

The Last Twelve Verses of Mark: Original or Not? A Symposium
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**AMID PERFECT CONTEMPT, A PLACE FOR THE GENUINE:
THE LONG ENDING OF MARK AS CANONICAL VERITY¹**

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Priority must always be given tangible, objective data, and to external evidence, over subjective theory or speculative opinions. Facts must control theory, not vice versa.

– K. A. Kitchen²

“IMAGINARY GARDENS WITH REAL TOADS IN THEM”

The ending of Mark is a flash-point in NT criticism. Textual critics and commentators over the past 150 years have debated the various possible endings of the Gospel according to Mark.³ Many scholars hold that this question represents the most serious textual and exegetical problem facing the interpreter of the Second Gospel.⁴ Although some might consider the Markan ending less significant than text-critical issues involving other New Testament passages, the presence or absence of a highly visible twelve-verse segment engenders a high level of concern, particularly when the passage in question has appeared unchallenged within the main text of nearly all bibles and manuscripts over the past 1600 years.⁵ That a text-critical problem exists at this point is certain; the question of its significance and resolution may be less notable and consequential than the endless discussions over the past centuries have made it appear.

“THE IMMOVABLE CRITIC”

The text-critical issue involved is fairly easy to state in terms of external evidence and proposed theories of accounting for the phenomenon:

A Short Ending at 16:8 (MSS \aleph /01, B/03, 304, sy^s).⁶

¹ Some phrases found in the title and various subheadings are taken from the public domain version of Marianne Moore’s poem, “Poetry,” as published in *Others* 5:6 (July 1919) 5. The rationale for this particular theme is presented later in this essay.

² K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1966) 28.

³ Mark is named as the author of the Second Gospel by reliable early tradition (see Papias, as noted in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3:39.15, and Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3:9-12). “Mark” throughout this paper thus refers to the author of the Second Gospel, as well as to the Second Gospel itself.

⁴ Typical are the chronologically separated comments of A. T. Robertson, *Studies in Mark’s Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1919) 129 (“This is the chief textual problem in the Gospel of Mark and, one may add, in the New Testament itself”); and James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, Pillar NT Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 497 (“The ending of Mark . . . presents the gravest textual problem in the NT”).

⁵ A similar controversy surrounds the 12-verse narrative regarding the woman taken in adultery (Jn 7:53-8:11). No other passages of similar length are at issue from a text-critical standpoint.

⁶ Isolated versional MSS are not included in these tabulations. MSS 1420 and 2386 also terminate at 16:8. However, as pointed out by James A. Kelhoffer, “The Witness of Eusebius’ *ad Marinum* and Other Christian Writings to Text-Critical Debates concerning the Original Conclusion to Mark’s Gospel,” *ZNW* 92 (2001) 98n80, “a page is missing after Mark 16,8 in 1420 and in 2386,” and therefore these MSS cannot be cited in support of the Short Ending. Regarding MS 2386, see also Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies 1971; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) in loc. The ending at 16:8 in the Old Syriac Sinaitic MS (sy^s) is offset by the presence of verses 17-20 in one fragment of the Old Syriac Curetonian MS (sy^c).

- Perhaps the original ending authored by Mark became "lost," such loss being reflected in the MSS cited above or their common archetype.
- Perhaps the evangelist deliberately ended his gospel at 16:8.
- Perhaps the evangelist circumstantially was forced to stop at 16:8

An Intermediate Ending following 16:8 (it^k alone, with additional modifications to verse 8; also present in tandem with the Long Ending in MSS L/019, Ψ/044, 083, 099, 274^{mg}, 579, L-1602).

- Perhaps this was the original Markan Ending (apparently not held by anyone).⁷
- Perhaps created to resolve the abruptness caused by an ending at 16:8.
- Perhaps an existing one of many artificially created but now lost alternate endings.

A Long Ending concluding at 16:20 (all remaining continuous-text MSS, Lectionaries, and most versional witnesses).

- Perhaps authored by the evangelist and intended as the conclusion of his gospel.
- Perhaps authored by someone else in an attempt to conclude the gospel in an appropriate manner.
- Perhaps a piece of "floating tradition," or an extract from an unknown document that became attached to the Long Ending (hereafter LE) in order to provide some sort of conclusion.

A Long Ending with a lengthy expansion following 16:14 (MS W/032, with the so-called "Freer Logion"; also known from a mention in Jerome).

- Perhaps the Logion was added in an attempt to clarify or mollify the disciples' unbelief.

From the 19th century onward, critical scholarly opinion tended to favor the "lost ending" hypothesis.⁸ During the latter third of the 20th century, the critical viewpoint mostly has shifted to deliberate termination at 16:8 as reflecting authorial intent.⁹ The view that the LE should be accepted as original within the text of the Second Gospel obviously has not garnered a strong scholarly consensus as have the options so persuasively presented by opposing text-critical, interpretative, or content-based theories.

⁷ Paul L. Danove, *Linguistics and Exegesis in the Gospel of Mark: Applications of a Case Frame Analysis*. JSNTSS 218; Studies in New Testament Greek, 10 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001) 72n10, errs in declaring that Kurt Aland "argues for the originality of the Shorter Ending based in part on the empty space left after the ending of Mark in Codex Vaticanus." Cf. Steven Lynn Cox, *A History and Critique of Scholarship concerning the Markan Endings* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993) 142-143, who points out that Aland considered *both* the Intermediate and Long Ending as non-original to the Gospel of Mark, although each had an early but separate geographical origin. See directly on this point Kurt Aland, "Bemerkungen zum Schluss des Markusevangeliums," in E. Earle Ellis and Max Wilcox, eds., *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969) 175.

⁸ Despite misunderstandings based on their reliance upon MSS \aleph and B, Westcott and Hort actually held that the original ending of Mark most likely was lost; further, they consider the concept that Mark deliberately intended to end his gospel at 16:8 "untenable" (51). See Brooke F. Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," in their *Introduction to The New Testament in the Original Greek: With Notes on Selected Readings* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, rep. ed. 1988 [London: Macmillan, 1882]) 46-47, 49, 51, particularly 46-47: "It is incredible that the evangelist deliberately concluded either . . . with ἐφοβουντο γαρ, or . . . with a petty detail of a secondary event, leaving his narrative hanging in the air . . . The least difficult explanation . . . is by the loss of a leaf."

⁹ This shift is documented in N. Clayton Croy, *The Mutilation of Mark's Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), chapters 2 ("A Sea Change in Scholarly Opinion," 18-32) and 3 ("The Reasons for the Shift," 33-44). Even so, as noted by Cox, *History and Critique*, 210, there remains "some reluctance by the church and critical scholarship in accepting Mark 16:8 as the intended ending of the Second Gospel."

It is of no benefit merely to list names and count scholarly noses; people will tend to favor scholars considered authoritative, while rejecting all contrary assertions.¹⁰ Yet it cannot be claimed that the scholarly voices on any particular side of the issue are unbiased and without presuppositions; even the present writer has presuppositions and biases that could affect his judgment. However, certain factors at least mollify the influence of any *a priori* opinions that might be brought to the discussion. For example:

- The various endings of Mark are themselves "orthodox," without any particular heretical or heterodox emphasis.
- These endings were used theologically and liturgically throughout church history without serious controversy.
- Most of the content of the more extensive endings could be known and established from other portions of scripture.

"ALL THESE PHENOMENA ARE IMPORTANT"

Very little new evidence of significance has been discovered since the known endings were debated by Burgon, Scrivener, and Westcott-Hort in the 19th century.¹¹ No papyri yet exist for this passage; the oldest manuscripts remain \aleph /01 and B/03; and the patristic evidence remains unchanged.¹² The only subsequent discovery that had any real bearing was that of W/032, which contains the LE plus an expansion previously known from Jerome's late fourth/early fifth-century comments (the so-called "Freer Logion").¹³ In reality, the 21st-century scholars continue to deal with issues raised during the 19th century, albeit in a redirected manner.¹⁴ Yet the presumed complexity regarding the ending of Mark remains an ongoing fascination, driving scholarly imagination for more than 150 years, with little or no end in sight.¹⁵

¹⁰ Cf. John A. T. Robinson, *The Priority of John* (London: SCM, 1985) 10: "One must always beware of the tendency of the critical establishment to close ranks against anything that disturbs its fundamental presuppositions."

¹¹ See John W. Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to S. Mark: Vindicated against recent Critical Objections and Established* (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1871; rep. ed. Collingswood, NJ: The Dean Burgon Society, 2002); Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., ¹1861, ²1874, ³1883; London: George Bell and Sons, ⁴1894 [rev. by Edward Miller]); Westcott and Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," 28-51. The external evidence is delineated in J. K. Elliott, "The Text and Language of the Endings to Mark's Gospel," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 27 (1971) 255-262; and William R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Cambridge: University Press, 1974) 3-75, with the most complete listing of Greek continuous-text manuscript evidence appearing in Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, eds., *Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments. IV. Die Synoptischen Evangelien. 1. Das Markusevangelium* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998) 406-407.

¹² The Sahidic MS P. Palau Rib. 182, made public in 1972, also ends at 16:8; Greek MS 2427, formerly considered an important parallel to Codex Vaticanus but containing the LE, has been shown to be a 19th-century forgery.

¹³ Jerome, *Contr. Pelag.* 2:15.

¹⁴ Croy, *Mutilation*, 29, notes that the discussion continues primarily because of the interpretative issues involved: "There was no manuscript discovery that demanded a reappraisal of Mark."

¹⁵ The following volumes provide comprehensive surveys of the many theories proposed: Cox, *History and Critique*; James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; 2 Reihe, 112 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2000) 5-47; and Mark M. W. Waterman, *The Empty Tomb Tradition of Mark: Text, History, and Theological Struggles*, *Theology, History, and Biblical Studies Series*, 1 (Los Angeles: Agathos, 2006) 36-83. See also the extensive bibliography in Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, *Word Biblical Commentary* 34b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001) lviii-lix, 540-543.

On the basis of external evidence, the present writer has no difficulty in defending a reading supported not only by the Byzantine Textform (which he obviously prefers),¹⁶ but also by the wide range of MSS that represent the Western, Caesarean, and even the Alexandrian texttype (ⲛ and B thus represent "Alexandrian exceptions" to the overall situation of that texttype).¹⁷ Were the LE not absent from codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, the few manuscripts that contain both the Long and Intermediate Endings, and the limited adverse versional and patristic testimony would not be sufficient to maintain the controversy. To illustrate: strong Alexandrian support exists (ⲛ B C L Γ, over 30 minuscules, vg^{mss} mae sy^{pal mss} slav) for the generally rejected spear-thrust narrative at Mt 27:49 – testimony far stronger than in support of the short ending of Mark. Equally, the modern eclectic editors accept the Byzantine reading in 1Cor 15:51^b despite the "stronger" manuscript, versional, and patristic support given by favored Alexandrian and Western witnesses at that location (ⲡ⁴⁶ A^c; D ar b d f^{txt} [o] vg; ⲛ A* C F G 0243 33 1241 1739 f^{ms} g arm geo¹; Origen^{gr1/2} Didymus Cyril^{1/2} Jerome; Marcion, Tertullian Ambrosiaster, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine). In each case, the combination of witnesses favoring a non-Byzantine variant is *stronger* than that which exists in relation to the Short Ending of Mark – and yet such readings remain rejected.

