

## Markan Idiolect in the Study of the Greek of the New Testament

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### Introduction

The official title for this session as printed in the program runs like this: “The Contribution of the Writer’s Idiolect to an Understanding of the Nature of New Testament Greek with Implications for Exegesis.” So that was my assignment. The negotiations that resulted in my name being printed in the program did, however, imply that I might adapt that in some unspecified ways to focus more specifically on the Gospel of Mark. I know a bit more about Mark than I do about idiolect, so that gave me some small bit of hope. But now that I contemplate juxtaposing my paper with one on bilingualism and another on pente-hexoglossia, I first wonder exactly how idiolect fits with those esoteric topics (one so esoteric that Professor Buth had to invent a word just to talk about it!), and second how it is that I am invited to address a topic that is perhaps most suited to discussion by a formally trained linguist—or perhaps by a philosopher (since some of them debate whether it is even possible to understand someone else since everyone has their own idiolect!)?<sup>1</sup> Since I was given no explanation of either of my dilemmas (and since I was foolish enough to accept the invitation), I have had to blunder along where angels might fear to tread. I do so, as I have remarked before,<sup>2</sup> as a visitor in the land of Linguistica, or perhaps more appropriately, a tourist—though hopefully not the sort of tourist who talks loudly, steps on the cultural cracks, and generally offends the locals.

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<sup>1</sup> In attempting to get the “lay of the land” I have discovered that the subject of idiolect is a profound (or at least hotly debated) topic in philosophy. For a substantive bibliography, see <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/idiolects/#Bib>>, which is appended to Alex Barber, “Idiolects” (2007), in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. I will assume that this is not the sort of discussion envisioned by the steering committee!

<sup>2</sup> Rodney J. Decker, *Temporal Deixis of the Greek Verb in the Gospel of Mark in Light of Verbal Aspect*, SBG 10 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), xiii.

What I have written may not pass muster on the Day of Reckoning in linguistic heaven. It surely looks different than it would if written by a generative linguist. (I have not invented nearly enough new words or postulated enough transformations or mined enough deep structure to qualify for entrance there!) But neither does it resemble the structural niceties of systemics. Neither Chomsky<sup>3</sup> nor Halliday would be happy with what I have to say. And you might not think it profound either. What the rest of our panel—august linguists all—will think, we will likely find out in due time.

So with those qualifications out of the way, what might a more prosaic, grammar-oriented, NT guy have to say about idiolect?

### Definitions and Limitations

Idiolect is, in many ways, a very slippery concept. Standard definitions are not easy to come by. If we turn to a standard reference work, we would discover that idiolect might be defined as “the linguistic system of an individual speaker—one’s personal dialect.”<sup>4</sup> But such a close definition means that it is not something that we can easily examine since all we ever hear or read are snippets of that abstract conception that we might label idiolect. Even if we have a literary corpus (small as it may be) like the Gospel of Mark, all we have are approximately 11,000 words comprising a series of related statements.<sup>5</sup> We do not have *Mark’s* idiolect, only one subset of it. There are an infinite number of things that Mark might have said and a great many ways that he could have said them. It is true that Mark did not actually say an infinite number of things, but we have only one sample of what he did say.

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<sup>3</sup> Idiolect was a key concept for Chomsky; see the summary in Geoffrey Sampson, *Schools of Linguistics* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1980), 50.

<sup>4</sup> David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, 6th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), s.v. “idiolect,” 235. Poythress defines it as “the special differences that belong to a single person’s use of his language. An idiolect is a dialect specialized to one person” (Vern Poythress, *In the Beginning Was the Word: Language, A God-Centered Approach* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2009], 62 n.6). See also J. Lyons, *Language and Linguistics: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 268, §9.2, who explains that idiolect falls on a spectrum of: language—dialect—idiolect. A full study of idiolect would have to deal with many other linguistic factors including register and genre, etc. Not being trained in linguistics, I will make no pretense of presenting extensive bibliography or discussion of the larger field.

<sup>5</sup> I am not a statistician, but from what I have read, even an 11,000 word sample may be inadequate for the kind of questions that are often asked related to idiolect. In this regard, see Matthew Brook O’Donnell, “Linguistic Fingerprints Or Style by Numbers? The Use of Statistics in the Discussion of Authorship of NT Documents,” in *Linguistics and the NT: Critical Junctures*, ed. S. Porter & D. Carson, 206-62, JSNTSup 5 (Sheffield, 1999).

There are complications even within the corpus that we do have. How much of what we read in that portion of our Greek testaments titled ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΡΚΑΝ is Mark's idiolect? I am not thinking about those skeptical of authorship by John Mark, or those who view this gospel as a creation of the Markan community, or those who propose a redacted composition by some unknown editor based on various traditions that had come to him in various literary forms. Rather I have in mind the more traditional explanation reflected in the Papias tradition (and other related accounts) that Mark is a record of Peter's oral ministry in Rome.<sup>6</sup> If that tradition reflected the actual situation to any extent (and we have no good way to either prove or disprove this), how much of the gospel is Mark's idiolect and how much Peter's? Is some of the "roughness" of Mark's gospel a reflection of the oral

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<sup>6</sup> "He [Papias] expounds with these [words]: 'And the presbyter [i.e., John] also said this: "Mark, being the interpreter of Peter [Μάρκος μὲν ἑρμηνευτῆς Πέτρου γενόμενος], wrote accurately all that he remembered [ἐμνημόνευσεν] (but not, however, in order [οὐ μέντοι τάξει]) [of] the things which were spoken or done by our Lord," for he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but later, as I said, [he followed] Peter (who provided instruction according to the need [ὅς πρὸς τὰς χρείας ἐποιεῖτο τὰς διδασκαλίας], but not as to make an arrangement [orderly account] of the Lord's discourses); so that Mark did not err in anything in thus writing some things as he remembered them; for he was attentive to one thing, not to leave out anything that he heard or to make any false statements in them.' So then these things were recounted by Papias concerning Mark" (Eusebius, *EH* 3.39, my translation). For the Greek text I have used the Loeb ed. of Eusebius, 1:296–97; see also Daniel Theron, *Evidence of Tradition* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1957), 66–67 (Greek and translation). I have revised the punctuation from that given in the Loeb edition to reflect what I think is a more accurate reading of the text. The most difficult question is where the quotation from "the presbyter" ends. I have made my best guess, but it is only that. The initial words cited above are those of Eusebius, who then quotes from Papias ('...') who quotes "the presbyter" ("...") and then resumes his own [i.e., Papias'] explanation; the text cited concludes with Eusebius' closing comment. I have taken the "... later, as I said ..." to indicate that Papias is again speaking at this point, and it would then make best sense to see the γάρ clause as beginning his statement ("for he neither heard ...").

This information is supplemented in a number of other writers (with what degree of reliance on Papias we do not know), including Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, 106.3; the Anti-Marcionite Prologue; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.1.1–2; the Muratorian Fragment; and Clement of Alexandria, *Outlines*, per Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.15, 6.14.5–6, to cite only 2d C. testimony. This material has been discussed in many places. One of the better such treatments is to be found in Robert Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 1026–45; see also E. Earle Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents*, Biblical Interpretation series (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 357–76 and Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), at least 64–84, but elsewhere as well.

preaching style of Peter?<sup>7</sup> That is certainly possible, though once again, we cannot prove such a hypothesis.<sup>8</sup>

For now we must be content to recognize that we are talking in abstractions about partial data, so we must be modest about what we claim in terms of “Mark’s idiolect,” indeed, of idiolect in general. We might at this point invoke the now classic Saussurean distinction between the language system as such and an individual writer’s use of it (i.e., between *langue* and *parole*).<sup>9</sup> Assuming that distinction, we could say that a person’s use of the language, reflecting his or her personal preferences (i.e., stylistic choices) is, in a word, idiolect.<sup>10</sup> What we can discuss, then, in a generalized way, is how Mark often prefers to say things in his

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<sup>7</sup> France’s analysis at this point is attractive and credible, if ultimately unprovable. “The persistent church tradition which names Peter as the source of Mark’s material points to a potential source for such ‘eye-witness’ elements, in the memory ... of the person who was nearer to the heart of most of the events which Mark records than anyone else except Jesus himself.... One of the reasons for the vividness of Mark’s narrative may be that he followed a good master, who had both an eye for interesting detail and the personal memory to supply it. Marks tells a good story because Peter must have been a man worth listening to” (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 17–18). Streeter’s observations may also be relevant: “Mark reads like a shorthand account of a story by an impromptu speaker—with all the repetitions, redundancies, and digressions which are characteristic of living speech. And it seems to me most probable that his Gospel...was taken down from rapid dictation by word of mouth” (B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* [London: Macmillan, 1924], 163–64).

