

A Multilingual Turn: Introducing the ‘MARK16’ *COMSt Bulletin**

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1. A Multilingual Turn in Markan Research

The first online conference hosted by the five-year Swiss National Science Foundation project ‘MARK16’¹—held from Lausanne (CH) in September 2020 and published in 2021—had, as its purpose, to highlight and strengthen the bridges between ancient codicology and digital humanities, focusing on the creation of virtual research environments (VRE).² The second ‘MARK16’ online conference, held from Lausanne in June 2022, also built bridges, but between ancient languages and traditions surrounding Mark 16, and between New Testament (NT) exegesis and textual criticism.³ This interdisciplinary subject is the focus of a publication of selected papers in this ‘MARK16’ *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies (COMSt) Bulletin* special issue. The co-editors—Mina Monier, Dan Batovici, and I—warmly thank the COMSt editorial board for this opportunity. We also have hardly enough words of recognition for the intense involvement and excellent editing work of Eugenia Sokolinski, *COMSt Bulletin* editing manager.

This interdisciplinary perspective highlights ‘MARK16’ as an extended field of studies, from historical exegesis to editing tasks. After twenty years of scholarly work,⁴ James Kelhoffer continues to highlight thoughts and discover-

* Many thanks are due to Andrea Allen for her English proof-reading of this introduction, as well as to Mina Monier and Dan Batovici for their remarks and input. The writing of this introduction, as well as the organization of the conference and my supervision of the editing, has been supported by the SNSF MARK16 fund n°179755.

1 See <<https://mark16.sib.swiss>>; <<https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/179755>>, with the list of the publications of the project. I am the PI of this five-year SNSF project. Members of the team are Priscille Marschall (post-doc, DH+), Elisa Nury (Research scientist, DH+, SIB), and Silvano Aldà (software developer, Core-IT, SIB). Until December 2022, Mina Monier (post-doc, DH+, SIB) and Jonathan Barda (software developer, Core-IT, SIB) have contributed enormously to give its shape to the manuscript room <<https://mr-mark16.sib.swiss/>>.

2 See Clivaz and Allen 2021.

3 Exegetical readings of Mark without real attention to the manuscripts will continue to be written; see for example the recent article of Ratsoin 2023, 54–65.

4 This scholarly journey has started in 2000 with the publication of his PhD, Kelhoffer 2000.

ies about the Longer Ending of Mark, as one can see in his ‘MARK16’ *COMSt Bulletin* article cleverly titled, ‘The End of the Beginning’, an expression attributed to Winston Churchill. Another example comes from Mark textual criticism with a 2021 statement by Anne Boud’hors about the edition of the Gospel of Mark in Sahidic Coptic: ‘Arrivant bientôt au terme des recherches entreprises en 1985 sur la version copte sahidique de l’évangile de Marc...’.⁵ She demonstrates, along with her colleague Sofía Torallas Tovar, why an almost entirely scholarship-focused life was necessary to achieve this task.⁶ This comprehensive Sahidic Coptic edition of Mark was born in the framework of the project *Marc Multilingue*, led by Christian Amphoux and Jean-Claude Haelewyck, from the 1990s, and later joined by J. Keith Elliott⁷ until 2013.⁸ It has represented a turning-point for the entirety of New Testament textual criticism (NTTC).⁹ ‘MARK16’ is indebted to these pioneering researchers.

The multilingual evolution of NTTC has taken the most decisive step forward with the preparation of the *Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) during the twentieth century, described by Houghton, Parker, Robinson, and Wachtel as ‘an edition of the New Testament on an unprecedented scale’.¹⁰ About 200 Greek manuscripts are selected for each book as a baseline, as well as ‘readings from early translations believed to be based directly on Greek: in addition to Latin, Coptic and Syriac, the latter includes Armenian, Old Church Slavonic, Ethiopic and Gothic’.¹¹ As presented by Greg Paulson at the first ‘MARK16’ conference,¹² the Digital ECM opens even more avenues and possibilities based on the *New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room* (NTVMR).¹³ All NT scholars need the patient, hard work of the ECM, both printed and digital, as well as the further development of the NTVMR, the reference editing virtual research environment for the field. I conceive of the other digital NTTC projects as satellites of different sizes and purposes, which are all related to the *New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room*:¹⁴ NTTC has decisively become a multi-teams challenge. In this scholarly landscape, the study of the endings of

