THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

DID MARK'S JESUS 'LIVE LIKE A KING?': THE *REX* AND ROMAN IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY IN MARK'S GOSPEL

Mark G. Lamas Jr.

New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology, PhD
The University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT

The Gospel of Mark stands out uniquely from the other gospels in its understanding and presentation of Jesus' kingship. Matthew, Luke, and John's gospels positively assign Jesus the title "king" (βασιλεύς) and in fact such a status remains integral to each gospel's characterisation of Jesus (e.g. Davidic typology in Matthew and prophecy in Luke.) and his mission (e.g. Lk. 19:38; Jn. 18:37). Mark's gospel is strikingly variant, missing opportune moments to align Jesus and other positive characters (e.g. David) with royal themes, and especially the title βασιλεύς. Mark utilises the term βασιλεύς twelve times in three clustered units (Mk 6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27; 13:9; 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32) and each are overtly negative. This study shows that from Julius Vindex's revolt against Nero (c. March 68CE) to 73CE (Vespasian's fourth year in power), the political concept of *libertas* ("liberty") had been revived. Political *libertas* had its origins in that transitional period when Lucius Junius Brutus had exiled Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus, and initiated the Republic. In Roman memory, *libertas* meant Rome's "liberation" from kingship (*regnum*) and was inextricably tied to the L. Brutus narrative. As evidenced in both the literary sources and numismatic material, the rebellion faction of Vindex and Galba (Mar. - 9 June 68CE) uniquely utilised political *libertas*, associating Nero with the kingship/tyranny motif of King Tarquin and L. Brutus' subsequent exiling (and later Cicero and Marcus Brutus with Julius Caesar). The ripples caused by the civil wars, and its popular *libertas* propaganda, reverberated throughout the empire during the years that many scholars date Mark's gospel (68-73CE). I argue that Mark's reticence to name Jesus βασιλεύς was influenced by recent widespread politicisation of *libertas* and the lingering despotism of Nero, which would have negatively

associated kingship with tyranny, thus compromising Mark's message of Jesus. Additionally, I aim to distinguish between Mark's two narrative worlds, i.e. the earthly and transcendent narrative worlds. It is in the former that we find a strong reticence by the Markan author to associate Jesus with earthly aspirations towards kingship. However, in the transcendent narrative world, cosmic truths about Jesus' identity as "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Christ", which are loaded with kingship language, remain available only to Markan characters with access to both narrative worlds (e.g. non-human and demonic forces). In instances where Jesus' identity is revealed to human characters within Mark's story world, Mark sets their experience within a transcendent setting (e.g. Mk. 9:9) and always regards the full embodiment and power attached to his identity as future oriented (e.g. Mk. 14:61-62). The confession of the centurion (Mk. 15:39) is the climatic unification of the two worlds where Jesus ontologically becomes "Son of God", "Son of Man", and the "Christ" with all of the power and kingly language attached to such titles. Mark presents this unification in a grand scheme of triumph and deification.

LAY SUMMARY

The Gospel of Mark stands out uniquely from the other gospels in its understanding and presentation of Jesus' kingship. Matthew, Luke, and John's gospels positively assign Jesus the title "king", and which is a title that is integral to each gospel's characterisation of Jesus and his mission. However, Mark's gospel is strikingly different, missing opportune moments to align Jesus and other positive characters with royal themes, and especially the title "king". Mark utilises the term "king" twelve times in three clustered units, each being overtly negative. This study shows that from Julius Vindex's revolt against Nero (c. March 68CE) to 73CE (Vespasian's fourth year in power), the political concept of *libertas*, or "liberty", had been revived throughout the Roman Empire. The idea of political *libertas* originated during the empire's transitional period when Lucius Junius Brutus had exiled Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus, and initiated the Republic. In Roman memory, *libertas* meant Rome's "liberation" from kingship and was inseparably tied to the story of Lucius Brutus. As evidenced in both the literary sources and coins of the time, the rebellion faction of Vindex and Galba (Mar. - 9 June 68CE) uniquely utilised political *libertas*, associating Nero with the kingship/tyranny motif of King Tarquin, and L. Brutus' subsequent exiling. The ripples caused by the civil wars, and its popular *libertas* propaganda, reverberated throughout the empire during the years that many scholars date the writing of Mark's gospel (68-73CE). I argue that Mark's restraint to name Jesus as "king" in his writings was influenced by the widespread politicisation of *libertas* at the time, as well as the lingering oppressiveness of Nero's leadership, which would have negatively associated kingship with tyranny, thus compromising Mark's message of Jesus. Additionally, I aim to distinguish between Mark's two

narrative worlds, i.e. the earthly and transcendent narrative worlds. It is in the former that we find a strong reticence by the Markan author to associate Jesus with earthly aspirations towards kingship. However, in the transcendent narrative world, cosmic truths about Jesus' identity as "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Christ", which are loaded with kingship language, remain available only to Markan characters with access to both narrative worlds (e.g. non-human and demonic forces). In instances where Jesus' identity is revealed to human characters within Mark's story world, Mark sets their experience within a transcendent setting (e.g. Mk. 9:9) and always regards the full embodiment and power attached to his identity as future oriented (e.g. Mk. 14:61-62). The confession of the centurion (Mk. 15:39) is the climatic unification of the two worlds where Jesus ontologically becomes "Son of God", "Son of Man", and the "Christ" with all of the power and kingly language attached to such titles. Mark presents this unification in a grand scheme of triumph and deification.

Table of Contents

Introduction: A King for All: From Trump to Jesus 1

Chapter 1: The Riddles of a Markan Provenance and Date 6

Introduction 6

Early Church Traditions 9

Does Language Tell Mark's Story 11

Bilingualism and the "Romanisation" of Mark 11

Roman Language Policies 14

Latinisms in the New Testament 17

Code-Switching in Mark 21

Mark and His Audience 24

Jewish, Gentile, Or…? 24

Contact with a Roman Context 27

Divorce and Roman Law? (Mk. 10:12) 27

Brief on Alexander and Rufus (Mk. 15:21) 31

Final Remarks on Locating Mark 32

Not the Where, but the When: Dating Mark 33

A Path towards Destruction (Mk. 13) 35

Missing the Facts 38

Prophecy or Problems? 40

Mark 13:14 and Varieties of Interpretation 45

The Abomination of Desolation 46

Nero Redux! 51

Nero in the Sibylline Oracles 4 55

Nero in the Sibylline Oracles 5 57

Some Proposals for Mark 64

Revelation 13 and 17 as an Early Neronian Return Myth 67

Fleeing the City (Mk 13:14) 75

Brief Conclusions 78

(Graph) Fig. 1: Latinisms in Mark 80

***Chapter 2: Summer of 69': Reviving Libertas and the Odium of Kingship at Rome* 81**

Introduction 81

"Cultural Memory" and Remembering 83

When Kings Ruled at Rome 85

Libertas Defined 86

The *Odium Regni* Seared into Roman Memory 89

Various Positive/Neutral Uses of Rex and Regnum 92

Figurative Uses 93
Rex in the Early Roman Theatre 97
Religious Uses of *Rex* 101
The "Good" Kings in Roman History 105
Considering the Causes of the *Odium Regni* at Rome 110

External Threats of the "Rex" 112

Internal Threats of the "Rex" 120

Weaponising and Politicising *Regnum* 124

Cinna 124
Verres 127
Rullus and the "Kings of the Treasury" 129
Titus Labienus 140
Catiline Conspiracy 142

The Emergence of *Rex* and *Libertas* in the Roman Civil War 146

Civil Wars of 69CE 146
Restoring the Republic on Rebel Coinage 150

Popular Contact with the *Rex* 158

A Brief Conclusion 160

Chapter 3: Explicit Kingship in Mark: Invective and Praise 162

Introduction 162

Markan "Kingship" as Invective 163

Heads Will Roll: "King" Herod Antipas in Mark 6:14-29 163
Mockery, Make-Believe, or Majesty in Mark 15 196
Flipping Confessions: Absent God, Present Centurion 200
God's Abandonment As Markan Theological Tool 211
God's Abandonment as Judgment: Is Mark 15:38 an *Evocatio Deorum*? 212

Conclusion 220

Chapter 4: Implicit Kingship in Mark: Narrative Space and Jesus Made God 222

Introduction: The "Kingdom of God" in Mark's Gospel 222

Narrative Space and Time in Mark 223
The "Son of God" and The Two Narrative Worlds 226
Secrecy, Identity, and the Eschaton 234
The "Son of Man" Who Rides the Clouds 236
What Kind of "Christ"? 240
Confessing It All 248
Allying Jesus with David?: A Brief on David's Role in Mark's Gospel 249
Brief Conclusions 255

Jesus, the Triumphator? 256

Standard Accounts of the Roman Triumph 259
The Flavian Triumph (Jos. BJ 7.121-157) 262
Schmidt's Reading of Triumph in Mark 266
The Arch of Titus: Triumph, Apotheosis, and Deification 271
Jesus, Rome, and the Christological Pissing Contest 277
How Many Kingdoms? 281
You've Got a Friend in Me: Rome and the Demonic Kingdom 286
The Apothesois of Jesus 299

Conclusion 301

Conclusion 303

Bibliography 307

Introduction

A King for All: From Trump to Jesus

In the summer months of 2019 while reporting on President Donald Trump's relationship with foreign dictators, popular CNN news anchor, Don Lemon, expressed his disbelief with President Trump's blatant disregard for the U.S. government's congressional oversight committee. Lemon, recalling the relationships President Trump has enjoyed with dictators over the years, said, "I guess it should be no surprise President Trump is behaving like a king".[1] Lemon's words, along with his tone and emotional response, were clearly indicative of a negative connotation of the word, "king". Interestingly, Lemon appropriates and then weaponises the term. His association of a "king" with tyrannical rulers and dictators in the likes of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un further confirmed Lemon's vilifying use of the term. However, what does it mean for someone to "behave[e] like a king"?

It seems that Lemon problematises Trump's failure to accept legally mandated checks and balances of his own governmental body, which aims to restrict presidential overreach. In other words, for Lemon, to "behave[e] like a king" is to act on whim. More importantly, it is to act outside the parameters of law. By the very fact that an American audience is expected to readily understand Lemon's definition of "king" reveals one side of the cultural coin in our understanding of the term. The other side of the coin is America's deep fascination and love of all things regal, especially from Great Britain. One can merely point to the idolisation surrounding a

[1] CNN, "Don Lemon: No Surprise Trump is Behaving like a King", YouTube Video, 6:51, May 16, 2019, https://youtu.be/ZEh2miCjydo.

figure like Princess Diana. Perhaps, the popularity of the Netflix series, *The Crown*, in the U.S. may also reveal jovial feelings towards regal things. Most recently, one could look to the millions of Americans who tuned-in to watch the royal wedding, some as early as 4 a.m. on the west coast. Nonetheless, even today "behaving like a king" and "kingship", more generally, can elicit feelings of both love and hate. It is in the growing contentious political climate of American politics that Lemon could seize a word like "king" and weaponise it as invective. The crucial argument of this thesis maintains that Mark's gospel was written in a political climate not unlike the one described above. That climate not only effected the way Mark understood and utilised the term βασιλεύς ("king"), but also how his audience perceived it.

For most, scholars and laypeople alike, the kingship of Jesus is clearly attested in the gospels. For example, at the outset of Matthew's gospel (Mt 2:2), Jesus is explicitly presented as the "King of the Jews" (βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων) by the wise men, a positive appellation. Furthermore, Matthew's eschatological discourse envisions Jesus as "the king" (ὁ βασιλεὺς) who judges his enemies and blesses his followers (Mt 25:34, 40). In Luke's gospel, the disciples declare that Jesus is, "The king who comes in the name of the Lord" (ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου), thus fulfilling OT prophecy (Lk 19:38). John's gospel is especially unequivocal, with Jesus explaining his own kingship as the "purpose I was born and have come into the world" (Jn 18:37). In his confession to Jesus, Nathanael states, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (Ῥαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; Jn 1:49); in the feeding of the five thousand, the crowd attempts to "take him [Jesus] by force to make him king" (ἁρπάζειν αὐτὸν ἵνα ποιήσωσιν βασιλέα; Jn 6:15). Matthew, Luke, and John regard Jesus' kingship

positively (cf. Mt 1:6; 2:2; 21:5; 25:34, 40; Lk 19:38; 23:2; Jn 1:49; 6:15; 12:13; 12:15; 18:37; 19:21; Acts 13:22; 17:7) and often cast him under Jewish (Davidic) models of kingship.

At other times, Matthew and Luke will even provide royal meaning to otherwise simple statements by Mark. For example, in Matthew's "Triumphal Entry", Matthew insists that the disciple's actions to retrieve a donkey for Jesus reveal his connection to Davidic kingship as in LXX Zech. 9:9. Though Luke avoids quoting LXX Zech. 9:9 directly, Jesus' disciples still praise him as "king" (Luke 19:38) .[2] Why do Matthew and Luke state perceived overtones of kingship while Mark refrains? Scholars have answered Mark's silence by providing it with a theological purpose, namely to preserve Jesus' hidden identity (i.e. "The Messianic Secret").[3] This last point is reasonable considering that neither Mark's handling of Herodian kingship in Mark 6:14-29 nor his brief language of "kings" in Mark 13:9 relate kingship to Jesus explicitly. However, only within the passion narrative does

[2] See the comparison in the chart below. Notice, Luke removes the material related to the "Daughter of Zion".

Matthew 21:5	Luke 19:38	LXX Zechariah 9:9
Εἴπατε τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών· Ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεταί σοι πραΰς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὄνον καὶ ἐπὶ πῶλον υἱὸν ὑποζυγίου.	Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου·	Χαῖρε σφόδρα, θύγατερ Σιων, κήρυσσε, θύγατερ Ιερουσαλημ, ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεταί σοι, δίκαιος καὶ σῴζων αὐτός, πραΰς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὑποζύγιον καὶ πῶλον νέον.

[3] William Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901); J.D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); James D. G. Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark" in *The Messianic Secret* (ed. Christopher Tuckett; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Heikki Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark* (trans. Christopher Tuckett; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990).

Mark clearly and finally connect kingship to Jesus (Mk. 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32), albeit ironically.

The Gospel of Mark stands out uniquely from the other gospels in its understanding and presentation of Jesus' kingship. Mark's gospel is strikingly variant, missing opportune moments to align Jesus and other positive characters with royal themes, and especially the title, βασιλεύς. Moreover, there is no instance in Mark's gospel where Jesus or the author are presumed to name the "kingdom" (βασιλεία) as Jesus' own, but rather it is always assigned to God. Conversely, Matthew (16:28) redacts Mark 9:1, which states, "there are some here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power". Matthew's version supplants Mark's "kingdom of God" to assign the kingdom to the "Son of Man", whom Matthew identifies with Jesus.[4] In addition, while there are no parallels found in Mark, Matthew 13:41 again reserves the possession of the kingdom to the "Son of Man". Luke 22:28-30 similarly records an episode where Jesus is commending the disciples for remaining faithful to him during the difficult trials of his ministry. For such faithful obedience, Jesus states, "I will confer onto you, just as my Father has conferred *on me, a kingdom*, so that you may eat and drink at *my table* in *my kingdom*…" (my emphasis; κἀγὼ διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου βασιλείαν, ἵνα ἔσθητε καὶ πίνητε ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου).[5] Beyond kingship, Mark is careful not to ascribe even a kingdom to Jesus.

[4] Luke follows Mark's version nearly verbatim, only excising the end where the kingdom will "come with power" (Lk. 9:27).

[5] Luke also assigns possession of the kingdom to Jesus by putting it in the mouth of the criminal on the cross: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (ὅταν ἔλθῃς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν σου).

Mark uses the term βασιλεύς ("king") twelve times in three clustered units (Mk. 6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27; 13:9; 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32) and each are overtly negative. This study will show that from Julius Vindex's revolt against Nero (c. Mar. 68CE) to 73CE (Vespasian's fourth year in power), the political concept of *libertas* ("liberty") had been revived in the wake of Roman civil war. Roman sources place political *libertas* in the transition from the regal period to the Republic, when Lucius Junius Brutus (L. Brutus) had exiled Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus, and initiated the Republic. In Roman memory, *libertas* meant Rome's "liberation" from kingship (*regnum*) and was inextricably tied to the L. Brutus narrative. As evidenced in both the literary sources and numismatic material, the rebellion faction of Vindex and Galba (Mar. - 9 June 68CE) uniquely utilised political *libertas* to associate Nero with the kingship motif of King Tarquin. The ripples caused by the civil wars, and its popular *libertas* propaganda, reverberated throughout the empire during the years that most scholars agree Mark's gospel was written (68-73CE). I argue that Mark was reticent to name Jesus βασιλεύς as his own beliefs concerning kingship were influenced by recent widespread politicisation of *libertas* and the lingering despotism of Nero, which would have negatively associated kingship with tyranny, thus, compromising Mark's message to his audience concerning Jesus' identity. Therefore, the question of Jesus' kingship in Mark becomes more speculative when the historical context is brought to account and the other gospels are silenced so that Mark's voice may emerge without interference.

Chapter 1

The Riddles of a Markan Provenance and Date

Introduction

In Markan studies, enduring puzzles concerning Mark's provenance, dating, and audience continue to draw avid challengers who hope to find and connect the missing pieces. Does internal or external evidence reveal Mark's gospel to be of western or eastern origin? Moreover, what of the dating? Can a pre or post 70CE date be adduced with any level of certainty? Was Mark's gospel written to a community comprised of Jews, god-fearers, or gentiles? What of Mark's background? Was Mark a Jew or gentile himself? For the scope of this project, issues of authorship are unessential, and I will hold a somewhat agnostic position on the question, though affirming Joel Marcus' assertion concerning Petrine influence and "John Mark": "The truth is, were it not for Papias, one would never suspect that the Second Gospel was particularly Petrine".[1]

My aim is to assess varying external and internal evidence in Mark, to discuss the provenance and dating, which I find most compelling, though far from concrete, and to present a range of likely possibilities upon which this thesis will rely. This chapter may seem formed against a provenance in the city of Rome, though this is not my aim; rather I want to assess those issues commonly attested as particularly "Roman" to see whether they might also fit within a different context. Therefore, my starting point is typically oriented towards Roman arguments. In addressing a Markan audience, I will suggest that whether Mark was writing from

[1] Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 24. Throughout this writing, "Mark" will be shorthand, at times, for the author of Mark's gospel, but also the Gospel of Mark itself, and delineations should be clear enough.

the east or west, his language hints at the reception of his work by a gentile audience with some Jewish background. Subsequently, I intend to show that Markan "Latinisms" were a widespread phenomenon in the ancient world, particularly in the east, and so it is impossible to make any definitive claims in relation to provenance. I also note "points of contact" with Rome in Mark (e.g. female-initiated divorce in Mk. 10:12, etc.) and suggest that the integration of multiple cultures, laws, and languages in the east, as well as the west, can attest for these phenomena.

Furthermore, I propose to date Mark between the start of the Roman Civil War (beginning of 68CE) and the mid-Flavian era (c. 75CE), though preferring a date between Vespasian's hiatus on his advancement towards Jerusalem – i.e. after learning of Nero's death, likely sometime at the end of summer or beginning of fall 68CE – and Titus's final advance on Jerusalem (summer 70CE). However, while my thesis is not reliant upon a narrowly defined locale, it will be important for me to demonstrate Mark's awareness of distinctly Roman ideas, i.e. I intend to show Mark's own understanding and subsequent ability to navigate the uniqueness of Roman conceptions of kingship. Mark's distancing from kingship may also be motivated by his aims to accommodate an audience who held similar views to his own about kingship at the time. Therefore, it is assumed that the community for which Mark writes—wherever they might be located—would likewise have a familiarity with distinctive Roman views on kingship as well if Mark's claims are to have any currency. And while I argue against the simplicity of words like "Romanisation", as if "Roman" were a fixed category, the issue of kingship stands out uniquely as a topic concerned with Roman history, but not necessarily the city of Rome itself. Therefore, while the city of Rome would serve my purposes well here, a

revival of the odium towards kingship was newly ripened and spread throughout the Roman frontiers in the Civil Wars of 69CE. The rebels' widespread and aggressive propaganda campaigns against the tyrant Nero sought to restore Republican *libertas*, which had become threatened under his rule. From these introductory conclusions, a few notes concerning background information of Mark's gospel should be made.

In dating Mark just before the destruction of the temple, the Markan author and audience lived in the lingering shadow of Neronian despotism and persecution. As such, Mark is interested to encourage his community to remain faithful to Jesus in the face of a new and coming persecution (Mk. 4:17; 8:34; 10:39; 13:9-13).[2] Moreover, as Mark writes on the dawn of the temple's destruction (see below), his community wonders whether God is truly more powerful than the Roman oppressors who encircle it (Mk. 13). They question how Jesus' death produced victory when continued suffering looms in the background, post-Easter. In light of these difficulties, Mark's gospel is concerned "for people who are afraid to believe in a world that despises weakness and esteems power".[3] In presenting Jesus as crucified, early Christian messaging and communities became compromised by criticisms and reservations about Jesus' mode of death. Mark answers these critics by writing an apology of the cross. As I will show in chp. 4, Mark presents Jesus' death by crucifixion not as a path to shame, but as a conduit to power, and even deification. This understanding of Mark's gospel squares well with the genre of ancient *bioi*,[4]

---

[2] Cf. Hendrika N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in Its Historical and Social Context* (NTS 114; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 27-74.

[3] Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 1026.

[4] See, Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; SNTSMS 70; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); Helen K. Bond,

which were deeply concerned with the presentation of the story's key subject, i.e. their personality, identity, messaging, and character traits. For Mark, identity and Christological concerns about Jesus are informed by nearly every pericope; and Jesus' death by crucifixion, and subsequent resurrection, only solidify his commitment to his messaging and superior moral character.

Early Church Traditions

Traditionally, scholars have located Mark's gospel in Rome,[5] though (relatively) recent proposals have suggested an eastern provenance, such as the region of Palestine or province of Syria.[6] The longstanding basis for a Roman

The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 29-77.

[5] Important works arguing for a Roman provenance include R. E. Brown and J. P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983); Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, trans J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995), 1-30, specifically 28-30; Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 191–97; Ivan Head, "Mark as a Roman Document from the Year 69: Testing Martin Hengel's Thesis", *Journal of Religious History* 28, no. 3 (2004): 240-259; Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel : an Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 76-91.

[6] A Galilean provenance is argued for thoroughly in Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark*; see also Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), 64-66; Werner Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); W.R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For proponents of a Syrian provenance see Philipp Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Einleitung in dem Neue Testament und den Apokryphen und den apostolischen Väter* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1975), 347; H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 100-105; Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 236–245; Joel Marcus, "The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark", JBL 111 (1992): 441-462; idem, *Mark 1–8*, 33-37. For scholars taking a mediating position see Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 7-10, 96-102. Yarbro Collins suggests Rome or Antioch as most likely, but concludes "it is compatible with both locations (*and others*)" (101; my emphasis). Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 20. Boring argues a mediating position of "Syria or Galilee" and concludes "it is not possible to be more precise than this". For scholars taking a non-definitive position on the issue see Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989). Morna Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, BNTC (London: Continuum, 1991), 5-8. Hooker (8) contends, "All we can say with certainty, therefore, is that the gospel was composed somewhere in the Roman Empire—a conclusion that scarcely narrows the field at all!".

provenance once rested heavily upon the external evidence found in the earliest church traditions. Irenaeus (c. 180) and Clement of Alexandria (c. 180), for example, claimed that Mark was written in Rome, a locale consistent with the Anti-Marcionite Prologue (c. 160-180), i.e. locating Mark "in the regions of Italy". Scholars have rightfully raised objections and questioned whether the Peter/Mark correlation prominent in the earliest witnesses could have derived from 1 Pet. 5:13 and consequently cemented "Mark" to Peter "in Babylon" (i.e. Rome).[7] A Mark/Rome correlation occurs nowhere in the patristic record apart from the Mark/Peter connection.[8] The force, then, to associate apostolic authority, i.e. specifically Petrine authority, to Mark's gospel likely resulted in a subsequent connection to Rome.[9]

---

[7] Jürgen Regul, *Die Antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe* (Vetus Latina 6; Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 96; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 6-7; Marcus, "Jewish War", 442-443; Clifton Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 224-225; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 12. Cf. Robert Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC 34A; Dallas: Word Inc., 1989), xxix. Guelich convincingly argues that the connection between Silvanus and Mark in 1 Pet. 5:12-13 envisions the "John Mark" of Acts and the Pauline/Deutero-Pauline correspondence. This link stems from the earliest attestation of the anonymous "Mark"–who is likely the author of the gospel—and Papias' hope to establish apostolic authority deriving from Peter. For this task, John Mark was the perfect candidate, and the association of Mark's and Peter's names created the perfect link. Contra Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel*, 77-80. Winn argues that (1) the sample size (i.e. two sources), based on only seven traditions of a Mark/Peter link, and of which five connect Mark, Peter, and Rome, is too small to draw any conclusive patterns; (1) each witness's failure to note the Rome tradition can be explained by the intent and concern of their writing; (2) there is no inherent motivation or benefit for creating a Roman provenance. Winn's arguments are helpful, but unconvincing. Winn's first objection fails to take into account the fact that Papias, as the first and earliest source, penetrates subsequent sources. Had the two sources not mentioning Rome been, for example, Origen or Irenaeus, his argument might stand. Since Papias first makes the Peter/Mark connection, this allows the tradition to propagate by its conflation with 1 Peter 5:13. Winn's second objection assumes that the Mark/Rome tradition played a similarly meaningful role to the Peter/Mark tradition; instead, the Mark/Rome connection was simply the negative consequence of corrupted traditions continuing to be propagated by the church. Therefore, no motivation is necessary since it merely resulted from the Peter/Mark tradition.

[8] Clifton Black, *Mark*, 225. For another (possibly) early Petrine connection, see also Justin Martyr, *Dial*. 106.3 (which can confidently be dated before 167CE). Justin references Jesus' appointing and naming of Peter in "*his* memoirs" (my emphasis). In conjunction, Justin also notes the name change of the sons of Zebedee to "Boanerges, which means 'sons of thunder,'" thus connecting the reference to Mark 3:17, the only occurrence of this name.

[9] Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 2.167. Koester argues that the connection solidified a

Papias' testimony, the earliest witness to a Peter/Mark connection, was inceptive[10] for Irenaeus who implied the connection to Rome, and Clement of Alexandria (and later witnesses)[11] who later incorporated it full stock.[12] The external evidence, then, based on early church traditions, remains inconclusive and the sources suspect. Beyond external evidence, Mark's language is often suggested as the key to unlock the provenance code.

Does Language Tell Mark's Story?

Bilingualism and the "Romanisation" of Mark

In attempts both to locate and identify Mark and his audience, scholars have looked to the author's language. The abundance of Latinisms and Semitisms, scholars argue, can help determine not only Mark's provenance of writing and the locale of his audience, but also his primary language (Aramaic?) and subsequent languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin?), i.e. such linguistic evidence might reveal a cultural milieu for which one can ultimately situate the author and his audience with precision. The presence of multiple Latinisms, it is argued, can help locate Mark in the city of Rome, i.e. where Latin functioned most naturally as the *lingua franca* in

---

defense of the Gospels against the Gnostics. Contra Petr Pokorny, "Das Markusevangelium", *ANRW II*, 25.3 (1984) 2020-2021.

[10] Eusebius notes Papias' awareness of 1 Peter (*HE* 3.39.17), so there is little reason to assume that Papias was using an earlier common and independent tradition. Contra Martin Hengel, "Probleme des Markusevangeliums," in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982*, WUNT 33 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 246; Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT 3 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 4-5.

[11] E.g. Origen, Eusebius, the Monarchian gospel prologue, and Jerome.

[12] Clifton Black, *Mark*, 225. Black notes, "the historian should allow for a considerable, if not precisely determinate, degree of folklore and legend in the patristic coupling of Mark with Rome." Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 22. Marcus argues that the Papias testimony, for example, ought to be regarded suspect as the quality of the content appears "apologetic".

the west. In addition, the presence of Semitisms might, for example, underline the author's first language, Aramaic. In some instances, scholars attempt to import an entire history of Mark based on his language.[13] And while general linguistic patterns in Mark's gospel may certainly be discerned—and provide information potentially related to the author's identity and background—I argue that such phenomena cannot locate Mark with the type of precision scholars sometimes suggest. Moreover, the quest for degrees of "Romanisation"[14] in Mark's gospel are increasingly problematic.

In the Roman Empire, terms such as "Greek" and "Roman" were neither monolithic nor mutually exclusive,[15] but reflected an ever-evolving diversity of identity, which changed and adapted through time and space. The process of acculturation, which scholars long-bracketed in simplistic dualist terms of dominance and passivity, i.e. the replacement of one native culture by the more dominant (Roman) one, can no longer be sustained. Rather, scholars recognise the coterminous existence of multiple identities and languages amongst Rome and its subjects.[16] Both [Rome and its subjects] had reciprocal interests and could benefit by

[13] Ben Witherington III, for example, speaks of Mark's "Jewish family" and "Jerusalem" upbringing! Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Socio-Rhetorical Commentary Series; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 20. See also Witherington's blog, Ben Witherington III, "Latinisms, Western Diction, and the Provenance of Mark's Gospel," *The Bible and Culture*, 1 November 2011, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/bibleandculture/2011/11/01/latinisms-western-diction-and-the-provenance-of-marks-gospel/.

[14] For a helpful up-to-date understanding of the research and topic see Alex Mullen, *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean: Multilingualism and Multiple Identities in the Iron Age and Roman Periods*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2013), 4-14.

[15] Consider the *tria cordia* (i.e. Ennius' trilingual abilities in Greek, Oscan, and Latin) of Ennius, who was neither exclusively Greek, Roman, nor Oscan, but equally identified with the "three hearts" simultaneously. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, U.K.: CUP, 2008), 4.

[16] Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 14.

adopting aspects of the other's culture, especially language. Rome could benefit in her tasks of conquest while subjects could benefit in goods and prestige. While Rome certainly stimulated the spread of ideological views and institutions with aims toward legitimation; locals too adopted Roman forms of identity without pressure from Rome. Latin, the language of empire and conquest, could be utilised by Rome's subjects for personal interests and power. The dedication[17] found under an equestrian statue of Vespasian in Perge serves this point:

Imp(eratori) T(ito) F(lavio)
Vespasiano
Caesari Aug(usto)
ci(ves) R(omani) et ordo
et res publica
Pergensium

"To Imperator Titus Flavius Vespasianus Caesar Augustus, Roman citizens and the council, and the people of Perge."

This inscription dates to the earliest years of Vespasian's reign (69CE) as evidenced by the inclusion of the *nomen* Flavio (Vespasian's title had yet to be fixed). In the wake of the civil wars, and after military forces in Judaea, Syria, and Egypt had acknowledged Vespasian as emperor, the citizens of Perge were concerned to make their political allegiances known. In an environment where the epigraphic records indicate that nearly all inscriptions from Perge were found in Greek at that time, this one stands out uniquely. The cities' loyalties are not only reinforced by their dedicatory statue, but also in their use of Latin.[18]

[17] IK 54 (Perge); AE 1996, 00687.

[18] Werner Eck, "Der Anschluß der kleinasiatischen Provinzen an Vespasian und ihre Restrukturierung unter den Flaviern" in *Vespasiano e l'impero dei Flavi (Atti del Convegno, Roma, Palazzo Massimo, 18-20 novembre 2009)*, eds. Luigi Capogrossi Colognesi and Elena Tassi Scandone (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2012), 27-44.

For the city's Roman citizens, council, and people of Perge, the language of Rome was strategically deployed for their benefit. This example challenges the security of an "either/or" dichotomy—in the case of Mark, "Roman or …"–and forces a more complex view of "Romanisation" set within a matrix of multiple identities, languages, and cultural interactions utilised and negotiated by individuals and communities for their benefit. In other words, Mark's use of Latinisms, for example, does not necessitate a Roman provenance merely because of their presence in his gospel. Rather, Mark could have been motivated to use such language for other (unknown) reasons. For example, and at a less administrative level, Cicero remarks on Lucullus' intentional latinising of his Greek historical work to convince his audience that a Roman had produced it. Cicero notes that Lucullus littered his work with "barbarisms and solecisms" to achieve these goals.[19] This should serve again as a caution against simplistic and general labelling of Mark (the author) as "Roman," "Jewish," or otherwise. The mere diversity of Mark's gospel in language and contexts, and subsequent polarisation of scholars on these positions, further cautions against such simplicity.

Roman Language Policies

The Romans, unlike other conquering powers before them,[20] never enforced a widespread language policy on the east. Instead, Greek functioned unencumbered as the *lingua franca* in the region from the Seleucid and Ptolemaic periods onwards, but

[19] Cic. *Att*. 1.9.10: *Lucullus de suis historiis dixerat, se, quo facilius illas probaret Romani hominis esse, idcirco barbara quaedam et soloeca dispersisse*.

[20] Rome is set in strong contrast to the ambitions of Alexander the Great who intentionally enforced Greek on subject peoples (Plut. *Alex*. 47.6).

especially under the Roman administration.[21] In the east, however, one could expect to find insertions of Roman dominance through language. Military milestones as well as inscriptions listing imperial victories were produced in Latin even among predominately Greek-speaking cities in the east.[22] Coins featuring Latin inscriptions also circulated throughout this region, affirming Rome's dominant position. Moreover, there were implicit expectations for Roman citizens in the provinces, whether they were Greek speakers or otherwise, to learn Latin.[23] Official documents for Roman citizens in the east could require Latin (e.g. legal documents such as wills and birth certificates), even when the parties were non-Latin speaking.[24] Conversely, it appears that the Romans did not accommodate local Semitic languages as they did Greek. Instead, the languages of local populations in the east typically suffered from Roman integration, as evidenced in the decline of Egyptian Demotic during the first century CE.[25] Among epigraphic evidence, the *Titulus Crucis*, recorded in John

---

[21] Bruno Rochette, *Le latin dans le monde grec: recherches sur la diffusion de la langue et de lettres latines dans les provinces hellénophones de l'empire romain* (Brussels: Latomus, 1997), 160.

[22] The exception being AE 1971, 471 (found in Palestine), which begins in Latin and ends in Greek noting the distance to Caesarea: Imp(eratori) Caesari / [P(ublio)] Helvio [Pertinaci] / trib(unicia) pot(estate) co(n)s(uli) [II] / Aug(usto) pont(ifici) / max(imo) p(atri) p(atriae) / Ἀπὸ Καισα[ρειας] / μειλια [γ]. The marker dates to 193CE, long after the expansion of Latin in the area. There are obvious pragmatic reasons for such a script.

[23] See Suet. *Claud*. 16.2, who notes Claudius' harsh treatment of a Roman citizen—a prominent figure from Greece—who was stripped of his Roman citizenship for a "deficient knowledge of Latin" (*verum Latini sermonis ignarum*). Cf. Apul. *Met*. 9.39 where a grieving gardener is beaten by a Roman soldier for his failure to understand the soldier's Latin. Cf. Cic. *Brut*. 140.

[24] The practice was an empire-wide phenomenon, but is particularly noticeable in the Egyptian papyri record (due to the extensive survival of papyri in the area). Both wills and birth certificates were made in Latin due to their obvious connections to citizenship. See J. N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 5.IV.5, 6.

[25] The Demotic language in Egypt suffered severely in the first century CE, seeing a marked decrease, for example, in use on sales receipts and marriage settlements which had a century earlier been widespread. Demotic was all but replaced with Greek towards the end of the first century CE. This progression is not accidental, but seems to have arisen from the Romans' insistence on Greek as the official administration language of the east regardless of the populations

19:19, is one of the few known trilingual (19:20) inscriptions featuring Greek (Ἑλληνιστί), Latin (Ῥωμαϊστί), and a local language (Ἑβραϊστί).

However, the scarcity of inscriptional evidence could suggest that trilingual texts were mainly recorded on perishable materials, as in the case of the *Titulus Crucis*, which survives only in the literary record.[26] Therefore, the presence of long-term native Latin-speaking Roman soldiers, businesspeople, and officials had a major effect on both local languages and the official Koine. As a direct result, Roman provinces borrowed (see below) and transliterated Latin words into Greek to make sense of institutional Roman terms and apply them in their own contexts where Greek had yet to assign equivalents. However, many of the loanwords found in Mark had already been integrated into Greek for quite some time. This is the difficulty with "Latinisms," for it is impossible to know how deeply a loanword had become integrated into the Greek system, i.e. at a point where terming the word "borrowed" no longer makes sense. It is important to better understand language use more directly in those areas where scholars typically assign Markan provenance, and ask whether Markan Latinisms would have been more plausibly utilised in an eastern or western setting. Most impactful on the local language was the establishment and influence of the Roman military.

---

dominant language. See Adams (*Bilingualism*, 2.XIV.3) on "language death" in the east. Also, Mark Depauw, "Language Use, Literacy, and Bilingualism" in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christina Riggs (Oxford, UK: OUP, 2012), 494.

[26] Werner Eck, "Lateinisch, Griechisch, Germanisch …? Wie sprach Rom mit seinen Untertanen?" in *Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and Regional Perspectives: Proceedings of the Fourth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, c. 200 BC–AD 476) Leiden: June 25–28, 2003*, eds. L. De Ligt, Emily A. Hemelrijk, and H.W. Singor (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 2004), 10-13.

Latinisms in the NT[27]

One important feature typically ascribed to Mark is his proliferation of Latinisms. "Latinisms" can be bracketed under the more general term, "borrowing," and more narrowly classified as "loan-words". Borrowing describes the adoption and import of any linguistically integrated element (e.g. a loan-word) from one language into another.[28] The Latinisms found in Mark can be categorised as "predictable" Latin loans, integrated (or in the process of integration) into the Greek language to "fill gaps in the lexicon for imported concepts and objects".[29] Contact with Roman administrations, institutions, and trade led to empire-wide borrowing of Latin vocabulary and grammatical characteristics.[30] However, there remain two difficulties when assessing loan-words. The first concerns the degree of integration, i.e. the degree to which a foreign word had become embedded into the host language. Long-standing integration would *not* require a speaker/author to be functionally bilingual (or bilingual at all), since the borrower may not even realise that a loan is being borrowed.[31] Secondly, difficulty can arise when assessing the differences between

[27] For a helpful examination of the Latinisms found in the NT and Greek writings see, BDF §5; Hugh J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974).

[28] Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 18-29. Cf. Alex Mullen, "Latin and Other Languages: Societal and Individual Bilingualism" in *A Companion to the Latin Language*, ed. James Clackson (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 531.

[29] J.N. Adams and Simon Swain, "Introduction" in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 17. By "predictable", Adams and Swain note technical terms associated with Roman institutions, which would have quickly forced new terminology upon contact. "Non-predictable" categories would be classified in everyday language occurrences found, for example, at the market.

[30] Adams (*Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 5.1.3) notes that Egypt is somewhat unique in that the spread of Latin was met with some resistance and mostly confined to the political sphere.

[31] Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 29.

the source and borrower of a term or grammatical construction; and whether it reflects the natural development of pre-existing similarities between Latin and Greek (borrowed words are often easier to assess than syntactical loans). Van Iersel argues, for example, that Mark's use of ἵνα after verbs of speaking, asking, or commanding mimicked the use of the Latin *ut*, and should be considered among Markan Latinisms.[32]

However, Geoffrey Horrocks has adequately shown that such an influence on the Koine can be found taking shape early in the Hellenistic period, and the convergence of Latin merely stimulated, rather than initiated, this grammatical feature of Koine Greek.[33] Similarly, examples of verb-final constructions in Mark, typically ascribed as Latinisms, can be explained by Classical Greek constructions and early influences of administrative documents being translated from Latin into Greek.[34] In fact, many of the grammatical "Latinisms" attested in Mark can be clarified as an expected progression of Koine's contact with Latin. In other words, these features found in Koine can no longer be distinctly identified as "Latin" (though features, in other works, can certainly be discerned as such), but rather as the typical progression of language in a province influenced by the integration of Latin upon Koine. Similarly, most loan-words found in Mark are of the "predictable" type

[32] Bas M.F. Van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (trans.W.H. Bisscheroux; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 35.

[33] Geoffrey C. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers*, ed. by InterScience Wiley, 2nd ed. (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010),93-94; Geoffrey C. Horrocks, "Syntax: From Classical Greek to the Koine" in *A History of Ancient Greek: from the Beginnings to Late Antiquity*, ed. by A.-F. Christidis with the assistance of Maria Arapopoulou and Maria Chriti (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 626.

[34] Horrocks, "Syntax", 621; Jorma Kaimio, *The Romans and the Greek Language* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica,1979), 120.

expected by the convergence of Roman institutions and the local populace.

The New Testament has a total of 27 Latinisms, which occur 68 different times.[35] From that total, the four gospels account for 18 Latinisms and 54 overall occurrences. Though scholars differ on the quantity and quality of Latinisms in Mark,[36] the gospel features 10 Latinisms, which occur 15 times. Additionally, Mark has three unique Latinisms not used elsewhere in the NT.[37] Hengel notes that "such an accumulation of Latinisms is unusual" and "point[s] to an origin in Rome".[38] Incigeri presses the point further: "The most likely place for Latinisms to predominate is in the city of Rome, where the Latin and Greek languages were closely intermingled as nowhere else at that time".[39] However, Matthew's gospel, a writing considered by most scholars as having its origins in the East (and likely

[35] See figure 1 for a list of all Latinisms and occurrences in the NT. This brief study does not account for other possible Latinisms. For example, Latinized endings such as Ἡρῳδιανοί (3:6) or Latin idioms such as τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιῆσαι for *satisfacere* in Mk. 15:15. See BDF §5.

[36] Numerous scholars continue to (problematically) number κράβαττος, for example, among the "Latinisms" found in Mark, e.g. C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 154; Gundry, *Mark*, 117; Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark,* 114. However, Mark's use of the word κράβαττος ("bed / mat"; Mk. 2:4, 9, 11, 12; 6:55) as a "Latinism" should be questioned. The word derives from Macedonian origin and was already in circulation among Greek authors before any major influence of Latin. For example, Pollux 10.35 citing—secondhand—the usage of κράβαττος in earlier Greek comedic authors, Rhinthon (3c. BCE) and Crito (2c. BCE). For a contemporary usage to Mark's writing, see Egyptian papyrus *O.Did.* 372. Later examples (early 2c. CE) include *P.Lond* 2.191.16 and *P.Oxy* 42.3060.8. For Macedonian origin, see Johannes Kramer, "κράβατος, κραβάτιον und Verwandtes in den Papyri", Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete 41(2) (2009): 205-216; R. S. P. Beekes and Lucien Van Beek, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series, v. 10/1-2 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), "κράββατος"; Christopher Zeichmann,"Loanwords or Code-Switching? Latin Transliteration and the Setting of Mark's Composition" *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting from the First to the Seventh Century*, no. 4 (2017): 45. References to Pollux 10.35 cited in Eric Otto Völker, *Rhinthonis Fragmenta* (Halis Saxonum, 1887), 40.

[37] See σπεκουλάτωρ (6:27); ξέστης (7:4) κεντυρίων (15:39, 44, 45).

[38] Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 29.

[39] Incigeri, *The Gospel to the Romans*, 102.

Syrian Antioch),[40] also accounts for 10 Latinisms, but with a higher frequency than Mark at 19. Moreover, three of Matthew's Latinisms are unique to his writing and are not in Mark (and only one is in Luke) or elsewhere within the NT.[41] Therefore, dependency on Mark does not entirely account for Matthew's choice to adopt Latinisms.

Diverging from Mark's (and Matthew's) pattern, Luke appears more apprehensive to adopt Latinisms and prefers Greek equivalents.[42] Moreover, it is interesting to find three instances where Matthew and Luke utilise Latinisms found in Mark, but not in parallel pericopes, again revealing a lack of dependency on Mark. In the first instance, Luke drops the term μόδιος found in Mk. 4:21 and Matt. 5:15 for σκεῦος (Lk. 8:16), but then later implements μόδιος at Lk. 11:33, a doublet of Lk. 8:16.[43] In Matt. 8:28-34, the author parallels Mark's version of the demoniac episode (Mk. 5:1-20) near verbatim (relevant passages: Mt. 8:29 = Mk. 5:7; Mt. 8:30 = Mk. 5:11; Mt.8:31 = Mk. 5:12; Mt. 8:32 = Mk. 5:13), though he eliminates the

[40] For an extensive and recent list of literature on Matthean provenance, see Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 41 fn. 122. Cf. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary on Matthew 1–7*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 56-58.

[41] See μίλιον (Mt. 5:41); ἀσσάριον (Mt. 10:29; cf. Luke 12:6); κουστωδία (Mt. 27.65, 66; 28:11).

[42] Luke uses only five Latinisms, sharing 3 common to Mark, 4 common to Matthew, and 1 unique Latinism also found in John's gospel and Acts. See BDF §5, 4-5 for Luke's various diversions from Markan and Matthean Latinisms.

[43] The presence of a Latinism here is highly contested. Arguments are made concerning the phrase οὐδὲ ὑπὸ τόν μόδιον, which are absent in the first doublet, and thus suspect of not being the original form. While NA28 brackets the phrase and UBS 4 gives it a "C" rating; major translations (e.g. NRSV and REB) prefer the shorter text, and exclude it altogether. However, the textual witnesses provide "weighty and diversified external evidence" that should not be quickly dismissed. While the Latinism may be suspect, especially for Luke, the textual witnesses must be considered and explained. See Bruce M. Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.)* (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 134.

conversation between the demoniac and Jesus, thus jettisoning the need for naming the λεγιών. However, at Jesus' arrest (Mt. 26:53), Matthew chooses λεγιών to reveal the potentiality of Jesus' strength, i.e. had he decided to call down "twelve *legions* of angels" (δώδεκα λεγιῶνας ἀγγέλων). Lastly, though Matthew has no parallel to Mark's story of the widow's offering (Mk. 12:41-44), he still utilises the term κοδράντης, suggesting it represents the smallest denomination (Mt. 5:26).[44] Therefore, neither the mere presence of Latinisms in Mark nor their frequency suggests a Roman provenance any more than it does for, say, Matthew's gospel. However, scholars not only base their arguments on presence and frequency, but rather type and quality of Latinisms found in Mark. In two places, Mark applies Latinisms in a way that is explanatory of his initial Greek terms. The first appears in Mk. 12:42 where ὅ ἐστιν κοδράντης ("which is a *quadrans*") explains λεπτὰ δύο ("two lepta"). The other is found at Mk. 15:16 where ὅ ἐστιν πραιτώριον ("which is the praetorium") explains the Greek term αὐλή ("courtyard/palace").

Code-Switching in Mark

Both Mk. 12:42 and 15:16 follow the frequent Markan construction ὅ ἐστιν (cf. Mk. 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 12:42; 15:16, 22, 34, 42), showing the explanatory nature of these episodes.[45] This construction also exhibits Mark's purposeful

[44] The smallest Roman denomination was the κοδράντης (Plut. *Cic*. 29.4; Mart. 2.44.9; Hor. *Sat*. 2.3.93; Juv. 7.8), however, for an eastern setting, the λεπτός was a smaller denomination than the κοδράντης (cf. Mk. 12:42), and seems would be more appropriate in terms of familiarity; yet, Matthew never uses the term λεπτός. Cf. David Hendin, *Guide to Biblical Coins*, 4th ed. (Amphora: New York, 2001), 34-37. Further, the parallel Lukan episode (12:59) may represent another occurrence of Luke's avoidance of Markan and Matthean Latinisms.

[45] There are 29 uses of this expression in the NT and 9 are found in Mark, double the amount for any other NT writings. The more literary form τοῦτ' ἔστιν in Mk. 7:2, which carries the

intention in deploying a skilful literary "code switch"[46] rather than "borrowing" or accidental "interference".[47] Though code-switches are often deliberate and, for Mark, intended to clarify the Greek terms for his audience, nothing points particularly to an audience or provenance in Rome. And while scholars often suggest a competence with Latin on the part of Mark, and subsequently his audience, this level of code-switching, though purposeful, was often employed among low to no-competency bilinguals.[48] To conclude that Mark's code-switches equated to competent bilingualism, which then equated to the marks of an educated elite are misguided.[49] Various reasons can account for Mark's code-switches, namely (1) to illustrate his identity and sense of self or group-belonging; (2) to accommodate supposed needs of

---

same meaning, is utilised only once and may suggest a pre-Markan tradition (cf. Mt. 26:26; 27:46; Acts 1:19; 19:4; Rom. 7:18, etc.). Also, for a similar rendering in relation to language, see Josephus (*Ant*. 7.67) who clarifies an Aramaic loanword (Σόλυμα) into a Greek equivalent (ἀσφάλεια) with same construction.

[46] Typically defined, code-switching involves the use of two languages in a single utterance. Borrowing (e.g. loanwords), however, is concerned with words that have become embedded into the host language. Distinctions between "borrowing" and "code-switching" are historically muddled with no clear formula for assessment. Often, code-switching and borrowing are presented on a continuum for which code-switching is a prerequisite to borrowing (though not all code-switches will become loanwords). For the definition of this work, code-switching is understood as the *conscious* use of two or more languages in a communicative event, whereas borrowing is considered *unconscious* as the integration of a word has taken place in the host language. In Mark 12:42 and 15:16, though the Latinisms (κοδράντης; πραιτώριον) are integrated to host language, Mark seems conscious of his word choice as evidenced in his construction, ὅ ἐστιν. For this reason, I have opted for the use of "code-switching" in these two instances and "borrowing" for the other loans. See Penelope Gardner-Chloros, *Code-switching* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).

[47] J.N. Adams notes (*Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 28), "I see interference as unintentional and beyond the control of the writer, whereas code-switching… is often a manifestation of linguistic skill".

[48] Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 41; Agnes Bolonyai, "Code-Switching, Imperfect Acquisition, and Attrition" in *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Code-Switching*, eds. Barbara E. Bullock and Almeida Jacqueline Toribio (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2009), 262; Alex Mullen*, Southern Gaul*, 88.

[49] For this logic see, Dietmar Neufeld, *Mockery and Secretism in the Social World of Mark's Gospel* LNTS (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 30. To be fair, Neufeld acknowledges that "we do not know what his [Mark's] levels of education were or even that he was bilingual, but we can entertain the possibility…".

his audience; or (3) as a stimulus for culturally specific topics.[50]

These features are not mutually exclusive, but often overlap. In the case of Mark, option one and two are certainly pertinent. Marcus argues against Mk. 12:42 and 15:16 being explanatory terms for an audience unfamiliar with λεπτός and αὐλή, but instead prefers that Mark was providing clarifications about imprecise terms with more precise ones.[51] However, in relation to Mark's Aramaicisms, Marcus acknowledges that Mark mediated his language for "readers not conversant with Aramaic," no less through his ὅ ἐστιν construction.[52] If Mark utilises such a construction for his audience with explanatory purposes at seven other points, should we not expect these other two instances to be similar, especially when each example is related to language use? Moreover, these types of code-switches are usually representative of close contacts between minority and majority language groups who have undergone "rapid social change."[53] For Mark, such an environment need not be explained by a Roman provenance, and may, in fact, be better elucidated by an eastern one.[54]

[50] Mullen, *Southern Gaul*, 89.

[51] Marcus, "The Jewish War", 445.

[52] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 372.

[53] John J. Gumperz and Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez, "Cognitive Aspects of Bilingual Communication" in *Language Use and Social Change: Problems of Multilingualism with Special Reference to Eastern Africa* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 1971), 112.

[54] Zeichmann, "Loanwords", 42-64. Zeichmann's article helpfully sets the use of Latinisms within three important geographical locations (Palestine, Rome, and Syria), i.e. where scholars have notably contended Mark's gospel was written. In his findings, he states, "At the level of vocabulary, many of Mark's words can be found in all three locations, though they are certainly more common in Syria and post-War Palestine than Italia".

Mark and His Audience

Jewish, Gentile, Or…?

Many scholars have allied Mark with a vibrant awareness of Judaism while still others suggest that his harsh tones towards Jewish law and misunderstandings of Jewish concepts and practices (Mk. 7:3-4; 15:42) undergird his gentile background and distance from Judaism. However, the Apostle Paul stands as an example of a Christian Jew who openly criticised Judaism and was not a gentile. In his gospel, Mark directly cites the Greek OT (LXX) 30+ times,[55] with numerous citations representing Mark's creative ability (and scriptural knowledge) to conflate verses into a useful composite.[56] Mark frequently refers to "the Scripture" (ἡ γραφή; Mk. 12:10, 24; 14:49) and γέγραπται, the perfect passive form of γράφω ("it is written"), without further details to describe the OT (Mk. 1:2; 7:6; 9:12, 13; 11:17; 14:21, 27; cf. 10:5; 12:19). Furthermore, one finds that Mark prefers to utilise the LXX over the Hebrew text.[57] In fact, Mark's adoption of the LXX is sometimes determinate for the storyline to make sense.

The pericope of Jesus' triumphal entry was staked on the disciples' obtaining a colt "upon which no one had ever sat" (ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεὶς οὔπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν). Mark intended to recall LXX Zech. 9:9, and the addition of νέος ("new") there confirms Mark's usage of an unridden colt. Matthew (21:5) revises Mark to conform

[55] "Allusions" and "echoes" are likely extensive, but not counted among my list here.

[56] Mk. 1:2-3*, 11*; 2:25-26; 4:12; 6:34; 7:6-8, 10*; 8:18*; 9:7, 11-13, 48; 10:4, 6-8*, 19; 11:9-10, 17*; 12:10-11, 19, 26, 29-33*, 36; 13:14, 24-27*; 14:24, 27, 62*; 15:24, 29, 34. Those verses marked * are noted as composite verses.

[57] Additionally, in the episode of the "Great Commandment" (Mk. 12:28-34), where Jesus recites the Shema (Deut. 6:4-5), Mark favours the preposition ἐκ (12:30, 4x) as rendered in the LXX while Matthew (22:37) corrects Mark preferring ἐν to better reflect the Hebrew preposition ב.

to the Hebrew text—where no suggestion is made as to whether the animal was unridden—by eliminating ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεὶς οὔπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν altogether.[58] Moreover, Mark's literary habits exhibit Septuagintal (and consequently, "secondary Semitic"[59]) influences as well.

To note a few recurrent Markan characteristics: (1) the extensive[60] use of καί to introduce a pericope, or smaller units within a pericope (i.e. καί-parataxis);[61] (2) verb-subject word order;[62] (3) the pleonastic λέγων introducing direct speech;[63] (4) and periphrasis.[64] Furthermore, Mark, and subsequently his audience, were also keenly aware of Jewish characters and their function in the Jewish scriptures. Mark

[58] B.W. Bacon, *The Gospel of Mark: Its Composition and Date* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), 211-212.

[59] E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 202; N. De Lange, "Jewish Greek", in *A History of Ancient Greek: From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity*, ed. A.-F. Christidis (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 640. De Lange also notes, "Although some texts contain 'Semitisms'…many texts written by Jews are couched in perfectly ordinary Greek…". See also, Vit Bubenik, *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area* (Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1989), 65-67; Geoffrey Horrocks*, Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell 2014), 147-152.

[60] Mark 3:1-27, for example, exhibits 21 uses of the sentence-initial καί (also a high concentration in Mk. 5:35-41; 8:1-13; 12:1-5; 14:32-41, 53-72; 16:1-8). Moreover, Paul Ellingworth notes that around 64% (i.e. 376 of 583) of sentences in Mark begin with καί. Paul Ellingworth, "The Dog in the Night: A Note on Mark's Non-Use of KAI", *BT* 46 (1995): 125.

[61] In the LXX, 1 Maccabees (28.71/1,000 words), 1 Chronicles (27.08/1,000 words), and Joshua (21.00/1,000 words) retain the sentence-initial καί with a frequency near that of Mark (28.66/1,000 words). For a brief review, see the somewhat rough index in Rodney J. Decker, "Markan Idiolect in the Study of the Greek of the New Testament" in *The Language of the New Testament*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 66.

[62] V-S word order appears c. 160 times in Mark (cf. 300+ S-V word order in Mark, which reflects a more typically *Koine* flavour), but I have only listed high-yielding clusters: Mk. 1:4-15 (7x); 2:19-25 (7x); 3:20-31 (4x); 4:3-17 (7x); 5:21-29 (4x); 6:14-29 (6x); 9:1-11 (6x); 10:3-7 (3x); 13:1-12 (11x); 14:1-9 (7x); 15:33-41 (4x).

[63] For Semitic influence of the pleonastic λέγων, see BDR §420. Examples evident in Mk. 1:7, 15, 24; 8:15, 27; 9:25; 12:26; 14:60, 68; 15:4, 9. Other varieties of the particple (λέγοντες) occur at Mk. 6:25, :11; 10:49; 11:31.

[64] See, for example, Mk. 1:22; 5:41; 13:13; 15:22, 34. Rodney Decker counts "about two dozen periphrastics in Mark" in comparison to Matthew's 22. Rodney Decker, "Markan Idiolect", 52.

utilises characters such as Elijah (Mk. 1:6; 6:15; 8:28; 9:11-13; 15:35-36), Moses (Mk. 1:44; 7:10; 9:4-5; 10:3-4; 12:19, 26), David (Mk. 2:25; 10:47-48; 11:10; 12:35-37), Elijah and Moses (Mk. 9:4-5), and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Mk. 12:26) without any explanation to his audience. Mark, then, seems to be at home, and expects his audience to be as well, in the Jewish scriptures, though in Greek form.

In addition, numerous episodes reveal Mark's understanding and ability to navigate various Jewish practices/rituals, though at times lacking proficiency: Jewish purity laws/traditions (Mk. 1:40-45; 7:2-4); fasting (Mk. 2:18-20); Corban (Mk. 7:11); Marriage (Mk. 10:2-12); Temple workings (Mk. 11:15); Sadducean beliefs and, by implication, opposing Jewish beliefs (Mk. 12:18-23); Jewish festivals of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Mk. 14:1); and the Day of Preparation (Mk. 15:42). Mark, and not necessarily his audience,[65] also appears to be conversant with popular Jewish politics, most potently evidenced in the episode of John the Baptists' beheading (Mk. 6:14-29).[66] While Mark certainly expresses a clear affinity with Jewish thought (and may himself be Jewish), his audience still depends on his explanations of various Jewish words and practices to understand the narrative. For those adhering to a Syrian (or eastern) provenance for Mark, it becomes difficult to explain Mark's reasoning as Syria had the largest Jewish population outside of Judaea.[67] Mark's audience, then, seems familiar enough with the over-arching

[65] The γάρ-conjunction in Mk. 6:17, 18, 20 heightens the explanatory nature of this episode for Mark's audience. Along with the γάρ-conjunction and the aorist indicative verbs throughout vv. 17-29, Mark intends to portray the entire scene in the form a flashback. This lends to the possibility that Mark's audience was unfamiliar with the material (cf. Mk. 1:16; 7:3).

[66] Cf. Jos. *Ant*. 18.5.2.

[67] Jos. *BJ* 7.43.

narratives of the LXX, but unaware of street-level practices and landmarks associated with Judaism. Any assessment of provenance must adequately address Mark's continuous need to explain Jewish terminology and practice.

Contact with a Roman Context

Divorce and Roman Law? (Mk. 10:12)

Mark 10:12 explicitly accepts women's rights to initiate divorce with their husbands. Such a setting, scholars argue, assumes a Greco-Roman context, where Roman law afforded women such liberties.[68] Moreover, eastern forms of Judaism typically held the husband as the initiator of divorce. Matthew's omission (Matt. 19:9) of the Markan passage mirrors the standard view commonly drawn from Deut. 24:1-4 and LXX Mal. 2:15-16, and assimilates more easily to his Jewish perspective. However, such a monolithic view of Jewish male-initiated divorce has become increasingly challenged.[69] The earliest Jewish evidence for female-initiated divorce occurs in the Elephantine documents from Egypt, where female-initiated divorce contracts date as early as 449BCE (particularly, B36; C33, dated to 198BCE).[70] Whether such a practice existed in Palestine or the east generally during the first century CE has been disputed. However, beyond the Elephantine documents, two

[68] Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 442-44; Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London: Routledge, 2002), 140. In first century Roman law, either party could initiate a divorce unilaterally, though subsequent conditions for women might be more challenging.

[69] For an extensive list see, David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 90 fn. 16.

[70] For primary references, see Günther Vittmann et al., *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 208-211, 365-369; cf. David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage*, 75-80.

texts outside of Mark are especially notable: Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.30 and 1 Cor. 7. And while Mark himself could function as a witness to this phenomenon—i.e. his narrative world envisions Jesus, a first-century Jew, prohibiting wives from divorcing their husbands in Jewish Palestine—this would be a circular argument.

The issue of remarriage appears in Philo's *Spec. Laws* 3.30, placing a woman as the initiate of divorce: "And he [God] also says, that if a woman after divorcing[71] her husband…marries again…" (Ἐὰν δέ, φησίν, ἀνδρὸς ἀπαλλαγεῖσα γυνὴ… γημαμένη πάλιν). Most surprising is that Philo was recalling a commandment/saying of God (φημί), namely Deut. 24:1, 3. Both in the LXX and MT, the divorce is initiated by the husband, yet in Philo the husband is never mentioned. Moreover, I have translated Philo's term ἀπαλλάσσω as "divorce" since context, i.e. its relation to Deut. 24:1, 3, permits such a rendering. Philo also uses ἀπαλλάσσω in connection with husband-initiated divorce (*Spec. Laws* 1.105; 2.139; 3.27; 3.62) and once more of wives (3.82). In this latter text, it is not entirely clear whether a new wife who has been falsely accused by her husband was permitted to just "leave" or also initiate the divorce.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7:10, 13) might offer another possible setting for the rights of Jewish women in initiating divorce. First Corinthians 7:10 belongs to Paul's paraenetical section encompassing chapters 5-7 where the church at Corinth has posed questions to him concerning marriage and celibacy (1 Cor. 7:1: "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote…"). In v. 10, Paul moves the discussion forward to another topic concerning marriage, namely

[71] Cf. *P. Tebt.* 104.31 (92BCE); *P. Oxy.* 104.26 (96CE).

divorce and remarriage. Paul "commands" (παραγγέλλω) that a wife not separate from her husband. He clearly demarcates this "command" as not his own, but that of the "lord" (οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλ' ὁ κύριος). Paul's formulation likely draws from an earlier Christian tradition found in the Synoptics (Mk. 10:2-12, esp. 9, 11; Matt. 19:3-9). His use of the verb χωρίζω[72] strengthens this connection as it is only attested in the Synoptics at Matt. 19:6 and Mk. 10:9. Additionally, his use of χωρίζω for "divorce" is striking here since he seems to oscillate between it and ἀφίημι in this short section, thus associating χωρίζω with the "lord's" command (vv. 10, 11) and ἀφίημι with his own (vv. 11, 12, 13). This supports the idea that Paul was drawing from an early Jesus tradition that preferred χωρίζω, and to which Mark (and Matthew) had access. However, the "lord's" injunction to women in v. 10 seems to more closely resemble the Markan version, which lacks any sexual concessions (cf. Matt. 19:9: μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ) for divorce and preserves women's rights to initiate divorce. For Paul's context in Corinth, the wife could initiate divorce unproblematically whereas Matthew and Luke had to adjust such views. In large part, my argument is that such a tradition stands behind Paul and the Synoptics, reaching back to earlier Christian origins and is not merely dependent upon contextualisation for Paul's Corinthian audience. Whether this tradition originated against less egalitarian models found in Palestine at the time of Jesus is uncertain, but the tradition appears early.

One final law-related argument for female-initiated divorce should be made. The coterminous existence of local and (Roman) state law in the east is clear enough,

[72] Χωρίζω occurs seven times in the Pauline letters, of which four are related to the pericope in 1 Cor. 7. The other three uses (Rom. 8:35, 39; Philem. 15) are not connect to divorce, but carry the meaning "to separate". Romans 8:35, 39 demonstrates that it is impossible for the love between a Christian and "Christ" to be "separated". Philemon 15 notes the separation of master and slave.

even though the details of how these legal systems interacted remains mostly elusive. As subjects of Rome, Jews were afforded the freedoms to practice their ancestral laws, but could they appeal to Roman courts in addition? Could there be a legal situation in the east, especially among a Jewish population, where prohibiting women to initiate divorce makes sense for Mark's audience?

P.Yadin 18, a Jewish marriage-contract—admittedly later than Mark (early second century CE)—from the Babatha Archives, and a document from the village of Maoza in Arabia (Nabataean region), reveals a complex system "which emphatically recalls the attachment of this rural world to a wider power structure".[73] The document appeals to Rome,[74] dating according to the Roman system and noting the consulships of Publius Metilius Nepos and Marcus Annius Libo. Moreover, *P.Yadin* 18 was scribed in Greek by a Theënas son of Simon, while only the initiators of the contract and its witnesses signed in their local language, Aramaic.

Documents of this sort were often drawn up with the intention of appealing to supposed Roman preferences. Consequently, the use of Greek and Romanized terminology could also hurry along a potentially lengthy court process by making the documents more comprehensible to Roman officials and their staff.[75] At Rome's advent in the Nabataean Kingdom, a trajectory away from a general legal framework accepted by local inhabitants (witnessed in general phrases of the archive, such as, "as is customary") turned to more specific laws (e.g. "in accordance with Greek

---

[73] Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 BC - AD 337* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1993), 19.

[74] Elsewhere in the archive, for example, Babatha appeals to the Roman governor to settle disputes over the guardianship of her son, Jesus (*P. Yadin* 12-15, 26-30).

[75] Kim Czajkowski, *Localized Law: The Babatha and Salome Komaise Archives* (Oxford: OUP, 2017), 186.

custom" as in *P.Yadin* 18) to accommodate the Roman legal system, though this progression was not at the cost of indigenous law.[76] The strong prohibitions against Jewish women who utilised gentile courts to oversee their divorce cases in later rabbinic passages (*b. Git.* 1:5d; 88b), likely suggests widespread use of gentile courts as in the Babatha record.[77] The evidence from the Babatha Archive, then, may suggest that *some* Jewish communities in the east utilised legal systems outside of their traditional domain. Therefore, the Markan prohibition against divorce with women as initiators, could reflect a similar complex situation where local and (Roman) state legal systems intersected with one another. There is nothing specific to suggest Rome as a provenance, though nothing to mitigate against such a view either.

Brief on Alexander and Rufus (Mk. 15:21)

Following a short stint of mocking Jesus in the courtyard of the palace (Mk. 15:16), soldiers "led him [Jesus] out to crucify him" (Mk. 15:20; καὶ ἐξάγουσιν αὐτὸν ἵνα σταυρώσωσιν αὐτόν). On the path to Golgotha (Mk. 15:22), the soldiers "compel" (ἀγγαρεύω) Simon of Cyrene, a passer-by, to carry Jesus' cross (Mk. 15:21). Simon, however, is further described by Mark as "the father of Alexander and Rufus". Theissen suggests that Simon's sons were more well-known than Simon to the earliest author and community (i.e. "traditionalists" according to Theissen) of the

[76] Jacobine G. Oudshoorn, *The Relationship between Roman and Local Law in the Babatha and Salome Komaise Archives: General Analysis and Three Case Studies on Law of Succession, Guardianship, and Marriage*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, V. 69 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 194. Cf. Martin Goodman, "Babatha's Story", *JRS* 81 (1991): 171.

[77] Hannah Cotton, "The Rabbis and the Documents" in *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 171.

Passion narrative,[78] which he dates to Jerusalem in the early 40's CE.[79] He concludes that Simon's place of origin remained adequate enough information for Matthew and Luke, and the mention of his sons can only be explained by their popularity with an earlier community.[80] However, while the name Alexander is clearly attested throughout the east and west, the name Rufus is particularly problematic for those insisting upon an early or eastern provenance. There is only one epigraphic attestation of the name "Rufus" in Palestine prior to 70CE. The funerary inscription reads: Ῥούφου . ὅς δ' ἄν | μετενένκῃ πα(ρέβῃ?) | τὸν ὅρκ || ον | [αὐ] τοῦ ("Of Rufus. Whoever moves [him] away [from the ossuary] has violated his oath."). [81] If we are to follow Theissen's suggestion that Mark's phrase, ἐρχόμενον ἀπ' ἀγροῦ ("[Simon]…was coming in from the country"), means that Simon had returned from work,[82] and that Simon and his sons were local, then such epigraphic information should cast some doubt on Theissen's argumentation.

Final Remarks on Locating Mark

In this first section of chapter one, I have attempted to challenge assumed conclusions regarding Markan provenance. First, I briefly explored the external evidence of early church traditions, which tended to locate Mark's writing in Rome due to the corollary between Peter and "Mark" drawn from 1 Pet. 5:13. I showed that

[78] Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 176.

[79] Ibid., 197-198.

[80] Ibid., 176.

[81] SEG 31:1409. For a helpful commentary on the inscription, see CIIP 1.1.385 (pp. 406-407). Translation also taken from CIIP.

[82] Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 167.

no patristic sources connect Mark to Rome outside of the corollary between Peter and Mark. Thus, the evidence remains suspect. Secondly, far greater attention was paid to Markan language. Here I questioned long-held assumptions about the nature of Latinisms: (1) what they can actually reveal about our author and (2) where he composed his gospel. Contrary to numerous Markan scholars, I argued that the type and quality of Markan Latinisms likely reveal a low-level bilingual, further questioning the strength of a provenance at Rome. Thirdly, I noted points of contact with Mark's writing and a Roman context. I suggested that female-initiated divorce (Mk. 10:12), often used by Markan commentators to suggest Mark's Roman background, found pockets of acceptability in some regions of the east. Lastly, I argued that Mark's use of the name "Rufus" (Mk. 15:21) would make an eastern locale difficult as there is only one funerary inscription attesting to the name in Palestine prior to 70CE. Overall, I determined that internal and external evidence can provide no definitive answers for a Markan provenance, though the legitimacy of suggestions can be questioned and challenged, as I have tried to do.

Not the Where, but the When: Dating Mark

My thesis argues that Mark could have written his gospel as early as the final stages of Nero's life, i.e. during the initial rise of Galba (Summer 68CE), or (more likely) in a post-Neronian environment (i.e. post-June 68CE, and likely spring/summer of 69CE, but not beyond 74CE), and depends upon a widespread proliferation of *libertas* as a positive political slogan following Nero's death, thus deeming claims to Jesus' "kingship"–i.e. assumed anti-*libertas* sentiments–as detrimentally negative. However, this political slogan would slowly fall out of vogue

only as time passed and the memory of Neronian despotism faded.

Historically, the key starting point for dating Mark's gospel is the eschatological discourse of chapter 13.[83] Several scholars consider the discourse to reflect either Mark or his audience's own understanding or personal experience of the first Jewish war, which occurred between 66-70CE.[84] Important to these discussions are the apparent references to a crisis at the Jerusalem temple (Mk. 13:1-2; 14; 14:58), a coming persecution (Mk. 13:5-13; 13:15-23), and subsequent eschatological salvation (Mk. 13:24-27). However, scholars debate (1) which event(s) Mark intends to reference and (2) whether the words of Mark's Jesus are predictive, and thus reflect an earlier *logion*, or retrospective of an event that has already occurred. Therefore, a key disagreement is often waged over dating the gospel prior to or after the destruction of the temple in 70CE. As noted, while my argumentation prefers a pre-temple destruction date, it is not dependent upon it. Rather, my thesis can be sustained so long as the tyranny of Nero's reign lived in the memories of the empire's inhabitants. While an earlier date affords Mark's audience a more vivid recollection of Nero's despotism (and I argue a Nero *redux* myth is noted in Mk. 13:14), a later date could certainly be relevant as well.

---

[83] For important works dating Mark in a post-70CE environment see, Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Marks Gospel* (BIS 65; Leiden: Brill, 2003); Hendrika N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in Its Historical and Social Context* (NovTSup 114; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 81-94; John S. Kloppenborg, "Evocatio Deorum and the Date of Mark", *JBL* 124 (2005) 419-50; Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda* (WUNT 2/245; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 58-67; Christopher B. Zeichmann, "The Date Of Mark's Gospel apart from the Temple and Rumors of War: The Taxation Episode (12:13-17) as Evidence", *CBQ* 79, 3 (2017): 422-437. For scholars dating Mark prior to the Temple's destruction see, Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium Des Markus*, 15th ed. (Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über Des Neue Testament; Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 268; Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist,* 77; Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 14–30;Van Iersel, *Mark*, 46–49; Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), lxii–lxiii.

[84] It is not my intention here to discuss the argumentation for a pre-68CE date.

A Path towards Destruction (Mk. 13)

The standard chapter divisions of Mark 13 are unhelpful as Mk. 13:1-2 connects back to the larger section preceding it, beginning at Mk. 11:27, then further confirmed by Jesus' continuous teaching event in the temple at Mk. 12:35. Readers are first introduced to the temple at Mk. 11:11 following Jesus' movements through Bethphage and Bethany, and finally his entrance into Jerusalem then the temple. The narrator has hinted to the implied audience the nature of Jerusalem's hostility towards Jesus (Mk 3:22; 7:1); and it should be no surprise that Jesus will find contention and die here. That hostility, encapsulated by Jerusalem's temple leadership, is met with praise by the "many" (πολλοί) Jewish wayfarers at Bethphage and Bethany (Mk. 11:8-10). What seems to be setting up a climactic episode in Mark–with Jesus' imitative triumph and praise from the crowd–ends anticlimactically with the Markan Jesus alone entering Jerusalem and the temple only to "look around at everything" (περιβλεψάμενος πάντα) and return to Bethany. The following three pericopae are intercalated[85] with two episodes of Jesus cursing a fig tree (Mk. 11:12-14, 20-21), bookending his cleansing of the temple (Mk. 11:15-19). The force of Markan intercalation creates a corollary between numerous stories with each helping interpreting the other while making "an entirely new point".[86] Therefore, Mark's temple-cleansing episode is intentionally wedged between the

[85] This technique "sandwiches" a story between another apparently unrelated one with each story needed to interpret the other. See James R. Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives", *NovT* 31 no. 3 (1989): 193-216.

[86] James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 117.

cursing of the fig tree, so we will begin first with the sandwiched story.

At Mk. 11:15, Jesus enters the temple only to "cast out" (ἐκβάλλω) those buying and selling there. Mark's overtly demonic language[87] is put in stark contrast to the Jerusalem leaders who were introduced to the audience at Mk. 3:22. The scribes "from Jerusalem" who charged Jesus with casting out demons by the power of "Beelzebul" are representatives of a temple needing an exorcism itself. Beyond casting out buyers and sellers, Mark's Jesus "destroys"[88] (καταστρέφω) the tables of moneychangers and the chairs of those selling doves, thus bringing all cultic activity to a stop. Mark's use of καταστρέφω ("destroy") here is interesting as it first invokes images of destruction related to the temple. Furthermore, Mk. 11:16 confirms Jesus' aims, stressing that "he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple" (καὶ οὐκ ἤφιεν ἵνα τις διενέγκῃ σκεῦος διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ). In both Philo and Josephus, the term σκεῦος (translated "anything") makes reference to "temple vessels" and again confirms Jesus' actions to bring the temple to a halt.[89] By way of narration, the audience learns that Jesus' pronouncement of judgment against the temple provokes another (cf. Mk. 3:6) murderous plot (Mk. 11:18) against him. Most Markan commentators note that the two episodes of the fig tree, which sandwich the cleansing of the temple, ought to be interpreted in relation to one another.[90] For

[87] Mark uses the term ἐκβάλλω 16 times with 10 of those used in episodes related to the casting out of demonic spirits (cf. Mk. 1:34, 39; 3:15, 22, 23; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18, 28, 38).