<sup>8</sup> In the remainder of this essay I refer simply to “Mark” as the author without attempting to determine other influences or sources. Although I accept the traditional ascription of authorship to John Mark as the most likely origin of this gospel (which is formally anonymous—though see the objections of Hengel [*Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 64–84] and France [*Mark*, 39 n.80] in this regard), my reference here is simply to the author of the work as we have it regardless of who that might be. For a survey of evidence in defense of this traditional view of Mark’s authorship, see Robert Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 1–8.

<sup>9</sup> On *langue* and *parole*, particularly as it relates to the bilingual situation of the NT writers, see Moisés Silva, “Bilingualism and the Character of Palestinian Greek,” *Biblica* 61 (1980): 198–219, reprint, *The Language of the NT: Classic Essays*, ed. S. Porter, 205–26, JSNTSup 60 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 214–16, 223–26.

<sup>10</sup> This is sometimes described as a writer’s “individual preferences” (Moisés Silva, “Response to Fanning and Porter,” in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research*, ed. S. Porter and D. A. Carson, JSNTSup 80 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 79) or the “characteristics of a particular author” (Constantine Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative*, SBG 13 [New York: Peter Lang, 2007], 31). To be fair, neither of these two writers is attempting to formulate a technical definition; they only offer an explanatory gloss along with the word idiolect. Silva works this out more carefully in his article on bilingualism, explaining an individual writer’s style (“the variations [*parole*] that grammar [*langue*] leaves out”) in terms of idiolect (“Bilingualism and the Character of Palestinian Greek,” 223–26).

one surviving literary sample. On that matter, there has been a fair bit of discussion over the years, though not using the terminology of idiolect.

### Proposed Judgments Based on Idiolectical Considerations

The better critical/exegetical commentaries on Mark often include a discussion of Mark's grammar<sup>11</sup> and there have also been several specialized studies of Markan grammar.<sup>12</sup> These discussions, supplemented with my own observations, are summarized selectively in the following pages.<sup>13</sup> I have selected primarily grammatical matters for illustrative comment, though idiolect is not limited to matters of this sort. Not included here are other factors such as vocabulary, word order, register, etc.

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<sup>11</sup> See particularly C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 2d ed. (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977), 20–21; William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 25–28; Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1914), xxxiii–ix; Henry Barclay Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1909; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), xliii–l; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 2d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1966; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 45–66. The discussion in C. S. Mann is very brief (*Mark*, AB 27 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986], primarily 168–69 with some other notes on word usage). Such a discussion seems to have fallen out of favor in the most recent such works, being conspicuously absent in Robert Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34A, (Dallas: Word, 1989)/Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Nelson, 2001); Gundry, *Mark*; Joel Marcus, *Mark*, 2 vols., AB (New York: Doubleday, 2000/Yale Univ. Press, 2009); France, *Mark*; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); and Stein, *Mark*.

<sup>12</sup> J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), incorporating the extensive work of C. H. Turner and others; John C. Doudna, *The Greek of the Gospel of Mark*, JBLMS, 12 (Philadelphia: SBL, 1961); Elliott C. Maloney, *Semitic Interference in Marcan Syntax*, SBL Dissertation series 51 (Chico, CA: Scholar's Press, 1981); N. Turner, "The Style of Mark," in MHT 4:11–30; and Paul L. Danove, *Linguistics and Exegesis in the Gospel of Mark: Applications of a Case Frame Analysis and Lexicon*, JSNTSup 218 (Sheffield, 2001). Also Peter Dschulnigg, *Sprache, Redaktion und Intention des Markus-Evangeliums Eigentuemlichkeiten der Sprache des Markus-Evangeliums und ihre Bedeutung fuer die Redaktionskritik*, Stuttgarter Biblische Beitrage, 11 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984); Marius Reiser, *Syntax und Stil des Markusevangeliums im Licht der hellenistischen Volkliteratur*, WUNT 2.11 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1984); and Max Zerwick, *Untersuchungen zum Markus-Stil: ein Beitrag zur stilistischen Durcharbeitung des Neuen Testaments* (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1937).

<sup>13</sup> This discussion could be extended considerably if smaller details were included. For example it might be noted that Mark is the only NT writer to use ἀπό with the genitive following an imperatival βλέπετε (8:15, 12:38). Or it might be observed that the adverbial use of πολλά is a distinctive Markan use, occurring in this gospel 10 of its 16 NT instances (1:45; 3:12; 5:10, 23, 26a, 38, 43; 6:20; 9:26a; 12:27). I have rather chosen to focus on more significant features that have a broader impact on Mark's overall idiolect.

### Parataxis

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Mark's idiolect is his paratactic style, stringing sentences together with *καί* rather than more specific conjunctions.<sup>14</sup> Of the NT writers, Mark is least helpful in directing his readers' understanding of his discourse, thus placing greater demands on the reader in tracking contextual clues to meaning and the relation of events other than by the more explicit indication of sentence conjunctions. As C. H. Turner puts it,

In the hands of a master of the Greek language its highly developed structure and its numerous particles make punctuation to a large extent superfluous, and enabled any intelligent reader to punctuate for himself as he read. But St Mark was not a master of the Greek language and his fondness for brief co-ordinate clauses, not helped out by appropriate particles, often leaves us in doubt whether, for instance, we should read a clause interrogatively or not.<sup>15</sup>

Mark's usage can be quantified in various ways. Metzger, e.g., observes that 80 of 88 sections in Mark begin with *καί*.<sup>16</sup> Another way of illustrating Mark's parataxis is noting that about 64% of the sentences in Mark begin with *καί* (376 of 583).<sup>17</sup> A more limited snapshot can be seen in taking Mark 1 as a sample and comparing it with the sections in Matthew and Luke which are roughly equivalent. Of the 38 sentences in Mark 1 (UBS<sup>4</sup>), 33 begin with *καί*. By contrast, Matt 3–4 contain 34 sentences, but only 9 begin with *καί*.<sup>18</sup> Luke 4 has 31 sentences, of which 23 are *καί* initial.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Though I will not repeat such qualifications at every point below, it should be kept in mind that we do not know if Mark always wrote this way or if there were particular factors involved with his writing of this gospel that suggested to him the appropriateness of this particular style. All we can say is that this paratactic style appears to be characteristic of this particular literary composition.

<sup>15</sup> C. H. Turner, in *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark*, ed. J. K. Elliott, 23. Turner's focus in this context is with parenthetical statements which are not clearly marked in any way, but the same principle is equally true of Mark's long strings of *καί*-connected clauses.

<sup>16</sup> Bruce Metzger, "The Language of the NT," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. G. Buttrick, 7:43–59 (New York: Abingdon/Cokesbury, 1951), 7:48. These sections are based on the divisions in the Westcott-Hort text.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Ellingworth, "The Dog in the Night: A Note on Mark's Non-Use of KAI," *Bible Translator* 46 (1995): 125.

<sup>18</sup> Of the other sentences the sentence conjunctions are *δέ*, 12; *γάρ*, 2; *τοτε*, 7; *οὖν*, 1; *μέν*, 1; and *παλιν*, 1.

<sup>19</sup> The dominance of *καί* in Luke is somewhat surprising. Other than *καί*, 6 sentences are introduced with *δέ*.

This does not mean that Mark is characterized by pervasive asyndeton (on which see below), only that he does not write hypotactically; he does not make very extensive use of the various particles available to him. For Mark, all is *καί*, the unmarked connective with fewer uses of *δέ*, *τότε*, *γάρ*, *οὖν*, etc.<sup>20</sup> The gospel appears to follow a Hebraic pattern with the ubiquitous *vav*.<sup>21</sup> Although Mark was presumably a native speaker of Aramaic,<sup>22</sup> this does not appear to be the most likely explanation of Mark's paratactic style.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> To pick one example, *δέ* is used 163 times in Mark. This contrasts sharply with 494 in Matt and 542 in Luke. It occurs about half as frequently in Mark when adjusted for relative length (11.95/1,000 words versus 22.35 and 23.14 respectively). It appears that the more common use of *δέ* to indicate development in narrative has been supplanted by the ubiquitous *καί*. See also Randall Buth, "'Edayin/Tote—Anatomy of a Semitism in Jewish Greek," *MAARAV* 5–6 (1990): 33–48.

<sup>21</sup> N. Turner proposes that since *vav* stands first in the Hebrew clause, Mark prefers *καί* to the postpositive conjunctions so as to retain the syntactical pattern (MHT 4:17); such suggestions are speculative.