"THERE ARE THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT BEYOND ALL THIS FIDDLE"

Although the external evidence basically settles the issue for the present writer, an advocate of a particular reading should go beyond decisions reached on the basis of external testimony. Further compelling reasons should be drawn from internal evidence in order to supplement and support the conclusion established by the weight of the primary external data. To this extent, Paul L. Danove is correct: "An analysis of the alternate endings that does not include references to interior criteria . . . cannot establish an adequate basis for determining which alternative is the most probable ending."¹⁸ While exception can be taken to Danove's absolute declaration, an advocate of a given variant *should* offer external *and* internal reasons for acceptance of a preferred text.¹⁹ This is now the primary thrust of the present paper, involving some significant but often overlooked items within the realm of external evidence, followed by specific internal considerations.

"ELEPHANTS PUSHING": *Patristic Testimony*

Most discussions concerning the patristic evidence relative to the Markan ending focus on the speculations of the fourth and later centuries, whether by Eusebius or (in repetition) Jerome, or Victor of Antioch. Yet the opinions of later patristic writers should not negate earlier patristic testimony that supports LE inclusion.²⁰ Particular in this regard are the second-century testimonies

¹⁶ See Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, eds., *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2005* (Southborough, MA: Chilton Book Publishing, 2005).

¹⁷ According to texttype, the MSS and versional witnesses that include the LE can be classified roughly as follows (*teste* NA²⁷ and UBS⁴): *Alexandrian*: C L Ψ 083 099 33 157 579 892 1241 2427 L-1602 bo; *Western*: D aur c d^{supp} ff² I n o q vg sy^c; *Caesarean*: W Δ Θ f¹³ 28 565 700 arm^{mss}; *Byzantine*: A *Byz Lect* sy^p sy^h sy^{pal} (the MSS containing both the Intermediate and Long Ending are basically Alexandrian in character).

¹⁸ Danove, *Linguistics and Exegesis*, 73n14.

¹⁹ See Maurice A. Robinson, "The Case for Byzantine Priority," in Robinson and Pierpont, *Byzantine Textform 2005*, 545: "Final judgment on readings requires the strong application of internal evidence *after* an initial evaluation of the external data has been made."

²⁰ Jerome's statement to Hedibia (Jerome, *Ep.* 120) that the LE "is met with in only a few copies, almost all the codices of Greece being without the passage" needs to be tempered by Metzger's cautious observation: "Such disparities of proportion of evidence [in comparison with existing MSS] . . . may of course be due to the limitations of Jerome's knowledge"; Bruce M. Metzger, "St. Jerome's Explicit References to Variant Readings in Manuscripts of the New Testament," in Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson, eds., *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament presented to Matthew Black* (Cambridge: University Press, 1979) 188 (the quotation from Jerome appears on 182). Kelhoffer, "The Witness," 98, similarly states, "The possibility is to be acknowledged, of course, that this author's [Eusebius'] claim to knowledge of a more 'accurate' textual tradition . . . may constitute something of a rhetorical device . . . Later Christian authors made strikingly similar claims about the best MSS . . . in order to *defend* the

of Justin Martyr and (explicitly) Irenaeus. Under almost any other circumstances, these citations should outweigh patristic speculations of some two centuries later.

Justin Martyr

Justin does not specifically identify a text as being from the LE of Mark (or equally, from the LE within Tatian's Diatessaron). Nevertheless, Justin evidences a familiarity with the LE, stating (*Apology* 1.45) that the disciples, "having gone forth, preached everywhere" (ἐξελοῦντες πανταχοῦ ἐκηρυξαν). This three-word combination appears *only* in Mk 16:20, and differs from the common Greek text in Mark solely in relation to the order of the last two words.²¹ The collocation of these three terms occurs nowhere else in the NT or Septuagint, and the chance that Justin could be alluding to an unknown extra-biblical source is highly unlikely.²² Frederic H. Chase has noted that Justin here is

weaving a quotation into his own words . . . as if it were a word occurring in an authority quoted by him . . . Justin is characteristically weaving together words and ideas derived from [Mc.] xvi. 15 . . . and words and ideas derived from v. 20 The section [the LE] was known to and was used by, Justin, before the middle of the [second] century.²³

In addition, Martin Hengel has noted that "Justin uses no other written sources for the Gospel material which he includes than the Canonical Gospels";²⁴ this would appear to seal the point.

Irenaeus

Later in the second century, Irenaeus intentionally quotes from both the beginning and end of the gospel of Mark, in order to declare the relative boundaries of that gospel. Regarding Mark's conclusion, Irenaeus states,

At the end of his gospel, Mark says, 'And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was received into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.'²⁵

That this quotation is genuine and not a later interpolation is clearly accepted, even by Westcott and Hort.²⁶ Irenaeus' unambiguous testimony regarding the closing words of Mark's gospel thus

authenticity of the Longer Ending." Such comments should urge caution when evaluating the claims of various fathers who speak of "nearly all the copies" or whatever copies might be considered "accurate."

²¹ The order of these words in the LE (Mk 16:20) is ἐξελοῦντες ἐκηρυξαν πανταχοῦ. That Justin's phraseology stems from the LE of Mark is acknowledged by C. S. Mann, *Mark*, Anchor Bible 27 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986) 674. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 47n181, declares absolutely: "It can . . . be demonstrated that Justin Martyr (*Apol.* I.45.5) . . . reflects knowledge of Mark 16:9-20."

²² Westcott and Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," *Introduction*, 39, attempt to minimize the evidence from Justin by claiming that his collocation of these words was not unusual, but that "they were natural and obvious words to use and to combine." Were this the case, one must wonder why neither the NT nor LXX, nor other writers seem to have thought it "natural and obvious" to combine such words in their various writings. Westcott and Hort thus appear to overstate their claim.

²³ Frederic Henry Chase, "Note on [Mark] xvi. 9-20," in his *The Old Syriac Element in the Text of Codex Bezae* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1893) 154, 156. The bracketed "[Mark]" in the title and "[Mc.]" in the quotation are original to Chase.

²⁴ Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000) 225n109.

²⁵ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3:10.5, as quoted in Mann, *Mark*, 674. Irenaeus continues (ANF 1:426) by stating that the conclusion of Mark is "confirming what had been spoken by the prophet," with a citation of Ps. 110.1. For a discussion of Irenaeus' quotation of the opening verses of Mark, see Maurice A. Robinson, "Two Passages in Mark: A Critical Test for the Byzantine-Priority Hypothesis," *Faith and Mission* 13 (Fall 1996) 66-111.

²⁶ Westcott and Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," 39. The quotation is also mentioned in a Greek scholium in MS 1582.

becomes a significant point of evidence, declaring the LE to be a component part of the Second Gospel in a period long predating that of \aleph , B, Eusebius, and Jerome.²⁷

In this light, the shortest reading may not always be original, but may have arisen either through accident or design (other areas of analysis appear to demonstrate that point).

"CASE AFTER CASE COULD BE CITED"

Regarding accident, I offer an example from our seminary library. Bar-coded labels at one time were prepared for each book that listed the call number, author, and title. These were limited only by the available space on the label. As a result, various pamphlets produced by the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture appear on our barcode labels as coming from the "Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hell"! ²⁸

Regarding intentional shortening, I turn to the twentieth-century American poet Marianne Moore (1887-1972).²⁹ Moore's free verse poem entitled "Poetry" originally appeared in a "long" 40-line version (July 1919).³⁰ Later, the poem was reworked (1925) into a quite different 13-line "intermediate version."³¹ Even later, the "longer version" was restored (1932), with only minor differences from the original. Yet in her final edition (1967), Moore truncated the poem into a "short version" encompassing *only* the first three lines of her longer edition, even then lacking two phrases found in the longer version's opening lines. In Moore's "Poetry," one finds the various endings of the gospel according to Mark paralleled: the 40-line "long form"; a quite different 13-line "intermediate form"; and a 3-line "short form" — each with its own share of "variant readings," and each created by the author herself. In Moore's case we know the entire transmissional history; with Mark we have "only hints followed by guesses."³²

²⁷ Kelhoffer, "The Witness," 103n97, points out that "Irenaeus never reflects an awareness of MSS that omit Mark 16,9-20 and assumes that the passage rightly belongs *in fine* . . . *Euangelii*."

²⁸ One example of this phenomenon appears on the back cover of our library's copy of *Longer Mark: Forgery, Interpolation, or Old Tradition*, Protocol of the Eighteenth Colloquy: 7 December 1975 (Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1976).

²⁹ The University of Chicago's website states, "The legalities of quoting poetry and music lyrics — even just a line or two — are very strict and complex" <www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/cmosfaq.Documentation.html>. In particular, problems exist involving quotation of Moore's poetry: "Some authors' estates, such as those of H. D. [Hilda Doolittle] and Ezra Pound, are supportive of scholarship and rarely object to reasonable quotation or to requests to print extracts from authors' writings. But other estates, such as those of James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Marianne Moore, have shown themselves to be wary of or hostile to scholarship and hence difficult in the matter of permissions" <www.utpjournals.com/product/jsp/333/copyright1.html> (ironically, Hilda Doolittle and Ezra Pound were among Marianne Moore's closest friends). Due to the legal issues involved, the present essay limits Moore quotations to material clearly in the public domain (published during or before 1923).

³⁰ Robin G. Schulze, *Becoming Marianne Moore: The Early Poems 1907-1924* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002) 205-206, 468-478, provides a photofacsimile of the original 1919 poem as published (205), and also provides a complete collection of variant readings and differing textual formats of this poem as it appeared in 1921, 1924, 1925, 1932 and 1968. Bonnie Honigsblum, "Marianne Moore's Revisions of 'Poetry,'" in Patricia C. Willis, ed., *Marianne Moore: Woman and Poet* (Orono, ME: The National Poetry Foundation, University of Maine, 1990) 203-218, presents charts detailing all published editions of "Poetry," including "Three Typed Manuscripts . . . with Author's Handwritten Revisions."

³¹ Schulze, 207; Honigsblum, 207. The internet blurb for Schulze's book states, "For Moore, no text was ever stable or finished; each opportunity to publish offered an opportunity to revise Textuality is not a fixed, static product but an ongoing, fluid process" <www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/8804.html>.

³² Paraphrasing a line from T. S. Eliot, "Four Quartets: The Dry Salvages."

"A HIGH SOUNDING INTERPRETATION CAN BE PUT UPON THEM"

Not only are the various versions of Moore's "Poetry" analogous to the Markan ending issue, but commentators upon Moore favor the differing versions of that poem in accord with their interpretative fancy. Some favor the "longer version";³³ some favor the "intermediate version";³⁴ and even the "short version" has its advocates.³⁵ Moore's 1967 *Complete Poems* includes the epigraph, "Omissions are not accidents."³⁶ Moore's shortening of "Poetry" clearly was intentional; yet, had the publishing history of Moore's "Poetry" been unknown, many Moore scholars might have presumed the three-line version to be original, followed by later supplementary material, which might have been presumed to reflect a weak first expansion and subsequent polished extension of the original. Naturally, the critics would be quite wrong.³⁷

Of course, had the earlier long version of Moore's poem *not* initially existed, the later versions would have been more difficult to interpret. A similar consideration could apply to the various Markan endings. As Moore stated elsewhere, it is "one of/those things into which much that is peculiar can be/read;/complexity is not a crime but carry/it to the point of murkiness and nothing is plain."³⁸

"WHEN DRAGGED INTO PROMINENCE": *Some Rationale for Omission of the Long Ending*

Should the LE be considered original to the Markan autograph (minimally defined as the initial canonically transmitted form of the text of that book), the various alternative conclusions that exist among the manuscripts still require investigation.