[88] BDAG, s.v. "καταστρέφω", par. 2.

[89] Jos. *Ant*. 3.107, 147, 150, 180, etc.; *Bell*. 1.39; 2.147; 5.562; 6.389; Philo *Leg*. 3.102; *Her*. 226; *Mos*. 2.94, 101, 146; *Spec*. 1.231; 3.206. Kelber notes that σκεῦος refers to sacred cultic objects at least a third of the time in the LXX. See Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark,* 101.

[90] For a helpful exegesis see, W.R. Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and Its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition*, JSNTSS 1 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980).

Mark, the symbolic judgment against the fig tree and its fruitlessness is representative of the temple. In fact, the injunction by Jesus in Mk. 11:14, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again", shows that temple reform is not within the purview of Mark and destruction of the temple and its leadership is the only legitimate way forward for such corruption. Therefore, as the fig tree is cursed, and will wither away and die, so too will the temple be exposed to the same fate (Mk. 11:20-21).

In the next pericope (Mk. 11:27-33), the Jerusalem religious leaders question Jesus, demanding that he reveal by what and by whom he asserts his authority.[91] In response to their questioning (Mk. 12:1-12), Jesus tells them a parable. The parable, likely drawing upon LXX Isa. 5:1-7, intends to expose[92] the chief priests, scribes, and elders[93] as adversaries of God for their repeated failure to recognise God's prophets. They even desire to kill God's "beloved son" (Mk. 12:7). The parable notes that God will deal a final blow by "destroying" (ἀπόλλυμι) temple authorities (Mk. 12:9). It is only at the end of chapter 12 that Mark's Jesus delivers an explicitly derisive message towards the scribes, a message not concealed by figurative language in the form of a vineyard and its tenets or a withering fig tree. Mark attacks their pomp (Mk. 12:38-39) and fraudulence (Mk. 12:40-42) outright by recounting how a poor widow gave her final penny to a corrupt religious institution. For Mark, however, this does not complete the pericope. Rather, Jesus exits the temple (Mk.

[91] Jesus' authority is further questioned in three back-to-back exchanges (Mk. 12:13-17, 18-27, 28-34) between temple authorities following Mk. 12:1-12.

[92] Mark narrates that the chief priests, scribes, and elders "realised that he had told this parable against them" (ἔγνωσαν γὰρ ὅτι πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν εἶπεν).

[93] Mark 12:1 ambiguously notes that Jesus began to speak the parable to "them", but the referent here is looking back to chief priests, scribes, and elders of Mk. 11:27.

13:1) only for one of his disciples to admire the temple's "large stones" and "large buildings". This larger section (Mk. 11:1-13:2) closes here with Jesus making his final prediction concerning the temple, and implicitly the cultic system; "Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down" (Mk. 13:2). The finality of the temple's destruction is settled and clear in Mark as witnessed in the build-up from chapters 11-13. However, the question remains whether Mark is writing of this destruction prior to or after the historical destruction of the temple on August 70CE.

Missing the Facts

Scholars often argue that Mark's own descriptions in Mk. 13:2 do not correlate well with other contemporary authors writing about the Jewish War. Van Iersel argues that there is a clear "absence of even the faintest allusion to that event [Jewish War] or the siege and conquest of Jerusalem" and that Josephus provides numerous details concerning the Jewish War about which Mark seems to be clueless.[94] For example, Josephus clearly describes Titus' work to raze not only the temple but also Jerusalem, though with the exception of the western wall and a few towers (Phasael, Hippicus, and Mariamme) still standing (*BJ* 6.413; 7.1). Further, Josephus makes a number of references to the temple and its various buildings (and Jerusalem)[95] burning on fire.[96] At times, Josephus can use fire metaphorically to

[94] van Iersel, *Mark*, 46.

[95] Jos. *BJ* 7.328 (Eleazer Speech): μένων γὰρ εὐμενὴς ἢ μετρίως γοῦν ἀπηχθημένος, οὐκ ἂν τοσούτων μὲν ἀνθρώπων περιεῖδεν ὄλεθρον, προήκατο δὲ τὴν *ἱερωτάτην αὐτοῦ πόλιν* πυρὶ καὶ κατασκαφαῖς πολεμίων (my emphasis).

[96] Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans*, 121 records sixty-nine uses of "fire" or "burn" connected to the sanctuary and surrounding building and twenty of the city. See some important

speak of a "purging fire" against the Jews and inspired by God through the Romans (*BJ* 6.110; cf. 6.250),[97] but more often his language attests to a literal fire (*BJ* 6.274).[98] Mark mentions only the temple's destruction ("not one stone left upon another"), thus reckoning his prophecy, "not fulfilled precisely,"[99] since he does not seem to have Jerusalem's destruction or the temple fire in mind as well. Hengel notes that Lk. 19:41-44, a later text looking back on the events of the Jewish War, provides a more "detailed description" of the destruction.[100] In Lk. 19:41-44, the author appears to describe Titus' *circumvellatio*, the complete "razing" (ἐδαφίζω) of Jerusalem, and the temple's destruction ("they will not leave within you one stone upon another"). Two chapters later, Lk. 21:6, 20-24 confirms 19:41-44 by again noting the temple's destruction (Lk. 21:6), Titus' *circumvellatio* (Lk. 21:20), and Jerusalem's destruction (Lk. 21:20).

Luke 21:24 also adds that many inhabitants of Jerusalem would be killed while others would be taken into captivity. Incigneri argues that these descriptions simply amount to the "same ingredients" found in the OT to describe the destruction of the first temple.[101] While there are certainly similarities with OT/Jewish themes of

---

uses, cf. Jos. *BJ* 6.110, 166, 167, 181, 182, 185, 188, 232, 233, 235, 243, 250, 251, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262, 274, 275, 279, 280; 7.328 (Eleazer Speech).

[97] Jos. *BJ* 6.110: θεὸς ἄρα, θεὸς αὐτὸς ἐπάγει μετὰ Ῥωμαίων κάθαρσιν αὐτῷ πῦρ καὶ τὴν τοσούτων μιασμάτων γέμουσαν πόλιν ἀναρπάζει.

[98] We must also be able to reckon the various accounts about fire outside of Josephus. Cf. Tac. *Hist*. 5.13: *subito nubium igne conlucere templum*; Dio Cass. 66.6.1-3. Dio insists that temple was set to fire by the "defenders" and "destroyed" by Titus. Contra Incigneri, *Gospel for the Romans*, 121.

[99] Ibid, 11.

[100] Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 14.

[101] Incigeri, *The Gospel to the Romans*, 118.

siege and murder by sword (Gen. 34:26; 1 Sam. 15:8; Ezek. 39:23), captivity (2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36; 1 Macc. 10:33), and Jerusalem's trampling by gentiles (1 Macc. 3:45, 51; 4:60; Ps. Sol. 2:19), the depiction here seems too "real" a description of recent history "not to reflect the experience of the drama of the year 70".[102] For example, Luke's prophecy concerning captives could well be explained by the notorious Flavian triumph of 71CE, where Josephus reports that the Romans celebrated the achievements of the Flavian victory over Judaea by putting Simon bar Gioras, seven-hundred Jewish captives, and the temple's plunder on display in a triumph at Rome (*BJ* 7.116-157). Moreover, it seems that Luke adds important and detailed content to his narrative where Mark otherwise remains superficial. This is not to say that Mark is not referencing the temple's destruction at Mk. 13:2–for I think he is, and the build-up of negative temple language in chapters 11-12 speak to this–but rather to say that Mark does not seem to have knowledge of the temple's destruction or the situation on the ground in a way that Luke does. Hengel explains this lack by noting Mark's distance from the actual event (placing him in Rome).[103] However, for Mark, this lack of information can be plausibly accounted for if we assume that Mark is writing when the temple is still standing.

Prophecy or Problems?

Incigneri argues that a prediction by Mark's Jesus would be daring as he could not have known whether the temple would actually fall, especially since the

[102] François Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53* (trans. James Crouch; Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 115.

[103] Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 18.

Romans had no clear policy to raze cities and temples after being conquered. Such a failed prediction would reflect poorly on Mark's Jesus and discredit him before his audience.[104] However, Mark, in discussing the events of the eschaton at Mk. 13:32 ("But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the son, but only the Father"), is not concerned about embarrassment and ascribes to Jesus a lack of knowledge about the timing of the Parousia events. Certainly, for some early Christians, this was a deep embarrassment, as evidenced in the MSS records of the Matthean parallel, which frequently omitted οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός.[105] Surely, Jesus' failure of knowledge concerning earthly history is not of greater embarrassment than Jesus' failure to have proper knowledge of cosmic events. Incigneri's point seems to be of no concern for Mark who is not embarrassed by Jesus' lack of foreknowledge. In fact, the absence of knowledge here bolsters the position I want to now engage.

Mark 13:28-30, following the predictions of the temple's demise (Mk. 13:1-4), the eschatological birth pangs (Mk. 13:5-8), expectant persecutions (Mk. 13:9-13), the abomination of desolation and suffering (Mk. 13:14-20), coming false messiahs (Mk. 13:21-23), and the return of the Son of Man (Mk. 13:24-27), encourages readers to take a lesson from the fig tree (cf. Mk. 11:12-14, 20-21). As the branches of the fig tree become tender and produce leaves, hinting to observers that "summer is near", so too Mark's Jesus warns, "when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates" (Mk. 13:29). He continues in verse 30, "…this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place". Mark's use of "these things" (ταῦτα) in v. 29 forms an *inclusio* around the disciple's

[104] Incigeri, *The Gospel to the Romans*, 119.

[105] Cf. ℵ^{2a} K L W Γ Δ f^{1} 33. 565. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424 𝔪 g^{1} 1 vg sy co; Hier^{mss}.

initial question at Mk. 13:4 ("Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all *these things* are about to be accomplished") concerning the temple. The material in Mark regarding the Parousia (Mk. 13:24-27; 32-37) causes R.T. France to question why this new theme is introduced at all when the disciples initial question concerned only the "fate of the temple".[106] The Matthean parallel (Matt. 24:3) replicates Mark's disciples in relation to the question about the temple (i.e. "when will these things be?"), but then adds two more questions about the sign related to Jesus' Parousia and "end of the age" (τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος). In Mark, "these things" (ταῦτα) seems to more naturally refer to the destruction of the temple, and the Parousia is relevant only in its relation to the temple's destruction. Mark confirms the focus on the temple by his use of "these things" at Mk. 11:28, 29, 33 and their relation to the temple incident.[107] Nevertheless, as noted by France, Mark seems to fit within the milieu of his day, which naturally links–as with Matthew–the judgement/destruction of the temple and Jerusalem with the eschatological event of the Parousia.[108]

The distinct time markers between these two events is clear enough ("this generation" versus "that day or hour"). However, Mark's use of ταῦτα πάντα ("all these things") at Mk. 13:30 indicates that Mark's warning not only includes the events of "this generation" (Mk. 13:5-23) but also of "that day or hour" (Mk. 13:24-27, and by implication Mk. 13:32-37; τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἢ τῆς ὥρας). Therefore,

---

[106] R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 542.

[107] Rikki Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark* (WUNT 88; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 338.

[108] France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 507.

Mark predicts the destruction of the temple and the Parousia within the "span of a single lifetime".[109] This again adds to the discussion of Jesus' prophecy and accuracy. Mark's statements would make most sense if the destruction of the temple had not yet occurred, as Mark is willing to place only a general terminal date on the earthly events ("this generation") and not even a general date on the cosmic events ("no one knows"). In this scenario, Mark is likely aware that the temple is on the brink of destruction, being encircled by the Romans on all sides, which is why he can place its *complete fall* within a generation, but is unwilling to commit to a tighter timeline.

Incigneri argues, beyond just a failed prediction by Jesus, that Mark could not have known that the temple would be destroyed, as such a situation was not Roman policy. However, from Josephus, we learn that upon hearing news of disturbances in Gaul and Vindex's revolt against Nero (early 68CE),[110] Vespasian expedites his campaign (first commissioned by Nero) in the hopes to ease tensions back in Italy (*BJ* 4.440-42). By July 68CE, Vespasian's speedy campaign leads him to "enclose Jerusalem from all directions" (πανταχόθεν περιτειχίζων), setting up garrisons at key junctions (*BJ* 4.486). As he readies to march in "full force" (πάσης τῆς δυνάμεως) against Jerusalem, he learns that Nero has died (*BJ* 4.491), putting a halt to military operations until he receives clear directives from the new emperor (*BJ* 4.497; cf. 502). Vespasian learns that Galba has become emperor and soon dispatches Titus to offer his respects and receive a directive for military operations in Judaea (*BJ* 4.498;

[109] Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 335.

[110] Plut. *Galb.* 4.4. Perhaps Vespasian learned of the coup after Vindex dispersed letters to provincial governors who, with the exception of Galba, all forwarded them to Nero.

cf. Tact. *Hist*. 1.10).

At the end of January 69CE, Titus got as far as Corinth before learning of Galba's death and returned to his father sometime between Feb. and Apr. 69CE (*BJ* 4.499).[111] Here, as throughout *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus oscillates between events happening afar at Rome and concurrently with the Jewish War. Breaking from discussing Roman conflicts, he notes, in *BJ* 4.503-4.584, the internal conflicts arising in Jerusalem: "Jerusalem was now coming under the threat of war on another front" (*BJ* 4.503), to which he expands on rebel factions within the city. Throughout this discourse he interjects twice to update the audience: firstly, to note the deaths of Galba and Otho (*BJ* 4.545-49); secondly, to explain the renewal of Vespasian's military campaign in Judaea during late May 69CE (*BJ* 4.550-55).

At this point, Vespasian's military has gone silent for nearly a year. We are told that Vespasian's campaign aimed to control those areas in Judaea that had "yet been subdued" (*BJ* 4.551). Following brief details of a few campaigns, Josephus explains that all of Judaea, except for the bandits' strongholds (Herodium, Masada, and Machaerus) and Jerusalem, were now under Roman control (*BJ* 4.555). A few lines later he reports that "Vespasian had destroyed the whole area in the vicinity of Jerusalem" (*BJ* 4.588). In light of the situation on the ground, and if Mark is in fact

[111] During Titus' absence, Vespasian and Mucianus (Syrian Governor) had pledged allegiance to Otho. Following Otho's death on 16 Apr. 69CE, Vitellius is named emperor by Rome. After a coup is rallied [First, at the "Mount Carmel conference" held in June 69CE somewhere between the borders of Syria and Judaea, and then secondly at Berytus towards the end of July 69CE (Tac. *Hist.* 2.81-2).] between Vespasian, Mucianus, Tiberius Alexander, and auxillary parties, Vespasian is hailed emperor on 1 July 69CE by soldiers in Egypt, 3 July 69CE in Judaea, and 15 July 69CE in Syria. After a long and bloody march towards Rome led by Mucianus (Aug. 69CE), Vespasian is hailed emperor *in absentia* by the senate on 21 or 22 Dec. 69CE. After Mucianus departed Antioch for Rome in Aug. 69CE, Vespasian and Titus stayed behind in Syria-Judaea until Oct. 69CE to raise funds and keep potential threats, especially from the Parthians and Judeans, at bay. Vespasian and Titus then depart for Egypt where they remain until Titus moves to command Judaea in early spring 70CE and Vespasian until his final departure for Rome in Sept. 70CE.

referring to the Jewish War, could he really not have predicted, with some level of confidence, the temple's destruction after he had seen or heard of Vespasian's destruction of surrounding areas in Judaea and the encirclement of the capital?

Additionally, John Kloppenborg has persuasively argues that the Roman practice of the *evocatio deorum*, i.e. the "calling out" of the tutelary deity, prior to a conquest, to abandon the gods' associated city with the promise of a new temple at Rome, may be in the mind of Mark at Mk. 13:2. The prediction of the temple's destruction, Kloppenborg explains, is not merely a "fortunate guess", but instead presupposes knowledge of Rome's military tactics.[112] He notes that anyone "who had knowledge of the practices of *evocatio* and *devotio* or knew of the fates of Carthage, Corinth, Isaura Vetus…could have concluded from the events, say, of 66-69CE, that the total destruction of the temple would not only be possible, but would be a nearly inevitable consequence of war".[113] Moreover, for Kloppenborg, the issue is not merely about "real estate", but rather the claims concerning the absence of the "divine presence".[114] This overall evaluation squares well with this paper's reading of Mk. 11-13:2, which conveys the temples' *cultic termination* following Jesus' actions and pronouncement.

Mark 13:14 and Varieties of Interpretation

The contents of Mark 13:14, its interpretation and context, are often

[112] John S. Kloppenborg, "*Evocatio Deorum* and the Date of Mark", *JBL* 124.3 (Fall 2005), 450.

[113] Ibid, 442.

[114] Ibid, 450.

determinative points for dating Mark. As displayed in figure 2 (below), there are a variety of translations with key terms and phrases significantly differing. These translation choices exhibit the complex interpretative history of the meaning behind τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ("the abomination of desolation", or the "abomination that causes desolation" as in NIV84), the function of "let the reader understand" as either a Markan interjection or original Jesus logion, and Mark's request for "those in Judaea" to escape to the mountains. In this section, I will make a number of interpretative choices, both linguistic and historical, to show that (1) lying behind the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως was a tradition concerned with Nero's disappearance, return, and the subsequent initiation of the eschaton following his supposed death in June 68CE; (2) Mark's apparent interjection, "let the reader understand" is likely a cryptic hint typical of apocalyptic literature (cf. Rev. 13:18); (3) Mark's warning to "flee to the hills", if a historical note, can accommodate a date during Vespasian's hiatus of his military campaign; and, if ahistorical, could reflect the author's knowledge of a prophetic tradition related to God's wrath and subsequent escape to the hills.

NRSV	NASB95	ESV	NIV84
But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.	But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.	"But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.	When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Fig. 2

The Abomination of Desolation

The term τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως is a direct reference drawn from the "desolating sacrilege" found in LXX Dan. 9:27, 11:31, 12:11. First Maccabees 1:54-59 provides the historical context underlying the Danielic episodes. In 1 Macc. 1:54-59, we learn that Antiochus Epiphanes, upon his return from victory in Egypt, had halted all cultic services in the Jerusalem temple. He ordered that anyone adhering to the law or book of the covenant be condemned to death. He further charged that books of the law should be torn to pieces and burned. The author of 1 Maccabees reports that Antiochus Epiphanes constructed a pagan altar, a desolating sacrilege, on the site of the altar of burnt offerings. Perhaps, most devastating, was the unclean sacrifice on this altar on the twenty-fifth day of Chislev. Mark 13:14 certainly reflects this situation, though Mark has creatively reworked the content to match his own present situation.

Scholars provide a myriad of solutions to the enigmatic phrase, τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως. However, most commentators recognise that the perfect active participle of ἵστημι (ἑστηκότα) is masculine and not in agreement with the neuter βδέλυγμα, thus forming a *constructio ad sensum.*[115] This rendering suggests that the "abomination" is either a person or an image of a person, and most interpretations accommodate such a reading. Moreover, Mark's Jesus explains that this "abomination" will be "standing where he/it ought not be" (ἑστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ). In relation to masculine form of ἵστημι, a personal form of δεῖ ("he ought") seems to make better sense here, and I have therefore supplied "he" rather than "it" in the

[115] BDF §134.3.3.

translation.[116] Mark provides a creative reworking of Daniel's "desolating sacrilege", i.e. a pagan altar on the altar of YHWH, to reflect the person lying behind the erection of the altar, namely Antiochus Epiphanes. In any case, these grammatical issues, as will be shown, are vital when discussing various interpretations offered by scholars.

One popular interpretation, from as early as the patristic record (Chrysostom, Theophylact, et al.), identifies the βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως with a pagan image or statue. For example, in Chrysostom's *Homilies on Matthew*, he coupled the "abomination" with a statue placed in the temple by Titus: "And by 'abomination' he meant the statue of he who then took the city, which he who desolated the city and the temple stood within the temple, therefore, he calls it, 'of desolation'" (24.2).

Yarbro Collins, more specifically, links the "abomination" with Gaius' failed attempt to place a statue of Zeus – with Gaius' head – in the temple in 40CE.[117] In her argument, Yarbro Collins notes that the term βδέλυγμα in the LXX clearly has a lexical range "to designate the image of a foreign god".[118] In fact, in multiple cases, the word does not only refer to the image of a god, but also the deity it represents.[119] Coupled with this information and the irregular use of a masculine participle of ἵστημι with the neuter βδέλυγμα (see above), Yarbro Collins finds the Gaius

[116] See the variations of translation in fig. 2.

[117] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 14. This episode is referenced in Josephus' Ant. 18.261f., where Petronius is ordered by Gaius to erect the statue. The Jews response to Petronius' orders is swift as they recognise such an action as a defilement of their temple. Cf. Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 260.

[118] Ibid, 610. Yarbro Collins cites LXX Deut. 7:25–26; 27:14–15; 29:15–16; Isa. 2:8, 20; 44:19; cf. Jer. 7:30; Ezek. 8:10; 20:30.

[119] Ibid. Yarbro Collins cites Deut. 32:16–17; 3 Kgdms. 11:6, 33; 4 Kgdms. 23:13; Wis. 14:8–11.

hypothesis most convincing.[120] However, this thesis is difficult to maintain when Petronius never actually carried out Gaius' orders;[121] thus, neither an "abomination" was erected nor a "desolation" actualised. Why should Mark note an event as a referent when it was quite distant, or entirely faded, from his audience's memory[122] and also unfulfilled?

Another popular suggestion identifies the Markan phrase with Zealots. J. Marcus and V. Balabanski are key voices on this position. While Marcus suggests that the catalyst for Mark's warning of the "abomination" is the Zealot leader Eleazer ben Simon, Balabanski argues for the installation of Phanias as High Priest in 67CE.[123] Marcus' and Balabanski's evidence rests in connecting various Danielic verses (Mk. 8:11-14, 9:27; 11:32) to a desecration or cultic transgression during the early years of the Jewish Revolt.[124] For Marcus, this desecration occurs c. 67-68CE, when "revolutionary λῃσταί" had established their headquarters in the inner Temple, under Eleazar ben Simon's direction. Moreover, he argues Mark's connection by noting that Mk. 11:17 "reflects the revolutionary situation in a remarkable way".[125] Balabanski understands the cultic transgression as Phanias' elevation to High Priest in 67-68CE, a political situation which Josephus clearly decried due to Phanias'

---

[120] For more variations on a similar theory, see James Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 37-38;

[121] See Jos. *Ant*. 18.304-5 where Petronius' non-compliance is reprimanded in a letter from Gaius, which only reached Petronius after Gaius' death.

[122] Gundry, *Mark*, 771.

[123] Marcus, "The Jewish War", 454-455; Vicky Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 55-134; cf. Witherington, *Mark*, 345.

[124] Marcus, "Jewish War", 447; Balabanski, *Eschatology*, 124-125.

[125] Marcus, "Jewish War", 450-451. Marcus cites his evidence of this desecration from Jos. *BJ* 4.3.7-8; 5.1.2.

lacking qualifications and association with the Zealot party. Balabanski remarks, "In installing their own appointed high priest, the Zealots upset what had been an uneasy balance of power between the ruling conservative high-priestly families and the radical nationalists".[126] It is this statement by Balabanski which most harms her position. One must consider the strong bias of Josephus who was not only part of the priestly aristocracy, but also clearly abhorred the Zealot's political viewpoints.[127] Therefore, it is not clear at all that Jews or Christians would have seen Phanias' appointment as negatively as Josephus.

Still others have suggested that the *presence* of the Roman army is the "abomination" that Mark has in mind. This interpretation is quite old, stemming back even to Luke (21:20) who modifies Mark's writing: "But when you see the abomination of desolation…" (Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) with "But when you see Jerusalem being encircled by armies…" (Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλήμ). This view of the "abomination" as the *presence* of the Roman army in the Temple Sanctuary is usually applied to Titus[128] and his troops' actions following the final assault on the temple.[129]

---

[126] Balabanski, *Eschatology*, 129.

[127] Evans, *Mark 8:27 – 16:20*, 319. Evans cites Jos. *BJ* 4.3.9 to contend that the priestly aristocracy "found it necessary to upbraid the people for their apathy against the Zealots!".

[128] See Donald Juel, *Mark*, ACNT (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1990), 179. Cf. W.A. Such, The *Abomination of Desolation in the Gospel of Mark: Its Historical Reference in Mark 13:14 and Its Impact in the Gospel* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999), 94-97, 102; Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 130. These last three studies identify Titus as the "abomination"; Roskam, *Purpose of Mark*, 90-91.

[129] E.g. Rudolf Pesch, *Markusevangelium* (2 vols; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1976-77). Pesch (2.291) cites Josephus' *BJ* 6.260 as his proof text; Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium,* 222. Lührmann suggests that the masculine participle of ἵστημι is intended to implicate the Roman commander or his army. Hooker, *St. Mark*, 314; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 259.

However, this suggestion remains inadequate as it fails to recognise that the temple was on fire, and sacrifices had already ceased by the time that Titus and his army had made their final assault. Additionally, this reading fails to account for the masculine participle of ἵστημι, which anticipates an individual or image of an individual rather than a presence. Balbanski, arguing against reading Titus' presence or proclamation of victory in the forecourt of the temple, states that the participle actually "indicates the beginning of a *process which is bound to a specific person*". Here she argues that Titus' victory acclamation would only be understood as a single event.[130]

This is an important note as I will aim to show that Jews and Christians, very early following Nero's death in June 68CE, repurposed popular Neronian myth stories; stories of his return (not from death, but from hiding), leadership in the East, and subsequent overthrow of Rome, in part, for Rome's responsibility in the destruction of the temple (and in *Sib. Or.* 4 and 5, the destruction of "pious people"). Additionally, it was Nero's return which was believed to initiate the coming age, and would have provided Mark's readers with a source of hope in light of impending destruction. It was this eschatological framework, a framework that claimed more than just the presence of a person or statue "standing where he ought not", but also indicated the initiation of an eschatological future. This situation fits well with what follows Mk. 13:14.

Nero Redux!

[130] Balabanski, *Eschatology*, 127. Cf. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 18.

In his biography of Nero, Edward Champlin, after introducing the "standard view of Nero", i.e. as the evil tyrant, notes, "Monster or not, Nero had an afterlife that was unique in antiquity".[131] Following the death of Nero on 9 June 68CE, at least three[132] individuals over the course of 20 years claimed to be the dead emperor (or in the eyes of many, the hiding emperor). These individuals rallied enough support and success to find their way into Rome's historical record.

The first of these appeared in 69CE. Tacitus reports that the pretender was either a slave from Pontus or a freedman from Italy, but traditions varied.[133] This pretender not only had Nero's musical acumen, but also physically resembled the former emperor. Tacitus notes that he gathered deserters, and once landing on the island of Cythnus by chance, following a violent storm, enlisted Roman troops (by threat of death!) who were homeward bound from the East. The pretender was killed following his solicitations of the trierarchs (whose ships had landed on Cythnus) to send him to Syria or Egpyt. The pretenders' body was carried through Asia then to Rome.

Dio Cassius called the second pretender, "The False Nero" (ὁ ψευδονέρων), and dates his rise to the reign of Titus (79-81CE).[134] Dio reports that he was an

---

[131] Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 2003), 9.

[132] Contra Bernard W. Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero* (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 419-420; J. Bishop, *Nero: The Man and the Legend* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1964), 167-170; S.J. Bastomsky, "The Emperor Nero in Talmudic Legend", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 59.4 (1969): 321-325. Each of these authors argue that there were only two false Nero's (i.e. one arising in 69CE and the other 80CE). However, this position is untenable as Tacitus (*Hist*. 2.8) in his discussion of the first pretender notes, "*Ceterorum casus conatusque in contextu operis dicemus*". Importantly, in speaking of the first pretender, Tactius notes "others (i.e. pretenders)", using the plural *ceterorum*. Therefore, there were at least two other pretenders noted by Tacitus in addition to the first. Cf. Paul A. Gallivan, "The False Neros: A Re-Examination", *Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* Bd. 22.2, H.2 (1973), 364-365.

[133] Tac. *Hist*. 2.8-9; Cf. Dio Cass. 64.9.

[134] Dio Cass. 65.19.3b (Zon. 11.18).

Asiatic named Terentius Maximus. He too resembled Nero physically and was musical. Dio explains that Terentius gained a small following initially,[135] though after setting out for the Euphrates, a far greater number attached to him along the way. Eventually, Terentius sought refuge with the Parthian king Artabanus III, who received him and "was making ready to restore him to Rome" (καταγαγεῖν εἰς Ῥώμην παρεσκευάζετο). On this pretender, John of Antioch[136] differs on a few points, most notably, in his explanation that the pretender's flight to Parthia was a requital for Nero's work of returning Armenia. He also adds that the pretender's true identity was soon discovered and he was subsequently killed.

The third pretender, Suetonius reports, was an individual of unknown origin who gained notoriety among the Parthians in the early years of Suetonius' life (c. 88-89CE). In fact, according to Suetonius, the pretenders' popularity among the Parthians was so strong that they not only gave him support, but could "hardly be made to return him" (*vix redditus sit*) upon Rome's request.[137] Furthermore, Tacitus (*Hist*. 1.2.1) also makes a note concerning a Neronian pretender who almost caused the Parthians to declare war. This figure's identity could be applied either to pretender two or three.

Various factors can be attributed to this rise in Neronian pretenders. Suetonius explains that while Nero's death provoked great public joy, "…there were some who for a *long time* decorated his tomb with spring and summer flowers, and

[135] John of Antioch (104M) reports that the pretender was favourable in rallying "many" throughout Asia Minor.

[136] Joann. Antioch *fr*. 104M.

[137] Suet. *Nero*, 57.2

now produced his statues on the rostra in the fringed toga, and now his edicts, as if he were still alive and would shortly return and deal destruction to his enemies" (emphasis mine).[138] Dio Chysostom, writing during Domitian's reign, recounts popular sentiments of Nero among the public: "There was nothing to prevent his continuing to be emperor for all time, seeing that even now everybody wishes he were still alive. And the great majority do believe that he is."[139] It was this popular standing of Nero in some quarters, which, when attached to the suspicious account of events surrounding Nero's death, likely formed the foundation for the Neronian return myth.

Nero's death was shrouded in suspicion and led to various theories surrounding his demise (or lack thereof), which were widespread and cast a long-lasting post-mortem spotlight on the historical figure. Suetonius' reports of Nero's death that only Nero's nurses, Ecloge, Alexandria, and Acte, actually witnessed the emperor's burial.[140] He further suggests that Icelus (Galba's freedman) allowed Nero's body to be burned, but it is not clear whether Icelus was, in fact, in attendance to see the work completed.[141] Moreover, Nero's own actions and prophecies from oracles led further to varying theories about whether he was actually dead. For example, after hearing that Petronius had betrayed Nero and aligned himself with Galba, Dio Cassius records that Nero had begun formulating plans to kill the senators, burn the city, and escape to Alexandria.[142] Among other options, Nero also

[138] Suet. *Nero*, 57.1.

[139] Dio Chrys. *Or*., 21.10.

[140] Suet. *Nero*, 50.

[141] Suet. *Nero*, 49.4.

[142] Dio Cass. 63.27.1a-2.

considered seeking refuge from the Parthians as a last-option.[143] In addition, during Nero's life, Suetonius reports that some astrologers had not only predicted that Nero would be abandoned in the final moments of his career, but they promised him that following his rejection, he would be restored to his full powers, though in the east. Notably, "several" (*nonnulli*) astrologers specified Jerusalem as this location in the east.[144] All of these suspicions further led to an interesting Neronian history in Jewish and Christian circles.

Nero in the Sibylline Oracles 4

The fourth Sibylline Oracle (*Sib. Or.*) dates to sometime shortly following the eruption of Vesuvius in the fall of 79CE[145] and is concerned with the figure of Nero. Following a retrospective description of the Jewish Temple's destruction in 70CE, the Sibyl notes, "a great king will flee from Italy…unseen and unheard over the channel of the Euphrates". Nero seems to fit the bill of this unidentified king, most notably in the Sibyl's connection to the king's matricide (*Sib. Or.* 4.121) and mention of the Roman civil war of 69CE (*Sib. Or*. 4.124). From the Sibyl, we learn that the "wrath of the heavenly God" (*Sib. Or.* 4.135) will be dispensed to Italy in two forms: (1) the eruption of Vesuvius (*Sib. Or.* 4.130, "when a firebrand…reaches to broad heaven"); (2) Nero's return, "raising up a great spear" for war against Rome (*Sib. Or.* 4.137-138). It is not, however, just the Temple's destruction in *Sib. Or.* 4,

[143] Suet., *Nero*, 47.2.

[144] Suet. *Nero*, 40.2.

[145] Kenneth Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha* (SJSJ; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 182.

which initiates Nero's return and war on the West, but more emphatically the death of the "blameless tribe of the pious" (*Sib. Or.* 4.136).[146]

Interestingly, the Sibyl parallels Nero with another unidentified (Persian) king (*Sib. Or.* 4.76). The description of this Persian king's army and historical situation likely connects him to King Xerxes. Both kings are first described as "raising up a great spear" (*Sib. Or.* 4.76 / 4.138, μέγα ἔγχος ἀείρας), though eventually taking flight as "fugitives" (Xerxes, *Sib. Or.* 4.79 / Nero, *Sib. Or.* 4.119, 138). The Sibyl sketches Nero, the "fugitive from Rome", making his way to the East, i.e. through the "Euphrates" (*Sib. Or.* 4.120) and "Parthian Land" (*Sib. Or.* 4.123). This is paralleled – though in reverse – by Xerxes' rise in the East, i.e. Asia (*Sib. Or.* 4.76), and subsequent assault on the West (*Sib. Or.* 4.80-81). The two kings's flights are equally matched by a subsequent outbreak of war: for Xerxes, the Peloponnesian War (*Sib. Or.* 4.83-85), and for Nero, the civil war of 69CE (*Sib. Or.* 4.124). As Kenneth Jones notes, "Xerxes stands as a precursor for Nero". Jones follows this line and argues against the Sibyl formulating any conception of *Nero redivivus*.[147] Rather, Nero should be understood as *Xerxes redux*. In making this connection, Jones parallels Xerxes' failed invasion of Greece against the Sibyl's prophecy of Nero's success during his assault on the west (*Sib. Or.* 4.137). But, why does the Sibyl utilise this Xerxes connection?

[146] Jones, *Jewish Reactions*, 202-204. Jones, rightfully, suggests that the author of *Sib. Or.* 4 is providing a push back to the resentment of contemporary authors who were thirsty for vengeance against the Romans for destroying the Temple. Jones argues that God's punishment (through the Vesuvian eruption and Nero's return) is produced in response to the death of the pious rather than just the destruction of the temple.

[147] Jones, *Jewish Reactions,*189.

As Jewish history recounted a favourable past with Persia, most notably in the form of King Cyrus (cf. Isa. 45), who rescued the Jews from exile and restored their temple cult, so too did Nero's special relationship with the Parthians,[148] and expected return from "Parthian Land" (*Sib. Or.* 4.123),[149] provide hope to some Jews in a post-Neronian setting. Perhaps Persia/Parthia, through Nero's lead, might again rescue the Jews. However, the tension between the character of Nero as both matricide and saviour figure is palpable and must be mediated by the author.

This is achieved by presenting Nero *redux* as a purely human figure who will *initiate* a later eschatological end. This eschatological end is first introduced at 4.40, and discusses God's final judgment of the pious and impious. The impious will be sent to the "gloom in fire", realising their iniquities (*Sib. Or.* 4.43). The theme arises once more, but this time the text is situated following Nero's return (*Sib. Or.* 4.152). The author casts the impious as increasingly wicked, and the threat to the pious has even elevated to murder (*Sib. Or.* 4.158). However, the Sibyl notes, "…know that God is no longer benign, but gnashing his teeth in wrath and destroying the entire race of men at once by a great conflagration" (*Sib. Or.* 4.159-161). Importantly, God is presented as the active agent dispensing final judgement and rectifying the wrongs of the impious, not Nero. In this, Nero acts only as the *catalyst* and instrument to God's eschatological moment.

[148] In Suetonius (*Nero* 47.2), Suetonius shows how Nero, considering alternative strategies upon seeing his rule coming to an end, thought he might survive by seeking asylum from Parthia. This positive image of Nero and Parthia is the result of Nero's political decision to put Tiridates on the Armenian throne, even after Tiridates brother, Vologases, had broken policy with Rome by installing him without imperial approval. Cf. Suet. *Nero* 13; Dio Cass. 62.19-23.

[149] Note, for example, how various accounts of the Neronian pretenders listed above are connected with Parthia. Cf. Cass. Dio 66.19.3; Joann. Antioch *fr.* 104M; Suet. *Nero* 67.2; Tac. *Hist.* 1.2.

Nero in Sibylline Oracles 5

In *Sib. Or.* 5, the Sibyl gives greater attention to Nero[150] than in *Sib. Or.* 4 as he features in most major sections (*Sib. Or.* 5.28-35, 137–154, 214-237, 361-385). In the opening review (*Sib. Or.* 5.28-35) of Rome's history, the Sibyl levels devastating blows to Nero's character (as in *Sib. Or.* 5), naming him a "dangerous snake, breathing out severe war" (δεινὸς ὄφις φυσῶν πόλεμον βαρύν). He is an athlete, charioteer, and *murderer*.[151] The Sibyl notes Nero's attempts to cut through the Isthmus of Corinth and his consequent defiling of that place with blood. Then, the Sibyl explains that Nero will "vanish" (ἄιστος), during which time he remains destructive, but will again "return" (ἀνακάμπτω), though this time "making himself equal to God" (*Sib. Or.* 5.34, ἰσάζων θεῷ αὐτόν). It is curious that the author does not mention Nero's death, but instead notes that after vanishing Nero is still active ("he remains destructive"). Again, the Sibyl never refers to Nero's death in relation to his return (evidence against *Nero redivivus* so far in the *Sib. Or.* 5). This introduction, with a strong focus on Nero, functions to familiarise this important character, his iniquities, and the idea surrounding his disappearance and return to the audience.

Following the Egyptian oracle (*Sib. Or.* 5.52-92), where the Sibyl recounts the punishments meted out to Egypt (likely) for its hand in the Exodus story,[152] a

[150] In the Sibyl's opening review of the "woeful history of the Latin race" (*Sib. Or.* 5.1-51), Nero, above all other emperors, is given the most attention at seven lines. Notice the difference between Augustus and Trajan, who are given only six and five lines, respectively.

[151] The murder of his family members is especially noted in vv. 29-30, which states that Nero will seize them with his hands and finally destroy them.

[152] At *Sib. Or.* 5.93, a destructive Persian figure is said to arrive like "hail", likely drawing to mind the events recorded in Exodus. Cf. Ex. 9:18-35.

"Persian", a destructive figure "from the West",[153] arrives bringing great destruction to Egypt and Asia. This figure will also "desire to destroy the city of the blessed ones" (*Sib. Or.* 5.107), but will be stopped by a "certain king sent from God" (*Sib. Or.* 5.108). While Yarbro Collins identifies this figure with Nero,[154] noting the connection with Parthia and the False Nero tradition, the section seems to lack the typical comments used by the *Sib. Or.* to identify Nero. Short summaries of Nero's matricide, his plan to cut through the Isthmus of Corinth, or connection to "Babylon" are absent. Furthermore, if we are to identify Nero here, the episode is chronologically odd, since Nero, after devastating Egypt (*Sib. Or.* 5.94) and Asia (*Sib. Or.* 5.99), would need to return to conquer Rome (*Sib. Or.* 5.104-105), and then Jerusalem (*Sib. Or.* 5.107) once more!

Following Kenneth Jones' argumentation, the descriptions from lines *Sib. Or.* 5.93 (i.e. naming the destructive figure, "Persian") and *Sib. Or.* 5.101 (i.e. the destructive figure being called, "the one who obtained the land of the Persians") together suggest that the references intend to denote "a non-Persian ruler of the old Persian empire", namely Antiochus IV.[155] Antiochus IV, Jones continues, fits the image the Sibyl paints of the destructive figure, no less for the history associated between him and the Jews. In historical fact, Antiochus IV, the destructive figure here, conquers Egypt, plays the role of a stock tyrant, and is remembered as nearly "destroying" "the city of the blessed ones" (*Sib. Or.* 5.107). Moreover, while

[153] I have translated line 104, αὐτὸς δ' ἐκ δυσμῶν εἰσπτήσεται ἄλματι κούφῳ, as "But he himself will appear unexpectedly with a light sprung from the West".

[154] J.J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles", *OTP* 1.395 n. b2.

[155] Jones, *Jewish Reactions*, 220-223. However, while Jones finds Antiochus IV fits best, he does suggest both Cambyses or Artaxerxes as potential candidates of the "Persian".

Antiochus was not stopped by a "king sent from God" (*Sib. Or.* 5.108), the author of Daniel (Dan. 12:1) envisions the archangel Michael bringing Antiochus IV to his end. Jones continues that the destructive figure in *Sib. Or.* 5 is "composed of many elements with a large admixture of details from the historical Nero"; however, "…in this first instance we can already see that Antiochus IV also added to the portrait of the man of destruction", a role Nero plays throughout *Sib. Or.* 5.[156]

In *Sib. Or.* 5.137-154, Nero is brought to the fore again by the Sibyl, who draws from traditions connected to the historical Nero as well as Nero *redux*. Nero is introduced as a great king of Rome, who cut through the neck of the isthmus and was a "god-like man" born of Zeus and Hera (*Sib. Or.* 5.138-140).[157] The typical features – musical talent, murderous inclinations, and matricide – are also noted by the Sibyl (*Sib. Or.* 5.141-142). Nero will then flee from Babylon (5.143), and make his way to the Medes and kings of the Persians (*Sib. Or.* 5.147). Recounting the events with Tiridates of Parthia in 63CE,[158] the Sibyl explains that Nero added glory to the Medes and Persians (*Sib. Or.* 5.148). He lurked among these evil ones and conspired against the "true people" (*Sib. Or.* 5.149). The Sibyl then assigns responsibility to Nero for *seizing* the Jerusalem Temple and "burning the citizens" who entered it. Upon Nero's appearance (return?), creation shook and kings perished (i.e. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius), leaving the reign to Vespasian (or Titus may be implied here), who is then said to have destroyed Jerusalem and its "righteous people" (*Sib. Or.*

---

[156] Ibid, 223.

[157] R.H. Charles notes that these few lines introducing Nero are "bitterly sarcastic". R.H. Charles, *Commentary on the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2.399. Suet. *Nero*, 6 discusses the mystery surrounding Nero's birth.

[158] Cf. fn. 141.

5.150-154).

The Sibyl gives us a few pieces of important information regarding Nero. As at *Sib. Or.* 5.34, Nero is sarcastically presented as a "god-like man" (ἰσόθεος), a theme that arises throughout *Sib. Or.* 5 and will be important when we examine earlier examples in 2 Thessalonians and Revelation where the destructive figure intends to usurp God's place. Additionally, Nero is not held accountable for the burning of the Temple. In fact, he seems to be responsible only for "seizing" it and burning the citizens who entered it. This likely reflects Nero's responsibility as the initiator of the Jewish War, which concluded in the Temple's destruction by burning. Also, Nero's death again is not attached to his disappearance and return. Finally, following the section (*Sib. Or.* 5.155-178) on Nero's return, the Sibyl again places the Nero return myth within a Jewish eschatological schema. The Sibyl first warns that Babylon and the land of Italy will be dealt a deadly blow by "a great star" (*Sib. Or.* 5.158). At *Sib. Or.* 5.174, it is God, not Nero, who will be the source of final judgment against Rome, destroying both the city of Rome and its inhabitants (cf. *Sib. Or.* 4 above).

Nero appears again in *Sib. Or.* 5.214-237 with all the familiar features alerting readers to Nero's identity. The Sibyl begins this section with an oracle concerning Corinth's impending destruction. The narrative assumes Nero's disappearance as it notes that the Fates will lead him *back*, i.e. "the one who is (now) fleeing deceitfully" (*Sib. Or.* 5.216). Upon his return, Nero will destroy Corinth. Such destruction, according to the Sibyl, is mandated by God, who gave Nero this strength "like no previous one of all the kings" (*Sib. Or.* 5.220-221). With his strength, Nero will cut off the roots of three heads and will give them to others to eat,

so that they might eat the flesh of the parents of the unholy king. The entire world will then experience murder and terrors because of Jerusalem and its righteous inhabitants.

The imagery of the three heads is particularly important. The Sibyl is recalling the image provided in Daniel 7:8 where the author has a vision of four beasts. In this vision, the author describes the fourth beast as having ten horns from which a smaller horn sprang. It was from this smaller horn, that three others were uprooted. The fourth beast is commonly identified with the Seleucid Empire and the small horn with Antiochus IV. The application by the Sibyl may link Antiochus IV and Nero once again.[159]

Beyond Daniel's three uprooted heads, the Sibyl adds that Nero will give them (i.e. the uprooted heads) to others "to eat the flesh of the parents of the impious king" (*Sib. Or.* 5.224). Jones argues that Nero's most famous murders would make his mother Agrippina, Claudius, and Britannicus possible candidates of the Sibyl's mysterious language. This suggestion is based on the interpretation of γονεύς ("parent") to also encompass Nero's brother and sister. Still, Jones presses the interpretation of γονεύς further, advocating that the term could be loosely interpreted as something like "predecessor" or "ancestors", and that the reference by the Sibyl is discussing the deaths of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. This reading can be accommodated as the text looks back on the events following Nero's disappearance (death). In this way, the three contenders for the throne could be seen as predecessors to the returned Nero.[160] In any case, Jones is keen to see the Antiochus IV and Nero

[159] Following Jones, *Jewish Reactions*, 229-231.

[160] Ibid.

connection, suggesting that the Sibyl is using early material of Antiochus IV, then attempting to "assimilate it to Nero". This accounts for the Sibyl's various elements that construct the man of destruction, especially those parts that appear to have non-Neronian features.[161]

The final reference to Nero comes at *Sib. Or.* 5.361-385 where his matricidal action confirms Nero's identification (*Sib. Or.* 5.363). The Sibyl prophesies Nero's return from the ends of the earth during a period of time for which Nero was on the run (*Sib. Or.* 5.364).[162] Upon his return he will destroy and conquer every land; however, more specifically, "He will immediately seize the one because of whom he himself perished" (ἧς χάριν ὤλετό τ' αὐτός, ἑλεῖ ταύτην παραχρῆμα).[163] The word ἧς here is a feminine pronoun and likely suggests that the Sibyl had Rome in mind as the actor who caused Nero to "perish". He will further destroy men and rulers, setting fire to them all, though he will raise up those crouched in fear. Following this, a great war from the West will breakout with blood rising to river banks and wrath dripping in Macedonia (*Sib. Or.* 5.371-373). The Sibyl then explains that this war will not only cause an alliance to the people from the West, but also the king's (Nero's) destruction. The ambiguity of the text leaves much to question.

---

[161] Ibid, 230.

[162] Φεύγων ἠδὲ νόῳ ὀξύστομα μερμηρίζων. See φεύγω in connection to Nero's disappearance rather than death in *Sib. Or.* 4.64, 120; 5.143; 5.216. Cf. 7.48; 12.93.

[163] Collins' translation, *OTP* 1.402. Scholars have suggested that this text reflects the concept of *Nero redivivus* since it appears that Nero has "perished" and returned. However, ὄλλυμι has a wider lexical range than "to perish" or "to destroy" in the sense of death, and could also soundly have the meaning of being "lost", "ruined", or "finished". This latter sense seems more appropriate considering no other references to *Nero redivivus* are found in *Sib. Or.* 5 and because of the author's use of φεύγω at *Sib. Or.* 5.364. In the two other instances (*Sib. Or.* 5.143, 216) where φεύγω is used in relation to the Nero return myth, the author never connects it to Nero's death. See *GE* 1146, s.v. 2; *LSJ* 1217, s.v. B.I-III; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion, 9; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 181.

Who are we to identify as those "crouched in fear" who Nero "raises up"? Who makes this alliance with "the people from the West"? Jones is helpful on this account, suggesting a positive reading of Nero in this section. While the Sibyl notes Nero's matricidal characteristic, she also displays a few positive features as well. For example, at 5.366 he is noted as considering " all things more wisely than all men". The Sibyl also notes that by his zeal he is compassionate "for those crouched in fear" and raises them up (*Sib. Or.* 5.370). These positive images are matched by the destructive characteristics of Nero resonant throughout *Sib. Or.* 5. Here the positive images of Nero found among the lower classes of Rome and the eastern provinces more generally (see above, cf. fn. *Sib. Or.* 5.131, 132) are providing a background to the Sibyl. Jones argues that the "people crouching in fear" could be read as the Jewish people with Nero functioning as a type of saviour figure.[164]

This reflects the sort of image of Nero discussed when examining *Sib. Or.* 4, which made the connection between Nero and Parthia/Persia. Jones explores whether in this section Nero's return is not something to be dreaded by the Jews, but rather anticipated as the initiation of the eschaton. It is only following the king's (Nero's) death that early signs of the eschaton emerge with deep chaos erupting (*Sib. Or.* 5.375-380). This chaos is hampered by "fire…from the floors of heaven" and will cause the "destruction of war" to cease entirely. Only "a wise people" (presumably the Jews) who are left from the destruction will have peace, "having experienced evil so that it might later rejoice". Jones helpfully explains, "The eschaton is always an upheavel, but in the way that birth is."[165] Moreover, Nero does not function then as a

[164] Jones, *Jewish Reactions*, 234.

[165] Ibid.

type of final destroyer figure in antagonism to the Messiah, but rather "as a harbinger of the end".[166]

Some Proposals for Mark

Prior to Mk. 13:14, Mark's Jesus recounts the beginning "birth pangs" prior to the initiation of the eschaton (Mk. 13:5-13). These are marked, for example, by wars, earthquakes, and famines. While Hengel cites general outbreaks of each disaster in 68CE, there are a few important associations between Nero and these phenomena. The concurrent existence of the Jewish War and Roman Civil War can certainly account for Mark's comment about "wars and rumours of wars" (Mk. 13:7). Moreover, Dio Cassius records an earthquake in 68CE following Nero's escape to Phaon's estate prior to his suicide.[167] Additionally, Tacitus (*Ann*. 12.43.1) and an inscription (*AE* 1980, no. 5) report an earthquake in 51CE, the year that Nero received the *toga virilis*. Dio Cassius, however, makes the connection between the destructive earthquake and Nero's coming of age.[168] As to famine, it is Nero's coinage from 64-66CE[169] which is first to feature the goddess Annona (from *annus*, "year"), who is associated with the yearly produce of the earth and the grain supply of Rome. These coins were intended to be a propagandistic tool for the emperor by

[166] Ibid, 235.

[167] Dio Cass. 63.28.1: "While he was on the way [to Phaon's estate] a terrible earthquake occurred, so that one might have thought the whole world was bursting asunder and all the spirits of those murdered by him were leaping up to assail him".

[168] Dio Cass. 61.33.2 (Zon. 11.10): "When Nero (to use the one of his names that has prevailed) assumed the toga virilism, the Divine Power shook the earth for a long time on the very day of the ceremony and by night struck terror to the hearts of all alike."

[169] RIC I^2 Nero 98, 99, 137-142, 372, 389-391, 430-431, 493-497, 566-572.

displaying his ability to restore the grain supply following The Great Fire of 64CE. However, as Peter Garnsey notes, "they [the coins] indirectly confirm the scale of the disaster".[170] Perhaps, Mark is recounting these various historical events regarding Nero to point to a Neronian background.

Citing the various accounts of Nero *redux* above, Hengel argues that the "abomination of desolation" in Mk. 13:14 refers to Nero *Redivivus* and his occupation of the temple as the antichrist. This is confirmed for Hengel by Mark's note of the male figure (via the *constructio ad sensum* in Mk. 13:14) "standing where *he* ought not". One important note of correction is Hengel's use of Nero *redivivus,* i.e. *redivivus* meaning "that who/which lives again". *Early* accounts of Nero *redux*, as shown in the *Sib. Or.*, were never connected to his death, but rather to the historical Nero, whose disappearance was often explained by an intentional attempt to hide himself in the east until he could be restored to power worldwide.[171] Moreover, Hengel is correct to stress that Mark's use of Daniel likely intends to recall Antiochus Epiphanes and his sacrilegious actions in the temple (see above). However, in a similar fashion to the author of *Sib. Or.* 5, Mark has creatively reconstructed the episode of Antiochus Epiphanes, but now focused it on the figure himself (not the altar), and purposely conflated this threat with widespread beliefs in the east concerning Nero's return (Nero's own harsh actions against Christians in 64CE made him a candidate for such a comparison), which would begin in Jerusalem

[170] Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 224.

[171] Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 25-28. See J.J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*, SBL Dissertation Series 13 (Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature for the Pseudepigrapha Group, 1974), 188 fn. 47; J.W. Van Henten, '*Nero Redivivus* Demolished: The Coherence of the Nero Traditions in the Sibylline Oracles', *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 21 (2000) 3-17.

(see Suet. *Nero* 40.2). For Mark, Nero's appearance in the holy city marks the liminal point of the eschaton ("those in Judea must flee to the mountains!"). And while this appearance of Nero certainly spells destruction and suffering, it is also the precursor to salvation, and subsequent joy. For Mark, this is not just a warning to his community of coming destruction, but also impending salvation. His final words at the end of chapter 13 – i.e. to "keep awake" – are a fitting end to a scenario on the precipice of cosmic resolution.

While most scholars accept a later form of Nero *redux*, even Hengel questions whether "Mark does not already presuppose this expectation of *Nero redivivus* [?]".[172] Yarbro Collins argues that it is the author of Revelation (John) who aids the development of Nero's *redux* into Nero *redivivus*. According to Yarbro Collins, John parodies the Nero *redux* against the death, resurrection, and parousia of Jesus, most explicitly in describing Nero as "the one who was, and is not, and shall be" (Rev. 17:8).[173] However, she dates this adjustment of the Nero *redux* and *redivivus* to twenty years following Nero's death.[174] I will argue, contra Yarbro Collins, that Revelation was written sometime in mid to late 69CE, rendering it contemporary with Mark. I will try to show that Nero *redux* (not Nero *redivivus*) was already circulating in 69CE and reflected much of the same evidence and outcomes expected of Nero found in the Jewish writings of the *Sib. Or.* 4 and 5 above. This should provide some historical evidence that a framework surrounding Nero *redux*

[172] Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 25. Also, I would contend that Hengel means Nero *redux* here.

[173] This is seen against the backdrop of John's Jesus who will return again (cf. Rev. 1:7; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7). Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 185. Yarbro Collins, likewise, notes John's "double parody", i.e. first with Jesus, but then also with God, who is consistently called the one "…who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8).

[174] Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 184.

was well-known during the proposed period of Mark's writing and is likely reflected in it.

Revelation 13 and 17 as an Early Neronian Return Myth

Most scholars date Revelation to sometime under Domitian's reign, i.e. before his death in 96CE.[175] This decision is often weighted heavily on the external evidence offered by Irenaeus' testimony c. 180 C.E. (*Adv. Haeres.* 5.30.3).[176] Rojas-Flores has offered a strong rebuttal, suggesting that the patristic evidence is varied in its dating of Revelation, though it seems to have a tendency towards an early Neronian date.[177] Internal considerations have provided numerous scholars with the evidence needed to accept a dating of Revelation sometime between 68-70CE. Most of these scholars agree that the book was written sometime after Nero's death and before the destruction of the temple.[178] Such evidence is based almost entirely on Rev. 11:1-2, 13, and 17. The latter two chapters will be discussed in more detail

[175] For a date in the Trajanic period, see H.J. De Jonge, 'The Apocalypse of John and the Imperial Cult', in *Kykeon: Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel*, H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, H.W. Singor, F.T. van Straaten, and J.H.M. Strubbe (eds.), (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 142; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002): 127-129.

[176] Regarding John's "apocalyptic vision", Irenaeus notes that John received them "…not long ago, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign". For modern scholars influenced by Irenaeus' testimony, see Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse,* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 55-56. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation/27,* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 21; G.B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John,* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 6; Mitchell G. Reddish, *Revelation,* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys Pub., 2001), 16-17; Wilfrid J. Harrington and Daniel J. Harrington, *Revelation,* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2008), 9.

[177] Gonzalo Rojas-Flores, "The Book of Revelation and the First Years of Nero's Reign", *Biblica* 85.3 (2004): 375-377.

[178] Albert A. Bell Jr., "Date of John's Apocalypse: The Evidence of Some Roman Historians Reconsidered" *NTS* 25 (1978): 93–102; J. Christian Wilson, "The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation" *NTS* 39 (1993): 587–605; Stephen S. Smalley, *Thunder and Love: John's Revelation and John's Community* (Milton Keynes: Word, 1994), 40-49; Thomas B. Slater, "Dating the Apocalypse of John" *Bib* 84 (2003): 252–58.

below, but, I should briefly make a note about Rev. 11:1-2. John's vision here is concerned with Jerusalem and its temple: "Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, 'Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months'". These verses suggest that the temple had not yet been destroyed. In fact, the note about the "court outside the temple" which has been "given over to the nations" and the trampling of the holy city for forty-two months, suggests a situation where the temple is under immediate threat, contemporaneously with John's writing. In any case, there is no internal referent to the destruction of the temple, which suggests it had likely not occurred yet.[179]

The Neronian return myth appears in Rev. 13 and 17. In John's vision at Rev. 13, he sees a beast[180] arising out of the sea. This beast (Rome) has ten horns and seven heads for which ten diadems are on the horns and blasphemous names on the heads.[181] John notes that the beast was like a leopard, with feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. The dragon[182] had given the beast its power, throne, and great

[179] In relation to the thrust of the entire book, especially in light of chps. 21-22, which envisions a new holy city, it is shocking that the author, if he did have knowledge of the temple's destruction, would not incorporate a new temple as a source of hope for his suffering audience. Cf. Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 3.

[180] The "beast" here seems to be a creative reworking of John's, who takes the memory of Daniel's vision of the four beasts (Dan. 7) and revises it for his present situation and audience by aligning it with Rome (cf. 4 *Ez*. 12:11). Moreover, Nero is identified as a "beast" (θηρίον) by ancient writers (cf. *Sib. Or.* 5.343; 8.157; Philostratus *Vit. Apoll.* 4.38). Cf. above where I note that Nero (one of the beasts heads) is identified with the beast itself.

[181] John mimics the language of Daniel 7:24 whose ten horns are likewise listed as ten kings.

[182] Scholars have attributed various interpretations to the "dragon" imagery here. Some have noted its close relationship to ancient Near Eastern mythology (see Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 57-100; R. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (London: T & T Clark, 1993), 185-198). Still others see the dragon as the stock symbol of oppression and evil, a figure

authority. John then explains in verse 3, "One of its heads *appeared* to receive a mortal blow, but its mortal wound was healed" (my emphasis; μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη). He references the occurrence twice more in chapter 13, noting, "the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed" (Mk. 13:12), and again "the beast that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived" (Mk. 13:14).[183] Commentators often identify John's cryptic language with Julius Caesar, who was dealt a deadly blow by Cassius and Brutus (among other senators).[184] However, Julius Caesar neither recovered from this attack, nor were there writings that suggested such a legend was in existence.

Nero is a stronger candidate since he died by a self-inflicted sword wound,[185] specifically to his throat (Suet. *Nero* 49.3-4). Additionally, chapter 13 ends with cryptic numbering aimed to aid readers/hearers of the apocalypse in identifying the beast. John explains that through wisdom and intelligence anyone can calculate the "number of the beast, since it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty six" (Rev. 13:18). Scholars widely recognise that John is using gematria to

---

who heaps wrath on God's people and can be reapplied to various characters. The term, for example, is applied to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 51:34 [LXX 28:34]) and Pompey (*Pss. Sol.* 2.25). An interesting use of the term is used of Pharaoh, naming him "the great dragon"(Ezek. 29:3, τὸν δράκοντα τὸν μέγαν; cf. 32:2). This is the language used by John in his first instance naming the "great fiery dragon" (Rev. 12:3). Rome, with its oppressive powers, functions in John's time as Egypt did in Jewish history. More than that, the dragon is identified by John ultimately as the "ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12:9).

[183] Interestingly, the first reference to the death blow and recovery is in relation to one of the heads of the beast, whereas, at Mk. 13:12-14 the "first beast" is the referent of the apparent mortal wound.

[184] For this interpretation the word μίαν ("one" in my translation) is taken as an ordinal, meaning "first" (i.e. "first" emperor).

[185] Some commentators have argued that Gaius Caligula's severe illness and shaky recovery (Suet. *Cal*. 14.2; Dio Cass. 59.8.1-2) makes him a potential candidate. However, the mention of the "sword", clearly excludes him.

implicate "Caesar Nero".[186] This all suggests that John believed that Nero had, in fact, not died, but rather recovered from the "mortal wound" he suffered. The beast, then, in the form of Nero, was allowed to rule for "forty-two months" (c. 3 ½ years; Rev. 13:5). The background to this temporal time is drawn from Dan. 8:9-14, where it refers to the persecuted Jews suffering under Antiochus Epiphanes (again connecting the figures of Antiochus Epiphanes and Nero). Interestingly, this time allotment nearly matches with the length of the Jewish War, 66-70CE. More specifically, I will argue, according to Rev. 17:8, that Revelation is composed sometime between the reign of Vitellus (16 Apr. 69CE) and Titus' final advance on Jerusalem (Spring/Summer 70CE), nearly 3 ½ years. The reign of the first beast is marked with destructiveness, war, and blasphemies against God (Rev. 13:6-7). However, there is a clear shift from the aorists and perfects in vv. 1-7 to the future indicative in v. 8 where "all the inhabitants of the earth *will* worship it [the beast]" (my emphasis; Rev. 13:6-8). Two important notes should be made: (1) for John's return myth of Nero, he envisions Nero taking the place of God as an object of worship; (2) John's change from the aorist and past tenses in vv. 1-7 to the future tense in v. 8 sets Nero's return myth within an eschatological schema, similar to what was found in *Sib. Or.* above.

[186] The path to this solution is somewhat difficult, but seems most widely accepted. Scholars must take the name "Caesar Nero" and transliterate it from Greek to Hebrew, which becomes קיסר נרון (*qysr nrwn*), however, equaling 676. With the yod dropped, the spelling becomes קסר נרון (*qsr nrwn*), thus equaling the numerical value, 666 (ק = 100, ס = 60, ר = 200, נ = 50, ר = 200, ו = 6, ן = 50). Aune notes this spelling is attested in an Aramaic document from Wadi Murabba'at (David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, WBC 52b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 770). Moreover, the MSS variant "616" attests to the Latin form of "Nero Caesar" transliterated into Hebrew (נרו קסר, *nrw qsr*). For scholars recommending a Neronian identification see, I.T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction, with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 642; R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920), 1.367-368; J.P.M. Sweet, *Revelation*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1990), 217-219; Aune, *Revelation*, 770-773.

Revelation 13:11 introduces a second beast in John's vision. This beast rises out of the earth (the first beast rises out of the sea) and has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. The second beast has all the authority of the first beast. The second beast "does great miracles" (ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα) and, like Elijah[187] (1 Kgs. 18:38; 2 Kgs. 1:10), can even "make fire come down from heaven in the sight of all" (Rev. 13:13). While the second beast is exclusively associated with the miracles (cf. Rev. 19:20) these signs are performed "on behalf of the [first] beast" (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου). These miracles are intended to deceive the "inhabitants of the earth" into worshipping the first beast. Eschatological figures are frequently associated with performing miracles (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-10; *Did*. 16:4; *Apoc. Daniel* 13.1-13; *Apoc. Ezra* 4.26-27; et al.). However, this association with Nero and the miraculous is made at *Sib. Or.* 3.63-74 and *Asc. Isa.* 4:5-11. The former, a later addition post-dating the destruction of the Jewish temple, and the latter, dating to the end of the first century.[188] This discussion will factor into the picture Mark paints of the abomination of desolation who not only performs miracles, but does so in attempts to lead people astray (Mk. 13:22).

Revelation 17 begins with one of the seven angels introducing and detailing, in a vision to John, "the great whore" (τῆς πόρνης τῆς μεγάλης) , who readers should understand symbolically as Rome (cf. Rev. 17:18).[189] In John's descriptions of the vision, he saw a "woman" (who is to be identified with "the great whore") seated on

[187] In this instance as the false Elijah preparing the way for the false messiah.

[188] Dating *Sib. Or.* 3.63-74 see J.J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles", *OTP* 1.322; Dating *Asc. Isa.* 4:5-11 see, M.A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah", *OTP* 2.143.

[189] See the discussion in David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, WBC 52c (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1025.

a “scarlet beast”, who was covered in blasphemous names with seven heads and ten horns. These descriptions hint readers to the first beast from Rev. 13 (who appeared to suffer a deadly-blow). John lays out a vivid description of the woman and her atrocities (Rev. 17: 4-6). John’s response to the vision of the woman is “amazement” (θαυμάζω), and it suggests that John is “on the verge of succumbing to her charms”.[190] The angel’s rebuke at v.7 (“Why are you amazed?”) is met with his explanation regarding the “mystery” of the woman and the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

The angel interprets the beast that John saw as one who “*was* [past], and *is not* [present], and *is about to* [future] ascend from the abyss and go to destruction” (Rev. 17:8; ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγει).[191] These time-divisions (past, present, and future) correlate well with the phases typically assigned to Nero *redux*. Nevertheless, scholars often regard the phrase “is not” (οὐκ ἔστιν) as describing the beast’s (Nero’s) death. This would indicate that John has a conception not of Nero redux as in chapter 13, but rather Nero *redivivus*. However, “is not” appears to be a reference back to the *apparent* fatal blow described in Rev. 13:3, 12, 14. As I have shown, John’s language assumes that the beast had not died. Furthermore, it seems that John is also theologically concerned to set up the beast as the antithesis of the God who is called, “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι). John notes that the proper interpretations require his audience to use “wisdom”,

[190] Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, BNTC (London: Continuum, 2006), 244.

[191] This unique formula is only used of the beast in Rev. 17, and appears in three varied forms at Rev. 17:8a, 8b, 11a. See the variations in the synoptic comparison in Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 939.

situating the following section within the realities of the Johannine community (cf. Rev. 13:18).

The interpreting angel continues, giving a double interpretation about the seven heads of the beast. In the first instance, he describes the seven heads as seven mountains on which the woman is seated;[192] but secondly, the seven heads equate to seven "kings" (βασιλεύς for *imperator* here). From the seven emperors "five have fallen" (πέντε ἔπεσαν), "one is [ruling now]" (Rev. 17:10b), and "the other has not yet come", but when the final emperor does come, "he must be in place for only a short time" (Rev. 17:10d). Beginning the list of seven emperors with Julius Caesar is problematic as Nero would be the sixth emperor ([1] Julius Caesar, [2] Augustus, [3] Tiberius, [4] Gaius, [5] Claudius, [6] Nero), i.e. the one who is ruling now. Yet, we know that the beast (Nero) "is not" ruling at the time of John's writing (Rev. 17:8). Prior to Suetonius in the early second century, lists of succession beginning with Augustus, and not Julius Caesar, were "common practice".[193] Such a reading renders the "five fallen" emperors accordingly: (1) Augustus, (2) Tiberius, (3) Gaius, (4) Claudius, and (5) Nero. If this is correct, Galba would be counted as the sixth emperor, i.e. the one currently ruling, and Otho, the seventh emperor, i.e. the one whose reign will be for a short time.[194] This suggestion is historically reasonable as

[192] This is language would clearly lend to readers imagining Rome's famous "seven hills". Cf. Varro *Ling*. 5.41-54; Pliny *N.H.* 3.66-67; Juv. *Sat.* 9.130.

[193] George H. Van Kooten, "The Year of the Four Emperors and the Revelation of John: The 'Pro-Neronian' Emperors Otho and Vitellius, and the Images and Colossus of Nero in Rome", JSNT 30.2 (2007): 211 fn. 11; Cf. _____ , "The Jewish War and the Roman Civil War of 68-69 C.E.: Jewish, Pagan, and Christian Perspectives" in *The Jewish Revolt Against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* , ed. Mladen Popović (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 434.

[194] For arguments regarding the inclusion of Otho and Vitellius in succession lists, see Bell Jr., "Date of John's Apocalypse", 99.

Otho had the shortest reign of any emperor in the first century.[195] Furthermore, while John notes that these emperors "have fallen" (ἔπεσαν), the wording does not necessarily imply by death.[196] Rather, πίπτω may be understood here as "overthrown", suggesting Nero *redux* once more.[197] The interpreting angel confirms this reading, noting that the beast "who was and is not" is also the eighth emperor, though he is counted among the list of seven. Moreover, the fate of the beast, as noted in Rev. 17:8, 11, is bound for destruction (εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγει). However, before that destruction occurs, John records that the "ten kings"[198] and the beast will unite against the "whore" and hate her, John continues, "they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire" (Rev. 17:16). Following these actions, the ten kings relinquish their power to the beast. Not only is this God's will, according to John, but the desire to destroy the "whore" was planted by God "to carry out God's purpose" (Rev. 17:17). The Nero *redux* traditions found in Roman, Jewish, and other Christian sources explored in this chapter are brought to the fore here. Nero and the ten kings function as the ironic actors who will bring

[195] Otho reigned from 15 Jan. 69CE – 16 Apr. 69CE (3 months). John's knowledge of a shorter reign following the sixth emperor suggests he is familiar with Otho's short-lived reign. Yet, the text is problematic if, as this reading interprets, Galba is the "one [who] is ruling now" (Rev. 17:8; ὁ εἷς ἔστιν). This would imply that Vitellius, and not Nero, would be the "eighth" emperor in succession. Van Kooten helpfully suggests that Rev. 17:10b ("one [who] is ruling now") "was authentic at the moment it was written" and that Rev. 17:10d ("he must be in place for only a short time") is a later addition supplemented after the quick and unexpected death of Otho, thus placing the final edition soon into the Vitellius. This understanding is further confirmed considering Vespasian's emperorship occupies no space in Revelation. See Van Kooten, "The Year of the Four Emperors", 218-219.

[196] In Revelation, however, πίπτω is usually used in a worshipful sense, but at Rev. 11:13; 14:8; 16:19; 18:2 it appears to mean utter destruction. Reading "violent death" here would also have validity in light of the vicious deaths many emperors in the succession list suffered.

[197] Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 949.

[198] Likely representative of Rome's client kings who are "subordinate to the beast" and "coheres with an informal political institution fostered by Rome". Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 951.

down Rome. Their actions will usher in the eschaton bringing final judgment and destruction against Rome (Rev. 18) and themselves (Rev. 19:20).

Fleeing the City (Mk. 13:14)

Both Yarbro Collins and Hengel have argued that the plea of Mark's Jesus for Judaean fugitives to flee to the mountains (Mk. 13:14) is problematic for a post-70CE date. Hengel explains that fleeing would be "non-sensical" following Vespasian's encirclement of Jerusalem in July 68CE. He argues that fugitives would have run directly into the arms of either stationed Roman military or ruthless Sicarii, either way a deadly situation.[199] Yarbro Collins asks, in a post-siege/destruction scenario, what sense there would be for fleeing.[200] In fact, Winn notes, "The temple's destruction did not ignite an onslaught of persecution…", but rather the destruction ended the siege on Jerusalem.[201] However, while Yarbro Collins rejects the idea that fugitives were escaping during the siege on the temple, Incigneri has adequately shown that fugitives were likely able to escape Jerusalem following Titus' renewal of the campaign in April 70CE, and well into the siege on the temple, and even after.[202] However, does fleeing make sense during the months of Vespasian's hiatus, a period of dating suggested by this chapter?

Prior to Vespasian's halt of his campaign against Jerusalem, Josephus reports (*BJ* 4.366-378) that the Roman soldiers noticed the dissensions among the enemy

[199] Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 116-118. Hengel (117) also notes that Mark may not be dependent upon a historical tradition, but instead recalling elements of 1 Macc. 2.28.

[200] Yarbro Collins, *Mark,* 602.

[201] Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel*, 69.

[202] Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans*, 123-126.

and thought it to be a divine sign that their attack on Jerusalem should move forward. In the episode, Vespasian corrects his soldiers's impulses who gave no mind to expediency or safety. He explained that such a move would reunite the factions and stir a greater revolt against the Romans. Vespasian's strategy was to allow the in-fighting among the Jews who "were reaching a more pitiful state than any Roman attack and capture would inflict on them" (*BJ* 4.375). Josephus notes that Vespasian's strategy began to work and "every day brought in numbers of defectors who managed to get away from the Zealots" (*BJ* 4.377; πολλοὶ γοῦν καθ' ἡμέραν ηὐτομόλουν τοὺς ζηλωτὰς διαδιδράσκοντες).[203] While he explains that "escape was not easy", many found refuge through bribes or other means to secure safe passage (*BJ* 4.378). Josephus later notes that "ordinary citizens" afflicted by war, tyranny, and revolt "broke free from their own people and fled to take refuge with foreigners hoping to find with the Romans the security of which they had despaired at home" (*BJ* 4. 397). Josephus further reports that Vespasian was gathering intel from deserters. Here, Josephus, possibly in a show of polemics for Flavian propaganda,[204] explains that these deserters were urging Vespasian to rise in defense of their city and rescue their people (*BJ* 4.410-11). While Josephus makes clear that fleeing or defecting was no easy task, these few accounts challenge the line that fugitives could not "flee" Jerusalem prior to or during Vespasian's military hiatus (July 68CE – Apr. 70CE).

Additionally, the idea of "fleeing" could be an ahistorical note intended to

[203] While we certainly cannot know how many people were defecting in this instance, Josephus opts for the term πολλοὶ.

