

**Mark and Paul**

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Edited by  
James D. G. Dunn, Carl R. Holladay,  
Matthias Konradt, Hermann Lichtenberger,  
Jens Schröter and Gregory E. Sterling

## **Volume 199**

# Mark and Paul

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Comparative Essays Part II  
For and Against Pauline Influence on Mark

Edited by  
Eve-Marie Becker, Troels Engberg-Pedersen  
and Mogens Müller

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## Preface

This volume aims to take up and continue the scholarly discussion of the relationship between Mark and Paul that has recently become a “hot topic” in New Testament exegesis: was the evangelist directly influenced – in spite of writing in a completely different literary genre – by Paul, the writer of letters? Or should we rather refer any similarities to the fact that both belonged to and articulated the broader traditions of what we might best call “earliest Christianity”?

This is the set of questions that was put on the agenda when the two New Testament departments at Denmark’s universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen decided to engage in a joint research venture a few years ago. We organized our work around two conferences. In September 2010, the Danish participants in the project met in Aarhus for a two-day session where we presented first drafts of papers on the topic. During these two days we also discussed how the joint research project might be continued in and beyond the Danish universities.

In August 2011 we met again, this time in Copenhagen and this time with a number of international participants as presenters of papers and/or respondents: John Barclay (Durham, UK), Ismo Dunderberg (Helsinki), Elizabeth Struthers Malbon (Virginia Tech), Joel Marcus (Duke), Margaret Mitchell (Chicago), Gerd Theissen (Heidelberg) and Oda Wischmeyer (Erlangen). Since then the various papers offered by both New Testament scholars teaching in Denmark and the global experts have been carefully revised for publication in the present volume.

At the same time, on the initiative of Oda Wischmeyer this volume was related to a publication project on “Paul and Mark: Two Authors at the Beginnings of Christianity” (BZNW 198), so that it now forms part two of a shared publishing venture. It is our hope that the appearance of these two volumes will help to place the question of the Paul/Mark and Mark/Paul relationship on a new scholarly level.

We cannot end this preface without commemorating a much-missed contributor, Anne Vig Skoven. Vig Skoven began to study theology after a rich and varied career, eventually becoming, until her much-too-early death in spring 2013, a PhD student at the University of Copenhagen in a research project devoted to the Mark/Paul project. All who knew her remember her as a stimulating, insightful and kind person, someone whom we deeply miss. We are sad that she could not see the final result of the shared project in which she showed such a keen interest.

It remains to thank the editorial board of BZNW for accepting our project for publication in this series, and especially Dr. Albrecht Dönnert, Dr. Sabine Krämer and Sophie Wagenhofer for their cooperation, patience and support during the process of publication. We also thank Aarhus University, the University of Co-

penhagen and the Danish Research Council for the Humanities (FKK) for financial support for our meetings in Aarhus and Copenhagen and for the publication of the volume. We thank stud. theol. Anna Bank Jeppesen (Aarhus) for producing the indices.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all contributors and respondents – in Denmark, as well as colleagues from abroad – for their work together in moving into the centre of the New Testament, where we find Paul and Mark. If we definitely knew how these two authors are related, we would finally have unraveled how the Jesus tradition, the Christian kerygma and Hellenistic literacy met and set the agenda for the written “gospel proclamation” in and beyond the first century CE.

Eve-Marie Becker, Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Mogens Müller  
Aarhus and Copenhagen, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013

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Eve-Marie Becker, Troels Engberg-Pedersen and  
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## Mark and Paul – Introductory Remarks

In Paul and Mark we meet *the* two basic figures in earliest Christian theology and literature. In principle, we might consider both authors and theologians more or less independently from one another. In so doing, we might soon agree on stating that the impact of Paul's letter-writing activity cannot be underestimated – neither in a theological nor in a literary sense<sup>1</sup> – and the same is also true for 'Mark', the initiator if not the actual inventor of the narrative genre. In separating Paul and Mark, we might relate these two authors and theologians to different generations within earliest Christianity and qualify their writings differently in terms of genre – as being either epistolary or narrative in nature. However, the question would remain to what extent Paul and Mark also share common materials – Jesus traditions like the *paradosis* concerning the last supper (1 Cor 11:23–26; Mark 14:22–25) or kerygmatic formulas (1 Cor 15:3b-5; Mark 8:31) – and how and why they do so. In other words, the quest for a theological and literary interrelation or dependency will not be long in emerging.

On second thought, therefore, the need to consider Paul and Mark comparatively imposes itself. There are various ways of doing so. First, we may discuss on the level of tradition history how Paul might have had access to a number of Jesus traditions which we also know from the Synoptic tradition – and thus from Mark.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, in connection with Ferdinand Christian Baur's interest in differentiating the various theological movements in earliest Christianity by profiling a basically Pauline and an anti-Pauline group, we might read the Markan Gospel as a response to Paulinism in the last third of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, we might consider comparatively central lexemes, syntagms, propositions and

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1 Cf. most recently: F. W. Horn (ed.), *Paulus Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); *Paulus – Werk und Wirkung. FS für A. Lindemann zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. P.-G. Klumbies et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

2 Cf., e.g. recently: J. Schröter, "Das Verhältnis zum irdischen Jesus und zur Jesusüberlieferung." In F. W. Horn (ed.), *Paulus Handbuch*, 279–285; E.-M. Becker, "2 Corinthians 3:14, 18 as Pauline Allusions to a Narrative Jesus Tradition." In "What Does the Scripture Say?": *Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, LNTS 470, eds. C. A. Evans and H. D. Zacharias (London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2012), 121–133.

3 Cf. in general: J. Wischmeyer, "Paul and Mark in Nineteenth Century Scholarship." In *Paul and Mark: Two Authors at the Beginnings of Christianity*, BZNW 198, eds. O. Wischmeyer, D. Sim, I. Elmer (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014) (forthcoming).

theologumena (such as εὐαγγέλιον or πίστις etc.)<sup>4</sup> or narrative patterns in Paul and Mark and discuss in what sense and to what extent the Markan Gospel might be seen as a theological and/or literary successor of Paul – or whether what they share was simply property common to all in earliest Christian times. Finally, we might directly take Mark and his gospel narrative as our point of departure and analyze how far the earliest gospel writer might have had access to Pauline traditions, or even to the Pauline letters themselves.

But even if we try to sharpen our approach and our methodological instruments, we may still expect the Paul and Mark/Mark and Paul relationship to be quite complex and to elude any simple solution. This means that in this field, where we can only work with historical and literary hypotheses, focus on the task of comparison becomes particularly important.<sup>5</sup> It is against this background that the Paul and Mark/Mark and Paul project – now brought together in two BZNW volumes – has its special profile.

The contributions in *Paul and Mark* (BZNW 198) serve the purpose of giving a comprehensive overview of the historical, literary and theological track that might lead from Paul to Mark. Here, the history of research on the question is recalled from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards and historical issues such as the connection of both authors to Rome are addressed. In addition, various theological concepts, narrative shapings and cultural issues are discussed in comparative form. A fourth section in the first volume points to the interrelation of Paul and Mark in reception history up to Papias' time.<sup>6</sup>

The contributions in *the present* volume, *Mark and Paul*, to some extent continue this debate, but several of them also suggest a change in perspective by focusing on one or the other of the two specific queries or approaches that were adopted at the two conferences underpinning the volume. The first query specifically addresses the issue of genre and asks how an apostolic letter and a gospel narrative might be compared. Are Paul's and Mark's theologies and ways of thinking confined by the needs of the literary genre they are using? Or – the other way round – is their use of literary genre dependent on their theological concepts? Or, finally, are there ways of overcoming the genre differences

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<sup>4</sup> See the various contributions in: *Paul and Mark* (see n. 3).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. on similar projects: *Mark and Matthew, Comparative Readings I: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings*, WUNT 271, eds. E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); *Mark and Matthew II, Comparative Readings: Reception History, Cultural Hermeneutics, and Theology*, WUNT 304, eds. E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. more extensively: O. Wischmeyer's introduction, in: *Paul and Mark* (see n. 3).

without playing them down? How far does the ‘letter-gospel-divide’ illuminate these two theological and literary profiles in earliest Christianity?

