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Edited by
EVE-MARIE BECKER
and ANDERS RUNESSON

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Comparative Readings: Reception History, Cultural Hermeneutics, and Theology

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Preface

This book presents the outcome of the second of two international collaborative efforts to develop a new comparative approach to the study of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. The project began with a conference at Aarhus University, Denmark, in 2008 (published in 2011; WUNT 271), and continued with a second conference at McMaster University, Canada, in 2009. Together, the two volumes represent the teamwork of thirty-one scholars active in thirteen countries on four continents. The first volume focused on comparative analysis of the earliest Gospels in their first-century settings. In the present volume, contributors have worked on the reception of Mark and Matthew in numerous settings, from the first to the twenty-first century (Part One), as well as on specific issues raised by the diverse, culturally embedded hermeneutics involved in the production of meaning in different social, religious, political, and economic contexts (Part Two). We would like to express our gratitude to all contributors for their interest in the overall project, their collegiality, and their willingness to work on the specific topics suggested to them. The success of the project as a whole is dependent first and foremost on the contributors' efforts and inspiration.

The McMaster conference was made possible through a generous grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), as well as from contributions by the Office of the Vice-President of Research, McMaster University, and Mohr Siebeck; we are very grateful for and encouraged by this strong support for what we believe is an important step forward in the study of the earliest Gospels. We also want to acknowledge our deep gratitude to doctoral student Ralph Korner, McMaster University, who provided invaluable assistance with the many details involved in the organizational procedures related to the conference. His exceptional administrative skills, as well as his unwaveringly cheerful attitude throughout the event were highly praised by the attendees and contributed greatly to the convivial and collegial atmosphere of the conference. The event took place at the McMaster University Club; we are especially grateful to Jennifer Brewer, Assistant Club Manager, for the excellent service and leadership that she provided.

As everyone who has edited a book knows, a lot of painstaking work at several stages goes in to the production of a volume. For much appreciated assistance with the editorial procedure, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Dr. Jeremy Penner (Catholic University, Leuven) and doctoral student Nick Meyer (McMaster University). Their careful eye for detail, including their language editing, has greatly enhanced the quality of the volume. We are likewise grateful to doctoral student Jacob Mortensen (Aarhus University) who has prepared the indices for this volume with great precision. Finally, we would like to thank Prof. Dr. Jörg

Frey, the editor of WUNT, for accepting the volume in this series, and – last but not least – Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and Tanja Idler at Mohr Siebeck for their support and encouragement as this project was brought to completion.

December, 2012

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

Table of Contents

Introduction

Reading Mark and Matthew Within and Beyond the First Century

Anders Runesson and Eve-Marie Becker

1. Comparative Readings: Between Reader, Text, and Context

Sustained comparative Synoptic studies do not stand alone methodologically in the humanities. Such approaches, which elaborate on an individual author or text by means of comparison, belong to a more general trend within cultural studies as well as in the humanities more broadly, such as in, e.g., literary studies and philosophy.[1] Engaging in textual interpretation involves approaching specific texts composed more often than not by individual authors. In these texts, however, are embedded a myriad of conscious and unconscious relationships to historical and contemporary events, people, and other texts likewise connected historically and contemporaneously. In-depth understanding of a text evolves, therefore, almost by necessity from multi-perspectival comparative approaches rather than from readings taking a more isolated focus as point of departure. Indeed, all understanding, even in its most basic forms, is, arguably, in its very nature based on comparison; what we perceive is always the result of instant mental processes aimed at making sense of the space and time in which we move, and/or which we imagine, in relation to already acquired experience and knowledge. The Mark and Matthew project, of which the present study is the second volume, aims at taking seriously such more general insights and applying them to the earliest Gospels in order to stimulate new research and a deeper understanding of these two texts individually and as parts of a common discursive setting.

In the first volume, published in 2011, we outlined aspects involved in and insights to be won from a comparative approach to the earliest Gospels in their first-century settings.[2] An international group of scholars engaged the Gospels from the perspectives of history of research, text criticism, linguistics, date, genre, socio-religious location, conflict, violence, and community building. A final con-

[1] For example, it is hardly accidental that a philosopher like Ernst Cassirer tried to make best sense of Rousseau, whose birth 300 years ago is celebrated in 2012, by approaching him on the basis of comparative readings (Rousseau – Kant – Goethe): Ernst Cassirer, *Über Rousseau* (Hg. und mit einem Nachwort von G. Kreis; Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2012).

[2] Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson, "Introduction: Studying Mark and Matthew in Comparative Perspective" in *Mark and Matthew I, Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First Century Settings* (ed. E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 1–10.

tribution provided notes from the conference aimed at encouraging further discussions. We are pleased to see that reviewers of volume I so far have appreciated its innovative impact.[3] In the present volume, maintaining the comparative perspective, our goal is to expand our approaches to Mark and Matthew through taking on questions relating to reception, cultural hermeneutics, and theology, covering a time-span from the first to the twenty-first century. Doing so, one aspect of the interpretive endeavor that we wish to highlight is the fact that the texts are silent until we, their readers, give them voice; that meaning and use happen in the interplay between history and the present, residing never in one place alone, but rather in the dynamic space embracing both text and reader.

In order to address such questions, we have brought together seventeen scholars, teaching at universities in nine countries, who approach the texts from a variety of viewpoints utilizing different methodologies and applying them to specific periods in time, from the very beginnings of the history of the texts up to our own day. This in-depth and focused collaboration between scholars has produced, we believe, a fascinating combination of detailed studies of particular themes and time periods on the one hand, and, on the other, an intriguing overall impression, emerging from the volume when read in its entirety, of the elastic and vigorous nature of the interpretive enterprise.

As we planned the two conferences and the volumes that have followed from them, we have been keenly aware of the fact that current developments in Gospel research tend to challenge many central and long-held consensuses within the study of each of the Gospels. Addressing this situation in a creative way needs to involve, in our view, several parameters. The field is currently in a position in which we must address a very wide variety of concerns as they relate to the study of the earliest Gospels. It is essential, therefore, to be as comprehensive as possible in our selection of topics and themes to be dealt with, both within and beyond the more traditional approaches that we apply to our texts. Radical diversity of opinion with regard to almost each and every one of these approaches in turn leads to a desire for an overview of exegetical developments over time, to put things in perspective; a 'time-line' of sorts, providing us with case studies which, when connected, generate a sense of our own relative place in a two-thousand year old chain of interpreters. Involved in such an endeavor, if it is to be launched effectively, are several aspects relating to us – and by "us" we mean both contemporary and historical individuals – as interpreters, as political, social, and religious beings in different parts of the world, not least the simple fact that we relate to history from our respective vantage points. We need, in other words, to address issues like history, meaning, and the dynamics of understanding.

