

# Mark's longer ending

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Among the theories as to how the Gospel of Mark ended is the proposal that a final page was lost early in its transmission. This article presents evidence to support that theory. Matthew appears to follow Mark closely until 16:8 when our authentic Mark ends abruptly. We may expect him to do so if he has access to Mark's longer ending. Utilizing C. H. Turner's article on Marcan usage, we explore several peculiarities of Mark's style that appear in Matthew 28:9-20. These indicate that Matthew followed Mark as he re-shaped the gospel in his own way, but distinctive traces of Mark survived.

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Like the gospel of Mark itself, there appears to be no end in sight to the discussion of how the book ended.<sup>1</sup> Many contemporary scholars have been attracted to the view that Mark intended to end his gospel at 16.8 with the words ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ.<sup>2</sup>

One modern scholar, W. Farmer, defends the originality of the traditional longer ending, 16.9-20. He insists that Mark is an abbreviated compilation of Matthew and Luke.<sup>3</sup> A shorter ending, found in the Old Latin codex Bezae Cantabrigiae (it<sup>k</sup>) has not commended itself to contemporary scholars.<sup>4</sup>

One other suggestion has been proposed in recent years. A number of scholars contend that Mark did not end his gospel at 16.8, but that the original ending was lost very early in the transmission history of the

<sup>1</sup> For an extensive recent bibliography see Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20, WBC* 34b (Waco: Word, 2001) 540- 551. A thorough account of Marcan "endings" is found in D.C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 124-147.

<sup>2</sup> For a recent impressive discussion that adopts this view, see Elizabeth E. Shively, "Recognizing Penguins: Audience, Expectation, Cognitive Genre Theory: Audience, Expyec-tation, Cognitive Genre Theory, and the ending of Mark's Gospel." *CBQ* 80 (2018) 273-292

<sup>3</sup> W. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (SNTSMS 25; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)

<sup>4</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994) 102-107. Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration*, Fourth Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 322-327.

book.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, James Edwards argues that Mark originally ended more or less like Matthew 28.<sup>6</sup> This view had already been proposed by R.H. Gundry, and still earlier by Stephen Neill,<sup>7</sup> and has been adopted by a number of scholars including N.T. Wright. Wright notes, "Since (on the mainstream view of synoptic relations) Matthew has been following Mark reasonably closely up to this point, especially in developing 28.5b-8a out of Mark 16.6-8a it is not impossible that he continued to do so, and that we have in Matthew 28.9-20 an outline at least of what Mark 16 might have gone on to say."<sup>8</sup>

Edwards takes the theory that Matthew employed Mark before the ending was lost a step further. He comments: "Two things Mark has led us to expect in a resurrection narrative – an appearance of Jesus to the disciples in Galilee and a transferal of his authority to the disciples – constitutes the essence of Matthew's ending in 28.9-10 and 16-20. Those seven verses have as good a claim as any to being the substance of Mark's original ending."<sup>9</sup>

The purpose of this article is to follow up Edwards' observations and to explore the presence of features peculiar to Mark in Matthew 28.9-20. The style of Mark has been much studied in the past century, and on the theory that Matthew used Mark in his ending as well as throughout his gospel, we may reasonably expect to find Marcan stylistic features in this section, as we do in the rest of the first gospel. The Marcan stylistic features were subjected to special study by C.H. Turner in a series of articles in the *Journal of Theological Studies* in the 1920's, and these studies have been reprinted, in a volume edited by J.K. Elliott.<sup>10</sup> Turner's studies will provide the basis for an investigation which produces some intriguing results:

One of the most distinctive features of Marcan style is his constant use of the preposition *into* (εἰς) where the preposition *in* (ἐν) is expected. The

<sup>5</sup> N. Clayton Croy, *The Mutilation of Mark's Gospel* (Nashville: Abington, 2003) argues that both the ending and the beginning pages of Mark were lost from a very early codex. F.J.A. Hort had suggested that the Gospel of Mark may have lost its last leaf, Brook Fosse Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek, Introduction, Appendix, Notes on Select Readings*. (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1882) 47.

<sup>6</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 503.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew, A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 591. Stephen Neill, *Jesus Through Many Eyes*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 77.

<sup>8</sup> N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 624.

<sup>9</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 504.

