared traditions of Mark and 1 Peter, such as the rejected stone of Psalm 118 (Mark 12:10/1 Pet 2:7), the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 (Mark 10:45/1 Pet 2:22-25a), or the messianic shepherd of Ezekiel 34 (Mark 5:34/1 Pet 2:25b).⁵¹⁷ Even granting these parallels, including the debatable allusion to the Isaianic servant in Mark 10:45,⁵¹⁸ the major differences ought to not be overlooked. The cosmic Christology of 1 Peter goes beyond the Synoptic tradition.⁵¹⁹ The sayings material in 1 Peter has the clearest echoes of the Sermon on the Mount or special "M" material not found in Mark.⁵²⁰

The Greek is not the only obstacle to Petrine authorship. It would seem uncharacteristic for the historical *Cephas* to address a pre-dominantly non-Jewish audience and not broach the subject of *Torah* observance (cf. Gal 2:9-13) or reminisce about his personal experiences with Jesus. John Elliott lists the spread of the Christ cult through Asia Minor (1 Pet 1:1), the post-70 use of Babylon as a cipher for Rome (1.1; cf. Rev 17-18) and the use of *Χριστιανός* as an insider designation to distinguish "Christians" from Israel and the surrounding populace (4:16; cf. Acts 11:26; 26:28) as demanding a date beyond the 60s and the lifetime of *Cephas*.⁵²¹ Some scholars push the composition of 1 Peter into the second century. By artificially dividing 1 Peter

⁵¹⁶ Moon, *Contributive Amanuensis*, 116-117. The retort that 1 Peter does not explicitly note that either Mark or Silvanus penned the epistle in the benediction, unlike Tertius in Rom 16:22, but Moon argues that Paul is not always explicit that he required an amanuensis (cf. Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17; Phlm 19). An amanuensis may be inferred, he suggests, from implied pointers such as references to certain addresses in personal intimate terms in the postscript or by stylistic variations (pp. 82-95).

⁵¹⁷ Moon, *Contributive Amanuensis*, 8, 171-207.

⁵¹⁸ See footnote 268.

⁵¹⁹ M. Eugene Boring, *1 Peter* (Abingdon NT Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 36.

⁵²⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 10-2; David G. Horrell, "The Product of a Petrine Circle? A Reassessment of the Origin and Character of 1 Peter" *JSNT* 24 (2002): 22.

⁵²¹ Elliot, *1 Peter*, 136-7. J. Ramsay Michaels (*1 Peter* [Dallas: Word, 1988], lviii-lix) accepts the arguments for a later date, yet defends Petrine authorship on the grounds that Peter's martyrdom in Rome under Nero is historically dubious. He argues that John 21:18-19 is too ambiguous to be a reference to the crucifixion and is a proverb contrasting youth and old age, that 2 Peter 1:14 hints at Peter's death but not violent martyrdom, and that 1 Clement 5:4 only means that Peter suffered hardships. Interestingly, he anticipates the argument of Michael Goulder ("Did Peter ever go to Rome," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 57 [2004]: 377-396) that Peter did not go to Rome at all.

into a baptism sermon (1:3-4:11) and an epistle proper to Christians in Asia Minor undergoing trials at the hands of political authorities (1:1-2; 4:12-5:14), Beare correlated the “fiery trial” (4:12) with the correspondence of Pliny and Trajan (ca 111/112 CE) that prescribes being a “Christian” as a capital offense (*Ep.* 10.96-97).⁵²² The chief offense of the Christian in 1 Peter, however, lies in their non-participation in the public cults and severing of social ties (4:3-4) and incited sporadic, local forms of harassment rather than official state suppression (2:12; 3:16-7; 4:3-4, 12-6). 1 Peter is not hostile to “Babylon” (contra Rev 17, 18) and may be written before the deterioration of relations under Domitian around 93 CE.⁵²³ For Burton Mack, the imagined pristine apostolic age with Peter as the progenitor of the Roman church is a facet of second century Christian mythmaking and Christ’s fulfillment of prophecy, atoning death, heavenly rule and delayed return has become a fixed creed in 1 Peter,⁵²⁴ but there is no reason why these developments did not begin to take root in the late first century. Time must be allowed for 1 Peter to circulate and to be approvingly cited by Papias (*HE* 3.39.17), 2 Peter (3:1) and Polycarp (*Phil.* 1:3; 2:1; 8:1, 2). I am comfortable with a date anywhere between 70 and 93 CE.

John Elliot assigns the letter to a Petrine school in the last quarter of the first century.⁵²⁵ From a sociological vantage point, he argues that it is unlikely that Peter ever worked without a group of sympathizers and the NT always allies him with a group, whether with the “Twelve,” the inner circle of three (Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33), John (Acts 3:1-11; 4:1-23), Jesus’s brother James (Gal 1:18-9; 2:9) or the household of Mary and John Mark (Acts 12).⁵²⁶ Silvanus, Mark and the “chosen/elect lady” (συνεκλεκτῆ) in 1 Peter 5:12-3 were among the members who comprised the

⁵²² Beare, *First Epistle of Peter*, 6-8, 13-5.

⁵²³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 30-33; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 98-103, 135-6; Boring, *1 Peter*, 33-4, 43-4.

⁵²⁴ Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament*, 201-5.

⁵²⁵ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 127-30, 888-90.

⁵²⁶ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 273; *1 Peter*, 127-8, 888-9.

Petrine circle in Rome.⁵²⁷ Elliott's contribution on the Petrine influences in 1 Peter has garnered wide support. Black writes, "[P]etrine Christianity appears to have been so highly synthetic and amalgamative of other Christian forms."⁵²⁸ Boring speaks of a "distinctly Petrine formulation" of a stream of tradition including hymnic, creedal, liturgical and catechetical elements.⁵²⁹

This was in reaction to an older scholarly judgment that the ascription to Peter was a superficial gloss to mask 1 Peter's inherent Paulinism. Baure is representative of this position when he writes, "Entire passages are little more than an expansion or restatement of Pauline texts, and whole verses are a kind of mosaic of Pauline words and forms of expression."⁵³⁰ Elliott strongly repudiates treating 1 Peter as a pale imitation of Paul. He disregards thematic parallels (e.g., the *kerygma*, grace, election, eschatology, household of faith) as general Christian teaching, though he is open to indirect influence from Paul's epistle to the Romans due to the common Roman milieu. He adds that 1 Peter is not addressed to an area particular to the Pauline mission (cf. Bythnia-Pontus, Cappadocia) (1:1) and accentuates the differences from Paul in the conception of δικαιοσύνη (righteousness) (1 Pet 2:24; 3:14), the list of χαρίσματα (gifts) (4:10-11), or the image of Christian fellowship (e.g., brotherhood, flock, strangers and aliens).⁵³¹ In his full-length monograph on the subject,⁵³² Herzer does not even permit that the expression ἐν χριστῷ was influenced by Paul. To be "in Christ" in 1 Peter 3:16 (cf. 5:14) is to live uprightly and suffer the consequences of the abuse of outsiders in the present, in imitation of Christ's example of suffering (cf. 3:18), while 5:10 promises that those "in Christ" will partake in the

⁵²⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 129-30, 888-9..

⁵²⁸ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 64 (italics added).

⁵²⁹ Boring, *1 Peter*, 41.

⁵³⁰ Baure, *First Epistle of Peter*, 25.

⁵³¹ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 37-40.

⁵³² Jens Herzer, *Petrus Oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des Ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition* (WUNT 103; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1998).

future in the divine glory.⁵³³ In the Pauline corpus, ἐν χριστῷ primarily refers to the deity's saving action "in Christ" by the means of Christ's substitutionary death and the participation of believers in this through baptism and the resulting new life or ethics that are inculcated therein.⁵³⁴ If the expression became detached from its origins in Pauline usage, 1 Peter could have picked it up without its Pauline connotations.⁵³⁵

I have no desire to turn back the clock on the exegetical gains in reading 1 Peter as a theological work in its own right and not a slavish imitation of Paul. Yet it may be a step too far to remove all Pauline influence behind the use of the epistolary form instead of another literary genre, the "grace and peace" salutation (1:1), the idiomatic "in Christ" (ἐν χριστῷ) (3:16; 5:14), the distinctive terms for "gift" (χάρισμα) (1 Pet 4:10; Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:7ff) or "fleshly" (σαρκικός) (1 Pet 2:11; Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 3:3; 9:11; 2 Cor 1:12; 10:4), the similarities in paraenesis (1 Pet 3:9; Rom 12:7; 1 Thess 5:15), the obligations to the state (1 Pet 2:13-14; Rom 13:1-7), the *haustafel* (1 Pet 2:18-3:7; Col 3:18-4:1; Eph 5:21-6:9), the Pauline companions Mark and Silvanus and other minor parallels (cf. 1 Pet 1:14; Rom 12:2; 6:11, 18).⁵³⁶ The author is not pretending to be Paul, so it is not unexpected that the author would re-use Pauline elements in a distinctive way.⁵³⁷ 1 Peter draws on a assortment of traditions along with Paul such as an address to diaspora exiles (1 Pet 1:2), the *logia* of Jesus, a Christological exegesis of Isaiah 53 (cf. Acts 8:28-35), paraenesis that is paralleled in James (1 Pet 5:5-9; James 4:6-10), and creedal material (1 Pet 1:18-21; 2:21-25; 3:18-22).⁵³⁸ Horrell makes a strong case that there is no sense

⁵³³ Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus*, 85-90.

⁵³⁴ Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus*, 91-101.

⁵³⁵ Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus*, 102-6.

⁵³⁶ See the point by point response to Herzer in Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 4-10; cf. Boring, *1 Peter*, 30-2; Ehrman, *Forgery*, 250-5.

⁵³⁷ Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 10.

⁵³⁸ Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 10-4.

in which 1 Peter embodies the distinctive traditions of a Petrine circle rather than an amalgam of Jewish and Pauline traditions, analogous to 1 Clement or 2 Peter.⁵³⁹

There may be other historical issues with Elliott's reconstruction. Michael Goulder disbelieves that Peter went to Rome at all, contending that division of labour that Paul worked out with the Pillars (Gal 2:9), the silence of Acts and the lack of an explicit reference to martyrdom under Nero in 1 Clement 5:4 apart from vague "trials" weighs heavily against the historicity of the tradition.⁵⁴⁰ Markus Bockmuehl's rebuttal is that the aorist participle "having born witness" (μαρτυρήσας) and the euphemism for going "to one's own place" (5.4, cf. 5.7; Acts 1:25; Ignatius, *Magn.* 5.1) in 1 Clement 5:4 implies martyrdom, but the discreetness on the circumstances of Peter's death was politically shrewd.⁵⁴¹ Whether or not Peter was in Rome, the plausibility that a group of dedicated followers accompanied Peter does not validate the existence of a Petrine school in Rome after his death for which there is no other evidence.⁵⁴² In conclusion, 1 Peter was a pseudonymous document penned in Rome in the last quarter of the first century that unifies diverse streams of "Christian" tradition.

2. *The Role of Peter, Mark and Silvanus in the Pseudonymous Framework of 1 Peter*

Peter's name was affixed to this letter to authorize it as apostolic, for he was widely esteemed as a chief apostle and spokesperson from the beginning (cf. Mark 1:16-20; 3:16-19; 16:7; Matt 16:18; Luke 22:31-32; John 20:2-10; 21:15-17; Gal 1:17-19; 1 Cor 9:5; 15:5). Lutz Doering argues that the epistle constructs a *Petrusbild* (Peter image) from a stock of Christian memories

⁵³⁹ Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 23-4.

⁵⁴⁰ Goulder, "Rome," 377-96. Goulder sees the trials in 1 Clement as modeled after Acts, which is problematic as there is no evidence of literary dependence, but they may have shared oral traditions. He accepts that John 21:18-9 with Peter stretching out his hands alludes to his crucifixion, but notes that this reference comes relatively late.

⁵⁴¹ Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, 124-30.

⁵⁴² Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 19; Doering, "Peter Image," 646.

of him as the pre-eminent apostle (1:1), authoritative co-elder (5:1; cf. Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22f; 16:4) and shepherd of the flock (5:2; cf. John 21:15-17; Acts 20:17, 28-29).⁵⁴³ Peter was remembered as an “ecclesiastical centrist,” mediating between the hard-liners that followed James and the *Torah*-free Pauline mission so that Paul only chastises him for hypocrisy for what he saw as renegeing on their previous agreement about mixed table fellowship rather than apostasy (cf. Gal 2:11-14).⁵⁴⁴ Attributing a document that consolidates and unifies diverse streams of Christian thought to Peter is not at all a distortion of his legacy.

In what way do Silvanus and Mark contribute to the authorial fiction? Beare’s position is that they contribute nothing: “[t]he mention of Mark and Silvanus, and also of Babylon, has *no significance* except as part of the device of pseudonymity.”⁵⁴⁵ A more likely answer is that the two prop up the *integrative* aspect of the Peter image in 1 Peter in acting as a bridge between Paul and Peter.⁵⁴⁶ Like Mark, the vast majority of references to Silvanus or Silas associate him with Paul (2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 2:1; Acts 15:40; 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4, 10, 14, 15; 18:5).⁵⁴⁷ Just as Clement of Rome lifts up Peter and Paul as the two pillars of the church, 1 Peter locates two of Paul’s co-workers under the aegis of the emerging figurehead of the Roman congregation, Peter. In the face of external pressure on the fledgling “Christian” community, the best defense was a united front.⁵⁴⁸ Against this interpretation of “Mark” in 1 Peter, Hengel argues that 1 Peter 5:13 and Papias constitute a case of multiple attestation because the timing

⁵⁴³ Doering, “Peter Image,” 647-62. Doering does not believe that the real author slips up from the author fiction to reveal his real location in Rome (Babylon), but this is also part of the *Petrusbild* as tradition placed Peter in Rome. He also sees in both the reference to Peter as a “witness of Christ’s suffering” (5:1), which he interprets as Peter’s practical testimony in sharing in Christ’s suffering (cf. 4:13), and 5:10 as a participant in the future glory as alluding to Peter’s martyrdom in Rome. This last point is convincing only if one already accepts the historicity of the tradition of Peter in Rome. Another explanation is that the epistle was authorized with the weight of the authority of the church in Rome, which facilitated its quick acceptance and dissemination.

⁵⁴⁴ Pheme Perkins, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 9-10.

⁵⁴⁵ Beare, *First Epistle*, 183 (italics added).

⁵⁴⁶ Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 26; Doering, “Peter Image,” 666.

⁵⁴⁷ Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 19-20. Achtemeier’s (*1 Peter*, 351) suggestion that Silvanus, as bearer of the letter in 5:12, may be a real figure but is not related with Silvanus/Silas in the rest of the New Testament, is unconvincing.

⁵⁴⁸ Ehrman, *Forgery*, 257-9.

was too tight for one to influence the other. Hengel excludes literary borrowing because he dates 1 Peter around 100 CE as a response to the publication of a collection of Pauline epistles,⁵⁴⁹ but the Pauline influence could have been mediated to 1 Peter from a few epistles (e.g., Romans). If 1 Peter was popularly disseminated in the provinces of Asia Minor (cf. 1 Pet 1:1) between 70 and 93 CE and quickly became an authoritative text (cf. Papias, 2 Peter, Polycarp), this allows for plenty of time for the impact of 1 Peter to be felt in Asia Minor and for the association of Peter and Mark to be mediated, directly or indirectly, to the elder John.

There is one more parallel outside of Paul's letters to 1 Peter 5:12-3 that I have not taken into consideration. The book of Acts has John Mark in the company of Peter (12:12) and Silas as an emissary of the Jerusalem Church alongside Judas, Paul and Barnabas (15:22-3). Herzer and Doering spot an intertextual relationship between Acts and 1 Peter, or at least common traditions, in the representation of Peter as the initiator and proponent of the Gentile mission (Acts 11; 15:7-11; 1 Pet 1:1; 4:3-4), the early bond of Mark and Peter (Acts 12:5; 1 Pet 5:13) and Silas as a letter carrier delivering a diaspora letter with a similarly idiomatic "writing through their hand" (γράφαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν) (Acts 15:22-23; 1 Pet 5:12).⁵⁵⁰ The language of "sonship" in 1 Peter 5:13 may denote that Mark was an early convert of Peter (cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Phlm 10; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1; Tit 1:4) or it may express the mutual concerns of the Christian community for one another like a family.⁵⁵¹ But Acts 12:12 and 15:22-3 is balanced out by the overwhelming association of (John) Mark and Silvanus/Silas primarily with Paul in Acts and the Pauline epistles. If the apostolic decree of Acts has any historical basis, then the

⁵⁴⁹ Hengel, *Studies*, 48, 154 n. 67, 150 n. 36; *Four Gospels*, 66-68; Hengel, *Frage*, 317.

⁵⁵⁰ Doering, "Peter Image," 657, 665-66, 677-680. He adds that the image of Peter instructions to shepherd (ποιμαίνω) and exercise oversight (ἐπισκοπέω) over the flock (ποιμνιον) (1 Pet 5:2) echoes the admonitions of Paul in the Miletus speech (Acts 20:17, 28-29)

⁵⁵¹ Lutz Doering, "Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering. Author Construction and Peter Image in First Peter" in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, 670-1.

names may have been attached to it in the tradition and the reason why 1 Peter depicts Silvanus as a letter-carrier, but Acts does not directly connect Silas with Peter. Silas is still grouped with Paul and Barnabas. Secondly, Acts has a similar synthesizing purpose as 1 Peter, re-narrating the story of Christian beginnings as one of singular origins and a straight trajectory from Jerusalem to Rome. Just as the title “apostle” is restricted to the Twelve with the exception of Acts 14:4, regardless of how fervently Paul fought for the recognition of his apostolic calling (1 Cor 9:1-2; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 1:1), so Paul and his staff are subservient to the apostolic college in Jerusalem. Finally, depending on when and where one locates Acts, its author could possibly have been drawing on traditions influenced by 1 Peter. 1 Peter 5:13 may be the first time that Peter and Mark are linked together.

D. The Flawed Figure of John Mark

1. The Authorship and Date of the Book of Acts

As hinted at in the last paragraph, the book of Acts complicates my neat and tidy sketch of the evolution of the literary traditions about Mark. It introduces an individual named John Mark in close proximity to Peter (Acts 12:12) before he becomes an assistant (ὑπηρέτης) of Paul and Barnabas (13:5). To figure out where Acts fits in the puzzle, the authorship and dating of Acts are crucial. If the famous shift to the first person plural (16:10-17; 20:5-16; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) is taken in support of the traditional ascription to Luke,⁵⁵² then its author was part of the same Pauline circle that included Mark (Phlm 23-24; Col 4:10-11; cf. 2 Tim 4:11)! If not, the author

⁵⁵² C.S. Williams, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Black’s NT Commentaries; London: Black, 1964), 3-6; F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Rev. Ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 6-7; William Neil, *Acts* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 23; James D.G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Peterborough: Epworth, 1996), x; Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts* (Augsburg Commentary on the NT; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 13-4; Howard Marshall, *Acts* (Tyndale NT Commentaries; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1980), 44-5; F. Scott Spencer, *Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 13; Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Cambridge and Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), 52-3.

may have been working with whatever oral or written sources were available in the late first or early second century in reconstructing the personages and events of the narrative. Thus, I will spend considerable effort locating Luke-Acts in a general time frame before proceeding with a discussion on John Mark in Acts.

According to a general consensus representing a fairly wide ideological spectrum, Luke-Acts ought to be dated to roughly 70 to 100 CE.⁵⁵³ Nonetheless, there are able defenders of a date as early as the 60s and as late as 115 to 130 CE.⁵⁵⁴ Usually to establish an acceptable range of dates, it is necessary to pinpoint a *terminus a quo* (limit from which) and *terminus ad quem* (limit to which). In the most thorough study of the separate reception histories of Luke and Acts before Irenaeus, Andrew Gregory only finds secure evidence of the reception of Acts in the *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* 1:27-71 (which cannot be securely dated pre-Irenaeus), *the Letter from Lyons and Vienne*, the apocryphal Acts (*Acts of Paul*, *Acts of Peter*, *Acts of John*) and Eusebius's anonymous opponent of the New Prophecy.⁵⁵⁵ Other scholars have allowed for influence from Polycarp (*Phil.* 1.2) or Justin (cf. *1 Apol.* 39.3; 49.5; 50.12).⁵⁵⁶ Since Luke relies upon Mark as a major source text, the second volume has to be written after the composition of Mark. C.S. Williams dodges the force of this argument by positing that Acts originally followed a proto-Luke,⁵⁵⁷ but, aside from the speculative nature of what a proto-Luke would have looked

⁵⁵³ Bruce, *Acts*, 12-3; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), xxxiii; Dunn, *Acts*, xi; Haenchen, *Acts*, 86; Krodel, *Acts*, 14; Marshall, *Acts*, 46-8; Spencer, *Acts*, 16; Neil, *Acts*, 24; Witherington, *Acts*, 61-2.

⁵⁵⁴ For the best defense of an early dating, see Hemer, *Hellenistic History*, 365-468; cf. Robinson, *Redating*, 27-9, 88-90. For scholars who date Acts to the second century, see Mack, *Christian Myth*, 167, 225-8; Richard Pervo, *Dating Acts* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 2006); idem, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009); Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

⁵⁵⁵ See especially Gregory, *Luke and Acts*, 350-1. As far as Luke, Gregory finds references in 2 Clement, the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Protevangelium of James*, Marcion (in an earlier recension) and Justin. Assuming Acts was not written long after the first volume, Acts cannot be dated to the mid second century.

⁵⁵⁶ Other surveys on the reception of Acts by Haenchen (*Acts*, 3-9), Conzelmann (*Acts*, xxvii-xxiii) and Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 15-27, 292-308) largely confirm its lack of attestation in the second century.

⁵⁵⁷ Williams, *Acts*, 12-3, 15.

like apart from the Markan narrative framework, the book of Acts also relies on Mark (cf. Acts 5:12-6; 19:11-2/Mark 6:55-6; Acts 6:13-4/Mark 14:57-8; Acts 7:56/Mark 14:62).⁵⁵⁸ To most this is conclusive proof that Luke-Acts must be a post-70 CE work, but the conventional dating of Mark has not gone unchallenged.⁵⁵⁹ It seems that the evidence for an intermediate dating for Luke-Acts is by no means clear-cut.

Arguments in favour of an early date revolve around a series of conspicuous silences. J.A.T. Robinson comments, “[O]ne of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climatic event of the period – the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70... is never once mentioned as a past fact.”⁵⁶⁰ In relation to Acts, he adds that its ending betrays no knowledge of the deaths of Peter, Paul or James.⁵⁶¹ While Colin Hemer admits that arguments drawn from the abrupt ending are made on “[a]n inadequate basis,” he speculates that Luke closed his narrative before Paul was subsequently released from Roman imprisonment because his ministry remained a politically sensitive subject.⁵⁶² He lists a host of reasons for dating Acts to 62 CE such as silences on the fall of Jerusalem, the Judaean War, the Neronian persecution, the ministry of Peter in Rome, or the martyrdoms of key leaders. On the positive front, he infers that Acts belongs to an earlier era with the pre-70 authority of the Sadducees, the sympathetic portrayal of the Pharisees, the prominence of the “God-fearers” (οἱ φοβούμενοι τον θεόν), the Roman toleration of “Judaism” extended to the Jesus people (18:14-17), and the details that accord with a cultural milieu as early as the Julio-Claudian period.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁸ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 36-8.

⁵⁵⁹ The sharpest challenge to the consensus dating Mark shortly before or after the Jewish War is from Crossley, *Date*; cf. Robinson, *Re-dating*, 14-19; 107-16. My own view is that Mark probably dates from the late 60s CE.

⁵⁶⁰ Robinson, *Re-dating*, 13.

⁵⁶¹ Robinson, *Re-dating*, 88-90.

⁵⁶² Hemer, *Setting*, 365, 407-8. But see the problems with the hypothetical second imprisonment above.

⁵⁶³ Hemer, *Setting*, 376-82.

The early dating is belied by the fact that two Lukan additions (Luke 19:43-4; 21:20-4) seem to be *vaticinium ex eventu* in light of the events of 70 CE. Robinson's insistence that the passages reflect commonplaces of ancient warfare and may be drawn from the Septuagint, in contrast to a detailed *ex eventu* prophecy in *Sibylline Oracles* 4.125-7, is unpersuasive.⁵⁶⁴ Luke alters Mark's ambiguous "abomination of desolation" (13:14; cf. Matt 24:15) into the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem (Luke 21:20), though it reads more naturally in light of Daniel (9:27; 11:31; 12:10; cf. 1 Macc 1:54) as a desecrating sacrilege rather than destruction,⁵⁶⁵ suggesting he is reinterpreting the prophecy after the fact. Questions about the fates of James, Peter or Paul, illustrious leaders they may be, are of secondary importance to the extension of the Jesus movement from Judaea to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) and the progressive flow of the narrative is from Jerusalem to Rome (28:16-31). Finally, many features observed by Hemer can be attributed to a later writer utilizing Gospel traditions, Josephus or other sources to create verisimilitude. A *terminus a quo* is set up around 70 CE.

A Pauline co-worker could have written Acts in the late first century, but it is hard to reconcile Acts with Pauline theology on righteousness, justification (cf. Acts 13:39) or union with Christ. Acts revises Paul's image as a miracle worker, orator and subordinate of the "apostles."⁵⁶⁶ Paul's private settlement with the Pillars before controversy over mixed table fellowship spilled out at Antioch (Gal 2:1-10) is transformed into a public forum reaching a unanimous decision in favour of the Gentile mission apart from a few concessions (Acts 15:1-35). There may be a role reversal as Peter champions the Gentile mission (Acts 11) and calls *Torah* a "yoke" (Acts 15:10; cf. Gal 5:1) while Paul is an exemplar of piety (cf. Acts 21:17-26)

⁵⁶⁴ Robinson, *Redating*, 21, 27.

⁵⁶⁵ Crossley, *Date*, 27-9. Collins (*Mark*, 12-4) argues the oracle was influenced by the Caligula crisis but is also a genuine future expectation that the Romans will again try to set up a desolating sacrilege in the temple and succeed.

⁵⁶⁶ See especially Haenchen, *Acts*, 113-5.

who circumcises Timothy (16:3).⁵⁶⁷ Some handle the differences by identifying Galatians 2 with the meeting of Acts 11:27-30,⁵⁶⁸ but Acts 15 has the same basic players (James, Peter, Paul, Barnabas), setting (Jerusalem, Antioch), dispute on the *gospel* to the Gentiles, stance on the inability to observe *Torah*, victory for a Law-free Gentile mission and division of labour between Paul and the Jerusalem Pillars.⁵⁶⁹ The differences of 1 Thessalonians from Acts 17:1-9 are also instructive: whereas Paul envisions an audience of ex-idolaters (1 Thess 1:9-10), Paul ministers to the Jewish and Greek worshippers gathered in the synagogue in Acts (17:1-9).⁵⁷⁰

Many scholars thus follow Philip Esler in establishing a *terminus ad quem* for Acts before the publication of a collection of Pauline letters.⁵⁷¹ Yet Conzelmann, who agrees that similar episodes in Acts and Paul rest upon oral traditions in the Pauline churches rather than direct borrowing, finds, “[i]t is almost inconceivable, however, that the author of Acts knew nothing at all about the letters.”⁵⁷² Richard Pervo too finds it inconceivable, for he documents 89 to 90 places where Acts echoes from the content of several of Paul’s epistles including the deutero-Paulines (Colossians, Ephesians).⁵⁷³ Not every parallel is equally convincing as he admits the goal is to put forward so many numerous cases that the collective weight cannot be

⁵⁶⁷ Philip Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lukan Theology* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 93-108. Timothy’s circumcision contrasts with the uncircumcised Titus (Gal 1:3) and may be designed to subvert Galatians (cf. Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 19).

⁵⁶⁸ Bruce, *Acts*, 283-85; Marshall, *Acts*, 244-247; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical*, 91-95.

⁵⁶⁹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 79-96; Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 18-19.

⁵⁷⁰ For Esler (*Community and Gospel*), a “pagan” could not identify with the narrative and so the Lukan community was primarily composed of a mixed audience of Jews and non-Jewish οἱ φοβούμενοι τον θεόν. Spencer (*Acts*, 16-7) criticizes Esler for confusing the narrative world of the text with the real one outside of it. Luke accentuates the Jewish credentials of the Christian community and the leaders to legitimate it as in continuity with ancestral custom and no threat to political authorities suspicious of new *collegia*. Elsewhere Esler recognizes the strategy to represent “[t]heir new faith as if it were old and established, as the divinely sanctioned outgrowth of Judaism” (p. 69)

⁵⁷¹ Esler, *Community and Gospel* 28. It would be superfluous to name all the commentators who hold that Luke-Acts betrays no knowledge of the epistles. A good critical defense of it is by Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht: SCM Press, 1987), 6-8.

⁵⁷² Conzelmann, *Acts*, xxxiii.

⁵⁷³ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 51-147

easily discarded,⁵⁷⁴ but many of his parallels feature rare terminology shared between Paul and Luke-Acts or are most plausibly interpreted as deliberate revisions of Paul's account according to the redactional interests of the author (e.g., Acts 15/Gal 2; Acts 9:25/2 Cor 11:33). The improbability that the author of Luke-Acts was unaware of this major facet of Paul's ministry, especially with the continuous production of Pauline pseudepigraphy, and Pervo's statistical analysis shifts the burden of proof to those who maintain the author's ignorance of the epistles. Acts diverges from Paul in order to construct a Paul for a new generation, just as Paul is remembered differently by the Pastorals, the Acts of Paul or Marcion.

In the same way, conventional wisdom dictates that Luke-Acts must have been written before the publication of Josephus's *Antiquities* because of the small and large discrepancies between them. It is not hard to spot outright contradictions on dates and numbers between Josephus's own writings. Steve Mason has re-opened the question of the dependence of Luke-Acts on Josephus. Starting with generic similarities such as that both are examples of apologetic historiography on behalf of their groups for their respective patrons (Theophilus, Epaphroditus) and steeped in the scriptural heritage of Israel, he moves on to significant parallels on the census under Quirinus as a watershed event (*War.* 2.117-18; *Ant.* 18.1-5; Luke 2:1-3; Acts 5:37), the names of rebel leaders and groups (e.g., Judas the Galilean, Theudas, the Egyptian, the *sicarii*) (*War* 2.254-57, 260-64; *Ant.* 20.97-102, 164-65, 167-69, 171; Acts 5:36-37; 21:38), the death of King Agrippa (*Ant.* 19.343-50; Acts 12:20-23) or the representation of the sects of Second Temple Judaism(s) along the lines of a philosophical school or ἀίρεσις (*War* 1.110, 2.162; *Ant.* 17.41; Acts 24:15).⁵⁷⁵ Some of the events may have been matters of common knowledge, but

⁵⁷⁴ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 52.

⁵⁷⁵ Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 186-223. Other parallels include information on the family of Herod (Luke 19:12-27; *War.* 1.282-385), the governorship of Felix and Drusilla and of Agrippa II and Bernice (*Ant.* 16.29-30; 17.93; 20.141-47; Acts 24:24; 25:23; 26:30) and of Lysanias tetrarch of

Mason and Pervo make a case for knowledge of Josephan redaction that is too close to be coincidental. The rendition of Gamaliel's speech in Acts 5:36-7 creates a chronological quagmire in setting Judas's revolt (ca 6 CE) after Theudas (ca 44-6 CE), but both Acts and Josephus single out these two rebels together and Josephus narrates anecdotes concerning them in the same reverse order (cf. *Ant.* 20.97-102).⁵⁷⁶ The dependence of Luke-Acts on a collection of Pauline epistles and Josephus's *Antiquities*, dated around 93-4 CE (cf. *Ant.* 20.267), moves up the *terminus a quo* to around 100 CE.

To get into further specifics involves a degree of subjectivity. Pervo accumulates a thick list of affinities with the deutero-Pauline and Catholic epistles and the Apostolic Fathers in his word study, but that does not narrow the date down.⁵⁷⁷ The use of the distinguishing marker "Christian" is a sign of a later writer who was conscious of the Christians as a distinct entity (cf. Acts 11:26; 26:28), but the label is paralleled in 1 Peter 4:11. Paul's charge to the elders to guard the flock from savage wolves that rose up after his departure may reflect a third generation context (20:17-38). Marshall denies the anachronisms: "[t]here is little interest in the crystallization of sound doctrine, in the doctrine of the church, in the sacraments, and in the development of a hierarchical ministry standing in a line of succession from the apostles."⁵⁷⁸ On the other hand, Pervo contends that Acts is familiar with the Ignatian threefold model of bishops (πρεσβύτεροι) (Acts 20:17-38; 21:18-25), presbyters (ἐπισκόποι) (20:28) and deacons (6:1-6) as well as widows (9:39-41), but dissents from a rigid monepiscopacy. Acts confines the image

Abilene (Luke 3:1; *War.* 2.215, 247; *Ant.* 19.275), the famine under Claudius (Acts 11:28-29; *Ant.* 3.320; 20.51-53, 101), the treacherous dealings of Pilate (Luke 13:1; *Ant.* 18.85-87). Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 153-97) adds a tribune of the cohort coming to arrest an agitator in the temple (Acts 21:30-33 & *War.* 2.11; cf. 3 Macc 1:18-19, 23, 28-29), the tactic of how our enemies riot while we are peaceful (Acts 19:23-40; *War.* 7.46-62, 100-11), John the Baptist as Hellenistic moralist (Luke 13:10-14; *Ant.* 18.117), correcting Mark 6:17 that Herodias was *not* Philip's wife (Lk 3:19-20; *Ant.* 18.109-10), a conversion story (*Ant.* 20.17-96; Acts 8:26-39), the Nazirite vow (Acts 21:23b-24; *Ant.* 19.294), conspiracies against Paul and Herod the Great (Acts 23:12-35; *Ant.* 15.282-91).

⁵⁷⁶ Mason, *Josephus*, 211; Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 152-60.

⁵⁷⁷ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 260-292.

⁵⁷⁸ Marshall, *Acts*, 47-48. Witherington (*Socio-Rhetorical*, 61-62) also judges Luke's ecclesiology as "primitive."

of a leader surrounded by πρεσβύτεροι to the apostolic period (15:6, 23; 21:18), treats the offices of presbyter or overseer as interchangeable, and stresses the dynamic functions of verbs or abstract nouns related to “service” (e.g., διακονία in 6:1, 4).⁵⁷⁹ If Marshall underestimates the ecclesiology in the Miletus speech, Pervo may read too much of Ignatius into Acts as Paul refers to ἐπισκόποι and διακόνου (Phil 1:1) and Peter is called a συμπρεσβύτερος (fellow elder) in 1 Peter (5:1). To account for the twin emphases on the rootedness of Christians in the scriptural legacy of Israel and the distancing of Christians from non-Christ believing Jews, Tyson dates the canonical redaction of Luke and the book of Acts as late as 130 CE as a response to Marcion.⁵⁸⁰ I am hesitant about theories of proto-Luke that cannot be verified by textual evidence and Marcion’s Gospel may be irrecoverable. Tyson’s reading of Acts 16:6-8 as a cryptic reference to the place of Marcion’s origin (i.e. Bithynia is associated with Pontus) may give way to a simpler explanation.⁵⁸¹ Since the other NT reference to this area is in a pseudonymous epistle ascribed to Peter (1 Pet 1:1), it may have been known that it was not evangelized by Paul.

A final means to date Luke-Acts may be to look into its literary relationship with Papias’s *Logia of the Lord*. A number of scholars have detected an intertextual relationship between the Lukan and Papiian prologues.⁵⁸² Though most scholars who have done so see the lines of influence running from Luke to Papias,⁵⁸³ Dennis MacDonald has revived the hypothesis of Lukan dependence on Papias and I will take account of his parallels.⁵⁸⁴ Both have a second-

⁵⁷⁹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 212-13. Although Luke’s depiction of the apostles surrounded by “presbyters” (Acts 20:17-38; 21:18-25) seems similar to the Ignatian bishop surrounded by silent presbyters, though in Luke they speak in unison, Pervo argues that Luke reserves this model for the apostles (p. 208).

⁵⁸⁰ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, especially ch. 4.

⁵⁸¹ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 77.

⁵⁸² See Kok, “Flawed Evangelist,” 253 n. 3 for references to scholars such as Robert Grant, Rupert Annand, R.P. Martin, Michael Goulder, Charles E. Hill, D.P. Moessner and Dennis MacDonald. Hill, “New Papiian Fragment,” 625-26.

⁵⁸³ See, for example, Martin, *Evangelist*, 81-3; Goulder, *A New Paradigm*, 99-100; Hill, “New Papiian Fragment,” 625-6.

⁵⁸⁴ MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 43-68; cf. Annand, “Four Gospels,” 50-3.

person address (σοι) (*H.E.* 3.39; Luke 1:3).⁵⁸⁵ Papias handed down (παραδίδωσιν) traditions (παραδόσεις) from those who followed (παρηκολουθηκώς) the elders (*H.E.* 3.39.14), who were links in a chain extending back to the Lord's disciples (*H.E.* 3.39.4), and Mark followed (παρηκολούθησεν) Peter and remembered his teachings precisely (ἀκριβῶς) (3.39.15). The author of Luke too followed (παρηκολουθηκότι) everything from the beginning and aimed to compile or arrange (ἀνατάξασθαι)⁵⁸⁶ (cf. συνέταξατο in *H.E.* 3.39.16) an exposition (διήγησις) (cf. *H.E.* 3.39.14) of the deeds (πραγμάτων) (cf. πραχθέντα in *H.E.* 3.39.15) accomplished among them as handed down (παρέδοσαν) from the “firsthand participants and assistants of the message” (αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου).⁵⁸⁷ Since Mark did not provide a suitable arrangement (τάξις) (*H.E.* 3.39.15), the motivation of the author of Luke was to precisely (ἀκριβῶς) write an “orderly account” to supersede it (Luke 1:3).

Many brush off these parallels as independently reproducing the same terminology and tropes from their rhetorical education,⁵⁸⁸ but it may be more than a coincidence that two contemporaries writing around the same time felt a prologue was obligatory to present a similar rhetorical justification for their own project against the deficiency of some of the source material. MacDonald calls attention to other intriguing parallels with Papias including the connection of Mark and Peter (Acts 12:12; Eusebius *H.E.* 3.39.15), the death of Judas in his own field (Acts 1:18; Apollinarus of Laodicea fragment on Matt 27:5), the martyrdom of James (Acts 12:1-2; Philip the Side, codex Baroccianus 142; Gregory Hamartolus, Codex Coislinianus 305), the

⁵⁸⁵ MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 45.

⁵⁸⁶ Alexander (*Preface*, 110; cf. MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 54) notes that the compound ἀνατάξασθαι was a newly coined variant of συντάξασθαι and stresses the ordering of pre-existent material.

⁵⁸⁷ MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 44-5. MacDonald (*Two Shipwrecked Gospels*, 55) reads two groups present in this description, with “from the beginning” (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς) modifying αὐτόπται (firsthand participants) and “of the message” (τοῦ λόγου) modifying ὑπηρέται (assistants), presenting another parallel with Papias on Peter as a firsthand participant and Mark as his assistant of the message. However, most commentators agree with Alexander (*Preface*, 119) that the αὐτόπται and ὑπηρέται are the same group modified by γινόμενοι τοῦ λόγου.

⁵⁸⁸ See, for example, Alexander, *Preface*, 135; Alistair Stewart-Sykes “Taxei in Papias: Again” *J ECS* 3 (1995), 489.

mentioning of Justus Barsabas and to Philip's prophetic daughters (Acts 1:23; 21:8-9; Eusebius *H.E.* 3.39.9) and the anointing of Jesus by a sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50; cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.39.17).⁵⁸⁹ MacDonald's argument that Aristion's διήγησις and Papias's commentary were among the "many" referenced in the Lukan prologue is a real possibility if its author was a contemporary of Papias.

If one is not convinced there the extent of the parallels demand literary dependence, another option is that both Luke-Acts and Papias were drawing on the same pool of oral traditions from the elders of Asia Minor.⁵⁹⁰ A good case can be made for the provenance of Luke-Acts in Ephesus as the first-person plurals occur in the Aegean region with the exception of 27:1-28:16, 7 percent of the text takes place in Ephesus, and Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders (20:17-38) provides the best window into the authorial situation.⁵⁹¹ Ephesus may have been home to the elder John (cf. Irenaeus, *A.H.* 2.22.5; 3.3.4; Clement, *Qds* 42; Polycrates, in Eusebius *H.E.* 3.31.2-3) but, even if this tradition is not reliable, Ephesus was a mere 160 kilometres from Hierapolis where the elder's students were available to be interviewed by Papias. At the very least, the author of Luke-Acts and Papias had access to shared oral traditions, if not directly dependent on Papias. A date around 110 CE satisfies the evidence that the author of Luke-Acts relied on the Pauline epistles and Josephus's *Antiquities* and was in touch with oral traditions circulating in Asia Minor at the end of the first century. With this date and setting in mind, it is time to return to the traditions of John Mark in Acts.

⁵⁸⁹ MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 43. MacDonald also cites the parallel to Luke 10: of Satan falling as lightning from heaven, which appears in a possible reference to Papias in the Armenian translation Andrew of Caesarea's Commentary on Revelation, but there are doubts on the reliability of the Armenian fragments, cf. Körtner, *Papias*, 34-36; Schoedel, "Papias," 260.

⁵⁹⁰ Kok, "Flawed Evangelist," 254-5.

⁵⁹¹ Pervo, *Acts*, 5-6; Kok, "Flawed Evangelist," 255.

