

EXTERNAL FOOTPRINTS AND INTERNAL FINGERPRINTS: CONSIDER ALL THE EVIDENCE ABOUT MARK 16:9-20

by James Snapp, Jr. - 4,560 words - April 2007

I believe that Mark 16:9-20 is canonical, and that it is a legitimate part of the Gospel of Mark. In this chapter, I will offer two reasons for this belief: deductions from the external evidence, and deductions from the internal evidence. I will also summarize the transmission-history of the endings of Mark.

+++ DEDUCTIONS FROM EARLY EXTERNAL EVIDENCE +++

Mark 16:9-20 is absent from Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, the Sinaitic Syriac, Old Latin Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae, and one Sahidic copy, and it was absent from copies mentioned by Eusebius of Caesarea. However, these disputed verses are supported by witnesses as old as P52, P66, P75, P45, P46, P64, and P13.

Although some Bible-footnotes state that the passage in question is absent in “our oldest manuscripts,” that is not the same as a statement that the passage is absent in our oldest *witnesses* or in the oldest available *evidence*. The writings of leaders in the early church (and in some cases the writings of early opponents of the church) often convey or display the contents of their copies of New Testament books.

Papias (101-108), the author of *Epistula Apostolorum* (150), Justin Martyr (160), Tatian (172), Irenaeus (184), the author of *Acts of John* (late second century), Hippolytus (220), and the writer Porphyry (270) indicate, to various degrees, familiarity with the Long Ending of Mark.

+ The testimony of **Papias** is quite tentative, but if any weight is to be assigned to Ammonius, or to the silences of Origen and Clement of Alexandria, it is fair to put Papias' statement on the scales also. Eusebius of Caesarea and the later writer Philip of Side (who seems at least partly dependent on Eusebius' citation) both state that Papias related a story about Justus Barsabbas (who is mentioned in Acts 1:23) in which, according to Eusebius, "he swallowed a deadly poison and received no harm, on account of the grace of the Lord." Philip of Side adds several details: Justus drank the poison of a snake, he did so in the name of the Lord, and he did so when put to the test by unbelievers.

Papias' brief story about Justus is just the sort of thing that one would write to illustrate a non-abusive application of the statement in Mark 16:18 that believers shall not be harmed "if they drink any deadly thing." On the other hand, Papias gives no explicit indication that he was illustrating a passage of Scripture; he was, rather, handing down a story that he claimed to have learned from the daughters of Philip (the evangelist) at Hierapolis. So the weight given to Papias' statement is a matter of milligrams. (This weight-assignment would increase considerably, however, if it could be verified that Philip of Side's report is more accurate than the shorter report which Eusebius provided.)

+ The testimony from the composition known as *Epistula Apostolorum*, c. 150, is more weighty. According to Martin Hengel, M. Horschuh stated in Studien zur Epistula Apostolorum, PTS 5, 1965, that this text's resurrection-narrative "is closest to the so-called inauthentic conclusion to Mark in respect of its structures," and "The basic pattern of the account is thus derived from the inauthentic conclusion of Mark." (p. 168, "*Studies in the Gospel of Mark*," English translation © John Bowden 1985. Originally published in part as articles appearing in WUNT 28 (1983) and 33 (1984)).

The basis for Horschuh's statement is subtle but substantial. There is more to consider here than a shared reference to "mourning and weeping." In *Epistula Apostolorum*, one of the women (the name varies among the witnesses) goes from the tomb to the disciples and reports that "the Master is risen from the dead," and the disciples do not believe her. In the canonical Gospels, the closest scenario to that is in Mk. 16:10-11, where Mary reports to the disciples that Jesus is alive and has been seen by her, and they do not believe her. This is not so much a quotation as it is the establishment of the framework of a narrative, but it indicates that the author knew Mark 16:10-11.

Also, *Epistula Apostolorum* pictures the disciples saying, "We believed her not that the Saviour was risen from the dead. Then she returned unto the Lord and said unto him: None of them hath believed me, that thou livest." The phrase "that thou livest" resembles the phrase "that Jesus was alive" in Mk. 16:11 and the phrase "None of them hath believed me" may be based on the phrase "they did not believe it" in Mk. 16:11. So, while *Epistula Apostolorum* does not contain an explicit quotation from Mark 16:9-20, its structure and verbiage indicate that its author knew the text that we know as Mark 16:9-11.