The Short Ending at 16:8

The absence of both the Long and Intermediate Endings in codices Sinaiticus (Ⲙ/01) and Vaticanus (B/03) leaves what appears to be a puzzling and incomplete conclusion.³⁹ Whether this occurred

³³ Elizabeth Gregory, "Imaginary Gardens with Real Toads," in *Quotation and Modern American Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1996), cited electronically at <www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/poetry.htm>.

³⁴ Donald Hall, "On 'Poetry,'" in his *Marianne Moore: The Cage and the Animal* (New York: Pegasus, 1970): "The middle version is the one I like best . . . it does not, as the longer version does, seek to define what poetry ought to be." On the other hand, Bonnie Costello, *Marianne Moore: Imaginary Possessions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), complains that in the middle version, "the famous 'imaginary gardens with real toads in them' is removed and in its place is the phrase 'enigmas are not poetry'" (both sources cited electronically as per the previous note).

³⁵ R. P. Blackmur, "The Method of Marianne Moore," in his *The Double Agent: Essays in Craft and Elucidation* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1962 rep. ed. [1935]) 152, notes that "the idea . . . may be as readily inferred in the earlier version as it is inescapably felt in the later . . . We cut away immediately all that does not belong . . . and find ourselves possessed of a new point of view." Sister Therese, S. D. S., *Marianne Moore: A Critical Essay, Contemporary Writers in Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 23, states "The three salvaged lines do retain the essence of the poem . . . , and perhaps do gain in impact because of the narrow setting."

³⁶ Marianne Moore, *Complete Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1991 rep. ed. [1967]) vii.

³⁷ Costello, *Moore*, op. cit., pointedly asks, "Could we divine the earlier version from its vestige? . . . A short poem is no more genuine than an expansive one."

³⁸ Marianne Moore, "In the Days of Primitive Colour," *The Lantern* 27 (Spring 1919) 35; photo-reproduced in Schulze, 242.

³⁹ Croy, *Mutilation*, 171-172, notes that, if 16:8 is considered the original ending, "we are forced to believe that Mark has committed grammatical and/or stylistic gaffes at the . . . conclusion of his Gospel We are forced to believe that Mark was either inept, perverse, or astonishingly modernistic as a narrator We must explain how Mark hit on a narrative technique that was unknown in antiquity but appeals to the modern literary mind, why he fails to narrate events that he has predicted, and why he pulls the rug out from under the reader in the last verse. This series of improbabilities . . . suggests [otherwise]." Yet Croy himself aggravates the problem by insisting "that the thesis of mutilation . . . is the most plausible explanation of all the data" — adding to his hypothesis the speculation that a longer *beginning* of Mark equally was "lost" (113-136, 165-166).

due to accident (an archetypal lost leaf) or intent (authorial decision to end with 16:8), the result is problematic.⁴⁰ Had the LE been original (say advocates of the Short Ending), then no compelling reason would exist for total removal; in contrast (say they), were the Short Ending original, a later creation of some sort of conclusion would seem necessary to some readers.

Of course, the scribe of Vaticanus, after 16:8 on the final leaf of Mark, has left blank the last third of the second column and all of the third column, apparently because he was familiar with the Intermediate or Long Ending, or both. As Westcott and Hort note,

In B, the scribe, after ending the Gospel with v. 8 in the second column of a page, has contrary to his custom left the third or remaining column blank; evidently because one or other of the two subsequent endings was known to him personally The omitted words . . . were in existence . . . when the extant MS was written, and were known to its scribe.⁴¹

It is possible that the Vaticanus scribe found one or both of the longer endings in an exemplar; a question of which to include may have resulted in leaving the lengthy blank space.⁴²

Something also appears peculiar in Codex Sinaiticus: a cancel-sheet replacement occurs in that MS at the same location. Milne and Skeat, however, calculate from the preceding and following pages that Sinaiticus did not originally contain the LE (although their data allows the Intermediate Ending to remain possible).⁴³ Equally, the scribe of Vaticanus and (at least) the replacement corrector of Sinaiticus deliberately may have excluded any particular ending, even while the scribe of Vaticanus allowed the option for possible later insertion of one or the other longer endings.⁴⁴ Should Sinaiticus and Vaticanus deliberately have omitted the LE (as opposed to the "archetypal lost leaf" hypothesis), one should explore possible reasons for such omission. Various options now are discussed.

⁴⁰ Larry Hurtado, *Mark*, Good News Commentary (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983) 272, states, "If Mark did end his Gospel here [16:8], it would be an unusually clever and subtle device, so clever and subtle that perhaps no one detected his intent until modern scholarly research succeeded!"

⁴¹ Westcott and Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," 29-30. Hort overreached in claiming that this scribe "found neither of them [the two longer endings] in the exemplar which he was copying" — perhaps, but not necessarily. Vaticanus' blank column and a third is noted by Burgon, Scrivener, Farmer, and others; however, that fact is mentioned *nowhere* in Metzger, *Textual Commentary* in loc., nor in Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford, 2005) 322-327.

⁴² Had the scribe intended to leave space sufficient for only the Intermediate Ending, the remainder of the second column would have been adequate (assuming the subscription to be written in the lower margin, as at the end of Luke and Philippians). The third blank column is explicable only on the basis of the scribe's knowledge of the LE or the combined Intermediate and Long Endings.

⁴³ H. J. Milne and T. C. Skeat, "The Transition from Mark to Luke," in their *Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus* (London: British Museum, 1938) 9-11. While Milne and Skeat claim non-inclusion of the LE in the original form of Sinaiticus, their own data allows for the possible presence of the 34-word/172-letter Intermediate Ending in whatever original leaves stood in that MS prior to replacement by the cancel-sheet.

⁴⁴ More than enough room exists in Vaticanus' blank space for the Intermediate Ending. However, the space is insufficient to contain the entire LE. Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 87, clearly erred in claiming the blank space left in Vaticanus as "abundantly sufficient to contain the twelve verses." See Maurice A. Robinson, "The Ending of Mark in Codex Vaticanus: A Feasible Solution," Paper presented to the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Collegedale, Tennessee, March 1993, where calculations suggest that the scribe of Vaticanus apparently misestimated the word count of the LE due to a mental haplographic leap from -ν κἀκεῖνοι α- in 16:10-11 to the identical sequence of letters in 16:12-13, thus excluding 16:11-12 from his estimate.

"I TOO, DISLIKE IT": Apparent Contradictions versus Other Canonical Narratives

The deliberate excision of the LE could find a rationale in Eusebius' response to the questions of Marinus (essentially repeated in Jerome's response to Hedibia,⁴⁵ as well as in comments appearing in Victor of Antioch). To some fourth-century readers, certain LE matters involving chronology, location, and events were in apparent contradiction to statements appearing in the remaining canonical gospels.⁴⁶ While Marinus specifically questioned one apparent contradiction (between Mk 16:9 and the account in Mt 28:1),⁴⁷ other more problematic matters could be cited.⁴⁸ Such is the case even among modern writers. Issues involving disbelief within the LE as an apparent contradiction against the remaining three gospels are noted in detail by James Snapp, Jr.:⁴⁹

Where does the author of the LE get the idea that Mary Magdalene saw the Lord, and reported to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that the disciples – not just Thomas, but the entire group – had not believed her, and that Jesus rebuked the Eleven (not just Thomas) for refusing to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen? Not from John. Not from Luke. And certainly not from Matthew, who concludes one scene in 28:10 with Jesus telling the women to tell His brothers to go to Galilee, and begins another scene in 28:16 with the eleven disciples going to Galilee. There's no hint in Matthew that they did not believe the women's report Our meticulous and imitative author . . . , instead of affirming his sources, . . . created a fresh new event in 16:11 – the disciples' rejection of Mary Magdalene's report that she had seen Jesus alive – and another fresh new event in 16:14 – Jesus' rebuke of the disciples for their refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.⁵⁰

To this could be added the fact noted by many commentators and stated with clarity by Delbert Burkett, who noted the aggravated discontinuity between Mark's resurrection narrative and the Gospel of Matthew, in that

⁴⁵ In his letter to Hedibia (*Ep.* 120), Jerome notes that the LE could be rejected "especially since it seems to narrate what is different from and contradictory to the other evangelists" (quoted from Metzger, "St. Jerome's Explicit References," 182).

⁴⁶ Kelhoffer, "The Witness," 80, notes that "the importance of answering such questions is easily recognized at a period when the four NT Gospels had been collected and alleged discrepancies in scripture were . . . scrutinized by critics."

⁴⁷ Marinus asked "How is it, that, according to Matthew [xxviii. 1], the Saviour appears to have risen 'in the end of the Sabbath,' but, according to Mark [xvi. 9], 'early the first day of the week?'" (quoted from Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 44, punctuation *sic*). Jerome responds to essentially the same question (Kelhoffer, "The Witness," 53), while Victor of Antioch notes that Mark 16:9 opens with a "statement which seems inconsistent with Matthew's narrative" (Kelhoffer, "The Witness," 62).

⁴⁸ Westcott and Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," 47, list several apparent contradictions as part of a "jarring moral discontinuity."

⁴⁹ Related comments regarding apparent contradiction when mentioning apostolic disbelief are noted by Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Development of Greek and the New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 167 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 246: "According to Mark's longer ending and Luke, all of the disciples refused to believe . . . whereas according to Matthew, only some of the disciples doubted . . . , and according to Jn 20:25-27 only one disciple, Thomas, refused to believe."

⁵⁰ James Snapp, Jr., comment posted on an internet text-critical discussion list, 26 Feb 2007 <groups.yahoo.com/group/textualcriticism/message/2962>. Snapp does *not* consider the LE to be what Mark intended to write as the conclusion of his Gospel account, but "a freestanding composition that Mark's survivors attached to Mk. 1:1-16:8 before the initial release of the book," James Snapp, Jr., comment to the internet text-critical discussion list, 12 Jan 2007 <groups.yahoo.com/group/textualcriticism/message/2841>. Snapp offers a three-part summary of external and internal considerations on the website <www.curtisvillechristian.org/MarkOne.html>, with a 107pp monograph-length study available from <www.textexcavation.com/snapp/PDF/snappmark.pdf>.

Mark looks forward to a Galilean resurrection narrative (Mark 14:28; 16:7), which the longer ending does not provide . . . [A] scribe may have concluded that the longer ending was not the original ending of Mark and so omitted it.⁵¹

Apparent contradictions by themselves, however, might not constitute sufficient ground for removal of the LE or the substitution of an alternative ending.⁵² Other factors, however, might increase the cumulative case so as to impel some scribes at various times and locations to eliminate or replace the problematic LE.⁵³ At least two of these issues should be examined further.