2. *John Mark in the Book of Acts*

Vincent Taylor judged the congruence between Acts presentation of John Mark with Colossians 4:10 to be so precise that he remarked, “[t]his is one of the ‘undesigned coincidences’ between the Pauline Epistles and the Acts and raised *virtual certainty* the identification of Mark and John.”⁵⁹² From a survey of the commentaries on Acts, many Acts scholars would assent to this assessment.⁵⁹³ The problem with claiming a datum as “certain” is that there is always a scholar waiting in the wings to buck the consensus. C. Clifton Black notices that Acts has nothing explicit about John Mark as a relative of Barnabas, but functions in an entirely subordinate role to Paul and Barnabas.⁵⁹⁴ Paul refuses to accept him back in the fold after John Mark turns out to be a bitter disappointment (Acts 15:36-8). The text does not explicitly attribute to John Mark a motive for leaving Paul behind earlier in the narrative (13:13), but Black perceptively observes that it had something to do with John Mark’s failure to continue in “the work” (τὸ ἔργον) of ministering to the ἔθνη (nations) for which they were set apart to do (15:38; cf. 13:2; 14:26).⁵⁹⁵ Consequently, John Mark is not the faithful co-worker who stands by Paul’s side in the epistles, but a representative of the backward thinking of Pharisaical Christians (cf. 15:1) who would thwart the progress of the good news into non-Jewish territory.⁵⁹⁶

Normally I would commend Black’s methodological caution against readily harmonizing disparate data, but the author of Acts may have intended the identification of John Mark with Paul’s co-worker Mark. It is hardly by chance that in all the New Testament texts, an individual named Mark is either tied directly with Paul or a Pauline colleague like Barnabas (Col 4:10; Acts

⁵⁹² Taylor, *St. Mark*, 29 (italics added).

⁵⁹³ See Neil 1973, 176; Haenchen 1971, 384-85 n. 122; Marshall 1980, 209-10; Conzelmann 1987, 124; Bruce 1988, 238; Johnson 1992, 212-13; Dunn 1996, 163; Fitzmeyer 1998, 488; Witherington 1998, 396; Pervo 2009, 306.

⁵⁹⁴ Black, *Images of an Apostolic Interpreter*, 28-29.

⁵⁹⁵ Black, *Images of an Apostolic Interpreter*, 38-42.

⁵⁹⁶ Black, *Images of an Apostolic Interpreter*, 43.

12:25; 13:5; 15:36-8) or Silvanus/Silas (1 Pet 5:13; Acts 15:36-9).⁵⁹⁷ This case may be strengthened if Pervo is correct on the influence of the Pauline and deutero-Pauline (Colossians, Ephesians) epistles on Acts. Pervo spots a few inter-textual allusions to Colossians in Acts (cf. Acts 26:18/Col 1:13; Acts 20:24/Col 4:17).⁵⁹⁸ Many of Paul's co-workers make a cameo in Acts and, like Mark, the name Aristarchus only shows up in the epistles to Philemon and the Colossians and Tychichus in Colossians and other deutero-Pauline epistles.⁵⁹⁹

The description in Colossians of Mark as “from the circumcision” and a relative of Barnabas coheres with the picture of John Mark as the assistant of Paul and Barnabas in Acts. There is nothing in the epistles that indicate that Mark had the Semitic name “John” in addition to his Latinized name, but Paul never discloses his Semitic name “Saul,” his background in Tarsus, his training under Gamaliel or his Roman citizenship. All these details are singly attested in Acts. My survey of Colossians and 1 Timothy exposed a lingering with Mark on the Pauline side and Acts may fill in the gaps. Many scholars hold that Acts masks the cause of the split between Paul and Barnabas in the controversy over mixed table fellowship (Gal 2:13) by glossing it into a personal spat over John Mark (Acts 13:13; 15:27-9),⁶⁰⁰ but, if Black correctly interprets the withdrawal of John Mark as revolving around the “Gentile mission,” the issues at the heart of the conflict in Galatians and Acts are not far apart. Paul's reconciliation with Mark (Phlm 23; Col 4:10) or Barnabas (cf. 1 Cor 9:6; Col 4:10) is not narrated in Acts.

⁵⁹⁷ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 17-18.

⁵⁹⁸ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 107, 120-1

⁵⁹⁹ Here is a list of the other Pauline co-workers who appear in Acts: Silas (Acts 15:40-18:5; 2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 2:1), Timothy (Acts 16:1; 17:14, 15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom 16:21; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor 1:1, 19; Phil 1:1; 2:19; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 3:2, 6; 2 Thess 1:1; Phlm 1:1; cf. 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 6:20; 2 Tim 1:2), Jason (Acts 17:5-9; Rom 16:21), Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; cf. 2 Tim 4:19), Apollos (Acts 18:24; 19:1; 1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6; 16:12), Gaius (Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14), Aristarchus (Acts 19:19; 20:4; 27:2; Col 4:10; Phlm 1:24), and Tychichus (Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; cf. 2 Tim 4:12; 3:12).

⁶⁰⁰ Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 171-2; Haenchen, *Acts*, 477; Conzelman, *Acts*, 123; Pervo, *Acts*, 331, 386-7.

In most instances, Acts follows the earliest sources in placing Mark with Paul, but there is an intriguing exception in Acts 12:5. After Peter's miraculous escape from prison, he flees to the congregation gathered in Mary's house in Jerusalem. Mary is introduced as the mother of John Mark. The natural assumption is that Peter often preached to this congregation. Black avers that John Mark is tangentially introduced to identify Peter's wealthy patron Mary,⁶⁰¹ but she does not re-appear after this short episode. Gerd Lüdemann infers that John Mark was redactionally inserted into an earlier source that included the names of Mary and Rhoda to prepare for his re-appearance in 12:25 and to be a bridge between Peter and Paul.⁶⁰² But a further question is why the author of Acts links John Mark so closely with Peter rather than just the Jerusalem Church in general. On this point, 1 Peter preceded Acts by a few decades, so this may be sufficient to explain why Acts made the connection. However, I have recently offered the hypothesis that Luke-Acts may be familiar with the developing traditions of Mark as the interpreter of Peter was utilized by Papias and I will rehearse the argument below.⁶⁰³

It is true that John Mark is not explicitly identified as a Gospel writer, for this may take place outside of the purview of the narrative if the evangelist wrote down what he remembered long after Peter had preached, but one could never guess about Paul's extensive letter-writing activity from the narrative of Acts.⁶⁰⁴ John Mark's future role may be foreshadowed in the description of him as a ὑπερέτης (Acts 13:5). From his analysis of 34 papyri and one ostrakon, the finding of B.T. Holmes is that ὑπερέτης designates one who handles written documents,⁶⁰⁵ while R.O.P. Taylor interpreted the term as equivalent to a priestly assistant in the synagogue.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰¹ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 28.

⁶⁰² Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 141, 144-46.

⁶⁰³ The next two paragraphs are based on Kok, "Flawed Evangelist," 255-7.

⁶⁰⁴ Collins, *Mark*, 2.

⁶⁰⁵ B.T. Holmes, "Luke's Description of John Mark" *JBL* 54 (1935): 65-8.

⁶⁰⁶ R.O.P. Taylor, "The Ministry of Mark" *Exp.Tim.* 54 (1943): 136-8.

Black counters that the term on its own may not carry such precision (cf. Acts 5:22, 26; 13:26; 20:34; 24:23) and John Mark's assistance may have involved menial tasks such as sorting out Paul's material needs or travel arrangements.⁶⁰⁷ Black thinks that the service in Acts 13:5b was rendered to Paul and Barnabas alone,⁶⁰⁸ but Mark is re-introduced as their assistant right when they are preaching in the synagogues of Salamis.⁶⁰⁹ John Mark may perform the same function for them as the synagogue attendant (ὑπερέτης) does in Luke 4:20. The Paul of the epistles may adamantly defend his independence via a direct revelation (Gal 1:11), but the Paul of Acts is subservient to the Twelve and his preaching virtually identical to Peter's (cf. Acts 13:16-47). For Acts, the task of John Mark may have been to support non-eyewitnesses like Paul or Barnabas by having charge over the catechetical traditions that he learned from Peter. The author of Luke-Acts may interact with the same tradition on the evangelist Mark as Papias, just as they share other oral traditions, when he speaks about the past ὑπηρέται of the word and the deficient literary arrangements of his predecessors (Luke 1:2).

This last point may answer why John Mark comes across so poorly in Acts. The conflict with Paul may be historical, but Acts is a selective account and could have omitted it. John Mark seems to get excluded from the commission of the Spirit (Acts 13:1-5a), perhaps because he failed to live up to his duty in deserting Paul.⁶¹⁰ The verb for depart (ἀποχωρέω) in Acts 13:13 can take on connotations of “removing oneself from” someone's opinions (Epictetus, *Discourse* 4.1.53), turning back in fear (Jer 46:5 LXX) or apostasy (3 Macc 2:33).⁶¹¹ In Acts 15:36-8, Paul bears a grudge in stubbornly insisting that “this one” (τούτου) (i.e. Mark) had “deserted” them

⁶⁰⁷ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 30. See LXX Prov 14:35; Isa 32:5; Wis. 6:4; *Ep. Aristeas* 111. Many commentators would agree with Black. See Haenchen, *Acts*, 397; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 99; Dunn, *Acts*, 175; Krodel, *Acts*, 228; Johnson, *Acts*, 222; Witherington, *Acts*, 394; Pervo, *Acts*, 323.

⁶⁰⁸ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 32-33.

⁶⁰⁹ Byrskog, *Story*, 279.

⁶¹⁰ Haenchen, *Acts*, 397; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 99; Marshall, *Acts*, 218.

⁶¹¹ Johnson, *Acts*, 229; Spencer, *Acts*, 143; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical*, 396.

(ἀποστάντα) and the participle can carry similar implications of defection or apostasy (cf. Luke 8:13; Jer 3:14; 1 Macc 11:43).⁶¹² Some seek out a more positive angle on John Mark; F.F. Bruce opines that it was better for John Mark to stay under the care of the “son of encouragement” to develop his “latent qualities” until he reached “full maturity.”⁶¹³ Although there was a beneficial outcome in the multiplication of two missionary campaigns (Acts 15:39), it is strange that Acts does not narrate the reconciliation of John Mark and Paul. Barnabas disappears from the narrative at this point too, but he was positively portrayed earlier (4:36-7) and his leniency with John Mark is consistent with his character as he had once granted a reformed persecutor named Saul a second chance (9:27).⁶¹⁴ There is no description of John Mark’s positive attributes or his laudable actions to balance out his failure and Acts terminates his career on this low point. I agree with Adela Collins’ solution to this conundrum: “Since the author of Acts also wrote the Gospel according to Luke, it could be that this critical portrait was intended to undercut the authority of the second Gospel.”⁶¹⁵

The John Mark of the book of Acts is a composite figure, the result of harmonizing the earlier accounts of Mark as a Pauline co-worker and the later association of Mark with Peter. Like 1 Peter 5:13, John Mark bridges the divide between Peter (Acts 12:12) and Paul (12:25). I have advanced the hypothesis that the author of Acts was aware of the tradition about the evangelist Mark: John Mark’s service was to handle the catechetical traditions, traditions that may have formed the raw material for a Gospel. Nonetheless, the ambivalent depiction of John Mark in Acts matches the intention of the author of Luke to supersede the prior faulty Gospel text with a more orderly version. But if the reader is not persuaded by my thesis that the author

⁶¹² Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 38.

⁶¹³ Bruce, *Book of the Acts*, 302.

⁶¹⁴ For this reason, Spencer (*Acts*, 158) points out that many readers sympathize with Barnabas over Paul.

⁶¹⁵ Collins, *Mark*, 5. See further Kok, “Flawed Evangelist,” 256-7.

of Acts was aware of the traditions about the evangelist Mark, it is enough to demonstrate that the connection between Mark and Peter in Acts 12:5 is a late development that post-dates the first written evidence of such a connection in 1 Peter by a few decades.

E. Conclusion: Putting the Pieces of the Puzzle on Mark Together

We can detect three stages in the literary evolution of Mark. The earliest reliable evidence (Phlm 23; Col 4:10) locates Mark firmly within the Pauline camp and he continues to be remembered among Paul's co-workers in the later sources (2 Timothy, Acts). In the second stage, the pseudonymous author of 1 Peter plucks two of Paul's co-workers at random, Mark and Silvanus, from the Pauline sphere to suit a centrist vision of the Christian community under the leadership of Peter. 1 Peter was disseminated throughout Asia Minor and had an impact on the general milieu of the elder John and the author of Luke-Acts. The last step was taken by the elders of Asia Minor who assigned an anonymous Gospel to Peter through his intermediary Mark and passed the report on to Papias. If the author of Luke-Acts was aware of the new tradition about the evangelist Mark as well, the ambiguous treatment of John Mark expresses the author's feelings about the text of Mark. The rest of the patristic writers are derivative of Papias, though each develops the tradition in new ways. The remaining issue to be explained is the transition from step two to step three. The names of Mark and Peter had been co-joined before the time of the elder John, but why attach these respected names to a Gospel that, by all reckonings, was not highly regarded? Crossley may be right that the direct attribution to a flawed figure like Mark conveniently took the blame off Peter for the shortcomings of the Gospel, but a better solution would be to let this undesirable Gospel fade into obscurity. The reasons for why this anonymous Gospel was imbued with apostolic authority will be pursued in the next section.

CHAPTER 4:
TOWARDS A THEORY OF THE PATRISTIC RECEPTION OF MARK

In forcing “Mark” to be classified as either “Petrine” or “Pauline,” the ghost of F.C. Baur and the Tübingen School lingers on to haunt the halls of the academy.⁶¹⁶ Since the work of Walter Bauer, this rigid dichotomy has given way to an appreciation of the highly variegated nature of the early Christ movement, a richly diverse landscape in which the evangelist was an active participant.⁶¹⁷ The anonymous writer of Mark was one voice among many in the Christian wilderness, shaped by and reacting to his or her social context. Although the patristic writers tried to balance the particular and the universal in their localizing traditions of the evangelists, the diverse geographical locales in which the Gospels were produced had no hermeneutical relevance to the patristic conception of the harmony and universality of the fourfold Gospel.⁶¹⁸ Willi Braun speaks of Mark being pressed into explicitly “Christian” duties of a political sort; the

⁶¹⁶ For a classic study on Paul from the Baurian dialectic, see F.C. Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teaching* (trans. Eduard Zeller, London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1876).

⁶¹⁷ Walter Bauer’s survey of four geographical areas (Edessa, Egypt, Asia Minor, Rome) and case that “heresy” preceded “orthodoxy” in all the areas except Rome has been severely critiqued for overestimating the extent of the influence of the Roman church and relying too much on arguments from silence, but he deserves credit for forcing historians to obey the dictum “let the other side also be heard” (*Unity and Diversity in Earliest Christianity* [ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel; trans. Paul J. Achtemeier; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971], xxi). Bauer resisted applying his results to the first century on the grounds that the New Testament and its “anti-heretical” writings were too disputed geographically and chronologically to serve as a useful point of departure (xxv), but efforts to apply his thesis to the first century include James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 43-200; Mack, *Myth of Innocence*; idem, *Christian Myth*; Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, ed., *Redescribing Christian Origins* (Koninklijke Brill NV: SBL, 2004). I am not as confident in the reconstruction of individual communities behind the hypothetical sources (“Q”, an early version of Thomas, the pre-Markan pronouncement stories), but I am sympathetic to a model on Christian polygenesis in place of singular origins.

⁶¹⁸ See especially the debate in Margaret Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that ‘the Gospels were Written for all Christians’” *NTS* 51 (2005): 36-79; Richard Bauckham, “Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence? A Response to Margaret Mitchell” in *The Audience of the Gospels: The Original Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity* (ed. Edward W. Klink III; Library of NT Studies 353; London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), 68-110.

reception history of Mark was not one of a school (e.g., the Johannine School) continually amending a text over the course of time but a history of confiscation.⁶¹⁹

Whatever circumstances led to the production of first-century Mark, its voice was soon muted when it was forced into the service of constructing a normative Christian identity in the second century. Mark was not appropriated in the name of Peter because it was highly valued on its own literary or theological merits. To solve the mystery of why the patristic writers bothered with Mark at all when the other NT Gospels better met their needs, Mark may have become a site of contention between second century Christian groups over contested myths of origin and propriety rights to the designation “Christian.” In the battleground over defining Christian origins and delineating sharp boundaries between insiders and outsiders, the patristic writers neutralized the threat of Mark being called upon in support of the beliefs or practices of opposing Christian factions by stamping it with an apostolic seal of approval and by disarming “deviant” readings of the Gospel. I will begin this chapter with a broad overview of the competing Christian social formations in the second century before narrowing in on the reception of the first century Gospel literature in this period.

A. Redefining Christian Origins in the Second Century

When investigating the manifold ways that Mark or any other early New Testament writing may have been read (or more likely, heard) by second century Christians, it is necessary to illuminate their historical and social context. In posing the question of what may be classified as belonging to the “Christian” *genus* in the second century, Stanley K. Stowers writes:

By typical historical standards, the best answer might be the array of Christian groups in the second century that practice forms of mutual recognition and that have fairly clear historical connection with later Christian formations that will

⁶¹⁹ Braun, “The First Shall be Last,” 43-45.

organize themselves using the mythmaking and social discourse found enshrined in the canonical Gospels, the supposed letters of Paul, and other writings.⁶²⁰

In the “social formation and myth-making” of the varied Christian communities,⁶²¹ the preferred narrative of Christian origins functioned to legitimate their *raison d'être* as a new social entity and articulate their distinctiveness from Jewish or Greco-Roman religious formations as well as from rival Christian associations. The standard nomenclature for the winning side is “Orthodox” or, for the period before their ascendancy, the labels “proto-orthodox” and “incipient orthodoxy” may be applied.⁶²² Charles Hill reasons that labels such as the “Great Church” or “Catholic” can be neutral designations for the majority or conventional position by wide consensus, even if not in every locale, and that rules out dissenting positions as sectarian.⁶²³ For Hill, this is supported by the patristic rhetoric of universality (cf. Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 8.2; *Epis. Apos.* 1.1; *M. Poly. praef.*; 8.1; 16.2; 19.2; Muratorian lines 61-2, 66; Justin, *Dial.* 3.3; 80.5; *2Apol.* 9.4; Ireneus, *A.H.* 5.31.1; 1.10.2) and Celsus leaves the same impression in his polemic against “the great church” and “those of the multitude” (*C. Cels* 5.61; cf. 5.59).⁶²⁴

There is a danger here that scholars may blur their etic classifications with their subject's emic categories. It is one thing to make a historical case that some groups attracted more members than others, though the extent of the vituperation in heresiological treatises and the anxiety about the international success of a figure like Marcion (Justin, *1 Apol* 26.5; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 5.19) undercuts the idea that victory for any one Christian group was assured in the second and third centuries. It is another thing for a historian or scholar of religion to employ loaded terminology that implicitly carries a value judgment about the respective positions of the

⁶²⁰ Stanley K. Stowers, “Mythmaking, social formation, and the varieties of social theory” in *Redescribing Christian Origins*, 490.

⁶²¹ I borrow the conceptual vocabulary “mythmaking and social formation” from Mack, *Christian Myth*, 11.

⁶²² For a defense that this usage can be purely neutral, see Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 12-3.

⁶²³ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 9.

⁶²⁴ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 5-8.

debate, majority or otherwise, when it is our responsibility to study all the texts with empathy. Departing from the standard nomenclature, Mack applies the term “centrist” to Christians who positioned themselves between radical Pauline and Gnostic factions.⁶²⁵ In my opinion, his terminology is preferable as it is descriptive rather than prescriptive, avoiding a normative theological judgment that revolves around an orthodoxy-heresy binary.

One of the legitimizing strategies of Christian intellectuals was the concept of apostolic succession. Since antiquity took precedence over innovation and truth was held to precede error (Clement, *Strom.* 7.17; Tertullian, *Prescription* 29; Origen, *Comm. Song of Songs*, 3), this strategy promoted their fidelity to the apostolic rule of faith as handed down a stable line of successive Christian leaders while castigating “schismatic” Christians for deviating from the norm. 1 Clement has tentative notions of apostolic succession (cf. 42:1-4) and Ignatius champions a monarchical episcopacy to safeguard the communal tradition, while Irenaeus combined a strong episcopal government with apostolic succession.⁶²⁶ This strategy was replicated in the genealogies of Basilides or Valentinus as part of a chain of teachers that went back to Peter or Paul respectively (cf. Clement, *Strom.* 7.106). By the time of Eusebius, there were established genealogies of centrist bishops at every major See. Peter stands at the head of the list for Rome, Antioch and, indirectly through Mark, Alexandria.⁶²⁷ Heralded early on as a leading authority (1 Cor 15:5; Mark 16:7; Luke 24:34), Peter’s legacy was actively fought over by Christians who attributed a whole host of writings with varying ideologies back to him (1 Peter, 2 Peter, Gospel of Peter, the Apocalypse of Peter, the *Kerygmata Petrou*, the Letter of

⁶²⁵ Mack, *Christian Myth*, 6.

⁶²⁶ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 208-9.

⁶²⁷ Bauer (*Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 45, 115-17, 19-20) argues that, under the Roman influence of Petrine primacy, Euodius was replaced by Peter as the first bishop of Antioch before the “second bishop” Ignatius (compare *H.E.* 3.22 with *H.E.* 3.36.2; cf. Origen, *Hom. Luke* 6.1) and is dismissive of the Alexandrian tradition as a bare list of names without personality and a “puff of smoke.” But see Oden (*African Memory*, 170-2) for a passionate defense of the historicity of the Alexandrian succession list of 10 bishops between Mark and Demetrius (189-231 CE).

Peter to Philip). In Gnostic circles, Peter could be venerated or treated as a representative of centrist Christianity and a foil for a disciple with true gnosis.⁶²⁸

Granted that apostolic succession performed a legitimating function, this does not automatically render it unhistorical. Oden balks at how scholars disdainfully treat the succession lists of Alexandria as all about “economics and power politics” or a “cultural fantasy or social legitimation,”⁶²⁹ yet he is equally dismissive of the goal of “[t]he non-consensual followers of Valentinus and Marcion and Basilides” to gain legitimacy by claiming apostolic roots.⁶³⁰ But the history of Alexandrian Christianity is murky before Clement. Reading into the silence of the sources, Bauer thought that the origins of Alexandrian Christianity were Gnostic before bishop Demetrius in the early third century,⁶³¹ though his view has been overturned by the manuscript evidence as pointing to an early Jewish Christian influence.⁶³² No Christian group achieved the status of “consensual” in second century Alexandria. Markus Bockmuehl is equitable to all parties in allowing that there may be a measure of legitimacy in the claims made on behalf of Basilides or Valentinus, though he acknowledges that myth-making at work in the claim that Basilides received the dominical tradition from Matthias (cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7.20.1).⁶³³

Bockmuehl accepts a historical basis behind the claims of writers such as Irenaeus to pass on the apostolic tradition, which he bolsters with studies that illustrate how collective memories can last up to 150 years.⁶³⁴ These memories spanned the generation of the apostles (ca. 1-70), their younger contemporaries (ca. 70-130) and subsequent students (ca. 130-200) until Irenaeus

⁶²⁸ Pheme Perkins, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 156-63.

⁶²⁹ Oden, *African Memory*, 34, 171.

⁶³⁰ Oden, *African Memory*, 174.

⁶³¹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 44-60.

⁶³² Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*; Pearson, “Earliest Christianity in Egypt,” 132-60.

⁶³³ Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word – Refocusing New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 180; *Remembered Peter*, 25 n.64)

⁶³⁴ Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 169-70; idem, *Remembered Peter*, 16.

was the last living person to have had contact with a personal acquaintance of the apostles.⁶³⁵ By Bockmuehl's own calculations, the average lifespan was 35 years with 5 percent making it to 60,⁶³⁶ so very few – if any – would have been old enough to have had a meaningful relationship with the apostles ministering in the mid-first century. Bockmuehl cites texts that indicate that some elderly apostles lived up to the time of Trajan (Irenaeus, *A.H.* 2.22.4; 3.3.4; Epiphanius, *Ref.* 30.24.6; Jerome, *Ill. Men* 9; *Ag. Jov.* 1.26; cf. John 21:22-24).⁶³⁷ Some of his evidence may be the result of conflating the apostle John and the elder John or the apostle Philip and the evangelist Philip (*H.E.* 5.24.2-8; 3.31.3) or is of manifestly legendary character such as the age span of the resurrected saints (Quadratus, in Eusebius, *H.E.* 4.3.2-3). Moreover, Irenaeus was willing to shorten the chain of transmission by having Polycarp and Papias as direct hearers of the apostle John (cf. *A.H.* 3.3.4; 5.33.4; Eusebius, *H.E.* 5.20.6; 5.5.8).

For all the parties concerned, the apostolic period had a normative value as the age of revelation at the founding of the Jesus movement.⁶³⁸ What was really going on here is a battle for the pristine origins and Foucault lays out the stakes: “[i]t is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities; because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the eternal world of accident and succession.”⁶³⁹ As Braun notes, trajectories work backwards as authenticity is bestowed on an

⁶³⁵ Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 178; *Remembered Peter*, 17-28. Examples of those who bridged the gap between the apostles and the post-apostolic generation may be Clement of Rome (Irenaeus, *A.H.* 3.3.3), Papias (*H.E.* 3.39.3-4) and Polycarp (cf. *A.H.* 3.3.4; 5.33.4; Letter to Florinus in Eusebius, *H.E.* 5.20.6; 5.5.8).

⁶³⁶ Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 179.

⁶³⁷ Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 178-9.

⁶³⁸ Gamble, “New Testament Canon,” 347.

⁶³⁹ Michael Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology (Volume 2)* (ed. James Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al; London: Penguin Books, 2000), 374. The editors of an English edition of Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson; trans Carol Diethe; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) make the point that, contrary to Foucault's reading, Nietzsche was not completely adverse to a search for origins or was only interested in contingency and discontinuity, but only that Nietzsche opposed a genealogical narcissism that neglects the difference at the origins (xx).

ideology by retrojecting it back to the point of origins or the “first times.”⁶⁴⁰ Current practices are reinforced by representing them as what has always been done since the beginning or calls for reform are sounded by encouraging members to return to the “original” practices of the founders of the group. This is not to deny that a handful of second century Christians may have had contact with some first or second generation leaders of Christ congregations and passed on what they were taught, but the genealogist must take into account the discontinuities, the forgotten details, the accidental misunderstandings, the slight deviations and complete reversals of thought that give birth to new social facts.⁶⁴¹

Patristic writers had three mutually reinforcing strategies for appropriating and perpetuating this apostolic authority by setting themselves up as the guardians of apostolic tradition (teaching), apostolic succession (office) and apostolic writings (authoritative scriptures).⁶⁴² This is a form of cultural and social capital that is wielded by the powerful members of a group. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital may be in an embodied state such as lasting physical or mental dispositions, an objectified state such as a material good or an institutionalized state such as an educational qualification that purports to guarantee certain properties on its owner.⁶⁴³ It requires an investment of labour in time to acquire, such as training or education, and the reality that not everyone has the equal means to attain it bestows on it scarcity and social value.⁶⁴⁴ Social capital is a system of social obligations among a network of

⁶⁴⁰ Braun, “The First Shall Be Last,” 56.

⁶⁴¹ Michael Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology (Volume 2)* (ed. James Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al; London: Penguin Books, 2000), 374. Note that the editors of an English translation of Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson; trans Carol Diethe; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) make the point that, contrary to Foucault’s reading, Nietzsche was not completely adverse to the search for origins or focussed just on contingency and discontinuity, but only opposed a genealogical narcissism that neglects the difference at the origins (xx).

⁶⁴² Gamble, “New Testament Canon,” 347.

⁶⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 47.

⁶⁴⁴ Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 48-9.

individuals that practice mutual self-recognition and an exchange of goods. Those who are well-endowed in social capital are worth knowing more than others. To prevent competition for it from tearing the group apart, social capital may be concentrated in the hands of the designated leader or representative of the group as it is institutionalized in the form of titles and access to group membership is carefully regulated.⁶⁴⁵ It is the group's belief in the efficacy of symbolic capital that confers power on it. The patristic writers had a form of cultural capital in that they had the means to become literate, rhetorically trained writers who had spent time learning from the apostles or apostolic associates, so they had the qualifications to correctly expound upon the "rule of faith." Their affiliation with the right kind of people was also a form of social capital which authorized them as the duly appointed successors of the apostles.

Critical to the endeavor to re-define Christian origins was to control the interpretation of first-century literary products. By directly or indirectly attributing certain texts to apostles, the patristic writers sanctioned the reading of these texts for their communities. Correspondingly, they spurned compositions, such as the Valentinian "Gospel of Truth," as not in accordance with the apostolic Gospels (cf. *A.H.* 3.11.9) or denounced the apostolic ascriptions of Gospels that did not meet their approval, such as the Gospels of *Peter* (cf. Serapion of Antioch in *H.E.* 6.12.2; Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.3.2), *Thomas* (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.7.20; Origen, *Hom in Luc* 1) or *Judas* (Irenaeus, *A.H.* 1.31.1). This vindicates Foucault's point that the "author function" is really a discourse of classification and ownership.⁶⁴⁶ The classification of a text under a certain name authenticates it, implies a degree of internal homogeneity, grants it a certain status in a given culture, and allows for reciprocal explication by means of other texts in the "authorial" corpus.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁵ Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," 47, 51-4.

⁶⁴⁶ Michael Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, 211-14.

⁶⁴⁷ Foucault, "What is an Author," 211.

A canon of sacred literature was insufficient to propagate theological conformity as differing groups were reading the same texts.

There was a hermeneutical debate to be won. While centrist Christians accepted allegorical readings that conformed to the *regula fidei*, on the whole they rejected them if they seemed to contradict the literal sense (*sensus literalis*).⁶⁴⁸ Anthony Thiselton reproduces the apologetic of Irenaeus that interpretation must occur in a public, corporate Christian context (A.H. 4.26.2; 4.21.3) in continuity with the shared apostolic testimony against “gnostic” individualistic and atomistic readings.⁶⁴⁹ There may be a measure of truth in Irenaeus’s witty satire of Valentinian readings against the grain as reassembling the portrait of a king into a dog or fox while resolutely maintaining that they have not changed the king’s visage or haphazardly lifting lines of Homer out of context (A.H. 1.8.1; 1.9.4). It must be remembered, though, that the “literal sense” advocated by Irenaeus did not involve a recognition of the historical gulf between the past and the present, but only what the texts meant in and for the present of the interpreter.⁶⁵⁰ In my final chapter, I will explore how de-historicized some readings of Mark’s “literal sense” could be when read through the lens of the extra-textual rule of faith. Only those with the right tools as handed down the legitimate channels of succession could elucidate the text. We can situate the reception of Mark in this hermeneutic debate.

B. Theorizing the Reception of Early Christian Literature

This shift to the reception of Mark is part of the increasing interest among biblical scholars in the field of reception history (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*) and the countless afterlives of biblical literature

⁶⁴⁸ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 20-22; Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 155-56.

⁶⁴⁹ Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 146-56, 166. Thiselton does fault Clement of Alexandria for his “gnostic hermeneutic” in reading the text through the lens of privately revealed knowledge.

⁶⁵⁰ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (trans. Wilhelm C. Linss; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1988), 98.

through the centuries.⁶⁵¹ For Bockmuehl, *Wirkungsgeschichte* (effective history) is nothing less than the salvation of a highly fragmented discipline. It opens a way for the integration of diachronic and synchronic tools to appreciate how the text was heard and performed, encourages dialogue with systematic theologians or other sub-disciplines of the Humanities, and enables biblical scholars to communicate the relevance of their research to contemporary society.⁶⁵² Although the standard historical-critical methods of textual, source, form or redaction criticism are often sharply differentiated from reception history, W. John Lyons argues that these methodologies should be re-labelled with the terminology of reception history. It is the study of reception all down the line, whether the congregations that heard oral stories about Jesus in their *Sitz im Leben*, the redactor's response to a source, the reconstructed audiences of the Gospels, or the scribal alterations of manuscripts.⁶⁵³ Lyon's definition is not a far cry from the task of the historical critic as it is usually construed: "Reception history aims to understand the interaction between a text, a context and an audience's response."⁶⁵⁴

A key insight of reception history is the fundamental role of the reader in the production of meaning. Thiselton writes, "Reader-response theories call attention to the active role of communities of readers in constructing what counts for them as 'what the text means.'"⁶⁵⁵ With a nod towards Gadamer on the fusion of the horizons, Hans Robert Jauss focuses on the reader's "horizons of expectations."⁶⁵⁶ The reader is conditioned by his or her past reading experience, but the rules that he or she has built up may be corrected, altered or reproduced by reading a new

⁶⁵¹ See William John Lyons ("Hope for a Troubled Discipline? Contributions to New Testament Studies from Reception History" *JSNT* 33 [2010]: 208) for a list of a number of conferences, seminars, journals, books and commentary series devoted to the study of the reception history of biblical literature.

⁶⁵² Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 64-67.

⁶⁵³ Lyons, "Hope," 213-14.

⁶⁵⁴ Lyons, "Hope," 213.

⁶⁵⁵ Thiselton, *Hermeneutics*, 515.

⁶⁵⁶ See his proposal about the aesthetics of reception (*Rezeptionsästhetik*) and articulation of seven theses in Hans Robert Jauss, *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception* (trans. Timothy Bahti; Brighton Sussex: Harvester, 1982), 19-45.

text, leading to a transformation of the reader's horizon.⁶⁵⁷ Whether the first readers gauge a text as pleasing or alienating may have no bearing on the aesthetic experience of future readers; a literary work that does not initially find a receptive audience may develop a following or a formerly successful work may come to be deprecated.⁶⁵⁸ For reader-response theorists, meaning is not confined to authorial intention nor lays dormant in the text, but is activated by the reader in what he or she brings to the act of interpretation. This need not lead to relativism or a complete free-for-all. Tolbert adjudicates between readings on the basis of whether they accord with current public and conventional standards of intellectual discourse, anchor the reading in the structure of the text, pass the test of internal coherence, are cognizant of the socio-historical and literary matrix of the text, and produce illuminating results.⁶⁵⁹

Stanley Fish's thorough-going advocacy of the vital role of the reader culminates in his denial that textual meaning exists apart from the act of interpretation. Fish locates meaning squarely in the "interpretive community" and their interpretive strategies for constituting the properties of the text and assigning them intentions.⁶⁶⁰ Fish cannot be accused of subjectivism because at no point does an individual subject stand outside of any one interpretive community with its shared assumptions, norms and values that enable his or her consciousness.⁶⁶¹ A literary institution authorizes a finite number of interpretive strategies, such as the criteria outlined by Tolbert, and idiosyncratic interpretations are quickly ruled out of bounds because there is of yet no elaborated interpretive procedure for producing the text in such a way.⁶⁶² Fish may swing the pendulum too far away from a genuine fusion of the horizons of the text and the interpreter and

⁶⁵⁷ Jauss, *Aesthetic of Reception*, 23.

⁶⁵⁸ Jauss, *Aesthetic of Reception*, 25-7.

⁶⁵⁹ Tolbert, *Sowing the Word*, 9-13.

⁶⁶⁰ For more on the "interpretive community," see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 171.

⁶⁶¹ Fish, *Interpretive Communities*, 319-20.

⁶⁶² Fish, *Interpretive Communities*, 342, 345-49.

the power of the text to prophetically critique or transform the interpretive community.⁶⁶³ I prefer how Iser resolves the literary problem of the stability and variability of interpretation in that a text has generic or structural clues to guide the reader and ward off eccentric readings, but readers actualize the text in different ways by imaginatively filling in its narrative gaps and creating interconnections between its various segments in searching for a coherent narrative pattern.⁶⁶⁴ Fish's approach remains a valuable reminder that the individual does not approach a text from a neutral starting point, for the questions asked of a text and the interpretive procedures implemented are influenced by the interpreter's social location. His theory has implications for the hermeneutical disagreements between different Christian interpretive communities:

[m]embers of the same community will necessary agree because they will see (and by seeing, make) everything in relation to the community's assumed purposes and goals, and conversely, members of different communities will disagree because from each of their respective positions the other 'simply' cannot see what is obviously and inescapably there.⁶⁶⁵

Since our horizon may conceal as much as it illuminates, there may be profit in striving to empathetically enter another interpretive paradigm. For some scholars, the re-discovery of pre-modern biblical exegesis has a faith-supporting function. Ulrich Luz illustrates the benefits of reception history as clarifying how we have been influenced by the text as we are carried along the stream of interpretation, preventing a contemporization of the text by bypassing centuries of reinterpretation and internalization, finding correctives for faulty interpretations, and learning from interpretations from faith (*regula fidei*, Church doctrine, Reformation).⁶⁶⁶ His commentary on Matthew shines a light on the "history of interpretation" in commentaries or

⁶⁶³ Thiselton, *Hermeneutics*, 539-46. Borrowing from Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, Thiselton argues that language games are not just context-relative but are complicated networks of overlapping, interpenetrating criss-crossings to form trans-contextual bridges and frames of reference for meaning in common human behaviour.

⁶⁶⁴ Iser, *Implied Reader*, 277-84; Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 7-8, 52; Thiselton, *Hermeneutics*, 516-23. But see the sharp criticisms of Iser in Stanley Fish, "Why No One's Afraid of Wolfgang Iser" in *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1989), 68-86.

⁶⁶⁵ Fish, *Interpretive Communities*, 15.

⁶⁶⁶ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 97-98.

theological writings and the “history of influence” in media such as sermons, canonical law, hymnody or art and in its actualization in the life of the church.⁶⁶⁷ Bockmuehl delights that the implied reader as an ecclesiastically-situated convert invested in the truth claims of the texts has been placed back in the forefront.⁶⁶⁸ Much depth of learning into the New Testament texts can be gained by reading over the shoulders of the scholarly giants of the patristic era. On the other hand, reception history underlines the historical contingency of acts of interpretation and the power interests that may be at play in the preference of one reading over another. Nietzsche urged that the origins and emergence of a thing (e.g., a physical organ, legal institution, social custom, political usage, art form or religious rite) be kept separate from its utility or practical application as the result of continuous reinterpretation, adaptation and redirection towards a new purpose or function. The emergence of a dominant interpretation is a sign that the will to power has been achieved and the powerful have imposed their meaning onto a thing, masking or eradicating whatever former meanings were assigned to it.⁶⁶⁹ Borrowing an image of biological adaptation, Stowers writes, “A social exaptation would be a cultural artifact that in some sense originated in one social formation and environment but that came to serve a different use and function in another population, environment and social formation.”⁶⁷⁰

In her study of Mark’s canonization and its marginalization in that very canon over the centuries, Schildgen unveils the role of powerful readers and institutions in controlling what will be read and how it will be read in different times and places.⁶⁷¹ She brilliantly lays out how cultural and ideological concerns, interpretive strategies and literary tastes change over time, so that precisely what offended the sensibilities of patristic interpreters sparks much of the modern

⁶⁶⁷ See his differentiation of these terms in Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 95.

⁶⁶⁸ Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 69-72.

⁶⁶⁹ Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 51; cf. Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 376.

⁶⁷⁰ Stowers, “social theory,” 494.

⁶⁷¹ Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice*, 21.

interest in Mark.⁶⁷² What is bewildering is that it is not twenty-first century literary critics but second to fourth century Christians who selected Mark for the canon in the first place. Instead of authorizing the reading of Mark with an apostolic seal of approval, they could have suppressed it. Overriding their literary distaste for Mark, in Braun's view, was a greater danger of letting a first-century cultural artifact get (mis)used by their enemies. Mark must have widely circulated at an early date to become a main source for different Gospel writers and oral performances of Mark may not have ceased among second century Christians,⁶⁷³ so it may not have been easy to brush Mark aside. In defining Christian origins and demarcating the centre from the periphery, centrist Christians appropriated Mark to prevent it from falling into the "wrong" hands.⁶⁷⁴ Mark became a "prestige good" without intrinsic value, like an unread book sitting on a shelf may be regarded as a "collectible."⁶⁷⁵ Peter was the symbolic figurehead of centrist "Christianity" as is clear from the succession lists and the volume of pseudonymous literature in his name. Only those in the proper line of apostolic succession were eligible to be expositors of a Gospel based on Peter's preaching and "schismatic" interpreters were self-evidently wrong. As Fish observes, agreement in interpretive communities is secured by making disagreement aberrant.⁶⁷⁶

C. The Second Century Reception of John as an Analogy?

I have yet to test Braun's hypothesis against the textual data, but it struck me how close it is to Bauer's theory on the reception of John. Bauer lists the following writers as silent on John: the Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Dionysius of Corinth, Hegesippus and Rhodon.⁶⁷⁷ John had a

⁶⁷² Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice*, 21. She writes, "Like the gospel's empty tomb, its ambiguities, paradoxes, and 'open-endedness' prove to be precisely what interests contemporary commentators."

⁶⁷³ See my discussion Dewey, "Oral Story" on pp. 9-10.

⁶⁷⁴ Braun, "The First Shall be Last," 54.

⁶⁷⁵ Braun, "The First Shall be Last," 50, 50 n. 27.

⁶⁷⁶ Fish, *Is there a Text*, 15.

⁶⁷⁷ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 204-7, 209-11.

pivotal place in the *Diatessaron*, but Tatian may not be representative of the centrist Christian position as he comes to be reprimanded for “heresy” (cf. Irenaeus, *A.H.* 1.28.1 [1.26.1]).⁶⁷⁸ The reluctance of centrist Christians to cite John is counterbalanced by its positive reception in the school of Valentinus (e.g., Ptolemy, Heracleon) and the Montanist sect. For this reason, the learned Roman presbyter Gaius denounced John as the work of the “heretic” Cerinthus and John was spurned by an anonymous group known to Irenaeus (*A.H.* 3.11.9) and Epiphanius’s *Alogoi* (cf. *Pan.* 51.3.1-6; 51.4.5-10; 51.21.15-16; 51.22.1; 51.32.1-2; cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.25.6-7).⁶⁷⁹ Not until Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian and the Muratorian Canon was John rehabilitated in the eyes of centrist Christians in Rome as they realized that it was a useful ally for their Christological convictions.⁶⁸⁰ What Charles Hill entitles the “Orthodox Johannaphobia Paradigm” has had a well-established pedigree since Bauer.⁶⁸¹

Although Hengel challenged some of the alleged instances of silence on John in centrist Christian sources and refuted the widespread Gnostic usage outside the school of Valentinus in the 140s,⁶⁸² Charles Hill has written the most exhaustive rebuttal of this paradigm. Hill endeavors to undermine it on three fronts. First, despite some strained arguments for the odd source (e.g., Hegessipus), Hill amasses compelling evidence that there was no sudden take-over of John orchestrated by solitary individuals such as Irenaeus after 170 CE.⁶⁸³ Not only is John authoritative in elite textual sources, but the depiction of Johannine scenes in iconography and catacomb artwork display its mass popularity.⁶⁸⁴ His maximalist conclusions on the dependence on John in centrist Christian writings in the first half of the second century are more doubtful. I

⁶⁷⁸ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 206.

