Mark and Matthew I

Edited by
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and ANDERS RUNESSON

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Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings

Edited by
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and
Anders Runesson

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Preface

This book represents the first results of international collaborative efforts, anchored at Aarhus University in Denmark and McMaster University in Canada, to initiate a new approach to the study of the earliest Gospels, Mark and Matthew. The project began in 2008 with a conference in Denmark that focused on comparative readings of these Gospels in their first-century settings, and continued in Canada in 2009, this time consisting of discussions on hermeneutics, reception history, and theology. The Aarhus conference, the results of which are presented here, was made possible by a generous grant from Aarhus University (AUFF) as well as by support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Mohr Siebeck.

For invaluable assistance in organizing the conference we would like to thank research secretary Marlene Jessen, Dr. René Falkenberg, and stud. theol. Helle Bundgaard Laursen, who also helped editing the indices. Many thanks also to doctoral student Nick Meyer and Dr. Jeremy Penner for help with copyediting. A special thanks to Jeremy, who worked around the clock on the penultimate version of the manuscript. Last but not least, we would like to extend our gratitude to Professor Dr. Jörg Frey, the editor of WUNT, for accepting the volume in this series, and to Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and Anna Krüger at Mohr Siebeck for their professionalism and patience during the complex editorial process of preparing the manuscript for publication.

December 2010 Eve-Marie Becker, Aarhus, and Anders Runesson, Hamilton

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Introduction

Studying Mark and Matthew in Comparative Perspective

Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson

1. To Compare Is to See Anew

The study of Mark and Matthew in comparative perspective has a long history, but mainly insofar as we attempt to solve the Synoptic Problem, and, to a certain degree, to untangle the relationship of these Gospels through redaction-historical analyses. However, ever since the theory of Markan priority became firmly established in the first half of the 19th century, such redaction-historical work has focused on understanding Matthew rather than Mark when they are compared. To be sure, many studies, especially commentaries of either Mark or Matthew, make observations related to the other Gospel as they interpret specific passages or reconstruct certain events; nevertheless, most often the result of studying Mark and Matthew is that one Gospel stands in the shadow of the other.

There is, thus, a certain methodological ambiguity in contemporary Markan and Matthean studies that needs careful attention. On the one hand, studies addressing the Synoptic Problem and related issues represent in-depth, detailed comparative analyses. In such studies, however, the comparative approach is limited to source-critical and tradition-historical methodologies. On the other hand, studies dealing with synchronic or diachronic aspects of Mark and Matthew are oriented towards one of the Gospels only, and usually ignore comparative approaches. The result is that the conclusions of such studies usually do not contribute to analyses of the Synoptic Problem and related issues; neither do they shed light on the other Gospel's literary profile. A sustained comparative approach, however, contributes both to the Synoptic Problem discourse *and* sheds light on the individual Gospels through an analogy-contrast scheme. Such a scheme, it should be noted, does not presuppose a certain solution to the Synoptic Problem, but leaves that question open. In other words, regardless of whether the two-document hypothesis viz. two-source theory, for example, or the Mark-without-Q hypothesis is preferred, a comparative approach patterned on the analogy-contrast scheme will highlight aspects of the Gospels that are critical for our understanding of the rise and development of gospel literature in the first century C. E.

A close comparative reading of both Gospels will, therefore, not only enhance our understanding of Mark and Matthew as they relate to each other, but also

shed light on each Gospel in its own right, allowing us to see them 'anew.' A project focusing on the two earliest Gospels would thus fill a gap in scholarship, especially if it offered a sustained comparative approach from multiple perspectives. Seeing here both a need and a way forward for Gospel studies, we decided to gather an international group of scholars for two conferences that focused on comparative issues, covering traditional approaches as well as more recent methodological developments. The first conference, the results of which are presented here, took place at the University of Aarhus in Denmark, July 25–26, 2008. The second conference was held about a year and a half later at McMaster University in Canada, November 17–18, 2009. The basic impetus behind this project is the assertion that Mark and Matthew have been produced in a context of strong conceptual proximity; thus, they hold the potential to illuminate each other in significant ways and should be understood in relation to one another.

A better understanding of Mark and Matthew through the comparative approach is not only achieved on the basis of contrastive reading, but also from the perspective of conjoint reading. Mark and Matthew have consistently and continuously provoked a contrastive reading that challenges their interpreters with respect to their literary and theological *propria*. Conjoint reading is merited too, however, because the two Gospels share more broadly a first-century C. E. context in which they both contributed to the development of early Christian identity formation. In such processes of identity formation, Mark and Matthew played different but overlapping roles. Sometimes they supported each other, and sometimes they competed; they often marked boundaries, but they also appealed to the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures that shaped them and their audiences, urging contextualized understandings of their message. In other words, one may say that the heuristics of a sustained comparative approach lies interwoven within the interconnectedness of a competitive companionship. It was with this goal in mind we asked the contributors of the present volume to reflect on Mark and Matthew from different perspectives. The result, we believe, is enlightening and adds significantly to the study of the earliest Gospels in context.

2. Outline and Contributions

In this volume, the purpose of comparing Mark and Matthew is to shed light on the earliest history of gospel literature, i. e., the earliest history of Jesus-traditions that were transformed into a more or less coherent Jesus-story that was not only repeated and imitated, but also modified and redefined. Within this comparative approach, the most challenging and deceivingly simple question arises: What is it that makes Mark's Gospel a *Markan* Gospel, and Matthew's Gospel a *Matthean* Gospel?

