

## One Cry or Two? Mark's Composition of Mark 15:34–37

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Mark 15:34-37 describes the moment of Jesus' death. The scene is prepared with v. 33 where we read that darkness falls over the earth. In vv. 34-37 Jesus cries out just before he dies and his cry incites people standing near the cross to mock him. One much discussed feature in this passage is the double mention of Jesus' cry: once in v. 34 (ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, "Jesus cried out with a loud voice") and a second time in v. 37 (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείς φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν, "Then Jesus gave a loud cry").<sup>1)</sup> In v. 34 the cry is a quotation of the first half of Psalm 22:2a (NRS Psa 22:1a; LXX Psa 21:2a) Ελωι ελωι λεμα σαβαχθानी, while the second cry in v. 37 is a wordless shout. A much debated exegetical question is: did Mark intend two separate utterings or only one, with v. 37 resuming or repeating v. 34? Opinions are divided, but most modern Bible translations reflect the view that Jesus cries out twice.<sup>2)</sup> With the translations in

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1) English quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, unless indicated otherwise.

2) I have not found a translation in which the two verses are rendered in such a way that it is clear that the cry in v. 37 is the same as the one in v. 34a. I found two translations that come close. One is the Darby Bible which has "And Jesus, having uttered a loud cry, expired." This translation leaves the possibility open to identify the cry of v. 37 with that of v. 34. The other translation is the Dutch Willibrord Translation. In its revised text of 1995 v. 37 has been rendered as: "Maar Jezus had, na het slaken van een luide kreet, de geest gegeven" ("But Jesus, after giving a loud cry, had breathed his last"). In both cases one could take the second mention of Jesus' cry as referring back to the shout in v. 34, although the Dutch rendering of ἀφείς ("na

mind, I would like to look at these verses again and see if Mark really intended a double cry. The reason for raising the question is two-fold. Firstly, although *πάλιν* (“again”) is among Mark’s favourite words, he does not use it in v. 37 and therefore does not make explicit that a second cry is intended in v. 37. Secondly, the transition from vv. 34-36 to v. 37 does not seem smooth and seems to betray redactional intervention. If this is the case, what then exactly was the scope and purpose of Mark’s intervention?

## 1. Previous research

The redaction history of Mark’s passion narrative has been the subject of intensive study for almost a century, resulting in a variety of theories. When form criticism emerged, the question arose: was there a more or less coherent pre-Markan passion narrative that Mark used for his gospel? M. Dibelius, for instance, assumed that Mark based his passion narrative on an older passion narrative that he took over almost in its entirety.<sup>3)</sup> R. Bultmann, on the other

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het slaken van”) is already more ambiguous, since it can also be taken as continuing the narrative rather than as a reference back to v. 34.

Modern commentaries, too, explain with more or less certainty, v. 37 as referring to a second cry: see e.g. D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark*, Penguin New Testament Commentaries Series (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 430; W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 574; M. D. Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St Mark*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: Black, 1993), 377; C. A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 508; R. H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross. Volume II. Mark 9-16* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 948-949. A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: a Commentary*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Hermeneutical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 753-754, argues justifiably that Mark used a source for his passion narrative in which Jesus only uttered a wordless cry (v. 37) and that Mark himself added the words of Psa 22:2a as Jesus’s last words. D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 3 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987), 263-264, is undecided.

- 3) E.g. M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 6th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971); R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium II. Teil: Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27-16,20*, Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 2/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1977). Overviews of the “Forschungsgeschichte” of Mark’s passion narrative can be found in e.g. J. Ernst, “Die Passionserzählung des Markus und die Aporien der Forschung”, *Theologie und Glaube* 70 (1980), 160-180; J. R. Donahue, “From Passion Traditions to Passion Narrative”, W. H. Kelber, ed., *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 1–20.

hand, suggested that once there may have existed a primitive passion narrative, but that most of what we have in Mark is composed out of traditions that once circulated independently. It was Mark who arranged these unconnected traditions into a coherent passion narrative.<sup>4)</sup> In the late 1960s and early 1970s the debate was picked up again with discussions about pre-Markan sources and pre-Markan redaction layers. Some, like V. Taylor, J. Schreiber and W. Schenk<sup>5)</sup> distilled from Mark's passion narrative two or three distinct sources which Mark must have used. Others again, such as J. Gnilka and D. Dormeyer,<sup>6)</sup> reconstructed two or three earlier stages of Mark's passion narrative. E. Linnemann, on the other hand, argued that the first passion narrative we have is one resulting from Mark's activity as a collator rather than as an author. She denied even the existence of a primitive passion narrative. According to her, it was Mark who was the first to use isolated traditions and bring them together into one narrative.<sup>7)</sup>

This search for Mark's sources or for layers of redaction and tradition underlying his narrative, which was sometimes accompanied by a firm belief in the possibility of retrieving information about the historical circumstances of Jesus' death, resulted in widely divergent and even contradicting solutions. It became clear that the assignment of verses to pre-Markan sources or redactional stages had been to a large extent a random exercise. Therefore, more recent studies have concentrated on explaining Mark's passion narrative at its

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4) R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, Forschungen Zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Neue Folge 12, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 297-308.