[3] See, e.g. Helen K. Bond, review of E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson (eds), *Mark and Matthew I, Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First Century Settings*, *JSNT* 45.5 (2012) 38–39; Jeff Jay, review of E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson (eds), *Mark and Matthew I, Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First Century Settings*, *Early Christianity* 3 (2012) 259–64.

In order to implement such a strategy with the aim of creating an expanded platform for the study of the earliest narrative witnesses to Jesus of Nazareth, a platform which has the potential of opening up new ways of thinking about these texts – and of ourselves and others as readers – scholars from different interpretive 'guilds' and academic cultures need to work together in a concerted effort to move beyond that which happens to be familiar in one particular place. In the past, researchers within various such interpretive 'guilds' have, unfortunately, tended to work in isolation from each other, and interaction has often been limited, to the detriment of the wider field of Gospel studies. The two Mark and Matthew volumes thus far produced aim at taking some initial steps towards overcoming such isolation and opening up a shared space in which different perspectives can meet and inspire rather than clash and lead to estrangement. In a constantly shrinking world, such efforts seem more important now than ever before, as we realize the relativity of our own interpretive efforts in the larger context of both culture and history.

The present volume has a distinct focus on the reception of Mark and Matthew in comparative perspective, from the earliest period onwards. With 'the earliest period' we include the first century, since 'reception' is a rather elusive concept involving also the production of the texts themselves. Accepting Markan priority, the creation of the text is evidence of a specific form of reception of parts of the oral Jesus traditions transmitted and circulated in the first century, as well as, possibly, some earlier written forms of these traditions, the latter also being part of the reception of previous oral traditions. These oral traditions, out of which Mark's Gospel was carved, continued to exist as such alongside Mark, as Mark's own textual reception history took form in Matthew's Gospel and elsewhere. Matthew, while utilizing Mark's Gospel, also textualised other versions of the same traditions as Mark had used, as well as traditions transmitted beyond the reach, or liking, of Mark. For scholars accepting the theory of a written Q source, this source was also, along with oral tradition, merged together with the other sources in the highly structured matrix that has come down to us as the Gospel of Matthew.[4] Then, later, Matthew's Gospel exercised influence on the reception of Mark's Gospel, as the ending of that Gospel was augmented by traditions partly gleaned from Matthew.[5] The constant presence of oral tradition alongside the written documents complicates any theory aiming at exact descriptions of the intricate web of interconnections between Mark and Matthew. In these processes of overlapping receptions that led to the genesis of the earliest gospels that have been preserved

[4] Q, according to some scholars, was also part of the material known to Mark, who used it sparingly. Thus, the analysis of the production of Mark, in such theories, needs to take into account a specific form of Q reception. For a recent overview of the origin and structure of the Gospel of Matthew, see Anders Runesson, "Matthew, Gospel According to," in vol. 2 of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible* (ed. M. D. Coogan; 2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 59–78.

[5] See James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

through the centuries, we also see the birth of the reception of the genre of the gospels themselves, which develops significantly in the second century and onwards.

2. Reception and the Production of Meaning

Diverse types of concepts and theories can illuminate the literary shape of the gospel genre. On the basis of genre-studies, *Eve-Marie Becker* investigates Mark's primary impact on the further history of the gospel-*genre* "in its inventive power of creating a literary concept of a gospel-writing."[6] In its first successful decades, 'Mark' was considered to be a literary source rather than a 'stable text.' Although the Gospel's reception-history was not coherent as such early on,[7] the text must soon have been understood as a literary concept that opened up the floor for literary improvement, re-arrangement, and competition. Consequently, when considering the gospel-concept in relation to Mark, Matthew, and the Gospel of Peter, it should be noted that it was not only imitated but also developed extensively. It is clear that Mark opened up the doors for the development of early Christian literary activities since it functioned as an impetus for organizing Jesus-narratives in literary terms. More specifically, Mark initiated and stimulated the early Christian history of narrative literature to a large extent.

Borrowing ideas from evolutionary theory, the cognitive science of religion, and network analysis, *Petri Luomanen* proposes an evolutionary analysis of Mark, Matthew, and Q which explains why Mark and Matthew – and not Q – survived as literary documents. Moreover, in an evolutionary perspective, Mark, and particularly Matthew, seem to have a most "successful evolutionary profile," regarding formal, i.e. literary characteristics, network discourse, identity discourse, and ritual discourse. As Luomanen notes, "Q was the most likely to disappear as an independent document and Matthew the most likely to be the most successful."[8] Luomanen's study reinforces the fact that a comparative analysis of Mark and Matthew cannot escape the quest for and the analysis of 'Q.'

Keeping Q in the equation, *Benedict Thomas Viviano* offers an, in his own words, "positivistic" historical approach defined over and against postmodern convictions, as he presents a historical reconstruction of Q's origin and provenance. For Viviano, Q is "for the most part a collection of the aphoristic teachings and apocalyptic preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, preserved in the private *notebooks* of a direct auditor of these two preachers"; the auditor is identified as Matthew Levi.[9] From here, Viviano moves on to a fresh comparative reading of Mark 2:13–17 and Matt 9:9–13, which underlines the continuous need for 'exploratory exegesis.' In

[6] P. 33.

[7] Cf. limited papyri-transmission; the variety of Markan endings; "Secret Gospel of Mark"; hypotheses on Deutero- and Proto-Mark.

[8] P. 71 and 73.

[9] P. 75.

this way, light is shed on the dynamic impact of historical hypotheses on textual interpretation.

As is well known, while Mark's Gospel enjoyed initial success and great influence on the production of gospels, Matthew soon achieved a standing unrivalled among the Gospels in church history, mirroring its position as the first text of the New Testament canon. Matthew's influence, however, reached beyond the circles that later came to dominate developments in the majority church as Christianity rose to political prominence in the late fourth century. It seems clear, e.g., that Matthew was favored and used by Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and who practiced a form of Christ-centered Judaism that became increasingly marginalized as non-Jewish forms of Christianity became politically empowered and anti-Jewish legislation was introduced in the Christian Empire.[10] But Matthew was also used by other, non-Jewish Christ-believing groups, which were part of the diverse scene involving beliefs and practices centered on Jesus as a Christ-figure, and which, in the end, were marginalized. Evidence of such reception is found in second-century texts from Nag Hammadi in Egypt. In order to shed light on some of these developments, the volume proceeds from the earliest period when Mark and Matthew were formed to analyses of the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (*SJC*), which re-writes the so-called Great Commission (Matt 28:16–20), as well as of Jerome's commentary and Chrysostom's sermons.