The second query specifically takes Mark and his gospel narrative as its point of departure and asks, from a reception perspective, what kind of evidence we find for or against a Pauline influence on Mark if we, as it were, start out from Mark. A third query that was also constantly present at the two conferences is the methodological question that was raised, in the history of scholarship, by Martin Werner in his 1923 reaction to Gustav Volkmar’s nineteenth-century interpretation and again more recently by Joel Marcus in reaction to Werner. Marcus’ essay is reprinted in this volume in an extended version, and is referred to numerous times in the other essays of the volume.

All three questions – of genre, reception and previous scholarship – are variously addressed in the essays throughout the volume, though with different emphases. The volume is organized in three sections, reflecting on the three approaches from partly historical, partly exegetical and partly conceptual perspectives.

*The first section* is entitled “Histories and Contexts” and leads back to the beginnings of the current Mark/Paul debate. At the same time, it reflects upon how we may define the crucial literary and social contexts in which both authors should be placed. This section to some extent continues the approach of the first volume. It begins with an essay by *Anne Vig Skoven* on “Mark as Allegorical Rewriting of Paul: Gustav Volkmar’s Understanding of the Gospel of Mark”. Here the reader is brought back to the founding work on the Paul/Mark relationship that set the scene for the following 150 years of scholarly discussion – to the extent that this issue was discussed at all after Martin Werner’s frontal attack on Volkmar’s thesis in 1923. Vig Skoven’s essay serves the purpose of describing what Volkmar actually said and meant, and she copiously quotes from Volkmar himself in a manner that considerably deepens the picture of Volkmar’s ideas in comparison with how they have been received. In a brief account of Werner’s reaction to Volkmar, Vig Skoven perceptively suggests that his rejection of Volkmar was so influential not so much because of the quality of his individual arguments as because of the rise of form criticism, which sidetracked the line of inquiry that Volkmar had initiated. Vig Skoven ends by noting a number of features where Volkmar in fact anticipated much later developments in biblical scholarship. She concludes by suggesting that rather than trying to prove, against Werner, that Mark is a Pauline gospel, it might be better to ask, more modestly, whether Paul can shed light on certain Markan phenomena which continue to puzzle New Testament exegetes.

In his seminal essay, “Mark – Interpreter of Paul”, *Joel Marcus* brought the Mark/Paul debate to scholarly attention once again. In constant dialogue with

Werner, he lists a number of topics where Mark agrees with Paul more than any other New Testament writer. Both place emphasis on the εὐαγγέλιον as a central aspect of their theology. Both see Jesus' crucifixion as the apocalyptic turning-point of the ages. Both celebrate Jesus' victory over demonic powers. Both see Jesus as a new Adam. Both emphasize the importance of faith in Jesus. Both have negative things to say about Peter and about members of Jesus' family. Both claim that Jesus came, not for the righteous, but for ungodly sinners, on whose behalf he died an atoning death, and that he came for the Jews first, but also for the Gentiles. And more. The same convergence is then found in their treatment of the topic on which Marcus spends most of his time, namely, the idea of the cross. Against Werner, Marcus also advances the argument that a 'Paulinist' need not take over everything in Paul – as we already know from Colossians and Ephesians and from the Pastoral letters. For the present publication Marcus has developed his 'Pauline' understanding of Mark 7 in a careful discussion of Daniel Boyarin's recent proposal, which finds a much more Jewish Mark here.

*Heike Omerzu*, in "Paul and Mark – Mark and Paul. A critical outline of the history of research", covers some of the same ground as Marcus, but adds to his discussion in two respects. First, she goes into slightly more detail about work done on the issue since Werner, even including some treatments that have appeared since Marcus' essay was first printed. Secondly, she raises some critical questions that come out of this whole scholarly discussion. The most important of these is probably the need for clarification of the contentious notion of 'Paulinism', 'Pauline thought' and 'Pauline theology', an issue that has recently been much debated both within Pauline studies themselves and also in relation to the supposed 'Paulinism' of the Acts of the Apostles. Towards the end of her essay, Omerzu points to a renewed focus on "the actual textual relations between Paul and Mark" as a possible way forward "instead of recovering assumed pre-Markan and pre-Pauline material in the context of tradition-historical studies". But she also rightly notes the risk one thereby runs of constructing an authoritative image of Paul that does not fit the historical situation in antiquity itself.

In his wide-ranging essay, "'Evangelium' im Markusevangelium. Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Ort des ältesten Evangeliums", *Gerd Theissen* begins from a careful analysis of the meaning and use of the term εὐαγγέλιον in Paul and Mark. He shows that the two authors are closer to one another than to any other New Testament writers in their handling of the concept. And he develops the political content of this notion, which combines input both from the Old Testament and from Hellenistic royal rhetoric and which is shared by both authors. Going carefully through all occurrences of the term in Mark (1:1, 1:14–15, 8:35, 10:29, 13:10, 14:9), Theissen also shows how Mark continues to develop an initial-

ly ‘Pauline’ use of the term that Mark has presented first, thereby enlarging and changing it for his own purposes. Theissen argues that Mark’s knowledge of Paul goes back to the Antiochene period, and he situates Mark in the context of Syrian Christianity, to which Paul and Peter, Barnabas and Mark all at one time belonged. Theissen supports this view by noting (among other things) that *all* statements about the historical Jesus made by Paul in his letters are supported by Mark. Theissen still sees Mark as articulating an ‘intermediary’ position in the understanding of Jesus, one which rather goes back to Peter and Barnabas. Mark does know (early) Paul; but while not being a direct spokesman for Peter, he rather represents the Antiochene position in early Christianity that we should connect with Peter and Barnabas.

Following on from these discussions of the state of the art and its origins, Eve-Marie Becker and Mogens Müller refer to two further kinds of ‘histories’ that need to be taken into consideration in investigation of the Paul/Mark and Mark/Paul debate: the literary-historical setting of both authors in the Hellenistic-Roman period, and the quest for the ‘Sitz im Leben’ within congregational life. Becker and Müller end, however, by suggesting two different perspectives.

In “Earliest Christian *literary activity*: Investigating Authors, Genres and Audiences in Paul and Mark”, Eve-Marie Becker aims to contextualize Paul and Mark within the broader framework of Hellenistic literary culture in the early Principate. Becker specifically looks for a “‘Pauline’ and... ‘Markan’ cluster of *literary activity*” in order to envisage what “the earliest processes of literary production among Christ believers between ca. 50 and 70 CE” might have looked like. By referring to the phenomenon of *recitatio* she underlines that in antiquity author, audience and genre were inseparably interrelated so that the quest for the author immediately implies observations about genre as well as audience, and *vice versa*. On the basis of her provisional conclusion that “literary *genres* are nothing less than a communicative link between author and *audience*”, Becker next examines Paul’s epistolography and Mark’s gospel-writing comparatively. Finally she makes the following claims regarding their different literary concepts: “it is mainly the divergence of literary activity behind Paul and Mark – implying different kinds of literary authority as well as the shift in audience and genre expectation – that stimulates conceptual differences; either epistolary or pre-historiographical literature points to a diversification of literary milieu(s), already in earliest Christian times”. This conclusion makes evident that the Paul/Mark and Mark/Paul debate sheds light on the very beginnings of Christian literary history.

In his programmatic essay, “In the Beginning Was the Congregation: In Search of a *Tertium Comparationis* between Paul and Mark”, Mogens Müller focuses the understanding of the two very different literary genres of the apostolic

letter and the evangelist's gospel onto a single point which Müller locates in the use of both genres in the communal life of the earliest Christian congregations. For: "In the beginning was the congregation." Setting out from Paul, Müller stresses the role of the paraenetic passages in the letters, claiming that when Paul relates what is basic in Christianity, it is the new conduct of life which is emphasized as what counts. He also shows how central theologoumena – like that of a 'New Covenant', of the role of the Spirit, of baptism and other motifs with their roots in the Old Testament – are picked up by Paul to support the new life of the congregation. Next Müller turns to Mark, in whom he finds an attempt to produce 'Scripture' along the lines of the Old Testament, but again for direct and immediate use in congregational service, possibly in the form of a 'lectio sollemnis im Gottesdienst'. Here, too, Müller finds an emphasis on the implicit paraenetic implications of the Jesus story. Müller ends up suggesting that the shift from the letter form of Paul to the narrative gospel form of Mark had a kind of *tertium comparationis* in the change in the reader's consciousness that both aimed to create, a change that may be summarized under the heading of a "new creation (καινὴ κτίσις)".