5) V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St Mark. The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indexes*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan 1966), 649-651; J. Schreiber, *Der Kreuzigungsbericht des Markusevangeliums Mk 15,20b-41: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und methodenkritische Untersuchung nach William Wrede (1859-1906)*, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 48 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986); W. Schenk, *Der Passionsbericht nach Markus: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Passionstraditionen* (Leipzig: Gerd Mohn, 1974).

6) J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus. 2. Teilband Mk 8,27-16,20*, Evangelisch Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament II/2 (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979); D. Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu als Verhaltensmodell: Literarische und theologische Analyse der Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte der Markuspassion*, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen. Neue Folge 11 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1974).

7) E. Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 102 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970).

redactional level,<sup>8)</sup> with a stronger emphasis on Mark's stylistic characteristics, such as his grammar and word choice. It is still generally assumed that there is older tradition behind Mark's passion narrative; this seems to be confirmed by the wider attestation of Jesus' passion and death in the rest of early Christian literature, such as in the letters of Paul, who mentions Jesus' crucifixion several times (1Co 1:23; 2:2, 8; 2Co 13:4; Phi 2:8), states that "he was handed over" (1Co 11:23) and gives a summary of Jesus' passion in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Therefore it is not unlikely that when Mark composed his gospel, traditions about Jesus' passion existed, partly even in written form, and that Mark used these traditions for his passion narrative. But attempts at a detailed reconstruction of these source(s) and of the stages the tradition went through before Mark, have largely been abandoned. The same applies to the attempts to filter out "historical" information from Mark's narrative. It has been acknowledged that reconstructions of Jesus' passion and death are doomed to result in speculation, since from very early on the traditions of the early church overwrote the earliest accounts of the events. The search for "original," "historical," or "genuine" strands in Mark's passion narrative has most often brought forth naive representations of history that were the result of wishful thinking rather than of sound methodology. It is only with great difficulty that one can discern something of the oldest layers of tradition. And so it is maybe better to have less history than to have more that turns out to consist of speculative, unverifiable reconstructions.<sup>9)</sup>

## 2. Luke's and Matthew's redaction of Mark 15:34-37

Before we proceed, we should perhaps look first at the way in which the other two synoptic gospels have used Mark's passion narrative. While Matthew has a

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8) See e.g. the studies in W. H. Kelber, *Passion in Mark* (n. 3); F. J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 66 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981); F. Neiryck, *Duality in Mark. Contributions to the Study of the Marcan Redaction*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 31 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988).

9) See Ph. R. Davies, "Whose History? Whose Israel? Whose Bible? Biblical Histories, Ancient and Modern", L. L. Grabbe, ed., *Can a 'History of Israel' Be Written?* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 1997), 104-122, see 105.

close parallel to Mark 15:33-37, Luke has used Mark's narrative with relative freedom. Firstly, Luke changed the order of events. For instance, he moved the scene in which Jesus drinks the ὄξος or vinegar from the sponge (Luk 23:36) to a slightly earlier moment in the narrative. He also left out the quotation from Psalm 22 and its subsequent misunderstanding by people attending the crucifixion, and replaced it with Psalm 31:6 (NRS 31:5, LXX 30:6, "into your hands I commend my spirit"), combining it with the words φωνὴ μεγάλη into one shout (Luk 23:46).

Matthew follows Mark more closely, but he did make his usual stylistic improvements to Mark's narrative. More important to us is that he added πάλιν in his parallel to Mark 15:37 (Mat 27:50), thereby clearly making the wordless shout of Jesus into a different one from the first cry (Mar 15:34 // Mat 27:45). Apparently, Matthew felt the need to remove the ambiguity from Mark's report and his change underscores the fact that something is not quite right in Mark's composition. It at least raises the question why Mark himself, if he really wanted to have a second cry in v. 37, did not use πάλιν.