[204] Cf. *BJ* 4.412: "Vespasian was already sympathetic to their plight, and he now set out against Jerusalem, apparently intent on besieging the city, though in reality his purpose was to free it from its own internal siege."

call Mark's audiences's attention to the prophetic tradition associated with God's wrath. This is displayed, for example, in Genesis 19:17 (Sodom and Gomorrah) where the angels of God warn Lot to take his family and "flee to the hills" (ההרה המלט) prior to God's wrath being expressed on Sodom in utter destruction.[205] Furthermore, LXX Ezek. 7 also connects God's judgment and wrath to a mountain escape. LXX Ezek. 7:5 is addressed to "the land of Israel" (LXX Ezek. 7:2) and explains, "I [God] will pour out my wrath against you [Israel], and I will accomplish my anger on you, and I will judge you by your ways, and I will repay all your abominations to you". Some of these judgements are pronounced in LXX Ezek. 7:15: "He who is in the plain will die by the sword, and famine and death will kill those who are in the city", and followed by a significant note, "And those of them who escape will be rescued, and they will be on the mountains". Additional references could be noted, for example, in Josephus if we understand fleeing to the mountains, in Josephus' view, as a retreat in lieu of God's willingness to act in favour of the rebels–i.e. fleeing in the face of God's abandonment.[206] This latter interpretation fits well with what this paper has argued thus far, namely that the impending destruction of Jerusalem, its cultic system and temple, are a result of divine wrath.

Brief Conclusions

[205] The LXX uses somewhat nuanced language, but with the same interpretative force as the HB. The LXX provides the middle imperative of σῴζω for מלט, thus rendering an interpretation such as, "save yourself (by going) into the mountains" (εἰς τὸ ὄρος σῴζου). Cf. Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2.293; George Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days: The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 411-412.

[206] Jos. *BJ* 1.36, 95; 2.504, 511. Similarly, see 1 Macc. 2:28; 9:40.

In this opening chapter, I have attempted to challenge a number of basic assumptions associated with the provenance and dating of Mark. While I found no arguments of Markan provenance entirely convincing, I hope to have shown areas where Mark's gospel are less likely to have been composed. I take heart in Morna Hooker's conclusions that "All we can say with certainty, therefore, is that the gospel was composed somewhere in the Roman Empire!".[207] With dating Mark's gospel, my proposal is more specific – likely in 69CE, and certainly before the temple's destruction in August 70CE – as I see the real impact of the Roman Civil War and the Jewish War on our author and his audience. I hope to have shown that a date during Vespasian's hiatus in the Jewish War (from Nero's death to April 70CE), more specifically, mid to late 69CE after the Nero *redux* myth had time to spread, is plausible given the internal evidence in Mark. This timeline will help situate our next chapter, which aims to understand the concepts of kingship from the earliest periods of Roman history to the writing of Mark's gospel.

[207] Hooker, *St. Mark*, 7.

Latinisms in the New Testament

	GMark	GMatthew	GLuke	GJohn	Acts	1 Corinthians	Philippians	2 Timothy	Revelation	Total Per Word	Total Overall Occurrences
modius (μόδιος, "peck measure")	1	1	1							3	
legio (λεγιών, "legion")	2	1	1							4	
speculator (σπεκουλάτωρ, "executioner")	1									1	
denarius (δηνάριον, "denarius")	3	6	3	2					2	16	
sextarius (ξέστης, quart measure, "pitcher")	1									1	
census (κῆνσος, "poll tax")	1	3								4	
quadrans (κοδράντης, "quadrans")	1	1								2	
flagellum (φραγελλόω, "to flog")	1	1								2	
praetorium (πραιτώριον, "governor's official residence")	1	1		3	1		1			7	
centurio (κεντυρίων, "centurion")	3									3	
milia (μίλιον, "mile")		1								1	
assarius (ἀσσάριον, "as [Roman copper coin]")		1	1							2	
custodia (κουστωδία, "guard"/ "guard of soldiers")		3								3	
sudarium (σουδάριον, "a cloth")			1	2	1					4	
flagellium (φραγέλλιον,"whip")				1						1	
libra (λίτρα, "a (Roman) pound"				2						2	
titulus (τίτλος, "inscription")				1						1	
linteum (λέντιον, "linen cloth")				2						2	
libertinus (λιβερτῖνος, "freedman")					1					1	
colonia (κολωνία, "Colony")					1					1	
sicarius (σικάριος, "assassin")					1					1	
forum (φόρον, "Forum")					1					1	
taberna (ταβέρναι, "Taverns")					1					1	
semicinctium (σιμικίνθιον, "Apron")					1					1	
macellum (μάκελλον, "meat market")						1				1	
membrana (μεμβράνα, "parchment")								1		1	
paenula (φαιλόνης, "cloak")								1		1	
Total Overall Occurrences	15	19	7	13	8	1	1	2	2		68
Gospel Totals	15	19	7	13	54						

Latinisms - Verses

	GMark	GMatthew	GLuke	GJohn	Acts	1 Corinthians	Philippians	2 Timothy	Revelation
modius (μόδιος, "peck measure")	4.21	5.15	11.33						
legio (λεγιών, "legion")	5.9, 15	26.53	8.30						
speculator (σπεκουλάτωρ, "executioner")	6.27								
denarius (δηνάριον, "denarius")	6.37; 12.15; 14.5	18.28; 20.2, 9, 10, 13; 22.19	7.41; 10.35; 20.24	6.7; 12.5					6.6 (X2)
sextarius (ξέστης, quart measure, "pitcher")	7.4								
census (κῆνσος, "poll tax")	12.14	17.25; 22.17, 19							
quadrans (κοδράντης, "quadrans")	12.42	5.26							
flagellum (φραγελλόω, "to flog")	15.15	27.26							
praetorium (πραιτώριον, "governor's official residence")	15.16	27.27		18.28, 33; 19.9	23.35		1.13		
centurio (κεντυρίων, "centurion")	15.39, 44, 45								
milia (μίλιον, "mile")		5.41							
assarius (ἀσσάριον, "as [Roman copper coin]")		10.29	12.6						
custodia (κουστωδία, "guard"/ "guard of soldiers")		27.65, 66; 28.11							
sudarium (σουδάριον, "a cloth")			19.20	11.44; 20.7	19.12				
flagellium (φραγέλλιον,"whip")				2.15					
libra (λίτρα, "a (Roman) pound"				12.3; 19.39					
titulus (τίτλος, "inscription")				19.19					
linteum (λέντιον, "linen cloth")				13.4, 5					
libertinus (λιβερτῖνος, "freedman")					6.9				
colonia (κολωνία, "Colony")					16.12				
sicarius (σικάριος, "assassin")					21.38				
forum (φόρον, "Forum")					28.15				
taberna (ταβέρναι, "Taverns")					28.15				
semicinctium (σιμικίνθιον, "Apron")					19.12				
macellum (μάκελλον, "meat market")						10.25			
membrana (μεμβράνα, "parchment")								4.13	
paenula (φαιλόνης, "cloak")								4.13	

Fig.1 Latinisms in the NT, frequency and location.

Chapter 2

Summer of 69': Reviving *Libertas* and the Odium of Kingship at Rome

Introduction

The regal period of Ancient Rome is cloaked in mystery as historians seek to dismantle fiction from history. What is certain is that the literary evidence from ancient Roman historiographers provide a strikingly parallel account of the seven kings of Rome.[1] Over the last century, archaeology has leant much to scholarship concerning the regal period. The early 6th century BCE inscription "RECEI"[2] etched in archaic Latin on a cippus found under the Lapis Niger in the ancient *comitium* at Rome provides an important archaeological connection to the regal period or shortly following it.[3] Additionally, a 5th century bucchero cup found in the Regia at the *Forum Romanum* has the graffito, "REX", further providing early evidence of Roman kings or the institution of the *rex sacrorum*.[4] Likewise, the Republican institutions and practices such as the *rex sacrorum* ("king for sacred rites"), *interrex*, *rex Nemorensis* ("king of the grove"), and *triumphus* further display the residual

[1] See, Andrea Carandini (ed.), *La leggenda di Roma*, 4 vols. (Milan: Mondadori, 2006-2011). This impressive work attempts to bring together relevant works related to early Rome, not least kingship.

[2] CIL I^2 1, ca. 600–550BCE. The inscription was written in archaic Latin, and the boustrophedon form places the inscription within the first half of the 6th century BCE, the earliest known Latin inscription. See R.E.A. Palmer, *The King and the Comitium: A Study of Rome's Oldest Public Document*, Historia Einzelschriften, Heft 11 (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1969); Mauro Cristofani, *La Grande Roma dei Tarquini* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1990), 58-59; Sergio Battaglini. *Il complesso del Niger lapis nella storia della prima Roma : note sull'iscrizione e i monumenti* (Roma: Battaglini, 2009).

[3] Following Beek, the relation of the word *kalatorem* (likely the archaic form of *calator*, i.e. "to summon") to *recei* on the cippus probably refers to a "servant of the priest" (pp. 21-22). Thus *recei* most likely references the *rex sacrificulus* rather than any particular king of the regal period. See Leon ter Beek, "Divine Law and the Penalty of *Sacer Esto* in Early Rome", in *Law and Religion in the Roman Republic*, ed. Olga Tellegen-Couperus (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 9-29.

[4] Helpful details found in Cristofani, *La Grande Roma dei Tarquini*, 22-23.

effects of an earlier monarchy. As Christopher Smith concludes, “The evidence for the existence of the *rex* at Rome is so strong that it has to be factored into any account, even if the historical narrative has to be jettisoned”.[5] However, the complexity of historical reconstruction of kingship in ancient Rome is not the aim of this chapter. While these various evidential considerations help in understanding *why* the Romans believed they were once ruled by kings, our main concern is to understand the perceptions and cultural memory associated with Roman kingship from the late republic to the Principate, with a particular focus on the civil wars of 68-69CE and Vespasian’s early reign (69-75CE).

In this chapter, I will show that the *-reg* word group could connote both positive and negative associations at Rome, though these were dependent on social, political, and topographical circumstances. For example, while the term *rex* could conjure positive memories of the first six kings of the regal period at Rome, i.e. as founders of important Roman institutions, Tarquinius Superbus, Rome’s last king, could equally evoke an intense hatred of the term in the cultural memory of Romans. This negative view was further developed towards the end of the third and beginning of second centuries BCE, in part, by Rome’s interaction with various state monarchies of the east. The use of the *-reg* word group as political invective became popular at Rome as politicians could justify their conquests as a means to protect the *libertas* of citizens at home and foreigners abroad. The successes of such political invective abroad soon shifted back to internal politics of Rome. In extant literature of the late Republic, Cicero most visibly exploited kingship discourse as political

[5] Christopher Smith, "Thinking About Kings", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 54, no. 2 (2011): 25.

invective, though with a special emphasis during his *contiones* (i.e. public speeches). Mainly in civil disturbances, accusations of *regnum*, and consequently the loss of Roman *libertas*, became fodder for politicians looking to castigate a political foe as overreaching for power. It was during the Roman civil wars of 68-69CE that saw an intentional renewal and mimicry of Republican era kingship discourse, and once again "*rex*" became an hated term. While the *rex* could be both positively and negatively attested, the cultural memory of Rome's tainted king, Tarquinius, was ever-present for politicians looking to elevate themselves during times of civil dissension, and such is the case during the time when Mark was composing his gospel.

"Cultural Memory" and Remembering

As noted, this chapter is concerned to present the perceptions and cultural memory associated with Roman kingship rather than any historical reconstruction of kingship at Rome's inception. Consequently, I adopt Jan Assmann's definition of cultural memory. Assmann distinguishes between "collective" and "cultural" memory, the former concerned with day-to-day memories and recollections of a "recent past" for which memory is time-limited to the life-span of the memories' originating group while the latter begins where the former ends, transcending time and spreading through institutionalised mnemotechniques and media. Whereas collective memory transpires organically and fortuitously, cultural memory is a construct reinforced intentionally by institutional powers directed at conserving and inaugurating new forms of a given memory. The memory, then, is externalised to individual memory and exists in a "disembodied form", thus allowing the institution

to continue long-term propagation.[6] These memories are often preserved in symbolic form through the creation of rituals, monuments, and anniversaries, for example. As these memories are not time-limited, they can be reappropriated and reconceptualised for situational purposes of the present. As such, cultural memory is highly selective and can be reimagined from culture to culture and age to age. Therefore, cultural memory is *not* concerned with preserving the past as it was, but rather, as Assman succinctly states, "…cultural memory is not factual but remembered history".[7]

Modern theories of memory need not be applied anachronistically upon our study of Roman history and its intersection with the New Testament. Rather, "memory" (*memoria*) fits naturally into the environs of Roman culture, which infiltrated all aspects of Roman life, from statues and festivals to the commemoration of the dead. The practice of *damnatio memoriae* serves as a particularly lucid example. The *damnatio memoriae* was the state-sponsored act of posthumously erasing an individual's memory by removing or defacing names or images associated with that person. The goal was to forget the individual wholesale, and as such forgetting is about selectivity, a selectivity which diminishes one aspect of memory for the sake of underscoring another. In this way, the *damnatio memoriae* also served political ends as a controlled process by which the institution could disseminate a common yet altered past memory to unite the masses. Conversely, as the *damnatio*

[6] Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory", in *Cultural Memory Studies an International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young (Berlin : Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 111.

[7] Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), 37-38.

memoriae functioned as an artefact of memory through forgetting, so unscathed architecture, statues, coins, writings, processions, and other media functioned as symbols of remembrance.[8] For the concerns of this chapter, our attention will be centred on the widespread "cultural memory" associated with Roman kingship (most specifically around the time Mark's gospel was being written).

When Kings Ruled at Rome

Roman attitudes towards kings and kingship were (primarily) twofold: while the Romans positively insisted upon their monarchical foundations, which were etiologically important for various institutions at Rome (see below), they also expressed a strong distaste for kingship (*odium regni*). Ancient writers such as Livy, Cicero, Tacitus, and Florus, among others, record a consistent history concerning the foundations of Rome by emphasising the *odium regni*: generally beginning with the rise of the regal period, the rejection of monarchy, and the establishment of the *libera res publica*. In this vein, the hatred of the *rex* was seen as a product of the actions of the *gens Tarquinia*, a hatred which was likely reinforced from the 3rd to 1st centuries BCE when Rome's military advancements led to greater interactions with foreign nations/kings. Reconstructions by modern historians have mimicked these ancient writers, suggesting that in the *rex* there was an unambiguous and deep-rooted hatred seared into the collective consciousness of the Romans. For at the heart of

[8] Varro *Ling*., 6.49: "So also the monimenta 'memorials' which are on tombs, and in fact alongside the highway, that they may admonere 'admonish' the passers-by that they themselves were mortal and that the readers are too. From this, the other things that are written and done to preserve their memoria 'memory' are called monimenta 'monuments'".

Republican ideology was *libertas* ("freedom" / "liberty") and its greatest threat was the single rule of a *rex* and his *regnum*.

Libertas Defined

In its basic form, *libertas* referred to the legal state of a free person (*liber*) as opposed to the condition of slavery (*servitium / servitus*).[9] The slave (*servus*) was always subjected to the whim, whether malevolent or benevolent, of a master (*dominus*). However, a free citizen lived in the absence of domination (*dominatio*), or daily interference typically found between slave and master. Such a concept could be metaphorically linked to the citizen-state relationship, where the state played the role of *dominus* and citizens as *servus*. Cicero's *De Re Publica* 2.43.17 employs the slave-master relationship as a political metaphor to denigrate opposing views on monarchy, stating, "A nation who is subjected under a king deserts many things, principally *libertas* ("freedom"), which exists not in having a just master, but in not [having a master] at all".[10] *Libertas*, then, is most basically the absence of domination, whether applied to the individual or civic spheres.

Libertas was also a revered goddess, the personification of freedom to individual citizens. A temple was dedicated to Iuppiter Libertas–the equivalent of the Greek cult of Zeus Eleutherios–as early as the 3rd century BCE. On Republican coinage, Libertas often appears in bust with knotted hair, a diadem, and *pileus* (126-

[9] CH. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome During the Later Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: CUP, 1968), 1-2; Matthew Roller, *Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 219-233; Valentina Arena, *Libertas and the Practice of Politics in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), 14-44.

[10] Cic. *Rep.* 2.43.17. *Desunt omnino ei populo multa, <qui> sub rege est, in primisque libertas, quae non in eo est, ut iusto utamur domino, sed ut nul<lo>…*

75BCE) in the background. In other Republican issues she is displayed riding in a biga or quadriga with *pileus* and *vindicta* in hand. The *vindicta* and *pileus* were associated with the processes of manumission. The *vindicta* was the rod used by the *adsertor libertatis* ("protector of liberty") to free wrongfully seized slaves. In the official process, the *adsertor* would touch slaves with the *vindicta* and claim them free before a magistrate. Pending agreement by the slave's *dominus*, the slave was set free.[11] The *pileus* was likewise related to the day of manumission where slaves would have their head shaved and be given the *pileus*, a felt cap of conical shape, to don following their release.[12] These symbols were not only associated with the goddess Libertas, but became shorthand for the liberties she embodied.

The concept of *libertas* affected the whole Roman world regardless of one's social placement, making *libertas* a polyvalent term dependent upon one's subjective interpretation. A slave, for example, would be more apt to understand *libertas* within its legal context as described above, where a slave's freedom meant access to rights not previously afforded them. This interpretation could vary as one moved up the social hierarchy, i.e. from slave to free (and even among socially variable citizens). *Libertas* would, for example, be understood differently by a Roman senator who might associate *libertas* within the political realm, as Cicero above. Therefore, the meaning of *libertas*, and its associated symbols, could likewise be utilised to evoke varying messages or ideologies, as evidenced for example by the Republican coinage.

---

[11] W.W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 441-459.

[12] Polyb. 30.18.3; Livy 45.44.19. Cf. J. C. Edmondson and Alison Keith, *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Cultur*, Phoenix Supplementary Vol. 46 (Toronto Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 30.

RRC 270/1 issued by moneyer M. Porcius Laeca in 125BCE featured Libertas in a quadriga being crowned by flying Victory and holding reins and *vindicta* in her left hand and *pileus* in her right. The legend beneath reads M·PORC and ROMA. The coin–as the inscribed name suggests– no doubt refers to the "Porcian Laws" initiated by Tribune of the Plebs, P. Porcius Laeca, at the start of the 2nd century BCE. The Porcian Laws protected Roman citizens from being flogged inside and outside of Rome. Livy suggested that the Porcian Laws were initiated to uphold "the liberty of the plebs" (*libertas plebis*) and "protect the backs of citizens" (*tergo civium*).[13] Here, *libertas* and its associated symbols were used not in their usual sense to suggest simply freedom from domination, but came to express the idea of legal protection against state-enforced bodily injury.

Similarly, both M. Junius Brutus (RRC 501/1) and C. Cassius Longinus (RRC 500/2) issued coins in the east with the archaic Latin form of *libertas*, inscribed as "LEIBERTAS". Their intention was to evoke images of an earlier time when Lucius Junius Brutus had "liberated" the Roman people by toppling monarchy and instituting the Republic at Rome.[14] Again, individual freedom from slavery was not within purview. With such plasticity in the Republic and again in the Principate, *libertas* had the capability of capturing a variety of audiences. For our study of the civil wars of 68-69CE, this may explain why the rebellion of Vindex and Galba took stock in the term in a way that no other emperors in the Principate had before them. For the rebellion leaders, *libertas* became an especially charged political catchword

[13] Livy 10.9.4.

[14] Anna Clark, *Divine Qualities: Cult and Community in Republican Rome*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 150 n.89.

intended to make clear associations to the transitory period between the expulsion of Rome's kings and the institution of the Republic.

The Odium Regni Seared into Roman Memory

The Romans believed that they were once ruled by seven kings, beginning with the famous Romulus and ending with Taquinius Superbus. It was the last king, Tarquinius Superbus for whom ancient writers believed the widespread hatred of kings at Rome burgeoned. Livy explained that after the death of Rome's 6th king (Servius Tullius), "legitimate kingship perished" (*legitima regna occiderunt*).[15] In Cicero's *De Re Publica*, Scipio mentioned the widespread assumption that the hatred of kings originated with Tarquin, stating, "What, do you not know that it was the insolence and pride of *one man*, Tarquinius, that made the title of king odious to our people?".[16] However, it was the rape of Lucretia by Tarquin's son, which initiated the fall of Rome's monarchy and the rise of the Republic at Rome.[17]

Lucretia was the wife of Lucuius Tarquinius Collantinus, the cousin of King Tarquin and one of the future first consuls of the Republic. While the sources record variant narratives of Lucretia's rape, Dionysius of Halicarnassus reports that the third son of King Tarquin, Sextus Tarquinius, was sent by his father to lay siege to Ardea, and as an offer of hospitality, during a quiet time in the battlefield, Lucretia attended to and lodged Sextus, seeing that he was a relative of her husband. Once the house

[15] Livy 1.48.9.

[16] Cic. *Rep.* 1.62.6.

[17] Cic. *Rep*. 2.47.1. Cicero notes the fall of monarchy was initiated because of "one man's vice" (*uniusque vitio genus*), i.e. the rape by Tarquin's son.

had gone to sleep, Sextus forced himself upon Lucretia, threatening to kill and then expose her as an unchaste wife if she refused his sexual advances. Lucretia sorrowfully conceded, and the following day revealed the events to her father and a large gathering of Rome's prominent men. Dredged by the guilt and shame of the rape, Lucretia took a dagger and stabbed herself in the heart.

While her father and husband grieved her death, Livy notes that one Lucius Junius Brutus (L. Brutus) took on a "new character" (*novum…ingenium*) and rose to lead the revenge against the Tarquins.[18] L. Brutus pulled the knife from Lucretia's body and, with Rome's prominent men, swore an oath by the gods, saying, "I swear that with sword and fire…I will pursue Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, his wicked wife, and all his children, and never again will I let them or any other man be king in Rome".[19] Lucretia's body was carried to the public square, where L. Brutus rallied a revolt and denounced the king for his and his family's tyrannical behaviour. Livy records that Brutus' call to action led the crowd to demand the abrogation of Tarquin's authority and his immediate exile.[20] The people hailed L. Brutus, "liberator of the city" (*liberatorem urbis*).[21]

Tarquin's exile led to the establishment of a new Republican government in which two consuls were elected by popular vote of the Centuriate assembly, and under the charge of the Prefect of the City. L. Brutus and Collantinus were voted the first two elected consuls in the Republic. Livy noted, "The rule of the kings, from the

[18] Livy 1.59.2.

[19] Livy 1.59.1.

[20] Livy 1.59.11.

[21] Livy 1.60.2.

founding of Rome to its liberation, was 244 years" (*Regnatum Romae ab condita urbe ad liberatam annos ducentos quadraginta quattuor*). For Livy, the epochs of Roman history were separated by "rule of kings" (*regno*) and Rome's "liberation" (*libero*) from them. Elsewhere, Livy designated the inauguration of the Republic as "The birth of liberty" (*libertatis…originem*).[22] Plutarch, c. 100 years later, regarded L. Brutus as the "father of their [Rome's] liberties".[23]

Shadowing these ancient writers, it has been the *odium regni* at Rome which has produced canon-like status among modern historians. According to Mommsen, for example, the Romans' vow to never again reinstate a king led thereafter to a period of (long-lasting) "blind hatred" towards kingship.[24] Andrewes also concluded, "the mere word *rex* aroused prejudice".[25] Wirszubski further labelled the term *rex* as "odious" to the Romans;[26] and Dunkle said the word was "detested by the Romans from the earliest days of the Republic".[27] Taylor assumed the *reg-* word family was mainly associated with tyrannical forms of government.[28] In Roman political circles, Classen suggested the words *rex* and *regnum* were extremely toxic: "einen häßlichen

[22] Livy 2.1.7.

[23] Plut. *Pub*. 10.1.

[24] Theodor Mommsen and William P. Dickson, *The History of Rome* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 255.

[25] Antony Andrewes, *The Greek Tyrants* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1956), 21.

[26] CH Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome During the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: CUP, 1950), 64.

[27] J. Roger Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 98 (1967), 156.

[28] Lily Ross Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (Berkeley: UCP, 1949), 23. C.f. S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock, M.P. Charlesworth, *CAH* Vol. 9 (Cambridge: CUP, 1932), 727.

Klang und wird zum Schimpfwort...".[29] Smith, evaluating the claims of Caesar's aspirations towards kingship, also put it strongly, "*rex* and *regnum* were opprobrious terms".[30] And while the *odium regni* at Rome was certainly one prevalent aspect of Rome's cultural memory concerning kingship, it was not the only one.[31] In fact, there are numerous examples, as will be shown below, of positive uses of the *reg*- word group entirely disassociated from the *odium regni*; examples which offer a more complex view of the *rex* at Rome. These views of the *rex* varied by author, date, and setting, and could be appropriated for various purposes.

Various Positive/Neutral Uses of *Rex* and *Regnum*

Uses related to the *reg*- word family outside the political sphere and without a trace of *odium regni* occur throughout Latin literature. However, high concentrations of such uses are especially evident when *rex* and *regnum* are applied to the religious sphere, in the theatre of Republican comedy, as a term to denote the "patron", and as figurative speech to indicate, for example, social position.

Figurative Uses

[29] C. Joachim Classen, "Die Königszeit im Spiegel der Literatur der römischen Republik (ein Beitrag zum Selbstverständis der Römer)", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* Bd. 14, H. 4 (Oct., 1965): 385.

[30] R.E. Smith, "The Conspiracy and the Conspirators", *Greece & Rome* 4, no. 1 (1957): 62. C.f. H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 B.C. to A.D. 68* (London: Routledge, 1988), 150.

[31] Two recent works in particular have thoroughly navigated these complexities of the *rex* and *regnum* at Rome: Christian Sigmund, *‚Königtum' in der politischen Kultur des spätrepublikanischen Rom* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2014); Federico Russo, *L'odium regni a Roma tra realtà politica* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2015).

The *reg*- word group is applied in various and widely differentiated figurative senses. The application to the animal world is especially prominent. Phaedrus, for example, places the lion among other animals as "king"[32] (*rex*) and "king of the beasts" (*ferarum regem*)[33] respectively. The eagle too is esteemed as "king of birds" (*rex…avium*),[34] the parrot as "green ruler of the east" (*viridis regnator Eoae*),[35] and the rooster as one who "exercises royal sway" over households (*regnum in quacumque sunt domo exercent*).[36] The crocodile shows its dominance over dolphins attempting to enter the Nile by "ruling the river" (*amne regnantes*)[37] and the ram "proudly rules the wooly flock" (*regnoque superbus lanigeri gregis*).[38] Furthermore, Greek and Roman authors had an interest in the social organisation of insects, but especially bees. Authors found the bees' monarchic-like society easily comparable to kingship in their own world. A "king-bee"[39] motif reoccurs consistently throughout Latin literature as a literary trope to explain political systems.[40]

[32] Phaed. 1.5.7; Cf. Mart. 1.60.5 where Martial notes the lion as "lord and king of the forests" (*nemorum dominum regemque*).

[33] Phaed. 1.14.1.

[34] Pliny *HN* 10.95.203; Cf. Mart. 5.55.1 where the eagle is called, "queen of the birds" (*volucrum regina*). See also Pliny *HN* 8.37.90, here the wren is named "king of the birds in Italy" (*rex avium in Italia*).

[35] Stat. *Silv*. 2.4.25.

[36] Pliny *HN* 10.24.47.

[37] Pliny *HN* 8.91.7.

[38] Manil. *Astro*. 2.227.

[39] Most ancient writers assumed that a ruler was male and therefore so were the bees' leader.

[40] Varro, *Rust.* 3.16.8.1; 3.16.18.6; 3.16.35.3; Cf. Columella, *Rust*. 9.9-11; Virg. *G.* 4.21, 106; Ov. *Fast*. 3.556; Sen *Clem.* 1.4.1.9; Sen. *Ep.* 114.23.1; Val. Fl. 1.397; Pliny *HN* 11.74. Cf. S. Van Overmeire, "The Perect King Bee: Visions of Kingship in Classical Antiquity", *Akroterion* 56 (2011): 31-46.

Beyond the animal world, nature can be embodied and rule or be king/queen. The winds of Aeolus, for example, are labelled "king",[41] said to "rule",[42] and have their own spatial "kingdoms".[43] The winds of Boreas are likewise the "ruler" of the Monoecus cliffs.[44] Among rivers, Fronto lists the Tiber as the "master and ruler of all-encompassing waters" (*dominus et fluentium circa regnator undarum*)[45] while Virgil names the Po, "king of the rivers" (*fluviorum rex*).[46] Martial also comments on a nymph who is "queen of the sacred lake" (*sacri regina lacus*).[47] Additionally, the cypress tree rules as "queen of the Alps" (*Alpini…regina cupressus*) and roads are expressed with kingship language: the via Appia is called "queen of long roads" (*Appia longarum…regina viarum*) and the *Trivia* is a "realm/kingdom" (*regna*).[48]

Education, teachers, and virtues tend to utilise positive *reg-* language in Latin literature as well. In Horace's *Odes*, Numidia and Lamia share the same boyhood "teacher" (*rege*)[49] and Pliny the Younger uses the phrase *rectorem magistrum* of his mentor/teacher, Corellius Rufus.[50] At Pompeii, a graffito marked "royal tutor" (*regali tutom*) is located in the House of Sodom and Gomorrah (Reg. IX.1.26).[51]

---

[41] Virg. Aen. 1.52, 62.

[42] Pliny *HN* 3.93.2.

[43] Mart. 10.30.19; Sil. *Pun*. 14.70.

[44] Sil. *Pun*. 1.587.

[45] Fronto *Orat*. 15.6; Cf. Enn. *Ann*. 63; Cic. *Orat*. 161.

[46] Virg. *G*. 1.482.

[47] Mart. 9:58; Cf. Stat. *Theb*. 9.384.

[48] Mart. 9.64; Cf. Livy 39.27.10.4, who remarks on the "ancient royal road" (*veterem viam regiam*).

[49] Hor. *Carm*. 1.36.8.

[50] Plin. *Ep*. 1.12.12; Cf. 3.3.4.

The (student) head of a class can also be demarcated with the *reg*- word group in Statius.[52] Heads of philosophical schools can be described as "kings"[53] and even Attalus, according to Seneca, ascribes the title to himself.[54] Philosophy (*philosophia*) itself is said to "exercise her own rule" (*exercet philosophia regnum suum*)[55] and wisdom (*sapientia*) to rule a kingdom (*regnum sapientiae*).[56] Both *ratio* ("reason")[57] and *oratio* ("eloquence/speech")[58] serve as "queen(s) of the world". "Justice" (*iustitia*) functions as the "mistress and queen of all virtues" (*iustitia…omnium est domina et regina virtutum*)[59] and virtue is said to "rule" pleasure (*virtus autem quomodo voluptatem reget*).[60] Pleasure (*voluptas*) elsewhere is personified and said to rule a "realm"[61] (*regno*) and is bedecked in "royal garb" (*ornatu regali*).[62] "Money" (*pecunia*) is designated "queen" (*regina pecunia*)[63] and believed to be the "ruling principle of everything" (*Pecunia <una> regimen est rerum omnium*).[64]

---

[51] CIL 4.4987.

[52] Stat. *Theb*. 12.111; Cf. *Achil*. 295.

[53] Sen. *Ep*. 33.4.

[54] Sen. *Ep*. 108.13.

[55] Sen. *Ep*. 53.9.

[56] Sen. *Ben*. 7.10.6.

[57] Cic. *Tusc. Disp*. 2.47.7.

[58] Pacuv. *Trag*. 177; Cf. Cic. *De or.* 2.44.187; Quint. 1.12.18.3.

[59] Cic. *Off*. 3.28.

[60] Sen. *Dial*. (*De Vita Beata*) 7.11.2.4, 5.

[61] Cic. *Sen*. 41.2.

[62] Cic. *Fin*. 2.69.

[63] Hor. *Epist*. 1.6.37.

[64] Pub. *Sent*. P.9; Cf. Petron. *Sat*. 14.2.1.

Fortune too becomes embodied, encompassing her own "realm" (*regnum*),[65] and can be seen "controlling human destiny" (*sed quoniam humanarum rerum fortuna. pleraque regit*)[66] and "ruling the lives of people" (*vitam regit fortuna*)[67] and cities (e.g. *regis Antium*).[68]

The *rex* can further be used figuratively to designate the highest authority in children's games and well-known proverbs. For example, in his *Apocolocyntosis*,[69] Seneca begins the book by setting out what he wishes to accomplish in recounting the events of 13 October (i.e. Claudius' death). As Seneca's source is called into question (by "any" [*quis*] potential interlocutors, 1.1.3), he explains that he has "freedom" (*liberum*) in choosing whether or not to reveal his source, a freedom acquired at the time of Claudius' death. Seneca presents Claudius as the "king" and "fool" of a popular proverb[70] (*aut regem aut fatuum nasci oportere*) and reckons that after his death his ultimate authority (i.e. as *rex*) died too, leaving Seneca self-autonomy. The use of *liberum* naturally implies its contrasting feature, *servus*; which is the condition of all subjects under the *rex*. For Seneca, self-agency (i.e. *liberum*) was established after the ultimate authority (i.e. *rex),* Claudius, came to his end.[71] Among other applications, Horace notes children's refrains while playing games:

[65] Sen. *Dial*. 6.10.6.1.

[66] Sall. *Iug*. 102.9.2.

[67] Cic. *Tusc*. 5.25; Cf. Cic. *Off*. 1.38.

[68] Hor. *Carm*. 1.35.1.

[69] Sen. *Apocol*. 1.1.6.

[70] Cf. Porphyrion on Hor. *Sat*. 2.3.188.

[71] P.T. Eden, *Apocolocyntosis* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 62-64.

"You will be king, if you play according to the rules" (*rex eris…si recte facies*).[72] It appears that the title "king" would be awarded to the game competitor who acted "rightly" (*recte*). Additionally, during the Saturnalia, the one time of year when gambling was legal at Rome, Martial remarks that "King dice-box rules" the day (*regnator quibus imperat fritillus*).

There are also a few Pompeian inscriptions with the *reg*- word group used as a means to convey flattery due to one's authority, i.e. in a positive manner. The first, a short funerary inscription found in the doorway of Regio IX.7.17, reads, "Cestilia, queen of the Pompeians / my sweet soul, bye!" (*Cestilia Regina Pompeianoru(m) / anima dulcis va*(*le*)).[73] The second, discovered in the peristyle of the House of the Triclinium (V.2.4), states, "The fuller / Lucius Quintilius / Crescens has rule here" (*Fullo* / *L*(*ucius*) *Quintilius* / *Cresce*(*n*)*s hic* / *regnatus est*). And finally, the inscription, *Rex es* ("You are king"), was found on a wall near the amphitheatre.[74]

These examples are among the many various figurative uses of the *reg*- (and *rect*-) word family in which traces of the *odium regni* are minimal or absent.

Rex in the Early Roman Theatre

---

[72] For my translation of *recte* as "according to the rules", see *OLD*[2], *recte*, 5. See Pl. *Tht*. 146a for a possible allusion to a similar game in Athens.

[73] CIL 4.2413h. Translation: Vincent Hunink, *Oh Happy Place! Pompeii in 1000 Graffiti*, (Roma: Apeiron, 2014), entry 900. For a similar usage in the epigraphic record see also CIL 14.4239. The literary evidence is well-attested: Pet. *Sat*. 128.2; Mart. 10.64.1; Stat. *Theb*. 9.384.

[74] CIL 4.10193a. This final inscription, however, remains ambiguous as to its tenor; and I mention it only for the sake of its interpretive history. Paul Berry, for example, has unconvincingly argued that CIL 4.10193a is a Christian inscription. He oddly cites Mk. 15:2; Matt. 27:11; Lk. 23:3 from the Vulgate, which reads, "*Tu es rex Iudaeorum*?", to make the connection. However, it is impossible to determine, and most unlikely, whether early Latin manuscripts of the Gospels even pre-date the destruction of Pompeii. In any case, with such a short inscription, and no further evidence for such a reading, prudence seems best and should be relegated as ambiguous.

Only recently have modern scholars shifted their investigative energies towards the Roman theatre of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE to better grasp the trajectory of the ideology surrounding the *rex* at Rome.[75] This is due in part to the fragmentary nature of these early sources and the uncertainty regarding their reliability. However, Plautus is our most complete and reliable source from this period. The presentation of kingship in his corpus, however, noticeably lacks any sharp criticisms of kings or their activity even though the *-reg* word group and various forms of -βασιλ are utilised extensively.

The term *rex*, like *tyrannus* and forms of *basileus*, in Plautus can refer to exorbitant wealth and grandeur, but also to the patron of the parasite. In *Rudens* 907-937, the slave Gripus is sent out to fish by his master Daemones during a strong sea storm. Gripus catches no fish, but nets a wooden trunk. Assuming the find to be his, Gripus thanks Neptune for the riches he believes lie inside. Gripus then, with his newfound wealth, intends to purchase his freedom from Daemones, construct a farm with house slaves of his own, and set up a trade business. Following this imaginary demonstration of his wealth, Gripus remarks, "I'll be regarded as a king among kings" (*apud reges rex perhibebor*). He further relays his future plans of creating a large city centre called "Gripus" where he will establish his "great kingdom" (*regnum magnum*). Likewise, the pimp Ballio, during a chiding of his prostitute Hedylium, can imagine that Athens will rename him "King Jason" (*regem*

[75] The most notable work being Russo, *L'odium regni a Roma*, esp. 15-42.

Iásonem)[76] simply because his supply of corn would be so abundant.[77] At *Stichus* 377, the slave Gelasimus reports to his *domina* Panegyris that her husband has returned home from a trip abroad with various items of luxury in tow. Gelasimus explains that he himself will "recline at table like a king" (*accubabo regie*) on the new furniture made of ivory and gold. Each of these uses is free from negative moral judgments about kings and certainly do not display the type of political *odium regni* discussed earlier. Interestingly, the use of *regie* at *Stichus* 377 is the only instance of an adjective from the *-reg* word group as Plautus seems to prefer *basilicus* and *basilice*. These adjectives, however, have the same interpretative force as *regie*, and appear to be a Plautine innovation.[78] Though, again, the overall sense is not of the *odium regni*, but most often a reference to splendour and grandeur.[79] These positive connotations are further displayed in Plautus' use of the *-reg* word group to differentiate the patron from the parasite.[80]

The dual appearance (*Curc*. 285-286; *Pseud*. 703) of *tyrannus* also provides no negative connotations. In *Curc*. 285, for example, Plautus clearly intends the meaning of *tyrannus* to be drawn from Greek stock[81] but as nothing more than a

---

[76] In relation to Ballio's suggestion of an overflow of corn, this could be in reference to Iasion, son of Zeus and husband of Demeter, god of agriculture. This seems more likely a suggestion than "King Jason", tyrant of Pherae.

[77] *Pseud*. 193.

[78] Eduard Fraenkel, *Plautine Elements in Plautus* (*Plautinisches im Plautus*, 1927; repr., trans. by Tomas Drevikovsky and Frances Muecke, Oxford, UK: OUP, 2008), 130-133. Fraenkel concludes his position by noting the lexical and interpretive variety of *basilicus* and *basilice* in the Plautine corpus. Such a variety was not found readily in Greek comedies nor in Attic Greek.

[79] See Fraenkel, *Plautine Elements in Plautus*, 130-131.

[80] *Asin*. 919; *Capt*. 92, 825; *Men*. 902; *Stich*. 455. Cf. Ter. *Ph*. 338; Naev. *Pall*. 73; and later sources: Hor. *Ep*. 1.17.43; Mart. 3.7.5; 4.83.5; Juv. 5.14; 7.45; *P. Mich.* 8.472.

[81] *Tyrannus*, for example, is listed among four other powerful positions (*strategus*, *agoranomos*, *demarchus*, *comarchus*), all of which have Greek origin.

position of power and wealth. The "tyrant" is among the list of those various office-holders who Curculio blends together as "exceedingly rich" (*quisquam est tam opulentus*). The use of *tyrannus* in *Pseudolus* 703, likewise, indicates only a position of power without negative overtones. Moreover, while *tyrannus* occupies only two uses in the Plautine corpus, the *reg*-word group occurs 75 times. This is especially conspicuous when Plautus uses *rex* at times when *tyrannus* is more fitting, as is the case when he names not only reputable Greek kings with the term *rex*,[82] but also exemplar "tyrants" with the same title.[83] This suggests that *rex* and *tyrannus*, as well as roots of *basileus*, could be used similarly and positively in Plautus' writing.[84] This stands in contrast to Greek comedies on which these plays are based. Russo notes that Plautus' "kings" and "tyrants" are "reduced to mere literary stereotypes, deprived of any political-ideological value", i.e. Greek comedies clearly articulate the negative connotations associated with some kings, and certainly tyrants, and also exploit the political dimensions of such a position in a way that Plautus does not.[85]

Furthermore, the *-reg* word group can also describe the parasite-patron relationship (*Asin*. 919; *Capt*. 825; *Men*. 902; *Stich*. 455). This usage appears to have a natural transition between luxury and wealth associated with royalty. The parasite could consider their patron a "*rex*" without demeaning connotations or conjuring the *odium regni*. In many ways, the *rex* ("patron") was everything desired, but

[82] Cf. Attalus: *Poen.* 664; *Persa*: 339; Philip: *Aul.* 86, 702; *Persa*: 339; Seleucus: *Mil*. 75, 948.

[83] Cf. Hieron of Syracuse: *Men*. 409, 902; Creon of Thebes: *Amph*. 194, 351; Agathocles of Syracuse: *Pseud*. 119, 532; *Men*. 409.

[84] Russo, *L'odium regni a Roma*, 16-17.

[85] Federico Russo, "Tyrants and Kings in the Latin Theatre (From Naevius to Accius)", *Erga-Logoi. Rivista di storia, letteratura, diritto e culture dell'antichita* 5 (2017): 92-93.

unattainable to the parasite. Fraenkel challenges scholarly assumptions, which argue the Roman adaptation of earlier Greek origins from Attic New Comedy. He explains that the phrase ὁ τρέφων ("the one who feeds") was mostly commonly used of the parasite in Greek drama and that the Romans must have "coined their own technical term for the concept of parasitism".[86] This utilisation of the *-reg* word group maintains its popularity with occurrences at various periods throughout Latin literature (Naev. *Pall*. 73; Hor. *Ep*. 1.17.43; Sen. *Dial*. 2.15.1; 10.3.2; Col. 1.pr.9; Mart. 3.7.5; 4.83.5; Juv. 5.14; 7.45; P. Mich. 8.472).

Religious Uses of Rex

The *reg*- word group is used extensively and positively in the religious sphere. Livy reports that following Brutus' establishment of the Republic, issues concerning the *res divina* were considered. Since the king personally oversaw certain public sacrifices during the regal period, the priestly position of *rex sacrorum*[87] was appointed to act as religious equivalent and so ensure that the "loss of their kings might not be regretted on any occasion" (*necubi regum desiderium esset*).[88] The office may be a product of early Roman history as it required the priest to belong to a

[86] Fraenkel, *Plautine Elements in Plautus*, 130.

[87] The position finds a variety of names in the sources: As *Rex sacrorum*, Cic. *Dom*. 38, *Har. Resp.* 12.14; Livy 27.6.16, 27.36.5; Plin. *HN* 11.186; Macrob. *Sat.* 1.15.12; Gaius *Inst*. 1.112; Serv. *Aen*. 10.228.4; *Hist. Aug.* 6.6.4. *Sacrificulus rex*: Livy 6.41.9; Paul. Fest. 318.29. *Rex sacrificulus*: Varr. *Ling*. 6.31.5; Livy 2.2.1; 6.41.9, 40.24.8; Gell. *NA* 10.15.21.2; Serv. *Aen*. 8.363.3, 8.654.5; Paul. Fest. 293.2. *Rex sacrificiorum*: Livy 9.34.12. *Rex*: Varro *Ling*. 6.12, 6.13. Cf. Fay Glinister, "Politics, Power, and the Divine: The Rex Sacrorum and the Transition from Monarchy to Republic at Rome", *Antichthon* 51 (2017): 59-76; Andreas Bendlin, "Rex Sacrorum", *NP. Ant.*.

[88] Livy 2.2.1.

patrician family[89] and be married by *confarreatio*.[90] The *rex sacrorum* played an integral role in various religious rites as well as rituals related to the *kalendae*; for example, sacrificing and fleeing during the *Regifugium* or *QRCF* dates[91] (see below) and sacrificing in the *Regia* on *dies Agonales*.[92] The priesthood, however, was stripped of significant political power. As a subordinate position to the *pontifex maximus*, the assignment may reflect the historical transition from the regal period to the Republic, a transition fearful of power being demarcated to any *rex* at Rome. However, though sceptically considered by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[93] the title and position, while related to *reg*- word group, endured at Rome. Likewise, the priest of Diana's shrine at Nemi–who was required to be a runaway slave and (likely) won the office by killing the previous incumbent through a single sword fight–similarly held a priesthood described as a *regnum*[94] and office title derived from kingship language, i.e. *rex Nemorensis* ("king of the grove").[95]

[89] Cic. *Dom*. 38.

[90] Gaius *Inst*. 1.112.

[91] Ov. *Fast*. 2.685-855 ; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 63 (=279c6-d9).

[92] Varr. *Ling*. 6.12.

[93] Liv. 2.2.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom*. 4.74.4; 5.1.4. Livy reports that *rex sacrificulum* (See fn. 65 for various names for the *rex sacrorum*) was subordinate to the *pontifex* since the relationship between the title (*rex*) and office (*rex sacrorum*) "might impede liberty" (liberati…officeret). Dionysius of Halicarnassus, also, notes the position was held only "for the sake of form" (ἕνεκα τῆς ὁσίας φυλάττηται), and therefore relegated to "one function" (μόνον...ἔργον)–i.e. "principally of sacrificing" (ἡγεμονίαν τῶν θυηπολιῶν)–and "nothing else" (ἄλλο δ' οὐδέν).

[94] Cf. Ov. *Fast*. 3.269-272; Ov. *Ars am*. 1.259-262; Val. Fl. 2.305; Stat. *Silv*. 3.1.52-60.

[95] The only complete title of the priesthood (*Nemorensi regi*) located at Suet. *Calig*. 35; Fullest accounts found at Strabo 5.3.12; Pausanias 2.27.4; Servius *Aen*. 6.136. Cf. Virg. *Aen*. 6.136-141; Sil. *Pun.*4.366-369; Vit. 4.8.4; Serv. *Aen*. 2.116; 6.136; 7.515. C.M.C. Green, "The Slayer and the King 'Rex Nemorensis' and the Sanctuary of Diana", *Arion* 7, n.3 (Winter, 2000): 24-63.

Latin literature is consistent in its utilisation of the *reg*- word group to designate titles to various deities, describe the domains of their rule, and help explain their operation within the world. Early in his *De Natura Deorum* (1.3.1 - 1.5.5), Cicero considers various views of his time concerning divine providence. In it, Cicero can set the opinions of "some philosophers" who believe the gods exercise no responsibility over human affairs against "other philosophers" who conclude that "the entire world is *ruled* and managed (*administrari et regi censeant*) by divine intellect and reason". This latter position is defended by Balbus, the representative of Stoic theology in *De Natura Deorum*, and he too utilises *reg*- language to understand the gods' interactions with human beings, noting that the gods "rule one world as a joint commonwealth and state" (*unum mundum ut communem rem publicam atque urbem aliquam regentis*).[96] Even Lucan, who is suspicious of the gods' activity in human affairs, can remark, "…we lie when we say Jupiter reigns" (*Mentimur regnare Iovem*).[97] These authors reflect common beliefs about the gods' ability to interact within the world, and saw fit to describe this interaction through kingship language.

Jupiter and Juno are among the deities most commonly recognised as *rex* and *regina*. Jupiter, though often described by the title *optimi maximi*,[98] is also labelled a "king" and one who "rules" within a "kingdom".[99] Ovid shows Jupiter's oversight of

---

[96] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.79.1.

[97] Luc. *Phar*. 7.447.

[98] E.g. Cic. *Verr*. 2.4.64.9, 12, 2.4.69.10, 2.4.71.4; Cic. *Leg. Agr*. 1.18.4; Cic. *Rab. Post*. 31.11; Cic. *Cat*. 3.21.9; Cic. *Dom*. 14.12; Cic. *Har. Resp*. 11.1, 21.6; Cic. *Sest*. 129.2; Cic. *Scaur*. 47.2; Cic. *Phil*. 14.27.11; Cic. *Off*. 3.104.12; Livy 3.17.5.4, 3.19.7.5, 5.51.92, 7.3.5.3, 7.3.8.2, 7.13.10.5, 10.7.10.1, 21.63.8.1, 22.37.12.2, 36.35.12.2, 36.35.12.5, 38.56.13.2, 44.14.3.4; Plin. *HN* 15.134.2, 28.15.8; Val. Max. 1.1.16.4, 3.7.1e.13, 4.1.6.5, 4.7.1.14, 8.15.1.11; Gell. *NA* 12.8.3.2; Plin. *Pan*. 8.1.4, 52.3.2, 52.6.3; Suet. *Aug*. 94.6.3, *Vit*. 15.3.6, *Ves*. 5.7.3; Tact. *Hist*. 3.72.4.

the tripartite world–heaven and earth (Jupiter); the sea (Neptune); the nether world (Pluto)–by styling him "ruler" of all.[100] Therefore, Jupiter takes the dominant position among the gods, often defined as the "king of the gods".[101] Juno likewise holds the position of "queen of the gods", though usually set in relation to her husband (and brother), Jupiter.[102] However, while Juno is regularly referenced as "queen",[103] and may even be said to act in a "queenly" manner,[104] she is not as often referenced in relation to ruling or overseeing "kingdoms/domains".[105]

Next in frequency, Neptune is named "king of the swelling waves" (*tumidis qui regnat in undis*) and "ruler of the seas" (*Neptunum regnatorem marum*). He acts "royally" by protecting fleets of boats[106] and rules in a "kingdom/domain" (i.e. the sea; *regnum*).[107] Pluto too is a "king" [108] who "rules"[109] the variously named

---

[99] Cic. *Rep*. 3.23.2 as exemplary. Cf. Enn. *Ann*. 175; Plaut. *Trin*. 207-8; Plaut. *Cas*. 336; Cic. *Ara. Phae*. 19.1; Cic. *Rep*. 1.50.3; Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.4.9, 3.53.13; Virg. G. 1.125; Virg. *Aen*. 1.78, 4.199, 6.533, 6.584, 8.320, 12.849; App. Verg. *Aet*. 255; Lucil. 899; Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.2; Ov. *Met*. 6.74, 10.148, 10.155; Sil. It. 9.537; Sen. *QNat.* 2.43.1.4; *Med*. 774; Quint. *Inst*. 3.7.8.2; German. *Arat*. 265; Apul. *Met*. 6.7.1.

[100] Ov. Met. 15.859.

[101] Acc. *Trag*. 143; Livy 1.53.3.3; Ov. *Met*. 10.155; Stat. *Theb*. 9.421; Sil. It. 12.623.

[102] Virg. *Aen*. 1.46; Sil. It. 7.78.

[103] Liv. Andron. *Od*. 14.1; Plaut. *Cis*. 513; Plaut. *Trin*. 207; Cic. *Dom*. 144.3; Cic. *Scaur*. 47.3; Cic. *Ling*. 5.68.1; Virg. 7.438, 10.62; Livy 3.17.3.3, 5.21.3.1, 5.22.4.3, 5.23.7.1, 5.31.3.1, 5.52.10.3; 6.16.2.2; 27.37.13.1-2, 27.37.15.1; 31.12.10.1; 34.24.2.2; 39.2.11.2; 40.52.1.3; Ov. *Met*. 3.265, 6.94, 9.21, 14.829; Ov. *Pont*. 1.4.39; Sen. *Agam*. 341; Stat. *Theb*. 5.446, 7.221, 8.503; Val. Fl. 5.401, 6.650; *Hist. Aug.* 12.7.1; Pliny *HN* 35.115.

[104] Virg. *Aen*. 1.443, 4.114.

[105] Cf. Cic. *Nat. D*. 2.26, perhaps where Juno is said to oversee a realm.

[106] Hor. *Ars Poet*. 65.

[107] Petron. *Sat*. 139.2.6.

[108] Luc. 3.29 ("ruler of the dead"), 6.651 ("ruler of Tartarus"), 741 ("king of night"), 799, 7.169 ("Stygian kingdom"; Ov. *Met*. 5.356 ("king of the silent land"); Juv. 13.52 ("ruler of the underworld").

"kingdom of the underworld".[110] Prosperpina, in connection with the rule of Pluto,[111] is understood as his "queen",[112] the one who jointly "rules the realms" (*regnaque…regat*)[113] of the underworld. Additionally, various other deities are mentioned with less frequency. For example, both Venus and Flora are regarded as "queen(s)" while Macareus oversees a "kingdom" and Minos "rules" Crete.[114] In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Venus appeals to Cupid and explains that he already "rules" over the two sovereigns of two-thirds of the tripartite world (i.e. Jupiter and Neptune) and could, with his irresistibility, sway Dis for control over the entire cosmos.[115] These positive uses confirm that the *reg*- word group could be utilised in the religious sphere without any connotations of the *odium regni*. Moreover, in the following chapter, this section will be utililsed to understand how Mark, though rejecting kingship language in relation to Jesus, can ultimately declare God's sphere a "kingdom" without connecting God negatively to the *odium regni*.

The "Good" Kings in Roman History

[109] Ov. *Fast*. 4.584; Tib. 3.7.67.

[110] See descriptions listed at fn. 85. Cf. Virg. *G*. 4.469; Virg. *Aen*. 6.106; Val. Max. 4.7.4; Ov. *Met*. 7.249; Sen. *Nat*. 6.32.4.

[111] Stat. *Silv*. 5.3.277.

[112] Col. *Rust*. 10.1.1.274.

[113] Ov. *Amor*. 3.10.46; Cf. Col. *Rust*. 10.1.1.274

[114] Venus: Hor. *Carm*. 1.30.1; cf. Prop. 4.5.65; Serv. 469.1; Flora: Ov. *Fast*. 5.261; Macareus: Ov. *Her*. 11.16; Minos: Ov. *Her*. 10.69.

[115] Ov. *Met*. 5.362-374.

The *-reg* word group was portrayed positively[116] when it was applied to the first six (of seven) kings of the regal period at Rome. While most Roman authors held the final *rex* of the regal period (i.e. Tarquinius Suberbus's) accountable for transgressing the liberties of Roman citizenry, the first six kings were notable by these same authors for their achievements, character traits, and overall benefit to Rome's foundation and development.[117]

Romulus was most popularly known as the "founder of the city"[118] and the name after which the city "Rome" was based. He was understood as the son of Mars[119] and a god himself (i.e. as Quirinus).[120] As king, Romulus established the "first temple consecrated in Rome" to Jupiter Feretrius[121] and pledged a temple to Jupiter Stator.[122] Furthermore, he was associated with the creation of Roman laws[123] and the formation of *pomerium*,[124] the patriciate,[125] and ten *curiae*.[126] Cicero (*Rep*.

---

[116] As will be discussed later, Romulus' name and character are muddied by political invective towards the end of the Republic.

[117] While authors such as Livy may be strongly anti-monarchical, they still regard many of the actions of the early kings as admirable.

[118] Cic. *Balb*. 31.10: *princeps ille creator huius urbis*; Cic. *Cat*. 1.33.5; Livy 3.39.4.3; 4.15.7.2; Ov. *Fast*. 1.29.

[119] Cf. Livy 4.15.72; Vell. Pat. 1.8.5.1; CIL 10.809; et al.

[120] An early attestation of *Romule die* ("god Romulus") appears in Enn. *Ann*. 105 (F55). The apotheosis of Romulus was witnessed by Julius Proculus and detailed in Livy 1.16.5; Plut. *Rom*. 28.1; Cic. *Rep*. 2.20; Cic. *Leg*. 1.3; Ov. Fast. 2.499; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.63.2ff; cf. Cic. *Att*. 12.45.2; Livy 5.24.11.4; Ov. *Fast*. 2.476; Quint. *Inst*. 3.7.5.1; Sen. *Controv*. 7.2.6.10.

[121] Livy. 1.10.5-6; Dion. Hal. 2.34.4.

[122] Livy 1.12.6; Ov. *Fast*. 6.793 has Romulus building the temple.

[123] Livy 1.8.1.

[124] Plut. *Rom*. 11.3.3.

[125] Livy 1.8.7.

[126] Livy 1.13.7.

2.53) notes his work and achievements as "that splendid constitution of Romulus" (*illa praeclara constitutio Romuli*). Romulus is to be emulated by generals and leading men at Rome.[127] As a positive appellation, Roman citizens could be hailed as the "people of Romulus" (*Romulae genti*).[128] Moreover, the adoption and positive uses of his name are attested in numerous Pompeiian graffiti.[129]

Positive associations with Romulus are early. The favourable positioning towards Romulus is clear as Ennius notes the figures' appearance as "handsome" (*Romulus pulce*r).[130] Furthermore, he is regarded as a "protector of fatherland" (*patriae custodem*) and "descended from the bloodline of gods" (*sanguen dis oriundum*).[131] In addition, Cicero preserves the entire description of the *Augurium Romuli* of Ennius (2nd century BCE) sans disputes and rivalries between the brothers – they are equal partners and collaborators.[132] In fact, Romulus' murder of Remus

[127] For example, both A. Cornerlius Cassus (5th c. BCE) and M. Claudius Marcellus (consul 222BCE) matched Romulus' *spolia opima* of Acron and were styled as "second founder[s] of Rome". On this point, see J.D. Evans, The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 87. Camillus (Livy 5.49), Marius (Plut. *Marc*. 27), and Sulla, among others are each styled a new Romulus. For issues related to Marius as a new Romulus, see C. Classen, "Romulus in der römischen Republik", *Philolgus* 106 (1962): 182. Relating to Sulla, see Matthew Gisborne, "A Curia of Kings: Sulla and Royal Imagery" in *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome* (eds. Olivier Hekster, Richard Fowler; Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2005), 119-121. Gisborne argues a clear association between Sulla and Romulus, though rejects that Sulla ever claimed to be a *rex*.

[128] Hor. *Carm. Saec.* 47; Stat. *Silv*. 1.1.79.

[129] For "Romulus" as a name see CIL 4.2413c, f, g; cf. ROMVLVS CALOS ("Romulus is Beautiful") on CIL 4.4725, 5148; Inscribed singularly as ROMVLVS ("Romulus") see CIL 4.1296, 1301, 1629, 2053, 2326, 2413c, 3193a, 4483, 8275, 10559 (in Herculaneum); ROMVLVS IN CAELO ("Romulus in Heaven"), a popular line from Enn. *Ann*. 1.110, see CIL 4.3135, 7353, 8568, 8995a-d.

[130] Enn. *Ann*. 1.75.

[131] Enn. *Ann*. 1.105.

[132] Enn. *Ann*. 1.72-91.

appears to be mitigated by Ennius as an act of protection for Rome and a warning to others attempting to breach their walls rather than fratricide.[133]

Numa, the second king of Rome, is most notably remembered in the literary[134] and numismatic[135] records for his establishment of Roman religion. He is responsible for bringing the vestal virgins to Rome[136] and establishing the foundational roles of augur,[137] *flamen*,[138] and Pontifex Maximus.[139] Livy records that Numa constructed a temple to Janus and reformed the calendar.[140]

Tullius Hostilius, Numa's successor, was remembered for his war-like tendencies (quite dissimilar to Numa); most notable was his overthrow of Alba Longa.[141] He is cited for the construction of important Roman sites such as the *Curia Hostilia* and *comitium*.[142] According to Cicero (*Rep*. 2.31), Hostilius formulated rules for the declaration of war by fetial rites.[143]

---

[133] Enn. *Ann*. 1.92-94; Cf. Cynthia Bannon, The Brothers of Romulus: , 160. (Hold off on using book).

[134] See a detailed description in Livy 1.20-21.

[135] Especially clear religious symbolism is applied to Numa in RRC 334/1. The coin, minted in 97BCE at Rome, is inscribed with NVMA·POMPIL in exergue. Numa is standing at the altar with *lituus* in hand and a *victimarius* to the right leading a goat to the lit altar in the middle. The *lituus* here identifies Numa as an augur. Livy notes that Numa functioned as an augur during the dedication to the altar of Jupiter Elicius on the Aventine (Livy 1.20.7).

[136] Livy 1.20.3.

[137] Livy 4.4.2; Contra Cic. *Rep*. 2.9.16, which assigns this role to Romulus.

[138] Enn. *Ann*. 1.116 in Varro *Ling*. 7.45.

[139] Livy 1.20.5-7; cf. Plut. *Numa* 7.

[140] Livy 1.19.6-7.

[141] Enn. *Ann*. 120-126; Livy 1.22.

[142] Livy 1.30.2-3.

[143] Livy assigns this role to Ancus Marcius (Livy 1.32.5) while Dionysius (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.1) and Plutarch supply Numa.

In Cicero and Livy's work, the fourth king, Ancus Marcius, was said to have added both the Aventine and Caelian Hills to Rome.[144] Livy further comments that Ancus also founded the port of Ostia.[145] Most importantly, Ancus was credited with ordering the *Pontifex Maximus* to copy the religious commentaries of Numa – so that the state could properly perform sacrifices as established by Numa – and display them in public.[146] Interestingly, the designation "*bonus*" ("good") was attached to Ancus in two sources.[147]

King Tarquinius Priscus too helped build Rome's foundations by doubling the number of senators in the senate[148] and erecting the Circus Maximus.[149] He also introduced Etruscan traditions to Rome, such as the triumph (via quadriga), *ludi*, *fasces*, and senatorial garb. Florus continues, "in fact all the ornaments and insignia which serve to emphasize the dignity of office".[150]

Rome's sixth king, Servius Tullius, was memorialised for his creation of the census, divisions of Rome's classes, *tribus*, and *Centuriata*.[151] Early in Latin

---

[144] Cic. *Rep*. 2.18; Livy 1.33.1-7.

[145] Livy 1.33.9.

[146] Livy 1.32.2.

[147] See Enn. *Ann*. 3.137: *postquam lumina sis oculis bonus Ancus reliquit* ("…after good Ancus left the light with his eyes"). Lucr. 1025 cites Ennius near verbatim: lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancu' reliquit ("Even good Ancus has closed his eyes on the light".).

[148] Cic. *Rep*. 2.20; Flor. 1.5.2.

[149] Livy 1.35.8.

[150] Flor. 1.5.6: *Inde fasces, trabeae, curules, anuli, phalerae, paludamenta, praetextae, inde quod aureo curru, quattuor equis triumphatur, togae pictae tunicaeque palmatae…*("It was from them [Etruria] that were derived the fasces, robes of State, official chairs, rings, horse-trappings, military cloaks, purple-bordered togas, the practice of riding in triumph in a gilded car drawn by four horses, embroidered robes and tunics adorned with palms".).

[151] Livy 1.42.5 – 1.43; cf. Livy 4.4.2; Flor. 1.6.3.

literature, Accius praises Servius for establishing and guarding the "liberty" of Rome's citizens.[152] Other successes include the institution of the cult of Diana on the Aventine,[153] the building of Fortuna's temple,[154] and the extension of the *pomerium*.[155] According to Dionysius,[156] he was also credited with founding the *Compitalia* festival, though Pliny assigns this to Tarquinius Priscus.[157] Other sources ascribe to Servius Rome's first legitimate Roman coinage[158] as well as *tributum* and army pay.[159]

Considering the Causes of the Odium Regni at Rome

What I have attempted to do thus far is to provide a balance to the view concerning the *odium regni* at Rome by mediating it with another prominent view of kingship, which praised Rome's foundational kings and made positive associations with the *-reg* word group. So while a strong cultural memory of the *odium regni* was resonant at Rome, it was not the only view of kingship held by the Romans. The *rex* (and *-reg* cognates), then, is a polyvalent term with the flexibility of evoking cultural memories of Rome's past, whether good (e.g. Rome's first six kings), bad (e.g. Tarquinius Superbus), or neutral (e.g. references to order in the animal kingdom). In

[152] Acc. *Praet*. 40.

[153] Livy 1.45.2-7.

[154] Varr. *Ling*. 6.17.

[155] Livy. 1.44.4.

[156] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.14.4.

[157] Plin. *HN* 36.70.

[158] Plin. *HN* 33.43.

[159] Livy 43.13.

this, the *odium regni* was not static at Rome, but rather could ebb and flow. The argument of this entire project understands the political atmosphere of 69CE to have reopened the proverbial gates of the *odium regni* empire-wide, and it is this sturdy flow which influenced Mark's reticence to name Jesus "king". But what caused the *rex* to ebb and flow in Roman history?

Rome's military advancements and subsequent interactions with external kingdoms offered Roman politicians and generals ample opportunity to keep the *odium regni* alive and well. Their political promises to secure Rome's *libertas* (and the *libertas* of other nations) were demonstrated by their demonisation of provincial "kings" who Rome claimed were attempting to, once again, bring the Romans under a cloud of subjugation like Tarquinius. Moreover, this demonisation was used as political fodder to justify Roman conquest. Equally, internal conflicts and party politics further heightened the manifestation of the *odium regni* at Rome. Finally, ever-increasing power of populist leaders in the late republic were met with senatorial disapproval, i.e. a senatorial body who felt their own power and the status quo slipping away. The spread of the *odium regni* could safeguard senatorial aristocracy and prevent Republican order from collapsing into a one-man rulership. Even in early manifestations (in later traditions) following the regal period, common stories of the *affectatores regni* ("aspirants of kingship") flourished and reinforced the idea of "traditional systems of government as continuously under threat, from its earliest days until the present or the recent past".[160] Whenever needed, the *odium*

[160] Jaclyn Neel, "Reconsidering the *Affectatores Regni*", *Classical Quarterly* 65.1 (2015): 224. The *affectatores regni* have historically been associated with three key figures: Spurius Cassius (485 BCE), Spurius Maelius (439 BCE), and Marcus Manlius Capitolinus (384 BCE). Neel helpfully untangles the problems of scholarship, which argue Cicero deliberately constructed the trio and that *affectatores regni* were categorically recognised and common (i.e. more than the standard three).

regni lay near for politically-motivated leaders who were looking for mud to sling at their rivals.

External Threats of the "Rex"

The *Histories* of Sallust record a speech given by the consul M. Lepidus where he criticises the "tyrannical Sulla" (1.48.1; *tyrannidem L. Sullae*). Lepidus warns his audience not to let Sulla outwit them by believing that his unspeakable actions were merely a lapse in normal personal and political behaviour. Rather, he is cruel and instills fear as a means to keep himself safe. Such cruelty, argues Lepidus, results in a deep misery for the audience, a misery which can distract them from protecting their own liberty. Lepidus then remarks on Sulla's "minions" (*Satellites*), i.e. the pro-Sullan members of the ruling class, who, with like-minded exemplars in their ancestral line, have forfeited their own enslavement for dominion (*dominationis*) over the people; thus, incurring great injury by preferring a life without equity for a life maintaining the highest principles of justice.

The ancestors of the *satellites* are contrasted with the "distinguished" ancestors of the Bruti, Aemilii, and Lutatii, who Lepidus states were born to subvert that which the *satellites* ancestors created by their manly courage. Lepidus then argues, "For what other reason did these ancestors guard against Pyrrhus, Hannibal, and Philip and Antiochus, other than for *liberty*, each man's own residence, and the right that we might not submit to anything but the law?" (my emphasis).[161] Lepidus here connects four historic enemies of Rome and their threat to Rome's *libertas*. I

[161] Sall. *Hist*. 1.48.4-5: *Nam quid a Pyrrho, Hannibale, Philippoque et Antiocho defensum est aliud quam libertas et suae quoique sedes, neu quoi nisi legibus pareremus*?

will provide a few examples showing how themes of *libertas* and their relation to external kings played a vital role in maintaining the *odium regni* at Rome. This is shown not only through liberties won for Rome, but liberties afforded by Rome's hand to other provinces as well. I will utilise, among other examples, the latter two kings mentioned here since *libertas* as an external policy appears before Pyrrhus' life and at the end of Hannibal's.

The earliest uses of *libertas* in relation to external policy likely dates to the Isthmian Games of 196 BCE when T. Flaminius, the Roman proconsul who defeated Philip V and, after victory, announced tax exemptions, autonomous governance, and *freedom to the people* of Corinth, Phocis, Locris, cities of Euboea, Magnesia, Thessaly, the Perrhaebi, and Achaea of Phthia, after conquering Philip.[162] Following this event, the "'Freedom of the Greeks' became a repeated slogan in the [Roman] diplomacy of subsequent years".[163]

Prior to this pronouncement, Livy records the pro-Roman *strategos*, Aristaenus, who presents King Philip V in strongly negative terms, tying to his character "brutality, greed, and lust" (*crudelitate avaritia libidine*), associations usually reserved for tyrants. In his speech, Aristaenus attempts to convince the Achaean Federation, who is uncertain whether to ally themselves with Rome, Rhodes, and Attalus against Philip V. or to uphold their previous treaty with the king. Aristaenus expresses a level of disbelief, calling the Federation "insane" if they

[162] Livy 33.32.5, 8-10. See the praise of envoy carrying the message, who is hailed the "harbinger of liberty" (*libertatis…nuntium*; lin. 8-9).

[163] Eric Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley: UCP, 1984), I.132.

disregard the Romans who "crossed seas" to ensure their liberty against the tyranny of Philip V.[164]

At the Council of the Aetolians, which also served as a place of deliberation to decide whether the Aetolians would uphold their treaty with Philip V or help Roman forces, a delegate of Philip V states the general feelings of the Aetolians: "You think Philip's rule some sort of infringement of your liberty" (*Philippi regnum officere aliquid uidetur libertati vestrae*). Livy makes a clear connection between *libertas* and *regnum*. Additionally, in the same meeting, Philip's delegate delivered accusations against Rome, that as a consequence of Rome's liberation of Syracuse from Carthage they have "made them [Syracuse] into a tribute-paying province subject to their axes and rods".[165] The Roman ambassador, Lucius Furius Purpureo, accepts the allegations, but explains how Syracuse had long suffered under "foreign tyrants" (*externis tyrannis*; i.e. Hippocrates and Epicydes), and had in fact preferred these tyrants to being captured by Rome.[166] However, the Roman ambassador, noting the hard-fought war against the Carthaginians, explained the outcome, namely Rome's work for the restoration of Syracuse to the people and their liberation. It is against cruel kings (here associated with term *tyrannus*), such as Philip V, that Rome exercised its power to liberate these cities and advance their conquests.[167]

---

[164] Livy 33.33.5-7.

[165] Livy 31.29.8.

[166] Livy 31. 31. 5-8.

[167] While Rome established that their motives were in hopes of establishing *libertas*, their enemies being conquered often accused Rome of systematic imperialism. Cf. Caes. *Gall*. 7.77; Sall. *Hist*. 6.15; et. al.

As another example, Livy records negotiations[168] with the Seleucid ambassador Hegesianax who is before the senate seeking a treaty on behalf of Selecuid King Antiochus III. The episode occurs shortly before the start of the Syrian War in 193BCE. In his response to Hegesianax, T. Quinctius Flamininus provides a comparison between the motives of Rome and that of Antiochus III in dealing with Greece. Flamininus accuses Antiochus III of hopes to reduce the Greek cities to enslavement while Rome has an invested interest in providing the *patrocinium* of Greek freedom. Roman intervention, then, not only shows marks of Rome's good faith and unwavering constancy (*fidei constantiaeque*) towards Greek freedom, but the term *patrocinium* also suggests a type of protection afforded to clients by their patron or legal defense in the courtroom.[169] Quinctius then compares Antiochus III to Philip V, stating that as Rome liberated Greece from Philip V, so too would they "free from Antiochus the cities of Asia that are of Greek stock" (*ab Antiocho Asiae urbes quae Graii nominis sint liberare in animo habet*). Flamininus, again comparing Antiochus and Philip V, gives the king an ultimatum, to either withdraw from Europe or watch as the Roman people "champion their states' liberty" with the same strength and loyalty that defeated Philip V.[170]

These defeats were not merely stories in the history books, but were put on extravagant display for all of Rome to see. The superiority of the Roman governance to the despotism of these kings were made into a spectacle as conquered kings were often paraded through the streets of Rome in their vanquished state as part of

---

[168] Livy 34.59.8-12.

[169] OLD[2], *patrōcinium*, 1, 2.

[170] Livy 34.59.4-5: *renuntiarent civitatibus suis populum Romanum, qua virtute quaque fide libertatem eorum a Philippo vindicaverit, eadem ab Antiocho, nisi decedat Europa, vindicaturum*.

triumphal ceremonies. Famous kings, whose names struck fear in the hearts of Roman citizens, were staged for public humiliation, a humiliation which was embedded into the cultural memory of onlookers and could be recalled in Roman literature to reinforce an ideology of Roman dominance. Roman leaders knew the power of these spectacles, which is evidenced by Caesar's long imprisonment of Vercingetorix for six years merely to display him in the Gallic triumph of 46BCE.[171]

The visual representation between power and humiliation is on full display in the three-day Macedonian triumph of L. Aemilius Paullus.[172] On day one, Plutarch records that two-hundred and fifty chariots were full with captured statues, paintings, colossal figures, and other captured plunder. During day two Macedonia's seized arms were paraded, from helmets and shields to Cretan targets and Thracian quivers. Macedonian soldiers, in downtrodden form, also marched carrying sums of money in silver and ornamented utensils. Day three was the most elaborate and included the humiliation of King Perseus himself. First, the king's chariot was paraded, which had in it his weaponry and diadem. Secondly, Perseus's two sons and daughter were exhibited along with a long train of their personal attendants.[173] Next, Perseus himself was marched wearing a dark robe and boots of his Macedonian origin. Following him were friends and personal attendants.

Prior to the triumph, Plutarch notes that Perseus sent to Aemilius asking to be excluded from the parade, "But Aemilius, in *mockery*, as it would seem, of the king's

---

[171] Plut. *Caes*. 27.5; Cf. Dio Cass. 40.41.3; 43.19.4.

[172] Plut. *Aem*. 32-34; Liv. 45.28-40; 40.1-8.

[173] At the end of Plut. *Aem*. 33, Plutarch goes to some lengths to express the sadness and empathy felt by spectators for the children who are presented innocently. Particularly, see line 8: "Perseus walked along almost unheeded, while the Romans, moved by compassion, kept their eyes upon the children".

cowardice and love of life, had said: 'But this at least was in his power before, and is so now, if he should wish it'" (my emphasis). In other words, Perseus had the power to commit suicide, but instead chose to march. Finally, Aemilius entered the triumph, dressed in a purple robe interwoven with gold and holding a spray of laurel, on a chariot of "magnificent adornment" in concert with hundreds of golden wreaths and victory prizes. The entire army also marched with sprays of laurel and in song. Plutarch explains that Aemilius "was gazed upon and admired by all". The 3-day event culminated in a final display of Roman power against kingly humiliation.

This contrast is perfectly balanced, for example, in Plutarch's description of the two leaders' outfits and respective crowd reception. Aemilius is dressed in purple robe and interwoven gold, a signal of royalty,[174] while Perseus is donning a dark robe likely associated with mourning. Moreover, Perseus "walked along almost unheeded" while Plutarch, in strongest possible terms, notes the crowd's admiration and gaze upon the heroic Aemilus. The two figures' dissimilarity is also acknowledged by Plutarch's notes about their respective armies. Perseus's army are described as having faces "heavy with grief" while the armies of Aemilius are marching in song. These contrasting features visually highlight the failure of kingship and the dominance of the Republican government to a wide audience and future generations.

