

ONCE MORE ON MK 16.9-20

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Abstract. For the diaspora and the first pagan Christians, Galilee was not an authoritative centre of the Hellenistic era, therefore, in the accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, this event is either simply transferred to Jerusalem (Luke) or separated from the main text by a colophon (John) or questioned in parts of the manuscript tradition (Mark), which influences the modern criticism.

Keywords: Galilee, resurrection, Hellenism, diaspora, Mark's long ending.

The resurrection of Jesus, his return from death to life is actually the content of all four Gospels. In this regard, the sudden end of Mark at 16.8, which is preceded by the firm promise of a meeting with the resurrected Jesus in Galilee (14.28, 16.7), has spawned a great variety of research literature with special emphasis on the contrast between the ending in Mark and other Gospels¹. However, the ending of Jesus' earthly story, as presented in other NT sources, also lacks strong ideological or theological accents. Thus, Jesus' promise of the post-Easter meeting in Galilee in the gospel of Matthew (26.32), repeated by the angel (28.7), is fulfilled in the last lines of the gospel (28.6-20), where it looks like an epilogue, a summary, and not an account of the most significant moment of the whole earthly history of Jesus. A better documented meeting in Galilee is present in John (chapter 21), but, as is commonly believed, it goes beyond the bounds of his gospel, forming a kind of an appendix or addition. Luke does not have a Galilean conclusion to the story at all, and after the crucifixion Jesus appears in the flesh twice - in Emmaus and Jerusalem. In both cases, the eating of bread is evidence of his bodily resurrection (Lk 24.30 and 24.43). This reiteration and at the same time the rejection of Galilee in Luke can hardly be seen as a documentary description. In general, it can be said that the theme of the bodily resurrection in Galilee did not receive a detailed description in any of the four gospels.

It is worth noting that there is other evidence in the Gospels that the Galilean theme was not developed with the care that might be expected.

¹ An eloquent picture of different comments is presented by the collective opus: D. A. BLACK, D. BOCK, K. ELLIOTT, M. ROBINSON and D. WALLACE. *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: 4 views*. Ed. by D. A. BLACK. Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 2008.

So, contrary to NT historical message, the birth of the baby Jesus takes place in Bethlehem (Mt 2.2, Lk 2.8), as well as his presentation at the Temple in Jerusalem (Lk 2.22-33), while the subsequent settlement in Nazareth in Galilee is explained by the fear of persecution (Mt 2.22). Jesus spends his coming-of-age day (bar mitzvah) in the Jerusalem temple (Lk 2.42). In his turn, Nathanael (“an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” Jn 1.47) doubts that there can be “any good thing” coming from Nazareth (Jn 1.46). The Pharisees state with full confidence that “out of Galilee arises no prophet” (Jn 7.52). It is not the inhabitants of Galilee that come to the Jordan to hear John the Baptist preach, but “all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem” (Mk 1.5), despite the mountainous and difficult terrain². The “synagogues of Galilee” where Jesus preached (Lk 4.44) are supplanted in some manuscripts by “synagogues of Judea”, and this reading is accepted as the basic one in NA 27, that is, it is recognized as the original one. Likewise, rumour of Jesus as a great prophet spread throughout Judea (Lk 7.17), although the return to life of the widow's son took place in Galilee (Lk 7.15-16). One of the temptations of Jesus by the devil takes place on the roof of the Jerusalem temple (Lk 4.9).

It is against this background, in our opinion, that the final episode of the gospel narrative must be viewed. The Long Ending in Mk 16.9-20 after a lengthy discussion was recognized secondary, which was reflected in NA 27 by enclosing it in square brackets. The motivation is based on the textual criticism - this passage is absent from some ancient and authoritative manuscripts. Textual criticism was the first objective and, as it seemed, reliable way to solve basic questions of the history of a text. Still, textual criticism is not the only available tool, only the coincidence of results of different research procedures can provide a reliable result. Doubts about the reliability of the NA 27 position became extremely serious after the recent linguistic research by N. P. Lunn³.