For the Aarhus conference, and thus for this volume, we decided to focus on investigating the first Gospels in their first-century C. E. settings. We have divided the resulting studies under six headings, the first of which, entitled "History of Research," introduces the project as a whole by placing both volumes in scholarly context. Here, Cilliers Breytenbach presents the current state of research on Mark, focusing on recent monographs that have been published between 2000 and 2009. Breytenbach states that studies "on Mark and Matthew are scarce."[1] At the same time, his survey demonstrates how a comparative approach to both Gospels serves the interpretation of each Gospel respectively: "It seems to me to be of fundamental importance that the question of Mark's genre should be placed within the general discussion on genres, a discussion that is basic to all literary studies."[2] Thus, the genre debate illustrates most impressively the need for a comparative approach when analyzing the genre of Mark (or Matthew); none of the Gospels can simply be looked at individually.

David C. Sim's analysis of the state of research on Matthew continues where Graham Stanton's classic study ended in 1985. Sim notes that,

> much recent Matthean research has been focused directly on the place of the Matthean community within its various social, political, historical, and religious contexts. Where did it stand in relation to the broader Jewish community? Where did it stand in relation to the variety of viewpoints in the emergent Christian movement? How did it relate to the Gentile world and the issue of Gentile converts? What was its attitude towards Rome, and how were these views expressed in the Gospel narrative?[3]

These questions, together with such key problems as authorship, date, location, and interpretive methods, are the guiding principles around which Sim structures his observations.[4]

From a methodological point of view, the fundamental importance of text criticism and linguistics hardly needs an apology in New Testament scholarship, especially within comparative research on the Gospels. In *Section 2*, "Reconstructing the Artifacts: Text-Critical and Linguistic Aspects of the Study of Mark and Matthew," Barbara Aland discusses recent developments in text criticism that have been applied to Mark and Matthew. She starts by claiming that: "This contribution aims to present a simple result, namely to show what it really meant when texts have been copied in the context of early Christian textual transmission."[5] After discussing the 'kohärenzbasierte genealogische Methode (CBGM: coherency-based genealogical method)' and its quest for the 'Ausgangstext (A: "initial text"),' Aland reaches the conclusion that, "variants in New Testament

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[1] C. Breytenbach, "Current Research on the Gospel according to Mark: A Report on Monographs Published from 2000–2009," 13–32.

[2] Breytenbach, "Current Research on the Gospel according to Mark," 31.

[3] D. C. Sim, "Matthew: The Current State of Research," 36.

[4] Sim, "Matthew," 33–51.

[5] B. Aland, "Was heißt Abschreiben? Neue Entwicklungen in der Textkritik und ihre Konsequenzen für die Überlieferungsgeschichte der frühesten christlichen Verkündigung," 55.

manuscripts do not indicate an intentionally-styled tradition, but reflect the intense work of fallible people who did their job and who – despite a huge amount of minor variants – were remarkably reliable."[6]

Tommy Wasserman addresses the more specific problem of the elusive 'original text.' Noting that even though "the Gospel text has been affected by textual transmission from the very beginning of its literary history,"[7] there is evidence that the situation was not as chaotic in the second century C. E. as has been argued recently by some scholars. He concludes that "the text-critical task will never be finished, but the rich and growing body of textual evidence, the tenacity of the textual tradition, and the refined methods of textual criticism may ensure us that the goal is within reach. The reconstruction of the original text remains an 'impossible possibility.'"[8]

Moving on to linguistics, Stanley E. Porter draws our attention to the fact that, despite its key role for interpreting the Gospels, linguistics has largely been marginalized in mainstream research, even in commentaries focused on the Greek text. In order to address this situation, Porter surveys important recent studies relevant to Mark and Matthew. Then, as he clarifies key terms and categories in linguistic research, he offers new insights into Mark and Matthew from the perspective of lexical semantics, grammatical semantics, syntactical semantics, pragmatics, and discourse. He concludes, "a linguistic framework, rather than something to be feared, presents new and possibly unique opportunities for exegetical work."[9]

The articles presented in *Section 3* are part of the current discussion on the date and genre of Mark and Matthew. Eve-Marie Becker points to the fact that dating Mark and Matthew is still a pivotal task for Synoptic Gospels research, as it "has important implications for interpreting and understanding the Gospel literature."[10] Becker applies the methods used for dating ancient literature in Classics for the dating of Mark and Matthew, and suggests that a distinction should be made between a 'relative' and an 'absolute' dating of gospel literature. In this respect, she also demonstrates how a comparative approach to both Mark and Matthew challenges the conventional attempts at dating them individually. In terms of a 'relative chronology' Matthew seems to follow Mark rather than *vice versa*. But because "we could not find an earlier or later date than 70 C. E. in the history of the first century C. E. that could function as a *terminus post quem* for dating Mark and Matthew, we need to conclude that *both* Gospels were written either *before* or *after* 70 C. E."[11]

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[6] Aland, "Was heißt Abschreiben?" 76.

[7] T. Wasserman, "The Implications of Textual Criticism for Understanding the 'Original Text'," 77.

[8] Wasserman, "The Implications of Textual Criticism," 96.

[9] S. E. Porter, "Matthew and Mark: The Contribution of Recent Linguistic Thought," 119.