Other examples include the triumph of king Jugurtha. Sources note that Jugurtha was paraded as conquered and chained along with his two sons and vast

[174] While I do not have the space to deal with the issue of the triumphator here, it should be noted that the triumphator had numerous associations with *regnum*, though these powers and associations were only limited to the length of the triumph itself. See H.S. Versnal, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 56-93; Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, Mass: HUP, 2007).

wealth in the triumph of Gaius Marius.[175] Plutarch reports that while Jugurtha was marching in the triumph he "lost his reason".[176] Dio Cassius emphasises the physical features of Vercingetorix who was "extremely tall" and an "imposing figure".[177] His surrender to Caesar, however, is not with words, but rather with his hands clasped and bowing as though offering supplication. Along with Jurgurtha and Vercingetorix, King Aristonicus[178] and King Alexander[179] (brother of Iamblichus) are also paraded and executed as part of the triumphal procession. These examples certainly reinforced the supremacy of Roman republic to monarchy and, consequently, the *odium regni* at Rome.

Defeated kings were not only paraded through the streets of Rome, but were also displayed on Roman coinage. The Macedonian triumph of Aemilius Paullus (see above) is captured on a Republican coin (RRC 415/1) issued in 62 BCE by the moneyer L. Aemilius Paullus, who draws his name from the historic figure. Four figures in total are displayed on the reverse of the coin, each differing in shape and size. The right of the coin is Aemilius Paullus's image. He is significantly larger than the other three figures, who should be identified as Perseus and his two sons. Perseus is shown bearded and captive with his hands tied behind his back, thus signifying his vanquished state.

[175] Plut. *Mar.* 12.3.-5; Liv. *Per*. 67.

[176] Plut. *Mar*. 12.3: ἀλλ' ἐξέστη γε πομπευθεὶς, ὡς λέγουσι, τότε τοῦ φρονεῖν.

[177] Dio Cass. 40.41.3, 43.19.4.

[178] Sall. *Hist.* 6.5-9; Vell. Pat. 2.4.1.

[179] Dio Cass. 51.2.2–3.

Additionally, two silver denarii (RRC 422/1a-b) jointly minted at Rome in 58 BCE by M. Aemilius Scaurus and P. Plautius Hupsaeus note the specific military achievements of Scaurus, proquaester of Syria from 65-61 BCE. On the obverse, a figure kneels, holding the reins of a camel (also pictured) in his left hand and an olive branch tied with fillet in his right. The figure is clearly identified in the inscription as REX ARETAS (i.e., Aretas III), the Nabataean king whose interaction with Scaurus can be found in Josephus's works.[180] Scaurus had led an assault on Petrea in Arabia and neighbouring areas, having set fire to many of them. On the urging of Antipater, Aretas paid a sum of three-hundred talents for peace in the region. The coin seems to represent this surrender.

Likewise, the defeated Numidian king Jugurtha (RRC 426/1) appears on silver denarii minted by Faustus Cornelius Sulla, son of the dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla. The coin appears to commemorate the turning point of his father's early political career when he befriended Bocchus I, king of Mauretania, and set in motion the apprehension of Jugurtha,[181] who had eluded Roman capture for years. Bocchus was the father-in-law of Jugurtha and had been convinced by Sulla to betray his son-in-law. Bocchus arranged a conference between Sulla and Jugurtha, who agreed to meet unarmed. At the meeting, Sulla ambushed Jugurtha and killed his entire entourage. Faustus's coin appears to represent this scenario. The reverse of the coin features Sulla seated and elevated. Bocchus is on the left kneeling with an olive-branch in his right hand. On the right is Jugurtha who is kneeling submissively with hands tied behind his back. It is this episode, and the ambiguity surrounding who

[180] See Jos. *Ant*. 14,14-33, 80; *BJ* 123-130; 159.

[181] The episode is well detailed in Sall. *Iug*. 111-113.

should have received praise for Jugurtha's capture, Marius or Sulla, which ignites a long-lasting and bloody rivalry between the two leaders. Interestingly, the internal conflicts and civil wars, which ensue due to their rivalry, will ignite the use of the *-reg* word group in political invective.

Internal Threats of the "Rex"

Marius was appointed the new consul in 107BCE and given the province of Numidia by the Plebiscite in January of the same year,[182] though the Senate had extended Q. Caecilius Metellus's command in the area. Sallust reports that Marius enrolled unlikely soldiers to his army, i.e. pulling ranks from those who were not within the five census classes for which soldiers were typically drawn.[183] Marius's advances on Jugurtha were slow, and it was only until the political innovations of Sulla that Rome's victory came into view. Sulla regarded this work as a calculated accomplishment for himself and not Marius. The discord became palpable when, in 91 BCE, the Senate approved statues dedicated by Bocchus I featuring Jugurtha's surrender to Sulla. This scene was displayed in the capital and spurred Marius' ire towards Sulla, but any actions by Marius were prevented by the start of the Social War.

In 88 BCE, Sulla was elected consul and appointed by the senate to lead the war against Mithridates.[184] Discontent with these political arrangements, tribune P.

[182] Sall. *Iug*. 73.7; cf. 82.2.

[183] Livy 1.42.4-43. This rule is supposedly established in the regal period under Servius Tullius, who bases qualifications on property value. Cicero (Cic. *Rep*. 2.40) puts the minimum property value at 1,500 bronze asses.

[184] See Plut. *Sull*. 8-10; App. *B Civ.* 1.7.55-63; Vell. Pat. 18-19; cf. Federico Santangelo, *Marius* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 74-81.

Sulpicius Rufus, with the support of Marius, proposed to distribute the newly acquired citizenry of the Social War equally to the Roman *tribus*. Such a distribution would have created a new political base of power against Sulla. Sulla blocked Sulpicius's proposal repeatedly until finally he was compelled by Sulpicius's armed faction to go into exile. Surprisingly, in the scuffle with the armed faction, Marius helped Sulla escape, and subsequently joined with his troops in Campania. With Sulla exiled, Sulpicius passed his legislation. As tribune of the people, Sulpicius appealed to the plebiscite and had Sulla's command of the war with Mithridates transferred to Marius, another reminder of the contention between these foes.

Sulla received this news at Nola and gathered a conference with his soldiers. He reported that Marius intended to enlist new soldiers upon taking command, which would mean the loss of an enormous plunder for the soldiers at the conference. He further noted the undignified treatment he received from Marius and Sulpicius, but did not yet allude to the type of revenge he was beginning to envision (i.e. war on Rome's soil). Sulla then encouraged his troops to be ready for war, and Appian notes that "they were aware of his intentions" (οἱ δὲ συνιέντες τε ὧν ἐπενόει) and encouraged Sulla to take courage and lead them to Rome.[185] Envoys were sent by the Senate, Marius, and Sulpicius to intercept Sulla. During their interactions, the envoys questioned Sulla, asking why he was marching on Rome. Appian reports Sulla's single refrain: "To deliver her from her tyrants!" (ἐλευθερώσων αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν τυραννούντων).[186] Here, Sulla justifies his march on Rome by appealing to her

[185] App. *B Civ.* 1.7.57. However, Appian explains that all but one of Sulla's officers retreated to Rome as they could not bear to take up arms in Rome.

[186] Ibid. Here Appian uses the Greek equivalents of both [the bad] *rex* and *libertas*.

liberation from Marian tyranny. Plutarch describes the scene of the bloody civil war due to Sulla and Marius's rivalry: "So slight and puerile were the first foundations and occasions of that hatred between them, which afterwards led them through civil bloodshed and irreparable discords to tyranny and the confusion of the whole state".[187]

Sulla and Marius's actions, in consequence of their rivalry, were epoch-making moments in the history of Rome and would become caricaturised in subsequent civil wars and political invective. Their names were listed among other figures such as the Gracchi brothers, Drusus, or Cinna, and served as rhetorical devices to convey cruelty, overreach, and *affectatores regni*. Later authors would drag these historic figures of the earlier Republic into late-Republican politics, i.e. to the problems of their own day between the *populares* and *optimates*. Authors such as Sallust or Cicero could link their contemporaries to these earlier figures, who were associated with *regnum*, tyranny, or cruelty, to castigate them as political foes.[188] For example, in his critique of Vatinius, Cicero rhetorically asks, "…were not you a tribune of the people, but in fact an insufferable tyrant, a nobody sprung from mud and obscurity?". Cicero then ties the actions of Vatinius (e.g. abolishing the auspices and trampling the holy laws) among the type of turmoil brought about by the

[187] Plut. *Sull*. 4.4: ἡ μὲν οὖν ἔχθρα βραχεῖαν οὕτω καὶ μειρακιώδη λαβοῦσα τὴν πρώτην ὑπόθεσιν καὶ ἀρχήν, εἶτα χωροῦσα δι' αἵματος ἐμφυλίου καὶ στάσεων ἀνηκέστων ἐπὶ τυραννίδα καὶ σύγχυσιν ἁπάντων πραγμάτων…

[188] As will be shown, uses of words such as *tyrannus*, *dominatio*, *crudelitas*, et al comprise various lexical shades of the *-reg* word group. Cf. Cic. *Verr*. 1.35 (*omnis dominatio regnumque iudiciorum*); Cic. *Pro. Rab*. 10, 27; Cic. *Cat*. 1.30.

Gracchi, Saturninus, Drusus, Sulpicius, Cinna, and Sulla, figures Cicero associates with the *populares* in his *Pro Sestio*.[189]

The *populares* and *optimates* are political terms of the late-Republic, which individually represent political divisions between those who desired their words and actions to please the populace (*populares*) and those who represented the "best men" (*optimates*), namely the council of the state and senatorial authority.[190] Sallust claims that prior to the destruction of Carthage, "the people and senate of Rome together managed political affairs between them peacefully and with moderation".[191] Following this time, aspirations of wealth and arrogance flourished–the nobles abused their position and the people their liberty–culminating in the political divisions attested at Rome. As an example of the situation, Sallust charges the Gracchi brothers with instigating the political divisions of his own day. On both sides of the divide, each claimed to be the true defenders of the rights and freedoms of the Roman people. Politically, even the *optimates* had to assert their service to all publicly, not just the nobility. Cicero can claim, for example, to be a "*populares* in reality and not pretence" (*non ostentatione popularem*), unlike his enemy Rullus who claims, with his associates, the title, but only falsely.[192] This equal defense of liberty naturally seems to lend to charges of *regnum* by both the *populares* and the *optimates* as a political device. The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*, a

[189] Cic. *Sest*. 103-105. At section 105, Cicero makes mention of "the Gracchi, Saturninus, or any of those *populares* of old" (*Num vos existimatis Gracchos aut Saturninum aut quemquam illorum veterum, qui populares habebantur, ullum umquam in contione habuisse conductum*?).

[190] Cic. *Sest*. 96-98.

[191] Sall. *Iug*. 41-42. These divisions never represented official "parties" of modern conception and were often highly variegated in policies and political positions.

[192] Cic. *Leg. Agr*. 1.23.

rhetorical handbook composed sometime in the 80's BCE, hints at such a *universal connection* while teaching on the use of personification with L. Brutus as an example:

> "But if that great Lucius Brutus should now come to life again and appear here before you, would he not use this language? 'I banished kings; you bring in tyrants. I created liberty, which did not exist; what I created you do not wish to preserve. I, at peril of my life, freed the fatherland; you, even without peril, do not care to be free.'"[193]

However, credit is due to Cicero who weaponises and propagates the rhetorical device against the *populares* prior to Caesar's death and then again more powerfully in the years following Caesar's assassination.[194] In this next section, I will review just a few examples of how Cicero and other authors use the *-reg* word group as political invective to attack their opponents.

Weaponising and Politicising *Regnum*

Cinna

L. Cornelius Cinna[195] was elected consul in 87 BCE and was given support by Sulla, though Cinna was a supporter of Marius, on the agreement that Sullan laws would be upheld. Once in office, Cinna tried to overturn Sullan legislation and was forcefully removed by his colleague C. Octavius, a supporter of Sulla. Cinna was then expelled from Rome and his consulship replaced illegally by L. Cornelius

---

[193] *Rhet. Her.* 4.66.

[194] Paul M. Martin, *l'idée de royauté à rome: de la rome royale au consensus républicain* (Clermont-Ferrand: Adosa, 1994), II.107-184; for quote above, 135: "*nul plus que lui ne fit usage de cette arme, au point d'être largement responsable de son usure politique*". Cf. A. Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invective, CQ 41 (1991): 106-120.

[195] See Manfred Landfester, Hubert Cancik, and Helmuth Schneider, "Cornelius" I.18 in *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Ernst Badian, "Cornelius Cinna (1), Lucius, Roman consul, 87 BCE" in *OCD* (Oxford: OUP, 2016).

Merula. Along with joining the ranks of Cn. Papirius Carbo, Q. Sertorius, and Marius, Cinna had been gathering Italian troops and legionaries. In late 87 BCE, they marched on Rome, capturing the city. Following Rome's seizure, Cinna remained in power for three years, a time Cicero described as pure anarchy in which pro-Sullan advocates were murdered, Sullan legislation rescinded, and Sulla declared an enemy of the state. For his actions, charges of *regnum*, tyranny, and cruelty are lodged against him. [196]

In *De Natura Deorum*, Cicero attempts to answer for his interlocutor whether the gods are providently present within the world. After a long discourse, he appeals to Ennius's *Telamon*, who says, "For if they cared for people, good people would prosper and bad people come to grief; but this is not so".[197] Cicero then details negative memories of personal and civic significance that have afflicted good people, such as the defeat of the Scipios in Carthage, Hannibal's murder of Marcellus, the exiling of Cicero's uncle Rutilius, and the murder of his friend Drusus. Cicero notes, "The day would be too short if I desired to recount the good men visited by misfortune; and equally so were I to mention the wicked who have prospered exceedingly". It is in remembering the misdeeds of bad people who seem to be rewarded that Cicero questions, "Why did that monster of cruelty Cinna rule for so long?" (*cur omnium crudelissimus tam diu Cinna regnavit*). Not only does Cicero tie Cinna to *regnum*, but he identifies his key characteristic as "exceedingly cruel" (*crudelissimus*).[198]

---

[196] Cic. *Brut*. 227.

[197] Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 3.79.

[198] Cicero adopts the superlative *crudelissimus* to describe Cinna here.

In his *Philippics*, Cicero explains that he would favor the "bitterest last day of his [M.Antonius, Antony's grandfather] life to the autocracy of Lucius Cinna, who cruelly murdered him".[199] Cicero then imagines what Antony's grandfather might want in that moment: the fear brought about by Antony's entourage of armed guards in Rome or *libertas*. He contrasts the autocracy of Cinna, with whom Antony is compared, against the would-be liberty desired by Antony's ancestor. Elsewhere in the *Philippics*, Cicero associates Cinna with "excessive power" (*nimis potentem*)[200] and *dominatio*.[201] He labels Cinna among the "usupers of kingship" who had been most powerful in the period following L. Brutus's hard-won liberation from Rome's kings, but with the implication of associating Antony with Tarquin.

Further evidence is found in Plutarch who begins his life of Caesar linking the genealogy of Cornelia, Caesar's wife, to her father Cinna, "who had once held the rulership at Rome" (Τὴν Κίννα τοῦ μοναρχήσαντος) [202] Tacitus, narrating moments of Roman history, likewise, begins his *Annals* noting that "neither Cinna nor Sulla created a lasting despotism" (*Non Cinnae, non Sullae longa dominatio*).[203] Additionally, Servius illustrates how to use a proper name as a term of abuse by quoting Sallust. In the brief fragment, Sallust notes accusations of M. Lepidus's enemies who believed he had hopes to reinstate Cinna's tyranny,[204] saying, "with a

[199] Cic. *Phil*. 1.34.

[200] Cic. *Phil*. 2.108.

[201] Cic. *Phil*. 1.34; cf. Vell. Pat., 2.23.3; Val. Max. 6.9.6.

[202] Plut. *Caes*. 1.1.

[203] Tact. *Ann*. 1.1. Relating to Cinna's rule as *dominatio*, see fn. 199.

[204] Sall. *Hist*. 1.67.19; cf. Sall. *Hist*. 1.67.3, 6 where M. Lepidus is charged with having "crushed out liberty" (*opprimundae libertatis*). Also, at 1.67.10 he said to have "overthrown liberty" (*libertatis subvortundae*).

very loud voice calling him [M. Lepidus] a tyrant like Cinna" (*tyrannumque et Cinnam maxuma voce adpellans*).[205]

Verres

Some of Cicero's earliest uses of the *-reg* word group, along with other semantically similar terms, are used against the governor of Sicily (73-71 BCE), C. Verres, as political invective. In Cicero's *In Verrem* (70 BCE), Verres is accused of misconduct and misappropriation of public funds, buying extravagant items for personal consumption.[206] The Sicilians appealed to Rome to help in dealing with Verres, whom they accused of extorting their farmers.[207] As quaestor of Sicily in 75 BCE, Cicero had local affiliations and considered himself a patron of the Sicilians. After the jury chose Cicero in the process of *divinatio*, he acted as the Sicilians' legal defence in their *quaestio de repetundis*[208] trial. The case was presided over by M. Acilius Glabrio, an esteemed praetor of 70 BCE. As praetor, Glabrio could serve for only 1 year after which the case would pass to his successor. The trial had begun on 5 August, 70 BCE, and the stratagem set forward by Hortensius, the defence, was to carry the trial into the new year – a real possibility with festivals putting the trial on hiatus – when a less-esteemed judge could oversee the case.[209] In fact, this accounts

[205] Sall. *Hist*. 1.64.1; Cf. Serv. *Aen*. 4.214.

[206] Cic. *Verr*. 4.8-10.

[207] Cic. *Verr*. 3.163-225, introductory charges in 3.163: "…three years the country has been cheated, and the farmers robbed, of a quantity of corn that defies calculation".

[208] Cic. *Verr*. 1.35: "…I undertook this case at the request of the Sicilians". Ernst Badian and Andrew Lintott, "*repetundae*" in *OCD* (Oxford: OUP, 2016).

[209] Cic. *Verr*. 1.6, 26-34.

for the first charge of *regnum* in *In Verrem*, though it is not levelled against Verres, but rather Hortensius. Cicero marks Hortensius's scheme to delay the trial not only an intolerable use of power (*intolerabilis potentia*), but also "a royal / tyrannical domination of the law courts" (*dominatio regnumque iudiciorum*).[210]

As to the attacks upon Verres, Cicero uses a wide-range of terminology. In recounting some of Verres's actions, Cicero notes his third year in power when "he adopted a practice that may fairly be described as 'royal'" (*regia*).[211] Cicero goes on to draw a comparison between Verres's extramarital sexual misdeeds to types of polygany found in eastern empires, specifically among kings in Persia and Syria. This leads Cicero to give Verres the derogatory title "King of the Sicilians" (*regem Siculorum*). Cicero helps his audience envision Verres in the vein of a polygynist eastern monarch, who's too weak to overcome his uncontrollable libido.[212] Furthermore, Verres is contrasted to the Roman hero M. Marcellus who conquered Syracuse in 212 BCE.[213] Cicero recounts the respect Marcellus showed towards the city, its gods, and its religious monuments. Of special importance was the temple of Minerva. Cicero notes that Marcellus "did not touch" the temple, though Verres "stripped and plundered" it. Cicero continues, remarking on how Verres stole numerous items from the temple and placed them within a "harlot's house". Among those items were twenty-seven portraits of the kings and tyrants of Sicily. Cicero finally contrasts these kings and tyrants to Verres, explaining: "Observe how much

---

[210] Cic. *Verr*. 1.35.

[211] Cic. *Verr*. 3.76-77.

[212] Maike Steenblock, *Sexualmoral und politische Stabilität. Zum Vorstellungszusammenhang in der römischen Literatur von Lucilius bis Ovid* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 61: "Die Polygamie wird als Zeichen unkotrollierter Hingabe an die libido gewertet".

[213] Cic. *Verr*. 4.122-123.

more hateful a tyrant of Syracuse this man was than any of his predecessors: they did, after all, adorn the temples of the gods, while this one removed even the memorials and adornments that they had given".[214] Cicero argues that even the tyrants of Syracuse respected religious space while Verres desecrated it. Such accusations afford him the designation "tyrant of Syracuse". Charges of "tyranny" are made throughout Cicero's *Verrine Orations*. Two of the harshest condemnations declare Verres as both an "insane tyrant" (*amentis tyranni*) and "vile despot" (*nefario tyranno*).[215]

Rullus and the "Kings of the Treasury"

From the time of the Gracchi and Sulla's dictatorship down to Cicero's own speeches *De lege agraria* (*Leg. agr.; "On the Agrarian Law"*) in 63 BCE, questions surrounding land distribution were politically charged and divisive.[216] This is especially palpable in the political tensions of the *populares* and *optimates* of Cicero's own day, and of which he represents the latter group. Prior to Cicero's first day as consul on 1 January 63 BCE, P. Servilius Rullus, Tribune of the People, had proposed agrarian legislation with the support of C. Julius Caesar and M. Licinius Crassus. However, prior to examining Rullus's bill in more detail, it will be helpful to better understand previous land reforms and how they led up to the proposed *lege agraria* of Rullus.

---

[214] Cic. *Verr*. 4.123.

[215] Cic. *Verr*. 3.20; 4.51, 123; 5.103, 117.

[216] Livy 2.41 preserves early discussions regarding a *lex agraria* with Sp. Cassius and the *ager publicus* of the Hernici. I begin with the Gracchi as its most relevant for the discussion of *Leg. agr*.

New *ager publicus* ("public land"), i.e. land acquired through conquests in Italy, had become scarce already by the late-second century BCE as war operations began to slow due to Rome's well-established domination throughout Italy. No regulations were put in place over the centuries as Rome rapidly acquired land. This led to inequitable land distribution to rich landowners who bought vast acreage to establish large estates. Additionally, land was being purchased from subsistence farmers by wealthy landowners. This significantly affected private land ownership for smaller farmers who were now becoming dependent upon the public grain supply.[217] This was, in part, due to wealthy landowners hiring out work to slaves rather than citizen cultivators. Appian records that Italy was becoming a "race of slaves" (θεραπόντων γένος) due to the citizen population dwindling by extreme poverty, crushing taxes, and military service.[218] In fear of both a depleting Italian population and the threat of a slave-state, the *Lex de modo agrorum* was established to limit citizens to 500 *iugera* of land, 500 sheep, and 100 cattle. These laws aimed to manage the previously unobstructed purchasing power of rich landowners and provide a more equitable wealth distribution to all. Any new agrarian reforms would require the state to purchase owned land, confiscate it, or use provincial property.

The *Lex Sempronia agraria* of Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, for example, required landowners to forfeit their land without reimbursement. Ti. Gracchus appointed a *Triumviri*[219] comprised of himself, his brother Gaius, and his father-in-

[217] Gesine Manuwald, *Cicero, Agrarian Speeches: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), xiii, also xiii-xxviii for a helpful introduction to agrarian law at Rome. Cf. App. *B. Civ.* 1.7-13.

[218] App. *B Civ*. 1.7-8.

[219] Plut. *T. Gracch*. 8-13.

law Ap. Claudius. The *Triumviri* were to be replaced annually and their job was to oversee proper allocation and distribution of the forfeited land. The legislation reinforced the *Lex de modo agrorum* proposed earlier, but with some emendations. Each citizen was limited to 500 *iugera* of inalienable land and 250 *iugera* per child, up to 1000 *iugera* in total for all.[220] The bill spurred outcries from the wealthy and praise from the poor. It was only after Ti. Gracchus's speech on voting day that he appealed to the people on the issues of population, not money. He argued that hopes of world domination could not be accomplished without rearing of children by men who had the means to raise families. Ti. Gracchus was soon murdered, which ultimately halted the bill from being realised. Later, regulations restricting the unhindered purchase of land by the wealthy were lifted and new legislation was needed.

The *Lex Thoria*,[221] proposed by Tribune of the People, Sp. Thorius in 111 BCE suggested that land owners should keep their own property, but provide payments to the state. The revenue would then be distributed to the people, though Appian notes that this legislation failed to grow the population. Still others, such as Tribune of the People, L. Appuleius Saturninus, proposed a bill (*Lex Appuleia agraia*) in 100 BCE to distribute the *ager Gallicus*, obtained by Marius, to veterans, but the legislation was later withdrawn by the Senate. In 91 BCE, M. Livius Drusus recommended the *Lex livia agraria*, which proposed to settle the poor in colonies of Italy and Sicily. These operations were to be administered by *decemviri agris dandies adsignandis*,[222] among which Drusus numbered, though the proposal was

[220] Livy *Epit*. 58.

[221] Cic. *De or.* 2.284; *Brut*. 136; App. *B Civ*. 1.27.

later annulled. By the 60's BCE, numerous laws were proposed, but the problem of limited land in Italy had only compounded.

Like many others before him, P. Servilius Rullus, Tribune of the People in 63BCE, proposed yet another bill (*rogatio Servilia*) concerned with land distribution. His bill recommended that Roman citizens be settled as subsistence farmers on state land. However, that land was to be acquired from Italian landowners willing to sell to the state, a willingness that Cicero considered unlikely.[223] The money to buy the lands in Italy was to be raised from sales of all public land acquired in the provinces since 88 BCE[224] as well as all land authorised by the senate for sale since 81 BCE.[225] Additionally, portions of Italy[226] and Sicily[227] were also proposed to be sold by Rullus. Moreover, the legislation had provisions to investigate all public and private lands in provincial areas with the potential to impose higher taxes (*vectigalia*).[228] The bill would also confiscate any former and future military plunder that had not been paid to the treasury.[229] These initiatives were to be enforced by a committee of

[222] CIL 6.1312: *M(arcus) Livius M(arci) f(ilius) C(ai) n(epos) Drusus / pontifex tr(ibunus) mil(itum) Xvir stlit(ibus) iudic(andis) / tr(ibunus) pl(ebi) Xvir a(gris) d(andis) a(dsignandis) lege sua / et eodem anno Vvir a(gris) d(andis) a(dsignandis) lege Saufeia / in magistratu occisus est.*

[223] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 1.14.

[224] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.38.

[225] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.35-37.

[226] For example, Cicero, quoting Rullus's comment on the Scantian Forest (public lands) in the Campanian region, states, "'The Scantian Forest,' he says, 'Shall be sold'". Cic. *Leg. agr.* 1.3. See also 3:15; Cf. Plin. *HN* 2.240.

[227] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 1.2-4; 2.47-49.

[228] Cic. *Leg. agr*. 1.10.

[229] Cic. *Leg. agr*. 2.68-70.

decemviri, who, along with the chief *decemvir*, Rullus,[230] are repeatedly dealt accusations of aspiring to *regnum* and tyranny by Cicero.[231]

As with previous agrarian proposals, the sponsors envisioned committees of three (e.g. Ti. Gracchus) or ten (e.g. Drusus) men as appointees to oversee the work of land distribution.[232] This appointment in *Leg. agr.*, then, was quite normal, but the election process and authority conveyed to this committee was irregular.[233] The *decemviri* were to serve for five years[234] with praetor standing,[235] and were to be granted authority, put forward by a praetor, according to a *lex curiata*. Rullus also wanted to style the election process of the *decemviri* on that of the *Pontifex Maximus*.[236] He proposed that seventeen of the thirty-five *tribus* of Rome were to be selected by lot to choose the *decemviri*, thus requiring a majority vote of nine *tribus* for an appointment.[237] Cicero understood Rullus's election process of the *decemviri* along with their illegitimate authority as a fundamental threat to the *libertas* [238] of the

---

[230] Rullus is rarely singled out individually with the *-reg* word group, though, according to Cicero, Rullus's bill puts him among commissioners as the chief *decemvir*. Cf. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.43: "…the king of a most flourishing kingdom" (*rex denique opulentissimi regni*).

[231] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.8: "new tyrannies, extraordinary powers, not merely military, but *regal powers*, were, it was supposed, being aimed at" (my emphasis; *novae dominationes, extraordinaria non imperia sed regna quaeri putabantur*). In the arrangement of *Leg. agr.*, speech one was delivered to the senate while speeches two and three were *contiones* before the people. The *contio* speeches differ in terms of style and argumentation from the senate speech. Interestingly, we only find one use of the *-reg* word group lodged at the *decemviri* as political invective in speech one (1.24), but numerous examples in his *contiones*. This perhaps suggest that the *-reg* word group as political invective was a particularly "popular" phenomenon.

[232] Cf. Cic. *Leg. agr*. 2.17.

[233] Manuwald, *Cicero, Agrarian Speeches*, xxvii, fn. 98.

[234] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.32.

[235] Ibid.

[236] Cic. *Leg. agr*. 2.18.

[237] Cic. *Leg. agr*. 2.16, 18, 21.

Roman people and a grab at unlimited power and wealth for the committee, of whom Rullus was to be their chief member.[239]

In his first *contio*,[240] Cicero calls the election process a "depletion of your liberty" (*libertatis vestrae deminutionem*) since "it orders the tribune of the people, who has carried that law, to create decemvirs by the votes of seventeen tribes, so that everyone who shall have been elected by nine tribes shall be decemvir". The appointment of a *decemvir*, Cicero argues, would have required the majority votes of only nine tribes of the thirty-five, thus the "Roman people shall be deprived of their voting right" (*ut popoulus Romanus suffragio privaretur*), a staple of Roman *libertas*. Cicero then rhetorically asks Rullus whether any elected Tribune of the People had ever been put in office without the vote of all thirty-five *tribus*, to which a negative answer is implied. Cicero clearly notes that even the Gracchan commission was elected by all thirty-five tribes.[241] He then attacks Rullus, astonished by the fact that a tribune, who is supposed to embody the representation of the People, is the key actor in depriving them of their votes / *libertas* by inviting only "a few tribes" (*paucas tribus*) to vote. Rullus does this "not according to established legal rules but by accidental favour of the lot". Consequently, Rullus strips the Roman people of their right to vote, and thus their *libertas*. For all of these charges Cicero can claim: "the most disgraceful thing of all, a tribune of the people, a magistrate whom our ancestors intended to be the protector and guardian of liberty,

[238] Cic. *Leg. agr*. 1.21-22; 2.15-16, 24, 29, 32, 35, 75.

[239] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.16.

[240] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.16-18.

[241] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.31.

is to *set up kings in the state*" (my emphasis; *reges in civitate constitui*).[242] Cicero, a few lines later, appeals again to Roman ancestry, noting their hard-fought defense of *libertas*, and likely recalls the transition from the regal period to the Republic.[243] Therefore, Cicero argues that magistrates who have been elected "without your [the Roman people's] authorization" are of two kinds, "either a King and intolerable or a private individual and insane" (*aut rex non ferundus aut privatus furiosus*).[244]

Cicero also attacks Rullus's bill for modelling the election of the *decemviri* on the *pontifex maximus*.[245] As noted above, he finds such a voting assembly as reducing rights of citizens, but also explains that the election parallel is inaccurately applied. Cicero stresses that the office of *pontifex maximus* could not be awarded by the People because of the holiness of the rite. It was out of respect for the importance of the office of the priest that their ancestors provided a way for the People's inclusion. Cicero notes that the Tribune of the People, Cn. Domitius, provided a way for the election of the People to the priesthood (104 BCE), i.e. through allowing seventeen of the thirty-five tribes to function in the election process and allowing a candidate from the People to be elected, though with the priestly college having the final power of admission. However, Cicero expresses the legality of the entire process and the differences between Domitius and Rullus. Domitius provided a means to include the People in the electoral process of the priestly college, but

---

[242] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.15; Cf. Cic. Leg. agr. 2.24: "I will repeat what I said at the outset, that it is Kings who are being set up, that your liberty is entirely abolished by this law" (*renovabo illud, quod initio dixi, regnum comparari, libertatem vestram hac lege funditus tolli*).

[243] Cic. *Leg. agr*. 2.16: "do not hesitate, with a consul to help you, to defend that liberty which was won by your ancestors with so much sweat and blood and handed on to you without any effort on your part".

[244] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.32.

[245] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.18-19.

without transgressing religious rites. Rullus, however, has manipulated what was essentially an exemption to a traditional standard for the sake of the People. Therefore, Rullus has not provided more liberty to the People, but has again restricted it.

Cicero, even more shockingly, notes that Rullus has acted unfairly with the People's *libertas* by overseeing the entire electoral process himself – neither willing to entrust it to the People nor his supporters,[246] and even electing himself as the committee's chief (*princeps*) member.[247] It is Rullus who proposes a *comitia* and grants the *decemviri* their authority. Cicero complains that Rullus will unfairly draw the tribes of his choice to put into the office of *decemviri* and will ultimately create in them "masters over all things" (*omnium rerum…dominos*).[248] Cicero not only presents the election process as a threat to Roman *libertas*, but also the seemingly unfettered power given to the *decemviri* by the bill.

In Rullus's legislation, "the *decemviri* shall have the same rights as elected magistrates".[249] Cicero argues, however, that in Rome, a state far excelling in its right to *libertas*, a civil or military official cannot be elected "without a comitia". Cicero questions why Rullus's bill includes the third article, i.e. the appointment of the *decemviri* by a *lex curiata*, if it is merely negated in the fourth article, wherein the *decemviri* are afforded the same authority "without a *lex curiata*…as they would if they had been appointed in the strictest accordance with the law". Cicero makes

[246] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.20-21, cf. 2.22.

[247] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.22.

[248] Ibid.

[249] For this paragraph, Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.29.

the comparison between an appointment of *decemviri* without a *lex curiata* against a proper election involving *all the People*. For Cicero, not only does the bill dispossess the *comitia* of their political right, but also undercuts the *libertas* of the People who will only partly (i.e. nine tribes of the thirty-five) have a vote. Such a blatant disregard for the law provides Cicero a strong justification to conclude that, "Kings are being set up over us, not decemvirs" (*Reges constituuntur, non decemviri*). Once they initiate their functions, "all of your [the People's] rights, power, and *libertas* are destroyed" (*omne vestrum ius, potestas libertasque tollatur*).

Cicero claims that Rullus's bill will allot the *decemviri* with nearly unlimited power and no accountability, explaining that Rullus "…gives the decemvirs an authority which is nominally that of the praetors but is in reality that of a King" (*Dat praeterea potestatem verbo praetoriam, re vera regiam*).[250] A few sections later Cicero more fully elaborates on that power:

> "…they are granted the power of examination without judges, penalty without appeal, punishment without redress, of punishing without the intercession of the tribune…the consuls and even the tribunes themselves will be amenable to them, while they will be amenable to none; they will be allowed to claim magisterial offices, but they cannot be brought to trial".[251]

Cicero finds their absolute power unique in Roman history, explaining that "there has never been an instance of *royal power* which was not restrained" (my emphasis; *Nullum enim regnum fuit umquam, quod non*).[252] As a unique situation, Cicero lacks proper terminology to explain the absolute power proposed for the *decemviri*. Thus, he states, "I call such power *kingly*, but assuredly it is something far greater!" (my

[250] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.32. Cf. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.57.

[251] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.34.

[252] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.35.

emphasis; *ego hanc potestatem regiam appello, sed profecto maior est quaedam*).[253] Additionally, the five-year appointment of the *decemviri* is another indicator of their unlimited power. Cicero notes that Rullus "…limits it to five years, but in reality he makes it perpetual".[254] Cicero continues to argue that no persons who enjoy the wealth, power, and prestige envisioned for the *decemviri* would give up the office except "against their will".[255] Therefore, the appointment in perpetuity appears more regal than Roman.

Cicero also notes an article of Rullus's legislation regarding the authority of *decemviri* to determine the establishment of new colonies: "And into whatever places besides it shall seem good to them".[256] Cicero, frustrated by the ambiguity of the article, rhetorically asks, "What then is to prevent them [*decemviri*] from settling a colony on the Janiculum and placing their garrison on our heads and necks?". The Janiculum was one of the seven hills of Rome, annexed to the city early in Roman history to prevent the possibility that "it might someday become a stronghold of Rome's enemies".[257] Cicero implies that the arbitrary power given to the *decemviri* to establish colonies "into whatever places" could even apply to Rome! Cicero then warns the People that Rullus could authorise the *decemviri* to lead any citizen "into all the municipalities and colonies in the whole of Italy". At this point, Cicero has already shown the financial exploitations[258] and amassing of wealth the *decemviri*

[253] Ibid; Cf. "he gives the decemvirs an authority which is nominally that of the praetors but is in reality that of a King".

[254] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.32.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.74.

[257] Livy 1.33.6.

could receive when applying the *vectigalia*[259] indiscriminately. In fact, as far as we know, Cicero coins the expression, *reges aerarii* ("treasury kings") in *Leg. agr.* 2.15 when attacking the *decemviri*. With both wealth and large populations under their command, Cicero explains that the *decemviri* could then "hold all Italy under siege…having your liberty hemmed in by garrisons and colonies". In such an instance, Cicero rhetorically questions, "What hope of recovering your liberty will be left to you?". As explained in an earlier section ("External Threats to the 'Rex'"), Rome had hard-won their *libertas* through military achievements against outside kingdoms hoping to subjugate them (e.g. Philip V, Antiochus III, Perseus, et al). Here, Cicero understands Rullus's bill to threaten Roman *libertas* since provincial colonies, or even new colonies within Rome (!), could be setup by the *decemviri*, with an unlimited supply of men. In the following sections, Cicero uses Rome's rival city, Capua, to heighten the potential threat, even designating the city, "the second Rome".[260] Finally, Cicero, strongly condemning Rullus's plan, states, "Is it not clear that a king is being set up, is it not clear that your liberty is being destroyed?" (*num obscure regnum constituitur, num obscure libertas vestra tollitur*).

In his final summary to the senate (speech one), Cicero, the true *popularis*[261] and defender of Roman *libertas*, presents himself as bringing "light into utter

---

[258] Cf. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.62.

[259] The *vectigal* was tax revenue derived from public lands and rent from state property. Cf. Graham Burton, "*vectigal*" in *OCD* (Oxford: OUP, 2015). Also, see above.

[260] Cic. *Leg. agr.* 1.18-22; 2.76-97. Capua was located in Campania region and was notorious for its rebellion against Rome in 314 BCE and alliance with Hannibal during the Second Punic War. The city is often negatively portrayed as arrogant (*superbia*) and rebellious (Cic. *Red. Sen.* 17) with the potential of becoming a "second Rome" (Cic. *Phil*. 12.7).

[261] Cic. *Leg. Agr*. 1.23.

darkness for the Roman people".[262] Cicero maintains that so long as he is consul "…nothing need be feared; that no army, no band, no colonies, no *vectigalia*, *no new dominion, no despotic rule of decemviri*, no second Rome nor another seat of empire will exist…" (my emphasis; *nullum imperium novum, nullum regnum decemvirale*).

Titus Labienus

In the same year (63 BCE) that Cicero gave his speeches against Rullus, he also defended the senator Gaius Rabirius who appealed a conviction of *perduellio* ("crime of treason")[263] by *duoviri perduellionis*[264] for his alleged participation in the murder of Tribune of the People, Lucius Saturninus (c.100 BCE). Both the charge of *perduellio* and the sentencing of crucifixion[265] were particularly archaic judicial forms. Rabirius, with Cicero as his defence appealed the case before the *comitia centuriata*. Titus Labienus, the nephew of the murdered Saturninus, prosecuted the case. The motives behind the charge do not seem to be personal, but rather the political workings of the *populares* to test the *optimates* on the application of the *Senatus consultum ultimum*, i.e. emergency powers granted to magistrates to put Roman citizens to death without authorization by the People.[266] Cicero competently defended Rabirius, lessening his harsh death sentence to exile. However, in his

[262] Cic. *Leg. Agr*. 1.24.

[263] *OLD*[2], *perduelliō*, 1.

[264] Caesar served as one of the *duoviri* on the case.

[265] John Granger Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 69-72. Cook argues that the Labienus wanted to sentence Rabirius with the archaic penalty of *arbor infelix*, i.e. death by scourging. For rhetorical purposes, Cicero misleadingly identifies the original sentencing with crucifixion.

[266] Henrik Mouritsen, *Politics in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), 161.

defence, Cicero regularly deployed the *-reg* word group against Labienus as political invective.

Like Rullus above, Cicero questions how the Tribune of the People Labienus, the "guardian and defender of its [the People's] rights and liberties" (*custos defensorque iuris et libertatis*), can act against the law of Porcius,[267] which prohibited the rod[268] against any Roman citizen. Cicero argues that the Porcian law seized the rod from the lictor to ensure the *libertas* of the people, but Labienus, with the sentence issued to Rabirius, has handed it back to the executioner.[269] Cicero records one of Labienus's own favourable phrases, "Lictor, go bind his hands". He further argues that such a phrase is not only foreign to Roman *libertas*, but also the kings' Romulus and Numa.[270] Such phrases, in fact, are representative of King Tarquin: "Tarquin, haughtiest and most cruel of kings, provides your torture-chamber with those mottoes…" (*Tarquini superbissimi atque crudelissimi regis*).[271] For Cicero, the liberty under threat recalls the regal period under Tarquin's rule. Labienus's actions have recapitulated that which Cicero argues has "long since disappeared from our state, overwhelmed not only by the shadows of antiquity but by the light of Liberty".[272]

---

[267] See more above in the section "*Libertas* Defined".

[268] The rod or stick used by a lictor as an instrument of corporal punishment. Cf. *OLD*[2], *virga*, 2a.

[269] Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 12.

[270] It is important to note that even by 63 BCE. Both of these names can be applied positively here over and against the tyrant, Tarquinius Superbus.

[271] Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 12.

[272] Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 13; Cf. Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 10: "But that glory, gentlemen, belongs in the first place to our forefathers who, when they drove out the kings, retained among a free people no trace of their cruel ways; and in the second place to many brave men who intended that your liberty should not be made offensive by savage punishments but safeguarded only by mild laws". Here

Similar to his attacks on Rullus, Cicero presents himself, in his role as consul, as the defender of *libertas* against the uncontrolled regal aspirant, Labienus. Cicero states his resolve: "I avow and I boast, that it is by my counsel, my determination, my influence that you have been forced to drive out an action which is cruel, savage, and more suited to a king than a tribune" (*Quam ob rem fateor atque etiam, Labiene, profiteor et prae me fero te ex illa crudeli, importuna, non tribunicia actione sed regia, meo consilio, virtute, auctoritate esse depulsum*). Baraz argues that Cicero's use of *depulsum* ("drive out") following *regia* "cannot but bring into play *expello*, the standard verb to designate the expulsion of the kings".[273] Such a connection, Baraz argues, proposes Labienus in the form of a new Tarquin, whom Cicero, a new type of L. Brutus, must "expel" to ensure the *libertas* of the Roman people. Cicero's defence of Rabirius against such an unlawful and cruel punishment, which had all the features of regal power, ensured that Roman *libertas* would not be transgressed.

Catiline Conspiracy

After a stint as governor in Africa from 67-66 BCE, Lucius Sergius Catilina returned to Rome and entered the consular elections for 65 BCE. However, he was prevented from standing for the consulate due to a *quaestio de repetundis*, [274] for which he was later acquitted. Over the next couple of years, Catiline's political

---

Cicero makes the argument along the same lines, rhetorically utilising the *-reg* word group and *libertas*.

[273] Yelena Baraz, "Discourse of Kingship in Late Republican Invective" in *Evil Lords: Theories and Representation of Tyranny from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, eds. Nikos Panou and Hester Schadee (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 50.

[274] Cf. fn. 208.

career struggled. In consular elections for 63 BCE, Catiline made a written agreement with C. Antonius Hybrida, and had the support of Caesar and Crassus, but was ultimately defeated by Cicero. He stood a final time in consular elections for 62 BCE and was beaten by Decimus Junius Silanus and Lucious Licinius Murena. After this final defeat, Macdonald notes a decisive shift, which moved Catiline from seeking consulship by constitutional means to becoming an "active revolutionary preparing a coup d'état in Rome and an insurrection in Italy".[275] By the start of November, 62 BCE, Catiline had been forced out of Rome by Cicero and assumed the leadership role of the rebellion in Etruria. Catiline attempted an ally with the Allobroges (a Gallic tribe), who reported Catiline's intentions to their patron at Rome, Q. Fabius Sanga. Sanga reported to Cicero and provided him the evidence needed to expose the conspiracy.[276] Catiline was condemned as an enemy of the state by mid-November.

Sallust provides us with the strongest use of political invective when he condemns Catiline and his co-conspirators for aspirations of *regnum*. After a brief biography of Catiline's sordid early life, Sallust explains that the "tyranny of Lucius Sulla" (*dominationem L. Sullae*) had inspired Catiline to "seize the Republic" (*reipublicae capiundae*) by any means necessary, so as to "obtain royal power for himself" (*sibi regnum pararet*).[277] Furthermore, P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura, a disgraced politician and pro-Catilinarian, attempted to co-opt the Allobroges (see above) for the Catilinarian cause by claiming a Sibylline prophecy about himself:

---

[275] Cicero, *In Catilinam I-IV, Pro Murena, Pro Sulla, Pro Flacco*, Translated by C. McDonald, LCL, (Cambridge: CUP, 1937), 7.

[276] Sall. *Cat*. 41.

[277] Sall. *Cat*. 5.6.

"According to the Sibylline books, *sovereignty over Rome was portended for three Cornelii*; that there had already been Cinna and Sulla, and that he was the third who was destined to gain control of the City" (my emphasis; *ex libris Sibyllinis regnum Romae tribus Corneliis portendi*).[278]

In addition, Cicero makes a clear connection to Servilius Ahala's murder of the *affectatores regni*, Spurius Maelius (d. 439 BCE), when considering why Catiline had not yet been executed by a "consul's orders" (*consulis…oportebat*).[279] The story of Ahala and Maelius is further elaborated below, but it is important to recognise here that Cicero sees himself, the consul, in the role of Ahala, who liberated the city from a potential *regnum* and loss of *libertas*. For Cicero, regicide, so long as it defends *libertas*, and thus the Republic, is justified even if approved only by a "consul's orders". In fact, this is how Catiline and his co-conspirators came to their end, being arrested and executed without a trial or popular approval. It is for these reasons that even Cicero himself can be accused of kingly behaviour or aspiring to kingship.[280]

In Cicero's *Pro Sulla*, Cicero finds himself defending P. Cornelius Sulla, the nephew of the dictator, who was put on trial for his alleged part in the Catiline conspiracy. The prosecution was led by Cicero's cherished friend, L. Manlius Torquatus. Cicero's ill feelings for Sulla are evident elsewhere in his writing,[281] and his representation here is likely politically motivated, though Cicero asserts his help

[278] Sall. *Cat.* 47.2; cf. Cic. *Cat*. 3.9; 4.2.

[279] Cic. *Cat*. 1.2-3.

[280] Cic. *Cat*. 1.30; 2.14 (*crudelissimum tyrannum*); *Dom*. 94; Other attacks include: Cic. *Att*. 1.16.10 (Clodius); *Sull*. 21-22, 26-27, 48; *Dom*. 75-76; 94.

[281] Cic. *Fam*. 9.10.3; 15.17.2.

is necessary for Sulla since he himself was so close to the evidence.[282] His defence of Sulla, however, shocked and angered Torquatus who launched a vicious diatribe against Cicero where he employed the *-reg* word group. He repeatedly accused Cicero of charges of regnum and tyranny for his part in arresting and executing Catiline and his co-conspirators.

According to Cicero, "…Torquatus says that he cannot bear my tyranny. What tyranny are you talking about, Torquatus?" (…*regnum meum ferre non posse. Quod tandem, Torquate, regnum*).[283] In the next section, Cicero further elaborates on claims made by Torquatus, "At this point too you were pleased, quite unnecessarily, to be funny when you said that there were three foreign kings, Tarquin [Lucius Tarquinius Priscus], Numa, and myself" (*At hic etiam, id quod tibi necesse minime fuit, facetus esse voluisti, cum Tarquinium et Numam et me tertium peregrinum regem esse dixisti*).[284] The ridicule lists Cicero with the two kings of Rome famously appointed from Sabine (Numa) and Etruscan (Tarquinius Priscus) origins respectively. The joke seems to attack Cicero's origins, from the Italian town of Arpinum. However, Cicero dismantles the jest by showing that Torquatus's own example gives precedent to kings at Rome, and that the real novelty would be a foreign consul (an impossibility at Rome)![285] Against his attacker, Cicero defended his actions during the executions of Catilinarian conspirators by reutilising and projecting the same political invective onto them. In his defense, Cicero argues,

[282] Cic. *Sull*. 20.

[283] Cic. *Sull*. 21.

[284] Cic. *Sull*. 22.

[285] D. H. Berry, *Cicero: Pro P. Sulla Oratio* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 183.

"During this magistracy far from establishing a kingship, I suppressed one" (*quo in magistratu non institutum est videlicet a me regnum, sed repressum*).

So while Cicero is our main source for the use of this political invective, he is also a victim of it. The invective then was not merely a phenomenon of the *optimates*, but could be reclaimed for any political purposes when condemning various forms of overreach in a political opponent. Moreover, much of this study has examined the political invective of the *-reg* word group prior to its use following Caesar's murder. After Caesar's murder, a clear rise of the invective is noticeable as Cicero and his associates now had to justify Caesar's death as a tyrannicide before a peering public (more on this below).[286] While I hope to have shown that the *-reg* word group was clearly language of political invective in the late Republic, especially during turbulent times of civil and external threats of war; this next section will display a type of mimicry of the late-Republic arising when Rome and its *libertas* were once again threatened by civil war and the despotism of the Neronian regime.

The Emergence of Rex and Libertas in the Roman Civil War

Civil Wars of 69CE

In the winter of 67/68CE, Gaius Julius Vindex, Roman governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, rose in secret rebellion against Nero. According to Dio Cassius,[287]

[286] For Cicero condemning Caesar as a tyrant or king, see: Cic. *Phil*., 2.34; 2.90; 2.96; 2.117; *Off*. 1.112; 2.23; *Att*. 7.20.2; 8.2.4; 10.1.3; 10.4.2; 10.8.6; 14.5.2; 14.6.2; 14.9.2; 14.14.2, 4; 14.16.2; 14.17.6; 15.20.2; 16.14.1; *Fam*. 12.1.2; etc.

[287] Throughout this chapter, I will refer to "Dio Cassius", though fully recognising the source is known only through his epitomator, Xiphilinus.

Vindex first sought to rally the Gauls under his support by accusing emperor Nero of having "spoiled the whole Roman world…".[288] Vindex encouraged the Gauls to respond by taking up arms to "aid themselves and the Romans in *liberating* the entire world" (my emphasis; ἐπικουρήσατε μὲν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς, ἐπικουρήσατε δὲ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις, ἐλευθερώσατε δὲ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην) from the tyrant Nero.[289] Dio further described Vindex's "vast love of freedom" (φιλελεύθερον...πλεῖστον) as the motivating factor for the rebellion.[290] The ancient literary sources seem consistent in presenting Vindex as especially associated with the concept of *libertas*. In fact, within 10 years after the civil wars, Pliny the Elder spoke of Vindex's legacy as "that restorer of freedom against Nero" (*adsertorem illum a Nerone libertatis*).[291] As noted earlier, the *adsertor libertatis* was the official who touched the wrongfully enslaved with a *vindicta*, thus liberating them from their unfortunate enslavement. Pliny's claim is clear: Vindex, the rebel, had acted as the *adsertor* to the Roman world who had been illegitimately enslaved by the despotic Nero.[292]

While the sources present Vindex positively as strong, intelligent, daring, ambitious, and skilled in warfare, he is still characterised as one who required support outside of Gaul, showing that he personally lacked the gravitas needed to lead a coup against Nero.[293] To gather support, Vindex issued letters to governors in

[288] Dio 63.22.3.

[289] Ibid.

[290] Dio Cass. 63.22.1[2].

[291] Plin. *HN* 20.160.

[292] Cf. Roller, *Constructing Autocracy*, 261.

[293] Dio Cass. 63.22.1[2].

the provinces asking them to join his rebellion, though careful not to name any potential replacements to Nero (which might have alienated the governors vying for power).[294] Plutarch records that the governors responded by forwarding the letters to Nero and doing "all they could to destroy the progress of Vindex".[295]

Only Servius Sulpicius Galba (hereafter, Galba), the wealthy governor of Hispania Tarraconensis, neither denounced nor exposed Vindex's plan to Rome. However, Plutarch reports that Galba still did not trust Vindex's movement, perhaps believing that it lacked the necessary muscle to get the job done.[296] Nero's lacklustre response to Vindex's disturbance affirms the seemingly weak force of the movement – Suetonius notes that upon receiving first reports of the revolt, Nero carried on to the gymnasium to watch athletes compete, held a dinner party that night, and even had time to show off his new water-organs, and only responded eight days after the initial reports.[297] By the middle of March 68, Vindex officially and openly rebelled against Nero, sending another letter to Galba–assuming his silence a positive sign–requesting that he join forces and take the lead role as "defender and leader of humanity" (*humano generi assertorem ducemque*.).[298] Vindex's offer to Galba evoked again the understanding of *libertas* and the function of the *adsertor libertatis* against the enslaving Nero.

Galba accepted Vindex's offer and assumed the leadership role from 3 April 68CE. In their new alliance, Galba appears to have embraced the rhetoric of

---

[294] Morgan, *69AD*, 19.

[295] Plut. *Galb.* 4.3.

[296] Plut. *Galb.* 4.2.

[297] Suet. *Nero* 40.4.

[298] Suet. *Galb.* 9.2; Cf. Plut. *Galb.* 4.4.

Vindex's "liberty" slogan. The literary sources which connect Galba's ascension as leader of the revolt to 3 April do so intentionally to link him with the auspicious day celebrating Hercules Victor and Hercules *Adsertor*.[299] Issues of Vindex's coinage with a bust of Hercules and the inscribed HERCVLES ADSERTOR confirm this connection and reveal the newfound strength and related liberty of the movement Vindex associated with Galba.[300] Furthermore, Suetonius reports that after accepting Vindex's offer at Nova Carthago, Galba "ascended the tribunal, *as though* he were to perform the manumission of slaves" (my emphasis; *Igitur cum quasi manumissioni vacaturus conscendisset tribunal*), and there fittingly used the public ceremony to denounce Nero and declare his part in the rebellion's war for liberty.[301]

Suetonius notes further that during this ceremony, an exiled boy of noble birth, who was intentionally brought from the Balearic Islands for this event, as well as the "images [or "masks"]" (*imagines*) of those condemned or killed by Nero were placed in front of Galba as he spoke. The demonstration evoked images of public ceremonies where the *imagines* ("images" / "masks") of deceased noblemen at Rome were worn by crowds during their funeral processions. As Polybius described, the deceased nobleman would be carried into the Forum and placed on the *Rostra* where crowds gathered to hear the eldest son give a *laudatio funebris* ("eulogy for the deceased"), a eulogy recounting the virtues and achievements of the nobleman, and which concluded in the donning of the deceased's mask. Andrew Gallia, argues that

[299] Christopher Ehrhardt and Douglas Little, *Lives of Galba and Otho* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2008), 47-48.

[300] RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 49.

[301] Suet. *Galb*. 10.1; Plut. *Galb*. 5.1.

such a performance by Galba was meant to capture momentum for the revolt from the upper classes–i.e. men in a similar social standing to Galba–who had watched Nero condemn and deprive well-deserving noblemen of their rights. For Galba, his new role as *assertor* not only meant liberation to the lower classes, but also the restoration of traditional rights to members of the highest class, a truly Republican notion.[302] Polybius also notes that these elaborate funeral processions were most important for the "young men" (οἱ νέοι) in attendance, and that by seeing the celebration of brave men's lives, they might be incited to imitation through suffering for the public good. Suetonius' intentional placement of the boy of noble birth may be considered another rallying cry for Galba, encouraging action for the cause of liberty by utilising those whom Nero had condemned and killed as objects of imitation.

Following his speech, the sources[303] report that the crowd responded positively by hailing Galba as "emperor" (*imperator*). However, Suetonius notes that Galba rejected the titles "emperor" and "Caesar", and instead declared himself "*legate* of the Senate and people of Rome" (my emphasis; *legatum se senatus ac populi R.*). Galba's move was aimed at styling himself in Republican fashion by vesting power in the Senate and Roman people to assure interested parties that his and Vindex's revolt was a far cry from the autocracy practised by Nero.

Restoring the Republic on Rebel Coinage

[302] Andrew Gallia, *Remembering the Roman Republic: Culture, Politics, and History under the Principate* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2014), 20.

[303] Plut. Galba 5.1; Suet. Galba 10.1; Dio 63.29.6.

The rebels' coinage – issued from early April until the death of Nero (9 June 68) – provides further evidence for their marked interest in Republican imitation, specifically *libertas*, and the rejection of monarchical rule. On the rebel's coinage, one immediately notices the complete absence of busts displaying living emperors. This absence recalls the coining styles of the Republic, which were filled with busts of gods, personifications, abstractions, animals, and various symbolic objects rather than human leaders.[304] Recalling the Republic is particularly potent in the rebel's imitation of Neronian coinage. As such, the rebellion's focus on the Genius of the Roman People, last displayed at the end of the Republic,[305] clearly evoked a time when the Senate and Roman people held constitutional power. For example, the inscription GENIO AVGVSTI ("Genius of the emperor") of Neronian coinage was recreated by the rebels as GENIO P(OPULI) R(OMANI).[306] The genitive AVGVSTI ensured proper devotion to the emperor's *genius*, the spiritual attendant and protector of an individual, but now that devotion had become challenged by the rebellion and was bestowed back to its rightful place, i.e. to the (*P)opuli (R)omani*. Numerous other Neronian issues with the genitive AVGVSTI, used to infer the emperor's embodiment of virtues, personifications, or benefits, were also being retooled by the rebellion. For example, VICTORIA AVGVSTI ("Victory of the emperor") and SECURITAS AVGVSTI ("Security of the emperor") were now appropriated through

[304] The one exception is the use of the divinised Augustus's image (RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 81-83, 86-89, 90 [?], 91-95, 97-110, 111 [?], 112-117) and his two sons, Gaius and Lucius Caesar (RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 87), who both died at relatively young ages.

[305] RRC 393/1a, b; 397/1; 428/3.

[306] RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 64.

the P(OPULI) R(OMANI) and not Nero (AVGVSTI).[307] Additionally, the standards, symbolic of Nero's military power, were reworked to show that his authority had shifted to the P(OPULI) R(OMANI).[308] The re-establishing of constitutional powers back to the Senate and the Roman people were among the most prominent themes on the rebel's coinage.

From the 143 types issued throughout the rebellion, 82 (57.34%) refer to the senate (SPQR; SC) or the Roman people (SPQR; PR). In fact, at Lungdunum, the region where Vindex held the governorship, numerous Neronian coins have been found defaced with the countermarks "SPQR" ("The Senate and the Roman People) and "P R" ("The People of Rome"). Many of the issues are clearly stamped through Nero's neck to symbolically decapitate the tyrant.[309] For the rebellion, it was more advantageous to provide creative anti-Neronian countermarks than reissue new money to sustain their military forces. As such, many coin themes were associated with the hope for a revival of the Republic, i.e. a system of government featuring proper checks and balances found in the appointment of consuls and a Senate by the people of Rome.[310] For the rebellion, such a government had gone wayward under Nero and his autocratic regime. Therefore, the rebel's promotion of *libertas* seemed to be associated with political rather than individual freedom from domination.

---

[307] E.g. for the Victory type, see RIC I^2 Nero 197 against RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 12. For the Securitas type, see RIC I^2 Nero, 491 against RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 37.

[308] For example, compare RIC I^2 Nero, 48 to RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 44.

[309] Eric R. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 51.

[310] Contra C.M. Kraay, "The Coinage of Vindex and Galba, AD 68, and the Continuity of the Augustan Principate" *Numismatic Chronicle* 6th Series, 9 (1949): 129-149. Kraay argues against the *libertas* type as an indication for rebellion hopes of reviving the Republic. He insists rather that, along with other mint types, the rebellion envisioned a new reign by a new princeps.

The rebels' *libertas* issues accounted for nearly 10% of their overall coinage output. In the Principate, only three references to *libertas* are found prior to the civil wars, none of which can be ascribed to Nero's reign.[311] Unlike later issues from Galba, Vitellius, and Vespasian, which displayed only a few images and inscriptions, such as Libertas standing and holding *pileus* and *vindicta* with the inscription LIBERTAS PVBLICA or LIBERTAS RESTITVTA, the rebels distributed a variety of *libertas* coinage. One issue from the mint in Spain features on its obverse the legend LIBERTATI in the dative ("For liberty") with a Roman citizen wearing a toga and *pileus*, and holding up a wreath with his right hand. The toga and *pileus* were items worn by (free) citizens while the wreath–issued on 35 of the rebel's 143 coins–was awarded to those who had saved the life of a fellow-citizen or the state, the relevance to the saving of the state in relation to Nero is clear enough. The reverse displays the goddess Victory standing on a globe and holding palm branch and wreath with the inscription SPQR. The palm branch was customarily received by victors of war and had become attached to the goddess Victory from an early stage.[312] Of special interest is the globe, which with the other symbols suggests the rebel's worldwide ambitions to bring liberty through victory over Nero. This pairing of *libertas* and Victory was novel and would not be issued again. Furthermore, the rebels creatively married *libertas* to concepts such as SALVS ("Health" / "Welfare") and PAX ("Peace"). For the rebellion, SALVS and PAX were realisable benefits for Rome's citizens only through the restoration of *libertas*, and once again such a pairing would not reappear during the reigns of later emperors.

[311] RIC I^2 Augustus, 497; RIC I^2 Claudius, 97, 113.

[312] Cf. Virg. *Aen*. 5.339, 472; Sen. *Phoen*. 638.

The rebels' *libertas* coinage frequently featured the legends LIBERTAS RESTITVTA ("liberty restored") with various forms of SPQR or P R.[313] But, what did the rebels mean by "*libertas* restored"? Restored to what? The connections between *libertas* and SPQR and P R were especially strong and undoubtedly pointed to a particular time in Roman history. Specifically, the rebels sought to conjure a cultural memory related to the transitory period between the overthrow of Rome's last king and the inauguration of the Republic.

One rebel coin (RIC I^2 Civil Wars, 25) featured an image of Libertas' bust with the inscription LIBERTAS P(OPULI) R(OMANI) on the obverse. The reverse reads RESTITVTA with a pileus between two vertical daggers. The rebels' coin imitates the popular EID·MAR coin issued by Marcus Junius Brutus c. 43BCE after his assassination of Julius Caesar. EID·MAR was short for the archaic form EIDES MARTIAE, meaning, "The Ides of March", or 15 March. With Marcus Brutus as the issuer, the date was associated with his role in the assassination of Julius Caesar on 15 March, 44BCE. From its inception, the EID·MAR coin enjoyed notoriety, being one of only a few coins mentioned also in the literary sources.[314]

The context of his message is clear enough, Brutus and Cassius had liberated the fatherland from the tyrant Julius Caesar. Cicero, Brutus' political ally in the years of Julius Caesars' reign, confirms the type of character smearing launched against Caesar following his death, and the hopes of politically legitimising his assassination. In his *Philippic 2*, Cicero rejected the claim that he had a hand in the

[313] RIC I^2, 24-27, 132-133.

[314] Dio, 47.25.3: "Brutus stamped upon the coins which were being minted in his own likeness and with a cap and two daggers, indicating by this and by the inscription that he and Cassius had liberated the fatherland"

assassination of Caesar, noting however, "If I had…I would have removed monarchy (*regnum*) from the Republic, and not only the king (*regem*)".[315] Cicero clearly demarcated Caesar as a "king" (*rex*) and his government a "monarchy" (*regnum*). In the same writing, he attacked Marc Antony, charging that after the hard-fought work to expel aspirants of kingship in Rome's recent past, Antony, centuries later attempted to set up a king (*rex*) in Julius Caesar.[316]

For Cicero, cementing Caesar to the concepts of *rex* and *regnum* made the connection to Rome's past more vivid. Cicero could recast "King" Caesar in the light of King Tarquin and Marcus Brutus in the light of his descendent L. Junius Brutus, thus justifying Caesar's murder. The Bruti *gens*, as we have already seen, was well associated with stamping out monarchs even prior to Caesar's death. Cicero capitalised on this connection and consistently referenced Marcus Brutus and his conspirators as *liberatores* ("liberators").[317] This was in fact Marcus Brutus' own political tactic, and like his descendant L. Junius Brutus, he concluded that Caesar's assassination had materialised for the sake of liberating Rome. Following Caesar's murder, Marcus Brutus and Cassius were forced to flee Italy. While away, Marcus Brutus had, for example, intended *in absentia* to stage the *Brutus* at the Apollinarian games in 44BCE (6-13 July), a play re-enacting his descendant's role in exiling King Tarquin.[318] The play was aimed at garnering popular support by linking the murder

[315] Cic., *Phil*., 2.34.

[316] Cic., *Phil*., 2.87 (*quod fas non est, rex Romae constitueretur*).

[317] Cic. *Phil*. 2.31 (x2); 2.89; 2.114.

[318] Cic. *Phil*. 10.9.

of Caesar with Tarquin's expulsion.[319] On this point, Cicero connected Marcus Brutus and his conspirators to that of the ancient Brutus, explaining:

> "These men [Caesar's assassins] did what no one else had done before them. For Brutus [L. Brutus] made war against Tarquin, but only during the time when kings were allowed in Rome. Spurius Cassius, Spurius Maelius, and Marcus Manlius were killed because of suspicions that they aspired towards kingship. But these men [Caesar's assassins] were the first to respond with swords and not attack someone for merely desiring kingship, but instead attacked a ruling king".[320]

Marcus Brutus' own coinage also reveals his political interests in promoting his family lineage and connection to *libertas*. One coin type (RRC 433/1) issued by Brutus featured images of his descendants Lucius Brutus and Servilius Ahala, the latter a descendant on his mother's side. L. Junius Brutus, as we have already seen, had exiled King Tarquin, and Ahala had killed Spurius Maelius, an aspiring monarch, in 439BCE. Cicero, after being accused of instigating the Brutii brothers (Marcus and Decimus Brutus) in Caesar's murder, told his accusers to look no further than the *imagines maiorum*, wax-images of ancestors, in the brother's home. He recounts, "[B]oth saw Lucius Brutus' *image* every day, and one of them also Ahala's…". Another coin issued by Brutus contained the bust of Libertas with the inscription LIBERTAS on the obverse. The reverse displays L. Junius Brutus walking left between two lictors carrying the *fasces* and preceeded by an *accensus*, with the legend BRVTVS in exergue. The image recalled L. Junius Brutus's role as first consul after he secured liberty and transitioned the government to the Republic.

It is with this interest in *libertas* that Brutus issued his EID·MAR coin. The death of Caesar had to be legitimised and reckoning him "king" (*rex*) enabled the

[319] Cic. *Att*. 16.5.1.

[320] Cic. *Phil*. 2.114.

historical memory of Tarquin and Lucius Brutus' victory over him to be recapitulated for the present cause. And in the same way, the rebels of 68-69CE brought that memory again to the fore, but this time with different characters. For the rebels, the new typological Lucius or Marcus Brutus had been found in Vindex and Galba, and Nero had become typified under the same paradigm as Tarquin and Caesar, i.e. as a *rex* (in a pejorative sense). LIBERTAS RESTITVTA with the cap and daggers on rebel coinage meant to elicit a "cultural memory" that connected the rule of Nero to that experience of early Romans subjected to the despotism of Tarquinius Superbus, and the rule of kingship more generally.

As mentioned earlier, the theme of *libertas* appeared on only three coin types (one of Augustus and two of Claudius) in the Principate prior to 68CE, and was produced in significant volumes during Galba's reign (72/521 issues, i.e. 13.82%), and relatively less in Vitellius' reign (10/177 types, i.e. 5.65%). While Vespasian issued higher quantities of *libertas* types (29/610 issues from 69-71CE, i.e. 4.75%) in the first four years of his reign, with significant tapering occurring throughout those years, the type disappears completely after 74CE only to reappear once in 81CE under Titus, and then consistently under Trajan in 96CE. Moreover, *libertas* was not a localised political agenda attaching to those areas governed by Vindex and Galba, but in fact can be found at various (and opposing) uprisings across the empire, most notably in coinage of Clodius Macer in Africa.[321] As such, the theme of *libertas* and its association with the tyranny/ kingship of Nero was widespread throughout the

[321] For example, RIC I^2 Clodius Macer, 6. The legend on the obverse reads: L CLODI MACRI LIBERATRIX S C ("Liberator L. Clodius Macer // Senatus Consultus"). The coin displays the bust of Africa, draped and facing right, wearing a head-dress. The reverse lists the name of Macer's legion, which is also connected to *libertas*: MACRIANA LIB[ERATRIX] LEG. I.

empire. In fact, the Gospel of Mark and its author's clear aversion to kingship may be directly influenced by this phenomenon, which falls within the generally agreed upon dating of Mark, i.e. 69-75CE (though I argue for a date of 69CE in Chp. 1).

Popular Contact with the *Rex*

The cultural memory surrounding kingship generally, and the expulsion of the *gens Tarquinia*, the birth of the Republic, and *libertas* particularly, were regularly before the public consciousness. The statue of L. Brutus, for example, which stood among the statues of Rome's seven kings on the Capitoline Hill, would have reminded the passer-by of the liberties afforded Rome due to his actions. In fact, Plutarch reports that the statue, which postured L. Brutus with sword drawn in hand, presented a powerful message to "assure that he had resolutely dethroned Tarquin".[322]

The yearly civic festival of *Regifugium*[323] would have further highlighted the exile of the *gens Tarquinia* from Rome. The festival, as recorded on numerous *Fasti*,[324] occurred each year on 24 February and was followed by the *Equirria* to signal the closure of a year and the beginning of a new one. The details of the festival are highly uncertain. Ovid connects the festival to the exile of Tarquinius Superbus. Plutarch's account in *Roman Questions* 63 (=279c6-d9)–if in fact referring to the *Regifugium*–describes a performance in which the "*rex sacrorum*" (ῥῆγι

[322] Plut. *Brut*. 1.1; Also, see the helpful study by J.D. Evans, "Statues of the Kings and Brutus on the Capitoline", *OpRom* 18 (1990): 99-105.

[323] The fullest study of the *Regifugium* remains V. Basanoff, *Regifugium: La fuite du roi, Histoire et mythe* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1943).

[324] *InscrIt* 13.2, 1, 10, 22, 42, 43; Cf. BNP, *"Regifugium*".

σακρώρουμ) flees as fast as he can from the *Comitium* following a "sacrifice". While Plutarch makes reference to how "the Romans drove-out their kings altogether" (Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ παντάπασι τοὺς βασιλεῖς ἐκβαλόντες), there remains no explicit mention of the *Regifugium* or Tarquinius Superbus. Plutarch could very well be referring to the two dates on the calendar marked *QRCF* (i.e. 24 March and 24 May) associated with a "sacrifice", the "flight of the king" and the *Comitium*.[325] However, connecting the "flight" during the *Regifugium* to Tarquinius Superbus seems to have been the more common explanation in antiquity.[326] Moreover, for Ovid, 24 February had particular connections to Julius Caesar and the introduction of his new calendric system of intercalation, i.e. 24 February was repeated on leap years and may indicate "the historical 'repetition' of the two Bruti and their attempts to remove either a king or someone thought to be aiming at kingship".[327] Ovid, in this instance, may be telling the ancient story of Tarquinius Superbus and Lucretia, but he insists on nodding to the more recent past by bringing Caesar implicitly into the narrative. At another point, Ovid describes the moment Lucretia drops to her death, after having stabbed herself, by remarking that she was careful not to fall in an "indecent manner" (*moriens ne non procumbat honeste*).[328] This language echoes the tradition following

[325] The ancient sources disagree on the meaning of *QRCF*, i.e. either *quando rex comitiauit fas* or *quando rex comitio fugerat* , and its connection to the *Regifugium* or Tarquinius Superbus. Cf. Varro Ling. 6.31; Ovid Fasti 5.727. For a helpful examination of the problem, see G. Radke, *Fasti Romani. Betrachtungen zur Frühgeschichte des römischen Kalendars* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1990), 49-56;Jorg Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 76-79.

[326] E.g. Auson. *Ec*. 23.13: *nec Regifugium pulsis ex urbe tyrannis laetum Romanis fas reticere diem*.; Paul. Fest. p. 347L: *Regifugium sacrum dicebant, quo die rex Tarquinius fugerit e Roma*; *Fasti Polemii Silvii* (=*IscripIt* 13.2, 43): *cum Tarquinius Superbus fertur ab urbe explusus*.

[327] Matthew Robinson, *A Commentary on Ovid's Fasti, Book 2* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 437; see also 434.

[328] Ov. *Fast*. 2.833.

Caesar's assassination, where he too is said to have fallen "decently" (*honestius*) upon being stabbed.[329] Ovid's work relates the various memories that the yearly *Regifugium* might elicit for those celebrating the event, and it is clear to see how this festival might call to mind the ancient odium of the *gens Tarquinia* and the transition period associated with L. Brutus and *libertas*, but also the more recent politics of Julius Casear (and M. Brutus's response), an accused aspirant of kingship. Therefore, the Romans were frequently exposed to the ideas of kingship, its history at Rome, and its subsequent dismantling in favour of a *libera res publica*.

A Brief Conclusion

The oscillation between positive and negative views of the rex at Rome has problematised scholarship on the subject. However, as I have attempted to show, the *odium regni* was most visible in the late Republic and into the Principate as a tool of political invective–especially during periods of war (either civil or foreign)–to criticise opponents/enemies by connecting them to anti-republican sentiments, namely accusing those enemies of aspirations towards *regnum*.[330] More pointedly, from 68-74CE, the theme of *libertas*–i.e. the antithesis to the subjugation by any *regna*–was procured for propagandistic purposes by rebel forces and subsequent emperors (with the exception of Otho). This propaganda was utilised to delegitimise opponents by suggesting they had returned to a *regnum* in the vein of Tarquinius

[329] Cf. Val. Max. 4.5.6 *ne tribus quidem et viginti vulneribus quin verecundiae obsequeretur absterreri potuit, si quidem utraque togam manu demisit, ut inferior pars corporis tecta collaberetur*; Suet. *Div. Iul*. 82.2 *simul sinistra manu sinum ad ima crura deduxit, quo honestius caderet etiam inferiore corporis parte velata*; App. Bell. Civ. 2.117 μετὰ δὲ τὴν Βρούτου πληγήν,. . . . εἴτε ἀπογινώσκοντα ἤδη, τὸ ἱμάτιον περικαλύψασθαι καὶ πεσεῖν εὐσχημόνως παρὰ ἀνδριάντι.

[330] Cf. Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, 55. Syme's remarks are especially relevant, "The terms 'rex' and 'regnum' belong to the vocabulary of Roman political invective…".