In the second section – "Texts and Interpretations" – the Mark/Paul debate is approached through examples of concrete, comparative textual interpretation that take their point of departure from Mark in accordance with the overall profile of the volume. In this way, central passages in the Markan Gospel, such as the *initium* and parts of the so-called controversy stories in Mark 2–3, as well as sections in Mark 7 and 8, are related to equivalent passages in Paul in order to discuss the affinity or diversity of the Markan and Pauline ideas.

In her essay on "Romans 1:1–7 and Mark 1:1–3 in Comparison: Two Opening Texts at the Beginning of Early Christian Literature", Oda Wischmeyer points to an affinity between the two texts that exceeds any simple quest-for-genre debate. After stating that "Romans 1 and Mark 1... can be regarded... as important theological statements at the outset of early Christian literature", Wischmeyer undertakes exegetical analysis from various perspectives including, first, describing the textual dimension of both texts comparatively. In a second and third step she focuses on the 'literary dimension', addressing genre-criticism as well as the socio-religious setting and function of both texts. Finally, Wischmeyer analyses how Paul and Mark make similar use of biblical quotations and references, and how the term εὐαγγέλιον in a specific sense appears to be a 'key term' behind the literary conceptualization of both opening texts. It is particularly here that Wischmeyer not only develops Becker's comparative view on earliest Christian literary activity, but also qualifies that picture: Paul and Mark, she writes, "introduced a literature of their own for the early Christian communities. The overall purpose was not to establish a 'Christian' literary culture, but to better

communicate the εὐαγγέλιον". For Wischmeyer, the "configuration as the two-fold 'origin' of Christian literature and theological culture" in Paul and Mark will also reveal important insights into "the question of early Christian *identity*".

In his essay, "Man and the Son of Man in Mark 2:27–28: An Exegesis of Mark 2:23–28 Focussing on the Christological Discourse in Mark 2:27–28 With an Epilogue Concerning Pauline Parallels", *Jan Dochhorn* argues for a pre-Markan source behind Mark 2 as a whole, and then detects a 'high' Christology in Mark 2:27–28 that has its roots long before Mark. This high Christology is both a 'Son of Man Christology' and a 'New Adam Christology'. The fact that this type of Christology may also be found in Romans 1 and Hebrews 1:1–2:9 does not reflect any direct influence from Paul on Mark. Rather, as Dochhorn claims, we have good reason to assume that many basic Christological concepts were generated quite early on, including Christological claims that even ascribe to Jesus the position of God. It is true that Mark and Paul may be found to have many special elements in common, but Dochhorn points to something more general: that Mark and Paul share Christological ideas because they are witnesses to Early Christian theology that precedes them both. What they have in common may simply be very old.

*Kasper Bro Larsen*, in "Mark 7:1–23: A Pauline Halakah?", goes through a text in Mark that might seem an obvious candidate for tracing direct Pauline influence on Mark. Starting from Werner's and Marcus' opposing positions on Mark's 'Paulinism', Bro Larsen ends up suggesting that his chosen Markan text points toward a *via media* between the two scholars as the most reasonable path to tread. Thus the pericope of Mark 7:1–23 is neither 'ecumenical' (Werner) nor necessarily Pauline (Marcus): it legitimizes the dietary practices of Gentile Christ believers – whether Pauline or not – by means of the Jesus tradition. Bro Larsen concludes that while this result may appear disappointing to scholars in a search of Pauline-Markan connections, it is as far as one may go on the basis only of Mark 7:1–23. Still, as a test case the analysis of Mark 7:1–23 cannot stand alone but must be compared with other test cases in order to construct a full scenario both in terms of quantity (i.e. the number of parallels) and quality (i.e. the specificity of any supposed parallels). Thus the search must go on, until "the next Werner" will pick up his battered gauntlet and present an up-to-date synthesis.

*Troels Engberg-Pedersen*, in "Paul in Mark 8:34–9:1: Mark on what it is to be a Christian", belongs to those who see a direct influence of Paul on Mark. In a fairly classical, redaction critical analysis of Mark 8:34–9:1 he argues that this passage is tightly constructed by Mark on the basis of 'Q-material' that is found in both Matthew and Luke outside their parallels with the Markan text itself. The changes incorporated by Mark, however, that help to give his text its



tight inner logic are drawn from passages in the Pauline letters that are distinctly Pauline inasmuch as they describe – in Paul’s almost inimitable way – Paul’s own ‘conversion’ to a ‘directedness’ towards Christ that excludes all other concerns. Mark, however – so Engberg-Pedersen claims – does attempt to imitate Paul here. He takes over specific phrases and ideas used by Paul to describe his own ‘conversion’, applies them to all Christ-believers and puts that application into the mouth of the earthly Jesus himself. Engberg-Pedersen’s interpretation is that Mark’s aim was to have his Jesus identify the essence of ‘what it is to be a Christian’. In this, Engberg-Pedersen claims, he was directly helped by Paul.

In the *third and last section* – “Topics and Perspectives” – the volume presents various contributions in which the Mark/Paul affinity is looked at from the point of view of fundamental literary and theological and/or religious concepts such as cosmology, myth, ‘cross’ and apostleship. Again, the contributors do not agree on how closely Mark should be placed in the context of the Pauline tradition. Rather, the purpose of this section is to reflect upon how the Mark/Paul debate appears when seen in the light of a number of broader interpretive constructs.

*Gitte Buch-Hansen*, in “The Politics of Beginnings – Cosmology, Christology and Covenant: Gospel Openings Reconsidered in the Light of Paul’s Pneumatology”, addresses the Christologies with which Paul begins his letter to the Romans and Mark his gospel in the light of the role played by the πνεῦμα (‘spirit’) in Paul’s overall theology and ethics. In an extended discussion of the way Paul handles the issue of ethnicity in relation to the Christ event in Galatians 3, she develops the concrete, quasi-biological sense in which Paul employs the notion of the resurrected Christ as πνεῦμα as a tool through which Gentiles were literally grafted into Judaism and the heritage from Abraham. Turning then to the gospel openings, she shows that the Christology of Mark 1 – particularly as implied in the account of Jesus’ baptism – lies midway between Paul’s literal understanding of Christ as πνεῦμα (which links believers directly with Judaism) and Luke’s Christology in the annunciation scene (which completely separates Jesus’ origin from anything concretely Jewish). Though Mark, by contrast, may well have been inspired in the baptism scene by Paul’s understanding of the πνεῦμα, unlike Paul, he does not describe Jesus as the first-born among others with the πνεῦμα acting as a link between Jesus and believers. Rather, by understanding Jesus as the unique son of God, he moves in the direction of Luke’s Christology. This move shows that Mark has in fact moved away from the central Pauline idea of the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

A different type of overall view of the Mark/Paul relationship is given by Ole Davidsen and Jesper Tang Nielsen. Both situate their analysis in the semiotic and narrative tradition of A. Greimas. Interestingly, however, they reach rather differ-



ent results concerning the Mark and Paul debate. The difference between Tang Nielsen's tentatively positive and Davidsen's more sceptical conclusion concerning the Mark/Paul relationship may be due to a divergent view of narrative structures: while Davidsen focuses on certain fundamental or deep structures, Tang Nielsen has his eye on narrative features that lie more on the literary surface.

In his essay, "Adam-Christ Typology in Paul and Mark: Reflections on a *Ter-tium Comparationis*", Ole Davidsen engages in a discussion with Joel Marcus by articulating a number of different possible relationships between (a) pre-Pauline traditions, (b) Paul and (c) Mark that need to be distinguished before addressing the question whether Mark was "an interpreter of Paul". We may be able to detect 'intertextual relations' between Paul and Mark, but that is no argument for mutual *influence* either way. Rather than looking for similarities in order to detect particular Pauline traits in Mark, we should focus, so Davidsen claims, on similarities in order to detect general features pointing to a shared primal tradition. Davidsen develops this understanding in an analysis of the 'Adam-Christ typology', which he considers to be of paramount importance in Paul, but also implicitly present in Mark. This correspondence, however, should not be taken as a sign of Pauline influence on Mark. Rather, the Adam-Christ typology as an organizing narrative structure points to a pre-Pauline narrative tradition which Mark could well have learned from some other source.