<sup>10</sup> J.K. Elliott, *Language and Style in the Gospel of Mark*. An edition of C.H. Turner's "Notes on Marcan Usage" together with other comparable studies, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* 71 (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

two prepositions are practically interchangeable in Mark. C.H. Turner's study of this peculiar feature of Marcan usage reveals the tendency of the other two evangelists to eliminate this vulgarism from Mark.<sup>11</sup> Especially Matthew found this Marcan mannerism irritating, and he retains it only once (Mark 6.8) out of twenty-one occurrences in Mark. More recently Nigel Turner studied the style of St. Mark and pointed out that the second evangelist overworked certain words, with εἰς carrying a very heavy load: baptize *in*, descend *upon*, preach *to*, sit *on*, beat *in* the synagogue, be *at* home or *in* the field, speak *in* the village, become *into* one flesh, spread *on* the road, blaspheme *against*.<sup>12</sup> In some of these instances the idea of motion may be present, and it may not simply be the case of confusion between εἰς and ἐν. J.J. O'Rourke also argued that the confusion of εἰς with ἐν is invoked too readily in the exegesis of Mark.<sup>13</sup> Neither study makes reference to C.H. Turner's analysis of εἰς and ἐν. This is not a stylistic feature Matthew would use himself, and he normally avoids it when taking over Mark, who favors the idiom. Matthew 28.19 reads, *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name* (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) *of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Could it be that we have here a second instance (cf. Mark 6.8) where Matthew has let the Marcan stylistic feature stand?*<sup>14</sup> If so, it tells a tale of origins.

Another stylistic feature in Matthew 28 that deserves our attention is the reference to Jesus' disciples. Three times the disciples are called *his disciples* (οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ verses 7, 8 and 13), while once they are called *the eleven disciples* (28.16, Οἱ δὲ ἑνδεκά μαθηταὶ). C.H. Turner's study of the terms used for Jesus' disciples is instructive. He wrote in his 1925 study:

Originally, when 'disciples' collected first round Jesus of Nazareth, his were not the only disciples. There were 'disciples of John,' there were 'disciples of the pharisees' ...and therefore the followers of Jesus in his ministry were not 'the disciples,' but 'his disciples,' not οἱ μαθηταὶ but οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> C.H. Turner, "Notes on Marcan Usage, III" *JTS* 26 (1924-5) 14-20. J.K. Elliott, *Language and Style*, 16-22.

<sup>12</sup> N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, (James H. Moulton, ed.) vol. IV *Style* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1976) 28.

<sup>13</sup> J.J. O'Rourke, "Critical Notes: a note concerning the use of εἰς and ἐν in Mark," *JBL* 85 (1966) 349-51.

<sup>14</sup> We also note 1 Peter 5.12, ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ: εἰς ἣν στήτε. A literal translation would be, *This is the true grace of God, stand fast into it*. Given a growing respect for the *logion* of Papias,

Eusebius, *HE* III.39.1, it may not be out of place to point out the occurrence of this stylistic peculiarity here. See R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 12-15.

<sup>15</sup> *JTS* 26 (1925) 235-237. J.K. Elliott, *Language and Style*, 47.

Mark writes οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ some thirty-two times out of forty. Luke uses αὐτοῦ in following Mark more often than Matthew when following Mark. Matthew, showing greater divergence from Mark, uses οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ consistently only until

13.10. Most occurrences in the second half of Matthew are without αὐτοῦ, although the longer form does occur throughout the first gospel. Turner concludes:

At one end of the evangelistic tradition, St Mark's gospel distinguishes itself by its close adherence to the archaic phrase; at the other, St. Matthew is the only gospel where οἱ μαθηταὶ without αὐτοῦ becomes predominant, especially in the nominative.<sup>16</sup>

It isto be noted that the reference to *his disciples* is not as much an exclusively Marcan feature as Turner would lead us to believe. He notes that the longer form, with αὐτοῦ, occurs throughout Matthew. It is significant, however, that it occurs in Matthew nine times where there is no parallel in Mark (5.1, 8.23, 9.37, 11.2, 12.49, 13.36, 15.23, 26.1, 27.64 (Σ B omit αὐτοῦ) and at three points Matthew reads οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ where Mark does not (10.1, 16.21, 23.1). This may be the case as well at Matthew 15.32, where the parallel, Mark 8.1 is textually uncertain (+αὐτοῦ AB etc). So the recurrence of the archaic phrase may also point to a Marcan source for Matthew 28:9-20, but it is not as clear cut as in the case of εἰς and ἐν.

But there is more evidence to consider on the matter. At Matthew 28.9 a number of manuscripts include the phrase *and as they went to tell his disciples* (A C L al.). The words ἀπαγγεῖλαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ are a duplication of the words found in verse 8. Modern editors have judged these words to be an addition to the text of Matthew, citing "their absence from the earliest and best representatives of both early types of text (the Alexandrian and the Western)."<sup>17</sup> The UBS committee considered the possibility that the words fell out of the text due to similar line ending, but were confident that the additional phrase was not original with Matthew. However, the possibility of omission ought to be given more serious consideration. The similar lines have a total of 27 letters in common, and it was characteristic of scribes to have carelessly eliminated lines under these circumstances.<sup>18</sup> If in fact the words have fallen out

S21mg : « Comme elles allaient porter la nouvelle à ses disciples, voici... »

<sup>16</sup> JTS 26 (1925) 237. J.K. Elliott, *Language and Style*, 48.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 60.