René Falkenberg demonstrates how *SJC*, through incorporating Matthean motifs like the Great Commission, may have attempted to appear "as a continuation of the narrative in the Matthean epilogue. It has been suggested that the revelation dialogue was … a continuation of that Gospel on a higher level."[11] Here, the idea of emulating Matthew's authoritative status seems to be predominant. Directing attention to interpreters who worked within what has remained since then the mainstream church, *Peter Widdicombe's* analysis of Jerome and Chrysostom not only indicates how these patristic exegetes have given more "theological weight" to Matthew than to Mark,[12] but also points to how both theologians differ in their reading of Matthew in literary (commentary and sermons) as well as in theological terms. The history of *interpretation* thus appears early on also as a history of individual *interpreters*.[13]

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[10] Recent studies, from various perspectives, on these Jews and their beliefs and practices include Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007); Matt Jackson McCabe, ed., *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Edwin Broadhead, *Jewish Ways of Following Jesus: Redrawing the Religious Map of Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Petri Luomanen, *Recovering Jewish-Christian Sects and Gospels* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[11] P. 104.

[12] P. 105.

[13] Cf. e.g. reflections on this in Eve-Marie Becker, "Was ein Text sein kann: Zur Beschreibung eines Text-Inventars," in *Was ist ein Text?* (ed. O. Wischmeyer and E.-M. Becker; Tübingen / Basel: Francke Verlag, 2001), 159–69; eadem, ed., *Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft: Autobiographische Essays aus der Evangelischen Theologie*, (Tübingen / Basel: Francke Verlag, 2003).

Once Christian culture, as shaped by the Catholic Church, was firmly established in European societies in the Middle Ages, the reading of Mark and Matthew developed in new ways. Although Mark remained in the shadow of Matthew for most of the time, there are some interesting cases when Mark and Matthew were commented upon in relation to one another. Few New Testament scholars work on biblical interpretation in the Middle Ages, and none, as far as we are aware, have produced a comparative study of the treatment of Mark and Matthew in the immensely influential 12th century scholarly masterpiece, produced with a layout quite similar to the Talmud, the *Glossa Ordinaria*.[14] Analysis of this learned work, which brings together quotes from commentaries by the Church Fathers and later writings, serves well the purpose of illustrating the significance of continuity and change as history moved from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages. Despite some uncertainties regarding its composition history, *Joseph Verheyden* chooses the *Gloss* in order to show how "Medieval authors went about putting together a 'commentary,' not only on Matthew but also on that much neglected Gospel of Mark," and how "Medieval commentators handled tensions between the gospels."[15] Verheyden's study thus builds a bridge between Synoptic exegesis in antiquity and exegesis in the modern period.

Among key moments in the development of the interpretation of Mark and Matthew, the Reformation period[16] and its later developments present us with a major interpretive shift, which is still dominant in the Western world today. Since Enlightenment ideals and insights developed and morphed into what we regard today as modern scholarship on the Bible, both Protestant and later on Catholic scholars have joined a common academic milieu in which discussions are nurtured through the application of agreed upon historical and other methodologies. Still, certain patterns of thought developed within as well as between Protestant and Catholic interpreters. In two contributions focusing on Mark and Matthew such patterns are analyzed as they apply to the quantitatively most productive century of Biblical as well as Synoptic studies so far, a period when the study of what was – and is – considered to be 'holy texts' by the church was taken on also by scholars of non-conformist religious leanings as well as researchers from other religious backgrounds or no religious affiliation at all: the twentieth century.

Martin Meiser presents an overview of the history of Synoptic studies that, until the 1970s, was predominantly based in Germany. On the one hand, Synoptic studies were still under the methodological influence of 19th century academic exegesis (source criticism and historical criticism). On the other hand, exegetes were affected by various streams of thought in different cultural as well as ecclesial milieus, as these developed before and after the Nazi period. Within such inter-

[14] For a general discussion of this work, see Lesley Smith, *The* Glossa Ordinaria: *The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[15] P. 144.

[16] Contributions to Synoptic exegesis during the reformation period will receive further attention in connection with the preparations for the reformation jubilee in 2017.

pretive contexts, Markan and Matthean passages that were adaptable especially to political readings became increasingly important. Thus, up to the end of the 20th century the academic relevance of either Mark or Matthew has a certain tendency to lie in their openness to socio-political application.

Catholic exegesis of that period was more clearly determined by the official church statements from 1893, 1943, and 1993, as well as by a concern for meeting ecclesial needs,[17] as *Detlev Dormeyer* points out. In a 'Literaturbericht,' Dormeyer discusses the results of exegetical studies of Mark and Matthew produced by Catholic scholars. He notes paradigm shifts within and beyond Synoptic exegesis, like the acceptance of Form- and Redaction-Criticism and the so-called Linguistic Turn, especially with regard to their impact on Markan and Matthean studies. Dormeyer also shows how certain types of contextual readings (e.g., liberation theology and feminist approaches) derive from Catholic exegesis more specifically.

Reading Meiser and Dormeyer comparatively may lead the reader to consider further certain, partly interrelated, historical, political, geographical, and academic developments with which Synoptic studies were confronted in the 20th century: the cultural crisis of a Western civilization marked by World War I and II; the loss of German-speaking academic dominance in the field of theology; the increase of politically oriented readings, primarily rooted in the so-called global south and frequently initiated by Catholic theology; the challenges to New Testament studies emerging from various fields within the humanities – the Linguistic Turn being only the starting point for an ongoing quest with regard to the problem of how to relate the New Testament writings to diverse hermeneutical shifts. Such developments prepared for the complex and intricate interpretive scene which we currently experience in the 21st century.

As noted above, among the many historical processes of the 20th century one stands out more than others, also with regard to its deep effects on the church, Christian theology, and New Testament studies: the Second World War. More precisely, the Christian-Jewish relationship could not remain the same after the horrors of the Holocaust, as these events, atrocious beyond comprehension, were demonstrably related to specific forms of New Testament interpretation in the church. Struggling to understand its role not only in the Holocaust, but also in relation to international developments beyond this context involving the proliferation of interfaith encounters, the Second Vatican Council, convened from October 11, 1962 to December 8, 1965, produced documents that initiated profound reassessments of the church's theology of religions. With regard to Jewish-Christian relations, the *Nostra Aetate* (1965) of the Council was followed by two documents widely regarded as the most authoritative texts on the subject today: *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration* Nostra Aetate (n. 4)

[17] Cf., e.g., John L. Curran, "St. Irenaeus and the Dates of the Synoptics," *CBQ* 5 (1943): 34–46; 301–310; 445–457, esp. 37–38, where Curran discusses "modern Catholic Views."

(1975), and *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* (1985).