+ **Justin Martyr**, writing his First Apology in about 150, alluded to Mark 16:20 when he wrote in chapter 45, "That which he [i.e., David, in Psalm 110] says, 'He shall send to thee the rod of power out of Jerusalem,' is predictive of the mighty word, which his apostles, going forth from Jerusalem, preached everywhere." Especially significant are the words "*going forth*" and "*preached everywhere*" since exactly the same Greek words are used, though in a different order, in Mark 16:20.

Hort, in *Notes on Select Readings*, p. 39, expressed a doubt about the connection between Mark 16:20 and Justin's statement because "v. 20 does not contain the point specially urged by

Justin," that is, that the disciples went forth specifically from Jerusalem. Hort's reservation is still cited to this day. However, when Hort wrote those words in 1881, he was unaware of the arrangement of the Arabic Diatessaron, which was published in 1888 by P. Agostino Ciasca. Frederic Henry Chase (in an appendix in The Syriac Element in the Text of Codex Bezae, ©1893, MacMillan and Co., NY), noticed something in Ciasca's text that diminishes Hort's objection. Section LV:12-17 of the Diatessaron (according to Ciasca's Arabic text) runs as follows:

“And our Lord Jesus, after speaking to them, took them out to Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And while he blessed them, he was separated from them, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and at all times they were in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. And from thence they went forth, and preached in every place; and our Lord helped them, and confirmed their sayings by the signs which they did. And here are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one of them, not even the world, according to my opinion, would contain the books which should be written.”

Arabic Diatessaron 55:14 states that the disciples "returned to Jerusalem" (using Luke 24:52) and it is following this, in 55:16, that the Diatessaron says that the disciples went forth "from there," that is, from Jerusalem. Thus the Diatessaron displays *precisely* the point specially urged by Justin. An objection may be raised that just because Tatian's harmony of the Gospels had this feature, that does not mean that it was assumed by Justin. However, Chase, after pointing all this out, also noted, "It will be, I think, generally admitted that the probability is that there is some kind of connexion, more or less immediate, between Tatian's Diatessaron and Justin's N.T. quotations." The case for such a connection has only grown stronger since Chase

made that statement -- so much so that it is no great leap to say that Tatian's Diatessaron was modeled after Justin's Gospels-harmony.

Chase also observed that Justin uses the word πανταχου twice, "as if it were a word occurring in an authority quoted by him." The likelihood that Justin was recollecting a Gospels-harmony (possibly one which he himself had composed, using yet more ancient materials) which incorporated Mark 16:9-20 is very high.

+ Our next witness is **Tatian**, who in about 172 merged the texts of the Gospels into one continuous narrative called the Diatessaron. Some pieces of evidence used to reconstruct the Diatessaron are not written in Greek or Syriac; they are Arabic, Armenian, Old Dutch, Italian, Latin, and Persian. They arrange the text of the LE differently.

Working mainly with late evidence, several prominent scholars (including Streeter and Metzger) have categorically affirmed that Tatian's Diatessaron contained the LE. However, because each branch of evidence treats the LE differently, it could be argued that the Long Ending was independently assimilated into each branch, which would imply its original absence from the Diatessaron.

The Arabic Diatessaron (see the excerpt above in the discussion of Justin Martyr), made in 1043, was based on a MS (written in 873) of the Syriac text of the Diatessaron. The Arabic Diatessaron's arrangement may be regarded, with some qualifications, as a fairly close representation of the original arrangement of the Diatessaron. This goes a long way toward explaining why other texts of the Diatessaron do not incorporate Mark 16:9-20 in the same way. The Arabic Diatessaron pictures the disciples on a mountain (as in Matthew 28:16), and warps the text of Mark 16:14 so as to present the individuals who failed to believe as the same individuals who first saw the risen Jesus. The Diatessaron's question-raising structure, preserved

in the Arabic Diatessaron and in the Syriac MS from which it was translated, elicited independent adjustments in various branches of the late evidence.

The Arabic Diatessaron is allied with much earlier evidence from a commentary on the Diatessaron written by Ephrem Syrus. Ephrem included a clear quotation of Mark 16:15 combined with Matthew 28:19. Ephrem died in 373, and the Syriac manuscript (Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709) of his commentary was produced in about A.D. 500. The only conclusion which can be justified by this is that the Diatessaron included the Long Ending.