[10] E.-M. Becker, "Dating Mark and Matthew as Ancient Literature," 124.

[11] Becker, "Dating Mark and Matthew," 143.

Since the 1970s, the genre of the Gospels, especially of Mark as the earliest Gospel, but less so of Matthew, has drawn the attention of New Testament scholarship. The question of genre is crucial for all Gospel research, since analyses of genre carries within it interpretive clues that shed light on the meaning of these texts. The genre(s) of the Gospels are notoriously difficult to establish and opinion varies. Many scholars, but not all, would say that all four Gospels share the same literary genre; some would regard this genre as *sui generis*, others would say it is unclassifiable, or generically ambivalent. The majority would insist, however, that the Gospels share a generic profile with Jewish and/or Greco-Roman literary genres, such as, e. g., biography or historiography. Noting this current state of genre analysis, David Aune argues that "the Gospel of Mark (followed by the Gospel of Matthew), represents both an imitative and transformative reaction to existing literary genres, i. e., Mark in particular is a type of Greco-Roman biography in the special sense that it is a parody of that genre."[12]

Another critical area of investigation enabling scholars to interpret the Gospels from within a contextual frame concerns the socio-religious location in which the texts were transmitted and authored. The social, political, ethnic, religious, geographical, and cultural aspects of these texts need to be taken into account in such analyses. Approaches to the problems associated with these aspects have been many, especially over the last 40 years. In *Section 4*, we have aimed at renewing these discussions by combining diverse approaches with a comparative perspective. Sean Freyne examines the Jewish context of the borderland of southern Syria/Phoenicia in the period just before and after the First Revolt (66–70 C. E.). In this context, he explores "how the particular exercises of myth-making that the authors of these two works engage in may become more intelligible by suggesting that they are addressing specific problems facing early Jewish Jesus-followers in different contexts within the general region, and at slightly different historical moments."[13] Contrary to some recent studies, Freyne finds that there is a considerable amount of continuity, despite conflicts between groups, within the highly complex matrix of post-war Judaism.

Morten Hørning Jensen argues that neither Mark nor Matthew has a Galilean provenance, only a Galilean cradle. Because this Galilean cradle left significant marks on both Gospels, however, Jensen considers the different ways this fact may further the study of these texts. In order to limit the material, he chooses one test case: Jesus' seemingly contradictory statements on family life and discipleship, as they are preserved in the earliest strata of the Jesus traditions. Referring to recent archaeological investigations, and drawing on sociological studies, Jensen creates a Galilean reading scenario and sets the scene for his investigation as follows:

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[12] D. Aune, "Genre Theory and the Genre-Function of Mark and Matthew," 147.

[13] S. Freyne, "Matthew and Mark: The Jewish Contexts," 179 f.

[I]t is reasonable to assume that if rural Galilee was as strong as ever, the amount of animosity encountered in Mark and Matthew might stem from a Galilean experience of rejection caused by just the slightest suggestion of change and indirect critique. On the other hand, if the foundation under family life was already considerably eroded, the animosity preserved in Mark and Matthew needs, plausibly speaking, a more profound basis of direct critique from the Jesus movement to make sense.[14]

Focusing on the former scenario, Jensen concludes that Mark and Matthew display what he terms "a Galilean experience of rejection. … [T]he 'conflict in calling' described in the Gospel material was 'a Galilean fact' rather than an intended program *per se*."[15]

Paying close attention to Q, Linden Youngquist focuses on the literary sources and their internal relationship in order to draw conclusions about the socio-religious outlook of the communities behind the texts, with a special emphasis on Matthew as a user of both Mark and Q. Despite the fact that Matthew and Q have much in common regarding several fundamental socio-religious issues, and Mark differs from them both, it is commonly assumed that Matthew has used Mark, rather than Q, as the main text around which he created his own narrative. According to Youngquist, however, a close analysis of Matthew's use of sources reveals that Q is at the centre of Matthew's story, and Markan material is used only to illustrate Q. Such a conclusion has implications for how the relationship between these communities is reconstructed.

Wayne Baxter argues for approaching the problem of socio-religious orientation spectrically. He focuses on a key metaphor in Mark and Matthew, the shepherd, and compares its appropriation in these two Gospels. He argues that this metaphor is used in a variety of contexts – both Jewish and Greco-Roman – but in very different ways, and by comparing its usage the central convictions inherent in these texts are revealed. By placing Mark and Matthew in this wider context, Baxter concludes that, unlike the case with many other texts written by Christ-believers, in both Mark and Matthew this metaphor was associated with Jewish national restoration, a distinctly Jewish concern. However, "on a continuum mapping belief in Jewish national restoration, while both Mark and Matthew would be positioned closer to the end advocating Jewish nationalism, Matthew would be much closer to the nationalistic end pole than Mark."[16]

Warren Carter's study, entitled, "Matthew: Empire, Synagogues, and Horizontal Violence," forms a bridge between *Section 4* on socio-religious location and the more thematically constricted *Section 5*, which deals specifically with aspects of conflict and violence. Limiting his analysis to the Gospel of Matthew, Carter notes that many studies in the past have attempted to interpret the 'reli-

[14] M. H. Jensen, "Conflicting Calls? Family and Discipleship in Mark & Matthew in the Light of First-Century Galilean Village Life," 208 f.

[15] Jensen, "Conflicting Calls?" 231.