In "The Cross on the Way to Mark", *Jesper Tang Nielsen* reaches a "tentative conclusion" to the effect that Mark does build on and continue Paul's specific interpretation of the earliest traditions about Jesus' death, one which focuses on a special understanding of the meaning of the cross. Searching for distinct narrative structures of the Jesus story – first in the pre-Pauline traditions that may be gathered from Paul himself, then in Paul's own theological elaborations of this material and finally in Mark's rendering of that story – Tang Nielsen identifies a number of specific narrative features in Paul's elaborations that can be found again in Mark. Whereas in the earliest ascertainable material the main focus was much more on Jesus' relationship with God than on its implications for believers, Paul works hard to bring these two aspects together. In this, moreover, Paul developed a set of coherent ideas that were intended to spell out the meaning and wider implications of the notion of Christ's having died on the cross. This special focus, as Tang Nielsen goes on to show in an overall reading of Mark, is also found in the first evangelist.

*Finn Damgaard*, in "Persecution and Denial – Paradigmatic Apostolic Portrayals in Paul and Mark", sees a more direct, literary relationship between Paul and Mark. Damgaard relates Mark's ambiguous portrayal of the apostle Peter to the Pauline letters in an unexpected way. While many scholars like Joel Marcus who argue for Markan dependence on Paul often assume that

Mark's negative portrait of Peter is in some way influenced by Paul's attitude to Peter in the letters, Damgaard suggests that Mark created his ambiguous portrayal of Peter in imitation of Paul's *own* biography of reversal. Paul's autobiographical remarks not only exerted an influence on how later Christians wrote his biography: they had an impact on the way Peter was portrayed in Mark. By imitating Paul's popular biography of reversal, Mark created a paradigmatic portrayal of Peter. In particular, Damgaard suggests that Mark constructed his portrait of the tearful Peter on the basis of Paul's autobiographical remarks in 1 Corinthians.

It will be obvious from this summary of the essays that the contributors do not come to a final agreement on how to answer the question about the Mark/Paul relationship. We do believe, however, that taken together the essays contribute considerably to clarifying the issue, both through explicit methodological reflections and through actual exegetical practice. We also note not only that different methodological approaches in many cases yield different results – but also, and rather more interestingly, that different approaches may in some cases yield closely similar results. This highlights the insight that further progress with regard to the question about the Mark/Paul relationship will have to rely, not on scholars' imaginative powers or on their capacities for reading the texts, but on their achieving the utmost clarity concerning the theoretical and methodological framework with which they as scholars approach the issue.

This volume – like the previous one (BZNW 198) – cannot therefore be understood as the 'last word' on the Paul/Mark and Mark/Paul debate. Further steps still have to be taken. Rather, we consider this collection of essays to be a reminder of a crucial issue in New Testament studies. Indeed, the Paul/Mark and Mark/Paul debate is and will continue to be indispensable. This is true in at least two ways: The Paul/Mark and Mark/Paul debate sheds light simultaneously on the literary and theological roles of the two main authors at the origins of Christianity and on their mutual affinity, closeness and influence. And it reminds us to see an eminent tool of exegetical work more clearly: any hypothetical (re)construction of interrelatedness in theological or literary terms must always reflect the methodological awareness that is part and parcel of a well-founded comparative reading.

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## **I. Histories and Contexts**



Anne Vig Skoven †

# Mark as Allegorical Rewriting of Paul: Gustav Volkmar's Understanding of the Gospel of Mark

“Ganz geschichtlich und ganz Poësie,  
Beides in Einem”  
(Gustav Volkmar, 1857)

## Introduction: The beginning of the Mark/Paul-connection in the scholarly debate

Unlike exegetes of the patristic tradition and also unlike most of 20th century scholarship, biblical scholars of the 19th century were not foreign to the idea that Paulinism was to be found in the Gospel of Mark. The founder of the so-called Tübingen School, Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), for instance, regarded the Gospel of Mark as a synthesis of Petrine and Pauline traditions.<sup>1</sup> Baur argued that Mark was based on Matthew and Luke and composed in the 2nd century. According to the Tübingen School, the Gospel of John was the final synthesis of the antitheses between Jewish Christian orthodoxy and the Pauline spirit – and Mark was one step on that way.

In 1857, the German exegete Gustav Hermann Joseph Philipp Volkmar (1809–93) characterized the Gospel of Mark as a Pauline gospel. Although Mark's story was concerned with Jesus' life and death, it was also, so Volkmar argued, permeated by Pauline theology. During his lifetime, Volkmar remained a solitary figure, and David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874) once considered him a “närriger Kauz”.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th century knowledge of Volkmar's the-

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<sup>1</sup> F. C. Baur, “Das Evangelium des Marcus. “ In *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien, ihr Verhältnis zu einander, ihren Charakter und Ursprung* (Tübingen: Ludw. Fr. Fues Verlag, 1847), 535–67.

<sup>2</sup> In English: a ludicrous little owl. In a letter to Wilhelm Vatke from 1861, Strauss describes Volkmar as ... “ein närriger Kauz, der aber nicht ohne einzelne Lichtblicke ist ... es ist Tollheit, was er vorbringt, doch nicht ohne Methode ... leider ist diese Methode zum Theil die Baur'sche,” quoted from Adolf Jülicher, “Volkmar, Gustav.” In *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band 54, 1908), 764–775 (771).

sis and writings was widespread among German speaking scholars. His thesis drove a wedge into German biblical scholarship; Adolf Jülicher (1857–1938) and William Wrede (1859–1906) both appreciated Volkmar's work, Albert Schweizer (1875–1965) and his student Martin Werner (1887–1964) did not.

Since Gustav Volkmar is rather unknown to contemporary biblical scholarship, I shall here provide a short biography.<sup>3</sup> Volkmar studied theology and philology in Marburg in 1829–32 and obtained his dr. phil. in 1838. From 1833 to 1852, he taught in various *Gymnasien*, in which he primarily worked within the field of philology and classical studies. In 1850 he published a book on Marcion and the Gospel of Luke, in which he claimed against Baur and Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889) that Marcion's gospel was a rewriting of Luke.<sup>4</sup> According to Adolf Jülicher, Volkmar had deserved a chair for this – today widely accepted – thesis. However, a series of dramatic events prevented that. Due to church political controversies, Volkmar was arrested in the classroom in 1852 and charged with lese-majesty and dismissed from his job. In 1853, he was called to Zürich where he was finally appointed professor of New Testament studies in 1863.<sup>5</sup> In Zürich he published the works which are of special relevance to the present study:<sup>6</sup>

- *Die Religion Jesu und ihre erste Entwicklung nach dem gegenwärtigen Stande der Wissenschaft* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1857); a popular work, which introduced Volkmar's thesis of Mark as a Pauline gospel.
- *Die Evangelien, oder Marcus und die Synopsis der kanonischen und ausserkanonischen Evangelien nach dem ältesten Text mit historisch-exegetischem Commentar* (Leipzig: Ludw. Fr. Fues Verlag, 1870); a scholarly commentary on the Gospel of Mark, in which Volkmar, against Baur, forwarded his thesis that Mark was the first gospel, Luke the second and Matthew only the third. The commentary was republished in a slightly edited second edition with a new title in:

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**3** Volkmar's commentary on Mark is, for instance, not included in the otherwise encompassing and impressive bibliography in Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

**4** The title was: *Das Evangelium Marcions: Text und Kritik mit Rücksicht auf die Evangelien des Märtyrers Justin, der Clementinen und der apostolischen Väter; eine Revision der neuern Untersuchungen nach den Quellen selbst zur Textesbestimmung und Erklärung des Lucas-Evangeliums* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1852).