⁶⁷⁹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 208.

⁶⁸⁰ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 211-2

⁶⁸¹ For a full bibliography of some of the leading Johannine scholars, see Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 13-55.

⁶⁸² Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 3-22.

⁶⁸³ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 75-171.

⁶⁸⁴ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 155-66.

will give reasons for why I am not persuaded on Papias's knowledge of John in the next chapter, but it is worth comparing Hill's survey with the absence of secure references to John in another recent volume on the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers.⁶⁸⁵ Hill may be right that Justin's *Apology* 61.4-5 cites John (3:3, 5), picking up John's redactional framework with the quandary about re-entering a mother's womb, and a reasonable case can be made for Justin's debt to Johannine *Logos* Christology.⁶⁸⁶ Hill admits Justin's preference for the Synoptic tradition as a source of prophetic proof texts and Christian ethics,⁶⁸⁷ but Justin's actual usage of John may lie between the maximalist results of Hill and the absolute rejection of any dependence on John in the classic study of A.J. Bellinzoni.⁶⁸⁸ At issue is Hill's relaxation of the standards for detecting an intertextual reference to John, not taking the long survival of Johannine-like oral traditions (e.g., Matt 11:25-7/Luke 10:21-2) into consideration.

Hill's second line of defense is that the Roman Christian hostility to John has been exaggerated. Regarding Gaius, Eusebius respects him as a learned anti-Monotist critic, but his status as a "presbyter" may come from an erroneous ninth century marginal note in Photius of Constantinople.⁶⁸⁹ Gaius accused Cerinthus of authoring Revelation or his own sensuous apocalypse (Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.38.2; 3.96.6, 12-13; 7.25.2), but Hill strives to demonstrate that Hippolytus, as cited in the twelfth century commentary on the Apocalypse by Dionysius bar Salibi, or Epiphanius (*Pan.* 51.33.1-3) mistakenly presumed that Gaius associated John with

⁶⁸⁵ See Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 358-66, 374-80, 384-95, 416-42. On the contrary, Tuckett ("Didache," 93-4), Holmes ("Polycarp," 198-9), Paget ("Barnabas," 238), and Gregory and Tuckett ("2 Clement," 253) cannot find references to John in their respective subjects. While Foster ("Ignatius," 183-4) is open to the theological affinities of Ignatius with John, he also cautions that knowledge of John cannot be demonstrated.

⁶⁸⁶ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 317-28

⁶⁸⁷ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 315-6.

⁶⁸⁸ See Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 317-42; A.J. Bellinzoni, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 134-8. See also the critical remarks on Hill in Gamble, "New Testament Canon," 340, 340 n. 16; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 474, 477 n. 113.

⁶⁸⁹ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 177-8, 195-8.

Cerinthian authorship as well.⁶⁹⁰ The heresiological sources may be too late or unreliable, yet it is possible that Eusebius suppressed a negative view of a canonical Gospel but had less scruples about the book of Revelation (*H.E.* 3.25.4, 39.6).⁶⁹¹ Ephemianus may have conjured up his *Alogoi* out of a conglomeration of anti-Johannine attitudes including the outsider attacks of Celsus and Porphyry,⁶⁹² but the exposure of contradictions between Johannine and Synoptic chronology is similar to the reports of Gaius' complaints above.⁶⁹³ Finally, by forcing a common identification of the second group listed in *A.H.* 3.11.7 and in 3.11.9, Hill unpersuasively identifies Irenaeus's anonymous group (3.11.9) as separationist Docetists who reject the ongoing work of the Paraclete and parallels their teaching to the *Apocryphon of James*.⁶⁹⁴

If the last identification seems farfetched as the *Apocryphon of James* has clear Johannine echoes, Hill advises scholars to pay closer attention to how John is treated in Gnostic literature. In his section on Nag Hammadi, Hill distinguishes between texts that are too late to have a bearing on the reception of John before Irenaeus (e.g., *Tripartite Tractate*), texts that relate only superficially with John, or texts that take a supersessionary or adversarial approach to John.⁶⁹⁵ In the second category, for example, Hill places the *Apocryphon of John* as secondarily latching

⁶⁹⁰ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 172-204. Hill casts doubt that the accusation goes back to Hippolytus. He summarizes Allan Brent's thesis that the titles *Heads against Gaius* and *Defense of the Gospel and Apocalypse according to John* in the catalogue of Hippolytan works by Ebed-Jesu (ca. 1300) were derived from bar Salabi's commentary, especially as the title of the latter does not exactly correspond to the non-polemical title of Hippolytus' treatise [τά] ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννου εὐαγγελίου καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως ([The Matters] concerning the Gospel and Apocalypse according to John) engraved on the statue at a coemeterium at the Via Tiburtina, and bar Salabi mistakenly made the anti-Montanist Gaius the leading spokesperson of a conglomeration of anti-Johannine attitudes. Against this, Watson (*Gospel Writing*, 481-2, 482 n. 28) argues that Brent cites no evidence that Ebed-Jesu invented literary works of Hippolytus or had a detailed knowledge of bar Salabi's commentary. The title could have been abbreviated in the inscription and ἀπολογία may have preceded the ὑπὲρ instead of the article τά.

⁶⁹¹ Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 486.

⁶⁹² Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 185-6, 191.

⁶⁹³ Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 484-9.

⁶⁹⁴ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 115-7, 191. For instance, the *Apocryphon of James* 6.21-2 has the age of prophecy cut off with the Baptist and 11.11-2 identifies the Paraclete exclusively with Jesus (cf. 1 John 2:2; contra John 14:16).

⁶⁹⁵ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 236-77.

onto the Johannine prologue to augment its pleromatic myth.⁶⁹⁶ Similarly, Ptolemy restricts his exegesis to the prologue (*A.H.* 1.8.5) and Heracleon's commentary on John may date near the end of the second century after John's ascendancy since Origen is the first to bring it up.⁶⁹⁷ Since Hill takes John 1:14 as an obvious reference to the incarnation, he places the *Trimorphic Protennoia* (cf. 47.13-9, 49.12-20; 50:12-20) or the *Gospel of Truth* (cf. 26.4-9; 31.1-8) in the third category as superseding or polemicizing against John's incarnational Christology.⁶⁹⁸ Yet the enfleshment of the *Logos* may have been interpreted by Valentinians in a possessionist sense as Jesus becomes the human vessel of the *Logos* (cf. John 1:32-4), which may have motivated a scribal change of θεός (god) to υἱός (son) in John 1:18 to exhibit the personal pre-existence of the "son."⁶⁹⁹ Hill's exegesis may be better grounded in the text of John, but communities guided by different presuppositions may differ in what they read out of John.

My impression is that Hill has deflated some of the case for a conspiracy of silence in centrist Christian circles before Irenaeus because of John's "gnostic" affinities. On balance, there may have been a livelier struggle for ownership of John. Hill has not overturned the paradigm in its entirety as he may overestimate the extent of the influence of John in some of the early second century Christian sources and underestimate the signs of its positive reception among the Valentinians and other groups (e.g., Montanists). Authorial claims helped to legitimate John for partisans on both sides of the debate (Irenaeus, *A.H.* 3.1.1; Ptolemy, in *A.H.* 1.8.5) and Hippolytus, Eusebius and Epiphanius recognized that a means of discrediting the Gospel or the book of Revelation was to deride the author. The reception history of the fourth

⁶⁹⁶ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 240-1.

⁶⁹⁷ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 103-5, 207-11.

⁶⁹⁸ Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 242-77.

⁶⁹⁹ Peppard, *Son of God*, 144. In contrast, Ehrman (*Orthodox Corruption*, 72-82) considers the scribal change to be motivated by the theological desire to elevate the Christology from υἱός to θεός.

canonical Gospel may thus be analogous to the reception of Mark, another text that had to be won over from the periphery by attributing it to an eminent apostolic authority.

D. Conclusion: A New Theory on the Reception History of Mark

The second century was a period of intense Christian social formation. Myths of origin functioned to articulate the historical authenticity, internal homogeneity and social agenda of the group in competition with other Christian religious formations. Second century Christians gravitated to all sorts of first century texts to fulfill this purpose, some of which may have been highly valued (e.g., Matthew) and others that were less so (e.g., Mark). Out of concern that Mark could be usurped by “false” Christian teachers in support of divergent beliefs or practices, Mark was secured for the centrist Christian side by vouching for its apostolicity. If it is asked why patristic writers appropriated some texts like Mark or John and confined others to the fate of near extinction like the Nag Hammadi Library, it may be that some texts in the latter category taught doctrines such as an ignorant Demiurge that they could not assimilate to their theological perspective. On the other hand, a text like Mark had a genuine ancient pedigree and was close enough to the accepted Gospel of Matthew. While the fear that their adversaries could exploit Mark’s silences at the beginning or ending of the text and its problematic passages in the middle was real, threatening readings of Mark could be disarmed by cross-referencing it in conjunction with other acceptable Gospel texts through the lens of the rule of faith. Arguments from silence are always precarious, so I will proceed to test Braun’s hypothesis in two stages. Next, I will scrutinize the explicit patristic comments for signs of unease about the decision to accept Mark as an authoritative text for the community. In the last chapter, I will search for clues of an “interpretive community” for Mark outside of centrist Christian influence.

CHAPTER 5

THE PATRISTIC AMBIVALENCE REGARDING MARK

At the start of my investigation, I chased a trail of implicit clues on the manuscripts, citations and emendations of Mark as part of my case for its ambivalent status. Schildgen has an apt summary of the patristic response to Mark: “The gospel lacks the necessary data found in Matthew and John useful to the fathers in clarifying liturgical, ecclesiastical, doctrinal, or sacramental practices.”⁷⁰⁰ Turning to the explicit patristic comments, Mark is both affirmed and disavowed. Its apostolicity is affirmed at the same time as its literary or theological qualities are denigrated – the Gospel is not in order (τάξις) (Papias, in *H.E.* 3.39.15), it was transmitted after Peter’s death (ἔξοδος) (Irenaeus, *A.H.* 3.1.1), it was met by Peter with indifference (Clement, in *H.E.* 6.14.7) or its author had a nasty disfigurement (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 7.30.1). Inasmuch as they give lip service to Mark’s apostolic credentials and normative authority, they inadvertently let slip their perception that Mark was not fully compatible with the centrist Christian project.

A. Apologizing for Mark’s Lack of Order

Owing to Papias, many Christians from the patristic period to the present have associated Mark with Peter. The name of Peter seems to be invoked by Papias to overcome an uncomplimentary appraisal of the Gospel. Eusebius (*H.E.* 3.39.15) cites Papias as follows:⁷⁰¹

And this is what the elder used to say, ‘when Mark was the interpreter [or translator] of Peter, he wrote down accurately everything that he recalled of the Lord’s words and deeds – but not in order. For he neither heard the Lord nor

⁷⁰⁰ Schildgen, *Power*, 60-1.

⁷⁰¹ The following translation is from *The Apostolic Fathers Volume II* (ed. and trans. Bart D. Ehrman; LOEB Classical Library; Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 103.

accompanied him, but later, as I indicated, he accompanied Peter, who used to adapt his teachings for the needs at hand, not arranging, as it were, an orderly composition of the Lord's sayings.⁷⁰² And so Mark did nothing wrong by writing some of the matters as he remembered them. For he was intent on just one purpose: to leave out nothing that he had heard or to include any falsehood among them.⁷⁰³

The rationale for why the account was “not in order” (οὐ... τάξει) is that the evangelist was neither a hearer nor a follower of the Lord, but a student of Peter who “wrote accurately” (ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν) as much as “he recalled” (ἐμνημόνευσεν) and did not err in writing a few things (ἔνια) as “he remembered” (ἀπεμνημόνευσεν). As a secondhand recipient of disconnected oral reports, he was not able to weave them into an “orderly arrangement” (σύνταξις). Since the subject doing the remembering is not totally clear, some scholars interpret Papias to mean that the evangelist had become (γενόμενος) Peter's interpreter and wrote (ἔγραψεν) exactly what Peter dictated to him from his (i.e. Peter's) memories of the Lord.⁷⁰⁴ Conversely, Papias may have meant that the evangelist was Peter's interpreter before he wrote what he (i.e. Mark) remembered of Peter's preaching. The context supports the second reading that some time had transpired from the evangelist's role as Peter's interpreter to his authorship of the Gospel or else, if Peter was around, he could have inquired of Peter about how to best organize the material.⁷⁰⁵ Hugh Humphrey's curious interpretation that the evangelist began writing *before* he followed Peter “later” (ὕστερον), supported by bracketing off the phrase “having become the interpreter of Peter” (ἐρμηνευτῆς Πέτρου γενόμενος) as clarifying the

⁷⁰² Kürzinger (*Papias*, 23) translates this sentence differently: “Dieser machte seine Unterweisungen nach Art der Chreiai, nicht in der Absicht, eine literarische Komposition der Herren logien zu machen” (this one made his teachings according to the type of *chreiai*, not in the intention to make a literary composition of the Lord's *logia*).

⁷⁰³ Καὶ τοῦθ' ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἔλεγε· Μάρκος μὲν, ἐρμηνευτῆς Πέτρου γενόμενος, ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν, οὐ μέντοι τάξει, τὰ ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα. οὔτε γὰρ ἤκουσε τοῦ κυρίου οὔτε παρηκολούθησεν αὐτῷ· ὕστερον δέ, ὡς ἔφην, Πέτρῳ, ὃς πρὸς τὰς χρείας ἐποιεῖτο τὰς διδασκαλίας, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς περὶ σύνταξιν τῶν κυριακῶν ποιούμενος λόγιων. ὥστε οὐδὲν ἤμαρτε Μάρκος, οὕτως ἔνια γράψας ὡς ἀπεμνημόνευσεν· ἐνὸς γὰρ ἐποίησατο πρόνοιαν, τοῦ μηδὲν ὧν ἤκουσε παραλιπεῖν ἢ ψεύσασθαί τι ἐν αὐτοῖς.

⁷⁰⁴ See Ellis, *Making*, 358; Kürzinger, *Papias*, 45-6; Gundry, *Apology* Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 211-2.

⁷⁰⁵ Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 67.

identity of “Mark” at the start, would be self-defeating.⁷⁰⁶ The purpose of the apologetic was that the evangelist’s fidelity to Peter compensates for the defects of the Gospel.

Apparently somebody disagreed with the opinion that the evangelist “did nothing wrong” (οὐδὲν ἥμαρτε) to provoke this apology. For Terrence Mullins, critics charged the evangelist with not transcribing every word at Peter’s dictation but filling in the text with a few items from his own fallible memory. Mullins argues that the term ἔνιχα, translated as a small portion in distinction from a greater one (1 Clem 44:6; 2 Clem 19:2; *Diogn.* 5:3), is incapable of accommodating the entirety of a book the size of Mark.⁷⁰⁷ He correlated the illegitimate additions with the short excerpts of the “Secret Gospel of Mark” discovered by Morton Smith.⁷⁰⁸ If I may temporarily bypass the debate over its authenticity, it is improbable that Papias knew this text as it is unattested outside of Clement and there may have only been one copy of it in Alexandria that was kept tightly under wraps by an elite circle of Alexandrian mystics before the Carpocratians got a hold of it (*Theod.* I.21-II.13).⁷⁰⁹ Bauckham has rendered Mullin’s argument mute by showing that ἔνιχα could cover a work that was equivalent to the length of Mark (cf. Lucian, *Demonax*, 12).⁷¹⁰ Another scholar, reacting to the lack of consensus about the meaning of τάξις (order), proposed a textual emendation. Noticing how the letters ξ and χ sound similar when read aloud, Horace Rigg conjectures that the original reading was οὐ μέντοι τάχει and meant that Mark wrote “not at all hastily-in a slipshod manner.”⁷¹¹ A standard rule of thumb in the absence of textual evidence is that hypothetical emendations are a last resort when all the

⁷⁰⁶ Humphrey, *From Q to ‘Secret’ Mark*, 12-3. Humphrey’s rendering does not explain how the evangelist’s work can be described as in accordance with Peter.

⁷⁰⁷ Terrence Y. Mullins, “Papias on Mark’s Gospel,” *VC* 14 (1960): 219-20.

⁷⁰⁸ Terrence Y. Mullins, “Papias and Clement and Mark’s Two Gospels” *VC* 30 (1976): 189-92. I will discuss this text below (pp. 187-93) and in the Appendix (pp. 238-68).

⁷⁰⁹ Scott G. Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith’s Controversial Discovery* (ESJ 15; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), 135-41.

⁷¹⁰ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 219.

⁷¹¹ Horace Riggs, “Papias on Mark” *Novum Testamentum I* (1956): 171-2.

options are exhausted. We first need to try to figure out if the concession that Mark lacked τάξις or “order” makes sense in the context of Papias’s critical observations.

Scholars disagree on how to decipher the meaning of τάξις and whether it relates to Mark’s chronological or literary arrangement. Papias may have borrowed a formulaic platitude on neither subtracting nor adding falsehood from the historians (e.g., Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 6.4; 13.2; 25.4; Dionysius of Halicarnassus; *Thuc.* 5, 8; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.17; Lucian, *Demonax*, 12, 67) and chronology was a historical concern.⁷¹² As a non-eyewitness, the evangelist was not in a position to ascertain the correct sequence of events. The chief hurdle is that the historians rarely chose the term τάξις for chronology. Instead, they preferred terms like χρόνος or καιρός when speaking about sequential time (cf. Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.97.2; Philostatus, *Vita Apolloni* 1.2; Polybius, *Hist.* 5.33).⁷¹³ It may be more likely that Papias was thinking of a rhetorical or literary arrangement.⁷¹⁴ Rhetoric had a prominent role in education and Hierapolis was home to the famed Stoic philosopher Epictetus.⁷¹⁵ For Lucian, a professional historian refines a rough body of material by adding order (τάξις) and style (λέξις) (*Quom. Hist. conscr.* 48).⁷¹⁶

At the forefront of reinterpreting Papias with rhetorical categories, Kürzinger takes πρὸς τὰς χρείας to mean that Peter adapted his teaching in the form of *chreiai*, concise anecdotes of

⁷¹² Hengel (*Studies*, 48-9, 154 n. 67) cites historians on the importance of a correct chronological sequence (cf. Polybius 2.56.10; Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 14.3.5) and on avoiding a false arrangement (Lucian, *Quom. Hist. conscr.* 6; Josephus *Ant.* 1.17; *War* 1.15). For the use of τάξις among historians, Bauckham (*Eyewitnesses*, 217-21) cites Lucian (*Hist. Conscrip.* 6, 48, 51, 55), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De Verborum Censura* 9; *Epistula ad Pompeium* 3 [*taxai*]) and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.17; 4.197 [*taxai*]; *War* 1.15) and assumes that Papias had read Polybius or shared the concerns for proper order of contemporary historians like Plutarch (*Parallel Lives*) or Tacitus (*Agricola*). See also Arthur Wright, “*Taxeî* in Papias” *JTS* 14 (1913): 298-300; Körtner, *Papias*, 212; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 1:5-6.

⁷¹³ Stewart-Sykes “Again,” 489-90. He notes that many of Hengel’s examples, and one could add Bauckham’s, seem to be speaking about a literary arrangement in how a historian organizes the material into a narrative.

⁷¹⁴ See F.H. Colson, “Τάξει in Papias (The Gospels and the Rhetorical Schools),” *JTS* 14 (1912): 62-69; Kürzinger, *Papias*, 13-14; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, xxvii; Juel, *Mark*, 16; Gundry, *Apology*, 1037; “Pre-Papian Tradition,” 63; Alistair Stewart-Sykes “*Taxeî* in Papias: Again” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995): 487-492; Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 91; Witherington, *Gospel of Mark*, 22-23; Collins, *Mark*, 85.

⁷¹⁵ Kürzinger, *Papias von Hierapolis*, 14.

⁷¹⁶ A point made as early as Colson, “Τάξει,” 64.

the words or deeds of a person (cf. Aelius Theon, *Prog.* 3.2-3).⁷¹⁷ Alistair Stewart-Sykes classifies Mark as a *chreiai* collection, so the author was under no obligation to arrange the material. Inaccuracy was the sole grounds to censure a *chreia*, a charge refuted by the accurate memory of the evangelist.⁷¹⁸ There may be too many chronological markers and non-*chreiai* material in Mark that weighs against its genre as a *chreiai* collection.⁷¹⁹ Further, some scholars argue that the Greek should be κατὰ τὰς χρείας to match Kürzinger's translation and that "to/for the needs" is a more natural translation, though an object must be supplied.⁷²⁰ Either Papias communicates the ad hoc nature of Peter's preaching or the rhetorical form of Peter's oral accounts of Jesus. The evangelist did not integrate Peter's anecdotes into an effective literary arrangement because he was not a master of the material; he was a secondhand reporter.⁷²¹

For some scholars, these complaints bear no resemblance to the NT text mislabelled under the name of Papias's "Mark."⁷²² Parker identifies John Mark with the evangelist "John" and Papias's description with the fourth canonical Gospel, a Jewish work rooted in personal reminiscences that departed from the standard Synoptic order.⁷²³ This does not fit with how John represents the beloved disciple as the fount of the Johannine tradition and how this disciple is often sets at odds with Peter (13:23-4; 18:15-6; 20:3-8; 21:20-2). Contrariwise, the evangelist in

⁷¹⁷ Kürzinger, *Papias von Hierapolis*, 52-56; cf. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, xxvii; Gundry, *Apology*, 1037; "Pre-Papian Tradition," 63-4; Witherington, *Mark*, 22-23; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 214-17.

⁷¹⁸ Stewart-Sykes, "Again," 490-2.

⁷¹⁹ Scott Brown, "The Letter to Theodore: Stephen Carlson's Case against Clement's Authorship" *J ECS* 16 (2008): 564-5 n. 73.

⁷²⁰ W.D. Davies and Dale Alison, *Matthew 1-7* (International Critical Commentary; New York and London: T&T Clark, 1988), 16; Matthew Black, "The Use of Rhetorical Terminology in Papias on Mark and Matthew" *JSNT* 37 (1989): 34. However, Gundry ("Pre-Papian Tradition," 64) points out parallel phrasing in Luke 12:47 πρὸς τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ (according to his will).

⁷²¹ Collins, *Mark*, 85.

⁷²² David G. Deeks "Papias Revisited" *Exp. Tim.* 88 (1977): 327-8. Black (*Apostolic Interpreter*, 90-1) is skeptical about the possibility of certainty on the referent behind Papias.

⁷²³ Pierson Parker, "John and John Mark" *JBL* 79 (1960): 97-8, 136-7; cf. "Posterity," 132-5.

Papias is a non-eyewitness and follower of Peter.⁷²⁴ Although “Q” has also been entertained as an option,⁷²⁵ the things the Lord “had said or done” (λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα) suits a narrative better than a sayings collection. Humphrey ventures that Papias knew a narrative version of Q before it was combined with a Passion narrative to make up the Gospel of Mark, but he hangs too much on the title “Lord” instead of “Christ” as signifying a non-messianic Christology and the lack of a reference to the suffering of Jesus in this short excerpt.⁷²⁶

Other scholars apply Papias’s remarks to an initial draft of Mark. Through his expertise of ancient composition practices and the distinction between private notes (ὑπομνήματα) and published memoirs (ἀπομνημονεύματα), the classics scholar George Kennedy proposes that Papias intended the evangelist’s preliminary notes before they were integrated into an organized account.⁷²⁷ Notebooks may have come in handy as an aid for recalling Jesus’s teachings.⁷²⁸ Building on Stewart-Sykes’ observation that Papias claims that the text has no order, rather than a poor order, Scott Brown agrees with Kennedy that Papias was thinking of an unordered notebook.⁷²⁹ Brown differs from Kennedy in detecting a shift to the evangelist fashioning a narrative out of his disorganized notes when he began to write a few things (ἔνιχα).⁷³⁰ On the contrary, as early as Justin’s “memoirs” of Peter (*Dial.* 106.3) the patristic tradition interprets Papias in reference to the finished text of Mark. Without the attachment of this unpopular text to

⁷²⁴ Parker (“John Mark,” 104-5) presents John Mark as a witness of some of the events of Jesus’ lifetime by recourse to the opening line of the Muratorian Canon (“nevertheless he was present at some things and so recorded them”), but this part is fragmentary and “Peter” may have been the referent.

⁷²⁵ C.F.D. Moule and A.M.G. Stephenson, “R.G. Heard on Q and Mark,” *NTS* 2 (1955): 14-8.

⁷²⁶ Humphrey, *From Q to ‘Secret’ Mark*, 12-5. On pp. 28-9, he observes that Jerome was content with Papias’s summary of Mark as composed of the sayings and deeds of the Lord (cf. *Comm. In Matt.*, Prol. 6).

⁷²⁷ Kennedy, “Source Criticism,” 148. Kennedy finds additional support in *H.E.* 2.15.2 where Mark’s auditors petition him to write down a few notes (ὑπόμνημα). In the same volume, Wayne Meeks, (“*Hypomnēmata* from an Untamed Skeptic: A Response to George Kennedy,” 167) notes that the *Letter to Theodore* supports Kennedy’s thesis as Mark brings his own and Peter’s notes (ὑπομνήματα) to Alexandria to compose a second version of Mark. Cf. Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 142. I will deal more with Clement below.

⁷²⁸ On the early Christian use of notebooks, see Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 186-9.

⁷²⁹ Brown, “Letter to Theodore,” 564; cf. Stewart-Sykes, “*Taxeî* in Papias,” 190, 192.

⁷³⁰ Brown, “Letter to Theodore,” 565-6.

Peter as early as Papias, it is doubtful that it would have survived to the time of Justin or Irenaeus. Papias does not alter his terminology to signal a change of subject from preliminary notes to a polished composition to sustain Brown's reading. The apology that the evangelist did nothing wrong in writing a few things as "he remembered" (ἀπεμνημόνευσεν) mirrors the excuse for the lack of order in that the evangelist "recalled" (ἐμνημόνευσεν) how Peter had preached detached anecdotes about the Lord without handing down a connected account. Papias appraised the NT text of Mark to be an incomplete narrative, without the birth or vindication of its protagonist, and which loosely organizes the material at its disposal (e.g., conflict stories in 2:1-3:35; parables in 4:1-34) apart from an overall framework from the baptism to the last week in Jerusalem.⁷³¹ It is an exaggeration that Mark had no order at all, but Papias excused it as a rough draft, without order or beauty, that was faithful to the substance of Peter's preaching.

Unlike Mark's lack of τάξις, Matthew arranged (συνετάξατο) the oracles (τὰ λόγια) in a Hebrew dialect (Ἑβραϊδι διαλέκτῳ) (3.39.16). Kürzinger, Gundry and Watson cast aside Eusebius's editorial interruption separating verse 15 from 16, because the οὖν (therefore) at the start of the excerpt on Matthew presupposes something before it. In this case, Matthew was written to compensate for Mark's deficient order, a remarkably early testimony on behalf of Markan priority!⁷³² Regrettably, as our access to Papias is through Eusebius, whether the extract on Mark preceded the οὖν in Papias or the excerpts on Mark and Matthew were juxtaposed together by Eusebius may be indeterminate.⁷³³ To get Papias's testimony to correspond with the Greek text of Matthew, Kürzinger and Gundry argue that the lack of an article before Ἑβραϊδι

⁷³¹ See the critiques of Kennedy's thesis in Meeks, "Hypomnēmata," 159, 168-69; Black, "Rhetorical," 37.

⁷³² Kürzinger, *Papias*, 10-1; Meeks, "Hypomnemata," 165; Gundry, *Apology*, 131-32; idem, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 55-6; Watson, *Gospel Writings*, 126.

⁷³³ Black, "Rhetorical," 32; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 222.

διάλεκτῳ indicates that Papias had a Semitic style in mind, befitting the rhetorical tenor of the passage.⁷³⁴ Their re-interpretation of Papias at this point has faced severe criticism.⁷³⁵

As Papias's account does not conform to the Greek text of Matthew, which was not a translation from a Semitic language but depended on the Greek text of Mark, some scholars have searched for another positive identification. A minority of scholars equate τὰ λόγια (cf. Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12; 1 Clem 13:4; 19:1; 53:1; 62:3; 2 Clem 13:3) with "Q" as opposed to the words and deeds (λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα) that made up Mark.⁷³⁶ A better term for a sayings collection might be λόγοι (sayings) rather than λόγια (oracles)⁷³⁷ and, from the title of Papias's work (λογίων κυριακῶν) and the comparison with a narrative Gospel like Mark, λόγια seems to be interchangeable with sayings and deeds.⁷³⁸ James Edwards does not identify the narrative source of *H.E.* 3.39.16 with our text of Matthew, but with the "Gospel according to

⁷³⁴ Kürzinger, *Papias*, 9-24; cf. Gundry, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 67-8. For the article, see Acts 1:19; 2:6, 8, 21:40; 22:2; 26:14.

⁷³⁵ See the devastating critique by Armin Baum, „Ein aramäische Urmatthäus im kleinasiatischen Gottesdienst. Das Papiaszeugnis zur Entstehung des Matthäusevangeliums“, *ZNW* 92 (2001): 262-4; cf. Black, "Rhetorical," 32-4, Schoedel, "Papias," 257, 263; Sim, "Response," 290. Against Kürzinger: 1) the absence of an article is insignificant (cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 12.26; *Abr.* 12; Clement, in Eusebius *H.E.* 6.14.2) and διάλεκτος has been modified by a nationality rather than another adjective to clarify a non-linguistic meaning (τροπική, πεζή, ρυθμική, ἔμμετρος, ποιητική, πανηγυρική, πλατωνική, ξενή), 2) the more common terms for "style" are λέξις, φράσις and ἀπαγγελία; 3) the words "Hebrew dialect" are not used for style elsewhere in the LXX (cf. 4 Macc 12:7; 16:15), NT (cf. Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14) or Josephus (cf. *Ant.* 5.12); 4) ἑρμενεύω can be used for how an author expresses his thoughts or notes in a stylistic manner but not for a second-hand author putting the words of another person into a written composition, so the many who "interpreted" (ἡρμήνευσεν) are likely translators, and 5) the weight of patristic tradition favours the traditional reading.

⁷³⁶ Manson, *Gospels and Epistles*, 77-87; Black, "Rhetorical," 32-5; cf. Davies, *Matthew*, 17; Sim, "Response," 287-91; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 87-9.

⁷³⁷ James R. Edwards (*The Hebrew Gospel and the development of the Synoptic Tradition* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 4) points out from many of the examples offered by Manson summarize scriptural revelation (Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; 1 Clem 13:4; 53:1; Origen, *Comm. On Matt* 5.19; 19:13; *Hom. On Jer.* 10.1), the Christian proclamation of salvation (Heb 5:12; 2 Clem 13:3), the "gospel" account of the Lord (Polycarp, *Phil.* 1.7) or the contents of the canonical Gospels (Irenaeus, *A.H.* 1.8.1).

⁷³⁸ See Kürzinger, *Papias*, 50-1; Körtner, *Papias*, 151-67; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 214; Grundy, "Pre-Papian Tradition," 65; Edwards, *Hebrew Gospel*, 4-5; Baum, „Urmatthäus,“ 260-1. Sim ("Response," 289) objects that λόγοι are *in* the Gospels, not directly equated with them, as Papias was not writing a commentary on the Gospels but on a variety of traditions at his disposal. But the point is that by including sayings *and* narrative material under the title "exposition of the Lord's *logia*" (λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγησέως), λόγοι had a wider frame of reference that just sayings and τὰ λόγια need not be read as disconfirming that Papias had a narrative Gospel in mind.

the Hebrews” (cf. *H.E.* 3.39.17).⁷³⁹ Edwards resurrects the old hypothesis of an early Gospel text in Hebrew, though he allows that it appeared in different recensions in various communities (e.g., Nazoraeans, Ebionites),⁷⁴⁰ but the scattered patristic quotations of a “Hebrew Gospel” probably derive from two or three texts that postdate the Synoptics and Papias.⁷⁴¹ Eusebius may have recognized a story retold in Papias as similar to the “Hebrew Gospel” that he knew in 3.39.17. It is more common to be agnostic about the referent of Matthew’s *logia*.⁷⁴²

The words Ἐβραϊδι διαλέκτω may not disqualify the Greek text of Matthew from consideration. It was easy to assume an Aramaic original as Matthew makes the greatest effort to tie the story of Jesus into the scriptural heritage of Israel and was alleged to be by one of the Twelve in Palestine, just as Peter required a translator (ἑρμηνευτῆς) (*H.E.* 3.39.15).⁷⁴³ A translation in the ancient world could amount to little more than a loose paraphrase.⁷⁴⁴ Hengel and Bauckham argue that Papias implicitly critiques Matthew inasmuch as its pristine order was spoiled by unskilled translators who interpreted (ἡρμήνευσεν) as “each was able” (ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος),⁷⁴⁵ but Papias does not reprimand the translators who worked to the best of their abilities. Baum understands the aorist ἡρμήνευσεν to refer to the past oral exposition of Semitic Matthew in the churches,⁷⁴⁶ though it may have been Papias’s explanation for variant

⁷³⁹ Edwards, *Hebrew Gospel*, 6-7.

⁷⁴⁰ Edwards, *Hebrew Gospel*, 45-96.

⁷⁴¹ See Andrew Gregory, “Prior or Posterior? The *Gospel of the Ebionites* and the Gospel of Luke” *NTS* 51 (2005): 344-60; idem, “Jewish-Christian Gospels” in *Non-Canonical Gospels* (ed. Paul Foster; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 54-67; Körtner, *Papias*, 204-5; MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 14.

⁷⁴² Deeks, “Papias Revisited,” 298-9.

⁷⁴³ Körtner, *Papias*, 205-6; Schoedel, “Papias,” 258. Again, Kürzinger (*Papias*, 16) interprets Mark as Peter’s expositor or „Mittelsmann,“ but the parallel with Matthew makes “translator” a more likely option.

⁷⁴⁴ Davies, *Matthew 1-7*, 12.

⁷⁴⁵ Hengel, *Studies*, 47-8; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 225. Kürzinger’s (*Papias*, 18-19) reads “each” as Mark and Matthew acting as middlemen in relating the *logia* in their gospels. Gundry (“Pre-Papian Tradition,” 67) reads the “each” more traditionally as referring to Matthew’s readers, but sees them as expositors trying to discern the message rather than translators. Both assumes the excerpt on Matthew immediately followed the one on Mark and is faces all the same criticisms in footnote 59 on the verb ἡρμήνευω.

⁷⁴⁶ Baum, „Urmatthäus,“ 267-69. He parallels this with the oral exposition in Aramaic of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Palestinian Synagogue in the first century (p. 270).

written forms of Matthew or a source closely akin to it.⁷⁴⁷ If Black and Casey are right on the Aramaic vorlage of some of the Synoptic double tradition, Papias's wrong inference about an Aramaic origin of Matthew as a whole was not unreasonable.⁷⁴⁸ In any case, the translations occurred in the past and do not detract from the present authority of the Greek text of Matthew. The point is not the language of Matthew, but its apostolicity and good order. The first canonical Gospel was treasured in the patristic period and may have been the ideal Gospel for Papias: a complete narrative from the birth to the resurrection appearances of Jesus, organized into five organized teaching blocks with well-crafted discourses like the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) or the missionary instructions (Matt 10).⁷⁴⁹

Even if the excerpt on Matthew did not immediately follow Mark in Papias, Matthew's arrangement of the oracles is an appropriate contrast to Mark's haphazard assortment of the Lord's sayings and deeds. To view Luke or John as the standard bearer of order, one must justify Papias's silence on either Gospel.⁷⁵⁰ In Charles Hill's complex argument, Papias did testify to all four Gospels and this tradition has been preserved without credit in Eusebius (*H.E.* 3.24.5-13). The words κατέχει ὁ λόγος (the record holds) and φασίν (they say) indicates the use of a source and a silver thread runs from Papias (*H.E.* 2.15.2; 3.24.5-16; 3.39.15-16) to several patristic authors on the following points: 1. the authorial humility of the evangelists who did not take it upon themselves to write, 2. the origins of the Gospels in apostolic preaching, 3. the rooting of the Gospels in memory, 4. the discrepancies in the "order" of Gospels, and 5. the apostolic endorsement of the contents of the Gospels.⁷⁵¹ I have undercut points 1 and 5 as

⁷⁴⁷ Lightfoot, *Supernatural Religion*, 169; Schoedel, "Papias," 258; MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 14-5.

⁷⁴⁸ Black, "Rhetorical," 38-9; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 80-6.

⁷⁴⁹ In addition to Kürzinger, Gundry and Watson above, other scholars who accept a comparison with Matthew include Turner, "Modern Issues," 260; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 55; Collins, *Mark*, 86.

⁷⁵⁰ Körtner, *Papias*, 173-6; MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 46; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 416 n. 23.

⁷⁵¹ Hill, "Papian' Fragment," 588-613; "Papias," 312; *Johannine Corpus*, 387-94. See also Bartlet, "Date and Contents," 26-7.

originating in Clement, for Papias may have just agreed with Clement to the extent that Mark was Peter's interpreter and that 1 Peter supplemented this tradition (*H.E.* 2.15.2). If Hill is right on a single source, it may come from Clement and not Papias.⁷⁵² Yet Bauckham critiques Hill for not carefully delineating the varied written or oral sources behind 3.24.5-13 and bypassing the discrepancy between how Eusebius reconciles the differing chronologies by placing John's chronology before the baptism (cf. John 3:24) with Papias's blanket statement that Mark is not in order.⁷⁵³ Hill would also make Papias an incredibly early witness to the fourfold Gospel.⁷⁵⁴

Some scholars find indirect evidence for Papias's knowledge of Luke or John. In chapter 3, I covered how the Lukan and Papian prologues share identical terminology or their cognates (διηγῆσις, παραδίδωμι, παρακολουθέω, συντάξασθαι, ἀκριβῶς) as well as several intriguing details about persons or events in Acts and Papias. R.P. Martin sketched a scenario where Papias imitated the Lukan prologue in order to set Mark on par with Marcion's Gospel.⁷⁵⁵ His hypothesis flounders on the evidence that Papias wrote before the rise of Marcion. Further, if Papias wanted to favourably compare Mark with Luke, the disparagement of Mark's order in contrast to Luke's orderly (καθεξῆς) version was a counter-productive admission. Eusebius was interested in matters pertaining to the canon, so it is unlikely that he omitted Papias's tradition on Luke, and there is no evidence of Luke in the genuine Papian fragments.⁷⁵⁶ If the author of Luke-Acts was a contemporary of Papias, the dependence may have been in the reverse

⁷⁵² Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 238 n. 192; Gregory, *Reception*, 37.

⁷⁵³ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 433-37. Reliance on a source is presupposed by references to a "record" (3.24.5, 8) or "it is said" (3.24.7), but Bauckham points out that "they say" could just as well refer to oral tradition and that Hill needs to consider where Eusebius may be paraphrasing or offering his own explanatory comments (3.24.8b, 3.24.9-10). More problematically, Eusebius solves chronological discrepancies among the gospels by locating Johannine chronology before the Baptist's arrest (cf. Jn 3:24), unlike Papias who simply declares that Mark is not in order.

⁷⁵⁴ Hill ("Papian' Fragment," 617-22) dates Papias's work to 125-35 CE to increase the plausibility that Papias could have known of the existence of the fourfold gospel canon, but this dating may be too late.

⁷⁵⁵ Martin, *Evangelist*, 81-83.

⁷⁵⁶ The Armenian translation of the Commentary on the Apocalypse by Andrew of Caesarea (c.600CE) may cite a Papian tradition on Luke 10:18, but there are uncertainties surrounding the length of the quotation, whether it included Luke 10:18 and whether it comes from a source other than Papias. On the unreliability of the Armenian fragments as evidence of Papian traditions, see Kortner, *Papias*, 34-6; Schoedel, "Papias," 260-1.

direction. Papias may have been among the “many” predecessors of Luke if Dennis MacDonald is right or the parallels may be accounted for by two rhetorically trained authors with shared expectations about what an orderly Gospel narrative should look like and access to the same body of oral traditions in Asia Minor.⁷⁵⁷

Proponents of the view that John was Papias’s exemplar of good order have marshalled a supplementary list of Papias’s affinities with Johannine theology: the esteem for charismatic leaders over hierarchical authority, the language of “commandments” (ἐντολὰς) given “to the faith” (τῇ πίστει) and coming from “the truth” (τῆς ἀληθείας) (*H.E.* 3.39.4), the list of 7 “disciples” (John 1:40-4; 21:2), and John’s careful literary and chronological structure in dividing up the narrative by feast days.⁷⁵⁸ Against the silence of Ephesus, Eusebius may have purposely suppressed Papias’s opinion on the authorship of John.⁷⁵⁹ However, I have raised objections against the case of Hengel and Bauckham of the identification of the elder John with the author of the fourth canonical Gospel. The dissimilar chronologies of Mark and John may be irrelevant if Papias was thinking of a superior literary arrangement; Matthew may have satisfied that criterion. Papias’s list of 7 disciples is superficially related to John (*H.E.* 3.39.3). The first 3 names (Andrew, Simon or Peter, Phillip) occur in the same order in John 1:40-4, but the names of Nathaniel (1:45) and Nicodemus (3:1) must be omitted before one gets to Thomas (11:16), the unnamed “sons of Zebedee” do not surface until the epilogue (21:2) and Matthew is not in John at all. Instead, Papias borrowed the first 7 names from Matthew 10:2 (cf. Mark 3:16-9) with Bartholomew dropping out due to his insignificance.⁷⁶⁰ Any residual crossover with Johannine

⁷⁵⁷ On the former solution, see MacDonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 43-68. For the latter possibility, see Gregory, *Luke and Acts*, 37; Kok, “Flawed Evangelist,” 254-5.