Sign Gift Concerns

Beyond apparent internal contradiction, a more pressing issue involves the specific sign gifts stated to accompany those who believe. After the legitimization of Christianity under Constantine, a possible area of concern involved perceived difficulties if certain "sign gifts" might be claimed in support of some revived form of prophetic leadership, particularly neo-Montanism.⁵⁴ It would be no wonder were certain of the orthodox to have an interest in eliminating an appeal to continuing prophetic signs and wonders, lest a claim of advanced prophetic revelation become destructive of orthodoxy.⁵⁵ In view of these considerations, removal or replacement may have been viewed as the optimal solution. Attention thus is directed to the Intermediate Ending.

"THE AUTOCRATS AMONG US": The Creation of the Intermediate Ending

The Intermediate (or "shorter") Ending is acknowledged to be non-Markan, and secondary to the canonically transmitted form of that gospel. Vocabulary and style as well as external evidence agree on this point. For whatever reason, the Intermediate Ending was created to provide a reasonable conclusion to the abrupt "for they were afraid" of 16:8.⁵⁶ The question is whether the Short Ending at 16:8 (which in some manner preceded the creation of the Intermediate Ending) resulted from deliberate exclusion of the LE, or whether the Short Ending reflected the canonically transmitted autograph.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Delbert Burkett, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources: From Proto-Mark to Mark* (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004) 263.

⁵² Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 65, claims that "such discrepancies and difficulties . . . could never by themselves account for the omission of the *whole* of Mk. 16:9-20. Such a radical action . . . requires an objectionable exegetical surd that . . . striking at the vital centre of the church's life, threatens its very existence" [emphasis original].

⁵³ Some modern apologists (e. g. David Robert Palmer) have concluded that the LE is "impossible to harmonize" with the remaining canonical gospels. Palmer claims that some of these "other contradictions involving the ending of Mark . . . do not show themselves until . . . a harmonization of the gospels" is attempted, stating specifically that Mk 16:12-13 "contradicts what Luke 24:33-35 says"; also, that Mk 16:9 ("he appeared first to Mary of Magdala") appears "impossible to reconcile with the other accounts" that claim "Jesus first appeared to the other women . . . and then to Mary of Magdala"; Palmer, posted on the tc-alternate-list, 22 Jan 2007 <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TC-Alternate-list/message/1141>>.

⁵⁴ Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 65, suggests that a deliberate excision of Mk 16:9-20 may have occurred in reaction to "the kind of threat, for example, that was represented in such second-century sectarian phenomena as the Montanist movement."

⁵⁵ Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 65-74, considers sign-gift abuse as motivating "a third way of dealing with these problems . . . to suppress the verses by omitting them from some copies" (70). Farmer states pointedly, "Mk. 16:9-20 contains promises of Jesus to which the church has never succeeded in accommodating itself, except by unconscious repression" (65); thus, "it is possible to see how the practice of ending Mark with ἐφοβουντο γαρ could have arisen, and . . . how manuscripts with this reading could have become current in some locales and remained in circulation until difficulties fed by those verses no longer posed a threat to the order, peace and well being of the church" (70-71).

⁵⁶ As stated by Wilfred L. Knox, "The Ending of St. Mark's Gospel, *HTR* 35 (1942) 15, "The usual 'form' of popular stories . . . demands that you must round off your incident properly, leaving nothing to the imagination."

⁵⁷ Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 123-125, swiftly passes over the Intermediate Ending as a peculiarity having no value. This becomes the weakest part of Burgon's volume, primarily caused by the knowledge of the

The Intermediate Ending reads as follows:⁵⁸

<p>Παντα δε τα παρηγγελμενα τοις περι τον ΠΕΤΡΟΝ συντομως, ἐξηγγειλαν. Μετα δε ταυτα και αυτος ο Ιησους, απο ανατολης και αχρι δυσεως, ἐξαπεστειλεν δι' αυτων το ιερον και αφοαρτον κηρυγμα της αιωνιου σωτηριας. Ἀμην.</p>	<p>But they reported all things having been communicated concisely to those around Peter. Now after these things, even Jesus himself sent forth by means of them, from the East even to the West, the sacred and incorruptible proclamation of the eternal salvation. Amen</p>
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This Intermediate Ending by itself is found only in Old Latin MS *k* (Codex Bobbiensis);⁵⁹ it appears in tandem with the LE in MSS L/019, Ψ/044, 083, 099, 274^{mg}, 579, and L-1602, and in the versional sy^{hmg} cop^{sa mss} cop^{bo mss} and eth^{mss}.⁶⁰ All these witnesses date from the fourth century and later, with Old Latin *k* being the earliest (4th/5th century).⁶¹ The Intermediate Ending lacks patristic support, and its limited versional support does not pre-date the 4th century. The Greek MSS containing the Intermediate Ending tend to reflect the Alexandrian texttype, suggesting an Egyptian origin (its presence in the single Old Latin MS and several Ethiopic and Bohairic MSS – the latter following the Intermediate Ending with the LE – may reflect borrowing from an Egyptian source).

Old Latin *k*, however, performs “creative embellishment” within the entire Markan resurrection narrative. Mk 16:8, for example, is edited to eliminate an apparent contradiction by removing the phrase “and they said nothing to anyone.” In addition, Mk 16:3 in that MS is amplified thus:

But suddenly at the third hour of the day there was darkness over the whole circle of the earth, and angels descended from the heavens, and as he [the Lord] was rising . . . in the glory of the living God, at the same time they ascended with him; and immediately it was light. Then the women went to the tomb . . .⁶²

This embellishment parallels the expansions typical of the apocryphal Gospel of Peter, which at this point includes a “speaking cross” accompanying the two men who “descended from heaven in a great brightness,” bringing Jesus out of the tomb.⁶³

Some of the Intermediate Ending material appears mingled with elements of the LE in a Coptic “postscript” to the Egyptian Gnostic treatise, *Pistis Sophia*, which begins in mid-sentence:

Intermediate Ending in his day only in MS L/019 (in a footnote Burgon acknowledges an inability to comprehend Scholz’ comment regarding MS 274, which has the Intermediate Ending in the margin).

⁵⁸ Greek text from NA²⁷; English translation by the present writer.

⁵⁹ Elliott, “Text and Language,” 256. Elliott there further suggests that “Lat. [vt. a] may also have originally contained the shorter ending only” (brackets original).

⁶⁰ Elliott’s MS 0112 is now known to be part of MS 083 (along with 0235); NA²⁷, Appendix 1, “Codices Graeci et Latini,” 695, lists the contents of 083+0112+0235.

⁶¹ MS 083 is of the 6th/7th century; 099 of the 7th; L/019 and L-1602 of the 8th; Ψ/044 of the 9th/10th; 274 of the 10th; and 579 of the 13th century.

⁶² Translation in Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, in loc. The common text of Mk 16:3-4 reads “And they said to themselves, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?’ And having looked up they observed that the stone already had been rolled away, yet it was very large.” The expansion in Old Latin *k* occurs after the women’s question.

⁶³ Metzger, *ibid.* For the Greek text and translation of the Gospel of Peter, see Andrew E. Bernhard, *Other Early Christian Gospels: A Critical Edition of the Surviving Greek Manuscripts*, Library of New Testament Studies, 315 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2006) 49-83. Cf. Erwin Preuschen, *Antilegomena: Die Reste der außerkanonischen Evangelien und urchristlichen Überlieferungen* (Gieszen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1905) 19-20.

... the righteous. They came forth three by three to the four *regions* of the heavens. They preached the *Gospel* of the Kingdom in the whole *world* while the Christ *worked* with them through the word of confirmation and the signs which followed them and the marvels. And in this way the Kingdom of God was known upon the whole earth and in the whole *world* of Israel, as a witness to all *peoples* which exist from the places of the East to the places of the West.⁶⁴

Although this postscript certainly has an Egyptian connection,⁶⁵ few seem to have noted the similarities between this and the longer Markan endings, perhaps because the postscript is not part of the *Pistis Sophia* itself.⁶⁶ The postscript does suggest familiarity with both the Intermediate and Long endings of Mark; this quite possibly is due to MSS that contained *both* endings simultaneously. Horner comments on this phenomenon,

The sentence about the journeys of the Apostles written on the blank leaf bound in with the rest of the volume has no perceptible connection with our text [i. e., the *Pistis Sophia*] and may possibly be the work of some one who, suddenly coming across it in some other document and wishing to preserve it, seized upon this leaf as the only piece of parchment available.⁶⁷

The "some other document" may have been a copy of Mark that contained *both* the Intermediate and Long Ending, with elements of both endings combined by the author of the postscript or already present in the source manuscript; such would fit what is already known from existing Greek manuscripts.⁶⁸

In light of the joint inclusion of both the Intermediate and Long Ending in various Greek MSS, it is possible that the Intermediate Ending was *not* created solely to provide a conclusion to the abrupt 16:8, but rather to provide an *alternate* conclusion to the *known* LE. The present writer suggests a plausible option, involving liturgical and lectionary concerns. From early times, the Greek Orthodox church has read the LE for Matins on the Feast of the Ascension.⁶⁹ As the Sunday readings were developed for the Synaxarion, Mk 15:43-16:8 was assigned to the Liturgy reading for

⁶⁴ Carl Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia*, The Coptic Gnostic Library, Nag Hammadi Studies, 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1978) 385 (Coptic text), 386 (English translation; italics original). The passage begins in mid-sentence as shown. Helpful alternative translations of this passage (without the Coptic text presented) appear in G. R. S. Mead, ed., *Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Miscellany. Being for the most part Extracts from the Books of the Saviour, to which are added Excerpts from a Cognate Literature.* (London: J. M. Watkins, n. d. [1921]) 325; and George Horner, ed., *Pistis Sophia* (London: SPCK, 1924) 199.

⁶⁵ Although apparently written originally in Greek (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s. v., "Pistis Sophia"), the manuscript reflects a form of Gnosticism current in late fourth century Egypt. Cf. Philip David Scott-Moncrieff, *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt* (Cambridge, 1913) 175: "The scheme [of *Pistis Sophia*] betrays here and there marked signs of Egyptian influence, and the fact that the work was sufficiently important to be translated into the native tongue shows without doubt that the sect which inspired it was an Egyptian branch who dwelt in Egypt."

⁶⁶ Mead notes (*Pistis Sophia*, xxiv) that the postscript is "somewhat in the style of the Mark-conclusion." George Horner, ed., *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect, otherwise called Memphitic and Bohairic: With Introduction, Critical Apparatus, and Literal English Translation*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1898) 1:482, when discussing the Intermediate Ending found in two Coptic MSS, notes that "The reference to the rising and setting [i. e., the 'East and West'] occurs also in the . . . paraphrase of the *Pistis Sophia*" (brackets original).

⁶⁷ Horner, *Pistis Sophia*, xxviii. There is no reason to suspect a Gnostic source for the postscript. Of course, on the basis of possession, the copyist of the postscript likely considered the *Pistis Sophia* as somehow authoritative.

⁶⁸ All Greek MSS that contain the Intermediate Ending also contain the LE. Even with Bobbiensis, the scribe's exemplar might not have concluded at 16:8, but may have contained both longer endings, with the scribe simply selecting the first (the Intermediate Ending regularly appears between 16:8 and 16:9 in the MSS whose main text contains both readings) and re-editing 16:8 to eliminate the apparent conflict between that verse and the Intermediate Ending.