**5** Volkmar was appointed "ausserordentlicher Professor" in Zürich in 1857/58 and "ordentlicher Professor" in 1863.

**6** Volkmar's list of publications also includes works on classical issues (for instance Sophokles' *Antigone*, 1851), heretical Christianities, Jewish apocalyptic writings (for instance on *4 Ezra*, *1 Enoch* and *Assumption of Moses*, 1860–63) and commentaries on *Revelation* (1862) and *Romans* (1875).

- *Marcus und die Synopse der Evangelien nach dem urkundlichen Text und das Geschichtliche vom Leben Jesu* (Zürich: Verlag von Caesar Schmidt, 1876).<sup>7</sup>

In addition to Volkmar's traditional commentaries on the Markan text, the books from 1870/76 offer an early reception history of the Markan narratives. Volkmar traces the stories through nine subsequent gospels or gospel fragments in – what he believes to be – the right chronological order.<sup>8</sup> According to Jülicher, this was a learned, outstanding and original enterprise.<sup>9</sup> However, we must leave this volume from Volkmar's hand aside for the present purpose.

In his biographical sketch of Gustav Volkmar from 1908, Adolf Jülicher characterizes Volkmar as an exegete whose work was framed to the one side by Baur's *Tendenztheorie* and to the other side by Strauss' scepticism (772f). Yet, he differs from both schools on two important issues: historicity and Markan priority. With regard to Strauss, Volkmar welcomes his critique of the rationalistic and harmonizing exegesis of early 19th century scholarship.<sup>10</sup> But he is also critical of Strauss' concept of the gospel narratives as *mythoi*, instead he prefers the term "Poësie". Unlike Strauss Volkmar emphasizes the historicity of the gospel narratives.<sup>11</sup> Yet, his understanding of historicity, as well as his method are clos-

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7 Relevant to our history of research is also *Jesus Nazarenus und die erste christliche Zeit mit den beiden ersten Erzählern* (Zürich: Verlag von Caesar Schmidt, 1882), a popular work, which was the basis of Albert Schweitzer's negative review of Volkmar's thesis, set out in *Von Reimarus bis Wrede* (1906). I thank Professor (MSO) Heike Omerzu for the reference.

8 Volkmar's sequence was *Genealogus Hebraeorum* (80 AD) (The Gospel of the Hebrews); *Evangelium Pauperum, Essenorium* (80 AD) (The Gospel of the Ebjonites); The Gospel of Luke (100 AD); The Gospel of Matthew (110 AD); The Gospel of Peter (130 AD); The Gospel of Paul according to Marcion; The Gospel of the Nazarenes (150 AD); The Logos Gospel (The Gospel of John) (155 AD) and The Gospel of the Egyptians (160–70 AD) (Volkmar 1870, viii).

9 "Das Vollständigkeit, mit der Volkmar hier das gesammte Evangelien- und evangelisch-historische Material der ersten 2½ Jahrhunderte verarbeitet hat, ist seitdem von niemandem erreicht worden." "Ein originellerer Commentar als der Volkmar's zu Marcus wird nie geschrieben werden; ich meine aber, er kann sich auch an gelehrter Gediegenheit mit jedem messen" (Jülicher 1908, 770f).

10 Set out in David Friedrich Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet I-II* (Tübingen: Osiander, 1835–36).

11 "Die Nachbildung des A.T.'s ist freilich nirgends mechanisch, oder gar nach einem schon feststehenden Messias-Schema, das Strauss unterstellte, sondern überall hat sie in dem geschichtlichen und weltgeschichtlichen Leben Jesu ihren Grund, was Str. noch nicht sah" (Volkmar 1876, 645, emphasis added). "Nur war sein [Strauss'] positiver Versuch, die evangelischen Erzählungen als Niederschlag dunkler Traditionen oder Mythen aufzufassen, so haltlos unbegründet, dass der Fortschritt nothwendig war, die Natur und Komposition der einzelnen Evangelienchriften in's Auge zu fassen, und ihnen das Geheimnis ihrer Conception abzulocken" (Volkmar 1870, xi).

er to those of 20th century redaction criticism than to the *Leben Jesu Forschung* of his own century. With regard to the Tübingen School, Volkmar treats the early Christian literature as *Tendenzschriften*. His overall project was to reconstruct the history of the gospel traditions as a reflection of the developments in early Christianity. But unlike the Tübingen exegetes, he accepted, as already mentioned, the thesis of Markan priority. Consequently, he rejected the idea of an “Ur-Evangelium” which was needed for the Tübingen explanation of the gospel relations. Likewise he rejected the idea of a *Spruchbuch* or *Schriftquelle* (1870, viii-xi; 1876, 646) – later identified as Q. According to Volkmar, Mark’s only sources were: the Old Testament writings, four Pauline letters (Romans, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians), the oral tradition of early Christian communities – and, surprisingly, Revelation.

In this essay, I shall offer a thorough presentation of Volkmar’s thesis about Paulinism in Mark. In the first part, I discuss the alleged relationship between Revelation and the Gospel of Mark. I also account for Volkmar’s considerations of the composition and genre of Mark. In the second part, I go into more detail concerning the relationship between Mark and Paul. Here I first provide a summary of the general thesis as set out in 1857, which reflects Volkmar’s view of the Markan Jesus. Next, I give an example from his 1870/76 commentary on Mark, which demonstrates the literary character of the relationship between the Jesus traditions and the Pauline gospel in the Markan text. In the third part, I return to the reception of Volkmar’s work among his contemporary colleagues and elaborate on the criticism to which his work was exposed around the *fin de siècle*. Finally, I discuss the relevance of Volkmar’s thesis for 21st century New Testament studies.

## 1 Gustav Volkmar’s Understanding of the Gospel of Mark

### Redating Mark

According to Volkmar, Revelation – or the apocalypse of Jesus Christ as he calls it using the self-designation of the text (Rev 1:1) – was the ‘thesis’ towards which the Gospel of Mark was the ‘antithesis’ and reaction (1876, 646). The apocalypse was, so Volkmar explains, the first narrative Christian text. It was written in 68 during the reign of Nero, presumably by John, the Zebedee son. It represented Jewish Christian orthodoxy and emphasized the exclusively future character of salvation which was to take place at the *parousia*. Within this worldview, there



was no future and no salvation for the Gentiles. In contrast, the second narrative Christian writing, the Gospel of Mark, featured the (true) Pauline Christ who preached salvation for all, including the Gentiles (1876, 7–8).

Volkmar argues that Mark was written in the seventies, that is, a hundred years earlier than the Tübingen School presumed.<sup>12</sup> As for provenance, he seems to favour Palestine.<sup>13</sup> Volkmar believes the author of Mark to be a Hebrew-thinking, Greek-speaking Jew, who had spent some time in Galilee and Jerusalem, and who was acquainted with the Pauline gospel as well as with early oral traditions (1876, 647). He thinks very highly of the author: “er bleibt doch einer der geistvollsten und einflussreichsten Schriftsteller, die es nach Paulus gegeben hat” (1876, 647).

## Character – composition – genre

Volkmar saw the Gospel of Mark as a didactic poem based on historical events: “ein selbstbewusstes Lehrpoesie auf historischem Grund” (1870, xx).<sup>14</sup> However, Mark’s successors changed the original gospel in a more prosaic direction (*prosaisieren*). In the Gospel of Mark, Revelation’s apocalypticism and future *parousia* were transformed into a didactic narrative about the historical manifestations of the glory of the Pauline Christ: “Die visionäre Erzählung von künftigen Parusie ist hier [in Markus] zu einer lehrbildlichen Erzählung von der schon diesseitigen Herrlichkeit des Christus *Pauli* geworden” (1876, 646, emphasis added). Mark’s Gospel had a distinctly *doctrinal* character which, from the very beginning, was polemically directed against Revelation. Consequently, his *evangelion* begins – not with the *parousia* – but with John the Baptist, who, as foretold by Isaiah, was to prepare the coming of the kingdom in *history*. The whole section in Mark 1:1–8 was a doctrinal discourse (*Lehrvortrag*) about the character of John’s baptism. On the one hand, it was a divinely ordered and necessary preparation for

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<sup>12</sup> Earlier in 1857, Volkmar had dated Mark to 80 AD, that is, during the surprisingly mild reign of Titus – a dating that challenged the apocalyptic schedule of Revelation (the horns) (1857, 195). In 1870, he changed the date to 73 AD, claiming that the 40 days of temptation was an apocalyptic code for the years that had passed since Jesus’ death (1870, 50).