⁷⁵⁸ Deeks, “Papias Revisited,” 325-6; Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 20-2; Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 226-33.

⁷⁵⁹ Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 424.

⁷⁶⁰ Macdonald, *Shipwrecked Gospels*, 17 n. 26; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 463.

sounding language may be due to Papias's awareness of 1 John (*H.E.* 3.39.17) and there is nothing that necessitates that the Gospel and the epistle circulated together.⁷⁶¹

I want to advocate for a little humility regarding our knowledge of the contents of a book no longer extant. Short of a dramatic archaeological discovery, the extant fragments display knowledge of Mark, Matthew and a substantial body of oral tradition. If the Papiian tradition on Mark originally stood alone, perhaps the point was less to compare Mark with another text than to point out that its disorganization constituted proof that it was true to the equally disordered oral tradition.⁷⁶² Papias's fondness for the *viva voce* is well documented (*H.E.* 3.39.3-4). Why prize a haphazard collection of anecdotes from a secondary source like Mark, though, when one possessed the firsthand testimony of the apostle Matthew, a writer with the sufficient literary skill to organize his recollections into a coherent narrative? In the shift from an oral to a textual medium, there was little incentive to retain Mark after the production of Matthew if not for Papias's strenuous apology that Peter's authority stood behind it.

B. Handed Down after Peter's Departure

By the time of Irenaeus (ca. 130-200 CE), Mark may have undergone a change of fortunes in its elevation to canonical status. Before Irenaeus, Justin produced written harmonizations of the Synoptics for didactic purposes in his school in Rome and his pupil Tatian hatched the plan to compose a harmony primarily out of the four Gospels.⁷⁶³ Arguably Tatian's inclusion of John was influenced by Justin (*I Apol.* 61.4). Justin's reference to the memoirs of the apostles and their followers (*Dial.* 103.8) has been taken by some scholars as stipulating four Gospels at a

⁷⁶¹ Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis*, 173-6, 198-9

⁷⁶² Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 92-93.

⁷⁶³ See the close examination of the sayings tradition in Justin in Bellinzoni, *Sayings*, 140-2.

minimum, two by apostles and two by their followers,⁷⁶⁴ but these may not be identical to the canonical four as Justin equates Mark with Peter's memoirs (*Dial.* 106.3).⁷⁶⁵ Irenaeus may have the first explicit rationale for a fourfold Gospel canon (*A.H.* 3.11.9). Nevertheless, T.C. Skeat proposes that the symbolism of the Lion, Calf, Human and Eagle as representing John, Luke, Matthew and Mark respectively in Irenaeus derives from a source introduced with φησίῳ (they say). The anomalies in the text may be due to the corruption of a source in that Irenaeus agrees with Ezekiel against Revelation in portraying the creatures as four-faced "cherubim" supporting the throne rather than prostrating around it, yet keeps to Revelation's order of the creatures.⁷⁶⁶ If the source followed Ezekiel's order of Human, Lion, Ox and Eagle, it corresponds to the old Western order of Matthew, John, Luke and Mark.⁷⁶⁷ Annette Reed dismisses Skeat's source theory as tenuous. The contradictions resulting from the combination of Ezekiel and Revelation are no different from how Irenaeus usually combines Old and New Testament texts.⁷⁶⁸

Irenaeus may be the originator of the tortured numerology on the number four – four zones of the earth, winds, cherubim and historical covenants – out of his desperation to justify a canon that was widely accepted though not established across the board.⁷⁶⁹ His argumentation is not entirely arbitrary, for the four winds or terrestrial zones evoke the "universal" Christian practice.⁷⁷⁰ Groups that preferred a single Gospel were positioned outside the mainstream (3.11.7), but the fourfold Gospel canon was more than a polemical instrument. Watson argues that it was an ecumenical construct, placing the Asian contribution of John from Ephesus

⁷⁶⁴ Hengel, *Four Gospels*, 19-20; Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 76; Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 339-40. But Watson (*Gospel Writing*, 476 n. 106) replies that, if that were the case, we would expect Justin to have used ἦ rather than καί and so Justin understands all the "memoirs of the apostles" as products of the apostles *and* their followers.

⁷⁶⁵ Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 76.

⁷⁶⁶ T.C. Skeat, "Irenaeus and the four-gospel canon," *NTS* 34 (1992): 196-7.

⁷⁶⁷ T.C. Skeat, "Irenaeus and the four-gospel canon," *NTS* 34 (1992): 197-9.

⁷⁶⁸ Annette Yoshiko Reed, "ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ: Orality, Textuality and the Christian Truth in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*" *VC* 56 (2002): 39, n. 71, n.72.

⁷⁶⁹ T.C. Skeat, "Irenaeus and the four-gospel canon," *NTS* 34 (1992): 194, 199; Stanton, *Gospel*, 65-6.

⁷⁷⁰ Reed, "ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ," 23 n.40.

alongside the Roman pillars Peter and Paul and the Gospels associated with them, just as Irenaeus was keen to be a peacemaker between East and West in mediating the quortodeciman controversy.⁷⁷¹ Reed cautions not to exaggerate the canonicity of the Gospels over against the oral tradition by showing Irenaeus's complex interplay of εὐαγγέλιον as oral proclamation (e.g., 3.1.1, 12.12, 14.1) or written text (e.g., 3.1.1; 10.5, 11.8-9, 16.8, 5.18.12), or how he evocatively draws on both meanings, as mutually supportive of the one Rule (κωνῶν) of Faith.⁷⁷²

In spite of Mark's placement in a canon of sacred literature, pride of place went to Matthew as first in the canonical order. Braun writes, "In this 'one Gospel-four Gospel' argument Mark merely serves a gratuitous place-holding function that is not tied to the merits of the narrative itself."⁷⁷³ On an interesting side note, among the patristic writers who replicate Irenaeus's metaphor of the four living creatures (Victorinus, Augustine, Ps.-Athanasius), Mark shifts between all four creatures, signifying that they were not able to articulate Mark's distinct theological contribution.⁷⁷⁴ The neglect of Mark within the canon is exemplified by how little Irenaeus cites it and how one of his few explicit citations is misattributed (4.6.1 on Matt 11:27/Luke 10:22), which Peter Head takes as a sign that Irenaeus was fairly ignorant of Mark's contents.⁷⁷⁵ At the start of Book Three, Irenaeus recounts some lore on each of the evangelists (A.H. 3.1.2) and, luckily, the Greek text has been preserved in Eusebius (H.E. 5.8.3). We catch a glimpse of Irenaeus's attitude about Mark based on this snippet:⁷⁷⁶

So Matthew brought out a written Gospel among the Jews⁷⁷⁷ in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome and founding

⁷⁷¹ Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 468-72.

⁷⁷² Reed, "ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ," 11-46.

⁷⁷³ Braun, "The First Shall be Last," 49, n. 26.

⁷⁷⁴ Swete, *St. Mark*, xxxvi-xxxviii.

⁷⁷⁵ Head, "The Early Text of Mark," 112. See the discussion in the Introduction

⁷⁷⁶ This translation is taken from Orchard, *Order*, 128.

⁷⁷⁷ The Greek text does not have "Jews" but "Hebrews."

the Church. But after their demise, Mark himself the disciple and recorder of Peter, has also handed on to us in writing what has been proclaimed by Peter.⁷⁷⁸

Irenaeus builds on Papias in declaring Mark to be the disciple (μαθητής) and interpreter (ἐρμηνευτής) of Peter. The new element is his relocation of Mark after Matthew and after the “departure” (ἔξοδος) of Peter and Paul, which many scholars take as a euphemism for their deaths. Vincent Taylor accepts the historicity of Irenaeus’s testimony that Mark post-dates the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, but the move in subsequent patristic literature to date Mark back into Peter’s lifetime he discards as apologetical.⁷⁷⁹ E. Earle Ellis contests Taylor’s interpretation of Irenaeus on two counts. He first disputes the euphemistic reading by pointing out that the consistent term for “death” in Irenaeus is θάνατος (*mors*) (e.g., 3.12.13; 3.16.1; 3.18.2) while the *hapax legomenon* ἔξοδος may lie behind *egression* (4.33.13), *exodus* (4.15.1; 4.16.1; 4.20.12) or *exitus* (4.29.2; 4.36.5; 5.20.1), none of which refer to death.⁷⁸⁰

The second linguistic argument of Ellis takes its cue from the study by John Chapman.⁷⁸¹ Chapman does not demur from the standard euphemistic reading of ἔξοδος, but, to reconcile Irenaeus with Clement,⁷⁸² reads the perfect παραδέδωκεν (“had handed down”) as the transmission of the Gospel after the ἔξοδος of Peter and Paul rather than its composition.⁷⁸³ To refute the Valentinians, Chapman interprets Irenaeus’s argument to be that the preaching of the apostles in diverse lands was well known, whether in Palestine (Matthew) or Rome (Peter, Paul) or Asia (John). The witness of Peter and Paul was not lost upon their deaths because their disciples, Mark and Luke, recorded it while Peter and Paul were alive, though their Gospels were

⁷⁷⁸ ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν διαλέκτῳ καὶ γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν· Μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων ἔξοδον Μάρκος, ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἐρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου, καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπο Πέτρου κηρυσσόμενα ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν παραδέδωκεν.

⁷⁷⁹ Taylor, *St. Mark*, 6.

⁷⁸⁰ Ellis, *Making*, 362-3; cf. Gundry, *Apology*, 1042-3.

⁷⁸¹ J. Chapman, “St. Irenaeus on the Date of the Gospels” *JTS* 6 (1905): 563-9.

⁷⁸² Chapman, *St. Irenaeus*, 563.

⁷⁸³ Chapman, “St. Irenaeus,” 567.

subsequently transmitted it to the church after the two apostles passed away.⁷⁸⁴ Ellis goes further in arguing that Irenaeus refers to the transmission of Mark after Peter “departed” from the city of Rome, but the present participle κηρυσσόμενα (preaching) may mean that it was transmitted to the Roman congregation while Peter was alive too.⁷⁸⁵

There are linguistic holes in the arguments of Ellis and Chapman. Θάνατος may be Irenaeus’s preferred term for death, but Winn points out evidence that a euphemistic use of ἔξοδος was within Irenaeus’s range of meanings (cf. 1.25.4; 3.14.2; possibly 5.7.1).⁷⁸⁶ There are other parallels that employ ἔξοδος in a euphemistic sense (cf. *Wis* 3:2; 7:6; *TestNapht* 1:1; Luke 9:31; 2 Pet 1:15; Justin, *Dial.* 105:3, 5; Eusebius, *H.E.* 5.1.36, 55).⁷⁸⁷ While the adverb ἐγγράφως (in/through writing) may modify κηρυσσόμενα, it may also modify παραδέδωκεν and describe how Peter’s preaching was handed down by the evangelist in the medium of writing.⁷⁸⁸ Chapman thinks that it weakens the apologetic that Mark and Luke represented the apostolic witness unless the Gospels were written in the lifetimes of the apostles, but there is no reason that they could not accurately preserve the witness of the apostles after their deaths.⁷⁸⁹ Even if Irenaeus was primarily thinking of Mark’s transmission, one should not read a long interval between the writing and transmission of the text. Crossley observes that there was no motive to withhold the Gospel from the reputable Roman Christ congregation for an extended period of time, so Mark could have been written and transmitted after Peter’s death.⁷⁹⁰

Ellis’s re-interpretation of Irenaeus as referring to the departure of Peter and Paul from the city of Rome has weak historical support. There is a tradition that Paul was released from his

⁷⁸⁴ J. Chapman, “St. Irenaeus,” 566-7; cf. Humphrey, “From Q to ‘Secret Mark,’” 23-4.

⁷⁸⁵ Ellis, *New Testament*, 362-63; cf. Gundry, *Apology*, 1042-43.

⁷⁸⁶ Winn, *Roman Imperialism*, 44-5.

⁷⁸⁷ Taylor, *St. Mark*, 5; Hengel, *Studies*, 119 n.17.

⁷⁸⁸ Winn, *Roman Imperialism*, 46.

⁷⁸⁹ Winn, *Roman Imperialism*, 44-5.

⁷⁹⁰ Crossley, *Date*, 8, 12; cf. Winn, *Purpose*, 46-47.

first Roman imprisonment and fulfilled his plans to go to Spain (1 Clem 5:6; *Acts Pet* 1.6), which itself may be nothing more than an inference from Romans 15:24-8. Some scholars try to reconstruct an earlier visit of Peter to Rome before his last visit and martyrdom in the capital. On the slender thread of a *Cephas* party in Corinth (1 Cor 1:12ff; 3:6; 3:22-4:1, 9; 9:5; cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.25.8) and Paul's commitment to not build on another's foundation (Rom 15:20, 21-24; cf. 1:8), they speculate that Peter had gone to Corinth and then travelled via Brundisium and the Appian Way to Rome.⁷⁹¹ Neither 1 Corinthians nor Romans states that Peter set foot in Corinth or Rome and the earliest text to place Peter in "Babylon" is the late first century text of 1 Peter, but it does not give a date for Peter's arrival in Rome. Robinson dates the encounter of Peter and Mark in Rome as early as 41 CE based on patristic reports that Peter was in Rome as early as the second year of Claudius (42 CE) to confound the arch heretic Simon Magus.⁷⁹² Ellis grants the presence of some hagiographic embellishment in Peter's ordination to the sacerdotal chair in Rome from 42 CE but, in his reconstruction, Peter travelled from Corinth to Rome around 52CE to confront Simon Magus.⁷⁹³

These reconstructions may be a little credulous in their acceptance of a typical myth of origins that dates the foundations of centrist Christianity in Rome as early as possible and depicts Peter's triumph over Simon, the progenitor of all the "heresies." Simon may have been selected for this villainous role because Peter had rebuked him in Samaria in the story in Acts 8:9-24 and Simon had a following that was among the competition for the early Christians. While it may be lacking in historical foundations, it is conceivable that Irenaeus knew a tradition that placed Peter

⁷⁹¹ Manson, *Studies*, 39-40; Ellis, *Making*, 366-8, 374; Robinson, *Redating*, 111-4. In this way, Manson seeks to harmonize all the evidence: Peter met Mark in Rome between 55-60 CE (Phlm 23; Col 4:10), the evangelist wrote while Peter was alive (Clement) and Mark was transmitted to the Roman congregation after Peter's death (Irenaeus).

⁷⁹² Robinson, *Redating*, 111-4. See *Acts of Peter*, Justin, *1 Apol* 26, 56; Irenaeus, *A.H.* 1.23.1-4; Hippolytus, *Ref.* 6.15; Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.14.1-6, 17.1; Jerome, *De Vir Ill* 1.

⁷⁹³ Ellis, *Making*, 367-8, 372-6.

in Rome this early, but there is no tradition whatsoever that had Peter and Paul leave Rome around the same time.⁷⁹⁴ As far as I am aware, in all the traditions Peter stays in Rome until his martyrdom. By the time of Irenaeus, the *belief* that Peter and Paul founded the Roman church before their executions in the capital was firmly established.⁷⁹⁵

Irenaeus infers from Papias that the evangelist Mark left a transcript of Peter's preaching in handing down the Gospel in writing after the death of Peter in Rome. Yet Papias left enough grammatical ambiguity about the timing of the composition of the Gospel in relation to the evangelist's role as Peter's interpreter for the majority of patristic writers to interpret him to mean that the evangelist wrote in Peter's lifetime.⁷⁹⁶ Two points thus come to the forefront for Irenaeus's tradition on Mark. The first point is that the pre-eminent status of Matthew has been solidified. Against the vast majority of modern students of the Synoptic Problem, Irenaeus explicitly dates Mark after Matthew. The second point is that readers of Matthew are fortunate enough to have the firsthand witness of an apostle, but Mark was handed down in writing after the two main apostolic figureheads passed away from the scene. In this way, Irenaeus subtly distances the apostle from his protégé. Papias lays the blame for Mark's faulty order at the feet of the evangelist as a second-hand witness doing his best to remember what Peter had preached, which Irenaeus accounts for by the extrapolation that Peter had died before the evangelist resolved to write. In separating the evangelist from Peter in time, this may be yet another attempt to rationalize the non-use of a Gospel that supposedly contained Peter's preaching.

⁷⁹⁴ Crossley, *Date*, 7-8; Winn, *Purpose*, 45.

⁷⁹⁵ 1 Clement 5:3-6 is debatable, but for other references see Ignatius, *Rom.* 4.2-3; Dionysius of Corinth in *H.E.* 2.26; *Acts Pet* 36-9; Irenaeus, *A.H.* 3.3. I italicized belief because some scholars have called into question the historicity of Peter's martyrdom in Rome (see Goulder, "Did Peter ever go to Rome," 377-96). Legendary or not, what matters here is that Irenaeus believed it.

⁷⁹⁶ Gundry, *Apology*, 1042-43; France, *Mark*, 38. See Clement (Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.15.1-2; 6.14.7), Origen (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25.5); Epiphanius (*Haer.* 6.10); Eusebius (*HE* 2.14; *Chronicle*); Jerome (*Ep.* 120.11; *De Vir. Ill.* 8).

C. Peter's Indifference to the Private Circulation of Mark

1. The Accepted Traditions of Clement on Mark

While the details in Justin and Irenaeus on Mark are meager, Eusebius has preserved two elaborate and somewhat contradictory accounts on Mark from Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215). A third Clementine excerpt on Mark has been preserved in a sixth century Latin translation by Cassiodorus, the founder of the monastery and library at Vivarium, Italy, in the work *In Epistola Petri Prima Catholica*. To take the excerpts in order, Eusebius's paraphrase of Clement's testimony in Book 2 of his Ecclesiastical History is surprisingly positive given the theme of this chapter. Eusebius claims to draw the following tradition on the evangelist Mark from the sixth book of Clement's Ὑποτυπώσεις (Outlines) (*H.E.* 2.15.1-2):⁷⁹⁷

But such a light of piety shone on the minds of those who heard Peter that they were not nearly satisfied with a single hearing or with an unwritten account of the divine proclamation. And so with all kinds of entreaties they begged Mark (whose Gospel is now in circulation), a follower of Peter, that he might leave behind a written record of the teaching that had been given to them orally. And they did not rest until they prevailed upon him. To this extent they were the impetus for the writing called the Gospel According to Mark. And they say that when the Apostle came to know what had happened, after the Spirit revealed it to him, he delighted in their eagerness and authorized the writing to be read in the churches.⁷⁹⁸

When Eusebius returns to Clement's tradition on Mark, Clement seems to be singing a very different turn. This time, Eusebius introduces his paraphrase in the context of Clement's general discussion of the order (τάξις) of the Gospels (*H.E.* 6.14.5-7):⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁷ I take the following translations from Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, 97.

⁷⁹⁸ τοσοῦτον δ' ἐπέλαμψεν ταῖς τῶν ἀκροατῶν τοῦ Πέτρου διανοίαις εὐσεβείας φέγγος, ὡς μὴ τῇ εἰς ἅπαξ ἰκανῶς ἔχειν ἀρκεῖσθαι ἀκοῇ μηδὲ τῇ ἀγράφῳ τοῦ θείου κηρύγματος διδασκαλίᾳ· παρακλήσειεν δὲ παντοίαις Μάρκον, οὗ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον φέρεται, ἀκόλουθον ὄντα Πέτρου, λιπαρῆσαι ὡς ἂν καὶ διὰ γραφῆς ὑπόμνημα τῆς διὰ λόγου παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς καταλείψοι διδασκαλίας, μὴ πρότερόν τε ἀνεῖναι ἢ αὐτοῖς κατεργάσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα, καὶ ταύτῃ αἰτίους γενέσθαι τῆς τοῦ λεγομένου κατὰ Μάρκον εὐαγγελίου γραφῆς. Γνόντα δὲ τὸ πραχθέν φασὶ τὸν ἀπόστολον, ἀποκαλύψαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ πνεύματος, ἡσθῆναι τῇ τῶν ἀνδρῶν προθυμίᾳ, κυρῶσαι τε τὴν γραφὴν εἰς ἔντευξιν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

⁷⁹⁹ I take the following translation from Orchard, *Order*, 166.

He [Clement] used to say that the first written of the gospels were those having the genealogies, and that the Gospel of Mark had this formation. While Peter was publically preaching the Word in Rome and proclaiming the gospel by the the [sic] Spirit, the audience, which was numerous, begged Mark, as one who had followed him for a long time and remembered what had been said, to write down the things he had said. And he did so, handing over the Gospel to those who had asked for it. And when Peter got to know about it, he exerted no pressure either to forbid it or to promote it...⁸⁰⁰

The third Clementine testimony on the evangelist Mark is found in the midst of his *Adumbrationes* on 1 Peter 5:13. The most interesting aspect is the further specification about the recipients of Mark as Caesar's equestrians (*Caesareanis equitibus*), who were high ranking persons of the equestrian order in close proximity to the imperial household such as senior local magistrates, councilors and high priests of the imperial cult.⁸⁰¹ The excerpt is as follows:⁸⁰²

Mark, the follower of Peter, while Peter was publically preaching the Gospel at Rome in the presence of some of Caesar's knights and uttering many testimonies of Christ, on their asking him to let them have a written record of the things which had been said, wrote the Gospel which is called the Gospel of Mark, from the things said by Peter...⁸⁰³

The basic substance of the three extracts is of one accord. At the request of Peter's auditors in Rome, the evangelist put the public preaching of Peter into written form. It is the fine details that are conflicting.⁸⁰⁴ The reports are inconsistent with regards to the genre of the evangelist's work as either a "Gospel" (*H.E.* 6.14.6; *Adumb. In. 1 Pet 5:13*) or as some rough

⁸⁰⁰ Προγεγράφθαι ἔλεγεν τῶν εὐαγγελίων τὰ περιέχοντα τὰς γενεαλογίας, τὸ δὲ κατὰ Μάρκον ταύτην ἐσηκέναι τὴν οἰκονομίαν. Τοῦ Πέτρου δημοσίᾳ ἐν Ῥώμῃ κηρύξαντος τὸν λόγον καὶ πνεύματι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐξεπόντος, τοὺς παρόντας, πολλοὺς ὄντας, παρακαλέσαι τὸν Μάρκον, ὡς ἂν ἀκολουθήσαντα αὐτῷ πόρρωθεν καὶ μεμνημένον τῶν λεχθέντων, ἀναγράψαι τὰ εἰρημένα· ποιήσαντα δέ, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον μεταδοῦναι τοῖς δεομένοις αὐτοῦ· ὅπερ ἐπιγνόντα τὸν Πέτρον προτρεπτικῶς μῆτε κωλύσαι μῆτε προτρέψασθαι.

⁸⁰¹ Peppard, *Son of God*, 90.

⁸⁰² I take the following translation from Orchard, *Order*, 131.

⁸⁰³ *Marcus Petri sectator palam praedicante Petro evangelium Romae coram quibusdam Caesareanis equitibus et multa Christi testimonia proferente, petitus ab eis ut possent quae dicebantur memoriae commendare, scripsit ex his quae Petro dicta sunt evangelium quod secundum Marcum vocitatur.*

⁸⁰⁴ The differences on the genre, audience and emotions of Peter were noticed by Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 143. Factoring in the *Letter to Theodore*, Black observes a further difference in that letter as it recounts how the evangelist brought his notes from Rome (*Theod.* I.15-17) but does not explicitly identify the audience of the evangelist's first draft before he composed the new mystic Gospel in Alexandria.

notes (ὑπόμνημα) (*H.E.* 2.15.1; cf. ὑπομνήματα in *Theod.* I.20). The make-up of the audience of Mark is characterized in either general terms as “many who were present” (τοὺς παρόντας, πολλοὺς ὄντας) (*H.E.* 6.14.6) or in specific terms as upper level officials (*Adubr. in. 1 Pet* 5:13). Lastly, the attitude of Peter towards the written record of his preaching was either one of indifference (*H.E.* 6.14.7) or enthusiasm (*H.E.* 2.15.2). It is a mystery how Eusebius harmonized his sources in his own mind, but Black lay bear the traces of implicit resistance to the production of Mark in both of Eusebius’s paraphrases, whether in the form of apostolic detachment (*H.E.* 6.14.7) or in the preliminary resistance of the evangelist (2.15.1).⁸⁰⁵

It is more likely that Eusebius’s paraphrase in 2.15.2 is an improvement upon Clement’s lukewarm feelings towards Mark in 6.14.6 than Eusebius turned Clement’s positive assessment of a canonical document into a less flattering account. The extract in 6.15.5-7 is a good place to begin in discerning Clement’s views. He starts with the contention that the Gospels with “the genealogies” (τὰς γενεαλογίας), Matthew and Luke, were “written before” (περιέχοντα) (6.14.5). Modern advocates of the “Griesbach hypothesis” predictably gravitate towards this passage.⁸⁰⁶ Gamba adduces another hint in Clement’s *Adumbrationes* on 1 Peter 5:13: Mark’s intended audience of high-ranking Roman officials may presuppose that Luke had already been positively received by an elite Roman official, Theophilus.⁸⁰⁷ Gamba may be overreaching to enlist additional support from Clement for Markan posterity to Matthew and Luke. Peppard thinks that the latter text may be evidence for Mark’s provenance in the imperial capital as Clement was cognizant of the imperial titles and language re-applied to Jesus in Mark.⁸⁰⁸

Another explanation is that Clement assumed that Peter was preparing his defense before senior

⁸⁰⁵ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 143.

⁸⁰⁶ Farmer, *Synoptic Problem*, 226; “Patristic Evidence,” 7-9; Orchard, *Order*, 164.

⁸⁰⁷ Giuseppe Giov. Gamba, “A Further Reexamination of Evidence from the Early Tradition” in *New Synoptic Studies*, 21.

⁸⁰⁸ Peppard, *Son of God*, 90.

Roman officials in “Babylon” (1 Pet 5:13), just as Paul, imprisoned in Rome, sends greetings from the members of “Caesar’s household” (Phil 4:21).⁸⁰⁹

Much like Augustine’s treatment of Mark as an abbreviation of Matthew, Clement may have downgraded Mark by placing it after Matthew and Luke. Clement would have been utterly unique in construing the literary relationship of the Synoptics in this fashion as this solution to the Synoptic Problem is otherwise unattested before the ninth century and his successor Origen follows the canonical order of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.⁸¹⁰ Thus, some scholars remove the excerpt on Mark as an interpolation that breaks up Clement’s original comparison of the Gospels with the genealogies that recount the “bodily facts” (τὰ σωματικά) (6.14.5) with John’s spiritual Gospel (πνευματικὸν... εὐαγγέλιον) (6.14.7).⁸¹¹ Stephen Carlson, however, has offered a translation for Clement that has the merit of holding the whole passage together. Instead of taking the infinitive προέγραψαι in a temporal sense of having been written before or earlier, Carlson notes that the preposition πρό can have a locative meaning and the meaning of προγράψω may be to “write before the public” or “set forth publically.”⁸¹² Clement’s statement may not be about the timing of the composition of the Synoptics but their target audiences. The Gospels with the genealogies were published for a broad audience, whereas Mark was written for a limited circle in Rome and, initially, without Peter’s knowledge

⁸⁰⁹ Richard Bauckham, “Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence? A Response to Margaret Mitchell” in *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity* (ed. Edward W. Klink III; Library of NT Studies 353; London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), 75 n. 26. He observes that “notable people” also persuade John to write.

⁸¹⁰ Stephen C. Carlson, “Clement of Alexandria on the ‘Order’ of the Gospels” *NTS* 47 (2001): 119-20. Farmer (“Patristic Evidence,” 13-14) protests that Origen’s order might not be chronological and that he is really only concerned with the ecclesial tradition that there are four gospels that speak in harmony of the one Gospel.

⁸¹¹ Chapman, “St. Irenaeus,” 568; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 432-4. Watson argues that Eusebius may have interpolated Clement’s exegesis on 1 Peter 5:13 into Clement’s contrast of the Synoptics with John in the *Outlines*.

⁸¹² Carlson, “‘Order,’” 122-3. Cf. Gal 3:1; Aeschines, *Fals. Leg.* 60; Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 53.7; Demosthenes, *Euerg.* 42; Aristophanes, *Av.* 450; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.33; Justin, *2 Apol.* 15; Clement, *H.E.* 6.14.2.

(6.14.7a).⁸¹³ Throwing in Clement’s exegesis of 1 Peter in the mix, the audience of Mark was a tiny proportion of the population of Rome – elite officials.

This may be the reason for the term ὑπόμνημα (notes), which typically were meant for private use and not for publication, as a description of the evangelist’s work in Eusebius’s other paraphrase of Clement in 2.15.2. Building on Kennedy’s distinction between the evangelist’s preliminary notes and his final composition, C. Clifton Black and Scott Brown argue that Clement retells how the evangelist began to compile some “notes” of Peter’s preaching which are not to be strictly identified with his “Gospel;” Clement names the “Gospel of Mark” as an identifying marker to clarify the figure named “Mark” in 6.14.6.⁸¹⁴ Yet the highly literate Clement may have assessed the literary quality of the Gospel of Mark itself to be like rough notes, directed towards a single purpose to satisfy the request of Peter’s auditors in Rome, while the publication and wide distribution of the polished texts of Matthew and Luke was intentional. There are no grounds for Humphrey’s assumption that Clement uses εὐαγγέλιον in the earlier sense of the *kerygma* of the death and resurrection of Christ to refer to a Passion Narrative that was incorporated into the text of Mark.⁸¹⁵ Humphrey’s exegesis seems guided by his apriori theory on the compositional stages in the writing of Mark; Clement applies εὐαγγέλιον as a title to the finished texts of Matthew, Luke and John (*H.E.* 6.14.5, 7).

Margaret Mitchell categorizes Clement’s account of the production of Mark as an “audience request tradition” as the audience is the cause (*aitioi*) or historical occasion that called forth the production of the text.⁸¹⁶ Bauckham finds a parallel for the literary convention in

⁸¹³ Carlson, ““Order,”” 123.

⁸¹⁴ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 142; Brown, “Letter to Theodore,” 564.

⁸¹⁵ Humphrey, *From Q to ‘Secret Mark’*, 16.

⁸¹⁶ Margaret Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that ‘The Gospels were Written for all Christians’” *NTS* 51 (2005): 50 n 42, 51.

Clement in the work of Galen.⁸¹⁷ Galen complains that writings he intended for a small private audience ended up circulating wider than he wished and some circulated without inscriptions and were passed off as other people's work (*De libris propriis* 10, 17). In one example, Galen dictated a speech to a messenger boy at the request of his friend, but this writing leaked out against Galen's insistence that it was intended for the lecture room rather than a published book (*De venae sectione adversus Erasistrateos Romae degentes*). Eventually Galen gives up writing for private use without an eye to wider publication (*De libris propriis* 11-2, 23, 54).

That a purely local audience prevailed upon the evangelist to put Peter's preaching into writing may contradict Bauckham's insistence that the Gospels were written for "all Christians" and that the Christ followers would have no need of a written record if they were able to listen to an apostle in person.⁸¹⁸ However, Bauckham argues that Clement obviously knew that Mark had widely circulated and presumes that the evangelist's intent was to reach an audience beyond a limited circle in Rome. He had to wait for Peter's permission for the text to be circulated more broadly and Peter neither energetically prevented it nor urged it forward (μήτε κωλύσαι μήτε προτρέψασθαι) (6.14.7).⁸¹⁹ Many of Bauckham's examples show, however, show how Galen's published oral lectures were widely disseminated contrary to the intention of the author who wished for them to be restricted to the private use of certain individuals as an aide-memoire.⁸²⁰ If Carlson's translation is correct, Clement is explicit that Matthew and Luke were written for mass public consumption while Mark may have circulated contrary to the original authorial intention. Peter neither encouraged nor forbade the limited use of the evangelist's draft of his preaching by a select group of his auditors in Rome.

⁸¹⁷ The following examples are taken from Bauckham, "Response to Margaret Mitchell," 73-5.

⁸¹⁸ Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence," 50.

⁸¹⁹ Bauckham, "Response to Margaret Mitchell," 75-6.

⁸²⁰ Bauckham, "Response to Margaret Mitchell," 78.

When the news reached Peter that the evangelist had transcribed his preaching, his reaction seems rather apathetic. Braun amusingly paraphrases Clement's credulity about Peter's "unauthorized memoirs" as saying, in other words, "I won't stop him, but I sure as hell won't give him any encouragement either."⁸²¹ Just as Papias faulted Mark's order and Irenaeus dated the writing after Peter's death, Clement achieved the necessary distance from Peter in that Peter did not endorse the evangelist's plans to put his preaching into writing.⁸²² All three Synoptics take a back seat to John. Conscious that the Synoptics covered the physical facts, John decided to supplement the other three with a spiritual Gospel (6.14.7b). To summarize, Clement may have judged Mark to be perfectly satisfactory in relating the bare facts taught by Peter, but the evangelist did not polish the notes because he did not plan to publish them for wide circulation like Matthew and Luke. Clement also detracts from Mark so that the "spiritual Gospel" can shine all the more brightly.⁸²³ This accounts for Clement's minimal use of Mark. Clement was well versed in biblical and classical literature, but the only discernible references to Mark in his literary corpus is a loose extended commentary on the pericope of the rich man in Mark 10:17-24 (*Qds* 4) and two other references (Mark 8:38 in *Strom.* 4.70.2; Mark 9:29 in *Ecl.* 15.1).⁸²⁴

This stands in sharp contrast to the other Clementine tradition in Eusebius on how Peter learned of the news upon a "revelation to him by the spirit" (ἀποκαλύψαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ πνεύματος) and was zealous "to authorize" (κυρῶσαι) the reading of Mark in the churches (2.15.2). Eusebius's use of "they say" (φασί) in 2.15.2 is a sign that he is including within his paraphrase of Clement and Papias the general tradition about Mark from his own day.⁸²⁵ At this point, Eusebius transparently re-writes Clement by putting a much more positive spin on Peter's

⁸²¹ Braun, "The First Shall be Last," 51.

⁸²² Bauckham, "A Response to Margaret Mitchell," 73.

⁸²³ Hengel, *Studies*, 4.

⁸²⁴ See my discussions on p. 5.

⁸²⁵ Humphrey, *From Q to 'Secret Mark'*, 19; Bauckham, "A Response to Margaret Mitchell," 77.

reaction as he could not conceive of the prospect that Peter was anything less than enthusiastic about a canonical text.⁸²⁶ The text also tries to bridge the gap from a local to a universal readership by having Peter sanction the reading of Mark in the “churches.”⁸²⁷ Clement’s belittlement of Mark is no longer appropriate for a canonical text in Eusebius.

2. *Excursus on Clement’s Letter to Theodore*

I have purposely left the *Letter to Theodore* out of the discussion so far due to the amount of controversy surrounding its authenticity. In 1958, Morton Smith stumbled upon a letter under the heading of “Clement of the *Stromateis*” to a certain Theodore inscribed onto a 1646 edition of the letters of Ignatius of Antioch by Isaac Voss at the Mar Saba monastery.⁸²⁸ Theodore must have been a Palestinian Christian to explain why the letter ended up at Mar Saba.⁸²⁹ Smith sketched the following scenario. This little-known edition of Mark disappeared during the Severan persecution and was forgotten after Clement left Alexandria, which is why Origen was in the dark about it. Since the subject of the letter was an unknown Gospel and a group (i.e. the Carpocratians) that quickly diminished after the second century, it no longer held any interest and was left to lie dormant in the monastery. John of Damascus may have known of a collection of Clementine letters when he worked at Mar Saba (716-49 CE) and, after a devastating fire in

⁸²⁶ Hengel, *Studies*, 4; Bauckham, “Response to Margaret Mitchell,” 77.

⁸²⁷ Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence,” 51-2.

⁸²⁸ On the circumstances of the discovery, see Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1-4; *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel According to Mark* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1974), 10-7.

⁸²⁹ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 285; *Secret Gospel*, 143. Clement had studied in Jerusalem and was friends with the future bishop of the city, Alexander, and Smith argues that Theodore may have been a popular name for Christians of Jewish ancestry.

the monastery library in the eighteenth century, a monk may have preserved the letter for posterity by scribbling out its contents on the last few leaves of a random book.⁸³⁰

The letter recounts how the evangelist Mark composed a second edition of his Gospel while in Alexandria that Clement calls the “mystic Gospel” (*Theod.* II.6, 12).⁸³¹ Of the two excerpts Clement quotes (cf. II.21-3.11; III.14-16), the first takes place between Mark 10:35 and 36. Jesus resurrects a rich youth (νεανίσκος) and, after staying at his house for a period of six days, instructs him in the “mystery of the kingdom of god” (cf. Mark 4:11) during the last night. The narrator depicts the youth wearing a linen clothe (σινδών) over his naked body on this night, paralleling the description of a youth in Mark 14:51-2. The second fills in a lacuna in Mark 10:46a by narrating how Jesus refused to receive the youth’s sister and mother and Salome in Jericho, but without the full context to clarify Jesus’s actions. Disconcertingly for Clement, Carpocrates stole the text and twisted it in a libertine direction, inserting new material including the line “naked man with naked man” (γυμνὸς γυμνῶ) (III.13).

This is a remarkable find, but, for some scholars, it is too scandalous to be true. Quentin Quesnell was the first to insinuate that Smith may have forged the letter in order to test how the guild assimilates new data.⁸³² With the publication of Stephen Carlson’s *The Gospel Hoax*, the floodgates opened for more scholars to express their suspicions of Smith in print.⁸³³ Pending an

⁸³⁰ For the details, see Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 284-90; *Secret Gospel*, 143-5; cf. Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 70-1. On the other hand, Pierluigi Piovanelli has cast some critical suspicion on the location of the find as John of Damascus may have worked at Jerusalem until 742 CE, not at Mar Saba as his later biographers avered. See Pierluigi Piovanelli, “Halfway Between Sabbatai Tzevi and Aleister Crowley: Morton Smith’s ‘Own Concept of What Jesus ‘Must’ Have Been’ and, Once Again, the Questions of Evidence and Motive” in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery: The Secret Gospel of Mark in Debate* (ed. Tony Burke; Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 163.

⁸³¹ Brown (*Mark’s Other Gospel*, xi) notes that the “Mystic Gospel” is a better translation of μυστικὸν εὐαγγέλιον than the standard “Secret Gospel” as Clement does not mean that the Gospel itself is secret, only that its meaning is concealed. I will refer to it as the mystic Gospel or “mystic Mark” from henceforth.

⁸³² Q. Quesnell, “The Mar Saba Clementine: A Question of Evidence,” *CBQ* 37 (1975), 57-8.

⁸³³ See Stephen Carlson, *The Gospel Hoax: Morton Smith’s Invention of Secret Mark* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005); Peter Jeffrey, *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled: Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death and Madness in a Biblical Forgery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Francis Watson, “Beyond Suspicion: on the Authorship of the Mar Saba Letter and the Secret Gospel of Mark” *JTS* 61 (2010): 128-70. Recently, a conference

investigation of this divisive topic in my appendix, I would just like to tentatively include the *Letter to Theodore* in this survey for the sake of completeness. The letter has the following account of the composition history of Mark (*Theod.* I.15-22):⁸³⁴

As for Mark, then, during Peter's stay in Rome, he wrote an account of the Lord's doings, not, however, declaring all of them, nor yet hinting at the mystic ones, but selecting what he thought most useful for increasing the faith of those who were being instructed. But when Peter died a martyr, Mark came over to Alexandria, bringing both his own notes and those of Peter, from which he transferred to his former book the things suitable to those studies which make for progress toward knowledge. Thus he composed a more spiritual Gospel for the use of those who were being perfected.⁸³⁵

The letter heaps praises on a second esoteric edition of Mark, but many of the same elements of Clement's account of canonical Mark are repeated: the association of Mark and Peter, the Roman provenance, the publication of the text in Peter's lifetime and the genre of the text as rough "notes" (ὑπομνήματα) (cf. *H.E.* 2.15.2).⁸³⁶ The Carpocratian's dissemination of an edition of Mark that greatly troubled Theodore impelled Clement to present a more telescoped picture of the composition history of Mark than elsewhere.⁸³⁷ Jeff Jay has shown how well the *Letter to Theodore* accords with ancient epistolary genre that bemoaned the pilfering or unauthorized circulation of a book without the author's permission and recounted the book's transmission history to clarify when multiple editions of a work were in circulation.⁸³⁸ For one example, he reviews Augustine's epistle to Aurelius (*ep.* 174) that features Augustine's

at York University was convened for scholars on both sides of the issue and the papers from the conference were published by Tony Burke in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*.

⁸³⁴ This translation is from Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, xviii-xix.

⁸³⁵ ὁ γοῦν Μάρκος, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Πέτρου ἐν Ῥώμῃ διατριβὴν, ἀνέγραψε τὰς πράξεις τοῦ κυρίου, οὐ μέντοι πάσας ἐξαγγέλλων, οὐδὲ μὴν τὰς μυστικὰς ὑποσημαίνων ἀλλ' ἐκλεγόμενος ὡς χρησιμωτάτας ἐνόμισε πρὸς αὐξήσιν τῆς τῶν κατηχουμένων πίστεως. τοῦ δὲ Πέτρου μαρτυρήσατος, παρήλθεν εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ὁ Μάρκος, κομίζων καὶ τὰ [τ] αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ τοῦ Πέτρου ὑπομνήματα ἐξ ὧν μεταφέρων εἰς τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοῦ βιβλίον τὰ τοῖς προκόπτουσι περὶ τὴν γνῶσιν κατάλληλα συνέταξε πνευματικώτερον εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὴν τῶν τελειουμένων χρῆσιν.

⁸³⁶ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 142.

⁸³⁷ Jeff Jay, "A New Look at the Epistolary Framework of the Secret Gospel of Mark" *J ECS* 16 (2008), 590.

⁸³⁸ Jay, "Epistolary Framework," 573-97.

complaint about how his intentions to publish all 12 books of his *De Trinitate* together was thwarted when some stole his books and circulated them before they were ready for publication (174.6-22). Augustine wrote to Aurelius, the new bishop of Carthage, to explain the situation and to have the letter accompany his completed and polished work as an authenticating preface.⁸³⁹ Similarly, the *Letter to Theodore* served as an authenticating seal of approval on the true mystic text in distinction from the Carpocratian's falsified version.