<sup>18</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 253-254. For an earlier study see A.C. Clark, *The Primitive Text of the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914). More recent studies of the this and other causes of omission in the early papyri conclude that scribes tended to omit more often than to add in copying. J.R.

of the text of Matthew for this reason, we have another instance of the phrase οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ. And if the longer text is original, as I suspect it is, then we may discern a further example of this Marcan feature in Matthew 28.9-20.

There may be still another Marcan stylistic feature in Matthew 28.9-20, depending on our textual decision. One of the most outstanding characteristics of Marcan style is redundancy. In discussing Matthew's style Nigel Turner noted that "Matthew seeks to avoid Mark's repetition and prolixity of expression by some significant omissions."<sup>19</sup>

C.H. Turner, commenting on this feature, noted that both Matthew and Luke "tend to abbreviate at such points, and to retain only one or other of the double phrases." He also adds, "To some extent the scribes of Mark fell under a similar temptation."<sup>20</sup> C.M. Tuckett also conducted a study of Mark's duplicate expressions and concluded that the vast majority of Mark's pleonasms must be due to Mark's own style.<sup>21</sup> If we accept the possibility that the duplicate reading of Matthew 28.9 dropped out of the text due to *homoeoteleuton* (a similar ending of lines), then we have here a further example of Marcan style in the Matthean narrative.

Another notable feature of Mark's style is his persistent use of the particle ὅτι (that) after words of saying (λέγων etc.) followed by direct speech. C.H. Turner noted that in about 40 instances where it occurs in Mark, Matthew and Luke regularly eliminate this "superfluous ὅτι."<sup>22</sup> Matthew eliminates all but three of Mark's instances of this form (retaining one in ten) and these are at the end of his gospel (14.71, 14.72, 16.7). It seems that Matthew tires of correcting Mark's mannerism toward the end of his gospel, and allows these instances to stand. In this connection we note Matthew 28.13, λέγοντες, Εἶπατε ὅτι Οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες... (*Telling them, "You must say, 'his disciples came by night...'*).

Royse, *Scribal Habits in the Early Greek New Testament Papyri* NTTS 36 601-602 (Leiden: Brill, 2008). P.M.Head, "Some Observations on Early Papyri of the Synoptic Gospels, Especially Concerning 'Scribal Habits'" *Bib* 71(1990) 240-247. P.M. Head, "The Habits of New Testament Copyists: Singular Readings in the Early Fragmentary Papyri of John," *Bib* 85 (2004) 399-408.

<sup>19</sup> N.Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, IV, *Style*, 39. For a full list of Mark's redundancies see W.C. Allen, *The Gospel According to Mark* (New York, Macmillan, 1915) 12-14. and the full-length monograph by F. Neyrinck, *Duality in Mark, Contributions to the Study of Marcan Redaction* BETL XXXI (Leuven, Leuven University Press, rev.edn. 1988).

<sup>20</sup> C.H. Turner, *Saint Mark*, (London: SPCK, 1930) 16.

<sup>21</sup> C.M. Tuckett, *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 21.

<sup>22</sup> C. H. Turner, "Notes on Marcan Usage," *JTS* 28 (1927) 9-15. J.K. Elliott, *Language and Style*, 68-74.

Here, then is another feature of Mark's style found in Matthew's gospel at a point beyond which we have an extant text in Mark.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to these Marcan stylistic traits found in Matthew 28.9-20, we observe a literary technique that is distinctive to Mark. This is the so-called Marcan "sandwich technique."<sup>24</sup> Mark frequently interrupts a story or pericope by inserting a second story into it. The second story seems unrelated. James Edwards argues that each sandwich consists of an A<sup>1</sup>-B<sup>1</sup>-A<sup>2</sup> sequence with the B component functioning as the theological key to the flanking halves.<sup>25</sup> Edwards lists the following passages that exhibit this literary technique: 3.20-35; 4.1-20; 5.21-43; 6.7-30; 11.12-21; 14.1-11; 14.17-31; 14.53-72; 15.40-16:8. Matthew follows Mark on a number of occasions, reshaping the material to his own purposes. What is striking, however, is that in Matthew 28.9-20 we find another sandwich of the Marcan type. Verses 8-10 narrate the appearance of Jesus to the disciples, and the command to go to Galilee, where they will see him. The story is then interrupted by a second story about the bribing of the guards in verses 11-15. Verses 16-20 then resume the earlier story of the meeting in Galilee, and Jesus' commission and promise. This appears to be a literary structure which Matthew has taken over from Mark.

The reading at Mark 16.8 ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ (*for they were afraid*) is generally accepted as the ending of the authentic Mark. But it may not be the authentic ending of Mark. If the ending was lost from the roll or codex of either the autograph or earliest copy, then it appears that the loss did not occur before Matthew made use of Mark, who has left traces of his distinctive style on the Matthean narrative.

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, Codex Sinaiticus has the singular reading ὅτι εἶπατε.

<sup>24</sup> J.R. Edwards, "Marcan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Marcan Narratives," *NovT* 31 (1989): 193-216.

<sup>25</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 11-12.