[16] W. Baxter, "Matthew, Mark, and the Shepherd Metaphor: Similarities, Differences, and Implications," 281 f.

gious' conflicts in the synagogue to determine Matthew's social location. This, however, creates a distorted picture, and Carter aims at describing the situation beyond such a restrictive perspective. He argues that,

> since synagogues were not isolated religious institutions but were places of imperial negotiation, and given that the Roman empire was the societal foreground in which late first-century C. E. Judaism and Matthew were embedded, the vertical, elite-generated pressure of negotiating the empire provides the primary context in which we might most appropriately understand the horizontal verbal violence between Matthew's group and the synagogue(s).[17]

Noting that the early Jesus movement is often thought of as "a force for peacemaking and non-violence in the violent world of Mediterranean society,"[18] John S. Kloppenborg highlights the fact that this movement was prepared to use violent metaphors and to imagine acts of violence carried out on its behalf. Some of these violent metaphors were taken from apocalyptic imagery associated with the final judgment; others, however, mirror the realities of daily life in ancient Mediterranean society. Regarding Mark and Q, Kloppenborg concludes that almost all representations of violence remain within the realm of realistic representation. Matthew, however, displays "the widest development of scenarios of lethal violence. Matthew expands the scope and intensity of divine violence so that it is applied both to opponents and to underperforming insiders."[19]

Lorenzo Scornaienchi's study, entitled, "The Controversy Dialogues and the Polemic in Mark and Matthew," focuses on the controversy dialogues specifically, since most of them are considered to be the "key to understanding Jewish-Christian polemical relations in the first century."[20] Against this background the comparative approach to Mark and Matthew can illuminate more extensively how and against whom Mark and Matthew are conceptualizing the controversies when they are reporting on conflicts between Jesus and the Jewish authorities. Scornaienchi states that even if both Gospels "want to show the aggression of the Jewish religious leader against Jesus as the reason for his death on the cross," they also vary in how they "delineate a speech ethic as a normative principle through which Jesus appears as *vir bonus* in the debate." While Mark "intends to write an apology of Jesus in a pagan context," Matthew presents "Jesus' teachings in the internal search for a new Jewish identity."[21]

The articles in the final section of the volume, *Section 6*, focus on the problems associated with using text to build communities. We have chosen here to have two distinct contributions on Mark and Matthew respectively; these studies should, therefore, be read together, so that they may illuminate each other. While the topic itself, the use of text as a community building tool, allows for reception

[17] W. Carter, "Matthew: Empire, Synagogues, and Horizontal Violence," 286.
[18] J. S. Kloppenborg, "The Representation of Violence in Synoptic Parables," 323.
[19] Kloppenborg, "The Representation of Violence," 351.
[20] L. Scornaienchi, "The Controversy Dialogues and the Polemic in Mark and Matthew," 310.
[21] Scornaienchi, "The Controversy Dialogues," 320.

of historical approaches, the focus here is limited to first-century C. E. scenarios. Oda Wischmeyer raises the question of identity formation through the use of literature in her article, "Forming Identity Through Literature: The Impact of Mark for the Building of Christ-Believing Communities in the Second Half of the First Century C. E." She begins her study by stressing

> that the Gospel of Mark works as the first Christian book in a twofold sense: 1) The religious impact of the Gospel of Mark was made through its presentation of the life, teaching, and passion of Jesus. 2) The literary impact of Mark's Gospel as the first Jesus-book is often undervalued. By giving the Christ-believing communities a book of their own, the author of the Gospel of Mark provided the communities with a new, independent, and distinct cultural standing.[22]

Wischmeyer thus assumes that Mark's refusal to disclose author and audience is, in the end, part of his literary strategy that "requires a broader audience of Christ-believing communities and individual persons."[23]

In his article, "Building Matthean Communities: The Politics of Textualization," Anders Runesson examines the socio-political implications of textualizing oral tradition. Based on the most recent advances in synagogue research, he argues that the group that wrote down these traditions was in the process of leaving behind the larger Pharisaic collective to which they had previously belonged. The Matthean text, together with the Didache, provided these radical messianic Pharisees with the material they needed for building their own association. Runesson then examines the processes of building community through instruction and example, looking specifically at how ritual practice, national identity, and counter-colonization helps in these community building processes. He maintains that, while the Gospel of Matthew displays clear traces of the local context in which the Gospel was formed, it was intended for a global audience that would, it was hoped, adopt its version of messianic Judaism. As such, building Matthean communities using this text (as well as the Didache) meant no less than taking on the Roman Empire and subduing it to the God of Israel.

A conference is held to bring people together in order to further the state of research by the mutual sharing of insights. This is done both by developing shared convictions in new directions and by disagreement; debates are central to any progress in our field. The outcome of our discussions and deliberations is mirrored to a certain degree in the published contributions. This does not mean, of course, that the studies presented to the reader are the final word. In order to capture some of what our interaction brought up as well as to invite further discussion as the reader is about to exit the book, we asked Adela Yarbro Collins to write down her observations from the conference. In her contribution, "Reflections on the Conference at the University of Aarhus," she chose to

[22] O. Wischmeyer, "Forming Identity Through Literature. The Impact of Mark for the Building of Christ-Believing Communities in the Second Half of the First Century C. E.," 355.