As for the reception of the mystical edition of Mark, Smith's theory was that Mark 10:13-45 with the excerpts from mystic Mark was recited on the night of the Paschal vigil before Easter when baptisms were performed. This section of Mark may plausibly fit into a catechetical context with its references to the monotheistic confession, the commandments and the call to become like children or renounce everything for Jesus. Smith's main support comes from the language of entering "the great mysteries" (τὰ μεγάλα μυστήρια) in the *Letter to Theodore* and the resurrection story, six day preparation period, nocturnal setting and symbolic baptismal garb (σινδών) of the mystic text.⁸⁴⁰ The liturgiologist Thomas Talley saw the *Letter to Theodore* as the missing link for the Coptic tradition that Jesus baptized his disciples on the sixth day of the sixth week after Epiphany.⁸⁴¹ From a typika dating from the ninth to tenth centuries, he observed that Mark played a substantial role in the Lenten readings of Constantinople but, after the reading of Mark 10:32-45 on the Sunday of the fifth reading, the reading of John 11:1-45 replaced Mark on the Sabbath of the sixth week. Talley argues that the forty day Lenten fast displaced an original fast following Epiphany (January 6) and reconstructs a hypothetical lectionary over the Epiphany season in Alexandria where Mark is continuously read. Mark 10:32-45, along with the Lazarus-like resurrection story of the mystic text, was read on Friday and Mark 10:46-52 on the

⁸³⁹ Jay, "Epistolary Framework," 579-82.

⁸⁴⁰ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 168-88; *Secret Gospel*, 64-69. T

⁸⁴¹ Thomas Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1986), 205-14.

Sabbath of the sixth week.⁸⁴² But Talley's reconstruction is based on very late evidence and Peter Jeffrey cannot find a place for mystic Mark in the Epiphany season of Alexandria as the text has no water imagery or allusions to John's baptism of Jesus and the tradition that Jesus baptized his disciples on the sixth day of the sixth week is a later justification for a practice whose origin has been forgotten.⁸⁴³ Staying at the youth's house for six days does not equal the "sixth day" or the sixth day of the week when Jesus baptized *plural* disciples.⁸⁴⁴

A greater problem for Smith's theory is that the *Letter to Theodore* does not presuppose an audience of Christian neophytes preparing for baptism, but advanced Christians who are being perfected in γνῶσις (knowledge) and initiated into "the great mysteries" (I.20-II.2; cf. *Strom.* 4.1.3.1-4; 5.11.79.7-71.3).⁸⁴⁵ The term μυστήριον (mystery) was used in a cognitive rather than a cultic sense. In the first century the term "mystery" related to salvation history (e.g., Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 15:51; Eph 1:9; 3:3-4, 9) and to philosophy in the second or third centuries; Clement's distinctive usage of it is for the divine truth hidden beneath the literal level that can be unveiled through allegorical exegesis.⁸⁴⁶ Yet Jeffrey argues that those "being perfected" (τελειουμένων) in the letter, in contrast to those "being instructed" (χατηχουμένων) (*Theod.* I.22), are the individuals who have reached the end (τέλος) of their catechumenate and received baptism. For Clement, baptism confers perfection (cf. *Paed.* 1.6.25.1-26.3) against a Valentinian two-tiered hierarchy of Christian simplores and elite gnostics.⁸⁴⁷ Brown grants that some passages in Clement imply that the baptized have been perfected (*Paed.* 1.6.26.1) but, like Paul

⁸⁴² Talley, *Liturgical Year*, 185, 210-2.

⁸⁴³ Jeffrey, *Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled*, 74-89; idem "Clement's Mysteries and Morton Smith's Magic" in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*, 220.

⁸⁴⁴ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 148-9.

⁸⁴⁵ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 130; "Behind the Seven Veils, I: The Gnostic Life Setting of the Mystic Gospel of Mark" in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*, 248, 250-5.

⁸⁴⁶ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 127-35.

⁸⁴⁷ Jeffrey, "Clement's Mysteries," 221-30. It should be noted that Jeffrey believes the letter to be a forgery that imitates Clement's ritual terminology but misrepresents the actual ritual practices in second century Alexandria.

(cf. Phil 3:12), other passages in Clement view the attainment of perfection as a process as the Christian grows in knowledge and love that is not completed in this lifetime (*Paed.* 1.6.52.2-3; *Strom.* 6.9.78.3-4; 14.111.3).⁸⁴⁸ An already-not yet tension exists in Clement's thought. The context of the *Letter to Theodore* makes clear that the readers being perfected and initiated into the "great mysteries" have advanced far beyond preliminary instruction in the Christian faith.⁸⁴⁹ Brown explicates how the metaphor of a mystagogue leading the interpreter into the innermost sanctuary of the truth hidden behind the seven veils (*Theod.* I.22, 25-6) corresponds to Clement's imagery of the universe as a celestial temple and the progression of the soul through seven stages of purification to the Ogdoad ("eight"), the "holy of holies" where the perfected gnostic contemplates divine reality face to face.⁸⁵⁰ Brown writes that "[t]he truth unveiled through mystic exegesis is not for all and sundry but is restricted to those who have attained a level of perceptiveness, understanding, interneal harmony, self-control, and purity that merits access to the inner sanctuary (cf. Philo, *Ebr.* 34.135-136)."⁸⁵¹

Leaving aside the glowing endorsement of the mystic text of Mark that was available to the select few, the letter may not drastically alter Clement's assessment of the public, canonical edition. In truth, the canonical text of Mark again comes up short in comparison to a "more spiritual Gospel" (πνευματικώτερον εὐαγγέλιον) (*Theod.* I.21), except in this instance mystic Mark replaces John as the spiritual exemplar (cf. *H.E.* 6.14.7). The evangelist selected only what was useful for the edification of beginning κατηχούμενοι (catechoumens) of the doings of the Lord (τὰς πράξεις τοῦ κυρίου) when beginning to compile his memoirs (ὑπομνήματα) in Rome and did not yet divulge the hierophanic teachings of the Lord (I.23-4). This may be an apt

⁸⁴⁸ Brown, "Seven Veils," 279-82.

⁸⁴⁹ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 130.

⁸⁵⁰ Brown, "Seven Veils," 255-7, 259-76.

⁸⁵¹ Brown, "Seven Veils," 276.

characterization of the new converts of Rome who requested a draft of Peter's preaching.⁸⁵² The real gnostic goods are not stored in this elementary text. Therefore, the acceptance or rejection of the *Letter to Theodore* as an ancient text does not impact Clement's ultimate evaluation of the *canonical* text. With or without the letter added to our database, canonical Mark is compared either way to a text with greater spiritual profundity (John or mystic Mark) to the detriment of the former. It may be satisfactory as a first draft of Peter's preaching for a limited purpose, but it is not a refined literary work like the Gospels with the genealogies and not sufficient for the advanced Christian who seeks a deeper knowledge.

D. The Disfigurement of the Evangelist

To keep my thesis at a manageable length, I stated the parameters of my study as the period from Papias to Clement of Alexandria. The traditions about Mark, surnamed the "stump-fingered," in the *Refutation of All Heresies* (7.18) by the third century schismatic bishop of Rome and heresiologist Hippolytus (ca. 170-236) may be too late for my survey. Hippolytus's reference to Mark in the context of refuting Marcion may also be a careless mistake. He indicts Marcion of plagiarizing the Greek philosophy of Empedocles in formulating his conception of the Demiurge, for Marcion's doctrines are neither found in Paul "the Apostle" (ὁ ἀπόστολος) nor Mark "the stump-fingered" (ὁ κολοβοδάκτυλος). His accusation that Marcion tampered with the text of Mark stands against the judgment of Irenaeus (*A.H.* 1.27.2), Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 4.2.4.; 4.3.1-2) and Epiphanius (*Haer.* 1.3.11) that Marcion's Gospel was most akin to Luke. Black writes, "Assuming (as do most scholars) that Irenaeus and Tertullian were right about this, has Hippolytus confused Mark with Luke, or is this evidence of his cavaliness with the facts about

⁸⁵² Bauckham, "Response to Margaret Mitchell," 76 n. 29.

those whom he excoriates?”⁸⁵³ Paul and Mark are once again reunited since the pages of the NT, but Hippolytus makes nothing of this fact and may only name them as two recognizable figures in the history of early Christianity.⁸⁵⁴

Even so, the way Hippolytus casually passed on the moniker “stump-fingered” (κολοβοδάκτυλος), without explanation or apology, may suggest it was a detail already familiar to his readers in Rome. The term *colobodaktylus* resurfaces in the old Latin prologues attached to Mark. Formed from κολοβός (curtailed, maimed) and δάκτυλος (finger), this is the sole occurrence of this compound word in Latin and may be a Greek loanword. Richard Heard cites a few Greek parallels such as κολόβοριν (stump-nose) (Lev 21:18 LXX) and κολοβοτράχηλος (stump-necked) (Adamant, *Physiogn.* 2.21).⁸⁵⁵ Otherwise, the Latin prologue does not depart from the standard traditions about the evangelist as the “interpreter” (*interpres*) of Peter and the location of the Gospel more generally in the “regions of Italy” (*partibus Italiae*). There are two main recensions of the Latin prologue to Mark, one which agrees with Irenaeus in dating Mark after the departure (*post excessionem*) of Peter and an enlarged one which agrees with Eusebius and Jerome on Peter’s approval of the Gospel and the evangelist’s episcopal office in Alexandria.⁸⁵⁶ The manuscripts with the Latin prologues are far later than Hippolytus, but the traditions contained within them may date back earlier.

Renewed attention was given to these prologues when Donatien de Bruyne advanced his case that the Latin prologues to Mark, Luke and John found in 37 manuscripts from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries can be dated back to the end of the second century and served a united purpose in the aftermath of the Marcionite crisis. His argument for the unity and dating of the

⁸⁵³ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 116-7.

⁸⁵⁴ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 117.

⁸⁵⁵ The only parallels R.G. Heard (“The Old Gospel Prologues” *JTS* 6 [1955], 4) finds is κολόβοριν (maimed nose) in Lev 21:18 LXX and in Adamant, *Physiogn.* 2.21.

⁸⁵⁶ For the Latin prologue to Mark, see Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 29-30; Orchard, *Order*, 148.

prologues was made on the following grounds: 1. the unity of the three prologues in the Spanish branch of manuscripts (TXE) and the most important manuscripts (FNS), 2. the shared phraseology in the prologues to Luke (*in archaiae partibus hoc descripsit evangelium*) and Mark (*descripsit idem hoc in partibus italiae evangelium*), 3. the explicit polemic against Marcion in the prologue to John and implicit polemic in the prologue to Luke, and 4. the dependence of the fourth century Monarchian prologues on the “anti-Marcionite” prologues.⁸⁵⁷ There is evidence of a Greek original of the prologue to Luke in manuscripts from the tenth (Cod. Atheniensis) and eleventh centuries (Cod. Bodl. Misc. Graec. 14); the term *colobaktylus* may imply a Greek original of the prologue to Mark. De Bruyne located the prologues in second century Rome because the nickname *colobodaktylus* was known only in Rome and Rome was the site of the intense opposition to Marcion.⁸⁵⁸ His argument won over many supporters including the leading scholar of his generation, Adolf von Harnack.⁸⁵⁹

The nomenclature “anti-Marcionite” prologues has lived on, though the reasoning behind it has been steadily eroded and seems to have been decisively overturned in the monograph of Jürgen Regul.⁸⁶⁰ Six manuscripts is not a solid basis for the inference that all three prologues were originally united as they may not be independent of each other or show signs of re-writing.⁸⁶¹ There is strong evidence that the prologue to Luke circulated independently as it is the most frequently represented in the manuscripts (22 times) and, as it contains information on

⁸⁵⁷ Donatien de Bruyne, “Les plus anciens prologues Latines des Evangiles,” *RBén* 40 (1928), 200-1. I am grateful to Victor Gomes for assistance in translating this article for me.

⁸⁵⁸ De Bruyne, “prologues,” 209-10.

⁸⁵⁹ A. von Harnack, “Die ältesten Evangelien-Prologe und die Bildung des Neuen Testaments” (*SB* 1928): 322-41; See also W.F. Howard, “The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels,” *ExpTim* 47 (1935-36): 534-8; Robert M. Grant, “The Oldest Gospel Prologues,” *ATR* 23 (1941): 231-245; Taylor, *St. Mark*, 3.

⁸⁶⁰ See especially his conclusions in Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 266-7. For others who dissented from de Bruyne, see Engelbert Gutwenger, S.J., “The Anti-Marcionite Prologues,” *TS* 7 (1946): 393-409; Richard G. Heard, “The Old Gospel Prologues,” *JTS* 6 (1955): 1-16; Haenchen, *Acts*, 10-12 n. 1.

⁸⁶¹ Gutwenger, “Anti-Marcionite,” 398-9; Heard, “Prologues,” 3; Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 70-4. For instance, the second recension of the prologue to Mark is likely a re-writing of the earlier version.

Matthew, Mark, John and Revelation, may have been intended as an all inclusive prologue.⁸⁶²

The Latin prologue to Luke may have served as a source for the Monarchian prologue, but the Monarchian prologue to Mark is much larger and, aside from the nickname, differs substantially from the other prologue to Mark in that it has nothing about the evangelist as Peter's disciple and interpreter or of Peter's demise and has a different explanation for the evangelist's infirmity.⁸⁶³

The bit of shared phraseology in the prologues to Mark and Luke may be chalked up to a common expression,⁸⁶⁴ to assimilation of the prologue of Mark to Luke's by a scribe who combined them,⁸⁶⁵ or to dependence of the prologue of Mark on that of Luke.⁸⁶⁶ The Latin prologue of John explicitly reproaches Marcion, but the evidence for an anti-Marcionite polemic in Luke is weak. Its broad brush against "Jewish fables" (cf. 1 Tim 1:4-6) is vague and the reference to the beginning of the Gospel with the Baptist's birth would hardly confound Marcion. Marcion would be favourably disposed to the reference to the evangelist Luke's celibacy and was not adverse to the Baptist's preparatory role; the first two chapters of Luke were not conducive to Marcion because of the birth of Jesus.⁸⁶⁷ An anti-Marcionite agenda behind the prologues makes the loss of a prologue to Matthew tough to explain, for Matthew's theme of the continuity of Jesus with the scriptures of Israel would be a powerful counterpoint to Marcion.⁸⁶⁸

On its own, the prologue to Mark does not lend itself to a specifically anti-Marcionite purpose. Ellis grants that Regul has refuted the unity of the prologues but is willing to maintain the second century dating and Roman provenance of the prologue to Mark as the tradition contained therein may be in the same stage of development as in Irenaeus in dating the

⁸⁶² Heard, "Prologues," 4.

⁸⁶³ Gutwenger, "Anti-Marcionite," 400; Heard, "Prologues," 3.

⁸⁶⁴ Gutwenger, "Anti-Marcionite," 400; Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 75. *Romani sunt in partibus Italiae* is found in the so-called "Marcionite" prologue to Paul's epistle to the Romans.

⁸⁶⁵ Heard, "Prologues," 3.

⁸⁶⁶ Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 75.

⁸⁶⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, 11 n.1; contra de Bruyne, "anciens prologues," 205-6.

⁸⁶⁸ Heard, "Prologues," 2; Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 75.

transmission of Mark after Peter's demise and in transliterating the Roman epithet *colobodaktylus*.⁸⁶⁹ Although de Bruyne argued that prologue antedates Irenaeus,⁸⁷⁰ it may be more likely that the prologue expands upon Irenaeus as the latter does not seem to be aware of the nickname given to the evangelist.⁸⁷¹ There may also be no evidence of a Greek original if the prologue borrowed the nickname from Hippolytus.⁸⁷² The non-polemical nature of the prologue to Mark and lack of details makes it virtually impossible to determine its exact age and origin before the date of the manuscripts.⁸⁷³ It may be far too late to shed meaningful light on the attitude of second century Christians towards Mark.

To turn back to the first occurrence of the nickname *κολοβοδάκτυλος* in the early third century work of Hippolytus, his unreflexive inclusion of it intimates that he is not the originator and that it was common knowledge in his context. The meaning may have long been forgotten, promoting the multiplication of rationalizations for it.⁸⁷⁴ The evidence has been thoroughly reviewed by J.L. North.⁸⁷⁵ The misleadingly labeled "anti-Marcionite" prologue opts for the simple, literal interpretation that the evangelist had too short fingers in comparison to the rest of his body (*corporis proceritatem digitos minores habuisset*). This is probably the safest option in that it does not demean the evangelist and navigates out of a tricky predicament.⁸⁷⁶ A Spanish manuscript of the Vulgate, *codex Toletanus*, and some other Latin manuscripts agrees with this interpretation. Other interpretations of the nickname are found in *codex Amiatinus*, a Vulgate

⁸⁶⁹ Ellis, *Making*, 359.

⁸⁷⁰ De Bruyne, "anciens prologues," 203.

⁸⁷¹ For the argument that the prologue expands upon Irenaeus, see Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 98; cf. Hengel, *Studies*, 3-4.

⁸⁷² Gutwenger, "Anti-Marcionite," 402.

⁸⁷³ Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 95, 97. The earliest manuscript that Regul notes has a colophon that mentions that an earlier copy was corrected for Ecclessius, the archbishop of Ravenna in 521-32 CE.

⁸⁷⁴ Regul, *antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 96.

⁸⁷⁵ J.L. North, "MARKOS HO KOLOBODAKTYLOS: Hippolytus, *Elenchus*, VII.30," *JTS* 29 (1977): 499-500. The rest of this paragraph is indebted to his review of the manuscript evidence.

⁸⁷⁶ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 120.

manuscript, and the Monarchian prologue where Mark intentionally amputates himself to disqualify himself from the Jewish priesthood and a third interpretation in two Heberno-Latin texts (ca 750 CE) that he desired to avoid the Christian episcopate.

To ascertain what might have been the import of the epithet to those who first heard it, some scholars judge it to be as harmless as the flat-footed Justus in the *Acts of Paul*.⁸⁷⁷ For Stein, the divulgence that the evangelist had a physical deformity passes the criterion of embarrassment. He writes, “The negative comment about Mark’s ‘stumpfingers’ has every appearance of being a historically reliable tradition. It is most unlikely that secondary tradition would demean Mark by such a description.”⁸⁷⁸ Parker and Oden take seriously the alternative explanation that John Mark was a Levite and purposely mutilated his fingers to evade the priesthood,⁸⁷⁹ but the tradition can be better explained as an attempt to provide a backstory to explain an obscure epithet by harmonizing Barnabas as a Levite in Acts 4:36 with the filial relationship of Mark and Barnabas in Colossians 4:10. It may be naïve to suppose that this physical description arose out of ideology-free, antiquarian interests. Such a deprecating epithet may not have been taken so innocently in the honour culture of the ancient Mediterranean.⁸⁸⁰

If the epithet in Hippolytus was the remnants of an earlier polemic, scholars debate whether the target was the text of Mark, the person of John Mark or the mutilated Gospel of Marcion.⁸⁸¹ The last option corresponds to the literary context that Hippolytus has placed the reference to Mark, but Hippolytus’s polemic against Marcion may be confused and the nickname predates his usage. For some scholars, the epithet is not attached to the text but to the evangelist himself. North has the most ingenious hypothesis for the origins of the derisive nickname in a

⁸⁷⁷ De Bruyne, “anciens prologues,” 201; Grant, “Oldest Gospel Prologues,” 235; Heard, “Prologues,” 5.

⁸⁷⁸ Stein, *Mark*, 3. Cf. Swete, *St. Mark*, xxvi-xxvii; Taylor, *St. Mark*, 3-4.

⁸⁷⁹ Parker, “John Mark,” 97-8; Oden, *African Memory*, 88.

⁸⁸⁰ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 118.

⁸⁸¹ See the summary in North, *MARKOS HO KOLOBODAKTYLOS*, 502-3.

malicious pun on the evangelist's name *Marcus* as *murcus*, a moniker coined by Gallic soldiers for Italian soldiers who cut off their thumbs to cowardly shirk military service. If this link can be substantiated, the inventor of this pun was disgusted by John Mark's cowardice in deserting his fellow missionaries (cf. Acts 13:13; 15:38).⁸⁸² For Black, such creative readings ultimately enter into the realm of speculation, but the basic point is that it was a slur on the evangelist's diminished physical or moral capacities.⁸⁸³ However, if a new meaning of the epithet was imposed on an earlier one, it could be that it had once been in reference to the Gospel of Mark, cut short at the beginning and ending of the work when measured by the infancy and resurrection narratives of Matthew or Luke. In time the referent was forgotten and the epithet was transferred to the evangelist, which was still unflattering to the person of Mark but no longer a damning assessment of a canonical text. Whether towards the text or the evangelist, the nickname was another sign of patristic ambivalence towards Mark.

E. Conclusion: Reading between the Lines of the Patristic Reports on Mark

In my introduction of the thesis, Mark was characterized as a text at once present and absent in the canon. Schildgen laid the blame at the feet of Augustine who devalued Mark as parroting Matthew and as an author who had little that was distinctive to say (*de. Cons. Evan.* 1.2.4). Papias should not be let off the hook in setting the trend for the reception of Mark, in both the positive and negative sense. On one level, Mark is a trustworthy record of the life of Jesus as mediated through the witness of Peter. On another level, Mark did not measure up to another Gospel such as Matthew (Papias, Irenaeus, Clement) or John (Clement). They all endeavor to justify why they thought that Mark, a Gospel that is faithful to the prince of the apostles, was a

⁸⁸² North, "MARKOS HO KOLOBODAKTYLOS", 503-5.

⁸⁸³ Black, *Apostolic Interpreter*, 118.

substandard work, rhetorically and theologically. The rationalizations for their cavalier treatment of Mark range from the argument that the evangelist was not able to mold his Gospel into a properly ordered literary work as a secondhand intermediary of Peter (Papias), he wrote after Peter had passed away (Irenaeus) or without Peter's official endorsement (Clement), or the text was mutilated. If Mark was grudgingly accepted, the next chapter will explore the evidence of a more positive reception on the "other side."

CHAPTER 6

THE CLASH OF RIVAL INTERPRETERS OF MARK

Although Mark was unappreciated by centrist Christian interpreters, it may have been positively received in other circles of Christian readers. Through the course of this thesis, I have touched on patristic discussions about the affection that the Valentinians and the Montanists had for John or Marcion for an expurgated version of Luke.⁸⁸⁴ There are fewer patristic comments that explicitly name an interpretive community that principally esteemed Mark, but I will delve into the scribal revisions and patristic exegesis on Mark in the larger context of the polemical situation in the second century. Scribes and learned patristic exegetes often “correct” Mark to counteract an actual, or what was feared as a potential, aberrant reading. Specifically, they were wary about how Mark may lend itself in support of an adoptionist or separationist Christology and of the privileged status of esoteric knowledge. To appropriate Mark in the name of Peter and his authorized successors was also to delegitimize the interpretive strategies of groups that did not read the text from the lens of the apostolic “rule of faith.”

A. What Counts as a Citation of a Written Gospel Text?

Before we can explore the diverse ways that Mark was read in the second century, it is essential to delineate what constitutes an inter-textual reference to Mark. Intertextuality is a field that studies how one writer is influenced by a prior body of discourse that makes his or her own text intelligible, whether to cite or transpose or refute that prior discourse, and about the linguistic or

⁸⁸⁴ See also Irenaeus, *A.H.* 1.27.2; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.2. However, a few scholars have challenged the patristic characterization of Marcion’s Gospel, which he attaches no name, preferring to see it as a local Pontic recession of a Luke that differed from the canonical text (see Gregory, *Luke and Acts*, 173-210; Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 38-40).

thematic relations between texts.⁸⁸⁵ In assessing how a writer takes up a prior text, Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett define a “reference” as an umbrella term for the apparent use of one text in another and an “allusion” or “quotation” as a more specific term on the manner in which and degree of certainty in which the presence of such a reference may be established. They narrow the definition of a quotation as significant verbal identity and perhaps a formal marker while an allusion may be much looser, but they permit that the boundaries between quotations, allusions or paraphrases are fairly porous.⁸⁸⁶ Complicating the issue is the inaccessibility of the authorial intention and the uncertainty about whether it is possible to know whether an author consciously borrows from an earlier text or if the similarities between texts are due to shared resonances or familiar imagery.⁸⁸⁷

This difficulty is compounded in the study of the reception of the Synoptics in Christian writers in the period before Irenaeus. Unlike the Pauline epistles, which are mostly the creative product of a solitary individual, Matthew and Luke reproduce most of the content and at times wording of Mark and all three Synoptic writers had oral or written sources at their disposal. The statistics compiled in the *Biblia Patristica* may be unreliable in indiscriminately attributing a reference to Mark when it is to Synoptic triple tradition or to material Mark shares with Matthew or Luke, so there is no guarantee that many of the references that are counted for Mark were not drawn from the more popular Matthean or Lukan parallels. Even patristic references to passages singly attested in Mark may theoretically come from a Mark-like oral or written source that was circulating in the second century. Other scholars, with a greater awareness of these pitfalls, have implemented methodologically rigorous criteria for detecting an inter-textual reference.

⁸⁸⁵ See the review and discussion on intertextuality in Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 35-42.

⁸⁸⁶ Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett, “Reflections on Method: What Constitutes the Use of Writings that later formed the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers,” in *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, 64.

⁸⁸⁷ Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 401.

The ability to determine when a writer was copying a Synoptic text rather than relying on a free floating oral tradition or another written source is not an exact science. Massaux allows for literary contact if there is sufficient verbal correspondence and a text is closer to a particular Gospel than any other text.⁸⁸⁸ His “principle of simplicity” is to not multiply hypothetical sources, but the oral tradition in Christian catechism and worship did not cease with the production of written Gospels as confirmed by Papias’s praise of a “living and abiding voice.”⁸⁸⁹ Wolf-Dieter Köhler has sharpened Massaux’s methodology.⁸⁹⁰ When the citation is not marked by an explicit formula identifying the source text, he argues that literary dependence may be likely (*wahrscheinlich*) if a text clearly coincides with a source text, has less proximity to other texts and deviations of the wording can be accounted for as redactional changes. Literary dependence may be quite possible (*gut möglich*) if the last two criteria remain as constants even if a text is not as consistently close to its source text or if the first and third criteria are constants but other literary parallels are equal contenders. Lastly, it is theoretically possible (*theoretisch möglich*) if the first and third criteria are constants but a text has greater proximity to other literary parallels. It is also theoretically possible if the first and second criteria are constants but the wording differs to such an extent from the source text that dependence is questionable.

Köhler’s sophisticated criteria may not adequately address the ramifications of the proliferation of oral and written traditions closely related to the Synoptic texts. Thus, he judges literary dependence to be “*wahrscheinlich*” if a text produced in a different social context shares the special material (*Sondergut*) of a source text and “*gut möglich*” if it shares the *Sondergut*

⁸⁸⁸ Maussaux, *Influence*, 1:xxi-xxii

⁸⁸⁹ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 31-4; Gregory, *Luke and Acts*, 15.

⁸⁹⁰ I take the following criteria from Köhler, *Rezeption*, 12-4.

even if it arises in the same environment.⁸⁹¹ This issue has occupied Helmut Koester for over half of century since the publication of his dissertation on the Synoptic tradition in the Apostolic Fathers. His criterion for how one can be confident of literary dependence on a Synoptic text rather than a shared oral tradition is when one is able to detect elements of the evangelist's redactional activity in the later text.⁸⁹² Koester's methodology has some limitations. First, it eliminates a number of potential parallels if the evangelist's redaction, precisely defined by how a writer edits a source or freely creates new material, is undetectable. Second, it assumes that second century Christian writers strictly reproduced their source when there may be ideological motivations to selectively quote in a polemical situation.⁸⁹³ Nevertheless, Gregory makes the valuable point that adopting Koester's rigorous approach does not absolutely exclude the possibility that a patristic writer had knowledge of a certain Synoptic Gospel, only that in those cases literary dependence is not demonstrable and it is better to be safe with a smaller quantity of secure results.⁸⁹⁴ In addition to Koester's criterion, the inclusion of some kind of formula (e.g., it is written), an extended piece of shared text and the rarity of the terminology shared between the two texts may be used as supplementary evidence for a literary relationship.⁸⁹⁵

There is an additional difficulty with Koester's criterion that relates to my previous criticisms of the application of redaction criticism to Mark. The standard solution to the Synoptic Problem is Koester's starting assumption, though there are solid reasons to consent to the consensus on Markan priority, and changes to Mark by Matthew or Luke may not always be redactional as they had other available sources.⁸⁹⁶ Even so, to arrive at minimally secure results

⁸⁹¹ Köhler, *Rezeption*, 14. See the fair review and critique of Köhler's method in Gregory, *Luke and Acts*, 10-2, 16-20; Gregory and Tuckett, "Method," 71-5.

⁸⁹² Koester, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, 3; cf. Foster "Justin Martyr," 105-6; Gregory and Tuckett, "Method," 71.

⁸⁹³ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 127-8.

⁸⁹⁴ Gregory, *Reception of Luke*, 13

⁸⁹⁵ Foster "Gospel of Peter," 105.

⁸⁹⁶ Köhler, *Rezeption*, 14-5, Gregory, *Reception of Luke*, 13-14; Gregory and Tuckett, "Method," 76-77.

for the use of Matthew and Luke in the second century writers, Koester's criterion may be the most effective method. The critical weakness of Koester's methodology comes to a head with Mark, however, because we do not have the sources of Mark to discern Markan redaction. Mark's special material may come from an unknown source. The leaning of a redaction critic on distinctive Markan vocabulary may indicate no more than the terminology preferred by a certain writer, regardless of whether the same terms were in Mark's sources or not.⁸⁹⁷ Separating out the redaction from the tradition in Mark involves a degree of speculation.

Therefore, to determine literary dependence on Mark rather than a Synoptic parallel or a Mark-like source, a scholar should, first, look for a formula that explicitly identifies the citation as coming from Mark. Unluckily, there are no such quotation formulas naming Mark in any Christian writer before Irenaeus, so the next best thing a scholar can do is to look for passages unique to Mark or distinctive features that are not shared in the Synoptic parallels. The case for a reference to Mark rather than a Mark-like source is strengthened if there is significant verbal and thematic correspondences with the source text and details that may be unlikely reproduced in another source, whether a grammatical error or stylistic oddity that a better writer would clean up or an idiosyncratic position that other Christian texts might exclude as a theological liability. To see how these strictures might work in practice, not just in theory, we can take a second look at the reference in Justin's *Dialogue* 106:3. Absolute certainty on the source of the reference may prove to be elusive without an explicit attribution to Mark, but there is good reason to render the formula "memoirs of him" in the literary context as Peter's memoirs and to detect Papias's influence in the background. A strong case may be made for an allusion to special Markan material as well. Not only is the nickname βουναργής singly attested in Mark among the Synoptics, but it is also unlikely that another source would independently reproduce the same

⁸⁹⁷ Black, *The Disciples in Mark*, 116-7; Gregory and Tuckett, "Method," 76.

erratic transliteration of the Aramaic. For this reason, this text is widely classified as an inter-textual reference to Mark 3:17, ranging from Maussaux to Koester.⁸⁹⁸

The aim of this chapter is not to exhaustively survey every last reference to Mark in the second century. I am indebted to the painstaking labours of previous scholarship in gathering the data. My interest is in the second order act of interpretation and, more narrowly, on testing Braun's hypothesis that the patristic reservation over Mark may be evidence for the positive reception of Mark by the theological adversaries of the patristic writers. At first sight, when more rigorous methodological strictures are applied to the limited textual data in the period, the evidence for a readership for Mark outside centrist Christian circles is not very promising. Excluding the Gospel of Thomas, Christopher Tuckett spots two demonstrable allusions in the Nag Hammadi Corpus to Mark: the Second Treatise of the Great Seth 56.6-13 (Mark 5:21) and Melchizedek (IX.I) 25.5f (Mark 15:33, 42).⁸⁹⁹ Tuckett's survey mirrors the results of the patristic literature in that the Nag Hammadi texts depend on Matthew the most, Luke to a lesser degree and Mark hardly at all.⁹⁰⁰ The jury may be out on the relationship of *Thomas* with the Synoptics, but two recent studies making the case for literary dependence do not find a single saying in *Thomas* that is exclusively shared with Mark without elements from Matthew and Luke in it and just one saying that features distinctive Markan material in the seed growing secretly (Mark 4:29/*Thom.* 21.10).⁹⁰¹ Bauckham argues that Saying 13 denigrates Peter and Matthew as

⁸⁹⁸ Maussaux, *Saint Irenaeus*, 2.90; Köhler, *Rezeption*, 255-6; Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 274.

⁸⁹⁹ Christopher Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition: Synoptic Tradition in the Nag Hammadi Library* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 125-26, 150. He concludes that both contain references to distinctive Markan material that is arguably redactional. The first refers to Simon's sons listed only in Mark 15:21. The latter passage speaks about the crucifixion from the third to the ninth hour, which is a time frame found only in Mark 15:33, 42.

⁹⁰⁰ Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi*, 13-148, 149-50.

⁹⁰¹ Simon Gathercole, *The Composition of the Gospel of Thomas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 153, 153 n. 19, 155; Mark Goodacre, *Thomas and the Gospels: The Case for Thomas' Familiarity with the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2012), 21, 78 n. 42, 80 n. 49; cf. Neiryck, "Apocryphal Gospels, 137-9. Goodacre (*Thomas*, 80 n. 50) and Neiryck ("Apocryphal Gospels," 134-7) also see *Thomas* 20 as following the wording of the Markan form of the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:32).

the authorities behind the first two canonical Gospels,⁹⁰² but Peter's role is not unexpected as a spokesperson for centrist Christians whereas "Matthew" is the odd one out.⁹⁰³ In the survey of Edwards on the patristic citations of a Hebrew Gospel, he alleges that there is not a single one that agrees exclusively with Mark against Matthew or Luke nor an example of a word, phrase or thematic parallel replicated from Mark that does not have as great a parallel with Matthew and Luke.⁹⁰⁴ In fact, Edward's thesis is that the Hebrew Gospel predates the Synoptics as the source of Luke's Sondergut, but he underestimates the evidence in Epiphanius's source may have been a Synoptic harmony (cf. the near verbatim agreement of *Pan.* 30.13.5/Mark 1:4-6) that does pick up Matthean redaction (cf. "Matthew" instead of Levi at the tax collectors booth in *Pan.* 30.13.3 [Matt 9:9] or the response to the Baptist in 30.13.8 [Matt 3:15]).⁹⁰⁵ Edwards is basically correct that the quotations rarely allude to distinctive Markan material. One deduction from this data could be that there was no receptive audience for Mark at all in the second century.

As for the evidence adduced by Braun, he lists the so-called Anti-Marcionite Prologues as evidence that Mark was of interest to radical Paulinists,⁹⁰⁶ but scholarship since De Bruyne has all but negated the proposals regarding the unity, second century dating and anti-Marcionite character of the Latin prologues. Hippolytus's off-the-cuff remark that Marcion's doctrines are not in Mark stands against the better informed judgment of Irenaeus and Tertullian that Marcion's Gospel was closer to Luke. The *Letter to Theodore* names the Carpocratians as the possessors of an esoteric version of Mark, but, given its controversial status among scholars, I

⁹⁰² Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 236-7.

⁹⁰³ In the view of Gathercole (*Composition*, 169-70), the saying may only exhibit awareness of the text of Matthew.

⁹⁰⁴ Edwards, *Hebrew Gospel*, 109-10. For his survey, see pp. 45-96.

⁹⁰⁵ For a refutation that demonstrates Matthean and Lukan redaction in the quotations of Epiphanius, see Andrew Gregory, "Prior or Posterior? The *Gospel of the Ebionites* and the Gospel of Luke" *NTS* 51 (2005): 349-54; cf. Maussaoux, 5.3, 125, 222-6; Neiryneck, "Apocryphal Gospels," 157-60. Edwards conclusions contradicts his own survey of Epiphanius that there are 13 clear and 14 possible parallels to Luke, 6 clear and 6 possible parallels to Matthew, and 3 clear and 3 possible parallels to Mark (*Hebrew Gospel*, 76).

⁹⁰⁶ Braun, "The first Shall be Last," 54.

hesitate to lean too much on it unless I can find other incontrovertible evidence of the non-centrist Christian reception of Mark. However, there may be one more avenue worth exploring. Through a mirror reading of the patristic exposition of Mark and the theological proclivities of the scribal corrections to Mark, we may be able to witness the remnants of what might have been a more lively battle for the ownership of the Gospel. Working with the limited textual data that is available, it may not always be possible to distinguish reality and perception. That is, my examination of the data below may either reveal that Mark had an active readership among non-centrist Christian communities or it may lay bare the paranoia of centrist Christian interpreters that Mark *could* be taken up in support of “heretical” doctrines, regardless of whether their opponents were actually interested in Mark or not.

B. Reading Mark from the “Other Side”

To predict what issues may have alarmed second century centrist Christian readers of Mark, one area that may have caused great consternation is Mark’s seemingly “low” Christology, keeping in mind that the labels “low” and “high” themselves carry an implicit theological judgment on the validity of different Christological expressions according to the standards of Nicene orthodoxy. While Matthew and Luke commence their narratives from the virginal conception of Jesus and John opens with homage to the pre-existent *Logos*, Mark begins at the baptism. The last recorded words of Jesus in Mark 15:34, a lament of divine abandonment, was replaced with noble dying sentiments in Luke 23:46 and John 19:30. The paradox of the Father forsaking the Son had Christian writers in the late patristic and medieval periods scrambling for all sorts of creative solutions,⁹⁰⁷ though they may have been dealing with the more popular Matthean

⁹⁰⁷ See Kevin Madigan, *The Passions of Christ in High-Medieval Thought: An Essay on Christological Development* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 73-90.

version which retains the cry in slightly different wording (Matt 27:46). A perusal of modern, theologically-oriented commentaries on Mark reveals how Mark 15:34 sparked some theological paradoxes for commentators that the evangelist could not have foreseen.⁹⁰⁸

Other tricky passages in Mark may have contributed to their apprehension. In Mark 10:17-8, a wealthy man greets Jesus with an extravagant gesture and addresses him as “good teacher” (διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ), but Jesus retorts, “why do you call me good? No one is good except one, God” (τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός). A literal reading of the text could carry the startling implications that Jesus distances himself from the deity, but a few scholars have managed to flip the text into an affirmation of Jesus’s intrinsic goodness, hence his divinity.⁹⁰⁹ Matthew 19:16-7a removes the troubling implications altogether with a slight modification: the rich man inquires about “what good thing must I do” (τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω) and the Matthean Jesus answers “why do you ask me concerning the good? One is good” (τί με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ; εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ ἀγαθός). The inclusion of the words “not even the Son” (οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός) among those who are ignorant of the timing of the eschatological day or hour (Mark 13:32; cf. Matt 24:36) was a key proof-text in the debates between the champions of Nicea and their Arian interlocutors over whether the Son possesses the same nature as the Father.⁹¹⁰ At this time, though, both sides may have debated the text in the more popular

⁹⁰⁸ To give a few examples of how some conservative Protestant commentators have wrestled with Mark 15:34, Cranfield (*St. Mark*, 458-9; cf. Lane, *Mark*, 573) interprets Jesus’ cry as a real abandonment by the Father as he bore the burden of sin and the complete identification with sinners, but he reassures his audience that the unity of the Trinity remained unbroken. Taylor (*St. Mark*, 594) rejects the “Lutheran” option that Christ was literally forsaken and the object of divine wrath against sin as problematic because it contradicts the love and unity of the divine purpose in the atonement. Instead, Jesus experienced feelings of divine abandonment but in actuality he was not.

⁹⁰⁹ Gundry, *Apology*, 553; Gathercole, *Preexistent Son*, 74. In support, Jesus does not categorically deny the man’s flattery but asks an open-ended question about the meaning behind the word “good.” Gundry and Gathercole argue that the rest of the pericope affirms that the commands of *Torah* are insufficient to enter eternal life, which can only be attained by obedience to the commandment issued by Jesus to follow him, pointing to his own goodness. However, Jesus’ demand on the man to sell all his possessions and join his movement could be read as affirming *Torah* because the man’s attachment to wealth was seen as a violation of the commandment against idolatry.

⁹¹⁰ See especially Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 39-50.

Matthean version,⁹¹¹ which is supported by the scribal omission of the offending words in a number of manuscripts and witnesses of Matthew rather than Mark.⁹¹²

Additionally, Mark gave a free license to Christian esotericism, from the messianic secret to the division between Jesus's parabolic teachings that were publically available and the hidden wisdom that he imparted in private to an inner circle privy to the "mystery" (Mark 4:11; cf. Matt 13:11; Luke 8:10; *Thom.* 62). Mark 4:11 and parallels was an attractive text for different interpreters because the term "mystery" was an empty signifier that could be filled with new content. As Braun puts it, "We know that a crucial battle line formed over the difference between the views of Jesus as a mystagogue and Jesus as a suffering saviour in the second to fourth centuries."⁹¹³ On the one hand, Mark is far more invested in the Passion of Jesus than the sayings material and some of the "teaching" terminology (διδάσκειν, διδαχή) seem oddly misplaced in that Mark does not narrate what was taught (1:22) or employs it after an action of Jesus (1:27).⁹¹⁴ On the other hand, though James Robinson argues that the *Gattung* of sayings collections evolved into revelatory discourses of the risen Christ to his disciples in some Nag Hammadi texts, he points out that Mark 4:1-33 was a significant precursor in the shift from the "sayings of the wise" (λόγοι σοφῶν) to "secret sayings" (λόγοι ἀποκρύφου).⁹¹⁵ For Alexandrian thinkers like Clement and Origen whose sympathies lie on the centrist side, Jesus's special illumination of his parables for his disciples vindicated their allegorical approach as the

⁹¹¹ Braun, "The First Shall be Last," 49.