⁶⁹ The Liturgy reading for that day (Thursday of the Sixth Week after Pascha) is Lk 24:36-53, along with Ac 1:1-12. See the tables in *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993) 771-780. The LE also is read during Easter week as the third "Gospel of the Resurrection."

the Third Sunday after Easter.⁷⁰ Continuous-text manuscripts were used for liturgical purposes long before the creation of separate lectionary manuscripts, and in some localized quarters (Egypt in particular) the abrupt negative tone concluding that lection may have struck harshly upon those hearing such an ending publicly read, particularly when the lection involved the announcement of the resurrection itself. The doubtful nature of such a liturgical conclusion may have provoked in some circles a pious adjustment in the form of the Intermediate Ending.⁷¹ Such would allow an already lengthy lection to conclude on a positive and evangelistic note without over-extending the text unnecessarily. The Intermediate Ending thus would provide an appropriate conclusion to 16:8 without assuming an actual absence of the LE itself in any particular MS.⁷²

This could explain why all Greek NT MSS that contain the Intermediate Ending also include the LE. The comments in later MSS that contain both endings perhaps reflect (or misunderstand) earlier issues involving liturgical concern.⁷³ That such a scenario could exist is demonstrated by liturgical alterations existing elsewhere within other continuous-text manuscripts.⁷⁴ The insertion of the Intermediate Ending in a small number of Greek MSS between 16:8 and the LE thus appears to testify to a lectionary-related purpose, and does not suggest any doubt regarding the LE itself.

"WE DO NOT ADMIRE WHAT WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND": Style and Vocabulary Issues

Numerous discussions concern the alleged "non-Markan" style and vocabulary of the LE.⁷⁵ Various studies supporting the opposite contention also exist – in particular those of John W. Burgon,⁷⁶ John A. Broadus,⁷⁷ William R. Farmer,⁷⁸ and (recently) Bruce Terry.⁷⁹ Even James Kelhoffer (who rejects Markan authorship of the LE) claims that the supposed "unknown author" of the LE

⁷⁰ Readings for major feast days were developed first, followed by readings for Sundays and Saturdays. Later, weekday readings were added. The Menologion finally added readings for saints' days and special occasions.

⁷¹ Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 191-211, discusses early lectionary practice in relation to the LE and the lection concluding at 16:8. The Intermediate Ending does not come under consideration due to Burgon's swift dismissal of such as a simple anomaly on 123-125 (as mentioned earlier in note 57).

⁷² A similar scenario exists in regard to the omission and/or relocation of the *Pericope Adulterae* among manuscripts of the Fourth Gospel. See Maurice A. Robinson, "Preliminary Observations Regarding the *Pericope Adulterae* based upon Fresh Collations of nearly all Continuous-Text Manuscripts and all Lectionary Manuscripts containing the Passage," *Filología Neotestamentaria* 13 (2000) 35-59.

⁷³ The comments appearing in the MSS that contain both the Intermediate and Long Endings are the following: "This also is carried somewhere" (L sy^{hmg}); "In some manuscripts these things appear" (099 sams); "In other manuscripts these things are not written" (L-1602); "In some of the manuscripts until here [16:8] the evangelist has completed, to which point also Eusebius Pamphilus noted in his canons; but in many other copies also these things appear" (f¹); "Now also these things are carried after the 'for they were afraid'" (L Ψ 0112).

⁷⁴ See Maurice A. Robinson, "Incipit/Explicit: Lectionary Influence on the Continuous-Text Manuscripts belonging to the Byzantine Textform," paper presented to the 55th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, Georgia, November 2003, 35: "Such crossovers tend to spread only among a limited minority of [continuous-text] manuscripts in any given case Where such minority incursion appears . . . , the direction of influx seems to be primarily from the lectionary . . . over to the continuous-text manuscripts." Phrases typically added due to lectionary requirements include the name "Jesus," "Let him hear who has ears to hear," "At that time," and the like. Other passages (e. g. the Bloody Sweat of Lk 22:43-44) are relocated within some lections – even to different gospels. Some passages (e. g., the doxology of the Lord's Prayer in Mt 6:13) are not spoken by the laity but spoken or whispered by the priest.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Elliott, "Text and Language," 255-262; also, Danove, *Linguistics and Exegesis*, 70n6, 71nn7, 8; and Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 546-547.

⁷⁶ Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 136-190.

⁷⁷ John A. Broadus, "Exegetical Studies: Style of Mark xvi. 9-20, as bearing upon the Question of Genuineness," *Baptist Quarterly* 3 (1869) 355-362.

⁷⁸ Farmer, *Last Twelve Verses*, 83-103.

⁷⁹ Bruce Terry, "The Style Of The Long Ending Of Mark," 9pp. <bible.ovc.edu/terry/articles/mkendsty.htm>. Terry examines stylistic features of the LE in comparison with the unquestioned portions of Mark as these relate to categories of "juncture, vocabulary, phraseology, and miscellaneous" (par. 2).

deliberately imitated Markan style and vocabulary at various points.⁸⁰ As Delbert Burkett states, "Someone in the early church thought that 16:9-20 served as an appropriate continuation of 16:1-8. That someone may well have been Mark himself."⁸¹

Without reviewing all previous claims and replies, the present writer includes a few observations drawn from his own study:⁸²

Total words in the LE:	= 166
LE words occurring elsewhere in Mark	
– in an <i>identical</i> form: ⁸³	= 106 (63.8%).
– in parallel parsing or declensional forms:	= 39 (23.5%)
– in parallel compounded or non-compounded forms:	= 9 (5.4%)
Words in LE with <i>some</i> related parallel elsewhere in Mark:	= 154 (92.7%).

Words *not* paralleled within Mark:

Word	Matthew	Luke	John	Acts	Entire NT
πενθεω	2	1	0	0	11
θεασομαι (2x)	4	3	7	4	24
ἕτερος	7	32	1	18	98
ἐνδεκα	1	2	0	2	6
ὄφις	3	2	1	0	14
θανασιμος	0	0	0	0	0
βλαπτω	0	1	0	0	2
ἀναλαμβάνω	0	0	0	8	13
πανταχου	0	1	0	4	7
συνεργεω	0	0	0	0	5
βεβαιωω	0	0	0	0	8

Except for ἕτερος, the supposed non-Markan words of the LE are rare even within the remaining three gospels. At most, the *general* rarity of these particular words is as appropriate to Mark as to any other gospel.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 49, 73, 121, states, "Numerous parts of 16:9-20 bear a striking resemblance to Mark 1:1-16:8 . . . Such perceptiveness to the subtleties of the style of 1:1-16:8 bespeaks an author who had read Mark very closely . . . The LE's numerous Markan words and phrases reflect an effort to imitate the style of the work which this author augmented." Kelhoffer, 65-122, provides a complete discussion of LE stylistic imitation, not only of Mark, but (theoretically) of the other canonical gospels.

⁸¹ Burkett, *Rethinking*, 254. In terms of Synoptic relationships, Burkett further notes, "Even if the Gospel of Mark served as the source for Matthew and Luke, it might still be based on earlier sources, such that it reflects . . . the style of pre-Markan sources" (255).

⁸² The Byzantine Textform is the basis for tabulation, but the data do not differ significantly within the NA²⁷/UBS⁴ eclectic text. Markan style would be enhanced, however, were the NA/UBS text used for comparison, since πανταχου occurs in that text at Mk 1:28, while otherwise absent from the Byzantine Textform. The NA/UBS comparison base would require removal of πανταχου from the accompanying chart as well as a minor adjustment in the quantity and percentage of tabulated agreement. I thank James Snapp, Jr., for calling this to my attention.

⁸³ While form alone does not necessarily reflect syntactical use, identity of form does suggest commonality of expression by a given author, and cannot exclude authorial originality.

⁸⁴ Burkett, *Rethinking*, 254, astutely observes that opponents of the LE "assume that all of this material [1:1-16:8] reflects Mark's style and further that Mark's style is fully reflected in this material." In so doing, "implicitly they presuppose that Mark was an author who composed all of this material, not an editor who compiled most of it from earlier sources."

"WHEN THEY BECOME SO DERIVATIVE AS TO BECOME UNINTELLIGIBLE"

The LE does use certain words in a peculiar manner: Elliott, for example, declares,

The verb πορευομαι . . . is not a Markan word. It is however found three times in this longer ending . . . Mark does not use the simple form of this verb.⁸⁵

Certainly, πορευομαι occurs exclusively within the LE; elsewhere in Mark *only* compounded forms with εἰσ- ἐκ- παρ- προσ- and συμ- are used. Yet it is fallacious to conclude that Mark could never use the uncompounded form when such might suit his particular purpose.

Compare a parallel situation: the LE uses only the *compounded* forms of ἀκολουθεω (prefixed by παρ- and ἐπ-). Elsewhere in Mark the *uncompounded* form occurs 20 times. Elliott's approach theoretically should claim the uncompounded form as "Markan," while the compounded form would be labeled a stylistic proclivity of the author of the LE. However, Mark in one (and only one!) location *does* use a *compounded* form (συνακολουθεω, Mk 5:37). Had this usage *not* existed, the LE opponents would have added this to their vocabulary and style differences as part of their LE "non-Markan" vocabulary.⁸⁶

Similarly, Elliott and others have claimed that the two occurrences of ἀπιστεω in the LE are "also non-Markan."⁸⁷ Yet within Mark three instances of the nominal and adjectival forms of the same root appear (ἀπιστια, Mk 6:6; 9:24; ἀπιστος, Mk 9:19). Obviously, cognate usage involving parallel root forms remains an authorial component and demonstrates that many of the supposedly "non-Markan" terms found in the LE do fall within a reasonable expectation regarding Markan usage. Far too many problems arise from excessive claims regarding vocabulary and style involving a limited portion of text.⁸⁸

Style and vocabulary remain ephemeral, particularly when dealing with a limited portion of text and matters involving the Synoptic Problem.⁸⁹ As a parallel example, objections have been raised to the Johannine authenticity of the final chapter of the Fourth Gospel, despite its Johannine vocabulary and style and the unanimity of the external manuscript, versional, and patristic evidence for its authorial integrity and original canonical inclusion. Gilbert van Belle makes a further point when commenting on the lack of Johannine characteristics within the Fourth Gospel:

The absence of Johannine characteristics in some narrative parts of the Fourth Gospel . . . does not prove that these passages belong to a source . . . Five miracle stories (2:1-12; 4:46-47.50-54; 5:1-9; 6:16-21; 9:1-2.6-7) contain only a few Johannine characteristics . . . In most cases, the absence of Johannine characteristics is meaningless, because the characteristics do not appear in any narrative material in John . . . U. Schnelle rightly remarks: "Extensive literary-critical or

⁸⁵ Elliott, "Text and Language," 258.

⁸⁶ In Mk 5:37, the uncompounded form of ἀκολουθεω occurs in MSS A K Π 33 1241. Since Elliott does not cite the compounded forms in the LE as "non-Markan," it must be presumed that he accepts the compounded συνακολουθεω in 5:37 as original to Mark.

⁸⁷ Elliott, "Text and Language," 259.

⁸⁸ Elliott, "Text and Language," 262n20 suggests that the various tallies of "non-Markan" terms within the LE are "low" and represent "an undercount." In contrast, the present writer suggests that *overcounts* in this matter are more frequent, and in most writers these exist primarily to embellish an *a priori* view of LE non-authenticity based primarily on its absence from MSS X and B.