Also, Tjitze Baarda, a specialist in Diatessaron-studies, observed in a study published in NTS, Vol. 41, #3 (July 1995), pp. 458-465, that in a West-Saxon text of Mark 16:11, the text reads the equivalent of "they did not believe them." Baarda pointed out that this reading, which is found (in the West) in Codex Fuldensis and the Old High German and (in the East) in the Arabic Harmony, does not fit the context, since only Mary Magdalene is in view. Baarda proposed that inasmuch as all these texts have been influenced by the Diatessaron, the coincidence of this variant suggests that it was present in the Syriac Diatessaron (which influenced texts in the East) and the Latin Diatessaron (which influenced texts in the West). This implies that it was originally in Tatian's Diatessaron, and thus that Tatian's Diatessaron included Mark 16:9-20.

Baarda has also noted that the Arabic harmony text "appears to be of high value for the reconstruction of the original Syriac Diatessaron," and "The neglect and disregard which was so often the share of the Arabic harmony is unwarranted." (p. 25, T. Baarda, *"To the Roots of the Syriac Diatessaron Tradition (TA 25:1-3)"* in Novum Testamentum, Vol. XXVIII, Jan. 1986, © 1986 by E.J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands.)

+ **Irenaeus**, our fourth second-century witness, made an explicit quotation from Mark 16:19. Writing in Lyons, in Gaul (France), Irenaeus wrote in *Against Heresies*, Book Three, 10:5-6, "Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: 'So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.'" The Latin text is, "*In fine euangelii ait Marcus: Et quidem Dominus Iesus, postquam locutus est eis, receptus in caelos, et sedet ad dexteram Dei.*"

Irenaeus' testimony is particularly weighty. Besides being a bishop (who would be expected to have more copies of the Gospels than the average literate Christian), and besides writing about 145 years before Codex Vaticanus was made, Irenaeus appealed on one occasion to "the ancient and approved copies" of the book of Revelation when sorting out a textual variant (Eusebius quoted his comment in Ecclesiastical History, Book Five, ch. 8). Irenaeus gives no indication that he knew of any question about the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20, even though he had traveled in Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul. (Indirect evidence of Irenaeus' acceptance and use of the Long Ending might also be found in the verbiage used in *Against Heresies*, Book Two, 32:4, which was quoted by Eusebius in Ecclesiastical History, Book 5 ch. 7.)

Irenaeus' quotation of Mark 16:19 is preserved in the ultra-formal Latin translation of *Against Heresies*, and although this part of his composition is not extant in the fragmentary Greek remains of the book, it is mentioned in a Greek marginal note in MS 1582 (dated to the 900's – the oldest MS in f¹) next to Mark 16:19 which states that Irenaeus cited this passage in the third book of *Against Heresies*.

+ The legend-filled *Acts of John* is our fifth second-century witness. Part 20 of this text features an exchange between an unbeliever named Aristodemus and the apostle John: "*And Aristodemus said, "If thou wilt have me believe in thy God, I will give thee poison to drink, and if*

thou drink it, and die not, it will appear that thy God is true.” The apostle answered, “If thou give me poison to drink, when I call on the name of my Lord, it will not be able to harm me.”

This seems to demonstrate the author’s knowledge of Mark 16:17. In *Acts of John*, part 16, John is pictured saying, after a re-telling of Luke 16:19-31, "*And these words our Lord and Master confirmed by examples of mighty works.*" This resembles the language of Mark 16:20. Rather than suggest that Mark 16:9-20 has the flavor of second-century legends, these elements in *Acts of John* show that influence ran in the other direction; that is, legends were created and expanded to display the fulfillment of predictions in the New Testament.

+ Hippolytus, who wrote in the early third century, is regarded as the author of a composition called *Apostolic Tradition*, which has passed into four major transmission-streams: Latin, Sahidic, Arabic, and Ethiopic. The opening of chapter 32 of *Apostolic Tradition* reflects an awareness of Mark 16:18. The Latin version has the following pair of sentences: “Let every faithful person take care to receive the Eucharist before he tastes anything else. For if he receives in faith, even if something deadly shall be given to him after this, it cannot harm him.” The Sahidic, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions contain the same or very similar sentences.

(Quotation from *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*, Copyright © 2002 Augsburg Fortress, by Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips.)