### 3. The absence of πάλιν in spite of Mark's predilection for it

As mentioned above, the absence of πάλιν is an important indication that points in the direction of Mark having intended one and the same shout.<sup>10</sup> It is all the more striking, since πάλιν is a word that has been identified as characteristic of Mark's style: it is one of the words he uses more frequently than both Matthew and Luke together (28 times in Mark against 17 times in Matthew

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10) For the idea that v. 37 is a recapitulation of v. 34, see e.g. Schreiber, *Kreuzigungsbericht* (n. 5), 65-66, 350; G. Schneider, *Die Passion Jesu nach den drei älteren Evangelien*, *Biblische Handbibliothek* 11 (München: Kösel, 1973), 127; Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu* (n. 6), 204; L. Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Christus: Versuch einer literarkritischen und traditions-geschichtlichen Bestimmung der vormarkinischen Passionsgeschichte*, *Stuttgarter Bibelstudien* 69 (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1974), 86, 96-97; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (n. 6), 312; C. R. Kazmierski, *Jesus, the Son of God. A Study of the Marcan Tradition and its Redaction by the Evangelists*, *Forschung zur Bibel* 33 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1979), 196, n. 22; Matera, *Kingship of Jesus* (n. 8), 126; R. E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah. From Gethsemane to the Grave. Volume II: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, *Anchor Bible Reference Library* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 1044.

and 3 times in Luke).<sup>11)</sup> Interestingly enough, in a few translations the verse has been rendered in such a way as if Mark 15:37 does have *πάλιν* in the text.<sup>12)</sup> One could explain this as a harmonization with the text of Matthew 27:50, where *πάλιν* indeed has been added, but it could just as well be a spontaneous translation decision meant to improve the flow of the translated text.

In the Greek manuscript tradition there is hardly any evidence that Mark 15:37 was harmonized with Matthew 27:50. There is only one manuscript of Mark that reads *πάλιν* in 15:37. This is minuscule 792, a 13th century codex, now preserved in the National Library of Greece in Athens.<sup>13)</sup> An earlier witness for the addition of *πάλιν* to Mark 15:37 is the Gothic translation, which dates back to the 4th century.<sup>14)</sup> But here, just as in the modern versions, the occurrence of “again” does not necessarily mean a harmonization with the parallel passage in Matthew,<sup>15)</sup> but may simply be explained as a spontaneous decision by the

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11) For the preference of Mark for *πάλιν*, see J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), 13; E. J. Pryke, *Redactional Style in the Marcan Gospel. A Study of Syntax and Vocabulary as guides to Redaction in Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 97-99; F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark* (n. 8), 276-277; C. H. Turner, “Marcan Usage: Notes, Critical and Exegetical on the Second Gospel”, J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark. An Edition of C. H. Turner’s “Notes on Marcan Usage” Together with Other Comparable Studies*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 71 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 111-115; G. D. Kilpatrick, “Some Notes on Marcan Usage”, J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark. An Edition of C. H. Turner’s “Notes on Marcan Usage” Together with Other Comparable Studies*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 71 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 168-169.

12) For example, all editions of the New Living Translation have “Then Jesus uttered *another* cry”, the New Testament for Everyone has “But Jesus, with *another* loud shout, breathed his last”, the Bibbia della Gioia has “Allora Gesù emise un *altro* forte grido” and the Hawaiian Pidgin has “Den Jesus yell *again* real loud.” There may of course be other examples in other languages, especially because NLT is used as a resource model text in translation projects around the world.

13) I thank Dr. Greg Paulson of the Münster Institute for New Testament Textual Research for this information. No mention is made of this variant in the text editions of e.g. Wettstein, Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, Von Soden, Weiss, Legg or Swanson.

14) The variant in the Gothic text is mentioned by John Mills in his edition of the New Testament of 1707. In J. J. Griesbach’s 3rd edition of his Novum Testamentum of 1827, which was augmented by D. Schulz, the Gothic is mentioned as well, but most likely Schulz took the variant from Mills. It is not mentioned in Tischendorf’s *editio octava critica maior* (1872).

15) W. Streitberg, *Die gotische Bibel. Erster Teil. Der gotische Text und seine griechische Vorlage. Mit Einleitung, Lesarten und Quellennachweisen sowie den kleineren Denkmälern als Anhang* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter – Universitätsverlag, 1960), 220, mentions Mat 27:50 as the possible cause of the insertion in Mar 15:37.

translator. If indeed Mark had the intention to distinguish between the two cries in v. 34 and v. 37, it remains remarkable that he did not use the word that he favours so much elsewhere in his gospel.