Superbus and sought to diminish the *libertas* acquired by L. Brutus. At the same time, the message of *libertas* was used to legitimise one's campaign by displaying a commitment to Republican values and aims. The rise of *libertas* during this unstable time naturally affected the empire's communication and definition concerning kingship, and the *rex* once again fell under a negative shadow. It is within this background that I will, in the next chapter, situate Mark's gospel and suggest as the reasoning behind Mark's aversion to associating his key figure, Jesus, with kingship.

Chapter 3

Explicit Kingship in Mark: Invective and Praise

Introduction

In the last chapter, I sought to provide a background to the concepts of kingship at Rome. I challenged assumed conceptions of the *odium regni* at Rome and argued that throughout Roman history kingship was variously interpreted, and often dependent upon the political situation of the time. While the Roman gods and early kings were often praised, it was within the context of civil and provincial wars that the *odium regni* found currency and could be optimised for political purposes by those attempting to slander their political opponents, both at home and abroad. By calling the *odium regni* to popular consciousness, a political opponent could be accused of transgressing political optics of Republican freedom, most notably the *libertas* afforded to all Roman citizens. A transgression against *libertas* would recall Rome's tyrannical history of Tarquinius Superbus, the heroic actions of Junius Brutus, and the advent of Republican Rome.

I argued that near the time Mark was writing his gospel (69CE), the rebellion faction, led by Vindex and then Galba, challenged Neronian despotism with accusations marking anti-*libertas* sentiments. The proliferation of *libertas* on the coinage distributed by the rebels and Galba show a marked interest in reclaiming Republican values, especially *libertas*, which was under threat by Nero. The rebels' insistence to confer the power of the state back to the Roman people and Senate could be insured only by usurping the power from Nero and ensuring that others like him would not rise. Aligning Nero with the *gens* Tarquinia and Julius Caesar–most notably the imitation coin of Brutus and Cassius–explains why the *odium regni* at

Rome reemerged. In effect, the *odium regni* of the civil war spills over into Mark's world, prompting not only Mark's reticence to call Jesus "king"– for such an interpretation would align him with the likes of Nero and Tarquinius, i.e. with despots–but also allowing him the flexibility to use kingship discourse to align characters in his own narrative with historical memories of well-known despots. In this chapter, I will examine Mark's explicit use of βασιλεύς ("king") and its derivatives in Mark's gospel to show how the author's reluctance to use kingship language may be influenced by the historical context of the Roman civil war of 68-69CE. The term βασιλεύς occurs twelve times in Mark's gospel: five times during the episode of "John's Martyrdom" (Mk. 6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27), once briefly in Mark 13:9, and six times in the "Passion Narrative" (Mk. 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32). Interestingly, when Mark employs the term in "John's Martyrdom" and Mk. 13:9 it is explicitly unfavourable. Mark's passion narrative, however, permits space for ambiguity regarding Jesus' kingship, and this will be explored.

Markan "Kingship" as Invective

Heads Will Roll: "King" Herod Antipas[1] in Mark 6:14-29

The first use and cluster (5x) of the term βασιλεύς occurs in Mark's episode of John's martyrdom (Mk. 6:14-29), which is an intercalation[2] between Jesus' sending of the disciples into ministry (Mk. 6:6b-13) and their return (Mk. 6:30). The use of intercalation here mitigates against the view that this section does not correlate

[1] Throughout this section, I opt for naming the "king", "Herod Antipas" to mitigate any confusion with other Herod's.

[2] See Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 117.

well with the immediate Markan context, but rather displays an author awkwardly filling space with Herod Antipas's fears about Jesus and John the Baptist's death because he is unaware of Jesus' historical life between the interval of the disciples' mission.[3] However, as noted in chapter 1, an intercalation creates a corollary between stories with each helping interpret the other, while making "an entirely new point". [4] James Edwards notes that intercalations are displayed to highlight major motifs of the Markan story, but "especially the meaning of faith, discipleship, bearing witness, and the dangers of apostasy…".[5] In step with Edwards, the intercalation of Mk.6:14-29 is structured around the theme of discipleship and its consequential effects of suffering. In fact, the last Mark's audience hears of John the Baptist[6] prior to this episode is of his "arrest" (παραδίδωμι; Mk. 1:14) at the end of Mark's prologue (Mk. 1:1-15). Immediately following the prologue (Mk. 1:16-20), Jesus sees and calls the first disciples to follow him. Such a connection is not incidental. At various junctures, Mark clearly correlates John's (very abbreviated) story with that of Jesus, and his disciples.[7] In addition, the themes of discipleship and

[3] C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Cambridge: CUP, 1959), 206; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark: A Commentary on the Gospel* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; London: SPCK, 1975), 132; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 158. Hooker notes, "There seems no logical connection between the two themes [sending of the disciples and their return and the account of Herod], but somewhat artificial insertion provides an interlude for the disciples to complete their mission". Cf. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* 1.344. Further mitigating against such a view is the subtheme related to food. It is not coincidental that a drunken feast with John's head as *le plat principal* comes directly before the feeding of the 5,000 (Mk. 6:31-44) where Jesus blesses, breaks, and gives bread. Marcus suggests this is "seen as a kind of demonic eucharist". Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 403.

[4] The divisions of this section are affirmed by Mark's use of ἀποστέλλειν ("to send") at v. 7 and οἱ ἀπόστολοι ("sent ones") at v. 30. Scholars have often linked v. 30, incorrectly it seems, with the miracle feeding of the 5,000 (Mk. 6.31-44). Cf. Lohmeyer, *Markus*, 122–23; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 1.345; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 336.

[5] James R. Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches", 196.

[6] However, "John's disciples" do make a brief cameo at Mk. 2:18.

suffering are highlighted by Mark with a pattern that works chronologically from John to Jesus and then Jesus to the disciples.

John foreshadows the life of Jesus in a way that Jesus foreshadows the future life of his disciples. This link is explicit in the repetition of the preaching ministry and suffering attributed to all of these characters. For example, in Mk. 1:4, John is "in the wilderness, *proclaiming* a baptism of *repentance* for the forgiveness of sins" (my emphasis; κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) while Jesus, immediately following John's exit from the narrative (Mk. 1:14), is "*proclaiming* the good news of God, saying…*repent* and believe in the good news" (my emphasis; Mk. 1:14-15; κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ... μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ). When Jesus sends the disciples to begin their work in his ministry, Mark notes that they too "*proclaimed* that all should *repent*" (my emphasis; Mk. 6:12; ἐκήρυξαν ἵνα μετανοῶσιν). In each instance, the mantle of proclamation for repentance is passed from one character to the next.

Likewise, Mark describes John's arrest with the aor. pass. inf. of παραδίδωμι ("to be handed over into custody").[8] This same language is later utilised by Mark in his description of Jesus' betrayal by Judas Iscarot (Mk. 3:19; 14:10, 11, 21, 42, 44), who sets the events of Jesus' passion into motion, and the disciples, who will be "handed over" to "councils…governors and kings" (Mk. 13:9) to suffer persecution in the near future. However, it is Jesus who suffers presently, being "handed over" to

[7] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4-8: Reading and Rereading" *JBL* 112 (1993): 222; Mary Beavis, *Mark*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 105. Most commentators note the connection between John and Jesus, but only some link the disciples in this Markan pattern.

[8] BDAG, s.v. "παραδίδωμι", par. 1.b. Perhaps, drawing from the Lat. *trado* as a technical term for the police or courts.

councils (Mk. 14:55; 15:1), religious leaders (Mk. 14:10, 11), and the "governor"[9] (Mk. 15:1, 10, 15); all of which will foreshadow the disciple's future persecution as explained in Mk. 13:9. The disciples' future suffering is already matched by the suffering of Mark's Jesus in the present. But, Jesus' suffering is also proleptically marked by John's suffering from the start of the gospel, and here in Mk. 6:14-29. John too foreshadows the suffering of the disciples under "kings" in Mk. 13:9 as he is murdered by "*King* Herod". However, even in light of these foreshadows, Marcus correctly notes that "John plays an extraordinarily minor role in the story of his death".[10]

The main thrust of Mark's episode appears in the opening verses (vv. 14-16) and is twofold:[11] first, Mk. 6:14-16 is used to introduce the audience to "King Herod" (ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρῴδης), who will play the dominant role throughout the pericope. To this point in the narrative, Mark has only familiarized the audience with Herod Antipas's supporters (Mk. 3:6), a group negatively charactarised by Mark as colluding in attempts to murder Jesus (cf. Mk. 12:13). Mark will also later warn

[9] Mark only uses the Greek term ἡγεμών once at Mk. 13:9 when referring to "governors". However, while Matthew's parallel (Mk. 10:18) of Mk. 13:9 names the "governors" as ἡγεμών, Matthew also assigns the title to Pilate eight times (Matt. 27:2, 11 (x2), 14, 15, 21, 27; 28:14). This likely also reflects Mark's meaning and connection to the use of ἡγεμών as it relates to Pilate's role in Jesus' suffering. Moreover, the use of ἡγεμών is odd, but not unheard of. Josephus uses the term for Pilate only once in *AJ* 18.55, but Philo uses the more general, ὕπαρχος. In the famous "Pilate Stone", found in 1961 at Caesarea, Pilate is named *praefectus Iudaeae* ("prefect of Judaea"), thus showing that his role was subordinate to the legate of Syria, and that "he was not a governor in charge of an independent province Iudaea". See commentary on *CIIP* 1277.

[10] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 403. Marcus explains that unlike the martyrdoms of figures found in 2 and 4 Maccabees or the story of Stephen in Acts, John is abruptly murdered without confronting or conferring judgement on his killer.

[11] Contra Ross S. Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias and Her Daughter in the Death of John the Baptizer: A (Christian) Theological Strategy?", *JBL* 125.2 (2006): 321-349. Kraemer argues that the entire episode functions as a Christian apology aiming to confirm that Jesus could not be John the Baptist resurrected.

against the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (Mk. 8:15).[12] Clearly, Mark's overall characterization of Herod Antipas is negative, but unlike Matthew's presentation of him, Herod Antipas himself is not a clear threat to Jesus.[13] Second, the identity of Jesus (ὄνομα αὐτοῦ), whose noteriety had "become openly known" (φανερὸν... ἐγένετο), comes to the fore and drives Herod Antipas's questioning regarding Jesus, about whom he has begun to hear rumours. For some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, thus explaining the powers at work in Jesus' ministry; others that he was Elijah, and still others that he was one of the "prophets of old". Herod Antipas assumed the first option was true, and by connecting John and Jesus to the language of "power" (δύναμαι), Mark once more reminds the audience of John's proclamation about Jesus, the "mightier one" (Mk. 1:9; ὁ ἰσχυρότερός).[14]

Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, served as tetrarch over Galilee and Peraea from 4 BCE – 39 CE. Mark, however, titles Herod Antipas a "king" (Mk. 6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27), though he is correctly "tetrarch" (τετραάρχης) in Matthew (14:1) and Luke (3:19; 9:7) [And of course in historical fact].[15] Some commentators

[12] The metaphor of yeast is not developed in Mark and therefore its meaning is difficult to decipher. However, its attachment to the Pharisees along with the double imperatives "to be alert" (ὁράω) and "beware" (βλέπω) heighten the negativity of Herod Antipas.

[13] In Matthew, Jesus' reaction to his disciples' report about John's death is followed by Jesus' departure to a deserted place (Mt. 14:13: Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκεῖθεν ἐν πλοίῳ εἰς ἔρημον τόπον κατ' ἰδίαν). Mark's Jesus also departs to the desert following John's death, but it is not due to John's death; rather the disciples needed rest following a busy itinerant schedule, which afforded them, "no leisure even to eat" (Mk. 6:31).

[14] While δύναμαι carries the connotations of "being able" or "having capacity", ἰσχυρός is the acualisation of that capacity. The meanings and derivatives of these two words overlap. Cf. Walter Grundmann, "ἰσχύω, ἰσχυρός, ἰσχύς, κατισχύω", *TDNT* 3:397.

[15] The evidence for Herod Antipas referenced as "tetrarch" is overwhelming. For literary references outside of the NT, see Jos. *AJ* 17:20, 146; *BJ* 2:178, 181. See coinage, Hendin 509 – 527, which all bear various inscriptions titling Herod Antipas as "tetrarch" (HPΩΔOY TETPAPXOY or HPWΔHC TETPAPXHC). Also, note the honorific inscriptions to Herod Antipas where he is called "tetrarch": IG XII.4 (Kos), *Ins. de Délos* 1586 (Delos). Cf. Gabriella Gelardini, "The Contest for a

give little attention to the Markan detail about Herod Antipas's title, and usually consider it either a lapse in Mark's knowledge of Herod Antipas[16] or gloss the subject entirely explaining it as a popular title given to Herod Antipas by locals out of respect.[17] F.F. Bruce argues that the servants of Herod Antipas would have likely spoken Aramaic, and thus called him "*malka*…a term with a wider range of meaning than Latin *rex* or even Greek βασιλεὺς". This helps Bruce explain the interchangeability between "tetrarch" and "king" in the Synoptic gospels.[18] Van Iersel notes the irrelevance of Mark naming Herod Antipas, "king", explaining, "…this is not information likely to be in the possession of the average reader in antiquity or today, nor is it relevant to the meaning".[19] However, other scholars have recognised the literary currency that such a title creates in the narrative. Various scholars, for example, have commented on Mark's intentional ridicule of Herod

Royal Title: Herod Versus Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark (6,14-29; 15,6-15)" *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 28.2 (2011): 95-99. [15] In Luke-Acts, Herod Antipas is either titled τετραάρχης or "Herod". Matthew titles Herod similarly to Luke, but in one instance names him "king" (βασιλεὺς). However, Matthew's single instance likely reflects his own copying of Mark's version for which the core of the sentence is nearly written verbatim with the exception of two redacted compound words and deletion of γίνομαι:

Matt. 14:9	Mk. 6:26
καὶ λυπηθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς διὰ τοὺς ὅρκους καὶ τοὺς συνανακειμένους...	καὶ περίλυπος γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς διὰ τοὺς ὅρκους καὶ τοὺς ἀνακειμένους...

[16] Hooker, *St. Mark*, 159. Hooker actually calls the title a "mistake" by Mark.

[17] Henry Barclay Swete, *The Gospel according to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices* (London: MacMillan, 1913), 120; Harold Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972), 117-120, 149-150; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 211; Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark,* 133; C.S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 295; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 329; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 184; France, *Gospel of Mark*, 252; Robert H. Stein, *Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 300; Mark L. Strauss, Mark, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 261.

[18] F.F. Bruce, "Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea", *The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society* 5 (1963/65): 9.

[19] Van Iersel, *Mark*, 219.

Antipas who aspired to kingship with the urging of Herodias, but was ultimately rejected and exiled in 39 CE by emperor Gaius.[20] Most notably, Mark's wording is assigned the role of irony.[21] For Abraham Smith, Mark's gospel is riddled with irony; and what stronger sense of irony can Mark apply to this literary episode than to show Herod Antipas's willingness to forfeit up to half of his "kingdom" when he was historically exiled in pursuit of a larger kingdom (and kingship).[22] Marcus also argues that Mark's presentation of "King Herod" is ironic, and intends to draw on a "common antityrannical theme, the germ of which is present in the Old Testament" in the figures of Pharoah, Ahasuerus (Esther), and the king in Daniel.[23] Marcus further comments on the influence of the Greco-Roman background here, noting Plato's *Republic* as a key source for understanding the tyrant as a false king for his inability to control his own passions.[24] Smith, drawing on Marcus' argument, agrees that Mark may be casting Herod Antipas as a "king" type.[25] However, further into Smith's argumentation, he makes a distinction between Herod Antipas as a "king"

---

[20] See the story as told by Josephus in Jos. *AJ* 18.7.1-2.; Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 162; Marcus, Mark 1-8, 398; Also Hurtado, *Mark*, 97: "…Mark here refers to him as 'king,' very likely in mockery of his unfulfilled vanity"; Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel : text and subtext*, SNTS 72 (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 145. Camery-Hoggart further claims that while Mark does not hint at such a reading, perhaps the audience would understand the ridicule without any prompting.

[21] James W. Voelz, *Concordia Commentary: Mark 1:1–8:26* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 399.

[22] Abraham Smith, "Tyranny Exposed: Mark's Typological Characterization of Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14-29)" *Biblical Interpretation* 14, no. 3 (2006): 266.

[23] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 399.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Smith, "Tyranny Exposed", 263-266. Smith takes a few pages to explain the use of ancient *synkrisis*, marking the importance of it as a literary tool to compare character types. *Synkrisis* could take "an episode or episodes from one 'life'…to establish a pattern – an inevitable, inescapable pattern – for another".

type, and Herod Antipas the "tyrant" type. Smith continues, the "ancient king and the ancient tyrant were similar".[26]

While part of my argument will affirm much of what Smith argues, there needs to be clarity on the shades of meaning between the Greek βασιλεὺς and τύραννος, and the Roman *rex*. Smith's article does not seem to address the unique problem of Roman kingship. When Smith marks Herod Antipas out as "tyrant" type, I am not sure he has this historic problem in mind. In chapter two, I note at great length the peculiarities of Roman kingship in the ancient world. In their conquests, the Romans had come in contact with various long-established political models of kingship in the East and elsewhere. While contact with Greek tyrants and Hellenistic kings certainly influenced the development of the *odium regni* at Rome,[27] small distinctions between the ancient "tyrant" and Roman "king" are well-known in the literature.[28]

In recounting the story of Tarquinius Superbus and his exile from Rome, Cicero notes that Tarquinius's actions transformed the word "*rex*", which at one time neutrally meant "king" (i.e. during the regnal period), to mean "despot" (*rege dominus extiterit*). He continues, "For here we have a master over the people, whom the Greeks call a tyrant; for they maintain that the title of king should be given only

---

[26] Ibid, 269.

[27] Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective", (1967) 151-171; Elizabeth Rawson, "Hellenistic Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and Their Roman Equals" *JRS* 65 (1975): 148-159; Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy" (1991) ; Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 46-50.

[28] See Oswyn Murray, "Philodemus on the Good King according to Homer" *JRS* 55 (1965): 161-182, esp. 165-166. Murray notes that the "tyrant" is associated with vices of immorality, murder, etc. while the "king" is virtuous, prosperous, and devoted to protect his subjects, a distinction "common to almost all extant works of περὶ βασιλείας" (165).

to a ruler who is as solicitous for the welfare of his people as is a father for his children, and maintains in the best possible conditions of life those over whom he is set".[29] While Cicero considers such a "king" as "good", he also explains that a king's natural tendency *will always* bend towards the most corrupted state (*inclinatum et quasi pronum ad perniciosissimum statum*), namely, "tyranny". For it is in a king's mastery (*dominatus*) over people that leads to tyranny. Cicero further remarks that while Greeks can distinguish between good and bad kings by their use of βασιλεὺς and τύραννος, the Latin "*rex*" can be understood both positively and negatively (*nostri quidem omnes reges vocitaverunt, qui soli in populos perpetuam potestatem haberent*).[30] In this text, Cicero was looking for an equivalent to match the Greek βασιλεὺς – τύραννος dichotomy. While Cicero could situate the *rex* with the Greek τύραννος, the positive equivalency of the "good king" cannot be known, as this portion (fifteen lines) of Cicero's *De Republica* MSS is no longer extant. This gap in the MSS is located where Cicero offers a solution.[31] In any case, the point here is to show that the Romans were aware that shades of meaning existed between the Greek "tyrant" and Roman "king", and that Smith fails to address this distinction.[32]

I noted above that my argument is not that Smith is wrong in his evaluation (in fact, I agree with his overall assessment), but that he unnecessarily moves his argument from Herod Antipas as a "king type" to a "tyrant type", trying to show that

[29] Cic. *Rep*. 2.47.

[30] Cic. *Rep*. 2.48.

[31] Sigmund, *Königtum*, 79. Sigmund notes that Cicero likely borrowed kingship language from Plato and Aristotle, using the Greek ἡγεμών to translate into *princeps*, thus anchoring the term to Stoic philosophy. Yet, Sigmund's conclusions are certainly speculative.

[32] Cf. Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy", 120. Erskine notes, "because there is no Latin word for tyrant, it becomes easier for *rex* to absorb some of the bad connotations of the Greek τύραννος".

the latter form is the harsher of the two. It appears that Smith recognises the Greek distinctions between the "good" (βασιλεὺς) and "bad" (τύραννος) king of Greek conception, but does not allow for the uniqueness of kingship discourse at Rome, and its influence on the tyrant type. Perhaps, Smith's connection between the stock tyrant and philosopher drives this focus (cf. pp. 276-277). However, as shown in chapter two, charges of *regnum*, *tyrannis*, or *dominatus* were all constituent of political kingship invective of the Roman empire during times of political conflict. Additionally, the term βασιλεὺς could be used by Greek authors to convey the negative meaning of the *-reg* word group (i.e. the *odium regni*) typically appropriated by Latin authors.

Suetonius reports (*Iul*. 79) that during demonstrations of the people following the Latin Festival in 44 BCE, a single member of the crowd had placed a laurel wreath tied with a white *fascia*, a symbol of kingship, on Julius Caesar's statue. In response, the tribunes of the people, Epidius Marullus and Caesetius Flavus ordered that the laurel be removed and the demonstrator arrested. Suetonius writes that Caesar reportedly (*ut ferebat*) rebuked the tribunes harshly for robbing him of the glory to reject kingship. However, Suetonius's side note suggests that perhaps Caesar was actually grieved (*dolens*) because the crowd was not more positively enticed by the hint of kingship implied in the gesture. From this point on, according to Suetonius, Caesar could no longer elude rumours and charges of aspiring to kingship. These rumours persisted even though Caesar, when greeted by the people as *rex*, would reply by saying that he was Caesar, not "king" (*Caesarem se, non*

regem esse).[33] The episode is then tied to the Lupercalia of 44 BCE where Antony attempted to place a diadem on Caesar's head, another act indicating his aspirations towards kingship. In addition, Suetonius also links, in the same section, rumours spreading among the people concerning the prophecies of the Sibylline Oracles, which predicted that only a king could overthrow the Parthians, and that the title of "king" should be given to Caesar to ensure their success (Caesar was planning a campaign against Parthia in 44 BCE). This episode provides a clear link to the *odium regni* and the use of the *-reg* word group as political invective against Caesar. Still, it is how Greek sources also told this same story that interests this project.

Plutarch introduces his version (*Iul*. 60.1-2) of this story with a quick aside explaining that the most explicit hatred against Caesar stems from his "passion for royal aims" (τῆς βασιλείας ἔρως). Plutarch's language is overtly negative, drawing on Caesar's sexual lust (ἔρως) to describe his aspirations of the kingly position. Like Suetonius, Plutarch notes the Sibylline books and the prophecy of a "king" who will defeat Parthia. Again, Caesar is hailed as "king" (βασιλέα) while coming down the Alban Mount, and explains to the crowd that he is "not called king, but Caesar" (οὐκ ἔφη βασιλεύς, ἀλλὰ Καῖσαρ καλεῖσθαι). The episode of the Lupercalia takes place in the following section (*Iul*. 61), describing Antony's wish to put a diadem upon Caesar's head, but Caesar rejects. His two-fold refusal of the kingly symbol is met with cheers from "all" the crowd. Plutarch notes that Caesar's "experiment had failed". In Plutarch, it appears that Caesar's motives are to analyse the crowd and

[33] My concern here is not to answer whether Caesar attempts to evade the title by pretending to tell the crowd that they are calling him by the wrong cognomen. For this discussion see, Monroe E. Deutsch, "I am Caesar, Not Rex", *Classical Philology* 23.4 (1928): 394-398; Sigmund, *Königtum*, Chp. 3.

their response to his kingship. Had Caesar's rejection of the diadem been met with disapproval by the crowd, then perhaps he could retain the crown. Moreover, the two tribunes, "Flavius" and "Maryllus", are mentioned again as removing diadems from Caesar's statues and arresting those who had first hailed Caesar "king" (βασιλεύς). Plutarch, however, connects Flavius and Maryllus to L. Brutus, calling the pair "Brutuses" (Βρούτους) for their work. Plutarch then explains for his (unaware?) audience that "Brutus was the one who destroyed the royal dynasty" (ὅτι Βροῦτος ἦν ὁ καταλύσας τὴν τῶν βασιλέων διαδοχὴν) and restored power to the senate and people.

As shown above, the *odium regni* is clearly present in Suetonius's use of the *-reg* word group (if even ironically as a slander), and yet Plutarch, in his reporting of the same episode, does not opt for language related to τύραννος, but defaults to βασιλεύς and its cognates. This episode is further retold in other Greek sources, namely Appian, Dio Cassius, and Zonaras, and the same pattern appears, but for the sake of repetition and time, the nuances will not be further explored.[34] However, these examples should serve to show that distinctions between τύραννος and βασιλεύς existed, and that the lexical range of βασιλεύς in Greek works (i.e. like Mark) could very well serve as a one-to-one for the negative use of the *-reg* word group (i.e. the *odium regni*) found in Latin literature. In fact, the characterisation of Herod Antipas in Mk. 6:14-29 points to such a use. Kingship discourse, again in its particularly Roman form, was marked by distinctive characteristics/vices – as shown in the examples of accusations of *regnum* in chapter 2 – such as *superbia* (pride), *libido*

[34] Cf. App. *BC* 2.107-108; Dio Cass. 44.9.1-44.11.4; Zonar. 10.11.

(desire/lust), and *crudelitas* (cruelty/savagry), among others.[35] Smith is correct in his portrayal of the "stock features" of the tyrant type: (1) the tyrant's paranoia; (2) the tyrant's use of a bodyguard; (3) the tyrant's excess; and (4) the tyrant's encounter with the philosopher. The *odium regni* of Roman conception was built also from this same stock imagery as it found its foundations in both Greek and Eastern backgrounds. Smith's numerous examples citing Roman literature is proof enough of this connection. Moreover, many of the vices that will be discussed briefly here have much in common with Smith's list of the tyrant's "stock features" (though many more existed in antiquity).

In its basic form, *superbia* can be defined as pride or haughtiness. However, at least from the late Republic (and probably much earlier), *superbia* finds its background linked to the history of Tarquinius Superbus's actions in the regal period, which no doubt influences the connection of *superbia* to despotic activity at Rome rather than simply "pride".[36] Yelena Baraz, argues that *superbia* "becomes the anti-republican quality *par excellence* and this status is confirmed by the fact that it

---

[35] Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective", 168. Cf. fn. 187, chp. 2; Smith, "Tyranny Exposed", 271-277. Cicero's political invective against Verres (Cic. *Verr*. 2.2.9), for example, lists Verres's vices, among which these specific vices are numbered: "They would, in fact, have endured even Verres in silence, if only his offences had been those of an ordinary man, offences of a recognized and usual type, or, indeed, of only a single sort, no matter what. But finding his luxury and his cruelty, his greed and his pride, beyond their power of endurance; finding all the privileges and rights and benefits ever granted them by the Roman senate and nation reft from them by the wickedness and lust of one man…" (*Hunc denique ipsum pertulissent, si humano modo, si usitato more, si denique uno aliquo in genere peccasset. Sed cum perferre non possent luxuriem, crudelitatem, avaritiam, superbiam, cum omnia sua commoda, iura, beneficia senatus populique Romani unius scelere ac libidine perdidissent*).

[36] Yelena Baraz, "From Vice to Virtue: The Denigration and Rehabilitation of Superbia at Ancient Rome" in *KAKOS: Badness and Anti-Value in Classical Antiquity*, eds. Ralph M. Rosen, Ineke Sluiter (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 382. Cicero (*Phil*. 3.9) links the etymology of the word to Tarquin, noting, "And this Tarquin that our ancestors did not endure was reckoned and called not 'the cruel' or 'the impious', but '"the proud"' (*Atque ille Tarquinius quem maiores nostri non tulerunt non crudelis, non impius, sed superbus*). See also Livy 1.49.1: "Now began the reign of Lucius Tarquinius, whose conduct procured him the surname of Superbus, or the Proud" (*Inde L. Tarquinius regnare occepit, cui Superbo cognomen facta indiderunt*).

is frequently found in conjunction with accusations of aiming at *regnum*".[37] In an important section of her study, Baraz examines Livy with the hopes of understanding how Tarquin's behaviour and actions help to produce a negative message of the term *superbia*. She begins by noting Livy's first important feature of *superbia*, as it relates to Tarquin, namely "the desire to maintain one's superiority…by removing all possibility of competition".[38] Immediately following Livy's introduction of Tarquin (49.2), where Tarquin's "*conduct* procured him the surname of *Superbus*" (my emphasis; *cui Superbo cognomen facta indiderunt*), the audience is told that Tarquin "put to death the leading senators". Livy then recounts that senators were further reduced by Tarquin's unjust legal rulings, and yet he made no new appointments to the senate. Baraz comments, "Once true superiority is removed from the field, it is easier for the unworthy to have their claims appear valid".[39] This initial use of *superbia* is clearly set within the realm of the political sphere. However, Baraz notes that the rape of Lucretia by Tarquin's son, Sextus, provides a social and sexual perspective to the displacement of the superior figure by the inferior.

While scholars have primarily focused on Sextus's rape of Lucretia as sexual,[40] Baraz explains that Livy presents the rape as a lapse in the norms of Roman social hierarchy. While Sextus and Collantinus (Lucretia's husband) were on furlough from the battle in Ardea, Livy records that the topic of wives was discussed among the pair and others.[41] Each man regaled with drunken praises of their wives,

---

[37] Ibid., 382-383.

[38] Ibid., 384.

[39] Ibid.

[40] There is certainly a sexual element here, as Livy (1.57.10) notes, "not only her beauty, but her proved chastity as well, provoked him" (*cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat*).

and a bet was set to surprise their wives and to test their "natural disposition / character" (*ingenia*). All of the wives were found at banquet that night, "whiling away the time" (*tempus terentes*) while Lucretia, toiling in wool-works by lamp, won the "contest of womanly virtues" (*muliebris certaminis laus*). As a royal, Sextus believes the greatest of everything ought to be apportioned to him, including the ideal matron, and "sets out to restore the balance" by "displacing her from that position of virtue".[42] Sextus threatens to posthumously disgrace Lucretia by killing a slave and laying her dead body next to his as though caught and convicted of adultery. The play between the free Lucretia and the slave is clear. Sextus is willing to forego social boundaries to achieve his end goal. Baraz reads Lucretia "symbolically as standing in for the abused dignity of the aritstocracy…reflective of the tyrants' attitude to the freedom of their subjects".[43] Here, the *superbia* of Sextus is exemplified. For the Tarquin family, drive for personal interests overrides concern for public interests of republican norms and values of society.

Cicero, however, links Lucretia's rape to Tarquin's inability to "rule either his own conduct or the *lustful desires* of his family" (my emphasis; *neque suos mores regere poterat neque suorum libidines*), and consequently associates *libido* with the downfall of kingly rule into despotism. In chapter 2, I attempted to display this form of *libido* when discussing Verres, who Cicero casts as a type of polygynist eastern monarch who cannot control his own *libido*. So in one sense, there is a strong connection to the sexual nature of the word. However, *libido*, when applied to

[41] Livy 1.57.6-11.

[42] Baraz, "From Vice to Virtue", 385.

[43] Ibid., 386.

political invective can also mean "despotic caprice, which characterizes rule according to the desire of one man".[44] For example, Cicero can charge the *decemviri* with *libidines* in "all their governmental acts"[45] (*libidinoseque omni imperio*) and negatively link *libido* with a royal *potestas*.[46] Dunkle notes that *lex* ("law"), the ruling principle of republican government, represents everything that *libido* is not; since *lex* could protect citizens from the whims of a despotic ruler.[47] Such whims were characteristic of the "cruelty" (*crudelitas*) often displayed by despots.

In numerous examples of chapter 2, the charges of "cruelty" paired with aspirations of *regnum* are numerous, and I will only note a few examples. In Cicero's *Rab. Perd.*, Rabirius's sentence of crucifixion for his *perduellio* conviction is cited as especially "cruel". Cicero charges that Labienus (the defence) finds his inspiration for such torture from architect of cruelty, Tarquin.[48] For Cicero, such punishment is archaic, belonging to the times of the regal period. In fact, Porcian laws protected Roman citizens against such sentences, yet the law was not being upheld by the prosecutor. It is this illegitimacy and unjust sentencing that makes the act particularly cruel. Similarly, the charge against Cicero's aims at *regnum*, stem foremost from accusations of his cruelty towards the Catiline conspirators. It was not the executions themselves that earn Cicero his charge *crudelitas*, but rather his failure to utilise the

[44] Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective", 168.

[45] Cic. *Rep*. 2.63: (of Ptolemy) "If there is anyone, gentlemen of the jury, who1 thinks that Gaius Rabirius is deserving of censure for having submitted a fortune so eminently well invested and established as his own to the power and caprice of a king…" (*Si quis est, iudices, qui C. Rabirium, quod fortunas suas fundatas praesertim atque optime constitutas potestati regiae libidinique commiserit*)

[46] Cic. *Rab. Post.* 1.

[47] Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective", 168.

[48] Cic. *Rab. Perd*. 12.

appropriate judicial process to prosecute, convict, and execute punishment. These charges are presented as regal since the mediator of justice acts arbitrarily without a counterbalance or accountability.

Charges of *superbia*, *libido*, and *crudelitas* are evident in Mark's presentation of Herod Antipas (as will be shown below), and represent Mark's attempts to cast Herod Antipas in terms of the *odium regni*. However, scholars have noted that Mark provides a more empathetic characterisation of Herod Antipas than the other gospels.[49] Could such a view be sustained if Mark's motive is to charge Herod Antipas with a negatively-loaded use of kingship discourse?

The synoptic gospels vary in their approach and presentation of Herod Antipas. I will begin with Luke for his brevity on Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas first appears in Luke (3:19-20) to explain why John's was imprisoned. Luke's characterisation of Herod Antipas is explicitly negative as he is condemned by John for "all the evil things" that he had done; but, as Luke notes, an especially wicked act was Herod Antipas's imprisonment of John.[50] Additionally, Herodias is only peripherally mentioned as the cause for John's initial rebuke against Herod Antipas, with no mention of her ill-will towards John. Later in the narrative, Luke's reporting of John's execution is brief (Lk. 9:9) with Herod Antipas' admission of murder clearly stated, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?". However, both Mark and Matthew, connecting the episode of John's earlier imprisonment (Mk. 1:14; Mt. 4:12), retell the account with more elaborate details in

[49] See, for example, Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, WBC 33B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 410. Hagner argues that the result of Matthew extensive changes provide a "much more negative view of Herod than in the Markan account (cf. too the omission of Mark 6:20b)".

[50] Luke's Septuagintalism, προσέθηκεν καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ πᾶσιν connects Herod Antipas's more general evil acts of v. 19 to the wicked act perpetrated in John's imprisonment at v. 20.

the form of flashbacks.[51] Nevertheless, Matthew has significantly abbreviated Mark's account by 129 words (301 words in Mark and only 172 in Matthew).[52]

Both gospels agree that (1) John's imprisonment stems from his criticism of Herod Antipas's marriage to Herodias (Mk. 6:17-18; Mt. 14:3-4); (2) the question of John's execution arises during Herod Antipas's "birthday celebration" (γενέσια; Mk. 6:21; Mt. 14:6); (3) either Herod Antipas's daughter (see below), named Herodias, or Herodias's daughter dances for Herod Antipas and his guests provoking him to fulfill whatever wish she requests (Mk. 6:21-22; Mt. 14:6-7); (4) Herodias prompts the daughter to ask for John's head (Mk. 6:24; Mt. 14:8); (5) John's head is given to the daughter on a platter, and at once transfers it to Herodias (Mk. 6:28; Mt. 14:11); (6) John's disciples retrieve and bury their leaders' body. However, while there are clearly points of agreeance between the kernel of the story in Mark and Matthew, Matthew makes subtle changes to the narrative. For example, Matthew's characterisation of Herod Antipas and Herodias is interesting.

In Mark's narrative, Herodias's grudge against John's condemnation sparks a desire in her to "kill him [John]" (Mk. 6:19), though Herodias is prevented on account of Herod Antipas's fear of John, the "just and holy man" (οὐκ ἠδύνατο...ὁ γὰρ Ἡρῴδης ἐφοβεῖτο τὸν Ἰωάννην εἰδὼς αὐτὸν ἄνδρα δίκαιον καὶ ἅγιον). In Matthew's version, Herod Antipas "desired to kill him [John]", but out of his fear for the crowd, who recognised John as a prophet, refrained (Matt. 14:5). This latter account seems to square well historically with Josephus, who reports that Herod

[51] See Voelz, *Mark1:1-8:26*, 396 fn. 3 for linguistic patterns associated with this Markan flashback.

[52] The sheer length of this Markan pericope adequately speaks to its importance in the entirety of Mark's gospel.

Antipas murders John in fear of John inciting political rebellion.[53] However, Mark hints at some of the underlying meaning expressed explicitly in both Matthew and Josephus. Mark has Herod Antipas's response at verse 16 mimic the language of verse 14, where some were saying that "John had been raised", which accounts for Jesus' "powers".

In this section, as noted above, John is not the concern of Mark's Herod Antipas, but rather Jesus is. Herod Antipas's awareness ("King Herod heard of it") that Jesus' name and his powers were becoming known intimates to readers Herod Antipas's own political fears concerning Jesus' rise. Mark again purposefully casts Jesus in John's light. John's own popularity is clearly articulated in Mk. 1:4 where "the *whole* Judean countryside and *all* the people of Jerusalem" (my emphasis; πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμῖται πάντες) were going to him for a baptism of repentance. In Mark, Herod Antipas foresees in Jesus another growing political threat that must be hampered. However, Marcus notes that reconciling Mark and Josephus's accounts are too insurmountable.[54] Yet, Stein convincingly suggests that it would be "natural for Josephus to concentrate on the political grounds for John's death and for Mark to focus on the moral and religious ones".[55] Still, Mark seems to at least hint at the political implications evoked in this episode even if choosing to bring the moral and religious elements more into focus.

As examined above, *superbia*, in its political understanding, is foremost concerned with maintaining one's superiority by eliminating all potential threats to

[53] Jos. *AJ* 18.116-118. Moreover, unlike Mark or Matthew, Josephus notes that some Jews believe Herod Antipas's loss in the war against Aretas was due to his ill-treatment of John.

[54] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 399-400.

[55] Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, 303.

that superiority. However, the true superior figure must be eliminated to legitimise the inferior one. In Herod Antipas's encounter, first with John and then Jesus, Mark uses kingship discourse to show that Herod Antipas embodies this quality of the "king", who recognised in John and recognises in Jesus a growing renown and power – renown and power due, in Herod Antipas's assessment, to the "king" alone. However, while Mark stages Herod Antipas as one who is powerful, i.e. the active agent in John's arrest,[56] he is also *literarily* castrated by Herodias.

In Mark's use of Herodias, Mark does not attempt to shift responsibility away from Herod Antipas only to place it upon Herodias. Rather, Herod Antipas accepts responsibility for John's execution even before the flashback (v. 16; "John, whom I beheaded..."). The flashback serves to recount the underlying circumstances surrounding John's murder, but also to reflect upon Mark's own characterisation of Herod Antipas. By allying Herodias to typically masculine features – e.g. her ability to navigate a dangerous political situation[57] – Mark exposed ancient masculine fears of feminine power.[58] The "king" is outwitted and outmaneuvered, no less by Herodias, his wife! However, the narrative does not mean to emphasise Herodias's strength, but rather Herod Antipas's weakness, and such a contrast exposes not Herodias, but Herod Antipas's empty power. He is a fraud, and can only be made superior to the central figures of the story (John and Jesus) by eliminating them as political threats. He perfectly embodies the *superbia* that kingship discourse entails.

---

[56] The initial pronoun (αὐτός) of Mk. 6:17 is likely emphatic and stresses the responsibility and action were initiated by Herod Antipas.

[57] Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 186. Edwards helpfully states, "Herodias nurses her antipathy against John with shrewd and calculating patience..."

[58] Jennifer A. Glancy, "Unveiling Masculinity: The Construction of Gender in Mark 6:17-29" *BibInt* 2.1 (1994): 37; Alice Bach, "Calling the Shots: Directing Salomè's Dance of Death" *Semeia* 74 (1996): 110.

In this way, Herod Antipas is hardly presented in a light that can be deemed more favourable than the other gospels. However, to ignore Mark's sympathetic notes concerning Herod Antipas would also be negligent.

The Markan narrator gives the audience insight to Herodias's inner processing as she schemes against John. The narrator reveals a level of innocence on Herod Antipas's part (Mk. 6:20), explaining that Herod Antipas not only feared John, "knowing" (οἶδα) that he was a "just" (δίκαιος) and "holy" (ἅγιος) man, but also that he "protected" (συντηρέω) John (presumably from Herodias) and "gladly listened to him" (ἡδέως αὐτοῦ ἤκουεν). Likewise, upon learning of the dancing girl's request for John's head on a platter (Mk. 6:26), Mark notes, "The king became grieved beyond measure" (περίλυπος γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς). These emotionally charged and positively depicted words and scenarios purposely present to the audience a split-minded Herod Antipas. Marcus helpfully captures the climax of the episode when he explains that the ambivalent Herod Antipas is going through a "crucial test of his soul".[59] I also agree with Marcus that Herod has the opportunity, in his lofty position as "king", to deny the girl's request, but chooses against it. However, for Mark, the ambivalence of Herod Antipas is crucial to his narrative since it displays not only Herod Antipas's weakened character, but also his transition from a relatively good leader to a despotic one.

While scholars have naturally given much attention to the cruelty and ambivalence of Herod Antipas displayed in this episode, few have recognised the importance of the *banquet's* connection to these themes. In fact, the banquets of Nero – a contemporaneous figure with our Markan author who, I have argued, is

[59] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 403.

well in Mark's mind while writing (see chp. 1 and 2) – were remembered in historical sources as the liminal stage between childish excessiveness and pure despotism.[60] Suetonius, for example, reports Nero's change:

> "…at first his [Nero's] acts of wantonness, lust, extravagance, avarice and cruelty were gradual and secret, and might be condoned as follies of youth…little by little, however, as his vices grew stronger, he dropped jesting and secrecy and with no attempt at disguise openly broke out into worse crime…Sometimes he closed the inlets and banqueted in public in the great tank, in the Campus Martius, or in the Circus Maximus, waited on by harlots and dancing girls from all over the city".[61]

Dio reports a similar shift in Nero while conterminously considering the degeneration of his relationship with his advisors, Seneca and Burrus, "the most influential of the men at Nero's court".[62] Seneca and Burrus had all but taken the reins of the government from Nero, who chose rather than running the government to indulge himself in youthful excess. However, Dio explains that Seneca and Burrus allowed Nero's excess – so long as no significant harm came to the public or their interests – with the full expectation that he would have a change of heart after his desires were satiated. Dio comments on their willful ignorance: "as though they

[60] I draw most of my conclusions on the banquet from Justin Goddard, "Tyrant at Table" in *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History, and Representation* (eds. Jas Elsner, Jamie Masters; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 67-81.

[61] Suet. *Nero* 26.1; 27.1-3.

[62] Dio Cass. 61.3.3

[Seneca and Burrus] did not realise that a young and self-willed spirit, when reared in unrebuked licence and absolute authority, so far from becoming sated by the indulgence of its passions, is ruined more and more by these very agencies".[63]

It is directly following this comment that Dio notes for his audience that the banquet was the locale of a clear increase in Nero's revelry and vice. However, the banquet is also where Nero's *mindset* (see trans. below; ἐπίστευσεν, lit. "he came to believe") concerning his conduct, which had now come to negatively affect the public, changed significantly. In fact, Nero "*came to believe* that such conduct was really not bad and that he could carry it even farther. Consequently he began to indulge in each of these pursuits in a more open and precipitate fashion" (my emphasis).[64] In the next section of his history, Dio recounts the numerous atrocities inflicted upon the public by Nero's excess and subsequent despotism, though with each action originating from his changed mindset at the banquet.

The banquet in these examples seem to serve as the literary background to a character's moral tipping point. It is notable that in Roman conception, the banquet often served as an important tool for the host to display his character, though often through an excess that would benefit the community.[65] Tacitus clearly adopts this theme of the banquet as a literary background to Nero's greatest crimes and schemes: for example, Nero's (1) poisoning of Britannicus (Tac. *Ann*. 13.16); incestual relationship with his mother Agrippina (Tac. *Ann*. 14.2); first considerations to kill

[63] Dio Cass. 61.4.2.

[64] Dio Cass. 61.4.3.

[65] Goddard, "Tyrant at the Table", 68-70. Goddard notes of banquets held by Roman emperors, "Lavish banquet operated as vehicles for the display of the emperor's virtues, opportunities for the emperor to reveal to his subjects how he exemplified the necessary qualities of the good ruler" (68).

Agrippina (Tac. *Ann*. 13.20); and the forced suicide of senators (Tac. *Ann*. 15.69). Such a reading of the banquet as a locale to moral ambivalence that ultimately deviates to despotism could be applied to Mark as well. Mark's positive notes, then, have literary purpose, which ultimately intend to cast Herod Antipas under a negative shadow. However, while Mark does not present Herod Antipas's actions as a type of drunken or luxurious excess typically associated with such banquets; Herod Antipas is seething with incestual lust (*libido*) for his dancing daughter.

The flashback to John's murder begins at Mk. 6:21 with Herodias recognising Herod Antipas's "birthday celebration" (γενέσια) as an "opportune time" (ἡμέρας εὐκαίρου)[66] to finally execute her desire to kill John (Mk. 6:19). For Herod Antipas's birthday celebration, he gave a banquet and invited "his great men" (τοῖς μεγιστᾶσιν αὐτοῦ),[67] "military commanders" (τοῖς χιλιάρχοις), and "prominent men of Galilee"[68] (τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς Γαλιλαίας). Following this introduction of Herod Antipas's guests, a "young girl" (κοράσιον)[69] enters the banquet (and narrative). However, the identity of this young girl is complicated. The phrase τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἡρῳδιάδος makes uncertain whether Mark intends to denote the young girl as "*his* [Herod Antipas's]" (αὐτός) or "*her* [Herodias's]" (αὐτῆς) daughter. However,

[66] Marcus notes the adjective εὔκαιρος connects this episode and Judas' betrayal of Jesus (Mk. 14:41). If this reading is accepted, Mark, again, layers the narrative where John functions as a type of foreshadowing figure to Jesus. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 401.

[67] Yarbro Collins notes that these individuals should likely be identified as the "heads of the ten toparchies of his realm". Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 308.

[68] I assume here that women were not among those in this list as even the "king's" wife was not invited. This is shown by the dancing daughter's exit and entrance to the banquet to speak with her mother (Mk. 6:24-25).

[69] While this is placed at the end of the v. 22 this is the only certain identification that we can give to character introduced here.

"his [Herod Antipas's] daughter Herodias" (τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἡρῳδιάδος) is the earliest and more difficult reading, being strongly attested in א B D L Δ 565.[70]

This reading and its context suggests that the "daughter" is the child of Herod Antipas and Herodias (cf. Mk. 6:24, 28; Herodias is designated τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῆς,"her [the young girl's] mother"[71]). Yarbro Collins notes that, in such a scenario, the child must have been born sometime between 29 CE, when Herod Antipas and Herodias first met, and 39 CE, following Herod Antipas' exile from Galilee. She also explains that the term κοράσιον could fit this description, making the young girl no older than 10 years old.[72] However, Yarbro Collins finds it more likely that Mark or his source has mistakenly assigned Herodias's daughter to Herod Antipas.[73] Edwards strongly concludes, "Although this is the more difficult reading, and therefore theoretically preferable, it is confusing to the point of meaninglessness".[74] Hoehner argues that the pronoun was originally feminine, and he explains that support is found in the MSS evidence: αυτης της A C K N Γ Θ f^{13} 28. 33. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. 2542 𝔐.[75] Additionally, Hoehner argues that the reading also corresponds well to Matthew's version of the story, lending support to his reading: ἡ θυγάτηρ τῆς Ἡρῳδιάδος (Matt.

[70] Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 90.

[71] While the "mother" here is not named by Mark, the context certainly points to Herodias and her murderous intentions for John (Mk. 6:19.

[72] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 308.

[73] Ibid; Cf. Mann, Mark, 297; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 332; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 396; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 258.

[74] Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 187 fn. 27.

[75] Harold Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972), 151-154; Gundry, *Mark*, 320.

14:6).[76] Moreover, many commentators[77] connect the young girl to Salome, the child of Herodias's first marriage in Josephus, though she is never mentioned by name in Mark or the Synoptic parallels.[78]

On such an assessment, commentators will likewise explain that Mark may have intended to mean the girl was Herod Antipas's "step-daughter".[79] However, difficulties with these readings also arise as the term κοράσιον would not correspond well with Salome's age, who would have been in her late teenage years or early twenties.[80] While the complications associated with the historicity of this episode are legion, I agree with Marcus's estimation that reading the pronoun as αὐτός (i.e. "his [Herod Antipas's] daughter Herodias"), "accords with the story's general atmosphere of wild abandon".[81] The negative characterisation of the entire Herodian enterprise seems to be Mark's aim!

The audience, then, is to imagine, whether fictional[82] or otherwise, the "young girl" as Herod Antipas and Herodias's daughter, though she is also named Herodias. She enters the banquet among Herod Antipas's entourage and the scene moves quickly to her "dance" (ὀρχέομαι), which Mark notes, "pleased Herod and his

---

[76] Ibid.

[77] Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 332; Hook, *St. Mark*, 161; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 187; Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 215; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark* (TNTC; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017), 145.

[78] Jos. *Ant.* 18.136, 137. The banquet scene is nowhere in historic sources outside of the NT.

[79] Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 332.

[80] Bruce, "Herod Antipas", 12-13. Mark uses this term to describe Jairus's ill daughter who is described as "twelve years of age" (Mk. 5:42). Cf. Theissen *The Gospels in Context*, 90.

[81] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 396.

[82] As shown below, I tend to agree with Corley (*Private Women*) that the banquet is likely (mostly) fiction and taken from stock motifs of the first century banquet.

fellow guests" (ἤρεσεν τῷ Ἡρῴδῃ καὶ τοῖς συνανακειμένοις). The use of the aorist of ἀρέσκω ("pleased") brings another point of contention among scholarship. Interpretations range from complete innocence of the girl's dance,[83] with non-sexual connotations on the part of Herod Antipas and his guests, to an overtly sexual response.[84] The latter position seems more grounded in the overall narrative of the episode and draws many parallels to stock motifs of the first-century banquet.[85] Corley articulates this banality in first century-literature well, "The scene for Herod's party is stock and stereotypical…an official performs an execution in the context of a banquet at the request of a courtesan".[86] Such scenes were even part and parcel of the Roman education system as evidenced, for example, in Seneca the Elder's use of *controversiae*, oratorical training devices, using fictional legal cases, which developed into a semi-literary genre by the times of the Principate and were intended for schools and public consumption. The genre is known for its extreme and sensationalists examples, for which rapists, tyrants, pirates, and kidnappers are typically featured among their pages. The theme of an unjust autocrat expressing cruelty, greed, or lust appears in "over thirty specimens extant in the Latin corpus alone".[87]

---

[83] Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 157; R. Girard, "Scandal and the Dance: Salome in the Gospel of Mark", *New Literary History* 15.2 (1994): 311-324.Barbara Baert, "The Dancing Daughter and the Head of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29) Revisited An Interdisciplinary Approach", *Louvain Studies* 38 (2014): 14; Schnabel, *Mark*, 146.

[84] Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 221; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 332; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 396; Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 215; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 258; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 308; Boring, *Mark*, 178; Strauss, *Mark*, 266.

[85] See also the sexual connotations of ἀρέσκω in LXX Gen. 19:8 and LXX Job 31:10.

[86] Kathleen Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 94.

One example close to Mark's episode occurs in Seneca the Elder (also told in variations by Cicero, Livy, and Plutarch) who sets up a fictitious court case.[88] The episode recounts how, during a banquet, proconsul Lucius Flaminius sent a guard to behead a prisoner at the request of a courtesan. The courtesan had never experienced a beheading and simply desired to see one. The severed head was subsequently brought before the banqueting table and the courtesan. As though standing before a court of law, the famous declaimer, Albucius Silus, gives his response to the situation, connecting Flaminius's acts to a harsh cruelty: "But if anyone, judges, wants me to tell of the praetor's cruelty (*crudelitatem*), how many besides this man he slaughtered, how many innocent men he condemned, how many he shut up in prison, I promise that I shall satisfy such an enquirer: in one party I shall unroll the story of the accused and his praetorship". Silus also marks Flaminius's cruelty as going beyond tyranny (*O qui crudelitate omnis superasti tyrannos*). Further condemning Flaminius before the fictitious judges, Silus states:

> "I don't say that he [the prisoner] should not be struck by the axe; I do ask that he fall victim to the *law* rather than a prostitute.—Remember that the aim of your power is terror, not diversions for frivolous women.—Why, judges, should I tell you now of their various amusements, their *dances,* their contest in shame to see whether the praetor or the whore capered more indecently?" (My emphasis; *Non veto quominus securi percutiatur: illud rogo, legi potius*

[87] Anthony Corbeill, "Rhetorical Education and Social Reproduction in the Republic and Early Empire" in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric*, eds. William Dominik and Jon Hall (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 76-77.

[88] Sen. *Controv*. 9.2.

quam scorto cadat. Memento terrorem imperio quaeri, non oblectamenta mulierculis. Quid ego nunc referam, iudices, ludorum genera, saltationes, et illud dedecoris certamen, praetorne se mollius moveret an meretrix?)

Importantly for Mark's episode, such stereotypical examples of women not only brought to the fore the illicit sexuality associated with banquets and dancing (e.g. the courtesan), which correspond well to the sexual definitions of *libido* (so Theissen: "When women are mentioned at men's banquets, the idea of sexual contact is always present"),[89] but also the other side of the lexical range of *libido*, namely despotic caprice, which is opposed to *lex*.

According to Mark, Herodias's ire, and subsequently John's imprisonment, is motivated by John's challenge to the legality of Herod Antipas's marriage to Herodias. Why is it so difficult for interpreters to accept that Mark might present Herod Antipas as one who would act with incestual and erotic desires for his young daughter when Mark had already characterized Herod Antipas as a sexual deviant in his marriage to Herodias (Mk. 6:17-18)? Certainly, the charge against Herod Antipas by John is sexual in nature. The marital transgression that John refers to in Mk. 6:17-18 is Lev. 18:16 and 20:21, which forbids a man to have a sexual relationship with his brother's wife, with the only exception being that his brother has died childless (Deut. 25:5-10). However, John's charge is not only sexual. Rather Mark uses John's statements to connect Herod Antipas's sexual deviancy to a transgression of the law. Herod Antipas's sexual acts drive him to capricious decisions unhindered by wise counsel, or even the law. Herod Antipas's desires for Herodias to be his wife, and

[89] Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 91.

subsequently the divorce from Phasaelis (Aretas's daughter), costs him (and his community) heavily by initiating a war with Aretas;[90] and now, in similar fashion, his incestual desires (i.e. uncontrolled *libido*) towards his own daughter drive him to a despotic end, finalising in the cruel dismembering of John the Baptist.

The final vice that Mark imbues to Herod Antipas's character is *crudelitas*. As discussed earlier, *crudelitas* encompasses both a type of cruel savagery, but also in Roman kingship discourse it was associated with unjust punishment that fell outside of lawful prosecution. In his narrative, Mark has clearly established that John is both "holy" and "just", arrested without proper cause. Some interpreters have suggested that Herod Antipas's arrest and imprisonment of John "on account of Herodias" (v. 17) was intended to "protect" (v. 20) John from the threat of Herodias, thus conflating vv. 17 and 20.[91] Such a reading presents Herod Antipas in a positive light, and suggests that John's imprisonment is for his own wellbeing. However, this connection is by no means clear. Mark connects Herodias as the cause behind Herod Antipas's imprisoning of John, but not necessarily as a means to protect John from her. As noted earlier, Josephus's explanation for John's murder is clearly a calculated political move by Herod Antipas. Mark's language in verse 17 makes more sense in this latter context. Mark maintains that Herod Antipas sent men to "seize" (κρατέω) and "bind" (δέω) John. While κρατέω can simply mean to "take hold" of something in Mark (1:31; 5:41; 9:27), it is also used negatively at pivotal moments to threaten Jesus (Mk. 3:21; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 49, 51). Likewise, δέω also carries negative connotations in Mark. The term is used of Jesus' arrest by the chief

[90] Jos. *Ant*. 18.109-113.

[91] Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 219; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 394.

priests (Mk. 15:1) and the seizing of the demoniac by shackles, which he rent apart (Mk. 5:3, 4).

Mark highlights the injustice of John's imprisonment by contrasting these terms with positive characteristics of John as "holy" and "just". As with the details of Seneca the Elder's *controversiae* discussed above, Flaminius is accused by Silus of despotic acts and *crudelitas* not just for the act of beheading the prisoner, but for allowing the courtesan to decide his fate without adequate jurisprudence. Likewise, Mark depicts John as unjustly condemned to death by the whim of Herod Antipas's own lusts. Upon granting a request to his daughter Herodias, Herod Antipas is "grieved" to learn that the girl wants John beheaded. The grotesque nature of the young child's request for John's head on a platter adds to the vivid indecency and savagery of the Herodian enterprise, which the "holy" and "just" man will suffer. The narrative moves quickly after Herod Antipas decides to grant her request. Mark notes that Herod Antipas "immediately…sent a solider of the guard…to bring John's head" (v. 27). The raw and emotional Herod Antipas concerned for John's welfare has finally disappeared from the narrative only to be eclipsed by his new role as a calculating despot. The transformation has occurred and the stationed soldier-guard confirms Herod Antipas's new role. Like Tarquinius Superbus who won the throne by criminal actions against Servius Tullius; he feared that someone might as easily seize his kingship in a similar fashion, and so armed himself with a stationed guard.[92] The bodyguard of the "king" is well-recognised as a stock motif of the paranoid and

[92] Livy, 1.49. 2.

despotic tyrant.[93] The cruelty of Herod Antipas is matched only by the tenderness of John's disciples, who maintain the dignity of his body with a proper burial (v. 29).

In my assessment, Mark is merely working in vogue of 69 CE and the resurgence of kingship discourse as political invective at that time. For Mark, then, kingship language equals tyranny, but only because of the political atmosphere during the time of his writing. Herod Antipas is charged with the title "king" in the same way that Cicero marks out Labienus, Catiline, or the *decemviri* (cf. Chp. 2) as "kings". This reading, however, challenges numerous interpreters who claim that Mark presents a challenge between "king" Herod Antipas and "king" Jesus with the latter as the victor. Boring argues that, whether Mark is purposeful in calling Herod "king", it sets up the narrative to compare "Herod's 'kingship' with that of Jesus, representing the kingdom of God'.[94] Culpepper maintains a similar explanation, "Making Herod a king…sets up the contrast between Jesus as king and Herod as a representative of earthly kings…The term [βασιλεύς] therefore establishes the antithesis in Mark between Jesus and Herod, with Herod functioning as a representative of the political powers opposed to Jesus and the kingdom of God".[95] However, such a contrast is not readily apparent.

In fact, that Jesus never assigns "the kingdom" to himself likely indicates that Jesus, though on the side of the kingdom, never claims to be its ruler. Mark's

[93] For the stock feature of the tyrant's bodyguard, see Smith, "Tyranny Exposed", 273-274.

[94] Boring, *Mark*, 177.

[95] R. Alan Culpepper, "Mark 6:17-29 in its Narrative Context: Kingdoms in Conflict" in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (eds. Kelly Iverson and Christopher Skinner; Ann Arbor, MI: SBL Press, 2014), 154. Cf. Gelardini, "The Contest for a Royal Title", 95: "…the author intentionally addresses Herod as 'king', particularly because he has him speak of 'his kingdom' and…to purposely construct a narrative competition between Herod and Jesus, who are both royal and heroic individuals of divine descent".

purpose for the kingship motif must be found elsewhere (see further in Chp. 4). Mark's overall theme of kingship aims to connect it to martyrdom, and subsequently discipleship, a strongly negative context. Broadhead correctly notes, "The kingship of Herod is played out explicitly against the death of John the Baptist"; and "…the connotations of the kingship title are wholly violent".[96] This connection to martyrdom, and naturally suffering, is clearly made each time Mark uses the term βασιλεύς, and it applies not only in episodes related to John (Mk. 6:14-29), but also Jesus (Mk. 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32) and his disciples (Mk. 13:9).[97] Roman kingship discourse argues for a purposeful intent of Mark's language to condemn Herod Antipas as a despotic leader who has degenerated from his sympathetic disposition towards John. Herod Antipas's response to fears over John's growing popularity (*superbia*), his lustful encounter with the young girl Herodias (*libido*), the unlawful marriage to his wife Herodias, and unlawful treatment of John (*crudelitas*) exemplify Herod Antipas as a true representation of the *odium regni*.

Furthermore, Smith argues that just as the *synkrisis* is formed between John and Jesus, so too Herod Antipas's despotic behaviour "guides the authorial audience in its assessment of Pilate".[98] For Smith, Pilate mimics Herod Antipas in knowledge,

---

[96] Edwin Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark* (LNTS 175; London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 79.

[97] There is a strong connection to Jesus, discipleship, and suffering in Mark's writing, which appears to be at the heart of his gospel (Mk. 4:16-17; 8:31-38; 10:30, 38-39; 13:13). See Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 79: "In the past the Baptist died at the hands of the king. In the future disciples will again endure the violent judgment of kings. In the present Jesus stands mocked and condemned under the rubric of the kingship title".

[98] Smith, "Tyranny Exposed", 283. For an longer, though still lacking, list of connections between Herod Antipas and Pilate, see, Mark McVann, "The 'Passion' of John the Baptist and Jesus before Pilate: Mark's Warnings about Kings and Governors" *BTB* 38.4 (2008): 152-157; Gabriella Gerlardini, "The Contest for a Royal Title: Herod versus Jesus in the Gospel According to Mark (6, 14-29; 15, 6-15)", *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 28.2 (2011): 104-105.

power, and "regard for human *will*".[99] He argues both figures have the power and desire to set free their prisoners, but are limited by obstructive external factors. In the case of Herod Antipas, his hinderance is in the form of Herodias and his own daughter, whereas Pilate's obstacle is the crowd who he wishes to satisfy (Mk. 15:15; βουλόμενος τῷ ὄχλῳ τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιῆσαι). Smith further connects the locales of the prisoners's deaths (John in *northern* Palestine and Jesus in *southern* Palestine) as well as their authorial offices of the "king" (Herod Antipas) and "governor" (Pilate) respectively. Such a connection leads Smith to conclude: "the authorial audience's actualisation of Pilate as a tyrant figure is irresistible".[100] However, such assumptions should be questioned since Mark's Pilate neither exhibits the key characteristics of a despotic ruler (*superbia*, *libido*, and *crudelitas*) as Herod Antipas above, nor is he labelled under the heading of "king" himself. Rather, accusations of kingship are launched *against Jesus* by Pilate (Mk. 15:2, 9, 12), the Jewish crowd (including religious leaders) (Mk. 15:12, 32), soldiers (Mk. 15:18), and the inscription posted above Jesus' head on the cross (Mk. 15:26). In short, Jesus, not Pilate, is the object of kingship invective in Mark 15.

Mockery, Make-Believe, or Majesty in Mark 15?

A cluster (6x's) of the term βασιλεύς (Mk. 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32) appears in Mark shortly after Jesus' initial arrest at Gethsemane (Mk. 14:43-52), and his subsequent interrogation by the Jewish leaders (Mk. 14:53-65). The narrator, while providing no background information for the audience, introduces "Pilate" to the

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

story after the religious leaders had "handed him [Jesus] over" to him (Mk. 15:1). Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (Mk 15:2; Σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων;) to which Jesus responds, "You are saying it" (σὺ λέγεις). Jesus' response affirms that the designation was given to him by the crowd/religious authorities of the narrative world, however, while rejecting it as a self-designation.[101] This last point is confirmed as Pilate's later statement (Mk 15:12) puts the emphasis on the crowd, saying, "What then do you want me to do with the man *you call* (ὃν λέγετε), the King of the Jews?" (my emphasis).[102] Additionally, Pilate's reluctance to crucify Jesus (cf. Mk. 15:10, 14) suggests no clear charge or threat of usurpation was established in Jesus' original response. In fact, Pilate questions Jesus even after his perplexing retort (i.e. σὺ λέγεις), "Do you have no answer?" (Mk. 15:4).

However, Evans suspects a hint of mockery in Pilate's question, focusing attention on the emphatic pronoun (σὺ εἶ) and connecting it to the negative question – "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One? (Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ;) – asked by the high priest in the previous episode (Mk. 14:61).[103] Evans' suggestion may be sound if Mark is purposely juxtaposing the σὺ εἶ construction here against the earlier confessions about Jesus as God's son (Mk. 1:11 [Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός]; 3:11 [Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ]). Furthermore, Pilate's charge against Jesus as "King of the Jews" assumes a continuity from the previous storyline, where Jesus is

[101] Gundry, *Mark*, 924.

[102] The phrase ὃν λέγετε is absent in A D W Θ $f^{1.13}$ 565. 700. 2542^{s} lat sy^{s} sa. Metzger argues that the insertion may represent a "scribal amelioration" and that ὃν λέγετε could have been dropped as no religious authority had previously mentioned the phrase "King of the Jews" in Mark's narrative.

[103] Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 478.

charged with blasphemy by the Jewish court (Mk. 14:64).[104] Such a reading would make sense of Mk. 15:9 where Pilate continues to call Jesus by the kingly title even after Jesus responds.[105]

Four of the six uses of βασιλεύς in Mark 15 (15:2, 9, 12, 26) appear when Markan characters use the phrase "King of the Jews" (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων). The phrase only comes from the mouth of non-Jewish characters, namely Pilate (Mk. 15:2, 9, 12) and the mocking soldiers[106] (Mk. 15:18), but it is also written on the inscription marking Jesus' charges (Mk. 15:26). Mark demarcates the "King of the Jews" as a non-Jewish phrase as only a few verses later, for example, the chief priests and scribes mock Jesus as the "King of Israel" (ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ) while he dies on the cross (Mk. 15:32).[107] While Pilate's use of "King of the Jews" remains ambiguous at vv. 2 and 9 (and any sense of mockery must be argued, as I have done above), it becomes clear in v. 12 that the phrase is being used negatively against Jesus. In fact, the same crowd shouting "crucify him" in the following verse (v. 13)

[104] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 713. Yarbro Collins notes rather the charge, historically, was likely *seditio*.

[105] Pesch, for example, argues that the narrative itself assumes Jesus' title. In this, Pilate's continued use (Mk. 15:9, 12) of the title indicates that Pilate interpreted Jesus' response in the affirmative, and thus the narrative clearly regards Jesus' as a kingly figure. See Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2:458.

[106] I read the στρατιῶται ("soldiers") in Mk. 15:16 as provincial auxillaries and not Roman legionary forces. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah, Volumes 1 and 2: From Gethsemane to the Grave, A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1994), 1.701 fn. 64; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 724.

[107] Helen Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (SNTS; Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 106. However, it is interesting that Pilate assigns to the Jewish crowd the claim of calling Jesus, "King of the Jews". If "King of the Jews" and "King of Israel" are two sides of the same coin, then why does Pilate hear the Jewish crowd making charges of Jesus as "King of the Jews"? Additionally, the association with sedition and high treason should not be lost as Mark's audience may be well acquainted with messianic and kingly claimants disturbing Roman peace in Palestine at the time. Cf. Richard A. Horsely and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), Chp. 3.

has also given him the title that Pilate has utilised in his discussion with Jesus (vv. 1-5) and the crowd (vv. 6-15).

Beyond Pilate's usage of the phrase, "King of the Jews", the soldiers in the following pericope dress Jesus in royal garb, with a diadem made of thorns, and "hail" (χαῖρε) him under the same title (Mk. 15:16-20). The actions of the soldiers provide a scene of clear mockery and Mark's explicit use of the term ἐμπαίζω, meaning to "ridicule, mock, or deceive" at vv. 20 and 32, further clarify this sense.[108] However, Mark's application of "King of the Jews" / "King of Israel" in his narrative intends not only to convey mockery, but also invective against Jesus by his enemies. Kingship in this way is undoubtedly negative, and in fact, Jesus eventually dies on accusations of aspiring to kingship (Mk. 15:26). These accusations reflect the popular usage of political invective near the time of Mark's writing and may be utilised by Mark for this purpose, as in Mk. 6:14-29.

Several commentators note the close proximity and volume of kingship language applied to Jesus in Mk. 15 against a clear absence throughout the rest of Mark's gospel. For scholars, such a pattern, suggests that Mark intends to withhold kingly titles until moments prior to Jesus' death as an unveiling of Jesus' true identity, and so applies them to Jesus ironically, i.e. as the true king. As Marcus states, "This seems to be the best way to understand, for example, the fact that in Mark's Gospel Jesus is never called a 'king' until he stands before Pilate on the way to the cross…".[109] Morna Hooker further echoes Marcus' sentiments, "Certainly it is

[108] BDAG, s.v. "ἐμπαίζω", par. 1. Also, see below for a further discussion.

[109] Joel Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation", *JBL* 125.1 (2006): 73.

in death that he is proclaimed as king".[110] Marcus and Hooker (among many others) see Mark's use of mockery as a purposeful rhetorical tool to explain away Jesus' shameful death on a cross. In ridiculing and mocking Jesus as a king, Pilate, the soldiers, the crowd, and the Jewish authorities have unwittingly participated in revealing Jesus' true identity (more in Chp. 4). The climax is apparent in the final confession of Jesus identity by a centurion, who, for the first time in the earthly narrative world, recognises Jesus as "God's son" (υἱὸς θεοῦ).[111]

Flipping Confessions: Absent God, Present Centurion

The centurion[112] in Mk. 15:39 functions in a different manner than the mocking soldiery, Pilate, Jewish authorities, and crowd before him. The confession of the centurion – "Truly this man was God's Son!" (ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν) – appears authentic and positive. This conclusion stands against a line of scholarship which argues that the centurion's statement is to be understood as

[110] Morna Hooker, "'Who Can This Be?' The Christology of Mark's Gospel" in *Contours of Christology in the New Testament*, ed. Richard Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 94.

[111] For a valuable discussions on Mark's use of non-articular nouns and how it relates to Mark's use of υἱὸς θεοῦ. See, France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 658-660; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 766-768; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 1058.

[112] For views on the identity of the "centurion", see Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 764 - 765. Yarbro Collins argues, cogently, in my opinion, that Mark's language is insufficient to determine whether he understands the centurion here to be a Roman citizen, provincial auxiliary, or Roman legionary. As state above, the use of στρατιῶται ("soldiers") in Mk. 15:16 should likely be read as provincial auxillaries and the centurion's leadership of them would probably reflect a similar identity. However, this does not discount a "Roman-reading" of Mark for which I have argued at length in chapter 1. Rather, Mark, and his audience, show an understanding of Roman ideologies even if Mark's provenance lay outside of Rome (again, what does a "Roman" identity even look like in the first century?). For other helpful discussions on the topic, see also France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 658-660; Gundry, *Mark*, 942; Christopher Zeichmann, *The Roman Army and the New Testament* (Lanham, MD: Fortress Academic, 2018), 38-41, 112-119.

mockery and sarcasm. [113] For example, Horsley concludes that the long string of ironic statements and mockery of Jesus by the soldiers (Mk. 15:16-20) only indicts the centurion, who would have led the soldier's charge, or, at least, been envisioned as numbered among them by Mark.[114] While Mark certainly displays high levels of irony in the centurion's confession, he is especially careful in chapter 15 to signpost instances of mockery by using clear and explicit language (Mk. 15:20, 29, 31, 32).

Following the soldier's faux regal acclamations and physical abuse of Jesus, Mark is insistent to ensure the audience understands that the soldier's spectacle was aimed at "mocking" (ἐνέπαιξαν) Jesus (v. 20). Furthermore, after Mark situates Jesus vertically on his cross,[115] he explains that "those who passed by[116]… ridiculed" (βλασφημέω; v. 29) Jesus.[117] For Mark, even nods to character's body movements, such as "shaking their heads" (κινοῦντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν), and language, like "Aha" (οὐὰ),[118] further suggest a high level of mockery (v. 29). Following the ridicule of the passerby's (vv. 29-30), Mark notes that the chief priests and scribes

[113] Contra Earl S. Johnson, "Is Mark 15.39 the Key to Mark's Christology?" *JSNT* 31 (1987): 3-22; Earl S. Johnson, "Mark 15,39 and the So-Called Confession of the Roman Centurion", *Biblica* 81 (2000): 406-413; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 252; Kelly R. Iverson, "A Centurion's "Confession": A Performance-Critical Analysis of Mark 15:39," *JBL* 130 (2011): 349 n. 73.

[114] Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 252.

[115] This is clearly indicated in the text by Mark positioning Jesus between "two bandits", on his right and left (v. 28).

[116] The identity of the passerby's (οἱ παραπορευόμενοι) remains unknown – perhaps, intended as a more general crowd – in Mark and likely reflects an allusion to LXX Ps. 21:8-9, 108:25.

[117] The charge here appears not to indicate the type of "blasphemy" seen in Mk. 14:64 (contra Evans, *Mark 8:27 – 16:20*, 504), but rather a general defamation of the Markan Jesus. Cf. BDAG, s.v. "βλασφημέω", par. b, ε.

[118] The term is an "interjection denoting amazement" (BDAG, s.v. "οὐά"). The *LSJ* marks it as an equivalent to the Latin *vah,* meaning "astonishment" or admiration (LSJ, 1268). As France (*The Gospel of Mark*, 647) notes, the meaning of οὐὰ here "gains its sense from the tone of voice rather than from a lexical meaning". This point is well taken and, for France, οὐὰ within its lexical construct "conveys vindictive sarcasm".

acted "likewise" (ὁμοίως; v. 31). Importantly, Mark reinstitutes the language of mockery (ἐμπαίζω; v. 31) assigned earlier to the soldiers (v. 20), a clear escalation of culpability against the religious elite. It is after the scorn of the chief priests and scribes, in Mk. 15:32, that Mark ends the pericope (Mk.15:16-32) explaining that Jesus was even "taunted" (ὀνειδίζω) by "those crucified with him" (οἱ συνεσταυρωμένοι σὺν αὐτῷ). As the new pericope develops (Mk. 15:33-41) and approaches the centurion's cameo, all clear signposting is gone.

Some scholars have looked to the second appearance of the centurion (Mk. 15:44-45) in the narrative to show Mark's negative assessment of this character. Zeichmann argues that the centurion "displays an apathetic attitude towards Jesus" during his interaction with Pilate, who is trying to assess – for Joseph of Arimathea – whether Jesus was dead or alive, and ready to be handed over for burial.[119] Zeichmann never properly addresses this conclusion, other than to note it. However, quite differently from his earlier cameo, the centurion is now presented entirely in the passive role, dutifully fulfilling his commander's (i.e. Pilate) requests. Mark's active emphasis lies upon Pilate in v. 44, where "summoning" (προσκαλεσάμενος) the centurion, Pilate "asked" (ἐπηρώτησεν) him for Jesus' status. No response is given by the centurion, and in v. 45, Mark again places the prominence on Pilate as the active character by specifically stating that the knowledge of Jesus' status came "from the centurion" (ἀπὸ τοῦ κεντυρίωνος).