⁹¹² Ehrman (*Orthodox Corruption*, 108) notes that it is unlikely that the scribes would harmonize the more popular Matthean version with Mark.

⁹¹³ Braun, "The First Shall be Last," 47.

⁹¹⁴ See below for discussion of Koester's theory that the teaching terminology was not in the proto-Mark used by Matthew and Luke but inserted into the text of Mark by the canonical editor (*Ancient Christian Gospels*, 283-4).

⁹¹⁵ James Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark and Other Marcan Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 47.

hermeneutical key to moving beyond the literal level.⁹¹⁶ It is in these two areas, Christology and esotericism, where the key battles may have been fought over Mark.

1. The Evidence from the Patristic References to Mark

The earliest evidence for a polemical context surrounding the reception of heterogeneous oral or written Jesus traditions comes from Papias. Papias was a collector of *logia*, encompassing sayings and short anecdotes about Jesus, as stories about Jesus flourished in the first century. As part of his explanation for inquiring into whatever traditions about the Lord that the elders were promulgating among their students, Papias asserts that learning from a living voice (ζώσης φωνῆς) is more valuable than the information that can be gathered “out of books” (ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων) (H.E. 3.39.4). An exclusive reliance on oral tradition makes it trickier to sort out the reliable accounts from the hearsay and to check the spread of “falsehood.” Papias is adamant that he does not delight in those who “say many things” (πολλὰ λέγουσιν) but only those who “teach the truth” (τῆς ἀληθείας διδάσκουσιν), not those who “remember foreign commandments” (ἀλλοτρίας ἐντολὰς μνηεύουσιν) but only those “from the Lord given to the faith” (παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου τῆ πίστει δεδομένας) and “of the truth” (τῆς ἀληθείας) (3.39.3). In contrast to the trustworthiness of his own oral informants, or of the approved written sources about the Lord (i.e., Mark, Matthew), Papias censures some others for passing along traditions that he panned as not authentically of the Lord nor in accordance with the truth.

Unfortunately, Papias does not specify the target of his polemic. As stated previously, it is unwarranted to read elaborate gnostic mythologies or demiurgical speculations behind such a vague descriptor. Papias was writing before these developments, but he could have been

⁹¹⁶ Schilgen, *Power*, 53; Brown, “Seven Veils,” 257-8. Cf. Clement, *Strom.* 1.12.56.2; 5.12.80.6; 6.15.124.6-125.2; Origen, *De Principiis* 3.16; *Comm. Matt.* 10.4.

speaking out against the Pauline legacy. As early as F.C. Baur, Papias was deemed to be a Jewish Christian and Paul was made out to be his antagonist, which may explain the value Papias placed on the words or deeds of the Lord as taught by the disciples against the extraneous teachings of others (i.e. Paul). Baur assumed that Papias knew the legend of Peter's contest with Simon Magus and took the latter figure as a cipher for Paul,⁹¹⁷ but Papias does not explicitly locate Peter or the evangelist in Rome for this to be correct. Charles M. Nielsen has made a renewed case that Paul was the object of Papias's invective, arguing that Papias reacted to his near contemporary Polycarp's practical elevation of Paul's writings to scriptural status (*Phil.* 12.1; cf. *Eph.* 4:26).⁹¹⁸ A blanket criticism of books seems strange when Papias advocated for two written Gospels in a book of his own, so Nielsen translates βιβλία as "sacred writings" and reads it as a polemic against the inclusion of the Pauline corpus in the scriptures.⁹¹⁹ The size of the Pauline corpus may be behind the reproach of those who say too much and the alien commandments may have in mind Paul's instructions on virginity that were not from the Lord (1 *Cor* 7:24; cf. 7:1).⁹²⁰ Reading 1 Clement through a Bauerian lens as a Roman ecclesiastical maneuver to bring the wayward Corinthians into line,⁹²¹ Nielsen adds that Papias may have resented the role of 1 Corinthians as a weapon of ecclesiastical politics.⁹²²

It is true that Papias does not bring up the Pauline epistles, a silence he shares with other second century Christians like Justin Martyr, but Papias does not explicitly denounce Paul. Without a New Testament canon in place, there is no reason that an author of a five-volume treatise would have singled out the Pauline corpus of letters as overly voluminous and Paul did

⁹¹⁷ Baur, *Paul*, 118-20.

⁹¹⁸ Charles M. Nielsen, "Papias: Polemicist Against Whom?" *TS* 35 (1974): 530-2; cf. Annand, "Four Gospels," 49.

⁹¹⁹ Nielsen, "Polemicist," 532.

⁹²⁰ Nielsen, "Polemicist," 533-4. Nielsen also mentions that Papias may have shared in other Jewish Christian rejection of Paul's doctrine of predestination, but we know nothing about Papias's personal theology.

⁹²¹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy*, 96-105.

⁹²² Nielsen, "Polemicist," 534-5.

not present his opinions on celibacy as anything other than optional advice. Paul's enemies did not often associate him with commandments; he was usually accused of antinomianism (Rom 3:8; Jas 2:14-26). Papias does not specify certain βιβλία as less edifying than others but recites a well known platitude that hearing from a trustworthy teacher is more beneficial than books in general. The polemic may be too imprecise to apply to Paul.

It may be impossible to recover the target of Papias's polemic with any degree of precision. Körtner compares Papias's obscure polemic to the denunciation of unidentifiable groups such as the "Nicolaitans" or persons branded under the names of "Jezebel" or "Balaam" in Revelation (2:6, 14-5, 20-3).⁹²³ Nevertheless, Papias does evince a polemical context where diverse groups were differently interpreting a variety of sayings or stories of the Lord that were "in the air." To prevent these individuals or groups from misreading the texts in wide circulation like Mark and Matthew, the elders of Asia Minor maintained their ownership over them by recourse to their apostolic authorship. To regulate the flow of information, Papias specifies certain oral tradents as more reliable than others and specific books that are on the approved reading list as a way to exercise some control over the tradition. Beginning with Papias, we can witness the start of a shift from the authority of inspired speech to sacred books.⁹²⁴

Moving on to Justin, Luise Abramowski situates him between Papias's fondness for oral tradition over the written text and Irenaeus's canonization of sacred Gospel texts (*A.H.* 3.2.1), for Justin may hold the written memoirs and oral tradition to be of equal value.⁹²⁵ The references to the apostolic memoirs are concentrated in a section of the *Dialogue* that engages in an extended exegesis of LXX Psalm 21 (22). Abramowski sees this section as an exegetical-Christological

⁹²³ Körtner, *Papias*, 170-1.

⁹²⁴ Braun, "The First Shall be Last," 55.

⁹²⁵ Abramowski, "Memoirs," 329-31. However, in the last chapter, it was noted that the focus on scriptural texts did not entirely eclipse the value of oral tradition even for Irenaeus.

treatise which emphasized Christ's humanity (*Dial.* 98:1; 99:1; 100:2; 103:8) against the Docetism of the "Gnostics" (cf. γνῶσις in 100:3), though Justin reworked it to fit into its present literary context of a Jewish-Christian debate over messianic prophecy.⁹²⁶ To prove that the Psalm has been fulfilled, Abramowski argues that Justin coined the term memoirs in comparison with other Roman records to express how the Gospels document the human imprint of Jesus in history (101:3; 102:6; 103:8; 104; 105:1; 106:1, 2, 4; 107:1).⁹²⁷ I argued that Papias was the primary influence on Justin's attribution of the memoirs to the apostles, but I do not dismiss the supplementary influence of the Greco-Roman genre on Justin's terminology. Abramowski may be right on the polemical edge to Justin's discussion of the memoirs in this section of the *Dialogue* and Mark may be counted as one of the memoirs under debate (*Dial.* 106.3). Such a refutation would be less effective if these texts were not accorded a level of authority by his "Gnostic" opponents.

Papias and Justin left small traces of the polemical context in which different written Jesus traditions were received and authorized by means of an authorial claim. Both felt it vital to guard Mark under the apostolic authority of Peter, but they do not provide explicit evidence that their opponents relied on Mark any more than other written Gospel texts. Explicit evidence to this affect is in Irenaeus. In his denunciation of splinter groups who peddle one Gospel in place of the "universal" Christian reverence for four, Irenaeus rehearses the affinity of the Ebionites for Matthew, Marcion for Luke and the disciples of Valentinus for John. Those who separate Jesus from the "Christ" and deny that the Christ could suffer, however, were partial towards Mark (*A.H.* 3.11.7). Among the second century Christological formulations vying for supremacy in the market place of ideas, Goulder labels the theological system of the Ebionites or Cerinthus

⁹²⁶ Abramowski, "Memoirs," 324-6. The side point that god was not ignorant in the garden in the stories of Adam and Abel (99:3) also reveals the traces of an original anti-Gnostic rebuttal.

⁹²⁷ Abramowski, "Memoirs," 332-4.

(cf. 1.26.1-2) as a “Possessionist Christology.” In this system, Jesus was possessed by the angelic “Christ” at his baptism, which in an earlier conception may have been the spirit (cf. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.13.7; 30.16.3), and the divine being left him before his death.⁹²⁸ Irenaeus characterizes the Christologies of the Marcosians (1.15.3), Carpocratians (1.25.1) or Orphite Gnostics (1.30.4, 13) in a similar vein. Inasmuch as there may have been several local permutations which Irenaeus blurs together, Ehrman differs from Goulder in his preference for distinguishing the “adoptionists” who construed the baptism as the election of Jesus as the son of god (e.g., Ebionites; Theodotus of Byzantium) and the “separationists” (e.g., Cerinthus) who divided the human Jesus from the divine Christ as “ideal types.”⁹²⁹

Goulder postulates that Mark took over an older, Possessionist Christological outline that was left relatively intact. The Spirit descends “into” (εἰς) or possesses Jesus at the moment of his baptism (Mark 1:10) and abandons him at the crucifixion (15:34; cf. Matt 27:46; *Gos. Pet.* 19).⁹³⁰ Many other commentators are resistant to an adoptionist reading of the baptism scene at the level of authorial intention, arguing that Mark stops short of quoting “today I have begotten you” in Psalm 2:7 (compare the western reading of Luke 3:22) or that Mark 1:11 is no more an act of adoption than 9:7.⁹³¹ Indeed, Goulder may import anachronistic conceptions into Mark’s language of divine sonship that has its closest analogues with the Davidic king or the Roman emperor. I would argue that the separationist or possessionist Christologies of the second century involved debates about ontology and the nature of the union of the divine and the human

⁹²⁸ Goulder, *Two Missions*, 108-13; see also Hans-Martin Schenke, “The Mystery of the Gospel of Mark” in *Der Same Seths: Hans-Martin Schenkes Kleine Schriften zu Gnosis, Koptologie und Neuem Testament* (ed. Gesine Schenke Robinson, Gesa Schenke and Uwe-Karsten Plisch; Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 78; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 556.

⁹²⁹ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruptions*, 194 n. 2. Peppard (“Son of God,” 147) further argues that we know little of what the Ebionites believed and that the term adoptionist should be reserved for Roman Christians like Theodotus.

⁹³⁰ Goulder, *Two Missions*, 130, 132-34. Goulder translates Matt 27:50 ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα as “let the spirit go,” which could have been read as the divine spirit rather than his own spirit at death (p. 112).

⁹³¹ Taylor, *St. Mark*, 162; Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 55; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 48; Witherington, *Mark*, 75; France, *Mark*, 82-3; Stein, *Mark*, 58-9; Boring, *Mark*, 46

in Jesus that may not be on Mark's radar.⁹³² It is sufficient for my purposes here that Mark could be, and was, read in light of second century adoptionist and possessionist Christology. Matthew and Luke were less susceptible to an adoptionist interpretation of the baptism in that they announce Jesus's Christological identity from birth (Matt 1:16-8, 23; 2:2, 11; Luke 1:32-3, 35; 2:11), which makes it all the more curious that Irenaeus informs us that the Ebionites favoured an edition of Matthew that subtracted its nativity story (*A.H.* 1.26.2; 3.11.7).⁹³³

Irenaeus gives readers a sample of Valentinian exegesis of Jesus's cry of dereliction on the cross, which is cited in the Markan (ὁ θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές) (Mark 15:34) rather than Matthean form (θεέ μου, ἰναντί με ἐγκατέλιπες) (Matt 27:46).⁹³⁴ In this moment, Jesus was severed from the divine Christ in the same way as *Sophia-Achamoth* was excluded from the *Plērōma* (*A.H.* 1.8.2; cf. 1.4.1). There is no reason to suspect that Irenaeus invented this exegesis wholesale. In his account of Basilides, a teacher who flourished during the reign of Hadrian (ca. 117-38 CE), Irenaeus informs readers about how Basilides taught that the first begotten *Nous* (mind) appeared on earth as a human but switched forms with Simon of Cyrene, leaving poor Simon to be crucified in his stead while Christ looked on and laughed (1.24.4). Robert Grant inferred that Basilides based his view on a severely literal reading of Simon taking up the cross in Mark.⁹³⁵ The clincher is that the story of the divine Christ laughing at his enemies who crucified Simon of Cyrene in his place is also recounted in the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* 56.6-13, which includes the singly attested names of Simon's sons (Mark 15:21) that were

⁹³² Peppard (*Son of God*, 94-5) is more careful in distinguishing Mark's Christology from the second century Roman Theodorus of Byzantium or the adoptionists in eighth century Spain.

⁹³³ For the confused accounts of diverse Jewish Christian groups that may or may not accept the Virgin birth that the patristic writers lump together under the heading "Ebionite," see Justin, *Dial.* 48; Origen, *C. Cels.* 5.61; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.2.1; Eusebius *H.E.* 3.27.2-3

⁹³⁴ Watson, *Gospel Writers*, 497 n. 189.

⁹³⁵ Grant, "Two Books," 62

omitted by Matthew and Luke as a superfluous detail.⁹³⁶ Since they reasoned that a divine entity cannot suffer, the Valentinians reasoned from Mark that the divine Christ abandoned Jesus on the cross and Basilides swapped Christ with Simon in his selective reading of Mark.

According to Irenaeus, the Valentinians were adept at reading the Gospels as coded texts of their complex cosmogony.⁹³⁷ They must have had a variant version of Jesus's reply that there was only one who was good in the heavens, for they capitalize on the plural heavens as a cipher for the Aeons (*A.H.* 1.20.2; cf. Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19). The story of the woman hemorrhaging for 12 years became a symbol of the twelfth aeon, *Sophia*, and her passion to flow into the divine essence before she touched the garment of the Son, the aeon *Aletheia* (truth), and ceased from her passion (1.3.3). The resurrection of the 12 year old girl symbolizes how the aeon Christ bestowed form on *Sophia Achamoth*, the daughter who had been generated from her mother's passion, and gave her a renewed perception of the light (1.8.2). Irenaeus retain distinctive details of the Markan pericopae such as the little girl's father as an ἀρχισύναγωγος (Mark 5:22; contra Matt 9:18; Luke 8:41), the age of the little girl (Mark 5:42; contra Matt 9:25; Luke 8:55; but cf. Luke 8:42) and the theologically unsettling admission of Jesus's ignorance in the question "who touched me" (τίς μου ἥψατο) in its Markan form (Mark 5:31; contra Luke 8:45-6).⁹³⁸

⁹³⁶ Tuckett, *Nag Hammadi*, 125-6, 150 (?).

⁹³⁷ Watson, *Gospel Writers*, 495-502. Watson explicates Irenaeus's rendition of the Valentinian myth on pp 495-6. There is a divine realm known as the *Plērōma* that is the home of thirty aeons. In the passion of the twelfth aeon *Sophia* to comprehend the greatness of the unknown Father apart from the will of her husband Theletos, she gave birth to a formless creature called *Sophia* or *Achamoth* who was excluded from the *Plērōma*. The aeon Christ gave her form but, after he departed, she desired to the realm of light. She was temporarily relieved of her passion upon a visitation of the Saviour with whom she conceived spiritual offspring, the divine spark that was present in Valentinian Christians, but her passion became the substance of the ignorant Demiurge who created the physical world.

⁹³⁸ Watson, *Gospel Writings*, 497, 497 n. 188; cf. Head, "Early Text," 111.

The traumatic separation of Jesus from Christ symbolized the plight of *Sophia-Achamoth* who was left behind by Christ and unable to return to the realm of light (*A.H.* 1.8.2; cf. 1.4.1).⁹³⁹

For more literal-minded readers who may have combatted their exegesis as incredible, the Valentinians had another Markan proof-text. The query of Jesus to the sons of Zebedee about whether they were ready to be baptized with the same baptism that he would undertake (Mark 10:3), a metaphor that was omitted in the Matthean parallel (Matt 20:22), symbolized the spiritual baptism into a more perfect knowledge that the Valentinians had undergone.⁹⁴⁰ It appears that Mark 4:11 was not the sole proof-text in Mark that could be called upon to validate a kind of special insight into the text that was bequeathed to the elect. It may be granted that the Valentinian treatment of Mark in support of their pleromatic myth may be nothing special as they subjected all four Gospels to a similar reading. Nevertheless, in their exegesis of Mark, Watson exclaims, “What is more striking is the nonassimilation of Mark to Matthew.”⁹⁴¹ Most important, however, is that the baptism and crucifixion scenes in Mark formed the substructure of the Valentinian possessionist and separationist Christology.

Before moving on from Irenaeus, there is one more Gnostic group that he names that had a special affinity for Mark. Irenaeus devotes a section to the Carpocratians. They believed that Jesus was conceived in the normal fashion as a son of Joseph, but Jesus’s soul remembered its former existence in the sphere of the unknown god and he learned the key to escape the evil world makers. Jesus was an exemplary forerunner for the Carpocratians who longed to equally escape this material prison (*A.H.* 1.25.1). Like the Valentinians, Mark could have been the source for their adoptionist Christology. To escape the endless transmigration of souls, Irenaeus

⁹³⁹ Watson, *Gospel Writers*, 497-8. Watson believes that this exegesis may reflect an earlier form of the myth that the twelfth aeon, *Sophia*, was expelled from the *Pleroma* for daring in her passion to comprehend the greatness of the unknown Father.

⁹⁴⁰ Head, “Early Text,” 111.

⁹⁴¹ Watson, *Gospel Writings*, 497.

claims that the Carpocratians taught that one had to experience every way of life, whether the actions were regarded as good and pious or evil and sacrilegious, so as not to be compelled to re-enter bodily existence (1.25.4). To validate their doctrines, one of their prooftexts was that Jesus spoke “in a mystery” (ἐν μυστηρίῳ) to the disciples in private and they transmitted it to the worthy (1.25.5). The singular “mystery” (μυστήριον), as opposed to the plural “mysteries” (μυστήρια) (Matt 13:11; Luke 8:10; cf. *Thom* 62), strongly suggests that Mark 4:11 is in view. Even if one spurns the *Letter to Theodore* as a fake, we would have second-hand evidence that the Carpocratians rooted their social praxis in Jesus’s private disclosure of a “mystery” that they took from Mark. Other Gnostic groups appealed to the esoteric element of the Jesus tradition, but Irenaeus resumes the plural “mysteries” for the matters that were revealed to the elect disciples by the risen Christ in his discussion of the Orphite Gnostics (1.30.14).

After Irenaeus, Clement does not really provide much information on non-centrist Christian interpretive communities for Mark if the *Letter to Theodore* is left out of the account. Indeed, Clement has few citations of Mark at all apart from the extensive commentary on the Markan pericopae of the rich man.⁹⁴² In it, Clement spends an inordinate amount of time reassuring wealthy Christians that they do not stand condemned, though he exhorts them to give generous alms (*Qds* 31). Since other philosophers surrendered their material wealth (e.g. Anaxagoras, Democritus, Crates) out of a variety of noble or ignoble motivations (11), the new teaching that Christ brought into the world must be hidden beneath the literal level. Otherwise it would contradict, according to Clement, other passages where Jesus welcomes wealthy disciples

⁹⁴² For the Greek text and English translation, see G.W. Butterworth, *Clement of Alexandria: The Exhortation to the Greeks, The Rich Man’s Salvation and the Fragment of an Address Entitled to the Newly Baptized* (LOEB; London: William Heinemann; New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1919), 270-367.

(e.g., Levi, Matthew,⁹⁴³ Zachaeus) or commands his followers to give to the poor and feed the hungry, which could not be obeyed if everyone voluntarily became impoverished (13). Clement re-interprets the meaning of the pericopae in light of the Stoic ideal of completely ridding oneself of the passions and arriving at the moral state of *apatheia* or ‘imperturbability.’⁹⁴⁴ His pastoral instincts are in line with a number of modern commentaries that comfort their readership that the text does not literally require them to relinquish all of their possessions. Speaking for many commentators, Lane writes, “The specific form of the sacrifice Jesus demanded of this man is not to be regarded as a general prescription to be applied to all men [or women]... [t]he command to sell his property and to distribute the proceeds to the poor was appropriate to this particular situation.”⁹⁴⁵ Many are uneasy with the literal application of the passage.

The question, though, is why Clement would quote the text in its Markan form. He uses a formula explicitly identifying Mark as the source and acknowledges that the wording varies slightly in the other Gospels (5), but he may have reproduced Mark 10:17-31 from his fallible memory as it falls below the 70 percent agreement with any of the textual families and is frequently contaminated by the better known Matthean or Lukan parallels (4).⁹⁴⁶ It is unusual that Clement would cite the Markan rather than the Matthean form of the pericope given the pre-eminence of Matthew. As we have seen, Morton Smith’s theory on the noteworthy role of Mark as part of a lectionary reading in Alexandria may be baseless and is contradicted by the severe lack of manuscript attestation or the limited citations of Mark from Clement and Origen. Rather,

⁹⁴³ Instead of regarding the Gospel of Matthew as changing the name of the tax collector from “Levi” (Mark 2:14; cf. Luke 5:27) to “Matthew” (Matt 9:9), or vice-versa, Clement views them as two separate individuals.

⁹⁴⁴ Kovacs, “Clement of Alexandria,” 115, 117.

⁹⁴⁵ Lane, *Mark*, 367; cf. Gundry, *Apology*, 563; Stein, *Mark*, 470.

⁹⁴⁶ Cosaert, *Clement of Alexandria*, 118-31, 238-40; cf. F.F. Bruce, *The ‘Secret Gospel’ of Mark (Ethel M. Wood lecture 1974)* (London: The Athlone Press, 1974), 11-2. Head (“Text of Mark,” 113) is inclined to see Clement citing a very loose type of text. For the text, see Butterworth, *Salvation*, 278-81.

this section of Mark may have been read by some minority group in Alexandria in a way that provoked a crisis for other Christians in Alexandria that demanded Clement's attention.

If we mirror read Clement, he first disarms the potential low Christology that other readers got out of the pericopae. In its Markan and Lukan forms, Jesus seems to decline the appellation "good" for himself, which is carefully re-worded in the Matthean parallel. Clement re-assures the reader that the flattering address was completely appropriate to Jesus as the one who is the Life, the Saviour, the Teacher, the Truth, the Perfect, the Immortal and the Word (6). Jesus launches from the adjective "good" to turn the attention of the pupil to the one good deity who alone dispenses eternal life and from whom the Son receives it and dispenses it freely to people (6). Origen makes similar hermeneutical moves to reconcile Mark 10:18 to a trinitarian godhead as goodness proceeds from the Father to the Son and Spirit (cf. *On First Principles*, 1.2.13). Second, if Clement was frustrated that some wealthy people were turned off of the Christian message because they felt that their wealth put them in a hopeless position with respect to their eternal salvation (2-3), other readers in Alexandria must have been reading Mark 10:17-21 in the exact way that Clement deplors. They may have grounded an extreme asceticism back to the teachings of Jesus from this section of Mark, much to Clement's chagrin. The *Letter to Theodore* may be additional evidence of the situation Clement confronted in that it locates a story nearby the pericopae of the rich man, sandwiched between Mark 10:35-6, that offsets its tragic ending with the positive example of a rich youth who obeys Jesus's call to discipleship to the extent of stripping himself of all his possessions save for the linen clothe that he wears.⁹⁴⁷ Robert Gundry sets the mystic Gospel in the context of the idealization of poverty in second century Alexandria that Clement re-interprets in a moralizing direction in his exposition of

⁹⁴⁷ See further Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 187-8; Secret Gospel, 68; Gundry, *Apology*, 622-3; Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 199-201. See the Appendix for a defense of this interpretation.

Mark's pericopae of the rich man.⁹⁴⁸ For those scholars who discredit the *Letter to Theodore* as a modern forgery, it cannot be brought in as supplementary evidence at this point. Irrespective of one's position on this latter debate, I cannot account for this notable exception to Clement's indifference towards Mark unless the Markan pericope of the rich man posed a special problem in Alexandria that Clement had to fix. However, the chief evidence for the non-centrist use of Mark in this survey of patristic references to Mark seems to come from Irenaeus.

2. The Evidence from the Scribal Corrections of Mark

The conflicting interpretations of the Markan Christology may also clarify some of the scribal corrections to Mark. The bulk of Byzantine manuscripts reword Mark 1:10 to the Spirit descended "on" (ἐπί) Jesus, which Ehrman takes more as an effort to circumvent a separationist Christology than a mere harmonization with Matthew 3:16 and Luke 3:22.⁹⁴⁹ This conflict may provide a context for the inclusion of υἱοῦ θεοῦ in Mark 1:1. Although the longer reading has superior numerical support in the manuscript evidence and their geographical distribution in their representation in different text-types,⁹⁵⁰ Peter Head is adamant that the support for the shorter reading among diverse witnesses including the Alexandrian (Ⲛ, syr^{pal}), Caesarean (0), and independent text-types (28) should not be underestimated.⁹⁵¹ According to Head, the shorter reading is found in the Greek text of Irenaeus (*A.H.* 3.11.8) and other authors who discuss the

⁹⁴⁸ Gundry, *Apology*, 622-3; "Secret Gospel of Mark," '96.

⁹⁴⁹ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 166.

⁹⁵⁰ See the summary of the textual apparatus in Wasserman, "In the Beginning," 22-3, 40-1. The longer reading is supported by all four traditional, while the shorter reading may be confined mainly to some witnesses in the Alexandrian so-called "Caesarean" text and a few Latin Fathers may indicate an otherwise unattested division in the readings of the Western text. Croy (*Mutilation*, 115-7) lists up to 9 variants for Mark 1:1, but Wasserman observes that 5 do not occur in the Greek manuscripts and are typical adaptations of the passages by the Fathers. Three others may be explained as accidents such as confusing the nomina sacra κυ for θυ (1241) or accidental omissions of the terms χριστοῦ (28*) or υἱοῦ (055 752 858 1337 1506).

⁹⁵¹ Head, "Text Critical," 623-4. Other commentators that accept the short reading include Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 85-8; Marcus, *Mark 1-7*, 141; Collins, *Mark*, 131.

shorter reading and may be dependent on Irenaeus including Victorinus of Pettau (*Comm. Apoc.* 4.4), Basil of Cappadocia (*Against Eunomius* 2.15), Epiphanius (*Pan.* 51.6.4) and Jerome (*Comm. Malachi* 3.1; *Epistle to Pammacheus* [100] 57.9), though both Jerome and Severian attest the longer reading as well. The Latin Fathers consistently support the longer reading, but the shorter may have earlier and more geographically diverse witnesses. It is supported in the West with the Greek text of Irenaeus (*A.H.* 3.11.8) and Victorinus of Pettau and the East with Origen (*Comm. Jo.* 1.131 6.24; *C. Cels.* 2.4), Serapion of Thmuis (*Against the Manichees* 25, 37) and Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat. led.*3.6); there is no Greek support until Severian (d. 408 CE) and Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 CE).⁹⁵² On internal grounds, Mark's major theme of Jesus's divine sonship may actually make the shorter reading the *lectio difficilior*.⁹⁵³

Head and Ehrman do not think it likely that a scribe skipped over $\nu\iota\omicron\upsilon\theta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\theta$ due to the phenomenon of homoioteleuton. While a scribe had to transcribe six genitive endings in a row, with some of the words abbreviated on top of that, the scribe would be in a state of alertness at the beginning of a Gospel and the abbreviations of the *nomina sacra* were designed to protect the sacred words.⁹⁵⁴ Instead, the longer reading is an expansion that belongs with “tendentious, reverential and doctrinal alterations” and Head adduces parallels to scribes adding “son of god” in Mark 8:38 (⌘ L 157), 14:61 (⌘* 579), Matthew 1:1 (Victorinus), 1:16 (*Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*), 13:37 (28) and John 1:18 or 6:69 (several manuscripts).⁹⁵⁵ Ehrman makes the intriguing suggestion that it was a pious addition to prevent an adoptionist reading of Mark by affirming Jesus's divine sonship prior to the baptism.⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵² Head, “Text Critical,” 624-6

⁹⁵³ Head, “Text Critical,” 627.

⁹⁵⁴ Head, “Text Critical,” 628-9; Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 86.

⁹⁵⁵ Head, “Mark 1.1,” 627.

⁹⁵⁶ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 75.

Before it is judged an open and shut case, Tommy Wasserman's exhaustive rebuttal may give one pause.⁹⁵⁷ Scholars may no longer be able to enlist Irenaeus as a witness to the shorter reading as a new standard edition of his work skips directly from εὐαγγελίου to the prophetic prooftexts in Mark 1:2 as Irenaeus correlates Mark with the eagle or the prophetic spirit (3.11.8; cf. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 51.6.4) and two other references to the longer reading in the Latin text (3.10.5; 3.16.3) may demand the inclusion of "son of god" based on their literary contexts.⁹⁵⁸ Wasserman goes through the patristic writers one by one to explain why they may have abbreviated the text. Serapion may depend on Origen's argumentation in his linking the beginning of the Gospel to prophecy and Law, Basil may have abbreviated to keep the main focus on the Baptist, Cyril explicitly signals his abbreviation with the words καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς, Severian's argument seems to depend on the longer reading so there may have been an accidental omission in the manuscript witness, and Victorinus may have relocated *filius dei* from Mark 1:1 to his previous citation of Matthew 1:1.⁹⁵⁹ Wasserman gives examples of the accidental scribal omissions of *nomina sacra* in the beginning of books (e.g., 2 Cor 1:1; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1); that such an accident could happen in Mark 1:1 is demonstrated by the quick correction of Codex Sinaiticus (κ¹) and several Byzantine witnesses.⁹⁶⁰

On top of that, Wasserman disputes that the longer reading represents a scribal expansion for theological reasons. He goes through Head's list one by one to exhibit how "son of god" is rarely inserted from scratch to enhance the Christology, with the exception of Mark 8:28 which harmonizes with Peter's expanded confession in Matthew 16:16. In Head's other examples, the

⁹⁵⁷ Wasserman, "In the Beginning," 20-50. Other scholars that agree with the longer reading include Taylor, *St. Mark*, 152; Lane, *Mark*, 41 n. 7; Gundry, *Apology*, 33; France, *Mark*, 49; Witherington, *Mark*, 69-70; Boring, *Mark*, 30; Stein, *Mark*, 39.

⁹⁵⁸ Wasserman, "In the Beginning," 27. *A.H.* 3.10.5 repeatedly calls Jesus the "son of god" and 3.16.3 is preceded by citations of Romans 1:1-4 and Galatians 4:4-5.

⁹⁵⁹ Wasserman, "In the Beginning," 29-32.

⁹⁶⁰ Wasserman, "In the Beginning," 45-7.

phrase has been transposed from the citation in Mark 1:1 to Matthew 1:1 in Victorinus, was not part of the citation proper (cf. *The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*), or was substituted for a different Christological title such as the son τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ (of the blessed) (Mark 14:61 in \aleph^* 579), ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (the son of man) (Matt 13:37 in Codex 28) or ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (the holy one of god).⁹⁶¹ Wasserman also questions whether a subtle change in Mark 1:1 would be an effective tactic to battle adoptionism, especially as Irenaeus and Epiphanius were content to abbreviate the text despite fighting the threat of adoptionist Christologies.⁹⁶²

Both readings have some strong support in the Fathers or the manuscripts and it is not clear which reading was known to Irenaeus from the Greek text. Although Wasserman discounts Head's examples, they show at the very least that scribes in the patristic period were willing to substitute a standard Christological title like "son of god" for titles or circumlocutions that were less prevalent in a non-Jewish, Christian environment. A second century centrist scribe may have judged the Jewish title "Christ" on its own to be an insufficient encapsulation of the Christological identity of Jesus. Further, many Christian commentators have felt enough unease about Mark's declaration of Jesus' divine sonship only at the baptism to explicitly reassure their readership that Mark 1:9 does not insinuate that Jesus became something he was not before and just re-affirms his previous status as god's son.⁹⁶³ Wasserman may consider a scribal change at 1:1 to be ineffective counter to adoptionism, but a modern commentator like M. Eugene Boring precisely rebuts an adoptionist reading of Mark 1:9 by pointing out that "[t]he narrator has already revealed to the reader that Jesus is Son of God [at 1:1]."⁹⁶⁴ Irenaeus had a different strategy in countering an adoptionist reading of Mark 1:9, which was the actual verse under

⁹⁶¹ Wasserman, "In the Beginning," 48-9. In addition, Wasserman lists off other examples where υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ is substituted for another Christological title or part of it accidentally omitted.

⁹⁶² Wasserman, "In the Beginning," 49.

⁹⁶³ Taylor, *St. Mark*, 162; Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 55; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 48; France, *Mark*, 82-3; Stein, *Mark*, 58-9.

⁹⁶⁴ Boring, *Mark*, 46.

dispute, not Mark 1:1. To counter the exclusive use of Mark by adoptionist or separationist Christians (*A.H.* 3.11.9), Irenaeus insisted that Mark was an inseparable part of the fourfold Gospel canon by expressing one aspect of its unified message – its prophetic character. For this reason, Irenaeus skipped right from the title “gospel” to the prophetic testimony in Mark 1:2. In the end, it may be equally feasible that υἱοῦ θεοῦ was accidentally passed over by scribes or was inserted into the text to combat adoptionism.

If there is some evidence for scribal tampering at the beginning of Mark, the conflict with a separationist Christology may account for the scribal changes at the ending. Ehrman points out the agreement among the Bezae and old Latin manuscripts (D c i k syr^h) and Porphyry for the reading “reviled” (ὠνεΐδισαs) instead of “forsaken” (ἐγκατέλιπεs) at Mark 15:34 and he postulates that this subtle change prohibited a separationist reading that has the divine power abandon Jesus on the cross.⁹⁶⁵ The interpolation of Mark’s longer ending (henceforth LE) may also be relevant to this discussion, but William Farmer and James Snapp have sought to overturn the consensus that Mark 16:9-20 is secondary. Their review of the manuscript and patristic witnesses for the LE is comprehensive.⁹⁶⁶ It is absent in the great uncials of Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (s), but B has Mark 16:8 on the thirty-first line of the second column and leaves a third column entirely blank before the start of Luke, allowing room for the LE to be squeezed in and perhaps revealing the scribe’s uncertainty on what to do with the LE.⁹⁶⁷ Both Farmer and Snapp believe that the LE was first excised in Egypt and influenced the exemplar of B and s as well as many manuscripts in Caesarea (cf. Eusebius, *Quaestiones ad Marinum*) or Armenia. The shorter ending of Codex Bobbiensis (it^k) may have been by an Alexandrian calligrapher who was

⁹⁶⁵ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 168-71.

⁹⁶⁶ Farmer, *Twelve Verses*, 3-74; Snapp, *Authentic*, 5-129.

⁹⁶⁷ Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 57-9; Snapp, *Authentic*, 46-7.

untrained in Latin and the Freer Logion in Codex Freerianus (W, O32; cf. Jerome, *Dialogue against the Pelagians* 2.15) has an Egyptian provenance.⁹⁶⁸

Snapp makes some fair points against some of the witnesses that have been turned into evidence for the LE's omission. For example, Ammonius may be wrongly cited as a witness against its inclusion by mistakenly identifying the Eusebian Canons with his Matthew-centred harmony.⁹⁶⁹ While the evidence is weak that Clement and Origen knew the LE, they cite Mark extremely rarely so they cannot be definite witnesses on its inclusion or exclusion.⁹⁷⁰ Other parallels drawn by Snapp may be stretched. Papias's rumination on how Justus Barsabbas drank a harmful poison (δηλητήριο φάρμακον) (cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.39.9-10), which Philip of Side specifies as the venom of a viper (ἰὸν ἐχίδνης) from which he was protected in the "name of Christ" (ὀνόματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ), may be a local legend about Justus. It is not the same as picking up a serpent (ὄφις) and the LE has a different word for poison (θανάσιμος) (16:8); the LE and Papias may pick up on popular ideas of the kind of marvels that impress outsiders.⁹⁷¹ In the *Epistula Apostolorum*, the "mourning and weeping" of the disciples (1:10) and their disbelief

⁹⁶⁸ See Farmer, *Twelve Verses*, 36-59; Snapp, *Authentic*, 38-9, 46-60, 66-7, 75-7, 78-9, 157-63. The Sinaitic Syriac (Syr^s) ms may be an exception, but Snapp points out that it is a mixed text with Alexandrian, Western and Caesarean readings and the scribe had access to different readings of Mark. It stands out from other Syrian witnesses.

⁹⁶⁹ Snapp, *Authentic*, 14-5. Farmer (*Twelve Verses*, 59-63) allows that Mark 16:9-20 may not have had a place in Ammonius's *Diatessaron* because it does not have much parallels with Matthew 28:9-20 and was a source of inspiration for Eusebius when he created his Canons.

⁹⁷⁰ Snapp, *Authentic*, 18-20, 24-7. Snapp argues that the line "he says 'at the right hand of God'" in Clement's *Adumbrationes* on Jude may refer to Mark 16:19 and the masculine pronoun in the subject may be the evangelist, because Luke has "the right hand of the power of god." But the literary context is the Jewish trial and the most natural reading is that the citation elaborates on the answer of Jesus ("he") to the high priest. Clement may have dropped the Jewish circumlocution in inaccurately reproducing Luke 22:69 from memory, especially if the language of sitting at god's right hand had become creedal, but Snapp concedes that another manuscript conforms to the wording of Luke 22:69 and there is the added issue of how faithful Cassiodorus's fifth century Latin "translation" is to Clement. In Origen's *Philocalia* 1.5, Snapp finds a series of thematically related prooftexts. The apostolic proclamation of "the gospel" (το εὐαγγέλιον) "everywhere" (πανταχόσε) is sandwiched between texts on treading upon serpents (cf. Luke 10:19) and "signs and wonders" (cf. Heb 2:4). But the wording is not specific enough for dependence and may be a general summary of the book of Acts with the commission of the apostles (Acts 1:8), their preaching of "the gospel" (το εὐαγγέλιον) (Acts 20:24; cf. 15:7) and their miracle working activity. The Lukan reference to trampling on the heads of serpents is very different from picking them up in the longer ending of Mark.

⁹⁷¹ See the discussion in Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 433-42 in the context of his larger chapter on drinking deadly poison in Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian sources (pp. 417-72); contra Snapp, *Authentic*, 5-6.

of the women's report to have seen the risen Jesus is similar to the LE (16:10-11), while in Luke 24:11 the eleven disbelieve the women's report about the angels,⁹⁷² but weeping is a natural reaction to the grief of losing a beloved teacher that does not require dependence. The encounter of the women with the risen Jesus before meeting the disciples in Matthew 28:9-10 may have been conflated with the disbelief of the disciples in Luke 24:11 and 41.⁹⁷³

A stronger parallel is in Justin's *I Apology* 45.5. The words ἐξεληθόντες πανταχοῦ ἐκήρυξαν (going out they preached everywhere) match Mark 16:20a with the exception of their order, "the word" (τοῦ λόγου) of the apostles may elaborate on 16:20b that signs will confirm "the word" (τὸν λόγον) of the apostles and Justin's practice is to quote written Gospel traditions when exegeting Scripture (cf. Ps 110:1-2).⁹⁷⁴ Kelhoffer increases the chances of literary dependence with a few supplementary texts: the elucidation of the "eighth day" in *Dialogue* 138.1 shares ἀναστάς (risen), πρώτης (first) and ἐφάνη (appear) with Mark 16:9, but πρώτης (first) does not designate the first day of the week. Christ's resurrection was on the "first day" (πρώτη... ἡμέρα) in *I Apology* 67.8, but Justin has the key words "arose" and "appeared" (ἀνέστη, φανείς) in a different form from Mark 16:9. In *Dialogue* 76.6a, "we who believe" (ἡμεῖς οἱ πιστεύοντες) have the power to cast out devils and the power of exorcism is granted τοῖς πιστεύουσιν (for those who believe) in Mark 16:17a but the parallel is slight.⁹⁷⁵ The case hinges on *I Apology* 45.5, but Andrew Gregory does not think that three words are sufficient to establish a direct quotation; πανταχοῦ (everywhere) was a convenient synonym for longer expressions such as εἰς πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων (in all the tribes of people) (*I Apol* 31:7; 50:12) or ἐν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι (into all the nations) (*I Apol* 42:4) and Justin's language on the post-

⁹⁷² Snapp, *Authentic*, 6-7.

⁹⁷³ See also Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 171 n. 49.

⁹⁷⁴ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 172-5; Snapp, *Authentic*, 7-8.