<sup>22</sup> J. H. Moulton verbalizes what seems to be the most widely accepted assumption in this regard. After referring to the "marked deficiency in Greek culture" evidenced in Mark's gospel, Moulton explains that "the position of Mark's family does not favour the idea that he was badly educated: he only shared the strong preference for Aramaic which was normal among Jerusalem residents, and never troubled to acquire polish for a Greek which came to him from conversation with other foreigners and with men of the people" ("New Testament Greek in the Light of Modern Discovery," in *Essays on Some Biblical Questions of the Day*, ed. H. Swete [London: Macmillan, 1909], reprint, *The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays*, ed. S. Porter, 60–97, *JNTSup* 60 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 85). On the larger question of the role of Aramaic in the NT world of the first century, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Language of Palestine in the First Century AD," *CBQ* 32 (1970): 501–31; reprinted in *A Wandering Aramean* (Scholars Press, 1979), 29–56, and in *The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays*, 126–62, and also in part two of *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 29–56. He concludes as follows: "I should maintain that the most commonly used language of Palestine in the first century A.D. was Aramaic, but that many Palestinian Jews ... used Greek, at least as a second language .... [and] some Palestinian Jews spoke only Greek.... But pockets of Palestinian Jews also used Hebrew, even though its use was not widespread" (1979/1997 reprints, 46).

<sup>23</sup> Aramaic often uses *'edayin* as the narrative connector, though *vav* can also be used as an unmarked connective. Randall Buth has commented to me that "We do not have any Aramaic narrative of decent length at Qumran that does not use *'edayin* 'then' in its narrative connectives. These produce TOTE when translated into Greek semi-literally. But TOTE is totally missing from Mark's narrative structure" (personal email, 11/5/2009). Aramaic does not have a *vav* consecutive construction which serves a complex sequential function as is found in Hebrew, but *vav* can be used as a more generic connector (Roy Beacham, personal email, 11/6/2009; see also Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, *Porta Linguagum Orientalium*, n.s. 5, 5th ed. [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983], 37–38).

Since it seems to be somewhat precarious to assume that Hebrew was widely spoken in first century Israel, this leaves a direct Hebraic influence on Mark's style at this point in question. Perhaps we should look instead to the LXX for possible influence. Mark, as a native speaker of Aramaic, would have often (and perhaps most commonly) read and heard his Bible read in Greek.<sup>24</sup> It appears that Mark's usage of *καί* as an unmarked sentence (and clause) connective is very similar to narrative books that I have examined in the LXX.<sup>25</sup> Adjusted for length, the frequency of sentence-initial *καί* in Mark is very close to 1 Maccabees and 1 Chronicles (28.66/1,000 words, 28.71, 27.08 respectively), with Genesis and Joshua close behind (18.42 and 21.0), all significantly higher ratios than other narrative books in the NT. The next-nearest NT narrative book is Luke at 14.9—half the frequency of Mark. At the clause-initial level, the difference in the same books is even more obvious (see stats in the appendix). I would suggest, then, that the influence is indeed Hebraic, but as mediated through the LXX.

#### Redundancies and Dualities

Stein says that there are 213 instances of grammatical redundancy in Mark.<sup>26</sup> Hawkins also provides a list, though with only 39 such instances.<sup>27</sup> It is possible that

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<sup>24</sup> I grant that this is an assumption which I have not argued at this point, but an assumption which I think reflects a sustainable and widely held position on this subject. If need be, I think it can be justified. For the present purposes I will simply appeal to recent work on the LXX such as Karen Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000); Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint As Christian Scripture* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2002), esp. 80–83; and J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* NovTSup 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1968). Also relevant are discussions of the language of Jesus. In this regard see Stanley Porter, "Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek? A Look at Scholarly Opinion and the Evidence," *TynBul* 44 (1993): 199–235, also available in *idem.*, *Studies in the Greek NT: Theory and Practice*, SBG 6 (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 139–71.

<sup>25</sup> Though I have not pursued this line of investigation extensively, the tables in the appendix may suggest what at least some of the evidence would show. The precision implied in the statistics cited above should not be unduly influential; they are simply the mathematical calculations provided by Accordance for the search: *καί* <WITHIN 1 Words> [FIELD Begin]. See the appendix for more details. Other databases may generate slightly different results depending on the text used, the punctuation, and the classification system. I would expect, however, that the same general patterns would be present.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Stein, "Synoptic Problem" in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. J. Green and S. McNight (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 788; *idem.*, *The Synoptic Problem—the 2d ed.* is now titled *Studying the Synoptic Gospels: Origin and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001); *idem.*, *Mark*, BECNT. Stein does not include the list in any of these publications. See also F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark*, BETL 31 (Leuven Univ Press, 1972).

some items on these lists are not valid redundancies.<sup>28</sup> Often one or both of the synoptic parallels avoid a pleonasm by using only half of the expression found in Mark.<sup>29</sup> As one example, in 1:32 Mark writes, “when evening came as the sun was setting” (ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης, ὅτε ἔδου ὁ ἥλιος). In the parallel text Matthew has only “when evening came” (ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης, 8:16) and Luke has a variation of the other half of the statement, “as the sun was setting” (δύνοντος δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου, 4:40). In some cases the duality may not be a redundancy *per se*, but a fuller statement in which one part complements the other—yet it is still true that the synoptic parallels at times have only one of the complements.<sup>30</sup>

### Multiple Negatives

One particular form of redundancy in Mark deserves separate comment: the use of multiple negatives. I find about two dozen instances of multiple negatives in Mark, including two triples.<sup>31</sup> In the case of the most common double negative, οὐ μὴ, the synoptic parallels almost always have the same construction, including the verb. All of these but one are the words of Jesus.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> John C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, 2d ed. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1909), 139–42. The difference in Hawkins’s list of 39 examples and Stein’s 213 may be that Hawkins lists only the ones in which one of the synoptic parallels ameliorates the pleonasm. If that is the case (and one would need Stein’s list to verify this hypothesis), then the point is that though pleonasm is not uncommon in the language of the NT, it is still *more* frequent in Mark than in other narrative writers—the contrast with the other synoptic writers being evident in the parallel passages.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., Stein (*DJG*) lists 1:32b as one example (“all who were sick or possessed with demons”), but this can only be considered redundant if sickness and demon possession are equated.

<sup>29</sup> Although I assume Markan priority as a working hypothesis, I am not predicating any arguments in the body of this paper on dependence one way or another. I will return to this matter in the concluding section.

<sup>30</sup> This could be developed further, but without the data implied by Stein or comparative data for the rest of the NT narrative corpus, it would take considerably more time than this essay allows.

<sup>31</sup> There are also other instances in which two negatives negate two finite verbs “back-to-back”: 6:11; 8:17, 18; 9:48; 12:14, 24, 25; 13:15, 32 *ter*; 14:68. This is not as significant and does not qualify as a “double negative,” but it is a less common usage.

<sup>32</sup> In all the examples cited, those in which the double negative appears in the words of Jesus are marked at the end of the line with a dagger.† Likewise two statements are marked with an asterisk\* in which a complementary infinitive is included; technically one negative negates the finite verb and the second one the infinitive, but since the semantics require both verbal forms to be understood together, they are treated as a double negative.

- 9:1, οὐ μὴ γεύσωνται θανάτου (Matt 16:28 and Luke 9:27, both same)†  
 9:41, οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσῃ τὸν μισθὸν αὐτοῦ (Matt 10:42, same; Luke, no ||)†  
 10:15, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν (Matt, no ||; Luke 18:17, same)†  
 13:2a, οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῆ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον (Matt 24:2, same; Luke, reworded)†  
 13:2b, ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῆ (Matt 24:2 and Luke 21:6, both have only οὐ)†  
 13:30, οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη (Matt 24:34 and Luke 21:32, both same)†  
 13:31, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρελεύσονται (Matt 24:35 and Luke 21:33, both same)†  
 14:31, οὐ μὴ σε ἀπαρνήσομαι (Matt 26:35, same; Luke, no ||)

The next most common double negative is οὐ with a form of οὐδεῖς. In every case where one of the other synoptic writers records the same statement the double negative is not found. In these examples (and the others below), most are Mark's editorial use; only a half dozen appear in the words of Jesus.

- 3:27, οὐ δύναται οὐδεῖς (Matt 12:29, τις; Luke no ||)†  
 5:37, οὐκ ἀφῆκεν οὐδένα (Matt, no ||; Luke 8:51, τινα)  
 6:5, οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἐκεῖ ποιῆσαι οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν, εἰ μὴ ... (Matt 13:58, οὐκ ... πολλας; Luke, no ||)  
 14:60, οὐκ ἀποκρίνη οὐδέν (Matt 26:62, οὐδεν only; Luke, no ||)  
 14:61, οὐκ ἀπεκρίνατο οὐδέν (Matt 26:63 omits stmt.; Luke, no ||)  
 15:4, οὐκ ἀποκρίνη οὐδέν (Matt 27:13, οὐκ; Luke, no ||)

In other double negative phrases a similar pattern is seen in that the double negative is not present in parallel texts or a "smoother" expression is used. These include the following.