In these documents, Biblical interpretation is at the center, as theology is (re-) formed and anti-Semitism combated. But in which ways are the Biblical texts used? What hermeneutics are involved, and which role, if any, does modern academic historical research play in these processes? Focusing on the reception of Mark and Matthew in these official church documents, *Anders Runesson* notes certain developments in interpretive approach that occurred between 1965 and 1985, highlighting how inter-subjective academic endeavors have come to contribute – ecumenically – to church theology in essential ways. He concludes that, while historical discourses have contributed significantly to the process of breaking down anti-Jewish stereotypes and theologies, some methodological inconsistencies surface as the documents use Mark and Matthew to make specific theological points. Ultimately, the potential of academic historical research to influence the dynamics of the production of church theology centers to a significant degree on its ability to generate historical voices religio-culturally divergent from contemporary politics. In this way academia is enabling the ancient texts to interact in new ways in the theological dialogue that also involves contemporary voices of people from all parts of the world.

3. The Dynamics of Interpretation

Bringing together analyses of Mark and Matthew from divergent time periods and cultural contexts in a conference setting – as well as between the covers of a book – raises profound questions relating to the problem of the interpretive engagement as such. While similar questions were addressed to a certain degree in the contributions to the first part of the present volume, in part two we want to bring attention to such issues in a more focused way. As with the first part of the volume, the strategy chosen has been to work from a wide-ranging perspective, but to have the wider spectrum concretized in the form of specific key topics, with the hope that others will expand such investigations in various directions in the future.

Thus proceeding, it is of importance, as we see it, not to leave out certain hermeneutical paradigms that contribute to defining our theological and/or historical approach to Mark and Matthew, such as the quest for the 'earliest voices' and 'potential intentions' of the authors and their audiences. What did they want to achieve, and how did they go about working towards those goals? What hermeneutics were involved in the first-century settings in which the texts were shaped, and how was meaning produced and re-produced in ongoing debate and dialogue? Such discussions shed important light on other types of approaches to the texts, in diverse and later settings. In this context, *Adela Yarbro Collins* addresses recent discussions of Mark and history writing. She begins with an audience-oriented analysis of the term ἀρχή (Mark 1:1) and concludes that it "seems likely that those

readers familiar with Greek and Latin historical writings took the use of this word as a cue, a signal, that they should understand Mark as a historical work." Yarbro Collins' overall interpretation of Mark's narrative concept leads to a fundamental insight with regard to what the gospel genre as a literary model implies: "Mark … created a narrative that allows its readers to relive the past – the teaching and activities of Jesus."[18]

While Yarbro Collins offers a literary understanding of Mark's Gospel, *Stephen Westerholm* reflects upon the origin and nature of Mark and Matthew much more in theological terms. As reconstructed from the hearers' perspective, Westerholm addresses the textual propositions and kerygmatic impact by which the aim of the gospel writings is generated: "On the whole, the story of Jesus in the Gospels seems intended to inspire faith, allegiance, obedience, and worship more than imitation."[19] Certainly, Yarbro Collins would agree with the claim that "Mark intended his readers to hear a foundational story from the past."[20] However, while Westerholm moves on to a kerygmatic reading that may point to a canonical perspective, Yarbro Collins limits her textual analysis to the aims and purposes of literary interpretation.[21] Here we encounter two different modes of approaching Mark's and Matthew's narrative concept, models which may inspire further discussion.

Throughout most of the reception history of Mark and Matthew – contrary to modern historical-critical approaches – the New Testament as canon has played a vital role and its various parts have been allowed to interpret each other. This phenomenon generates further questions relating to canonical theologies and the role of Mark and Matthew in such theologies. None of the Gospels were intended as one contribution among others to a collection of sacred writings. What happens to meaning and function as such texts are incorporated into a larger inter-textual interpretive matrix, the canon, meant to be authoritative for large groups of people?[22] This is the topic of *Mogens Müller's* study. Müller proposes a "canonical theology," within which the fourfold Gospel may find a place and where matters of narrative inconsistency and needs for harmonization lose their importance. At the same time, Müller notes how Matthew, as a "new edition of Mark,"[23] as well as Mark itself, ultimately serves ecclesial needs and purposes in worship settings. Through such processes, the Gospels' pluriformity may function as a factor stimulating diversity rather than unity, if unity is understood as uniformity (cf. Ernst Käsemann). As the present collection of essays indicates repeatedly, when Mark

[18] P. 244 and 238.

[19] P. 252 f.

[20] Westerholm, p. 257.

[21] Westerholm, p. 257: Mark "also wrote his Gospel, as early Christians proclaimed the gospel, in the confidence that God would address his hearers through his words, so that, in receptive hearts, those words would bear fruit."

[22] Regarding recent discussion of canonization and de-canonization, cf. *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion: Kanonisierungsprozesse religiöser Texte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart – Ein Handbuch* (ed. E.-M. Becker and S. Scholz; Berlin / Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

[23] P. 264.

and Matthew are studied comparatively the focus continuously shifts back and forth between considering the literary history of each Gospel narrative on the one hand, and the canonical setting in which more than two Gospels generate a spectrum of meaning that affects the individual texts on the other. In the end, the canonical perspective is an important part of that larger interpretive frame which urges scholars to engage in continuously renewed attempts to apply a comparative perspective in their analysis of the Gospels.

No exegesis or interpretation is neutral, especially when conceptualized programmatically as a 'reading.' A multitude of factors are activated,[24] consciously or unconsciously, as human beings of flesh and blood encounter and engage a text. There is a constant reciprocal dynamic between readers and the text on the one hand, and readers of the text and the society in which the reader lives on the other hand, a continuous interaction that involves and effects change, including the type of change that is entangled in processes attempting to uphold an interpretive status quo.[25] In this regard, feminist scholarship has contributed greatly to the study of the New Testament and our Gospels, and has done so from a variety of perspectives. As *Janice Capel Anderson* notes, there is not one feminism, but several feminisms, which makes definition difficult.[26] Referring to bell hooks and Linda Martín Alcoff, Anderson suggests a wide approach to defining feminism as "a common resistance to all the different forms of male domination," and "our right and our ability to construct, and take responsibility for, our gendered identity, our politics, and our choices." Exploring several readings of Matthew's genealogy along historical and cultural spectra with a special focus on the women mentioned therein, Anderson notes the importance of frames and the social location of interpreters, as well as the text's ambivalence in that it may support both oppression and liberation. The unexpected presence of five women in a patrilineal genealogy, she concludes, challenges the readers "to read both with and against the grain."[27]

As discussed by Anderson, certain strands of feminism are closely related to, and intertwined with, postcolonial analysis. For postcolonial studies, political

[24] Cf. *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik: Begriffe – Methoden – Theorien – Konzepte* (ed. O. Wischmeyer, et al.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

[25] The idea of something or someone supporting a 'status quo' should be treated with some caution. Nothing is immovable and that which is ostensibly made to 'stand still' in fact, as a result of this very act, moves, since its location in relation to its surroundings, and thus in relation to its interpreters, is constantly changing. Form should not be confused with content. In other words, any attempt to preserve is, in reality, an attempt to change, just as much as change may aim at preservation; any 'preservation' is inevitably done within a complex web of constantly moving parameters, in relation to which a perceived 'preservation' ceaselessly changes in as much as it relates to social, political, economic, and cultural realities at any given historical moment. Change is all-pervasive and unending; the real question is, fundamentally, about direction, which is a subjective and political issue.