Moreover, in the same chapter Mark uses *πάλιν* emphatically where he does intend repetition. In 15:2 and 15:4, for instance, Pilate asks the same thing twice and Mark underlines this with the use of *πάλιν* (15:2 *καὶ ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν ὁ Πιλάτος*, and 15:4 *ὁ δὲ Πιλάτος πάλιν ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν*). Similarly in 15:9 and 15:12, where Pilate responds twice to the shouts from the crowds (15:9 *ὁ δὲ Πιλάτος ἀπεκρίθη* and 15:12 *ὁ δὲ Πιλάτος πάλιν ἀποκριθεὶς ἔλεγεν*). And in the previous chapter as well, Mark uses *πάλιν* to emphasize the repetition when the high priest asks Jesus the same thing twice (14:60 *ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς … ἐπηρώτησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν*, and 14:61 *πάλιν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν*). The fact that the word *πάλιν* is lacking in 15:37 may not be simply a coincidence, but may mirror Mark's authorial intention.

#### 4. Double mention of the same event as characteristic of Mark's style

The double occurrence of the cry has also been explained, and rightly so, as an instance of “duality,” a typical Markan style feature, of which several instances occur in chapter 15. Mark shows the phenomenon of duality in different ways: grammatically (e.g. double participles, double imperatives, a verb plus its compound or a compound verb plus the same preposition), in many different stylistic features (e.g. double temporal or local statements, repetitions of motives or correspondence in narrative), and in the composition of larger sections, such as the repetition of narrative materials<sup>16)</sup> and so-called

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16) Throughout his *Duality in Mark* (n. 8), Neiryneck mentions quite a number of occasions in Mar 15. One example of duality is correspondence in narrative, which occurs in 15:4 and 5 (*οὐκ ἀποκρίνη οὐδέν* / “Have you no answer to make?” and *οὐκέτι οὐδέν ἀπεκρίθη* / “Jesus made no further answer”); 15:6 and 8 (*ἀπέλυνεν αὐτοῖς ἓνα δέσμιον ὃν παρητούντο* / “he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked” and *ἤρξατο αἰτεῖσθαι καθὼς ἐποίει αὐτοῖς* / “and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them”); 15:24 and 25 (for a more detailed discussion of these two verses, see below); 15:37 and 39 (*ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς … ἐξέπνευσεν* / “Jesus breathed his last” and *ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ κεντυρίων … ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν* / “the centurion … saw that he thus breathed his last”); 15:46 and 47 (*ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ* / “and laid him in a tomb” and *ἑθεώρουν ποῦ τέθειται* / “they saw where he was laid”); see for these examples F. Neiryneck, *Duality in Mark*, 113 and 118. For this footnote also RSV and ESV have been used because of their more literal renderings.

sandwich arrangements.<sup>17)</sup>

The occurrence of duality in Mark's gospel has been explained in many different ways. One way has been by taking the double expressions as indications of the existence of different sources or traditions, which Mark then conflated into one narrative. Each part of the double expressions was assigned to a different source.<sup>18)</sup> Another way has been to distinguish between tradition and redaction. Quite often the first element of the double expressions has been attributed to tradition, while the second, more explanatory element has been assigned to the redactor. The problem with both approaches is that the distribution of the two parts to either two sources or to tradition on the one hand and redaction on the other, has been done somewhat mechanically and that, as a consequence, the results have been rather arbitrary.

Instead of interpreting the double expressions as evidence of different sources, it is less hazardous to accept duality simply as a typically Markan feature.<sup>19)</sup> The question for us is what this means for the interpretation of Mark 15:34 and 37, where we have ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῆ μεγάλης in v. 34 and ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείδ φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν in v. 37. Why does Mark give this information twice? Can both parts indeed be traced back to the hand of the author, or is the repetition the result of something else?

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17) In a sandwich construction Mark interrupts a story (A) by inserting another story as intermezzo (B), after which he finishes the first story (A'). Cases in point are Mar 5:22-43 and 11:1-19. In Mar 5 Jairus asks Jesus to heal his sick daughter and Jesus comes with him (A = 5:22-24). When Jesus follows Jairus to his home, the woman suffering from hemorrhages interrupts Jesus' walk to Jairus' home; Jesus heals her (5:25-34 = B). After this, Jesus can enter Jairus' home to heal his daughter (5:35-43 = A'). Similarly, in Mar 11, the story of Jesus cursing the fig tree (11:12-14 = B) stands in between the stories of Jesus' entry in Jerusalem (11:1-11 = A) and the cleansing of the Temple (11:15-19 = A').

18) Well-known examples of Marcan double expressions that have been attributed to Mark's use of two sources are the temporal indications in 1:32, which has a repetitive ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης, ὅτε ἔδυν ὁ ἥλιος ("That evening, at sundown, ...") or 16:2 with double καὶ λίαν πρῶτῃ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ("And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen").