- 9:8, οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλά ... (Matt 17:8, οὐδένα εἶδον εἰ μὴ; Luke, no ||)  
 15:5, οὐκέτι οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίθη (Matt 27:14, οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ πρὸς οὐδὲ ἐν ῥῆμα; Luke, no ||)  
 7:12, οὐκέτι ἀφίετε αὐτὸν οὐδὲν ποιῆσαι (Matt and Luke, no ||)†\*  
 11:2, ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεῖς οὕπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν (Matt, no ||; Luke 19:30, οὐδεῖς πώποτε—smoother?)†  
 1:44, Ὅρα μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης (Matt 8:4 and Luke 5:14, μηδενί)†  
 11:14, μηκέτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐκ σοῦ μηδεῖς καρπὸν φάγοι (Matt, μηκέτι; Luke, no ||)†  
 14:25 (triple!), οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ πίω (Matt 26:29, οὐ μὴ πίω; Luke, no ||)†

In other cases there is not a parallel statement in the Synoptics to compare.

- 12:34, οὐδεῖς οὐκέτι ἐτόλμα αὐτὸν ἐπερωτῆσαι  
 16:8, καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν, ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ

5:3 (triple!), καὶ οὐδὲ ἀλύσει οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι  
 3:20, μὴ δύνασθαι αὐτοὺς μηδὲ ἄρτον φαγεῖν\*  
 2:2, ὥστε μηκέτι χωρεῖν μηδέ

Although some double negatives such as οὐ μὴ are common,<sup>33</sup> most of Mark's are, indeed, unique and a number of others are rare elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> Mark is the only NT writer to use five such combinations (οὐδὲ οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς, οὐδεὶς οὐκέτι, οὐδενὶ οὐδέν, οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς, and μὴ μηδέ). Three similar collocations occur only one other time in the NT (οὐδεὶς οὐπω, οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ, and μηδενὶ μηδέν). The only other triple negative in the NT that I have found is οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ in Rev 18:14.

### Periphrasis

Periphrastics are common in Mark—more so than Matthew.<sup>35</sup> This may be a reflection of Mark's mother-tongue being Aramaic<sup>36</sup> since I am told that periphrasis is much more common in Aramaic than in Hebrew.<sup>37</sup> Although periphrastic use is

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<sup>33</sup> “Common,” however, needs to be qualified in that οὐ μὴ is common in the NT only in certain kinds of statements. In koine generally it is only common in lower levels of Greek, particularly when translated from Semitic material. This is not to say that it was unknown in Attic or in the literary koine, but there it was used much less frequently, being reserved for statements of particular emphasis. It appears that this stress may have been lost in the koine generally through over use. For an extended discussion of οὐ μὴ, see MHT 1:187–92.

<sup>34</sup> Hawkins (*Horae Synopticae*, 142) gives the following figures for double negatives, though he does not indicate the forms or combinations involved: Matt, 3; Mark, 17; Luke, 17; Acts, 5; John, 17. My catalog above lists 25 double (or triple) negatives in Mark.

<sup>35</sup> I count about 2 dozen periphrastics in Mark. There are about 20 in Matthew (based on a preliminary count by Rob Green, currently beginning work on a PhD dissertation on periphrastics). Given the relative lengths of each book, Mark appears to make more frequent use of the periphrastic.

<sup>36</sup> This is debated by various scholars, though the general consensus seems to point to some Semitic influence, if only as mediated through the LXX (i.e., the frequent periphrasis in Mark may be viewed as a “Septuagintalism” or perhaps better, a “Septuagintally-enhanced” usage). It is surprising that no discussion of periphrastics appears in Maloney's *Semitic Interference in Marcan Syntax*. Matthew was also, of course, as likely an Aramaic speaker as was Mark, but his abilities in Greek appear to be more polished and he reflects less such influence at the language level. We might speculate that this was in part due to needs of his employment (or that his relatively greater proficiency enabled him to work in a Greek-speaking environment), but we have no data to substantiate such a suggestion and other possible explanations might be judged equally probable.

<sup>37</sup> Periphrasis begins to appear in later Hebrew, perhaps by influence from Aramaic. For Hebrew examples and discussion, see Bruce Waltke & M. O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 37.7.1.c, p. 629–30 (e.g., Neh. 13:5, 22; Esth. 6:1); for

very common in language in general, it is not nearly as common in Greek. When it is used, it often (not always) has a “certain emphasis.”<sup>38</sup> In Attic this “emphasis” is often said to be a matter of duration of time, but such usage is often not present in the koine, especially when a text is heavily influenced by an Aramaic style as appears to be the case with Mark at some points.<sup>39</sup>

#### Indefinite Plurals

The indefinite use of the plural involves the use of a third person plural verb without an explicit nominative subject. This verb refers to the actions of an unspecified group not otherwise identified grammatically in the preceding context. It is most obvious when there is a shift in subjects, especially when a previous plural verb has a different subject than the implied subject of the subsequent plural verb. The subject of this indefinite verb, having no explicit antecedent, is often represented in English as simply “[some] people.” C. H. Turner suggests that this reflects the Aramaic use of the plural as a substitute for the passive, though Rydbeck attributes it to the *Fachprosa*.<sup>40</sup> This construction occurs more than a dozen times in Mark 1–8.<sup>41</sup>

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Aramaic, see Rosenthal, *Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, §177, p. 55 (e.g., Dan. 2:31, where the ptcp. comes first, then the verb [word order is very loose in the Aramaic sections of Daniel]:

וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים וְהָיוּ מִבְּרִיָּהּ

<sup>38</sup> BDF, §353 (1), p. 179; MHT 2:451; Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, transl. J. Smith (Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), §360 (“a stronger and more picturesque expression” in Acts 25:10); cf. BDAG, s.v., εἰμί, 286.11.e, f.

<sup>39</sup> Howard suggests that a temporal emphasis may be a more likely use of the periphrastic in John and Paul, but not elsewhere in the NT (MHT 2:451).

<sup>40</sup> Turner refers to these as “impersonal” rather than indefinite. I have used the term indefinite since the reference is always to actions of people. The point is rather that the specific referent is only implicit and not specified in the preceding context. In Turner’s words, “the use of a plural verb with no subject expressed, and no subject implied other than the quite general one ‘people’. This form of phrase, common in Aramaic as a substitute for the passive, is very characteristic of St. Mark’s narrative, and is generally altered in the other Synoptists either by the insertion of a definite subject or (and this especially in St Luke) by the substitution of the passive voice for the impersonal active” (C. H. Turner, in *Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark*, 4). Such third person indefinite constructions used for the passive are less common in Hebrew, but more common in Aramaic. See further, MHT, 2:447–48 and references there. Lars Rydbeck’s conclusions regarding the “subjectless third person plural verb for the idea of ‘one’” are noted, though not elaborated, in his essay “On the Question of Linguistic Levels,” in *The Language of the NT: Classic Essays*, ed. Porter, 191 n.1.

<sup>41</sup> My list extends only to ch. 8 since that is as far as I have written for the Baylor Handbook at this point. The list is as follows: 1:32, 45; 2:3, 18 bis; 3:32; 5:14, 35; 6:12, 14, 33, 35; 7:32; 8:22. In

To note just a few examples, in 1:22,<sup>42</sup> Mark's statement, *ἐξεπλήσσοντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ*, is somewhat vague: “they were astonished”—without specifying who it was. (This is sometimes represented in English translations as “people were astonished”; e.g., NIV, NET.) In Matthew the statement is explicit: *ἐξεπλήσσοντο οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ* (7:28; SQE, §35, p. 53).

Or in 2:3,<sup>43</sup> the subject shifts from the πολλοί who come (2a) to an indefinite third plural reference with *ἔρχονται*—which cannot be the same as the πολλοί since they are already there. Thus: “some people came carrying to him... a paralytic” (cf. NIV, NET, NRSV). Luke's statement is a bit different and does not use the same verb, but supplies an explicit subject: *καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες φέροντες ἐπὶ κλίνης ἄνθρωπον ὃς ἦν παραλελυμένος, καὶ ἐζήτουν αὐτόν* (5:18; SQE, §43, p. 60).

In the last pericope of Mark 3 Jesus' family *sent* [someone] to call Jesus (31).<sup>44</sup> Although it is not explicitly stated in the text, it seems likely that they sent one individual to call him. Mark's record shows Jesus in the midst of a crowd (*ὄχλος*) when he receives the summons. The plural verb *λέγουσιν* does not likely mean that the crowd seated around him delivered this message. Rather it is the indefinite construction, “someone told him...”—likely the same person sent in v 31.<sup>45</sup> In Luke this statement is expressed with a passive verb: *ἀπηγγέλη δὲ αὐτῷ* (8:20), “and it was reported to him.” Matthew's equivalent is *εἶπεν δὲ τις αὐτῷ* (12:47), “and someone said to him,” a singular verb with an indefinite pronoun as the subject (SQE, §121, p. 173).

addition, some have argued for 1:44 and 3:21, but I doubt they are legitimate explanations in those contexts. For lists covering all of Mark, see Taylor, *Mark*, 47 and C. H. Turner, in *Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark*, 4–12.