<sup>13</sup> In his 1857 book, Volkmar argued that due to the Markan text’s Latinisms, Mark was probably written in Rome. But in 1870, he became sceptical of his former thesis. After all, the Latinisms were not sufficient reason for making Italy the place of provenance. If the same argument had been applied to the Talmud, these texts must also have been written in Rome or Italy (1876, 646).

<sup>14</sup> Probably this understanding of the character of Mark’s Gospel is indebted to the German idealist Friedrich Schiller and the philosophical and didactic aims of his dramas which transcended a merely sensuous understanding. I thank Professor Oda Wischmeyer for this reference.

the salvation through Christ (1:1–4). On the other hand, it was not sufficient, which the Baptist himself confirms: “I have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:7–8) (1876, 31).

Unlike the later proponents of form criticism and their understanding of Mark’s Gospel as a collection of traditional material, Volkmar believed Mark to have been carefully composed: “nach einer durchgreifendes” (1857, 206) and “wohl gegliederte Sachdisposition” (1876, 644). In the 1857 volume, he argued that Hebrew parallelisms shaped the structure of the gospel on every level. On the macro-level, Mark was divided into two major sections, 1:14–8:26 and 8:27–16:20.<sup>15</sup> Both of these sections could be divided into four subsections – and so on. Volkmar kept struggling with the Markan outline over the years. The exact number of subsections changed both in 1870 and again in 1876. Nevertheless, Volkmar maintained a certain doctrinal progression, which was important to his interpretation of Mark as a theological treatise. Part 1 (1:14–8:26) dealt with the Jewish beginnings (*die Anfänge*, 1:14–45) which were followed by the transcendence of old religious borders (*der Fortschritt*, 2:1–3:6) and the founding of a new community (*die Stiftung*, 3:7–4:34). Then Mark demonstrates the omnipotence of Jesus’ ministry (*die Allgewalt*, 4:35–5:45) and the universal scope of his salvation (*das Allerlösen*, 6:1–8:26).

According to Volkmar, Mark’s primary purpose was not to write a historical biography about Jesus, but to give an exposition of the true Christ: “eine Darstellung vom wahren Wesen Jesu Christi” (1857, 269). Consequently, Mark made every effort for his gospel *not* to be considered a biography of Jesus (1857, 263). Even the inclusion of Jesus traditions into the text does not make it a biography. Everything that is told in the gospel – including the historical details from Jesus’ life – has the overall purpose of presenting Jesus as the already ascended Son of Man (1857, 269). Thus, the true protagonist of the gospel is not Jesus, but the risen Christ. Also when traditional material is included, the gospel narratives remain symbolic representations of Pauline theology. Volkmar explains: “Der Inhalt der Erzählungen ist durchweg *als sinnbildliche Darstellung paulinischer Lehre zu begreifen, so viel Überlieferungsstof darein verwebt sein mag*” (1876, 644, emphasis added). Therefore Mark’s Gospel belongs to the genre of epic. It is composed as an “Epos des Christenthums”. It is, as Volkmar explains: “ganz geschichtlich und ganz Poësie, Beides in Einem” (1857, 276).

The conception of Mark as the epic of Christianity implies a two-level reading of the gospel, which, when these readings are juxtaposed, covers events right

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<sup>15</sup> Volkmar thinks that Mark 16:15–16, 19–20 belonged to the original gospel. However, the present form of the verses is somewhat corrupted (1857, 205).

from the era of Jesus to the evangelist's own time.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Volkmar does not discharge the gospel as a source for the life of Jesus: "Es ist eine kostbare Quelle für das Leben Jesu, *aber auch solche für das Leben des Paulus und der Christenheit nach ihm*" (1857, 269, emphasis added). But above all, the Gospel of Mark is a didactic narrative, which presents (the true) Pauline Christianity in a new genre: "ein Darstellung echt christlicher Lehre paulinischen Sinnes in erzählender Form."

## 2 Mark as an Allegorical Rewriting of Paul

### The Gospel of Mark as a didactic poem

In *Die Religion Jesu* from 1857, Volkmar drew attention to the Pauline *Tendenz* in Mark's arrangement of his gospel and he gives a clear, although – when compared to his later works – simplified, impression of his two-level reading and didactic understanding of the gospel. Right from the prologue, Mark portrays Jesus as "Christus des Geistes, wie er sich im Apostel [that is, in Paul] offenbart hat". However, this Paulinized version of Christ is connected to Judaism only in the respect that he emerged *from* it. The greatest person *within* Judaism was John the Baptist, although his baptism only offered an external initiation into Christ. Nevertheless, Volkmar takes John's baptism of Jesus to be "das Vorbild für die Taufe Aller" (1876, 40). In this way, true (Pauline) Christianity is shown to be rooted in Judaism.

In the first part of Mark (1:14–8:26), Jesus continues the Baptist's call for repentance (1:14–15). While recognizing the pillars of the church and their status as Jesus' first disciples (1:16–20), Mark demonstrates how Jesus transcends Judaism in his authoritative teachings and also through the universal scope of his ministry, which is not directed to the Jewish world alone, but also to the Gentiles. Interestingly enough, Volkmar takes the unclean spirit in 1:21–28 to be the first representative of the Gentile world. It was unclean due to its worship of idols.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Volkmar explains: "Die Elemente dieses epischen Gemäldes von der ersten Parusie Jesu Christi als des Sohnes Gottes in geistiger Herrlichkeit, bestehen einfach in der gesamten christlichen Erfahrung von den ersten Zeiten an bis auf die Zeit des Verfassers, also aus wirklicher Ueberlieferung aus der Urzeit des Christenthums und aus alledem, was sich in der christlichen Gemeinde, im Besondern auch im Leben und Wirken des Apostels Paulus durch das Wirken des Auferstandenen Großen ereignet hat" (1857, 206).

<sup>17</sup> According to Volkmar, the terror of demons was especially prominent during the Roman Empire (1870, 86).

Proceeding from the original group of disciples (1:29–34) to wider areas (1:35–39), Jesus' ministry soon includes the outcasts among the Jews. But when Jesus cleanses the leper (1:40–45), he ignores the commandments of the Mosaic Law. Yet he does not demand of his fellow countrymen that they neglect it, too (1:44). This *transcendence of Judaism* – Volkmar repeatedly speaks about “*der Fortschritt*” – is illustrated and legitimized in the following chapter through the pardoning of sins (2:1–12), the acceptance of sinners (2:13–17) and changed habits (2:18–3:5). These new practices lead to persecution (3:6), but they also attract attention (3:7), and Jesus' popularity frequently disturbs and threatens his ministry. However, by calling the twelve, Mark's Jesus gives authority to the Jewish-Christian communities; Volkmar speaks of “*die Judenapostel-Autorität*”. Nevertheless, these *sarkan* relations (3:20–35) have to be opened up towards the Gentile world (1857, 265).

Mark 4 addresses the greatest obstacle to Jesus' legitimacy, namely the continuing *sarkan* non-understanding which characterizes the Jewish Christian majority (4:1–34). Yet, no cosmic power – neither the storm (4:35–41), nor the satanic legion, nor Gentile uncleanness (5:1–20), nor even severe sicknesses or death (5:21–43) – can resist Jesus' power. Mark's Jesus/Christ has this *Alles überwindendes Wesen*, which also characterizes the Pauline Christ Jesus. Yet the fact that it is Jesus of Nazaret who possesses these powers puzzles the natives of his hometown (*Heimat*) (6:1–6). Just like the prophet Elijah, Jesus must leave his native land. Also in parallel with the Christ of Paul's letters, Mark's Pauline Jesus brings the *Liebesmahl des Abends* to the Gentiles (6:30–46). In this way, he overcomes the divide of the deadly sea (6:47–52). The introduction of a new principle of spiritual purity (*Geistesreinheit*) in Mark 7:1–23 implies that Gentiles far away (7:24–30) as well as nearby (7:31–37) come within Jesus' reach. But in spite of the repetition of the miraculous supper among the Gentiles (8:1–9), the Jewish pillars among the apostles still fail to understand that the gospel is not only to be taken *sinnlich* (8:14–21). Yet, Christ finally succeeds in opening their eyes to his true *Wesen* (8:22–26), and the reader proceeds to the second part of the gospel (8:27–16:20).