19) F. Neiryck, *Duality in Mark* (n. 8), 49: "Thus, the conclusion may be justifiable (and it has been accepted in many studies on Marcan redaction) that we are faced here with one of Mark's most characteristic features of style."

## 5. Much redaction in vv. 34-37

To begin with, the wider context in which our verses occur, Mark 15:33-39, shows many signs of Markan redaction. Among them the use of καί (vv. 33, 34 and 35),<sup>20)</sup> the use of the genitive absolute (v. 33), an Aramaic word or phrase combined with a translation (v. 34), multiple participles in one sentence (v. 36), and the repetition of phrases: these phenomena are all typically Markan.<sup>21)</sup> The mentions of the sixth and the ninth hour, too, must have been introduced by Mark, who needed a temporal framework for his narrative.<sup>22)</sup> The statement that “Jesus died” in v. 37 is of course traditional, but the replacement of the traditional ἀπέθανεν (see, e.g., 1Th 4:14; Mar 15:44) by ἐξέπνευσεν is a more recent development, possibly a redactional change by Mark.

## 6. Mark's use of Psalm 22 to depict Jesus as a suffering righteous one

The use of Psalm 22 in the passion narrative is no doubt also a Markan contribution to the story. Three times (15:24, 29 and 34), Mark uses the psalm to represent Jesus as a “suffering righteous one.” This concept derived from Old Testament tradition and was elaborated in later literature, such as Wisdom of Solomon, to describe a righteous person who was shamed and killed by his opponents but vindicated by God (e.g. Wis 2:10-20; 3:1-9; 4:7-20; 5:1-7). The connection between the suffering righteous one and Jesus is most probably pre-Markan,<sup>23)</sup> but the connection of Jesus' image as the suffering righteous one with Psalm 22 is most likely Mark's.

In 15:29 Mark alludes to Psalm 22:8 (NRS 22:7; LXX 21:8) in one of the mocking scenes by mentioning the passers-by who shake their heads when they

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20) The καί in v. 36 should be omitted. The asyndeton is the harder reading and represents Mark's preference for asyndeton (see J. H. Moulton and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. IV, Style by N. Turner (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), 12; J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* (n. 11), 137.

21) J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* (n. 11), 10-15, 114-153; J. H. Moulton and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (n. 20), 11-30; E. J. Pryke, *Redactional Style in the Marcan Gospel* (n. 11), e.g. 62ff and 119ff; F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark* (n. 8), 107.

22) R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (n. 4), 295; C. H. Turner, “Marcan Usage” (n. 11), 61-62.

23) See e.g. Phi 2:6-9.

see Jesus on the cross. In 15:24 and 15:34 he quotes Psalm 22:19 and 22:2 respectively, in both cases with changes to the LXX text. The first part of Psalm 22, in which the suffering servant cries out to God, fits well with Mark's depiction of Jesus as a non-royal Messiah whose true identity can only be understood in terms of his suffering and death. For Mark, Jesus' identity should be stripped of all political connotations: Jesus is a king but not one with worldly power, and he is crucified as a rebel or insurgent, but in reality, according to Mark, he is neither.

As mentioned above, the connection between Jesus' fate as a suffering righteous one and Psalm 22 must be Mark's. Indeed, the use of Psalm 22 as shown by Mark 15:24, 29 and 34 has no parallel in any early Christian sources independent of Mark. This means that there is no evidence that the passages of Psalm 22 were ever used to give shape to Jesus' passion before Mark did so. This again explains why in the two cases in which Mark quotes the Psalm (15:24 and 34), the quotation interrupts the flow of the narrative and Mark has to pick up the storyline afterwards with the result that the quotation is enclosed by the same or very similar phrases. In 15:24 and 25 the quotation of Psalm 22:19 stands between the phrases *καὶ σταυροῦσιν αὐτόν* and *καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν*.<sup>24)</sup> The quotation of Psalm 22:2 in v. 34 stands between the words *ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῆ μεγάλης* and *ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείξ φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν* in v. 37.

That it was Mark who added the quotations to the narrative, is perhaps best visible in 15:24-25, which speaks about the dividing of and casting of the lots over Jesus' clothes. These verses are a good illustration of what seems also to have happened in 15:34-37. The text of the LXX uses aorist forms for both "dividing" and "casting lots" (*διεμερίσαντο* and *ἔβαλον*). Mark's own favourite narrative form is the historic present.<sup>25)</sup> In 15:24 Mark opens the passage on the crucifixion using a present tense (*σταυροῦσιν*); subsequently he uses present tenses for the following verbs, i.e. those of the quotation of Psalm 22:19, as well. Instead of *διεμερίσαντο* and *ἔβαλον* of the LXX, Mark uses *διαμερίζονται* and *βάλλοντες*. V. 25, on the other hand, has an aorist (*ἐσταύρωσαν*), which is also

24) See also J. R. Donahue, *Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 10 (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 243; Donahue mentions these verses in a list of examples of "Marcian insertions."