<sup>42</sup> Mark 1:21–22, *Καὶ εἰσπορεύονται εἰς Καφαρναούμ. καὶ εὐθὺς τοῖς σάββασιν εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν ἐδίδασκεν. <sup>22</sup>καὶ ἐξεπλήσσοντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ, ἣν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς.*

<sup>43</sup> Mark 2:2–3, *καὶ συνήχθησαν πολλοί ..., καὶ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον. ὅτε ἔρχονται φέροντες πρὸς αὐτόν παραλυτικὸν αἰρόμενον ὑπὸ τεσσάρων.*

<sup>44</sup> Mark 3:31–32, *Καὶ ἔρχεται ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔξω στήκοντες ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτόν καλοῦντες αὐτόν. <sup>32</sup>καὶ ἐκάθητο περὶ αὐτὸν ὄχλος, καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ἴδοὺ ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ἔξω ζητοῦσίν σε.*

<sup>45</sup> Although the indefinite verb is always (?) plural, and the referent is likewise often plural, it appears that it can also refer to a single, unspecified person. As a substitute for a passive (as in Luke) this is reasonable, and the use of the singular verb with the indefinite pronoun in Matthew suggests the same sort of reference.

### Diminutives

It is possible that the use of diminutive *forms* is characteristic of Mark. Until someone traces all the potential diminutives in the NT,<sup>46</sup> this remains only a possibility, though one that is often noted in relation to Markan idiolect. Metzger suggests that this is one element common to colloquial usage in many languages.<sup>47</sup> Taylor, e.g., says that,

Special interest belongs to Mark's use of diminutives.... [9 listed; see below] ... We may agree that Mark's use of ὠτάριον is not intended to suggest that the high priest's servant's ear was a particularly small one, and that Mark uses it because he is fond of that kind of word. The usage is colloquial and the words are not necessarily diminutive in sense.<sup>48</sup>

Plummer's comments, however, suggest that Mark's use of diminutives may not be much different than the other Gospel writers, so a "special interest" may not be legitimate. He observes that there is only one such form unique to Mark (θυγάτριον) and several others that occur in the other Gospels, but not in Mark.<sup>49</sup>

The list of diminutives in Mark is as follows: θυγάτριον (> θυγάτηρ), daughter; ἰχθύδιον (> ἰχθύς), fish; κοράσιον (> κόρη, not in NT), girl; κυνάριον (> κύνω), dog; παιδίον (> παῖς), child; πλοιάριον (> πλοῖον), boat; σανδάλιον (> σάνδαλον, not in NT), sandal; ψιχίον (> ψίξ), crumb; and ὠτάριον (> οὖς), ear.<sup>50</sup>

It is not legitimate in most instances to find a diminutive *meaning* to the use of these *forms*. The potential Markan characteristic is the use of these *forms*, not that he uses them with their original diminutive meaning. Few retain any semantic value from earlier usage; e.g., θηρίον (1:13) is the diminutive form of θήρ, but the word was used even in classical times to refer to animals such as deer, elephants, and sharks (all full grown), and in the koine period it is used of the wild animals in the arena.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, πλοιάριον (3:9) is glossed as "small boat" (BDAG, 830), but is

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<sup>46</sup> The only study along this line of which I am aware is only a journal article: Donald C. Swanson, "Diminutives in the Greek New Testament," *JBL* 77 (1958): 134–51. There may be other such work of which I am not aware; I have not attempted an exhaustive search of the literature on this subject.

<sup>47</sup> Metzger, "Language of the NT," 48.

<sup>48</sup> Taylor, *Mark*, 45.

<sup>49</sup> Plummer, *Mark*, CB, xxxiv.

<sup>50</sup> Some of these may not be true diminutives in form. Walter Petersen, e.g., suggests alternate morphology for several including σανδάλιον; e.g., in 6:9 it is perhaps a "generic" formation, i.e., "a shoe of the sandal kind" (*Diminutives in -ION: A Study in Semantics* [Weimar, Germany: R. Wagner Sohn, 1910], 96).

<sup>51</sup> See the references in LSJ and BDAG.

probably no longer in use as a diminutive since the same kind of vessel is referred to as a *πλοῖον* in 4:1.

The one diminutive found only in Mark, *θυγάτριον*, “little daughter” (5:23; 7:25) is the diminutive form of *θυγάτηρ*. It may be used by Mark as a “term of endearment.”<sup>52</sup> Likewise there may be diminutive connotations to *κυνάριον*, “little dog,” in 7:27. There are several diminutive forms used together in this passage: *little dogs* eat the *little children’s* (*παιδίων*, v. 28) *little crumbs* (*ψιχίων*, v. 28). This may be “intended for effect.”<sup>53</sup>

#### Frequent Use of εὐθύς

Mark has an unusual concentration of occurrences of εὐθύς.<sup>54</sup> In narrative material (Matthew–Acts), εὐθύς occurs 51 times. Of these, 41 instances are in Mark.<sup>55</sup> Matthew has 5, Luke and Acts have 1 each, and John has 3 instances of εὐθύς. The more common word in the narrative sections is εὐθέως which occurs 13× in Matthew, only once in Mark, 6× in Luke, 3× in John, and 9× in Acts (32× total). It is obvious that Mark had a distinct preference for εὐθύς over εὐθέως.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> So BDAG, 461; see also Petersen, *Diminutives in -ION*, 173.

<sup>53</sup> Gundry, *Mark*, 375; contra Petersen (*Diminutives in -ION*, 266), who suggests it refers rather to a class.

<sup>54</sup> For a lengthier summary of this usage, see *TDM*, 73–77. For a full discussion of the use of εὐθύς in Mark, see Rodney J. Decker, “The Use of εὐθύς (‘immediately’) in Mark,” *JMAT* 1 (1997): 90–121.

<sup>55</sup> 1:10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 30, 42, 43; 2:8, 12; 3:6; 4:5, 15, 16, 17, 29; 5:2, 29, 30, 42 (2 ×); 6:25, 27, 45, 50, 54; 7:25; 8:10; 9:15, 20, 24; 10:52; 11:2, 3; 14:43, 45, 72; 15:1.

<sup>56</sup> These factors have often been taken to indicate that εὐθύς is a characteristic Markan word that contributes to Mark’s emphasis on the actions of Jesus and is part of the vocabulary that gives the Gospel its unique flavor. In this regard, see Lane, *Mark*, 25–28. Morna Hooker suggests that the frequent use of εὐθύς “gives a sense of urgency to the narrative,” although she also recognizes that it can be used in the weakened sense of “so next” (*The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC [London: A. C. Black, 1991; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, n.d.], 45). Likewise Gundry writes that “the frequency of Mark’s use of εὐθύς, ‘immediately,’ does not mean that the adverb has lost its vitality for him; rather he wants to portray a ministry full of powerful activity” (86). See also Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT 3 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 46, 52. Harold Riley, however, suggests—I think correctly—that the “feeling of urgency” that pervades Mark is due to two factors: the omission of extensive didactic sections and the unusual predominance of εὐθύς. He suggests that if εὐθύς does not carry the force of “immediately” often assigned to it (and he does not think that it does), the effect of Mark would be little different than that of Matthew if the teaching sections were removed from the first Gospel (“Euthus in Mark,” Appendix 1 of *The Making of Mark: An Exploration* [Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 1989], 215). That is, Mark probably does not intend to convey a sense of urgency in his writing.

As used in Mark, εὐθύς may refer to sequential action or it may suggest the rapidity with which an event occurs. It may, in addition to these meanings, function as a conjunction with a meaning not greatly different from καί. In this case it may add a nuance of sequence (though not necessarily temporal sequence, but in the sense of, “the next thing I want to say is...”),<sup>57</sup> or it may be “otiose, and a mere mannerism.”<sup>58</sup>

One of Mark’s unique stylistic features is his frequent use of καὶ εὐθύς rather than εὐθύς alone.<sup>59</sup> This combination may have the same meaning as εὐθύς alone,<sup>60</sup> but a number of passages evidence, via specific contextual indications, specific uses of καὶ εὐθύς. Although this phrase may be a reference to instantaneous action,<sup>61</sup> or it may be simply a sentence conjunction.<sup>62</sup> In the second instance the expression carries no sense of rapidity or shortness of time, but indicates simply the succession of events, and at times has no more force than καί alone.<sup>63</sup>

#### Historical Present<sup>64</sup>

The use of present tense verbs in narrative sections of the NT to describe events that were past in reference to the narrator has long been recognized as a syntactical feature of the language and has traditionally been identified as the “historical present.” Some NT writers, including Mark and John, use this much

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<sup>57</sup> D. Daube points out that εὐθύς often indicates “the *planmäßige*, steady, blow upon blow succession of events” in Mark (*The Sudden in the Scriptures* [Leiden: Brill, 1964], 48). Paul Ellingworth also suggests some discourse-based considerations regarding the use of εὐθύς that are worth pursuing (“How Soon is ‘Immediately’ in Mark?” *BT* 4 [1978]: 414–19).