In addition, Henry Chadwick provides details about two Greek fragments that contain a snippet from *Apostolic Tradition*. In "Preface to the Second Edition" (i.e., the second edition of Gregory Dix's presentation of *Apostolic Tradition*, first published in 1937 and reissued, after Chadwick's corrections, in 1968 and again in 1992), Chadwick wrote:

"Two new Greek fragments have to be reported here. The first is preserved in a dogmatic florilegium of patristic quotations contained in two manuscripts, cod. Ochrid.86 (saec. XIII) f.

192 and Paris.gr.900 (saec. XV) f.112. The discoverer, Professor Marcel Richard, printed the excerpt from the *Apostolic Tradition* in *Symbolae Osloenses* 38 (1963), page 79 This new fragment preserves the original Greek of chapter xxxii.1 (= Botte 36): εκ των διαταξεων των αθιων αποστολων πασ δε πιστος περιασθω, προ του τινος γευσασθαι ευχαριστιασ μεταλαμβανειν. ει γαρ πιστει μεταλαβοι [v.l.: μεταλαβη] ουδ' αν θανασιμον τισ δωη αυτω μετα τουτο ου κατισχυσει αυτου (cf. Mark xvi.18)." [I added the bracketed v.l., based on an observation by Bradshaw *et al.* JES] This shows that the author knew and accepted the Long Ending of Mark.

+ In about A.D. 270, Porphyry wrote *Against the Christians*, a mostly-lost composition in which he made various objections to Christian beliefs. In about 405, an author named Macarius Magnes (from the city of Magnesia in Asia Minor) wrote a composition called *Apocritus* in response to a pagan objector to Christianity. Macarius Magnes was unaware of the identity of the author to whom he was responding. At one point (Book III, ch. 21), Macarius Magnes says that the pagan writer claimed that Peter put Ananias and Sapphira to death. This is very similar to a position which Jerome (in Epistle 130, *To Demetrius*) attributed to Porphyry. It is very likely that the work to which Macarius Magnes was responding was a condensation of Porphyry's book, and that the condenser was Porphyry's successor Hierocles, who was proconsul of Bithynia during the persecution of Christians there in A.D. 303.

Macarius Magnes cited the following statement from the pagan writer: "Again, consider in detail that other passage, where He says, "Such signs shall follow them that believe: they shall lay hands upon sick folk, and they shall recover, and if they drink any deadly drug, it shall in no wise hurt them." So the right thing would be for those selected for the priesthood, and

particularly those who lay claim to the episcopate or presidency, to make use of this form of test.”

In *Apocritus*, Macarius Magnes replied to this citation -- in which the pagan’s quotation of Mark 16:18 is framed between quotations of John 6:53 and Matthew 17:20 -- not by claiming that the passage was absent from some MSS, but by attempting to allegorize the “sickness,” “deadly thing,” and other contents of Mark 16:18. I conclude from this that Mark 16:18 was in Porphyry’s copy of the Gospels in 270, and in Macarius Magnes’ copy of the Gospels in 405.

+ Fourth-century quotations from the Long Ending of Mark come from sources as diverse as **Ambrose of Milan** (who quotes Mark 16:18 in *The Prayer of Job and David* 4:1-4) and **Aphrahat the Persian Sage** (who, c. 345, quoted from Mark 16:16-18 in paragraph 17 of *Demonstration One: Of Faith*), and **Augustine** used the passage several times. In addition, the Long Ending of Mark was included in the Vulgate by **Jerome** (in 383) and in the Gothic Version by **Wulfilas** (in 350). It is found in the **Peshitta** and in most **Old Latin** MSS, and part of it was woven into the *Gospel of Nicodemus 14:1*.

These footprints of the Long Ending lead to two conclusions:

- (1) An appeal to the two oldest manuscripts of Mark 16 rather than to the oldest evidence is insufficient; it is essentially an appeal to climate.
- (2) The Long Ending of Mark received widespread acceptance as part of the Gospels in the second and third and fourth centuries.

+++ DEDUCTIONS FROM INTERNAL EVIDENCE +++

Many commentators have echoed the observations made by Metzger regarding the non-Markan vocabulary of the Long Ending. However, as Dr. Bruce Terry has shown, if any once-

used word is to be regarded as “non-Markan,” then Mark 15:40-16:4 must be declared the 12-verse passage of Mark with the highest number of “non-Markan” words. The most formidable internal-evidence-based objections against the Long Ending do not consist of evidence that Mark could not have written it; they consist of evidence that Mark could not have written the Long Ending *as the ending of the Gospel of Mark*. The main pieces of evidence are the following:

- (1) The sudden shift between 16:8 and 16:9.
- (2) The use of *εκεινος* as an absolute in the Long Ending.
- (3) The positive focus on signs, in contrast to Mark 8:11-12.
- (4) The focus on events which, in Luke, are located in and around Jerusalem rather than in Galilee.