⁸⁹ Burkett, *Rethinking*, 255, claims in contrast that the LE reflects "five of the features of Markan style" (the use of ἀναστας, πρωι, κηρυσσειν, δαιμονια ἐκβαλλειν, ἄρρωστοι, and -χου as adverb; he also adds "possibly" the use of σκληροκαρδια).

tradition-historical theories based on stylistic criticism cannot rest simply on words that occur once, twice, or three times in the whole of the Gospel."⁹⁰

Such issues apply equally to the style and vocabulary controversies surrounding the LE. James Snapp, Jr., calls attention to the peculiar inconsistency wherein various scholars can posit a supposed "lost ending" of Mark that was drawn upon and utilized by Matthew — a purely conjectural hypothesis with *no* manuscript evidence. Yet the same scholars inform their readers that the existing LE *must* be rejected on the basis of two MSS plus internal vocabulary and stylistic criteria, despite its strong external support and internal Markan elements.⁹¹ Such factors demonstrate the proverbial truth that "Cavil, if it do not find an hole, will make one."⁹² Ross J. Purdy pertinently assesses the real problem in relation to New Testament textual criticism [TC]:

The state of affairs is one in which we find an expectation that everyone can be an armchair text critic and employ canons arbitrarily. Practically, this works out in every translation coming out with different readings for different reasons. To me, that is not science and it is not critical. There is a fundamental fatal failure in the philosophy of TC.⁹³

Staccato Style and the Long Ending

The LE has been criticized for its condensed and awkward narrative elements. Yet Mark does the same elsewhere. As B. H. Streeter stated, regarding the whole of Mark's gospel, "Mark reads like a shorthand account of a story by an impromptu speaker."⁹⁴ Bernard Orchard applies Streeter's comment directly to the LE, suggesting its "Markan originality" and canonical validity, lacking only Petrine authority for that section.⁹⁵ The same abbreviated style is also seen in Mark's 31-word summary of the lengthy Temptation narrative found in Matthew and Luke (exact parallels underlined; similarities italicized where appropriate):⁹⁶

Και εὐθὺς το πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. Καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ ἐρημῷ ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα, πειραζόμενος ὑπο τοῦ Σατανα. Καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκονοῦν αὐτῷ.

And immediately *the Spirit* throws him out into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness *forty days*, *being tested by Satan*. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels ministered to him.

⁹⁰ Gilbert van Belle, "Style Criticism and the Fourth Gospel," in Patrick Chatelion Counet and Ulrich Berges, *One Text, A Thousand Methods: Studies in Memory of Sjef van Tilborg*, Biblical Interpretation Series, 71 (Leiden: Brill, 2005) 303. The citation is from Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 156.

⁹¹ James Snapp, Jr., comment posted to the Yahoo textual criticism discussion list, 11 Jan 07 <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/textualcriticism/message/2837>>.

⁹² "The Translators to the Reader," Preface to the Authorized Version, 1611, par. 1.

⁹³ Ross J. Purdy, message posted on the "tc-alternate-list," 25 Oct 2006 <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TC-Alternate-list/message/665>>.

⁹⁴ Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1936) 163.

⁹⁵ B. Orchard, "Mark and the Fusion of Traditions," in F. Van Segbroeck et al., eds., *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, 3 vols. (Leuven: University Press, 1992) 799. Orchard suggests that Mark's record of the impromptu narrative declared by Peter was cut short by Peter's imprisonment and/or martyrdom, at which point "Mark himself felt obliged to take responsibility for the so-called Long Ending . . . , and so to publish the text in its completed form."

⁹⁶ Some words are both underlined and italicized due to differences between the Matthean and Lukan accounts in relation to the Markan wording. No particular view regarding Markan priority or the Synoptic Problem is implied; the concern involves only the longer and summarized forms of a parallel incident within the Synoptic Gospels.

While the Markan summary statement contains elements found in Matthew or Luke, Mark's account is no mere abridgment of either (too much is left out). Mark also adds elements not found in either parallel location (the intensifying εὐθους for τότε and ἐκβαλλει for ἀνηχθη/ῆγετο; and the new informational detail και ἦν μετὰ των θηριων). Short summary abridgment, with some elements altered or added clearly reflects "Markan style" – at least within the demonstrable range of that author, including the LE.

"ONE MUST MAKE A DISTINCTION": Vocabulary-Related Considerations

In the 19th century, John A. Broadus and John W. Burgon independently compared the style and vocabulary of the LE with that of various undoubted Markan portions.⁹⁷ Broadus examined the 12 verses preceding the LE (15:44-16:8), and found 17 words, phrases, or stylistic usages "not elsewhere employed by Mark."⁹⁸ Burgon examined Mk 1:1-12 and 1:9-20. In the first segment he found Markan themes that recur in the LE;⁹⁹ in the second segment he found structural and vocabulary parallels to the LE.¹⁰⁰ More recently, Bruce Terry examined Mk 15:40-16:4 in the same manner, finding some 20-22 items used once in Mark within that portion, with some 13 words *hapax* to Mark.¹⁰¹

The present writer has experimented with two passages, one uniquely Markan, and the other with parallels but containing some unique Markan elements.

1) *A Uniquely Markan Segment.* The seed growing secretly (Mk 4:26-29) occurs only in Mark.¹⁰² Of the 62 words that comprise this parable, 7 words are peculiar to Mark (11.2%), along with some short phrases (ὡς ἐαν; ἐαν ἀνθρωπος; ὡς οὐκ).

2) *A Segment with Parallels plus Markan Elements:* The arrest in the garden (Mark 14:42-52) is paralleled in the remaining gospels, but Mark's version contains the unique account of the youth fleeing naked. Of the 202 words that make up this pericope, 15 are hapax within Mark (7.4%), with 3 or 4 uniquely Markan phrases also present.

Both passages should be compared to the LE, which contains 166 words, approximately 15 being unique (9.04%). The percentage of unique words stands midway between the limits of the Markan sample passages above, and suggests that far less is gained from vocabulary and stylistic analysis than often is claimed. Appeals to "Markan style" or "Markan vocabulary" thus appear problematic, and rest upon data more coincidental and transitory than substantial. Such comparisons do not disprove Markan authorship of the LE, nor suggest that the LE is based upon derivative tradition. The LE may best be regarded as a Markan summary of resurrection appearances, provided as a fulfillment *testimonium*.

"THAT WHICH IS ON THE OTHER HAND, GENUINE": Thematic Considerations

Beyond inconclusive matters of vocabulary and style, thematic aspects of the gospel according to Mark should be considered.¹⁰³ Since the opening statement of Mk 1:1 presents "The beginning of

⁹⁷ Broadus, "Style of Mark," 355-362; Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 136-190.

⁹⁸ Broadus, "Style of Mark," 361.

⁹⁹ Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 173-175.

¹⁰⁰ Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 142-145, 181-184. Burgon, however, considers vocabulary and stylistic examination "untrustworthy," "coarse," "delusive," "clumsy," and "vulgar." Burgon only "condescends" to use this method simply because his opponents make such an appeal.

¹⁰¹ Terry, "Style Of The Long Ending," 3. Terry acknowledges at least 20 unique items; the count of 22 is "depending on textual variants."

¹⁰² This passage remains unparalleled within the Synoptic tradition, but certain of its elements *may* reflect a Markan analogy to the Matthean wheat and tares parable.

the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" as Mark's primary theme, one would expect its ending to demonstrate a fulfillment of that claim. Without the LE, no such fulfillment exists: Jesus is shown to be the Son of God with power and majesty only in the LE, culminating with Christ's ascension and heavenly enthronement at the right hand of God. In fact, the pattern of promise/prediction and fulfillment permeates the Gospel of Mark. As N. Clayton Croy remarks,

Mark's consistent habit is to *demonstrate the reliability* of Jesus' words by narrating their fulfillment, even when that narration is incidental to the flow of the main story. In Mark 7:29, for example, Jesus tells the Syrophenician woman who comes seeking healing for her daughter, "You may go – the demon has left your daughter." The reader can trust Jesus' words; the pericope can conclude. But it doesn't. Mark 7:30 says, "So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone." Similarly, in Mark 10:46-52, Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus. In verse 52a Jesus says, "Go; your faith has made you well." Surely Jesus' words will come to pass. Yes, we know they come to pass because Mark *tells* us they do in 52b: "Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way."¹⁰⁴

Like the other Synoptics, Mark contains OT prophecy and Jesus' prediction of his session at the right hand of God; yet the fulfillment is *not* recorded by Matthew or Luke, but remains only a future event (Mt 22:44; 26:64; Lk 20:42; 22:69). The LE, however, follows Mark's pattern, and makes the cycle complete: OT prophecy (Mk 12:36); Jesus' prediction (Mk 14:62), and the actual fulfillment (Mk 16:19).¹⁰⁵

Two other LE items reflect completion of themes found within the gospel of Mark. The first involves an "Elijah motif," while the other involves various parallels and antitheses between narrative portions of Mark's gospel and the LE.

"LITERALISTS OF THE IMAGINATION": The Elijah Emphasis

Warren A. Gage has noted that many themes and patterns within Mark "extend into the disputed verses at the end of the book . . . strongly supporting their authenticity." Gage further contends that Mark presents Jesus as a "New Elijah."¹⁰⁶ This thematic emphasis bears directly on the LE, since Mk 16:19 parallels Septuagintal language relating to Elijah's ascension into heaven.¹⁰⁷ As Gage notes,

The number of references to Elijah/Elisha is remarkable within the short compass of this shortest of the Gospels . . . The prominence of the Elijah theme to Mark is further suggested by the fact that references to Elijah frame the beginning and ending of the Gospel, as well as the passage at the center [Mk 9:12-13].¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Cox, *History and Critique*, 89, when criticizing Farmer's vocabulary-based analysis, states, "It is . . . difficult to understand why Farmer limited his 'internal evidence' to such a linguistic comparison. One must wonder why Farmer did not make a theological comparison between the longer ending and Mark 1:1-16:8."

¹⁰⁴ Croy, *Mutilation*, 58-59, emphasis original. Croy further notes (69n39) that the same promise/prediction and fulfillment motif applies to the cursing of the fig tree, Mk 11:12-14, 20-22.

¹⁰⁵ Apart from the LE, this fulfillment is recorded only outside of the Gospels: Ac 2:33-34; Ro 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1Pe 3:22; cf. the hints in Rev 5:1, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Warren Austin Gage, "Jesus as the New Elijah and the Textual Question regarding the Ending of the Gospel of Mark" (unpublished, 2001; forthcoming as a chapter in a book). Gage is professor of Old Testament Exegesis at Knox Theological Seminary, Florida.

¹⁰⁷ Gage, "Jesus as the New Elijah," 1. On p. 9, Gage calls attention to the verbal parallels between the two ascension accounts: Mk 16:19, "after he spoke to them, he was received up into heaven"; LXX 2Kgs 2:11, "and they were talking . . . and Elijah was received up . . . into heaven" (emphasis original). Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 111, also compares the ascension language of the LE (ἀνεληφθη εἰς οὐρανόν) with identical words describing Elijah's ascension in both 2Kgs 2:11 and 1Macc 2:58.