⁹⁷⁵ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 173-4.

ascension worldwide mission of the apostles is almost creedal.⁹⁷⁶ Snapp adds that the mission of the disciples to go out “from Jerusalem” to preach everywhere in Justin (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 1:4, 8) is paralleled in the harmony of Luke 24:49b-53 and Mark 16:18-20 in the fifty-fifth chapter of the Arabic version of the Diatessaron,⁹⁷⁷ but the continuity of Justin’s small-scale harmonizations of Synoptic data with Tatian’s massive harmony is an open question. Justin may be listed as a “maybe” on literary dependence. Snapp is persuasive that the LE was part of the Diatessaron in his comparison of the order of its two fullest witnesses, the Arabic Diatessaron and the Latin Codex Fuldensis,⁹⁷⁸ and Irenaeus cites Mark 16:19 with an explicit formula (*A.H.* 3.10.5-6). The LE can be dated to the first half of the second century, perhaps on the earlier end of the scale in the absence of distinct Christian offices or a developed missiology.⁹⁷⁹

On the other hand, Farmer and Snapp underestimate the counter-testimony of two informed patristic textual critics. To reconcile the timing of Matthew 28:1 and Mark 16:9, Eusebius admitted a twofold solution in *Quaestiones ad Marinum*: the LE is textually spurious or can be harmonized with Matthew 28:1 in that Jesus arose late on the Sabbath and appeared to Mary Magdalene on the dawn of Sunday. For Farmer, the answer that the LE is “seldom” in the manuscripts or that “almost all copies” end with 16:8 contradicts the sober judgment that the LE is in “some copies” and Eusebius’s preference is for the second solution that has the final word. In Farmer’s judgment, Eusebius borrowed the twofold solution from an earlier source, probably Origen,⁹⁸⁰ but the evidence for Origen’s knowledge of the LE is lacking.⁹⁸¹ I agree with Snapp that Eusebius favoured the former option, given the absence of 16:9-20 from the Eusebian

⁹⁷⁶ Gregory, *Reception of Luke*, 87.

⁹⁷⁷ Snapp, *Authentic*, 8-9.

⁹⁷⁸ Snapp, *Authentic*, 10-12.

⁹⁷⁹ Frenschkowski, *Offenbarung*, 244.

⁹⁸⁰ Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 5-13, 31

⁹⁸¹ Snapp (*Authentic*, 44) notes a slight parallel in Origen’s *Commentary on John* when he vouches for the variant “Bethabara” at John 1:28 despite that “Bethany” was “in nearly all the copies,” but Snapp rightly does not consider the wording to be significant enough to demand that Origen was the source of the tradition in *Ad Marinum*.

Canons, but tolerated the second option out of ecumenical considerations.⁹⁸² Farmer and Snapp argue that Eusebius had no way of ascertaining the contents of the manuscripts across the Empire apart from the “accurate” copies known to him in Caesarea.⁹⁸³ Jerome depends on Eusebius in repeating the query on the timing of the resurrection and the same twofold solution (*Epistle 120, To Hedibia*).⁹⁸⁴ In hurriedly answering objections, Jerome is explicit in his reliance on past authorities without assenting to all their opinions and he may have had no way to test Eusebius’s claims about the state of the evidence in Caesarea,⁹⁸⁵ but Jerome could have suppressed the first solution if it was drastically at odds with the reigning *communis opinio*.

Nor do Farmer and Snapp adequately account for the removal of the LE. Farmer conjectures that it was intentionally excised as it created too many headaches for harmonizers of the resurrection narratives, as seen in the examples of Eusebius and Jerome, and contained the outlandish promise that believers would be unharmed by venomous snakes or deadly poisons.⁹⁸⁶ The surgical removal of an entire section seems drastic when they could have amended the discrepancies (e.g., 16:9) or deleted the offending parts (16:18a) and it is implausible that a scribe would be more satisfied terminating Mark on the women’s fearful silence at 16:8. Snapp’s reconstruction is more complex as he views the LE as a separate composition of the evangelist in Egypt before he set off to Rome and Annianus succeeded him in the episcopal chair in Alexandria in 62 CE (cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.14.1). Circumstances prevented the completion of the Gospel as the evangelist hastily departed for Alexandria where he was martyred and his Roman auditors grafted on his summary of the resurrection appearances at the end of the Gospel,

⁹⁸² Snapp, *Authentic*, 44-6.

⁹⁸³ Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 12; Snapp, *Authentic*, 44.

⁹⁸⁴ Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 22-3; Snapp, *Authentic*, 69-71.

⁹⁸⁵ See Snapp, *Authentic*, 71-2, though Snapp notes that Jerome does not reproduce Eusebius’s harmonistic argument that there were two women referred to as “Mary Magdalene” as he may have found it incredible.

⁹⁸⁶ Farmer, *Twelve Verses*, 59-71.

but Egyptian critics omitted the LE when they recognized that it was not strictly part of the evangelist's reminiscences of Peter's preaching in Rome.⁹⁸⁷ By now, this synthesis of earlier and later traditions cannot be uncritically accepted as it is questionable that the evangelist ever was in Egypt or that the Egyptian scribes played the role of historical critics in discriminating the Petrine and non-Petrine material in Mark. Snapp skillfully reviews and exposes the weak spots in alternative explanations involving an accidental loss.⁹⁸⁸

There are good reasons to treat the LE as secondary. Snapp reasons that it was once separate as it does not easily fit on to 16:8 as the other women suddenly drop out, Mary Magdalene is freshly introduced (16:9), the time of day is restated (16:9; cf. 16:2), the predicted reunion in Galilee is not narrated and the opening of 16:9 reads like the start of a summary.⁹⁸⁹ Matthew and Luke may have gone their own way after Mark 16:8 because they did not have the LE.⁹⁹⁰ To explain this, Snapp resorts to theories of a proto-Mark based on the minor agreements against Mark and the major Lukan omissions (e.g., Mark 6:45-8:26). Luke followed the ending of proto-Mark while Matthew had access to the canonical version as well yet suppressed the LE due to its harsh references to the obstinate unbelief of the disciples (16:10-11, 13, 14).⁹⁹¹ The omissions in Matthew or Luke can be explained in other ways apart from theories of a proto-Mark and Matthew could have followed the practice elsewhere of editing the hard-heartedness of the disciples in a more favourable direction (e.g., Matt 14:33; cf. Mark 6:52) without excluding all of the details in the LE.⁹⁹² Debate has gone back and forth on whether the terminology and

⁹⁸⁷ Snapp, *Authentic*, 158-62.

⁹⁸⁸ Snapp, *Authentic*, 151-6. For instance, it would be remarkable that the manuscript was damaged at the point where there is a natural break between 16:8 and the beginning of a summary of resurrection appearances in 16:9.

⁹⁸⁹ Snapp,

⁹⁹⁰ Farmer would not be fazed by this objection as the chief advocate of the Griesbach hypothesis who accepts the longer ending as evidence of Mark's posterity to Matthew and Luke (*Twelve Verses*, 108).

⁹⁹¹ Snapp, *Authentic*, 165-9.

⁹⁹² To offer some suggestions for the minor agreements, they may be coincidental common changes to Mark's grammar or style, shared revulsion at some of the theologically problematic bits of Mark, instances of scribal

style of the LE accords with Mark,⁹⁹³ but Kelhoffer makes a strong case that it harmonizes with the resurrection accounts of Matthew, Luke and John and has theological affinities with John's definition of faith, division of believers and unbelievers and emphasis on "signs" (contra Mark 8:11-2).⁹⁹⁴ It is conceivable that the episodes in the other Gospels that go beyond Mark 16:8 may derive from non-Markan sources, so literary dependence cannot be absolutely proven if the evangelist's redaction is irretrievable.⁹⁹⁵ In this instance, though, it seems more parsimonious that the LE had access to the written Gospels than such a great store of oral traditions with special Matthean, Lukan and Johannine material.

The LE recounts that Mary Magdalene had been possessed by seven demons (cf. Luke 8:2) and that Jesus appeared to her alone (cf. John 20:11-8), to two travellers walking into the country (cf. Luke 24:13-34), and to the "eleven" (cf. Matt 28:16; Luke 24:9). A reader of Mark 16:7 might have expected Judas's restoration along with the rest of the disciples if he or she had not heard about Judas's death (Matt 27:3-10; cf. Acts 1:18-9). The LE has its differences from Matthew, Luke and John.⁹⁹⁶ In Matthew 28, the disciples do not disbelieve the women, while their skepticism in Luke 24:11 concerns the report of the women about the angels, and the LE omits the scene and dialogue of their reunion with Jesus on a mountain in Galilee. The eleven do not distrust the report of the two travellers (cf. Luke 24:34) nor are rebuked for their disbelief in Luke and the LE does not include the Lukan details such as the names Cleopas or Emmaus, the

harmonization or, on the Farrer theory, Lukan redaction of Matthew. Luke may have had similar redaction reasons for omitting certain parts of Mark. For the redactional interests of the evangelists, see pp. 8-9. On Luke's redactional interests specifically in the editorial revisions of Mark, see Kok, "Flawed Evangelist," 246-7. For a critical review of Helmut Koester's reconstruction of "proto-Mark," see p. 260.

⁹⁹³ Compare Farmer (*Twelve Verses*, 83-103) and Snapp (*Authentic*, 135-9) with Kelhoffer (*Miracle and Mission*, 67-122).

⁹⁹⁴ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 137-50; cf. Collins, *Mark*, 807-09. I am not as convinced from the ascension of Jesus and the reference to "new languages (γλώσσαις... καινῶν) that the LE is dependent on Acts.

⁹⁹⁵ See Gregory, *Luke and Acts*, 87-91, 312.

⁹⁹⁶ The following list is primarily taken from Snapp, *Authentic*, 144-5.

conversation on the road or the breaking of the bread.⁹⁹⁷ The disciples do not disbelieve Mary's report in John 20 and Peter's rehabilitation in Galilee in John 21 is not present in the LE. Yet the LE did not have much space to cover all of Luke 24:13-34, though the odd notice that Jesus appeared in a different "form" seems to be a rationalization for why the two on the road failed to recognize Jesus.⁹⁹⁸ The LE may conflate the appearances of Jesus to Mary in John and (among others) in Matthew with the skepticism of the disciples in Luke, amplifies the hard-heartedness of the disciples in keeping with the Markan theme (Mark 6:52; 8:17-21), and omits the geographical references instead of attempting to harmonize the timing of the appearances in Galilee or Jerusalem. We may not be able to read into the scribe's mind to fathom all the decisions that make up the LE, though we must remember that the LE is not a full Gospel harmony but an attempt of a scribe to pass off the LE as the work of the evangelist, but the LE knows too many singly attested details in the other Gospels to be independent of them.

The LE may not just provide narrative closure for second century readers of Mark, for another motivation may be to actively refute a separationist reading of the earliest recoverable ending of Mark. Although the empty tomb in Mark 16:1-8 intimates the bodily resurrection of Jesus, it left room for some to selectively read Mark's ending in a separationist light as the disciples "will see" a vision of a spiritually raised entity in Galilee rather than the physically embodied Jesus. Luke and John may explicitly combat Docetic interpretations of the resurrection body of Jesus when the risen Jesus eats a piece of broiled fish in the presence of the disciples (Luke 24:41-3) or bares his crucifixion wounds (John 20:25-7). The reference in the

⁹⁹⁷ See Frenschkowski, *Offenbarung*, 246. Yet Frenschkowski concludes, in contrast to Snapp, that the LE had access to both Luke 24:13-34 and a pre-Lukan form of the story that it shaped for a new purpose.

⁹⁹⁸ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 144. Frenschkowski (*Offenbarung*, 246-7) interprets the reference to another "form" μορφή as an allusion to Jesus' glorious heavenly form rather than his pre-resurrection earthly body, but in the literary context "another" form seems to allude back to the appearance to Mary in 16:9. Frenschkowski severs this connection because he does not believe that the LE was the work of a conscientious author.

LE to Jesus's third appearance to the eleven while they were gathered at the table (Mark 16:14) may presuppose knowledge of Luke 24:41-3. Ehrman argues that the LE emphasizes the physicality of the resurrection of the "Lord Jesus" as he ascended and sat down at the right hand of god (Mark 16:19).⁹⁹⁹ The LE serves other functions from supplying a less ambiguous ending to harmonizing the resurrection appearances reports, but an anti-separationist agenda may also motivate the scribe. The scribal amendments to the beginning and ending of Mark thus add further weight to Irenaeus's testimony that the pressing problem for the centrist Christian reception of Mark was that it was also amenable to Gnostic separationists.

C. Conclusion: The Hermeneutical Battle over Mark

In my survey of some of the references to Mark in the period from Papias of Hierapolis to Clement of Alexandria, my goal was to test Braun's thesis that the centrist Christian confiscated Mark from Christian groups they believed to be beyond the pale. Of course, the difficulty with any thesis on the reception of Mark in the second century is that the evidence is limited. The editorial changes made to Mark by the evangelists and scribes alike may reveal that they thought certain passages were easy fodder for a "heretical" interpretation, but that does not necessarily mean that their theological adversaries drew the same conclusion. It would be an interesting result if the paranoia of centrist Christian interpreters that their opponents might seize on the "aberrant" texts in Mark, regardless of whether they had an interest in doing so, encouraged them to strenuously safeguard the text as apostolic, hence "orthodox."

Yet the vague hints in Papias and Justin that Christians in the second century were caught up in a war over the ownership of Gospel texts and that apostolic authorship was a major weapon on the front lines gives way to the explicit naming of the alternative interpretive communities of

⁹⁹⁹ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 272.

Mark in Irenaeus. Irenaeus insinuates that the followers of Valentinus, Basilides and Carpocrates were interested in Mark. Some of the texts that feature in the debate, such as Mark 1:9, 10:17 or 15:34, were read as distancing Jesus from the supreme deity and as supporting an adoptionist or separationist Christology where Jesus is possessed by a divine entity at the baptism and abandoned by it at the crucifixion. Another way to bypass the paradox of how a divine being could suffer was to disallow that Jesus had died on the cross at all by substituting Simon of Cyrene in his place. Groups that legitimated their interpretation of the Jesus tradition by rooting it back in the hidden *gnosis* that Jesus imparted to his disciples had a perfect proof-text in Mark 4:10. Other Markan passages, or the theme of esotericism in Mark in general, could also serve this function. To establish my case, I have tried to avoid relying on the controverted evidence from the *Letter to Theodore* as my primary evidence. This text would only supplement what Irenaeus and Clement have already informed us on how the Carpocratians rooted their beliefs and practices in Mark's expression of the "mystery of the kingdom of god" (*A.H.* 1.25.5) and that some Alexandrian readers took the imperative to voluntary asceticism and poverty in Mark 10:17-24 quite literally.

CONCLUSION:

THE CENTRIST CHRISTIAN APPROPRIATION OF MARK

Unless the evangelist had a special relationship with Peter in actual fact, something must have overcome the patristic ambivalence about Mark's literary or theological value to motivate their incessant insistence that the second canonical Gospel was Petrine. Many scholars have been puzzled by the disjunction between the tradition about the evangelist Mark with the contents of the canonical Gospel that came down in his name. Indeed, in my first three chapters, my verdict was that there is no sound basis in either the internal evidence of the Gospel itself or in the late external references that link Mark and Peter together to conclude that the author of Mark was the interpreter of Peter. Unable to discern a reason to distrust Papias's general reliability, David Deeks supposed that Papias must have been referring to a lost writing by the aforementioned Mark that became confused with the text mistakenly handed down as the "Gospel according to Mark."¹⁰⁰⁰ Deeks did not despair over this fortuitous accident of history. He quips "Sometimes a case of mistaken identity can be a blessing. Perhaps Papias' finest contribution to Christian history was that his defense of MARK inadvertently gave to an anonymous work of genius a personal superscription ('According to Mark'), and surrounded it with a spurious origination which safeguarded it for posterity."¹⁰⁰¹

I am inclined to agree with Deek's evaluation of the literary genius of Mark when it is respected on its own terms rather than the burden placed upon it by the patristic writers to meet their own needs and agendas, but, if I am correct, the attribution of the text to Peter was no

¹⁰⁰⁰ Deeks, "Papias Revisited," 327-8.

¹⁰⁰¹ Deeks, "Papias Revisited," 328.

accident. Rather, it was a deliberate power play to co-opt Mark for the centrist Christian project to re-define Christian origins in the second century against the competing legitimating narratives of their rivals. Although Mark hardly captured their excitement, they could not afford to concede it to their opponents. Attaching Peter's apostolic authority to Mark was the means by which they sanctioned its use among their own congregations and de-legitimized the readings of dissident groups that fell outside the approved lines of apostolic succession. The reason they could take over Mark but not other explicitly "Gnostic" texts was that Mark was close enough to Matthew and, when read in conjunction with the other canonical Gospels, Mark's gaps at the beginning and end of the narrative or its threatening individual passages could be glossed over by cross-referencing with another accepted Gospel. Whatever the evangelist may have intended in composing the first extant narrative *bios* or life of Jesus, its individual voice became drowned out in the one Gospel in quadriform, read through the single lens of the apostolic rule of faith.

For some, this verdict that it is impossible to speculate behind the anonymous authorship of the Gospel and that the patristic tradition on it was invented wholesale as a legitimating device may seem unduly negative, but it could also be read as a liberating thing for this Gospel itself. Positively, the evangelist can finally step outside of the long shadow cast by Peter and Paul and receive credit for his or her own notable contribution in the history of Christianity. The evangelist can be respected as a masterful narrator and theologian, not a mere stenographer copying down the tradition as Peter had dictated it. The Gospel of Mark was stamped with a Petrine imprimatur to make it safe for the canon, obliterating the text's distinctive voice to some extent, but its very presence in the canon ensured that its radical counter-cultural proclamation of the "good news of Jesus Christ" may speak in our world today. For this reason, some readers may be grateful that the patristic writers chose to rescue the text from the margins.

APPENDIX

THE CARPOCRATIANS AND THE MYSTIC GOSPEL OF MARK

The most clear-cut evidence for a non-centrist interpretive community for Mark is in the controversial *Letter to Theodore*.¹⁰⁰² While the survival of the sole exemplar of a Clementine letter about a previously unknown Gospel fragment over such a lengthy period of time may seem far-fetched, it is not entirely unprecedented. Tony Burke points to parallel examples of dramatic discoveries of single, late manuscripts of the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* or the *Infancy Gospel of James*.¹⁰⁰³ For a closely related example of the modern discovery of an unprovenanced “Gospel” fragment, the *Egerton Gospel* (Papyrus Egerton 2) was purchased from an antiquities dealer in Egypt in 1934 without further knowledge of the dealer or the purchaser.¹⁰⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Pierluigi Piovanelli considers the discovery of a hitherto unknown ancient work copied into a modern European book to be exceptional, not to mention highly suspicious.¹⁰⁰⁵

Joining the often acrimonious debates on whether it is an ancient letter or a modern forgery is to enter a scholarly minefield and I sympathize with why few scholars are willing to take a gamble on it. Regrettably, the manuscript has gone missing, so a cloud of uncertainty hangs over the whole affair. As the discussion tends to generate more heat than light, I want to affirm at the outset my utmost respect for the scholars who have weighed in on both sides of the

¹⁰⁰² To review the circumstances of the discovery and the aftermath, see pp. 187-9.

¹⁰⁰³ Tony Burke, “Introduction” in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*, 27. An expert on the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, Burke recounts how the text was first catalogued with other Viennese manuscripts in 1675 by Peter Lambeck. Lambeck excerpted several lines from a late fifteenth century Greek manuscript which was subsequently lost, but no one accused Lambreck of forgery before a second manuscript was found 20 years later. The *Infancy Gospel of James* first appeared in Guillaume Postel’s Latin translation of a late unnamed Greek manuscript in 1552 and in a Greek edition from another unnamed manuscript by Michael Neander in 1564 before further discoveries.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Charles W. Hedrick, “*Secret Mark*: Moving on from Stalemate” in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*, 41.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Piovanelli, “Halfway,” 160-1. Thus, he rules out Smith’s parallel of the recycling of older fragments of parchment, such as a known fifteenth century manuscript of Sophocles’ *Ajax*, in the end pages of printed books.

issue. At any rate, a study of the second century reception of Mark may be incomplete without taking the letter into consideration for, as Scott Brown observes, “The Gospel of Mark was the least quoted and most apologized-for gospel of the traditional four. The *Letter to Theodore* may give us some insight into why that was.”¹⁰⁰⁶ If some readers are unable to suspend their cynicism to entertain that the letter may be a piece of ancient correspondence, they may excise this section with hopefully not too great a loss to the thesis as a whole.

A. An Ancient Document or a Modern Forgery?

I would like to advance three lines of evidence for why I am slightly inclined to accept the genuineness of Smith’s find, though my arguments to this effect will not really break new ground that is unfamiliar to the main participants of the debate. In my estimation, Smith followed the proper protocols to authenticate the find, did not possess the necessary training to pull off the composition of the Greek letter, and seems to have radically misconstrued the contents of the letter. First, to verify his find, Smith proceeded to catalogue and photograph the manuscript (MS 65) and consulted paleographic experts who dated the hand to the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰⁷ Then, he spent two years on a painstaking word-by-word statistical analysis to verify that the vocabulary, phraseology, rhythm and content corresponded with Clement and the majority of the 14 patristic or classical scholars he conferred with agreed with his assessment.¹⁰⁰⁸ Smith ruled out an imitation of Clement based on the minor disagreements with Clement on whether Carpocrates or his son Epiphany founded the sect (cf. *Strom.* 3.2) and the permissibility of

¹⁰⁰⁶ Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 71.

¹⁰⁰⁷ See Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1-4; idem, *Secret Gospel*, 10-23.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 5-85; idem, *Secret Gospel*, 26-9. Most experts accepted the attribution to Clement when Smith surveyed the scholarly scene in 1982; see Morton Smith, “Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark: The Score at the End of the First Decade” *HTR* 75 (1982): 450. But the consensus has broken down among some specialists on Clement (see Piovanelli, “Halfway,” 161-3).

committing perjury under oath (cf. *Strom.* 7.8).¹⁰⁰⁹ This last point could disqualify Clementine authorship of the letter, but Clement thought Carpocrates distorted the text to such a degree that he admonished Theodore to deny on oath that the *Carpocratian* version was by the evangelist (*Theod.* II.11-3), a half-truth that may be tolerable (cf. *Strom.* 7.9.53.2).¹⁰¹⁰ No other suitable ancient candidates are on the table apart from Clement or an imitator of Clement.¹⁰¹¹

In all of this, Smith seemed to display a critical acumen to test the authenticity of his find. Admittedly, early on Quinten Quesnell protested Smith's handling of the matter, complaining about the inaccessibility of the manuscript and the lack of transparency regarding the information Smith supplied to his experts. Quesnell urged that proper scientific examination of the physical evidence such as the composition or colour of the ink, the state of the manuscript and the search for manuscripts by the same hand was required for a decision on the authenticity of the letter.¹⁰¹² Smith exasperatedly replied that the manuscript was freely available in the monastery library and that it was an unusual request to have the ink tested, a demand not made for the other items Smith catalogued.¹⁰¹³ It was not Smith's fault that the manuscript was removed from the Voss volume and misplaced; other witnesses located it where Smith left it and one attempt to get the ink tested was blocked by Archimadrite Meliton.¹⁰¹⁴ This should put to bed the rumours that Smith alone laid eyes on the manuscript. The parallel with Paul Colemon-Norton's amusing agraphon that he purported to have seen in Morocco, but in reality may have been concocted

¹⁰⁰⁹ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 84-5.

¹⁰¹⁰ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 31.

¹⁰¹¹ One independent researcher has argued that the letter tried a little too hard to imitate Clement; see A. H. Criddle, "On the Mar Saba Letter Attributed to Clement of Alexandria," *JECS* 3 (1995): 215-20.

¹⁰¹² Quesnell, "A Question of Evidence," 52-3.

¹⁰¹³ M. Smith, "On the Authenticity of the Mar Saba Letter of Clement: Reply to Q. Quesnell," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 196.

¹⁰¹⁴ For the most up-to-date review of the history following the discovery, see Burke, "Introduction," 2-19.

from a joke he would tell his students, breaks down because he was not able to supply written documentation or photographs to back up his “discovery.”¹⁰¹⁵

A few scholars, however, envisage Smith planting clues in the letter to let the discerning reader in on his “hoax.”¹⁰¹⁶ The first clue Carlson spots is that the top handwriting of the first page of Smith’s catalogue of manuscript number 22 betrayed the same hand as the *Letter to Theodore* (MS 65) and was ascribed to the superficial Greek surname Μαδιότης. A suffix was attached to μαδῶ, meaning “to lose hair” or figuratively “to swindle,” and was a self-deprecating joke by the balding Smith.¹⁰¹⁷ His next clue is that the saying on mixing salt with an adulterant to change its flavor (*Theod.* I.13-15) presupposes free-flowing table salt that existed after 1910 when a chemist at the *Morton* Salt Company invented an anti-caking agent to prevent salt from forming into clumps.¹⁰¹⁸ A third clue is in Smith’s commentary, which links the salt saying in Matthew 5:13 to Jeremiah 28:17 LXX. The parallel does not work in the Greek as the verb in Jeremiah means to “shape metal objects,” or metaphorically to create false things, rather than to mix truth and error. Smith alluded to the Jeremiah text because the text, in English, refers to a *goldsmith*.¹⁰¹⁹ Francis Watson extracted a new clue in the saying about mixing truth with inventions, causing the truth to be falsified (παράχραρᾶσσεται) or imprinted with a false image. The job of mixing precious and base metals was done by a “forger,” but, when it came to have connotations of a counterfeiter, the term “smith” was substituted. In conjunction with this, the letter has the aorist infinitive passive of μωραίνω, rather than the form in the Synoptics (Matt

¹⁰¹⁵ Contra Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 16-20.

¹⁰¹⁶ Carlson (*Gospel Hoax*, 15-16) distinguishes between deliberate fraud for the purposes of monetary gain and a playful hoax to test the critical acuity of scholars or for the pleasure of fooling the scholarly establishment.

¹⁰¹⁷ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 62-3.

¹⁰¹⁸ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 59-61. He contrasts this with how Clement uses Clement’s saltwater as a metaphor in *Strom.* 1.8.41.3-4 or speaks of salt in lumps in *Protr.* 2.14.2; 2.22.4, *Strom.* 7.4.26.

¹⁰¹⁹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 62-3.

5:13/Luke 14:34), to spell out “Morton” (μωρ[αν]θην[αι]).¹⁰²⁰ Finally, the circumstances of Smith’s discovery may run a little too parallel with the evangelical thriller *The Mystery of Mar Saba*. Watson elaborates on the parallels with the novel: the location of Mar Saba, the faint hope that a significant manuscript may be hidden away in the monastery in spite of the pessimism that most of the manuscripts had been removed, the sensational manuscript that undermined Christianity accompanied by another ancient texts as a seal of authenticity, and a constructed Greek text with Synoptic phraseology and Johannine echoes.¹⁰²¹

Scott Brown and Allan Pantuck have worked tirelessly to refute each supposed clue of a hoax. Brown has shown that the hand of the top handwriting of the first page of manuscript 22 differs from that of manuscript 65¹⁰²² and, with Pantuck, that the name Μαδιότης in Smith’s *Nea Siōn* catalogue was a misprint of Smith’s transcription of Ἰμαδέοτας when it was re-translated back into Greek.¹⁰²³ Brown notices that it is not the salt that is mixed in the letter. It is the true things that are mixed with inventions to render the whole of the mystic Gospel as false, “with the result that” (ὥστε) it is as worthless as salt that has become insipid.¹⁰²⁴ The metaphor is not about how salts are mixed with adulterants to modify their taste, much less the chemical processes in action, but the ancient awareness that salt can lose its taste such as when it becomes wet (Pliny, *Nat hist.* 31.41) or is covered with gypsum dust.¹⁰²⁵ Brown criticizes Carlson for missing the elipsis (ff) Smith placed after Jeremiah 28:17 which, though it might be a

¹⁰²⁰ Watson, “Beyond Suspicion,” 152-5.

¹⁰²¹ Watson, “Beyond Suspicion,” 161-70.

¹⁰²² Scott Brown, “Factualizing the Folklore: Stephen Carlson’s Case Against Morton Smith” *HTR* 99 (2006), 295-8; Scott G. Brown and Allan Pantuck, “Morton Smith as M. Madiotes: Stephen Carlson’s Attribution of *Secret Mark* to a Bald Swindler” *JSHJ* 6 (2008), 118-21. A key difference that Brown catches is that the writer of manuscript 22 has far less competence in accent marks than manuscript 65.

¹⁰²³ Brown and Pantuck, “Bald Swindler,” 112-16. They further point out that Smith’s transcription of the signature as Ἰμαδέοτας may be mistaken as examination of the uncropped photograph of MS 22 suggests that the name could be Μοδέοτος, a name found at the Greek Patriarchate and at Mar Saba (pp. 122-3).

¹⁰²⁴ Brown, “Factualizing the Folklore,” 307-8.

¹⁰²⁵ Brown, “Factualizing the Folklore,” 310.

weak parallel, clarifies that Smith may have linked the following verse (Jer 28:18) to Matthew 5:13 because it speaks about another worthless thing (idols) that will perish.¹⁰²⁶ Resorting to English synonyms of a Greek word to get “smith” or deleting letters from a Greek word to get the transliteration *mōrthēn* (Morton?) may border on the “codes” about modern personages or events that some see between the lines of the biblical texts. As for the parallels with the novel, aside from the location, they are fairly loose and may reflect the stock experiences of manuscript hunters, especially as the novel is based on the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus by Constantin von Tischendorf.¹⁰²⁷ The playful “hoax” hypothesis may admirably steer clear of ad hominem attacks on the late Smith, but, if Smith forged the letter, he perpetuated a malicious deception on his closest scholarly peers that he took to the grave.

For those who imagine Smith’s character to be capable of the latter, the next question is whether he had the ability to compose the *Letter to Theodore*. On the one hand, A.H. Criddle has tried to prove that the letter has too high a ratio of Clementine to non-Clementine features and an imitator of Clement searched through his corpus to pick out words that are not in other patristic texts and avoid words used in patristic texts that are not in Clement.¹⁰²⁸ Scott Brown has poked holes in Criddle’s statistical analysis. Criddle generalizes from a limited sample of 6 out of the 13 words that are new or used only once in the letter without explaining why a forger

¹⁰²⁶ Brown, “Factualizing the Folklore,” 312. Brown admits that it is not a particularly good parallel, but that it is not so outlandish as Carlson assumed.

¹⁰²⁷ , Scott Brown and Allan Pantuck, “Craig Evans and the *Secret Gospel of Mark*: Exploring the Grounds for Doubt” in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*, 103-5.

¹⁰²⁸ Criddle, “Mar Saba Letter,” 215-20. From a sampling of Stählin’s index, Criddle determines that 37.5 percent of Clement’s vocabulary consists of words used only once. For every increase of 8 words in a newly discovered Clementine text, we should expect a total of 5 words that were used once before previously, but the ratio of the *Letter to Theodore* is 4 to 9 for new words to words used once previously. Similarly, Clement’s most cited passages occur only once, so we would expect the number of quotations previously occurring once to be less than half of the number of previously unknown quotations, but the *Letter to Theodore* has 4 new quotations and 4 used once previously in Clement.

would pick words almost as rare in Clement as in other patristic texts,¹⁰²⁹ excludes the citation of the mystic Gospel but factors in vocabulary from Clement's free citations elsewhere, and overlooks that the amount of unique vocabulary in Clement's public treatises may be due to his desire to impress with his encyclopedic learning.¹⁰³⁰ Brown exclaims that it would be a colossal task to comb through the Clementine corpus to pick out rare words in Clement that are virtually non-existent in the rest of patristic literature without the aid of modern Clementine and patristic lexicons,¹⁰³¹ though the publication of Otto Stählin's index on Clement published in 1936 might give a modern imitator some time to practice.¹⁰³² However, it is one thing to have a deep familiarity with Clement's vocabulary or theology and another to compose an original "Clementine" text in a flawless eighteenth century Greek paleographic style.

To prove that Smith attempted the latter, Carlson advanced the discussion by subjecting the letter to a handwritten analysis. Carlson thought that he caught evidence of unnatural hesitations in the pen strokes (i.e. "forger's tremor") and anomalies in the formation of the letters *tau*, *pi*, *rho* and *omicron-epsilon* ligature compared to other eighteenth century manuscripts at Mar Saba,¹⁰³³ but he has faced criticism for using the halftone reproductions of Smith's black-and-white photographs and for lacking the professional qualifications in handwriting analysis.¹⁰³⁴ The *Biblical Archaeological Review* obtained the assistance of a Greek questioned document examiner, Venetia Anastasopoulou, and a Greek Paleographer, Agamemnon Tselikas, to undertake a handwriting analysis. Disappointingly, this has not resolved the stalemate as they reached opposite verdicts on whether the letter was or was not written by a native Greek-

¹⁰²⁹ Brown adds that Criddle's method of examining words never used before with words used once in prior writings has been shown to only correctly identify the authorship of 3 out of 7 of Shakespeare's poems (see Brown, "Clement's Authorship," 536-7 n. 5).

¹⁰³⁰ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 55-6.

¹⁰³¹ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 55.

¹⁰³² This point was first made by Quesnell, "The Mar Saba Clementine," 55.

¹⁰³³ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 25-35.

¹⁰³⁴ See Burke, "Introduction," 26, Brown and Pantuck, "Grounds for Doubt," 122-3.

speaker.¹⁰³⁵ On another front, Watson questions if a Greek writer would require the level of assistance that the *Letter to Theodore* receives from Papias. Clement depended on Papias, so it is not unexpected that the letter follows Papias on the contents of Mark as τὰς πράξεις τοῦ κυρίου (the doings of the Lord) (*Theod.* I.16; cf. *H.E.* 3.39.15 τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα) before the evangelist compiled (συνέταξε) a spiritual Gospel (*Theod.* I.22; cf. *H.E.* 3.39.16 συνέταξατο). Watson lays out a deeper structural parallel between the letter on how Mark did *not* (οὐ μέντοι) narrate all Lord's deeds *nor* (οὐδὲ μήν) reveal concealed ones but *rather* (ἀλλὰ) chose stories for catechoumens with Papias on how Mark did *not* (οὐ μέντοι) write in order for he was *not* (οὐ μέντοι) a hearer *nor* (οὐτε) follower of Lord but *rather* (ὑστερον δέ) of Peter.¹⁰³⁶ Brown and Pantuck note that the exact verbal correspondence is restricted to οὐ μέντοι and that Papias's syntactical construction, unlike the *Letter to Theodore*, is separated by two clauses. Meanwhile, the construction of the letter is paralleled in Clement (*Protr* 1.2.4).¹⁰³⁷

The Achilles heel of the forgery hypothesis is that Smith may not have had the necessary skills to forge the letter. Smith's former student, Allan Pantuck, has documented how Smith did not have the time in his busy schedule to attain a sufficient level of Greek proficiency nor a mastery of an eighteenth century paleography or Clement's literary style before he stayed at Mar Saba in 1958.¹⁰³⁸ This is not meant to detract from Smith's considerable expertise, for Smith admits as much himself in his sarcastic retort to Quesnell's allegations that, "Unfortunately,

¹⁰³⁵ See Venetia Anastasopoulou, "Experts Report Handwriting Examination," *BAR Scholar's Study* (posted April 2010), 1–39. Online: <http://www.bib-arch.org/scholars-study/secret-mark-handwriting-analysis.asp>; "Agamemnon Tselikas' Handwriting Analysis Report," *Biblical Archaeology Review Scholar's Study* (posted May 2011), n.p. Online: <http://www.bib-arch.org/scholars-study/secret-mark-handwriting-agamemnon.asp>. For criticism of Tselikas, see Hedrick, "Stalemate," 35-7; Brown and Pantuck, "Grounds for Doubt," 124-5.

¹⁰³⁶ Watson, "Beyond Suspicion," 149-51.

¹⁰³⁷ Brown and Pantuck, "Grounds for Doubt," 132-4.

¹⁰³⁸ Allan J. Pantuck, "A Question of Ability: What Did He Know and When Did He Know It? Further Excavations from the Morton Smith Archives" in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*, 185-203; contra Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 44-7; Piovanelli, "Halfway," 164-5.

nobody else has had so high an opinion of my classical scholarship.”¹⁰³⁹ Anastapolou’s conclusions that the letter has the spontaneity and skill of a trained scribe that is much too advanced when compared to the Greek handwriting from Smith’s notes seems to vindicate Pantuck on this score.¹⁰⁴⁰ To make the forgery hypothesis work, the conspiracy theory must grow to include an accomplice with training in eighteenth century Greek paleography. But Smith had to master the distinctive styles of Clement and Mark as well as ancient epistolary conventions to give his accomplice a rough draft to perfect. Jeff Jay’s verdict on Smith’s “superhuman” abilities to pull off a forgery of this nature is worth quoting in full:

But those who argue the letter is a twentieth century forgery must now allow that the forger had a solid knowledge of epistolography, ancient practices of composition and transmission, and the ability to weave a letter with fine generic texture, in addition to previously recognized competency in patristics, eighteenth-century Greek paleography, Markan literary techniques, and tremendous insight into the psychology and art of deception.¹⁰⁴¹

The last reason to doubt a forgery by Smith is that he seems to have spectacularly misrepresented the contents of the letter in the service of his unconventional theories. This goes against the judgment of Smith’s critics that see the letter to be too closely aligned with Smith’s prior interests. Carlson points out that Smith had previously linked Mark 4:11-2 and Clement with forbidden sexual relationships (Lev 18:22; 20:13) in *t. Hagigah* 2.1.¹⁰⁴² In addition, Watson highlights Smith’s prior curiosity in a source behind the Markan controversy stories (2:1-3:6) with Johannine characteristics, in a secrecy doctrine taught by Jesus and Paul (cf. 1 Cor 2:1-6), and in Clement of Alexandria who merits four mentions in a 1958 article by Smith.¹⁰⁴³ But when the rabbinic passage is quoted in the context of Smith’s dissertation, the Levitical laws on

¹⁰³⁹ Smith, “Score,” 450.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Anastasopoulou, “Experts Report Handwriting Examination,” 37.

¹⁰⁴¹ Jay, “Epistolary Framework,” 596-7.

¹⁰⁴² Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 71-2.

¹⁰⁴³ Watson, “Beyond Suspicion,” 157-60.

forbidden sexual relationships are part of a collection of texts that the Tannaïm forbade as unsuitable for public teaching such as the creation narratives or Ezekiel's chariot vision.¹⁰⁴⁴ The search for a source of Mark with Johannine characteristics runs counter to Smith's opinion that the new Gospel excerpts lacks traits of Johannine redaction.¹⁰⁴⁵ On the contrary, Smith's opinions had shifted as a result of the study of the letter. He previously interpreted Mark 4:11 as a post-Easter invention, designed to account for the anomaly that the majority of the Jews did not accede to the messiahship of Jesus with the justification that they were not privy to his secret teachings, but changed his view that the mystery of the kingdom "given" to the disciples was a baptismal rite administered by the historical Jesus after the discovery.¹⁰⁴⁶

As it happens, Smith built his new ideas on strained interpretations of the data. His theory on the baptismal *Sitz im Leben* for the recitation of mystic Mark was borrowed, with minor modifications, from the patristics scholar Cyril C. Richardson and regurgitated by many without evaluation.¹⁰⁴⁷ Crossan paralleled the imagery of the mystic text with the nocturnal baptism in Acts 16:33, the Pauline baptism metaphors of being clothed in Christ (Gal 3:27; Col 2:11-2), and the return to a sexually undifferentiated humanity in the protology of *Thomas* (27, 37).¹⁰⁴⁸ While Crossan believed that the Carpocratians distorted the baptismal imagery in an erotic direction, Koester takes the line "naked man with naked man" in the context of baptisms in the nude (cf. *Apostolic Tradition* 21:11).¹⁰⁴⁹ But Gundry is right that the nocturnal baptism of the centurion and his family in Acts 16:33 has a specific context that does not set a precedent for

¹⁰⁴⁴ Brown, "Factualizing the Folklore," 323; Brown and Pantuck, "Grounds for Doubt," 106-7.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Pantuck and Brown, "Grounds for Doubt," 106-7.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Brown, "Factualizing the Folklore," 324-5; Brown and Pantuck, "Grounds for Doubt," 107-12.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 168-88; *Secret Gospel*, 64-9.

¹⁰⁴⁸ John Dominic Crossan, *Four Other Gospels: Shadows in the Contours of Canon* (Minneapolis, Chicago, New York: Winston Press, 1985), 117-8.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 294 n. 7, 302.

the timing of baptisms and the *Apostolic Traditions* has baptisms at dawn.¹⁰⁵⁰ Jeffery cannot think of other evidence for a ritual that required the removal of clothing.¹⁰⁵¹

Unlike Crossan and Koester, Jeffery wants to expose the anachronisms of the letter when it is set against the ritual practice of second century Alexandrian Christians. The text has some features of an initiation rite in the story of a resurrection, the week-long teaching followed by a nocturnal vigil, and the performative dimensions of the linen clothe (σινδών) as a towel for water immersions or a shroud for burial.¹⁰⁵² Yet Jeffery lists a number of oddities about the rite: it is not accompanied by lengthy periods of fasting, exorcisms, catechisms, repentance or confessions of faith. There is no vocabulary of light, illumination, sealing or crowning. The imagery of crossing into the Promiseland and Eucharistic motifs are missing. Contrariwise, the resurrection symbolism for baptism, the preparation period leading to a vigil, and the white garment in the letter may be anachronistic to second century Alexandria.¹⁰⁵³ Jeffrey deduces that the real author of the letter was influenced by Anglican liturgiologists in the mid twentieth century as two Anglican scholars tried to root the Saturday night vigil and the white robe in Hippolytus's *Apostolic Constitutions*. Further, in the Book of Common prayer, the "Gospel" (Matt 27:57-66) features an account of a burial set in the evening and the "Prayer" (Rom 6:3-11) features the Pauline typology of death and resurrection for baptism.¹⁰⁵⁴ Jeffery may be too quick to confuse Smith's interpretation of the data, which he has persuasively debunked, with the

¹⁰⁵⁰ Gundry, *Apology*, 620, 622.

¹⁰⁵¹ Jeffrey (*Unveiled*, 294-5 n. 108) notes that the line "And let them stand in the water naked" (21:11) is not original to the *Apostolic Tradition* but derives from a fifth century Syriac text based on it known as *Testamentum Domini*.

¹⁰⁵² Jeffrey, *Unveiled*, 61.