[26] Anderson, p. 272, mentions, e.g., Western liberal feminism, cultural feminism, womanist feminism (which, as she notes, developed from African American feminism), and postcolonial feminism.

[27] P. 272 and 287.

issues related to colonialism, hegemony, and power relations stand at the center of investigations, which in turn may take different forms: historical, contemporary, methodological, and theoretical.[28] Recent postcolonial scholarship has called attention to various problems in traditional Western exegesis, unveiling how hegemonic aspects of the academic world are part of a wider postcolonial reality, and, further, how this has affected and still affects interpretations and methods used. Revealing the racializing tendencies of 19th century biblical scholarship and how such scholarship related to the colonial mindset prevalent in Europe at the time, *Hans Leander* warns against the risk of such colonial heritage becoming reproduced in contemporary research. Leander rejects the distinction in New Testament textbooks – and in many scholars' minds – between 'ordinary exegesis' and 'exegesis with a special focus,' the latter meant to categorize approaches like feminism, postcolonialism, African American, and queer perspectives. Such distinctions prioritize Western forms of exegesis as 'normal,' and therefore also as more relevant in terms of the scientific and purportedly non-biased status of the historical and linguistic results produced. Reading Mark and Matthew with 19th century commentators reveals that far from being 'neutral' these exegetical discourses were intertwined with and dependent on racialized discourses of modernity, related specifically to the field of orientalism. In addition, Leander shows how scholarship on Mark and Matthew was linked to discourses of Protestant mission and its relationship to European colonialism. Ultimately all exegesis, Leander concludes, is best described as 'exegesis with a special focus.'

Leander's study sheds light on the fact that New Testament exegesis is in the process of becoming truly global. Not only are voices from other parts of the world now beginning to be heard in their own right by mainstream Western scholarship; that very scholarship is challenged at its methodological and theoretical core. Such intellectual encounters between sometimes radically different points of view, followed by reciprocal interaction and engagement in discussions of not least methodological and theoretical questions, may contribute significantly to new ways of understanding both 'the other' and ourselves as culturally embedded readers, as we begin to decolonize universalizing definitions of exegesis. As *Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele* note, in such processes we have to recognize that the comparative approach itself may be relativized when understood from a different theoretical perspective. Synoptic comparison, they argue, has tended to proceed with a set of assumptions and embedded values that are fundamentally modern. While comparing Matthew and Mark may seem like a value-neutral and methodologically objective enterprise, a different orientation to Gospel Studies challenges us to rethink our own assumptions and values and how those are shaped by and also shape the comparative process. The reader is invited by Penner and Vander

[28] For a presentation and analysis of postcolonial approaches, see Anna Runesson, *Exegesis in the Making: Postcolonialism and New Testament Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

Stichele to consider the proposition that we encounter ourselves in our own methods long before we encounter something other in the text.

From a different angle, *Michael Knowles* investigates modern scholarship on Mark and Matthew in relation to earlier forms of exegesis, with special emphasis on Late Antiquity on the one hand and the modern and post-modern periods on the other. In this way, light is shed on the wider perspective in which we may understand the current interpretive moment. Focusing on the transfiguration (Mark 9:2–10; Matt 17:1–8), which is portrayed in similar fashion in both Gospels, Knowles explores various forms of reception of this tradition in apologetics, homiletics, liturgy and lectionary, hymnody, iconography, and theology, including the theological interpretation of Scripture. Finding connection-points between the pre-modern and the post-modern periods in the diverse reception of the transfiguration, the modern approach to reading biblical texts is relativized as a rather limited strategy for understanding texts; such interpretive boundaries stand in contrast to the universalizing claims it produces.

Knowles' contribution, which completes the volume, emphasizes the role of the many and diverse voices in the church for the interpretive outcome, so that the "different voices and perspectives (those of the academy providing only a small part) contribute to an ongoing, richly multi-layered symphony of scriptural exposition, explanation, and appropriation."[29]

It is our hope that the present volume, read together with the first volume of the Mark and Matthew project (WUNT 271, 2011), will provide a stimulus for increased interaction within and between the various scholarly paradigms, or 'guilds,' in which we tend to work, as we strive towards greater understanding of the earliest narrative portraits of Jesus and, by implication, ourselves as interpreters and partners in the production of meaning in various cultural and hermeneutical settings. What began as two texts with an intertwined history entangled in the realities of the first-century Mediterranean world has come to generate innumerable responses within and outside the churches and the academic world throughout history and around the globe. Understanding Mark and Matthew comparatively in these countless contexts is a fascinating – and unending – task, which requires cooperation and encourages interdisciplinarity within the larger fields of the humanities, the social sciences, and theology. If the Mark and Matthew volumes show that such cooperation between sometimes radically different, even opposing, perspectives and approaches is not only desirable but also possible, stimulating, and fruitful, our efforts have not been in vain.

[29] P. 355.

Part I

Reception and Cultural Hermeneutics: Reading Mark and Matthew From the 1st to the 21st Century

The Reception of "Mark" in the 1st and 2nd Centuries C. E. and its Significance for Genre Studies

Eve-Marie Becker

The Markan Gospel was at its literary height early on. As far as we can see "Mark"[1] was immediately spread, read, and used, eventually by John, in any case by Matthew and Luke, who are its earliest readers and transmitters. Thus, we can guess that the Markan Gospel was successfully circulated already between 70–90 C. E. And according to Eusebius,[2] Mark's Gospel also received an early attribution of apostolic authorization: it was Papias of Hierapolis who called Mark the interpreter of Peter (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15)[3] and thus, in the first half of the second century, associated Mark with apostolic traditions.[4]

Nevertheless, we also get the impression that Mark's reception-history did not continue – at least, not consistently – during the second century. Such an impression is based on various facts and observations which we will look at now. It will become evident here that in the second century C. E. we basically have to deal with phenomena like textual inconsistency and literary diversity of Mark. These observations will force us to re-define what we actually mean when investigating Mark's early reception-history (s. 1.). In order to understand these phenomena more comprehensively and to discuss Mark's literary 'success' we will then have to enter the field of *genre studies* and literary history (s. 2.).