¹⁰⁸ Gage, "Jesus as the New Elijah," *ibid.* Gage includes (1-2) the allusions to Malachi 3:1 and 4:5 at the beginning of Mark's gospel; the placing of Elijah ahead of Moses in Mk 9:4; and the question whether Elijah will

Gage also cites allusional parallels to the Elijah narratives that transcend the nine named occurrences of Elijah in Mark.¹⁰⁹ The claims of Gage thus parallel those of Wayne Meeks relative to the Moses theme within the Gospel of John.¹¹⁰ If, as most scholars agree, Meeks' claim regarding the Moses theme in John is valid, so also should Gage's claims regarding the Elijah theme in Mark be accepted. If so, Gage's point becomes absolute: a true ending of Mark (whether the LE or some speculative "lost" ending) would require Christ's ascension in order to complete the "Elijah motif" within that gospel. In addition, the passing of Elijah's mantle to Elisha as a sign of power finds a corresponding parallel in the LE sign gifts promised to Jesus' followers who remain behind after his ascension.¹¹¹

"IN ALL ITS RAWNESS": Related Parallels between Mark 1 and Mark 16

The present writer has explored additional parallels between the undoubted portions of Mark and the LE. The first set involves parallels between the opening and closing portions of Mark (assuming the LE as the intended conclusion). The following linguistic and thematic parallels exist between the commencement of Jesus' public ministry in Mk 1:32-39 and elements found in the LE at the conclusion of his earthly ministry:¹¹²

Mark 1:32-39	Mark 16:9-20
1:32 Narrative setting: as the sun goes down	16:9 Narrative setting: when the sun rises early
1:33 many people	16:9 one alone (Mary Magdalene)
1:33 People appear at the door of the house where Jesus was	16:9 Jesus appears to Mary outside the door of the tomb (cf. 16:3, 8)
1:34 Healing many having diseases	16:18 Laying hands on the sick for healing
1:34 Casting out many demons	16:17 Casting out demons
1:34 No speaking by the demons	16:17 Disciples to speak in various languages
1:34 (Unbelieving) demons knew him to be the Christ	16:16 Unbelieving humans will be condemned
1:35 Having risen very early he went forth	16:9 Having risen early he appeared 16:20 Having gone forth
1:35 And he departed into a desert place	16:13 Having departed (cf. 16:6 a place)
1:35 Simon [Peter] and those with him followed	16:10 She reported to those with him [and (16:7) to Peter].
1:38 And Jesus says to them, Let us go into the surrounding towns	16:15 And Jesus says to them, Go into all the world
1:38 in order that also there I might proclaim	16:15 Proclaim the gospel
1:39 And he was proclaiming . . . in the whole of Galilee	16:20 And they went forth proclaiming everywhere

come down to rescue Christ from the cross in Mk 15:36, where the latter text "anticipates the conclusion of the Gospel wherein Jesus is translated into heaven in a manner remarkably like Elijah (Mark 16:19)."

¹⁰⁹ Mk 1:6, 12-14; 3:22; 4:41; 7:24-25; 12:1-7; 14:12-14; 15:25, 31-39.

¹¹⁰ Wayne Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1967).

¹¹¹ Gage, "Jesus as the New Elijah," 9.

¹¹² Although the material preceding Mk 1:32 also contains parallel elements, the quantity of such words and incidents increases in the current passage. Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 182-184, saw in Mk 1:9-20 "verbal coincidences" that possess "argumentative weight and significancy," as well as "essential parallelism" (emphasis original). He considers such "a profounder phenomenon" because of its clearly chiasmic nature. Burgon concludes (184), "It is surely not an unmeaning circumstance . . . that the Evangelist should at the very outset and at the very conclusion of his Gospel, so express himself!"

Parallels between Mark 3, Mark 6, Mark 7-8, and Mark 16

Although the chiasmic-like parallels and antitheses between the opening of Mark and the LE might impress, more can be claimed. The same thematic elements found in the LE recur elsewhere within Mark. These parallels should be considered in light of their cumulative effect as they might bear upon the authenticity of the LE. Certainly such parallels are more than coincidental: they reflect existing structural and thematic elements that appear throughout canonical Mark, and which find their culmination in the LE.¹¹³ Consider, for example, the disciples' first commissioning in Mk 3:14-15 in comparison to the disciples' final commissioning in the LE:

Mark 3:14-15	Mark 16:9-20
3:14 Christ appoints Twelve	16:14 Christ appears to the Eleven
3:14 That he might send them out to proclaim	16:15 He tells them to go and proclaim
3:15 He gives them authority to heal diseases	16:18 They shall place hands upon the infirm and they shall recover
3:15 And to cast out demons	16:17 They shall cast out demons

Another set of parallels relates to the subsequent commissioning of the disciples in Mk 6:7-13:

Mark 6:7-13	Mark 16:9-20
6:7 Christ calls toward him the Twelve	16:14 Christ appears to the Eleven
6:7 And he begins to send them out	16:15 He tells them to go and proclaim
6:7 He gives them authority over unclean spirits	16:17 They shall cast out demons in my name
6:12 Having gone forth they were proclaiming	16:20 Having gone forth they proclaimed
6:13 They cast out many demons	16:17 They shall cast out demons
6:13 They anointed with oil many infirm	16:18 They shall place hands upon the infirm
6:13 And they shall recover	16:18 And they shall become well

A further set of parallels exists in the segment concerning Christ's ministry in Mark 7:24-8:38. The following linguistic, thematic and sequential parallels exist between this portion and the LE:¹¹⁴

Mark 7:24-8:38	Mark 16:9-20
7:24 Having arisen, he departed	16:9 Having risen 16:13 Having departed
7:24-30 Into Tyre; 7:31-37 Into Sidon; 8:22 Into Bethsaida	16:15 Go into all the world
7:24-30 Casts out demon	16:17 They shall cast out demons
7:31-37 Dumb man healed, speaks for the first time with a "new" tongue	16:17 They shall speak with new tongues
7:36 And he the more proclaimed	16:15 proclaim the gospel to all creation 16:20 And these having gone forth proclaimed everywhere
8:11 Seeking a (refused) sign from him	16:17 And (accepted) signs will follow
8:13 Jesus departs to the other side, after speaking to them	16:19 Jesus departs into heaven after speaking to them
8:23 And having laid his hand upon them 8:25 Again he laid hands upon them	16:18 They will lay hands upon the sick and they shall recover

¹¹³ Echos of the LE also appear in 1Peter; these may be of significance, considering the early tradition associating Mark and Peter (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3:39.15). See in particular 1Pet 3:22 (ὅς ἐστιν ἐν δεξιά του θεου πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανὸν) and Mk 16:19 (ἀνεληφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐκαθίσεν ἐκ δεξιῶν του θεου).

¹¹⁴ Other items appearing in Mark 7-8 parallel events within the unquestioned final portion of Mark (16:1-8). Apart from the mention of Peter in 16:7, these parallels are excluded from the present comparison.

8:29 Peter proclaims Jesus is the Christ	16:19-20 Jesus is proclaimed as the Lord
8:31 After three days he will rise; Peter rebukes him	16:9 Now when he was risen (16:7 Tell Peter)
8:34 If anyone wants to follow behind me	16:17 Signs will follow those who believe 16:20 By the signs following
8:35 . . . will save it	16:16 . . . will be saved

"IN DEFIANCE OF THEIR OPINION": Compositional Concerns involving the LE

Many who reject the LE have claimed it to be a later compilation drawn from the other canonical gospels. Certain elements of the LE do parallel material appearing in Matthew, Luke, and even John.¹¹⁵ However, a claim of derivative compilation cannot stand once the unparalleled "additional" material found within the LE is considered. This material is not derived from the remaining canonical gospels, nor from any known non-canonical material; independent uncompiled authorship remains primary in this regard. A summary compiler of pre-existing narrative would closely follow the sources, even if abridging; additional unverifiable material would *not* be created or included. This concept particularly is intensified when some of the additional material appears to involve apparent contradictions that relate to the source material being summarized. Among the additional material within the LE not paralleled in the remaining Synoptics occur the following problematic elements:

- Mary Magdalene appears alone;
- The gathered disciples were "mourning and weeping";
- The disciples disbelieved the initial report;
- Jesus appeared "in another form" to the two who were walking (Luke has "their eyes were held from recognizing him");
- The two were walking "into a field" (Luke says "on the road to Emmaus");
- The report of these two was disbelieved by the eleven;
- Jesus reproached the eleven for unbelief and "hardness of heart" because they had rejected the reports of those who had seen him;
- Belief and baptism appear linked in regard to salvation;
- Five sign gifts are promised those who believe;
- Christ's ascension is followed by his session at the right hand of God;
- The Lord confirms the mission of the disciples by the signs following.

Were an independent writer attempting to summarize the resurrection appearances found in the remaining three gospels (or even those cited in Acts 1 and 1Cor 15), closer parallels would be present and the problematic non-harmonious material would *not* have appeared.¹¹⁶ MS 2145 provides an excellent model of what a true summary narrative should resemble. Although the LE appears normally in this MS, a summary of the LE appears on the two leaves that *precede* the Markan title page, reading as follows:¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Burkett, *Rethinking*, 255, errs, however, in claiming "The stylistic argument against the longer ending . . . stands or falls with the theory of Markan priority." Contrary to this position (held by many), the present writer suggests that one's view of the Synoptic Problem should *not* drive what is basically a text-critical issue; neither should such drive various claims that involve style, vocabulary, and thematic emphases.

¹¹⁶ This factor would seem to negate Kelhoffer's "pastiche" theory regarding the composition of the LE.

¹¹⁷ Kurt Treu, *Die Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments in der UdSSR* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966) 92-95. Literal translation by the present writer. Treu's Greek format has been altered in regard to punctuation and capitalization, and by adding breathings, iota subscript and movable -v. MS 2145 is a vellum manuscript of the four gospels copied by a scribe named John, completed on 23 Feb 1144.

<p>Ἄναστας ὁ χριστος, ὠφθη Μαρια, ἀφ' ἧς τα̅ζ̅ [= ἑπτα] δαιμονια ἐξεβαλεν. Ἐκεινη εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταις· οἱ δε ἠπιστησαν. Ἐπειτα ὠφθη ἐν τη ὁδῷ τοῖς δυσιν, εἶτα τοῖς ἑνδεκα· καὶ ὠνειδισεν τὴν ἀπιστιαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἀπεστειλεν αὐτοὺς κηρυσσεῖν καὶ βαπτίζειν καὶ σημεῖα ποιεῖν. Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀνεληφθη, καὶ τοῦτο τὸ τέλος ἔχει τὸ κατὰ Μαρκὸν εὐαγγέλιον.</p>	<p>Christ having risen, he was seen by Mary, from whom he had cast out the seven demons. That (woman) spoke to the disciples, but they disbelieved. Later he was seen on the road by the two. Then [he appeared] to the eleven, and he reproached their unbelief. And he sent them to proclaim and to baptize and to do signs. And after these things, he was taken up. And this end has the gospel according to Mark.</p>
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The summary is short, accurate, and reasonable. It conveys the sense of the LE, but *without* most of the more controversial additional material. It paraphrases more than copies, and does not reflect direct verbal assimilation. Only 21 words at most (12%) are common to the original LE source; of these, only 3 two-word phrases and one five-word phrase derive from the LE.¹¹⁸ A few other words are slightly altered from what appears in the LE.¹¹⁹

In contrast, the LE often presents an *embellished* and *less* similar context than appears in the presumed source gospels from which these summaries allegedly were derived. The unparalleled LE material should *not* have appeared within a summary document; such affects the question of source and motive in LE composition, particularly in light of the normative pattern for a summary document as demonstrated in MS 2145. This in itself suggests that the Intermediate Ending was *not* intended to serve as an abridgment, but as a *substitute* for the LE, possibly (as noted above) for lectionary purposes.¹²⁰

"ABOVE INSOLENCEN AND TRIVIALITY": Fifteen Points of Summary and Conclusion

(1) The LE *can* be supported and defended as canonically original in accord with the consensus established from theological, thematic, historical, and transmissional considerations.