5 Boud’hors 2021a and 2021b.

6 Boud’hors and Torallas Tovar 2021, 203–220.

7 Elliott, Amphoux, and Haelewyck 2012, 113–124.

8 Boud’hors 2021b.

9 Amphoux, Elliott, and Outtier 2012.

10 Houghton, Parker, Robinson, and Wachtel 2020, 98.

11 Houghton, Parker, Robinson, and Wachtel 2020, 99.

12 Paulson 2021.

13 DECM: <<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/ecm>>; NTVMR: <<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/>>.

14 They allow for the showing of data not considered in the ECM, like the two new Greek attestations of the *conclusio brevior*, found by Mina Monier, ‘MARK16’ post-doc, in GA 1422 and GA 2937. These new attestations cannot be integrated in

Mark requires particularly a multilingual approach. Indeed, no Greek witness of chapter 16 before the middle of the fourth century has survived, not even fragments of papyrus.

‘MARK16’ also highlights that NTTC is currently going outside of the scholarly margins to get to the center of the interpretative work.¹⁵ Several of these *COMSt Bulletin*’s articles illustrate the synergy between textual criticism and exegesis and highlight multilingualism as a key-point for the future of NTTC.¹⁶

Before presenting the articles, we must draw attention to the flexible naming of the different endings of Mark in this issue. For example, Patrick Andrist follows my suggestion to name the ending of Mark 16:8/36 the ‘Shortest Ending’, the ending of Mark 16:8/104 the ‘Shorter Ending’, and the ending of 16:20 the ‘Longer Ending’. Joan Taylor designates the Shortest Ending as the ‘Abrupt Ending’, which explains its long history of interpretation. Tommy Wasserman names the ending of Mark 16:8/104 the ‘Intermediate Ending’, whereas the *Editio Critica Maior* names it *conclusio brevior*.¹⁷ David Taylor designates the *conclusio brevior* either as the ‘Shorter Ending’ or the ‘Intermediate Ending’, but joins Andrist and me in naming Mark 16:8/36 the ‘Shortest Ending’. The team of co-editors have chosen to keep this diversity in the naming of Mark’s endings. It mirrors the present state of the art: there is movement in the usual perception of the ‘Short Ending’ in Mark 16:8/36, and collective efforts are needed to explore new multilingual evidence. Researchers will need time for consideration until a consensus is reached detailing a common new vocabulary.

The nineteen articles of this ‘MARK16’ issue are grouped in three sections: *Greek and Latin Traditions*, *Other Languages*, and *History of Reception*. We warmly thank all our authors for their involvement: they have opened a new chapter in Mark 16 research history. Who would have thought, just a few years ago, that digital culture would excavate so much unknown material about the last chapter of Mark? Thanks to the support of the five-year SNSF PRIMA grant, groundbreaking results have been provided. The ‘MARK16’ manuscript room, with its manuscripts in eleven languages, will provide material for many further inquiries and studies.

the digital, open-ended ECM, since only entire manuscripts are considered in the collation. See Monier 2021, 75–98.

15 As argued in Clivaz 2023.

16 As example of the NTTC multilingual approach, see Kreinecker 2022.

17 Strutwolf, Gäbel, Hüffmeier, Lakmann, Paulson, and Wachtel 2021b, 279.

2. Content of the Issue

The *Greek and Latin Section* presents eight articles. It starts with the cornerstone text of Patrick Andrist, who considers Mark 16 in the Codex Sinaiticus (01), Vaticanus (03) and Alexandrinus (02) from the codex materiality point of view: ‘Physical Discontinuities in the Transitions between the Gospels: Reassessing the Ending of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus’. Such a complete and careful analysis of these witnesses from the codicological perspective is highly innovative and was necessary to clarify current assumptions on these three major codices, as well as honestly summarize this evidence on Mark 16: in short, nothing can be proven or argued on Mark’s endings from the codicological materiality of 01, 02, and 03.