1. Defining and Re-defining "Mark"

We start with the recognition that there is no strong material evidence for the early reception of Mark on the level of manuscript-transmission.[5] While the first

[1] When we talk about the "Markan Gospel" we basically mean here and later on the canonical gospel-writing as we find it in Nestle-Aland[27/28] (pp. 88–147/102–76).

[2] For further patristic references to Mark, the Evangelist, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.8.3; 2.15; 3.24.7; 5.14.6; 6.25.4 f.

[3] Cf. W. C. van Unnik, "Zur Papias-Notiz über Markus," *ZNW* 54 (1963): 276–7.

[4] The reception of the Markan Gospel is partly affiliated with the reception of the figure of John Mark also (cf. 1 Pet 5:14) who, especially in relation to Barnabas (Acts 12:25; 15:36 ff.), plays an important role up to the end of the fifth century – e.g. as the author of the *Acts of Barnabas* (2.2.292–302). Cf. F. R. Prostmeier, "Barnabas-Literatur," in *LACL* (ed. S. Döpp and W. Geerlings; 3rd ed.; Freiburg etc.: Herder, 2002), 107–8.

[5] For the (early) reception history of the Markan Gospel, cf., recently, B. D. Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice: The Reception of the Gospel of Mark* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), esp. 35–62.

and only *papyrus*-manuscript documenting Mark is P^{45} (third century),[6] we do have much more and even older *papyri* for Matthew. These document the rich material evidence for the Matthean Gospel during the 2nd and 3rd centuries.[7] It is only in the important *codices* of the fourth and fifth century, like *Sinaiticus* (א 01), *Vaticanus* (B 03), *Alexandrinus* (A 02) and *Bezae Cantabrigiensis* (D 05), that the broad material evidence for the Markan Gospel is available to us. Interestingly, here Mark indeed is delivered in its entirety, i.e. in its full length. It seems hardly accidental[8] that the Gospel of Matthew is much better witnessed than Mark in the second and third centuries. This might rather tell us something about the specific character and the early reception-history of the Markan Gospel also. Consequently, Dieter Lührmann started his commentary on Mark by problematizing the slim textual basis which we have for Mark and its consequences for Markan exegesis.[9] And Harry Gamble has pointed to the fact that there is indeed a relationship between material evidence, reception-history, and the gain of textual consistency: "In the absence of controlled transmission, an ancient text acquired stability not in proportion to the extent of authority lodged in it, but by the broad circulation of enough copies to establish and sustain a consistent, self-reinforcing textual tradition."[10] But this means, in other words, that if we can prove in Mark's case that there is textual inconsistency in the second century, then the weak material evidence can have significance for Mark's early reception-history also. And, in fact, there are different types of indications for questioning Mark's early textual consistency. By considering these indications we will, however, get beyond Gamble in that we will detect how textual inconsistency and literary diversity are interrelated.

(a) The Markan ending in 16:8 is still under dispute. Even if we follow Kurt Aland and others in assuming that the original ending of Mark is in place in 16:8[11] – as documented, e.g., in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus – and that this ending

[6] Some parts of Mark 1 and 16:9 are documented in Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.10.6); cf. also E.-M. Becker, "Dating Mark and Matthew as Ancient Literature," in *Mark and Matthew I, Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First Century Settings* (ed. E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 123–43, 127 f., esp. n. 24.

[7] These papyri date from ca. 200, the second/third century ($P^{64, 77}$), or the third century ($P^{1, 37, 45, 53, 70}$).

[8] Of course, we cannot be sure whether the history of the textual transmission of Mark is to a large degree contingent: it could be that the number of early *papyri*-manuscripts containing Matthew is simply higher because of chance. On the other hand, even if we can neither exclude factors like coincidence nor be certain about whether all early remaining manuscripts of Mark have as yet been found, we are also working with comparative indicators like probabilities, and parameters like average.

[9] Cf. D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 1–3. In this context, he also points to the various concrete implications for exegesis: he reflects, for instance, on the consequences for textual criticism of Markan texts: "Die Textkritik hat grundsätzlich derjenigen Lesart den Vorzug zu geben, die als nicht von Parallelversionen der anderen Evangelien beeinflußt zu erweisen ist" (2).

[10] H. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995), 126.

[11] Cf. the resumé in E.-M. Becker, *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 238–9.

is intentional, we cannot, however, avoid admitting that several additions to the text, such as the Freer-Logion in Codex W (fourth / fifth century C. E.), the shorter ending, and the longer ending, are obviously meant as later attempts to complete the Markan Gospel literarily.[12] Such supplementations[13] had possibly been put into the manuscripts already during the second century.[14] In other words, in comparison to Matt 28:9–20, Luke 24:13–53, and John 20:11–21:25, the original ending of

[12] For an overview, cf., e.g., J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus: 2. Teilband Mk 8,27–16,20* (5th ed.; Zürich / Düsseldorf: Benziger Verlag, 1999), 350–8, or A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 802–18.

[13] Dibelius called them disconcertingly 'wilde Überlieferungen,' what presupposes a firm and distinct type of transmission: M. Dibelius, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Herausgegeben v. F. Hahn* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1975), 47 ff. He meant Jesus-traditions that were probably orally delivered, either before being affiliated to already existing texts (cf., e.g., John 7:53–8:11) or before being transformed into a written text individually (cf., e.g., *Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840*). I refer here and later to Dibelius because already in 1926 he approached the apocryphal gospels programmatically by means of a *literary history*. Concerning the remains of Papyri of Apocryphal materials in general, cf. D. G. Martinez, "The Papyri and Early Christianity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (ed. R. S. Bagnall; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 590–622, 598 f. Concerning the 'Oxyrhynchus Scholars' in particular: W. A. Johnson, "The Ancient Book," in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, 256–81, 270–7. Parts of the secondary ending of the Markan Gospel, e.g. the *Freer Logion*, might also fit to that category of 'wilde Überlieferungen.' More carefully, J. Frey, "Zu Text und Sinn des Freer-Logion," *ZNW* 93 (2002): 13–34: "Das Freer-Logion ist ein … singulärer, vielleicht von einem einzelnen Schreiber in die Textüberlieferung eingetragener Einschub in den langen Markus-Schluß" (34). For the theological tendencies of the so-called Freer-Logion, cf. J. Dochhorn, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie: Der eschatologische Teufelsfall in Apc Joh 12 und seine Bedeutung für das Verständnis der Johannesoffenbarung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 284–93. For textual criticism and Codex W, cf. T. R. Shepherd, "Narrative Analysis as a Text Critical Tool: Mark 16 in Codex W as a Test Case," *JSNT* 32 (2009): 77–98. Today, we might thus better speak of *Einzelüberlieferungen* (individual traditions), where we subsume the so-called *agrapha* as well as separately preserved Jesus-traditions.