[23] Wischmeyer, "Forming Identity Through Literature," 376.

focus on one issue in the study of Matthew, namely Matthew's Jewishness, as well as on the problem of genre in the Gospel of Mark. Her comments are not to be seen as a 'conclusion' to the volume, but rather as an indicator of the encouraging fact that discussion continues beyond both the conference setting and the pages of this book.

3. Résumé and Prospect

This volume presents to the reader articles that investigate the first-century C. E. contexts of Mark and Matthew, with the aim of better understanding them through comparative analysis. Of course, more can be said, and other aspects of Gospel study could and should be addressed in future studies in order to develop further the potential of the comparative approach. The articles of the second volume of the Mark and Matthew project, which is currently in preparation, will continue to explore the Gospels within new settings, focusing on hermeneutics, reception history, and theology.[24]

The present volume illustrates the heuristic gains of a comparative, multi-perspectival approach to Mark and Matthew. All of the complex problems involved in the study of Mark and Matthew cannot be solved in this volume, but they can be addressed in fresh ways so that the interconnected competitiveness of these writings becomes more evident. The earliest Gospels cannot be regarded as isolated phenomena. Rather, the close relationship between them points to their intended interaction between Christ-believers as they shaped their narratives. One could perhaps even say that this literary and theological interaction created the phenomenon of what may be called 'Christian literary culture.' This would be true regardless of how we perceive of the Gospels within the frame of Greco-Roman and Jewish literature, and the question of the innovative aspect as it relates to the Gospel genre in that setting. The innovative traits in the Gospel narratives are undeniable, and they indicate a literary vigor that goes beyond simple narrative framing and redactional interpretation of diverse Jesus-traditions. Once we appreciate how Mark and Matthew together conceptualize the 'gospel' story, we will be able to see, from the perspective of their close literary companionship, how they each contribute to the shape of the narrative gospel-concept in more detail.

It is our hope that the publication of this and the following volume will not be the end of a fascinating undertaking but rather a beginning of new readings of the earliest Gospels. This notion of beginning again 'anew,' or reading and re-reading, is already inherent within the intentions of both Mark and Matthew, and thus a lifelong task for all Markan and Matthean scholars. In the opening of

[24] E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson, eds., *Mark and Matthew. Comparative Readings II: Hermeneutics, Reception History, Theology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; in preparation).

the Gospels, both authors write of a 'beginning' (*archē*, Mark 1:1; *genesis*, Matt 1:1), which is then replaced, or followed up, by a new beginning in the closing verses of each Gospel (Mark 16:8; Matt 28:16–20), forcing the reader to start all over again. From the very beginning, the exercise of reading Mark and Matthew comparatively has been an intriguing project, one that will continually call for the earliest Gospels to be read 'anew,' discovering again and again that, "*… jedem Anfang wohnt ein Zauber inne ….*"

1. History of Research

Current Research on the Gospel according to Mark

A Report on Monographs Published from 2000–2009

Cilliers Breytenbach

Six years ago, in 2004, Andreas Lindemann published his report on Markan research from 1992 till 2000.[1] His essay is valuable for many reasons, not least because it helps us to follow certain tendencies in Markan research.[2] Rather than structuring the current report according to categories such as volumes of essays, monographs, specific topics, expositions of particular passages, and commentaries, as Lindemann did, I shall focus this review on the literature that has been published in monograph form since 2000. When necessary, the preceding discussion will be briefly summarized. Sometimes the question is not only what was published, but rather what questions have not been addressed. It is not possible to give due credit to new commentaries,[3] nor is it commendable to pay attention to the volumes of collected essays on Mark or monographs confined to specific episodes or single passages of the Gospel.[4]

1. Methodological Issues

Lindemann was able to cover an array of monographs on methodological questions. Apart from his reviews of traditional redaction-critical work[5] and more

[1] A. Lindemann, "Literatur zu den Synoptischen Evangelien 1992–2000 (III): Das Markusevangelium," *TRu* 69 (2004): 369–423.

[2] D. Dormeyer, *Das Markusevangelium* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), ends his monograph on various topics in Markan research with a chapter on the contemporary discussion.

[3] Cf. C. Evans, *Mark: 8:27–16:20* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001); J. R. Donahue and D. J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002); C. Focant, *L'évangile selon Marc* (Paris: CERF, 2004); M. E. Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2006); A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). I have to leave aside the numerous short commentaries and introductions on Mark that have been written for teaching purposes.

[4] Cf. J. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); A. P. Wilson, *Transfigured: A Derridean Re-reading of the Markan Transfiguration* (London: T & T Clark, 2007); A. de M. Kaminouchi, *But It Is Not So among You: Echoes of Power in Mark 10:32.45* (London: T & T Clark, 2003); G. Keerankeri, *The Love Commandment in Mark: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mark 12:28–34* (Rome: PIB, 2003).

[5] Cf. G. van Oyen, *De studie van de Marcusredactie in de twintigste eeuw* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993).

modern narrative analysis,[6] or readers' response criticism,[7] it became clear that the methodological perspective on Mark was widened in the nineties to include perspectives from the textual sciences within a broader semiotic framework, a promising new development.[8] Since 2000, "aural criticism"[9] and "performance criticism," which had been developed from sociolinguistics and became fairly popular amongst researchers on Native American and African folklore,[10] struck the exegetical guild.[11] As had been the case regarding narrative and readers' response criticism, Markan studies again became the testing ground for this new approach.