<sup>58</sup> Riley, *Making of Mark*, 217.

<sup>59</sup> Of the 41 instances of εὐθύς in Mark, 25 use this phrasing. (It is also used once in each of the other Synoptics and once in Acts.)

<sup>60</sup> Mark 4:5; 6:45; 9:15; 11:2, 3; 14:72.

<sup>61</sup> Mark 1:42; 2:8; 5:29, 30, 42a; 10:52. When this connotation is present, Mark always uses καὶ εὐθύς with an aorist verb (either an indicative or a participle), never εὐθύς alone and never with a present verb form. The perfective aspect of the aorist is particularly appropriate for describing instantaneous action.

<sup>62</sup> Mark is characterized by the “monotonous repetition of *kai* ... at the beginning of sentences. Of the approximately 583 sentences in Mark..., approximately 376, or 64.5%, begin with *kai*” (Ellingworth, “The Dog in the Night,” 125. This may be one factor in the semantic force of the combined phrase καὶ εὐθύς in Mark.

<sup>63</sup> Mark 1:10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 29, 30; 2:12; 6:27; 8:10; 14:43; 15:1. Rudolf Pesch refers to this usage of καὶ εὐθύς as *stilistisch-interjektionelle*. He also points out that Mark frequently uses a sequence of two καὶ εὐθύς phrases to connect *Doppelszenen*, citing 1:10, 12; 1:18, 20; and 1:21, 23 as examples (*Das Markusevangelium*, 2 vols., HTK [Freiburg: Herder, 1976–77], 1:89–90).

<sup>64</sup> This section is abridged and adapted from *TDM*, 101–04.

more frequently than writers such as Luke. The nature and purpose of such a use, which typically functions in parallel with aorist tense-forms as part of the narrative's storyline, has been debated. Discourse functions, including the discourse role of verbal aspect, appear to offer a more consistent explanation than other approaches that have been proposed.

Several key studies have pointed the way forward in this area. Thackeray's work in the LXX led him to propose that the historical present was not a vivid (he used the term *dramatic*) use of the present as has often been suggested,<sup>65</sup> but was essentially a paragraph marker that served to introduce new dates, scenes, characters, or speakers.<sup>66</sup> This suggestion has been picked up by a number of more recent studies, either as a supplement to the traditional explanation (e.g., Fanning), or developed into an alternate explanation (e.g., Buth, Levinsohn, and Enos).<sup>67</sup>

When the Gospel of Mark is examined with these explanations in view, it would appear that Fanning's four categories provide the most comprehensive explanation for the *function* of the historical present in Mark. The following catalog of functional usage is offered for non-λέγω historical presents.<sup>68</sup>

- To begin a new paragraph<sup>69</sup> (this often involves new participants or a new location): 1:12, 21; 2:15; 3:31; 5:35; 6:1a, b, 30; 7:1; 8:22a; 9:2a, b; 10:1a, 35, 46; 11:1a, 15, 27a; 12:13, 18; 14:17, 32a, 43, 66

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<sup>65</sup> Representative of temporally-based vividness explanations are Ernest De Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), §14; Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), §174.3; William Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1890), §33; J. Mateos, *El Aspecto en el Nuevo Testamento*, Estudios de Nuevo Testamento 1 (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1977), §46; Herbert W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, rev. G. M. Messing (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1956), §1883; and N. Turner, *Syntax*, MHT 3:60.

<sup>66</sup> H. St. John Thackeray, "The Historic Present and Its Functions," in *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins*, 20–22, The Schweich Lectures, 1920, 2d ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press for the British Academy, 1923), 20–22; he considers the historical present, not only in the Books of Reigns (primarily 1 Samuel), but also in Mark's gospel.

<sup>67</sup> See Buist Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, OTM (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 226–39; Randall Buth, "Mark's Use of the Historical Present," *NOT* 65 (1977): 7–13; Stephen H. Levinsohn, "Preliminary Observations on the Use of the Historic Present in Mark," *NOT* 65 (1977): 13–28; Ralph Enos, "The Use of the Historical Present in the Gospel According to St. Mark," *Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest* 3 (1981): 281–98

<sup>68</sup> In addition to these four categories, the historical presents in Mark 15:20, 21, 22, 24a, and 24b form a unique section in which the closing events of a discourse are marked.

<sup>69</sup> For purposes of this analysis, the paragraph divisions of NA<sup>27</sup> were used as the basic criterion, supplemented by those of UBS<sup>4</sup> where there was a disagreement.

- To introduce new participants in an existing paragraph: 3:13b, 20b; 15:27
- To move participants to a new location within a paragraph: 2:4; 3:13a, 20a, 4:36; 5:38a, 40a, b; 6:45, 48; 10:49; 11:1b, 7a, b; 14:13a, 33, 37a, b, 41, 53; 16:2
- To begin a *specific* unit after a general introduction: 1:40; 2:3, 18a; 4:1; 5:15a, b, 22a, b, c, 23; 6:7; 7:5, 32a, b; 8:22b, c; 10:1b; 11:27b

#### Disputable Characteristics of Markan Idiolect

Too often various writers have claimed features “unique to” or “characteristic of” Mark which cannot be supported by the evidence.<sup>70</sup>

#### *Asyndeton*

To note only a few without attempting a full discussion, Turner says that Mark shows a “fondness for asyndeta” which “corresponds to his rough unlitrary style.”<sup>71</sup> It is true that asyndeton can be found in Mark (e.g., 1:4, 8, 15). It might seem a bit unexpected in a book in which most clauses are connected by *καί*, yet juxtaposing clauses with no connective at all is simply another way of not indicating the precise relationship of adjacent clauses. That this is a “fondness” may overstate the data which do not evidence any greater use of asyndeton in Mark

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<sup>70</sup> Once again, this catalog might be extended much further if smaller items were included. Doudna, e.g., often claims that some grammatical features are “peculiar to Mark,” yet they are found elsewhere. He suggests that *διά* + gen (6:2) used for dative is “peculiar to Mark” (*Greek of the Gospel of Mark*, 29), but BDAG, 224, s.v. *διά*.3.a. says that this is used “Hebraistically in expr. denoting activity *διὰ χειρῶν τινος* (LXX) Mk 6:2; Ac 5:12; 14:3; 19:11, 26.” The references in Acts are identical in meaning to the Mark example that Doudna claims are “peculiar to Mark.” There are also numerous LXX examples along this line (though it can also mean “in the charge of” in LXX). Likewise *ἐπ’ αὐτούς* indicating respect (which occurs several times in Mark, e.g., 6:34) is a less common use of *ἐπί* with the accusative, but not “peculiar to Mark” as Doudna (31) claims. Similar instances can be found elsewhere in the NT, e.g., Matt 15:32 (*σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον* || Mark 8:2). With similar verbs it is used in Rev 1:7 (*κόψονται ἐπ’ αὐτόν* = Zech 12:10 LXX) and Luke 23:28 (*κλαίετε ἐπ’ ἐμέ*). It can also be used to express negative relationships; see Luke 9:5 (*μαρτύριον ἐπ’ αὐτούς*). BDAG cites a number of other passages similar to these (s.v. *ἐπί*, 366.15). A related use is found twice in Mark 9:12–13. There *πῶς γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* and *καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ’ αὐτόν* must mean “about him.” This is not the expression of feelings, but identifies “on/for whom” or “about whom” something is done (BDAG, s.v. *ἐπί*, 366.14)—i.e., it is used with action verbs rather than verbs of emotion or relationship. Elsewhere see Heb 7:13 (*ἐφ’ ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα*) and 1 Tim 1:8 (*κατὰ τὰς προαγούσας ἐπὶ σὲ προφητείας*).

<sup>71</sup> C. H. Turner, in *Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark*, 78. Of 39 instances listed by Turner (74–78), 7 require a particular *v.l.*, but even adjusting these to the text of NA<sup>27</sup>, there are 32 which have a parallel in Matthew or Luke. (He does not list instances without a parallel and I do not have a complete catalog of such instances at this point.)

compared with other NT writers.<sup>72</sup> However, if this were viewed as one part of a larger category, i.e., Mark's penchant for unmarked clause connections, then perhaps it could be said that the broader feature was characteristic of Mark.