25) J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* (n. 11), 143-148; J. H. Moulton and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (n. 18), 20-21.

the form used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:8 and Galatians 5:24. Clearly, the aorist is the more “traditional” form in which Jesus’ death was talked about, while the present tense is due to Markan redaction. Evidently, Mark has added the quotation from Psalm 22:19 to the crucifixion story and introduced it with a redactional use of the verb “to crucify” in the historic present. In v. 25, the more traditional form ἐσταύρωσαν is maintained as the summarizing description of the crucifixion with Mark’s temporal indication of the “third hour” attached to it. The duality created here is the result of Mark’s insertion of Psalm 22:19. Both verbs, σταυροῦσιν and ἐσταύρωσαν, obviously refer to one and the same event. The aorist ἐσταύρωσαν is the form Mark took over from tradition and it is this verb which triggered the insertion of Psalm 22:19. However, both the historic present σταυροῦσιν and the change of the verbs of Psalm 22:19 into present tenses have the hallmarks of Markan redaction.

The result is typically Markan: in other places too Mark composed his narrative in such a way that a sandwich arrangement was the outcome.<sup>26)</sup> The conclusion seems to be warranted that in Mark 15:34-37 a similar thing happened as in 15:24-25: Mark doubled-up information he received from tradition.

## 7. The composition and style of vv. 34–37

Let us have a closer look at the composition and redaction of vv. 34-37. The two phrases with which the cry is described show some significant differences. V. 34 has the words ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ and these are introduced by the temporal indication of the sixth hour. The verb βοάω is much less favoured with Mark than κράζω, but may well have been chosen here by him for its Old Testament connotation of the cry of a suffering righteous person.<sup>27)</sup> In general, the use of a verb in combination with a cognate dative betrays Mark’s preference for pleonasm,<sup>28)</sup> but here (v. 24) Mark made another choice. The dative φωνῇ

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26) See above, n. 17.

27) See D. Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu als Verhaltensmodell* (n. 6), 202. In n. 823 on the same page Dormeyer mentions several examples, all of which are combined with the dative φωνῇ μεγάλῃ.

28) J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* (n. 11), 125-126; F. Neiryneck, *Duality in Mark* (n. 8), 77: the use of a verb with cognate accusative or dative.

μεγάλη “with a loud voice” occurs in two more places in Mark (1:26; 5:7) and twenty-two times elsewhere in the New Testament. The most frequent meanings of φωνή in the New Testament are “voice” and “sound.”<sup>29)</sup> In v. 37, however, the noun is used in an accusative form and also has a different meaning. There it does not mean “voice” or “sound,” but “cry.” Instead of “Jesus cried out with a loud voice” as in v. 34, v. 37 has something different: “Jesus uttered a loud cry.”<sup>30)</sup> The question is: are both parts of the double expressions the result of Mark’s redaction, or is one of the parts older, and if so, which part?

Some interpret both parts as the result of Markan redaction and as a conscious attempt by Mark to create duality,<sup>31)</sup> while others understand both parts as older tradition.<sup>32)</sup> However, it rather looks as if v. 34 is secondary to v. 37:<sup>33)</sup> the latter verse lacks typical Markan features, such as the use of καί and the use of a verb with a cognate dative. Probably, then, v. 37 is the older tradition and the insertion of Psalm 22:2 was redaction prompted by it, with a result similar to 15:24-25: Mark added the quotation of Psalm 22:2 to the older material available to him (15:37), and introduced the insertion by rephrasing that older material (15:34).

However, in this case, the quotation of Psalm 22, for which he uses Aramaic rather than Hebrew, is not the only addition. The Aramaic words Ελωι ελωι of the cry are used by Mark as a starting point for a next scene in 15:35: they call forth the reaction of the bystanders, who interpret Jesus’ cry as a call for Elijah: Ἴδε Ἡλίου φωνεῖ (“Listen, he is calling for Elijah”). And this again leads to a third moment in 15:36a, which alludes to Psalm 69:22 (LXX 68:22): someone fills a sponge with vinegar, puts it on a stick and tries to make Jesus drink from it. Just as Psalm 22, Psalm 69 too is a Psalm about a suffering righteous person, and therefore suitable for describing Jesus’ fate as a suffering righteous one. The

29) W. Schenk, *Der Passionsbericht nach Markus* (n. 5), 43, explains φωνή as the fixed attribute of the one who will judge at the end of times (as in 1Th 4:17), but he neglects the difference between “sound” and “voice,” which for users of the Greek language undoubtedly mattered.