Whitney Shiner assumes that the first "readers" of Mark's Gospel would, in fact, have been "listeners," since they would not have appropriated its meaning through silent reading. Instead, they would have had the text read out aloud to them, and hence "performed," within a community setting.[12] The book aims "to recover the experience of a Gospel performance in its first century setting" (1) by investigating the historical evidence available to us for reconstructing the nature of oral literature and oral performance in the ancient world, and by examining the Gospel of Mark itself for clues that it supplies with regard to its "performance style." Shiner poses the following questions: Why would Mark's Gospel have been presented in oral performance? What form might this oral performance have taken? What emphasis might such an oral performance have had, and what would have been the manner of delivery? Would Mark have been read from a scroll or a codex, or would the Gospel have been memorized (and if so, does its structure facilitate this)? How did ancient audiences typically react to oral performances, what motivated their responses, and how did such performances secure their involvement? Literacy levels were low (it is estimated that less than

[6] Cf. T. E. Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel and Storytelling* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988); P. Müller, *"Wer ist dieser?" Jesus im Markusevangelium: Markus als Erzähler, Verkündiger und Lehrer* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1995).

[7] Cf. R. Fowler, *"Let the Reader Understand:" Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); B. M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (trans. W. H. Bisscheroux; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

[8] Cf. O. Davidson, *The Narrative Jesus: A Semiotic Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993); S. Pellegrini, *Elija – Wegbereiter des Gottessohnes: Eine textsemiotische Untersuchung im Markusevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 2000).

[9] Cf. J. Dewey, "The Survival of Mark's Gospel: A Good Story?" *JBL* 123 (2004): 495–507; idem, "From Storytelling to Written Text: The Loss of Early Christian Women's Voices," *BTB* 26 (1996): 71–8; idem, "The Gospel of Mark as an Oral-Aural Event: Implications for Interpretation," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (ed. E. Struthers Malbon and E. McKnight; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 145–60; idem, "Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark," *Int* 43 (1989): 32–44.

[10] Cf. A. Joubert, *The Power of Performance: Linking Past and Present in Hananwa and Lobedu Oral Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004).

[11] Cf. http://www.biblicalperformancecriticism.org/.

[12] Cf. W. Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003). Further references to this work shall be made parenthetically in the main body of the text. The same procedure will apply to the following works under discussion.

10 per cent of the population of the Roman Empire could read), books had limited circulation (they were difficult to read as well as expensive), and "for most types of communication, people preferred to hear a written message rather than read it silently" (11). Oral performance was thus important in the ancient world, and Shiner reviews the many different types of oral performance in the Roman world that might have served as a model for the recitation of the Gospel (private readings, public readings, storytelling, etc.), the forms adopted (novel, drama, pantomime, poetry, epic), and the nature of reading in worship contexts, both Jewish and Christian. Shiner thus uses performance criticism as a theoretical framework to conceptualize what happened to the Gospel of Mark after it had been written. It was written to be performed. One could, however, flip the question around and ask what had been performed and in what way before Mark was written. Performance criticism could help us to conceptualize the phase of oral transmission in a more responsible way. Unfortunately, this possibility has not been realized in the following publications.

An upsurge of publications on orality is closely related to performance criticism. Theoretical insights into orality and audition encouraged some researchers to reopen old questions. In his dissertation presented in Durham, Terrence C. Mournet gives a brief overview of oral tradition in early form critical studies that focuses on the development of general oral studies since 1960 and its influence on New Testament studies.[13] After discussing the interface between oral communication and written texts and highlighting the characteristics of oral communication, he applies these insights to the synoptic question. His conclusion reaffirms an insight, which had been underlined by early form critics, that there was a living oral tradition that influenced the literary phases of development of the synoptic Gospels:

> Given the extent to which oral communication dominated ancient society, we must look beyond the rigid, highly – and often exclusively literary models of Synoptic Gospel interrelationships that dominate the current academic landscape. Despite the understandable desire to reconstruct an elegant model of Gospel interrelationships, which a strictly literary paradigm enables one to do, we must begin a shift away from an exclusively literary model of Synoptic interrelationships towards an understanding of the Jesus tradition that is able to take account of the highly oral milieu that existed during the time of Gospel composition. (293)

Armin D. Baum also addresses the synoptic question. He, however, includes insights from experimental psychology into the abilities of human memory, such as research on Serbo-Croatian oral poetry, native North American and West African folklore, and rabbinic tradition.[14] He concludes:

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[13] Cf. T. C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency: Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

[14] Cf. A. D. Baum, *Der mündliche Faktor und seine Bedeutung für die synoptische Frage: Analogien aus der antiken Literatur, der Experimentalpsychologie, der Oral Poetry-Forschung und dem rabbinischen Traditionswesen* (Tübingen: Francke, 2008).

While not impossible it is improbable that the relationship of the first three Gospels to each other can be described in terms of simple literary dependence. As the different analogies have made clear, several characteristics of the New Testament synoptic evidence find no satisfactory explanation without the influence of oral tradition and human memory. (403)

"Therefore *strong literary dependence including the Two-Source Hypothesis does not offer a satisfactory answer to the Synoptic Question.* Yet the assumption of Markan priority has been confirmed" (411). Whilst Mournet asks for a revision of the traditional historical-critical approach which attempts to solve the Synoptic Problem on the basis of literary documents, Baum presents his view boldly: "Every single aspect of the Synoptic Problem may be accounted for if *Matthew and Luke drew their common Markan material from the same oral source as Mark had done before them*" (413). Any methodological approach to establish pre-Markan tradition hinges on the view one takes on the Synoptic Problem. It makes a fundamental difference if one allows for the influence of living oral tradition on the passages from Mark retold by Matthew or Luke. Only after one has carefully studied what happened to Mark's material in Luke and Matthew, and not how Matthew and Luke integrated the Markan tradition in their narratives, will we be able to rule out the possibility that what is normally taken as Matthean or Lukan redaction contains pre-Markan tradition.