#### *Anacoluthon*

Another feature that might be disputable as “characteristic” of Mark is the presence of anacolutha. Hawkins lists 13 of these (135–37), but some of these are simply parenthetical statements which, although they do interrupt a larger construction, are neither broken constructions in themselves, nor do they break the construction in which they are embedded.<sup>73</sup> It is true that where there is a parallel statement in Matthew or Luke the anacoluthon is not found,<sup>74</sup> but it is not clear whether this is a desire to avoid an anacoluthon or if it is simply the omission of a bit of parenthetical data considered unnecessary for the writer's purpose in his narrative.

#### **Possible Conclusions Based on Idiolectical Considerations**

This essay has examined only the Gospel of Mark, but since there are features of the Greek of this text that differ from other parts of the NT, this same sort of discussion could be repeated for each of the NT writers—and perhaps for the individual writings of some authors.<sup>75</sup> What are the implications of this? I would

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<sup>72</sup> Where there are parallels in Matthew or Luke, a connective is sometimes found. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, 137–38, lists 22 instances in which Matthew or Luke use/insert a conjunction, usually γάρ (10×), or sometimes οὖν (5×), καί (4×), δέ (3×), ὅτι (1×), etc. (I have not verified these instances.) Plummer says asyndeton is not common in Mark's narrative, but is common in reported sayings (but cf. Taylor, 49f, to the contrary). This does not mean that asyndeton is a distinctive characteristic of Mark, however, since Matthew can employ asyndeton quite freely as well (e.g., Matt 5:3–17), as can other NT writers, whether Paul, John, or James. Hawkins does claim that “in Luke the decidedly asyndetic constructions are very few” (138; he lists 7 examples). See further, BDF, §§459–63. A definitive statement in this regard would require a catalog of asyndeta in the NT so that comparative statements could be grounded more firmly. I am unaware of exhaustive studies of this sort. My summary here regarding other writers is based on the summaries of the grammars.

<sup>73</sup> C. H. Turner discusses 19 possible parenthetical statements in Mark (in *Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark*, 23–35).

<sup>74</sup> E.g., Mark 3:17, καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτοῖς ὀνόματα βοανηργές, ὃ ἐστὶν υἱοὶ βροντῆς. Cf. Matt 10:2, καὶ Ἰακώβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, and Luke 6:14, καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην.

<sup>75</sup> The Johannine corpus is the most obvious example, though Peter's two letters also diverge, and even Luke's idiolect differs from his gospel to Acts (and perhaps even within Acts).

suggest four major areas that are affected by these sorts of data. I will comment more extensively on the first since it is most directly related to the question of the nature of the Greek of the NT.

First, grammar and exegesis need to take idiolectical considerations into account. The value may be more negative than positive: it may caution us not to over-draw conclusions based on ostensible idiosyncrasies of Mark's Greek. At the exegetical level this might suggest that some arguments regarding the nature of Mark's gospel have been ill-founded. It is not uncommon to read commentators mining the exegetical ore of the Markan εὐθύς to conclude that this is the gospel of action, the "Go Gospel."<sup>76</sup> This is sometimes combined with other linguistic features such as the use of ἄρχω and πάλιν to conclude that Mark emphasizes urgency and immediacy, but this is simply the result of the fact that Mark's purpose is primarily to describe what Jesus did rather than what he taught. If a similar portion of the didactic sections are removed from Matthew or Luke, the result might not be much different. This sort of conclusion is sometimes the result of grammatical maximalism (the "golden nuggets" approach), but other times is due to a lack of sensitivity to Markan usage.

It is not only the commentators, however, who fall short in this regard. The grammarian faces a similar challenge—and for obvious reasons. The published grammars in our field are, almost without exception, grammars of the NT.<sup>77</sup> As a result the language of the entire corpus is homogenized to enable general statements regarding usage. This is both natural and certainly desirable at some level since it is much more difficult to keep separate descriptions in focus simultaneously. And there are many grammatical principles that are, indeed, true of all NT writers. The best grammars do point out idiolectical differences at times, but the nature of their task does not enable consistent implementation of this. Colwell was right when he said that "a grammar is not possible for the Koine as it is

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<sup>76</sup> This was the title of a devotional commentary by Manford Gutzke (*Gospel Light*, 1968). The same problem can arise in a translation if εὐθύς is always translated "immediately," as, e.g., in NASB (40/41 instances). The result, as I have pointed out elsewhere, is to give the reader a false sense of urgency in the text ("The Use of εὐθύς ['immediately'] in Mark," 119).

<sup>77</sup> There are a few exceptions such as Edwin Abbott's *Johannine Grammar* (London: A. and C. Black, 1906) or more specialized works such as G. Mussies, *The Morphology of Koine Greek, As Used in the Apocalypse of St. John: A Study in Bilingualism* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

possible for Attic Greek in the classical period. In the popular Koine *each author's grammar must be written.*"<sup>78</sup>

We grammarians should perhaps take our cue from the biblical theologians and prior to writing our "systematic" grammar, first prepare a "biblical" one that recognizes distinctive usage, whether found in Mark or in any other author. Doing so would guard against unjustified extrapolations based on NT usage as a whole. For example, a new grammar currently in the press refers to *γάρ* only occurring in narrative proper in 10% of NT instances.<sup>79</sup> This is partly a genre problem in that only about half the NT is narrative in the first place, but it can also affect how we handle individual writers. The grammar goes on to discuss the 33 instances of *γάρ* in Mark that occur in narrative proper sections—but never mentions that there are only 66 instances of *γάρ* in Mark—and that detail skews the earlier 10% figure by a very wide margin.<sup>80</sup> Is Mark's usage really different from the rest of the NT? Or only from other narrative books? Or from the Synoptics? My point is not to resolve the issue, but merely to point out that these factors need sharper focus in many instances.<sup>81</sup> Grammarians cannot be content to "paint with a broad brush."

Second, a consideration of the idiolect of the NT writers is relevant to textual criticism. Indeed, the primary motivation for the most extensive discussion of Markan grammar, that by C. H. Turner, is to provide guidelines for applying the canons of internal evidence by the radical eclectics.<sup>82</sup> Such questions are legitimate

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<sup>78</sup> E. C. Colwell, "Greek Language," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G. Buttrick, 2:479–87 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 2:481, emphasis added. This statement should not be pressed absolutely. Colwell's point is a relative one suggesting that there is greater consistency among the (literary?) Attic writers than there is in the koine generally. Note that he refers specifically to the "popular koine" rather than literary koine writers. On where the NT fits into this spectrum, see the comments below by Rydbeck's comparison of the NT with the *Fachprosa*.

<sup>79</sup> Steven E. Runge, *A Discourse Grammar of the NT* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, forthcoming; references to the 2009 pdf draft MS), 37. The state referenced could be quantified more sharply in that Runge is distinguishing narrative proper from discourse, but the genre difference between Matthew–Acts versus most of the remainder of the NT is what I have in mind here. There may be some minor narrative sections embedded in epistolary genre, but as a whole, the narrative–discourse distinction is largely not relevant there.

<sup>80</sup> Perhaps these figures can be reconciled, but it is not obvious in the grammar that such factors have been considered. They are certainly not discussed or explained clearly.

<sup>81</sup> To be fair, Runge at times does refer to usage by specific writers, but too often that is not the case. A related issue is that some arguments are based on cross-linguistic evidence, so not only is the usage of individual writers given too little attention, but non-Greek factors come into play as well. Generalizing across languages is tricky business.

<sup>82</sup> I refer, of course, to the radical (or rigorous or "thorough-going") eclecticism of C. H. Turner, G. D. Kilpatrick, and J. K. Elliot and others who follow this trail. C. H. Turner's work has

ones, however considerable caution in the use of this at the text critical level is needed. An internal criterion such as intrinsic probability is only that: it is probable to some degree that a writer might more likely have said one thing than another, but our sample sets are far too small to place a high degree of probability on our judgments in that regard, let alone to base a system of textual criticism on internal criteria. I will not develop this area further other than to point out one of Metzger's criticisms that is relevant: "an author may on occasion vary his usage."<sup>83</sup>

Third, although I will not attempt to address this in any detail, I do want to point out that some of the data reflected above is relevant to a discussion of the Synoptic Problem. Of particular relevance are those instances where there is a difference between Mark and the other Synoptics. In each such case Matthew and/or Luke are the writers who present the statements in a more "polished" way. To cite two examples, Mark's paratactic use of *καί* as the default sentence connective is not characteristic of the others, nor of Greek in general. Likewise the frequency of double negatives and the relative scarcity of them in the other Synoptics, particularly in parallel statements is probably significant.