[14] The following datings are suggested: the general *terminus ad quem* for the Freer-Logion is Jerome (*Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* 2.15); nevertheless, scholars tend to think that it had already been formed during the second century: J. Jeremias, "Freer-Logion," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* (6th ed.; ed. W. Schneemelcher; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1990), 204–5, says: "das Stück erweist sich "als altertümlich" (204). Differently, P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter* (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 681 f., who discusses the role of the Freer-Logion within the group of texts which are called 'Dialogues of the risen Christ with his disciples,' and does not think that it represents the oldest version of that kind of literature. In accordance to Kurt Aland ("Der Schluß des Markusevangeliums," in idem, *Neutestamentliche Entwürfe* [München: Kaiser, 1979], 246–83) some scholars have tended to date the shorter as well as the longer ending to the second century C. E. (cf. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 268). In the case of the longer ending the *terminus ad quem* is Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.10.5 f.) and even Justin (1 *Apol.* 45); cf. J. Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 2009), 1088, and Gnilka, *Evangelium*, 354. J. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 157 ff. and 473 ff. even tries to show that the longer ending was composed by an individual author between the first half and the midst of the second century C. E. The *terminus ad quem* for the shorter ending would be the longer ending itself, because otherwise the shorter ending would have been suppressed and would not have been transmitted further on; cf. Gnilka, *Evangelium*, 351.

Mark in 16:8, which does not refer to any epiphany of the risen Jesus, must have been understood as insufficient and incomplete. And yet some manuscripts like Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do prove that Mark 16:8 had in some cases been understood as a reasonable ending. Thus, additional endings were optionally appended to it. Interestingly, textual inconsistency and a multiplication of literary versions go hand in hand: as a consequence of defining Mark's ending, there was thus not only an increase of textual inconsistency but there was also multiplication of various literary versions of "Mark."

There is additional evidence for assuming that literary diversity and textual fluidity are interconnected. (b) If we should hold that Clement of Alexandria's reference to a "Secret Gospel of Mark" is authentic,[15] we do not only get insight into a specific literary adaption of Mark in the second half of the second century in Alexandria,[16] but rather also into continuing 'heretical' attempts of the so-called Carpocratians (cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.25.1–6) to utilize the Markan Gospel by yet further enlarging and extending it.[17] In this letter, Clement even tells the story of at least three different versions of the Markan Gospel that were known to him comprehensively: he mentions first "an account of the Lord's doings" (ἀνέγραψε τὰς πράξεις τοῦ κυρίου), that was composed by Mark in Rome; secondly, he speaks of "a more spiritual Gospel" (συνέταξε πνευματικώτερον εὐαγγέλιον), i.e. the "secret Gospel" (τὸ μυστικὸς εὐαγγέλιον) that was composed by Mark after his coming to Alexandria; and thirdly, he refers to a "polluted" (καὶ ἐμίανε) version of this gospel-account, arranged by a certain Carpocrates.[18] Finally, Clement tries to defend the "secret Gospel"-version against the Carpocratian interpretation. We will not discuss here Clement's intentions with authorizing the "Secret Gospel" of Mark.[19] It is rather more interesting to see how natural it obviously was up to the end of the second century to think of diverse literary versions of *one* gospel-writing such as Mark while its textual character was not yet fully consistent.

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[15] Cf. M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), esp. 448–52.

[16] For the beginnings of Christian theology and literature in Alexandria, cf., in general, A. Fürst, *Christentum als Intellektuellen-Religion: Die Anfänge des Christentums in Alexandria* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2007); M. Clauss, *Alexandria: Eine antike Weltstadt* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004), esp. 202–12.

[17] E. Rau, "Zwischen Gemeindechristentum und christlicher Gnosis: Das geheime Markusevangelium und das Geheimnis des Reiches Gottes," *NTS* 51 (2005): 482–504; idem, "Das Geheimnis des Reiches Gottes: Die esoterische Rezeption der Lehre Jesu im geheimen Markusevangelium," in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen: Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen* (ed. J. Frey and J. Schröter; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 187–222.

[18] Folio 1, recto, line 16 until folio 1, verso, line 10. Text and translation in Smith, *Clement*, 446 f. and 448–50.

[19] For the whole spectrum of discussion, cf., e.g., P. Jeffery, *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled: Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death, and Madness in a Biblical Forgery* (New Haven / Londond: Yale University Press, 2007); S. G. Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith's Controversial Discovery* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007).

What we see so far is that there obviously was an interdependency of a limited amount of copies available and textual inconsistency as well as the development of diverse literary outlines. The processes of transmitting differing literary versions of the Markan gospel-account during the second century C. E. obviously were dynamic for various reasons: these could be either matters of literary completion and creativeness or matters of specific, viz. 'heretical,' teaching which finally led to the production of a variety of Markan gospel-versions, in fact possibly without producing a bulk of manuscript-copies. As I will argue in this contribution, the reason for these processes could point back already to the last third of the first century C. E.: the Matthean Gospel, in fact, as an inclusion or 'incorporation' of Mark, was an early literary re-shaping of Mark's gospel-outline. Literary diversity was initiated here. The argument might then support the insight that already at that time literary variety and textual inconsistency go hand in hand.

(c) Here, we can take into account that there were probably various textual versions of Mark existent around, and possibly before, Matthew's time. Such an assumption is based on the observation of the so-called *minor* and *major agreements* that exist between Matthew and Luke against "Mark" while using him: accordingly, some scholars have made a proposal on grounds of *Literarkritik* that there was either a 'Deutero-Mark' or a 'Proto-Mark' that was used by Matthew and Luke and that differs significantly from the Markan version that is known to us.[20] We cannot discuss those hypotheses in detail here. More importantly, we need to start from various observations on the fact that the "Markan Gospel" as a textual entity is neither unchanging nor stable. It is obvious that the nature of the gospel-writing as a *literary* concept is such that it provokes and shapes further literary plurality and diversity from the very beginning. We are thus dealing here with *generic* questions. By saying this we are close to Werner H. Kelber's insights regarding the differences between the "Oral and the Written Gospel" (1983).[21] This means that Mark's reception history can best be approached from the point of view of literary-history.

(d) When considering the literary dynamics that are implied in the written gospel-concept, we should go back to Papias[22] and read more carefully what his witness on the Markan Gospel actually means: Papias' valuation of Mark as a literary

[20] Cf. again the resumé in Becker, *Markus-Evangelium*, 29 f.