One cannot escape the impression that orality and audition have been put to the service of conservative scholarship. Those who initiated this turn to performance studies have carefully avoided this caveat and underlined the fact that comparative studies in oral literature and performance studies should have a sobering effect on those who have too much optimism when setting out their search for pre-Markan tradition.[15]

A more positive approach is that of Bridget Gilfillan Upton. By comparing Mark with the novels by Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus, she reviews the evidence which suggests that Mark and these novels were written for listening. She then applies aural and speech act theory to the various endings of Mark to illustrate how – in comparison with Xenophon's Ephesian Tale – these texts (Mark 16:1–8; 16:9–20 and the shorter ending of 16:9 in k) were heard by ancient audiences.[16]

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[15] J. Dewey and E. Struthers-Malbon, eds., *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); B. W. Henaut, *Oral Tradition and the Gospels: The Problem of Mark 4* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark: Notes on the Gospel in its Literary and Cultural Settings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and the essays on Mark in R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper, and J. M. Foley, eds., *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory and Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

[16] Cf. B. G. Upton, *Hearing Mark's Endings: Listening to Ancient Popular Texts through Speech Act Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

2. Traditions in Mark's Gospel

Alongside aural studies, traditional source criticism still has its proponents. For the time being the traditional form of the two-source hypothesis seems to be unchallenged by the newer commentaries on Mark. But neither have the theories of a proto-Mark,[17] the Secret Gospel of Mark,[18] nor the priority of Matthew been put to rest. David Neville urges the proponents of Markan priority and posteriority to rethink their presuppositions on the division, arrangement, and order of parallel pericopes when conceptualizing Gospel formation, since evidence based on compositional order is ambiguous and inconclusive.[19] In the light of the oral – aural debate, the relationship between Mark and Q has to move beyond traditional source criticism. The overlaps between Mark and Q are explained best when one allows that both Mark and Q independently drew on oral tradition.[20] In the last two decades the question of the dependence of John on the synoptic Gospels has been answered in a markedly positive way by recent Johannine scholarship.[21] If John's Gospel is taken to be part of the aural reception history of Mark, it is no longer possible to claim that the Markan/Johannine parallel tradition has roots in common pre-Markan, pre-Johannine tradition. This, however, was the position taken by various commentators on John.

Focusing on the making of the canonical Mark, Hugh M. Humphrey moves beyond narrative criticism toward the compositional stages behind the earliest narrative Gospel.[22] "If 'theology' first of all is the process of bringing faith to expression, the composition history of Mark's Gospel illustrates that process" (7). Mark came into being in three stages as the work of one person (an educated and affluent Alexandrian, who was at one time Peter's interpreter in Rome, then the founder of the Alexandrian church), starting with a narrative version of Q (Mark 1–13), to which the passion-resurrection story was added (Mark 14–16) at a second stage. Finally, some complementary editing was done to produce the current Gospel. "In my view, the Gospel of Mark results not from the editing of unattested documents by an unknown redactor for unspecified purpose(s), but

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[17] Cf. D. Burkett, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources: From Proto-Mark to Mark* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004).

[18] Cf. J. Dart, *Decoding Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003).

[19] D. Neville, *Mark's Gospel – Prior or Posterior: A Reappraisal of the Phenomenon of Order* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002). Since one is well served by David Neville's earlier report on the question of Markan priority and the two-source hypothesis, the reader is referred to this work: idem, *Synoptic Source Criticism* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1994).

[20] Cf. F. Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

[21] Cf. M. Labahn and M. Lang, "Johannes und die Synoptiker. Positionen und Impulse seit 1990," in *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditionsgeschichtlicher Perspektive* (ed. J. Frey and U. Schnelle; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 443–515.

[22] Cf. H. M. Humphrey, *From Q to "Secret" Mark: A Composition History of the Earliest Narrative Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2006).

from the ever-maturing theological reflection of the Christian tradition's first evangelist, Mark" (7).

At least one traditional source Mark used can be established with reasonable certainty: the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Since Joel Marcus had been restudying the use of quotations from the Old Testament from the perspective of Mark's Christology,[23] several studies on the use of specific Old Testament traditions have followed. Thomas Hatina[24] discussed the function of Scripture in Mark's Gospel, providing "an evaluation of the various contexts that have been proposed by historical critics for reading Mark's quotations and allusions." Former approaches are considered to be inadequate for "the lack of consideration given to the narrative of Mark's Gospel as the primary context within which the quotations and allusions are embedded." He proposes "a model for reading scriptural quotations and allusions that is sensitive to both the narrative of Mark's Gospel and the historical setting within which it is written" (3). Hatina thus focuses on the context of the story world as the arena of literary criticism and narrative criticism (1).