Furthermore, scholars have concluded that the centurion's continuation as a soldier, and adherance to the commands of Pilate, indicate no special devotion to

[119] Zeichmann, *The Roman Army*, 112.

Jesus. More specifically, Johnson concludes that the scenario of Mk. 15:39 is simply too unbelievable. According to Johnson, for a soldier to turn their cultic devotion away from the emperor and to a man crucified on the cross, at the risk of "death for treason", is simply implausible.[120] Zeichmann is helpful on this point, clearly arguing, "emperor worship was never, at any point, mandated"; and as such, "Mark does not imagine military duties to be incompatible with the centurion's declaration".[121] That the centurion continues in the service of the military has no bearing on whether his confession should be read as authentic or sarcastic.

As a positive assessment of the centurion, some weight should be given to the potential "rhetorical comparison" with the "bystanders" (παρεστηκότες) in Mk. 15:35.[122] Mark 15:39 orients the body of the centurion as "standing in front of him [Jesus]" (ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ).[123] Yarbro Collins sees here a correlation between vv. 35 and 39 with the shared participle, παρίστημι. The contrast seems strong, and helps the audience capture Mark's presentation of the centurion in relation to negatively presented bystanders of vv. 35-37.

In Mk. 15:35, the bystanders' misinterpret Jesus' final words (ελωι ελωι λεμα σαβαχθανι; v. 34) believing that his cry to God is, in fact, a plea of help to Elijah,[124]

[120] Johnson, "Is Mark 15.39 the Key", 13; Johnson, "Mark 15,39 and the So-Called Confession", 409-410.

[121] Zeichmann, *The Roman Army*, 116.

[122] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 766.

[123] Decker notes, "This [ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ] expression ('in front of him') is a long standing idiom that at one time likely contained a recognized ellipsis…". Rodney Decker, *Mark 9-16: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (BHGNT; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 262.

[124] Matthew's gospel (27:46) changes Mark's Aramaic, ελωι, to the Hebrew ηλι, perhaps, to more clearly connect the saying to Elijah.

who was thought to attend to the prayers of pious Jews; as confirmed in later folk-traditions.[125] By offering Jesus "sour wine" (ὄξος) in v. 36, the bystander's believe they can prolong the life of Jesus and potentially experience a miraculous feat of God ("Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down".).[126] The audience of Mark understands the bystander's enthusiasm is wholly misguided. Earlier, Mark confirmed Jesus' disregard for those who looked for "a sign from heaven" (Mk. 8:12) and definitively explained Elijah's coming, rejection, and ultimate death (Mk. 9:11-13). Yarbro Collins accurately notes that the bystanders "see (and hear), but not with insight" (cf. Mk. 4:12).[127] In stark contrast to these bystanders, "The centurion…sees (and hears) with insight into the significance of Jesus' suffering and his identity".[128] The role of the centurion within the overall movement of the narrative further compliments his positive function within Mark. The centurion's confession (Mk. 15:39) follows on the heels of Jesus taking his last breath (v. 37) and the theophanic moment of the temple's veil being torn (v. 38).

Following the bystander's inappropriate hopes of a miracle involving Elijah (v. 37), Mark quickly (δέ) shifts the audience's attention away from the bystanders and focusses in on Jesus, who "gave a loud cry" (ἀφεὶς φωνὴν μεγάλην) then[129]

---

[125] Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 327; Boring, *Mark*, 431.

[126] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 757; Boring, *Mark*, 431.

[127] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 766.

[128] Ibid.

[129] As Decker (*Mark 8-16*, 261) notes, "The adverbial nuance of the participle [ἀφίημι] is debated". I follow Decker that the participle should not be equated with the main verb, and so separate them appropriately. Decker cogently argues, contra Gundry (*Mark*, 948), "Although it is grammatically *possible* that emitting a loud cry (ἀφεὶς φωνὴν μεγάλην) and expiring (ἐξέπνευσεν) are to be equated, it is not mandated by grammar and usage (Gundry has overstated the grammatical evidence)".

"breathed out his last (breath)" (ἐξέπνευσεν). Marcus accurately correlates the near verbatim ἐβόησεν...φωνὴν μεγάλην ("[Jesus] cried out with a loud voice") of v. 34 with v. 37. However, for Marcus, this denotes a potential seam in the "weaving together of two versions of the same narrative" and leads him to understand the "loud cry" in vv. 34 and 37 as one in the same.[130] Yet, Mark's minimal use of the short phrase, φωνὴν μεγάλην ("loud cry"), at four different locations in his narrative (Mk. 1:26; 5:7; 15:34, 37), may be significant for a different interpretation.

In Mk. 1:26 and 5:7, the "loud cry" is ascribed to the "unclean spirits". Here the unclean spirits have attached themselves (through possession) to their human hosts and, in their confrontations with Jesus, were in the midst of losing their possessive power over those human hosts. The "loud cry" of each unclean spirit was meet by commands of Jesus for the demon to "come out of him [the human host]" (ἐξῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ; Mk. 1:26) and "come…out of the man [the human host]" (ἐξελθε...ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; Mk. 5:8). In both cases, the "loud cry" of these two episodes indicate the abandonment or evacuation of a spirit from their human host.[131] It is interesting, then, that Mk. 15:34 and 15:37 both attribute Jesus' "loud cry" to abandonment, specifically the abandonment of God (15:34) and evacuation of the spirit (15:37).

[130] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 1056. Marcus notes Mk. 15:24-25 as an example for such a conclusion.

[131] Contra Gundry (*Mark*, 965), who associates the common denominator of these verses with strength by considering that "the spirit gave a last demonstration of power over the demoniac". In a similar fashion, France (*The Gospel of Mark*, 652) and Evans (*Mark 8:27-16:20*, 507) argue that the "loud cry" at Mk. 15:34 and 15:37 indicate that Jesus is not dying without a fight. In any case, I want to be clear that I do not see this association of the phrase, "loud cry", with unclean spirits as a corollary to Mark's Jesus, as if somehow Mark has come under demonic power (Contra Kelber, *Mark's Story*, 81).

Jesus' cry in Mk. 15:34,[132] "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me" (ελωι ελωι λεμα σαβαχθανι...ὁ θεός μου, ὁ θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με), near-verbatim corresponds to LXX Ps. 21:2a (ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου, πρόσχες μοι· ἵνα τί ἐγκατέλιπές με). While nearly all scholars point out that LXX Ps. 21 certainly adheres to a prayer of lament, distress, and abandonment, some diminish these aspects of God's inactivity by quickly looking to the triumphant end of LXX Ps. 21.[133] However, even Marcus, who states, "it seems likely that the Psalm's ending was in *Mark's* mind", argues that Jesus' predicament in Mk. 15:34 "is one of real forsakenness".[134] Such abandonment adheres to the movement of Mark's narrative whereby all of the disciples (Mk. 14:50-52),[135] and Peter (alone) once more (Mk. 14:66-72), desert Jesus (cf. Mk. 14:26-31). Furthermore, Mark has already presented God as the active agent who "will strike the shepherd" (πατάξω τὸν ποιμένα; Mk. 14:27) and not "remove" (παραφέρω) the cup of eschatological judgment from Jesus (Mk. 14:36).[136] For Mark, God has abandoned Jesus, full stop.

As Mk. 15:37 abruptly notes Jesus' "loud cry", the audience quickly learns that Jesus' "breathed his last [breath]" (ἐξέπνευσεν). The unusual use of ἐκπνέω merits some discussion.[137] In Jesus' final moments of life, all four gospels draw upon

---

[132] Written first in transliterated Aramaic and then Greek.

[133] Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Zurich: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), 2:322; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2:494; Marcus, *Way*, 180–82; Evans (*Mark 8:27-16:20*, 507).

[134] Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1063.

[135] Cf. Mk. 14:32 for reference back to Gethsemane where he was with "his disciples".

[136] On the cup as a symbol of eschatological judgment, see Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 978; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 680. For the cup as a symbol of suffering, see Gnilka, *Markus*, 2:260–61; Brown, *Death*, 1:169.

πνεῦμα-language in varying degrees.[138] France notes that Mark and Luke, sharing "simple" forms of ἐκπνέω, provide "less scope" to read references of the Holy Spirit into their scenes.[139] However, such readings should not be discounted. Gundry argues that the compound ἐκπνέω helps connect Mark's audience back to Jesus' baptism in Mk. 1:10-11.[140] Whereas the spirit enters "into him [Jesus]" (εἰς αὐτόν) at baptism (Mk. 1:10), so now that same spirit is "breathed out" (ἐκπνέω) of Jesus at his death (Mk. 15:38). Gundry states the correlation clearly, "ἐξ- contrasts with εἰς and -έπνευσεν with πνεῦμα".[141] As noted earlier, the phrase φωνὴν μεγάλην in Mark appears only at times of abandonment/evacuation of a spirit. As such, Mark's use of the compound ἐκπνέω highlights this point. Further strengthening a connection between these two sections (Mk. 1:10-11 and Mk. 15:37-39), we find the only two uses of the verb σχίζω ("tearing") in Mark, which appear at Mk. 1:10 (for rending the heavens) and 15:38 (tearing of the temple veil). Perhaps less convincing, but relevant, is the appearance of a voice (God in Mk. 1:11; Centurion in Mk. 15:39) in each pericope declaring Jesus as God's son. The connection between Mk. 1:10-11 and 15:37-39 is strong and "constitutes a symbolic *inclusio* which brackets the entire

[137] Gundry (*Mark*, 949) questions why Mark does not use more adequate terms such as ἀπέθανεν or ἐτελεύτησεν (cf. France, *Mark*, 655). Gundry, citing the term in *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 1.1.14 and 3.9.1 as "fainting", suggests that Mark may have employed the term to highlight the impermanence of Jesus' death.

[138] Luke 23:46, following most closely to Mark, adopts the aorist form of ἐκπνέω; Matthew 27:50 notes that Jesus "breathed his last" (ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα); and John 19:30 explains that Jesus "gave up his spirit" (παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα).

[139] France, *Mark*, 655.

[140] Gundry, *Mark*, 949-950. Cf.

[141] Ibid.

Gospel, linking together the precise beginning and the precise end of the earthly career of Jesus" (more on this below).[142]

As I have attempted to argue above, Mark is continuing the theme of abandonment, which finds its apex at Mk. 15:38; where, following Jesus' last breath (v. 37), the audience learns that "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω). Unfortunately, Mark uses the unspecific term, καταπέτασμα ("curtain"), to describe the temple curtain. For example, in Josephus's description of the Second Temple, he notes that the "sanctuary" (ναός) was divided into two chambers: the first, separated by an 83' high gate with golden doors and a curtain (καταπέτασμα) extending the door's length; the second chamber, measured 30' and was "similarly divided…by a *curtain*" (my emphasis; διείργετο δὲ ὁμοίως καταπετάσματι). The first chamber-curtain, according to Josephus (*BJ* 5.208, 210-214), separates the inner and outer sanctuaries while the second chamber-curtain divides the inner sanctuary and the Holy of Holies (*BJ* 5.219). However, Josephus describes each curtain with no distinction, and uses the same noun, καταπέτασμα, for both. On etymological grounds, we find further lack of clarity within the LXX and non-canonical LXX as well as texts outside of the LXX.[143] Thus, interpretations regarding which "curtain" Mark (and the other gospels) is referring to in v. 38 are vast.[144]

---

[142] David Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's Cosmic Inclusio", *JBL* 110.1 (Spring 1991): 123. Cf. S. Motyer, "The Rending of the Veil: A Markan Pentecost", *NTS* 33 (1987): 155-157.

[143] See the extensive study of Daniel M. Gurtner, *The Torn Veil: Matthew's Exposition of the Death of Jesus* (SNTS 139; Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2007), 47-96.

[144] Interpretations for the inner veil, see: Taylor, *St. Mark*, 596; Harry L. Chronis, "The Torn Veil: Cultus and Christology in Mark 15:37–39", *JBL* 101 (1982), 110 n. 67; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 108; Brown, *Death*, 2:1106–13; Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 507; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 760; Marcus, *Mark*

Some scholars read the Markan phrase in v. 39, "seeing that [he died] in this way" (ἰδὼν...οὕτως), as a literal visual experience (i.e. seeing the curtain torn) of the centurion, which in turn evoked his confession.[145] In fact, Jackson argues, "The soliloquizing centurion…saw a miracle, and it was God's Spirit in Jesus who worked it" and elicited such a response from the soldier.[146] Similarly, Ulansey explains, "…just as Jesus *witnessed* the tearing of the heavens, so the centurion *witnessed* the tearing of the temple veil".[147] This last astute literary note, oddly, leads Ulansey to conclude that the centurion had a literal visual experience. Consequently, he maintains that if the centurion literally saw a temple curtain torn, it must have been the outer curtain because "the inner veil was hidden from view inside the temple".[148] While Mark's reference in v. 39, ἰδὼν...οὕτως, could literarily evoke an actual vision of the curtain by the centurion, its historical plausibility is weak and should cautioned as too problematically literal.[149] Gundry, for example, presses the literal sense almost to absurdity by arguing that the conjunction καὶ at the front of v. 38 should be read as ecbatic (i.e. as a result); thus, Gundry's interpretation argues that

---

8-16, 1057. Interpreters concluding that Mark intends the outer veil, see: Lohmeyer, *Markus*, 347; Erich Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium erklärt* (HNT 3; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1950), 167; Lane, *Mark*, 575; John R. Donahue, *Are you the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 13; Missoula, MT: University of Montana, 1973), 202–3; Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 31; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 140–42; Howard M. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle from the Cross", *NTS* 33 (1987): 16–37; Motyer, "The Rending of the Veil", 155–57; Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn", 123–25. Gundry, *Mark*, 950.

[145] Jackson, "The Death of Jesus", 22; Gundry, *Mark*, 948-950; Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 508.

[146] Jackson, "The Death of Jesus", 22.

[147] Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn", 124.

[148] Ibid.

[149] See Yarbro Collins' (*Mark*, 738-740, 760) helpful discussion on the likely location the Temple in relation to Golgotha. Cf. Brown, *Death*, 2:912–13.

Jesus' final expiration of the Spirit is a physical manifestation – literarily seen by the centurion – that powerfully rips the curtain in two.[150]

Furthermore, Ulansey's thesis requires that the outer veil is, in fact, Mark's reference point. Ulansey cites Josephus' descriptions of the embroidery on the outer veil, which "had symbolic meaning as an image of the universe" and "a panorama of the heavenly bodies".[151] Drawing from this description, Ulansey argues that the tearing of the outer curtain, which he understands to represent "heavenly bodies", would adequately tie the rending of Heaven (Mk. 1:10) and the outer curtain (Mk. 15:38) nicely together. While I have argued above that an *inclusio* exists between Mk. 1:10-11 and 15:37-39, it does not require that we assume Mark's audience is intimately familiar with Jewish tapestry or Herodian architecture.[152] As such, Yarbro Collins correctly explains that Mark's interest is not concerned with the effect of the temple veil on characters within his narrative, but rather on "the audience of Mark who are expected to reflect on its significance".[153]

As argued in chapter 1, Mark has already sealed the fate of the temple cult, and its end, in Jerusalem; even though he is writing on the precipice of the temple's physical destruction. Mark's messaging to his audience at Mk. 15:38 is merely a continuation and finalisation of that theme. In this way, the Markan co-text mitigates against the view that Mark is speaking of an outer curtain.[154] Such a view fails to

[150] Gundry, *Mark*, 949-950.

[151] Jos. *BJ* 5.212-2114.

[152] Cf. Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 760; Boring, *Mark*, 432.

[153] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 760.

[154] Such a view yields little interpretative dividends and requires, like Ulansey's proposal, that Mark's audience have first-hand knowledge of temple tapestry to make the text meaningful in any

assimilate to Mark's larger narrative movement and anti-temple motifs. Therefore, Mark likely envisions the curtain separating the inner sanctuary and Holy of Holies, i.e. where God's presence is housed. For his audience, Mark highlights God's departure from the temple in a few significant ways: (1) Mark attempts to navigate his audience, both Jew and Gentile, towards a new understanding of God (and God's presence), who no longer resides in a temple; (2) Mark emphasizes the abandonment of God for a theologising moment with his audience, who learn that even in absence God requires faithfulness; (3) Mark regards the imminent destruction of the temple as God's judgement and vindication of Jesus (Mk. 11:12-25); and as such, answers why, if God is truly powerful, the temple is on the verge of destruction; (4) Mark calls attention to the Roman *evocatio* (introduced at Chp. 1) and Jewish covenantal theology, and prepares his diverse readers for the temple's final blow.

God's Abandonment As Markan Theological Tool

Following the episode of the torn curtain (Mk. 15:39), God disappears entirely from Mark's narrative, never to return.[155] Danove suggests that Mark is

---

way. Following Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 760), cf. Carl Schneider, "καταπέτασμα", *TDNT* (1965) 3:628–630.

[155] A range of scholars cite the use of ἐγείρω ("to raise") at Mk. 16:6 as evidence of God's agency (i.e. the divine passive): Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 465; Hooker, *St. Mark*, 385; Gundry, *Mark*, 991-992; Edwards, *Mark*, 494; Boring, *Mark*, 445; Moloney, *Mark*, 346. In fact, Edwards (*Mark*, 494) remarks, " 'was raised' rightly implies that he [Jesus] was resurrected by God". Moloney (*Mark*, 346) presses the point further to argue that ἠγέρθη is clearly a divine passive, which actually relieves the tension of God's abandonment at Mk. 15:34. Decker (*Mark 9-16*, 275) is not easily swayed that ἠγέρθη should be read as a passive at all, and suggests the form is an intransitive " θη middle". The same form of ἐγείρω used at Mk. 16:6 is also found in the mouth of Herod Antipas at the episode of John's murder (Mk. 6:16). With ἠγέρθη taken as a divine passive, Herod Antipas states, "John, whom I beheaded has been raised" (Ὃν ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα Ἰωάννην, οὗτος ἠγέρθη; NRSV). As a divine passive, this implicates Herod Antipas as the one giving agency to God. Pascut ("The So-Called Passivum Divinium", 320-322) rightly notes, "…it would be extremely odd for a pagan tetrarch to have made the claim that Israel's God raised someone from the dead". As in Mk. 6:16, while the passive meaning is plausible, the θη form should be taken as intransitive. For a very helpful

implementing a "deconstructive rhetorical strategy" and argues that the absence of God after Mk. 15:39 "encourages a more profound identification of the narrative audience with Jesus".[156] For Danove, the silence following Jesus' cry of dereliction (Mk. 15:34) is evidence that God will not be rescuing Jesus or intervening on his behalf. In fact, from Mk. 14:1-16:8, the narrative betrays the positive relationship between Jesus and God set forth as a pattern throughout the rest of Mark's gospel (Mk. 1:1-13:37).[157] However, Mark retools this absence positively by narrating the moments of Jesus' death as faithfulness to God even in the midst of silence and remoteness. Mark's audience learns a new theological pattern concerning God: God is both present and remote at times. However, absence does not suspend faithfulness on the part of God or Jesus. In this way, as Jesus remains faithful to God in God's absence, so the real audience ought to imitate him in their lives. For the audience, who have experienced (or may in the future) the deafening silence of God in the midst of persecution; this example of Jesus comes as a reassuring reprieve.

God's Abandonment as Judgment: Is Mark 15:38 an Evocatio Deorum?

Reading the torn curtain as God's abandonment of the temple *may* also reflect the Roman practice of *evocatio*. In chapter 1, this work briefly introduced the concepts of *evocatio* and *devotio*, and noted their relevance to Jesus' prophecy and Mark's estimated calculation concerning the destruction of the temple in Mk. 13:1-2.

---

discussion on the divine passive and its use in Mk. 16:6, see Beniamin Pascut, "The So-Called *Passivum Divinum* in Mark's Gospel" *NovT* 54 (2012): 313-33.

[156] Paul L. Danove, *The Rhetoric of Characterization of God, Jesus, and Jesus' Disciples in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup; London, UK: T&T Clark International, 2005), 54.

[157] However, Danove (Ibid.) is clear to indicate that "both preexisting and cultivated beliefs recognise the possibility of God's remoteness".

Prior to military conquests, the Romans had developed the ritual of *evocatio*, i.e. the "calling out" (*evocare*) of a city's tutelary deity to vacate the city and abandon its people to ensure a Roman victory. The actual ritual of *evocatio* has few historical and literary instances for which discrepancies abound.[158] As such, scholars differ on the scope of the ritual, especially in understanding when, why, and how it was employed. While Gustaffon warns that the "earliest sources do not give precise enough information for a certain definition of *evocatio*"; she remains convinced that "*evocatio* is an established concept". For Gustaffon, any attempt at a definition should encompass these three elements, which she regards as having "common denominators" among the evidence: 1) ritualised conquest; 2) *votum*; 3) the place and its god.[159] On this first point, I have already discussed the relationship of *evocatio* to *devotio* in chapter 1. Therefore, my emphasis will be directed to the issue of *vota* and place, but first I must speak briefly to issues of dating *evocationes* and the temple's destruction at Jerusalem.

The Isaura Vetus (*AE* 1977, 816) inscription,[160] dating to 75BCE, has for many scholars helped solidify either the historicity of the *evocatio* or a practice

[158] The following cases are regarded as the most well-known and stable regarding the ritual of *evocatio*: Juno Regina and the conquest of Veii (Livy 5; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 13.3; Plut. *Cam*. 5-6); Tutelary god/goddess of Carthage (Macrob. *Sat*. 3.7-9); Tutelary god of Isaura Vetus (*AE* 1977, 816). For discrepancies see Gabriella Gustaffson, *Evocatio Deorum: Historical and Mythical Interpretations of Ritualised Conquests in the Expansion of Ancient Rome* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Historia Religionum 16; Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2000).

[159] Gustaffson, *Evocatio Deorum*, 81.

[160] Translation used from Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Vol. 2, A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1998), 2:11. The inscription was found in Bozkir, Turkey in 1970 and reads:

AE 1977, 816	Translation
SEVEILIVS. C. F. IMPERATOR HOSTIBUS. VICTEIS. ISAVRA. VETERE CAPTA. CAPTIVEIS. VENVM. DATEIS. SEI. DEVS. SEIVE. DEAST. QVOIVS. IN.	Sevilius, Son of Gaius <Servilius>, the imperator defeated the enemy, took Isaura Vetus and sold those captured there. Whether it was god or goddess

similar to it in form.[161] Moreover, this inscription's dating confirms that the Roman *evocatio* was known and practiced in the late Republic. Additionally, more fully developed depictions of *evocatio* in Macrobius[162] and Servius exhibit long-lasting knowledge of the ritual into the late Empire.[163] Such attestations lend to the possibility of the practice being active in the first century, and more importantly, during the Roman siege of Jerusalem.[164] This is particularly important for our consideration of Mk. 15:38 in connection with the historical realities behind Mark's writing.

TVTELA. OPPIDVM. VETVS. ISAVRA. FVIT *vac*. VOTVM SOVIT.	who provided protection for Isaura Vetus, he fulfilled his vow.

[161] See Gustaffson (*Evocatio Deorum*, 60-63) for a variety of views concerning the nature of the Isaura Vetus inscription as it relates to *evocationes*. While Gustaffson first questions (p. 61) whether the Isaura Vetus inscription is sufficient to be called an *evocatio*, eventually she concedes (p. 81) to the suggestion as applied by her own measurable "common denominators" (see below).

[162] Kloppenborg ("Evocatio Deorum", 439) notes the correlation between the formula used in Macrobius' *carmen* (*si deus si dea est cui populus civitasque Carthaginiensis est in tutela*) and the forumla used in the Isaura Vetus inscription (*sei deus sieve deast quoius in tutela oppidum…fuit*). For Kloppenborg, the forumlaic correlation, even though separated by nearly 500 years, strengthens the historical veracity of the practice.

[163] Macrob. *Sat*. 3.7-9; Serv. *A*. 2.351; 12.841. Davies' challenge to the practice of *evocatio* during the Jerusalem siege falls short since he argues it was "archaic by 70 but still familiar to a number of Greek and Roman authors of the principate". Davies argues that Pliny the Elder's description of *evocatio* implies that the practice "was no long actively performed". He rests his argument on Pliny's use of the verb *durat* at *N.H.* 28.18 where he states of *evocationes*, "…and it survives in the body of learning of the pontifices" (*et durat in pontificum disciplina*). Davies explains that the term is difficult to make sense of if Pliny is using it to describe a contemporary practice, but understandable as an "archaic survival" and "body of technical knowledge" for the pontifical college. However, Pliny's use of the word *durat* through his corpus is not clear. In fact, at numerous points, he uses the verb *durat* to describe ancient practices continuing into the present day. In one instance, Pliny (N.H. 16.216) speaks concerning how well cypress wood holds its shine and notes, "Has not the statue of Vejovis in the citadel, made of cypress wood, lasted [*durat*] since its dedication in the year 561 after the foundation of Rome?". Elsewhere, Pliny (*N.H.* 14.54) discusses Homer's record of mixing water and Maronean wine, which "still retains its strength" (*durat etiamnum vis*). Again, these few uses are sampled to mitigate against reading *durat* as only looking towards the past rather than to the present. See Jonathan Davies, "Covenant and Pax Deorum: Polyvalent Prodigies in Josephus' Jewish War" *Histos* 13 (2019): 83; Cf. Gustaffon, *Evocatio Deorum*, 42-43.

[164] Contra Davies ("Covenant and Pax Deorum", 84), who argues, "…there seems to me to be no evidence that *evocationes*, properly speaking, were performed as late as 70". The whole notion of "properly speaking" here assumes a sort of clear definition of the ritual for which anyone should be sceptical. See fn. 164 above for further argumentation.

The ritual of *evocatio* involved the offering of vows (*vota*) from the Romans to an enemy town's protective gods or goddesses. At times, the deities could be presented a new place at Rome (e.g. Juno of Veii [Livy]; gods of Carthage [Macrobius]) or given a new shrine in the same, or near, location (e.g. Isaura Vetus).[165] The Isaura Vetus inscription is distinct from other *evocationes* texts as it suggests that the *votum* did not include a new home at Rome for the god or goddess. Whereas Beard argues that setting up provincial shrines/temples is a type of "relaxation" as the ritual moved through time, Gustaffson rightly suggests this indicates there was likely few "strict and clearly regulated" aspects of the ritual.[166] While some ritual aspects of *evocatio* are unclear, the summoning of the protective deity appears in all known cases of *evocationes*. Moreover, the verb *evocare* and its relation to summoning the gods or goddesses is far more widespread and may account for instances of *evocatio*, though in a variety of forms.[167]

In practice, the *votum* stands between the general or priest and the deities being "called out" (*evocare*) during conquest. The tutelary deities, in return for Roman devotion, are to abandon, on their own volition, their protective role over the enemy city and people. The question for our examination of Mk. 15:38 is whether

---

[165] The inscription, found on a building-block, was likely intended for a shrine on or near the site. Cf. Alan Hall, "New Light on the Capture of Isaura Vetus by P. Servilius Vatia," in *Akten des VI. Internationalen Kongresses fiir griechische und lateinische Epigraphik, München* 1972 (Vestigia 17; Munich: Beck, 1972), 572; Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Vol. 1, A History* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1998), 1:133. Cf. Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome: V.2*, 248.

[166] See Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:133; Gustaffson, *Evocatio Deorum*, 62.

[167] Hekster notes, "In the 21 literary cases in which gods are evoked, the verb *evocare* is used 18 times, whereas the actual concept of *evocatio* is only mentioned three times". Olivier Hekster, "Reversed Epiphanies: Roman Emperors Deserted by Gods" *Mnemosyne* 63.4 (2010): 611, fn. 32. Cf. J. Le Gall, "Evocatio" in *L'Italie Préromaine et la Rome républicaine I. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Heurgon* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1976), 519-524. Le Gall ("Evocatio", 524), for example, argues that that the Isaura Vetus inscription proves the banality of the ritual, which is why only major instances (e.g. Veii or Carthage) of *evocatio* are found in the literary sources.

Mark, writing on the brink of the temple's catastrophic destruction, has *evocatio* in his, or his audience's, purview.

Scholars positively arguing that Titus summoned the God of Israel in an *evocatio* cite Josephus and Tacitus, who proffer similar associations between the destruction of the temple in 70CE and God's abandonment:

> [Titus to John of Gischala and his supporters] "Why are you polluting your Sanctuary with the blood of foreigner and native? I call the gods of my fathers and *any god that ever watched over this place – I do not believe there is one now* – I call my own army, the Jews in my camp, and you yourselves to witness that I am not compelling you to desecrate your Temple." (my emphasis; Jos. *BJ* 6.126-127).

> "Embattled armies were seen to clash in the sky with flashing arms, and the Temple shone with sudden fire from heaven. The doors of the shrine suddenly opened, a superhuman voice was heard to proclaim that 'the gods were leaving', and at once there came a mighty movement of their departure" (Tac. *Hist*. 5.13).[168]

Both Josephus and Tacitus place these episodes chronologically and immediately prior to the destruction of the temple. In fact, as literary units, each function in their narratives to justify the movement towards the final siege on Jerusalem and the temple. Hadas-Lebel sees a direct correlation between the *carmen evocationis* ("*sive*

[168] Trans. William Hamilton Fyfe, *Tacitus: The Histories* (Oxford, UK: OUP, 2008), 241.

deus sive dea")[169] and Titus' words in Josephus above.[170] However, as I have argued throughout this section, such certainties regarding ritual formulas of *evocationes* cannot be sustained. Kloppenborg makes a similar error in relation to omens and *evocationes* associated with Jos. *BJ* 6.299 and Tacitus' text above (*Hist*. 5.13). Here, he argues that omens and prodigies are a key feature of the *evocatio* which "necessarily preceded the siege".[171] However, like Hadas-Lebel, Kloppenborg's confidence is overstated; and while we can maintain that omens were associated with some *evocationes* (e.g. Juno of Veii), they appear to be of the type, which sought to incorporate new cults at Rome.[172]

We know, in fact, that Israel's God was *not* introduced to Rome following the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Rather, according to Josephus (*BJ* 7.218), Vespasian enacted a tax requiring "all Jews" to pay to Jupiter Capitolinus "the same contribution they had previously made to the temple at Jerusalem".[173] The total destruction of the temple and its cult appears to have served fiscal and ideological motivations.[174] Fiscally, the total destruction of the temple cult at Jerusalem provided Vespasian the opportunity to "redirect the tax to Rome without incurring the charge

---

[169] Cf. fn. 163.

[170] Mireille Hadas-Lebel, "Flavius Josèphe comme témoin des rites de victoire romains", Melanges de l'Ecole Francaise de Rome v. 121.2 (2009): 478.

[171] Kloppenborg, "*Evocatio Deorum*", 444.

[172] Gustaffon, *Evocatio Deorum*, 79.

[173] Cassius Dio (66.7.2) reports that the tax was a tribute to Jupiter Capitolinus for upkeep of the Temple of Jupiter, which was destroyed during the Roman civil war of 69CE.

[174] James Rives, "Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple" in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (eds. Jonathan Edmonson, Steve Mason, and James Rives; Oxford: OUP, 2008), 156. Rives correctly notes the apologetic tone of Josephus and his presentation of Titus. Josephus repeatedly mitigates responsibility away from Titus and onto Titus' soldiers, the Jews, and the rebels.

of impiety".[175] Ideologically, the Flavians needed to secure their power after the uncertain waters of 69CE, and such a victory ascribed to Roman Jupiter helped set that tone.[176] Jodi Magness states the situation well, "…his [Jewish God] cult seems to have been subjugated to and replaced by that of Capitoline Jupiter".[177] In this way, it does not appear that Israel's God was "called out" under the type of circumstances allotted to the *evocatio* (as explained above). On this point, Davies notes, "The Romans did not win the favour of the God of Jerusalem; the Jews lost it".[178] God appears, according to Josephus, to have willfully abandoned the city and his people, leaving them to their demise.

For Davies, Josephus's repeated correlation between the first and second temple's destruction throughout *BJ* speaks against a clear case of *evocatio* in 70CE, and rather promotes themes of covenantal language related to desertion and renewal frequently found in the Hebrew Bible.[179] In one instance, for example, Josephus (*BJ* 5.408-412) marks Titus' restoration of Jerusalem's water supply (following the rainy season) as comparable to a portent of Jerusalem's capture by the "king of Babylon" in 586BCE. Josephus remarks to the rebellion, "He ["king of Babylon"] took the city and burnt it along with the sanctuary, though I doubt that the Jews in those days were

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Jodi Magness, "The Arch of Titus and the Fate of the God of Israel", *JJS* 59.2 (2008): 207.

[178] Davies, "Covenant and Pax Deorum", 85.

[179] See Davies "Covenant and Pax Deorum", 86-88. Davies' evidence: "he [Josephus] implicitly and explicitly compares himself to the prophet Jeremiah, who predicted and lived through the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon; he emphasises the coincidence that the fall of Jerusalem to Titus happened on 10th Ab, the same date as the its fall to Nebuchadnezzar…".

guilty of any impiety as gross as yours".[180] While certainly Josephus condemns the rebellion of 70CE as having the greater impropriety, his suggestion focusses on the failure of the Jews in both contexts nonetheless. Therefore, upon stating this comparison between the two epochs of temple history, Josephus concludes, "So I am sure that our God has abandoned his holy places here, and is standing now with the enemies you are attempting to fight".[181]

Ezekiel 10-11 and 2 Bar. 8:2 (cf. 4 Bar. 4:2) serve as precedence for God's departure from the Jerusalem temple prior to its destruction by Babylonian armies. As Davies correctly notes, for Josephus, "History is repeating here", and Josephus no less envisions God's judgment against the Jews – delivered in the form of Roman power and temple destruction – as he does their renewal (e.g. Ezek. 43; 2 Bar. 77).[182] The permanence of an *evocatio*,[183] and subsequent allegiance to Rome, would certainly strip back Josephus' image of a renewing, covenantal, God. Davies resolves the conflict by allowing that Josephus is using "doublespeak" to promote a dual message for which different audiences would inevitably draw distinct conclusions.[184] With Josephus' comparisons, how could a Jewish audience, familiar with covenantal

[180] Jos. *BJ* 5.411.

[181] Jos. *BJ* 5.412; Cf. *BJ* 6.299

[182] Davies, "Covenant and *Pax Deorum*", 88, 92.

[183] Davies ("Covenant and *Pax Deorum*", 88 fn. 28) cites the transfer of the god Vertumnus to Rome in Prop. 4.2.55-56: "But grant me this, god-begetter, that togaed Romans *till the end of time* may bustle at my feet" (my emphasis; *sed facias, divum Sator, ut Romana per aevum transeat ante meos turba togata pedes*).

[184] Davies, "Covenant and *Pax Deorum*", 79-80. Josephus is more likely than Mark, for example, writing *BJ* for a Roman (or Gentile) audience. Cf. Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome A.D. 66-70* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1987), 6; Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 97-98; Mark Brighton, *The Sicarii in Josephus' Judean War: Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Observations* (Early Judaism and Its Literature 27; Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 47.

theology, conclude that the temple's destruction in 70CE equaled the end of the temple cult without renewal? Moreover, how could a Gentile audience, without proper knowledge of Jewish history, see God's abandonment as anything other than God's final estrangement?[185] For Mark, his audience is adequately versed in Jewish history and its key figures as well as over-arching theological themes of scripture, including covenantal-language.[186] God's exit from behind the inner veil signals God's absence, and may have even evoked *evocatio*-like language for some in Mark's audience. However, while I have argued above that God's abandonment of Jesus, the real audience, and the temple is truly an abandonment, there is nothing in Mark's gospel to suggest that God will not remain faithful to his people or Jesus even when Mark leaves it unstated. Certainly, the experience of God's radio silence is cumbersome to the Markan audience and must be addressed, but it does not mark finality. Moreover, Jesus' faithful death in the face of silence strikes another chord reminding the real audience of the gospel's reverberating apologetic tone concerning the power of Jesus and the God of Israel.

Conclusion

[185] Greeks, like the Romans, believed that the defeat of a city was the consequence of the abandonment of the tutelary deity. Cf. Aesch. *Sept*. 217-218.

[186] For example, in Mk. 14:24, at the Passover meal, Jesus took a cup, drank from it, and proclaimed to his disciples, "This is my blood of the covenant" (Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης). This phrase likely alludes to LXX Ex. 24:8, a covenant-establishing ceremony. In the ceremony, Moses reads the book of the covenant to the people for which they respond, "Everything that the Lord has said we will do, and we will obey!". Following the people's words, Moses sprinkles the blood of a sacrificed bull on them and establishes the covenant, "Look! *the blood of the covenant* (my emphasis; τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης), which the Lord established with you concerning all these words". Mark's audience appears to be less familiar with ground-level practices of Jewish living and rituals than scripture.

In this chapter, I have argued that Mark's use of term βασιλεύς was purposely deployed as political invective against "King Herod", a negative figure in the Markan narrative. In fact, the title "king" attached to this figure, who was never a king in historical fact, displays Mark's purposeful use of the term as political invective. In Mk. 15, Mark again draws attention to the negative connotations attached to the -βασιλ word family, though now placing the invective in the mouths of hostile groups attacking Jesus. In this overall assessment, I actually agree with scholarly consensus who argue that Mark utilises kingship as a tool to display Jesus' ultimate victory to the shame of his enemies. How, though, can I hold together the view that Mark uses kingship language both negatively as invective and positively as praise in the same narrative? Further examination of the centurion's confession is key as it makes visible Mark's demarcation between earthly and transcendent narrative worlds. This separation allows Mark to casts Jesus' messianic titles, for example, in an eschatological context that Jesus will attain only in his death. Therefore, while Markan messianic titles retain kingly meaning, they are always oriented towards the future, i.e. after Jesus' death.

Chapter 4

Implicit Kingship in Mark: Narrative Space and Jesus Made God

Introduction: The "Kingdom of God" in Mark's Gospel

As shown in chapter 2, Rome is unique in its view of kingship. In comparison, for example, to provinces in the east, Rome at varying times and for varying reasons could view kingship negatively (i.e. the *odium regni*) or positively. However, when the *-reg* word group was applied to the gods or their "rule/reign", whether over "territories", "domains", or "realms", Roman writers were consistently positive. For example, Jupiter was regularly and positively described as a "king" who "rules" within a "kingdom". I showed that numerous other Roman gods are given the same appellations and functions without a hint of the *odium regni*. Much in the same way, while Mark is quite aware of the *odium regni* at the time of his writing, his use, for example, of βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ("Kingdom of God"; Mk. 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14, 15, 23, 24, 25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43), whether a functional reigning or ruling, or spatial and geographical meaning,[1] was consistent with historical and contemporary Roman writers who could hold both the *odium regni* and positive kingship of the gods nicely together.

[1] I am not overly concerned *here* to enter the extensive debate about the nature of the "kingdom of God" as it relates to its eschatological, transcendental, political, or spiritual state. Later in the chapter, I will come back to issues surrounding Mark's understanding of the eschatological significance of "kingdom of God" language and its connection to Mark's narrative worlds and Jesus' triumphal victory over Satanic forces. However, for a discussion exploring the "kingdom of God" in full, see Wendell Willis, ed., *The Kingdom of God in 20th Century Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987); Other important works include: Johannes Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, trans. Richard Hyde Hiers and David Larrimore Holland (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1971); Norman Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Burton L. Mack, "The Kingdom Sayings in Mark," *Foundations and Facets Forum* 3.1 (1987); Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003); H. Leroy Metts, "The Kingdom of God: Background and Development of a Complex Discourse Concept," *CTR* 2.1 (2004): 51–82; Mary Ann Beavis, *Jesus and Utopia: Looking for the Kingdom of God in the Roman World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).

The *odium regni*, in many cases, seems then to be the charge of *human aspirations* towards kingship, an end for which the Roman gods were not capable of being charged. In this way, kingship, when it relates to God, is acceptable because it lies outside of the narrative world's realm of time and space, and is thus other-worldly and divine. For example, God in Mark[2] is set within a kingdom for which the implication supposes God as king. The Markan author and the Markan audience are non-reactive to such claims.

I will identify two clearly distinctive narrative worlds – the transcendent and earthly narrative worlds – that Mark presents to his audience. As I will show, the way in which one reads and understands Mark's use of "kingship", whether explicitly (as in Chp. 3) or implicitly (within Christological titles) is dependent upon the narrative world that Mark presupposes. These comments have Christological implications for Mark's gospel. While Mark clearly understands God to "rule/reign" (perhaps over a domain?), Jesus, in all of his humanity, does not in the same way. This is not to negate Mark's presentation of Jesus as a powerful individual, but it may bring Jesus short of the divinity afforded to God in Mark if such a reading is applied flatly (more on this later).[3]

Narrative Space and Time in Mark

[2] I use "Mark" and "Markan author" interchangeably throughout this chapter.

[3] Elizabeth Malbon, however, argues that Mark's Christology presents a deflection by Jesus, who remains reticent to accept honor in place of God. She explains that later in Mark's narrative Jesus will accept honor "when it does not conflict with honoring God". In this way, Mark's Jesus may be rejecting kingship over the kingdom because God is presented as king. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 194.

The Markan author is not presumed to function as a character within Mark's narrative world, but rather stands omnisciently outside of it. The Markan author recounts the events of his story "without drawing attention to the act of narration itself".[4] This understanding provides the Markan author a position of authority with his audience.[5] Mark can reliably provide his audience with insider information concerning characters, their emotions and mindsets, otherwise unavailable were Mark an actor himself within the narrative world, i.e. limited by time and space. This perspective helps the reader understand the author's intended characterisation of various actors within the narrative. The Markan author, through the narrator, can reach not only into the narrative world's past, but also its future. In the mind of the Markan author, the ending of his story has already unfolded. The understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection, for example, was already present and beyond its developing stages in Christian history prior to Mark writing his gospel. Therefore, Mark's real audience is likewise attuned to the stories' plot lines and (at least) its ending.[6] Mark is merely arranging his narrative to accommodate his own retelling of Jesus' story.

As the Markan author narrates, he stands omnisciently outside of the narrative world (and also provides readers insights to this world), and yet various other-worldly characters (e.g. God, Satan, demons, angels, Holy Spirit) *within* the narrative world are also presented as having an awareness of transcendent realities

[4] Joanna Dewey, Donald Michie, David Rhoads, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 41.

[5] Ibid.

[6] The audience must be knowledgeable of the various terms and titles used of Jesus for which no description is given, but merely assumed.

unobtainable to the narrative world's human characters. From the opening verse of Mark's gospel, for example, the real audience (again, who are not limited to the strictures of time and space) is privy to information regarding Jesus' identity as both the "Christ" and "Son of God",[7] which human characters within Mark's earthly narrative world will only gain knowledge of as Mark's story ends (e.g. most fully at Mk. 14:61-62 and 15:39).

By connecting these two narrative worlds (i.e. the transcendent and earthly narrative worlds), Mark can speak of transcendent and cosmic truths, which lie beyond the earthly narrative world. It is only when we differentiate between these two worlds that we can hold together Mark's vision of Jesus' kingship, which *rejects kingship in all of its earthly forms*, but accepts it of Jesus in the transcendent narrative world. However, from the outset of Mark's gospel, Jesus' royal and divine identity is unmistakably visible to non-human characters and the real Markan audience who are clued into both worlds of the narrative. Jesus' ontological status – in particular, his divine quality – is dependent, however, upon his death and subsequent apotheosis. In the earthly narrative world, Jesus is clearly presented as being empowered by God beyond other natural human characters; yet still, Jesus "is not yet on a par with the God of Israel".[8] Below, I examine Mark's use of the Christological titles, "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Messiah" to show how Mark has divided his two narrative worlds and used these titles within an eschatological framework to assimilate Jesus to a divine status, but only after he has died.

---

[7] Likewise, Mark's association of Jesus with titles such as "Son of Man" and "Messiah" are almost always set within a future eschatological world, i.e. another example of the transcendent world.

[8] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Ancient Notions of Transferal and Apotheosis in Relation to the Empty Tomb Story in Mark" in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body, and Transformative Practice in Early Christianity* (eds. Turid Karlsen Seim; Jorunn Økland; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 41.

The "Son of God" and The Two Narrative Worlds

Scholars have debated the function of Mark's opening sentence (Mk. 1:1), and the various grammatical and textual issues associated with it. The text, with critical marks, reads: Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ⸂[υἱοῦ θεοῦ]⸃ ("The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, [Son of God]"). Questions of structure are pertinent to this discussion as it is unclear whether Mark intended verse one to function as an introductory sentence for the first sections of the gospel (Mk. 1:2-3; 1:2-8; 1:1-13; 1:1-15)[9] or a formal title of the entire work.[10] The lack of a verb driving the sentence as well as Mark's only use of the fully developed title, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, suggests the latter function. Mark uses this introductory sentence as a preview to the gospel that will unfold. This further stresses the point that Mark is writing in light of a finished story for which Jesus is already both "Messiah" and "Son of God", since even the Markan audience is expected to correctly understand the meaning of Mark's terms.

Mark's use of the phrase υἱοῦ θεοῦ has considerable textual issues in Mk. 1:1. The phrase is absent from a number of important witnesses (א Θ 28. *l* 2211 pc sa^{ms}; Or), and variant readings differ (e.g. υιου του κυριου, 1241). However, the phrase remains in ^{1}א and nearly all uncials except Θ. A feasible solution to textual problems

[9] Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 34; Lane, *Mark*, 42-45; Guelich, *Mark* 1-8:26, 7; Gundry, *Mark*, 30-36 (93); Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 23; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 27-28. Hooker, *St. Mark*, 31.

[10] Mann, *Mark*, 194; Van Iersel, *Mark*, 88-89; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 130; Beavis, *Mark*, 33; Boring, *Mark*, 29-32; Schnabel, *Mark*, 36. For a mediating position, see Marcus (*Mark 1-8*, 143), who notes, "Mark begins his work with a title (1:1) that introduces both the prologue (1:1–13 or 1:1–15) and the Gospel as a whole…".

of Mk. 1:1 could be that *homoioteleuton* in verses 1-3 (13x) caused scribal errors and omissions in the textual history. There is strong internal and external evidence that υἱοῦ θεοῦ was not a later addition, but functioned as an integral part in the plot of Mark's narrative. The phrase υἱοῦ θεοῦ and other "son" language relating to Jesus occur in at least eight different locations in Mark's gospel (Mk. 1:1; 1:11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 13:32; 14:61; 15:39; cf. 12:6). The importance of sonship and the title υἱοῦ θεοῦ for Jesus cannot be overstated. Mark's gospel begins (Mk. 1:1, 11) and ends (Mk. 15:39) with Jesus as son, and God implicitly as his father.

In fact, it is commonly noted that at Mk. 6:3, Mark does not refer to Jesus as "Joseph's son",[11] but rather connects Jesus' ancestry to Mary ("son of Mary").[12] Luke appears to find this rendering problematic and redacts the text to read οὐχὶ υἱός ἐστιν Ἰωσὴφ οὗτος; (Lk 4:22, "Is not this Joseph's son?"). Joseph's omission in Mark is historically and narratively conspicuous. Greco-Roman society saw itself, first, as a family,[13] and secondarily, as an extension of the larger πόλις,[14] which "served as a building-block…of larger political units".[15] Within the family, each person retained the social status of the family and was expected to adhere to their inherited "script".[16]

---

[11] Although, two important textual witnesses (P45^{vid}; 33^{vid}) eliminate any reference to Jesus as carpenter and attribute the title to his father: (1) ουχ ουτος εστιν ο του τεκτον ος ο $\overline{\text{υς}}$ της μαριας (P45^{vid}); (2) ουχ ουτος εστιν ο του τεκτονος ο υιος της μαριας (33^{vid}).

[12] Ronald Alan Kittel, "The Mother of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark", *Living Pulpit* 10, no. 4 (October 1, 2001): 10.

[13] Beryl Rawson, *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 125.

[14] Rawson, *The Family in Ancient Rome*, 127.

[15] Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 56.

[16] Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 12. Bryan describes "scripts" in terms of

The father figure served as the *paterfamilias* and operated with highest authority and legal standing.[17] This is even more pronounced in Judaism,[18] where the focus is set on a cohesive family unit with strong bonds between marriage, children, and group identity.[19] Judaism, likewise, held the father as the source of highest authority. With such a strong emphasis on the father historically, we must account for the absence of a tradition naming Joseph as Jesus' father in Mark's gospel, and instead understand why he traces Jesus' genealogical information through Mary.

Harvey McArthur cites numerous examples of matriarchal genealogical identification in Jewish and Christian history[20] and attempts to show that Mary's genealogy is likely used descriptively rather than legally in Mark (cf. Gen 21:9; Judg 11:1; 1 Kgs 17:17; Lk 7:12; Acts 16:1; 23:16; Gal 4:21-31).[21] Others suggest that Joseph's absence represents Jesus' bastardly origins[22] or an outright dismantling and reimagination of the family unit (cf. Mk. 3:31-35). However, Joseph's absence makes sense according to Mark's narrative, which focuses heavily on Jesus' sonship, and likely intends to substitute Joseph as Jesus' father to more boldly highlight

---

unspoken and underlying roles adhered to by dissimilar social groups.

[17] Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald, *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 180.

[18] David DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 158.

[19] Richard S. Hess and Daniel Carroll, *Family in the Bible: Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 17-31; 59-99.

[20] Harvey K. Mcarthur, "Son of Mary", *NovT* 15, no. 1 (1973): 38-58.

[21] Therefore, had a formal inquisition (i.e. census, broker, etc.) been made of Jesus, his identification would remain in Joseph. Furthermore, Jesus is likely identified according to Mary's lineage because of the locale (6:1). The crowd seems to have an insight to the life of Jesus' family. Perhaps, Mary as a notable figure in the community would overshadow her since dead husband.

[22] Marcus 2008, 375.

God's function as the father of Jesus. Therefore, if υἱοῦ θεοῦ reads originally (Mk. 1:1) as suggested, then the first words of Mark's gospel establishes this kinship between Jesus and God. In Mk. 1:11, at Jesus' baptism, "a voice came from heaven" (φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν) confirming Mark's claims about Jesus being the "Son of God" in Mk. 1:1.[23] Mark is making familial claims, by which Jesus, as "Son of God", can draw his authority and proclaim his message concerning the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:14-15).

In identifying Jesus as God's "son" and, specifically, using the title "Son of God", Mark elicits both a Jewish and Roman imperial perspective for his audience.[24] In Mark's usage of sonship language at Mk. 1:11, for example, scholars are keen to note a correlation between the heavenly voice's first statement ("You are my son") and LXX Ps. 2:7.[25] In context, LXX Ps. 2:7 is part of an inaugural celebration for a newly ("*today* I have begotten you") appointed king of Israel in which God sanctioned the king's authority to act on God's behalf. The filial relationship between king and God further ratified this exercise of dominion by the human king.

---

[23] The location of the voice (ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν), divine passive (ἐγένετο), and likely Psalmic allusion leaves little question to the reader that God is speaking (cf. 9:7).

[24] As noted in Chapter 1, such a flat and strong distinction between "Jewish" and "Roman" identities is unrealistic in the ancient world as populations could navigate multiiple identities at a time and utilise them for their own purposes. However, I make this note without precluding the distinctness of cultures and identities in the ancient world. Yarbro Collins and her reading of son-language through the lens of both Jewish and Roman perspectives (as it pertains to the Markan audience) remains a helpful source in navigating these distinctions. See Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Jews", *HTR* 92.4 (1999): 393-408; Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans", *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 85-100.

[25] Most commentators confidently note an allusion to LXX Ps. 2:7 in Mk. 1:11 (and 9:7) while others have offered, less confidently, intertextual allusions to Isa. 42 (Servant Songs) or Gen. 22 (Abraham and his "beloved son", Isaac). My attention to LXX Ps. 2:7 is due to the immediacy of the text's concern with kingship. The ambiguous identity of the "servant" in Isa. 42 along with the servant's speculative relationship to kingship allowed me to forego a further exploration (See Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, OLT (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 323-325).

The near-verbatim quotation in Mk. 1:11 only deviates from LXX Ps. 2:7 in the placement of the predicate nominative (υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ). The strength of this allusion is evident, and suggestions that the language "include some of the most common words in Greek – or any language for that matter…" does not mitigate against this position.[26] Furthermore, the royal coronation in Ps. 2 most naturally finds its background in relation to the Davidic dynasty. The concept of sonship was integral to the covenant-language at Sinai (LXX Deut. 1:31; 8:5) and was carried over into the matrix of language applied to the Davidic covenant and subsequent kings (2 Kgdms. 7:14; LXX Ps. 88:27). For example, a correlation between Ps. 2:7 and 2 Sam. 7:14 found currency in messianic traditions at Qumran (4QFlor 1:10–13) and Second Temple texts (1 En. 48:10; 4 Ezra 7:28-29; 13:32, 37, 52; 14:9). Such ideas, as we will see, are similarly utilised in Mark's gospel, first in the episode of the transfiguration (9:7), where LXX Ps. 2:7 will be evoked once more, but again when Mark equates Jesus' messiahship to his sonship at Mk. 14:61 ("the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed one"). Mark's application of sonship language to Jesus, then, likely carries with it kingly, Davidic, and messianic overtones.

Scholars have similarly viewed Markan sonship language through a Roman perspective. Most notably is the recent work of Michael Peppard.[27] While Peppard questions whether the meaning lying behind Mark's baptism scene (Mk. 1:9-11) intends to draw allusions to LXX Ps. 2:7 (or Isa. 42:1),[28] he considers the scene

[26] Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 95.

[27] Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World*.

[28] Though, it should be noted that Peppard is equally happy to concede this point as it does not derail his key thesis. Peppard are far more sceptical of scholars who argue for allusions to Isa. 42 and Gen. 22.

through the lens of Roman imperial adoption practices. Peppard helpfully disentangles misconceptions surrounding the role of adoption in the Roman world, specifically in relation to imperial dynastic succession. For Peppard, Jesus is presented as a counter to the Roman emperors, who were often adopted ("made") rather than biological ("begotten") "sons of God". In this reading, Peppard does not regard Markan Christology as low, but to the contrary as "adoption could be a vehicle for prestige".[29] In this way, adopted sons were in no way of lesser value or status than biological sons. Peppard, then, interprets the baptism scene as Jesus' liminal stage into adoption (again, through a Roman lens), i.e. being "made" into God's son. Jesus gains a new status which he did not have prior to his baptism. In addition, the appearance of the dove's descent acts as an augural event and counter-message to the imperial eagle. I mostly agree with Peppard's thesis, especially in relation to the counter imperial messaging and the understanding of Jesus as the "made" rather than "begotten" Son of God. Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero all utilised *divi filius* language following the death and apotheosis of their adoptive fathers, signaling the prestige of Roman adoption. Moreover, a production of sixteen various coin types[30] featuring the head of Augustus and the legend DIVI F (*divi filius*) in the Civil Wars of 68-69CE, puts adoption language and its popularity very near the time of Mark's writing making it a relevant point for consideration.

Moving attention back to the baptism scene, Mark records that immediately following John's baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, Jesus saw "the heavens being torn apart" (v.10; σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς). The direct speech from God in this episode

[29] Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World*, 94.

[30] RIC I^2 Civil Wars 86, 88, 89, 93-100, 102, 104, 107, 109-110.

finds its setting within the transcendent narrative world. As Jesus emerges *up* out of the water (ἀναβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος), "the spirit *descends*" (my emphasis; τὸ πνεῦμα... καταβαῖνον) *into* Jesus as a dove. The spirit's descent is enabled by the splitting heavens (cf. Gen. 7:11; Acts 10:11; Rev. 19:11), a clear indication of the transcendent narrative world's presence.[31] Mark's use of εἶδον in the third person singular at v. 10 suggests that *only Jesus* saw the heavens split and the spirit descend. Likewise, in v. 11, the voice of God twice speaks to Jesus directly, using second person singular pronouns (σύ). Matthew's version redacts Mark, opting for less personal sentiments, by using the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος in place of σύ (Mt. 3:17; Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα). This minor change allows for more character witnesses within Matthew's narrative to confirm, with Jesus, God's declaration and adoption concerning Jesus. Mark's rendering does not allow room for such a reading. Therefore, in Mark, God's declaration about Jesus occurs within the transcendent narrative world. No human character[32] is privy to the episode except Mark and the Markan audience, who really know the true identity of Jesus as God's son.

However, Mark does use the demonstrative pronoun, like Matthew, in his second theophanic episode (Mk. 9:1-8) of the transfiguration. At Mk. 9:2, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John to a "high mountain alone, by themselves" (ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους) where Jesus transfigured before them (καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν). The emphatic note is intended to display how limited the group is during the

[31] Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 32.

[32] The ambiguity of Jesus' status in Mark remains an important question at this point.

transfiguration. In all, from the earthly narrative world, only Jesus and the three disciples are present. According to Mk. 9:4, Elijah and Moses simply appear (ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἠλίας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ), though their origins are presumed to be from the transcendent narrative world. Mark, then, notes that suddenly "a cloud overshadowed them" (νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς). The audience is given no information about who the cloud covered, whether the three glorified figures (Jesus, Elijah, and Moses), the three disciples, or all six characters.[33] Though, with the phrase ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο ("for they were terrified") in v. 6 referring back to the disciples, it would only make sense to minimally include the disciples as part of αὐτοῖς in v. 7.

Importantly, for Mark, the cloud represents a theophanic moment, "signifying the presence of God".[34] The theophany cues the audience to the divisions between the earthly and transcendent narrative worlds. The movement of the transcendent narrative world has clearly taken over the setting as Mark carefully navigates its relation to the earthly narrative world. Mark records that a "voice came from the clouds" (ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης). This language mimics his earlier usage at the baptism scene (Mk. 1:11), and indicates that the voice is God's. As noted above, the major change to God's speech between the baptismal scene and the transfiguration regards Mark's use of the second person singular pronoun σύ to the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος. This change allows the disciples to take part in the theophanic event as they too hear God's voice. To further strengthen this reading, the command to

[33] Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 425) argues that the information does not seem to be of dire importance to narrative as the focus is on the divine voice and its proclamation about Jesus.

[34] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 425. Cf. LXX Exod. 24:15-16.

"listen" (ἀκούω) makes little sense if it is directed at the two other transfigured characters in the scene.[35] The command, however, develops from Mk. 8:18, where Jesus, chastising the disciples for their misunderstanding, asks them, "Do you have ears, and fail to hear?" (ὦτα ἔχοντες οὐκ ἀκούετε;). Following God's speech, Mark notes the immediacy (ἐξάπινα)[36] with which the transcendent narrative world has withdrawn from the scene (Mk. 9:8).

Secrecy, Identity, and the Eschaton

The narrative progresses as the small group (Jesus, Peter, James, and John) comes down the mountain where the transfiguration had taken place. Mark notes that Jesus "ordered" (διαστέλλω) the disciples to remain quiet "concerning what they had seen", but only "until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead" (Mk. 9:9). These two pieces of information concerning both secrecy and Jesus' future eschatological existence are important. As detected at Mk. 9:9, the secrecy motif in Mark typically cues the reader to an event in the transcendent narrative world. For example, in Mark 3:11, the Markan audience is given an elaborate summary (cf. Mk. 1:32-34, 45) of Jesus missionary work, which includes his interactions with "unclean spirits". The audience learns that after having visual contact with Jesus, these unclean spirits would fall to the ground and cry out loud, "You are the Son of God!" (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ). Again, the words of the unclean spirits mimic those words from God at the

[35] This is especially true if Mark has provided a textual allusion to LXX Deut. 18:15: "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you from your brothers like me; *you shall listen to him*" (my emphasis; προφήτην ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου ὡς ἐμὲ ἀναστήσει σοι κύριος ὁ θεός σου, αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε). In this reading, Jesus would function as another prophet like Moses, i.e. not superseding him.

[36] The term ἐξάπινα can mean "unexpectedly" or "immediately". The word appears fifteen times in the LXX with both meanings used regularly. See Decker, *Mark 9-16*, 6.

baptismal scene (1:11). Similarly to Mk. 1:11, Mark uses the second person singular pronoun σύ to indicate that no other character (besides Jesus) within the earthly narrative world heard the proclamation.

A similar episode occurs at Mk. 5:7. In this pericope (Mk. 5:1-20), the audience learns that Jesus travels to the country of the Gerasenes.[37] Here, Jesus is encountered by "a man with an unclean spirit" (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) who emerges from the tombs (v. 2). Mark reports two initial encounter stories (Mk. 5:2 against Mk. 5:6-7). In the first instance, the man with an unclean spirit simply meets Jesus with the inference being that this contact is made near the boats (v. 2a). However, in the second initial encounter story (Mk. 5:6), Mark has the man "seeing Jesus from a distance" (ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν), running towards him and bowing in reverence to him (ἔδραμεν καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ). The man with an unclean spirit then shouts, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" (v. 7; Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου;). Notice, the "distance" (μακρόθεν) helps Mark introduce the transcendent narrative world without having Jesus' true identity (υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου) spoiled by onlookers. Moreover, it is significant that the verbal shift in v. 1, which indicated that "*They* [the disciples] came to the other side of the sea" (ἦλθον εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης), is removed immediately in v. 2, suggesting that only Jesus stepped out of the boat and was alone met by the man with an unclean spirit. The entire dialogue between the man with an unclean spirit and Jesus presumes that they are alone, and that only Jesus heard the man with an unclean spirit truly identify him.

[37] Mark's note indicating that the group traveled from "the other side of the sea", i.e. in Jewish territory, aims to provide a Gentile setting for the current pericope.

The "Son of Man" Who Rides the Clouds

In Mk. 9:9, Jesus provides his disciples with a schedule, detailing the appropriate time to unveil his true identity. Jesus tells the disciples that only after his death can they reveal to others the information concerning his identity, which they learned in the transcendent narrative world and from the voice of God. By connecting Jesus to the identity of the "Son of Man", Jesus' authority and divinity is cast in a *future eschatological context*, i.e. within the transcendent narrative world. In the earthly narrative world, however, Jesus' role as "Son of Man" is characterised by rejection and suffering (Mk. 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21 (x2), 41), which will only be eclipsed by eschatological power and vindication after his death (Mk. 8:38; 13:26; 14:62). The connection between suffering and eschatological power is linked by an allusion to the human figure, "one like a Son of Man", in LXX Dan. 7:13-14.

As a whole, Daniel 7 speaks to the deliverance of God's people, but begins with a vision recounting the historical movement and power of four world kingdoms demarcated as four beasts. The "one like a Son of Man" is presented in stark contrast to these beasts, and dominion moves quickly from the beasts to this human figure. The "one like a Son of Man" comes riding on the clouds of heaven to receive "authority and royal honor" (ἐξουσία καὶ τιμὴ βασιλική) from the Ancient of Days. This imagery of riding on clouds transcends the earthly narrative plane and attributes divine qualities to the human figure (cf. Ex. 34:5; Num. 10:34; Ps. 104:3; Isa. 19:1). Furthermore, the "one like a Son of Man" and his authority is intricately connected to the "the holy people of the most high" (LXX Dan. 7:27); he identifies with God's

people and their suffering (LXX Dan. 7:8, 21, 24, 25). For Marcus, the figure's connection to God's elect people, suffering, and vindication solidifies a Danielic background to Mark's "Son of Man" language.[38]

Importantly, the figure is presented in terms of kingship, i.e. having "royal honor" (τιμὴ βασιλική) and a "kingdom" (βασιλεία; LXX Dan. 7:14, 18, 22, 27). The "one like a Son of Man" is not only presented in contrast to the four kingdoms, but also to the "kings" (βασιλεύς) who represent them. Divinity and kingship are clearly assigned to this figure; and in Mark's reimagining of LXX Dan. 7, the enemies of God "*will see* the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory" to vindicate God's people (cf. Mk 13:26-27). However, this vindication only comes to fruition "after that suffering" (Mk. 13:24), i.e. within the transcendent context of the eschaton. However, some have argued that the use of "Son of Man" at Mk. 2:10 and 2:28 are an exception to this transcendent context. These episodes are situated amongst five human conflict stories (Mk. 2:1-3:6), which Mark contrasts against Satanic/cosmic opposition encountered by Jesus in Mk. 1.

The first controversy (Mk. 2:1-12) begins with Jesus' proclamation of forgiveness after he performed an act of healing on a paralytic. Following the proclamation, "some of the scribes" were internally questioning Jesus' authority and, on the narrative level, accuse him of blasphemy for having forgiven the paralytics' sins; this is a task "God alone" can initiate (v. 7). Jesus asks his interlocutors, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?" (v. 9). For the Markan Jesus, the "easier" response to

[38] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 531, 613. Marcus (*Mark 8-16*, 613) notes, "The 'one like a Son of Man' is exalted to heavenly glory, and this exaltation is linked with the vindication of the people of God after they have suffered for 'a time, two times, and half a time'.

the paralytic would be to simply speak his forgiveness, but such an act proves no efficacy of the forgiveness enacted. The harder route, i.e. through healing, appears to accomplish both aims. The responses in vv.10-11 concern the issue at hand: "[10] But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins– he said to the paralytic – [11]'I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.'".

The opening phrase of v. 10, ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ("But that you may know…"), is typically understood in three different ways. Some take the initial ἵνα-clause imperatively and translate the text as a command ("Know that…")[39] while others – most commonly – read ἵνα as a purpose clause, and, thus, a continuation of Jesus' response to the scribes. Still others regard v. 10 as an authorial aside.[40] The sudden shift between characters, i.e. from the scribes to the paralytic, in v. 10 is clumsy. Moreover, if v. 10 is part of Jesus' response to the scribes then the appearance of "Son of Man" so early in the narrative, along with Jesus' willingness to identify himself with that title, should cause us pause.[41] Thus, the latter position (authorial aside) seems preferable.

Likewise, Mk. 2:28 refers to Jesus as the "Son of Man" and "lord of Sabbath" following a controversy between Jesus' disciples and the Pharisees. Mark records that the disciples were "plucking heads of grain" (Mk. 2:23) when they were

[39] C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (London: CUP, 1968), 144–45; Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 97–98.

[40] Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 100; Hugh Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 101; Mary Healy, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 57; Beavis, *Mark*, 59.

[41] Lane (*The Gospel of Mark*, 96) states the problem well, "With the exception of Ch. 2:10 and 28, it ["Son of Man"] does not enter the Marcan record until after the acknowledgement that Jesus is the Messiah in Ch. 8:29. Then it occurs twelve times and provides the key to Jesus' self-disclosure to his disciples".

suddenly accused by the Pharisees of "doing what is not lawful on the sabbath" (Mk. 2:24). Through Jesus' correct interpretation of scriptural precedent, i.e. on the basis of Davidic authority (Mk. 2:25-26), the authority of the Pharisees is undermined. In the narrative world, Jesus' disciples stand in continuity with the true meaning of scripture and, therefore, God's intended role for sabbath. Jesus' final maxim, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath" (Mk. 2:27), confirms the role of the sabbath as God intended it. Following the maxim, Mk. 2:28 states, "so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath" (ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου).

While the particle ὥστε ("so") functions here to show a result of what came before (whether regarding the pericope in its entirety or immediately situated to v. 27), it remains unclear whether the statement is Jesus' own, i.e. as a continued response to the Pharisees, or another editorial aside and explanatory comment to Mark's real audience. Decker notes, "The Greek simply does not indicate where the quotation ends".[42] The latter position, however, seems the more prudent interpretation since the relationship between vv. 27 and 28 has a clear "lack of cohesion".[43] Lane argues that the particle ὥστε most often "establishes a link of consequence between two propositions". However, a strong discontinuity between the key subjects of v. 27, i.e. ἄνθρωπος ("human"), and v. 28, i.e. ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ("the Son of Man"), should again cause us pause.

As editorial notes, the context and setting of Mk. 2:10 and 2:28 are at once

[42] Decker, *Mark 1-8*, 66.

[43] Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 118-120.

not only relevant to the narrative world of Mark's creation, but also the real audience behind the text. One can imagine the importance for early Christian communities (Mark's included) and their questions concerning issues related to Jesus' authority. By levelling the claim that Jesus can forgive sins (Mk. 2:10) and has authority even over sabbath law (Mk. 2:28); any question of Jesus' authority is settled for the real audience. The relevance of sabbath observance in early Christian communities cannot be overstated.[44]

What Kind of "Christ"?

Issues surrounding secrecy and Jesus' identity are further elaborated by Mark's use of the term χριστός ("messiah" or "anointed one"). The concept of the "messiah" in the Hebrew Bible, and Judaism more widely, was varied by time and place. Collins warns "that 'messiah,' even as an eschatological term, can refer to different kinds of figures, and that to speak of 'the messiah' without further qualification is to speak ambiguously".[45] The title, "messiah" (מׁשיח) in the Hebrew Bible could be used to refer to Israel's kings (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:10; 12:3, 5; 24:7; 2 Sam. 19:22; 22:51; 23:1; Pss. 18:50; 89:38, 51; 2 Chron. 6:42; Lam. 4:20; Isa. 45:1), priests (Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22), or prophets (Ps. 105:15; 1 Chron. 16:22). The verbal cognate, מׁשח ("to anoint"), was used as part of the inauguration ceremonies for those filling the offices listed above (of kings: 1 Sam. 9:16; 2 Sam. 2:4, 7; 1 Kings 1:39, 45; 19:16; Ps. 89:20; of priests: Exod. 28:41; 40:15). In the wake of a waning

[44] Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 101-102; John P. Meier, "The Historical Jesus and the Plucking of the Grain on the Sabbath", *CBQ* 66 (2004): 578-579.

[45] John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI : Eerdmans, 2010), 18.

monarchy and the break of the Davidic line (Jer. 22:19), hopes for a future royal messiah (e.g. Dan. 9:25) from Davidic stock developed within Judaism. These ideas, featured heavily in Second Temple literature, stem from the dynastic landscapes of the Davidic tradition.

In the LXX,[46] the crucial text of the Davidic dynastic tradition is the prophet Nathan's oracle to David (2 Kgdms. 7:8-16). Here, the Lord will make for David a house (v. 11; ἀπαγγελεῖ σοι κύριος ὅτι οἶκον οἰκοδομήσεις αὐτῷ), and make David's name great upon the earth (v. 9; τὸ ὄνομα τῶν μεγάλων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). Moreover, this will come about after David's death, and proceed from David's own progeny (τὸ ὄνομα τῶν μεγάλων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). The son of David is to build the Lord a house, and in return the Lord will establish his kingdom *forever* (v. 13; εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). Furthermore, a filial dimension is added, and the Lord will act as a father to the Davidic child (v. 14; ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν).[47] Importantly, the "mercy" (ἔλεος = MT חסד) of the Lord is never removed even in light of the child's potential "injustice" (ἀδικία), and the Davidic "house" and "kingdom" is made "sure forever" (v. 16).

Various non-canonical Jewish sources waited in anticipation of a messianic prophet or king, but not always a Davidic one. For example, *Sib. Or.* 3, written by Alexandrian Jews between 163-45BCE,[48] presents a type of royal eschatology with various non-Jewish figures representing key roles in Jewish salvation history. Most

[46] Again, I often cite the LXX since Mark seems to have a clear preference and familiarity with the text.

[47] Cf. LXX Ps. 2; 109; Isa. 9.

[48] Collins, "Sibylline Oracles", 1.355.

often the depiction of a coming messianic deliverer is in the form of gentiles (Persian King Cyrus: *Sib. Or. 3.282-287*; Ptolemy VI Philometor: *Sib. Or. 3.652-656*), though deliverance is reckoned to the Jews. In more rare cases, the author reveals that the messianic deliverer is a unidentified Jewish prophet-king whose rule in the age to come is comprised of universal peace (*Sib. Or.* 3.781-782). Though the prophet–king language is rare in *Sib. Or.* 3, it is not unfamiliar to messianic traditions within Judaism (cf. Wisd. 3:8; Dan 7:18, 22, 27; 1QM XVII 5-9; Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30; Rev 3:21).

The *Psalms of Solomon* (*Pss. Sol.*) in contrast presents a more pro-Davidic perspective of the messiah. *Pss. Sol.* was written sometime between 70-30BCE in Jerusalem. The narrative, overall, speaks to a group of Jews beset with the effects of devastating foreign invasions. In their crisis, the author explains that their present suffering is actually the discipline of God for their unfaithfulness (*Pss. Sol.* 2:1, 15–18; 3:3–5; 4:8; 8:3, 23–26; 9:2). For the psalmist, God was punishing the Hasmonean monarchy for usurping the Davidic throne, and the "righteous" (i.e. the psalmist's group) were collateral damage (*Pss. Sol.* 17:4-5). Accordingly, the punishment culminated in the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire (*Pss. Sol.* 17:5). Therefore, without the realistic prospect of overturning their political overlords, this community adopted an apocalyptic message of a coming messianic figure, specifically a Davidic king, who would liberate them from their desperate situation and restore Jerusalem "as in the beginning" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:30), by reinstating their rightful king. The psalmist concludes that the Davidic ruler is the only legitimate *human king*, who will act as vice-regent of God towards Israel (*Pss. Sol.* 17:42). The psalmist confirms the continuity of the Davidic covenant and its relevance for his

present time. Because of this continuity, the Davidic covenant delegitimises the reign of the Hasmoneans who usurped the throne.

It is by the agency of a holy spirit (*Pss. Sol.* 17:37) that the Davidic king is strengthened to crush Israel's enemies (i.e. "lawless nations"; *Pss. Sol.* 17:22-24), rule with wisdom (*Pss. Sol.* 17:29), and restore Jerusalem (*Pss. Sol.* 17:30). He will wipe clean injustice and make the Jewish state recognisable among foreign nations, who will then pledge allegiance to God. Interestingly, war mongering will not be an essential feature of his appointed task (*Pss. Sol.* 17:33-44). The psalmist, reinterpreting LXX Ps. 2 and Isa. 11, presents the Davidic ruler not only as king politically (*Pss. Sol.* 17:21, 32, 42), but also as judge (*Pss. Sol.* 17:26-29) and shepherd (*Pss. Sol.* 17:40-41).[49] The battle against his enemies is fought through the "word of his mouth" as he "condemns sinners by the thoughts of their hearts" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:24-25; cf. 17:35). Additionally, the king, though not divine, is sinless (*Pss. Sol.* 17:36). This last attribute directs him to lead Israel to "holiness" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:41). This stands in stark contrast to the sinful Hasmoneans (*Pss. Sol.* 17:6) and Romans (*Pss. Sol.* 17:13), as this king's rule is marked by "equality" (ἰσότης) rather than "pride" (ὑπερηφανία; *Pss. Sol.* 17:41). Finally, the king is named the "Lord Messiah" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:32; χριστὸς κυρίου) and "king of Israel" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:42; τοῦ βασιλέως Ισραηλ).