30) Matthew changed this: instead of Mark’s ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀφείς φωνὴν μεγάλην he uses the more current construction of a verb (a participle aorist of κράζω) with a dative φωνῆ μεγάλης (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν κράξας φωνῆ μεγάλης).

31) E.g. F. J. Matera, *Kingship of Jesus* (n. 8), 30 and 125.

32) E.g. D. Dormeyer, *Die Passion Jesu als Verhaltensmodell* (n. 6), 204; Schreiber, *Kreuzigungsbericht* (n. 5), 72.

33) See e.g. L. Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Christus* (n. 10), 96.

reason for trying to make Jesus drink is then explained in v. 36b, which picks up the motif of Elijah: the bystanders want to prolong Jesus' suffering and taunt him by saying "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Whether the bystanders in v. 36b are mocking Jesus or are truly waiting for the miracle of Elijah's help, has been the subject of much discussion.<sup>34)</sup> But seeing that both Psalm 22 and 69 describe the fate of a suffering righteous person who has to endure the taunts of his enemies, it is more likely that the response of the bystanders must be interpreted as mockery.

This becomes even clearer in the next verse, v. 37. After mentioning the efforts of the scoffers to keep Jesus alive and make fun of him, Mark emphasizes the fact that their attempts were in vain: Jesus has already died.<sup>35)</sup> The use of  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  in v. 37 strongly supports this interpretation: it marks a sharp contrast with what precedes it. It is exactly Jesus' quick death, and so his escape from the humiliating mockings, which are a clear indication for the reader of Mark's gospel that God has vindicated Jesus. That Mark wants to depict Jesus' quick death as something unusual and unexpected also becomes clear later in the chapter, where Pilate can hardly believe that Jesus has already died when Joseph of Arimathea asks him for Jesus' body (15:44).

Stylistically, the result of Mark's insertions in 15:34-37 is a double sandwich arrangement. Vv. 34a and 37, the mention of Jesus' cry, form the two extreme ends of the outer "sandwich." V. 37, as we have seen, must have been taken by Mark from tradition and v. 34 has the features of his own redactional activity. In between vv. 34a and 37, Mark added direct speech, in the form of Psalm 22:2 to what traditionally was a wordless cry (v. 37), plus the misinterpretation of these words (vv. 34b-35 and 36b); this insertion again forms another "sandwich" with v. 36a, the allusion to Psalm 69:22, in the middle:

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34) J. Schreiber, *Der Kreuzigungsbericht des Markusevangeliums Mk 15,20b-41* (n. 5), 71, distinguishes between the response by the Jewish onlookers (derision) and by the Gentile onlookers (hope for Jesus' rescue); Linnemann, *Passionsgeschichte* (n. 7), 151 maintains that the response of the onlookers expresses their wish to see a miracle. Schreiber complicates the reading of the Marcan text by distinguishing nuances that seem absent in the text; Linnemann tones down the mocking and therefore reduces the contrast between v. 36 and v. 37.

35) L. Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Christus* (n. 10), 97, argues that 15:37  $\acute{\alpha}\varphi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  refers back to v. 34 and not to v. 36, but this in fact diminishes the link between the mocking in vv. 35-36 and the adversative meaning of  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  which underlines the swiftness of Jesus' death. He is correct, though, to paraphrase v. 37 as "Jesus ist aber bereits gestorben" ("Jesus has already died").

- A (34a) At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice,  
 B (34b-35) "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." (Psa 22:2)  
 C (36a) And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, (Psa 69:22)  
 B' (36b) "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."  
 A' (37) Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

All this looks very much like a typically Markan composition.

As mentioned above,<sup>36)</sup> there are more examples of such sandwich arrangements in Mark's gospel, including those in which Mark, just as in 15:24-25 and 15:34-37, repeats what he received from the tradition. Mark 14:35-36 too has a repetition that is most likely the result of Mark having added direct speech. In 14:35-36 Jesus' prayer is rendered twice. In v. 35 the prayer is in indirect speech (προσηύχето ἵνα εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν παρέλθῃ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα / "he prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him"); in v. 36 Mark introduces Jesus words again (καὶ ἔλεγεν) and this time uses direct speech (Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ ... κτλ). As in the other two cases in Mark 15, here too it looks as if Mark took one part from the tradition, in this case v. 35, and expanded the tradition with the direct speech in v. 36.<sup>37)</sup> This may be taken as confirmation that the words of Psalm 22:2a are a Markan explicitation of the wordless shout of Mark's tradition.