Family 1 is then the center of interest for two contributions. In ‘The Text and Paratext of Family 1 in Mark 16’, Tommy Wasserman identifies 2954 as a new *fl* member, at least in Mark and John, and presents a study of paratextual elements in Mark 16 and in the Johannine *pericope adulterae*, as well as an emphasis on a significant core member, Codex 1582. This inquiry demonstrates that ‘painstaking but necessary work on Family 1’ will have to be done in the future. In ‘According to the Egyptians’: Mark 16 in GA 72’, Mina Monier argues that parts of GA 72, which is usually related to family Π, exhibit resemblance to Family 1 text type. This innovative hypothesis is accompanied by the analysis of the Eusebian canons of Mark 16 in GA 72, as well as by the complete edition of two scholia about Mark 16, including a specific one found in several other minuscules. These two contributions have the potential to relaunch the investigation of Family 1 on the one hand, and about Mark 16 on the other. Paratextuality is still emphasized in an article by Anthony Royle and Garrick Allen about Mark 16 in GA 2604, a magnificently illustrated minuscule that is almost never studied apart from the work of these co-authors: ‘Framing Mark: Reading Mark 16 in a Catena Manuscript’. They demonstrate that one ‘can no longer explore the texts of Mark’s endings in isolation from the features that are transmitted alongside them’ and help to overcome the division between NT textual criticism and history of reception.

Greek and Latin witnesses all contribute to overcoming this division, as highlighted by the next four articles. In ‘Was Salome at the Markan Tomb? Another Ending to Mark 16’, Elizabeth Schrader Polczer argues that the varying names and number of women in 16:1 should be seen as part of the broader problem of the ending of Mark, underlining the absence of Salome in certain witnesses. Another look at the very early reception of the Gospel of Mark is then presented by James A. Kelhoffer in ‘The End of the Beginning’: Mark’s Longer Ending (16:9–20) and the Adaptation of the Markan Storyline’. Using narrative criticism, he demonstrates the continuities and ruptures between the

Gospel of Mark and the Longer Ending: eschatology appears to be the main difference between Mark's story and the Longer Ending. The Longer Ending is also at the core of Nicholas Zola's article, 'The Ending of Mark in Tatian's *Diatessaron*'. He compares the resurrection narrative in the eleventh-century Arabic harmony with that of the sixth-century Latin Codex Fuldensis, the two earliest and most reliable representations of reconstructing the *Diatessaron*'s sequence, and this confirms that Tatian integrated significant parts of the Longer Ending in his *Diatessaron*. The Greek and Latin Section concludes with Andrew Smith's article, 'Mark 16 and the Eusebian Apparatus: Greek and Latin Solutions', in which he provides a patient overview of the subject. He presents a tentative history, considering the Eusebian Apparatus, of the development of the diverse endings of Mark from the fourth century CE in the Greek and Latin traditions.

The *Other Languages Section* also presents eight articles focused on Mark 16 in the Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Persian, Armenian, and Georgian traditions. In 'The Shorter Ending of the Gospel of Mark in the Coptic Versions', Anne Boud'hors and Sofia Torallas Tovar provide the first assessment of the *conclusio brevior* in the Coptic tradition, including Bohairic and Fayyumic evidence added to the Sahidic witnesses. The richness of their analysis demonstrates new avenues for further inquiry about the emergence and spread of the Shorter Ending. David Taylor provides a complete overview of 'The Endings of the Gospel of Mark in Syriac Witnesses', with data about the 'evidence for three of the main endings to the Gospel of Mark, and for their reception in the churches of Syria and Mesopotamia'. If the article announces modestly 'an up-to-date overview and assessment', it highlights a constant editorial process in Syriac traditions, integrating new data notably from Greek manuscripts; it provides a clear basis for reassessing Mark's endings in this tradition.