Mark uses the term χριστός seven times in his gospel (Mk. 1:1, 8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21; 14:61; 15:32) and five of those references directly attribute the

[49] Joseph L. Trafton, "The Psalms of Solomon" in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison Jr., and John Dominic Crossan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 256.

designation to Jesus (Mk. 1:1; 8:29; 9:41; 14:61; 15:32 [in mockery]).[50] Moreover, just as "Son of God" and "Son of Man" are presented as effectual designations in transcendent terms, so too does Mark's use of χριστός remain hidden from the earthly narrative world until Jesus' passion narrative (Mk. 14:61). At Mk. 1:1, the use of χριστὸς, like "Son of God",[51] is part of the opening title of Mark's gospel and stands outside of the earthly narrative world. Mark 9:41 appears to be a later editorial addition of ἐμοί with Χριστοῦ.[52] Elsewhere, Mk. 12:35 and 13:21 each clearly depict the messiah within an eschatological context while Mk. 15:34 is used as Markan irony (pointing to Jesus' eschatological messiahship). Mark 8:29, however, appears most problematic for my understanding of Mark's two narrative worlds.

Mark 8:29 is understood by most scholars as *the* pivotal turning point in Mark's gospel whereby Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" for which Peter responds as the disciple's mouthpiece,[53] "You are the Messiah" (σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός). France takes Peter's confession as a launching point when "the truth about Jesus is recognised and acknowledged".[54] Evans understands the confession as a reversal of naming between Jesus and Peter, i.e. as Jesus renamed Simon to Πέτρος ("rock"), so too does Peter name Jesus, ὁ χριστός. Peter's role in establishing what would become something of a surname for Jesus in the early church, according to

[50] We might also consider the "false-messiahs" (ψευδόχριστοι) at Mk. 13:22 as the inverse of Mark's designation for Jesus.

[51] See section, "The Son of God and The Two Narrative Worlds" above.

[52] Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 408. Cf. **א*** reads ὅτι ἐμόν ἐστε.

[53] Mark use of the phrase ἰδὼν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ at Mk. 8:33 indicates that Peter was merely the vocal participant of the disciple's collective thinking. Cf. Mk. 9:5; 10:28; 11:21; 14:37 where Peter often takes on the vocal role of the group.

[54] France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 329.

Evans, shows the positive import of this confession.[55] Most commentaries suggest that Peter's use of the term χριστός must indicate his correct identification of Jesus since the language is already utilised by the Markan author at Mk. 1:1.[56] Hooker asks rhetorically, "Could any of his readers reach this point in his story and still not understand who Jesus was?"[57] Still, others argue that while Peter "gets it right" he does so only partially.[58] Yarbro Collins appeals to the "symbolic import of 8:22-26" for a proper interpretation and concludes, "…Peter's response, although true, is ambiguous and thus in need of clarification".[59]

I question, however, in what sense we might call Peter's confession, "true". In chapter 3, I developed the idea that Mark's use of the βασιλ- word family, for example, could be retooled to indicate either invective (Mk. 6:14-29) or positive appellation through irony (Mk. 15), though each section determined by context. Could Mark's employment of ὁ χριστός here not act similarly? Commentators attempt to see the use of χριστός in Mk. 8:29 as being of the same quality and substance as Mk. 1:1, and often forego Mark's contextual stop signs. The movement of the previous pericope (Mk. 8:22-26, i.e. the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida) functions as a three-step literary tool to point readers (1) backwards to the complete spiritual blindness of the disciples (Mk 8:18 against Mk. 8:23); (2) forwards to the

[55] Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 15.

[56] Cf. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 291; Gundry, *Mark*, 427; van Iersel, *Mark*, 282-285; Strauss, *Mark*, 360-361, especially fn. 4.

[57] Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, 203.

[58] Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 251-252; Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 166-167.

[59] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 402. Cf. Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 614.

increasing spiritual vision of Jesus' identity according to the disciples (Mk 8:24 against Mk. 8:29?); (3) and finally progressively to full sight, as displayed in the Bartimaeus story at Mk. 10:46-52. In this foreshadowing paradigm, Peter does not move from spiritual blindness in Mk. 8:18 to full sight by Mk. 8:29, but rather should be understood to misinterpret Jesus' identity altogether. In this view, Peter remains "blind", and the narrative bears this out contextually.

Mark 8:27-30 is intricately tied to Mk. 8:31-33, where Jesus equates the "Messiah" to the "Son of Man" (v. 31), and rebukes Peter as acting in league with the kingdom of Satan (v. 33). France is correct to note that the phrase ἤρξατο διδάσκειν ("he began to teach") at the start of Mk. 8:31 aims to "focus [Mark's] reader's attention on the development in the story (like his use of εὐθύς) rather than indicate a marked change of theme".[60] Mark has already used the exact phrase at three other points in his gospel (Mk. 4:1; 6:2, 34) to indicate the continuation of a narrative.[61] The latter section (Mk. 8:31-33) helps clarify Jesus' own self-understanding of "Messiah" against Peter's blundered view. As a unit, Mark's Jesus, then, weds the terms "Messiah" (Mk. 8:29) and "Son of Man" (Mk. 8:31) together in what appears to be a novel conflation at the time, and helps further define his own meaning of ὁ χριστός.[62] Furthermore, if Peter's confession of Jesus as "messiah" at Mk. 8:29 is tied to Jesus' rebuke of Peter at Mk. 8:33, then Peter's conclusion about Jesus as "messiah" is not just a half-truth, but it is incorrect. In addition, Jesus'

[60] France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 333. Cf. J.D.G. Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark" *TynBul* 21 (1970): 105.

[61] Contra Hooker (*The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, 205) who comments, "…this is certainly the beginning of a new stage in Jesus' teaching".

[62] Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Mark Allan Powell, "Messiah", ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (Revised and Updated)* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 628.

demand to silence (Mk. 8:30) after Peter's confession does not exemplify a secrecy motif, but rather aims to quail "this false idea of Messiahship", whatever the Markan Peter might have meant by his proclamation.[63]

The setting of this episode in Caesarea Philippi may further add a dimension to Peter's confession and help explain what prompts Jesus' question in the first place. Geographically, Caesarea Philippi was located near the southern base of Mt. Hermon and roughly 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. The first reference to the city by its Greek name, Panium, comes from Polybius (*Hist*. 16.18) around 200BCE. The name derives from its special relation to the Greek god Pan who was considered the chief god at this location, and enjoyed a dedicated cave shrine there. Augustus, c. 20 BCE, renamed the district Panias and gave it to Herod the Great. According to Josephus, Herod built and dedicated a shrine of "white marble" to Augustus at this site where he received divine honors.[64] However, following Herod's death, the region was given to Herod's son, Philip, who Josephus credits with the rebuilding and developing of the city, and eventually making it the region's capital and his home.[65]

Sometime near 2 BCE, Philip renamed the city after himself and, in honor of Emperor Tiberius, called it Caesarea Philippi. Later, Herod Agrippa II, greatly increased Caesarea Philippi and renamed it Neronias in honor of Emperor Nero.[66] Ancient Jewish sources (1 En. 12-16; T. Levi 2-7) associated the site with "visionary activity and ascent to the Heavenly Temple".[67] This background works well for

---

[63] Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark", 106.

[64] Jos. *BJ* 1.404-406; *Ant*. 15.363-364.

[65] Jos. *BJ* 2.168; *Ant*. 18.28.

[66] Jos. *BJ* 3.514; *Ant*. 20.211.

[67] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 602-603.

Mark's story where Jesus and three disciples will soon ascend "a high mountain" (ὄρος ὑψηλὸν) to have a visual and auditory experience of Jesus' transfiguration (Mk. 9:1-8). Historically, Vespasian gave thanks to the gods at this location following his successful campaign in Galilee during the Jewish revolt against Rome.[68] However, as a city known for a mostly gentile population, fountain of paganism, and harsh treatment of Jews, especially in the wake of the Jewish revolt against Rome, it is a surprising location for Jesus to ask the disciples about his identity. Most commentators note that this setting serves as a perfect setting for Jesus to assert his power, i.e. claiming messiahship, against empire and divinities associated with the site. It is for this reason that Mark casts Peter with a similar reflex. Jesus' corrective to Peter's botched definition is to immediately (Mk. 8:31) reimagine the messiah in light of his identity as the "Son of Man" who will suffer. In such a setting, Peter's answer anticipates an arbiter of power, but Jesus becomes a harbinger of suffering. Since the site draws imperial and divine power as well as violence to ancient imagination, why should we not expect a response such as Peter's?

Confessing It All

As I have attempted to show above, it is only in Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation that his role as "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Messiah", all of which appear interrelated to Mark, will be revealed. Jesus' arrest and trial before the Jewish council in Mk. 14:61-62 provides the clearest example of this point. Mark reports that the high priest questioned Jesus, asking, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?". Mark notes that Jesus had, just a few verses earlier (Mk.

[68] Jos. *BJ* 3.443.

14:60-61a), refused to defend himself against unfounded accusations.[69] However, the silence that has marked Jesus' identity throughout the gospel is now abruptly interrupted by Jesus' answer: "I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (v. 62). The statement "I am" (ἐγὼ εἰμι) might possibly be an allusion to the Tetragrammaton (YHWH; cf. LXX Ex. 3:14; Jn. 8:58), signifying a heightened Christological statement by Mark. More importantly, Mark has drawn together the titles, "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Messiah" in vv. 61-62, and has equated them loosely to one another in an eschatological context. The parallel versions in Matthew and Luke qualify the saying in Mk. 14:62 by adding the phrase, "from now on" (ἀπ' ἄρτι in Matt. 26:64; ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν in Lk. 22:69), perhaps expanding Mark's meaning which intends to convey the enthronement of Jesus but only following his death.

Allying Jesus with David?: A Brief on David's Role in Mark's Gospel

The previous section set out to account for Mark's use of important Christological titles such as, "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Messiah". While I have accepted a clear connection between these titles and kingship, I have not yet linked them directly to Mark's characterisation of David or estimation of Davidic kingship. In relation to Jesus, scholars have often declared Mark's characterisation of David, and Davidic messianic aims, as stingingly negative or unapologetically positive. Like Jesus, Mark's David cannot be characterised with royal qualities or titles since they were demonstrably negative when Mark was writing his gospel. So, while Mark presents David positively, and as a character to be emulated, Mark also

[69] Mark 14:59 indicates that there were problems with witnesses' testimonies.

avoids aligning David too closely with royal qualities. In consequence, Mark can align Jesus positively with David, but not his kingship.

Mark's gospel utilises Davidic themes four times (Mk. 2:25; 11:10; 12:36, 37) and references Jesus as a "Son of David" three times (Mk. 10:47, 48, 12:35). However, even though Mark clearly appropriates Davidic themes (Mk. 2:23-28; 10:47-48; 11:10), he is reluctant to affiliate David with concepts of kingship so easily found in Matthew and Luke. For example, although Matthew presents David as a "king" from the beginning of his gospel (Mt. 1:6) and Luke speaks of David's "throne" (Lk 1:32), Mark remains cautious regarding implications of Davidic kingship with only a single mention of David's "kingdom" (Mk 11:10) in the mouths of critical bystanders (Mk 10:48).[70] Elizabeth Malbon and Paul Achtemeier, among others, suggest that the Davidic texts are not merely functioning neutrally, but that the Markan author rejects them as an inadequate designation for the Markan Jesus.[71] Other scholars insist that the Markan author and Markan Jesus do not refuse Davidic terminology, but intend to retain kingly imagery while rejecting militaristic aspirations.[72] Broadhead, for example, refuses to accept that Mark is simply adverse

[70] The "many" (πολύς) of Mk. 10:48 are implied as the "many" (πολύς) in the "Triumphal Entry". In Mk. 10:48, the crowd is presented negatively by rejecting Bartimaeus the opportunity to receive a healing touch from Jesus.

[71] Paul J. Achtemeier, "'And He Followed Him,' Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46-52", *Semeia* 11 (1978), 126-27; Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 168. Cf. Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 251; Ian H. Henderson, "Reconstructing Mark's Double Audience", in *Between Author and Audience in Mark: Narration, Characterization, Interpretation*, edited by Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, 6-28 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 25.

[72] Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 89;; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 45-46; Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 292; Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 151; Stephen H. Smith, "The Function of the Son of David Tradition in Mark's Gospel," *NTS* 42 (1996): 537; Ben Witherington III., *The Gospel of Mark*, 333; Collins, *Mark*, 581-82; Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 164-65

to kingship outright, but rather compares the violent Davidic figure of *Pss. Sol.* 17 as the type of kingly figure Mark is rejecting. For Broadhead, "While the claim to kingship is not silenced in the characterization of Jesus, this claim is redefined in the Gospel of Mark as a taunting indictment brought by others".[73]

Mark characterises David positively in his gospel and refuses to attach kingly features to him. As with his presentation of Jesus, Mark's understanding of kingship is tainted by the calamities of civil war and echoes of Neronian despotism. As such, aligning David with kingship, the most marked feature of this Jewish hero, would potentially threaten the positive portrayal Mark is aiming to highlight. Mark 2:23-28 and Mk. 10:47-48 display most clearly Mark's positive characterisation of David, but also his avoidance of David's royal features.

As noted in my brief exegesis of Mk. 2:23-28 above (see "*The 'Son of Man' Who Rides the Clouds*"), Mark roots Jesus' basic authority in David's past actions. In this episode, Mark does not shy away from aligning Jesus too closely with David; in fact, Mark's Jesus employs David's fib to Ahimelech from 1 Sam. 21 and reinterprets it positively, thus removing any potential stain from David. In this sense, the Markan Jesus goes out of his way to present David positively. Mark, however, never explicitly mentions the kingship or kingdom of David in this pericope, but scholars have argued hints of kingship may be implicitly noted.

In v. 23, Mark explains that the disciples were going through the grainfields, and that they "made their way" (ὁδὸν ποιεῖν) by plucking heads of grain. Mark has

[73] Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 80. See above for *Pss. Sol.* 17 and the "violent" Davidic ruler. Also, we find this violent image of Davidic messianism in texts from Qumran (1QM 11:1–18; 4QFlor 1:11–14; 4QPBless 1–7; 4QTestim 9–13) and in some Pseudepigraphal material (4 Ezra 12:31–32; *T. Jud.* 24:1–5).

only used the term ὁδός twice (Mk. 1:2, 3) thus far in his narrative, explicitly referring to LXX Isa. 40:3 in each instance. Marcus argues that this terminology, moreover, can carry significance in relation to road preparation practices for incoming regal bodies.[74] As John "prepared the way" for Jesus, so now Jesus' disciples adopt this role. If the participle is one of means, then perhaps τίλλω ("pluck") is functioning to show that the disciples are clearing a path for Jesus, but no royal indications, as Marcus suggests, are readily apparent. In the Matthean (12:1) and Lukan (6:1) parallels, ὁδὸν ποιεῖν is omitted, which may be to fix the redundancy of Mark's gospel since he has already implied this movement with παραπορεύομαι ("going through") in the same verse. Is Mark being purposely redundant here so as to hint his readers to something more than mere corporeal movement? If so, Mark's clarity is lacking. The text seems to simply heighten the plot line and prepare Jesus' disciples for their encounter with the Pharisees.

In his retelling of David's story in 1 Sam. 21 (Cf. Mk. 2:25), Mark's Jesus appears to misinterpret, or possibly reinterpret the narrative. Important to our interpretation, Mark's Jesus places Abiathar as the "high priest"; yet, this fails to recognise that Ahimelech, Abiathar's father, is priest, though not the "high priest", and the one who interacts with David in 1 Sam. 21. Matthew and Luke, possibly recognising Mark's error, omit ἐπὶ Ἀβιαθὰρ ἀρχιερέως (cf. Matt 12:1-8; Lk 6:1-5). It is difficult to determine what benefit the narrative gains by implicating Abiathar as the key character, though his popularity could be an indicator. Certainly, Abiathar plays a larger role in the story of David, as he is most importantly known for

[74] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 239.

surviving Saul's attack against the priests (1 Sam. 22:20), and warning David of Saul's coming plans. Also, notably, he is in possession of the "ephod", which he brings to David after Saul's attack on the priests (1 Sam. 23:6). This is an important note as David, then, uses this ephod as a divinatory object, which clearly summons YHWH (1 Sam. 23:9-10; 1 Sam. 30:7-8), showing David's approval before God and thus his rightful hold on the kingship. Therefore, typological roles of power and regal legitimacy might underline the authority that Jesus attempts to appeal to by citing Abiathar, but Mark makes no explicit attempts to connect these ideas to Davidic kingship. Mark 10:46-52 serves as similar example of a positive assessment of David, but a silence/rejection towards Davidic kingship.

In Mk. 10:46-52, Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, hears that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. In an effort to attract Jesus' attention and appeal to him for healing, Bartimaeus cries out twice, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (υἱὲ Δαυὶδ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με; Mk. 10:47, 48). Jesus' silence in the narrative is deafening. Scholars often argue that since Mark's Jesus denies the messianic title of "Son of David" in Mk. 12:35-37 that the present verse should be interpreted with that knowledge in mind.[75] Meier's takes the emphasis off of the messianic title and redirects it towards the issue of Bartimaeus's healing. Meier's links the phrase "Son of David" to Solomon—the only true monarch to carry this title—and shows that Solomon had "gained a reputation as exorcist and healer".[76] Meier's notes, for example, that Josephus "witnessed the Jew Eleazar perform exorcisms in the

[75] For example, Moloney (*Mark*, 209) states, "Mark shows little interest in the messianic title 'Son of David,' and Jesus will later argue that the Messiah is not the Son of David (see Mk. 12:35-37)".

[76] John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Volume Two, Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1994), 689.

presence of Vespasian with the help of roots prescribed by Solomon, the invocation of Solomon's name, and the use of incantations Solomon had composed".[77] Cranfield likens the title in terms of Bartimaeus's politeness, which recognizes Jesus' physical descent from David. Cranfield disparages any need for a messianic title because of Jesus' later "denial" in Mk. 12:35-37.[78] Witherington too offers an interpretation where the "Title Son of David will prove to be true but inadequate to fully describe Jesus".[79]

Bartimaeus, as far as Mark is concerned, is cast in a positive light and praised for his outstanding faith (Mk. 10:52). For example, even though Bartimaeus is introduced παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν ("by the way / roadside"),[80] and not ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ("on the way") as the disciples (Mk. 8:27; 9:33, 34), he succeeds in his request for "sight" (Mk. 10:51-52). This success is put into contrast to the failure of the disciples, James and John, who sought positions of heavenly power in the previous pericope (Mk. 10:36). Additionally, this text forms an *inclusio* around the first blind man story (Mk. 8:22-26), in which the narrative serves to show the disciple's spiritual progression from blindness to partial sight, and finally to full sight. Ironically, the *inclusio* bookends with Bartimaeus—who was rejected by the disciples (Mk. 10:48)[81]—as the one who "recovered his sight", and can see Jesus' identity clearly enough to "follow him" (Mk. 10:52). Bartimaeus, then, serves as the exemplar disciple and pinnacle of

[77] Ibid.

[78] Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 344-345.

[79] Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark,* 292.

[80] This may possibly hint at the idea that Bartimaeus stands on the "outside" of Jesus' followers. Furthermore, Mark concludes the Bartimaeus story by stating, "And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him *on the way* (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ)."

[81] I read πολύς as including the disciples.

Mark's discipleship section (Mk. 8:31-10:52). The positive association with Bartimaeus and his "Son of David" language is strongly contrasted with the critical crowd, who both condemn Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:48) and later chant for "the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!" (Mk. 11:10). Reinforcing this reading, the chants by the negative crowd are eclipsed by Jesus' anti-climactic and awkward arrival to Jerusalem (Mk. 11:11). While the Davidic figure is characterised positively, his association with kingdom is overtly negative.

Brief Conclusions

The terms "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Messiah" implicitly speak to the question of Jesus' role as king. Language concerning the "Son of God" and "Messiah" in the LXX/HB, as shown above, clearly indicate some relationship to King David. Mark, however, understands Jesus' appropriation of these titles to lie outside of the earthly narrative world and within an eschatological context (e.g. Mk. 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; et al). So, while the terms "Son of God" and "Messiah", for example, might be linked to a Davidic background of kingship, Mark connects this title to the risen and exalted Jesus. In other words, Mark's messianic titles of Jesus are future oriented and fulfilled only after his death. Therefore, Mark can reject kingship in all earthly forms, but following Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation, can attribute them to Jesus, even if implicitly in messianic titles.

This separation of narrative worlds helps explain the various titles assigned to Jesus throughout Mark's narrative, which are implicitly riddled with kingship language (e.g. "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Messiah"), though always presented within the transcendent narrative world through an eschatological context.

It is only in Jesus' death, and subsequently the centurion's confession, that Jesus becomes in the earthly narrative world what various non-human characters had already understood him to be within the transcendent realm, namely "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Messiah". Moreover, it is in Jesus' passion narrative that Mark utilises and then subverts kingship invective. I will argue below that Mark utilises Roman political ideology to present Jesus' crucifixion procession as a mock Roman triumph; however, not only as a means to subvert and revert Jesus' shameful death into a victorious one as an apology for the cross, but also to highlight that Jesus, by his victory over the demonic kingdom and virtuous actions throughout Mark's narrative, has achieved deification through apotheosis, which was intimately tied to the Roman triumph.

Jesus, the Triumphator?

T.E. Schmidt detects correlations between the Roman triumph and the procession of Jesus' crucifixion in Mark (15:16-32).[82] Schmidt, at the time (1995), writing in the shadow of Robert Gundry's newest commentary on Mark, advances Gundry's understanding of Mark's gospel as an "apology for the cross". Gundry argues that Mark creatively reimagines Jesus' humiliating death as an expression of exaltation and glory rather than shame. Under Gundry's banner of a Markan apology, Schmidt argues that the details of Mark 15:16-32 are specifically aimed to "evoke a Roman triumphal procession" in the mind of Mark's audience.[83] However, the

[82] T.E. Schmidt "Mark 15.16-32: The Crucifixion Narrative and the Roman Triumphal Procession" *NTS* 41 (1995), 1-18.

[83] The specific details of Schmidt's arguments are listed here, but will be further discussed below: the entire guard coming together (Mk. 15:16), the ceremonial garb (Mk. 15:17, 19), mockery of the soldiers (Mk. 15:16-20), the procession vocabulary (Mk. 15:20), summoning a bystander to

triumph Mark presents in his gospel is quite unlike its historical precedents and functions rather as an "anti-triumph" aimed to make sense of Jesus' death. For Schmidt, the Markan Jesus and his exaltation are juxtaposed with "Lord Caesar" and the "futile adoration" the emperor received during a triumph.[84]

Scholars have ambivalently received Schmidt's work.[85] Marcus dismisses Schmidt's overall claims and instead places the passion episode of Jesus locally as a mock coronation typically undertaken by client-kings.[86] Others have adapted Schmidt's approach, but applied his findings elsewhere in Mark's gospel, especially the "Triumphal Entry" (Mk. 11:1-11).[87] While notable scholars have challenged Schmidt's reading, especially observing problems between the parallelism of Mark and sources on the Roman triumph,[88] there is still much to commend that scholars often dismiss. While most of Schmidt's article has a foremost concern to account for small details between what Schmidt understands as close parallels of events in Jesus' passion and the Roman triumph, he also takes a short portion of his essay – equaling

---

carry Jesus' cross (Mk. 15:21), the name "Golgotha" (Mk. 15:22) , the offer and refusal of a drink (Mk. 15:23), the time of day Jesus is crucified (Mk. 15:25), the placard with inscription (Mk. 15:26), and the placement of those crucified near him (Mk. 15:27).

[84] Schmidt, "Mark 15.16-32", 18.

[85] Compare, for example, Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 725 and Adam Winn, *Reading Mark's Christology under Caesar: Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018), 157-162. Whereas Yarbro Collins notes that Schmidt's parallels appear "far-fetched", Winn's work finds Schmidt essential in connecting the Christological features (both power and suffering) of Mark's Jesus to Roman political ideology.

[86] Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 1047-1048. Marcus uses the example of Carabas, a madman parodically enthroned by local Jews who were protesting Jewish king Agrippa I.

[87] Allan Georgia, "Translating the Triumph: Reading Mark's Crucifixion Narrative against a Roman Ritual of Power" *JSNT* 36.1 (2013), 19-22.

[88] Schmidt, "Mark 15.16-32", 6. Schmidt fairly notes that the evidence he provides for a parallel all "range in strength of credibility".

just one page – to discuss what he calls "self-divinization efforts"[89] of Gaius and Nero. Here, Schmidt does not elaborate much on the connection between deification and the triumph, a point that I will further explore.

In Schmidt's reconstruction of the Roman triumph, he relies heavily upon the seminal work of H.S. Versnel, who aimed to understand the historical origins of the Roman triumph.[90] As will be shown below, scholars remain skeptical that the origins of this ritual can ever be reconstructed. Instead, the traditions that are recorded in our sources appear to be a later development, only as early as the Late Republic. Therefore, the chronology of events for a Roman triumph, which Schmidt determines are clearly "patterned", are not nearly as reliable as he (or Versnel) suggests.[91] This, in part, lends to Schmidt's own admission that the parallels range in weakness and strength. Below I aim to show that triumphs could be remembered and performed in various ways. With no reconstructable model for a "patterned" triumph, Mark gives his audience cues hinting them to memorable features of the Roman triumph, further strengthening Schmidt's claims. Moreover, integral to Mark's utilisation of triumphal language is the connection to deification. I will argue that Mark accounts for the man, Jesus, who through his victorious battle over demonic forces, earned his triumph as triumphator, and subsequently his deification at death for a life well lived. Consequently, the ending of Mark, with an empty tomb and no body to be accounted for, reinforces this reading as Mark supposes the apotheosis of Jesus has occurred.

[89] Schmidt also calls these connections to divinisation "epiphanic" throughout his article.

[90] H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus*.

[91] Schmidt, "Mark 15:16-32", 3.

Standard Accounts of the Roman Triumph

The imperial triumph was a Roman ritual procession celebrated following the war victory of a Roman general or emperor, and believed, according to sources, to have extended all the way back to Romulus. Romulus was believed to have marched to the Capitoline with his defeated enemy's spoils in hand and thus forever established the tradition of triumphing at Rome.[92] In the Republican era, a triumphal procession was awarded as the highest honors received by a military general for his strategy and courage on the battlefield. However, by the Principate, triumphs were awarded to the imperial family alone.[93] In its basic form, the processions of the triumph were celebrated in three parts with an initial march through the streets of Rome beginning at the Triumphal Gate, and thus crossing the *pomerium*. From there, the procession moved past the Circus Maximus, and finally to the Capitoline Hill.

The first part entailed a display of the defeated enemy's captured spoils, including valuable military weaponry, statues, animals for sacrifice, and artwork. Captured enemies, and often their families, were likewise marched through the streets of Rome and paraded as conquered spectacles for the onlooking crowd (see also Chp. 2). Following the parade of captives was the triumphing general/emperor themselves, riding tall in a chariot pulled by four white horses, donned in triumphal dress (*tunica palmata*, *toga picta/purpurea*) and crowned in laurel (*corona laurea*). In the chariot, directly behind the triumphing general/emperor, stood a slave holding

[92] Plutarch (*Rom*. 16.7) remarks, "This procession [Romulus's] was the origin and model of all subsequent triumphs…" (ἡ μὲν οὖν πομπὴ τῶν αὖθις θριάμβων ἀρχὴν καὶ ζῆλον παρέσχε).

[93] The last private citizen to celebrate a triumph was L. Cornelius Balbus in 19BCE. For a full chronological list of Roman triumphs see Tanja Itgenshorst, *Tota illa pompa: der Triumph in der römischen Republik: mit einer CD-ROM, Katalog der Triumphe von 340 bis 19 vor Christus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 430-436

a golden crown (*corona triumphalis*) over the triumphator's head, and whispering words in his ear to remind him that he not forget his mortality. Following the triumphator was an assemblage of commanding soldiery and freed Roman slaves wearing *pilei* ("freedom caps"). The last part of the triumph brought together the general's / emperor's successful soldiers, whose cries of praise were also met with humorous songs about the triumphator. Upon reaching their final destination (i.e. Capitoline Hill), the crowd watched as the general / emperor sacrificed an animal at the Temple of Jupiter. A banquet and an escort home for the triumph completed the ceremony.

Mary Beard, in her monumental work on the Roman triumph, first provides a reconstruction of the various elements, as I have done above, of the Roman triumph. She notes, that "every single part of it [the reconstruction] is attested in Roman literature or the visual arts, in some cases many times over".[94] However, Beard argues against a single and clearly discernible chronology of events for the Roman triumph. For Beard, this problematizes what scholars have long assumed as a standard reconstruction of the ritual. With no guiding principle of chronology, triumphs of mythical imagination (e.g. Romulus) or history (e.g. Vespasian) become blurred. In fact, Beard argues that most reconstructions of the Roman triumph bring together disparate pieces of evidence separated by gaps of time and contexts, and fail to account for the biases and purposes of the primary sources for which scholars draw their evidence. Beard, in her opening example of this problem, questions the standard scholarly assumptions of a lavish triumph, so familiar in ancient sources and still-standing triumphal arches. Such a feature of the Roman ritual must have

[94] Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 82.

come at a late stage when Rome was in a position to exploit "lucrative foreign wars".[95] Her point is well taken, and much of her book is an attempt to question the historical veracity and origins of the Roman triumph, a topic that scholars have spilled the most ink on in their examinations of the ritual.

However, the key concern for this section is neither to assess the historical origins of the triumph nor the contradictory literary and material evidence. In fact, essential to Beard's judicious assessment, she argues that scholars should not dismiss contradictory material, but rather account for it as different "'ways of seeing' the triumph".[96] This is the type of "remembered history" (i.e. "cultural memory") discussed in chapter two. In many cases, Schmidt's connection of Jesus' crucifixion and the Roman triumph attempts at too many points to see parallels that Mark simply may not have known or not included in his reconstruction. One should not, however, conclude that Mark's failure to account for each element of "standard Roman triumph" (whatever that might mean) is indicative of a failed parallel. Again, as Beard argues, the chronology of events in the triumph were not always settled, but instead seem to have been modified as Rome expanded and changed over time. In many cases, for example, the processional route taken by the triumphator was subject to changes due to numerous variables, including the preferences of the triumphator, who might travel through meaningful sites for progandistic purposes. The question of origins, then, is not nearly as important for this chapter as understanding the ground-level perceptions of triumphing. In other words, if Mark's Jesus is being presented as a triumphator, what is Mark's "way of seeing" this event, and must it include all of

[95] Ibid. 82-83.

[96] Ibid. 91.

the various elements typically associated with Roman triumphs? I argue that while no single chronology of events is evident in restoring the Roman triumph, Mark certainly gives the audience hints to a triumph as Schmidt suggests.

The Flavian Triumph (Jos. BJ 7.121-157)

Josephus records the Flavian triumph of 71CE in his *Bellum Judaicum* (*BJ* 7.121-157). In relation to Mark's gospel, Josephus is the nearest and most sustained historical record of a Roman triumph. To be clear, I neither argue that Mark has literary dependence on Josephus nor that Mark was written in light of the Flavian triumph of 71CE.[97] Rather, we have in Josephus an example of a man familiar with Jewish and Roman contexts, much like Mark, detailing, in written record, an account of a triumph within a decade of Mark's gospel. Recongising the tendencies of Josephus' depiction as well as the material evidence of the Flavian triumph may hint the real audience (not Mark's intended audience) of Mark's gospel to familiar motifs and props associated with the Roman triumph popular around the time of Mark's writing.

Josephus' biases towards his Flavian benefactors is evident as the entire episode of the triumph is presented as a "Flavian *coronation*, the official launch party and press night of the Flavian dynasty".[98] This is confirmed at the outset of the triumph's description, where the dynasty is highlighted by Josephus's note about the crowds pleasure with the coming together of all three members (Vespasian, Titus,

[97] As argued in Chapter 1 above, my thesis follows a date immediately prior to the fall of the Jerusalem temple. For a fully developed understanding of Mark as a response to the Flavian triumph of 71CE, see Incigneri, *The Gospels to the Romans*, Chp. 4.

[98] Mary Beard, "The Triumph of Flavius Josephus" in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, eds. A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 584, Cf. 543-558.

and Domitian) of the imperial family in one place and at one time.[99] And while the senate had voted for separate triumphs for each (καίπερ ἑκατέρῳ τῆς βουλῆς ἴδιον ψηφισαμένης),[100] Josephus is clear to indicate that the triumphators had decided to hold a joint triumph (ἕνα καὶ κοινὸν…ποιήσασθαι θρίαμβον).[101] Their unification ushered in an immense crowd in Rome, so that there was hardly room for the procession to advance.

Josephus records a gathering of the soldiery near the temple of Isis,[102] in the Campus Martius, while it was still nighttime, i.e. the night before the triumph. He notes that this was also the location where Vespasian and Titus, "those victorious generals" (ἐκείνης οἱ αὐτοκράτορες), would spend the night,[103] though coming out at the break of dawn, "crowned with laurels and wearing traditional purple robes" (δάφνῃ μὲν ἐστεφανωμένοι, πορφυρᾶς δ' ἐσθῆτας πατρίους ἀμπεχόμενοι), and being met by the Senate, chief magistrates, and ranking equestrians.[104] According to

[99] Jos. *BJ* 7.120: τῷ δὲ πλήθει τῶν πολιτῶν δαιμόνιόν τινα τὴν χαρὰν παρεῖχε τὸ βλέπειν αὐτοὺς ἤδη τοὺς τρεῖς ἐν ταὐτῷ γεγονότας.

[100] Does Josephus mean to indicate that Domitian would have also celebrated a triumph for putting down the revolt with the Germans, specified at *BJ* 7.75-88?

[101] Jos. *BJ* 7.121. Steve Mason argues that Josephus' note is one of ironic humour as Vespasian attaches himself to the Temple spoils of Titus, explaining, "Well he [Vespasian] might have preferred a joint triumph, since a whole for his own achievements – exhibiting grain and crude pottery from Galilee, rocks from Judaea's villages – would have been risible". Steven Mason, "Josephus' Portrait of the Flavian Triumph" in *Der römische Triumph in Prizipat und Spätantike*, eds. Gabian Goldbeck, Johannes Wienand (Berlin: De Gruyter: 2017), 150.

[102] For comments on the connection between the temple of Isis and Flavian propaganda as well as the importance of reconstructing the Flavian triumphal path, see Jodi Magness, "Some Observations on the Flavian Victory Monuments of Rome" in *Koine: Mediterranean Studies in Honor of R. Ross Holloway* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009), 35-36; Steve Mason, "Josephus Portrait of the Flavian Triumph", 152-156.

[103] For discrepancies over whether Vespasian and Titus stayed in the Temple of Isis see Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 95-96; Steve Mason, "Josephus Portrait of the Flavian Triumph", 153.

[104] Jos. *BJ* 7.124.

Josephus, the triumphators were then seated on ivory chairs set upon a platform where soldiers passed while shouting acclamations to the generals. After recognising the troop's praise, Vespasian and Titus mantled their heads and offered prayers. This was all followed by a brief speech from Vespasian, an invitation to breakfast for the soldiers, and finally, after donning their royal garbs again (assuming they were taken off at some point…), a sacrifice to the gods before crossing the *pomerium*.

At the start of the triumph, Josephus first notes the extravagance of items carted through the procession, explaining, "it is impossible to give an adequate description of the wealth of spectacle" (Ἀμήχανον δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν εἰπεῖν τῶν θεαμάτων τὸ πλῆθος). The items are varied – though including works of art, masses of gold, silver, and ivory, transparent gems, Babylonian tapestry, statues of their gods, and exotic animals – but ultimately aim to "demonstrate the greatness of the Roman Empire" (τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ἔδειξε τὸ μέγεθος).[105] Josephus notes the clothing of the animal attendants and the clothing of the animals themselves. Giving no sense of order in the procession, he moves from the animal's clothing to that of the captives who were also paraded in beautifully coloured clothing (ἡ τῶν ἐσθήτων ποικιλία καὶ τὸ κάλλος), which drew the crowd's attention away from their physical deformaties amassed during the war. However, beyond the spectacle thus far,

[105] Mason argues that Josephus' descriptions depicting these masses of wealth are hardly realistic, and that "the whole project of a triumph for Judaea required extensive fabrication". Mason explains that Josephus is clearly generalising the spoils as an easily accessible characterisation of eastern booty to a Roman audience. For Mason, Josephus cues an attentive (Jewish) audience who might question, for example, what exotic animals were actually brought from Judaea…perhaps, lizards or camels? Mason explains that these animals are hardly triumph-worthy, and certainly out-of-step with the type of spectacle exhibited in the triumphs other emperors, such as Pompey and Augustus. In recounting the triumph, Mason explains that Josephus, "leaves room for the impression that the organisers scavenged whatever they could, to dazzle Rome's populace with a sense of eastern conquest". In the end, Josephus's retelling of the Flavian triumph "was a thoroughly manufactured, artificial affair". Mason, "Josephus Portrait of the Flavian Triumph", 157-171.

Josephus found the moving "stages" (πῆγμα) to be "above all others" (μάλιστα). The enormity of these stages stretched upwards of three and four-storeys high, causing a sense of awe, but also fear. Each of the platforms depicted various stages of the Jewish war and intended to allow the audience to witness the events as though they had been there themselves (*BJ* 7.146). Among the displays were the devastation of the defeated enemy's countryside, enemies fleeing the city, massive walls destroyed by siege engines, enemy defenders retreating inside the temple walls, and the temple and city being destroyed by fire. Each float carried a defeated city's commander depicting the moment of their capture.

Josephus, however, records the "special prominence" (*BJ* 7.148; διαπρέπω) given to the spoils taken from the Jerusalem temple, specifically the showbread table, menorah, and the Jewish Law (i.e. the Torah). The importance of the showbread table and menorah as propaganda for the Flavian triumph are indicated by their prominence on the Arch of Titus' relief panels. Following the procession of the Jewish Law was a parade of those carrying statues of Victory made of ivory and gold. The triumphators themselves were next in the procession. Interestingly, Josephus reports only a small detail about Vespasian and Titus in their chariots with Vespasian leading the group and Domitian riding alongside by horse. The culmination of the ritual ended at the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline. Josephus explains that the triumphators were to follow a "long-standing tradition" (παλαιὸν πάτριον),[106] which dictated that they must wait for the execution of the enemy commander – in their case, Simon bar Giora – prior to making a final sacrifice in the

[106] Josephus at numerous points throughout this episode makes reference to various stages of the procession as "customary" or "traditional".

Temple of Jupiter. The triumphators, then, offered prayers and received favourable portents following their sacrifice. Finally, Josephus explains that the triumphators returned to their palace where a banquet was held in their honour.

Schmidt's Reading of Triumph in Mark

Schmidt makes his first parallel between Mark's gospel and a Roman triumph by noting Mark's use of the word πραιτώριον (Mk. 15:16). Schmidt draws attention to the clarification Mark gives to his readers by using the explanatory construction ὅ ἐστιν (see also Chp. 1), thus clarifying αὐλή ("palace") by the Latin-loanword, πραιτώριον, referring to the "official residence of a governor".[107] Schmidt understands this to be intentional by Mark, who first reports that the soldiers led Jesus to the πραιτώριον then subsequently "called together the entire cohort" (συγκαλοῦσιν ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν). As in Josephus' account above, soldiers are first gathered together as a preparation for the triumph. Schmidt argues that gathering so many troops to beat and mock a single criminal is unrealistic,[108] and thus he considers that Mark may be cueing his audience to the preparatory work of a triumph.

Schmidt's second parallel regards the purple ceremonial robe and crown typically donned by the triumphator. Schmidt is correct to note that "one source after

[107] LSJ, 1458.

[108] The term σπεῖρα translates to the Latin *cohors*, meaning a tenth of a legion, i.e. anywhere from 200-360 soldiers. See Evans, *Mark 8:27 - 16:20*, 489; Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions*, 85. For such a gathering as unrealistic, see: Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 452; Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 370; Brown, *Death*, 1:864–65. I agree with Marcus (*Mark 8-16*, 1039), who argues that such a large number of soldiers being assigned to one man would most certainly be problematic for other soldiery needs throughout the city. Furthermore, the scene appears to take place inside, which, again, lends to reading that this may be hyperbole aimed to recall a triumph.

another" clearly mark this detail as a main feature of the Roman triumph.[109] Josephus further indicates that the purple clothing and laurel crown worn by Vespasian and Titus were derived from the "ancestral customs" (πάτριος).[110] Even Beard, who is sceptical to assign any normative practice to the ritual, explains, "For Romans, triumphal costume certainly conjured up an image in purple and gold. These colors are consistently stressed in ancient accounts of the ceremony and so closely linked with the figure of the general that writers can describe him simply as 'purple', 'golden', or 'purple and gold'".[111] Still others, such as Yarbro Collins, argue that the garb described by Mark is meant to evoke images of local rulers rather than the emperor or a triumphal procession.[112] More importantly, we are confronted with another potentially (historically) implausible detail, i.e. how did the soldiery acquire such expensive material to clothe Jesus? Matthew (27:28) regards this detail as no small feat, and modifies Mark's phrase, ἐνδιδύσκουσιν αὐτὸν πορφύραν ("They dressed him in purple") to read χλαμύδα κοκκίνην περιέθηκαν αὐτῷ ("They put a

[109] Schmidt, "Mark 15.16-32", 7.

[110] As it regards questions of origins and whether the ceremonial dress indicated that the triumphator embodied the god Jupiter Optimus Maximus himself for the day remains contentious among scholars. This is, for example, a point of disagreement among scholarship for which Versnel has clearly set the standard view since the 1970's. However, Beard notes a "striking disjunction" between literary and material (visual) evidence. Beard (*The Roman Triumph*, 225-226) argues, "In no surviving image of a triumphal process…do we see anything like the fancy dress that the general is supposed to have sported". In fact, there appears to be discontinuity even between the depiction of ceremonial garb in Josephus' account and what we find on the Arch of Titus. Such discontinuities only speak against a monolithic version of the triumph. Again, our concern is not with a historical reconstruction of the triumph in its infancy, but rather how it was remembered near the time of Mark's writing. In regards to Josephus' account, the ceremonial dress is a key feature in the elaborate ritual. For arguments on the origins of the ceremonial dress and its relation to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, see Versnel, *Triumphus*, 72-77; Larissa Bonfante Warren, "Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings: The Changing Face of the Triumph" *JRS* 60 (1970): 49-66; Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 225-233.

[111] Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 228.

[112] Yarbro Collins argues against Schimdt, "The mockery of Jesus as king of the Jews, however, evokes the practice of local rulers subject to the Romans more strongly than the Roman triumph".

scarlet robe on him"), which may suggest that Matthew linked the ownership of the clothing to a soldier.[113] Additionally, would it be acceptable for soldiers to dress Jesus in clothing that was reserved alone for those of equestrian rank and above? It seems implausible.

The crown twisted of thorns, likewise, Schmidt argues, evokes signs of a Roman triumph. As noted in the account of Josephus, the "purple robe" donned by Vespasian and Titus were accompanied by a laurel crown (δάφνῃ μὲν ἐστεφανωμένοι). For Schmidt, the correlation between the crown of thorns and laurel crown is clear. However, he again notes the oddity (and unlikeliness) of the soldiery finding a thorny bush while stationed in the palace courtyard (Are we to imagine these bushes are readily available?). The implausibility of Mark's rendering of the event may lend credence to the fact that Mark has purposefully invoked triumphal language.

At Mk. 15:18-19, the soldiers continue their mockery campaign against Jesus by "greeting" (ἀσπάζομαι) him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews". Schmidt argues that the accolades given by the soldiers to the triumphator provides Mark's context. Josephus, for example, reports that Vespasian and Titus were met with "acclamations" (ἐπευφημέω) by the gathered troops just before their triumph. However, Schmidt further explains that there are no literary records suggesting that a greeting, i.e. in the form that Mark provides, was ever part of the ceremony. The mockery by the soldiers, though, appears fitting if considered among other triumphs.

[113] Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 490. Mark's language is clear that clothing was purple and not associated with a soldier's "red" cloak.

Various ancient sources report that songs, either of ribald or praise, were sung by the triumphator's troops. Suetonius, for example, states of Julius Caesar's triumph:

> "In his triumph over Gaul, his men chanted, among the other songs soldiers usually come out with as they march behind the chariot, the following most notorious lines:
>
> 'Caesar had his way with Gaul;
> Nicomedes had his way with Caesar:
> Behold now Caesar, conqueror of Gaul, in triumph,
> Not so, Nicomedes, conqueror of Caesar'"[114]

Most notably in Suetonius' account is the fact that the soldier's coarse song is just one form "among the other songs soldiers usually come out with…".[115] Mark may be mimicking Jesus' mockery to the type of mockery endured by generals and emperors during their triumphs.[116] In this way, the mockery is not ironic in Mark's episode, but reflects actual practice of the triumph where soldiers took comedic shots at their commander.

---

[114] Suet. *Iul*. 49.4.

[115] For the interchangeability of songs which praised and jested the triumpathor, see Plutarch's (*Aem. Paul.* 34.7) note on Aemilius Paulus' triumph: "The whole army also carried sprays of laurel, following the chariot of their general by companies and divisions, and singing, some of them divers songs intermingled with jesting, as the ancient custom was, and others paeans of victory and hymns in praise of the achievements of Aemilius, who was gazed upon and admired by all, and envied by no one that was good. "

[116] Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 247-248.

Mark 15:21[117] details another point of correlation between the Roman triumph and Mark's gospel. Schmidt compares Simon of Cyrene, who helps Jesus carry his cross, to the processionial attendant (*victimarius*) who walked alongside, with doubled-bladed axe in hand, and eventually killed the sacrificial bull / animal . In this parallel, Jesus functions as the sacrificial bull and Simon of Cyrene, the Roman official paraded alongside the animal. While Josephus neither remarks on what type of animal is sacrificed nor the *victimarius*, we can clearly see both figures on the frieze just below the cornice of the Arch of Titus. Schmidt regards the personal connection to Simon's sons (Alexander and Rufus) and the (seemingly) divinely planned arrival of Simon, "coming from the fields" (ἐρχόμενον ἀπ' ἀγροῦ), as evidence for this connection.[118]

Schmidt also regards the final destination of Jesus' procession at Golgotha (in Aramaic, "the place of the skull / head", according to Mark's interpretation of the language) as another parallel. In the Roman triumph, the processional route always ended at the temple of Jupiter, the Capitolium, a Latin word derived from the Latin *caput*, meaning "head". Citing Dionysius of Halicarnassus (4.59-61) and Livy (50.55.5-6), Schmidt notes a legend concerning a skull that was found while the temple's foundations were being laid, thus drawing an etymological connection between the term "skull" and the Capitolium. The parallel presumes that clued-in

[117] I have not listed Schmidt's ("Mark 15:16-32", 8) point on Mk. 15:20b, where he argues that the verb ἐξάγουσιν ("led out") was used by Mark "to denote a procession involving the accompaniment of a key figure by others". This point of argumentation is especially weak in Schmidt's work. Cf. Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 728 fn. 181.) regards Schmidt's argument here "a misrepresentation of the use of this verb in the passages from the NT that he cites".

[118] Cf. Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 737) argues contra Schmidt: "There is no hint, however, in Mark's narrative that Simon's role was divinely planned. It is highly unlikely that Mark's audiences would have perceived an evocation of the Roman imperial triumph in Simon's role".

readers of Mark's gospel would readily associate the terminal point of the Roman triumph as the place of the skull / head.

For Schmidt, the "supreme moment of the triumph" is at the sacrifice to Jupiter.[119] While scholars have little to no evidence of the triumphal sacrifice, the scenes are depicted on various material evidence. In these depictions, the triumphator is offered wine, to which he refuses then pours upon the altar, only moments before, or simultaneously with, the sacrificial event. Schmidt goes on to argue that the wine "signifies the precious blood of the victim, and the links between sacrificant, wine, and victim signify their identity". In this link, the bull is presented as a god who dies and reemerges in the person of the triumphator. [120] Schmidt notes the immediacy of Jesus' death (v. 37) following his refusal of wine (v. 36) as a clear indication of the connection to the triumph in Mark's gospel. Interestingly, the Matthean version redacts Mark's refusal and has Jesus taste the wine. Luke and John omit the tradition.

The list of Schmidt's parallels are far greater than what I have adopted here. The various points of contact listed above, however, seem to me to bear the most strength in reading Mk. 15:16-32 as a Roman triumph. Moreover, as I explained at the start of this section, scholars have overlooked the short portion of Schmidt's essay, which deals with issues of triumph and apotheosis. I argue below that this connection bears more weight for the Markan narrative than Schmidt, or others, typically attest.

The Arch of Titus: Triumph, Apotheosis, and Deification

[119] Schmidt, "Mark 15:16-32", 11.

[120] Ibid.

The Arch of Titus depicts the celebrated Flavian triumph of 71CE and was a dedicatory arch erected by Domitian to Titus sometime following Titus' death in September 81CE. The inscription located near the attic on the eastern side of the arch reads: SENATUS / POPULUSQUE ROMANUS / DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI F / VESPASIANO AUGUSTO ("The Senate and People of Rome, to the Deified Titus, Vespasian Augustus, son of Deified Vespasian,"; CIL 6.945). On the inner southern and northern walls of the Arch of Titus are two relief panels. The southern panel displays, in vivid imagery, the menorah and the showbread table (Ex. 25:30), two significant details reported by Josephus concerning the spoils of the procession (*BJ* 7.148). The northern panel depicts Titus donned with triumphal garb and standing in a quadriga, holding the scepter of Jupiter in his left hand and a palm branch in his right.[121] Victory stands behind Titus in the quadriga and crowns him.

The triumphal garb, among other notable portions of the ritual, points towards the triumphator's close association (perhaps, integration) with Jupiter.[122]. Beard argues that Plautus' comedic play *Amphitruo* provides the clearest, and earliest, example of the triumphator's association with divinity. In the comedy, the Theban general, Amphitruo, has gone to war to fight the Teleboians. In his absence, Jupiter impersonates the general and tricks Amphitruo's wife, Alcumena, into believing that Amphitruo has returned from war. In Jupiter's trickery, he impregnates Alcumena (producing Hercules), who is already pregnant with Amphitruo's child (Iphicles). It is during the actual return of Amphitruo from war that Beard detects

[121] Naomi J. Norman, "Imperial Triumph and Apotheosis: The Arch of Titus in Rome" in *Koine: Mediterranean Studies in Honor of R. Ross Holloway* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009), 44.

[122] Versnel, *Triumphus*, 56-93. Livy (10.7.10), for example, regards the triumphal clothing as the "attire of Jupiter Optimus Maximus" (*Iovis optimi maximi ornatu decoratus*).

mimicry of "official language of triumphal petitions" by Sosia (i.e. Amphitruo's slave), who reports his master's military successes according to a "technical Roman rubric (*suo auspicio, suo imperio*)". Beard maintains that Plautus has comedically reversed the social convention of the triumphator. If the social convention of the triumph is that the triumphator becomes Jupiter (i.e. a god) for the day, then the comedic punchline in *Amphitruo* is that a god (i.e. Juptier) becomes a human for a day.[123] The joke, however, only makes comedic sense if the audience assumes that the triumphator becomes like Jupiter in a tangible way.

A slave (in most sources, but remembered on the arch in the form of Victory) was thought to stand behind the triumphator in the quadriga, crowning him and whispering in his ear, "look behind you, and remember that you are a man" (Tert. *Apol*. 33.4; for various other versions of the role and statement, see Juv. 10.41; Plin. *HN* 38.41).[124] Norman notes that the phrase "look behind you" is understood to mean towards the future in much of Roman literature.[125] Therefore, the injunction from the slave is not only to bring the triumphator back down to earth (literally!), since he was believed to have become a god for the day, but also to point him forward, i.e. towards his future earthly life which he ought to make worthy of deification.

Located on the ceiling in the center of the archway, another panel depicts Titus carried heavenward by Jupiter's eagle, signaling Titus' apotheosis. With seemingly conflicting imagery on the relief panels, scholars questioned the Arch of

[123] For Beard's evaluation of the story in Plautus' *Amphitruo*, see Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 253-256, 254 for quote.

[124] Beard (*The Roman Triumph*, 85-92) is clear to emphasise that while the slave almost certainly played a role in the ritual, that role could be "emphasized, effaced, or substituted according to differing priorities of representation and interpretation".

[125] Norman, "Imperial Triumph and Apotheosis", 43.

Titus' fundamental purpose, i.e. whether it should be considered a triumphal arch, celebrating the victory of Rome over Judaea, or a consecration monument, designed to highlight Titus' apotheosis. Pfanner argues that the imagery of apotheosis depicted on the Arch of Titus along with its brief inscription noting Titus' deified status, provides strength to understanding the Arch as a "consecration monument ("*Konsekrationsmonument*")".[126] Millar argues that the clear association with the triumph of 71CE as well as the Arch's placement on the triumphal route should be evidence enough to "include it in the category of triumphal arches".[127] However, Naomi Norman questions whether triumph and deification should be separated at all, and rather regards triumph and deification "as two sides of the same coin".[128]

Norman examines and connects the triumph to imperial funeral processions. Her investigation only examines the funeral procession of Augustus (there are no surviving records for Titus), which began a standard pattern of funerary practices. However, she notes numerous points of contact between these funerary practices and the Roman triumph. Dio Cassius reports that during Augustus' funeral, his body was laid inside of a couch made of ivory and gold, and covered by a pall decorated in purple and gold.[129] However, above his physical body was laid a wax effigy of the emperor dressed as triumphator in full triumphal garb (εἰκὼν δὲ δή τις αὐτοῦ κηρίνη ἐν ἐπινικίῳ στολῇ ἐξεφαίνετο) and displayed to the public. The wax effigy was carried

[126] Michael Pfanner, *Der Titusbogen* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1983), 99.

[127] Fergus Millar, "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome 1" in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (eds. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives; Oxford: OUP, 2007), 122-123.

[128] Norman, "Imperial Triumph and Apotheosis", 50.

[129] Dio Cass. 56.34.

in procession from his house up on the Palatine to the Forum below, a reversal of the Roman triumphal route. Two further golden images of the emperor were likewise displayed in procession, one carried from the Senate house and another in a triumphal chariot (*quadriga*). Wax images of the ancestors were paraded next, and followed by speeches from Drusus and Tiberius.

After Dio records Tiberius' lengthy eulogy (56.34-41), he reports that the couch holding Augustus' body was then carried through the *Porta Triumphalis*, i.e. the starting point of Roman triumphs. Dio states that the Senate, equestrian order and their wives, the Praetorian guard, and nearly every person at Rome followed in procession to the Campus Martius. Here the couch holding Augustus' body was laid upon a pyre. First the priests, then equites, and finally the soldiery of the Praetorian Guard performed a *decursio*, i.e. "the elaborately choreographed circling of the pyre that was designed to perpetuate the emperor's memory".[130] Centurions then took torches, lit the pyre, and threw *triumphal decorations* on the pyre as it burned. Once consumed, "an eagle released from it flew aloft appearing to bear the emperor's spirit to heaven" (ἀετὸς δέ τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀφεθεὶς ἀνίπτατο ὡς καὶ δὴ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναφέρων).

Norman argues that these various stages, and associated rituals, show a connection between the funeral procession and the Roman triumph, which cannot merely be coincidental. In fact, for Norman, these rituals, "each centered on a resplendent protagonist, each anchored in the concept of a man who becomes a god", are intimately linked together. The panels on the Arch of Titus perfectly captures this close correlation. For the northern (w/ quadriga) and southern (w/ spoils) panel

[130] Norman, "Imperial Triumph and Apotheosis", 49.

reliefs cannot be understood apart from the attic panel (Titus' apotheosis), though they are clearly separated one from the other. Norman notes, however, that these panels are connected by key "sculptural details": (1) Titus wears the same toga and tunic in the quadriga and at his apotheosis; (2) Jupiter's eagle is postured in the same form on the triumphal chariot[131] as in the apotheosis relief panel. These cues, according to Norman, would have hinted observers to "read the panels together and acknowledge that Titus' divinization is grounded in his triumph".[132] The apotheosis of Titus, then, functioned as "the heavenly consummation of [his] earthly triumph…"[133] For Norman, the triumph was merely used to foreshadow what was to come in the (good) emperor's future apotheosis. Whereas the "goal of the triumph was to make the emperor a god for one day; the goal of apotheosis was to make him a god forever".[134] These concepts of triumph, death, and apotheosis clearly have currency for the Markan Jesus. If we read Mark's passion of Jesus as a triumphal victory, albeit ironically, in tandem with concepts of apotheosis, then Mark's ending begins to come into clearer focus. However, before we can explore these connections, we must first address how Jesus can be reckoned a triumphator in any sense of the word. In other words, what has Mark's Jesus triumphed over to make him a fitting candidate for the role of triumphator?

[131] On the relief panel, Jupiter's eagle is carved onto the chariot just under the figure's armpit who walks directly adjacent to Titus in the chariot. The image is small, but clearly mimics Jupiter's eagle on the attic relief.

[132] Norman, "Imperial Triumph and Apotheosis", 49.

[133] Magness, "Some Observations on the Flavian Victory Monuments of Rome", 37.

[134] Ibid., 52.

Jesus, Rome, and the Christological Pissing Contest

At the start of this chapter, I noted a clear consistency between Mark's presentation of God's kingdom and Roman sensibilities towards other-worldly kingship. While human aspirations of kingship are to be avoided at all costs, transcendent kingship is certainly acceptable even at times when kingship was perceived negatively. Mark's "kingdom of God" language not only provides an access point between the earthly and transcendent narrative worlds for the reader, but also explains how Mark can manifestly determine Jesus as victor over demonic forces and worthy of a triumph.

From the start of Mark's gospel, the author is concerned with the messaging of "good news" (εὐαγγέλιον; Mk. 1:1; 14, 15, 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9) and an *inclusio* formed at vv. 1 and 15, with εὐαγγέλιον functioning as the key connecting noun, helps establish a link between the good news and the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:14-15).[135] The use of καθώς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ ("Just as it is written in Isaiah") at Mk. 1:2 gives direct context to the nature of this good news by drawing on language from Isaiah. With this link to Isaiah, Mark intends to show Jesus' "good news" is a message of historical substance, i.e. the history of Israel's narrative as understood through an Isaianic lens. In examining the verbal cognate (εὐαγγελίζω) of εὐαγγέλιον in Isaiah, one finds that the declaration of good news is

[135] A case, however, can be made for this section to separate at v. 13. Out of 583 sentences in Mark, 376 of those begin with καί. The opening unit is no exception and helps link verses 6 (καὶ), 7 (καὶ), 9 (καὶ ἐγένετο), 10 (καὶ εὐθὺς), 11 (καὶ), 12 (καὶ εὐθὺς), and 13 (καὶ). Breaking this cycle, verse 14 begins with μετὰ δὲ, an unfamiliar and rare transitional phrase in Mark (1:14; 16:8). If the boundary were detached from verses 14-15, then 1:1-13 would serve as the opening and verses 14-15 as a type of summary for Jesus' upcoming ministry (1:14-3:6). However, the inclusion of the phrase μετὰ δὲ τὸ παραδοθῆναι (v. 14) does not designate a new literary unit, but is translated here as an antecedent adverbial infinitive. The action of the infinitive takes place in time before the controlling verb.

summarily the announcement of God's coming restoration and vindication of God's exiled people (LXX Isa 40:9; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1).[136] This is likely the sense that Mark ascribes to Jesus "proclaiming the good news of God" (κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ) at Mk 1:14.[137] Mark's meaning of the phrase, however, is more clearly defined in the next verse (v. 15) where he notes that the kingdom of God inches closer to manifesting itself with the advent of Jesus. In this, the kingdom of God is part and parcel of Mark's "good news" message.

Much like the Isaianic prototype, Mark utilises the word εὐαγγέλιον to differentiate between epochal moments within history. The arrest of John the Baptist and his subsequent disappearance from the narrative at Mk. 1:14[138] provides Mark the literary opportunity to divide these crucial epochs of time.[139] For Mark, Jesus' arrival accelerates ("the time has been fulfilled") God's coming and expected rule, i.e. "the kingdom of God *has come near*" (my emphasis; ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ). The perfect form of ἐγγίζω may have a temporal sense, which means it does not indicate that "an event has already arrived but that it is imminent, ready to take

[136] See Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus*.

[137] While I have discussed Mark's use of "kingdom of God" as a royal ruling or reigning, the term can also be used in the sense of a royal realm where one can live (Mk. 14:25) or enter (Mk 9:47; 10:15, 25).

[138] See Chp. 3 ("'King' Herod Antipas in Mark 6:14-29") for a fuller discussion on the relationship between John as foreshadowing Jesus throughout Mark.

[139] Gnilka, *Markus*, 1:65; Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 63; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 175. Marcus helpfully explains, "The arrest of John the Baptist (1:14a) shows the way in which the old-age powers react to those who announce God's eschatological action. But Jesus' return to his homeland to proclaim the good news (1:14b) demonstrates that the opposition of those powers cannot silence the voice of God".

place at any moment".[140] However, other uses of ἐγγίζω in Mark could also suggest a spatial rather than temporal meaning. The verb is used three times, at Mk. 1:15, 11:1, 14:42, and the latter two examples seem to carry a spatial meaning. The first is noted when Jesus nears the borders of Jerusalem prior to entering the city (Mk. 11:1). The second is utilised when Judas approaches Jesus in betrayal at Gethsemane (Mk. 14:42). In these two instances, the use of ἐγγίζω is followed by the immediate presence of the object said to be drawing near. For example, Jesus finally "entered Jerusalem" (Mk. 11:11) after first "approaching" (ἐγγίζουσιν) the city in Mk. 11:1. Furthermore, Judas' "drawing near" (ἤγγικεν) to Jesus in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:42) is marked by Judas' subsequent arrival even as Jesus "was still speaking" (Mk. 14:43). There are clear implications for the authorial meaning of ἐγγίζω in relation to God's kingdom at Mk. 1:15. Did Mark's Jesus mean to imply nearness or presence with the verb ἐγγίζω? Nearness rather than presence seems more appropriate to the contextual use of ἐγγίζω at Mk. 1:15 where no *immediate* display of God's kingdom/activity follows in the narrative.[141]

Mark's Jesus presents the kingdom of God as either future oriented or set within Mark's transcendent narrative world as defined earlier. Mark never presents a true "irruption"[142] of the transcendent into the earthly narrative world even though

[140] Joel F. Williams, *Mark*, EGGNT (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2020), 31. Contra C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (rev. ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1961), 29-40; Ma'afu Palu, *Jesus and Time: An Interpretation of Mark 1.15* (LNTS 468; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 125-131.

[141] It is not until Mk. 1:21, with the exorcism of an unclean spirit, that the kingdom of God becomes effectual in the work of Jesus.

[142] Here I adopt the language of Mircea Eliade, who understood the term "irruption" as the moment sacred space "broke into" profane space. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 1987), 26.

transcendent effects of the kingdom of God have palatable outcomes on human and non-human characters. Arguing for a realised eschatology, Kümmel explains that the kingdom of God is "realizing itself already in his [Jesus'] person, his actions, and his message".[143] However, while Kümmel intends to argue differently from my point here, he, in fact, furthers it. I agree with Kümmel that Jesus, a character who accesses both the transcendent and earthly narrative worlds, is *alone* the representative of God's kingdom in both narrative worlds. Unlike, Matthew and Luke, for example, the use of the term "kingdom of God" is found alone on the lips of the Markan Jesus with only a single usage by the narrator (Mk. 15:43); though he also stands outside of the story world in a transcendent perspective.[144]

While other characters can be expectant of the kingdom of God (Mk. 15:43) and even actively be commissioned to participate in its program by Jesus (Mk. 6:7, 12-13); it is alone embodied within the person of Jesus and not yet prepared for public consumption, i.e. for human characters to enact or realise in the earthly narrative world. Again, Jesus alone demonstrates the kingdom of God, defines its nature, and decides its imminence. Only at the transfiguration (Mk. 9:1-8) is the kingdom of God manifested (by Jesus' command at Mk. 9:1) in full display for human characters.

In this episode, three disciples (Peter, James, and John) are provided a

---

[143] Werner G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus* (trans. Dorothea M. Barton; 2nd Ed.; SBT 23: London: SCM, 1961), 153.

[144] While Matthew prefers the term "kingdom of Heaven" (32x) to "kingdom of God" (5x), his collocation of the two terms at Mt. 19:23-24 mitigates against seeing these phrases with two different meanings (e.g. a heavenly vs. earthly nature). Moreover, Matthew adopts "kingdom of Heaven" language instead of "kingdom of God" in shared material with Mark and Luke (Mt. 4:17 // Mk. 1:15; Mt. 5:3 // Lk. 6:20; Mt. 8:11 // Lk. 13:28). In Matthew, the disciples ask Jesus about the "kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 18:1) while both the Lukan narrator (Lk. 8:1; 9:2, 11; 17:20; 19:11; 23:51) and human characters (Lk. 14:15; 17:20 [technically]) utilise "kingdom of God language.

visionary experience of the kingdom of God, which has "come in power" (ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει) in the present (Mk. 9:1). As France puts it, "The perfect tense of ἐληλυθυῖαν indicates that they are not to see the 'coming' of the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, but rather to witness the fact that it *has* come".[145] Here, an instance of "irruption" takes place. However, as noted earlier, the entire episode is clearly set within the transcendent narrative world. In addition, the key terms in Mk. 8:38-9:1, such as, "seeing" (ὁράω), "Son of Man", "glory" (δόξα), and "power" (δύναμις) will show up, uncoincidentally,[146] two more times in the eschatological "Son of Man" sayings (Mk. 13:26 ; 14:62), which draw on LXX Dan. 7:13-14. This indicates that Mark likely envisions the transfiguration pericope to be understood as a present experience of the future reality concerning God's kingdom. The future manifestation of the kingdom of God, like Mark's understanding of the "Son of Man", is intricately tied to Jesus' death and assumption of power thereafter.

How Many Kingdoms?

It is only in Jesus that this new age is burgeoning and replacing the old age, which is wholly opposed to God's inversion of conventional values (Mk. 9:47; 10:14, 15, 23, 24, 25; 12:34) and empowered by hostile demonic forces.[147] The latter point has immediate relevance to the larger question being asked in this section, i.e. how can Jesus be presented as triumphant and deserving a triumph (though an ironic

[145] France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 344.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Marcus (*Mark 1-8*, 72), drawing from de Boer's terminology, categorises this form as "cosmic apocalyptic eschatology", which can be "characterized by the notion that the earth is in subjection to cosmic forces of evil".

one) in Mark's gospel? The answer, for Mark, is demonstrably tied to issues of kingdom. Beginning at Mark 1:13, immediately following Jesus' adoption and endowment of the spirit, Jesus is thrust into a cosmic battle with Satan. It is only a single verse after this brief encounter that Jesus' kingdom message is first pronounced (Mk. 1:14-15). This cosmic perspective, with dividing lines drawn early in the narrative, sets the stage for the author to develop a comparative tool when detailing Jesus exorcisms, healings, and miraculous feats over nature. Dewey, Michie, and Rhoads capture these sentiments well, stating, "The confrontation between God's agent and Satan in the desert lies in the background of all events".[148] The cosmic conflict is not simply background noise, but centrestage. Mark can note the reality of Satan's power, which can snatch away one's acceptance of Jesus' message concerning the kingdom of God (Mk. 4:12-15) and even influence one of Jesus' closest disciples (Peter) to obstruct divine prerogative (Mk. 8:33). This cosmic conflict manifests itself most clearly at Mk. 3:20-35.

Mark 3:20-35 is an interconnected pericope through intercalation. Mark inserts the Beelzebul controversy (Mk. 3:22-30) between vv. 20-21 and 31-35, which concern Jesus' (biological) familial relationships.[149] Using the intercalation, Mark appears to characterise Jesus' relationship with his family negatively.[150] In

[148] Dewey, Michie, Rhoads, *Mark as Story*, 82. Cf. Elizabeth S. Malbon, " 'Reflected Christology': An Aspect of Narrative 'Christology' in the Gospel of Mark", *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 26 (1999): 130. Malbon cites a similar understanding, "The background conflict underlying Mark's gospel is that between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan…Everything else that happens in Mark is to be understood against this transcendental background".

[149] Notice, ἔλεγον ὅτι (v. 22) bookends Mk. 3:22-30 with ὅτι ἔλεγον (v. 30), and likewise v. 21 connects to v. 22 with ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι.

[150] Some scholars reject οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ (Mk. 3:21) as referencing Jesus' family and translate the phrase, "associates, friends, or followers". France (*The Gospel of Mark*, 166) argues that it would be "difficult" for the first time reader to understand that Jesus is talking about his family since no family member is mentioned to this point. Affirming France, see Boring, *Mark*, 104 fn. b; Moloney,

connection with the Beelzebul controversy, Mark is contrasting the family's charge, "He has gone out of his mind"[151] (Mk. 3:21), with the scribes accusation, "He has Beelzebul" (Mk. 3:22).[152] Whereas Jesus' family seeks to possess him (Mk. 3:21), the scribes consider him "possessed" (Mk. 3:22).[153] In this way, Mark aligns Jesus' family with the scribes,[154] who attribute Jesus' exorcistic mission to Satan's power ("He has Beelzebul"; Mk. 3:29-30).[155] The accusations from the scribes lead Jesus into a parable concerning Satan and Satan's kingdom (Mk. 3:24). Mark's Jesus dismantles the scribe's claim of demonic activity (Mk. 3:23-26) by arguing that

---

The Gospel of Mark, 142. Contra France, Boring, and Moloney, the substantivizing article (οἱ) turns the prepositional phrase (παρ' αὐτοῦ) into the nominative subject of ἐξῆλθον. Moreover, the historical transmission of this text further recommends reading this phrase as Jesus' family. For example, later scribes (for full discussion, see Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 138 fn. 75), likely uncomfortable with Mark's negative portrayal of Jesus' family, alter οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ (3:21) to identify the accusation of madness to the Markan scribes in v. 23. Tampering is evidenced, for example, in the majority of Old Latin witnesses and uncials. Additionally, notice D and W read, περι αυτου οι γραμματεις και οι λοιποι. Furthermore, Matthew and Luke (Mt 12:46-50; Lk 8:19-21) revise Jesus' family's strong words by omitting ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξέστη (Mk 3:21). Additionally, Jesus' family "sent" and "called" (ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν καλοῦντες αὐτόν; 3:31) Jesus in Mark, but only "requests" (BDAG, 428) to speak to him in Matthew (ζητοῦντες αὐτῷ λαλῆσαι; Mt 12:46). Luke even blames the crowd for blocking the family's encounter with Jesus (οὐκ ἠδύναντο συντυχεῖν αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον; Lk 8:19). Reading Jesus' family here appears to be most prudent (Cf. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 115).

[151] Typically, ἐξίστημι is translated as "amazement" or "astonishment". However, ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι preceding ἐξίστημι likely stresses the meaning, "to lose one's mind" (cf. BDAG, 350.2.a.). Furthermore, ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι (v. 21) and ἔλεγον ὅτι Βεελζεβοὺλ ἔχει (v. 22) are purposely structured symmetrically to indicate a correlation.

[152] Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark*, 153. Witherington suggests a better reading: "He is possessed by Beelzebul". The agency provided by the phrase ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι lends to this reading. Though ἐν (ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι) does not typically act as an agent, it seems to possess that quality in this passage. Cf. BDAG, 329, which suggests "with the help of", and cites precedent at Mt. 9:34; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 6:2; 14:21.

[153] George Aichele, "Jesus' Uncanny 'Family Scene'", *JSNT* 74 (1999): 41.

[154] Scribes are mentioned fifteen times (Mk. 2:6, 16; 3:22; 7:1, 5; 9:14; 11:18, 27; 12:28, 32; 14:1, 43, 53; 15:1, 31) and Mark characterizes them negatively in all instances, except for Mk. 12:34.

[155] Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 115. Hooker suggests, "madness was often regarded as due to possession by a demon." In this light, both Jesus' family and scribes intend to make the same charge against Jesus.

Satan's kingdom and household would self-destruct if Jesus, "by the ruler of the demons…casts out demons" (Mk. 3:22). Interestingly, Mk. 3:20-35 is not attached to an individual exorcism story. Unlike Matthew and Luke,[156] Jesus' whole enterprise as an exorcist in Mark is questioned and the scribes position Jesus in Satan's domain and "system of evil".[157]

In this pericope, Mark delineates systems as microcosms ("household") and macrocosms ("kingdom"). Mark casts Jesus as the "stronger one" (ἰσχυρός; Mk. 1:7)—the only candidate to defeat the "strong one" (ἰσχυρός; Mk. 3:27), Satan,[158] and his minions.[159] In fact, by implication, Jesus "bound" Satan in their first encounter (Mk. 1:12-13) as evidenced by Jesus' plundering of Satan's "goods" (Mk. 1:21-27, 34; 3:11-12, 15) in the narrative to this point. This is displayed when the Markan Jesus shifts from two third-class conditionals (e.g. ἐάν + μερίζω) in Mk. 3:24-25 to a first class conditional (εἰ) in v. 26. Due to the use of a subjunctive (μερισθῇ) in vv. 24-25, the conversation and act lends itself to future orientation. However, the switch to a first class conditional presents Mark's recognition of the historical past. Jesus' past exorcist activity is indicative of what is coming.[160] Furthermore, Mark may be alluding to LXX Isa. 49:24-26 and 53:12 as God's long-awaited promise of rescue

[156] Cf. Mt 9:32-33; 12:22-23; Lk 11:14.

[157] Boring, *Mark*, 108.

[158] Contra Aichele, who posits that the crowd "binds" Jesus, the "strong man". Aichele, "Jesus' Uncanny 'Family Scene'", 29-49.

[159] In Mk. 5:3, "no one was ever strong enough to restrain (δέω)" the demon possessed man, except Jesus. The term δέω connects the story back to Mk. 3:27 where Jesus has the strength to "bind" (δέω) the strong man, Satan.

[160] Elizabeth E. Shively, *Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark The Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22-30* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 48.

from evil and plunder of the ἰσχυρός (LXX Isa 49:25).[161] Therefore, Satan's demise is not only future oriented but also present. Jesus bound the "strong one", and Satan's collapsing house (microcosm) only reinforces God's promise of action, on the cosmic level (macrocosm), against Satan's "kingdom". Jesus sternly warns those who might align him with Satan's collapsing kingdom (Mk. 3:28-30). Jesus, thus, presents two kingdoms by which one can align him or herself: (1) Satan's kingdom or (2) God's kingdom.