None of these textual fingerprints eliminate Mark as the author. Cumulatively, however, they indicate that the Long Ending was not composed by Mark in order to complete the Gospel of Mark. The first and fourth pieces of evidence also indicate that the Long Ending was not composed by *anyone* to complete the Gospel of Mark. They suggest that the material we now know as Mark 16:9-20 existed as a freestanding document before being attached to the main portion of the text of the Gospel of Mark.

Fairly recently, the view that the Long Ending originated as a pastiche of material from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts has become somewhat popular. James Kelhoffer’s doctorate-book Miracle and Mission, which J.K. Elliott described as “overwhelmingly convincing,” advocates that view. Kelhoffer proposed that the Long Ending was composed to complete the Gospel of Mark by an author who consciously borrowed language from 60 source-passages (18 of which are in Mark) in order to write the 170-word Long Ending in a way that would imitate the writing-style of Mark and the writers of the other canonical Gospels. Such an

approach eliminates the risk of identifying any linguistic fingerprints in the Long Ending as Mark's fingerprints, because consistencies with Markan vocabulary and style are assumed to be imitations of Mark.

That theory requires a special sort of author. The author would be bold enough to add his own literary creation to the Gospel of Mark, but timid enough not to adjust the jarring shift between 16:8 and 16:9. He would be thoroughly acquainted with the Gospel of Luke, and yet write that the disciples rejected the two travelers' report (in 16:13), which is not suggested by Luke, and he would present Jesus' subsequent appearance to the disciples as if it occurred some time after the two traveler's report, which also is not suggested by Luke. He would be so cautious that he consulted the Gospels and Acts 60 times, but also so bold that he inserted unparalleled material about serpent-handling (which Mk. 16:18 does not suggest to be accidental) and poison-drinking. Though dependent upon Matthew, Luke, and John, he would differ from all three by relating that main group of disciples rejected Mary Magdalene's announcement that Jesus was alive and had been seen by her. And this author, though he realized that the Gospel of Mark ended with an explicit forecast of an appearance in Galilee, would decide not to use John 21, and would choose instead to summarize events which anyone acquainted with the Gospel of Luke would locate in and around Jerusalem rather Galilee.

Such an author is, I believe, complicated beyond the point of plausibility. The theory of a mad mimic ought to be rejected in favor of a much simpler and more credible explanation of the textual fingerprints in the Long Ending.

Mark 16:9-20 did not begin its literary life as part of the Gospel of Mark. It existed in Rome as a catechetical or liturgical text. Whether it was composed by Peter or Mark, or merely used by them, it was regarded at Rome as a text which had apostolic authority.

When Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark, he intended to finish it with an account of an appearance of Jesus to the disciples at Galilee, as 14:28 and 16:7 indicate. However, Mark was prevented from doing so, either due to his unexpected death during the tumultuous events that were occurring in Rome in the mid-late 60's, or because an emergency compelled him to leave Rome (heading perhaps to Alexandria).

Those who were left behind in Rome possessed the Gospel of Mark in the incomplete form in which Mark had left it. They realized that Mark's Gospel-account was unfinished. Desiring to disseminate the account, but not in such an incomplete form, and hesitating to add their own words to those of Mark, they attached another composition -- a short text which they knew had been composed by Mark or used by him -- and attached this short text to conclude Mark's Gospel-account. This theory of the origin of the Long Ending resembles Hort's view (in *Notes*, p. 51) that "A scribe or editor, unwilling to change the words of the text before him or to add words of his own, was willing to furnish the Gospel with what seemed a worthy conclusion by incorporating with it unchanged a narrative of Christ's appearances after the Resurrection which he found in some secondary record then surviving from a preceding generation."