In the new context, the aorist ἐξέπνευσεν in v. 37 takes on a new meaning – it no longer means "he died" but "he *had* died," which refers back to the moment of the ἐβόησεν of v. 34 and expresses the idea that Jesus had died before the

36) See above, n. 17; see also F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark* (n. 8), 133.

37) See R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (n. 4), 342 compares the two cases of 14:35–36 and 15:34/37. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (n. 2), 244, ad 14:35–36 "Das deutet darauf, dass eine der beiden Fassungen von Mk formuliert ist zur Verdeutlichung der ihm vorgegebenen Fassung. ... es hat alle Wahrscheinlichkeit für sich, 36 auf Mk zurückzuführen, der damit die allgemeinere Bitte von 35b neu fasst, ..." ("This suggests that one of the two phrases has been formulated by Mark to explain the other, which he received from tradition ... it is probably best to attribute 36 to Mark, who intended it as a more specific formulation of the prayer of 35b" – English translation by MdL.)

mocking of v. 36b could take effect. In his grammar of the New Testament, A. T. Robertson explains that the aorist indicative just refers to the past, often without specifying the temporal relation to the time at which actions of other verbs in the sentence take place; consequently, the aorist can also be used for a pluperfect.<sup>38)</sup> V. 37 then, which in Mark's tradition contained the only reference to a shout of Jesus at the cross, now emphasizes the failure of the attempts of the onlookers to mock Jesus: they try to make fun of Jesus' last words, but their attempts are in vain: Jesus has already died.

## 8. Conclusion: one cry

We can conclude that almost the entire passage vv. 34-37 betrays Markan redaction. The only traditional verse is v. 37, which lacks the typically Markan features we can find in vv. 34-36, although even here (a secondary, possibly Markan-redactional) ἐξέπνευσεν replaces the more traditional ἀπέθανεν (see, e.g., 1Th 4:14 and 1Co 15:3, but also Mar 15:44 end: ἀπέθανεν!). Mark's tradition must have had only the wordless shout to describe the moment of Jesus' death (v. 37). The evangelist inserted the words of Psalm 22:2a (v. 34) but then felt the need for an introduction to this direct speech for which he rephrased the traditional material available in v. 37. V. 37 was thus not intended as the account of a second action, but in Mark's new context resumed and repeated the contents of v. 34. Consequently, in Mark's passion story the cry of 15:37 is the same as that of 15:34. A possible translation in English of 15:37 could be: "But Jesus, after having shouted so loudly, had already died."

### <Keywords>

Mark 15:34-37, passion narrative, Markan redaction, Psalm 22:2, Psalm 69:22, Markan duality.

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38) See A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 840-841, see esp. 841: "The speaker or writer did not always care to make this more precise. He was content with the mere narrative of the events without the precision that we moderns like. We are therefore in constant peril of reading back into the Greek aorist our English or German translations. (···) The Greeks cared not for relative time."

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<Abstract>

## **One Cry or Two? Mark's Composition of Mark 15:34-37**

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Mark 15:34-37 describes the moment of Jesus' death. In these verses, Jesus cries out twice, in v. 34 and in v. 37. In v. 34, his cry is a quotation of the first half of Psalm 22:2a (Ελωι ελωι λεμα σαβαχθανι) while in v. 37, his cry is an unspecified shout (ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ). In many translations of Mark's gospel, the words in v. 37 are rendered in such a way as to suggest that Jesus' cry in v. 37 is a second utterance, but in the literature on Mark 15, opinions are divided. The parallel in Matthew (27:45) indeed allows for the interpretation of two distinct utterances because Matthew's gospel uses an explicit πάλιν in the second case (n v. 50). However, there are two reasons to understand Mark's gospel as narrating the event in a different way, with only one utterance intended in vv. 34-37. The first reason is that even though πάλιν ("again") is frequently used by Mark, it is not used in v. 37. As such, it is not made explicit in v. 37 that a second cry is intended. This is indeed all the more remarkable because in other cases, Mark uses πάλιν explicitly to emphasize the repetition of an event in the same chapter. The second reason for assuming why Mark reports only one cry is that the transition from vv. 34-36 to v. 37 is awkward and seems to indicate a redactional intervention of Mark. In this article, I will argue that in vv. 34-36, there is sufficient evidence to assume Markan redaction, while v. 37 is most likely original. My conclusion is that vv. 34-36 are a Markan addition to an original v. 37, resulting in the typically Markan style feature of "duality". In other words, v. 37 does not recount a second cry but resumes and repeats the cry in v. 34.