The first person in Mark's Gospel to realize that Jesus is the Christ is Peter, but the first *historical* person to understand what this meant was the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul understood *how* Jesus was the Christ – namely, through his suffering (cf. Mark 8:27–38) and subsequent resurrection. These are the two focal points in Paul's Christology: crucifixion and glorification. Although Jesus rebukes Peter for his lack of understanding of the Son of Man's inexorable fate (8:31–33), his confession leads to the transfiguration, which shows Jesus Christ in his – otherwise hidden – glory (9:2–13).

Through Jesus' instruction of his disciples on the way to Jerusalem, the reader is taught what proper discipleship and true faith imply: confidence in God's power (9:14–29) and the will to keep peace (9:3–50). Just like Jesus' first disciples the reader, too, must realize that the *true* law consists of higher, eternal and “*übermosaische*” commandments (10:2–12), the fulfilment of which presupposes the attitudes of true faith (10:13–16), true love (10:17–27) and true hope (10:28–31). On his way to his own suffering, Jesus makes it clear to his disciples that all apocalyptically inspired ambitions of ruling must be abandoned in favour of serving and (potential) suffering (10:35–45) (1857, 264–68).

## The Markan Jesus according to Volkmar

I hope that it is obvious from the above summary why, according to Volkmar, the Gospel of Mark cannot be regarded as a Jesus biography. Mark's Gospel is to be seen as an odyssey in which the reader travels with the historical Jesus, with the apostle Paul and with the risen Christ (or the Christ-spirit). Volkmar explains: “... durch das ganze Ev. hin ist das Leben Jesu, wie das Leben, Wirken und Leiden Pauli mit im Auge” (1876, 645). Whereas the author of Luke and Acts chose to allocate these travel narratives to two separate volumes, Mark's single two-level story encompasses both. Volkmar regards the Markan Jesus as a literary character who is based upon several literary and historical figures – including, of course, the historical Jesus. However, when speaking of Christ the author often has Paul in mind. Apparently, Mark has projected Paul and his Gentile mission – as we know it from Paul's letters and from the Acts of the Apostles – back into Jesus' life. Volkmar also finds Pauline theological concepts expressed in the Markan Jesus' words and deeds (i.e. the above mentioned faith, love and hope in 10:13–31).

It is this procedure that I refer to as “an allegorical rewriting of Paul”.<sup>18</sup> However, unlike his reviewers, Volkmar never employed the term “allegory” to describe his understanding of Mark's Gospel. Instead, he spoke of symbols (*Sinnbilder*) and of the “parabolic” nature of the gospel. In line with the prevailing understanding of allegory in German scholarship on literature and theology, Volkmar associated allegory with an unwarranted loss of historicity, which ear-

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<sup>18</sup> Employing the term “rewriting” in this context refers to the general inscription of Pauline matters into the setting of Jesus. However, it does not qualify as a rewriting in the narrow and technical sense in which rewriting meets specific criteria or depends on specific literary matrices. Volkmar's thesis does not rest on verbatim agreements.

lier had been the very reason for his criticism of Strauss' *mythos*.<sup>19</sup> The continuity between the historical Jesus and Paul's mission was essential to Volkmar's understanding of Mark. This important point is demonstrated in his 35 page analysis of the small story about the calling of Levi in Mark 2:13–17.

## Mark 2:13–17 as an allegorical rewriting of Gal 2,11ff

Volkmar places Mark 2:13–17 in the subsection 2:1–17, which consists of two *Lehrstücken*: the first section, 2:1–12, concerns the healing of the paralyzed man and challenges the Jewish view of sin and sinners; the second section, 2:13–17, concerns the acceptance of these sinners as implied in Jesus' calling of Levi. In the larger context, this subsection belongs to 2:1–3:6, which Volkmar spoke of as “[der] Fortschritt über die jüdische Anschauung” (1876, 151; 1857, 136).<sup>20</sup>

In the tradition, the paralyzed man from 2:1–12 was understood as a symbolic representation of fallen mankind. He is, as Volkmar explains, “der von der Sünde gelähmte Mensch”. In his own interpretation of the story, an ethnic dimension is added to the predicament, since it is especially characteristic of the Gentile world. After the healing of the (sinfully) paralyzed man, Levi – now the sinner is depicted as a tax collector – can be called upon in order to follow Jesus (2:14). That the calling is an invitation into community is demonstrated by the meal, when Jesus and his disciples eat together with tax collectors and sinners. However, this meal is – and I use a Pauline word – a *skandalon* to the Pharisean scribes (2:15–17). According to Volkmar, three groups are present at the meal: Jesus and his disciples, tax collectors and sinners – and then he adds: the Pharisaic scribes.<sup>21</sup> It is very likely, so Volkmar argues, that Hillel's dis-

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**19** That allegory should imply a loss of historicity is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. However, in the Hellenistic period we also find allegory practised *without* the exclusion of a literal, historical dimension. This is e.g. the case in Philo's work. See Henrik Tronier, “Philonic Allegory in Mark.” In *Philosophy at the Roots of Christianity*, Working Papers 2, Biblical Studies Section, eds. Henrik Tronier and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2006), 9–48.

**20** Volkmar appears to be the first scholar who has seen the interrelatedness of 2:1–3:6, since he joyfully reports that Weiss and Holtzmann followed *him* in this respect.

**21** In Volkmar's reading, the Pharisaic scribes belong among the followers of Jesus. His punctuation of the Greek text differs from that of Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27 edition [= 28. edition]. According to Codex Sinaiticus (and P88) vv. 15–16 reads “for they were many, and they followed him, even (*kai*) the Pharisean scribes”. Nestle-Aland reads with Codex Vaticanus: “for they were many and they followed him. And the Pharisaic scribes ...”

ciples were also attracted to Jesus' teachings, yet unprepared for its radical consequences. It is in accordance with this reading, when Volkmar suggests that the narrated meal did not take place in Levi's home, but in the house where Jesus was staying – that is, in Peter's house.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise it would not be possible for the Pharisaic scribes to be present. In this respect Mark differs from Luke and Matthew, who could not conceive of such a Pharisaic group being close to Jesus. But Mark could, since he, in Volkmar's view, only had in mind the episode in Antioch, which Paul described in his letter to the Galatians. Volkmar draws attention to the fact that unlike most of Mark's other stories, this incident has no Old Testament parallel. Even in 1 Kings 17:13f, where Elijah goes to a Gentile woman's house, he eats only *at* her house, not *with* her. Instead, the parallel case is to be found in the Antioch meal practice *before* the delegation from James arrived (Gal 2:11–14). The disciples who are called first in Mark include the pillars mentioned in Gal 2:9 (Peter and John). Levi, who is called next, fills in the place of the sinful Gentile Christians in Antioch (Gal 2:12). The third party, the Pharisaic scribes from Mark, plays the same part at the common meal as “those from James” in Antioch in Gal 2:12. “Those from James”, who have a Pharisaic orthodox interpretation of the Law, may very well have posed the same question to Kefas, Barnabas and the other Jews as the scribes do in Mark: Are we to eat with sinners? Volkmar concludes that both texts deal with an *inner* Christian conflict between Jews and Gentiles, with Paul and Mark on the one side and James and the author of Revelation on the other.