[21] Cf. W. H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). Here Kelber has emphasized the shift to an alternative mode of conceptualizing gospel-traditions as it was initiated by the shape of a 'written gospel.' The concept of a 'written gospel' was soon imitated, modified, and multiplied: "Nowhere in early Christianity is it more obvious than in the gospel of Mark that preservation of oral tradition is not a primary function of writing … Both in form and content the written gospel constitutes a radical alternative to the oral gospel … Mark's massively reflexive reconstruction of Jesus' past is his form of demythologizing the orally perceived presence of Jesus" (207 and 210).

[22] However, we should keep in mind also that Papias as a patristic author was controversial (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.11–13; Irenaeus, *Haer* 5.33.4): Cf. E. Schulz-Flügel, "Papias von Hierapolis," in *LACL*, 545–6.

concept needs to be seen against the background that he prioritizes oral traditions over written texts (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4). From here, we can more particularly understand what he had in mind when stating that there is a lack of τάξις in Mark which results from the deficit of not being affiliated directly to the group of Jesus-disciples (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15). It seems that Papias himself rather maintains a critical attitude towards Mark's gospel-concept than a strong support for it. In any case, he documents certain difficulties and insufficiencies regarding the early reception of Mark in the first half of the second century C. E. His note on a literary deficiency might indeed to some degree be seen parallel to the receding of Mark in the textual tradition.[23] For obvious reasons of textual stability, Papias has privileged processes of oral transmission. It is not accidental then that Justin Martyr around the middle of the second century C. E. was referring to the gospel's literacy (= 'Literarizität')[24] as well as to its plural and manifold appearances (1 *Apol.* 66; cf. *Dial.* 10.2; 100.1).[25] Literacy and literary plurality again seem to be two sides of the same coin. This is why literacy generates canonization, i.e. the formal definition of textual entities as well as collections of texts.[26]

So, how should we envisage best this interrelation of literacy, literary multiplicity, textual inconsistency, and reception-history? I will suggest this to be a literary and/or generic phenomenon first of all. Accordingly, we should approach these potential relationships on the basis of *literary-history*. In this contribution I will thus raise the question: how can we best reconstruct the early reception of Mark up to the pre-canonical collection of the 'Four Gospels' (*Vierevangelienkanon*), including Mark, is shaped between *ca.* 170 and 180 C. E.,[27] as Irenaeus documents (*Haer.* 3.1.1.) – a process which possibly developed in controversy with Marcionite 'heresy'[28]? So far, I have referred to the variety of textual versions of Mark that had been shaped during the second century and that are out of proportion to the number of manuscript-copies. Such a variety of texts points to the fact that during this period of time "Christian scriptural texts were still relatively fluid and subject

[23] In difference to this, Eusebius, *ca.* 200 years later than Papias, is mostly interested in depicting a strong apostolic authority for the four gospel-writings, including Mark, and hereby reflects how the gospel-writings are received in the early fourth century.

[24] 'Literature' and 'literacy' can to a certain degree be understood synonymously; cf. S. Greenblatt, *Was ist Literaturgeschichte? Mit einem Kommentar von C. Belsey. Aus dem Englischen von R. Kaiser/B. Neumann* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000), 19 with reference to R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 151.

[25] Cf. also Marcion, who names his redaction of Luke as 'gospel'; e.g., Tertullian, *Marc* 4.2.

[26] Cf. E.-M. Becker, "Antike Textsammlungen in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion: Eine Darstellung aus neutestamentlicher Sicht," in *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion: Kanonisierungsprozesse religiöser Texte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart – Ein Handbuch* (ed. E.-M. Becker/S. Scholz; Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 3–31.

[27] Cf. T. K. Heckel, *Vom Evangelium des Markus zum viergestaltigen Evangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 30. Heckel distinguishes between a "Vierevangeliensammlung," that was shaped first, and a "Vierevangelienkanon" – only regarding the latter can a positive and a negative concept of canon be used.

[28] Cf., e.g., H. Freiherr von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968/Nachdr. 2003), 201–2.

to revision,"[29] and that textual inconsistency and literary diversity are interrelated. By being aware of the multiplicity of textual versions, we thus get in touch with the literary dynamics by which the Markan Gospel as a narrative concept was received and transmitted: from early on "Mark" was obviously less important as a stabile text meeting certain social needs than as a literary "source" (cf. Luke) or *Vorlage* (cf. Matthew)[30] – in any case, as a *literary concept* that could be continued as well as improved. From here we can better understand how various textual as well as literary versions or re-writings of "Mark" came into being.[31] Considering the number of different literary versions of Mark and the simultaneous rise of apocryphal gospel-writings in the second century C. E. we should then conclude that literacy during this period of time widely stimulated creativity and multiplicity in the field of narrative prose.[32]

In what follows, I will try to explain by means of *genre studies* (s. 2.) how the first *ca.* 100 years of Mark's reception history might have looked and what we can deduce from this for the early history of Christian literature: it will become evident then that it was the Matthean attempt of incorporating Mark, rather than suppressing Mark (s. 2.1.), that initiated further literary creativeness by which other gospel writings – the so-called "apocryphal gospels" – appeared on the scene (s. 2.2.). In the end, we can understand the gospel-writing best as a literary concept that implies the shape of literary plurality in early Christian narrative literature (s. 3.). Accordingly, the Markan Gospel could also hereby assert its position in the long run.

2. Genre Studies (Gattungsgeschichte)

Let us begin with some remarks on definition. It is *genre studies (Gattungsgeschichte)*[33] that – as a field of *literary history* (*Literaturgeschichte*)[34] – can give us relevant

[29] Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 125 f.

[30] We need to take into account here and later that Matthew and Luke vary technically, i.e. heuristically in their usage of Mark: while Luke considers Mark to be a historical source in that it is a preliminary narrative attempt of which he can make use, Matthew obviously understands Mark as a *Vorlage* in that he incorporates most of Mark in a material sense.

[31] In this regard we have to discuss critically Martin Dibelius' idea concerning early Christian literary history: he thought that "literaricity leads to deadness" ("Buchwerdung bedeutet hier … Erstarrung des Lebendigen"); Dibelius, *Geschichte*, 48.

[32] Orality rather tends to oblige memorization; cf., e.g., A. Kirk and T. Thatcher, eds., *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005). Cf. E.-M. Becker, "Literarisierung und Kanonisierung im frühen Christentum: Einführende Überlegungen zur Entstehung und Bedeutung des neutestamentlichen Kanons," in *Kanon in Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion*, 389–97.

[33] Terminology and methodology can rarely be translated into other languages and transferred to corresponding academic spheres with satisfaction: there hardly exists an equivalent term to *Gattungsgeschichte* in the Anglo-American exegesis (for *Gattungsgeschichte,* cf., e.g., K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," in *ANRW* II.25.2 [1984]: 1031–1432 and 1831–85; A. Wagner et al., "Gattung[en]," in *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik: Begriffe – Metho-*