¹⁰⁵³ Jeffrey, *Unveiled*, 62. Jeffrey does note that the Basilidians had a nocturnal rite at Epiphany, similar to the Paschal Vigil, which featured an evening banquet followed by hymn-singing till dawn (*Strom* 1.21.146.2) (*Unveiled*, 69-70). However, as mentioned on p. 191, Jeffrey notes that the primary model for baptism rituals in second century Alexandria was Jesus's baptism in the Jordan.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Jeffrey, *Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled*, 63-8. He argues that the Pauline typology became the dominant interpretation for Easter baptisms at a later date. Earlier, baptism was associated with Pentecost in the Latin west or with Jesus' baptism on Epiphany (Jan 6) in Syria, Egypt and parts of the west (pp 68-9).

contents of the letter itself. I find the arguments of Brown to be more convincing than Jeffery that the frame of the letter presupposes an audience that is far too advanced than elementary Christians who have recently undergone baptism.¹⁰⁵⁵ The mystic text does not narrate a baptism. There is no water, the nocturnal setting is in accordance with Mark's secrecy theme and it would not make sense for the youth to still be wearing his baptismal garment in Mark 14:51-2.¹⁰⁵⁶ The σινδών is not the youth's pre-baptismal costume; it was his burial shroud.¹⁰⁵⁷ Jesus is not performing a rite; he is "teaching" the youth (*Theod.* III.10).

Smith carried his baptismal reading of the *Letter to Theodore* further by contending that the mystic Gospel gives a glimpse into the practice of the historical Jesus. In his reconstruction, Jesus administered a magical baptism rite which enabled the initiate to be united with the spirit of Jesus, to ascend into the "kingdom" of heaven, and to be liberated from the Mosaic Law ordained for the lower sphere.¹⁰⁵⁸ Conveniently, all the writings of this early libertine wing of the Jesus movement vanished, though Smith fallaciously appealed to the standard vituperative rhetoric in Christian heresiological texts or in the Greco-Roman critics of Christianity that lambaste the "other" as practicing gross immorality.¹⁰⁵⁹ Critics seized on a point in Smith's summary on how the spiritual union with Jesus put into effect by the rite may have been accompanied by physical union.¹⁰⁶⁰ In their mind, Smith wanted to shock the establishment with a text that imaged Jesus as a sexually promiscuous magician.

Many of Smith's critics see his handiwork behind the sexuality of the letter. Carlson reads "he remained with him that night" (ἔμεινε σὺν αὐτῷ τὴν νύκτα ἐκείνην) (III.9) to be

¹⁰⁵⁵ See my discussion on pp. 190-2.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Gundry, *Apology*, 618-9; Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 145-6.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Gundry, *Apology*, 620, 622; Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 145.

¹⁰⁵⁸ See Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 217-51; *Secret Gospel*, 101-13.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 254-64; *Secret Gospel*, 101-13.

¹⁰⁶⁰ See the infamous summary in Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 113-4

unnecessary as the text already specified that Jesus was lodging at the youth's house. Seeing the idiom as unparalleled in an ancient context, he interpreted it as a euphemism for casual sex that belongs to the context of gay urbanites in the 1950s seeking relationships in public parks.¹⁰⁶¹ This is reinforced by the youth's love for Jesus, Jesus's rejection of the women and the use of Jude as a proof-text against homosexuality (*Theod.* I.3, III.15-6).¹⁰⁶² Jeffrey reads the entire text as an extended double entendre. Since the verb προσκυνέω was associated in Smith's day with "kiss" (e.g., kiss an idol), the sister "coming" "bent down to kiss" Jesus is a crude joke about oral sex. Jesus leaves her to pursue the young man (*Theod.* II.24-6) and spurns the women in the second excerpt (III.16).¹⁰⁶³ The reference to seizing the youth's hands is also taken in a sexual way, especially as "hand" could be used as a euphemism for the genitals and seizing the hands was a technique in Greek wrestling between naked athletes.¹⁰⁶⁴ Jeffrey takes the latent homosexuality in the text as anachronistic. Based on his review of ancient pederasty on the Athenian model in the fifth to fourth centuries BCE, the higher status male lover (ἐραστής) is the active participant and the lower-status young beloved (ἐρώμενος) is the passive recipient, mirroring the hierarchical inequality in the social sphere.¹⁰⁶⁵ This Platonic model has less to do with sexual orientation than with the enculturation of a boy into the cultural mores of society, but the mystic text is anachronistic in that it is the youth pursues a relationship with Jesus.¹⁰⁶⁶

This may disprove the text if it is correct to read sexual imagery into it. However, since there is no reason to assume that Jesus and the youth stayed in the same room of the house for all of the six days, the youth "remained with Jesus that night" because Jesus was teaching him about

¹⁰⁶¹ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 66-71.

¹⁰⁶² Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 126 n. 12.

¹⁰⁶³ Jeffrey, *Secret Gospel Unveiled*, 92-3, 96-9.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Jeffrey, *Secret Gospel Unveiled*, 93-5. Jeffrey supports his interpretation by noting that hand gestures are rare, pointing out the possibility of a liturgical clasping of hands in Gal 2:19 and of liturgical handshakes among Gnostics while the *Apostolic Tradition* 21:9 has the presbyters grasp those receiving baptism without specifying their hands.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Jeffrey, *Secret Gospel Unveiled*, 185-212.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Jeffrey, *Secret Gospel Unveiled*, 209-10.

the kingdom.¹⁰⁶⁷ Scholars do not ordinarily read sexual connotations into Jesus's love for the man with many possessions (Mark 10:21), the disciple whom Jesus loved who leans on the Lord's breast (John 13:23, 25) or Nicodemus visit to Jesus at night to listen to his teaching (John 3:2). Brown points out the similarity with John 1:39 in that two male disciples desire to be Jesus's disciples and request to remain with him that day (παρ' αὐτῷ ἐμειναν τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκεῖνην).¹⁰⁶⁸ The two men on the road to emanaus requested the mysterious stranger to "remain with us" (μεῖνον μεθ' ἡμῶν) as the evening drew near (Luke 24:28).¹⁰⁶⁹ As προσκυνέω was a regular term for obeisance to a social superior, the double entendre that Jeffrey finds on the basis of how the term was understood in Smith's day is a circular argument that presupposes that Smith was the author. In Mark 5:41, Jesus seizes the hands of a young boy and raises him when he appeared to the crowd as dead with no sexual implications. Neither Jesus nor the youth are naked in the text known to Clement and there is no need to read anymore into the nocturnal teaching session than the induction of the youth in the life of discipleship. According to Clement, it was the Carpocratians who sexualized a perfectly innocuous text.

If Smith was the author of the *Letter to Theodore*, it is puzzling why his major theories are such a poor match to the text. Carlson's reasoning is that Smith's fanciful theories were deliberate obfuscation so that critics could not accuse him of forgery and to distract from how the text vindicates his basic suppositions about a common source behind Mark and John and an early strand of Christian libertinism.¹⁰⁷⁰ But why would Smith risk his professional reputation to vindicate a benign theory of a common source behind Mark and John or feel the need to forge a

¹⁰⁶⁷ Brown, "Factualizing the Folklore," 314

¹⁰⁶⁸ Brown, "Factualizing the Folklore," 314-15. Carlson (*Gospel Hoax*, 125 n. 3) rejects the parallels on the basis of the differences, but Brown shows that such differences only show that the mystic text is independent of the Johannine text but that the underlying idea of lodging with Jesus is the same.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Hedrick, "Stalemate," n.p.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 78-86; Stephen Carlson, "Reply to Scott Brown," *Expository Times* 117 (2006), 187-8.

new text when he presumed that he had all the proof he needed of an early libertine movement in the texts of the New Testament and the patristic heresiologists? Smith had little to gain, and everything to lose, in taking the risk. Truly, his scholarly reputation suffered from reviewers less impressed with Smith's sensationalism. I am well aware that a great deal of uncertainty remains about the *Letter to Theodore*. There may come a day when we have the good fortune to re-discover the letter and run the proper scientific tests or a scholar is waiting in the wings with an argument that will definitively move the consensus of scholarship beyond the stalemate one way or the other. Until that day, I would prefer to presume Smith's innocence until he is proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

B. The Relationship of Mystic Mark to the Canonical Gospel

1. A Second Century Pastiche?

If the *Letter of Theodore* is accepted as a genuine correspondence of Clement, we can begin to ask questions about the relationship of mystic Mark to its canonical counterpart and about what bearing this new data might have on the reception of Mark among diverse groups in Alexandria. Was the mystic Gospel a Carpocratian text whose pseudonymous author hoodwinked an incredulous Clement into falling for the ruse that it was an authentic text by the evangelist Mark?¹⁰⁷¹ Or, alternatively, were the sections of the mystic text quoted by Clement an original part of Mark that was excised from the final canonical edition by a centrist Christian scribe? Predictably, the initial reaction to the mystic text as an extra-canonical fragment was that it was a rudimentary pastiche of the four canonical Gospels. As Carlson rightly observed, by relegating

¹⁰⁷¹ Bruce, "Secret Mark," 20.

the new text to a second century, New Testament scholars were able to, in effect, sideline it by confining it outside the boundaries of the study of the New Testament proper.¹⁰⁷²

To give a few examples, Robert Gundry argues that mystic Mark conflates the Synoptic pericope of the wealthy man (Mark 10:17-22; Matt 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-23) by taking the νεανίσκος (youth) from Matthew 19:20-2, the expression “looking upon him he loved him” from Mark 10:21 and the aside “for he was rich” from Luke 18:23.¹⁰⁷³ Robert Grant judges that the author of the mystic Gospel searched for everything he could find about a “youth” (Matt 19:20, 22): a youth was raised from the dead (Luke 7:14), a youth was in a tomb (Mark 16:5) and a youth wore a sheet over his naked body (Mark 14:51-2).¹⁰⁷⁴ For F.F. Bruce, the text is a collage of mainly Markan phrases with bits from Matthew such as the falling at Jesus feet (Mark 7:25), the plea for pity from the son of David in the face of the disciples’ disapproval (Matt 15:22-3), the emotions of anger (Mark 1:41 in D), the garden tomb (John 19:41), the rolling of the stone from the tomb (Matt 28:2), the action of seizing the hand (Mark 1:31; 5:41), the love for the man (Mark 10:21; cf. John 13:23, 30), the beseeching of Jesus to be with him (Mark 5:18), the 6 day time frame (Mark 6:2), the linen robe over the naked body (Mark 14:51) and the remaining with him that night (John 1:39).¹⁰⁷⁵ Bruce thinks there is a confused echo of the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:17-44) in that the loud voice comes from the supposedly dead occupant of a tomb and Jesus himself rolls away the stone.¹⁰⁷⁶ On the second excerpt of mystic Mark, Bruce and Gundry explain the slight against Salome and the other women on the grounds that Salome is identified as the mother of the sons of Zebedee (cf. Mark 15:40; Matt 27:56) who makes the ambitious request for her sons in the Matthean counterpart to the Markan pericope

¹⁰⁷² Carlson, *Gospel Hoax*, 3.

¹⁰⁷³ Gundry, *Apology*, 614.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Grant, “Two Books,” 60.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Grant, “Two Books,” 60-1; Bruce, “The ‘*Secret Gospel of Mark*,’” 10-1.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Bruce, “The *Secret Gospel of Mark*, 10-1.

(Matt 20:20; cf Mark 10:35-40).¹⁰⁷⁷ In Bruce's judgment, "The fact that the expansion is such an obvious pastiche, with its internal contradiction and confusion, indicates that it is a thoroughly artificial composition, quite out of keeping with Mark's quality as a story-teller."¹⁰⁷⁸

If it were a second century pastiche, mystic Mark would be worth studying as a clue to the reception history of Mark every bit as much as the LE. It should be noted that Smith tried to reverse the lines of dependence by having the mystic text influence the Western readings of Mark (cf. *Theod.* II.23, 25; III.4-5) and the text of Matthew (*Theod.* III.4, 7),¹⁰⁷⁹ but it is unlikely that it had such an influence yet left no other traces in the manuscript tradition nor was attested by anyone other than Clement. What is more problematic is that the standards to demonstrate an inter-textual relationship worked out in the last chapter seem to be relaxed in this case as if a temporal reference to 6 days or a setting in a garden tomb or a miracle story of the resurrection of a youth is sufficient to convict the text as a crude pastiche. The phraseology of the mystic text certainly reads like Mark, but the parallels to the other Synoptics may be weaker. Bartimaeus begs for mercy from the "son of David" in Mark 10:47, despite the rebukes from the crowd, and the mystic text does not need to take the νεανίσκος from the Matthean pericope of the rich "youth" (Matt 19:20) as Mark 14:51 has a "youth" in a linen clothe.¹⁰⁸⁰ In the second excerpt, there could be a number of explanations for the rejection of the youth's mother, sister and Salome without invoking another Gospel besides Mark. Brown suggests that the women may have wanted to take control of the youth like the family members of Jesus attempted to do with him (Mark 3:19b-21, 31-5).¹⁰⁸¹ For Marvin Meyer, the snub of the women foreshadows their

¹⁰⁷⁷ Bruce, "The Secret Gospel of Mark, 12; Gundry, *Apology*, 614.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Bruce, "The Secret Gospel of Mark, 12.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 123, 145

¹⁰⁸⁰ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 98-101.

¹⁰⁸¹ Brown, "Factualizing the Folklore," 318.

failure to heed the instruction of the young man in white in Mark 16:7-8,¹⁰⁸² but I have contested the reading that the women fail at 16:8. Smith thought that an originally positive conversation of Jesus and Salome was suppressed before Clement received the text.¹⁰⁸³ As Clement does not supply the context, it may be too speculative to fill in the gaps.

Brown finds only two potential parallels to the other two Synoptics to be weighty – the words “and approaching Jesus rolled away the stone” (*Theod.* I.6; cf. Matt 28:2) and the statement “for he was rich” (*Theod.* I.9b; cf. Luke 18:23). However, the former shares eight words with Mark 16:3 as opposed to five with Matthew 28:25 and the words “and approaching” may naturally take the past tense “rolled away.”¹⁰⁸⁴ As for the latter, Smith viewed it as an interpretive gloss that Clement imported from Luke 18:23 when reciting the mystic text from memory, just as Clement’s reproduction of Mark 10:17-21 in *Quis dives salvetur* has a number of Matthean or Lukan contaminations.¹⁰⁸⁵ Brown considers it methodologically inappropriate to play the interpolation card when the text is inconvenient. He proposes that mystic Mark made a similar editorial change as Luke because the term “rich” better applies to the youth’s ownership of a house than Mark’s “having many possessions” (10:22) and Mark 10:25 speaks about the chances of a “rich” person to enter the kingdom, though he also points out the use of the D text of Mark 10:22 “for he was having much wealth” in Clement (cf. *Qds* 4:7).¹⁰⁸⁶

There is a stronger case to relate the story of Jesus’s affection for the young man that he raised with the Johannine story of Lazarus. Brown spots another parallel with John 1:39 as two men who had been in the company of the Baptist seek to be disciples of Jesus and remain with

¹⁰⁸² Marvin Meyer, “The Young Streaker in Secret and Canonical Mark” in *Ancient Gospel or Modern Forgery*, 154-5.

¹⁰⁸³ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 121-2; cf., John Dominic Crossan, *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon* (Mineapolis, Chicago, New York: Winston Press, 1985), 109.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 98-101.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 67, 69.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 100.

him at his lodging that day.¹⁰⁸⁷ The issue with positing direct dependence on John 11 is that the mystic Gospel lacks all of the distinct redactional features of John. Missing is the stock Johannine terminology, the apologetic comparison with the Baptist (10:41), the space and time measurements (e.g., 4 days, Bethany as 2 miles from Jerusalem), the character names (e.g., Lazarus, Mary, Martha), the doubling of the sisters, the prior relationship with the deceased and his family, the direct speech of Jesus, the Ἰουδαῖοι (Jews), the polarization of the crowd, and the dramatic flourishes such as the delay to visit Lazarus to the consternation of the disciples.¹⁰⁸⁸ Crossan flags up three areas in which the mystic Gospel may be more primitive than its Johannine counterpart: the great cry from the tomb symbolizing the demonic power of death (*Theod.* III.1; cf. Mark 1:26; 5:7) becomes Jesus's cry (John 11:43), Jesus's feelings of anger (*Theod.* II.25; cf. Mark 1:41) changes into his troubled spirit (John 11:33, 38), and the garden tomb that could be afforded by the rich youth is transferred to Jesus's tomb (John 19:41).¹⁰⁸⁹

Paul Foster, after appealing to E.P. Sander's demonstration that the details in the Synoptic and post-Synoptic Gospels stories could be expanded or retracted,¹⁰⁹⁰ notes that a writer who wanted the mystic text to look like an original part of Mark may have consciously avoided replicating Johannine traits.¹⁰⁹¹ Grant does not think much of the departures of the mystic text from John because its author retells a different story with separate concerns,¹⁰⁹² but it may be telling that the author does not slip up and revert back to John as a source. The place name "Bethany" may be an example of such a relapse (cf. John 11:11), but the "Bethany" in the mystic text may not be the village situated on the Mount of Olives (Mark 11:1) nor the home of Lazarus

¹⁰⁸⁷ Brown, "Factualizing the Folklore," 315-6. See above.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 120; *Secret Gospel*, 52-4; cf. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 296; Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 86-7.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, 104-6.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Sanders, *Tendencies*, 272.

¹⁰⁹¹ Paul Foster, "Book of the Month: Secret Mark is No Secret Anymore" *ExpTim* 117 (2005): 65.

¹⁰⁹² Grant, "Two Books," 63.

that John 11:11 puts as 3 kilometres away from Jerusalem. Brown argues that it is the “Bethany beyond the Jordan” (cf. John 1:28), a village east of the Jordan where Jesus hears of Lazarus’s illness (John 10:40). From there, Jesus crosses the Jordan (*Theod.* III.10-11) and continues on to Jericho (Mark 10:35-45), Bethphage and Bethany near Jerusalem (11:1).¹⁰⁹³ Incidentally, this contradiction with John controverts Smith’s thesis that the itineraries of Mark, with the mystic excerpts added back in, and John run parallel, requiring a Semitic precursor for both.¹⁰⁹⁴ Brown guesses that an earlier oral story of an exorcism of a demoniac living among the tombs may be behind both and undergirds the demonic cry from the tomb in the mystic text (*Theod.* III.1) or John’s difficult phrasing “rebuked the spirit and troubled himself” (John 11:33).¹⁰⁹⁵ If mystic Mark was not a pastiche of the four Gospels, might it have been an original part of Mark?

2. *An Early Edition of the Gospel of Mark?*

Against the tide of scholars who rushed to discredit it as a cento of the four Gospels, John Dominic Crossan, Helmut Koester, Hans-Martin Schenke and Marvin Meyer have argued for the priority of mystic Mark to canonical Mark.¹⁰⁹⁶ In this scenario, the mystic text was excised from the canonical edition, but was not screened out completely (cf. Mark 10:46; 14:51-2). Koester advanced a complex source-critical theory of successive layers of editing by the same Markan School from a proto-Mark without 6:45-8:26 used by Luke, an amplified Mark used by Matthew, a mystical edition of Mark and a canonical edition of Mark with the LE. He reconstructs the text

¹⁰⁹³ Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 91-92.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 58-60; *Secret Gospel*, 56-61. Smith points out that both start out “beyond the Jordan” (Mark 10:1b/John 10:40-41) to the miracle in “Bethany” and on to Jerusalem. Another major problem with Smith’s overarching theory of a common source to explain some of the parallel itineraries from Mark 6:32ff and John 6:1ff is that he overlooks that the author of John may have had a degree of familiarity with Mark, though he chose to depart from Mark’s narrative at several points and rely on different sources.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 82-4; 86-92.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, 106-20; Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 275-302; Schenke, “Secret Mark,” 554-72; Meyer, “Young Streaker,” 145-56.

of proto-Mark from the minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against the text of canonical Mark. For instance, the canonical editor may have inserted the noun “gospel” on its own into Mark as it may not have been in the version of Mark known to Matthew and Luke.¹⁰⁹⁷ Or canonical Mark alters the “mysteries” that are given to the disciples “to know” (Matt 13:11/Luke 8:10; cf. *Thom.* 62; 1 Cor 13:2; 4:1; 14:2) to a singular “mystery” given to the disciples which equates with the “gospel” (cf. Eph 6:19).¹⁰⁹⁸ Canonical Mark also departs from the primitive formulation of the passion predictions (Matt 16:21/Luke 9:22; cf. 1 Cor 15:4) by using the active tense for “rise” and “three days” instead of the third day (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:31).¹⁰⁹⁹

In redacting proto-Mark, the canonical editor was influenced by the mystic edition as well. The canonical text agrees with the singular “mystery” in the mystic Gospel (*Theod.* III.10).¹¹⁰⁰ The addition of the phrase “Jesus looked on him and loved him” (Mark 10:21) is indebted to the mystic text (*Theod.* III.4) and the magical connotations of the “amazement” (ἐθαμβοῦντο) of the disciples (10:24) echoes a main theme of the esoteric Gospel, for neither are present in the Synoptic parallels to the pericope of the rich man (Matt 20:16-30; Luke 18:18-30).¹¹⁰¹ A number of unparalleled Markan uses of the terms “teaching” (διδασκαλία) or the verb “to teach” (διδάσκειν) are secondary expansions based on the “teaching” of the youth.¹¹⁰² Koester takes the exorcism of the epileptic boy in Matthew 17:18-20a and Luke 9:42-3 as more primitive than the enhanced account of Mark 9:25-9. When onlookers think the boy has died in the violent struggle with the demon in the canonical edition of Mark, Jesus seizes his hand and “raised” (ἤγειρεν) him.¹¹⁰³

The wording is similar in the mystic text (*Theod.* III.3-4; cf. Mark 9:25-7), though Mark uses the

¹⁰⁹⁷ Alternatively, Matthew 24:13 seems to expand the reference to the “gospel” in Mark 13:10 to the “gospel of the kingdom” and Matthew 26:13 changes Mark 14:9 from “the gospel” to “this gospel.”

¹⁰⁹⁸ For his list of striking minor agreements, see Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 276-84.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 280, 301.

¹¹⁰⁰ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 279-80, 297-8, 302.

¹¹⁰¹ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 276-7, 284-5, 302.

¹¹⁰² Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 283-4, 301-2.

¹¹⁰³ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 281-2, 301-2.

active tense “rise” in the passion predictions.¹¹⁰⁴ The unparalleled Markan reference to sharing in Jesus’s baptism (10:38), which is not quite an appropriate image for martyrdom in the same way as the cup, may tie in with the baptism in the mystic text.¹¹⁰⁵

Crossan cuts out Koester’s proto-Mark, but his theory is no less complicated. He argues that the canonical editor of Mark dismembered the mystic text and scattered its pieces all over the Gospel.¹¹⁰⁶ Originally, the youth of the mystic Gospel and the wealthy man of Mark 10:17-22 may have been separate characters, for Clement does not elaborate on the salvation of the rich man in his exposition on Mark 10:17-22, but the canonical editor connected them with the reference to the rich man’s obedience from his “youth” and the phrase “looked on him and loved him” (10:20-1). The baptismal garb of the youth in the mystic text has become part of a bizarre story of a youth fleeing naked in a garden (Mark 14:51-2). Several phrases in the mystic text are transferred to locations throughout Mark. The plea “Son of David have mercy on me” is moved to awkwardly bracket “Jesus” on the lips of blind Bartimaeus. The “mystery of the kingdom” is placed in the context of public parables (4:11). “After 6 days” describes the time period between Peter’s confession and the transfiguration (9:1). Jesus seizes the hand and raised the epileptic boy (9:26; cf. 1:31; 5:41; 9:27) and a former demoniac beseeches Jesus “that he might be with him” (5:8). The “youth” and “Salome” are transferred to the empty tomb narrative (16:1, 5) and the women bewilderingly ask who “will roll away the stone” (16:3; compare Matt 28:2 and Luke 24:2). In each example, Crossan argues that the clumsy relocation of elements of the mystic text throughout the canonical Gospel has left strains in its new literary context.

¹¹⁰⁴ Koester also notes that Mark’s “after three days” may imply a fourth day, the timing of the resurrection of Lazarus (280 n. 2; cf Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 163-4).

¹¹⁰⁵ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 278-9, 302.

¹¹⁰⁶ The following examples in this paragraph come from Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, 111-9.

To start with Koester, there may be other explanations for the minor agreements besides positing a proto-Mark. Some changes may reflect scribal harmonizations of the Synoptics. Others fit the characteristic redactional changes of Matthew and Luke to clean up Mark's grammatical or stylistic issues (e.g., Mark 4:11), tone down Mark's vivid storytelling or the emotions of Jesus (e.g., Mark 9:25-7; 10:21, 24; cf. Mark 1:41; 3:5), and eliminate Mark's strange or embarrassing details (e.g., Mark 14:51-2; cf. Mark 7:32-7). Robert Gundry goes through Koester's example one by one to show that they are explicable as redactional changes to Mark.¹¹⁰⁷ For instance, Matthew and Luke pluralize "mysteries" as individual explanations of the parables while Mark's "mystery" matches the singular "kingdom," alter Mark's "three days" prediction so it would no longer contradict the tradition of a resurrection appearance on Sunday, or delete references to "teaching" where they do not seem to fit (e.g., Mark 1:27). Gundry permits some subsidiary influence of Matthew to Luke, just like advocates of the Farrer Hypothesis explain the minor agreements as evidence of Luke's dependence on Matthew, but this may not sway a scholar like Koester who strictly adheres to Luke's independence as per the Two Source Hypothesis. However, even on Koester's reconstructions, there is nothing in the redaction of canonical Mark that requires the mystic text to be in the background. "Teaching" is not a sacramental act that evokes the mystic text, "baptism" is an irrelevant addition (10:38) if mystic Mark is not about a baptism, "gospel" is not in the mystic text, "raised up" is a standard term, and love characterizes the reaction of the youth to Jesus better than "amazement."¹¹⁰⁸

In removing proto-Mark from the picture, Crossan's theory suffers from an unreasonably late post-Carpocratian date for Matthew and Luke, for then they are redacting the canonical text

¹¹⁰⁷ Gundry, *Apology for the Cross*, 605-13.

¹¹⁰⁸ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 114-6.

of Mark.¹¹⁰⁹ Another weakness is that, in Crossan's model, the canonical editor was not above resorting to deceptive means to make the mystic text appear secondary by dismembering its parts all over the canonical Gospel.¹¹¹⁰ Finally, Gundry again goes through Crossan's examples one by one to see if each element is better explained within its present Markan literary context or as a haphazard arrangement of the pieces of mystic Mark.¹¹¹¹ Gundry asks why an editor would bother to relocate the youth in a linen clothe to an enigmatic scene in the Garden than omit him entirely or awkwardly bracket the name "Jesus" with the petition "son of David have mercy on me" than omit the name. The hope of the women that someone would remove the stone for them to annoint the body in Mark 16:3 is not unrealistic, but would be an ill-conceived plan when the tomb was sealed and guarded in Matthew. Mark 4:11 still divides a smaller group with access to private teachings of a "mystery" from a larger group of outsiders. The other phrases paralleled in the mystic text do not seem out of place in their Markan contexts. It must be asked whether it makes more sense to posit a writer who was deeply familiar with Mark to reproduce its phraseology in an expanded mystical edition of the Gospel or an incompetent canonical editor who dismembered a coherent story and scattered its parts wherever he or she pleased.

However, the primary argument for the priority of mystic Mark may be that its story of the youth appears in a truncated form in Mark 14:51-2.¹¹¹² According to Marvin Meyer, when the mystic excerpts are inserted back into the text of Mark, a coherent mini-story may emerge. Meyer isolates five "scenes or vignettes in the life of discipleship:" 1. the rich "youth" (Matt 19:20, 22; cf. Mark 10:10) whom Jesus loves turns aside from the radical demand to surrender all

¹¹⁰⁹ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 50-51. To avoid this problem, Crossan speculates about an early group of libertines using the mystic text, but Marcus notes that this contradicts the sole evidence we have in the *Letter to Theodore* that the only libertines using the mystic text were the Carpocratians.

¹¹¹⁰ Crossan, *Four Other Gospels*, 119.

¹¹¹¹ The following examples are in Gundry, *Apology*, 613-21.

¹¹¹² Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 277, 302; Schenke, "Secret Mark," 557.

his possessions (Mark 10:17-21), 2. the rich youth who is raised from dead looks with love on Jesus and is initiated into the “mystery of the kingdom” (*Theod.* II.23-III.10), 3. the youth’s female familial relations and Salome are not welcomed by Jesus in Jericho (*Theod.* III.14-6; cf. Mark 10:46), 4. the youth deserts Jesus in the Garden as he flees naked when the soldiers rip off his linen clothe (Mark 14:51-2), and 5. the youth is dressed in white and announces the risen Jesus to Salome and other women (16:5).¹¹¹³ In Meyer’s reading, the gloomy note of the failure of the male and female disciples of Jesus (Mark 16:8; cf. *Theod.* III.16) is counterbalanced by the redemption of the anonymous youth in the ending.¹¹¹⁴

Meyer shows how it is possible to read the additions of the mystic text as part of a continuous story-line in Mark, but there are a few holes in reading all the references to a “youth” as an inter-connected story. Like Smith,¹¹¹⁵ Meyer seems to equate the man with many possessions in Mark 10:17-22 with the “youth” in mystic Mark, but the man in Mark 10:20 may not be a youth but looks back on his *Torah* observance since his “childhood” (νεότης).¹¹¹⁶ One would have to imagine that the rich man suddenly died shortly after his encounter with Jesus.¹¹¹⁷ The “youth” dressed in white at the tomb may be a supernatural being (cf. *Gos Pet* 13:55), which is how Matthew and Luke seem to interpret him (Matt 28:2-7; Luke 24:4-6).¹¹¹⁸ Phillip Sellew spotted the most substantial problem: Mark 14:51 writes about “a certain youth” (νεανίσκος τις), implying that this is a new character.¹¹¹⁹ Although Sellew follows Koester’s model and so takes this as evidence that the canonical editor has thoroughly revised Mark to hide that the youth

¹¹¹³ Meyer, “Young Streaker,” 152-5.

¹¹¹⁴ Meyer, “Young Streaker,” 154-5.

¹¹¹⁵ Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 67-9.

¹¹¹⁶ Gundry, *Apology*, 617.

¹¹¹⁷ Brown, *Mark’s Other Gospel*, 102.

¹¹¹⁸ Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 297-8 n. 8.

¹¹¹⁹ Philip Sellew, “Secret Mark and the History of Canonical Mark” in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honour of Helmut Koester* (ed. Birger A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 252.

was previously introduced,¹¹²⁰ it is strange that the canonical editor would completely expunge the mystic text from Mark 10:46 aside from the reference to Jericho but overlook the traces of the story in Mark 14:51-2.¹¹²¹ Appeal is often made to the fact that the absence of the mystic text leaves a gaping hole in Mark 10:46 as it narrates a trip to Jericho where nothing happens,¹¹²² but there are other instances in Mark when a location is named without narrating what exactly Jesus was doing there (10:1, 17; 11:11-2).¹¹²³ Finally, Brown is probably right that the mystic text was larger than the 15 sentences Clement cited,¹¹²⁴ so it is not as simple a matter as re-inserting the excerpts back into their Markan contexts. Therefore, it seems more likely that mystic Mark was an expansion of the canonical text, filling in Mark's narrative gaps by providing a backstory for the enigmatic stalker in the Garden (14:51-2) or describing the unnarrated activity of Jesus in Jericho (10:46) among other things.

3. *A Second Century Expansion of Canonical Mark in Alexandria*

So far I am in agreement with Clement on mystic Mark as an expansion of canonical Mark, but, for Clement, both texts had the same author. Hedrick and Brown make a case for why this is plausible. They defend the mystic text against the charge that it was a crude pastiche of Markan phraseology.¹¹²⁵ To validate Markan authorship, Brown argues that the excerpts of the mystic

¹¹²⁰ Sellev, "History of Canonical Mark,"

¹¹²¹ Gundry, *Apology*, 612; Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 118.

¹¹²² Smith, *Secret Gospel*, 69-70; Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 301. Crossan (*Four Other Gospels*, 109) also argues that *Theod.* III.14 singular "he comes to Jericho" corresponds better to the singular in Mark 10:46b, but Gundry (*Apology*, 614) responds that the singular of Mark 10:46a fits with the third person plurals of Mark 10:32-33 and that Clement's citation may be contaminated with Mark 10:46b or the Mystic Gospel changed it to a singular to distinguish from the plural for the women.

¹¹²³ Grant, "Mark's Two Books," 62.

¹¹²⁴ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 117-8.

¹¹²⁵ Best (*Disciples and Discipleship*, 197-205) designed an experiment to show that Mystic Mark is an overkill of Markan phraseology and redactional features when compared to other Markan texts like Mark 1:40-45 and 7:24-30. However, Brown (*Mark's Other Gospel*, 106-10) and Hendrick ("Stalemate," 47-51) have shown that Mark 4:1-2 and 5:35-43 could be equally dismissed as over-doing the vocabulary and style of Mark if we did not already know that they were original to the Gospel. Brown also noticed that Best excluded the second citation of Mystic Mark,

text conform to the pattern of a typical Markan intercalation. That is, Mark likes to splice one story by inserting a second story in the middle of it in order for the two stories to mutually interpret one another. For example, between the story of the journey of Jesus to raise the 12 year old daughter of the synagogue ruler from the dead, he is touched by a woman suffering from haemorrhaging for 12 years, and the two stories are interrelated through the symbolic number 12 (Mark 5:22-43). According to Brown, the ambitious request of James and John (10:35-40) is sandwiched between the location of Jesus and the youth's sister away from the disciples in Bethany (*Theod.* II.23) and the location of the youth's sister away from the disciples in Jericho (III.14-16).¹¹²⁶ In Brown's view, the symbolic costume of the youth as he is initiated into the mystery of the kingdom and the metaphorical baptism into the martyrdom of Jesus that is stipulated for the sons of Zebedee form a mutually interpretive commentary.¹¹²⁷ Brown sees a larger inclusio between Mark 10:32 and 16:7-8 as Jesus is described as "going before" his scared disciples to Galilee, so the youth is paradigmatic of the fear and failure of the disciples in the Garden and their reconciliation with the risen Jesus at the end of Mark.¹¹²⁸ The reference to "six days" (III.7) links backwards to the transfiguration of Jesus (9:1) and forwards to the youth's transformation in 16:5.¹¹²⁹ This may be less convincing, however, if the man in white is meant to be a heavenly being rather than the youth in Mark 14:51.

Against Brown's attempt to attribute mystic Mark to the evangelist, Carlson fairly responds that the mystic text stands out from a typical Markan sandwich in that the second excerpt does not really complete the story of the resurrected youth in the first excerpt, but is

which has a lower percentage of Mark's vocabulary and stylistic traits. Finally, Best argued that mystic Mark has too many Markan redactional features that tend to cluster in the seams of the canonical text, but he inherited this view from earlier redactional critics. In actual fact, the pericopae cited above by Brown and Hendrick have an abundance of the redactional features identified by Best.

¹¹²⁶ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 165-73.

¹¹²⁷ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 175.

¹¹²⁸ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 183-4, 195-7.

¹¹²⁹ Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 201-3.

really two separate episodes that take place 6 days apart.¹¹³⁰ Foster is also not convinced by Brown of an obvious connection in the actions or themes of the two excerpts quoted by Clement and the interpolation of the new material actually undoes Mark's threefold pattern of a passion prediction followed by the disciples misunderstanding and Jesus's correction in the discipleship section.¹¹³¹ Having done so much to refute the baptismal reading of mystic Mark, Brown seems to me to sneak the baptism interpretation into the back door, at least at the metaphorical level, by seeing a mutually interpretative commentary on the symbolic baptism of martyrdom that James and John will undergo and the youth's linen clothe as a baptism costume. I would argue that Brown was right earlier that the linen clothe was the shroud that the youth was buried in, not a special baptismal costume, and there may be no connection between the mystic Gospel with Jesus's answer to the sons of Zebedee other than the themes of the reversal of expectations and the requirement of total self-sacrifice that is rampant throughout Mark. Instead, the placement of the story shortly after Jesus's discussion on riches in Mark 10:34f and the *gar* clause "for he was rich" (III.6; cf. Mark 5:42; 11:13; 16:4) means that the text is most clearly connected to the story of the rich man of Mark 10:17-21 as well as Mark 14:51-2.¹¹³²

The *Sitz im Leben* for the production of mystic Mark seems to be the intense interest in the Markan pericope of the rich man in Alexandria in the second century as attested by Clement's exposition on the rich man. It was written by an Alexandrian scribe who was deeply immersed in Mark's terminology and literary style and Hendrick does well to elucidate it in the context of the art of imitation (μίμησις) taught in rhetorical schools.¹¹³³ To review, after the

¹¹³⁰ Carlson, "Scott Brown," 186-7.

¹¹³¹ Foster, "No Secret," 65.

¹¹³² See further Smith, *Clement of Alexandria*, 187-8; *Secret Gospel*, 68; Gundry, *Apology*, 622-3; Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*, 199-201.

¹¹³³ Hedrick, "Stalemate," 52-7. Since Mystic Mark is far more informed about the vocabulary, style and themes of Mark than the LE, Hendrick is open to Markan authorship of the mystic expansion of Mark ("Stalemate," 59), but it may just be written by a superior imitator of Mark. Some imitators of Paul are better than others.

disappointing failure of one rich man to obey the command to relinquish his wealth and follow Jesus unconditionally, we have a second story of a rich youth who literally submits to the command to the extent of shedding all of his possessions except for the linen clothe fit for a corpse.¹¹³⁴ Such a text would be a problem for less literally minded Christians in Alexandria who were not prepared to part with their possessions and may have not been preserved for this reason. The letter breaks off before the reader gets to Clement's interpretation of the mystic text, perhaps because Clement taught Theodore the true mystical interpretation orally rather than writing it down or the scribe lost interest in Clement's obscure exegesis, but I imagine that his interpretative moves would have been similar to his treatise on the rich man. Through allegorical exegesis, the nakedness of the youth except for his clothe may have been interpreted as stripping himself of all his earthly passions as he comprehended the heavenly "mystery."

Apparently the Carpocratians gravitated to the mystic text because they could fill in the enigmatic reference to Jesus's teaching the mystery of the kingdom with whatever content they wished (Mark 4:11; cf. Irenaeus, *A.H.* 1.25.5). Although some scholars argue that the letter has the wrong group of libertines, for the Carpocratians are accused of wipe swapping (cf. Clement, *Strom.* 3.2.5) rather than homosexual activity,¹¹³⁵ the polemic of the letter may accord with Irenaeus's polemic that the Carpocratians practiced all ways of life. The charge of anachronism would not apply as the Carpocratians were not known to Irenaeus and Clement to follow the dictates of convention. F.F. Bruce considers that the reference to "naked man with naked man" to represent some sort of mystic initiation and an uninhibited sexual ethic which he parallels with the libertine behaviors at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 5).¹¹³⁶ I would demur from Bruce that the

¹¹³⁴ Gundry, *Apology*, 621-3; Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel*,

¹¹³⁵ Watson, "Beyond Suspicion," 245; Jeffrey, "Morton Smith's Magic," 245.

¹¹³⁶ Bruce, "Secret Mark," 16-9.

Carpocratians were the authors of this text,¹¹³⁷ for the Carpocratians may have imposed a new meaning on the text's earlier demand for material dispossession. But it is difficult to take the descriptions of the Carpocratians in Irenaeus or Clement at face value, for accusations of immorality were thrown at all sorts of minority associations in the ancient world as part of the standard vituperative rhetoric against others. We have the protests of centrist Christian apologists when their communities were accused of cannibalism or sexual orgies. The line "naked man with naked man" may have just been a rumour heard by Theodore, based on little more than putting together the reputation of the Carpocratians with the fact that they had some text that described an enigmatic scene with Jesus spending a night with a half-naked youth. If the Carpocratians did interpolate the line about the nakedness of Jesus and the youth into the text, it is possible that they did not interpret it sexually. Nakedness may have been symbolic for shedding their corporeal cover (cf. 2 Cor 5:3) and liberation from the powers that govern the material world, which was the goal of the Carpocratian soteriology.¹¹³⁸ Once the Carpocratians took over the text, other Alexandrian Christians may have been repelled by it.

C. Conclusion: Supplementary Evidence about the Reception of Mark

To conclude, the mystic Gospel of Mark may be a valuable artifact that has much to tell scholars about the second century reception of Mark, no more and no less. If Smith did not discover the text and construct his far-fetched theories about Christian origins from it, I wonder if the text would have generated the same level controversy. As far as I am concerned, the *Letter to*

¹¹³⁷ Bruce, "Secret Mark," 20.

¹¹³⁸ Schenke ("Secret Mark," 567-9) interprets the "gnostic" meaning of Mark 14:51-2 in this fashion: the youth is the angelic double of Jesus and the powers of this world are only able to seize his corporeal covering, but they are not able to keep the youth or Jesus in their custody. I agree with Meyer ("Young Streaker," 154) that this story more likely indicates the failure of the youth, along with the rest of the disciples, in saving themselves from being arrested along with Jesus by taking shameful flight in the context of Mark. However, the imagery of taking off clothes could easily have the meaning that Schenke imputes to it in the Carpocratian *version* of mystic Mark.

Theodore supplements what we already knew from Irenaeus and Clement. First, it may fill in some of the gaps for why Clement concentrated on disarming the Markan form of the pericopae of the rich man, for the mystic Gospel may be evidence of the valorization of voluntary poverty and extreme asceticisms for some Alexandrian readers of Mark. Second, it backs up Irenaeus's information on the Carpocratians as rooting their own teachings in their interpretation of Mark 4:11. The Carpocratians looked to Jesus as a paradigmatic figure for all humanity as he discovered the secret to existence and was able to escape the powers of the material world and may have imparted the mystery to his young apprentice in the mystic text. How the Carpocratians may have interpreted the saying of the "mystery of the kingdom of god," or the enigmatic scene of Jesus and the youth, may not be recoverable from Clement's fierce polemic against them. I realize that many scholars may still be persuaded that the text is a modern forgery, so I will conclude by re-emphasizing that the *Letter to Theodore* only plays a supplementary role to the evidence that could be accepted across the board that some groups read Mark in support of an adoptionist or separationist Christology or for certain esoteric teachings. The centrist Christians won the text back in the name of Peter.

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