According to Volkmar, the Jewish doctrine of Israel's election, which separates the *dikaioi* from the *hamartôloi*, constitutes the theological background for the Markan story. He draws attention to the fact that Paul addresses the same issue repeatedly in his letters: in Gal 2:15 he refers to the common understanding among Jews that Gentiles were born sinners; in 1 Cor 9:21 he speaks about the *anomos* and *ennomos*; and in Romans 1:18–3:20 he engages in a comparison of Jews and Gentiles without and within Christ. In the Gospel of Mark, the tax collector Levi has come to represent the whole category of sinners being accepted at Christ's table. According to Volkmar, the break with this conception of sinners had its source in the life and practices of the historical Jesus. Volkmar explains: “Dieser Fortschritt über die jüdische Anschauung ist ohne Frage von Jesus selbst ausgegangen, oder Paulus ist auch dabei nur von seinem Vorgang und Wesen begeistert worden” (1876, 151; 1857, 136). Mark was probably aware of that. Compared to the conflict between the Jewish Christians from James and Paul, Mark's achievement was to bring to mind Jesus' historical prac-

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22 The referent of the pronouns in 2:15 (twice *autos*) is not obvious.



tice and, in addition, to breathe the Pauline Christ-spirit into the Markan Jesus' words. Volkmar describes Mark's contribution to the development of Christianity in this way: "den grossen Grundsatz des paulinischen Christenthums als Jesu Stimme zu zeigen, und die Erinnerung an sein eignes Leben mit Zöllnern zu erneuen" (1876, 146). But after all, Paul's mission fulfilled the potential of the historical Jesus' practices. Consequently, Mark's Gospel remains: "Ganz geschichtlich und ganz Poësie, Beides in Einem."

Paul's description of the Antioch episode in Galatians makes Volkmar wonder whether Kefas was at all present at the meal(s) to which Mark's narrative refers, and whether he ever understood the Pauline scope of Jesus' words about the righteous and sinners. Obviously James and the author of Revelation did not.<sup>23</sup> But the story about Levi in Mark and the Antioch episode in Galatians certainly have the opposite point – namely, in my paraphrase of Volkmar's point: *Nicht heraus, sondern herein!*

### 3 Reception and Criticism

As mentioned in the introduction, Volkmar's commentary was appreciated by a number of contemporary scholars. Although Jülicher found several weaknesses in Volkmar's work, he also spoke of it as "ein zu früh vergessenes Buch" and of Volkmar as "einer der bedeutendsten Bibelkritiker der letzten hundert Jahre" (1908). Wrede was even more enthusiastic and described Volkmar as: "unzweifelhaft ... das geistreichste und scharfsinnigste und m.E. überhaupt das bedeutendste, das wir über Markus besitzen."<sup>24</sup> Scholars like Adolf von Harnack, Johannes Weiss and Heinrich Julius Holtzmann likewise appreciated Volkmar's work. In spite of resistance from scholars such as Schweitzer, Werner and Paul Wernle, the idea of Paulinism in Mark eventually became so widespread in German scholarship that Martin Werner felt the need to write an entire monograph, *Der Einfluss paulinischer Theologie im Markusevangelium*, published in 1923, to refute Volkmar's thesis.<sup>25</sup>

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**23** The author of Revelation most emphatically demands the Nikolaites who eat meat sacrificed to idols to leave the community (Rev 2:15).

**24** William Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), 283.

**25** Martin Werner, *Der Einfluß paulinischer Theologie im Markusevangelium: eine Studie zur neutestamentlichen Theologie*. Beihefte zur ZNW 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1923). Werner's monograph was dedicated to Albert Schweitzer.



In the preface to his book, Werner explains his worries about the consequences of Volkmar's line of thought. Werner perceived Volkmar's work to be in line with other recently published books which treated Jesus as a purely mythical figure. Werner foresaw that this tendency would have serious consequences for the *Leben Jesu Forschung*. His criticism was based upon the claim that Volkmar was guilty of *allegoresis*. In Werner's view, Volkmar was not dealing with the Markan gospel itself, but with an allegorical reading of it. This allegorical reading, so Werner claimed, was the vehicle by means of which Volkmar imported the so-called Pauline features into Mark. His attack was directed against the very premises on which Volkmar's reading rested. As mentioned above, Volkmar never employed the term allegory himself. Instead, he argued for a *parabolic* reading of the gospel, and he made a list of ten features in Mark's Gospel that legitimized his hermeneutical approach, among these the *symbolism* involved in the cursing of the fig tree (11:12–14); the glorification or *spiritualization* of Christ that took place in the transfiguration (9:2–8); and the *two-step* healing of the man born blind (8:22–26) (1876, 644f). Werner attacked the most widespread of these arguments. He either rejected or shed doubt upon them through references to established scholars like Julius Wellhausen and Wernle. Werner concluded that *allegoresis* was unnecessary to explain Mark's Gospel and he insisted on a literal reading of the gospel, which he generally believed to be more Petrine than Pauline. Having questioned the legitimacy of doing *allegoresis* in a reading of Mark, Werner systematically compared Mark's and Paul's views on a vast number of issues: Christology, the law, gospel, faith, Jews and Gentiles, sacraments etc. He found some common traits, but more often serious differences, e.g. the often-claimed incompatibility between Mark's horizontal Jesus and Paul's vertical Christ. Werner's conclusion was that the common material was not distinctively Pauline, but belonged to the mainstream tradition of early Christianity.

In my view, a systematic comparison like the one undertaken by Werner also has some flaws. Firstly, it fails to pay sufficient attention to the differences of genre. Secondly, it rests on a traditional view of Pauline theology as a static enterprise. Thirdly, Werner's insistence upon a literal reading seems somewhat strained and it is hard to avoid the impression that it is rooted in apologetics with the aim of protecting the historical Jesus from dogmatic, Pauline fetters. Yet, Werner's thorough analysis and strong criticism of Volkmar's work convinces a present-day reader that a different procedure is needed in order to reopen the case.

Of course, Volkmar's interpretation of Mark is open to critique. His project was probably as rooted in apologetics as was Werner's. In Volkmar's case, Pauline theology was brought to the fore at the expense of the *Leben Jesu Forschung*. Firstly, Volkmar's view of the didactic nature of Mark (especially the sketch from

1857, summarized above) seems exaggerated and his exegesis sometimes strained. Secondly, the Pauline Gentile mission, which he finds almost everywhere in the gospel, overshadows other important aspects in Mark's narratives. Thirdly, his Tübingen scheme of early Christian tendencies was too narrow. Fourthly, Volkmar's claim that the replacement of the *particularistic* Judaism with the *universalism* of Christianity constituted a "*Fortschritt*" cannot be accepted today, but reflects the ideological landscape of the 19th century. But still other aspects of Volkmar's reading of Mark's Gospel appear surprisingly acceptable to modern scholarship, and many of his insights anticipated 20th century biblical scholarship. I mention the most important issues:

- The hypothesis of Markan priority.
- The insight of redaction criticism that the Markan Jesus was a reflection of the proclaimed Christ of this community.
- The focus on ethnicity in the New Perspective on Paul according to which Paul's theologizing was seen as a response to his work among Jews and Gentiles.
- The approach to the gospel as a piece of literature and the evangelist as an author which narrative criticism made mainstream exegesis.

It has been suggested that Werner's monograph put an end to the idea of Paulinism in Mark. I would argue that it was not so much Werner's refutation itself as the rise of form criticism that sidetracked the line of inquiry that Volkmar had initiated. As we know, form criticism concentrated on the individual pericopes and traced their history backwards in search for their *Sitz-im-Leben*, but it took no interest in the gospels as complete works. It is quite telling that the interest in the relationship between Paul and Mark surfaces again with redaction criticism. Anglo-American scholars inclined toward literary readings like Joel Marcus and William Telford have long advocated for ideas that resemble Volkmar's readings.<sup>26</sup> So maybe the literary turn in exegesis has finally paved the way for a comeback for the latter's thesis. Maybe the task is not so much to refute Werner by *proving* that Mark constitutes *the* Pauline gospel, but to ask, more modestly, whether Paul can shed light on certain Markan phenomena which keep puzzling New Testament exegetes.<sup>27</sup> Can the Messianic secret, for instance, be seen as a parallel to the hidden mystery of 1 Cor 2:7? Should we understand the lack of understanding among the disciples in Mark in light of the divine strat-

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<sup>26</sup> Joel Marcus, "Mark – Interpreter of Paul." *NTS* 46 (2000), 473–487; William R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 164–169.

<sup>27</sup> This approach is taken by J. C. Fenton in "Paul and Mark." In *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 89–112.