(2) The LE is as likely to have been written by Mark as by anyone else.¹²¹ This has been demonstrated positively by the Markan elements of vocabulary and style that appear within the LE (Burkett, Kelhoffer) and negatively by the display of alleged "non-Markan" material within unquestioned portions of Mark (Burgon, Broadus, Farmer, and the present writer).¹²² When undoubted Markan portions can be shown to be "less Markan" than the LE, and when the LE can be shown to contain "Markan elements," the various arguments from vocabulary and style lose much of their force.

¹¹⁸ These are the following, according to verse sequence: (9) Ἄναστας, Μαρια, ἀφ' ἧς, ἑπτα δαιμονια; (10) Ἐκεινη, τοῖς; (11) ἠπιστησαν; (12) δυσιν; (14) τοῖς ἑνδεκα, καὶ ὠνειδισεν τὴν ἀπιστιαν αὐτῶν; (16) καὶ; (17) σημεῖα; (19) μετὰ, ἀνεληφθη.

¹¹⁹ For example, κηρυσσεῖν καὶ βαπτίζειν, where the original LE source has (widely separated) κηρῦσατε and βαπτισθεῖς.

¹²⁰ Note that the only LE words in common with the Intermediate Ending are the non-essential δε and τοῖς, as well as the phrase μετὰ δε ταῦτα. Compare this to the 12% words held in common with the LE in the summary of MS 2145.

¹²¹ Burkett, *Rethinking*, 256, pointedly states, "What evidence we have points in the direction of a common editor for Mark 1:1-16:8 and 16:9-20 Since the editor looks like Mark, he probably was Mark If Mark did create the longer ending, then it would be the original ending of the Gospel."

¹²² Farmer's position is qualified: "The least difficult course remains to view these verses as belonging to the autograph of the gospel, though not entirely from the evangelist's hand. He apparently was working with received tradition, probably written in Greek"; William R. Farmer, "A Note on J. N. Birdsall's Review of *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1975," in his *Occasional Notes on Some Points of Interest in New Testament Studies* (Dallas: SMU, Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology, 1980) 19.

(3) Speculative reconstructions regarding "lost original" endings of Mark lack external documentary support and are purely ephemeral.¹²³

(4) A Markan intention to end at 16:8, expecting the reader(s) to supply what is "missing" on the basis of subjective reflection, and thereby intuitively filling in gaps in light of a community-based "resurrection faith" or some such concept, requires a sophisticated postmodern viewpoint not typically found within ancient classical literature (even the short *Fables* of Aesop required *moralia* to explain the point).¹²⁴

(5) A correspondence exists between the "Son of God" theme at the beginning of Mark and the ascension/enthronement motif that concludes the LE.

(6) An "Elijah" theme permeates Mark's gospel, and requires the LE (or something very much like it) in order to complete the cycle by inclusion of an ascension narrative.

(7) Conceptual and verbal parallels and antitheses that relate to the LE appear throughout discrete portions of Mark (Mk 1:32-39; 3:14-15; 6:7-13; 7:24-8:38).

(8) Mark consistently demonstrates the overt fulfillment of promises and prophecies. A conclusion of Mark (whether at 16:8 or in the Intermediate Ending) that failed to demonstrate total fulfillment of resurrection and session predictions would be destructive of Markan style and purpose.¹²⁵

(9) The bulk of versional testimony supports the LE. Such evidence, coming from widely scattered locales, overrides any limited versional testimony that would call the LE into question.

(10) Explicit patristic citation from the second century (Justin, [Tatian], Irenaeus) outweighs patristic speculation of the fourth and later centuries, whether by Eusebius, Jerome (in repetition), Victor of Antioch, or Hesychius.¹²⁶ The same applies to modern writers who appear more willing to speculate than to accept the general transmissional evidence that is nearly unanimous in support of the LE, apart from the limited questioning that occurs primarily during the fourth century.

(11) Stronger external evidence exists in support of the Alexandrian insertion at Mt 27:49 and the Alexandrian/Western readings at 1Cor 15:51^b (among other variant units) than for LE omission, even though those non-Byzantine readings are readily rejected by modern eclectic critics. The LE should not be rejected on the basis of lesser testimony, particularly when early patristic sources (in conjunction with the bulk of the manuscript evidence) support the contrary.

¹²³ Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 20, warns against "drastic and wholesale reconstructions" that are at "variance with the existing documentary evidence." As Kitchen notes, "The fact that . . . scholars are habituated to these widely known reconstructions, even mentally conditioned by them, does not alter the basic gravity of this situation which should not be taken for granted." Unfortunately, as lamented by Jacob Neusner, *Are there really Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels?* South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, 80 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 28n11, "In a theological field, every possibility endures; facts do not intervene, and tests of validation and falsification do not apply."

¹²⁴ N. T. Wright, "Early Traditions and the Origin of Christianity," *Sewanee Theological Review* 41 (1997/8) 136, has stated, "I tried for some years to believe that Mark was really a postmodernist who would deliberately leave his gospel with a dark and puzzling ending, but I have for some time now given up the attempt. Grammatically, the gospel could have ended with 'for they were afraid' (*ephobounto gar*); structurally, it could not have ended without the story of the risen, vindicated Jesus."

¹²⁵ Cf. Croy, *Mutilation*, 58-59, 69n39, quoted earlier.

¹²⁶ For the latter, see Kelhoffer, "The Witness," 101-102.

(12) Similar arguments claiming non-authenticity are urged in regard to the final chapter of John and the supposed "lost beginning" of Mark.¹²⁷ The strongest case for the swift rejection of such hypotheses remains the utter lack of supporting manuscript, versional, or patristic evidence. Had \aleph , B, or other major witnesses omitted such passages, the text-critical issue would have become a matter of major dispute; equally, had the absence of the LE in \aleph and B *not* been known, much of the current dispute quickly would evaporate. The conjoint testimony of these two MSS remains the eclectic touchstone, even when opposed by most other evidence normally deemed to be in sympathy with the modern eclectic viewpoint.

(13) Possible reasons for LE excision can be suggested, particularly when omission occurs in two closely related fourth-century Greek manuscripts and scattered versional manuscripts. Presumed contradictions, theological concerns, and matters of internal consistency remain primary in this regard.

(14) The remaining unmutated Greek manuscripts, versions, and fathers overwhelmingly support the LE.¹²⁸ It is present in all Greek MSS save two,¹²⁹ and spans all existing texttypes (Byzantine, Western, Caesarean, and Alexandrian).¹³⁰ Even the two Greek MSS omitting (\aleph and B) have textual peculiarities in this location (the blank space in B; the cancel-sheet in \aleph).

(15) Finally (and ultimately), the bulk of the evidence, whether external or internal, points to the validity of the LE not only as authentic to Mark, but also ecclesiastically recognized and canonically accepted from at least the mid-second century to the time of the Enlightenment.¹³¹ Such factors support the continued canonical acceptance and promulgation of the LE as the *only* fitting conclusion to Mark's gospel, despite what controversy might be raised regarding precise matters of authorship. A. C. Headlam (in a differing context) speaks of those who are "continually building up elaborate and far-fetched theories to explain away what is obvious and natural." He then declares,

The reverse is the case. The simple and natural explanation is the orthodox one, it takes the facts simply as they are. It has far the most evidence in its favour You will find long and

¹²⁷ See Croy, *Mutilation*, "Frontal Damage," 113-136. Whatever Croy's hypothesis might be, it is no longer a matter of NT textual criticism. Yet Croy claims the *real* textual problem in Mk 1:1 is "falsely reduced to the presence or absence of the words 'Son of God,'" even while claiming the "lost beginning" hypothesis in the total absence of external evidence.

¹²⁸ Farmer, "A Note," 17, states, "The attestation for inclusion is not only stronger according to known text types by number, it is stronger by the earliness of the date of the external witnesses *and* by their geographical distribution" [emphasis original].

¹²⁹ The 12th-century MS 304 generally cited in favor of omission is interwoven with a commentary as opposed to having a continuous text. The absence of a Markan ending beyond 16:8 in that MS may more likely involve commentary-based oversight rather than deliberate excision or non-presence in a continuous-text exemplar. The present writer inspected this MS on microfilm, and would *not* choose to cite this MS as a valid witness for a Markan ending at 16:8. Burgon, *Last Twelve Verses*, 283, writes regarding this MS: "The text of S. Mark is here interwoven with a Commentary which I do not recognize I am led to suspect that the contents of this MS. will be found to correspond with what Possinus published and designated as 'Tolosanus.'"

¹³⁰ One should note that, within the LE, each texttype possesses its own distinctive pattern of readings; this indicates a *separate* divergence from a much earlier archetypal form of that passage, whether Western, Byzantine or something else. The question to be answered is how the Alexandrian MSS — apart from \aleph and B — were enabled to create a characteristically "Alexandrian" form in the LE (where \aleph or B were *not* extant) that typifies the "Alexandrian" pattern paralleled in the remaining portions of Mark where \aleph and B *are* present, without the LE itself requiring earlier incorporation within a presumed pre-fourth century archetypal Alexandrian base text.

¹³¹ David Silversides, "Review of *God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us*," *Quarterly Record* [Trinitarian Bible Society], Issue 577 (Oct-Dec 2006) 50-51 addresses the primary theological issue surrounding this point: "The original inerrant text has been providentially preserved, not somewhere within all the manuscripts that have been, or may yet be, discovered throughout history, but in those manuscripts that have a pedigree among the professing people of God through the ages."

elaborate theories constructed to explain away simple facts You will find every explanation but the natural one given of various passages. We will find a great deal that is clever and ingenious. But it is all of the nature of apologetics. The whole trend of investigation and discovery has been against the position adopted by those writers.¹³²

In reality, Frederik Wisse is correct when speaking of NT textual issues where eclectic critics claim later addition or interpolation affecting the vast majority of MSS:

We are dealing with nothing more than educated guesses which lead nowhere and needlessly clutter the scholarly literature The burden of proof and the weight of the textual evidence are such that one can only suggest the possibility of an interpolation as a last resort.¹³³

With this, the present investigation fittingly concludes, leaving the LE of Mark firmly in its traditional location within the Second Gospel, and – most probably – written by St Mark himself.

– end –

¹³² A. C. Headlam, "The Dates of the New Testament Books," in W. Sanday, F. G. Kenyon, F. C. Burkitt, F. H. Chase, A. C. Headlam, and J. H. Bernard, *Criticism of the New Testament*, St. Margaret's lectures, 1902 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902) 177.

¹³³ Frederik Wisse, "The Nature and Purpose of Redactional Changes in Early Christian Texts: The Canonical Gospels," in William L. Petersen, ed., *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text, and Transmission*, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity, 3 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989) 40-41, 53.