The story returns to Jesus' family, who, upon arrival, are "outside" (ἔξω; Mk. 3:31) of Jesus' presence while the crowd is "around him" (περὶ αὐτὸν; Mk. 3:32). The co-text suggests to be "outside" (ἔξω) is to align oneself with the wrong kingdom (Mk. 4:11), specifically the demonic kingdom (Mk. 5:10). Jesus challenges the traditional view of family. Family is no longer determined by blood (Mk. 3:20-21) or tradition (Mk. 3:22-30) but by how "one"[162] orients his or her life (ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ; Mk. 3:35) towards or against God's kingdom and will; this determines who will be "around" Jesus or on the "outside". In Mark, all conflict with Jesus stems from those characters who fail to align themselves with the correct kingdom. However, as Dewey, Michie, and Rhoads insightfully note, "The immediate narrative stage for the establishment of God's rule is Israel under the military control of the Roman Empire". The key enemies of Jesus in Mark, such as Pilate, Herod Antipas, the High Priest Caiphas, and the contentious religious leaders,

[161] Shively, *Apocalyptic*

[162] BDAG, 725. In Mk. 3:35, ὅς, the nominative subject of ποιέω, indicates the range of Jesus' offer to others; no longer obligated by blood, gender, or status, but by one's ability to do "the will of God."

were all appointed by Rome or "provide[d] tribute for their Roman overlords" in exchange for the governance of Judea, Jerusalem, or the temple.[163]

You've Got a Friend in Me: Rome and the Demonic Kingdom

Mark's direct confrontation with imperial power comes to the fore in Jesus' liberation of the Gerasene Demoniac (Mk. 5:1-20). Mark's use of the term λεγιών ("legion") at Mk. 5:9 to identify the military forces that occupy their human host aims to classify demonic and Roman imperial powers under a single banner. While this pericope typically functions as a launching pad for colonial and anti-occupation readings of Mark,[164] Zeichmann correctly argues that the issue of Rome and "military matters…occupy a secondary or tertiary position within the pericope".[165] Still, Zeichmann does not deny Mark's use of λεγιών as a reference to the Roman army,[166] but rejects a localised reading of Mark's Jesus as dispatching *legio X Fretensis*.[167] In similar fashion, most colonial and non-colonial readings respectively

[163] Dewey, Michie, Rhoads, *Mark as Story*, 66.

[164] Stephen D. Moore, "Mark and Empire: Zealot and Postcolonial Readings", *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, eds. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 135. For post-colonial readings of the Gerasene Demoniac, see, Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 100-103; Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans*, 190-194; Hans Leander, *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*, SemeiaSt 71 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013), 201-219; Warren Carter, "Cross-Gendered Romans and Mark's Jesus: Legion Enters the Pigs (Mark 5:1-20)", *JBL* 133 (2015): 139-155.

[165] Christopher B. Zeichmann, *The Roman Army and the New Testament* (Lanham, MD: Fortress Academic, 2018), 55.

[166] Zeichmann notes that discrepancies between the size of an actual Roman legion (5,400) and the numbers of the pigs (2,000) is due to Mark's use of the term λεγιών as a misnomer for the Roman military. He equates the issue to an Iraqi civilian calling American Soldiers, "Marines" without distinguishing between the branch or ranks.

[167] Zeichmann, *The Roman Army*, 55-57. Zeichmann maintains that the boar and aquatic imagery associated with this episode must be coincidental according to his reading..

cite the correlation between demonic forces and Roman power with some being more forceful than others. Mark's defeat over satanic forces, then, is a defeat, in some way, related to Rome explicitly, which *can* operate within the satanic sphere/kingdom. However, Mark's association of the satanic realm with earthly, human-made systems (Mk. 8:33), rather than the realm of God also lends to the idea that Mark may challenge Rome in more subtle ways.

This is best captured at Mk. 12:13-17, where Mark's Jesus invokes the name Καῖσαρ ("Caesar") explicitly three times (Mk. 12:14, 16, 17) and contrasts him antithetically against God. While Mark does not overtly connect Rome in the sphere of the Satanic here, the dividing lines are certainly drawn between the domain of God and all other domains, which, by choice or default, stand against God's rule. In this pericope, these dividing lines are exemplified by Jesus' injunction: "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mk. 12:17).

The entire pericope (Mk. 12:13-17) is loosely associated to parable of the tenants before it (Mk. 12:1-12) where the Markan narrator cues the audience that the parable offended the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Mk. 11:27), and now they want to arrest Jesus (Mk. 12:12). Following the parable of the tenant are three successive dialogues – all taking place in the temple precincts – which challenge Jesus' public authority (two negative, one positive). Each pericope takes up a "hot-topic" issue for which Jesus' must respond authoritatively. The first of these dialogues begins at Mk. 12:13 where we learn that the chief priests, scribes, and elders send in "some Pharisees and Herodians" as reinforcements "to trap" Jesus verbally (i.e. "in what he said"). The Pharisees and Herodians begin their assault on a

platform of flattery (Mk. 12:14) noting Jesus' impartiality towards people and allegiance to the "way of God" (τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ). The true attack follows in their next set of questions, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not"? (Mk. 12:14). The Markan narrator enlightens the audience that Jesus understands the threat ("But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, 'Why are you putting me to the test?'") in the questions they ask (Mk. 12:15)

The divisiveness of the questions are simply implied by Mark, but also influenced by the key characters present. As the Sadducees (Mk. 12:18-27) and the scribe (Mk. 12:28-34) in the following episodes are concerned with issues respective of their identities,[168] so too does our present pericope intend to highlight the oddly amicable relationship between the Herodians and the Pharisees (cf. Mk. 3:6).[169] The "tax" (κῆνσος) in question likely represents the poll/head tax instituted by the Romans in 6CE. This tax drew a violent revolt, which was incited by Judas the Galilean and Sadduc/Zadok, the Pharisee. According to Josephus, Judas and Sadduc/Zadok incited revolt among the Jews by claiming, "taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery" and encouraged the people "to assert their liberty".[170]

In Josephus' parallel passage at *BJ* 2.118, Judas alone is said to have rallied this revolt, "preaching that it was cowardice to submit to Roman taxes and to tolerate mortal masters when God had been their only lord". In describing Judas' affiliation

[168] It is significant that the only appearance of the Sadducees in Mark's gospel centres around issues of resurrection, a belief for which they diverged from Pharisees (cf. Acts 23:6-10). Cf. Jos. *BJ* 2.162-166; *Ant*. 13.171-172; 13.293-298; 18.16-17.

[169] See Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 244.

[170] Jos. *Ant*. 18.4.

with the "three philosophies" (Pharisees, Saduccees, and Essene), Josephus (*Ant*. 18.9), states that Judas, "excited a fourth philosophic sect". However, in Josephus' description of Judas' new sect, he notes, "This school agrees in all other respects with the opinions of the Pharisees, except that they have a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master".[171] The connection between the Pharisees and Judas is forged here in *Antiquities*, unlike the content found in *BJ* 2.118 ("This man [Judas]…started his own sect, and had nothing in common with the others".). Mason explains that in the time elapsed between Josephus' writing of *BJ* – where Josephus' standing as a Pharisee was still relevant – and *Antiquities*, which details "harsh reports" concerning Pharisees, Josephus "was happy to forge a new rhetorical bond between the still-despicable Judas and the Pharisees". [172] While Mason fairly cautions against "historical constructions of radical Pharisaic wings or the like", we can deduce here, that the Pharisees took a harsh stance towards Roman power.[173]

In contrast to the Pharisees, the Herodians supported the pro-Roman and aristocratic Herodian dynasty, which was first established by Herod the Great (37-4 BCE).[174] Throughout his life, Herod's legitimacy was scrutinised (and thus the dynasty) since he was considered a "half-Jew",[175] i.e. his mother was Nabataean and his father Idumaean. Josephus notes clear opposition to Herod on the part of the

[171] Jos. *Ant*. 18.23.

[172] Steve Mason, *Volume 1B: Judean War 2* (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary; Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2008), 83.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Jos. *BJ* 1.319

[175] Jos. *Ant*. 14.403

Pharisees,[176] and in one case even reports that the wife of Pheroras paid the fine for 6000+ Pharisees who refused to swear loyalty to Herod and Augustus.[177] Mark may be ironically playing on these historically negative feelings to suggest a common enemy had been found in Jesus.

With the question asked and trap set, Jesus then requests that his interlocutors provide him a "denarius". This is an odd request considering the rarity of the denomination in pre-war Judaea.[178] In dating Mark's gospel to 69CE, I follow Yarbro Collins, who understands that the "request for a denarius does not signify a literal payment of tax in coin, but rather concretizes and symbolizes the general issue of paying tribute to Rome".[179] However, the nature and purpose of Roman coinage is often overlooked by commentators. A defining feature of the Roman Empire in the first century CE was the wide diffusion of political and cultural ideas and ideals, concerning the emperor's public image, through mass distribution of visual symbolism on imperial statues, monuments, artwork, and in administrative texts and literature. Public buildings, imperial games, and food distribution displayed the benefaction offered to the emperor's loyal subjects and reinforced his positive image. The imperial cult, religious ceremonies, and temples, further, reminded the public of

[176] Jos. *BJ* 1. 571;

[177] Jos. *Ant*. 17.42

[178] Fabian E. Udoh, *To Caesar What Is Caesar's: Tribute, Taxes, and Imperial Administration in Early Roman Palestine 63 B.C.E.-70 C.E.* (BJS 343; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2005), 223-36; Kenneth K.A. Lönnqvist, "The Date of Introduction of Denarii to Roman Judaea and the Decaplois Region", *ARAM* 23 (2011), 314-317. Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 553) is overoptimistic about the evidence for the circulation of denarii in Judaea and notes their presence in a "limited way".

[179] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 553.

the emperor's special relation to the gods.[180] Far less visually seizing, but more widespread, were imperial coins, which were manufactured in Rome[181] and dispersed throughout the empire.

The images and messages found on imperial coinage, while intending to serve a pictorially communicative purpose, are only peripheral to their primary economic function. Financial need, specifically paying state expenditures, motivated the circulation of the mint.[182] Nevertheless, understanding the primary purpose of coinage output should not diminish the importance of images presented on that coinage. For under Vespasian, for example, imitative antiquarian designs long forgotten were revived and new types produced, showing a worthy interest in coin types.[183] Apparently, then, the mint served not only economic aims, but ideological ones as well. That numerous symbols engraved on coinage (globes, trophies,

---

[180] Often overlooked are those activities with short-lived media, and only later represented in the coinage. For example, public festivals and ceremonies, orations, and imperial anniversaries are short-lived and reflected in the coinage only in part, thus leaving modern historians with exiguous facts concerning the output of communications, which were meant to work in tandem with the events. For a further discussion on this point, see C.H.V. Sutherland, *Coinage in Imperial Policy 31 B.C.-A.D. 68* (London: Methuen, 1951), 173-184; A. H. M. Jones, "Numismatics and History" in *Essays in Roman coinage presented to Harold Mattingly*, eds. R. A. G. Carson, C. H. V. Sutherland, and Harold Mattingly (London: OUP, 1956), 13-33.

[181] This is nuanced in the time of the Civil Wars of 69CE. Early Flavian production is unique in that one finds larger denominations of Vespasian's imperial coinage minted in different parts of the empire for circulation in Rome. Also, uniquely Flavian, mints in Rome produced provincial issues for circulation in the east. Cf. RIC II^2 Vespasian, 1339-1340. Vespasian's facial features closely reflect the Spanish issues of Vitellius as die-cutters were likely unaware of Vespaisan's appearance since he did not arrive in Rome until October, 70CE.

[182] C. J. Howgego, *Ancient History from Coins* (London: Routledge, 1995), 34. For full details regarding state expenditure see, Richard Duncan-Jones, *Money and Government in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 33-46.

[183] Ian Carradice, "Towards a New Introduction to the Flavian Coinage" in *Modus Operandi: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Rickman*, eds. M. Austin, J. Harris, and C. Smith (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998): 93-117; C.f. T.R. Stevenson, "Personifications on the Coinage of Vespasian (AD69-79)", *Acta Classica* 53 (2010): 181-205. Stevenson shows the many minor variations between Vespasian's coinage and that of his predecessors, noting, "55 new legends in association with personifications were employed" during Vespasian's reign; Contra Barbara Levick, *Vespasian* (London: Routledge, 1999), 65. Levick believes that Vespasian's coinage consists of "borrowed" copies and "banal" types.

cornucopiae, etc.) are found on personal items in the ancient world, such as jewellery and furniture, suggest that coin types were readily understood by the populace.[184]

The fact that Mark's Jesus takes and examines the denarius asking about its pictoral meaning shows that the gospel writer has an awareness of the symbolic value in the coinage beyond mere economics. The Markan author implies that a symbolic and interpretative value is intricately woven into the coinage through image. For the Roman Empire, coins were an effective conduit by which widespread—crossing over class divides—audiences might be reached by the state. The visual presentation of the emperor, his family, and his empire on the coinage created a lasting image in the collective memory of the populous. Text and image—on coin types—often worked together to provide the illiterate with readily available images, and the literate with powerful language to reinforce such images.

More difficultly to determine is the awareness among moneyers who designed the coinage entering circulation. On the one hand, the monetary system was one of the few constants of everyday Roman living, thus attracting little literary attention by which modern historians are able to draw conclusions;[185] however, on the other hand, clear patterns of decision-making for coin types are evident in the higher and lower denominations of numerous emperors.[186] The depth of the emperor's involvement in the selection process is a highly debated topic among numismatists.[187] However, Suetonius notes that Augustus issued a silver coin with

---

[184] Howgego, *Ancient History from Coins*, 74.

[185] C. H. V. Sutherland, *The Emperor and the Coinage: Julio-Claudian Studies* (London: Spink, 1976), 5.

[186] Olivier Hekster, "Coins and Messages: Audience Targeting on Coins of Different Denominations?" in *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power*, eds. L. De Blois, P. Erdkamp, O. Hekster, G. De Kleijn, and S. Mols (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 2003), 20-35.

the "sign of the constellation Capricornus" to legitimise his trust in a horoscope.[188] Nero, upon his return from a trip to Greece, produced statues and struck coins of himself in the likeness of a lyre-player.[189] Therefore, on some level, it appears that the emperor was at least conscious of *some* coin types. What can be deduced is that objects of media served to memorialise, celebrate, and idealise the emperor, whether or not these were the emperor's intentions.[190]

The emperor's portraits, as well as the reverse coin types, served an important role, since they often, and by implication, intended to represent the authority and values of the state.[191] Prior to Augustus' emperorship, obverse portraits were alone occupied by headshots of the divine, and likely showed that the emperor held "a place of ambiguity between humanity and divinity".[192] Taking samples from

---

[187] See C.H.V. Sutherland, "The Intelligibility of Roman Imperial Coin Types", *JRS* 49 (1959): 46-55 who argues undoubtedly for the influence of the emperor in type selection. Challenging Sutherland: T.V. Buttrey, "Vespasian as Moneyer", *NC*[7] 12 (1972): 80-109; Barbara Levick, "Propaganda and the Imperial Coinage", *Antichthon* 16 (1982): 104-116. Both scholars maintain that official moneyers are most likely responsible for type production. See also Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus", *JRS* 76 (1986): 80-82. Wallace-Hadrill holds a more nuanced view and discusses the difficulty of interpreting the "SC" marks of Augustus's precious and non-precious metals. He also shows that authority between moneyers and emperors were not so disjointed as Mommsen proposed. See also, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and His Virtues", *Historia* 30.3 (1981): 308.

[188] Suet. *Aug.* 94.12: *Tantam mox fiduciam fati Augustus habuit, ut thema suum vulgaverit nummumque argenteum nota sideris Capricorni, quo natus est, percusserit*. See RIC I[2] Augustus, 124-130, 174-175, 477, 480, 488-489, 493, 521-522, 541-542, 544-545.

[189] Suet. *Nero* 25.2: *item statuas suas citharoedico habitu, qua nota etiam nummum percussit ac post haec tantum afuit a remittendo laxandoque studio,*). See RIC I[2] Nero, 73-82, 121-123, 205-212, 380-381, 384-385, 414-417, 451-455.

[190] However, this communication does not always imply a type of "propaganda" in the modern sense (Contra Jones, "Numismatics and History", 13-15), for "propaganda" not only needs a methodical and determined vehicle for its propagation, but it must also evoke harsh overtones (Levick "Propaganda and the Imperial Coinage", 105-106). From the available data, the historian simply cannot ascertain either condition in the Roman coinage, and so to avoid being anachronistic or drawing too much from the unconscious imagination of modern readers, such a term should be avoided. Perhaps, terms such as "publicity" or "widespread communication" should be adopted.

[191] Howgego, *Ancient History* , 43. Cf. Mt. 22:17-22; Mk. 12:13-17; Lk. 20:21-26.

[192] Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and His Virtues", 315.

Vespasian coinage,[193] we see Vespasian's head is adorned with a laurel wreath most frequently, though, at times, Vespasian appears with radiate or bareheaded.[194] Vespasian's bust is typically draped over the right shoulder (a few times over the left), cuirassed, or with an aegis (three times with Medusa[195] on breast). Furthermore, the obverse typically displays imperial titular, which includes numbered consulships (COS),[196] tribunician power (TR P),[197] and imperatorial acclamations (IMP),[198] an important feature for dating coinage. Likewise, over Vespasian's reign, for example, he received the titles *Augustus* (AVG),[199] *Pontifex Maximus* (P M),[200] *Pater Patriae*

[193] Examples here are drawn from Vespasian's coinage circa 69-75CE since they represent a somewhat more steady image of coining following the chaotic year of the four emperors. Also, Vespasian's coinage places us near the time of Mark's writing.

[194] Vespasian's bare head is rare and only occurs on four coins minted at Rome (RIC II.1, 8; 9; 10; 11) in early 70CE. Perhaps this is intended to regard the civility of the newly appointed emperor (C.f. BMCRE 1, xxxi).

[195] RIC II^2, 182, 200, 201.

[196] Though the imperial office was highly sought after in the Republic, the prestige tapered off during Augustus's reign; and thereafter with only sporadic usage on the coinage before Vespasian. However, all the Flavians accede the position. See BMCRE 1, lxix; BMCRE 2, xx.

[197] Tr(ibunicia) P(otestate), though usually numbered in previous emperors's coinage to show the reigning year, is frequently without numbered years in Vespasian's reign—Vespasian's power, then, is intended to be emphasised. Suetonius (*Vesp.* 12), notes Vespasian's reluctance to accept tribunician power and the title, *pater patriae* too early, "*ac ne tribuniciam quidem potestatem* < ... > *patris patriae appellationem nisi sero recepit*". See also, BMCRE 1, lxviii; BMCRE 2, xx.

[198] The title *imperator* (i.e. "Commander") functioned in the Republic to designate commendation offered to victorious generals by their troops. The title retained its militaristic overtones as chief military official. Though Augustus assumes the title as a praenomen, many of his successors refrained. Nero resurrected the title in 66CE and all of the Flavians utilised the title as their praenomen. BMCRE 1, lxvii-lxviii; BMCRE 2, xix-xx; Levick, *Vespasian*, 66.

[199] According to Suetonius (*Aug.* 7), the title "Augustus" is a derivation of the root word *augur*. The prestige of religion and the majesty attached to it presented the emperor as extraordinary. After Augustus's reign, every succeeding emperor through to the Flavian period used the title. BMCRE 1, lxviii; BMCRE 2, xx.

[200] This title conferred the emperor as head of the state religion, and was first taken up by Augustus in 12BCE. It occurs on the Flavian coinage regularly, and held an important place in the imperial office. BMCRE 1, lxviii; BMCRE 2, xx.

(P P),[201] and *Censor* (CENS),[202] symbols that might be associated with what Mark (Mk. 12:16) labels, ἐπιγραφή ("title" / "inscription").

The reverse types present consistent categorical designs linking the emperor to personified virtues, deities, significant events, dynastic features, and inanimate / animate objects. Of these types, *personified virtues* outweigh the rest significantly near the time of Mark's writing. All of these designs were intended to connect particular values, ideals, and ideas to the emperor for which they symbolized. It was with Galba's reign (68-69CE) that a proliferation of coins featuring virtue types were produced (See Chp. 2) with aims of communicating to the populace the emperor's "personification" of such "virtues". These two terms are distinguishable here and should be understood accurately.

"Personifications" provide value to abstract ideas, ideals, or benefits through human embodiment. In the case of Vespasian's imperial coinage, for example, the emperor is intended to embody personifications and ideals engraved.[203] Distinct from personifications, "virtues" represent the ethical and moral qualities of a person.[204]

---

[201] Every Flavian accepted this title, which was the greatest honour bestowed upon the emperor. Emperors were embarrassed to accept this title in fear of looking pomp because of its significance (see fn. 25). BMCRE 1, lxix; BMCRE 2, xx.

[202] Typically, two censors were chosen and the Flavians accepted it during censors (cf. Suet. *Vesp*. 8; *Tit*. 6). BMCRE 2, xx. Also, for a full list of all titular titles and dates see, RIC II[1], pp. 16-17.

[203] These "ideas", "ideals", and "benefits" in Vespasian's imperial coinage from 65-75CE include: *aeternitas*, *concordia*, *felicitas*, *fortuna*, *libertas*, *pax*, *salus*, *securitas*, *spes*, and *victioria*. However, the term "abstract" in the definition above could be misleading, and is listed to aid the modern reader, though without limiting the concrete reality of divinities worshipped at Rome. See J. R. Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology", *ANRW* 2.17.2 (1981), 830-833. Fears prefers the archaic form of "virtue"—a power and influence working through a divine being—to describe what some have labeled "personification." However, it is difficult to shift the modern mind into thinking that terms such as *pax*, *victoria*, or *fortuna* could ever be "virtues". Therefore, this study has retained the term "personification", though with a fair warning that it too has its limitations.

[204] Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and His Virtues", 308-310. Virtues in Vespasian's imperial coinage from 69-75CE include: *aequitas*, *fides*, *honos*, *iustitia*, *providentia*, *virtus*.

Therefore, concepts such as *pax* ("peace"), *fortuna* ("fortune"), or *victoria* ("victory") are otherwise disqualified as "virtues" for their lack of moral quality. Naturally, numismatists and classicists tend to blur the line between these two distinct roles because virtues are often personified in the coinage. For example, Vespasian's most frequent virtue from 69-75CE, *aequitas*, is personified in all nine variety types.[205] In addition, every virtue variety type of Vespasian between 69-75CE, with *providentia*[206] and *fides*[207] being the exception, is personified.

The personification of virtues was realised over time, but most potently in the rule of Julius Caesar. Caesar's reign was a watershed moment for the proliferation of virtue types, which, unlike the early Republic, were being detached from the collective identity of the Roman public and becoming extensions of the emperor's dynamic personality. The virtues of the emperor were subsequently mediated to the public, who carefully ensured his safety and offered prayers for him as the community depended upon the emperor for mediation of those embodied virtues.[208]

The progression to consolidate collective virtues under the individual emperor came in the form of the imperial cult. In 45BCE, the senate recognised the clemency of Caesar (i.e. for his mildness towards the Pompeians) and subsequently

[205] RIC II^2 Vespasian 20, 21, 286, 287, 441, 720, 722, 1106, 1114.

[206] RIC II^2 Vespasian 10, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 448, 489, 591, 592, 630, 631, 671, 729, 1166, 1167, 1200, 1201.

[207] RIC II^2 Vespasian 70, 71, 72, 156, 229, 300, 402, 444, 484, 507, 520, 528, 571, 625.

[208] Fears ("The Cult of Virtues") convincingly traces the concepts of *virtutes populi romani* and *virtutes imperatoris* to Cicero's *Pro Lege Manilia* (specifically, chps. 13-16), and shows Cicero's intention to equate Pompey's person and achievement with virtues otherwise associated with the state. The coinage of Vespasian follows suit, showing only a minor interest in associating virtues with the public. See RIC II^2, 82 (LIBERTAS PVBLICA); 435, 581, 658, 715, 742, 818, 830 (FELICITAS PVBLICA); 520 (FIDES PVBLICA); 1136 (ROMA). See appendix 1.

introduced the Clementia Caesaris.[209] Other cults included the Fortuna Caesaris and Victoria Caesaris.[210] These cults, for the first time, were incorporated into the life of worship at Rome and associated wholly with Caesar. The cults of Julius Caesar gave rise to the appellation *Augusta* in the Principate and provided the formal foundation for which later cultic traditions formed. With this inauguration, the dynamics between emperor, divinity, virtue, and personification evolved. Now, for someone to invoke *Pax Augusti / Augusta/us*, they assumed a special divine relationship between Augustus and the power of *pax*.[211] This is similar to a Christian prayer, when the initiate asks for mediation between Jesus and the Godhead. So, in the analogy, the "Godhead", Pax, acted to distribute the power of *pax*, through the conduit of Augustus, and within his sphere.

Growing from the Julio-Claudian period, personifications of virtues and gods became regularly attested on the coinage.[212] The personification types of

[209] Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 80-127.

[210] Weinstock, *Divius Julius*, 233-243.

[211] This concept was formulated in two precise grammatical forms, namely the genitival *Augusti* and adjectival *Augusta/us*. See TLL 2, 1413-1419. The *Augusta* form is clearly situated under Augustus's reign, while *Augusti* only appears later during Claudius's reign. C.f. BMCRE I, 164, n. 1. Whereas the genitival, theoretically, expressed personal qualities of the emperor himself, the adjectival form conveyed the benefits of his reign. However, the terminology on the epigraphic and numismatic material is characteristically ambiguous (Cf. RIC II^2, 181 [PAX AVGVSTI]; 1191 [PAX AVG]; 669 [PAX AVGVST]; 1433 [PACI ORB TERR AVG]; 1130 [PACI AVGVSTI]; 1431 [PACI AVGVSTAE]). The lack of clarification is likely evidence of the two grammatical forms' interchangeability, especially by the time of Mark's writing. For a helpful explanation of the problem, though concession of indistinguishable forms see Fears, "Cult of Virtues", 886-889. C.f. A. Nock, "Studies in the Graeco-Roman Beliefs of the Empire", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 45 (1925): 92, fn. 73; Albert D. Castro, "Tacitus and the 'Virtues' of the Roman Emperor: The Role of Imperial Propaganda in the Historiography of Tacitus" (PhD diss., Department of Classical Studies, Indiana University, 1972), 9-10. For arguments of grammatical distinction see BMCRE I, lxxiv. Here, Mattingly notes, "The difference in meaning between the two [*Augustus* and *Augusti*] is subtle—the difference between a condition and a quality."

[212] Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and His Virtues", 298.

Augustus[213] were calculated attempts to demarcate his new reign as *princeps*.[214] Wavering interest in virtues (and type variety, in general) thereafter is evident on the coinage of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, yet take a positive turn in the year of the four emperors, specifically during Galba's reign.[215] During this chaotic time, each contender / usurper attempted to produce coinage reflecting notable virtues, gods, events, and religious positions that would help justify their power as emperor to the populous and protect them from all claims of aspiring to kingship (*odium regni*), associated with previous reigns.[216] Many of these coins reflected Republican types,[217] showing that virtues and personifications intended to illicit past actions through the lens of present and future situations. In other words, every coin type attempts to stimulate the cultural memory of its recipients and draw to mind deeper expression and meanings of reality.

In this way, Mark's connection between "Caesar", "image", and "title" in relation to the denarius elicits more than what is shown on the surface, i.e. the prop (denarius) in the scene is loaded with imperial messaging meant to draw one closer to the emperor and the sphere he encompasses. By Jesus stating that his interlocutors

---

[213] *Victoria*, *Pax*, *Fortuna Redux*, *Virtus*, *Clementia*, *Iustitia*, and *Pietas*. Fears, "Cult of Virtues", 889.

[214] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "*Civilis Princeps*: Between Citizen and King", *JRS* 72 (1982): 32-48.

[215] To quickly compare coin type varieties Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero see Rasiel Suarez, *Eric II: The Encyclopedia of Roman Imperial Coins,* 2nd ed. (Tumwater, Washington: Dirty Old Books, 2010), 1-19, 27-30, 33-40, 44-56. Also, see Galba's impressive quantity of virtue variety types for such a short-lived reign, 57-65.

[216] See chapter 2. Cf. E.S. Ramage, "Denigration of Predecessor under Claudius, Galba, and Vespasian" *Historia* 32 (1983): 201-214. Ramage helpfully argues that Vespasian's coin types were purposely chosen to align with the agenda of Galba who had brought the *damnatio memoriae* against Nero. Further his thesis maintains that through the promotion of virtues one administration could make a clean break from the previous ones.

[217] Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and His Virtues", 8-11.

are to "give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's", they are allowed a level ambiguity to conclude their own preferred answers. The Herodians will concede that Jesus is legitimising Rome's rule and Caesar, and taxes should be paid. The Pharisees, however, could hear Jesus statement as an indirect rejection of Roman power and an insistence on devotion to God. However, Jesus' answer still raises issues about what is actually Caesar's. Richard Horsley frames the problem well: "If God is the exclusive Lord and Master, if the people of Israel live under the exclusive kingship of God, then all things belong to God, the implications for Caesar being fairly obvious…Caesar, or any other imperial ruler, has no claim on the Israelite people, since God is their actual king and master".[218]

In brief, Mark presents his victory over Satan and the Satanic sphere in both direct and subtle ways by implicating collaborators for which Rome and the religious leaders are chiefly designated. Nevertheless, we return full circle to the connection between triumphator (earthly movement) and apotheosis (transcendent movement), and the role it plays in Mark's gospel.

The Apotheosis of Jesus

If Jesus' (mock) triumph brought his divinity into focus, it was his death that brought it to completion. As noted earlier, there are Christological implications for reading Mark as I have done. I argue that in Mark's narrative, Jesus' more-than-human status is known only to those few who stand outside of Mark's earthly narrative world. The confession by the centurion indicates, for the first time, in all narrative worlds, Jesus' true identity. The confession directly follows Jesus' death

[218] Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 99.

(Mk. 15:37; "Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last"). Jesus identity, and subsequently his ontological status, which Mark never explicitly addresses, and at times intentionally hides, comes to full fruition in Jesus' death. Painter notes, "There is no coincidence that the kingship of Jesus and his status as Son of God should be bound up with his crucifixion and death".[219] In fact, throughout the entire narrative, Mark has clued not only his audience, but also the earthly and transcendent characters, to Jesus' future ontological status following his death. As shown above, the messianic titles, full with divine and kingly implications, are set within an eschatological context and come to completion only at Jesus' death. But why is Jesus' death significant for that status and those titles? I argue that in his death, Jesus becomes fully divine, fulfilling his messianic roles, through the process of apotheosis.

Among scholarship there has emerged a growing interest in translation narratives and Roman apotheosis traditions of the first century CE as a way to explain the resurrection and ascension episodes of Jesus in the gospels.[220] Apotheosis is the transference of a deified individual's soul/body to heaven so that they might take their place among the gods. Such a process legitimised claims of power and often secured dynastic succession. Romulus, Aeneas, Julius Caesar, and Caesar Augustus are among those Romans popularly said to have gone through an

---

[219] John Painter, *Mark's Gospel* (New Testament Readings; New York, NY: Routledge, 1997), 201.

[220] Wendy Cotter, "Greco-Roman Apotheosis Traditions and the Resurrection Appearances in Matthew" in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Yarbro Collins, "Ancient Notions of Transferal", 41-58; Daniel A. Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: the Early History of Easter* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 2010), 53-61; Richard Miller, "Mark's Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity" *JBL* 129.4 (2010): 759-776; John Granger Cook, *Empty Tomb, Resurrection, Apotheosis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018).

apotheosis. Richard Miller, in a provocative essay, provides twenty examples (what he cites as "translation fables") of close parallels between Romulus' apotheosis and Jesus' resurrection and ascension narratives in the gospels. Features relevant to Mark's gospel include: missing bodies (Mk. 16:6); darkness over the land prior to the apotheosis (Mk. 15:33); claims of the individual being a "Son of God" (Mk. 15:39); people fleeing (Mk. 16:8); and frightened subjects (Mk. 16:8). [221] Yarbro Collins strengthens these close parallels while also providing a study of Elijah's apotheosis in 1-2 Kings, and arguing that both Roman and Jewish traditions could have influenced Mark's writing on Jesus' resurrection. For Yarbro Collins, the benefit for Mark in detailing Jesus' resurrection as an apotheosis was one of legitimacy over and against the deified Roman emperor, and hence Roman power.[222] If Jesus was truly "God's son", as even the centurion claims, then Jesus' death spelt victory rather than shame, and Mark's audience could confidently accept and proclaim this as truly "good news".

Conclusion

In this final chapter, I aimed to distinguish between Mark's two narrative worlds, i.e. the earthly and transcendent narrative worlds. It is in the former that we find a strong reticence by the Markan author to associate Jesus with earthly aspirations towards kingship. However, in the transcendent narrative world, cosmic truths about Jesus' identity as "Son of God", "Son of Man", and "Christ", which are loaded with kingship language, remain available only to Markan characters with

[221] Miller, "Mark's Empty Tomb", 772-773.

[222] Yarbro Collins, "Ancient Notions of Transferal", 56.

access to both narrative worlds (e.g. non-human and demonic forces). In instances where Jesus' identity is revealed to human characters within Mark's story world, Mark sets their experience within a transcendent setting (e.g. Mk. 9:9) and always regards the full embodiment and power attached to his identity as future oriented (e.g. Mk. 14:61-62). The confession of the centurion (Mk. 15:39) is the climatic unification of the two worlds where Jesus ontologically becomes "Son of God", "Son of Man", and the "Christ" with all of the power and kingly language attached to such titles. Mark presents this unification in a grand scheme of triumph and deification. For Mark, Jesus' crucifixion procession was intended to be read as a mock Roman triumph where Jesus was hailed as king, but only in jest. Lying behind the mockery, however, was the truth about Jesus, a truth known only by those who had access to the transcendent narrative world of Mark. In his post-death existence, Jesus truly became divine and king in all narrative worlds, which was only realised because Jesus had experienced an apotheosis. Once more, Mark turned Jesus' apparent shame into victory and the cross of weakness became one of power for a questioning audience.

Conclusion

The general purpose of this writing was to analyse the contours of kingship in Mark's gospel. In particular, I set out questioning whether Mark characterised Jesus as an ideal or Davidic king as numerous scholars today unquestionably accept. The question of kingship in Mark's gospel, however, is not a new one. Numerous books, dissertations, monographs, and articles have explored different dimensions of kingship within Mark's gospel.[1] However, this writing differs from others; whereas most studies begin from the premise that the Markan Jesus is "king", this one questions that assertion all together. More narrowly, this writing argues that Mark's reticence to elicit a kingship motif explicitly is directly related to Mark and his audience, who were living in the shadow of Neronian despotism and would have coupled concepts of kingship with negative terms equating to tyranny. Additionally, Mark was writing his gospel in the stirs of the Roman Civil War, when political ideas of *libertas*, and its counterpart, *regnum*, were being utilised as tools of political invective throughout the empire. This widespread ideology casted a negative shadow on kingship. Mark's own understanding of kingship is set within this context and effected how he presented Jesus as a "king" to his audience, who were likely familiar

[1] H. Conzelmann, "History and Theology in the Passion Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels", *Interpretation* 24 (1970): 178-197; Frank Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 66 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982); R. T. France, *Divine Government: God's Kingship in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SPCK, 1990); N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, (London: SPCK, 1996), Chps. 10, 13; W. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998); Eugene Boring, "Markan Christology: God-Language For Jesus?" *New Testament Studies* 45.4 (1999): 451-471; Michael Priest, "The Comforting King: A Socio-Literary Analysis of Mark's Presentation of Jesus as King" (PhD Diss., New Orleans Baptist Seminary, 2000); Robert D. Rowe, *God's kingdom and God's Son: The Background in Mark's Christology from Concepts of Kingship in the Psalms* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Craig Evans, "King Jesus and His Ambassadors: Empire and Luke-Acts" in *Empire in the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 120-139.

with the political climate of the day. Mark carefully avoided kingship language knowing that its close association with tyranny could compromise the communication of Jesus' message.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I attempted both to locate and date Mark's gospel. Throughout the chapter, I challenged long-held assumptions about Mark and his language. In many cases, scholars have assumed that understanding the various Latinisms and code-switches in Mark might aid in locating a Markan provenance with precision. Pressing back, I argued that these attempts were often futile as identities in the ancient world were not monolithic and language acquisition did not certify a person's locale. However, I did express the importance of Markan language in aiding our understanding of Mark's audience and who they may have been. I offered that scholars might glean information about Mark and his audience by looking to the author's knowledge and use of the LXX, his need to explain basic Jewish rituals, and his contact with Greco-Roman customs. Importantly, I provided few conclusions about where Mark's gospel could have originated, but attempted to show why some regions were more unlikely.

In dating Mark, I examined internal and external evidence showing that there seemed to be a consensus among recent interpreters that Mark's gospel was composed sometime between 65CE and 75CE. However, I proposed that Mark was writing sometime in 69CE while Vespasian had taken a hiatus from the Jewish War and rumours of Nero *redux* had time to develop and spread. Against consensus, I maintained that the gospel was written before the temple's destruction in August 70CE.

In chapter two, my intention was to recount the story of Rome's regal past and its relationship with kings. I wanted to understand the cultural memory of Roman kingship in the Late Republic and Principate. I argued that the Romans clearly held both positive and negative views of kingship, and that such views could oscillate depending upon the political climate. The *odium regni* was most visible when the political climate was volatile. Political opponents appropriated kingship language to attack rival politicians by accusing them of aspiring towards kingship. Such language would evoke cultural memories of Rome's regal past, specifically of king Tarquinius Superbus. Naturally, during civil strife, accusations of aspiring towards *regnum*, i.e. in the vein of Tarquinius Superbus, would be utilised as political fodder. However, it was during the Roman Civil War of 69CE – when I argue Mark was writing his gospel – that a proliferation of *libertas* ("liberty") propaganda was being spread to counteract years of Neronian tyranny. *Libertas*, likewise, was used politically to indicate one's allegiance to Republican values as well as their resistance to *regnum*. It was under this context that the term *rex* (Gk. βασιλεύς) was again deemed a negative word. As Mark wrote his gospel with this hostile background in mind, his message adequately accounts for the negative connotations associated with kingship.

In chapter three, I was concerned to investigate Mark's use of the term βασιλεύς. The term is used (relatively) infrequently in Mark's gospel with twelve mentions being clustered together in two key locations (Mark 6:14-29 and Mk. 15:1-32). How Mark utilises kingship language is telling. Not only does Mark avoid attaching Jesus too closely to any kingship language, but he even uses kingship invective himself. In the episode with "King Herod" (Mark 6:14-29), I showed that

Herod Antipas' title was properly, "tetrarch", yet Mark decidedly calls him "king" (βασιλεύς). By Mark adopting this language, he is purposely entering into the culturally acceptable use of the term βασιλεύς as political invective. Mark's charge against Herod Antipas is that he acted tyrannically and embodied "kingly" characteristics such as, *superbia*, *libido*, and *crudelitas*.

In Mk. 15:2, the audience is again introduced to kingship language being used as invective. However, Herod Antipas is no longer the object of ridicule, but the focus narrows to Jesus. Accusations of kingship are carried out against Jesus by his religious and political foes. Thus far in the narrative, Mark had only attached negative value to the term βασιλεύς. Then, as shown in chapter 4, by casting Jesus' crucifixion procession as a mock Roman triumph, Mark reappropriates the term βασιλεύς and gives it new meaning in the narrative. Now, the triumphator, Jesus, dons his kingly regalia before his unwitting audience who praise him and hail him as "king". What was at once language of political invective, Mark has turned into praise elevating it to a transcendent level. In fact, the triumph is the initiating phase, which moves Jesus from merely a man with authority and power greater than other humans, to a god on par with the God of Israel. Jesus' apotheosis at the end of Mark confirms this newly acquired divinity.

Works Cited

Achtemeier, Paul J. "'And He Followed Him,' Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46-52," *Semeia* 11 (1978): 126-27.

Adams, J.N., and Simon Swain, "Introduction" in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text*. Oxford: OUP, 2002.

_____ *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*. Cambridge: CUP, 2003.

Ahearne-Kroll, Stephen P. *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Aichele, George. "Jesus' Uncanny 'Family Scene'." *JSNT* 74 (1999): 29-48.

Anderson, Hugh. *The Gospel of Mark*. NCBC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976.

Andrewes, Antony. *The Greek Tyrants.* London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1956.

Arena, Valentina. *Libertas and the Practice of Politics in the Late Roman Republic.* Cambridge: CUP, 2013.

Assmann, Jan. "Communicative and Cultural Memory." In *Cultural Memory Studies an International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Edited by Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008: 111.

_____ *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination.* Cambridge: CUP, 2011.

Aune, David E. *Revelation 6-16*. WBC 52b. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

Aune, David E. *Revelation 17-22*. WBC 52c. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

Bach, Alice. "Calling the Shots: Directing Salomè's Dance of Death". *Semeia* 74 (1996): 110.

Bacon, B.W. *The Gospel of Mark: Its Composition and Date*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925.

Badian, Ernst. "Cornelius Cinna (1), Lucius, Roman consul, 87 BCE". *OCD.* Oxford: OUP, 2016.

Badian, Ernst, and Andrew Lintott. "*repetundae*". *OCD.* Oxford: OUP. (2016).

Baert, Barbara. “The Dancing Daughter and the Head of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29) Revisited An Interdisciplinary Approach”. *Louvain Studies* 38 (2014): 14.

Balabanski, Vicky. *Eschatology in the Making*. Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1997.

Baltzer, Klaus. *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55*. Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.

Baraz, Yelena. “From Vice to Virtue: The Denigration and Rehabilitation of Superbia at Ancient Rome”. *KAKOS: Badness and Anti-Value in Classical Antiquity*. Edited by Ralph M. Rosen and Ineke Sluiter. Leiden: Brill (2009): 382.

_____ “Discourse of Kingship in Late Republican Invective”. In *Evil Lords: Theories and Representation of Tyranny from Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Edited by Nikos Panou and Hester Schadee. Oxford: OUP (2018): 50.

Basanoff, V. *Regifugium: La fuite du roi, Histoire et mythe.* Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1943.

Bastomsky, S.J. "The Emperor Nero in Talmudic Legend", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 59.4 (1969): 321-325.

Battaglini, Sergio. *Il complesso del Niger lapis nella storia della prima Roma: note sull'iscrizione e i monumenti.* Roma: Battaglini, 2009.

Bauckham, R. *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*. London: T & T Clark, 1993.

Beard, Mary, North, John, and Price, Simon. *Religions of Rome: Vol. 1, A History*. Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1998.

_____ *Religions of Rome: Vol. 2, A Sourcebook*. Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1998.

Beard, Mary. “The Triumph of Flavius Josephus.” *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*. Edited by A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik. Leiden: Brill, 2003: 543-584.

_____ *The Roman Triumph.* Cambridge. Mass: HUP, 2007.

Beasley-Murray, George. *Jesus and the Last Days: The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993.

Beavis, Mary Ann. *Jesus and Utopia: Looking for the Kingdom of God in the Roman World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

_____ *Mark*. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

Beckwith, I.T. *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction, with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. New York: Macmillan, 1919.

Beek, Leon ter. "Divine Law and the Penalty of *Sacer Esto* in Early Rome." In *Law and Religion in the Roman Republic*. Edited by Olga Tellegen-Couperus. Leiden: Brill, 2012: 9-29.

Beekes R. S. P., and Lucien Van Beek. *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series, v. 10/1-2. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010.

Bell Jr., Albert A. "Date of John's Apocalypse: The Evidence of Some Roman Historians Reconsidered." *NTS* 25 (1978): 93–102.

Berry, D. H. *Cicero: Pro P. Sulla Oratio.* Cambridge: CUP, 2004.

Bishop, J. *Nero: The Man and the Legend*. New York: A.S. Barnes, 1964.

Black, Clifton. *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

Bolonyai, Agnes. "Code-Switching, Imperfect Acquisition, and Attrition" in *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Code-Switching*. Edited by Barbara E. Bullock and Almeida Jacqueline Toribio. Cambridge, U.K.: CUP, 2009: 262.

Bond, Helen K. *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation*. SNTS; Cambridge: CUP, 1998.

_____ *The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2020.

Boring, Eugene. *Mark: A Commentary.* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

Bovon, François. *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53*. Edited by Helmut Koester. Translated by James Crouch. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.

Boxall, Ian. *The Revelation of Saint John*. BNTC. London: Continuum, 2006.

Braun, Roddy L. *1 Chronicles*. WBC. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1986.

Brighton, Mark. *The Sicarii in Josephus' Judean War: Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Observations*. Early Judaism and Its Literature 27. Atlanta: SBL, 2009.

Broadhead, Edwin. *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark.* LNTS 175; London: Bloomsbury, 1999.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah, Volumes 1 and 2: From Gethsemane to the Grave, A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. New York; London: Yale University Press, 1994.

Brown, R. E. and J. P. Meier. *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity.* New York: Paulist Press, 1983.

Bruce, F.F. "Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea." *The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society* 5 (1963/65): 9.

Bryan, Christopher. *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Bubenik, Vit. *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area*. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1989.

Buckland, W.W. *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian.* Cambridge: CUP, 2010.

Burridge, Richard A. *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography.* 2nd ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Burton, Graham. "*vectigal*". *OCD.* Oxford: OUP, 2015.

Buttrey, T.V. "Vespasian as Moneyer." *NC*[7] 12 (1972): 80-109.

Caird, G.B. *The Revelation of St. John.* Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.

Camery-Hoggatt, Jerry. *Irony in Mark's Gospel: text and subtext*. SNTS 72 (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 145.

Carandini, Andrea, ed. *La leggenda di Roma*, 4 Volumes. Milan: Mondadori, 2006-2011.

Carradice, Ian. "Towards a New Introduction to the Flavian Coinage." *Modus Operandi: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Rickman*, eds. M. Austin, J. Harris, and C. Smith. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998)

Carter, Warren. "Cross-Gendered Romans and Mark's Jesus: Legion Enters the Pigs (Mark 5:1-20)." *JBL* 133 (2015): 139-155.

Castro, Albert D. “Tacitus and the ‘Virtues’ of the Roman Emperor: The Role of Imperial Propaganda in the Historiography of Tacitus.” PhD diss., Department of Classical Studies, Indiana University, 1972.

Champlin, Edward. *Nero*. Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 2003.

Charles, R.H. *Commentary on the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.

Charles, R.H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*. 2 Volumes. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920.

Childs, Brevard S. *Isaiah: A Commentary*. OLT. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Chronis, Harry L. “The Torn Veil: Cultus and Christology in Mark 15:37–39.” *JBL* 101 (1982): 97-114.

Cicero. *In Catilinam I-IV, Pro Murena, Pro Sulla, Pro Flacco*. Translated by C. McDonald, LCL. Cambridge: HUP, 1937.

Clark, Anna. *Divine Qualities: Cult and Community in Republican Rome*, Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: OUP, 2007.

Classen, C. “Romulus in der römischen Republik“. *Philolgus* 106 (1962): 182.

Classen, C. Joachim. "Die Königszeit im Spiegel der Literatur der römischen Republik (ein Beitrag zum Selbstverständis der Römer)." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte.* Bd. 14, H. 4. October, 1965: 385.

Collins, J.J. *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*, SBL Dissertation Series 13. Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature for the Pseudepigrapha Group, 1974.

_____ *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.

Cook, John Granger. *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

_____ *Empty Tomb, Resurrection, Apotheosis*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018.

Cook, S.A., F.E. Adcock, and M.P. Charlesworth. *CAH.* Volume 9. Cambridge: CUP, 1932.

Corbeill, Anthony. “Rhetorical Education and Social Reproduction in the Republic and Early Empire”. *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric*. Edited by William

Dominik and Jon Hall. Malden, MA: Blackwell (2007): 76-77.

Corley, Kathleen. *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.

Cotter, Wendy. "Greco-Roman Apotheosis Traditions and the Resurrection Appearances in Matthew". *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memorhy William G. Thompson, S.J.*, Edited by David E. Aune. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

Cotton, Hannah. "The Rabbis and the Documents." In *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World.* Edited by Martin Goodman. Oxford: OUP, 1998: 167-180.

Craigie, Peter C. *Psalms 1–50*. Second Edition. WBC. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004.

Cranfield, C.E.B. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark.* Cambridge: CUP, 1959.

Cristofani, Mauro. *La Grande Roma dei Tarquini.* Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1990.

Culpepper, R. Alan. "Mark 6:17-29 in its Narrative Context: Kingdoms in Conflict". *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*. Edited by Kelly Iverson and Christopher Skinner. Ann Arbor, MI: SBL Press (2014): 154.

Czajkowski, Kim. *Localized Law: The Babatha and Salome Komaise Archives*. Oxford, U.K.: OUP, 2017.

Danove, Paul L. *The Rhetoric of Characterization of God, Jesus, and Jesus' Disciples in the Gospel of Mark*. JSNTSup. London, UK: T&T Clark International, 2005.

Davies, Jonathan. "Covenant and Pax Deorum: Polyvalent Prodigies in Josephus' Jewish War." *Histos* 13 (2019): 78-96.

Decker, Rodney J. "Markan Idiolect in the Study of the Greek of the New Testament." Pages 43-66 in *The Language of the New Testament*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

_____ *Mark 9-16: A Handbook on the Greek Text.* BHGNT. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014.

De Jonge, H.J. 'The Apocalypse of John and the Imperial Cult'. Pages 127-129 in *Kykeon: Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel*. Edited by H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, H.W. Singor, F.T. van Straaten, and J.H.M. Strubbe. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

De Lange, N. "Jewish Greek", in *A History of Ancient Greek: From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity*. Edited by A.-F. Christidis. Cambridge: CUP, 2007: 640.

Depauw, Mark. “Language Use, Literacy, and Bilingualism.” Page 494 in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*. Edited by Christina Riggs. Oxford, U.K.: OUP, 2012.

Deutsch, Monroe E. “I am Caesar, Not Rex”. *Classical Philology* 23.4 (1928): 394-398.

Dewey, Joanna, Donald Michie, and David Rhoads. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. 3rd Edition. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.

Dodd, C.H., *The Parables of the Kingdom*. New York: Scribner’s, 1961.

Donahue, John R. *Are you the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 13. Missoula, MT: University of Montana, 1973.

Driver, S. R. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*. Third Edition. ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902.

Duncan-Jones, Richard. *Money and Government in the Roman Empire*. Cambridge: CUP, 1998.

Dunkle, J. Roger. "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*. Volume 98. 1967: 156.

Dunn, James D. G. “The Messianic Secret in Mark.” *TynBul* 21 (1970): 92-117.

Eck, Werner.“Lateinisch, Griechisch, Germanisch …? Wie sprach Rom mit seinen Untertanen?”. Pages 10-13 in *Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and Regional Perspectives: Proceedings of the Fourth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, c. 200 BC–AD 476) Leiden: June 25–28, 2003. Edited by* L. De Ligt, Emily A. Hemelrijk, and H.W. Singor. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 2004.

_____ “Der Anschluß der kleinasiatischen Provinzen an Vespasian und ihre Restrukturierung unter den Flaviern.” Pages 27-44 in *Vespasiano e l’impero dei Flavi (Atti del Convegno, Roma, Palazzo Massimo, 18-20 Novembre 2009)*. Edited by Luigi Capogrossi Colognesi and Elena Tassi Scandone. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2012.

Eden, P.T. *Apocolocyntosis.* Cambridge: CUP, 1995.

Edmondson, J. C., and Alison Keith. *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*. Phoenix Supplementary Volume 46. Toronto Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 2008.

Edwards, James R. "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives." *NovT* 31 Number 3 (1989): 193-216.

_____ *The Gospel According to Mark*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.

Ehrhardt, Christopher, and Douglas Little. *Lives of Galba and Otho.* London: Bristol Classical Press, 2008.

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 1987.

Ellingworth, Paul. "The Dog in the Night: A Note on Mark's Non-Use of KAI," *BT* 46 (1995): 125.

Erskine, A. "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invective," *CQ* 41 (1991): 106-120.

Evans, Craig. *Mark 8:27–16:20*. WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001.

Evans, J.D. "Statues of the Kings and Brutus on the Capitoline." *OpRom* 18 (1990): 99-105.

_____ *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Fears, J.R. "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology." *ANRW* 2.17.2:827-948.

Fraenkel, Eduard. *Plautine Elements in Plautus, Plautinisches im Plautus*, 1927. Reprinted. Translated by Tomas Drevikovsky and Frances Muecke. Oxford, UK: OUP, 2008.

France, R.T. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002.

Fyfe, William H. *Tacitus: The Histories*. Oxford, UK: OUP, 2008.

Gallia, Andrew. *Remembering the Roman Republic: Culture, Politics, and History under the Principate.* Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2014.

Gallivan, Paul A. "The False Neros: A Re-Examination". *Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* Bd. 22.2, H.2 (1973): 364-365.

Gardner-Chloros, Penelope. *Code-switching*. Cambridge: CUP, 2009.

Garnsey, Peter. *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Georgia, Allan. "Translating the Triumph: Reading Mark's Crucifixion Narrative against a Roman Ritual of Power." *JSNT* 36.1 (2013): 19-22.

Gerlardini, Gabriella. "The Contest for a Royal Title: Herod versus Jesus in the Gospel According to Mark (6, 14-29; 15, 6-15)". *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 28.2 (2011): 104-105.

Girard, R. "Scandal and the Dance: Salome in the Gospel of Mark". *New Literary History* 15.2 (1994): 311-324.

Gisborne, Matthew. "A Curia of Kings: Sulla and Royal Imagery". In *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome.* Edited by Olivier Hekster, Richard Fowler; Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, (2005):119-121.

Glancy, Jennifer A. "Unveiling Masculinity: The Construction of Gender in Mark 6:17-29". *BibInt* 2.1 (1994): 37.

Glinister, Fay. "Politics, Power, and the Divine: The Rex Sacrorum and the Transition from Monarchy to Republic at Rome." *Antichthon* 51 (2017): 59-76.

Gnilka, Joachim. *Das Evangelium nach Markus*. 2 vols. Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 2. Zurich: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979.

Goddard, Justin "Tyrant at Table". *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History, and Representation.* Edited by Jas Elsner and Jamie Masters. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (1994): 67-81.

Goodman, Martin. *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome A.D. 66-70*. Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1987.

_____ "Babatha's Story," *Journal of Roman Studies*, 81 (1991): 169-175.

Green, C.M.C. "The Slayer and the King ' Rex Nemorensis' and the Sanctuary of Diana." *Arion* Volume 7, Number 3. Winter (2000): 24-63.

Green, Joel B. and Lee Martin McDonald. *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.

Grubbs, Judith Evans. *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Gruen, Eric. *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome.* Berkeley: UCP, 1984.

Grundmann, Walter. “ἰσχύω, ἰσχυρός, ἰσχύς, κατισχύω”. *TDNT* 3:397.Guelich, Robert. *Mark 1-8:26.* WBC 34A. Dallas: Word Inc., 1989.

Gustaffson, Gabriella. *Evocatio Deorum: Historical and Mythical Interpretations of Ritualised Conquests in the Expansion of Ancient Rome*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Historia Religionum 16. Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2000.

Gumperz, John J., and Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez. “Cognitive Aspects of Bilingual Communication” in *Language Use and Social Change: Problems of Multilingualism with Special Reference to Eastern Africa*. Oxford and New York: OUP, 1971: 112.

Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993.

Gurtner, Daniel M. *The Torn Veil: Matthew’s Exposition of the Death of Jesus*. SNTS 139. Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2007.

Hadas-Lebel, Mireille. “Flavius Josèphe comme témoin des rites de victoire romains.” Melanges de l’Ecole Francaise de Rome v. 121.2 (2009): 473-479.

Hagner, Donald. *Matthew 14-28*. WBC 33B. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995.

Harrington, Wilfrid J., and Daniel J. Harrington, *Revelation.* Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2008.

Head, Ivan. "Mark as a Roman Document from the Year 69: Testing Martin Hengel's Thesis". *Journal of Religious History* 28, no. 3 (2004): 240-259.

Healy, Mary. *The Gospel of Mark*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

Hekster, Olivier. “Coins and Messages: Audience Targeting on Coins of Different Denominations?”. *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power*, eds. L. De Blois, P. Erdkamp, O. Hekster, G. De Kleijn, and S. Mols. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 2003.

_____ “Reversed Epiphanies: Roman Emperors Deserted by Gods”. *Mnemosyne* 63.4 (2010): 601-615.

Henderson, Bernard W. *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero*. London: Methuen & Co.,1903.

Henderson, Ian H. "Reconstructing Mark's Double Audience." *Between Author and Audience in Mark: Narration, Characterization, Interpretation*. Edited by Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, 6-28. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009: 25.

Hendin, David. *Guide to Biblical Coins*, 4. Amphora: New York, 2001.

Hengel, Martin. "Probleme des Markusevangeliums." Page 246 in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982*, WUNT 33. Edited by P. Stuhlmacher. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984.

_____ *Studies in the Gospel of Mark.* Translated by J. Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995.

Hess Richard S. and Daniel Carroll. *Family in the Bible: Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.

Hoehner, Harold. *Herod Antipas*. Cambridge: CUP, 1972.

Hooker, Morna. *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*. BNTC. London: Continuum, 1991.

_____ "'Who Can This Be?' The Christology of Mark's Gospel". *Contours of Christology in the New Testament*. Edited by Richard Longenecker. Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (2005): 94.

Horrocks, Geoffrey C. "Syntax: From Classical Greek to the Koine", in *A History of Ancient Greek: from the Beginnings to Late Antiquity*. Edited by A.-F. Christidis, Maria Arapopoulou, and Maria Chriti. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

_____ *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell 2014.

Horsely, Richard A. and John S. Hanson. *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.

Howgego, C.J. *Ancient History from Coins*. London: Routledge, 1995.

_____ *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.

Hurtado, Larry W. *Mark*, NIBC. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989.

Incigneri, Brian J. *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Instone-Brewer, David. *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*. Grand Rapids. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002.

Itgenshorst, Tanja. *Tota illa pompa: der Triumph in der römischen Republik: mit einer CD-ROM, Katalog der Triumphe von 340 bis 19 vor Christus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005.

Iverson R ., Kelly. "A Centurion's "Confession": A Performance-Critical Analysis of Mark 15:39." *JBL* 130 (2011): 329-350.

Jackson, Howard M. "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle from the Cross." *NTS* 33 (1987): 16–37.

Jones, A.H.M. "Numismatics and History" in *Essays in Roman coinage presented to Harold Mattingly*, eds. R. A. G. Carson, C. H. V. Sutherland, and Harold Mattingly. London: OUP, 1956.

Jones, Earl S. "Is Mark 15.39 the Key to Mark's Christology?" *JSNT* 31 (1987): 3-22.

_____ "Mark 15,39 and the So-Called Confession of the Roman Centurion." *Biblica* 81 (2000): 406-413

Jones, Kenneth. *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha*. SJSJ; Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Juel, Donald. *Mark*. Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1990.

_____ *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 31. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977.

Kaimio, Jorma. *The Romans and the Greek Language*. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica,1979.

Kee, H.C. *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977.

Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009.

Kelber, Werner. *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.

_____ *The Christology of Mark's Gospel.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.

Kittel, Ronald Alan. "The Mother of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark." *Living Pulpit* 10. Number 4 (October 1, 2001): 10.

Klauck, Hans-Josef. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.

Kloppenborg, John S. "*Evocatio Deorum* and the Date of Mark." *JBL* 124.3 (Fall, 2005): 419-450.

Klostermann, Erich. *Das Markusevangelium erklärt*. HNT 3. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1950.

Koester, Helmut. *Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature of Early Christianity*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000.

Kraay, Contra C.M. "The Coinage of Vindex and Galba, AD 68, and the Continuity of the Augustan Principate". *Numismatic Chronicle* 6th Series, 9 (1949): 129-149.

Kraemer, Ross S. "Implicating Herodias and Her Daughter in the Death of John the Baptizer: A (Christian) Theological Strategy?" *JBL* 125.2 (2006): 321-349.

Kramer, Johannes. "κράβατος, κραβάτιον und Verwandtes in den Papyri," Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete 41(2) (2009): 205-216.

Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus*. trans. Dorothea M. Barton. SBT 23. London: SCM, 1961.

Landfester, Manfred, Hubert Cancik, and Helmuth Schneider. "Cornelius" I.18 in *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World.* Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Lane, William L. The Gospel of Mark, NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974.

Le Gall, "Evocatio". *L'Italie Préromaine et la Rome républicaine I. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Heurgon*. Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1976: 519-524.

Leander, Hans. *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*. SemeiaSt 71. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013.

Levick, Barbara. "Propaganda and the Imperial Coinage." *Antichthon* 16 (1982): 104-116.

_____ *Vespasian*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Lohmeyer, Ernst. *Das Evangelium Des Markus*. 15th Edition. Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über Des Neue Testament. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959.

Lönnqvist, Kenneth K.A. “The Date of Introduction of Denarii to Roman Judaea and the Decaplois Region.” *ARAM* 23 (2011): 307-318.

Lührmann, Dieter. *Das Markusevangelium*. HNT 3. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987.

Luz, Ulrich. *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary on Matthew 1–7*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007.

Mack, Burton L. “The Kingdom Sayings in Mark.” *Foundations and Facets Forum* 3.1, 1987.

Magness, Jodi. “The Arch of Titus and the Fate of the God of Israel”. *JJS* 59.2 (2008): 207.

_____ “Some Observations on the Flavian Victory Monuments of Rome”. *Koine: Mediterranean Studies in Honor of R. Ross Holloway*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009: 35-36.

Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.

_____ “Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4-8: Reading and Rereading.” *JBL* 112 (1993): 222.

_____ “‘Reflected Christology’: An Aspect of Narrative ‘Christology’ in the Gospel of Mark.” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 26 (1999): 127-145.

_____ *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009.

Mann, C.S. *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1986.

Manuwald, Gesine. *Cicero, Agrarian Speeches: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary.* Oxford: OUP, 2018.

Marcus, Joel. *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

_____ “The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark”. JBL 111 (1992): 441-462.

_____ *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

_____ “Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation”. *JBL* 125.1 (2006): 73.

_____ *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 2009.

Martin, Paul M. *l'idée de royauté à rome: de la rome royale au consensus républicain.* Clermont- Ferrand: Adosa, 1994.

Marxsen, Willi. *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969.

Mason, Hugh J. *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis*. Toronto: Hakkert, 1974.

Mason, Steven. *Josephus and the New Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.

_____ *Volume 1B: Judean War 2*. Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2008.

_____ "Josephus' Portrait of the Flavian Triumph." *Der römische Triumph in Prizipat und Spätantike*. Edited by Gabian Goldbeck and Johannes Wienand. Berlin: De Gruyter: 2017: 150.

Matera, Frank J. *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982.

Maurer, Christian. "ῥίζα, ῥιζόω, ἐκριζόω". TDNT 6:986.

McArthur, Harvey K. "Son of Mary", *NovT* 15. Number 1 (1973): 38-58.

McVann, Mark. "The 'Passion' of John the Baptist and Jesus before Pilate: Mark's Warnings about Kings and Governors." *BTB* 38.4 (2008): 152-157.

Meier, John P. "The Historical Jesus and the Plucking of the Grain on the Sabbath." *CBQ* 66 (2004): 561-581.

Metts, H. Leroy. "The Kingdom of God: Background and Development of a Complex Discourse Concept." CTR 2.1 (2004): 51–82.

Metzger, Bruce M., and United Bible Societies. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.)*. London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994.

Millar, Fergus. *The Roman Near East, 31 BC - AD 337*. Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1993.

_____ "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome 1". *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*. Edited by Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives. Oxford: OUP, 2007: 122-123.

Miller, Richard. “Mark’s Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity”. *JBL* 129.4 (2010): 759-776.

Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

Mommsen, Theodor, and William P. Dickson. *The History of Rome.* Cambridge: CUP, 2010.

Moore, Stephen D. “Mark and Empire: Zealot and Postcolonial Readings.” *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*. Edited by Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004: 193-205.

Motyer, S. “The Rending of the Veil: A Markan Pentecost.” *NTS* 33 (1987): 155-157

Moule, C.F.D. *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*. London: CUP, 1968.

Mounce, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation.* Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

Mouritsen, Henrik. *Politics in the Roman Republic.* Cambridge: CUP, 2017.

Moxnes, Halvor. *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003.

Mullen, Alex. “Latin and Other Languages: Societal and Individual Bilingualism”. Page 531 in *A Companion to the Latin Language*. Edited by James Clackson. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

_____ *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean: Multilingualism and Multiple Identities in the Iron Age and Roman Periods*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge, U.K.: CUP, 2013.

Murray, Oswyn. “Philodemus on the Good King according to Homer”. *JRS* 55 (1965): 161-182.

Myers, C. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988.

Neel, Jaclyn. “Reconsidering the *Affectatores Regni*”. *Classical Quarterly* 65.1 (2015): 224.

Neufeld, Dietmar. *Mockery and Secretism in the Social World of Mark's Gospel.* LNTS. London: T & T Clark, 2015.

Nock, A. "Studies in the Graeco-Roman Beliefs of the Empire." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 45 (1925): 84-101.

Norman, Naomi J. “Imperial Triumph and Apotheosis: The Arch of Titus in Rome”. *Koine: Mediterranean Studies in Honor of R. Ross Holloway*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009.

Oakley, Francis. *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

Oudshoorn, Jacobine G. *The Relationship between Roman and Local Law in the Babatha and Salome Komaise Archives: General Analysis and Three Case Studies on Law of Succession, Guardianship, and Marriage*. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, V. 69. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Painter, John. *Mark’s Gospel*. New Testament Readings; New York, NY: Routledge, 1997.

Palmer, R.E.A. *The King and the Comitium: A Study of Rome’s Oldest Public Document*, Historia Einzelschriften. Heft 11. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1969.

Palu, Ma’afu. *Jesus and Time: An Interpretation of Mark 1.15*. LNTS 468. London: T&T Clark, 2012.

Pascut, Beniamin. “The So-Called *Passivum Divinum* in Mark’s Gospel.” *NovT* 54. (2012): 313-33.

Peppard, Michael. *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in its Social and Political Context*. Oxford: OUP, 2011.

Perrin, Norman. *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.

Pesch, Rudolf. *Markusevangelium*. Volume 2. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1976-77.

Pfanner, Michael. *Der Titusbogen*. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1983.

Plummer, Alfred. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. Thornapple Commentaries. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982.

Pokorny, Petr. “Das Markusevangelium,” *ANRW II*, 25.3. (1984): 2020-2021.

Radke, G. *Fasti Romani. Betrachtungen zur Frühgeschichte des römischen Kalendars.* Münster: Aschendorff, 1990.

Räisänen, Heikki. *The ‘Messianic Secret’ in Mark.* Translated by Christopher Tuckett. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990.

Ramage, E.S. “Denigration of Predecessor under Claudius, Galba, and Vespasian.” *Historia* 32 (1983): 201-214.

Rawson, Beryl. *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Rawson, Elizabeth. “Hellenistic Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and Their Roman Equals.” *JRS* 65 (1975): 148-159.

Reddish, Mitchell G. *Revelation.* Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys Pub., 2001.

Regul, Jürgen. *Die Antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*. Vetus Latina 6. Freiburg: Herder, 1969.

Rives, James. “Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.” *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome.* Edited by Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives. Oxford: OUP, 2007: 145-166.

Robinson, Matthew. *A Commentary on Ovid’s Fasti, Book 2.* Oxford: OUP, 2011.

Rochette, Bruno. *Le latin dans le monde grec: recherches sur la diffusion de la langue et de lettres latines dans les provinces hellénophones de l'empire romain.* Brussels: Latomus, 1997.

Rojas-Flores, Gonzalo. “The Book of Revelation and the First Years of Nero’s Reign”. *Biblica* 85.3 (2004): 375-377.

Roller, Matthew. *Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Roskam, Hendrika N. *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in Its Historical and Social Context.* NTS 114. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Ross Taylor, Lily. *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar.* Berkeley: UCP, 1949.

Rüpke, Jorg. *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine.* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Russo, Federico. *L’odium regni a Roma tra realtà politica.* Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2015.

_____ “Tyrants and Kings in the Latin Theatre (From Naevius to Accius)”. *Erga-Logoi. Rivista di storia, letteratura, diritto e culture dell'antichita.* Volume 5 (2017): 92-93.

Sanders, E. P. *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006.

Santangelo, Federico. *Marius.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

Schmidt T.E. “Mark 15.16-32: The Crucifixion Narrative and the Roman Triumphal Procession.” *NTS* 41 (1995): 1-18.

Schnabel, Eckhard J. *Mark*. TNTC. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017.

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News According to Mark: A Commentary on the Gospel*. Translated by Donald H. Madvig; London: SPCK, 1975.

Scullard, H.H. *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 B.C. to A.D. 68.* London: Routledge, 1988.

Shively, Elizabeth E. *Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark The Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22-30*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

Sigmund, Christian. *Königtum‘ in der politischen Kultur des spätrepublikanischen Rom.* Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2014.

Slater, Thomas B. “Dating the Apocalypse of John.” *Bib* 84 (2003): 252–258.

Smalley, Stephen S. *Thunder and Love: John’s Revelation and John’s Community*. Milton Keynes: Word, 1994.

_____ *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.

Smith, Abraham. "Tyranny Exposed: Mark's Typological Characterization of Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14-29)." *Biblical Interpretation* 14. Number 3 (2006): 266.

Smith, Christopher. "Thinking About Kings." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 54. Number 2. 2011: 25.

Smith, Daniel A. *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: the Early History of Easter*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 2010.

Smith, R.E. "The Conspiracy and the Conspirators." *Greece & Rome* 4. Number 1. 1957: 62.

Smith, Stephen H. “The Function of the Son of David Tradition in Mark’s Gospel.” *NTS* 42 (1996): 537.

Steenblock, Maike. *Sexualmoral und politische Stabilität. Zum Vorstellungszusammenhang in der römischen Literatur von Lucilius bis Ovid.* Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012.

Stein, Robert H. *Mark*. BECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

Stevenson, T.R. “Personifications on the Coinage of Vespasian (AD69-79).” *Acta*

Classica 53 (2010): 181-205.

Strauss, Mark L. *Mark*, ZECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Such, W.A. The *Abomination of Desolation in the Gospel of Mark: Its Historical Reference in Mark 13:14 and Its Impact in the Gospel*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999.

Sutherland, C.H.V. *Coinage in Imperial Policy 31 B.C.-A.D. 68*. London: Methuen, 1951.

_____ "The Intelligibility of Roman Imperial Coin Types." *JRS* 49 (1959): 46-55.

_____ *The Emperor and the Coinage: Julio-Claudian Studies*. London: Spink, 1976.

Sweet, J.P.M. *Revelation*. 2nd Edition. London: SCM Press, 1990.

Swete, Henry Barclay. *The Gospel according to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices*. London: MacMillan, 1913.

Talbert, Charles H.. *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.

Telford, W.R. *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and Its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition*. JSNTSS 1. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980.

_____ *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Terrien, Samuel. *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*. ECC. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

Theissen, Gerd. *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

Tigay, Jeffrey H. *Deuteronomy*. The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996.

Trafton, Joseph L. "The Psalms of Solomon." *The Historical Jesus in Context*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison Jr., and John Dominic Crossan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Treggiari, Susan. *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Ulansey, David. “The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark’s Cosmic Inclusio.” *JBL* 110.1 (Spring 1991): 123-125.

Van Henten, J.W. ‘*Nero Redivivus* Demolished: The Coherence of the Nero Traditions in the Sibylline Oracles’, *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 21 (2000): 3-17.

Van Iersel, Bas M.F. *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary.* Translated by W.H. Bisscheroux. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Van Kooten, George H. “The Year of the Four Emperors and the Revelation of John: The ‘Pro-Neronian’ Emperors Otho and Vitellius, and the Images and Colossus of Nero in Rome”. JSNT 30.2 (2007): 205-248.

_____ “The Jewish War and the Roman Civil War of 68-69 C.E.: Jewish, Pagan, and Christian Perspectives”. In *The Jewish Revolt Against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Edited by* Mladen Popović. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Van Overmeire, S. “The Perect King Bee: Visions of Kingship in Classical Antiquity”. *Akroterion* 56. 2011: 31-46.

Varner, Eric R. *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture.* Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Versnal, H.S. *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph.* Leiden: Brill, 1970.

Vielhauer, Philipp. *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Einleitung in dem Neue Testament und den Apokryphen und den apostolischen Väter*. Berlin: DeGruyter, 1975.

Vittmann, Günther, Bezalel Porten, Cary J. Martin, J.J. Farber, Leslie S.B. MacCoull, Simon Hopkins, and Ranon Katzoff. *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Voelz, James W. *Concordia Commentary: Mark 1:1–8:26*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2013.

Völker, Eric Ott. *Rhinthonis Fragmenta*. Halis Saxonum, 1887.Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew. *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge, U.K.: CUP, 2008.

Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew. "The Emperor and His Virtues." *Historia* 30.3 (1981): 298-323.

_____ “*Civilis Princeps*: Between Citizen and King.” *JRS* 72 (1982): 32-48.

_____ "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus." *JRS* 76 (1986): 66-87.

Warren, Larissa Bonfante. "Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings: The Changing Face of the Triumph." *JRS* 60 (1970): 49-66

Watts, Rikki E. *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*. WUNT 2/88. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997.

Weinstock, Stefan. *Divus Julius.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

Weiss, Johannes. *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*. Translated by Richard Hyde Hiers and David Larrimore Holland. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1971.

Williams, Joel F. *Mark*. EGGNT. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2020.

Willis, Wendell. *The Kingdom of God in 20th Century Interpretation*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987.

Wilson, J. Christian. "The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation." *NTS* 39 (1993): 587–605.

Winn, Adam. *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.

_____ *Reading Mark's Christology under Caesar: Jesus the Messiah and Roman Imperial Ideology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018.

Wirszubski, CH. *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome During the Late Republic and Early Principate.* Cambridge: CUP, 1950.

Witherington III, Ben. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Socio-Rhetorical Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001.

_____ "Latinisms, Western Diction, and the Provenance of Mark's Gospel," *The Bible and Culture*, 1 November 2011, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/bibleandculture/2011/11/01/latinisms-western-diction-and-the-provenance-of-marks-gospel/.

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

Udoh, Fabian E. *To Caesar What Is Caesar's: Tribute, Taxes, and Imperial Administration in Early Roman Palestine 63 B.C.E.-70 C.E.* BJS 343.

Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2005.

Yarbro Collins, Adela. *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*. Harvard Dissertations in Religion. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976.

_____ *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984.

_____ "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Jews", *HTR* 92.4 (1999): 393-408.

_____ "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans", *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 85-100

_____ *Mark: A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark.* Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007.

_____ "Ancient Notions of Transferal and Apotheosis in Relation to the Empty Tomb Story in Mark". *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body, and Transformative Practice in Early Christianity*. Edited by Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009: 41.

Zeichmann, Christopher. "Loanwords or Code-Switching? Latin Transliteration and the Setting of Mark's Composition." *JJMJS* 4 (2017): 42-64.

_____ *The Roman Army and the New Testament*. Lanham, MD: Fortress Academic, 2018.