For my part, I try to draw attention to the fact that the NT authors were somewhat skeptical about the Galilean material. Only John's exceptional artistic skill gave the Galilean finale deep expressiveness. By no means can one agree with the widely accepted opinion that Jn 21 is not part of the whole. This chapter contains three most important episodes of John's NT story: 1) the appearance in the flesh of the resurrected Jesus in Galilee, 2) making Peter the main figure of the NT movement, 3) the fate of the Beloved Disciple. The colophon that ends chapter 20

² E. g. some comments: «There is a touch of hyperbole in Mark's reference to all the land of Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem» (TAYLOR V. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. London, 1966. P. 155) and “When Mark reports that all the people from Judea and Jerusalem were “going out” to John, he may be implying that this was the beginning of a new Exodus (Exodus 13:4, etc.)” (CULPEPPER R. A. *Mark*. Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2007. P. 46).

³ LUNN N. P. *The Original Ending of Mark: A New Case for the Authenticity of Mark 16:9-20*, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2015.

(absent in many manuscripts, including A and B) can be considered a postscript of an editor who was incapable of a true understanding of the Galilean scene, of its inherent connection with the entire preceding narrative. The perceptible pause in Mark's coherent story between 16.8 and 16.9 is due to the fact that between the two events - the empty open coffin and the Galilee meeting - several days elapsed, not filled with any significant content and simply spent by the apostles in getting from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee. Reproduction of the details of Mark's version in Matthew and Luke confirms the existence of the Long Ending. Thus, Mt 28.7 and 28.10 reiterate the order for the disciples to go to Galilee to see the resurrected Jesus, although the resurrected Jesus himself has already appeared at the Jerusalem tomb (Mt 28.9-10). Lk 24.13 has two nameless disciples going to Emmaus, their significance being explained in Mk 16.12-13: they also carried the message of the Resurrection.

It seems that only John proved able to give an integral meaning to the final episode of the NT agony. Luke's literary treatment of the material is not done as carefully, individual scenes are weakly connected to each other. The transfer of the event to Emmaus is not motivated. It seems that the appearance of the resurrected Jesus in Galilee to some extent reduces the significance of the Resurrection, gives it a certain provinciality in the eyes of the evangelists. This turn of the events is inconsistent with the expectations placed on the phenomenon of the Resurrection. From the point of view of the diaspora, Galilee means almost nothing, while the Jerusalem temple means a lot. So, according to a historian, 'the center of Jewish tradition was Jerusalem, the Jewish community of the Diaspora also stood four square on tradition, and this was officially recognized by the authorities'⁴. Moreover, "One of the most important privileges in Jewish eyes was the permission to collect money and to send it to Jerusalem. Augustus stressed this in the clearest possible fashion (Ant. XVI, 162ff.), not being satisfied with mere permission, but also classifying the money as "sacred funds": anyone who stole it was liable to the death-penalty as a *hierosylos*, one guilty of sacrilege"⁵. Collecting money for the Temple, in particular, was one of the aspects of Paul's activity⁶. It is quite obvious that the target audience of the NT message was the Diaspora.

⁴ TCHERIKOVER V. *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*. Translated by S. APPLEBAUM. Philadelphia; Jerusalem, 1959. P. 345.

⁵ Idem. P. 308. Cf. also: HENGEL M. *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ*. In collaboration with Christoph Marksches. London; Philadelphia, 1989. P. 9-18.

⁶ "The very apostle Paul appears as a 'Diaspora Jew' who had become alienated from the faith-ideas of the fathers" (SCHOEPS H. J. *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*. London, 1961. P. 261).

Talking about the promise of a meeting in Galilee with the risen Jesus, W.R. Telford believes that «the significance of the inserted verses 14.28 and 16.7 in Mark is that the evangelist is telling his readers that Jesus promised his disciples that he would appear among the Gentiles, and before them at that»⁷. But our observations rather suggest the opposite. As the “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Isa 8.23), this country is devoid of attraction for the Diaspora. That is why, contrary to the tradition preserved by the other three gospels, Luke excludes Galilee from his account of the Resurrection.

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⁷ TELFORD W. R. *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*. Cambridge University Press, 1999. P. 149.

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