After Sara Schulthess in 2018,¹⁸ Jean Valentin is the second scholar to explore Mark 16 in the Arabic tradition in 'Mc 16 dans les manuscrits arabes du Sinaï—Réflexions de méthode pour leur utilisation en critique textuelle. Diversité des versions, rubriques, langues sources, variantes fausses et vraies'. The Longer Ending is present in all the Sinaï manuscripts, but not integrated in all the liturgical paratexts from Jerusalem: more inquiry about the relationship between liturgy and textual transmission needs to be done. Moreover, the article demonstrates that the quite constant influence of Syriac and Syriac-Palestinian traditions can be observed in these Arabic manuscripts. The Ethiopic tradition is presented by Curt Niccum in 'The Endings of Mark in Ethiopian Translation and Transmission'. He supports the viewpoint that

18 Schulthess 2018, 63–84.

the Ethiopic version points to a Greek exemplar, which is highly important for NTTC, as argued in the 2021 ECM of Mark by Niccum himself.¹⁹ Moreover, he clearly repeats an information that hopefully will be now integrated in all Mark 16 studies: ‘In contrast to erroneous claims of the past, Metzger established that there were no continuous text manuscripts of Gə‘əz Mark that ended the Gospel at 16:8’.

The last four articles of the second section highlight two Mark 16 traditions which have not been studied on their own—the Persian and the Georgian traditions, and one Mark 16 tradition already researched, but without new material from the Armenian tradition. In ‘Mark 16 in the So-Called Persian Harmony’, Ali B. Langroudi presents the first overview of Mark 16 in the so-called Persian Harmony of the Gospels, including a transcription and translation, and comments about the peculiarities of these verses, collating them with the early Syriac Gospels. The Armenian tradition is highlighted by two articles: Dan Batovici, in ‘The Displaced Endings of Mark in Armenian Biblical Manuscripts’ draws the attention to the displacement of the endings of Mark in Armenian manuscripts by focusing on six test-cases where this ending is copied at the end of the Gospel of John, or Luke, or Matthew instead. In ‘Mark 16 :9–20 in Armenian Medieval Literature. A Commentary by Barseł Maškewor‘I’, Armine Melkonyan presents Mark 16 in the Armenian *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* by Basil of Mashkevor (1325 CE). Barseł describes Mary Magdalene’s sentiments and presents intriguing reflections on why Jesus first appeared to her after he had risen. *Other Languages* concludes with an article by Bernard Outtier, ‘Un essai de panorama de Marc 16 dans la tradition géorgienne’, the very first one in this tradition. It presents the editions of several manuscripts attesting to the ‘relatively simple’ history of Mark’s endings in this tradition: first the shortest one, up until the tenth century, and then the longer one.

The third section, *History of the Reception*, begins in early Christianity with a detailed study of Cerinthus by Joan Taylor, ‘Cerinthus and the Gospel of Mark: The Priority of the Longer Ending’. His adoptionist point of view may explain, at least in part, the complex history of Mark’s endings. With ‘Trajectories in the History of Textual Scholarship on Mark’s Endings: A Reconsideration’, Jan Krans and An-Ting Yi pay attention to ‘to the period from the sixteenth to the late-eighteenth century, when Birch discovered that Codex Vaticanus does not contain the traditional ending as found in the Textus Receptus’. They demonstrate the impact of the authority of early modern Christianity in the perception of Mark’s endings. Finally, Régis Burnet, in ‘Mark 16 from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century: Why Were the Doubts not

19 Strutwolf et al. 2021c, 279.

Expressed Earlier?’ highlights the history of the readings from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, notably with Cajetan, yet widely ignored in the further studies on Mark 16. Many of the hypotheses that are currently in vogue can already be found in texts from the sixteenth century and beyond.

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