Assuming that there is, indeed, some literary relationship between the Synoptics,<sup>84</sup> if Matthew or Luke were original, why would Mark "degrade" their Greek since he was making large use of their work? It makes much better sense that Matthew and Luke polished the relatively rougher Greek of Mark, whose account they would appear to be following. It would seem more likely that Mark, were he following the account of Matthew and Luke, would reproduce more closely the more polished work of his peers rather than rewriting so much of it in his own rougher style.

Fourth, where does Mark sit on a literary spectrum in the Greek of the NT? The broader question of the nature of the Greek of the NT is a subject far too large to

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been published in the volume edited by J. K. Elliott, *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark*, which also includes material by Kilpatrick and Elliott.

<sup>83</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 3d ed. (Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 178.

<sup>84</sup> I assume that this is the case, though I realize some disagree vigorously—and others would disagree with the direction of the relationship. The bibliography is extensive, but some of the more helpful discussions include: D. A. Black and David Beck, ed., *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), esp. the chapter by McKnight; David Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (NY: Doubleday, 1999); William Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* (New York: Macmillan, 1964); Robert H. Stein, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001); Streeter, *The Four Gospels*; and Robert Thomas, ed. *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002).

address in detail here.<sup>85</sup> Over the past several centuries we have seen broad shifts in the answer to this question. No longer do we hear arguments for “Holy Spirit Greek” (though N. Turner’s view is related to this old position<sup>86</sup>). The work on the papyri by Deissmann, Moulton, and others at the turn of the 20th C. placed our understanding on much better footing. Their explanations were not perfect since they focused too closely on the vocabulary of these documents and did not consider larger issues adequately.

The most recent work in this area avoids referring to the Greek of the NT as “vulgar” Greek, the spoken language of common people in contrast to literary Greek. Among the most significant work is that of Lars Rydbeck—unfortunately not well known nor accessible in English.<sup>87</sup> Rydbeck and others<sup>88</sup> propose that we find the closest parallels to the NT in the technical prose writing of the day (the *Fachprosa*). This is neither the common spoken language nor the language of literature, but the “factual prose which was primarily intended for practical use”<sup>89</sup> by scientists, doctors, businessmen, lawyers, etc.—the “professional prose of the day.”<sup>90</sup> This intermediate level of language was “acceptable to the educated and accessible to the uneducated,” yet “stands at some remove from wholly popular use.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> The best introduction to this 20th C. discussion is Stanley Porter, *The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays*.

<sup>86</sup> “The peculiarly Christian dialect” (MHT 4:3).

<sup>87</sup> Rydbeck’s major work is: *Fachprosa, vermeintliche Volkssprache und Neues Testament: Zur Beurteilung der sprachlichen Niveauunterschiede im nachklassischen Griechisch*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Graeca Upsaliensia, 5 (Uppsala, 1967). One section of this book is included in Porter’s *Classic Essays*, for the first time in English.

<sup>88</sup> A very similar conclusion was drawn, apparently independently from Rydbeck, by Loveday Alexander in her 1978 dissertation, since published as *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTS 78 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), and previously summarized in “Luke’s Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing,” *NovT* 28 (1986): 48–74. Others who have summarized this research include Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 32–40 and James Voelz, “The Language of the New Testament,” *ANRW* 2.25.2: 893–977. Daniel Wallace’s discussion runs along similar lines, though Rydbeck would object to his use of “conversational” as an accurate designation (*Greek Grammar* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 21–30). Also likely relevant here, though I have not seen it, is Albert Wifstrand, *Epochs and Styles: Selected Writings on the New Testament, Greek Language and Greek Culture in the Post-Classical Period*, WUNT 179 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

<sup>89</sup> Rydbeck, “Question of Linguistic Levels,” 195.

<sup>90</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 34.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

There is not strict uniformity within this classification of texts, but the basic morphology, vocabulary, and syntax is sufficiently similar to form a distinct grouping. There is considerable variety of content and also a range of style—or, for our purposes, idiolect. Even within the NT Rydbeck proposes five linguistic styles, grouping all the Synoptics and Acts together.<sup>92</sup> This group is “characterized by a septuagintal atmosphere and general semitic influences on phraseology and the sequence of words.”<sup>93</sup> This description does not refer to non-Greek constructions (“Semitisms” in a narrow sense), but to LXX and Semitic influences on the style of these writings. Each writer reflects this influence in his own way, thus we can speak of idiolect. In the case of Mark, several features noted above appear to be due to LXX or Semitic influence (e.g., Mark’s paratactic *καί*, the use of periphrasis, and the indefinite plural, and perhaps others). As Wallace notes, the syntax is certainly Greek, but features such as these affect the style of individual writers (i.e., idiolect).<sup>94</sup>

Mark’s idiolect does place him toward the less literary end of the spectrum of NT writers, but the non-literary nature of Mark’s Greek ought not to be over-emphasized since all koine would be judged poorly if compared with the prose of the Attic luminaries. That is what provoked the second stage of Atticism in the late first and second centuries AD as the literary purists attempted to set back the clock and return to the “good ‘ole days” of classical Attic usage.<sup>95</sup> Unpolished? Yes, by those standards. But very adequate to communicate his record of τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ.

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<sup>92</sup> His other groups consist of Paul, John, Revelation, and the rest (including Catholic Epistles, Hebrews, and the Pastorals). See Lars Rydbeck, “Die Sprache des NT” in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 4th ed., s.v., “voce Bibel,” now in the new English edition, RPP, v. 2, “The Language of the NT,” sub “voce Bible.” The English text was posted by the author on the b-greek list, 1/14/2008, <<http://lists.ibiblio.org/pipermail/b-greek/2008-January/045408.html>>.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. (capitalization as in b-greek original).

<sup>94</sup> *Greek Grammar*, 27.

<sup>95</sup> For a careful discussion of Atticism, see J. N. Kazazis, “Atticism,” in *A History of Ancient Greek*, ed. A.-F. Christidis (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), 1200–1212. The first stage of Atticism (first century BC) was a revival of Attic style in reaction to the non-periodic discourse of Asianism (1202). Porter gives slightly earlier dates for both Asianism and Atticism (“The Greek Language of the New Testament,” in *A Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament*, ed. S. Porter, 99–130, NTTS 25 [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 103).

## Appendix

### Occurrences per 1,000 words (All Instances)

	Matt	Mark	Luke	John	Genesis	Joshua	1 Chron	1 Macc
καί	54.01	80.63	63.31	46.25	83.29	109.92	119.94	125.31
δέ	22.35	11.95	23.14	11.35	23.20	3.64	0.59	4.91
τότε	4.07	0.44	0.64	0.53	0.11	0.42	0.43	0.25
γάρ	5.61	4.84	4.14	3.41	2.85	1.40	0.05	1.54
οὖν	2.53	0.44	1.41	10.66	1.14	0.36	0	1.04

These statistics should not be over-read. They include *all* instances of the conjunctions listed, not just those in sentence-initial position. The LXX books selected are somewhat random, attempting to offer a range of authors and dates.<sup>96</sup>

If we restrict the search to sentence-initial position the results show a similar proportion.<sup>97</sup>

### Occurrences per 1,000 words (Sentence-Initial)

	Matt	Mark	Luke	John	Genesis	Joshua	1 Chron	1 Macc
καί	10.31	28.66	14.90	4.90	18.42	21.00	27.08	28.71
δέ	15.25	9.53	17.80	6.61	17.34	2.12	0.43	2.68
τότε	3.17	0	0.30	0.21	0.03	0.24	0.16	0.20
γάρ	2.08	1.61	1.41	0.96	0.27	0.12	0.05	0.10
οὖν	2.04	0.29	0.90	9.96	0.60	0.18	0	0.60

If the search is done at the clause level, the following data result.

### Occurrences per 1,000 words (Clause-Initial)

	Matt	Mark	Luke	John	Genesis	Joshua	1 Chron	1 Macc
καί	21.62	44.20	26.85	15.13	37.71	42.25	49.61	55.84
δέ	22.21	11.88	23.01	11.30	22.82	3.52	0.59	4.91
τότε	3.35	0.07	0.47	0.37	0.05	0.30	0.27	0.25
γάρ	5.61	4.76	4.14	3.41	2.58	1.34	0.05	1.54
οὖν	2.53	0.44	1.41	10.66	1.11	0.36	0	1.04

<sup>96</sup> My choices are somewhat random and may not be adequately representative. For a more thorough study, these figures should be checked across all OT narrative texts and also compared with narrative koine texts written originally in Greek rather than translation. It would also be of interest to calculate the percentage of sentences and clauses which use καί (and the other conjunctions). To do so is beyond the scope of the present essay.

<sup>97</sup> The Accordance search used at the sentence level was: καί <WITHIN 1 Words> [FIELD Begin]. (For postpositives, the “within” value was set to 4. This might miss a few postpositives that occur later, but should account for most instances.) The results have *not* been manually verified since the goal is to get a general picture, not to prove something by statistics. The patterns evident indicate the general trend with sufficient clarity.