Various short studies appeared on the use of specific books from the Old Testament in Mark,[25] flanked by Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll's study on the literary interaction between the Gospel of Mark's passion narrative and four Psalms of individual lament alluded to in it.[26] In the four psalms David is depicted as one who in his suffering challenges God's role, searches for understanding of his suffering in the light of his past relationship with God, and attempts to move God

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[23] J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (2nd ed.; London: T & T Clark, 2004).

[24] T. R. Hatina, *In Search of a Context: The Function of Scripture in Mark's Narrative* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

[25] Cf. the report on previous research on the Old Testament in Mark in R. E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 9–28. Unlike him, M. D. Hooker, "Isaiah in Mark's Gospel," in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (ed. S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 35–49, restricted her essay to those passages where clear citations or allusions to the book of Isaiah occur; cf. Hooker, "Isaiah." Other essays on the OT in Mark: T. R. Hatina, ed., *The Gospel of Mark* (vol. 1 of *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels*; London: T & T Clark, 2006); S. Moyise, "Deuteronomy in Mark's Gospel," in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament* (ed. M. J. J. Menken and S. Moyise; London: T & T Clark, 2007), 27–41; C. Breytenbach, "The Minor Prophets in Mark's Gospel," in *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament* (ed. M. J. J. Menken and S. Moyise; London: T & T Clark, 2009), 27–37; D. E. Hartley, *The Wisdom Background and Parabolic Implications of Isaiah 6:9–10 in the Synoptics* (New York: Lang, 2006); N. R. Parker, *The Marcan Portrayal of the 'Jewish Unbeliever:' A Function of the Marcan References to Jewish Scripture: The Theological Basis of a Literary Construct* (New York: Lang, 2008).

[26] Cf. S. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Cf. also R. Watts, "The Psalms in Mark's Gospel," in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (ed. S. Moyise and M. Menken; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 25–45; J. McWhirter, "Messianic Exegesis in Mark's Passion Narrative," in *The Trial and Death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion Narrative in Mark* (ed. G. van Oyen and T. Shepherd; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 69–97: He seeks to identify a process of "messianic exegesis" that lies behind the Old Testament citations in Mark's passion narrative.

to act on his behalf because of his suffering. Because Mark alludes to these psalms in reference to Jesus, David's concerns become woven into the depiction of Jesus in Mark. On this background the necessity of understanding Jesus' death as inevitable within an apocalyptic framework is questioned. The suffering king David offers a more appropriate model for Jesus' suffering in Mark than, as Watts has argued,[27] that of the servant from Deutero-Isaiah.[28] This clash of opinions shows that the inter-textual study of Mark and the Septuagint is a rich and promising field for research, revealing much about Mark's compositional techniques and theological aims.[29]

3. On the Text of Mark

Henrich Greeven's comprehensive text-critical analysis of Mark, in which he suggests various deviations from the standard text, has been published posthumously.[30] The question as to the ending of Mark's Gospel has not been put to rest. After meticulously reviewing a seemingly closed debate, N. Clayton Croy reopens the question by arguing that the beginning and end of the codex have been mutilated accidentally.[31]

Attention has been given to rhetorical devices like irony[32] and paradox,[33] but specific studies on the style of Mark's text are still rare.[34] After reviewing pre-

[27] Cf. note 25. Watts argued that the new Exodus theme of Isaiah (particularly Deutero-Isaiah) is the hermeneutical key not only to the structure of the second Gospel but to Markan Christology and soteriology as well.

[28] In a later essay, "Challenging the Divine: LXX Psalm 21 in the Passion Narrative of the Gospel of Mark," in *Trial and Death*, 119–48, Ahearne-Kroll re-examines Mark's passion narrative through the lens of Ps 21.

[29] One example of compositional technique should suffice. The pattern of using basic citations from Deuteronomy and combining them with a second citation from another book of Moses seems to be a compositional technique often used by Mark. He follows this procedure in 7:10 (Deut 5:16 + Exod 21:17) and 12:19 (Deut 25:5–6 + Gen 38:8). The allusion to Deut 24:1 in 10:4 is followed by a combination of two citations from Genesis (Gen 1:27 + 2:24). These cases prove that in citing the books of Moses, Mark's use of the commandments from Deuteronomy becomes fundamental. Other texts are attached to the Deuteronomistic base text. Cf. C. Breytenbach, "Die Vorschriften des Mose im Markusevangelium," *ZNW* 97 (2006): 23–43.

[30] Cf. H. Greeven and E. Güting, eds., *Textkritik des Markusevangeliums* (Berlin: LIT, 2005). The Markan text of Codex Vaticanus is meticulously studied by J. Voelz, "The Greek of Codex Vaticanus in the Second Gospel and Marcan Greek," *NovT* 47 (2005): 209–49.

[31] N. C. Croy, *The Mutilation of Mark's Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).

[32] In his essay, "The Irony of Power in the Trial of Jesus and the Denial by Peter – Mark 14:53–72," in *Trial and Death,* 229–45, T. Shepherd seeks to understand both the blasphemy charge and Peter's denial of Jesus from the perspective of power, paying special attention to "power transactions" located within both of them. He argues that these two stories are a Markan intercalation – a storytelling technique that Shepherd links with "dramatized irony" in previous research.

[33] Cf. H. F. Santos, *Slave of All: The Paradox of Authority and Servanthood in the Gospel of Mark* (London: T & T Clark, 2003).

[34] One still has to rely on the dated contributions of M. Zerwick, *Untersuchungen zum*