Subsequently, the Long Ending was either lost or excised. If the loss was not incurred through accidental damage to the two-piece autograph, then an excision was carried out by an individual who fit one or more of the following descriptions, leading to the following results:

- he regarded the Long Ending as a separate composition, and removed it because he felt that it did not merit placement with the text of Mark 1:1-16:8, or

- he knew that the Long Ending was not the ending which Mark had intended to write, and removed it on the grounds that it was not placed in the book by Mark, or

- he knew that the Long Ending had not been added by Mark, and, after reading the Gospel of Luke, he became dissatisfied with the Long Ending because it was difficult to harmonize with Luke's account, and removed it for those two reasons, or

- he knew that the Long Ending had not been added by Mark, and resisted the addition of the Long Ending in the hope that a more appropriate ending could be obtained elsewhere -- from John in Ephesus. When this proved futile, the Long Ending was eventually reattached, but not before some copies were made of the incomplete text, which entered the Alexandrian text-stream.

(continued after Excursus)

EXCURSUS: A JOHANNINE ENDING OF MARK

An intriguing sub-theory (on which no weight is placed in the main theory) is that an attempt to obtain a more appropriate ending in Ephesus was not futile, but led to the production of a text resembling John 21:1-14 or John 21:1-19. Once this Johannine Ending was received in Ephesus, the Long Ending was redundant, like a bandage on a healed wound. For a brief period, copies of Mark were produced at Ephesus in which Mark 16:8 was accompanied by a Johannine Ending. However, since copies from Rome continued to be issued with the Long Ending, when the Gospel of John was initially disseminated in Ephesus, the Long Ending was re-attached to the Gospel of Mark, and the Johannine Ending was attached, in an expanded form, to the Gospel of John. The Long Ending was not re-attached, though, in part of Egypt, where copyists regarded it as an inferior rival to the Johannine Ending embedded in John 21.

Traces of such an understanding of John 21 may exist in four pieces of evidence:

- (1) Tertullian's reference in Treatise on the Soul to John 20:30-21 as the conclusion of the Gospel of John,
- (2) Origen's reference in Commentary on John X:27 to Jn. 20:29 as a statement found at the end of the Gospel of John (though Origen demonstrates knowledge of John 21:18 in *Against Celsus*, Book II),
- (3) The narrative-flow of the *Gospel of Peter*, in which a scene resembling Mark 16:8 is followed by a scene resembling John 21:1, and
- (4) *Telos*-symbols in Codex Vaticanus alongside John 20:30 and at 21:1, indicating that in some sense one of these verses was regarded as the book's conclusion.

+++ FOLLOWING THE FOOTPRINTS OF THE OTHER ENDINGS +++

The transmission-history, to the extent that it can be traced by extant evidence, corresponds to what one would expect to result from the scenario described above: the Long Ending was accepted as part of the Gospel of Mark in Gaul, Rome, Asia Minor, and Syria. In Egypt, the Abrupt Ending was disseminated in Gospels-books, and affected the earliest level of the Sahidic version, one branch of the Old Latin version, and the ancestry of the Sinaitic Syriac. The Short (“Intermediate”) Ending was composed in Egypt, possibly in the late second or early third century by a copyist who did not appreciate that John 21 was a continuation of the thread of Mark’s narrative. In the late third century, when copies with the Long Ending circulated in Egypt (non-Byzantine copies, with “*And in their hands*” in 16:18), copyists who were puzzled by disagreeing exemplars combined the two endings, placing the Short Ending first so that it would round off an otherwise abruptly-ending pericope. Such copies formed the text-base of the Ethiopic and Bohairic versions, and influenced the Sahidic version also.

Copies with the Abrupt Ending were taken from Egypt to Caesarea (by Origen, among others) and it was these cherished copies, or their descendants, that Eusebius described as the “accurate copies” in his comments to Marinus. Eusebius’ comments were perpetuated by Jerome, and were capsulized in marginalia in f¹ and related copies. Armenian translators in the fifth century, influenced by either an exemplar prepared by Eusebius (one of the 50 codices), or by his comments and Canons, did not include Mark 16:9-20 in the Armenian version. The translators who produced the Old Georgian version followed the Armenian version.

Meanwhile, copies with the Long Ending as part of the Gospel of Mark circulated everywhere else the Gospels were known. Wherever copies or copyists or translators were more

firmly linked to the initial Roman dissemination of the Gospel of Mark than to an Egyptian Gospels-text, the Long Ending was accepted as part of the Gospel of Mark. Those who want their copies of the Gospel of Mark to contain the ending that was in the Gospel of Mark when it was initially released for church-use should do likewise.

THE END